

# Literature for a Lifetime

The Notebook Nothing to Declare: Memoirs of a Woman Traveling Alone O'Pioneers Oliver Twist An Omelette and a Glass of Wine On Doctoring One Hundred Women Who Shaped American History Open Secrets The Orchid Thief Original Intentions: The Founders Othello Otherwise Our Endangered Values Out of Africa Pale Horse Patrimony Peony in Love Perfect Storm The Piano Tuner Pilgrim at Tinker Creek The Places in Between The Plot Against America The Poet Poetry of the First World War Points of View: An Anthology of Short Stories Pompeii Portrait of a Marriage Possession A Prayer for Owen Meany Pride and Prejudice Prime Cut The Prince Pygmalion The Reader The Reading Group Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books The Red Badge of Courage Red Harvest Red Hot Murder: An Angle Amalfi Mystery The Red Tent Reflex The Remembered Past 1914-1945 Remembering World War II Restless Waters Revolutionary Road The Ritual Bath The Road A Rumor of War Running From the Law Sailing Alone Around the Room The Samurai's Garden Sandy Koufax: A Lefty's Legacy The Scalpel and the Silver Bear The Search for Meaning The Secret Life of Bees Shadows in My House of Sunshine The Shawl The Shipping News Shoeless Joe Siberian Light Sight Unseen Skinwalkers Small Island Smilla's Sense of Snow Snow Falling on Cedars The Soloist The Song of the Lark Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down Steam Pig The Stiff and the Dead The Stone Diaries A Streetcar Named Desire Teacher Man Ted Williams: The Biography of an American Hero Tell Me a Riddle The Tender Bar Tess of the D'Urbervilles The Things They Carried This Boy's Life A Thousand Acres Three Cups of Tea A Three Dog Life The Time Traveler's Wife Total Recall A Trip to the Beach: Living on Island Time in the Caribbean A Trouble of Fools Troublemaker Tulerosa Twelfth Night Unbowed Unnatural Exposure An Unsuitable Job for a Woman Untamed Seas: One Woman's True Story of Shipwreck and Survival Victorian Secrets Wait Till Next Year Waiting We Die Alone We Got There on the Train We Were Soldiers Once...and Young What the Body Told What's the Matter With Kansas When I was Puerto Rican White Butterfly Why Americans Hate Politics Wife of a Chef Willa Cather: The Emerging Voice The Willow Pattern Wolf in the Shadows Wolf to the Slaughter The Woman Warrior Women For all Times Women in Their Beds Words and Music Work and Life A Year in the World: Journeys of a Passionate Traveller You Can't Take it With You Young Men and Fire All in the Family At Bat: Biographies About Baseball Greats Autobiographies: Able, Disabled, & Enabled Back From the Brink: True Tales of Survival Baseball and the American Vision Coming Home: Contemporary Prize-Winning Novels Connecticut Sisters in Crime - The New Heroine: Contemporary Novels Deciding Justice Elected by the People Food for Thought Good Cooks, Great Books! House Divided Impossible Missions and Expeditions The Landscape of the American Mystery Novel A Light Hearted Look at Life Literature Around Catastrophic Events Murder on the Menu Murder on the Menu-Second Course The Mystery Novel as a Reflection of Its Time Once Banned, Now Classic: Original Intentions: The Founders Portraits of Suburbia Range of Realism: The Novel in the 19th and 20th Centuries The Reader, The Writer, and The Detective: The Eternal Triangle A Reader's Feast Scene of the Crime: Settings of Mystery Fiction Shakespeare: The Two Sides of Drama Stories: Voyages of Men, Women and the Sea Terrorism and Takeovers Traveling Memories Victorian Secrets The Vietnam War From the Front Line and at Home What is This Thing Called Love? Contemporary Prize-Winning Novels Willa Cather Women For All Times World War II: On the Battlefield and at Home Abraham Lincoln Adrift Seventy-Six Days Lost at Sea The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn The Age of Innocence Alexander Ha American The Alice B. Toklas Cookbook An American Childhood Americans and the Land Angela's Ashes Angels in America Anna Karenina The Apprentice: My Life in the Kitchen Are Women Human The Art of Eating As You Like It Assault and Pepper Astrid and Veronika Atonement The Awakening Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress Bee Season Before You Know Kindness Bel Canto The Bell Beloved Benjamin Franklin Between Memory and Desire: The Middle East in a Troubled Age The Big Sleep Billy Boyle - A World War II Mystery Bleachers Blind Descent Blithe Spirit Blood Orange Brewing The Bone Is Pointed Bookseller of Kabul Broken Colors Candida The Catcher in the Rye A Catered Murder The Celebrant Chasing Daylight Chocolate Chopping Spree The Christ Child Goes to Court The Color of Water Concubine's Children A Confederacy of Dunces The Country of the Pointed Firs Daisy Miller Deadmistress Death at La Fenice Death in a Tenured Position Death in a White Tie A Death in the Family Dispatches Dixie City Jam Double Blind Doubt Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim Drinking: A Love Story Drop Shot Dubliners Dwarf Kingdom Eat, Pray, Love Empire Falls Endurance The Eustace Diamonds Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East Exploring Local History Exploring Values Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close Falling Through the Earth Family Album The A

## Page Turners

The Revolutionary Generation Founding Father: Rediscovering George Washington Four American Poets Frankenstein The Friday Night Knitting Club Fried Eggs with Chopsticks The Friendship Test Fudge Cupcake Murder Garlic and Sapphires Gideon's Trumpet Girl in Hyacinth Blue Girl With a Pearl Earring Girls of Tender Age The Glass Menagerie The God of Small Things The Godwulf Manuscript The Golden Notebook The Great Gatsby Growing Up Latino Guadalcanal Diary Guests of the Sheik Hamlet The Handmaid's Tale The Heritage of the Future Home Town The Hours House Divided House of Mirth Human Capital Hunger of Memory The Hungry Ocean Ice Bound: A Doctor's Incredible Battle for Survival at the South Pole The Ice Storm Images of Aging in the Heart of the Sea In the Old Ways Inheritance Into Thin Air Invisible Man Islam in America Islam: An Introduction Istanbul: Memories and the City Jane Eyre Joe DiMaggio: The Hero's Life Julie & Julia The Killer Angels King Lear Kitchen Confidential Larry's Party Last Bite The Last Gentleman Last Orders Leaves of Grass A Lesson Before Dying A Light Hearted Look at Life Lighting the Way Lincoln Literary Feasts: Inspired Eating From Classic Fiction Lolita The Long Walk The Longest Day June 6, 1944 Love Love in the Time of Cholera Love's Labour's Lost Loving Frank Luncheon of the Boating Party Lying Awake MacBeth Madame Bovary Maimonides The Maltese Falcon The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit The Map of Love March The March Marley & Me: Life and Love With the World's Worst Dog Memoirs of a Geisha The Memory Keeper's Daughter The Merchant of Venice A Method to March Madness Mickey Mantle: America's Prodigal Son Middlemarch A Midsummer Night's Dream Mill on the Floss Mistress of Spices The Moonstone Mortal Stakes Mountains Beyond Mountains Moving Violations Mrs. Dalloway My Antonia My Life in France My Old Man and the Sea My Sister's Keeper My Year of the Meats The Naked and the Dead My Sister's Keeper My Year of the Meats The Naked and the Dead Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass Native Son The Natural History of the Senses The Natural New American Short Stories New and Selected Poems, Vol. 1 The Nice and the Good The Nine Tailors The Notebook Nothing to Declare: Memoirs of a Woman Traveling Alone O'Pioneers Oliver Twist An Omelette and a Glass of

## Catalog of Themes & Books

### Reading & Discussion Programs in Connecticut Libraries





*...to provide opportunities for all the people of Connecticut to rediscover the joy of lifelong learning, to see themselves in the full context of their history and heritage, and to explore the infinite varieties of human thought and experience contained in our literature and expressed in our arts that give shape and direction to our lives.*

*Literature for a Lifetime*  
*Reading & Discussion Series*

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[www.ctculture.org](http://www.ctculture.org)

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## What is Literature for a Lifetime?

**Literature for a Lifetime** is the successor to Time for Ideas in Libraries and formerly Connecticut Reading Connections. This unique project was originally developed by the Southern Connecticut Library Council. Starting in 1998, the Connecticut Humanities Council assumed total funding for the project and launched Time for Ideas in Libraries as one of its core humanities programs. Through its scholar-led book discussion programs, **Literature for a Lifetime** assists libraries in their role as active cultural community centers where people from all walks of life come together to explore human values.

Since 1983, the project has sponsored over 4,000 book discussions in 120 public libraries across Connecticut and has received nearly \$1,000,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities in support of these programs. Connecticut Reading Connections was founded in 1989 to extend the life of grant-purchased materials and to assist libraries in their efforts to establish programming in the humanities as part of their regular services. In its new identity as **Literature for a Lifetime**, the project continues to administer fully-funded four-part discussion series, worth approximately \$3,000 in goods and services, through an annual competitive application process as funding allows. Libraries and other non-profits “buy into” the program by contributing a cash cost-share in correlation to the size of their budget.

In addition, any library, school, or retirement community may borrow a series (based on availability) for a seventy-five dollar fee for a four session series or twenty dollars for a one session plus return shipping of books. Libraries hosting a **Literature for a Lifetime** program are given priority in choosing series.

**Literature for a Lifetime** provides multiple copies of the books and promotional materials for each discussion series, training in administering and publicizing public programs, and opportunities for participation in its grant-funded projects on a variety of new and interesting humanities topics.

All the themes in this catalog have been developed by humanities scholars and funded by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH),

the Connecticut Humanities Council (CHC), or other state humanities councils. Some of the themes in this catalog, were developed by the American Library Association as part of their national “Let’s Talk About It” and “Lives Worth Knowing” projects, or by the New England Foundation for the Humanities. Many of the themes for older adults were created for or by the National Council on Aging for their “Self-Discovery Through the Humanities” project. We gratefully acknowledge the generous cooperation of these organizations as well as the many librarians and scholars who have made these programs possible. We are pleased to add new selections to this catalog to compliment and broaden those developed by our predecessors.

## How to Use This Catalog

This catalog is intended as a resource for Connecticut public libraries, Friends groups, school library media specialists, teachers, senior center coordinators, public programmers and other groups interested in promoting humanities projects. The series listed in this catalog are arranged in ten general categories for ease of use. A themed packet, containing a detailed synopsis of the topic, a sample press release and public service announcement, and general instructions is also available. Bibliographies of additional suggested readings are also available for some themes.

## How to Apply

**Literature for a Lifetime** are offered seasonally – summer, fall and winter

Summer – June 15<sup>th</sup> – August 15<sup>th</sup>

Fall – September 15<sup>th</sup> – December 15<sup>th</sup>

Winter/Spring – January 15<sup>th</sup> – May 15<sup>th</sup>

**A LIBRARY INTEREST FORM** is mailed to all Connecticut libraries in September to solicit program interest for the following fiscal year. (you may also find this form on our website at [www.ctculture.org](http://www.ctculture.org)). Other interested agencies should contact our office (information below). All programs are contingent upon grant-funding and the partner’s ability to host a successful program.

Once selected for a grant-funded discussion, the participating organization chooses a series or title and submits their preferences for dates and times. Council staff matches the program with an experienced **Literature for a Lifetime** discussion leader and ships 30 copies of each book for a four-session series and 20 copies for a one-session program; 300 publicity flyers, as well as other materials and posters. Hosts are responsible for local publicity; recruiting their audience **(a minimum of 12 per session is required)**; Distributing and collecting evaluation forms after the last session; and for contributing a cash cost-share, based on the library's annual budgeted.

Annual Budget	Cost Share Contributions
\$0-\$200,000	\$150
\$200,000-\$1,000,000	\$300
\$1,000,000 +	\$400

(Cost-share for one-sessions are calculated at 25%)

## BOOKS AND MATERIALS

Books and materials in this catalog are loaned on a first-come, first-served basis. Libraries participating in a **Literature for a Lifetime** scholar-led program receive priority over other libraries. It is best to reserve books and materials at least three months before your series begins.

Books and materials are shipped approximately six weeks before the series begins, and are due back to the Connecticut Humanities Council within two weeks after the last program.

Limited storage space requires that we weed the collection regularly in order to make room for new series books. Fifteen new series have been developed since FY 2005. Series titles are usually alphabetized by the author's last name unless the scholar who developed the series arranged the books in some other order, i.e. chronologically, by degree of difficulty, or to alternate longer and shorter reading assignments.

**Note:** Please understand that some materials may be pulled from this catalog due to poor condition. If we are unable to replace the title, we may choose another in its place. Please check our website for the latest edition of the online catalog which will provide you with updates.

## Independent Series

**Fees:** A seventy-five dollar fee is charged for borrowing an **Independent series** from this catalog or twenty dollars per title, which includes 20 copies of each title in a series. No packet or flyer are available for this service. Each borrowing library is responsible for return shipping.

To borrow a series independently, first call the Literature for a Lifetime office to determine availability, then follow up by completing the confirmation form in the back of this catalog and send it by mail; or fax to:

Connecticut Humanities Council  
 37 Broad Street  
 Middletown, CT 06457-3204  
 (860) 685-7589 or 685-7590  
 Fax to: (860) 685-7569  
 Email Program Director Marcia Trotta  
[Marcia@ctculture.org](mailto:Marcia@ctculture.org) or  
 Program Assistant Rachel Pollak  
 Email: [Rachel@ctculture.org](mailto:Rachel@ctculture.org)

## The Connecticut Model for Reading and Discussion Series

The Connecticut model for reading and discussion programs was developed by the Southern Connecticut Library Council in 1982, and has since been employed successfully in over 120 public libraries. A book discussion series generally consists of four hour-and-a-half programs, spaced two or three weeks apart depending on the length and difficulty of the books. Each series is led in its entirety by a humanities scholar. The scholar begins each session with a brief 15-20-minute lecture on the topic to be discussed, providing background material on the author, the book, and the issues to be raised during discussion. Then he or she leads a group discussion, acting primarily as facilitator. Each program in the series builds on the last, and it is the scholar's role to provide continuity and focus, as well as expert guidance, throughout the series. The librarian acts as host for each program, introduces the scholar at the beginning, and providing refreshments and crediting co-sponsors. Participants borrow the books from the library, either in complete sets or one at a time, and complete the assigned reading prior to each discussion. The programs are all free and open to the public. The library must list CHC as a sponsor in all promotion relating to the program.

For instructions and guidelines on coordinating a reading and discussion series in your library, call the **Literature for a Lifetime** office at (860) 685-7590. In addition, here are some other resources for coordinating a series or for ideas and suggestions for theme and books:

*Adult Programs in the Library*, Brett W. Lear (Chicago, ALA, 2001; ISBN 08389-0810-1)

*Book Discussions for Adults: A Leader's Guide*, by Ted Balcom (Chicago: ALA, 1992; ISBN 0-8389-3413-7)

*Courtney Love in the Shopping Mall: Humanities Programming for Young Adults*, by Evelyn Shaevel, Peggy O'Donnell and Susan Goldberg (Chicago: ALA, 1991; ISBN 08389-3387-4)

*The New York Public Library Guide to Reading Groups*, by Roleene Saal (New York: Crown, 1995; 0-5178-8357-0)

*Reading Women, The Newsletter of Literary Ideas*. Bimonthly. P. O. Box 296, Winnetka, IL 60093. \$29.00 per year.

Internet Web Sites:

[www.ala.org/publications/wpc4n/national.html](http://www.ala.org/publications/wpc4n/national.html)  
Whole Person Catalog 4. Lists national and state discussion programs.

[www.randomhouse.com](http://www.randomhouse.com)  
Random House web site. Browse to find various pages on book discussions, such as [www.randomhouse.com/vintage/read/](http://www.randomhouse.com/vintage/read/). The Reading Group Center web site helps to plan and run book discussions. This site also includes discussion guides.

[www.readinggroupguides.com/advice/index.asp](http://www.readinggroupguides.com/advice/index.asp)  
Reading Group Guides.com contains advice on starting and running a reading group, choosing what to read, a list of books about reading groups and other valuable information for book discussion groups, including discussion guides.

# **Catalog of Themes & Books**

# American History and Culture

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## BASEBALL AND THE AMERICAN VISION

A. Barlett Giamatti, former Yale University President and Commissioner of Baseball wrote: "Baseball is one of the few enduring institutions that has been continuous and adaptable and in touch with its origins. As a result baseball is not simply an essential part of this country, it is a living memory of what American culture, at its best, wishes to be." This four-part book discussion series seeks to demonstrate that literature, sports and American culture can be linked by focusing on baseball as a reflection of the American vision and American culture. In doing so, the series will attempt to answer some of the following questions: Why are fans so passionate about the game? How does baseball reflect the vision of the American hero? How has that vision changed in the last 25 years? How does baseball reflect America's vision of itself? How and why has baseball been able to link one generation to the next?

