

Good Reads 2019: the 23rd 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.

Thanks to Post & Print for supplying the coveted printed versions and to the College Store for distributing those versions and posting online. This is a labor of love that I fortunately had passed on to me by Sarah Potter, Bookstore Director Emerita. This year's issue is dedicated to my parents, who nurtured my love of reading and the written word from the earliest of ages.

Until next year,
Alison Keegan, Dean of the Faculty's office

"Literature is my Utopia." ~Helen Keller

Meet Your Next Favorite Book

Two recommendations: **King Leopold's Ghost** by **Adam Hochschild** is a great read. It is a history book that reads like a novel. Another good one is the science fiction book **The Sparrow** by **Maria Doria Russell**.
Andee Alford, Math and Statistics Workshop

The best book I read all year was **A Gentleman in Moscow** by **Amor Towles**
Jim Bauer, ILS

Kill 'Em and Leave: Searching for James Brown and the American Soul by **James McBride**. Our cultural memory of James Brown is so bound up with our cultural myths about him that the real man gets lost. McBride, the Bates 2001 Convocation speaker, tells us the story of Brown by going to the source -- the places he grew up, the people who knew him. The story is not just about the man behind the myth, but how and why the man helped construct the myth. It ends up as much a commentary on race and American popular culture as it is about James Brown himself.

The Broken Earth Trilogy by **N.K. Jemisin**. Yes, her series won all of the awards. But you know what? It deserved to. These books are speculative fiction and sit somewhere between fantasy and science fiction, but the labels aren't particularly meaningful. These are books about internalized oppression, perseverance, rebellion, and liberation. They ask us to rethink our relationship with the earth without becoming didactic. On top of that, they are a really compelling adventure. (Jemisin also made me rethink my reflexive opposition to the use of second person as a narrative device.)

The Shepherd's Life: Modern Dispatches from an Ancient Landscape by **James Rebanks**. I stumbled upon Rebanks on Twitter,

where he would comment on literature and on his latest challenges with an ill sow, and post the most gorgeous photos of Hertfordshire, where he was and is a shepherd in a long line of shepherds. The book is an extension and an elaboration of the thoughts he tweeted 140 characters at a time. (This was the old days on Twitter, after all, before the embarrassment of riches that 280 characters brought.) He writes profoundly and practically about the role of small farming in the modern industrialized world and of the importance of place. As I found on Twitter, even if you think this isn't your cup of tea, it probably is.

John Baughman, Department of Politics

Auto Biography by Earl Swift. This piece of narrative nonfiction tells two stories. One chronicles the complete ownership history of a 1957 Chevy station wagon that spent most of its life Norfolk, Va., area. In this story, you learn about the ups and (way, way) downs of the U.S. automotive industry; about Norfolk's social history; and how this classic Chevy intertwines with and reflects the hopes, dreams, and despairs of its various owners. Swift's second story describes the life and times of the local man — owner of strip clubs and a vehicle junkyard, a former brawler but funny as hell — who came to own the vehicle by 2010. Both stories are vastly entertaining, the first a bit more for me. My mother-in-law gave me this book, and she knows me well: As someone who's always owned older cars, I liked how Swift's reporting illuminates our relationships with our vehicles. Whether you're a car nut or just been curious about how your attachment to a car can evolve (and sometimes sour) over the years, this book is an especially fun and insightful read.

Jay Burns, Communications Office

The best book I read this year was **Reclaiming 42: Public Memory and the Reframing of Jackie Robinson's Radical Legacy** by David Naze. In it, Naze uncovers the ways that Major League Baseball and other institutions have systematically worked to remove any controversy from the memory of Jackie Robinson. The book takes readers on a

compelling journey, recounting Robinson's appearance before the House Un-American Activities Committee, his public showdowns with Paul Robeson and Malcolm X, and the way he has been commemorated at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum and during MLB's first Jackie Robinson Day in 2004. Through it all, a picture emerges of an outspoken citizen who called out the racism of his era but whose memory has been stripped of any controversial

politics in order to maximize his likability, and more sadistically, to encourage passive, apolitical behaviors on the part of modern-day athletes of color.

Jonathan Cavallero, Department of Rhetoric, Film, and Screen Studies

The One-in-a-Million Boy by Monica Wood, a Portland-based writer. This book is surprising and uplifting despite a really tragic inciting incident, and you can feel Maine throughout it.

Americanah by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. I read this epic coming-of-age love story that partially takes place in Lagos while I was in Lagos and it totally centered me and gave me a deeper sense of the city and the people there.

Harry's Trees by Jon Cohen. Magical realism at its best. A totally fun and meaningful story of people coming together after heartbreak.

Shoshanna Currier, Bates Dance Festival

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens. The book is tough to categorize; it's a love story, a murder mystery, a courtroom drama, and an ode to the outdoors – all in one. A painfully beautiful first novel that is at once a murder mystery, a coming-of-age narrative and a celebration of nature. Owens here surveys the desolate marshlands of the North Carolina coast through the eyes of an abandoned child. And in her

isolation that child makes us open our own eyes to the secret wonders—and dangers—of her private world."—The New York Times Book Review

The Great Alone by Kristin Hannah. In this unforgettable portrait of human frailty and resilience, Kristin Hannah reveals the indomitable character of the modern American pioneer and the spirit of a vanishing Alaska—a place of incomparable beauty and danger. *The Great Alone* is a daring, beautiful, stay-up-all-night story about love and loss, the fight for survival, and the wildness that lives in both man and nature.

Educated by Tara Westover. *Educated* is an account of the struggle for self-invention. It is a tale of fierce family loyalty and of the grief that comes with severing the closest of ties. With the acute insight that distinguishes all great writers, Westover has crafted a universal coming-of-age story that gets to the heart of what an education is and what it offers: the perspective to see one's life through new eyes and the will to change it. The true story of Tara Westover's life. - lacking any formal education, Tara began to educate herself. She taught herself enough mathematics and grammar to be admitted to Brigham Young University, where she studied history, learning for the first time about important world events like the Holocaust and the civil rights movement. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge. Only then would she wonder if she'd traveled too far, if there was still a way home.

Winter's Bone by Daniel Woodrell. Sixteen-year-old Ree Dolly lives deep in the Ozarks, where she looks after her two younger brothers and her crazy mother, a woman who mostly sits on a chair in a kind of feline catatonia. Ree's father is a methamphetamine cook who jumped bail after putting the family's house up as collateral. Ree has a week to find Dad before the county repossesses the place.

