

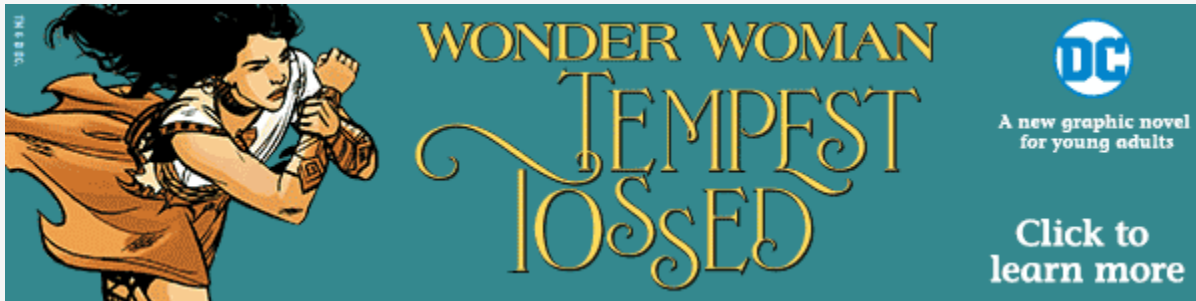
The Bookworm presents Shelf Awareness for Readers for Tuesday, June 2, 2020

From: The Bookworm Omaha (bookwormomaha@shelf-awareness.com)

To: [REDACTED]

Date: Tuesday, June 2, 2020, 09:29 AM CDT

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Tuesday, June 2, 2020

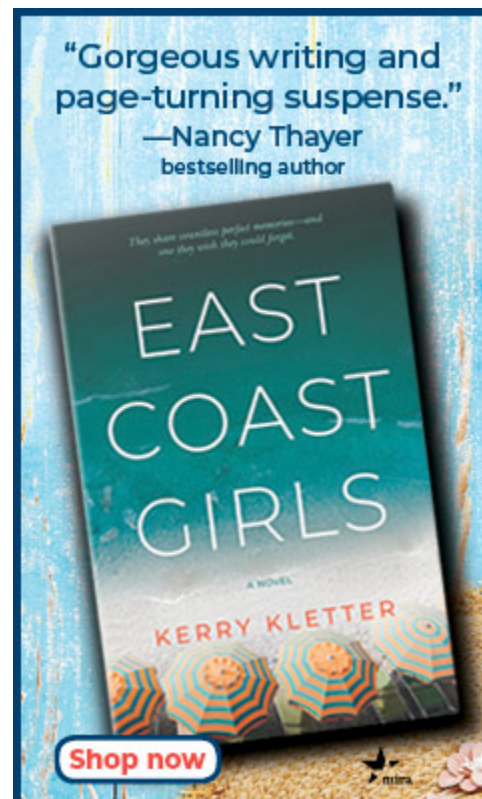
From the Shelf

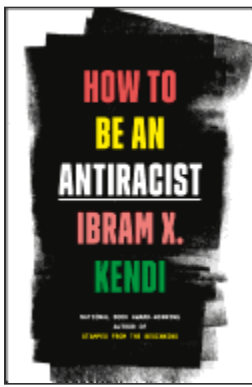
Reading Toward Anti-Racism

For many of us, these might feel like the most fractured, uncertain times of our lives. And this pandemic doesn't weigh evenly on everyone. In the United States, COVID-19 is indisputably, disproportionately affecting people of color--on top of the already horrific everyday violence against people of color in the U.S., as we've been painfully reminded in the wake of the recent murders of Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia and George Floyd in Minnesota.

Many of us find ourselves casting around in collective solitude for ways to enact change: What can we *do*? One thing we can do: educate ourselves.

National Book Award winner Ibram X. Kendi's [How to Be an Antiracist](#) (One World, \$27) is a timely and timeless way

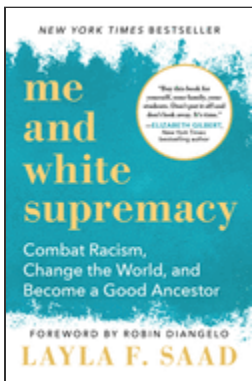
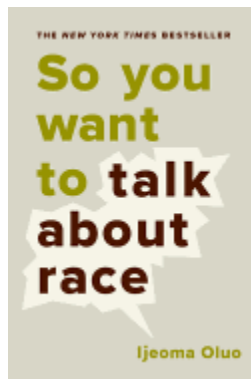




