

Sarah's books read in 2017

see also [books read in 2016](#) and "[books won't save you](#)" for the 2016 wrap-up

see also [books read in 2015](#) and "[books with friends](#)" for my 2015 year in review

see also [books read in 2014](#) and "[being a reader, again and still](#)," the 2014 year in review

color key: **dark magenta** is reread; **blue italics** that aren't numbered I didn't finish; **orange** are books in paper instead of kindle; **green** are books I'm currently reading; and **red** will be the books I loved and/or really stuck with me, which is not the same thing



102 books finished, 2 books still slowly reading, 4 books abandoned (1 of which I'll return to)

: borrowed from the library = 49

♂ : male author = 13

◆ : writer of color = 20 (5 ♂)

January




1. ♂ AJ Hartley, work-in-progress!
2. **Emily St John Mandel, *Station Eleven*** (for the 3rd time; I'd been thinking about it a lot post-election: how do you survive and create and find hope in a destroyed world? Still great, still moving)
3. ◆ Octavia Butler, *Patternist* (final of the series if you're reading it in the order she published as a collected series not in which they were written; in any case, way less disturbing than others of her books but, while good, also less compelling)
4. ♂ Charles Lovett, *The Bookman's Tale* (via being on sale; fine! Better written than other literary historical thrillers I've read, though that's not a high bar. The early scene with Marlowe et al was horribly bad, but it got better, and the bibliomania stuff was good. And accurate!)
5. Ali Smith, *The Accidental* (I did not love this as much as *There But For The*, in part because the dad was such a horrible ass and I didn't have a lot of patience for the mom, either. But still enamored of Smith.)
6. **Maria Semple, *Where'd You Go, Bernadette*** (reread because nothing else was calling to me; I liked it better than I'd remembered)
7. ◆ ♂ James Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room* (because 15yo is reading it for English and I've never read it before; so sad! So so so sad. I'm glad I read it, but I had to drag myself to it each night.) 
8. ◆ Imbolo Mbue, *Behold the Dreamers* (this was great! This was hard to read, especially post-immigration and Trump frenzy. Also had to kind of drag myself to read it even though I liked it.) 
9. Jenn McKinlay, *Assault and Beret* (aka Hat Shop #5, I think; thank fucking god a simple cozy)

February




10. Jane Casey, *The Burning* (aka Maeve Kerrigan #1; reread because all the books I have from the library now are too heavy to read and I am withdrawing into something more familiar and less pressing. Still good, and this time through I could appreciate the plotting better, since I wasn't racing to see what happens.)
11. Jane Casey, *Left for Dead* (aka a Maeve Kerrigan prequel; still escaping from everything and this met that need, though not as good as the novels--felt like it needed more room to flesh things out)
12. Jane Casey, *The Reckoning* (aka MK #2; still bothered by how there's little change in the voices--M sounds just like Rob who sounds just like whoever else launches into long dialog. But I still like the characters)
13. ♦ Jacqueline Woodson, *Another Brooklyn* (ahh, very good; girlhood and escape and poverty, and lyrical) 📖
14. Stephanie Danler, *Sweetbitter* (i dunno where this came from, but I enjoyed it, both for the food writing and for the general scene setting.) 📖
15. ♦ Octavia Butler, *The Parable of the Sower* (went back to this because people keep referring to it in these dark days and so I pushed through the Earthseed philosophizing; and it was good!)
16. ♦ Octavia Butler, *The Parable of the Talents* (right, so I really liked this, up until the end, which seemed like a sudden wish fulfillment; that might be because I'm not feeling as optimistic as the book ended up being)
17. Jane Casey, *The Last Girl* (aka MK #3; still not entirely understanding the murderer and the way it all plays out and I want to shake Maeve and her insecurities but was a good reread and still a good mystery)
18. Maria Semple, *Today Will Be Different* (I liked this; a bit of a similarity to *Bernadette*, but still enjoyable) 📖
19. ♂ Michael Connolly, *The Crossing* (aka Harry Bosch #18; ack, I am nearly the end of the Bosch backlog! Good, albeit weird to see so much perspective coming from the villains) 📖
20. Denise Mina, *Still Midnight* (aka Alex Marrow #1; via @bookavore's rec to Anne; ahhh so good! It was confusing af trying to figure out the characters and personalities and who to trust, but confusing in a good way. The ending felt a bit not quite right--I still wasn't quite sure how the info spread to set up the whole kidnapping, the couple getting together was sweet but strained belief, was that blue sports car the spouse's? Maybe I was just tired and missing details. In any case, yes, and on to more) 📖
21. Karen Joy Fowler, *At Wits End* (I liked this, but didn't quite settle into it. Interesting in how it continues the shift from the comparative straightforwardness of her Jane Austen book to the complexity of *Beside Ourselves*.)

