



The Meeting will
start soon...

The National Book Foundation

- <https://youtu.be/2tPAFmrXEM>

List of other winners



2016	<u>Colson Whitehead</u>	<u><i>The Underground Railroad</i></u>	
2017	<u>Jesmyn Ward</u>	<u><i>Sing, Unburied, Sing</i></u>	[46]
2018	<u>Sigrid Nunez</u>	<u><i>The Friend</i></u>	[47]
2019	<u>Susan Choi</u>	<u><i>Trust Exercise</i></u>	[48][49]
2020	<u>Charles Yu</u>	<u><i>Interior Chinatown</i></u>	[50]
2021	<u>Jason Mott</u>	<u><i>Hell of a Book</i></u>	[51][52][53]
2022	<u>Tess Gunty</u>	<u><i>The Rabbit Hutch</i></u>	[54][55]
2023	<u>Justin Torres</u>	<u><i>Blackouts</i></u>	[56]
2024	<u>Percival Everett</u>	<u><i>James</i></u>	[57]



Charles Johnson

- Charles Richard Johnson (born April 23, 1948)
- He is an American scholar and the author of novels, short stories, screen-and-teleplays, and essays, most often with a philosophical orientation.
- Johnson has directly addressed the issues of black life in America in novels such as *Dreamer* and *Middle Passage*

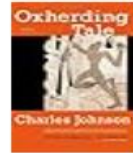
Johnson's Other Books...



The Way of the Writer: Reflections on the Art and Craft of Storytelling

by Charles R. Johnson (Goodreads Author)

★★★★★ 3.80 avg rating — 508 ratings — published 2016 — 8 editions



Oxherding Tale

by Charles R. Johnson (Goodreads Author)

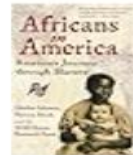
★★★★★ 3.94 avg rating — 450 ratings — published 1982 — 22 editions



Dreamer

by Charles R. Johnson (Goodreads Author)

★★★★★ 3.71 avg rating — 353 ratings — published 1998 — 3 editions



Africans in America: America's Journey through Slavery

by Charles R. Johnson (Goodreads Author), Patricia Smith, WGBH Series Research Team

★★★★★ 4.46 avg rating — 179 ratings — published 1998 — 7 editions



Dr. King's Refrigerator: And Other Bedtime Stories

by Charles R. Johnson (Goodreads Author)

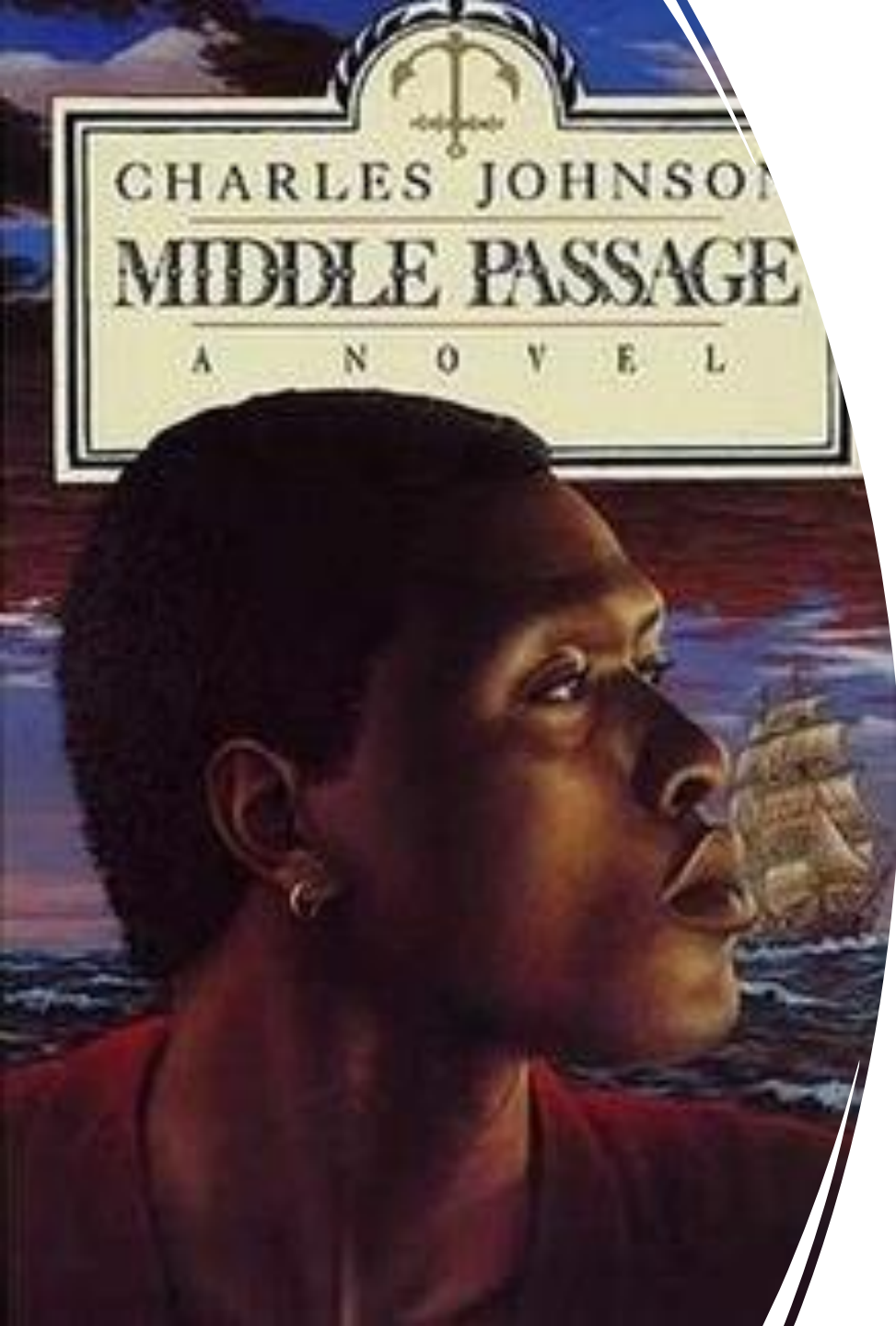
★★★★★ 3.52 avg rating — 186 ratings — published 2005 — 9 editions



