



Ramaz Upper School Library
Suggested Summer Reading List 2016

Adichie, Ngozi Chimamanda, *Americanah* (Historical Fiction)

Ifemelu and Obinze are young and in love when they depart military-ruled Nigeria for the West. Beautiful, self-assured Ifemelu heads for America, where despite her academic success, she is forced to grapple with what it means to be black for the first time. Quiet, thoughtful Obinze had hoped to join her, but with post-9/11 America closed to him, he instead plunges into a dangerous, undocumented life in London. Fifteen years later, they reunite in a newly democratic Nigeria, and reignite their passion—for each other and for their homeland.

Albom, Mitch, *Tuesdays with Morrie: An Old Man, A Young Man, and Life's Greatest Lesson* (Non-Fiction)

Mitch Albom reconnects with his college professor Morrie Schwartz. It's been nearly twenty years since he saw Morrie. Mitch rediscovered him in the last months of the older man's life. Knowing he was dying, Morrie visited with Mitch in his study every Tuesday just as they used to back in college. Their rekindled relationship turned into one final "class": lessons in how to live.

Alexie, Sherman, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (Diary Fiction)

Arnold Spirit, aka Junior, was born an outsider with water on his brain, lopsided eyes, and an IQ oppressed by extreme poverty and a mediocre reservation education. After switching to an all-white high school he realizes that though he'll never easily fit in, self-determination and a solid personal identity will give him the chance to both succeed and transcend.

Asimov, Issac, *I, Robot* (Science Fiction)

Science fiction classic in which a Robot, accused of murder, has his day in court.

Baldwin, James, *Go Tell It On The Mountain* (African American Fiction)

A semi-autobiographical novel about a fourteen-year-old boy's discovery of the terms of his identity as the stepson of the minister of a storefront Pentecostal church in Harlem in 1935.

Ballard, J.G., *Empire of the Sun* (War & Military Fiction)

Shanghai, 1941, the streets are full of chaos and corpses and a young British boy searches in vain for his parents. Imprisoned in a Japanese concentration camp, he is witness to the white flash of Nagasaki, as the bomb bellows the end of the war.

Carver, Raymond, *Cathedral* (Short Stories)

A collection of short stories that overflow with the danger, excitement, mystery and possibility of life. Stories included: "Feathers" "Chef's House" "Preservation" "The Compartment" "A Small, Good Thing" "Vitamins" "Careful" "Where I'm Calling From" "The Train" "Fever" "The Bridle" "Cathedral."

Carver, Raymond, *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* (Short Stories)

Presents seventeen short stories which include: "Why Don't You Dance" "Viewfinder" "Mr. Coffee and Mr. Fixit" "Gazebo" "I Could See the Smallest Things" "Sacks" "The Bath" "Tell the Women We're Going" "After the Denim" "So Much Water So Close To Home" "The Third Thing that Killed my Father Off" "A Serious Talk" "The Calm" "Popular Mechanics" "Everything Stuck to Him" "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love" "One More Thing."

Chabon, Michael, *The Amazing Adventure of Kavalier & Clay* (Humorous Fiction)

Joe Kavalier has managed to escape from Nazi-occupied Prague, and now he must use his cunning wits to help rescue his family from Hitler's evil plans.

Charyn, Jerome, *Bitter Bronx* (Short Stories)

Thirteen stories about the Bronx. Jerome Charyn returns to his roots and leads the literary renaissance of an often-overlooked borough in this collection. He depicts a world before and after modern urban renewal destroyed the gritty sanctity of a land made famous by Ruth, Gehrig, and Joltin' Joe. Charyn recalls the mean streets of his youth. In "Lorelei" a lonely-hearts grifter returns home to a former sweetheart; in "Milo's Last Chance" a guidance counselor has a disastrous affair with a student; and in "The Major Leaguer" a former New York Yankee gets entangled with a gang of drug dealers near the

wreckage that Robert Moses wrought. In these and ten other stories, Charyn crafts a funny, sad, and loving tribute to the Bronx.

