

BOSTON REVIEW

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

A POLITICAL AND LITERARY FORUM
INDEPENDENT AND NONPROFIT SINCE 1975

FROM THE EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

At *Boston Review*, we publish with the conviction that collective reasoning and imagination can create a more just world. Besides our signature forum on urgent public issues, we offer deeply considered long-form essays, political and social analysis, and commentary on current affairs. We are left-of-center and nonpartisan, independent and nonprofit.

Though our principles are fixed, our approach to publishing is not. In the mid-1990s we were one of the first magazines to put all our articles online, always for free and without a paywall. In the 2000s we dropped our tabloid look in favor of a standard magazine format. In the 2010s we radically increased our online content and transitioned from magazines to bookazines, each focused on a particular theme. In 2016 we got rid of online advertising to exit the world of surveillance and started to build our current membership model. And this year, we expanded our newsletter offerings in the face of social media instability.

The two of us have been doing this together for more than two decades, and we are proud of what we have accomplished with a very limited budget and a small but devoted staff. We survive on grants, large gifts, and revenue from our membership program and issue sales. We do not have an endowment or a single funder, and our future is never guaranteed. Nevertheless, we have been able to publish an extraordinary collection of writers. We bring their creativity and thoughtfulness to many millions of general readers, to the students and teachers who read and teach our essays, and to journalists at larger media outlets that draw on our work.

Boston Review has been operating for forty-eight years. As we close in on our fiftieth anniversary, we remain a nimble organization. Guided by firm principles and values, we create serious public discussion using whatever format the times call for.

We invite you to join the conversation.

Sincerely,



Deborah Chasman



Joshua Cohen

Coeditor-in-Chief & Publisher

Deborah Chasman

Coeditor-in-Chief

Joshua Cohen

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Assistant Editor

Cameron Avery

Audience Engagement Editor

Ben Schacht

Arts in Society Editor

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Associate Publisher & Fellowship

Coordinator

Jasmine Parmley

Marketing and Development

Coordinator

Irina Costache

Black Voices in the Public Sphere

Fellows, 2023-2024

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Kelton Ellis

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Lily Hu

Walter Johnson

Robin D. G. Kelley

Paul Pierson

Becca Rothfeld

Simon Torracinta

Contributing Arts Editors

Ed Pavlić

Ivelisse Rodriguez

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Deborah Fung

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Hiram Samel

Brandon M. Terry

Michael Voss

Black Voices in the Public Sphere

Fellowship Advisors

Danielle Allen

Ann Marie Lipinski

Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor

Brandon M. Terry

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

“*Boston Review* sees around corners—it names the urgent challenges of our era ahead of others and brings together the brightest minds to debate them. I read *Boston Review* in order to clarify my own thinking.”

DANIELLE ALLEN

“*Boston Review* is what so many journals and magazines on the left claim to be but only partly achieve: literary yet political, demanding yet accessible, cosmopolitan yet grounded in the American scenes, on top of new books that matter but playing it broad and fair.”

DAVID WALDSTREICHER

“There are not many publications that can match *Boston Review*’s commitment to publishing Black thinkers, giving space to debates about Black liberation from across the political spectrum, or insisting on the significance of race in broader questions of justice, democracy, and citizenship.”

BRANDON M. TERRY

“Publishing diverse voices that embrace debate and encourage impatience with convention, *Boston Review* is an indispensable pillar of the public sphere.”

ALONDRA NELSON Former Deputy Director, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy

“*Boston Review* plays a critically important role in getting ideas out in the world that can have a real impact in confronting the monumental challenges we face today.”

NOAM CHOMSKY & ROBERT POLLIN

“Let mainstream publications give in to the perceived demand for bite-sized news; *Boston Review* provides the exquisite main course.”

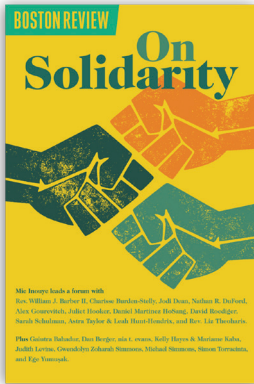
**UTNE AWARD FOR BEST WRITING
CITATION**

“In our swamp of media sensationalism and group-speak, *Boston Review* stands out as a bold voice for reason and argument, one of the very, very few places that offer intelligence, integrity, and variety.”

