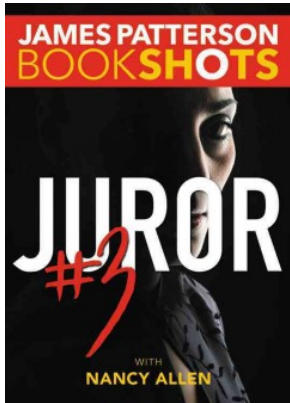


January 2019 Long List

Fiction



Allen, Nancy. Juror #3.

Provided by Ann Wilson:

Nancy Allen, author of the Ozarks Mystery Series, practiced law for fifteen years as Assistant Missouri Attorney General and Assistant Prosecutor in her native Ozarks. She's tried over thirty jury cases, including murder and sexual offenses, and is now a law instructor at Missouri State University.

Her debut novel, a legal thriller entitled *The Code of the Hills*, was published in 2014 by HarperCollins/Witness, followed by *A Killing at the Creek* (2015), *The Wages of Sin* (2016) and *A Wolf in the Woods* (2018). James Patterson and Nancy Allen have co-authored a legal thriller set in Mississippi and starring defense attorney Ruby Bozarth. *Juror #3* will be released by Hachette on September 17, 2018.

Ann would like to suggest Nancy's fifth book, *Juror #3*, that she wrote in collaboration with James Patterson. If selected, Ann will get Nancy to come to our meeting.

Ruby Bozarth, a newcomer to Rosedale, Mississippi, is also fresh to the Mississippi Bar--and to the docket of Circuit Judge Baylor, who taps Ruby as defense counsel in a racially charged felony.

The murder of a woman from one of the town's oldest families has Rosedale's upper crust howling for blood, and the prosecutor is counting on Ruby's inexperience to help him deliver a swift conviction. Ruby's client is a college football star who has returned home after a career-ending injury, and she is determined to build a defense that will stick. She finds help in unexpected quarters from Suzanne, a hard-charging attorney armed to the teeth, and Shorty, a diner cook who knows more than he lets on.

Ruby never belonged to the country-club set, but once she nearly married into it. As news breaks of a second murder, Ruby's ex-fiancé, Lee Greene, shows up on her doorstep--a Southern gentleman in need of a savior. As lurid, intertwining investigations unfold, no one in Rosedale can be trusted, especially the twelve men and women impaneled on the jury. They may be hiding the most incendiary secret of all.



Cleeton, Chanel. Next Year in Havana. (LeAynne)

Booklist:

Contemporary romance author Cleeton (*On Broken Wings*, 2017) has taken a detour through her own family history to produce a luscious novel that will please romance, historical, and women's fiction readers alike. It's 1959 at the Havana airport, and the four Perez sisters are leaving for Miami, unsure of when they'll return—perhaps next year? Cleeton follows Elisa, the third daughter of a powerful sugar baron. Fast-forward almost 60 years to meet Elisa's granddaughter, Marisol, arriving at that same airport to scatter Elisa's ashes. Parallel tales of passion and romance crash against rigid family expectations, wartime violence, and political barriers. These two women, pampered Elisa and independent Marisol, tell their stories of star-crossed love with genuine emotional intensity. Cleeton's almost guidebook-style descriptions contrast revolutionary era with contemporary Havana, avoiding facile dichotomies for a touching portrayal of a fractured people. With Reader's Guide Discussion Questions and a preview chapter from Cleeton's next novel, which will feature Elisa's sister, firebrand Beatriz, this book launches a very appealing and promising series. -- Martinez, Sara (Reviewed 2/1/2018) (Booklist, vol 114, number 11, p23)

Kirkus:

"My grandmother loved a revolutionary," says Marisol Ferrera, returning to Cuba 60 years after her family fled the island only to find herself falling for another attractive rebel. Romance readers who enjoy their love stories leavened with a sizable measure of earnest political history will warm to Cleeton's (*On Broken Wings*, 2017, etc.) new novel, which offers parallel tales of entwined hearts challenged by oppressive regimes. Elisa Perez, one of the four "sugar queens"—the privileged daughters of a Cuban sugar baron—is the first star-crossed lover. Living in luxury in Havana in the late 1950s, Elisa and her sisters are shielded from the imminent revolution by their father's money and allegiance to the status quo, but then Elisa falls for Pablo, "Fidel [Castro]'s eyes and ears in the city." In the 21st century, Florida-based lifestyle journalist Marisol smuggles her grandmother's ashes back to Cuba, obeying Elisa's wishes to be reunited in death with the country from which she had been exiled. Once in Havana, Marisol discovers not only her family's roots and the letters revealing Elisa and Pablo's secret passion, but also her own emotional fulfillment in the form of Luis, the grandson of Elisa's best friend. Cleeton delivers the two women's descents into dangerous romance with persuasive intensity, but her descriptions of Pablo's and Luis' commitments to challenging the political establishment and her larger commentary on Cuba's long, troubled history make for a heavy contrast. "Why is the Cuban convertible peso so important?" asks Marisol, setting the reader up for another solid slab of social/historical/financial exposition. Somber and humor-free, the novel feels uncomfortably strung between its twin missions to entertain and to teach detailed, repetitive factual lessons. A love story and an homage to the history of the Cuban people, the latter significantly overshadowing the former. (*Kirkus Reviews*, December 1, 2017)



Egan, Jennifer. *Manhattan Beach*. (De Ann)

Booklist:

