

Better Than Reparations

Better Than Reparations is a living body of work—part investigation, part remembrance, part revelation—authored by Tiara Elise Hatley and released between 2024 and 2025 through the *Marine Flow Blog*. What began as a personal inquiry into a long-silenced family mystery grew into a multi-part series that reconnects history, ancestry, and collective healing in a way that feels both intimate and expansive.

At the heart of the series is Phillip Hatley, a U.S. Army veteran, registered voter, and Memphis resident who was killed by Memphis police officers in 1939. For decades, the truth of his death lived quietly inside his bloodline—passed down through fragments, silences, and unanswered questions. *Better Than Reparations* is the story of what happens when that silence is finally broken, not through outrage alone, but through patience, research, listening, and care.

The opening essays invite readers into the mystery itself—how one family's unanswered questions led to archives being reopened, scholars taking notice, and institutions responding. With support and confirmation from the University of Memphis, WKNO / PBS, and the Civil Rights and Restorative Justice Project, the Hatley family's story was no longer just personal memory—it became public record. Scholar Elena Kuran later described the case as an example of “silent archives and silenced genealogies,” a phrase that perfectly captures the spirit of the series.

From there, the work widens its lens. Through conversations hosted on the Civil Wrongs Podcast with Professor Laura Faith Kebede-Twumasi,

descendants of Phillip Hatley—across multiple generations—share how history doesn't stay in the past. Children, parents, and elders speak openly about grief, identity, confusion, resilience, and pride. These moments are not presented as tragedy alone, but as testimony—proof that memory survives even when systems fail.

The series also documents moments of public gathering and shared recognition. In February 2025, Hatley descendants participated in the Black Reparations Project Conference at Northeastern University School of Law, standing alongside other families whose histories had also been interrupted by violence and erasure. Around the same time, the launch of BLM Grassroots Memphis became another point of connection, where Tiara Hatley's poem "*Dismay (Willie Mae)*" was performed—not as protest, but as remembrance.

One of the most powerful shifts in the series comes when it turns inward. In *The Mind of Willie Mae's Progeny*, the work opens space for spiritual reflection and channeled narrative—allowing the voice of Willie Mae Hatley, Phillip's widow, to be felt alongside the documents and data. These moments are tender, careful, and grounding. They don't replace facts; they sit beside them. They remind readers that history isn't just what happened—it's what was carried.

As the series unfolds, a gentle but clear insight emerges: understanding changes everything. When history is fully known—when names, dates, places, and impacts are lovingly restored—something softens. Conversations change. Resistance eases. Justice no longer has to

be shouted into existence; it begins to arrive naturally, sometimes from unexpected directions. The work suggests that while restitution may not always come directly from the U.S. government, restoration can still take many forms—through education, cultural institutions, mental health spaces, land-based initiatives, and new economic pathways.

This theme becomes especially visible during the Say Their Names Mental Health Awareness Town Hall Series in May 2025, hosted by Ashley McKenzie Smith. Over five weeks, families, psychologists, journalists, and community members gathered to talk openly about grief, media harm, public trauma, and healing. Voices like Dr. Jillian Whatley emphasized that tending to emotional truth is not separate from justice—it's foundational to it.

What makes *Better Than Reparations* feel so alive is that it never rushes the reader toward an answer. Instead, it celebrates the power of curiosity, research, and remembrance. It honors the idea that before anything can be repaired, it must first be understood—and that understanding, when done with care, makes restoration feel less like a fight and more like a reunion.

In the end, the series leaves readers with a quiet but hopeful truth: history itself is a gift. When it is recovered, shared, and held with dignity, it opens doors—to healing, to opportunity, and to forms of justice that arrive with grace rather than resistance. *Better Than Reparations* doesn't demand the future. It prepares the ground so the future can arrive on its own.

Better Than Reparations is a historical, genealogical, and moral inquiry into the unresolved legacy of racialized state violence against Black Americans, told through the documented killing of Phillip Hatley—a law-abiding U.S. veteran, registered voter, husband, and father—by government officials during an era in which justice for Black citizens was structurally impossible. The work centers not on speculation, but on archival evidence, court records, community memory, and interdisciplinary research that reconstructs a silenced truth deliberately buried by institutions responsible for upholding the law.

Rather than framing reparations solely as a monetary question, the work argues that the deeper harm inflicted on Black families was the systematic destruction of lineage, protection, economic continuity, and historical record. The killing of Phillip Hatley did not merely end a life; it severed a family's financial stability, paternal guidance, social standing, and generational momentum. The absence of restitution at the time created cascading effects—widowhood under unjust conditions, disrupted inheritance, social stigma, and long-term economic vulnerability—that no retroactive payment alone could fully resolve.

