An American Marriage by Tayari Jones

The story of Celestial and Roy, a young, newlywed couple excited about their future together, taking a trip to visit Celestial's family. Roy then makes a simple decision that changes his life. A woman in a nearby hotel room is raped and, having encountered Roy at the ice machine, later mistakenly identifies him as the culprit. Despite the lack of evidence, Roy is sentenced to prison for 12 years.

The Artist’s Way: A Spiritual Path To Higher Creativity by Julia Cameron

An international bestseller, millions of readers have found it to be an invaluable guide to living the artist's life. Still as vital today - or perhaps even more so - than it was when it was first published one decade ago, it is a powerfully provocative and inspiring work.

Babel by R.F. Kuang

Welcome to Babel: the great Oxford translation institute in an alternative version of Victorian England, where translators hold the keys to the British Empire. Every device and engineering technique there is, from steam trains to the foundations of buildings, relies on silver bars enchanted with "match pairs"; words in two different languages that mean similar things, but with a significant gap between them. The bars create the effect of the difference: feelings, noises, speed, even death.

Behold The Dreamers by Imbolo Mbue

A compulsively readable debut novel about marriage, immigration, class, race, and the trapdoors in the American Dream--the unforgettable story of a young Cameroonian couple making a new life in New York just as the Great Recession upends the economy.

Beloved by Toni Morrison

From the acclaimed Nobel Prize winner: an unflinchingly look into the abyss of slavery. This spellbinding novel transforms history into a story as powerful as Exodus and as intimate as a lullaby. A staggering depiction of hauntedness set in Ohio after the Civil War, Beloved concerns a woman who flees slavery and, facing recapture, kills her little girl. Morrison's vision of black life, particularly the impact of the past on the present, is mythical in the telling.
Between The World And Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates

In this brief book, which takes the form of a letter to the author's teenage son, Coates, the justly acclaimed author of the family memoir The Beautiful Struggle (2008), comes to grips with what it means to be black in America today.

Black Cake by Charmaine Wilkerson

In present-day California, Eleanor Bennett's death leaves behind a puzzling inheritance for her two children, Byron and Benny: a black cake, made from a family recipe with a long history, and a voice recording. In her message, Eleanor shares a tumultuous story about a headstrong young swimmer who escapes her island home under suspicion of murder.

The Body Keeps The Score by Bessel Van der Kolk

Psychiatrist van der Kolk, the director of a trauma treatment center, provides advice about coping with, treating, and healing all kinds of trauma. He shares stories of patients that illuminate how devastating and debilitating their horrific experiences are. Advances in neuroscience, interpersonal neurobiology, and developmental psychopathology have enhanced our understanding of psychological trauma.

The Book Of Hope by Jane Goodall

The renowned naturalist and chimpanzee researcher reflects on her philosophy of life. No longer observing wildlife in the fast-vanishing African forests, Goodall, now 87, continues to work, traveling the world to speak about conservation, humane treatment of animals, reforestation, and the detriments of climate change and poverty.
**Born A Crime: Stories From A South African Childhood by Trevor Noah**

The host of The Daily Show reflects on his tumultuous South African childhood. In a gritty memoir, Noah relates his harsh experiences growing up during the final years of apartheid and the chaotic and racially charged conflicts that would continue to undermine the newly won freedom that was established in its aftermath.

**Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer**

As a botanist, Robin Wall Kimmerer has been trained to ask questions of nature with the tools of science. As a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, she embraces the notion that plants and animals are our oldest teachers. In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Kimmerer brings these two lenses of knowledge together.

**Canyon Sacrifice by Scott Graham**

Canyon Sacrifice brings the rugged western landscape, the mysterious past of the ancient Anasazi Indians, and the Southwest's ongoing cultural fissures vividly to life. A deadly struggle against murderous kidnappers in Grand Canyon National Park forces archaeologist Chuck Bender to face up to his past as he realizes every parent's worst nightmare: a missing child.

