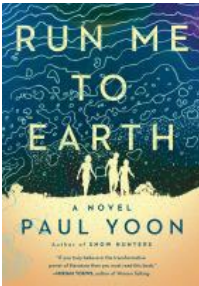




BOOK DISCUSSION KITS

[Run Me to Earth](#) by Paul Yoon



From award-winning author Paul Yoon comes a spellbinding novel about three kids orphaned in 1960s Laos—and how their destinies are entwined across decades. Alisak, Prany, and Noi—three orphans united by devastating loss—must do what is necessary to survive the perilous landscape of 1960s Laos. When they take shelter in a bombed out field hospital, they meet Vang, a doctor dedicated to helping the wounded at all costs. Soon the teens are serving as motorcycle couriers, delicately navigating their bikes across the fields filled with unexploded bombs, beneath the indiscriminate barrage from the sky. In a world where the landscape and the roads

have turned into an ocean of bombs, we follow their grueling days of rescuing civilians and searching for medical supplies, until Vang secures their evacuation on the last helicopters leaving the country. It's a move with irrevocable consequences—and sets them on disparate and treacherous paths across the world.

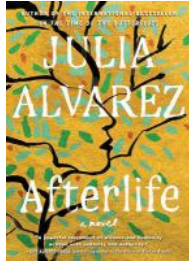
[I Have the Answer](#) by Kelly Fordon (Local Author)



Kelly Fordon's *I Have the Answer* artfully mixes the fabulist with the workaday and illuminates relationships and characters with crisp, elegant prose and dark wit. The stories in Fordon's latest collection are disquieting, humorous, and thought-provoking. They might catch you off guard, but are always infused with deep humanity and tenderness. In these thirteen short stories, Fordon presents people dealing with the grayness of reality and longing for transcendence. Characters within these stories are often as surprised by their own behavior as that of their neighbor's. In "Jungle Life," the narrator attempts to clarify and document the stories of his father, a war veteran,

before he descends into dementia. In "Where's the Baby?" a woman reflects on her difficult childhood as she grudgingly cares for her more successful, yet exasperating sister. In "In the Dog House," a woman visits an estate sale and sifts through the layers of lifetimes past while grappling with her long-standing jealousy of a mysterious neighbor. In "The Shorebirds and The Shaman," a woman who has just lost her husband winds up at a kooky weekend retreat role-playing her way out of debilitating grief.

[Afterlife by Julia Alvarez](#)



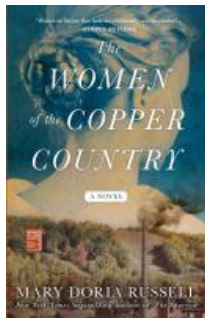
Antonia Vega, the immigrant writer at the center of *Afterlife*, has had the rug pulled out from under her. She has just retired from the college where she taught English when her beloved husband, Sam, suddenly dies. And then more jolts: her bighearted but unstable sister disappears, and Antonia returns home one evening to find a pregnant, undocumented teenager on her doorstep. Antonia has always sought direction in the literature she loves--lines from her favorite authors play in her head like a soundtrack--but now she finds that the world demands more of her than words. *Afterlife* is a compact, nimble, and sharply droll novel. Set in this political moment of tribalism and distrust, it asks: What do we owe those in crisis in our families, including--maybe especially--members of our human family? How do we live in a broken world without losing faith in one another or ourselves? And how do we stay true to those glorious souls we have lost?

[The Nickel Boys by Colson Whitehead](#)



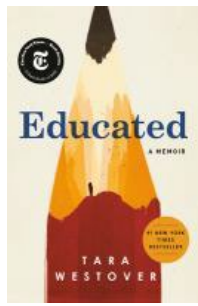
In this Pulitzer Prize-winning, New York Times bestselling follow-up to *The Underground Railroad*, Colson Whitehead brilliantly dramatizes another strand of American history through the story of two boys unjustly sentenced to a hellish reform school in Jim Crow-era Florida. When Elwood Curtis, a black boy growing up in 1960s Tallahassee, is unfairly sentenced to a juvenile reformatory called the Nickel Academy, he finds himself trapped in a grotesque chamber of horrors. Elwood's only salvation is his friendship with fellow "delinquent" Turner, which deepens despite Turner's conviction that Elwood is hopelessly naive, that the world is crooked, and that the only way to survive is to scheme and avoid trouble. As life at the Academy becomes ever more perilous, the tension between Elwood's ideals and Turner's skepticism leads to a decision whose repercussions will echo down the decades.

[The Women of the Copper Country by Mary Doria Russell](#)



In July 1913, 25-year-old Annie Clements had seen enough of the world to know that it was unfair. She's spent her whole life in the copper-mining town of Calumet, Michigan where men risked their lives for meager salaries and had barely enough to put food on the table and clothes on their backs. The women labor in the houses of the elite, and send their men deep underground each day, dreading the fateful call of the company man telling them their loved ones aren't coming home. When Annie decides to stand up for herself, and the entire town of Calumet, nearly everyone believes she may have taken on more than she is prepared to handle. In Annie's hands lie the miners' fortunes and their health, her husband's wrath over her growing independence, and her own reputation as she faces the threat of prison and discovers a forbidden love. On her fierce quest for justice, Annie will discover just how much she is willing to sacrifice for her own independence and the families of Calumet.

[Educated : a Memoir by Tara Westover](#)



Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, Tara Westover was seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom. Her family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received an education, and no one to intervene when one of Tara's older brothers became violent. When another brother got himself into college, Tara decided to try a new kind of life. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge University. Only then would she wonder if she'd traveled too far, if there was still a way home.

[Becoming by Michelle Obama](#)



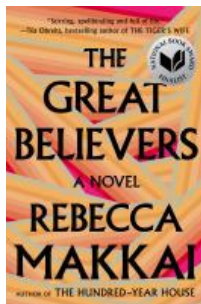
In a life filled with meaning and accomplishment, Michelle Obama has emerged as one of the most iconic and compelling women of our era. As First Lady of the United States of America, she helped create the most welcoming and inclusive White House in history. With unerring honesty and lively wit, she describes her triumphs and her disappointments, both public and private. A deeply personal reckoning of a woman of soul and substance who has steadily defied expectations.

