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# Booklist Reader

Book and audiobook recommendations for all ages

April 2026

Booklist
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## Stories of Immigration in Life and Fiction

## New Poetry Collections for National Poetry Month

## Trend Alert: Youth Debuts from Adult Authors

## Celebrating Arbor Day

Illustration by Paolo Domeniconi, from *Climbing*, by Amy Lowell

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- Top 10 book lists for all your favorite genres
- Author Interviews
- Read-alike lists
- ...and more!

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ReadAlert

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# Booklist Reader

April 2026
Volume 5, Issue 8

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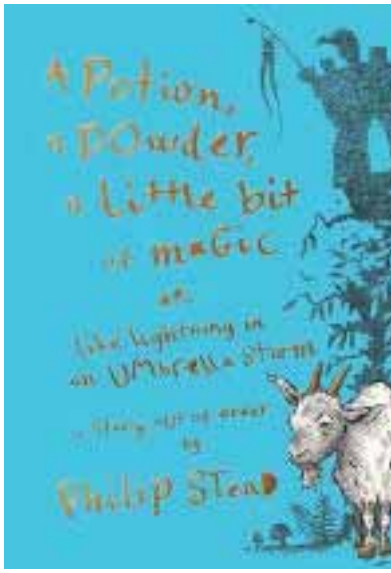


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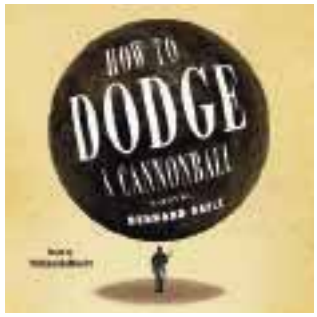

**On the Cover**

From *Climbing*, by Amy Lowell, illustrated by Paolo Domeniconi, and published by Creative Editions (Mankato, MN). *Climbing* appears in this issue's "Recent Poetry Round Up" feature. Illustration © 2025 by Paolo Domeniconi. Used by permission of the publisher.

## From the Publisher

I'm writing this on my last day as Senior Director of ALA Publishing & Media and Publisher of *Booklist*. I have mixed emotions and will deeply miss the publishing team and working with ALA to help expand the reach of our important and impactful publications. *Booklist* is ALA's premier book review magazine for library workers; we launched *Booklist Reader* to share the joy of reading with you, booklovers and library patrons. Reading is our passion at *Booklist*, and it's been a tremendous pleasure to work on this publication with the team to share that passion. Although I'm leaving, *Booklist* and *Booklist Reader* are in great hands with Editor in Chief Donna Seaman at the helm. To all who enjoy this publication and its reading and listening recommendations for all ages, I thank you. After today, I'll be joining you in the library, *Booklist Reader* in hand, discovering my next great read.

*—George Kendall*
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# Stories of Immigration in Life and Fiction

**by Enobong Tommelleo**

The human need to explore new places is as old as our race. Unfortunately, it is often paired with the impulse to devise borders that artificially determine which land belongs to whom and who belongs where. We promise gold-paved streets to those who approach our borders and require steel-plated nerves to any who wish to stay. As a person holding three nationalities (two through naturalization, one through heritage), I have heard the promises, steeled my nerves, and been fortunate enough to receive at least an official welcome. But in truth, receiving the official statement of belonging is only half the battle. The following fiction and nonfiction books explore the joy, pain, and courage of exchanging one home for another and the silent immigrant burden of proving you belong.

**American Street.** By Ibi Zoboi. 2017. HarperCollins/Balzer+Bray. Gr 9–12.

When Haitian immigrant Fabiola Toussaint is separated from her mother at the U.S. border, she is forced to navigate her new life and culture without her mother's guidance. In Zoboi's award-winning YA novel, Fabiola struggles to reconcile her heritage and spiritual beliefs with the challenges of fitting in.

**Americanized:** Rebel Without a Green Card. By Sara Saedi. 2018. Knopf. Gr 9–12.

Saedi's humorous and heartfelt YA memoir follows the author through her adolescent years, navigating high school, zits, prom, and her status as an undocumented immigrant.

**Behold the Dreamers.** By Imbolo Mbue. 2016. Random.

Jende Jonga is a Cameroonian immigrant and chauffeur to Clark Edwards, one of the head executives at Lehman Brothers. Clark is at the top of his game and living the American dream. But when Lehman Brothers collapses in the midst of a financial crisis, the fragile nature of both men's realities is revealed.

Art from the cover of *The Undocumented Americans.*

**The Good Immigrant:** 26 Writers Reflect on America. Ed. by Nikesh Shukla and Chimene Suleyman. 2019. Little, Brown.

Twenty-six writers reflect on their experiences as immigrants and people of color in pursuit of the American dream in a collection of essays that traverses the range of human emotion, from laughter to despair.

**The Joy Luck Club.** By Amy Tan. 1989. Putnam.

Four Chinese women and their American-born daughters navigate the intricacies of generational and cultural divides within their families. As the daughters attempt to bring their mothers into the future, the mothers share tales of their difficult pasts in China to help illuminate their own identities.

**The Lonely Londoners.** By Sam Selvon. 2020. Penguin Classics.

First published in 1956, this novel told in a series of vignettes follows the experiences of a group of West Indian immigrants who moved to London after WWII. This often humorous yet heartbreaking novel evokes the struggles and loneliness of living in a place hostile to your humanity.

**Pachinko.** By Min Jin Lee. 2017. Grand Central.

This emotional family saga spans four generations of a Korean family that moves to Japan in hope of a better life, yet faces continual hardships as members struggle to fit in, in a country that refuses to accept them.

**Small Island.** By Andrea Levy. 2010. Picador.

Two Jamaican immigrants, Hortense and Gilbert, move to London after WWII in hope of a better life. But as their lives intertwine with farmer's daughter Queenie and her husband, Bernard, it's soon evident that life on this island involves fighting a war of a different kind.

**The Undocumented Americans.** By Karla Cornejo Villavicencio. 2020. Random/One World.

Villavicencio travels the U.S. documenting the stories of undocumented immigrants. As she recounts their stories of resilience, grief, and hope, she humanizes a population often relegated to headlines and political debates and highlights what we all lose when this community is devalued.

Art from the cover of *Pachinko.*

# New Poetry Collections for National Poetry Month

**by Donna Seaman**

Though poetry rarely receives the flashy attention paid to popular fiction, excellent new poetry collections are published in quantity all year long. To celebrate this year's National Poetry Month, we offer an exciting array of early 2026 titles.

**America, A Love Story.** By Camille T. Dungy. Wesleyan.

Dungy's marvelous new collection is a stunning exploration of motherhood, the natural world, nostalgia, and life as a Black woman in America, set within the complex history and landscape of a country where "there is not a place I can wander inside you and not feel a little afraid."

**Be Easy:** New and Selected Poems. By Adrian Matejka. Norton/Liveright.

This highly anticipated gathering of poems new and from past collections celebrates Matejka as an acclaimed writer of soulful musicality, fascinating contradictions, unmatched linguistic ingenuity, and constantly evolving poetic strategies.

**The Book of Marys and Glaciers.** By Carrie Olivia Adams. Tupelo.

Adams' fifth collection is a work of observation, connection, and expansion as the poet interrogates how it feels to be a woman and the ways women are valued and devalued, while also expressing concerns regarding technology and ecological consequences.

**Bright Thorn:** Poems 2000–2026. By Devin Johnston. Farrar.

Johnston has always been an outlier, a poet who manages to assemble experience from sensation, infusing words with new energy thanks to his attention to diction and description: "soft Ojibwe names of lakes / still lap the shores of islands"

**Cantares.** By Edgar Garcia. Wesleyan.

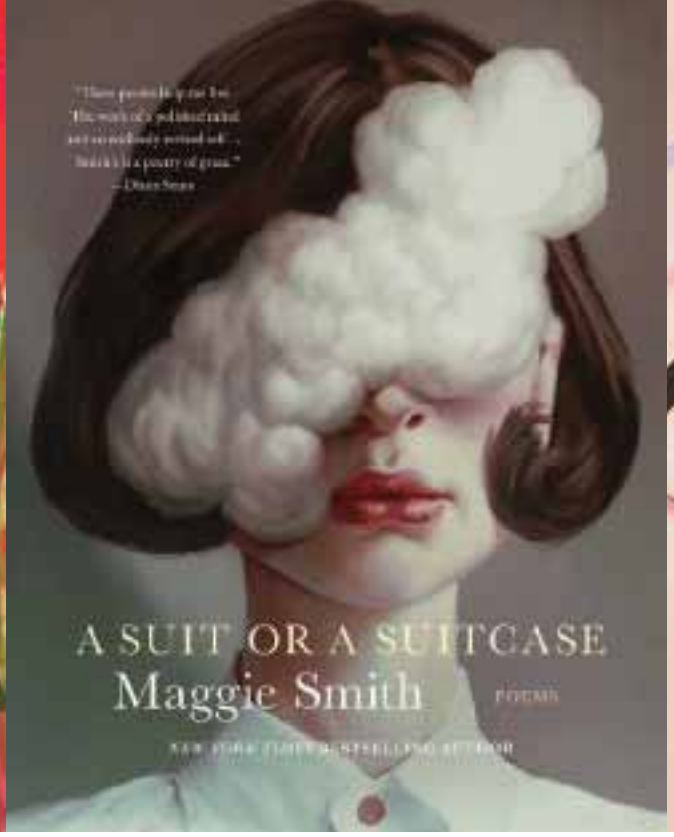
In a unique approach to history, myth, poetry, and artistry, celebrated scholar and poet Garcia sings a contemporary version of the *Cantares Mexicanos*, a collection of Nahuatl songs from sixteenth-century Mexico, accompanied by mini-essays that provide context and commentary.

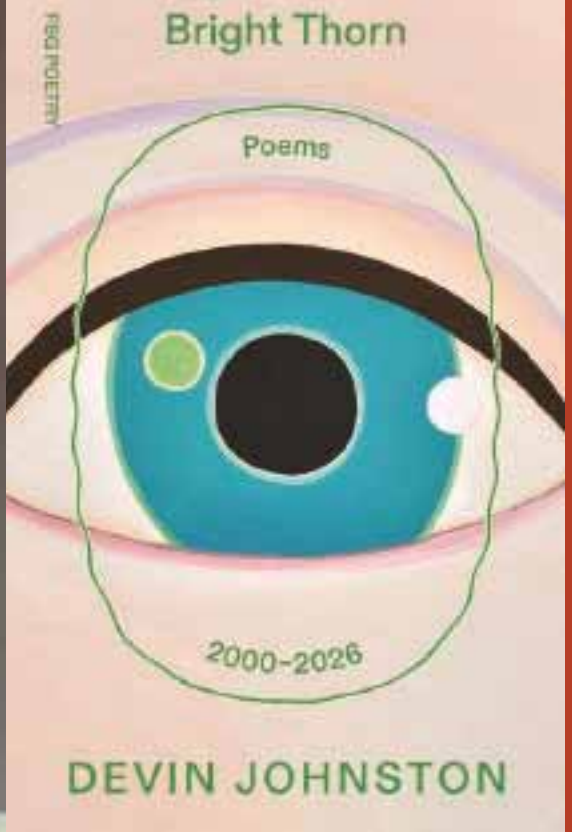
**Common Sense (1776), Addressed to Today's Citizens of America:** An Erasure. By Crystal Simone Smith. Beacon.

As we mark our nation's 250th anniversary, Smith provides a visually arresting and provocative critique of Thomas Paine's foundational 1776 pamphlet, *Common Sense*, by redacting large swathes that contradict and undermine its stated core values. This canny work of erasure poetry is sharply relevant in this time of increasing challenges to the constitution and our rights.

**en el norte / soy del sur:** a postnational postmemory. By José Felipe Alvergue. Omnidawn.

Salvadoran American poet and professor Alvergue's fourth book of poetry delivers "sonnet essays," inventive lyrical treatises on four topics—trust, fear, anxiety, and miracles. Family photos interrupt and complement the text, generating a true work of creative and critical genius.






**Enormous Morning.** By Philip Schultz. Norton.

In his twelfth collection, Pulitzer Prize–winner Schultz argues, hectors, insists, and celebrates. His past is as alive to him as the present and his family history reads like a pattern book for the worst the twentieth century had to offer.

**Intifadas.** By Edward Salem. Sarabande.

Award-winning writer and activist Salem's second poetry collection is a raw, scalding testament to life as a Palestinian American born in the U.S. to diasporic parents, offering poems that depict compassion, fear, anger, and the search for refuge in the olive groves and rocky outskirts of Ramallah.

**Promise/Threat.** By Jonah Mixon-Webster. Knopf.

The PEN America Award–winning poet of *Stereo(TYPE)* returns with a captivating experimental collection in which we follow the speaker from dreaming to wakefulness and from surrender to control as Mixon-Webster explores death, love, self-destruction, identity, and introspection.

**Replica.** By Lisa Low. Univ. of Wisconsin.

Low's debut collection is one of reflection, interrogation, and clarity as the Asian American poet walks the reader through white spaces domestic and professional, topographies internal and external, while addressing race, mental health, romantic partnership, mother-daughter relationships, privilege, and power.

**Reverse Requiem.** By Ina Cariño. Alice James.

Whiting Award–winner Cariño's luminous poems pull ancestors and ghosts known and hidden to the fore, evoking a shared timeline that bends in many directions, suggesting a long and weaving lineage of people, place, culture, environment, trauma, loss, and joy.

**A Suit or a Suitcase.** By Maggie Smith. Washington Square.

Smith's first poetry collection since her much-lauded memoir, *You Could Make This Place Beautiful*, is accessible and fullhearted in its consideration of post-divorce self-reacquaintance, solo parenting, middle age, and navigating the unexpected life she now inhabits.

**The Vineyard.** By Jonathan Galassi. Knopf.

Galassi revitalizes the pastoral tradition in this luscious, witty, and poignant book-length poem chronicling a summer in a Long Island village he calls Oyster Ponds, where—candid, bemused, awed, and grateful—he embraces moments painful, joyful, and wonderfully ordinary.

**We (the People of the United States).** By Joshua Bennett. Penguin.

Bennett ruminates on his family history in a dazzling, expansive exploration of personal experience and the touchstones that informed it in poems that examine national identity, parenthood, masculinity, popular culture, and the natural world with clever wordplay, wit, and vivid clarity.

**Wellwater.** By Karen Solie. Farrar.

While the name of Solie's hometown, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, suggests a blunt instrument, she is sharp, sardonic, disillusioned, and compassionate as she critiques capitalism and mourns her father. As a deep well draws on an aquifer of ancient water, this collection draws up profound feelings.

Top 10

# Poetry Collections

The most artistic and resonant poetry collections from the last year introduce readers to new poets and tried-and-true poets at the peak of their powers. They have all found lyrical ways to address difficult subjects, from personal trauma to war, with candor, beauty, profound emotion, and striking perceptions.

**Burn Me Back.** By Peggy Robles-Alvarado. 2025. Four Way.

Puertorriqueña Dominican poet and performer Robles-Alvarado brings her punchy, powerful voice to the page in a collection that cracks open wounds of sexual violence, confronts family alcoholism, and moves toward recovery in sensual, intimate lyrics.

**Ecstasy.** By Alex Dimitrov. 2025. Knopf.

The latest collection from Dimitrov, winner of the Stanley Kunitz Prize, is alight with desire, trysts, and humor. Set in New York and Miami, it features speakers who are brash, dismissive, flippant, and full of longing.

