

# Saint Ann's School

## Suggested Summer Reading List

### for high school and faculty, 2022



Many titles on this list are available on the digital library as ebook, audiobook, or both. 📖 means ebook 🎧 means audiobook 📖 🎧 means both. See the end of this list for more instructions.

Adiche, Chimamanda Ngozi. **Americanah**. We are in a hair salon in Princeton, a warehouse in London, a café/bookstore in Lagos, we are in the heady days of blogging. We are rooted in history—stories of the African diaspora, narrative(s) of immigration, the context of the Obama presidency. In this beautiful 500+ pages, the themes and lyricism of Adiche's shorter works are here in full. A novel of scope and heart. (Laura Barnett) 📖 🎧

Ahmed, Dilruba. **Bring Now the Angels**. Elegant poems that carefully balance the attachment to a “ghost homeland” with a clear-eyed assessment of life in America that is both wise and wry, affectionate, and questioning. (Marty Skoble) 📖

Almontaser, Threa. **The Wild Fox of Yemen**. A poetic window into the struggle to hold two identities at once, to embrace both the burka and self exposure. Quite a feat! (Marty Skoble) 📖

Atkinson, Kate. **Transcription**. If you haven't read Kate Atkinson, this summer is a great time to start. She is a brilliant, funny, English author. *Transcription* is the story of an eighteen-year-old girl who is put in charge of monitoring the actions of British Fascist sympathizers during WWII. Ten years later we find her working for the BBC—or is that really what she is doing? There are many delicious twists and turns in the story. (Richard Mann) 📖

Austen, Jane. **Northanger Abbey**. An unexceptional young woman finds herself in a truly exceptional situation in this gothic sendup that asks the question—where is the line between reality and fantasy? If you have always wanted to try out a Jane Austen novel but felt intimidated by the lengthy tomes facing you on the shelf, *Northanger Abbey* is the book for you! (Chloe Smith) 📖 🎧

Austen, Jane. **Pride and Prejudice**. Elizabeth Bennett is sassy, smart, and emotionally sharp; I loved this story of her love and courage. She and her elder sister are so alert, and they don't put up with any nonsense from snotty Darcy nor his awful aunt. Is there room for misunderstandings? Of course! An engrossing, moving, and fascinating book. (Mike Roam) 📖 🎧

Barnes, Julian. ***The Sense of an Ending***. A slim book, subtly plotted, the first I have read by this prolific writer. A quiet book about friendship, parenthood, responsibility, and shirking of responsibility. A lucid and reckoning book with characters who are sometimes not empathetic. The ending shocks. (Laura Barnett)  

Barry, Kevin. ***Night Boat to Tangier***. Barry translates the hard-boiled lingo of the American mobster novel into Irish, and the result, especially in the first half, is moody, funny, and very entertaining. In the second half, the Celtic fondness for alcohol, opiates, banshees, and curses predominates. (Ben Rutter)  

Bedford, Simi. ***Yoruba Girl Dancing***. Slim and fascinating autobiographical novel about a young Nigerian girl who moves to England for boarding school in the 1950s. (Michael Donohue)

Belorusetz, Yevgenia. ***Modern Animal*** (Translated by Bela Shayevich.) Imagine a book the size of a deck of cards. And in this book, funny, grand, and grave stories from the points-of-view of animals in modern Ukraine. This small dream-like tome felt like contemporary folk literature, simple tales with profound reverberations. Read, too, Belorusetz' wartime diary, which can be found online and was part of The Venice Biennale. *Modern Animal* is one of seven "island" books published by Isolarii, co-founded by India Ennega '12. Subscribe! You will get a world-opening tiny book in the mail every two months (past authors include Art Spiegelman, Robert Coover, Can Xue, Édouard Glissant & Hans Ulrich Obrist). From Isolarrii: "We take up this genre-bending format to navigate the turbulence of our times. Each book is a ready-to-hand island. Together, they are a growing archipelago. Islands from which to view the world anew." (Laura Barnett)

Boyle, T.C. ***The Tortilla Curtain***. The story unfolds in Topanga Canyon, California and depicts the class and racial tensions between an upper middle class white community and the undocumented Mexican immigrants. You care about the characters on both sides and become completely swept up in the ensuing tragedy. Boyle tells the story with humor and insight. (Richard Mann) 

Braithwaite, Oyinkan. ***My Sister, the Serial Killer***. *My Sister, the Serial Killer* is fun and frustrating, as many sibling relationships are. Korede and Ayoola are very different; one is responsible and overlooked, the other beautiful and impulsive. It is almost as if they live in separate worlds, until Ayoola begins to show an interest in one of Korede's coworkers. I found no heroes or villains in this book, in fact everything felt murkier than the title would suggest. (Leda Fisher)  

Buford, Bill. ***Dirt***. You don't have to be into food and travel to enjoy this book (though it helps). A wonderfully descriptive and funny piece of nonfiction about an NYC family of four that up and moves to Lyon, France, so the author can try and work the line of a real French restaurant to better understand the art and history of French cuisine. Hard to put down from the outset. (Peter Zerneck)  