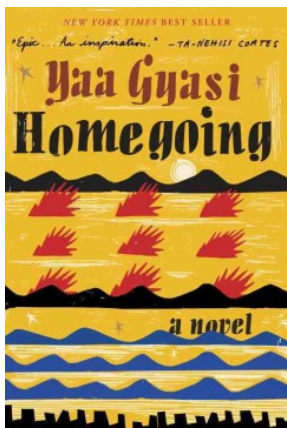
/ Starred Review */* The sea, in all its gleaming, brooding, swaying magnificence and mystery, calls to the striving characters in Egan's first historical novel and exerts an equally magnetic pull on readers. In Depression-era New York City, Eddie Kerrigan, a self-possessed, exceptionally observant man, takes his smart, circumspect 11-year-old daughter, Anna, along on his rounds as a bagman for an Irish gangster. One cold day they drive out to Manhattan Beach to meet with Dexter Styles, a dashing and ruthless nightclub impresario who is impressed with Anna's urge to walk barefoot in the frigid sand and sea. "Well, what's it feel like?" he asks. "It only hurts at first," she says. "After a while you can't feel anything." Her father is not pleased, but Dexter grins and says, "Words to live by." And with that, Egan, a deft and deep-reaching storyteller, establishes the secret triangle upon

which this mesmerizing novel of suspense, daring, and determination is so adroitly built. Anna is devoted to her severely disabled sister, Lydia, as is her beautiful mother, a Minnesota farm girl who made her way to New York and the Ziegfeld Follies. Eddie can barely look at his twisted, immobile youngest but commits himself to making enough money to provide the care she needs, hence his dangerous association with Styles, who walks a thin line between legitimate prestige and violent criminality via his ties to the Syndicate. Eddie's gamble backfires, and he disappears. After a year of college, Anna joins the war effort, securing a job at the Brooklyn Naval Yard inspecting parts for battleships. She has an epiphany while watching a man don a massive diving suit: she is destined to be a diver. Her wildly unconventional conviction carries her over every obstacle entrenched misogyny places in her way. Egan revels in Anna's moxie, training, underwater ship-repairing missions, and growing expertise, describing every object, action, and conversation with exhilarating specificity. She knows precisely how those 200-pound diving suits worked, how they felt from the inside, how divers were attached to their tenders above, how they were buffeted by the currents as they worked. She animates the Naval Yard, the waves of ambition, rivalry, gossip, and camaraderie among diverse men and women who never would have known each other if war hadn't tossed them together. Egan was able to write so vividly and fluidly about this seminal time and place because she has been researching the Naval Yard and its divers since 2004, six years before *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010) appeared. In that innovative and episodic novel, which garnered the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Critics Circle Award, and *Booklist's* Top of the List, Egan considered the seismic impact of digital technology, as she did in *The Keep* (2006), in which gothic meets high-tech. Here, in this more traditionally told tale, she looks back to the coalescence of an earlier technological revolution as

the world went to war, American industrialization was weaponized, men were sent to the front, and women filled new jobs. Like Dennis Lehane, Egan has combined insightful historical fiction with emotionally rich crime fiction to create a riveting and provocative investigation into the human condition. For all her keen attunement to social metamorphosis, what is most engrossing is Egan's charting of the psychological eddies and storms that shape her irresistibly stubborn, risk-seeking characters. Eddie's tough boyhood left him preferring "danger over sorrow any day of the week." Anna does what she believes she must, no matter the consequences. How sharply Egan delineates the "byzantine calculus" inherent in underworld alliances; how powerfully she evokes the glory and perils of nature and the utter nihilism of erotic desire. There's more. Egan also follows the fate of the archetypically motley crew of a merchant-marine ship in U-boat-infested waters, mustering the piercing detail and wrenching drama found in Melville and Conrad. Ultimately, Egan's propulsive, surprising, ravishing, and revelatory saga, a covertly profound page-turner that will transport and transform every reader, casts us all as divers in the deep, searching for answers, hope, and ascension. -- Seaman, Donna (Reviewed 8/1/2017) (Booklist, vol 113, number 22, p20)

Kirkus:

/ Starred Review */* After stretching the boundaries of fiction in myriad ways (including a short story written in Tweets), Pulitzer Prize winner Egan (*A Visit from the Goon Squad*, 2010, etc.) does perhaps the only thing left that could surprise: she writes a thoroughly traditional novel. It shouldn't really be surprising, since even Egan's most experimental work has been rich in characters and firmly grounded in sharp observation of the society around them. Here, she brings those qualities to a portrait of New York City during the Depression and World War II. We meet 12-year-old Anna Kerrigan accompanying her adored father, Eddie, to the Manhattan Beach home of suave mobster Dexter Styles. Just scraping by "in the dregs of 1934," Eddie is lobbying Styles for a job; he's sick of acting as bagman for a crooked union official, and he badly needs money to buy a wheelchair for his severely disabled younger daughter, Lydia. Having rapidly set up these situations fraught with conflict, Egan flashes forward several years: Anna is 19 and working at the Brooklyn Naval Yard, the sole support of Lydia and their mother since Eddie disappeared five years earlier. Adult Anna is feisty enough to elbow her way into a job as the yard's first female diver and reckless enough, after she runs into him at one of his nightclubs, to fall into a one-night stand with Dexter, who initially doesn't realize whose daughter she is. Disastrous consequences ensue for them both but only after Egan has expertly intertwined three narratives to show us what happened to Eddie while drawing us into Anna's and Dexter's complicated longings and aspirations. The Atlantic and Indian oceans play significant roles in a novel saturated by the sense of water as a vehicle of destiny and a symbol of continuity (epigraph by Melville, naturally). A fatal outcome for one appealing protagonist is balanced by Shakespearean reconciliation and renewal for others in a tender, haunting conclusion. Realistically detailed, poetically charged, and utterly satisfying: apparently there's nothing Egan can't do. (Kirkus Reviews, July 1, 2017)



Gyasi, Yaa. *Homegoing*. (Sarah)