**Gaza:** The Poem Said Its Piece. By Nasser Rabah. Tr. by Ammiel Alcalay and others. 2025. City Lights.

Displaced by ongoing violence in Gaza, Palestinian poet and novelist Rabah excavates poetic truths from a crushed collective unconscious in this English and Arabic bilingual collection.

**Indifferent Cities.** By Ángel García. 2025. Tupelo.

In his bracing second collection, following *Teeth Never Sleep* (2018), Mexican American poet García chronicles legacies of movement, migration, and abandonment across several generations.

**Night Watch.** By Kevin Young. 2025. Knopf.

Concentrated, intricately crafted, richly evocative, peppered with song lyrics and conversational turns of phrase, distinguished poet and scholar Young's newest poems delve into the mysteries of body and soul, memory and death, life and love.

**Regaining Unconsciousness.** By Harryette Mullen. 2025. Graywolf.

Life on the brink of technological, environmental, and societal upheaval and collapse is examined in this new collection of vibrant, eclectic, and affecting poems by National Book Award finalist Mullen.

**Resting Bitch Face.** By Taylor Byas. 2025. Soft Skull.

Award-winning Byas (*I Done Clicked My Heels Three Times*, 2023) explores identity, perception, and the act of watching and being watched in bildungsroman-esque, self-image-themed poems and elegant verses in conversation with art, film, poetry, photography, and historical figures.

**rock flight.** By Hasib Hourani. 2025. New Directions.

Lebanese Palestinian poet Hourani's eye-opening debut poetry collection communicates the feelings of dislocation and precarity that have attended his own experience and that of Palestinians in exile.

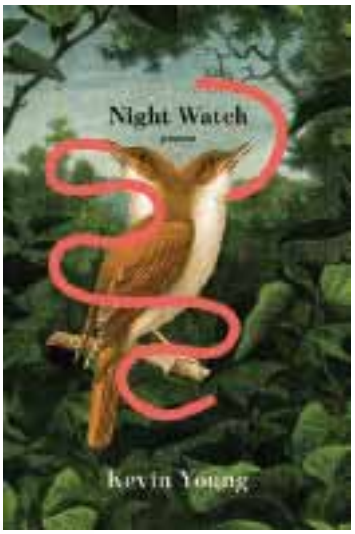
**Second Nature.** By Chaun Ballard. 2025. BOA.

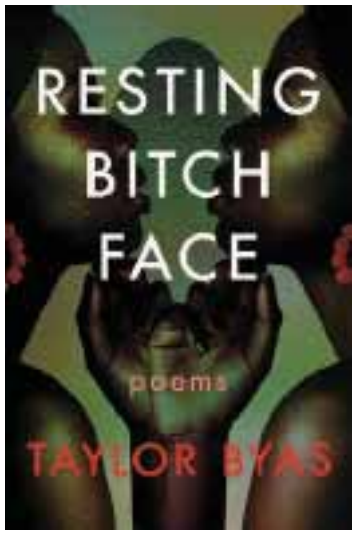
Intergenerational relationships, family and community identity, beautifully rendered nostalgia, and clever wordplay are all present and accounted for in this stunning debut collection by award-winning poet Ballard.

**You Must Live:** New Poetry from Palestine. Ed. by Sherah Bloor and Tayseer Abu Odeh. Tr. by Sherah Bloor and Tayseer Abu Odeh. 2025. Copper Canyon.

Translator-editors Abu Odeh and Bloor have created a timely and important bilingual anthology of recent poems by 30 Palestinian poets living in Gaza and the West Bank, poems that are shattering and sublime, intimate and communal.

Art from the cover of *Burn Me Back*.

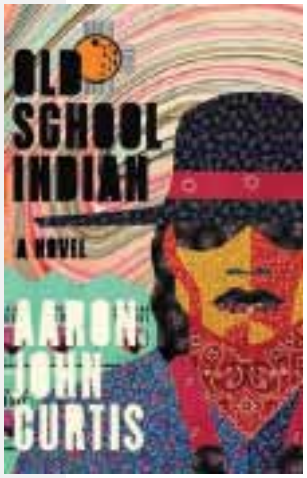




Top 10

# First Novels

These outstanding recent titles represent just about everything a first novel can be: satire, dystopia, genre-blend, haunting, funny. Here, too, are ten authors we look forward to seeing second novels from.



**All the Water in the World.** By Eiren Caffall. 2025. St. Martin's.

Caffall channels her ecological expertise into this commanding and heart-pounding novel about four survivors of a superstorm in an already ravaged, mostly abandoned New York City.

**Boy from the North Country.** By Sam Sussman. 2025. Penguin.

Aspiring writer Evan returns to his rural New York home to help his mother through chemotherapy and endures a gauntlet of confounding and transforming revelations as he nurtures the long-held fantasy that Bob Dylan could be his father.

**The Catch.** By Yrsa Daley-Ward. 2025. Norton/Liveright.

Daley-Ward melds surrealism and sf with contemporary fiction and a sprinkling of romance in the story of twin sisters and the woman who one sister believes is the mother they lost as infants while the other is sure she's a con artist.

**Fundamentally.** By Nussaibah Younis. 2025. Penguin/Tiny Reparations.

In a glorious satire shot through with emotional heft, Londoner Nadia tries to implement a UN rehabilitation program for ISIS brides in Iraq but is confronted with the inefficiencies, corruption, and idiocy of global aid and diplomatic systems.

Art from the cover of *Fundamentally.*

**Harriet Tubman:** Live in Concert. By Bob the Drag Queen. 2025. Gallery.

After a mysterious phenomenon brings back historical figures, music producer Darnell receives the gig of a lifetime—producing an album by his idol, Harriet Tubman. This energetic, humorous debut never wavers in its focus on the resilience and power of Black Americans.

**Old School Indian.** By Aaron John Curtis. 2025. Zando/Hillman Grad.

Back on the Mohawk reservation in upstate New York where he was raised, middle-aged bookseller Abe reunites with friends and relatives and skeptically attempts a course of healing from the debilitating automimmune disease affecting him.

**Open, Heaven.** By Seán Hewitt. 2025. Knopf.

Hewitt's reflective debut novel illuminates the complexity of gay adolescence. In a village in Northern England, 2002, 16-year-old James has recently come out to his parents and been outed at school when he meets troubled older boy Luke.

**The Phoenix Pencil Company.** By Allison King. 2025. Morrow.

Voiced by Monica Tsai, working on a "sparking connections" app, and her grandmother, Yun, recording her fading memories, King's debut is part speculative, part multigenerational family epic, part historical record, part coming-of-age romance, and all magic.

**These Memories Do Not Belong to Us.** By Yiming Ma. 2025. Mariner.

Set in a future in which memories can be downloaded from one mind to another, this novel-in-stories asks provocative questions about narrative, humanity, and love.

**To the Moon and Back.** By Eliana Ramage. 2025. Simon & Schuster/Avid Reader.

Steph Harper works tirelessly towards her goal: become the first Cherokee astronaut. Ramage's wondrous and deeply moving novel explores ambition, sexuality, and familial bonds with sensitivity and insight.

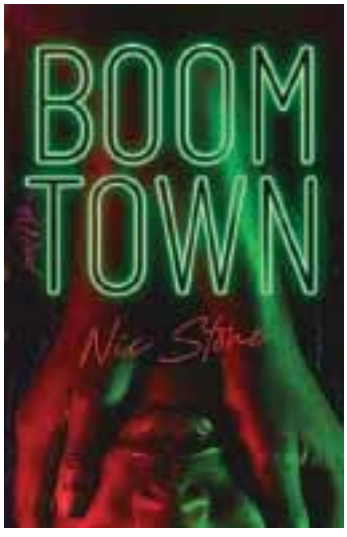
Art from the cover of *Yerba Buena.*

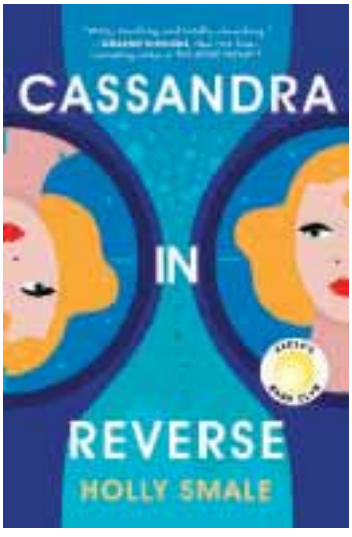
Trend Alert

# Adult Debuts from YA Authors

**by Susan Maguire**

Writers of young-adult novels are finding their way to the grown-ups' table with their adult debuts. Some of these authors will find crossover readership among those who grew up with their books; others are reaching for entirely new audiences. Readers will appreciate how these authors have honed their narrative clarity in books for teens and even middle-grade readers as they tackle themes like grief, family, and overcoming trauma from the past. It's not all tragedy, though, as this list includes a variety of genres and tones, representing the depths plumbed in these varied and exciting works.




**Boom Town.** By Nic Stone. 2025. Simon & Schuster.

Stone is known for YA fiction that explores the depths of the experiences of Black teenagers. This decidedly adult thriller, set in an Atlanta strip club, uses alternating perspectives and timelines as well as each narrator's knowledge, biases, and assumptions to piece together the story of a dancer whose disappearance mirrors that of a woman who went missing years before.

**Cassandra in Reverse.** By Holly Smale. 2023. MIRA.

The author of the YA Geek Girl series brings her brilliant character development to the tale of a 31-year-old stuck in a dead-end job who struggles with relationships because she can't pick up on emotional clues and who unexpectedly discovers her ability to travel back in time. As she attempts to reset the present by changing the past, she finds herself questioning if she can ever get it right.

**I Might Be in Trouble.** By Daniel Aleman. 2024. Grand Central.

A one-hit-wonder novelist meets a man on a dating app who fulfills all of his wildest fantasies and who, in the morning, is dead. Aleman's adult debut is both riotously funny and deeply touching as the novelist searches for his next book idea while dealing with a dead body.

**The Listeners.** By Maggie Stiefvater. 2025. Viking.

YA fantasy author Stiefvater infuses a touch of homespun magic in her adult debut. In 1942, the general manager of a luxury hotel in West Virginia must turn over her facilities to the State Department, which needs it to house Axis diplomats and their families in an epic-feeling novel that highlights characters at the mercy of the tides of history.

**The Macabre.** By Kosoko Jackson. 2025. Harper Voyager.

Lewis, a struggling artist, learns he is the descendant of a well-known painter whose works include magical elements that wreak havoc on the lives of those who possess them. When Lewis is summoned to the British Museum for a clandestine mission, he is unsure who to trust,

including his intriguing handler, Noah, in Jackson's eerie page-turner.

**The Manor of Dreams.** By Christina Li. 2025. Simon & Schuster/Avid Reader.

Middle-grade author Li combines historical fiction, mystery, and romance in this multigenerational gothic novel that follows Chinese American sisters who are shocked when their mother changes her will a week before her death, leaving their beautiful but crumbling California estate to a woman whose family was once employed there. A murder investigation ensues, but the two families must work together to fight a sinister presence that lingers in the house.

**Park Avenue.** By Renée Ahdieh. 2025. Flatiron.

In this spellbindng, juicy adult debut, an ambitious lawyer is tapped for a case involving a famous family—she knows she was picked because she shares their Korean heritage—in which a makeup mogul plans to divorce his dying wife before his children can collect their sizable inheritance.

**Pride and Joy.** By Louisa Onomé. 2024. Atria.

A woman who doesn't always see eye to eye with her Nigerian Canadian family, especially since her recent divorce, contends with a deeply religious aunt who claims her mother, who died suddenly in her sleep, will be resurrected in three days. This adult debut deftly combines emotional insight and comedy, exploring themes of family, grief, and belonging in a unique yet instantly recognizable family.

**Red City.** By Marie Lu. 2025. Tor.

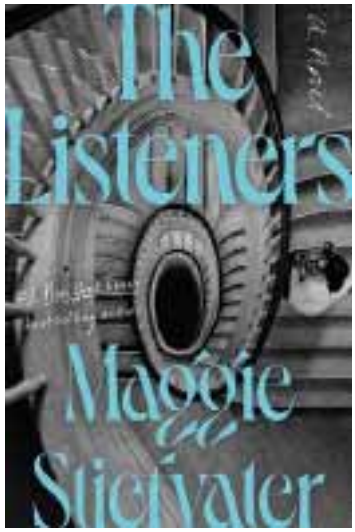
Full of both magic and crime, best-selling author Lu's romantasy is the perfect book for readers transitioning from YA to adult. A young woman befriends a schoolmate, but they hide things from each other—they both secretly study alchemy—and their star-crossed love story is tied up in the tale of powerful alchemy syndicates battling over territory and control of a dangerous new drug.

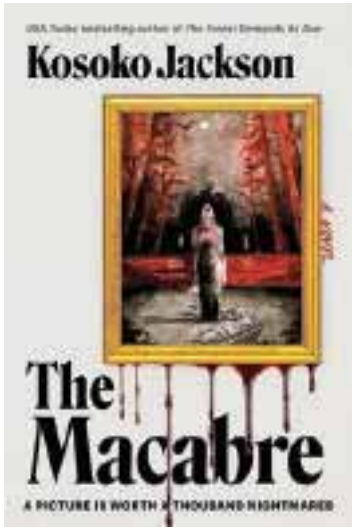
**The Unwedding.** By Ally Condie. 2024. Grand Central.

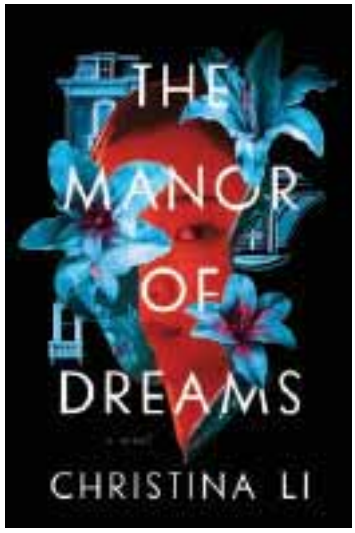
This engrossing locked-room thriller from the author of the YA Matched trilogy follows a newly single woman at a high-end resort who becomes embroiled in a wedding party there, befriending fellow travelers and discovering a body just as a massive storm forces the road to the resort to close.

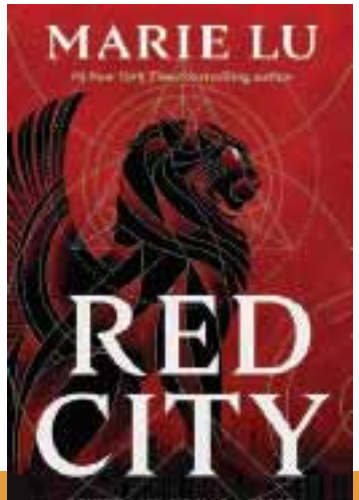
**Yerba Buena.** By Nina LaCour. 2022. Flatiron.

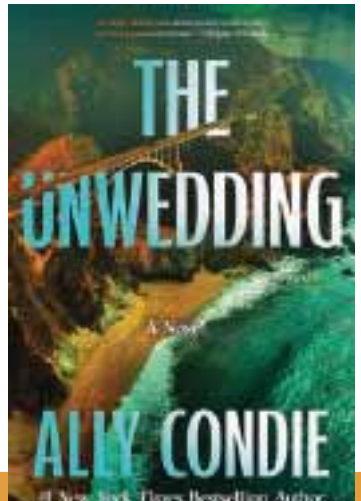
Printz Award–winner LaCour transitions from YA to adult in this lyrical, ultimately hopeful tale of two women who have dealt with their share of tragedy—one lost a girlfriend as a teenager, one is caught up in a toxic affair—who must let go of their pasts to finally allow themselves to fall in love.