Burns, Anna. ***Milkman***. There was a lot of buzz about this novel when it came out in 2018. You may have heard that it's "difficult." I recommend giving it a look — you'll know within twenty pages if it's your cup of tea. I loved it. Set in Belfast in the 1970s, it vividly recreates that world in all its violence and absurd, unacknowledged terrors. (Michael Donohue)  

Capa, Robert. ***Slightly Out of Focus***. This memoir from renowned photojournalist Robert Capa, famous for his coverage of World War II, delivers the insights and wry sensibilities of a global adventurer with great panache. Capa is irresistibly candid in his tales of adventure and survival, showcasing a infectious brand of storytelling that will leave you wishing he'd survived long enough to become the celebrated author he seemed poised to become. (Jamie Rutherford)  

Chambers, Becky. ***A Psalm for the Wild-Built***. (Monk & Robot, bk1). "It is difficult for anyone raised in the human infrastructure to truly internalize that your view of the world is backward," realizes Dex as pavement turns to "chaotic jumble." Dex is that human, a tea-brewing monk, traveling with Mosschap, a charming wild-built robot, in search of the

elusive cricket in this solarpunk speculative novella in which “Remnants” are powerful frissons of memory that further our understanding of the world and our place in it, if we are receptive to them. Lush descriptions permeate their forward motion through the still-abundant flora and fauna. Robots have names, not letters and numbers: Morning Fog, Small Quail Nest. It’s an enchanting tale, a Crayola-crayon box, which touches on notions of spiritual friendship and environmental responsibility. (Cathy Fuerst) 

Chen, Chen. ***When I Grow Up I Want to Be a List of Further Possibilities***. Wonderful, often slyly playful poems about coming to terms with one’s self despite the hopes of the parents who gave you the freedom to do just that. (Marty Skoble) 

Cleary, Beverly. ***Ramona the Pest***. Ramona is tackling kindergarten with the energy of a hurricane. "Hurricane" was my grandmother's nickname on account of her driving, which was wild even though she was so short she had to peer out from under the top of the steering wheel. Maybe Ramona grew up to be Grandma Roam. Ramona is so alive, and every day matters, and she's trying very hard: it's an instant time warp back to my own long ago kindergarten days, when every day had learning and hopes of joy from teachers, parents, and classmates. (Mike Roam)  

Corthron, Kia. ***The Castle Cross the Magnet Carter***. This long (800 pages) and sweeping tale follows two sets of brothers as they come of age and become men, living through the changes that happen in American society over the course of 50 years. I loved the way Corthron uses dialect and dialogue to depict the brothers' ages and geographical location and I appreciated how close I felt to each character. One of my favorite books! (Veronica Rivera) 

Cusk, Rachel. ***The Country Life***. I loved the Outline trilogy, but I was thrilled to discover this earlier novel, which is less spare and distilled, and more traditional in a sense. The prose is terrific (the sentences, I mean!), the storytelling hilarious. A romp! (Liz Fodaski)  

de Gramont, Nina. ***The Christie Affair***. In 1926 all of Britain searched for Agatha Christie after her car was found abandoned on the side of the road. After eleven days she reappeared claiming amnesia—she gave no further explanation for her disappearance. Nina de Gramont brilliantly imagines what might have happened during those days. The Christie Affair has murder, intrigue, and a tidy conclusion (just like an Agatha Christie mystery)—plus a hefty dose of romance and heartbreak. This was totally fun to read. (Ragan O’Malley) 

Egan, Jennifer. ***The Candy House***. A “sibling” novel to *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, Egan’s 2011 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, this book is a collection of narratives in various styles from people who are connected to each other. It is similarly, and broadly speaking, a book about people, life, memory, and the technology that we coexist with. No Powerpoint presentations this time around, but there is the “Collective Consciousness” with “gray grabs” of “people’s anonymous memories.” There are “Counters” that track us and “Eluders” who try to avoid them. The book also references the recent pandemic. As in *Goon Squad*, life continues on regardless of how time is spent and what befalls the characters. There are so many layers and connections in the book. The characters, symbolism, and chapters will resonate differently for different people, but Egan’s sharp observations and brilliant prose will be enjoyed by all. (Anna Verdi) 

El-Mohtar, Amar and Max Gladstone. ***This Is How You Lose the Time War***. What a weird book. Told mostly in letters between two time agents on opposite sides of an all-encompassing war, this book was confusing and strange and beautifully written. To be honest, I'm not sure how I feel about this book other than to say I've read very little like it and am glad that I found it. (Leda Fisher) 

Ferrante, Elena. ***The Days of Abandonment***. Visceral anguish described minute by minute. The loss of the self and the descent into madness described with acute intensity. Maybe too much but some might like it. (Vivian Swain) 

Franzen, Jonathan. **Crossroads**. I ended up on some 70s coming of age jag this winter and the warm glow was just the thing to get through the chilly season. *Crossroads*, a sprawling, linked, family drama, was my entry point to the decade. It centers around the minister of an evangelical parish straddling the worlds of suburban fuddy duddies, post-hippie new age Christians, his family, their friends, and a changing America. As with all of Franzen's work, I found it consuming and compelling but enjoyable enough to read at bedtime without falling asleep after 3 pages. (Eli Forsythe) 

