

# Behind the Book

by Pippa Biddle, author of *Ours to Explore: Privilege, Power, and the Paradox of Voluntourism*

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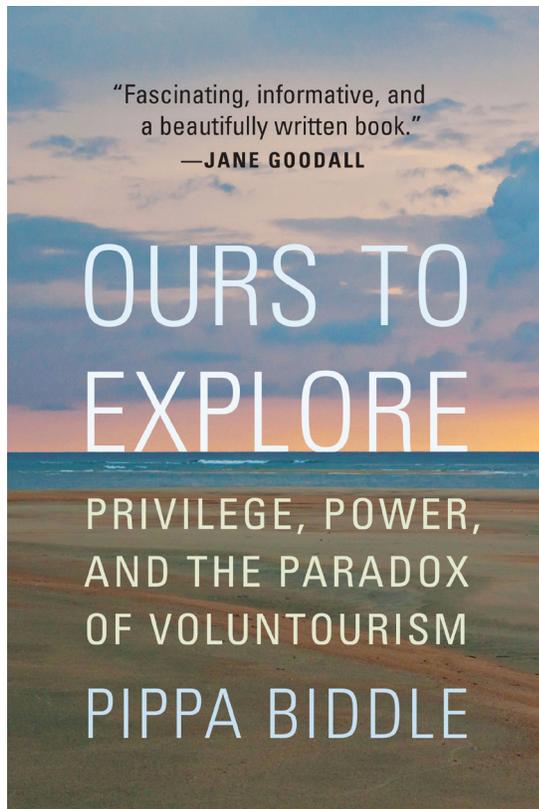
ETC. ....50

The drive from the airport to the orphanage was hot, dusty, and decidedly uncomfortable. Our van had seen its best years a decade prior, and I shifted in my seat in search of a perch without a pronounced spring until finally accepting that it was what it was, and there was nothing I could do about it.



PHOTO BY BENJAMIN DAVIDSON

That would become the motto of the voluntourism trip to Tanzania I took in 2009, between my junior and senior years of high school. Over and over again, when I found myself in unexpectedly uncomfortable situations, I would try to find a more forgiving position before hearing that *it was what it was*.



When I learned that the girls at the orphanage were served less nutritious food than we received, I was told *it was what it was*.

When I heard that the girls were frequently denied medical care, I was told *it was what it was*.

When I saw the unfinished projects left behind by other volunteer groups, I was told *it was what it was*.

When our own work was taken down and redone while we were sleeping, I was told *it was what it was*.

Voluntourism, the combination of short-term volunteer work and tourism, is a multi-billion-dollar industry that ferries millions of people around the world to “make a difference” each year. Unfortunately, trip provider promises rarely pan out.

But I didn’t know this in 2009, and I certainly didn’t have the vocabulary to articulate nor understand my own misgivings. So, I kept trying the same formula for creating change: go places, help people, and then inspire others to follow my lead.

From my preteens into my early twenties, that formula felt good. Then, seemingly overnight, in the winter of 2014, the sweet taste of playing savior turned sour in my mouth. A quickly penned and frankly worded blog post I titled, “The Problem with Little White Girls (and Boys): Why I Stopped Being a Voluntourist,” summed up my frustrations. When I pressed “publish,” I had no idea it would resonate with millions of readers.

With a rapidity only possible in the digital age, I became known as a voluntourism “expert” despite no credentials to my name other than the hubris of a college dropout with a viral blog post. In preparation for speeches and lectures, I assigned myself homework. I dug through studies and articles on voluntourism, international aid, and religious missions. I devoured accounts from former voluntourists, trip leaders, and host community members. I also interviewed researchers and development professionals. Slowly I earned the title I’d been given after one blog post.

**“Finding stories is easy.  
Finding truths, I have  
learned, is not.”**

“... dressing up harm in the robes of do-goodery is a toxic practice that furthers discrimination, abuse, and even child trafficking.”

After I decided to turn what I’d uncovered about voluntourism into a book, I knew it had to be more than a white woman confessing her do-gooding sins and begging others to do differently. It had to carry weight, so the years between the idea for *Ours to Explore* and when I completed the manuscript were filled with accumulating even more ballast.

While learning how humans try, and often fail, to create positive change, I became especially fascinated by the link between the early days of global mass tourism in the Victorian era and voluntourism today. I was not surprised to learn that past colonial empires would play a role in the power dynamics of present-day voluntourism. And yet, identifying colonialism as an unbroken thread gave me a trail to follow and, eventually, the narrative arc that forms the spine of *Ours to Explore*.

However, the voluntourism of today is best observed on the ground. This posed a problem. I knew from my own experiences what the most popular voluntourism projects look like, and I didn’t need any more barefoot children to run toward me to know how it felt. Furthermore, I didn’t want to exacerbate the problems I spotlight in *Ours to*

*Explore* by putting myself back in the middle of them.

By conducting my research from home, I faced a variety of challenges. Sometimes the people who are the most willing to talk aren’t those one should be quickest to trust. Memory, too, is fallible, and while vivid storytelling requires texture, relying on a source to remember the weather three years prior is a large ask. While I wrote the book, I had to be willing to scrap compelling tales when I discovered they didn’t have teeth. Finding stories is easy. Finding truths, I have learned, is not. Over time, I was able to verify startling stories from around the world, from Kenyan orphanages and Haitian clinics to Greek refugee processing centers and the New Jersey coast.

Voluntourism may not be the greatest crime on Planet Earth, but dressing up harm in the robes of do-goodery is a toxic practice that furthers discrimination, abuse, and even child trafficking. *Ours to Explore* offers readers an opportunity to challenge their preconceptions of what “doing good” looks like and to find catharsis in the stories of others who’ve tried so hard to make a difference, only to discover that sometimes the best way to step up is to step back.

#### UNP EDITOR IN CHIEF BRIDGET BARRY RESPONDS

I was familiar with voluntourism and its repercussions before Pippa Biddle’s proposal arrived in my inbox, so I was excited to learn more about her project. Biddle’s thoughtful connections between voluntourism and its historical roots appealed to my historian side,

and her experiences as a voluntourist added a personal angle to the story.

After Pippa completed a draft of the manuscript, one of the challenges I faced as her editor was balancing her and other voluntourists' stories, the historical background of voluntourism, details about the voluntourism industry today, and the lessons we should draw from all of this information. Pippa had an amazing amount and depth of material, so she and I worked hard to hold the manuscript to a reasonable length while building a narrative that would keep readers turning the pages. While the negative consequences of voluntourism are a primary focus of the book, Pippa is careful to retain an optimistic outlook on how to create a better volunteer structure that can meaningfully serve those in need.

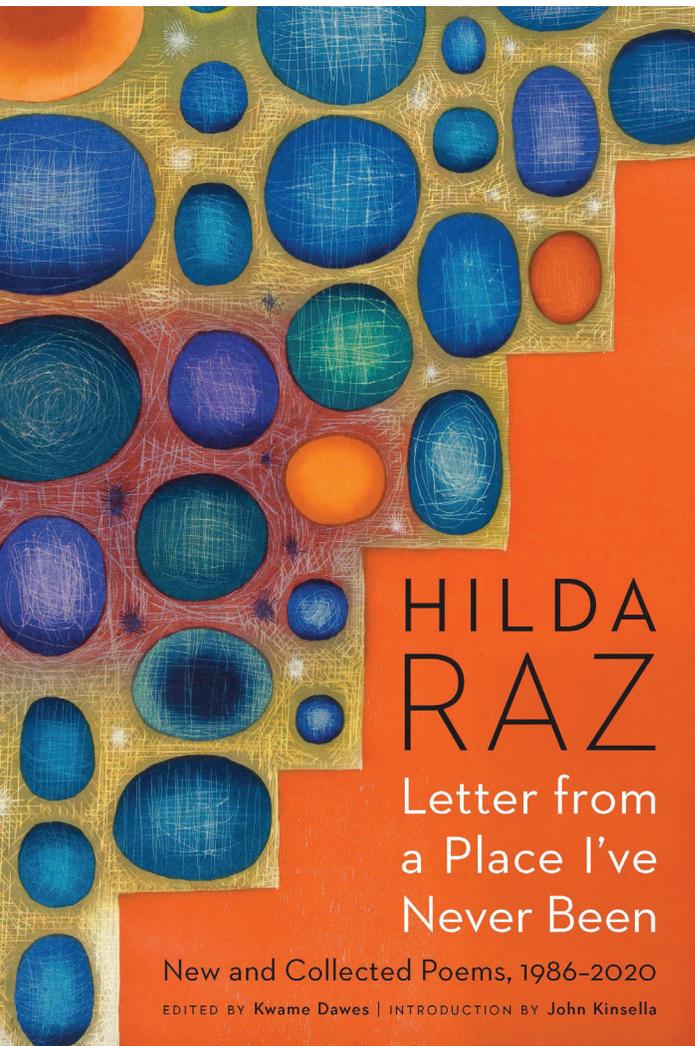
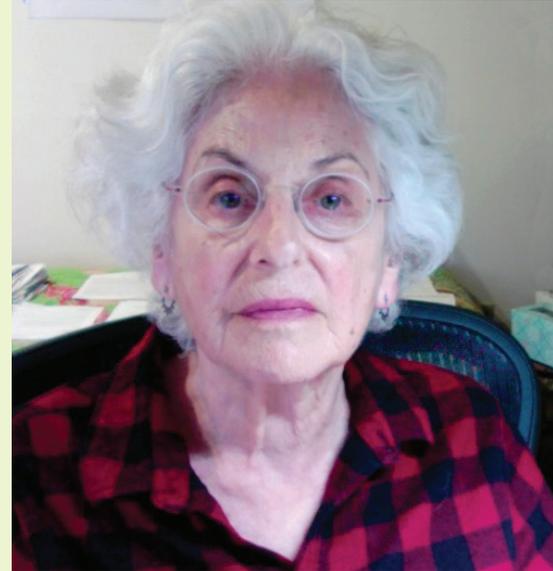
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**PIPPA BIDDLE** is a writer based in the Hudson Valley. Her work has been published by numerous publications, including the *Atlantic*, *Guernica*, *AMC Outdoors*, *Maine Magazine*, and *Wired*.



# Why I Write

BY HILDA RAZ

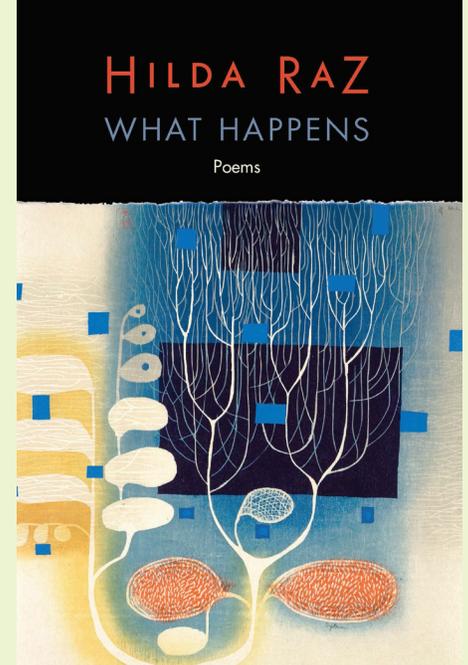
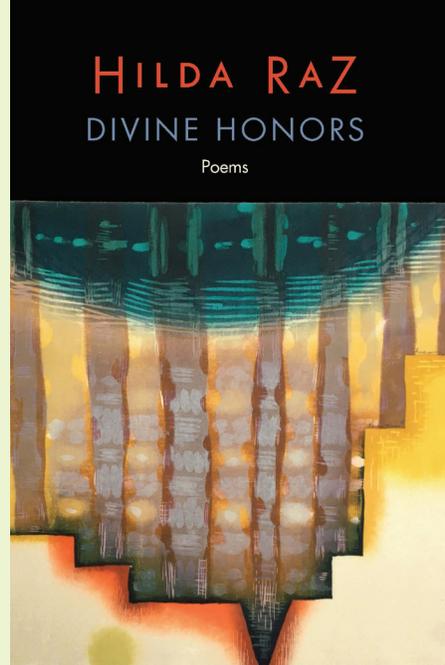
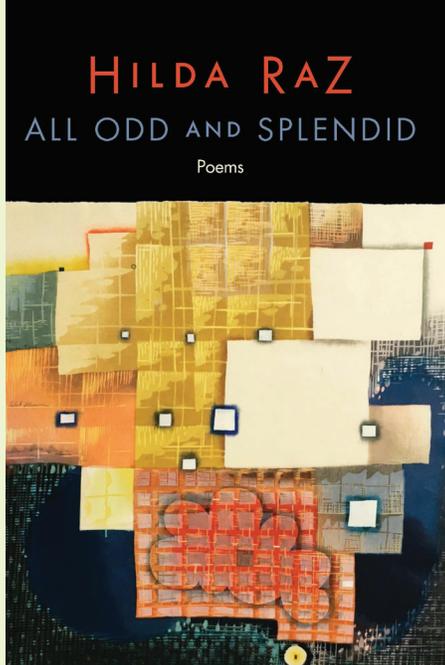


Since childhood I've written down words, often in short lines, with the emphasis on sound. Patterns. I like patterns, too. Let me show you how the process works for me.

The window washer is coming soon. Piles of books on the window seat to replace on shelves. Now a book falls opens to a chapter, "Warrior Slogans," that begins, "Three objects, three poisons, and three seeds of virtue. Atisha." Wait. I have to write it down. Here's a notebook and a pencil. I sit. My fingers move in time to my brain's mutter. Something else begins.

Life is chaotic on the face of it, isn't it? The computer every day. The pandemic, the election, insurrection. The predation of earth. Sounds are everywhere. Words. Those vowels. A chant against tyranny. And now here's the window washer. I've got to go.

Long ago I learned to be an editor. First my high-school yearbook, then my college literary magazine, later at the Bread Loaf Writ-



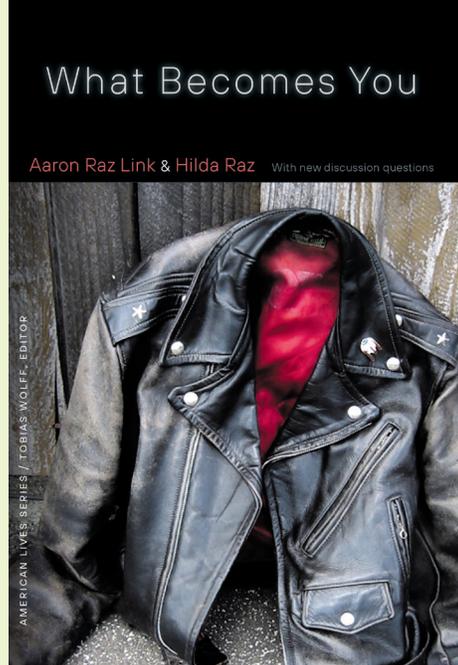
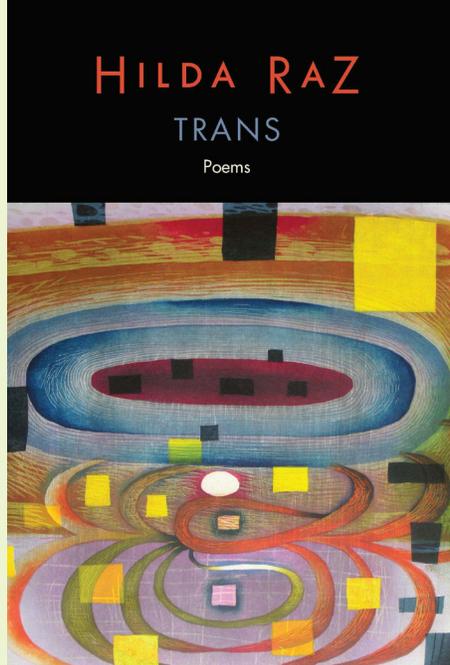
ers' Conference editing *The Crumb*, the daily paper, and then working with the literary quarterly *Prairie Schooner* as a manuscript reader and then as editor in chief.

E. B. White famously wrote to a fan, “My wife is helpful to me in my writing, but she does not write. She is an editor. An editor is a person who knows more about writing than writers do, but who has escaped the terrible desire to write. . . . A writer, however, writes as long as he lives. It is the same as breathing.”

I've been a writer ever since a pencil (too young for a pen, said my mother) came into my left hand, long before I became an editor. The tactile pleasure of pushing and pulling the lead across the paper. And later the sound of typewriter keys putting rhythm to my words. Then the clack of the IBM Selectric ball racing across the sandwich of onion skin, carbon paper, and twenty-weight manuscript pages. The smell of the mimeograph, the correction fluid—mostly ether. Who could resist? Every sense engaged.

Editing is good for those of us who like to collaborate. Writing is a solitary business. Joan Didion said in her essay “Why I Write”: “Like many writers I have only this one ‘subject,’ this one ‘area’: the act of writing. I can bring you no reports from any other front.”

Truly when there is news to tell, when, for example, like many people, I had breast cancer and I could report from the front, my writing fit the patterns of protest and observation. And for decades I've written two kinds of books together, one poetry, one prose. *Divine Honors* and *Living on the Margins: Women Writers on Breast Cancer* were written during treatment. When my younger child came out as transsexual, before and after his surgery, I wrote *Trans: Poems* and *What Becomes You*, a book of essays with Aaron Raz Link. And when New Mexico became my home, I wrote *List and Story*, poems that are catalogs and narratives, one form exhaustive (narratives, stories) and the other suggestive to the reader (lists, catalogs), both forms good company as I made my transition from professor to full-



time writer. The essays are germinating. Now *Letter from a Place I've Never Been*—which contains all my poetry books, published but not collected poems, and almost a full book of new poems—is being published by the University of Nebraska Press.

And now it's time to answer the question I was asked: Why do I write?

Because I know how, I write. Because the habit is in me. Because I'm addicted. Because ecstasy lives in the world and horror and folly and all those abstractions that need concrete examples to make sense, I write. Because my children and grandchildren and all of you are in the world. And every path leads to an encounter with something beyond us. And I need to document these meetings, these assurances that behind every veil is a breath, wind moving something, sun coming up and going down in windows; that every owl and raven hunts for prey and that prey may be us; that revolution is in the body and the body politic; that life is precious and needs no explanation.

And here's the truth—I write to loosen the bounds of things. To make the world porous. To unload and unlock sensory information. To engage the spirit. To see through the scrim to the light. To fix each moment. To merge with my subject. To transgress. To repent. To object. To find the muscle attachment in the shell of the oyster.

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**HILDA RAZ** is the former longtime editor of *Prairie Schooner* and was named the first Luschei Professor and Editor in the Department of English at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. She is editor of the Mary Burritt Christiansen Poetry Series at the University of New Mexico Press and poetry editor for *ABQ InPrint* and *Bosque Journal*, both from Bosque Press. She is the author or editor of fourteen books. Her newest work is *Letter from a Place I've Never Been: New and Collected Poems, 1986–2020*.



