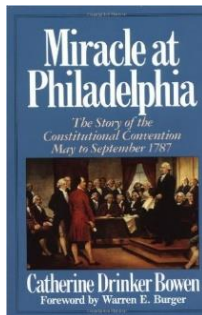


The Women's National Book Association Celebrates Women's History Month 2017:

Book-A-Day Women's History Month Program

The 32 books included in the WNBA's Book-A-Day Women's History Month initiative were culled from the organization's two 100 Books lists developed as part of the organization's centennial celebrations. They were selected based on their literary importance and the cultural and social impact they have had. We believe they represent a broad spectrum of issues critical in our multicultural and diverse world. The order in which they are being sent does not rank them but rather organizes them around the topics of government and politics, the environment, social justice, race, class, immigration, diversity, and being human.

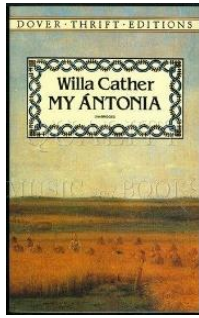
Day 1



Catherine Drinker Bowen. *Miracle at Philadelphia: The Story of the Constitutional Convention*. 1966. Reprint. New York: Back Bay Books, 1986.

We launch our Book-A-Day Women's History Month Program at the beginning—with our founding document, the creation of the U.S. Constitution. Catherine Drinker Bowen's classic *Miracle at Philadelphia: The Story of the Constitutional Convention* tells the story of those few months in 1787 when the new country's leading statesmen hammered out the compact that would define our country and shape its identity. Drawing from letters, diaries, and other documents of the day, the author gives voice to the founders' principles, fears, and passions—and charts their course, through contentions and compromises, to an agreement. One of the most popular books ever written about this foundational moment, *Miracle at Philadelphia* engages as well as educates readers about the hard task of forging consensus in a democracy.

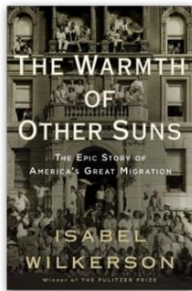
Day 2



Cather, Willa. *My Ántonia*. 1918. Reprint. New York: Dover, 1994

One of Willa Cather's most celebrated novels, *My Ántonia* tells the deeply moving story of Ántonia Shimerda, a Bohemian immigrant whose family arrives in Nebraska in the late 1800s. Described in astounding and evocative detail, the land is as beautiful in its vast stretches of open space as it is unforgiving in the hard work it requires of its settlers. From her passionate and self-possessed adolescence to the resignation and fullness of her adult life, Ántonia's story unfolds in the somewhat melancholy voice of the narrator Jim Burden, whose close friendship with "my Ántonia" forms the deep background of the story. The fierce striving of those from foreign countries who adopted the United States as their own plays out in Ántonia's doggedness and independent spirit, as well as that of the other immigrant women in the narrative. Through this woman's story and that of her family and fellow immigrants, the resourcefulness and resilience of the pioneer spirit take center stage, as they do in the great American drama still unfolding today.

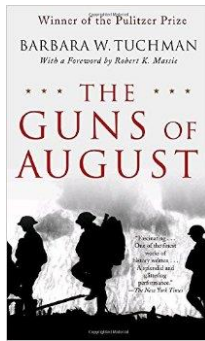
Day 3



Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. New York: Random House, 2010.

In *The Warmth of Other Suns*, Wilkerson tells the story of the six million African Americans who participated in the decades-long exodus from the South to the North and West known as the Great Migration. By focusing on the stories of three people who fled the South in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, Wilkerson brings to life one of the most influential but hitherto little-understood forces that shaped twentieth-century America. As Wilkerson shows, African Americans fled persecution, death threats, and lack of opportunity in search of access to the American dream. What they found was a mixture of continued racism, urban poverty, and the possibility of a better future. It is a powerful, bittersweet history of lost roots and perseverance that must be understood in order to appreciate the persistent gap between the reality and the promise of social and political equality for all Americans.

