

Summer Reading Recommendations  
2020-2021

**Fiction**

1. [The Poet X](#) by Elizabeth Acevedo
  - a. Sophomore Xiomara Batista is simultaneously invisible and hyper visible at home, school, and in her largely Dominican community in Harlem—her body is "unhide-able" she tells readers early on, yet she bristles at how others project their desires, insecurities, failures, patriarchal attitudes toward her. Though she is quick to battle and defend herself and her twin brother Xavier, Xiomara's inner life sensitively grapples with these projections and the expectations of her strict, religious mother.
2. [The Testaments](#) by Margaret Atwood
  - a. The sequel to *The Handmaid's Tale*! More than 15 years after the events of *The Handmaid's Tale*, the theocratic regime of the Republic of Gilead maintains its grip on power, but there are signs it is beginning to rot from within. At this crucial moment, the lives of three radically different women converge, with potentially explosive results. Two have grown up as part of the first generation to come of age in the new order. The testimonies of these two young women are joined by a third: Aunt Lydia. Her complex past and uncertain future unfold in surprising and pivotal ways.
3. [With the Fire on High](#) by Elizabeth Acevedo
  - a. Ever since she got pregnant freshman year, Emoni Santiago's life has been about making the tough decisions - doing what has to be done for her daughter and her abuela. The one place she can let all that go is in the kitchen, where she adds a little something magical to everything she cooks, turning her food into straight-up goodness. Even though she dreams of working as a chef after she graduates, Emoni knows that it's not worth her time to pursue the impossible. Yet despite the rules she thinks she has to play by, once Emoni starts cooking, her only choice is to let her talent break free.
4. [The Great Gatsby](#) by F. Scott Fitzgerald
  - a. **Note:** Only for rising seniors as this is a part of the junior-level curriculum, for both U.S. Literature and AP Literature. **NO STUDENTS ENTERING GRADES 9-11 MAY CHOOSE THIS NOVEL.** It's great, but you'll read it in your junior year and we don't want you to be spoiled!
  - b. This 1925 novel, told by late-20's Nick Carraway, is set in Long Island, New York, in the two fictitious towns of West Egg and East Egg. In the summer of 1922, Nick finds himself living next to Jay Gatsby - a mysterious millionaire whose parties are well-known throughout the city. As Nick grows closer to Gatsby and learns about his past, Nick learns that there might be a particular reason or person for which Gatsby is throwing these parties.
5. [Third and Indiana](#) by Steve Lopez
  - a. In the Philadelphia neighborhood known as the Badlands, drug gangs rule absolutely. Each time a life is lost in the carnage of the local drug wars, a boldly drawn chalk outline of a body appears on the street leading up to City hall: a teenaged dealer, a priest, a little girl with a jump rope. Ofelia Santoro rides her bicycle through the dark, decaying streets, looking for her

fourteen-year-old-son, Gabriel. She's afraid of what she might find. Gabriel has fallen in with the most savage of the drug dealers, but now wants to get out—if he can.

6. [The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao](#) by Junot Diaz
  - a. Oscar is a sweet but disastrously overweight ghetto nerd who—from the New Jersey home he shares with his old world mother and rebellious sister—dreams of becoming the Dominican J.R.R. Tolkien and, most of all, finding love. But Oscar may never get what he wants. Blame the fukú—a curse that has haunted Oscar's family for generations, following them on their epic journey from Santo Domingo to the USA. Encapsulating Dominican-American history, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* opens our eyes to an astonishing vision of the contemporary American experience and explores the endless human capacity to persevere—and risk it all—in the name of love.
7. [The Underground Railroad](#) by Colson Whitehead
  - a. Cora is a young slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia. An outcast even among her fellow Africans, she is on the cusp of womanhood—where greater pain awaits. And so when Caesar, a slave who has recently arrived from Virginia, urges her to join him on the Underground Railroad, she seizes the opportunity and escapes with him. In Colson Whitehead's ingenious conception, the Underground Railroad is no mere metaphor: engineers and conductors operate a secret network of actual tracks and tunnels beneath the Southern soil. Cora embarks on a harrowing flight from one state to the next, encountering strange yet familiar iterations of her own world at each stop.
8. [We Are the Wildcats](#) by Siobhan Vivian
  - a. A toxic coach finds himself outplayed by the high school girls on his team in this deeply suspenseful novel, which unspools over twenty-four hours through six diverse perspectives.

