

PERSON, PLACE, & THING:
BEYOND THE NOUN OF LEADERSHIP



2020-2022



Pre-Seminar Preparations

Summer 2020 Reading and Resources



William C. Friday
Fellowship FOR HUMAN
RELATIONS

Summer Readings & Resources



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Reverend Dr. William Barber II with Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, *The Third Reconstruction: How a Moral Movement is Overcoming the Division of Politics and Fear*

Jonathan C. Creasy, ed., *Black Mountain Poems: An Anthology*

Georgann Eubanks, *The Month of their Ripening: North Carolina Heritage Foods through the Year*

Martha Mason, *Breath: A Lifetime in the Rhythm of an Iron Lung - A Memoir*

Edgar Villanueva, *Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous Wisdom to Heal Divides and Restore Balance*

Introduction

Books can be important conveyors of stories and journeys, of wisdom and tradition, and of facts and fictions alike. They can remind us of the familiar while opening the door to people, places, and things beyond our experience or imagination. The words of others can sometimes lift up truths we are not yet able to see or hear clearly on our own. Often, words challenge even as they uplift. When we take seriously a book's invitation to step into someone else's world, it helps us to see more clearly the boundaries of our own believing and knowing. We read, then, for the expansion of our worlds, for pleasure, and for learning that turns us, page by page.

When we read with awareness, we honor the world-making capacity of words, including our own. In *MisReading America: Scriptures and Difference*, theologian Vincent Wimbush describes reading as a practice of both resistance and liberation. Looking for the place from which a given text speaks—and recognizing the power differentials that amplify some voices and truths over others—transforms reading into a practice of conscientization. Reading with intention also invites humility. We are not the experts of others' texts, nor do we necessarily seek expertise in their stories. Instead, we read to find our way to a fuller understanding of our own lives and worlds as we hold space for unimagined possibilities.

Describing the work of discerning between sacred text and personal truth (and between personal text and sacred truth), Wimbush cautions that “not all know how to read themselves (and others) reading America.” How can we read ourselves and others? What about reading America? And this reading of ourselves reading America? What could that mean? What might it entail? And how might a reading, re-reading, and misreading of these texts—and others—facilitate conversation, connection, and relationship?

*We read, then, for the expansion of our worlds, for pleasure,
and for learning that turns us, page by page.*

This reading and resource guide serves as one point of access to the 2020–2022 Friday Fellowship journey. Each incoming Fellow received one of the following six texts that engages a different North Carolina person, place, or story. At the outset of their fellowship experience, the 2020–2022 Fellows will be thinking about where and how their individual stories and experiences are both nurtured and challenged by broader cultural contexts.

THE THIRD RECONSTRUCTION



HOW A **MORAL MOVEMENT** IS **OVERCOMING** THE POLITICS OF **DIVISION** AND **FEAR**

THE REVEREND DR. WILLIAM J. BARBER II

WITH JONATHAN WILSON-HARTGROVE

BLACK MOUNTAIN POEMS



An Anthology

The New Road

I-26 AND THE FOOTPRINTS OF PROGRESS IN APPALACHIA

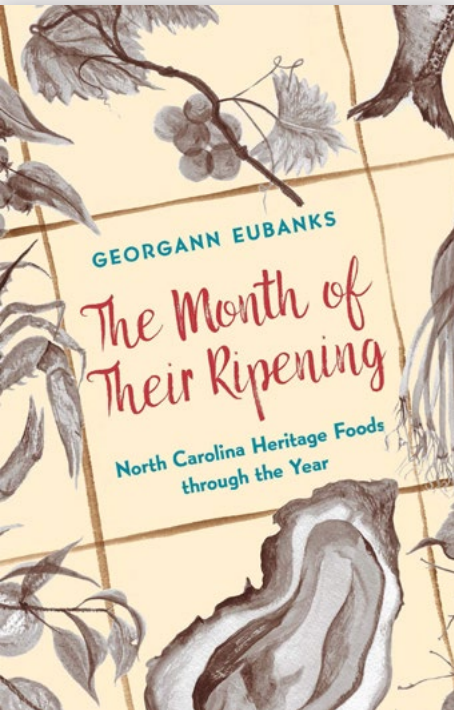


Rob Amberg

GEORGANN EUBANKS

The Month of Their Ripening

North Carolina Heritage Foods through the Year



foreword by

ANNE RIVERS SIDMONS

"Martha Mason writes, with eloquence and fearless clarity, about one of the most extraordinary lives I've ever known of."

