

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July, 2015

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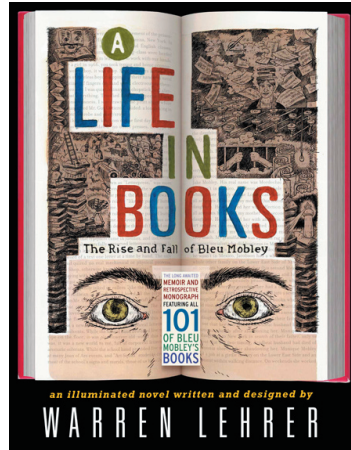
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An Imprint of ORO Editions

***A LIFE IN BOOKS: The Rise and Fall of Bleu Mobley* wins its 7th, 8th & 9th Awards: The 2015 International Book Award - Best New Fiction & Best Cover Design, and The Paris Book Festival Wild Card Award. It also has won: The 2014 IPPY Outstanding Book of the Year Award (Independent Publisher), The 2014 Best New Fiction Award from USA Best Books Awards, a Next Generation Indie Book Award, a Print Magazine Design Award, a CBAA Exhibition Prize, and a National Indie Excellence Award.**



**—One Illuminated Novel Containing 101 Books Within It—  
Each with Its First-Edition Cover Design, Catalog Copy & Select Excerpts**

**A LIFE IN BOOKS: The Rise and Fall of Bleu Mobley** (GOFF Books, hardcover; \$34.95, ISBN: 978-1-939621-02-3), written and designed by award-winning author/artist Warren Lehrer, is an extraordinarily original, funny, and deeply human exploration of one man's use of books as a means of understanding himself, the people around him, and a half-century of American/global events. It celebrates the mysteries and contradictions of the creative process, and grapples with the future of the book as a medium, and the lines that separate truth, myth, and fiction.

**A LIFE IN BOOKS** is an illuminated novel containing 101 books within it, all written by Lehrer's protagonist—the controversial and prolific author Bleu Mobley—who finds himself in prison looking back on his life and career. Over the course of one long night in the darkness of his prison cell, he whispers his life story into a microcassette recorder, tracing his journey from the public housing project of his youth to a career as a journalist, then experimental novelist, college professor, accidental bestselling author, pop-culture pundit, and unindicted prisoner.

Bleu Mobley's autobiography/apologia is paired with a review of all 101 of his books, each represented by its first-edition cover design and catalog copy, and more than a third of his books are excerpted. The resulting retrospective contrasts the published writings (which read like short stories) with the confessional memoir, forming a most unusual portrait of a well-intentioned, obsessively inventive (if ethically challenged) visionary. A masterful fusion of art and literature, **A LIFE IN BOOKS** distinguishes itself as one of those books you'll want to hold in your hands, feast your eyes on, read and re-read, share with friends, and treasure for years to come.

**A LIFE IN BOOKS** is the lead title from Goff Books – the new imprint of ORO Editions that features works of Visual Literature, and books on Art, Design, and Popular Culture. **Print and web quality jpgs** of Bleu Mobley book jackets (which make great page layouts and slide shows), the **A LIFE IN BOOKS** cover, page spreads, author photos, and videos (including Lehrer presenting Bleu Mobley in performance) are available for download at: <http://www.alifeinbooks.net/#press>

**For any questions or to arrange an interview with Warren Lehrer, please contact Judith Sloan at 718.791.4324 or judith@earsay.org.**

## PRAISE FOR *A LIFE IN BOOKS*

**WINNER 2014 IPPY OUTSTANDING BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARD** for “Most Original”

“A stunningly unique take on the novel that unabashedly explores the relationship between narrator and reader. With *A Life in Books*, Lehrer has upended the modern novel form and its narrative limitations, creating a rich and engaging story through visual literature. Mindblowing... reality bending... a laugh riot and visual feast.” **Independent Publisher**

“An ingenious, one-of-a-kind novel.” **Kurt Andersen STUDIO 360**

“In *A Life In Books*, author and graphic design visionary Warren Lehrer crafts a vivid kaleidoscopic odyssey that frames one man’s life through not one, but one hundred different books—and book jackets. In this unmistakably modern evocation of the illuminated manuscript, Lehrer’s book reminds us that we are what we do. And, for that matter, what we publish.”