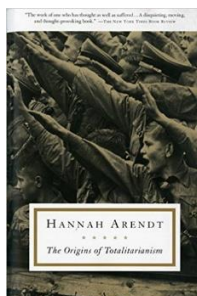
Day 4



Tuchman, Barbara. *The Guns of August*. 1962. Reprint, with a foreword by Robert K. Massie. New York: Presidio, 1994.

Barbara Tuchman's *The Guns of August* has been heralded as one of the finest books on the subject of war. Written 55 years ago, it is not only the most celebrated book written about World War I, it is one of the most renowned history books on any topic whatsoever, earning the author a Pulitzer Prize. Her peerless scholarship informs the book with a deep knowledge of her subject and the characters come alive on the page, allowing the story to emerge as one of the great dramas of any century. Tuchman narrates the events that led up to World War I in captivating detail, revealing how the war started, why, and how it could have been stopped but wasn't. A classic historical survey, Tuchman's masterpiece is essential reading for anyone who wants to understand how human foibles and follies lead us into needless war.

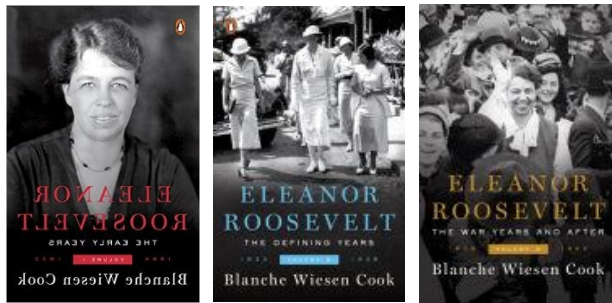
Day 5



Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. 1951. Reprint. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1973.

In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, widely considered one of the most important books of the twentieth century, Arendt writes vividly about the rise of totalitarian regimes, particularly in Russia and Germany, and the cruel inhumanity that resulted. In her discussion of the rise of Hitler in Nazi Germany, which she fled in 1933, Arendt shows how a variety of factors led to the not inevitable "final solution": the extermination of 6 million Jews. Arendt's work offers lessons that every age should heed in order to avoid repeating the horrors of Hitler and Stalin. Perhaps the most important is that we should all pay attention when demagogues gain followers by scapegoating outsiders and inventing their own fictions eagerly believed by dispossessed masses.

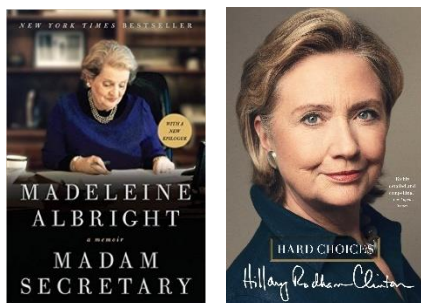
Day 6



Cook, Blanche Wiesen. *Eleanor Roosevelt*. Vol. 1: *The Early Years, 1884-1933*. New York: Penguin, 1993. Vol. 2: *The Defining Years, 1933-1938*. New York: Penguin, 2000. Vol. 3: *The War Years and After, 1939-1962*. New York: Viking, 2016.

Blanche Wiesen Cook's three-volume biography of Eleanor Roosevelt's influential and inspirational life is a remarkable accomplishment. Cook worked on Roosevelt's biography for well over 25 years and presents a grand biography not of a remote icon, but of an indomitable woman who welcomed life, as she put it, with "an unquenchable spirit of adventure." **Volume 1** follows Roosevelt from her birth until she steps into the role of first lady in 1933. Cook captures Eleanor's troubled childhood, her marriage and life with Franklin before his election to the presidency, and her career as a champion for women's rights and social reforms. **Volume 2** chronicles Roosevelt's first six years as America's most controversial first lady and maps her contributions to the New Deal. When Eleanor discovered her husband's marital infidelities, she decided not to divorce him, but to create a new marital partnership that allowed both of them freedom and gave her the space to forge her own career while forming a female support network. In **Volume 3**, President Roosevelt and the first lady confront a new political reality: a Congress much less favorable to the New Deal and other progressive ideas. In addition, the threat of war in Europe and Asia led to an increase in isolationism and anti-immigrant sentiments. After her husband's death in 1945, one of Eleanor's most important contributions was her role in writing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Day 7



Albright, Madeline. *Madame Secretary: A Memoir*. Reprint. New York: Harper Perennial, 2013.
Clinton, Hilary. *Hard Choices*. Reprint. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015.

