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### TECH

Spring/Summer 2025

#### **Greenwood Rising: Immersion and Interpellation**

Thomas Conner

“The room looks like an old barbershop. A long mirror stretches across the far wall, with three barber’s chairs in front of it. Towels, scissors, and other items are strewn about, but they’re just set dressing. Tulsa’s Greenwood Rising is less about staring at artifacts and more about historical immersion. A trio of holograms appears in the mirror and invites visitors, often just passive onlookers, to become active participants in their world of 1921. Inert objects can only say so much, but the animated ghosts of Greenwood Avenue have much to say.”

### FABRIC

Fall/Winter 2024

#### ***African Wax Prints***

Based on an exhibition curated by Dr. Gifty Afua Benson

“In February 2024, Oklahomans had the opportunity to experience a unique and beautiful exhibition when *Wandering Spirit: African Wax Prints* opened at the Oklahoma Center for the Humanities in Tulsa. It traced the history of African wax prints along colonial trade routes, across three continents, and through globalization in the post-colonial era, affirming that although not originally African, wax prints are ingrained in African culture where people love and identify them as their own.”

## ***A Crazy Quilt***

Rilla Askew

“Following the turbulent 1930s, Oklahoman Woody Guthrie penned his famous lyrics *This land is your land, this land is my land*, and the song is still widely sung in schools, at rallies, and community celebrations. Often, though, it seems that only the second half of the chorus is really meant—this land is *my* land. This land is *our* land. Meaning people who look like me, speak like me, have the same histories as me. How do we stand united as Americans when there seems to be so much that divides us? Books can be a great starting place. They foster cross-cultural understanding, empathy, and community resilience by introducing readers to works that recognize the myriad ways *we* are *they*, and *they* are *us*.

## **GO**

Spring/Summer 2024

## ***Henry Box Brown: A Man in Motion***

Kimberly Roblin

“A man in motion remains in motion. Slavery sought to stagnate Henry Brown, but he saw, defined, and understood the world through movement. He was a man on the move, a man who perfected entrances and, most famously, an exit... Virginia law might have considered his life a noun, an object to be bought, sold, or inherited, but not Brown. His life was a verb.”

## **STORIES**

Fall/Winter 2023

## ***Patience, Perspective, and the Power of Story***

An interview with Toni Ann Johnson by Scott LaMascus

“Storyteller Toni Ann Johnson uses her skills as an actor, playwright, and fiction writer to tell powerful stories of race, reconciliation, and the effects of lingering racism. She is award-winning on stage and screen, and most recently with her story collection *Light Skin Gone to Waste*, selected for the 2021 Flannery O’Connor Award for Short Fiction. When I spoke to Johnson in Los Angeles and later by email, we explored the role stories can play in our understanding of truths, including matters many would rather forget.”

## ***The Kept and the Killed***

Erica X Eisen

“Begun as part of the alphabet soup of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal policies, the Farm Security Administration (FSA) had been tasked with resettling struggling farmers onto more fertile ground, providing education about agricultural science, and giving loans for the purchase of land, feed, and livestock. Arguably its most enduring legacy today, however, is the hundreds of thousands of photographs the agency produced to document the plight of destitute farmers, many of whom were trapped in an inescapable pit of debt made deeper still by the environmental devastation of the Dust Bowl.”

***Killing the Negative: Poetic Interventions***

Poem by Quraysh Ali Lansana and Art by Joel Daniel Phillips

***Shaping Cultural Memory***

Sarah Milligan

“If we have learned nothing else from the long history of collecting objects to reflect our past, it might be that everyone has a role. Representation matters in these history-saving spaces. When we empower everyone to shape their own story, when we gather these narratives and objects with a conscious eye for who and what is missing, the result is more than a collection to be visited. It is a living cultural trust through which we remember and better understand the stories of *us*.”

