



Book Club Staff Recommendation Night 2017

Wednesday, May 3rd and Tuesday, May 9th

Books are listed alphabetically by author's surname.

Flowers for the Judge by Margery Allingham (1936)

Mystery, Paperback, \$18.99

One of my favourite Margery Allingham titles, *Flowers for the Judge* is a classic mystery set in 1930s England. Featuring sleuth Mr. Albert Campion, a dead man in a prestigious publishing house, and a disappearance from the same publishing house decades earlier, Allingham creates a puzzle where the characters matter more than the plot.

Book clubs could have a wonderful time comparing Allingham to other writers of the Golden Age - Dorothy L. Sayers (cerebral and academic but engaging) or Agatha Christie (plot driven, yet compulsive reading). As well, the changes in life since the 1930s are many, but what remains the same? (Susan)

Rush Oh! by Shirley Barrett (2016)

Fiction, Paperback, \$20.99

One of the last whaling families at Twofold Bay, the Davidsons are facing the second thin whaling season in a row. Their hopes lie in "the Killers", a group of orcas who lure other species of whale into the bay. Loosely based on a real whaling patriarch in Australia, *Rush Oh!* features both a sweet love story and page-turning action, depicting a style of life that no longer exists.

(Judith)

Days Without End by Sebastian Barry (2017)

Fiction, Hardcover, \$35.00 (Paperback expected September 12th, 2017)

Already a Costa Prize winner in the UK, Sebastian Barry's newest novel is the story of Thomas McNulty, who escapes the famine in Ireland and comes to America in the 1840s. With no other prospects he joins the army and experiences both the Indian Wars in the West and finally the Civil War. Along the way, he forms a makeshift family with his partner John Cole and a young Indian girl they adopt, Winona. The novel explores the contradictions of America - the promise, the chance to reinvent yourself, and the violence that seems to follow them everywhere - in a voice that is itself both ironic and hopeful, and in passages of extraordinary beauty. (Ian)

Winner: Costa Prize for Fiction, 2017

Carry Me by Peter Behrens (2016)

Fiction, Paperback, \$19.95

Carry Me is part love story, part interwar novel, part family epic. Billy and Karin are two young Germans, who through a twist of fate, were born on the Isle of Wight in the years before the First World War, allowing them to hold British passports. Through the interwar years, their friendship grows through their mutual love of fast cars and jazz clubs. As Europe tilts once more on its axis, careening back into war, Karin and Billy must decide where their loyalties lie. Behrens' writing is rich and evocative and his characters loveably flawed. (Judith)

The Dogs of Littlefield by Suzanne Berne (2016)

Fiction, Paperback, \$21.99

Littlefield has been named one of the top twenty places to live in the United States (well, before someone started poisoning the dogs). Sociologist Clarinet Watkins has come to find out why these people are so happy, because they must be happy, Right? Right? (Sandy)

Tuco: The Parrot, the Others, and a Scattershot World by Brian Brett (2015)

Nature Writing, Hardcover, \$32.95

This book is both a biography of an irreverent African Grey parrot, and an exploration of the history of birds/dinosaurs, the relationships between humans and birds, and our tendency to "other" anything that is different from us. It is provocative, profound, hilarious and moving. *Tuco* is most of all the extraordinary story of Brett's decades-long relationship with this singular bird. (Sue Hill)

A Walk in the Woods by Bill Bryson (1997)

Travel, Paperback, \$22.00

One of Bill Bryson's best books, I think. Having returned to the United States after many years in the UK, Bryson sets out to rediscover his country by walking the Appalachian Trail. He recruits the help of an old college friend, Stephen Katz, a recovering alcoholic who perhaps hopes the walk will be therapeutic. In fact, neither of them are prepared for the hardships of the journey. Along the way the Bryson humour shines - we meet the usual cast of eccentric characters and get a sense of the huge breadth of the trail and the landscape it encompasses. Unusually however, there is an overlay of sadness at the end when Katz is unable to complete the trip and Bryson offers up some heartfelt reflections on life and commitment as he walks on alone. (Ian)

The Relic Master by Christopher Buckley (2016)

Fiction, Paperback, \$22.00

A satirical look at life in the 16th century Holy Roman Empire. Dismas is a relic master with two patrons, the Elector of Saxony and the Archbishop of Mainz. He attends relic fairs searching for

pieces of the True Cross, or the knuckle of a long lost saint. Albrecht Durer is his friend and accomplice in the biggest relic hunt of all, the search for the Shroud of Chambery (Shroud of Turin). (Michelle)

