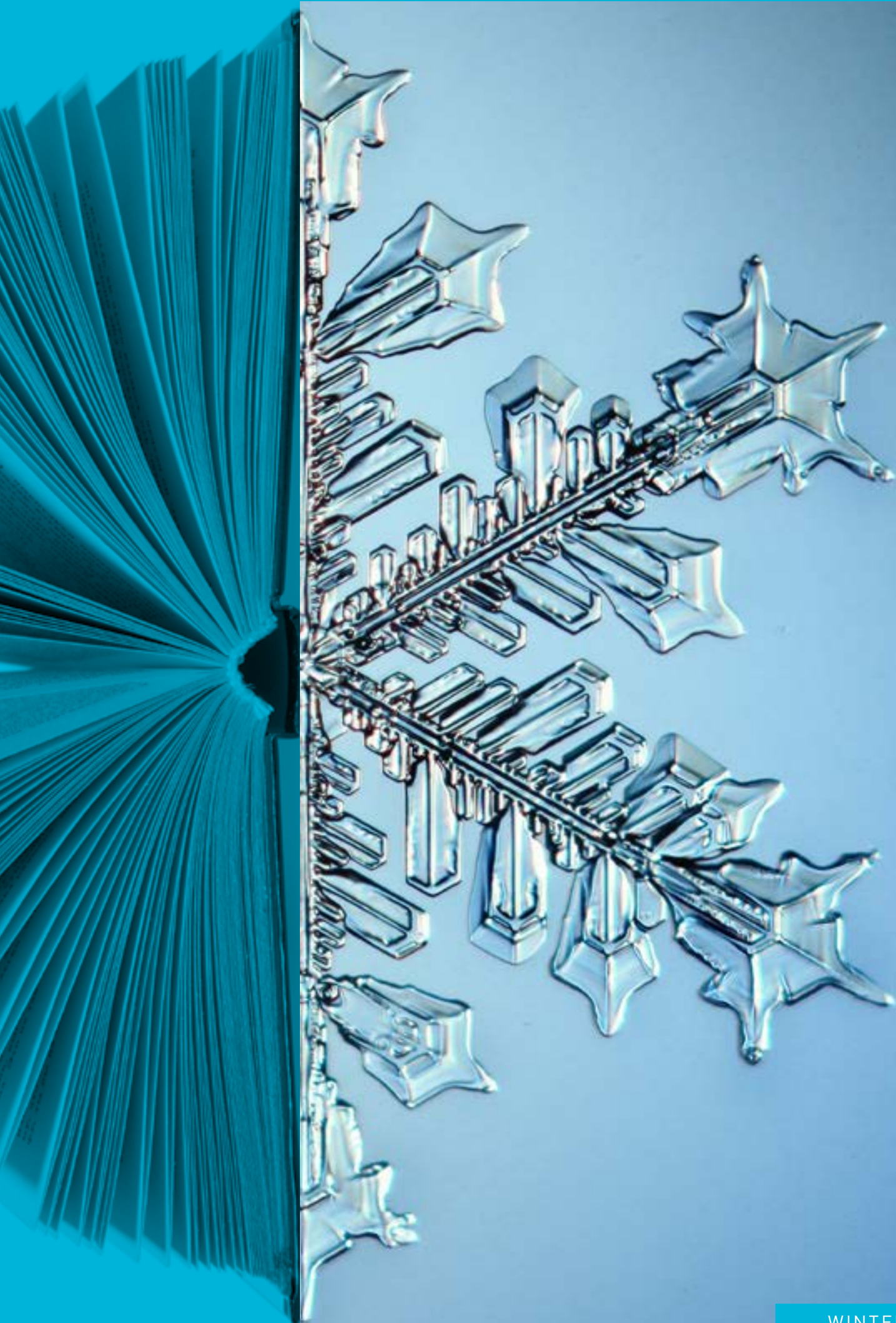


# OFF THE SHELF


A LOOK INSIDE BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY



WINTER 2016/17



# BRANCH LOCATIONS

A detailed map of Brooklyn, New York, with a grid of streets. Black dots are placed across the map to represent library branch locations. The dots are labeled with neighborhood names in all caps. The map includes the East River to the north, the Atlantic Ocean to the east, and the Hudson River to the west. The title 'BRANCH LOCATIONS' is overlaid in large, semi-transparent pink letters at the top.

GREENPOINT

LEONARD

WILLIAMSBURGH

BUSHWICK

WALT WHITMAN

BROOKLYN HEIGHTS

DEKALB

WASHINGTON IRVING

MARCY

CLINTON HILL

BEDFORD

MACON

SARATOGA

ARLINGTON

CARROLL GARDENS

PACIFIC

RED HOOK

CENTRAL

BROWER PARK

EASTERN PARKWAY

BROWNSVILLE

CYPRESS HILL

PARK SLOPE

CROWN HEIGHTS

STONE AVENUE

NEW LOTS

FLATBUSH

RUGBY

EAST FLATBUSH

SPRING CREEK

WINDSOR TERRACE

SUNSET PARK

CORTELYOU

BOROUGH PARK

CLARENDON

CANARSIE

JAMAICA BAY

BAY RIDGE

MCKINLEY PARK

KENSINGTON

MIDWOOD

PAERDEGAT

FORT HAMILTON

DYKER

MAPLETON

RYDER

FLATLANDS

MILL BASIN

NEW UTRECHT

HIGHLAWN

KINGS HIGHWAY

HOMECREST

KINGS BAY

ULMER PARK

GRAVESEND

GERRITSEN BEACH

SHEEPSHEAD BAY

CONEY ISLAND

BRIGHTON BEACH

**BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY IS THE FIFTH-LARGEST** PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES, SERVING THE BOROUGH'S 2.5 MILLION RESIDENTS AND OFFERING THOUSANDS OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS, MILLIONS OF BOOKS, FREE WIFI AND MORE THAN 1,100 INTERNET-ACCESSIBLE COMPUTERS.