March





22. Jane Casey, MK #4 (needed a break from thinking, couldn't bring myself to start in on *Song of Solomon*)
23. Jane Casey, MK #5 (still not ready to deal with a serious book)
24. ♦ Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon* (b/c A will be reading it for English class and I haven't read it since grad school; just deeply wonderful.) 📖

25. Jane Casey, *After the Fire* (aka MK #6; lesson here: don't read things too quickly because I don't know why I was confused by the ending last time)
26. Faye Kellerman, *The Ritual Bath* (aka Decker/Lazarus #1; I enjoyed this! Will read more) 
27. Denise Mina, *The End of the Wasp Season* (aka Alex Morrow #2; zomg I sank into this book and could barely leave it at the end. The characters, the setting, the tricking me into doubting my own sense of what was going on. It was all great.) 
28. Judith Flanders, *A Murder of Magpies* (book editor solves mystery; I needed fluff to come down after the Mina but it was hard to settle into this. Maybe would read more? Not sure)
29. Elizabeth Hand, *Black Light* (I liked this initially a lot--the general atmosphere, the main character--but the wrap up and the whole 'gods are alive' thing was blah) 
30. V.E. Schwab, *A Darker Shade of Magic* (prep for the newest coming out...)
31. V.E. Schwab, *A Gathering of Shadows* (prep...)

April

32. V.E. Schwab, *A Conjuring Light* (so this was tricky because of having to sustain the climax, basically, across the whole book, but it mostly worked)
33. Faye Kellerman, *Sacred and Profane* (Decker/Lazarus #2 and no thank you, I think I'm done. Way more proselytizing than the first one and I didn't enjoy the 1980s sexual shaming) 
34. Catriona McPherson, *As She Left It* (I enjoyed this--not like the other two of hers I read--more quirky and less dark?)
35.  ♂ Colson Whitehead, *Zone One* (not sure why I decided to reread this; as often the case, I like it even better the second time around)
36. Mary McCarthy, *The Group* (this was amazing; hard going at first because it was so claustrophobic, such circumscribed choices; it didn't get easier, exactly, but I got more absorbed into the characters and how they were making sense of their lives and choices.)
37. Elena Ferrante, *The Story of the Lost Child* (aka Neapolitan #4) 

May

38. ♂ Michael Connelly, *The Wrong Side of Goodbye* (aka Harry Bosch #19) 
39. Sarah Domet, *The Guineveres* (ah, I liked this, from start to finish) 
40. Denise Mina, *Gods and Beasts* (aka Alex Morrow #3; so good, as I expected! A bigger spread of characters to follow and understand than the last one) 
41. Denise Mina, *Red Road* (aka Alex Morrow #4 because I didn't have enough last time; still really enjoy her but maybe #2 was the best)
42. ♂ George Orwell, *1984* (because J wanted to read it and it'd been a long time but interrupted it because oh I am STRESSED about his bar mitzvah and this was hard to read . . . so came back and finished this after Blue Place, I think. And... there was so much I didn't remember about it. It was depressing as fuck.)
43. Elinor Lipman, *Turpentine Lane* (via who knows where; it was okay; fluffy, which is fine, but not especially engaging) 
44. Susie Steiner, *Missing, Presumed* (reread because the next one comes out this summer and was still too pre-bar-mitzvah stressed to return to 1984)