Franzen, Jonathan. **Crossroads**. Description: if you are a fan or even just a past reader of Franzen, *Crossroads* will definitely give you what you need/would expect: complex and rich characters, compelling storylines, subtle shifts in plot, a full submersion into believable worlds in the 1920s, 1930s and early 1970s, a wide range of emotions. What the book won't give you is something mind-blowingly original from Franzen. But that's okay, because what he does with words and how he builds the characters and how he tells the tale is marvelous. Set mainly in the suburbs of Chicago during the Vietnam War Era, and centered on a weak-willed middle-aged pastor, his until recently submissive wife with a secret past, and their children, the novel flits backward and forward in time to rural Ohio, LA, NYC, SF, and most affectingly, to New Mexico. My favorite aspect of Franzen's writing is his ability to make long, complex and vocabulary dense sentences somehow extremely readable. It is a compelling read! (Tom Hill) 

Fry, Hannah. **Hello World: Being Human in the World of Algorithms**. Hannah Fry discusses the algorithms that influence our lives. At their core, algorithms are sequences of math operations translated into computer code. Given data from the real world and a defined objective, an algorithm can make decisions about the route we should take to school or assess the flight risk of a person accused of a crime. In the book, Fry is helping the reader examine our relationship with algorithms and understand the compromise we're making when we put our trust in them. In her own words: The future doesn't just happen. We create it. (Kalim Khogiani-Nguyen) 

Gaiman, Neil. **Make Good Art**. Gaiman's 2012 graduation speech from Pennsylvania's University of The Arts. It's graduation season. Read it! Believe it! Some quotes: 1. *The one thing that you have that nobody has is you, your voice, your mind, your story, your vision.* 2. *I hope you make mistakes. If you make mistakes, it means you are out there doing something.* 3. *Sometimes life is hard. Things go wrong in life and in love and in business and in friendship and in health and in all the other ways that life can go wrong. And when things get tough, this is what you should do. Make good art...Do what only you can do best: Make good art. Make it on the bad days. Make it on the good days too.* (Laura Barnett) 

Galchen, Rivka. **Everyone Knows Your Mother is a Witch**. Spun out of a true historical episode, this novel is about the mother of astronomer/mathematician Johannes Kepler, who was, in fact, put on trial for being a witch. The book imagines an unhappy town full of unhappy people living in unhappy times, which makes the book sound less funny than it is. But it is sad! Mama Kepler isn't necessarily a nice person, but that doesn't justify cruelty, which is always worth being reminded of. (Michael Pershan) 

Glück, Louise. **Winter Recipes from the Collective**. "The part of life/ devoted to contemplation/ was at odds with the part/ committed to action." Precisely! Read Louise Glück! (Liz Fodaski) 

Gordon, Robert. **It Came From Memphis**. A Memphis native dives deep into the melodic, racial, and utter funkiness of his town. (Liam Flaherty) 

Graeber, David and David Wengrow. **The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity**. First off, this is a long book (with an eye-popping 63 page-long bibliography), and can be slightly repetitive. But it is undeniably one of the most interesting reads (if you are into heavily researched nonfiction anthropological/archaeological tomes) I have embarked on in a while. Graeber and Wengrow prop up and knock down so many different taken-for-granted beliefs in the history/development of humankind's practices that it is hard to keep track. But, oh boy, do they keep track! Whether or

not your interpretation/understanding lines up with theirs, it is fun to work through their logic with them, as they argue that our species' tendency for social and political flexibility of the past has calcified in modern times. Expect major dips into Hobbes and Rousseau, the agricultural revolution, and various ways humans have experimented with social organization. Some of the targets of their new interpretations of archaeological data are folks you might have read: Jared Diamond, Steven Pinker, Yuval Noah Harari. And although I am not quite through with the book, and have taken 2 breaks from it to "reset", I wholeheartedly recommend it. Co-author David Graeber in particular was a truly interesting person, from his early work in economic anthropology to his role in the Occupy movement. (Tom Hill) 

Haig, Matt. ***The Midnight Library***. This page-turner is heavy on narrative and plot. I felt that I had made a discovery - only to discover that it has been a number one hardcover seller for over a year! A teaser: "*Between life and death there is a library, and within that library, the shelves go on forever. Every book provides a chance to try another life you could have lived.*" (Laura Barnett)  

Hannah, Kristin. ***The Great Alone***. By the author of *The Nightingale*, this page turner really tore at my heart. A family moves to the wilderness of Alaska and finds they have the courage and strength to survive but surviving their own human nature and frailty is quite another struggle. Kristin Hannah always gets to the center of human behavior. (Mary Lou Gower) 

Hannah, Kristin. ***Winter Garden***. This wonderful story made me think of my own mother, her struggles during the depression, and the marks it left on her life. As you read this book, think about your own relatives and don't be too quick to judge. Everyone has a story! Ask them what their story is. This was a GREAT read! (Mary Lou Gower) 

Hagood, Caroline. ***Ghosts of America: A Great American Novel***. Adjusting the male gaze in literature and history is no easy task; this playful story is a powerful beginning of that process, channeling authentic voices with intelligence and wit. Caroline is one of ours. (Marty Skoble)

Hamid, Mohsin. ***Exit West***. The lovers here are strangers to themselves and to the many lands that become their home in the course of this novel. A remarkable fusion of harsh political reality and magical realism, it is both dystopian and utopian. It works. (Marty Skoble)  

