The Jubilee Reader

Recent books by African American writers, writers from the African diaspora, and on related topics.
Issue 6 – July/August 2023

Fiction

Ada’s Room
by Sharon Dodua Otoo
The lives of four women named Ada – born 400 years apart, in different countries – are connected by a fertility bracelet that each encounters at a pivotal moment in her life.

Against the Currant
by Olivia Matthews
When one of her competitors ends up murdered after a very public argument, the owner of a West Indian bakery in Brooklyn must prove her innocence and clear her name.

Black Candle Women
by Diane Marie Brown
Isolated by a decades-old curse that says anyone they fall in love with will die, the lives of four women in one California family are turned upside down when the youngest member of the family brings a boy home.

An Autobiography of Skin
by Lakiesha Carr
Private wounds are laid open in this collection of stories about three East Texas women grappling with grief and memories of violence.

A Broken People’s Playlist: Stories (from Songs)
by Chimeka Garricks
Love, the search for meaning, and the possibility of redemption are explored in these 12 interconnected stories set in Nigeria and inspired by popular songs.

A Country You Can Leave
by Asale Angel-Ajani
In this coming of age novel set in a California trailer park, a biracial teenager seeks to understand her flinty, complicated mother, who grew up in the Soviet Union.
Daughter in Exile
by Bisi Adjapon
A Ghanan woman abandoned by the American father of her child must find a way to navigate the U.S. immigration system in this decade-spanning story of survival.

The Faithless
by C. L. Clark
In Clark’s follow-up to The Unbroken, a soldier and a princess fight to reclaim a throne that has been stolen from her by her uncle.

The Family Business 6
by Carl Weber
Underworld queenpin Paris Duncan and her family are threatened by a billionaire contraband smuggler who uses two scientists in an attempt to gain power.

The Foreign Exchange
by Veronica Henry
In Henry’s sequel to The Quarter Storm, a Vodou priestess (and amateur sleuth) finds herself investigating a cabal that targets at-risk youth.

Francisco
by Alison Mills Newman
Long out of print, this stylistically daring 1974 novel details the relationship between a young Black woman and an independent film director.

Full Figured 18
Authors Monica Walters and Treasure Hernandez tell the stories of two full-figured beauties – a good girl who’s unexpectedly swept off her feet by romance, and a diva looking for a sexy adventure.

A Game of Secrets
by Zuri Day
The Eddington heirs return for another story of forbidden lust, this time between a relationship-shy bachelor and his best friend’s sister, who he has sworn to protect.

Gone Like Yesterday
by Janelle Williams
A college prep coach and a teen activist united by a mysterious bond embark on a road trip from New York to Atlanta to locate a missing relative.

Her Unexpected Match
by Lacey Baker
A travel writer in search of a career-saving story finds unexpected romance while on assignment in a Maryland island community.

House of Cotton
by Monica Brashears
A young, financially strapped Tennessee woman begins working as a professional doppelganger, impersonating dead people so their living relatives can gain closure.
The Human Origins of Beatrice Porter and Other Essential Ghosts
by Soraya Palmer
Jamaican-Trinidadian sisters in Brooklyn growing apart from each other find common ground as they wrestle with the legacy of their violent father and unhealthy mother.

Last Seen in Lapaz
by Kwei Quartey
Ghanaian private investigator Emma Djan returns, this time to help a friend of her boss find his daughter, who has gone missing and may have become involved with a human trafficking ring.

The Lies of the Ajungo
by Moses Ose Utomi
In a fantasy world modelled on Saharan Africa, a young boy embarks on an epic quest to bring water back to his city and save his mother’s life.

Life and Other Love Songs
by Anissa Gray
The sudden disappearance of their husband and father forces a family to piece together the life of the man that united them but whom they hardly seemed to know.

Lone Women
by Victor LaValle
A young woman trades California for the lonely, windswept lands of Montana in 1915, hoping to escape the family curse that has killed her parents and left her isolated in her community.

Love and Other Flight Delays
by Denise Williams
Love is cleared for takeoff in three interconnected romance novellas set at an airport.

