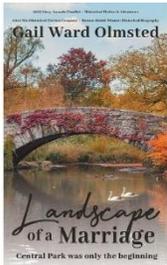


Welcome to the GCGM Book Group, featuring enlightening, engaging and entertaining books that relate in some significant way to gardens, the natural world, environment, or ecology. Book Group reviews are typically held Friday afternoons at the Bayview Historical Society located at 2590 S. Superior Street, Milwaukee, WI 53207.

### Upcoming Book Group Reads:



**January 23, 2026**

**Landscape of a Marriage: Central Park was only the beginning, Gail Ward Olmsted, 2021 (historical fiction based on facts)**

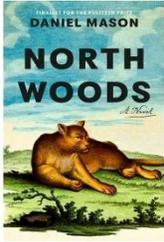
**Setting:** Central Park in New York City, Mount Royal in Montreal, the Chicago World's Fair, Niagara Falls,

Washington, DC, to California, Brookline, MA and Deer Isle, Maine.

**Summary:** written from the point of view of Frederick Law Olmsted's wife, Mary, his late brother's widow. After they married, he adopted her three children, and then they had four more children of their own. Their 44-year life together coincided with tumultuous events during the second half of the 19th century in America: the Civil War, Lincoln's assassination, the women's suffrage movement, the Gold Rush and the Second Industrial Revolution. Mary was the woman behind the significant personal and professional milestones in Olmsted's life, making both family life and his professional achievements possible. Each of the project locations had a significant impact on their lives together as they faced challenges in their relationship that are quite relevant today.

**Timeless questions:** balancing the needs of a family with professional goals, maintaining a close

relationship during long periods of separation, dealing with grief and loss.



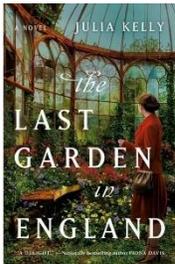
**May 1, 2026**

**North Woods, Daniel Mason, 2023 (historical fiction)**

**Setting:** New England woods

**Summary:** A sweeping novel about a single house in the woods of New England. A daring, moving tale of memory and fate, told through the lives of those who inhabit it across the centuries—a pair of young lovers from a Puritan colony, whose humble cabin in the woods becomes home to an extraordinary succession of inhabitants: an English soldier, a pair of spinster twins, a crime reporter, a lovelorn painter, a conman, a stalking panther, a lusty beetle. Each one confronts the mysteries of the north woods. Traversing cycles of history, nature, and even literature, *North Woods* shows the ways in which we're connected to our environment, and to one another, across time, language and space. Written along with the seasons and divided into the twelve months of the year, it is an unforgettable novel about secrets and fates.

**Timeless question:** How do we live on, even after we're gone?



**June 24, 2026**

**The Last Garden in England, Julia Kelly, 2021 (historical fiction; note day change to a Wednesday)**

**Setting:** An English estate over its inception to its restoration over a hundred years later.

**Summary:** A poignant, sweeping novel about women living across three different times whose

lives are all connected by one very special place. Present day: Emma, who restores the gardens of the famed Highbury House estate, designed in 1907 by her hero Venetia Smith. Emma discovers the garden's past and its hidden secrets as her work progresses. Venetia in 1907 had become a garden designer to industrialists, solicitors, and bankers, to show off their wealth with sumptuous country houses. The gardens of Highbury House, and people she

encounters change her life forever. And in 1944 Beth arrived at a farm on the outskirts of the village of Highbury wanting to find a place she can call home, while Highbury House cook, Stella, desperate to pursue her own dreams, wanted to escape the estate, and the mistress of the grand house, widow Diana, was trying to cling to her pre-war life while her home had been requisitioned as a convalescent hospital for wounded soldiers. The war threatens Highbury House's treasured gardens, drawing these three very different women together by a secret that will last for decades.

**Timeless question:** What are the unexpected connections that cross time and the special places that bring people together forever?