Night Hawks: Stories

by Charles R. Johnson (Goodreads Author)

★★★★★ 3.64 avg rating — 174 ratings — published 2018 — 3 editions



Facts about Johnson

Born	April 23, 1948 (age 76) Evanston, Illinois , U.S.
Occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Writer•academic•artist•philosopher•scholar of Buddhist and Black American literature
Education	Southern Illinois University (BS , MA) Stony Brook University (PhD)

Johnson on Writing

“To be frank, I think the elegant, long sentence is a thing of beauty, a self-contained entity worthy of study all by itself. Consider this sentence by Dylan Thomas from *Quite Early One Morning*:

(Next page)

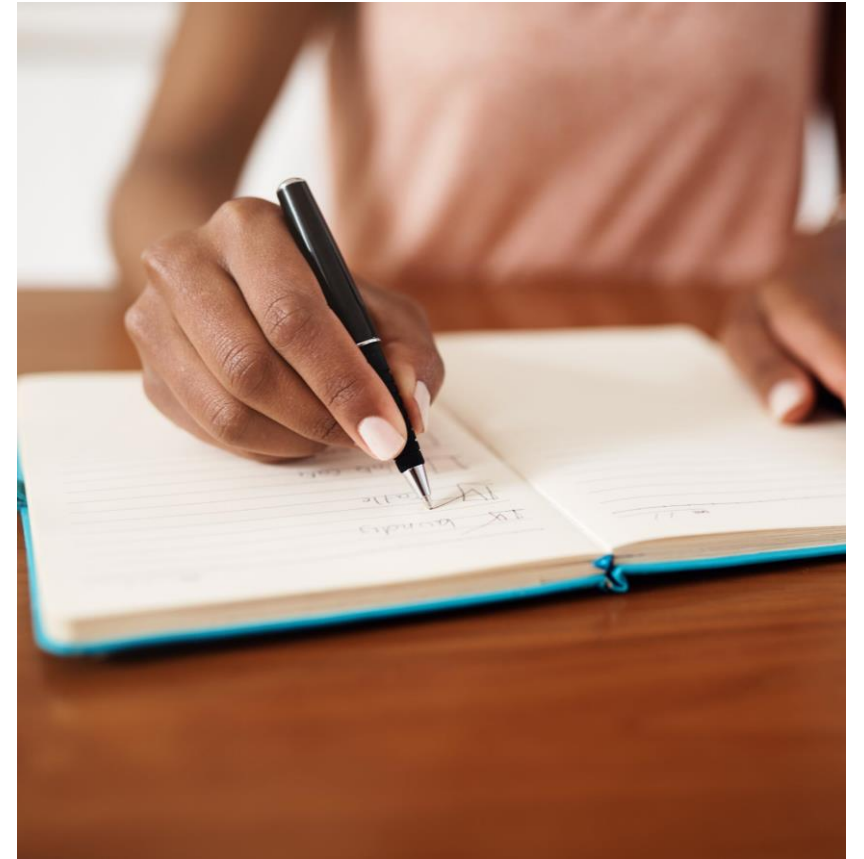


<https://youtu.be/5bHzFhNHqJM?si=kgytms94CTZ2rW7T>

On writing continued...

