

Curriculum Vitae

Aida Zilelian

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Education

- M.A., Creative Writing, Queens College, Queens, NY, 1998
- B.A. Psychology, minor in English and Philosophy, Queens College, Queens, NY 1995

Teaching experience/Workshops:

- September 2001- present: English & Creative Writing
Professional Teaching License for the State of New York, (English 7-12)

Courses: Creative Writing, Public Speaking/Storytelling, AP English, AP Psychology, 20th Century American Culture & Literature

- July-August 2021/2022 - International Armenian Literary Alliance mentorship program

IALA (International Armenian Literary Alliance) supports Armenian writers in all stages of their careers. The mentorship program provides aspiring writers with an instructor/mentor to read and provide feedback on their mentee's writing and speak virtually with their mentee throughout the program to discuss the mentee's work and how to navigate the publishing industry.

- June 2022 - Queens Public Library – *Our Culture, Our Selves: Writing Through Identity*
- November 2022 - Lounge Writers – *Writing Family Stories*
- February/March/April 2023 - Midwest Writing Center

Publishing History

Literary Journals

Fiction

“With Great Affection, Sophie” – Pen Pusher - April 2008

“Encore” - *Visions Literary Journal* – Fall 2008

“Is This Desire?” - *Slushpile Magazine* – Spring 2008

“The Will of Sacrifice” - *The Writer’s Block* – Summer 2009

“The Festering” – *Suss: Another Literary Journal* – October 2009
Sucker Literary Magazine – February 2012

“He’s the One for Her” - *Ararat Magazine* – July 2010

“Almost There” - *Halfway Down the Stairs* – March 2010

“Red Riding Hood” – *Memewar* – December 2010

“To Be Home Again” - *Assisi Journal* – March 2011

“The Darkness of North” - *Waccamaw Journal* – Spring 2011

“The Weight of Emptiness” – *Halfway Up the Stairs* – December 2011

“The Good Girl” – *Ararat Magazine* – July 2011

“A Passing Season” – *Niche Magazine* – September 2012

“For the Good of the Whole” – *Theurgy Literary (UK)* – January 2013

“A Different Street” – *Exterminating Angel* – April 2013

“Wind and Glass Behind Us” – *Bleeding Heart Press* – Fall 2013

“Afterlife” – *Per Contra* – Fall 2014

“Where the Wind Howls” – *The MacGuffin* – Summer 2017

“The Letting Go” – *HyeBred Magazine* – October 2021

“The Piano” – *Lighthouse Weekly* – February 2022

“Kyooghatsee” (forthcoming) – *Leavings Literary Journal* – Summer 2023

Non-fiction

“What I Can Tell” – *SNR Review - Fall 2009*
Panik: Life Anthology About Life Altering Experiences (Anthology)
February 2012

“The Cold War” – *Wilderness House Literary Review* – Fall 2009

“In My Innocence” – *The Fertile Source* – July 2010

“Liar, Liar” – *Lowestoft Chronicles* – Fall 2010

“Toni with an ‘i’” – *Red Fez Journal* – February 2012

“1998” – *Free Range Nonfiction* – April 2013

“A Slow Thawing” – *West Texas Literary Review* – Fall 2018

“Where You End and Where I Begin” – *Minnie’s Diary, A Southern Literary Review* – June 2018

“The Love You Can’t Give” – *Herstory* – May 2020

“Zilelian from Zile” – *American Armenia* – March 2022

“Arshile” – *Ekphrastic Review* – April 2022

“How I Learned to Love My Mother” – *Phoebe Literary* – Spring 2023

Anthologies

“Liar, Liar” - *Lowestoft Chronicles 2011 Anthology*

“In My Innocence” - *paniK: Candid Stories of Life Altering Experiences Surrounding Pregnancy - 2011*

“Wind and Glass Behind Us” – *Transfusion* – Bleeding Heart Publications - 2012

“The Art of Trying” – *Two Countries: U.S. Sons and Daughters of Immigrant Parents - Anthology of Immigrant Experiences - Red Hen Press - 2018*

“My Father’s Grave” - *These Summer Months: Stories from the Late Orphan Project – Backpack Press – 2018*

“On Being Armenian” – *Immigrant Story Project* – (forthcoming 2022)

Works in Progress/Bodies of Work

- *The Hollowing Moon* (Young Adult)

A novel about the friendships between two young teenage girls who escape their small town and travel across the Midwest.

One of the four semi-finalists of the Anderbo Novel Contest. THE HOLLOWING MOON it is also the prequel to *The Legacy of Lost Things*.

- *The Legacy of Lost Things* - Debut novel (General/multi-cultural fiction)

A sequel to *The Hollowing Moon*, delving into the lives and history of an Armenian family immigrating to America and adjusting to the new life of a modern country. Recipient of the 2014 Tololyan Literary Award. Published by Bleeding Heart Publications.

- *These Hills Were Meant for You* - (General fiction)

A collection of short stories focusing on family relationships and the themes of redemption, loss and personal triumph. Characters interweaving throughout the collection create a family tree of individuals who are connected to one another. Some of the short stories have appeared in various literary journals. Short-listed for the Katherine Anne Porter Award, 2018.

