February 2018

Books

White Rage
by Carol Anderson
As Ferguson, Missouri, erupted in August 2014, and media commentators across the ideological spectrum referred to the angry response of African Americans as “black rage,” historian Carol Anderson wrote a remarkable op-ed in The Washington Post suggesting that this was, instead, “white rage at work. With so much attention on the flames,” she argued, “everyone had ignored the kindling.”

Living Into God’s Dream:
Dismantling Racism in America
Edited by Catherine Meeks, foreword by Jim Wallis
While the dream of a “Post-Racial” America remains unfulfilled, the struggle against racism continues, with tools both new and old. Living into God’s Dream is a report from the front, combining personal stories and theoretical and theological reflection with examples of the work of dismantling racism and methods for creating the much-needed “safe space” for dialogue on race to occur.

We were Eight Years in Power
by Ta-Nehisi Coates
We Were Eight Years in Power: An American Tragedy is a collection of essays by Ta-Nehisi Coates originally from The Atlantic magazine between 2008 and 2016 over the course of the American Barack Obama administration.

All American Boys
by Jason Reynolds, Brendan Kiely
It’s art imitating life, really. All American Boys is a young adult novel that looks at a specific instance of police brutality from the perspectives of two high school classmates: Rashad, who is savagely beaten by a local policeman who (wrongly) suspects him of shoplifting and assaulting a white woman, and Quinn, who sees the beating and initially pretends he didn’t. It’s a fictional reflection of real-life police encounters with young black men that ended badly.

Film

Mudbound
A 2017 American period drama film directed by Dee Rees and written by Rees and Virgil Williams, based on the novel of the same name by Hillary Jordan. It stars Carey Mulligan, Garrett Hedlund, Jason Clarke, Jason Mitchell, and Mary J. Blige. The film depicts two World War II veterans—one white, one black—who return to rural Mississippi each to address racism and PTSD in his own way. Laura McAllan is trying to raise her children on her husband’s Mississippi Delta farm, a place she finds foreign and frightening. In the midst of the family’s struggles, two young men return from the war to work the land. Jamie McAllan, Laura’s brother-in-law, is everything her husband is not—charming and handsome, but he is haunted by his memories of combat. Ronell Jackson, eldest son of the black sharecroppers who live on the McAllan farm, now battles the prejudice in the Jim Crow South.