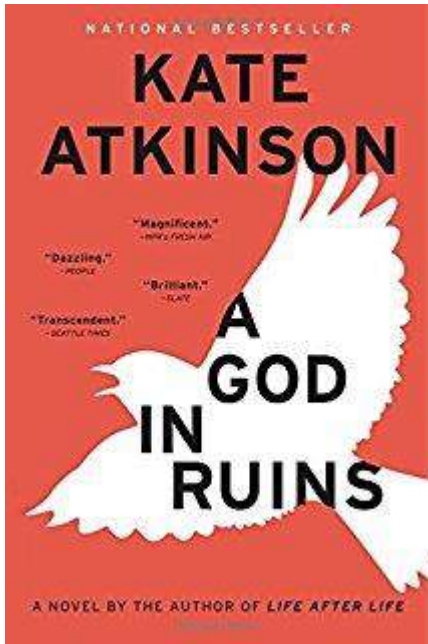


Suggested Summer Reading List for High School and Faculty Saint Ann's School, 2018



Alsadir, Nuar. ***Fourth Person Singular***. Part poetry, part philosophy, this book is an enchantment as well as a meditation on the physics of poetry. Alsadir's experiments with form echo her search for understanding how it is we communicate. More importantly, we get it. (Marty Skoble)

Atkinson, Kate. ***Life After Life*** or ***A God in Ruins***. Both are heartbreaking books about the same upper-crust British family living through WW2. *Life After Life* has a gimmick—the main character continuously dies and is reborn throughout the book—but *A God in Ruins* is (mostly) gimmick-free, and is my favorite of the two. It's intergenerational, and I think it has something sharp to say about the way a big international conflict can create trauma that takes generations to work through. Writing this makes me want to reread it—I recently found a copy in my building's laundry room. You don't have to include that in the reading list but it's true. (Michael Pershan)

Atwood, Margaret. ***Alias Grace***. A fictionalization of the notorious 1843 murders of Thomas Kinnear and his housekeeper Nancy Montgomery in Canada. Two servants of the Kinnear household, Grace Marks and James McDermott, were convicted of the crime. McDermott was hanged and Marks was sentenced to life imprisonment—she was sixteen years old. The novel is based on factual events, with the main narrator Grace, whose thoughts and speech are in the first person. Simon Jordan, who is ostensibly conducting research into criminal behavior, slowly becomes personally involved in the story of Grace Marks and seeks to reconcile his perception of the mild-mannered woman he sees with the murder of which she has been convicted. Once you are in the mind and thoughts of Grace Marks, you will find yourself pulled in and unable to put her down. (Charmaine Ting)

Atwood, Margaret. ***Hag-Seed***. It's *The Tempest* in a Canadian prison. But it's also *The Tempest* in the life of a Canadian theatrical director who's been usurped and cast adrift. Many magical layers to this novel. (Marty Skoble)

Atwood, Margaret. ***Oryx and Crake***. *Oryx and Crake*, the first book in the MaddAddam trilogy, is at once an unforgettable love story and a compelling vision of the future. Snowman, known as Jimmy before mankind was overwhelmed by a plague, is struggling to survive in a world where he may be the last human, and mourning the loss of his best friend, Crake, and the beautiful and elusive Oryx whom they both loved. In search of answers, Snowman embarks on a journey—with the help of the green-eyed Children of Crake—through the lush wilderness that was so recently a great city, until powerful corporations took mankind on an uncontrolled genetic engineering ride. This story takes us into a near future that is both all too

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familiar and not beyond our imaginings. With her hauntingly real details, her sharp wit and dark humor, Atwood projects us into a scarily possible future and wholly believable realm populated by characters who will continue to inhabit our dreams long after the last chapter. Margaret Atwood is my new favorite author. For readers of *Oryx and Crake*, nothing will ever look the same again. (Other books in the trilogy: *The Year of the Flood*, *MaddAddam*.) (Charmaine Ting)

Atwood, Margaret. ***The Penelopiad***. I decided to follow up my reading of Tóibín's *The House of Names* with this retelling of the Penelope story from her perspective. What was going on in Ithaca during the twenty years that Odysseus was fighting the Trojan War and then wending his way back home? The suitors who overrode her home and vied for her hand had to be both appeased and kept at bay. Penelope hid her true feelings from everyone but her twelve maids who would be sacrificed once Odysseus returned. Some of the chapters are told by the chorus of maids, in verse, some chapters by Penelope in her afterlife. It's a pretty quick read and an interesting, new perspective on an old tale. (Marjorie Meredith)

Ball, Jesse. ***How to Set a Fire and Why***. Amazing, smart, sarcastic teen wants to move away from home while she still knows more than everybody else. She has sketchy-sounding friends who want to join an arson club; what could possibly go wrong? (Mike Roam)

Bambara, Toni Cade. ***Gorilla, My Love***. Tender, forceful stories narrated in African-American vernacular about life in New York City circa 1977. Saw these on my parents' shelf when I was a kid, read some of them with my fourth graders, who nearly unanimously loved them. (Ben Gantcher)

Barnes, Julian. ***The Noise of Time***. An enjoyable short novel in which Barnes, mixing fiction and biography, imagines the composer Shostakovich looking back over his life, his music and his relationship to the power of the state. (Rosalie Fisher)

Blum, Andrew. ***Tubes: A Journey to the Center of the Internet***. This year I really enjoyed reading *Tubes*, on Blair Carswell's recommendation. It's an engaging account of one author's journey to try and trace what the actual, physical internet really looks like, and how it works. This is a good way to replace erroneous images of "clouds" with real images of anonymous warehouses full of routers, giant undersea cables, inconspicuous road-side markers, and the like. (Jascha Narveson)

Bowen, Elizabeth. ***A World of Love***. A group of people related to each other in various ways (love, history, etc.) in a decaying mansion in the Irish countryside. One of them, a young woman, discovers a collection of love letters written by her mother's former fiancé. Were they written to his fiancée or to someone else? After all this time, does it matter? Why? As the characters circle around each other during a summer's heat wave, they come to terms with the past and try to find a way toward one another that isn't burdened by what came before. Quiet. Slow. Delicious. Read it while drinking a cold beverage on a sweltering August afternoon. (Melissa Kantor)

