

CRASH COURSE

IN LITERARY FICTION

NoveList
Empowering Librarians... Engaging Readers



Panelists



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Manager of Content Curation, Chicago Public Library



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Customer Engagement Specialist, NoveList



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Manager Content Development, NoveList





libraryreads.org



Agenda

- Genre Definition
- History of the genre
- Appeals & Themes
- Awards
- Trends and recent titles
- Books we're excited about
- Q&A

Dictionary definitions of "literary"

Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary:

1a: of, relating to, or having the characteristics of humane learning or literature

b: bookish

c: of or relating to books

2a: well-read

b: of or relating to authors or scholars or to their professions

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition:

1. Of, relating to, or dealing with literature
2. Of or relating to writers or the profession of literature
3. Versed in or fond of literature or learning.
- 4a. Appropriate to literature rather than everyday speech or writing.
- b. Bookish; pedantic.

Genre definition

Literary fiction:

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1) focuses on **style, language and character;**

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- 3) and approaches its subjects, regardless of tone, with **serious intent**.

Genre definition

Literary fiction:

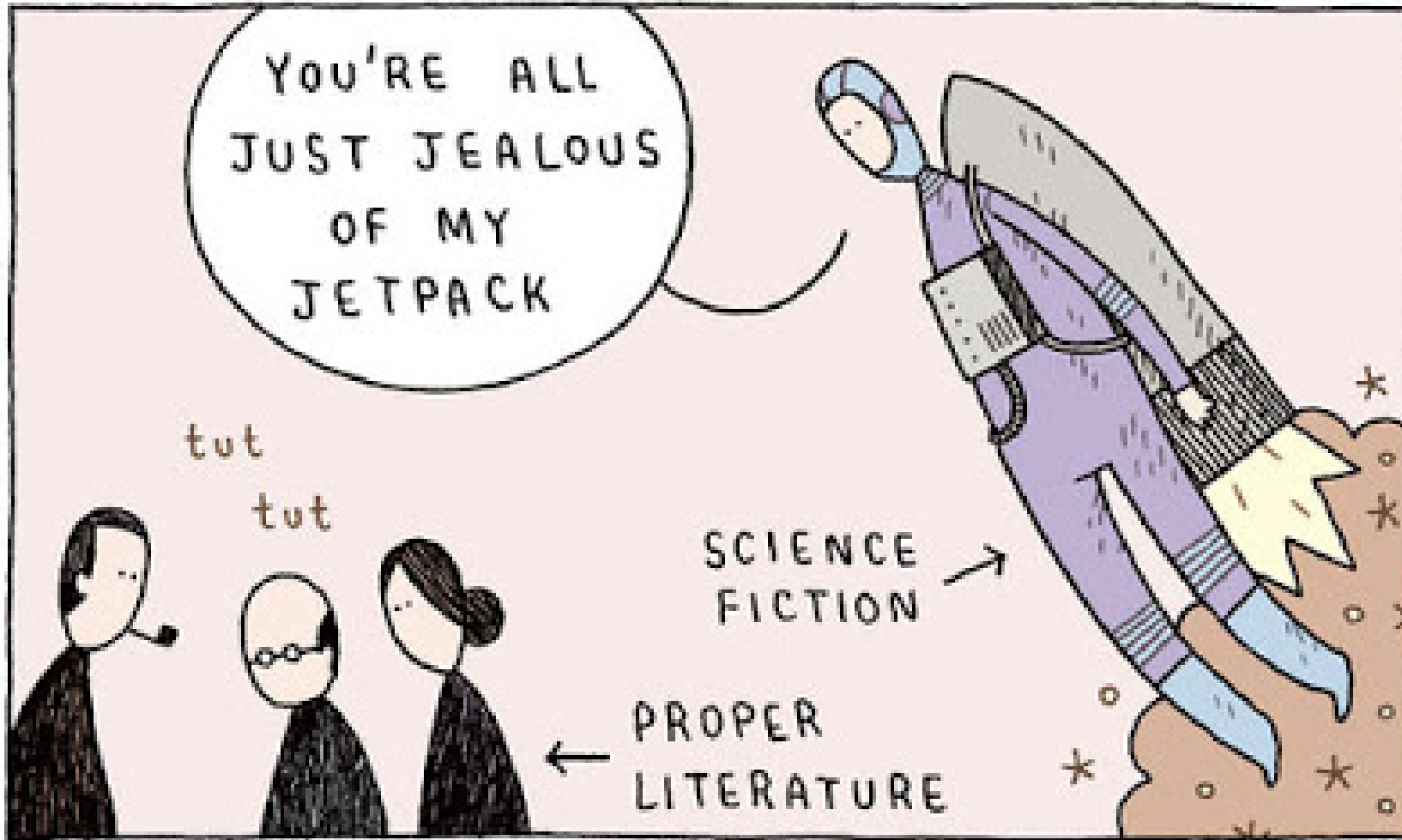
- 1) focuses on **style, language and character**;
- 2) asks readers to pay attention to its construction;
- 3) and approaches its subjects, regardless of tone, with **serious intent**.

For *some*, it also demands a certain focus on *realism*.

-The Readers' Advisory Guide to Genre Fiction, Neal Wyatt and Joyce G. Saricks

Literary fiction “versus” genre fiction

Literary fiction “versus” genre fiction



This genre comes with a lot of baggage



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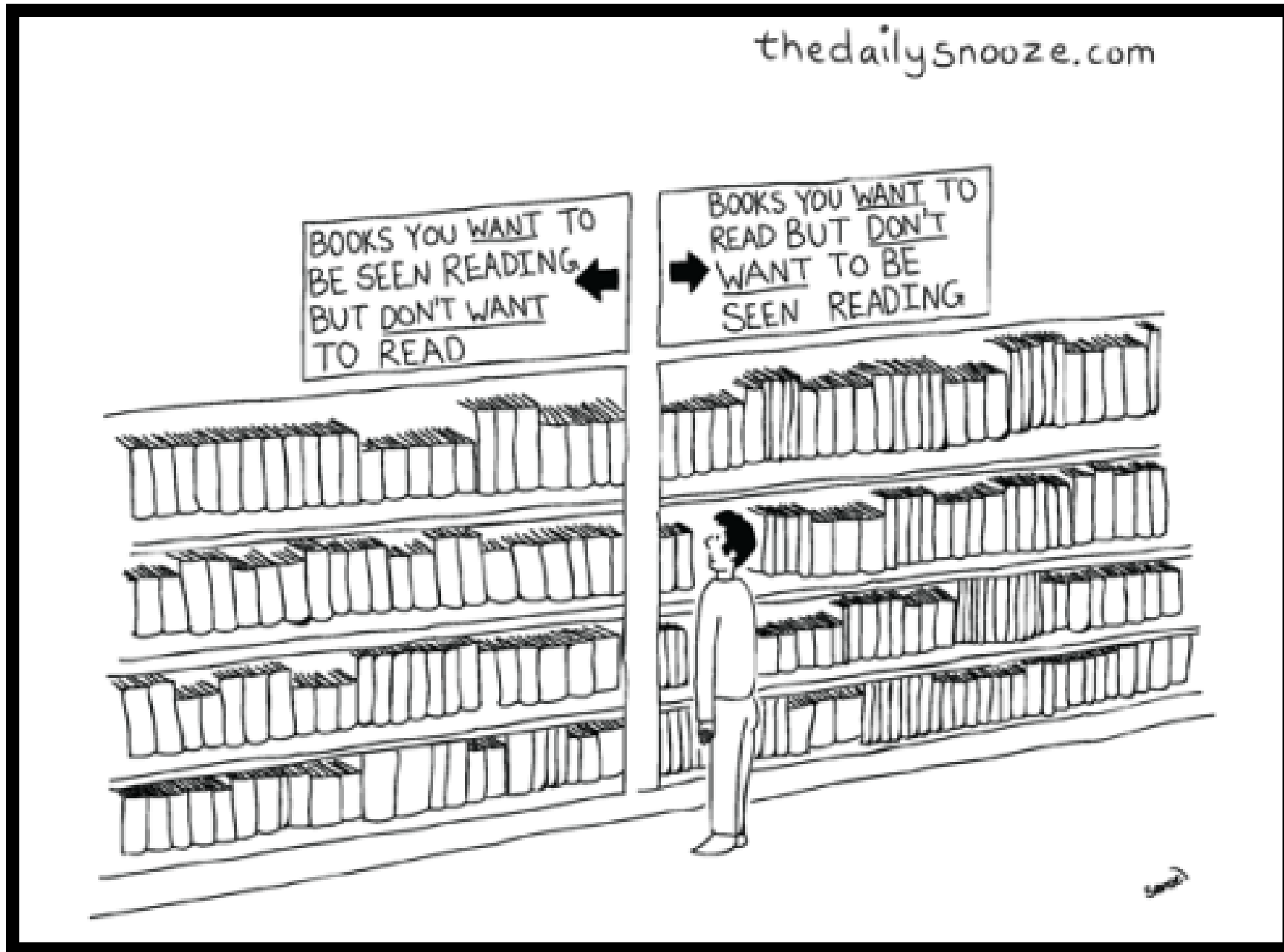


This genre comes with a lot of baggage

- Literary fiction isn't "above" other genres
- Every genre includes good and bad writing
- Every genre can include sophisticated techniques and experimentalism
- Every genre can address serious issues/themes
- A literary hardcover sells for about as much as a hardcover of any other genre



thedailysnooze.com

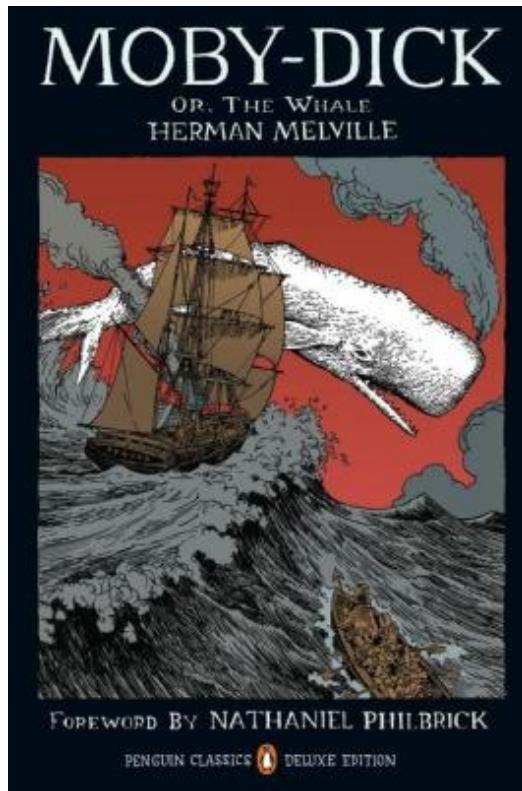


#NoveListConversations

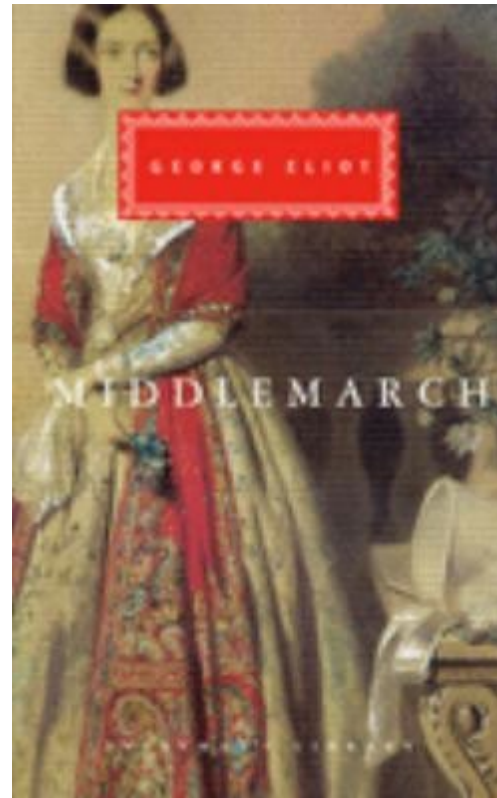
#PublishingPaidMe

- Hashtag started by two Black YA authors Tochi Onyebuchi and L.L. McKinney
- Highlighted huge disparities in what Black authors are paid by publishers compared to non-Black authors
- Jesmyn Ward fought for \$100,000 advance after winning National Book Award while white literary fiction author Lydia Kiesling sold her debut novel for \$200,000
- Roxane Gay received \$15,000 advance for *Bad Feminist*. White author Lacy Johnson received \$215,000 for her essay collection, *The Reckonings*.
- Unprecedented three-time Hugo Award Best Novel winner N.K. Jemisin received \$60,000 for *The City We Became*. Emily St. John Mandel received \$800,000 for only the US rights to *The Glass Hotel*.

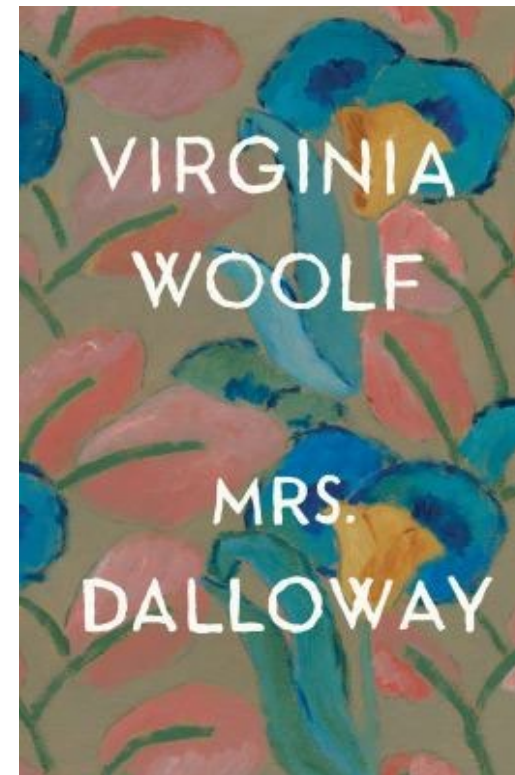
(Pre-)History of the genre



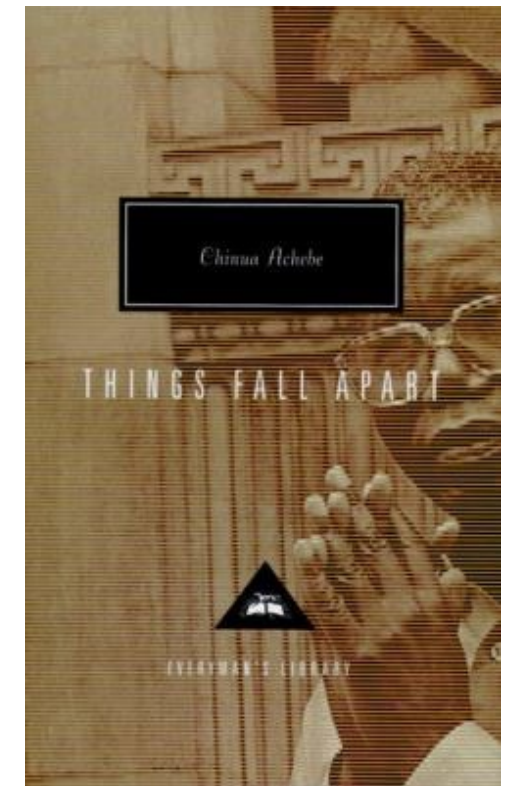
1851



1871

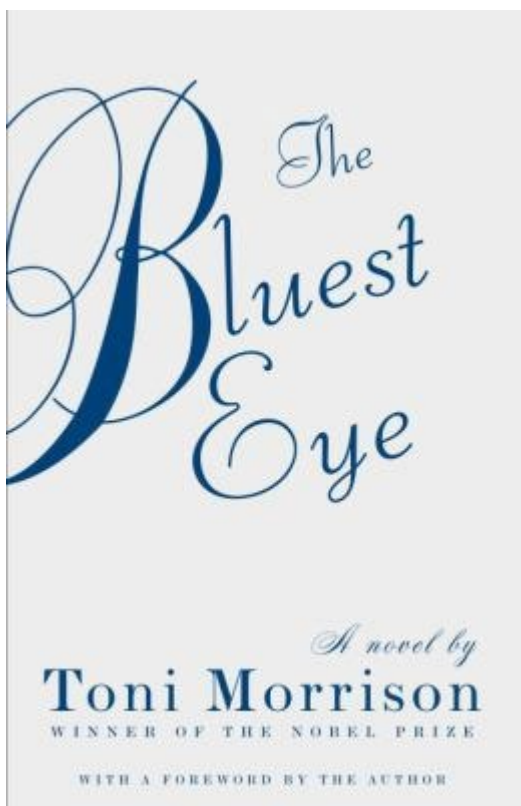


1925

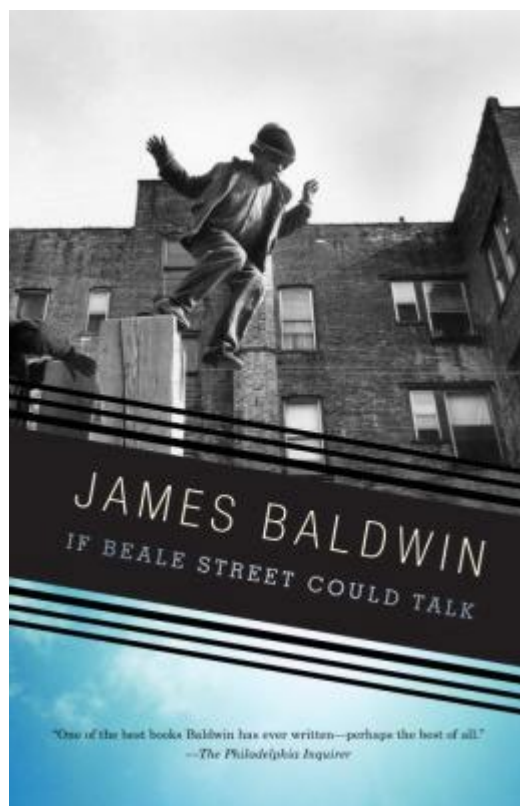


1958

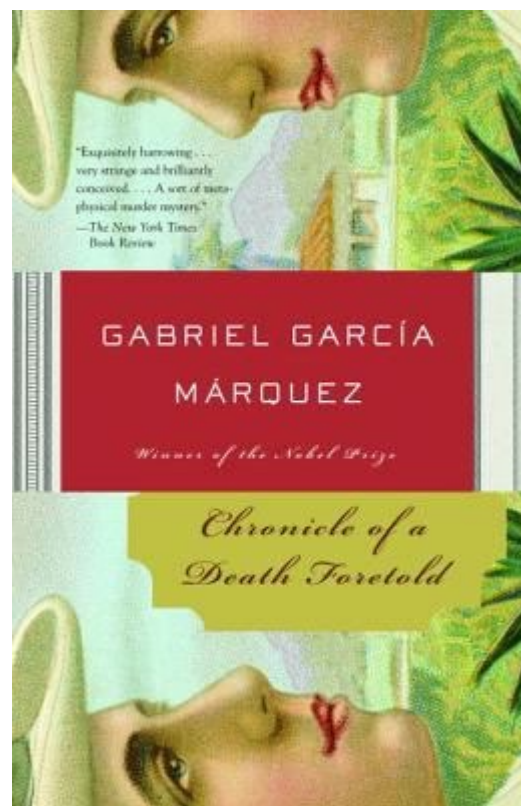
History of the genre



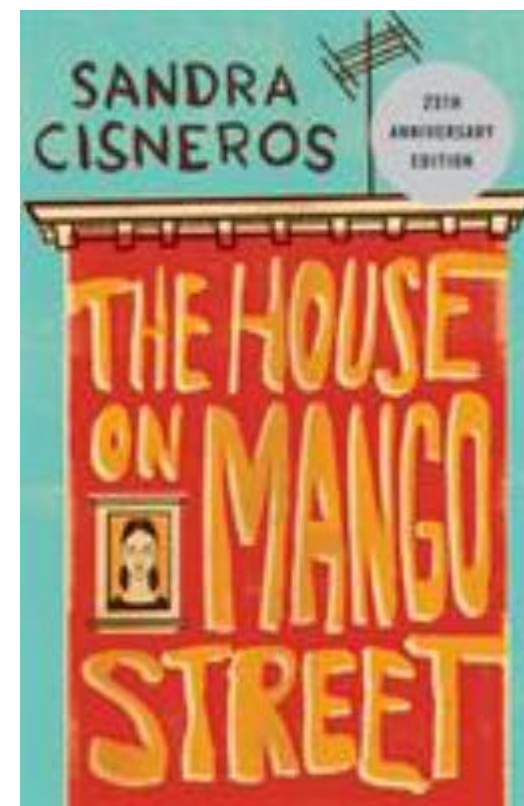
1970



1974



1981



1984

Literary Fiction: What's the appeal?

