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Front Matter


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The North Meridian Review

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A Journal of Culture and Scholarship

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Abbey Chambers recently completed her PhD in American Studies at Indiana University-Purdue University-Indianapolis (IUPUI). She has a master's degree in Art History from Indiana University, Bloomington. Her doctoral research uses visual culture theory and ethnographic methods to show how understanding residents' perceptions of neighborhood redevelopment can inform economic development processes that are equitable and inclusive.

Dr. Kiesha Warren-Gordon is an Associate Professor of Criminal Justice/Criminology at Ball State University where she also serves as the Director of the African American Studies Program. Dr. Warren-Gordon's work centers on critical approaches of community engagement while working with marginalized communities. Her research explores the intersection of race, class, and gender as it relates to violence, and intercultural conflict. Dr. Warren-Gordon is also active in the criminal justice professional community. She currently serves as the Past President of the Midwest Criminal Justice Association. She is also Senior Faculty Fellow for Indiana Campus Compact.

Emily Ruth Rutter is an Associate Professor of English at Ball State University. She is the author of *Invisible Ball of Dreams: Literary Representations of Baseball behind the Color Line* (University Press of Mississippi, 2018), *The Blues Muse: Race, Gender, and Musical Celebrity in American Poetry* (University of Alabama Press, 2018), and the forthcoming *Black Celebrity: Contemporary Representations of Postbellum Athletes and Artists* (University of Delaware Press, 2022). Along with Tiffany Austin, Sequoia Maner, and darlene anita scott, she co-edited *Revisiting the Elegy in the Black Lives Matter Era* (Routledge, 2020). Her numerous essays have been published in *African American Review*, *Aethlon*, and *MELUS*, among other journals.

Darolyn "Lyn" Jones is an activist/teacher/researcher/writer. Passionate about border crossing classrooms into the community, Lyn teaches in the Department of English at Ball State University and serves as director of the Memoir Project for the Indiana Writers Center. Lyn authored *Painless Reading Comprehension*, co-authored *Memory Workshop*, and is an editor for Indie presses: INwords Publications, Rethinking Children's & YA Lit, & 409 Press. Lyn researches and publishes academically in community writing, community engagement, and disability studies.

Dr. Adam Henze is a researcher, educator, and spoken word artist, and has shared his work in over thirty states, as well as Puerto Rico, Canada, England, and Ireland. He is the co-founder of Slam Camp, a summer writing academy for teenage poets, and is the director of Power of a Sentence, a writing workshop series at a women's prison in Indianapolis. Adam earned a PhD in Literacy, Culture, and Language Education at Indiana University, where he also works as a Research Associate at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community. Adam has facilitated educational programming at over a dozen prisons and juvenile detention centers in Indiana, Florida, Kentucky, Illinois, and Arkansas. Articles about his work as an artist and educator have appeared in *Japan Times*, *USA Today*, the *Indianapolis Star*, and on NPR, PBS, the Big Ten Network, and Chalkbeat. Adam is a Program Director at Southern

Fried Poetry, Inc., which hosts one of the largest and longest-running poetry slam festivals in the world.

JesAlana Stewart holds a doctorate in literacy, culture, and language education. She has dedicated her career to fostering enthusiasm in the classroom, promoting multilingual collaboration, and facilitating communication internationally. Due to her background in linguistics, she is fluent in Spanish, proficient in French, and has studied Mandarin, Italian, and Portuguese, developing in her a deep sense of responsibility to empower people through global educational opportunities that focus on equity and inclusion. Through this responsibility her research interests are interdisciplinary in nature, combining theory and inquiry in the fields of foreign languages, linguistics, literacy, rhetoric, global studies, and education.

