

WINTER ADULT READING MONTH

STAFF PICKS 2017

FICTION

The Green Bicycle by Haifaa Al Mansour—Spunky eleven-year-old Wadjda lives in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia with her parents. She desperately wants a bicycle so that she can race her friend Abdullah, even though it is considered improper for girls to ride bikes. This Middle Eastern coming-of-age story is told with warmth, spirit, and a mischievous sense of humor. [jF A316, ebook]

*This book is based on the award-winning film *Wadja*, which the Library has. It is the first film to be shot entirely in Saudi Arabia, and the first film made by a female Saudi director. (Haifaa Al Mansour) Because of restrictions placed on women in Saudi Arabia, she was not allowed to interact with her mostly male crew. She had to direct the street scenes from a nearby van, watching through a monitor and giving instructions via walkie-talkie. The movie preceded the book, but as always read the book first.

The Shining Girls by Lauren Buekes—A time-traveling serial killer from the 1930s is pursued by the punk 1990s girl who survived his attack. Sound interesting? It is intriguing, tense and surreal, moving quickly between time periods and point of view. A warning: the violence against women and animals is gruesome and upsetting, in part because the author forces you to care about the characters. However, if you can handle that, you are in for a good, gritty sci-fi crime novel. [F B566, CD book, ebook, eaudio]

The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay by Michael Chabon—an adventure which includes the art of escape and magic, Nazi Europe, a history of the comic book industry, several comic book sub-plots, family and romance. Periodically while reading it I came across passages written so beautifully that I had to read them out loud. [CD book, ebook]

The Bane Chronicles by Cassandra Clare—Magnus Bane is a warlock determined to live life to the fullest, and he isn't going to let a little case of immortality hold him back. Whether smuggling Marie Anoinette out of France, babysitting a fledgling vampire, or finding love (again) he's going to live it up and do it in high fashion, no matter how many years pass. [YA C591, ebook]

Goodbye Without Leaving by Laurie Colwin—Geraldine Colshares steps out of her life as a graduate student in English and into a short career as a backup singer for Vernon and Ruby Shakely and the Shakettes. But you can't be a Shakette forever, and when Vernon decides he needs all black backup singers, Geraldine is left trying to figure out her life. Colwin's novel is for anyone who's had trouble figuring out if you can be a grownup and still boogie in your soul. [F C727, ebook]



A Lady Reading by Sir Francis Seymour Haden, England 1858

The Uncorker of Ocean Bottles by Michelle Cuevas—A quiet book for wishers and dreamers, *The Uncorker of Ocean Bottles* celebrates friendship, community and the worth of every human being. Expressive, engaging text and Erin Stead's richly detailed illustrations about the man who opens and delivers messages in ocean bottles beg for repeated readings. The quirky, memorable protagonist finds his way into your heart as he delivers messages from bottles that he finds on the shore. [E C965 CUE]

These Shallow Graves by Jennifer Donnelly—What an adventure reading this book! It's a mix of historical fiction, murder-mystery, coming-of-age, and romance blended perfectly in a simple narrative. A story of dark secrets, dirty truths, and the lengths to which people will go for love and revenge. [YA D685, ebook]



Reading in Bed by James Abbot McNeill Whistler,
United States 1858

Neapolitan Novels by Elena Ferrante—*My Brilliant Friend* is the first book in an engrossing series about two girls growing up in post-war Naples. The tough neighborhood and their competitive childhood bind them together, as they find their place in changing Italian Society. The novel has a tense intimacy that tells the story of a particular friendship, in a specific time and place with many familiar dynamics of female friendships and romantic relationships. (I recommend all four—but start with the first one!) [F F373, ebook, eaudio]

Shades of Grey by Jasper Fforde—In a post post-apocalyptic society based on color perception, Eddie Russet and his father are assigned to leave their life in the Green Sector to East Carmine, a tiny town on the edge of the Red Sector. A series of events leading to the mysterious town of High Saffron reveal that there are many more secrets lurking beyond the surface of their polite and proper society. [F F437, CD book, ebook, eaudio]

Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library by Chris Grabenstein—Think Willy Wonka in library form and that's what this book is. A group of 12-year-olds are chosen to participate in a 24 hour scavenger hunt in the new town library, only it isn't a normal library, but is filled with all sorts special inventions to help escape from the library. Wonderful middle-grade book with dozens of references for any book lover. [jF G727, CD book, ebook, eaudio]