Harjo, Joy. ***Living Nations, Living Words: An Anthology of First Peoples Poetry***. Descendants of the peoples whose land we all live on (stolen) bless us with poems that range from fury to joy, a kind of reclamation. Work as vital and remarkably various as their authors. (Marty Skoble) 

Hawke, Ethan. ***A Bright Ray of Darkness***. An actor's personal life is in shambles while he plays a major role on Broadway. His self-destructive impulses make his journey to self-awareness that much harder. Wonderful insightful writing and an exciting glimpse of what goes on beyond the illusion of performance. (Marty Skoble)  

Hayes, Terrance. ***To Float in the Space Between: A Life and Work in Conversation with the Life and Work of Etheridge Knight***. Neither biography nor memoir; more than either or both. Two giants of modern American poetry and their quest for identity. (Marty Skoble)

Hendriks, Jenni and Ted Caplan. ***Unpregnant***. When seventeen-year-old Veronica realizes that she is pregnant, she enlists her ex-best friend, Bailey, to drive 900 miles with her to New Mexico—the nearest place to legally get an abortion. (In Missouri where she lives you must be 18 without parental consent). Things don't go exactly as planned! Funny, heartfelt, and incredibly timely. This is a young adult novel. (Ragan O'Malley)  

Heti, Sheila. **Pure Colour**. Mira realizes her world no longer fits any definition or expectation of what she thought she knew, and so she becomes leaf. Her father's death has propelled her into this spiritual conundrum: Are we Fish? Bear? Bird? Heti's voice, channeled through Mira's, is painted in humorous and wily brushstrokes striated with sorrow and love, all the colours of creation. (Cathy Fuerst)  

Hong, Cathy Park. **Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning**. Poet and essayist Cathy Park Hong blends memoir, cultural criticism, and history to expose the truth of racialized consciousness in America. These "minor feelings" are actually quite "major." (Yejing Gu)  

Hong, Cathy Park. **Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning**. The feelings were not so minor!, actually her observations are spot on, and her narrative gripping! (Felicia Kang)  

Ishiguro, Kazuo. **Klara and the Sun**. How does an AF (Artificial Friend) arrive at the very human feelings of hope and love? Could it possibly inhabit the body of a human and be just like that person? This is a moving account of a robot's learning. (Vivian Swain)  

Ishiguro, Kazuo. **Klara and the Sun**. Ishiguro is a genius. Yet again he manages to tell the story from such a unique point of view, this time in a very believable near-future setting. This will definitely be made into a movie. (Rick Shatz)  

Ishiguro, Kazuo. **Klara and the Sun**. Now out in paperback, this is a must-read, like any new Ishiguro novel. Our main character is an extremely well-made robot designed to serve as a child's friend. But this isn't a corny Steven Spielberg movie, it's in the capable hands of the author of *Never Let Me Go*. (Michael Donohue)  

Jordan, June. **The Essential June Jordan**. Prose:Poetry::James Baldwin:June Jordan. Her many voices, many moods, many subjects all illuminated with incandescent skill and unquenchable passion. An absolute MUST read. (Marty Skoble) 

Jordan, Pat. **A False Spring**. This is a cult classic originally published in 1975. Pat Jordan, who was a pretty big-time Sports Illustrated writer, writes about his three years as a minor-league pitching prospect. It might be the best memoir I've ever read. It's sort of about baseball, but really, it's about American small-town life in the late 1950s, in places like Davenport, Iowa and McCook, Nebraska. And it's a story about that great American theme: failure. (Michael Donohue) 

Kasischke, Laura. **Lightning Falls In Love**. Hauntingly beautiful poems exploring love and pain, devotion and trauma in marvelous lines. (Marty Skoble) 

Kimmerer, Robin Wall. **Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants**. The author weaves together knowledge from thousands of years of indigenous study with modern themes of sustainability. Everyone should read the chapter called Allegiance to Gratitude, if nothing else. (G. Giraldo)  

Kincaid, Jamaica. **My Brother**. When her brother dies of AIDS, Kincaid returns to Antigua where she tries to get her mind and arms around not just her brother's life and history but her family's and her own. (Melissa Kantor) 

Kobabe, Maia. **Gender Queer**. *Gender Queer* is an autobiographical graphic novel that tells the story of the author's lifetime experience with gender. The book—which was one of the most banned this year—offers a powerful perspective that is brought to life with beautiful illustrations. (Ellen Friedrichs)

Kunzru, Hari. **Red Pill**. When the winner of a prestigious writing fellowship heads to Germany, he's unable to get any work done and grows increasingly convinced he's seeing something evil and alt-right in the popular cop show Blue Pill. Never has the expression "Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they're not out to get you" rung truer. (Melissa Kantor)  

Labatut, Benjamin. ***When We Cease to Understand the World***. (Translated by Adrian Nathan West.) There's a cliché in fiction about mathematicians and scientists that I don't like: the ambitious scientist who is driven to madness by the search for ultimate truth. I just don't think that usually happens! Labatut's book swerves close to this trope, but I think he's exploring a more specific question: What's the deal with science and destruction in the 20th century? The chapters present fictionalized accounts of real scientific discoveries -- of general relativity, quantum mechanics, the wave equation—and the book is philosophical and engaging. (Michael Pershan)  