Cheever, John, *The Stories of John Cheever* (Short Stories)

A collection of sixty-one of Cheever's short stories published from 1946-1975.

Cisneros, Sandra, *Carmelo or, Puro cuento : a novel* (Domestic Fiction)

LaLa learns the stories of her awful grandmother and weaves them into a colorful family history. The "caramelo," a striped shawl begun by her great-grandmother, symbolizes their traditions.

Cisneros, Sandra, *La Casa en Mango Street* (Domestic Fiction)

A young girl living in an Hispanic neighborhood in Chicago ponders the advantages and disadvantages of her environment and evaluates her relationships with family and friends.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi, *Between the World and Me* (Non-Fiction)

The story of a father's past and a son's future, Coates offers this memoir as a letter to his teenage son, bearing witness to his own experiences and conveying passionate hopes for his son's life. Coates grew up in the tough neighborhood of West Baltimore, beaten into obedience by his father. His life changed dramatically at Howard University, where his father taught. Coates refers to whites' insistence on their exclusive racial identity; he realizes now "that nothing so essentialist as race" divides people, but rather "the actual injury done by people intent on naming us, intent on believing that what they have named matters more than anything we could ever actually do."

Cooney, Caroline B., *The Face on the Milk Carton* (Missing Children Fiction)

No one ever paid close attention to the faces of the missing children on the milk cartons. But as Janie Johnson glanced at the face of the little girl with her hair in pigtails, wearing a dress with a white collar – a three year old who had been kidnapped twelve years before from a shopping mall in New Jersey – she felt overcome with shock. She recognized the little girl – it was she.

Cunningham, Michael, *The Hours* (Domestic Fiction)

Cunningham draws inventively on the life and work of Virginia Woolf to tell the story of a group of contemporary characters struggling with the conflicting claims of love and

inheritance, hope and despair. The narrative of Woolf's last days before her suicide early in World War II counterpoints the fictional stories of Richard, a famous poet whose life has been shadowed by his talented and troubled mother, and his lifelong friend Clarissa, who strives to forge a balanced and rewarding life in spite of the demands of friends, lovers, and family.

DeLillo, Don, *Falling Man* (Psychological Fiction)

Keith Neudecker, a survivor of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, returns home from the ruins to his wife Lianne, from whom he had separated, and his young son Justin, and finds in the aftermath that he has become a very different man.

Doctorow, E.L. *Billy Bathgate* (Historical Fiction)

This is the story of Billy Bathgate, a boy who has insinuated himself into the inner circle of the notorious Dutch Schultz Gang to become apprentice and protege to one of the great murdering gangsters.

Doerr, Anthony, *All the Light We Cannot See* (Historical Fiction)

This novel takes place during World War II and the occupation of France. There are two main characters, each one on opposite sides in the conflagration that is destroying Europe. Marie-Louise is a blind girl who lived with her father in Paris before the occupation. When German forces invade the city, he and his daughter flee to the coastal city of Saint-Malo. Young German soldier Werner is sent to Saint-Malo to track Resistance activity there, and Marie-Louise and Werner's paths cross. Doerr re-creates the deprived civilian conditions of war-torn France and the strictly controlled lives of the military occupiers.

Dubus, Andre, *House of Sand and Fog* (Domestic Fiction)

Former colonel for the Iranian Air Force believes he can create a new life for himself and his family when he buys an attractive bungalow in the California countryside. When the cottage's former owner wants her house back, he is willing to do anything to keep it.

Eggers, Dave, *What is the What: The Autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng : a novel* (Sudanese Fiction)

As a young boy Valentino witnessed Arab militia men destroy his village, hid from hungry lions, wandered through wasted, desert landscapes, and narrowly escaped fatal disease, capture, starvation, and enlistment. The will to survive displayed here is almost as

miraculous as this Sudanese "Lost Boy's" ability to recount the harrowing genocide of home and people with such thoughtfulness and grace.

Eggers, Dave, *The Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* (Non-Fiction)

A memoir in which the author discusses the unrelated deaths of his parents within a period of months, his newly acquired responsibility for his eight-year-old brother, and his creation of a satirical magazine.

