



Tightrope: A Racial Journey to the Age of Obama

Gail Garfield

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Tightrope: A Racial Journey to the Age of Obama explores race and politics in the United States, addressing racial inequalities and injustices that have led to a point in history where, seemingly improbably, Americans have elected (and re-elected) a black man as president. We, as a nation, have taken precarious steps to arrive at the age of Obama, while remaining steeped in contradictions. Our steps on this racial tightrope are a work in progress—a history in the making—that will largely influence who we are and who we hope to become as Americans.

Gail Garfield retraces our steps along this wavering racial tightrope, weaving in her own experiences, including her childhood in the Jim Crow south, with the nation's broader racial history to trace the remarkable shift in America's racial landscape. The divergent steps we have taken, teetering between regressive and progressive racial politics, between stifling continuity and meaningful change, have led us to where we now tread as a nation, in this new Age of Obama. The halting, swaying missteps created by racial fears, hatred, and anger reveal the important imprints of separation and difference, and the bold, assured steps open up possibilities for inclusion, acceptance, and belonging. *Tightrope* challenges readers to reflect on their own steps on the racial tightrope and to ask basic questions about racial identity and progress in the United States.

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