

## KAO KALIA YANG

*“Yang powerfully demonstrates that much of what society doesn’t hold valuable—talents that don’t translate into monetary or educational success—still carry immense value.”* —Library Journal

**Kao Kalia Yang is a Hmong-American writer, filmmaker, and teacher. Her work crosses audiences and genres and has been recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Book Critics Circle Award, the Chautauqua Prize, the PEN USA literary awards, the Dayton’s Literary Peace Prize, Kirkus Best Books of the Year, the Heartland Bookseller’s Award, and has garnered four Minnesota Book Awards.**

Kalia was born in the refugee camps of Thailand to a family that escaped the genocide of the Secret War in Laos. She came to America at the age of six, and her first book, *The Latehomecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir*, reflects upon this move. A review by *Publishers Weekly* praises Kalia, “Yang tells her family’s story with grace; she narrates their struggles, beautifully weaving in Hmong folklore and culture.” *The Latehomecomer* was the winner of two Minnesota Book Awards, a finalist for the PEN USA Award, and earned a NEA Big Read title. It is the first Hmong-authored book to gain national distribution from a literary press.

Her other memoirs include, *The Song Poet: A Memoir of my Father*, which won the 2016 Minnesota Book Award, and was a finalist for the Dayton’s Literary Peace Prize, the National Book Critics Circle Award, the Chautauqua Prize, and the PEN USA Award; *Somewhere in the Unknown World*; and her latest, *Where Rivers Part: A Story of My Mother’s Life*.

Kalia’s is also the author of the children’s books, *A Map Into the World*, *The Most Beautiful Thing*, *The Shared Room*, *Yang Warriors*, *From the Tops of the Trees*, and *The Rock in My Throat*, which center around Hmong children who live in our world, who dream and hurt and hope in it. She is the co-editor of a ground-breaking collection titled *What God is Honored Here?: Writings on Miscarriage and Infant Loss By and For Native Women and Women of Color*. For her work, Kalia has been the recipient of McKnight, Soros, and Guggenheim Fellowships.

When she’s not in front of an audience inspiring social change and awareness, Kalia raises twin sons that keep her and her husband busy at their home in Minneapolis.