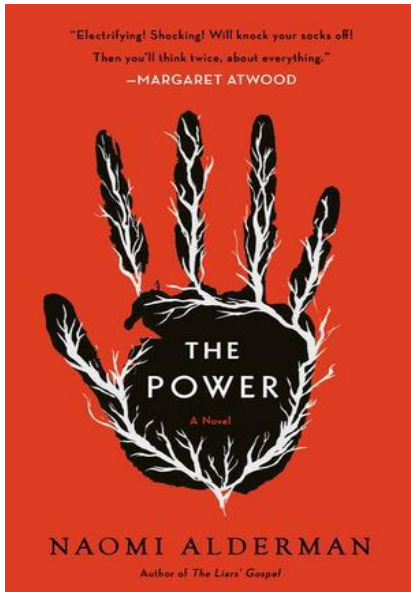


Saint Ann's School

Suggested Summer Reading List

for high school and faculty, 2019



Aickman, Robert. ***The Wine-Dark Sea***. These are intensely strange horror stories. Interest in Aickman's work has revived recently; I'd never heard of him until I read this unforgettable collection of macabre tales. (Michael Donohue)

Alderman, Naomi. ***The Power***. For lovers of Margaret Atwood's dystopian novels, *The Power* should be your next read. It imagines a world where teen girls discover they have the ability to maim and kill simply with the flick of a wrist. The upheaval this creates is epic. Dark, creepy, thought-provoking, and violent. (Ellen Friedrichs)

Alexander, Elizabeth. ***The Light of the World: A Memoir***. I read this searingly honest, soul-bearing, beautiful memoir this winter, in anticipation of Elizabeth Alexander's appearance at Saint Ann's as this year's Jack Eustis Lecturer. On the page as in person, Alexander confronts the sudden death of her husband (and father to their two boys) with extraordinary poise, even in her descriptions of the many moments following his death when she was brought to her knees by the pain of loss and grief. Moving across time, space, and emotion in brief poetic chapters she recounts their lives together, and brings Ficare—her husband—to life as an artist, son, refugee, chef, friend, and father. We feel joy as well as loss, and I finished the book somehow

experiencing the pang of not having known Ficare, and the privilege of having had the author, poet, and scholar who brought him so vividly back to life visit us at Saint Ann's. (Vince Tompkins)

Alexander, Elizabeth. ***The Light of the World: A Memoir***. I read this after hearing Dr. Alexander speak to HS students this spring. I was awed by how she writes about the attachments we make (to people, things, places, sounds, tasty food) and by her vulnerability in discussing how she feels when those attachments loosen and disappear. I connected to how she spoke of her meaningful relationships to her own teachers and her students, past and present. The book is about family, the one we are born into and the one we create. It is sad, but also fanciful; I loved the recipes scattered throughout. The book is about her late husband, the Eritrean artist, chef, and parent Ficare Ghebreyesus. I loved reading the hardcover edition as there is a beautiful painting by Ghebreyesus on the cover. *The Light of the World* was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in Biography/Letters in 2016. After reading it, I am inspired to read Alexander's poems, plays, and essays. (Laura Barnett)

Alexievich, Svetlana. ***Voices from Chernobyl: The Oral History of a Nuclear Disaster***. This book reads like the darkest Grimm's fairy tale, showing the world morphing in ways that should be impossible. Alexievich is the rare nonfiction writer to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, and her approach, sometimes called "polyphonic," is unlike that of anything I've ever read before. Riveting and deep, but beware—it will haunt your dreams. (Denise Rinaldo)

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For instructions and other tips, see the last page of this list.

Åsbrink, Elisabeth. **1947: Where Now Begins.** AMAZING! Deeply moving! History book focused on one incredible year. Wild scrapbook smorgasbord of post-WWII history with simultaneous action by Israelis, Palestinians, Nazis, anti-genocide activists, Billie Holiday, Simone de Beauvoir, United Nations human rights lawyers, poets, etc. (Mike Roam)

Atkinson, Kate. **Big Sky.** (pub. date 6/25) Before *Life After Life* and her recent book, *Transcription*, Kate Atkinson wrote a crime series that started with *Case Histories*, published in 2004. After a long gap, she returns with the fifth in the series, centered around the private detective Jackson Brodie. Atkinson's novels travel through dark, heart-wrenching moments, tempered with humor and great characters along the way. For what it's worth, Brodie shares a lifestyle and character traits with Cormoran Strike, if you've enjoyed any of the Robert Galbraith books! (Kate F. Hamilton)

Barnes, Julian. **Nothing to Be Frightened Of.** A memoir on mortality, in which Barnes intertwines personal reminiscence, family history, literary criticism, and philosophical speculation. All that with his usual blend of playfulness and seriousness. (Marielle Vigourt)

Benjamin, Chloe. **The Immortalists.** From the beginning, *The Immortalists* draws the reader in with a compelling and complicated question: How would you live your life if you knew the exact day you would die? For the four children in the Gold family, the answer to that question comes to direct their entire lives after they visit a fortuneteller one summer day in 1969. This book follows the path of the siblings through to the present day, and constantly brings up the question of how much of life is free will, and how much might be fate. It is beautifully written and fast-paced, and captures so many parts of American life over the past several decades. A great summer read! (Stephanie Schragger)

Bervin, Jen. **Silk Poems.** A remarkable book: Bervin takes on the persona of a silkworm using a form unique to its species: erudite, scientifically precise, wonderfully wry and wise. (Marty Skoble)

Blackwell, Sarah. **At the Existentialist Café.** Once so hip, now so forgotten, Blackwell takes a fresh look at the French existentialists, Heidegger's contributions and transgressions, and why the best thinking happens in cafes in the middle of great cities. (Liam Flaherty)

