

ONE

2025

BOOK

ONE

DENVER

**The story that
connects a city.**



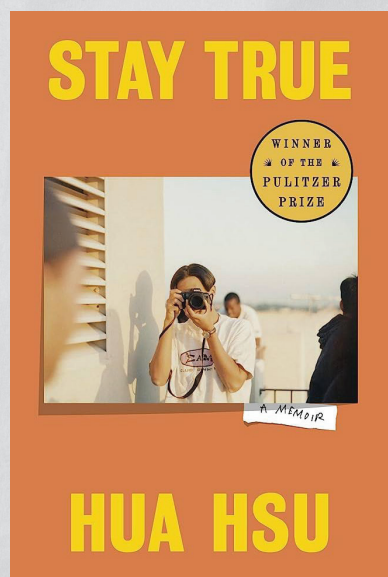
DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY

One Story. One City. Let's Read!

One Book One Denver invites adults across the city to read and reflect on one book at the same time to spark conversation, inspire creativity, and make connections. Together, each year, we'll explore the themes and perspectives presented in one book to uplift diverse voices and create space for dialogue, reflection, and discovery.

For more details, visit denverlibrary.org/obod.

2025 Book Selection: *Stay True* by Hua Hsu



In the award winning memoir, *Stay True* (2022) Hsu explores his '90s coming of age tale of an unexpected friendship with Ken, whose mainstream interests clash with his own alternative sensibilities. Following Ken's tragic death, Hua begins writing to preserve his friend's memory. This memoir explores memory, grief, identity, the endurance of connection, and the healing power of creativity.

- #58 on *The New York Times*' 100 Best Books of the 21st Century
- 2022 *The New York Times* Top 10 Book of the Year
- 2022 National Book Critics Circle Award for Autobiography
- *The New Yorker*'s Best Book of 2022
- *Publishers Weekly* best nonfiction book of 2022
- 2023 Pulitzer Prize for Memoir or Autobiography

"[*Stay True* is] writing at its most open, meticulous, forgiving and tender—which is to say, this is writing at its best."

—Ocean Vuong, author of *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*
(*New York Times* bestseller)



"Hua pays tribute to his friend by bringing their shared memories to life, elevating the entire memoir genre 'with a kind of athletic ease'"

—*Vanity Fair*

Hua Hsu is a staff writer at *The New Yorker* and is also the author of *A Floating Chinaman: Fantasy and Failure Across the Pacific* (2016). His work covers topics ranging from immigrant culture and student debt to hip hop and affirmative action.

In addition, Hsu is a 2016 New America Fellows Alumni and a 2020 fellow of the New York Public Library's Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers. As a Bard College professor, Hsu serves on the boards of the Asian American Writers' Workshop and Critical Minded.



"[Hua has become a] literary phenomenon."

—*The New York Times*

"[Hua has] crafted a transformative addition to the Asian American canon and to the critical conception of what a memoir is capable of."

—The National Book Critics Circles

"The things that make Hua Hsu's writing so singular — his searching grace, his rigorous sensitivity, his ability to make a living world out of the seemingly liminal — crystallize in this once-in-a-lifetime book."

—Jia Tolentino, *Trick Mirror* (New York Times bestseller)

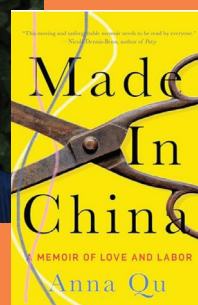
Author Hua Hsu In Conversation With Anna Qu

Friday, September 5, 6:30-9 p.m.

Denver Central Library

10 W. 14th Ave., Denver, 80204

Meet Hua Hsu in person and hear his discussion with Anna Qu, author of *Made in China: A Memoir of Love and Labor*. Bring your questions along with your copy of *Stay True* to be signed. Doors open at 6 p.m.



Stay True Reader's Guide

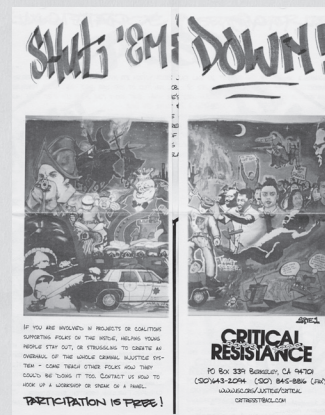
Book Club Discussion Questions

1. *Stay True* opens with a meditation on Hua's friend group taking long drives all over the Bay Area. From there, transportation and movement become recurring motifs throughout the book. What role does this motif play in the memoir and how does it change throughout the memoir?



