

Good Reads - 2015

The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry, by Rachel Joyce - Karen Daigler recommended this one to me, and I'm glad she did. I can't decide whether it's about coming of age, having a midlife crisis, or figuring out the meaning of life, but it was worth a listen (I experienced this one as an audiobook).

Working Stiff: Two years, 262 Bodies and the making of a Medical Examiner, by Judy Melinek - This is a true story of Judy Melinek's early training as an ME in New York City. It has gruesome descriptions of all sorts, but offers an interesting and realistic glimpse into how autopsies are performed and used to piece together natural and unnatural causes of death. I liked the author's style of approaching the stories without apology or flinch.

Stuff Matters: Exploring the Marvelous Materials that Shape Our Man-Made World, by Mark Miodownik - If you like knowing things like why concrete is used to build big structures, or why you can see through a window, this book will be a fun read. Miodownik used basic chemistry concepts (which he explains well) to demystify some of the properties of common and not-so-common materials. The book is written in a very accessible style, and doesn't force the reader to run off and look up too many things.

The Silo Saga: Wool, Dust and Shift, by Hugh Howey - I am not often drawn to post-apocalyptic tales, but chose to listen to this one, for some reason, and it kept me entertained on my commute. The three volumes explain life in a gargantuan underground silo, how the silo came to be, and what happens to the contained society (in that order). The characters are good, the writing good, and the story inventive enough that it kept me listening to all three installments.

Lee Abrahamsen, Associate Professor of Biology and Biochemistry

The Secret Place by Tana French. This is Tana French's fifth book in the Dublin Murder Squad Series. If you like intricately plotted and beautifully written crime novels, French's work will hold great appeal. I encourage

those who have not read her before, however, to start with **In the Woods** or **The Likeness**.

One Plus One by Jojo Moyes. A wonderful, funny, heartfelt book about Jess—a woman with a bullied stepson, a math savant daughter, and no financial means to lift them out of their unpleasant situation. Then, Ed steps into their lives and takes the family on a road trip that redeems them all.

Becky Albitz, Associate College Librarian for Collection Management

I read a bunch of Evelyn Waugh this year, very funny, esp. **Scoop**, a satire on mass-market journalism. The Daily Beast lifted its name from Waugh's book. His WWII trilogy is excellent, though sadly ironic rather than funny. I'm in the middle of a reread of **Fathers and Sons**. Sounds like family scenes from last Thanksgiving. I sampled some Maeve Binchy, and liked what I found: **Heart and Soul**. Funny and good-natured.

Martin Andrucki, Professor of Theater

Charles King, **Midnight at the Pera Palace: The Birth of Modern Istanbul**, Verso.

Bill Bryson, **At Home: A Short History of Private Life**

Stefan Zweig, **The World of Yesterday**

Senem Aslan, Assistant Professor of Politics

I've just been reading Joanna Macy's **World As Lover, World As Self** (Parallax Press, 2007) and Ursula Goodenough's **The Sacred Depths of Nature** (Oxford, 1998), and would strongly recommend them. In addition, unless you exclude audio books, I must say that Jim Dale's recordings of the Harry Potter series have turned my commute this semester from drudgery to sheer pleasure! I could totally imagine zoning out with them at the beach . . .

Cynthia Baker, Associate Professor of Religious Studies

A book I just read and liked very much is **Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet** by Jamie Ford. Set in Seattle, and in the context of a sweet

love story, it tells the history of the Japanese American "evacuations" during World War II.

Another one that Dave and I both liked a lot was **God's Hotel: A Doctor, a Hospital, and a Pilgrimage to the Heart of Medicine** by Victoria Sweet. She was a doctor at public charity hospital in San Francisco. Each chapter is a lesson she learned from the humanity of the "hopeless" cases she treated. In doing so, she portrays the strengths of the old, low tech, style of medicine with a different meaning of the term "personalized medicine" than the meaning coming into use today.

Pam Baker, Helen A. Papaioanou Professor of Biological Sciences

Tubes -- Andrew Blum

Jim Bauer, Director of Network and Infrastructure Services

The Book with No Pictures by B.V. Novak (from the TV show The Office)

This is a children's book, black and white with absolutely no pictures and it is hilarious. Actually produced when read, belly laughs from a 4 yr. old, a 35 year old and grandparents in their 60's.

Believe it or not, this has been the best book of the year for me. Each time it is read, especially by a different reader, it sounds a little different...must-read for families and curious adults.

Jane Bedard, Admission Office Specialist-Operations

Finding Your Inner Moose: Ida LeClair's Guide to Livin' the Good Life, by Susan Poulin. Ida is also a newly minted "Certified Maine Life Guide" who wants to help you live a better, happier life. Ida (a.k.a. the alter ego of popular performer Susan Poulin) is a daughter, sister, wife, and best friend who draws upon her experiences (as well as those of the noble and majestic moose) to offer practical and hilarious advice on relationships, physical fitness, stress, housecleaning, work, shopping, fun, and more. (If you are looking for impractical, woo-woo advice from a glammed-up, over-educated, fancy-schmancy life coach, just keep looking!) **Finding**

Your Inner Moose features such sections as: What Did I Do Wrong to Deserve this Turkey Gobbler Neck; How Many Points in Cabbage Soup?; I Can't Die Today Because if Anyone Saw the State of My House I'd Just Die; Feng Shui-ing the Double Wide; Slaying Energy Vampires; and Spousal Deafness. Good insights in a fun format.

Denise Begin, Academic Administrative Assistant, Pettengill Hall

One book I read this year that I thoroughly enjoyed is **Wild: from lost to found on the Pacific Crest Trail** by Cheryl Strayed. It is the first-hand story of one young woman's experiences hiking the PCT solo. It's an engaging and moving tale.

Sarah Jane Bernard '75, Director of HRIS

Fun Home by Alison Bechdel!

Mina Beveney, Associate Director of Residential Life

From the Bates Boston Book Club:

Dear Life	Alice Munro	short stories
Orphan Train	Christina Baker Kline	non-fiction
Beowulf	trans. by Seamus Heaney	fiction
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings	Maya Angelou	memoir
The Goldfinch	Donna Tartt	fiction
The Age of Ambition	Evan Osnos	non-fiction
Orange is the New Black	Piper Kernan	memoir
A Guide for the Perplexed	Dara Horn	essays

Boston Bates Club via Lisa Romeo, Class of 1988

I'd recommend Joe Torre and Tom Verducci's **The Yankee Years**. It was published several years ago but it offers an illuminating account of the dynamics that defined major league baseball during and after Torre's reign as manager of the New York Yankees. Especially interesting are its descriptions of how players' opinions on steroid use shifted and how a moneyball approach to player evaluation overtook more traditional

methods of baseball operations. Believe it or not, Red Sox fans, especially, will appreciate this history.

Jon Cavallero, Assistant Professor of Rhetoric

A new book on my shelf this year is Judith Schalansky's **The Giraffe's Neck**, newly translated from the German by Shaun Whiteside. The story of a biology teacher in eastern Germany after the fall of the Wall, it blends discourses of biological and social adaptation and ironically questions both.

I've also enjoyed these new-to-me gems: Bill Bryson's **At Home: A History of Private Life** and Primo Levi's **The Periodic Table** (thanks to Jason S.), an archeology of the houses we live in and a chemical (alchemical?) history of the 20th century, respectively. Last but not least, a shout-out to treasured re-rereads Joseph's Roth **Radetzky March** and Ian Buruma's **Murder in Amsterdam**, each in its own way trying to understand the end of an era.

Raluca Cernahoschi, Assistant Professor of German

Non-Fiction:

The Monster of Florence by Douglas Preston & Mario Spezi. Preston, an American novelist, and Spezi, an Italian journalist, attempt to identify the notorious serial killer who terrorized the Italian countryside from 1968 to 1985.

Unbroken by Laura Hillenbrand. Read the book, don't watch the movie. **In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex** by Nathaniel Philbrick. The story of a whaling ship in 1819 that was sunk after being rammed by a sperm whale. Several of the crew survived in whaleboats for over 90 days. This is the true story that inspired Melville's *Moby Dick*.

Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania by Erik Larson. The title says it all. Besides, if you enjoyed any of Larson's previous books (**Devil in the White City**, **Thunderstruck**, **In the Garden of Beasts**, etc.) then you'll probably enjoy this one as well.

How Star Wars Conquered the Universe: The Past, Present, and

Future of a Multibillion Dollar Franchise by Chris Taylor. If you grew up in the 70s and 80s, understand the power of the Force, and are a Star Wars geek then you'll probably enjoy this history of the franchise.