Love, Honor, Betray
by Mary Monroe
When a series of murders in Depression-era Alabama places a community on edge, an already-troubled marriage finds itself pushed to the limit by extramarital secrets.

The Neighbor Favor
by Kristina Forest
Ghosted by an author with whom she had struck up an email correspondence, a young woman falls in love with her new neighbor — who, unbeknownst to her, is the same author who ghosted her.

Pomegranate
by Helen Elaine Lee
Free, clean and sober after serving a four-year sentence for opioid possession, a woman confronts her past and contemplates her uncertain future.

River Spirit
by Leila Aboulela
In nineteenth century Sudan, a young woman in a relationship with the young merchant who rescued her after the murder of her father struggles for independence.
**Rootless**  
by Krystle Zara Appiah  
In this story of a relationship in crisis, an unhappy woman struggles to decide whether she should try to save her marriage or pursue the freedom she has discovered as an artist.

**Small Joys**  
by Elvin James Mensah  
An unlikely friendship develops between a gay Ghanaian man struggling with depression and the white British birdwatcher who saves him from suicide.

**The Spite House**  
by Johnny Compton  
On the run with his daughters in tow and desperate for money, a man with a mysterious past takes a job detailing the paranormal activities inside a supposedly haunted house.

**Starving for Love**  
by T. C. Littles  
In this good-girl-gone-bad story, the daughter of a well-to-do Detroit family runs off with one of the city’s most dangerous men, abandoning the life that has been planned for her.

**The Survivalists**  
by Kashana Cauley  
An ambitious New York lawyer finds herself on a new path in life when she moves in with her boyfriend and his Doomsday-prepper roommates.

**Symphony of Secrets**  
by Brendan Slocumb  
A musicologist hired to authenticate a long-lost opera by a famed African American composer stumbles upon a decades-old mystery that threatens his life.

**Time’s Undoing**  
by Cheryl Head  
When a journalist in 2019 Detroit begins looking into the 1929 murder of her great-grandfather, the secrets she unearths put her own life in danger.

**The Unfortunates**  
by J K Chukwu  
A college student is determined to reveal the truth about her elite school, which she feels has failed her and its other Black students.

**What Napoleon Could Not Do**  
by DK Nnuro  
A brother and sister from Ghana attempt to understand the promises and failures of the American dream.

**You Never Know**  
by Connie Briscoe  
Separated from her family, with her husband suddenly nowhere to be found, a woman traumatized by a home invasion fears the return of the intruder who turned her life upside down.
Non-Fiction

Arts and Literature

**The Black Guy Dies First: Black Horror Cinema from Fodder to Oscar**
by Robin Coleman
An exploration of the Black journey in modern horror cinema, from stereotyped and often minor roles in early horror films to the Oscar-winning, box office-busting, genre-redefining *Get Out.*

**Dancing Down the Barricades: Sammy Davis Jr. and the Long Civil Rights Era**
by Matthew Frye Jacobson
Jacobson uses the complicated, decades-long career of Sammy Davis, Jr., to explore the relationship between race, culture, and politics.

**Musical Landscapes in Color: Conversations With Black American Composers**
by William C. Banfield
First published 20 years ago, this collection of interviews with and self-profiles of 41 Black composers provides a framework for understanding the artists’ achievements.

**Spoken Word: A Cultural History**
by Joshua Bennett
A history of an art form that has transformed the cultural landscape, by award-winning poet, professor, and slam champion Bennett.

**Where I’m Coming From: Selected Strips 1991-2005**
by Barbara Brandon-Croft
Selected comic strips from the groundbreaking 1991-2015 run of *Where I’m Coming From,* the first strip by a Black female cartoonist to be syndicated in the United States.