Tomorrow, the Wildcat varsity field hockey squad will play the first game of their new season. But at tonight's team sleepover, the girls are all about forging the bonds of trust, loyalty, and friendship necessary to win. Everything hinges on the midnight initiation ceremony—a beloved tradition and the only facet of being a Wildcat that the girls control. Until now. Coach—a handsome former college player revered and feared in equal measure—changes the plan and spins his team on a new adventure. One where they take a rival team's mascot for a joyride, crash a party in their pajamas, break into the high school for the perfect picture.
9. [Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close](#) by Jonathan Safran Foer
  - a. Nine-year-old Oskar Schell has embarked on an urgent, secret mission that will take him through the five boroughs of New York. His goal is to find the lock that matches a mysterious key that belonged to his father, who died in the World Trade Center on the morning of September 11. This seemingly impossible task will bring Oskar into contact with survivors of all sorts on an exhilarating, affecting, often hilarious, and ultimately healing journey.
10. [Aristotle and Dante Discover the Universe](#) by Benjamin Alire Saenz
  - a. Aristotle is an angry teen with a brother in prison. Dante is a know-it-all who has an unusual way of looking at the world. When the two meet at the swimming pool, they seem to have nothing in common. But as the loners start

spending time together, they discover that they share a special friendship—the kind that changes lives and lasts a lifetime. And it is through this friendship that Ari and Dante will learn the most important truths about themselves and the kind of people they want to be.

11. [Circe](#) by Madeline Miller

- a. In the house of Helios, god of the sun and mightiest of the Titans, a daughter is born. But Circe is a strange child -- not powerful, like her father, nor viciously alluring like her mother. Turning to the world of mortals for companionship, she discovers that she does possess power -- the power of witchcraft, which can transform rivals into monsters and menace the gods themselves. Threatened, Zeus banishes her to a deserted island, where she hones her occult craft, tames wild beasts and crosses paths with many of the most famous figures in all of mythology, including the Minotaur, Daedalus and his doomed son Icarus, the murderous Medea, and, of course, wily Odysseus. But there is danger, too, for a woman who stands alone, and Circe unwittingly draws the wrath of both men and gods, ultimately finding herself pitted against one of the most terrifying and vengeful of the Olympians. To protect what she loves most, Circe must summon all her strength and choose, once and for all, whether she belongs with the gods she is born from, or the mortals she has come to love.

12. [The Secret Life of Bees](#) by Sue Monk Kidd

- a. Lily has grown up believing she accidentally killed her mother when she was four. She not only has her own memory of holding the gun, but her father's account of the event. Now fourteen, she yearns for her mother, and for forgiveness. Living on a peach farm in South Carolina with her father, she has only one friend: Rosaleen, a black servant whose sharp exterior hides a tender heart. South Carolina in the sixties is a place where segregation is still considered a cause worth fighting for. When racial tension explodes one summer afternoon, and Rosaleen is arrested and beaten, Lily is compelled to act.

13. [The Things They Carried](#) by Tim O'Brien

- a. Depicting the men of Alpha Company—Jimmy Cross, Henry Dobbins, Rat Kiley, Mitchell Sanders, Norman Bowker, Kiowa, and the character Tim O'Brien, who survived his tour in Vietnam to become a father and writer at the age of forty-three—the stories in *The Things They Carried* opened our eyes to the nature of war in a way we will never forget. It is taught everywhere, from high school classrooms to graduate seminars in creative writing, and in the decades since its publication it has never failed to challenge our perceptions of fact and fiction, war and peace, and courage, longing, and fear.

14. [Turtles All the Way Down](#) by John Green

- a. Aza Holmes, who suffers from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), never intended to pursue the disappearance of fugitive billionaire Russell Pickett, but there's a hundred-thousand-dollar reward at stake and her Best and Most Fearless Friend, Daisy, is eager to investigate. So together, they navigate the short distance and broad divides that separate them from Pickett's son Davis.

