

2025 Literary Society Selection List for Survey

(In no particular order)

1. When Nietzsche Wept by Irvin D. Yalom

"Set in Vienna in 1882, the novel imagines a working relationship between the famous German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and the eminent physician Josef Breuer. Breuer believes that Nietzsche's physical ailments have psychological causes, and he embarks on his newly invented "talking cure"—effectively a precursor to talk therapy and psychoanalysis."

2. Horse by Geraldine Brooks

Historical fiction

About horses, art, science, love, and racism

"In 1850, [Jarret Lewis](#), an enslaved Black teenager, attends the birth of the foal who will one day become known as Lexington, the most famous racehorse in American turf racing history."

"In 1954, art gallerist and former horse enthusiast [Martha Jackson](#) is astonished to discover that the painting her housekeeper Annie has asked her to help appraise is of none other than the legendary racehorse Lexington, who was great grandsire to her mother's own horse, Royal Eclipse"

"In 2019, Georgetown Art History graduate student Theo Northam discovers a portrait of a horse in a "FREE" pile outside his neighbor's house."

3. A Man Called Ove by Fredrik Backman

Ove is almost certainly the grumpiest man you will ever meet. He thinks himself surrounded by idiots - joggers, neighbours who can't reverse a trailer properly and shop assistants who talk in code.

But isn't it rare, these days, to find such old-fashioned clarity of belief and deed? Such unswerving conviction about what the world should be, and a lifelong dedication to making it just so?

In the end, you will see, there is something about Ove that is quite irresistible . . .

4. Homeland Elegies: A Novel by Ayad Akhtar

A deeply personal work about identity and belonging in a nation coming apart at the seams, Homeland Elegies blends fact and fiction to tell an epic story of longing and dispossession in the world that 9/11 made. Part family drama, part social essay, part picaresque novel, at its heart it is the story of a father, a son, and the country they both call home.

Ayad Akhtar forges a new narrative voice to capture a country in which debt has ruined countless lives and the gods of finance rule, where immigrants live in fear, and where the nation's unhealed wounds wreak havoc around the world. Akhtar attempts to make sense of it all through the lens of a story about one family, from a heartland town in America to palatial suites in Central Europe to guerrilla lookouts in the mountains of Afghanistan, and spares no one—least of all himself—in the process.

5. *Like Mother, Like Mother: A Novel by Susan Rieger*

Detroit, 1960. Lila Pereira is two years old when her angry, abusive father has her mother committed to an asylum. Lila never sees her mother again. Three decades later, having mustered everything she has—brains, charm, talent, blond hair—Lila rises to the pinnacle of American media as the powerful, brilliant executive editor of *The Washington Globe*. Lila unapologetically prioritizes her career, leaving the rearing of her daughters to her generous husband, Joe. He doesn't mind—until he does.

But Grace, their youngest daughter, feels abandoned. She wishes her mother would attend PTA meetings, not White House correspondents' dinners. As she grows up, she cannot shake her resentment. She wants out from under Lila's shadow, yet the more she resists, the more Lila seems to shape her life. Grace becomes a successful reporter, even publishing a bestselling book about her mother. In the process of writing it, she realizes how little she knows about her own family. Did Lila's mother, Grace's grandmother, die in that asylum? Is refusal to look back the only way to create a future? How can you ever be yourself, Grace wonders, if you don't know where you came from?

Spanning generations, and populated by complex, unforgettable characters, *Like Mother, Like Mother* is an exhilarating, portrait of family, marriage, ambition, power, the stories we inherit, and the lies we tell to become the people we believe we're meant to be.

6. *Lonely Hearts Hotel: A Novel by Heather O'Neill*

Two babies are abandoned in a Montreal orphanage in the winter of 1914. Before long, their true talents emerge: Pierrot is a piano prodigy; Rose lights up even the dreariest room with her dancing and comedy. As they travel around the city performing for the rich, the children fall in love with each other and dream up a plan for the most extraordinary and seductive circus show the world has ever seen.

