CONTACT: Abby Freeland, sales and marketing director at West Virginia University Press, 304 916 7730, abby.freeland@mail.wvu.edu

**In conversation: A Region Responds to *Hillbilly Elegy***

MORGANTOWN, WV—On [Monday, February 25 2019](https://calendar.wvu.edu/site/law/event/appalachian-reckoning-book-launch/), contributors to [*Appalachian Reckoning: A Region Responds to* Hillbilly Elegy](https://wvupressonline.com/node/774) will discuss J.D. Vance’s controversial memoir through a panel discussion cosponsored with the WVU Humanities Center, the Appalachian Justice Initiative, and West Virginia University Press. Editors Anthony Harkins (Western Kentucky University) and Meredith McCarroll

(Bowdoin College) will be joined by Affrilachian poet Crystal Good and photographer Roger May. Audra Slocum (Assistant Professor of English Education, WVU)will moderate this conversation.

This event will take place at West Virginia University’s College of Law on Monday, February 25, 2019, from 7:00-8:30 pm.

**Read Robert Gipe’s excerpt “**[**How Appalachian Am I**](https://chapter16.org/how-appalachian-i-am/)**.”**

With hundreds of thousands of copies sold, a Ron Howard movie financed by Netflix in the works, and the rise of its author as a media personality, J. D. Vance’s *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis* has defined Appalachia for much of the nation. What about*Hillbilly Elegy* accounts for this explosion of interest during this period of political turmoil? Why have its ideas raised so much controversy? And how can debates about the book catalyze new, more inclusive political agendas for the region’s future?

*Appalachian Reckoning* is a retort, at turns rigorous, critical, angry, and hopeful, to the long shadow *Hillbilly Elegy* has cast over the region and its imagining. But it also moves beyond*Hillbilly Elegy* to allow Appalachians from varied backgrounds to tell their own diverse and complex stories through an imaginative blend of scholarship, prose, poetry, and photography. The essays and creative work collected in *Appalachian Reckoning* provide a deeply personal portrait of a place that is at once culturally rich and economically distressed, unique and typically American. Complicating simplistic visions that associate the region almost exclusively with death and decay, *Appalachian Reckoning* makes clear Appalachia’s intellectual vitality, spiritual richness, and progressive possibilities.

Praise for *Appalachian Reckoning:*

“This book is a powerful corrective to the imperfect stories told of the white working class, rural life, mountain folk, and the elusive American Dream.”  
Nancy Isenberg, author of *White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America*

“*Appalachian Reckoning* is the sound of the choir, pitch perfect in its capturing of these mountains and their people. This book is not only beautiful, but needed.”   
David Joy, author of *The Line That Held Us*

"A welcome and valuable resource for anyone studying or writing about this much-maligned region."   
*Kirkus (s*tarred review)

"Stunning in its intellectual and creative riches."  
*Foreword Reviews*(starred review)

"While Vance offers one bleak 'window' into the extensive multistate region, this valuable collection shows resilience, hope, and belonging are in Appalachia, too."  
*Publishers Weekly*

“This is a must-read for everyone who read (or refused to read) J. D. Vance’s deeply flawed, best-selling memoir*, Hillbilly Elegy.*”  
Shaunna Scott, University of Kentucky

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