MARTHA NUSSBAUM



THIS YEAR'S ISSUES



ON SOLIDARITY (SUMMER 2023)

What does solidarity mean, and how can diverse movements build enough of it to change society? This issue clarifies a key idea in struggles for a more just world, making the case for maintaining solidarity through conflict in durable institutions over time.

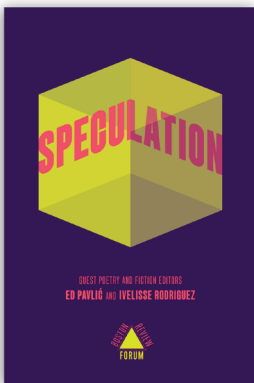
IS EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ENOUGH? (SPRING 2023)

In a neoliberal age that prizes personal responsibility and individual merit, the idea of equal opportunity has been called into question. Taking equality seriously, critics argue, means aiming to ensure that we all live equally flourishing lives—not merely that we have equal shots at upward mobility.



SPECULATION (WINTER 2023)

This collection of poetry, stories, and essays—including work by Sandra Simonds, Parashar Kulkarni, and Junot Díaz—engages speculation as a ubiquitous feature of financial capitalism and a radical tool of collective imagination. By rejecting dominant ideas about what is possible, speculation empowers us to plot new paths to a more just future.



RECENT FEATURES

- "HOW TO END THE WAR IN UKRAINE"

Rajan Menon leads a forum on building the peace

- "WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO SAVE DEMOCRACY?"

Pranab Bardhan contends it's more than the economy

- "WHO'S AFRAID OF SOCIAL CONTAGION?"

Hugh Ryan reflects on two centuries of queer history

- "BLACK SPIRIT, BLACK STRUGGLE"

Panashe Chigamadzi and Cornel West on the legacy of Desmond Tutu

- "A BODY OF ONE'S OWN"

Becca Rothfeld rejects feminist arguments against body modification

- "COULD A LARGE LANGUAGE MODEL BE CONSCIOUS?"

David Chalmers shows why the answer could soon be yes

- "THE FAKE NEWS ABOUT FAKE NEWS"

Daniel Williams scrutinizes the psychology of misinformation

- "BARTOW STATION"

A short story by National Book Award finalist Jamel Brinkely

- "A CENTURY OF SERIOUS DIFFICULTY"

Johanna Winant on the legacy of literary modernism

- "WHY UNIONS NEED MORE DEMOCRACY"

Ege Yumuşak defends the demands of labor's rank and file

- "THE FALSE PROMISE OF OPPORTUNITY ZONES"

Timothy Weaver shows why tax breaks for land development haven't worked

- "A RECORD OF VIOLENCE"

Jeanne Theoharis in conversation with Margaret Burnham on Jim Crow

- "FAMILY FEUD"

Will Holub-Moorman explains how not to criticize family policing

- "CAN INNOVATION SERVE THE PUBLIC GOOD?"

Shobita Parthasarathy makes the case for a new model



WHY I SUPPORT *BOSTON REVIEW*

Robin D. G. Kelley

Boston Review is my favorite publication: every time its newsletter appears in my inbox, I stop what I'm doing to read. When it comes to publishing fresh and generative ideas, *Boston Review* has no peer.

It is not corporate, it is not trying to be hip, and it is not afraid of hard and hidden truths. No wonder so many eminent public intellectuals are flocking to its pages. Writing for *Boston Review* is a joy because I know that I will always be edited with rigor and care—a miracle in an age when editing has all but disappeared.

At *Boston Review* you can also trust that ideas are taken seriously—and that they will always be accessible for all. It is committed to keeping its website completely free. *Boston Review* deserves your support; they have earned it. ▲

BOSTON REVIEW IN THE WORLD

- *Boston Review's* work has been shared widely among high-profile media outlets, including the *New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *The New Yorker*, and *PBS*.
- Timothy Weaver's "The False Promise of Opportunity Zones" was also featured on *PBS NewsHour* about Senator Tim Scott's presidential run.
- Many pieces have inspired recent books, including Olúfẹ̀mí O. Táíwò's *Elite Capture*, David Theo Goldberg's *The War on Critical Race Theory*, and Alex de Waal's *New Pandemics, Old Politics*.
- Five of ten 2022 Marguerite Casey Foundation Freedom Scholars have been *Boston Review* contributors.
- Literary critic Merve Emre, whose 2017 essay "Two Paths for the Personal Essay" won wide acclaim, was profiled by *Business Insider*.
- In May 2023, contributing editor Becca Rothfeld became the *Washington Post's* nonfiction book critic.

