

WHAT IF EVERYONE READ THE SAME BOOK AT THE SAME TIME, THEN CAME TOGETHER TO TALK ABOUT IT?

When we read a great book, we can't wait to share the experience with others. That's one of the joys of reading. In this spirit, Maryland Humanities created One Maryland One Book to bring together diverse people in communities across the state through the shared experience of reading the same book.

Now in its sixteenth year, One Maryland One Book remains Maryland's only statewide community reading program. Each year, the selection process is guided by a common theme. The theme for 2023 is "Connection."

The Maryland Center for the Book at Maryland Humanities partners with public libraries, high schools, colleges and universities, museums, bookstores, correctional facilities, and other organizations to bring book-centered discussions and other related events to communities across Maryland. But One Maryland One Book is not just about reading or literature; it is also about bringing people together for meaningful dialogue.

The book selected for 2023 is *There There* by Tommy Orange.

GRAB YOUR COPY

Find a copy of *There There* at your local library or bookstore and get reading! Ask if your local branch has partnered with us to recieve a set of free books, they may have one for you. For a limited time, we also are distributing e-book copies through our website, onemarylandonebook.org. Lastly, we always encourage you to buy a copy at your local independent bookshop or through Maryland Humanities' Bookshop.org affiliate page: https://bit.ly/buyomob23.

REACH OUT

Each year, more than 15,000 Marylanders read the One Maryland One Book selection. How many of those people are your friends or family? Use the book to jumpstart a meaningful conversation in person or virtually with an old friend or to make a new one.

PULL UP A CHAIR

We invite you to join Maryland Humanities and thousands of other Marylanders at one of the many book discussions and related events happening around the state and online from mid-September to mid-November, including the author event in October. To find One Maryland One Book programs in your area, go to onemarylandonebook.org and click on "Events."

After each One Maryland One Book program you attend, please visit omobfeedback.org and share your thoughts by taking our brief survey.

For all the latest information, "like" or follow us:



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FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR





Welcome! We are thrilled to have you join Maryland Humanities for the sixteenth year of One Maryland One Book, Maryland's largest reading and discussion program. Since 2008, the OMOB has brought together thousands of readers across the state to explore a specific work of literature through discussions at book clubs, libraries, colleges, museums, and more.

Literature has the power to delight, inform, and connect us. The OMOB is selected by a committee of distinguished members of Maryland's literary community. We hope this connects you to parts of your community in a new way.

There There is a novel that wonderfully captures this year's theme of **Connection**, with its multigenerational, interconnected structure that follows the stories of twelve Native people as they converge on the Big Oakland Powwow. It reminds us that the best books contend with a historical trauma through many perspectives, in both the past and present. These characters have conflicting needs and emotions. They are never perfect, but always hopeful.

We at Maryland Humanities understand the impact that such a novel can have, and hope this book will continue to affect readers with its depiction of the modern Urban Indian experience, and encourage recognition of the many Native communities living today in Maryland.

We encourage you to pick up your copy of *There There* and join the conversation at one of our many public events across the state. As a program of the Maryland Center for the Book at Maryland Humanities, One Maryland One Book is made possible each year through the generosity of our sponsors and community partners. We greatly thank them for their support. Find out more how to get involved at www.onemarylandonebook.org.

Please join us!

Alicia Jones McLeod, Board Chair Lindsey Baker, Executive Director



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

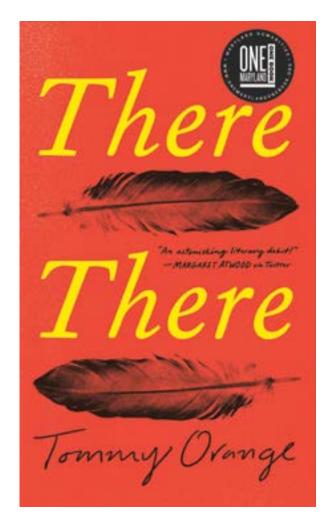
Tommy Orange is the author of the *New York Times* bestselling novel *There There*, a multigenerational, relentlessly paced story about a side of America few of us have ever seen: the lives of urban Native Americans. *There There* was one of *The New York Times Book Review's* 10 Best Books of the Year, and won the Center for Fiction's First Novel Prize and the Pen/Hemingway Award. *There There* was also longlisted for the National Book Award and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. Orange graduated from the MFA program at the Institute of American Indian Arts, and was a 2014 MacDowell Fellow and a 2016 Writing by Writers Fellow. He is an enrolled member of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma. He was born and raised in Oakland, California.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Reprinted from the book's back cover

