

---

# JANA LAIZ

---

*"Weeping Under This Same Moon by Jana Laiz is a stunning achievement written with uncanny sympathy from the complementary perspective of two teenage girls—one a Vietnamese refugee, the other a passionate yet unhappy American high school student."*

- George Rupp, President, International Rescue Committee

*"I'm extremely proud to be a part of helping to tell such an important story. It's time for everyone to know about Elizabeth 'Mumbet' Freeman."*

- Octavia Spencer, Actor & Executive Producer of a feature film based on **A Free Woman on God's Earth**



## BIOGRAPHY

Award-winning author Jana Laiz writes fiction that explores themes around our common humanity in global, historical and mythical settings. While known for writing for teens and young readers, her work resonates strongly with adults, as well.

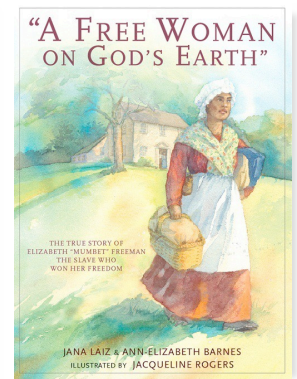
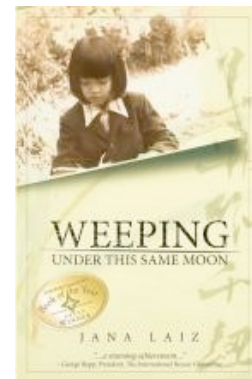
Her first novel **Weeping Under This Same Moon** won multiple awards, including ForeWord Magazine Book of the Year Award and has recently been optioned for film adaptation.

**"A Free Woman on God's Earth" - The True Story of Elizabeth "Mumbet" Freeman, The Slave Who Won Her Freedom**, co-authored by Laiz, was recently named a New York Reads 365 Reading List Selection.

A believer in the power of individuals to make a difference, Laiz is a rare combination of storyteller, teacher, and activist. Fascinated by other cultures, Jana studied anthropology and Chinese language at University. She was a caseworker at The International Rescue Committee working in refugee resettlement.

Jana is a frequent speaker on diversity and the power of volunteering, writing as spiritual practice, as well as an in-demand leader of writing workshops for young people and adults.

Jana lives in The Berkshires, Massachusetts and is currently Writer- In- Residence at Herman Melville's Berkshire home, Arrowhead.



# What People Are Saying About Jana Laiz

---

Students, teachers, parents and critics are raving about Jana Laiz

*“Jana, you were absolutely incredible! Thank you so much for coming! I loved your talk!*

*— Missy Franklin, 5-time Gold Medalist, 2012 London Olympics, Regis Jesuit High School*

*“Jana’s writing workshop was EPIC!”*

*— Kylee, Mt. Graylock High School Williamstown, MA*

*“Thank you again for an awesome Skyping experience. Many of my students wrote that your visit was their favorite part of the whole first unit.”*

*- Teacher after a Skype visit with a Minnesota middle school.*

*“Unputdownable! I entered this world and did not want to leave.”*

*- Alison Larkin, best-selling author of The English American on Jana Laiz’s The Twelfth Stone*

*“While preparing for my move to DC, I realized how much you inspired me after our talk at school. Since graduating, I was offered an internship at the UNHCR...I hadn’t realized the effect your work had on me until obtaining this position and I wanted to formally thank you for giving your words to the world.” - M.S. Monument Mountain High School, Great Barrington, MA*



# SPEAKING TOPICS & WORKSHOPS

---

## JANA LAIZ: PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN & ADULTS



**Jana Laiz is an award-winning author, teacher, and publisher.** As a former Refugee Resettlement Counselor, she is sought after to speak to children, teens and counselors affected by terrorism and war. With a Master's degree in Education and experience teaching from elementary school to University, including ESL, Laiz blends her extensive writing and publishing experience, her background as a teen volunteer for the International Rescue Committee, and her fervent belief in the power and joy of writing into a unique series of presentations and author-led workshops. Warm and humorous, children and adults alike are inspired by Jana's enthusiasm and her belief in the power of writing to make a difference in the world. Jana Laiz is the author of eight books (two have been optioned for film), including the award-winning novels **Weeping Under This Same Moon** and **"A Free Woman on God's Earth."** She is currently the Writer-In-Residence at Herman Melville's Berkshire home, Arrowhead.

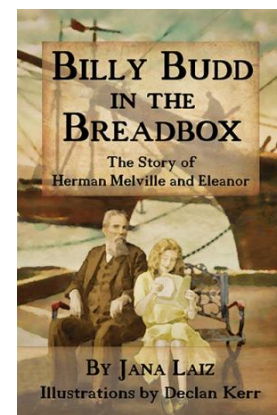
Appearances range from a one-hour author talk with Q&A to half or whole-day writing workshops on a variety of genres, including fiction, poetry, and memoir. These can be customized for in-classroom visits including specialized workshops for middle and high school students, book club talks, conferences and lectures.

