

# Good Reads 2017: the 21<sup>st</sup> Edition

The Bates College Non-Required Reading List  
for Leisure Moments



Entries are in alphabetical order by submitter, and their name appears at the bottom of the last title submitted.

My deepest thanks to Sarah Potter, for allowing me to grab this torch and keep it burning, and for the many supportive and lovely messages I received from people who wanted this tradition to continue.

Thanks to Post & Print for supplying the coveted printed versions and to the College Store for distributing those versions and posting online.

Until next year,

*Alison Keegan, Dean of the Faculty's office*

# Meet Your Next Favorite Book

## **Braiding Sweetgrass, by Robin Wall Kimmerer**

A lovely book about nature, spirituality, family and human emotion, Braiding Sweetgrass combines the perspectives of science and tradition. The author is a botanist and professor of plant ecology, and also a Potawatomi woman. Through these two lenses, she teaches others about the values of both.

## **The Anansi Boys, by Neil Gaiman**

A story of myth, magic and relationships, this book is as fun as it is weird. A seemingly ordinary guy finds a brother he never knew he had, a father he never knew at all and himself in the process. A good romp.

*Lee Abrahamsen, Biology*

## **Commonwealth, by Ann Patchett**

This is a sweeping family saga that brings us the story of two families coming together because of divorce. I loved the story, the writing and the suspense surrounding the early death of a central character.

## **The Invention of Nature, by Andrea Wulf**

Wulf reintroduces Alexander von Humboldt, the prolific German scientist, to the 21st century readers. His story is filled with exploration and wonder during his travels through Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1700s and across Russia in the early 1800s as he develops his ideas that everything in nature is interconnected instead of created by God for our use. What I particularly enjoyed was the last part of the book, which details Humboldt's influence on specific scientists.

*Áslaug Ásgeirsdóttir, Politics*

**Etta, by Gerald Koplan** is available through Amazon: a historical fiction story of the woman who married the Sundance Kid. It combines the actual facts that are known, and weaves a larger tale involving other real people who were alive at the time. Rollicking good story.

**Vinegar Girl, by Anne Tyler** is available at the Bates library. It's a present day retelling of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. I can really picture the characters since two of them are scientists working on autoimmunity. That's a mash-up I never thought I'd see!

**The Book of Ebenezer LePage, by GB Edwards** is available as an ebook through Maine InfoNet. It's a history of Guernsey told as a "fictional" memoir but written by an elderly man whose life seems to have been much like his narrator. It was rambling, but with a very sweet ending, and I liked the window into how an elderly person might think.  
*Pamela Baker, Class of 1970, and Faculty Emerita, Biology*

**Tell the Wolves I'm Home, by Carol Rifka Brunt**

This is the novel I forced on everyone I know last year. Highly recommended for anyone who has grown up and/or loved other human beings.

*Jennifer Blanchard, the President's Office*

**Lit: A Memoir, by Mary Karr**

It is not only a beautifully raw and inspiring book, but each chapter starts with a quote from another author, so it is a great way to be exposed to even more great reading.

*Rachel Boggia, Theater and Dance*

**The Age of Wonder: The Romantic Generation and the Discovery of the Beauty and Terror of Science, by Richard Holmes** is a beautiful book that recognizes the close kinship between arts/humanities and sciences, and how they rose up together.

*Janet Bourne, Music*

I'm currently reading and would recommend **The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt's New World, by Andrea Wulf**.

*Marita Bryant, Geology*

Here's one. I haven't read it yet, but it is on my nightstand in case of emergency. I hope I get the chance to read it before I really need it! It

shows readers how to quickly resolve any situation, no matter how long it's been going on, or how many people are involved. The techniques and psychological strategies presented here are simple, easy to understand, and work...fast. In this book readers will learn how to: End any family feud; Get an apology from anyone; Jumpstart any relationship or friendship; Handle any passive-aggressive person. The book is **Make Peace with Anyone: Breakthrough Strategies to Quickly End Any Conflict, Feud, or Estrangement**, by David Lieberman.

*Daphne Comeau, Advancement*

Fiction:

**Seveneves**, by Neal Stephenson

**The Golem and the Jinni**, by Helene Wecker

**The Day of the Jackal**, by Frederick Forsyth

**The First Fifteen Lives of Harry August**, by Claire North

**The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry**, by Gabrielle Zevin

**Summit: a Novel**, by Harry Farthing

Nonfiction:

**Pirate Hunters: Treasure, Obsession, and the Search for a Legendary Pirate Ship**, by Robert Kurson

**A Man on the Moon: The Voyages of the Apollo Astronauts**, by Andrew Chaikin

**Alexander Hamilton**, by Ron Chernow

*Grace Coulombe, Class of 1994, Mathematics*

**The House at Tyneford**, by Natasha Solomons. It's the spring of 1938 and no longer safe to be a Jew in Vienna. Nineteen-year-old Elise Landau is forced to leave her glittering life of parties and champagne to become a parlor maid in England.

**An Irish Country Doctor**, by Michael Taylor. Easy read. A straitlaced novice doctor gets initiated into the unorthodox world of a crafty rural sawbones in Taylor's American debut.

**Britt Marie Was Here, by Fredrik Backman.** Heartwarming story about a woman rediscovering herself after a personal crisis.