On this day, we are sending two books by women politicians who have achieved major milestones in political and public life. *Madame Secretary: A Memoir* by Madeleine Albright, the first woman to be U.S. secretary of state, is a memoir of her path to this important position, filled with extensive insights into international affairs, hotspots in U.S. foreign policy, and how Albright navigated the delicate diplomacy required in her role as chief diplomat. *Hard Choices: A Memoir*, by Hilary Clinton, navigates similar territory—describing her road to the White House as first lady, her developing role

in U.S. public life, and the insights into geopolitics that she gained during her tenure as secretary of state. It is our sincere hope that the knowledge of the world these women gained during their tenures might offer our leaders some guidance as they confront and tackle the complex global landscape facing the new administration.

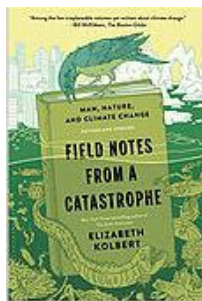
Day 8



Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. 1962. Anniversary edition. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2002.

Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, which in 1962 exposed the hazards of the pesticide DDT, eloquently questioned humanity's faith in technological progress, caused a major shift in public consciousness about the environment, and helped set the stage for the environmental movement. Carson, a renowned nature author and a former marine biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was uniquely equipped to create so startling and inflammatory a book. *Silent Spring* meticulously described how DDT entered the food chain and accumulated in the fatty tissues of animals, including human beings, and caused cancer and genetic damage. A single application on a crop, she wrote, killed insects for weeks and months—not only the targeted insects but countless more—and remained toxic in the environment even after it was diluted by rainwater. Carson concluded that DDT and other pesticides had irrevocably harmed animals and contaminated the world's food supply. As a result of her work, DDT came under much closer government supervision and was eventually banned. The most important legacy of *Silent Spring*, though, was a new public awareness that nature was vulnerable to human intervention. Carson had made a radical proposal: that, at times, technological progress is so fundamentally at odds with natural processes that it must be curtailed.

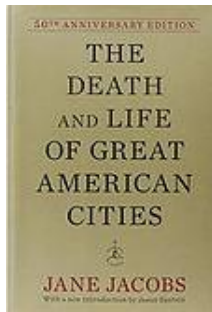
Day 9



Kolbert, Elizabeth. *Field Notes from a Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change*. 2006. Updated edition. New York: Bloomsbury, 2015.

In *Field Notes from a Catastrophe*, Elizabeth Kolbert documents her travels around the world to sites already affected by man-made climate change, including Alaska, the Arctic, Greenland, and the Netherlands. Kolbert not only witnesses rising sea levels, altered patterns of migration, thawing permafrost, and thinning ice shelves, she also talks to scientists about what we can expect as these changes accelerate. In addition, she shows how Exxon Mobil and other companies have persistently tried to discredit scientists' warning about the dangers the Earth is facing. In 2012, Kolbert published an updated edition with the new subtitle, *Is Time Running Out?* This time her message is even more urgent, as she documents further changes and wonders if the catastrophic effects of climate change can still be stopped or at least mitigated. It is a sobering examination of the most important challenge the human race faces.

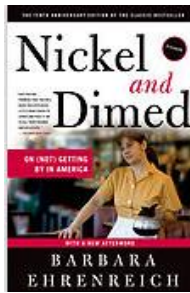
Day 10



Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. 1961. 50th anniversary edition, with a new introduction by Jason Epstein. New York: Modern Library, 2011.