Fiction:

Counting by 7s by Holly Sloan. A novel for kids (ages 10 and up) about a twelve-yr old girl trying to deal with the unexpected death of her parents. This was recommended by a friend who is helping her children overcome the loss of their infant sister. It's a lovely story.

Edge of Eternity by Ken Follett. This is the conclusion to Follett's Century Trilogy, this is a historical fiction novel from the mid-1940s to the present dealing with the Cold War, the Berlin Wall, the assassination of JFK, civil rights, Vietnam, etc.

The Department Q Series by Jussi Adler-Olsen, a Danish crime novelist. The series in order: **The Keeper of Lost Causes**, **The Absent One**, **A Conspiracy of Faith**, **The Purity of Vengeance**, and **The Marco Effect**. The series follows flawed detective Morck, who after being "promoted", finds his new office is in the basement and he's charged with solving seemingly unsolvable cold cases. Morck has some very quirky assistants who add levity to the novels that sometimes have dark storylines. Books 1 and 3 were my favorite.

Grace Coulombe, Director-Math and Statistics Workshop

Deep Down True by Juliette Fay

The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry by Rachel Joyce

A Man Called Ove: A Novel by Fredrik Backman

Karen Daigler, Senior Associate Director for Graduate and Professional School Advising

2 really fine novels about the American West: **Warlock** by Oakley Hall;

Butcher's Crossing by John Williams.

David Das, Assistant Director of Off-Campus Study

A Higher Call - by Adam Makos. An excellent non-fiction read about a crippled B-17 over Germany in WWII and a German 109 tracking it. More than just a combat saga.

Deep Down Dark - by Hector Tobar. Non-fiction tale of Chilean miners stuck deep in a mine for two months.

Hotel on the Place Vendome - by Tilar Mazzeo. Life in the Ritz Hotel during WWII. A wonderful cast of characters - non-fiction.

A Spy Among Friends - by Ben MacIntyre. The life of double agent Kim Philby- spy for the British and Russia during and after WWII. Non-fiction.

In the Kingdom of Ice - by Hampton Sides. About the ill-fated exploration to find the North Pole by the George DeLong expedition in the late 1800's. Non-fiction.

I actually did read fiction this year but none of it as noteworthy as the above.

Jerry Davis, Class of 1961

Some books I've enjoyed in the past year:

Americanah - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Half a Yellow Sun - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

The Secret History - Donna Tartt

The Goldfinch - Donna Tartt

The Circle - Dave Eggers

Fire Shut Up in My Bones - Charles Blow

Sisterland - Curtis Sittenfeld

American Wife - Curtis Sittenfeld

Colors Insulting to Nature - Cintra Wilson

Sharp Objects - Gillian Flynn

Dark Places - Gillian Flynn

Freddi Dupre, Assistant Dean, Admission

This year's list is heavy on YA -- I don't even have a kid this age, but I think some of the most interesting and creative writing is happening in that genre.

Code Name Verity, by Elizabeth Wein. The book that affected me most strongly in 2014. I could not start another book for two weeks after I finished this one, and I was totally in the World War II world of the book. You'll find it in the YA section, most likely, but don't let that make you think it's somehow childish.

The Impossible Knife of Memory, by Laurie Halse Anderson. Another YA book; addresses the issues of PTSD and growing up with an absent (one way or the other) parent.

Eleanor & Park, by Rainbow Rowell. Heartbreaking and brave, and true.

Owen's Daughter, and **Finding Casey**, both by Jo-Ann Mapson. The two most recent novels by an under-appreciated current author. Read all of her books, in publication order if possible. Most of the books are set in California, the Southwest, and occasionally Alaska. Characters drift in and out, meet new people, and pull them back into the story. Just like real life.

The Orphan Master's Son, by Adam Johnson. Did I "like" this book? No. It was hard. Did I find it gripping, moving, and ultimately haunting? Yes.

Elizabeth Durand, class of '76.

Warriors Don't Cry, Melba Pattillo Beals

If you are a fan of memoirs and U.S. History -- you'll want to read this book. **Warriors Don't Cry** is the story of the 1957-1958 integration attempt at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. The author, Melba Pattillo Beals, was one of nine students, known as "Little Rock Nine" who were part of this integration. For one year Ms. Beals and her eight friends endured the unimaginable. They were called names, kicked, spat at, burned, and their lives were threatened numerous times. These nine innocent young people went through this battle so that others like them would have the right to get a good education. This is an essential read.

Donna Duval, Assistant to the VP of Advancement

Rhett Butler's People, Donald McCaig

To all **Gone With The Wind** fans, this is a must read. The life of Rhett Butler as told through Rhett's eyes. It parallels **Gone With The Wind**.

Written In My Own Heart's Blood, Diana Gabaldon

This is the 8th book in the Outlander Series. I have been an Outlander Fan since reading the 1st book in the series. The books weave historical drama, a family's life, romance and time travel. The series will continue with book 9 eventually. Luckily we have the First Season of Outlander on STARZ to watch.

Those Who Wish Me Dead, Michael Koryta

Is a thriller about a 13 yr. old boy who witnesses a murder. Then is plunged into a new life. The book jumps right into your face. I couldn't put the book down.

We Know How This Ends, Living While Dying, Bruce H. Kramer with Cathy Wurzer

The book is about healing even if there is no cure. Bruce was diagnosed with ALS. Deeply introspective, but with themes all readers can relate to. A good book to help prepare us for most of us fear, dying. In the process you explore what it truly means to live.

Way Of The Peaceful Warrior, Dan Millman

Part autobiography, part fiction. It is a first person account of his quest for happiness. It is a journey through realms of magic, light, darkness, mind, body and spirit.

Melinda Emerson, Purchasing, Sales and Accounting Specialist, ILS

After decades of "reading as job," I was finally reminded of the thrill of books when I picked up Cormac McCarthy's **The Road**. Must-reading, particularly for fathers with sons (though my wife recommends it as well). I've read it at least once a year since I found it, and the ending destroys me every time. (The "Audible" reader, Tom Stechschulte, has a gift.) For all the brutality of its landscape, the book finally affirms hope and goodness and even a kind of Providence.

Andy Weir's **The Martian** recently revived my interest in science fiction. A wonderfully convincing yarn with a likable everyman hero who

survives by just being really smart. For a couple of weeks I couldn't wait to turn on my iPod and do the dishes each night.

The **Master and Commander** series by Patrick O'Brian is a captivating chronicle of adventure and friendship. O'Brian creates the illusion that he knows everything about the obscurities of early nineteenth-century history, but he makes his omniscience look effortless, and he never indulges in his tangents (unlike Melville--sorry **Moby Dick** fans). (If you listen on Audible, Patrick Tull's readings are the only choice.)

World War Z is a marvelous "anthology" of end-of-the-world fiction, each chapter drawing on different genres and making its own comment on humanity. Forget the movie; they should have turned this into an HBO series.

Nathan Faries, Asian Studies Lecturer

Sinead Morrissey-- **Parallax** (Belfast, N. Ireland's poet laureate, winner of the 2013 T.S. Eliot prize)

Julie Schumacher-- **Dear Committee Members** (the most hilarious academic life novel ever...)

Rob Farnsworth, Senior Lecturer-English

Texts from Jane Eyre: And Other Conversations with Your Favorite Literary Characters by Mallory Ortberg - very silly and fun book!

Sylvia Federico, Associate Professor of English and Classical and Medieval Studies

Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life by Barbara Kingsolver. It has recipes, education and commentary from her husband and daughter. I will just quote what is on the back of the book:

“Author Barbara Kingsolver and her family abandoned the industrial-food pipeline to live a rural life - vowing that, for one year, they'd only buy food raised in their own neighborhood, grow it themselves, or learn to live without it. Part memoir, part journalistic investigation, **Animal, Vegetable, Miracle** is an enthralling narrative that will open your eyes in a hundred new ways to and old truth: You are what you eat.”

Kids Books:

My 10 year old son, Wyatt, loved, **Wildwood Chronicles** by Colin Meloy.

Again, off the book jacket:

“Prue McKeel's life is ordinary. At least until her brother is abducted by a murder of crows and taken to the Impassable Wilderness, a dense, tangled forest on the edge of Portland. No one's ever gone in—or at least returned to tell of it.