*Karen Daigler, Bates Career Development Center*

**The Sound of Gravel, Ruth Wariner,** listened as an audio book, read by the author.

*Susan Dunning, Advancement*

**Angel of Bataan, by Walter MacDougal.** Alice Zwicker was the only service woman from Maine to be a prisoner of the enemy in either of the two World Wars. The story is about her life before, during and after her captivity. She is one woman I wish I could have met.

**A Long Way From Chicago, by Richard Peck,** What a great little book. Each chapter is a different memory of one week a year spent with his grandmother. For 7 different summers.

**Not For Sale- Finding Center in the Land of Crazy Horse, by Kevin Hancock.** (A Modern Day Vision Quest) This is not just the story of how one man, Kevin Hancock, looked deep into his own soul. It is an example of how all of us can find our inner voice and soul.

**Ruska, by Edward Rutherford.** A fictional drama with historical facts that spans 1,800 years of Russia's history, people, politics and culture. It's part novel and part history lesson.

*Melinda Emerson, ILS*

As a commuter, a lot of my "reading" comes via audio books. They must have good readers, or I won't tolerate them. Here is a sampling, in a variety of genres, that I've enjoyed recently:

**Harvest, by Maine's own Tess Gerriten,** read by George Guidall. A medical mystery/thriller that made me look forward to leaving for work!

**Not My Father's Son, written and read by Scottish actor Alan Cumming.** A memoir about uncovering mysteries from his family's past while confronting demons from his own childhood.

**The Immortal Irishman, by Timothy Egan**, read by Gerard Doyle. Non-fiction about an Irish revolutionary who is transported to Van Diemen's Land, escapes to America and becomes a hero here. Powerful insight into a broad sweep of Irish history as seen through the life of one man.

**The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, by Junot Diaz** (a favorite author of Obama's) read by Lin-Manuel Miranda (of Hamilton fame). About a lovesick Dominican ghetto kid living in New Jersey -- sounds odd, but it's quite entertaining and even illuminating.

**The Professor and the Madman, written and read by Simon Winchester**. A history of the creation of the OED, whose greatest contributor was an insane murderer working from the confines of an asylum -- an egghead's delight!

**The One-in-a-Million Boy, by Maine author Monica Wood read by Chris Ciulia**. This isn't a recommendation, because the reader makes the main/Maine character, a 104-year old woman from Portland, sound like she's from the Bronx. But Monica's work is wonderful, so read this one on paper. I just read her **When We Were the Kennedys** (on paper), and enjoyed that more -- all about growing up in a Maine paper mill town.  
*Carol Farrell, Theater and Dance*

**Hillbilly Elegy, by J.D. Vance**.

*Sylvia Federico, English*

**Bull Mountain, by Brian Panowich**. There's nothing like richly developed characters inside a fast-paced plot. Bull Mountain is utterly fantastic-- one of my favorite reads from the past few years.

**The Mothers, by Brit Bennett**. A story about love, community, and secrets. I really liked this one.

**The Secret History, by Donna Tartt.** Not a new release, but I reread it nearly every Fall; it's the one that I recommend to almost everyone who asks "What should I read next?"

*Kristy Gagne, Student Affairs Office*

I recommend **Samuel Eliot Morison's The Two-Ocean War: A Short History of the United States Navy in the Second World War.** The long title is somehow appropriate because it is a condensed version of his 15 volume history of the U.S. Navy in World War 2. After Pearl Harbor, Morison asked President Roosevelt for the opportunity to write this history from inside the Navy. The result was that he was commissioned an officer in the Navy and spent the rest of the war on several Navy ships all over the world. As he intended, this direct involvement in the events makes his writing vivid. A few times it seems to be a bit more like "official history" but not often. He doesn't shy away from saying what he thinks, both good and bad, about strategies, decisions, and commanders. The book has lots of great maps but should also have a glossary. There are many acronyms and references that are not commonly known now. That may be one downside of his goal of writing history while it happened. I used Google and Wikipedia to fill in those gaps while reading. It was such a fun and quick read that I may consider reading the 15 volume version.

*Bruce Hall, ILS*

**Darwin and the Beagle, by Alan Moorehead.** A readable and well-illustrated book that focuses on the round-the-world voyage that provided the evidence for evolution. Darwin, a young naturalist who was expected by his family to become a vicar after he gave up on medicine, signed up for the voyage partly to escape settling down into a respectable profession. (A footnote: In Westminster Abby, the quantity of verbiage on the memorial plaques and gravestones is generally in inverse proportion to the true importance of the person. So the forgotten 5th son of a viscount will have paragraphs of prose, and Darwin's gravestone in the floor says only "Charles Darwin".)



**The Romanovs, The Final Chapter, by Robert K. Massie.** A follow-up volume to Nicholas and Alexandra, on the physical searches and scientific detective work to establish that the bones of the Romanov family and their retainers had been found. Lots of egos and arguments involved, and the Russians were not pleased to have to rely on British and American DNA scientists to do most of the matching. An entire lab of Russian scientists working on the predecessor groundwork research to DNA had been shot on Stalin's orders, and the Russians have been behind in DNA work ever since.