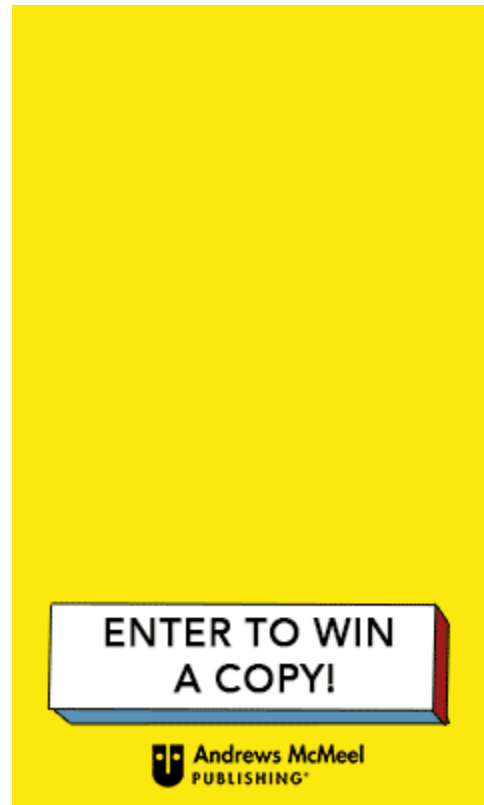
into a better understanding of how racism permeates culture and behavior. (Notably, Kendi's Antiracist Research & Policy Center has been collaborating with the COVID Tracking Project to provide [data on how the virus affects](#)

[people of color.](#)) If you have children, also see Kendi's board book *AntiRacist Baby*, illustrated by Ashley Lukashevsky (Kokila, \$8.99), which offers simple but profound lessons about how to make the world more equal. (And see [here](#) for books Kendi recommends.)

One of the most powerful ways forward is to have more informed, nuanced conversations about race, racism and white supremacy. To continue preparing for productive dialogue--and then moving toward enacting meaningful change--read the passionate, practical primer *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo (Seal Press, \$16.99).



Looking further ahead, set your sights on becoming a good ancestor with the phenomenal teacher-activist-podcaster Layla F. Saad's *Me and White Supremacy* (Sourcebooks, \$25.99). Saad lays a critical foundation for understanding



Instant
New York Times
Bestseller

LADY
IN
WAITING

MY EXTRAORDINARY
LIFE IN THE SHADOW
OF THE CROWN

“Riveting...Anne’s stiff
upper lip never quivers.”
—Oprah Magazine



In this issue...

Book Candy

McSweeney's Pandemic Guessing Game

Great Reads

Rediscover: White Fragility

The Writer's Life

Reading with... François S. Clemmons

AUTHOR BUZZ

Click here to see what authors are saying and win their books!



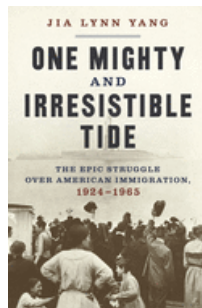
Reviews



★ *The Vanishing Half*
by Brit Bennett

This multi-generational saga explores a complex tangle of familial bonds, racism, hope and a future that clings to its past.

[Read this review >>](#)



★ *One Mighty and Irresistible Tide: The Epic Struggle over American Immigration, 1924-1965*
by Jia Lynn Yang

A journalist's family story spurs an important and sometimes surprising history of American immigration policy and the people who made it.

[Read this review >>](#)



★ *The Black Flamingo*
by Dean Atta

The Black Flamingo presents expertly crafted, stirring poetry to portray an unforgettable teen who lives his liberation and truth in drag.

[Read this review >>](#)

Reviews by subject:

Fiction · Mystery & Thriller · Romance · Biography & Memoir · History · Social Science · Children's & Young Adult

"Deftly written work of fiction."
-Midwest Book Review

Her Quiet Revolution
A Novel of
MARTHA HUGHES CANNON
First Female State Senator
MARIANNE MONSON



ENTER
GIVEAWAY

Book Candy

McSweeney's Pandemic Guessing Game

Can you guess? "[Heroine in an English country house novel](#) or member of a pandemic shelter-in-place American household?" (via *McSweeney's*)

Lockdown video: "Watch the [Lord of the Rings cast swap filming stories](#) on Zoom." (via *Mashable*)

"[Albert Einstein explains](#) why we need to read the classics" at *Open Culture*.

Download a [printable paper doll template](#), illustrated by Rebecca Cobb and based on Julia Donaldson's *The Paper Dolls*.

John Steinbeck's dog, Toby, "apparently [ate half of the first manuscript](#) of *Of Mice and Men*," *Lit Hub* noted.

The British Library offered kids advice on [how to make a miniature book](#).