The essay challenges dominant political narratives around reparations by asserting a difficult truth: while restitution is morally owed, the U.S. government has neither demonstrated the political will nor the legal posture to deliver comprehensive reparations to descendants of slavery. Moreover, historically, reparations were intended to come from enslavers and beneficiaries of slave labor—not from generalized public

taxation—rendering most modern debates structurally misaligned with historical reality. As such, waiting for reparations has often become a mechanism of delay rather than justice.

What the work proposes as “better than reparations” is truth recovery, public acknowledgment, historical correction, and lineage restoration. By uncovering the full story of Phillip Hatley through disciplined research and archival recovery, the family transforms a legacy of silence into one of documented truth, communal recognition, and intergenerational healing. The work reframes justice not as something granted by the state, but as something reclaimed through evidence, memory, and narrative authority.

The essay situates this family history within a broader analysis of American racial violence, arguing that the treatment of Black Americans—during slavery and long after emancipation—constitutes a form of slow, sustained genocide marked by lynching, state-sanctioned killings, resource denial, and cultural erasure. It directly counters stereotypes of Black fatherlessness and social dysfunction by demonstrating how such conditions were engineered through targeted violence against stable, law-abiding Black men and families.

Importantly, the work emphasizes that healing for Black communities cannot be achieved through symbolic gestures, performative acknowledgment, or isolated therapy sessions alone. True healing requires confronting historical truth, restoring silenced genealogies, and teaching descendants the factual realities of their lineage so that identity is rooted in truth rather than distortion or shame. In this sense, the recovery of

Phillip Hatley's story becomes both a personal and collective act of resistance against historical erasure.

Drawing on contemporary scholarship in restorative justice and archival studies, including the work of Elena Kuran on silent archives and silenced genealogies, the essay positions truth-telling as a moral and civic obligation. It asserts that racial justice in the present is inseparable from historical accountability, and that families must actively protect, document, and transmit their own histories when institutions have failed to do so.

Ultimately, *Better Than Reparations* is not a rejection of justice, but a reframing of it. It presents historical truth, lineage recovery, and public recognition as foundational forms of restitution—forms that restore dignity, continuity, and agency to families whose stories were deliberately suppressed. The work stands as both a memorial and a blueprint: demonstrating how confronting the past with rigor, evidence, and moral clarity can produce a future rooted in truth rather than denial.

Better Than Reparations: Exploring the Descendant Minds of Phillip Hatley (Part 1) is a deeply personal, historical, and reflective essay that documents the emotional, spiritual, and communal impact of uncovering the long-suppressed story of Phillip Hatley, a Black man whose life and death were entangled with racial injustice during the Civil Rights era. Written from a first-person perspective by his great-granddaughter, Tiara Elise Hatley, the work moves beyond conventional historical analysis to

explore how truth-telling reverberates across generations, shaping identity, purpose, grief, and healing within a living bloodline.

Rather than focusing solely on legal outcomes or material compensation, the essay reframes justice as something broader and more enduring than reparations alone. It argues that truth, remembrance, collective acknowledgment, and intergenerational dialogue can restore dignity and coherence to families and communities whose histories were fragmented by violence, silence, and systemic erasure. The discovery of hidden archives related to Phillip Hatley becomes a catalyst—not just for historical clarity, but for emotional release, spiritual awakening, and renewed communal responsibility.

A central strength of the work lies in its multigenerational lens. Hatley documents interviews and conversations with relatives spanning grandparents, parents, cousins, and children, including a nine-year-old great-great-granddaughter whose reflections reveal how historical truth can seed new ways of imagining community, cooperation, and future-building. These moments demonstrate that the impact of racial injustice is not confined to those who directly experienced it, nor is healing limited to legal or political remedies. Instead, the work emphasizes that younger generations, when included intentionally, become active participants in meaning-making rather than passive inheritors of trauma.

The essay also situates the family's experience within broader collective movements. Participation in the Black Reparations Project Conference, the Civil Wrongs Podcast in partnership with the University of

Memphis and WKNO, and Black Lives Matter grassroots events illustrates how individual family histories intersect with national conversations about reparations, accountability, and remembrance. Importantly, the work highlights how these spaces increasingly recognize spiritual and ancestral dimensions of justice—through rituals, ceremonies, poetry, and public storytelling—alongside legal and academic discourse.

