

2021 Conversations with Middle Eastern American Authors

Third Tuesday each month, February – July 7-8pm via Zoom

Moderated by Debbie Trent, chair of the Middle Eastern American Advisory Group (MEAAG) and Karen Leggett, co-chair of the Maryland Friends of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina (Egypt)



February 16 – Lebanese-born **Helen Zughaib** <http://hzughaib.com/> is an internationally acclaimed artist who will talk about *Stories My Father Told Me* – in which her paintings accompany her father's stories of growing up in Syria. Helen's art has been widely exhibited in the United States and overseas and gifted to heads of state. Helen will discuss art and literature as a way to encourage dialogue, understanding and acceptance.



March 16 – **Hena Khan** <http://www.henakhan.com> is an award-winning Pakistani-American children's author. Her middle grade novel *Amina's Voice* was named a Best Book of 2017 by the Washington Post, Kirkus Reviews and NPR. The sequel is *Amina's Song* will be out just in time for this conversation. Hena has written several acclaimed picture books including *Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns*, *Night of the Moon*, *It's Ramadan*, *Curious George*, *Under My Hijab*, and *Like the Moon Loves the Sky* - a picture book inspired by the Quran.



April 20 – **Rashin Kheiriyeh** <http://www.rashinart.com/> is an internationally recognized author/illustrator who has published more than 80 books in the U.S, Europe, Asia and her native Iran. She received a Sendak Fellowship Award in 2017 and is the character artist for a popular Iranian animation series. This conversation will feature Rashin's stories and art about the childhood challenges of belonging to a new culture while respecting your own heritage: *Celebrate the World: Ramadan* (this conversation takes place during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan), *Saffron Ice Cream*, *Story Boat*).



May 18 – **Nadia Hashimi** <https://nadiahashimibooks.com/> is a Montgomery County pediatrician turned novelist whose parents came to the U.S. from Afghanistan before the Soviet invasion. She will be talking about her newest novel – *Sparks Like Stars* – described as a story of America and Afghanistan, tragedy and survival, reinvention and remembrance. She is a member of the US – Afghan Women's Council and Kallion, an organization that seeks to elevate leadership through humanities.



June 15 – Susan Muaddi Darrah <https://susanmuaddidarraj.com/> will be discussing her short story collection, *A Curious Land: Stories from Home*, which won the 2014 AWP Grace Paley Prize for Short Fiction and a 2016 Arab American Book Award. Susan was a 2018 Ford Fellow and in 2019, launched #TweetYour Thobe, a social media campaign to promote Palestinian culture. In 2020, Capstone Books launched Susan's debut chapter book series, *Farah Rocks*.



July 20 – Pauline Kaldas <http://www.paulinekaldas.com/> teaches English and creative writing at Hollins University in Roanoke, VA. Immigrating from Egypt as a child with her parents, she has twice returned to live and teach in Cairo. She will be talking about her own collection of essays, *Looking Both Ways*, as well as her essay in *The Penguin Book of Migration Literature* about departure and return.