

**AMERICAN SHORT FICTION
PRESENTS**

Story Sessions

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TAYARI JONES *in conversation with*
ZZ PACKER

.....

WELCOME

Rebecca Markovits & Tommy Mouton

THE INSIDER PRIZE AWARDS

Sergio Muro

READINGS & CONVERSATION

Tayari Jones & ZZ Packer

BOOK SIGNING

First Light Books

Huston-Tillotson University
Thursday, September 10 at 6 p.m.



This project is supported
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City of Austin.



**AMERICAN
SHORT FICTION**



Over the course of her award-winning career, **TAYARI JONES's** work has explored the vagaries of birth and fate, the bitterness of injustice, and the persistent power of love. From her debut, *Leaving Atlanta*, to her latest, the Oprah Book Club Selection and New York Times bestseller *Kin*, Jones brings warmth and wisdom to themes of family, friendship, and what it means to be a girl and a woman in the American South. Hailed as "one of the most important voices of her generation" by *Essence* and as "a bard of the modern South" by the *Los Angeles Times*, her vivid characters, trademark humor, and gorgeous prose have won her acclaim from readers and critics alike. *Kin* was the second of Jones's novels, after *An American Marriage*, to be chosen for Oprah's Book Club, making her one of the rare authors selected more than once. It was named One of the Best Books of the Year (So Far) by *The New York Times* and Amazon and is a finalist for the Kirkus Prize.



ZZ PACKER's fiction has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *STORY*, *Ploughshares*, *GRANTA*, *Zoetrope All-Story*, *Best American Short Stories*, *Best Non-Required Reading* and, most recently, *100 Years of The Best American Short Stories* and *The New York Times Magazine's* "The 1619 Project." She is the recipient, among other honors, of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, a Rona Jaffe Foundation Award, a Whiting Award, and a National Book Award 5 Under 35 prize. Packer teaches writing at Vanderbilt University. She is the author of *Drinking Coffee Elsewhere*.

Each year, *American Short Fiction* awards the Insider Prize, directed by Senior Editor Sergio Muro, for work by incarcerated writers in Texas. The 2026 judge, Elizabeth McCracken, selected the following winners:

- **Fiction, 1st Place:** Charles Hill, "Prisoner's Home"
- **Nonfiction, 1st Place:** Deanna Carney, "Sit. Stay."
- **Fiction, Runner-up:** Brian Stevens, "A Hairy Tale"
- **Nonfiction, Runner-up:** Matthew Mendoza, "Zen and the Art of Civil Commitment"
- **Nonfiction, Runner-up:** Steven Perez, "Aunt Terry and Josiah King"



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