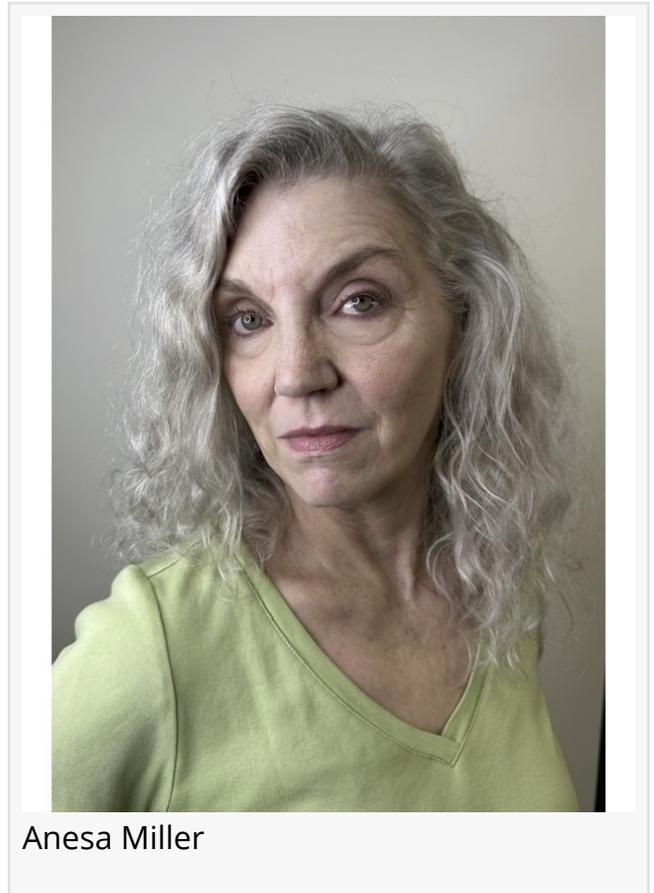


Anesa Miller, Author, to Address New York Literary Dominance at AWP Conference — March 4–7, 2026, Baltimore, MD

A decade-long study explores how publishing power shapes which books gain national visibility and who gets seen

BALTIMORE, MD, UNITED STATES, January 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A new study by author and researcher [Anesa Miller](#) suggests that American literary prestige may be far less geographically diverse than it appears. Examining a decade of fiction titles recognized by The New York Times Book Review, Miller's research finds that both publishing power and narrative attention remain heavily centered in New York.

Miller will present her findings at the upcoming Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP) conference, one of the largest annual gatherings of writers, educators, publishers, and literary organizations in the United States. The event will be held March 4 – 7, 2026, in Baltimore, Maryland.



Anesa Miller

"This project grew out of concerns about publishing consolidation, cultural gatekeeping, and the quiet disappearance of regional literary coverage," Miller explains. "I wanted to look beyond individual titles and ask bigger questions: Who publishes the books we label as 'the best'? Where are those stories set? And which voices and regions are consistently left out of the national conversation about literature?"

Miller analyzed hundreds of novels reviewed by the Times and later named among its annual "Best" and "Notable" fiction selections. Her findings reveal a clear pattern: the majority of books elevated to national prominence are published by a small group of publishers, most headquartered in New York City. According to the study, one publisher alone is responsible for roughly two-fifths of the total. While dozens of publishers appear across the lists, New York-based companies dominate the field.

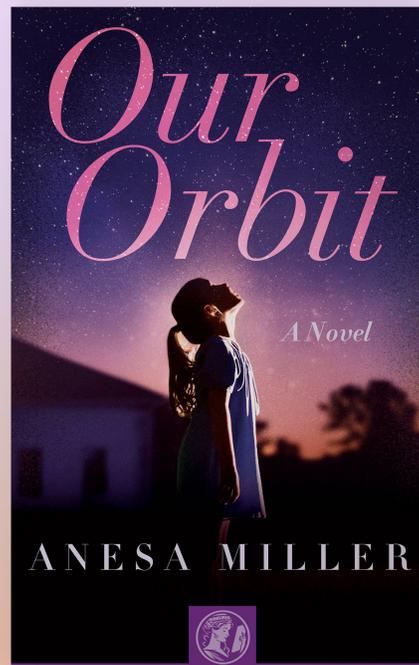
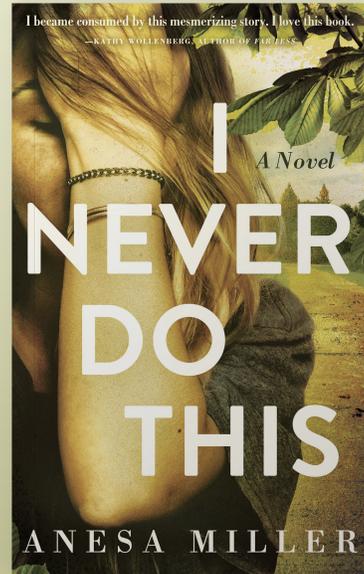
“Which books are considered ‘the best’ isn’t just a matter of taste,” Miller says. “It’s also about access, who has proximity to the institutions that shape cultural authority.”

The study also identifies a pronounced geographic imbalance in fiction settings. New York City and the broader Northeast appear far more frequently than other U.S. regions, alongside familiar transatlantic locales such as the British Isles and continental Europe. By contrast, novels set in the Midwest, South, and West appear far less often, while Canada registers only a marginal presence. Miller argues that this concentration creates a distorted cultural map that repeatedly returns to the same metropolitan and coastal spaces while leaving vast regions underrepresented.

“These patterns shape how readers imagine what American literature looks like,” Miller states. “When the same places are continuously framed as the center of literary life, other regions risk becoming invisible.”

Miller emphasizes that her research is not an indictment of individual editors or authors, but an examination of structural forces shaping contemporary literature. “This is about systems,” she notes. “When publishing, reviewing, and professional networks are concentrated in one place, recognition moves through a narrow pipeline.”

Analyzing 437 fiction titles reviewed by the Times over ten years, Miller mapped 576 geographic settings across 11 world regions. The results show that 81 percent of recognized titles came from



just seven publishers, most headquartered in New York City, with Penguin Random House responsible for nearly 40 percent of all selections.

Independent, self-published, and small press authors, those published outside the Big Five system, now account for a substantial share of the literary marketplace, including roughly one-third of U.S. eBook sales. Yet despite this scale, authors working through independent channels remain largely absent from the platforms that define national literary prestige, limiting both writers' visibility and readers' choice.

About Anesa Miller

Anesa Miller is an American author, poet, essayist, and independent researcher. A native of Wichita, Kansas, she taught Russian literature at universities in Kansas and Ohio. She earned her MFA from the University of Idaho. Her fiction, poetry, and essays have appeared in The Kenyon Review, Southern Humanities Review, Cream City Review, Nimrod, and The California Quarterly. She is the author of the novels [I Never Do This](#) and [Our Orbit: A Novel](#).

To learn more about Miller and her impactful work, click here: <https://anesamiller.com/>

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