- *The Last Echo Through the Plains* - (General/multi-cultural fiction)

Fiction – Told through three interweaving narratives, this novel is a family saga following the impact of the Armenian Genocide over four generations, and the long-lasting effects of tragedy on ancestral legacy and cultural memory.

- *All The Ways We Lied* – (Literary fiction/family saga/multi-cultural fiction)

Set in Queens, NY, this novel explores the depths of loyalty and sacrifice through the perspective of an Armenian family, three sisters and the ties that bind them as they grapple with a complicated mother and the death of their father.

- *Where There Can Be No Breath At All* – (Literary fiction/short stories/multi-cultural fiction)

A work in progress, this collection of short stories features the contemporary lives of American-Armenians from a first-generation, diasporic and immigrant perspective. Through exploring the themes of displacement, assimilation, inter-marriage and cultural expectations, these stories reveal a realistic portrait of Armenians and their unique struggles and triumphs.

Organization Affiliations & Curations

IALA - International Armenian Literary Alliance (Advisory Board Member & Mentor)

A network of Armenian writers with the mission of giving Armenian writers a voice in the literary world through creative, professional and scholarly advice. The organization supports emerging and established writers by promoting their work and connecting one another in the Armenian community and beyond.

Newtown Literary (Staff Reader & Editorial Board Member)

A Queens-based literary journal promoting new and emerging writers whose writing evokes the community of the borough of Queens. Reading and reviewing submissions, editing, partaking in decision-making aspects of a literary journal.

Boundless Tales Reading Series (Curator)

Launched in September 2011, Boundless Tales Reading Series is one of the only reading series in the borough of Queens. The goal of this series is to provide a venue for writers who are passionate about their writing, and who would like to share their work in a public forum.

Literary Gems: Hamazkayin, New York chapter (Curator)

A biannual reading featuring Armenian writers in various stages of their careers, this reading series strives to support Armenian writers by providing a reading platform for them to share with the Armenian community and beyond.

Readings and Storytelling:

Sunday Salon – October 2007

Ear Inn Reading – Summer 2008

Gartal Reading Series – November 2008

Hamazkayin: Literary Gems -April 2012/April 2013

Phoenix Reading Series – October 2012, Summer 2012

Art & Slush: Soho – October 2012

Phoenix Reading Series – October 2012

Nature of the Muse – April 2013

REZ Reading Series – May 2013; September 2013

Oh, Bernice! June 2013

With Special Guest! October 2013

Town Hall with Queens Council of the Arts, October 2013

First Tuesdays, March 2014

Oh, Bernice!, February 2015

NYU “Outside” Reading Series, March 2015

QCA: Celebrating Queens Women Artists, March 2016

Blue Stocking Bookstore Reading, October 2017

Why There Are Words (Bowery Poetry Club), December 2017

F Bomb Reading Series, May 2017

Five Alive Reading Series, January 2018

Friends of Maple Grove, Literary Sundays, October 2018

Show, Do Tell Reading Series, September 2019

Telling Favorites (storytelling series), March 2022

QED Astoria (storytelling series), March 2022

Digging Press reading series, May 2022

IALA reading of Armenian writers, August 2022

No, You Tell It! (storytelling/reading), September 2022
NYC's Finest Storytelling (storytelling series), September 2022
QED Astoria (storytelling series), October 2022
Awkward Teenage Years (storytelling series), December 2022
RISK! Radio Hour Podcast (forthcoming) Summer 2023

Interviews & Appearances

- Interview with Paula Rossman on QPTV's "World of Arts" (December 2015)
- Interview with WNYC's John Hockenberry – "The Takeaway" (April 2015)
- Voice of Armenians – Interview (April 2015)
- Interview with Glendale Newspress – "Learning Matters" by Joylene Wagner (April 2015)
- Fiction Writers Review – Interview with Nancy Agabian (March 2015) / French translation by George Festa
- Book Radio Interview with Kari Moran (March 2015)

Blurbs/Reviews

"A lyrical description of a family's search for their daughter and their humanity."

– Kirkus Reviews

"Zilelian's prose is lyrical at times, but for the most part she crafts a purposely flat realism that perfectly complements her subject matter. Reading *Legacy*, one thinks of Donna Tartt's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Goldfinch*."

- Huffington Post

"*The Legacy of Lost Things* is a beautifully written and artfully constructed novel that explores the intimate lives of several generations of an Armenian immigrant family in America. Aida Zilelian has the superior novelist's combination of equanimity and empathy. In deceptively simple prose, she takes you right to the heart of the matter."

-- Aram Saroyan, internationally known poet, novelist, biographer, memoirist, playwright and the recipient of two National Endowment for the Arts poetry awards

"*The Legacy of Lost Things* is a page-turning puzzle, a gripping study of a family of lost souls, burdened by patterns beyond their control, borne of tradition and decisions made in the blindness of youth. With unblinking bravery, Aida Zilelian has composed a complex, exquisitely-crafted story about the reality of violence and the possibility of redemption."

– Nancy Agabian, Author, *Me as her Again: True Stories of an Armenian Daughter*