Separated as teenagers, both escape into the city's underworld, where they must use their uncommon gifts to survive without each other. Ruthless and unforgiving, Montreal in the 1930s is no place for song and dance, depicted by O'Neill as "a voyage across Montreal, from realms of innocence and districts of longing to zones of cruelty" (National Post). When Rose and Pierrot finally reunite they'll go to extreme lengths to make their childhood dreams come true.

7. *The Paris Wife by Paula McLain*

No twentieth-century American writer has captured the popular imagination as much as Ernest Hemingway. This novel tells his story from a unique point of view—that of his first wife, Hadley. Through her eyes and voice, we experience Paris of the Lost Generation and meet fascinating characters such as Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, and Gerald and Sara Murphy. The city and its inhabitants provide a vivid backdrop to this engrossing and wrenching story of love and betrayal that is made all the more poignant knowing that, in the end, Hemingway would write of his first wife, "I wish I had died before I loved anyone but her."

8. **Salvage: Readings from the Wreck by Dionne Brand**

In *Salvage: Readings from the Wreck*, Dionne Brand's first major book of non-fiction since her classic *A Map to the Door of No Return*, the acclaimed poet and novelist offers a bracing look at the intersections of reading and life, and of what remains in the wreck of empire. Blending literary criticism and autobiography—as artifact, Brand reads Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, among other still-widely studied works, to explore encounters with colonial, imperialist and racist tropes from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century—tropes that continue in new forms today. Brand vividly shows how contemporary practices of reading and writing are shaped by the narrative structures of these and related works; and explores how, in the face of this, one writes a narrative of Black life that attends to its own consciousness and expression.

With the power and eloquence of a great poet coupled with the rigour of a deep and subtle thinker, Brand reveals how she learned to read the literature of two empires, British and American, in an anti-colonial light—in order to survive, and in order to live.

This is the library, the wreck, and the potential for salvage she offers us now, in a brilliant, groundbreaking and essential work.

9. **The Knowing Hardcover by Tanya Talaga**

From Tanya Talaga, the critically acclaimed and award-winning author of *Seven Fallen Feathers*, comes a riveting exploration of her family's story and a retelling of the history of the country we now call Canada

For generations, Indigenous People have known that their family members disappeared, many of them after being sent to residential schools, “Indian hospitals” and asylums through a coordinated system designed to destroy who the First Nations, Métis and Inuit people are. This is one of Canada's greatest open secrets, an unhealed wound that until recently lay hidden by shame and abandonment.

The Knowing is the unfolding of Canadian history unlike anything we have ever read before. Award-winning and bestselling Anishinaabe author Tanya Talaga retells the history of this country as only she can—through an Indigenous lens, beginning with the life of her great-great grandmother Annie Carpenter and her family as they experienced decades of government- and Church-sanctioned enfranchisement and genocide.

Deeply personal and meticulously researched, *The Knowing* is a seminal unravelling of the centuries-long oppression of Indigenous People that continues to reverberate in these communities today.

10. **The Covenant of Water: A Novel Library by Abraham Verghese**

The Covenant of Water is the long-awaited new novel by Abraham Verghese, the author of the major word-of-mouth bestseller *Cutting for Stone*, which has sold over 1.5 million copies in the United States alone and remained on the *New York Times* bestseller list for over two years.

Spanning the years 1900 to 1977, *The Covenant of Water* is set in Kerala, on South India's Malabar Coast, and follows three generations of a family that suffers a peculiar affliction: in every generation, at least one person dies by drowning—and in Kerala, water is everywhere. At the turn of the century, a twelve-year-old girl from Kerala's long-existing Christian community, grieving the death of her father, is sent by boat to her wedding, where she will meet her forty-year-old husband for the first time. From this unforgettable new

beginning, the young girl—and future matriarch, known as Big Ammachi—will witness unthinkable changes over the span of her extraordinary life, full of joy and triumph as well as hardship and loss, her faith and love the only constants.

