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2025 Anisfield-Wolf Book Award Winners Announced, Celebrating 90 Years of Literary Excellence

***Nation's Only Endowed Juried Prize for Books on Race and Diversity
Recognizes Groundbreaking Authors***

CLEVELAND [April 10, 2025] — Four groundbreaking works have been named winners of the 2025 [Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards](#), the nation's only endowed juried prize dedicated to literature that deepens our understanding of race and diversity.

The Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards jury, chaired by Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Natasha Trethewey, selected this year's distinguished group of winners:

- **Fiction:** *Colored Television* by **Danzy Senna**
- **Nonfiction:** *The United States Governed By Six Hundred Thousand Despots: A True Story of Slavery; A Rediscovered Narrative, with a Full Biography* by **John Swanson Jacobs**, edited by **Jonathan D. S. Schroeder**
- **Memoir:** *Feeding Ghosts* by **Tessa Hulls**
- **Poetry:** *Yard Show* by **Janice N. Harrington**

Pulitzer Prize-winning poet **Yusef Komunyakaa** will also receive the **Lifetime Achievement Award**, recognizing his profound impact on American literature. Known for his lyrical explorations of war, memory, and race, Komunyakaa has shaped contemporary poetry with a voice that is both unflinching and deeply evocative.

Founded in 1935 by poet and philanthropist Edith Anisfield Wolf, the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards remain a critical force in the literary world. Past winners include **Toni**

Morrison, James Baldwin, Isabel Wilkerson, Jesmyn Ward, and Colson Whitehead — writers whose work has shaped discourse on race and identity in America.

Anisfield Wolf, who died in 1963, asked the Cleveland Foundation in a bequest to sustain her passion and vision for the awards for the “purpose of stimulating the writing of more and better books upon the general subject of race relations.” The Cleveland Foundation continues to steward the awards today.

"For 90 years, the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards have championed fearless, groundbreaking literature that challenges the status quo, ignites dialogue, and shapes a more just and inclusive world," said Lillian Kuri, president and CEO of the Cleveland Foundation. "This year's winners unearth buried histories, redefine cultural narratives, and demand our attention — at a moment when these voices are more vital than ever."

A Landmark Win for the Graphic Memoir Genre

For the first time in its 90-year history, the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards have honored a **graphic memoir**: *Feeding Ghosts* by **Tessa Hulls**.

Through stunning visuals and powerful storytelling, Hulls unearths her family's multigenerational journey from China to America, confronting trauma, migration, and resilience in a format that redefines the boundaries of memoir.

A Prize with National and Global Impact

Now in its 90th year, the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards continue to elevate authors whose work ignites national and global conversations on identity, history, and justice.

"This year's winners add new dimensions to the Anisfield-Wolf legacy," said jury chair Trethewey. "From a rediscovered first-person slave narrative to a searing portrait of modern racial identity, these books demand to be read and discussed."

Trethewey is joined on the jury by esteemed AWBA-winning novelist Peter Ho Davies; bestselling AWBA-winning writer and scholar Charles King; AWBA-winning writer and American historian Tiya Miles; and critically acclaimed author and National Book Awards finalist Deesha Philyaw.

The 2025 Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards ceremony will take place September 19 in Cleveland — honoring the winners in a celebration of literature's power to confront the past and shape the future. This event will be part of a multi-week celebration of

books, literature and writing in Cleveland with other local literary partners. Additional details will be announced soon.

For interviews, review copies, and other details, please contact:

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About the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards

The Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards recognize books that have made important contributions to our understanding of racism and human diversity. Established in 1935 by poet and philanthropist Edith Anisfield Wolf, the awards are the only national endowed juried prize for literature that confronts racism and celebrates diversity. The Anisfield-Wolf Book awards are administered by the Cleveland Foundation.

About the Cleveland Foundation

Established in 1914, the Cleveland Foundation is the world's first community foundation – and one of the largest today. Through the generosity of donors, the foundation improves the lives of residents of Cuyahoga, Lake and Geauga counties by building community endowment, addressing needs through grantmaking and providing leadership on vital issues. Our vision is a vibrant Northeast Ohio where no Clevelander is left behind. For more information, visit ClevelandFoundation.org and follow us on [Facebook](#), [X](#) and [Instagram](#).