So begins an adventure that will take Prue and her friend Curtis deep into the Impassable Wilderness. There they uncover a secret world in the midst of violent upheaval—a world full of warring creatures, peaceable mystics, and powerful figures with the darkest intentions. And what begins as a rescue mission becomes something much greater, as the two friends find themselves entwined in a struggle for the very freedom of this wilderness. A wilderness the locals call Wildwood.”

My 8 year old, Camden, recommends:

The One and Only Ivan by Katherine Applegate

“Ivan is an easygoing gorilla. Living at the Exit 8 Big Top Mall and Video Arcade, he has grown accustomed to humans watching him through the glass walls of his domain. He rarely misses his life in the jungle. In fact, he hardly ever thinks about it at all.

Instead, Ivan thinks about TV shows he's seen and about his friends Stella, an elderly elephant, and Bob, a stray dog. But mostly Ivan thinks about art and how to capture the taste of a mango or the sound of leaves with color and a well-placed line.

Then he meets Ruby, a baby elephant taken from her family, and she makes Ivan see their home—and his own art—through new eyes. When Ruby arrives, change comes with her, and it's up to Ivan to make it a change for the better.”

Erin Foster Zsiga, Associate Dean of Students

Tiny Beautiful Things by Cheryl Strayed. If you need a book to hit you directly in your heart, this one will do the job very nicely. Not a 'light' summer read, but fantastic nonetheless.

The Storied Life of AJ Fikry - Such a wonderful, fast read.

Kristy Gagne, Administrative Assistant to the Dean and Residence Life Office

I loved everything about **Euphoria** by Lily King. Everything. The story, the people, the writing. A fascinating combination of anthropology, romance, intrigue. I couldn't put it down. When I finished I had to sit quietly and think about it for a long while.

LK Gagnon, Associate Dean of Admission-Admission Operations

And this from the mother of two small children:

If You Give a Moose a Muffin - Laura Numeroff [apparently this wears well over time and relentless repetition, ed.]

Z is for Zamboni-a Hockey Alphabet

Margaret Galligan-Schmoll, Admission Office Coordinator

I recommend **Maphead: Charting the Wide, Weird World of Geography Wonks** by Ken Jennings. Ken is the record breaking "Jeopardy" winner of a few years ago. He has a lighthearted, self-deprecating style that is fun to read. While there are chapters and themes throughout the book, it does not have to be read from front to back. It is possible to open the book at random and just start reading to have an enjoyable and learning experience as Ken touches on a variety of subjects such as psychology, history, geocaching, and even maps of imaginary places.

Bruce Hall, Network Administrator, ILS

Lily King, **Euphoria**. A short intriguing novel loosely based on the life, relationships, and research of Margaret Mead. A short, well-written examination of three intersecting lives told from two perspectives. Danielle Allen, **Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality**. I love this book and am looking forward to assigning it in a class some time. Allen is a philosopher who taught classes that did close readings of the Declaration (one group who were "traditional" college-age students and the other mostly older

students who attended at night while completing day jobs). Her spirited advocacy for the ideas of equality and interdependence that lie at the heart of the Declaration is informed by her experiences with these two groups as well as by her interpretations of history and philosophy. Great reading.

The Historical Atlas of Maine. This is not a beach book. In fact, I would just go to Ladd Library and open to a random page. You won't be disappointed. Fascinating material about Maine history and society from the beginning of the last Ice Age to today.

Joe Hall, Associate Professor of History

Celling Your Soul: No App for Life, by media and social science professor Joni Siani.

Professor Siani captures that in just one decade, we have totally changed the way we interact with one another. She identifies Millennials and the iGeneration as the first to be socialized in a digital world and are now feeling the unintended consequences. Research now shows a population with an exponential increase in stress, anxiety, depression, attention deficit, and obsessive-compulsive behavior, and who are the most technically advanced generation, yet most socially awkward. This book evaluates the paradox of our love/hate relationship with our digital devices, explains why we feel emotionally disconnected, and provides empowering strategies and simple changes for more fulfilling, balanced, and authentic human connectivity within the digital landscape. When it comes to fulfilling emotional “connections,” we are human. We come with all the apps we need.

Laurie Henderson, Director – Office Services

Ru Freeman '94, **A Disobedient Girl.** A remarkable novel, and hard to describe succinctly. Perhaps a Sri Lankan version of **Grapes of Wrath**, as a society comes apart and has to deal with civil disorder, at the same time that oppressed classes of people (in this case, house servants and rural farmers) try to find their way to some more stable society.

Ru Freeman '94, **On Sal Mal Lane**. A second novel, also about the collapse of social order in Sri Lanka, but this time focusing on a single small street in Columbo with a half dozen families of various ethnic and social backgrounds.

Bich Minh Nguyen, **Pioneer Girl**. An interesting book-within-a book design. The protagonist is a second-generation Vietnamese, a recent Ph.D. in English who finds herself drawn to the Laura Ingalls Wilder **Little House on the Prairie** books, because Wilder's daughter, a journalist, left a family brooch with her grandfather in Vietnam. The book is partly an account of the struggles of a new immigrant family with children rebelling from a traditional authoritarian mother, and partly a literary mystery story of whether Wilder's daughter, also rebelling from family traditions, gave up a child for adoption whose descendants do not know of their literary family.

Bob Drury and Tom Clavin: **The Heart of Everything That Is: The Untold Story of Red Cloud, an American Legend**. A biography of the Sioux leader who was the only Native American leader to defeat the American military in a major battle.

Richard Blanco: **The Prince of los Cocuyos: A Miami Childhood**. Blanco, the Maine poet who read his poem at President Obama's second Inauguration, has written a wonderful and very funny childhood autobiography. His Cuban immigrant family adjusts to Miami, at the same time that Blanco is trying as a child and teenager to figure out who he is an immigrant gay in a culture with a premium on masculinity. What a cast of characters!--his bookie grandmother who lorded it over the family, his parents with minimal English and nervousness about anyone who was not Cuban, the elderly Jewish widow who speaks Spanish from her days in pre-Revolutionary Cuba... Blanco finds his voice as a writer and poet, at the same time that he gradually finds himself.

Alfred Lansing: **Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage.**

Published in 1959 (OK, sometimes it takes me a while to notice a book) and still in print, this is the ultimate sea-story from hell. Ernest Shackleton led a disastrous expedition from 1914-17, trying to cross Antarctica. Their boat was crushed in the ice before they could begin. They spent a year camped on sea ice until it melted, and then managed to find their way in small boats through 720 stormy miles to a whaling station. Incredibly, everyone lived.

Bill Hiss, Class of '66, Retired

The Perfect Witness by Iris Johansen

Someone in witness protection, her cover is suddenly blown and she is on the run!!

Close to Home by Lisa Jackson

Mother and two daughters go home to renovate the family homestead, is it haunted, full of mystery and intrigue.

The Bullet by Mary Louise Kelly

Imagine finding out when you are 37 years old that you have been adopted and that you have a bullet buried in your neck. It has been there since age three...HOW did it get there?

The Liar by Nora Roberts - great book, newly out!!

Joan Houston, Administrative Assistant, Facility Services

Josh Cook, **An Exaggerated Murder** - detective novel - a debut novel but good, a book lover's book

Our Declaration by Danielle Allen

Margaret Imber, Associate Professor of Classical and Medieval Studies

Ghettoside: A True Story of Murder in America by Jill Leovy and
Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?: A Memoir by Roz Chast.

There are no two books I'd rather discuss.

Phyllis Graber Jensen, Director of Photography and Video, BCO

Rosemary Sutcliffe, **Sword at Sunset**. Best Arthurian novel ever. She is a master writer of historical fiction. You will laugh. You will cry. You will want to kill Saxons, Picts, and Mordred.

Michael Jones, Professor of History and Classical and Medieval Studies

Signature of All Things by Elizabeth Gilbert

I was fully prepared to hate my book club's choice of this title given the author's past dribble, but I was enthralled, especially listening to the marvelous audio edition read by Juliet Stevenson available from Bowdoin. There is nothing like a good British reader with an engrossing yarn to tell. This is story takes you into the early era of the botanists/explorers/entrepreneurs through the life of Alma Whittaker, who is the daughter of one such self-made botanists, and how she becomes one in her own right.

Winter Dance by Gary Paulsen

Having just come back from the Can-Am dogsled race, I decided to pick up this book from a past Iditarod racer to learn more about the experience. A real eye opener on the insanity of such a long-distance race as the Iditarod, but the amazing relationship with the dogs really comes through as well.

