

From the Editor

YA BOOKS THAT EXPLORE THE INTERSECTIONALITY OF RACE AND OTHER IDENTITIES

June 2020

Dear Readers,

I hope you and your loved ones are staying safe and healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic. I hope that you are finding rest and rejuvenation after schools' abrupt but necessary move to online/remote learning in March to mitigate the spread of the virus. And I hope you are aware that the Kansas Association of Teachers of English (KATE) is offering a variety of ways to stay connected, including several virtual events that you can explore on the newly redesigned [KATE website](http://kansasenglish.org) (kansasenglish.org), thanks to the leadership of KATE President Nathan Whitman. You should also visit the [KATE Blog](#), which was recently revitalized by Michaela Liebst and is thriving with multiple insightful posts each month (have you considered [submitting your own work yet?](#)).

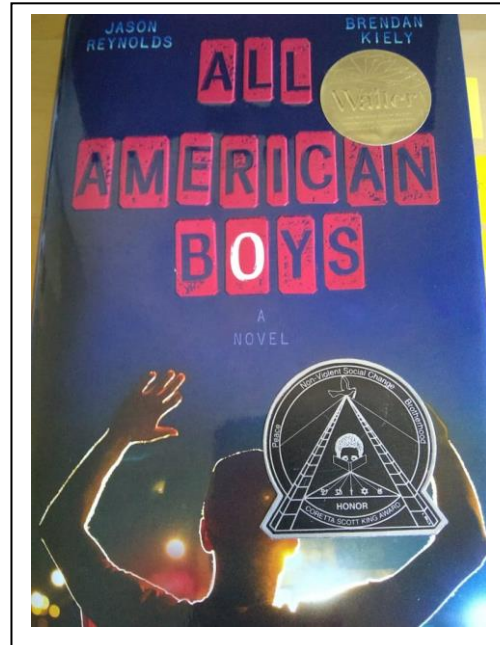
I would be remiss if I did not also acknowledge and voice my support for the important antiracism work happening across the state, nation, and world in response to ongoing violence against people of color, and I encourage you to review [NCTE's antiracism statement](#). All manuscripts for this issue were submitted in mid-January, well before the COVID-19 pandemic and the widespread protests against systemic racism and white supremacy. In this issue of *Kansas English*, you will find scholarly articles and practitioner pieces that will inform your work, as well as reflective and creative pieces that will help you see our profession from new perspectives. I want to highlight Beth Gulley's practitioner piece on blogging and joyful writing, as it may inform your instructional delivery as schools make plans for reopening in the time of COVID-19. I also want to draw your attention to three reviews of YA books that depict the intersectionality of race and other facets of identity: Alexis Bean's review of Tomi Adeyemi's *Children of Blood and Bone*, Spencer Arndt's review of Jason Reynolds's *For Every One*, and Blake Overman's review of Adib Khorram's *Darius the Great Is Not Okay*.

I would also like to make a YA book recommendation of my own that will inform your and your students' understanding of racism and white supremacy: Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely's award-winning [All American Boys](#) (2015). I have been teaching this novel since spring 2017 in my students' first English methods course at WSU in which we learn about effective curriculum design

using Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe's [Understanding by Design](#) while also considering the impacts of racism, privilege, and white supremacy.

All American Boys depicts the events and aftermath of police violence against an unarmed Black high school student named Rashad and a White classmate named Quinn who witnesses the attack. Reynolds and Kiely, who are Black and White, respectively, tell the story in chapters that alternate between Rashad's and Quinn's perspectives, giving White readers and readers of color mirrors and windows into their own and others' experiences and perspectives. It also provides the opportunity for my students, the majority of whom are White, to examine their own privilege alongside Quinn, while also raising questions about bias, prejudice, and racism in law enforcement, [education](#), and [mainstream media](#). Our study of *All American Boys* is accompanied by opportunities for discussion, writing, reflection, and inquiry as students design an interdisciplinary unit plan that [emphasizes social justice](#).

I hope you will consider adding these YA books to your summer reading and classroom library; I hope you enjoy this issue of *Kansas English*; and I hope you will consider participating in the professional conversation by [submitting your own work for the 2021 issue!](#)



Until next time, happy teaching and learning!

Katherine Mason Cramer