SHOP
NOW

From the author of *She Would Be King*,
a #1 INDIE NEXT PICK

A memoir of escaping the First Liberian
Civil War and building a life in the US



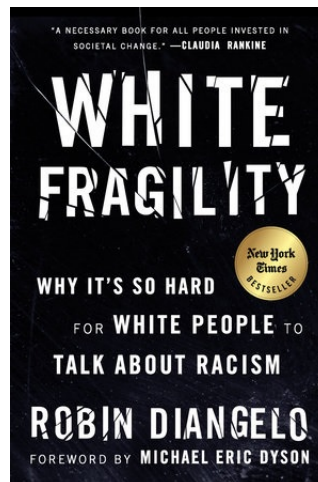
Great Reads

Rediscover: *White Fragility*

White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism by Robin DiAngelo, published by Beacon Press in 2018, has seen a recent resurgence on bestseller lists thanks to the nationwide protests over the Minneapolis Police Department's murder of George Floyd. DiAngelo, an anti-racism activist and an academic in the fields of critical discourse analysis and whiteness studies, coined the term white fragility in 2011 to describe the defensiveness felt by many white people when discussing racism. The *Los*

Angeles Review of Books described *White Fragility* as "one-part jeremiad and one-part handbook. It is by turns mordant and then inspirational, an argument that powerful forces and tragic histories stack the deck fully against racial justice," and said that the book is "uncommonly honest about the duration and extent of entrenched injustice and provocative on the especially destructive role of progressive whites at critical junctures."

White Fragility (\$16) spent more than a year on the *New York Times* bestseller list, making it the fastest-selling book in the history of nonprofit publisher Beacon Press. It includes a foreword by Michael Eric Dyson, author of *Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America*. --Tobias Mutter



THE FRENCH LITERARY SENSATION

"A brief, intense read...alluring and disturbing." —*The Guardian*
"A gasping, sensory-driven symphony of love and despair."
—*Booklist*

A Novel by Pauline Delabroy-Allard

BUY FROM YOUR LOCAL INDIE



The Writer's Life

Reading with... François S. Clemmons

François S. Clemmons received a Bachelor of Music degree from Oberlin College and a Master of Fine Arts from Carnegie Mellon University. He also received an honorary Doctor of Arts degree from Middlebury College. In 1973, he won a Grammy for a recording of *Porgy and Bess*; in 1986, he founded and directed the *Harlem Spiritual Ensemble*; and from 1997 until his retirement in 2013, Clemmons was the *Alexander Twilight Artist in Residence* and director of the *Martin Luther King Spiritual Choir* at Middlebury College in Vermont, where he resides. He is perhaps best known for his appearances as the singing police officer, *Officer Clemmons*, on the PBS television series *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. *Officer Clemmons: A Memoir* was published by Catapult on May 5, 2020.



photo: Vincent Jones

On your nightstand now:

I admit that I've kept a galley of *Officer Clemmons: A Memoir* there ever since I received it in the mail!

Favorite book when you were a child:

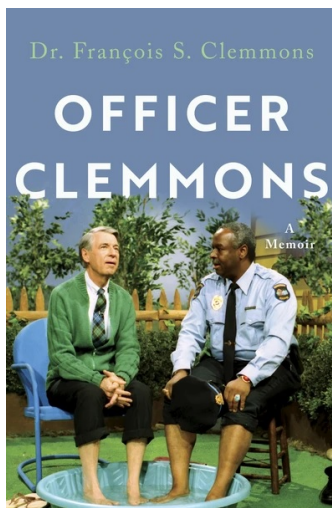
I absolutely loved *Five Smooth Stones* by Ann Fairbairn, about a young black boy in Depression-era New Orleans who suffers great hardship in his life in order to become a leader of the civil rights movement. I read that book over and over again.

Your top five authors:

Commanding and beautiful black voices like James Baldwin, Lucille Clifton, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Maya Angelou... and Langston Hughes. That's six, but I can't possibly leave him out!

Book you've faked reading:

Harry Potter. I know, I know, but I just didn't have the time to read them when the series became so popular, and I never picked them up later.



Book you're an evangelist for:

A People's History of the United States by Howard Zinn. Zinn is the real deal--I recommended his book to my students every year. It revolutionized the way American history can be taught and discussed.

Book you've bought for the cover:

Becoming by Michelle Obama. I absolutely adore Michelle. She is such an inspiring woman, and the photo on her memoir speaks to her strength as well as her warmth....

[Read more >>](#)



HOW DOES SOAP CLEAN YOUR HANDS?

Explore the science behind healthy habits in this engaging STEM title from Flowerpot Press!

A bubbly blast of science and common sense, timely as well as timeless. —Kirkus Reviews

Read an excerpt

Book Reviews

Fiction

★ *The Vanishing Half*
by Brit Bennett

Like *The Mothers*, Brit Bennett's second novel, *The*



MORE INFO

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Vanishing Half, is deeply emotional and compelling, with evocative prose and deep characterization.

Spanning 30 years and two generations, *The Vanishing Half* follows twin sisters Desiree and Stella as they run away from home in the 1950s and follow dramatically different paths in life. Their hometown of Mallard, La., is intentionally populated exclusively by light-skinned black people, and Stella disappears from Desiree's life when she decides to cross over, passing as white and starting a white family.