Labatut, Benjamin. ***When We Cease to Understand the World***. It's hard to describe this text, so I'll simply say it's part philosophical treatise, a bit of biography, a healthy dollop of fact and a fair amount of fiction. Examining the lives of Fritz Haber, Werner Heisenberg and Erwin Schrodinger (among others), this slim volume palpates scientific discoveries and mathematical proofs and watches what happens as they take individuals and humankind to their logical conclusion. (Melissa Kantor)  

Labatut, Benjamin. ***Un Verdor Terrible (When We Cease to Understand the World)*** A fascinating book that intertwines the fictional life of famous physicists such as Schrodinger, and the stories of how they arrived at their conclusions. If your knowledge of these matters is as limited as mine, this is the book for you, and you will quickly discover its note of caution. (Vivian Swain) 

Lawrence, Tim. ***Hold on to Your Dreams: Arthur Russell and the Downtown Music Scene 1973 - 1992***. The last (or not? Please!) of Lawrence's masterful charting of NYC's unconquerable and ever mutating music scene, when downtown met uptown and a lot of other places, and it all got wonderfully weird. (Liam Flaherty)

le Carré, John. ***Silverview***. This was the novel left behind when le Carre died in 2020. It's a modest, brief book, and it should definitely not be your first le Carre. But for those who like the major novels, I highly recommend it. (Michael Donohue)  

Le Tellier, Hervé. ***The Anomaly***. (Translated by Adriana Hunter.) What is an anomaly? This very entertaining novel that is nothing like I've ever read before (maybe because I'm not familiar with thrillers), makes us question our existence. Are we who we think we are? Are we part of an experiment? The Air France flight that leads to these questions lands in New Jersey instead of JFK. Find out why! (Vivian Swain)  

Lethem, Jonathan. ***The Fortress of Solitude***. *The Fortress of Solitude* is Jonathan Lethem's semi-autobiographical tale of two young friends, Dylan Ebdus and Mingus Rude, coming of age in Brooklyn starting in the 1970's. Following its protagonists on dramatically different paths in life, the storyline is punctuated with observations on race, gentrification, and maturation—with a surprising yet effective touch of magical realism. (Jamie Rutherford)  

Lispector, Clarice. ***The Stream of Life***. I thought it would be fitting to recommend this book by Clarice Lispector as she was a brilliant, Ukrainian born writer whose voice speaks to so many readers all over the world. In this beautiful, lyrical novel, the narrator describes her life as an artist in language accessible to anyone who has experienced both struggle and exaltation in the process of self discovery. (Jenny Marshall)

Mandel, Emily St. John. ***Sea of Tranquility***. I loved this novel which flits through hundreds of years of history and future like it's easy. This book is about so much: the passage of time, life on earth and beyond, what it means to be human. And it does all that without being too dense or heavy-handed. I couldn't put it down. (Elena Sheppard)  

Mandel, Emily St. John. ***Sea of Tranquility***. A magical story connecting people in different eras. It felt thematically deep and stylistically light, and always fascinating! (Mike Roam)  

Maraniss, Andrew. ***Singled Out: The True Story of Glenn Burke***. Burke is one of baseball's most fascinating figures. He was the inventor of the high-five—yes, he made up the high-five—during his days with the Dodgers in the late 1970s. He was also the only semi-openly gay player in the game—semi, in that everyone on the Dodgers knew it, but no one in the newspapers did. The Dodgers front office couldn't trade him away fast enough, and he had a troubled life after baseball. Maraniss's book tells the story well. (Michael Donohue)  

McBride, Eimear. ***The Lesser Bohemians***. An impossibly intimate novel about love written in McBride's signature experimental, fragmented syntax. Through the narrator's sprawling and fractured stream of consciousness experience a love affair full to the brim of shocking vulnerability. (Evan Liu)  

McBride, James. ***The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother***. McBride, author of *Deacon King Kong* (also fantastic) wrote this memoir about growing up as number eight of twelve children with a white mother, a Black minister for a father and, later, a Black stepfather. Nothing short of amazing.  

McCullough, David. ***The Path Between the Seas: The Creation of the Panama Canal, 1870-1914***. Warning: reading this will make you want to visit the Panama Canal. This book is filled with details about the politics and intrigue that surrounded the efforts to build it and incredible stories of the rain, the terrain and the disease that plagued its excavation. One of my favorite descriptions was of a valley that had been flooded by rain so intense that the jungle trees were almost fully submerged. A traveler in a canoe describes how these treetops teemed with tarantulas trying to avoid drowning! Goethals (the same guy the local bridge is named after) plays a starring role in getting the canal built—an interesting NYC connection. (Liz Velikonja) 

McKinty, Adrian. ***The Cold, Cold Ground***. (Detective Sean Duffy, bk 1). I have fallen in love with Detective Sean Duffy and this series. It didn't happen right away. In fact, I thought he was a bit of an idiot who used drugs excessively and was a philanderer. But he has grown on me and I am a big fan now. Detective Sean Duffy is a Catholic cop in the Protestant RUC (Royal Ulster Constabulary) in 1980s in Belfast during the troubles. His cases often involve the IRA or the Protestant paramilitary groups and Duffy has to weave his way carefully through treacherous alliances. He is fearless (usually) and has a good heart. Most of all, he hates the violence that is endemic in Northern Ireland during the troubles. Educational and entertaining. (Ragan O'Malley)  

