

# The Leavers Winner Of The Pen Bellweather Prize Fo

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*Sundays in August* Patrick Modiano 2017-08-29 From beloved storyteller and Nobel Prize winner Patrick Modiano, a masterful and gripping crime novel set in picturesque Nice on the French Riviera Stolen jewels, black markets, hired guns, crossed lovers, unregistered addresses, people gone missing, shadowy figures disappearing in crowds, newspaper stories uncomfortably close and getting closer . . . this ominous novel is Patrick Modiano's most noirish work to date. Set in Nice—a departure from the author's more familiar Paris—this novel evokes the bright sun and dark shadow of the Riviera. Modiano's trademark ability to create a haunting atmosphere is here on full display: readers descend precipitously into a world of mystery, uneasiness, inevitability. A young couple in hiding keeps close watch over a notorious diamond necklace known as the Southern Cross. Its provenance is murky, its whereabouts known only to our hero and heroine, who find themselves trapped by its potential value—and its ultimate cost. Deftly Modiano reaches further and further into the past, revealing the secret histories of the two even as the pressurized present threatens to overwhelm them.

**Betty Before X** Ilyasah Shabazz 2018-01-02 The fictionalized biography of Betty Shabazz (Malcolm X's wife) as a young girl in post-WWII Detroit, as written by her daughter, Ilyasah Shabazz, with Renée Watson.

**Marshmallow Clouds** Ted Kooser 2022-03-15 "A freewheeling romp through the world of imagery and metaphor, this quietly startling collection of thirty poems, framed by the four elements, is about art and reality, fact and fancy. Look around: what do you see? A clown balancing a pie in a tree, or an empty nest perched on a leafless branch? As poet Connie Wanek alludes to in her afterword--a lively dialogue with former US Poet Laureate Ted Kooser--sometimes the simplest sights and sounds "summon our imaginations" and cry out to be clothed in the alchemical language of poetry. This compendium of the fleeting and unexpected turns the everyday--turtles, trees, and tadpoles; cow pies, lazy afternoons, and pillowy white marshmallows--into poetic gold." -- Amazon.com.

*Tell Me Everything You Don't Remember* Christine Hyung-Oak Lee 2017-02-14 A memoir of reinvention after a stroke at age thirty-three. Christine Hyung-Oak Lee woke up with a headache on the morning of December 31, 2006. By that afternoon, she saw the world—quite literally—upside down. By New Year's Day, she was unable to form a coherent sentence. And after hours in the ER, days in the hospital, and multiple questions and tests, her doctors informed her that she had had a stroke. For months afterward, Lee outsourced her memories to a journal, taking diligent notes to compensate for the thoughts she could no longer hold on to. It is from these notes that she has constructed this frank and compelling memoir. In a precise and captivating narrative, Lee navigates fearlessly between chronologies, weaving her childhood humiliations and joys together with the story of the early days of her marriage; and then later, in painstaking, painful, and unflinching detail, the account of her stroke and every upset—temporary or permanent—that it caused. Lee illuminates the connection between memory and identity in an honest, meditative, and truly funny manner, utterly devoid of self-pity. And as she recovers, she begins to realize that this unexpected and devastating event has provided a catalyst for coming to terms with her true self—and, in a way, has allowed her to become the person she's always wanted to be.

*The Book of Dead Birds* Gayle Brandeis 2009-10-13 Ava Sing Lo has been accidentally killing her mother's birds since she was a little girl. Now in her twenties, Ava leaves her native San Diego for the Salton Sea, where she volunteers to help environmental activists save thousands of birds poisoned by agricultural runoff. Helen, her mother, has been haunted by her past for decades. As a young girl in Korea, Helen was drawn into prostitution on a segregated American army base. Several brutal years passed before a young white American soldier married her and brought her to California. When she gave birth to a black baby, her new husband quickly abandoned her, and she was left to fend for herself and her daughter in a foreign country. With great beauty and lyricism, *The Book of Dead Birds* captures a young woman's struggle to come to terms with her mother's terrible past while she searches for her own place in the world.

*The Leavers* (*National Book Award Finalist*) Lisa Ko 2018-04-24 FINALIST FOR THE 2017 NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FOR FICTION Named a Best Book of 2017 by NPR, Entertainment Weekly, the Los Angeles Times, BuzzFeed, Bustle, and Electric Literature “There was a time I would have called Lisa Ko’s novel beautifully written, ambitious, and moving, and all of that is true, but it’s more than that now: if you want to understand a forgotten and essential part of the world we live in, *The Leavers* is required reading.” —Ann Patchett, author of *Commonwealth* Lisa Ko’s powerful debut, *The Leavers*, is the winner of the 2016 PEN/Bellwether Prize for Fiction, awarded by Barbara Kingsolver for a novel that addresses issues of social justice. One morning, Deming Guo’s mother, Polly, an undocumented Chinese immigrant, goes to her job at a nail salon—and never comes home. No one can find any trace of her. With his mother gone, eleven-year-old Deming is left mystified and bereft. Eventually adopted by a pair of well-meaning white professors, Deming is moved from the Bronx to a small town upstate and renamed Daniel Wilkinson. But far from all he’s ever known, Daniel struggles to reconcile his adoptive parents’ desire that he assimilate with his memories of his mother and the community he left behind. Told from the perspective of both Daniel—as he grows into a directionless young man—and Polly, Ko’s novel gives us one of fiction’s most singular mothers. Loving and selfish, determined and frightened, Polly is forced to make one heartwrenching choice after another. Set in

New York and China, *The Leavers* is a vivid examination of borders and belonging. It's a moving story of how a boy comes into his own when everything he loves is taken away, and how a mother learns to live with the mistakes of the past.