Bordas, Camille. **How to Behave in a Crowd.** The young boy who narrates this moving novel is the most interesting voice I've heard since Holden Caulfield. His family is wonderfully wacky. A superb satire of excesses of the mind. (Marty Skoble)

Broder, Melissa. **The Pisces.** Okay, this book is about a 38-year-old woman kind of having a midlife crisis, and I won't tell you all the ways in which I RELATED, but I did. It's sexually quite graphic, so if that's not your thing, you might want to skip it. My sister and I and several friends who passed this book around all seriously LOL'd often while reading this tale of disastrous dating, dog sitting, and romancing a merman in Venice, CA. (Nicholas Williams)

Caletti, Deb. **A Heart in a Body in the World.** Annabelle is running from Seattle to Washington DC. Her grandfather Ed is following her in his RV. As she journeys across the country, her story becomes known and she is cheered as she crosses state borders. But why is she running? Sometimes when everything becomes too much, the only thing to do is to put one foot in front of the other. An amazing YA book—funny, heartwarming, and heartbreaking. (Ragan O'Malley)

Carnegie, Dale. **How to Win Friends & Influence People.** A bit dated and oddly titled, but this book is full of wisdom about living and working in the modern world. Also, a very quick read! (Jesse Kohn)

Carr, J. L. **A Month in the Country.** A beautiful, elegant little book: in the remote English countryside, a damaged veteran of WWI restores a hidden fresco and rediscovers his capacity to love and accept loss. (Marty Skoble)

Carrère, Emmanuel. ***Limonov: The Outrageous Adventures of the Radical Soviet Poet Who Became a Bum in New York, a Sensation in France, and a Political Antihero in Russia.*** An unconventional biography of the bizarre and controversial Russian writer. You don't need to have read a word of Limonov's books—his life is, in a sense, his strangest work. (Michael Donohue)

Child, Lee. ***Past Tense: A Jack Reacher Novel.*** Detective in small New Hampshire town goes up against sinister innkeepers, mysterious Canadian farmers with contraband, and some weird family history. Page turner with smart characters. (Mike Roam)

Currey, Mason (editor). ***Daily Rituals: How Artists Work.*** Sometimes I am an artist who doesn't want to work. In those cases, I draw inspiration and directives from the 159 very short entries in this fun, but also heavily researched, little book. Learn about the artistic practices and work habits of Jane Austen, Margaret Mead, Truman Capote, Richard Wright, Charles Schulz, Marina Abramovic, Albert Einstein, Toni Morrison, Vladimir Nabokov, Louis Armstrong, Jean-Paul Sartre, Voltaire, Mozart, Karl Marx, Nikola Tesla, Agatha Christie, Maya Angelou, W.B. Yeats—and more... (Laura Barnett)

Cusk, Rachel. ***Outline.*** “A woman goes to Athens to teach a writing class” doesn't begin to describe this novel, but technically that's what happens in it. One critic described *Outline* as a novel in twelve conversations, which begins to capture its sensibility and structure. The first time you read Virginia Woolf or Gabriel García Márquez, you might say, *I didn't know a novel could do this.* You'll think that about *Outline*, too. (Melissa Kantor)

Cusk, Rachel. ***Kudos.*** The third in Cusk's autobiographical trilogy (after *Outline* and *Transit*) about an English writer named Faye. These books sound a bit dull in summary, but they are totally absorbing. (Michael Donohue)

Cusk, Rachel. ***Kudos.*** The third in a trilogy (although they can be read in any order), this book is so spare and so elegant. Once again Cusk creates a novel out of conversations or more accurately monologues since Faye, Cusk's persona, almost never speaks. It's quite a remarkable discussion of social and feminist issues. (Marty Skoble)

Czapnik, Dana. ***The Falconer.*** If you grew up in the 90s, this coming-of-age tale could be for you. Regardless of what era you hail from, the unsureness of self is something we can all relate to. The cultural references will be fun for anyone who remembers the 90s. The descriptions of an aspiring female basketball player in the New York private school world are unique and nuanced. An easy, relatable, and accessible read. (Rick Shatz)

Czapnik, Dana. ***The Falconer.*** It's 1993 and Lucy Adler is a high school senior in New York City. She is fiercely passionate about basketball and equally passionate about Percy, her best friend and ball-playing companion. In general, growing up is hard to do, and growing up in 1993 is no exception. Czapnik recreates the world that was NYC in the 1990s with specific references to place, clothing brands and styles, and musical artists (Tribe Called Quest, for example). A poignantly nostalgic novel that captures that bittersweet moment that occurs on the edge of adulthood. (Ragan O'Malley)

DiAngelo, Robin. ***White Fragility: Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk About Racism.*** This book is important reading for white folks at any point in their identity development. DiAngelo digs deep into the things we don't like to say and unpacks many patterns of racist bypassing behaviors. (Gretta Reed)

Doerr, Anthony. ***All the Light We Cannot See.*** Intersecting narratives and chapters that alternate between points of view of two characters in France and Germany in World War II. The book will appeal to scientist-poets and poet-scientists. Gorgeous and suspenseful. Pulitzer Prize in 2015, I just read it. When I finished, I was bereft and wanted to start again. (Laura Barnett)

Doerr, Anthony. **All the Light We Cannot See.** I resisted picking up this one a few years ago when everyone was reading it (I had just finished a spate of WWII novels and needed to take a break) and I was skeptical that it could be as wonderful as everyone said. Oh, man. It's extraordinary. So well-written and well-crafted, such a jewel of a book. If you haven't read it, you are in for one of the best reads of your life. Savor it. (Marjorie Meredith)