Doris Kearns Goodwin, WAIT TILL NEXT YEAR  
Eric Rolfe Greenberg, THE CELEBRANT  
W. P. Kinsella, SHOELESS JOE  
Bernard Malamud, THE NATURAL

## DECIDING JUSTICE

Using original documents and absorbing case studies, we will investigate some of the most important Supreme Court cases, from the first debate over the Bill of Rights to current controversies about social justice and rights to privacy. We will get to know individual justices such as Felix Frankfurter and Oliver Wendell Holmes, and we will meet anarchists, schoolchildren, a prisoner, and other determined citizens whose rights became subjects of historic debate and momentous decisions which have touched our daily lives.

*Deciding Justice* is designed for adults who enjoy challenging reading and thoughtful discussion. No background in history or jurisprudence is assumed, but those with such backgrounds will find the series refreshing and relevant.

Anthony Lewis, GIDEON'S TRUMPET  
Richard Polenberg, FIGHTING FAITHS: THE ABRAMS CASE, THE SUPREME COURT  
AND FREE SPEECH  
Wayne Swanson, THE CHRIST CHILD GOES TO COURT  
DECIDING JUSTICE, Program Anthology

## ELECTED BY THE PEOPLE

Why do we vote the way we do? This series will examine this question as we examine the practice of politics in America today. We will discuss the separation of morality and politics, starting with Machiavelli in 16<sup>th</sup> century Italy. Do we tend to vote for candidates today for their perceived ethics or for our own economic reasons? What role should religion play in government? What values or policies do conservatives and liberals believe they are voting for when they vote for one party or another? In this way, we will try to understand political slogans and pitches as politicians try to convince us to vote for them.

Niccolo Machiavelli, THE PRINCE  
E. J. Dionne, Jr., WHY AMERICANS HATE POLITICS  
Thomas Frank, WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH KANSAS  
Jimmy Carter, OUR ENDANGERED VALUES

## **HOUSE DIVIDED**

Set in the time of the Civil War, this series is based on selections from fiction and non-fiction materials that depict the drama of era with the backdrop of the loss of 620,000 lives. Experience a fascinating portrayal of the presidency and of a man in Thomas' biography of *Abraham Lincoln*. Contrast it with the fictional portrait created by Gore Vidal in his bestseller, *Lincoln*. Doctorow's *The March* places the reader on the trail of combat, and *Killer Angels* chronicles the Battle of Gettysburg. This thought-provoking series will open the way for discussions about regional and political differences that are relevant not only in this country, but worldwide.

E. L. Doctorow, *THE MARCH*  
Michael Shaara, *THE KILLER ANGELS*  
Benjamin P. Thomas, *ABRAHAM LINCOLN*  
Gore Vidal, *LINCOLN*

## **PORTRAITS OF SUBURBIA: THE GOOD LIFE IN CONNECTICUT GONE BAD**

The suburbs have historically been a place to search for the good life, and Connecticut is a state where most of the residents are, in fact, living a suburban lifestyle. In the 25 years following World War II, unprecedented numbers of working and middle class urban dwellers moved to the suburbs, essentially transforming Connecticut from an urban/rural state to an urban/suburban state. The suburban lifestyle is best reflected by homeownership in a nice neighborhood with good schools and a better quality of life, which is often accompanied by a commute into town or the city to work. As the suburbs have grown and changed over the years, however, its residents have experienced certain negative side effects to suburban living, making one wonder whether they are really living the "good life" in suburban Connecticut.

Sloan Wilson, *THE MAN IN THE GRAY FLANNEL SUIT*  
Richard Yates, *REVOLUTIONARY ROAD*  
Rick Moody, *THE ICE STORM*  
Stephen Amidon, *HUMAN CAPITAL*  
\*Video: Suburbia

## **TERRORISM & TAKEOVERS**

The contemporary novels in this series bring alive all of the emotions that erupt during times of terrorism and takeovers. The books are disconcerting and disturbing as they force readers to contemplate the consequences of events, whether actual or threatened. Once set in motion, the incidents in each story irrevocably alter the lives of the characters and illustrate the strength and fortitude of the human spirit.

Jonathan Safran Foer, *EXTREMELY LOUD & INCREDIBLY CLOSE*  
Ann Patchett, *BEL CANTO*  
Philip Roth, *THE PLOT AGAINST AMERICA*  
Margaret Atwood, *THE HANDMAID'S TALE*

## **THE VIETNAM WAR FROM THE FRONT LINE AND AT HOME**

This series revisits the Vietnam War not from a political or polemical perspective, but as an event chronicled by combatants and journalists write narratives that range from memoir to oral history to impressionistic fiction. Join us for a discussion of these books which, by placing the war in the personal context of first-person accounts, contribute to the long and rich tradition of war literature as written by those who were there and by those who remained at home.

Philip Caputo, *A RUMOR OF WAR*  
Michael Herr, *DISPATCHES*  
Danielle Trussoni, *FALLING THROUGH THE EARTH*  
Harold Moore & Joseph Galloway, *WE WERE SOLDIERS ONCE...AND YOUNG*  
Tim O'Brien, *THE THINGS THEY CARRIED*

## **WORLD WAR II: ON THE BATTLEFIELD AND AT HOME**

This series explores three different aspects of World War II, viewed through three different perspectives. We begin with a first person account of Guadalcanal—the beginning of the three-year offensive against Japan—from the on-site diary of a war correspondent. Our guide to D-Day, the June 6, 1944 opening of the European western front, is a correspondent who covered the invasion but wrote about it fifteen years later following extensive research and interviews. We will conclude with Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead*, one of the greatest novels to emerge from the war.

Richard Tregaskis, GUADALCANAL DIARY  
Cornelius Ryan, THE LONGEST DAY: JUNE 6, 1944  
Norman Mailer, THE NAKED AND THE DEAD

# **Biography/Autobiography**

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## **AT BAT: BIOGRAPHIES ABOUT BASEBALL GREATS**

It has been called “America’s pastime”, for those who have played the sports and for countless others who visit favorite ball fields or listen to the sounds and the sights of a game on radio or television. How has this sport influenced American culture-then and now? What makes some players become legends and heroes? This series of biographies examines these issues through the perspective of four baseball greats who have distinguished themselves on the field: Joe Di Maggio, Sandy Koufax, Mickey Mantle, and Ted Williams.

Richard Ben Cramer, **JOE DIMAGGIO: THE HERO’S LIFE**  
Tony Castro, **MICKEY MANTLE: AMERICA’S PRODIGAL SON**  
Jane Leavy, **SANDY KOUFAX: A LEFTY’S LEGACY**  
Leigh Montville, **TED WILLIAMS: THE BIOGRAPHY OF AN AMERICAN HERO**

## **AUTOBIOGRAPHIES: ABLE, DISABLED, & ENABLED**

What does it mean to be disabled? To the person with the disability? To the friends, family, physicians dealing with the person and/or the related concerns? To society in general? What stereotypes and stigmas attach to particular disabilities? What do these impose on the disabled? In what ways do people with disabilities defy, debate, or try to demolish the added burdens of negative public images? What roles do medical personnel play in the treatment and rehabilitation of the disabled, in promoting or dispelling stereotypes, “conventional wisdom,” medical innovations? Why did the authors write these books-and for what audience? The books in this series address these issues with honesty, clarity, and unsentimental wit.

John Hockenberry, **MOVING VIOLATIONS**  
Atul Gawande, **COMPLICATIONS**  
Georgina Kleege, **SIGHT UNSEEN**  
Caroline Knapp, **DRINKING: A LOVE STORY**

## **ORIGINAL INTENTIONS: THE FOUNDERS**

Whether called “Founding Fathers” or “Founding Brothers,” the men who led the struggle for independence and helped construct the new American government are understandably viewed as being larger than life. Indeed, their actual identities as “public men” have at times been obscured by historical sentimentality and mythmaking. The weaving of myths has taken many forms: patriotic interpreters have depicted the work of the Constitutional Convention as a “miracle,” while skeptics have debunked the Founders as a propertied elite working in concert to defend their accumulated wealth.

By exploring the Founders and their times through the eyes of three distinguished historians, we will seek to remove the veil of legend and see the Founders as they were. Our journey into the past will generate a host of questions about the era of the Revolution and the Early Republic. How did the Founders view the character of “democracy?” What expectations did they hold about the future of slavery? What views did they hold about the political economy of the new republic? What accounts for the bitter controversies that colored American politics after 1789?

Edmund S. Morgan, **BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**  
Richard Brookhiser, **FOUNDING FATHER: REDISCOVERING GEORGE WASHINGTON**  
Richard Brookhiser, **ALEXANDER HAMILTON, AMERICAN**  
Joseph J. Ellis, **FOUNDING BROTHERS, THE REVOLUTIONARY GENERATION**

## Books on Screen

**“It wasn’t as good as the book?” When is this true and why? What can a film offer that great literature does not?**

Did you know that over 1,000 books have been made into films over the years? The following is only a partial list of books in our collection that also have movie versions.

*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain  
*Age of Innocence*, Edith Wharton  
*Anna Karenina*, Leo Tolstoy  
*Angela’s Ashes*, Frank McCourt  
*Atonement*, Ian McEwan  
*The Awakening*, Kate Chopin  
*Bee Season*, Myla Goldberg  
*Beloved*, Toni Morrison  
*Chocolat*, Joanne Harris  
*Daisy Miller*, Henry James  
*Empire Falls*, Richard Russo  
*Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley  
*Girl With a Pearl Earring*, Tracy Chevalier  
*The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald  
*The Handmaid’s Tale*, Margaret Atwood  
*The Hours*, Michael Cunningham  
*House of Mirth*, Edith Wharton  
*Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Bronte  
*Lolita*, Vladimir Nabokov  
*Marley & Me*, John Grogan (coming soon)  
*Memoirs of a Geisha*, Arthur Golden  
*My Sister’s Keeper*, Jodi Picoult (coming in 2009)  
*Native Son*, Richard Wright  
*The Natural*, Bernard Malamud  
*The Notebook*, Nicholas Sparks  
*Orchid Thief*, Susan Orlean  
*Out of Africa*, Isak Dinesen  
*Perfect Storm*, Sebastian Junger  
*Possession*, A. S. Byatt  
*Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen  
*The Secret Life of Bees*, Sue Monk Kidd  
*Shoeless Joe*, W. P. Kinsella  
*A Thousand Acres*, Jane Smiley  
**AND many more!**

Perhaps you would like to offer your book discussion group a special two-part program where you first discuss the book and then view the film version. **The possibilities are endless!**

# Contemporary Novels

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## Jodi Picoult Novels

Picoult has mined the complex mysteries of everyday life: love, marriage, career, family. Faced with difficult, often painful moral choices, her characters struggle to find balance in an off-kilter world fraught with danger and shattered by terrible sociological ills like domestic violence, sexual abuse, and teen suicide. Though page-turners of the highest order, Picoult's stories avoid easy solutions and provoke thoughtful reading and animated discussion.

Picoult, Jodi, NINETEEN MINUTES  
Picoult, Jodi, THE PACT  
Picoult, Jodi, MY SISTER'S KEEPER

## Louise Shaffer Novels

Loyalty, lifetime friendships, and secrets are themes that these three Shaffer novels share. Set in rural Georgia, these books capture the essence of life in the south, especially in a small town, and show that mystery and problems exist everywhere. Southern hospitality reigns supreme though, and readers are treated to three fantastic cake recipes – true southern hospitality.

Shaffer, Louise, THE THREE MISS MARGARETS  
(Red Velvet Cake Recipe)  
Shaffer, Louise, THE LADIES OF GARRISON GARDENS  
(Mayonnaise Cake Recipe)  
Shaffer, Louise, FAMILY ACTS  
(Peach Pecan Pound Cake Recipe)

## Susan Vreeland Novels

Enter the mind and heart of painters....Follow the rebel Canadian painter, Emily Carr, seeking the spiritual content of her beloved British Columbia by painting its wild landscape and its native totemic carvings in *The Forest Lover*. In *Girl in Hyacinth Blue*, Vreeland traces an alleged Vermeer painting through the centuries revealing its influence on those who possessed it. *Life Studies* reveals Impressionist and Post-Impressionist painters from points of view of people who knew them and showing that ordinary people can have profound encounters with art. *Luncheon of the Boating Party*, illuminates the vibrant, explosive Parisian world of *la vie moderne* surrounding Renoir as he creates his masterwork depicting the French art of living and in *The Passion of Artemisia*, discloses the inner life of Artemisia Gentileschi, Italian Baroque painter who empowered her female heroines with her own courage.

Vreeland, Susan, THE FOREST LOVER  
Vreeland, Susan, GIRL IN HYACINTH BLUE  
Vreeland, Susan, LIFE STUDIES  
Vreeland, Susan, LUNCHEON OF THE BOATING PARTY  
Vreeland, Susan, THE PASSION OF ARTEMISIA

# Drama

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## A LIGHT HEARTED LOOK AT LIFE

“Great literature is boring.” “Great literature is too heavy.” “Great literature is so depressing.” How many times have people made these types of comments regarding what is considered “great literature”? “A Lighthearted Look at Life,” a four-part book discussion series, will be offered as a rebuttal to these observations by demonstrating that great writers can indeed see the amusing side of life and, from time to time, even write about it.

Noel Coward, BLITHE SPIRIT

Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman, YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU

William Shakespeare, AS YOU LIKE IT

George Bernard Shaw, PYGMALION

## SHAKESPEARE: THE TWO SIDES OF DRAMA

Shakespeare wrote over 30 plays in his lifetime—histories, comedies, tragedies, and romances. One of the most striking features of his work is his magnificent command of language. Some scholars have speculated that this was because he was an actor himself. Many of his lines have survived outside of his plays and have become expressions used frequently in our modern language. The Connecticut Humanities Council owns multiple copies of the following plays. You can select the titles that you would like to design your own series.

### Comedies

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Twelfth Night

Comedy of Errors

Love's Labour's Lost

### Tragedies

Macbeth

Othello

King Lear

Hamlet

## FOUR AMERICAN POETS

This series explores the work of four American writers whose poetry is testimony to the timelessness of literature and the creative process. Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson, the giants of nineteenth-century American poetry, have exerted a tremendous influence on succeeding generations of poets. Though vastly different in style and technique, they have much in common in terms of what accounts for their ongoing preeminence in the pantheon of American literature. Billy Collins and Mary Oliver are two contemporary poets whose work has achieved great critical acclaim as well as a large and loyal readership. While speaking directly to modern audiences, their poetry is part of a tradition that can be traced back to their illustrious predecessors.

Though presented as independent discussions of each poet, the four-part series will also touch on themes common to all that illustrate their shared relationship in the landscape of American poetry.

Walt Whitman, LEAVES OF GRASS

Emily Dickinson, FINAL HARVEST

Billy Collins, SAILING ALONE AROUND THE ROOM

Mary Oliver, NEW AND SELECTED POEMS, VOL. 1

## AMERICAN POETS: PART TWO

This series begins with the Pulitzer-Prize winning poems of Robert Frost, moves on to Langston Hughes, key to the Harlem Renaissance, then to Elizabeth Bishop, the most highly regarded American woman poet of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and ends with the contemporary work of former Poet Laureate Rita Dove.

Robert Frost, ROBERT FROST'S POEMS

Langston Hughes, SELECTED POEMS OF LANGSTON HUGHES

Elizabeth Bishop, COMPLETE POEMS

Rita Dove, SELECTED POEMS

# Expanding Horizons: Literature From Home & Abroad

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## A READER'S FEAST

Our taste in food—what we eat (and avoid); how we grow, select, prepare and serve it; with whom we eat and under what circumstances—is culturally mediated in ways powerful but often unobtrusive. If we are what we eat, we are also what we read. The books in this series nourish the mind, the senses, and the sensibilities. Participants will be invited to supplement the readings with cookbooks and recipes whose significance in their lives and culture they will be asked to define, to interpret, and to question.

**The Appetizer:** Diane Ackerman, *THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE SENSES*

**The Salad:** M. F. K. Fisher, *THE ART OF EATING*

**The Entrée:** Chitra B. Divakaruni, *MISTRESS OF SPICES*

**The Dessert:** Joanne Harris, *CHOCOLAT*

\*Sean Brand, *LITERARY FEASTS: INSPIRED EATING FROM CLASSIC FICTION*

\*You may choose this title for either *A READER'S FEAST* or *GOOD COOKS, GREAT BOOKS*

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This series takes the reader through culinary journeys. The biography of the world's first famous T.V. chef shows us how she changed our perception. The disguises needed by a food critic to camouflage her identity give us a glimpse not only food service but also the fierce competition of the industry and of journalism. *Julia and Julie* presents us with a very unique coming of age experience and a young woman's struggle to find who she wants to be. The "behind the scenes" of *The Wife of a Chef* clearly illustrates that owning a restaurant is hard work, not glamour. All of these titles provide us with insight into a profession that serves us all.