Appeals

Lyrical

Complex (style and character)

Popular narrative structures, themes

Epistolary novels

Parallel narratives

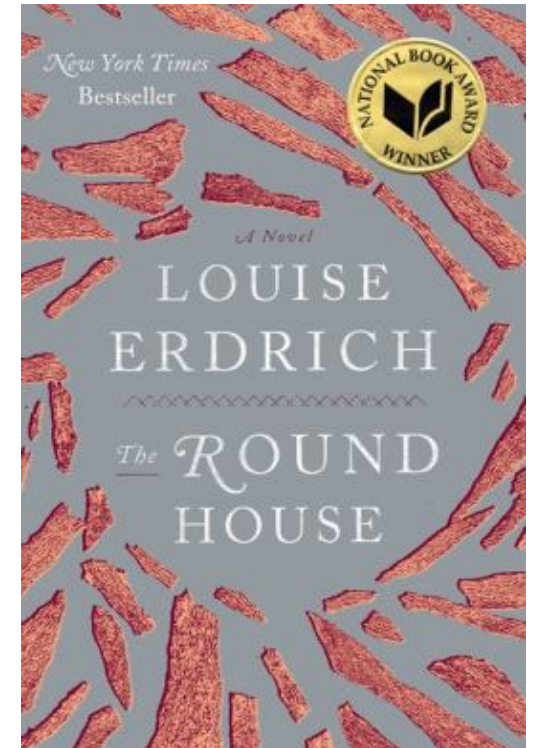
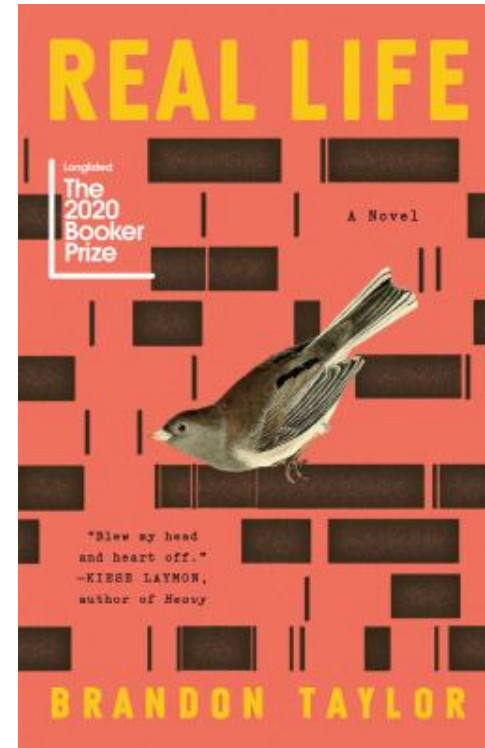
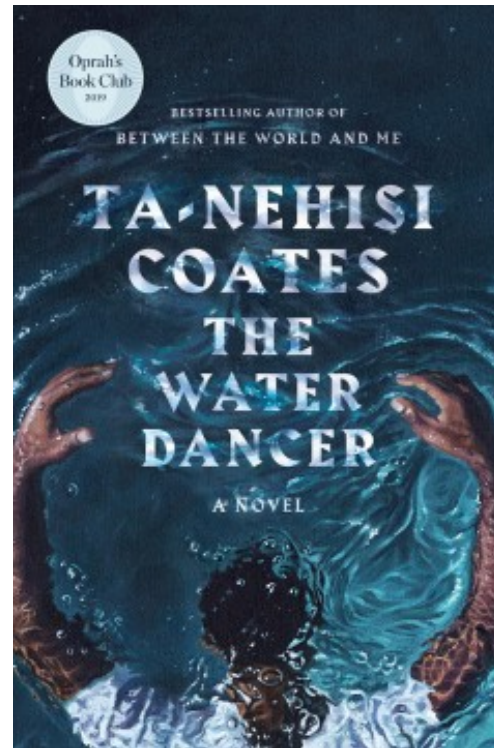
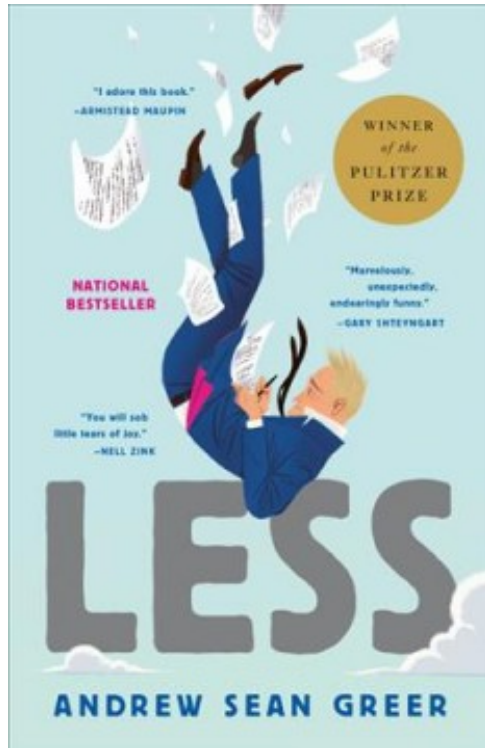
Family sagas

Strong sense of place

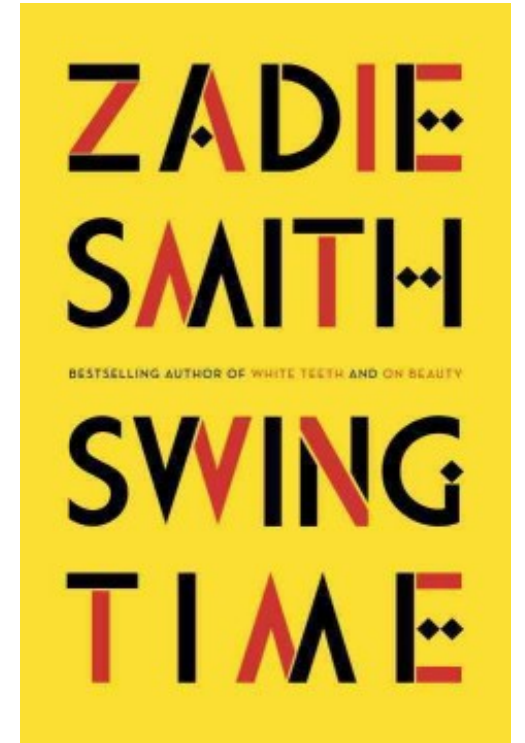
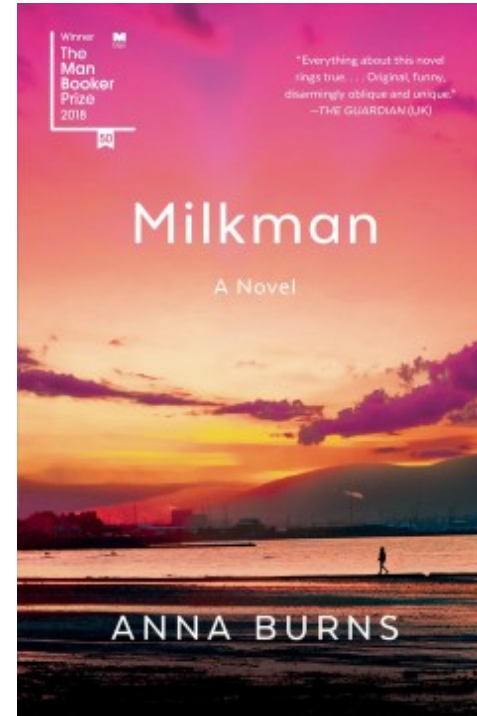
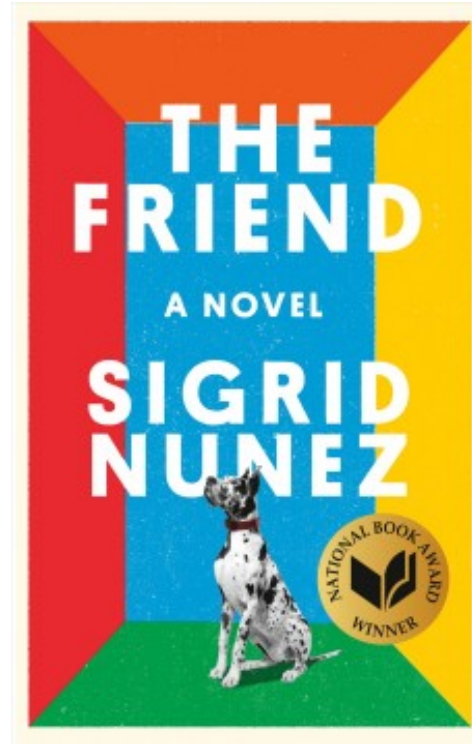
Immigrant experiences



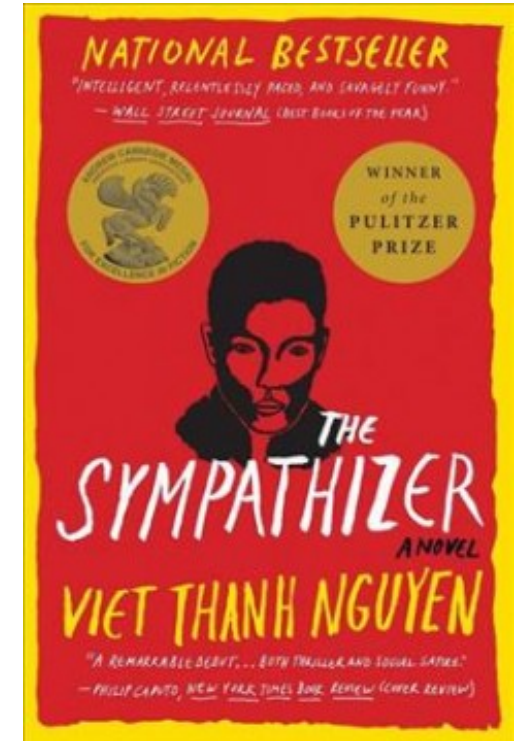
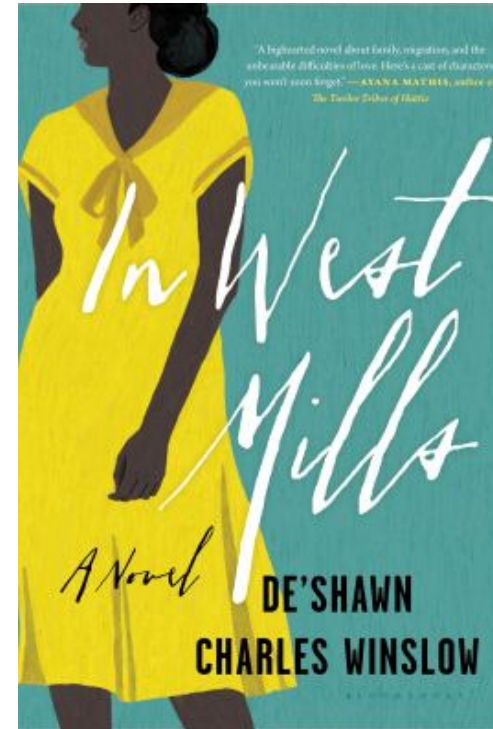
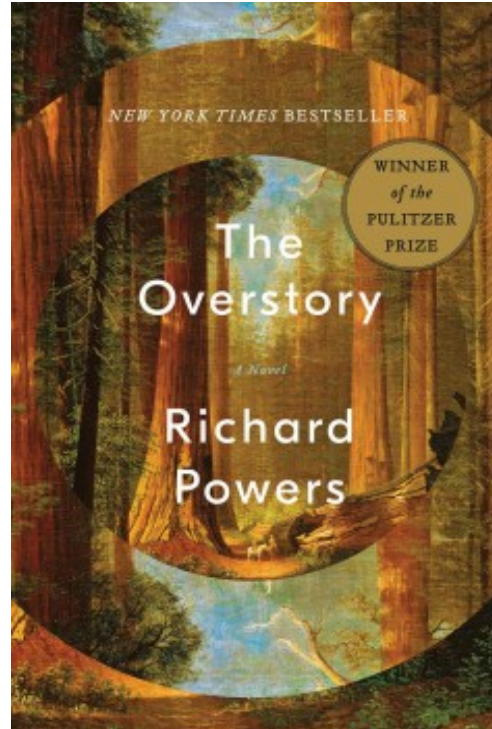
Lyrical



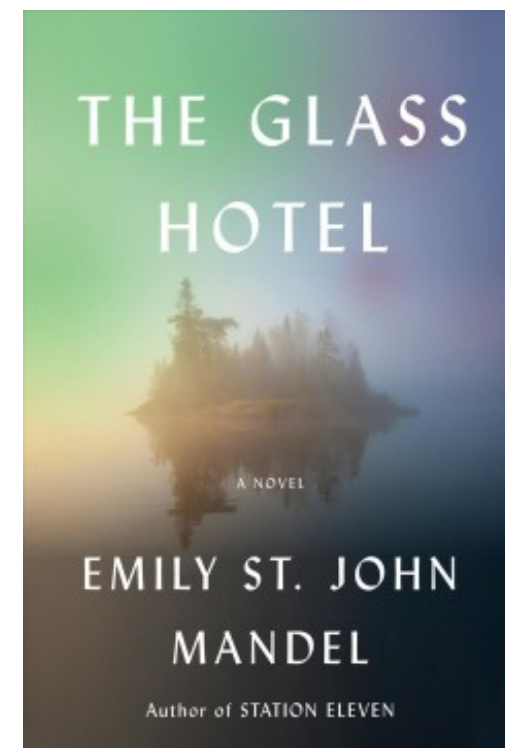
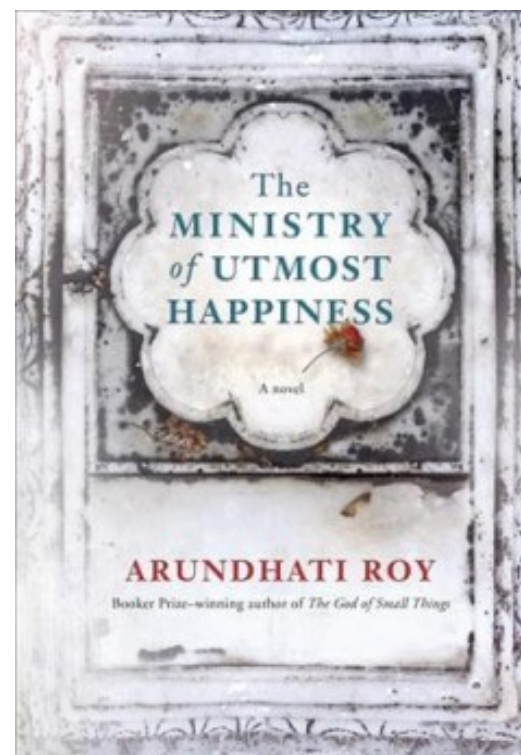
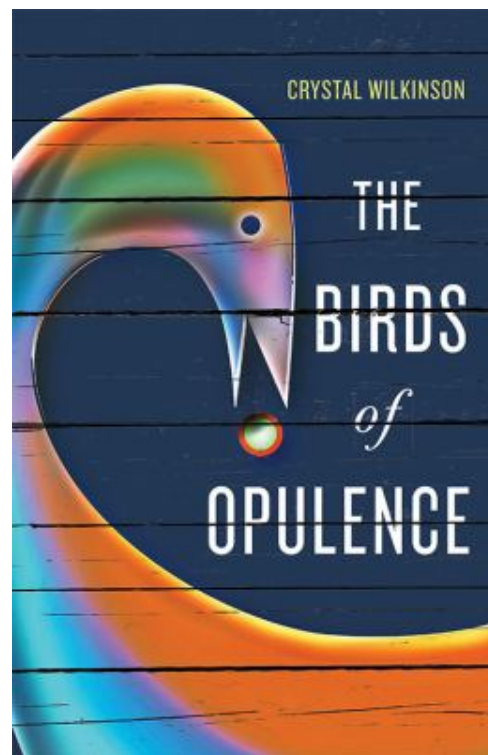
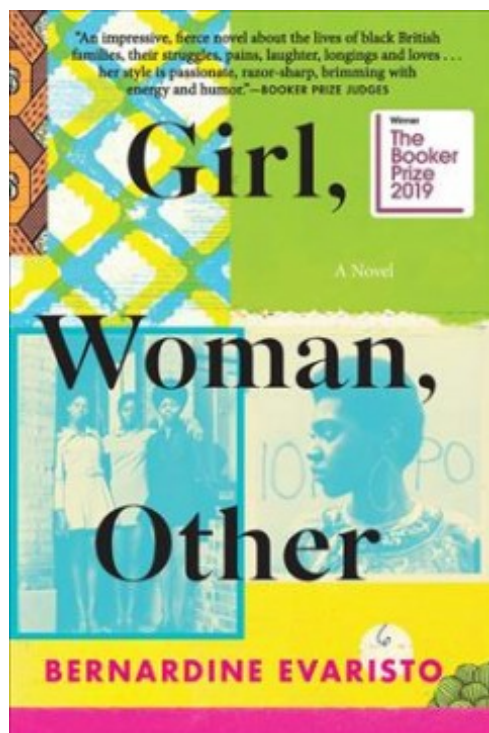
Stylistically complex