Egan, Jennifer. **Manhattan Beach.** This book is a fascinating read about a young woman, Anna Kerrigan, who becomes a diver at the Brooklyn Navy Yards during WWII. The story begins during the Great Depression with her father working for the Mob and then disappearing without a trace. Anna essentially decides to make her way on her own as a strong, independent woman. Egan's language is beautiful—I couldn't put it down. (Eva Zasloff)

Fey, Tina. **Bossypants.** Smart, true, moving, and good takes on tv, theater, film, acting, and Alec Baldwin. (Nancy Reardon)

Frank, Anne. **Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl.** I had not read this book since I was a child. When I read it recently, it seemed different. Then, I read the introduction. It was different. The original publication, which was in circulation between 1947 and 1989 had omitted about 30 percent of Anne's original diary. The revised critical edition was released in English in 1989. Apparently, Anne's father Otto Frank believed his daughter would have preferred to avoid publishing unflattering portraits of her mother; additionally, the conservative publishing house was uncomfortable including entries that referred to Anne's burgeoning sexuality. So... if you are of a certain age and read this in the 1980s, I strongly suggest reading it again, both for the powerful first-person narrative of life in hiding as a Jewish child in World War II Amsterdam, as well as how hagiography relates to what and how we interpret. (Laura Barnett)

French, Tana. **The Witch Elm.** *The Witch Elm* is a break from French's Dublin Mystery Squad Series but continues her masterful buildup of suspense and skillful psychological portraits. Toby's calm life is shattered when burglars beat him and leave him with lasting injuries. In an attempt to rebuild his life, Toby moves into the Ivy House with his girlfriend to take care of his ailing Uncle Hugo. The Ivy House was a gathering place for all of Toby's aunts, uncles, and their children, and Toby and his cousins spent many unsupervised summers there. All seems well until a human skull is found in the mysterious witch elm in the Ivy House's garden. Through the twisting plot that ensues, French explores the fragility of the self, the uncertainty of memory, and the role of chance in shaping a life. The book starts a bit slowly, but the second half is well worth the setup. (Kristin Fiori)

Gabriel, Mary. **Ninth Street Women: Lee Krasner, Elaine de Kooning, Grace Hartigan, Joan Mitchell, and Helen Frankenthaler: Five Painters and the Movement That Changed Modern Art.** Gabriel knows what makes great art and how hard it is. Centered around the enormous and moving struggles (to succeed and to be accepted on their own terms) of five women who are at the center of American Modern Art, this book also shows us how that art is part of an entire culture: music, dance, poetry. This is a BIG book and an important one! (Marty Skoble)

Giridharadas, Anand. **Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World.** A lively, inspiring analysis of ways well-meaning folks can steer positive intentions away from action that would challenge or tax the most fortunate. What do you suppose happens with ideas that don't fit the overlapping zones of "Good Things to Do" and "Things that are Okay with Powerful People"? (Mike Roam)

Glück, Louise. **American Originality: Essays on Poetry.** Incisive and insightful essays on how we think the way we do as we read. The central section is a compilation of introductions to various young poets' first books. Makes you want to read them all. Glück is an articulate appreciator. (Marty Skoble)

Greer, Andrew Sean. **Less**. So this novel is about a gay man turning 50, sort of having a midlife crisis, and going on a trip around the world. And even though I'm about to turn 40 I still RELATED. It's really sweet and whimsical, a fun summer read. (Nicholas Williams)

Greer, Andrew Sean. **Less**. What does it mean to not be a genius? Can you love without risk? Just a couple of the existential questions the hapless Arthur Less must grapple with as he stumbles around the world trying to hold on to his beloved perfect-blue suit. Greer writes with such humor and skill and boundless compassion for his characters that I didn't want this brief book to end. (But I loved the ending.) (Denise Rinaldo)

Gwynne, S.C. **Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History**. Incredibly rich history of the Comanches and what was going on between 1830 and 1910 in the Wild West. This book is about holding out before everything changed. (Rebecca Benson)

Gyasi, Yaa. **Homegoing**. I loved this book. It is a centuries-spanning epic of short stories following eight generations of a family, starting with two half sisters living in colonial Ghana. Each chapter focuses on the next generation until eight generations pass, ending in present day US and Ghana. *Homegoing* is moving, compelling, fascinating, powerful, and devastating. Hard to put down. Hard to forget. (Jen Zernick)

Gyasi, Yaa. **Homegoing**. Separated sisters, say villagers in Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing*, "are like a woman and her reflection, doomed to stay on opposite sides of the pond." This epic novel opens with the comings-of-age of two Ghanaian half sisters unaware of one other's existence. Esi is forced onto a slave ship bound for the United States, while Effi is married to a British soldier in Ghana. Successive chapters chronicle the seven generations that follow. Remarkable here is the degree of agency the author reserves for her characters. (Beth Bosworth)

Hadley, Tessa. **Clever Girl**. I discovered Tessa Hadley browsing the shelves of my favorite bookstore, and it's been love ever since. *Clever Girl* is my favorite right now. It's the story of a woman growing up in 1960s England, and it takes you from her early childhood to middle age (late middle age)? I think what I liked about it so much is how Hadley captures the grownup truth that nothing that happens to you when you're young matters as much as (or in the way that) you think it will. Yet she conveys this without flattening the immediacy and drama of all the things that do, in fact, matter very much as they're happening. (Melissa Kantor)

Hadley, Tessa. **The Past**. A family gathers in their grandparents' somewhat rundown country house for a (final?) vacation cum reunion. Mistakes are made, hopes are dashed, yet somehow joy, love, and beauty triumph. (Melissa Kantor)