Ruth Reichl, *GARLIC AND SAPPHIRES*

Julie Powell, *JULIE & JULIA*

Julia Child & Alex Prud'homme, *MY LIFE IN FRANCE*

Courtney Febroriello, *WIFE OF A CHEF*

## GOOD COOKS, GREAT BOOKS

Lovers of good food and good writing will delight in this series. Elizabeth David, acclaimed by many as "the best food writer of her time" and Alice B. Toklas, rated by James Beard as "one of the really great cooks of all time," share with readers their experiences with the cuisine of different cultures, favorite recipes and memorable meals. Anthony Bourdain, executive-chef at les Brasserie Les Halles in New York, offers a funny and irreverent insider's perspective on the restaurant business while Joanne Harris creates a "timeless and enchanting story about temptation and pleasure." Jacques Pépin's *Captivating Memoir*, the man who Julia Child has called "the best chef in America" tells the story of his rise from a frightened apprentice in an exacting Old World kitchen to an Emmy Award-winning superstar who taught millions of Americans how to cook and shaped the nation's tastes in the bargain. Join us in savoring the varieties of writing in this collection.

Anthony Bourdain, *KITCHEN CONFIDENTIAL*

Elizabeth David, *AN OMELETTE AND A GLASS OF WINE*

Jacques Pépin, *THE APPRENTICE: MY LIFE IN THE KITCHEN*

Alice B. Toklas, *THE ALICE B. TOKLAS COOKBOOK*

## COMING HOME: CONTEMPORARY PRIZE-WINNING NOVELS

Home, and coming home, in these novels—as in real life—has many meanings, literal and psychological. However close *heart* is to *hearth*, coming home is never easy. Home is seldom a cozy nest the characters can take for granted—as the destruction of the family farm in *A Thousand Acres* proves. For people exiled by war, whose homes have been destroyed (*Beloved*) or forcibly taken from them (*Snow Falling on Cedars*), to re-establish a home is to come into citizenship and community. For people devastated by death (*Stone Diaries*) and divorce (*Shipping News*), to build a home and to build a house is a gradual process; it involves rebuilding a family, and ultimately reintegrating oneself into society. These superbly written novels cause us to reflect on what home means to others and to ourselves. Because families and society are never static, to come home always involves coming to terms with self-knowledge, growth and change, pain, and hard-won pleasure.

David Guterson, SNOW FALLING ON CEDARS

Toni Morrison, BELOVED

E. Anne Proulx, THE SHIPPING NEWS

Carol Shields, THE STONE DIARIES

Jane Smiley, A THOUSAND ACRES

## LITERATURE AROUND CATASTROPHIC EVENTS

Our generation has been witness to many natural and terrorist driven catastrophic events, from 9/11, to the Tsunami of 2004, to Hurricane Katrina among others. Through the discussion of books in this series, participants will have an opportunity to examine some of the emotional, psychological, economic, and political impacts that these have on people. Participants will read *The Bookseller of Kabul*, *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*, *Vladimir Nabokov's Novels and Memoirs*, and *Reading Lolita in Tehran*.

Asne Seierstad, BOOKSELLER OF KABUL

Vladimir Nabokov, VLADIMIR NABOKOV NOVELS AND MEMOIRS

Dai Sijie, BALZAC AND THE LITTLE CHINESE SEAMSTRESS

Azar Nafisi, READING LOLITA IN TEHRAN: A MEMOIR IN BOOKS

## ONCE BANNED, NOW CLASSIC

A book, it is often said, reflects the society in which it was written. This may be especially true when the society denies the reflection and censures the book. The four works in this series, all banned at the time of publication, are now accepted as classics of American literature. How can we explain this change in attitude? Does it reflect a change in actual morality or just a change in what we're willing to see in print? What factors led these authors to create works that defied the prevailing standards of their time? Participants will examine these and related questions about censorship, rights, and creativity.

Mark Twain, THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN

Richard Wright, NATIVE SON

Kate Chopin, THE AWAKENING

J. D. Salinger, THE CATCHER IN THE RYE

## RANGE OF REALISM: THE NOVEL IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES

Whether as the account of the rise of a boy born in a Victorian workhouse or the chronicles of the fall of a lady of Russian aristocracy, the nineteenth-century novel emerged as the pre-eminent literary form for portraying the wide range of human possibilities to which we give the name realism. In our own century, Edith Wharton's secular tragedy of a materialistic society and John Irving's spiritual comedy about an eccentric boy who becomes an instrument of God stand as masterful examples of how the novel continues to define and extend what we recognize as realistic.

Leo Tolstoy, ANNA KARENINA

Charles Dickens, OLIVER TWIST

Edith Wharton, HOUSE OF MIRTH

John Irving, A PRAYER FOR OWEN MEANY

Mary Shelley, FRANKENSTEIN

## **VICTORIAN SECRETS**

In Victorian England, the status and role of women were subjects of political debate, literary discourse and pictorial representation. From the idealization of *The Angel in the House* (the domestic guardian of morality and virtue) to the imprisonment of *The Madwoman in the Attic* (the closeted hysteric), various images of women suffuse Victorian literature and art. Through discussions of four great novels of the period, we will consider the depiction of women in an age in which women were both worshipped and subjugated.

Charlotte Brontë, *JANE EYRE*  
George Elliot, *MILL ON THE FLOSS*  
Thomas Hardy, *TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES*  
Anthony Trollope, *THE EUSTACE DIAMONDS*

## **WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED LOVE? CONTEMPORARY PRIZE-WINNING NOVELS**

Why do we love to talk about love? Why do we return again to a subject that can be so maddening, frustrating, heartbreaking—and so delicious? Love, as rendered in these four prize-winning novels that turn the subject around kaleidoscopically, is never simple, never settled, forever fascinating.

A. S. Byatt, *POSSESSION*  
Arundhati Roy, *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS*  
Ha Jin, *WAITING*  
Michael Cunningham, *THE HOURS*

## **WILLA CATHER**

This series starts off with Sharon O'Brien's biography examines the early influences on this great American author who's live spanned the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Three of her novels will then be read: *O Pioneers*, considered to be the novel that gave her name recognition; *Song of the Lark* which chronicles the artist's growth and development in the guise of an opera singer; and *My Antonia*, perhaps her most famous novel.

Sharon O'Brien, *WILLA CATHER: THE EMERGING VOICE*  
Willa Cather, *O' PIONEERS!*  
Willa Cather, *THE SONG OF THE LARK*  
Willa Cather, *MY ANTONIA*

# **Family and Personal Relationships**

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## **ALL IN THE FAMILY**

It is commonplace for us to feel that the American family as we once knew it no longer exists. We ask if the extended family, settled in the same community, is truly a thing of the past; we worry about the rising divorce rate, the many single-parent households, and about the effect of both parents working. Each author reveals family struggles with problems such as alcoholism, poverty, racism and emotional abuse, but each memoir also provides compelling testimony to the complexities and durability of family bonds and the efforts to create a self apart from those ties.

**\*Select four or all of the works for your series.**

Harold Augenbraum, GROWING UP LATINO  
Annie Dillard, AN AMERICAN CHILDHOOD  
Henry Louis Gates, Jr., THE COLORED PEOPLE  
Frank McCourt, ANGELA'S ASHES  
Esmerelda Santiago, WHEN I WAS PUERTO RICAN  
Tobias Wolfe, THIS BOY'S LIFE

## **WOMEN FOR ALL TIMES**

Who are the women who have impacted the world? How have they had influence over others? What are some of the issues that they confronted? How did they overcome barriers? What is *her story*? The four books in this series points us to the feminine voice through the fiction in Dorothy Parker's *Complete Stories*, through inspirational insight in Sayer's *Are Women Human?* and in Schiff's *Lighting the Way*, and through the examination of their own lives in Felder's works.

Gina Berriault, WOMEN IN THEIR BEDS  
Deborah Felder, 100 WOMEN WHO SHAPED AMERICAN HISTORY  
Dorothy Sayers, ARE WOMEN HUMAN and Karenna Gore Schiff, LIGHTING THE WAY  
Dorothy Parker, COMPLETE STORIES



The following titles were originally purchased for our Literature & Medicine program for health care professionals. However, libraries are welcome to borrow them for a single session or Independent Book Discussion.

*Angels in America*, Tony Kushner  
12 copies available

*Chasing Daylight*, Eugene O'Kelly  
25 copies available

*Complications*, Atul Gawande  
20 copies available

*Doubt*, John Shanley  
25 copies available

*Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley  
40 copies available

*Lying Awake*, Mark Salzman  
25 copies available

*Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf  
24 copies available

*On Doctoring*, Richard Reynolds & John Stone, MD  
35 copies available

*Otherwise*, Jane Kenyon  
25 copies available

*Pale Horse*, Katherine Anne Porter  
25 copies available

*Patrimony*, Philip Roth  
24 copies available

*The Scalpel and the Silver Bear*, Lori Alvord  
25 copies available

*The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, Anne Fadiman  
30 copies available

*What the Body Told*, Rafael Campos  
34 copies available

# **Mysteries & Detective Fiction**

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## **CONNECTICUT SISTERS IN CRIME – THE NEW HEROINE**

Everyone loves a good murder mystery with a suspenseful plot that keeps the reader guessing and an engaging sleuth with whom readers can relate as the story unfolds and we try to figure out “whodunit”. The new heroine in today’s contemporary mystery novel brings a whole new profile for the amateur sleuth—she is savvy, self-reliant, strong, often has a great sense of humor, and often deals with specific gender-related issues, such as trying to get established in a male dominated career. Enjoy these contemporary mystery novels written by Connecticut women authors.

Roberta Isleib, FINAL FORE  
Karen E. Olson, SACRED COWS  
Jessica Speart, RESTLESS WATERS  
Carole Shmurak, DEADMISTRESS

## **THE LANDSCAPE OF THE AMERICAN MYSTERY NOVEL**

Landscape, place, and gender have been key ingredients in mystery/detective fiction since inception, but at no time in the genre’s history have they received more attention than they are right now from both creators and critics. With the explosion of new writers during the past few years—especially in the hard-boiled field—new and fascinating ways of depicting landscape, creating place, and introducing gender issues have effectively reinvented the genre. (You may choose any or all of these titles)

Dashiell Hammett, THE MALTESE FALCON  
Raymond Chandler, FAREWELL MY LOVELY  
Linda Barnes, A TROUBLE OF FOOLS  
Robert B. Parker, MORTAL STAKES  
Michael McGarrity, TULAROSA  
Nevada Barr, BLIND DESCENT  
James Lee Burke, DIXIE CITY JAM  
Marcia Muller, WOLF IN THE SHADOWS

## **MURDER ON THE MENU**

Test your hidden sleuth as you read these culinary mysteries that promise to be deadly to the last bite! All of the selections have some connection to food and food preparation, but each has its own unique flavor. The diverse settings for the action as well as the different personalities create a perfect recipe for a humanities discussion. The main characters make unappetizing discoveries and we are challenged to spot the villains in these thrillers along with them. Taste victory as you solve the crimes!

Isis Crawford, A CATERED MURDER  
Joanne Fluke, FUDGE CUPCAKE MURDER  
Diane Mott Davidson, PRIME CUT  
Diane Mott Davidson, DARK TORTE

## **MURDER ON THE MENU – SECOND COURSE**

Combine the authors’ love of food with some irresistibly tempting “whodunits” and you end up with this series that is a combination of light-heartedness, mystery and suspense.

Diane Mott Davidson, CHOPPING SPREE  
Joanne Pence, RED HOT MURDER: AN ANGIE AMALFI MYSTERY  
Laura Childs, BLOOD ORANGE BREWING  
Nancy Verde Barr, LAST BITE

\* This series has only 20 copies of each title.

## **THE MYSTERY NOVEL AS A REFLECTION OF ITS TIMES**

Mystery fiction is not only exciting reading but also a window into the cultural, social, and political world in which it was written. This series traces the mystery novel through world wars, the Great Depression, the Cold War, and our more recent era of terrorism, organized crime and the drug trade. Topics such as women's rights, racial conflicts and injustices, and psychological stress are considered, both as social realities and as signs of a changing literary consciousness. Books may be paired as suggested or discussed separately. (You may choose any or all of these titles)

Dorothy Sayers, *THE NINE TAILORS*  
Dashiell Hammett, *RED HARVEST*  
Amanda Cross, *DEATH IN A TENURED POSITION*  
Sara Paretsky, *TOTAL RECALL*  
Joseph Hansen, *TROUBLEMAKER*  
Wilkie Collins, *THE MOONSTONE*  
Patricia Cornwell, *UNNATURAL EXPOSURE*  
Harlan Coban, *DROP SHOT*

## **THE READER, THE WRITER, AND THE DETECTIVE: THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE**

In the detective story, more than in other fictions, the reader participates in searching for the truth buried in the text. The reader is free to speculate along with the detective and even to improve on the detective's speculations with his or her own guesswork. However, the writer, whose aim is to sustain in the reader the tension between the desire to solve the crime and the pleasure of keeping the guessing game going, controls the reader's knowledge. This series explores detective fiction from the era of the detective as puzzle solver in the 1890s to the complexities of both character and world reflected in the moral and psychological mysteries of the 1980s. Books may be paired as suggested or discussed separately. (You may choose any or all of these titles)

Ngaio Marsh, *DEATH IN A WHITE TIE*  
Dick Francis, *REFLEX*  
P. D. James, *AN UNSUITABLE JOB FOR A WOMAN*  
Raymond Chandler, *THE BIG SLEEP*  
Tony Hillerman, *DANCE HALL OF THE DEAD*  
Ruth Rendell, *WOLF TO THE SLAUGHTER*  
Robert B. Parker, *THE GODWOLF MANUSCRIPT*  
Nevada Barr, *FLASHBACK*  
Michael Connelly, *THE POET*  
Lisa Scottoline, *RUNNING FROM THE LAW*

## **SCENE OF THE CRIME: SETTINGS OF MYSTERY FICTION**

Who does not feel at home in the familiar surroundings of 221B Baker Street or strolling the village streets of St. Mary Mead? And who has not sensed the perils of the mean streets of Chandler's Los Angeles or Paretsky's Chicago? Setting has marked importance in many mystery novels. This series looks at novels in some less familiar settings, both geographical and cultural. In many cases the writers have used the settings to create mood, to affect plot, to illuminate characters, and to highlight thematic concerns. (You may choose any or all of these titles)

Donna Leon, *DEATH AT LA FENICE*  
Nicholas Freeling, *A DWARF KINGDOM*  
Arthur Upfield, *THE BONE IS POINTED*  
James McClure, *STEAM PIG*  
Faye Kellerman, *THE RITUAL BATH*  
Walter Mosley, *WHITE BUTTERFLY*  
Tony Hillerman, *SKINWALKERS*  
Robert van Gulik, *THE WILLOW PATTERN*  
Peter Hoeg, *SMILLA'S SENSE OF SNOW*  
Robin White, *SIBERIAN LIGHT*

# One Session Book Discussions

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**The following selections can be used by any library on an independent basis, OR you may select one and we will arrange a scholar for you. For an independent program, you will need to contact a scholar of your choice and invite her or him to lead the discussion or you may contact CHC for scholar suggestions. You may also pair titles to create your own multi-session series.**

Agee, James, A DEATH IN THE FAMILY

Forty years after its original publication, Agee's last novel seems, more than ever, an American classic. In its lyrical, sorrowful account of a man's death and its impact on his family, Agee has created an overwhelmingly powerful novel of innocence, tenderness, and loss that should be read aloud for the sheer music of its prose.

Atwood, Margaret, THE HANDMAID'S TALE

In the world of the near future, who will control women's bodies? Offered is a Handmaid in the Republic of Gilead. She may leave the home of the Commander and his wife once a day to walk to food markets whose signs are now pictures instead of words because women are no longer allowed to read. She must lie on her back once a month and pray that the Commander makes her pregnant, because in an age of declining births, Offered and the other Handmaids are only valued if their ovaries are viable. Offered can remember the days before, when she lived and made love with her husband Luke; when she played with and protected her daughter; when she had a job, money of her own, and access to knowledge. But all of that is gone now....Funny, unexpected, horrifying, and altogether convincing, *The Handmaid's Tale* is at once scathing satire, dire warning, and tour de force.

Augenbraum, Harold & Stavans, Ilan, GROWING UP LATINO

From the mean streets of the barrio to the house on Mango Street, from the Mambo Kings to the Garcia Girls, the authors who contribute to this volume transport us across geographies and through cultures in an attempt to articulate the joys, struggles, defeats, and triumphs of the Latino experience in the United States. *Growing Up Latino* offers, for the first time, a comprehensive collection of classic and recent Latino writing in English, converging in sometimes shocking, often funny, and always stirring memoirs and stories. Religion, sex, love, language, and family are some of the topics explored in this compelling anthology of fiction and nonfiction. With its laughter and tears, its beauty and power, it is a thoroughly enjoyable book and an unforgettable contribution to the Latino tradition of letters. This diverse collection shatters the myth of a singular U.S.- Latino experience, proving the existence of a rich tradition whose writers, active for more than forty years, are only now being recognized by a rapidly growing audience.