10 Questions

# Robyn Green

**by John Charles**

Robyn Green was born and raised in Suffolk, England. After falling in love with the theater at a young age, she spent time performing on stage before shifting her focus to behind the scenes where she now specializes in costume design and curation. Robyn's passion for the arts is the main source of inspiration for her writing. *The Dramatic Life of Jonah Penrose* is her debut novel and her love letter to the theater.

***1. Who is Robyn Green when she is at home?***

When I'm not writing I can usually be found wrapped in a blanket drinking a cup of tea or out at the theater. I've recently moved to a lovely village outside of London and am really enjoying exploring the area with my dogs Anna and Spud.

***2. What can you tell us about* The Dramatic Life of Jonah Penrose*?***

This book came to me during a really difficult time in my life and allowed me to focus on something I really love, and I'm so happy that it's going out into the world. I was struggling a little with what to work on with my writing and my agent told me to write something that I know and love, and for me that's the theater. I really wanted to take a look behind the scenes at what we don't see on stage, which is how Jonah and his world came about. I set out to write a romance but ended up writing a lot of my own experiences too when it comes to Jonah's family. Being able to write about all the dramatics with some more serious issues was important to me, and I hope that readers can resonate with Jonah and what it's like to navigate life in your thirties.

***3. What five words best describe* The Dramatic Life of Jonah Penrose*?***

Dramatic, queer, West End romance!

***4. What is it about the enemies-to-lovers/rivals-to-lovers trope you find most interesting as an author?***

When I was plotting out the novel, I actually didn't set out to write an enemies-to-lovers trope, but as I developed Dexter and the narrative with Jonah it felt natural to make them professional rivals. I think the dynamic of having a rivalry creates a tension that's so fun to write, then developing that distaste into something romantic really is such a fascinating dynamic to explore. I really enjoyed writing the scenes where they were picking holes in each other, it made the romantic scenes feel all the more worth it because of that pent-up tension.

***5. Much of* The Dramatic Life of Jonah Penrose *is set amid a fictional musical* The Wooden Horse*. What are your own favorite real-world musicals?***

This is the hardest question because I really do go through phases when it comes to musicals, and I will play soundtracks on repeat for months before circling back to others. Saying that, my favorite musical is *Cabaret*, which is why I knew I needed to include it in the novel somehow. Another recent favorite of mine is *Next to Normal*, which I'm not ashamed to say makes me sob every time I see it. *Evita* also holds a special place in my heart; it was the first show I was in when I was younger, and I still remember those songs like the back of my hand!

***6. What are the books that made you fall in love with reading?***

I used to spend a lot of time at my grandparents' house and one of my fondest memories is sitting on my grandad's knee while he read to me. I, sadly, can't remember the name of that book, but it was about a magical train. I've tried to look it up so many times but can never find it, I hope it comes back to me one day because that is one of the earliest books I ever remember reading. My first chapter book that made me realize a world could exist past short picture books was *The Trumpet of the Swan*, by E. B. White, which I didn't really understand when reading it at the time, but looking back now, I know that book really made me excited about the possibility of being able to read more. Later on, *Of Mice and Men* had a huge impact on my love of literature. My English teacher at school was incredible and he read that book to us and, given he must have read it hundreds of times, he cried at the end. The impact that book had on him really moved me. It had the same impact on myself, and ever since then, I've always chased that feeling of being so consumed by a book you completely lose yourself in it.

***7. What role have libraries played in your life?***

I actually got *The Trumpet of the Swan* out of my school library, so that was my first step into the library world, which I loved. I still remember my school library, very orange and yellow, but filled with the most amazing books. I've always loved browsing the shelves in my local library and since moving, I have one I can walk to in a couple of minutes, which is amazing. It's such a hub in the community, and I think the work they do to get children involved with reading is incredibly important. Now, though, I love the library apps. Audiobooks get me through my days!

***8. What is the best piece of life advice you have been given?***

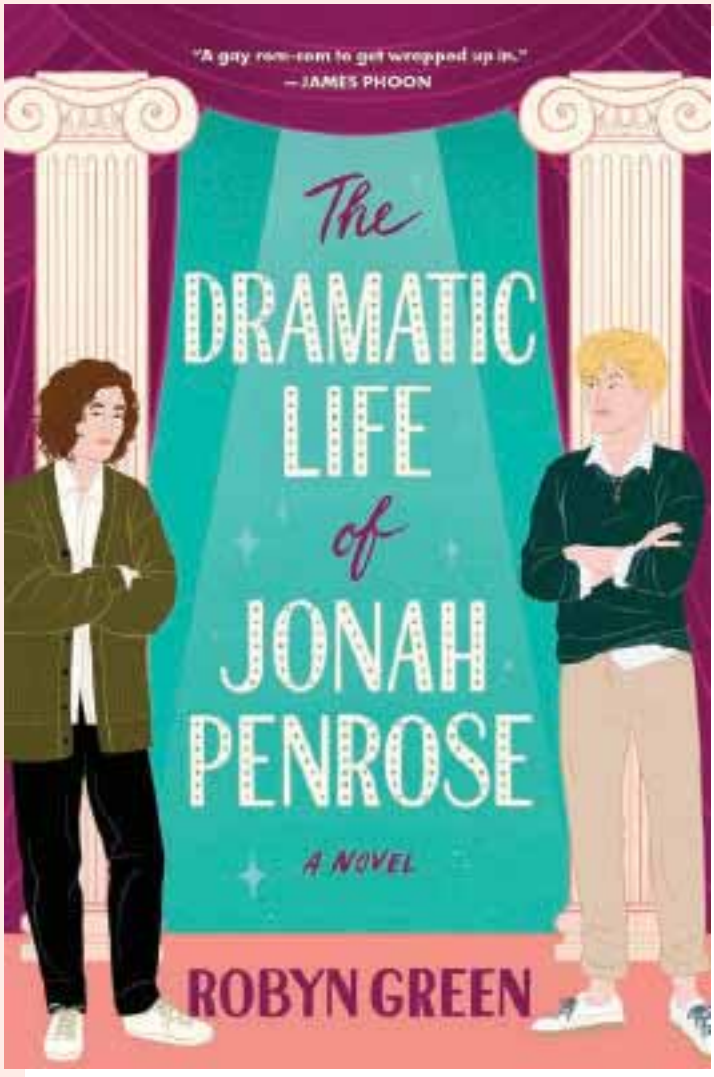
"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." I actually try to live by this; sometimes life can be really hard and it's easy to get caught up in my own world, but remembering those around me is important, so even if its dropping a text to a friend to tell them I think they're amazing, or calling my parents just to catch up and tell them I love them, I try to do those things because you never know what someone else might be going through, and that small thing might just brighten their day.

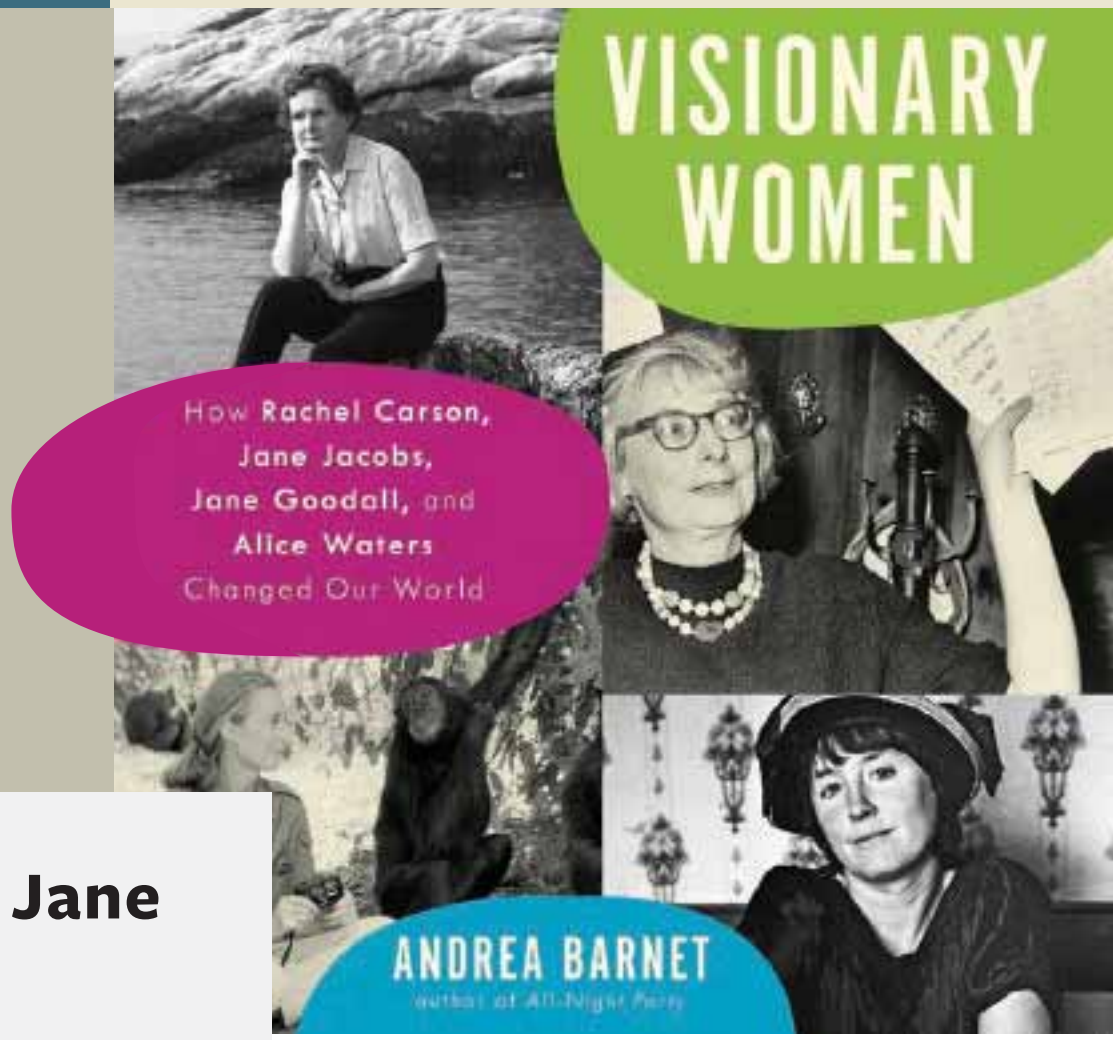
***9. What is next for you as an author?***

It's really strange to think past Jonah when it's been everything I've thought about for such a long time now! But I am working on another romance and have finished another top-secret project. Although I have to be very mysterious about future work, I will continue to proudly show queer representation in everything I do and hopefully create characters readers can resonate with.

***10. How can readers learn more about you and your work?***

I'm quite active over on Instagram (@robyniswriting) where you will find me posting stories of my dogs, theatre trips, and other general life things as well as what I'm up to writing-wise! I also update my links there frequently so news is up-to-date!






# The Legacy of Jane Goodall

**by Donna Seaman**

Jane Goodall (1934–2025)—scientist, conservationist, humanitarian—advocated ardently for the preservation of the living world right up to the end of her extraordinarily courageous, creative, giving, and enormously influential life. She transformed wildlife studies through her groundbreaking work with chimpanzees in Gombe, Tanzania, then expanded her conservation efforts to encompass all of the planet's plants and animals, founding the international Jane Goodall Institute and Roots & Shoots, her global program for young people. She wrote 27 books for all ages, including *The Book of Hope: A Survival Guide for Trying Times* (2021); tirelessly traveled the world to share her message of caring, learning, and action; and received numerous awards. These books encapsulate Goodall's legacy in the work of scientists and others deeply inspired and guided by her knowledge, wisdom, and convictions.

**The Animals' Agenda:** Freedom, Compassion, and Coexistence in the Human Age. By Marc Bekoff and Jessica Pierce. 2017. Beacon.

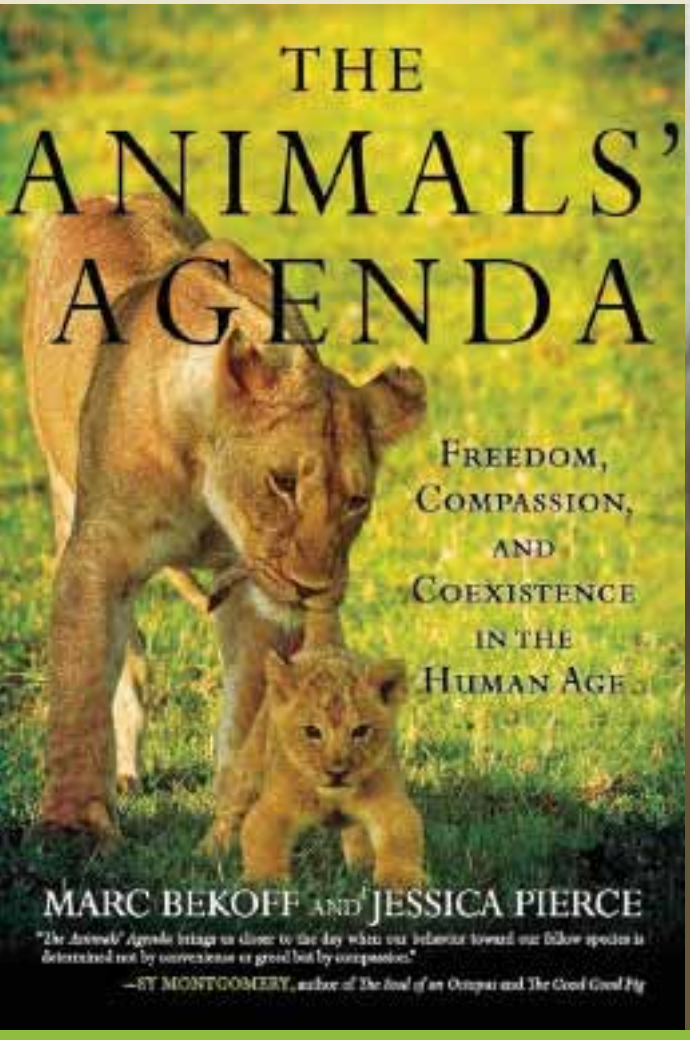
Animal-behavior expert Bekoff, cofounder of Goodall's Roots & Shoots program and Ethologists for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, with bioethicist Pierce, affirms the intelligence and emotions of animals whose lives are controlled by humans, from livestock to lab animals to pets, and calls for far kinder and more respectful interactions.