Tommy Orange's wonderous and shattering novel follows twelve characters from Native communities: all traveling to the Big Oakland Powwow, all connected to one another in ways they may not yet realize. Among them is Jacquie Red Feather, newly sober and trying to make it back to the family she left behind. Dene Oxendene, pulling his life together after his uncle's death and working at the powwow to honor his memory. Fourteen-year-old Orvil, coming to perform traditional dance for the very first time.

Together, this chorus of voices tells of the plight of the urban Native American—grappling with a complex and painful history, with an inheritance of beauty and spirituality, with communion and sacrifice and heroism. Hailed as an instant classic, *There There* is at once poignant and unflinching, utterly contemporary and truly unforgettable.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Tommy Orange opens the novel with a prologue that provides a history of Native Americans from their point of view. Were you taught this history? How did reading this history (and perhaps learning it for the first time) affect how you went into the remainder of the book?
- 2. The chapters in this book are told from multiple perspectives first person, second person, third omniscient, and third close. What is the effect of reading the book through these different perspectives? Why do you think the author chose this technique?
- 3. What's your reaction to the quote "Dene is not recognizably Native. He is ambiguously nonwhite. Over the years he'd been assumed Mexican plenty, been asked if he was Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Salvadoran once, but mostly the question came like this: What are you?" (28-29). Have you, or someone you know, ever experienced what he's talking about? How does it impact their sense of identity?
- 4. The title "There There" is referenced in the text when Dene listens to the song "There There" by Radiohead (29) and later when he recalls Gertrude Stein's quote about Oakland. What are your thoughts on the title and its meaning? How does Dene interpret the phrase for Native people? Are there moments when you've wondered if there's any there there?
- 5. Edwin Black is very concerned with whether or not he fits the label of "Native" (69). Later in the novel when Orvil is in the locker room getting dressed in his regalia he starts to feel like a "fraud" (232). Discuss how characters wrestle with being "Native" enough, or matching up to the identity they attach to the word.
- 6. Other characters are constantly protecting themselves from Indian culture. Edwin reflects on what he calls "the problem with Indigenous art" (77). Opal is against Orvil and the other kids "doing anything Indian." (118). Octavio's grandmother Fina tells him, "'Some of us got this feeling stuck inside, all the time, like we've done something wrong." (184). Discuss how historical and generational trauma makes these characters wary. How do you feel about it as a way to cope?
- 7. Spider legs become a recurring symbol in the book. Jacquie and Opal's mother says "spiders carry miles of web in their bodies, miles of story, miles of potential home and trap. She said that's what we are. Home and trap" (163). Part III is introduced with the James Baldwin quote "People are trapped in history and history is trapped in them" (157). How does Opal react when Orvil pulls spider legs out of his body? What does that signify to her?
- 8. Jacquie says of the people at the conference: "These were career people, more driven by concern about keeping their jobs, about the funders and grant requirements, than by the need to help Indian families. Jacquie was no different. She knew it and hated this fact," (103). How is this similar or different to Dene's grant committee earlier in the book? What is the novel saying about the role that money plays in how Native lives and stories are looked after?