# THE WINTER ISSUE

**FEATURE**  
MULTICULTURAL  
PROGRAMMING

04

**FEATURE**  
COZY COOKBOOKS  
& READING SPOTS

12

**HAPPENINGS**  
THE 2016 BROOKLYN  
EAGLES LITERARY PRIZE

07

**STAFF SPOTLIGHT**  
PAT MOORE

14

**ARTS & CULTURE**  
CLASSICAL INTERLUDES,  
EXHIBITIONS & MORE

10

**PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT**  
BKLYN INCUBATOR

16

# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



**THIS EDITION OF *OFF THE SHELF* IS DEVOTED IN PART TO THE WIDE RANGE OF PROGRAMS AND EVENTS IN OUR BRANCHES, WHERE THESE DAYS YOU ARE ALMOST AS LIKELY TO ENCOUNTER A CITIZENSHIP CLASS OR A PODCASTING WORKSHOP AS A BOOK CLUB.**

Yet for all their modern functions and offerings, Brooklyn's 60 public libraries still give New Yorkers room to read, research and reflect—to do, in other words, their best thinking. At a time of year traditionally reserved for expressions of gratitude, I am thankful for that.

There is no doubt that libraries are livelier now than in the past, and that to find a little peace here, you have to know where to look: the alcoves and reading nooks of our stately Carnegie branches, the tucked-away corners of our otherwise open-floored mid-century buildings, the spaces in our naturally lit modern libraries specifically designed for thoughtful solitude.

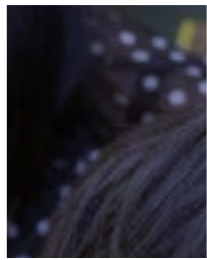
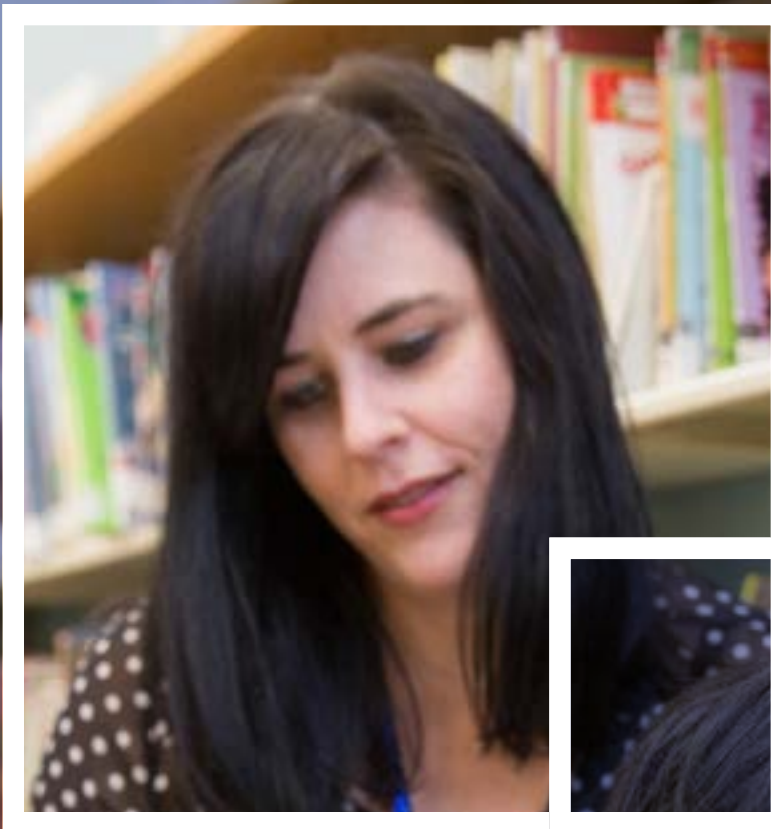
The search for quiet is well worth it. After all, what makes our branches special is not only their vitality—crowded story times, flashing computer screens, exclamations of discovery and wonder in many languages—but also those moments, impossible to anticipate, when a busy library falls suddenly and unaccountably silent. At those times, it is as if we are in communion with the past, when libraries were hushed as temples, environs apart from the bustling outside world. It is certainly far better to be part of the world than apart from it, and I would not want us to go back to that time. But it is nice, on occasion, to visit.

Very truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Linda E. Johnson'.

**Linda E. Johnson**  
President & CEO





# LOVE YOUR LIBRARY.

When you donate to Brooklyn Public Library, your support helps provide free life-transforming services & programs to all Brooklynites.

Every gift counts—donate today at [bklynlib.org/Give-OtS](http://bklynlib.org/Give-OtS).



The beauty of living in Brooklyn is that no matter where you're from or what language you speak, you can visit a public library to check out a great book or attend a free program.

Brooklyn Public Library President & CEO, Linda E. Johnson

# MULTICULT PROGRAM





# CULTURAL IMMIGRATING

## HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Throughout October, BPL celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month with a series of family-friendly programs featuring Scarmouches Latino Puppet Theater’s performance of *Juan Sin Miedo/Fearless Juan*, a ghost story presented in both Spanish and English that teaches children how to address fear.

At Carroll Gardens’ closing celebration, librarian Jodi Shaw explained the importance of multicultural programs. “Children learn that the world is bigger than their own neighborhoods. The programs are especially appealing to parents who want their children to speak a language other than English—when children are this young, their brains are like sponges, and they’re able to learn a great deal at Library events.”

Apple Bank sponsored Hispanic Heritage Month festivities at Sunset Park, DeKalb and Carroll Gardens libraries. The bank is also sponsoring the Library’s 14-part World Language Family Series, which includes a Russian concert series, commemorations of the Lunar New Year and the second annual World Language Family Day for Immigrant Heritage Month in June.