Laura Juraska, Associate College Librarian for Research Services

Here are a few things I especially appreciated reading personally and/or professionally this year...

Kitchen (by Banana Yoshimoto)- this short novel was recommended by one of my college-age kids, who is majoring in Japanese; it is a beautiful, sad, touching story about family and home and food and love. I read it in English, and the translation was by Megan Backus.

All the Light We Cannot See (by Anthony Doerr)- my mother lent this to me and I started reading it just before it won the Pulitzer; I bet multiple people will suggest it this year, I'm certainly enjoying it so far (I'm about a third of the way through).

Dear Committee Members (by Julie Schumacher)- a very amusing epistolary novel that's entirely letters of recommendation written by a

cynical, 50-something academic; especially hilarious if you've written or read a lot of letters of recommendation.

Ain't No Trust (by Judith Levine)- a sociological study of the problematic consequences of welfare reform for low-income families and for the United States more generally; the subtitle captures the basic argument well- "how bosses, boyfriends and bureaucrats fail low-income mothers and why it matters."

Emily Kane, Professor of Sociology

The Engagements, by J. Courtney Sullivan

Five different plot lines, four that revolve around the institution of marriage, this book tells the fascinating history and story behind the slogan "A Diamond is Forever", coined by Frances Gerety in 1947. Gerety, a single woman, ironically married to her job for an ad firm, takes on her biggest client, De Beers, and changes the future of marriage and diamond sales. The book weaves four other stories that look at the impact of the diamond ring on deciding marriage and provides entertaining and touching moments.

The Mermaid Garden, by Santa Montefiore

This is one of those books that is a light read but engrossing enough to while away an afternoon because one is so easily swept away by the visual description of the landscape and likable characters. Two stories entwine to make an interesting twist in this memorable novel.

The Husband's Secret and **Big Little Lies**, by Liane Moriarty

These two books are the kind that keep you up all night because you can't put them down and you want to devour more. Twists, unexpected plots and characters who are well defined make these books must reads for the upcoming summer beach season. This author has a gift of taking the reader on a ride that has so many twists and turns, you wonder how it'll all come together in the end...but it always does and in a satisfying way.

The Light Between Oceans, by M.L. Stedman

This is one of those novels that makes you question your moral compass and begs the question "what would you do" if you found yourself in the same situation as these characters and needed to make a choice that has

you questioning the difference between right and wrong, and realizing that the lines can be very blurry. The writing is lovely, the visual imagery is cold and isolating and sets the tone for the entire novel. Heartbreaking and triumphant at the same time, this debut novel by Stedman did not disappoint.

Alison Keegan, Administrative Asst. and Supervisor of AAS, Dean of the Faculty's Office

I really enjoyed **Where'd You Go, Bernadette** by Maria Semple and **Beautiful Ruins** from Jess Walter.

Meg Kimmel, Associate Vice President for Communications

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down, by Anne Fadiman: The story of a Hmong family new to California and how cross-cultural misunderstanding affected treatment of their epileptic young daughter and their attempts to assimilate American culture. Excellent book.

The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, by Daniel Brown. Their "epic quest" includes so much more than learning to row and training. It gave me a new perspective on the Dust Bowl, the Great Depression, the Pacific Northwest, and early Nazi Germany.

The Red Badge of Courage, Stephen Crane. I like to re-read a classic now and again, and in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, I chose this one. It's a challenging book, but so worth it.

Gilead, by Marilynne Robinson. A father at the end of his life writes a letter to his young son, trying to impart the advice and wisdom that he knows he won't be able to give in person. A beautiful book that you shouldn't rush.

All the Light We Cannot See, Anthony Doerr. 2015 Pulitzer Prize for fiction. WWII through the experiences of a Hitler Youth and a blind French girl, whose paths converge in Brittany. Doerr doesn't take a straight chronological path with the story, which made it hard for me to follow without some effort, but it's worth it.

Hawaii, by James A. Michener. I visited Hawai'i for the first time this year and a friend recommended that I read this book before the trip. She's more a

Michener fan than I am, but I was reminded that he really does do a good job of bringing the history of a place to life through his characters.

Margot Knight, Director of Advancement Research

For anyone craving some excellent sci-fi, I was enthralled with Dan Simmons' novel **Hyperion** (1989) this year.

Nancy Koven, Associate Professor of Psychology

Cry, The Beloved Country, Alan Paton

A classic, set in 1948 Apartheid South Africa

The Rosie Project, Graeme Simsion

A light, humorous story about a man on the Asperger's spectrum who is seeking a wife.

Sea of Poppies, Amitav Ghosh

The first of a trilogy, set in Calcutta and on a ship on the high seas just before the first opium war.

Americanah, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

A contemporary story about a Nigerian woman who comes to the U.S. for college, then returns to Nigeria.

The Truth of All Things by Keiran Shields

Not a literary masterpiece, but very interesting historical fiction mystery, set in Portland, Maine around turn of the 20th century.

Jennifer Koviach-Côté, Associate Professor and Chair of Chemistry

Joseph A. Conforti, **Lizzi Borden on Trial: Murder, Ethnicity and Gender**, University of Kansas, 2015.

An eye opening account of one of the most notorious crimes of the Gilded Age and of gender, class and nationality in Fall River, Massachusetts. – Conforti is Distinguished Professor Emeritus of American and New England Studies at the University of Southern Maine, and author of another fascinating, well-written book about growing up in Fall River, **Another City Upon a Hill** (Tagus Press, University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth. (2013?))

James Leamon, Professor Emeritus of History

The titles I recommend are several that I read entirely in the Den. Like reading at the beach, reading at the Den is full of distractions! A great Den read is one that is so gripping that the Den fades away for a while and I am living through the author's words. Count these as great:

Lisa Genova's **Left Neglected** is the story of a woman who suffers a traumatic brain injury through a car accident, and her struggle to recuperate.

Crashing Through by Robert Kurson. Blinded as a very young child, a man takes the opportunity in adulthood to have revolutionary surgery that restores his sight.

Here If You Need Me by Kate Braestrup. Written from the heart, Braestrup shares her experience of becoming the chaplain for the Maine Warden Service as well as stories from on the job. In a way universal and in a way uniquely Maine.

Rebecca Lovett, Assistant Manager, Bates College Store

Salvage the Bones by Jesmyn Ward

Bill Low, Curator-Museum of Art

Armand Gamache series by Louise Penney, about a Quebecois investigator working for the Surete; **Bone Clocks** by David Mitchell; **Ebony and Ivy**, Craig Wilder, about race and higher education in America; **All the Light We Cannot See**, Anthony Doerr (a polar bear); **Arctic Dreams**, Barry Lopez.

Kathy Low, Associate Dean of the Faculty, Professor of Psychology

I haven't had much success reading really good books this year; so sad since there is always so little time to read! So I will share my top 10 all-time favorite books (in no particular order):

A Prayer for Owen Meany by John Irving

The Hotel New Hampshire by John Irving

East of Eden by John Steinbeck

Therese Raquin by Emil Zola

The Hundred Secret Senses by Amy Tan

The Red Tent by Anita Diamant
Unbroken by Laura Hillenbrand
Les Miserables by Victor Hugo
Like Water for Chocolate by Laura Esquivel
The Warmth of Other Suns by Isabel Wilkerson

*Mary Main, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources and
Environmental Health and Safety*

This year I joined a Book Club, at long last--and a great one! Some people with Bates connections, others without: a delightful mixture. Predictably, I ended up reading some books I might not have selected from the library shelf: **Station Eleven** by Emily St. John Mandel. A lethal flu decimates the earth's population, then time fast forwards to 15 years later. As we follow the little groups of survivors, and discover how they are connected, it is fascinating to see what was destroyed, what has become important, what they are still living without, and what they have managed to reinvent. Can't help but wonder how society as we knew it would really react to a similar disaster.

A Year After Henry by Cathy Pelletier. Henry dies of a sudden heart attack, and the story follows his family and neighbors in Bixley, Maine, as they adjust to his absence. Each has a story and a different connection to Harry, and Pelletier weaves their relationships with him and with each other into a tangled web of humor and sadness.

American Sniper by Chris Kyle. After all the furor about the movie release, I had to read the book (first) to see what it was all about. I found it harsh but honest; a compelling insight into the reality of combat. I was left feeling that I have led a very sheltered life, and wondering how a person can endure years of war and then be expected to re-enter the protected world of ordinary life as we know it and just carry on. Now I'm ready to see the movie.