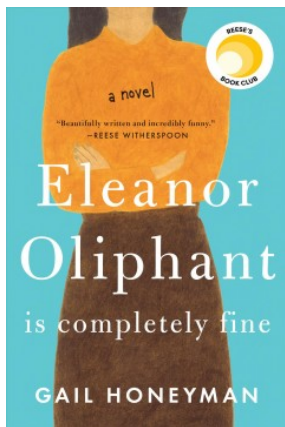
Booklist:

This sometimes painful novel by Ghanaian author Gyasi has garnered much prepublication attention, including a blurb by Ta-Nehisi Coates. It traces, through the stories of two main families in alternating chapters proceeding chronologically, the history of Ghanaian and American civilization from the eighteenth century to the present, in Africa (where one branch of the family initially stays) and America (where the other goes). It opens with the horrors wrought by British enslavement of the Africans, especially the women, and goes through each stage efficiently. The author has done her research, and though the book occasionally reads like a historical overview (each element—the beginning of cocoa cultivation in Ghana, the Fugitive Slave Act, and, later, the convict-lease system in America—feels summarized rather than dealt with dramatically), it has power and beauty, thanks to Gyasi's commanding

style. Expect the novel to attract considerable attention and to appeal to readers of multigenerational sagas. -- Levine, Mark (Reviewed 5/1/2016) (Booklist, vol 112, number 17, p73)

Kirkus:

A novel of sharply drawn character studies immersed in more than 250 hard, transformative years in the African-American diaspora. Gyasi's debut novel opens in the mid-1700s in what is now Ghana, as tribal rivalries are exploited by British and Dutch colonists and slave traders. The daughter of one tribal leader marries a British man for financial expediency, then learns that the "castle" he governs is a holding dungeon for slaves. (When she asks what's held there, she's told "cargo.") The narrative soon alternates chapters between the Ghanans and their American descendants up through the present day. On either side of the Atlantic, the tale is often one of racism, degradation, and loss: a slave on an Alabama plantation is whipped "until the blood on the ground is high enough to bathe a baby"; a freedman in Baltimore fears being sent back South with the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act; a Ghanan woman is driven mad from the abuse of a missionary and her husband's injury in a tribal war; a woman in Harlem is increasingly distanced from (and then humiliated by) her husband, who passes as white. Gyasi is a deeply empathetic writer, and each of the novel's 14 chapters is a savvy character portrait that reveals the impact of racism from multiple perspectives. It lacks the sweep that its premise implies, though: while the characters share a bloodline, and a gold-flecked stone appears throughout the book as a symbolic connector, the novel is more a well-made linked story collection than a complex epic. Yet Gyasi plainly has the talent to pull that off: "I will be my own nation," one woman tells a British suitor early on, and the author understands both the necessity of that defiance and how hard it is to follow through on it. A promising debut that's awake to emotional, political, and cultural tensions across time and continents. (Kirkus Reviews, March 15, 2016)



Honeyman, Gail. *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine*. (De Ann)

Booklist:

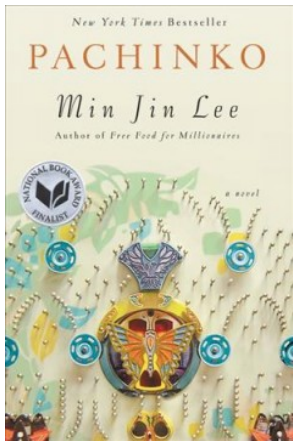
/* Starred Review */ Move over, Ove (in Fredrik Backman's *A Man Called Ove*, 2014)—there's a new curmudgeon to love. Thirty-year-old Eleanor Oliphant leads a highly predictable life, working at an office, eating the same meals alone in her apartment, and spending her weekends regularly administering vodka (she usually goes without speaking to another human from the time she bids farewell to the bus driver on Friday until she greets another one on Monday). She is, as she regularly tells herself, fine. But when a chance encounter with a local musician sends her reeling into the throes of a full-fledged crush, her carefully constructed world breaks open. Soon she is embarking on a self-improvement program from the outside in, complete with shopping trips, manicure, makeup, and attempts at hairstyling. The real changes, however, are slowly taking place within, as she develops a

friendship with a man from work and eventually learns the wonderful rewards that come to those who open their hearts. Walking in Eleanor's practical black Velcro shoes is delightfully amusing, her prudish observations leavened with a privately puckish humor. But readers will also be drawn in by her tragic backstory, which slowly reveals how she came to be so entirely Eleanor. Witty, charming, and heartwarming, *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* is a remarkable debut about a singular woman. Readers will cheer Eleanor as she confronts her dark past and turns to a brighter future. Feel good without feeling smarmy. -- Thoreson, Bridget (Reviewed 3/15/2017) (Booklist, vol 113, number 14, p18)

Kirkus:

A very funny novel about the survivor of a childhood trauma. At 29, Eleanor Oliphant has built an utterly solitary life that almost works. During the week, she toils in an office—don't inquire further; in almost eight years no one has—and from Friday to Monday she makes the time go by with pizza and booze. Enlivening this spare existence is a constant inner monologue that is cranky, hilarious, deadpan, and irresistible. Eleanor Oliphant has something to say about everything. Riding the train, she comments on the automated announcements: "I wondered at whom these pearls of wisdom were aimed; some passing extraterrestrial, perhaps, or a yak herder from Ulan Bator who had trekked across the steppes, sailed the North Sea, and found himself on the Glasgow-Edinburgh service with literally no prior experience of mechanized transport to call upon." Eleanor herself might as well be from Ulan Bator—she's never had a manicure or a haircut, worn high heels, had anyone visit her apartment, or even had a friend. After a mysterious event in her childhood that left half her face badly scarred, she was raised in foster care, spent her college years in an abusive relationship, and is now, as the title states, perfectly fine. Her extreme social

awkwardness has made her the butt of nasty jokes among her colleagues, which don't seem to bother her much, though one notices she is stockpiling painkillers and becoming increasingly obsessed with an unrealistic crush on a local musician. Eleanor's life begins to change when Raymond, a goofy guy from the IT department, takes her for a potential friend, not a freak of nature. As if he were luring a feral animal from its hiding place with a bit of cheese, he gradually brings Eleanor out of her shell. Then it turns out that shell was serving a purpose. Honeyman's endearing debut is part comic novel, part emotional thriller, and part love story.(Kirkus Reviews, February 1, 2017)