**Impermanent Blackness: The Making and Unmaking of Interracial Literary Culture in Modern America**
by Korey Garibaldi
In this look at American publishing from the 1910s to the 1960s, Garibaldi throws a spotlight on the authors, agents, and publishers who forged partnerships across racial lines to achieve success.
Biography

Biography of a Phantom: A Robert Johnson Blues Odyssey
by Mack McCormick

This posthumous publication represents the life’s work of McCormick, who spent decades in his search for details about the mysterious and underdocumented life of Delta bluesman Robert Johnson.

A Few Days Full of Trouble: Revelations on the Journey to Justice for My Cousin and Best Friend, Emmett Till
by Wheeler Parker

Parker – Emmett Till’s cousin and best friend – recounts Till’s tragically short life, and details the work he has done to secure justice for Till.

The Kneeling Man: My Father’s Life as a Black Spy Who Witnessed the Assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.
by Leta McCollough Seletzky

The story of Black police officer Marrell McCollough, who, while undercover as a member of an activist group, was famously photographed kneeling beside King following his murder.

Life Sentence: The Brief and Tragic Career of Baltimore’s Deadliest Gang Leader
by Mark Bowden

An in-depth portrait of the leader of a notorious Baltimore gang and the 2016 FBI investigation that led to his incarceration.

The Odyssey of Phillis Wheatley: A Poet’s Journeys Through American Slavery and Independence
by David Waldstreicher

A new look at the life of Wheatley, who was enslaved as a child and later became a renowned poet and critic of slavery.

Our Brave Foremothers: Celebrating 100 Black, Brown, Asian, & Indigenous Women Who Changed the Course of History
by Rozella Kennedy

Inspired by her own foremothers’ legacies and the friendships formed throughout her life, Kennedy celebrates the stories of 100 women who changed the course of U.S. history.

The Sergeant: The Incredible Life of Nicholas Said
by Dean Calbreath

Born into wealth in the kingdom of Borno, Said was kidnapped and enslaved at 13, and eventually ended up in the United States, fighting against the Confederacy as a member of the 55th Massachusetts Infantry.

Serving Herself: The Life and Times of Althea Gibson
by Ashley Brown

A comprehensive biography of Gibson, the first African American to win titles at the French Open, Wimbledon, and the U.S. Open.
Twice as Hard: The Stories of Black Women Who Fought to Become Physicians, from the Civil War to the 21st Century
by Jasmine Brown
Seeking to correct the historical record, Brown details the stories of nine trailblazing Black women who overcame innumerable obstacles to become physicians.

Cooking
Eating from Our Roots: 80+ Healthy Home-Cooked Favorites from Cultures Around the World
by Maya Feller
Registered dietitian and nutritionist Feller presents more than 80 recipes celebrating cultures and cuisines from around the world.

Everyday Grand: Soulful Recipes for Celebrating Life’s Big and Small Moments
by Jocelyn Delk Adams
Grandbaby Cakes founder Adams presents more than 80 Southern-steeped comfort food recipes.

Education
Unearthing Joy: A Guide to Culturally and Historically Responsive Teaching and Learning
by Gholdy Muhammad
In this follow-up to Cultivating Genius, Muhammad discusses how teaching from cultural and historical realities can enhance teachers’ efforts to cultivate identity, skills, intellect, criticality, and joy for all students.

Essays
Black on Black: On Our Resilience and Brilliance in America
by Daniel Black
Writing on topics such as police brutality, the AIDS crisis, the role of HBCUs, and queer representation in the Black church, novelist and scholar Black looks at racial tension in America and the ongoing fight for visibility, change, and hope.

A Darker Wilderness: Black Nature Writing from Soil to Stars
A collection of personal essays examining the importance of nature to the lives of Black Americans.

Fashion
Fresh Fly Fabulous: 50 Years of Hip Hop Style
Published as part of The Museum at FIT’s “Fresh Fly Fabulous: 50 Year of Hip Hop Style” exhibition, this book draws on the experiences of those who were present at the birth of hip hop to explore its influence on the worlds of style and fashion.
diseases such as cancer and diabetes, as well as psycho-social factors such as racism that negatively affect the physical well-being of Black women.