Austen, Jane, PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

When Elizabeth Bennet first meets eligible bachelor Fitzwilliam Darcy, she thinks him arrogant and conceited, while he struggles to remain indifferent to her good looks and lively mind. When she later discovers that Darcy has involved himself in the troubled relationship between his friend Bingley and her beloved sister Jane, she is determined to dislike him more than ever. In the sparkling comedy of manners that follows, Jane Austen shows the folly of judging by first impressions and superbly evokes the friendships, gossip and snobberies of provincial middle-class life.

Benn, James. R., BILLY BOYLE – A WORLD WAR II MYSTERY

During WWII, a diplomatic mission in Norway turns into a murder probe. As the Good War heats up and the draft accelerates, Boston cop Billy Boyle decides to enlist. After his well-connected and vocal Irish family calls in a few favors to get Billy into Officers Candidate School, he emerges a lieutenant under the command of rising military star and distant relative Dwight Eisenhower, whom Billy calls Uncle Ike. In London, Ike assigns Billy to a special mission in Norway along with dishy British Officer Daphne Seaton, the unresponsive target of Billy's all-out romantic assault, even though her heart belongs to Polish baron Lt. Piotr "Kaz" Kazimierz, another member of the team. Starchy Major Harding heads the team, whose assignment is to inform the Norwegian king and other dignitaries that the Allies, now bolstered by America's recent entry into the war, will soon implement Operation Jupiter, the invasion of Norway. This rather jaunty mission takes a dark turn when a diplomat named Knut Birkeland dies after a fall from the high window of his room. A locked door and a regretful note left behind lead everyone to assume he killed himself. Everyone, that is, except Billy, who undertakes an investigation that includes the king and leads to romance with a spirited nurse.

Berriault, Gina, **WOMEN IN THEIR BEDS**

Berriault employs her vital sensibility—sometimes distracted and ironic, sometimes achingly raw—to explore the inevitability of suffering and the nature of individuality in a collection of stories that are such models of economy that they may seem almost telepathic. *Women in Their Beds* won the National Book Critics Circle Award, the PEN/Faulkner Award and the Rea Foundation Prize.

Betts, Emilie, **SHADOWS IN MY HOUSE OF SUNSHINE**

*Shadows in My House of Sunshine* takes the reader on a rich historical passage of adventures, challenges, joys and sorrows. Dating from the Pre-Depression years straight through September 11<sup>th</sup>, *Shadows in My House of Sunshine* links the author's experiences to this rich, diverse era. Living in twenty-nine different homes over the course of her life, the author relates her experiences with candor and openness. Each turn of the page reveals the true spirit and bravery of Ms. Betts' triumphs and troubles.

Blanchard, Robert & Melinda, **A TRIP TO THE BEACH: LIVING ON ISLAND TIME IN THE CARIBBEAN**

This is the true story of a trip to the beach that never ends. It's about a husband and wife who escape civilization to build a small restaurant on an island paradise—and discover that even paradise has its pitfalls.

Blake, William, **SONGS OF INNOCENCE and SONGS OF EXPERIENCE**

As both painter and poet, William Blake was a powerful and visionary artist whose two early collections of poetry, *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*, contain memorable lyric verses embodying the emerging spirit of Romanticism. The poems of *Songs of Innocence* describe childhood states of naturalness and purity in delicately beautiful lyrics that reveal a child's unspoiled and beatific view of life and human nature. In *Songs of Experience*, the mood and tone darken, the poems suggesting the bitter corruptions and disillusionment that await the innocent.

Bohjalian, Chris, **BEFORE YOU KNOW KINDNESS**

*Before You Know Kindness* is a family saga that is timely in its examination of some of the most important issues of our era, and timeless in its exploration of the strange and unexpected places where we find love.

Bohjalian, Chris, **DOUBLE BIND**

When college sophomore Laurel Estabrook is attacked while riding her bicycle through Vermont's back roads, her life is forever changed. Formerly outgoing, Laurel withdraws into her photography and begins to work at a homeless shelter. It is there she meets Bobbie Crocker, a man with a history of mental illness and a box of photographs that he won't let anyone see. But when Bobbie suddenly dies, Laurel discovers that before he was homeless, Bobbie Crocker was a successful photographer who had worked with such legends as Chuck Berry, Robert Frost, and Eartha Kitt. As Laurel's fascination with Bobbie's former life grows, she becomes convinced that his photographs reveal a deeply hidden secret.

Bowen, Donna Lee, ed. & Early, Evelyn A., **EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE MUSLIM MIDDLE EAST**

lives are colored by more than religion and politics. *Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East* is an extremely accessible collection of essays and stories, memoirs and photographs, organized around topics such as family, gender, work, and entertainment. This title quietly invites us to challenge stereotypes we might not even know we hold.

Brooks, Geraldine, **MARCH**

As the North reels under a series of unexpected defeats during the dark first of the Civil War, one man leaves behind his family to aid the Union cause. His experiences will utterly change his marriage and challenge his most ardently held beliefs. Riveting and elegant as it is meticulously researched, *March* is an extraordinary novel woven out of the lore of American history by the author of the international bestseller *Year of Wonders*. From Louisa May Alcott's beloved classic *Little Women*, Geraldine Brooks has taken character of the absent father, Mr. March, who has gone off to war leaving his wife and daughters to make do in mean times. To evoke his voice, Brooks turned to the journals and letters of Bronson Alcott, Louisa May's father, a friend and confidant of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau.

Chevalier, Tracy, **GIRL WITH A PEARL EARRING**

History and fiction merge seamlessly in Tracy Chevalier's luminous novel about artistic vision and sensual awakening. Through the eyes of the sixteen-year old Griet, the world of 1660s Holland comes dazzling alive in this richly imagined portrait of the young woman who inspired one of Vermeer's most celebrated paintings.

Chong, Denise, **CONCUBINE'S CHILDREN**

The ethos of family is dramatically portrayed by Denise Chong in this tale of her grandmother, brought from China as a young concubine by a sojourner to the New World, of the man's wife and the children who would be left

behind, and of the author's own incredible discovery of those children six decades later. Here is a true story, woven from letters, photographs, and memories, with more twists and turns than any novel. It is a story of the lives of one family living on two different sides of the globe: in a village in South China before and after the Communists took power, and in the gritty Chinatowns on North America's west coast. The "at-home" wife would hold sacred the honor of the family; supporting her was the concubine who sacrificed her own family in working the tea houses abroad, in "Gold Mountain." In tow was her youngest daughter, the author's mother. It was she who unlocked the past for her daughter, whose curiosity about some old photographs ultimately reunited this family, who had been divided for most of this century.

Crane, Stephen, **THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE**

Published thirty years after the Civil War, this "impressionistic" American classic tells a war story in a thoroughly modern way - without a trace of romanticizing. Through the eyes of ordinary soldier Henry Fleming, we follow his psychological turmoil, from the excitement of patriotism to the bloody realities of battle and his flight from it. In the end, he overcomes his fear and disillusionment, and fights with courage.

Crowther, Yasmin, **THE SAFFRON KITCHEN**

*A passionate and timely debut about mothers and daughters, roots and exile, from the streets of Iran to the suburbs of London.*

In what is certain to be one of the most talked-about fiction debuts of the year, Yasmin Crowther paints a magnificent portrait of betrayal and retribution set against a backdrop of Iran's tumultuous history, dramatic landscapes, and cultural beauty.

Danford, Natalie, **INHERITANCE**

How well do we know our parents? Olivia Bonocchio's answer to that question would be: not at all. Olivia's father, Luigi, an Italian immigrant who raised her on his own, has kept his past closely guarded. After Luigi - stricken with Alzheimer's - dies, Olivia discovers a deed in his name, dated 1940, to a house in Italy. Intrigued, she travels for the first time to his Italian hometown, Urbino. At first Olivia is charmed by the historic, art-laden city, complete with an architecturally significant ducal palace and a favorite son Renaissance painter. She's equally charmed by the young lawyer she's hired to help her investigate the deed. But as Olivia begins to delve into her father's past, she is provided a glimpse beneath the mythic surface and, in a be-careful-what-you-wish-for answer to her desire for personal history, uncovers the secret that caused her father to leave his family and his country behind. Natalie Danford's debut novel, *Inheritance*, explores the challenge of knowing anyone - our parents, our partners, or even ourselves - fully.

Davis-Gardner, Angela, **PLUM WINE**

In the beautifully written, multi-layered novel *Plum Wine*, Angela Davis-Gardner portrays the love story between Seiji, a Japanese potter who endured the terrors brought about by the Hiroshima bombing, and Barbara Jefferson, a lonely young American teaching English at an all-girls Tokyo university. This tale is much more than romance; the narrative combines elements of mystery, culture, history, literature, and poetry in one woman's life-altering journey through the recent past.

Diamant, Anita, **THE RED TENT**

The red tent is the place where women gathered during their cycles of birthing, menses, and even illness. Like the conversations and mysteries held within this feminine tent, this sweeping piece of fiction offers an insider's look at the daily life of a biblical sorority of mothers and wives and their one and only daughter, Dinah. Told in the voice of Jacob's daughter Dinah (who only received a glimpse of recognition in the Book of Genesis), we are privy to the fascinating feminine characters who bled within the red tent. In a confiding and poetic voice, Dinah whispers stories of her four mothers, Rachel, Leah, Zilpah, and Bilhah—all wives to Jacob, and each one embodying unique feminine traits. As she reveals these sensual and emotionally charged stories we learn of birthing miracles, slaves, artisans, household gods, and sisterhood secrets. Eventually Dinah delves into her own saga of betrayals, grief, and a call to midwifery.

Dillard, Annie, **PILGRIM AT TINKER CREEK**

In this Pulitzer Prize-winning commentary on nature, and the nature of the universe, Dillard as a young woman undertakes a pilgrimage in the woods at Virginia's Tinker Creek, walking slowly and looking carefully. An amateur naturalist and seeker of universal truths in the manner of Thoreau, Dillard's perception—tangling from earth to the heavens—deepens as the seasons vary. Her quest to understand nature results in a spiritual understanding of herself and the universe, as well, which she shares in this lyrical meditation.

Dinesen, Isak, **OUT OF AFRICA**

From 1914 to 1931, Danish aristocrat Baroness Karen Blixen owned and operated a coffee plantation in Kenya. After the plantation failed, she returned to Europe and began to write under the pen name Isak Dinesen. *Out of Africa* reads like a collection of stories in which she adheres to no strict chronology, gives no explanation of the facts of her life, and apologizes for nothing. First published in 1937, *Out of Africa* is not free of the colonial or racist attitudes of its time; yet, within that context, Isak Dinesen is an enlightened observer and participant as she describes the experience of British East Africa before World War II. She portrays in rich detail the vast land around her, alive with strange and wonderful human populations; the thrilling terror of a nocturnal lion hunt; a shooting accident among the Africans on her farm and its repercussions; raising and freeing an orphaned antelope fawn; getting to know the Africans and the colonial adventurers who found their way into her life. "If I know a song of Africa," she writes, "of the Giraffe, and the African new moon lying on her back, of the ploughs in the fields, and the sweaty faces of the coffee-pickers, does Africa know a song of me?"

Douglass, Frederick, **NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS**

*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* takes us into the fields, cabins, and manors of the pre-Civil War plantations in the South, revealing the daily terrors of the slave, the heartlessness of the slaveholders. Written more than a century ago by a Negro who became a famous orator, U.S. minister, and a leader of his people, this classic speaks directly to our age. It is a record of savagery and inhumanity that goes far to explain why America still suffers from the great injustices of the past.

Edwards, Kim, **THE MEMORY KEEPER'S DAUGHTER**

*The Memory Keeper's Daughter* is a brilliantly crafted family drama that explores every mother's silent fear: what would happen if you lost your child and she grew up without you? A rich and deeply moving page-turner. *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* captures the way life takes unexpected turns and how the mysterious ties that hold a family together help us survive the heartache that occurs when long-buried secrets burst into the open.

Elliot, George, **MIDDLEMARCH**

Vast and crowded, rich in irony and suspense, *Middlemarch* is richer still in character, with two of the era's most enduring characters, Dorothea Brooke, trapped in a loveless marriage, and Lydgate, an ambitious young doctor.

Ellison, Ralph, **INVISIBLE MAN**

*Invisible Man* is a milestone in American literature, a book that has continued to engage readers since its appearance in 1952. A first novel by an unknown writer, it remained on the bestseller list for sixteen weeks, won the National Book Award for fiction, and established Ralph Ellison as one of the key writers of the century. The nameless narrator of the novel describes growing up in a black community in the South, attending a Negro college from which he is expelled, moving to New York and becoming the chief spokesman of the Harlem branch of "the Brotherhood", and retreating amid violence and confusion to the basement lair of the Invisible Man he imagines himself to be. The book is a passionate and witty tour de force of style, strongly influenced by T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Joyce, and Dostoevsky.

Fernea, Elizabeth Warnock, **GUESTS OF THE SHEIK**

In her memoir, Elizabeth Warnock Fernea writes with the eye of an anthropologist and the style of a novelist as she invites us to experience what it is like for an outsider to be granted an inside view of a culture that continues to perplex many Westerners. Join us for a lively discussion of a remarkable book that offers insights into Islamic culture and our own.

Fitzgerald, F. Scott, **THE GREAT GATSBY**

Many consider *The Great Gatsby* the closest thing to the Great American Novel ever written. First published in 1925, it is the timeless story of Jay Gatsby and his love for Daisy Buchanan. Gatsby lives in the New York suburb of West Egg, where those with "new money" reside. Gatsby's mansion is right across the bay from the home of his wartime love, Daisy Buchanan, pictured always in white. Gatsby seeks to keep his illusion of Daisy as perfect alive. He uses his money, gained through illegal means, to do so, and uses his neighbor, Nick Carraway, to try to reach Daisy. The love of money as the root of evil is a pervading theme.

Flaubert, Gustave, **MADAME BOVARY**

Emma Bovary, the most audacious adulterer in all literature, has a lot of company, Anna Karanina and Lady Chatterley to name few. But as we at times feel sympathy for the other famous protagonists, there is a strong dislike at times revulsion for Madame Bovary for her outlandish behavior at the expense of not only her cowardly husband but also her lonely, helpless daughter. She would sacrifice anything, anybody to have her way. Consequences be damn. When somebody asked Flaubert who was the model for his famous heroine he replied "That Bovary woman is myself!" Madam Bovary is bored with her boorish, uncouth husband and longs for romance, gaiety, excitement,

music, dance, theater, everything a intellectual Parisian woman would have. She wanted to be a bourgeois! She falls headlong into disaster. She would not even destroy the love letters which were stashed away in the attic. Emma despised her husband to such a degree that she shuddered to think of his forgiveness which she knew she would be sure to get after he found out of her infidelity. She is no doubt one of the most fascinating characters ever penned. One can just imagine the reverberations the book must have caused in Victorian England in mid 19th century not to mention America.

#### Gaines, Ernest, A LESSON BEFORE DYING

*A Lesson Before Dying* is set in a small Cajun community in the late 1940s. Jefferson, a young black man, is an unwitting party to a liquor store shootout in which three men are killed; the only survivor, he is convicted of murder and sentenced to death. Grant Wiggins, who left his hometown for the university, has returned to the plantation school to teach. As he struggles with his decision whether to stay or escape to another state, his aunt and Jefferson's godmother persuade him to visit Jefferson in his cell and impart his learning and pride to Jefferson before his death. In the end, the two men forge a bond as they come to understand the simple heroism of resisting—and defying—the expected.

#### Gilbert, Elizabeth, EAT, PRAY, LOVE

In her early thirties, Elizabeth Gilbert had everything a modern American woman was supposed to want--husband, country home, successful career--but instead of feeling happy and fulfilled, she felt consumed by panic and confusion. This wise and rapturous book is the story of how she left behind all these outward marks of success, and of what she found in their place. Following a divorce and a crushing depression, Gilbert set out to examine three different aspects of her nature, set against the backdrop of three different cultures: pleasure in Italy, devotion in India, and on the Indonesian island of Bali, a balance between worldly enjoyment and divine transcendence.

#### Goldberg, Myla, BEE SEASON

Eliza Naumann has no reason to believe she is anything but ordinary, especially after her teachers place her in the class for slow learners. Her father, Saul, dotes on her older brother Aaron's rabbinical ambitions. Her mother, Miriam, seems fully absorbed by her law career. When a spelling bee threatens to reaffirm her mediocrity, Eliza amazes everyone; she wins. Eliza's unexpected success sends her off-kilter family into a tailspin, and Eliza comes to depend upon her own divination to hold the family together. With intense imagination and great emotional acuity, *Bee Season*, evokes a child's desperate longing for praise and acceptance and is a masterful portrayal of modern family life.

#### Golden, Arthur, MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA

This title takes the reader behind the rice-paper screens of the geisha house to a vanished floating world of beauty and cruelty, from a poor fishing village in 1929 to the decadence of 1940s Kyoto, through the chaos of World War II to the towers of the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, where the gray-eyed geisha Sayuri unfolds the remarkable story of her life.