**FOOD**

Spring/Summer 2023

***Food Lessons from the Dust Bowl***

Mary Larson

“Resources were in short supply during the Dust Bowl years of the 1930s, especially in the hard-hit farming and rural communities of Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, New Mexico, and Colorado. Under the sharp realities of this scarcity, food was more than just fuel for bodies; it signified comfort and community, as reflected in oral histories, journals, diaries, letters, and newspapers of the period.”

**CODE**

Spring/Summer 2022

***Melvil Dewey and the Bias of Code***

Sarah Olzawski

“Public libraries and the organizational ‘code’ we use to access information developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Though largely invisible to public library users, classification codes are the hidden architecture that enable the seamless discovery of information.” One of the mostly commonly used today is the Dewey Decimal System, plagued with inherent limitations and bias that librarians work to overcome as they strive toward equity and inclusion.

**CROSSROADS**

Fall/Winter 2021

***Charting a Course for True North***

Caroline Lowery

Executive Director, Caroline Lowery, delivered reflective remarks at the Tulsa Race Massacre Centennial Symposium in 2021 and urged everyone to look to the humanities for direction.

***Toward “One Tulsa”***

Hannibal B. Johnson

The 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre left transgenerational racial trauma for Tulsa’s Black community and a legacy of silence about the devastating loss of life and property. As Tulsa and the world commemorated the centennial of the Massacre in 2021, author Hannibal Johnson contextualized Tulsa’s struggle for reconciliation along the arc of oppression against Black Americans, from 1619 slavery through present-day protests and policing, that gave rise to the modern civil rights chants of “Black lives matter,” “I can’t breathe,” and “Say my name.”

***Photographing the Tulsa Massacre***

A conversation with Karlos K. Hill by Daniel Simon

Simon and Hill discuss the role of photography in documenting historic events as well as its role in current debates about racial justice. “While not their intention, white Tulsans who snapped pictures of Greenwood’s destruction made it possible for future generations to bear witness to what occurred,” Hill argues. “Without the photos of Greenwood’s destruction, I believe it would be more difficult to convince people now of the scale of violence that took place.”

***Djeli***

Kalenda Eaton

“A djeli (commonly known as a griot) is a West African storyteller who is the keeper of oral tradition and village history. This creative essay, based on the author’s family history, is written to honor speakers, perspectives, and storytelling traditions carried by Black women.”

***Breaking Down Barriers***

David W. Levy

Levy documents the struggle to end segregated education through the experience of George McLaurin, the first African American to attend The University of Oklahoma. This essay is adapted from *Breaking Down Barriers: George McLaurin and the Struggle to End Segregated Education* by David Levy and published by The University of Oklahoma Press.

***Reflections on a Beleaguered Symbol***

Tonnia L. Anderson

Tonnia Anderson explores the intersection of history, heritage, and hate associated with the Confederate Flag. “To move forward as human beings and a society,” she writes, “Confederate relics, which propagate a message of racism, belong to the pages of history. They do not and should not define twenty-first-century America.”

## CITIZEN 2020

Fall/Winter 2020

### ***What Comes Before “Woke”?***

Franny Nudelman

Learn about the history of a sleep as a form of protest. “Long before ‘woke’ came to signify a new generation of awareness and activism, the language of sleep, dreams, and awakening infused social movements, from the religious revivals of the eighteenth century to the “dream” of racial equality preached by Martin Luther King.”

### ***Leading the Way***

Michelle Duster and A’Leia Bundles

“As we mark the centennial of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the story of American women’s battle to secure the right to vote is being rewritten. Hidden drama and missing details are being revealed as...women of color now take their rightful places beside Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.... This more accurate historical account allows us to reflect on the roles our ancestors, Ida B. Wells and Madam C. J. Walker, played in the fight for women’s suffrage.”