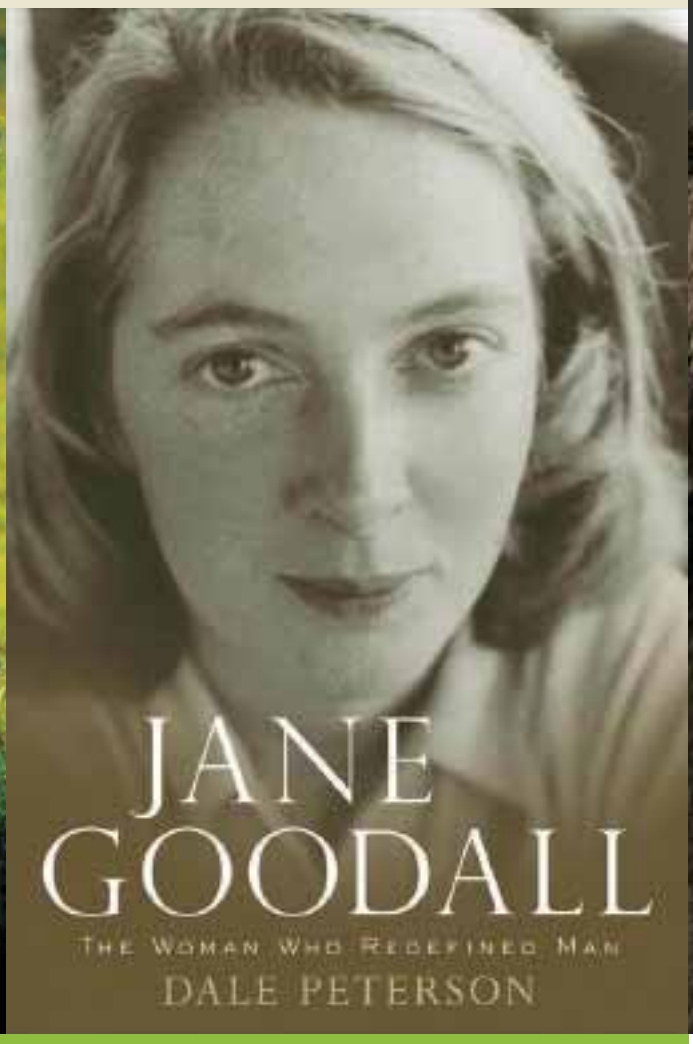
**Becoming Wild:** How Animal Cultures Raise Families, Create Beauty, and Achieve Peace. By Carl Safina. 2020. Holt.

Award-winning biologist Safina explains that all animal life exhibits culture, which improves the survival rate of the group, taking readers deep into the cultures of sperm whales, scarlet macaws, and our close relative and Jane Goodall's adored species, chimpanzees.

**Following Fifi:** My Adventures among Wild Chimpanzees; Lessons from Our Closest Relations. By John Crocker. 2017. Pegasus.

After college, Crocker went to Tanzania's Gombe National Park to study chimpanzees with Jane Goodall, learning



as Goodall knew so intimately just how similar humans and chimpanzees are.

**Jane Goodall:** The Woman Who Redefined Man. By Dale Peterson. 2006. Mariner.

Although Goodall lived a dynamic life for nearly two decades after this vivid biography was first published, its portrayal remains freshly illuminating and pleasurable as Peterson chronicles her personal and professional lives and notes that Goodall possessed, "high energy, a natural and happy competitiveness, a capacity for intense and extended concentration, a surprising attraction to risk, and an unusual tolerance for physical stress," qualities that proved essential to her uniquely demanding life as a pioneering field scientist and international activist.

**Mama's Last Hug:** Animal Emotions and What They Tell Us about Ourselves. By Frans de Waal. 2019. Norton.

Do we share the same emotions as all the other animals with whom we share the planet? Celebrated primatologist de Waal, firmly in the Goodall mode, answers with a resounding yes in a captivating and keenly observant survey of animal species.

**Visionary Women**: How Rachel Carson, Jane Jacobs, Jane Goodall, and Alice Waters Changed Our World. By Andrea Barnet. 2018. Ecco.

It's fascinating to see Goodall from Barnet's perspective as she aligns this paradigm-setting primate expert turned global ambassador for the living world with three other visionaries—environmentalist Carson, city advocate Jacobs, and pioneering organic restaurateur Waters—who offered "a new, more holistic way to think about the world, and a more benign way of living in it."

**What the Chicken Knows:** A New Appreciation of the World's Most Familiar Bird. By Sy Montgomery. 2024. Atria.

Naturalist and beloved writer Montgomery gets up close and personal with animals, always attuned, as Goodall was, to their emotions, intelligence, and personalities. She has written books about octopuses, turtles, a beloved pig, hummingbirds, moon bears, and pink dolphins. Here she vividly shares her love for the chickens she has lived with, describing their affection, sense of place, gift for language, love of play, and sense of humor.

## Reserve These Reads

# Adult

Get your hands on these hotly anticipated books, all out this month.

### Fiction

**American Fantasy.** By Emma Straub. Riverhead.

Best-selling Straub returns with a tale of nostalgia and middle age in this story of a newly divorced empty nester who, at the urging of her sister, books a cruise featuring all five members of a boy band she loved when she was a teenager.

**Cherry Baby.** By Rainbow Rowell. Morrow.

In Rowell's next sexy novel, Cherry's husband is in L.A., getting famous for his webcomic featuring a character based on Cherry and not planning to come back, when Cherry, in Omaha, runs into someone from her past.

**The Ending Writes Itself.** By Evelyn Clarke. Harper.

Bookish mysteries are about to have even more of a moment with this book from Cat Clarke and V. E. Schwab, writing as Evelyn Clarke. In their first outing together, six authors gather on a remote Scottish island to write the final chapters of a famous novelist's last twisty thriller.

**Go Gentle.** By Maria Semple. Putnam.

Returning with her first novel in ten years, the author of the smash-hit *Where'd You Go, Bernadette* introduces Adora Hazzard, a Stoic philosopher utterly at peace with her contained life, until a handsome stranger disrupts everything.

**Hope Rises.** By David Baldacci. Grand Central.

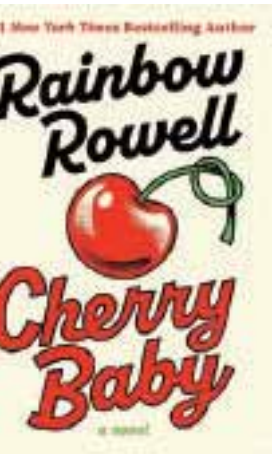
In the sequel to *Nash Falls*, Walter Nash is determined to bring the criminal mastermind who destroyed his life to justice, but, as he riskily works from inside her operation, the question arises: What is justice?

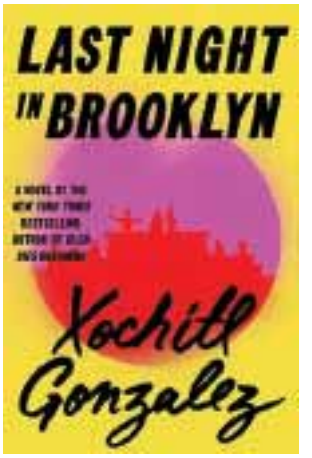
**Last Night in Brooklyn.** By Xochitl Gonzalez. Flatiron.

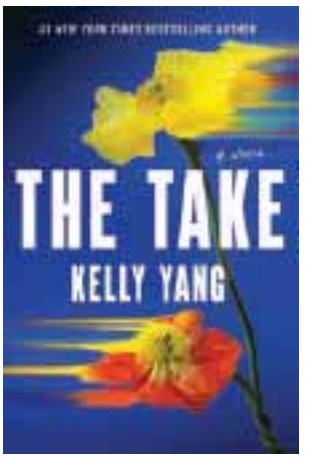
The author of *Olga Dies Dreaming* and *Anita de Monte Laughs Last* is back with a story of class, identity, and gentrification in early 2000s Brooklyn, featuring a woman (engaged to a doctor) who ventures into the Fort Greene neighborhood and becomes enmeshed in the clashing lives there.

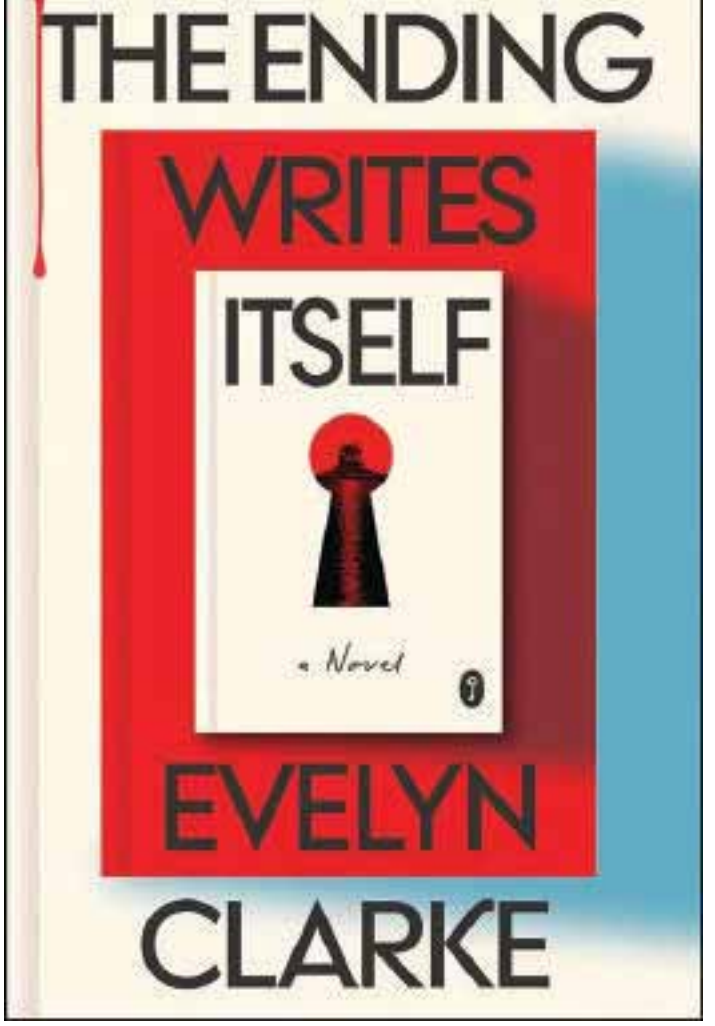
**Mad Mabel.** By Sally Hepworth. St. Martin's.

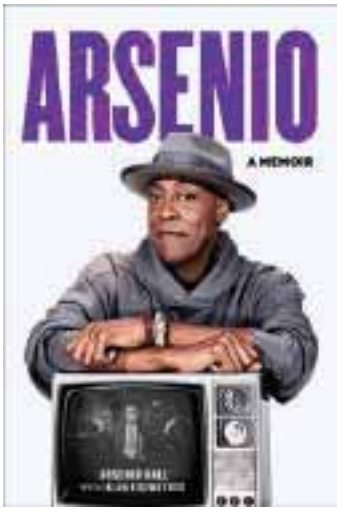
A Melbourne octogenarian, the grouch of her neighborhood, discovers a neighbor's body, which leads the police to look into her past as Australia's youngest murder convict in Hepworth's latest twisty thriller, which may just be her best yet.

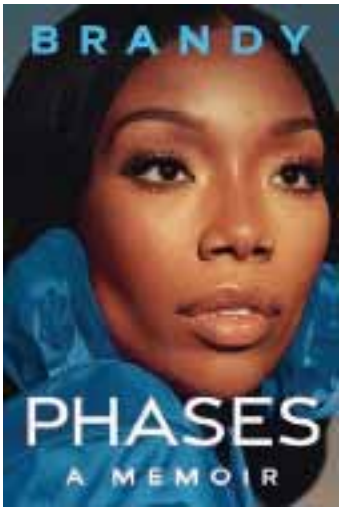











**My Dear You.** By Rachel Khong. Knopf.

Khong's follow-up to the best-selling Read with Jenna book club pick *Real Americans* is a story collection featuring relatable characters caught in fantastical circumstances, such as a solitary swim teacher who gets swept up in a tight-knit group of friends' revenge plot and a sex doll given the chance to speak.

**See You on the Other Side.** By Jay McInerney. Knopf.

In the final volume of the Calloway family tetralogy that McInerney began with *Brightness Falls*, a friend's thirty-fifth anniversary celebration in the spring of 2020 spurs a major marital reckoning for the Calloways.

**The Take.** By Kelly Yang. Berkley.

The best-selling middle-grade author makes her foray into adult fiction in this speculative thrill ride about a veteran white movie producer who undertakes an experimental anti-aging treatment, transfusing her blood with that of an aspiring Asian American novelist.

**We Burned So Bright.** By TJ Klune. Tor.

With the end of the world fast approaching, retired husbands take to the road in their dodgy old RV and drive cross-country, encountering the full range of humanity in a story that is warm and cozy even in the face of overwhelming grief, with complex family dynamics at the heart of it.

**West of Wicked.** By Nikki St. Crowe. Tor Bramble.

This fantastically clever, sinister, and steamy re-imagining of *The Wizard of Oz* blends fantasy, romance, political intrigue, and mystery in the story of a young woman swept up by a tornado who encounters a sexy scarecrow, witches good and bad, and a yellow brick road.

## Nonfiction

**Arsenio.** By Arsenio Hall. Atria/Black Privilege.

The comedian traces his roots from performing as a magician in Cleveland to megastardom in movies like *Coming to America* and his iconic talk show, a staple of 1990s late-night (remember Bill Clinton playing the sax?), and discusses his difficult decision to walk away from it all.

**London Falling:** A Mysterious Death in a Gilded City and a Family's Search for Truth. By Patrick Radden Keefe. Doubleday.

Expanding on a *New Yorker* piece, Keefe, best known for *Say Nothing* about the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland, investigates the death of a London teenager caught up in the city's crime underworld.

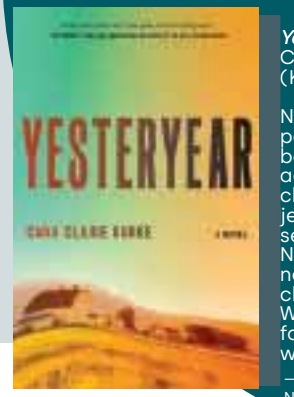
**Phases.** By Brandy. Hanover Square.

Multiplatinum singing-sensation Brandy recounts the highs and lows of a life lived in the spotlight, going from singing in Mississippi churches to acting in TV's *Moesha* and *Cinderella*.

# April 2026

## The Top Ten Adult Fiction and Nonfiction Chosen Monthly by America's Library Staff

**Find out more at www.LibraryReads.org**



*Yesteryear: A Novel*
Caro Claire Burke
(Knopf)

TOP PICK

Natalie is an influencer with a seemingly perfect life: perfect children, perfect husband, and a perfectly beautiful Idaho farm. Never mind the workers who actually run the farm, the nannies who care for the children. And never mind the women online who are jealous that Natalie can afford to be a trad wife who serves her family and, most importantly, her God. Natalie wakes one morning in her house...except it's not. Electricity has been replaced by a fire, her children are dirty, and her husband is old and gruff. Where are the hidden cameras? Where is her real family? Creative, mind-bending, and incredibly well-written, this one is sure to be a blockbuster.

—Jenny Davies, Oak Creek Public Library, WI
NoveList read-alike: *The Influencers* by Anna-Marie McLemore

*Japanese Gothic*
Kylie Lee Baker
(Hanover Square)

A troubled young man in 2026 begins communicating with the ghost of a female samurai from 1877 when he visits his father's new home in Japan. Both hold bloody secrets. A gory and suspenseful horror read that combines lyrical, dream-like writing with a compelling story of past meeting present.

—Mara Bandy Fass, Champaign Public Library, IL
NoveList read-alike: *The Fervor* by Alma Katsu

*The Ending Writes Itself*
Evelyn Clarke
(Harper)

An oft-used trope—people lured to a remote island, then cut off from the outside world—gets a new life. Six writers, following the death of their famous host, must compete to finish his final manuscript for a massive payday. While hesitant at first, the competition soon becomes intense, no one is quite who they seem to be, and death stalks the halls. A wonderfully twisty mystery and a wickedly satirical look at the world of publishing.