Elmore, Leonard, *Swag* (Mystery Fiction)

The smallest of small-time criminals, Ernest Stickley Jr. figures his luck's about to change when Detroit used-car salesman Frank Ryan catches him trying to boost a ride from Ryan's lot. Frank's got some surefire schemes for getting rich quick—all of them involving guns—and all Stickley has to do is follow "Ryan's Rules" to share the wealth. But sometimes rules need to be bent, maybe even broken, if one is to succeed in the world of crime, especially if the "brains" of the operation knows less than nothing.

Erdich, Louise, *Murdering Indians – A Documentary History of the 1897 Killing That Inspired Louise Erdrich's the Plague of Doves* (Non-Fiction)

In February of 1897 a family of six—four generations, including infant sons and their aged great grandmother was brutally murdered in rural North Dakota. The weapons used were a shotgun, an axe, a pitchfork, a spade and a club. Several North Dakota Indians from the nearby reservation were arrested, one was tried, found guilty and sentenced to be hanged. The conviction was reversed by the state supreme court, which ordered a new trial. However, a one week later an angry mob broke into the county jail dragged three of the five accused Indians out, and hanged them from a butcher's windlass.

Erdrich, Louise, *The Plague of Doves* (Domestic Fiction)

In 1911, a farm family is killed in Pluto, North Dakota, and three Ojibwe are lynched for the murders even though there is no evidence of their guilt. Years later the events of the crime reverberate among the descendants of those involved.

Eugenides, Jeffrey, *Middlesex* (Domestic Fiction)

Three generations of a Greek American family find themselves plagued by a mutant gene which causes bizarre side effects in the family's teenage girls.

Foer, Jonathan Safran, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (Domestic Fiction)

Oskar Schell, a gifted 9-year old, explores the mystery of his father's death during the 9/11 attack.

Gaines, Ernest, *A Lesson Before Dying* (Friendship Fiction)

Jefferson, a young black man is about to go to the electric chair for murder. When Jefferson's attorney states, "I would just as soon put a hog in the electric chair as this," disillusioned teacher Grant Wiggins is sent into the penitentiary to help Jefferson gain a sense of dignity and self-esteem before his execution.

Grymes, James, *Violins of Hope* (Non-Fiction)

Grymes traces the history of violins played by Jews in the Holocaust. Each chapter is dedicated to one violin and its players, places, and how it eventually came into the hands of Israeli violinmaker and repairman Amnon Weinstein. Across the board, the violins aided someone's survival or made their life more bearable. In Auschwitz, SS members formed orchestras for entertainment from the prisoners there. They noted, "We played music for sheer survival." It was by no means a guarantee of survival, and some orchestras were gassed immediately after their set. But some of the stories are accounts of hope and joy. In the backwoods of Norway, the conductor Ernst Glaser headed an initiative where he played for the Norwegian resistance movement, hiding out in the wilderness to relay Norwegian history and pride.

Hamill, Pete, *Snow in August* (Domestic Fiction)

Eleven-year-old Irish Catholic, Michael Devlin and Rabbi Judah Hirsch form a wonderful, if unlikely, friendship in Brooklyn in 1947, but the actions of a group of anti-Semitic thugs soon have them trapped in a spiral of hate and hoping for a miracle.

Hannah, Kristin, *The Nightingale* (Historical Fiction)

Hannah's pays homage to the courage and endurance of Frenchwomen during World War II. In 1995, an elderly unnamed widow is moving into an Oregon nursing home on the urging of her son, Julien. This trajectory is interrupted when she receives an invitation to return to France to attend a ceremony honoring people who aided the escape of others during the war. Cut to spring, 1940: the Germans march into Paris and refugees flee south. Vianne has said goodbye to her husband who's off to hold the Maginot line against invading Germans. She returns to tending her small farm in the Loire Valley and teaching at the local school. Meanwhile, Vianne's sister Isabelle is a rebellious eighteen year-old

looking for purpose in her life and joins the Resistance. The Nightingale tells the stories of two sisters, separated by ideals, passion and circumstance, each embarking on her own dangerous path toward survival, love, and freedom.