## JUSTICE

Spring/Summer 2019

### ***Excerpt: A Perilous Path***

An interview with Bryan Stevenson by Anthony C. Thompson

“In early 2017, New York University School of Law launched the Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law—a center founded on the idea that lawyers today cannot fully understand the American legal landscape without studying the relationship among race, ethnicity, and economic inequality on one hand, and the successes and failures of legal structures on the other. To mark the founding of this center, I asked NYU Professor of Clinical Law and Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative, Bryan Stevenson, [and others] to join me for a conversation. In edited form, it is reproduced in the book *A Perilous Path* (The New Press, 2018), from which the following is excerpted.”

### ***Bending the Arc of the Moral Universe***

Hasan Kwame Jeffries

“If the arc does not bend on its own, then how can it be moved toward justice? Two years before the Selma to Montgomery March, [Martin Luther] King penned his Letter from Birmingham Jail, a veritable blueprint for exerting the kind of pressure needed. A close look at the core arguments that King made in the essay offers compelling insight into how to transform an unjust society into a just one.”

***Poetry: Reflections on Justice***

Paul Bowers and Dorothy Alexander

A pair of poems on justice.

***To Kill a Mockingbird***

Paul Lehman

“As a legal term, the word justice suggests reason and fairness. The meaning and interpretation of justice varies with different communities, especially ethnic groups, as well as different social and economic levels of society. Fiction is an interesting way to view these shifting applications of justice. The Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee gives us just such an opportunity as the novel’s plot weaves together different characters’ views of justice.”

***Between You and Me***

Ryan Gentzler

“Oklahoma has a problem. Being dubbed ‘first in the nation’ might be a point of pride with many public policies. But when it comes to incarceration, we’re locking up Oklahomans in record numbers, stretching state coffers to support those behind bars, and removing breadwinners from society for petty offenses, leaving their families financially vulnerable and perpetuating a cycle of poverty and prison. Our state’s distinction at the top for mass incarceration of its citizens leaves much to be desired. How did we get here—and how can we pursue fair and balanced reform?”

***Poetic Justice***

An interview with Ellen Stackable by Julie Ann Ward

“[Ellen] Stackable is co-founder of Poetic Justice, a Tulsa nonprofit that offers restorative writing workshops to incarcerated women. The program approaches each writer as an individual, not just a statistic—and it works...the program acknowledges the limits of our justice system in providing rehabilitative opportunities for incarcerated women. The program creates a space for these women to form bonds with others and find peace within themselves through writing. The goal is to help participants find a sense of voice, hope, and the power to change—if not their circumstances, then at least the way in which they cope with those circumstances.”

***Poetic Justice: The Poems***

Writing by women in Oklahoma prisons

Five women share their stories and their poetry.

### ***Justice Like Water***

Harold Shank

“Martin Luther King, Jr., a formidable champion of justice, frequently used the line “Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.” It’s a vivid image. We can see the surging water and hear the roar of the mighty stream. King knew that images give substance to abstract ideas. That’s why a picture can replace a thousand words or why seeing a painting or viewing a monument expands our view of the world. King, like others, used images to explain complex ideas—such as justice.”

### ***Quilt of Democracy***

Interview with Clara Luper by Paul Lehman

“October 2019 marks the 61st anniversary of the first sit-in of the Civil Rights Movement. That history-making event took place in Oklahoma City at Katz Drug Store, where thirteen teenagers and their advisor, Clara Luper, sat down at the lunch counter and refused to leave unless they were served. Twenty years ago, scholar Paul Lehman talked with Clara Luper and her daughter, Marilyn Hildreth, one of the young people who participated, about the sit-in and its legacy. Their observations are striking. Following is an edited excerpt from that conversation, recorded in October 1998.”

### **TRUTH**

Spring/Summer 2018

### ***Hidden History***

Hannibal B. Johnson

A poem on the history we don’t know.

### **RIGHTS**

Summer 2014

### ***Blessings of Liberty***

William E. White

“What are the inherent rights and liberties of the individual? How do we realize them and protect them? Are there limits? Do they include only the specifics listed in the Bill of Rights? Do they include, as Franklin Roosevelt proposed, rights to employment, housing, healthcare, education, and retirement? The very future of the American republic depends on answers that a new, rising generation of citizens will discover and apply. We are engaged in a great debate to discover, as Abraham Lincoln asked 150 years ago, can ‘a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that ‘all men are created equal’” long endure?”