**Jessica Helfand** writer, graphic designer, educator, founding editor **DESIGN OBSERVER**

“A profound commentary on this nausea-inducing unique moment in the grand transition from Silly Mind to Machine Mind. Amusingly and smartly enough, Lehrer may have helped transition ‘the last great American novel’ to the first ‘great illustrated novel’ which is how novels started. *A Life In Books* is brilliant, beautiful, delicious for eyes and mind.”

**Andrei Codrescu** poet, novelist, editor **EXQUISITE CORPSE**, public radio commentator

“A book-lover’s fictional treat of books that never were... *A Life In Books* is ultimately about how the sadness of life is transformed into art. The book is about survival, and how life requires constant adjustment, constant compromise, and the will to find the funny line at which you won’t compromise... As Whitman said, ‘I contain multitudes,’ and Bleu Mobley contains 101 books. Wonderful!” **Michael Silverblatt BOOKWORM, KCRW**

“A meticulously illustrated chronicle... Lehrer’s 101 cover designs for Mobley’s books are pitch perfect. And like the best film title sequences, which establish moods or introduce plotlines, these fictional covers are vehicles by which Lehrer illuminates Mobley’s tale of success and failure.” **Steven Heller THE ATLANTIC**

“An ingenious first novel filled with over 100 provocative titles all written by Lehrer’s protagonist author...”

**Sam Roberts THE NEW YORK TIMES CLOSEUP**

“*A Life in Books* is a sort of Chinese puzzle whose myriad ideas, stories and characters from all parts of the globe intersect, overlap, and dovetail. Lehrer is adept at representing our multicultural society, which for him means not a sociological construct but the lives and struggles of real people. Like Art Spiegelman, Chris Ware, and Ben Katchor, he participates in the search for fresh and innovative ways to show, as well as tell, his many stories.” **Robert Berlind THE BROOKLYN RAIL**

“An entertaining and provocative work combining text and graphic art in a fascinating way.”

**Pradeep Sebastian THE HINDU**

*A Life In Books* is a masterpiece of visual storytelling, boldly integrating illustration and typography into its engaging story.”

**David Gutowski LARGEHEARTED BOY**

“*A Life In Books* challenges readers to rethink the relations of the novel to the image, and of the whole book to our contemporary world... In it, Lehrer continues to make design a constitutive element of his writing, telling the story of his fictional author through book covers, fonts, supporting documents, and a series of concepts for innovative books... *A Life In Books* succeeds beautifully as a hybrid between the graphic novel and the novel and suggests new potentials for popular literary fiction... Beautifully written.” **David Banash EYE MAGAZINE**

“A blend of writing and design, which extends to performance art... *A Life in Books* is a typographical and design tour de force.” **Ellen Shapiro PRINT MAGAZINE**

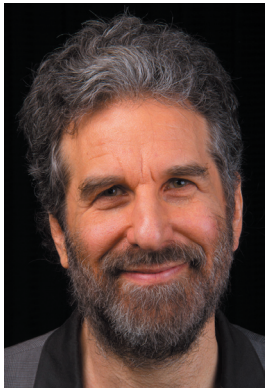
“Lehrer’s invented bibliography is a brilliant, ambitious, and compelling novel... A bold work of the imagination with so many visual touches that make dipping into the book so much fun. The essential backstory turns out to be about what the future holds for books as material objects.” **Nicholas Basbanes** author of *On Paper* **FINE BOOKS & COLLECTIONS**

“A tour de force of graphic design, illustration and writing. A funny, thought-provoking and refreshing twist on the graphic novel... Guaranteed to bring a smile.” **Ken Carbone THE HUFFINGTON POST**

“In the era of cookie-cutter books and rubber-stamped stories, Warren Lehrer’s *A Life In Books* is fresh, original, idiosyncratic, beautiful, and important.” **Rabih Alameddine** novelist, painter, author of *Koolaid, I, the Divine*