Harbach, Chad, *The Art of Fielding* (Domestic Fiction)

At Westish College, a small school on the shore of Lake Michigan, baseball star Henry Skrimshander seems destined for big league stardom. But when a routine throw goes disastrously off course, the fates of five people are upended. Henry's fight against self-doubt threatens to ruin his future.

Heller, Joseph, *Catch 22* (War & Military Fiction)

His problem is Colonel Cathcart, who keeps raising the number of missions the men must fly to complete their service. Yet if Yossarian makes any attempts to excuse himself from the perilous missions that he's committed to flying, he's trapped by the Great Loyalty Oath Crusade, the bureaucratic rule from which the book takes its title: a man is considered insane if he willingly continues to fly dangerous combat missions, but if he makes the necessary formal request to be relieved of such missions, the very act of making the request proves that he's sane and therefore ineligible to be relieved.

Hemingway, Ernest, *The Sun Also Rises* (Fiction)

It is a story of a group of 'Lost Generation' Americans and Brits in the 1920s on a sojourn from Paris to Pamplona, Spain. The novel poignantly details their life as expatriates on Paris' Left Bank, and conveys the brutality of bullfighting in Spain.

Hodes, Martha, *The Sea Captain's Wife* (Non-Fiction)

Hodes reconstructs the intriguing and unusual life of Eunice Richardson Stone Connolly, a mill laborer in mid-19th-century New England who went South with her husband to seek their fortune; homesick, even as her husband fought for the Confederacy, she returned to New Hampshire, where she was reduced to working as a washerwoman. But then she heard of her husband's death, and in 1869, mystifying some of her relatives, Connolly marries a well-to-do black sea captain from Grand Cayman Island and moves there.

Hornby, Nick, *High Fidelity* (Humorous Fiction)

Recently dumped by his wealthy girlfriend, record store owner, Rob Fleming finds himself in financial trouble and sets out on a pilgrimage to ask his former girlfriends where their relationships went wrong and to learn where his life went off track.

Hosseini, Khaled, *The Kite Runner* (Betrayal Fiction)

Years after he flees Afghanistan, Amir, now an American citizen, returns to his native land and attempts to atone for the betrayal of his best friend before he fled Kabul and the Taliban.

Irving, John, *A Prayer for Owen Meany* (Domestic Fiction)

In the summer of 1953, two eleven-year-old boys who were best friends are playing in a Little League baseball game in Gravesend, New Hampshire. One of the boys hits a foul ball that kills the other boy's mother. The boy who hits the ball doesn't believe in accidents; Owen Meany believes he is God's instrument. What happens to Owen, after that 1953 foul ball, is extraordinary.

Ishiguro, Kazuo, *Never Let Me Go* (Science Fiction)

Only special students are chosen to attend Hailsham, an exclusive boarding school tucked away in the English countryside. The chilling truth of their special nature slowly unfolds as we follow the stories of three former students.

Jackson, Shirley, *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* (Psychological Fiction)

Merricat Blackwood protects her sister, Constance, from the curiosity and hostility of the villagers after murders occur on the family estate.

Jin, Ha, *Waiting* (Historical Fiction)

Lin Kong struggles to balance his life between the two women he loves and the country that is trying to rule his life.

Johnson, Adam, *Fortune Smiles* (Short Stories)

In the six stories, Johnson delves deep into love and loss, natural disasters, the influence of technology and how the political shapes the personal. In the title piece, a woman with cancer becomes distraught as she contemplates her family living on without her. Elsewhere, a young man and his girlfriend scour post-Katrina New Orleans for the mother of his son, and a former Stasi agent reconsiders his past.

Jones, Edward P., *The Known World* (Historical Fiction)

Henry Townsend, an African farmer and former slave, is befriended by the most powerful man in antebellum Virginia's Manchester County and becomes proprietor of his own plantation, as well as of his own slaves.

