



Title List 2022

Our **Read Around Yolo** program currently offers fiction and non-fiction books for discussion groups. Bags include ten copies of the book, one set of discussion questions, and one set of discussion leader tips. Online reservations can be made [here](#). Please note: New titles are listed in **RED**.

Adult Titles

***100-Year-Old Man Who Jumped Out the Window and Disappeared* by Jonas Jonasson**

After a long and eventful life, Allan Karlsson ends up in a nursing home, believing it to be his last stop. The only problem is that he's still in good health, and in one day, he turns 100. A big celebration is in the works, but Allan really isn't interested (and he'd like a bit more control over his vodka consumption). So he decides to escape. He climbs out the window in his slippers and embarks on a hilarious and entirely unexpected journey, involving, among other surprises, a suitcase stuffed with cash, some unpleasant criminals, a friendly hot-dog stand operator, and an elephant (not to mention a death by elephant). It would be the adventure of a lifetime for anyone else, but Allan has a larger-than-life backstory: Not only has he witnessed some of the most important events of the twentieth century, but he has actually played a key role in them. Starting out in munitions as a boy, he somehow finds himself involved in many of the key explosions of the twentieth century and travels the world, sharing meals and more with everyone from Stalin, Churchill, and Truman to Mao, Franco, and de Gaulle.

***19th Wife* by David Ebershoff**

It is 1875, and Ann Eliza Young has recently separated from her powerful husband, Brigham Young, prophet and leader of the Mormon Church. Expelled and an outcast, Ann Eliza embarks on a crusade to end polygamy in the United States. A rich account of her family's polygamous history is revealed, including how both she and her mother became plural wives. Yet soon after Ann Eliza's story begins, a second exquisite narrative unfolds—a tale of murder involving a polygamist family in present-day Utah. Jordan Scott, a young man who was thrown out of his fundamentalist sect years earlier, must reenter the world that cast him aside in order to discover the truth behind his father's death. And as Ann Eliza's narrative intertwines with that of Jordan's search, readers are pulled deeper into the mysteries of love, family, and faith.

***57 Bus* by Dashka Slater**

One teenager in a skirt. One teenager with a lighter. One moment that changes both of their lives forever. If it weren't for the 57 bus, Sasha and Richard never would have met. Both were high school students from Oakland, California, one of the most diverse cities in the country, but they inhabited different worlds. Sasha, a white teen, lived in the middle-class foothills and attended a small private school. Richard, a black teen, lived in the crime-plagued flatlands and attended a large public one. Each day, their paths overlapped for a mere eight minutes. But one afternoon on the bus ride home from school, a single reckless act left Sasha severely burned, and Richard charged with two hate crimes and facing life imprisonment. The case garnered international attention, thrusting both teenagers into the spotlight.

***Afterlife* by Julia Alvarez**

The Poet X Antonia Vega, the immigrant writer at the center of *Afterlife*, has had the rug pulled out from under her. She has just retired from the college where she taught English when her beloved husband, Sam, suddenly dies. And then more jolts: her bighearted but unstable sister disappears, and Antonia returns home one evening to find a pregnant, undocumented teenager on her doorstep. Antonia has always sought direction in the literature she loves--lines from her favorite authors play in her head like a soundtrack--but now she finds that the world demands more of her than words. *Afterlife* is a compact, nimble, and sharply droll novel. Set in this political moment of tribalism and distrust, it asks: What do we owe those in crisis in our families, including--maybe especially--members of our human family? How do we live in a

broken world without losing faith in one another or ourselves? And how do we stay true to those glorious souls we have lost?

***All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr**

From the highly acclaimed, multiple award-winning Anthony Doerr, the beautiful, stunningly ambitious instant New York Times bestseller about a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II. Marie-Laure lives with her father in Paris near the Museum of Natural History, where he works as the master of its thousands of locks. When she is six, Marie-Laure goes blind and her father builds a perfect miniature of their neighborhood so she can memorize it by touch and navigate her way home. When she is twelve, the Nazis occupy Paris and father and daughter flee to the walled citadel of Saint-Malo, where Marie-Laure's reclusive great-uncle lives in a tall house by the sea. With them they carry what might be the museum's most valuable and dangerous jewel. In a mining town in Germany, the orphan Werner grows up with his younger sister, enchanted by a crude radio they find. Werner becomes an expert at building and fixing these crucial new instruments, a talent that wins him a place at a brutal academy for Hitler Youth, then a special assignment to track the resistance. More and more aware of the human cost of his intelligence, Werner travels through the heart of the war and, finally, into Saint-Malo, where his story and Marie-Laure's converge.

***All the Ugly and Wonderful Things* by Bryn Greenwood**

As the daughter of a drug dealer, Wavy knows not to trust people, not even her own parents. It's safer to keep her mouth shut and stay out of sight. Struggling to raise her little brother, Donal, eight-year-old Wavy is the only responsible adult around. Obsessed with the constellations, she finds peace in the starry night sky above the fields behind her house, until one night her star gazing causes an accident. After witnessing his motorcycle wreck, she forms an unusual friendship with one of her father's thugs, Kellen, a tattooed ex-con with a heart of gold. By the time Wavy is a teenager, her relationship with Kellen is the only tender thing in a brutal world of addicts and debauchery. When tragedy rips Wavy's family apart, a well-meaning aunt steps in, and what is beautiful to Wavy looks ugly under the scrutiny of the outside world. Kellen may not be innocent, but he is the fixed point in Wavy and Donal's chaotic universe. Instead of playing it safe, Wavy has to learn to fight for Kellen, for her brother, and for herself.

***Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**

A powerful, tender story of race and identity by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, the award-winning author of *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Ifemelu and Obinze are young and in love when they depart military-ruled Nigeria for the West. Beautiful, self-assured Ifemelu heads for America, where despite her academic success, she is forced to grapple with what it means to be black for the first time. Quiet, thoughtful Obinze had hoped to join her, but with post-9/11 America closed to him, he instead plunges into a dangerous, undocumented life in London. Fifteen years later, they reunite in a newly democratic Nigeria, and reignite their passion—for each other and for their homeland.

***Another Day in the Death of America* by Gary Younge (non-fiction)**

On an average day in America, seven young people aged nineteen or under will be shot dead. Younge chose November 23, 2013, with ten such deaths, and over a period of twenty-four hours reveals the powerful human stories behind the statistics. The result is a gripping chronicle of an ordinary but deadly day in American life, and a series of character portraits of young people taken from us far too soon and those they left behind.

***Anxious People* by Fredrik Backman**

Taken hostage by a failed bank robber while attending an open house, eight anxiety-prone strangers—including a redemption-seeking bank director, two couples who would fix their marriages and a plucky octogenarian—discover their unexpected common traits.

***Art of Racing in the Rain* by Garth Stein**

The New York Times bestselling novel from Garth Stein—a heart-wrenching but deeply funny and ultimately uplifting story of a dog's efforts to hold together his family in the face of a divisive custody battle. Enzo knows he is different from other dogs: a philosopher with a nearly human soul (and an obsession with opposable thumbs), he has educated himself by watching television extensively, and by listening very closely to the words of his master, Denny Swift, an up-and-coming race car driver. Through Denny, Enzo has gained tremendous insight into the human condition, and he sees that life, like racing, isn't simply about going fast. Using the techniques needed on the race track, one can successfully navigate all of life's ordeals. On the eve of his death, Enzo takes stock of his life, recalling all that he and his family have been through: the sacrifices Denny has made to succeed professionally; the unexpected loss of Eve, Denny's wife; the three-year battle over their daughter, Zoë, whose maternal grandparents pulled every string to gain custody. In the end, despite what he sees as his own limitations, Enzo comes through heroically to preserve the Swift family, holding in his heart the dream that Denny will become a racing champion with Zoë at his side. Having learned what it takes to be a compassionate and successful person, the wise canine can barely wait until his next lifetime, when he is sure he will return as a man.

Away by Amy Bloom

Panoramic in scope, *Away* is the epic and intimate story of young Lillian Leyb, a dangerous innocent, an accidental heroine. When her family is destroyed in a Russian pogrom, Lillian comes to America alone, determined to make her way in a new land. When word comes that her daughter, Sophie, might still be alive, Lillian embarks on an odyssey that takes her from the world of the Yiddish theater on New York's Lower East Side, to Seattle's Jazz District, and up to Alaska, along the fabled Telegraph Trail toward Siberia. All of the qualities readers love in Amy Bloom's work—her humor and wit, her elegant and irreverent language, her unflinching understanding of passion and the human heart—come together in the embrace of this brilliant novel, which is at once heartbreaking, romantic, and completely unforgettable.

Beautiful Ruins by Jess Walter

The story begins in 1962. On a rocky patch of the sun-drenched Italian coastline, a young innkeeper, chest-deep in daydreams, looks out over the incandescent waters of the Ligurian Sea and spies an apparition: a tall, thin woman, a vision in white, approaching him on a boat. She is an actress, he soon learns, an American starlet, and she is dying. And the story begins again today, half a world away, when an elderly Italian man shows up on a movie studio's back lot—searching for the mysterious woman he last saw at his hotel decades earlier. What unfolds is a dazzling, yet deeply human, roller coaster of a novel, spanning fifty years and nearly as many lives...Gloriously inventive, constantly surprising, *Beautiful Ruins* is a story of flawed yet fascinating people, navigating the rocky shores of their lives while clinging to their improbable dreams.

Becoming by Michelle Obama (non-fiction)

In a life filled with meaning and accomplishment, Michelle Obama has emerged as one of the most iconic and compelling women of our era. As First Lady of the United States of America, she helped create the most welcoming and inclusive White House in history. With unerring honesty and lively wit, she describes her triumphs and her disappointments, both public and private. A deeply personal reckoning of a woman of soul and substance who has steadily defied expectations.

Beekeeper of Aleppo by Christy Lefteri

Nuri is a beekeeper; his wife, Afra, an artist. They live a simple life, rich in family and friends, in the beautiful Syrian city of Aleppo—until the unthinkable happens. When all they care for is destroyed by war, they are forced to escape. But what Afra has seen is so terrible she has gone blind, and so they must embark on a perilous journey through Turkey and Greece towards an uncertain future in Britain. As Nuri and Afra travel through a broken world, they must confront not only the pain of their own unspeakable loss, but dangers that would overwhelm the bravest of souls. Above all, they must journey to find each other again. Moving, powerful, and beautifully written, *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* brings home the idea that the most ordinary of lives can be completely upended in unimaginable ways.

Behold the Dreamers by Imbolo Mbue

A compulsively readable debut novel about marriage, immigration, class, race, and the trapdoors in the American Dream—the unforgettable story of a young Cameroonian couple making a new life in New York just as the Great Recession upends the economy. Jende Jonga, a Cameroonian immigrant living in Harlem, has come to the United States to provide a better life for himself, his wife, Neni, and their six-year-old son. In the fall of 2007, Jende can hardly believe his luck when he lands a job as a chauffeur for Clark Edwards, a senior executive at Lehman Brothers. Clark demands punctuality, discretion, and loyalty—and Jende is eager to please. Clark's wife, Cindy, even offers Neni temporary work at the Edwards family summer home in the Hamptons. With these opportunities, Jende and Neni can at last gain a foothold in America and imagine a brighter future. However, the world of great power and privilege conceals troubling secrets, and soon Jende and Neni notice cracks in their employers' facades. When the financial world is rocked by the collapse of Lehman Brothers, the Jongas are desperate to keep Jende's job—even as their marriage threatens to fall apart. As all four lives are dramatically upended, Jende and Neni are forced to make an impossible choice.

Best We Could Do by Thi Bui (non-fiction)

An intimate and poignant graphic novel portraying one family's journey from war-torn Vietnam, from debut author Thi Bui. This beautifully illustrated and emotional story is an evocative memoir about the search for a better future and a longing for the past. Exploring the anguish of immigration and the lasting effects that displacement has on a child and her family, Bui documents the story of her family's daring escape after the fall of South Vietnam in the 1970s, and the difficulties they faced building new lives for themselves. At the heart of Bui's story is a universal struggle: While adjusting to life as a first-time mother, she ultimately discovers what it means to be a parent—the endless sacrifices, the unnoticed gestures, and the depths of unspoken love. Despite how impossible it seems to take on the simultaneous roles of both parent and child, Bui pushes through. With haunting, poetic writing and breathtaking art, she examines the strength of family, the importance of identity, and the meaning of home. In what Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Viet Thanh Nguyen calls "a book to break your heart and heal it," *The Best We Could Do* brings to life Thi Bui's journey of understanding, and provides inspiration to all of those who search for a better future while longing for a simpler past.

***Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates (non-fiction)**

In a profound work that pivots from the biggest questions about American history and ideals to the most intimate concerns of a father for his son, Ta-Nehisi Coates offers a powerful new framework for understanding our nation's history and current crisis. Americans have built an empire on the idea of "race," a falsehood that damages us all but falls most heavily on the bodies of black women and men—bodies exploited through slavery and segregation, and, today, threatened, locked up, and murdered out of all proportion. What is it like to inhabit a black body and find a way to live within it? And how can we all honestly reckon with this fraught history and free ourselves from its burden? *Between the World and Me* is Ta-Nehisi Coates's attempt to answer these questions in a letter to his adolescent son. Coates shares with his son—and readers—the story of his awakening to the truth about his place in the world through a series of revelatory experiences, from Howard University to Civil War battlefields, from the South Side of Chicago to Paris, from his childhood home to the living rooms of mothers whose children's lives were taken as American plunder. Beautifully woven from personal narrative, reimagined history, and fresh, emotionally charged reportage.