A seminal work on the importance and vitality of the “city” as a way of life, and what works and what doesn’t in making cities thrive, Jane Jacobs’ *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* has become a touchstone for human-centered urban-planning since its original publication in 1961. By analyzing the “peculiar” urban features that enable human interaction, security, and diversity, Jacobs not only celebrates the idea of urban life but offers prescriptions that have guided urban planners since. Her assertions are often surprising, sometimes counter-intuitive. For instance, sidewalks alone are treated in three separate chapters totaling 60 pages—and credited not just with facilitating interpersonal contact, but fostering safety and nurturing children. One of the conditions she outlines for urban diversity—older buildings blending with new—is obvious under her clear-eyed analysis. Older buildings, with lower rents, can be home to people of different income levels and walks of life, including teachers, artists, and other young creative professionals. These and other ideas make *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* an enduring discourse for city residents and urban planners even today.

Day 11



Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. 2001. 10th anniversary edition. New York: Picador, 2011.

In Ms. Ehrenreich's seminal book on wages and living on minimum wage, she traveled across the country and worked a variety of jobs, including as a waitress, a house cleaner, and an aide in a nursing home. Most of these jobs are primarily worked by women, for the depressed wages "women's work" frequently gets, but the crushing part of her experiment was her understanding how many of her co-workers not only didn't have the financial cushion she did, but were working multiple exhausting jobs, raising kids, and dealing with other problems (health, mental health, legal, immigration) as well. Eye-opening and a tour-de-force of embedded journalism, Ms. Ehrenreich's book informed a generation about the inequities and the harsh conditions faced by the workers upon whose backs most of our country runs.

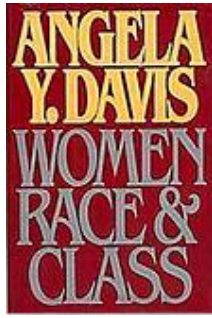
Day 12



Nussbaum, Martha. *Sex and Social Justice*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

In this collection of highly readable articles, Nussbaum, a law and ethics professor from the University of Chicago, makes a series of compelling arguments about the rights of women and homosexuals to be treated with respect for their common humanity. Utilizing statistical data and real-life stories to bolster her arguments, Nussbaum shows how local customs, traditions, and preconceptions can adversely affect the health and well-being of women across the globe. In her view, patriarchal power is at the root of one the most basic injustices, that of sexual oppression. She envisions a world in which women, gays, and lesbians are treated as fully realized human beings, where sex and sexuality are not seen as justifications for cruelty and abuse.

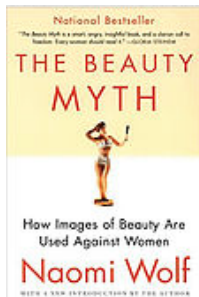
Day 13



Davis, Angela. *Women, Race, and Class*. New York: Vintage, 1983.

In this ground-breaking and provocative book on the history of feminism, Angela Davis weaves a clear-eyed analysis of classism and racism into the historical narrative of women's rights. Starting with first-wave feminism—the struggle for women's suffrage starting in the mid-1800s—to the fight to expand women's reproductive and economic rights with second-wave feminism, this scholarly yet accessible tract helped to establish the now prevalent and all-important idea of intersectionality—that an honest evaluation of women's status and power cannot be divorced from analysis of class structure and racial status, and the historical injustices relating to all three.

Day 14



Wolf, Naomi. *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women*. 1991. Reprint. New York: Harper Perennial, 2002.

The Beauty Myth is an impassioned book, carefully thought out and backed by exhaustive research. The basic premise is that forced adherence to standards of physical beauty have grown stronger for women as they gained power in other societal arenas. Wolf argues that this standard of beauty has taken over the work of social coercion formerly left to myths about motherhood, domesticity, chastity, and passivity, all of which have been used to keep women powerless. The myth of beauty spreads the belief that an objective measurement of beauty exists, and that women must want to embody it, and that men must want such women. However, Wolf contends that the beauty myth is really not about women, it is about men's institutions and power. Beauty is about behavior, not appearance. Besides weakening women psychologically, the beauty myth feeds a multibillion-dollar cosmetics industry, and keeps women from rising too high in the workplace by offering a way around antidiscrimination laws. Wolf offers chapters on how the beauty myth functions at work, in the media and culture, in the religious sphere, and in sex and sexual relations. In a final chapter, Wolf calls for a third wave of feminism that will dismantle the societal machinery that enforces adherence to the beauty myth.