**It’s Always Been Ours: Rewriting the Story of Black Women’s Bodies**
by Jessica Wilson

Using the stories of clients, friends, and celebrities, Amplify Melanated Voices co-founder Wilson challenges readers to rethink what having a “good” body means in contemporary society.

**History**

**Africatown: America’s Last Slave Ship and the Community It Created**
by Nick Tabor

Emancipated in 1865 and unable to return home, the last group of enslaved people brought to the U.S. from West Africa formed a community outside Mobile, Alabama, a community which has struggled against the odds to survive to the present day.

**School Clothes: A Collective Memoir of Black Student Witness**
by Jarvis Givens

Using more than 100 firsthand accounts, Givens presents a new look at Black education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

**Benjamin Banneker and Us: Eleven Generations of an American Family**
by Rachel Jamison Webster

After learning that mathematician and astronomer Banneker was a distant relative, white poet Webster embarked on a voyage of discovery, drawing on oral histories and interviews with her newly discovered relatives to create a portrait of their ancestors’ shared lives.

**Driving the Green Book: A Road Trip Through the Living History of Black Resistance**
by Alvin Hall

Using *The Negro Motorist Green Book* as his guide, award-winning broadcaster Hall makes a national tour of the motels, stores, and restaurants that once provided welcome to Black travelers in the U.S.

**On Freedom Road: Bicycle Explorations and Reckonings on the Underground Railroad**
by David M. Goodrich

Climate scientist Goodrich travels the routes of the Underground Railroad on bicycle, logging a 3,000-mile-long journey through the history of slavery and freedom.
The Wounded World: W. E. B. Du Bois and the First World War
by Chad Williams
A dramatic recreation of the struggles W. E. B. Du Bois faced while attempting to compose a history of Black participation in World War I – a work that he did not complete before his death.

Memoir

Belonging: A Daughter’s Search for Identity Through Loss and Love
by Michelle Miller
CBS Saturday Morning co-host Miller tells the story of her abandonment by her mother, and how she was forced to reckon with her own identity and the secrets that shaped her family.

Black Chameleon: Memory, Womanhood, and Myth
by Deborah D. E. E. P. Mouton
Mouton reflects on her childhood, living in the world as a Black woman whose love is often coupled with danger, and learning to be a mother.

Choosing Family: A Memoir of Queer Motherhood and Black Resistance
by Francesca Royster
Royster chronicles her journey to motherhood and explores the complications of adoption through a Black, queer lens.

The Education of Kendrick Perkins
by Kendrick Perkins
Former NBA player Perkins details his journey from small-town Texas to professional basketball and shares his thoughts on racism, political consciousness, and more.

I Can’t Save You: A Memoir
by Anthony Chin-Quee
Chin-Quee, an otolaryngologist, TV consultant, and self-described “not white, mostly Black, and questionably Asian man” recounts a lifetime of stories from his turbulent life and career.

Never Far from Home: My Journey from Brooklyn to Hip Hop, Microsoft, and the Law
by Bruce Jackson
Microsoft executive Jackson recounts the arc of his life, detailing childhood poverty, early interactions with the criminal justice system, his decade in entertainment law, and his work as a diversity advocate.

Remember Me Now: A Journey Back to Myself and a Love Letter to Black Women
by Faith Brooks
Christian activist and anti-racism educator Brooks uses stories, poems, and letters to chronicle her story and celebrate Black womanhood.
Share My Life: A Journey of Love, Faith and Redemption
by Kem
R&B artist Kem recounts an emotionally starved childhood that led from addiction and homelessness at the age of 19, to sobriety, to a career as a singer with multiple Grammy nominations.

Sink
by Joseph Earl Thomas
Thomas remembers a childhood of poverty, physical violence, and neglect, and his eventual escape through the powers of imagination and video games.

Stash: My Life in Hiding
by Laura Cathcart Robbins
Podcast host and writer Cathcart Robbins recounts a lifetime of high-functioning addiction and alcoholism, the end of her marriage, and her journey to sobriety.