Aza is trying. She is trying to be a good daughter, a good friend, a good student, and maybe even a good detective, while also living within the ever-tightening spiral of her own thoughts.

15. [Long Way Down](#) by Jason Reynolds

- a. Or, you can call it a gun. That's what fifteen-year-old Will has shoved in the back waistband of his jeans. See, his brother Shawn was just murdered. And Will knows the rules. No crying. No snitching. Revenge. That's where Will's now heading, with that gun shoved in the back waistband of his jeans, the gun that was his brother's gun. He gets on the elevator, seventh floor, stoked. He knows who he's after. Or does he?

16. [Little Fires Everywhere](#) by Celeste Ng

- a. In Shaker Heights, a placid, progressive suburb of Cleveland, everything is planned—from the layout of the winding roads, to the colors of the houses, to the successful lives its residents will go on to lead. And no one embodies this spirit more than Elena Richardson, whose guiding principle is playing by the rules.

Enter Mia Warren—an enigmatic artist and single mother—who arrives in this idyllic bubble with her teenaged daughter Pearl, and rents a house from the Richardsons. Soon Mia and Pearl become more than tenants: all four Richardson children are drawn to the mother-daughter pair. But Mia carries with her a mysterious past and a disregard for the status quo that threatens to upend this carefully ordered community.

When old family friends of the Richardsons attempt to adopt a Chinese-American baby, a custody battle erupts that dramatically divides the town—and puts Mia and Elena on opposing sides. Suspicious of Mia and her motives, Elena is determined to uncover the secrets in Mia's past. But her obsession will come at unexpected and devastating costs.

17. [There There](#) by Tommy Orange

- a. Tommy Orange's wondrous and shattering novel follows twelve characters from Native communities: all traveling to the Big Oakland Powwow, all connected to one another in ways they may not yet realize. Among them is Jacquie Red Feather, newly sober and trying to make it back to the family she left behind. Dene Oxendene, pulling his life together after his uncle's death and working at the powwow to honor his memory. Fourteen-year-old Orvil, coming to perform traditional dance for the very first time. Together, this chorus of voices tells of the plight of the urban Native American—grappling with a complex and painful history, with an inheritance of beauty and spirituality, with communion and sacrifice and heroism. Hailed as an instant classic, *There There* is at once poignant and unflinching, utterly contemporary and truly unforgettable.

18. [The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven](#) by Sherman Alexie

- a. Vividly weaving memory, fantasy, and stark reality to paint a portrait of life in and around the Spokane Indian reservation, this book introduces some of Alexie's most beloved characters, including Thomas Builds-the-Fire, the storyteller who no one seems to listen to, and his compatriot, Victor, the sports hero who turned into a recovering alcoholic. Now with an updated introduction from Alexie, these twenty-four tales are narrated by characters

raised on humiliation and government-issue cheese, and yet they are filled with passion and affection, myth and charm. Against a backdrop of addiction, car accidents, laughter, and basketball, Alexie depicts the distances between men and women, Indians and whites, reservation Indians and urban Indians, and, most poetically, modern Indians and the traditions of the past.

19. [On the Come Up](#) by Angie Thomas

- a. By the author of [The Hate U Give](#). Sixteen-year-old Bri wants to be one of the greatest rappers of all time. Or at least win her first battle. As the daughter of an underground hip hop legend who died right before he hit big, Bri's got massive shoes to fill.

But it's hard to get your come up when you're labeled a hoodlum at school, and your fridge at home is empty after your mom loses her job. So Bri pours her anger and frustration into her first song, which goes viral . . . for all the wrong reasons.

Bri soon finds herself at the center of a controversy, portrayed by the media as more menace than MC. But with an eviction notice staring her family down, Bri doesn't just want to make it—she has to. Even if it means becoming the very thing the public has made her out to be.