[What the Eyes Don't See : a Story of Crisis, Resistance, and Hope in an American City by Mona Hanna-Attisha](#)



Written by the crusading pediatrician who helped turn the crisis into a transformative movement for change, *What the Eyes Don't See* is a devastating insider chronicle of the Flint water crisis, the signature environmental disaster of our time, and a riveting narrative of personal advocacy. Here is the dramatic story of how Dr. Mona used science to prove Flint kids were exposed to lead, and how she courageously went public with her research and faced a brutal backlash. With persistence and single-minded sense of mission, she spoke truth to power. The book explores the horrific reality of how misguided austerity policies and callous bureaucratic indifference placed an entire city at risk.

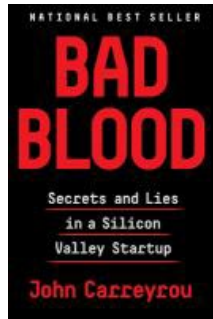
[The Great Believers by Rebecca Makkai](#)



In 1985, Yale Tishman, the development director for an art gallery in Chicago, is about to pull off an amazing coup, bringing in an extraordinary collection of 1920s paintings as a gift to the gallery. Yet as his career begins to flourish, the carnage of the AIDS epidemic grows around him. One by one, his friends are dying and after his friend Nico's funeral, the virus circles closer and closer to Yale himself. Soon the only person he has left is Fiona, Nico's little sister. Thirty years later, Fiona is in Paris tracking down her estranged daughter who disappeared into a cult. While staying with an old friend, a famous photographer who documented the Chicago crisis, she finds herself finally grappling with the devastating ways AIDS affected her life and

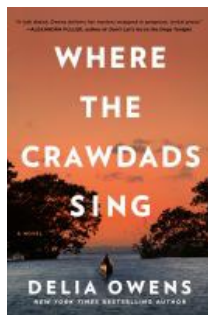
her relationship with her daughter. The two intertwining stories take us through the heartbreak of the eighties and the chaos of the modern world, as both Yale and Fiona struggle to find goodness in the midst of disaster.

[Bad Blood : Secrets and Lies in a Silicon Valley Startup](#) by John Carreyrou



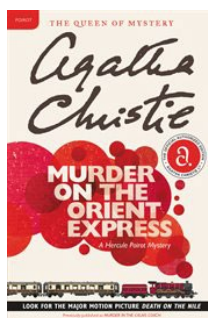
In 2014, Theranos founder and CEO Elizabeth Holmes was widely seen as the female Steve Jobs: a brilliant Stanford dropout whose startup "unicorn" promised to revolutionize the medical industry with a machine that would make blood tests significantly faster and easier. Backed by investors such as Larry Ellison and Tim Draper, Theranos sold shares in an early fundraising round that valued the company at \$9 billion, putting Holmes's worth at an estimated \$4.7 billion. There was just one problem: the technology didn't work. For years, Holmes had been misleading investors, FDA officials, and her own employees. When Carreyrou, working at the Wall Street Journal, got a tip from a former Theranos employee and started asking questions, both Carreyrou and the Journal were threatened with lawsuits. Undaunted, the newspaper ran the first of dozens of Theranos articles in late 2015. By early 2017, the company's value was zero and Holmes faced potential legal action from the government and her investors.

[Where the Crawdads Sing](#) by Delia Owens



For years, rumors of the "Marsh Girl" have haunted Barkley Cove, a quiet town on the North Carolina coast. She's barefoot and wild; unfit for polite society. So in late 1969, when handsome Chase Andrews is found dead, the locals immediately suspect Kya Clark. But Kya is not what they say. Abandoned at age ten, she has survived on her own in the marsh that she calls home. A born naturalist with just one day of school, she takes life lessons from the land, learning from the false signals of fireflies the real way of this world. But while she could have lived in solitude forever, the time comes when she yearns to be touched and loved. Drawn to two young men from town, who are each intrigued by her wild beauty, Kya opens herself to a new and startling world -- until the unthinkable happens.

[Murder on the Orient Express](#) by Agatha Christie



Just after midnight, the famous Orient Express is stopped in its tracks by a snowdrift. By morning, the millionaire Samuel Edward Ratchett lies dead in his compartment, stabbed a dozen times, his door locked from the inside. Without a shred of doubt, one of his fellow passengers is the murderer. Isolated by the storm, detective Hercule Poirot must find the killer among a dozen of the dead man's enemies, before the murderer decides to strike again.

[Exit West : a Novel](#) by Mohsin Hamid



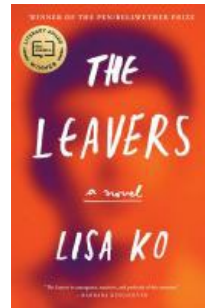
In a country teetering on the brink of civil war, two young people meet—sensual, fiercely independent Nadia and gentle, restrained Saeed. They embark on a furtive love affair, and are soon cloistered in a premature intimacy by the unrest roiling their city. When it explodes, turning familiar streets into a patchwork of checkpoints and bomb blasts, they begin to hear whispers about doors—doors that can whisk people far away, if perilously and for a price. As the violence escalates, Nadia and Saeed decide that they no longer have a choice. Leaving their homeland and their old lives behind, they find a door and step through. . . . *Exit West* follows these remarkable characters as they emerge into an alien and uncertain future, struggling to hold on to each other, to their past, to the very sense of who they are.

Less by Andrew Sean Greer



Who says you can't run away from your problems? You are a failed novelist about to turn fifty. A wedding invitation arrives in the mail: your boyfriend of the past nine years is engaged to someone else. You can't say yes—it would be too awkward—and you can't say no—it would look like defeat. On your desk are a series of invitations to half-baked literary events around the world. QUESTION : How do you arrange to skip town? ANSWER : You accept them all. What would possibly go wrong? Arthur Less will almost fall in love in Paris, almost fall to his death in Berlin, barely escape to a Moroccan ski chalet from a Saharan sandstorm, accidentally book himself as the (only) writer-in-residence at a Christian Retreat Center in Southern India, and encounter, on a desert island in the Arabian Sea, the last person on Earth he wants to face. Somewhere in there: he will turn fifty. Through it all, there is his first love. And there is his last. Because, despite all these mishaps, missteps, misunderstandings and mistakes, *Less* is, above all, a love story.