Where I Live Now by Sharon Butala (2017)

Memoir, Hardcover \$26.99

Sharon's husband Peter died in 2007 and this book is an intimate sharing of her remembrances of their lives together on a ranch and hay farm in southwest Saskatchewan and her grief at his loss. Sharon reminisces about their mutual love of the land and the decision to turn over care of the grasslands to the Nature Conservancy as the Old Man on His Back Prairie and Heritage Conservation Area. She shares the choices she makes as her life changes. Her observations about her move to Calgary are particularly poignant and will resonate with many of us. (Irene)

Storm Front by Jim Butcher (2000)

Urban Fantasy, Paperback \$13.50

Harry Dresden is the only openly practicing wizard in the USA, as far as he knows anyway. From his office in Chicago he provides all manner of magical aid and services (but no love potions, endless purses or other entertainments, thank you very much!) In fact, he even consults for the Chicago Police Department when they run into something on the spooky side.

In the first book of the Dresden Files, Harry finds himself investigating a brutal murder – a murder that could only have been perpetrated by magic. The further he investigates, the more entangled he becomes. Add in a strange but hopefully lucrative case involving a timid housewife and her missing husband, an annoyed mobster with a drug war on his hands, and a grouchy warden determined to prove Harry is the bad guy, and life suddenly gets a bit more interesting. Dark sorcerers, mobsters and murder. Could this investigation get any worse? (Kristi)

Guy by Jowita Bydlowska (2016)

Fiction, Paperback, \$20.00

Vain, handsome, an oblivious misogynist, and an active narcissist. We all know that guy. He's... Guy. Immerse yourself in the point-of-view of a man who gives men a bad name. Guy trips through life with ease until he trips over the wrong woman and tumbles into a downward spiral of darkly comic self-discovery. (Sarah)

The Forgetting by Sharon Cameron (2016)

Teen fiction, Hardcover, \$24.99 (Paperback expected July 25th, 2017)

In the walled community of Canaan, every resident faithfully records their life in a book they keep with them at all times, because they know that every twelve years the Forgetting will come, an event of mass amnesia that leaves society in chaos. But what no one knows is that at the last Forgetting, one little girl, Nadia, didn't forget. Examining questions of memory, family,

terrorism, privacy and historical records, *The Forgetting* is a fascinating read for teens and adults alike, and would be a great choice for intergenerational book clubs. (Judith)

Kushiel's Dart by Jacqueline Carey (2002)

Fantasy, Paperback \$26.99 and Pocket Paperback \$9.99

Phédre is a young woman who is touched by the Angel Kushiel, blessed (or cursed) to find pleasure in pain. Sold as a child into indentured servitude to a pleasure house and then sold again to a rich and mysterious nobleman, she dreams of nothing more than becoming the foremost courtesan in Terre D'Ange. But both men and gods have much bigger plans for her. From the pleasure houses of the Night Court, to the homes of the Peers of the Realm, to the Palace itself, Phédre will discover the greatest conspiracy to ever face Terre D'Ange. Armed with only her wits, training, and her ever-constant companion, the priest-warrior Joscelin, she will follow the threads of that conspiracy beyond the borders of her homeland and to its very heart. First book in the Kushiel's Legacy series. (Kristi)

The True History of the Kelly Gang by Peter Carey (2000)

Fiction, Paperback, \$22.00

Australian writer Peter Carey takes on one of his country's legends in this Booker-Prize-winning novel. In the 1870s, the bushranger Ned Kelly and his gang led the police on a massive manhunt which culminated in one of the most iconic events in Australian history. Peter Carey's great achievement here is to take Kelly's own voice — from a letter he wrote to a local newspaper while on the run — and flesh it out into an entire life as the outlaw tells his own story from childhood, for the sake of his newborn daughter. By turns funny, thrilling, angry, naïve and heartbreaking, it is a fully formed portrait and — full disclosure — one of my favourite novels. (Ian)

Winner: Man Booker Prize, 2000

Moonglow by Michael Chabon (2016)

Fiction, Hardcover, \$33.99 (Paperback expected September 19th, 2017)