Throughout the narrative, Hatley reflects on the coexistence of joy and grief. While uncovering the truth brings relief, validation, and pride, it also exposes pain, unresolved questions, and the emotional cost of confronting how frequently such injustices occurred. The author does not romanticize discovery; instead, she presents it as a complex process that demands emotional maturity, communal support, and spiritual grounding. The essay acknowledges prior family losses and grief, suggesting that unresolved ancestral trauma may echo across time, shaping family dynamics and emotional landscapes in ways that only become visible when truth is finally surfaced.

Another key theme is lineage as living continuity. Hatley draws connections between the talents, callings, and personalities of present-day family members and those of their ancestors—writers, healers, artists, musicians, organizers—suggesting that ancestral legacy expresses itself not only through memory but through embodied traits and creative gifts. This perspective reframes descendants not merely as victims of history, but as carriers of unfinished work, cultural intelligence, and unrealized dreams.

Ultimately, *Better Than Reparations* positions truth-telling as an act of completion rather than rupture. The essay argues that the current generation is not tasked with starting a new movement, but with finishing the race begun by those before them—crossing a moral and historical finish line by acknowledging what happened, honoring those lost, and choosing conscious, informed action moving forward. The work closes on the idea that cycles of injustice persist not because they are inevitable, but because they remain unexamined. Awareness, remembrance, and ethical responsibility are presented as the tools through which those cycles can finally be interrupted.

In this way, the essay serves simultaneously as memoir, historical reflection, spiritual meditation, and cultural commentary. It offers readers a model for how families, communities, and institutions might engage with painful histories—not to remain trapped by them, but to transform them into sources of clarity, cohesion, and forward movement. The work asserts that while reparations may address material harm, truth, lineage acknowledgment, and collective healing offer something deeper: the restoration of narrative, dignity, and moral continuity across generations.

Better Than Reparations: Exploring the Descendant Minds of Phillip Hatley (Part 2) is a deeply honest continuation of Tiara Elise Hatley's multigenerational exploration into truth, grief, and ancestral responsibility following the rediscovery of her great-grandfather Phillip Hatley's suppressed history. While Part 1 centered on discovery, remembrance, and collective awakening, Part 2 confronts the far more difficult reality that

truth does not only heal—it also disrupts, exposes unresolved pain, and forces families to reckon with grief that has long gone unspoken.

This installment focuses on how grief manifests within families once hidden histories are revealed. Hatley documents how the sudden emergence of public recognition, organizational support, and reparations conversations stirred unexpected conflict between close relatives—particularly between brothers—revealing how different generations and personalities process inherited trauma in divergent ways. The essay illustrates that shared ancestry does not guarantee shared strategy, emotional readiness, or compatible leadership styles, especially when grief resurfaces without warning.

A central theme of Part 2 is the dark side of grief—how pain, when unacknowledged or unevenly processed, can surface as tension, control, misunderstanding, or emotional volatility. Hatley recounts her decision to step back from formal participation in a proposed family foundation, not out of disrespect or disagreement with its mission, but out of a commitment to peace, emotional safety, and long-term familial harmony. She argues that collaboration must never come at the cost of psychological or spiritual wellbeing, especially when the trauma being addressed is the very cause of historical harm.

The essay also introduces a powerful spiritual lens, interpreting family dynamics as expressions of generational memory. Hatley reflects on how different relatives unconsciously embodied the traits, wounds, and callings of their ancestors—veteran lineage, community leadership, artistic

expression, and spiritual sensitivity—suggesting that unresolved ancestral pain continues to live through descendants until it is consciously addressed. This framing allows the reader to see conflict not as failure, but as a signal of deeper historical forces at play.

One of the most poignant moments in the work involves Hatley's heightened spiritual sensitivity during moments of emotional strain, including a scene where a baby reacts physically to unresolved tension during a family discussion. These moments underscore the essay's core argument: grief is not abstract—it is embodied, transmitted, and felt across generations, even by those too young to understand it cognitively.

Rather than presenting a neat resolution, Part 2 emphasizes discernment, boundaries, and patience as essential tools for healing. Hatley affirms that it is possible—and sometimes necessary—for different branches of a family to pursue parallel paths toward justice, expression, and remembrance. Some may focus on formal institutions and public actions, while others contribute through writing, art, education, and spiritual healing. Unity, the essay argues, does not require uniformity.