***Big Little Lies* by Liane Moriarty**

Sometimes it's the little lies that turn out to be the most lethal. A murder. A tragic accident. Or just parents behaving badly? What's indisputable is that someone is dead. But who did what? *Big Little Lies* follows three women, each at a crossroads: Madeline is a force to be reckoned with. She's funny and biting, passionate, she remembers everything and forgives no one. Her ex-husband and his yogi new wife have moved into her beloved beachside community, and their daughter is in the same kindergarten class as Madeline's youngest. Celeste is the kind of beautiful woman who makes the world stop and stare. While she may seem a bit flustered at times, who wouldn't be, with those rambunctious twin boys? New to town, single mom Jane is so young that another mother mistakes her for the nanny. Jane is sad beyond her years and harbors secret doubts about her son. But why? While Madeline and Celeste soon take Jane under their wing, none of them realizes how the arrival of Jane and her inscrutable little boy will affect them all. *Big Little Lies* is a brilliant take on ex-husbands and second wives, mothers and daughters, schoolyard scandal, and the dangerous little lies we tell ourselves just to survive.

***Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World* by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, with Douglas Abrams (non-fiction)**

Two spiritual giants. Five days. One timeless question. Nobel Peace Prize Laureates His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu have survived more than fifty years of exile and the soul-crushing violence of oppression. Despite their hardships--or, as they would say, because of them--they are two of the most joyful people on the planet. In April 2015, Archbishop Tutu traveled to the Dalai Lama's home in Dharamsala, India, to celebrate His Holiness's eightieth birthday and to create what they hoped would be a gift for others. They looked back on their long lives to answer a single burning question: How do we find joy in the face of life's inevitable suffering? They traded intimate stories, teased each other continually, and shared their spiritual practices. By the end of a week filled with laughter and punctuated with tears, these two global heroes had stared into the abyss and despair of our time and revealed how to live a life brimming with joy. This book offers us a rare opportunity to experience their astonishing and unprecedented week together, from the first embrace to the final good-bye. We get to listen as they explore the Nature of True Joy and confront each of the Obstacles of Joy--from fear, stress, and anger to grief, illness, and death. They then offer us the Eight Pillars of Joy, which provide the foundation for lasting happiness. Throughout, they include stories, wisdom, and science. Finally, they share their daily Joy Practices that anchor their own emotional and spiritual lives. The Archbishop has never claimed sainthood, and the Dalai Lama considers himself a simple monk. In this unique collaboration, they offer us the reflection of real lives filled with pain and turmoil in the midst of which they have been able to discover a level of peace, of courage, and of joy to which we can all aspire in our own lives.

***Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* by Trevor Noah (non-fiction)**

The compelling, inspiring, and comically sublime story of one man's coming-of-age, set during the twilight of apartheid and the tumultuous days of freedom that followed.

***Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer (non-fiction)**

As a botanist, Robin Wall Kimmerer has been trained to ask questions of nature with the tools of science. As a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, she embraces the notion that plants and animals are our oldest teachers. Drawing on her life as an indigenous scientist, and as a woman, Kimmerer shows how other living beings--asters and goldenrod, strawberries and squash, salamanders, algae, and sweetgrass--offer us gifts and lessons, even if we've forgotten how to hear their voices. In reflections that range from the creation of Turtle Island to the forces that threaten its flourishing today, she circles toward a central argument: that the awakening of ecological consciousness requires the acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world. For only when we can hear the languages of other beings will we be capable of understanding the generosity of the earth, and learn to give our own gifts in return.

***Buddha in the Attic* by Julie Otsuka**

A gorgeous novel by the celebrated author of *When the Emperor Was Divine* that tells the story of a group of young women brought from Japan to San Francisco as “picture brides” nearly a century ago. In eight unforgettable sections, *The Buddha in the Attic* traces the extraordinary lives of these women, from their arduous journeys by boat, to their arrival in San Francisco and their tremulous first nights as new wives; from their experiences raising children who would later reject their culture and language, to the deracinating arrival of war. Once again, Julie Otsuka has written a spellbinding novel about identity and loyalty, and what it means to be an American in uncertain times.

***Calypso* by David Sedaris (non-fiction)**

David Sedaris returns with his most deeply personal and darkly hilarious book. If you've ever laughed your way through David Sedaris's cheerfully misanthropic stories, you might think you know what you're getting with *Calypso*. You'd be wrong. When he buys a beach house on the Carolina coast, Sedaris envisions long, relaxing vacations spent playing board games and lounging in the sun with those he loves most. And life at the Sea Section, as he names the vacation home, is exactly as idyllic as he imagined, except for one tiny, vexing realization: it's impossible to take a vacation from yourself. With *Calypso*, Sedaris sets his formidable powers of observation toward middle age and mortality. Make no mistake: these stories are very, very funny—it's a book that can make you laugh 'til you snort, the way only family can. Sedaris's powers of observation have never been sharper, and his ability to shock readers into laughter unparalleled. But much of the comedy here is born out of that vertiginous moment when your own body betrays you and you realize that the story of your life is made up of more past than future. This is beach reading for people who detest beaches, required reading for those who loathe small talk and love a good tumor joke. *Calypso* is simultaneously Sedaris's darkest and warmest book yet—and it just might be his very best.

***Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?* by Roz Chast (non-fiction)**

In her first memoir, Roz Chast brings her signature wit to the topic of aging parents. Spanning the last several years of their lives and told through four-color cartoons, family photos, and documents, and a narrative as rife with laughs as it is with tears, Chast's memoir is both comfort and comic relief for anyone experiencing the life-altering loss of elderly parents. When it came to her elderly mother and father, Roz held to the practices of denial, avoidance, and distraction. But when Elizabeth Chast climbed a ladder to locate an old souvenir from the “crazy closet”—with predictable results—the tools that had served Roz well through her parents' seventies, eighties, and into their early nineties could no longer be deployed.

***Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson (non-fiction)**

As we go about our daily lives, caste is the wordless usher in a darkened theater, flashlight cast down in the aisles, guiding us to our assigned seats for a performance. The hierarchy of caste is not about feelings or morality. It is about power—which groups have it and which do not. In this book, Isabel Wilkerson gives us a portrait of an unseen phenomenon in America as she explores, through an immersive, deeply researched narrative and stories about real people, how America today and throughout its history has been shaped by a hidden caste system, a rigid hierarchy of human rankings. Beyond race, class, or other factors, there is a powerful caste system that influences people's lives and behavior and the nation's fate. Linking the caste systems of America, India, and Nazi Germany, Wilkerson explores eight pillars that underlie caste systems across civilizations, including divine will, bloodlines, stigma, and more. Using riveting stories about people—including Martin Luther King, Jr., baseball's Satchel Paige, a single father and his toddler son, Wilkerson herself, and many others—she shows the ways that the insidious undertow of caste is experienced every day. She documents how the Nazis studied the racial systems in America to plan their out-cast of the Jews; she discusses why the cruel logic of caste requires that there be a bottom rung for those in the middle to measure themselves against; she writes about the surprising health costs of caste, in depression and life expectancy, and the effects of this hierarchy on our culture and politics. Finally, she points forward to ways America can move beyond the artificial and destructive separations of human divisions, toward hope in our common humanity.

***Cleopatra: A Life* by Stacy Schiff (non-fiction)**

Her palace shimmered with onyx and gold but was richer still in political and sexual intrigue. Above all else, Cleopatra was a shrewd strategist and an ingenious negotiator. She was married twice, each time to a brother. She waged a brutal civil war against the first and poisoned the second; incest and assassination were family specialties. She had children by Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, two of the most prominent Romans of the day. With Antony she would attempt to forge a new empire, in an alliance that spelled both their ends. Famous long before she was notorious, Cleopatra has gone down in history for all the wrong reasons. Her supple personality and the drama of her circumstances have been lost. In a masterly return to the classical sources, Stacy Schiff boldly separates fact from fiction to rescue the magnetic queen whose death ushered in a new world order.

***Cooking with Fernet Branca* by James Hamilton-Patterson**

Gerald Samper, an effete English snob, has his own private hilltop in Tuscany, where he wastes away his time working as a ghostwriter for celebrities and inventing wholly original culinary concoctions—including ice cream made with garlic and the bitter, herb-based liqueur of the book's title. Gerald's idyll is shattered by the arrival of Marta, on the run from a crime-riddled former soviet republic. A series of hilarious misunderstandings brings this odd couple into ever closer and more disastrous proximity.

***Cutting for Stone* by Abraham Verghese**

Marion and Shiva Stone are twin brothers born of a secret union between a beautiful Indian nun and a brash British surgeon. Orphaned by their mother's death and their father's disappearance, bound together by a preternatural connection and a shared fascination with medicine, the twins come of age as Ethiopia hovers on the brink of revolution. Moving from Addis Ababa to New York City and back again, *Cutting for Stone* is an unforgettable story of love and betrayal, medicine and ordinary miracles—and two brothers whose fates are forever intertwined.

***Dandy Gilver and the Proper Treatment of Bloodstains* by Catriona McPherson local author**

Welcome to Edinburgh, 1926. Dandy Gilver, a wealthy and witty aristocrat (and sometimes amateur sleuth) receives a letter from Lollie Balfour, who insists that her husband of five years is having her followed and her mail is being steamed open. The only way for Dandy to help is by pretending to applying for a job as a lady's maid in Lollie's house. Dandy gets a crash course from her own maid and arrives at 31 Heriot Row, ready to put all of her detection skills to good use. Why does Mr. Balfour want to get rid of his wife? And can Dandy stay in disguise long enough to evade the villains? Charming and funny, Dandy Gilver is an irresistible sleuth who is sure to win over mystery lovers everywhere.

***Distance Between Us: A Memoir* by Reyna Grande (non-fiction)**

An eye-opening memoir about life before and after illegally emigrating from Mexico to the United States. When Reyna Grande's father leaves his wife and three children behind in a village in Mexico to make the dangerous trek across the border to the United States, he promises he will soon return from "El Otro Lado" (The Other Side) with enough money to build them a dream house where they can all live together. His promises become harder to believe as months turn into years. When he summons his wife to join him, Reyna and her siblings are deposited in the already overburdened household of their stern, unsmiling grandmother. The three siblings are forced to look out for themselves; in childish games they find a way to forget the pain of abandonment and learn to solve very adult problems. When their mother at last returns, the reunion sets the stage for a dramatic new chapter in Reyna's young life: her own journey to "El Otro Lado" to live with the man who has haunted her imagination for years, her long-absent father. In this extraordinary memoir, award-winning writer Reyna Grande vividly brings to life her tumultuous early years, capturing all the confusion and contradictions of childhood, especially one spent torn between two parents and two countries.

***Divide: American Injustice in the Age of the Wealth Gap* by Matt Taibbi (non-fiction)**

A scathing portrait of an urgent new American crisis. Over the last two decades, America has been falling deeper and deeper into a statistical mystery: "Poverty goes up. Crime goes down. The prison population doubles." "Fraud by the rich wipes out 40 percent of the world's wealth. The rich get massively richer. No one goes to jail." In search of a solution, journalist Matt Taibbi discovered the Divide, the seam in American life where our two most troubling trends—growing wealth inequality and mass incarceration—come together, driven by a dramatic shift in American citizenship: Our basic rights are now determined by our wealth or poverty. In *The Divide*, Matt Taibbi takes readers on a galvanizing journey through both sides of our new system of justice—the fun-house-mirror worlds of the untouchably wealthy and the criminalized poor.

***Dry* by Jane Harper**

A small town hides big secrets in *The Dry*, an atmospheric, page-turning debut mystery by award-winning author Jane Harper. After getting a note demanding his presence, Federal Agent Aaron Falk arrives in his hometown for the first time in decades to attend the funeral of his best friend, Luke. Twenty years ago when Falk was accused of murder, Luke was his alibi. Falk and his father fled under a cloud of suspicion, saved from prosecution only because of Luke's steadfast claim that the boys had been together at the time of the crime. But now more than one person knows they didn't tell the truth back then, and Luke is dead. Amid the worst drought in a century, Falk and the local detective question what really happened to Luke. As Falk reluctantly investigates to see if there's more to Luke's death than there seems to be, long-buried mysteries resurface, as do the lies that have haunted them. And Falk will find that small towns have always hidden big secrets.

***Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman**

No one's ever told Eleanor that life should be better than fine. Meet Eleanor Oliphant: She struggles with appropriate social skills and tends to say exactly what she's thinking. Nothing is missing in her carefully timetabled life of avoiding social interactions, where weekends are punctuated by frozen pizza, vodka, and phone chats with Mummy. But everything changes when Eleanor meets Raymond, the bumbling and deeply unhygienic IT guy from her office. When she and

Raymond together save Sammy, an elderly gentleman who has fallen on the sidewalk, the three become the kinds of friends who rescue one another from the lives of isolation they have each been living. And it is Raymond's big heart that will ultimately help Eleanor find the way to repair her own profoundly damaged one. Soon to be a major motion picture produced by Reese Witherspoon, *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* is the smart, warm, and uplifting story of an out-of-the-ordinary heroine whose deadpan weirdness and unconscious wit make for an irresistible journey as she realizes. . . The only way to survive is to open your heart.