[bklynlib.org/worldlanguages](http://bklynlib.org/worldlanguages)

## CREATIVE AGING

Creative Aging is BPL’s series of multi-session art workshops for patrons 50 and older. Each workshop is led by a professional teaching artist and closes with a celebratory event at which participants showcase their work.

The Creative Aging workshops gained momentum when they expanded to include multilingual offerings. “Patrons love hearing and speaking their own language. That they’re able to participate in a Library program they can fully understand, and with similar individuals, is so meaningful to them,” said Taina Evans, BPL’s coordinator for Older Adults Services.

Locations are chosen based on neighborhood population. Past workshops include a Russian drawing workshop in Sheepshead Bay; a Haitian-Creole visual arts program in Canarsie; Hebrew bead-

*continued on next page >*



## MULTICULTURAL PROGRAMMING

*continued*

## CREATIVE AGING

*continued*

weaving in Midwood; Spanish dance at DeKalb; and a Chinese choral arts workshop at New Utrecht.

One standout was Greenpoint's Polish storytelling program. "At the closing ceremony, participants shared stories of all kinds—sad, humorous, shocking," Taina said. "Even though I couldn't understand the language, I was able to understand the sentiment thanks to the expressive audience reactions."

In 2017, BPL plans to offer at least six more multicultural Creative Aging workshops, including dual-language programs and online programs for homebound seniors. For more information, visit [bklynlibrary.org/seniors/creative-aging](http://bklynlibrary.org/seniors/creative-aging).

## LANGUAGE LINE

Language Line, a telephone service used by public agencies like the 311 call center, allows speakers of different languages to communicate with the help of an interpreter. Thanks to an ongoing partnership with Apple Bank, BPL became the first library system in NYC to offer this free interpretation service.

Jennifer Chan, a job information resource specialist at the Library's Business & Career Center, often relies on Language Line to assist students from BPL's ESOL classes with their job searches. "Before Language Line, I had to use Google Translate, which was slow and inefficient," Jennifer said. "Language Line allows me to help students faster so I can meet with a greater number of them. The translators make sure the students fully understand the information, and they help me identify exactly what kind of resources I need to provide to each student."

Language Line is available in all 60 BPL branches, enabling staff to communicate with patrons in over 100 languages. For more information or to request an interpreter, visit [bklynlibrary.org/immigrant-services/languages](http://bklynlibrary.org/immigrant-services/languages).

### SECOND PLACE AWARD - \$3,000

#### CINDY SIMILIEEN-JOHNSON:

**GOAL CHIC**, a nonprofit organization, will provide mentorship to women of all ages to develop self-confidence, financial literacy, wellness and healthy relationships.

### FIRST PLACE AWARD - \$5,000

#### LAWRENCE LOVELL:

#### **BREAKTHROUGH SOLUTIONS**

will operate in East Flatbush. This mental wellness service will empower individuals to tackle their difficult pasts and achieve meaningful goals.

### THIRD PLACE AWARD - \$2,000

#### PAUL CELICOURT & RICHARD

**SAM: ALLORIDE** is a flexible ride-sharing platform. It will build a social network of drivers and riders who may offer and request trips.

## POWERUP! KREYOL

PowerUP! KREYOL was created to fill a need; BPL's Business & Career Center realized Brooklyn's large population of Haitian-Creole speakers had few opportunities to bring their business ideas to life.

"It was a no-brainer for us to propose a Haitian-Creole version of our original PowerUP! Business Plan Competition," said Winnie Siclait, the program liaison. "Brooklyn has a large entrepreneurial community that

didn't have access to resources in their native language, and now the Business & Career Center is able to provide them with business classes, counseling and capital."

The program is open to all Haitians interested in starting small businesses. Participants attend classes, which are taught in Haitian-Creole, focused on creating business plans, marketing, financial projections and doing research with Library resources. Those who are interested must attend an information session to participate. The next sessions will be held in early 2017.

[bklynlib.org/powerup-kreyol](http://bklynlib.org/powerup-kreyol)



# THE 2016 BROOKLYN EAGLES LITERARY PRIZE

*Congratulations to Idra Novey and Mary E. Buser, winners of the 2016 Brooklyn Eagles Literary Prize!*

Now in its second year, the Prize honors books published in the past year that embody the spirit of Brooklyn. In fiction, Brooklyn-based author Idra Novey won for *Ways to Disappear*, her debut novel about the disappearance of a famous Brazilian novelist and the young translator who turns the author's life upside down following her trail.

Mary E. Buser won the nonfiction category with her first book, *Lockdown on Rikers: Shocking Stories of Abuse and Injustice at New York's Notorious Jail*. Buser, a Brooklynite and former mental health administrator, describes the everyday abuses she witnessed while working at Rikers.

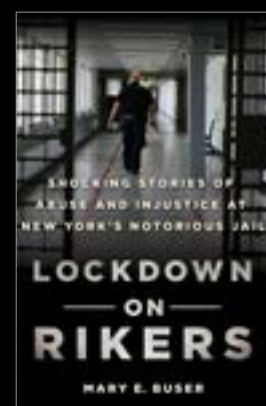
The winners were announced on October 21 at Park Slope Library during the Brooklyn Classic, BPL's annual Fall Benefit. This year, more than \$52,000 was raised to support the Library's programming and collections for children, youth and families.

The Brooklyn Classic is sponsored by the Brooklyn Eagles, a community of engaged, young BPL supporters who fundraise and advocate for the resources the Library offers.

Visit [bklynlibrary.org/brooklyneagles](http://bklynlibrary.org/brooklyneagles) to learn more.