The Game of Thrones by George R. R. Martin. The series has been my "background reading " this year. Just finished Book 4 and starting Book 5. I love it--and have never seen the TV series.

Judy Marden '66 (and retired administrator)

The following books are available at the Ladd Library:

The Good Lord Bird, by James McBride

As a Civil War re-enactor with an interest in historically-based novels, I found this book to be very interesting. McBride does a brilliant job of telling the story as a narrative “voiced” by an African-American boy who was “saved” by the abolitionist, John Brown, and taken into the fold of Brown’s group. With a peculiar twist in personal perspective, the boy provides details of the group’s travels and activities. His narrative also gives the reader glimpses into the personal musings and beliefs held by John Brown in the years leading up to and including his historical raid on Harper’s Ferry, WV.

Swan’s Island Chronicles, by Kate Webber ’11

Short stories, written as part of Webber’s collective history project, provide a very personal view of life on an island off the coast of Maine -- with pictures, too! A great summer read!

The Three, by Sarah Lotz

Imagine four passenger airliners crashing on the same day in different parts of the world – with one child surviving each of the crashes. The book is written in first-person accounts by people who were directly impacted by the crash: friends or family members of a deceased passenger or a surviving child, and others. Lotz, referring to the day as “Black Thursday,” offers an intriguing view of how the world might react or be affected by such immense tragedies. The story grabbed my attention and held it right through the addendum and back to “the beginning.”

Wild, by Cheryl Strayed

Currently reading this book – didn’t see the movie – and have been enjoying the personal account of a woman solo-hiking the Pacific Crest Trail. I’m finding it to be a great way to vicariously experience the trials

and tribulations and beauty of through-hiking from Southern California to Oregon and beyond.

Monica McCusker, Office Coordinator, Bates College Store

Sea Room, An Island Life in the Hebrides by Adam Nicolson

Set in the Shiant Islands close to the Outer Hebrides in Scotland. A personal account of the wildlife and stories surrounding these remote islands.

Mountains of the Mind by Robert Macfarlane

Historical and personal accounts of mountain ascents.

Wildwood: A Journey Through Trees by Roger Deakin

A naturalist's journey through a variety of wooded landscapes in England and beyond. Deakin has been described "as a kindred spirit to Annie Dillard, Wendell Berry and Thoreau".

A Moveable Feast by Ernest Hemingway

Classic memoir of Paris in the 1920's with Hemingway's expat community including F. Scott Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound and Ford Madox Ford.

David McDonough, Director - Bates Career Development Center

Blink: the power of thinking without thinking by Malcolm Gladwell

[Good insight into snap judgments and what it takes to make good ones.]

My daughter recommended the following two titles to me. I've already started the second and am enjoying it.

Captivating : unveiling the mystery of a woman's soul by

John and Stasi Eldredge

Wild at heart : discovering the passionate soul of a man by John

Eldredge

Connie Mullane, Library Assistant, Public Service

My Italian grandparents arrived at Ellis Island from Naples just about 100 years ago. Elena Ferrante's Neapolitan trilogy (**My Brilliant Friend, The Story of a New Name, Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay**) offered me a chance to imagine a parallel universe in which I grew up Italian. An

Australian reviewer said of Ferrante's fierce prose that it was like reading an angry Jane Austen. Can't wait for the fourth novel to come out in September.

Georgia Nigro, Professor of Psychology

I recommend **Supreme City: How Jazz Age Manhattan Gave Birth to Modern America** by Donald Miller, who, through profiles of about 30 larger-than-life individuals, chronicles the golden age of The City from the opening of Grand Central in 1913 till 1930. Politicians, titans of industry, impresarios, bootleggers, immigrants, writers, speculators. Lots of Art Deco skyscrapers.

I'm of two minds on Elizabeth Gilbert's **Signature of All Things**. To a humanist, the natural history seems amazing well researched, and it's an epic, but also contrived (which may be the point – the signature, the plan), and it gets mighty didactic at the end.

Kerry O'Brien, Assistant Dean of the Faculty

Girl on the Train by Paula Hawkins

While I'm not quite finished with this book, I can't put it down. The writing is so wonderful and there is suspense and intrigue packed into each paragraph. I take it with me everywhere and read just a little at a time, whether I'm on the beach, stuck inside on a rainy day, or during my lunch break.

Leanne Ouimet, Office Coordinator & Assistant to the Associate VP for Communications

The book I would love to recommend is **The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating** by Elizabeth Tova Bailey.

"While an illness keeps her bedridden, Bailey watches a wild snail that has taken up residence on her nightstand. As a result, she discovers the solace and sense of wonder that this mysterious creature brings and comes to a greater understanding of her own confined place in the world."

This small book is a delightful and inspiring read. Bailey's prose is graceful and witty. Perfect for a summer's day in the hammock.

Shelley Palmer, Administrative Assistant - Off Campus Study

I read a wonderful, large collection of Alice Munro short stories: **Family Furnishings: Selected Stories, 1995-2014**, given to me as a gift at Christmas. It helped me get through the winter. I also read T. Geronimo Johnson's **Welcome to Braggsville**, which I found both enjoyable and uncomfortable. I read the poignant novel, **The Lotus and the Storm** by Lan Cao. I happened to see on the library shelves and decided to read **A Dry White Season** by André Brink. I remembered it had been a movie with Donald Sutherland. It is a powerful story written in 1979 about apartheid South Africa. To keep myself from jumping off a bridge, I'm currently finishing Cathie Pelletirer's **One-way Bridge**, and will move on to **Traveling Sprinkler: a Novel**, by Nicholson Baker.

Carole Parker, Ladd Library Acquisitions

The Orphan Train by Christina Baker Kline. A very moving story about orphaned children searching for new families after they were moved by rail to the midwest. A revelation for me about a forgotten time in American History.

Any of the mysteries by Louise Penny. I am probably late discovering Penny's marvelous mysteries from others of you, but these are very enjoyable and highly recommended. They are all set in the small village of Three Pines, Quebec where a host of engaging people reside.

All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr. A book about an orphan boy in Germany and a blind girl in France as they grow up before and during WWII, but so much more. Written with imagination and compassion, this story contemplates the difficult questions of moral obligation, survival, and family.

Camille Parrish, Learning Associate/Lecturer, Environmental Studies

Plainsong by Kent Haruf

Oryx and Crake by Margaret Atwood

The Glass Castle by Jeanette Walls
The Price of Salt by Patricia Highsmith
Interpreter of Maladies by Jhumpa Lahiri
The Unbearable Lightness of Being by Milan Kundera
Siddhartha by Hermann Hesse
Brent Pav, Bates Experimental College

Along with others who have submitted titles for the 2015 list, I have fallen hook, line and sinker for Louis Penny's Armand Gamache mysteries. I am decidedly NOT a mystery reader, but these are such good tales that I read all 10 this year. Whoa!

I am in the middle of **The Road to Character** by David Brooks. I'd heard Brooks discussing his writing on NPR and found a copy of the book at my college store! It's a very accessible walk along this road, focusing on how, despite limitations or weaknesses, we can develop strong moral fiber. Frances Perkins, Dwight Eisenhower and Dorothy Day have been my tour guides thus far.

And finally, a pitch for a book by Maine author, Patrick Robbins—son of former Bates employee Judith Robbins. Patrick's book is called **To Make Others Happy** and is the story of a joy facilitator who "only knows how to pass joy along until he meets the woman who shows him how to keep it, and the man who wants to take it all away." Doesn't the term "joy facilitator" strike a chord? I haven't read the book but do want to show support for Maine writing and this Maine writer in particular!

Sarah Potter, Bookstore Director

Tracy Kidder, **Strength in what remains** (2009)— beautifully written story of Deo, who was heading to medical studies, who barely escapes the genocide in Burundi; barely makes it to New York City not knowing English; lives as a homeless person, but working; within two years is admitted to Columbia; goes to medical school; returns to Burundi to put up medical facilities. Toward the end of the book Kidder does tell some of the history of Burundi.
[unfortunately, Burundi is now back in the news]

Graham Farmelo, **The Strangest Man: The hidden life of Paul Dirac** (2009) — Thorough, very readable biography of one of the great physicists of the 20th century. Brought quantum mechanics and relativity together. Today we would probably recognize that he had Aspergers. Still people got use to his behavior and he led a reasonably happy life.

Peter Ackroyd, **Charlie Chaplin** (2014) — Biography. A quick read. A really amazing person; prepared and ready just as silent movies were becoming popular. You can appreciate his genius and hard work, but you get to dislike him as a person.