A shimmering evocation of a bygone India and of the passage of time itself, *The Covenant of Water* is a hymn to progress in medicine and to human understanding, and a humbling testament to the difficulties undergone by past generations for the sake of those alive today. It is one of the most masterful literary novels published in recent years.

11. The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed.

Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil's name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what *really* went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr.

But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.

12. Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation by Kristin Kobes Du Mez (Author), Kristin Kobes Du Mez (Author)

Jesus and John Wayne is a sweeping, revisionist history of the last seventy-five years of white evangelicalism, revealing how evangelicals have worked to replace the Jesus of the Gospels with an idol of rugged masculinity and Christian nationalism—or in the words of one modern chaplain, with “a spiritual badass.”

As acclaimed scholar Kristin Du Mez explains, the key to understanding this transformation is to recognize the centrality of popular culture in contemporary American evangelicalism. Many of today's evangelicals might not be theologically astute, but they know their VeggieTales, they've read John Eldredge's *Wild at Heart*, and they learned about purity before they learned about sex—and they have a silver ring to prove it. Evangelical books, films, music, clothing, and merchandise shape the beliefs of millions. And evangelical culture is teeming with muscular heroes—mythical warriors and rugged soldiers, men like Oliver North, Ronald Reagan, Mel Gibson, and the Duck Dynasty clan, who assert white masculine power in defense of “Christian America.” Chief among these evangelical legends is John Wayne, an icon of a lost time when men were uncowed by political correctness, unafraid to tell it like it was, and did what needed to be done.

Challenging the commonly held assumption that the “moral majority” backed Donald Trump in 2016 and 2020 for purely pragmatic reasons, Du Mez reveals that Trump in fact represented the fulfillment, rather than the betrayal, of white evangelicals' most deeply held values: patriarchy, authoritarian rule, aggressive foreign policy, fear of Islam, ambivalence toward #MeToo, and opposition to Black Lives Matter and the

LGBTQ community. A much-needed reexamination of perhaps the most influential subculture in this country, *Jesus and John Wayne* shows that, far from adhering to biblical principles, modern white evangelicals have remade their faith, with enduring consequences for all Americans.

13. Certainty Paperback by Madeleine Thien

Gail Lim, a producer of radio documentaries in present-day Vancouver, finds herself haunted by events in her parents' past in wartorn Asia, a past which remains a mystery that fiercely grips her imagination.

As a child, Gail's father, Matthew Lim, wandered the Leila Road and the jungle fringe with his lovely Ani, a girl whose early bond with Matthew will affect his life always. As children, they found themselves together under the terrifying shadow of war in Japanese-occupied Sandakan, Malaysia. The war shatters their families and splits the two apart until years later, when they remeet only to be separated again. The legacy of their connection is later inherited by Matthew's wife, Clara, in unexpected ways.

Gail's journey to unravel the mystery of her parents' lives takes her to Amsterdam, where she meets the war photographer Sipke, who tells his story of Ani and their relationship, which began in Jakarta, a story that will bring Gail face to face with the complications in her own life and lead her closer to the truth.

Vivid, poignant, wise, at once sweeping and intimate, *Certainty* is a novel about the legacies of loss, about the dislocations of war and the redemptive qualities of love. Thien reveals herself as a novelist of rare and potent talent.

14. The Inheritance of Loss Paperback by Kiran Desai

In a crumbling, isolated house at the foot of Mount Kanchenjunga in the Himalayas lives an embittered judge who wants only to retire in peace, when his orphaned granddaughter, Sai, arrives on his doorstep. The judge's cook watches over her distractedly, for his thoughts are often on his son, Biju, who is hopscotching from one gritty New York restaurant to another. Kiran Desai's brilliant novel, published to huge acclaim, is a story of joy and despair. Her characters face numerous choices that majestically illuminate the consequences of colonialism as it collides with the modern world.