***Reimagining Equality: Stories of Gender, Race, and Finding Home***

Anita Hill

[From the introduction] “In her most recent book, *Reimagining Equality: Stories of Gender, Race, and Finding Home*, Hill tracks the recent housing foreclosure crisis and the biases of gender, race, and class that have been the hallmarks of lending practices since the 1800s. Starting with her own family, Hill takes us through decades of history, noting the experiences of women in search for equality and ‘home.’ According to Hill, home is “a place that provides access to every opportunity America has to offer.” Without first securing that place, she says, there can be no equality.”

**AMERICAN HUMOR**

January 2014

***A Brief History of African American Humor***

Gerald Early

“Humor is an important creative act that binds a group together, gives it an identity, and defines its view of itself and the world outside itself. In the United States, a country that seems at times unsure about assimilation versus pluralism, group humor is complex in its function and meaning. A group’s humor might contain elements of self-hatred as well as elements of self-protection. How can an outsider understand this if people in the group do not themselves fully understand the complexity of their humor and, as might be the case with many in the group, do not like the humor of their group?”

**POP CULTURE**

January 2013

***New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music***

Hugh Foley

“Along with drama, architecture, foodways, literature, and visual arts, music is a key way that humans express our joys, sorrows, spiritual pursuits, and collective memories. By delving into a region’s music, we learn more about the people who live and have lived in that place. By extension, we learn about the commonalities we share as people, as well as understand more about our individual cultural identities.”

***Popular Culture: America’s Mirror***

Peter C. Rollins

“One of the best ways for America to understand itself is by looking into the mirror of popular culture. Popular culture includes the songs we play, the commercials we absorb, the news we encounter on our computers and television screens and in our cars. We retain these images and messages—whether we want to or not.”



### ***Pop Culture and the Power of Movies***

Brian Hearn

“People often remind me (especially my mother) that I have one of the best jobs in the world. No argument here. I get to watch, think, choose, write, and talk about movies in a restored art house cinema, smack dab in the middle of a thriving downtown art museum. Our community-based program has screened thousands of films— principally independent, international, and classic movies—of all lengths and genres. Over my career as a film curator, I’ve had time to consider the ups and downs of the motion picture medium, its technological evolution, and its long ascent from peephole parlor thrill to global pop culture sensation.”

### **RECONCILIATION**

Summer 2012

### ***Slavery’s Castles***

Doug Henderson

“I first encountered an African slave castle while photographing AIDS research in Ghana in 2004. I was surprised to learn that these grim, historic places had never been photographically documented. After years of research and planning, I returned to Africa with another photographer, Greg Merrell, to photograph as many sites associated with the slave trade as we could find.”

### ***Making Peace with the Past***

Sharon Leslie Morgan and Thomas Norman DeWolf

“It is against this backdrop that we decided to drag one of America’s skeletons out of the closet and confront it. Our goal was to address the historic wound inflicted by slavery and racism, a “scab” Americans pick at but have never committed to fully heal. In May 2011, we set out on a road trip as part of a larger “healing journey”—a black woman and a white man; a descendant of slaves and a descendant of slave traders. Together, we traveled more than six thousand miles, through twenty-one states, over four weeks. Our objective was to explore historic American sites through a specific lens: to learn how we each feel about race, how it has affected our lives and the American narrative; to understand the view from “the other side”; and to ponder how we can move beyond the legacy of slavery.”

### ***A History Long Forgotten: Intersections of Race in Early America***

Arwin D. Smallwood

“For centuries America has attempted to simplify discussions of race into three broad categories: Native American, African American, and white. But a significant number of Americans have never seen themselves as belonging to only one race. They embrace and celebrate an identity that blends these cultures. In the 2010 U.S. Census, over nine million people identified themselves as multiracial— the majority sharing some combination of Native American, African American, or Caucasian heritage.”