Walter Isaacson, **The Innovators: How a group of hackers, geniuses, and geeks created the digital revolution** (2014) — Tells the story of the creative people, some loners, some collaborators, and some interested in combining art and engineering — all leading to today's digital devices. Starts with Ada Lovelace (Lord Byron's daughter) on to Alan Turing, Bill Gates and Steve Jobs. As well written as Isaacson's biographies of Einstein and Jobs.

Marie Curie, **Pierre Curie** (1923) — Very short, but insights into their personal and scientific lives before and after they began their work on radioactivity that led to their Nobel Prizes. His tragic death in his 40's is discussed. A real love story as well. She tells of her later medical work with her daughter during World War I.

Jack Pribram, Professor Emeritus of Physics

I'd like to submit **I Was Told There'd Be Cake** by Sloane Crosley for consideration. It is a series of short stories, tracking the musings of a twenty-something as she maneuvers through impossibly awkward social situations.

Alicia Rea, Annual Giving Coordinator-Students

As usual, I read less than I wanted to or should have, and now that I'm deaning and not teaching for a while, I don't even get to reread the books I love to stay close to. Oh well. But I did read:

Roz Chast, **Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?** I loved this book even more than I thought I would. I get *The New Yorker* in large part for her cartoons; this book is at once funny and serious and sad and,

for those of us all too familiar with parental mortality, searingly honest. My friend and colleague Alex Dauge-Roth gave me a related book that I really enjoyed:

Lydia Flem, **The Final Reminder: How I Emptied My Parents' House** (which I read in the original, **Comment j'ai vidé la maison de mes parents**). For those with even good high school French and a desire to get back in the game, it's a fairly easy read with quite straight-forward French. This is another very moving accounting of the author's disposition of her parents' effects and coming to terms with becoming the eldest generation. Short and tender. Indeed, things cling to us and tell a lot of stories.

And while we're in French and colleague mode, I have been incredibly moved by

Akram Belkaïd, **Retours en Algérie** which is an accounting of the author/journalist's return to Algeria after a long period of exile during the intense civil war in his native country. He offers a beautifully nuanced view of the former colonizer and the colonized with unexpected empathies, disruptions and shared anguish. He is the brother of our dear colleague Meryem Belkaïd who invited him to speak this winter. I'd love to have him back to talk about the book that we'll be reading in my seminar in the fall! And speaking of colleagues, last but not least, why not:

Mary Rice DeFosse (and James Mayall), **The Franco-Americans of Lewiston-Auburn**. A beautiful history of this area by a Franco Hall of Famer and cherished Bates professor. Should be required reading for us all!

For a laugh:

Julie Schumacher, **Dear Committee Members**, an academic novel told in letters of recommendation. After 22 years on this campus and 3 years in the dean's office, I see no reason to make things up to be entertained, amazed, incredulous or awe-struck. This reads like my life. Academia is a novel always waiting to happen and Schumacher does a pretty good job.

Last summer I read:

Donna Tartt, **The Goldfinch** because it's really, really long and I thought if I read it I'd feel 1.) noble, 2.) worthy and 3.) like I'd really been on vacation. Check, check, check. I liked it a lot. I'd seen the painting it's based on recently and enjoyed the pages and pages of shenanigans around its disappearance.

I was looking for something on gender and graphic novels or comics and found G. Willow Wilson (Marvel Comics), **Ms. Marvel** which presents the first female Muslim super-hero. A bit didactic, but pretty interesting. And as always, Hergé, **Tintin**. The library has them all. Another good way to brush up on your French.

Finally, Danielle Allen, **Our Declaration**. It's the staff enrichment week read and the common read for the class of 2019. This is a close reading of the Declaration of Independence based on Allen's experience teaching night school and University of Chicago students on how to unpack this historical, complicated, jointly authored and edited document. And if you come to convocation on September 8, you can hear her talk about it in her address to us all!

Kirk Read, Professor of French and Francophone Studies/Associate Dean of the Faculty

This year my favorite book was **All the Light We Cannot See**, by Anthony Doerr. It was a real page turner.

WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE

From the highly acclaimed, multiple award-winning Anthony Doerr, the beautiful, stunningly ambitious instant *New York Times* bestseller about a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II.

Julie Retelle, Assistant College Librarian for Access Services

The Boys in the Boat

Nine Americans and their epic quest for gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics
by Daniel James Brown

Mike Retelle, Professor of Geology

The Department Q novels by Jussi Adler-Olsen are very entertaining detective novels. Grumpy Danish detective with interesting coworkers. The murders are gruesome but the stories are engrossing.

The Narrow Road to the Deep North by Richard Flanagan. I am sure many will suggest this book. I put off reading it but once I started found myself engrossed.

The Orphan Master's Son. I came late to the party on this one. I found the craziness that is North Korea sad, scary, and fascinating.

Returning to Earth by Jim Harrison. I love his writing and found this story of one man's death, told in many voices, to be beautiful and complicated.

Stephanie Richards, Visiting Assistant Professor, Biology

I found myself cheering for the Univ. of Washington on April 4 when they skunked Brown Univ. in all three races. My response to their wins was a direct result of reading Daniel James Brown's **The Boys in the Boat**. You must have had multiple recommendations for that one, yes? A gritty, against-all-odds story.

I'm currently reading Barbara Kingsolver's **Animal, Vegetable, Miracle**. She and her family moved from Tucson, AZ, to rural Appalachia to live as conscious farmers/consumers for a year, depending on the local producing environment to meet their food and other practical needs. Definitely worth borrowing from a library, or a friend, as I did.

A third book, which has been on my night table for years, and which I dream of re-reading, [I loved this book. Can one really *love* a book??] is **Heracles' Bow** by James Boyd White. As advertised on the cover, it's a group of essays on the rhetoric and poetics of the law. Sounds dry, you say? Not so. It's lyrically beautiful writing.

Judith Robbins, Bates friend and past employee

Find the Good: Unexpected Life Lessons from a Small-Town Obituary Writer, by Heather Lende

Heather Lende is an obituary writer in a small town in Alaska. She has written three books as well as columns in several publications.

Ship of Theseus, by J.J. Abrams and Doug Dorst

Description from goodreads.com:

"A young woman picks up a book left behind by a stranger. Inside it are his margin notes, which reveal a reader entranced by the story and by its mysterious author. She responds with notes of her own, leaving the book for the stranger, and so begins an unlikely conversation that plunges them both into the unknown."

Fragile Things, by Neil Gaiman

A short story collection. "Sunbird" is one of my favorite short stories ever!

Ree Russell, Coordinator of Student Support, Dean of Students Office

A good read: **How to be Both** by Ali Smith

Bronwyn Sale, Lecturer in Education

Cutting for Stone, Abraham Verghese - Terrific page turner story about a doctor looking for his roots in Africa where his Mother (a nun) died in childbirth, and his surgeon father abandoned him and his brother to the care of the nuns running the clinic. Escaping civil war, becoming a doctor, finding dad, back to Africa to close the loop.

Telling the Bees, Peggy Hesketh - Unexpectedly interesting though the first couple of chapters are slow. A bit of a murder mystery, elder relationship psychology, lots about bee keeping and bee behavior. Loved the chapter headings (about bees) and how they forecast the chapter content.

The Places in Between, Rory Stewart - about walking across Afghanistan and surviving by wits, knowledge of Persian dialects and Muslim customs. True story of 2002 journey.

The Promise of a Pencil, Adam Braun - one young man's effort to make a difference in the lives of children in poverty in other than USA countries through education. A movement. (A college student gave the book to me when we happened to meet in the Boston bus station.)

Nancy Salmon, Bates Retiree

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness / Michelle Alexander. Hearing snippets of information about the "prison industrial complex" and the failure of the "war on drugs" did not prepare me for revelations about American society that are laid out in this book. The author traces injustices that began with the institution of slavery, morphed into the form of Jim Crow laws, and are now insidiously ingrained in all levels in our "justice" system. If you want to understand why people are out in the streets, read this book.

This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate / Naomi Klein. "Forget everything you think you know about global warming. The really inconvenient truth is that it's not about carbon--it's about capitalism. The convenient truth is that we can seize this existential crisis to transform our failed economic system and build something radically better." Reading the book jacket got my attention, and this book is amazing. Klein lays out what has been happening since the 1980s regarding unregulated capitalism, trade agreements, environmental movements, and climate change. Some things I learned: who and what is behind the movement to deny climate change; how international trade agreements are blocking green energy solutions that would otherwise be widely available now; how methods of extracting oil, coal, and gas have become much riskier and environmentally damaging; how many environmental groups aligned themselves with fossil fuel companies; why options that some tout as "the technology solution" are flawed and dangerous. Klein then lays out examples of what is working and offers an inspiring vision of what we can create by overcoming the current ideological blocks and creating an economy that works for us and all of nature.

