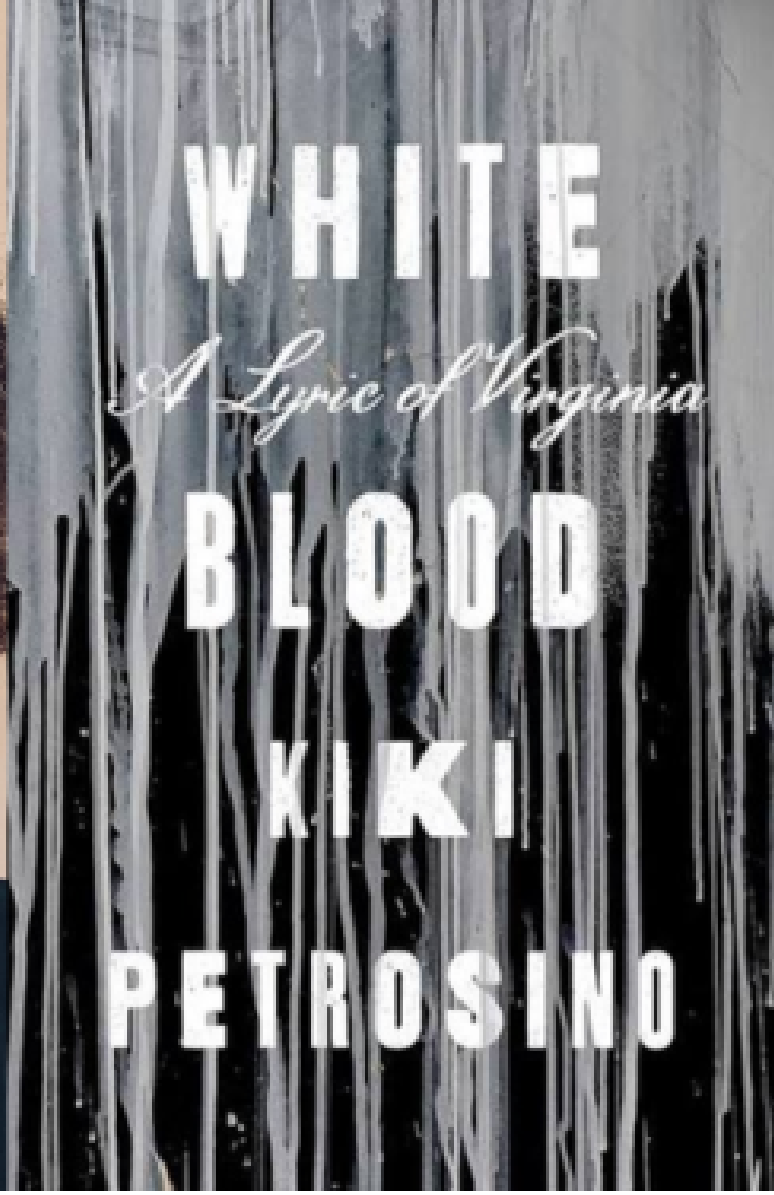

2021 UNT Rilke Prize

Kiki Petrosino - *White Blood: A Lyric of Virginia*

Kiki Petrosino's *White Blood: A Lyric of Virginia* (Sarabande Books) has won the 2021 UNT Rilke Prize. The $10,000 prize recognizes a book written by a mid-career poet and published in the preceding year that demonstrates exceptional artistry and vision.

In 2015, following the death of her maternal grandmother, the University of Virginia professor embarked on a powerful journey to understand more about her ancestors. She took a DNA test and combed through archival documents in search for answers.

White Blood: A Lyric of Virginia, is a culmination of that ancestral research. In it, Petrosino weaves together a variety of poetic forms — villanelles, a heroic crown and erasure — to explore her Black heritage and larger societal issues with the legacy of slavery and race relations in America.