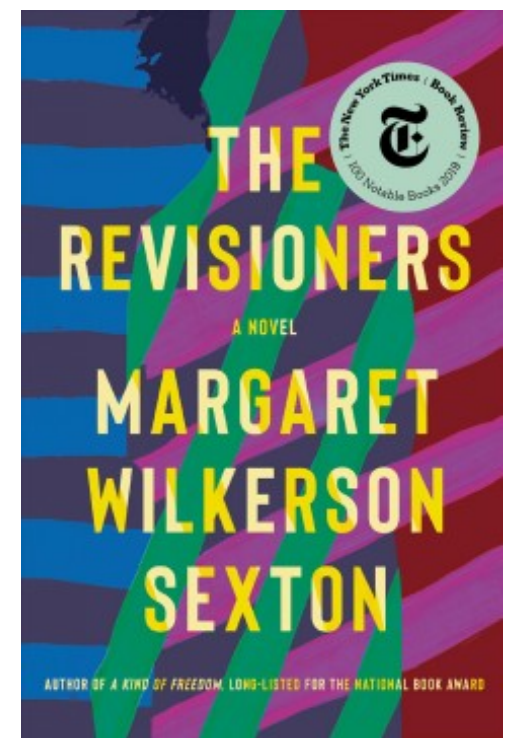
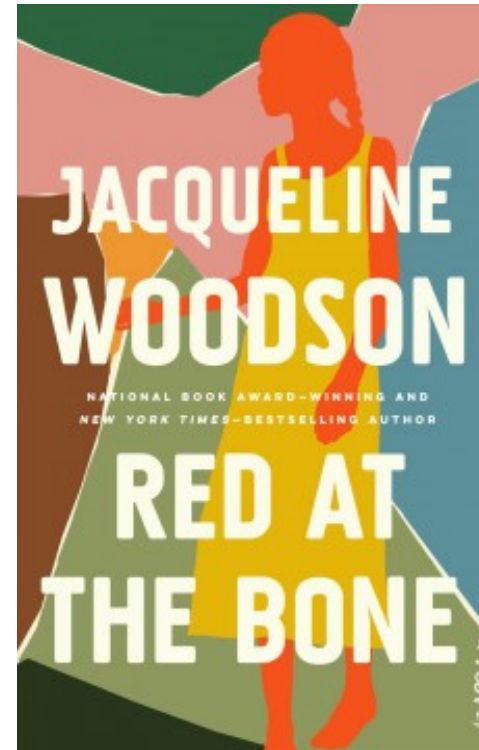
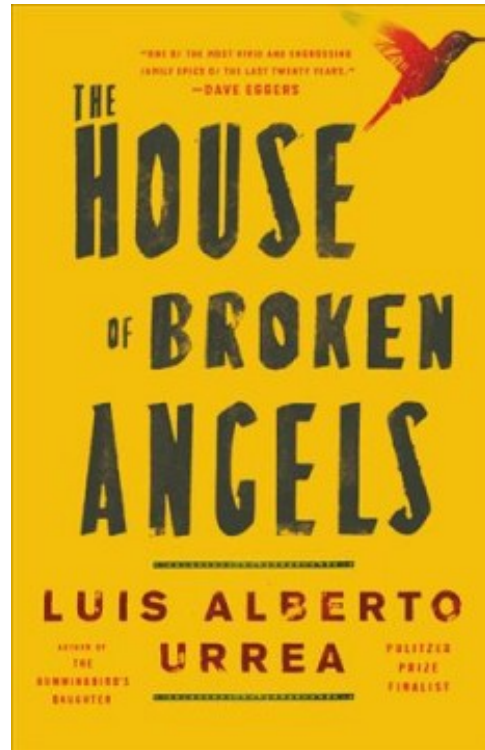
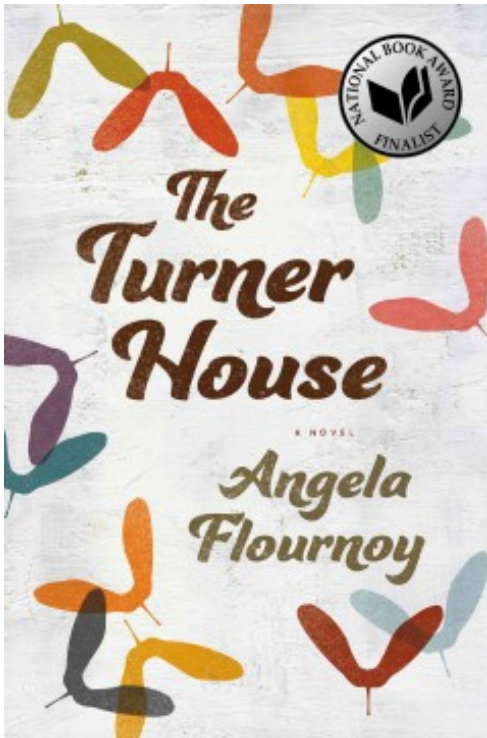
Complex character



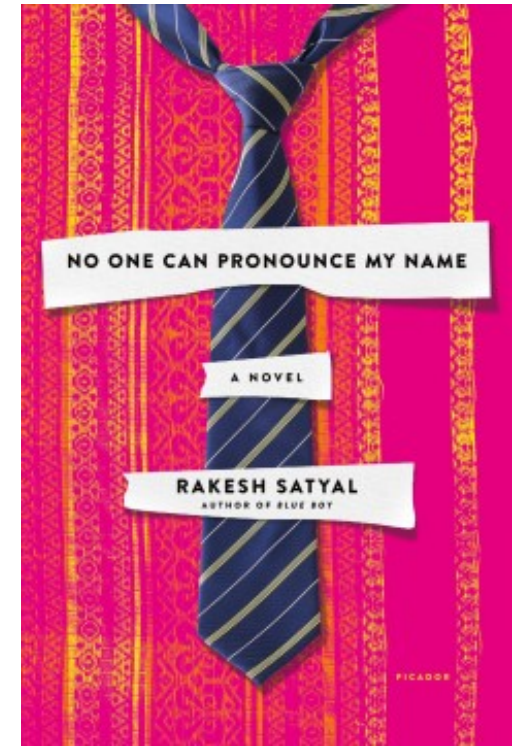
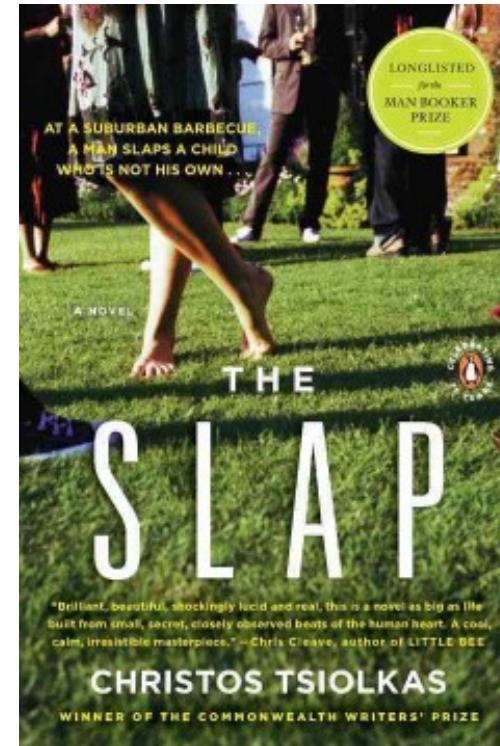
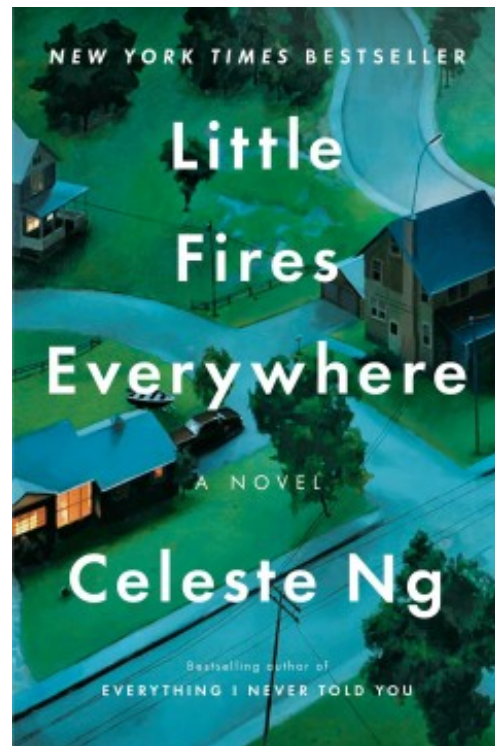
Ensemble casts



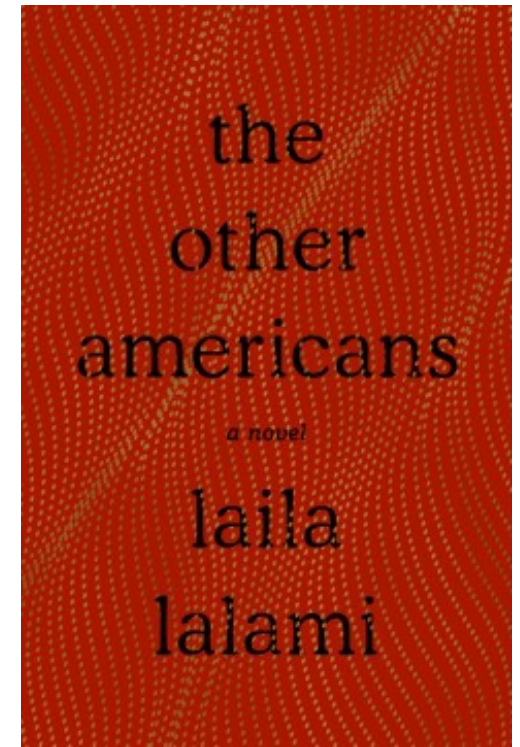
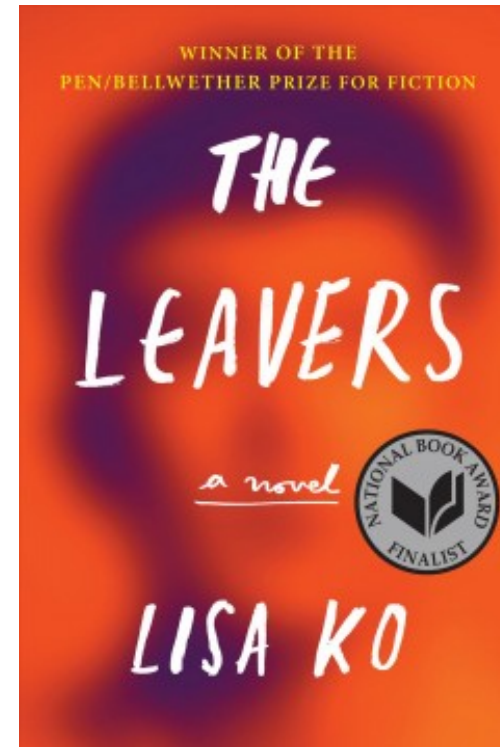
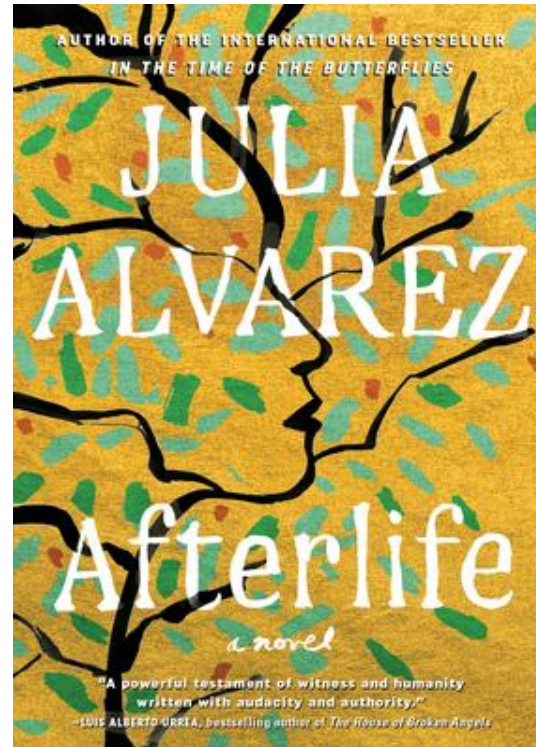
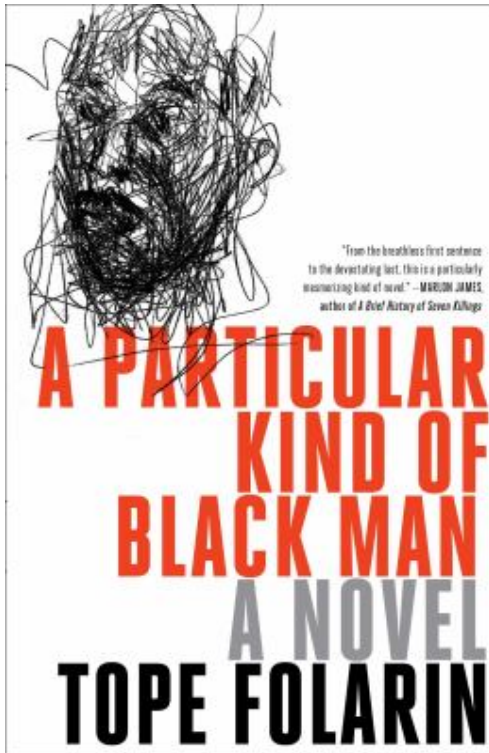
Family gatherings/Family sagas



Suburban malaise

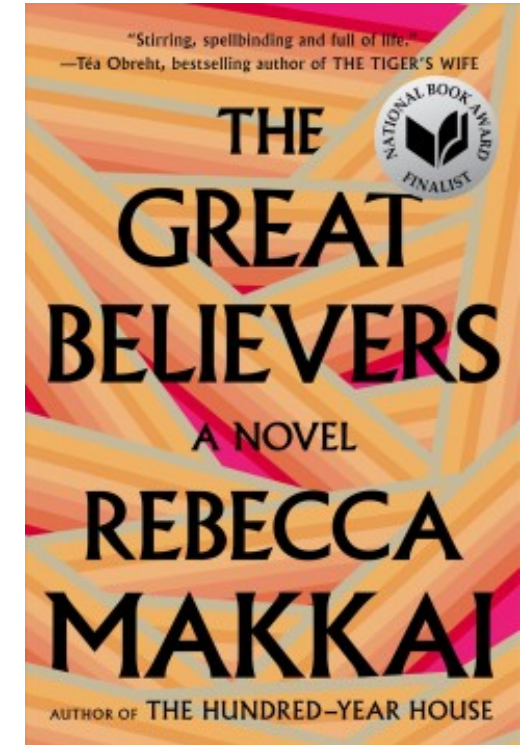
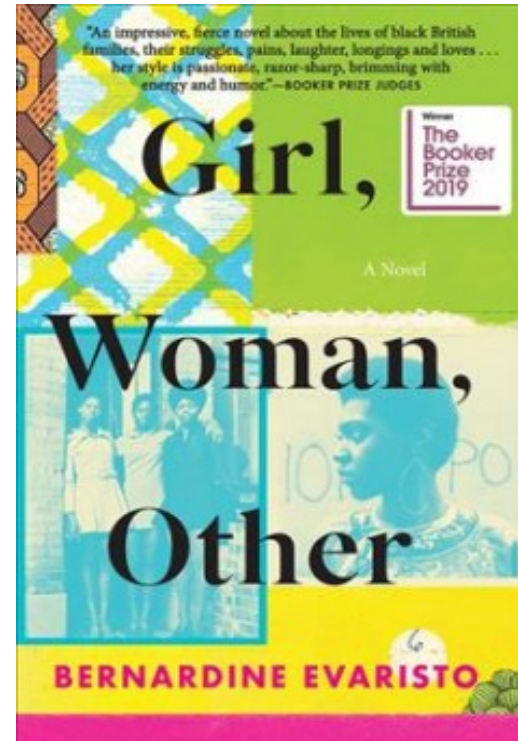


Immigrant experiences



Awards

- National Book Awards
- Pulitzer Prize for Fiction
- The Booker Prize
- Nobel Prize for Literature
- Women's Prize for Fiction
- PEN America Literary Awards



Awards committees in the news

- Nobel Prize for Literature
- National Book Critics Circle – resignations over planned Black Lives Matter statement

<https://time.com/5696202/nobel-prize-literature-2019/>

<https://www.vulture.com/2020/06/national-book-critics-circle-resignations.html>

Awards: Lesser Known Gems

- BCALA, Hurston/Wright Legacy Awards
- Lambda Literary Awards, Stonewall Awards
- Women's Prize for Fiction
- Carnegie Awards / RUSA Awards
- PEN American Literary Awards, PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction
- Goldsmiths
- Booker International, Best Translated Book Awards (Three Percent)
- First Novel Prize, The Story Prize
- Neustadt International Prize, Dayton Literary Peace Prize (fiction), Aspen Words Literary Prize