The work ultimately reframes justice as a process rather than an outcome. While reparations, restitution, or public acknowledgment may be part of the journey, they cannot substitute for emotional readiness, spiritual grounding, and ethical responsibility. Hatley stresses the importance of allowing grief to unfold without forcing timelines, structures, or collective decisions before families are truly prepared.

In closing, *Part 2* offers a sobering yet compassionate lesson: blessings and burdens often arrive together. The uncovering of truth is both a gift and a test, carrying the potential for healing as well as conflict. The responsibility of the present generation is not only to honor ancestors, but to cleanse inherited wounds so future generations may live with greater peace. Through writing—identified as her divine calling—Hatley positions storytelling itself as a healing practice, one capable of restoring balance, preserving dignity, and guiding others through similarly complex journeys of remembrance and repair.

Better Than Reparations: The Mind of Willie Mae's Progeny is a reflective, intergenerational narrative that weaves historical documentation, lived experience, and spiritual inquiry to examine the long-term psychological, emotional, and structural consequences of racial violence against Black American families. Centered on the Hatley family lineage, the work explores how a single act of state-sanctioned violence in the early 20th century reverberates across generations—shaping mental health, family dynamics, economic outcomes, and collective memory.

The author situates the reader within a framework of “time travel” through archival records, oral history, and contemporary events, illustrating how past injustices are not static historical facts but living forces that continue to influence present-day realities. The narrative traces the killing of Willie Mae Hatley’s husband by law enforcement, the absence of legal recourse, and the resulting psychological trauma experienced by Willie Mae and her children. This trauma is shown to cascade forward,

manifesting in later generations through silence, fractured relationships, coping behaviors, and unrealized potential.

Distinct from traditional historical analysis, the work integrates spiritual reflection and channeled narrative as a methodological tool—not as spectacle, but as a means of accessing suppressed emotional truth, ancestral memory, and unresolved questions left unaddressed by legal and political systems. Through this approach, the author frames healing not as revenge or financial restitution alone, but as truth-telling, acknowledgment, forgiveness, and collective understanding. The concept of “better than reparations” emerges as a call for holistic repair: emotional, psychological, cultural, and institutional.

The text also situates the family's private healing within broader public contexts, including modern movements for racial justice, memorialization efforts, mental health advocacy, and civic dialogue. By connecting personal revelation to public events—such as Juneteenth commemorations, grassroots organizing, and national conversations about policing—the work demonstrates how individual family histories are inseparable from national narratives.

Importantly, the author extends the inquiry beyond a single family's perspective. The work calls for dialogue that includes descendants of all parties involved, including those connected to law enforcement, arguing that true reconciliation requires multi-perspective historical reckoning rather than one-sided judgment. This approach reframes justice as a shared societal responsibility rather than an adversarial demand.

Ultimately, *The Mind of Willie Mae's Progeny* positions intergenerational healing as both a moral imperative and a civic necessity. It argues that unresolved trauma silently shapes governance, economic behavior, public health, and social cohesion—and that addressing these invisible inheritances may be more transformative than traditional reparations models alone. The work stands as a hybrid of memoir, social analysis, and ethical inquiry, offering a model for how families, institutions, and nations might confront historical harm in ways that foster clarity, accountability, and long-term collective healing.

A distinctive and essential dimension of *The Mind of Willie Mae's Progeny* is its use of channeled spiritual reflection as a deliberate method of inquiry rather than a literary device. The author does not position spiritual insight as symbolic or metaphorical, but as a form of epistemology—an alternative way of knowing that becomes necessary when traditional archives, court records, and institutional histories fail to capture emotional truth, moral complexity, and unresolved human consequence. Through moments of stillness, prayerful reflection, and inward listening, the narrative allows ancestral voices, suppressed memories, and unanswered questions to surface in ways that formal documentation cannot provide.

This channeled dimension functions as a bridge between history and interiority. It gives voice to Willie Mae not only as a historical figure, but as a conscious presence whose grief, endurance, and moral clarity continue to inform the descendants who carry her lineage. The author treats these

moments with restraint and responsibility, framing them as contemplative encounters rather than sensational revelations. In doing so, the work models a disciplined spiritual practice that complements archival research by addressing the psychic and ethical residue left behind when injustice goes unresolved.

Importantly, the channeled reflections do not seek to override factual history or absolve wrongdoing. Instead, they surface questions of meaning, forgiveness, accountability, and continuity—asking what justice requires when legal systems fail, when silence becomes inherited, and when harm reshapes families across generations. This spiritual methodology allows the author to explore not only what happened, but what remained unfinished in the moral and emotional ledger of history.