**Caste: The Origins Of Our Discontents by Isabel Wilkerson**

In this brilliant book, Isabel Wilkerson gives us a masterful portrait of an unseen phenomenon in America as she explores, through an immersive, deeply researched narrative and stories about real people, how America today and throughout its history has been shaped by a hidden caste system, a rigid hierarchy of human rankings.

**Cloud Cuckoo Land by Anthony Doerr**

An ancient Greek manuscript connects humanity's past, present, and future. "Stranger, whoever you are, open this to learn what will amaze you" wrote Antonius Diogenes at the end of the first century C.E.—and millennia later, Pulitzer Prize winner Doerr is his fitting heir. Around Diogenes' manuscript, "Cloud Cuckoo Land"—the author did exist, but the text is invented—Doerr builds a community of readers and nature lovers that transcends the boundaries of time and space.
**Deep Creek: Finding Hope In The High Country by Pam Houston**

On her 120-acre homestead high in the Colorado Rockies, beloved writer Pam Houston learns what it means to care for a piece of land and the creatures on it. In essays as lucid and invigorating as mountain air, Deep Creek delivers Houston's most profound meditations yet on how “to live simultaneously inside the wonder and the grief…to love the damaged world and do what I can to help it thrive.”

**Deer Woman: An Anthology by Durango Public Library Compiler**

Based on the true stories of Indigenous women throughout the world, this anthology features the work of more than a dozen Native women sharing stories of survival, empowerment, and healing. Featuring the work of: Patty Stonefish, Allie Vasquez, Mia Casesa, Darcie Little Badger, Tara Ogaick, Kimberly Robertson, Barbara Kenmille, Maria Wolf López, Tatum Bowie, Jackie Fawn, Rebecca Roanhorse, Carolyn Dunn, Nashoba Dunn-Anderson, and more. See this guide for tips on discussions dealing with trauma.

**Detransition, Baby by Torrey Peters**

Three people try to define the concept of family when confronted with an unplanned pregnancy. There’s Reese, a transgender woman who always longed to be a mother; Katrina, a cisgender woman who's grappling with whether to keep the baby; and Ames, who lived for six years as a transgender woman before "detransitioning," going back to the gender he was assigned at birth. Ames proposes that he, Reese (his ex), and Katrina (his current lover) raise the child together.

**Devotions by Mary Oliver**

Carefully curated, these 200 plus poems feature Mary Oliver's work from her very first book of poetry, *No Voyage and Other Poems*, published in 1963 at the age of 28, through her most recent collection, *Felicity*, published in 2015. This timeless volume, arranged by Oliver herself, showcases the beloved poet at her edifying best. Within these pages, she provides us with an extraordinary and invaluable collection of her passionate, perceptive, and much-treasured observations of the natural world.

**Eleanor & Park by Rainbow Rowell**

It's the start of a new school year in 1986 Omaha when sophomores Eleanor and Park meet for the first time on the bus. They are an unusual pair: she's the new girl in town, an ostracized, bullied "big girl" with bright red curly hair, freckles, and an odd wardrobe; he's a skinny half-Korean townie who mostly wears black But as they sit together on the school bus every day, an intimacy gradually develops between them.
**Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury**

*Fahrenheit 451* is the temperature at which book paper burns. *Fahrenheit 451* is a novel set in the (perhaps near) future when "firemen" burn books forbidden by a totalitarian "brave new world" regime. The hero, according to Mr. Bradbury, is "a book burner who suddenly discovers that books are flesh-and-blood ideas and cry out silently when put to the torch."

**Finding The Mother Tree by Suzanne Simard**

In this, Simard's first book, the pioneer on the frontier of plant communication and intelligence, the intimate world of the trees, in which she brilliantly illuminates the fascinating and vital truths—that trees are not simply the source of timber or pulp, but are a complicated, interdependent circle of life; that forests are social, cooperative creatures connected through underground networks by which trees communicate their vitality and vulnerabilities with communal lives not that different from our own.