**Tiny Hot Dogs** Mary Giuliani 2019-04-09 From awkward schoolgirl to Caterer to the Stars, Mary Giuliani weaves together a collection of hilarious memories, from professional growing pains to her long journey to motherhood, never losing her sense of humor and her love for everyone's favorite party food, pigs in a blanket. Mary's utterly unremarkable childhood was everything she didn't want: hailing from a deeply loving yet overprotective Italian family in an all-Jewish enclave on Long Island. All she wanted was to fit in (be Jewish) and become famous (specifically a cast member on Saturday Night Live). With an easy, natural storytelling sensibility, Mary shares her journey from a cosseted childhood home to the stage and finally to the party, accidentally landing what she now refers to as "the breakthrough role of a lifetime" catering to a glittery list of stars she once hoped to be part of herself. Fresh, personal, and full of Mary's humorous, self-deprecating, and can-do attitude against all odds, you'll want to see where each shiny silver tray of hors d'oeuvres takes her next. You never know when the humble hot dog will be a crucial ingredient in the recipe for success, in building a business or simply making life more delicious.

**Everything Here is Beautiful** Mira T. Lee 2018 A story of "two sisters--Miranda, the older, responsible one, always her younger sister's protector, [and] Lucia, the headstrong, unpredictable one, whose impulses are huge and often life changing. When their mother dies and Lucia starts hearing voices, it is Miranda who must find a way to reach her sister. But Lucia impetuously plows ahead, marrying a big-hearted, older man only to leave him suddenly to have a baby with a young Latino immigrant. She moves her new family from the States to Ecuador and back again, but the bitter constant is that she is, in fact, mentally ill"--

**Calling for a Blanket Dance** Oscar Hokeah 2022-07-26 "STUNNING." —Susan Power, author of *The Grass Dancer* A moving and deeply engaging debut novel about a young Native American man finding strength in his familial identity, from a stellar new voice in fiction. Oscar Hokeah's electric debut takes us into the life of Ever Geimausaddle, whose family—part Mexican, part Native American—is determined to hold onto their community despite obstacles everywhere they turn. Ever's father is injured at the hands of corrupt police on the border when he goes to visit family in Mexico, while his mother struggles both to keep her job and care for her husband. And young Ever is lost and angry at all that he doesn't understand, at this world that seems to undermine his sense of safety. Ever's relatives all have ideas about who he is and who he should be. His Cherokee grandmother, knowing the importance of proximity, urges the family to move across Oklahoma to be near her, while his grandfather, watching their traditions slip away, tries to reunite Ever with his heritage through traditional gourd dances. Through it all, every relative wants the same: to remind Ever of the rich and supportive communities that surround him, there to hold him tight, and for Ever to learn to take the strength given to him to save not only himself but also the next generation. How will this young man visualize a place for himself when the world hasn't made room for him to start with? Honest, heartbreaking, and ultimately uplifting, *Calling for a Blanket Dance* is the story of how Ever Geimausaddle finds his way home.

*The Girl who Fell from the Sky* Heidi W. Durrow 2011-01-01 After a family tragedy orphans her, Rachel, the daughter of a Danish mother and a black G.I., moves into her grandmother's mostly black community in the 1980s, where she must swallow her grief and confront her identity as a biracial woman in a world that wants to see her as either black or white. A first novel. Reprint.

*Dominicana* Angie Cruz 2019-09-03 A GOOD MORNING AMERICA BOOK CLUB PICK Shortlisted for the 2020 Women's Prize for Fiction "Through a novel with so much depth, beauty, and grace, we, like Ana, are forever changed." —Jacqueline Woodson, *Vanity Fair* "Gorgeous writing, gorgeous story." —Sandra Cisneros Fifteen-year-old Ana Cancion never dreamed of moving to America, the way the girls she grew up with in the Dominican countryside did. But when Juan Ruiz proposes and promises to take her to New York City, she has to say yes. It doesn't matter that he is twice her age, that there is no love between them. Their marriage is an opportunity for her entire close-knit family to eventually immigrate. So on New Year's Day, 1965, Ana leaves behind everything she knows and becomes Ana Ruiz, a wife confined to a cold six-floor walk-up in Washington Heights. Lonely and miserable, Ana hatches a reckless plan to escape. But at the bus terminal, she is stopped by Cesar, Juan's free-spirited younger brother, who convinces her to stay. As the Dominican Republic slides into political turmoil, Juan returns to protect his family's assets, leaving Cesar to take care of Ana. Suddenly, Ana is free to take English lessons at a local church, lie on the beach at Coney Island, see a movie at Radio City Music Hall, go dancing with Cesar, and imagine the possibility of a different kind of life in America. When Juan returns, Ana must decide once again between her heart and her duty to her family. In bright, musical prose that reflects the energy of New York City, Angie Cruz's *Dominicana* is a vital portrait of the immigrant experience and the timeless coming-of-age story of a young woman finding her voice in the world.

*The Best American Short Stories 2016* Junot Díaz 2016-10-04 "The literary 'Oscars' features twenty outstanding examples of the best of the best in American short stories." —Shelf Awareness for Readers *The Best American Short Stories 2016* will be selected by Pulitzer Prize winner Junot Díaz. He brings "one of the most distinctive and magnetic voices in contemporary fiction: limber, streetwise, caffeinated and wonderfully eclectic" (Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times*) to the collection.