Craig & Fred: A Marine, A Stray Dog, and How They Rescued Each Other by Craig Grossi - A heartwarming story of a stray dog and

a U.S. Marine who met under the unlikeliest circumstances in Afghanistan—and who changed each other's lives forever. As part of an elite team of Marines, Craig Grossi was sent on his most dangerous assignment to the Sangin District of Afghanistan. He expected to face harsh conditions and violence from Taliban fighters. What he didn't expect was to meet a stray dog, with a big goofy head and little legs—a dog all on his own, filthy and covered in bugs, in a bomb-ridden district, but who carried himself with confidence. And even though the Marines have a rule against approaching strays, Craig couldn't help but offer some food and a pat—and was shocked when the dog wagged his tail. From that moment on, they were inseparable; whether out on missions or back at the base, the dog named Fred went along. When the time came for Craig to leave Afghanistan, he knew that Fred had to leave with him no matter what. And as Craig tried to get acclimated to civilian life, Fred was there for him. This book tells the inspiring story of two friends who ultimately rescued each other, and the stubborn positivity and love that continue to shape their world.

Deborah Cutten, Academic Support Services

Where the Crawdad's Sing by Delia Owens. "For years, rumors of the "Marsh Girl" have haunted Barkley Cove, a quiet town on the North Carolina coast. So in late 1969, when handsome Chase Andrews is found dead, the locals immediately suspect Kya Clark, the so-called Marsh Girl. But Kya is not what they say. Sensitive and intelligent, she has survived for years alone in the marsh that she calls home..."

Before We Were Yours by Lisa Wingate. "For readers of Orphan Train and The Nightingale comes a "thought-provoking [and] complex tale about two families, two generations apart . . . based on a notorious true-life scandal."

A Piece of the World by Christina Baker Kline. "To Christina Olson, the entire world was her family's remote farm in the small coastal town of Cushing, Maine. Born in the home her family had lived in for generations, and increasingly incapacitated by illness, Christina seemed

destined for a small life. Instead, for more than twenty years, she was host and inspiration for the artist Andrew Wyeth and became the subject of one of the best-known American paintings of the twentieth century.

Karen Daigler, Center for Purposeful Work

I would like to recommend **The Last Sane Man: Michael Cardew: Modern Pots, Colonialism, and the Counterculture** by Tanya Harrod.

Susan Dewsnap, Department of Art and Visual Culture

I'd recommend **Braiding Sweetgrass** by Robin Wall Kimmer. Connects Indigenous Wisdom with plant ecology and personal journeys.

Alice Doughty, Department of Geology

The Dark Gifts trilogy by Vic James. I read the two first in French (unfortunately, thought the translation is excellent!) and will be reading the last volume soon. It's a dystopia based on a remaking of British history. Society is ruled by a magically gifted class and the lower non-gifted classes must give 10 years of their lives to a slavery system. The story builds up around a family partly separated, and in which the elder children are going to take part in the rebellion against the regime in various ways. So it's more of a teenage book but the story is definitely gripping!

Atonement by Ian McEwan. I read it for my exam and it was a pure revelation to me. The writing can prove a little hard at the start because the structure of the sentences is sometimes unsettling, and it's a metafictional novel, but the story is sadly beautiful. The end made me cry so much that I realized it did not happen in years. The story starts like this: set in England's countryside on a hot 1935 summer day an 13-year-old girl, Briony, sees something that she does not quite understand but on which she will build up a story anyways, a story that will destroy her sister's life forever.

The Duchess of Malfi by John Webster. An English play I read for my exam too. It was written in the 17th century, so the language is quite

archaic, but the Norton's edition with the footnotes clarifies most of it, if not all of it! The story is almost comparable to Game of Thrones in some ways: most of the characters plot to kill others and/or die in atrocious ways.

The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood. I discovered the story through the Hulu series, and I am now reading the novel which was adapted in the first season (only! as the second season and soon to be released third, are going further beyond the first novel): the writing is simply amazing, it's a delight to read although it's probably one of the most dreadfully realistic dystopias ever!!

Franck Dumergue, French and Francophone Studies Teaching Assistant

Every Note Played by Lisa Genova

Hillbilly Elegy by J.D. Vance

Educated by Tara Westover

And for fun: **Nine Perfect Strangers** and **The Husband's Secret** by **Liane Moriarty**

Susan Dunning, Office of Advancement

Nine Perfect Strangers by Liane Moriarty. Nine main characters, and she makes it all come together.

Us Against You by Fredrik Backman. Another book by the author of **A Man Called Ove**: politics, hockey, people, and how the world works.

All the Ugly and Wonderful Things by Bryn Greenwood. The world of meth and despair; I wouldn't say I enjoyed it, exactly, but it stuck with me for a long time and I think the writing is amazing.

The Great Alone, Kristin Hannah. Alaska -- this book feels true, although I have never been there.

The Clockmaker's Daughter by Kate Morton. A superb story, like all her books.

Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine by Gail Honeyman. I can't describe it, but you should read it.

The Alice Network by Kate Quinn. World War II.

I'll Be Your Blue Sky by Marisa de los Santos. Good story with wonderful characters and unexpected connections.

Oh! You Pretty Things by Shanna Mahin. Hollywood fiction.

The entire **Ruth Galloway series by Elly Griffiths.** Mysteries built around an English archaeologist/professor. Read them in order.

Elizabeth Durand, Class of 1976

Down to Earth by Bruno Latour

The Unwinding: An Inner History of the New America by George Packer

Amity and Prosperity: One Family and the Fracturing of America

Francis Eanes, Program in Environmental Studies

Origin by Dan Brown. Another fast paced Robert Langdon thriller. I enjoy how Dan Brown uses real locations as his backdrop. He makes me want to visit. The end of the book is interesting and I recall it every time I walk across campus...

The Jesus Incident by Frank Herbert and Bill Ransom. Not as famous as Frank Hebert's Dune series but the author once again creates a whole new world that gets you thinking. There was one chapter early on that did not make sense to me until later in the book so don't stop when you go "what is this?". There is a prequel to this book as well as two sequels.

The Long Earth by Terry Pratchett and Stephen Baxter. Not as tongue in cheek as Terry Pratchett's Disc World series but he does create a new universe that has its own set of logic and evolutionary theory that is slowly unraveled. When a talking soda vending machine that is thought to be a reincarnation of a Tibetan motorcycle repairman is introduced as a character I knew this was a Terry Pratchett book. This is a first of a five book series.

Ken Emerson, Human Resources

Finding Fraser by KC Dyer. A must for all those Outlander fans. Sometimes searching for true love can be a little.... Outlandish.

The Winter Sea & Firebird by Susanna Kearsley. Outstanding Scottish Historical Fiction (Slains #1 & 2). Very well researched. Had to look up the places & characters on the internet. Susanna Kearsley is compared to Diana Gabldon. Could not put these books down.