**The Fire Next Time by James Baldwin**

A national bestseller when it first appeared in 1963, *The Fire Next Time* galvanized the nation, gave passionate voice to the emerging civil rights movement—and still lights the way to understanding race in America today. It consists of two "letters," written on the occasion of the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation, that exhort Americans, both black and white, to attack the terrible legacy of racism.

**Firekeeper’s Daughter by Angeline Boulley**

Reeling after the death of her uncle, Daunis is trying to adjust to her new normal, a challenge at the best of times, especially when her scandalous origins leave her caught between two worlds: Ojibwe and French. When she witnesses a murder at the hands of someone who is addicted to meth and from a prominent family of her tribe, she has a choice: let the cycle of pain continue or protect her community.

**Gender Queer by Maia Kobabe**

Vulnerable and honest, Gender Queer grapples with issues of identity and sexuality in ways that highlight how messy and painful but ultimately vindicating the process of understanding and valuing yourself can be. Kobabe shares details of their childhood, struggling with puberty, crushes, and teen sexual fantasies.
**The Giver by Lois Lowery**

The haunting story centers on twelve-year-old Jonas, who lives in a seemingly ideal, if colorless, world of conformity and contentment. Not until he is given his life assignment as the Receiver of Memory does he begin to understand the dark, complex secrets behind his fragile community.

**The Handmaid’s Tale by Margaret Atwood**

In Margaret Atwood's dystopian future, environmental disasters and declining birthrates have led to a Second American Civil War. The result is the rise of the Republic of Gilead, a totalitarian regime that enforces rigid social roles and enslaves the few remaining fertile women.

**Harlem Shuffle by Colson Whitehead**

*Harlem Shuffle’s* ingenious story plays out in a beautifully recreated New York City of the early 1960s. It’s a family saga masquerading as a crime novel, a hilarious morality play, a social novel about race and power, and ultimately a love letter to Harlem.

**How High We Go In The Dark by Sequoia Nagamatsu**

Sequoia Nagamatsu's ambitious novel-in-stories was written long before Covid. Nevertheless, when melting permafrost reveals a Neanderthal corpse, which in turn disgorges an ancient plague, the repercussions feel initially familiar. Only initially, because the Arctic plague will turn out to be far deadlier, while Nagamatsu's zany vision extends, via a succession of first-person narrators, thousands of years into the future, incorporating interstellar travel, advanced cryopreservation and alien shape-shifters.

**How To Be An Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi**

In *How To Be an Antiracist*, Kendi takes readers through a widening circle of antiracist ideas--from the most basic concepts to visionary possibilities--that will help readers see all forms of racism clearly, understand their poisonous consequences, and work to oppose them in our systems and in ourselves.
**How To Change Your Mind by Michael Pollan**

Pollan has long enlightened and entertained readers with his superbly inquisitive and influential books about food. He now investigates a very different sort of comestible, psychedelics.

**I Am Malala by Malala Yousafzai**

At times earnest and somber, at others irreverent and playful, the 17-year-old details her experiences as an advocate for education in Pakistan especially for women both before and after she became a target of the Taliban. Although her efforts to attend school, and the subsequent attack she endured, make for a powerful story, Yousafzai writes just as vividly about her daily life as a child in Pakistan.

**An Indigenous Peoples’ History Of The United States by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz**

Dunbar-Ortiz, Native American studies scholar and longtime American Indian Movement member, offers a radical rewrite of traditional U.S. history up to and including the five wars waged since WWII, a history, she explains, based on settler colonialism, or the founding of a state based on the ideology of white supremacy, the widespread practice of African slavery, and a policy of genocide and land theft.