# Director's View

BY DONNA A. SHEAR, UNP DIRECTOR



Few people can look back at the expanse of their careers and say they've been blessed with such a meaningful and fulfilling one—whether it was my beginning position, right out of college, as an aide to United States Senator Paul S. Sarbanes (who recently passed away), to my time in the community newspaper world, to my more than two decades as a director at university presses, the last dozen years here at Nebraska. In between, I got to work at a start-up magazine for lawyers and as marketing director at the Jewish Publication Society, a relationship that endures today in the unique collaboration we have between the Press and JPS.

But those who know me know that despite the fact that I've been honored with a fabulous career, family has always been my number one priority. My husband and I have been blessed with three wonderful children, now adults, and they have blessed us with five grandchildren (so far).

Our children are spread out around the country, and I want to focus on being an important part of my grandchildren's lives. So I have made the difficult decision to retire this summer.

It's so hard to imagine my life without the Press! It has been such a rewarding and vital part of my development as an individual. I've learned from my colleagues, from our authors and editors, from the members of the wider university press community, and probably most important, from the books and journals we publish. (No, I don't read them all; I wouldn't have time to do my job if I tried to do that!) I'll miss the intellectual stimulation of working with

intelligent, well-informed, and dedicated people. I'll even miss some of the more esoteric conversations: conversations we sometimes have about where to place a comma, which words should be capitalized in a title, and other obscure grammar issues that, as publishers, are vitally important to us.

We've accomplished a great deal as a Press in the last dozen years. We've made much of our content available electronically and have begun the journey into audiobooks. We have nearly doubled the number of journals we publish and have grown our book output to more than 160 new titles annually. Our backlist has enjoyed a healthy rebound. One especially happy day was the one on which we welcomed *Black Elk Speaks* and the other phenomenal works by John G. Neihardt home to Nebraska.

We've been innovative, too—establishing a partnership with JPS and acquiring Potomac Books. All of the above would not have been possible without the unwavering support of the University of Nebraska administration, which acknowledges the importance of the Press to its academic mission. We've begun the difficult and necessary work of being a more equitable and diverse organization, not only within our staff, but in the content we publish.

I'm optimistic about the future of the Press. A new director will inherit an engaged and committed staff, brilliant authors and editors, and a wealth of content from which the people of Nebraska, the region, the nation, and even the world have benefited and will continue to benefit long into the future.

Thank you for all your support in the dozen years I've been honored to be UNP's director. I look forward to my retirement in a few months, comforted somewhat by the knowledge that I'll have the time to read so many more of the books we publish.



## PAB Member Eschews the Limelight

### *A Profile of Peter J. Longo*

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**P**eter Longo, professor of political science at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, doesn't like to be in the limelight—despite his many accomplishments. When we chatted with him via Zoom, he repeatedly spoke of his admiration for many of his colleagues at the university, for his students both past and present, for his fellow Press Advisory Board (PAB) members, for the Press's staff, and of course, for the authors of the books that the PAB scrutinizes and gives the thumbs up to publish.

“I love being on the Press Advisory Board,” he said. “The Press performs a vital function—connecting citizens of our broader world. I love the encouragement by the Press to be an avid and active reader because this leads to being an engaged citizen.”

Engaging citizens has been a cornerstone of Longo's career. After graduating from law school, Longo went immediately to graduate school, earning his Ph.D. in political science at UNL. The combination of both degrees means he teaches courses in constitutional law, civil rights and liberties, American politics, and public policy. He talks about the particular challenges in today's political cli-



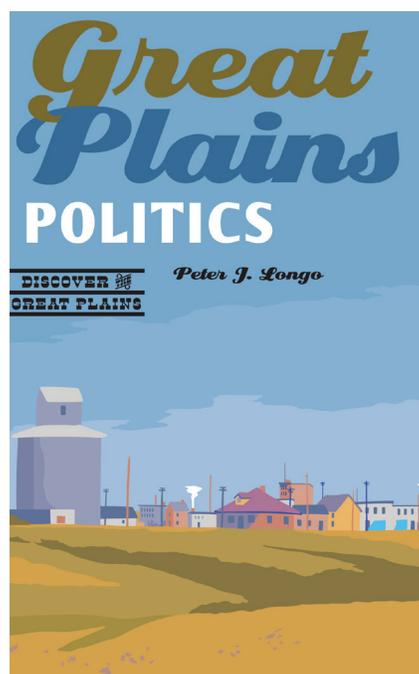
PHOTO BY UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT KEARNEY

mate of teaching American politics, trying to stress the message to his students that, in the past, our politicians and American citizens engaged in civil discourse. “How do you tell students not to distrust government?” Longo asks, as he worries about how the current political landscape looks to young people today. “What happened to civic friendships?” Longo recalls the days when Republicans and Democrats in Nebraska government had respect for one another's opinions and points

of view. Sadly, he says, this respect has eroded over the last few years. In his book—*Great Plains Politics*, part of UNP’s Discover the Great Plains series with the Center for Great Plains Studies—Longo profiles six politicians who have been positive contributors to the political history of the Great Plains. While their viewpoints varied from liberal to conservative, all were steadfastly committed to the state and the nation.

Longo is the son, brother, and father of medical professionals, so he has great respect for science and understands the importance of trusting scientific professionals. One of the courses Longo loves to teach is environmental policy, where he works with scientists to demonstrate how public policy has an impact on our environment. In this course, he says, he lets the facts speak for themselves, and students can draw from them sound conclusions about the role public policy plays in the future of our climate.

Longo grew up outside of Omaha in Bellevue, Nebraska, and attended Creighton Prep High School and Creighton University before going to UNL for his law and graduate degrees. He credits working as head umpire in Little



League baseball as the place where he learned to deal with all kinds of people, to have a thorough knowledge of the rules of a game, and to teach others to be good sports.

If anyone exemplifies being a good sport, it’s Peter Longo. Gracious, hardworking, and always rooting for the “other guy,” Longo brings all of this and more to his role on PAB. UNP thanks him heartily for his continued service.



## UNL Professors Join Forces with Press to Publish Contemporary Holocaust Studies Series

UNL professors Gerald Steinacher and Ari Kohen have joined together to edit a new book series, published by the University of Nebraska Press, about the history of the Holocaust, using their research that shows personal narrative as the most impactful way to teach the horrors of the Holocaust.

The books in the series are chosen from the biannual Sommerhauser Symposium, led by Steinacher and Kohen and hosted by UNL since 2015.

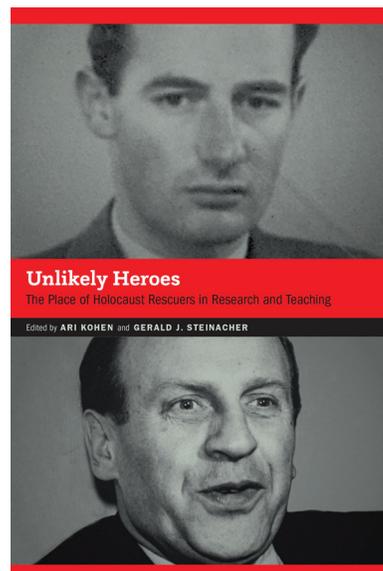
“It’s so important to educate a wider audience,” Steinacher said. “I always felt it was my obligation to be a public historian and get our research, our knowledge, out there.” Steinacher regularly teaches a History of the Holocaust course to 150–200 students at UNL. He is constantly looking for ways to have a greater impact on his students and especially on present and future Holocaust educators.

“We want to work with teachers, who are so extremely important as people who can distribute the information to the next generation,” he says.

Their research has become even more significant as recent studies have shown younger

generations lack knowledge about the Holocaust and many other genocides. Specifically, a nationwide survey by the Claims Conference suggested that one in ten respondents could not recall the Holocaust ever being mentioned in school. According to the survey, nearly one-third of all Americans and more than four in ten millennials did not know the basic fact that six million Jews were murdered in this genocide.

“Holocaust education is not systematized in the United States, so depending on where you are from, you might learn about it or you might not—it’s a roll of the dice,” Kohen





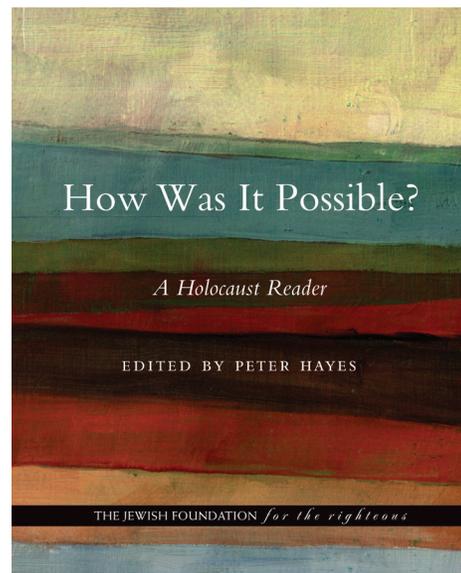
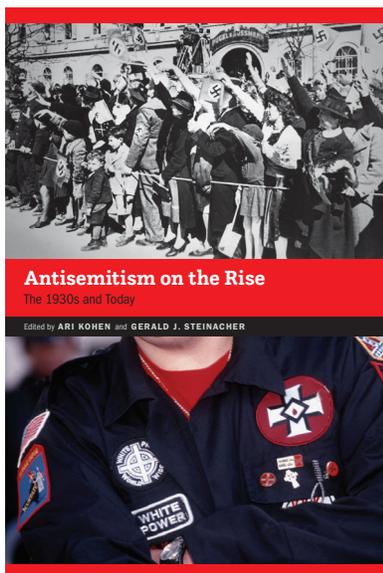
Visitors gather near the gate rail entrance, of Auschwitz Birkenau, a Nazi concentration and extermination camp in Poland. Two Nebraska scholars have identified ways to make Holocaust education more meaningful for students. (Shutterstock)

said. “This is one area where we can improve. We’re specifically trying to bring as many high school teachers as we can to the table.”

The first book in the Contemporary Holocaust Studies Series, *Unlikely Heroes: The Place of Holocaust Rescuers in Research and Teaching*, was published in 2019, and a new book, *Antisemitism on the Rise: The 1930s and Today*, comes out this fall. Both books were edited by Kohen and Steinacher, and each joins a wide body of UNP work about the history of the Holocaust, including books in the award-winning series Contemporary History of the Holocaust. The

Press also co-published *How Was It Possible?: A Holocaust Reader*, edited by Peter Hayes, with the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous. This book provides teachers and students with important readings about the Nazi persecution of the Jews in World War II.

“We’re honored to be the publisher of many important works that teach the history and lessons of the Holocaust to new generations of students and scholars,” said UNP director Donna Shear. “These times demand that the lessons of the past not be forgotten.”



## Ted Kooser Retires from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln

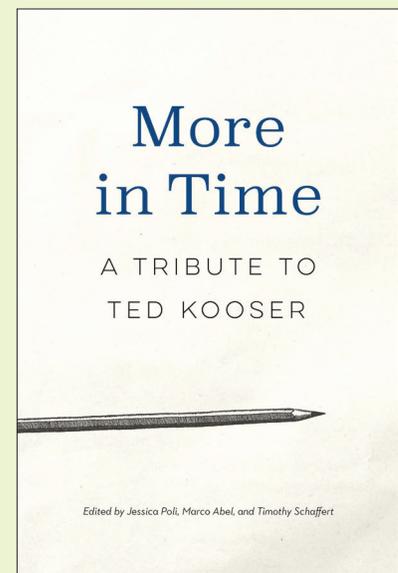


**F**ew people have been as supportive of the University of Nebraska Press as Ted Kooser, who retired from teaching at the university in December of 2020. Ted is a UNP author, having published many books with us—including *The Poetry Home Repair Manual*, *Local Wonders*, *Valentines*, *Lights on a Ground of Darkness*, and *The Blizzard Voices*, to name a few. He serves as editor of UNP’s Ted Kooser Contemporary Poetry series, which aims to publish selected works from overlooked poets. Over the years he has also graciously chaired our Press Advancement Council and filmed a video supporting the Press ([view it here](#)).

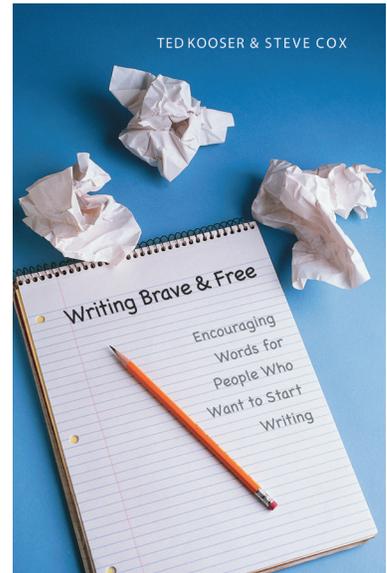
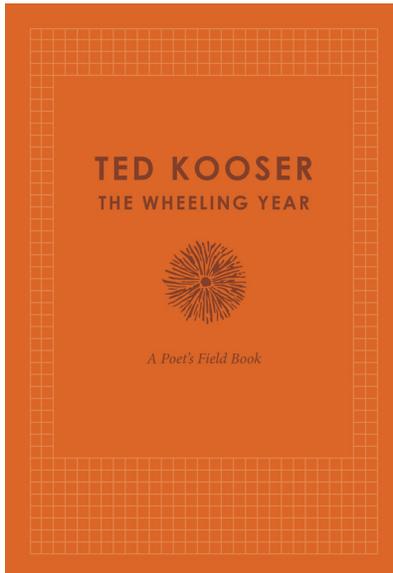
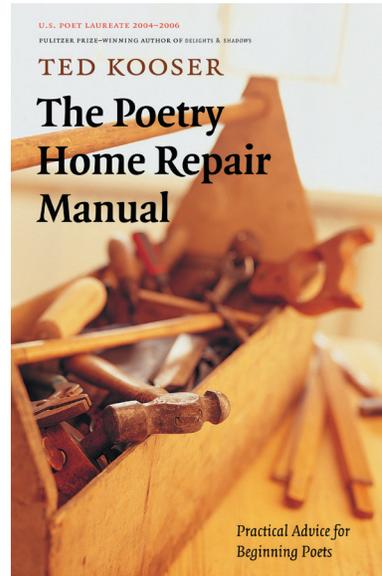
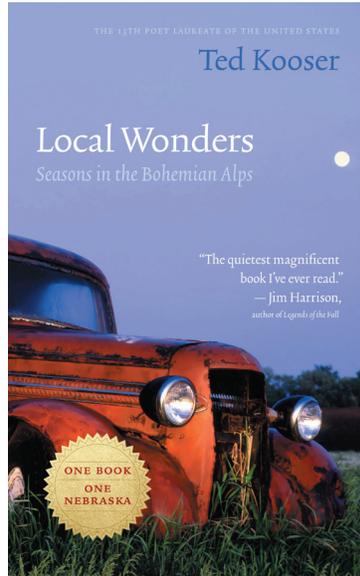
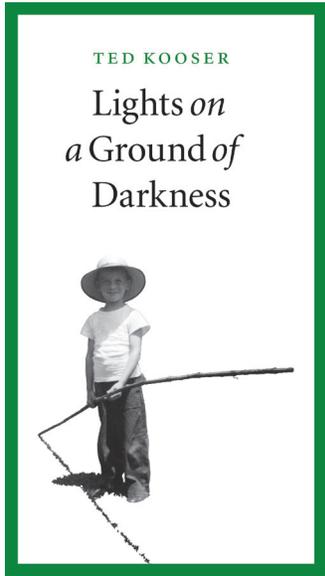
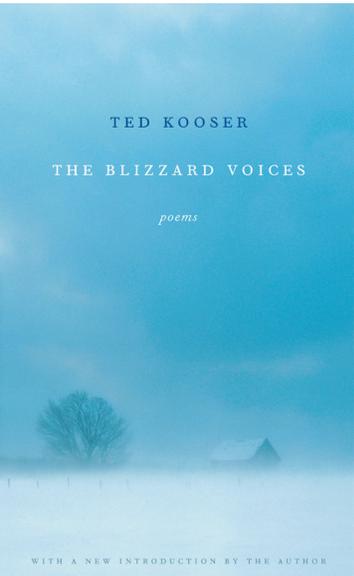
Despite his fame—he was U.S. Poet Laureate for two terms (2004–2006) and won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 2005—Ted remains down to earth, eager to assist both young poets and midcareer ones, and consistently humble. He will stay busy in his next stage, continuing to write more poetry and children’s books. We wish him all the best in his well-earned retirement. He’ll always be a friend of the Press.



**New this spring!**



***More in Time: A Tribute to Ted Kooser***  
Edited by Jessica Poli, Marco Abel,  
and Timothy Schaffert

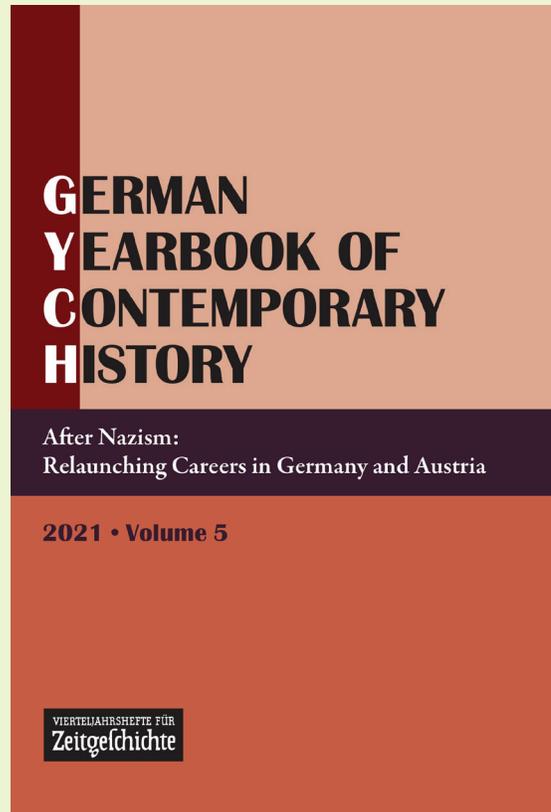


## UNP Journals Signs German Yearbook of Contemporary History

UNP Journals recently added its 34th title, *German Yearbook of Contemporary History* (as of March 31, 35 total!).

A publication of the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History, this English-language journal focuses on twentieth- and twenty-first-century history. Each annual volume addresses one central theme. Articles are a combination of translations from the Institute's prestigious quarterly journal, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, and original research. The Institute reached out to UNP when it sought to convert the title from a book series to a journal. The Institute was looking for a nonprofit scholarly journals publisher with a reputation in history and a presence in the publication's primary market, North America, to best represent and publish its work.

UNP's first issue of *German Yearbook of Contemporary History* will publish in midsummer 2021. It joins a distinguished stable of academic journals at UNP ranging in topics from literature, history, music, sports, media, gender studies, Black studies, and geography. Most are available electronically on Project MUSE.