**Ben Macintyre,** British historian of the 20th Century, focuses on biographies of bizarre individuals or WWII accounts of bizarre skullduggery. He is prolific and quite readable. **Agent Zigzag, Operation Mincemeat, Forgotten Fatherland, The Napoleon of Crime, Rogue Heroes, Double Cross, The Englishman's Daughter,** and **A Spy among Friends.**

**The Fleet at Flood Tide: America at Total War in the Pacific, 1944-45, by James Hornfischer.** Very well written, especially with the strategic differences between the senior Naval leaders. Admiral Raymond Spruance, the careful and thorough intellect of the campaigns, is the central character, but there is a great deal of detail on the fighting itself. At 500 pages, not an evening's quick read.

**Love in a Fallen City, by Eileen Chang.** Related stories about the collapse of traditional Chinese patriarchal culture, highly regarded by many modern Chinese as accurately reflective of the turmoil of 20th century China.

**Irena's Children, by Tilar Mazzeo.** A social worker in the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw smuggled hundreds of children out before they could be shipped to concentration camps.

**Bones of Grace, by Tahmima Anam.** Part of a trilogy of novels following a family in Bangladesh through the decades during and after independence. The cutting up of a ship, the Grace of the title, on the

Bangladesh coast is a core image for what the family is experiencing.  
Very well written.

*Bill Hiss, Class of 1966, Retired Colleague*

**White Oleander by Janet Finch** has heavy content, but it is absorbing and poetic and I have read it many, many times.

Authors **Milan Kundera** and **Hermann Hesse** are all-time favorites of mine, though their novels aren't the typical beach read. They have strong philosophical tones that I like to slowly digest and take my time reading to really absorb their messages and themes.

**The Unbearable Lightness of Being by Milan Kundera** is incredible and **Steppenwolf** and **Peter Camenzind by Hermann Hesse** are my favorites.

As an artist, I fell in love with Georgia O'Keeffe by reading her letters. Through her words you can discover her unique spirit. Her fascinating relationship with Alfred Stieglitz can be dissected by reading **My Faraway One: Selected Letters of Georgia O'Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz, by Sarah Greenough.**

*Alexandra Hood, Olin Arts Center*

**An Uncommon Protector, by Shelley Shepard Gray.** It takes place during/after the Civil War. It's a love story, but it's also about soldiers taken prisoner and the bonds/friendships they form as prisoners of war. In this modern day and age, we sometimes forget about our ancestry, and we never should.

*Joan Houston, Retired colleague*

**Rules of Civility, by Amor Towles.** A lovely novel about a working class Brooklyn girl's encounter with the gilded, set in Manhattan in the late 1930's. A wonderful evocation of the place and time - New York is practically a character in this novel.

**The Art Forger, by Barbara A. Shapiro.** A charming book through which you will learn how to forge a masterpiece (if you already know how to paint well).

**Tribe, by Sebastian Junger.** A kind of pop culture/somewhat autobiographical/somewhat sociological exploration of how contemporary western culture cuts us off from an innate human trait to take care of each other. I don't know if I buy all of it, but it's well-written, thoughtful and thought-provoking - also short.

*Margaret Imber, Classical & Medieval Studies and Dean of the Faculty's Office*

**News of the World, by Paulette Jiles.** If you enjoyed True Grit, the movie or the book, you'll enjoy this older man/younger girl story based on true events. Beautifully captivating writing; she is a poet as well as a novelist.

**Woman Next Door, by Yewande Omotoso.** Clever story of the lingering issues in South Africa told through the microcosm of two older women, one white and one black.

**I Shot the Buddha, by Colin Cotterill.** This is the latest in the Dr. Siri Paiboun mysteries which are wonderfully clever stories populated with unforgettable characters with a real Thai flavor.

*Laura Juraska, ILS*

One work of fiction I especially enjoyed this year was **Angela Fournery's The Turner House**, a multi-generational family saga set primarily in Detroit, spanning from the Great Migration through de-industrialization and into the Great Recession. Fournery offers a deeply moving family story, that also manages to explore the history, politics, and sociology of the US from the 1940's through the early 21st century beautifully.

I also recommend **Jane Hamilton's The Excellent Lombards**, a coming of age story set in the context of the decline of small farms, and

**Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland***, which follows two Bengali brothers, one of whom stays in India as a political activist while the other immigrates to the US to become an academic scientist.

I always like to recommend at least one work of sociology too, and this year I suggest **Matthew Desmond's book *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City***. It's a highly engaging account of the role evictions, and the public policies that allow profit to be extracted through eviction, play in deepening poverty in the contemporary US. The nuanced sociological analysis is offered through lively ethnographic accounts of the lives of low-income renters, landlords, and property managers in Milwaukee.

*Emily Kane, Sociology*

**All the Ugly and Wonderful Things, by Bryn Greenwood.** A beautifully unsentimental book about the darkness that childhood can offer coupled with a unique friendship and an unlikely love story. One of the best books I read in 2016, it left me thinking for days after, which truly is the best kind of book.

**The Sound of Gravel, by Ruth Wariner.** I love memoirs, and preferably, the more messed up the person, the better the story. This book was heartbreaking, haunting, deeply emotional, and as a mom, left me feeling so profoundly sad at what this woman had to endure in her childhood. That said, she made it out of a wrenching situation to write this incredible book, and is truly a survivor.