**The Invisible Life Of Addie LaRue by V.E. Schwab**

On July 29, 1714, in a small village in France, a young woman named Adeline prays to any god who will answer for salvation from a stifling life. But the one who arrives grants Addie a gift, in exchange for her soul, that comes with a curse: though she will not age or die, everyone she meets will forget her as soon as she leaves their sight.

**Island Of Sea Women by Lisa See**

_The Island of Sea Women_ introduces readers to the fierce and unforgettable female divers of Jeju Island and the dramatic history that shaped their lives in an epoch set over many decades, beginning during a period of Japanese colonialism in the 1930s and 1940s, followed by World War II, the Korean War and its aftermath.

**Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë**

Written in 1847, this novel remains a favorite, especially among younger readers and listeners who continue to be entranced by the young Jane and her mysterious Mr. Rochester. The story of an unhappy orphan and her life as a governess at Thornfield is filled with difficulty, including a shocking revelation on her wedding day.
Love Songs Of W.E.B. DuBois by Honoree Fanonne Jeffers

An intimate yet sweeping novel that chronicles the journey of one American family, from the centuries of the colonial slave trade through the Civil War to our own tumultuous era.

March. Book One by John Lewis and Andrew Aydin

March is a vivid first-hand account of John Lewis' lifelong struggle for civil and human rights, meditating in the modern age on the distance traveled since the days of Jim Crow and segregation. Rooted in Lewis' personal story, it also reflects on the highs and lows of the broader civil rights movement.

Matrix by Lauren Groff

Groff fashions a boldly original narrative based on the life and legend of 12th-century poet Marie de France. After Marie is banished to a poverty-stricken British abbey by Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine at age 17 in 1158, she transforms from a reluctant prioress into an avid abbess. With the rhythm of days and nights regulated by the canonical hours from Lauds to Prime, from Compline to bed, Marie reshapes the claustrophobic community into a “self-sufficient... island of women.”

Maybe You Should Talk To Someone by Lori Gottlieb

With great empathy and compassion, Gottlieb chronicles the many problems facing the “struggling humans” in her stable of therapy patients. The intimate connection between patient and therapist forms the core of the memoir, as the author plumbs the multifaceted themes of belonging, emotional pain, and healing.

Migrations by Charlotte McConaghy

Young adult novelist McConaghy (the Chronicles of Kaya series) makes her adult debut with the chronicle of Franny Stone, a troubled woman who follows a flock of endangered Arctic terns on what is believed to be their final migration home. A story of nature on the verge of collapse even as a young woman struggles with her past.
Of Women And Salt by Gabriela Garcia

An affluent Cuban immigrant reckons with her daughter's drug addiction and her own culpability in their self-destructive choices. Presented in 12 chapters that read more like interlinked stories, Garcia channels her Miami-based Cuban-Mexican American heritage into five generations of a Cuban American matriarchy. Garcia's women populate a sprawling albeit textually spare narrative that demands careful parsing for resonant rewards.

Olga Dies Dreaming by Xochitl Gonzalez

It's 2017, and Olga and her brother, Pedro "Prieto" Acevedo, are boldfaced names in their hometown of New York. Prieto is a popular congressman representing their gentrifying Latinx neighborhood in Brooklyn, while Olga is the tony wedding planner for Manhattan's power brokers. Despite their alluring public lives, behind closed doors things are far less rosy . . .

One Hundred Years Of Solitude by Gabriel García Márquez

One Hundred Years of Solitude tells the story of the rise and fall, birth and death of the mythical town of Macondo through the history of the Buendiá family. Inventive, amusing, magnetic, sad and alive with unforgettable men and women, this novel is a masterpiece in the art of fiction.

Parable Of The Sower by Octavia Butler

Although conventional gloom-and-doom scenarios of civilization on the brink of collapse are rapidly becoming passe in contemporary science fiction, original variations occasionally appear to give new life to the form. Diary of teenager Lauren Olamina, 2024-27, as she struggles to survive the collapse of civilization and formulate a new religion that spells out her notion of God as change.