#### Grisham, John, BLEACHERS

John Grisham has written *BLEACHERS* as a paean to the high school football experience that he and numerous others have enjoyed. But there is much more than football in this story. In this short novella about life, growing up and growing older Grisham has given us a haunting look at the years in our lives that we often look back upon with a sense of nostalgia that is difficult to characterize.

#### Grogan, John, MARLEY & ME: LIFE AND LOVE WITH THE WORLD'S WORST DOG

100 pounds of unbridled canine exuberance and unrelenting mischief. Marley: proud owner of a tail that could, with metronome-like regularity, clear coffee tables and topple unsuspecting toddlers, Marley: noble member of a breed famous for its ability to guide the blind, who's declared "untrainable" and bounced out of obedience class. A perfect dog? Maybe not. But when they plucked him from a litter 13 years ago, John Grogan and his new wife gamely set out on an adventure that would change their lives forever. Joyfully infectious, *Marley & Me* is a loving valentine to one dog and his unquenchable spirit. John Grogan has captured their journey together, and in this delightfully moving story, has set the bar high for dog owners everywhere.

#### Gruen, Sara, WATER FOR ELEPHANTS

As a young man, Jacob Jankowski was tossed by fate onto a rickety train that was home to the Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth. It was the early part of the great Depression, and for Jacob, now ninety, the circus world he remembers was both his salvation and a living hell. A veterinary student just shy of a degree, he was put in charge of caring for the circus menagerie. It was there that he met Marlana, the beautiful equestrian star married to August, the charismatic but twisted animal trainer. And he met Rosie, an untrainable elephant who was the great

gray hope for this third-rate traveling show. The bond that grew among this unlikely trio was one of love and trust, and, ultimately, it was their only hope for survival.

Haddon, Mark, **THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME**

Christopher John Francis Boone knows all the countries of the world and their capitals and every prime number up to 7,057. He relates well to animals but has no understanding of human emotions. He cannot stand to be touched. And he detests the color yellow. This improbable story of Christopher's quest to investigate the suspicious death of a neighborhood dog makes for one of the most captivating, unusual, and widely heralded novels in recent years.

Harris, Robert, **POMPEII**

Ancient Rome is the setting for the superb new novel from Robert Harris, author of the number one bestsellers *Fatherland*, *Enigma* and *Archangel*. *Pompeii* recreates in spellbinding detail one of the most famous natural disasters of all time. And by focusing on the characters of an engineer and a scientist, it offers an entirely original perspective on the Roman world.

Horan, Nancy, **LOVING FRANK**

*I have been standing on the side of life, watching it float by. I want to swim in the river. I want to feel the current.* So writes Mamah Borthwick Cheney in her diary as she struggles to justify her clandestine love affair with Frank Lloyd Wright. Four years earlier, in 1903, Mamah and her husband, Edwin, had commissioned the renowned architect to design a new home for them. During the construction of the house, a powerful attraction developed between Mamah and Frank, and in time the lovers, each married with children, embarked on a course that would shock Chicago society and forever change their lives.

Hosseini, Khaled, **THE KITE RUNNER**

The unforgettable, heartbreaking story of the unlikely friendship between a wealthy boy and the son of his father's servant, *The Kite Runner* is a beautifully crafted novel set in a country that is in the process of being destroyed. It is about the power of reading, the price of betrayal, and the possibility of redemption, and it is also about the power of fathers over sons—their love, their sacrifices, their lies.

Humphreys, Stephen R., **BETWEEN MEMORY AND DESIRE: THE MIDDLE EAST IN A TROUBLED AGE**

Stephen Humphrey explains in straightforward prose the interplay between politics and religion in the Middle East. Join us for a discussion of how Middle Easterners today are caught up in bitter memories of their past and frustrated desires for their future.

Jacobs, Kate, **THE FRIDAY NIGHT KNITTING CLUB**

A charming and moving novel about female friendship and the experiences that knit us together even when we least expect it.

James, Henry, **DAISY MILLER**

Traveling in Europe with her family, Daisy Miller, an exquisitely beautiful young American woman, presents her fellow-countryman Winterbourne with a dilemma he cannot resolve. Is she deliberately flouting social conventions in the way she talks and acts, or is she simply ignorant of them? When she strikes up an intimate friendship with an urbane young Italian, her flat refusal to observe the codes of respectable behavior leaves her perilously exposed. In *Daisy Miller* James created his first great portrait of an enigmatic and independent woman, a figure who would come to dominate his later masterpieces.

Jewett, Sara Orne, **THE COUNTRY OF THE POINTED FIRS**

Sarah Orne Jewett's *The Country of the Pointed Firs* was published in 1896, and it quickly garnered a reputation for its truthfulness and the quality of its writing. Rudyard Kipling described it as 'immense--it is the very life,' and Henry James praised it for being 'absolutely true--not a word overdone--such elegance and exactness.' *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, is a concisely written and beautifully wrought episodic novel of a young woman writer's summer sojourn in the Maine fishing village of Dunnet Landing. Through Jewett, the young woman conveys the effect of her deepening connections to the people of Dunnet Landing, especially the sibylline Mrs. Todd, and her empathy with the mysteries of the coastal life, one where the land and the sea have equal influence.

Jones, C.J. and Hazuka, Tom, **A METHOD TO MARCH MADNESS**

Every March, millions of people turn into what has become one of the greatest annual sports events – “The Big Dance”, aka “March Madness” right down to the Final Four. This book gives impressions from insiders – basketball coaches, players, athletic directors – all of which speak to the aura surrounding human competition.

Joyce, James, DUBLINERS

These 15 stories, Joyce's first published prose, are complete in themselves, even though they got further development in *ULYSSES*. The author called them "a series of chapters in the moral history of his community." They bear the unmistakable stamp of Joyce's genius and are an augury of the masterworks, which were to follow. Joyce was born near Dublin in 1882 and educated in Jesuit schools in Ireland. Dissatisfied with the intellectual atmosphere, he left in 1902 and spent most of the remainder of his life abroad.

Kidd, Sue Monk, *THE SECRET LIFE OF BEES*

In Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees*, 14 year old Lily Owen, neglected by her father and isolated on their Georgia peach farm, spends hours imagining a blissful infancy when she was loved and nurtured by her mother, Deborah, whom she barely remembers. These consoling fantasies are her heart's answer to the family story that as a child, in unclear circumstances, Lily accidentally shot and killed her mother. All Lily has left of Deborah is a strange image of a Black Madonna, with the words "Tiburón, South Carolina" scrawled on the back. The search for a mother, and the need to mother oneself, are crucial elements in this well-written coming-of-age story set in the early 1960's against a background of racial violence and unrest. This is a remarkable story about divine female power and the transforming power of love—a story that women will share and pass on to their daughters for years to come.

Kidder, Tracy, *HOME TOWN*

In this fascinating book, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Tracy Kidder takes us inside the everyday workings of Northampton, Massachusetts -- a place that seems to personify the typical American hometown. Kidder unveils the complex drama behind the seemingly ordinary lives of Northampton's residents. And out of these stories he creates a splendid, startling portrait of a town, in a narrative that gracefully travels among past and present, public and private, joy and sorrow.

Kidder, Tracy, *MOUNTAIN BEYOND MOUNTAINS*

In medical school, Paul Farmer found his life's calling to cure infectious diseases and to bring the lifesaving tools of modern medicine to those who need them most. Tracy Kidder's magnificent account shows how one person can make a difference in solving global health problems through a clear-eye understanding of the interaction of politics, wealth, social systems, and disease. Profound and powerful, *Mountains Beyond Mountains* takes us from Harvard to Haiti, Peru, Cuba, and Russia as Farmer changes people's minds through his dedication to the philosophy that "the only real nation is humanity."

Kingston, Maxine Hong, *THE WOMAN WARRIOR*

Maxine Hong Kingston's book *The Woman Warrior* is really written on the premise that it is a personal narrative; truly the book is a double-edged sword. The narrative style is perspective, which is both its greatest strength and its most glaring weakness. The underbelly of the book is that it is articulated as "Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts." Despite the ghosts representing anything "Other" than Chinese, she relates particularly to the females of her ethnic circle and the personal suffering in their lives, in a male-centered society in China and beyond. *The Warrior Woman* is the subaltern come alive and a triumph that gives voice and a sense of liberation on many levels.

Krakauer, Jon, *INTO THIN AIR*

Jon Krakauer's riveting book, which begins with his "straddling the top of the world" after ascending Mount Everest, quickly develops into a harrowing account of the disastrous events that followed his descent. This first-person study of the deadliest season in the history of Everest chronicles how both professional risk-takers and amateur adventurers were fatally confounded by bad luck and poor judgment.

Larson, Erik, *THE DEVIL IN THE WHITE CITY*

Bringing Chicago circa 1893 to vivid life, Erik Larson's spellbinding bestseller intertwines the true tale of two men—the brilliant architect behind the legendary 1893 World's Fair, striving to secure America's place in the world; and the cunning serial killer who used the fair to lure his victims to their death. Combining meticulous research with nail-biting storytelling, Erik Larson has crafted a narrative with all the wonder of newly discovered history and the thrills of the best fiction.

Lessing, Doris, *THE GOLDEN NOTEBOOK*

Anna is a writer, author of one very successful novel, who now keeps four notebooks. In one, with a black cover, she reviews the African experience of her earlier years. In a red one she records her political life, her disillusionment with communism. In a yellow one she writes a novel in which the heroine relives part of her own experience. And in a blue one she keeps a personal diary. Finally, in love with an American writer and threatened with insanity, Anna tries to bring the threads of all four books together in a golden notebook.

Levy, Andrea, *SMALL ISLAND*

Winner of both the Whitbread Book of the Year and the Orange Prize for Fiction, this is a tour de force. Spirited and improbably funny, it offers the account of two very ordinary couples in postwar London. Hortense arrives from Jamaica in 1948 to make a home with her new husband, Gilbert. But in a place where the buildings are taller, the weather colder, and the sky more gray than anything she's experienced; she begins to question the wisdom of her decision. It is Gilbert, her new husband and a man she barely knows, who reminds her why it is she has come so far. A war veteran struggling to make a home in the city, Gilbert questions his own resolve when he finds not a hero's welcome but prejudice, contempt, and nearly insurmountable odds. But he is befriended by Queenie, the couple's while landlady, whose life is upended when her husband Bernard, long thought dead, returns from the war with a head full of memories and an aching heart.

Lovesey, Peter, *THE LAST DETECTIVE*

In order to solve the mystery of the "Lady in the Lake," Detective Superintendent Peter Diamond must locate two missing letters attributed to Jane Austen and defy his superiors on the force to save a woman unjustly accused of murder. This is the first of the Peter Diamond series; it won the 1992 Anthony Boucher Award for Best Mystery Novel.

Márquez, Gabriel García, *LOVE IN THE TIME OF CHOLERA*

*Love in the Time of Cholera* is the crowning achievement of Nobel Prize-winning novelist. Framed between two riverboat journeys to the jungle interior over the course of a lifetime, it is set in an imaginative world that Garcia Marquez describes as "magic realism," where reality, fantasy and superstition co-exist. In an interview in the New York Times he says, "There's not a single line in all my work that does not have a basis in reality. The problem is that Caribbean reality resembles the wildest imagination." In his fictional world both the particular and the universals of human nature coexist in this web of "magic realism." Fully fleshed characters set in the rich sensory details of ordinary life inhabit a stratified world of Caribbean society at the turn of the century and, in a stretch of the author's imagination, a world that reflects the thematic obsession of the novel.

Márquez, Gabriel García, *ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE*

The novel tells the story of the rise and fall of the mythical town of Macondo through the history of the Buendía family. It is a rich and brilliant chronicle of life and death, and the tragicomedy of humankind. In the noble, ridiculous, beautiful, and tawdry story of the Buendía family, one sees all of humanity, just as in the history, myths, growth, and decay of Macondo, one sees all of Latin America.

Mason, Daniel, *THE PIANO TUNER*

In 1886 a shy, middle-aged piano tuner named Edgar Drake receives an unusual commission from the British War Office: to travel to the remote jungles of northeast Burma and there repair a rare piano belonging to an eccentric army surgeon who has proven mysteriously indispensable to the imperial design. From this irresistible beginning, *The Piano Tuner* launches its protagonist into a world of seductive loveliness and nightmarish intrigue. And as he follows Drake's journey, Mason dazzles readers with his erudition, moves them with his vibrantly rendered characters, and enmeshes them in the unbreakable spell of his storytelling.

Maathai, Wangari, *UNBOWED*

In *Unbowed*, Nobel Prize-winner Wangari Maathai recounts her extraordinary journey from her childhood in rural Kenya to the international stage. When she founded the Green Belt Movement in 1977, she began a renowned poor people's environmental effort that soon inspired the world. Having endured jailings, beatings, and personal losses, Maathai continued to plant trees and change lives, and worked successfully to save Kenya's forests and to restore democracy to her beloved country.

Mayes, Frances, *A YEAR IN THE WORLD: JOURNEYS OF A PASSIONATE TRAVELLER*

*A Year in the World* is vintage Frances Mayes—a celebration of the allure of travel, of serendipitous pleasures found in unlikely locales, of memory woven into the present, and of a joyous sense of quest. An ideal travel companion, Frances Mayes brings to the page the curiosity of an intrepid explorer, remarkable insights into the wonder of the everyday, and a compelling narrative style that entertains as it informs. An illuminating and passionate book that will be savored by all who loved *Under the Tuscan Sun*, *A Year in the World* is travel writing at its peak.

McBride, James, *THE COLOR OF WATER*

As a boy in Brooklyn's Red Hook projects, James McBride knew his mother was different. But when he asked about it, she'd simply say, "I'm light-skinned." Later he wondered if he was different, too, and asked his mother if he was black or white. "You're a human being," she snapped. "Educate yourself or you'll be a nobody!" And when James asked what color God was, she said, "God is the color of water." . . . As an adult, McBride finally persuaded his mother to tell her story—the story of a rabbi's daughter, born in Poland and raised in the South, who fled to Harlem,

married a black man, founded a Baptist church, and put twelve children through college. *The Color of Water* is James McBride's tribute to his remarkable, eccentric, determined mother—and an eloquent exploration of what family really means.

McCarthy, Cormac, THE ROAD

*The Road* tells the story of a man and his son's journey toward the sea and an uncertain salvation. Nothing moves in the ravaged landscape save the ash on the wind. It is cold enough to crack stones, and when the snow falls it is gray. The sky is dark. Their destination is the coast, although they don't know what, if anything, awaits them there. They have nothing; just a pistol to defend themselves against the lawless bands that stalk the road, the clothes they are wearing, a cart of scavenged food – and each other.

McCourt, Frank, TEACHER MAN

In *Teacher Man* Frank turns his attention to the subject that he most often talks about in his lectures-teaching: why it's so important, why it's so undervalued. He describes his own coming of age — as a teacher, a storyteller, and, ultimately, a writer. He is alternately humble and mischievous, downtrodden and rebellious. He instinctively identifies with the underdog; his sympathies lie more with students than administrators. It takes him almost fifteen years to find his voice in the classroom, but what's clear in the thrilling pages of *Teacher Man* is that from the beginning he seizes and holds his students' attention by telling them memorable stories. And then it takes him another fifteen years to find his voice on the page.

McEwan, Ian, ATONEMENT

Ian McEwan's symphonic novel of love and war, childhood and class, guilt and forgiveness provides all the satisfaction of a brilliant narrative and the provocation we have come to expect from this master of English prose.

McPherson, James, FOR CAUSE AND COMRADES: WHY MEN FOUGHT IN THE CIVIL WAR

Consider a war in which 25,000 soldiers are killed or wounded in a single battle, as they were at Gettysburg, or 16,000 in a single day, as at Antietam. The degree of suffering and hardship during the American Civil War has been well documented and analyzed in books and films from Margaret Mitchell's fictional *Gone with the Wind* to Bell Irvin Wiley's classic studies of Civil War soldiers, *The Life of Johnny Reb* and *The Life of Billy Yank*. All these sources agree on the brutality of the combat, but what motivated soldiers to continue fighting under such bitter conditions is the cause of some controversy. Until recently, the common stance has been that soldiers enlisted out of economic need and stayed out of loyalty to their comrades. The respected Civil War historian James M. McPherson weighs in with a different point of view in *For Cause and Comrades*. Professor McPherson posits that the common rank-and-file soldiers did indeed hold political and ideological beliefs that prodded them to enlist and to fight. His research is based on letters and diaries from 1,076 Union and Confederate soldiers. These reveal many motivations, but always they lead back to duty, honor, and a cause worth dying for. *For Cause and Comrades* is a fascinating exploration of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century mind—a mind—, it seems, that differs profoundly from our own.

Moehringer, J. R., THE TENDER BAR

In a place that inspired Scott Fitzgerald's *Great Gatsby*, young J. R. Moehringer lives with his single mother and mercurial grandfather in a cramped home with a rather-too-colorful cast of strident aunts, down-on-their-luck uncles, and their various offspring. It is 1970s Manhasset Long Island, and J.R. is lonely and adrift. A moving, vividly told memoir full of heart and drama, about a boy striving to become a man, and his romance with a bar.