***Elegance of the Hedgehog* by Muriel Barbery**

We are in the center of Paris, in an elegant apartment building inhabited by bourgeois families. Rene, the concierge, is witness to the lavish but vacuous lives of her numerous employers. Outwardly she conforms to every stereotype of the concierge: fat, cantankerous, addicted to television. Yet, unbeknownst to her employers, Rene is a cultured autodidact who adores art, philosophy, music, and Japanese culture. With humor and intelligence, she scrutinizes the lives of the building's tenants, who for their part are barely aware of her existence. This is a moving, funny, triumphant novel that exalts the quiet victories of the inconspicuous among us.

***End of Your Life Book Club* by Will Schwalbe (non-fiction)**

"What are you reading?" That's the question Will Schwalbe asks his mother, Mary Anne, as they sit in the waiting room of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. In 2007, Mary Anne returned from a humanitarian trip to Pakistan and Afghanistan suffering from what her doctors believed was a rare type of hepatitis. Months later she was diagnosed with a form of advanced pancreatic cancer, which is almost always fatal, often in six months or less. This is the inspiring true story of a son and his mother, who start a "book club" that brings them together as her life comes to a close. Over the next two years, Will and Mary Anne carry on conversations that are both wide-ranging and deeply personal, prompted by an eclectic array of books and a shared passion for reading. Their list jumps from classic to popular, from poetry to mysteries, from fantastic to spiritual. The issues they discuss include questions of faith and courage as well as everyday topics such as expressing gratitude and learning to listen. Throughout, they are constantly reminded of the power of books to comfort us, astonish us, teach us, and tell us what we need to do with our lives and in the world. Reading isn't the opposite of doing; it's the opposite of dying. Will and Mary Anne share their hopes and concerns with each other--and rediscover their lives--through their favorite books. When they read, they aren't a sick person and a well person, but a mother and a son taking a journey together. The result is a profoundly moving tale of loss that is also a joyful, and often humorous, celebration of life: Will's love letter to his mother, and theirs to the printed page.

***Euphoria* by Lily King**

From New England Book Award-winner Lily King comes a breathtaking novel about three young anthropologists of the '30s caught in a passionate love triangle that threatens their bonds, their careers, and, ultimately, their lives. English anthropologist Andrew Bankson has been alone in the field for several years, studying the Kiona river tribe in the Territory of New Guinea. Haunted by the memory of his brothers' deaths and increasingly frustrated and isolated by his research, Bankson is on the verge of suicide when a chance encounter with colleagues, the controversial Nell Stone and her wry and mercurial Australian husband, Fen, pulls him back from the brink. Nell and Fen have just fled the bloodthirsty Mumbanyo and, in spite of Nell's poor health, are hungry for a new discovery. When Bankson finds them a new tribe nearby, the artistic, female-dominated Tam, he ignites an intellectual and romantic firestorm between the three of them that burns out of anyone's control. Set between two World Wars and inspired by events in the life of revolutionary anthropologist Margaret Mead, *Euphoria* is an enthralling story of passion, possession, exploration, and sacrifice from accomplished author Lily King.

***Everything I Never Told You* by Celeste Ng**

Lydia is dead. But they don't know this yet. So begins the story of this exquisite debut novel, about a Chinese American family living in 1970s small-town Ohio. Lydia is the favorite child of Marilyn and James Lee; their middle daughter, a girl who inherited her mother's bright blue eyes and her father's jet-black hair. Her parents are determined that Lydia will fulfill the dreams they were unable to pursue—in Marilyn's case that her daughter become a doctor rather than a homemaker, in James's case that Lydia be popular at school, a girl with a busy social life and the center of every party. When Lydia's body is found in the local lake, the delicate balancing act that has been keeping the Lee family together tumbles into chaos, forcing them to confront the long-kept secrets that have been slowly pulling them apart. James, consumed by guilt, sets out on a reckless path that may destroy his marriage. Marilyn, devastated and vengeful, is determined to find a responsible party, no matter what the cost. Lydia's older brother, Nathan, is certain that the neighborhood bad boy Jack is somehow involved. But it's the youngest of the family—Hannah—who observes far more than anyone realizes and who may be the only one who knows the truth about what happened. A profoundly moving story of family, history, and the meaning of home, *Everything I Never Told You* is both a gripping page-turner and a sensitive family portrait, exploring the divisions between cultures and the rifts within a family, and uncovering the ways in which mothers and daughters, fathers and sons, and husbands and wives struggle, all their lives, to understand one another.

***Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* by Matthew Desmond (non-fiction)**

A landmark work of scholarship and reportage that will forever change the way we look at poverty in America. In this brilliant, heartbreaking book, Matthew Desmond takes us into the poorest neighborhoods of Milwaukee to tell the story of eight families on the edge. In vivid, intimate prose, Desmond provides a ground-level view of one of the most urgent issues facing America today. As we see families forced into shelters, squalid apartments, or more dangerous neighborhoods, we bear witness to the human cost of America's vast inequality—and to people's determination and intelligence in the face of hardship. Based on years of embedded fieldwork and painstakingly gathered data, this masterful book transforms our understanding of extreme poverty and economic exploitation while providing fresh ideas for solving a devastating, uniquely American problem.

***Far from the Tree* by Robin Benway**

Robin Benway's beautiful interweaving story of three very different teenagers connected by blood explores the meaning of family in all its forms—how to find it, how to keep it, and how to love it. Being the middle child has its ups and downs. But for Grace, an only child who was adopted at birth, discovering that she is a middle child is a different ride altogether. After putting her own baby up for adoption, she goes looking for her biological family, including Maya, her loudmouthed younger bio sister, who has a lot to say about their newfound family ties. Having grown up the snarky brunette in a house full of chipper redheads, she's quick to search for traces of herself among these not-quite-strangers. And when her adopted family's long-buried problems begin to explode to the surface, Maya can't help but wonder where exactly it is that she belongs. And Joaquin, their stoic older bio brother, who has no interest in bonding over their shared biological mother. After seventeen years in the foster care system, he's learned that there are no heroes, and secrets and fears are best kept close to the vest, where they can't hurt anyone but him. Don't miss this moving novel that addresses such important topics as adoption, teen pregnancy, and foster care.

***Feather Thief: Beauty, Obsession, and the Natural History Heist of the Century* by Kirk Wallace Johnson (non-fiction)**

A rollicking true-crime adventure and a captivating journey into an underground world of fanatical fly-tiers and plume peddlers, for readers of *The Stranger in the Woods*, *The Lost City of Z*, and *The Orchid Thief*. On a cool June evening in 2009, after performing a concert at London's Royal Academy of Music, twenty-year-old American flautist Edwin Rist boarded a train for a suburban outpost of the British Museum of Natural History. Home to one of the largest ornithological collections in the world, the Tring museum was full of rare bird specimens whose gorgeous feathers were worth staggering amounts of money to the men who shared Edwin's obsession: The Victorian art of salmon fly-tying. Once inside the museum, the champion fly-tier grabbed hundreds of bird skins--some collected 150 years earlier by a contemporary of Darwin's, Alfred Russel Wallace, who'd risked everything to gather them--and escaped into the darkness. Two years later, Kirk Wallace Johnson was waist high in a river in northern New Mexico when his fly-fishing guide told him about the heist. He was soon consumed by the strange case of the feather thief. What would possess a person to steal dead birds? Had Edwin paid the price for his crime? What became of the missing skins? In his search for answers, Johnson was catapulted into a years-long, worldwide investigation. The gripping story of a bizarre and shocking crime, and one man's relentless pursuit of justice, *The Feather Thief* is also a fascinating exploration of obsession, and man's destructive instinct to harvest the beauty of nature.

***Fifty Words for Rain* by Asha Lemmie**

Kyoto, Japan, 1948. Noriko "Nori" Kamiza will not question why her mother abandoned her, or her confinement to the attic of her grandparents' imperial estate. And she will not resist the scalding chemical baths she receives daily to lighten her shameful skin. The illegitimate child of a Japanese aristocrat and her African American GI lover, Nori is an outsider from birth. Her grandparents take her in only to conceal her, fearful of a stain on the royal pedigree that they are desperate to uphold in a changing Japan. When chance brings her legitimate older half-brother, Akira, to the estate that is his inheritance and destiny, the siblings form an unlikely but powerful bond - one their formidable grandparents cannot allow and that will irrevocably change the lives they were always meant to lead.

***Finding Nouf* by Zoe Ferraris**

When sixteen-year-old Nouf goes missing, her prominent family calls on Nayir al-Sharqi, a pious desert guide, to lead the search party. Ten days later, just as Nayir is about to give up in frustration, her body is discovered by anonymous desert travelers. But when the coroner's office determines that Nouf died not of dehydration but from drowning, and her family seems suspiciously uninterested in getting at the truth, Nayir takes it upon himself to find out what really happened. Fast-paced and utterly transporting, *Finding Nouf* is a riveting literary mystery that offers an unprecedented window into Saudi Arabia and the lives of men and women there.

***Fire in Paradise: An American Tragedy* by Alastair Gee and Dani Anguiano (non-fiction)**

There is no precedent in postwar American history for the destruction of the town of Paradise, California. On November 8, 2018, the community of 27,000 people was swallowed by the ferocious Camp Fire, which razed virtually every home and

killed at least 85 people. The catastrophe seared the American imagination, taking the front page of every major national newspaper and top billing on the news networks. It displaced tens of thousands of people, yielding a refugee crisis that continues to unfold. *Fire in Paradise* is a dramatic and moving narrative of the disaster based on hundreds of in-depth interviews with residents, firefighters and police, and scientific experts. Alastair Gee and Dani Anguiano are California-based journalists who have reported on Paradise since the day the fire began. Together they reveal the heroics of the first responders, the miraculous escapes of those who got out of Paradise, and the horrors experienced by those who were trapped. Gee and Anguiano also explain the science of wildfires, write powerfully about the role of the power company PG&E in the blaze, and describe the poignant efforts to raise Paradise from the ruins. This is the story of a town at the forefront of a devastating global shift--of a remarkable landscape sucked ever drier of moisture and becoming inhospitable even to trees, now dying in the tens of millions and turning to kindling. It is also the story of a lost community, one that epitomized a provincial, affordable kind of Californian existence that is increasingly unattainable. It is, finally, a story of a new kind of fire behavior that firefighters have never witnessed before and barely know how to handle? What happened in Paradise was unprecedented in America. Yet according to climate scientists and fire experts, it will surely happen again.

***Goodbye, Vitamin* by Rachel Khong**

Her life at a crossroads, a young woman goes home again in this funny and inescapably moving debut from a wonderfully original new literary voice. Freshly disengaged from her fiancé and feeling that life has not turned out quite the way she planned, thirty-year-old Ruth quits her job, leaves town and arrives at her parents' home to find that situation more complicated than she'd realized. Her father, a prominent history professor, is losing his memory and is only erratically lucid. Ruth's mother, meanwhile, is lucidly erratic. But as Ruth's father's condition intensifies, the comedy in her situation takes hold, gently transforming her grief. Told in captivating glimpses and drawn from a deep well of insight, humor, and unexpected tenderness, *Goodbye, Vitamin* pilots through the loss, love, and absurdity of finding one's footing in this life.

***Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck**

First published in 1939, Steinbeck's Pulitzer Prize-winning epic of the Great Depression chronicles the Dust Bowl migration of the 1930s and tells the story of one Oklahoma farm family, the Joads--driven from their homestead and forced to travel west to the promised land of California. Out of their trials and their repeated collisions against the hard realities of an America divided into Haves and Have-Nots evolves a drama that is intensely human yet majestic in its scale and moral vision, elemental yet plainspoken, tragic but ultimately stirring in its human dignity. A portrait of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless, of one man's fierce reaction to injustice, and of one woman's stoical strength, the novel captures the horrors of the Great Depression and probes into the very nature of equality and justice in America.

***Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows**

"I wonder how the book got to Guernsey? Perhaps there is some sort of secret homing instinct in books that brings them to their perfect readers." January 1946: London is emerging from the shadow of the Second World War, and writer Juliet Ashton is looking for her next book subject. Who could imagine that she would find it in a letter from a man she's never met, a native of the island of Guernsey, who has come across her name written inside a book by Charles Lamb...

***Hearts of Horses* by Molly Gloss**

In the winter of 1917, nineteen-year-old Martha Lessen saddles her horses and heads for a remote county in eastern Oregon, looking for work "gentling" wild horses. She chances on a rancher, George Bliss, who is willing to hire her on. Many of his regular hands are off fighting the war, and he glimpses, beneath her showy rodeo garb, a shy but strong-willed girl with a serious knowledge of horses. So begins the irresistible tale of a young but determined woman trying to make a go of it in a man's world. With an elegant sweetness like that found in *Plainsong*, and a winning energy as in *Water for Elephants*, *The Hearts of Horses* delivers a heartwarming, greatly satisfying story about the unexpected and profound connections between people and animals.

***Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race* by Margot Lee Shetterly (non-fiction)**

The phenomenal true story of the black female mathematicians at NASA at the leading edge of the feminist and civil rights movement, whose calculations helped fuel some of America's greatest achievements in space—a powerful, revelatory contribution that is essential to our understanding of race, discrimination, and achievement in modern America.