Shoeless Joe by W.P. Kinsella—The author, W. P. Kinsella, died last fall, another great name lost to 2016. His book *Shoeless Joe*, on which the movie *Field of Dreams* was based, is one of my favorites. Featuring the characters who star in the film as well as additional personae and locations, it is a joy to read, filled with examples of magical realism on and off of the baseball diamond. The prose is poetical and even spiritual. I don't think you need to be a baseball fan to enjoy it. An

added bonus, the story not only takes place in Iowa, but just outside of Iowa City. [F K56, CD book, ebook, eaudio]

The Night Circus by Erin Morgenstern—The rules never change in this life and death competition, only the arena. For this round, the arena is a night circus, decorated in only black and white. Beautiful and surreal, this circus seems to be fueled on magic - perhaps, because, it is. As the two competitors, Celia and Marco, challenge themselves and each other by adding exhibits to the circus, they tumble into love. Unfortunately, only one can remain standing by the end of the competition, and their desire for each other puts the lives of everyone connected to the circus at risk. The writing in this book is very much like the circus itself: dreamlike and breathtaking. A lovely read. [F M851, CD book, LP, ebook, eaudio]

His Majesty's Dragon by Naomi Novik—Will Laurence ran away to the Navy at the age of twelve. Now a decorated captain in the Napoleonic Wars he is looking forward to proposing to his childhood sweetheart. His plans are derailed when a dragon egg, bounty from a French ship, hatches weeks from land. Duty demands he become companion to the hatchling, leaving everything he knows behind. [F N943, CD book, ebook, eaudio]

My Name is Mary Sutter by Robin Oliveira—Mary comes from a long line of distinguished midwives. At 20 she is a respected midwife herself, but she wants more. She wants the medical knowledge which is restricted to the sphere of men. She wants to be a surgeon. When the country breaks out in civil war, the army requests nurses, and Mary takes the opportunity in the hopes it will lead to more. [F O48, CD book, ebook, eaudio]

Pax by Sara Pennypacker—Peter and his pet fox, Pax, are inseparable until Peter must go live with his grandfather and is

forced to return Pax to the wild. Their story is told from their alternating points of view and is one of loyalty, bravery, and the ugliness of human wars. It is hard to put down. [jF P416, CD book, ebook, eaudio]

Going Postal by Terry Pratchett—When conman extraordinaire Moist von Lipwig is finally captured, the leader of Ankh Morpork does the only sensible thing and drafts him into government service. Given the unenviable task of modernizing the decrepit postal service, Moist must use his wits to navigate bureaucratic red-tape, golem labor unions, corporate culture, and a banshee. True to his form, Pratchett uses a comical story about a man named Moist to open doors to more serious topics. [F P912, CD book, ebook, eaudio]

The Revenant: a Novel of Revenge—Michael Punke—In 1823, Hugh Glass is a fur trapper with the Rocky Mountain Fur Company that deals daily with threats of weather, animals, and attacks from Indian tribes that have become warlike over encroachment onto their lands. Glass is scouting when he is mauled by a grizzly bear and is not expected to survive. The company's captain has two of his men stay behind to give Glass a proper burial when the time comes, but they leave instead, taking his hatchet and beloved rifle. Glass does survive, however, and sets out over three thousand miles to exact revenge on the two who left him behind. *The Revenant* is based on a true story and is now a film starring Leonardo DiCaprio. [F P984, CD book, ebook, eaudio]

The Way of Kings by Brandon Sanderson—For the longest time I wrote off Sanderson because someone who is so, so prolific has to have a lion's share of duds. How wrong I was. The first book in his Stormlight Archive series, *The Way of Kings* takes place in a rugged and rocky world constantly beset by raging storms. Political unrest is reaching a boiling point as we follow the intertwining stories of a reluctant assassin, a soldier sold

into slavery, a young noblewoman capable of more than she knows, and the brother of the king who is beginning to question his way of life. Sanderson does an amazing job balancing a strange, alien world with very relatable characters. Themes of leadership and the responsibility required for positions of power abound! [F S216, CD book, ebook, eaudio]

