“LITERATURE OF FIRE”
Regular monthly show no. 80 • Monday, May 18, 2026

Hosted and curated by @rhapsodyburlesque • Photography by @zacemery.photography
Co-produced by @ricktelfer and @nicholassurges
With thanks to Shawn (tech), @bardically_inspired_pj (door), and our home venue @liveonelgin

---

#1 — *To Shape a Dragon’s Breath* by Moniquill Blackgoose (2023)
Winner of the Lodestar Award for Best Young Adult Book and the Andre Norton Award, *To Shape a Dragon’s Breath* is Moniquill Blackgoose’s breakout novel and the first book in her Nampeshiweisit trilogy. The story follows Anequs, a young Indigenous woman who enters a colonizer-run dragon academy and finds herself at odds with their rigid culture. In this excerpt, Anequs experiences her baby dragon's breath powers for the first time, navigating the sensations of their new psychic bond as she realizes both the danger her dragon poses and her immense responsibility to protect her community.
Reader: Steven (he/him)

#2 — *The Fireman by Joe Hill* (2016)
The Fireman is a post-apocalyptic novel set in a world where a deadly spore has infected most of the population. Manifesting as striking black-and-gold patterns on the skin, the illness eventually causes death by spontaneous combustion. In this excerpt, a mysterious figure who has learned to live with the affliction guides the protagonist, Harper, to a hidden sanctuary. En route, he explains that it is not the infection itself that kills, but rather the destructive power of fear and shame—offering a powerful allegory to the HIV epidemic.
Reader: Joshua @yourchillsuper (he/him)

#3 — *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury (1953)
In this pivotal moment from the dystopian classic, the protagonist escapes his pursuers and experiences a profound epiphany while floating down a river. Shaking off his past, he realizes he can no longer participate in the systematic burning of books, and must instead dedicate his life to protecting and preserving human knowledge.
Reader: @chrisviau (he/him)

#4 — *Centering Indigenous Voices*
This insightful excerpt explores the rich history of cultural burning, summarizing the diverse approaches and motivations—ranging from community safety and hunting to agriculture and ecological balance—behind controlled burns as practiced by various Indigenous cultures.
Reader: Gluteus Maximus (he/him)

#5 — *Fire Season: Field Notes from a Wilderness Lookout* by Philip Connors (2011)
In this evocative memoir, a seasonal fire watcher meditates on his own agricultural upbringing and reflects on the lives of those who share a professional relationship with deadly wildfires—from the lonely lookouts who spot them to the brave crews who fight to subdue them.
Reader: Tarot Bear @bardically_inspired_pj (he/him)

#6 — *Howl's Moving Castle* by Diana Wynne Jones (1986)
Famously adapted into the beloved 2004 Studio Ghibli film by Hayao Miyazaki, *Howl's Moving Castle* tells the story of Sophie Hatter, a young woman transformed into an elder by the Witch of the Waste's curse. Seeking a way to break the spell, Sophie tracks down the reclusive wizard Howl. In this charming excerpt, she boldly cooks breakfast over the petulant fire demon, Calcifer, firmly establishing herself as the mighty wizard's unsolicited new housekeeper.
Reader: Myki (he/him)

#7 — *Fire Weather* by John Vaillant (2023)
In a gripping account from this stunning work of climate non-fiction, a resident of Fort McMurray recalls the sheer terror, urgency, and chaos of escaping the devastating 2016 wildfires with his family.
Reader: Caleb @caleb_evansss **(he/him, they/them)**

#8 — *Master of Djinn* by P. Djèlí Clark (2021)
Set in an alternate-history 1912 Cairo, this urban fantasy follows a clever detective protagonist. While walking with her new police partner, she is interrupted by a well-connected "informant"—who happens to be her secret girlfriend. The informant playfully steers the conversation toward religion, mischievously putting the protagonist in a delightfully awkward professional position.
Reader: Shawn (he/him)