—Beth Mills, New Rochelle Public Library, NY
NoveList read-alike: *You Are Fatally Invited* by Ande Pliego

*Thistlemarsh*
Moorea Corrigan
(Berkley)

WWI nurse Mouse receives notice that she is next in line to inherit the Faerie-blessed Thistlemarsh Hall in the English countryside. But she must do the impossible: fix the crumbling manor in just one month with the surprise aid of a handsome Faerie who can help defeat the magic protecting the manor. Fantastic atmospheric style, world-building elements, and sympathetic characters.

—Kristin Skinner, Flat River Community Library, MI
NoveList read-alike: *The Cottingly Secret* by Hazel Gaynor

*The Duke*
Anna Cowan
(St. Martin's Griffin)

The romance between Celine and Kate is fraught with obstacles (mostly themselves) and the secret they are keeping from the ton: that Celine is a courtesan who is blackmailing Kate, a member of the House of Lords. A traditional historical full of yearning and intrigue, this is what every Sapphic Regency reader has been waiting for.

—Dontaná M., Oak Park Public Library, IL
NoveList read-alike: *A Lady for All Seasons* by T.J. Alexander

*Start at the End*
Emma Grey
(Zibby Publishing)

A thoughtful, emotionally resonant novel that will appeal to readers who enjoy stories about love, loss, and new beginnings. This "sliding-doors" story balances tenderness and hope, offering a meaningful reading experience that lingers after the final page. An excellent choice for patrons who enjoy contemporary literary fiction and book club–worthy reads.

—Janie Hermann, Princeton Public Library, NJ
NoveList read-alike: *What Might Have Been* by Holly Miller

*London Falling: A Mysterious Death in a Gilded City and a Family's Search for Truth*
Patrick Radden Keefe
(Doubleday)

In 2019, the lifeless body of teenager Zac Brettler was discovered in the Thames River. Police conclude that Zac was suicidal, but his parents believe that something more nefarious led to his death, and discover he was caught up with gangsters and criminals. Compelling narrative non-fiction that's deeply intimate and unnerving.

—KC Davis, LibraryReads Ambassador, CT
NoveList read-alike: *Butler to the World* by Oliver Bullough

*Molka*
Monika Kim
(Erewhon Books)

Dahye finds herself in a relationship with a rich, handsome man. But when a video scandal involving the two erupts, he flees Korea, leaving Dahye alone. When she realizes the extent of the betrayal, she seeks a terrible bloody revenge. An unapologetic dive into female rage, exploitation, misogyny, and powerlessness.

—Lila Denning, St. Petersburg Library System, FL
NoveList read-alike: *My Sister, The Serial Killer* by Oyinkan Braithwaite

*The Caretaker*
Marcus Kliewer
(Atria/12:01 Books)

Macy thinks she's finally caught a break when she answers an ad for a weekend house-sitting gig that pays a ridiculous amount of money, even if it comes with some...unsettling instructions. Unsettling turns eerie, which turns to horrifying as Macy realizes—too late—this is one job that she should have never accepted. The chills ramp up fast and never stop in this page-turner horror novel.

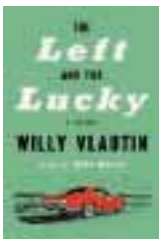
—Sharon Layburn, South Huntington Public Library, NY
NoveList read-alike: *The Spite House* by Johnny Compton

*Go Gentle: A Novel*
Maria Semple
(Putnam)

Adora is an Upper West Side philosopher who seems to have her life together. She practices stoicism, and it keeps her grounded and happy—until it doesn't. Who is the mysterious man who wants her to deliver a letter? What are her employers up to? How did she become a stoic? Readers follow along with Adora as she tries to find answers.

—Joan Hipp, LibraryReads Ambassador, NJ
NoveList read-alike: *Crush* by Ada Calhoun

**Bonus pick:**



*The Left and the Lucky*
Willy Vlautin
(Harper)

**Notable Nonfiction:**

*The Lost Cities of El Norte: Coronado's Quest, the Unconquered West, and the Birth of American Indian Resistance*
Peter Stark,
(Mariner Books)

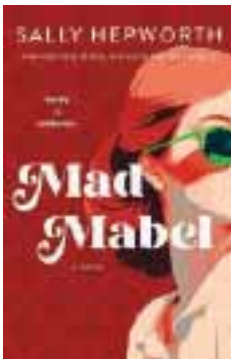
*Be sure to check out our social media for the Bonus Pick annotations!*

# April 2026
# HALL OF FAME TITLES

The LibraryReads Hall of Fame designation honors authors who have had multiple titles appear on the monthly list since 2013.

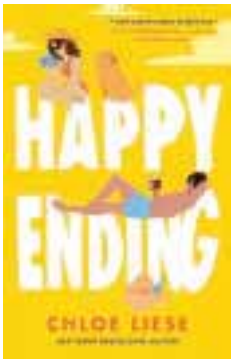
Find out more at www.LibraryReads.org/HOF

*The Paris Match*
Kate Clayborn
(Berkley)



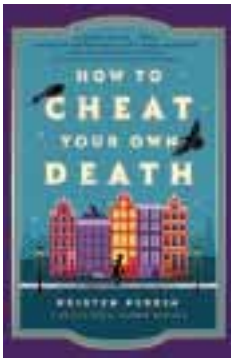

*Mad Mabel*
Sally Hepworth
(St. Martin's Press)

*We Burned So Bright*
TJ Klune
(Tor Books)



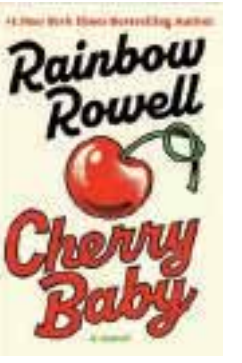

*Happy Ending*
Chloe Liese
(Gallery Books)

*The Name Game*
Beth O'Leary
(Berkley)




*How to Cheat Your Own Death: A Novel*
Kristin Perrin
(Dutton)

*The Mountains We Call Home: The Book Woman's Legacy*
Kim Michele Richardson
(Sourcebooks Landmark)




*Cherry Baby*
Rainbow Rowell
(William Morrow)

*The Book Witch*
Meg Shaffer
(Ballantine Books)

*American Fantasy*
Emma Straub
(Riverhead Books)

# PBS BOOKS

## PBS BOOKS READERS CLUB

### Where Great Books Bring Readers Together

Looking for your next favorite read? The PBS Books Readers Club is a free, national digital series that connects readers with the authors—and stories—they love most.

### Meet the Authors

Episodes feature thoughtful reading lists and in-depth conversations with best-selling and beloved writers, including voices like Kristin Hannah, Percival Everett, Julia Alvarez, and many more. These thoughtful interviews explore inspiration, characters, and the stories behind the stories.

### Discover What to Read Next

Alongside author talks, PBS Books shares curated booklist episodes and themed recommendations—perfect for readers who love discovering new titles and revisiting favorites.

### Watch on YouTube and Join the Community

Readers connect year-round in the PBS Books Readers Club Facebook Group, sharing recommendations, discussing monthly picks, and submitting questions for authors.

### Keep Reading

The PBS Books newsletter delivers hand-picked recommendations and literary inspiration straight to your inbox—visit pbsbooks.org/subscribe.

### Read Beyond the Page

The PBS Books Readers Club connects readers with authors and ideas—creating deeper understanding, richer conversations, and an even greater love of books.

## American Stories: A Reading Road Trip

*A literary adventure across the United States*

*American Stories: A Reading Road Trip* is a joyful, state-by-state journey through the books, places, and people that have shaped America's imagination. Produced by PBS Books in partnership with the Library of Congress, this digital series brings together travel, history, and storytelling—all through the lens of literature.

Each episode explores a different U.S. state or territory, highlighting local authors, unforgettable books, and bookish destinations that make each place unique. From historic libraries and indie bookstores to literary landmarks and real-life settings that inspired great works, the series celebrates how stories grow from place—and how those stories help define who we are.

Along the way, viewers meet best-selling authors, passionate booksellers, librarians, historians, and local storytellers, with special features from each state's Center for the Book, showcasing community programs, events, and local literary pride.

We've hit the road with these stops on our Reading Road Trip:

- Rhode Island
- Georgia
- Ohio
- Indiana
- Louisiana
- Washington
- Wyoming

Created in celebration of America's 250th birthday, *American Stories: A Reading Road Trip* invites viewers to explore the heart, history, and creative spirit of the nation—one story at a time.

It's a book lover's dream itinerary.

Whether you're planning your next trip or simply turning the page from home, this series proves that every great journey begins with a story.

✨*Watch on YouTube • Subscribe to find out where we're headed next at pbsbooks.org/subscribe.*

# Program Highlights

## PBS Celebrates National Library Week with Two Powerful Films Honoring Libraries and Librarians

National Library Week is a moment to celebrate the institutions that sit at the heart of community life: our public libraries. Every day, librarians do far more than shelve books. They connect neighbors to information, provide safe spaces for learning, offer trusted guidance in moments of uncertainty, and help ensure that access to knowledge remains open to everyone.

This year, PBS is spotlighting the essential role libraries play in American civic life through two timely and deeply moving documentary films—each offering a different lens on what libraries mean to the people they serve, and why the work of librarians matters now more than ever.

### The Librarians

Premiered February 9, 2026 | Now streaming on the PBS App

In *The Librarians*, award-winning filmmaker Kim A. Snyder documents a growing national conflict unfolding in a place many Americans have long considered sacred ground: the library.

The film begins in Texas, where lawmakers seek to review a list of books—sparking a chain of events that places librarians on the frontlines of a national battle over what belongs on library shelves and who gets to make those decisions. Across the country, librarians face increasing pressure as library collection standards are challenged, particularly around books that include race-related and LGBTQIA+ content.

Snyder's approach is both personal and investigative. What began as a story about a wave of book bans in Texas and Florida evolved into something larger: a deeply coordinated effort to intimidate, censor, and undermine public institutions—especially libraries, and especially the women who lead them.

Throughout the film, viewers meet librarians with a wide range of backgrounds and beliefs, including an Army veteran, a devout Catholic, a Baptist minister's daughter, and a Librarian of the Year—quiet professionals who share a commitment to freedom of information and the responsibility of serving their communities with care. The film also highlights voices of hope: students speaking at board meetings, community members pushing back, and individuals from across the political spectrum choosing truth over fear.

At its core, *The Librarians* asks a crucial question: what happens to public life when access to knowledge is restricted?

### Free for All: The Public Library

*Free for All* will stream for free on PBS App & PBS.org from May 1–June 29, 2026

Where *The Librarians* captures the urgency of the present, *Free for All: The Public Library* offers a sweeping look at the past, present, and future of one of America's most valued civic institutions.

Directed by Dawn Logsdon and Lucie Faulknor, the documentary traces the evolution of the public library system—from the mid-nineteenth-century "Free Library Movement" to the modern-day challenges libraries face in an era of budget cuts, closures, privatization pressures, and polarizing debates.

The film introduces viewers to the quiet revolutionaries who helped shape the library into what it is today, including historic pioneers like Ernestine Rose, who fought to provide books in multiple languages to immigrant communities in Manhattan and helped hire the New York Public Library's first African American librarians. It also spotlights leaders like Regina Andrews, who became the first Black librarian to officially lead an NYPL branch and helped transform the 135th Street branch into an intellectual hub of the Harlem Renaissance.

Just as importantly, the film brings the story into the present. Viewers meet librarians and outreach workers across the country, including a Wisconsin librarian who knows her patrons by name, and a Louisiana bookmobile driver who brings books and services directly to children, families, and seniors.

In their letter to viewers, the filmmakers share a powerful realization shaped by lived experience: librarians are first responders. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, their local library became a lifeline—not for reading material, but for computers, trusted information, help filing claims, and a sense of stability in chaos. That same role has continued through floods, wildfires, economic downturns, the pandemic, and civil unrest.

### Libraries as Democracy in Action

Together, these two films underscore a shared truth: libraries are more than buildings filled with books. They are one of the last truly public commons—spaces where the doors are open, resources are shared, and the promise of equal access remains real.

PBS is proud to support and amplify the work librarians do every day. This National Library Week, these films invite viewers not only to reflect on what libraries have meant in their own lives, but to recognize the people who keep them running—and the role libraries continue to play in strengthening communities across America.

And if there's one takeaway both films make clear, it's this: go to your local library, and thank a librarian.

A Conversation

# Maggie Smith

**by Heather Booth**

Maggie Smith's newest poetry collection, *A Suit or a Suitcase*, is rich with a grounded, loamy truth in conversation with the pristine divinity one can find in the small, everydayness of life. *Booklist* audio editor Heather Booth asked Smith, also host of *The Slowdown* podcast in partnership with The Poetry Foundation and American Public Media, how listening to poetry connects with her work as a poet sharing her work aloud.

***Heather Booth: It's often said that poetry is meant to be heard; your podcast,* The Slowdown*, and your new narration of* A Suit or a Suitcase *are two ways we get to hear poetry that is either from or meaningful to you. How do you interact differently with poems heard than with poems read?***
Maggie Smith: Poems, like songs, are meant to live in the air. The sounds of the words are as important as their meanings. So while I write in a notebook or on my laptop, the poems really come alive when they're read aloud. I love to let the lines wash over me, and absorb what I can on first listen, then listen a second or even a third time to really savor the language.

***Booth: Do you hear your poems as you write them? Does the physicality of speaking a poem have a place in your writing process?***
Smith: I can't write or revise without reading my work aloud, and that goes for everything, not just poetry. I read everything aloud, and I tell my students to do the same thing. I advise them to trust their ears, and to read their work aloud over and over, working out the rhythm, listening for any tongue twisters. I tell them to ask themselves: Are any words hard to say back to back? Do the vowels sing together? Is the rhythm awkward at all? Are there too many—or not enough—syllables? Reading a draft aloud helps us sand down the splinters.

***Booth: What types of poems are you most drawn to reading aloud? Are there some that are difficult for you to give voice to? Some that you return to again and again?***
Smith: I enjoy reading a wide range of poetry, and I like reading it all aloud, from Shakespeare to Lucille Clifton to James Wright to Victoria Chang. When I was in college, I bought a box set of CDs of poets reading their own work. It was thrilling to hear Plath herself read "Daddy" and Ginsberg read "Howl." There's something special about hearing a poet read their own work, and paying attention to their pacing, their inflection, and the emotion in their delivery.

***Booth: Your poem "Good Bones" led to so many conversations among its readers. Similarly,* The Slowdown *feels like a personal invitation to conversation about the poems you share. Can you talk about how and when poetry works as a public conversation–starter? How you would like to see poetry as leading public conversation?***
Smith: One of the things I love about *The Slowdown* is that it's accessible. It's available on public media, free of charge, so that everyone can make poetry part of their daily life. Even people who don't think of themselves as "poetry people" turn to poems during life's biggest moments, but poems can help us make sense of our lives every day. Poetry can help us say the unsayable, and when we share poems collectively, they help us connect with others. We need—and we deserve—the opportunities for self-reflection and connection to others that poetry offers us.

***Booth: Do you listen to audiobooks? If so, when do you choose audio for a book rather than print?***
Smith: I love hearing authors read their work, and poetry in particular, because it is so sonically beautiful. But I also like to have the text in front of me, probably because I'm so interested in form; I want to see the shape and structure on the page. My ideal would be to listen to the author reading their poetry while following along with the book in my hands.