The story begins in 1968, when Desiree and her very dark-skinned daughter, Jude, come back to Mallard, fleeing years of escalating domestic violence. Returning to the town where her father was brutally murdered by white men is the last thing Desiree ever expected to do after so many years away, but she still feels the pull of home and the cold comfort of the mother and community who raised her. Meanwhile, Stella is living as a wealthy white woman, avoiding all black people, as she's convinced they'll be able to discern her secret. She goes so far as to teach her white, blonde daughter that she shouldn't play with their new black neighbors' child.

While shifting points of view and alternating timelines can become confusing, Bennett skillfully carries readers through three decades and seven narrators. *The Vanishing Half* handles subjects such as post-traumatic stress disorder, domestic violence, grief and colorism, exploring them within the context of complicated and messy family and romantic relationships. Bennett exposes the myriad ways people can hurt those they love best--or heal generational trauma. --[Suzanne Krohn](#), editor, *Love in Panels*

Discover: This multi-generational saga explores a complex tangle of familial bonds, racism, hope and a future that clings to its past.

Riverhead, \$27 hardcover, 352p., 9780525536291

You've Got Something Coming by Jonathan Starke

A battered boxer springs his young daughter from an orphanage and they hitchhike to Las Vegas, seeking a better life, in the gritty *You've Got Something Coming* by Jonathan Starke.

Wisconsin. Winter. A 41-year-old washed-up boxer named Trucks sneaks into the children's home where social services placed his deaf daughter, Claudia. He has \$30 in



MORE INFO

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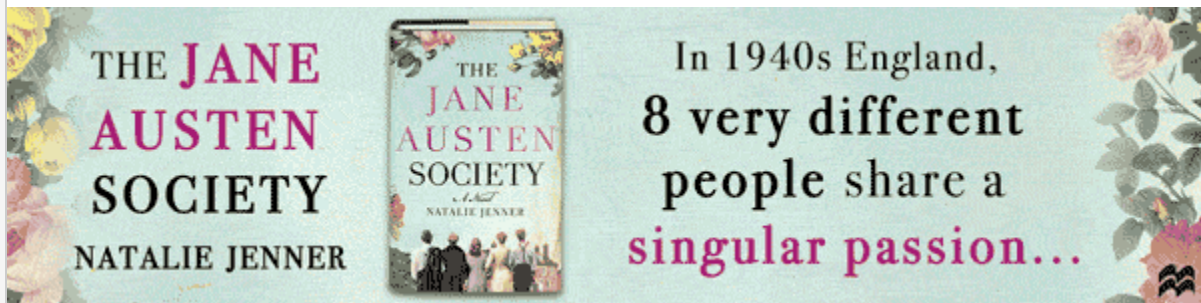
his pocket, and big dreams of steady work and a stable life for himself and his child.

Trucks and Claudia cling tightly to each other as they flag down their first of many rides traveling west. Various strangers along the way offer help to improve their situation, but a prideful and untrusting Trucks turns down what he sees as handouts. Claudia begins to lose faith in Trucks's ability to provide for them. Things go quickly from bad to the very worst as the two each separately realize how ill-prepared they are for both the weather and their lot in life.

Starke's novel is peppered with heartbreaking father-daughter moments, such as when Claudia stops to touch each of her sleeping friends before leaving the orphanage, but refuses to take her own father's hand, and when a desperate Trucks tries to explain to Claudia the difference between "need borrowing" and outright stealing. *You've Got Something Coming* suggests some people create good karma, some sow bad karma and that there is a balance to all things, but the outcome for these characters obliterates all that. The novel is a slap in the face of every happy ending ever written, but will resonate with readers long after it's finished. --Paul Dinh-McCrillis, freelance reviewer

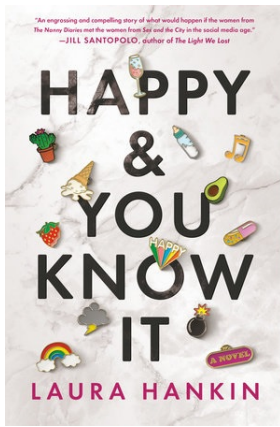
Discover: A frank and unapologetic look at what it means to be homeless and poor in the U.S. that will rip out readers' hearts.

Black Heron Press, \$16 paperback, 290p., 9781936364329



Happy and You Know It
by Laura Hankin

A down-on-her-luck musician finds dark secrets lurking beneath the polished exteriors of glamorous New York City moms in this pointedly funny satire-thriller from Laura Hankin (*The Summertime Girls*).