INTRODUCING OUR NEW PUBLISHING PARTNER

This year *Boston Review* launched a partnership with Haymarket Books—an independent, nonprofit book publisher based in Chicago that specializes in books that contribute to struggles for economic and social justice. Haymarket will distribute our backlist as well as new issues to book and retail stores.



"We've long admired *Boston Review's* commitment to creating spaces for robust discussions of ideas and politics. We're excited to help promote the work of such a historic magazine and support the contributions of its illustrious writers."

KATY O'DONNELL Editor, Haymarket Books

FROM THE MARKETING TEAM

Dear Reader,

This has been a year of exciting changes in the way *Boston Review* connects with readers and supporters. In September we launched a distribution partnership with Haymarket Books, an independent, nonprofit publisher whose mission—to publish work that contributes to struggles for social and economic justice—deeply resonates with our own. We are thrilled to be working with them to grow *Boston Review*'s readership, collaborate on events, and boost our presence in retail and book stores across the nation.

Also this fall, we are launching a new membership portal where supporting readers can self-serve their subscription information and access easily readable digital copies of our entire print issue archive, stretching back to our founding in 1975. Through it all, we remain committed to publishing without ads and paywalls.

When you become a member, make a donation, or purchase an event ticket, you not only help to expand the range and rigor of public debate and support the highest standards of editing and fact checking; you help to build a more inclusive and egalitarian public sphere by subsidizing access for all readers online, regardless of ability to pay.

Thank you for supporting our mission. We couldn't do it without you.

Sincerely,



Jasmine Parmley & Irina Costache



BOSTON REVIEW CONTRIBUTORS HAVE INCLUDED:

SADIQ AL-AZM
KWAME ANTHONY APPIAH
JOHN ASHBERY
MARGARET ATWOOD
WILLIAM J. BARBER II
JOE BIDEN
ELIZABETH BISHOP
PIERRE BOURDIEU
JOSEPH BRODSKY
JUDITH BUTLER
ITALO CALVINO
DAVID CHALMERS
DON MEE CHOI
NOAM CHOMSKY
KIMBERLÉ CRENSHAW
EDWIDGE DANTICAT
ANGUS DEATON
NATALIE DIAZ
SAMUEL R. DELANY
RITA DOVE
MERVE EMRE
MARY GAITSKILL
JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH
AKBAR GANJI
PETER GODFREY-SMITH
VIVIAN GORNICK
JORIE GRAHAM
LANI GUINIER
TERRANCE HAYES
SEAMUS HEANEY
CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

BELL HOOKS
MARLON JAMES
ROBIN D. G. KELLEY
YUSEF KOMUNYAKAA
JHUMPA LAHIRI
ED MARKEY
CHINA MIÉVILLE
RALPH NADER
MARTHA NUSSBAUM
RAJ PATEL
JOHN RAWLS
ADRIENNE RICH
DOROTHY ROBERTS
EMMANUEL SAEZ
SONIA SANCHEZ
MICHAEL SANDEL
BERNIE SANDERS
ELAINE SCARRY
SARAH SCHULMAN
AMARTYA SEN
EVIE SHOCKLEY
PATRICIA SMITH
SUSAN SONTAG
ASTRA TAYLOR
KEEANGA-YAMAHTTA TAYLOR
PHILIPPE VAN PARIJS
OCEAN VUONG
BINYAVANGA WAINAINA
ELIZABETH WARREN
CORNEL WEST
HOWARD ZINN

SPECIAL PROJECTS

RETHINKING POLITICAL ECONOMY

After forty years of market fundamentalism, our world is in crisis. How do we build a new one? Essays debate new ways to think about protecting the planet, the relationship between equality and democracy, the need for racially inclusive prosperity, the promise of industrial policy, the dangers of concentrated economic power, and a revival of investment in public goods.