Junger, Sebastian, *The Perfect Storm: A True Story of Men Against the Sea*

(Non-Fiction)

It was the storm of the century, boasting waves over one hundred feet high—a tempest created by so rare a combination of factors that meteorologists deemed it "the perfect storm." In a book that has become a classic, Sebastian Junger explores the history of the fishing industry, the science of storms, and the candid accounts of the people whose lives the storm touched?

Kerouac, Jack, *On the Road* (Non-Fiction)

Swings to the rhythms of fifties underground America, jazz, sex, generosity, chill dawn, and drugs, with Sal Paradise and his hero Dean Moriarty, traveler and mystic, the living epitome of Beat.

Kidd, Sue Monk, *Secret Life of Bees* (Domestic Fiction)

Searching for the truth about her mother's life and death, a grieving Lily finds the answers, love and acceptance where she least expects it.

King, Stephen, *On Writing: a memoir of the craft* (Non-Fiction)

Stephen King reflects on how his writing has helped him through difficult times and describes various aspects of the art of writing.

Kingsolver, Barbara, *Animal, Vegetable and Miracle* (Non-Fiction)

The author tells how she and her family relocated to southern Appalachia from Arizona in order to live a simpler life, grow their own food, and live among a community of local organic growers.

Kushner, Rachel, *The Flamethrower* (Domestic Fiction)

Reno, so-called because of the place of her birth, comes to New York intent on turning her fascination with motorcycles and speed into art. Her arrival coincides with an explosion of activity—artists colonize a deserted and industrial SoHo, stage actions in the East Village, blur the line between life and art. Reno is submitted to a sentimental education of sorts—by dreamers, poseurs, and raconteurs in New York and by radicals in Italy, where she goes with her lover to meet his estranged family.

Lahiri, Jhumpa, *The Lowland* (Historical Fiction)

Subhash, having left his family in Calcutta to pursue a career in science in the United States, returns home to look into what happened to his brother, Udayan, who had joined the Naxalite Movement, and try to rebuild his shattered family and help his brother's wife.

Larson, Erik, *Isaac's Storm* (Non-Fiction)

Based on the diaries of Isaac Monroe Cline and on contemporary accounts this book tells the story of Isaac Cline, a weather scientist in Galveston, Texas in 1900, discussing his belief and assertion that nothing in the way of weather could destroy the coastal city. The book also looks at how Cline dealt with the aftermath of the hurricane that hit Galveston on September 8, claiming the lives of thousands of people.

Larson, Erik, *Thunderstruck* (Non-Fiction)

Larson juxtaposes scientific intrigue with a notorious murder in London at the turn of the 20th century. It alternates the story of Marconi's quest for the first wireless transatlantic communication amid scientific jealousies and controversies with the tale of a murderer caught as a result of the invention. The figures include Marconi and one of his rivals, physicist Oliver Lodge, who believed that he was first to make the discovery, but also insisted that the electromagnetic waves he studied were evidence of the paranormal. The parallel tale recounts the story of Dr. Hawley Harvey Crippen, accused of murdering his wife. As he and his unsuspecting lover attempted to escape in disguise to Quebec on a luxury ocean liner. Unbeknownst to the couple, the world followed the pursuit through wireless transmissions to newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic. A public that had been skeptical of this technology suddenly grasped its power.

LeCarre, John, *A Most Wanted Man* (Fiction)

In Hamburg, Annabel, a civil rights lawyer, works to prevent Issa, a Muslim who is in Germany for mysterious purposes, from being deported, but in doing so she risks her own career and personal safety, and when Tommy Brue, a sixty-year-old British private banker, gets involved, German Intelligence takes an active interest.

Lethem, Jonathan, *Motherless Brooklyn* (Mystery Fiction)

Lionel Essrog, a victim of Tourette's syndrome, is rescued from the St. Vincent's Home for Boys, along with three other boys, by local tough guy, Frank Minna who molds the group into a fly-by-night detective agency. When Frank is knifed and tossed in a dumpster, Lionel is forced to become a real detective in order to find the killer.