Walking With Gorillas: The Journey of an African Wildlife Vet
by Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka
Kalema-Zikusoka, Uganda’s first wildlife veterinarian, tells the story of an animal-loving childhood that led to a career protecting endangered mountain gorillas and other wild animals.

Self-Help

Black People Breathe: A Mindfulness Guide to Racial Healing
by Zee Clarke
Reclaiming Flow founder Clarke shares mindfulness exercises, breathwork practices, and meditative tools centered on healing from and surviving racial trauma.

Drama Free: A Guide to Managing Unhealthy Family Relationships
by Nedra Glover Tawwab
Licensed therapist and bestselling relationship expert Tawwab offers advice for identifying dysfunctional family patterns, breaking the cycle, and moving forward.

The Elevation Approach: Harness the Power of Work-Life Harmony to Unlock Your Creativity, Cultivate Joy, and Reach Your Biggest Goals
by Tina Wells
RLVNT Media founder Wells details a four-phase plan for achieving work-life balance that involves preparation, inspiration, recreation, and, ultimately, transformation.

Microjoys: Finding Hope (Especially) When Life Is Not Okay
by Cyndie Spiegel
Microjoys are a practice of uncovering joy and finding hope at any moment. In these essays, Spiegel shares the microjoys that have kept her going through tough times and shows how others can learn to see the microjoys in their lives.
Sensual Faith: The Art of Coming Home to Your Body
by Lyvonne Briggs
Drawing on elements of West African spirituality, body- and sex-positive preacher Briggs shares wellness rituals, journal prompts, affirmations, and practices designed to align and harmonize women’s bodies with pleasure and sexuality.

We Over Me: The Counterintuitive Approach to Getting Everything You Want from Your Relationship
by Khadeen Ellis and Devale Ellis
Actress Khadeen and former NFL player Devale outline their approach to building a strong, healthy, and long-lasting relationship, which involves focusing on your partner’s needs instead of your own wants.

Black Earth Wisdom: Soulful Conversations With Black Environmentalists
Respected and influential Black environmentalist voices address how runaway consumption and corporate insatiability are harming the Earth and impacting every facet of American society.

Social Science

Birthing Liberation: How Reproductive Justice Can Set Us Free
by Sabia Wade
In this exploration of the impact of medical racism on society, doula and educator Wade promotes the idea that personal trauma work – if healed – can lead to collective liberation and social change.

The Case for Cancel Culture: How This Democratic Tool Works to Liberate Us All
by Ernest Owens
Using examples from politics, pop culture, and his own personal experience, award-winning journalist Owens offers a progressive look at cancel culture as a tool for activism and change.

Charleston: Race, Water, and the Coming Storm
by Susan P. Crawford
Weaving together science, narrative history, and the family stories of Black Charlestonians, this book tells the story of an endangered city that stands at the intersection of climate and race.

The Opportunity Index: A Solution-Based Framework to Dismantle the Racial Wealth Gap
by Gavin Lewis
Lewis, managing director at BlackRock and co-founder of the #TalkAboutBlack movement, explains the origins of the racial wealth gap and its impact on the Black community.
**Seventy Times Seven: A True Story of Murder and Mercy**  
by Alex Mar  
An exploration of the life of Paula Cooper, a 15-year-old Black girl sentenced to death for her murder of an elderly white woman during a home invasion.

**We Were Once a Family: A Story of Love, Death, and Child Removal in America**  
by Roxanna Asgarian  
Using the 2018 murders of six children by their adoptive parents as a springboard, Asgarian looks at the persistent racial biases and corruption that often work to separate children of color from their birth parents in today’s foster-care system.

**Sports**  

**Black Ball: Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Spencer Haywood, and the Generation That Saved the Soul of the NBA**  
by Theresa Runstedtler  
A look at professional basketball in the 1970s, when an influx of talented, paradigm-challenging Black players represented a threat to the sport’s status quo.

**Black Mercuries: African American Athletes, Race, and the Modern Olympic Games**  
by David Kenneth Wiggins  
An exploration of the experiences of African American athletes in the Olympic Games from 1896 to the present day.

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