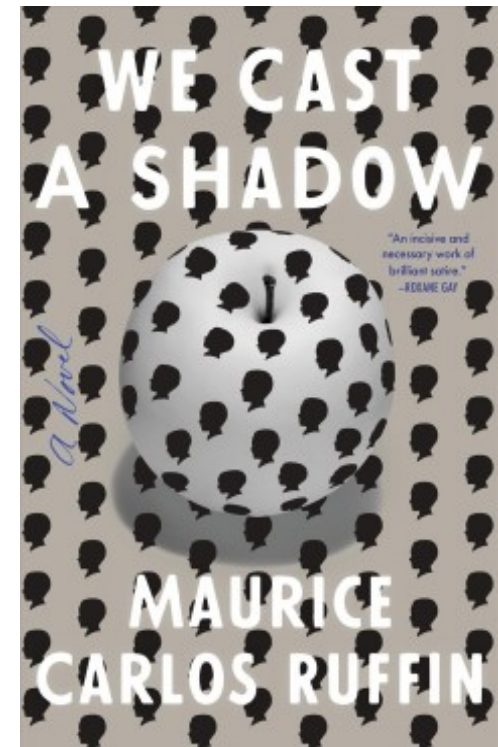
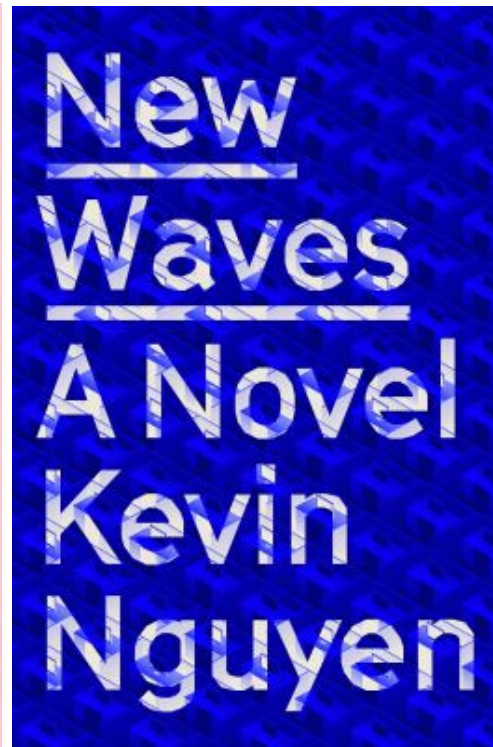
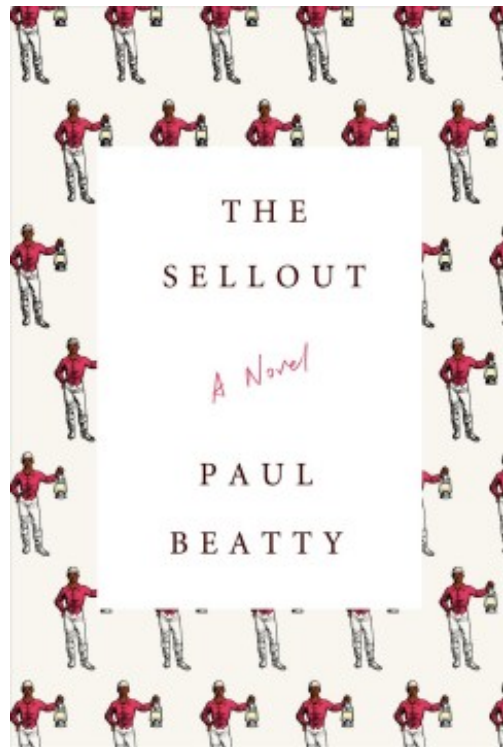
EDI and literary fiction RA

Finding diverse and #OwnVoices titles in NoveList!

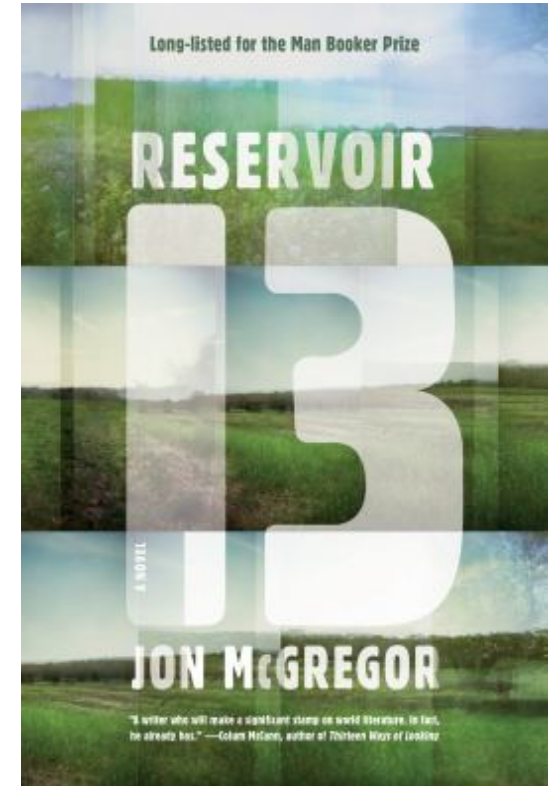
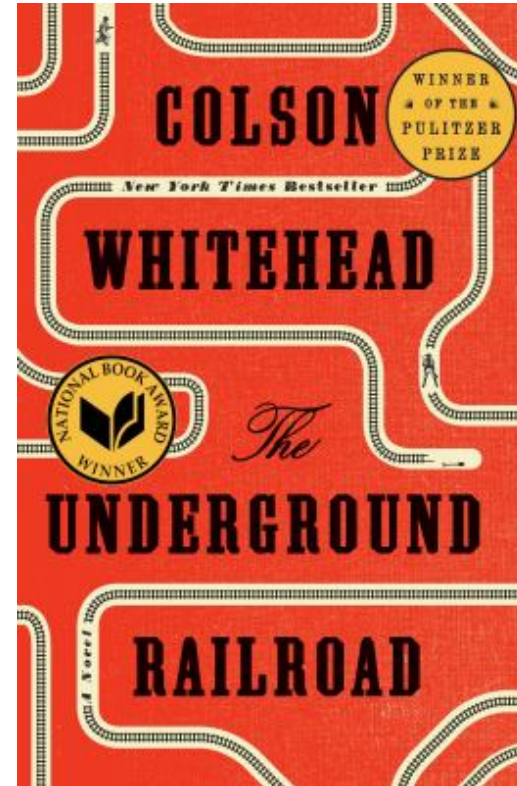
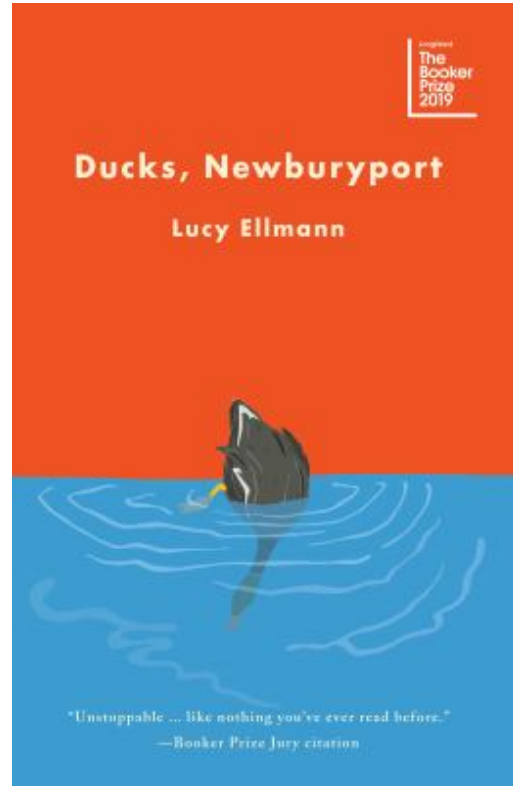
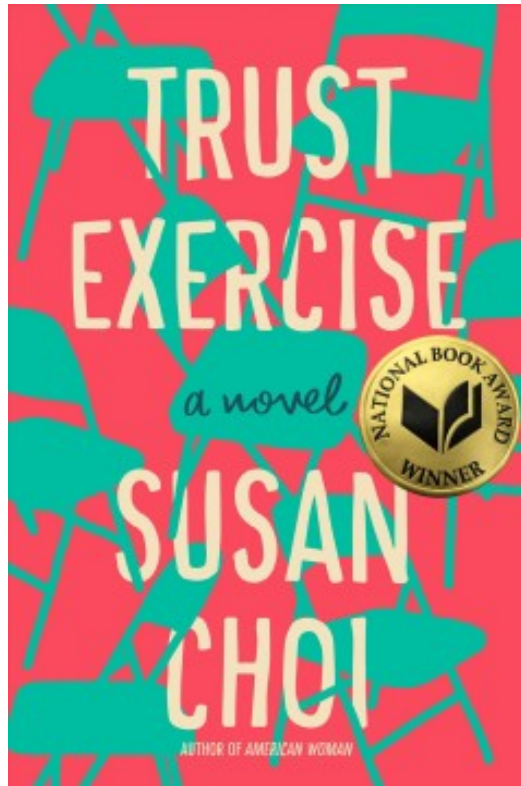
“[A]uthors of **own voices** stories draw on their **personal experiences as part of a marginalized group to depict their fictional characters’ journeys,**” and this may provide “welcome reassurance to readers... unaccustomed to seeing people like themselves at the [narrative] center... or of seeing aspects of their own lives depicted with authenticity and nuance.” ~ Gillian Speace, NoveList

Own voices
Culturally diverse
Religiously diverse
LGBTQIA diverse
Ability diverse

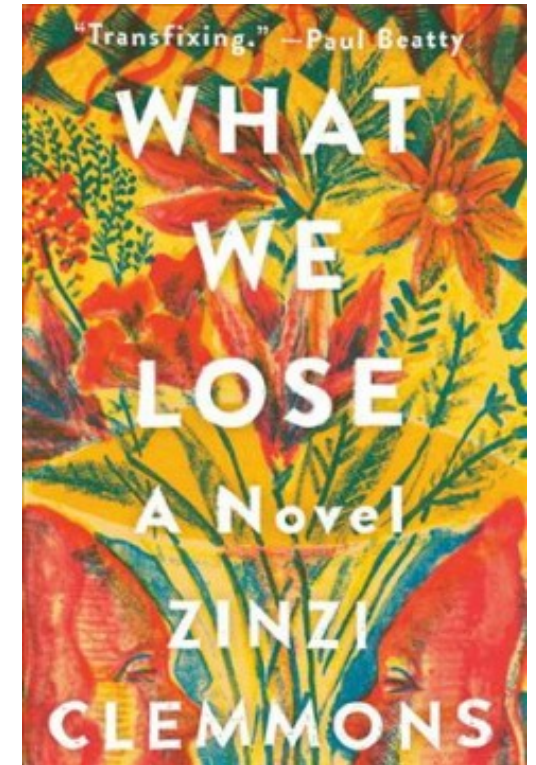
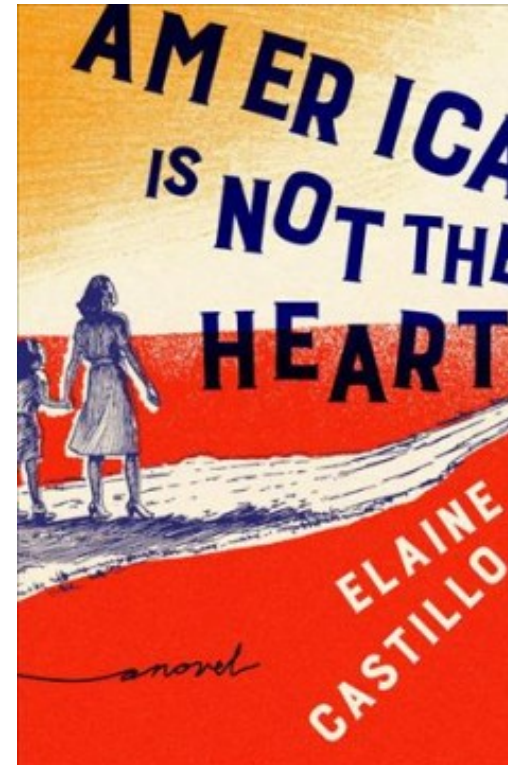
Humor & Satire



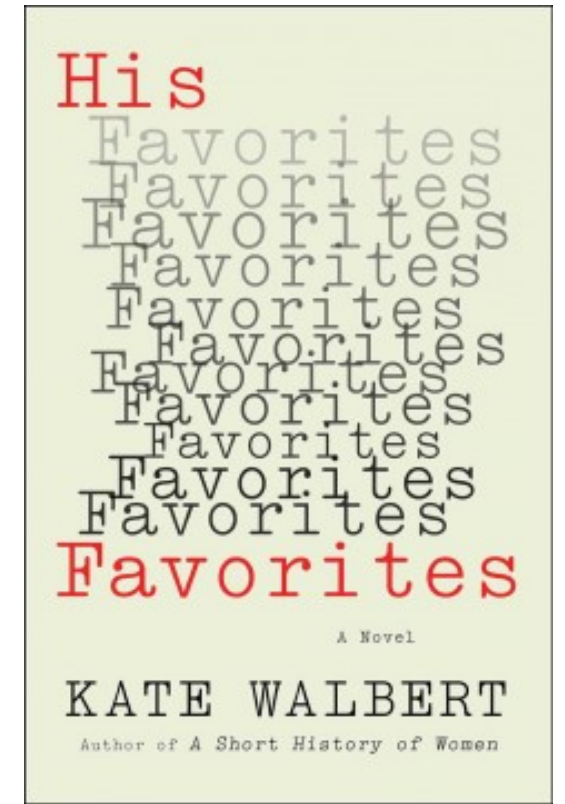
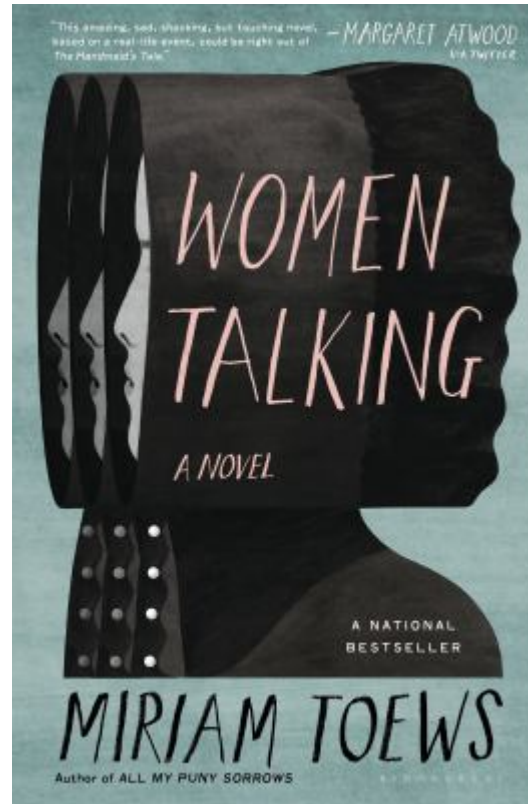
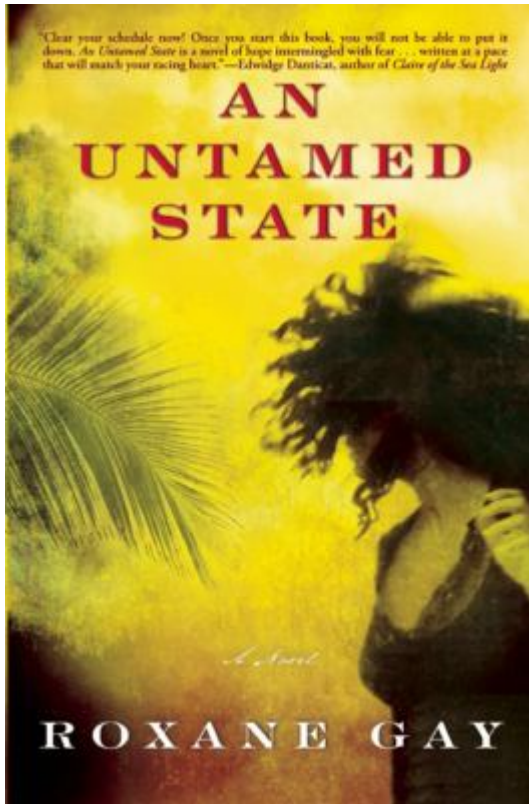
Experimental