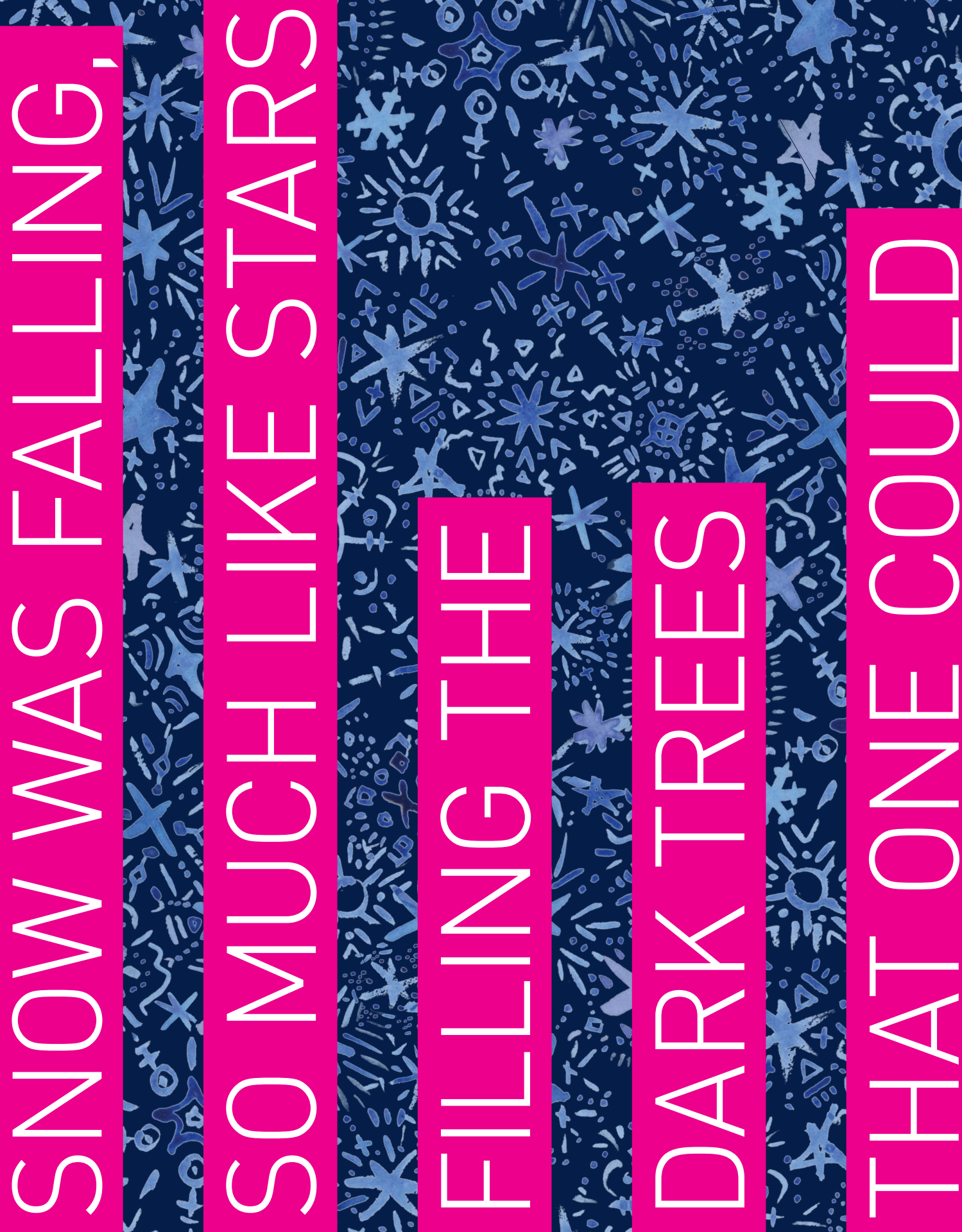
FICTION



NONFICTION

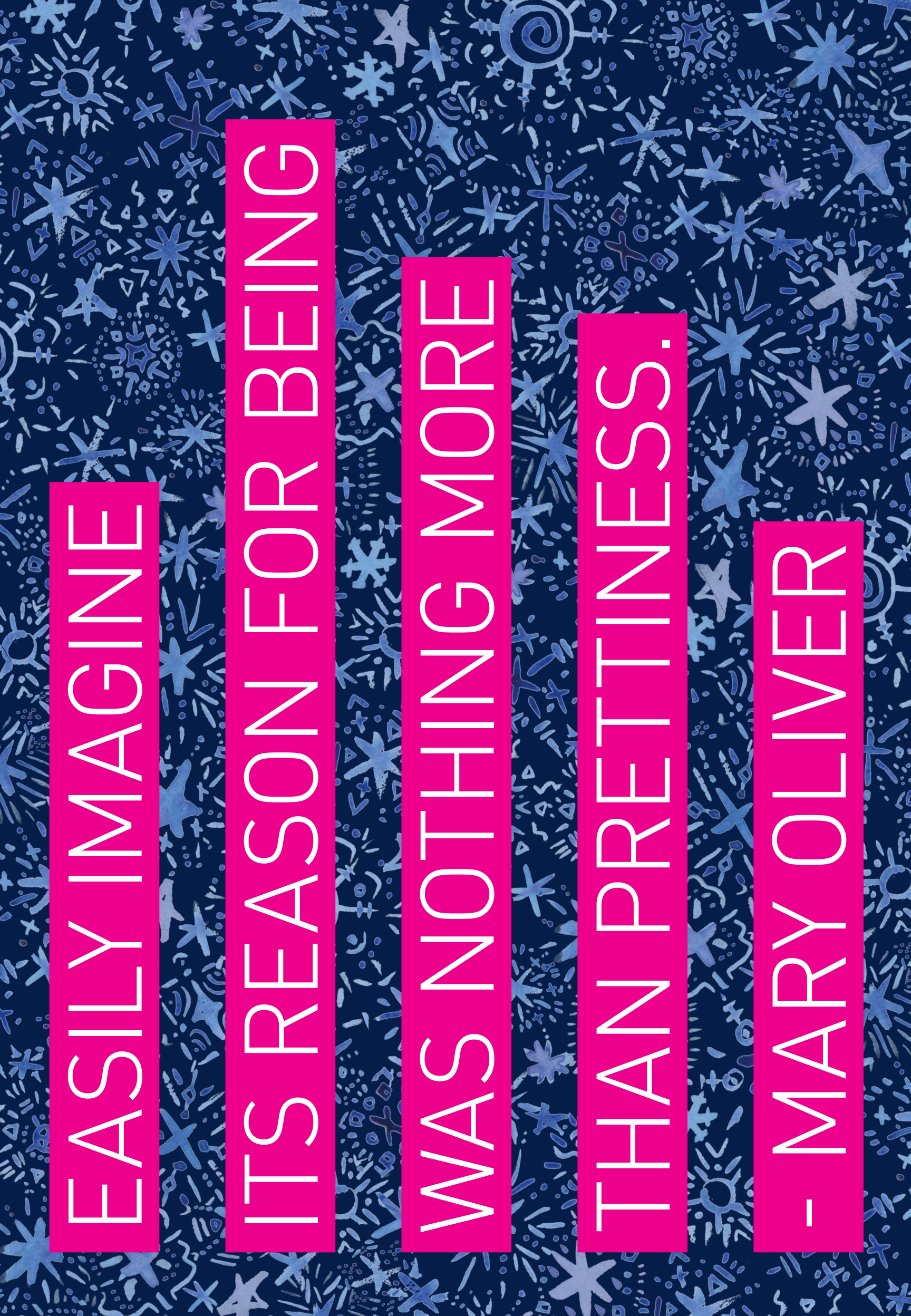






SNOW WAS FALLING,  
SO MUCH LIKE STARS  
FILLING THE  
DARK TREES  
THAT ONE COULD





EASILY IMAGINE

ITS REASON FOR BEING

WAS NOTHING MORE

THAN PRETTINESS.

- MARY OLIVER



ARTS & CULTURE AT  
CENTRAL LIBRARY

Brooklyn Public Library hosts cultural events throughout the borough, including special series and programming at the Dr. S. Stevan Dweck Cultural Center. Join us to ignite your curiosity and immerse yourself in art and ideas.

WINTER SERIES

# CLASSICAL INTERLUDES

SUNDAYS, 4 PM

*The Cassatt Quartet*

January 22

The quartet performs Mendelssohn's "Capriccio for String Quartet," Ellen Taaffe Zwilich's "Voyage," Daniel Visconti's "Black Bend" and Tchaikovsky's "Quartet No. 1 in D Major."

*JACK Quartet*

January 29

Christopher Otto, Austin Wulliman, John Pickford Richards and Jay Campbell perform works by Ruth Crawford Seeger, Derek Bermel, Julia Wolfe and Iannis Xenakis. Co-presented with Carnegie Hall.

*Children under 6 not admitted to Classical Interludes.*

photo: JACK Quartet





Nina Meledandri

## EXHIBITIONS

### **BRIC BIENNIAL: VOLUME II, BED-STUY/CROWN HEIGHTS EDITION TRANSLATIONS & ANNOTATIONS**

This exhibition includes the work of four artists—Kumasi J. Barnett, Aaron Beebe, Asuko Goto and Chris Nosenzo—who use existing texts and documents as source material to alter, annotate, translate and reinterpret into new pieces relevant to their lives and to the times in which we live.

Grand Lobby, November 16 – January 31