Lee, Min Jin. *Pachinko*. (Trudy)

Publishers Weekly:

Lee's (Free Food for Millionaires) latest novel is a sprawling and immersive historical work that tells the tale of one Korean family's search for belonging, exploring questions of history, legacy, and identity across four generations. In the Japanese-occupied Korea of the 1910s, young Sunja accidentally becomes pregnant, and a kind, tubercular pastor offers to marry her and act as the child's father. Together, they move away from Busan and begin a new life in Japan. In Japan, Sunja and her Korean family suffer from seemingly endless discrimination, and yet they are also met with moments of great love and renewal. As Sunja's children come of age, the novel reveals the complexities of family national history. What does it mean to live in someone else's motherland? When is history a burden, and when does history lift a person up? This is a character-driven tale, but Lee also offers detailed histories

that ground the story. Though the novel is long, the story itself is spare, at times brutally so. Sunja's isolation and dislocation become palpable in Lee's hands. Reckoning with one determined, wounded family's place in history, Lee's novel is an exquisite meditation on the generational nature of truly forging a home. (Feb.) --Staff (Reviewed 11/21/2016) (Publishers Weekly, vol 263, issue 47, p)

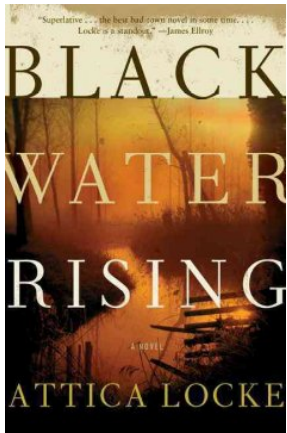
Kirkus:

/* Starred Review */ An absorbing saga of 20th-century Korean experience, seen through the fate of four generations.Lee (Free Food for Millionaires, 2007) built her debut novel around families of Korean-Americans living in New York. In her second novel, she traces the Korean diaspora back to the time of Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910. "History has failed us," she writes in the opening line of the current epic, "but no matter." She begins her tale in a village in Busan with an aging fisherman and his wife whose son is born with a cleft palate and a twisted foot. Nonetheless, he is matched with a fine wife, and the two of them run the boardinghouse he inherits from his parents. After many losses, the couple cherishes their smart, hardworking daughter, Sunja. When Sunja gets pregnant after a dalliance with a persistent, wealthy married man, one of their boarders—a sickly but handsome and deeply kind pastor—offers to marry her and take her away with him to Japan. There, she meets his brother and sister-in-law, a woman lovely in face and spirit, full of entrepreneurial ambition that she and Sunja will realize together as they support the family with kimchi and candy operations through war and hard times. Sunja's first son becomes a brilliant scholar; her second ends up making a fortune running parlors for pachinko , a pinball-like game played for money. Meanwhile, her first son's real father, the married rich guy, is never far from the scene, a source of both invaluable help and heartbreaking woe. As the destinies of Sunja's children and grandchildren unfold, love, luck, and talent combine with cruelty and random misfortune in a deeply compelling story, with the troubles of ethnic Koreans living in Japan never far from view. An old-fashioned epic whose simple, captivating storytelling delivers both wisdom and truth.(Kirkus Reviews, October 15, 2016)

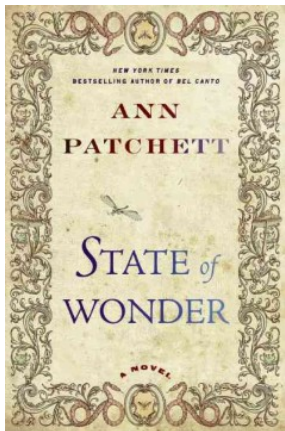
Locke, Attica. *Black Water Rising*. (Trudy)

Kirkus:

A debut thriller about an African-American lawyer with some difficult clients and a radical past. Jay Porter smokes too many Newports; he's short on money; his wife Bernie is pregnant; and the slip-and-fall lawsuits that bolster his practice have nearly dried up as Houston heads from boom to bust in 1981. When he rescues a woman from a bayou after gunshots ring out, Jay keeps mum to the cops. His own tangles with "the Man" haunt him: At 19, only a close-call acquittal saved him from going to prison on a charge of helping to kill a federal agent. From his radical



past, Jay is left with wariness and memories of a romance with white revolutionary Cynthia Maddox, who turns up years later as Houston's mayor and with whom he reconnects while representing a hooker in a civil case against an oil magnate. Jay needs the mayor's help to protect striking black union members who have come to him after being assaulted by their white counterparts. The book's three intersecting story lines promise nothing but trouble. The rescued woman is either a victim, a killer or a pawn in a scheme to damage Jay; the hooker could bring down the oilman; and the strike could bankrupt Houston. Jay, pulled into this vortex, also struggles with grim memories of his dad fatally beaten by rednecks and Black Panther allies decimated by the FBI. Locke expertly etches a portrait of her anxiety-ridden protagonist, and she animates the complex plot with the assurance of a practiced screenwriter (she's currently working on an HBO series about civil rights). (Kirkus Reviews, May 15, 2009)

