



Aya de Leon

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ABOUT AYA

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Aya de León directs the Poetry for the People program, teaching creative writing at UC Berkeley. She is the acquiring editor for Fighting Chance Books, the new climate justice fiction imprint at She Writes Press. Beginning in 2023, Fighting Chance will publish novels for adults by writers of all genders that tell stories of people taking collective action in the here and now to solve the climate crisis. Fighting Chance is open to all popular genres: crime, romance, sci-fi/fantasy, women's fiction, urban fiction, and beyond. Kensington Books publishes her award-winning feminist heist series, *Justice Hustlers*: *UPTOWN THIEF* (2016), *THE BOSS* (2017), *THE ACCIDENTAL MISTRESS* (2018), and *SIDE CHICK NATION* (2019) which was the first novel published about Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico. Kensington also publishes her standalone climate novels, *A SPY IN THE STRUGGLE* (2020), *QUEEN OF URBAN PROPHECY* (2021), and *THAT DANGEROUS ENERGY* (December 2022). Aya's young adult and middle grade novels include *THE MYSTERY WOMAN IN ROOM THREE* (free online on Orion Magazine 2021), *UNDERCOVER LATINA* (Candlewick 2022), and *GOING DARK* (Candlewick 2023). Aya has received acclaim in the *Washington Post*, *Village Voice*, *SF Chronicle*, and *The Establishment*. Her words have also appeared in *Harper's Bazaar*, *The Guardian UK*, *Ebony*, *Essence*, *Guernica*, *Writers Digest*, *Huffington Post*, *Catapult*, *The Root*, *The Toast*, *VICE*, *Ploughshares*, *Bitch Magazine*, and on *Def Poetry*. Prior to becoming a novelist, she received acclaim for her work in spoken word, poetry, and hip hop theater. She was named best discovery in theater for 2004 by the *SF Chronicle* for "Thieves in the Temple : The Reclaiming of Hip Hop," a solo show about fighting sexism and commercialism in hip hop. Also in 2004, she received a Goldie award from the *SF Bay Guardian* in spoken word for "Thieves..." and her subsequent show "Aya de Leon is Running for President." In 2005 she was voted "Slamminest Poet" in the *East Bay Express*. A graduate of Harvard College, with an MFA in fiction from Antioch University Los Angeles, Aya has been an artist in residence at Stanford University, a Cave Canem poetry fellow, and a slam poetry champion. She has also attended VONA and the Breadloaf Environmental Writers workshop. She publicly married herself in the 90s and from 1995 to 2012, she hosted an annual public Valentine's Day show that focused on self-love. She's on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. In 2020, she co-founded and blogged for *The Daily Dose: Feminist Voices for the Green New Deal*. In spring 2022, she organized an online conference entitled *Black Literature vs. the Climate Emergency* (available on YouTube). She organizes with the Black Hive, the climate and environmental justice formation of the Movement for Black Lives. She is also writing for a major entertainment franchise and working on a memoir.