*The Music Shop* Rachel Joyce 2018-11-06 "An unforgettable story of music, loss and hope. Fans of *High Fidelity*, meet your next quirky love story."—People NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY THE TIMES (UK) AND THE WASHINGTON POST It is 1988. On a dead-end street in a run-down suburb there is a music shop that stands small and brightly lit, jam-packed with records of every kind. Like a beacon, the shop attracts the lonely, the sleepless, and the adrift; Frank, the shop's owner, has a way of connecting his customers with just the piece of music they need. Then, one day, into his shop comes a beautiful young woman, Ilse Brauchmann, who asks Frank to teach her about music. Terrified of real closeness, Frank feels compelled to turn and run, yet he is drawn to this strangely still, mysterious woman with eyes as black as vinyl. But Ilse is not what she seems, and Frank has old wounds that threaten to reopen, as well as a past it seems he will never leave behind. Can a man who is so in tune with other people's needs be so incapable of connecting with the one person who might save him? The journey that these two quirky,

wonderful characters make in order to overcome their emotional baggage speaks to the healing power of music—and love—in this poignant, ultimately joyful work of fiction. Praise for *The Music Shop* “Captures the sheer, transformative joy of romance.”—*The Washington Post* “Love, friendship, and especially the healing powers of music all rise together into a triumphant crescendo. . . . This lovely novel is as satisfying and enlightening as the music that suffuses its every page.”—*The Boston Globe* “Magnificent . . . If you love words, if you love music, if you love love, this [novel] will be without question one of the year’s best.”—*BookPage* (Top Pick in Fiction) “Joyce has a knack for quickly sketching characters in a way that makes them stick. [*The Music Shop*] will surprise you.”—*Minneapolis Star Tribune* “Rachel Joyce has established a reputation for novels that celebrate the dignity and courage of ordinary people and the resilience of the human spirit. . . . But what really elevates *The Music Shop* is Joyce’s detailed knowledge of—and passion for—music.”—*The Guardian*

**Elsewhere Home** Leila Aboulela 2019-02-12 Since her award-winning debut novel, *Minaret*, Leila Aboulela has been praised by J.M. Coetzee, Ali Smith, Aminatta Forna, and Anthony Marra among others for her rich and nuanced depictions of Islamic spiritual and political life. Her latest collection, *Elsewhere, Home*, draws us ineluctably into the lives of immigrants at home and abroad as they forge new identities and reshape old ones. A young woman’s encounter with a former classmate elicits painful reminders of her former life in Khartoum. A wealthy young Sudanese woman studying in Aberdeen begins an unlikely friendship with one of her Scottish classmates. A woman experiences an evolving relationship to her favorite writer, whose portrait of their shared culture both reflects and conflicts with her own sense of identity. Shuttling between the dusty, sun-baked streets of Khartoum and the university halls and cramped apartments of Aberdeen and London, *Elsewhere, Home* explores, with subtlety and restraint, the profound feelings of yearning, loss, and alienation that come with leaving one’s homeland in pursuit of a different life.

**Good Kings Bad Kings** Susan Nussbaum 2013-01-01 The residents at a facility for disabled young people in Chicago build trust and make friends in an effort to fight against their living conditions and mistreatment in this debut novel from the playwright behind “*Mishuganismo*.”

**Mudbound** Hillary Jordan 2017-02-28 Now a Netflix major motion picture International Bestseller Winner of the Bellwether Prize for Fiction “Sometimes it’s necessary to do wrong. Sometimes it’s the only way to make things right.” In this award-winning portrait of two families caught up in the blind hatred of a small Southern town, prejudice takes many forms—some subtle, some ruthless. *Mudbound* is the saga of the McAllan family, who struggle to survive on a remote, ramshackle farm, and the Jacksons, their black sharecroppers. When two sons return from World War II to work the land, the unlikely friendship between these brothers-in-arms—one white, one black—arouses the passions of their neighbours. As the women and men of each family tell their version of events, we are drawn into their lives. Striving for love and honour in a brutal time and place, they become players in a tragedy on the grandest scale and find redemption where they least expect it.

**Refuge: A Novel** Dina Nayeri 2018-07-10 “Rich and colorful... [*Refuge*] has the kind of immediacy commonly associated with memoir, which lends it heft, intimacy, atmosphere.” —*New York Times* The moving lifetime

relationship between a father and a daughter, seen through the prism of global immigration and the contemporary refugee experience. An Iranian girl escapes to America as a child, but her father stays behind. Over twenty years, as she transforms from confused immigrant to overachieving Westerner to sophisticated European transplant, daughter and father know each other only from their visits: four crucial visits over two decades, each in a different international city. The longer they are apart, the more their lives diverge, but also the more each comes to need the other's wisdom and, ultimately, rescue. Meanwhile, refugees of all nationalities are flowing into Europe under troubling conditions. Wanting to help, but also looking for a lost sense of home, our grown-up transplant finds herself quickly entranced by a world that is at once everything she has missed and nothing that she has ever known. Will her immersion in the lives of these new refugees allow her the grace to save her father? *Refuge* charts the deeply moving lifetime relationship between a father and a daughter, seen through the prism of global immigration. Beautifully written, full of insight, charm, and humor, the novel subtly exposes the parts of ourselves that get left behind in the wake of diaspora and ultimately asks: Must home always be a physical place, or can we find it in another person?

*And West Is West* Ron Childress 2015-10-13 Winner of the prestigious PEN/Bellwether Prize for Socially Engaged Fiction, *And West Is West* is an inspired novel about two young people who learn, the hard way, about the devastating power of new technology to isolate us from the consequences of our actions. When Jessica, a young Air Force drone pilot in Nevada, is tasked with launching a missile against a suspected terrorist halfway across the world, she realizes that though women and children are in the crosshairs of her screen, she has no choice but to follow orders. Ethan, a young Wall Street quant, is involved in a more bloodless connection to war when he develops an algorithm that enables his company's clients to profit by exploiting the international financial instability caused by exactly this kind of antiterrorist strike. These two are only minor players, but their actions have global implications that tear lives apart--including their own. When Jessica finds herself discharged from the service and Ethan makes an error that costs him his job, both find themselves adrift, cast out by a corrupt system and forced to take the blame for decisions they did not make. In *And West Is West*, Ron Childress has crafted a powerful, politically charged, and terrifyingly real scenario that takes readers into the lives of characters living in different worlds yet bound together by forces beyond their control.

