

# The Pitch

NEWSLETTER OF THE PRPL

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## Poetry for the Public

We are excited to announce that the Philip Roth Personal Library started a poetry club, Poetry for the Public (P.F.T.P.)! This club will have monthly poetry workshops that are hosted by Newark poets. In addition to the workshops, we will have Open Mics for people who attend the workshops to share their creations.

Our first workshop was led by Kween Moore on September 13, 2022. She began by familiarizing participants with poetic terms, famous poets, and different styles of poetry. She then read a few of her favorite pieces, shared a bit about her experience becoming a poet, and delved into the writing aspect of the workshop. Moore instructed participants on how to create a blackout poem. The beauty of this style of poetry is that poets are supplied with a body of text and they select the words they wish to use to cultivate their poem!

Our second workshop was held on October 4, 2022, and Mia X spent a substantial amount of time covering delivery. She mentioned that prior to performing, a poet should always warm up with articulation and breathing exercises and should become one with their poem. She introduced the crowd to exercises that she uses and performed three of her pieces to give examples on how to strongly deliver a poem. She then had participants write a twenty-word poem and encouraged them to return to it to develop their poems as time goes on.

On National Coming Out Day, October 11, 2022, P.F.T.P. had its first major event of the year! Jamisha Montague hosted "JAM Storyslam" which involved people who identify as LGBTQIA+ to share their coming out stories and Queer poets to perform some poetry. We had poets Calandra Albert, Destiny McCullough, Eleven Muldrow, Flowetree Lokx, Kai McCall, Nicolas Hornyak, Swiss McCall, and Travis Love perform their poems and storytellers Deion Session, Landin Morris, Landy Ducheine, Reginald Bledsoe, and Titilayo Afolabi share their coming out stories. This event created a safe, inclusive space for all, fostered community building, and allowed creatives to broadcast their work.

P.F.T.P. secured a partnership with City Verses, the NJ Performing Arts Center’s poetry series, and are hosting four poetry reading and writing workshops this year in the Philip Roth Personal Library. The dates are as follows: October 18th, October 25th, November 1st, and November 15th. The workshops will be led by Rutgers-Newark MFA graduate, Attorious Augustin and are hosted by Dimitri Reyes, Newark poet, and Rutgers-Newark MFA graduate. The workshops will end with a 30 minute reading from scheduled guest poets including James Ellerbe, Ameerah Shabazz, Rescue Poetix and Treasure Borde.

Please join us at any, or all, of our workshops and be sure to follow “[PoetryForThePublic](#)” on Instagram to keep up with the club!

-Jamisha Montague



KWEEN MOORE

P.F.T.P.  
WORKSHOP #1

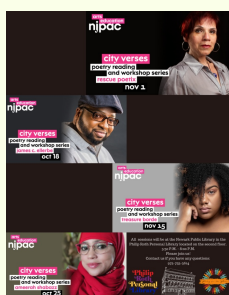


PARTICIPANTS WRITING

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**October 18, 25, November 1, 15, 5:30pm, PRPL**

**City Verses** Poetry Reading and Workshop Series in collaboration with the NJ Performing Arts Center



**October 25, 6:30 pm (EST), Main Library**

## *Don't Worry, Mr. Roth—We're Reading and Writing!*

Philip Roth created remarkable, memorable scenes in his 31 books and one of those, in *The Facts: A Novelist's Autobiography* (1988), takes place in his family’s apartment on Leslie Street in Weequahic where Roth has come home on break from Bucknell University and stays out past midnight. His father Herman does not know where his son is, and when Philip shows up, it does not go well.