Maria Hamilton Abegunde is an ancestral priest, healer, and poet. Her creative work and scholarship focus on healing intergenerational traumas related to slavery and sexual violence through ritual, contemplative practices, and community-based art. Her work has been published in the *Massachusetts Review*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, *COGzine*, the *Kenyon Review*, *Best African American Fiction*, *nocturnes*, *rhino*, and several anthologies, including *I Feel a Little Jumpy around You*, *Catch the Fire*, and *Beyond the Frontier: African American Poetry for the 21st Century*. Commissioned work appears in *Be/Coming* and *Keeper of My Mothers Dreams*. Excerpts from *Learning to Eat the Dead: Juba, USA* was a COG finalist. Dr. Abegunde is a Cave Canem fellow. Her writing fellowships include those from Sacatar, Ragdale, and Norcroft. She was an NEH Summer Institute fellow in the Black Aesthetics and African Centered Cultural Expressions project. She has received grants from Indiana Humanities/National Endowment for the Arts, the Illinois Arts Council, and the Barbara Deming Foundation. She is the director of The Graduate Mentoring Center and a faculty member in African American and African Diaspora Studies at Indiana University Bloomington. She likes to read and watch science fiction, laugh, do nothing, and dance in the street when the music is groovy.

Celeste Williams is a former newspaper journalist, having worked at daily newspapers in Indiana, Alabama, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. She won several national awards and a Pulitzer Prize nomination for her reporting on extreme poverty in Mississippi. She is also a poet and playwright. Her play, *More Light: Douglass Returns*, in conjunction with Asante Children's Theatre, ran two summers at Conner Prairie Interactive History Park. She is president of the board of directors of the Indiana Writers Center.

Tatjana Rebelle (they/she) is a mother, activist, organizer, writer, performer and promoter. They have lived in Indianapolis most of their life, which is where they learned to use their writing to deal with growing up in the Midwest as a bisexual, biracial child of an immigrant. They are the founder of VOCAB, an all-inclusive monthly spoken word and live music event that is in its thirteenth year. They have been fighting for social justice for communities of color and QTBIPOC rights for several years on their own. As well as American Friends Service Committee, combating Islamophobia, white supremacy and fighting for Palestinian liberation. AFSC gave them the chance to follow in the footsteps of their idol, Bayard Rustin in taking a nonviolent stance against global and local oppression. Tatjana's goal is to bring activism to the people via their current work in Environmental Justice with Earth Charter Indiana.

Cristina Santamaría Graff is an Assistant Professor of Special Education, Urban Teacher Education at IUPUI. She has expertise in bilingual/multicultural special education and applies her skills in working with Latinx immigrant families of children with dis/abilities in family-centered projects. Her scholarship focuses on ways community engaged partnerships with families and other stakeholders can transform inequitable practices impacting youth with dis/abilities at the intersections of race, class, and other identity markers of difference. Though Cristina's scholarship is mainly represented through academic writing, she is excited to share this poem to communicate through imagery, symbolism, and metaphor the emotional impact of being 'othered' as shared by several families she has had the honor of listening to and learning from. This poem is a composite of their stories.

Michael Jackman is a senior lecturer in writing at Indiana University Southeast, where he has taught composition and creative writing for fifteen years. A published poet and former editor and journalist, he lives in New Albany, Indiana with his partner Sarah, son Theo, new pandemic dog Olive Trouble Rotten Meshuggeneh Shenanigans Dugan, cat Naomi, rats Antonio and Dwight, and six egg-laying chickens. Jackman is an accomplished musician performing guitar/vocals/dobro/ukulele in the Americana/Roots/Nostalgia trio Molly's Mutts (when there is performing again) and occasionally gives poetry readings and leads creative writing workshops. Jackman has published poetry in *Carbon Culture Review*, *Gyroscope: A Literary Review*, *Hospital Drive*, *Jewish Currents*, *Panoply*, *Pegasus*, *The Thomas Merton Seasonal*, *The Louisville Review*, *NEBO*, *Orange Blossom Review*, *Poetica*, *The New Sound: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Art and Literature*, and others. He won second place in the 2014 Raynes Poetry Prize competition, judged by Joan Larkin. He is the author of "Metre and Meaning In Jane Kenyon's 'Song,'" *New Writing: The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing* 14, no. 1 (2017).

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