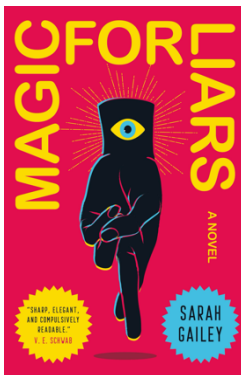


Kendall Bentz

Holidays on Ice

David Sedaris

Perfect for the holiday season but also funny year-round. This short collection of hilarious holiday memoirs by acerbic wit David Sedaris will have you howling. The well-known showpiece in the book is “SantaLand Diaries” which recounts Sedaris’ stint as Crumpet, a Macy’s department-store elf. He lays bare the underbelly of the holiday-industrial complex while falling for fellow elf, Snowball. It’s full of great lines, such as the time when a customer stares at 33-year-old Sedaris in his elf costume and tells Sedaris he looks “stupid.” “I wanted to say that at least I get paid to look stupid ... he gives it away for free.” If you’re not familiar with Sedaris, do yourself a favor and pick this up.

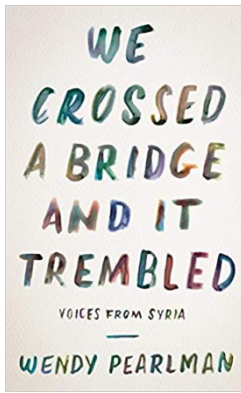


Brittany Burns

Magic for Liars

Sarah Gailey

For everyone who hated Harry Potter, this is the book for you (ok, and it’s also for those who know their Hogwarts House, Wand specifications, and Patronus creature). Gailey takes you on a fascinating magical mystery at a magical school through the eyes of a grungy, noir detective. Here the lockers are graffitied, the students are nasty, and everybody lies. As long as you watch your step and don’t trust anyone, I’m sure you’ll be fine.



We Crossed a Bridge and It Trembled

Wendy Pearlman

On a more serious note, *We Crossed a Bridge...* is a heartbreaking look into the collapse of a once thriving country. Pearlman drives the demise of Syria during the Arab spring through the personal accounts of engineers, accountants, freedom fighters, journalists, civil servants, doctors, students, and mothers. It's also a careful reminder that what happened in Syria could really happen anywhere.



How Long 'til Black Future Month?

N.K. Jemisin

N.K. Jemisin packs a punch in her latest sci-fi/fantasy story collection with topics ranging from hope to destruction to downright weird. Written in teeth-sinking prose, my favorites include: "The Ones Who Stay and Fight", "The Effluent Engine", "On the Banks of the River Lex", and "The Trojan Girl."



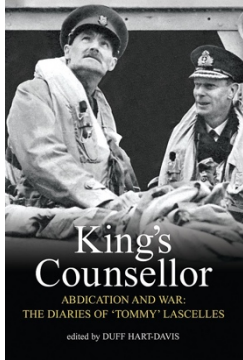
Daniel Casse

The Taking of MH370

Jeff Wise

Five years ago, a Malaysian jetliner disappeared over the South China Sea. Thousands of hours of searching by three governments have failed to come up with a plausible explanation of what happened. Jeff Wise has changed all that. His book is the most meticulous and thorough account of what happened to the plane and why its disappearance was no accident. Wise takes on every theory and every bit of "proof" that the plane crashed in the Indian Ocean. His narrative is deeply researched, sometimes technical, and, I'm

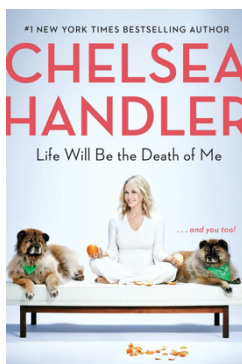
afraid, irrefutable. Is it a conspiracy theory on the grandest scale? Yes? Is it an absolute page-turner? Yes? Is it true? Go read this slim book and tell me why it's not.



King's Counsellor: The Diaries of "Tommy" Lascelles

Sir Alan "Tommy" Lascelles

"Tommy," courtier to young Queen Elizabeth, is a mesmerizing character in *The Crown*: un-breakable defender of tradition, stern voice of imperial protocol, and arbiter of how things will go down in Buckingham Palace. In real life, he was even more fascinating. As his war time diaries reveal, Sir Alan Lascelles was not merely a steely advisor to three monarchs. He was a war-hero, a well-read intellectual, a regular at the exclusive Traveller's Club on Pall Mall, and an inside player who knew more about British monarchy than any other figure of the 20th century. His posthumously published diaries of the war years cover everything from the highest level of diplomacy (Tommy regularly talked with Churchill) to the pettiness of court gossip. Lascelles was a beautiful writer who brings all his skills to a multi-page evisceration of Edward, the Duke of Windsor, the Nazi-swooning king who abdicated the throne in 1936. In these pages, life is superior to art.