A Lowcountry Christmas by Mary Alice Munroe. A wounded warrior and his younger brother discover the true meaning of Christmas in this timeless story of family bonds.

The Child Finder by Rene Denfeld. Excellent book. Abduction told from 3 sides & more. A haunting book.

This year I discovered **The Southern Sisters Mysteries by Anne George.** These Birmingham ladies have you laughing at times. **Murder Sees A Life,** was really good.

Karen MacInerney's, Gray Whale Inn Mysteries. Takes place on Cranberry Island, Maine

Mr. Emerson's Wife by Amy Belding Brown. A Bates Alumni. A Historical Fiction very well done. It examines the emotional landscape of love and marriage. I did not know as much about this time period as I thought I did.

Gate in the Fence of Time by David Robert Berry. A time travel book that takes place in Williamsburg, VA. 1775 to 1781. I think I learned more about the Revolution from this book than I did in history in school. I learned that politics is as much about money and power today as it was during the founding of this country.

The River at Night by Erica Ferencik. A high-stakes drama set against the harsh beauty of the Maine wilderness, charting the journey of four friends as they fight to survive the aftermath of a whitewater rafting accident. The River at Night is a nonstop and unforgettable thriller.

Night Stories: Fifteen Original Stories Inspired by the Art of Linden Frederick. Fine art painter Linden Frederick has created 15 paintings and enlisted and inspired noted writers to create accompanying stories. Renowned authors as diverse and talented as Elizabeth Strout, Ann Patchett, Anthony Doerr, Richard Russo and Lawrence Kasdan, among others, have contributing to expanding the artists' world with their tales, as varied and captivating as the artworks themselves.

Melinda Emerson, Information and Library Services

C'mon, audio book "readers" -- tell us YOUR fave picks!! Here are some of mine from the past year. All must have good actors to read.

Circe by Madeline Miller. Retelling of mythology with Perdita Weeks narrating beautifully.

Lincoln in the Bardo by George Saunders. Many have commenting on this book; the audio has an amazing cast of stars reading, which makes it really fun.

She Would be King by Wayetu Moore. History meets magical realism in retelling of formation of Liberia.

Call for the Dead by John LeCarre. Great spy stuff by the master (Book 1 of Smiley series)

Warlight and **In the Skin of a Lion**, both by **Michael Ondaatje**. Can't get enough of this guy.

Born a Crime, autobiography by Trevor Noah, read delightfully by him. Really funny and endearing.

Trustee from the Toolroom by Nevil Shute. Quirky and hard to describe...ordinary man in bizarre circumstances, read by the amazing Frank Mueller.

Kingdom of the Blind by Louise Penny. Well, everyone loves Ms. Penny, right? Bathurst (from Downton Abbey) is a good reader.

Homegoing by Yaa Gyassi. "A riveting, kaleidoscopic debut novel about race, history, ancestry, love, and time that traces the descendants of two sisters torn apart in 18th-century Africa across 300 years in Ghana and America." Long, but covers a **lot** of territory impressively.

Testament of Mary by Colm Toibin. The Christ story as told from Mary's imagined perspective. Told with great skill by Meryl Streep.

West with the Night by Beryl Markham. Read by Julie Harris, this is a lovely autobiography of an adventurous woman who grew up in east Africa in the 1920's, and became a pilot, (flew transatlantic in '36).

Carol Farrell, Department of Theater and Dance

The Deeper the Water, The Uglier the Fish by Katya Apekina is a debut novel about dysfunctional family, art, concept of a muse, set in Metairie and New York. I really enjoyed it.

Sylvia Federico, Department of English

Here are my favorite impactful books I've read in 2019:

Becoming by Michelle Obama

No Ashes in the Fire by Darnell L. Moore

**The Book of Joy by Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, and Douglas
Carlton Abrams**

Educated by Tara Westover

Rachel Forcillo, Class of 2018, Center for Purposeful Work

My suggestion is: **Go Be Kind by Leon Logothetis**

Heidi Gagnon, Student Financial Services

An Absolutely Remarkable Thing by Hank Green. This book begins in New York City, where a young woman named April May discovers a tall metal robot statue in the middle of a sidewalk. Thinking it's a piece of art, she records a quick video with the statue and uploads it online. As it turns out, this statue is one of many that have suddenly appeared in cities throughout the world. While people slowly uncover the mystery of the statues, April May's video goes viral and she becomes the public face of the crisis. This book was not only engaging for its mystery, but also because it explores the consequences of fame in the age of social media.

Bucky F*cking Dent by David Duchovny. This year I discovered that the actor David Duchovny has written several novels, and they're better than one might expect. Set in the year 1978, this novel follows a man named Ted who finds out that his estranged father has lung cancer. The two reconnect over the father's interest in the Red Sox, who had a tumultuous season that year. Despite not having a deep knowledge of baseball history, I enjoyed the book because Duchovny includes enough context to understand and care about the games. We see what the wins and losses mean to the characters, and the sport gives the novel some of its most poignant moments.

Holy Cow by David Duchovny. Far more comedic than his other book, Holy Cow is a cartoonish fable about a cow named Elsie who escapes her farm after discovering the truth about slaughterhouses. With that premise, the book could have become too dark or serious, but Duchovny keeps the humor light and frequent. There are some scenes that address the treatment of animals, but by the end, the book seems more concerned with using the story as a way to explore human experience and life.

Dragon Teeth by Michael Crichton. A western set in the early days of fossil hunting, this book is about a young man who journeys to the American West with an expedition searching for dinosaur bones. Along the way, his original mission is derailed and he must find his way back home while protecting a collection of fossils. Dragon's Teeth was released posthumously almost ten years after Crichton's death, but it still contains his signature style, using real research as a foundation for a thrilling fictional story.

Fates and Furies by Lauren Groff. This novel follows the marriage between two flawed people, Lotto and Mathilde. Their relationship begins full of excitement and promise, but as the years pass their lives grow more complicated. I appreciated how the book showed the perspectives of both characters, which led to surprises later on. While I didn't always agree with decisions the characters made, I found them interesting and wanted to see their journey all the way to the end.

Dan Girling, Post & Print

How Fascism Works: The Politics of Us and Them by Jason Stanley. It's simple and scary. Stanley, the Jacob Urowsky Professor of Philosophy at Yale University, uses history and contemporary commentary to place Trump and company in the arena of fascism.

Looking for Lorraine: The Radiant and Radical Life of Lorraine Hansberry by Imani Perry. This is a beautifully told story about the life of a brilliant artist and activist. Perry, the Hughes-Rogers Professor

of African American Studies at Princeton University, weaves in her own personal history to emphasize Hansberry's impact.