Roth notes that it’s a good thing his older brother Sandy, living in Manhattan, was home on a visit. With their mother, Bess, Sandy “made every conceivable effort to act as a peacemaker and, with an air of urgent diplomacy, hurried back and forth between the two ends of the apartment, where the two raving belligerents were isolated. And

**Book talk** with Dur E Azina, author of *American Fever*. Sponsored by the NPL Reference Department

**November 5, 1pm (EST) on Zoom**  
The Philip Roth Book Club: **A Discussion** of *Patrimony* with host Jesse Tisch

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**November 18, 7 - 9pm (EST), NJPAC**  
**The Philip Roth Lecture:**  
**The Influence of the 1619 Project in the Fields of American History, Education, and Journalism. A Conversation with Nikole Hannah-Jones and Jelani Cobb. Register [here](#) for either the Zoom live stream or for the in-person event.**

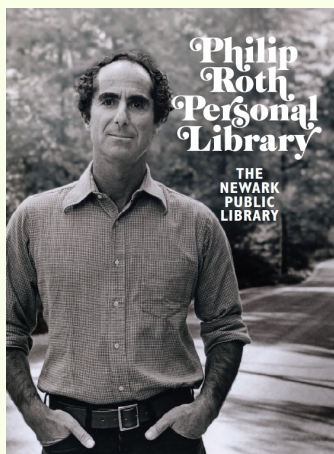
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**December 1, 6-7:30pm (EST) on Zoom**  
**Author talk** with Faleeha Hassan, *War and Me: A Memoir*

**January 21, 1pm (EST) on Zoom**  
The Philip Roth Book Club: A Discussion of *Goodbye, Columbus* with host Steven Zipperstein

**March 17-19, 2023, Newark, NJ**  
Philip Roth Festival in Newark

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though, after two days of Azina shouting and bitter silence, my father and I—for the sake, finally, of my desolated mother—negotiated a fragile truce, I returned to Bucknell a shell-shocked son, freshly evacuated from the Oedipal battlefield, in dire need of rest and rehabilitation.”

Roth, born in 1933, loved growing up in his Jewish middle-class neighborhood but was determined as a young man to break free from his father’s world and control, to experience the America out there waiting. At the same time, Roth remained tethered to Weequahic and Newark all of his life, giving family members, friends, his Jewish community, streets, stores, libraries, his schools, beliefs, summer days and sports teams essential roles in his storytelling.

Today at the Philip Roth Personal Library, now in our second year, Roth’s bequest of more than 7,000 books and many artifacts from his New York City apartment and Connecticut farm house reflect the range and depth of his life interests combined with very specific research for his fiction. As a reader, Roth wrote down his thoughts and ideas on book pages, inside covers, anywhere he could find space to write, integrating those books and pages into his work process. His annotations, a great gift from a great novelist, are especially of importance to researchers, writers and Roth followers, and are available for viewing by the public upon request.

Roth followed his passion and he became a writer. Everyone has a story. The library is pursuing an equally important purpose – promoting and keeping alive reading and writing for the public in general and in particular Newark’s youth. The library has announced a city-wide [writing contest](#) for high school students and high school-age youth living in Newark sponsored by the Newark Public Library and the NJ Performing Arts Center.

Nadine Giron, supervising librarian, notes: "Having the library be a destination for young people is a fulfilling part of our work right now." Three Newark high school classes came on tour in late spring, discussing what they are reading and to share their Newark narratives. One day, a young man who previously had visited the library returned with some friends to show them what he had seen the first time, specifically Roth’s typewriter. Students express amazement that Roth wrote and read so many books. The PRPL will welcome additional class groups in November.

## The Philip Roth Personal Library catalogue is now available for purchase!

The 72-page catalogue includes essays from Roth's friends and colleagues, voices which offer glimpses of Roth, along with highlights from the collection.

Visitors to the PRPL can purchase a copy for \$20, cash only. The catalogue is also available on the Newark Public Library's online store for \$25 plus + shipping and handling on the Newark Public Library's [online store](#). Please allow time for us to process and ship orders. It would be a great gift for any Roth fans for the holidays!