Environmental Debt: The Hidden Costs of a Changing Global Economy / Amy Larkin. In an interview, I heard Amy Larkin say that until we pay the real cost for what we use, the economy, on a fundamental level, is broken. The importance of changing accounting was a recurring theme in the

interview: "harmonize the rules of business with the laws of nature". I'm looking forward to reading this book which I understand articulates three rules: pollution can no longer be free and can no longer be subsidized; the long view must guide all decision making; government plays a vital role in catalyzing clean technology and growth and ending environmental destruction.

Sharon Saunders, Assoc. College Librarian for Systems and Bibliographic Services

My recommendations this year include **The Spectator Bird** by Wallace Stegner and **Homicide** by David Simon. Both had been on my 'to read' list for ages and neither disappointed.

Paula Schlax, Associate Professor of Chemistry

I just read **The Poacher's Son** by Paul Doiron.

Claire Schmoll, Executive Assistant to the President

Stuff Matters: Exploring the Marvelous Materials That Shape Our Man-Made World, by Mark Miodownik

Miodownik makes learning about concrete, steel, glass, and *chocolate(!)* so fascinating that, after reading this book, you will wonder how marvelous our designed world could be if materials science taught by someone as interesting as the author was an essential part of every child's schooling.

Anthony Shostak, Museum of Art – Education Curator

Atal Gawande, **Being Mortal**. My book club chose this book, and I admit I wasn't really looking forward to reading it. And then my mother was diagnosed with Stage 4 lung cancer, and I read it the week before I went out to see her. I am SO glad I did. This is an honest, straightforward and

compassionate look at end of life issues, told by a doctor who also shares the death of his own father as part of the narrative. It really helped prepare me for what I had to deal with and face. I'm also hoping the popularity of this book will make a difference in our collective conversation about quality of life, not just quantity. Highly recommended for all ages!

Bonnie Shulman, Mathematics Professor Emerita

The Hour I First Believed by Wally Lamb. It is a New York Times Bestseller, I really enjoyed it.

Jessica Smith, Environmental, Health and Safety Director

Sir Francis Walsingham and the Rise of Espionage in Elizabethan England by John Cooper

More adventures of Elizabeth's fearless and faithful (and ruthless) secret agent. Amplifies, but does not supplant, Budianski's **Her Majesty's Spy Master**.

Latin: Story of a World's Language by Jurgan Leonhardt

This is a rich, detailed history of a language that simply will not die. Parts of that language are still found in law, science, and common speech, although Leonhardt makes the point that its true preservation lies in academic departments of Classical languages.

The Language of the Law by David Mellinkoff

This is an encyclopedic, heavily annotated, but immensely readable account of Western law's journey from Old English to Latin and Law French and then to Modern English, both British and American. It is also a trenchant critique of current legal usage that the author insists lacks precision, brevity, intelligibility, and durability. He is especially annoyed at the law's habit of "worthless doubling", e.g., "fit and proper", "force and effect", "devise and bequeath", "null and void", et cetera, et cetera.

The Religious Roots of the First Amendment: Dissenting Protestants and the Separation of Church and State by Nicholas Miller

Miller claims that the First Amendment's guarantees of religious freedom depend, not primarily on Enlightenment de-emphasis on religion as a whole as popularly thought, but more on the Protestant Dissenters' belief in the "priesthood of all believers". Those who believed it was their individual task to understand Scripture neither needed nor wanted an established church to do it for them.

Shady Characters: The Secret Life of Punctuation, Symbols, and Other Typographical Marks by Keith Houston

Houston writes a lively history of many of those symbols that both readers and writers find necessary for the use of text. Some of these would be familiar to all: the hyphen, the dash, quotation marks, & the ampersand. Some may be less familiar: the pilcrow, the manicule, and what has been known as the pound sign or hash mark, but far more elegantly – the octothorpe. And then there is my favorite, the combination question mark and exclamation point – the short-lived but redoubtable "interrobang".

I recommend two books on religion: **The Bible** by Karen Armstrong and **Revelations** by Elaine Pagels, and three on the current state of higher education: **University, Inc.: the Corporate Corruption of Higher Education** by Jennifer Washburn; **The Rise and Decline of Faculty Governance: Professionalization and the Modern American University** by Larry Gerber; and **The Price of Admission** by Daniel Golden.

And finally, for long reads but very worthwhile, you might enjoy: **The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789** by Robert Middlekauf and **A Gentle Madness** by Nicholas Bashbanes.

Sawyer Sylvester, Professor of Sociology

I suggest a book by Susan R. Barry (Professor of Neurobiology at Mount Holyoke College) entitled **Fixing my Gaze**, subtitled "a scientist's journey into seeing in three dimensions." 2009. Basic Books (Perseus Book Group) New York ISBN 978-0-465-00913-8, 166 pages plus glossary and notes.

It's a fascinating and very moving account of Barry's discovery, through training, that she could acquire three dimensional vision that she lacked until late adulthood. -- A great read. [She also discusses the relevance of her experience to early acquisition, compensation for restrictions, and reacquisition of various senses (sight, touch and hearing) and explains the underlying neuroscience as an expert, but in simple language. I obtained it hard copy through the Lewiston Public Library.]

Bob Thomas, Professor Emeritus of Biology

Jenny Erpenbeck, **The End of Days**. A novel by an East German writer, that spans a tumultuous time in German history. A child is born in 1902, dies young, but is brought back by the author until her final death one hundred years later, following her reincarnation into the increasingly complex political situation in Germany. If this reminds you a little of Kate Atkinson's *Time After Time*, it did me as well, but I found this to be a richer and more complex book, both in human and political terms. It's almost impossible to describe the plot, but the writing is spare, elegant and utterly compelling. My favorite book so far this year.

Marilynne Robinson, **Lila**. The third in a trilogy of novels, the first two being **Gilead**, and **Home**. Lila is the young woman who, in **Gilead**, marries John Ames, the town's elderly Congregational minister. Lila's ability to survive a childhood of abuse and direst poverty, which we now hear about for the first time, makes her story both bleak and transformed by grace. All three books are deeply religious but they transcend any narrow sectarian limits. The minute I finished **Lila**, I went right back and reread **Gilead** (which won the Pulitzer Prize) which remains my favorite, but they are all wonderful.

Anne Thompson, Professor Emerita of English

Short Fiction

Phantasm Japan, ed. Nick Mamatas and Masumi Washington. Tales of the fantastic by Japanese authors, bound together with similar by international authors inspired by the history and culture of Japan. (Full disclosure: I am one of the latter, represented by my story "Thirty-Eight Observations on the Nature of the Self".) I especially recommend the pieces by Project Itoh, Dempow Torishima, and Yusaku Kitano.

See You in Paradise by J. Robert Lennon. A better execution of the types of stories that I attempt to write, combining the quotidian weirdness of contemporary America with a deeper, metaphysical sort of strangeness.

The Strange Library by Haruki Murakami. A quick, unsettling read.

Can't and Won't by Lydia Davis. The latest collection by the doyenne of contemporary short prose.

This Strange Way of Dying by Silvia Moreno-Garcia. Haunting stories of the fantastic that draw on the author's Mexican origins. I especially enjoyed the stories "Maquech," "Shade of the Ceiba Tree," and the title story.

Prison Noir, ed. Joyce Carol Oates. All stories are set in prison, written by current or former inmates, and most are very good. I doubt anyone could read this without seriously rethinking our country's heavy reliance on incarceration.

Autobiography of a Corpse by Sigizmund Krzhizhanovsky. The stories here range from good to excellent. If you like Kafka, Beckett, Calvino or Borges, you will appreciate this book, though Krzhizhanovsky cannot with precision be compared directly to any of those writers. If you're familiar with the history of Western philosophy, even better. If, in addition to those qualifications, the first 20 years after the Russian Revolution hold a special fascination for you, then some of these stories will insinuate themselves into the folds of your cerebral cortex and permanently reshape it.

Poetry

Citizen by Claudia Rankine. The dialectic of racialized visibility and hypervisibility rendered poignantly in prose poetry.

The Poetry of Derek Walcott, 1948-2013. A strong selection of the work of this Nobel Prize winning poet.