**Yes, Chef, by Marcus Samuelsson.** A memoir of a totally different caliber about one of my favorite Food Network personalities. This memoir describes the upbringing and harrowing life of a chef, in particular, one who was born in Ethiopia but was adopted and grew up in Sweden. I learned so much about Marcus and his family through this book, and the grueling process to make it in the food business. So many times I found myself thinking, really? All this just for food on a plate? Inspirational and delicious.

**Setting Free the Kites, by Alex George.** I judge books by their covers and this one intrigued me with its muted Ferris wheel lights and taking place in Maine. This is a tale of two boys and their friendship, and how the bond and strength of friendship can surpass tragedy and family failures. Poignant and memorable, this was a beautiful read.

**Behind Her Eyes, by Sarah Pinborough** is a wild ride of psychological thrilldom. You think you know how it ends? You're wrong, I promise.  
*Alison Keegan, Dean of the Faculty's Office*

**Secondhand Time: The Last of the Soviets by Svetlana Alexievich.** Described as 'a symphonic oral history about the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the emergence of a new Russia'...a really terrific book!  
*Bill Low, Museum of Art*

**Temporary People by Deepak Unnikrishnan.** Before I came to Bates last year, I worked at NYU Abu Dhabi and had the pleasure of collaborating with Deepak on many projects. Raised in Abu Dhabi, he was teaching in a precarious adjunct position at the university, and stood out as a creative, passionate educator deeply dedicated to helping students understand the UAE beneath the glitz. A temporary person himself, unable to get citizenship as a non-Emirati but knowing no other home, he creates a wrenching, stunning, fantastical work of the everyday lives of South Asian "expats" in the Gulf. His first novel is getting tremendous press - deservedly so.

*Tina Mangieri, Center for Global Education*

**The High Mountains of Portugal, by Yann Martel.**

*Maggie Maurer-Fazio, Economics*

Several of the books I read this year were suggestions offered in last year's booklet. I offer them again as a testament of how good they were.  
**The Girl on the Train, by Paula Hawkins.** (didn't see the movie) I had a hard time putting it down once I picked it up – very good read! I'm looking forward to reading her next book, **“Into the Water.”**

**The Lady in the Van, by Alan Bennett.** An interesting read (a bit more interesting than the movie).

**A Walk in the Woods, by Bill Bryson** (didn't see the movie) – a fun read. And **In a Sunburned Country, also by Bill Bryson.** I read this to get a feel for what the "land down under" might be like prior to visiting our daughter who's living in New Zealand and enjoyed his writing style. He's thorough enough to imagine what he's describing and piques one's interest with his personal insights on the local history and people.

**Hidden Figures, by Margot Lee Shetterly.** I liked the book, learned a lot I didn't know about the early space programs and will probably watch the movie.

**I'll Take You There, by Wally Lamb.** An interesting perspective by the main character as he relives his past to learn "the rest of the story" in order to better understand himself and his family.

*Monica McCusker, College Store*

**Deep South, by Paul Theroux.** Paul Theroux is best known for his travels in Africa, Russia, the Pacific and other places. This time he travels by car from his home on Cape Cod, visiting and revisiting mostly smaller towns in the deep south. He finds some places that have prospered and others that are almost abandoned suffering steep decline. He offers perspective on global aid initiatives that have largely overlooked the poverty that exists right on our own doorstep.

**The Stranger in the Woods: The Extraordinary Story of the Last True Hermit, by Michael Finkel.** The true story of the hermit in the woods, just an hour north of Lewiston. A tale of how one man managed to live for 27 years in a tent in the woods without talking to another person. An interesting reflection on solitude and how one day Christopher Knight just walked away from life's expectations. "He broke into nearby cottages for food, clothes, reading material, and other provisions, taking only what he needed, but terrifying a community never able to solve the mysterious burglaries."

**The Sixth Extinction, by Elizabeth Kolbert.** Elizabeth Kolbert came to Bates in October 2016 to deliver the Otis lecture and talk about her Pulitzer prize winning book. "The sixth mass extinction is the biggest story on Earth, period, and Elizabeth Kolbert tells it with imagination, rigor, deep reporting, and a capacious curiosity about all the wondrous creatures and ecosystems that exist, or have existed, on our planet. The result is an important book full of love and loss."

**The Sympathizer, Viet Thanh Nguyen.** "The winner of the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, as well as six other awards. The narrator, a communist double agent, is a "man of two minds," a half-French, half-Vietnamese army captain who arranges to come to America after the Fall of Saigon, and while building a new life with other Vietnamese refugees in Los Angeles is secretly reporting back to his communist superiors in Vietnam. The Sympathizer is a blistering exploration of identity and America, a gripping espionage novel, and a powerful story of love and friendship."

*David McDonough, Bates Career Development Center*

My favorite fiction of the past year was **A Little Life, by Hanya Yanagihara.** This 700+ page novel follows a group of four male friends from their time in college throughout their adult lives. A major theme of the book is suffering and it can be quite brutal for relatively long passages (trigger warning for anyone who has dealt with abuse), but it is beautifully written and a truly vivid, riveting read.