Browder, Bill. ***Red Notice: A True Story of High Finance, Murder, and One Man's Fight for Justice***. This is the true story of the political and financial intrigue that led up to the Magnitsky Affair and the sanctions of the same name. Bill Browder, the grandson of Earl Browder (head of the communist party in the US in the 1930s), rebelled against his intellectual parents by going into finance and decided to do so in Eastern Europe just as the Berlin Wall fell and companies were starting to privatize. He was one of the first American money guys to move to Moscow and open his own fund and he found himself in direct competition with the oligarchs surrounding Putin. Soon he was accused of fraud and his tax attorney, Sergei Magnitsky, after proving the charges unfounded, was jailed, tortured and killed by the Russian authorities. Browder sets out to exact whatever punishment he can. The pace of this book is breakneck: I couldn't put it down. (Marjorie Meredith)

Bryson, Bill. ***Notes from a Small Island***. One of my favorite Bill Bryson books. Finding himself in 1995 about to move back to the States after 20 years in England, he decides to travel around the country and report back on what's changed

since the 1970s. Bryson has a knack for finding the humorous in all situations and he manages to relate the histories of places and things in entertaining ways. He rarely drives a car, preferring to take trains and buses even when the schedules defy logic, and going on long walks when the fancy strikes. He eats and drinks immoderately and would, I think, make a marvelous traveling companion. (Marjorie Meredith)

Calasso, Roberto. **La Folie Baudelaire**. Ever read Baudelaire's "The Swan"? You should (again), and then read it with Calasso. (Ben Gantcher)

Carew, Keggie. **Dadland**. *Dadland* is the author's memoir of her father's life. Is that a thing? Maybe not until now. Carew's father is getting older and suffering from dementia. When evil step-mom dies, it opens the door for her to sort through Dad's belongings to uncover his past as a secret operative for the Brits during WW2. Dad is a hilarious character, Carew is a gifted storyteller, and the blend of personal and world history makes it hard to put down. (Eli Forsythe)

Carr, J.L. **A Month in the Country**. A brief, consoling novel about a mashed-up veteran of the First World War who, in restoring a medieval mural in an English country church, is himself restored. Art heals. (Ruth Chapman)

Césaire, Aimé. **Notebook of a Return to the Native Land**. Considered *the* epic of the *Négritude* movement (the French equivalent of the Harlem Renaissance) this book-length poem describes the soul-crushing effects of racism and colonialism and ends with a powerful vision of liberation. (Rosalie Fisher)

Chandler, L.A. **The Silver Gun: (An Art Deco Mystery)** "New York City, 1936. In the midst of the Great Depression, the Big Apple is defiantly striving toward an era infused with art, architecture, and economic progress under the dynamic Mayor La Guardia." —publisher's description. The story follows 23-year-old Lane Sanders, La Guardia's personal aide, as she unravels the mysteries from her childhood. My dear friend wrote this book and I am so thrilled to share it with you! From political intrigue to fashion, she captures the world of 1936 beautifully. (Christina Harrison)

Chee, Alexander. **Edinburgh**. A former member of a boys' chorus led by an abusive conductor deals with his pain as a young teacher at a private school. Beautiful book. (Nicholas Williams)

Chernow, Ron. **Grant**. The first hundred pages drag and the second half concerns a presidency whose reputation for uneventfulness and mismanagement Chernow's narrative tends (despite its best efforts) to confirm. But the account of Grant's rise from disgraced alcoholic peddler—he was selling kindling, unsuccessfully, like the poor woodcutter of legend, in downtown St. Louis when war broke out—to commander of the United States army is also legendary, and I would wash meditatively a sink of dishes and then wipe the counters down slowly so as not to break the magic spell of narrative as I sat in on the planning of the siege of Vicksburg or rode out with Phil Sheridan on a cavalry raid. And that is the problem with life in a democracy. I wish I preferred the second half—the procedural, incremental, bureaucratic stuff, the cabinet appointments and the gold ring and the annexation of Santo Domingo—but the ten-year-old in me just wants the courage and the heroism and the dastardliness and the war. Chernow is good, but he isn't Robert Caro, who really can wring a five-act tragedy out of office politics. I highly if redundantly recommend his **Means of Ascent**, the second volume of the LBJ tetralogy, for the outrageous, triple-overtime excitement of his account of the Texas Senate election of 1948. You just can't believe it happened. (Ben Rutter)

Comey, James. **A Higher Loyalty: Truth, Lies, and Leadership**. Non-fiction! Heartfelt and smart writing with moral thought: Comey's unpretentious attempts at decency, truth, teamwork, law, and courage run into a mafia-like boss with a team of complicit, servile, opportunist yes-men. Comey has a good eye for details, too, including the president's inept attempts to publicly hug Comey and privately beg Comey for "loyalty" at a candle-lit dinner for two. I was in Scouts as a teenager like Comey: weekly meetings always included a pledge to try one's best to be trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent—with loyalty and obedience to the good, not to the boss. (Mike Roam)

Cooper, Brittney. ***Eloquent Rage: A Black Feminist Discovers Her Superpower***. A dark skinned Black woman, who self-identifies as feminist, fat, Southern, working class and Christian, Cooper shares her story of growing from a little girl whose intellect was acknowledged and nurtured, into a woman who is an important feminist scholar and public intellectual. She explores her relationships to her intersecting selves as well as her relationships with White women, Black women, the legacy of generational trauma, the church and popular culture in a moving and sometimes very funny book that joins memoir and theory. (Shalewa Mackall)

Cronin, Justin. ***The Passage***. I feel a little crazy recommending a zombie apocalypse story, but its tension and range of characters kept me glued to the pages. A wild example of story-telling, a fascinating thriller, never dull, featuring a hint of psychic power amid survival adventures and loving caretakers. (Mike Roam)

Cusk, Rachel. ***Transit***. A fascinating array of characters in individual versions of change as they grapple with fear and free will, despair and hope. Beautiful and thoughtful (and thought-provoking) writing. (Marty Skoble)