OPPORTUNITY AFTER NEOLIBERALISM

Equal opportunity is a widely shared ideal. Across the political spectrum, it is often held up as an economic model as well as a fundamental value, giving meaning to the notion that all citizens are equal. But is equal opportunity enough? Does it truly capture the meaning of equality? Through a print issue, online forum, and additional online essays, this project explores what a more equitable society would look like—and the way to get there.

RECENT EVENTS

WHAT HAPPENED TO LIBERALISM?

Samuel Moyn with Becca Rothfeld

DEMOCRACY IN AFRICAN AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

Melvin Rogers with Neil Roberts

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SOLIDARITY

Mie Inouye with Daniel Martinez
HoSang

A THEORY OF COOPERATION

Bernard Harcourt with Amna Akbar

WHAT'S WRONG WITH EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

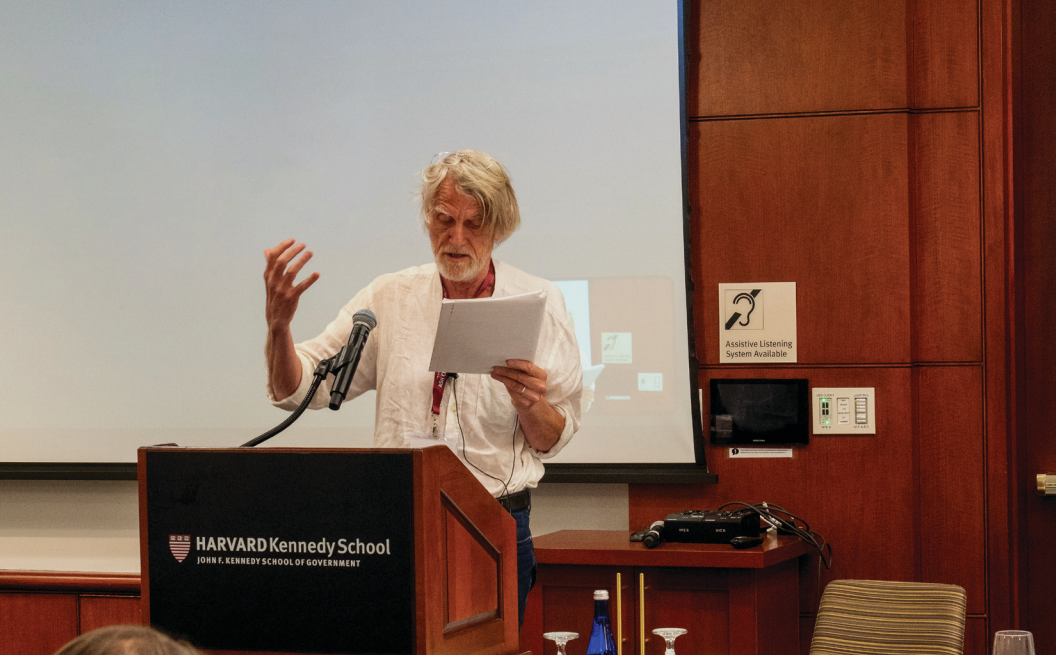
Christine Sypnowich with Ben Burgis

WHITEOUT: HOW RACIAL CAPITALISM CHANGED THE COLOR OF OPIOIDS IN AMERICA

Robin D. G. Kelley, Helena Hansen,
Jules Netherland, and David
Herzberg

THE POLITICAL THEORY OF ALGO- RITHMS

Josh Simons with Lily Hu



RECLAIMING FREEDOM CONFERENCE

The idea of freedom has played a central role in the politics of neoliberalism over the last few decades. Over this period, both the theory and rhetoric of freedom have been vigorously marshaled against government “intervention” in both economic and social life. The result is that today freedom is represented as an essentially conservative value, pitted against a rival progressive concern with equality.

Rejecting the crude affiliation of freedom with the right and equality with the left, *Boston Review* partnered with the Harvard Kennedy School’s Ash Center for Democratic Governance & Innovation to launch a special project that seeks to reclaim freedom as a fundamental political value and explain why freedom remains central to any vision of a just society.

The first component of this project was a conference held in May with distinguished political theorists, economists, and historians, including Alyssa Battistoni, Jefferson Cowie, Nancy Hirschmann, Mike Konczal, Philippe Van Parijs, Philip Pettit, Olúfẹ́mi O. Táíwò, Harsha Walia, and Lea Ypi. The project will culminate in a print issue of *Boston Review* devoted to this theme.