Maguire, Gregory, *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*

(Fantasy Fiction)

The Wizard of Oz retold from the point of view of Elphaba, the Wicked Witch of the West. You'll never think of Oz the same way again.

Maksik, Alexander, *A Marker to Measure Drift* (Psychological Fiction)

In the aftermath of Charles Taylor's fallen regime, a young Liberian woman named Jacqueline has fled to the Aegean island of Santorini. She lives in a cave accessible only at low tide. During the day, she offers massages to tourists, battling her hunger one or two euros at a time. Her pressing physical needs provide a deeper relief, obliterating her memories of unspeakable violence.

Martel, Yann, *Life of Pi* (Psychological Fiction)

Pi Patel, having spent an idyllic childhood in Pondicherry, India, as the son of a zookeeper, sets off with his family at the age of sixteen to start anew in Canada, but his life takes a marvelous turn when their ship sinks in the Pacific, leaving him adrift on a raft with a 450-pound Bengal tiger for company.

McBride, James, *The Good Lord Bird* (Historical Fiction)

Henry Shackleford is a young slave living in the Kansas Territory in 1857, when the region is a battleground between anti- and pro-slavery forces. When John Brown, the legendary abolitionist, arrives in the area, an argument between Brown and Henry's master quickly turns violent. Henry is forced to leave town—with Brown, who believes he's a girl.

McCarthy, Cormac, *All the Pretty Horses* (Domestic Fiction)

This is the story of young John Grady Cole, the last of a long line of Texas ranchers, who, along with two companions, sets off on an idyllic, sometimes comic adventure, to a place where dreams are paid for in blood.

McCarthy, Cormac, *The Road* (Science Fiction)

After an apocalyptic catastrophe, a father and his young son embark on a grim and perilous quest following the road to the sea.

McCourt, Frank, *Angela's Ashes: a memoir* (Non-Fiction)

Frank McCourt was born in Depression-era Brooklyn to Irish immigrants and raised in the slums of Limerick, Ireland. Frank's mother, Angela, has no money to feed the children since

Frank's father, Malachy, rarely works, and when he does he drinks his wages. Wearing rags for diapers, begging a pig's head for Christmas dinner and gathering coal from the roadside to light a fire, Frank endures poverty, near-starvation and the casual cruelty of relatives and neighbors—yet lives to tell his tale with eloquence, exuberance, and remarkable forgiveness.

Momaday, N. Scott, *House Made of Dawn* (Historical Fiction)

Abel, a young American Indian home from a foreign war, finds himself torn between his father's world on the reservation and the lure of industrial America.

Morrison, Tony, *Beloved* (Historical Fiction)

Sethe, an escaped slave living in post-Civil War Ohio, struggles to keep Beloved, an intruder, from gaining possession of her present while throwing off the legacy of her past.

Murakami, Haruki, *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage* (Psychological Fiction)

The remarkable story of Tsukuru Tazaki, a young man haunted by a great loss; of dreams and nightmares that have unintended consequences for the world around us; and of a journey into the past that is necessary to mend the present. It is a story of love, friendship, and heartbreak for the ages.

O'Brien, Tim, *In The Lake of the Woods* (Domestic Fiction)

After John and Kathy realize that their marriage has been built on deception, Kathy mysteriously disappears in the Minnesota north woods.

Orwell, George, *1984* (Fiction)

Winston Smith, a worker at the Ministry of Truth in the future political entity of Oceania, puts his life on the line when he joins a covert brotherhood in rebelling against the Party that controls all human thought and action.

Pamuk, Orhan, *A Strangeness in My Mind* (Fiction)

Since his boyhood in a poor village in Central Anatolia 12-year-old Mevlut Karatas fantasizes about what his life would become. He travels to Istanbul and survives by hawking a traditional Turkish drink called boza on the streets. He's so hapless he inadvertently marries the sister of a girl he loves, yet as he wanders the streets,

enthralled by the city's glorious history and its booming future, he senses a satisfying "strangeness" that finally leads him to recognize what he's really wanted in life.