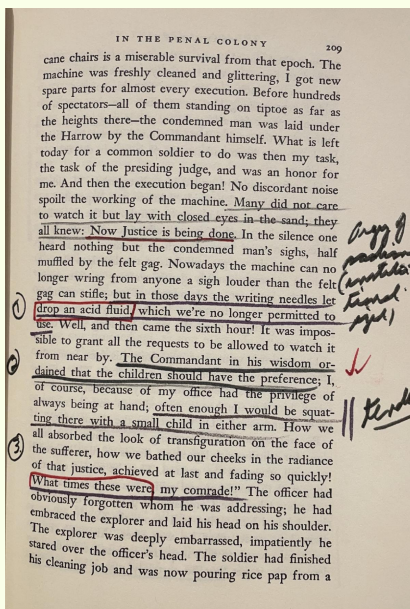
Giron administers programs and special events, welcomes individual visitors and groups, researches requests, organizes author talks, writes a weekly blog, oversees a wealth of information on the library's website and continues communications with Roth authors, friends and followers.

For her part, Jamisha Montague, library assistant who launched the library's poetry club, says she believes that some find it easier to express themselves through poetry. Therefore, it is a good way to get people interested in writing. "If we take something easily accessible to the public, they'll come in and get into what we have," she said. "It's a great way to reel people into the Philip Roth Personal Library."

"The insight I have had is that what one experiences in the Philip Roth Personal Library is this moment of combustion of reading, research and imagination to make fiction," says Newark Public Library Trustee Rosemary Steinbaum, who with fellow Trustee Timothy Crist, has worked closely throughout the development of the new library site.

"And if we can show a young person, a Newarker, that moment which is usually hidden in fiction, but show them that moment when imagination works on fact to yield fiction, that could be a model."

-Nancy Shields



Roth's annotated copy of Kafka's *The Penal Colony*

### Just What, Exactly, Are Roth Scholars Researching? And Where Do They Come From?

Since the PRPL opened in June of 2021, researchers throughout the globe have scheduled appointments to consult the collection. They have flown in from Germany, France, Italy, and Canada. And, of course, many originate from various locations in the United States. They consist of members of the Philip Roth Society, independent scholars, graduate students, educators, and even a screenwriter. Some have spent days pouring over Roth's copies of *Madame Bovary*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Penal Colony*, and *The Brothers Karamazov*. And do note that on occasion, Roth did read and annotate multiple copies of the same title.

Often, researchers are seeking to determine the influence of a particular author on Roth. These

include Faulkner, Flaubert, Pynchon, Stern, Trilling, Babel, Kafka and many Russian and German authors, or topics in the collection, such as peripatetic fiction, poetry, or music. Examining Roth's books, which contain a variety of markings such as underlining, asterisks, exclamation and/or question marks, and marginalia (even notes on the inside of a book jacket), provide crucial clues into both Roth's reading and writing process.

Or, sometimes a visitor is exploring a broader topic, such as Jewish Newark or the Korean War. Or how the Newark Rebellion of 1967 affected Philip Roth. Perhaps, even a deeper study of psychology and self-censorship in Roth's fiction. At other times, the topics are more ambiguous and lead researchers on an adventure of discovery.

And what becomes of the findings? Often, the material is incorporated into an article, a book, or it is presented at a conference.

The Philip Roth Society will publish a special issue of *Philip Roth Studies* in 2024 guest edited by Ira Nadel. All who conduct research in the PRPL are encouraged to submit an article. Essays dealing with research and discoveries at the library, plus the significance and value of the overall collection, are invited. Essays are to be 5000-7000 words. A brief prospectus of approximately 750 words should be submitted by December 15, 2022. Click [here](#) for more information.

-Nadine Giron

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Newsletter Issue #2 contributors: Jamisha Montague, Nadine Giron, and Nancy Shields

Philip Roth Personal Library @ The Newark Public Library  
5 Washington St., Newark NJ 07102  
[prpl@npl.org](mailto:prpl@npl.org) | 973.733.3614  
<https://prpl.npl.org>

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