Hagerman, Margaret A. **White Kids: Growing Up with Privilege in a Racially Divided America** (Critical Perspectives on Youth series). Sociologist Margaret Hagerman followed a group of privileged/affluent white children in a Midwestern town for two years, including students who attend independent schools. In this ethnographic monograph she persuasively argues that regardless of how parents talk about race and racism, white children are racially socialized in striking ways, particularly by observing and experiencing the behaviors, actions, and choices of their parents—and to some extent other grown-ups and peers in their lives. A great addition to the scholarship on the construction of whiteness and race. (Yuval Ortiz-Quiroga)

Hagood, Carolyn. **Ways of Looking at a Woman**. (*Our Carolyn*.) If you love women or children or movies or writing, or all of those, just read this! (Marty Skoble)

Haidt, Jonathan and Greg Lukianoff. **The Coddling of the American Mind: How Good Intentions and Bad Ideas Are Setting Up a Generation for Failure**. Concerned with the state of higher education, Haidt and Lukianoff explore whether

colleges are producing independent, critical thinkers in today's political environment. With implications for our school, I highly recommend (though don't always agree with) their take. (Jesse Kohn)

Halliday, Lisa. **Asymmetry**. Magical fascinating story within a story within a story. Has flirting, religion, sexism, literature, cultural appropriation, and war: Ideas and people travel from Central Park to the Middle East and back. (Mike Roam)

Hass, Robert. **A Little Book On Form: An Exploration into the Formal Imagination of Poetry**. Beginning with a brilliant examination of the line: what it is, what it does, how it does what it does, Hass thoroughly unpacks how poetry works through the 20th century. Asian, African, African-American, Latinx, and American Indian poets writing so powerfully in English in the 21st century will require a sequel to address new treatments of voice and form. (Marty Skoble)

Hayter, Alethea. **A Sultry Month: Scenes of Literary Life in 1846**. This might be the most obscure book you'll ever read: an out-of-print nonfiction narrative about one month in the life of a now-obscure painter, Benjamin Robert Haydon. But it's the best book I read last year. We meet the Carlyles, Tom Thumb, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning along the way. (Michael Donohue)

Hodgman, John. **Vacationland: True Stories from Painful Beaches**. This is one of my favorite books. Ever. There, I said it. You're probably thinking "wait, that mildly amusing white guy from The Daily Show? He wrote about getting old and having two summer homes? Eye roll." And yes, there are some cringe-y moments. But there's something deliciously nuanced and sad and delightful going on in these essays. Prepare yourself to laugh until your face hurts...then sink immediately into despondent heartache a few pages later. You'll take an unforgettable trip to Green-Wood Cemetery, learn about Dump Jail, and be walloped by Hodgman's mastery of the form. Wherever summer takes you, take this book with you and enjoy. (Anne Conway)

Ingalls, Rachel. **Mrs. Caliban**. What happens when a housewife and a seven-foot-tall lizard man fall into a passionate love affair? It's amazing how few people notice and how much the lovers discover and reveal about themselves and their respective species. This slim volume lingers. (Melissa Kantor)

Ingalls, Rachel. **Binstead's Safari**. Ingalls takes Millie, a neglected housewife, and gets her a sassy haircut and some new shoes. Millie discovers she's adorable, funny, admired and way too good for her boorish husband. While in Africa with her husband (a perfect parody of an academic), Millie falls in love with another man and discovers art, joy and passion. But...(Melissa Kantor)

Ishiguro, Kazuo. **Never Let Me Go**. What a wonderfully creepy book. As I read I kept thinking: this could be true. Ishiguro, as always, invents an utterly convincing narrative voice. (Marty Skoble)

Ishiguro, Kazuo. **The Buried Giant**. I usually read any Ishiguro book the moment it comes out, but I stalled with this one—it's about England in ancient times, and it involves ogres and dragons. Finally got around to it this year, and found it really weird and absorbing. If you read it, please talk to me about the ending. (Michael Donohue)

Kang, Han. **The Vegetarian**. A sensation in Korea when it was first published there in 2007, the English translation only came out in 2016. The book follows Yeong-Hye, a young woman who one day refuses to eat, touch, or cook meat anymore. Sounds simple enough, but the events take several surreal and frankly horrifying turns as the premise develops into an allegory of violence and bodily autonomy. Disturbing, upsetting, and utterly unforgettable. (Ashlyn Mooney)

Keefe, Patrick Radden. **Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland**. Crazy Prices was a Belfast supermarket. It was also a nickname given to Dolours and Marian Price, youthful, charismatic sisters who were members during the 1970s of the secretive and elite Provisional IRA death squad known as The Unknowns. This history of The

Troubles offers a vivid sense of what it was like to live and die in a city occupied by the British army but home to the brave, murderous twenty-year-old terrorist-soldiers of the IRA, many of whom would live to regret the executions they called down and the bombs they planted in shopping centers, if not the cause for which they fought. (Ben Rutter)

Keefe, Patrick Radden. **Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland.** Riveting account of life in Northern Ireland during the Troubles of the 1970s. (Michael Donohue)

Kincaid, Jamaica. **Lucy.** Lucy is a nineteen-year-old Antiguan working as an au pair in the United States. Estranged from her mother, attracted to and repelled by the white family for whom she works, Lucy comes to discover the beginnings of her self-expression. Sensuous, lucid, unflinchingly honest, the novel succeeds on its own terms. (Beth Bosworth)

Klam, Matthew. **Who is Rich?** If Judd Apatow and Richard Ford had a child, he would write like Matthew Klam. If you've been missing Klam's almost painfully hilarious observations about human foolishness (particularly in the arena of mating rituals) and how and why we lie to ourselves and others, *Who is Rich?* (the story of a has-been comic book creator who's pursuing a fling with an adult student at an artist's residency where he teaches every summer) will satisfy. (Melissa Kantor)