Patchett, Anne, *State of Wonder* (Fiction)

Dr. Marina Singh, a research scientist with a Minnesota-based pharmaceutical company, is sent to Brazil after the death of her friend and colleague, to take up his mission of finding Dr. Annick Swenson, a ruthless woman, now in her seventies, who has been conducting research among the Lakashi tribe on a reputed miracle drug, and refuses to let anything stand in her way.

Patchett, Anne, *Bel Canto* (Psychological Fiction)

A group of international guests, taken hostage by terrorists while attending a birthday party at the home of the vice president of a small South American country, form bonds with their captors and enter into an almost idyllic lifestyle, united by the music of Roxanne Coss, opera's most revered soprano.

Proulx, E. Annie, *The Shipping News* (Domestic Fiction)

Quoyle and his two emotionally disturbed daughters return to the family ancestral home in Newfoundland to start new lives.

Rice, Anne, *Interview with a Vampire* (Horror Fiction)

The time is now. We are in a small room with a vampire, face to face as he confesses. His confessions are hypnotic and shocking.

Roth, Philip, *The Plot Against America* (Fiction)

This is a fascinating alternate history that takes a hard look at one of America's legendary heroes, Charles Lindbergh, and at how bigotry and fear can shape politics.

Russo, Richard, *Empire Falls* (Domestic Fiction)

Miles Roby is called back from college to the small town of Empire Falls in Dexter County, Maine to take care of his ailing mother. He falls into a rut that keeps him trapped until years later when a series of revelations and tragedies jolts him back into an awareness of his life.

Satrapı, Marjane, *The Complete Persepolis* (Non-Fiction)

Marjane Satrapı's memoir of her childhood in Iran during the Islamic Revolution is beautifully rendered in this graphic novel series.

Shusterman, Neal, *Challenger Deep* (Domestic Fiction)

The surreal fantasies of fifteen-year-old Caden Bosch commingle with more comprehensible accounts of family and school, until his parents have him admitted to a psychiatric ward. The disorientation Shusterman evokes through the first-person narration is an apt, effective way to bring readers into nightmarish anxiety and despair-- and out of it. It is a moving, funny, dry and insightful story.

Shields, Carol, *The Stone Diaries* (Domestic Fiction)

This is the story of an ordinary woman's struggle to find a place for herself in her own life.

Skloot, Rebecca, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (Non-Fiction)

Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor black tobacco farmer whose cells were taken without her knowledge in 1951. This became one of the most important tools in medicine, vital for developing the polio vaccine, cloning, gene mapping, and more. Henrietta's cells have been bought and sold by the billions, yet she remains virtually unknown, and her family can't afford health insurance. This is a riveting story of the collision between ethics, race, and medicine; of scientific discovery and faith healing; and of a daughter consumed with questions about the mother she never knew.

Smiley, Jane, *A Thousand Acres* (Domestic Fiction)

Dark truths and long-suppressed emotions come to the surface in 1979 when a successful Iowa farmer decides to cut one of his daughters out of his will.

Smith, Patti, *Just Kids* (Non-Fiction)

It was the summer Coltrane died, the summer of love and riots, and the summer when a chance encounter in Brooklyn led two young people on a path of art, devotion, and initiation. Patti Smith would evolve as a poet and performer, and Robert Mapplethorpe would direct his highly provocative style toward photography. They traversed the city from Coney Island to Forty-Second Street, and eventually to the celebrated round table of Max's Kansas City. In 1969, the pair set up camp at the Hotel Chelsea and soon entered a community of the famous and infamous--the influential artists of the day, the

colorful fringe. It was a time of heightened awareness, when the worlds of poetry, rock and roll, art, and sexual politics were colliding and exploding. In this milieu, two kids made a pact to take care of each other.

Stegner, Wallace, *Angle of Repose* (Domestic Fiction)

This is the story of four generations in the life of the Ward family, from America's western frontier to today.

Strauss, Lee and Elle Strauss, *East of Eden* (Non-Fiction)

Eden Kelley is the primary caregiver for her mother who's in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's disease, and she's only twenty-four. Not what Eden planned to do when she left her husband for a new start with her four-year-old daughter in tow. She'd hoped for free babysitting, but instead she found a mystery. The discovery of an erroneous marriage document leads to more questions that Eden's mother can't answer because she doesn't remember.