[MORE INFO](#)

[BUY NOW](#)



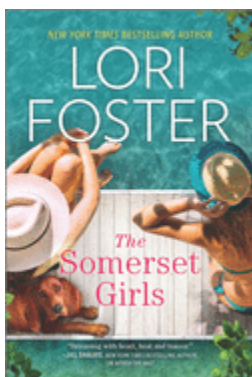
Twenty-eight-year-old Claire Martin's band has finally hit the big time with a chart-topping single but, unfortunately, they dumped her first. Her savings account depleted, she takes a job as a playgroup musician, seeing endless refrains of "If You're Happy and You Know It" as less demeaning than returning to her judgmental family in Ohio. To her surprise, she finds the glossy gaggle of moms charming, even aspirational in their cocooned world of money, wellness products and apparent inner peace. Little does she know Amara, the coolest mom, hides her spending from her husband, or that Instagram-famous Whitney's passionless marriage has her contemplating an affair with another mom's spouse. When she blunders into a bombshell that affects the entire group, Claire learns how flawed and human the women are, and also realizes they're in more danger than they know.

Hankin confronts the ironies of parenting and the "endless ways to do motherhood wrong." Though not the first to mine this territory, her sly wit puts a dry, welcome spin on the issue. Third-act revelations turn the story completely on its head; what seems straightforward and earnest morphs into a delightfully screwball thriller. Quirky and surprising, *Happy and You Know It's* sharp humor, empathetic portrayal of motherhood, and complex female relationships will have readers clapping their hands. --[Jaclyn Fulwood](#), blogger at Infinite Reads

Discover: A down-on-her-luck playgroup musician falls in with a group of wealthy moms who aren't all that they appear in this funny satire-thriller.

Berkley, \$26 hardcover, 384p., 9781984806239

The Somerset Girls by Lori Foster



[MORE INFO](#)

With more than 100 titles to her credit, Lori Foster delivers another feel-good contemporary story that will resonate with readers who admire strong female protagonists, sensual romance and a love of animals.

In *The Somerset Girls*, two sisters run an animal rescue farm inherited from their grandparents in rural Kentucky. Autumn and Ember Somerset share a bloodline and a converted duplex house, and both maintain day jobs. That's where the similarities end, however. Autumn, 32, is a decorator and designer--the girl-next-door, homebody-type. Having been jilted at the altar, Autumn has sworn off men and romance. She is reliable and responsible, tending to her colorful parents, including a father who is a

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stroke survivor. Ember--younger, an outgoing free spirit--is a girly-girl with an edge who loves to flirt with cute guys. She works as a builder. When Ember runs into a former local, Tash Ducker--a handsome widower and father who was Autumn's high school crush--she volunteers the sisters' help in redesigning his house to cheer up his traumatized seven-year-old daughter. As the remodel ramps up, a romance develops between Autumn and Tash, while Ember becomes entangled in a new relationship of her own.

With compassion, wit and charm, Foster (*Sisters of Summer's End*) presents well-defined characters who, along the road of romance, reveal unspoken burdens. A surprising plot twist, steamy romance and endearing animal stories will delight faithful readers and win over new ones. --[Kathleen Gerard](#), blogger at [Reading Between the Lines](#)

Discover: Themes of family bonds and loyalty anchor the feel-good story of dissimilar sisters who get swept up in new romances.

HQN, \$16.99 paperback, 384p., 9781335013385

“Family secrets, laughter and tears, shocking reveals, and an uplifting ending make this a story to savor—and share.”

—*Susan Wiggs*

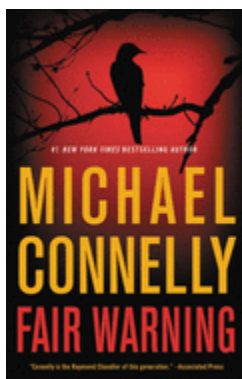
LISTEN TO AN AUTHOR INTERVIEW



Mystery & Thriller

Fair Warning

by Michael Connelly



Michael Connelly is most famous for creating Detective Harry Bosch, but the author's newspaperman Jack McEvoy, introduced in 2003's *The Poet*, is no less arresting. When McEvoy chases a story, he's just as relentless as Bosch on a case. In *Fair Warning*, McEvoy's first appearance after 2009's *The Scarecrow*, he identifies the chilling link between the deaths of four women.

McEvoy now works at FairWarning, a real-life consumer watchdog news site. A chance encounter with a woman who ends up murdered plunges McEvoy into an

MORE INFO

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investigation in which he discovers recently killed women all submitted DNA samples to the same company for analysis. This puts him in the killer's crosshairs and, due to McEvoy's liaison with one of the victims, the LAPD also considers him a suspect. He contacts former colleague Rachel Walling for help but must tread carefully, because on a previous story he destroyed her FBI career *and* their romantic relationship. The two still have trust issues, but must work together in order to snare a vicious killer who's already targeted his next victims.