***History of Love* by Nicole Krauss**

A long-lost book reappears, mysteriously connecting an old man searching for his son and a girl seeking a cure for her widowed mother's loneliness. Leo Gursky is just about surviving, tapping his radiator each evening to let his upstairs neighbor know he's still alive. But life wasn't always like this: sixty years ago, in the Polish village where he was born, Leo fell in love and wrote a book. And though Leo doesn't know it, that book survived, inspiring fabulous circumstances, even love. Fourteen-year-old Alma was named after a character in that very book. And although she has her hands full—

keeping track of her brother, Bird (who thinks he might be the Messiah), and taking copious notes on How to Survive in the Wild—she undertakes an adventure to find her namesake and save her family. With consummate, spellbinding skill, Nicole Krauss gradually draws together their stories.

Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi

Ghana, eighteenth century: two half-sisters are born into different villages, each unaware of the other. One will marry an Englishman and lead a life of comfort in the palatial rooms of the Cape Coast Castle. The other will be captured in a raid on her village, imprisoned in the very same castle, and sold into slavery. *Homegoing* follows the parallel paths of these sisters and their descendants through eight generations: from the Gold Coast to the plantations of Mississippi, from the American Civil War to Jazz Age Harlem. Yaa Gyasi's extraordinary novel illuminates slavery's troubled legacy both for those who were taken and those who stayed—and shows how the memory of captivity has been inscribed on the soul of our nation.

Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet by Jamie Ford

Set during one of the most conflicted and volatile times in American history, *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* is an extraordinary story of commitment and enduring hope. In Henry and Keiko, Jamie Ford has created an unforgettable duo whose story teaches us of the power of forgiveness and the human heart.

Hour of Land: A Personal Topography of America's National Parks by Terry Tempest Williams (non-fiction)

In honor of the United States National Park Service's centennial this year, naturalist and author Terry Tempest Williams reflects on 12 of the 400+ parks, seashores, monuments, and recreation areas that are, as she so elegantly puts it, "portals and thresholds of wonder." Visiting Gettysburg, Alcatraz Island, Grand Teton, Acadia, Gates of the Arctic, and more, she reflects on her trips and her own past as well as the history of the parks, how politics and people have shaped them and continue to shape them, and the environmental issues they face. Gorgeously illustrated with selections from several accomplished photographers, *The Hour of Land* is a fascinating book that nature lovers will cherish.

House of Broken Angels by Luis Alberto Urrea

In his final days, beloved and ailing patriarch Miguel Angel de La Cruz, affectionately called Big Angel, has summoned his entire clan for one last legendary birthday party. But as the party approaches, his mother, nearly one hundred, dies, transforming the weekend into a farewell doubleheader. Among the guests is Big Angel's half-brother, known as Little Angel, who must reckon with the truth that although he shares a father with his siblings, he has not, as a half gringo, shared a life. Across two bittersweet days in their San Diego neighborhood, the revelers mingle among the palm trees and cacti, celebrating the lives of Big Angel and his mother, and recounting the many inspiring tales that have passed into family lore, the acts both ordinary and heroic that brought these citizens to a fraught and sublime country and allowed them to flourish in the land they have come to call home. Teeming with brilliance and humor, authentic at every turn, *The House of Broken Angels* is Luis Alberto Urrea at his best, and cements his reputation as a storyteller of the first rank.

House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros

Sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes deeply joyous, *The House on Mango Street* tells the story of Esperanza Cordero, whose neighborhood is one of harsh realities and harsh beauty. Esperanza doesn't want to belong—not to her rundown neighborhood, and not to the low expectations the world has for her. Esperanza's story is that of a young girl coming into her power, and inventing for herself what she will become.

This book is sponsored by the Yolo Reads adult literacy program.

Housekeeper and the Professor by Yoko Ogawa

He is a brilliant math Professor with a peculiar problem—ever since a traumatic head injury, he has lived with only eighty minutes of short-term memory. She is an astute young Housekeeper—with a ten-year-old son—who is hired to care for the Professor. And every morning, as the Professor and the Housekeeper are introduced to each other anew, a strange and beautiful relationship blossoms between them. Though he cannot hold memories for long (his brain is like a tape that begins to erase itself every eighty minutes), the Professor's mind is still alive with elegant equations from the past. And the numbers, in all of their articulate order, reveal a sheltering and poetic world to both the Housekeeper and her young son. The Professor is capable of discovering connections between the simplest of quantities—like the Housekeeper's shoe size—and the universe at large, drawing their lives ever closer and more profoundly together, even as his memory slips away. Yoko Ogawa's *The Housekeeper and the Professor* is an enchanting story about what it means to live in the present, and about the curious equations that can create a family.

How Much of These Hills is Gold by C. Pam Zhang

Newly orphaned children of immigrants, Lucy and Sam are suddenly alone in a land that refutes their existence. Fleeing the threats of their western mining town, they set off to bury their father in the only way that will set them free from their

past. Along the way, they encounter giant buffalo bones, tiger paw prints, and the specters of a ravaged landscape as well as family secrets, sibling rivalry, and glimpses of a different kind of future.

***How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi (non-fiction)**

Antiracism is a transformative concept that reorients and reenergizes the conversation about racism--and, even more fundamentally, points us toward liberating new ways of thinking about ourselves and each other. At its core, racism is a powerful system that creates false hierarchies of human value; its warped logic extends beyond race, from the way we regard people of different ethnicities or skin colors to the way we treat people of different sexes, gender identities, and body types. Racism intersects with class and culture and geography and even changes the way we see and value ourselves. In *How to Be an Antiracist*, Kendi takes readers through a widening circle of antiracist ideas--from the most basic concepts to visionary possibilities--that will help readers see all forms of racism clearly, understand their poisonous consequences, and work to oppose them in our systems and in ourselves. Kendi weaves an electrifying combination of ethics, history, law, and science with his own personal story of awakening to antiracism. This is an essential work for anyone who wants to go beyond the awareness of racism to the next step: contributing to the formation of a just and equitable society.

***I'm Just Happy to be Here: A Memoir of Renegade Mothering* by Janelle Hanchett (non-fiction)**

In this unflinching and wickedly funny memoir, Janelle Hanchett tells the story of finding her way home. And then, actually staying there. Drawing us into the wild, heartbreaking mind of the addict, Hanchett carries us from motherhood at 21 with a man she'd known three months to cubicles and whiskey-laden domesticity, from judging meth addicts in rehab to therapists who "seem to pull diagnoses out of large, expensive hats." With warmth, wit, and searing B.S. detectors turned mostly toward herself, Hanchett invites us to laugh when we probably shouldn't and to rejoice at the unconventional redemption she finds in desperation and in a misfit mentor who forces her to see the truth of herself. A story of ego and forced humility, of fierce honesty and jagged love, of the kind of failure that forces us to re-create our lives, Hanchett writes with rare candor, scorching the "sanctity of motherhood," and leaving beauty in the ashes.

***Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot (non-fiction)**

Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor Southern tobacco farmer who worked the same land as her slave ancestors, yet her cells—taken without her knowledge—became one of the most important tools in medicine...Rebecca Skloot takes us on an extraordinary journey, from the "colored" ward of Johns Hopkins Hospital in the 1950s to stark white laboratories with freezers full of HeLa cells; from Henrietta's small, dying hometown of Clover, Virginia—a land of wooden slave quarters, faith healings, and voodoo—to East Baltimore today, where her children and grandchildren live and struggle with the legacy of her cells.

***Immortalists* by Chloe Benjamin**

It's 1969 in New York City's Lower East Side, and word has spread of the arrival of a mystical woman, a traveling psychic who claims to be able to tell anyone the day they will die. The Gold children—four adolescents on the cusp of self-awareness—sneak out to hear their fortunes. Their prophecies inform their next five decades. Golden boy Simon escapes to the West Coast, searching for love in '80s San Francisco; dreamy Klara becomes a Las Vegas magician, obsessed with blurring reality and fantasy; eldest son Daniel seeks security as an army doctor post-9/11, hoping to control fate; and bookish Varya throws herself into longevity research, where she tests the boundary between science and immortality. *The Immortalists* probes the line between destiny and choice, reality and illusion, this world and the next. It is a deeply moving testament to the power of story, the nature of belief, and the unrelenting pull of familial bonds.

***Interior Chinatown* by Charles Yu**

2020 NATIONAL BOOK AWARD WINNER From the infinitely inventive author of *How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe* comes a deeply personal novel about race, pop culture, immigration, assimilation, and escaping the roles we are forced to play. Willis Wu doesn't perceive himself as a protagonist even in his own life: He's merely Generic Asian man. Sometimes he gets to be Background Oriental Making a Weird Face or even Disgraced Son, but he is always relegated to a prop. Yet every day he leaves his tiny room in a Chinatown SRO and enters the Golden Palace restaurant, where *Black and White*, a procedural cop show, is in perpetual production. He's a bit player here, too, but he dreams of being Kung Fu Guy--the most respected role that anyone who looks like him can attain. At least that's what he has been told, time and time again. Except by one person, his mother, who says to him, "Be more". Playful but heartfelt, a send-up of Hollywood tropes and Asian stereotypes, *Interior Chinatown* is Charles Yu's most moving, daring, and masterly novel yet.

***Intuition* by Allegra Goodman**

Sandy Glass, a charismatic publicity-seeking oncologist, and Marion Mendelssohn, a pure, exacting scientist, are co-directors of a lab at the Philpott Institute dedicated to cancer research and desperately in need of a grant. Both mentors and supervisors of their young postdoctoral protégés, Glass and Mendelssohn demand dedication and obedience in a competitive environment where funding is scarce and results elusive. So when the experiments of Cliff Bannaker, a young

postdoc in a rut, begin to work, the entire lab becomes giddy with newfound expectations. But Cliff's rigorous colleague—and girlfriend—Robin Decker suspects the unthinkable: that his findings are fraudulent. As Robin makes her private doubts public and Cliff maintains his innocence, a life-changing controversy engulfs the lab and everyone in it. With extraordinary insight, Allegra Goodman brilliantly explores the intricate mixture of workplace intrigue, scientific ardor, and the moral consequences of a rush to judgment.

***Invention of Wings* by Sue Monk Kidd**

From the celebrated author of *The Secret Life of Bees*, a magnificent novel about two unforgettable American women. A masterpiece of hope, daring, the quest for freedom, and the desire to have a voice in the world. Hetty "Handful" Grimke, an urban slave in early nineteenth century Charleston, yearns for life beyond the suffocating walls that enclose her within the wealthy Grimke household. The Grimke's daughter, Sarah, has known from an early age she is meant to do something large in the world, but she is hemmed in by the limits imposed on women. Kidd's sweeping novel is set in motion on Sarah's eleventh birthday, when she is given ownership of ten-year old Handful, who is to be her handmaid. We follow their remarkable journeys over the next thirty-five years as both strive for a life of their own, dramatically shaping each other's destinies and forming a complex relationship marked by guilt, defiance, and the uneasy ways of love.

***Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI* by David Grann (non-fiction)**

In 1920s Oklahoma, the Osage Indian Nation possessed immense wealth because their land contained large petroleum reserves. In *Killers of the Flower Moon*, New Yorker staff writer David Grann portrays a series of murders on the reservation. Local authorities couldn't solve the crimes, but an investigation by the relatively new FBI (led by the young J. Edgar Hoover) identified and charged the killers, whose primary motivation was greed. In this thoroughly researched history, Grann also reveals conspiracy and corruption beyond what the FBI discovered.

***Kiss Quotient* by Helen Hoang**

A heartwarming and refreshing debut novel that proves one thing: there's not enough data in the world to predict what will make your heart tick. Stella Lane thinks math is the only thing that unites the universe. She comes up with algorithms to predict customer purchases--a job that has given her more money than she knows what to do with, and way less experience in the dating department than the average thirty-year-old. It doesn't help that Stella has Asperger's and French kissing reminds her of a shark getting its teeth cleaned by pilot fish. Her conclusion: she needs lots of practice--with a professional. Which is why she hires escort Michael Phan. The Vietnamese and Swedish stunner can't afford to turn down Stella's offer, and agrees to help her check off all the boxes on her lesson plan--from foreplay to more-than-missionary position... Before long, Stella not only learns to appreciate his kisses, but craves all of the other things he's making her feel. Their no-nonsense partnership starts making a strange kind of sense. And the pattern that emerges will convince Stella that love is the best kind of logic...

***Kiyo's Story: A Japanese-American Family's Quest for the American Dream. A Memoir* by Kiyo Sato (non-fiction)**

Local author

When Kiyo's father left Japan, his mother told him never to return: there was no future there for him. Shinji Sato arrived in California determined to plant his roots in the land of opportunity even though he could not become a citizen or own land. Education was his watchword. He and his wife and their nine American-born children labored in the fields together, building a successful farm. Yet at the outbreak of World War II, when Kiyo, the eldest, was eighteen, the Satos were ordered to Poston Internment Camp. This memoir tells the story of the family's struggle to endure in these harsh conditions and to rebuild their lives afterward in the face of lingering prejudice. Rejected by several nursing schools due to her ethnicity, Kiyo eventually became a captain in the Army Nursing Corps. The Satos returned home to find their farm in ruins, occupied by another family, but through fortitude and ingenuity, they persevered and ultimately succeeded.