### **BRIC BIENNIAL: VOLUME II, BED-STUY/CROWN HEIGHTS EDITION SPECIAL PROJECT – THE BARBERSHOPS BY HIDEMI TAKAGI**

Photographer Hidemi Takagi photographs the barbershop culture in Crown Heights and Bed-Stuy. The idea of barbershops as a social club, a place to debate politics, social issues, sports and family; where young and old all go to catch-up and learn, are sensitively captured in these photos. Featured barbershops include ABC 2 Barber Shop, Nine Hair Studio and De Rite Barbershop.

Youth Wing (Teen Center) November 16 – January 31

### **THE SHAPE OF SOUND: THE PICTURE BOOK ART OF SEAN QUALLS BY SEAN QUALLS**

This exhibition spans from Sean Qualls's earliest published book to his most recent work including collaborations with his wife Selina Alko. Featured books include *Before John Was a Jazz Giant*, *Freedom Song*, *The Case for Loving* and others. Also included are book dummies and sketches from various project stages.

Youth Wing, November 16 – January 31

### **FACING PAGES BY NINA MELEDANDRI**

An in-depth look at the artistic process through the lens of journal keeping. On view are examples of Meledandri's journals along with the work that has grown out of them. Included are books (both handmade and self-published) as well as paintings, photographs and projects combining the two that have evolved organically.

Balcony Cases, November 16 – January 31

### **HAWKS AND HANDSAWS**

A Series of Watercolors and Prints from *Shakespeare's Garden* and *Birdlands* by Ken Buhler

*The Birdlands* prints are a series of images that draw inspiration from unusual and poetic names of actual birds. In the prints, the image created by Buhler is juxtaposed to the work of the poet Cecily Parks, who responded to the same bird names with her text.