***The King Is Always Above the People*** Daniel Alarcón 2017-10-31 LONGLISTED for the 2017 NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FOR FICTION An urgent, essential collection of stories about immigration, broken dreams, Los Angeles gang members, Latin American families, and other tales of high stakes journeys, from the award-winning author of *War by Candlelight* and *At Night We Walk in Circles*. Migration. Betrayal. Family secrets. Doomed love. Uncertain futures. In Daniel Alarcón's hands, these are transformed into deeply human stories with high stakes. In "The Thousands," people are on the move and forging new paths; hope and heartbreak abound. A man deals with the fallout of his blind relatives' mysterious deaths and his father's mental breakdown and incarceration in "The Bridge." A gang member discovers a way to forgiveness and redemption through the haze of violence and trauma in "The Ballad of Rocky Rontal." And in the tour de force novella, "The Auroras", a man severs himself from his old life and seeks to make a new one in a new city, only to find himself seduced and controlled by a powerful woman. Richly drawn, full of unforgettable characters, *The*

King is Always Above the People reveals experiences both unsettling and unknown, and yet eerily familiar in this new world.

**Beyond the Bear** Dan Bigley 2013-03-21 A 25-year-old backcountry wanderer, a man happiest exploring wild places with his dog, Dan Bigley woke up one midsummer morning to a day full of promise. Before it was over, after a stellar day of salmon fishing along Alaska's Kenai and Russian rivers, a grizzly came tearing around a corner in the trail. Dan barely had time for "bear charging" to register before it had him on the ground, altering his life forever. "Upper nose, eyes, forehead anatomy unrecognizable," as the medevac report put it. Until then, one thing after another had fallen into place in Dan's life. He had a job he loved taking troubled kids on outdoor excursions. He had just bought a cabin high in the Chugach Mountains with a view that went on forever. He was newly in love. After a year of being intrigued by a woman named Amber, they had just spent their first night together. All of this was shattered by the mauling that nearly killed him, that left him blind and disfigured. Facing paralyzing pain and inconceivable loss, Dan was in no shape to be in a relationship. He and Amber let each other go. Five surgeries later, partway into his long healing journey, they found their way back to each other. The couple's unforgettable story is one of courage, tenacious will, and the power of love to lead the way out of darkness. Dan Bigley's triumph over tragedy is a testament to the ability of the human spirit to overcome physical and emotional devastation, to choose not just to live, but to live fully. Visit Dan Bigley's site or [Beyond the Bear](#).

**Lucky Boy** Shanthi Sekaran 2017-01-10 A gripping tale of adventure and searing reality, *Lucky Boy* gives voice to two mothers bound together by their love for one lucky boy. "Sekaran has written a page-turner that's touching and all too real."—People "A fiercely compassionate story about the bonds and the bounds of motherhood and, ultimately, of love."—Cristina Henríquez, author of *The Book of Unknown Americans* Eighteen years old and fizzing with optimism, Solimar Castro-Valdez embarks on a perilous journey across the Mexican border. Weeks later, she arrives in Berkeley, California, dazed by first love found then lost, and pregnant. This was not the plan. Undocumented and unmoored, Soli discovers that her son, Ignacio, can become her touchstone, and motherhood her identity in a world where she's otherwise invisible. Kavya Reddy has created a beautiful life in Berkeley, but then she can't get pregnant and that beautiful life seems suddenly empty. When Soli is placed in immigrant detention and Ignacio comes under Kavya's care, Kavya finally gets to be the singing, story-telling kind of mother she dreamed of being. But she builds her love on a fault line, her heart wrapped around someone else's child. "Nacho" to Soli, and "Iggy" to Kavya, the boy is steeped in love, but his destiny and that of his two mothers teeters between two worlds as Soli fights to get back to him. *Lucky Boy* is a moving and revelatory ode to the ever-changing borders of love.

**The Cult of the Amateur** Andrew Keen 2008-08-12 Amateur hour has arrived, and the audience is running the show In a hard-hitting and provocative polemic, Silicon Valley insider and pundit Andrew Keen exposes the grave consequences of today's new participatory Web 2.0 and reveals how it threatens our values, economy, and ultimately the very innovation and creativity that forms the fabric of American achievement. Our most valued cultural institutions, Keen warns—our professional newspapers, magazines, music, and movies—are being overtaken by an avalanche of amateur, user-generated free content. Advertising revenue is

being siphoned off by free classified ads on sites like Craigslist; television networks are under attack from free user-generated programming on YouTube and the like; file-sharing and digital piracy have devastated the multibillion-dollar music business and threaten to undermine our movie industry. Worse, Keen claims, our “cut-and-paste” online culture—in which intellectual property is freely swapped, downloaded, remashed, and aggregated—threatens over 200 years of copyright protection and intellectual property rights, robbing artists, authors, journalists, musicians, editors, and producers of the fruits of their creative labors. In today’s self-broadcasting culture, where amateurism is celebrated and anyone with an opinion, however ill-informed, can publish a blog, post a video on YouTube, or change an entry on Wikipedia, the distinction between trained expert and uninformed amateur becomes dangerously blurred. When anonymous bloggers and videographers, unconstrained by professional standards or editorial filters, can alter the public debate and manipulate public opinion, truth becomes a commodity to be bought, sold, packaged, and reinvented. The very anonymity that the Web 2.0 offers calls into question the reliability of the information we receive and creates an environment in which sexual predators and identity thieves can roam free. While no Luddite—Keen pioneered several Internet startups himself—he urges us to consider the consequences of blindly supporting a culture that endorses plagiarism and piracy and that fundamentally weakens traditional media and creative institutions. Offering concrete solutions on how we can reign in the free-wheeling, narcissistic atmosphere that pervades the Web, *THE CULT OF THE AMATEUR* is a wake-up call to each and every one of us.