## Nonfiction/Memoir

1. [The Glass Castle](#) by Jeanette Walls

- a. "The second child of a scholarly, alcoholic father and an eccentric artist mother discusses her family's nomadic upbringing, from the Arizona desert to Las Vegas to an Appalachian mining town, during which she and her siblings had to fend for themselves while their parents outmaneuvered bill collectors and the authorities." (NPR)

2. [Night](#) by Elie Wiesel

- a. [Night](#) is Elie Wiesel's masterpiece, a candid, horrific, and deeply poignant autobiographical account of his survival as a teenager in the Nazi death camps. This new translation by Marion Wiesel, Elie's wife and frequent translator, presents this seminal memoir in the language and spirit truest to the author's original intent. And in a substantive new preface, Elie reflects on the enduring importance of *Night* and his lifelong, passionate dedication to ensuring that the world never forgets man's capacity for inhumanity to man. *Night* offers much more than a litany of the daily terrors, everyday perversions, and rampant sadism at Auschwitz and Buchenwald; it also eloquently addresses many of the philosophical as well as personal questions implicit in any serious consideration of what the Holocaust was, what it meant, and what its legacy is and will be.

3. [Educated](#) by Tara Westover

- a. Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, Tara Westover was seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom. Her family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received an education, and no one to intervene when one of Tara's older brothers became violent. When another brother got himself into college, Tara decided to try a new kind of life. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over

oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge University. Only then would she wonder if she'd traveled too far, if there was still a way home.

4. [Shout](#) by Laurie Halse Anderson

- a. Bestselling author Laurie Halse Anderson is known for the unflinching way she writes about, and advocates for, survivors of sexual assault. Now, inspired by her fans and enraged by how little in our culture has changed since her groundbreaking novel *Speak* was first published twenty years ago, she has written a critically acclaimed poetry memoir that is as vulnerable as it is rallying, as timely as it is timeless. In free verse, Anderson shares reflections, rants, and calls to action woven among deeply personal stories from her life that she's never written about before. Praised as "captivating," "powerful," and "essential" by critics, this searing and soul-searching memoir is a denouncement of our society's failures and a love letter to all the people with the courage to say #MeToo and #TimesUp, whether aloud, online, or only in their own hearts. *SHOUT* speaks truth to power in a loud, clear voice--and once you hear it, it is impossible to ignore.

5. [Brown Girl Dreaming](#) by Jacqueline Woodson

- a. Raised in South Carolina and New York, Woodson always felt halfway home in each place. In vivid poems, she shares what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living with the remnants of Jim Crow and her growing awareness of the Civil Rights movement. Touching and powerful, each poem is both accessible and emotionally charged, each line a glimpse into a child's soul as she searches for her place in the world. Woodson's eloquent poetry also reflects the joy of finding her voice through writing stories, despite the fact that she struggled with reading as a child. Her love of stories inspired her and stayed with her, creating the first sparks of the gifted writer she was to become.

### **Nonfiction/General**

1. [The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks](#) by Rebecca Skloot

- a. "Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor Southern tobacco farmer who worked the same land as her slave ancestors, yet her cells—taken without her knowledge—became one of the most important tools in medicine: The first "immortal" human cells grown in culture, which are still alive today, though she has been dead for more than sixty years. HeLa cells were vital for developing the polio vaccine; uncovered secrets of cancer, viruses, and the atom bomb's effects; helped lead to important advances like in vitro fertilization, cloning, and gene mapping; and have been bought and sold by the billions.

Yet Henrietta Lacks remains virtually unknown, buried in an unmarked grave." (B&N)