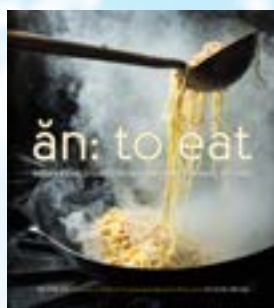
Foyer Cases, November 16 – January 31

Visit the online calendar for full details and more. **Hours:** M – Th 9 – 9 | F 9 – 6 | Sa 9 – 6 | Su 1 – 5

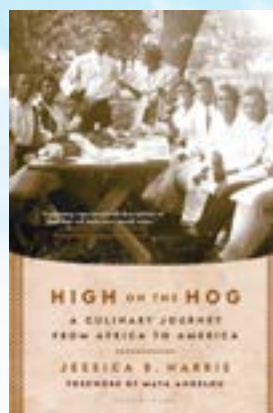


# COZY COOKBOOKS FOR HOME ENTERTAINING

As the weather gets chillier, thoughts turn to warm, indoor activities. Like reading. And cooking! Why not combine the two? Here's a selection of cookbooks to use with cozy, home entertaining in mind, with a nod to Brooklyn's cultural kaleidoscope. Once you get going, maybe you'll even bake that pie you craved when it was 90 degrees out, and you couldn't face the oven. Or just stop by the Four & Twenty Blackbirds Pie Shop outpost at Central Library.



**Ăn: To Eat : Recipes and Stories From A Vietnamese Family Kitchen**  
by Helene An



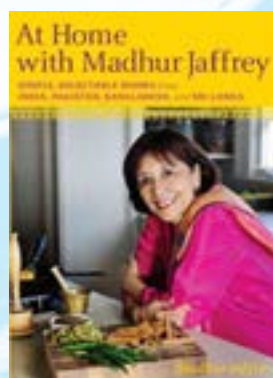
**High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey From Africa to America**  
by Jessica B. Harris



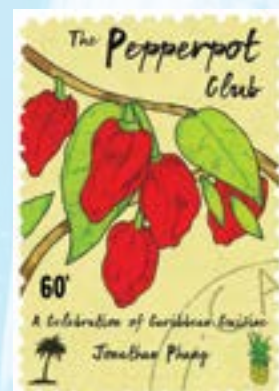
**Joan Nathan's Jewish Holiday Cookbook: Revised and Updated on the Occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Publication of the Jewish Holiday Kitchen**  
by Joan Nathan



**The Four & Twenty Blackbirds Pie Book: Uncommon Recipes From the Celebrated Brooklyn Pie Shop**  
by Emily Elsen & Melissa Elsen; Photography by Gentl & Hyers



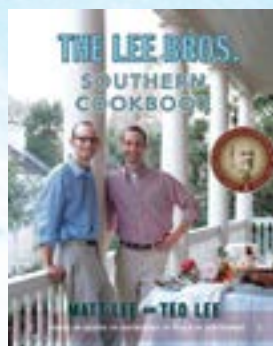
**At Home With Madhur Jaffrey: Simple, Delectable Dishes From India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka**  
by Madhur Jaffrey



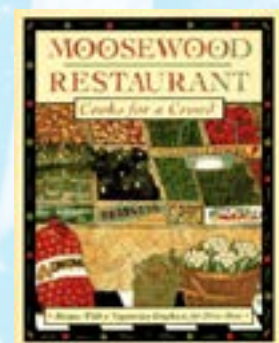
**The Pepperpot Club**  
by Jonathan Phang



**The Frankies Spuntino Kitchen Companion and Cooking Manual**  
by Frank Falcinelli



**The Lee Bros. Southern Cookbook: Stories and Recipes for Southerners and Would-be Southerners**  
by Matt Lee & Ted Lee



**The Moosewood Restaurant Cooks for A Crowd: Recipes With A Vegetarian Emphasis for 24 or More**  
by The Moosewood Collective



**BKLYN  
BOOKMATCH**

**BOOKMATCH LIBRARIAN SPOTLIGHT**  
**JOHANNA LEWIS**  
SCHOOL OUTREACH LIBRARIAN  
CENTRAL LIBRARY

Before joining the School Outreach team, Johanna was a teen services librarian, a copywriter, a waitress and a sous chef. Shy at parties, she prefers to be in the kitchen.

Visit Bklyn BookMatch online at [bklynlibrary.org/bookmatch](http://bklynlibrary.org/bookmatch) and complete a reader profile to get your personalized book suggestions today!



# COZY UP IN ONE OF OUR BRANCHES

Finding a peaceful, welcoming place to read can be tough—especially in Brooklyn. Thankfully, there's a library in every Brooklyn neighborhood! To help combat the winter chill, here's a list of particularly inviting libraries.

## ARLINGTON

This branch's beauty is so admired, it was featured in an episode of *Elementary*, CBS's modern interpretation of Sherlock Holmes. With a unique split-level layout and two fireplaces, natural oak trim and dazzling mezzanine, Arlington is one of the best-preserved Carnegie libraries in NYC.

## EASTERN PARKWAY



Every Carnegie library is gorgeous, but Eastern Parkway's limestone façade and rows of tall, arched windows are unique. Although the branch was recently renovated, its original reading nook with a fireplace remains.

## GERRITSEN BEACH



This light and airy branch offers high ceilings, a reading garden and windows overlooking the canal. Reading near the seaside has never been cozier.

## KENSINGTON



Enjoy a good book at this environmentally friendly, modern branch on 18th Avenue. It has a floor-to-ceiling wall of windows, which transforms the entire branch into a room with a view.

## NEW UTRECHT

This bustling branch recently celebrated its grand reopening with a day of music and storytelling. Borrow a magazine and curl up in a chair in New Utrecht's new periodical section, or sit back and enjoy a performance in the library's spacious auditorium.

## PARK SLOPE

Located on a quiet, tree-lined street, this cozy branch is big on charm. Inside, take in the stained-glass archways, tiled fireplaces and a vaulted, stained-glass ceiling. In 2017, the branch will unveil its Reading Circle and Storytelling Garden, featuring a community gardening space, water fountain and storytelling amphitheater.