Kitchens of the Great Midwest: A Novel by J. Ryan Stradal—This is a linked collection of stories about food, family, and friendship. Each story is told by a different character but is connected to a girl/woman foodie from Minnesota named Eve Thorvald. Even though each character tells their story for a brief time, they are each filled out and complex. The author does a fantastic job of capturing human character and foibles and typical Midwestern culture. I listened to it, and the reader was excellent, very Minnesotan. [F S895, CD book, ebook, eaudio]

Fun & Games by Duane Swierczynski—Charlie Hardie used to be a cop in Philadelphia, but he's done with all that now and is working as a professional housesitter. His latest gig is in LA, where he'll be taking care of a soundtrack producer's house. What he doesn't expect is that he'll also be taking care of the producer's girlfriend, whom he finds when he arrives, hiding from men who are trying to kill her. After that, the fun and games are a lot less like rest and relaxation and a lot more like hardboiled action. Read this for fun and for thrills. [F S976, CD book, ebook]

The Goldfinch by Donna Tartt—Donna Tartt's descriptive prose crafts a humorous and thought provoking story about the dysfunctional—and unfavorable—life of Theo Decker. This novel is bound to ignite some visceral reactions within the reader, and at almost 800 pages, it's perfect to curl up with for a weekend to escape the cold

weather and dive into an intriguing story. [F T195, CD book, LP, ebook, eaudio]

A Confederacy of Dunces by John Kennedy Toole—This Pulitzer Prize winning novel is so vivid you can practically smell the streets of New Orleans, a great way to escape the Iowa winter. The intertwining stories and dark humor make for a great read. The reader will most likely identify with some aspect of the characters (whether they want to or not). [F T671, CD book, ebook, eaudio]



Study of a Seated Cavalier Reading by Jean-Louis Ernest Meissonier, France circa 1870

Aquarium by David Vann—Every day after school, twelve-year-old Caitlin walks to the Seattle Aquarium where she finds refuge in the fish and waits for her single mother to finish her job and take her home. At the aquarium, an old man who loves fish as much as Caitlin befriends her, cracking open a family secret that will change her life forever. [YA V264, CD book, ebook]

The Sun is Also a Star by Nicola Yoon—Yoon has created an intricate interweaving of those seemingly random small events in life which are utterly pivotal, and it is fascinating to watch the pattern develop. The story is told by poetic Daniel, who does not want to

follow the life-plan envisioned by his Korean parents and become a doctor; and the scientific Natasha who is appalled at the circumstances which will force her undocumented family, herself included, to be deported back to Jamaica. Mingled within their story are other little vignettes which are not only explanatory but also serve to support the basic premise that even apparently insignificant interactions and encounters may indeed shape destiny. [YA Y59, CD book, ebook, eaudio]

GRAPHIC NOVEL

El Deafo by CeCe Bell—A semi-autobiographical graphic novel about a girl who loses her hearing at age 4 and is the only student at her school with a hearing aid. Ms Bell's drawings of a spunky, smart bunny draw you into a story of a girl learning to embrace her difference. A charming and heartwarming story. It is in the Children's department, but it is great for all ages! [jGN B433, ebook]

Locke & Key series by Joe Hill & Gabriel Rodriguez—*Locke and Key* is a strange yet darkly compelling fantasy graphic novel series about Keyhouse, a mansion in New England that is filled with doors that transform anyone who walks through them. But the grounds are also home to an evil, hate-filled presence that wants to open the scariest door of all. [GN H646, ebook]

Toil and Trouble by Mairghread Scott—A gorgeous retelling of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* from the perspective of the witches. They are actually fates who have guided and protected the land and people of Scotland forever, but are now facing their greatest challenge: each other. [ON ORDER, ebook]

Lumberjanes by Noelle Stevenson & Shannon Watters—This series of YA graphic novels mixes a normal girls summer

camp with fantastical elements. Jo, April, Mal, Molly, and Ripley team up as a hilarious group of 5 kick-butt girls who happen to keep finding themselves in the middle of a mystery both magical and supernatural. [YA GN S848, ebook]

