Event Title: Riven Past, Wounded Present: Writers from Kansas City and Tulsa

Event Description: Writers from Kansas City and Tulsa whose work cuts to the heart of two Midwestern cities with parallel wounded histories. From the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre to Kansas City's storied history of racism and segregation to the 2023 KC shooting of a Black teenager who rang the wrong doorbell, the work of these award-winning poets and fiction writers scours politics, contradictions, injustices, and inequalities in their cities' similarly riven pasts and wounded present.

Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Reading

Event Organizer & Moderator:

Rilla Askew is the author of five novels, a book of stories, and a collection of creative nonfiction. She’s received the American Book Award, Oklahoma Book Award, Western Heritage Award, and Arts and Letters Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. She teaches at the University of Oklahoma.

Event Participants:

Quraysh Ali Lansana is the author of fourteen books in poetry, nonfiction, and children’s literature, and is editor of nine literary anthologies. An Emmy- and DuPont-Columbia Award-winning journalist, Lansana is Executive Producer of KOSU/NPR’s Focus Black Oklahoma, a monthly radio program.

Desideria Mesa is currently editing her sequel to her debut novel, Bindle Punk Bruja, which explores the topics of identity and the Latinx experience in the Kansas City Mexican boxcar community during the 1920s. This novel tackles many issues we see repeated today, including classism, sexism, and racism.

Glenn North is a community-based poet. He is the director of inclusive learning and creative impact at the Kansas City Museum. He is a Cave Canem fellow, a Callaloo creative writing fellow, and an adjunct professor at Rockhurst University.

Whitney Terrell cohosts the Fiction/Non/Fiction podcast at Literary Hub. He is the author of The Good Lieutenant, The King of Kings County, and The

Opening Remarks & Housekeeping Announcements

The moderator will welcome attendees and offer reminders about available written text, accessibility for wheelchairs, service animals, etc., followed by a brief introduction of the panel and overview of the panel's subject matter: the shared histories of these two historically divided Midwestern cities. The moderator will introduce each of the panelists before they read.

Participants Read From Their Work:

- Rilla Askew
- Quraysh Ali Lansana
- Desideria Mesa
- Glenn A. North
- Whitney Terrell

Audience Q&A

The reading will end with a 10-15 minute Question and Answer session.