45. Nicola Griffith, *The Blue Place* (because I loved Hild and this was on sale; enjoyed it, although kept thinking about Elizabeth Hand's Cass Neary books)

June

46. Denise Mina, *Field of Blood* (aka Paddy Meehan #1; ahh this was great from the two stories to the 80s nostalgia through it all even though it is so hard to read things about broken kids)

47. Denise Mina, *The Dead Hour* (aka Paddy Meehan #2 because why deny myself the pleasure of reading the next one; was a bit baffling how Terry was just no longer in the story, but nothing not to enjoy)

48. Denise Mina, *Slip of the Knife* (aka #3 because see above; satisfying and I still love her)

49. Sue Miller, *The Arsonist* (who knows, it was on my library wishlist and it was available; it was good and prickly and I kept reading it even though there was a parent with dementia in it, which I hadn't realized) 📖

50. Denise Mina, *Blood, Salt, Water* (aka Alex Morrow #5, because it was suddenly available and I couldn't say no; not as fabulous as some of the earlier ones, I think because there was less of Alex in it, but still good) 📖

July

51. Ann Leckie, *Ancillary Justice* (because A loved it so and kept recommending it to me and the library has the trilogy as ebooks; and it was so confusing until it wasn't and it was good all the way through; amazing to have the mind-bending experience of generic pronouns being feminine and having gender being so invisible and yet believing that everyone is an amazon, basically) 📖

52. ◆ Octavia Butler, *Kindred* (so good; wasn't expecting the careful exploration of re-evaluating assumptions about how folks behaved)

53. Ann Leckie, *Ancillary Sword* (good, but not as great as the first because there's no confusion about what it's about) 📖

54. Susie Steiner, *Persons Unknown* (Manon Bradshaw again; omg so hard to be a mom is the big take-away, but the mystery less satisfying)

55. Allegra Goodman, *The Chalk Artist* (I liked it, but...? Need to reread to think about it maybe. Wanted more Diana, less annoying Teach for America Nina)

56. Ali Smith, *Autumn* (ahh so beautiful so good I still just love her)

57. Mary Doira Russell, *Epitaph* (the sequel to *Doc*; i might've loved *Doc* more but this was great and absorbing and wow did it make me sad)

58. ♂ Noah Hawley, *Before the Fall* (better than I expected, even though it'd gotten so many good reviews) 📖

a) ♂ Iain M. Banks, *Consider Phlebus* (A loves this series but wow I could not get into this and had to quit; hard scifi without character development...) 📖

59. Jane Casey, *Let the Dead Speak* (aka Maeve Kerrigan #6; good! Way more focused on the mystery and less on Maeve's life; felt better constructed but I missed Maeve)

60. Ann Leckie, *Ancillary Mercy* (#3 finally! V good; questions about where the boundaries of human and personhood are and a resistance to wrapping it up neatly) 📖

61. Emma Donoghue, *The Wonder* (I wasn't sure where this was going to go; it started off so annoying with the main character's anti-Irishness; the ending didn't pass the credulity tests but the story of the girl did. Did I like it? I guess yes?) 📖

August

62. Denise Mina, *Garnethill* (ahhh, I just do like her books; this seems v much like an early one, still working towards what is more recognizably her style in the later books, but yes please)

63. Denise Mina, *Exile* (aka Garnethill #2)

64. Denise Mina, *Resolution* (aka Garnethill #3; well that wrapped up! The abuse stuff that is detailed here is hard to read as well the alcoholism)

65. ♦ N. K. Jemison, *Kingdom of Gods* (aka Inheritance of the Gods #3; I think I might've liked the first one the best? Had a bit of a hard time remembering all the previous stuff, but once I got past this, loved it because I'm fond of Sieh.) 📖

66. Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney, *The Nest* (I think via Ron Charles once upon a time? Good, better than I'd expected, actually, even though Leo is so horrible and I hate it when people younger than me are described as aged) 📖

67. Jenn McKinlay, *A Likely Story* (another Library Lovers one; tired of the who to choose dating issue, thank god that ends)