The project was generously funded by the Omidyar Network and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

BLACK VOICES IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE FELLOWSHIP

Now in its third year, the Black Voices in the Public Sphere Fellowship continues to address the profound lack of diversity in the media by introducing a new generation of emerging media professionals to the world of editing and publishing. The program provides training, mentoring, and workshops with industry professionals for networking and career development to develop a project that brings their voice and priorities into the public sphere.

Speakers for the 2022–23 workshops included Vann R. Newkirk II (podcast host and senior editor at *The Atlantic*), Julie Fain (publisher at Haymarket Books), Becca Rothfeld (*Washington Post* nonfiction book critic and *Boston Review* contributing editor), and Ryu Spaeth (features editor at *New York* magazine).

Supported by an advisory board of distinguished public intellectuals and publishing professionals—Danielle Allen, Ann Marie Lipinski, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, and Brandon Terry—the program builds on our long-term commitment to publishing work on racial justice. It also receives generous financial support from *Boston Review*'s board of advisors, the Marguerite Casey Foundation, and our readers.

2023–24 FELLOWS



WILLOW N. CURRY is a writer, curator, and emerging arts critic. Taking a labor-focused approach, she will produce a series of essays and interviews examining the economic factors constraining artists and their work. Willow was previously an Emerging Critics Fellow at the National Book Critics Circle, where she also served a year-long term on the Board of Directors.



KELTON ELLIS holds a BA from Brown University, and his writing has appeared in *n+1* and *The Nation*. His project will explore how issues of disability and neurodivergence intersect with race, aiming to place them in the context of unfolding global crises.

FROM A BLACK VOICES FELLOW

Dear Reader,

In the spring of 2021, I was desperate to become a writer. I had spent the summer of 2020 writing furiously about the global uprisings challenging police violence and terror. I wanted the space and time to consider demands to abolish, defund, and—in some cases—“reimagine” police. As an education advocate, I was intimately familiar with the ties between carceral and educational systems. I wanted to untangle them, to better understand how care became carceral in the first place. *Boston Review* gave me that chance.

In an unforgiving media landscape, *Boston Review*'s Black Voices in the Public Sphere fellowship program handed me a bounty few early-career writers ever receive. They gave me the space, time, and freedom to explore core questions about Black history, politics, and movements. They gave me Robin D. G. Kelley as a mentor, one of the most influential Black historians living today. They validated my questions, my curiosities, and writing. With their support and guidance, I spoke to and learned from Jamelle Bouie, Adam Serwer, and Morgan Jerkins. I developed a writing routine that I still rely on today as a freelancer and fellow at *Mother Jones*.

As a Black Voices in the Public Sphere fellow, I interviewed my heroes—Angela Davis, Dorothy Roberts, and Derecka Purnell. My first essay led to appearances on WNYC's *The Takeaway*, conversations with book editors, and a contract with a literary agency. Perhaps most importantly, the fellowship gave me time—to try and fail, to read and discover new ideas. Without that time, I wouldn't be a fellow at *Mother Jones*. I wouldn't have helped launch *Hammer & Hope* or had the luxury to turn down offers that weren't right for me. As I continue to make professional choices, I still rely on the *Boston Review* team for support and advice.

The Black Voices in the Public Sphere fellowship is a lifeline to writers in an age of digital media collapse. It is an investment in political possibility. We need this fellowship to remain available and accessible for years to come.

Sincerely,



nia t. evans

Black Voices in the Public Sphere Fellow '21-'22

BOSTON REVIEW BY THE NUMBERS

	2022	2023
	(ACTUAL)	(BUDGET)
PROGRAM REVENUE		
Annual Fund/Membership	\$ 99,777	\$ 125,000
Retail Sales	17,844	30,000
Ancillary Business	23,171	25,000
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SUBTOTAL	140,793	180,000
SUPPORT		
Individual Gifts (1k and over)	31,000	40,000
Board Contributions	269,500	300,000
Grants	400,000	250,000
Black Voices Fellowship Grants	1,858	200,000
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SUBTOTAL	702,358	790,000
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TOTAL INCOME	843,151	970,000
EXPENSES		
Design and Production	66,336	65,600
Black Voices Fellowship Program	135,162	152,452
Editorial	435,794	471,753
Administrative	176,261	118,391
Development	85,525	103,200
Marketing	64,161	69,444
Circulation	51,175	13,000
<hr/>		
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,014,414	993,540
Net Operating Income	(171,264)	(23,540)
Tax Rebate	25,496	
Interest	390	
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NET INCOME	\$ (145,377)	\$ (23,540)

