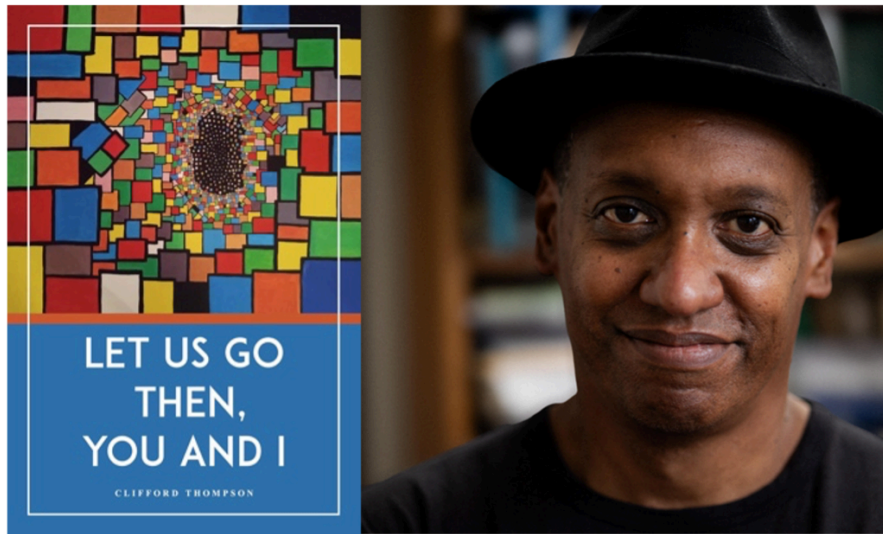


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**LET US GO THEN, YOU AND I**

By Clifford Thompson

Running Wild/Rize Press • October 5, 2026

*A novel about friendship lost and self-knowledge found*

In *Let Us Go Then, You and I*, Theo Brown sets out to answer two questions: why did his best friend die? And what is the best way for a person to live?

At the funeral of his best friend Charles Maddox, Theo Brown hears a series of eulogies about Charles's glamorous life that provokes a series of questions. Did Theo really know his friend? Has Theo himself been avoiding risk and hiding from a full life? What led to Charles dying of an overdose?

Theo takes a radical step in the manner of his favorite fictional detective, Johnson Jones. To investigate the death of his friend, to offer some closure to Melanie—Charles's cool older sister who has always felt out of his league—and to spice up his thirty-seven-year quiet life, Theo decides to leave his native Washington, DC for New York. It's a journey of emotional sleuthing and self-discovery, as the mystery of Charles's death and Theo's questions about his own history crisscross paths in Manhattan.

This is a detective story inflected with psychological realism and a self-examining, Prufrockian protagonist who stands in contrast to the hard-boiled gumshoe he loves. Thompson has peppered his narrative with pastiche that pays tribute to crime fiction authors—especially Chester Himes—delightfully engaging the genre in his interrogation of Black masculinity. *Let Us Go Then, You and I* explores the questions behind the question: What is the best way to live in this world?

## ADVANCE PRAISE

“Theo Brown thinks he’s going to New York to unravel the circumstances of his childhood friend’s death only to come up against the mystery of himself and how he came to be the man he is. Clifford Thompson’s fascinating new novel, *Let Us Go Then, You and I*, is a delicately spun tale of identity and the attempt to alter the course of one’s life. What we know—and Thompson knows a good deal about race, gender, family, and friendship—is one thing, but what we do with what we know is another thing altogether. *Let Us Go Then, You and I* is a story of confronting one’s most difficult truths. It’s a gorgeous and courageous book. I cared deeply about its protagonist.”

—Lee Martin, Pulitzer Prize finalist author of *The Bright Forever* and *The Evening Shades*

“*Let Us Go Then, You and I*, Clifford Thompson’s compelling new novel, gives us Theo Brown, a memorably endearing character in search of self-identity by way of the life and death of his oldest friend. Theo’s world—as he explores the complex boundaries of race, family, literature and love—is fully realized and grounded in time and place with wonderful vivid details throughout, while he also reaches for the broadest and most complex universal truths of life.”

—Jill McCorkle, author of *Life After Life* and *Hieroglyphics*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Clifford Thompson’s previous books include *What It Is: Race, Family, and One Thinking Black Man’s Blues* and *Jazz June: A Self-Portrait in Essays*. His work has appeared in *Best American Essays* and the Pushcart Prize Anthology. He is the recipient of a Whiting Writers’ Award for nonfiction. Thompson lives in Brooklyn.

## DETAILS

Title: *Let Us Go Then, You and I*

Author: Clifford Thompson

Publisher: Running Wild/Rize Press

Release date: October 5, 2026

ISBN-13: 978-19638669859

Page count: 246 pages

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