Bryan Curran

Life Will Be the Death of Me: ... and you too!

Chelsea Handler

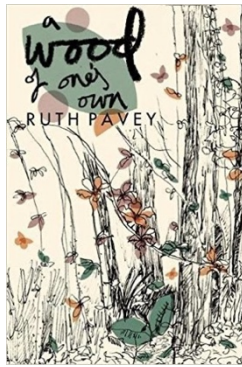
Hilarious memoir of Chelsea Handler's year of self-discovery. Her journey also led to her documentary "Hello, Privilege. It's Me, Chelsea," which explores how white privilege impacts American culture.



Thug Kitchen: The Official Cookbook: Eat Like You Give a F*ck

Thug Kitchen

Pardon the profanity. Elevate your nutrition and kitchen game.



Cassie Dormond

A Wood of One's Own

Ruth Pavey

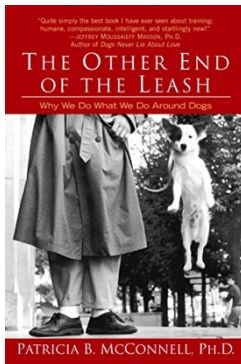
A memoir written by a retired London schoolteacher who purchases several acres of overgrown land, previously an orchard, in rural Somerset with the ambition to “plant a wood, tree-by-tree.” It has lessons in building a legacy and leaving the world a little better than when you found it. The book totally won me over—my bucket-list now includes learning how to graft fruit trees and purchasing a wood of my own, as well.



Middle England

Jonathan Coe

The Brexit comedy you didn't know you needed. This book tackles complicated themes in totally kind, humane, and often humorous ways.

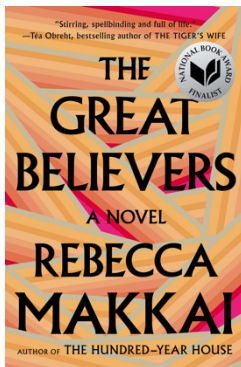


Meryl Ellingson

The Other End of the Leash

Patricia B. McConnell

As most of the firm, and anyone on the “dogsofhlg” Slack channel is well aware, I became a dog mom this year! I grew up with dogs but any dog that we had really attached itself to my dad. My dad is also a librarian and sent me this book almost as soon as I brought home my husky pup. It is less about how to train dogs than it is about how to nurture the relationship and be mindful of what kind of human and what kind of communicator you are being around your dog. And guess what? Dogs are most drawn to calm, composed, authoritative but warm leaders. It is a thought-provoking and humbling read whether or not you’re a dog owner.

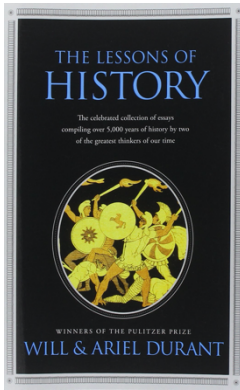


David Frey

The Great Believers

Rebecca Makkai

An epic in many ways, The Great Believers connects time and generations spanning Paris’ artist community after WWI; Chicago at the onset of the AIDS epidemic; and modern day—through the themes of love and loss and how we’re forever changed by what we’ve overcome. While a work of fiction, many parts could read as first-hand accounts—a testament to Rebecca Makkai’s simple, beautiful and compelling writing.

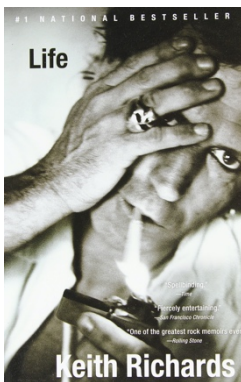


Rob Gluck

The Lessons of History

Will and Ariel Durant

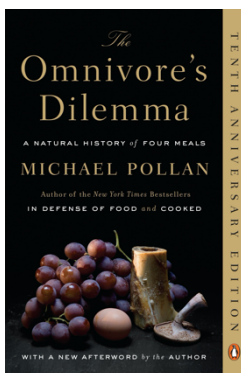
This short book (only 128 pages!) distills the many thousands of pages of their 11-volume series into a set of enduring truths that explain – and transcend – time periods and geographies. What gives weight to this light book is the notion that – having spent 50 years covering human history from every angle – the Durants are in a position to see larger patterns that might otherwise be elusive. They write in the intro: “Only a fool would try to compress a hundred centuries into a hundred pages of hazardous conclusions. We proceed.”



