

## Black History Month 2021 Staff Picks



[www.kolormekoby.com](http://www.kolormekoby.com)

**Melissa Koby** is an artist who lives in Tampa who creates beautiful pieces of art that celebrates people of color with peaceful landscape elements in the background.

“I really love the color palette of this artist and find it so clever to have her figures faceless. Melissa revealed that she wanted to have viewers see themselves in each person and I find it very engaging and personal.” -Carla

From The New York Times:

### **Six Seuss Books Bore a Bias**

Racism must be exorcised from culture, including, or maybe especially, from children’s culture. By Charles M Blow

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/03/opinion/suess-books-race-bias.html?smid=em-share>

“I discovered early on how difficult it was to find children’s literature that reflected Black skin color or hair. Given that I am white and my daughter is black, it felt even more urgent to provide images in which she could find herself. This was not easy in the 1990’s. Then came the moment when I wanted to share with her old funny shows that had split me up laughing. Thirty minutes into Little Rascals my stomach was in knots when Buckwheat, as Mr. Blow points out, showed up as a pickaninny character. We sadly never watched it again. So discovering Ezra Jack Keats’ book “The Snowy Day” with Peter’s journey was a dream.....a black mother, a black boy and his beautiful snow journeys....became a staple in our house. It turns out this book is the most checked out book in The New York Public Library’s 125-year history. What a great hunger for Black Children’s literature this reveals! And thank you, Dr.Seuss, for a rewrite that lets go of old ways of speaking about race and honors the change in consciousness.” –Jane

**Love And Rage; The Path Of Liberation Through Anger** by Lama Rod Owens

“Lama Rod Owens is a Black, queer, male-identified, Buddhist teacher and yoga teacher. He deftly explores issues of race, gender, sexuality and identity through the lenses of Buddhism and activism. In his latest book, “Love And Rage; The Path Of Liberation Through Anger,” he

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describes anger as a reaction to the tension we experience when we're hurt. When we're brokenhearted and don't know how to take care of ourselves, anxiety and tension arise. When we react to that tension, often with anger, it distances us from our wounds, but does nothing to ultimately heal them. By holding space for our pain, and empathizing with ourselves, it softens our hearts, making it easier to understand how to relate to our anger without reacting to it. This empowering step brings clarity to the anger, allowing it to be channeled in ways that reduce harm. In this way, anger becomes a tool of our agency and an instrument of liberation. Lama Rod Owens also co-authored "Radical Dharma; Talking Race, Love and Liberation." -**Corey**

### **So You Want to Talk About Race** by Ijeoma Oluo

"This is an engaging primer for any white person starting to broaden their perspective on race. Oluo clearly presents the issues, sharing personal stories, and providing language and relational tools to break open and expand our ideas of racism and white supremacy. She does this with humor and a brilliant capacity to clearly state facts, offer tools for engagement and all while maintaining clear boundaries. Highly recommended reading!" -**Barbara and Gillian**

### **Citizen** by Claudia Rankine

"Ms. Rankine is one of the few authors whose newest book I'd buy "sight unseen" .... Citizen (2014) was my initiation to her writing and remains a lasting influencer on my psyche. She has an inviting, raw, direct, touching way of showing, in relief, how it is to be Black in the US; not with a bludgeon but with a mirror- showing us the reflection of her world. It's a slim powerful volume." -**Lucia**

### **Dear White America** by Tim Wise

"Tim Wise brings awareness to the history of how white privilege came to exist, of how insidiously it permeates all levels of society, and how dangerous it is for ALL people. He explains the urgency of why white people must take responsibility for dismantling our racist institutions and systems. I found this book to be necessarily disturbing, yet inspiring, educational and enlightening. Awareness and understanding are the first steps to solving and evolving." -**Holly**

### **It Took A Miracle and Then Some** by Kristle Murden

"She is my beloved sister who came to live with my family, along with 3 of her siblings, when I was 13 years old, and she was 15 years old." -**Holly**

Adrienne Kennedy is a brilliant, creative, and impactful writer, and I would like to share her work in support of our commitment to anti-racism. Roundhouse Theatre is currently streaming four of her plays on demand through February, and I believe they have extended it another month or so. Roundhouse Theatre has a "Commitment to Anti-racism" statement posted on their website. Here is the link to purchase tickets:

<https://www.roundhousetheatre.org/On-Stage/Explore/The-Work-of-Adrienne-Kennedy-Inspiration-Influence> -**Holly**