The Leavers by Lisa Ko



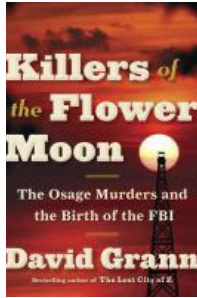
One morning, Deming Guo's mother, Polly, an undocumented Chinese immigrant, goes to her job at a nail salon—and never comes home. No one can find any trace of her. With his mother gone, eleven-year-old Deming is left mystified and bereft. Eventually adopted by a pair of well-meaning white professors, Deming is moved from the Bronx to a small town upstate and renamed Daniel Wilkinson. But far from all he's ever known, Daniel struggles to reconcile his adoptive parents' desire that he assimilate with his memories of his mother and the community he left behind. Told from the perspective of both Daniel—as he grows into a directionless young man—and Polly, Ko's novel gives us one of fiction's most singular mothers. Loving and selfish, determined and frightened, Polly is forced to make one heartwrenching choice after another. Set in New York and China, *The Leavers* is a vivid examination of borders and belonging.

Pachinko by Min Jin Lee



Pachinko follows one Korean family through the generations, beginning in early 1900s Korea with Sunja, the prized daughter of a poor yet proud family, whose unplanned pregnancy threatens to shame them all. Deserted by her lover, Sunja is saved when a young tubercular minister offers to marry and bring her to Japan. So begins a sweeping saga of an exceptional family in exile from its homeland and caught in the indifferent arc of history. Through desperate struggles and hard-won triumphs, its members are bound together by deep roots as they face enduring questions of faith, family, and identity.

Killers of the Flower Moon : The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI by David Grann



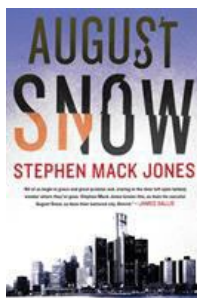
In the 1920s, the richest people per capita in the world were members of the Osage Nation in Oklahoma. After oil was discovered beneath their land, the Osage rode in chauffeured automobiles, built mansions, and sent their children to study in Europe. Then, one by one, the Osage began to be killed off. The family of an Osage woman, Mollie Burkhart, became a prime target. One of her relatives was shot. Another was poisoned. And it was just the beginning, as more and more Osage were dying under mysterious circumstances, and many of those who dared to investigate the killings were themselves murdered. As the death toll rose, the newly created FBI took up the case, and the young director, J. Edgar Hoover, turned to a former Texas Ranger named Tom White to try to unravel the mystery. White put together an undercover team, including a Native American agent who infiltrated the region, and together with the Osage began to expose one of the most chilling conspiracies in American history.

Lillian Boxfish Takes a Walk by Kathleen Rooney



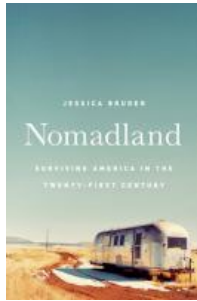
"In my reckless and undiscouraged youth," Lillian Boxfish writes, "I worked in a walnut-paneled office thirteen floors above West Thirty-Fifth Street ..." She took 1930s New York by storm, working her way up writing copy for R.H. Macy's to become the highest paid advertising woman in the country. It was a job that, she says, "in some ways saved my life, and in other ways ruined it." Now it's the last night of 1984 and Lillian, 85 years old but just as sharp and savvy as ever, is on her way to a party. It's chilly enough out for her mink coat and Manhattan is grittier now--her son keeps warning her about a subway vigilante on the prowl--but the quick-tongued poetess has never been one to scare easily. On a walk that takes her over 10 miles around the city, she meets bartenders, bodega clerks, security guards, criminals, children, parents, and parents-to-be, while reviewing a life of excitement and adversity, passion and heartbreak, illuminating all the ways New York has changed--and has not.

August Snow by Stephen Mack Jones



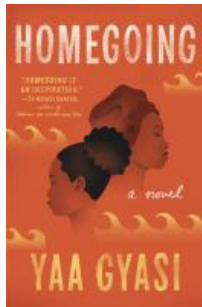
Tough, smart, and struggling to stay alive, August Snow is the embodiment of Detroit. The son of an African-American father and a Mexican-American mother, August grew up in the city's Mexicantown and joined the police force only to be drummed out by a conspiracy of corrupt cops and politicians. But August fought back; he took on the city and got himself a \$12 million wrongful dismissal settlement that left him low on friends. He has just returned to the house he grew up in after a year away, and quickly learns he has many scores to settle. It's not long before he's summoned to the palatial Grosse Pointe Estates home of business magnate Eleanore Paget. Powerful and manipulative, Paget wants August to investigate the increasingly unusual happenings at her private wealth management bank. But detective work is no longer August's beat, and he declines. A day later, Paget is dead of an apparent suicide--which August isn't buying for a minute. What begins as an inquiry into Eleanore Paget's death soon drags August into a rat's nest of Detroit's most dangerous criminals, from corporate embezzlers to tattooed mercenaries.

[Nomadland : Surviving America in the Twenty-First Century by Jessica Bruder](#)



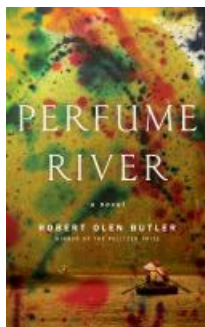
From the beet fields of North Dakota to the National Forest campgrounds of California to Amazon's CamperForce program in Texas, employers have discovered a new, low-cost labor pool, made up largely of transient older Americans. Finding that social security comes up short, often underwater on mortgages, these invisible casualties of the Great Recession have taken to the road by the tens of thousands in late-model RVs, travel trailers, and vans, forming a growing community of nomads. On frequently traveled routes between seasonal jobs, Jessica Bruder meets people from all walks of life: a former professor, a McDonald's vice president, a minister, a college administrator, and a motorcycle cop, among many others—including her irrepressible protagonist, a onetime cocktail waitress, Home Depot clerk, and general contractor named Linda May. In a secondhand vehicle she christens "Van Halen," Bruder hits the road to get to know her subjects more intimately. Accompanying Linda May and others from campground toilet cleaning to warehouse product scanning to desert reunions, then moving on to the dangerous work of beet harvesting, Bruder tells a compelling, eye-opening tale of the dark underbelly of the American economy—one that foreshadows the precarious future that may await many more of us. At the same time, she celebrates the exceptional resilience and creativity of these quintessential Americans who have given up ordinary rootedness to survive.

[Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi](#)



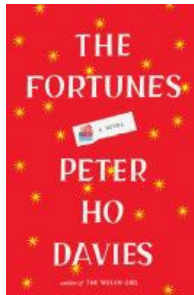
"Two half sisters, Effia and Esi, unknown to each other, are born into two different tribal villages in 18th century Ghana. Effia will be married off to an English colonial, and will live in comfort in the sprawling, palatial rooms of Cape Coast Castle, raising half-caste children who will be sent abroad to be educated in England before returning to the Gold Coast to serve as administrators of the Empire. Her sister, Esi, will be imprisoned beneath Effia in the Castle's women's dungeon, and then shipped off on a boat bound for America, where she will be sold into slavery. Stretching from the tribal wars of Ghana to slavery and Civil War in America, from the coal mines in the north to the Great Migration to the streets of 20th century Harlem, Yaa Gyasi's has written a modern masterpiece.

[Perfume River by Robert Olen Butler](#)



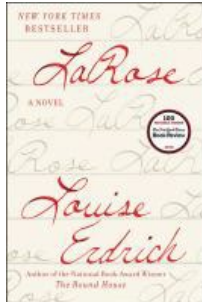
Robert Quinlan is a seventy-year-old historian, teaching at Florida State University, where his wife Darla is also tenured. Their marriage, forged in the fervor of anti-Vietnam-war protests, now bears the fractures of time, both personal and historical, with the couple trapped in an existence of morning coffee and solitary jogging and separate offices. For Robert and Darla, the cracks remain under the surface, whereas the divisions in Robert's own family are more apparent: he has almost no relationship with his brother Jimmy, who became estranged from the family as the Vietnam War intensified. Robert and Jimmy's father, a veteran of WWII, is coming to the end of his life, and aftershocks of war ripple across their lives once again, when Jimmy refuses to appear at his father's bedside. And an unstable homeless man whom Robert at first takes to be a fellow Vietnam veteran turns out to have a deep impact not just on Robert, but on his entire family.

[The Fortunes by Peter Ho Davies](#)



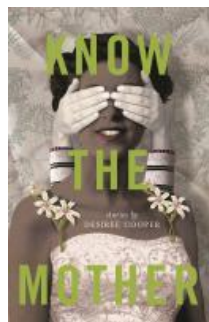
Inhabiting four lives—a railroad baron’s valet who unwittingly ignites an explosion in Chinese labor; Hollywood’s first Chinese movie star; a hate-crime victim whose death mobilizes the Asian American community; and a biracial writer visiting China for an adoption—this novel captures and capsizes over a century of our history, showing that even as family bonds are denied and broken, a community can survive—as much through love as blood.

[LaRose by Louise Erdrich](#)



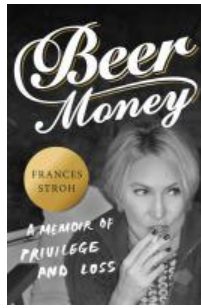
North Dakota, late summer, 1999. Landreaux Iron stalks a deer along the edge of the property bordering his own. He shoots with easy confidence—but when the buck springs away, Landreaux realizes he’s hit something else, a blur he saw as he squeezed the trigger. When he staggers closer, he realizes he has killed his neighbor’s five-year-old son, Dusty Ravich. The youngest child of his friend and neighbor, Peter Ravich, Dusty was best friends with Landreaux’s five-year-old son, LaRose. The two families have always been close, sharing food, clothing, and rides into town; their children played together despite going to different schools; and Landreaux’s wife, Emmaline, is half sister to Dusty’s mother, Nola. Horrified at what he’s done, the recovered alcoholic turns to an Ojibwe tribe tradition—the sweat lodge—for guidance, and finds a way forward. Following an ancient means of retribution, he and Emmaline will give LaRose to the grieving Peter and Nola. “Our son will be your son now,” they tell them. LaRose is quickly absorbed into his new family. Plagued by thoughts of suicide, Nola dotes on him, keeping her darkness at bay. His fierce, rebellious new “sister,” Maggie, welcomes him as a coconspirator who can ease her volatile mother’s terrifying moods. Gradually he’s allowed shared visits with his birth family, whose sorrow mirrors the Raviches’ own. As the years pass, LaRose becomes the linchpin linking the Irons and the Raviches, and eventually their mutual pain begins to heal. But when a vengeful man with a long-standing grudge against Landreaux begins raising trouble, hurling accusations of a cover-up the day Dusty died, he threatens the tenuous peace that has kept these two fragile families whole.

[Know the Mother by Desiree Cooper](#)



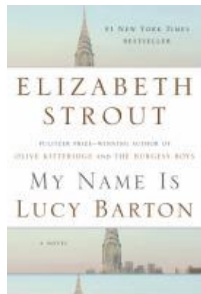
In this heart-wrenching collection, Cooper reveals that gender and race are often unanticipated interlopers in family life. An anxious mother reflects on her prenatal fantasies of suicide while waiting for her daughter to come home late one night. A lawyer miscarries during a conference call and must proceed as though nothing has happened. On a rare night out with her husband, a new mother tries convincing herself that everything is still the same. A politician's wife's thoughts turn to slavery as she contemplates her own escape: "Even Harriet Tubman had realized that freedom wasn't worth the price of abandoning her family, so she'd come back home. She'd risked it all for love." With her lyrical and carefully crafted prose, Cooper's stories provide truths without sermon and invite empathy without sentimentality.

[Beer Money : a Memoir of Privilege and Loss by Frances Stroh](#)



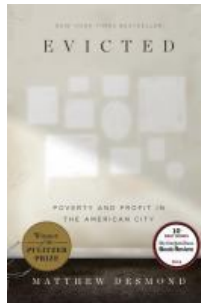
Frances Stroh's earliest memories are ones of great privilege: shopping trips to London and New York, lunches served by black-tied waiters at the Regency Hotel, and a house filled with precious antiques, which she was forbidden to touch. Established in Detroit in 1850, by 1984 the Stroh Brewing Company had become the largest private beer fortune in America and a brand emblematic of the American dream itself; while Stroh was coming of age, the Stroh family fortune was estimated to be worth \$700 million. But behind the beautiful façade lay a crumbling foundation. Detroit's economy collapsed with the retreat of the automotive industry to the suburbs and abroad and likewise the Stroh family found their wealth and legacy disappearing. As their fortune dissolved in little over a decade, the family was torn apart internally by divorce and one family member's drug bust; disagreements over the management of the business; and disputes over the remaining money they possessed. Even as they turned against one another, looking for a scapegoat on whom to blame the unraveling of their family, they could not anticipate that even far greater tragedy lay in store.