Chabon brings his characteristic playfulness and thoughtfulness to the story of his grandfather. In the last two weeks of his grandfather's life, stories begin to pour forth that "Mike" has never heard before. With his characteristic blurring of the lines between genres, Chabon leaves us wondering which fantastic aspects of his family history of moon landings, madness and mythic horses to believe, if any. (Judith)

Dragon Springs Road by Janie Chang (2017)

Fiction, Paperback, \$22.99

Chang introduces us to Jialing, a Eurasian woman born in 1901 Shanghai. Her story shows the dilemma of a girl abandoned by those around her. Neither culture appears willing to

acknowledge her, thus limiting Jialing's choices in life. An eloquent story of survival and strength, and an insightful look into China's history in the early 20th century.

Chang writes beautifully, and has created a character who will live in your memory for some time. Many issues to discuss as well, and a mystery to solve of what happened to Jialing's mother. (Susan)

Arrival by Ted Chiang (2002)

Short Stories, Paperback, \$22.00 (Originally published as Stories of Your Life)

Literary sci-fi/fantasy of the highest order. The human condition and philosophical paradox are explored through time travel, future mathematical theory, alien linguistics, and the construction of a great tower rising up to heaven. These stories will break your heart and your brain. (Sarah)

Juliet's Answer by Glenn Dixon (2017)

Memoir, Paperback, \$24.99

Calgarian Glenn Dixon spends a year in Verona as a volunteer "Juliet", answering some of the thousands of letters posted in a special mailbox for the heartsick. (Sandy)

The Book of the Unnamed Midwife by Meg Elison (2016)

Fiction, Paperback, \$21.95

Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, from a female POV (and with quotation marks). In a post-apocalyptic world where women are all but extinct, an obstetric nurse, disguised as a man and armed with an arsenal of contraceptives, rescues the few remaining women from the death sentence of pregnancy. A great conversation starter on the subject of female bodily autonomy. (Sarah)

Stir: My Broken Brain and the Meals that Brought Me Home by Jessica Fechter (2015)

Memoir, Paperback, \$22.00

In this slim book, a young active woman suffers a brain aneurism and survives. She shares her treatments, setbacks, and successes as she slowly recovers. Food and cooking were integral to her rehabilitation. Her description of trying to re-learn her way around the kitchen is particularly poignant. Bonus: recipes included. (Irene)

Island of Books by Dominique Fortier, translated from French by Rhonda Mullins. (French 2015, English 2016)

Fiction, Paperback, \$19.95

Set in the Abbey of Mont St. Michel off the coast of Normandy, this story moves from late 15th century to contemporary times. Elói is an illiterate portrait painter who has lost something very dear to him. He is brought to Mont St. Michel by his cousin, the abbot, to work as a scribe. The

narrator has also lost something and hopes that her time exploring the Abbey will help in its recovery. (Michelle)

Z: A Novel of Zelda Fitzgerald by Theresa Anne Fowler (2013)

Fiction, Paperback, \$18.50

A young Southern debutante takes a chance on a young writer who is set to publish his first novel. Who was Zelda Fitzgerald, other than the wife of the famous (and infamous) Scott? Montgomery, Alabama; New York City's Jazz Age; Hollywood; Paris; and the French Riviera all come to life in this lively look at the Lost Generation. (Judith)

Owls Do Cry by Janet Frome (1957)

Fiction, paperback, \$15.99

First published in 1957, this is the story of a poor family in a small New Zealand town: Mum; Dad; Toby, an epileptic; Francie, who leaves school to work; Chicks, the baby of the family; and Daphne, confined to mental institution because of her non-linear thinking. Daphne's chapters are heartbreakingly, hauntingly beautiful. (Sandy)

Swimming Lessons by Claire Fuller (2017)

Fiction, Paperback, \$19.95

There is a mystery in this book — what happened to Ingrid Coleman — but it is not a typical mystery or thriller. A woman writes letters to her husband about their marriage, but rather than giving them to him, she hides them among his many books. Stories hidden within stories. And then she disappears. Twelve years later her now adult daughters return home to see their injured father and one of them starts to ask questions. The answers are hidden in the books around her. Fuller interweaves two points of view — mother and daughter — to tell us a touching story. (Irene)

Just Like Family by Kate Hilton (2017)

Fiction, Paperback, \$22.99 (Publication expected May 30th, 2017)

Kate Hilton's second book, like her first, explores the lives of modern women. Her character, Avery Graham, is the chief of staff to the mayor of Toronto, she has a steady boyfriend of fourteen years, and a former husband. How does she balance the needs of her career and her personal life, and what happens when everything changes around her?