68. Lauren Groff, *Fates and Furies* (put off reading this for ages because of the way people kept talking about it--two different povs of a bad marriage!--but that's not it at all; what we keep secret and what we share, revenge and love, patience and self-knowledge and genius. In any case, I liked this much more than I thought I would) 📖

69. Ali Smith, *There But For The* (reread because I needed something well-written and substantive and I still love this book) 📖

70. Heather Young, *The Lost Girls* (via some NYT collection ages ago; it was ok? It was only ok. It got stronger as you got more invested in the characters and the reveal scenes were pretty arresting. But a lot of blandness to get there)

71. Gabrielle Zevin, *The Storied Life of AJ Fikry* (bc Rae gave the paper copy to me and her most recent book got a good review from Ron Charles; enjoyable up until ¾ way through but then just started becoming too cutesy by half) 📖

72. Jessie Burton, *The Miniaturist* (who knows where, an Amazon rec maybe? I enjoyed this more than I thought I would; some blurb I'd read made it sound whimsical, but it's not, and I liked the Antwerp descriptions) 📖

73. ♦ Jade Chang, *The Wangs v the World* (via Holly; good! I can see why she teaches it in her finance/lit course; BUT am stuck at the couple--just two--of anti-semitic things that characters say that don't seem to be addressed; they're just there, hanging, unlike the anti-Asian stereotypes or the anti-Black ones. Why do they just hang out there?)

September

74. ♦ ♂ Mat Johnson, *Loving Day* (because I liked this the first time and R and I were headed up to a weekend in Philly and I wanted to read something optimistic) 📖

75. Denise Mina, *The Long Drop* (oh, I liked this; complicated characters, unfolding of the reveal which drives it less than making sense of the people; the women are minor characters but so richly detailed) 📖

76. ◆ N. K. Jemison, *The Stone Sky* (aka Broken Earth #3; completely great; was hard at first because I hadn't reread the first two, or even just the second, and that would've helped me recall where we were, but it came together enough and worked itself into something great) 📖
77. Diana Gabaldon, *Outlander* (via H who was talking about how much she enjoys it and then it showed up on my rec kindle sale books; it was better than I expected! The writing was better, the details were interesting. The rapey bits, as H puts it, are uncomfortable--i don't want to read about how much she likes being pounded by Jamie. But I enjoyed the book.) 📖
78. Hillary Clinton, *What Happened* (because I love her but reading v slowly because it's so painful...)
79. ◆ ♂ James McBride, *A Song Yet Sung* (bought ages ago because it was on sale and because I loved *Good Lord Bird*; and I really enjoyed it; made me think a lot about the Eastern Shore and Maryland and slavery, which has been on my mind anyway. Lyrical and complicated and also optimistic)
- b) Clare MacKintosh, *I Let You Go* (Some book I tried because it was maybe on some list of mysteries but it was so poorly written I stopped maybe 10 pages in) 📖
- c) ◆ Octavia Butler, *Fledgling* (the last of hers I have to read so though I bought it a while ago I've been saving it to read; now was not the right time for it; couldn't deal with the young girl having sex with the man aspect so will return to it another time)
80. Tana French, *The Trespasser* (hit the spot; I liked it the first time, liked it more the second time when I could focus more on trespassing and being trapped by the blinders others put on us. And somehow I hadn't remembered it had a relatively happy ending, which says something about the state I've been in) 📖
81. Ann Leckie, *Provenance* (good! Fun! Lighter than the trilogy but/and enjoyable)

October

82. Diana Gabaldon, *Dragonfly in Amber* (aka Outlander #2; good enough, but not as enjoyable as the first, which was better for the tension of being 20c in 18c) 📖
83. Tana French, *In the Woods* (because was available and I'm having such a hard time finding things to read; A+) 📖
84. Jamie Attenberg, *All Grown Up* (more of a linked story collection than a novel, but oh I really liked it even as I found it so sad, which I was not anticipating from the blurb in the library) 📖
85. ◆ Nnedi Okorafor, *Akata Witch* (this was fun and good and just what I needed to recover) 📖
86. ♂ Andrew Taylor, *The Ashes of London* (I don't know where I picked this up; some algorithm? I liked it a lot! Fifth Monarchists and the Great Fire and printers and architects plus of course murders)