Connelly (*The Late Show*), a former journalist, excels in making investigative reporting as enthralling as any action scene. *Fair Warning* shines a spotlight on the shocking lack of government oversight in the field of DNA analysis and ancestry identification. Patrons who submit samples have no control or knowledge of where their DNA ends up, and Connelly spins a skin-crawling, cutting-edge mystery about the dangerous ways the data can be mined. The scariest part? According to the author's note, the depictions of genetic research and government oversight are based on fact. Fair warning, indeed. --Elyse Dinh-McCrillis, blogger at [Pop Culture Nerd](#)

Discover: Dogged reporter Jack McEvoy hunts a serial killer who targets women with specific DNA in this smart, propulsive thriller.

Little, Brown, \$29 hardcover, 416p., 9780316539425

The Wife Stalker by Liv Constantine



MORE INFO

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Liv Constantine's fast-paced *The Wife Stalker* begins with Piper having recently relocated from San Diego, Calif., to seaside Westport, Conn., reinventing herself in the process. She's changed her name from Pamela and bought a wellness center in town.

Joanna is hoping to enter a new phase in her life, too. She's been patiently taking care of the kids and maintaining the household while waiting for the man she loves, Leo, to come out the other side of his depression. After going to a wellness center, he does seem happier--especially when spending time with the center's owner, Piper. Before Joanna can grasp the full extent of the situation, she's been removed from the house, served with papers and cut off from the kids.

But she refuses to go quietly. Joanna starts digging into Piper's past, and finds Leo's new woman has had not only one but two husbands, who both came from money. And now they're both dead, from "accidents" while in Piper's

company. Joanna is certain Leo and the kids are in danger, and she's willing to sacrifice everything to keep them out of Piper's clutches.

Sisters Valerie and Lynn Constantine (*The Last Mrs. Parrish*), who write together as Liv, return to familiar territory with a story about envy and manipulation set in Connecticut, involving people in seemingly perfect lives and women with mysterious pasts. The characters can be frustrating and behave in confounding ways, but the story's swift pace and twist in the final act should keep domestic thriller fans engaged. --[Elyse Dinh-McCrillis](#), blogger at [Pop Culture Nerd](#)

Discover: A woman must stop a homewrecker from stealing her man and her life in this twisty domestic thriller.

Harper, \$27.99 hardcover, 320p., 9780062967282

A learned as well as lively book with many surprises.

—Paul Freedman, author of *Food: The History of Taste*



The history of the humble chile in China is a fascinating one.

—Carolyn Phillips, author of *All Under Heaven*

Romance

Ghosting: A Love Story by Tash Skilton



[MORE INFO](#)

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Writing together as Tash Skilton, Sarvenaz Tash (*Virtually Yours*) and Sarah Skilton (*Fame Adjacent*) run an update on *You've Got Mail* in this romantic comedy of errors.

Love is "a smokescreen for future heartbreak," according to New Yorker Miles, currently couch-surfing after his girlfriend left him. Unfortunately, love is his job. Miles ghostwrites chat messages on dating sites for clients too busy to keep up with their own profiles. After an on-the-job meltdown, his boss tells him to succeed with his next client, or else. Two obstacles stand in his way: the aggravating woman who fights him for day-old biscotti at his favorite coffee shop, and his chemistry with his client's top match. Meanwhile, Los Angeles native Zoey came to the Big Apple for inspiration, but feels too overwhelmed to venture farther than the coffee shop across the street, where a cute jerk steals her stale biscotti and her favorite



table. Struggling to make ends meet as a dating service ghostwriter, she takes comfort in chatting with her latest client's beau. As their enmity shifts to friendship, Zoey and Miles don't realize the online lovers they're pining after are really each other.

This tale of two Cyranos puts a sweet and funny spin on dating in the fast lane as Zoey and Miles advise their clients based on chat conversations with each other, with predictably disastrous results. Rom-com lovers will enjoy watching this pair of matchmakers find their app-ily ever after. --[Jaclyn Fulwood](#), blogger at Infinite Reads

Discover: In this rom-com, two dating service ghostwriters who bicker in real life don't realize their online crushes are actually each other.

Kensington, \$15.95 paperback, 352p., 9781496730657

Biography & Memoir

Moments of Glad Grace by Alison Wearing



MORE INFO

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Readers of Canadian author Alison Wearing's touching *Moments of Glad Grace* will understand her conflict long before the author herself does. As she embarks on a trip to Dublin with her father in pursuit of genealogical records, she envisions precious adventures with Joe, her 80-year-old father who's struggling through the first debilitating signs of Parkinson's. Desperate to learn why their ancestors left Ireland for Canada centuries ago, Joe insists instead on lugging tombstone-sized tomes and microfilm reels through the halls of the National Library. Throughout the memoir, Wearing voices her disdain for this; she does not understand genealogy's purpose. The connections to problematic, privileged ancestors make her feel sticky and deceived. Plus, for a writer naturally dependent on imagination, it's just so mind-numbingly *dull*.