***Booth: Do you have a favorite memory of libraries to share?***
Smith: I grew up in the public library as a child, and I practically raised my kids at our public library, going multiple times a week for story time, family events, and just to pick out books and movies. The library is such an important part of our community, and we all know the librarians there by name. As I wrote in a piece for *The Washington Post*, ("Covid-19 took away our family's second home: The library" from October 5, 2020), a kind of love letter to our beloved public library, "I think we become readers before we discover we're writers, and we become readers by being exposed to literature early and often. The public library makes this possible, free of charge. Public libraries are where readers—and, therefore, writers—are born."

Top 10

# First Novels on Audio

Cozy quirkiness, political satire, and a classic debut just now out on audio make up our varied and vibrant audio Top 10 this year.

**Best Offer Wins.** By Marisa Kashino. Read by Cia Court. 2025. Macmillan Audio.

Margo can barely stand the heat in the explosive DC real estate market. Court's narration is driven by the frenzied vibe of this darkly hilarious debut.

**Big Chief.** By Jon Hickey. Read by Shaun Taylor-Corbett. 2025. Simon & Schuster Audio.

Taylor-Corbett approaches Hickey's novel of small-town and tribal politics with a wary and world-weary tone that becomes razor sharp when enlivening the tale's many strong personalities and cultural identities.

**The Borrowed Life of Frederick Fife.** By Anna Johnston. Read by Tim Carroll. 2024. HarperAudio.

Australian debut author Johnston gifts readers a story brimming with every kind of love in this sure-to-be-classic. Fellow Australian Carroll flawlessly intertwines Johnston's three narratives and his empathy shines even through his own tears.

**How to Dodge a Cannonball.** By Dennard Dayle. Read by William DeMeritt. 2025. Macmillan Audio.

An often startling and always enthralling performance by a virtuosic DeMeritt. He shifts continually through characters memorable, lovable, and despicable, and one who sounds remarkably like Christopher Walken in this Civil War satire.

**Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard.** By Kiran Desai. Read by Vidish Athavale. 2025. Books on Tape.

Though it debuted in 1998, Desai's first novel appears on audio just last year. Athavale's ability to effortlessly transition among characters' ages, genders, careers, and levels of self-importance is irresistible.

**Mask of the Deer Woman.** By Laurie L. Dove. Read by Isabella Star LaBlanc. 2025. Books on Tape.

Tribal marshal Carrie Starr is a multidimensional, troubled character consumed with grief over the death of her daughter and LaBlanc delivers a narration worthy of Carrie's complexity.

**The Names.** By Florence Knapp. Read by Dervla Kirwan. 2025. Books on Tape.

Irish actor Kirwan, making her solo audiobook debut, is an utter marvel. She seamlessly dons and sheds literary variations to create a three-pronged puzzle yielding vast rewards in this historical debut.

**The Passenger Seat.** By Vijay Khurana. Read by Fajer Al-Kaisi. 2025. Tantor.

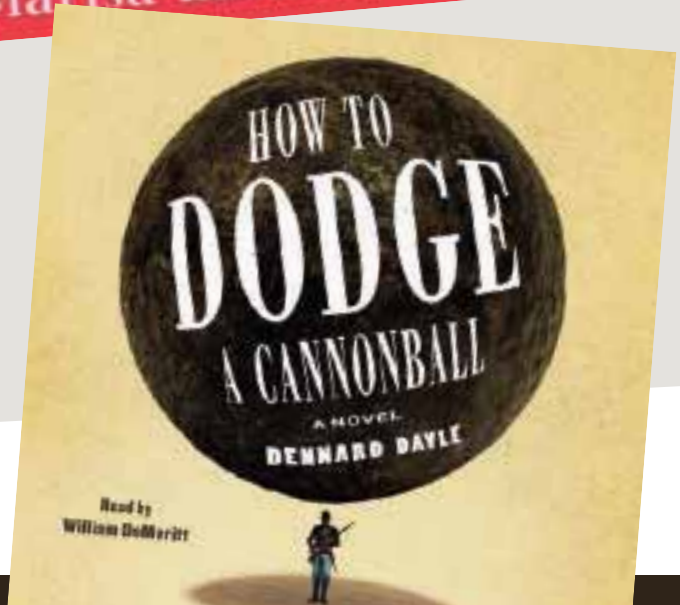
Two boys at the cusp of violent manhood embark on a road trip through the Canadian wilderness. Al-Kaisi contrasts the boys' spoken dialogue with inner monologues filled with uncertainty and fear of vulnerability.

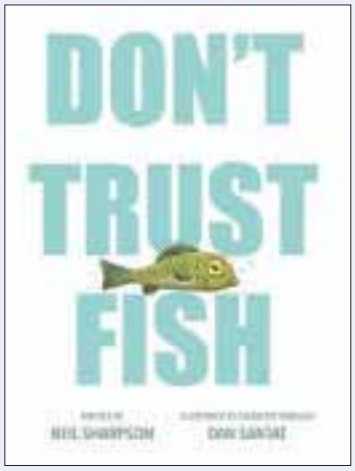
**Polybius.** By Collin Armstrong. Read by Rachanee Lumayno. 2025. Simon & Schuster Audio.

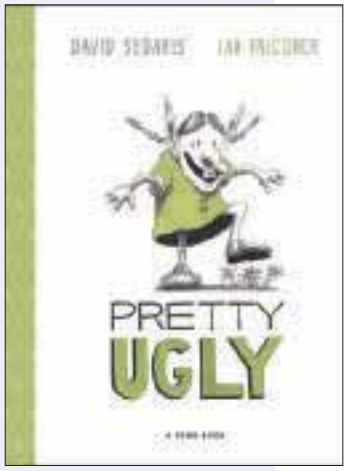
Horror, a small town, urban legends, and an arcade game in the 1980s converge in this irresistible debut. Lumayno shines as the foreboding, omniscient narrator, and in crafting a voice for each character.

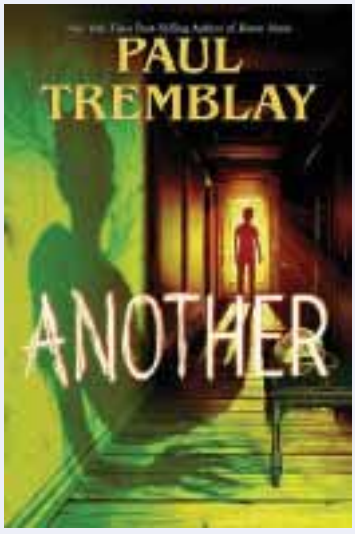
**A Town with Half the Lights On.** By Page Getz. Read by Hillary Huber. 2025. Tantor.

In newspaper articles, emails, journal entries, and letters in bottles, Huber's narration expertly tackles the quirky and uptight citizens of Goodnight, Kansas, as they decipher a most unusual will.





Art from the cover of *Death in the Cards*.

Trend Alert

# Youth Debuts from Adult Authors

**by Kelly Ferreira**

It's not unheard of for authors to cross genres and try new styles of writing. Recently, several notable adult authors have ventured into new age groups, hoping to capture younger audiences with their wit, creativity, and care. Playwrights, poets, Bram Stoker Award–winners, fan fiction enthusiasts, and more make up this list of authors of books for adults traversing a wide swath of children's and teen territory.

## Young

**Don't Trust Fish.** By Neil Sharpson. Illus. by Dan Santat. 2025. Dial. K–Gr. 3.

With exceptional timing in a dry comic voice, veteran playwright and novelist Sharpson's picture-book debut is part nature guide, part cautionary tale of the nefarious nature of fish from the perspective of a canny crustacean.

**Mama's Sleeping Scarf.** By Nwa Grace-James. Illus. by Joelle Avelino. 2023. Knopf. PreS–Gr. 2.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a prolific Nigerian author showered with accolades, adopts a pen name to share the sweet, familial tale of a young Black girl enthralled by her mother's sleeping scarf and the comforting role the scarf holds to soothe separation anxiety.

**Pretty Ugly.** By David Sedaris. Illus. by Ian Falconer. 2024. TOON. Gr. 1–3.

Sedaris has captured the laughter of many adults as an author, humorist, and radio contributor, and, in his true quirky fashion, here he enthralls young readers with a particularly gross family trying to out-scare one another as they make cute faces.

**The Surprise.** By Zadie Smith and Nick Laird. Illus. by Magenta Fox. 2022. Viking. PreS–Gr. 1.

Married coauthors Smith and Laird each have written several poignant adult works separately, which are deeply reflective of their lived experiences. Together, they've created an endearing work about an odd guinea pig with a penchant for judo costumes based on artwork by Fox.

## Middle

**Another.** By Paul Tremblay. 2025. HarperCollins/Quill Tree. Gr. 4–7.

Malicious mushrooms, the power of art, COVID-19, clinical anxiety, and personal agency all find their ways into the narrative of a new, haunting friend entering Casey's home as Bram Stoker Award–winning Tremblay confidently strides into the middle-grade horror arena.

**The Halloween Moon.** By Joseph Fink. 2021. HarperCollins/Quill Tree. Gr. 5–8.

Fink, creator of the popular podcast *Welcome to Night-vale*, adds humor to the macabre as Halloween-obsessed Esther Gold sneaks off with her best friend (against her parents' wishes) to trick-or-treat, where they encounter more haunting magic than they bargained for.

**Hansel and Gretel.** By Stephen King. Illus. by Maurice Sendak. 2025. Harper. Gr. 1–4.

In need of no introduction, literary behemoth King teams up with genius illustrator Sendak, reimagining the Brothers Grimm original with an old-fashioned writing style and incorporating creative details gleaned from Sendak's artwork in this whimsically grotesque tale.

**The Silver Arrow.** By Lev Grossman. 2020. Little, Brown. Gr. 4–7.

Aboard the magical train The Silver Arrow, Kate, with the help of younger brother Tom, transports various animals from endangered habitats to new homes around the world in this thrilling ride from Grossman, known best for the Magicians trilogy and its TV adaptation.

## Older

**Check & Mate.** By Ali Hazelwood. 2023. Putnam. Gr. 8–12.

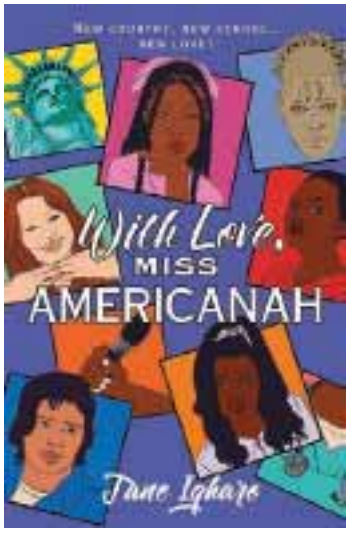
With her angsty rom-coms filled with STEM and fanfic inspiration, trained neuroscientist Hazelwood capitalizes on her knack for academic-minded characters in this impassioned chess romance centered on headstrong Mallory as she butts heads with celebrity "Kingkiller" Nolan.

**Death in the Cards.** By Mia P. Manansala. 2025. Delacorte. Gr. 7–12.

Manansala fed hungry whodunit readers with the Tita Rosie's Kitchen Mysteries series and returns to the genre here, this time centering on a high-school protagonist with the fearlessness of a PI and the crime-solving instincts of a classic detective in this tarot-driven drama.

**Highly Suspicious and Unfairly Cute.** By Talia Hibbert. 2023. Random/Joy Revolution. Gr. 9–12.

Renowned romance author Hibbert kicked off Nicola and David Yoon's YA romance imprint, Joy Revolution, with her YA debut about two former friends turned academic rivals who both make it into an exclusive survival course in the Scottish wilderness.




**I Kissed Shara Wheeler.** By Casey McQuiston. 2022. St. Martin's/Wednesday. Gr. 9–12.

Though her body of work is small, McQuiston took the adult-romance world by storm with tales of queer twenty-somethings trying to figure out life and romance—concepts that translate well into this academic-rival rom-com focused on tracking down serial kisser Shara Wheeler.

**The Protégée.** By Erica Ridley. 2025. Delacorte. Gr. 7–12.

Horror probably isn't what readers would expect of historical-romance specialist Ridley, yet she executes a fashionable tale of rhapsodic retribution and a scathing critique of class and capitalism in this murderous revenge-spree set in nineteenth-century France.

**With Love, Miss Americanah.** By Jane Igharo. 2024. Feiwel and Friends. Gr. 9–12.

Igharo's ability to marry genuine and infectious emotion with witty humor in her romances centering Nigerian characters is abundantly clear in her Jenny Han–esque coming-of-age story that follows Enore as she tries to acclimate to American high school after her father's death.

Art from the cover of *Mama's Sleeping Scarf.*

Top 10

# YA Debuts

These 10 titles come from a vast array of new voices demonstrating a remarkable grip on YA fiction, even as newbies to the game.

**All the Noise at Once.** By DeAndra Davis. 2025. 384p. Atheneum. Gr. 9–12.

Black and autistic Aiden wants nothing more than to play football with his quarterback brother, Brandon, but an incident with the police challenges the brothers' dynamic in this heartfelt story about connection and collective action.

**The Good Vampire's Guide to Blood and Boyfriends.** By Jamie D'Amato. 2025. 336p. St. Martin's/Wednesday. Gr. 9–12.

After human Cole catches newly turned vampire Brennan in the midst of blood larceny, they fall for each other, even as a human-killing vampire stalks campus.

**Last Chance Live!** By Helena Haywoode Henry. 2025. 544p. Penguin/Nancy Paulsen. Gr. 9–12.

Eternity Price jumps at the chance to eliminate her death-row sentence through a horrifying reality TV show, sharing her previous struggles throughout the narrative alongside scathing social and political critique.

**The Last Tiger.** By Julia Riew and Brad Riew. 2025. 416p. Penguin/Kokila. Gr. 8–12.

Royal Eunji and servant Seung must decide whether to protect the last tiger or sacrifice it in this delightful fantasy inspired by the authors' grandparents' forbidden relationship.

**My Fair Monster.** By Adrienne Rivera. 2025. 384p. Page Street YA. Gr. 9–12.

Pageant queen Corie finds a way to combine her flair for tiaras and sashes with her absolute love of schlocky horror movies in a monster-makeup competition.

**Out of Air.** By Rachel Reiss. 2025. 304p. St. Martin's/Wednesday. Gr. 8–12.

A deep-sea dive into a breathtaking cave leaves Phoebe and the Salt Squad cursed in this artful thriller full of air-tight tension and robust character development.

**Shampoo Unicorn.** By Sawyer Lovett. 2025. 320p. Disney/Hyperion. Gr. 9–12.

Lovett's incredibly written, multiple-POV debut features a searing, powerful story of three young queer people in rural America and how their stories intertwine.

**This Moth Saw Brightness.** By A. A. Vacharat. 2025. 448p. Dutton. Gr. 8–12.

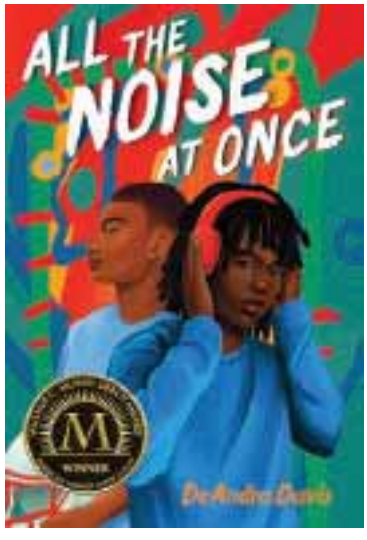
In this engaging work placing information literacy at the forefront, 'Wayne agrees to participate in a medical research study and connect with his crush, Jane, but not everything is as it seems.