My favorite non-fiction was **Modern Romance, by Aziz Ansari.** I've enjoyed Ansari's comedy and love his television shows (Parks & Recreation, Master of None) and I was expecting this book to be in the style of books written by other comedians, but it ended up being so much more. While the book does incorporate his comedic voice, he also partnered with a team of sociologists to conduct focus groups and

explore quantitative data to explain intergenerational and intercultural differences in how people fall in love. It is a smart, insightful, and engaging book.

*Tom McGuinness, Institutional Research, Analysis, and Planning*

**Queen Elizabeth II and Her Church, Royal Services at Westminster Abbey** by, **John Hall, Dean of Westminster**. A moving and remarkable book, by turns historical, liturgical, devotional and personal, in which the Dean of Westminster describes the unique part played by the Abbey in the life of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, and in doing so also makes compellingly clear its close and special relationship with the Queen and the British Royal Family. ~ Sir David Cannadine

**My Brother the Pope**, by **Msgr. Georg Ratzinger**. Not just a fascinating book, but a unique one, as well. We are granted an intimate look at the life of one beloved brother through the eyes of another. ~ Fr. Benedict Groeschel

Both of these I have enjoyed and recommend!

*Kevin Michaud, Dining Services*

**Mystic Tea**, by **Rea Nolan Martine**. This is a delightful, humorous, and insightful pleasure to read. The characters are colorful and the author pulls you in to a very personal and intimate level with them.

*Catie Moran, Academic Support Services*

**Evicted : Poverty and Profit in the American City**, by **Matthew Desmond**. This is a compassionate, heartbreaking portrait of low-income renters exploited by landlords and disregarded by the justice system.

**Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right**, by **Jane Mayer**. With a combination of biography and journalism, this sheds light on how certain ideas, once radical, have spread into the mainstream.



**Life and Fate, by Vasily Grossman.** The greatest Russian novel you've never heard of.

*Christine Murray, ILS*

**All the Light We Cannot See, by Anthony Doerr.** A rich novel set in pre-WWII and WWII following the lives of a blind French girl and an electronics savvy German boy which become entangled through radio broadcasts by the girl's uncles. A compelling tale finely wrought.

*Michael Murray, Economics*

**On Canaan's Side, by Sebastian Barry.** A lyrical tale of trauma and hope.

**The Sellout, by Paul Beatty.** I knew the book was a satire on race, but I didn't know it was a takedown of my field—psychology—as well.

**Death's End, by Liu Cixin.** The third in a science fiction trilogy that has changed forever my thoughts about first contact.

**Other Minds: The Octopus, the Sea, and the Deep Origins of Consciousness by Peter Godfrey-Smith.** The philosopher-author tells us that making contact with cephalopods is probably the closest we will come to meeting intelligent.

*Georgia Nigro, Psychology*

My Bates author pick this year is historian **Margaret Creighton's** great book, **The Electrifying Fall of Rainbow City: Spectacle and Assassination at the 1901 World's Fair**, which chronicles the 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, where, among many other things, President McKinley was shot. When you read it, you hear Margaret's voice throughout, spinning this incredible yarn. It's filled with facts, intersectionality, imperialism, and the examination of lots of colliding cultural forces, all written with signature Creightonian wit. The book also reveals why women climbed into barrels and flung themselves over Niagara Falls, which does not seem like a good idea at all.

**The Secret History of Wonder Woman, by Jill Lepore.** The origin story of Wonder Woman is entangled with emerging experimental psychology, Margaret Sanger, women's rights, plural marriage, a supreme huckster, and female superhero invented by a guy with a female paramour ghostwriter (a superhero hidden in her street clothes).

**Middlemarch!** Per recommendations from the English Department, I did the deep dive into **Middlemarch, George Eliot's** epic portrayal small town life in transition in 1830s England. It took forever to read, and I did wonder, "Dorothea, what were you thinking?" But it's a complex, unsentimental, honest portrayal of individuals and communities living in a time when things were about to get real.

*Kerry O'Brien, Dean of the Faculty's Office*

**Fates and Furies, by Lauren Groff.** It is engrossing and thought-provoking. Story of a marriage from his side (Fates) and her side (Furies). Different from anything I have read before.

**A Square Meal, A Culinary History of the Great Depression, by Jane Ziegelman and Andrew Coe.** A social history that provides insight about the social welfare networks that fed the hungry during the depression. Politics and social attitudes of the times are explored and the authors explain the underpinnings about how some of the programs and policies put into place during the depression have continued to influence our current thinking about food and nutrition. One point that particularly struck me was the authors' arguments for the role that food and nutrition played in the beginnings of the rural vs urban political and social divide that we see so dramatically today.

**I Contain Multitudes, by Ed Yong.** Just getting started on this one...  
*Karen Palin, Biology*

**The Meadow, by James Galvin.** This story focuses on a meadow on the Colorado/Wyoming border and the few people who had lived there

over a 100 year time span. Beautiful, moving depiction of the importance of place and the meadow's components- weather, wildlife, water, and people.

**One in a Million Boy, by Monica Wood.** Portland author Monica Wood has written another treasure about the relationships that develop between a centenarian, a boy and his father, and their own unique stories. A wonderful depiction of each of their journeys.