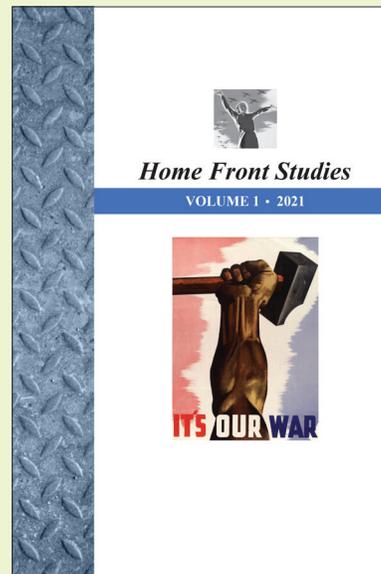
## UNP Welcomes Start-Up Journal, *Home Front Studies*

What happens to a country at home when it is fighting a war abroad? While there are more than a dozen journals in publication devoted to battlefronts and war, no journal exists to publish exclusively the work of home front scholars in wartime. UNP is excited to partner with James Kimble, professor of communication at Seton Hall University, in launching *Home Front Studies* to meet that need.

*Home Front Studies* will bring together scholars in a variety of disciplines, working and writing from multiple countries, who are each focused on examining and discussing a variety of home front contexts across the world.

Kimble's own interest in home front studies emerged during his research on wartime propaganda. "I've been interested in the rhetoric and visual imagery of wartime since graduate school, so *Home Front Studies* is a natural extension of that interest," says Kimble. "The journal will help construct a deeper understanding of how societies work (or, at times, fail to work) during wartime," he explains. "Home fronts are fascinating because they reveal a society in flux. Roles change, the usual norms of culture begin to shift, and unusual alliances develop. A society at war is fundamentally different than a society during peacetime."

Many scholars spanning multiple disciplines share Kimble's interest in studying home fronts. Their curiosities range from the role of homemakers during the U.S. Civil War to the

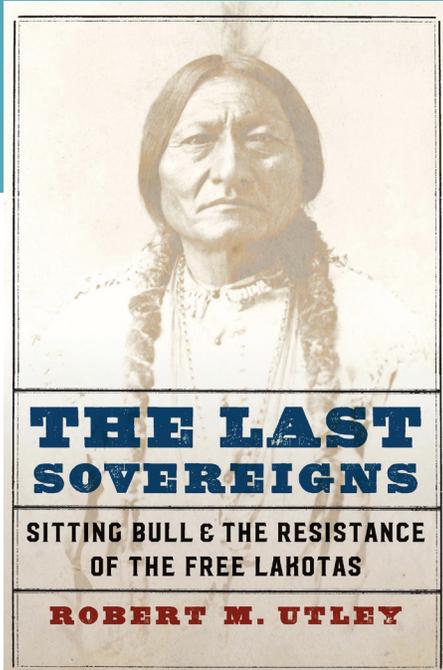


dynamics of racial segregation in munitions factories during World War II, among a host of other topics.

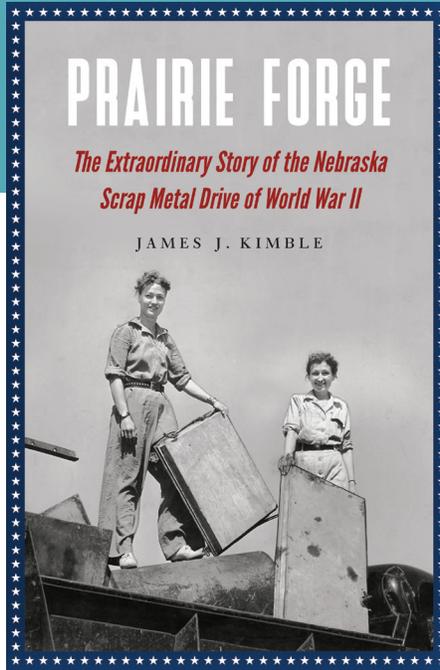
Kimble is thrilled to partner with UNP's Journals division on this new venture. He points to UNP's War, Society, and the Military series as a demonstration of the Press's depth and range in the field. His confidence is bolstered by the positive experience he had working with UNP on his own book, *Prairie Forge: The Extraordinary Story of the Nebraska Scrap Metal Drive of World War II*, published in 2014 under UNP's Bison Books imprint. As someone who is also a native Nebraskan and UNL alumnus, Kimble is especially happy to work with the Press again, in a small way returning to his own "home front." Here at UNP, we're very excited for the first issue of this new journal, forthcoming in November 2021.



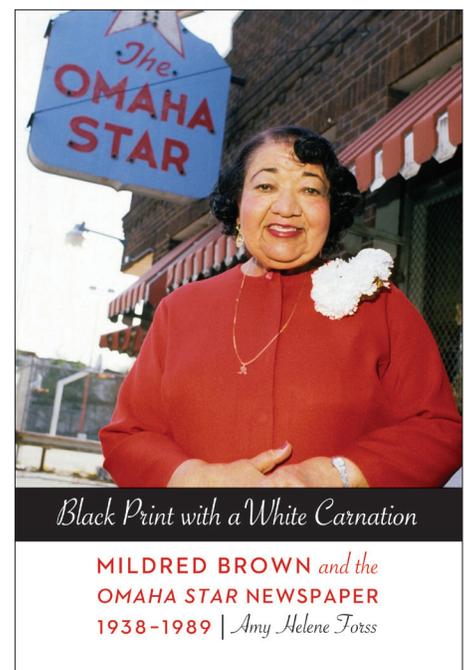
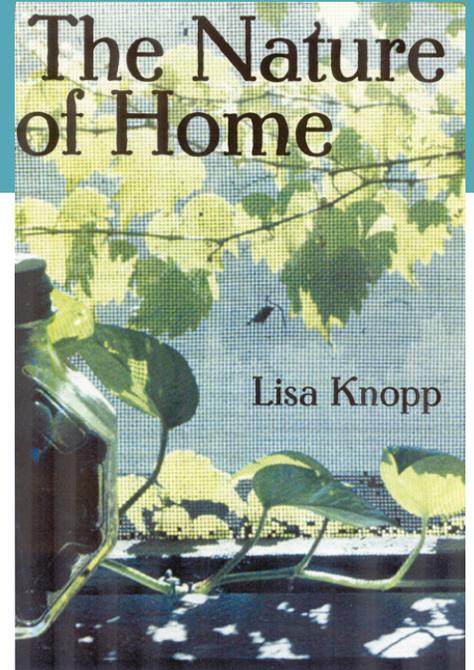
# Awards

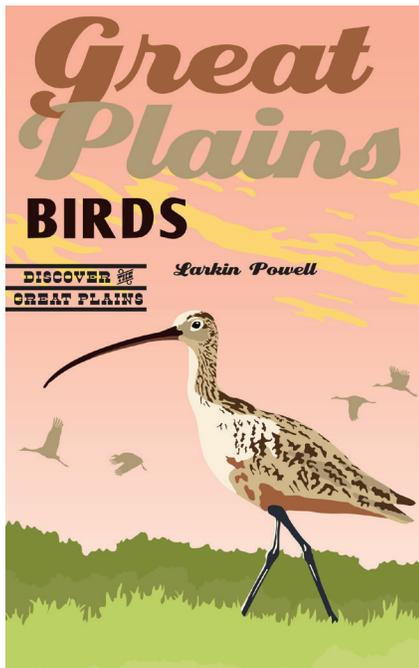
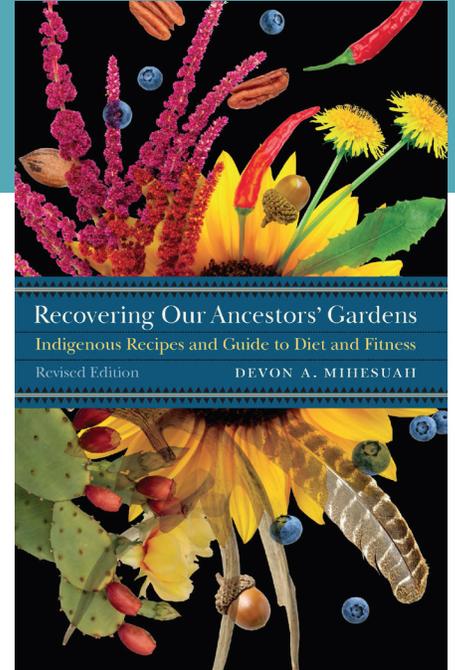
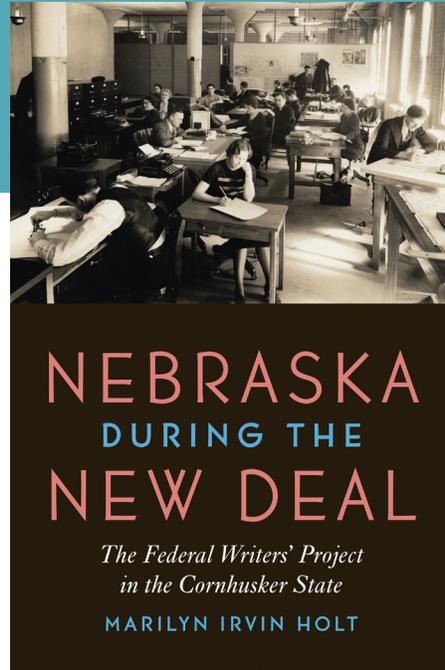
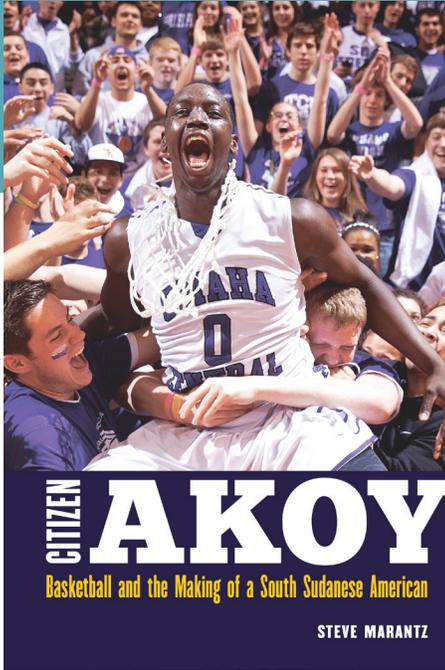


*The Last Sovereigns: Sitting Bull and the Resistance of the Free Lakotas*, by Robert M. Utley, was *True West Magazine's* 2020 Best Author and Historical Nonfiction Book of the Year.



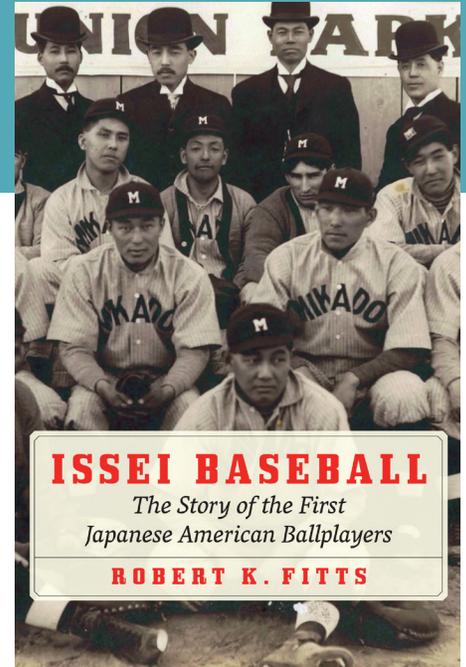
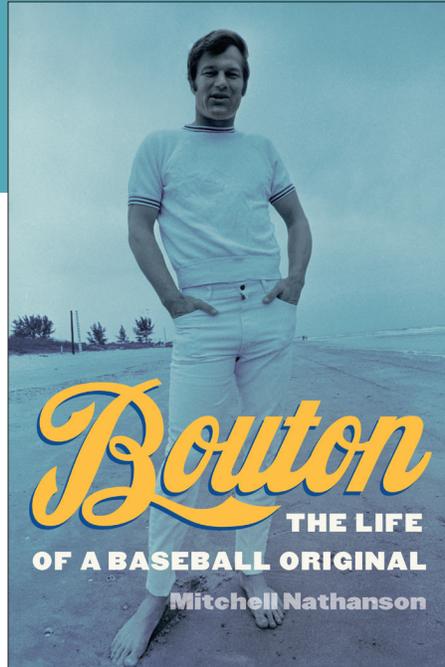
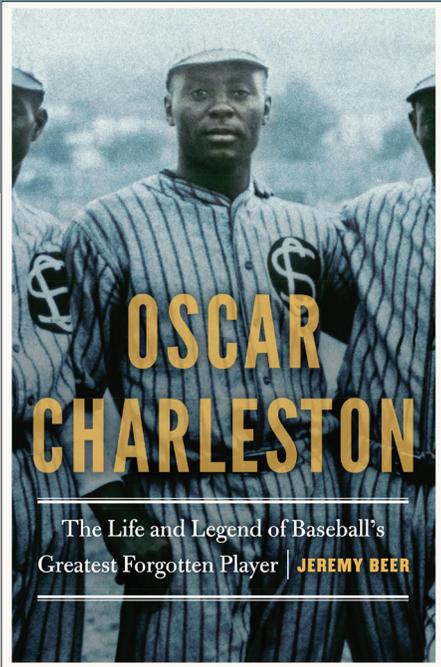
*Prairie Forge: The Extraordinary Story of the Nebraska Scrap Metal Drive of World War II*, by James J. Kimble, was named the 2021 “One Book One Nebraska” title by the Nebraska Center for the Book, Humanities Nebraska, and the Nebraska Library Commission. Three of the four “One Book One Nebraska” finalists were UNP books, including *The Nature of Home: A Lexicon and Essays*, by Lisa Knopp, and *Black Print with a White Carnation: Mildred Brown and the “Omaha Star” Newspaper, 1938-1989* by Amy Helene Forss.





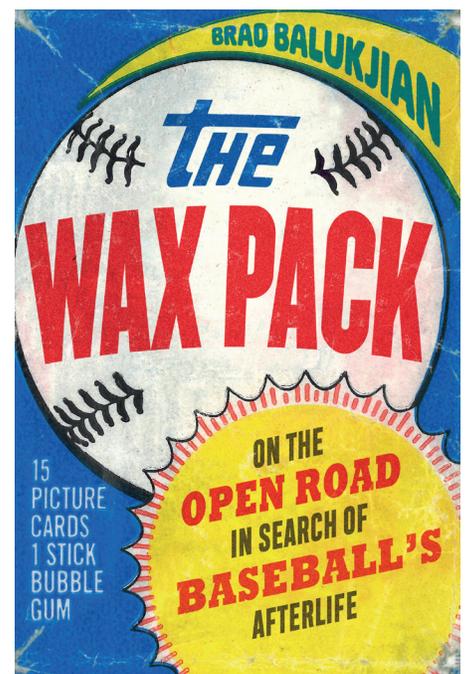
Three UNP books won 2020 Nebraska Book Awards: *Citizen Akoy: Basketball and the Making of a South Sudanese American*, by Steve Marantz, won in the Nonfiction Immigration Story category; *Nebraska during the New Deal: The Federal Writers' Project in the Cornhusker State*, by Marilyn Irvin Holt, earned the award in the Nonfiction Nebraska Perseverance category; and *Great Plains Birds*, by Larkin Powell, won in the Nonfiction Nature Reference category.

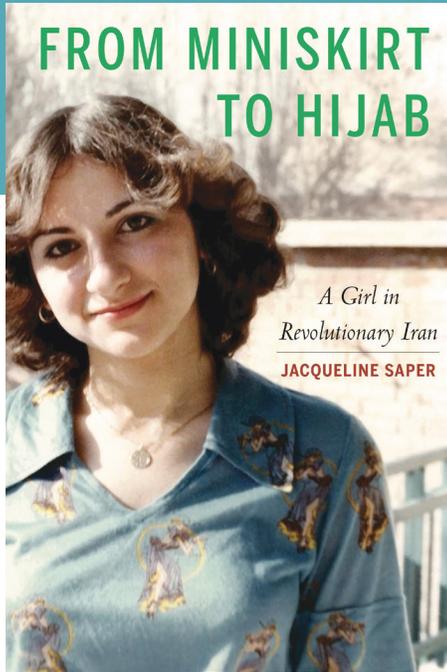
*Recovering Our Ancestors' Gardens: Indigenous Recipes and Guide to Diet and Fitness*, by Devon A. Mihsuah, won a 2020 Gourmand World Cookbook Award.



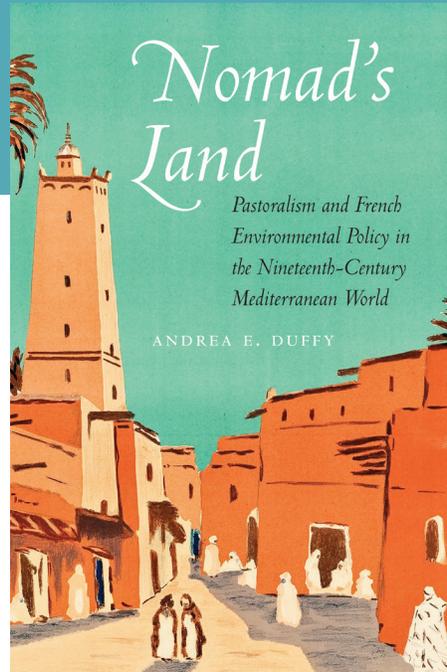
*Oscar Charleston: The Life and Legend of Baseball's Greatest Forgotten Player*, by Jeremy Beer, won the 2020 Seymour Medal from the Society for American Baseball Research and the 2019 CASEY Award for Best Baseball Book of the Year. Three UNP

books are finalists for the 2020 CASEY Award: *Bouton: The Life of a Baseball Original* by Mitchell Nathanson; *Issei Baseball: The Story of the First Japanese American Ballplayers* by Robert K. Fitts; and *The Wax Pack: On the Open Road in Search of Baseball's Afterlife* by Brad Balukjian. *The Wax Pack* was also a *Los Angeles Times* Bestseller and a 2020 NPR Book Concierge Staff Pick. *Bouton* was selected for the 2020 *New York Times* Summer Reading List.

