

Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards*

Cleveland Foundation
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EMBARGOED UNTIL TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2024 @ 8 P.M. EST

2024 Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards winners include stories that navigate racial politics' influence on Asian-American identity, Indigenous people's shaping of American history, and race at the intersection of art and history

Cleveland, OH (March 26, 2024) – The Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards, presented by the Cleveland Foundation, today announced the winners of the 89th annual awards. The 2024 recipients of the only national juried prize for literature that confronts racism and explores diversity are:

- **Maxine Hong Kingston**, Lifetime Achievement
- **Ned Blackhawk**, Non-fiction, “The Rediscovery of America”
- **Teju Cole**, Fiction, “Tremor”
- **Monica Youn**, Poetry, “From From”

“It is a great pleasure to recognize this year’s winners, who have used their unique voices and experiences to spark critical conversations,” said jury chair Natasha Trethewey, poet, memoirist and Board of Trustees Professor of English at Northwestern University. “This class joins past recipients, who include literary luminaries and contemporary thought leaders, in leveraging the power of words to explore and confront some of the most challenging topics facing us today.”

Trethewey, a 2021 Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards winner for non-fiction, received a Pulitzer Prize in poetry in 2007 and served as the nation’s 19th poet laureate from 2012-2014.

The Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards recognize books that have made important contributions to our understanding of racism and human diversity. Cleveland poet and philanthropist Edith Anisfield Wolf established the book awards in 1935, in honor of her father, John Anisfield, and husband, Eugene Wolf, to reflect her family’s passion for social justice.

“The Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards illuminate the path to social justice through literature’s transformative power. The best art does not simply reflect human experience – it challenges us and advances our humanity,” said Lillian Kuri, president and CEO, Cleveland Foundation. “Edith Anisfield Wolf understood this when she established the book awards nearly 90 years ago. Today, the Cleveland Foundation is proud to carry forward her legacy by celebrating literary excellence that catalyzes change in ourselves and in our communities.”

This year’s award winners are among more than 260 recipients of the prize. Past winners include seven writers who won Nobel prizes – Ralph J. Bunche, Nadine Gordimer, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Toni Morrison, Gunnar Myrdal, Wole Soyinka and Derek Walcott.

“This year’s winners join an Anisfield-Wolf canon of literature that has challenged the way that we think and inspired action in individuals around the world,” said Nicholas Roman Lewis, director of the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards.

THE JURY

Natasha Trethewey

Peter Ho Davies

Rita Dove

Tiya Miles

Steven Pinker

About the 2024 Winners:

Lifetime Achievement: Maxine Hong Kingston

Born to Chinese immigrant parents in Stockton, California, **Maxine Hong Kingston** altered the course of American culture, beginning with her books “The Woman Warrior” and “China Men.” A lifelong teacher, peace activist and writer, Kingston earned a degree at the University of California, Berkeley. She influenced generations to be skeptical of the identities the world foists upon them, and to discern how the past marinates the present. She lives and gardens in Oakland, California, with her husband Earll Kingston. Among her many honors, Kingston has received the National Medal of Arts, the National Book Award, the National Book Critics Circle Award and an Anisfield-Wolf Book Award for “The Woman Warrior.”

Fiction: “Tremor” by Teju Cole (Random House)

Teju Cole is a writer and photographer who has traveled in 48 countries over his 48 years. Born in Kalamazoo, Michigan, to Nigerian parents, he grew up in Lagos. He earned an undergraduate degree at Kalamazoo College, then art history degrees from the University of London and Columbia University. “Tremor,” his third novel, follows Tunde, a West African teaching photography in New England. The story is pierced by the ethics of collecting art, making music, and casual racism amid shifting history. Anisfield-Wolf Juror Peter Ho Davies calls it “a sinuous meditation on art and life, at once elegant and steely.” Cole is the Gore Vidal Professor of the Practice of Creative Writing at Harvard University. He lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with his wife Karen.

Non-fiction: “The Rediscovery of America” by Ned Blackhawk (Yale University Press)

Ned Blackhawk is an enrolled member of the Te-Moak tribe of the Western Shoshone and a historian at Yale University. He grew up in Detroit, excelling at his Jesuit high school classes in history even though he remembers no discussion of the millions of Indigenous people who have lived in North America over the past five centuries. His education at McGill University, UCLA and the University of Washington bent toward interrupting this erasure. “‘The Rediscovery of America’ offers a sweeping yet fine-grained history of Indigenous peoples,” notes Anisfield-Wolf juror and historian Tiya Miles, calling it “rare and ambitious.” The text, which also won a National Book Award, invites readers to reorient the story of America from one of discovery to one of encounter. Blackhawk lives in New Haven, Connecticut, with his wife Maggie.

Poetry: “From From” by Monica Youn (Graywolf Press)

Monica Youn, the daughter of Korean immigrants, grew up in Houston. She earned an undergraduate degree from Princeton University, a law degree from Yale University, and a master’s in philosophy from the University of Oxford, where she was a Rhodes scholar. Now, she calls herself a lapsed lawyer, and has garnered critical acclaim for her precise and lapidary poems. “From From,” her fourth collection, explores the question, “Where are you from...? No—where are you *from* from?” Anisfield-Wolf Jury Chair Natasha Trethewey notes this brilliant, formally inventive book “paints a devastating picture of what racial politics has wrought in this country.” Youn splits her time between New York and California, where she teaches at the University of California, Irvine.

The Anisfield-Wolf winners will be honored Sept. 27 at the Maltz Performing Arts Center at Case Western Reserve University. The awards will anchor the ninth annual Cleveland Book Week. For additional

information, a complete list of the recipients since 1935, and to learn more about The Asterisk* podcast featuring previous winners, visit www.Anisfield-Wolf.org.

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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. For more information, visit ClevelandFoundation.org and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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