Phyllis Graber-Jensen, Communications Office

Educated: A Memoir by Tara Westover. Imagine growing up in a separatist wing of the LDS church, having never been to school or to a doctor. Then imagine teaching yourself all of the necessary content to take the SAT and get into college. Now, imagine what your life is like in college when you haven't been exposed to the same things that your classmates have, even the existence of the Holocaust. Amazing and heartbreaking true story.

Everybody Lies by Seth Stephens-Davidowitz. Amazing use of large-scale search data to explore the side of human nature that we often don't want to talk about. Who we really are is what we search for online.

Weapons of Math Destruction by Cathy O'Neil. We often think of algorithms as more objective than human thinking. However, if they are trained with the biases of human thinking, they can be just as bigoted as we are and more. Fascinating read on how algorithms that dictate loan conditions, college admissions, parole and other topics do more to enforce inequality.

Michelle Greene, Program in Neuroscience

A Woman in the Window by A.J. Finn

Meg Gresh, Dean of the Faculty's Office

Reading, the magical experience of walking the path that another person walked. I always like and recommend reading a fiction and a non-fiction book at the same time. That's why today I want to share with you two books I enjoyed this year during my time at Bates.

Killing Commendatore by Haruki Murakami. This is the most recent book by the well-known Japanese author and perpetual candidate of the

Nobel Prize for Literature (I still believe, in my heart of hearts, that he deserves it and should win it). Though this was not my favorite Murakami's book, *Killing Commendatore* is an entertaining novel for those who, like me, enjoy opera, art, painting, and have listened to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Don Giovanni.

As usual, Murakami plays with two different realities and creates a world of magic realism where a circle of mysterious circumstances is opened; to close it, he must complete a journey that involves a mysterious ringing bell, a two-foot-high physical manifestation of an Idea, a dapper businessman who lives across the valley, a precocious thirteen-year-old girl, a Nazi assassination attempt during World War II in Vienna, a pit in the woods behind the artist's home, and an underworld haunted by Double Metaphors.

Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress by Steven Pinker. This is the most recent book by one of my favorite contemporary thinkers, the Canadian-American cognitive scientist Steven Pinker. In these essays, Pinker supports his ideas of progress and argues that the Enlightenment values of reason, science, and humanism have built up our world. A reading which is needed to think about what is happening today in our world from a sociological perspective. "There can be no question of which was the greatest era for culture; the answer has to be today, until it is superseded by tomorrow."
Daniel Guarín, Department of Spanish Learning Associate

There were several books and movies focused on nuclear weapons and the end of the world when I was young. I particularly remember "Fail Safe", "On The Beach", and "Dr. Strangelove: Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb". Recently, I read a current take on nuclear weapons issues with some of the same combination of terror, fatalism, and humor that appears in those earlier works. It is **The 2020 Commission Report on the North Korean Nuclear Attacks Against**

the United States: A Speculative Novel. As you can tell from the title, it is written from a future point-of-view looking back at a nuclear catastrophe and how it came about. The author is **Jeffrey Lewis, Ph.D.** who works on nuclear non-proliferation issues at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey. One fascinating aspect of this novel is that as the author says, it is "an imagination of a future based on actual events. Everything that takes place before August 7, 2018 is true and supported by the endnotes...everything that takes place after that date is invented...". The book is a quick read and based on enough facts that it is a plausible future. Although this book probably won't cause you to stop worrying about this possible future, you will at least be better informed.

Bruce Hall, Information and Library Services

The Human Shore: Seacoasts in History by John Gillis. This is a wonderful book to bring to the beach. It describes how humans have always been a species of the edge, living in the productive places between different ecosystems, and the coast has been among the most hospitable of human habitats. It has also been among the most dangerous, both for those traveling along its waters or living on its unstable edges. Gillis also points out that although more people live on or visit the shore, fewer people depend upon its life for their own livelihoods. You will look at the sea with new eyes.

There, There by Tommy Orange. It is strange to recommend a novel I have not yet read, but I have heard so many wonderful things about this exploration of what it means to be Native in contemporary Oakland that is the first novel I will read this summer. I can't give a review, but I encourage others to see what readers have said.

Joe Hall, Department of History

The Nautical Chart by Arturo Perez-Reverte. A mystery novel set in Spain, about trying to find a lost Jesuit treasure ship from 1770's. Lots of nautical history and detail, and very well written, so a terrific book for someone who loves the sea and mysteries. Translated from Spanish.

Other books by the same author: **The Flanders Panel, The Seville Communion, The Club Dumas, The Fencing Master.**

Growing up with the Country: Family, Race and Nation after the Civil War by **Kendra Taira Field**. Kendra Field is a history professor at Tufts who spent several years tracing back a family tale that her great-great-grandfather, a refugee from danger and poverty in the post-Reconstruction South, had gone back to Africa with Marcus Garvey. It turned out not be Marcus Garvey but Chief Alfred C. Sam, a Ghanaian convert to Christianity who, unlike Garvey, did manage to buy a ship and sail with a few hundred Blacks back to Africa in 1914. In a most unlikely mutual effort, Chief Sam had earlier come to Maine's "Shiloh" community in Durham, founded and led by Rev. Frank W. Sandford, Bates '1886, as part of Sam's conversion to Christianity, and then some years later called on the Shiloh community for help in refitting the ship in Portland and taking it to Galveston, where hundreds of Chief Sam's followers waited in a tent city for transfer to Africa. Field's amalgam of family and American post-Civil War history is fascinating for much more than the Chief Sam voyage to Ghana. She traces the complex ways in which many Blacks fleeing violence in the South chose what was then the Indian territory of Oklahoma, partly hoping that they would escape the racism and violence of whites, but also partly because lots of Black families had ties to Native Americans, either from intermarriage or because they could make a claim to land grants in Oklahoma that created for a few decades Black towns and farming districts. It was not to last: whites redefined the racial codes to exclude Blacks from any rights to Indian lands, and then as oil began to be discovered in Oklahoma, stole or bought under forced circumstances the land from both Native

Americans and Blacks. I have given my copy of this wonderful book to Bates, so it is available in Ladd.

The Lost City of the Monkey God by **Douglas Preston**. A non-fiction account of the discovery of a monumental ancient city in a very wild section of Honduran mountainous jungle. The civilization was somewhat

parallel to the Aztecs, but distinct. The exploration is dangerous—the jungle teems with fer-de-lance snakes—but also a complicated archeological detective story, as the team both maps the city with the help of a plane with lidar radar, and comes to a conclusion about the abrupt collapse of a civilization that probably served hundreds of thousands of people.

Being Mortal by Atul Gawande. A Harvard surgeon writes about the limits and trade-offs of medicine, and the various ways to make choices in the time we have left.