Of course, anyone else can see this mission isn't really about genealogy at all--it's about Wearing making peace with her little family and the time it has left. She and her father make no grand discoveries, nor is there much of anything compelling to be found in their long lists of daily activities. *Moments of Glad Grace* does not thrive on plot. But its characters are lovely. Joe is a tender, triumphant hero, a formerly closeted gay man who now celebrates his sexuality with admirable enthusiasm. He's hilarious, and you can feel Wearing's love for him in every page. Wearing's own evolution is what makes the book more

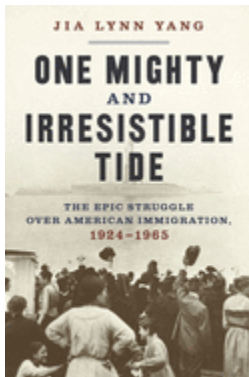
than just sentimental, however. Slowly, she begins to understand her complicated relationship with Joe, the legacy of her lineage, and the importance of small moments in the making of who we are. --[Lauren Puckett](#), freelance writer

Discover: A woman travels with her father, diagnosed with Parkinson's, to Ireland in pursuit of genealogical records, only to realize the important discoveries lie in their own relationship.

ECW Press, \$17.95 paperback, 256p., 9781770415133

History

★ *One Mighty and Irresistible Tide: The Epic Struggle over American Immigration, 1924-1965*
by Jia Lynn Yang



[MORE INFO](#)

[BUY NOW](#)



One Mighty and Irresistible Tide: The Epic Struggle over American Immigration, 1924-1965 began as an attempt by *New York Times* journalist and second-generation American Jia Lynn Yang to understand the law that allowed her parents to come to the United States from China and Taiwan, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. The result is a gripping account of 40 years of Congressional wrangling over immigration law in the United States.

Yang successfully argues that the idea of the United States as a nation of immigrants is a relatively new one--and demonstrates that laws controlling immigration are even more recent. The book centers on the passage of three major immigration laws--in 1924, 1952 and 1965--and the competing ideas about ethnicity, race and the nature of the United States as an entity that shaped those laws. Yang never loses sight of the fact that laws are passed by people. She introduces us to the often colorful and sometimes awful politicians and activists who lobbied for and against changes in immigration policy, clearly evoking each man's character as well as describing his political career. She outlines ugly relationships between immigration laws and the eugenics movement, isolationism, anti-Communist rhetoric, McCarthyism, anti-Semitism, and calls to keep the United States true to its "Northern European roots."

Ending where she began, Yang considers the impact of the 1965 bill. It opened the door to non-white immigration, yet closed the border with Mexico for the first time, changing the United States in ways that its promoters had

never anticipated. --[Pamela Toler](#), blogging at [History in the Margins](#)

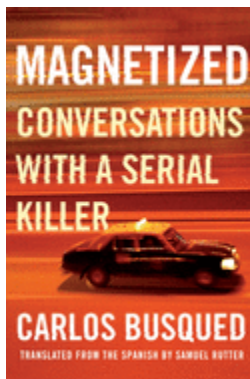
Discover: A journalist's family story spurs an important and sometimes surprising history of American immigration policy and the people who made it.

Norton, \$26.95 hardcover, 336p., 9780393635843

Social Science

Magnetized: Conversations with a Serial Killer

by Carlos Busqued, trans. by Samuel Rutter



MORE INFO

BUY NOW



Questions about why serial killers do what they do evoke answers as varied as the new mysteries they generate. Carlos Busqued, Argentine radio producer, engineer and professor at the University of Córdoba, had the opportunity to spend more than 90 hours with imprisoned serial murderer Ricardo Melogno. In *Magnetized*, Busqued compiles the transcripts of their conversations along with details of the crimes and Melogno's troubling history.

Busqued recorded interviews with Melogno in 2014 and 2015, relating to "a series of brief, strange, and almost restrained murders" in Buenos Aires in 1982. During a one-week period, the bodies of four taxi drivers were found slumped in their seats with .22 caliber bullet holes in the temple. The only items taken were vehicle registrations and victim IDs. The police were stumped. A week later, Melogno's brother turned him in.

Melogno, then 22, was an enigma. Described as unimpressive, "a regular, skinny kid," he expressed no motive or rationale for killing and felt nothing afterward. His affect resulted in a complete lack of consensus on his psychiatric status. The Federal Capital declared him unfit for trial due to insanity; the Province of Buenos Aires tried him and sentenced him to life in prison.

In his own words, Melogno describes his violent upbringing and his mother's use of religion as a weapon. Busqued, nominated for the Premio Herralde for his debut novel, *Under This Terrible Sun*, provides a chilling glimpse into the psyche of a killer wrapped in a meek facade. -- [Lauren O'Brien](#) of [Malcolm Avenue Review](#)

Discover: A prize-winning Argentine author assembles intimate conversations with, and medical reviews of, a baffling convicted serial murderer.