Doerr, Anthony. ***All the Light We Cannot See***. In the right circumstances (a string of days with few other compelling claims on one's time) this is a novel to fall into. Doerr compresses the monumental tale of World War II into a narrative that moves across time and space, as two children—one German, one French—are swept into the maw of violence and displacement that the war visits on the European continent. The orphan Werner's talent for building and repairing radios lands him reluctantly in military school and then the German army; the blind Marie-Laure's Paris is overrun and she finds herself clinging to Europe's edge at Saint-Malo in the last days of the war, with the city under siege and a secret she is desperate to protect. Beautifully rendered and brutally honest, this novel stays with you. It's a gem. (Vince Tompkins)

Dunn, Katherine. ***Geek Love***. Dunn's electric novel concerns the trials and tribulations of the Binewski family, a carnie family comprised of genetically mutated freaks that Mr. and Mrs. Binewski headline in their traveling show. The neon prose is a highlight. (Connor Spencer)

Egan, Jennifer. ***Manhattan Beach***. In 1934 Eddie Carrigan takes his daughter, Anna, to a work-related meeting at the home of Dexter Styles who lives near the ocean in Manhattan Beach, Brooklyn. Anna is mesmerized by the sea and one gets the sense that the ocean is going to play a large role in this epic historical novel. Fast forward seven years and Anna, now 19 years old, is hired along with hundreds of others to work at the Brooklyn Navy Yard as a part of the war effort. Eddie has been gone for five years, and no one knows why he left. Anna becomes smitten with the idea of diving and manages to become the first female diver at the Navy Yard. She and Dexter Styles cross paths and she begins to suspect that there is a connection between Styles and her father's disappearance. (Ragan O'Malley)

Egan, Jennifer. ***Manhattan Beach***. A Brooklyn story. It takes place during the years of World War II. The heroine, Anna, breaks gender boundaries to become a diver repairing ships to help our war effort. Her father mysteriously disappeared when she was only 12 and much of the story is about her process of learning about the complexities of her father's life and why he disappeared. Her journey takes us deep into the Irish and Italian underworld. A wonderful story, beautifully written. (Richard Mann)

Finn, A.J. ***The Woman in the Window***. A psychological, page-turning thriller. Anna Fox, a child psychologist who suffers from a debilitating case of agoraphobia, lives alone in her vast Harlem brownstone. She spends her days and nights watching Hitchcock films, giving psychiatric advice to other agoraphobes online, drinking huge quantities of merlot, swallowing a cornucopia of prescription drugs, and spying on her neighbors. When she witnesses a crime, she reports it to the police, but she's not exactly a reliable witness. Things spiral out of control. (Ragan O'Malley)

Flournoy, Angela. ***The Turner House***. Detroit, family, home—this book abounds! Should I mention the writing? (Will Geiger)

Fontane, Theodor. ***Effi Briest***. Often compared to *Madame Bovary* and *Anna Karenina*, this (much shorter) late nineteenth-century German realist novel, told with remarkable restraint, is heartbreaking. An additional recommendation: in Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*, Krapp says "Scalded the eyes out of me reading Effi again, a page a day, with tears again." (Rosalie Fisher)

Frank, Anne. ***The Diary of a Young Girl***. If you haven't read it since middle school (or haven't ever read it) now is the time. Think of all the drama of a typical adolescence, and then imagine having to go through it while hiding in an attic hoping to avoid the Gestapo—and death. Beautiful self-portrait of a brilliant young woman whose life was stolen from her. (Liz Bernbach)

Frankl, Viktor E. ***Man's Search for Meaning***. Why do some people lose the will to live, while others cling to it strongly (even while in a Nazi death camp)? In this powerful memoir, Frankl shares his profound human insights from his time as a prisoner during the Holocaust, how it led to his career as a clinical psychologist, and the development of his "logotherapy." (Dan Lerman)

Galbraith, Robert. ***The Cuckoo's Calling***. *The Cuckoo's Calling* is the first in Robert Galbraith's mystery series featuring detective Cormoran Strike. Galbraith is actually J.K. Rowling writing under a pseudonym, and she does not disappoint. The story is a real page-turner—Rowling knows how to develop fascinating characters and draw the reader in. Most memorable is the relationship between Cormoran and his assistant Robin Ellacott, and I want to hear more. Fabulous summer read, with an excellent BBC adaptation available on Cinemax. (Eva Zasloff)

Gallant, Mavis. ***Paris Stories***. Last January the *New Yorker* published a story called "Foreign-Returned," by Sadia Shephard. It's a very good story—but it proved controversial because it was such a close "updating" of Mavis Gallant's 1963 story "The Ice Wagon Going Down the Street." The hullabaloo drew attention to Gallant's fiction, which became for me one of the most important discoveries of the year. (Michael Donohue)

Godfrey-Smith, Peter. ***Other Minds: The Octopus, The Sea, and The Deep Origins of Consciousness***. I'm not done with this one yet, and props to Ben Rutter for the recommendation. A great read especially if you work with 5th graders, who study cephalopods at the end of their science curriculum. A great mix of science and philosophy. (Gretta Reed)

Grann, David. ***Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI***. The treatment of the Osage Indians by white Americans was cruel, inhumane, and simply mind-boggling. In the 1800s the Osage were relegated to land in Oklahoma that no white people wanted—well, not until oil was discovered. By the 1920s the Osage were incredibly wealthy. They drove fancy cars, built mansions, and traveled. Soon, however, various Osage started dying mysteriously. The bodies piled up before any proper investigation was carried out. (Ragan O'Malley)

Hamid, Mohsin. ***The Reluctant Fundamentalist***. Changez, a Pakistani whiz kid who wins every game of Princeton and Wall Street, soars up the financial tower and survives 9/11. The title points to the follow-on. A bravura monologue. (Ruth Chapman)

Hayter, Alethea. ***A Sultry Month: Scenes of London Literary Life in 1846***. A day-by-day history of one month in London in 1846, focusing on a few literary figures: Elizabeth Barrett, Robert Browning, the Carlyles, and best of all Benjamin Robert Haydon, who becomes a figure of extraordinary tragicomic pathos. (Michael Donohue)