McMurtry, Larry. ***Lonesome Dove***. Why did I wait so long to read this? Why did you? It's one of the best three or four novels I have ever read. The Western genre probably scared me away, but it should not do the same to you. (Michael Donohue) 

Minnis, Chelsey. ***Baby, I Don't Care***. A poetry book for movie buffs. Minnis mines, sometimes revises or reimagines, film dialog. Her character(s) are bawdy, tough talking and hilarious. (Marty Skoble)

Montefiore, Simon Sebag. ***Young Stalin***. Horrifyingly absorbing, eerily relevant. (Liam Flaherty) 

Muir, Tamsyn. ***Gideon the Ninth***. A science fantasy novel that follows a deeply irreverent orphan raised in the Ninth House of the Empire. The Ninth House is a cold, dead planet ruled by a powerful necromancer princess through the secret manipulation of her parents. The story unfolds when the Emperor calls the heirs of each House to his crumbling castle for the opportunity to become one of his immortal Lyctors. Gideon and the princess—lifelong enemies—must battle each other, themselves, a series of tests, and the castle itself not only to become immortal, but just to survive. (Bianca Roberson)  

Murakami, Haruki. **Norwegian Wood**. “But Hatsumi had some quality that could send a tremor through your heart.” And that’s what certain passages in this quiet book do—each young character projects either an appetite for life, or a reflective essence, or a sweetness, or an anguish that we, the adults, have encountered at some stage of our lives. (Vivian Swain)  

Murphy, Kate. **You’re Not Listening: What You’re Missing and Why It Matters**. As part of her research, journalist Murphy listened to people who spend their lives listening closely. These include CIA agents, focus group moderators, bartenders, and radio producers. Murphy touches on the psychology and neuroscience of listening; you’ll find practical tips, both for engaging with the culture-at-large and with family and friends. At its core, the book reflects on a paradox. How does today’s hyper-communicative world impede communication/listening? How did we get here? And now that we are here, can we acknowledge that NOT listening makes us fundamentally more lonely? (Laura Barnett) 

Nussbaum, Martha. **Citadels of Pride: Sexual Assault, Accountability, and Reconciliation**. Martha Nussbaum is a brilliant, erudite thinker, and she brings to this deeply important topic a wealth of scholarship and brilliant reasoning. Her ideas are both critical and hopeful, and she does a remarkable job of sorting out all the complex threads of these issues. (Liz Fodaski)  

Oates, Joyce Carol. **Foxfire: Confessions of a Girl Gang**. “The strangeness of Time. Not in its passing, which can seem infinite, like a tunnel whose end you can’t see, whose beginning you’ve forgotten, but in the sudden realization that something finite has passed, and is irretrievable.” A lyrical stream-of-consciousness account of the rise and wreckage of FOXFIRE, a 1950s girl gang whose devoted teenage members band together to take down predatory men in their blue-collar town. A wild ride. (B Mann) 

Orange, Tommy. **There There**. A fascinating panoply of characters enroute to a singular catastrophe. What they really have in common though is their history of oppression and loss (of dignity, of land, of opportunity). Orange’s beautifully lyrical language explores the dark interconnected lives that populate the impoverished Native American community in Oakland. Read it and then take the antidote: Joy Harjo’s *Living Nations Living Words* (see above). (Marty Skoble)  

Orlean, Susan. **The Library Book**. Part mystery and part homage to the idea of libraries themselves, this book weaves back and forth between telling the story of the unsolved case of the 1986 Los Angeles Public Library Fire and exploring the history and sometimes underappreciated value of the public library. (Elizabeth Sheridan-Rossi) 

Oseman, Alice. **Heartstoppers (Vol 1-4)**. Curious what the most popular middle school (and maybe high school) graphic novel series of the year is? Well, it’s *Heartstoppers*. Charlie has a crush on Nick, the school’s popular rugby star. Nick likes him back. Friendship, angst, sweetness, life. Don’t miss it. First the graphic novels took the world by storm and now the Netflix series. (Ragan O’Malley) 

O’Toole, Fintan. **We Don’t Know Ourselves: A Personal History of Modern Ireland**. Born in 1958, O’Toole grew up during the period when Ireland began to connect to the rest of the world, economically and culturally. It makes for a gripping tale. A longtime journalist, O’Toole is a brilliant writer who turns every chapter into a stand-alone gem. (Michael Donohue)  

Oyler, Lauren. **Fake Accounts**. The first half of this novel is so good that you must read it, even though the second half falters. The plot: a woman discovers that her boyfriend, a quiet type, is secretly a major figure on the internet, with extremist politics and a global reach. Takes place in New York and Berlin. (Michael Donohue) 