—REYNOLDS PRICE

BREATH

a lifetime in the rhythm of an iron lung

a memoir



MARTHA MASON

edgar villanueva

foreword by Bishop William J. Barber II



"... a pathway to healing that we all need."
—Dorim X. Kendi

second edition, revised and expanded

DECOLONIZING WEALTH

indigenous wisdom to heal divides and restore balance

Rob Amberg, *The New Road: I-26 and the Footprints of Progress in Appalachia*

William Barber w/ Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, *The Third Reconstruction: How a Moral Movement is Overcoming the Division of Politics and Fear*

Jonathan C. Creasy, ed. *Black Mountain Poems: An Anthology*

Georgann Eubanks, *The Month of their Ripening: North Carolina Heritage Foods through the Year*

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What might a Madison County chronicler (Amberg) and modern-day prophet (Barber) with roots in Washington County share in common? What can we learn from a life lived in an iron lung (Mason) and North Carolina foodways that nourish and sustain (Eubanks)? How might poets from a disappeared place (Creasy, ed.) respond to the call to decolonize the way we conceptualize and spend our resources (Villanueva)?

This is a powerful moment to be reading about the (im)possibility of breath itself and the politics of progress measured in roadways, coalitions, and philanthropists awakened to a different metric of flourishing. Of course, curation is always incomplete and never impartial. Reading and learning are not neutral activities.

Will you join the incoming class in looking for what is here and who is not?

What do these texts offer and what remains to be said?

The Invitation

The Friday Fellowship 2020 summer reading was selected to encourage Fellows to step into a reading practice attuned to questions of people, place, and purpose across the state. Specifically, Fellows were asked to read with the following intentions:

To encounter someone else's story with *curiosity*;

To question that which we do not understand with *courage*;

To identify our own frame of reference with *creativity*;

To seek *connection* to our own story and experience without reading or speaking over someone else's voice or truth.

When the class convenes, they will move through their summer reading in a series of structured, yet self-led conversations.

First, they will connect with others who read the same text.

What can we learn from one story or experience?

What can we learn from our different readings of the same text?

Next, the Fellows will step into groups of six, with each book represented by a different class member.

What can we glean across stories and experiences?

What might these different stories and experiences share in common?

The full cohort will take up the balance of the texts to tease out questions and themes core to the fellowship experience.

What questions do these texts raise? For individuals? For communities? For North Carolina? For the Friday Fellowship? What remains to be read and said?

Lastly, once we've considered the sum of all parts, we'll put down these books and look one another in the eye. We, too, are text-like: open and closed, of varying lengths, some in translation, others still emergent. Some of us are in our second or even third printings. Others are waiting to be printed, picked up, and read.

How, then, will we learn to read and engage one another?

If you are following along with the class, you might consider gathering with a group of friends to step into any of the above conversations. Perhaps you would enjoy reading the same text and engaging it together? Perhaps you would appreciate the challenge of reading, sharing, and learning across different texts? However you choose to proceed, the following questions are intended to deepen your reading practice and to encourage reflection. There's no obligation to tackle each and every question—consider selecting one or two from each section below. You might take note of what you have energy for and that which does not pique your interest.

What can we learn from that which we seek out?

Where might we need to lean in a bit more?

Reading Guide

Turning to the Text: Step by Step

Why did you select this particular book? What caught your attention?

What assumptions did you bring to the text? Where do they come from?

What did it require to actually pick up this text and begin? What did it take to finish?

What unfamiliar people, places, or things (words, in other words) did you encounter?

How did it feel when you faced an unknown on the page?

How did you respond to unfamiliar terms and concepts?

What questions did you bring to the text?

Meaning Making: Book by Book

What/whose story did you read? Where are they writing from?

What does community look and sound like in this text?

Who shows up? Do they create or become a collective “we”? How so?

Is there a problem? Who notices? Who responds?

Does change or transformation occur? How so?

What is required of whom?

What questions did this book raise for you?

Bringing it Home: Reader by Reader

Where and how does this text intersect with your life? Your learning? Your leadership? Your community?

What themes might this text offer for North Carolina today?

What touchstones does this text offer for an unfolding journey?

What is here? Who is missing?

What can we learn from one book? What might we learn from six?

What if we didn’t read at all?

Living the Questions: Answer by Answer

What is the “art” of living, of learning, of leadership? (Black Mountain Poems)

What if there is no road? (The New Road)

How will we ensure enough breath for all? (Breath)

What are you anticipating? What is worth waiting for? (Month of Their Ripening)

What/whose questions are not being asked? (The Third Reconstruction)

What if ...? (Decolonizing Wealth)

Recommended Resources

Rob Amberg, *The New Road: I-26 and the Footprints of Progress in Appalachia*

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Margalit Fox, “Martha Mason, Who Wrote Book About Her Decades in an Iron Lung, Dies at 71,” New York Times, May 9, 2009,
<https://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/10/us/10mason.html>.

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Person, Place, & Thing:

Beyond the Noun of Leadership



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