The Hare with Amber Eyes by Edmund de Wall. Technically, a family memoir of being caught in the social cataclysms of early 20th - century Europe. A wonderfully written account by an artist who inherits a set of small Japanese carvings, the only remaining element of the once-vast fortunes of a Jewish financier family who loyally tried to support the Austrian government in WWI, and then was crushed by the Nazis in WWII.

Fresh Air Fiend, Deep South and The Kingdom by the Sea: A Journey Around Great Britain by Paul Thoreau. Paul Thoreau is a stunningly productive writer; at last count he has published 48 books, about two-thirds fiction, but also including 17 books of travel writing. His travel writing is very readable, but he is also cranky, sometimes with an undertone of apparent dismay over the places and people he finds. Deep South may be his best, writing of the American South's tangled and painful rural cultures.

In Search of Scotland by H.V. Morton. No need to rush to the bookstore to find Morton's book—it was published in 1929. But I read it soon after Thoreau's Kingdom by the Sea, as both are travel books on Scotland. A tour of the Highlands by car in the 1920's was an adventure, and Morton was the

Thoreau of his day, writing several books of travel experiences. I was struck by the contrast in tones with Thoreau; Morton is gentle and affectionate about what he is seeing. Old fashioned, perhaps, but these days, it seems both charming and very welcome.

Bill Hiss, Class of 1966, retired colleague

This year I loved:

Little Fires Everywhere by Celeste Ng

Everything I Never Told You by Celeste Ng

The Immortalists by Chloe Benjamin

When Breath Becomes Air by Paul Kalanithi

Tribe of Mentors by Tim Ferriss

Educated by Tara Westover

Alexandra Hood, Olin Arts Center

Non-Fiction

Becoming by **Michelle Obama**. Thoughtful, interesting reflection on her life.

Rising out of Hatred by **Eli Saslow**. Fascinating biography of the son of one of the country's leading Nero-Nazis who, through the transformative power of differences that he encountered at a small liberal arts college in Florida, left the alt right and became one of its respected public critics.

The Lies that Bind by **Kwami Appiah**. Very engaging, often witty exploration of the often false assumptions we make about the constituent elements of modern social identity.

Call Me American by **Abdi Nor Iftin**. An amazing story of a Somali refugee's journey from a country destroyed by civil war, to a life in Portland, ME.

One Person, No Vote by **Carol Anderson**. Heartbreaking story about

the assault on the institutions of American democracy being made in order to further a white supremacist political agenda.

Fiction

Room: A Novel by Emma Donoghue. Haunting book about a mother and child held in secret captivity, their escape and the toll their hard won freedom takes.

The Paragon Hotel by Lyndsay Faye. A wonderful, funny, sad story about a jazz age gangster moll who hides out from the NYC mob in a hotel for black travelers in Portland, OR.

The Crossing Places by Elly Griffiths (Ruth Galloway series). First book in a great detective series about a British forensic archeologist.

The Book of Life by Deborah Harkness (All Souls Trilogy). So, I'm not typically one for books about witches, vampires and daemons - but this series is total fun. Strong characters, complex plot, good prose.

The Fifth Season by N. K. Jemisin (Broken Earth trilogy). An amazing sci-fi novel. I like sci fi, but even if you don't, you should consider this. The book (I haven't read #s 2 & 3, yet) address complicated questions of love, grief and rage. It really transcends genre. If you like Octavia Butler's work, you'll like this.

Margaret Imber, Program in Classical and Medieval Studies and Dean of the Faculty's Office

Among the many novels I've enjoyed this year, I especially recommend **Tommy Orange's There, There**, and the first two installments of **Ali Smith's** season-based quartet, **Autumn** and **Winter**. Orange's plot is faster-paced and more dramatic, with social inequalities more central to the story, both features I appreciated. But all three offer fascinating characters, complex multi-generational relationships (family

relationships and other relationships), and stories set in the context of important questions about contemporary social marginalization and social change (in Orange's case, in the United States; in Smith's case, in the UK).

Emily Kane, Department of Sociology

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens. The landscape in this book was as much of a character as the people were. The writing was lush and vivid and I simply couldn't put it down. This is a story of survival, resiliency, love, and an ode to nature and the craggy marshes of the South. Rarely do debut novels grab hold and don't let go like this one did for me. I love that it's a popular title for this year's booklet.

The Library Book by Susan Orlean. This is a love story for how important the role of a library plays in civil society. Part mystery and true crime, part history lesson, this book was a fascinating look at the fire that nearly wiped out the Los Angeles Public Library in the mid-1980s. Reading about the thousands of books and historical artifacts that were lost to this fire literally took my breath away. Libraries are pillars, safe spaces, and while I already have a deep appreciation for them, I came away from this book feeling like we need to be doing everything possible to protect the libraries we have left, now more than ever.

The Nightingale by Kristin Hannah. After reading **The Great Alone** last year, I find myself wanting to get my hands on anything Kristin Hannah has written. This book was addictive, moving, and powerful. Historical fiction at its finest.

Ghosted by Rosie Walsh. I read this book in a day last summer when spending an entire day at the beach, which made it the perfect beach read. I couldn't put it down and didn't want it to end. It was endearing and completely unexpected...a winning combination.

The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo by Taylor Jenkins Reid. This book was glittery and enchanting from the first page. There's a lot going on, i.e. trigger themes, but the prose is descriptive, poetic, and consuming. I loved every delicious minute of it.

Alison Keegan, Dean of the Faculty's Office

Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine by Gail Honeyman. A study of a woman who doesn't fit in, thinks she's OK with it, and realizes upon making some human connections that, actually, there's something to be said for people.

Washington Black by Esi Edugyan. I'm three fourths through and plan to re-read it as soon as I'm done, because I know there's more there that I haven't caught. It's a book that seems to defy categorization, at least so far. It's part fictional slave narrative, part adventure novel, part personal discovery story. Edugyan does a great job showing the monstrous and the beautiful together and demonstrating the layers of human existence, love, and pain without oversimplifying the emotions.

They Can't Kill Us Until They Kill Us by Hanif Abdurraqib. A collection of essays that examine racism, culture, aging, etc. told through the lens of music and memory. He's a master of studying big topics through small stories.

Grace Kendall, Communications Office

Circe by Madeline Miller (particularly the audiobook). A retelling of old, familiar Greek myths that many of us haven't thought about since middle school. It is a page turner, that got me looking up more details of some of the myths. I haven't read it yet, but her first book, **Song of Achilles** is also supposed to be very good.

The Power by Naomi Alderman. A science fiction account of an imagined world in which young women across the globe gain a power to physically subdue men. The result is an upending of societal norms. The book does contain some disturbing scenes and graphic violence.