Moffett, James and McElheny, eds., Kenneth, POINTS OF VIEW: AN ANTHOLOGY OF SHORT STORIES

Since its original publication in 1966, *Points of View* has attained classic status. Its superb selections and its groupings of stories to illustrate the different narrative techniques that give fiction magic and power have made it uniquely enthralling and illuminating. Now its contents have been updated and its cultural framework enlarged by the original editors. Many of the forty-four stories come from a new writing generation with a contemporary consciousness, and this brilliant blending of masters of the past and the brightest talents of the present achieves the goal of making a great collection even greater.

Moriarty, Laura, THE REST OF HER LIFE

Few relationships are as complex and as all-consuming as the one between mothers and daughters. Whether the bond is chilly and distant, or warm and loving, the mirror that we as females most often hold ourselves up to is that of the woman who raised us...and all too often there's that moment in a woman's life when she ruefully has to acknowledge that the words that just came out of her mouth sound exactly like those of her mother. The intricacies of this relationship are at the heart of *The Rest of Her Life*, a tense and completely absorbing novel by Laura Moriarty. Set against the backdrop of a single moment that will completely change a family's life forever, this is the kind of book that will keep you up and reading until the last page is turned.

Morris, Mary, NOTHING TO DECLARE: MEMOIRS OF A WOMAN TRAVELING ALONE

In the tradition of many men who tell travel tales, Morris travels fast and she travels alone, with daring and bravado for companions. Always in pursuit of adventure, she encounters danger, liaisons, fast friendships and ultimately, self-understanding as she confronts the realities of life along a route that takes her from the highland desert of northern Mexico to the steaming jungles of Honduras, from the Caribbean seashore to the breathtaking highlands of Guatemala.

Morrison, Toni, LOVE

Nobel Prize laureate Toni Morrison's spellbinding new novel is a Faulknerian symphony of passion and hatred, power and perversity, color and class that spans three generations of black women in a fading beach town. In life, Bill Cosey enjoyed the affections of many women, who would do almost anything to gain his favor. In death his hold on them may be even stronger. Wife, daughter, granddaughter, employee, mistress: As Morrison's protagonists stake their furious claim on Cosey's memory and estate, using everything from intrigue to outright violence, she creates a work that is shrewd, funny, erotic, and heart-wrenching.

Mortenson, Greg and Relin, David Oliver, THREE CUPS OF TEA

The astonishing, uplifting story of a real-life Indiana Jones and his humanitarian campaign to use education to combat terrorism in the Taliban's backyard. Anyone who despairs of the individual's power to change lives has to read the story of Greg Mortenson, a homeless mountaineer who, following a 1993 climb of Pakistan's treacherous K2, was inspired by a chance encounter with impoverished mountain villagers and promised to build them a school. Over the next decade he built fifty-five schools—especially for girls—that offer a balanced education in one of the most isolated and dangerous regions on earth. As it chronicles Mortenson's quest, which has brought him into conflict with both enraged Islamists and uncomprehending Americans, *Three Cups of Tea* combines adventure with a celebration of the humanitarian spirit.

Munro, Alice, OPEN SECRETS

In these eight new tales, a living master of the short story reveals entire lives with a sureness that is nothing less than breathtaking, capturing those moments in which people shrug off old truths, old selves, and what they only thought was fate. Alice Munro explores female themes with great depth and power, but the range of her vision is not exclusively female: through the eyes of her fictional women she examines the culture and values of her world while weaving complex, luminous, and poetic apprehensions of the milieu she has made so intensely her own.

Murdoch, Iris, THE BELL

A lay community of thoroughly mixed-up people is encamped outside Imber Abbey, home of an enclosed order of nuns. A new bell is being installed when the old bell, legendary symbol of religion and magic is unexpectedly rediscovered. Dora Greenfield, erring wife, returns to her husband, Paul, who is working on some fourteenth-century manuscripts that belong to the convent. A man with whom he once had a disastrous affair, while the wise old Abbess watches and prays and exercises discreet authority confronts Michael Meade, leader of the community. Everyone, or almost everyone, hopes to be saved—whatever that may mean. Originally published in 1958, this funny, sad, and moving novel is about religion, sex, the fight between good and evil, and the terrible accidents of human frailty.

Murdoch, Iris, THE NICE AND THE GOOD

This richly peopled novel revolves around a happily married couple, Kate and Octavian, and deals with love in its many aspects. The resonant sub-plot involves murder and black magic as the novel leads us through stress and terror to a joyous conclusion.

Nabokov, Vladimir, LOLITA

Awe and exhilaration—along with heartbreak and mordant wit—abound in *Lolita*, Vladimir Nabokov's most famous and controversial novel, which tells the story of the aging Humbert Humbert's obsessive, devouring, and doomed passion for the nymphet Delores Haze. *Lolita* is also the story of a hypercivilized European colliding with the cheerful barbarism of postwar America. Most of all, it is a meditation on love—love as outrage and hallucination, madness and transformation.

Nafisi, Azar, READING LOLITA IN TEHRAN: A MEMOIR IN BOOKS

Every Thursday morning for two years in the Islamic Republic of Iran, a bold and inspired teacher named Azar Nafisi secretly gathered seven of her most committed female students to read forbidden Western classics. As Islamic morality squads staged arbitrary raids in Tehran, fundamentalists seized hold of the universities, and a blind censor stifled artistic expression, the girls in Azar Nafisi's living room risked removing their veils and immersed themselves in the worlds of Jane Austen, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Henry James, and Vladimir Nabokov. In this

extraordinary memoir, their stories become intertwined with the ones they are reading. *Reading Lolita in Tehran* is a remarkable exploration of resilience in the face of tyranny and a celebration of the liberating power of literature.

Nemirovsky, Irene, SUITE FRANCAISE

Beginning in Paris on the eve of the Nazi occupation in 1940. *Suite Francaise* tells the remarkable story of men and women thrown together in circumstances beyond their control. As Parisians flee the city, human folly surfaces in every imaginable way: a wealthy mother searches for sweets in a town without food; a couple is terrified at the thought of losing their jobs, even as their world begins to fall apart. Moving on to a provincial village now occupied by German soldiers, the locals must learn to coexist with the enemy – in their town, their homes, even in their hearts.

Nicolson, Nigel, PORTRAIT OF A MARRIAGE

*Portrait of a Marriage* is an eloquent examination of the possibilities of a marriage. The story of Harold Nicolson and Vita Sackville-West as told by their son, Nigel, illuminates the intimate mechanics of a marriage in which each partner lives his or her own independent life, but to which each returns as a ship to its homeport. The reader is allowed to see clearly into the complex and wonderful world of two unusual people in love. Here, in an amazingly timely fashion, the idea of love being subject to logic or laws dissolves. Whether you are interested in these two talented people or simply looking for a good romance, this is a book to enjoy.

Niffenegger, Audrey, THE TIME TRAVELER'S WIFE

A dazzling novel in the most untraditional fashion, this is the remarkable story of Henry DeTamble, a dashing, adventuresome librarian who travels involuntarily through time, and Clare Abshire, an artist whose life takes a natural sequential course. Henry and Clare's passionate love affair endures across a sea of time and captures the two lovers in an impossibly romantic trap, and it is Audrey Niffenegger's cinematic storytelling that makes the novel's unconventional chronology so vibrantly triumphant. An enchanting debut and a spellbinding tale of fate and belief in the bonds of love, *The Time Traveler's Wife* is destined to captivate readers for years to come.

Noble, Elizabeth, THE FRIENDSHIP TEST

One late wine- and gossip-fueled night, four friends on a lark create a fateful test of friendship — one that challenges the very principles and boundaries of their alliance. To pass it means to never, at any cost, betray one another. Twenty years later, they must face that ultimate test. We meet them at the dawn of their camaraderie in the 1980s and already each woman is distinguished from the other: Tamsin, the compassionate mother hen; Reagan, the brazen and clever overachiever; Sarah, the seemingly perfect beauty; and Freddie, who despite being far from her U.S. home, finds strength in her friends. We forward to today, and as promised they are still firm friends that is until a crisis occurs and the principles that define their friendship test are challenged. Exquisitely rendered by Elizabeth Noble, *The Friendship Test* is a powerful testament to the depth and capacity of female relationships.

Noble, Elizabeth, THE READING GROUP

What starts out as a good idea born from a glass of wine and the need to socialize turns into much more. Over the span of a year, Clare, Harriet, Nicole, Polly and Susan—five women of different ages, backgrounds and contrasting dilemmas—transform themselves through the shared community of a book group. Their reading group becomes a forum for each of the women's views, expressed initially by the book they're reading and increasingly openly as the bonds of friendship cement. As the months pass, these women's lives become more and more intertwined. In *The Reading Group*, Noble reveals the many complicated paths in life we all face as well as the power and importance of friendship.

Norris, ed. Gloria, NEW AMERICAN SHORT STORIES

This unique anthology brings together twenty of today's most distinguished practitioners of the short story—each of whom has selected a favorite from his or her recent work. Editor Gloria Norris presents each story with an author interview and comments. What emerges is a rich panorama of the best in contemporary American short-story writing, as well as a variety of fascinating discussions on the craft of the short story. Reflecting the wonderful diversity of American life, this is a collection that provides superb reading pleasure as well as insights into the different ways in which the stories are constructed and the writers achieve their effects.

Nuland, Sherwin B., MAIMONIDES

Sherwin Nuland, with the deft skill of a consummate surgeon and the knowing heart of a true humanist, reveals the wisdom and spirit of this remarkable rabbi, physician, and philosopher. This book will educate and inspire not only people of faith, but all who seek to lead a life of significance and meaning.

Olsen, Tillie, TELL ME A RIDDLE

This collection of four stories, "I Stand Here Ironing," "Hey Sailor, what Ship?," "O Yes," and "Tell me a Riddle," has become an American classic. Since the title novella won the O. Henry Award in 1961, the stories have been

anthologized over a hundred times, made into three films, translated into thirteen languages, and - most important - once read, they abide in the hearts of their readers. "These stories have the lyric intensity of an Emily Dickinson poem and the scope of a Balzac novel." -- from the judges' citation for the Rea Award for the Short Story.

Olsson, Linda, *ASTRID AND VERONIKA*

With extraordinary emotional power, Linda Olsson's stunningly well-crafted debut novel recounts the unusual and unexpected friendship that develops between two women. Veronika, a young writer, rents a house in a small Swedish village as she tries to come to terms with a recent tragedy while also finishing a novel. Her arrival is silently observed by Astrid, an older, reclusive neighbor who slowly becomes a presence in Veronika's life. Offering comfort in the form of companionship and lovingly prepared home-cooked meals. Set against a haunting Swedish landscape, *Astrid & Veronika* is a lyrical and meditative novel of love and loss, and a story that will remain with readers long after the characters' secrets are revealed.

Orlean, Susan, *THE ORCHID THIEF*

In Susan Orlean's mesmerizing true story of beauty and obsession is about John LaRoche, a renegade plant dealer and sharply handsome guy, in spite of the fact that he is missing his front teeth and has the posture of al dente spaghetti. In 1994, Laroche and three Seminole Indians were arrested with rare orchids they had stolen from a wild swamp in south Florida that is filled with some of the world's most extraordinary plants and trees. Laroche had planned to clone the orchids and then sell them for a small fortune to impassioned collectors. After he was caught in the act, Laroche set off on one of the oddest legal controversies in recent memory, which brought together environmentalists, Native American activists, and devoted orchid collectors. The result is a tale that is strange, compelling, and hilarious.

Ozeki, Ruth, *MY YEAR OF THE MEATS*

*My Year of the Meats* is a wonderful, strong, disturbing, funny novel. It is at times hilarious and absurd, at times shocking and heart wrenching. This novel has become a bit of a 'conversation-starter' favorite for bookclubs around the world. An enjoyable read that delves into some 'meaty' issues!

Ozick, Cynthia, *THE SHAWL*

Although the short story and novella in this book are two of Cynthia Ozick's finest and most admired works of fiction—both were included in the annual *Best American Short Stories* and awarded First Prize in the annual *O. Henry Prize stories* collection—this is their first appearance in one paperback volume. At once fiercely immediate and complex in their implications, they succeed in imagining the unimaginable—the horror of the Holocaust and the unfillable emptiness of its aftermath.

Pamuk, Orhan, *ISTANBUL: MEMORIES AND THE CITY*

Pamuk, whose *My Name Is Red* won the 2003 IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, fondly remembers and capably details life growing up in the paradoxical city of Istanbul. Whether describing the elegant decay of the Bosphorus mansions (so named for their location on the Bosphorus Strait) or explaining the wealth and danger of oil tankers and shipping routes, Pamuk paints a picture of a city where the "remains of glorious past civilizations" are everywhere "inflicting heartache" on all who live among them.

Pausch, Randy, *THE LAST LECTURE*

"We cannot change the cards we are dealt, just how we play the hand." – Randy Pausch

A lot of professors give talks titled "*The Last Lecture*." Professors are asked to consider their demise and to ruminate on what matters most to them. And while they speak, audiences can't help but mull the same question: What wisdom would we impart to the world if we knew it was our last chance? If we had to vanish tomorrow, what would we want as our legacy? When Randy Pausch, a computer science professor at Carnegie Mellon, was asked to give such a lecture, he didn't have to imagine it as his last, since he had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer. But the lecture he gave – "Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams" – wasn't about dying. It was about the importance of overcoming obstacles, of enabling the dreams of others, of seizing every moment (because "time is all we have...and you may find one day that you have less than you think"). It was a summation of everything Randy had come to believe. It was about living. This is a book of inspiration, humor and intelligence.

Percy, Walker, *THE LAST GENTLEMAN*

Will Barrett is *The Last Gentleman*, a twenty-five-year-old wanderer from the South living in New York City with no plans for the future and detached from his past. The purchase of a telescope one summer day changes his life—for while searching for an elusive peregrine falcon in Central Park, Will accidentally spots a beautiful young woman and falls in love with her. And so begins his quest for home, identity, and the meaning of contemporary life.

Picoult, Jodi, MY SISTER'S KEEPER

*My Sister's Keeper* examines what it means to be a good parent, a good sister, a good person. Is it morally correct to do whatever it takes to save a child's life, even if that means infringing upon the rights of another? Is it worth trying to discover who you really are, if that quest makes you like yourself less? Should you follow your own heart, or let others lead you? Once again, in *My Sister's Keeper*, Jodi Picoult tackles a controversial real-life subject with grace, wisdom, and sensitivity.

Poe, Edgar Allen, THE TELL TALE HEART

Edgar Allan Poe remains the unsurpassed master of works of mystery and madness in this outstanding collection of Poe's prose and poetry are sixteen of his finest tales, including "The Tell-Tale Heart", "The Murders in the Rue Morgue", "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Pit and the Pendulum," "William Wilson," "The Black Cat," "The Cask of Amontillado," and "Eleonora".

Rahman, Fazlur, ISLAM

Rahman is one of few scholars whose work has been widely read both in the West and in the Islamic World. Exiled from his native Pakistan due to his controversial approach to the Qur'an and Islamic history, Rahman went on to distinguish himself at the University of Chicago, gaining acclaim worldwide for his neo-classical approach to Islamic Studies. He vigorously defends the compatibility and relevance of the Qur'an and the Islamic worldview to the modern world. Today his claims are more controversial, and important, than ever.

Reichl, Ruth, GARLIC AND SAPPHIRES

Ruth Reichl, world-renowned food critic and editor in chief of *Gourmet* magazine, knows a thing or two about food. She also knows that as the most important food critic in the country, you need to be anonymous when reviewing some of the most high-profile establishments in the biggest restaurant town in the world - a charge she took very seriously, taking on the guise of a series of eccentric personalities. In *Garlic and Sapphires*, Reichl reveals the comic absurdity, artifice, and excellence to be found in the sumptuously appointed stages of the epicurean world and gives us - along with some of her favorite recipes and reviews - her remarkable reflections on how one's outer appearance can influence one's inner character, expectations, and appetites, not to mention the quality of service one receives.

Rodriguez, Richard, HUNGER OF MEMORY

This immigrant's tale, in which the appropriation of language plays a central role, derives its poignancy from Rodriguez's awareness of the cultural losses and personal sacrifices he has incurred. While his course has brought him directly into the American mainstream, it has also set him apart from his Mexican-American family and the Chicano community. The eloquence of his testimony and its resonance for earlier generations of immigrants has made Rodriguez, and this book in particular, something of a cause among opponents of bi-lingualism. Rodriguez offers up his life to make a controversial political statement, but the clarity and emotional authenticity of his voice transcend the narrow frame of the current debate.