Herrera, Yuri. ***Signs Preceding the End of the World***. I loved this story with its strong young woman, beautiful language, and almost surreal scenes of Mexican and American back-and-forth migration. (Mike Roam)

Hollinghurst, Alan. ***The Sparsholt Affair***. At the beginning of this beautifully written book we meet a group of young men studying at Oxford at the start of the Second World War. One of them, the one most peripheral to the group, is named Sparsholt, and he leaves after one term after making a huge impression. We follow these men and their families and friends through the years until the present day; their stories are interwoven in a lovely way and the connections are sometimes surprising. Most interesting, the “affair” of the title is never described: we are witness to what leads up to it and we hear people refer to it afterwards, but the affair itself is left to our imaginations. I loved that! (Marjorie Meredith)

Horowitz, Anthony. ***Magpie Murders***. This one is very fun if you like classic mystery novels. It is a mystery within a mystery: a book publisher takes home the latest manuscript of the firm’s star writer and spends the weekend reading. It stars a beloved Hercule Poirot-like detective and we get to read the whole thing, except the last chapter is missing. So the book publisher takes it upon herself to track down the missing pages and another mystery unfolds...Anthony Horowitz must be a huge Agatha Christie fan because parts of the book are homages to her. (Marjorie Meredith)

Ignatofsky, Rachel. ***Women in Science: 50 Pioneers Who Changed the World***. Bios and illustrations of 50 women in science. People we should know, but often don’t, because their work was uncredited or co-opted. Give these women the space they deserve! (Gretta Reed)

James, Henry. ***The Bostonians***. This novel by James—excoriated by critics when it was released for its satire of Boston’s progressive movements—concerns itself with the contest between two cousins for the possession of a young feminist speaker, Verena Tarrant. Up at bat are Olive Chancellor, a “ticklish spinster” who harbors intense feelings for young Verena, and Olive’s cousin Basil Ransom, a Civil War veteran and Southern gentleman whose family entered Reconstruction in shambles. Written in stuffy, fussy prose, the novel is thoroughly bizarre, somewhat static, and full of sublimated queer desire. In other words, exactly my kind of read. (Connor Spencer)

Jefferson, Margo. ***Negroland***. Born in 1947, Jefferson grew up as a member of Chicago’s black upper-crust. Child of a doctor and a socialite, she describes an exclusive country whose inhabitants do not mix with those who are not fellow citizens. In documenting a very specific time and place, Jefferson reveals things about race in America that resonate deeply more than fifty years later. (Melissa Kantor)

Johnson, Denis. ***Jesus’ Son***. Sparkling, sensitive, determined, and poetic short stories that fly by. Normally I’m irritated by drug-addled or drunken characters acting crazy, but these are magical, sensitive, mystical, and articulate. (Mike Roam)

Johnson, Denis. ***The Largesse of the Sea Maiden***. This posthumous collection is another hit from a beloved and always interesting writer. Wacky, weird, and sometimes laugh-out-loud funny, sometimes heartbreaking. So good. (Liz Fodaski)

Kadare, Ismail. ***Chronicle in Stone***. A portrait of life in a city in Albania that changes hands repeatedly during the course of World War Two. These events are narrated by a little boy, so we see moments like air raids and occupation through his eyes. Also read his novel *The General of the Dead Army* (about an Italian officer charged with finding and burying Italian soldiers after World War Two). (Chris Mellon)

Kandinsky, Wassily. ***Concerning the Spiritual in Art***. A small and beautiful book. Pick it up and read a bit. It will draw you in. (Anna Maria Baeza)

Kaplan, James. ***Sinatra: The Chairman***. This book tells singer Frank Sinatra’s story from mid-career til the end of his life. The many anecdotes about recording sessions, TV tapings, and movie shoots are fun to corroborate with web searches. (Sam Lazzara)

Kempowski, Walter. ***All for Nothing***. A novel about Germany at the end of World War Two as it comes to grips with what awaits as the Russian army moves in from the east. It’s the best thing I’ve ever read in fiction about that moment of

German history. It reminds me of *The Tin Drum*, except it takes place at the other end of the war. An amazing portrait of a specific moment. (Chris Mellon)

Kidd, Sue Monk. ***The Secret Life of Bees***. “Fully imagined...the core of this story is Lily's search for a mother, and she finds one in a place she never expected.” —The New York Times Book Review. I enjoyed reading it. (Jackie Henderson)

Kincaid, Jamaica. ***A Small Place***. Ms. Kincaid—fierce, acerbic, unrelenting—shows us that the paradise island of our Caribbean vacation is home to many people whose ancestors were enslaved and whose political heritage is ruthless colonization by British pirates. Now Europeans and Americans stop by on their getaways and don't see what they're looking at. This extended essay provides new eyes. (Ruth Chapman)

Klam, Matthew. ***Who Is Rich?*** After years of wondering what happened to Matt Klam after the hilarity and wild success of *Sam the Cat*, weren't we delighted to hear that he had a novel out last summer? It's controversial. I loved it. I laughed out loud at times. You might have to be middle aged to appreciate it. If you add deep personal knowledge of the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, MA and its general ethos, that's another layer. But not a necessary one. (Liz Fodaski)

Kundera, Milan. ***The Unbearable Lightness of Being***. A poignant love story that touches upon the philosophical nature of existence. Stylized and easy to read, with 2-3 page chapters. (Dan Lerman)

Kushner, Tony. ***Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes***. Wow. If you're like I was and have a general sense of the importance of *Angels in America* but have never read it, do yourself a favor and pick it up. Featuring an array of characters of greater and lesser moral integrity (including ordinary gay men with AIDS, devout Mormons, a nurse and former drag queen, a Republican lawyer, the ghost of Ethel Rosenberg, and, yes, angels), this otherworldly yet tragically real play deals with existential questions of individual and collective good, free will and progress and punishment, life and death and sex and politics and God in the form of a flaming Hebrew letter Aleph. (Hannah Mermelstein)