Life

Keith Richards

I got this as a Christmas present when it was published in 2010, and I still recommend it as the best rock & roll autobiography ever written. It's written in Keith's voice – you imagine him saying the words on the page with a cigarette dangling in one hand and a glass of Jack in the other. Lots of great war stories, and plenty of fodder for amateur musicians who want to know how he developed his craft.

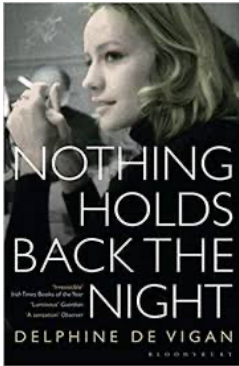


The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals

Michael Pollan

I also read this book many years ago and have picked it up again several times. Pollan exhibits admirable curiosity and persistence in tracing elements of the food on supermarket shelves all the way back to the soil – along the way deconstructing parts of the industrial food chain that we never see or think about. He explains why corn and corn byproducts are so prevalent in the food we eat, and also shows the larger forces at

work that drive the behavior of farmers, product companies and retailers. It's one of those books that can change your life.

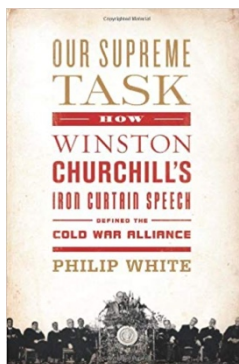


Yasmin Dias Guichot

Nothing Holds Back the Night

Delphine de Vigan

Though initially framed as a memoir, this book blends fiction and non-fiction as it explores trying to find 'truth' within the disparate fragments and impressions of her mother's life from others. At what point do memories diverge from reality and become fiction? The author aims to tell her mother's life story, but it transforms into one of a lost woman's struggle to raise a family while battling mental illness. De Vigan shows her mother's perseverance alongside her inability to cope. A bit dark, but a good read.

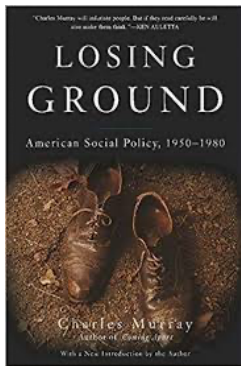


Michael Hodin

Our Supreme Task

Philip White

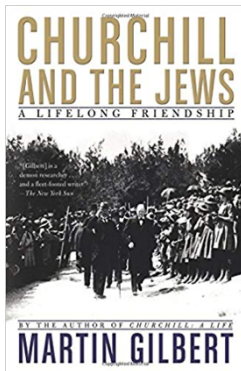
When Churchill wrote his Iron Curtain Speech, he was invited as a speaker to Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri by the President of the College who prevailed on his friend Harry Truman, then President, to encourage Churchill to accept the invitation.



Losing Ground

Charles Murray

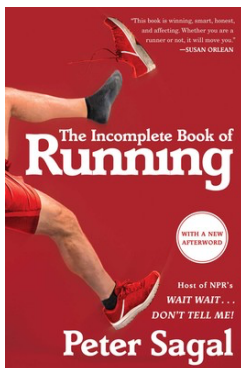
A great piece of social science describing the adverse impact of American Welfare on inner-city Blacks and the steps to transform welfare to work.



Churchill and The Jews

Martin Gilbert

Churchill's biographer, Martin Gilbert wrote this small book from the scraps of his monumental five-part series on Churchill's Biography. The period when Churchill, in the first decade of the 20th century, lost his Riding and was given a seat by the Party in Manchester. He got to know the large and successful Jewish Communists from Manchester, including one of the great Zionists Chaim Weizmann, which was the precursor to Churchill's support for what became the Balfour Declaration and then, after WWII, creation of the State of Israel.



Mark Hoffman

The Incomplete Book of Running

Peter Sagal

Remember when Homer gave Marge a bowling ball for Christmas that had "Homer" engraved on it? Then, when Marge opened it, Homer suggested: "Well, if you don't want it, then..." Or at least that's how I remember it. And such it was with The Incomplete Book of Running. I gifted it, read it, then proceeded to talk about it at the dinner table for a week straight. Now, I share it with you, even though you won't read it either. But if someone

can manage even a phony “thank you,” you’ll break new ground. (And the book is funny, even though it’s about running, which isn’t funny.)

