

Cover art: “Forsaken” by Ebelechiyem Anuoluwatele Okafor

## **A Note from the Editors: Antiracism and Justice**

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White supremacy and racial inequity is built into America’s foundation, from the enslavement of Africans to the current legal enslavement of Black and Latinx Americans who are incarcerated at a much higher rate than White Americans. For this issue, we chose “Antiracism and Justice” to invite Northeastern writers who are already invested in antiracist praxis and imagining how to restructure unjust systems. We define antiracism as dismantling racist institutions — educational, social, government, economic, and health — in order to prioritize racial justice and equity. Antiracism is an ongoing commitment in our individual, community, professional, and organizational practices to abolish racist systems and policies. The main goal of anti-racism is to reshape systems, but this work is crucial in our homes and everyday lives.

As we edited this issue, the continued violence against Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPI) peoples continues, including the eight people who were murdered in Atlanta, targeted because they were in AAPI-owned spas; the continued murders of people of color by the hands of the police, including Adam Toledo (13), Ma’Khia Bryant (16), Daunte Demetrius Wright (20), and Marvin David Scott III (26); and the trial of Derek Chauvin, which has attempted to villainize George Floyd, the victim. This issue is committed to the liberation of people of color by enacting antiracist praxis in our everyday and professional lives. And this work is ongoing.

For this issue, we invited all Northeastern writers to submit any genre of writing about antiracism and/or justice. There are several creative pieces, including poetry and creative non-fiction, that are interwoven across this issue, emphasizing the importance of creative counter-storytelling to expand and challenge notions of “professional” writing and genres. Ebelechiyem Anuoluwatele Okafor’s poem “Forsaken,” is a found poem of the last words of several victims of police brutality and violence; her poem is both this cover art as well as an important reminder why this work needs to be ongoing. Noor Charif’s poem, “A Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing,” shares her pain from a classroom activity where she, because she is Muslim, was ostracized and how this pain resonates with Islamophobia in the U.S.. Navina Magesh Kumar’s poem, “Object, I did not / Listen, I will not (Let the white man call me a pest)” depicts a racist encounter where the narrator refuses to be vilified for their race and skin color. Kim Seungjae’s poem, “Pursuit,” is inspired by Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*. Finally, in Shawn Thornhill’s creative non-fiction piece “How

to Be Black Enough,” Thornhill shares his journey embracing his Black identity, pushing against those who questioned his race growing up.

Besides the creative pieces, several authors also reimagined policies, changes, and research approaches to reveal or challenge racism. Emma Boughton in “Inequality in America: The Role of Race, Class, and Public Policy,” describes the intertwining nature of public policy, socioeconomic class, and racial inequity and provides some specific policy changes. Adriana Peyton Lanza argues in “Removing Standardized Testing is Not the Fix-it-all Solution Colleges Were Hoping to Find,” how standardized testing is just one barrier that leads to inequality in college acceptances. Max Willner-Giwerc’s op-ed “A Desperate Appliance: On Reparations,” breaks down how to achieve reparations for the descendants of enslaved Black Americans using current U.S. laws. In “More Than Teenage Angst,” Niki Janzer argues that the notion of grit contributes to increased anxiety and depression in teenagers. In “Social Media, Mobilization, and Polarization in the Context of Race,” by Eshan Singhi, Singhi suggests a methodology for tracing the impacts of virtual mobilization on actual changes. Finally in “Disparities in the Medical Professional Pipeline: Financial Challenges and Continued Demand for Black Medical Schools,” Cynthia Lau addresses the history of Black medical schools and how they have been systemically and systematically disadvantaged, as well as their significance in the medical professional pipeline and in treating marginalized communities.

Finally, several authors also examined how to challenge white supremacy across different spaces, including cultural, beauty, and educational institutions. In “Morality of Identity: Whitman in Chamoiseau and Glissant,” Y. Christie Lee uses Chamoiseau and Glissant’s notion of identity to critique Whitman’s poem “Song of Myself” about national identity; this piece illuminates the critical, and sometimes subtly exclusionary, nature of one’s words. Lauren DeSousa in “Being Black in American Academia,” DeSousa analyzes two pieces of fiction that demonstrate how academia perpetuates inequality for Black scholars and students. Similarly, Lauren Thompson’s piece “Combatting Racism in Higher Education,” further dives into racism in higher education, partially using Northeastern University as an example and listing actions that students can take to advocate for change at the institutional level. In Ramin Raza’s piece, “Whiteness as Escapism & the De-Romanticization of the Brown Body,” Raza advocates for U.S. media representations of South Asian Americans that challenge white supremacy and racist stereotypes using bell hooks’ notion of the oppositional gaze. Finally, “The Racializing of Beauty: The Rise of Western Beauty Norms and Self-Esteem Among Asian Women,” by Melody Chen examines the role of globalized white supremacy in Asian beauty conventions and markets.