I was born in a large Welsh town at the beginning of the Great War— an ugly, lovely town (or so it was and is to me), crawling, sprawling by a long and splendid curving shore where truant boys and sandfield boys and old men from nowhere, beachcombed, idled and paddled, watched the dock-bound ships or the ships streaming away into wonder and India, magic and China, countries bright with oranges and loud with lions; threw stones into the sea for the barking outcast dogs; made castles and forts and harbours and race tracks in the sand; and on Saturday afternoons listened to the brass band, watched the Punch and Judy, or hung about on the fringes of the crowd to hear the fierce religious speakers who shouted at the sea, as though it were wicked and wrong to roll in and out like that, white-horsed and full of fishes.”

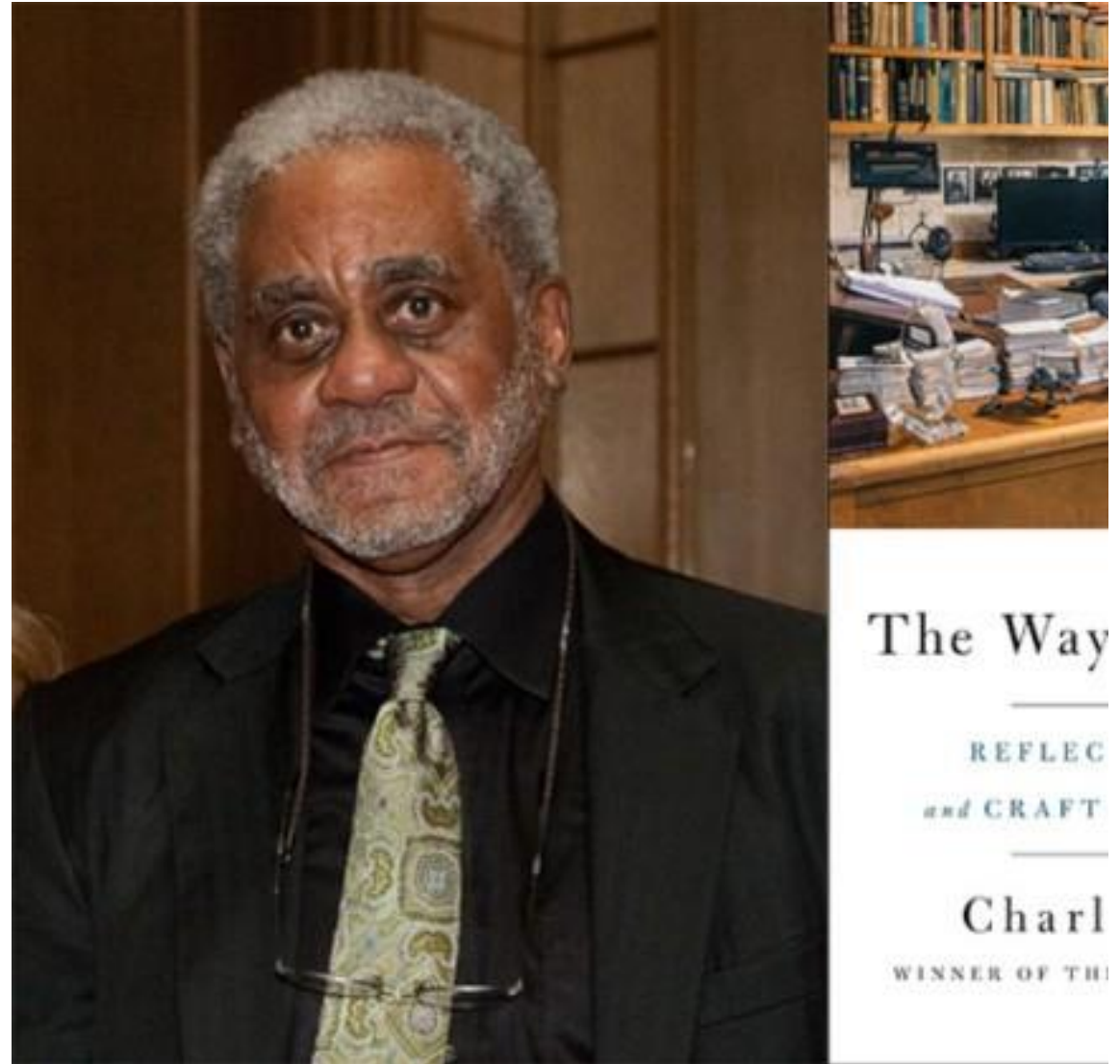
— **Charles Johnson**, [**The Way of the Writer: Reflections on the Art and Craft of Storytelling**](#)



Quote on words...