Russo, Richard, EMPIRE FALLS

In *Empire Falls*, the mills are closed, stores are boarded up, and the population is dwindling. The families that remain live on memories of the past and the shared fantasy that the mills will reopen and the once-thriving town will thrive once more. However, the formidable Mrs. Whiting, widow of the last Whiting son, makes no concessions to the community's needs or fantasies. Mrs. Whiting wields her power over the town and its inhabitants with an iron will. Miles Roby was once known around town as a young man smart enough to escape *Empire Falls*. He put his dreams on hold when his mother's illness interrupted his last year of college. Twenty years later, Miles is the proprietor of Mrs. Whiting's just barely profitable *Empire Grill*, the soon-to-be ex-husband of Janine (who has left him for the slick owner of the flashy new health club), and the proud father of Tick, a bright, loving teenager. Seduced by Mrs. Whiting's promise to bequeath him the restaurant, Miles stoically submits to her arbitrary, often humiliating demands-until the accidental discovery of a family secret shocks him into a troubling reevaluation of his life and the small town that shaped it. Nothing, however, prepares him for the horrific event that ultimately sets him free.

Salzman, Mark, THE SOLOIST

A former musical prodigy feels life is a major disappointment. He finds himself a jurist in a murder case, and at the same time he begins teaching a young genius that plays the cello. His involvement with the murder trial and the young student gradually helps him to find peace with life.

Schimmel, Annemarie, ISLAM: AN INTRODUCTION

This short yet comprehensive historical survey of the world's second largest monotheistic faith is written by Annemarie Schimmel, a leading scholar of Islamic Studies. She provides her readers with a survey of the history of

Islam, the basic ideas of the religion, and a sense of the contributions of Islamic civilization to the world in general and Euro-American culture in particular.

Schlink, Bernard, THE READER

An Oprah's Book Club selection and a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year, *The Reader* is a powerful and provocative novel. Both a coming-of-age story and a portrayal of the impact of the legacy of Nazism on successive generations, *The Reader* describes the anguish of coming to terms with the past—past relationships, past judgments, and the historical past. The *New York Times* Book Review describes *The Reader* as “Moving, suggestive and ultimately hopeful, (a book which) leaps national boundaries and speaks right to the heart.”

Sedaris, David, DRESS YOUR FAMILY IN CORDUROY AND DENIM

Sedaris has a knack for turning heartbreaking antics into moments of outrageous humor. This collection includes two hilarious vignettes about his younger brother Paul, the foul-mouthed, hardworking, salt-of-the-earth hope for the Sedaris clan. The first story about Paul chronicles his engagement and subsequent marriage to a girl from the North, which provides a 50-50 chance for an improvement in the family gene pool should they have any offspring. “Baby Einstein” relates the pregnancy and birth of this anxiously awaited child. Sedaris portrays his redneck brother in a high-pitched twangy voice that is equally as entertaining as the actual words themselves. In one tale that features his mother, she cozies up to a rich old aunt in anticipation of an inheritance, and in another she locks her children outside on the fifth snow day home from school. It's a hallmark of true comedic wit when stories can be heard more than once and still generate laughter.

See, Lisa, PEONY IN LOVE

For young Peony, betrothed to a suitor she has never met, these lyrics from *The Peony Pavilion* mirror her own longings. In the garden of the Chen Family Villa, amid the scent of ginger, green tea, and jasmine, a small theatrical troupe is performing scenes from this epic opera, a live spectacle few females have ever seen. Like the heroine in the drama. Peony is the cloistered daughter of a wealthy family, trapped like a good-luck cricket in a bamboo-and-lacquer cage. Though raised to be obedient, Peony has dreams of her own. So begins Peony's unforgettable journey of love and destiny, desire and sorry- as Lisa See's haunting new novel, based on actual historical events, takes readers back to seventeenth-century China, after the Manchus seize power and the Ming dynasty is crushed.

Shakespeare, William, COMEDY OF ERRORS

Hilarious confusion is presented in this story about two sets of twins who were separated at birth. Shakespeare's trademark puns are plentiful throughout the work.

Shakespeare, William, HAMLET

This spellbinding drama unfolds as young Prince Hamlet seeks revenge for the murder of his father. Hamlet contains some of the most powerful soliloquies in all drama.

Shakespeare, William, KING LEAR

In *King Lear*, Shakespeare explores filial ingratitude, injustice, and the meaninglessness of life. Greed, treachery and cruelty are themes in this play that presents a troubling vision of one man's life.

Shakespeare, William, LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

This is a classic example of the “comedy of manners” genre. King Ferdinand pledges, and insists that his court join him, in a vow of celibacy. We find the characters truly tested in a play that sparkles with Shakespeare's wit.

Shakespeare, William, MACBETH

One of the great Shakespearean tragedies, *Macbeth* is a dark and bloody drama of ambition, murder, guilt and revenge. Prompted by the prophecies of three mysterious witches and goaded by his ambitious wife, the Scottish thane Macbeth murders Duncan, King of Scotland, in order to succeed him on the throne. This foul deed soon entangles the conscience-stricken nobleman in a web of treachery, deceit and more murders that ultimately spells his doom. Set amid the gloomy castles and lonely hearths of medieval Scotland, *Macbeth* paints a striking dramatic portrait of a man of honor and integrity destroyed by a fatal character flaw and the tortures of a guilty imagination.

Shakespeare, William, THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

*The Merchant of Venice* is an intriguing drama of love, greed, and revenge. At its heart, the play contrasts the characters of the maddened and vengeful Shylock, a Venetian moneylender, with the gracious, level-headed Portia, a wealthy young woman besieged by suitors. At the play's climax, Shylock insists on the enforcement of a binding contract that will cost the life of the merchant Antonio – inciting Portia to mount a memorable defense.

#### Shakespeare, William, A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Perhaps the most popular of all Shakespeare's comedies, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* humorously celebrates the vagaries of love. The approaching wedding festivities of Theseus, Duke of Athens, and his bride-to-be, Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, are delightfully crisscrossed with the on-again, off-again romances of two young pairs of Athenian lovers, a fateful rivalry between the King and Queen of the Fairies; and the theatrical aspirations of a bumbling troupe of Athenian laborers. It all ends happily in wedding-night revelry complete with a play-within-a-play presented by the laborers to the ecstatic amusement of all.

#### Shakespeare, William, OTHELLO

One of the greatest of Shakespeare's tragedies, *Othello* tells the story of a Moorish general in command of the armed forces of Venice, who earns the enmity of his ensign Iago by passing him over for a promotion. Partly for revenge and partly out of pure evil, Iago plots to convince Othello that Desdemona, his wife, has been unfaithful to him. Iago succeeds in his evil aims only too well, for the enraged Othello murders Desdemona. When Othello later learns of her innocence, he takes his own life. Bleak and unsparing, this play offers a stunning portrait of an arch-villain and an astute psychological study of the nature of evil.

#### Shakespeare, William, TWELFTH NIGHT

A delightfully comic tale of mistaken identities, *Twelfth Night* revolves around the physical likeness between Sebastian and his twin sister Viola, each of whom, when separated after a shipwreck, believes the other to be dead. The theatrical romp begins when Viola assumes the identity of Cesario, a page in the household of the Duke of Orsino. The Duke is enamored of the countess Olivia, who spurns him for the newly arrived young page. Filled with some of the finest comedic scenes in the English language, this entertaining masterpiece remains one of Shakespeare's most popular and most performed comedies.

#### Shaw, George Bernard, CANDIDA

*Candida* (1894). Much here seems remarkably contemporary a century later. In this play, a ménage à trois revolves around a youthful poet who enters the home of Candida and her clergyman husband. Calling his play a "counterblast" to Ibsen's *A Doll House*, Shaw satirizes gender roles and the institution of marriage by suggesting that in the typical Victorian household it is the man who is the doll. In Shaw's experiences, man was the weaker spouse.

#### Shaw, George Bernard, PYGMALION

*Pygmalion* (1912), probably Shaw's best known play because of the enormous popularity of *My Fair Lady*. The musical faithfully incorporates much of Shaw's dialogue, yet there is a striking difference. In it the Eliza and Higgins do not plan to marry and live happily ever after with one another. The difference between play and musical will be explored. There are numerous autobiographical parallels to the playwright that pave the way for an exciting discussion.

#### Shields, Carol, LARRY'S PARTY

The San Diego Tribune called *The Stone Diaries* a "universal study of what makes women tick." With *Larry's Party*, Carol Shields has done the same for men. Larry Weller, born in 1950, is an ordinary guy made extraordinary by his creator's perception, irony, and tenderness. *Larry's Party* gives us, as it were, a CAT scan of his life, in episodes between 1977 and 1997, that seamlessly flash backward and forward. We follow this young floral designer through two marriages and divorces, and his interactions with his parents, friends, and a son. Throughout, we witness his deepening passion for garden mazes--so like life, with their teasing treachery and promise of reward. Among all the paradoxes and accidents of his existence, Larry moves through the spontaneity of the seventies, the blind enchantment of the eighties, and the lean, mean nineties, completing at last his quiet, stubborn search for self. Larry's odyssey mirrors the male condition at the end of our century with targeted wit, unerring poignancy, and faultless wisdom.

#### Silkin, ed., Jon, POETRY OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

A selection of poetry written during World War I. In the introduction Jon Silkin traces the changing mood of the poets - from patriotism through anger and compassion to an active desire for social change. The book includes work by Sassoon, Owen, Blunden, Rosenberg, Hardy and Lawrence.

#### Smith, Jane, I., ISLAM IN AMERICA

Smith begins her discussion with a brief history of Islam as it has been practiced in various parts of the world and how Islamic civilization has matured through the centuries. She then shifts her focus to our shores. She tackles such issues as African-American Muslims, American Muslim woman, the practice of one's faith in a society that is 95% non-Muslim, the raising and educating of children, and the future of the Islamic religion in America.

Smith, Mary-Ann Tirone, *GIRLS OF TENDER AGE*

With beauty, power, and remarkable wit, Mary-Ann Tirone Smith interweaves a bittersweet portrait of growing up among the working stiffs of 1950s Hartford, Connecticut, with the chilling progress of a serial pedophile who threatens to shatter her small town's innocence. This riveting memoir encompasses the murder of a schoolmate and life with a brother who suffered from autism.

Soueif, Ahdaf, *THE MAP OF LOVE*

With her first novel, *In the Eye of the Sun*, Ahdaf Soueif garnered comparisons to Tolstoy, Flaubert, and George Eliot. In her latest novel, which was shortlisted for Britain's prestigious Booker Prize, she combines the romantic skill of the nineteenth-century novelists with a very modern sense of culture and politics--both sexual and international.

Sparks, Nicholas, *THE NOTEBOOK*

A man with a faded, well-worn notebook open in his lap. A woman experiencing a morning ritual she doesn't understand, until he begins to read to her. *The Notebook* is an achingly tender story about the enduring power of love, a story of miracles that will stay with you forever. Set amid the austere beauty of coastal North Carolina in 1946, *The Notebook* begins with the story of Noah Calhoun, a rural Southerner returned home from World War II. Noah, thirty-one, is restoring a plantation home to its former glory, and he is haunted by images of the beautiful girl he met fourteen years earlier, a girl he loved like no other. Like a puzzle within a puzzle, the story of Noah and Allie is just the beginning.

Stewart, Rory, *THE PLACES IN BETWEEN*

In January 2002 Rory Stewart walked across Afghanistan--surviving by his wits, his knowledge of Persian dialects and Muslim customs, and the kindness of strangers. By day he passed through mountains covered in nine feet of snow, hamlets burned and emptied by the Taliban, and communities thriving amid the remains of medieval civilizations. By night he slept on villagers' floors, shared their meals, and listened to their stories of the recent and ancient past. Along the way Stewart met heroes and rogues, tribal elders and teenage soldiers, Taliban commanders and foreign-aid workers. He was also adopted by an unexpected companion--a retired fighting mastiff he named Babur in honor of Afghanistan's first Mughal emperor, in whose footsteps the pair was following.

Swift, Graham, *LAST ORDERS*

Four Men -- friends, most of them, for half a lifetime -- gather in a London pub. They have taken it upon themselves to carry out the last orders of Jack Dodds, master butcher, and deliver his ashes to the sea. As they drive towards the fulfillment of their mission, their errand becomes an extraordinary journey into their collective and individual pasts.

Thomas, Abigail, *A THREE DOG LIFE*

When Abigail Thomas's husband, Rich, was hit by a car, his skull was shattered, his brain severely damaged. Subject to rages, terrors, and hallucinations -- and with no memory of what he did the hour, the day, the year before -- he was sent to live in a nursing facility that specializes in treating traumatic brain injuries. This tragedy is the ground on which Abigail had to build a new life. How she built that life is a story of great courage and change, of moving to a small country town, of a new family composed of three dogs, knitting, and friendship, of facing down guilt and discovering gratitude. It is also about her relationship with Rich, a man who lived in the eternal present, and the eerie poetry of his own uncanny perceptions.

Tolstoy, Leo, *ANNA KARENINA*

Anna Karenina tells of the doomed love affair between the sensuous and rebellious Anna and the dashing officer, Count Vronsky. Tragedy unfolds as Anna rejects her passionless marriage and must endure the hypocrisies of society. Set against a vast and richly textured canvas of nineteenth-century Russia, the novel's seven major characters create a dynamic imbalance, playing out the contrasts of city and country life and all the variations on love and family happiness. While previous versions have softened the robust, and sometimes shocking, quality of Tolstoy's writing, Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky have produced a translation true to his powerful voice. This award-winning team's authoritative edition also includes an illuminating introduction and explanatory notes. Beautiful, vigorous, and eminently readable, this Anna Karenina will be the definitive text for generations to come.

Toole, John Kennedy, *A CONFEDERACY OF DUNCES*

Meet Ignatius J. Reilly, the hero of John Kennedy Toole's tragicomic tale, *A Confederacy of Dunces*. This 30-year-old medievalist lives at home with his mother in New Orleans, pens his magnum opus on Big Chief writing pads he keeps hidden under his bed, and relays to anyone who will listen the traumatic experience he once had on a Greyhound Scenicruiser bound for Baton Rouge. But Ignatius's quiet life of tyrannizing his mother and writing his endless comparative history screeches to a halt when he is almost arrested by the overeager Patrolman Mancuso--

who mistakes him for a vagrant—and then involved in a car accident with his tipsy mother behind the wheel. One thing leads to another, and before he knows it, Ignatius is out pounding the pavement in search of a job.

Tsukiyama, Gail, *THE SAMURAI GARDEN*

On the eve of the Second World War, a young Chinese man is sent to his family's summer home in Japan to recover from tuberculosis. He will rest, swim in the salubrious sea, and paint in the brilliant shoreside light. It will be quiet and solitary. But he meets four local residents—a beautiful Japanese girl and three older people. What then ensues is a tale that readers will find classical yet utterly unique. Young Stephen has his own adventure, but it is the unfolding story of Matsu, Sachi, and Jenzo that seizes your attention and stays with you forever.

Twain, Mark, *THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN*

Huck's first-person narration of his journey on the Mississippi River with the fugitive slave Jim begins with Huck's escape from his drunken, violent father and ends with his vowing to "light out for the Territory ahead of the rest." Along the way, Twain's novel chronicles life along the river, satirizes 19<sup>th</sup> century Southern culture, and dramatizes Huck's struggle to grow up in pre-Civil War America, even as he embodies the archetypal American boy's aversion to soap and "civilization." Twain's comic masterpiece touches on issues of national and universal importance, including innocence and experience, freedom and slavery, and race relations in America.

Tyler, Anne, *SAINT MAYBE*

In *Saint Maybe* her protagonist Ian Bedloe, stricken with guilt over the death of his older brother, raises three children unrelated to him by blood. He is strengthened in this Herculean task by the storefront Church of the Second Chance, to which he devotes himself with equal fervor. Someone once said all great writers are comic writers.

Vreeland, Susan, *LUNCHEON OF THE BOATING PARTY*

Instantly recognizable, Auguste Renoir's masterpiece portrays fourteen lively, diverse, and elegant Parisians enjoying a summer Sunday along the Seine. An art collector, an Italian journalist, a war hero, a wealthy painter, a celebrated actress, and Renoir's future wife are among those sharing this joyous moment of *la vie moderne*. But who were they really and what were their lives truly like? Narrated by Renoir and seven of the models, and using settings in Paris and along the Seine, Susan Vreeland's vibrant novel recreates their lives, loves, losses, and triumphs to illuminate the gusto, hedonism, and art of the era.

Vreeland, Susan, *GIRL IN HYACINTH BLUE*

This luminous story begins in the present day, when a professor invites a colleague to his home to see a painting that he has kept secret for decades. The professor swears it is a Vermeer—but why has he hidden this important work for so long? The reasons unfold in a series of events that trace the ownership of the painting back to World War II and Amsterdam, and still further back to the moment of the work's inspiration. As the painting moves through each owner's hands, what was long hidden quietly surfaces, illuminating poignant moments in multiple lives. Vreeland's characters remind us, through their love of this mysterious painting, how beauty transforms and why we reach for it, what lasts and what in our lives is singular and unforgettable.