“*A Life In Books* is unlike any book I’ve every read before. For anyone who loves books—*ALIB* is a fascinating look at the life of an author, and how the books that he has written grew out of his life experiences. An amazing and very beautiful book.” **Michael Kindness BOOKS ON THE NIGHTSTAND** *Selected Books We Can’t Wait For You to Read*“

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ARTIST



**Warren Lehrer** is a writer and designer/artist known as a pioneer in the fields of visual literature and design authorship. Acclaimed for capturing the shape of thought and reuniting the oral traditions of storytelling with the printed page, Lehrer has received many awards for his books and multimedia projects including the Brendan Gill Prize, the IPPY Outstanding Book of the Year Award, the Innovative Use of Archives Award, the USA Best New Fiction Award, three AIGA Book Awards, a Media That Matters Award, a Prix Arts Electronica Award, and grants and fellowships from the NEA, NYSCA, NYFA, Rockefeller, Ford, and Greenwall Foundations. His work is in many collections including MoMA, LA County Art Museum, The Getty Museum, The Brooklyn Museum, Georges Pompidou Centre, and Tate Gallery. The *Crossing the BLVD* exhibition, connected to the book of the same name (W.W. Norton), co-authored with Judith Sloan, has toured 15 sites around the US. Lehrer is also a performer and playwright. His performances and plays have been presented at many venues including La MaMa Experimental Theatre, The Knitting Factory, The Painted Bride, the Market Theatre (Johannesberg), and the Theatre Workshop (Edinburgh). He is a frequent lecturer and keynote speaker. Lehrer's multimedia performance/reading tour of *A Life In Books* began with his Keynote Speaker presentation at the NY Art Book Fair at PS1 MoMA and continues throughout the US and Canada at conferences, festivals, universities, art centers, and bookstores. Lehrer is a Full Professor at Purchase College, SUNY, and a founding faculty member of the *Designer As Author* grad program at the School of Visual Arts (SVA). Together with Judith Sloan, he founded EarSay, a non-profit arts organization in Queens, NY, dedicated to uncovering and portraying stories of the uncelebrated. *A Life In Books* is Lehrer's 10th book; his first novel.

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“In Lehrer's books, words take on thought's very form, bringing sensory experience to the reader as directly as ink on paper can allow... Once considered too far ahead of his time. Now the times are beginning to catch up to him.”  
**The New York Times Book Review** *Julie Lasky*

“In Warren Lehrer's extraordinary books, full of typographic innovation, he seeks to trap thought, sound, and speech in time and space on the printed page. The result is theater... The reader (viewer/listener) experiences the pathos within the mundane aspects of everyday life... reality, fantasy, along with art and literature, travel parallel but inseparable roads...” **Print Magazine** *Philip Meggs*

“Lehrer's books defy conventional notions of writing and bookmaking... Their stories echo in your mind long after the sound of them has ceased...” **The Chronicle of Higher Education** *Zoe Ingalls*

“One of the most imaginative and ambitious book artists of our time.”  
**American Book Review** *Richard Kostelantetz*

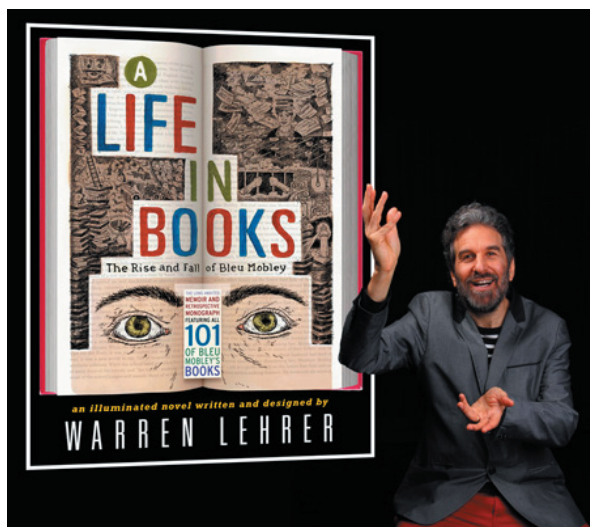
“Lehrer creates a rich soundscape in the reader's imagination... correlating the rhythm of language to the way the mind works... His books explore the rich dissonance of sound and life surrounding each of us... challenging the line between life and art...” **Afterimage** *Nancy Soloman*