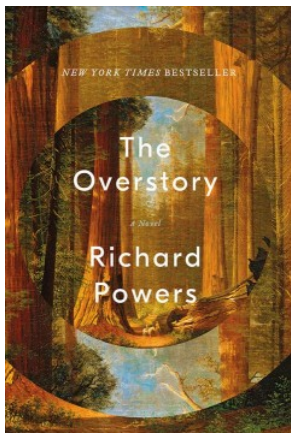


Patchett, Ann. *State of Wonder*. (Rita)

Kirkus:

/ * Starred Review */ A pharmacologist travels into the Amazonian heart of darkness in this spellbinder from bestselling author Patchett (Run, 2007, etc.). Marina Singh is dispatched from the Vogel pharmaceutical company to Brazil to find out what happened to her colleague Anders Eckman, whose death was announced in a curt letter from Annick Swenson. Anders had been sent to check on Dr. Swenson's top-secret research project among the Lakashi tribe, whose women continue to bear children into their 60s and 70s. If a fertility drug can be derived from whatever these women are ingesting, the potential rewards are so enormous that Swenson has been pursuing her work for years with scant oversight from Vogel; the company doesn't even know exactly where she is in the Amazon. Marina, who went into pharmacology after making a disastrous mistake as an obstetrics resident under Dr.

Swenson's supervision, really doesn't want to see this intimidating woman again, but she feels an obligation to her friend Anders and his grief-stricken wife. So she goes to Manaus, seeking clues to Dr. Swenson's location in the jungle. By the time the doctor turns up unexpectedly, Patchett has skillfully crafted a portrait from Marina's memories and subordinates' comments that gives Swenson the dark eminence of Joseph Conrad's Mr. Kurtz. Engaged like Kurtz in godlike pursuits among the natives, Swenson is performing some highly unorthodox experiments, the ramifications of which have even more possibilities than Vogel imagines. Indeed, the multiple and highly dramatic developments that ensue once Marina gets to the Lakashi village might seem ridiculous, if Patchett had not created such credible characters and a dreamlike milieu in which anything seems possible. Nail-biting action scenes include a young boy's near-mortal crushing by a 15-foot anaconda, whose head Marina lops off with a machete; they're balanced by contemplative moments that give this gripping novel spiritual and metaphysical depth, right down to the final startling plot twist. Thrilling, disturbing and moving in equal measures—even better than Patchett's breakthrough *Bel Canto* (2001). (Kirkus Reviews, February 1, 2011)



Powers, Richard. *The Overstory*. (Connie)

Booklist:

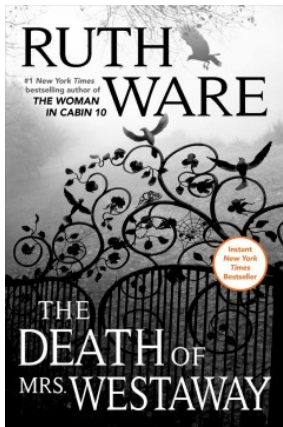
/ * Starred Review */ Nick, an artist, grew up on a family farm in Iowa famous for its regal chestnut tree. Patricia, born in Ohio with speech and hearing problems, finds inspiration in the plant world, studies forestry, and makes a controversial discovery. Adam, a science-struck boy enamored of ants, ends up majoring in social psychology and focusing on people "risking their lives for plants." Douglas' life is saved by a tree when his plane is shot down during the Vietnam War; he later joins a tree-planter squad, attempting to compensate for the ravages of clear-cut logging. Engineer Mimi's father, a Chinese immigrant who invented the earliest prototype for the cell phone, planted a mulberry tree in their backyard