Summary of the Leavers by Lisa Ko: Conversation Starters Bookhabits 2018-04-24 *The Leavers* by Lisa Ko: Conversation Starters Eleven-year-old Deming and his mother Polly are reunited after Deming arrives from China where Polly sent him when he was a baby to be cared for by his grandfather. Polly promises Deming they won't be separated again, but one morning, Polly leaves for the nail salon where she works and never comes home. Ten years pass and Deming is now named Daniel Wilkinson. Feeling the pain of abandonment all those years, Daniel decides to pursue links that will lead him to solve the mystery of his disappearing birth mother. Will Polly and Daniel reunite? Lisa Ko's debut novel, *The Leavers*, winner of the 2016 PEN/Bellwether Prize for Fiction, tells the harrowing story of immigrant mother and son who had to be separated in order to pursue the American Dream. A Brief Look Inside: *EVERY GOOD BOOK CONTAINS A WORLD FAR DEEPER* than the surface of its pages. The characters and their world come alive, and the characters and its world still live on. Conversation Starters is peppered with questions designed to bring us beneath the surface of the page and invite us into the world that lives on. These questions can be used to... Create Hours of Conversation: - Promote an atmosphere of discussion for groups - Foster a deeper understanding of the book - Assist in the study of the book, either individually or corporately - Explore unseen realms of the book as never seen before Disclaimer: This book you are about to enjoy is an independent resource meant to supplement the original book. If you have not yet read the original book, we encourage you to before purchasing this unofficial Conversation Starters.

**Kissing the Virgin's Mouth** Donna M. Gershten 2009-10-13 Guadalupe Magdalena Molina Vásquez -- wife, scoundrel, courtesan, mother -- is full of contradictions: she believes in love but is suspicious of men; she rejects religion but admires the Virgin Mary; she respects tradition while breaking all the rules. Here, in the Golden Zone of Teatán, Mexico, Magda tells her extraordinary life story -- from a poor Mexican barrio to American

affluence, from wide-eyed childhood to worldly courtesan life, from full-blooded youth to oncoming blindness -- and bewitchingly imparts the hard-earned wisdom she has gained through the years.

Right Back Where We Started From Joy Lanzendorfer 2021-05-04 If misfortune hadn't gotten in the way, Sandra Sanborn would be where she belongs—among the rich and privileged instead of standing outside a Hollywood studio wearing a sandwich board in the hope of someone discovering her. It's tough breaking into the movies during the Great Depression, but Sandra knows that she's destined for greatness. After all, her grandmother Vira crossed the country during the Gold Rush and established the Sanborns as one of San Francisco's most prominent families, and her mother Mabel grew up in a lavish mansion and married into an agricultural empire. Success, Sandra feels, is in her blood. She just needs a chance to prove it. In between failed auditions, Sandra receives a letter from a man claiming to be her father, which calls into question everything she believes about her family—and herself. As she tries to climb the social ladder, family secrets lurk in the background, pulling her down. Until Sandra confronts the truth about how Vira and Mabel gained and lost their fortunes, she will always end up right back where she started from. Right Back Where We Started From is a sweeping, multigenerational work of fiction that explores the lust for ambition that entered into the American consciousness during the Gold Rush and how it affected our nation's ideas of success, failure, and the pursuit of happiness. It is a meticulously layered saga—at once historically rich, romantic, and suspenseful—about three determined and completely unforgettable women.

**The Vigilante** John Steinbeck 2018-02 The papers all said he was a fiend. I read all the papers. That's what they all said.' One of America's greatest writers explores mob violence, voyeurism and betrayal in these unforgettable tales of Californian life.

The Moor's Account Laila Lalami 2015-09-22 An “exquisite piece of historical fiction” (Winnipeg Free Press), The Moor's Account is “brilliantly imagined fiction...rewritten to give us something that feels very like the truth” (Salman Rushdie). In 1527, the conquistador Pánfilo de Narváez left the port of San Lucar de Barrameda in Spain with a crew of more than five hundred men. His goal was to claim what is now the Gulf Coast of the United States for the Spanish crown and, in the process, become as wealthy and as famous as Hernán Cortés. But from the moment the Narváez expedition reached Florida it met with incredibly bad luck—storms, disease, starvation, hostile Indians. Within a year, there were only four survivors: the expedition's treasurer, Cabeza de Vaca; a Spanish nobleman named Alonso del Castillo Maldonado; a young explorer by the name of Andrés Dorantes; and his Moroccan slave, Mustafa al-Zamori. The four survivors were forced to live as slaves to the Indians for six years, before fleeing and establishing themselves as faith healers. Together, they traveled on foot through present-day Florida, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, gathering thousands of disciples and followers along the way. In 1536, they crossed the Rio Grande into Mexican territory, where they stumbled on a group of Spanish slavers, who escorted them to the capital of the Spanish empire, México-Tenochtitlán. Three of the survivors were asked to provide testimony of their journey—Castillo, Dorantes, and Cabeza de Vaca, who later wrote a book about this adventure, called *La Relación*, or *The Account*. But because he was a slave, Estebanico was not asked to testify. His experience was considered irrelevant, or superfluous, or unreliable, or unworthy, despite the fact that he had acted as a scout, an interpreter, and a translator. This

novel is his story.