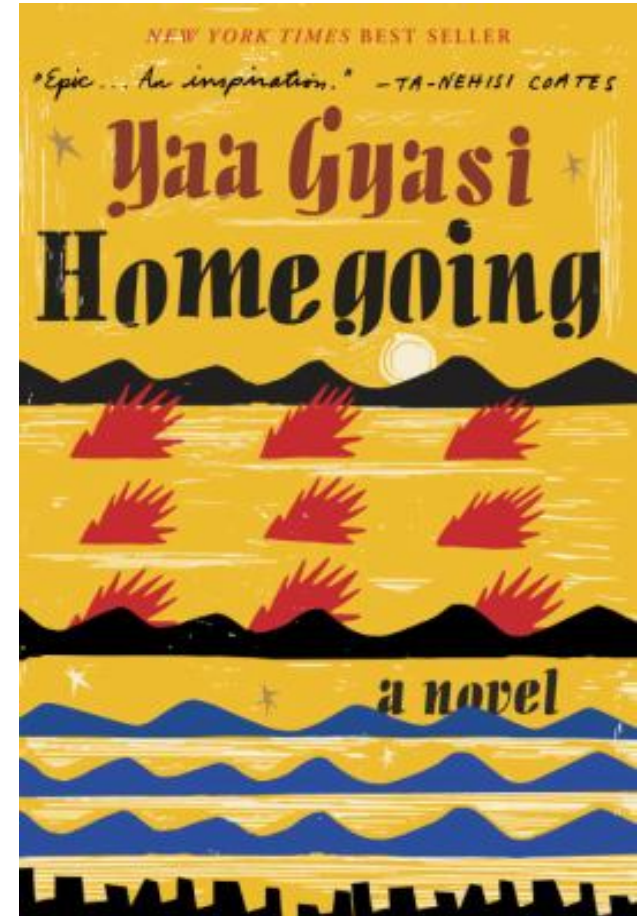
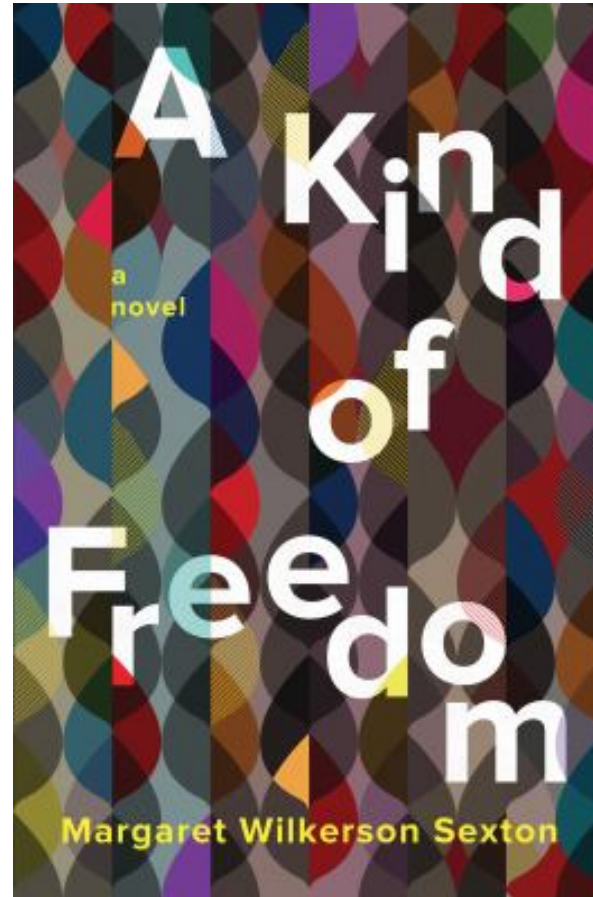
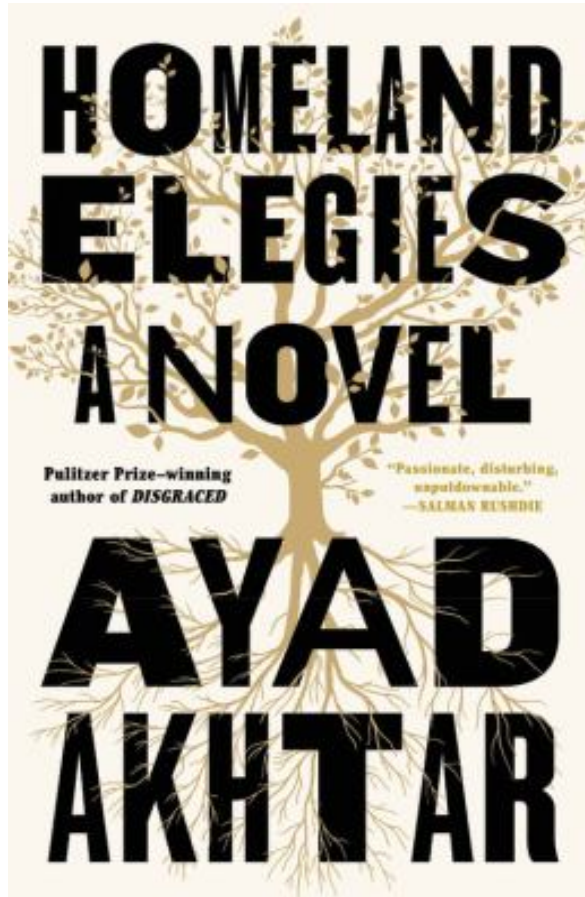
Unusual forms (AP Unconventional)



Facing Sexism / #MeToo

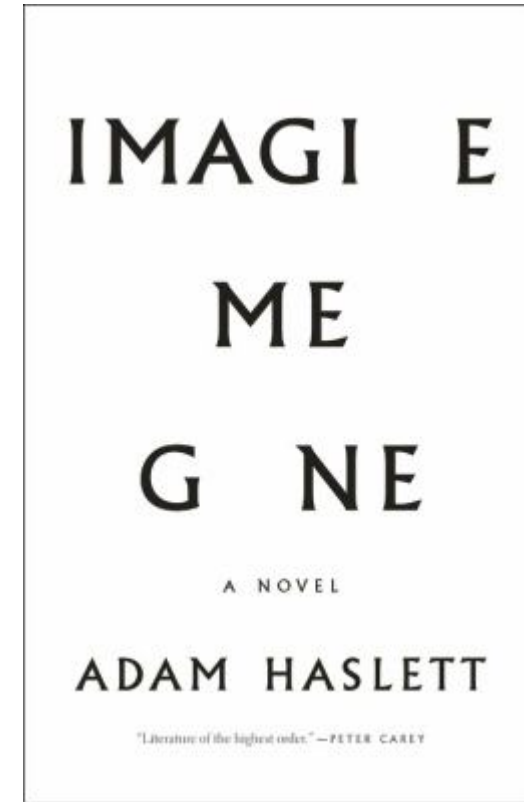
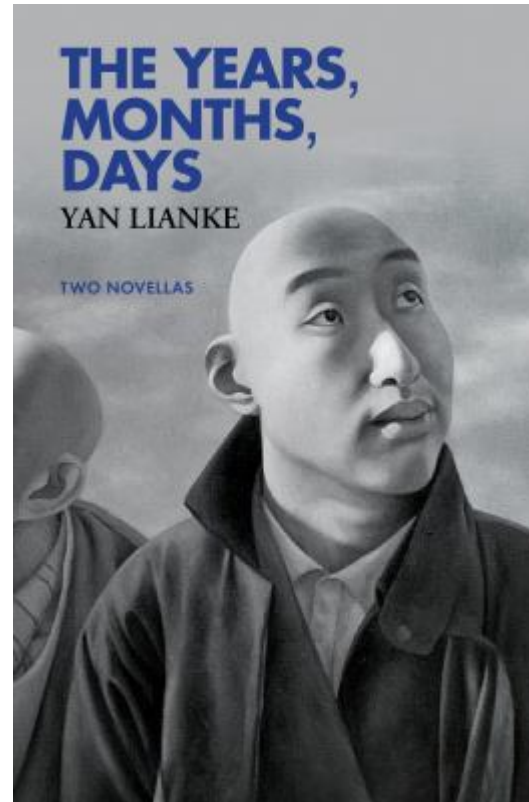
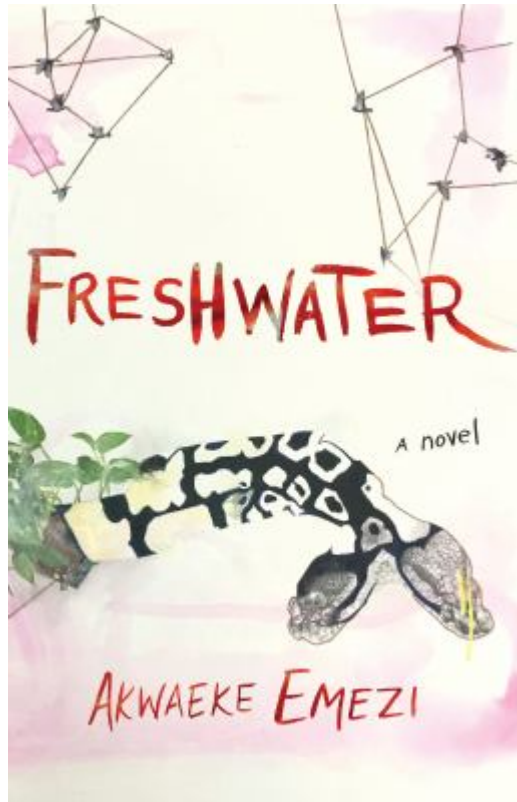


Facing Racism

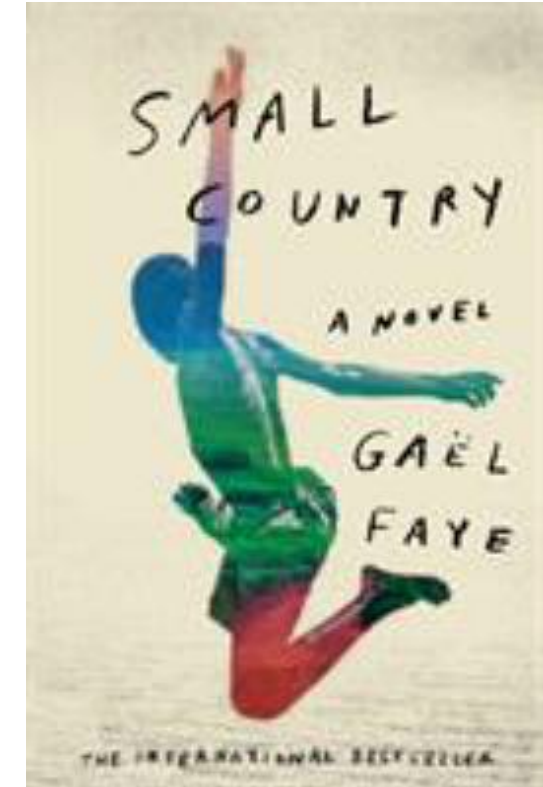
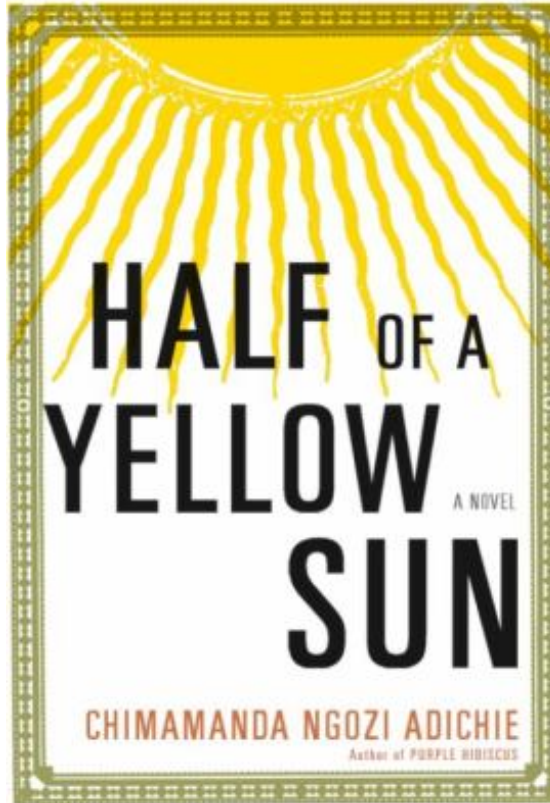


#NoveListConversations

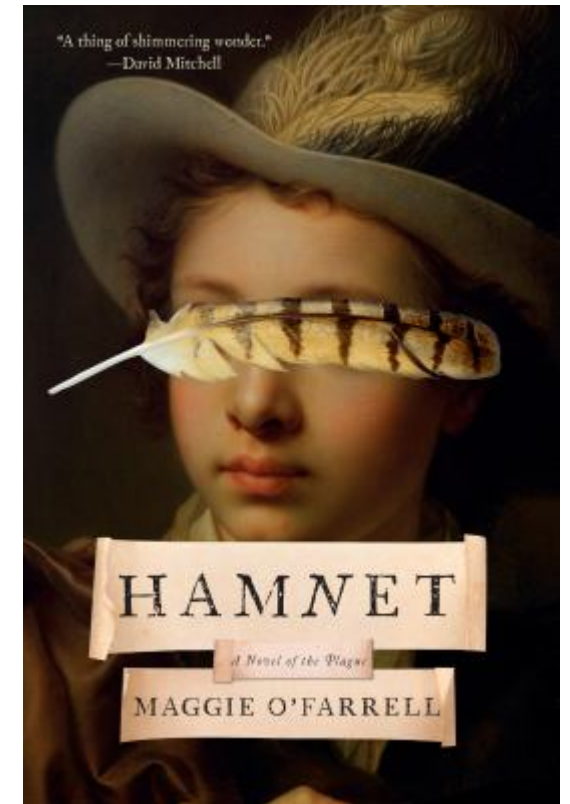
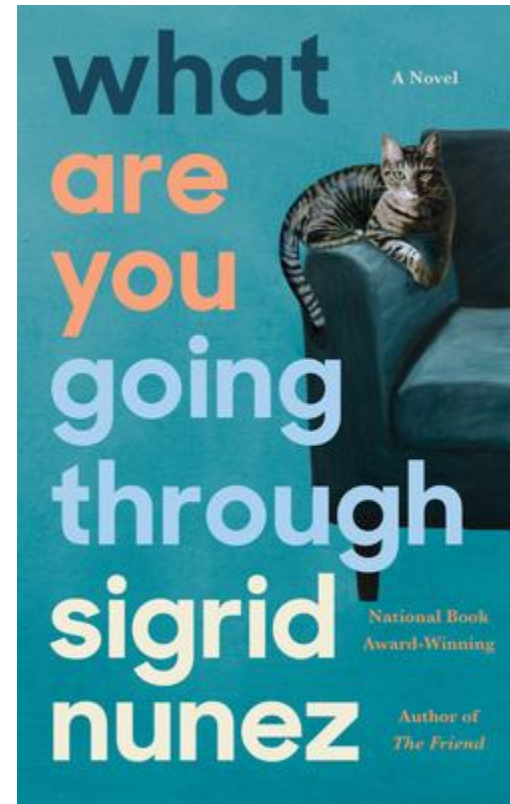
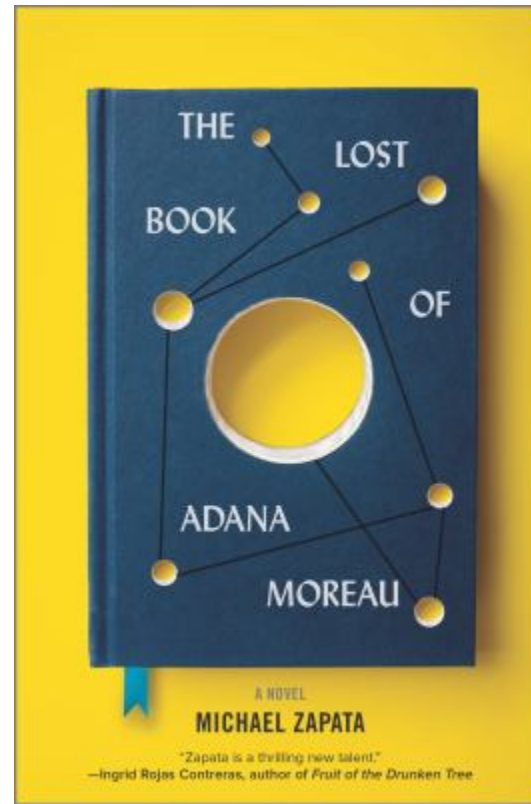
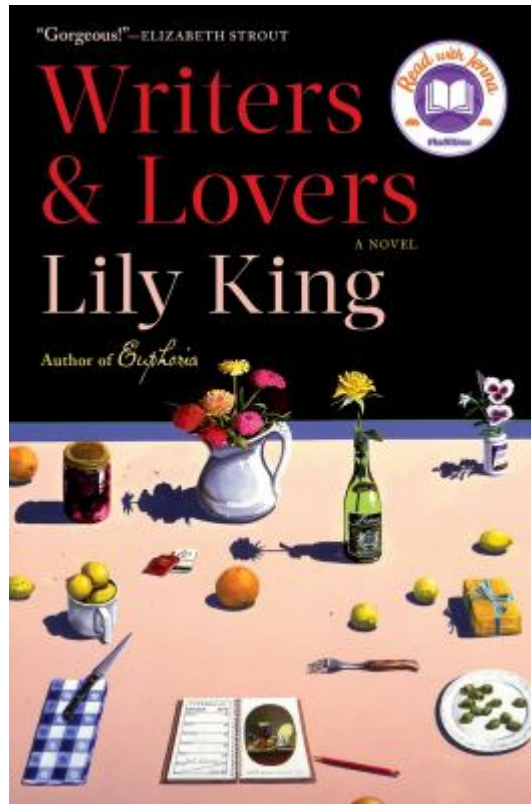
Dealing with Mental Illness / Disability



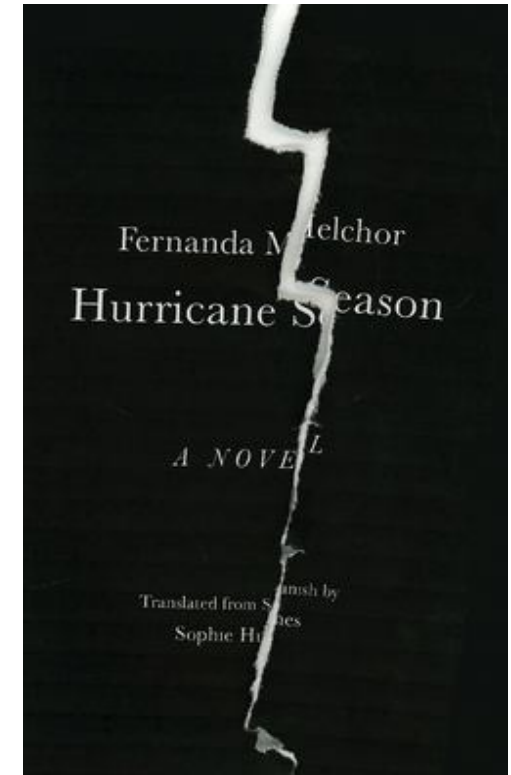
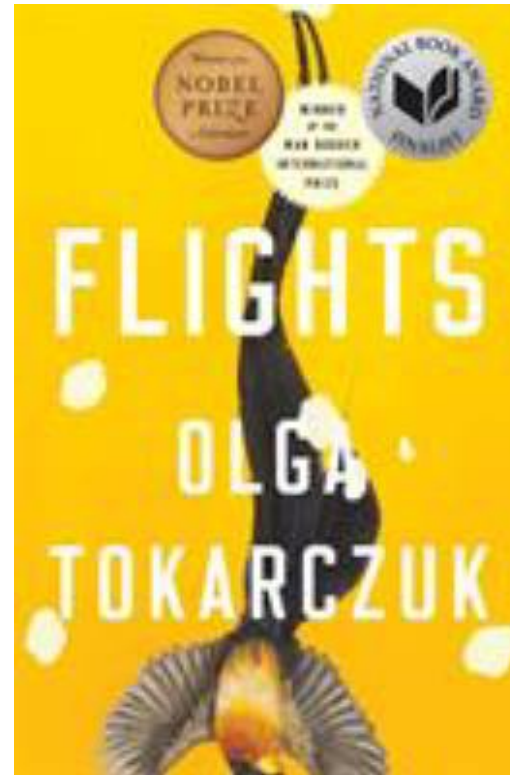
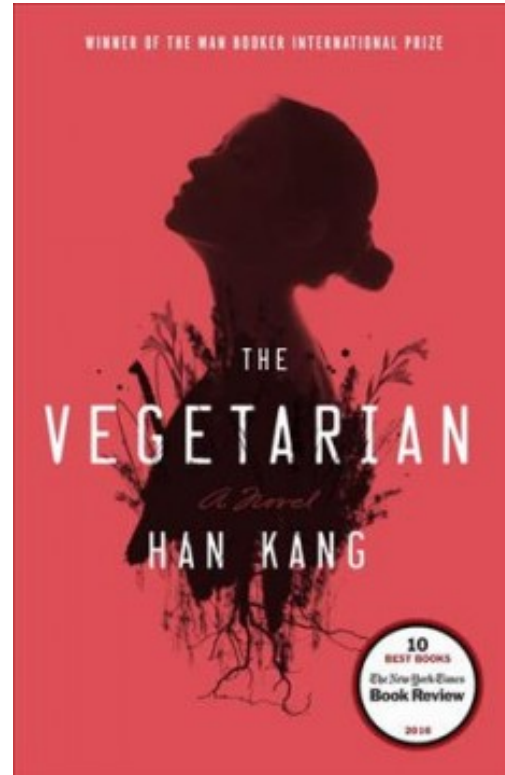
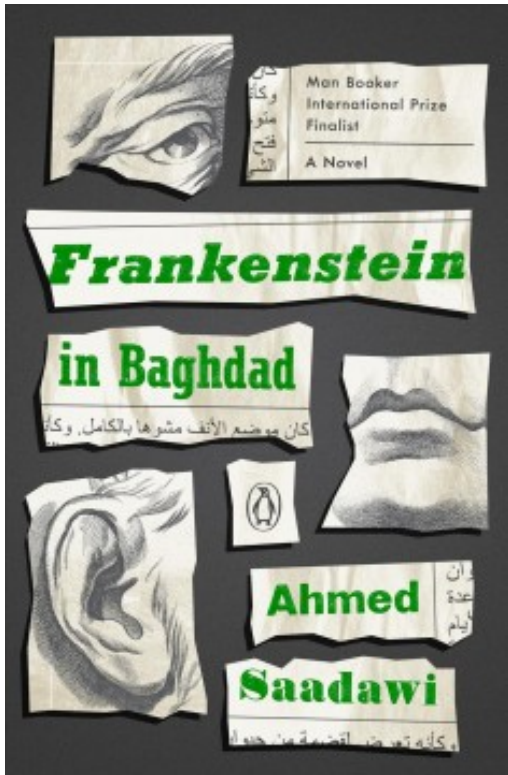
Life During Wartime