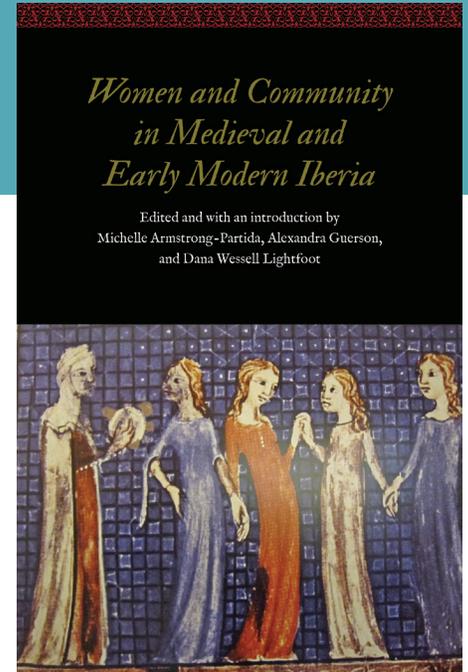




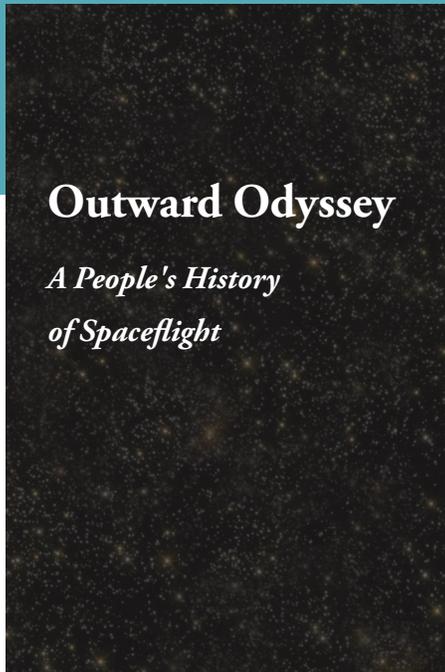
*From Miniskirt to Hijab: A Girl in Revolutionary Iran*, by Jacqueline Saper, won the Chicago Writers Association 2020 Book of the Year Award in the category of Traditional Nonfiction. The judges raved, “An important and courageous book, Saper’s story leaves the reader deeply moved and incredulous, but at the same time hopeful and in awe of the author’s ability to cope and ultimately thrive.”



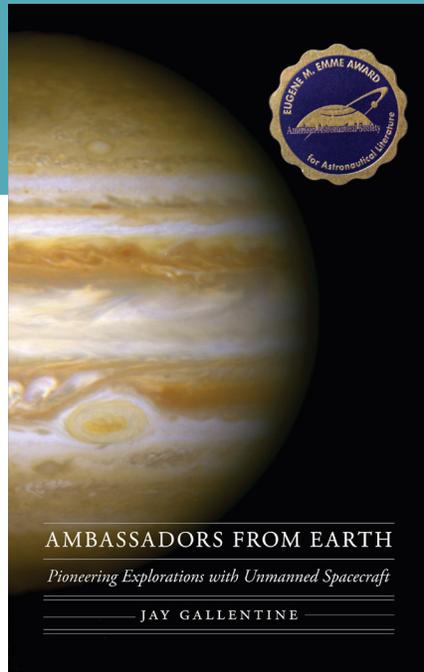
*Nomad’s Land: Pastoralism and French Environmental Policy in the Nineteenth-Century Mediterranean World*, by Andrea E. Duffy, won the 2020 Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Award from the Forest History Society.



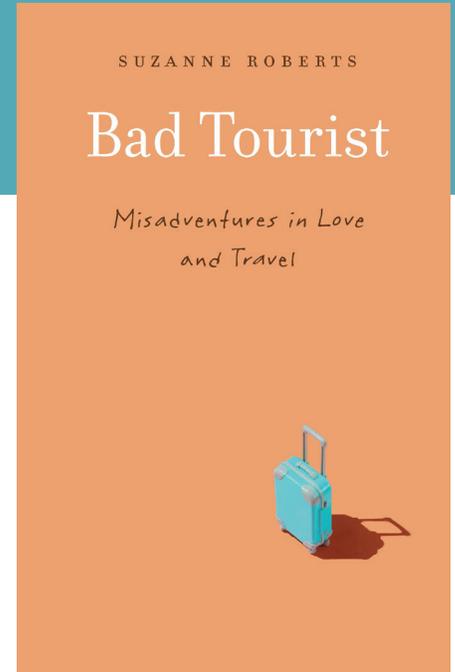
*Women and Community in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, edited and with an introduction by Michelle Armstrong-Partida, Alexandra Guerson, and Dana Wessell Lightfoot, won the 2020 Collaborative Project Award from the Society for the Study of Early Modern Women and Gender.



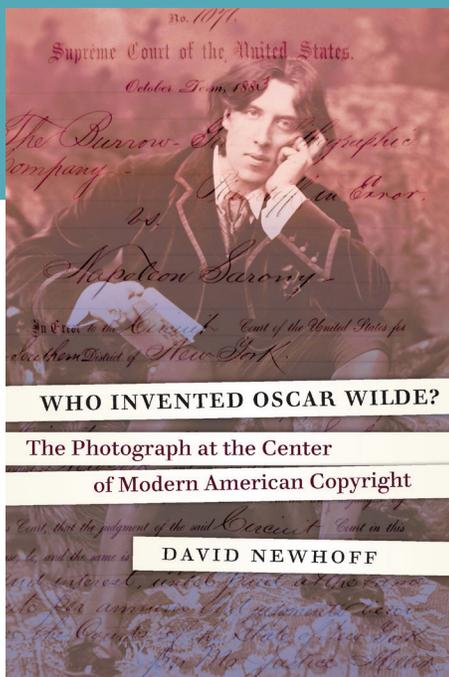
The University of Nebraska Press won a 2020 Ordway Award for Sustained Excellence in Spaceflight History from the American Astronautical Society. UNP was recognized for “documenting key topics in the history of spaceflight” with the publication of our series *Outward Odyssey: A People’s History of Spaceflight*. This series provides a popular history of spaceflight from the rocket scientists of the 1930s to today, focusing on the lives of astronauts, cosmonauts, technicians, scientists, and their families.



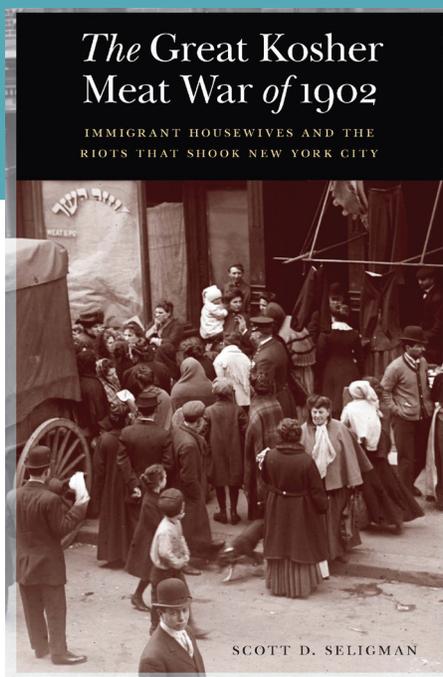
The award citation reads, “The University of Nebraska Press has produced a steady stream of well-researched, readable volumes on a wide variety of topics in spaceflight history. As of 2020, there have been nineteen titles in the *Outward Odyssey* Series. A number of them were finalists for the AAS Emme Award for Spaceflight Literature and one title (*Ambassadors from Earth: Pioneering Explorations with Unmanned Spacecraft* by Jay Gallentine) received the Emme Award in 2009.”



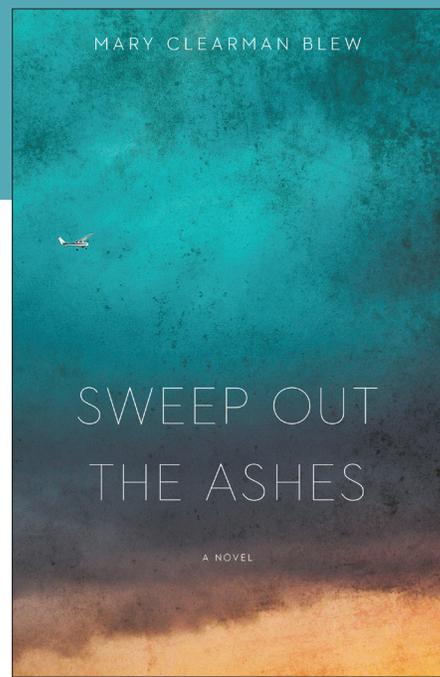
*Bad Tourist: Misadventures in Love and Travel*, by Suzanne Roberts, is on the shortlist for the Gilda Prize from the Story Circle Network, an international nonprofit association of women writers. The Gilda Prize is named in honor of comedian Gilda Radner. The nonprofit says, “Gilda memoirs are distinguished by their fresh voices, their honesty, and their authenticity. They make us laugh (even when we want to cry).”



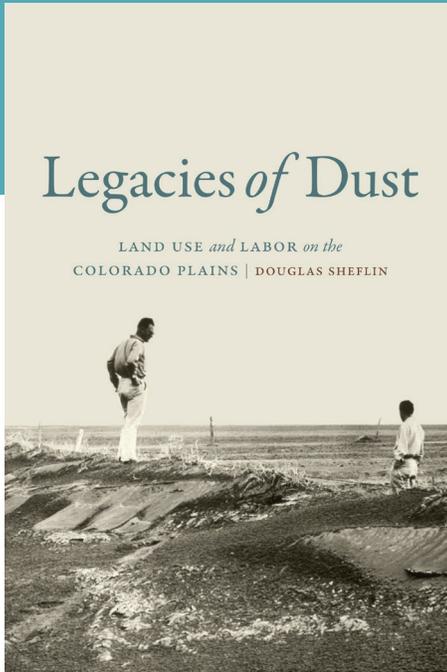
***Who Invented Oscar Wilde?: The Photograph at the Center of Modern American Copyright***, by David Newhoff, was a finalist in the category of Media and Cultural Studies for the Association of American Publishers (AAP) 45th annual Professional and Scholarly Excellence (PROSE) Awards.



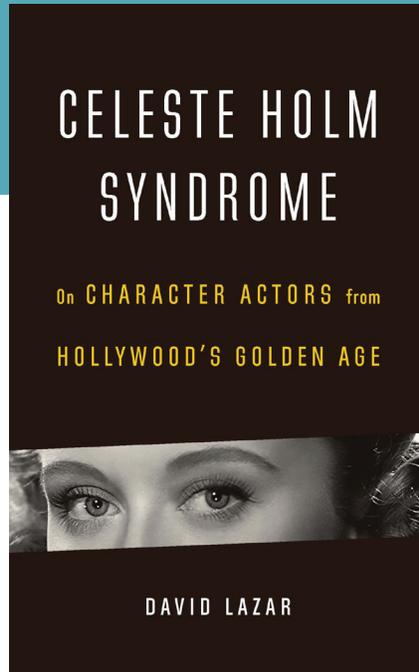
***The Great Kosher Meat War of 1902: Immigrant Housewives and the Riots That Shook New York City***, by Scott D. Seligman, was a 2020 American Book Fest Best Book Awards Finalist in the History: U.S. category and a 2020 National Jewish Book Award Finalist in American Jewish Studies.



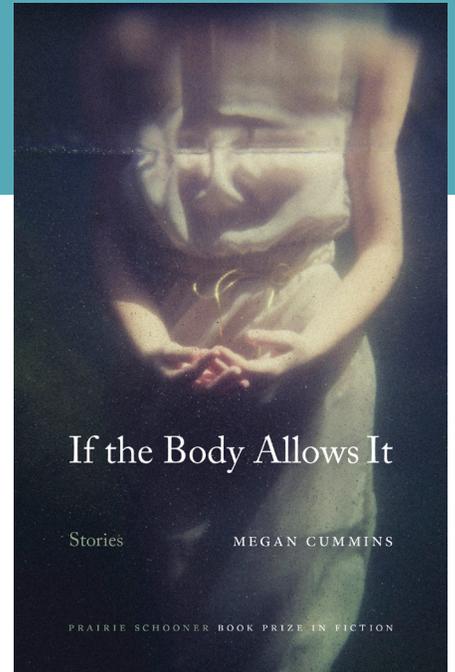
***Sweep Out the Ashes: A Novel***, by Mary Clearman Blew, was a finalist for a 2020 Spur Award from Western Writers of America.



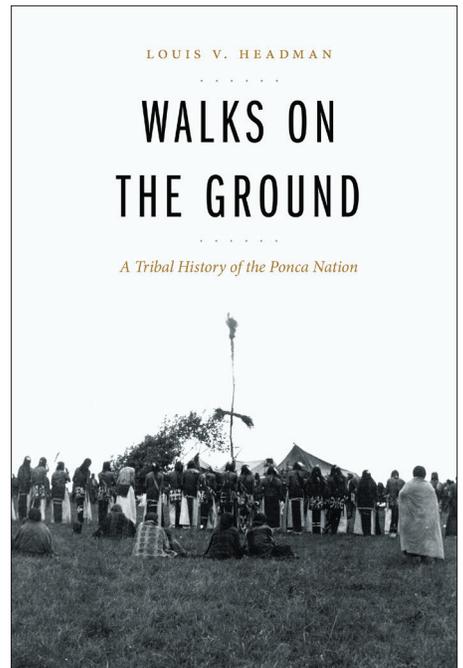
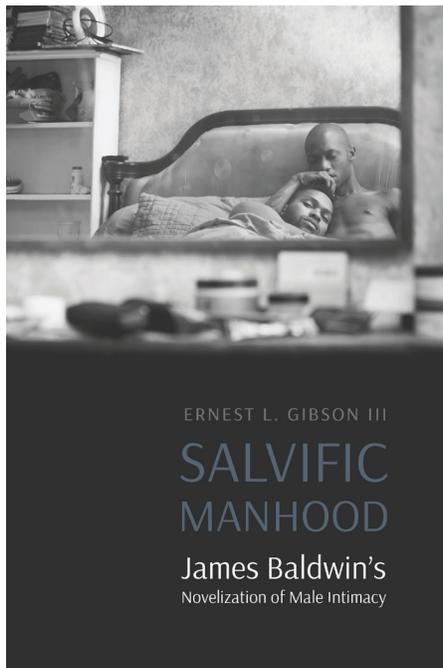
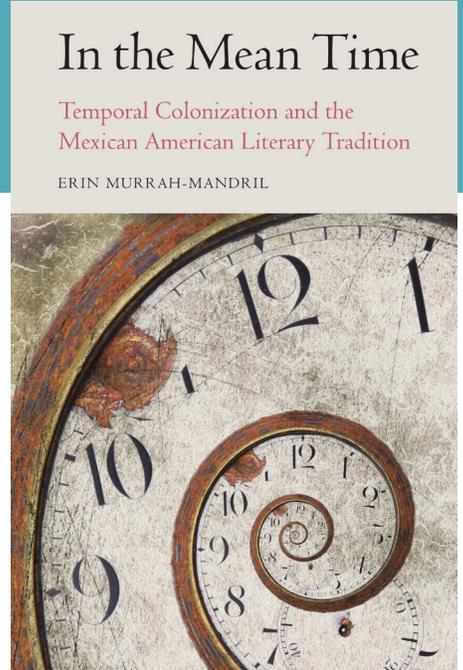
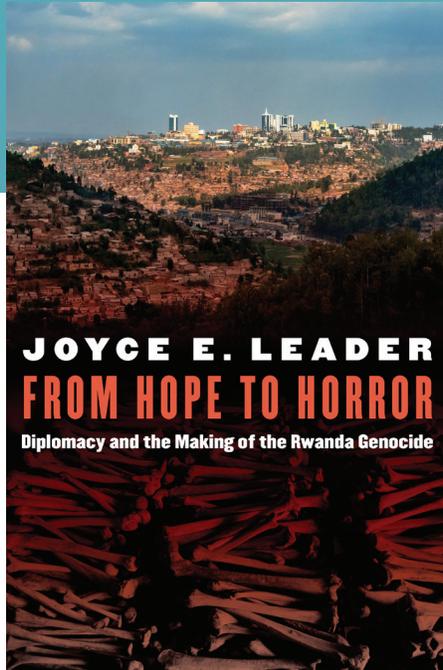
*Legacies of Dust: Land Use and Labor on the Colorado Plains*, by Douglas Sheflin, was a finalist for the 2020 Outstanding Western Book Award from the Center for the Study of the American West (CSAW).



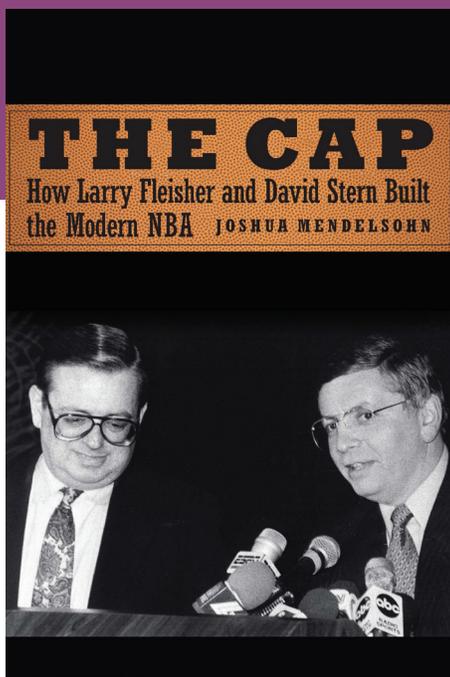
Two UNP books were longlisted for 2021 PEN America Literary Awards. They are *Celeste Holm Syndrome: On Character Actors from Hollywood's Golden Age*, by David Lazar, in the Art of the Essay category; and *If the Body Allows It: Stories*, by Megan Cummins, in the Debut Short Story Collection category.



Four UNP books were named 2020 Choice Outstanding Academic Titles. They are *From Hope to Horror: Diplomacy and the Making of the Rwanda Genocide* by Joyce E. Leader; *In the Mean Time: Temporal Colonization and the Mexican American Literary Tradition* by Erin Murrah-Mandril; *Salvific Manhood: James Baldwin's Novelization of Male Intimacy* by Ernest L. Gibson III; and *Walks on the Ground: A Tribal History of the Ponca Nation* by Louis V. Headman. *Walks on the Ground* was named Oklahoma Best-seller on November 22, 2020.