***Lab Girl* by Hope Jahren (non-fiction)**

An illuminating debut memoir of a woman in science; a moving portrait of a longtime friendship; and a stunningly fresh look at plants that will forever change how you see the natural world. Acclaimed scientist Hope Jahren has built three laboratories in which she's studied trees, flowers, seeds, and soil. Her first book is a revelatory treatise on plant life—but it is also so much more. *Lab Girl* is a book about work, love, and the mountains that can be moved when those two things come together. It is told through Jahren's remarkable stories: about her childhood in rural Minnesota with an uncompromising mother and a father who encouraged hours of play in his classroom's labs; about how she found a sanctuary in science, and learned to perform lab work done "with both the heart and the hands"; and about the inevitable disappointments, but also the triumphs and exhilarating discoveries, of scientific work. Yet at the core of this book is the story of a relationship Jahren forged with a brilliant, wounded man named Bill, who becomes her lab partner and best friend. Their sometimes rogue adventures in science take them from the Midwest across the United States and back again, over the Atlantic to the ever-light skies of the North Pole and to tropical Hawaii, where she and her lab currently make their home. Jahren's probing look at plants, her astonishing tenacity of spirit, and her acute insights on nature enliven every page of this extraordinary book. *Lab Girl* opens your eyes to the beautiful, sophisticated mechanisms within

every leaf, blade of grass, and flower petal. Here is an eloquent demonstration of what can happen when you find the stamina, passion, and sense of sacrifice needed to make a life out of what you truly love, as you discover along the way the person you were meant to be.

***Landfalls* by Naomi J. Williams**

In her wildly inventive debut novel, Naomi J. Williams reimagines the historical Laperouse expedition, a voyage of exploration that left Brest in 1785 with two frigates, more than two hundred men, and overblown Enlightenment ideals and expectations, in a brave attempt to circumnavigate the globe for science and the glory of France. Deeply grounded in historical fact but refracted through a powerful imagination, *Landfalls* follows the exploits and heartbreaks not only of the men on the ships but also of the people affected by the voyage—indigenous people and other Europeans the explorers encountered, loved ones left waiting at home, and those who survived and remembered the expedition later. Each chapter is told from a different point of view and is set in a different part of the world, ranging from London to Tenerife, from Alaska to remote South Pacific islands to Siberia, and eventually back to France. The result is a beautifully written and absorbing tale of the high seas, scientific exploration, human tragedy, and the world on the cusp of the modern era. By turns elegiac, profound, and comic.

***Language of Flowers* by Vanessa Diffenbaugh**

The Victorian language of flowers was used to convey romantic expressions: honeysuckle for devotion, asters for patience, and red roses for love. But for Victoria Jones, it's been more useful in communicating mistrust and solitude. After a childhood spent in the foster-care system, she is unable to get close to anybody, and her only connection to the world is through flowers and their meanings. Now eighteen and emancipated from the system with nowhere to go, Victoria realizes she has a gift for helping others through the flowers she chooses for them. But an unexpected encounter with a mysterious stranger has her questioning what's been missing in her life. And when she's forced to confront a painful secret from her past, she must decide whether it's worth risking everything for a second chance at happiness.

***Library Book* by Susan Orlean (non-fiction)**

The author reopens the unsolved mystery of the most catastrophic library fire in American history and delivers a dazzling love letter to a beloved institution: our libraries.

***Life is So Good* by George Dawson and Richard Glaubman (non-fiction)**

In this remarkable book, 103-year-old George Dawson, a slave's grandson who learned to read at age 98, reflects on his life and offers valuable lessons in living as well as a fresh, firsthand view of America during the twentieth century. Richard Glaubman captures Dawson's irresistible voice and view of the world, offering insights into humanity, history, hardships, and happiness. From segregation and civil rights, to the wars, presidents, and defining moments in history, George Dawson's description and assessment of the last century inspires readers with the message that—through it all—has sustained him: "Life is so good. I do believe it's getting better."

This book is sponsored by the Yolo Reads adult literacy program.

***Little Paris Bookshop* by Nina George**

Monsieur Perdu calls himself a literary apothecary. From his floating bookstore in a barge on the Seine, he prescribes novels for the hardships of life. Using his intuitive feel for the exact book a reader needs, Perdu mends broken hearts and souls. The only person he can't seem to heal through literature is himself; he's still haunted by heartbreak after his great love disappeared. She left him with only a letter, which he has never opened. After Perdu is finally tempted to read the letter, he hauls anchor and departs on a mission to the south of France, hoping to make peace with his loss and discover the end of the story. Joined by a bestselling but blocked author and a lovelorn Italian chef, Perdu travels along the country's rivers, dispensing his wisdom and his books, showing that the literary world can take the human soul on a journey to heal itself. Internationally bestselling and filled with warmth and adventure, *The Little Paris Bookshop* is a love letter to books, meant for anyone who believes in the power of stories to shape people's lives.

***Magic for Liars* by Sarah Gailey**

A private investigator and talented liar embarks on a search for a killer at a California private academy for mages where her estranged, magically gifted twin hides in plain sight.

***Major Pettigrew's Last Stand* by Helen Simonson**

In the small village of Edgecombe St. Mary in the English countryside lives Major Ernest Pettigrew (retired), the unlikely hero of Helen Simonson's wondrous debut. Wry, courtly, opinionated, and completely endearing, the Major leads a quiet life valuing the proper things that Englishmen have lived by for generations: honor, duty, decorum, and a properly brewed cup of tea. But then his brother's death sparks an unexpected friendship with Mrs. Jasmina Ali, the Pakistani shopkeeper from the village. Drawn together by their shared love of literature and the loss of their spouses, the Major and Mrs. Ali soon find their friendship blossoming into something more. But village society insists on embracing him as the

quintessential local and regarding her as the permanent foreigner. Can their relationship survive the risks one takes when pursuing happiness in the face of culture and tradition?

***Man Called Ove* by Fredrik Backman**

At first sight, Ove is almost certainly the grumpiest man you will ever meet. He thinks himself surrounded by idiots - neighbors who can't reverse a trailer properly, joggers, shop assistants who talk in code, and the perpetrators of the vicious coup d'etat that ousted him as Chairman of the Residents' Association. He will persist in making his daily inspection rounds of the local streets. But isn't it rare, these days, to find such old-fashioned clarity of belief and deed? Such unswerving conviction about what the world should be, and a lifelong dedication to making it just so? In the end, you will see, there is something about Ove that is quite irresistible. The word-of-mouth bestseller causing a sensation across Europe, Fredrik Backman's heartwarming debut is a funny, moving, uplifting tale of love and community that will leave you with a spring in your step—and less ready to judge on first impressions a man you might one day wish to have as your dearest friend.

***Me Before You* by JoJo Moyes**

A New York Times bestseller, with more than one million copies sold, by the author of *The Girl You Left Behind*. Louisa Clark is an ordinary girl living an exceedingly ordinary life—steady boyfriend, close family—who has never been farther afield than their tiny village. She takes a badly needed job working for ex-Master of the Universe Will Traynor, who is wheelchair-bound after an accident. Will has always lived a huge life—big deals, extreme sports, worldwide travel—and now he's pretty sure he cannot live the way he is. Will is acerbic, moody, bossy—but Lou refuses to treat him with kid gloves, and soon his happiness means more to her than she expected. When she learns that Will has shocking plans of his own, she sets out to show him that life is still worth living. A *Love Story* for this generation, *Me Before You* brings to life two people who couldn't have less in common—a heartbreakingly romantic novel that asks, “What do you do when making the person you love happy also means breaking your own heart?”

***Ministry of Utmost Happiness* by Arundhati Roy**

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness takes us on an intimate journey across the Indian subcontinent—from the cramped neighborhoods of Old Delhi and the roads of the new city to the mountains and valleys of Kashmir and beyond, where war is peace and peace is war. Braiding together the lives of a diverse cast of characters who have been broken by the world they live in and then rescued, patched together by acts of love—and by hope, here Arundhati Roy reinvents what a novel can do and can be.

***Moonglow* by Michael Chabon**

Michael Chabon traveled to his mother's home in Oakland, California, to visit his terminally ill grandfather. Tongue loosened by powerful painkillers, memory stirred by the imminence of death, Chabon's grandfather shared recollections and told stories the younger man had never heard before, uncovering bits and pieces of a history long buried and forgotten. That dreamlike week of revelations forms the basis of the novel *Moonglow*, the latest feat of legerdemain in the ongoing magic act that is the art of Michael Chabon. *Moonglow* unfolds as the deathbed confession, made to his grandson, of a man the narrator refers to only as my grandfather. It is a tale of madness, of war and adventure, of sex and desire and ordinary love, of existential doubt and model rocketry, of the shining aspirations and demonic underpinnings of American technological accomplishment at mid-century and, above all, of the destructive impact and the creative power of the keeping of secrets and the telling of lies. A gripping, poignant, tragicomic, scrupulously researched and wholly imaginary transcript of a life that spanned the dark heart of the twentieth century, *Moonglow* is also a tour de force of speculative history in which Chabon attempts to reconstruct the mysterious origins and fate of Chabon Scientific, Co., an authentic mail-order novelty company whose ads for scale models of human skeletons, combustion engines and space rockets were once a fixture in the back pages of *Esquire*, *Popular Mechanics*, and *Boys' Life*. Along the way Chabon devises and reveals, in bits and pieces whose hallucinatory intensity is matched only by their comic vigor and the radiant moonglow of his prose, a secret history of his own imagination. A lie that tells the truth, a work of fictional non-fiction, an autobiography wrapped in a novel disguised as a memoir, *Moonglow* is Chabon at his most daring, his most moving, his most Chabonesque.

***Mothers* by Brit Bennett**

Set within a contemporary black community in Southern California, Brit Bennett's mesmerizing first novel is an emotionally perceptive story about community, love, and ambition. It begins with a secret. "All good secrets have a taste before you tell them, and if we'd taken a moment to swish this one around our mouths, we might have noticed the sourness of an unripe secret, plucked too soon, stolen and passed around before its season." It is the last season of high school life for Nadia Turner, a rebellious, grief-stricken, seventeen-year-old beauty. Mourning her own mother's recent suicide, she takes up with the local pastor's son. Luke Sheppard is twenty-one, a former football star whose injury has reduced him to waiting tables at a diner. They are young; it's not serious. But the pregnancy that results from this teen romance—and the subsequent cover-up—will have an impact that goes far beyond their youth. As Nadia hides her secret from everyone,

including Aubrey, her God-fearing best friend, the years move quickly. Soon, Nadia, Luke, and Aubrey are full-fledged adults and still living in debt to the choices they made that one seaside summer, caught in a love triangle they must carefully maneuver, and dogged by the constant, nagging question: What if they had chosen differently? The possibilities of the road not taken are a relentless haunt. In entrancing, lyrical prose, *The Mothers* asks whether a "what if" can be more powerful than an experience itself. If, as time passes, we must always live in servitude to the decisions of our younger selves, to the communities that have parented us, and to the decisions we make that shape our lives forever.

***Music Shop* by Rachel Joyce**

It is 1988. On a dead-end street in a run-down suburb there is a music shop that stands small and brightly lit, jam-packed with records of every kind. Like a beacon, the shop attracts the lonely, the sleepless, and the adrift; Frank, the shop's owner, has a way of connecting his customers with just the piece of music they need. Then, one day, into his shop comes a beautiful young woman, Ilse Brauchmann, who asks Frank to teach her about music. Terrified of real closeness, Frank feels compelled to turn and run, yet he is drawn to this strangely still, mysterious woman with eyes as black as vinyl. But Ilse is not what she seems, and Frank has old wounds that threaten to reopen, as well as a past it seems he will never leave behind. Can a man who is so in tune with other people's needs be so incapable of connecting with the one person who might save him? The journey that these two quirky, wonderful characters make in order to overcome their emotional baggage speaks to the healing power of music--and love--in this poignant, ultimately joyful work of fiction.

***My Brilliant Friend* by Elena Ferrante**

A modern masterpiece from one of Italy's most acclaimed authors, *My Brilliant Friend* is a rich, intense and generous hearted story about two friends, Elena and Lila. Ferrante's inimitable style lends itself perfectly to a meticulous portrait of these two women that is also the story of a nation and a touching meditation on the nature of friendship. Through the lives of these two women, Ferrante tells the story of a neighborhood, a city and a country as it is transformed in ways that, in turn, also transform the relationship between her two protagonists.

My Mother's Kitchen* by Meera Ekkanath Klein *local author

My Mother's Kitchen is an enchanting place filled with promise, change and good food. If the weathered walls of this magical room could talk, they would tell the story of Meena and her childhood life. Each chapter is a slice in her young life and depicts her spunk and youthful spirit. A visit to the local Fruit and Flower Show becomes an adventure as told by Meena. Her distress at finding out about her aunt's dark secret or her joy of making a new friend are all told in her naive, yet pure voice. Her mother is a central character in her life and it is no wonder that the kitchen is a special place of healing and rejuvenation, not only for Meena but for other characters like Kashi and Ayah.

***My Year of Meats* by Ruth Ozeki**

When Jane Takagi-Little finally lands a job-producing a Japanese television show sponsored by BEEF-EX, an organization promoting the export of U.S. meats-she takes her crew on the road in search of all-American wives cooking all-American meat. Over the course of filming, though, Jane makes a few troubling discoveries about both. Meanwhile, on the other side of the globe, in Japan, Akiko Ueno watches *My American Wife!* and diligently prepares Coca-Cola Roast and Panfried Prairie Oysters for her husband, John, (the ad-agency rep for the show's sponsor). As Akiko fills out his questionnaires, rating each show on Authenticity, Wholesomeness, and Deliciousness of Meat, certain ominous questions about her own life-and the fact that after each meal she has to go to the bathroom and throw up-begin to surface. A tale of love, global media, and the extraordinary events in the lives of two ordinary women, counterpointed by Sei Shonagon's vibrant commentary, this first novel by filmmaker Ruth L. Ozeki-as insightful and moving as the novels of Amy Tan, as original as Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. or John Irving-is a sparkling and original debut from a major new talent.