Komunyakaa, Yusef. **Dien Cai Dau.** Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Yusef Komunyakaa details life as a journalist in Vietnam. A poem from the collection titled "Thanks," reads in part:

"What made me spot the monarch writhing on a single thread tied to a farmer's gate, holding the day together like an unfingered guitar string, is beyond me. Maybe the hills	grew weary & leaned a little in the heat. Again, thanks for the dud hand grenade tossed at my feet outside Chu Lai. I'm still falling through its silence."
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This collection is simultaneously astonishing and harrowing. (Dolapo Demuren)

Kwan, Kevin. **Crazy Rich Asians.** This was the most-checked-out adult book in the library for the last 12 months, so you'll be in good company if you devour, as I did, this book about Nick, who falls in love with Rachel, a colleague on the NYU faculty, then invites her home to Singapore for the summer. Rachel is gobsmacked to learn that Nick's family is crazy rich and that Nick is the country's most eligible bachelor. Lots of delicious rom-com fluff and brand-worship, of course, but it's served up with enough info on the history and culture of Singapore and surrounding areas that you can maintain your self respect—then quickly devour the two sequels. (Denise Rinaldo)

Laymon, Kiese. **Heavy: An American Memoir.** A memoir as letter from mother to son that unpacks race, class, gender and addiction from the perspective of a Mississippi writer and academic. Hard, funny and beautiful. It is also an excellent audiobook choice. (Shalewa Mackall)

Lee, Min Jin. **Pachinko.** I knew nothing about the Japanese occupation of Korea when I started this book and I was glad to learn about it and what came after by following the stories of one extended family through the years. It's very well written and relentlessly unhappy. The best thing that happens to the main characters is that they survive. (Marjorie Meredith)

Lepore, Jill. **These Truths: A History of the United States.** I literally read most of this on a beach so I'm going to go ahead and call this 900-page political history a great beach read (although using a Kindle may save space in your bag!). Lepore goes for a balance of history text and civics primer, so stories in our past that illuminate or rhyme with the America we inhabit today get particular attention. She rightfully puts slavery and the ethos of white supremacy at the center of the narrative from the start. She's indispensable on the history of the health care debate, the very specific origins of the

internet (woah, Alex Jones was around way earlier than I realized!) and how abortion and guns became (so lately!) such partisan flash points. Her strong contention that Phyllis Schlafly is the primary progenitor of the current (so male!) conservative movement is the type of historical intervention that makes my feminist brain hurt in the best possible way. A very readable history that's great for thinking about how we got here and where we might be going. (Anne Conway)

Lepore, Jill. ***These Truths: A History of the United States***. Jill Lepore's new (large!) single volume history of the United States is thrilling. She couples a deep knowledge of the subject with clear and often poetically evocative writing, and presents the history of this country in a way that feels refreshingly real and novel (to me, as a former Canadian, at any rate). She does this by never losing sight of the history of slavery and the undercurrent (over-current) of white supremacy that is central to how this country was founded and conceived and governed. Her writing about the rise of computers, polling, and professional political consulting in the 20th century and their effects on democracy is exciting to read for its scope and more than a little frightening in its implications. This is a book I would wish for all students in this country to have in their civics and/or history classes. (Jascha Narveson)

Macfarlane, Robert. ***The Old Ways: A Journey on Foot***. Robert Macfarlane decided to hike and walk the ancient pathways and pilgrimage routes that criss-cross Europe and the Middle East. Here he describes his journeys in beautiful prose, paying particular attention to the ways that external landscapes shape our internal selves. (Ashlyn Mooney)

Machado, Carmen Maria. ***Her Body and Other Parties***. Really enjoyed this book of short stories, and most incorporate other-worldly, fantastical, or horror elements. One favorite is an episode-by-episode retelling of like 12 seasons *Law and Order: SVU*. (Nicholas Williams)

Mahon, Derek. ***The Hudson Letter***. This is by an under-appreciated Irish poet who caught the particular poignancy of NYC in the 1970s. (Liam Flaherty)

Makkai, Rebecca. ***The Great Believers***. Yale is the young director of development at an art gallery in Chicago in 1985, on the verge of securing a too-good-to-be-true gift of 1920s paintings, as the AIDS epidemic closes in on his community. Thirty years later, Fiona, the sister of one of Yale's first good friends to die of AIDS, is in Paris in search of her daughter who may have joined a cult. Told from both perspectives, this is a hauntingly beautiful novel, a powerful rendering of the uncertainty and terror that characterized the gay community in the '80s, and an exploration of the meaning of family in the midst of crisis. The best book I've read all year. (Hannah Mermelstein)

Makkai, Rebecca. ***The Great Believers***. The story toggles between Chicago's gay community in the early years of the AIDS crisis and Paris thirty years later. In the Chicago section, we meet a group of young men who fall in love, become political activists, locate heretofore unknown works of art, grapple with the threat of infection, and often die of AIDS. At the center of this community is a young woman who follows her gay brother to Chicago after their parents throw him out of the house and who instead of going to college cares for him and his ill friends. In 2016, she is in Paris where she is attempting to track down her daughter (and possibly her granddaughter) from whom she has been estranged for several years. Heartbreaking yet hopeful. And very beautiful. (Melissa Kantor)

Mann, Charles C. ***1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus***. The history of the Americas before the arrival of Europeans sketched in the first half of this book is electrifying. The sheer distaste felt by hale, well-fed New England natives for the starving gremlins who crawled out of the belly of the Mayflower left an impression. The colonists would blow their noses into scabby cloths, then stuff them back into their pants, as if their phlegm were sacred. Far richer are the complex dynastic politics of the Inca state, in which dead emperors, holding much of the valuable land, created shortages. The chance downfall of the Inca at the hands of the brigandish and extraordinarily lucky Pizarro is unforgettable. The poetry and philosophy of the Aztecs is moving. Later chapters bog down in professors' debates over the size of the pre-Columbian population, but the early history Mann retells is not to be missed. (Ben Rutter)