[My Name is Lucy Barton by Elizabeth Strout](#)



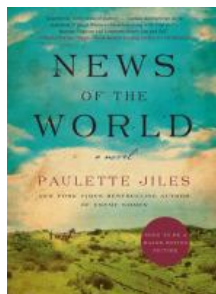
Lucy Barton is recovering slowly from what should have been a simple operation. Her mother, to whom she hasn't spoken for many years, comes to see her. Gentle gossip about people from Lucy's childhood in Amgash, Illinois, seems to reconnect them, but just below the surface lie the tension and longing that have informed every aspect of Lucy's life: her escape from her troubled family, her desire to become a writer, her marriage, her love for her two daughters. Knitting this powerful narrative together is the brilliant storytelling voice of Lucy herself: keenly observant, deeply human, and truly unforgettable.

[Evicted : Poverty and Profit in the American City by Matthew Desmond](#)



In *Evicted*, Princeton sociologist and MacArthur "Genius" Matthew Desmond follows eight families in Milwaukee as they each struggle to keep a roof over their heads. *Evicted* transforms our understanding of poverty and economic exploitation while providing fresh ideas for solving one of twenty-first-century America's most devastating problems. Its unforgettable scenes of hope and loss remind us of the centrality of home, without which nothing else is possible.

[News of the World by Paulette Jiles](#)



In the wake of the Civil War, Captain Jefferson Kyle Kidd travels through northern Texas, giving live readings from newspapers to paying audiences hungry for news of the world. An elderly widower who has lived through three wars and fought in two of them, the captain enjoys his rootless, solitary existence. In Wichita Falls, he is offered a \$50 gold piece to deliver a young orphan to her relatives in San Antonio. Four years earlier, a band of Kiowa raiders killed Johanna's parents and sister; sparing the little girl, they raised her as one of their own. Recently rescued by the U.S. army, the ten-year-old has once again been torn away from the only home she knows. Their 400-mile journey south through unsettled territory and unforgiving terrain proves difficult and at times dangerous. Johanna has forgotten the English language, tries to escape at every opportunity, throws away her shoes, and refuses to act "civilized." Yet as the miles pass,

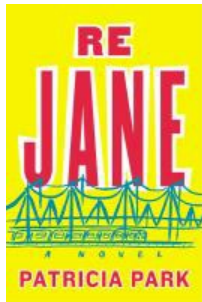
the two lonely survivors tentatively begin to trust each other, forming a bond that marks the difference between life and death in this treacherous land. Arriving in San Antonio, the reunion is neither happy nor welcome. The captain must hand Johanna over to an aunt and uncle she does not remember—strangers who regard her as an unwanted burden. A respectable man, Captain Kidd is faced with a terrible choice: abandon the girl to her fate or become—in the eyes of the law—a kidnapper himself.

Fortune Smiles by Adam Johnson



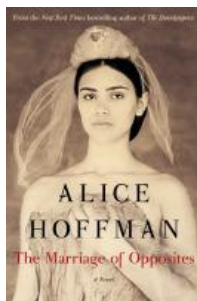
Throughout these six stories, Pulitzer Prize winner Adam Johnson delves deep into love and loss, natural disasters, the influence of technology, and how the political shapes the personal, giving voice to the perspectives we don't often hear. In "Nirvana," a programmer whose wife has a rare disease finds solace in a digital simulacrum of the president of the United States. In "Hurricanes Anonymous," a young man searches for the mother of his son in a Louisiana devastated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. "George Orwell Was a Friend of Mine" follows a former warden of a Stasi prison in East Germany who vehemently denies his past, even as pieces of it are delivered in packages to his door. And in the unforgettable title story, Johnson returns to his signature subject, North Korea, depicting two defectors from Pyongyang who are trying to adapt to their new lives in Seoul, while one cannot forget the woman he left behind.

Re Jane by Patricia Park



For Jane Re, half-Korean, half-American orphan, Flushing, Queens, is the place she's been trying to escape from her whole life. Sardonic yet vulnerable, Jane toils, unappreciated, in her strict uncle's grocery store and politely observes the traditional principle of nunchi (a combination of good manners, hierarchy, and obligation). Desperate for a new life, she's thrilled to become the au pair for the Mazer-Farleys, two Brooklyn English professors and their adopted Chinese daughter. Inducted into the world of organic food co-ops and nineteenth-century novels, Jane is the recipient of Beth Mazer's feminist lectures and Ed Farley's very male attention. But when a family death interrupts Jane and Ed's blossoming affair, she flies off to Seoul, leaving New York far behind. Reconnecting with family, and struggling to learn the ways of modern-day Korea, Jane begins to wonder if Ed Farley is really the man for her. Jane returns to Queens, where she must find a balance between two cultures and accept who she really is.

Marriage of Opposites by Alice Hoffman



Growing up on idyllic St. Thomas in the early 1800s, Rachel dreams of life in faraway Paris. Rachel's mother, a pillar of their small refugee community of Jews who escaped the Inquisition, has never forgiven her daughter for being a difficult girl who refuses to live by the rules. Growing up, Rachel's salvation is their maid Adelle's belief in her strengths, and her deep, life-long friendship with Jestine, Adelle's daughter. But Rachel's life is not her own. She is married off to a widower with three children to save her father's business. When her older husband dies suddenly and his handsome, much younger nephew, Frédéric, arrives from France to settle the estate, Rachel seizes her own life story, beginning a defiant, passionate love affair that sparks a scandal that affects all of her family, including her favorite son, who will become one of the greatest artists of France.

[A Spool of Blue Thread by Anne Tyler](#)



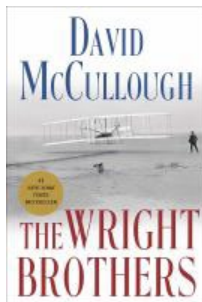
"It was a beautiful, breezy, yellow-and-green afternoon ..." This is how Abby Whitshank always describes the day she fell in love with Red in July 1959. From Red's parents, newly arrived in Baltimore in the 1920s, to the grandchildren carrying the Whitshank legacy boisterously into the twenty-first century, the Whitshanks are one of those families that radiate an indefinable kind of specialness, but like all families, their stories reveal only part of the picture: Abby and Red and their four grown children have accumulated not only tender moments, laughter, and celebrations, but also jealousies, disappointments, and carefully guarded secrets.