“FOOD: FRENEMY OF HUMAN EXISTENCE”
Regular monthly show no. 72 • Monday, September 22, 2025

Hosted by @rhapsodyburlesque • Photography by @zacemery.photography
Curated by Jake • Co-produced by @ricktelfer and @nicholassurges
With thanks to Shawn (tech), @wett_willy (door), and our home venue @liveonelgin

#1 — A Storm of Swords / George R.R. Martin [2000] (reader: @operatorjahlani)
Taking place in George R.R. Martin's land of Westeros, we open with the second wedding of the cruel king Joffery, as seen from the perspective of his Uncle Tyrion. Joffery's blatant cruelty has made him many enemies during his short life, many of whom are of close relation. This reading highlights the subversive way food can be used as a tool to express resentment and vengeance in subtle yet destructive ways.

#2 — Lessons in Chemistry / Bonnie Garmus [2022] (reader: @misster.ricky)
Our protagonist, Elizabeth, is a genius chemist in the early 1950s whose achievements are wholly disregarded on account of her gender. After becoming a widowed single mother, she is given an opportunity to host a cooking show that she utilizes to teach women not only how to cook but also the fundamentals of chemistry. Our reading joins Elizabeth when the weight of the injustices experienced by all women becomes too much for her to tolerate, and she hosts a very important episode about properly choosing your mushrooms.

#3 — A Homemade Life / Molly Wizenberg [2009] (reader: Yasser)
Molly Wizenberg combines a cookbook and memoir in her book A Homemade Life, in which she recounts various recipes and the moments in her life that shaped them. In our reading, she reflects on her late father and the warm memories of him during her childhood, memorialized by her recreation of his French toast recipe.

#4 — Hungry Monkey / Matthew Amster-Burton [2009] (reader: Erik)
This is a memoir about the author's efforts to teach his daughter his love of food. The reading starts at the beginning as the author recounts when his daughter was still breastfeeding while he was a stay-at-home dad. He also includes his musings on the quality of the various forms of breast milk and the unfortunate taste of formula, all tied together with the stress of being a first-time parent.

#5 — Dirt / Bill Buford [2018] (reader: JB)
A New York-based author moves himself and his family to Lyon, France, so he can train as a French chef for his next book, Dirt. Our reading takes place midway through his years of training, working in a kitchen full of crass jokes, burnt-out people, and young upstart bullies. We see how the high-stress environment of the kitchen makes people question their beliefs and breaks them down.

#6 — Butter Honey Pig Bread / Francesca Ekwuyasi [2020] (reader: Alex)
Butter Honey Pig Bread is the story of a mother and her two daughters, their choices with the resulting consequences, homes in need of mending, and the need to find new ones, love, trust, distances, and reconnection. We enter on Taiye as she, her mother, and sister are all in the same house after many years apart. With the addition of a brother-in-law, neither Taiye nor her mother has met him before. Together, the family prepares a meal, and the extent of discomfort that has grown between them all begins to be felt alongside the old grooves of familiar family.

#7 — Harrow the Ninth / Tamsyn Muir [2020] (reader: Jake)
Having recently achieved a saintly state of near necromantic godhood, Harrow faces the isolating horror of failing to live up to her potential once taken into the inner circle of her Emperor and God. Living alongside her fellow necromantic saints, she sees how woefully unprepared she is for the impending galactic threat, especially in comparison to her recently ascended peer. Her woes are only compounded as one of her senior saintly peers is on a mission to kill her for unknown reasons. We enter as Harrow tries to solve her problems by making a nice soup for her family.

#8 — A Psalm for the Wild-Built / Becky Chambers [2021] (reader: @adm_nkd / @photosbyjamesottawa)
A tea monk named Dex travels around the villages of their moon offering tea, and an open ear to the folks who visit them. Preparing teas to help ease their woes, we join Dex on a stop in one of these villages and see just how much a warm cup of tea can help ease a multitude of problems.