The Personal Librarian by Marie Benedict

Every element of this blockbuster historical novel is compelling and revelatory, beginning with the bedazzling protagonist based with awestruck care on Belle da Costa Greene. Hired in 1905 when she is her twenties, over the years Belle boldly oversees J. P. Morgan's world-class collection of rare books and illuminated manuscripts, strategically acquires treasures with witty charm and ruthless bargaining, and becomes the feared financier's most trusted confidante.
Poet Warrior by Joy Harjo
Musician, visual artist, and U.S. Poet Laureate Harjo continues her personal story in her second memoir, following the award-winning Crazy Brave (2013), in a genre-bending approach that interweaves poetry and anecdotes, memories, and familial and ancestral history.

The River by Peter Heller
Two college friends' leisurely river trek becomes an ordeal of fire and human malice. In bringing his characters to the brink of death (and past it), Heller speaks soberly to the random perils of everyday living. An exhilarating tale delivered with the pace of a thriller and the wisdom of a grizzled nature guide.

River Of Lost Souls by Jonathan Thompson
A deep history of the Animas River Valley and surrounding mountains near Durango and Silverton in southwestern Colorado. Thompson, a sixth-generation Coloradan, tells a tale of pollution and abuse by mining interests in a style that sways from conversational colloquialism to matter-of-fact reporting and reflects the passion of an activist whose family history is tied to each page he writes.

The Round House by Louise Erdrich
Louise Erdrich returns to the territory of her bestselling, Pulitzer Prize finalist The Plague of Doves with The Round House, transporting readers to the Ojibwe reservation in North Dakota. It is an exquisitely told story of a boy on the cusp of manhood who seeks justice and understanding in the wake of a terrible crime that upends and forever transforms his family.

Salone Italiano by Kay Niemann
As much a historical account as it is a novel, Salone Italiano is the fascinating tale of the lives and loves of the Sartore family, who exchanged their peaceful European existence for a life of both hope and hardship as immigrants living in the legendary mining town of Silverton, Colorado. Old world customs and traditions collide with the family’s newfound American lifestyle.
The School For Good Mothers by Jessamine Chan

This debut is the contemporary tale of Frida Liu, educated mother and daughter of immigrants. Gust, Frida’s unfaithful ex-husband, lives with crunchy, sexy Susanna. Through shared custody, Susanna becomes a kindly, dominant earth mother to Frida and Gust’s toddler daughter. Isolated and stressed by motherhood, Frida has “one very bad day,” is arrested, and must negotiate child-protective services. To win back parental rights, Frida enters the School for Good Mothers.

The 1619 Project by Nikole Hannah-Jones

In late August 1619, a ship arrived in the British colony of Virginia bearing a cargo of twenty to thirty enslaved people from Africa. Their arrival led to the barbaric and unprecedented system of American chattel slavery that would last for the next 250 years.

The Spiritual Nature Of Animals by Karlene Stange

Part meditation, part spiritual/theological exploration, part collection of anecdotes, part history, and all heart, this is a hard book to pin down. Stange, a veterinarian, spent her life caring for animals, but the difficult cases took a toll. She realized she could not continue to hold herself responsible for an animal's failure to heal. Thus began her wide-ranging look at the world's great religions and how animals prominently figure into their defining myths.

The Sympathizer by Viet Thanh Nguyen

A sweeping epic of love and betrayal. The narrator, a communist double agent, is a "man of two minds," a half-French, half-Vietnamese army captain who arranges to come to America after the Fall of Saigon, and while building a new life with other Vietnamese refugees in Los Angeles is secretly reporting back to his communist superiors in Vietnam.