***Hope for Racial Healing: Rethinking Christian Missions among the Chickasaw***

Otis W. Pickett

“Some wounds in American history simply cut too deep. The difficult and tumultuous relationship between the United States and the Chickasaw Nation is certainly one of those wounds. But perhaps some hope for future healing can be drawn from a deeper understanding of the injustices in our past. Today, in an era when attempts at racial reconciliation and solidarity seem fruitless in producing lasting change, we do well to re-examine and glean from the cooperative, interracial relationships in Mississippi mission churches of the early nineteenth century. These communities included whites, African Americans, and Native Americans, and were later carried from Mississippi into Oklahoma.”

***Righting the Wrongs of History: Reparations and the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot***

Hannibal B. Johnson

“A thoughtful, vigorous, and productive dialogue on reparations requires an understanding of the promise, possibilities, and parameters of these ameliorative measures. Most Tulsans agree that reparations are essential if we are to triumph over our tragic past. Indeed, we have begun making amends. Striking the appropriate balance—creating the right mix of measures that will help us heal our history—remains a challenge. So, too, does following through on our good intentions. When considering reparations, we are left with a question of morality and justice: As a civilized society, what actions must we take to salve the wounds of our own making? We accept the benefits that accrue across generations. We must likewise accept the burdens. If amends are to be made, if injustices are to be remedied, if wrongs are to be righted, the ultimate responsibility rests upon each of our shoulders.”

***Reconciling Myself to The Body's Lessons***

Faith Adiele

“My official ‘coming out’ as The Black Girl in my school occurred in third grade, when I debuted Chief Kamiakin Elementary School’s first Afro. Our town of Sunnyside, Washington, had never witnessed such a display. Originally formed as a Christian cooperative community on a few of the six million acres of land that Chief Kamiakin (of the Yakama tribe) and other Native chiefs were forced to relinquish to the U.S. government, the town had embraced its isolation, the ring of hills a deterrent to new ideas and new hairstyles. By the time my mother returned to the family farm in the early ’70s with me in tow, Sunnyside was a village consisting roughly of 4,500 Anglo farm owners, 1,500 Latino farm workers, one Asian family, one “Negro” family (according to the U.S. Census Distribution of the Negro Population), and me, product of an absent Nigerian father and Nordic-American mother.

## SUMMER 2010

### ***The Smokescreen of Race in America***

Rilla Askew

“The state I grew up in is one of the most segregated places in the country. I know people don’t generally think of Oklahoma that way, but it’s no accident that it’s the only state in the union where Barack Obama did not carry a single county. Consider this: Jim Crow laws were the first laws passed by Oklahoma’s legislature. From the Trail of Tears to the all-black towns to the rush of white settlement in the land runs, Oklahoma’s history created the racial caldron that boiled over into the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921—a conflagration of such scale and violence it forged the separation and silent suspicion that exist to this day.”

## FALL/WINTER 2008

### ***Amazing Grace: How Poets Helped End Slavery in the Atlantic World***

James G. Basker

“The year 2007 marked the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. February 2009 will mark the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln’s birth. As we reflect on this period, James Basker underscores the importance of preserving that history in our collective memory and cultural life. His book, *Amazing Grace*, compiles 15 years of research on the connections between literature and the history of slavery and abolition, research that has deepened his convictions about why literature matters.”

### ***All-Black Towns in Oklahoma: Pride, Prejudice, and Perseverance on the Western Plains***

Hannibal B. Johnson

“The all-Black towns offered hope: the prospect of full citizenship; the opportunity to be self-governing; and the chance to participate fully, through land ownership, in the American economic dream. Oklahoma seemed fleetingly to embody the American ideal. She was, it seemed, *El Dorado*, [the golden city of Spanish legend].”