Hilton uses humour and empathy to draw you into this world. And it's Toronto! So nice to see a book set in a real Canadian city. (Susan)

The Parcel by Anosh Irani (2016)

Fiction, Hardcover, \$32.00 (Paperback expected August 1st, 2017)

A transgender sex worker in Mumbai is charged with the psychological conditioning of a ten-year-old Nepalese girl set to be sold into sexual slavery. Irani plunges the reader into a world and a subculture most of us will never glimpse, where life is gritty and atrocities abound, but a closer look reveals humour, kindness, and even true love. (Sarah)

You by Caroline Kepnes (2015)

Fiction, Paperback, \$21.00

Joe manages a quaint bookstore, silently assessing the value of each customer's life based on the literary merit of their purchases. Joe is well read, judiciously homicidal, and he's in love with you. Violent, sexy, and laugh out loud funny, *You* is a divisive page turner sure to provoke lively discussion. (Sarah)

Himself by Jessica Kidd (2017)

Fiction, Paperback, \$24.99

When he is twenty-six, Mahoney is in a pub and is approached by the priest from the orphanage where he was left as an infant, who hands him a letter, the letter that was left with him when he was dropped off. It contains his real name and that of his mother, as well as the village where he was born, and the fact that his mother was murdered. He heads off, seeking the truth of what happens, to a village that isn't quite ready for the likes of Mahoney. (Sandy)

Mad Enchantment: Claude Monet and the Painting of the Water Lilies by Ross King (2016)

History, Hardcover, \$39.95 (Paperback expected September 12th, 2017)

King provides us with a moving portrait of Claude Monet who created perhaps his best known masterpieces — the water lilies — in his seventies. With the help of Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, Monet overcame grief over the deaths of his wife and son as well as his failing eyesight to forge a new direction with his art in his Giverny studio. King skillfully weaves contemporary events (e.g. WWI) that occurred throughout the years it took Monet to complete the Grande Decoration, many of which can now be found in museums worldwide. (Irene)

Winner: RBC Taylor Prize for Non-Fiction, 2017

Interpreter of Maladies by Jhumpa Lahiri (1999)

Short Stories, Paperback, \$21.50

Most of the stories in this elegant, touching collection concern characters of Indian heritage. Some are set in the United States and others in India. Yet the situations that the characters face involve universal human themes, from unhappy marriages to civil war. In "A Temporary Matter", a young Indian-American couple faces the heartbreak of a stillborn birth. In the title

story, an interpreter guides an American family through the India of their ancestors. Lahiri's writing is beautiful, engaging, and brilliantly clear. (Sue Hill)

The Bridge Ladies by Betsy Lerner (2016)

Memoir, Paperback, 22.99

This book tells about Betsy's learning about her mother and her mother's friends from the Bridge Club. "As a child I was fascinated by their outfits and hairdos, their strange language of bids and tricks. As a teen I thought they were square, missing the feminist boat. Now, having gotten to know them and learning how to play, I've come to love them and their game. At heart it's a mother-daughter story of a mid-life reconciliation. Bridge itself became the mother of all metaphors. You could say Bridge changed my life. Yes, Bridge."

An enjoyable read, and a great introduction to the game of bridge. Many writers of the 1930s wrote about bridge as an everyday part of being a lady or gentleman. This book helps to show the intricacies of the game and why it fascinated so many people. It is also a great book about learning who your mother really is. (Susan)

Ginny Moon by Benjamin Ludwig (2017)

Fiction, Paperback, \$22.99

Ludwig's debut novel is about an adopted autistic teenager who has finally found her "forever home". The home is safe. Her new parents are kind and loving. So what is compelling her to arrange a kidnapping by her abusive, drug addicted birth mother? The author is a father of an adopted autistic teen, so Ginny's voice is pitch perfect. *Ginny Moon* is a compulsively readable book that will keep you enthralled and riveted to the very end. (Mike)

Nutshell by Ian McEwan (2016)

Fiction, Hardcover, \$29.95 (Paperback expected May 30th, 2017)

