

NOVEMBER MONTHLY THEME:

HOLDING HISTORY

Holding history mean more than remembering dates, names, and places. For instance, very few of us have pasts without pain woven through. And it's just easier to shut out those traumatic times than confront them head on. And of course, there's the unprocessed horrors woven throughout our cultural history. They are the rule not the exception, but we work hard to close ourselves off from them with standard lines like, "At our best, this isn't who we are!" or "As Americans, we're better than this!"

All of which is to say that there is a deeper relationship between history and vulnerability than we often recognize. Without a heart willing to feel pain and endure grief, the fullness of our histories just can't enter in. Talking about past mistakes requires the ability to vulnerably say I'm sorry. An honest telling of racism requires the painful acceptance that some of us still benefit from the prejudices and oppression of our ancestors. And telling your full story requires navigating grief over choices you wish you would have made differently.

So, let's not just "remember" this month. Let's not just talk of telling truthful tales. Let's prepare to grieve, to confess, to feel, to forgive. The world needs broken-open hearts, not just good historians. That is, indeed, the only way the past gets in.

Which question is calling to you? Where is it leading you?

1. Do you believe that history is "written by the victors"? How have you experienced the "losers" version of history winning out?
2. When you tell the history of the pandemic in ten years from, what do you think you will begin with?
3. What memory has been with you the longest? Why has held on to you for so long?
4. What memory will die with you if you don't pass it on?
5. What if the question isn't, "Did it really happen that way?" But instead, "Why do you want to remember that it happened that way?"
6. Have you figured out the story you want to be remembered by?

Wise Words:

History is written by everyone. The more accurate quote would be, "History is temporarily twisted by people who're going to profit from it in the short term.

[Subham Jain](#)

One thing I've learned is that at the core of white privilege is the entitlement to amnesia and ignorance. To forget that America was founded on stolen land, stolen labor, and genocide, and that we live in a society structured by this history, is to embrace an identity rooted in a false innocence and a flight from truth and healing. This is the rot at the root of the nation.

[Jabari S. Jones](#)

In times like these, I look to the past. I come from people not meant to survive, and here is our bloodline, stronger than ever.

[Brittany Packnett](#)

To acknowledge our ancestors means we are aware that we did not make ourselves. *Alice Walker*

Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes—our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead. Tradition refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking around.

G. K. Chesterton

Remember your birth, how your mother struggled to give you form and breath. You are evidence of her life, and her mother's, and hers...

Joy Harjo

[Remember the Sky](#)

[full poem](#)

Remember the earth whose skin you are...

Remember you are all people and all people are you..."

Amy Greene

It's not forgetting that heals. It's remembering.