15. Before the Coffee Gets Cold: A Novel by Toshikazu Kawaguchi

In a small back alley of Tokyo, there is a café that has been serving carefully brewed coffee for more than one hundred years. Local legend says that this shop offers something else besides coffee—the chance to travel back in time.

Over the course of one summer, four customers visit the café in the hopes of making that journey. But time travel isn't so simple, and there are rules that must be followed. Most important, the trip can last only as long as it takes for the coffee to get cold.

Heartwarming, wistful, mysterious and delightfully quirky, Toshikazu Kawaguchi's internationally bestselling novel explores the age-old question: What would you change if you could travel back in time?

16. Remarkably Bright Creatures: A Novel by Shelby Van Pelt

After Tova Sullivan's husband died, she began working the night shift at the Sowell Bay Aquarium, mopping floors and tidying up. Keeping busy has always helped her cope, which she's been doing since her eighteen-year-old son, Erik, mysteriously vanished on a boat in Puget Sound over thirty years ago.

Tova becomes acquainted with curmudgeonly Marcellus, a giant Pacific octopus living at the aquarium. Marcellus knows more than anyone can imagine but wouldn't dream of lifting one of his eight arms for his human captors—until he forms a remarkable friendship with Tova.

Ever the detective, Marcellus deduces what happened the night Tova's son disappeared. And now Marcellus must use every trick his old invertebrate body can muster to unearth the truth for her before it's too late.

Shelby Van Pelt's debut novel is a gentle reminder that sometimes taking a hard look at the past can help uncover a future that once felt impossible.

17. The Personal Librarian: A GMA Book Club Pick (A Novel) by Marie Benedict (Author), Victoria Christopher Murray

A remarkable novel about J. P. Morgan's personal librarian, Belle da Costa Greene, the Black American woman who was forced to hide her true identity and pass as white in order to leave a lasting legacy that enriched our nation, from *New York Times* bestselling authors Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray.

In her twenties, Belle da Costa Greene is hired by J. P. Morgan to curate a collection of rare manuscripts, books, and artwork for his newly built Pierpont Morgan Library. Belle becomes a fixture in New York City society and one of the most powerful people in the art and book world, known for her impeccable taste and shrewd negotiating for critical works as she helps create a world-class collection.

But Belle has a secret, one she must protect at all costs. She was born not Belle da Costa Greene but Belle Marion Greener. She is the daughter of Richard Greener, the first Black graduate of Harvard and a well-known advocate for equality. Belle's complexion isn't dark because of her alleged Portuguese heritage that lets her pass as white—her complexion is dark because she is African American.

The Personal Librarian tells the story of an extraordinary woman, famous for her intellect, style, and wit, and shares the lengths she must go to—for the protection of her family and her legacy—to preserve her carefully crafted white identity in the racist world in which she lives.

18. Keeper'n Me by Richard Wagamese

When Garnet Raven was three years old, he was taken from his home on an Ojibway Indian reserve and placed in a series of foster homes. Having reached his mid-teens, he escapes at the first available opportunity, only to find himself cast adrift on the streets of the big city.

Having skirted the urban underbelly once too often by age 20, he finds himself thrown in jail. While there, he gets a surprise letter from his long-forgotten native family.

The sudden communication from his past spurs him to return to the reserve following his release from jail. Deciding to stay awhile, his life is changed completely as he comes to discover his sense of place, and of self. While on the reserve, Garnet is initiated into the ways of the Ojibway--both ancient and modern--by Keeper, a friend of his grandfather, and last fount of history about his people's ways.

By turns funny, poignant and mystical, *Keeper'n Me* reflects a positive view of Native life and philosophy--as well as casting fresh light on the redemptive power of one's community and traditions.