**Strangers in Their Own Land, by Arlie Russell Hochschild.** A sociologist takes the reader on a journey to "cancer alley" in southern Louisiana where she tells the stories of conservative individuals who have lived and worked there most of their lives. She shares their emotions, convictions, and reasons for their political choices.

*Camille Parrish, Environmental Studies*

**The Places that Scare You: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times, by Pema Chodron and The Miracle of Mindfulness, by Thich Nhat Hanh.**

*Nicole Pelonzi, Multifaith Chaplaincy*

**The Cormoran Strike Novels, by Robert Galbraith.** When your brain needs a little break and you're craving a well-written yet engrossing read, I highly recommend picking up the Cormoran Strike novels, a three-part series about a private eye.

**American Pastoral, Philip Roth.** In all of my years of school, I somehow missed this epic and just discovered it this year. Oh, the layers! What initially seems like a simple tale of an American family quickly shifts to a deep reflection on the history of the United States, and the everyday people who contributed to it.

*Liz Pinnie, Office of Admission*

Books are the best gifts! My Christmas gift good reads were **Ann Patchett's Commonwealth** and **Mrs. Queen Takes the Train by William Kuhn.** Enjoyed both but was delighted by Mrs. Queen, an

entertaining imagining of the changing monarchy and the queen's attempt to escape her royal routine.

I enjoyed two collections of poetry that are worth mentioning: the late **Jane Kenyon's Collected Poems** and **Sailing Alone Around the Room** by **Billy Collins**.

And, of course, the latest offering from **Louise Penney, A Great Reckoning**. As with every single one of Penney's Gamache mysteries, she leaves me eager for the next book.

*Sarah Potter, Bookstore Director Emerita*

**The Boys in the Boat, by Daniel James Brown**. Nine Americans and their epic quest for gold at the Berlin Olympics. Not just about rowing, but also about nine remarkable University of Washington students. And about their lives in the Northwest through the 1920s and into the Depression. Well written and interesting from beginning to end.

**The Road to Little Dribbling, by Bill Bryson**. Adventures of an American in Britain. As always, Bryson writes with humor and insight as he travels to mostly small towns that often have intriguing names. At times he can be critical (snarky), but overall entertaining.

**The Genius of Birds, by Jennifer Ackerman**. Amazing what has been discovered in the last twenty years. Ackerman has met with researchers, read scientific articles, traveled the world to see some remarkable behavior of birds, and yet writes with a light touch as she details recent research. She describes the evolution of their brains (over a much longer time than humans); describes their clever ways of surviving, including some using and even shaping tools; their social behavior, their nest making; and their songs.

*Jack Pribram, Faculty Emeritus, Physics*

I recommend **Patient, by Bettina Judd**, a book of poems in which the author considers her own medical ordeals as they are, as the website states, "entangled in a history of medical subjugation and display" that

includes enslaved women experimented on by the so-called father of modern gynecology. The website itself <http://www.patientpoems.com/>, which had video, sound, bibliography, and links, is a must read itself.  
*Erica Rand, Women and Gender Studies*

My 13 year old recommends **Orphan Train: A Novel, by Christina Baker Kline** as a compelling story of immigration, war, family, and coming of age.

I thoroughly enjoyed **Beautiful Ruins by Jess Walter, Little Bee by Chris Cleave, The Boys in the Boat by Daniel James Brown, and Just Mercy, by Bryan Stevenson.**

*Darby Ray, Harvard Center for Community Partnerships*

**The Refugees, by Viet Thanh Nguyen.** A marvelous collection of short stories that center around the immigrant and refugee questions as they pertain to Vietnam. A broad range of identities infuse this collection, complicating our assumptions about both American and Vietnamese cultures. Most stories have surprising turns that reframe questions of identity and belonging.

**Strangers Tend to Tell Me Things, by Amy Dickinson.** A shameless plug for an old friend's latest memoir. It is a series of essays with a vague attention to timeline, but mainly relying on common threads of people my age (58?!): aging and dying parents, children leaving the nest, blending families, divorce and remarriage, small town shenanigans. Amy writes the nationally syndicated column, Ask Amy, and can often be heard as a panelist on NPR's *Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me!*

**The Underground Railroad, by Colson Whitehead.** Profoundly moving novel imagining the underground railroad as an actuality--an underground train that runs to the north. Vivid, difficult, exquisitely written. I finished and then began all over again.

For the francophones and francophiles, two books I'm teaching in my Francophone literature course this fall by **Brahim Metiba: Je n'ai pas**

**eu le temps de bavarder avec toi**, and **Ma mère et moi**, two very short memoirs about a Franco-Algerian's relationship with his parents, the challenge of his sexuality, and his abiding tenderness for them both.

After reading the common read for next fall, **Just Mercy**, by **Bryan Stevenson** (which I highly recommend), I reread **To Kill a Mockingbird** and **Go Set A Watchman**, by **Harper Lee**. Lee was from the same town that Stevenson spends a lot of time in (his Equal Justice Initiative is centered in Mobile) and one has a whole new perspective on the glorification of Atticus Finch in that area and in the American psyche. His work is a tremendous rethinking of that story/myth where one appreciates the erasure of black history. That said, Lee's rediscovered novel and all the controversy surrounding it is rich and complicated.