Mann, Charles C. **1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus**. Really good account of the Americas before Columbus, making some important corrections to the history we learned in school in the twentieth century. (Michael Donohue)

Marcus, Greil. **Mystery Train: Images of America in Rock 'n' Roll Music**. Still a touchstone in writing on American popular music, finding the deep roots, unexpected connections, and racial signifying that has and will always be our American songbook. (Liam Flaherty)

McDermott, Alice. **The Ninth Hour**. A young Irish immigrant determined to prove that "the hours of his life belonged to himself alone" opens the gas tap in his Brooklyn tenement. In the aftermath of the ensuing fire, Sister St. Savior appears unbidden to direct the way forward for his widow and his unborn child. Everything in this early twentieth century Catholic Brooklyn colludes to erase the young man's brief existence, yet his suicide reverberates through many lives, across multiple generations. McDermott explores the notions of love and sacrifice, forgiveness and forgetfulness, with delicacy, heart, and intelligence. A beautiful book. (Marielle Vigourt)

Miano, Léonora. **The Season of the Shadow**. A village in sub-Saharan Africa wakes up to discover twelve members of the community are missing. Where have they gone? This Cameroonian novel examines the trans-Atlantic slave trade from the perspective of its earliest victims, conjuring a pre-Colonial civilization on the verge of being destroyed. Beautiful and unsettling. (Melissa Kantor)

Morgenstern, Erin. **The Night Circus**. This fantasy novel is a real page turner set in Victorian London. It is a tale of a magical circus that appears only at night and the magicians who inhabit its spellbinding world! (Mary Lou Kylis)

Morris, Monique. **Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools**. I felt like the sociological perspective in this book helped me properly contextualize my experience as an African-American girl in public school, K-12. Despite my location, I had seen many of the scenarios she described play out in public and private school. I think it helps teachers re-think or change the way they approach dealing with African-American girls in school. (Selah Johnson)

Moshfegh, Ottessa. **My Year of Rest and Relaxation**. I keep recommending her books and her most recent is one of my favorites from this past year. Sometimes don't you want to just sleep the year away, hit restart, and hope you come back a better person in a better world? (Nicholas Williams)

Mueller, Special Counsel Robert S., III. **The Mueller Report** (officially **Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election**). Very important real-life crime story: very readable, and chilling. Currently available as big searchable pdf download <https://www.justice.gov/storage/report.pdf> as of 27 May 2019. Alternatively (or if Trump's Dept. of Justice tries to restrict access) you may browse, search and download the report intact or in pieces from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/politics/read-the-mueller-report/>. For more "you are there in the dumpster fire" background also read *Fear: Trump in the White House* by Bob Woodward, *Unhinged: An Insider's Account of the Trump White House* by Omarosa Manigault Newman, and (funniest, smartest, and sexiest of the lot) *Full Disclosure* by Stormy Daniels. (Mike Roam)

Murdoch, Iris. **The Unicorn**. I picked this up on someone's stoop while walking the dog one day and, since I love Iris Murdoch, I dove right in: who knew I was in for such a strange ride? It has all the elements of a gothic horror novel yet is set in 1960s or 70s England. A young woman who needs to get away from her life accepts a job as a tutor in a remote castle on the rugged coast. When she arrives she discovers that her pupil is the owner of the castle who is basically kept captive by the band of eccentric people who work for her. The story is dark and claustrophobic, the menacing sea is just over the cliff and of course there's a nearby bog. It's an interesting, atmospheric read that must have been a fun exercise for Murdoch. (Marjorie Meredith)

Neill, A.S. ***Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing***. The title is misleading. This book isn't a parenting guide but about how we treat children and what it looks like to gift them radical respect and acceptance, to speak to them honestly, to foster their agency and initiative without coercion and arbitrary authority. Imagine a school where everyone makes the rules, every person has an equal vote (kids ages 5 thru 18 as well as adults), where you can propose your own classes or just not attend any at all. The Summerhill School was founded in England in 1921 and is still around. This is its incredible story and philosophy, written by its iconoclastic founder. Whether or not you agree with it, there's a good chance it will change how you see the school you attend or attended (or work for), and maybe even the world. Published in 1960 and still in print. (Rob Goldberg)

Ng, Celeste. ***Little Fires Everywhere***. This one grabbed me from the first page and proved to be a very entertaining read. Set in the designed-to-be-perfect town of Shaker Heights, Ohio, it explores what happens when chaos and perfection collide. An interesting character study with authentic dialogue and a little mystery to boot, *Little Fires Everywhere* is an entertaining book. (Eli Forsythe)

Ng, Celeste. ***Little Fires Everywhere***. In late-1990s bucolic Shaker Heights, Ohio, the youngest child of a picture-perfect suburban family purposely sets the house on fire (that's not a spoiler—it happens on page one). Why did she do this, you ask? This page-turner of a novel answers that question. (Melissa Kantor)

Ng, Celeste. ***Little Fires Everywhere***. Lovely novel with teenagers, pregnancy, & desire (not necessarily in that order); artists, child custody, sneaking around, suburbs, racism, college applications, and sensationalized news as the modern equivalent of the lynch mob in *Huck Finn* with brave people facing it down with scorn. (Mike Roam)