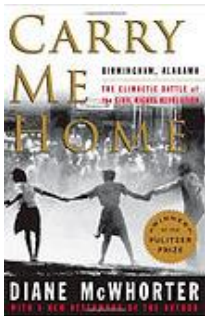
Day 15



Kingston, Maxine Hong. *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Childhood Among Ghosts*. 1976. Reissue edition. New York: Vintage, 1989.

Maxine Hong Kingston's mytho-poetic memoir rivets from the very first line when her mother says, "You must not tell anyone what I am about to tell you," the first of many secrets shared in a work of brilliance that remains just as fascinating to the last sentence. Kingston's account of growing up female and Chinese American starts in a laundry and traverses the family history back to China. Dreamlike, it also explores stories the Chinese brought with them to America and a legend of a fierce "female avenger" who inspired the author. The combination of myth, family stories, and childhood events make for a mesmerizing read that beautifully illustrates an immigrant family's experience and how vital that is to the fabric of America.

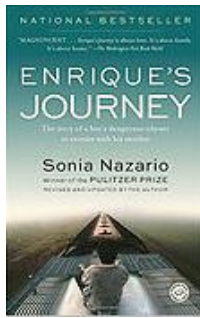
Day 16



McWhorter, Diane. *Carry Me Home: Birmingham, Alabama: The Climactic Battle of the Civil Rights Revolution*. 2001. Reissue edition, with a new afterword by the author. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013.

In *Carry Me Home: Birmingham, Alabama: The Climactic Battle of the Civil Rights Revolution*, Diane McWhorter returns to Birmingham in 1963, the site of civil rights demonstrations met with brutal resistance by law enforcement and the bombing of a historic black church that left four innocent black girls dead under the rubble. After Birmingham, segregation, America's version of apartheid, became unsustainable. McWhorter tells the story of Birmingham in compelling and, at times shocking, detail. Reviewers frequently use the word "novelistic" to describe this work, referencing Tolstoy's *War & Peace* and Homer's *Iliad*. As the author herself concludes in the afterword of the revised edition in 2013, "Thank God for Alabama. In the grand design of history, it remains the country's moral X ray, exposing broken places . . . [and it] compels this union, imperfect and perfectible, ever back to the fundamental question: Who are we?"

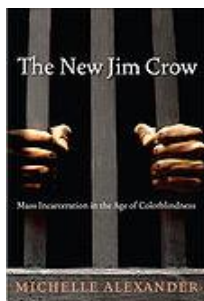
Day 17



Nazario, Sonia. *Enrique's Journey: The Story of a Boy's Dangerous Odyssey to Reunite with His Mother*. 2006. Reprint edition. New York: Random House, 2007.

Enrique's Journey: The Story of a Boy's Dangerous Odyssey to Reunite with His Mother began as a Pulitzer-Prize winning series in the *Los Angeles Times*. In 2014, journalist Sonia Nazario revised and updated her 2006 national bestselling book which humanizes the issue of illegal immigration by telling the gripping story of one boy's journey to be reunited with his mother 11 years after she left their impoverished home in Honduras to look for work in *el Norte*. There can be no hope of reaching a solution—much less a humane and sustainable one—without understanding the horrific conditions that compel people to attempt the perilous, uncertain, and illegal journey to the United States. Nazario's work has quickly become a classic text educating both students and citizens about the realities of illegal immigration and the need to address the economic and political conditions in Central American countries to deal with the immigration issue at its root cause.

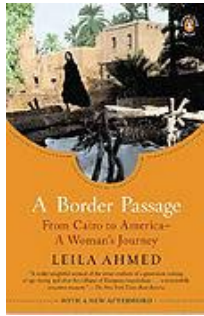
Day 18



Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press, 2012.

Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* exposes a racial caste system in America created by the harsh sentencing schemes of the so-called "War on Drugs." Alexander makes a shocking and compelling case linking America's highest-in-the-world incarceration rates (especially among ethnic minorities) to the earlier injustices of slavery and post-Reconstruction denial of the full rights of citizenship to blacks in America. *The New Jim Crow* challenges our belief in true racial progress in our country. Alexander's book continues the activism of women authors like Jane Addams and Ida B. Wells, compelling American readers to look at social injustice in segments of our society that might otherwise remain out of sight and unredressed. As Cornel West notes in his foreword, after reading this book, "there is no return to sleepwalking."

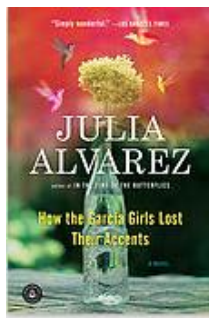
Day 19



Ahmed, Laila. *A Border Passage: From Cairo to America—A Woman's Journey*. 1999. Reprint, with a new afterword by the author. New York, Penguin Books, 2012.

In this deeply personal and moving memoir, Laila Ahmed traces her transformation, along with that of her native Egypt, across six decades. A woman born in 1940 in Cairo into relative privilege and educated at Cambridge University as Egypt was undergoing radical political change, Ahmed eventually finds herself as an expatriate academic in New England in 1981. The personal story gains wider meaning as Ahmed explores her own story in the larger context of massive political, social, and cultural shifts—from the end of British colonialism to the rise of Arab nationalism in her native Egypt. The author's afterword in this edition brings the story up to date, as she reflects on the promise and turbulence of the Arab Spring.

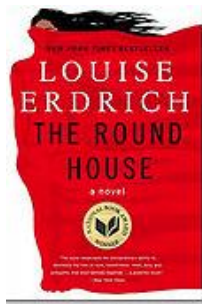
Day 20



Alvarez, Julia. *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*. 1991. Reprint. Chapel Hill NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2010.

When political upheavals force the Garcia family to flee to the U.S. to their home in the Dominican Republic, they exchange their privileged former life for a modest existence in the Bronx. Alvarez tells the story of their adjustment to a new culture in a backwards chronology, focusing on the very different experiences of parents and children. The four Garcia daughters embrace their new life while their parents find it difficult to make the transition. Told in short vignettes, these stories of family ties, resilience, and love provide a lively perspective on the joys and heartbreak of the immigrant experience.

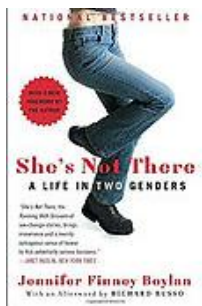
Day 21



Erdrich, Louise. *The Round House*. 2012. Reprint. New York: Harper Perennial, 2012.

Winner of the National Book Award for fiction, *The Round House* is set in familiar Erdrich territory: the Ojibwe reservation in North Dakota. Geraldine Coutts is brutally raped but refuses to talk about the crime to her family or the police. With family life upended by this incident, her 13-year-old son, Joe, deals with feelings of guilt and helplessness as he watches his mother try to recover physically and mentally. Clearly nothing will ever be the same and Joe vows to avenge the crime with the help of his friends. Issues of justice between the Native American and white communities, the relationship between parents and children, and the consequences of our actions, fill this novel with insight and tension. With a rich cast of supporting characters, Erdrich captures reservation life and relationships in this riveting coming of age story.

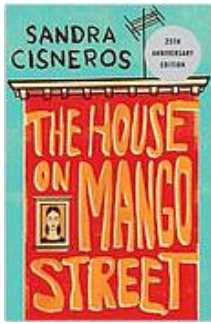
Day 22



Boylan, Jennifer Finney. *She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders*. 2003, Reprint. New York: Broadway Books, 2013.