## STONE AVENUE



Originally opened in 1914 as the Brownsville Children's Library, it is believed to have been the first library in the world devoted exclusively to children. Today, Stone Ave serves patrons of all ages and contains a life-sized chess set, an eye-catching Word Wall mural, a fireplace and carved wooden animal benches.

## WILLIAMSBURGH

This official NYC landmark is beautiful both inside and out. Its design is meant to evoke an open book, with two wings radiating from the center atrium. At 26,000 square feet, it's one of our largest branches, so you'll have no trouble getting lost in a good book.

SHOW US YOUR FAVORITE  
COZY READING SPOT  
#BKLYNCOZYREADING

## RECIPE FOR A COZY READING SPOT

### INGREDIENTS:

- Reading material so absorbing that nothing exists besides the words on the page
- Cozy knitwear (a blanket, a scarf, a blanket scarf)
- A warm beverage, preferably topped with whipped cream and cinnamon
- A view of the golden leaves or the falling snow
- One dog or cat asleep on your lap (optional but highly recommended)

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Put your phone away. Cozy reading is an internet-free zone.
2. Get comfortable—and serious. Wrap yourself in knitwear like it's a shield against all distractions.
3. Start reading. Stop for nothing except the occasional sip of hot chocolate or sigh of contentment.
4. Repeat tomorrow and every day after that.





## STAFF SPOTLIGHT / PAT MOORE

### **Harlemite Pat Moore, New Lots Library's Children's Librarian, describes librarianship as a career that chose her.**

"A good friend submitted my resume to Brooklyn Public Library for a preschool aide position without my knowledge, and I was called in for an interview." At the time Pat was in school studying early childhood education, and had recently closed her family daycare business. "With the job offer from BPL, I could continue in my field, just in a different setting."

Some 18 years later, Pat continues to provide early literacy services to children and families in East New York. She has been a constant figure at New Lots Library, connecting with the community through its children. She performs outreach to all of the neighborhood's family daycare homes and centers, offering programs to enrich the day for both caregivers and their charges.

More recently, Pat participated in BPL's BKLYN Incubator program and launched Root Resource, an initiative to help recent immigrants become licensed daycare providers. "I came up with the idea because the community needs well-trained childcare providers," said Pat. "There are a number of individuals already working in this field, but without a license. I thought, why not meld the two, creating quality childcare and business ownership?"

With help from BPL's Business & Career Center, Pat was able to secure the funding necessary to help these new entrepreneurs succeed. "The community has been very supportive of the project. Root Resource attracted 24 participants, with 10 completing the initial licensing," said Pat. "The library is a great place to do this kind of work. It attracts all the right players."

BKLYN Incubator launched just last year in an effort to support innovative programming, like Root Resource, throughout Brooklyn, and Pat is among the Library staff who feel grateful for the opportunity. "What better way to give employees a chance to use the skills they possess while gaining new ones?" she explained. Pat credits the many opportunities for continued professional development for keeping her at Brooklyn Public Library all these years. "It's a good place to work!"

When she's not busy at New Lots Library, you can find Pat traveling, baking, crocheting or listening to smooth jazz and Amy Winehouse in the home she shares in Harlem with her husband and daughters. But if you happen to be in East New York, be sure to stop in to New Lots Library and say hi to Pat and her colleagues!



# YARN BOMBS & WEDDING VEILS

## CENTRAL LIBRARY'S FIBER ARTS GROUP

Every Wednesday night, creativity and community intertwine at Central Library's Fiber Arts Group. Beginners, experts and everyone in between meet up to work on a wide range of individual fiber arts projects, from knitting and crocheting to quilting and jewelry-making. The group, which recently celebrated its seventh anniversary, continues to grow in members and creative projects.

"When we formed the group, we didn't want to limit it in any way," explained BPL web developer Susan Tam, who co-founded the Fiber Arts Group with Kay Badalamenti, supervising librarian of Central Library's Arts and History division. "We welcome anyone who wants to explore their craft or would simply like to map out time in the week to craft with likeminded individuals."

The open door policy brought an unexpected perk to the group: members have been introduced to crafting techniques from around the world. "We had a Chinese American artist who demonstrated macramé," said Tam, "and a quilter who practiced ribbon braiding passed down from her Nigerian parents. Not only does our group play a key role in keeping these traditional skills alive for the next generation, we incorporate digital literacy and technology lessons to help members enhance their craft skills and projects."

Members of the Fiber Arts Group have completed an array of personal projects in each other's company.

*During a gathering described by Tam as "very Gone with the Wind," the group watched a garment-sewer transform a living room curtain into a dress.*



When another member volunteered to make her niece's wedding veil, she turned to the group for assistance. Because they welcome all experience levels, it's not uncommon for beginners to show up seeking guidance or the opportunity to brainstorm. After completing a trial run with the group's support, the talented aunt had the confidence to create a 10-foot, cathedral-style veil with beaded edging.

The Fiber Arts Group strives to be inclusive to everyone—the young and not-so-young, beginners and experts, women and men—and it makes an effort to give back to its home base, Central Library. The group partnered with the Library's Inclusive Services department, headed by Carrie Banks, to celebrate the Youth Wing's garden with a yarn bombing, bringing together children and adults with and without disabilities to craft colorful felt flowers and crocheted animals that were used to decorate the space.

They also created a stunning Summer Reading quilt for Central Library's Youth Wing, using multiple techniques showcasing group members' abilities, including applique, macramé, knitting, Tunisian crochet, embroidery and ribbon braiding.

The group hopes to welcome even more members in the future. "Our crafters are interested in expanding their knowledge," said Tam. "This year, we plan to host a variety of guest speakers so members know what's happening in the fiber arts community beyond what is local to them."

The Fiber Arts Group meets every Wednesday at Central Library from 5:30 to 8 PM. If you've never dabbled in fiber arts before, Susan Tam has valuable advice: "Don't attempt a project bigger than you can chew. Start small and build on that. And don't be afraid to ask a lot of questions."