***New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander (non-fiction)**

Despite the triumphant dismantling of the Jim Crow Laws, the system that once forced African Americans into a segregated second-class citizenship still haunts America, the US criminal justice system still unfairly targets black men and an entire segment of the population is deprived of their basic rights. Outside of prisons, a web of laws and regulations discriminates against these wrongly convicted ex-offenders in voting, housing, employment and education. Alexander here offers an urgent call for justice.

***News of the World* by Paulette Jiles**

In the wake of the Civil War, Captain Jefferson Kyle Kidd travels through northern Texas, giving live readings to paying audiences hungry for news of the world. An elderly widower who has lived through three wars and fought in two of them, the captain enjoys his rootless, solitary existence. In Wichita Falls, he is offered a \$50 gold piece to deliver a young orphan to her relatives in San Antonio. Four years earlier, a band of Kiowa raiders killed Johanna's parents and sister; sparing the little girl, they raised her as one of their own. Recently rescued by the U.S. army, the ten-year-old has once again been torn away from the only home she knows. Their 400-mile journey south through unsettled territory and

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unforgiving terrain proves difficult and at times dangerous. Johanna has forgotten the English language, tries to escape at every opportunity, throws away her shoes, and refuses to act “civilized.” Yet as the miles pass, the two lonely survivors tentatively begin to trust each other, forming a bond that marks the difference between life and death in this treacherous land. Arriving in San Antonio, the reunion is neither happy nor welcome. The captain must hand Johanna over to an aunt and uncle she does not remember—strangers who regard her as an unwanted burden. A respectable man, Captain Kidd is faced with a terrible choice: abandon the girl to her fate or become—in the eyes of the law—a kidnapper himself.

***Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell**

George Orwell depicts a gray, totalitarian world dominated by Big Brother and its vast network of agents, including the Thought Police, a world in which news is manufactured according to the authorities' will and people live tepid lives by rote. Winston Smith, the hero with no heroic qualities, longs only for truth and decency. But living in a social system in which privacy does not exist and where those with unorthodox ideas are brainwashed or put to death, he knows there is no hope for him. He knows even as he continues to pursue his forbidden love affair that eventually he will come to destruction. The year 1984 has come and gone, yet George Orwell's nightmare vision in 1949 of the world we were becoming is still the great modern classic of negative Utopia. It is a prophetic and haunting tale that exposes the worst crimes imaginable: the destruction of freedom and truth.

***Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea* by Barbara Demick (non-fiction)**

Award-winning journalist Barbara Demick follows the lives of six North Korean citizens over fifteen years—a chaotic period that saw the death of Kim Il-sung, the rise to power of his son Kim Jong-il, and a devastating famine that killed one-fifth of the population. Demick brings to life what it means to be living under the most repressive totalitarian regime today—an Orwellian world that is by choice not connected to the Internet, where displays of affection are punished, informants are rewarded, and an offhand remark can send a person to the gulag for life. Demick takes us deep inside the country, beyond the reach of government censors, and through meticulous and sensitive reporting we see her subjects fall in love, raise families, nurture ambitions, and struggle for survival. One by one, we witness their profound, life-altering disillusionment with the government and their realization that, rather than providing them with lives of abundance, their country has betrayed them.

***Nothing to See Here* by Kevin Wilson**

A moving and uproarious novel about a woman who finds meaning in her life when she begins caring for two children with a remarkable ability. Lillian and Madison were unlikely roommates and yet inseparable friends at their elite boarding school. But then Lillian had to leave the school unexpectedly in the wake of a scandal and they've barely spoken since. Until now, when Lillian gets a letter from Madison pleading for her help. Madison's twin step kids are moving in with her family and she wants Lillian to be their caretaker. However, there's a catch: The twins spontaneously combust when they get agitated, flames igniting from their skin in a startling but beautiful way. Lillian is convinced Madison is pulling her leg, but it's the truth. Thinking of her dead-end life at home, the life that has consistently disappointed her, Lillian figures she has nothing to lose. Over the course of one humid, demanding summer, Lillian and the twins learn to trust one another--and stay cool--while also staying out of the way of Madison's buttoned-up politician husband. Surprised by her own ingenuity yet unused to the intense feelings of protectiveness she feels for them, Lillian ultimately begins to accept that she needs these strange children as much as they need her--urgently and fiercely. Couldn't this be the start of the amazing life she'd always hoped for? With white-hot wit and a big, tender heart, Kevin Wilson has written his best book yet--a most unusual story of parental love.

***On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong**

Poet Ocean Vuong's debut novel is a shattering portrait of a family, a first love, and the redemptive power of storytelling. *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* is a letter from a son to a mother who cannot read. Written when the speaker, Little Dog, is in his late twenties, the letter unearths a family's history that began before he was born -- a history whose epicenter is rooted in Vietnam -- and serves as a doorway into parts of his life his mother has never known, all of it leading to an unforgettable revelation. At once a witness to the fraught yet undeniable love between a single mother and her son, it is also a brutally honest exploration of race, class, and masculinity. Asking questions central to our American moment, immersed as we are in addiction, violence, and trauma, but undergirded by compassion and tenderness, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* is as much about the power of telling one's own story as it is about the obliterating silence of not being heard. With stunning urgency and grace, Ocean Vuong writes of people caught between disparate worlds, and asks how we heal and rescue one another without forsaking who we are. The question of how to survive, and how to make of it a kind of joy, powers the most important debut novel of many years.

***Orphan Train* by Christina Baker Kline**

Between 1854 and 1929, so-called orphan trains ran regularly from the cities of the East Coast to the farmlands of the Midwest, carrying thousands of abandoned children whose fates would be determined by pure luck. Would they be adopted by a kind and loving family, or would they face a childhood and adolescence of hard labor and servitude? As a

young Irish immigrant, Vivian Daly was one such child, sent by rail from New York City to an uncertain future a world away. Returning east later in life, Vivian leads a quiet, peaceful existence on the coast of Maine, the memories of her upbringing rendered a hazy blur. But in her attic, hidden in trunks, are vestiges of a turbulent past. Seventeen-year-old Molly Ayer knows that a community-service position helping an elderly widow clean out her attic is the only thing keeping her out of juvenile hall. But as Molly helps Vivian sort through her keepsakes and possessions, she discovers that she and Vivian aren't as different as they appear. A Penobscot Indian who has spent her youth in and out of foster homes, Molly is also an outsider being raised by strangers, and she, too, has unanswered questions about the past. Moving between contemporary Maine and Depression-era Minnesota, *Orphan Train* is a powerful tale of upheaval and resilience, second chances, and unexpected friendship.

Overstory by Richard Powers

An Air Force loadmaster in the Vietnam War is shot out of the sky, then saved by falling into a banyan. An artist inherits a hundred years of photographic portraits, all of the same doomed American chestnut. A hard-partying undergraduate in the late 1980s electrocutes herself, dies, and is sent back into life by creatures of air and light. A hearing- and speech-impaired scientist discovers that trees are communicating with one another. These four, and five other strangers--each summoned in different ways by trees--are brought together in a last and violent stand to save the continent's few remaining acres of virgin forest. In his twelfth novel, National Book Award winner Richard Powers delivers a sweeping, impassioned novel of activism and resistance that is also a stunning evocation of--and paean to--the natural world. From the roots to the crown and back to the seeds, *The Overstory* unfolds in concentric rings of interlocking fables that range from antebellum New York to the late twentieth-century Timber Wars of the Pacific Northwest and beyond, exploring the essential conflict on this planet: the one taking place between humans and nonhumans. There is a world alongside ours--vast, slow, interconnected, resourceful, magnificently inventive, and almost invisible to us. This is the story of a handful of people who learn how to see that world and who are drawn up into its unfolding catastrophe. *The Overstory* is a book for all readers who despair of humanity's self-imposed separation from the rest of creation and who hope for the transformative, regenerating possibility of a homecoming. If the trees of this earth could speak, what would they tell us? "Listen. There's something you need to hear."

Paris Library by Janet Skeslien Charles

Paris, 1939. Young, ambitious, and tempestuous, Odile Souchet has it all: Paul, her handsome police officer beau; Margaret, her best friend from England; her adored twin brother Remy; and a dream job at the American Library in Paris, working alongside the library's legendary director, Dorothy Reeder. But when World War II breaks out, Odile stands to lose everything she holds dear--including her beloved library. After the invasion, as the Nazis declare a war on words and darkness falls over the City of Light, Odile and her fellow librarians join the Resistance with the best weapons they have: books. They risk their lives again and again to help their fellow Jewish readers. When the war finally ends, instead of freedom, Odile tastes the bitter sting of unspeakable betrayal. Montana, 1983. Odile's solitary existence in gossipy small-town Montana is unexpectedly interrupted by Lily, her neighbor, a lonely teenager longing for adventure. As Lily uncovers more about Odile's mysterious past, they find they share a love of language, the same longings, the same lethal jealousy. Odile helps Lily navigate the troubled waters of adolescence by always recommending just the right book at the right time, never suspecting that Lily will be the one to help her reckon with her own terrible secret. Based on the true story of the American Library in Paris, *The Paris Library* explores the geography of resentment, the consequences of terrible choices made, and how extraordinary heroism can be found in the quietest of places.

Paris Wife by Paula McLain

Chicago, 1920: Hadley Richardson is a quiet twenty-eight-year-old who has all but given up on love and happiness—until she meets Ernest Hemingway. Following a whirlwind courtship and wedding, the pair set sail for Paris, where they become the golden couple in a lively and volatile group—the fabled “Lost Generation”—that includes Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Though deeply in love, the Hemingways are ill prepared for the hard-drinking, fast-living, and free-loving life of Jazz Age Paris. As Ernest struggles to find the voice that will earn him a place in history and pours himself into the novel that will become *The Sun Also Rises*, Hadley strives to hold on to her sense of self as her roles as wife, friend, and muse become more challenging. Eventually they find themselves facing the ultimate crisis of their marriage—a deception that will lead to the unraveling of everything they've fought so hard for. A heartbreaking portrayal of love and torn loyalty, *The Paris Wife* is all the more poignant because we know that, in the end, Hemingway wrote that he would rather have died than fallen in love with anyone but Hadley.

Place for Us by Fatima Farheen Mirza

A Place for Us is a deeply moving and resonant story of love, identity, and belonging. As an Indian wedding gathers a family back together, parents Rafiq and Layla must reckon with the choices their children have made. There is Hadia: their headstrong, eldest daughter, whose marriage is a match of love and not tradition. Huda, the middle child, is determined to follow in her sister's footsteps. And lastly is their estranged son, Amar, who returns to the family fold for the first time in three years to take his place as brother of the bride. What secrets and betrayals have caused this close-knit family to

fracture? Can Amar find his way back to the people who know and love him best? *A Place for Us* takes us back to the beginning of this family's life: from the bonds that bring them together, to the differences that pull them apart. All the joy and struggle of family life is here, from Rafiq and Layla's own arrival in America from India, to the years in which their children--each in their own way--tread between two cultures, seeking to find their place in the world, as well as a path home. *A Place for Us* is a book for our times: an astonishingly tender-hearted novel of identity and belonging, and a resonant portrait of what it means to be an American family today. It announces Fatima Farheen Mirza as a major new literary talent.

***Plainsong* by Kent Haruf**

Ambitious, but never seeming so, Kent Haruf reveals a whole community as he interweaves the stories of a pregnant high school girl, a lonely teacher, a pair of boys abandoned by their mother, and a couple of crusty bachelor farmers. From simple elements, Haruf achieves a novel of wisdom and grace—a narrative that builds in strength and feeling until, as in a choral chant, the voices in the book surround, transport, and lift the reader off the ground.

***Pull of the Stars* by Emma Donoghue**

In an Ireland doubly ravaged by war and disease, Nurse Julia Power works at an understaffed hospital in the city center, where expectant mothers who have come down with the terrible new Flu are quarantined together. Into Julia's regimented world step two outsiders -- Doctor Kathleen Lynn, a rumored Rebel on the run from the police, and a young volunteer helper, Bridie Sweeney. In the darkness and intensity of this tiny ward over three days, these women change each other's lives in unexpected ways. They lose patients to this baffling pandemic, but they also shepherd new life into a fearful world. With tireless tenderness and humanity, carers and mothers alike somehow do their impossible work. In *The Pull of the Stars*, Emma Donoghue once again finds the light in the darkness in this new classic of hope and survival against all odds.