Paul, Pamela. **100 Things We've Lost to The Internet**. This book made me (even more) aware about of the impact of the Internet. The title implies a nostalgic, woeful screed; it is not. Evocatively titled mini-chapters include the philosophical (*Boredom, Getting Lost, Benign Neglect, Patience*); tactile (*Flea Market Finds, The Spanish-English Dictionary, Penmanship*); humorous (*Figuring Out Who That Actor is*); rectifying (*A Parent's Undivided Attention*); and Spiritual (*Memory, Closure*). Read it, listen to the author (the editor of the NY Times Book review) on NPR. Disconnect. Rediscover. (Laura Barnett)  

Pavese, Cesare. **The Selected Works of Cesare Pavese**. Another vital rediscovery by the great New York Review of Books press. Pavese was a post war European master, and his finely delineated fiction stands besides the great Italian Neo-Realism films of the same era. (Liam Flaherty)

Peters, Torrey. **Detransition Baby**. *Detransition Baby* was one of my favorites this year. Equal parts funny, insightful and moving, it's unexpected and familiar at once. (Sarah Moon)  

Prins, Mark. **The Latinist**. A brilliantly-plotted academic thriller set at Oxford and featuring a classics grad student who discovers that her adviser has written her a tepid letter of recommendation—dooming her chances of a teaching post. Why? He wants her to stay there. With him. As the action moves from Oxford to an archaeological site in Italy, you'll find yourself torn—should you rip through the book as fast as possible and miss some of the wild info about the ancient world, or delay seeing how it ends and read slowly enough (while Googling) to absorb all the history? (Denise Rinaldo)  

Purnell, Sonia. **A Woman of No Importance: The Untold Story of the American Spy Who Helped Win World War II**. This woman is Virginia Hall, and in case you never heard of her, she was the most important American spy during World War 2 who more than any other individual was responsible for the organization and empowerment of the French resistance. Purnell does superb research and her accounts of Hall's work are the stuff of a thriller that one day will inevitably become a movie or miniseries. In fact, I have written a miniseries myself. (Richard Mann)  

Randall, Alice. **Black Bottom Saints**. It was a great pleasure to read about many iconic Black Detroit figures from history and music, the style is fresh and energetic, and every chapter concludes with a brilliantly relevant cocktail recipe. (Ronica Bhattacharya)  

Reid, Taylor Jenkins. **Malibu Rising**. Are you looking for the perfect summer beach read? Malibu Rising might just be it! This novel tells the story of one long day—the day of a party—in Malibu in August 1983. Nina Riva throws a party every year, where her three surfer siblings show up, along with celebrities, musicians, and the who's who of Malibu. The book goes back in forth in time to the 1950s to explain how the Rivas came to be, with lots of secrets, drama, and intrigue. If you would like to be transported to a different place and time, with lots of sun and ocean waves, this book is for you! (Stephanie Schragger)  

Rich, Simon. **New Teeth**. Every few years Simon Rich puts out another collection of funny, sweet stories and humor pieces. This is his latest, with most pieces tying somehow or another back into parenthood. (Michael Pershan)

Ruhl, Sarah. **Smile: The Story of a Face**. I adored this memoir by playwright, Saint Ann's parent, and McArthur "genius award" winner Sarah Ruhl, who developed Bell's palsy, a kind of paralysis of the face, just after giving birth to her twins. The condition robbed her of the ability to smile, which, in the context of things that can go wrong with your body could sound like an almost minor inconvenience. But the implications of the loss are enormous. The book loops wonderfully through Ruhl's life, including the 10 years she spent trying to regain movement in her face or come to terms with permanent paralysis. *Smile* makes many unexpected connections, and it's entertainingly and beautifully written. (Denise Rinaldo) 

Sandbrook, Dominic. ***Never Had it So Good: Britain from Suez to the Beatles***. Extremely readable history of Britain as it pulled out of the postwar lull. If you like this one, there are five more volumes from Sandbrook as he takes us all the way to the end of the 1980s. (Michael Donohue)

Sanneh, Kelefa. ***Major Labels: A History of Popular Music in Seven Genres***. Rock, hip hop, country, punk, rhythm and blues, dance, and pop: Sanneh, a longtime music critic, tells an idiosyncratic story of each one. His taste is often surprising, and his insights are often brilliant. (Michael Donohue)

Sebree, Chet'la. ***Field Study***. Poetry (James Laughlin Award) or memoir or poetic memoir or notes collected out in the "field" of one woman's work to come to terms with love and race. Whatever you call it, it works. (Marty Skoble) 

Seckin, Mina. ***The Four Humors***. In this riveting novel, Seckin's protagonist's search for the essence of her father leads her to discover the complex maternal and sororal ties that really bind families. American expectations clash with Turkish social structure in the context of "secular" Islam and a century of political struggle. It's a whole world wonderfully brought to life. Mina is one of ours. (Marty Skoble) 

Shipstead, Maggie. ***The Great Circle***. This epic novel spans a century, multiple countries and two main characters, and takes the reader deep into the world of aviation. The novel starts with a shipwrecked ocean liner just at the start of WWI, and shifts back and forth between the 20th century and the present day. Most of the novel focuses on Marian Graves, who was orphaned as a baby in the shipwreck and grows up to be a daredevil pilot. Marian's journeys take her around the world, with the goal of circumnavigating the world by going around both the North and South Poles. In the present day, a Hollywood starlet is looking to reboot her career by playing Marian, and her investigation into Marian's life and mysterious disappearance reveals secrets and connections. This is a beautifully written book that will completely transport you into a different era, and its twists and turns will keep you guessing! (Stephanie Schragger)  