Pachinko by Min Jin Lee. The story of a Korean family exiled to Japan, spanning about 100 years. The family endures the Japanese occupation of Korea, WWII, and struggles with racism and exclusion as Koreans in Japan.

Euphoria by Lily King. Inspired by the life of Margaret Mead, a (love) story about three Western anthropologists in 1930's New Guinea.

Jennifer Koviach-Côté, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

Life After Life and A God in Ruins by Kate Atkinson. These two novels are connected by characters, but can be read separately. *Life After Life* is a captivating look at life in 20th century Britain through the lens of a woman's experience, Ursula. The premise is to follow her life and the people around her multiple times, each time with a different ending and death. *A God in Ruins* follows many of the same characters, but through the lens of Ursula's youngest brother.

Caleb's Crossing by Geraldine Brooks. The story follows a young English colonist and a young Wompanoag man as their lives intersect in 17th century Martha's Vineyard. An incredible portrait of time and place in New England.

Rebecca Lazure, Office of Advancement

Warlight by Michael Ondaatje

Happiness by Aminatta Forna

The History of Love: A Novel by Nicole Krauss

A Long, Long Way by Sebastian Barry

The Flight of the Maidens by Jane Gardam

Book of Ages and These Truths by Jill Lepore

The Heart's Invisible Furies by John Boyne

There, There: A Novel by Tommy Orange

Less by Andrew Sean Greer

The Summer Without Men by Siri Hustvedt

Kathy Low, Department of Psychology

2018 was my first year receiving the Good Reads list, and I got a lot of great recommendations from it! I loved the **Broken Earth trilogy** by **N.K. Jemisin** and tore through **Kindred** by **Octavia E. Butler**.

A few months ago I read **The Tyranny of the Meritocracy** by **Lani Guinier**. It's a short, accessible book that argues that standardized testing in college admissions only gives an advantage to the wealthy. It also lays out some ideas for how colleges can encourage what Guinier calls democratic merit, which means admissions preferences for students who will actively make the world better. Bates gets a shout-out for being test-optional!

I got **Bad Blood** by **John Carreyrou** from the Bates library and read the whole thing that same evening (I went to work very tired the next day). It's about Theranos, the company that was supposed to revolutionize healthcare by running hundreds of blood tests with a single drop of blood but ends up taking "overpromising and underdelivering" to the stratosphere. It's a truly wild ride.

I also read **World War Z** by **Max Brooks**, which was super fun.
Emily McConville, Communications Office

I discovered a series of books of the "fantasy" genre by **Rachel Aaron**. They're well written and a fun read - perfect for summertime! They are:
Nice Dragons Finish Last
A Dragon of a Different Color
One Good Dragon Deserves Another
No Good Dragon Goes Unpunished
Last Dragon Standing

My husband enjoyed and recommended another of her series: **The Legend of Eli Monpress**.
Monica McCusker, College Store

I am not sure I read any book this past year that was worthy of an unequivocal recommendation, but there were four books, two fiction and two non-fiction, that I enjoyed enough to mention. **A Ladder to the Sky by John Boyne** is a wicked and engaging story of an amoral writer who is willing to do whatever it takes to become a famous author. **Beartown by Fredrik Backman** reminded me of a hockey version of the Friday Night Lights television series (with a dash of Coen Brothers dark comedy). On the non-fiction side, I will highlight two books by **Cal Newport**, who is a computer science professor at Georgetown. In **So Good They Can't Ignore You**, Newport debunks the traditional "follow your passion" advice and makes a compelling case that the key to deriving satisfaction with one's work is to develop and master one's skills. Credit to Rebecca Fraser-Thill for turning me on to this one. Finally, **Digital Minimalism** was helpful in getting me to reflect on how I interact with technology and how I can engage with it more intentionally.

Tom McGuinness, Office of Institutional Research, Analysis, and Planning

How to Love a Jamaican: Stories by Alexia Arthurs

Marcelle Medford, Department of Sociology

White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America by Nancy Isenberg. This is a great book about the origins and persistence of the white underclass in America, beginning with notions of so-called "waste people" imported from England; exacerbated by slavery, which, while creating an intolerably inhumane world for enslaved people, also perpetuated chronic landlessness among most whites; and continuing through the ways the industrial revolution, educational systems, immigration, politics, and pop culture have further classified poor white people. From its first pages, when Isenberg challenges us to think about how Harper Lee cast Tom Robinson's accuser, Mayella Ewell, and her family in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, this book demonstrates the complex doggedness of class, poverty, and race in the U.S. It will make you question your assumptions, which is good in a book.

Circe by Madeline Miller is the retelling of tales from ancient Greece from Circe's perspective, chronicling her life and adventures with Daedalus, Odysseus, Penelope, Helios, Scylla, random nymphs, man-pigs, and a pantheon of others, while revealing the joys and burdens of being a goddess. Gorgeous, lush writing. I loved this feminist take on elements of the Odyssey, the bro tale to end all bro tales (plus, it features weaving as a power move!).

The Library Book by Susan Orlean was my favorite book of the year. Framed around the unsolved mystery of the massive 1986 fire in the Los Angeles Public Library, this book is a loving tribute to libraries, an homage to Orlean's mother and their time spent together in the library, a history of American libraries, a survey of the indispensable scholarly and social-service roles of the modern library, and a biographical parade of LAPL librarians. It's part journalism, part history, part memoir. The overarching message is that libraries are the foundations of democracy and our guardians: whether tiny or vast, libraries level the playing field and give people a place to belong. Knowledge is power.

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

Outlander series by Diana Gabaldon. Historical fiction portrayed through the relationship and adventures of a 20th century traveler and an 18th century Scottish Highlander. Written so beautifully and detailed that you become invested in the characters as if they were family. The power is in the relationships and loyalties. The sense of honor, of commitment, of holding values above personal comfort or gain. The Outlander series requires the reader to judge their own beliefs and relationships and recognize the good and bad in each of us. An epic story of love, relationships, adventure, war, family, and more that stands the test of time - because it crosses time! The detailed character development, vivid descriptions, and engaging story pull the reader in, drawing out our own thoughts on love, politics, how we would react, what we would do. Something for everyone!

I suggest reading all 8 books (and the novella's that accompany the series) book #9 is scheduled to be released later this year. For those who cannot find time to read, they are all available on Audible with Davina Porter as narrated who brings all characters to life. Great therapy as you're creating, crafting, or walking/running.