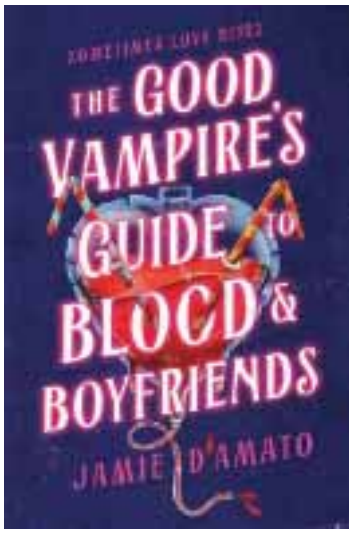
**The Unexpected Consequence of Bleeding on a Tuesday.** By Kelsey B. Toney. 2025. 304p. Random. Gr. 7–12.

With laugh-out-loud catastrophes that are told with empathy, Toney's debut is a fast-paced romp about the challenges of being young and navigating a medical system that doesn't take period pain seriously.

**Wavelength.** By Cale Plett. 2025. 408p. Groundwood. Gr. 9–12.

Sasha hides from the fame of their pop-star alter ego, befriending and romancing members of the band Wavelength while capturing everything simultaneously beautiful and catastrophic about queer teenage self-discovery.



Art from the cover of *Wavelength*.

Top 10

# Debut Graphic Novels for Youth

Ranging from humorous early reader comics to genre-blending teen romances, the debut graphic novels in this list offer a glimpse of the wide variety of new voices in this ever-expanding category.

**Avery and the Fairy Circle.** By Rowan Kingsbury. Art by the author. 2025. 56p. Flying Eye. Gr. 1–4.

Soft colors and rounded figures fill the panels of this story about Avery, who happens upon a fairy circle near her new house and befriends Birch, a rambunctious fairy who shows her the wonders of the forest.

**Don't Cause Trouble.** By Arree Chung. Art by the author. 2025. 256p. Holt. Gr. 3–6.

Ming's Chinese immigrant parents don't understand his desire to fit in, and his efforts to be a cooler kid lead to trouble big and small until he realizes how important it is to just be himself.

**Duck and Cat Ride the Riverboat.** By Drew Panckeri. Art by the author. 2025. 40p. Holiday. K–Gr. 2.

New Yorker cartoonist Panckeri makes his author-artist debut with this hilarious early reader comic about a tense riverboat ride involving Duck, Cat, and a family of hangry alligators.

**How to Talk to Your Succulent.** By Zoe Persico. Art by the author. 2025. 224p. Tundra. Gr. 4–7.

Rendered in luminous, luscious full-color artwork, this touching tale about a grieving girl who discovers she can talk to plants deftly uses the natural world to explore children's experience of grief.

**Hunger's Bite.** By Taylor Robin. Art by the author. 2025. 272p. Union Square. Gr. 8–12.

Neeta and Emery butt heads on the SS *Lark* as the new owner of the seafaring voyager takes over management, driving the crew to exhaustion and the first-class guests to insatiable insanity in this paranormal adventure.

**Lu and Ren's Guide to Geozoology.** By Angela Hsieh. Art by the author. 2025. 256p. HarperCollins/Quill Tree. Gr. 3–6.

Lu and Ren are looking for Lu's ah-ma while trying to solve an ecological mystery in this inventive comic with lush, well-considered, and fascinating world building.

**Pacheco and the Witch of the Mountain.** By Juan E. Zambrano. Art by the author. 2025. 176p. Andrews McMeel. Gr. 5–8.

Pacheco longs to learn magic, which is forbidden to boys, but the exiled Witch of the Mountain takes him on as an apprentice regardless.

**The Ribbon Skirt.** By Cameron Mukwa. Art by the author. 2024. 192p. Scholastic/Graphix. Gr. 3–7.

Anang, a two-spirit tween, is feeling uncertain about wearing a ribbon skirt to the upcoming powwow, until they find guidance and confidence in their family and community.

**Supa Nova.** By Chanté Timothy. Art by the author. 2025. 160p. Nosy Crow. Gr. 2–4.

Enterprising young scientist Nova invents a plastic-eating creature to solve an environmental problem, but her solution creates a whole different problem in this energetic, brightly colored, and brainy story.

**You and Me on Repeat.** By Mary Shyne. Art by the author. 2025. 224p. Holt. Gr. 9–12.

Chris lives the day of his high-school graduation over and over again in this coming-of-age time-loop tale full of emotional growth, well-timed comedy, and slow-burn romance.

Art from the covers of *Don't Cause Trouble* and *Avery and the Fairy Circle.*

Reserve These Reads

# Children & Teens

Get your hands on these hotly anticipated books, all out this month.

## Older

**Clock Hands.** By Marieke Nijkamp. Art by Sylvia Bi. Greenwillow. Gr. 8–12.

In this stand-alone companion to 2023's *Ink Girls*, poor aspiring metalworker Vale becomes apprentice to a man set on building their city's first astronomical clock.

**The Escape Game.** By Marissa Meyer and Tamara Moss. Putnam. Gr. 8–12.

Mega best-seller Meyer's latest collaboration is a murder-mystery that revolves around an escape room–themed reality TV show, on which a contestant was found dead.

**The Fight of Our Lives:** AIDS in America. By David Levithan and Gabriel Duckels. Knopf. Gr. 9–12.

Critically acclaimed Levithan teams up with Duckels, compiling a comprehensive history of America's response to AIDS that's required reading for anyone who wants to understand this tragedy on a deeper level.

**Piper at the Gates of Dusk.** By Patrick Ness. Candlewick. Gr. 9–12.

Ness returns to the popular Chaos Walking universe with this sequel, which takes place 20 years later and follows a new generation faced with a spreading plague of Noise.

**Soundtrack.** By Jason Reynolds. Crown. Gr. 7–12.

This adaptation of the original audiobook follows teen drummer Stuy as he escapes an abusive household and joins a ragtag band in 2000s New York City.

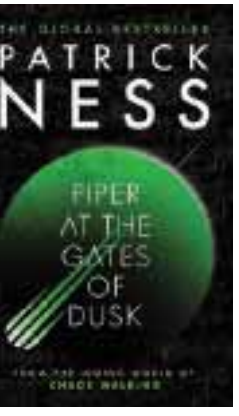
## Middle

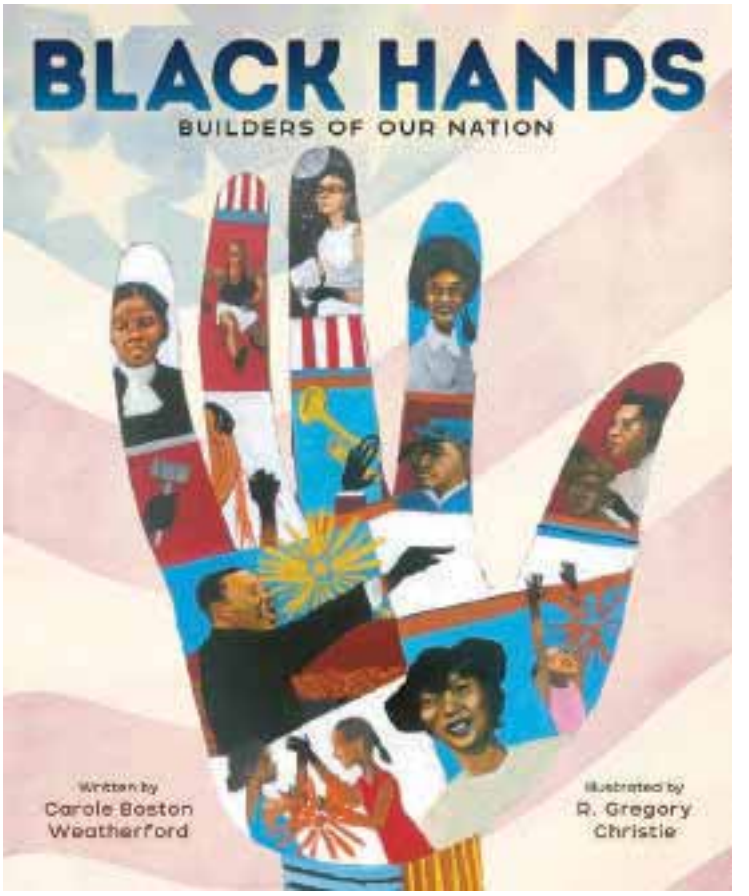
**Black Hands:** Builders of Our Nation. By Carole Boston Weatherford. Illus. by R. Gregory Christie. Crown. K–Gr. 5.

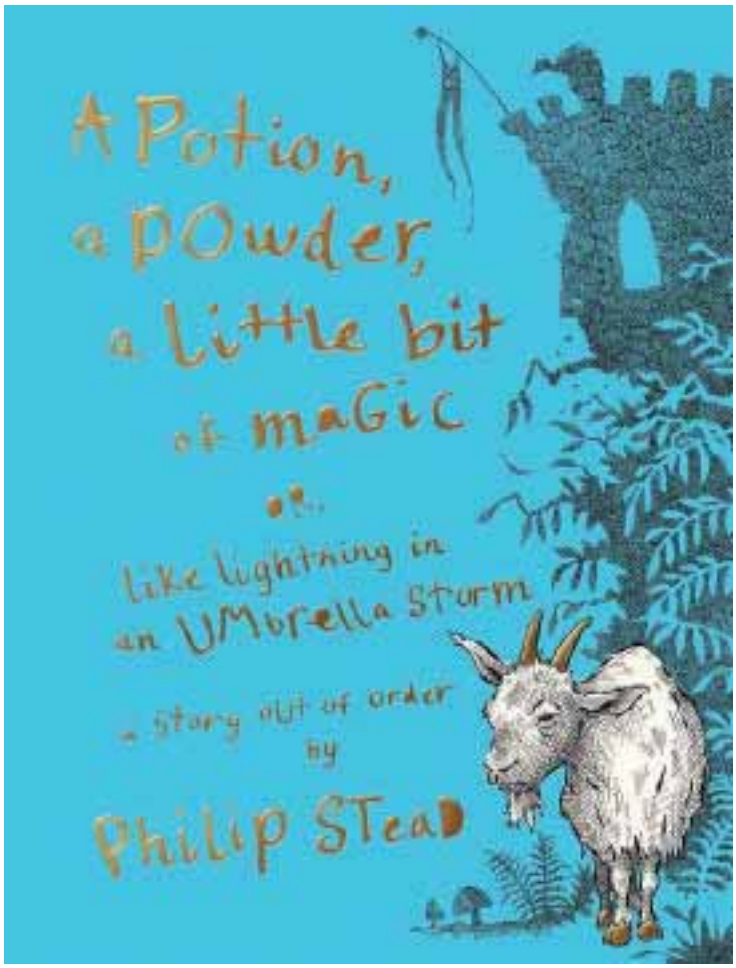
Renowned team Weatherford and Christie present an inspiring celebration of how Black hands have always woven essential parts of the American tapestry.

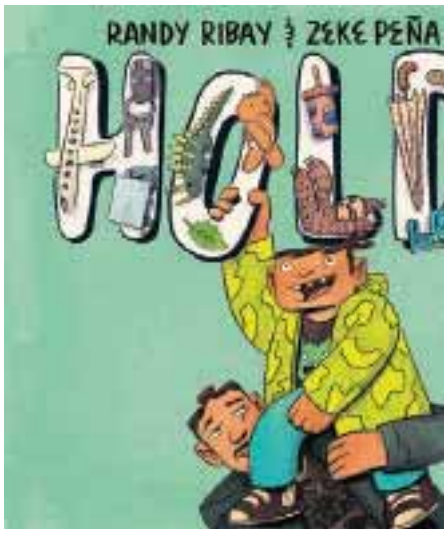
**Captain Underpants:** The First Epic Manga. By Dav Pilkey. Art by Motojiro. Scholastic/Graphix. Gr. 2–5.

Pilkey's famed underwear superhero is headed back to the shelves as veteran mangaka Motojiro adapts the first chapter book of the series into manga format.









**Guardians:** Forbidden Mountain. By Brandon Mull. Random/Labyrinth Road. Gr. 4–7.

In a thrilling new fantasy adventure from Mull, creator of the Fablehaven and Beyonder series, two young Anorans navigate very different social strata, only for their paths to become entwined.

**A Potion, a Powder, a Little Bit of Magic:** Or, Like Lightning in an Umbrella Storm. By Philip C. Stead. Illus. by the author. Holiday/Neal Porter. Gr. 4–7.

*Playful* is the first word that comes to mind when describing lauded picture-book creator Stead's first novel, about a royal goatherd embarking on a rescue mission.

**Rialto.** By Kate Milford. Clarion. Gr. 5–9.

As usual with Milford, the world of her latest novel hints at much deeper lore, which is sure to please fans of immersive, whimsical fantasy, and the breadcrumb-trail mystery is a fun puzzle to solve.

**Sashimi.** By Dan Santat. Art by the author. Roaring Brook. Gr. 1–5.

Santat demonstrates his storytelling mastery and decades of talent in this uproarious literal fish-out-of-water story of a cryptid fishboy concealing his identity to attend middle school.

## Young

**102.** By Matthew Cordell. Illus. by the author. Little, Brown. PreS–Gr. 3.

In the newest book by Cordell, whose *Wolf in the Snow* was the 2018 Caldecott Medal winner, a boy shrinks to mouse size and helps his animal friend save a family member who is stricken by illness.

**Good Morning, Morning!** By Maya Myers. Illus. by Jennifer K. Mann. Holiday/Neal Porter. PreS–Gr. 2.

A boy slips out into the natural world and embarks on a happy-go-lucky exploration of the predawn sights and sounds outside his house.

**Hold.** By Randy Ribay. Illus. by Zeke Peña. Penguin/Kokila. PreS–Gr. 1.

When it's time to leave, Daddy can't find the keys. After he asks his toddler to hold his water bottle, a game is launched, and bonding ensues.

**Ritu in the Sun.** By Moniza Hossain. Illus. by Mercè López. Crown. PreS–Gr. 3.

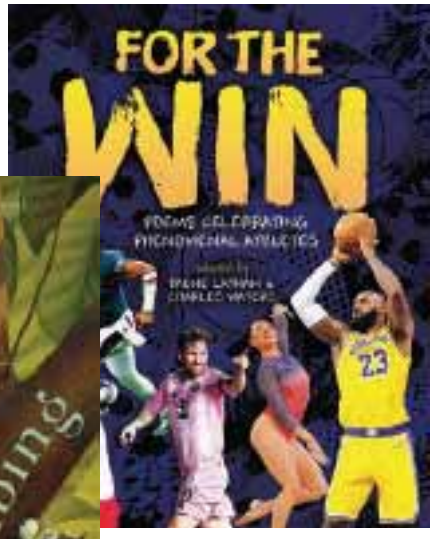
Stunning illustrations created using acrylic paint and graphite add depth and texture to this visually rich, lyrical exploration of colorism at odds with a love of the sun.