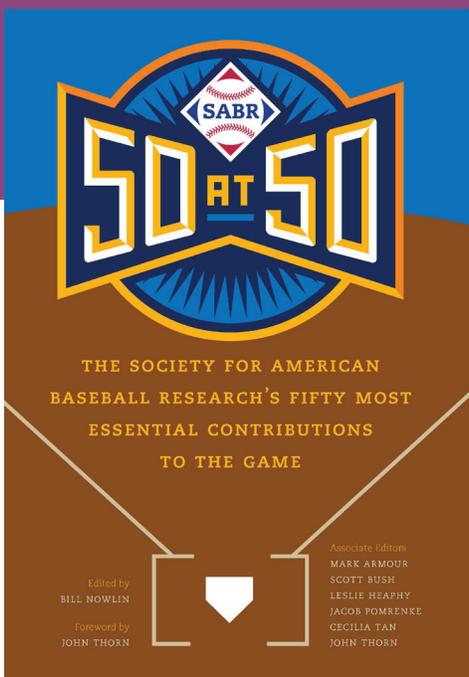
# Select Publicity Highlights



***The Cap: How Larry Fleisher and David Stern Built the Modern NBA*** by Joshua Mendelsohn

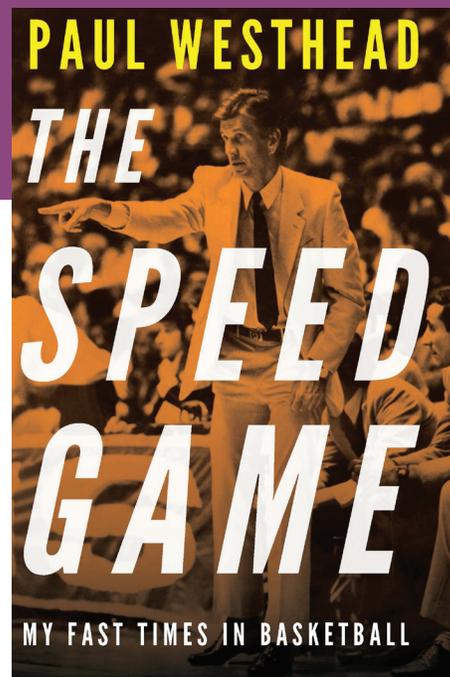
“A legal thriller, a close account of the tortuous ten-month negotiations, in the mid-1980s, for the big play that eventually put both the NBA’s players and the owners in the win column.”  
—David M. Shribman, *Wall Street Journal*

The book was a 2020 *Wall Street Journal* Holiday Gift Books Selection, and the *New York Times* highlighted it in its Business & Policy section on December 24, 2020.



***SABR 50 at 50: The Society for American Baseball Research's Fifty Most Essential Contributions to the Game*** edited by Bill Nowlin

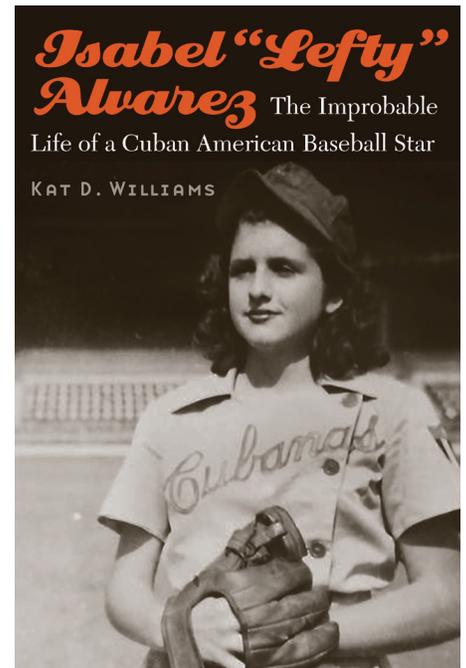
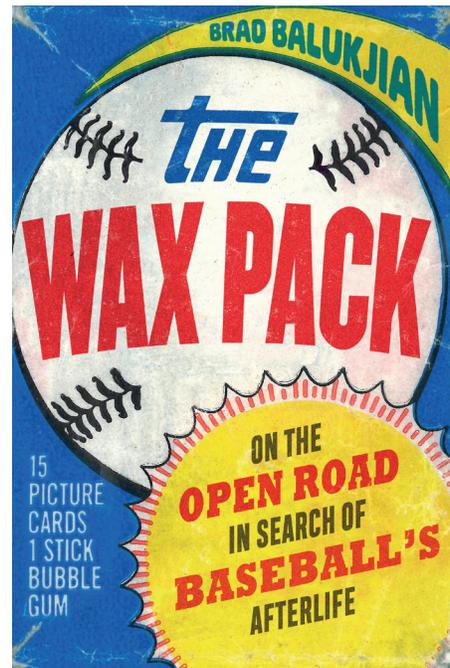
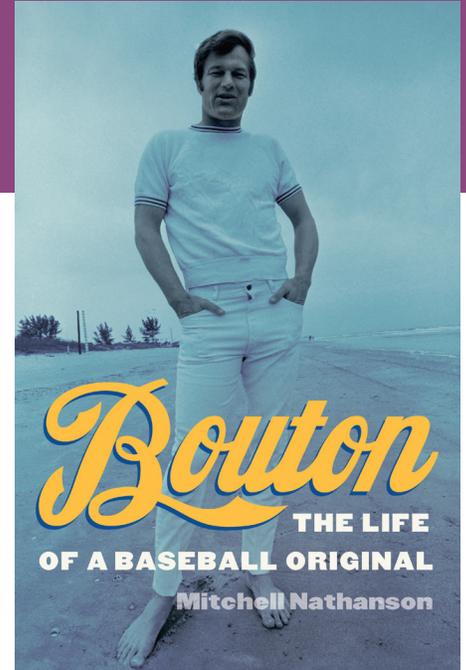
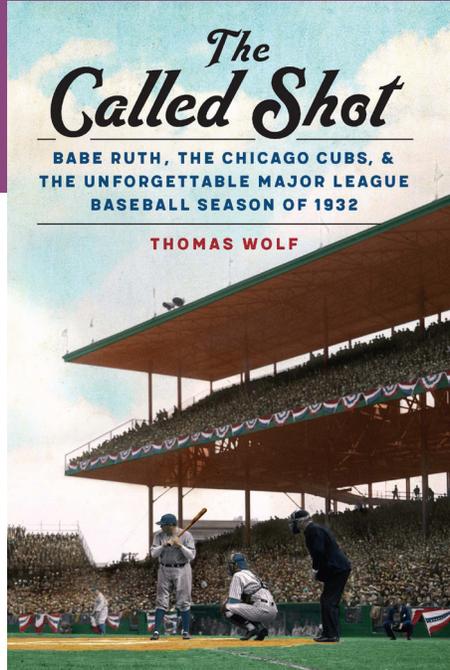
“This compilation, a distillation of all that is important to the society’s members . . . showcases the SABRite at his or her baseball-loving, stat-obsessed best.”—Paul Dickson, *Wall Street Journal*

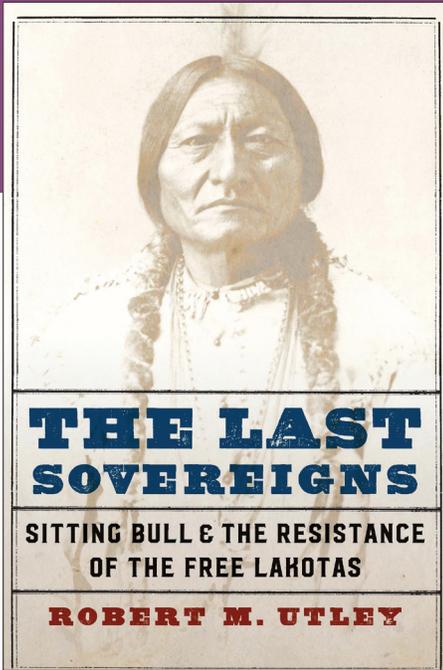


***The Speed Game: My Fast Times in Basketball*** by Paul Westhead

“Don’t get the idea that *The Speed Game* is infatuated repetitiously with a scheme for winning basketball games. Mr. Westhead gives us a lot more. It may be a surprise to readers to learn how graceful and interesting a writer he is. . . . In his memoir, he writes especially well about coaching the Los Angeles Lakers to an NBA championship in 1980 and the Phoenix Mercury, led by the great Diana Taurasi, to the 2007 women’s title. He also describes how, in the late 1980s, he transformed Loyola Marymount into a powerhouse, and he does so without diminishing the role of Hank Gathers and Bo Kimble in the team’s success.”—Fred Barnes, *Wall Street Journal*

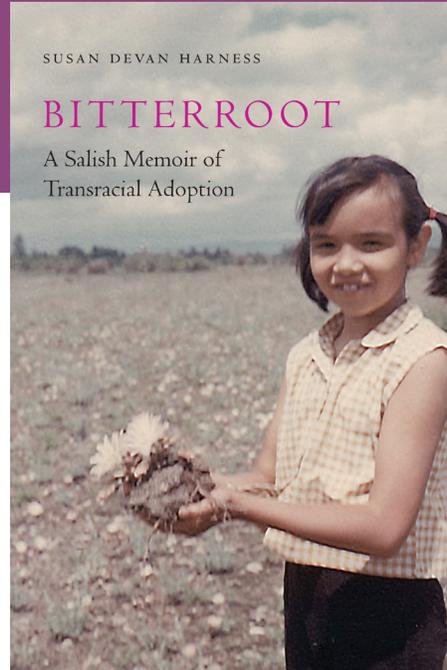
Four UNP books were named to *Sports Collectors Digest's* "Best Baseball Books of 2020" list. They are *The Called Shot: Babe Ruth, the Chicago Cubs, and the Unforgettable Major League Baseball Season of 1932* by Thomas Wolf; *Bouton: The Life of a Baseball Original* by Mitchell Nathanson; *The Wax Pack: On the Open Road in Search of Baseball's Afterlife* by Brad Balukjian; and *Isabel "Lefty" Alvarez: The Improbable Life of a Cuban American Baseball Star* by Kat D. Williams.





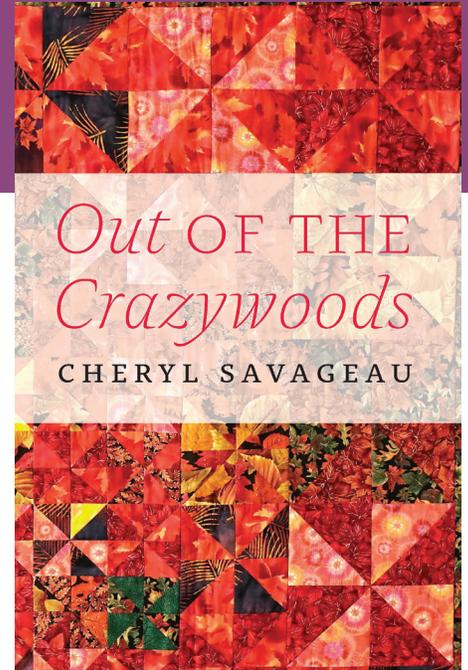
***The Last Sovereigns: Sitting Bull and the Resistance of the Free Lakotas*** by Robert M. Utley

“Mr. Utley is a good stylist and a natural storyteller. . . . The matter of sovereignty raised by Mr. Utley’s subtitle hangs like a cloud over the continuing struggle between Native peoples and energy developers over the Dakota Access Pipeline, which passes under the Missouri River not far upstream from Sitting Bull’s final resting place.”—Andrew R. Graybill, *Wall Street Journal*



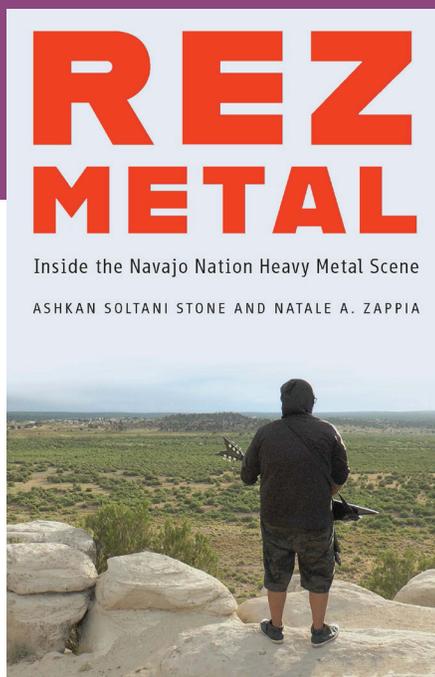
***Bitterroot: A Salish Memoir of Transracial Adoption*** by Susan Devan Harness

“What does it mean to be Native when you weren’t raised Native? What does it mean when the members of your birth family who remained on the reservation tell you that you were lucky to be raised elsewhere, but you don’t feel lucky? Harness brings us right into the middle of these questions and shows how emotionally fraught they can be. . . . It’s time everyone learned about the many ways there are of being Native.”—Carter Meland, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*



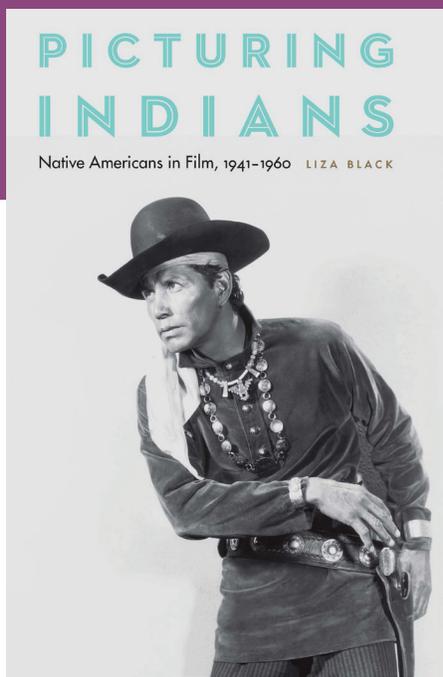
***Out of the Crazywoods*** by Cheryl Savageau

“In this unique and poignant memoir, Abenaki/French Canadian poet Cheryl Savageau describes her bipolar disorder in lyrical, clear and candid prose.”—*Ms. Magazine*, which also named the book a “favorite read” for 2020



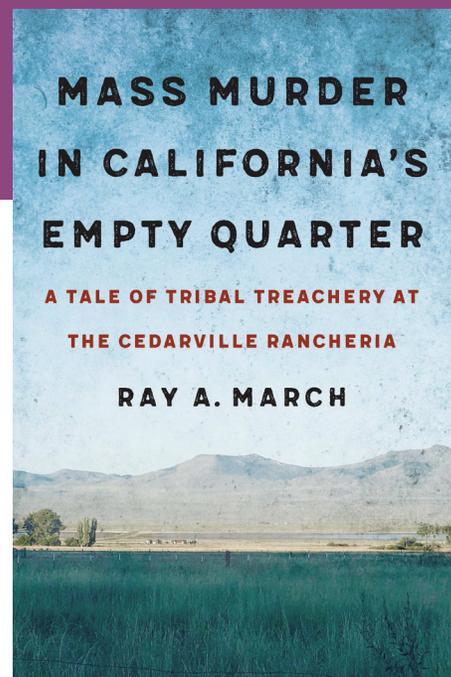
***Rez Metal: Inside the Navajo Nation Heavy Metal Scene*** by Ashkan Soltani Stone and Natale A. Zappia

“An intriguing and enlightening read.”—Kathy Sexton, *Booklist*



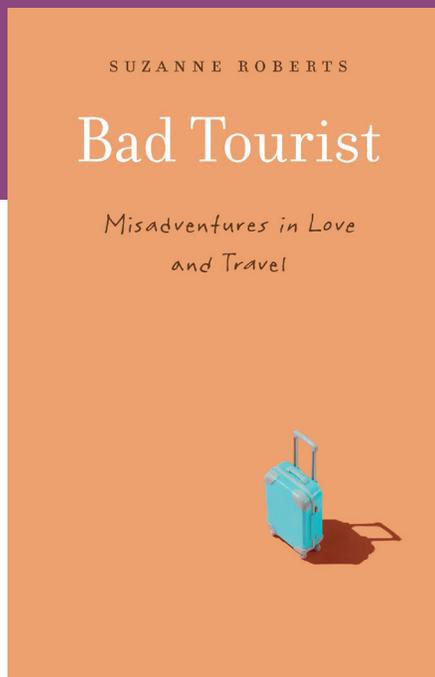
***Picturing Indians: Native Americans in Film, 1941–1960*** by Liza Black

“Meticulously researched, this engrossing volume fills a deep void in both film studies and Native American history. Black examines Native American actors in post-WWII films, especially their struggles for equal opportunity, pay equity and authentic representation.”—*Ms. Magazine*



***Mass Murder in California's Empty Quarter: A Tale of Tribal Treachery at the Cedarville Rancheria***, by Ray A. March,

was the subject of a lengthy opinion feature by Gabriel S. Galanda about disenrollment in the October 6, 2020, edition of *Indian Country Today*.



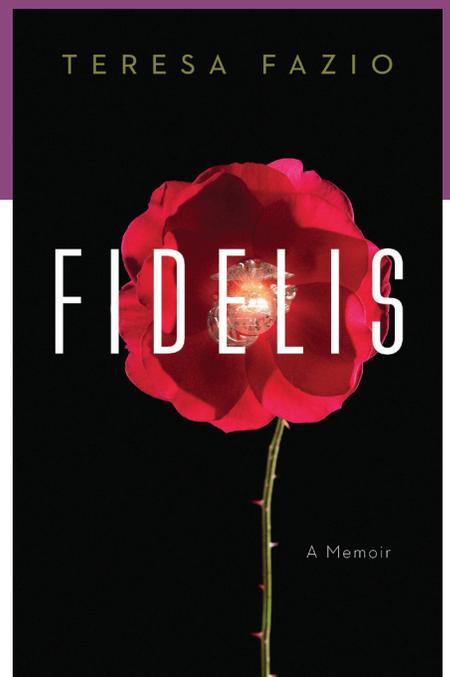
***Bad Tourist: Misadventures in Love and Travel*** by Suzanne Roberts

“Replete with harrowing and laugh-out-loud accounts of misadventures at home and abroad, Suzanne Roberts’s *Bad Tourist* collects entertaining stories from around the world. . . . Authentic, surprising, and irresistible, *Bad Tourist* is a travel text worth getting lost in.”—*Foreword Reviews*

“Roberts has spent decades circling the globe, chasing experience, understanding, and identity. This book is the culmination of her young adulthood on the move.”—Courtney Eathorne, *Booklist*

“Named Next Great Travel Writer by National Geographic’s *Traveler*, Roberts handily fits the distinction with memories, images, and insights that put readers in the seat beside her or hiking up a too-close-for-comfort volcanic slope—all the while providing a sort of anti-guidebook unapologetically illustrating what not to do.”—Donna McCrohan Rosenthal, *News Review*

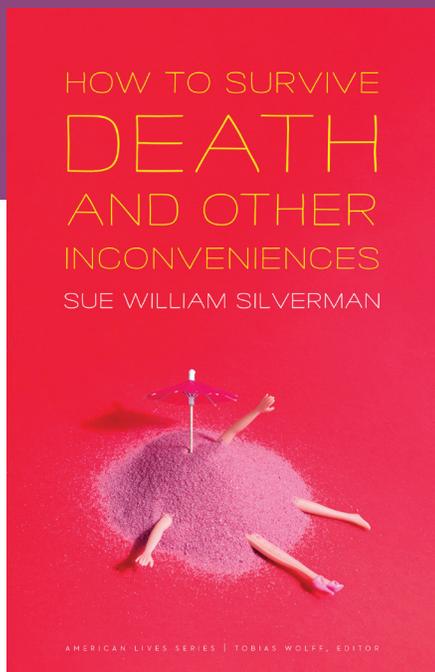
Suzanne Roberts has also been the subject of dozens of interviews, podcasts, and features about the book.