Lori Ouellette, Dean of the Faculty's Office

Becoming by Michelle Obama

On Tyranny, Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century by Timothy Snyder

The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas (fiction)

Chemistry by Weike Wang (fiction)

Karen Palin, Department of Biology

The wonderful **Monica Wood's The One-in-a-Million Boy.**

Clock Dance by Ann Tyler

I was gifted with some discarded novels that I felt I should read before donating or whatever, including:

The Storyteller by Jodi Picoult and Women in the Castle by Jessica Shattuck

The Art of Racing in the Rain by Garth Stein (although I have heard that **A Dog's Purpose by W. Bruce Cameron** is a better book of this style. I haven't read it.)

I also read **The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls**, after seeing the movie. Humbling.

Carole Parker, Ladd Library

The Overstory by Richard Powers

Educated: A Memoir by Tara Westover

A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles

Camille Parrish, Program in Environmental Studies

Caleb's Crossing by Geraldine Brooks, solid writing set in an interesting place and time (1600s, Nantucket).

Euphoria by Lily King, King is a compelling writer and this novel, based on Margaret Mead's experience in New Guinea in the early 1930s, was a good read.

The Female Persuasion by Meg Wolitzer. Nothing life-changing here but it was familiar and entertaining.

And I am reading all of **Laurie King's Mary Russell mysteries**. They are such good reads that I probably recommended them for last year's list, but as with so many other things in my life, I just can't remember!

Sarah Potter, Class of 1977, Bookstore Director Emerita

The snoring bird: My family's journey through a century of biology by Bernd Henrich. A memoir about his family, especially his father and Bernd's life, and their intense searches for insects and birds and their behaviors. Living in Poland they barely survived WWs I & II. After the wars, they made it to a farm in Maine. Bernd earned a Ph.D., and ended up on the faculty at the University of Vermont while maintaining the farm in Maine. He is a wonderful writer with endless fascinating details. (Oh, and he is remarkable long-distance runner.)

A Moveable Feast by Ernest Hemingway. I never read a book quite like this. He writes about his time in Paris in the 1920s when he is settling in with long stretches of time to write. But he also writes about the details of living in Paris, and about the interactions with other writers. You can almost sense his future life and novels to come.

Wait Till Next Year: A memoir by Doris Kearns Goodwin. I love baseball and Goodwin and I are about the same age. She grew up in a 1950s residential area of Brooklyn much like my residential area outside Hartford, CT. The Brooklyn Dodgers had great teams [Jackie Robinson

et al.] that could never win the World Series, thus the title of her book. She writes wonderfully of her growing-up years, and how she intensely following the Dodgers. At that time I was following the Yankees, but certainly knew about the Dodgers. The Dodgers finally won just before moving to Los Angeles. (Later, she and I became Red Sox fans.)

The pope of physics by Geno Segrè and Bettina Hoerlin. A biography of Enrico Fermi. I'd prefer the Italian title "Il Papa" (rather than the Pope) that he was given by the small group of physicists, all in their 20s, that recognized him in Rome as their leader. The book is not trying to teach physics, rather it is more history and biography going through both WWs I & II and into the 1950s. He was one of the great 20th century physicists and beloved by all who worked with him. He was a brilliant both as a theorist and an experimentalist. From a high school (Italian) friend of mine: "Great read. Some of the description of the work that Fermi was part of was not easy for me to understand, but I love the history of the man, the projects, the times! The intense struggle to unravel the processes that were necessary to harness atomic energy was riveting! Thank you for your recommendation." Written by the friend who is a lawyer.

Jack Pribram, Professor Emeritus, Department of Physics and Astronomy

I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter by Erika Sanchez. A Mexican-American teen navigates coming-of-age as she and her parents are reeling from the tragic, sudden loss of her sister. An honest and stunning reflection on adolescence, family, loss, and depression.

The Friend by Sigrid Nunez. The novel, written in the second person to the narrator's recently deceased longtime friend, is a beautiful account of grief and the bonds people forge through literature and writing. (And also of the love that grows between dogs and humans.)

Stephanie Pridgeon, Department of Spanish

Smoke Gets in Your Eye by Caitlin Doughty. Remarkable and extremely candid insight into the mortuary business and the way in which we deal with death in America.

The Drunken Botanist by Amy Stewart. Thorough and often humorous review of all the different plants people have used over the centuries to create alcoholic beverages.

John Rasmussen, Facility Services

The One-in-a-Million Boy by Monica Wood. A heartbreaking, heart-opening story by Maine's own Monica Wood.

The Library Book by Susan Orlean. Someone gave me this book as a gift. I threw it in my suitcase, hoping to enjoy a "pleasure read" on my way back from a conference on the West Coast; was SO disappointed when I realized it was a book about libraries; then I could hardly put it down. A fascinating romp!

Darby Ray, Harvard Center for Community Partnerships

Notre Dame de Paris/The Hunchback of Notre Dame by Victor Hugo. Timely, for those who have ever visited or can imagine what it would mean for such a catastrophic event to occur. Hugo makes for great summer reading when many can commit to longer works. You go from this, to **Les Misérables** and then are prepped for **Proust, In Search of Time Past/A la recherche du temps perdu**, a completely different genre, but competing well for length, weighing in at 3500 pages.

Small Country/Petit pays by Gail Faye. An amazing book now translated. Coming of age in the Rwandan genocide. Faye's father is French and his mother Rwandan and he spent his earliest years in Burundi. The genocide looms and then unfolds and his ability to tell the story through both the eyes of a child and adult is stunning. Metaphors abound in the relationships that populate the book and presage the horrors that will take hold among them.

Warlight by Michael Ondaatje. Another child's eye view of war, as the narrator and his sibling are left in the hands of strangers as their parents disappear into a life of spying. War story, thriller, coming of age. It was not the perfect unfolding for me (the beginning promises lots of twists and turns) but nicely written. Fans of **The English Patient** will recognize his style.

Napoleon's Buttons by Penny Le Couteur and Jay Burreson. Thank you, Colleen O'Loughlin, my Teaching Triangles partner for introducing me to the ways chemistry make the world go round. A fascinating account of how chemical compounds determine significant events in history. Her class (and I) read the chapter on the Salem witch trials and the pernicious belladonna plant. Maybe those women really did see the devil! (through hallucinations).

iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy--and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood--and What That Means for the Rest of Us by Jean Twenge. Many of my colleagues have noticed significant challenges to our teaching in recent semesters/years and in looking for answers to how our students appear to be thwarted (beyond the "snow plow" parent hypothesis), this book helped me a lot.

Ariel Gore's *We Were Witches*, is a novel closely based on the author's life as a child of bohemian and abusive parents who leaves high school at 16 to backpack around the world, has child in Italy, and returns to eke out a way through college, navigating welfare, homophobia, misogyny and other forms of violence. Her encounters and coming of age with and through the hallmark literature of women and gender studies was like a blast from the past for me. Her retelling of much of this is like a riveting 101 course in the history of patriarchy and women's resistance.