in Illinois. Neelay, another child of a brilliant immigrant parent, a pioneering computer designer in San Jose, takes to coding as a boy like a leaf to sunlight, and even though he loses the use of his legs after falling out an oak, trees inspire the nature-based virtual realms he creates, which make him a video-game "god." All of these magnetic characters, and others, are introduced separately in "Roots"; they then converge in "Trunk," "Crown," and "Seeds," each a section in MacArthur Fellow and National Book Award winner Powers' twelfth novel, a magnificent saga of lives aligned with the marvels of trees, the intricacy and bounty of forests, and their catastrophic destruction under the onslaught of humanity's ever-increasing population on our rapidly warming planet. A virtuoso at parallel narratives, concurrent micro and macro perspectives, and the meshing of feelings, facts, and ideas, Powers draws on his signature fascination with the consequences, intended and otherwise, of science and technology as he considers the paradox of our ongoing assaults against nature in spite of all the evidence indicating impending disasters. The gripping, many-branched drama that unfolds here is a grand inquiry into how our hubris and unrelenting consumption and decimation of natural resources drives environmental activists to enact extreme and dangerous forms of civil disobedience. Olivia, a college student in Boston is oblivious to trees until a freak accident leaves her receptive to strange "beings of light" who, as the year 1990 begins, induce her to pack up her car and start driving west. Olivia has no idea why she's on this mysterious journey until she sees television coverage of people forming a ring around an enormous tree in Solace, California. The "presences" tell her: "The most wondrous products of four billion years of life need help." Olivia finds her way to Nick in Iowa, and when they reach California, the lovers, like the real-life tree-sitter Julia Butterfly Hill, ascend 200 feet off the ground to live for months on precarious platforms erected on an ancient, majestic redwood under siege by loggers. Another bond is forged when Douglas and Mimi's paths cross at an endangered grove of trees outside her high-rise Portland, Oregon, office. Adam's tree-hugger research also puts him on the scene as they all arrive at the same place. And once each either witnesses or is subjected to vicious attacks by enraged loggers and contemptuous law-enforcement agents, they join forces and embark on acts of what they define as ecotage (vandalizing equipment to sabotage logging operations) and which logging corporations and the authorities deem ecoterrorism. Meanwhile, Patricia writes Rachel Carson-style books about the complex interconnectedness and intelligence of forests that galvanize the world. But can anyone stop or even slow the devastation wrought by the relentless tide of human growth and need? Powers' sylvan tour de force is alive with gorgeous descriptions; continually surprising, often heartbreaking characters; complex suspense; unflinching scrutiny of pain; celebration of creativity and connection; and informed and expressive awe over the planet's life force and its countless and miraculous manifestations. Powers elevates ecofiction with this profound and symphonic novel even as he pays subtle tribute to the genre's defining title, Edward Abbey's *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975), which, in turn, inspired T. C. Boyle's ecowarrior tale, *A Friend of the Earth* (2000). *The Overstory* takes a crowning position on a list of earlier novels about trees and tree-huggers and about the terrible consequences of ecotage or ecoterrorism as well-meaning convictions precipitate calamities and crises of conscience. Diverse in voice and timbre, the list includes *The Living*, by Annie Dillard (1992); *The Tree-Sitter*, by Suzanne Matson (2006); *The Cookbook Collector*, by Allegra Goodman (2010); *The Widower's Tale*, by Julia Glass (2010); *Barkskins*, by Annie Proulx (2016); and *At the Edge of the Orchard*, by Tracy Chevalier (2016). Powers wants us to see trees and forests in verdant and exhilarating detail, and feel the despair of those who know the magnitude and significance of all that is being irrevocably lost as forests everywhere are destroyed. As we rip apart the forest's green web, we immerse ourselves in the cyberweb. Powers wonders, Will data guide us in reversing our doomsday folly? Will stories help us fully perceive, cherish, and preserve life? *The Overstory* and its brethren seed awareness and hope. -- Seaman, Donna (Reviewed 2/15/2018) (Booklist, vol 114, number 12, p22)

Kirkus:

/ Starred Review */* Powers' (Orfeo, 2014, etc.) 12th novel is a masterpiece of operatic proportions, involving nine central characters and more than half a century of American life. In this work, Powers takes on the subject of nature, or our relationship to nature, as filtered through the lens of environmental activism, although at its heart the book is after more existential concerns. As is the case with much of Powers' fiction, it takes shape slowly—first in a pastiche of narratives establishing the characters (a psychologist, an undergraduate who died briefly but was revived, a paraplegic computer game designer, a homeless vet), and then in the kaleidoscopic ways these individuals come together and break apart. "We all travel the Milky Way together, trees and men," Powers writes, quoting the

naturalist John Muir. "In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks." The idea is important because what Powers means to explore is a sense of how we become who we are, individually and collectively, and our responsibility to the planet and to ourselves. Nick, for instance, continues a project begun by his grandfather to take repeated photographs of a single chestnut tree, "one a month for seventy-six years." Pat, a visionary botanist, discovers how trees communicate with one another only to be discredited and then, a generation later, reaffirmed. What links the characters is survival—the survival of both trees and human beings. The bulk of the action unfolds during the timber wars of the late 1990s, as the characters coalesce on the Pacific coast to save old-growth sequoia from logging concerns. For Powers, however, political or environmental activism becomes a filter through which to consider the connectedness of all things—not only the human lives he portrays in often painfully intricate dimensions, but also the biosphere, both virtual and natural. "The world starts here," Powers insists. "This is the merest beginning. Life can do anything. You have no idea." A magnificent achievement: a novel that is, by turns, both optimistic and fatalistic, idealistic without being naïve. (Kirkus Reviews, February 1, 2018)

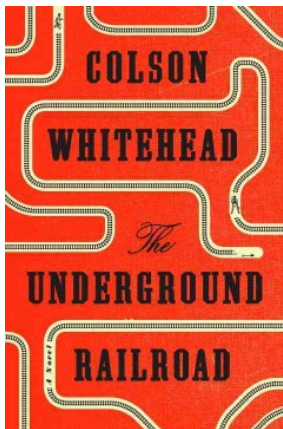


Ware, Ruth. *Death of Mrs. Westaway*. (De Ann) -- Not yet in paperback.

Kirkus:

/ Starred Review */* A young woman receives notice of a mysterious bequest. Is it a case of mistaken identity, or will it reveal some truth about her family? In Ware's (*The Lying Game*, 2017, etc.) fourth novel in as many years, Harriet "Hal" Westaway is barely making ends meet as a tarot reader on the Brighton Pier. Her mother died in a hit-and-run several years before, and in her grief, Hal has drifted into a solitary and impecunious life. Worse still, she's under threat from a loan shark who's come to collect the interest on an earlier debt. So when she receives a letter saying she's been named in the will of , possibly, an unknown grandmother, she decides to travel to Cornwall, despite fearing that it's probably all a mistake. There she meets several possible uncles and a creepy old housekeeper right out of a Daphne du Maurier novel, all against the backdrop of a run-down mansion. As Hal

desperately tries to keep up her charade of belonging to the family, she realizes that the malevolent atmosphere of Trepassen House has strong roots in the past, when a young girl came to live there, fell in love, and was imprisoned in her bedroom. Hal just has to figure out exactly who this girl was...without getting herself killed. Ware continues to hone her gift for the slow unspooling of unease and mystery, developing a consistent sense of threat that's pervasive and gripping. She uses tarot readings to hint at the supernatural, but at its heart, this is a very human mystery. The isolation of Trepassen House, its magpies, and its anachronistic housekeeper cultivate a dull sense of horror. Ware's novels continue to evoke comparison to Agatha Christie; they certainly have that classic flavor despite the contemporary settings. Expertly paced, expertly crafted. (Kirkus Reviews, April 15, 2018)