**Running the Rift** Naomi Benaron 2012-10-16 Winner of the PEN/Bellwether Prize for Fiction: An “audacious and compelling” novel of one man trying to outrun the horrors of the Rwandan genocide (The Washington Post). A Kansas City Star, Seattle Times, and BookBrowse Best of the Year Pick Running the Rift follows the progress of Jean Patrick Nkuba from the day he knows that running will be his life to the moment he must run to save his life. A naturally gifted athlete, he sprints over the thousand hills of Rwanda and dreams of becoming his country’s first Olympic medal winner in track. But Jean Patrick is a Tutsi in a world that has become increasingly restrictive and violent for his people. As tensions mount between the Hutu and Tutsi, he holds fast to his dream that running might deliver him, and his people, from the brutality around them. Winner of the PEN/Bellwether Prize for Socially Engaged Fiction, Naomi Benaron has written a stunning and gorgeous novel that—through the eyes of one unforgettable boy—explores a country’s unraveling, its tentative new beginning, and the love that binds its people together. “A profound display of imagination and empathy. Benaron writes like Jean Patrick runs, with the heart of a lion.” —The Dallas Morning News “A novel full of unspeakable strife but also joy, humor, and love.” —O, The Oprah Magazine “This is truly fearless writing: ambitious, beautiful, unapologetically passionate.” —Barbara Kingsolver, New York Times–bestselling author “A culturally rich and unflinching story of resilience and resistance.” —Chicago Tribune “Benaron accomplishes the improbable feat of wringing genuine loveliness from unspeakable horror.”—Publishers Weekly (starred review)

**The Book of (Even More) Awesome** Neil Pasricha 2011-04-28 From the bestselling author of The Book of Awesome, You Are Awesome, and the award-winning, multimillion-hit blog 1000 Awesome Things comes even more of the little things that make us smile every day! Neil Pasricha is back with a collection of hundreds more awesome things from the website, as well as never-before-seen extraordinary moments that deserve celebration: • Letting go of the gas pump perfectly so you end on a round number • When a baby falls asleep on you • When your pet notices you’re in a bad mood and comes to see you • Pulling a weed and getting all the roots with it • When your windshield wipers match the beat of the song you’re listening to • When the hiccups stop • The smooth feeling on your teeth when you get your braces off • Driving from a rough road onto a smooth one • When the person you’re meeting is even later than you are • That guy who helps you parallel park There’s even space for you to write your very own Awesome Things in the back. Because couldn’t we all use (even more) awesome?

Finding Jesus at the Border Julia Lambert Fogg 2020-04-21 Immigration is an issue of major concern within the Christian community. As Christians, how should we respond to the current crisis? Interweaving biblical narratives of border crossing and recent stories of immigrants at the US-Mexico border, this accessibly written book invites Christians to reconsider the plight of their neighbors and respond with compassion to the present immigration crisis. Julia Lambert Fogg, a pastor and New Testament scholar who is actively serving immigrant families in Southern California, interprets well-known biblical stories in a fresh way and puts a human face on the immigration debate. Fogg argues that Christians must step out of their comfort zones and learn to cross social, ethnic, and religious borders--just as Jesus did--to become the body of Christ in the world.

She encourages readers to welcome Christ by embracing DREAMers, the undocumented, asylum seekers, and immigrants, and she inspires Christians to advocate for immigrant justice in their communities.

Everywhere You Don't Belong Gabriel Bump 2021-01-12 A New York Times Book Review Notable Book of 2020 “A comically dark coming-of-age story about growing up on the South Side of Chicago, but it’s also social commentary at its finest, woven seamlessly into the work . . . Bump’s meditation on belonging and not belonging, where or with whom, how love is a way home no matter where you are, is handled so beautifully that you don’t know he’s hypnotized you until he’s done.” —Tommy Orange, The New York Times Book Review In this alternately witty and heartbreaking debut novel, Gabriel Bump gives us an unforgettable protagonist, Claude McKay Love. Claude isn’t dangerous or brilliant—he’s an average kid coping with abandonment, violence, riots, failed love, and societal pressures as he steers his way past the signposts of youth: childhood friendships, basketball tryouts, first love, first heartbreak, picking a college, moving away from home. Claude just wants a place where he can fit. As a young black man born on the South Side of Chicago, he is raised by his civil rights–era grandmother, who tries to shape him into a principled actor for change; yet when riots consume his neighborhood, he hesitates to take sides, unwilling to let race define his life. He decides to escape Chicago for another place, to go to college, to find a new identity, to leave the pressure cooker of his hometown behind. But as he discovers, he cannot; there is no safe haven for a young black man in this time and place called America. Percolating with fierceness and originality, attuned to the ironies inherent in our twenty-first-century landscape, *Everywhere You Don’t Belong* marks the arrival of a brilliant young talent.

America Is Not the Heart Elaine Castillo 2018-04-03 Named one of the best books of 2018 by NPR, Real Simple, Lit Hub, The Boston Globe, San Francisco Chronicle, The New York Post, Kirkus Reviews, and The New York Public Library "A saga rich with origin myths, national and personal . . . Castillo is part of a younger generation of American writers instilling literature with a layered sense of identity." --Vogue How many lives fit in a lifetime? When Hero De Vera arrives in America--haunted by the political upheaval in the Philippines and disowned by her parents--she's already on her third. Her uncle gives her a fresh start in the Bay Area, and he doesn't ask about her past. His younger wife knows enough about the might and secrecy of the De Vera family to keep her head down. But their daughter--the first American-born daughter in the family--can't resist asking Hero about her damaged hands. An increasingly relevant story told with startling lucidity, humor, and an uncanny ear for the intimacies and shorthand of family ritual, *America Is Not the Heart* is a sprawling, soulful debut about three generations of women in one family struggling to balance the promise of the American dream and the unshakeable grip of history. With exuberance, grit, and sly tenderness, here is a family saga; an origin story; a romance; a narrative of two nations and the people who leave one home to grasp at another.