[Crooked Heart by Lissa Evans](#)



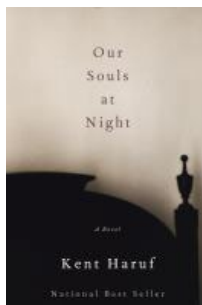
When Noel Bostock—aged ten, no family—is evacuated from London to escape the Nazi bombardment, he lands in a suburb northwest of the city with Vera Sedge—a thirty-six-year old widow drowning in debts and dependents. Always desperate for money, she's unscrupulous about how she gets it. Noel's mourning his godmother Mattie, a former suffragette. Wise beyond his years, raised with a disdain for authority and an eclectic attitude toward education, he has little in common with other children and even less with the impulsive Vee, who hurtles from one self-made crisis to the next. The war's provided unprecedented opportunities for making money, but what Vee needs—and what she's never had—is a cool head and the ability to make a plan. On her own, she's a disaster. With Noel, she's a team. Together, they cook up a scheme. Crisscrossing the bombed suburbs of London, Vee starts to make a profit and Noel begins to regain his interest in life. But there are plenty of other people making money out of the war—and some of them are dangerous. Noel may have been moved to safety, but he isn't actually safe at all. . . .

[The Wright Brothers by David G. McCullough](#)



On a winter day in 1903, in the Outer Banks of North Carolina, two brothers—bicycle mechanics from Dayton, Ohio—changed history. But it would take the world some time to believe that the age of flight had begun, with the first powered machine carrying a pilot. Orville and Wilbur Wright were men of exceptional courage and determination, and of far-ranging intellectual interests and ceaseless curiosity. When they worked together, no problem seemed to be insurmountable. Wilbur was unquestionably a genius. Orville had such mechanical ingenuity as few had ever seen. That they had no more than a public high school education and little money never stopped them in their mission to take to the air. Nothing did, not even the self-evident reality that every time they took off, they risked being killed.

[Our Souls at Night by Kent Haruf](#)



In the familiar setting of Holt, Colorado, home to all of Kent Haruf's inimitable fiction, Addie Moore pays an unexpected visit to a neighbor, Louis Waters. Her husband died years ago, as did his wife, and in such a small town they naturally have known of each other for decades; in fact, Addie was quite fond of Louis's wife. His daughter lives hours away, her son even farther, and Addie and Louis have long been living alone in empty houses, the nights so terribly lonely, especially with no one to talk with. But maybe that could change? As Addie and Louis come to know each other better--their pleasures and their difficulties--a beautiful story of second chances

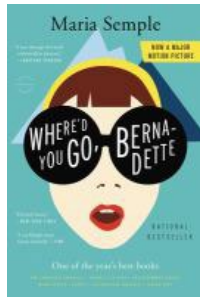
unfolds, making *Our Souls at Night* the perfect final installment to this beloved writer's enduring contribution to American literature.

[Elizabeth is Missing by Emma Healey](#)



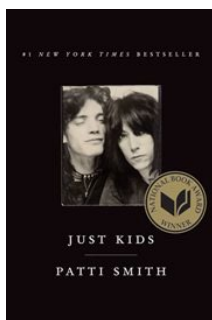
Maud, an aging grandmother, is slowly losing her memory—and her grip on everyday life. Yet she refuses to forget her best friend Elizabeth, whom she is convinced is missing and in terrible danger. But no one will listen to Maud—not her frustrated daughter, Helen, not her caretakers, not the police, and especially not Elizabeth’s mercurial son, Peter. Armed with handwritten notes she leaves for herself and an overwhelming feeling that Elizabeth needs her help, Maud resolves to discover the truth and save her beloved friend. This singular obsession forms a cornerstone of Maud’s rapidly dissolving present. But the clues she discovers seem only to lead her deeper into her past, to another unsolved disappearance: her sister, Sukey, who vanished shortly after World War II. As vivid memories of a tragedy that occurred more fifty years ago come flooding back, Maud discovers new momentum in her search for her friend. Could the mystery of Sukey’s disappearance hold the key to finding Elizabeth?

[Where’d You Go, Bernadette by Maria Semple](#)



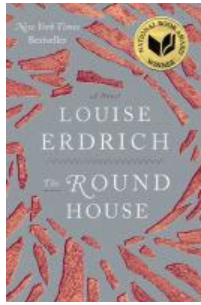
Bernadette Fox is notorious. To her Microsoft-guru husband, she's a fearlessly opinionated partner; to fellow private-school mothers in Seattle, she's a disgrace; to design mavens, she's a revolutionary architect; and to 15-year-old Bee, she is her best friend and, simply, Mom. Then Bernadette vanishes. It all began when Bee aced her report card and claimed her promised reward: a family trip to Antarctica. But Bernadette's intensifying allergy to Seattle -- and people in general -- has made her so agoraphobic that a virtual assistant in India now runs her most basic errands. A trip to the end of the earth is problematic. To find her mother, Bee compiles email messages, official documents, and secret correspondence -- creating a compulsively readable and surprisingly touching novel about misplaced genius and a mother and daughter's role in an absurd world.

[Just Kids by Patti Smith](#)



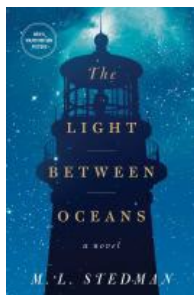
It was the summer Coltrane died, the summer of love and riots, and the summer when a chance encounter in Brooklyn led two young people on a path of art, devotion, and initiation. Patti Smith would evolve as a poet and performer, and Robert Mapplethorpe would direct his highly provocative style toward photography. Bound in innocence and enthusiasm, they traversed the city from Coney Island to 42nd Street, and eventually to the celebrated round table of Max's Kansas City, where the Andy Warhol contingent held court. In 1969, the pair set up camp at the Hotel Chelsea and soon entered a community of the famous and infamous - the influential artists of the day and the colorful fringe. It was a time of heightened awareness, when the worlds of poetry, rock and roll, art, and sexual politics were colliding and exploding. In this milieu, two kids made a pact to take care of each other. Scrappy, romantic, committed to create, and fueled by their mutual dreams and drives, they would prod and provide for one another during the hungry years.