2. *Stay True* is set in California during the 1990s when technology is changing at a rapid pace. How does that impact Hua's experience of growing up?
3. How do the two eras (Hua's coming of age in the 1990s and Hua's parents' arrival in the 1960s) relate to each other throughout the book? Does the publication date (2022) impact the narrative?

4. How does Hua use music to discover his own identity and interact with the world around him?
5. Why do Ken and Hua become close friends despite their differences? How does their relationship evolve?
6. What generational differences appear between Hua and his parents? In what ways was Hua's experience growing up different from Ken's experience of growing up in a Japanese American family?
7. What role do cultural theorists like Derrida and Mauss play in the story? How do their ideas surface among Hua's friends?
8. How does zine culture influence Hua's creativity? How does grief shape his artistic process?
9. How does Hua's perception of Ken change before and after his death? Does Ken's death shift Hua's view of himself?
10. The phrase *Stay True* was an inside joke between Hua and Ken. What does it mean in the context of the memoir? What does it mean to you?



Stay True Book Discussions

Tuesday, August 19, 2:30-4 p.m., Ross-Broadway Branch Library @ Hirschfeld Towers, 333 W. Ellsworth Ave., 80223

Thursday, August 28, 6-7 p.m., Petals and Pages, 956 Santa Fe Dr., 80204

Thursday, August 28, 6-8 p.m., Shop at MATTER, 2114 Market St., 80205

Tuesday, September 9, 7-8 p.m., Downtown Bookies @ Denver Art Museum, Martin Building, Level 1, Creative Hub, Sky Blue Room, 100 W 14th Ave Pkwy

Friday, September 12, 6 p.m., Lighthouse Writers, 3844 York St, Denver, 80205

Tuesday, September 30, 6-7 p.m., Petals and Pages, 956 Santa Fe Dr, Denver, 80204

Sunday, October 5, 11 a.m.-12 p.m., Sam Gary Branch Library, 2961 Roslyn St., 80238

Monday, September 8, 6-8 p.m., Maria Empanada Restaurant, 1298 S. Broadway, 80210 (Spanish)

More Events

All events are free and will fill up fast. Register to reserve your spot! denlib.org/obod-events

What Remains Exhibition

Friday, August 8–Saturday, September 27

Colorado Photographic Arts Center, 200 Lincoln St., Ste. 111, 80203

Features explore memory and grief through personal, evocative visual narratives by Carl Bower, Dana Stirling, and Emily (Billie) Warnock.

Driveways (2019) Film Screening

Explore connection, grief, and healing in the story of a boy who bonds with his elderly neighbor while helping his mother clean out a relative's home.

- Sunday, August 17, 2-4 p.m., Green Valley Ranch Branch, 4856 N. Andes Ct., 80249
- Wednesday, September 10, 7:30-9:30 p.m., Sam Gary Branch, 2961 Roslyn St., 80238

Silent Pages Society

Thursday, August 21, 5:30-8 p.m., MCA Denver, 1485 Delgany St, 80202

Bring your own book, find a spot, and read in shared silence beneath the sky. Registration required at denlib.org/sps.

The Zine Scene

Explore identity, storytelling, and creative self expression in zine making with the Denver Zine Library.

- Saturday, September 20, 1:30-2:30 p.m., Bob Raglan Branch, 1900 35th St., Ste. A, 80216
- Wednesday, August 27, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Sam Gary Branch, 2961 Roslyn St., 80238
- Thursday, September 4, 5-6 p.m., Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales Branch, 1498 N. Irving St., 80204
- Wednesday, September 17, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Hampden Branch, 9755 E. Girard Ave., 80231

Show & Tell: Sharing the Stories Behind Our Personal Objects

Bring a meaningful object and share its story in a reflective, supportive gathering to connect through the things we carry.

- Saturday, August 23, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Park Hill Branch, 4705 Montview Blvd., 80207
- Sunday, September 21, 3-4 p.m., Hampden Branch, 9755 E. Girard Ave., 80231

Craft Lessons from *Stay True*: A Four Week Workshop (\$245 fee)

Every Wednesday,
September 17 - October 8, 4-6 p.m.,
Lighthouse Writers Workshop,
3844 York St., 80205

Explore grief, identity, and cultural memory through close reading and guided exercises. Register at lighthousewriters.org

Hard Times Writers Workshop

Using themes from *Stay True*, reflect, connect, and write with others navigating poverty, addiction, or housing instability.