Catapult, \$23 hardcover, 192p., 9781948226684

Children's & Young Adult

★ *The Black Flamingo*
by Dean Atta



MORE INFO

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In his 2019 Stonewall Award-winning verse novel, *The Black Flamingo*, Dean Atta (*I Am Nobody's Nigger*, for adults) skillfully chronicles the life of Michael, a gay, British-born Cypriot-Jamaican teen.

It is clear from the beginning that this is not an average coming-of-age story--it's more a "coming-into-one's-own" story, with Michael declaring, "finally, I am the fairy finding my own magic." Michael's clear voice establishes him as a reliable narrator who generously guides readers through his most intimate moments. The frankness and depth of Michael's very personal reflections invite high emotional investment; his vulnerabilities and strengths refreshingly focus on the "full human being" his mother affirms him to be. Throughout, Michael explores themes of in-betweenness and connection, whether in his relationships with his parents, his crushes and sexual partners or his most enduring friendship. In his search to find a space and place where he might belong, Michael joins the Drag Society at his university and eventually takes flight as the feathered and free Black Flamingo.

Atta displays a deft command of diverse poetry forms with an on-the-nose reflective palindrome poem "House of Mirrors" and a concrete poem that mimics the heart-shaped arching of flamingo necks. *The Black Flamingo's* straightforward, cohesive chronology creates a smooth, compact and gripping read. --Breanna J. McDaniel, freelance reviewer

Discover: *The Black Flamingo* presents expertly crafted, stirring poetry to portray an unforgettable teen who lives his liberation and truth in drag.

Balzer + Bray, \$18.99 hardcover, 416p., ages 14-up, 9780062990297

Again Again
by E. Lockhart

Told in overlapping timelines--with multiple scene do-overs--this thought-provoking YA novel plays with the idea of parallel universes as a teenager grapples with love,



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understanding and forgiveness. Plus a bunch of unruly dogs.

The summer after her junior year at a boarding school, Adelaide attempts to recover from an unexpected breakup with her boyfriend ("I am an egg yolk of misery inside a membrane, and the name of the membrane is Mikey broke up with me"), come to terms with her younger brother's drug addiction and fall in love with someone(s) new. Those are the facts readers can be (mostly) sure of. How all this happens is where it gets tricky.

In *Again Again*, E. Lockhart, known for tinkering with timelines in *Genuine Fraud* and for twisting plots in *We Were Liars*, imagines different but concurrent scenarios for Adelaide's every step. For much of the story, she goes down one path: she pursues a boy she meets during her summer job of walking dogs. But alternate details of the relationship, as represented in different fonts, unfold along parallel routes, much like a choose-your-own-ending story, except "you" don't get to choose--Lockhart does.

In spite of the unusual timeline, Lockhart keeps the action moving. Scenes are short and just repetitive enough that readers know it's a re-do, but different enough that it's clear this is a synchronous event. What makes *Again Again* especially intriguing is that this is not a sci-fi novel. The worlds are not defined or literal. They are, simply, other possibilities. We make small choices all day long, every day, and others react. The layers of possibility are infinite and exciting. Or disappointing. Or catastrophic. Or... different. It's a way of looking at the world(s) that will come back to readers, again and again. --[Emilie Coulter](#), freelance writer and editor

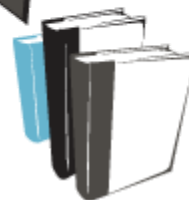
Discover: Through layered, parallel scenes, this surprising and charming YA novel explores one teen's existential angst about relationships--romantic, platonic, familial and canine.

Delacorte, \$18.99 hardcover, 304p., ages 12-up, 9780385744799

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The Key to Everything by Valerie Fraser Luesse

Dear Reader,

I think the right trip to the right place at the right time can change your life, illuminating who you truly are, separate and apart from everything and everybody you've always known. That's what happens to fifteen-year-old Peyton Cabot, whose bike ride from St. Augustine to Key West is inspired by an extraordinary true story. This is my third book, following *Missing Isaac* and *Almost Home*, both set in rural Alabama.

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Valerie Fraser Luesse
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The 24-Hour Soup Kitchen by Stephen Henderson

Dear Reader,

After cooking at a soup kitchen in Delhi that daily feeds 20,000 people, journalist Stephen Henderson began volunteering at charitable settings in cities across America, and around the world. A colorful series of travel essays, *The 24-Hour Soup Kitchen* brings a reader inside the chaos and compassion of kitchens in Iran, Israel, and South Korea, as well as Austin, Los Angeles and Pittsburgh.

Kirkus Reviews says, "An inspiring philanthropic account that deftly displays the author's affability, knowledge, and passion."

Stephen Henderson
www.the24-hoursoupkitchen.com



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