Lewis, John, Andrew Aydin and Nate Powell. ***March***. US Congress member John Lewis's incredible true story: a graphic (“graphic” as in cartoon, and as in violence) memoir of growing up as a black leader in the civil rights campaign down South, showing leadership, decency, non-violence, courage, and moral strength. (Mike Roam)

Liu, Cixin. ***The Three-Body Problem***. This is the first in a hard science fiction trilogy and (as I've discovered by virtue of recommending it to family) it's not for everyone. If you're looking for romance, relationships or even character development, this may not be for you. However, if you think you might enjoy a story that's clever and surprising and draws on game theory and physics, then this is your huckleberry. (Jared Cross)

Lodato, Victor. ***Edgar and Lucy***. A continual cliffhanger: will these damaged people survive, find forgiveness, understand the essential nature of kindness of love? Some will; so will the reader. (Marty Skoble)

Lyon, Rachel. ***Self-Portrait with Boy***. A WOW! At its center is a single photograph around which orbit many lives, especially that of the narrator. A wonderful glimpse into a New York art world and its edgy Brooklyn fringe. Saint Ann's makes a delightful cameo appearance. (Marty Skoble)

Lyon, Rachel. ***Self-Portrait with Boy***. Lyon's debut novel is told from the point of view of a famous photographer remembering the circumstances around the photograph that put her on the map. Twenty years earlier, squatting in DUMBO with other struggling artists (not all of whom struggled in the same way), she took a series of self-portraits, one of which happened to capture in the background a boy falling to his death. Not only is the story suspenseful (will she tell the boy's parents what has happened or will she simply try to make a name for herself with the photograph?), it's a beautiful portrait of Brooklyn before we turned all shiny. As an added bonus, Lyon (a Saint Ann's graduate) includes a school that looks a whole lot like Saint Ann's with a headmaster who sounds a whole lot like Stanley. (Melissa Kantor)

Mandel, Emily St. John. **Station Eleven**. Haunting, understated, beautiful. Kristen always remembers the night Arthur Leander died on stage during a production of King Lear. It is the night a flu pandemic arrived in the city, and civilization as we know it came to an end. Twenty years later she moves between settlements of the altered world with a troupe of actors and musicians called “The Traveling Symphony,” trying to keep the remnants of art and humanity alive. They encounter a violent prophet and the strange twist of fate that connects them all is progressively revealed. (Marielle Vigourt)

Maxwell, William. **So Long, See You Tomorrow**. A short book set in the 1920s in rural Illinois. A relationship between two farming families turns violent. Beautifully written. (Liz Bernbach)

McCarthy, Mary. **Memories of a Catholic Girlhood**. Orphaned in the 1918-1919 flu pandemic, McCarthy and her siblings move from one household to another, traveling between cities and religions but never finding themselves in a situation that's anything less than (hilariously/disturbingly) bizarre. (Melissa Kantor)

McCullough, Joy. **Blood Water Paint**. *Blood Water Paint* tells the story of Artemisia, the teen daughter of a middling Renaissance painter. An apprentice to her hostile and demanding father, Artemisia defies all convention, both by painting and by demanding justice after an assault. Told in a combination of lyrical verse and biblical narrative, *Blood Water Paint* will appeal to fans of historical fiction. (Ellen Friedrichs)

McDermott, Alice. **The Ninth Hour**. Set in 1950s Brooklyn, this quiet novel tells a story of love and loss and faith. A pregnant woman is widowed and the parish nuns take her in. She helps in the convent laundry (a world unto itself) and raises her daughter with the help of the nuns. The daughter grows up thinking she wants to be a nun, but then decides against it after a strange, almost otherworldly, train trip. The story then passes to the next generation as we hear the voices of children who wouldn't have existed except for their mother's change of heart. (Marjorie Meredith)

McGuire, Ian. **The North Water**. Not for the faint of heart. Hard-boiled novel about a whaling ship, a disgraced hero, the Arctic Circle, and pure evil. (Michael Donohue)

Medvedev, Kirill. **It's No Good: Poems, Essays, Actions**. Medvedev reminds me a little bit of O'Hara when he's just walking around, or maybe Tao Lin in the way he seems not to be rhetorically minded, and then he drops in some metaphors that make it all, if not a neat package, feel like it means something real. I'm going to spend more time with these this summer. Also, you can glean a sense of Russian politics and dissent from the essays. (Ben Gantcher)

Mehr, Bob. **Trouble Boys: The True Story of the Replacements**. On the surface, it's a group biography of one of the most interesting rock bands of the 1980s. But it transcends that—it becomes a glorious tale of American youth and the false promises of “authenticity.” (Michael Donohue)

Melvin, Leland. **Chasing Space: An Astronaut's Story of Grit, Grace, and Second Chances**. An unusual and refreshing astronaut memoir: Leland Melvin is African-American, an engineer, and the only astronaut to have also been a pro football player (while attending grad school, incredibly). A technician's mistake almost ends Melvin's space career before he can even blast off: second chances and teamwork are themes of the book, which continues Melvin's post-flight career of encouraging youth to persist and dream while studying both science and the arts. (Mike Roam)

Miller, Madeline. **Circe**. Remember that witch who turns Odysseus's men into pigs? Therein lies a tale. Circe's story makes the gods both all-too-human and not human enough. I had to force myself to slow down to appreciate Miller's beautiful language, but it's tough not to race through this page turner. (Melissa Kantor)

Miller, Madeline. **Song of Achilles**. The story of Achilles and Patroclus told through Patroclus's eyes. We start shortly before he and Achilles meet and follow them as they fall in love, study under Chiron and (spoiler alert!) head to Troy, where Achilles will find fame, glory and (more spoiler) death. I'm reading it for the second time. Prepare to weep buckets. (Melissa Kantor)

Milosz, Czeslaw. **The Captive Mind**. I'll let the readers infer what they may from *The Captive Mind* by Czeslaw Milosz, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1980. (Chad Coe)

