

April 2016 Book Reviews by Marius Mason

Angels with Dirty Faces by Walidah Imarisha. An amazing in depth and personal interview of two politicized (but not political) prisoners who are hard cases to deal with as prison abolitionists. Ms. Imarisha does not shrink from asking the toughest questions and bravely goes into the grey area. She also compares this uneasy territory with how we view rape and sexual assault by talking about her own experiences seeking accountability and healing and restoration as opposed to punishment and isolation. It's a brave book; she's a great writer.

We are Your Sons (about the Rosenberg trial and their children's lives). I am always so grateful to the Rosenbergs Children's Fund that has helped my kids come visit me here. The book was full of their letters, great investigative history, strong observations about correlations between times in this country's history where hysteria won out over reason and humanity. The book is a loving tribute to their parents, but you can see through the lives of their children what courage and values were instilled, even if their time was so cruelly cut short.

The New American Revolution by Grace Lee Boggs, a Detroit native and powerhouse. Her project, Detroit Summer, is an immense, intergenerational and interracial collaboration that has built a stronger community in the city and helped a lot of people reconnect. The book sets out to connect the vision of Malcom X and Martin Luther King Jr. to the present problems of unemployment, discrimination and food insecurity. Interesting essays on history and shifting the paradigm from a former dependence on a centralized authority (whether corporate or governmental) to a grassroots democratic decision-making community that seeks to identify real needs and provide local solutions to that. Ms. Boggs is so clearly motivated by a genuine love and hope, and her words are insightful and a motivation to action. She passed just recently, but her legacy, her life's work, will continue to be celebrated.

Melting Away: A 10 year journey between the poles, by Camille Seaman. What a beautiful and heartbreaking book, one that I wish I could send all my friends... rare view in photos of the changed caused by global warming at the poles – and of the harsh and magical light and beauty of these extreme places at the tips of the world. Ms. Seaman has made such a sacrifice in her life to bring this experience to the rest of the world. She writes movingly and eloquently about her own history and how she was taught by her Native grandfather that the water that makes up our bodies is always cycling into and out of the world around us – that we are literally part of the world and it is part of us. She has overcome such personal pain and gone on this dangerous quest to bring back something priceless, real wisdom and a message we need to hear. Please read this book.