19. Scarborough by Catherine Hernandez

SHORTLISTED FOR CANADA READS 2022

NOW A MOTION PICTURE directed by Shasha Nakhai and Rich Williamson; screenplay by Catherine Hernandez

Trillium Book Award and City of Toronto Book Award finalist; Edmund White Debut Fiction Award finalist; A Globe 100, National Post and Quill and Quire Best Book of the Year

Scarborough is a low-income, culturally diverse neighbourhood east of Toronto, the fourth largest city in North America; like many inner-city communities, it suffers under the weight of poverty, drugs, crime, and urban blight. *Scarborough* the novel employs a multitude of voices to tell the story of a tight-knit neighbourhood under fire: among them, Victor, a black artist harassed by the police; Winsum, a West Indian restaurant owner struggling to keep it together; and Hina, a Muslim school worker who witnesses first-hand the impact of poverty on education.

And then there are the three kids who work to rise above a system that consistently fails them: Bing, a gay Filipino boy who lives under the shadow of his father's mental illness; Sylvie, Bing's best friend, a Native girl whose family struggles to find a permanent home to live in; and Laura, whose history of neglect by her mother is destined to repeat itself with her father.

Scarborough offers a raw yet empathetic glimpse into a troubled community that locates its dignity in unexpected places: a neighbourhood that refuses to be undone.

20. **Demon Copperhead: A Novel Hardcover – by Barbara Kingsolver**

Set in the mountains of southern Appalachia, *Demon Copperhead* is the story of a boy born to a teenaged single mother in a single-wide trailer, with no assets beyond his dead father's good looks and copper-colored hair, a caustic wit, and a fierce talent for survival. Relayed in his own unsparing voice, Demon braves the modern perils of foster care, child labor, derelict schools, athletic success, addiction, disastrous loves, and crushing losses. Through all of it, he reckons with his own invisibility in a popular culture where even the superheroes have abandoned rural people in favor of cities.

Many generations ago, Charles Dickens wrote *David Copperfield* from his experience as a survivor of institutional poverty and its damages to children in his society. Those problems have yet to be solved in ours. Dickens is not a prerequisite for readers of this novel, but he provided its inspiration. In transposing a Victorian epic novel to the contemporary American South, Barbara Kingsolver enlists Dickens' anger and compassion, and above all, his faith in the transformative powers of a good story. *Demon Copperhead* speaks for a new generation of lost boys, and all those born into beautiful, cursed places they can't imagine leaving behind.

21. **True North Rising: My fifty-year journey with the Inuit and Dene leaders who transformed Canada's North by Whit Fraser**

In *True North Rising*, Whit Fraser delivers a smart, touching and astute living history of five decades that transformed the North, a span he witnessed first as a longtime CBC reporter and then through his friendships and his work with Dene and Inuit activists and leaders. Whit had a front-row seat at the MacKenzie Valley Pipeline inquiry, the constitutional conferences and the land-claims negotiations that successfully reshaped the North; he's also travelled to every village and town from Labrador to Alaska. His vivid portraits of groundbreakers such as Abe Okpik, Jose Kusugak, Stephen Kakfwi, Marie Wilson, John Amagoalik, Tagak Curley, and his own wife, Mary Simon, bring home their truly historic achievements, but they also give us a privileged glimpse of who they are, and who Whit Fraser is. He may have begun as a know-nothing reporter from the south, but he soon fell in love with the North, and his memoir is a testament to more than fifty years of commitment to its people.

22. **The Briar Club: A Novel by Kate Quinn**

Washington, DC, 1950. Everyone keeps to themselves at Briarwood House, a down-at-the-heels all-female boardinghouse in the heart of the nation's capital where secrets hide behind white picket fences. But when the lovely, mysterious widow Grace March moves into the attic room, she draws her oddball collection of neighbors into unlikely friendship: poised English beauty Fliss, whose facade of perfect wife and mother covers gaping inner wounds; policeman's daughter Nora, who finds herself entangled with a shadowy gangster; frustrated baseball star Beatrice, whose career has come to an end along with the women's baseball league of WWII; and poisonous, gung-ho Arlene, who has thrown herself into McCarthy's Red Scare.