Haven't read Shakespeare? Didn't like *Hamlet*? Don't worry about it! *Nutshell*, a story of deceit and murder, is crafted by an equally brilliant wordsmith. Who else would think to narrate a story from the perspective of an unborn child? This singular witness to proceedings surrounding an extraordinary crime caper is quite the social commentator. McEwan's prose will surely delay your need to race through this short novel: his best in many years. (Mike)

Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood by Trevor Noah (2016)

Memoir, Hardcover, \$35.00

This memoir is essentially the story of a young boy, who grows into a young man, who struggles to find himself in a world where he was never supposed to exist. It is also the story of that young man's relationship with his fearless, rebellious, and religious mother and her unconventional, unconditional love. The book is hilarious, dramatic, and affecting. Noah relates events with honesty and revealing insight. (Sue Hill)

One More Thing: Stories and other Stories by B.J. Novak (2015)

Short Stories, Paperback, \$20.00

This is a debut collection of short stories. These stories are original, entertaining, sensitive, and cover a broad range of subjects, themes and narrative voices. They are imaginative, provocative, and sometimes laugh out loud funny. There is playful humour throughout. This collection ticks pretty much all of the boxes that make for a fantastic short story read. (Sue Hill)

This Must be the Place by Maggie O'Farrell (2016)

Fiction, Hardcover \$36.95 (Paperback expected May 16th, 2017)

At the beginning of this book we meet Daniel Sullivan, an American linguist living with his reclusive former-movie-star wife Claudette and their two children in a remote part of Ireland. She has just fired a shotgun to frighten away a possible intruder. We hear from a host of other characters (along with their problems). A word of warning about multiple narrators and shifting timelines and places — not for the faint-of-heart reader — but O'Farrell pulls it all together and makes sense of these interlocking stories for us. You will care about these characters, flaws and all, and have much to discuss in a book club. (Irene)

Before I Fall by Lauren Oliver (2010)

Teen Fiction, Paperback, \$13.50

Friday, February 12th is the last day of Samantha Kingston's life, which ends in a bewildering car accident. The only catch is, she still wakes up -- to find that it's Friday morning again. Can she change the events of the day enough to save herself and her friends, or will she be stuck in this loop forever? Examining bullying, teen recklessness, and free will vs. predestination, *Before I Fall* is a raw look at the power dynamics inherent in teen life. (Judith)

The Lonely Hearts Hotel by Heather O'Neill (2017)

Fiction, Hardcover, \$32.99

Warning! *The Lonely Hearts Hotel* will be unlike anything you have read before. It is dark, gritty and disturbing — and it should win at least one major prize this year. Briefly, it's about two quirky, gifted orphans growing up in Montreal beginning in the 1910s. It is a beautifully-rendered fairy tale that might be about the meaning of love — or not. I sat for quite a long time, endeavouring to describe Heather O'Neill's writing, then cheated — ending up on Goodreads reading a review by user Steph VanderMeulen: "I wanted to photograph every sentence. I wanted to stuff it in my mouth or shoot it up directly in my bloodstream. It is marvellous, magical and wondrously imaginative." (Mike)

Killing the Rising Sun by Bill O'Reilly (2016)

History, Hardcover \$38.99

Bill O'Reilly continues his "Killing" series of history books, this time focusing on the Pacific theatre of World War II. Bill and his research partner, Martin Dugard, continue their dedication to bringing the reader only the absolute facts of history in a manner that is educational, entertaining and easy to read.

In *Killing the Rising Sun* we start in the Philippines, 1944, moving through the events of Iwo Jima and Okinawa, following the historic battles on the front lines against the Japanese. We are also taken to New Mexico to learn about the Manhattan Project under the leadership of Robert Oppenheimer. Likewise, we follow Harry Truman through his ascension from a largely ignored Vice President to the President who must make the most crucial decision in the history of modern warfare. *Killing the Rising Sun* brings history to life in a book that reads like a novel.