From early in his life, Boylan felt “that he was in the wrong body, living the wrong life.” He knew that he was meant to be a woman. *She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders* traces the life he led trying to fit in—dating women, marrying, having children, forming friendships with men as a male—until, at the age of 40, he could no longer deny what he was. The reader travels with Boylan as he transitions from male to female, with all the physical and psychological trauma and astonishment that it entailed. What did this change mean for Boylan’s wife Grace and novelist Richard Russo, Boylan’s closest friend, who suddenly found that the male friend he cherished was racked by doubts about the most basic aspect of his identity? Funny and heartbreaking, tender and insightful, *She's Not There* gets to the heart of what makes us human.

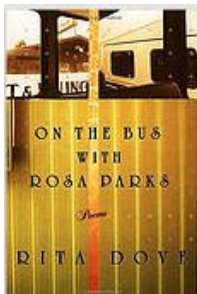
Day 23



Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street*. 1984. 25th anniversary edition. New York: Vintage Contemporaries, 2010.

Esperanza Cordero, a young Latina girl growing up in Chicago, turns to writing to express the desires and ambitions she feels as she navigates her teenage years. Her budding sexuality puts her at risk but also gives her insight into the lives of the grown women in her neighborhood, helping her make choices about the direction of her own life. Beautifully written, with spare, lyrical prose, part novel and part poem, *The House on Mango Street* has become a classic coming of age story, a staple in classrooms around the world.

Day 24



Dove, Rita. *On the Bus with Rosa Parks: Poems*. 1999. Reprint. New York: W.W. Norton, 2000.

Rita Dove manages something rare and wonderful in a story told through poems—she humanizes icon Rosa Parks, whose quiet act of courage changed the course of history. We see how an everyday woman with no notion of fame, acted from her convictions. More importantly, we see her as a person through the prism of Dove's elegiac poetry, starting with the opening cycle, "Cameos," which serves as the portrait of an extraordinary ordinary life. Rita Dove's powerful poems have a musicality that drives the narrative forward, a jazz and blues rhythm perfectly suited to the place and time of Rosa Park's Montgomery, Alabama bus rides. The final sequence is electrifying as it builds towards that pivotal moment in civil rights history when Rosa refused to go to the back of the bus and surrender her seat to a white woman. Poetry is too often regarded as something for Beats and elites but Rita Dove reminds us of the Poetry of the People through the brilliance of *On the Bus with Rosa Parks*.

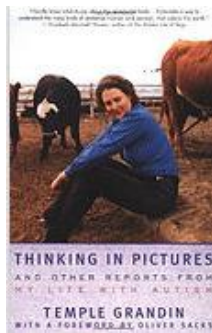
Day 25



Giovanni, Nikki. *Love Poems*. New York: William Morrow, 1997.

Love Poems by Nikki Giovanni addresses love in all its forms, romantic to familial. The works in this small volume showcase Giovanni's eminently accessible style. Her poems are direct, spirited, fearless, and witty. Known as a leading writer on black life in America, Giovanni touches readers of all races and genders with her honest words on the human experience, and her special focus is the subject of love.

Day 26



Grandin, Temple. *Thinking in Pictures and Other Reports from My Life with Autism*. 1995. Reprint. New York: Vintage Books, 2006.

In this most unusual memoir, Grandin, who has a Ph.D. in animal studies, writes about the way she sees the world and how it has hindered and helped her. As a child, Grandin's mother was concerned to provide her unusual daughter with supportive, educational environments. Other mentors along the way helped Grandin deal with the social and emotional worlds. Her unique way of processing emotion and information—her ability to “think in pictures”—led her to become an expert in the design of livestock handling equipment. But it is her willingness to speak about her disability that has been key to breaking down the shame and stigma of autism and allowing us all to bridge the gulf that separates us.

Day 27



Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye*. 1970. Reprint, with a new foreword by the author. New York: Vintage, 2007.