Grace's weekly attic-room dinner parties and window-brewed sun tea become a healing balm on all their lives, but she hides a terrible secret of her own. When a shocking act of violence tears the house apart, the Briar Club women must decide once and for all: who is the true enemy in their midst?

Capturing the paranoia of the McCarthy era and evoking the changing roles for women in postwar America, *The Briar Club* is an intimate and thrilling novel of secrets and loyalty put to the test.

23. Leonard and Hungry Paul by Ronan Hession

In this startling debut, Ronan Hession tells the story of two thirty-something men who take care of their parents and play board games together. Who like to read. Who take satisfaction in their work. Who are resolutely kind.

Leonard and Hungry Paul is the story of two friends trying to find their place in the world. It is about the uncelebrated people of this world. And it asks a surprisingly enthralling question: Can kind people change the world?

24. Small Things Like These by Claire Keegan

One of the *New York Times's* 100 Best Books of the 21st Century

"A hypnotic and electrifying Irish tale that transcends country, transcends time." —Lily King, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Writers & Lovers*

Small Things Like These is award-winning author Claire Keegan's landmark new novel, a tale of one man's courage and a remarkable portrait of love and family

It is 1985 in a small Irish town. During the weeks leading up to Christmas, Bill Furlong, a coal merchant and family man faces into his busiest season. Early one morning, while delivering an order to the local convent, Bill makes a discovery which forces him to confront both his past and the complicit silences of a town controlled by the church.

An international bestseller, *Small Things Like These* is a deeply affecting story of hope, quiet heroism, and empathy from one of our most critically lauded and iconic writers.

25. The One In A Million Boy by Monica Wood

The story of your life never starts at the beginning. Don't they teach you anything at school?

So says 104-year-old Ona to the 11-year-old boy who's been sent to help her out every Saturday morning. As he refills the bird feeders and tidies the garden shed, Ona tells him about her long life, from first love to second chances. Soon she's confessing secrets she has kept hidden for decades.

One Saturday, the boy doesn't show up. Ona starts to think he's not so special after all, but then his father arrives on her doorstep, determined to finish his son's good deed. The boy's mother is not so far behind. Ona is set to discover that the world can surprise us at any age, and that sometimes sharing a loss is the only way to find ourselves again.

Readers won't be able to resist falling for Ona ☺ The conclusion will leave them smiling through their tears."- *Shelf Awareness*

26. Briefly Perfectly Human: Making an Authentic Life by Getting Real About the End by Alua Arthur

For her clients and everyone who has been inspired by her humanity, Alua Arthur is a friend at the end of the world. As our country's leading death doula, she's spreading a transformative message: *thinking* about your death—whether imminent or not—will breathe wild, new potential into your life.

Warm, generous, and funny AF, Alua supports and helps manage end-of-life care on many levels. The business matters, medical directives, memorial planning; but also honoring the quiet moments, when monitors are beeping and loved ones have stepped out to get some air—or maybe not shown up at all—and her clients become deeply contemplative and want to talk. Aching, unfinished business often emerges. Alua has been present for thousands of these sacred moments—when regrets, fears, secret joys, hidden affairs, and dim realities are finally said aloud. When this happens, Alua focuses her attention at the pulsing center of her clients’ anguish and creates space for them, and sometimes their loved ones, to find peace.

This has had a profound effect on Alua, who was already no stranger to death’s periphery. Her family fled a murderous coup d’état in Ghana in the 1980s. She has suffered major, debilitating depressions. And her dear friend and brother-in-law died of lymphoma. Advocating for him in his final months is what led Alua to her life’s calling. She knows firsthand the power of bearing witness and telling the truth about life’s painful complexities, because they do not disappear when you look the other way. They wait for you.