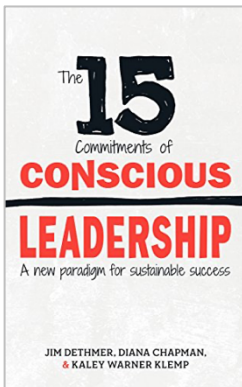


Drew Holzapfel

How Finance Works

Mihir Desai

Much of the work we do at HLG is about making complex ideas understandable. This book does exactly that – just with finance, instead of drugs, diseases, microchips, etc. Moreover, this book will give you insights into how our clients in corporations think, see and handle numbers.



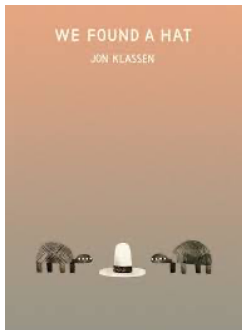
Megan Jackson

The 15 Commitments of Conscious Leadership: A New Paradigm for Sustainable Success

Jim Dethmer, Diana Chapman & Kaley Warner Klemp

Before you roll your eyes and write this off as another boring business leadership book, take a closer look! Brought to you by the founders of the [Conscious Leadership Group](#), this book teaches us to be more aware of our unconscious beliefs, more compassionate toward ourselves and others, and more capable of making and keeping our commitments. The path to conscious living begins with a fundamental question: [Where am I? Above or below the line?](#)

So...Where are you?



Jessica Kemp

We Found A Hat

Jon Klassen

I've read the beginning of a handful of books over the past two years and have yet to finish a single one. With two kids under 3, I'm lucky to finish anything these days but certainly not a long form book of any sort. Instead, this year I'll recommend one of the only books I've actually finished: A kid's book that I read on my own well before my toddler cared about it. (He still doesn't care about it.)

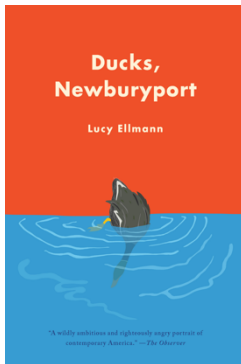


Brooks Kenny

Everything is Figureoutable

Marie Forelo

I met Marie 8 years ago when she was building her company that empowers women in business. Today, she is nationally recognized with multiple books, a podcast, a virtual school for women entrepreneurs. Her personal story is inspiring. Her latest book is funny, inspiring and relatable. "Everything is figureoutable—it's more than just a fun phrase to say. It's a philosophy of relentless optimism. A mindset. A mantra. A conviction."

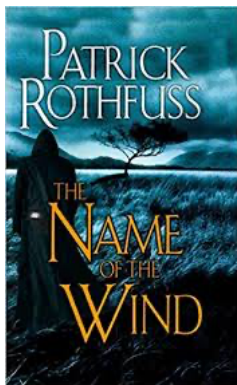


Beth Leuin

Ducks, Newburyport

Lucy Ellman

One thousand pages in one sentence. This stream-of-consciousness novel follows a middle-aged Ohio woman's thoughts: family, work, US history, that song lyric stuck in her head... The unusual rhythm requires some adjustment, but the word play and creative structure are worth the effort. Ellmann provokes reflection on the connections our minds draw, life's focal moments we retrace, and how little things collectively shape a life. Short-listed for the Booker prize.

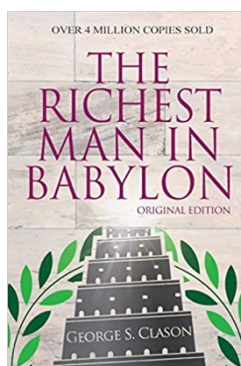


Matt Levy

The Name of the Wind

Patrick Rothfuss

An intricate, page-turning fantasy about a boy who can seemingly do anything in a world of magical learning, music, and a scary legend that haunts his own past.

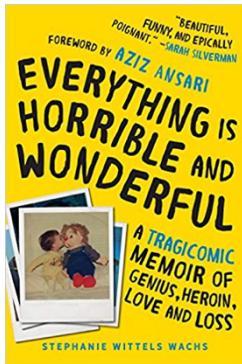


Emily Lizotte

The Richest Man in Babylon

George S. Clason

I've been focusing on building FI (financial independence) and this was a really easy quick read.