2. [The Tipping Point](#) by Malcolm Gladwell

- a. “The tipping point is that magic moment when an idea, trend, or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips, and spreads like wildfire. Just as a single sick person can start an epidemic of the flu, so too can a small but precisely targeted push cause a fashion trend, the popularity of a new product, or a drop in the crime rate. This widely acclaimed bestseller, in which Malcolm Gladwell explores and brilliantly illuminates the tipping point phenomenon, is already changing the way people throughout the world think about selling products and disseminating ideas.” (Amazon)
3. [The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains](#) by Nicolas Carr
  - a. “‘Is Google making us stupid?’ When Nicholas Carr posed that question, in a celebrated Atlantic Monthly cover story, he tapped into a well of anxiety about how the Internet is changing us. He also crystallized one of the most important debates of our time: As we enjoy the Net’s bounties, are we sacrificing our ability to read and think deeply?” (Amazon)
4. [Eating Animals](#) by Jonathan Safran Foer
  - a. Bestselling author Jonathan Safran Foer spent much of his life oscillating between enthusiastic carnivore and occasional vegetarian. For years he was content to live with uncertainty about his own dietary choices but once he started a family, the moral dimensions of food became increasingly important. Faced with the prospect of being unable to explain why we eat some animals and not others, Foer set out to explore the origins of many eating traditions and the fictions involved with creating them. Traveling to the darkest corners of our dining habits, Foer raises the unspoken question behind every fish we eat, every chicken we fry, and every burger we grill.
5. [Friday Night Lights: A Town, a Team and a Dream](#) by H. G. Bissinger
  - a. Meet the Permian Panthers of Odessa -- the winningest high-school football team in Texas history. Socially and racially divided, Odessa isn't known to be a place big on dreams, but every Friday night from September to December, when the Panthers play football, dreams can come true. With frankness and compassion, Pulitzer Prize winner H. G. Bissinger unforgettably captures a season in the life of Odessa and shows how single-minded devotion to the team shapes the community and inspires -- and sometimes shatters -- the teenagers who wear the Panthers' uniforms.
6. [Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption](#) by Bryan Stevenson
  - a. Bryan Stevenson was a young lawyer when he founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice dedicated to defending those most desperate and in need: the poor, the wrongly condemned, and women and children trapped in the farthest reaches of our criminal justice system. One of his first cases was that of Walter McMillian, a young man who was sentenced to die for a notorious murder he insisted he didn't commit. The case drew Bryan into a tangle of conspiracy, political machination, and legal brinkmanship—and transformed his understanding of mercy and justice forever.

7. [Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza](#) by Gloria Anzaldua
  - a. Rooted in Gloria Anzaldúa's experience as a Chicana, a lesbian, an activist, and a writer, the essays and poems in this volume profoundly challenged, and continue to challenge, how we think about identity. *Borderlands / La Frontera* remaps our understanding of what a "border" is, presenting it not as a simple divide between here and there, us and them, but as a psychic, social, and cultural terrain that we inhabit, and that inhabits all of us.
8. [The Body Keeps the Score](#) by Bessel van der Kolk, MD
  - a. The effects of trauma can be devastating for sufferers, their families and future generations. Here one of the world's experts on traumatic stress offers a bold new paradigm for treatment, moving away from standard talking and drug therapies and towards an alternative approach that heals mind, brain and body. Van der Kolk uses recent scientific advances to show how trauma literally reshapes both body and brain, compromising sufferers' capacities for pleasure, engagement, self-control, and trust. He explores innovative treatments--from neurofeedback and meditation to sports, drama, and yoga--that offer new paths to recovery by activating the brain's natural neuroplasticity. This book explores the tremendous power of our relationships to both hurt and heal--and offers new hope for reclaiming lives touched by trauma.

### **Nonfiction/History**

1. [Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience and Redemption](#) by Laura Hillenbrand
  - a. "The saga of Louis Zamperini, a former Olympic runner who became an American airman -- and whose true laurels were the result of trials, endurance and will far from any stadium. *Unbroken* follows Zamperini as a bombardier during World War II. When a plane he is piloting disappears into the Pacific Ocean, years of starvation, imprisonment and brutality follow."

### **Fantasy/Science Fiction**

1. [Parable of the Sower](#) by Octavia Butler
  - a. Set in a dystopian America where the country has largely collapsed due to global warming and wealth disparity, this novel focuses on a teenager named Lauren. Lauren possesses the ability to "share" - meaning that she feels pain and other physical sensations that she sees happening to other people. In the story, Lauren embarks on a journey to move from Southern California to Washington State in order to establish her own religion and community, which she dubs Earthseed.
2. [Boy's Life](#) by Robert McCammon
  - a. In the novel, Cory Mackenson shares with the reader his experiences in the twelfth year of his life. The year begins when his father attempts to

rescue a driver as his car plunges into Saxon's Lake, only to discover the man has been beaten to death. Cory spends the rest of the year, despite multiple distractions, attempting to find out who killed this stranger before his father's dreams drive him into the depths of the lake too. *Boy's Life* is a story of coming of age in the south. The story is set in the early 1960s and makes observations about changes in America at that time, with particular emphasis on the Civil Rights Movement. Several of the characters are connected to the Ku Klux Klan, and the segregation of the black community is dealt with in some detail.