The Bluest Eye is the debut novel of author Toni Morrison, recipient of the 1993 Nobel Prize in Literature, the first black woman so honored. In announcing the award, the Swedish Academy called Morrison “a literary artist of the first rank” and went on to describe her as a writer who “delves into the language itself, a language she wants to liberate from the fetters of race” and who “addresses us with the lustre of poetry.” *The Bluest Eye* tells the story of Pecola, a young black girl in post-Depression Ohio, taunted for the dark color of her skin and desperate to have blue eyes. This fierce and tragic novel takes an unflinching look at racism, incest, and rape. Often a target for censorship and book bans, the novel tackles language itself in an effort to give voice to a child shattered by racial rejection.

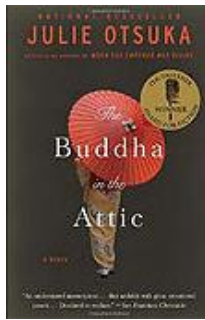
Day 28



Jefferson, Margo. *Negroland: A Memoir*. 2015. New York: Vintage, 2016.

In her memoir, Jefferson illuminates the world of upper-class African Americans and scrutinizes the nuances of racial prejudice that she grew up with in 1950s Chicago. An astute cultural observer, Jefferson is adept at summoning a past that lies just under the surface of the present, a past that was obsessed with color and racial difference. As she does so, she also introduces the reader to a class of Americans who yearned for the dignity and respect that gentility could provide but that racial prejudice made difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. She explains that she and other children “were warned that few Negroes enjoyed privilege or plenty and that most whites would be glad to see them returned to indigence, deference, and subservience.” Her memoir is a probing account of how the American dream of advantage and success was (and remains) tenuous for African Americans.

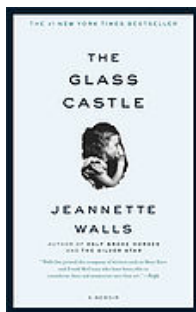
Day 29



Otsuka, Julie. *The Buddha in the Attic*. 2011. Reprint. New York: Anchor Books, 2012.

Julie Otsuka's *The Buddha in the Attic* tells the story of a group of young women brought over from Japan to San Francisco as “picture brides” nearly a century ago. The novel traces their extraordinary lives, from their arduous journey by boat, where they exchange photographs of their husbands, imagining uncertain futures in an unknown land; to their arrival in San Francisco and their tremulous first nights as new wives; to their backbreaking work picking fruit in the fields and scrubbing the floors of white women; to their struggles to master a new language and a new culture; to their experiences in childbirth, and then as mothers, raising children who will ultimately reject their heritage and their history; to the deracinating arrival of war. Employing a minimalist technique, the book is both intimate and expansive and gives this book a real, haunting power.

Day 30



Walls, Jeannette. *The Glass Castle: A Memoir*. 2005. Reprint. New York: Scribner, 2006.

The Glass Castle is a riveting memoir about a childhood from hell. At age three, Jeannette Walls was sent to the hospital with burns over half her torso, when her dress caught on fire while she was cooking for herself. There were more fires to come (yes, plural), along with starvation, evictions, alcoholism, molestation, homelessness, and much more. Her mother was an artist who didn't believe in disciplining or coddling her children (or feeding them). Her father was an alcoholic who couldn't hold a job and believed he was going to find gold. Her sisters and brother fend for themselves the best they can. From Phoenix to San Francisco to West Virginia, the problems accumulate and are all the more frustrating for how easily they could have been alleviated if the parents had appropriate mental health care. This memoir is a riveting glimpse into the poverty and mental health issues that can bring down a family for multiple generations.

Day 31



Strout, Elizabeth. *Olive Kitteridge*. 2008. Reprint. New York: Random House, 2008.

This brilliant Pulitzer-Prize winning novel focuses on Olive Kitteridge, a teacher living in a small town in Maine, and the joys and sorrows of her life. Strout uses the device of linked stories to show us Olive's life at different stages and the way she affects and is affected by all those around her. Olive herself is a character who, through her complicated and honest personality, embodies the problems, joys, and tribulations that define all our lives.