*Little Broken Things* Nicole Baart 2020-08-25 “If you liked *Big Little Lies*, you’ll want to crack open [*Little Broken Things*].” —Southern Living An unforgettable and moving novel about an affluent suburban family whose carefully constructed façade crumbles with the unexpected arrival of an endangered young girl. I have something for you. When Quinn Cruz receives that cryptic text message from her older sister Nora, she

doesn't think much of it. They haven't seen each other in nearly a year and their relationship consists mostly of infrequent phone calls and the occasional email. But when a haunted-looking Nora shows up just hours later, a chain reaction is set into motion that will change both of their lives forever. Nora's "something" is more shocking than Quinn could have ever imagined: a little girl, cowering and wide-eyed. Nora hands her over to Quinn with instructions to keep her safe and disappears, leaving Quinn as the unlikely caretaker of a girl introduced simply as Lucy. "Steeped in menace...a race-to-the-finish family drama" (People), *Little Broken Things* explores life and death, family and freedom, and the lengths one woman will go to protect the ones she loves.

*The Leavers a Novel* 2017 Named one of the most anticipated books of 2017 by Entertainment Weekly, Time.com, Bustle, BuzzFeed, The Millions, and Nylon.com. "The Leavers is courageous, sensitive, and perfectly of this moment."-Barbara Kingsolver An emotionally harrowing debut novel that explores assimilation and loss, immigration and homeland, independence and connection. One morning, Deming Guo's mother, an undocumented Chinese immigrant named Polly, goes to her job at the nail salon and never comes home. No one can find any trace of her. With his mother gone, eleven-year-old Deming is left with no one to care for him. He is eventually adopted by two white college professors who move him from the Bronx to a small town upstate. They rename him Daniel Wilkinson in their efforts to make him over into their version of an "all-American boy." But far away from all he's ever known, Daniel struggles to reconcile his new life with his mother's disappearance and the memories of the family and community he left behind. Set in New York and China, *The Leavers* is a vivid and moving examination of borders and belonging. It's the story of how one boy comes into his own when everything he's loved has been taken away-and how a mother learns to live with the mistakes of her past. This powerful debut is the winner of the 2016 PEN/Bellwether Prize for fiction, awarded by Barbara Kingsolver for a novel that addresses issues of social justice.

Searching for Zion Emily Raboteau 2013-01-08 A decade in the making, Emily Raboteau's *Searching for Zion* takes readers around the world on an unexpected adventure of faith. Both one woman's quest for a place to call "home" and an investigation into a people's search for the Promised Land, this landmark work of creative nonfiction is a trenchant inquiry into contemporary and historical ethnic displacement. At the age of twenty-three, award-winning writer Emily Raboteau traveled to Israel to visit her childhood best friend. While her friend appeared to have found a place to belong, Raboteau could not yet say the same for herself. As a biracial woman from a country still divided along racial lines, she'd never felt at home in America. But as a reggae fan and the daughter of a historian of African-American religion, Raboteau knew of "Zion" as a place black people yearned to be. She'd heard about it on Bob Marley's *Exodus* and in the speeches of Martin Luther King. She understood it as a metaphor for freedom, a spiritual realm rather than a geographical one. Now in Israel, the Jewish Zion, she was surprised to discover black Jews. More surprising was the story of how they got there. Inspired by their exodus, Raboteau sought out other black communities that left home in search of a Promised Land. Her question for them is same she asks herself: have you found the home you're looking for? On her ten-year journey back in time and around the globe, through the Bush years and into the age of Obama, Raboteau wanders to Jamaica, Ethiopia, Ghana, and the American South to explore the complex and contradictory perspectives of Black Zionists. She talks to Rastafarians and African Hebrew Israelites,

Evangelicals and Ethiopian Jews, and Katrina transplants from her own family—people that have risked everything in search of territory that is hard to define and harder to inhabit. Uniting memoir with historical and cultural investigation, Raboteau overturns our ideas of place and patriotism, displacement and dispossession, citizenship and country in a disarmingly honest and refreshingly brave take on the pull of the story of Exodus.

**The Sentences That Create Us** PEN America 2022-01-11 *The Sentences That Create Us* draws from the unique insights of over fifty justice-involved contributors and their allies to offer inspiration and resources for creating a literary life in prison. Centering in the philosophy that writers in prison can be as vibrant and capable as writers on the outside, and have much to offer readers everywhere, *The Sentences That Create Us* aims to propel writers in prison to launch their work into the world beyond the walls, while also embracing and supporting the creative community within the walls. *The Sentences That Create Us* is a comprehensive resource writers can grow with, beginning with the foundations of creative writing. A roster of impressive contributors including Reginald Dwayne Betts (*Felon: Poems*), Mitchell S. Jackson (*Survival Math*), Wilbert Rideau (*In the Place of Justice*) and Piper Kerman (*Orange is the New Black*), among many others, address working within and around the severe institutional, emotional, psychological and physical limitations of writing prison through compelling first-person narratives. The book's authors offer pragmatic advice on editing techniques, pathways to publication, writing routines, launching incarcerated-run prison publications and writing groups, lesson plans from prison educators and next-step resources. Threaded throughout the book is the running theme of addressing lived trauma in writing, and writing's capacity to support an authentic healing journey centered in accountability and restoration. While written towards people in the justice system, this book can serve anyone seeking hard won lessons and inspiration for their own creative—and human—journey.