3. [The Eyes of the Dragon](#) by Stephen King
  - a. Once upon a time, in the Kingdom of Delain, King Roland is murdered and his son and heir, Peter, is framed for the crime. Peter and his loyal friends must battle an evil wizard and Peter's usurper brother, Thomas, for the throne. Imprisoned in a tower, Peter conceives an escape plan that will take him years to execute before taking on Flagg, the powerful sorcerer who has masterminded this coup.
4. [The Girl With All The Gifts](#) by M.R. Carey
  - a. "Melanie is a little girl who goes to school, has friends, loves books. She is incredibly intelligent, and, we discover, lives underground in an army base with 20 or so other children her age. She is muzzled occasionally, and chained to her desk; and all the classes are tests, to see what information the children retain and understand. But she is a normal child, right up until the moment she smells human flesh too closely – and turns into a feral monster. Melanie, like the other children she lives with, is a zombie; the planet has been overrun, and these intelligent kids are the only possible way for its remaining scientists to find a cure." (The Guardian)
5. [Children of Blood and Bone](#) by Tomi Adeyemi
  - a. Zélie Adebola remembers when the soil of Orisha hummed with magic. Burners ignited flames, Tiders beckoned waves, and Zélie's Reaper mother summoned forth souls.  
But everything changed the night magic disappeared. Under the orders of a ruthless king, maji were killed, leaving Zélie without a mother and her people without hope.  
Now Zélie has one chance to bring back magic and strike against the monarchy. With the help of a rogue princess, Zélie must outwit and outrun the crown prince, who is hell-bent on eradicating magic for good.  
Danger lurks in Orisha, where snow leoponaires prowl and vengeful spirits wait in the waters. Yet the greatest danger may be Zélie herself as she struggles to control her powers and her growing feelings for an enemy.
6. [Akata Witch](#) by Nnedi Okorafor

- a. Twelve-year-old Sunny lives in Nigeria, but she was born American. Her features are African, but she's albino. She's a terrific athlete, but can't go out into the sun to play soccer. There seems to be no place where she fits in. And then she discovers something amazing—she is a "free agent" with latent magical power. Soon she's part of a quartet of magic students, studying the visible and invisible, learning to change reality. But will it be enough to help them when they are asked to catch a career criminal who knows magic too?

## Graphic Novels

1. [The Underwater Welder](#) by Jeff Lemire
  - a. *From the back cover:* "As an underwater welder on an oil rig off the coast of Nova Scotia, Jack Joseph is used to the immense pressures of deep-sea-work. Nothing, however, could, prepare him for the pressures of impending fatherhood. As Jack dives deeper and deeper, he seems to pull further and further away from his young wife and their unborn son. Then one night, deep in the icy solitude of the ocean floor, something unexplainable happens. Jack has a mysterious and supernatural encounter that will change the course of his life forever."

## Poetry

1. [Brown](#) by Kevin Young
  - a. Divided into "Home Recordings" and "Field Recordings," Brown speaks to the way personal experience is shaped by culture, while culture is forever affected by the personal, recalling a black Kansas boyhood to comment on our times. From "History"--a song of Kansas high-school fixture Mr. W., who gave his students "the Sixties / minus Malcolm X, or Watts, / barely a march on Washington"--to "Money Road," a sobering pilgrimage to the site of Emmett Till's lynching, the poems engage place and the past and their intertwined power. These thirty-two taut poems and poetic sequences, including an oratorio based on Mississippi "barkeep, activist, waiter" Booker Wright that was performed at Carnegie Hall and the vibrant sonnet cycle "De La Soul Is Dead," about the days when hip-hop was growing up ("we were black then, not yet / African American"), remind us that blackness and brownness tell an ongoing story. A testament to Young's own--and our collective--experience, Brown offers beautiful, sustained harmonies from a poet whose wisdom deepens with time.

