

Books

Scotiabank Giller Prize-winning author Ian Williams to write a book of essays about race, due out in fall 2021

Titled *Disorientation*, the nonfiction book explores being Black and the diversity of Black lives.

[Ryan B. Patrick](#) · Posted: Aug 12, 2020 10:33 AM ET | Last Updated: August 12



Ian Williams is a Brampton, Ont.-raised poet and writer. (Justin Morris)

Ian Williams, author of the 2019 Scotiabank Giller Prize-winning novel *Reproduction*, is writing a book about race.

The nonfiction book, titled *Disorientation: The Experience of Being Black in the World*, will be released in the fall of 2021.

Disorientation is inspired by the essays of the late American author James Baldwin in *Notes of a Native Son* and *Nobody Knows my Name*. The forthcoming book will explore issues such as the nature of Black identity and being Black in the world.

The Brampton, Ont.-raised, Vancouver-based Williams is a poet, author and professor at the University of British Columbia. He told [CBC Books](#) that he wanted to explore the diversity of Black lives and his personal experience of growing up as a Black Canadian.

- **[Being Black in Canada: Highlights the stories and experiences of Black Canadians](#)**

Disorientation, to be published by Random House Canada, will feature essays that look at the "disorientation" of discovering one's own Black identity as a child, the significance of Black faces and bodies in fomenting division, how Black people support each other in the face of racial disorientation and what it often means to be the only Black person in a room.

"How does one engage with the explosive world of race and privilege? In a culture that demands statements from corporations and pressures individuals to lay their politics bare on inhospitable platforms, many of us have had to rethink how we translate our personal, inarticulate convictions for public inspection," Williams told [CBC Books](#) in an email.



Ian Williams
@ianwillwrite



There's been a lot of talk about systemic change emerging from the current racial justice movements and BLM. [@PenguinRandomCA](#) actually put their money where their mouth is.



Denise Bukowski @BukowskiD

Canadian rights to Giller Prize-winning author @ianwillwrite's *DISORIENTATION: THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING BLACK IN THE WORLD*, inspired by James Baldwin and revealing the diversity of Black lives not covered in existing books, have gone to @acollins52 of Random House Canada.



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When Williams [won the \\$100,000 Scotiabank Giller Prize in 2019](#) for his debut novel *Reproduction*, he joined a select group of Black Canadian writers who had previously accomplished the feat — including [Esi](#)

Edugyan (*Washington Black* in 2018 and *Half-Blood Blues* in 2011), André Alexis (*Fifteen Dogs* in 2015) and Austin Clarke (*The Polished Hoe* in 2002).

Reproduction, which examines race, class, gender and geography through the story of Felicia and her teenage son Army, was also shortlisted for the 2019 Amazon Canada First Novel Award.

- **Ian Williams explores race, class and identity in his debut novel, *Reproduction***

Williams's previous books include the 2012 poetry collection *Personals*, which was shortlisted for the Griffin Poetry Prize and the Robert Kroetsch Poetry Book Award, and the 2011 short story collection *Not Anyone's Anything*.

His newest poetry collection, *Word Problems*, will be released in September 2020.