

# N. K. JEMISIN



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# BIOGRAPHY

## 20 words

N. K. Jemisin is a New York Times bestselling and Hugo Award-winning author; she is a MacArthur 2020 Genius Grant Fellow.

## 50 words

N. K. Jemisin is the first author in the genre's history to win three consecutive Best Novel Hugos, for her Broken Earth trilogy. Her most recent novel is the NYT-bestselling THE CITY WE BECAME, the first in the Great Cities trilogy. She is a MacArthur 2020 Genius Grant Fellow. She lives and writes in New York City.

## 150 words

N. K. Jemisin is the first author in the genre's history to win three consecutive Best Novel Hugo Awards, for her Broken Earth trilogy. Her work has won the Nebula and Locus Awards, and she is a 2020 MacArthur Genius Grant Fellow. The first book in her current Great Cities trilogy, THE CITY WE BECAME, is a New York Times bestseller. Her speculative works range from fantasy to science fiction to the undefinable; her themes include resistance to oppression, the inseparability of the liminal, and the coolness of Stuff Blowing Up. She's been an instructor for Clarion and Clarion West writing workshops. Among other critical work, she was formerly the science fiction and fantasy book reviewer at the New York Times. In her spare time she's a gamer and gardener, responsible for saving the world from KING Ozzymandias, her dangerously intelligent ginger cat, and his destructive sidekick Magpie.

**(cont.)**

## **Extended**

N. K. Jemisin was raised in Mobile, Alabama and New York City. Uprooted in two places, her childhood anchor was fiction; she spent hours at the local library, and "self-published" her own handwritten books with cardboard covers and yarn binding.

Despite writing since childhood, she considered it to be just a hobby until her early thirties. After attending the Viable Paradise writing workshop, she began seeking publication in earnest. Although she acquired an agent in 2005, her first novel (THE KILLING MOON, eventually published in 2012) did not initially sell, as the genre at the time was significantly less welcoming to inclusive fantasy. Instead she rewrote from scratch an old "trunked" novel -- which sold at six-figure auction to become THE HUNDRED THOUSAND KINGDOMS (2010) and its sequels. In 2016, her novel THE FIFTH SEASON (2015) won the Hugo Award for Best Novel, making Jemisin the first black person to have won in this category. In 2017 she won again for THE OBELISK GATE (2016), and then a third time in 2018 for THE STONE SKY, making her the first author in genre history to have won the Best Novel Hugo three consecutive times. In all, her short fiction and novels have won Hugos, a Nebula, and two Locus Awards, and have been translated into more than 20 languages. Her current Great Cities trilogy is ongoing, beginning with the New York Times bestselling THE CITY WE BECAME. She is a MacArthur 2020 Genius Grant Fellow.

Jemisin's most frequent themes include resistance to oppression, the inseparability of the liminal, and the coolness of Stuff Blowing Up. She has been an advocate for the long tradition of science fiction and fantasy as political resistance, and previously championed genre as a New York Times Book reviewer. She lives in Brooklyn.

# FAQ

## What have you written?

### NOVELS

#### The Inheritance Trilogy

- The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms (2009)
- The Broken Kingdoms (2010)
- The Kingdom of Gods (2011)
- "The Awakened Kingdom" novella (2014)
- Shades in Shadow story collection (2015)

#### The Dreamblood Duology

- The Killing Moon (2012)
- The Shadowed Sun (2012)

#### The Broken Earth Series

- The Fifth Season (2015)
- The Obelisk Gate (2016)
- The Stone Sky (2017)

#### The Great Cities

- The City We Became (2020)

### COLLECTIONS

- Best American Science Fiction and Fantasy 2018 (ed.)
- How Long 'Til Black Future Month? (2018)

### COMICS AND GRAPHIC NOVELS

- Green Lantern: Far Sector (2019-2020)

### SELECT SHORT FICTION

- "The City Born Great": <https://www.tor.com/2016/09/28/the-city-born-great/>
- "Valedictorian," *After: Nineteen Stories of Apocalypse and Dystopia*
- "The Evaluators": <https://www.wired.com/2016/12/nk-jemisin-the-evaluators/>
- "The Storyteller's Replacement" (*How Long 'Til Black Future Month*, reprinted in *Best American Science Fiction & Fantasy 2019*)

full bibliography at <http://nkjemisin.com/bibliography/>

### **Where do you get your ideas?**

They're delivered in the morning mail. Support the US Postal Service!

### **So you're Black! And a woman! What's that about?**

I understand why these questions are important. It is disheartening that people keep asking them, however, or some version of them. At this point, for me, these questions are a reflection the larger problem – that for those who are Other, our first job is always to explain ourselves to the Us. Therefore I ask that interviewers stop doing it, and think of something more interesting to ask.

### **When did you know you wanted to be a writer?**

Always. As a kid I devoured books at the library, and at home I would make my own handwritten books with cardboard covers and yarn binding. I've always wanted to write.

### **How did you become a writer?**

Nobody bought the ones with cardboard covers, so I had to write some better ones.

Serious answer: I've been writing since the age of 8 or so, but only began seriously seeking publication in my late twenties and early thirties. Then I went to a writing workshop (Viable Paradise), and from there on I wrote short stories to hone my craft and novels to tell the stories I wanted to tell. I sent the stories to magazines and the books to agents. I worked until I found the right one for me, and then we worked together for years before the *Hundred Thousand Kingdoms* sold. I kept a folder of rejections as motivation to keep going. I don't know where it is any more, which feels like as good a measure of success as anything else.

### **How do I become a writer?**

Unfortunately there is no one who can answer this for you the way that you want it answered. You become a writer by writing, and if that by itself makes you happy, you've succeeded already. To have a writing *career* means a lot of small-business management, market research, patience, and perseverance. The good news is that social media has made it much easier to do the work. The bad news is, no one can give you the patience or the perseverance. Good luck.

### **How do you keep writing?**

By not writing. Diligence is very important for a writer, especially a writer on a contract. However, if that's all you do, you will absolutely burn out, and recovery time for burnout is much longer than a few hours every night to do literally anything else. So, in order to keep writing, I go play *Skyrim* and fill stone towers full of cheese (among other things).

# RESOURCES

## INTERVIEWS

The New Yorker, 2020 <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/01/27/nk-jemisins-dream-worlds>

Paris Review, 2018 <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2018/12/03/a-true-utopia-an-interview-with-n-k-jemisin/>

GQ, 2018 <https://www.gq.com/story/nk-jemisin-is-trying-to-keep-the-world-from-ending>

Vulture, 2018  
<https://www.vulture.com/2018/11/nk-jemisin-fifth-season-broken-earth-trilogy.html>

## SELECT BLOG POSTS

How Long 'Til Black Future Month?  
<http://nkjemisin.com/2013/09/how-long-til-black-future-month/>

Dreaming Awake  
<http://nkjemisin.com/2012/02/dreaming-awake/>

Carving a New World  
<http://nkjemisin.com/2011/12/carving-a-new-world/>