## Other

- 1.) [The Book of Delights: Essays](#) by Ross Gay (Temple Grad!)
  - a.) "In *The Book of Delights*, one of today's most original literary voices offers up a genre-defying volume of lyric essays written over one tumultuous year. The first nonfiction book from award-winning poet Ross Gay is a record of the small joys we often overlook in our busy lives. Among Gay's funny, poetic, philosophical delights: a friend's unabashed use of air quotes, cradling a tomato seedling aboard an airplane, the silent nod of acknowledgment between the only two black people in a room. But Gay never dismisses the

complexities, even the terrors, of living in America as a black man or the ecological and psychic violence of our consumer culture or the loss of those he loves. More than anything other subject, though, Gay celebrates the beauty of the natural world--his garden, the flowers peeking out of the sidewalk, the hypnotic movements of a praying mantis." (Amazon)

2.) [Nine Stories](#) by JD Salinger

- a.) The war hangs over these wry stories of loss and occasionally unsuppressed rage. Salinger's children are fragile, odd, hypersmart, whereas his grownups (even the materially content) seem beaten down by circumstances--some neurasthenic, others (often female) deeply unsympathetic.

3.) [The 1619 Project](#) by New York Times Magazine

- a.) In August of 1619, a ship appeared on this horizon, near Point Comfort, a coastal port in the English colony of Virginia. It carried more than 20 enslaved Africans, who were sold to the colonists. No aspect of the country that would be formed here has been untouched by the years of slavery that followed. On the 400th anniversary of this fateful moment, it is finally time to tell our story truthfully. This is a collection of pieces including articles, poetry, and more.

## Young Adult Fiction with LGBTQ Themes

1. [The Poet X](#) by Elizabeth Acevedo

- a. Sophomore Xiomara Batista is simultaneously invisible and hyper visible at home, school, and in her largely Dominican community in Harlem—her body is "unhide-able" she tells readers early on, yet she bristles at how others project their desires, insecurities, failures, patriarchal attitudes toward her. Though she is quick to battle and defend herself and her twin brother Xavier, Xiomara's inner life sensitively grapples with these projections and the expectations of her strict, religious mother.

2. [Aristotle and Dante Discover the Universe](#) by Benjamin Alire Saenz

- a. Aristotle is an angry teen with a brother in prison. Dante is a know-it-all who has an unusual way of looking at the world. When the two meet at the swimming pool, they seem to have nothing in common. But as the loners start spending time together, they discover that they share a special friendship—the kind that changes lives and lasts a lifetime. And it is through this friendship that Ari and Dante will learn the most important truths about themselves and the kind of people they want to be.

3. [Anger Is a Gift](#) by Mark Oshiro

- a. Moss Jeffries is many things—considerate student, devoted son, loyal friend and affectionate boyfriend, enthusiastic nerd. But sometimes Moss still wishes he could be someone else—someone without panic attacks, someone whose father was still alive, someone who hadn't become a rallying point for a community because of one horrible night. And most of all, he wishes he didn't feel so stuck. Moss can't even escape at school—he and his friends are subject to the lack of funds and crumbling infrastructure at West Oakland High, as well as constant intimidation by the resource officer stationed in their halls. That was even

before the new regulations—it seems sometimes that the students are treated more like criminals.

Something will have to change—but who will listen to a group of teens?

When tensions hit a fever pitch and tragedy strikes again, Moss must face a difficult choice: give in to fear and hate or realize that anger can actually be a gift.

4. [Juliet Takes a Breath](#) by Gabby Rivera

- a. Juliet Milagros Palante is a self-proclaimed closeted Puerto Rican baby dyke from the Bronx. Only, she's not so closeted anymore. Not after coming out to her family the night before flying to Portland, Oregon, to intern with her favorite feminist writer—what's sure to be a life-changing experience. And when Juliet's coming out crashes and burns, she's not sure her mom will ever speak to her again. But Juliet has a plan—sort of. Her internship with legendary author Harlowe Brisbane, the ultimate authority on feminism, women's bodies, and other gay-sounding stuff, is sure to help her figure out this whole "Puerto Rican lesbian" thing. Except Harlowe's white. And not from the Bronx. And she definitely doesn't have all the answers . . .