Paradise Lost by John Milton. I had not read it until this year. If you managed to graduate Bates without reading it, put it on the list to remedy this gap in your cultural exposure, as it's an example of a "classic" that deserves that status.

Novels

Station Eleven by Emily St. John Mandel. My favorite novel of the last year. It is in part a warning that, when things get really bad, the people who say that "everything happens for a reason" are to be avoided at all costs.

Song of the Shank by Jeffery Renard Allen. A kind of speculative history of "Blind Tom," a 19th century black musician who, because of disability, in effect never benefited from the Emancipation Proclamation or the 13th Amendment.

How to Be Both by Ali Smith. The social construction of gender gets disintermediated by an obscure Renaissance painter.

A Brief History of Seven Killings by Marlon James. What do the CIA, the crack cocaine business, Bob Marley, and murderous homophobia have to do with one another? Through fiction, this book gets to the truth.

The Moor's Account by Laila Lalami. The conquest of the Americas as told by the first enslaved African known to have set foot on what is presently U.S. soil.

An Untamed State by Roxane Gay. Powerful debut novel by someone who, through her short fiction and essays, had already become one of my favorite authors. Trigger warnings for rape, physical abuse, and stunningly accurate portrayals of psychological trauma.

Skink--No Surrender by Carl Hiaasen. As an ex-Floridian I have to read everything by Hiaasen. I might have liked the state better if "Skink" had actually been an ex-governor. The author's first venture into YA, but a good quick read for adult audiences as well.

Dept. of Speculation by Jenny Offill. A quick read. A depiction of parenting a smart, sensitive child in New York City while descending into

depression. Bonus points for use of the word Kummingspeck, and teaching me about Jean-Paul Sartre's crustaceans.

Triangle by Hisaki Matsuura. Unusual events unfold naturalistically, driven by the perversities of strange enemies.

Non-Fiction

Capital in the 21st Century by Thomas Piketty. So rich in data and analysis that I posted a 10 part series about it on my blog.

An Indigenous People's History of the United States by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz. A necessary perspective on the history of this country that (unless you've studied with Joe Hall), you likely have not seen before.

Gay Berlin by Robert Beachy. A lively, readable historical account of the roots of the modern gay rights movement that shows how, when we speak of gender and sexuality today, we are basically speaking German.

A Storm of Witchcraft: The Salem Trials and the American Experience by Emerson W. Baker (Bates alum and Salem State University professor). Reads the Salem witch trials through multiple prisms to demonstrate their continuing relevance to matters of race, class, gender, property and law in America today. A good companion piece to the Dunbar-Ortiz.

The Politics of Wealth in Southwestern Nigeria: Why Ondo's Women Went to War by (Bates professor) Elizabeth Eames. Revelatory description of a historical episode with which I had previously been unfamiliar.

The Formation of Candomblé: Vodun History and Ritual in Brazil by Luis Nicolau Pares. Combines social history, anthropological investigation, and linguistic analysis to advance a hypothesis about the ethnic origins of certain religious rituals. While the hypothesis may be controversial among specialists in the study of Candomblé, the book presents the debates fairly and with enough background information for someone previously unfamiliar with the topic to learn a great deal.

Why Rural Schools Matter by (Bates professor) Mara Tieken. Though based on research she did at rural schools in Arkansas, contains recontextualizations of the national debates around education policy that are highly relevant to our own mostly rural state.

The Iranian Talmud: Reading the Bavli in its Sasanian Context by Shai Secunda. Like all the best scholarly writings on the Talmud, it is leavened by the humor of the tannaim and amoraim themselves.

A Civil War: A History of the Italian Resistance by Claudio Pavone. A comprehensive social history of a pivotal period in Italian (and world) history. And with all too many countries today being torn by civil war, one with a great deal of contemporary resonance.

White Girls by Hilton Als. Rare examples of cultural criticism that require thought of the reader, rather than merely providing predigested morsels ready for dinner party conversation.

Discipline and Punish by Michel Foucault. Another classic worth re-visiting.

Humor

Texts from Jane Eyre by Mallory Ortberg. A must read for all English majors.

Joseph Tomaras, Director of Sponsored Programs and Research Compliance

I'd suggest Colum McCann, **TransAtlantic**. It's a beautifully written series of subtly interlaced stories, including one focusing on George Mitchell and the Good Friday Peace Accord.

Tom Tracy, Phillips Professor of Religious Studies

Vampires in the Lemon Grove: and other stories

by Karen Russell

Vintage Contemporaries, Vintage Books, 2014

Karen is also author the author of two other works of fiction:

Swamplandia! and **St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by**

Wolves. **Vampires in the Lemon Grove** was given to me as a birthday present this year by my eldest son. I don't read a lot of fiction and was delighted by these brief journeys away from the real world. My favorite story from this collection was "Reeling for the Empire." Enjoy!

Laura Wardwell, AAA

I've been mostly reading non-fiction recently, although I am working my way through Neil Gaiman's **Fragile Things** right now, and enjoying it. So here are my 2014/15 selections:

The Catcher Was a Spy by Nicholas Dawidoff. Tells the life story of Moe Berg, professional baseball player, OSS and CIA spy, and all-around cipher and eccentric. Nicely written, but like Berg himself, this book was put together oddly and left me feeling empty and sad at the end.

Fenway 1912: The Birth of a Ballpark, a Championship Season, and Fenway's Remarkable First Year by Glenn Stout. Despite the lengthy 18th-century-like title, this book flows along easily and makes for an enjoyable and quick read for any level of baseball fan.

League of Denial by Mark Fainaru-Wada and Steve Fainaru, and **Against Football: One Fan's Reluctant Manifesto** by Steve Almond. If you just can't enjoy the NFL in it's current state and need to make a clean break of it, then read these two books. The Fainaru's present a damning case against the league's insistent denial that a brutal game doesn't actually harm its participants, while Almond's is a feisty and often funny rant against the game from a long-time, self-described "manly football fan."

The Violinist's Thumb: And Other Lost Tales of Love, War, and Genius, as Written by Our Genetic Code by Sam Kean. Half history of science, and half human drama, Kean's book is a fun trip through our DNA, about the scientists who unraveled its secrets, and how our genes affect us in a variety of ways.

Pat Webber, Director of Archives and Special Collections

Finally, I got around to reading **The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy** by Douglas Adams. What a hoot!

Inspired by a canoe trip I took through the area, I've read Louise Dickinson Rich's **We Took to the Woods**.

Beth Whalon, Assistant in Instruction, Biochemistry

From the fall/winter reading pile:

Hild, Nicola Griffith

Beautifully written fictional account of the early life of St. Hilda of Whitby
Burial Rites, Hannah Kent

Evocative fictional account of the last woman executed in Iceland.

Kindred, Octavia Butler

It took me too long to come to this book.

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse, Peter Matthiessen

Prepare to have your heart broken.

Wind-Up Bird Chronicles, Haruki Murakami

I want like Murakami more than I do. I think the failing is mine.

From the summer reading pile:

4th of July Creek, Smith Henderson

Citizen, Claudia Rankine

Hard to be God, Arkady and Boris Strugatsky

Utopia of Rules, David Graeber

Bartleby the Scrivener, Herman Melville

the Longmire mystery series, Craig Johnson

Andrew White, Director of User Services, ILS

Mysteries

Anything by Louise Penny, starting with her first, **Still Life** (2007).

Fiction

Jamie Ford, **Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet** - deals with internment of the Japanese in WWII.

Jane Gardam, **Old Filth** - the life of a "Raj orphan".

Non-fiction

Katherine Boo, **Behind the Beautiful Forevers** - slum dwellers of Mumbai.

Barron Lerner, **The Good Doctor** - contrasts medical practices of the 1960s with those of today.

Wil S. Hylton, **Vanished** - hunting for US planes shot down in WWII.

Anne Williams, Professor Emerita of Economics

Receiving three or more recommendations on the 19th annual list:

All the Light We Cannot See (Anthony Doerr)

Dear Committee Members (Julie Schumacher)

Our Declaration (Danielle Allen)

Anything by Louise Penny

Submissions are listed alphabetically by surname of the submitter. In an effort to conserve paper, we have condensed the list with very little regard for design or spacing! We apologize for overcrowding, typographical errors or other misrepresentations.

Our annual thanks to our friends in Office Services for co-sponsoring this effort and getting the list into booklet form with blazing speed.

Hastily compiled by Sarah Potter, Bookstore Director 5/15