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# No one's griping about the lines at this museum

Carey Cranston, president of Chicago's new American Writers Museum, shares his favorite first sentences

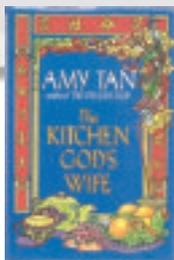
"Ships at a distance have every man's wish on board."



*Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston

"This singular line carries a huge impact, and sets a great thoughtful tone for a work about how one woman's life is tied to three men who have very different wishes about their ships at a distance."

"Whenever my mother talks to me, she begins the conversation as if we were already in the middle of an argument."



*The Kitchen God's Wife* by Amy Tan

"There's a humor and reality here that establishes a common fact almost any reader can connect to: that there is always a difference in our relationship with our parents than with anyone else in the world."

*A Confederacy of Dunces* by John Kennedy Toole

"Ignatius J. Reilly is one of the greatest comic characters of American literature. From the outset, the author sets the tone of who he is, from his balloon of a head to his absurd, but comfortable, manner of dress."

[americanwritersmuseum.org](http://americanwritersmuseum.org)

"A green hunting cap squeezed the top of the fleshy balloon of a head."



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# Jefferson is stepping aside for John Doe

A new museum looks at the American Revolution through the eyes of ordinary people

WE ALL KNOW THE SUPERSTARS OF 1776: Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington. But what about the men and women whose contributions to the cause have been overlooked? Philadelphia's new Museum of the American Revolution (opening April 19) gives them a voice.

Dr. R. Scott Stephenson, the museum's vice president of collections, exhibitions and programming, says visitors will experience General Washington's first winter as the Continental Army's commander through the eyes of a 10-year-old Massachusetts boy, stand among the Oneida Indian Nation as they deliberate whether to support the British or colonists and follow the lives of enslaved Africans as they embark on daring quests for freedom.

The museum also provides a direct link between the past and the present. Among the relics on display is a pair of red baby booties made from the coat of a British soldier, donated by archaeologist James Richardson, a descendant of Sgt. James Davenport, who fought between 1777–1783. "My family kept everything, and my grandmother hammered into us that we were descendants of the Mayflower and the Revolutionary War," Richardson says. "Being a part of this history means a lot to us, and I donated these things for fear, over time, they would eventually disappear." —KIMBERLEY LOVATO [amrevmuseum.org](http://amrevmuseum.org)