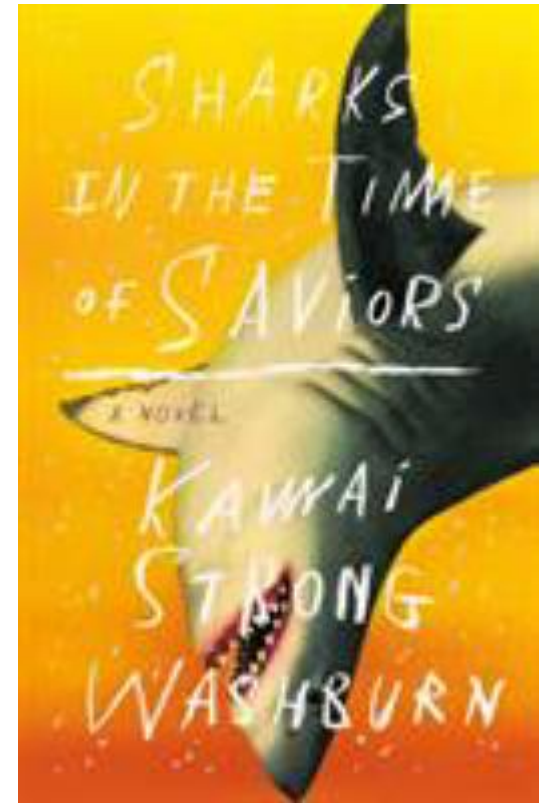
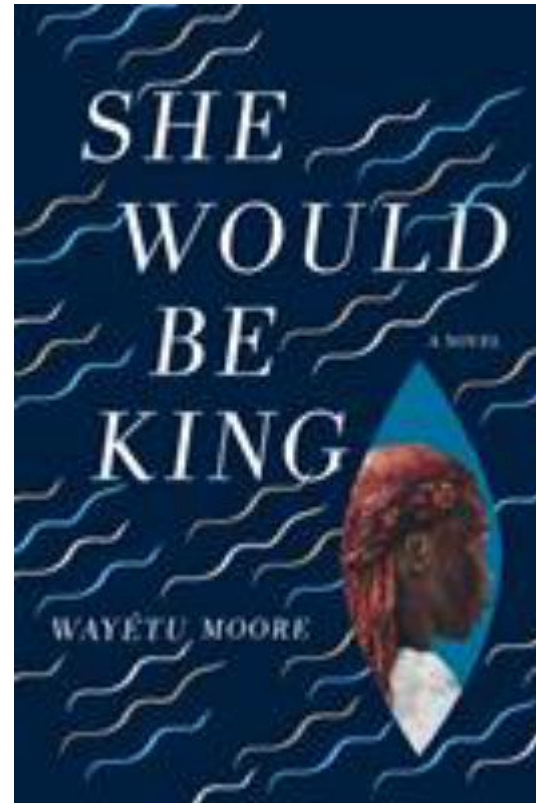
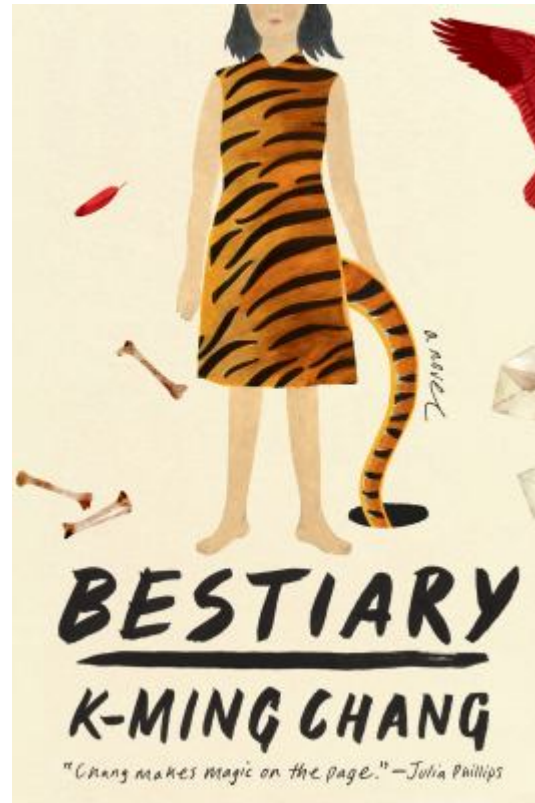
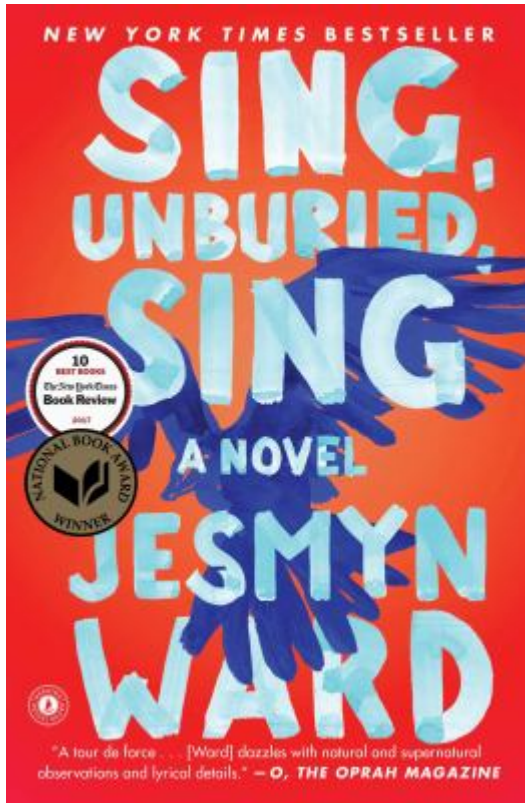
Books About Books (and Writers)



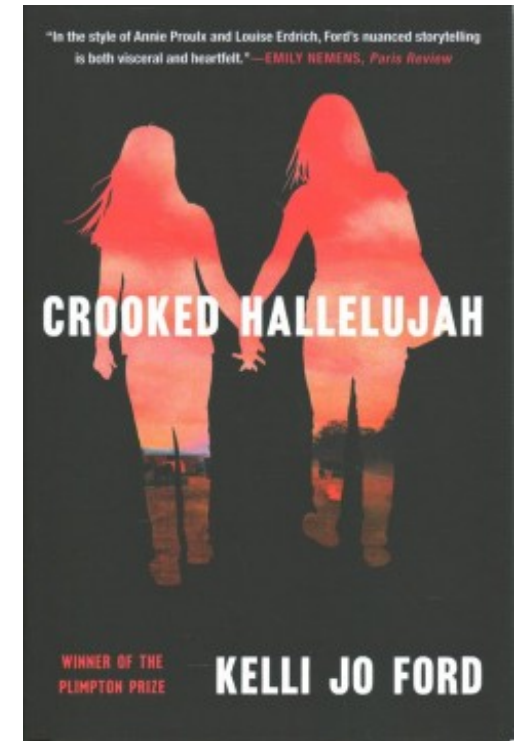
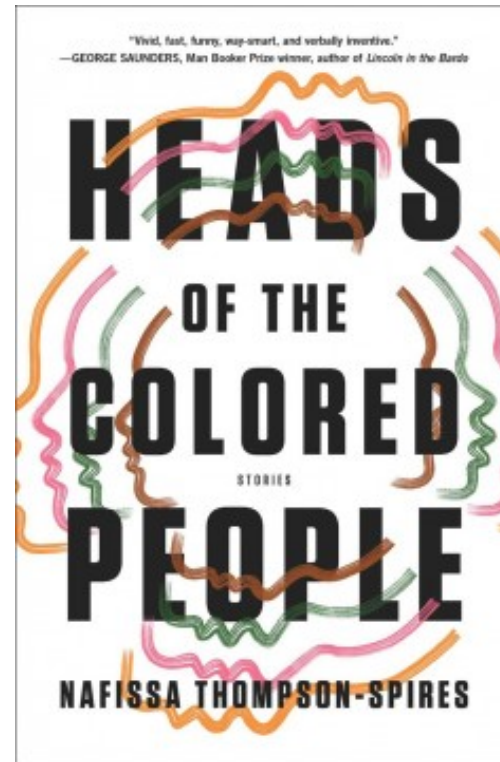
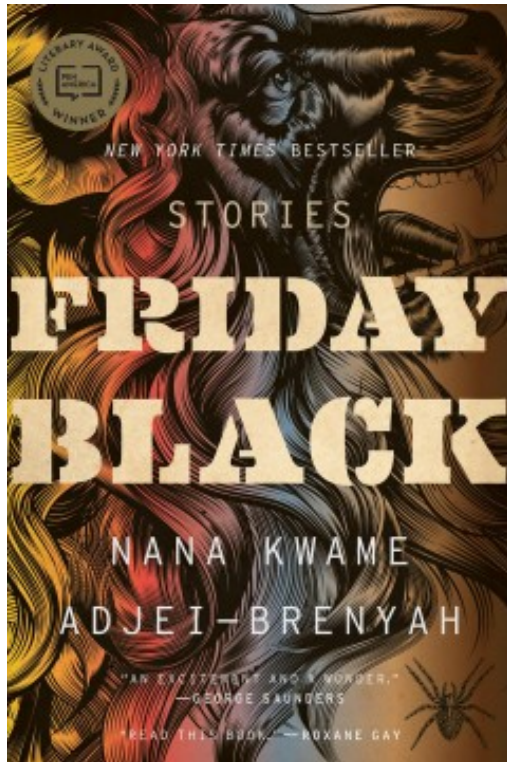
Translations



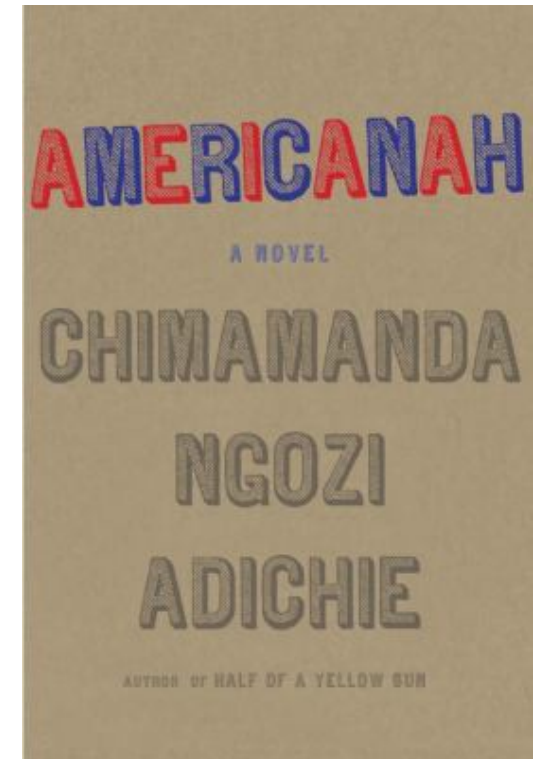
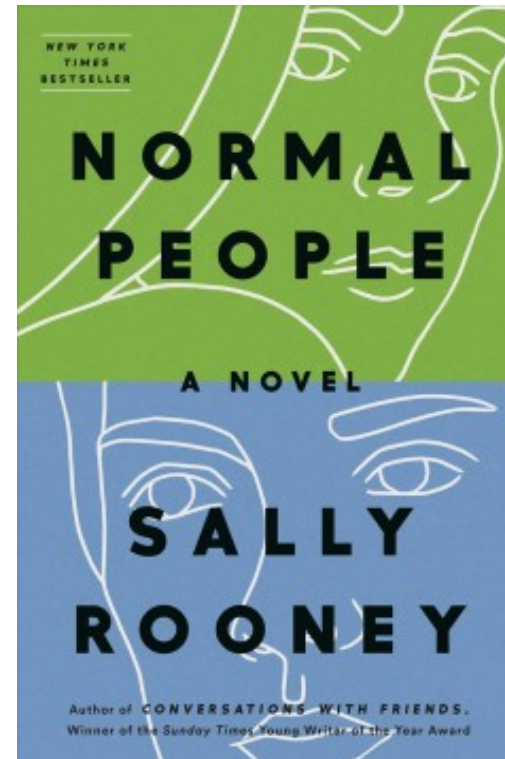
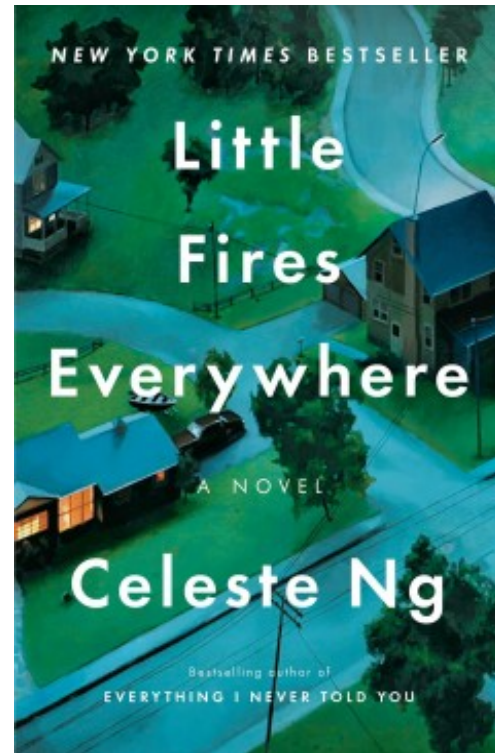
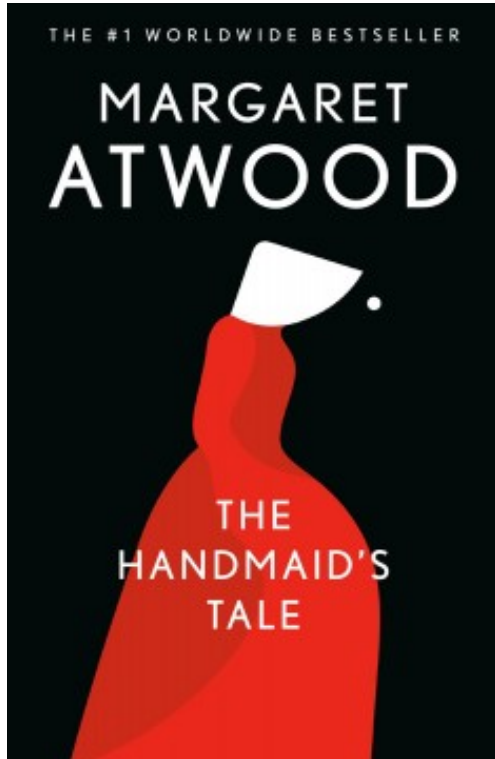
Magical Realism



Short stories



TV series adaptations



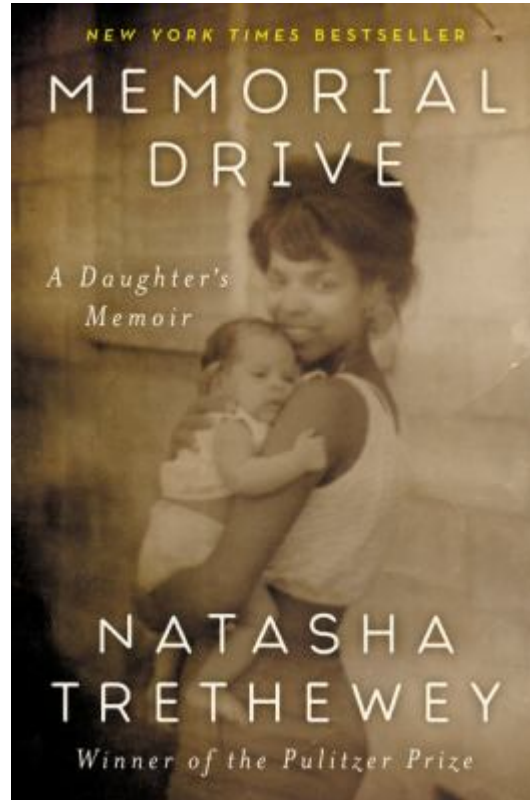
Helping readers

- Seriousness
- Character, Language, Style, Construction
- "Well-written"
- Unlikeable characters
- "New" classics