***Fidelis: A Memoir*** by Teresa Fazio

“Compelling for the conflict it depicts between honor and love, Fazio’s book offers a deeply personal perspective on gender issues in the male-dominated world of the Marine Corps. A candid and insightful memoir.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

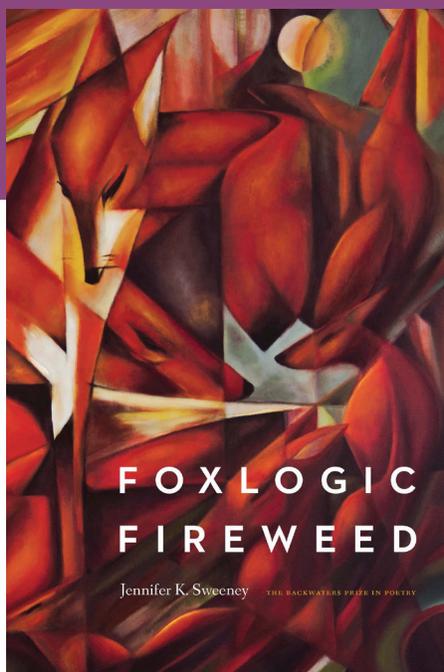
“In lyrical and brilliant prose, *Fidelis* offers a war story you have not read before.”—Kate Hendricks Thomas and Maggie Shields, *Journal of Veteran Studies*



***How to Survive Death and Other Inconveniences***  
by Sue William Silverman

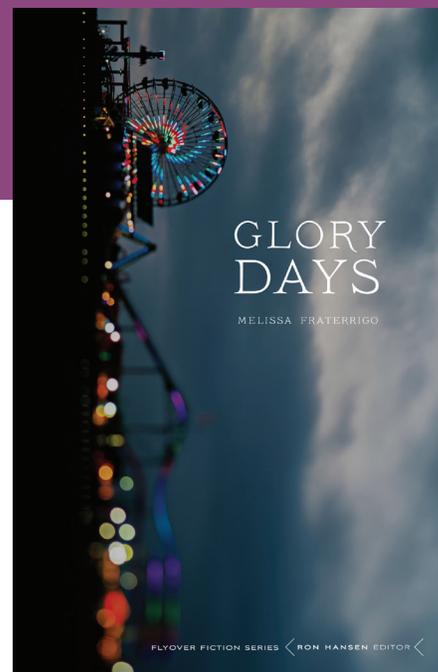
“What do we do with those memories that carry with them the ability to sink us? According to Silverman, in order to survive and grow, we have to collect them, transform them, and let them transform us.”—Chanel Dubofsky, *Lilith*

“Because of the distinctive subject matter and Silverman’s vast writing talents, *How to Survive Death and Other Inconveniences* will appeal to new and experienced readers alike; notably: it will also draw teachers of creative writing, who will cherish it for the many essays that can be taught as models of braided and segmented forms.”—Jody Keisner, *Hippocampus Magazine*

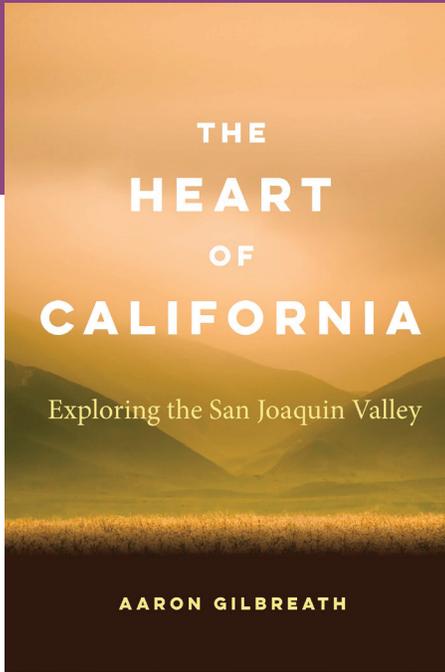


***Foxlogic, Fireweed***  
by Jennifer K. Sweeney

“Bringing issues facing a threatened natural world together with universal experiences and timely problems, *Foxlogic, Fireweed* is one of the year’s must-read books of poetry.”—*Bustle*, from its list of the most anticipated books of September 2020

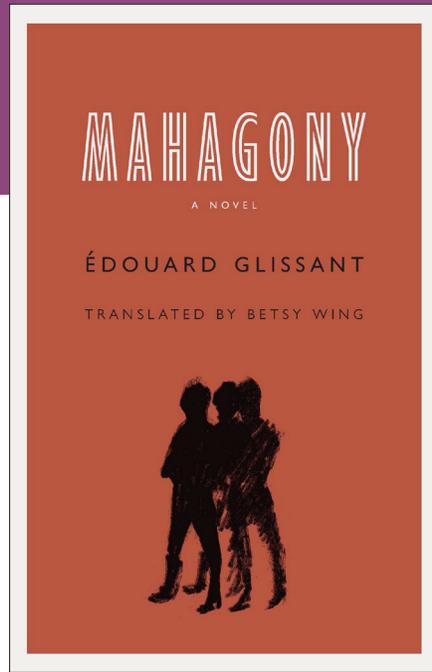


Melissa Fraterrigo, author of *Glory Days*, was the subject of AWP’s “In the Spotlight” feature highlighting “AWP members who are making exceptional contributions to the literary community.”

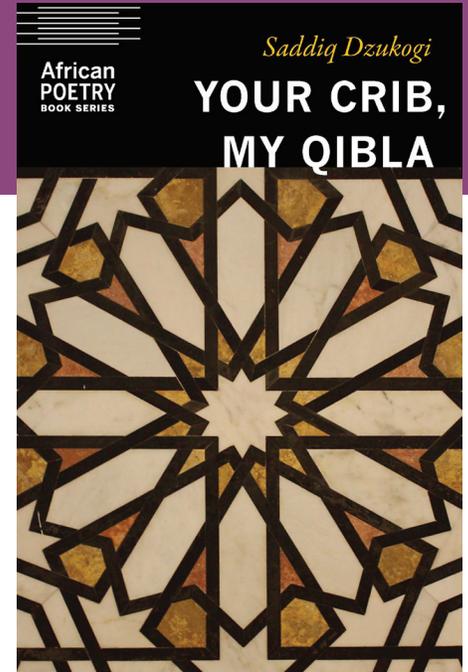


***The Heart of California:  
Exploring the San Joaquin  
Valley* by Aaron Gilbreath**

“In this captivating memoir, author Aaron Gilbreath takes us along on a journey through the vast interior of California, sandwiched between the mountains of the Sierra Nevada and the Pacific Coast Range. . . . A must-read in order to fully grasp the California experience.”—Melanie Dragger, *Literary West Review*

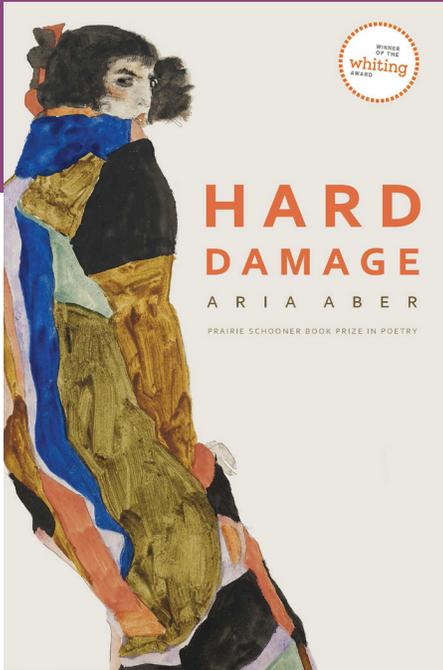


***Mahogany: A Novel***, by Édouard Glissant, translated by Betsy Wing, appeared in the *New York Times* twice at the end of 2020. It was part of both the “New and Noteworthy” books column on December 29 and the “Globetrotting” feature previewing books in translation coming out in 2021.



***Your Crib, My Qibla*  
by Saddiq Dzukogi**

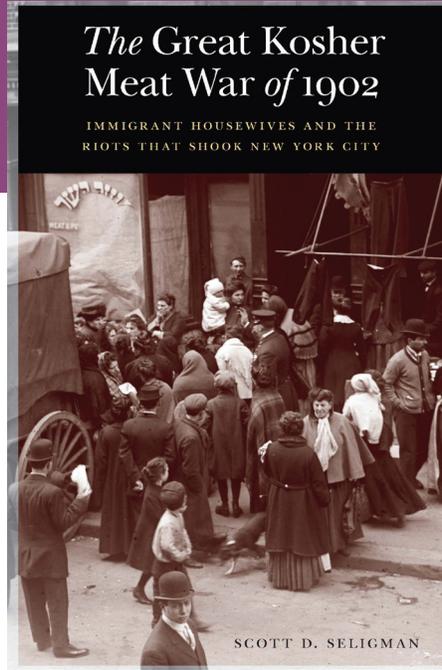
“Dzukogi’s *Your Crib, My Qibla* will join a list of collections by some of the most notable new African voices in the continent and in the diaspora, whose books have been published by the University of Nebraska Press.”  
—Ernest O. Ogunyemi, *Open Country*



***Hard Damage* by Aria Aber**

“*Hard Damage* is an immensely satisfying book. It charts immigrant experience in a way which is highly imaginative but also sustained and controlled. It will be fascinating to read what Aber writes next.”—Ian Pople, *Manchester Review*

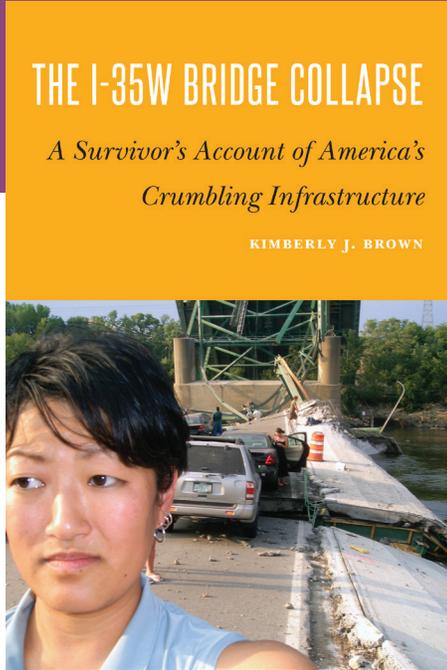
As part of the 2020 Texas Book Festival, the *Austin Chronicle* featured a discussion with the Whiting Award Winners in Poetry, including Aria Aber. The moderator was another UNP author, Safiya Sinclair.



***The Great Kosher Meat War of 1902: Immigrant Housewives and the Riots That Shook New York City* by Scott D. Seligman**

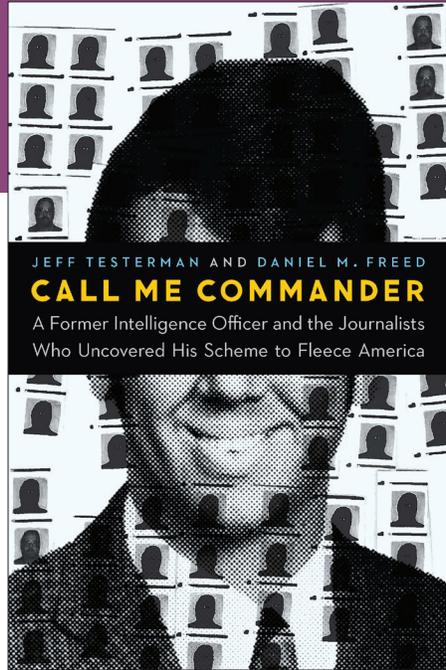
“Relying on primary source materials, Seligman has created a highly readable and enjoyable account of this little-known episode in American history. Highly recommended, especially for those interested in American history and Jewish history, as well as gender and labor studies.”—*Library Journal*, starred review

“The women didn’t know it, but it was the beginning of the twentieth century’s long list of social-justice battles for workers’ benefits, suffrage, civil rights. They would be fought with the methods of the meat war, too — public outreach, economic boycotts, massive demonstrations. They would change the face of America. And they all began with one woman’s anger at the price of brisket.”—*New York Daily News*



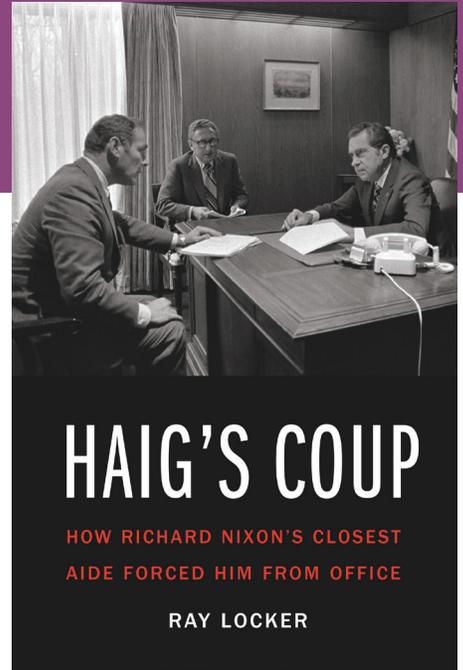
*The I-35W Bridge Collapse: A Survivor's Account of America's Crumbling Infrastructure* by Kimberly J. Brown

ABC News aired a story on December 29, 2020 about the “unbelievable” crisis in U.S. public transit systems. In a televised interview about the book and her experience, author Kimberly J. Brown called on “political leaders in both parties to adopt the lessons from that tragedy and see the human costs of infrastructure neglect.”



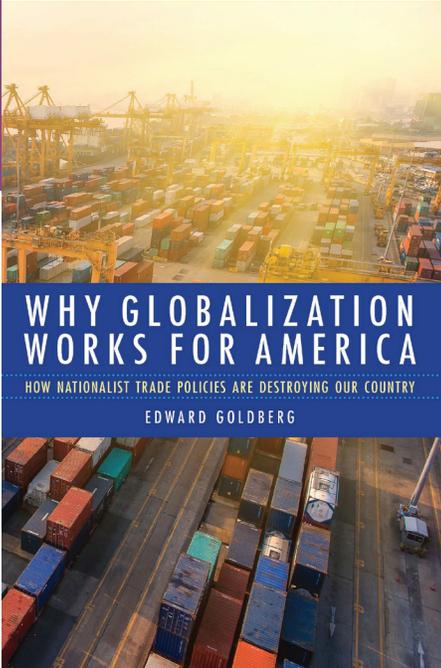
*Call Me Commander: A Former Intelligence Officer and the Journalists Who Uncovered His Scheme to Fleece America* by Jeff Testerman and Daniel M. Freed

“The narrative sends a powerful message: now, more than ever, journalists are needed to help distinguish between what is real and what is fake in American life.”—Dan Casey, *Roanoke Times*



*Haig's Coup: How Richard Nixon's Closest Aide Forced Him from Office* by Ray Locker

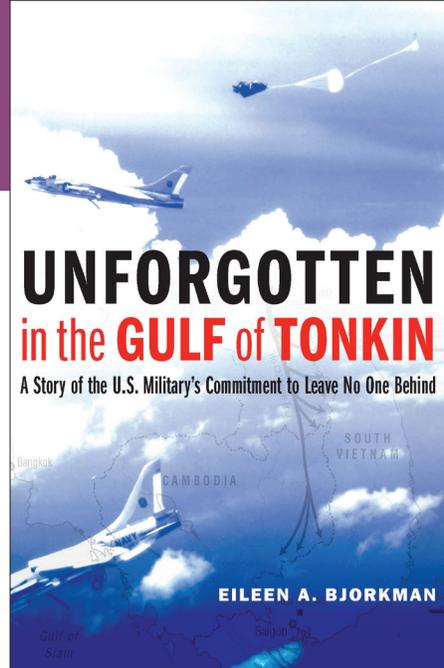
Locker published a 4,500-word article entitled “Secret Coup in the White House” in the October 2020 issue of *American Heritage*.



***Why Globalization Works for America: How Nationalist Trade Policies Are Destroying Our Country*** by Edward Goldberg

“*Why Globalization Works for America* is a welcome addition to a debate that has been hijacked by partisan and populist interests, to the detriment of what the author rightly calls America’s globalized DNA.”—Daniel Griswold, *National Review*

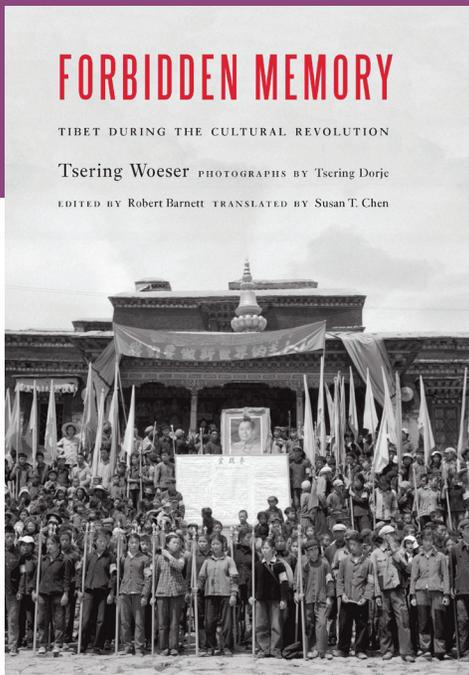
“[A] concise overview of how economic and political globalization have worked throughout history, and how ideologically driven propaganda and the unequal distribution of benefits have shaped the perception of globalization in today’s United States. . . . Consistently informative and highly readable.”—*Kirkus Reviews*



***Unforgotten in the Gulf of Tonkin: A Story of the U.S. Military’s Commitment to Leave No One Behind*** by Eileen A. Bjorkman

“[The book] is full of vignettes of fascinating stories from the birth of combat aviation to the rise of combat search and rescue. It weaves together a tapestry of short stories that all add up to display the most awe-inspiring aspect of military life—that no matter what happens, the U.S. military will come back for its own.”—Blake Stillwell, *military.com*

The September 1, 2020, issue of *Time* magazine included a lengthy feature story by the book’s author, Eileen A. Bjorkman, about the June 30, 1956, collision over the Grand Canyon of a TWA Super Constellation and a United DC-7, together carrying 128 people.



***Forbidden Memory: Tibet during the Cultural Revolution*** by Tsering Woeser, photographs by Tsering Dorje, edited by Robert Barnett; translated by Susan T. Chen, foreword by Wang Lixiong

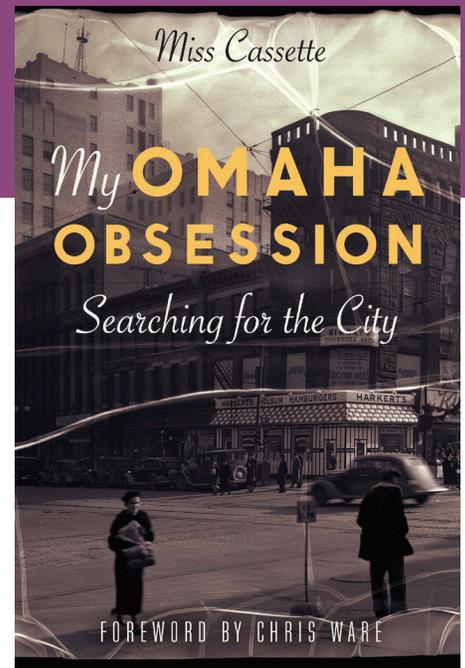
“*Forbidden Memory* is a beautiful book as well as an important contribution to the historiography of Tibet.”