Styron, William, *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (Historical Fiction)

The story is told of the short-lived, bloody rebellion of slaves in Southampton, Virginia, in August, 1831, as seen through the eyes of the instigator, Nat Turner.

Tan, Amy, *The Valley of Amazement* (Historical Fiction)

An epic of two women's intertwined fates and their search for identity that moves from the parlors of Shanghai courtesans to the mountains of a remote Chinese village. Spanning more than forty years and two continents, pivotal episodes in history are resurrected from the collapse of China's last imperial dynasty, to the rise of the Republic, to the inner workings of courtesan houses and the lives of the foreign "Shanghaianders" living in the International Settlement, both erased by World War II.

Tart, Donna, *The Goldfinch* (Psychological Fiction)

Theo Decker, a 13-year-old New Yorker, miraculously survives an accident that kills his mother. Abandoned by his father, Theo is taken in by the family of a wealthy friend. Bewildered by his strange new home on Park Avenue, disturbed by schoolmates who don't know how to talk to him, and tormented above all by his longing for his mother, he clings to the one thing that reminds him of her: a small, mysteriously captivating painting that ultimately draws Theo into the underworld of art.

Vonnegut, Kurt, *Welcome to the Monkey House: a collection of short works*

(Short Stories)

A collection of twenty-five short works by the American author written between 1950 and 1968 and originally printed in a wide range of publications including "The Atlantic Monthly," "Esquire," and "Ladies' Home Journal." "Where I Live" "Harrison Bergeron" "Who Am I This Time?" "Welcome to the Monkey House" "Long Walk to Forever" "The Foster Portfolio" "Miss Temptation" "All the King's Horses" "Tom Edison's Shaggy Dog" "New Dictionary" "Next Door" "More Stately Mansions" "The Hyannis Port Story" "D.P." "Report on the Barnhouse Effect" "The Euphio Question" "Go Back to your Precious Wife and Son" "Deer in the Works" "The Lie" "Unready to Wear" "The Kid Nobody Could Handle" "The Manned Missiles" "EPICAC" "Adam" "Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow."

Walker, Alice, *The Color Purple* (Domestic Fiction)

The story is told of two African-American sisters: Nettie, a missionary in Africa, and Celie, a child-wife living in the south, in the medium of their letters to each other and in Celie's case, the desperate letters she begins, "Dear God."

Waugh, Evelyn, *Brideshead Revisted: the sacred and profane memories of Captain*

Charles Ryder (Classics Fiction)

The most nostalgic and reflective novel looks back to the golden age before the Second World War. It tells the story of Charles Ryder's infatuation with the Marchmains and the rapidly-disappearing world of privilege they inhabit. Enchanted first by Sebastian at Oxford, then by his doomed Catholic family, in particular his remote sister, Julia, Charles comes finally to recognize only his spiritual and social distance from them.

Williams, Tennessee, *The Glass Menagerie* (Fiction)

Amanda, a faded southern belle, abandoned wife, and dominating mother, hopes to match her daughter Laura with an eligible "gentleman caller" while her son Tom supports the family. Laura, lame and painfully shy, evades her mother's schemes and reality by retreating to the make-believe world of her glass animal collection. Tom eventually leaves home to become a writer but is forever haunted by the memory of Laura.

Whitney, Kim Albon, *The Other Half of Life* (Historical Fiction)

Fifteen-year-old Thomas boards a ship in Germany headed to Havana. It's 1939, and the passengers, mostly Jews, are seeking asylum in a new land; neither their arrival nor safety

is guaranteed. Against this historical and political backdrop is the love story of Thomas and a girl named Priska. The real-life history provides the novel's energy.

Zusak, Marcus, *The Book Thief* (Historical Fiction)

Living in Nazi Germany, young Liesel and her family choose to lie and steal to protect a Jewish refugee hiding in their basement. Narrated by Death, this is not your typical World War II story.