Kirk Read, Department of French and Francophone Studies

I enjoyed reading **Born a Crime by Trevor Noah**. The book was eye-opening in so many ways for me.

Julie Retelle, Ladd Library

21 Lessons for the 21st Century by Yuval Noah. "Presenting complex contemporary challenges clearly and accessibly". These challenges are grouped into five categories: technology, politics, despair and hope, truth, and resilience.

Being Mortal: Medicine and what Matters in the End by Atul Gawande. This book accompanies a Boston surgeon who is willing to ask questions, learn from others, and change his way of interacting with patients, in part because of seeing the experiences of his mother-in-law and his father as they became frail and neared the end of their lives.

Walk out, walk on: a learning journey into communities daring to live the future now by Margaret Wheatley by Deborah Frieze. We seem to think if we just keep doing the same things, only faster and harder, we will solve complex problems that have plagued human societies for decades. This book allows readers to visit places and people who have walked away from our normal ways of thinking and have created different ways of living and being in community.

Sharon Saunders, Ladd Library

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens. I loved her memoir **Cry of the Kalahari** when it came out and, although this is fiction, it was a pleasure to read her prose again.

All Things Reconsidered by Roger Tory Peterson. Especially the snippets about his experiences birding in Maine.

Killers of the Flower Moon by David Grann. History, crime...

Paula Schlax, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

Nonfiction

Fear by Bob Woodward

A Higher Loyalty: Truth, Lies, & Leadership by James Comey

Fiction

The Circle by Dave Eggers

The Dresden Files by Jim Butcher

It Devours by Joseph Fink

The Kingkiller Chronicles by Patrick Rothfuss

Mistborn Series by Brandon Sanderson

Redeployment by Phil Klay

Station Eleven by Emily St. John Mandel

Graphic Novels

Persepolis 1 & 2 by Marjane Satrapi

Carl Steidel, Office of Student Support and Community Standards

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime by Marc Haddon

is a deeply touching story of an autistic child, lacking most social skills who, nonetheless, goes in search of the killer of his closest friend – the neighborhood dog. In his quest, he relies on the investigative skills learned from his favorite fictional detective.

Etymologicon: A Circular Stroll through the Hidden Connections of the English Language by Mark Forsyth is a wry, witty book on the unexpected origins of everyday words in the English language. Two more of his books await reading: **Horologicon and Eloquence**.

In Praise of Wasting Time by Alan Lightman. In an age when it seems that every inch of the day must be filled, Lightman sees great benefit in just "letting the mind lie fallow for some periods."

The Book by Amaranth Borsuk considers the place of the printed book in the digital age.

For biography, I recommend **Walter Isaacson's Leonardo da Vinci**.

For history, I recommend **Jon Meacham's American Gospel**.

Finally, if one needs reminding of the enduring significance of the original liberal arts, I recommend two books of essays published by **Wooden Books: Trivium and Quadrivium**.

Sawyer Sylvester, Professor Emeritus, Department of Sociology

The Sympathizer by Viet Thanh Nguyen. Account of the Vietnam War as told from the complex perspective of a Vietnamese man employed by a South Vietnamese general, but who is also a double agent for North Vietnam.

The Overstory by Richard Powers. My favorite book of the year. Nine different people whom fate brings together because of their common passion to save trees from extinction. I learned so much about trees! This may seem an odd recommendation but it's a thrilling, dramatic, and heartbreaking story.

Anne Thompson, Professor Emerita, Department of English

The Gardener and The Carpenter by Alison Gopnik. Great book about how people parent: some guide a natural process; some engineer the process.

The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt's New World by Andrea Wulf. An incredible story about Humboldt, his life and influence on the way we perceive the natural world, our impacts on the natural world, and how the natural world impacts us.

William Wallace, Department of Education

I would like to recommend **Sacred Cesium Ground and Isa's Deluge**, a book of two novellas by **Kimura Yusuke** translated by Doug Slaymaker. This book just came out this year and is written by an author from the Tohoku region of Japan, which was devastated by the disasters

of 2011. Kimura accesses the anger at abandonment and the point of view of a marginalized region in a way that writers from outside the affected area rarely do. Among many other fine points, Slaymaker's translation comes to grips with the importance of dialect in the original works.

Justine Weisinger, Program in Asian Studies

Non-Fiction. I have three disparate recommendations in the general non-fiction category. **The Feather Thief by Kirk Johnson.** Details past and present obsessions with colorful feathers of exotic bird species. **Fear by Bob Woodward** is a careful analysis of the workings of the Trump White House. As a former Peace Corps volunteer, I appreciated the insightful history of the organization's growth and change in **When the World Calls by Stanley Meisler.**

Memoirs. I have enjoyed: **Settled in the Wild by Susan Shetterly**, a 2018 "Read ME" choice, as well as **Real American by Julie Lythcott-Haim**, this past year's common read at Bates.

Fiction. I've recently enjoyed some historical fiction, particularly three books set in the nineteenth century. **News of the World by Paulette Jiles** and **Dragon Teeth by Michael Crichton** introduced me to some unusual aspects of the 1870s frontiers in Texas and in and around Wyoming. **Philida by Andre Brink**, set in South Africa earlier in the 1800s, tells a compelling story of Boer farmers and their slaves. **The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood** and **Animal Farm by George Orwell** are older novels that are both apt and chilling, and hopefully will never resemble reality. Finally, **Remains of the Day by Kazuo Ishiguro** is sui generis, a traditional English butler beginning to doubt the value of his dedication to service.

Mysteries. As always I read many mysteries, especially those by Louise Penny and Lisa Gardner. I also enjoyed two mysteries by European authors I hadn't encountered before: **Snow White Must Die by Nele**

Neuhaus and The Boy in the Suitcase by Lene Kaaberbol and Agnete Friis.

For airplane reading on the way to visit Yellowstone National Park, I liked **C. J. Box's Paradise Valley.**

Anne Williams, Professor Emerita, Department of Economics

"A room without books is like a body without a soul." ~ Cicero

Titles with two or more recommendations:

The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood

Ladder in the Sky by John Boyne

Caleb's Crossing by Geraldine Brooks

Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine by Gail Honeyman

The Broken Earth Trilogy by N.K. Jemison

Euphoria by Lily King

Circe by Madeline Miller

Nine Perfect Strangers by Liane Moriarty

Born a Crime by Trevor Noah

Becoming by Michelle Obama

Warlight by Michael Ondaatje

There, There by Tommy Orange

The Library Book by Susan Orlean

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens

The Overstory by Richard Powers

A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles

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One in a Million Boy by Monica Wood

Fear by Bob Woodward