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTERS:

THE WILLIAM AND FLORA HEWLETT FOUNDATION | THE MARGUERITE CASEY FOUNDATION
OMIDIYAR NETWORK FUND

FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

I first came across *Boston Review* nearly twenty years ago at a time when I had become disenchanted with the American media's commercialism and lack of substance. After reading an essay by legal scholar Larry Kramer—"We the People: Who Has the Last Word on the Constitution?"—I was so impressed by the magazine's content, intellectual rigor, and accessibility that I immediately subscribed. I have been a devotee ever since, serving as chair of *Boston Review's* board for the past decade.

During a perilous time for independent media, I have only grown more impassioned about *Boston Review's* mission: to feature robust and intellectually honest debate about pressing public issues and to deliver the tools citizens need to be fully engaged with democratic life. I am thrilled to say that this year we welcomed two seasoned publishing professionals to the board, who will draw on their decades of experience to help empower *Boston Review* to build a more inclusive and egalitarian public sphere.

Through all these developments, *Boston Review* continues to treat its readers as partners in a discussion, not as purchasers of a product. The role of its board is to support and expand that mission—to get its content in front of an ever-growing audience of engaged citizens. I hope you will join us as citizens, readers, subscribers, and supporters.

Sincerely,



Derek Schrier

WELCOMING OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS



MARGO BETH FLEMING

Literary Agent and Managing
Director at Brockman, Inc.



MICHAEL VOSS

Publisher at *Science News Magazine*

SELECTED AWARDS

NUMEROUS PIECES HAVE BEEN CITED RECENTLY AS NOTABLE ESSAYS
IN *THE BEST AMERICAN ESSAYS*, INCLUDING:

“What Makes Laws Unjust”
by Randall Kennedy (2022)

“The Logic of Effective Altruism”
by Peter Singer (2016)

“Why I Provide Abortions”
by Christine Henneberg (2021)

“The Desire to Know”
by Steven Shapin (2016)

“The Millions”
by Deborah Taffa (2021)

“Rethinking Privacy”
by William H. Simon (2015)

“Walt Whitman’s Boys”
by Jeremy Lybarger (2020)

“Mortal Risks”
by Oded Na’aman (2015)

“Guns in the Family”
by Walter Johnson (2019)

“On Being an Octopus”
by Peter Godfrey-Smith (2014)

“Saving Orwell”
by Peter Ross (2018)

“War Is Betrayal”
by Chris Hedges (2013)

“Pigs”
by Jesse Maceo Vega-Frey (2017)

“Apocalypse: What Disasters Reveal”
by Junot Díaz (2012)

ON ANGER (WINTER 2020 ISSUE)

SELECTED BY THE *NEW YORKER* AS ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR

- **FALL 2022 ISSUE *IMAGINING GLOBAL FUTURES*** was named a book of the month by *International Affairs* (2023)
- **ESSAY “PLEASURE AND JUSTICE”** by Becca Rothfeld was a finalist for *Washington Monthly’s* Kukula Award for Nonfiction Writing (2022)
- **ESSAY “TECHNOLOGY CAN’T FIX ALGORITHMIC INJUSTICE”** by Annette Zimmermann, Elena Di Rosa, and Hochan Kim wins The Hasting Center’s Award for an Early-Career Essay (2020)
- **ESSAY “WHO SHOT VALERIE FINLEY?”** by Beth Schwartzapfel is named a runner-up for the John Jay/H. F. Guggenheim Prize for Excellence in Criminal Justice Reporting (2014)
- **SHORT STORY “HITTING BUDAPEST”** by NoViolet Bulawayo wins the Caine Prize (2011)
- *Boston Review* receives the **UTNE INDEPENDENT PRESS AWARD FOR BEST WRITING** (2010)
- **ESSAY “A DEATH IN TEXAS”** by Tom Barry is named a finalist for the American Society of Magazine Editors (ASME) National Magazine Award for Public Interest (2010)