“Lehrer's books suggest the possibility of a new literary genre that makes full use of design's rhetorical dimension. Unlike so many contemporary graphic stylists, he begins from a deep engagement with content he has created himself.” **FRIEZE Magazine** *Rick Poynor*

“Lehrer pioneered what might be best termed “typographic performance” in his 1984 book/play *French Fries*, that is today considered by historians one of the lynchpins of the deconstructionist era... An astute urban sociological study (Margaret Mead meets Jane Jacobs), more importantly, *Crossing the BLVD* highlights the richness of a poly-cultural critical mass representing ‘the new’ New York. Eloquent, poignant, and smartly designed... an entirely satisfying piece of design and authorship.” **Eye Magazine** *Steve Heller*

“A celebratory chronicle of the immigrant experience in New York, *Crossing the BLVD* is a Whitmanesque book that reveals a staggering array of humanity... [it] chronicles life in Gotham in both its despair and boundless promise.” **Winner 2004 Brendan Gill Prize**

## Lehrer's A LIFE IN BOOKS Performance/Reading Tour/Residencies/Videos



In his funny, thought provoking multimedia performance/readings, Warren Lehrer presents an overview of Bleu Mobley's life in books via many of Mobley's book cover designs, book-like objects, and other *biographical* materials including animations and video performances of Mobley book excerpts by the band BETTY, actress/poet La Bruja, and beatbox artist Chesney Snow. The resulting retrospective focuses on the creative process of a writer/artist, as it reflects upon a half century of American/global events, and grapples with the future of the book as a medium and the lines that separate and blur truth, myth, and fiction.

Lehrer's A LIFE IN BOOKS tour began as a Keynote Speaker presentation at the NY Art Book Fair Conference at PS1 MoMA, and continues with appearances throughout the U.S. and Canada at festivals, conferences, theaters, universities, literary centers, and book stores.

### College Residencies/A LIFE IN BOOKS as a Teaching Tool

At some colleges and universities Lehrer also presents lectures on *Visual Literature* and uses A LIFE IN BOOKS as a teaching tool. As the Frederic W. Goudy Lecturer at Scripps College, he conducted an "UnBlankness" workshop using A LIFE IN BOOKS as a springboard for generating writing, book, and multimedia project ideas. In his residency at Rutgers University, classes in writing and design collaborated on fleshing out several Bleu Mobley books based on the excerpt(s) in A LIFE IN BOOKS. There was also an exhibition of select Bleu Mobley book covers and a retrospective of Lehrer's bookworks at The Dana Library at Rutgers/Newark. The complete A LIFE IN BOOKS exhibition presents itself as a Bleu Mobley retrospective and will travel to different sites. For more information about Warren's tour, the traveling exhibition, or to receive a copy of the A LIFE IN BOOKS Study Guide, contact [judith@earsay.org](mailto:judith@earsay.org)

### Theater Residency

Lehrer was awarded a 2014 Theater Residency at the LaGuardia Performing Arts Center in LIC, NY, where he developed the theatrical presentation culminating in a performance with help from direction and dramaturgy by Claire Lebowitz.

### Videos, Enhanced e-book, Awards

Lehrer received a New York State Council on the Arts Film and Electronic Media Grant to produce animations and short films which are used in Lehrer's performance presentations and online as digital enhancements to the hardcover edition of A LIFE IN BOOKS. One of the nine awards listed on the first page of this press release that A LIFE IN BOOKS has been honored with is a Best In Show Award at the CBAA (College Book Art Association) Biennial Exhibition/Conference. The award was given to A LIFE IN BOOKS in part because of the way "Lehrer used animation and video as an extension of the book."