---

## JANA LAIZ: BOOK-BASED PROGRAMS FOR KIDS

As the very first and current Writer-In-Residence at Herman Melville's Arrowhead, Jana has the incredible privilege to write at Melville's desk. It was there she wrote **Billy Budd in the Breadbox, The Story of Herman Melville and Eleanor.**

Bringing Herman Melville to life, through the voice of his nine-year-old granddaughter was an inspiration and this workshop shares this literary adventure story with students grades 3 and up.

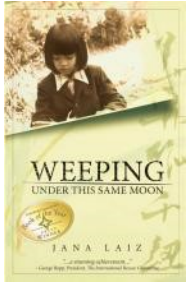


Continued...



# SPEAKING TOPICS & WORKSHOPS

## JANA LAIZ: BOOK-BASED PROGRAMS FOR KIDS, continued



Jana offers specialized workshops for high school, middle school and ESL students based on her award-winning novel, **Weeping Under This Same Moon**.

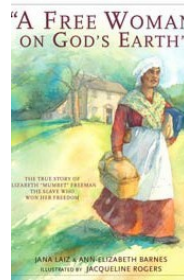
Workshops include a discussion of writing styles - the first person vs. writing with third person omniscient narrator and one or more of the following:

- Writing exercise in both voice styles
- Discussions on teenage volunteering as a way to help the local community/broader global community
- Finding the heart of the story
- Expressing feelings that transform personal stories
- Immigrant and Refugee stories
- Ways of making a difference in the

For high schools and middle schools adopting **Weeping Under This Same Moon** as part of the curriculum, Jana will discuss the book in- depth, answer related questions and share a slide presentation related to the book.

**To book JANA LAIZ for your classroom or event or to request information on adding one of these titles to your school or program, please email**

**[jana@janalaiz.com](mailto:jana@janalaiz.com)**



Jana's workshops based on **"A Free Woman On God's Earth" - The True Story of Elizabeth 'Mumbet' Freeman, The Slave Who Won Her Freedom**, include:

- Discussions of the American Revolution
- Life in the 1700s
- Slavery and Freedom in Massachusetts
- The life of Elizabeth 'Mumbet' Freeman

Co-written by Jana Laiz and Ann-Elizabeth Barnes, **"A Free Woman On God's Earth"** meets most curriculum requirements for third, fourth and fifth grade social studies.



Tapping into the inherent middle grade love of fantasy and folklore, Jana's popular workshops based on the Celtic YA Fantasy, **The Twelfth Stone** fire the imagination and may include discussion of:

- Writing Fantasy
- Environmental Issues
- Celtic Folklore
- Celtic Music
- Writing Books that all ages can enjoy

Jana recently helped one 7th grade class adapt **The Twelfth Stone** into a play!

Related workshop topic: *Piping & Penning* workshop bringing together Celtic folklore and music. World-renowned piper Nancy Tunnickliffe joins Jana.

# SPEAKING TOPICS & WORKSHOPS

---

## JANA LAIZ: PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

### THE RELUCTANT READER: The Power and Promise of Reading



James Patterson has been famously quoted as saying, “there is no such thing as a kid who hates reading. There are kids who love reading, and kids who are reading the wrong books.”

But what do you do if you have reluctant readers in your classroom? How do you overcome the barriers kids put up and counter the idea that in a light-up, whiz-bang world, books are just... well, boring?

**Award-winning author, educator and passionate literacy advocate Jana Laiz** - herself a recovered reluctant reader - talks with kids of all ages about how this reluctant reader came to be an avid reader and successful author.

In this one-hour, school-based program, Jana discusses her own memories of being a kid who hated to read but who dreamed of being a writer and talks candidly with kids about the moment it all changed for her, and chronicles the dramatic and fulfilling journey reading has taken her on.

In this interactive visual presentation, Jana takes kids along on her journey and guides them through a short writing assignment.

*“Kids light up when they learn Jana was a lot like them! They respond with great enthusiasm to her energy and thrilling stories of where reading has taken her.”*

Book Jana for your classroom visit by emailing  
[jana@janalaiz.com](mailto:jana@janalaiz.com)

# SPEAKING TOPICS & WORKSHOPS

---

## JANA LAIZ: PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS & TEACHERS



### GETTING OUTSIDE THE COMFORT ZONE

Jana discusses the joys and inspiration of working with refugees, how what she learned as a volunteer changed her life and how that experience can apply to any-

one today. Audiences will learn from this timely program how one teenager, moved by witnessing suffering, reached out across cultures to be of service to those trying to adjust to a new country and new culture, and found work that brought her joy and purpose. And how that experience would go on to be the basis for the award-winning novel **Weeping Under This Same Moon**.