—*Economist*

“Woeser describes the devastation wrought on Tibet’s Buddhist traditions by a campaign to humiliate the elderly and to obliterate what were known as the Four Olds—‘old thinking, old culture, old customs, and old

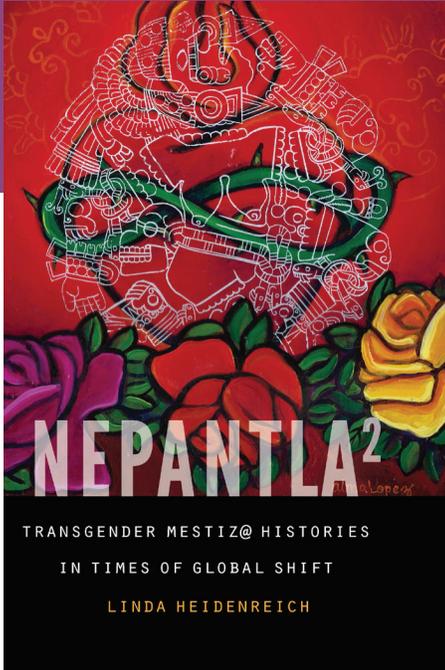
habits of the exploiting classes.’ The photographs in Woeser’s book were taken by her father, a soldier in the Chinese military, and found by her after he died. There are vandalized monasteries and bonfires of books and manuscripts—a rare pictorial record of a tragedy in which ideological delirium turned ordinary people into monsters who devoured their own.”

—*New Yorker*



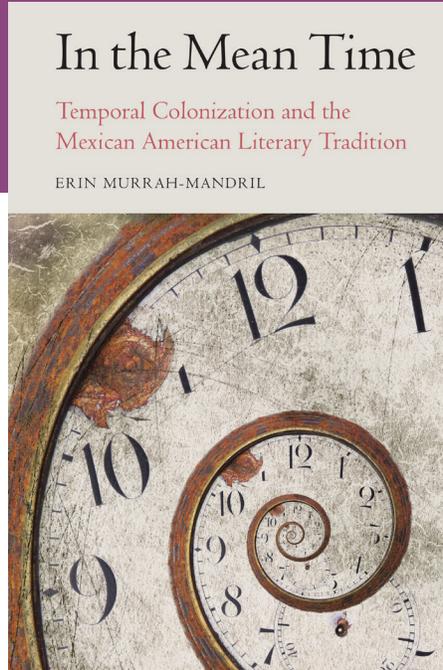
***My Omaha Obsession: Searching for the City*** by Miss Cassette

“A delightful collection of investigations into the old buildings of one city and the human stories found in their histories.”—*Shelf Awareness*



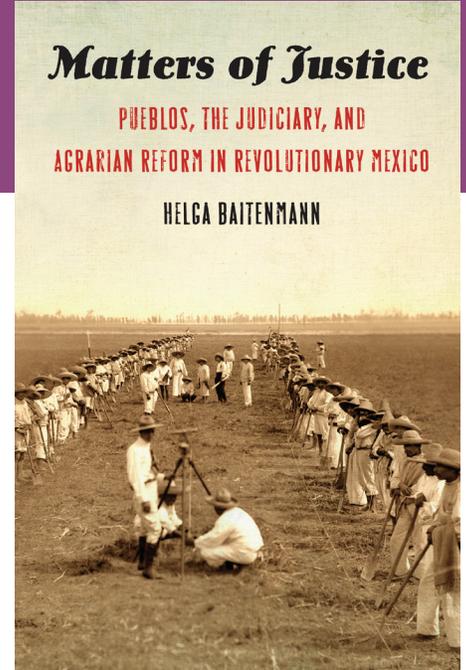
***Nepantla Squared: Transgender Mestiz@ Histories in Times of Global Shift*** by Linda Heidenreich

“Heidenreich’s latest fascinating history builds on the work of Gloria Anzaldúa’s concept of nepantleras to add new insights and layers to the examination and understanding of trans mestiz@ identity.”—*Ms. Magazine*



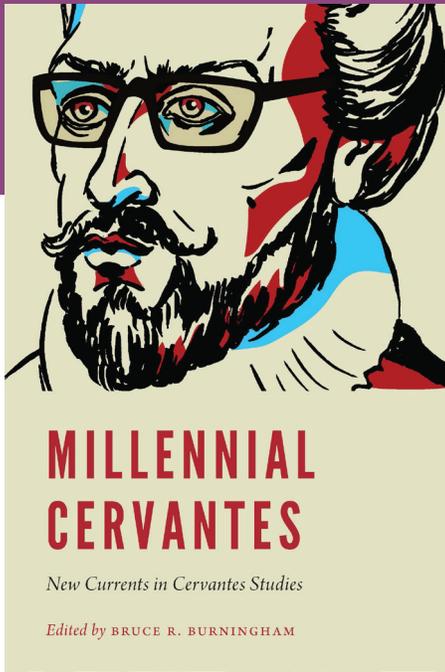
***In the Mean Time: Temporal Colonization and the Mexican American Literary Tradition*** by Erin Murrah-Mandril

“This is an intellectually rigorous and meticulously researched study of the Chicantx/Latinx/Mexican/American literary tradition.”—A. I. Estrada, *Choice*



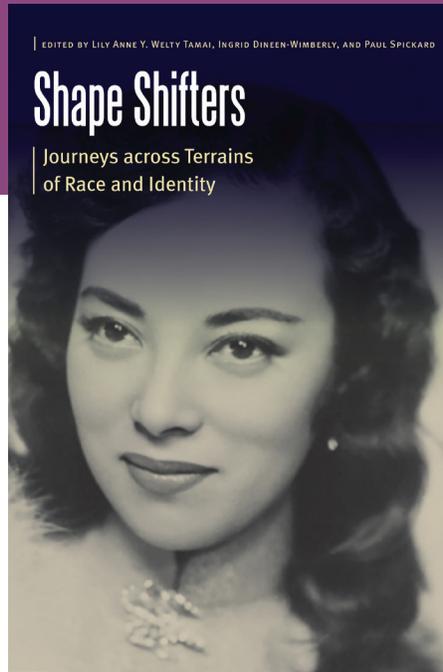
***Matters of Justice: Pueblos, the Judiciary, and Agrarian Reform in Revolutionary Mexico*** by Helga Baitenmann

“Baitenmann excels at grounding her argument in exhaustive archival research within the context of the broader literature.”—M. Becker, *Choice*



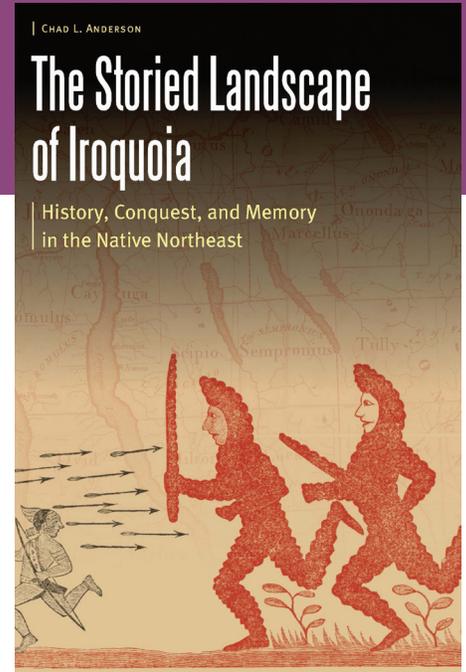
***Millennial Cervantes: New Currents in Cervantes Studies***  
edited by Bruce R. Burningham

“This collection of nine provocative, beautifully elaborated essays explores the impact of Cervantes’s writings in their own time and place, and well beyond.”—E. H. Friedman, *Choice*



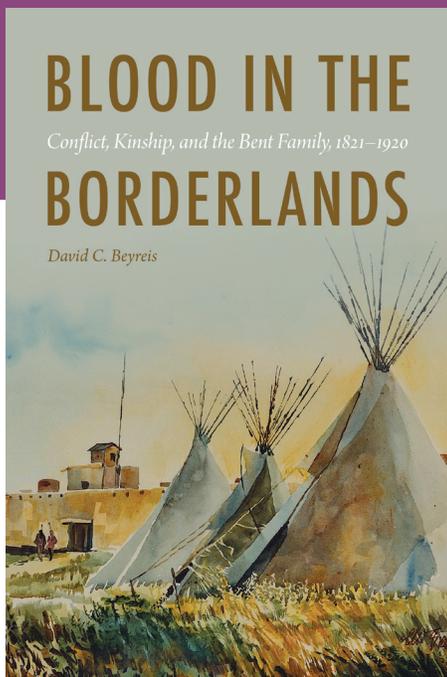
***Shape Shifters: Journeys across Terrains of Race and Identity***  
edited by Lily Anne Y. Welty Tamai, Ingrid Dineen-Wimberly, and Paul Spickard

“This diverse group of historians, sociologists, and scholars of ethnic studies explore how shape shifters, either individuals or groups, have changed identities for a variety of complex reasons that include social situations, cultural appeal, outside pressure or coercion, and as a result of pragmatism, idealism, or some combination of both.”—M. L. Roman, *Choice*



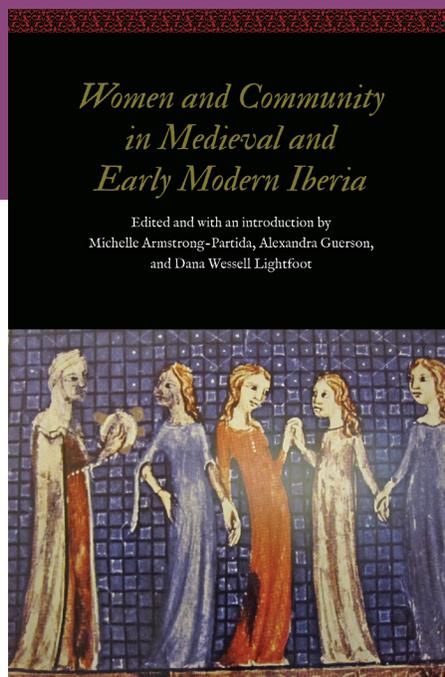
***The Storied Landscape of Iroquoia: History, Conquest, and Memory in the Native Northeast***  
by Chad L. Anderson

“Anderson’s fascinating work examines the shifts in the New York landscape through the 1840s as the area was used, shaped, and understood by the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and then the Americans. . . . This volume will work well in college courses as it bridges Iroquois and American histories and explores how written history is often based on cultural assumptions, memories, and oral traditions.”—D. R. Mandell, *Choice*



***Blood in the Borderlands: Conflict, Kinship, and the Bent Family, 1821–1920*** by David C. Beyreis

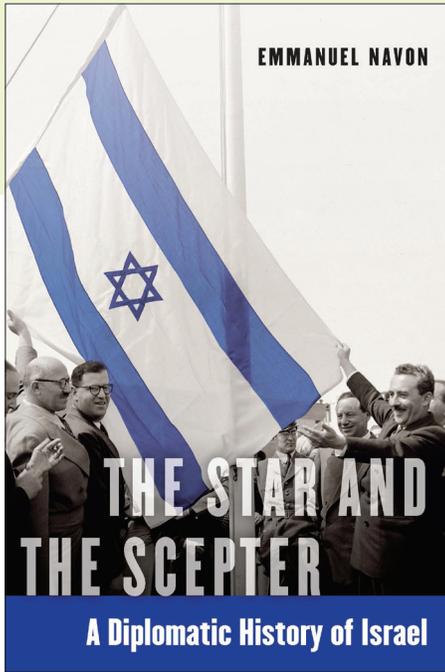
“This book is a concise multigenerational saga of the Bent family in Colorado, New Mexico, and Indian Territory, particularly as their fortunes intertwined with the plight of the Southern Cheyennes, with whom the Bents intermarried and conducted business. . . . Beyreis combines the epic scope of earlier accounts like David Lavender’s *Bent’s Fort* (1954) with concepts of intercultural exchange in line with more recent scholarship, including Elliott West’s *The Contested Plains* (1998) and James Brooks’s *Captives and Cousins* (2002).”—R. L. Dorman, *Choice*



***Women and Community in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*** edited and with an introduction by Michelle Armstrong-Partida, Alexandra Guerson, and Dana Wessell Lightfoot

“This collection of twelve essays significantly adds to the growing body of literature that explores the myriad networks through which medieval and early modern European women engaged and exercised agency within their societies’ patriarchal structures.”—J. Harrie, *Choice*

# JPS Awards and Select Publicity Highlights



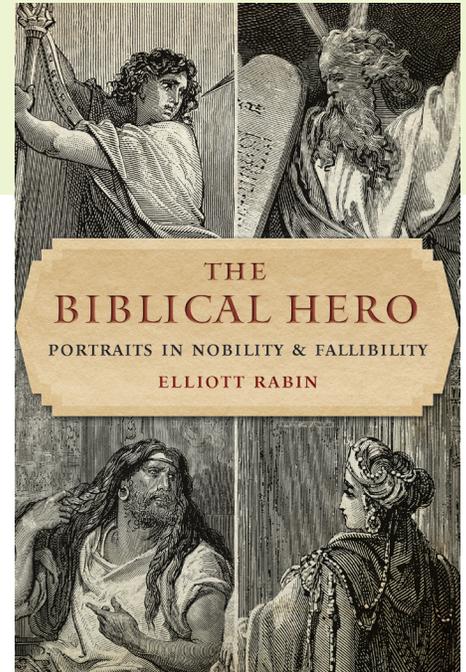
## *The Star and the Scepter: A Diplomatic History of Israel* by Emmanuel Navon

The *Jerusalem Post* named this title one of its “Top 14 books of 2020 on Israeli, Jewish matters.”

“*The Star and the Scepter* should be required reading for every veteran and cadet in Israel’s Foreign Ministry, and will be of significant interest to informed and educated general readers concerned with the Jewish people’s and the Jewish state’s places in the world.”—Brandon Marlon, *Jerusalem Post*

“Demonstrating that diplomacy is a balancing act between ideals and realpolitik, *The Star and the Scepter* draws aspirational and pragmatic lessons from Israel’s exceptional diplomatic history.”—Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security

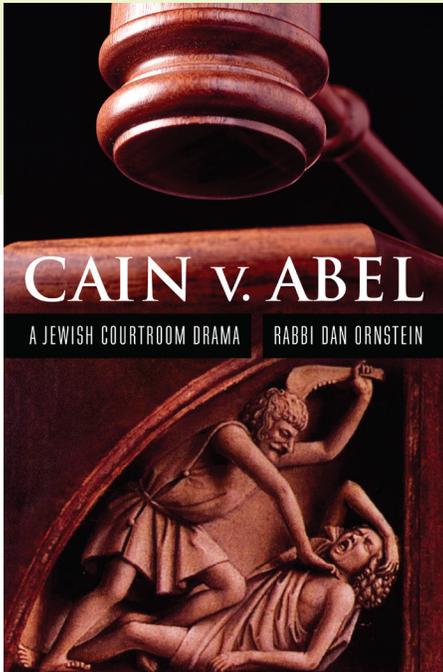
In addition to published reviews, the book has received considerable media attention including a feature on the Knesset Channel and a lengthy review essay in *Reform Judaism*. It has garnered mention in *Mosaic*, which also hosted Navon for a podcast about the book. Shmuel Rosner from *Jewish Journal* interviewed Navon in a thirty-three-minute podcast. Navon took center stage in a Middle East Forum webinar about the book, and he discussed it for thirty minutes on ELNET.



## *The Biblical Hero: Portraits in Nobility and Fallibility* by Elliott Rabin

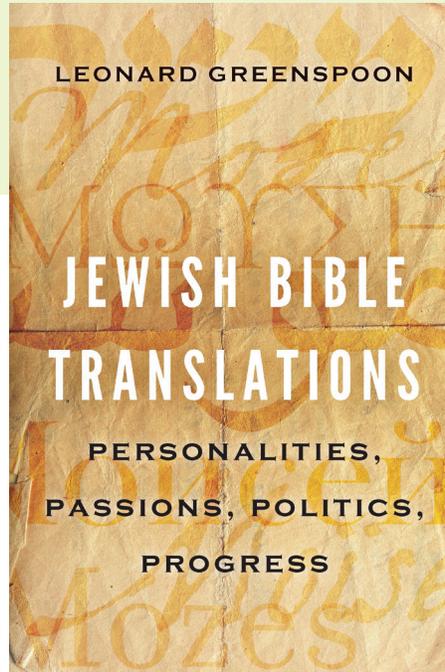
“As Rabin’s excellent volume so expertly teaches us, the Bible’s portrayal of its heroes inspires us today ‘to have high expectations of our leaders and to tolerate their imperfections . . . Biblical heroes are role models precisely because of the difficulties they encounter, both out in the world and inside themselves.’”—Stu Halpern, Jewish Book Council

*The Biblical Hero* was also highlighted in the *Jewish Literary Journal*.