November

87. P.F. Chisholm, *A Famine of Horses* (aka Robert Carey #1; via twitter when I asked for historical mystery recs and Kit Marlowe gave me a slew; I liked this! I liked the pace, the characters, the setting; will read more)

88. ◆ Celeste Ng, *Little Fires Everywhere* (starts slow with the annoying Mrs Whatsrface being the pov for too long, but then as the other characters step forward, it gets more complicated and compelling) 📖
89. Kat Howard, *An Unkindness of Magicians* (via Colin & NKJ review; a hard start for me, since I couldn't keep the characters apart, but once that got settled, I enjoyed this and the woman taking vengeance on male violence and bondage, with an actual #TeamBacchae moment, was deeply satisfying)
90. ◆ Jesmyn Ward, *Salvage the Bones* (a late comer to this but omg, astonishingly good and hard to stop thinking about, not that I'm trying to) 📖
91. Gabrielle Zevin, *Young Jane Young* (via Ron Charles; short, funny, sweet, though I was teary at the end when it came to revelations and forgiveness because I'm a sucker plus poor Monica Lewinsky, how she got shat on)
92. ◆ Nnedi Okorafor, *Who Fears Death* (I liked this) 📖
93. Tana French, *The Likeness* (slowly rereading the Dublin Murder Squad because they're so good and I'm enjoying how different they are the second time--better because I'm reading more slowly, noticing different details) 📖
94. Sarah Perry, *The Essex Serpent* (via best of lists, maybe? I wasn't quite sure what to expect from the blurbs, but something more docile than this, and so I liked it more than I thought I would) 📖
95. Ann Leckie, *Ancillary Justice* (was on sale and so I bought it and so I couldn't resist rereading it and still love it)

December

96. Ann Leckie, *Ancillary Sword* (not on sale, needed to keep reading, and same)
97. Ann Leckie, *Ancillary Mercy* (tried to take a break to read a library book but I couldn't; still think *Justice* is the best, still love the others)
98. ◆ Amal El-Mohtar, *The Honey Month* (twitter? I don't know; slowly reading bits between other books at the moment)
- d) Lidia Yuknavitch, *The Book of Joan* (initially via someone on twitter 📖 (well, that didn't work for me! I'm not sure why, I just struggled and couldn't bring myself to like it, so I quit)
99. ◆ Nalo Hopkinson, *Salt Roads* (via a list of afro-futurism; I read it but had to push myself through it; I think I never quite got all the connections between the different settings and really just wanted to stay with the Haiti story)
100. PF Chisholm, *A smth of Knives* (Robert Carey #2; I liked it, as I did with the first)
101. Nadine Ackerman, *The Power* (well. I did not like this as much as I hoped I would. The premise was interesting but then instead of getting more complex it shifted to being kind of obvious--hey, give women power and they too will wage wars and kill people!--and the framing fiction was annoying. Eh.)
102. Elizabeth Hand, *Waking the Moon* (... she's so good at scene setting and atmosphere, and the idea of the Divine etc was fine, but I was unhappy with the gender politics in which the violent feminine Goddess is horrible but the male system is I guess not good but whatever is kind of how it ends)
103. ♂ Tony Hillerman, *Thief of Time* (one of the Chee/Leaphorn mysteries; these just still continue to be so satisfying to reread and how often do you find a white author engaging)

so seriously with another culture like this? The questions of how do you balance your faith and heritage with the pressures/lures of the outside world are especially strong in this one and hit especially hard at the moment) 📖

104. ♂ Tom Perrotta, *Mrs Fletcher* (largely because the library had it available and it had gotten good reviews but... it wasn't that it wasn't good, but it turned into something so unbelievable that I couldn't get with the wrestling that made up the rest of the novel; the lesson maybe is don't read men writing about women's sexual desires) 📖