

## **Localize Your Summer Reading List with Mississippi Authors**

### **Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters shares list with a local twist**

Summer is here, and it's a scorcher. If all you have the energy for is a cold glass of lemonade and a good book, check out our summer reading list, which features work from our most recent award-winning authors.

#### **Fiction:**

*The Past is Never* by Tiffany Quay Tyson. This compelling addition to contemporary Southern Gothic fiction deftly weaves together local legends, family secrets, and the search for a missing child. Perfect for fans of Flannery O'Connor and Dorothy Allison, *The Past Is Never* is an atmospheric, haunting story of myths, legends, and the good and evil we carry in our hearts.

*Eveningland: Stories* by Michael Knight. Grappling with dramas both epic and personal, from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill to the “unspeakable misgivings of contentment,” *Eveningland* captures the ways in which ordinary life astounds us with its complexity. These stories, told with economy and precision, infused with humor and pathos, excavate brilliantly the latent desires and motivations that drive life forward.

*For a Little While* by Rick Bass. Bass provides searing insights into the complexity of family and romantic entanglements, and his lush and striking language draws us ineluctably into the lives of these engaging people and their vivid surroundings. The intricate stories collected in *For A Little While* - brimming with magic and wonder, filled with hard-won empathy, marbled throughout with astonishing imagery - have the power both to devastate and to uplift.

#### **Non-fiction:**

*Catfish Dream: Ed Scott’s Fight for His Family Farm and Racial Justice in the Mississippi Delta* by Julian Rankin. *Catfish Dream* centers around the experiences, family, and struggles of Ed Scott Jr., a prolific farmer in the Mississippi Delta and the first ever nonwhite owner and operator of a catfish plant in the nation. Rankin provides a fascinating portrait of a place through this intimate biography of Scott, a hero at once so typical and so exceptional in his community.

*Potlikker Papers: A Food History of the Modern South* by John T. Edge. Beginning with the pivotal role cooks and waiters played in the civil rights movement, noted authority Edge narrates the South’s fitful journey from a hive of racism to a hotbed of American immigration. He shows why working-class Southern food has become a vital driver of contemporary American cuisine. *The Potlikker Papers* tells the story of that dynamism—and reveals how Southern food has become a shared culinary language for the nation.

*Hanging Bridge: Racial Violence and America’s Civil Rights Century* by Jason Morgan Ward. Spanning three generations, *Hanging Bridge* reconstructs two wartime lynchings the 1918 killing of two young men and two pregnant women, and the 1942 slaying of two adolescent boys that propped up Mississippi’s white supremacist regime and hastened its demise. These organized murders reverberated well into the 1960s, when local civil rights activists again faced off against racial terrorism and more refined forms of repression.

## Poetry:

*Oceanic* by Aimee Nezhukumatahil. With inquisitive flair, Nezhukumatathil creates a thorough registry of the earth's wonderful and terrible magic. In her fourth collection of poetry, she studies forms of love as diverse and abundant as the ocean itself. With an encyclopedic range of subjects and unmatched sincerity, *Oceanic* speaks to each reader as a cooperative part of the earth, an extraordinary neighborhood to which we all belong.

*The Virginia State Colony for Epileptics and the Feeble-minded: Poems* by Molly McCully Brown. These harrowing poems from a dark corner of American history come from the winner of the 2016 Lexi Rudnitsky First Book Prize in Poetry. Haunted by the voices of those committed to the notorious Virginia State Colony, epicenter of the American eugenics movement in the first half of the twentieth century, this evocative debut marks the emergence of a poet of exceptional poise and compassion, who grew up in the shadow of the Colony itself.

*The Tornado Is the World* by Catherine Pierce. At the heart of Pierce's much-anticipated third book, a powerful tornado churns, spinning out poems of disaster and love, of sirens and wrecked landscapes, of warnings heeded and not. These poems stare down fear from the inside and ask what it means to walk straight into a splintering world both profane and sacred.

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