Nimona by Noelle Stevenson—Lord Ballister Blackheart, evil villain, never believed he needed a sidekick before Nimona showed up at his door. After spending some time with her, he remains unconvinced. But the impulsive and endearing shapeshifter is here to stay, utterly devoted to his cause of proving to the kingdom that the supposed good guys - Sir Ambrosius Goldenstein included - might not be so good, after all. As the skirmishes with the Institution of Law Enforcement and Heroics become more and more vicious, however, Lord Blackheart begins to realize secretive Nimona is extremely dangerous and uncontrollable. Quirky and sharp, this graphic novel will simultaneously make you laugh and tear at your heartstrings. [YA GN S848]

Paper Girls by Brian K. Vaughn—In the wee hours of the morning after Halloween 1988, four paper girls stumble upon an otherworldly mystery that changes their lives. If you loved *Stranger Things*, you'll love this! [ON ORDER]



Poetess by Hosoda Eishi, Japan 1801

NONFICTION

Dinner with Edward by Isabel Vincent—the touching and mouthwatering story of a woman who starts having dinner regularly with a friend's widowed father as a favor, and ends up in a meaningful friendship with an exacting and extravagant cook. [ON ORDER, CD book, ebook, eaudio]

The Girls of Murder City by Douglas Perry—If you enjoyed the musical *Chicago*, you'll be delighted (and horrified) to learn how much of the story is true. Perry gives his readers a truly amazing and historical insight into a series of sordid murders that rocked a city and inspired a young crime journalist to pen the original play. Fast-paced and scandalous, this thrilling book is one for applause. [364.1523 P462, CD book, ebook, eaudio]

The Sixth Extinction by Elizabeth Kolbert—This book explores the 5 major waves of extinction that Earth has gone through in its existence, and how because of the human race we are now going through Earth's 6th major extinction. However, this is the first extinction that has been caused by one of Earth's creatures—and we are the problem. [576.84 K81, CD book, ebook, eaudio]



Bearded Man Reading in Landscape by Mu'in Musavvir, Iran, AH 1045/AD 1635

Owls Aren't Wise and Bats Aren't Blind: A Naturalist Debunks Our Favorite Fallacies About Wildlife by Warner Shedd—My teenager first started reading this at a gift shop at a national park and then asked me to check it out from the library. After she read it, I did, too, and we both enjoyed this entertaining book full of interesting facts and light-hearted anecdotes about common wildlife. However, despite the author's warnings about rabies and other disease, my teen still thinks a raccoon would make a fun pet! [591.5 S541, ebook]

Ahead of the Curve: Inside the Baseball Revolution by Brian Kenny—MLB Network host Kenny takes on the sacred cows of traditional baseball statistics, explaining in his humorous and inimitable fashion just why they are bad ways to judge players. Instead, he introduces readers to a variety of newer analytics and argues cogently and engagingly that they make for a better game. Highly recommended for students of the game interested in making baseball more rational. [796.357 K36, CD book, ebook, eaudio]

Dead Wake: the Last Crossing of the Lusitania by Erik Larson—It is May of 1915, and German U-boats have been bringing terror to shipping in the North Atlantic. The *Lusitania* is the fastest ocean liner yet created, so there is little fear as the ship begins its journey across the Atlantic to Liverpool, England. Forces both large and small converge, however, to create one of the greatest disasters of history. Larson, author of *The Devil in the White City* and *Isaac's Storm*, is able to tell the story of ordinary people in intimate detail, creating suspense in a tale where the end is already known. [940.4514 L334, CD book, ebook, eaudio]

National Monuments by Heid E. Erdrich—Heid E. Erdrich's collection of poetry allows a new perspective into the material culture of a modern society and questions what place

history and cultural artifacts hold within our daily lives. This well-crafted verse through the Native American perspective is perfect to inspire deep thought on a snowy winter evening. [ON ORDER]

Connectography: Mapping the Future of Global Civilization by Parag Khanna—Khanna posits that it's no longer geography that is destiny but connectivity—the more connected you are to other people, markets, means of transportation, and product supply lines the better you'll do in the twenty-first century. To make his argument, he travels to Ukraine, China, Iran, Mongolia, North Korea, Pakistan, Nigeria, and across the Arctic Circle and many points in between. Read it for the ideas and for the fascinating maps of the new world order. [ON ORDER, CD book, ebook, eaudio]