Nottage, Lynn. ***Ruined; Fabulation, or The Re-Education of Undine; Sweat; By the Way, Meet Vera Stark; Mlima's Tale; Intimate Apparel***. Lynn Nottage writes plays about the intersection of daily lives with historic events. She often writes about the experience of African-American women. Briefly: *Ruined* is about the dangers of women in civil war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo; *Fabulation, or The Re-Education of Undine* is a somewhat satiric look at the upward/downward mobility in the naughts; *Sweat*, based on years of interviews, is about the working class of Reading, Pennsylvania; *By The Way, Meet Vera Stark* (seen in this year's Scene Marathon) is about racial stereotypes in the "Golden Age of Hollywood"; *Mlima's Tale* is about the clandestine international ivory market; and *Intimate Apparel* is based on the personal history of Nottage's own great-grandmother who worked as a seamstress in NYC. I have seen or read all of Nottage's plays. In order to see how they come off the page, try reading them aloud! Nottage is from Brooklyn and went to Saint Ann's. (Laura Barnett)

Nunez, Sigrid. ***The Friend***. The narrator loses her best friend and mentor, and finds herself burdened with the unwanted dog he has left behind, a huge Great Dane traumatized by the disappearance of its master. She herself is grieving and risks eviction since her building does not allow dogs... A great read, and I agree with the New York Times Book Review, Nunez's "confident and direct style uplifts—the music in her sentences, her deep and varied intelligence." And with the Wall Street Journal as well: "a beautiful book...A world of insight into death, grief, art, and love." (Marielle Vigourt)

Obama, Michelle & President Barack Hussein Obama. ***Becoming*** and ***Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance***. *Becoming*: the top-selling book of 2018. Translated into 44 languages. And yet... I felt like *Becoming* was like listening to a conversation with a friend (Michelle!) I would love to have. I appreciated the structure, the reflections on identity construction and the media, and the insider descriptions of moments in politics and history. I found it fascinating to read *Becoming* in counterpoint to President Obama's 1995 memoir *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*, that traces his early years in Honolulu and Chicago, and seems to so clearly foreshadow his vision for leadership. *Becoming* is personal and reflective; *Dreams from My Father* is, like other ego-histoires (a form of historical writing I read in my graduate program in oral history), more distanced and reflexive. I loved both books. We miss you, Obamas. (Laura Barnett)

Okamoto, Nadya. **Period Power: A Manifesto for the Menstrual Movement.** One of those books you wish you could give your younger self. Nadya Okamoto wrote this book at age 19, about the organization she started at age 16. She is Founder and Executive Director of PERIOD, which is the largest youth-run women's health NGO in the US. Her book talks about society and menstruation, ways to end period poverty, and is incredibly inclusive and factual about the ways people experience periods. I also highly encourage non-menstruators to check it out as it probably answers a lot of questions you may be too embarrassed to ask! (And explains why you might feel embarrassed!) (Gretta Reed)

Ondaatje, Michael. **Warlight.** History books tell us when wars end for nations. Ondaatje's brilliantly told story reveals how they often continue in secret for people on a deeply personal, often dangerous level. (Marty Skoble)

Owens, Delia. **Where the Crawdads Sing.** I adored this story of Kya "The Marsh Girl", a strong spirit growing up in the North Carolina swamps. Her adventures and love of nature touched my heart! (Mary Lou Kylis)

Paley, Grace. **Enormous Changes at the Last Minute.** Published as a collection in 1974, these stories are strongly voiced and beautifully shaped. An Italian mother interferes with her son's marriage; a single mother's children inspire her to take political action. Other stories are more swiftly told: a boy rides between subway cars, a neighbor suffers a breakdown, a woman meets "eleven unwed mothers on relief" and their eleven children in a New York playground. Funny, wise, and distinctly feminist. (Beth Bosworth)

Pearlman, Jeff. **The Bad Guys Won.** A riotous and profane (and R-rated) account of the 1986 Mets, this is also a great book about America in the 1980s. (Michael Donohue)

Pinker, Steven. **Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress.** Pinker thinks you are far too pessimistic in your views on gun violence, economic inequality, rising suicide rates, police shootings, the encroachments of technology, stray nukes, the sorry state of our uninformed electorate, and so on. You are not wrong about climate change. But the answer there is more technology, not puritan gestures of renunciation (cars, meat). Essentially, we need a lot more nuclear power plants. This book is not recommended for readers under 45. (Ben Rutter)

Pogue, James. **Chosen Country: A Rebellion in the West.** We live in one America here at Saint Ann's, but there's another America inhabited by ranchers and survivalists and devout Mormons who see the world a bit differently than we do. This is an account of Ammon Bundy's standoff with federal forces in Oregon. The author, a Brooklyn-based journalist with midwestern roots, bridges the cultural gap really well in my opinion. While we don't have to agree, it's always helpful to increase our perspectives. (Rick Shatz)

Powers, Richard. **The Overstory.** An ambitious, magnificent novel that tells time through tree history rather than human history. A must-read for anyone interested in environmental fiction—or Pulitzer Prize winners! (Kate Bodner)

Powers, Richard. **The Overstory.** Rarely does a book bring me to tears. This one did. And it made me look at the earth (and us) in a profoundly new way. This book will break your heart. (Marty Skoble)

Rulfo, Juan. **Pedro Paramo.** A (maybe apocryphal) piece of trivia: Gabriel García Márquez memorized the entirety of this slim novel by Mexican writer Juan Rulfo. Set shortly after the Cristero Wars in a half-imagined version of Jalisco, *Pedro Paramo* is full of whispers, mirages, memories, and gorgeous descriptions of the town of Comala, a ghost town "filled with echoes" that are "trapped behind the walls, or beneath the cobblestones." (Ashlyn Mooney)

Sayrafiezadeh, Saïd. **When Skateboards Will Be Free.** A memoir about growing up in the world of the Socialist Workers Party. Funny, insightful, and kind of heartbreaking. (Michael Donohue)