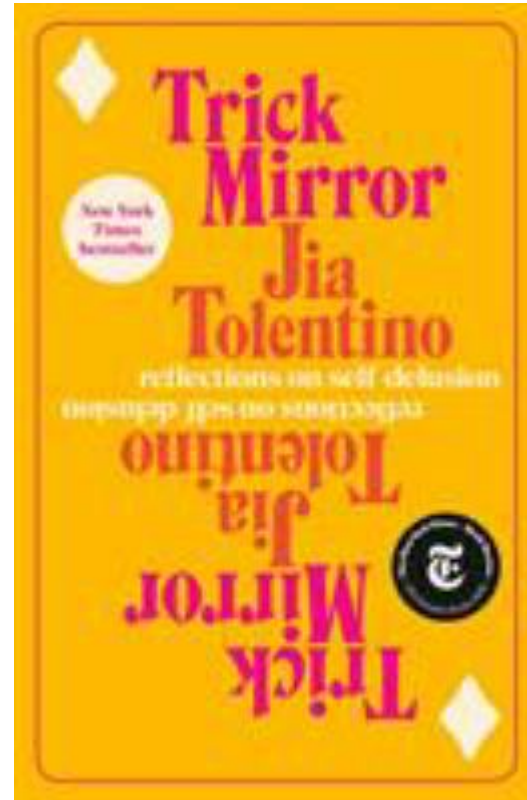
Finding literary fiction with mainstream appeal

- LibraryReads list
- Oprah Book Club
- Today Show Book Club

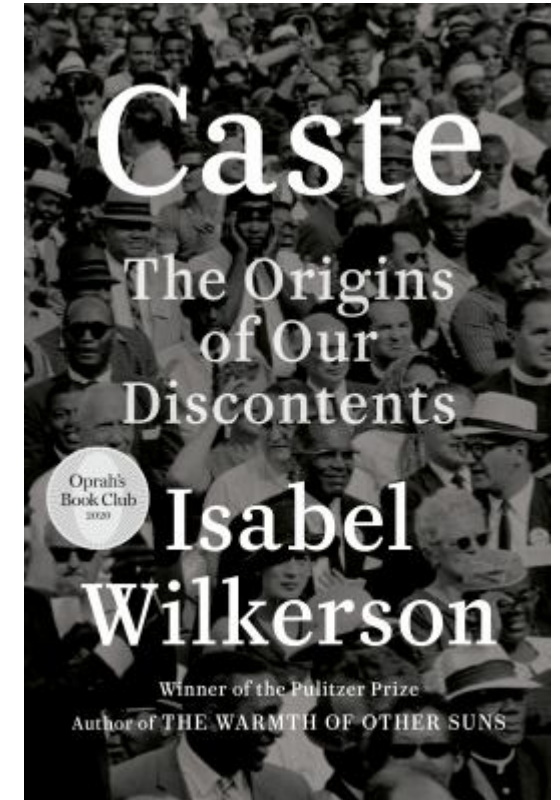
Nonfiction



Biography/Memoir

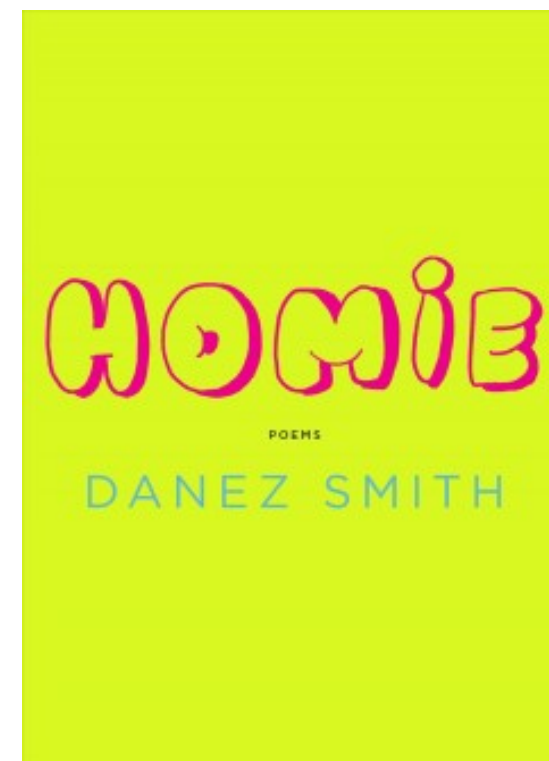
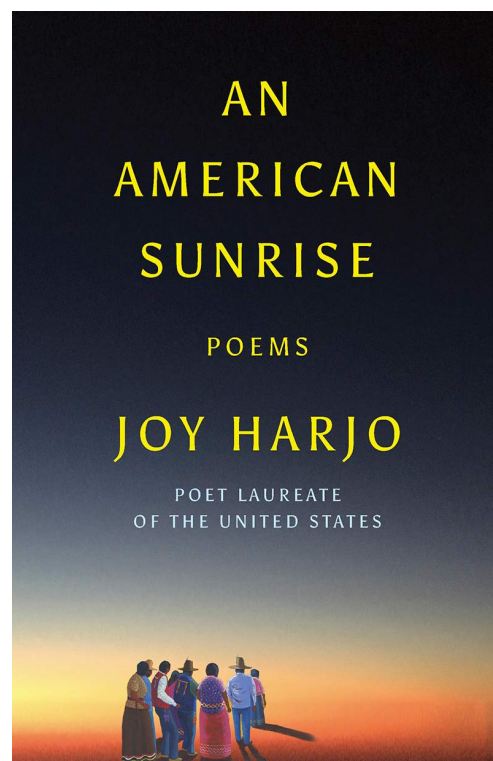
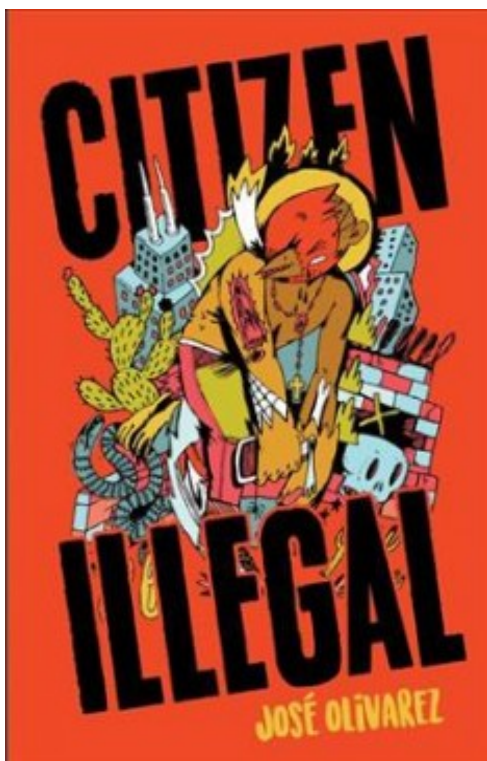


Essays



Social Issues

Poetry

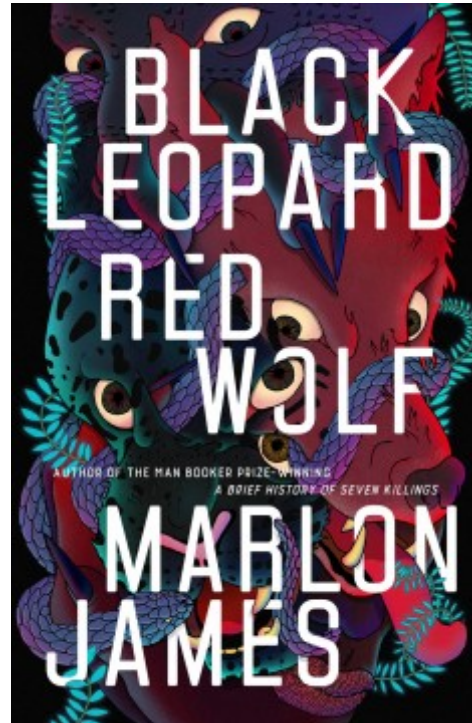


#NoveListConversations

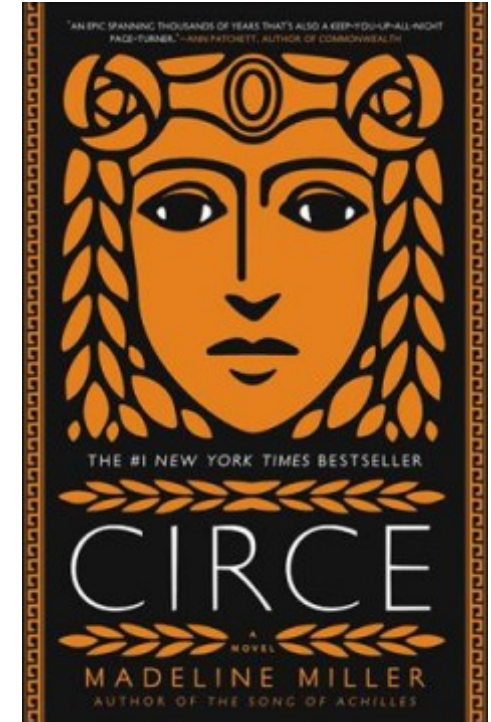
Literary genre blends



Historical Literary Fiction

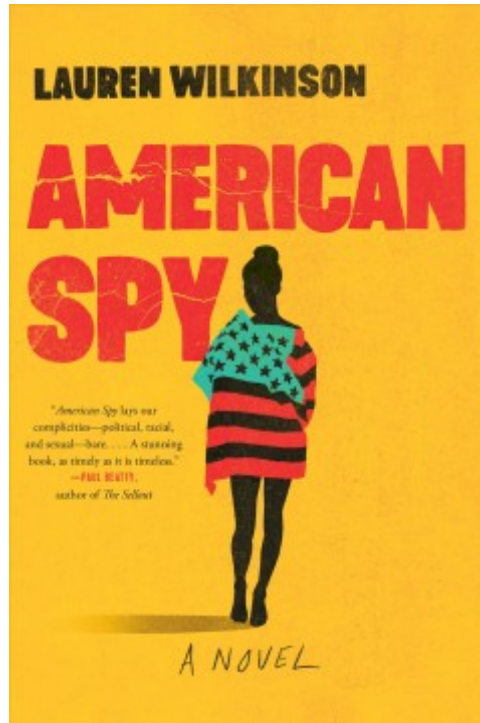


Fantasy



Mythological

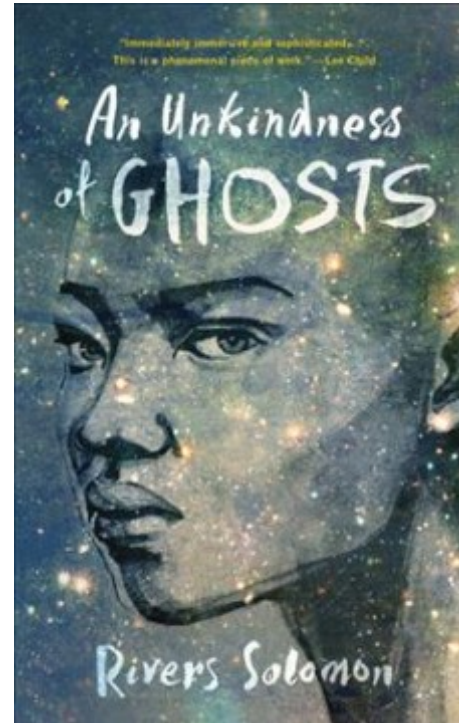
Literary genre blends



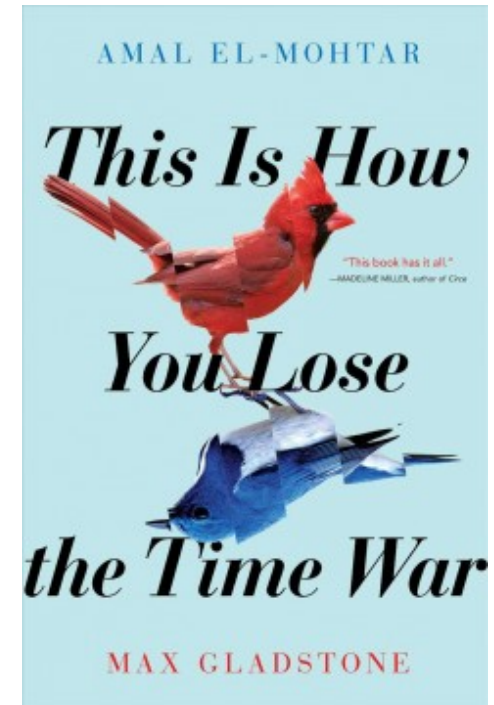
Historical Thriller



Magical Realism



Science Fiction



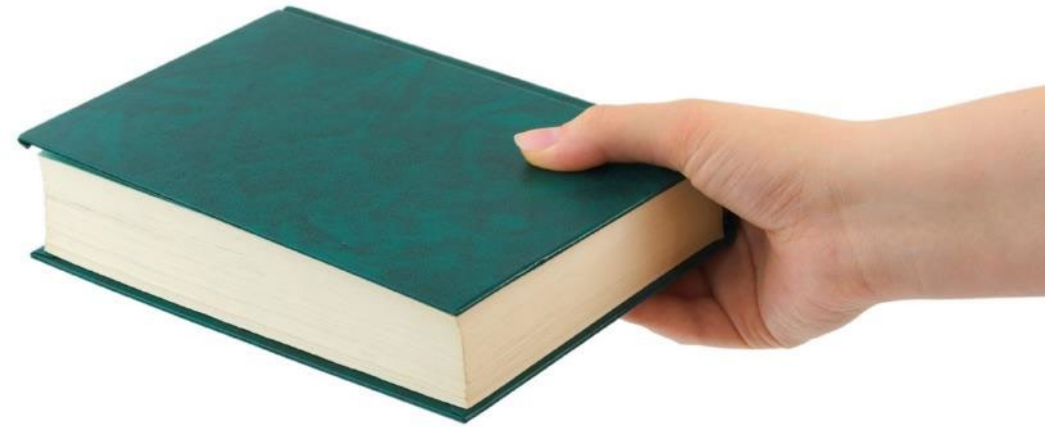
Literary Fiction Starter Pack

Representative of genre

Well-reviewed

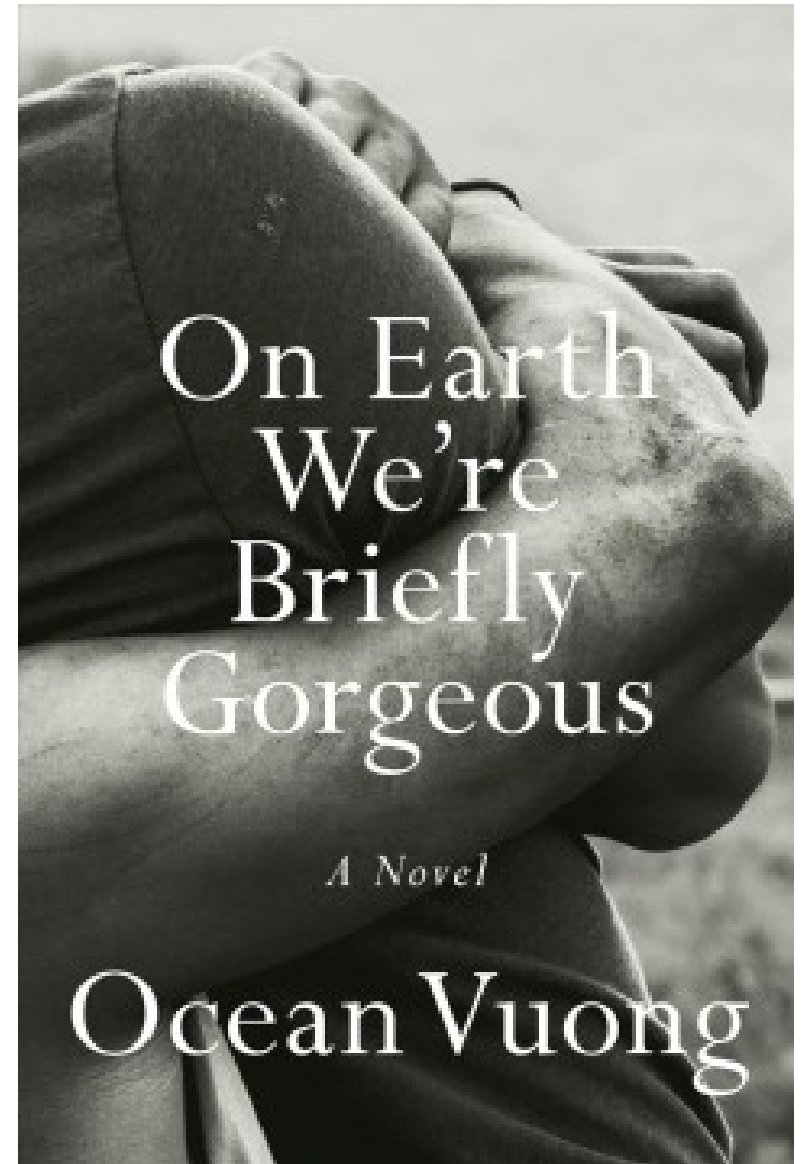
Wide appeal

Stand-alone



On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous by Ocean Vuong (2019)

- Immigrant experiences
- LGBTQIA diverse
- Own voices
- Unconventional
- Haunting
- Lyrical