- 9. Alcoholism is a recurring theme in the book, but takes center stage when Jacquie and Harvey are at the conference. Jacquie is looking for personal fulfillment, while Harvey speaks on how "there's not some special relationship between Indians and alcohol" (112). How does the book portrays the role alcohol has in the characters' lives? How does their sense of self and identity play into it?
- 10. What do you think Opal means when she says "learning about your heritage is a privilege. A privilege we don't have," (119)? Discuss the different ways the Indian characters in the book are blocked from their history. Do you see examples of this in our world today?
- 11. One of the few Indian things Opal does is make Indian tacos, reasoning that even though it's not traditional, "it comes from lacking resources and wanting comfort food" (132)? Do you have any comfort foods in your life that provide this feeling or connection to a culture? What typically makes something a "comfort" food?
- 12. Daniel writes an email to his deceased brother Manny (189-194). Why do you think he talks differently to Manny than he does in his regular life? Discuss the different ways characters grieve in the book. Have you coped with the lost of a loved one in unexpected ways?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Each year we hope that your participation in One Maryland One Book inspires continued exploration of the themes and topics examined in the selected book. This year's selection offers an excellent opportunity to explore coming-of-age, identity, family, addiction, social class, racism and discrimination, diversity, memory, love, parent-child relationships, sibling relationships, interracial relationships, social norms, womanhood and manhood, acceptance, and more. The following list of books, films, podcasts, and music might be of interest after reading *There There*. While we include suggested age groups for the readings, they are just a guide. Feel free to choose based on your interests. We encourage you to continue your exploration!

FICTION

What Storm, What Thunder by Myriam J.A. Chancy

The 2010 earthquake in Haiti devasted the country and affected many. Chancy zooms in on the human toll and centers each chapter on different interconnected characters whose lives are caught in the aftermath.

VenCo by Cherie Dimaline

In *VenCo*, Cheri Dimaline brings to life a network of women wielding ancestral magic—from Métis millennial Lucky St. James in Toronto, to Myrna Good in Salem and down to New Orleans. In this world, chosen family and female relationships are a magic all their own.

The Painted Drum by Louise Erdrich

National Book Award winner Louise Erdrich has several books about the Native experience, and this novel is one of her finest. An estate appraiser finds a the titular drum, an object that connects a large group of Ojibwe together. As we move forward and backward in time, we see the different ways an object can interact and leave its mark on generations of families.

If I Survive You by Jonathan Escoffery

With the same dark humor and vulnerability as *There There*, Jonathan Escoffery's collection of linked stories follows the misadventures of Trelawny, the youngest son of a Jamaican American family and first to be born outside of Jamaica. As they carve out space for themselves in Miami, Trelawny struggles to figure out where (and with whom) he belongs.

A Calm and Normal Heart: Stories by Chelsea Hicks

This collection of short stories revolves around modern day Native American adventurers seeking new places to call home in a nation where they don't always feel at home. As a member of the Osage tribe, author Chelsea T. Hicks blends her perspective with her unique humor and imagination.

Calling for a Blanket Dance by Oscar Hokeah

Calling for a Blanket Dance is a powerful debut novel about a young Native American man named Ever Geimausaddle who must navigate various obstacles and familial expectations. Told through multiple perspectives, this moving story showcases the strength of familial ties and the importance of finding one's place in the world.

The House of Eve by Sadega Johnson

This historical fiction novel, a Reese Witherspoon Book Club pick, takes place in the 1950s and is told in dual perspectives. Ruby is in high school attempting to make her way to college when her world is turned upside down. Meanwhile, Eleanor lives in Washington, DC and is attending Howard University. She works two jobs to put herself through college when she falls for a wealthy man. Ruby and Eleanor's separate stories connect in unexpected ways.

The Only Good Indians by Stephen Graham Jones

An innovative horror novel with richly drawn characters and a powerful exploration of complex themes of guilt, identity, and the consequences of historical trauma, with a particular focus on the experiences of contemporary Native Americans. Through a series of interwoven narratives that span past and present, Jones offers a powerful and thought-provoking reflection on the complexities of Native identity and the ways in which historical trauma continues to impact individuals and communities today.

Love After the End: An Anthology of Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer Speculative Fiction

Editor Jonathan Whitehead introduces this collection of Indigiqueer speculative fiction by telling the reader that, for some, the apocalypse already happened—in the form of colonization. Instead of mourning endless dystopian possibilities, too similar to the reality of modern history, this collection brings us glimmers of hope built on a long history of creative resilience.

Marvel Voices: Heritage

Native American and Indigenous comic creators explore the rich history of Marvel's cast of Indigenous characters in this comics collection.

