



#### Letter to Publishers and Authors:

The Literary Awards Committee of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, Inc. (BCALA) is now accepting submissions for the annual BCALA Literary Awards. The Committee will present four prizes of **\$1,000.00** each for adult books written by African American citizen authors: a First Novelist Award, a Fiction Award, a Nonfiction Award, and a Poetry Award. The First Novelist Award is given to recognize outstanding writing and storytelling by a debut author. Honor Book citations are also given in fiction and nonfiction without any accompanying monetary remuneration. Additionally, an Outstanding Contribution to Publishing citation is provided to an author and/or publishing company for unique books that offer a positive depiction of African Americans.

First presented at the Second National Conference of African American Librarians in 1994, the BCALA Literary Awards acknowledge outstanding works of fiction and nonfiction for adult audiences by African American authors. Recipients of these awards offer outstanding depictions of the cultural, historical or sociopolitical aspects of the Black Diaspora and embody the highest quality of writing style and research methodology, if applicable.

Books from small, large and specialty publishers are welcome for review consideration. Titles forwarded for review must be published in **2023**. Sets or multi-volume works are eligible. New editions of previously published works are eligible only if more than 30% of the total content is new or revised material. Inspirational, self-help, and graphic novels are ineligible. **Only finished, published books should be submitted; galleys (bound or unbound) and chapbooks are NOT eligible.**

Please send one copy of each title submitted to each member of the Literary Awards Committee. A Committee roster with their addresses can be found at <http://bcala.org/literary-award-committee/>

Supply all available information regarding the submission, including promotional material, author biography and available news articles and reviews via email or with published book.

## **BCALA Literary Awards Criteria**

BCALA presents **four (4) \$1,000.00 awards**: one for adult fiction, one for nonfiction, one for a first novelist and one for poetry. These awards acknowledge outstanding achievement in the presentation of the cultural, historical and sociopolitical aspects of the Black Diaspora.

**The Fiction Award** recognizes depictions of sensitive and authentic personal experience either within the framework of contemporary literary standards and themes or which explore innovative literary formats.

**The Nonfiction Award** honors cultural, historical, political, or social criticism or academic and/or professional research which significantly advances the body of knowledge currently associated with the people and the legacy of the Black Diaspora. (Categories could include the humanities, science and technology, social and behavioral sciences and reference).

**The First Novelist Award** acknowledges outstanding achievement in writing and storytelling by a first time fiction writer.

**The Outstanding Contribution to Publishing Citation** recognizes the author and/or the publishing company (for their support and publication of) special and unique books that recognize the outstanding achievements and positive depiction of contributions of the people and legacy of the Black Diaspora.

**The Poetry Award** strives to recognize and promote emerging and established poets that introduce and foster the joys of poetry writing.

Additionally, honor books may be selected in each category, but there is no cash award.

*Purpose:* To encourage the artistic expression of the African American experience via literature and scholarly research including biographical, historical and social history treatments by African Americans.

*Criteria:*

1. Must portray some aspect of the African American experience past, present or future.
2. All authors, editors and contributors must be have African American citizenship in the United States.
3. Must be published in the United States in the year preceding presentation of the award.
4. Must be an original work.

The final submission date to each juror is **December 31, 2023**. Decisions will be made during in January 2024. The awards will be presented in San Diego, CA during ALA's Annual Conference in June 2024. Publishers and winning authors (only) will be advised of the Literary Award Committee's decision in advance of the annual conference.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at  
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Sincerely,

*Gladys Smiley Bell*

Gladys Smiley Bell, Chair  
BCALA Literary Awards Committee

P.S.: BCALA Literary Award Seals < <http://bcala.org/book-award/> > are available for purchase to be displayed on winning books.