I also would recommend anything you can get a hold of by **James Baldwin** whom I had not really engaged a lot since high school (**Another Country**, **Go Tell it on the Mountain**, **The Fire Next Time...**). His work is stunningly relevant and prescient. And then see **I Am Not Your Negro** (dir. Raoul Peck) and reread it all over again. Also, so as not to cherry pick or offend by omission, I recommend going to the bookstore or library and reading Bates-affiliated authors to get to know your intellectual community better--there are some pretty amazing reads there!

*Kirk Read, French and Francophone Studies*

The book I am currently reading is **Barkskins** by **Annie Proulx**. I'm loving it so far, although I've only just started, so here is the review from Amazon. "In the late seventeenth century two young Frenchmen, René Sel and Charles Duquet, arrive in New France. Bound to a feudal lord for three years in exchange for land, they become wood-cutters—barkskins. René suffers extraordinary hardship, oppressed by the forest he is charged with clearing. He is forced to marry a native woman and their descendants live trapped between two cultures. But Duquet runs away, becomes a fur trader, then sets up a timber business. Annie Proulx

tells the stories of the descendants of Sel and Duquet over three hundred years—their travels across North America, to Europe, China, and New Zealand—the revenge of rivals, accidents, pestilence, Indian attacks, and cultural annihilation.

Over and over, they seize what they can of a presumed infinite resource, leaving the modern-day characters face to face with possible ecological collapse."

*Julie Retelle, ILS*

**The Woman Behind the New Deal: The Life and Legacy of Frances Perkins-Social Security, Unemployment Insurance and the Minimum Wage, by Kirstin Downey and My Life on the Road, by Gloria Steinem**

*Peggy Rotundo, Harvard Center for Community Partnerships*

**Eating on the Wild Side: The Missing Link to Optimum Health, by Jo Robinson.** Whether you are shopping at a grocery store, a farmers market, or in a seed catalog, this book will help you pick out the variety of a particular vegetable or fruit that is healthier for you. Different varieties of a fruit or vegetable can vary widely in amounts of antioxidants and phytonutrients--the elements in food that help us fight disease and stay vibrant and healthy. The author also conveys--in an engaging and understandable way--why much of our current food is not nearly as nutritious as varieties our "less-civilized" ancestors ate.

**The Ecology of Care: Medicine, Agriculture, Money, and the Quiet Power of Human and Microbial Communities, by Didi Pershouse.**

Didi is an acupuncturist in Vermont who does not practice the typical "spa-model" of acupuncture. Her sessions are affordable and community-creating. In this book she shares her journey of discovering a wider meaning of health and a sustainable system of holistic health-care that can flourish no matter what the future brings our way.

**Loving What Is, by Byron Katie.** Do you wish things were different? Would you be happy if [fill in the blank]? If you want to see how you create your suffering and learn how to stop, this book is for you.

**Thank you for being late: an optimist's guide to thriving in the age of accelerations, by Thomas Friedman.** Do things seem to be changing faster than you can keep up? Friedman explains several major forces that have hit exponential growth speeds and offers his ideas on how humans and our societies (both very adept at resisting the slightest change) can flourish in the future.

*Sharon Saunders, ILS*

**Citizen: An American Lyric, by Claudia Rankine.**

*Carolyn Starks, Office of Admission*

Fiction:

**Seveneves, by Neal Stephenson**

**The Martian, by Andy Weir**

**Assassin's Apprentice (Farseer Trilogy #1), by Robin Hobb**

**The Silent Land, by Graham Joyce**

Nonfiction:

**Between the World and Me, by Ta-Nehisi Coates**

**The Oath: The Obama White House and the Supreme Court, by Jeffrey Toobin**

**Notorious RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, by Irin Carmon**

**The Generals: American Military Command from WWII to Today, by Thomas Ricks**

*Carl Steidel, Student Affairs Office*

**The Riddle of the Labyrinth, by Margalit Fox** is a historical detective story about the cracking of Linear-B, and the personalities of the sleuths involved.



**84, Charing Cross Road, by Helene Hanff** is the winsome correspondence between Hanff, the writer, and Frank Doel, a used book dealer in London. *The Duchess of Bloomsbury Street* is the account of Hanff's nostalgic visit to London after Doel's death.

**The Sherlockian, by Graham Moore** is a tale of a novice in the Baker Street Irregulars caught up in the search for a missing diary of Arthur Conan Doyle and the solution of a related murder. I think Holmes fans will find this one well done.

**The Slow Professor, by Maggie Berg and Barbara K. Seeber** is an account of higher education's rushing toward a corporate model with education sold as a product. The authors urge a return to an earlier and slower model of teaching, learning, and reflection. A companion read would be *The Last Professors* by Frank Donoghue who sees the features of corporatization in the diminishing of tenure, the increase in use of adjuncts, and the marketing of degrees as tickets to employment. Finally, *Excellent Sheep* by William Deresiewicz concludes that, as colleges and universities increasingly admit students groomed and prepped by their parents and counselors to be best on the test, and then fitted for slots in the corporate world, those students never experience the liberation of the liberal arts.

**The Return of the Cane, by Gerard J. van den Broek** offers a brief but intense history of the practical and symbolic uses of " ... the rod, staff, baton, crook, stave, walking stick, wand, scepter, abacus, crosier, caduceus, mace, and so on." A gem.