By integrating spiritual reflection alongside documentation and lived experience, the work expands the boundaries of historical and social analysis. It suggests that certain truths—particularly those involving grief, ancestral trauma, and reconciliation—can only be accessed through contemplative, spiritually attuned listening. In this way, the channeled narrative becomes an act of stewardship: holding space for voices that were denied dignity in life, and offering a path toward healing that honors both the seen and unseen dimensions of human experience.

Better Than Reparations documents a multi-year process of historical recovery, community engagement, and intergenerational healing centered on the 1939 killing of Phillip Hatley by Memphis police officers and the lasting impact of that injustice on his descendants. The work argues

that while financial reparations are often debated as a remedy for historical harm, truth-telling, historical clarity, and the restoration of erased narratives are foundational prerequisites for any meaningful repair. Without an accurate accounting of the past, material compensation alone cannot address the psychic, cultural, and structural damage inflicted across generations.

The text weaves together archival research, academic collaboration, journalism, community activism, and personal testimony to reconstruct Phillip Hatley's life within the broader context of Jim Crow Memphis, early Black political participation, and systemic anti-Black policing. By situating Hatley not merely as a victim but as a veteran, voter, family man, and citizen, the work challenges dominant historical narratives that reduce Black lives to incidents of violence rather than full human existence. Scholarly contributions from the Civil Rights and Restorative Justice Project, historians, journalists, and legal researchers reinforce the rigor of the reconstruction while centering the lived experiences of Hatley's descendants.

A central focus of the work is the emotional and psychological toll borne by families who are forced to grieve publicly while simultaneously fighting for justice. Through documentation of the "Say Their Names" Mental Health Awareness Month town hall series, the text highlights how unresolved grief, media exposure, and institutional indifference compound trauma over time. Mental health professionals, impacted families, and advocates collectively articulate the need for trauma-informed policy,

emotional intelligence training, and accountability within legal and policing systems. These conversations frame healing not as a private act, but as a civic responsibility tied to public policy and institutional reform.

The work also examines contemporary resistance to racial justice efforts, including the defunding of DEI programs, shifting federal priorities, and political backlash against community-based organizations. Rather than positioning this resistance as an endpoint, the author argues for strategic adaptation—specifically, a pivot from domestic DEI frameworks toward internationally recognized ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) structures that allow marginalized communities to pursue equity through environmental safety, social infrastructure, and governance accountability without relying on U.S. political approval. This strategic reframing is presented as a practical pathway for Black American communities to continue pursuing justice through globally legible mechanisms.

Interwoven throughout the text is an emphasis on lineage, continuity, and divine timing. The rediscovery of the Hatley family's history aligns across generations—appearing in academic research, public memorials, media coverage, and even the coursework of younger descendants. These moments are presented not as coincidence, but as evidence of historical memory resurfacing when conditions are finally capable of holding it. The work frames ancestor remembrance and historical literacy as essential tools for restoring identity, grounding activism, and breaking cycles of silence that have long undermined collective healing.

Ultimately, *Better Than Reparations* asserts that knowing the truth—fully, publicly, and accurately—is itself a form of restitution. By resurrecting silenced histories, centering descendant voices, and integrating scholarship with spiritual reflection and community action, the work offers a model for justice that prioritizes dignity, clarity, and long-term repair. It calls on families, institutions, and the nation to engage in deliberate remembrance as a prerequisite for policy reform, social healing, and any future conversation about reparations. In doing so, it reframes justice not as a transaction, but as an ongoing process of acknowledgment, accountability, and restored humanity.

Better Than Reparations is a five-part historical, social, and spiritual anthology authored by Tiara Elise Hatley, published between January 2025 and October 2025 via the *Marine Flow Blog*. The series documents the rediscovery, investigation, and intergenerational impact of the 1939 killing of Phillip Hatley, a U.S. Army veteran, registered voter, and Memphis citizen, by Memphis police officers during the Jim Crow era—and the nearly century-long silencing of his family's truth.

The series begins with *Solving of a Mystery Haunting an American Bloodline* (January 19, 2025), which establishes the foundational argument of the work: that historical truth, documentation, and narrative restoration must precede demands for material restitution. Hatley argues that while reparations are morally justified, they remain politically contested because many claims lack the institutional clarity, archival backing, and public acknowledgment necessary to overcome resistance. In contrast, when

history is resurrected through research, archives, journalism, and legal scholarship, restitution—whether financial, institutional, or social—can emerge organically and sometimes from unexpected sources.