Sisters of the Lost Nation by Nick Medina

This is a story about a young Native girl who investigates the disappearance of women from her tribe's reservation while being haunted by a mysterious entity. As she uncovers the legends of her tribe's past, she struggles to find her place on the reservation and bring her missing sister home.

House Made of Dawn by N. Scott Momaday

This Pulitzer Prize-winning novel explores the cultural identity and struggles of a young Native American man, Abel, as he returns to his community after serving in World War II. Through vivid prose, the novel portrays Abel's journey towards reconciliation with his heritage and finding a sense of belonging in a world that has changed since he left.

The Beadworkers: Stories by Beth Piatote

Beth Piatote's debut short story collection explores the realities of Indigenous life in the modern world.

Afterparties: Stories by Anthony Veasna So

A moving yet hilarious collection that delves into the lives of Cambodian-Americans living in Stockton, California. Anthony Veasna So engages the reader with stories that are vulnerable, reflective, melancholy, and absurdly funny all at once, while exploring themes of sexual and cultural identity, family history, and generational trauma. *Afterparties* offers a poignant and nuanced reflection on the complexities of contemporary Cambodian-American experience.

Night of the Living Rez by Morgan Talty

Through twelve linked stories, Talty explores issues of addiction, loss, poverty, and intergenerational trauma through characters that stand at cultural and personal crossroads. Talty's stories turn an eye on the hardships of life while also capturing how messy and unpredictable life can be.

The Seed Keeper by Diane Wilson

The Indigenous tradition of preserving a cache of seeds across generations is at the heart of this story that interweaves family, tradition, history, and survival.

Probably Ruby: A Novel by Lisa Bird-Wilson

Adopted as an infant, Ruby has been on a lifelong quest to find her biological family and establish a connection with her Indigenous culture. Her life hasn't been easy since birth. From growing up with her controlling adoptive parents, to being in unhealthy relationships, and struggling with alcoholism and drug usage, Ruby slowly tries to reconnect with her culture. Will this connection bring meaning to her life?

White Horse by Erika T. Wurth

Kari James, a heavy metal and horror fan living in Denver, is haunted in more ways than one. On top of the looming trauma of her Native ancestors, she has started having actual visions of her dead mother, who seems to be pressing her to look into their complicated family history—a subject Kari has consciously avoided.

NON-FICTION & POETRY

How We Go Home: Voices from Indigenous North America

A project of Voice of Witness—an oral history nonprofit that aims to amplify voices of people impacted by injustice—*How We Go Home* shares first-person stories from Indigenous people across North America.

Stay True: A Memoir by Hua Hsu

Hsu, a first-generation Taiwanese-American, recounts his unlikely friendship with Ken, a Japanese-American student who is the epitome of mainstream culture, and their shared struggle to find a place in American society. Despite their differences, the two become close friends, but Ken's life is cut short by a senseless act of violence. The book is a coming-of-age story that explores the themes of identity and belonging.

Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plans by Robin Wall Kimmerer

Kimmerer's series of reflections on the natural world explores our connection to the earth that reflects both her botanist's training and her Indigenous knowledge. Robin Wall Kimmerer is a member of the Patawomi Nation and a distinguished professor of Environmental and Forest Biology at SUNY.

Becoming Kin: An Indigenous Call to Unforgetting the Past and Reimagining Our Future by Patty Krawec

Patty Krawec invites us—settlers and Indigenous peoples alike—to remember old ways of kinship, becoming better relatives to each other and to our land.

Red Paint: An Ancestral Autobiography of a Coast Salish Punk by Sasha LaPointe

Red Paint is LaPointe's journey to find a permanent home while reconciling her Indigenous heritage and punk rock influences. Set in the backdrop of Coast Salish ancestral land, Red Paint is a bold and contemporary story about reclaiming one's identity and voice.

Living Nations, Living Words: An Anthology of First People's Poetry edited by Joy Harjo

This collection of Indigenous literature from around the world highlights the diversity of cultures and traditions. The book showcases the power of Indigenous language and the ability to preserve cultural knowledge and values.