**The Tudors, by Roger Ackroyd** is an account of the principal political characters at the beginning of the English Reformation, while

**In the Beginning, by Alistair McGrath** recounts the writing of what might be the most enduring literary outcome of that period, *The King James Bible*.

**Northern Farm, by Henry Beston.** Having read Beston's **The Outermost House** years ago, I finally read the account of his move to a

farm in northern Maine. As Beston says several times in the first chapter, "Going home."

**Ex Libris** and **At Large and at Small** are both by **Anne Fadiman**, our most genial of bibliophiles, whose own marriage was solemnized by the loving couple's joining their libraries.

**The Book, by Keith Houston.** While there must be dozens of books on the history of bookmaking, this one is distinguished by having the various parts of its own construction carefully labeled on the book itself – a sort of "biblio-anatomy" to accompany the "biblio-history."

**Martin Luther: Visionary Reformer, by Scott Hendrix.** This is the only biography of Luther I have read, so I have no basis for comparison. But Hendrix does portray Luther, above all else, as obedient to the first of all Protestant commandments – to work hard at one's calling.

**The True Tales of Baker and Taylor, by Jan Louch.** This is a true story of two stray cats that wander into a library in a small town and, in many ways, take it over. The book is the head librarian's account of the cats' singular friendships with individual patrons.

**Plato and a Platypus Walk into a Bar ... by Thomas Cathcart and Daniel Klein** is a spare outline of the major schools of philosophy, each one illustrated by – a joke.

*Sawyer Sylvester, Faculty Emeritus, Sociology*

**Trans-Sister Radio by Chris Bohjalian.** The story of a transsexual woman starting her transition while in heterosexual relationship with a straight woman.

*Nadia Thompson, Advancement*

Novels:

**The Angel of History, by Rabih Alameddine.** A survivor's account of himself and his demons. **Blackass, by A. Igoni Barrett.** Race, identity, and Kafka in Lagos, Nigeria.

**LeRose, by Louise Erdrich.** Love, war, intergenerational trauma, revenge, adolescence, cute cherubic children, fart jokes: This novel has everything. Few writers know how to tell stories that span centuries as well as Erdrich does.

**The Dispossessed, by Ursula K. LeGuin.** There is more than one way to be human, and likely many better ways than seem possible at the moment.

**Main Street, by Sinclair Lewis.** A surprisingly feminist story published in 1920!

Short Stories:

**Allegheny Front, by Matthew Neill Null.** One of the best new short fiction writers of the last few years now has a collection out. Deep, dark, Appalachian Gothic.

Nonfiction:

**The Drone Eats with Me: A Gaza Diary, by Atef Abu Saif.** An award-winning novelist keeps a diary as his family lives through bombardment by the Israeli military.

**Discourses on Livy, by Niccolò Machiavelli.** Insights into the life and death of republics.

*Joseph Tomaras, Dean of the Faculty's Office*

**The Cemetery of Forgotten Books, series by Carlos Ruiz Zafron.**

There are currently three books: **The Shadow of the Wind**, **The Angel's Game**, and **The Prisoner of Heaven**.

**Johnny Got His Gun, by Dalton Trumbo**

**Papillon, by Henri Charriere**

**Perfume, by Patrick Suskind & Ella Vengerova**

**Read Player One: A Novel, by Ernest Cline**

*Jane Ngoc Tran, Office of Admission*

**Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on The American Right, by Arlie Hochschild and This Changes Everything:**

**Capitalism vs. The Climate, by Naomi Klein.** Both are game changers, fun to read, and leave you a more informed member of our democracy.

*William Wallace, First-Year Seminar Program*

**Prodigal Summer, by Barbara Kingsolver**

*Laura Webb, Advancement*

**The Sixth Extinction, Elizabeth Kolbert.** A measured assessment of humans as the most invasive species of all, with a great historical perspective.

**Galapagos, by Kurt Vonnegut.** Evolution gone wild-dystopic and funny.

**Ex Libris, by Anne Fadiman.** Slightly quirky musings on writing by a book lover.

**A Great Reckoning, by Louise Penney.** Gamache saves the day again.

**Making Refuge, by Catherine Besteman.** Great reporting on Somali Bantus in Lewiston - their origins, reactions, and impacts. I was shocked to realize I knew so little of their lives and backgrounds.

**A Man Called Ove, by Fredrik Backman.** Fun, heartwarming story of how a curmudgeonly widower is set upon by relentless friends.

Finally, for those who like to turn over books rather than read them, I highly recommend the Kempers' Little Free Library on Pettingill Street, just a few steps east of College Street. It consistently surprises me with interesting books I've never seen before.

*Anne Williams, Faculty Emerita, Economics*

**Titles with two or more recommendations:**

The Boys in the Boat, by Daniel James Brown

Ex Libris, by Anne Fadiman

Strangers in their Own Land, by Arlie Hochschild

The Sixth Extinction, by Elizabeth Kolbert

Commonwealth, by Ann Patchett

A Great Reckoning, by Louise Penney

Seveneves, by Neal Stephenson

Just Mercy, by Bryan Stevenson

The Sound of Gravel, by Ruth Wariner

The One-in-a-Million Boy, by Monica Wood

The Invention of Nature, by Andrea Wulf