Sedaris, David. **Calypso**. This was the perfect way to start my summer reading last year. Having reached his 60s, Sedaris writes about aging and death in a poignantly funny way; I admire the way he faces life changes head on. He's deliriously hilarious as always and such a spot-on observer of human foibles. He is an excellent writer. (Marjorie Meredith)

Shamsie, Kamala. **Home Fire**. At the start of this masterful novel, Isma, a devout Muslim of Pakistani descent, is on her way from London to Northampton, Massachusetts in order to pursue a graduate degree. She has left behind her 19-year-old twin siblings, Aneeka and Parvaiz, believing that they are now old enough to care for themselves. Isma has practically raised her siblings after the death of their mother years before (their jihadi father had disappeared long ago). In Northampton Isma meets Eamonn Lone, son of the tough-on-terrorism British Home Secretary (also of Pakistani descent). Life will never be the same for either family. Based loosely on Sophocles' *Antigone*, this was my favorite book of the year. (It was also a Saint Ann's Faculty/Staff book group choice.) (Ragan O'Malley)

Shiva, Vandana (editor). **Manifestos on the Future of Food and Seed**. This book emerged from the Terra Madre gatherings of farmers, traders, and activists in the food and agriculture sector. Acknowledging the ways that the food system has become distanced from humans, the writers and speakers discuss ways to bring humans, farming, and the environment back into harmony. (Gretta Reed)

Smith, Tracy K. **Wade in the Water**. The Poet Laureate speaks for a nation; this one certainly does: the public and the personal. Beautiful work. (Marty Skoble)

Sophocles and Theater of War. **Antigone in Ferguson**. Free at St. Ann's and The Holy Trinity Church through July 13, 2019. Through staged readings of Sophocles' *Antigone*, illuminated by an astonishing Chorus, we witness Antigone speak fierce truth to Creon, the ego-bloated, blindfolded head of state. Her acts of heroic civil disobedience result in violent reprisals that will strip him of everything except impotent self-knowledge. This community drama remembers the life of Michael Brown and the outrage of his murder, and in the hour following the play explores what we've seen and felt being there, know and don't know about racial injustice, laws and their origins, and personal and communal action that seek to raise multiple blindfolds. Reading *Antigone* beforehand is a great idea but not required. (Ruth Chapman)

Spark, Muriel. **Loitering with Intent**. Full of incisive wit and brilliantly crafted characters, the book sets up an unbelievable scenario that somehow rings true on many levels. The heroine, Fleur Talbot, is a young writer in London in 1949 who stumbles into a job as a secretary for a secretive Autobiographical Association led by Sir Quentin. The situation provides great ideas for the characters in the novel she is writing. Uncanny coincidences ensue, leaving the reader and Fleur to wonder whether Fleur's novel is predicting real events. Beautifully written and hilariously funny, *Loitering With Intent* was a quick, addictive read that left me wanting to spend more time with the characters, especially Sir Quentin's irreverent mother. (Kristin Fiori)

Spellman, A.B. **Four Lives in the Bebop Business**. A time capsule of jazz that shows how little has changed economically and culturally concerning America's sole original art form. Fantastically acidic interviews with the recently departed giant Cecil Taylor. (Liam Flaherty)

Swarup, Vikas. **Q and A** (inspired the movie *Slumdog Millionaire*). Ram Mohammad Thomas is arrested for cheating and winning a billion dollars on a brain quiz. He explains to his lawyer how he knew the 12 answers thanks to accidental encounters that provided him with the keys to the quiz show and to life itself. I thought after seeing the film I would find it uninteresting, but not at all. It reads extremely well. (Marielle Vigourt)

Taylor, Sonya Renee. **The Body is Not An Apology: The Power of Radical Self-Love**. Sonya Renee Taylor lays out a powerful framework for unapologetic self-love. She argues that we didn't enter this world feeling negatively about our

bodies, and gives prompts and truths that help shift our thoughts to positive and grateful relationships with the vessel we travel in through this world. (Gretta Reed)

wa Thiong'o, Ngugi. ***Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance***. A fine Kenyan author's studies on what is meant when "Africa" is said. (Liam Flaherty)

Thoreau, Henry David. ***Walden; or Life in the Woods***. A thoughtful book written in a different time with different language than we use today. Maybe not an easy, light read, but certainly a transporting one. Take yourself to a quiet place and listen. (Anna Maria Baeza)

Williams, John. ***Stoner***. Harrowing in its progression and utterly uplifting in its finale. The life of the mind and the life of the body are at odds in the world, but ultimately spirit triumphs. (Marty Skoble)

Wohlleben, Peter. ***The Hidden Life of Trees***. German forester tells all. Family of beech trees keeps grandpa alive (old stump) through underground network of fungi middlemen who take a steep cut of all sugar transfers (50%). Acacias pump bitter compounds into their leaves when the giraffes start eating, then broadcast a chemical alarm (ethyl) to their neighbors. Building these compounds costs sugar. Tree farm trees are unsocialized 'street children' unable to form attachments. It is entirely plausible that trees feel pain. The 'brain' is in the roots. Electrical pulses travel the roots at a rate of a centimeter per second. Beech trees huddle, slowing moisture-stripping winds, cooling the microclimate, allowing conservation of water. They stockpile sugar until, as a forest, they decide they have enough; then they spend massive sugar resources to publish a crop of nuts. Boars go wild. (Ben Rutter)

Wulf, Andrea. ***The Invention of Nature: Alexander Von Humboldt's New World***. Alexander Von Humboldt was one of the most interesting, gifted and famous people of his time. This book was a great read. A whole world opened up to me. (Ronnie Asbell)

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Note: If you are a graduating senior or a departing faculty member, your library card number and PIN will work through the end of July. Please use the digital library!

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