(Kristi)

Lara: The Untold Love Story and the Inspiration for Doctor Zhivago by Anna Pasternak (2017)

History, Hardcover, \$34.99

A book about a book. Anna Pasternak is a British journalist and the great-niece of Boris Pasternak, the Russian poet and author of *Doctor Zhivago*. Using the insights of her family connections, she tells the story of the writing and controversial publication of that novel, focusing on Pasternak's long relationship with Olga Ivinskaya, the woman who provided the inspiration for the character of Lara. The persecution Olga suffered at the hands of Soviet authorities as a result of the book highlights the price that is sometimes paid by those around an artist, especially in a totalitarian society. (Ian)

Commonwealth by Ann Patchett (2016)

Fiction, Paperback, \$24.99

Beverly and Bert meet at a birthday party and fall in love. Great, except for the fact that both of them are married to other people. Two divorces and a marriage later, they form a blended family that isn't exactly blended. (Sandy)

Nearly Normal by Cea Sunrise Person (2017)

Memoir, Paperback, \$24.99

A companion to her first book, *North of Normal*, Cea Person's new memoir is engaging and harrowing at the same time. After Cea's life in the wilderness (told in fuller detail in her first book), she became a model at a very young age. On the surface, even after her modelling career was over, her life was great and her unique childhood had left few traces. Underneath, Cea's life broke down, and in order to survive, she had to retrace her life and examine everything again.

Cea's two books can be read together or separately. They are compelling and raise the question of nature vs nurture in a very fundamental way. There is a local element to Cea's life – she spent many of her grade school years in Calgary, and attended schools close to this area. (Susan)

By Gaslight by Steven Price (2016)

Fiction, Paperback, \$25.00

William Pinkerton of the Pinkerton Agency is in London searching for the elusive Edward Shade. His only link is a woman who has jumped off a bridge into the Thames. Adam Foole is searching for the same woman. Different story threads are expertly woven into an intriguing story of civil war spies, grifters and relationships between fathers and sons. (Michelle)

I'm Thinking of Ending Things by Iain Reid (2016)

Fiction, Paperback, \$16.99

A colleague of mine who understands literary constructs was disappointed with Reid's novel. A good friend was so unnerved he was compelled to re-read most of it slowly and attentively. I loved *I'm Thinking of Ending Things* because I was in the mood for a fast paced entertaining thriller that dives into the realm of loneliness, despair, and the nature of identity. Besides, I quite enjoy twisted, nightmarish road-trips through an enigma of time & space. (Mike)

Gallows View by Peter Robinson (1987)

Mystery, Paperback, \$21.00

Inspector Alan Banks and his family have just relocated from London to the sleepy Yorkshire village of Eastvale in search of the quiet life. Still getting to know his new colleagues, Banks is suddenly confronted with three simultaneous crimes. As he struggles to determine if they are connected, his own family becomes pulled into the investigation and Banks must decide where his priorities lie when all the threads come together at once. In this novel, the first in the long-running Inspector Banks series, Peter Robinson explores the darkness that lies beneath the serene English countryside. (Ian)

Lillian Boxfish Takes a Walk by Kathleen Rooney (2017)

Fiction, Paperback, \$24.99

The story of Lillian Boxfish is based on the life of Margaret Fishback, a famous poet and personality who became the highest-paid female advertising copywriter in the world. New York City in the mid 1980s is not a safe place to be, especially for an 85-year-old woman who doesn't "give a hoot". Exceedingly clever, totally undaunted by circumstance, Lillian takes us on a seven-hour stroll through her life as a career woman who forged a path for so many others. (Mike)

Lincoln in the Bardo by George Saunders (2017)

Fiction, Hardcover, \$37.00

When young Willie Lincoln dies of typhus, his father, mad with grief, visits the crypt to hold his son's body. There, Abe is observed by a large cast of ghosts trapped between worlds by their unrealized hopes and dreams. Will the ghosts help Willie and Abe move on, or will they too become stuck in the bardo? A weird and heart-burstingly wonderful novel. (Sarah)

The Women in the Castle by Jessica Shattuck (2017)

Fiction, Paperback, \$21.99

A Bavarian castle that managed to survive the catastrophe of WWII is the primary setting for a breathtaking work of historical fiction. Three women of utterly different backgrounds and life experience come together in the aftermath of a failed attempt to assassinate Hitler. With piercing social insight we witness the repercussions of war on the families of those who died. The story of three very distinct, unforgettable women will teach us about the power of resistance and its shocking consequences. (Mike)

Scythe by Neal Shusterman (2016)

Teen Fiction, Hardcover, \$24.99

Imagine the world of the Hunger Games. This story is absolutely *nothing* like that. In *Scythe*, we get something a little different from the current trend of dystopian societies...we get utopia.