Stovall, Tyler. ***Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light***. The history of the small African American communities, mostly artists and writers and musicians, that thrived in Paris in the two postwar periods. Stovall, who died a few months ago, makes it a very engaging narrative. Readers of James Baldwin and Richard Wright will find this book especially interesting. (Michael Donohue)

Straub, Emma. ***All Adults Here***. I loved this book! Astrid Strick (a slightly more than middle-aged woman) is coming to terms with a lot of things. First there's her sexual orientation, then there's her parenting legacy. She has three grown children who are all operating with various levels of dysfunction. When her granddaughter comes to live with her for the summer, things bubble to the surface. This is such a great family story! It deals with issues of gender identity, abortion, friendship, infidelity—and there's a goat farm. I'm looking forward to reading Straub's new book, *This Time Tomorrow*. (Ragan O'Malley) 

Tóibín, Colm. ***The Magician***. A summary can't do it justice: it tells the story of the life of Thomas Mann, the German novelist. In Tóibín's hands it becomes the story of the twentieth century, and I couldn't put it down. (Michael Donohue) 

Whitehead, Colson. ***Harlem Shuffle***. Do yourself a favor and read *Harlem Shuffle* this summer. Ray Carney is a good guy (mostly) who sells furniture on 125th St. in 1960s New York. This is a crime novel, a family saga, a love letter to Harlem, and so much more. Pepper, an acquaintance of Ray's, is probably one of my favorite characters ever. (Ragan O'Malley) 

Widmer, Ted. ***Lincoln on the Verge: Thirteen Days to Washington***. Nonfiction account of the president-elect's long train ride to Washington in 1861. The southern states were seceding, war was coming, and assassins were trying to prevent Lincoln from ever getting to his inauguration. The book is also a very good portrait of the many cities along the route, from Chicago to Cleveland to Baltimore and finally to Washington. (Michael Donohue) 

Trethewey, Natasha. ***Native Guard; Monument***. Engaging decades of national and personal legacies in her poems, Natasha Trethewey reclaims lost histories and suppressed voices—many from the Civil War and from her growing up in Georgia and Mississippi. Her vibrant writing and remembering make me hungry to hear more. (Ruth Chapman)  

Van der Vliet Oloomi, Azareen. ***Call Me Zebra***. This is an incredible book that contemplates exile, belonging, war, migration, love, death, intellect and more in a brilliantly written and hilarious way through the voice of a powerful and amazing narrator. (Noa DeSimone)  

Villavicencio, Karla Cornejo. ***The Undocumented Americans***. This is a tender autoethnography that explores how undocumented people move through America. Each chapter focuses on a different city, from Manhattan in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 to Flint, Michigan, as Villavicencio negotiates journalistic neutrality and her desire to intervene on behalf of people like her and her family. (Leda Fisher)  

Weidensaul, Scott. ***A World on the Wing: The Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds***. What an interesting read, so packed with information that one has to take it in bit by bit. Who knew that one theory about why birds migrate is an immune system one? By raising their vulnerable chicks up north they avoid diseases while the birds are very young. Weidensaul also fills you with wonder at the feats of endurance and the adaptations of birds, especially the seabirds that spend days or months in the air. A marvelous slow read to let your brain escape into what is really a whole different world. (Liz Velikonja)  

Wolk, Douglas. ***All of The Marvels: A Journey to the Ends of the Biggest Story Ever Told***. The thing that every review mentions is that, to write this book, Wolk read every single Marvel comic ever published. That gave me the wrong idea of Wolk's ambitions because he isn't aiming to capture the whole sweep of the Marvel saga. Instead, each chapter is a breezy summary of a specific narrative as it plays out across different comic books, writers, and often decades. I'd recommend Wolk's book either to someone who is (a) curious as to whether there is any depth to these stories or (b) looking for a roadmap for particular storylines to explore. For me it was (b), and Wolk has proven an excellent guide. (Michael Pershan)  

Zauner, Michelle. ***Crying in H Mart***. A beautiful memoir. I loved this so much, I bought copies for my family! (Felicia Kang)  

## **Digital Library FACTS: What You Need to Know**

Access the Saint Ann's Digital library through Sora at <https://soraapp.com/library/saintannsny> or use the Sora app, which you can download from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.

**Logging In:** When you log onto Sora for the first time, you'll be prompted to find your school. If Saint Ann's doesn't pop up, search for it, then log in with your Saint Ann's Google credentials. Sora allows you to add other participating libraries, including the Brooklyn Public Library, so you can search multiple libraries at once.

**Finding Books:** To search for a title, click the "explore" icon at the bottom of the page/app and a search bar will appear at the top. You can also browse lists and collections, including this list.

**Other:** You can have four titles checked out at a time and the checkout period is two weeks. You may return books on the app or website. If you don't return a book yourself, it will automatically return after two weeks.

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Current and past reading lists can be found online at:

<http://saintannsny.org/divisions-and-offices/library/high-school-library/reading-list/>

**Thanks to all the contributors! Happy Reading.**