***Red at the Bone* by Jacqueline Woodson**

An unexpected teenage pregnancy pulls together two families from different social classes, and exposes the private hopes, disappointments, and longings that can bind or divide us from each other. Moving forward and backward in time, Jacqueline Woodson's taut and powerful new novel uncovers the role that history and community have played in the experiences, decisions, and relationships of these families, and in the life of the new child. As the book opens in 2001, it is the evening of sixteen-year-old Melody's coming of age ceremony in her grandparents' Brooklyn brownstone. Watched lovingly by her relatives and friends, making her entrance to the music of Prince, she wears a special custom-made dress. But the event is not without poignancy. Sixteen years earlier, that very dress was measured and sewn for a different wearer: Melody's mother, for her own ceremony-- a celebration that ultimately never took place. Unfurling the history of Melody's parents and grandparents to show how they all arrived at this moment, Woodson considers not just their ambitions and successes but also the costs, the tolls they've paid for striving to overcome expectations and escape the pull of history. As it explores sexual desire and identity, ambition, gentrification, education, class and status, and the life-altering facts of parenthood, *Red at the Bone* most strikingly looks at the ways in which young people must so often make long-lasting decisions about their lives--even before they have begun to figure out who they are and what they want to be.

***River of Stars* by Vanessa Hua**

Holed up with other mothers-to-be in a secret maternity home in Los Angeles, Scarlett Chen is far from her native China, where she worked in a factory and fell in love with the married owner, Boss Yeung. Now she's carrying his baby. To ensure that his child--his first son--has every advantage, Boss Yeung has shipped Scarlett off to give birth on American soil. As Scarlett awaits the baby's arrival, she spars with her imperious housemates. The only one who fits in even less is Daisy, a spirited, pregnant teenager who is being kept apart from her American boyfriend. Then a new sonogram of Scarlett's baby reveals the unexpected. Panicked, she goes on the run by hijacking a van--only to discover that she has a stowaway: Daisy, who intends to track down the father of her child. The two flee to San Francisco's bustling Chinatown, where Scarlett will join countless immigrants desperately trying to seize their piece of the American dream. What Scarlett doesn't know is that her baby's father is not far behind her. *A River of Stars* is a vivid examination of home and belonging and a moving portrayal of a woman determined to build her own future.

***Rosie Project* by Graeme Simsion**

The art of love is never a science. Meet Don Tillman, a brilliant yet socially challenged professor of genetics, who's decided it's time he found a wife. And so, in the orderly, evidence-based manner with which Don approaches all things, he designs the Wife Project to find his perfect partner: a sixteen-page, scientifically valid survey to filter out the drinkers, the smokers, the late arrivers. Rosie Jarman is all these things. She also is strangely beguiling, fiery, and intelligent. And while Don quickly disqualifies her as a candidate for the Wife Project, as a DNA expert Don is particularly suited to help Rosie on her own quest: identifying her biological father. When an unlikely relationship develops as they collaborate on the Father Project, Don is forced to confront the spontaneous whirlwind that is Rosie--and the realization that, despite your best scientific efforts, you don't find love, it finds you. Arrestingly endearing and entirely unconventional, Graeme

Simsion's distinctive debut will resonate with anyone who has ever tenaciously gone after life or love in the face of great challenges. *The Rosie Project* is a rare find: a book that restores our optimism in the power of human connection.

***Sense of an Ending* by Julian Barnes**

A novel so compelling that it begs to be read in a single sitting, *The Sense of an Ending* has the psychological and emotional depth and sophistication of Henry James at his best, and is a stunning new chapter in Julian Barnes's oeuvre. This intense novel follows Tony Webster, a middle-aged man, as he contends with a past he never thought much about—until his closest childhood friends return with a vengeance: one of them from the grave, another maddeningly present. Tony thought he left this all behind as he built a life for himself, and his career has provided him with a secure retirement and an amicable relationship with his ex-wife and daughter, who now has a family of her own. But when he is presented with a mysterious legacy, he is forced to revise his estimation of his own nature and place in the world.

***Shadow of the Wind* by Carlos Ruiz Zafón**

Barcelona, 1945. A great world city lies shrouded in secrets after the war, and a boy mourning the loss of his mother finds solace in his love for an extraordinary book called *The Shadow of the Wind*, by an author named Julian Carax. When the boy searches for Carax's other books, it begins to dawn on him, to his horror, that someone has been systematically destroying every copy of every book the man has ever written. Soon the boy realizes that *The Shadow of the Wind* is as dangerous to own as it is impossible to forget, for the mystery of its author's identity holds the key to an epic story of murder, madness, and doomed love that someone will go to any lengths to keep secret.

***Shuggie Bain* by Douglas Stuart**

Shuggie Bain is the unforgettable story of young Hugh "Shuggie" Bain, a sweet and lonely boy who spends his 1980s childhood in run-down public housing in Glasgow, Scotland. Thatcher's policies have put husbands and sons out of work, and the city's notorious drug epidemic is waiting in the wings. Shuggie's mother Agnes walks a wayward path: She is Shuggie's guiding light but a burden for him and his siblings. She dreams of a house with its own front door while she flicks through the pages of the Freemans catalogue, ordering a little happiness on credit, anything to brighten up her grey life. Married to a philandering taxi-driver husband, Agnes keeps her pride by looking good--her beehive, make-up, and pearly-white false teeth offer a glamorous image of a Glaswegian Elizabeth Taylor. But under the surface, Agnes finds increasing solace in drink, and she drains away the lion's share of each week's benefits--all the family has to live on--on cans of extra-strong lager hidden in handbags and poured into tea mugs. Agnes's older children find their own ways to get a safe distance from their mother, abandoning Shuggie to care for her as she swings between alcoholic binges and sobriety. Shuggie is meanwhile struggling to somehow become the normal boy he desperately longs to be, but everyone has realized that he is "no right," a boy with a secret that all but him can see. Agnes is supportive of her son, but her addiction has the power to eclipse everyone close to her--even her beloved Shuggie.

***Sign My Name to Freedom: A Memoir of a Pioneering Life* by Betty Reid Soskin (non-fiction)**

In Betty Reid Soskin's 96 years of living, she has been a witness to a grand sweep of American history. When she was born in 1921, the lynching of African Americans was a national epidemic, blackface minstrel shows were the most popular American form of entertainment, white women had only just won the right to vote, and most African Americans in the Deep South could not vote at all. From her great-grandmother, who had been enslaved until her mid-20s, Betty heard stories of slavery and the times of terror and struggle for black folk that followed. In her lifetime, Betty has watched the nation begin to confront its race and gender biases when forced to come together in the World War II era; seen our differences nearly break us apart again in the upheavals of the civil rights and Black Power eras; and, finally, lived long enough to witness both the election of an African American president and the re-emergence of a militant, racist far right. Blending together selections from many of Betty's hundreds of blog entries with interviews, letters, and speeches, *Sign My Name to Freedom* invites you along on that journey, through the words and thoughts of a national treasure who has never stopped looking at herself, the nation, or the world with fresh eyes.

***Sourdough* by Robin Sloan**

Lois Clary is a software engineer at General Dexterity, a San Francisco robotics company with world-changing ambitions. She codes all day and collapses at night, her human contact limited to the two brothers who run the neighborhood hole-in-the-wall from which she orders dinner every evening. Then, disaster! Visa issues. The brothers close up shop, and fast. But they have one last delivery for Lois: their culture, the sourdough starter used to bake their bread. She must keep it alive, they tell her—feed it daily, play it music, and learn to bake with it. Lois is no baker, but she could use a roommate, even if it is a needy colony of microorganisms. Soon, not only is she eating her own homemade bread, she's providing loaves daily to the General Dexterity cafeteria. The company chef urges her to take her product to the farmer's market, and a whole new world opens up. When Lois comes before the jury that decides who sells what at Bay Area markets, she encounters a close-knit club with no appetite for new members. But then, an alternative emerges: a secret market that aims to fuse food and technology. But who are these people, exactly? Leavened by the same infectious intelligence that

made Robin Sloan's *Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Bookstore* such a sensation, while taking on even more satisfying challenges, *Sourdough* marks the triumphant return of a unique and beloved young writer.

***Starless Sea* by Erin Morgenstern**

A timeless love story set in a secret underground world--a place of pirates, painters, lovers, liars, and ships that sail upon a starless sea. Zachary Ezra Rawlins is a graduate student in Vermont when he discovers a mysterious book hidden in the stacks. As he turns the pages, entranced by tales of lovelorn prisoners, key collectors, and nameless acolytes, he reads something strange: a story from his own childhood. Bewildered by this inexplicable book and desperate to make sense of how his own life came to be recorded, Zachary uncovers a series of clues--a bee, a key, and a sword--that lead him to a masquerade party in New York, to a secret club, and through a doorway to an ancient library hidden far below the surface of the earth. What Zachary finds in this curious place is more than just a buried home for books and their guardians--it is a place of lost cities and seas, lovers who pass notes under doors and across time, and of stories whispered by the dead. Zachary learns of those who have sacrificed much to protect this realm, relinquishing their sight and their tongues to preserve this archive, and also of those who are intent on its destruction. Together with Mirabel, a fierce, pink-haired protector of the place, and Dorian, a handsome, barefoot man with shifting alliances, Zachary travels the twisting tunnels, darkened stairwells, crowded ballrooms, and sweetly soaked shores of this magical world, discovering his purpose--in both the mysterious book and in his own life.

***Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mendel**

An audacious, darkly glittering novel set in the eerie days of civilization's collapse, *Station Eleven* tells the spellbinding story of a Hollywood star, his would-be savior, and a nomadic group of actors roaming the scattered outposts of the Great Lakes region, risking everything for art and humanity. Spanning decades, moving back and forth in time, and vividly depicting life before and after the pandemic, this suspenseful, elegiac novel is rife with beauty. A novel of art, memory, and ambition, *Station Eleven* tells a story about the relationships that sustain us, the ephemeral nature of fame, and the beauty of the world as we know it.

***Still Alice* by Lisa Genova (non-fiction)**

Alice Howland, happily married with three grown children and a house on the Cape, is a celebrated Harvard professor at the height of her career when she notices a forgetfulness creeping into her life. As confusion starts to cloud her thinking and her memory begins to fail her, she receives a devastating diagnosis: early onset Alzheimer's disease. Fiercely independent, Alice struggles to maintain her lifestyle and live in the moment, even as her sense of self is stripped away. It turns heartbreaking and inspiring, *Still Alice* captures in remarkable detail what it's like to literally lose your mind.

***Such a Fun Age* by Kiley Reid**

A striking and surprising debut novel from an exhilarating new voice, *Such a Fun Age* is a page-turning and big-hearted story about race and privilege, set around a young black babysitter, her well-intentioned employer, and a surprising connection that threatens to undo them both. Alix Chamberlain is a woman who gets what she wants and has made a living, with her confidence-driven brand, showing other women how to do the same. So she is shocked when her babysitter, Emira Tucker, is confronted while watching the Chamberlains' toddler one night, walking the aisles of their local high-end supermarket. The store's security guard, seeing a young black woman out late with a white child, accuses Emira of kidnapping two-year-old Briar. A small crowd gathers, a bystander films everything, and Emira is furious and humiliated. Alix resolves to make things right. But Emira herself is aimless, broke, and wary of Alix's desire to help. At twenty-five, she is about to lose her health insurance and has no idea what to do with her life. When the video of Emira unearths someone from Alix's past, both women find themselves on a crash course that will upend everything they think they know about themselves, and each other. With empathy and piercing social commentary, *Such a Fun Age* explores the stickiness of transactional relationships, what it means to make someone "family," and the complicated reality of being a grown up. It is a searing debut for our times.

Suspect* by John Lescroart *local author

Carelessly confident that the cops will recognize his innocence when his wife is found murdered, Stuart Gorman tells them everything—and becomes the number-one suspect. He reluctantly hires lawyer Gina Roake. Back in the game after a personal loss of her own, Gina knows all too well that innocence is no guarantee of justice.

***There, There* by Tommy Orange**

There, There is the story of twelve unforgettable characters, Urban Indians living in Oakland, California, who converge and collide on one fateful day. As we learn the reasons that each person is attending the Big Oakland Powwow—some generous, some fearful, some joyful, some violent—momentum builds toward a shocking yet inevitable conclusion that changes everything. Jacquie Red Feather is newly sober and trying to make it back to the family she left behind in shame. Dene Oxendene is pulling his life back together after his uncle's death and has come to work at the powwow to honor his uncle's memory. Opal Viola Victoria Bear Shield has come to watch her nephew Orvil, who has taught himself traditional

Indian dance through YouTube videos and will perform in public for the very first time. There will be glorious communion, and a spectacle of sacred tradition and pageantry. And there will be sacrifice, and heroism, and loss. *There, There* is a wondrous and shattering portrait of an America few of us have ever seen, at the same time as it is fierce, funny, suspenseful, thoroughly modern, and impossible to put down. Here is a voice we have never heard—a voice full of poetry and rage, exploding onto the page with urgency and force. Tommy Orange has written a stunning novel that grapples with a complex and painful history, with an inheritance of beauty and profound spirituality, and with a plague of addiction, abuse, and suicide. This is the book that everyone is talking about right now, and it's destined to be a classic.

***They Called Us Enemy* by George Takei (non-fiction)**

George Takei has captured hearts and minds worldwide with his captivating stage presence and outspoken commitment to equal rights. But long before he braved new frontiers in *Star Trek*, he woke up as a four-year-old boy to find his own birth country at war with his father's -- and their entire family forced from their home into an uncertain future. In 1942, at the order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, every person of Japanese descent on the west coast was rounded up and shipped to one of ten "relocation centers," hundreds or thousands of miles from home, where they would be held for years under armed guard. *They Called Us Enemy* is Takei's firsthand account of those years behind barbed wire, the joys and terrors of growing up under legalized racism, his mother's hard choices, his father's faith in democracy, and the way those experiences planted the seeds for his astonishing future. What is American? Who gets to decide? When the world is against you, what can one person do? To answer these questions, George Takei joins co-writers Justin Eisinger & Steven Scott and artist Harmony Becker for the journey of a lifetime.