Morden, S.J. **One Way**. Mars mission with convict labor and detective action, written by a real rocket scientist. More serious than Andy Weir's *Martian* and *Artemis* but shares their commitment to high stakes action in the midst of real science and realistic future technology. The characters could have, I admit, more emotional depth, but they are varied, desperate, sensitive, interesting...more than mere stereotypes. I'm desperate for the sequel, due in 2019. (Mike Roam)

Moshfegh, Ottessa. **Homesick for Another World**. Kinda dark, twisted short stories by the writer of one of my favorite books I read last year (*Eileen*). (Nicholas Williams)

Munro, Alice. **Runaway**. I've been dipping into this collection all year, never more than one story at a time, because each one packs a wallop. Like a major, gut-punching wallop. She may be the best short story writer ever. (Liz Fodaski)

Murakami, Haruki. **Men Without Women**. Men who find themselves alone, even Kafka's Gregor Samsa, have to fend for themselves. Women are strong figures. These seven understated and compassionate short stories, full of wry humor and pathos, are as compelling as Murakami's novels. (Marielle Vigourt)

Murphy, Tim. **Christodora**. I loved this novel. It's set in New York, with the Christodora House apartments (in the East Village, overlooking Tompkins Square Park) as the center from which the story spins. Moving back and forth across four decades, starting in the early 80s and reaching into the near future, the book reveals the interconnections between wonderful and infuriating characters from every sector of New York life—all connected by the AIDS epidemic. The author is a journalist who lived through and reported on much of what happens as a backdrop to the story, so you can trust the details in a way you can't with lots of historical fiction. Epic. Also read **And the Band Played On**, the 1987 account by journalist Randy Shilts, who heroically chronicled the AIDS disaster while he was living with (and dying of) AIDS himself. (Denise Rinaldo)

Ng, Celeste. **Little Fires Everywhere**. In Shaker Heights, Ohio, there is unrest beneath what seems to be a placid and affluent community, and the novel starts with a fire that burns a house to the ground. Ng explores the inner lives of several families, all of whom are harboring secrets, and the "little fires" in their own lives will get out of control, leading to life-altering decisions. Despite these serious topics and tensions, this book is fun to read—it pulls you into the characters' lives as you try to figure out what happened to lead to the fiery conclusion. (Stephanie Schragger)

Noah, Trevor. **Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood**. Noah tells his fascinating life story of growing up a mixed-race child in apartheid-era South Africa in this accessible and powerful story. (Ellen Friedrichs)

O'Rourke, Meghan. **Sun in Days**. Poetry with vibrant patches of prose. Fleeting glimpses of what has been, what is, and what may yet come—Meghan's work is savory and delicate. This work allows the reader to come closer to knowing the author than any other work I have read. A scintillating and exquisitely moving work of art! (Diane Gnagnarelli)

Oyeyemi, Helen. **Boy, Snow, Bird**. A fast and enjoyable read. Part of the re-imagined fairy tale genre, this Snow White-esque novel poses questions about race and identity. What do we see in the mirror? How do others see us? Through three different narrations—that of Boy, Snow, and Bird—Oyeyemi twists the modern fairy tale characters into different roles to produce something thoroughly unexpected. (Eva Zasloff)

Packer, ZZ. ***Drinking Coffee Elsewhere***. Beautiful vignettes and a good read if you've got travels ahead of you—each short story is digestible in a small amount of time. (Gretta Reed)

Pavone, Chris. ***The Expats***. Kate Moore, her husband Dexter, and their two children move to Luxembourg because Dexter has been offered a lucrative job. The family had been struggling in Washington—they could never seem to get ahead financially, so the move seems to make sense. What at first glance seems to be a story about a family of expats in a rich European country soon becomes a spy thriller. Kate has been leading a secret double life as a spy for ages—has Dexter been leading a double life as well, unbeknownst to Kate? (Ragan O'Malley)

Portis, Charles. ***True Grit***. Fourteen-year-old Mattie Ross's father gets shot, and she wants justice. Her story is a smart, funny Western. And I loved it. (Will Geiger)

Powers, Richard. ***The Overstory***. An “environmental novel” about the trees and us. Beautiful on the macro and micro levels and an important work to read anytime, but especially now. I couldn't stop reading it. (Laura Gilbert)

Proulx, Annie. ***Barkskins***. *Barkskins* is a great summer read if you are sleepily squirreled away lakeside for a month and wish to lose yourself in a grand tale (700 pages) about a major subject (deforestation over the centuries) with rich and fascinating characters. The book opens in 1693 in French Canada and follows two French immigrants and their posterity for more than three centuries as they systematically destroy the forests of Canada, Maine, Michigan, and New Zealand for personal profit. In many ways, it is really about the effect of one generation upon the next. And, as typifies Proulx's beautiful prose and odd narratives, it is full of remarkable details (mosquitoes, Native medicines, doing business in China in the 1700s) and characters (a Swedish woman who, upon death, is discovered to be a man). (Deborah Dobski)

Pullman, Philip. ***The Book of Dust***. I re-read the His Dark Materials series (*The Golden Compass*, *The Subtle Knife* and *The Amber Spyglass*) in anticipation of the release of *The Book of Dust*. It was a year to be lost and swept away in fantasy with an irreverent and brave heroine. I wonder who and what my daemon is? (Anna Maria Baeza)

Quinn, Kate. ***The Alice Network***. This historical fiction novel is set in two eras—WWI, and the immediate post-WWII era. During WWI, the British recruited young women to work as spies in France, and Eve Gardiner finds herself working undercover right alongside the enemy. Decades later, Charlie St. Clair runs away to France in search of her cousin who vanished during WWII. The stories of these two extraordinary women collide as they work together to solve two mysteries and to claim justice for the victims of the wars. (Stephanie Schragger)

Raboteau, Emily. ***Searching for Zion***. A vibrant memoir that takes us on Emily's personal quest to find where she belongs—her ‘Zion.’ The book begins with 23-year-old Raboteau going to visit her childhood best friend who has relocated to Israel to be with ‘her people.’ Born to a white mother and African-American father, Raboteau discusses her identity confusion when navigating the world as a biracial woman who identifies as black—more specifically, during a security check at an Israeli airport where she is mistaken for an Arab. Through historical and cultural explorations, Raboteau takes us on her journeys to places like Ethiopia, Jamaica, Ghana and the American South, in search of black people who left home to find a Promised Land. Talking with Evangelicals, African Hebrew Israelites, and Katrina transplants, Emily's question for them was one that I often ask myself: “Have you found the home you're looking for?” (Kenya Wagstaffe)

