

Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards*

*Presented by the Cleveland Foundation

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Cleveland Foundation Celebrates 90 Years of the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards with 2025 Finalists

CLEVELAND – [March 10, 2025] – The Cleveland Foundation announced 10 finalists for the 2025 [Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards](#) (AWBA), marking 90 years of honoring literature that confronts racism and explores diversity.

The announcement of finalists marks an expansion from past practice. In previous years, only the winning books have been revealed for categories that include fiction, nonfiction, poetry and lifetime achievement.

“Every year, the hardest part of our job as judges is choosing the winners from a finalist pool of incredible and compelling books,” says Natasha Trethewey, Pulitzer-Prize winning author and chair of the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards jury, which considered more than 300 submissions this year. “The decision to share the finalists allows us to lift up the important works of more of these talented authors to a broader audience.”

Founded in 1935 by poet and philanthropist Edith Anisfield Wolf, AWBA remains the only national endowed juried prize recognizing books that contribute to our understanding of racism and foster an appreciation of cultural diversity.

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.

This year’s extraordinary finalists span fiction, nonfiction, poetry and memoir/autobiography, reflecting the richness and complexity of the global conversation on identity, history and justice:

- **Janice Harrington**, *Yard Show*
- **Tessa Hulls**, *Feeding Ghosts*

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- **John Swanson Jacobs/edited by Jonathan D. S. Schroeder**, *The United States Governed by Six Hundred Thousand Despots: A True Story of Slavery; A Rediscovered Narrative, with a Full Biography*
- **Sarah Lewis**, *The Unseen Truth: When Race Changed Sight in America*
- **Susan Muaddi Darraj**, *Behind You Is the Sea*
- **Emily Raboteau**, *Lessons for Survival: Mothering Against "the Apocalypse"*
- **Kiley Reid**, *Come and Get It*
- **Danzy Senna**, *Colored Television*
- **Adam Shatz**, *The Rebel's Clinic: The Revolutionary Lives of Frantz Fanon*
- **Danez Smith**, *Bluff*

"Art is such a powerful tool—it inspires us, challenges us and leads us to ask the critical questions that drive society in the direction of its best self," says Lillian Kuri, president and CEO of the Cleveland Foundation. "For 90 years, the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards have amplified voices in pursuit of a more just and inclusive world, not only in literature but in life."

The finalist list of 10 titles was chosen by the 2025 AWBA jury. Trethewey is joined 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 columnist Deesha Philyaw. The selection process reflects the award's deep commitment to literary excellence and social relevance.

"This year's finalists embody the Anisfield-Wolf legacy of fearless writing that compels us to reckon with history and reimagine the future," says Trethewey. "These books are urgent, profound and necessary."

The winners will be announced on April 10 at the William N. Skirball Writers Center Stage Series presented by the Cuyahoga County Public Library Foundation and its academic partner Case Western Reserve University in the Maltz Performing Arts Center in Cleveland, Ohio. Tommy Orange, former AWBA winner for his 2018 debut novel, *There There*, will announce the winners following a conversation with fellow writer Kaveh Akbar. Live stream (and limited in-person) tickets are available at writerscenterstage.org.

The winners will also be honored at the upcoming annual Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards ceremony this fall in Cleveland.

For more information on the awards and past recipients, visit www.anisfield-wolf.org.

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About the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards

The Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards recognize books that have made important

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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](https://www.ClevelandFoundation.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [X](#) and [Instagram](#).