**We Love You, Charlie Freeman** Kaitlyn Greenidge 2017-01-31 A FINALIST FOR THE 2016 CENTER FOR FICTION FIRST NOVEL PRIZE AND THE 2017 YOUNG LIONS AWARD “A terrifically auspicious debut.” —Janet Maslin, *The New York Times* “Smart, timely and powerful . . . A rich examination of America’s treatment of race, and the ways we attempt to discuss and confront it today.” —*The Huffington Post* *The Freeman family--Charles, Laurel, and their daughters, teenage Charlotte and nine-year-old Callie--have been invited to the Toneybee Institute to participate in a research experiment. They will live in an apartment on campus with Charlie, a young chimp abandoned by his mother. The Freemans were selected because they know sign language; they are supposed to teach it to Charlie and welcome him as a member of their family. But when Charlotte discovers the truth about the institute’s history of questionable studies, the secrets of the past invade the present in devious ways. The power of this shattering novel resides in Greenidge’s undeniable storytelling talents. What appears to be a story of mothers and daughters, of sisterhood put to the test, of adolescent love and grown-up misconduct, and of history’s long reach, becomes a provocative and compelling exploration of America’s failure to find a language to talk about race. “A magnificently textured, vital, visceral feat of storytelling . . . [by] a sharp, poignant, extraordinary new voice of American literature.” —Téa Obreht, author of *The Tiger’s Wife**

*The Twelve-Mile Straight* Eleanor Henderson 2017-09-12 From New York Times bestselling author Eleanor

Henderson, an audacious American epic set in rural Georgia during the years of the Depression and Prohibition. Cotton County, Georgia, 1930: in a house full of secrets, two babies—one light-skinned, the other dark—are born to Elma Jesup, a white sharecropper's daughter. Accused of her rape, field hand Genus Jackson is lynched and dragged behind a truck down the Twelve-Mile Straight, the road to the nearby town. In the aftermath, the farm's inhabitants are forced to contend with their complicity in a series of events that left a man dead and a family irrevocably fractured. Despite the prying eyes and curious whispers of the townspeople, Elma begins to raise her babies as best as she can, under the roof of her mercurial father, Juke, and with the help of Nan, the young black housekeeper who is as close to Elma as a sister. But soon it becomes clear that the ties that bind all of them together are more intricate than any could have ever imagined. As startling revelations mount, a web of lies begins to collapse around the family, destabilizing their precarious world and forcing all to reckon with the painful truth. Acclaimed author Eleanor Henderson has returned with a novel that combines the intimacy of a family drama with the staggering presence of a great Southern saga. Tackling themes of racialized violence, social division, and financial crisis, *The Twelve-Mile Straight* is a startlingly timely, emotionally resonant, and magnificent tour de force.

*The Small Backs of Children* Lidia Yuknavitch 2015-07-07 National Bestseller A masterful literary talent explores the treacherous, often violent borders between war and sex, love and art. With the flash of a camera, one girl's life is shattered, and a host of others altered forever. . . In a war-torn village in Eastern Europe, an American photographer captures a heart-stopping image: a young girl flying toward the lens, fleeing a fiery explosion that has engulfed her home and family. The image wins acclaim and prizes, becoming an icon for millions—and a subject of obsession for one writer, the photographer's best friend, who has suffered a devastating tragedy of her own. As the writer plunges into a suicidal depression, her filmmaker husband enlists several friends, including a fearless bisexual poet and an ingenuous performance artist, to save her by rescuing the unknown girl and bringing her to the United States. And yet, as their plot unfolds, everything we know about the story comes into question: What does the writer really want? Who is controlling the action? And what will happen when these two worlds—east and west, real and virtual—collide? A fierce, provocative, and deeply affecting novel of both ideas and action that blends the tight construction of Julian Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending* with the emotional power of Anthony Marra's *A Constellation of Vital Phenomena*, Lidia Yuknavitch's *The Small Backs of Children* is a major step forward from one of our most avidly watched writers.

*At the Edge of the Haight* Katherine Seligman 2021-01-19 The 10th Winner of the 2019 PEN/Bellwether Prize for Socially Engaged Fiction, Awarded by Barbara Kingsolver “What a read this is, right from its startling opening scene. But even more than plot, it's the richly layered details that drive home a lightning bolt of empathy. To read *At the Edge of the Haight* is to live inside the everyday terror and longings of a world that most of us manage not to see, even if we walk past it on sidewalks every day. At a time when more Americans than ever find themselves at the edge of homelessness, this book couldn't be more timely.” —Barbara Kingsolver, author of *Unsheltered* and *The Poisonwood Bible* Maddy Donaldo, homeless at twenty, lives with her dog and makeshift family in the hidden spaces of San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. She thinks she knows how to survive and whom to trust until she accidentally witnesses the murder of a young man.

Her world is upended as she has to face not only the killer but also the police and then the victim's parents, who desperately want Maddy to tell them about the life their son led after he left home. And in a desire to save her since they could not save their own son, they are determined to have Maddy reunite with her own lost family. But what makes a family? Is it the people who raised you if they don't have the skills to look after you? Is it the foster parents whose generosity only lasts until things become more difficult? Or is it the family that Maddy has met in the park, young people who also have nowhere else to go? Told with sensitivity and tenderness and set against the backdrop of a radically changing city, *At the Edge of the Haight* is narrated by a young girl just beginning to understand herself. The result is a powerful debut that, much like previous Bellwether winners *The Leavers*, by Lisa Ko, or Heidi Durrow's *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky*, grapples with one of the most urgent issues of our day.