Wharton, Edith, *THE AGE OF INNOCENCE*

Newland Archer saw little to envy in the marriages of his friends, yet he prided himself that in May Welland he had found the companion of his needs—tender and impressionable, with equal purity of mind and manners. The engagement was announced discreetly, but all of New York society was soon privy to this most perfect match, a union of families and circumstances cemented by affection. Enter Countess Olenska, a woman of quick wit sharpened by experience, not afraid to flout convention and determined to find freedom in divorce. Against his judgment, Newland is drawn to the socially ostracized Ellen Olenska, who opens his eyes and has the power to make him feel. He knows that in sweet-tempered May, he can expect stability and the steadying comfort of duty. But what new worlds could he discover with Ellen? Written with elegance and wry precision, Edith Wharton's Pulitzer Prize-winning masterpiece is a tragic love story and a powerful homily about the perils of a perfect marriage.

Williams, Tennessee, *A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE*

It is a short list of 20th-century American plays that continue to have the same power and impact as when they first appeared, *A Streetcar Named Desire* is one of those plays. The story of the fading and desperate Blanche DuBois and how her sensuous and brutal brother-in-law, Stanley Kowalski, pushes her over the edge is now classic.

Williams, Tennessee, *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*

Tom Wingfield remembers a decisive moment in the life of his family. The time is the Depression, the place St. Louis, and the family is shabbily genteel and fatherless. His shy sister, Laura, is not only physically but also psychologically disabled; she collects glass figurines, which symbolize her own emotional fragility. Their mother,

Amanda, is a frayed southern belle, who hopes to teach her daughter how to use “charm” to get a man. Tom is a frustrated poet who works in a warehouse, escaping to the movies when reality comes too near.

The hopes of the family are pinned to the Gentleman Caller, Jim O'Connor, “the long-delayed but always expected something that we live for.” His appearance brings the family to a crisis. For a while, his attention transforms Laura, but ultimately the Wingfield women are again deserted by men, their dreams shattered like the fragile glass unicorn Jim accidentally drops. The absent father, in the form of an ever-smiling photograph, presides over the apartment, foreshadowing the imminent flight of his disenchanted son. In the final lines of the play, we see that the family “ties that bind,” especially Tom's memories of Laura, are not as easily broken as the pieces in her glass menagerie.

Zackheim, Michele, **BROKEN COLORS**

Sophie Marks' path to artistic and personal fulfillment takes her from World War II England to postwar Paris and the Italian countryside. She leaves Europe in 1967 and spends the next two decades in the American Southwest.

Acclaimed at last as an artist, she returns to England to confront the hidden memories of her childhood and test the possibilities of a renewed love, a passion ripened by maturity.

# Programs for Older Adults

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## SELF-DISCOVERY THROUGH THE HUMANITIES: HUMANITIES PROGRAMS FOR OLDER ADULTS

"Humanities Programs for Older Adults" (HPOA) is designed to provide meaningful, as well as challenging, education programs for elders. Its aim is to offer programs that are intellectually stimulating as well as accessible to older persons who may or may not have had much in the way of formal education. Since its development in 1984, over three hundred senior centers, elderly housing facilities, nursing homes, libraries, museums and other sites across Connecticut have hosted successful HPOA film and book discussions. The book discussion program is presented in the form of anthologies on a variety of topics and is in large type print. The words of great thinkers and writers, as well as ordinary people, on a range of social, historical and philosophic issues, are presented. Libraries planning to host one of these series should work with local senior centers or nursing homes to best serve this constituency. Fourteen series topics are available:

### *Americans and the Land*

This series emphasizes changing historical attitudes toward the North American continent as well as current concern for the restoration and preservation of a balanced ecology. The anthology includes early stories of the creation, excerpts from the journals of Christopher Columbus, John Smith, and William Bradford on their first impressions of the new land, the poetic visions of Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, and Theodore Roethke, and works by Willa Cather, Kate Chopin, Isaac Bashevis Singer, and E.B. White, all of which examine ways of looking at the country around us.

### *Exploring Local History*

This series explores elements of local history—the people, places, structures and events that give character and quality to a neighborhood or town. The program stresses the role each person can play in appreciating and developing the history of his/her own locality. Readings include a story of changing values in the Old West by Stephen Crane, a description of Nantucket from Melville's *Moby Dick*, Sandburg's poem "Chicago," a colorful description of New Rochelle, N.Y. by E.L. Doctorow, and several reminiscences of youthful days from older persons around the country.

### *Exploring Values*

A challenging array of issues and positions concerning lying, capital punishment, war, social oppression, sexual preferences, abortion and euthanasia have surfaced in contemporary life. This series presents an imaginative and balanced variety of viewpoints on these issues as expressed through classical and contemporary selections from philosophy, literature, religion, and law. Though the topics are serious, the readings are far from somber and participants will be delighted with a survey that spans readings from the Bible to the U.S. Constitution, Shakespeare to Mark Twain, Kant to Colette, the sages of old to the prophets of today.

### *A Family Album: The American Family in Literature and History*

This series deals with common family dilemmas and joys as well as selected historic events that have dramatically affected the course of life in individual families. Stories and autobiographical passages by Frederick Douglas, Theodore Roosevelt, Henry David Thoreau, Katherine Anne Porter, John Steinbeck, Maxine Hong Kingston and James Thurber are included in the text.

### *The Family, the Courts, and the Constitution*

This unit offers older adults an opportunity to explore, together with younger persons, the relevance and value of the U. S. Constitution in their lives. Older Americans have lived through the many interpretations and changes in the Constitution during the 20th century, and consequently they have valuable experiences and perceptions to share. Younger Americans, as future citizens, not only will gain an appreciation of this seminal document, but can test with their elders their own views that may one day influence future interpretations of this document. The Constitution provides an excellent focus for mutually beneficial sharing across generations while opening new perspectives—past, present, and future—on the meaning of the Constitution for individuals and society.

### *The Heritage of the Future*

What impact does the past have on our ability to envision the future and examine the implications of these visions? Participants will read a rich variety of essays, fiction, and poetry from the anthology, *The Heritage of the Future*, to explore topics such as the challenge of technology, the impact of education, and the concept of time—all from a humanities perspective. The eclectic group of writers include Alvin Toffler, Joan Didion, William Faulkner, E.B. White, George Orwell, Carl Sagan, Kurt Vonnegut, John Steinbeck, and Walt Whitman.

### *Images of Aging in Literature*

The selections in this series focus on some of the common responsibilities, problems and rewards of old age, with an emphasis on the relationships and obligations of one generation to another. Reading selections include: "The Heyday of the Blood" by Dorothy Canfield Fisher, "A Worn Path" by Eudora Welty, "The Sudden Sixties" by Edna Ferber, "The Little Shoemakers" by Isaac Bashevis Singer, and an extract from the autobiography of Grandma Moses. This series is also available in Spanish.

### *In the Old Ways*

Traditions and customs of the many diverse national and ethnic groups that have settled in this country, as well as early American customs, are highlighted in this series. The purpose of the series is to provide a focus for participants to look into traditions and customs of their own heritage, to offer an opportunity to learn about the traditions of others, and to stimulate discussion about the role older Americans can play in assessing our cultural heritage and passing it on to future generations. The readings are primarily fiction and autobiography, and are drawn from the writings of some of our most celebrated authors as well as lesser-known writers who vividly portray their own cultural experiences. Familiar authors are: Langston Hughes, Alice Walker, William Allen White, Mark Twain, LeRoi Jones, Chief Joseph, John Steinbeck and Katherine Anne Porter.

### *The Remembered Past: 1914-1945*

The period including the two world wars was marked by constant change and a growing diversity of experience and attitude among Americans. This series is a patchwork, or sampler, suggesting some of the dominant themes of American life during the period. Readings include views of World War I from the battlefield to the homefront, a look at the "Roaring Twenties," the Depression, accounts of the times by Harry Truman, the rise of Hollywood, and many others. Photographs, cartoons and sound recordings supplement the book's literary material.

### *Remembering World War II*

"*Remembering World War II*," a discussion series for older adults who experienced the war and others who want to learn from them.

### *The Search for Meaning*

This unit explores some of the deepest human questions and longings; it introduces readers to great writers and thinkers of the past—like Plato and Milton—as well as contemporary authors who seek the meaning of life. Readings of a diverse nature are taken in part from the Bible and works of authors such as: Albert Camus, John Updike, D. H. Lawrence, Emily Dickinson, Leo Tolstoy, William Shakespeare and John Donne. The unit is richly illustrated with thematically related folk art, sculpture, and other works of art.

### *We Got There on the Train*

For North Americans in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the railroad was a mixed blessing. Whether a railroad came to a town or through a rural countryside often meant the difference between future prosperity and mere survival for families and communities. This anthology addresses both the romance of the railroads—their grip on the imaginations of American authors, poets, painters and singers—as well as the concerns of those who saw in the ribbon of steel rails another step in the "conquering" and exploitation of the environment and the displacement of indigenous inhabitants. These readings reflect the fact that although rail travel is a declining and changing form of transport, it continues to capture the public imagination.

### Words and Music

This unit explores seven musicals that have endeared themselves to the American public. The *Words and Music* text, using portions of the lyrics and dialogue from the musicals, shows how each of them spoke to questions of their day. It also analyzes the careful blending of story, music, lyrics, dance, and set design that help readers see why their impact has been so significant. The musicals included in this unit are: *Show Boat*, *Porgy and Bess*, *South Pacific*, *Guys and Dolls*, *My Fair Lady*, *West Side Story*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*.

### Work and Life

Work—whether in field, factory, home or office—is central to the life of all Americans. Linking the unit's sessions is the theme of change in work and work methods over the last century and the general questions of how these changes have affected the quality of life. Sessions deal with topics such as: the range of work within every community; types of work identified with particular regions; attitudes toward work; definitions of success; work and self-image; conflicts between work and personal values; and work experiences from the first job through retirement. Readings include excerpts from the autobiographies of Thomas Hart Benton, Mark Twain, Harry S. Truman, Helen Hayes, Leo Durocher, Althea Gibson, and Eleanor Roosevelt. Readings are also taken from American short stories, poetry, and novels. The text is richly illustrated with photographs, cartoons and paintings. The readings are supplemented with cassette tapes of folk songs and other sound recordings.

**Please note:** While these programs were designed for the HPOA program, they are available to all. In addition, those working with seniors are free to select any series within the catalog.

# Prize-Winning Novels

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The following titles give readers a chance to catch up on Pulitzer Prize-Winning novels. What makes a novel worthy of being awarded the Pulitzer Prize and what if anything do these stories have in common? Select four titles to make up your series.

Cormac McCarthy, *THE ROAD* (2007)  
Geraldine Brooks, *MARCH* (2006)  
Richard Russo, *EMPIRE FALLS* (2002)  
Michael Cunningham, *THE HOURS* (1999)  
Graham Swift, *LAST ORDERS* (1996)  
Carol Shields, *THE STONE DIARIES* (1995)  
E. Anne Proulx, *THE SHIPPING NEWS* (1994)  
Jane Smiley, *A THOUSAND ACRES* (1992)  
A. S. Byatt, *POSSESSION*  
Toni Morrison, *BELOVED* (1988)  
John Kennedy Toole, *A CONFEDERACY OF DUNCES*  
Michael Shaara, *THE KILLER ANGELS* (1975)  
Annie Dillard, *PILGRIM AT TINKER CREEK*  
James Agee, *A DEATH IN THE FAMILY* (1988)  
Edith Wharton, *THE AGE OF INNOCENCE* (1921)

## Nobel Prize-Winning Authors

Doris Lessing, *THE GOLDEN NOTEBOOK*  
Orhan Pamuk, *ISTANBUL*  
Gabriel García Márquez, *LOVE IN THE TIME OF CHOLERA*  
Wangari Maathai, *UNBOWED*

# **Top Books of the Century**

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## **THE 1920'S**

Ernest Hemingway, FAREWELL TO ARMS  
F. Scott Fitzgerald, THE GREAT GATSBY  
Virginia Woolf, MRS. DALLOWAY  
E. M. Forster, PASSAGE TO INDIA

## **THE 1930'S**

Raymond Chandler, THE BIG SLEEP  
James Hilton, LOST HORIZON  
Dashiell Hammett, THE MALTESE FALCON  
John Steinbeck, OF MICE AND MEN

## **THE 1940'S**

John Hersey, BELL FOR ADANO  
Ayn Rand, FOUNTAINHEAD  
Norman Mailer, THE NAKED AND THE DEAD  
John Steinbeck, THE PEARL

## **THE 1950'S**

James Agee, A DEATH IN THE FAMILY  
Ray Bradbury, FAHRENHEIT 451  
Ralph Ellison, INVISIBLE MAN  
Vladimir Nabokov, LOLITA

## **THE 1960'S**

Michael Crichton, THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN  
Daniel Keyes, FLOWERS FOR ALGLINON  
Barbara W. Tuchman, GUNS OF AUGUST  
Harper Lee, TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

## **THE 1970'S**

Nigel Nicolson, PORTRAIT OF A MARRIAGE  
Annie Dillard, PILGRIM AT TINKER CREEK  
Maxine Hong Kingston, THE WOMAN WARRIOR  
Tim O'Brien, THE THINGS THEY CARRIED

## **THE 1980'S**

Margaret Atwood, THE HANDMAID'S TALE  
Toni Morrison, BELOVED  
Gabriel Garcia Marquez LOVE IN THE TIME  
OF CHOLERA  
John Irving, A PRAYER FOR OWEN MEANY

## **THE 1990'S**

Gail Tsukiyama, THE SAMURAI'S GARDEN  
Carol Shields, LARRY'S PARTY  
Arthur Golden, MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA  
Bernard Schlink, THE READER

# Stories of Journey & Survival

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## BACK FROM THE BRINK: TRUE TALES OF SURVIVAL

From Homer's *Odyssey* to *Apollo 13*, stories of people who have faced calamity and survived have always had enormous appeal. When the stories are true, and told by the survivors themselves, our sympathy and admiration are all the more engaged. Join us for a discussion of four first-person narratives of men and women who were brought to the brink of life and death, and lived to tell the tale to us.

Slavomir Rawicz, *THE LONG WALK*

Steven Callahan, *ADRIFT: SEVENTY-SIX DAYS LOST AT SEA*

Deborah Scaling & Meg Noonan, *UNTAMED SEAS: ONE WOMAN'S TRUE STORY OF SHIPWRECK AND SURVIVAL*

Jerri Nielsen, *ICE BOUND: A DOCTOR'S INCREDIBLE BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL AT THE SOUTH POLE*

## IMPOSSIBLE MISSIONS AND EXPEDITIONS

Why do people put themselves in extreme positions, what do they do when they get there, and how do they get out? Four non-fiction works of 20th-century adventures explore these questions as they consider the limits of human courage and endurance. Join us for discussions of the real-life exploits of professional risk-takers and amateur adventurers. Various set in the Arctic Circle and Antarctica, in the fiery wilderness of Montana and the icy desolation of the Himalayas, these books are exhilarating and chastening at the same time as they remind us of the tenacity of the human spirit and the fragility of life itself.

Alfred Lansing, *ENDURANCE*

Jon Krakauer, *INTO THIN AIR*

David Howarth, *WE DIE ALONE*

Norman Maclean, *YOUNG MEN AND FIRE*

## STORIES: VOYAGES OF MEN, WOMEN AND THE SEA

The sea is all around us, huge, powerful, beautiful, and fearsome. In the last few years, it has become a best-selling topic. Why? What is it about the sea that attracts us and terrifies us? We will read and discuss four recent works of men and women who work and live upon the sea: two tales of fishing the North Atlantic, the most dangerous of all occupations; the story of the whaleship *Essex*, rammed by a whale in 1820 and the survival of eight of her crewmen; and the story of a father and son journeying around Cape Horn: the ultimate test of the sailor.

David Hays & Daniel Hays, *MY OLD MAN AND THE SEA*

Sebastian Junger, *PERFECT STORM*

Linda Greenlaw, *THE HUNGRY OCEAN*

Nathaniel Philbrick, *IN THE HEART OF THE SEA*

## TRAVELING MEMORIES

Women traveling – sometimes they do it alone, sometimes with others. Each of these volumes provides us with an armchair look at some of the exotic places that these passionate travelers take us. From pleasurable quests of sightseeing, to dangerous pursuits of adventure, to exploration of cultures that are so different from their own, these travelers share the memories of expeditions. Enjoy *A Year in the World*; *Eat, Pray, Love*; *Nothing to Declare and Fried Eggs With Chopsticks* as you make your own journey and see why these women believe that travel is worth any cost or sacrifice.

Frances Mayes, *A YEAR IN THE WORLD: JOURNEYS OF A PASSIONATE TRAVELLER*

Elizabeth Gilbert, *EAT, PRAY, LOVE*

Mary Morris, *NOTHING TO DECLARE: MEMOIRS OF A WOMAN TRAVELING ALONE*

Polly Evans, *FRIED EGGS WITH CHOPSTICKS*

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