5. [More Happy Than Not](#) by Adam Silvera

- a. Sixteen-year-old Aaron Soto is struggling to find happiness after a family tragedy leaves him reeling. He's slowly remembering what happiness might feel like this summer with the support of his girlfriend Genevieve, but it's his new best friend, Thomas, who really gets Aaron to open up about his past and confront his future.

As Thomas and Aaron get closer, Aaron discovers things about himself that threaten to shatter his newfound contentment. A revolutionary memory-alteration procedure, courtesy of the Leteo Institute, might be the way to straighten himself out. But what if it means forgetting who he truly is?

6. [Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up with Me](#) by Mariko Tamaki (graphic novel)

- a. A graphic novel that asks us to consider what happens when we ditch the toxic relationships we crave to embrace the healthy ones we need. Laura Dean, the most popular girl in high school, was Frederica Riley's dream girl: charming, confident, and SO cute. There's just one problem: Laura Dean is maybe not the greatest girlfriend.

Reeling from her latest break up, Freddy's best friend, Doodle, introduces her to the Seek-Her, a mysterious medium, who leaves Freddy some cryptic parting words: break up with her. But Laura Dean keeps coming back, and as their relationship spirals further out of her control, Freddy has to wonder if it's really Laura Dean that's the problem. Maybe it's Freddy, who is rapidly losing her friends, including Doodle, who needs her now more than ever.

7. [The Miseducation of Cameron Post](#) by Emily Danforth

- a. When Cameron Post's parents die suddenly in a car crash, her shocking first thought is relief. Relief they'll never know that, hours earlier, she had been kissing a girl.

But that relief doesn't last, and Cam is forced to move in with her conservative aunt Ruth and her well-intentioned but hopelessly old-fashioned grandmother. She knows that from this point on, her life will forever be different. Survival in Miles City, Montana, means blending in and leaving well enough alone, and Cam becomes an expert at both.

Then Coley Talor moves to town. Beautiful, pickup-driving Coley is a perfect cowgirl with the perfect boyfriend to match. She and Cam forge an unexpected and intense friendship, one that seems to leave room for something more to emerge. But just as that starts to seem like a real possibility, Aunt Ruth takes drastic action to “fix” her niece, bringing Cam face-to-face with the cost of denying her true self—even if she’s not quite sure who that is.

8. [Ask the Passengers](#) by A. S. King
  - a. Astrid Jones desperately wants to confide in someone, but her mother's pushiness and her father's lack of interest tell her they're the last people she can trust. Instead, Astrid spends hours lying on the backyard picnic table watching airplanes fly overhead. She doesn't know the passengers inside, but they're the only people who won't judge her when she asks them her most personal questions...like what it means that she's falling in love with a girl. As her secret relationship becomes more intense and her friends demand answers, Astrid has nowhere left to turn. She can't share the truth with anyone except the people she imagines flying over her at thirty thousand feet, and they don't even know she's there. But little does Astrid know just how much even the tiniest connection will affect these strangers' lives--and her own--for the better.
9. [Will Grayson, Will Grayson](#) by John Green and David Leviathan
  - a. One cold night, in a most unlikely corner of Chicago, Will Grayson crosses paths with . . . Will Grayson. Two teens with the same name, running in two very different circles, suddenly find their lives going in new and unexpected directions, and culminating in epic turns-of-heart and the most fabulous musical ever to grace the high school stage.
10. [Felix Ever After](#) by Kacen Callender
  - a. Felix Love has never been in love—and, yes, he’s painfully aware of the irony. He desperately wants to know what it’s like and why it seems so easy for everyone but him to find someone. What’s worse is that, even though he is proud of his identity, Felix also secretly fears that he’s one marginalization too many—Black, queer, and transgender—to ever get his own happily-ever-after. When an anonymous student begins sending him transphobic messages—after publicly posting Felix’s deadname alongside images of him before he transitioned—Felix comes up with a plan for revenge. What he didn’t count on: his catfish scenario landing him in a quasi-love triangle... But as he navigates his complicated feelings, Felix begins a journey of questioning and self-discovery that helps redefine his most important relationship: how he feels about himself.