Briefly Perfectly Human is a life-changing, soul-gathering debut, by a writer whose empathy, tenderness, and wisdom shimmers on the page. Alua Arthur combines intimate storytelling with a passionate appeal for loving, courageous end-of-life care—what she calls “death embrace.” Hers is a powerful testament to getting in touch with something deeper in our lives, by embracing the fact of our own mortality. “Hold that truth in your mind,” Alua says, “and wondrous things will begin to grow around it.”

27. The Women: A Novel by Kristin Hannah

Women can be heroes. When twenty-year-old nursing student Frances “Frankie” McGrath hears these words, it is a revelation. Raised in the sun-drenched, idyllic world of Southern California and sheltered by her conservative parents, she has always prided herself on doing the right thing. But in 1965, the world is changing, and she suddenly dares to imagine a different future for herself. When her brother ships out to serve in Vietnam, she joins the Army Nurse Corps and follows his path.

As green and inexperienced as the men sent to Vietnam to fight, Frankie is over-whelmed by the chaos and destruction of war. Each day is a gamble of life and death, hope and betrayal; friendships run deep and can be shattered in an instant. In war, she meets—and becomes one of—the lucky, the brave, the broken, and the lost.

But war is just the beginning for Frankie and her veteran friends. The real battle lies in coming home to a changed and divided America, to angry protesters, and to a country that wants to forget Vietnam.

The Women is the story of one woman gone to war, but it shines a light on all women who put themselves in harm’s way and whose sacrifice and commitment to their country has too often been forgotten. A novel about deep friendships and bold patriotism, *The Women* is a richly drawn story with a memorable heroine whose idealism and courage under fire will come to define an era.

28. Health for All: A Doctor's Prescription for a Healthier Canada by Jane Philpott

Jane Philpott has spent her life learning what makes people sick and what keeps people well. She has witnessed miracles in modern medicine. She has also watched children die of starvation in a world that has plenty of food. With *Health for All*, she sounds a clarion call for a radical disruption in a health care system that is broken—but not beyond repair. The vision is rooted in a deep-seated commitment to health equity.

Decades ago, a few visionary Canadian leaders put laws in place to ensure health care insurance for all. But the structures to deliver that care were never fully developed as envisioned. As a result, our health systems are not comprehensive or well-coordinated. In the wake of a pandemic, we risk it all falling apart. More than six million people have no family doctor, nor any other access to primary care. Emergency rooms are routinely closed. Exhausted health workers wonder if it will ever get better. Some say we should hand health care over to the private sector. But to abandon our commitment to publicly funded health care now would only lead to more expensive and less equitable care. Philpott outlines a different solution—an ambitious, once-in-a-generation reset of health systems with universal access to primary care teams.

What sets this book apart is that it's more than a prescription for better medical care. Philpott looks at the big picture of health for all. This includes an intimate look at the personal roots of well-being: hope, belonging, meaning, and purpose. Then, through real-life stories, she examines the impact of the social determinants of health. Finally, she explains that none of this will happen without the political will to do the hard work of rebuilding a healthy society. The remedy we await is serious leadership to implement what we already know and to put the well-being of Canadians at the top of the agenda.

29. A Tale for the Time Being: A Novel Paperback by Ruth Ozeki

“A time being is someone who lives in time, and that means you, and me, and every one of us who is, or was, or ever will be.”

In Tokyo, sixteen-year-old Nao has decided there's only one escape from her aching loneliness and her classmates' bullying. But before she ends it all, Nao first plans to document the life of her great grandmother, a Buddhist nun who's lived more than a century. A diary is Nao's only solace—and will touch lives in ways she can scarcely imagine. Across the Pacific, we meet Ruth, a novelist living on a remote island who discovers a collection of artifacts washed ashore in a Hello Kitty lunchbox—possibly debris from the devastating 2011 tsunami. As the mystery of its contents unfolds, Ruth is pulled into the past, into Nao's drama and her unknown fate, and forward into her own future.