There There by Tommy Orange

Orange’s debut novel offers a kaleidoscopic look at Native American life in Oakland, California, through the experiences and perspectives of 12 characters. An aspiring documentary filmmaker, a young man who has taught himself traditional dance by watching YouTube, another lost in the bulk of his enormous body, these are just a few of the point-of-view characters in this astonishingly wide-ranging book, which culminates with an event called the Big Oakland Powwow.
**They Called Us Enemy by George Takei**

A stunning graphic memoir recounting actor/author/activist George Takei's childhood imprisoned within American concentration camps during World War II. Experience the forces that shaped an American icon -- and America itself -- in this gripping tale of courage, country, loyalty, and love.

**This Tender Land by William Kent Krueger**

Over the course of one unforgettable summer, four orphans will journey into the unknown and cross paths with others who are adrift, from struggling farmers and traveling faith healers to displaced families and lost souls of all kinds. With the feel of a modern classic, *This Tender Land* is an enthralling, big-hearted epic that shows how the magnificent American landscape connects us all, haunts our dreams, and makes us whole.

**Transcendent Kingdom by Yaa Gyasi**

Following her spectacularly lauded, bestselling historical and ancestral debut, *Homegoing* (2016), Gyasi's turns to the contemporary, tracing the dissolution of a Ghanaian immigrant family. By the time Gifty leaves Alabama for Harvard, she’s resolved to “build a new Gifty from scratch” by shedding the debilitating experiences of her young life: her father’s abandonment and return to Ghana, her older brother Nana’s heroin overdose, her mother’s suicidal depression, her faltering faith.

**True Biz by Sara Nović**

The students at the River Valley School for the Deaf just want to hook up, pass their history finals, and have politicians, doctors, and their parents stop telling them what to do with their bodies. This revelatory novel plunges readers into the halls of a residential school for the deaf, where they'll meet Charlie, a rebellious transfer student who’s never met another deaf person before; Austin, the school's golden boy, whose world is rocked when his baby sister is born hearing; and February, the hearing headmistress, who is fighting to keep her school open and her marriage intact.

**The Turnaway Study by Diana Greene Foster**

In this debut, Foster writes a comprehensive overview of abortion in the United States. At the same time, the organization of chapters that simultaneously foreground a significant issue and an individual women's story keeps the narrative as human as it is informational. Foster has compiled ten years' worth of research on women across 40 states and all ethnicities, yet never loses sight of that each woman's story is her own.
The Vanishing Half by Britt Bennett

A novel about twin sisters, inseparable as children, who ultimately choose to live in two very different worlds, one black and one white. Brit Bennett offers an engrossing page-turner about family and relationships that is immersive and provocative, compassionate and wise.

Velvet Was The Night by Silvia Moreno-Garcia

A simmering historical noir about a daydreaming secretary, a lonesome enforcer, and the mystery of the missing woman they're both desperate to find set in 1971 Mexico City.

Walden by Henry David Thoreau

With their call for "simplicity, simplicity, simplicity!", for self-honesty, and for harmony with nature, the writings of Henry David Thoreau are perhaps the most influential philosophical works in all American literature. Included in their entirety are Walden, his indisputable masterpiece, and his two great arguments for nonconformity, Civil Disobedience and Life Without Principle.

We Have Always Lived In The Castle by Shirley Jackson

Taking readers deep into a labyrinth of dark neurosis, We Have Always Lived in the Castle is a deliciously unsettling novel about a perverse, isolated, and possibly murderous family and the struggle that ensues when a cousin arrives at their estate.

A Woman Is No Man by Etaf Rum

The story of three generations of Palestinian-American women struggling to express their individual desires within the confines of their Arab culture in the wake of shocking intimate violence in their community.
Woman Of Light by Kali Fajardo-Anstine

A sprawling novel that follows five generations of a family of Mexican and Indigenous descent who live throughout the region now known as New Mexico and Colorado. At the heart is Luz, a teenager who reads tea leaves and discovers she has clairvoyant gifts. A convincing portrait of Denver in flux, haunted by white violence, and portrays a complex female friendship, a vivid love story (or three), and a story of family and memory in the American West.