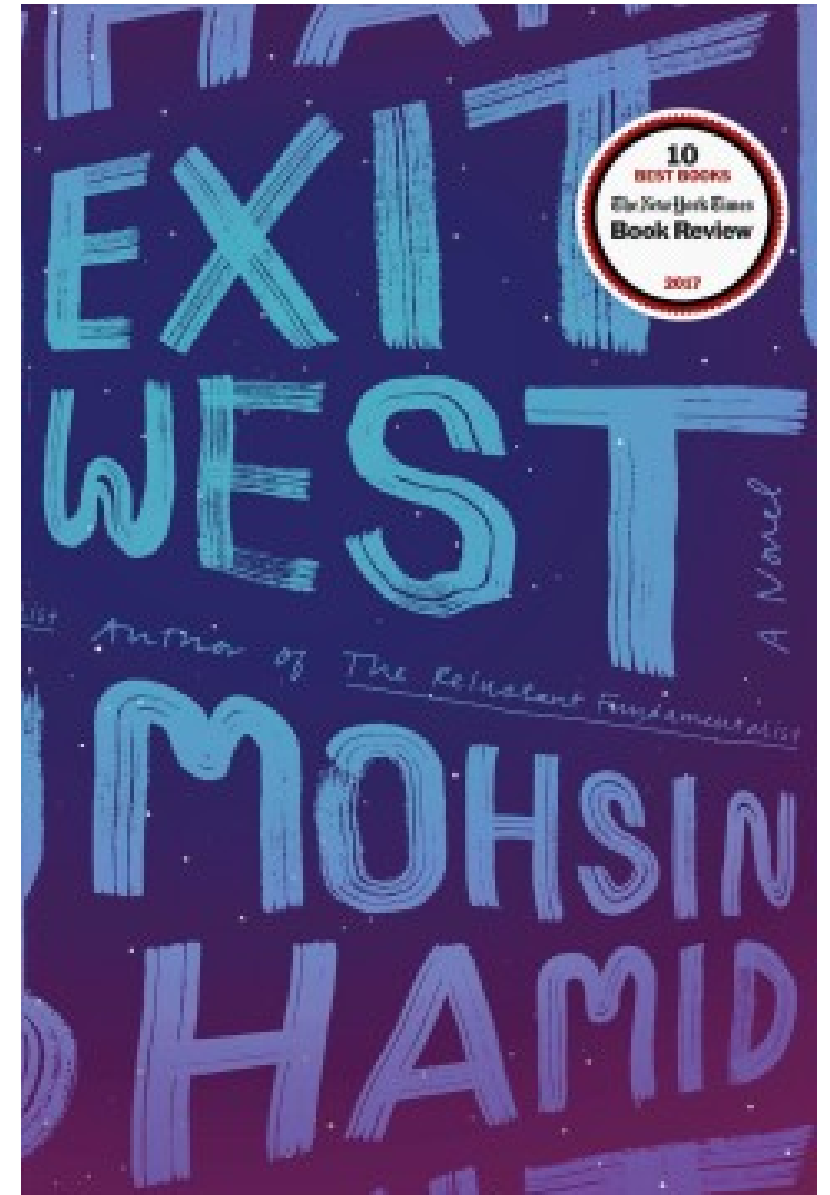


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Exit West

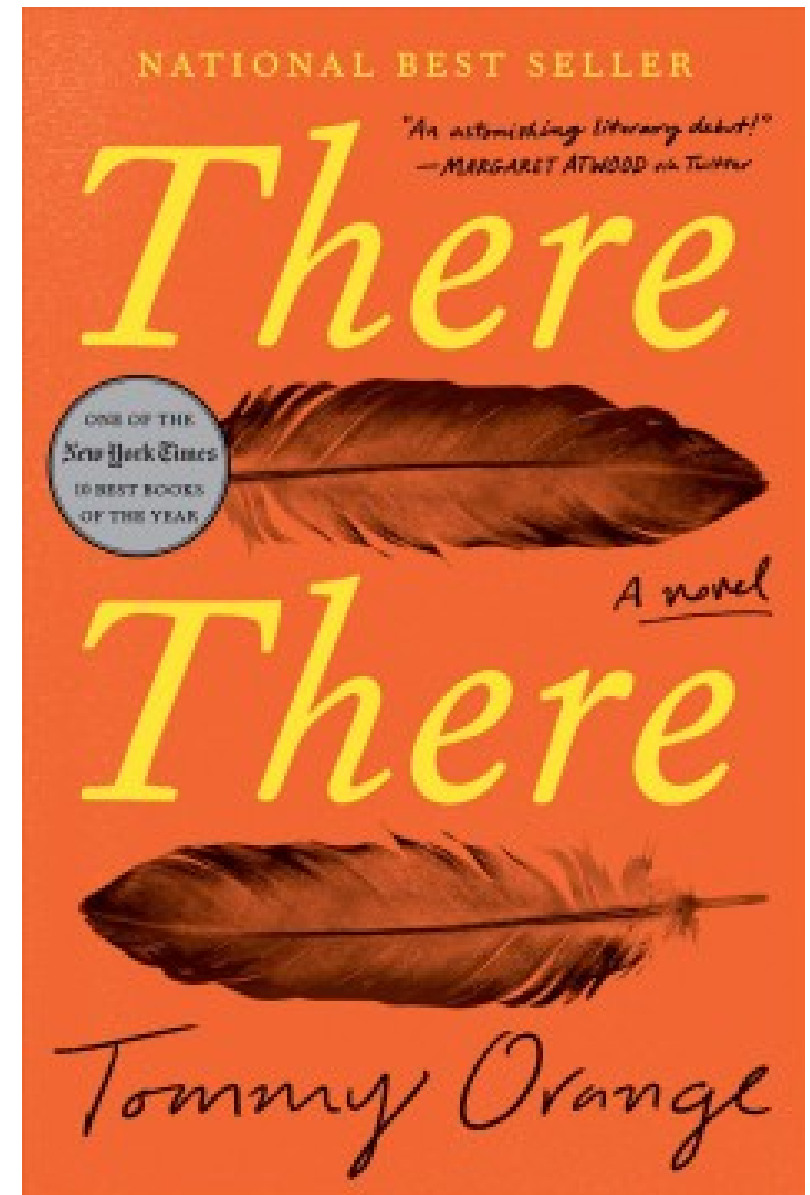
by Mohsin Hamid (2017)

- Immigrant experiences
- Life during wartime
- Love in wartime
- Character driven
- Own Voices
- Bittersweet



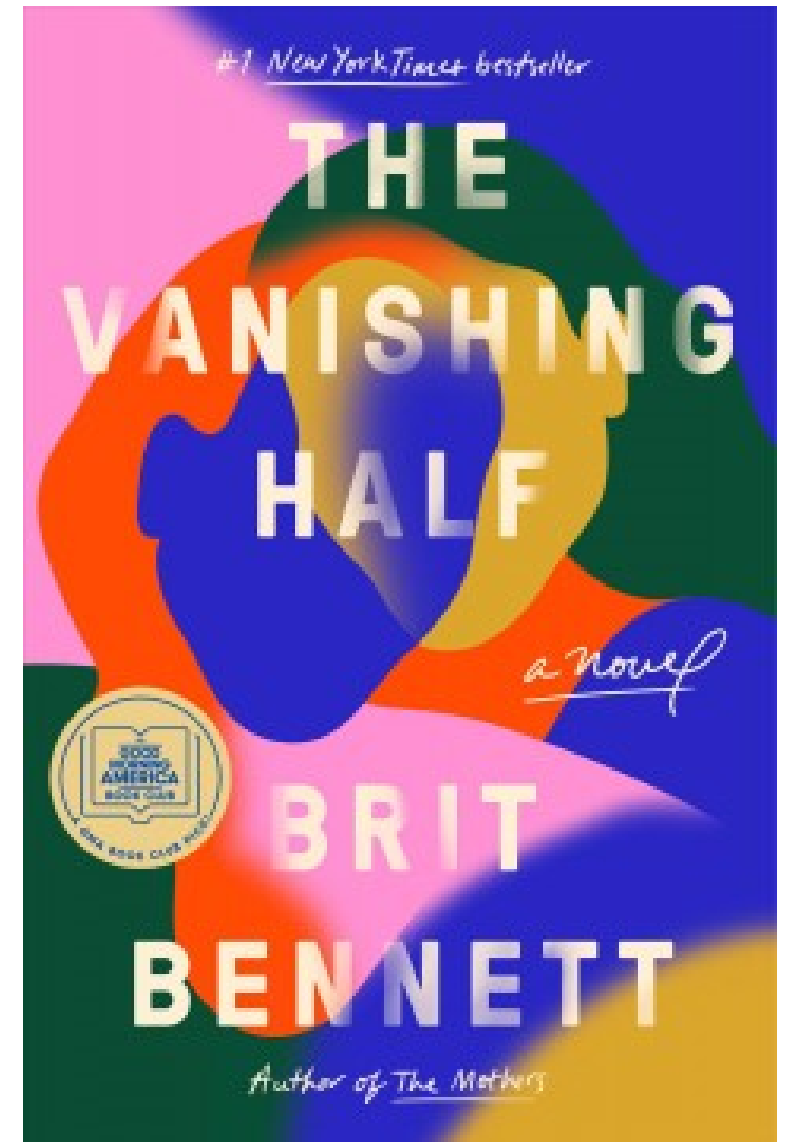
There There by Tommy Orange (2018)

- Multiple perspectives
- Ensemble cast
- Character driven
- Own Voices
- Fast-paced
- Strong sense of place



The Vanishing Half by Brit Bennett

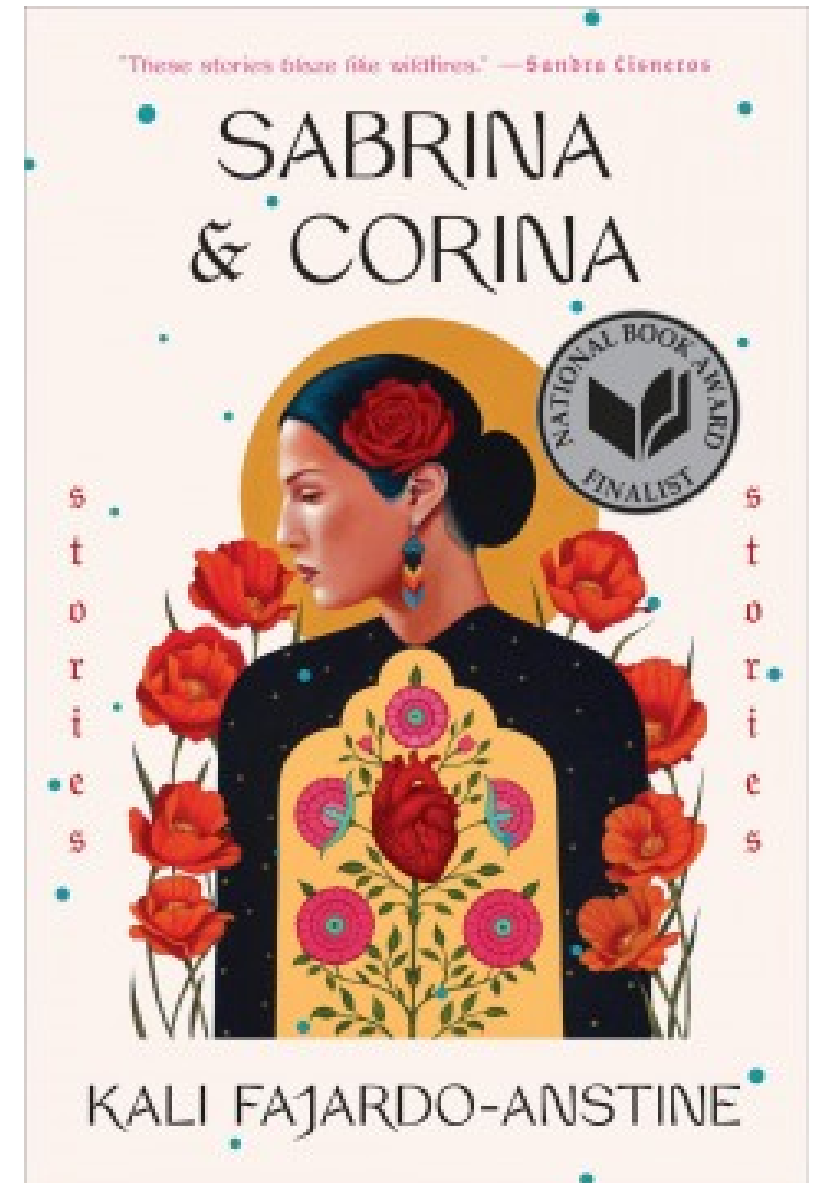
- Character driven
- Own voices
- Engaging
- Stylistically complex



Sabrina & Corina

by Kali Fajardo-Anstine (2019)

- Debut short story collection
- Female relationships
- Own voices – Latina protagonists of indigenous descent
- Hopeful
- Strong sense of place
- Compelling

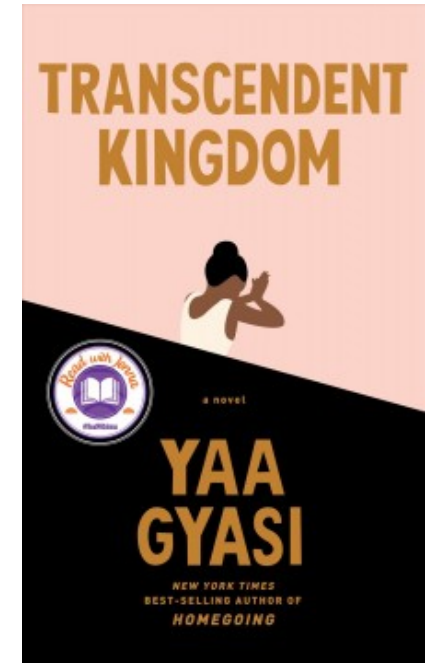
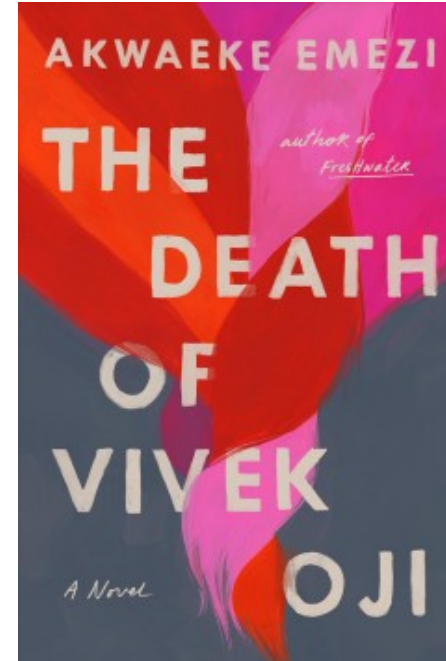
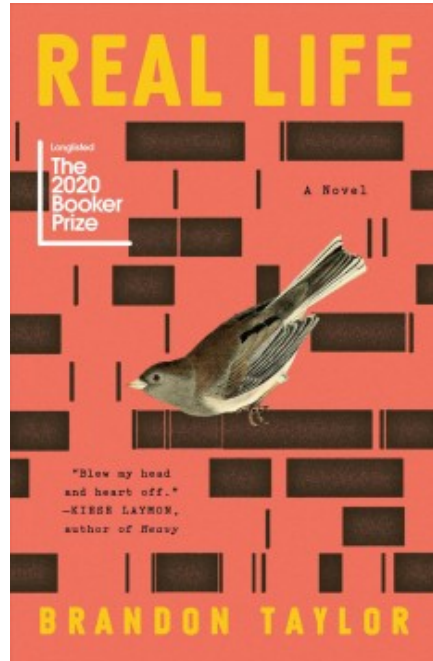


Books we're excited about!

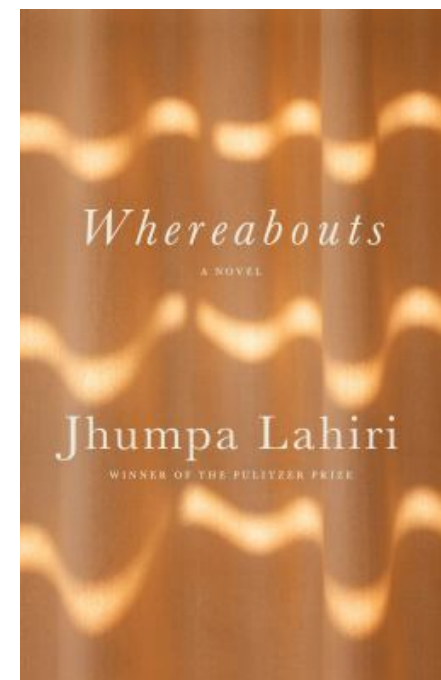
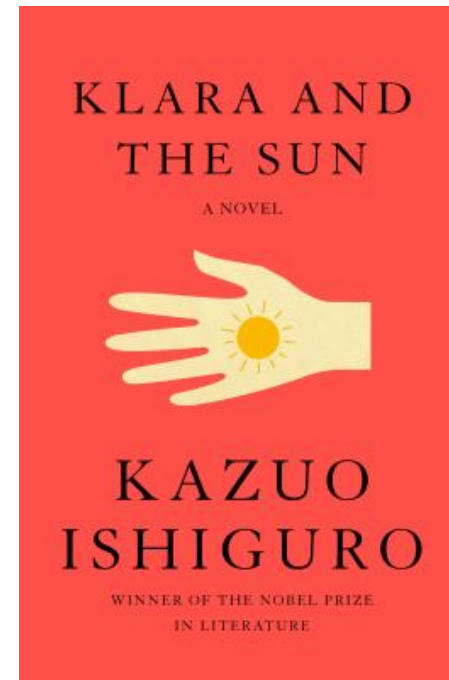
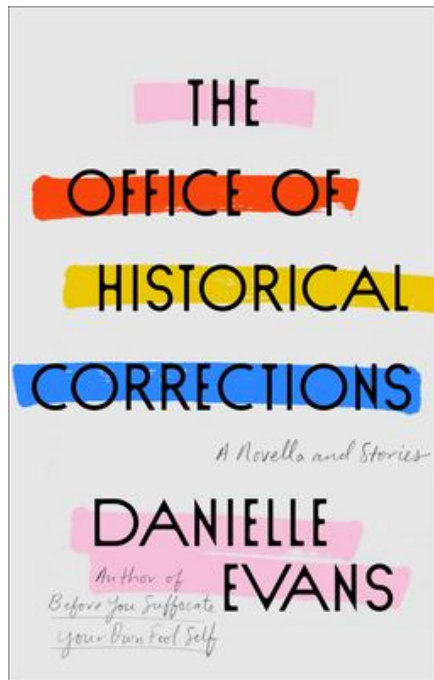
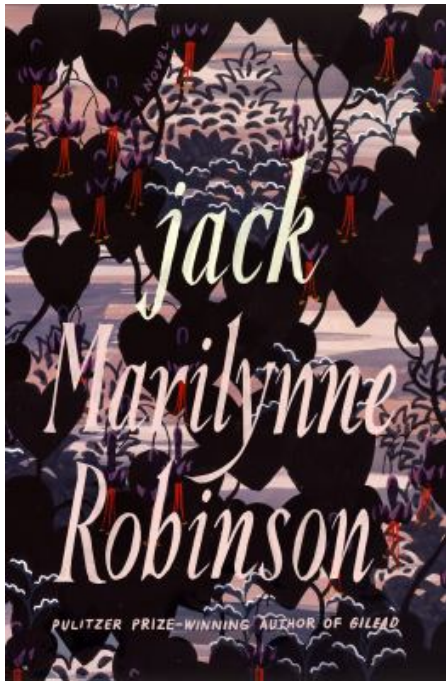


Photo by [Clay Banks](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Books Jessica can't wait to read



Books Stephen can't wait to read



Let's Talk! Q&A



Stephen Sposato

Manager of Content Curation, Chicago Public Library



Jessica Lin

Customer Engagement Specialist, NoveList



Thank you
Learn more at
ebSCOhost.com/novelist & libraryreads.org

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