***Cain v. Abel: A Jewish Courtroom Drama*** by Rabbi Dan Ornstein

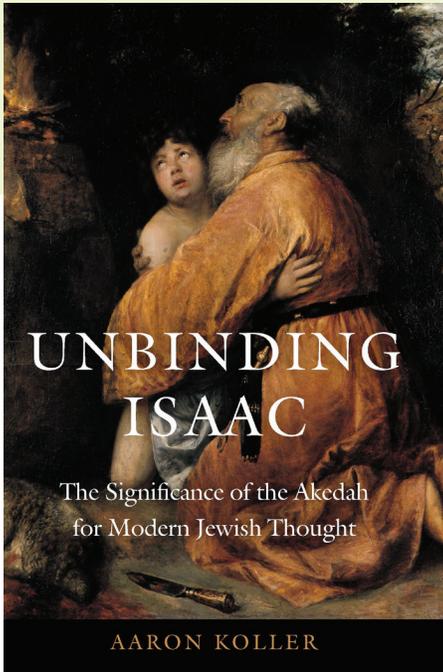
“Rabbi Dan Ornstein searches within the barebones biblical text for something that could bring us closer to understanding Cain’s motives and character, and the result is this book, a strikingly conceived courtroom drama. . . . Rich, compelling. . . . A literary tour de force.”—Merrill Leffler, Jewish Book Council



***Jewish Bible Translations: Personalities, Passions, Politics, Progress*** by Leonard Greenspoon

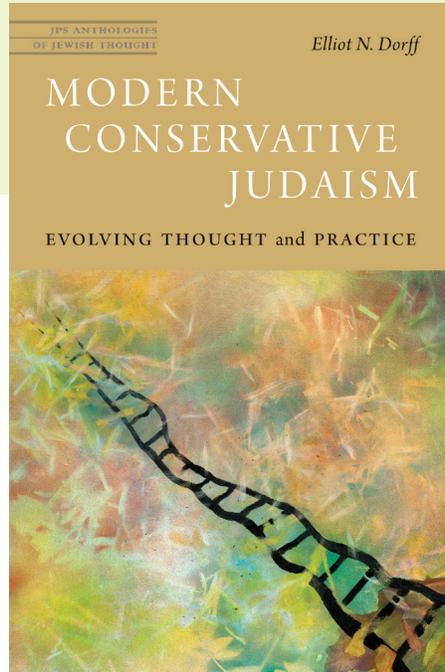
“My favorite parts of *Jewish Bible Translations* were the comparisons Greenspoon offers of different translations of the text. These sections made his other discussions come alive by showing how altering the word order, leaving out a word or two, or adding a sentence greatly changes the meaning of the text. It also shows how differences in Jewish theology affect the way that one interprets

the text, something those attending Torah study at their synagogue will understand. Anyone who wants to better understand the translation they use will definitely want to read Greenspoon’s work.” —Rabbi Rachel Esserman, *The Reporter*



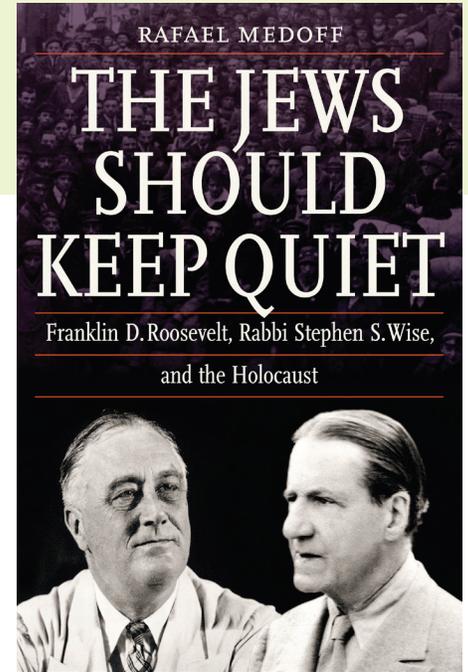
***Unbinding Isaac: The Significance of the Akedah for Modern Jewish Thought*** by Aaron Koller

“*Unbinding Isaac* is a lucid thesis-driven tour of some of the most important interpretations of the Akedah.”—Abraham Socher, *Jewish Review of Books*



***Modern Conservative Judaism: Evolving Thought and Practice*** by Elliot N. Dorff

“This volume forms part of a valuable service provided by The Jewish Publication Society in publishing separate volumes on each of the movements, collections of documents which reveal the history and thought of each movement from past to present.”—*Religious Studies Review*



***The Jews Should Keep Quiet: Franklin D. Roosevelt, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, and the Holocaust*** by Rafael Medoff

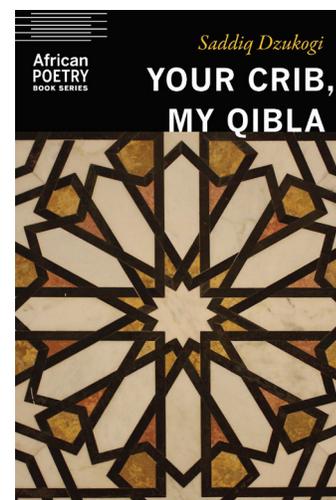
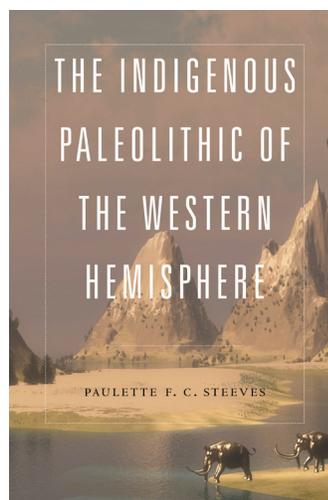
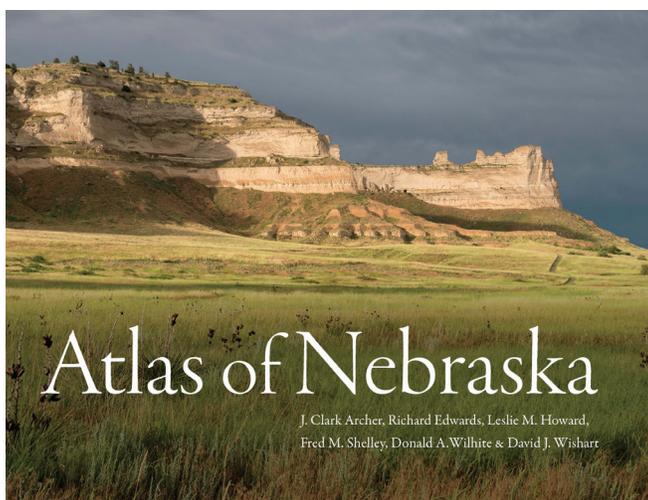
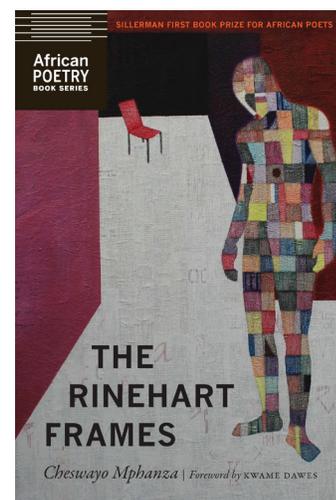
“Meticulously documented . . . sober . . . an important contribution to our understanding of the American government’s response to the Holocaust, and that of Franklin D. Roosevelt at the helm of power.”—*American Historical Review*

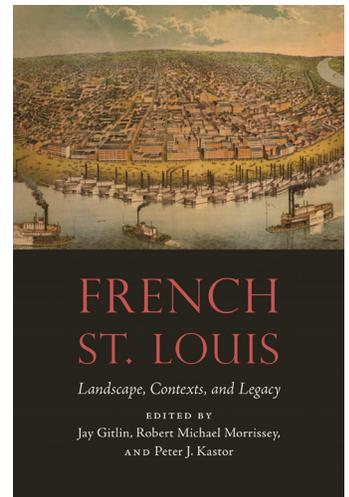
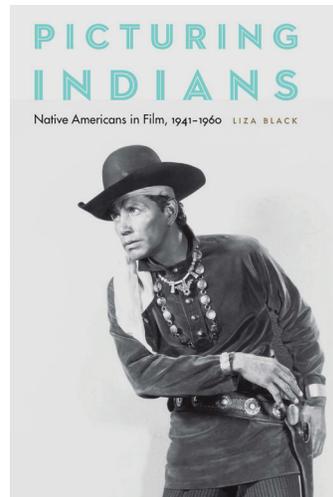
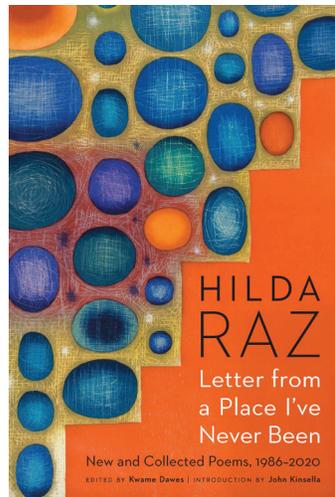
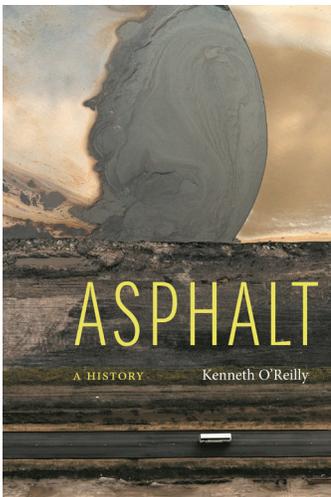
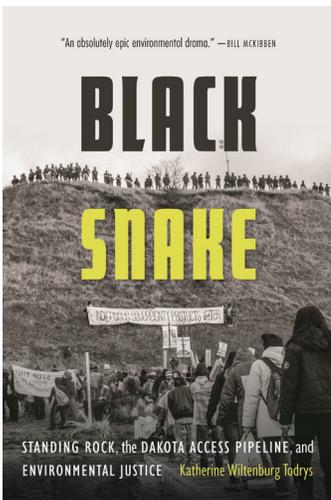
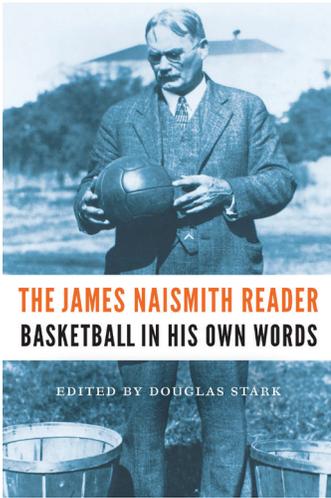
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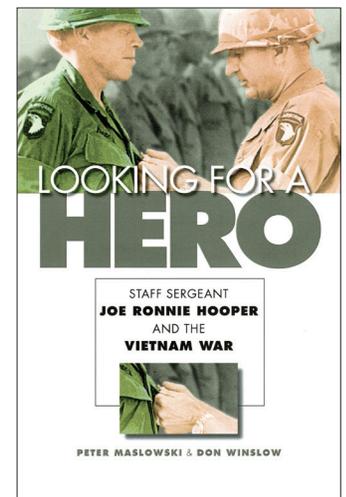
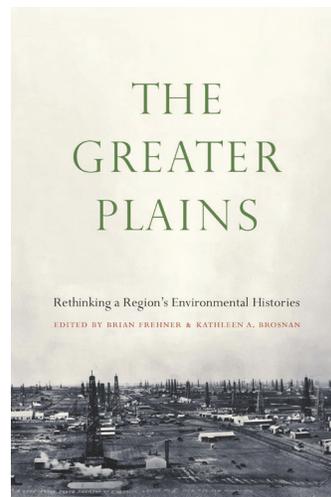
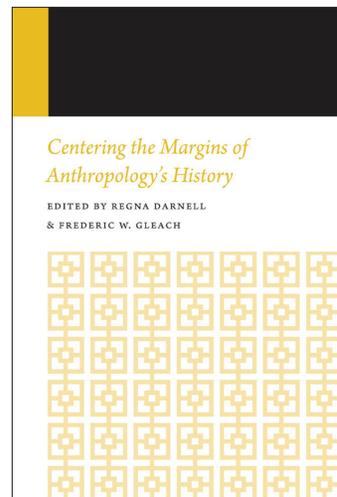
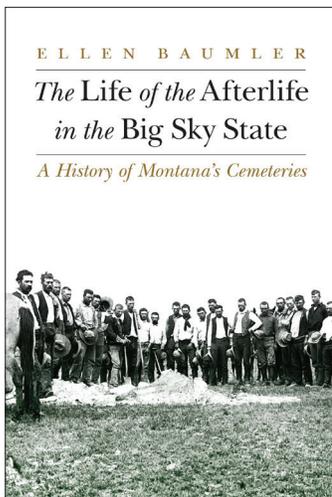
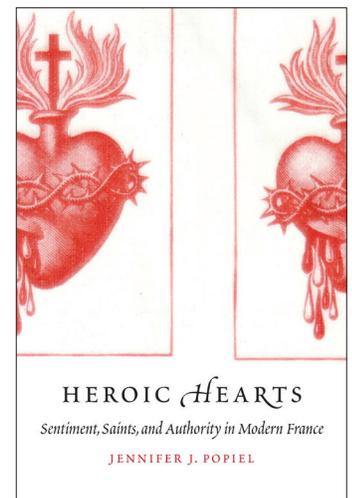
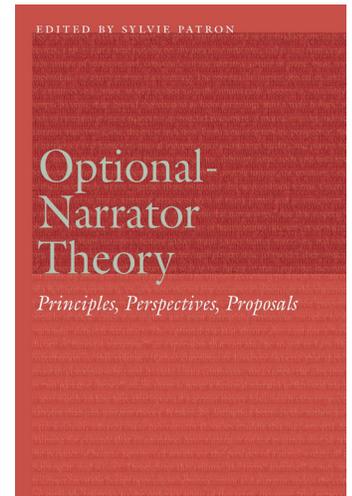
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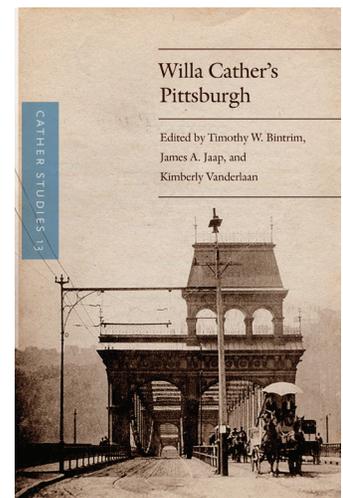
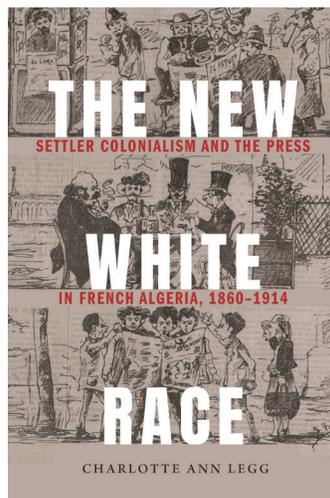
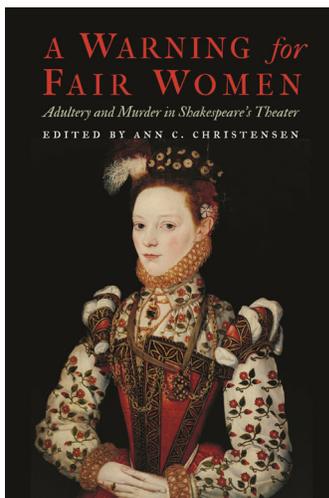
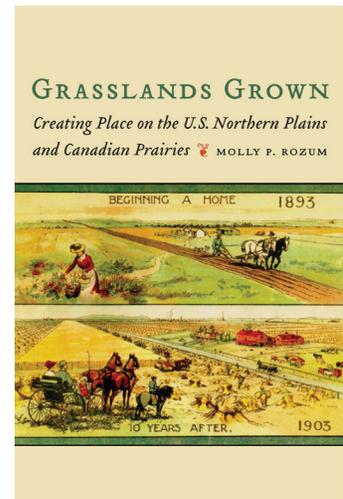
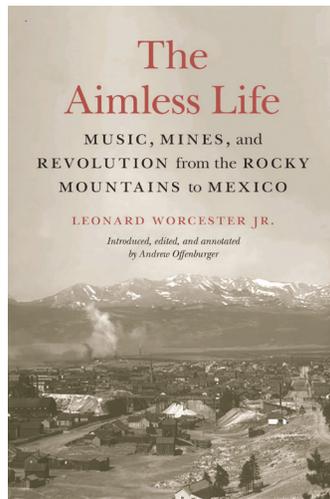
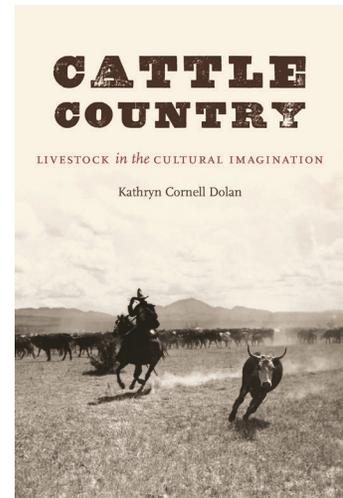
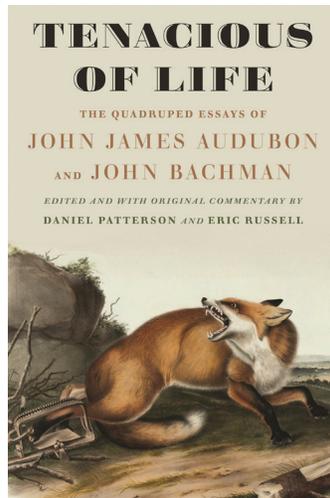
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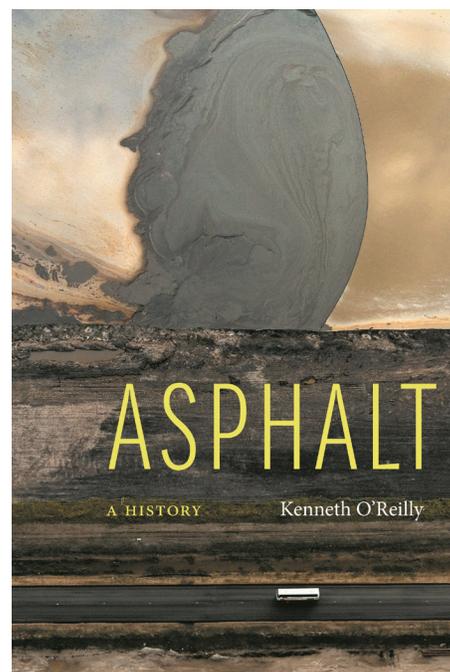
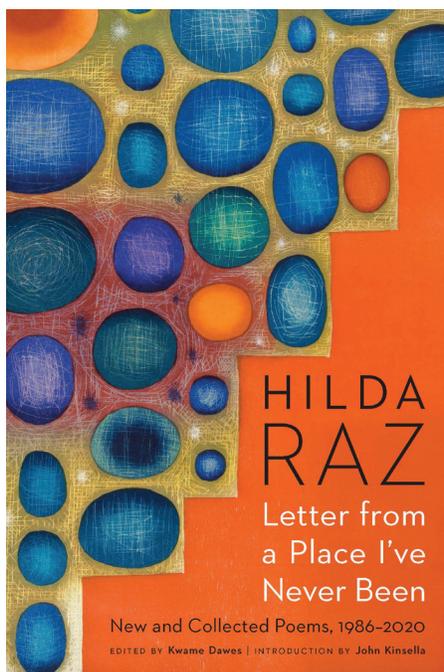
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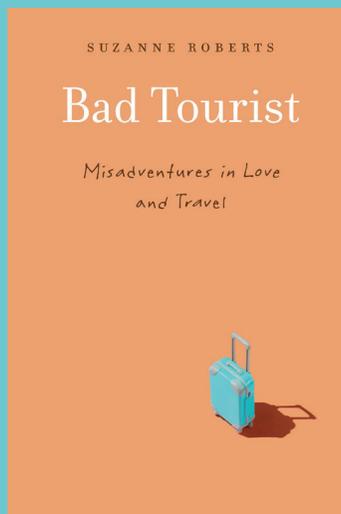
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No worries, I don't need a book.

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etc.



While UNP has been mostly remote since March, a few key people have worked on-site in our offices to keep the place running smoothly. Most important is our intrepid Barbara Townsend, acquisitions and business assistant, who, among many other duties, makes sure that staff members are informed when mail arrives for them at the office. She does a ton of other things, too, so thanks, Barbara, for all you do!