***Thinking in Pictures: And Other Reports from My Life with Autism* by Temple Grandin (non-fiction)**

Temple Grandin, Ph.D., is a gifted animal scientist who has designed one third of all the livestock-handling facilities in the United States. She also lectures widely on autism because she is autistic, a woman who thinks, feels, and experiences the world in ways that are incomprehensible to the rest of us. In this unprecedented book, Grandin writes from the dual perspectives of a scientist and an autistic person. She tells us how she managed to breach the boundaries of autism to function in the outside world. What emerges is the document of an extraordinary human being, one who gracefully bridges the gulf between her condition and our own while shedding light on our common identity.

***Thursday Murder Club* by Richard Osman**

In a peaceful retirement village, four unlikely friends meet weekly in the Jigsaw Room to discuss unsolved crimes; together they call themselves The Thursday Murder Club. There's Red Ron, the infamous former socialist firebrand, still causing trouble; gentle Joyce, widowed, pining for another resident, but surely not as innocent as she seems; Ibrahim, a former therapist who understands the darker side of human nature; and Elizabeth? Well, no one is quite sure who she really is, but she's definitely not a woman to underestimate. When a local developer is found dead, the Thursday Murder Club suddenly find themselves in the middle of their first live case. The friends might be septuagenarians, but they are cleverer than most. Can our unorthodox but brilliant gang catch the killer before it's too late?

***Tiger's Wife* by Tea Obreht**

In a Balkan country mending from war, Natalia, a young doctor, is compelled to unravel the mysterious circumstances surrounding her beloved grandfather's recent death. Searching for clues, she turns to his worn copy of *The Jungle Book* and the stories he told her of his encounters over the years with "the deathless man." But most extraordinary of all is the story her grandfather never told her—the legend of the tiger's wife.

***Transcription* by Kate Atkinson**

A dramatic story of WWII espionage, betrayal, and loyalty. In 1940, eighteen-year old Juliet Armstrong is reluctantly recruited into the world of espionage. Sent to an obscure department of MI5 tasked with monitoring the comings and goings of British Fascist sympathizers, she discovers the work to be by turns both tedious and terrifying. But after the war has ended, she presumes the events of those years have been relegated to the past forever. Ten years later, now a radio producer at the BBC, Juliet is unexpectedly confronted by figures from her past. A different war is being fought now, on a different battleground, but Juliet finds herself once more under threat. A bill of reckoning is due, and she finally begins to realize that there is no action without consequence. *Transcription* is a work of rare depth and texture, a bravura modern novel of extraordinary power, wit and empathy. It is a triumphant work of fiction from one of the best writers of our time.

***Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* by Rachel Joyce**

Meet Harold Fry, recently retired. He lives in a small English village with his wife, Maureen, who seems irritated by almost everything he does. Little differentiates one day from the next. Then one morning a letter arrives, addressed to Harold in a shaky scrawl, from a woman he hasn't heard from in twenty years. Queenie Hennessy is in hospice and is writing to say goodbye. But before Harold mails off a quick reply, a chance encounter convinces him that he absolutely must deliver his message to Queenie in person. In his yachting shoes and light coat, Harold Fry embarks on an urgent quest. Determined

to walk six hundred miles to the hospice, Harold believes that as long as he walks, Queenie will live. A novel of charm, humor, and profound insight into the thoughts and feelings we all bury deep within our hearts.

***We Begin at the End* by Chris Whitaker**

Thirty years ago, a teenage Vincent King was sent to prison. But now, he's served his sentence and is returning to his hometown. The hometown where his childhood best friend, Walk, is now the chief of police. The town where his childhood sweetheart, Star Radley, still lives. The same Star Radley whose sister he killed. Duchess, Star's daughter, is a self-proclaimed outlaw. She needs to be. Who else is going to take care of her and her five-year-old brother? Star is still dazzling, still beautiful, but she hasn't shined as bright since Vincent was sent away. Too often it's Duchess and Walk who are the ones taking care of her. But when Duchess exacts her own vigilante revenge, she will set into motion a series of events that threatens not only her own family, but everyone she grows close to.

***We Should All Be Feminists* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (non-fiction)**

The highly acclaimed, provocative *New York Times* bestseller—a personal, eloquently-argued essay, adapted from the much-admired TEDx talk of the same name—from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, award-winning author of *Americanah*. Here she offers readers a unique definition of feminism for the twenty-first century, one rooted in inclusion and awareness. Drawing extensively on her own experiences and her deep understanding of the often masked realities of sexual politics, here is one remarkable author's exploration of what it means to be a woman now—and an of-the-moment rallying cry for why we should all be feminists.

***Weight of Ink* by Rachel Kadish**

Set in London of the 1660s and of the early twenty-first century, *The Weight of Ink* is the interwoven tale of two women of remarkable intellect: Ester Velasquez, an emigrant from Amsterdam who is permitted to scribe for a blind rabbi, just before the plague hits the city; and Helen Watt, an ailing historian with a love of Jewish history. As the novel opens, Helen has been summoned by a former student to view a cache of seventeenth-century Jewish documents newly discovered in his home during a renovation. Enlisting the help of Aaron Levy, an American graduate student as impatient as he is charming, and in a race with another fast-moving team of historians, Helen embarks on one last project: to determine the identity of the documents' scribe, the elusive "Aleph." Electrifying and ambitious, sweeping in scope and intimate in tone, *The Weight of Ink* is a sophisticated work of historical fiction about women separated by centuries, and the choices and sacrifices they must make in order to reconcile the life of the heart and mind.

***Weird Sisters* by Eleanor Brown**

Three sisters have returned to their childhood home, reuniting the eccentric Andreas family. Here, books are a passion (*there is no problem a library card can't solve*) and TV is something other people watch. Their father—a professor of Shakespeare who speaks almost exclusively in verse—named them after the Bard's heroines. It's a lot to live up to. The sisters have a hard time communicating with their parents and their lovers, but especially with one another. What can the shy homebody eldest sister, the fast-living middle child, and the bohemian youngest sibling have in common? Only that none has found life to be what was expected; and now, faced with their parents' frailty and their own personal disappointments, not even a book can solve what ails them...

***Where'd You Go, Bernadette* by Maria Semple**

Bernadette Fox is notorious. To her Microsoft-guru husband, she's a fearlessly opinionated partner; to fellow private-school mothers in Seattle, she's a disgrace; to design mavens, she's a revolutionary architect, and to 15-year-old Bee, she is a best friend and, simply, Mom. Then Bernadette disappears. It began when Bee aced her report card and claimed her promised reward: a family trip to Antarctica. But Bernadette's intensifying allergy to Seattle—and people in general—has made her so agoraphobic that a virtual assistant in India now runs her most basic errands. A trip to the end of the earth is problematic. To find her mother, Bee compiles email messages, official documents, secret correspondence—creating a compulsively readable and touching novel about misplaced genius and a mother and daughter's role in an absurd world.

***Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail* by Cheryl Strayed (non-fiction)**

A powerful, blazingly honest memoir: the story of an eleven-hundred-mile solo hike that broke down a young woman reeling from catastrophe and built her back up again. At twenty-two, Cheryl Strayed thought she had lost everything. In the wake of her mother's death, her family scattered and her own marriage was soon destroyed. Four years later, with nothing more to lose, she made the most impulsive decision of her life: to hike the Pacific Crest Trail from the Mojave Desert through California and Oregon to Washington State and to do it alone. She had no experience as a long-distance hiker, and the trail was little more than an idea, vague and outlandish and full of promise. But it was a promise of piecing back together a life that had come undone. Strayed faces down rattlesnakes and black bears, intense heat and record snowfalls, and both the beauty and loneliness of the trail. Told with great suspense and style, sparkling with warmth and

humor, *Wild* vividly captures the terrors and pleasures of one young woman forging ahead against all odds on a journey that maddened, strengthened, and ultimately healed her.

***Wright Brothers* by David McCullough (non-fiction)**

The dramatic story-behind-the-story about the courageous brothers who taught the world how to fly—Wilbur and Orville Wright. On a winter day in 1903, in the Outer Banks of North Carolina, two brothers—bicycle mechanics from Dayton, Ohio—changed history. But it would take the world some time to believe that the age of flight had begun, with the first powered machine carrying a pilot. McCullough draws on the extensive Wright family papers to profile not only the brothers but their sister, Katharine, without whom things might well have gone differently.

***The Yellow House: A Memoir* by Sarah M. Broom (non-fiction)**

This ambitious, haunting memoir of home, movement, displacement, loss, and persistence allows Broom to offer an intimate, closely observed history of her family over nearly a hundred years. At its center is the author's mother, Ivory Mae Broom, who at 19, already a widow and mother of three, purchased the titular house in 1961 in industrial, impoverished New Orleans East, a world away from the French Quarter. Ivory Mae would raise 12 children there, of whom Broom is the youngest. In 2005, Hurricane Katrina rendered the Yellow House uninhabitable, magnified the racial inequities woven into New Orleans, and further scattered the already dispersed Broom family. This scattering included for the author a sojourn in Burundi and a brief stint back in New Orleans as a speechwriter for beleaguered mayor Ray Nagan; neither fulfilling, but both germane to what had become a quest for the essence of relationship and place. Though largely a linear narrative, this debut memoir feels collage-like--impressionistic, cumulative, multisensory--imbued with ambivalence about leaving and wonder at the pull of home.

***Yiddish Policemen's Union* by Michael Chabon**

For sixty years, Jewish refugees and their descendants have prospered in the Federal District of Sitka, a "temporary" safe haven created in the wake of the Holocaust and the shocking 1948 collapse of the fledgling state of Israel. The Jews of the Sitka District have created their own little world in the Alaskan panhandle, a vibrant and complex frontier city that moves to the music of Yiddish. But now the District is set to revert to Alaskan control, and their dream is coming to an end. Homicide detective Meyer Landsman of the District Police has enough problems without worrying about the upcoming Reversion. His life is a shambles, his marriage a wreck, his career a disaster. And in the cheap hotel where Landsman has washed up, someone has just committed a murder—right under his nose. When he begins to investigate the killing of his neighbor, a former chess prodigy, word comes down from on high that the case is to be dropped immediately, and Landsman finds himself contending with all the powerful forces of faith, obsession, evil, and salvation that are his heritage. At once a gripping whodunit, a love story, and an exploration of the mysteries of exile and redemption.

Juvenile and Young Adult Titles

***Awkward* by Svetlana Chmakova**

A sweet tale about two kids navigating the precarious and awkward waters of adolescence and middle school. Penelope--Peppi--Torres, a shy new transfer student, wants nothing more than to fit in and find a place among her fellow artistically inclined souls. The last thing she wants is to stand out. So when she bumps--literally--into quiet, geeky, friendly but friendless Jamie Thompson, and is teased as the "Nerder's Girlfriend," Peppi's first embarrassed instinct is to push him away and run. Though she later feels guilty and wants desperately to apologize for the incident, Peppi always ends up chickening out. She has no reason to speak to him, anyway, until she ends up bumping--figuratively and continually--into Jamie again! Will these two opposites ever see eye-to-eye, let alone become friends?

***The Book Thief* by Marcus Zusak**

It's just a small story really, about, among other things: a girl, some words, an accordionist, some fanatical Germans, a Jewish fist-fighter, and quite a lot of thievery... Set during World War II in Germany, Markus Zusak's groundbreaking new novel is the story of Liesel Meminger, a foster girl living outside of Munich. Liesel scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist—books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement before he is marched to Dachau. This is an unforgettable story about the ability of books to feed the soul.

***Inside Out and Back Again* by Thanhha Lai**

Inside Out and Back Again is a *New York Times* bestseller, a Newbery Honor Book, and a winner of the National Book Award. Inspired by the author's childhood experience of fleeing Vietnam after the Fall of Saigon and immigrating to Alabama, this coming-of-age debut novel told in verse has been celebrated for its touching child's-eye view of family and immigration. Hà has only ever known Saigon: the thrills of its markets, the joy of its traditions, and the warmth of her friends close by. But now the Vietnam War has reached her home. Hà and her family are forced to flee as Saigon falls, and they board a ship headed toward hope—toward America. This moving story of one girl's year of change, dreams, grief, and healing received four starred reviews, including one from *Kirkus*, which proclaimed it "enlightening, poignant, and unexpectedly funny."

***Wonder* by R.J. Palacio**

The extraordinary bestseller that has captivated over one million readers and inspired a movement to "choose kind." August Pullman was born with a facial difference that, up until now, has prevented him from going to a mainstream school. Starting 5th grade at Beecher Prep, he wants nothing more than to be treated as an ordinary kid—but his new classmates can't get past Auggie's extraordinary face. *Wonder* begins from Auggie's point of view but soon switches to include his classmates, his sister, her boyfriend, and others. These perspectives converge in a portrait of one community's struggle with empathy, compassion, and acceptance. In a world where bullying among young people is an epidemic, this is a refreshing new narrative full of heart and hope. R.J. Palacio has called her debut novel "a meditation on kindness"—indeed, every reader will come away with a greater appreciation for the simple courage of friendship. Auggie is a hero to root for, a diamond in the rough who proves that you can't blend in when you were born to stand out.