Ronson, Jon. ***The Psychopath Test: A Journey Through the Madness Industry***. Some light-hearted nonfiction adventures in the world of psychopaths. Beware: once you've read it, you may start seeing psychopaths everywhere. (Michael Donohue)

Rooney, Sally. **Conversations with Friends**. I haven't stopped telling everyone I know to read Rooney's debut novel since I devoured it in a weekend. Yes, it's an affair story—and a good one at that. But its charms are many. It's a deeply considered portrait of female friendship among nerdy, queer millennials. It nudges the reader to reflect honestly on the self-delusion, deception and manipulation that can come to define our most intimate relationships. Rooney's writing is sharp and accessible: the dialog crackles, the plot churns along at a steady clip. In short, I was sad to reach the end. I very much wanted more time inside these characters' heads. (Anne Conway)

Rosen, Jonathan. **Eve's Apple**. Beautiful, smart, and always hungry, Ruth almost died of anorexia as a teenager, and though apparently healed, she is obsessed with food. For her boyfriend, that is both a source of distress and erotic fascination. He sets out to unravel the mystery of hunger and denial, to save her at all cost. He lost a sister (suicide) and longs for knowledge, connection, acceptance. "A thinking person's love story," according to the Wall Street Journal. Indeed. (Marielle Vigourt)

Russell, Romina. **Zodiac**. *Zodiac* is a YA sci-fi fantasy series that's set in a galaxy inspired by the astrological signs. It's sort of like *Divergent* meets Star Wars. The quartet explores coming-of-age while grappling with politics of identity, immigration, xenophobia, and discrimination, all the while investigating the power of ancestral memory and the strength that can be found in human unity. (Side note: This bestselling series is written by my amazing sister, and I couldn't be prouder!) (Meli Garber)

Saunders, George. **Lincoln in the Bardo**. I found the unusual structure of the novel off-putting at the outset but after 20 pages I could not put it down. Tender and funny voices from the dead and a moving—almost unbearable—portrayal of a father's sorrow. (Rosalie Fisher)

Smith, Danez. **Don't Call Us Dead**. I read this whole collection of poems out loud to myself one afternoon and loved it. (Nicholas Williams)

Spark, Muriel. **The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie**. How had I never read this book before? It's about a smart, eccentric teacher at a small girls' private school in 1930s Scotland. Her pet students are described and followed from the age of 12 into adulthood and Spark plays with time in an interesting way. I love that the reader can find out what a character thinks at the ages of 35 and 12, all on the same page. It's funny (I laughed out loud in parts) and sad and now I have to see the movie with Maggie Smith. (Marjorie Meredith)

Springsteen, Bruce. **Born To Run**. A surprisingly poignant and candid memoir written in Springsteen's wonderfully natural style. You don't have to be a superfan of The Boss to enjoy reading this thoughtful meditation on fame, family, Catholicism, growing up and growing wise. Great for a slightly elevated beach read! (Anne Conway)

Stephenson, Neal. **The Baroque Cycle**. *The Baroque Cycle* is a big historical fiction series. (Depending how you count, it's one huge novel, three big ones, or I think eight normal-sized ones.) It's bonkers, in a good way. Topics include: pirates, vagabonds, odalisques, alchemy, war, the emergence of modern finance, the emergence of modern science. Louis XIV is a character. So are William of Orange, James II, Newton, Leibniz, Hooke, Huygens, plus a lot more than I can remember. I think a young Ben Franklin shows up at one point. I'm only 2/3 of the way through—looking forward to finishing it this summer! (Vol.1: *Quicksilver*, Vol. 2: *The Confusion*, Vol. 3: *The System of the World*) (Michael Pershan)

Strout, Elizabeth. **My Name is Lucy Barton**. Lucy is in the hospital for appendicitis gone weird, and her mother appears at the foot of her bed (she will stay five days and nights, only taking catnaps). Reminiscences about childhood in Illinois, people in the family, and in the village, where they were so poor they felt like scorned outsiders. The tension and longing that have informed every aspect of Lucy's life, her escape from her troubled family, her desire to be a writer, her marriage, her love for her two daughters, her complex relationships (with husband, mother, father) are treated with gentle honesty and nuanced responses. A book about love, almost as good as *Olive Kitteridge*! (Marielle Vigourt)

Strout, Elizabeth. **Anything is Possible.** These interwoven short stories are breathtakingly beautiful. They tell us more about Lucy Barton's past (if you read *My Name is Lucy Barton*, you will already know something about her) and the people she grew up with. I found myself reading about someone and thinking, "That person is going to have his own story at some point in this book," and it was often true. The layers of story, the relationship between the stories, is really quite remarkable. (Marjorie Meredith)

Sue, Derald Wing. **Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race.** Sometimes learning how to talk the talk helps you walk the walk. This book is an amazing resource for delving into *why* we need to talk about race and *how* we can do it. Fantastic starting point and still has lots to ponder for those with years of antiracist work under their belts. Plenty of case studies to help untangle the nuances of racial identity. As a White person, I also found the chapter on cultivating a positive antiracist White identity really important! (Gretta Reed)

Szabo, Magda. **The Door.** A Hungarian novel from the 1980s, essentially a long character sketch, and one of the best things I read last year. (Michael Donohue)

Tóibín, Colm. **House of Names.** Often when I read a book or see a movie that's told from a man's perspective I think, "the wife's story would be way more interesting" or "I wish I could see things from the daughter's point of view." And that's what this book does: it hands over storytelling duties to Clytemnestra and Electra (and Orestes) so that we get to see the sacrifice of Iphigenia and its aftermath from their eyes. It's fascinating to see that no matter who the protagonist is, power corrupts. If you're looking for an escape from behind-the-scenes power struggles and the stroking and stoking of egos, this is not the book for you. (Marjorie Meredith)

