

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:**

Headshots of winners are attached.



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## CHERRY LAKE PUBLISHING GROUP ANNOUNCES 2021 OWN VOICES, OWN STORIES AWARD WINNERS

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Ann Arbor, Mich.: Cherry Lake Publishing Group is thrilled to announce the 2021 recipients of its annual Own Voices, Own Stories Award. Launched earlier this year by Cherry Lake Publishing Group's imprint, Sleeping Bear Press, the award recognizes new authors from BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+ communities with a mission to highlight the universal experience of our shared humanity through diverse and multifaceted experiences.

Grand Prize winners receive a \$2,000 cash prize and a publishing contract standard for new Sleeping Bear Press authors. Honor Award winners receive a \$500 cash prize as well as one consulting session with a Sleeping Bear Press editor.

2021 Grand Prize manuscripts will be published as part of Sleeping Bear Press' 2023 season.

### 2021 Grand Prize Winners

**Julie Hopper** (Michigan) is a proud member of the Bay Mills Tribe of Chippewa Indians and currently works as the academic assessment specialist for Lake Superior State University's Charter Schools Office. In her winning manuscript, Hopper reflects on the values of Native American culture through a tender and poetic conversation between mother and daughter.

"I am humbled to have such a highly respected group of professionals and quality publishing company recognize my story and am looking forward to collaborating with the entire Sleeping Bear Team," said Hopper.

**Lesley Younge** (Silver Spring, Md.) is a writer and middle school teacher who draws inspiration from her son, her students, and the many hiking trails in her neighborhood. Her winning manuscript brings the afternoon of a young boy in the city to life as he races through his neighborhood to meet his grandmother's train on time.

“I am extremely honored that [my story] was selected as an Own Voices, Own Stories Grand Prize winner,” said Younge. “As a teacher and a mother, I know how critical it is for children to see themselves reflected in literature and for writers to share stories that might mirror their lives.”

Learn more about Younge at [www.teacherlesley.com](http://www.teacherlesley.com).

## 2021 Honor Winners

**Meghana Narayan** (Silver Spring, Md.) is an educator and has taught in early childhood classrooms for over a decade. She began a career in visual arts in 2015 and has carved out time from teaching kindergarten to pursue this work. She remains connected to education through her blog and social media platforms, [Teach for the Change](#), where she shares resources for raising racially and socially conscious children.

**C. Quintana (CQ)** is a queer writer with Cuban and Louisiana roots based on Canarsie-Lenape land in Cypress Hills, Brooklyn. The author of the full-length play *Scissoring* (Dramatists Play Service) and *The Heart Wants*, a chapbook of poetry (Finishing Line Press), CQ is the recipient of fellowships and residencies from Tin House, MacDowell, Queer/Art, Van Lier New Voices at the Lark, Lambda Literary, and beyond. Learn more about CQ at [www.cquintana.com](http://www.cquintana.com).

The Own Voices Own Stories Award is sponsored by Cherry Lake Publishing Group. To learn more, visit <https://sleepingbearpress.com/submissions>. To arrange for an interview or feature regarding this award, email [hailey.barron@sleepingbearpress.com](mailto:hailey.barron@sleepingbearpress.com).

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