Whitehead, Colson. *Underground Railroad*. (Trudy)

Booklist:

/ Starred Review */* Over the course of his previous five novels, Whitehead (*Zone One*, 2011) has conducted an imaginative, droll, and eviscerating inquiry into the blurred divide between American mythology and American history, especially the camouflaged truth about racism. In this magnetizing and wrenching saga, Whitehead tells the story of smart and resilient Cora, a young third-generation slave on a Georgia cotton plantation where she has been brutally attacked by whites and blacks. Certain that the horror will only get worse, she flees with a young man who knows how to reach the Underground Railroad. Everything Whitehead describes is vividly, often joltingly realistic, even the novel's most fantastic element, his vision of this secret transport network as an actual railroad running through tunnels dug beneath the blood-soaked fields of the South, a jolting and resounding

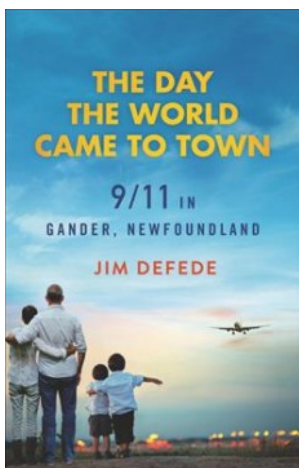
embodiment of heroic efforts and colossal risks. Yet for all that sacrifice and ingenuity, freedom proves miserably elusive. A South Carolina town appears to be welcoming until Cora discovers that it is all a facade, concealing quasi-medical genocidal schemes. With a notoriously relentless slave catcher following close behind, Cora endures

another terrifying underground journey, arriving in North Carolina, where the corpses of tortured black people hang on the trees along a road whites call the Freedom Trail. Each stop Cora makes along the Underground Railroad reveals another shocking and malignant symptom of a country riven by catastrophic conflicts, a poisonous moral crisis, and diabolical violence. Each galvanizing scene blazes with terror and indictment as Whitehead tracks the consequences of the old American imperative to seize, enslave, and profit. "Stolen bodies working stolen land. It was an engine that did not stop, its hungry boiler fed with blood." With each compelling character, some based on historical figures, most born of empathic invention, Whitehead takes measure of the personal traumas and mass psychosis that burn still within our national consciousness. Hard-driving, laser-sharp, artistically superlative, and deeply compassionate, Whitehead's unforgettable odyssey adds a clarion new facet to the literature of racial tyranny and liberation. -- Seaman, Donna (Reviewed 6/1/2016) (Booklist, vol 112, number 19, p37)

Kirkus:

/ Starred Review */* What if the metaphorical Underground Railroad had been an actual...underground railroad, complete with steam locomotive pulling a "dilapidated box car" along a subterranean nexus of steel tracks? For roughly its first 60 pages, this novel behaves like a prelude to a slave narrative which is, at once, more jolting and sepulchral than the classic firsthand accounts of William Wells Brown and Solomon Northup. Its protagonist, Cora, is among several African-American men and women enslaved on a Georgia plantation and facing a spectrum of savage indignities to their bodies and souls. A way out materializes in the form of an educated slave named Caesar, who tells her about an underground railroad that can deliver her and others northward to freedom. So far, so familiar. But Whitehead, whose eclectic body of work encompasses novels (*Zone One*, 2011, etc.) playing fast and loose with "real life," both past and present, fires his most daring change-up yet by giving the underground railroad physical form. This train conveys Cora, Caesar, and other escapees first to a South Carolina also historically unrecognizable with its skyscrapers and its seemingly, if microscopically, more liberal attitude toward black people. Compared with Georgia, though, the place seems so much easier that Cora and Caesar are tempted to remain, until more sinister plans for the ex-slaves' destiny reveal themselves. So it's back on the train and on to several more stops: in North Carolina, where they've not only abolished slavery, but are intent on abolishing black people, too; through a barren, more forbidding Tennessee; on to a (seemingly) more hospitable Indiana, and restlessly onward. With each stop, a slave catcher named Ridgeway, dispensing long-winded rationales for his wicked calling, doggedly pursues Cora and her diminishing company of refugees. And with every change of venue, Cora discovers anew that "freedom was a thing that shifted as you looked at it, the way a forest is dense with trees up close but from outside, the empty meadow, you see its true limits." Imagine a runaway slave novel written with Joseph Heller's deadpan voice leasing both Frederick Douglass' grim realities and H.P. Lovecraft's rococo fantasies...and that's when you begin to understand how startlingly original this book is. Whitehead continues the African-American artists' inquiry into race mythology and history with rousing audacity and razor-sharp ingenuity; he is now assuredly a writer of the first rank. (Kirkus Reviews, May 1, 2016)

Nonfiction

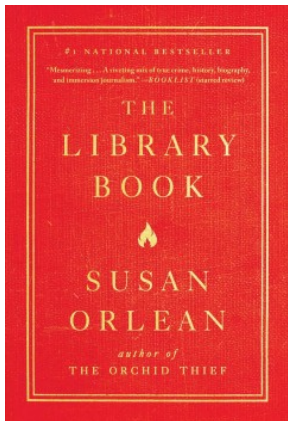


DeFede, Jim. *The Day the World Came to Town: 9/11 in Gander, Newfoundland.* (Sarah)

Booklist (October 1, 2002 (Vol. 99, No. 3))

On September 11, 2001, 38 jetliners bound for the U.S. were forced to land at Gander International Airport in Newfoundland after the terrorists' attack resulted in the closing of all American airspace. The planes carried 6,595 passengers and crew members; Gander's population is barely 10,000. This book is the story of how the people of Gander and the surrounding smaller towns worked around the clock for the next six days to help these stranded travelers. They prepared meals and--in some cases--took strangers into their homes. The Red Cross collected linens and toiletries for the passengers who had no access to their suitcases. A local brewery offered free samples of beer, animals on the planes were

cared for in a vacant hanger, kosher meals were provided for a rabbi, and a volunteer taxi service helped passengers get around town. Readers could do without all the stilted dialogue that DeFede has created to move the story along, but the book nevertheless is an engaging account of these copious acts of kindness.