Tóibín, Colm. **House of Names.** The Irish do love legends, even Greek ones. We all know the outline. Here, a great master takes on a great story and vivifies the personae, bringing us inside the life of their minds. Amazing! (Marty Skoble)

Vuong, Ocean. **Night Sky with Exit Wounds.** Harrowing and passionately romantic poems. (Marty Skoble)

Walker, Martin. **Bruno, Chief of Police.** This is a detective story/murder mystery starring a policeman in a small village in the south of France. This is the first book in a series and I look forward to reading all of them. Bruno spends most of his time helping his friends sidestep the many regulations that come with participation in the EU, but then a murder happens and he needs to focus on that. The case is a sensitive one and a team of investigators is sent from Paris, but they depend on Bruno's intimate knowledge of his neighbors and their habits in order to solve the crime. "Community policing" saves the day! (Marjorie Meredith)

Walker, Sarai. **Dietland.** Plum works for a fashion magazine, answering letters from teenage girls for the "Dear Kitty" column. Leading up to her weight loss surgery, she realizes she's being followed. Then, everything you thought you knew about fatness, beauty, and patriarchy explodes in this delightfully over-the-top and often disturbing novel featuring an eclectic cast of women and a feminist terrorist plot. Check out the new TV series on AMC. (Hannah Mermelstein)

Wangyal, Tenzin. **The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep.** Tenzin Wangyal distills these ancient teachings, and adapts them for Western practitioners. The practices have a mystical basis, yet are extremely practical, as they improve sleep quality, dream recall, and overall sense of being. It is beautifully written. For anyone interested in lucid dreaming or in the spiritual philosophy of Tibetan yoga, this is an essential book. (Henry Kandel)

Ward, Jesmyn. **Salvage the Bones.** The story of a family and their struggles in coastal Mississippi at the time of Hurricane Katrina. The characters are beautifully rendered. Moving and wrenching. (Liz Bernbach)

Ward, Jesmyn. ***Sing, Unburied, Sing***. An immersion into emotional and sometimes desperate lives—among its flavors are the lasting impact of poverty, racism, and drugs upon children and their grownups. The fascinating story never slows, mixes the sweet with the horrible, swings with musical writing that carries love and lament. The way some people care for children with devotion and humor is moving and inspiring; other characters hit and neglect and hit again, even while trying to be better. I feel their love, scars, history, and crying ghosts—maybe I understand this part of life and Southern USA a little better now. (Mike Roam)

Waters, John. ***Role Models***. Cult film auteur John Waters describes some of his favorite things in this essay collection, including: ex-cultist convicted felons, filthy dive bars, recalcitrant artwork, lurid pulp novels, amateur pornography, and Little Richard. (Connor Spencer)

Westover, Tara. ***Educated***. At age seventeen, Tara walked into a classroom for the first time. She grew up in the mountains of Idaho with her survivalist Mormon family, largely isolated from society. After an older brother made it out and went to college, Tara decided to break free herself. This is her story. (Ragan O'Malley)

Williams, John. ***Stoner***. Weirdly absorbing novel that doesn't sound like much: it's the story of an obscure English professor in Missouri. I don't know why it's so moving and engrossing. You might not either. (Michael Donohue)

Wolfe, Tom. ***The Right Stuff***. Wolfe died in May. He had a magical ability to capture moments and eras, along with the voices of their associated characters. (Actually, not so magical—he was legendary for his research.) This was equally true for his fiction and his nonfiction, but here I recommend his nonfiction opus about the first U.S. astronauts, known as the Mercury 7, and the test pilots like Chuck Yeager (first human to break the sound barrier) who paved the way for them. It is exciting, hilarious, poignant, and will make you feel like you're there. I can't imagine not loving this book. (Denise Rinaldo)

Wolff, Michael. ***Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House***. Can hardly put it down. And well written. (Nancy Reardon)

Wolitzer, Meg. ***The Female Persuasion***. Greer, a super-smart child of dysfunctional parents is a freshman at her safety school. Her boyfriend, Cory, is attending Princeton. Greer gets groped at a frat party; her reaction to the incident and the way it is handled at the school firmly locates the novel within today's collegiate landscape. Still recovering from the groping, Greer gets up her courage to mention the incident to Faith Frank, a well-known older feminist who is giving a lecture at the school. Thus begins a lifelong, influential connection between Greer and Faith. The novel explores the lives of Greer, Cory, Zee (Greer's friend) and Faith as it grapples with issues of feminism (second and third wave), race, and economics. Surprisingly entertaining. (Ragan O'Malley)

Woodson, Jacqueline. ***Another Brooklyn***. Girls of color becoming young women, growing up in Brooklyn in the 1980s, finding friends, religion, boys, responsibility, art, ambition, music, and pain, while looking for a desperately missed mother. National Book Award Finalist. I spent my own grades 5-12 in Colorado and Montana, experiencing white male life: the universal human events and emotions in this story make me all the more fascinated by the differences, and moved by the unfairnesses that appear. (Mike Roam)

Zink, Nell. ***The Wallcreeper***. Here's the first sentence of certified alien Nell Zink's first novel: "I was looking at the map when Stephen swerved, hit the rock, and occasioned the miscarriage." If that doesn't make you want to read this strange, rangey short novel—brisk and refreshing like a bottle of Perrier—then I don't know what will. (Connor Spencer)

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Logging in: Students and faculty need a library card number and PIN to check out books. Look for an email from library@saintannsny.org with yours (though you may have it already). **FYI:** Your library card number is simply your Saint Ann's ID number with an "S" in front if you are a student and an "FAC" in front if you are a faculty member. For example, if your student ID number is 18840, your library card number is S18840. If your faculty ID is 18840 your library card number is FAC18840. Your PIN is your first and last initials, lower case, followed by the same ID number. So, if your name is Eleanor Roosevelt and your ID number is 18840, your PIN is er18840. Got it, Eleanor? Now, go read some books!

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- Select the *Read in your Browser* option if you want to just read the title on your computer.
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