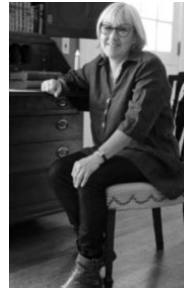


### FAERIES: WRITING THE MAGICAL REALMS

As most fantasy writers do, Jana spends a lot of time in her imagination and daydreams. There she imagines meetings with those elemental beings we call faeries and other

mythological creatures. What's it like to create an entire realm beyond our own? How does that differ from writing reality-based fiction and how do you write the magical in a way that's believable? How does the natural world inspire?

Jana will also discuss how her passion for the environment helped inform her book **The Twelfth Stone**, an eco-fantasy for young adult readers.



### A WRITER'S LIFE

There is a lot of mythology surrounding writers and the writing life in our culture. What is it really like to be a writer? What does it mean? Is there a method to this madness? Routine? Ritual? How does one get inspired and how does one move through writer's block?

In this program, Jana discusses what it means to be a writer and separates the fact from fiction. The story of her fascinating journey from reluctant reader to being invited to write at Herman Melville's desk at Arrowhead is sure to inspire!



### WRITING AS SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

To Jana, writing *is* her spiritual practice. It takes her out of herself and into an inspired place. By allowing thoughts, ideas, and words flow, there is a creative spark that is touched and awakened. Jana will discuss what this means in her life and how she sees the magic/divine in everything, when she pays attention.

**To book JANA LAIZ for your group or event please email**

**[jana@janalaiz.com](mailto:jana@janalaiz.com)**

# JANA'S BOOKS FOR PRESCHOOLERS

ALL TITLES AVAILABLE AT [WWW.JANALAIZ.COM](http://WWW.JANALAIZ.COM)



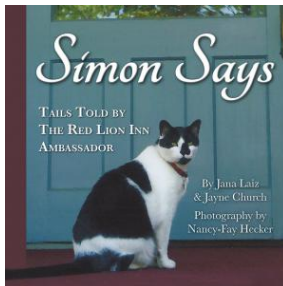
## **Blanket of Stars**

Written by Jana Laiz & Sean Vernon, Illustrated by Anastasiia Kuusk  
Accompanying CD or MP3 of Original music by Sean Vernon

Join Little Bird, Little Fox and Little Bunny as they get ready for bed. Lull your little ones to sweet sleep with the lush illustrations and soothing lullabies of **Blanket of Stars**.

Sean Vernon's original music accompanies this vividly illustrated picture book.

Music produced by Sean Vernon and Joe Podlesny at Avocet Productions with background music by Joe Podlesny.

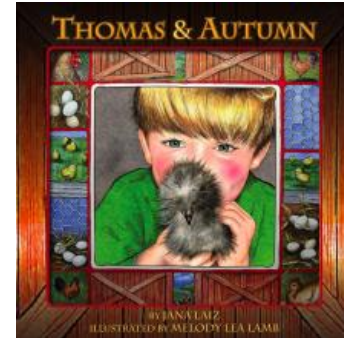


## **Simon Says - Tails Told By The Red Lion Inn Ambassador**

Written by Jana Laiz & Jayne Church  
Photographs by Nancy-Fay Hecker

**Simon Says** is the true story of Simon Treadway Gato, the lobby ambassador at the famous, historic Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

"My name is Simon. I came to The Red Lion Inn quite a number of years ago and found the place so entirely to my liking that I never left."

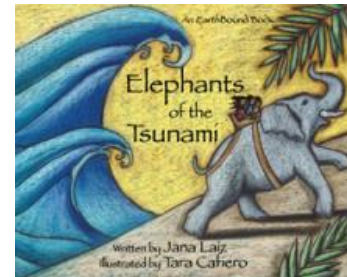


## **Thomas and Autumn**

Written by Jana Laiz  
Illustrated by Melody Lea Lamb

Thomas wants a chicken, but not just any chicken. Thomas wants a Silkie Bantam. Thomas has five dollars to take to the poultry show. Will he find the perfect chick?

**Thomas & Autumn** is the story of a little farm boy and his very special chicken. Perfect for early readers, especially for those who love chickens!



## **Elephants of the Tsunami**

Written by Jana Laiz  
Illustrated by Tara Cafiero

**Elephants of the Tsunami**, was written after the South Asian Tsunami disaster of 2004 in order to help the victims, both human and animal. It is the true story of eight amazing Thai working elephants that rescued many people who otherwise would have been consumed by the sea. We are proud to give a portion of the proceeds to tsunami relief efforts as well as Katrina relief. The book has been sent to Thailand as part of a literary and cultural exchange and has been read to over 600 Thai children in an effort to heal from the disaster. **Elephants of the Tsunami** can be purchased by visiting [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

To inquire about JANA LAIZ's preschool events or to request information on adding one of these titles to your school or program, please email [jana@janalaiz.com](mailto:jana@janalaiz.com)