Heart Berries: A Memoir by Terese Marie Mailhot

Terese Marie Mailhot's memoir explores her experiences growing up on the Seabird Island Indian Reservation, her struggles with mental health, and journey towards healing and self-discovery. It is a reflection on identity, trauma, and family.

Mamaskatch: A Cree Coming of Age by Darrel J. McLeod

In his memoir *Mamaskatch*, Darrel J. McLeod recounts his experiences growing up as a Cree boy in Northern Alberta, with a particular focus on his complex relationship with his family, struggles with his sexual identity, and journey towards self-discovery and acceptance. Through vivid descriptions and lyrical prose, McLeod offers a poignant and powerful reflection on the enduring impact of colonization and the resilience of Indigenous peoples.

Movements & Moments edited by Sonja Eismann, Maya Schöningh, Ingo Schöningh

A collection of boldly and beautifully illustrated stories of identity, liberation, and resilience among Indigenous women of the Global South.

We Had a Little Real Estate Problem: The Unheralded Story of Native Americans in Comedy by Kliph Nesteroff

Comedy historian Nesteroff investigates the history of Native representation in comedy from their forced appearance in Wild West shows, through famed Cherokee Will Rogers and more contemporary comedians who get to tell their own stories. Through the centuries, the importance of joy and laughter in Indigenous culture is evident.

Paying the Land by Joe Sacco

Award-winning comics journalist Sacco spent weeks interviewing the Dene of Northwest Canada, reporting on issues as universal as the treatment of the land by the Canadian government to the individual struggles from the men and women he spent time with. Their words speak loudly and are enhanced by Sacco's powerful drawings.

Poūkahangatus: Poems by Tayi Tibble

Tayi Tibble, a Maori poet born in the mid 90s, shares a collection centered on coming of age in the time of *Twilight* and the Kardashians, reconciling modern pop culture with the pull of ancient tradition and a culture overlooked in the present. Poūkahangatus—a compound word of her own creation, pronounced as "Pocahontas"—jabs at white-washed colonial history while asking "Am I navigating correctly?"

TEEN

The Firekeeper's Daughter by Angeline Boulley

Boulley's award-winning debut novel is about a biracial Native American girl who becomes involved in an investigation of a drug ring that is impacting her community. As she navigates this dangerous world, she must also confront the traumas and secrets that have shaped her life.

Apple: Skin to the Core by Eric Gansworth

A memoir in verse that celebrates survival and cultural continuity of the Native American people.

A Snake Falls to the Earth by Darcie Little Badger

Citizens of the land of spirits and monsters collide with humans on earth in this work of Indigenous futurism that highlights the deep connections to our physical world.

Me (Moth) by Amber McBride

This moving and bittersweet novel in verse follows Moth and Sani on a road trip as they experience loss and depression, life, and death, while connecting with their respective Black Southern hoodoo and Navajo/Diné roots.

#Not Your Princess: Voices of Native American Women

Simultaneously a love letter to young Indigenous women and a condemnation of the stereotypes they face, this collection of poetry, prose, and visual art centers and celebrates the unique and powerful beauty of Native femininity.

Surviving the City (Vols. 1 & 2) by Tasha Spillet-Sumner

In this graphic novel series, Dez, an Inninew, disappears into the city after she's confronted with placement in a group home. As her community scrambles to find her before she becomes yet another missing/murdered Indigenous person, her friends worry that it may already be too late.

CHILDREN

Invisible by Christina Diaz Gonzalez

This middle grade graphic novel stars a cast of students who are put together to do a community service project. While helping the community, they build an unexpected connection to each other.

The Sea-Ringed World: Sacred Stories of the Americas by Maria Garcia Esperón

Sacred stories of Native Americans from both continents.

Forever Cousins by Laurel Goodluck, illustrated by Jonathan Nelson

Kara and Amanda are cousins and best friends. When Kara's family moves from the city back to the Rez, the two worry that their relationship will change. At their family reunion the following summer, the girls fall back into their old ways and discover that distance cannot take away their connection.