Humanity is perfect. We have conquered poverty, war, disease. We have even conquered death. The one thing we have not conquered is space travel. So, we have a perfect society that can grow as it likes, but a limited space in which to do so. The solution to this problem? The Scythes. An organization literally dedicated to death. The mission of the Scythes is to maintain the population, bringing death to the immortal.

Meet Citra and Rowan, two teenagers who fear those whose trade in death. They each are given an extraordinary offer: apprentice to a Scythe for the chance to become one of them. They will train in the manner of dealing death and learn that a perfect world comes with a heavy price. First book in the Arc of a Scythe series. (Kristi)

The Fly Trap by Fredrik Sjöberg, translated from Swedish by Thomas Teal
(Swedish 2004, English 2014)

Biography, Paperback, \$24.95

This highly original book, the first in a trilogy, is difficult to categorize. In describing his passion for collecting hoverflies on an island off the coast of Sweden, Sjöberg meditates on the meaning of life. He shares his thoughts and stories in a conversational manner that is both intimate, down-to-earth, and at times quite funny. Midway through the book you'll find an unexpected reference to a "The Lone Trail", a poem by Robert W. Service. His second book in the trilogy, *The Art of Flight*, will be available in July. (Irene)

The Song Collector by Natasha Solomons (2016)

Fiction, Paperback, \$15.99

Fox (Henry Fox-Talbot), famous composer, wants to be left alone to mourn the death of his beloved wife, Edie. In a deep depression, unable to write music, he sits remembering his life — collecting vanishing folk songs, meeting his wife just after the war, family rifts. Only when he discovers that his difficult four-year-old grandson is a piano prodigy does he start to become interested in life again. (Michelle)

Miss Buncl's Book by D.E.Stevenson (1936)

Fiction, Paperback, \$20.99

An amusing story about a woman's attempt to earn a living by writing a book. And based on the premise "write what you know", she write a very thinly disguised novel about the inhabitants of her village.

Chaos ensues when the villagers read the book and see themselves ruthlessly described. A hunt is on to discover the author's identity (she used the clever pseudonym of John Smith). The book can be described as a comedy of manners, but has some intriguing insights into the class structure of English villages in the 1930s. This is a book for teens, grandmothers, and everyone in between. (Susan)

Oil and Marble by Stephanie Storey (2016)

Fiction, Hardcover, \$38.99

Florence, 1501: Leonardo is the established master, adorning himself with silks, satins and perfumes; Michaelango is the new upstart, who bathes once a year whether he needs it or not. It's during the next five years that the rivalry between these artists will spark the creation of two masterpieces, the Mona Lisa and the David. While the author admits to taking small liberties with the historical record in the service of her story, the breathtaking sense of place makes it easy to forgive her. (Judith)

Ashes of London by Andrew Taylor (2016)

Fiction, Paperback \$16.99

In the shadow of the Great Fire of 1666, James Marwood is coerced by the Crown to discover the meaning behind the murder of a man whose body is found near the smouldering St. Paul's Cathedral. A fascinating historical mystery set in a time of both political upheaval and the threat of foreign invasion. (Michelle)

The Lion in the Living Room: How House Cats Tamed Us and Took Over the World by Abigail Tucker (2016)

History, Hardcover, \$32.00 (Paperback expected September 5th, 2017)

Worshiped by Ancient Egyptians and Internet users alike, cats have actually contributed little to human societies, especially as compared to dogs. They have directly caused the extinction of countless species and have taken over areas as diverse as the Australian Outback and Antarctic islands. An exploration of how cats have used their relationship with humans to become one of the dominate species on the planet, *The Lion in the Living Room* will interest both those who adore cats and those who distrust them. (Judith)

Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of Family and a Culture in Crisis by J. D. Vance (2016)

Memoir, Hardcover, \$34.99 (Paperback expected January 20th, 2018)

A personal story of growing up “hillbilly” in the rust belt of America. Against the odds, J. D. Vance managed to rise above the poverty, addictions and what many would consider an abusive culture to become a lawyer in California. An unapologetic look at a part of American society that for outsiders is difficult to penetrate and understand. Excellent read. Fast-paced, eye-opening. (Michelle)

The Break by Katherena Vermette (2016)