Full of Ozeki's signature humor and deeply engaged with the relationship between writer and reader, past and present, fact and fiction, quantum physics, history, and myth, *A Tale for the Time Being* is a brilliantly inventive, beguiling story of our shared humanity and the search for home.

30. Mrs. Quinn's Rise to Fame: A Novel by Olivia Ford

Nothing could be more out of character, but after fifty-nine years of marriage, as her husband Bernard's health declines, and her friends' lives become focused on their grandchildren—which Jenny never had—Jenny decides she wants a little something for herself. So she secretly applies to be a contestant on the prime-time TV show *Britain Bakes*.

Whisked into an unfamiliar world of cameras and timed challenges, Jenny delights in a new-found independence. But that independence, and the stress of the competition, starts to unearth memories buried decades ago. Chocolate teacakes remind her of a furtive errand involving a wedding ring; sugared doughnuts call up a stranger's kind act; a simple cottage loaf brings back the moment her life changed forever.

With her baking star rising, Jenny struggles to keep a lid on that first secret—a long-concealed deceit that threatens to shatter the very foundations of her marriage. It's the only time in six decades that she's kept something from Bernard. By putting herself in the limelight, has Jenny created a recipe for disaster?

31. *I'm Glad My Mom Died Hardcover* by Jennette McCurdy

Jennette McCurdy was six years old when she had her first acting audition. Her mother's dream was for her only daughter to become a star, and Jennette would do anything to make her mother happy. So she went along with what Mom called "calorie restriction," eating little and weighing herself five times a day. She endured extensive at-home makeovers while Mom chided, "Your eyelashes are invisible, okay? You think Dakota Fanning doesn't tint hers?" She was even showered by Mom until age sixteen while sharing her diaries, email, and all her income.

In *I'm Glad My Mom Died*, Jennette recounts all this in unflinching detail—just as she chronicles what happens when the dream finally comes true. Cast in a new Nickelodeon series called *iCarly*, she is thrust into fame. Though Mom is ecstatic, emailing fan club moderators and getting on a first-name basis with the paparazzi ("Hi Gale!"), Jennette is riddled with anxiety, shame, and self-loathing, which manifest into eating disorders, addiction, and a series of unhealthy relationships. These issues only get worse when, soon after taking the lead in the *iCarly* spinoff *Sam & Cat* alongside Ariana Grande, her mother dies of cancer. Finally, after discovering therapy and quitting acting, Jennette embarks on recovery and decides for the first time in her life what she really wants.

Told with refreshing candor and dark humor, *I'm Glad My Mom Died* is an inspiring story of resilience, independence, and the joy of shampooing your own hair.

32. *Wifedom: Mrs. Orwell's Invisible Life* by Anna Funder

At the end of summer 2017, Anna Funder found herself at a moment of peak overload. Family obligations and household responsibilities were crushing her soul and taking her away from her writing deadlines. She needed help, and George Orwell came to her rescue.

"I've always loved Orwell," Funder writes, "his self-deprecating humour, his laser vision about how power works, and who it works on." So after rereading and savoring books Orwell had written, she devoured six major biographies tracing his life and work. But then she read about his forgotten wife, and it was a revelation.

Eileen O'Shaughnessy married Orwell in 1936. O'Shaughnessy was a writer herself, and her literary brilliance not only shaped Orwell's work, but her practical common sense saved his life. But why and how, Funder wondered, was she written out of their story? Using newly discovered letters from Eileen to her best friend, Funder re-creates the Orwells' marriage, through the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War in London. As she peeks behind the curtain of Orwell's private life she is led to question what it takes to be a writer—and what it is to be a wife.

A breathtakingly intimate view of one of the most important literary marriages of the twentieth century, *Wifedom* speaks to our present moment as much as it illuminates the past. Genre-bending and utterly original, it is an ode to the unsung work of women everywhere.