Beyond the Blue Horizon: How the Earliest Mariners Unlocked the Secrets of the Oceans by Brian M. Fagan—Fagan is an emeritus professor of anthropology and an expert sailor. Here he looks at the earliest civilizations to take to the seas, examining the kinds of boats they used and how they learned to steer by the stars. A highly readable book full of anecdotes, *Beyond the Blue Horizon* is perfect for anyone who's ever dreamed of setting sail. [910.45 F151, ebook]

BIOGRAPHY

Poser: My Life in Twenty-Three Yoga Poses by Claire Dederer—A lot of people tell Claire Dederer she should do yoga, and she resists, because people who do yoga are intolerably earnest. But she finally tries it out of desperation, and while she becomes an earnest devotee, she's also a very funny and astute narrator of yoga, yoga culture, and her own life as a daughter, wife, mother, and writer. [B D299 Dederer, CD book ebook]

Wishful Drinking by Carrie Fisher—I had always wanted to read one of Carrie Fisher's books, but it was not until her untimely death that I finally did. *Wishful Drinking* is based on the touring show she had about twelve years ago, in which she tells of her experiences growing up with famous parents, her problems with addiction, and of course, being in Star Wars. Listening to the audio was a real treat; not only was Ms. Fisher a very witty writer, but she knew how to time her lines just so. [B F533, CD book, ebook, eaudio]

I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark by Debbie Levy—As a child, Ruth Bader Ginsburg observed prejudice and realized life could be unfair. She protested, much like her mother who believed girls should “have the chance to make their mark on the world.” Off they went to the library where Ruth discovered a bounty of books about independent, talented women who made a difference. College in the 1950s? Most girls didn't go. Ruth did, then on to law school to become one of the few female lawyers in the United States, fighting in court for the rights of women and on to the Supreme Court to fight for the rights of all. *I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark* is a biography that encourages readers of all ages to be aware and beg to differ, to boldly dissent, to make things as fair as possible with thoughtful compassion. [jB G493 Ginsburg, ebook]

Hold Still: A Memoir in Photographs by Sally Mann—A beautiful memoir with family snap shots by photographer Sally Mann. Her exquisite writing touches on race, mortality, her close friendships and even family secrets that give insight into the influences that drive her intensely personal work. Each section touches on her connection to her family and the southern landscape, since these are often her subjects, and they give added meaning to her photographic work. [B M272 Mann, ebook]

The Making of Donald Trump by David Cay Johnston—Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporter David Cay Johnston writes a concise, compelling biography of Donald Trump. It is a factual telling of Trump's past, his business ventures, and his relationships with other people. Johnston writes a shocking and gripping account, without devolving into tabloid writing. It's smart, scrupulously researched, and a must-read for anyone wanting to know more about our new president. [B T871 Trump, CD book, ebook, eaudio]



Sybil Reading, Lighted by Child with a Torch by Ugo da Capri, Italy circa 1520-1527

Some Writer! The Story of E.B. White by Melissa Sweet—Calling all writers, calling all E. B. White fans, young and old! *Some Writer! The Story of E. B. White* is sure to please. Through meticulous, thoughtful detail in text, striking photographs and collaged graphic design, author/illustrator Melissa Sweet presents essential elements of author E. B. White's life and writing. Engaging for both writers and readers, *Some Writer! The*

Story of E. B. White is a writer's guide in its own right. It is sure to prompt rereading, or enjoying for the first time, E. B. White's wide-ranging classics, from *Charlotte's Web* and *Stuart Little*, to *New Yorker* essays, and even the canonical *Elements of Style*. Anyone who picks up this enlightening biography will open it again and again. [B W583 White, ebook]

Men We Reaped by Jesmyn Ward—Ward's memoir traces the lives and deaths of her brother and four of her friends—five young men she lost in a four year period in her hometown of DeLisle, Mississippi. Though they died in different ways, Ward sees them all ultimately of victims of a place with no prospects for its young and no hope for the future. For anyone from a small town and anyone who cares about the fate of young African Americans. [ON ORDER, ebook]

**WARM Up with a
Therapy Pony**
on Saturday, February 11
from 1-2 pm in the Schwab
Auditorium

Do not pass GO!
Do not collect \$200!
Just be ready to play at
Game Night for Grownups
on Wednesday, February 15
from 6:30—8:30 pm in
Meeting Room A