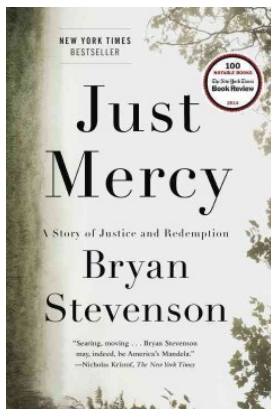


Orlean, Susan. *The Library Book*. (LeAynne) -- Not yet in paperback.

Kirkus:

An engaging, casual history of librarians and libraries and a famous one that burned down. In her latest, New Yorker staff writer Orlean (Rin Tin Tin: The Life and the Legend, 2011, etc.) seeks to "tell about a place I love that doesn't belong to me but feels like it is mine." It's the story of the Los Angeles Public Library, poet Charles Bukowski's "wondrous place," and what happened to it on April 29, 1986: It burned down. The fire raged "for more than seven hours and reached temperatures of 2000 degrees...more than one million books were burned or damaged." Though nobody was killed, 22 people were injured, and it took more than 3 million gallons of water to put it out. One of the firefighters on the scene said, "We thought we were looking at the bowels of hell....It was surreal." Besides telling the story of the historic library and its destruction, the author recounts the intense arson investigation and

provides an in-depth biography of the troubled young man who was arrested for starting it, actor Harry Peak. Orlean reminds us that library fires have been around since the Library of Alexandria; during World War II, "the Nazis alone destroyed an estimated hundred million books." She continues, "destroying a culture's books is sentencing it to something worse than death: It is sentencing it to seem as if it never happened." The author also examines the library's important role in the city since 1872 and the construction of the historic Goodhue Building in 1926. Orlean visited the current library and talked to many of the librarians, learning about their jobs and responsibilities, how libraries were a "solace in the Depression," and the ongoing problems librarians face dealing with the homeless. The author speculates about Peak's guilt but remains "confounded." Maybe it was just an accident after all. Bibliophiles will love this fact-filled, bookish journey. (Kirkus Reviews, July 15, 2018)



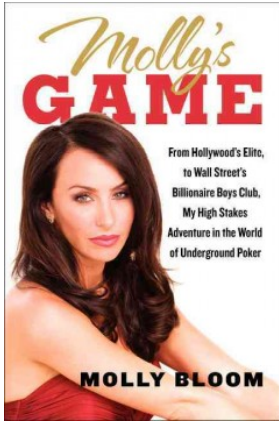
Stevenson, Bryan. *Just Mercy*. (Rita)

Kirkus:

/* Starred Review */ A distinguished NYU law professor and MacArthur grant recipient offers the compelling story of the legal practice he founded to protect the rights of people on the margins of American society. Stevenson began law school at Harvard knowing only that the life path he would follow would have something to do with [improving] the lives of the poor." An internship at the Atlanta-based Southern Prisoners Defense Committee in 1983 not only put him into contact with death row prisoners, but also defined his professional trajectory. In 1989, the author opened a nonprofit legal center, the Equal Justice Initiative, in Alabama, a state with some of the harshest, most rigid capital punishment laws in the country.

Underfunded and chronically overloaded by requests for help, his organization worked tirelessly on behalf of men, women and children who, for reasons of race, mental illness, lack of money and/or family support, had been victimized by the American justice system. One of Stevenson's first and most significant cases involved a black man named Walter McMillian. Wrongly accused of the murder of a white woman, McMillian found himself on death row before a sentence had even been determined. Though EJI secured his release six years later, McMillian "received no money, no assistance [and] no counseling" for the imprisonment that would eventually contribute to a tragic personal decline. In the meantime, Stevenson would also experience his own personal crisis. "You can't effectively fight abusive power, poverty, inequality, illness, oppression, or injustice and not be broken by it," he writes. Yet he would emerge from despair, believing that it was only by acknowledging brokenness that individuals could begin to understand the importance of tempering imperfect justice with mercy and compassion. Emotionally profound, necessary reading. (Kirkus Reviews, September 1, 2014)

Biography



Bloom, Molly. *Molly's Game*. (LeAynne)

Amazon:

Now a major motion picture, written and directed by Aaron Sorkin and starring Jessica Chastain, Idris Elba, Kevin Costner, and Michael Cera—the true story of "Hollywood's poker princess" who gambled everything, won big, then lost it all.

When Molly Bloom was a little girl in a small Colorado town, she dreamed of a life without rules and limits, a life where she didn't have to measure up to anyone or anything—where she could become whatever she wanted.

She ultimately got more than she could have ever bargained for.

In *Molly's Game*, she takes you through her adventures running an exclusive high-stakes private poker game catering to such clients as Hollywood royalty like Leonardo DiCaprio and Ben Affleck, athletes, billionaires, politicians, and financial titans. With rich detail, Molly

describes a world of glamour, privilege, and secrecy in which she made millions, lived the high life, and fearlessly took on the Russian and Italian mobs—until she met the one adversary she could not outsmart: the United States government.

It's the story of how a determined woman gained—and then lost—her place at the table, and of everything she learned about poker, love, and life in the process.