# Recent Poetry Roundup

**by Sarah Hunter**

It's National Poetry Month, and we're here to debunk the notion that poetry is stuffy and dull! Poetry can be about literally anything, as evidenced by these recent titles, which feature not only iconic poets like Mary Oliver and Langston Hughes but contemporary explorations of sports, historical figures, nature, and even scary stories.

Above: art from the covers of *Nature's Remarkable Partners, Melodies of the Weary Blues,* and *Goldfinches.*



**Climbing.** By Amy Lowell. Illus. by Paolo Domeniconi. 2026. 16p. Creative Company/Creative Editions. K–Gr. 2.

Striking, imaginative illustrations bring twentieth-century American poet Amy Lowell's 16-line imagist poem to life in this lyrical picture book that's perfect for imaginative kids, who will appreciate the enticing glimpses of literal castles in the air.

**For the Win:** Poems Celebrating Phenomenal Athletes. Ed. by Irene Latham and Charles Waters. 2026. 48p. Carolrhoda. Gr. 3–6.

This engaging collection celebrates 20 outstanding, current professional athletes from a wide range of sports, including basketball, golf, gymnastics, and even professional wrestling. Each competitor is the main subject of a poem written by a different contributor, resulting in a variety of styles, voices, imagery, and themes.

**Goldfinches.** By Mary Oliver. Illus. by Melissa Sweet. 2026. 40p. Viking. K–Gr. 3.

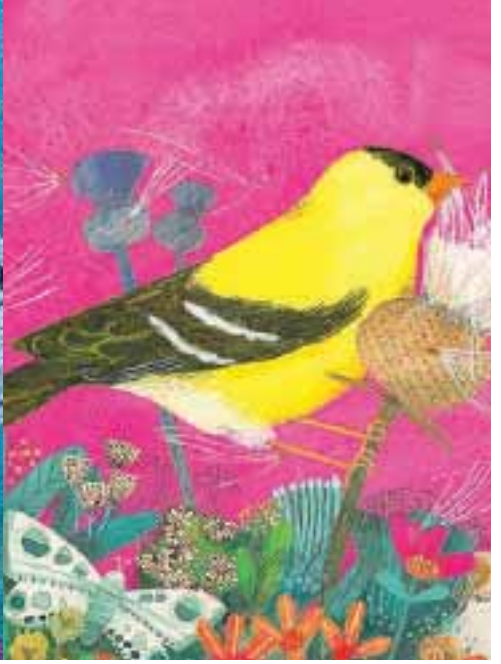
Pulitzer Prize winner Oliver's poem "Goldfinches" is given the picture-book treatment to excite young readers about the natural world. As a young ornithologist comes across goldfinches, Sweet's mixed media artwork in vibrant colors and textures takes the form of a nature journal while vividly rendering the birds in their cheery, bright glory.

**Harriet Tubman:** Force of Nature. By Caroline Brewer. Illus. by the author. 2025. 48p. What on Earth! Gr. 3–6.

This lilting biography of Harriet Tubman is written in short, powerful poems that act as lyrical snapshots that sparkle with life. Beautiful collage artwork portrays important moments and adds historical context in this tour-de-force poetic account of an important American figure.

**Hopeful Heroes:** More Poems about Amazing Latinos. By Margarita Engle. Illus. by Juliet Menéndez. 2025. 48p. Holt/Godwin. K–Gr. 3.

This collection of original poems from the former Young



People's Poet Laureate celebrates notable Latin Americans and important events in the history of the many nations of Latin America, pairing brief, free-verse poems with powerful portraits. This upbeat, accessible offering is also available in Spanish.

**Melodies of The Weary Blues:** Classic Poems Illustrated for Young People. By Langston Hughes. Ed. by Shamar Knight-Justice. 2026. 48p. Harper. K–Gr. 6.

A century after its original publication, this vibrant anthology reintroduces the poetry collected in Langston Hughes' *The Weary Blues* through a visual serenade by 23 insightful, accomplished artists. Both a reprise and an improvisation, this masterfully curated tribute lifts up Hughes' iconic voice and renders it newly urgent and enduringly timeless.

**Nature's Remarkable Partners:** Wild Poems for Two Voices. By Leslie Bulion. Illus. by Robert Meganck. 2026. 56p. Peachtree/Margaret Quinlin. Gr. 3–6.

In a variety of verse forms, Bulion offers poems for two voices, emphasizing many examples of mutualism found in nature across the globe. Alongside the often entertaining poems, cartoon illustrations and concrete scientific explanations help drive the concepts home.

**Nightmare Jones.** By Shannon Bramer. Illus. by Cindy Derby. 2025. 56p. Groundwood. Gr. 5–8.

This unusual volume blends free-verse poems with scary stories, resulting in an eerie keep-you-up-at-night collection destined to creep out even the most jaded of middle-schoolers. Pithy lines with discomfiting names are accompanied by appropriately macabre illustrations, and fans of the classic *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* will be delighted.

**Poems for Every Season:** A Year of Haiku, Sonnets, and More. By Bette Westera. Illus. by Henriette Boerendans. Tr. by David Colmer. 2026. 56p. Eerdmans. K–Gr. 3.

Grouped by season, this beautifully illustrated poetry collection utilizes a variety of poetic forms to chart the passing months at a farmhouse. Though the word choice is often sophisticated, the poems never lose their accessibility, particularly in conjunction with the finely crafted woodcut-print artwork.

**This is Not a Small Voice:** Poems by Black Poets. Ed. by Traci N. Todd. Illus. by Jade Orlando. 2025. 128p. Nosy Crow. Gr. 1–5.

One hundred poems, by poets ranging from Langston Hughes and Maya Angelou to contemporary voices, such as Renée Watson and Amanda Gorman, showcase the culture and joy of Blackness, accompanied by rich watercolor illustrations.

**Time for Haiku:** Four Seasons of Poems. By Josep Santaeulàlia. Illus. by Luciano Lozano. Tr. by Lawrence Schimel. 2026. 72p. Red Comet. K–Gr. 3.

Young readers are introduced to the seasons through haiku in Santaeulàlia's delightful poetry book, in which each of the four seasons is described through the sights and everyday activities that children encounter during their day in brief verses accompanied by simple but evocative artwork.

**Wisdom of the Woods:** 40 Nature Poems Passed Down from Bear to Bear. By Rachel Piercey. Illus. by Freya Hartas. 2026. 96p. Abrams/Magic Cat. Gr. 1–4.

This lush collaboration, the latest in the Brown Bear Wood series, invites readers to consider the wonders of nature in 40 original poems in a variety of poetry styles that explore not just animals in the woods but the dirt, leaves, roots, and seeds as well.

**World Soccer Kings.** By Charles R. Smith Jr. 2026. 48p. Candlewick. Gr. 2–5.

Taking as his subjects 16 currently active soccer superstars, Smith pairs clipped and color-filtered action photos with poetic tributes written in various styles and then follows up with notes on each player and poetic style, as well as on musical and other cultural influences.

# High-Demand Read-Alikes: Jordan Ifueko's *The Genie Game*

**by Sarah Hunter**

Best-selling, award-winning Jordan Ifueko makes her middle-grade debut this month with *The Genie Game*, a satirical novel about Valentine, a tween who gets roped into participating in a wish-granting scheme driven by the three monopolistic megacorporations that run her supposedly idealistic city, which shields residents from the climate crisis outside its borders. While acutely skewering overconsumption, tech-based surveillance, and internet culture, Ifueko keeps the story solidly grounded on Valentine's quest to find her missing sister. Readers who appreciate the sharp social commentary and thrilling adventure in *Genie Game* will find plenty to like in these similar titles.

**Amari and the Night Brothers.** By B. B. Alston. 2021. 416p. HarperCollins/Balzer+Bray. Gr. 3–7.

In a thrilling world of magic, technology, and mysticism, Amari is mysteriously offered an internship at the Bureau of Supernatural Affairs and is swept up in a quest to rescue her missing brother. Book 4 in the series released earlier this year.

**The Last Beekeeper.** By Pablo Cartaya. 2022. 304p. Harper. Gr. 4–8.

While Cartaya's novel doesn't have the same humor as Ifueko's, he explores a similar dynamic between big-tech business and the human workers that make it run in a climate-ravaged future, in which Yolanda discovers a rare beehive and must keep it secret from the greedy mayor.

**Zed Moonstein Makes a Friend.** By Lance Rubin. 2025. 336p. Clarion. Gr. 5–7.

In a seriocomic horror story designed to prod readers into reexamining their online habits, socially awkward middle-schooler Zed acquires an increasingly codependent AI companion, Monofriend, who gets his jokes, takes his side—and tracks everything he does and says for a paternalistic megacorporation.

**Unboxing Libby.** By Steph Cherrywell. 2025. 320p. Little, Brown. Gr. 4–7.

Libby's a robot in a Mars colony, but her glitchy code sets her apart from the other Libby models, especially when it comes to exploring the colony and discovering the reality behind human settlements on the planet—and that humans are more controlling than they seem.

**The Factory.** By Catherine Egan. 2025. 320p. Scholastic. Gr. 4–7.

This suspenseful series starter stars Asher, who's anxious about accepting a coveted spot at the Factory, where he'll get a good education, nourishing meals, and piles of

Right: art from the covers of *Futureland: Battle for the Park, Hana Hsu and the Ghost Crab Nation, The Factory,* and *Amari and the Night Brothers.*

money, as long as he takes part in a top-secret, possibly nefarious, renewable-energy experiment.

**Falling Out of Time.** By Margaret Peterson Haddix. 2023. 352p. HarperCollins/Katherine Tegen. Gr. 4–7.

Zola's life is so easy: her Insta-fridge and Insta-closet get her whatever she needs at a moment's notice. But a note hidden in her Insta-closet leads her on a search for answers that will shatter her worldview. This futuristic sequel to Haddix's popular *Running Out of Time* is full of compelling twists and turns.

**Futureland:** Battle for the Park. By H. D. Hunter. Illus. by Khadijah Khatib. 2022. 304p. Random. Gr. 3–7.

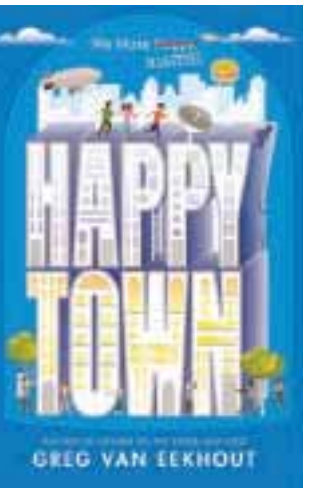
Futureland is an imaginative, Wonka-esque place that gives kids their hearts' desire and is fitted out with the latest technology. And Cam, whose family runs the park, is lucky enough to live there. But when kids go missing and Cam's parents start acting strange, he and his friends have to figure out who's trying to take Futureland down.

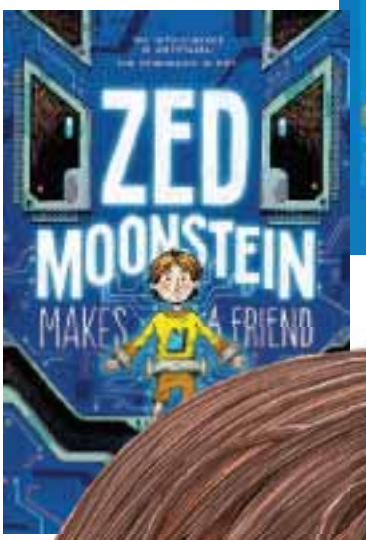
**Hana Hsu and the Ghost Crab Nation.** By Sylvia Liu. 2022. 368p. Razorbill. Gr. 5–7.

Hana attends an elite school, Start-Up, and she's eager to one day be meshed to the multiweb. But when she finds evidence that meshing might not actually be safe, regardless of Start-Up's assurances, she and her friends embark on a high-stakes adventure to discover the school's real intentions.

**Happy Town.** By Greg van Eekhout. 2024. 208p. Harper. Gr. 4–7.

Tech dystopia gets a zombie spin in this wry novel about a seemingly idyllic town built by a mega-billionaire. When Happy Town residents start craving fresh meat—of the human variety—Keegan and his friends must figure out how to solve the crisis without injuring their zombified parents.




Art from the cover of *Falling Out of Time.*

# Celebrating Arbor Day

Earth Day, Arbor Day, Tu B'Shevat—there's even a national Love a Tree Day each May. So many days and even more ways to celebrate trees! If you want to branch out from the recent growth in informational texts on the topic (no shade to those) go out on a limb with this collection of fictional picture books.

**All From a Walnut.** By Ammi-Joan Paquette. Illus. by Felicita Sala. 2022. Abrams. PreS–Gr. 2.

Grandpa carried a walnut over an ocean to this new home, where both he and the nut thrived as they put down new roots. Emilia learns from Grandpa to tend her own walnut sapling and carries on the nurturing cycle once he is gone.

**Apple and Magnolia.** By Laura Gehl. Illus. by Patricia Metola. 2022. Flyaway. PreS–K.

A child's unflagging belief that neighboring apple and magnolia trees are friends forms the root of an empathetic, if unusual, friendship story.

**A Bear, a Bee, and a Honey Tree.** By Daniel Bernstrom. Illus. by Brandon James Scott. 2022. Hippo Park. PreS–Gr. 2.

A hungry bear is thwarted by a busy bee (and *many* buzzy friends) in an expressive read-aloud with a rollicking cadence reminiscent of the author's equally delightful *One Day in the Eucalyptus, Eucalyptus Tree* (2016).

**Be a Tree!** By Maria Gianferrari. Illus. by Felicita Sala. 2021. Abrams. PreS–Gr. 1.

Buoyant free verse likens the structure of trees to that of the human body, emphasizing the social natures of each, while cheerful artwork showcases the diversity of both.

**The City Tree.** By Shira Boss. Illus. by Lorena Alvarez. 2023. Clarion. PreS–Gr. 2.

A sidewalk crack proves the perfect spot for a city tree to thrive, and vibrant illustrations highlight the passing of seasons and mutually beneficial relationships offered by urban canopies.

**Julie and the Mango Tree.** By Sadé Smith. Illus. by Sayada Ramdial. 2023. Feiwel & Friends. PreS–Gr. 2.

Julie's patient pleas for her tree to drop a mango go unheeded, but, when suddenly faced with an abundance of her favorite fruit, generous Julie shares the bounty.

**My Dad Is a Tree.** By Jon Agee. Illus. by the author. 2023. Penguin/Rocky Pond. PreS–Gr. 1.

A child persuades her father to spend all day outside pretending to be a tree, which brings both welcome and uninvited visitors, in a playful, collaged ode to imaginative play.

**Nell Plants a Tree.** By Anne Wynter. Illus. by Daniel Miyares. 2023. HarperCollins/Balzer + Bray. PreS–Gr. 1.

Nell planted the seed that grew into the thriving pecan tree that proves a gift to later generations in an optimistic story of interconnection and the legacy of loving acts.

**Norman Didn't Do It (Yes, He Did.).** By Ryan T. Higgins. Illus. by the author. 2021. Disney Hyperion. PreS–Gr. 1.

Porcupine Norman acts out in jealousy when a sapling sprouts near his best friend, a tree named Mildred. Hilarious visual gags reflect Norman's range of big feelings as he rectifies the situation.

**Once upon a Forest.** By Pam Fong. Illus. by the author. 2022. Random House Studio. PreS–Gr. 2.

A marmot and bird replant and tend saplings in the wake of a forest fire in a wordless, altruistic, and minimalist story.

Art from *Be a Tree.*

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