# BKLYN INCUBATOR

CREATING NEW EXPERIENCES  
FOR LIBRARIANS & PATRONS

## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

**Today's libraries are more than a place to borrow books; on any given day you can walk in to a Brooklyn Public Library branch and learn to use a computer while your child builds robots with Legos, see an art exhibit and then take in a film. And BPL launched BKLYN Incubator—an initiative designed to support the development of new ideas by librarians and staff—in order to reach even more communities through innovative programming.**

“The Incubator makes it possible for our branches to offer new programs to their patrons, or to provide traditional library services in new ways—everything from reading and writing workshops to horticulture, food justice, podcasting and dance,” said Brynna Tucker, who recently joined the Library as manager of BKLYN Incubator.

BKLYN Incubator launched in 2015 with an exploratory \$25,000 Sparks Ignition grant from IMLS, with the support



**READING THE RHYTHM** FROM LEFT: DWANA SMALLWOOD, SAMANTHA WASHINGTON, EMELY PINEDA SANCHEZ, JANICE DEES AND SHARON PALMER

of US Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand. “The grant, which supports innovative programming in libraries, was a response to a system-wide survey of BPL staff that revealed a lack of mechanisms in place for staff to have ideas be heard or initiated,” said Ames O’Neil, project manager of Strategic Planning at BPL.

“We wanted to support librarians’ ideas for new programs at BPL,” added Manager of Strategic Initiatives Diana Plunkett. “The initial grant made it possible to fund new programs and provide training and mentorship for librarians.”

BKLYN Incubator is more than just coming up with an idea and then scheduling it; staffers are guided on how to manage a program, handle a budget and write a grant proposal. And thanks to a \$322,740 grant from the Charles H. Revson Foundation, the next round of Incubator programs are being selected through a series of workshops on how to think entrepreneurially, manage programs and determine impact. With these enhancements, the program will become more than a competition – it will also be an opportunity for professional development. “Supporting them along the way is really upping the skill level of our staff,” said Diana.

During the spring and summer, more than 500 people attended branch programs that received funding during the first round of BKLYN Incubator. Highlights included Girls Report Now! at Leonard Library, a biweekly journalism course designed to introduce young women ages 12 to 17 to the principles of journalism; Future Leaders Career Awareness Series at Cypress Hills Library, where working professionals were invited to share their experiences with teens and advise them on potential career paths; and Reading the Rhythm at DeKalb Library, a combination dance class and book discussion program for high school students.

The latest programs include a DJ and music production workshops for Bed-Stuy teens at Bedford Library, and a 30-day reading challenge across the four branches located in East New York: Arlington, Cypress Hills, New Lots and Spring Creek. And be on the lookout for more innovative BKLYN Incubator projects in the new year.



# MIKE & DENISE REISS *LIBRARIES HAVE TO BE MORE THAN A STACK OF BOOKS*

Mike and Denise Reiss, supporters of Brooklyn Public Library, understand what libraries mean to the communities they serve. Their support of BPL's spaces and programs reflects that. "The library is a tool for someone to uplift himself or herself," said Mike. "I like giving motivated people the tools they need, and BPL offers that: citizenship classes, computer classes and more."

Mike, who donates to BPL in memory of his father, a Brooklynite, is an Emmy Award-winning TV writer, producer and show-runner (*The Simpsons*, *The Critic*) and children's book author (*How Murray Saved Christmas*, *The Boy Who Looked Like Lincoln*). He attributes much of his success and creativity to days spent in his local library as a kid. "I grew up in a small blue-collar town in Connecticut, before the internet, so the library was very important to me," he said. "I would read a large variety of books and magazines, looking for something that would really grab my attention." Between reading more "serious" books, Mike found his calling: humor. "I had access to material at my library that I couldn't get anywhere else."

"The library opened up a lot of worlds for me," added Denise, who cited the library as a resource to explore anything that interested her as a child. "And whatever I was interested in, the library offered a way for me to learn more about it." Denise recalled that her mother, a native of Queens, instilled



a love of the library in her as a child. "She would tell me that going to the library and reading fairytales was a great comfort and escape." This memory helped fuel Denise's decision to give to BPL, specifically in support of children's spaces. "That was meaningful to my mother before she passed."

The decision to support BPL was easy for Mike, too. "My father is from Brooklyn; he came from an immigrant family, but became a physician and wrote history books, and I feel that the library must have played a big part in that," he said. "I love that BPL is so well-used by a really diverse group of people."

Over the years, the Reisses have donated to upgrade children's reading spaces at Stone Avenue and Washington Irving libraries, for the DeKalb branch and toward world language materials and books-by-mail collections for the homebound. "These were all projects where our money would directly help people," said Mike, "by helping BPL continue to provide important resources and programming."

## Library Services for Older Adults

# Books by Mail & Books-to-Go

Older adults who can't get to their neighborhood library can still enjoy Brooklyn Public Library's extensive collection!

Our **Books-to-Go** program supplies nursing homes, senior centers and adult day-care centers with reading and viewing materials. For homebound or visually challenged individuals, **Books by Mail** makes it easy to borrow materials from BPL.

Visit [bklynlibrary.org/seniors](http://bklynlibrary.org/seniors) or call 718.236.1760 for more information about our services and programs.





# Bklyn Public Library

**Central Library**  
10 Grand Army Plaza  
Brooklyn, NY 11238

Brooklyn Public Library gratefully acknowledges the generous support of our corporate donors.

**Bloomberg Philanthropies**



**First Data**

Citi Foundation  
**citi**

**Goldman Sachs**



**nationalgrid**  
Foundation



**BOIES, SCHILLER & FLEXNER LLP**

**ASTORIA**  
BANK

Fiscal Year 2016-17