- Saturday, August 30, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Montbello Branch, 12955 Albrook Dr., 80239
- Saturday, September 13, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Bob Raglan Branch, 1900 35th St., Ste. A, 80216
- Saturday, September 27, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Decker Branch, 1501 S. Logan St., 80210
- Saturday, October 4, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Ford-Warren Branch, 2825 High St., 80205

Using Objects to Tell Our Stories

Explore memory and meaning through personal objects in this creative writing workshop led by poet Suzi Q Smith.

- Saturday, August 30, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Woodbury Branch, 3265 Federal Blvd., 80211
- Sunday, September 28, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Ross-University Hills Branch, 4310 E. Amherst Ave., 80222
- Tuesday, September 30, 4:30-7:30 p.m., Blair-Caldwell AARL, 2401 Welton St., 80205

Mix Tape Memories

Create a 12 track mix tape that tells your story through music, memory, and emotion—no music knowledge needed.

- Wednesday, September 3, 3:30-5 p.m., Ross-Cherry Creek Branch, 305 Milwaukee St., 80206
- Friday, September 12, 3-4 p.m., Blair-Caldwell AARL, 2401 Welton St., 80205

Print Workshop at MATTER

Saturday, September 6, 12-3 p.m., The Shop at MATTER, 2114 Market St., 80205
Create a letterpressed memory inspired by a personal memory with the artists at MATTER. 10 participants max.

Notes on *Held Impermanence*: Guided Tour

Sunday, September 7, 1:30-2:30 p.m., Clyfford Still Museum, 1250 Bannock St., 80204
Explore themes of grief and memory at the intersection of visual art and literature. Registration required.

Nostalgia Photography Walk

Monday, September 8, 9:30-10:30 a.m., Hampden Branch, 9755 E. Girard Ave., 80231
Capture moments from your past and present in this short walk-and-shoot session inspired by *Stay True*. Bring your phone or camera—no experience needed.

Denver Zine Fest 2025

Sunday, September 14, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Central Branch, 10 W 14th Ave. Pkwy., 80204
Discover zines, art, and indie publishing at this daylong marketplace featuring creators from Colorado and beyond. Celebrate DIY storytelling and community in an accessible, welcoming space.

The Enthusiasts: *Stay True*

Tuesday, September 16, 7:30-9 p.m., Buntport Theater, 717 Lipan St., 80204
A lively evening of fast-paced mini-presentations inspired by themes from *Stay True*. Three presenters share personal passions, followed by a Q&A with the audience.

***Stay True* '90s Music Scavenger Hunt**

Friday, September 19, 5:30-7 p.m., Wax Trax's Used Record Store, 638 E 13th Ave, 80203
Hunt for '90s albums mentioned in *Stay True* on a self-guided scavenger hunt at Wax Trax's used vinyl shop. Find records, listen in store, and compete for a chance to win a Wax Trax tote.

Pasar Southeast Asia

Sunday, September 21, 3 p.m., Levitt Pavilion, 1380 W. Florida Ave., 80223
Celebrate Southeast Asian culture with live music, art, and food in the event featuring Gamelan Tunas Mekar, a Balinese ensemble led by I Made Lasmawan.

Enter the Dragon Film Screening

Wednesday, September 10, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Sie Film Center, 2510 E Colfax Ave., 80206
Watch Bruce Lee's legendary 1973 martial arts film on the big screen. A post-film conversation with Dr. Ping Qiu (University of Denver) will explore themes of masculinity, media, and cultural identity.

**Colorado Dragon Boat Festival 25th Anniversary**

Saturday, September 6, 10 a.m.-7 p.m. and Sunday, September 7, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sloan's Lake Park, 1700 N Sheridan Blvd, 80212
Honor and celebrate Asian heritage with a weekend of racing (8 a.m.-dusk), food, art, and performances.

Tell Us What You Think—Get a Tote!

We want to hear from you. One Book One Denver is a citywide celebration built for this community—and your feedback helps shape what comes next.

Take the survey and score a limited edition OBOD tote bag!

You'll also be entered to win a goodie bag featuring:

- A \$25 gift card to Alamo Drafthouse
- A \$25 gift card to Wax Trax Records
- A \$25 gift card to Petals & Pages

This quick, anonymous survey takes just 3-5 minutes.



Take the survey now
denlib.org/obod-survey

Thank you for being part of OBOD 2025. Let's *Stay True*—together.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to our One Book One Denver partners and supporters across the Denver Public Library system, our community collaborators, and the countless readers, artists, and neighbors who make this citywide celebration possible. This program would not be possible without the contributions of staff across DPL locations.