Borders by Thomas King

While traveling back to Canada after visiting their family in Salt Lake City, a mother and son are trapped between borders due to their Blackfoot nationality. This graphic novel depicts how the tension between colonizers and Indigenous people is far from over.

Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story by Kevin Maillard, illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal

In this award-winning picture book, a Native American family cooks fry bread together. As they cook, they connect with their family traditions.

Water Lady: How Darlene Arviso Helps a Thirsty Navajo Nation by Alice McGinty, illustrated by Shonto Begay

The true story of Darlene Aviso, who delivers fresh water to Navajo Nation residents, is told through a fictional young boy.

Race to the Sun by Rebecca Roanhorse

Nezhoni and Mac embark upon a quest to find the weapons of the Diné Holy People they need to defend the world against ancient monsters.

The Misewa Saga series by David Robertson

This thrilling and captivating series blends Indigenous mythology, magic, and adventure to create a unique and engaging story. It offers a powerful reflection on the experiences of Indigenous youth and the importance of reclaiming cultural identity and heritage.

Powwow Day by Traci Sorrell, illustrated by Marlena Myles

Eight-year-old River is recovering from an illness, so she is unable to dance at the powwow this year. She is sad that she can't dance, but throughout the powwow she learns to connect with her tribe in other ways.

You Are Here: Connecting Flights edited by Ellen Oh

This middle grade anthology contains twelve interconnected stories by different authors about Asian American children who are in the Gateway International Airport in Chicago at the same time. Children will enjoy reading and figuring out the links that bring these characters' stories to life.

FILMS & SERIES

The Grizzlies

Based on a true story about an Inuit youth lacrosse team, *The Grizzlies* is a powerful and emotionally resonant film that offers a thoughtful exploration of the complexities of crosscultural engagement, the impact of colonization on Indigenous communities, and the transformative power of sports in promoting healing and connection.

Reservation Dogs

This darkly comic television series executive produced by Taika Waititi follows Indigenous youth in Oklahoma who commit small-time crime capers in order to fund their way to California.

Rumble: The Indians Who Rocked the World

This documentary explores the influence Native Americans have had on popular music over the past century.

Rutherford Falls

The statue of town founder Nathan Rutherford becomes a flashpoint for a town struggling with its identity. This humorous look at land ownership and cultural heritage is largely written by Indigenous comedians.

Scenes From a Glittering World

A documentary that follows teens at one of the most remote schools in North America on Navajo Nation territory, as they imagine and work toward a spectacular future.

To Us the Ashes: Indigenous Shorts

This collection of Indigenous documentary shorts does exactly what *There There* character Dene Oxendene set out to do in the novel: give a voice to the unheard, and a space on film for the overlooked.

AND MORE

Native American Music Awards

https://www.nativeamericanmusicawards.com/

2022 was the 20th year for these awards, celebrating Native musicians across genres ranging from traditional to country to rap to metal and everything in-between. A Spotify playlist begins with urban rap by StenJoddi (featured on the television series *Reservation Dogs*) through Halluci Nation (also featured in *There There*) and ends with the more meditative sounds of Gera and T.M.

Red Nation podcast

https://therednation.org/

Featuring interviews, discussions, and commentary about Indigenous history, as well as current politics and culture through a social justice and liberation lens.

There There Spotify playlist

https://open.spotify.com/playlist/7mCLMPEZhEohsZXS2SDuq1?si=9e3d679dbd744426

Created by Tommy Orange, this playlist consists of songs mentioned in the book, and songs that he listened to while writing.

Toasted Sister podcast

https://toastedsisterpodcast.com/

Explore the history of Native American food and the efforts to preserve Indigenous food heritage with Andi Murphy, a registered member of the Diné (Navajo) Nation.

Unreserved podcast

https://podcastre.org/podcasts?id=pod354

Rosanna Deerchild hosts this deep dive into Indigenous voices as they share their stories, helping us all better understand our shared human experience.

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Maryland Humanities is an educational nonprofit organization. Our mission is to create and support educational experiences in the humanities that inspire all Marylanders to embrace lifelong learning, exchange ideas openly, and enrich their communities. To learn more, visit mdhumanities.org.



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