“What a lover of words and their beauty discovers. . . is that there is literally a word for every object, material or immaterial, every relation, and every process that human beings have experienced. Because that is what words are: the crystallization in language of thousands of years of experience across numerous cultures and civilizations, each word being the most tangible flesh in which thought is tabernacled.”

— Charles Johnson, [The Way of the Writer: Reflections on the Art and Craft of Storytelling](#)



Summary of Middle Passage

The Book is a complex blend of allegory, adventure story, tall tale, and philosophical meditation. It follows the misadventures of Rutherford Calhoun, the narrator, who is an entertaining liar and consummate rogue.

- Calhoun, a slave, flees first to New Orleans and then, to escape marriage, to sea. Ironically, he stows away on a slave ship, the Republic, and so his adventures begin.
- The novel's characters are a motley collection of freaks, misfits, and oddities. Ebenezer Falcon, captain of the Republic, is a stunted, twisted dwarf whose brilliant mind and strong will are devoted to his own evil ends.
- Cringle, the first mate, is a well-meaning but ineffectual liberal, able to perceive evils and injustices but incapable of acting to resolve them.
- Josiah Squibb, the alcoholic, often-married but never-divorced cook, serves as a representative both of humankind's baser instincts and of rough but necessary common sense.

Summary cont.

- In Africa, the Republic takes on a cargo of slaves from the Allmuseri tribe (a group frequently mentioned in Johnson's fiction as a symbol of original African nature and unity).
- The crew also brings on board an enormous box that contains the Allmuseri's "god," a monstrous shape-shifting creature that drives mad those who listen to it.
- On the return voyage, a mutiny and slave revolt, perhaps inspired by the caged god, lead to the destruction of the Republic and the death of everyone aboard except Calhoun, Squibb, and three Allmuseri children
- . Rescued by a passing ship, Calhoun and the others return to New Orleans. Now a changed man, Calhoun finally marries and settles down, having learned that to be fully human requires commitment to others and community.

from supersummary.com



The Sea as a Presence In Middle Passage

https://youtu.be/Fi98_n7fjZI

Description All Five Senses

<https://youtu.be/gyQguNu3UE0>

Conflict in Storytelling

<https://youtu.be/ZyZTbdZ73dl>

Summary of "Middle Passage" By Charles Johnson

https://youtu.be/6Szeigibg_U?si=Am08uRI5EIAciXkP
Scene from Master and Commander

Scene from Master and Commander

<https://youtu.be/6oyQGHHz8U8>

History Channel's Life Aboard a Slave Ship

<https://www.history.com/videos/life-aboard-a-slave-ship>

New York Times article/25 years of Middle Passage

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/12/books/review/middle-passage-at-25.html?smid=url-share>

Upcoming book club meetings

www.letsreadgreatbooks.com

JAN
5



Let's Read National Book Award Winners/Middle Passage/Charles Johnson

Online event

Sunday, January 5, 2025 at 3:00 PM EST

JAN
24



Let's Read Great Books-Global Issues/The Undocumented

Online event

Friday, January 24, 2025 at 5:00 PM EST

JAN
31



Let's Read Caribbean Authors-Kevin Jared Hosein/Hungry Ghosts

Online event

Friday, January 31, 2025 at 4:00 PM EST

FEB
22



Let's Read Great Books-Global Issues/The Night Watchman

Online event

Saturday, February 22, 2025 at 5:00 PM EST

MAR
7



Let's Read Great Books/Pulitzer Prize -The Night Watch and Lark and Termite

Online event

Friday, March 7, 2025 at 5:00 PM EST

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Send me your book suggestions!



*Join our book club as we read
great literature!
Each month we choose a
different author
and read two of their books.*

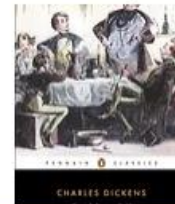
WHAT WE ARE READING NOW



November 29th

Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver, Pulitzer 2023

And...Dicken's David Copperfield, as it was Kingsolver's inspiration. We will read a summary



December's Author