The Round House by Louise Erdrich



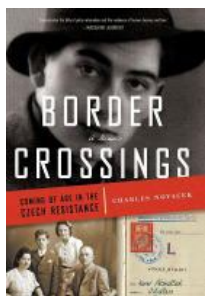
One Sunday in the spring of 1988, a woman living on a reservation in North Dakota is attacked. The details of the crime are slow to surface as Geraldine Coutts is traumatized and reluctant to relive or reveal what happened, either to the police or to her husband, Bazil, and 13-year-old son, Joe. In one day, Joe's life is irrevocably transformed. He tries to heal his mother, but she will not leave her bed and slips into an abyss of solitude. Increasingly alone, Joe finds himself thrust prematurely into an adult world for which he is ill prepared. While his father, who is a tribal judge, endeavors to wrest justice from a situation that defies his efforts, Joe becomes frustrated with the official investigation and sets out with his trusted friends, Cappy, Zack, and Angus, to get some answers of his own. Their quest takes them first to the Round House, a sacred space and place of worship for the Ojibwe. And this is only the beginning.

The Light Between Oceans by M.L. Stedman



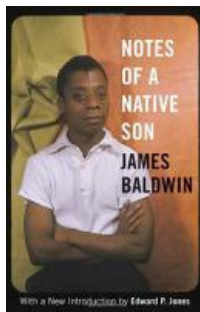
In 1918, after four harrowing years on the Western Front, Tom Sherbourne returns to Australia to take a job as the lighthouse keeper on remote Janus Rock. To this isolated island, where the supply boat comes only four times a year and shore leaves are granted every other year at best, Tom brings a young, bold, and loving wife, Isabel. Three years later, after two miscarriages and one stillbirth, the grieving Isabel is tending the grave of her newly lost infant when she hears a baby's cries on the wind. A boat has washed up on shore carrying a dead man and a living baby. Tom, whose records as a lighthouse keeper are meticulous and whose moral principles have withstood a horrific war, wants to report the dead man and the infant immediately. But Isabel has taken the tiny baby to her breast. Against Tom's judgment, they claim the child as their own and name her Lucy, but a rift begins to grow between them. When Lucy is two, Tom and Isabel return to the mainland and are reminded that there are other people in the world...and one of them is desperate to find her lost baby.

Border Crossings : Coming of Age in the Czech Resistance : a Memoir by Charles Novacek



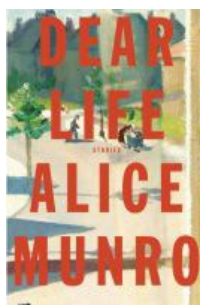
Border Crossings: Coming of Age in the Czech Resistance is the captivating, tender memoir of Charles Novacek, a Czechoslovakian whose idyllic childhood exploring the Tatra Mountains was shattered by the Nazi occupation of his homeland. He spent his youth defending his neighbors, his family, and his country, first from the Nazi atrocities of World War II and then from the Soviet oppression of the ensuing Cold War. Charles was eleven years old when his father and uncle recruited him into the Czech Resistance. Antonin Novacek not only taught his son to survive in the wild, but also prepared him for wartime: how to resist pain, hunger, and fear and to trust no one. His assignments included delivering messages to soldiers parachuting behind enemy lines and hiding them in caves he equipped for their shelter. As a young man, Charles was captured and jailed by the Communists and rescued by an underground resistance network. In too much danger to remain in Czechoslovakia, he staged a daring escape only to land in a miserable displaced persons camp. His will to live prevailed once again, and Charles eventually married and built a successful life in America.

Notes of a Native Son by James Baldwin



Written during the 1940s and early 1950s, when Baldwin was only in his 20s, the essays collected in *Notes of a Native Son* capture a view of Black life and Black thought at the dawn of the civil rights movement and as the movement slowly gained strength through the words of one of the most captivating essayists and foremost intellectuals of that era. Writing as an artist, activist, and social critic, Baldwin probes the complex condition of being Black in America. With a keen eye, he examines everything from the significance of the protest novel to the motives and circumstances of the many Black expatriates of the time, from his home in "The Harlem Ghetto" to a sobering "Journey to Atlanta."

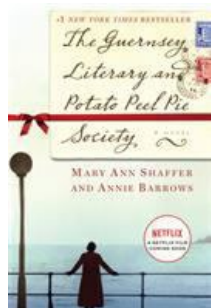
Dear Life : Stories by Alice Munro



In story after story, Alice Munro illumines the moment a life is forever altered by a chance encounter or an action not taken, or by a simple twist of fate that turns a person out of his or her accustomed path and into a new way of being or thinking. A poet, finding herself in alien territory at her first literary party, is rescued by a seasoned newspaper columnist, and is soon hurtling across the continent, young child in tow, toward a hoped-for but completely unplanned meeting. A young soldier, returning to his fiancée from the Second World War, steps off the train before his stop and onto the farm of another woman, beginning a life on the move. A wealthy young woman having an affair with the married lawyer hired by her father to handle

his estate comes up with a surprising way to deal with the blackmailer who finds them out. Suffused with Munro's clarity of vision and her unparalleled gift for storytelling, these tales about departures and beginnings, accidents and dangers, and outgoings and homecomings both imagined and real, paint a radiant, indelible portrait of how strange, perilous, and extraordinary ordinary life can be.

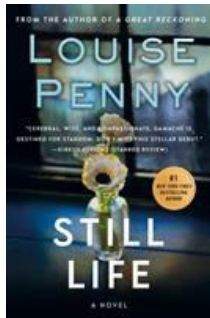
The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society by Mary Ann Shaffer



January 1946: London is emerging from the shadow of the Second World War, and writer Juliet Ashton is looking for her next book subject. Who could imagine that she would find it in a letter from a man she's never met, a native of the island of Guernsey, who has come across her name written inside a book by Charles Lamb. As Juliet and her new correspondent exchange letters, Juliet is drawn into the world of this man and his friends - and what a wonderfully eccentric world it is. The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society - born as a spur-of-the-moment alibi when its members were discovered breaking curfew by the Germans occupying their island - boasts a charming, funny, deeply human cast of characters, from pig

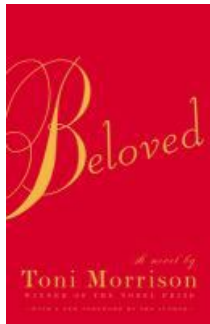
farmers to phrenologists, literature lovers all. Juliet begins a remarkable correspondence with the society's members, learning about their island, their taste in books, and the impact the recent German occupation has had on their lives. Captivated by their stories, she sets sail for Guernsey, and what she finds will change her forever.

