

Bestselling author speaks about novel at Book People



[Book People](#) hosted New York Times bestselling author Karen Thompson Walker on Friday to speak about her award-winning debut novel, "The Age of Miracles" about a woman describing her experiences when the earth's rotation suddenly begins to slow. This "slowing" increases the length of days to 30, 40 or more hours and drastically affects all aspects of daily life on earth. Hilltop Views sat down with the author about her novel and writing process.

Brooke Blanton: "The Age of Miracles" has received immense critical acclaim, what was your reaction to it becoming a New York Times bestseller?

Karen Thompson Walker: Shock...also excitement obviously, but mostly shock.

BB: The book is told from the point of view of an 11-year-old girl, why did you choose this age?

KTW: As soon as I started writing this story and I had the idea for the slowing of the rotation of the earth, I had the idea that the voice should be somebody looking back on when it happened. Something about having it happen at a time when that voice and that person was a child just felt right. I think it's partly because an adult looking back on childhood, it's always a story about a lost era for them, their own lost childhood. Since the whole book is partly about the lost era of how life on earth once was, it seemed like the right fit. And I also think adolescence is just a really interesting time of life.

BB: Can you describe the research process that went into writing your book?

KTW: I mostly did my own research, because I did want it to be really realistic. I did research on human circadian rhythms, how much sunlight plants need, how people build industrial greenhouses...and a little bit of

physics research. Astrophysics research was sort of the scariest and hardest part. I didn't show it to an astrophysicist until I had sold it. I felt that I didn't quite have the nerve. After I sold it I showed it to an astrophysicist and he showed me how much was based in real science and helped me fix some things that I had misunderstood.

BB: Did you have a previous interest in astrophysics?

KTW: I love science of all kinds. I don't have any expertise in it but I love to read the science section of the newspaper or books about science. I've always been interested in things related to the cosmos, but I don't have any training or expertise in it. Except for the research I did for this book.

BB: You referenced Ray Bradbury's "All Summer in a Day" in your book, what appealed to you about this short story?

KTW: I just remember it from childhood when I read it. When I got to the point that I wanted Julia, the main character, to be reading something in class it just seemed right to include that story which is also about a young girl and something strange happening in the outside world related to sunlight. It seemed like a nice fit.

BB: Where did you go to school and when did you start writing?

KTW: I went to college at UCLA then I got an MFA at Columbia in creative writing and fiction. I guess I started writing as a child but I started fiction and short stories really seriously in college.

BB: How long did it take you to write "The Age of Miracles"?

KTW: Almost four years. It started as a short story a couple of years earlier and I had set it aside. By the time I came back to it and started turning it into a novel, that was four years.

BB: What are your personal favorite types of books to read?

KTW: My favorite books are those that combine a flair for language. Interesting writing but with a gripping narrative. One that has a great plot but also great writing.

BB: And last question, what are your hopes and plans for your writing career?

KTW: I just hope to keep writing and getting to publish books. I'm working on a new novel and I'm in the early stages.