Fiction, Paperback, \$22.95

On a winter night in Winnipeg, a Métis woman witnesses a brutal crime in the field behind her house. Her story is questioned when no victim is found, but when the truth comes out, it hits close to home and brings her back in contact with her estranged matriarchal family. These women haunt me still. *The Break* is the best novel I read in 2016. (Sarah)

Dinner with Edward by Isabel Vincent (2016)

Memoir, Hardcover \$29.95 (Paperback expected June 27th, 2017)

This memoir describes the relationship that develops between a recently widowed nonagenarian grieving the loss of his wife and a young woman in her thirties struggling with a failing marriage. They meet over dinner and he cooks. Each chapter begins with a dinner menu (including drinks) and we quickly realize that Edward is a superb cook. Although there are a few “how to” snippets, I wish the recipes had been included, but the strength of the book is really in the relationship that develops between these two people and how they support one another. (Irene)

For Joshua: An Ojibway Father Teaches His Son by Richard Wagamese (2002)

Memoir, Paperback, \$19.95

I picked this title by Richard Wagamese, as it was an earlier book that I hadn't read before. It is in very limited supply, but you could select any book by Wagamese, and get the same powerful writing that drew me into this title.

Richard's writing is intensely honest at all times. In this book, Richard is explaining to his young child why Richard is unable to be part of Joshua's life. We learn about the sense of abandonment that underpinned every aspect of Richard's life, and the sense that he was never good enough. Without roots to his Ojibway culture, he drifted into crime and alcoholism, looking for acceptance.

Richard shows us the teachings that helped him through some of the rough patches. Richard's greatest strength is as a Teacher himself – showing us the way to acceptance of ourselves through story and tradition. I wept throughout this one. (Susan)

Two Old Women by Velma Wallis (1994)

Fiction, Paperback, \$18.50

Based on an Athabaskan legend and set in Alaska, two elderly complainers are left behind by their tribe during a particularly harsh winter. They can either lie down and die or work together and try to survive. (Michelle)

Shrill: Notes from a Loud Woman by Lindy West (2016)

Memoir, Paperback, \$21.00

The biting feminist memoir of a journalist, comedian, and my personal spirit animal. Her smart and honest takes on everything from abortion to Fat People vs. Dan Savage will leave you afraid, hopeful, and laughing yourself sick. (Sarah)

Cretacea and Other Stories from the Badlands by Martin West (2016)

Short Stories, Paperback \$20.00

Southern Alberta gothic gets the literary treatment. Set in and around Drumheller, the badlands are the bedrock of these short stories where the quirky residents' secrets are uncovered, fossil by fossil. This guy's writing is so good it's almost unbearable. (Sarah)

The Best Kind of People by Zoe Whittall (2016)

Fiction, Paperback, \$22.95

A well-loved teacher is charged with sexual assault, but what happens to his family while he's incarcerated? How do the wives and children of sexual predators cope? This is the unflinching story of hidden victims, and hidden survivors. Controversial ending. (Sarah)

Holding Still for as Long as Possible by Zoe Whittall (2014)

Fiction, Paperback, \$14.95

Young people struggling through life and love in the heart of Toronto's LGBTQ+ community. A paramedic in a crumbling long-term relationship and a former child star battling mental illness narrate this refreshing story about being human as opposed to being queer. (Sarah)

The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate — Discoveries from a Secret World by Peter Wohlleben (2016)

Science, Hardcover \$29.95

A fascinating look at how trees live and communicate, flourish or perish. A very eloquent discussion of new discoveries about interactions between trees and their surroundings and provides a sense of why reforestation is not as successful as foresters would like. (Michelle)

The Naturalist by Alissa York (2016)

Fiction, Paperback, \$21.00

The Naturalist begins unexpectedly with the death of its title character. Walter Ash is an amateur scientist in mid-nineteenth century Philadelphia, who had been planning a specimen gathering expedition to the Amazon. On an impulse his wife Iris decides to undertake the trip anyway, taking with her Walter's son Paul and her companion Rachel, a young Quaker girl. For each it becomes a journey of self-discovery in the face of a beautiful but alien landscape. The perspective shifts between past and present, Paul and Rachel, and even Walter's voice from an earlier journal, to create a haunting and dreamlike narrative. (Ian)

Owl's Nest Books
Britannia Shopping Plaza
815A 49th Avenue SW
contact@owlsnestbooks.com
<http://owlsnestbooks.com>
403-287-9557