Still Life by Louise Penny



Chief Inspector Armand Gamache of the Surêté du Québec and his team of investigators are called in to the scene of a suspicious death in a rural village south of Montreal. Jane Neal, a local fixture in the tiny hamlet of Three Pines, just north of the U.S. border, has been found dead in the woods. The locals are certain it's a tragic hunting accident and nothing more, but Gamache smells something foul in these remote woods, and is soon certain that Jane Neal died at the hands of someone much more sinister than a careless bowhunter. *Still Life* introduces not only an engaging series hero in Inspector Gamache, who commands his forces - and this series - with integrity and quiet courage, but also a winning and talented new writer of traditional mysteries in the person of Louise Penny.

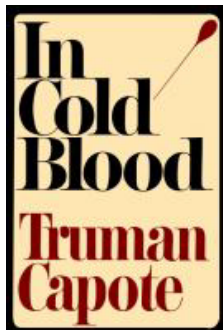
Beloved by Toni Morrison



Staring unflinchingly into the abyss of slavery, this spellbinding novel transforms history into a story as powerful as Exodus and as intimate as a lullaby. Sethe, its protagonist, was born a slave and escaped to Ohio, but 18 years later she is still not free. She has too many memories of Sweet Home, the beautiful farm where so many hideous things happened. And Sethe's new home is haunted by the ghost of her baby, who died nameless and whose tombstone is engraved with a single word: Beloved.

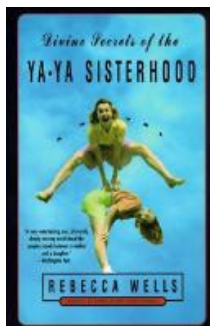
In Cold Blood : a True Account of a Multiple Murder and its Consequences

by Truman Capote



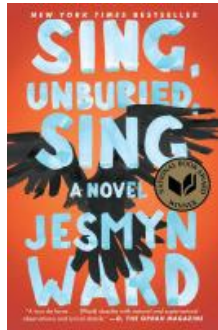
On November 15, 1959, in the small town of Holcomb, Kansas, four members of the Clutter family were savagely murdered by blasts from a shotgun held a few inches from their faces. There was no apparent motive for the crime, and there were almost no clues. As Truman Capote reconstructs the murder and the investigation that led to the capture, trial, and execution of the killers, he generates both mesmerizing suspense and astonishing empathy.

Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood by Rebecca Wells



A poignant, funny, outrageous, and wise novel about a lifetime friendship between four Southern women, *Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood* brilliantly explores the bonds of female friendship, the often-rocky relationship between mothers and daughters, and the healing power of humor and love, in a story as fresh and uplifting as when it was first published a decade and a half ago.

Sing, Unburied, Sing by Jesmyn Ward

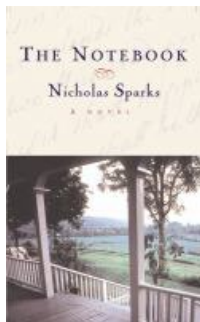


Jojo is 13 years old and trying to understand what it means to be a man. He doesn't lack in fathers to study, chief among them his black grandfather, Pop. But there are other men who complicate his understanding: his absent white father, Michael, who is being released from prison; his absent white grandfather, Big Joseph, who won't acknowledge his existence; and the memories of his dead uncle, Given, who died as a teenager. His mother, Leonie, is an inconsistent presence in his and his toddler sister's lives. She is an imperfect mother in constant conflict with herself and those around her. She is black, and her children's father is white. She wants to be a better mother but can't put her children above her own needs, especially her drug use.

Simultaneously tormented and comforted by visions of her dead brother, which

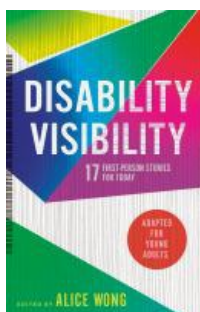
only come to her when she's high, Leonie is embattled in ways that reflect the brutal reality of her circumstances. When the children's father is released from prison, Leonie packs her kids and a friend into her car and drives north to the heart of Mississippi and Parchman Farm, the state penitentiary. At Parchman, there is another 13-year-old boy, the ghost of a dead inmate who carries all of the ugly history of the South with him in his wandering. He, too, has something to teach Jojo about fathers and sons, about legacies, about violence, about love.

The Notebook by Nicholas Sparks



At 31, Noah Calhoun, back in coastal North Carolina after World War II, is haunted by images of the girl he lost more than a decade earlier. At 29, socialite Allie Nelson is about to marry a wealthy lawyer, but she cannot stop thinking about the boy who long ago stole her heart. Thus begins the story of a love so enduring and deep it can turn tragedy into triumph, and may even have the power to create a miracle.

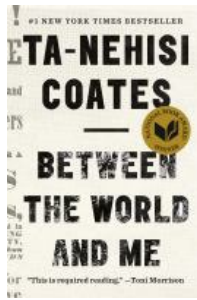
Disability Visibility by Alice Wong



One in five people in the United States lives with a disability. Some disabilities are visible, others less apparent - but all are underrepresented in media and popular culture. Now, just in time for the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, activist Alice Wong brings together this urgent, galvanizing collection of contemporary essays by disabled people. From original pieces by up-and-coming authors like Keah Brown and Haben Girma, to blog posts, manifestos, eulogies, Congressional testimonies, and beyond: This anthology gives a glimpse into the rich complexity of the disabled experience, highlighting the passions, talents, and everyday lives of this community. It invites listeners to question their own

understandings. It celebrates and documents disability culture in the now. It looks to the future and the past with hope and love.

[Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)



In a profound work that pivots from the biggest questions about American history and ideals to the most intimate concerns of a father for his son, Ta-Nehisi Coates offers a powerful new framework for understanding our nation's history and current crisis.