Central to this rediscovery was the involvement of academic and journalistic institutions, including the University of Memphis, WKNO / PBS, and the Civil Rights and Restorative Justice Project, whose research confirmed that Phillip Hatley's death was not an isolated incident but part of a broader pattern of racially motivated policing. The work references scholarly contributions such as Elena Kuran's "Phillip Hatley: Silent Archives and Silenced Genealogies," which frames the Hatley case as emblematic of how Black American lineages were systematically erased through violence and bureaucratic neglect.

The second and third essays—*Exploring the Descendant Minds of Phillip Hatley (Parts 1 & 2)* (April 8, 2025 and October 20, 2025)—shift from archival recovery to living impact, documenting interviews conducted with Hatley descendants through the Civil Wrongs Podcast, hosted by Professor Laura Faith Kebede-Twumasi in partnership with WKNO. These conversations include multiple generations—from elders to children as young as nine—revealing how unresolved historical trauma manifests emotionally, relationally, and organizationally across time.

Notably, the series highlights the Black Reparations Project Conference held February 27-28, 2025, sponsored by Northeastern University School of Law, where Hatley descendants joined other impacted families to discuss pathways to justice beyond litigation alone. The work

also documents the Black Lives Matter Grassroots Memphis Chapter Launch (February 2, 2025), where Tiara Hatley performed her poem “*Dismay (Willie Mae)*”, reframing public remembrance as a form of historical literacy rather than protest spectacle.

A major throughline of the anthology is the argument that protest without research risks repetition, while research creates leverage. The author explicitly challenges the idea that street protest alone produces structural change, asserting instead that documentation, lineage mapping, policy literacy, and narrative control are what allow families to move institutions—courts, universities, media, investors, and governments—without exhausting themselves or fragmenting communities. This perspective is reinforced through lived examples: correspondence with the White House, engagement with museums facing defunding, and participation in multi-institutional coalitions rather than singular activist movements.

The fourth essay, *The Mind of Willie Mae’s Progeny* (May 5, 2025), introduces a methodological expansion: spiritual reflection and channeled narrative as complementary tools to historical research. Through automatic writing and ancestor veneration practices, the voice of Willie Mae Hatley, Phillip Hatley’s widow, is presented not as metaphor but as intergenerational testimony—articulating questions of injustice, grief, and moral accountability that archival records cannot capture alone. This section situates spiritual reflection as a legitimate form of qualitative

inquiry, particularly in cultures whose histories were forcibly undocumented.

The final essay, *The Results of Resurrected History and Her-Story* (September 7, 2025), documents the tangible outcomes of truth recovery. These include the Say Their Names Monuments Mental Health Awareness Month Town Hall Series (May 2025), hosted by Ashley McKenzie Smith, featuring psychologists, journalists, and impacted families. Sessions occurred weekly on May 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30 at 7 PM EST, addressing grief, public trauma, media harm, and systemic accountability.

Featured expert Dr. Jillian Whatley (Atlanta-based trauma-informed educator and psychologist) emphasized that unresolved historical trauma reshapes behavior, policy outcomes, and institutional trust—arguing that preventative governance and emotional intelligence training are more effective than reactive punishment. The series also references collaborations with Lynching Sites Project Memphis, BLM Grassroots Memphis, and coverage of MPD civil rights findings under the U.S. Department of Justice.

Across the anthology, Hatley advances a central thesis: restitution does not have to come directly from the original perpetrator to be real. While the U.S. government may never issue reparations, restored history opens alternative pathways—through education systems, ESG-aligned capital, mental health infrastructure, cultural institutions, land-based initiatives, and intergenerational wealth-building rooted in clarity rather

than grievance. When truth is established, resistance diminishes, because claims become facts—not demands.

Ultimately, *Better Than Reparations* reframes justice as a process of remembrance before redistribution. It calls families, researchers, and communities to prioritize knowing who they are, documenting what happened, and understanding why systems behaved as they did. From that grounding, restitution—material or otherwise—arrives with less conflict, broader support, and greater durability. In this sense, the work argues that history itself is the first and most necessary form of reparations.

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To understand the full depth of this work, be sure to get the entire 61 page series for yourself. Share this summary with those in your community and organization. Contemplate how the work can be incorporated into education and job training — given that DEI is now to be emphasized within minority owned businesses.

Pick the essay that resonates most with you and select it from the series if obtaining the entire work is out of reach. Be sure to also share the marineflowblog.com/blog webpage with peers and colleagues to share the resources mentioned for personal use.