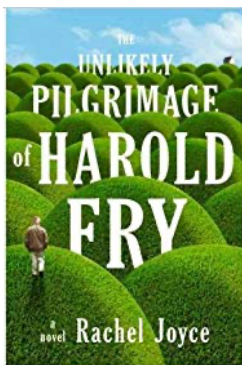


Clare Maher

Everything is Horrible and Wonderful

Stephanie Wittels Wachs

A sister's deeply personal tribute to her late brother (Harris Wittels of *Parks and Recreation*), a gifted writer and comedian who lost his life to heroin addiction. Full of humor and sadness, the book explores the confusion and emotional turmoil that follows the death of someone we love.

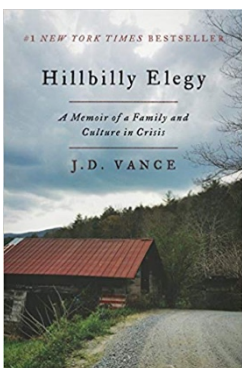


The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry

Rachel Joyce

The novel follows a man who sets off on a spontaneous pilgrimage across England, walking from the southernmost part to the northernmost part with nothing but the clothes he was wearing the morning he left his house to mail a letter to an old friend.

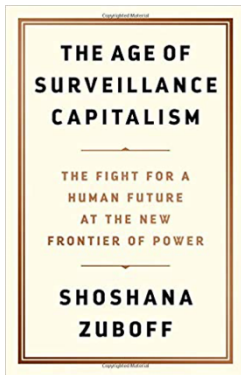
Gina Masino



Hillbilly Elegy

J. D. Vance

Hillbilly Elegy tells the story of a young man who grows up in a poor Rust Belt town in America and eventually graduates from Yale Law School, a conventional marker of success in achieving generational upward mobility. The memoir examines opportunity, class, and class mobility in America and documents Vance's personal and professional journey from his Appalachian upbringing to his life as a venture capitalist and author.



Chad McGinnis

The Age of Surveillance Capitalism

Shoshana Zuboff

I found this book very illuminating and very provocative. Certainly forces the reader to soberly assess the consequences of a world where information technology is part of the oxygen we breathe...and where we've forked over a great deal of our privacy for "free" services. Don't be surprised if you find yourself rethinking that smart speaker or doorbell camera you're thinking of purchasing.

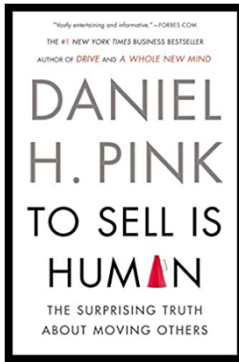


Cortland Mercer

Shoe Dog

Phil Knight

I hate it when Daniel Casse is right. So when he effusively recommended Shoe Dog, the Phil Knight autobiography, I initially dismissed the suggestion. But eventually, I gave into curiosity and read Knight's journey from dogged, but not-quite-talented-enough runner on Oregon's mythical cross-country team (complete with Prefontaine cameos), to post-college years selling shoes from the trunk of his beat-up car, to traveling to Japan with no knowledge of the language or culture and inventing outsourcing as we know it today, ultimately growing Nike into one of the most successful global brands in modern history. Fascinating, believable, thoroughly readable. I admit it Daniel, you were right.

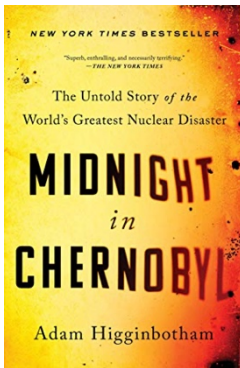


Melissa Gong Mitchell

To Sell is Human: The Surprising Truth About Moving Others

Daniel H. Pink

A good reminder that we may not all be salespeople, but we are all in sales. Now that information about everything is at our fingertips, it's ever more critical for us to communicate with clarity, connection and conviction as we sell our ideas, our services and our own personal brands.

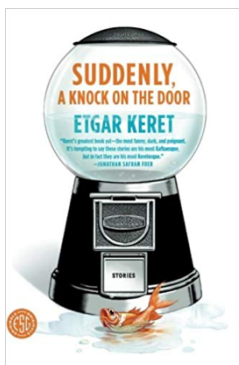


Mario Ottiglio

Midnight in Chernobyl

Adam Higginbotham

An indelible portrait of one of the greatest disasters of the twentieth century, of human resilience and ingenuity, and the lessons learned when mankind seeks to bend the natural world to his will—lessons which, in the face of climate change and other threats, remain not just vital but necessary.

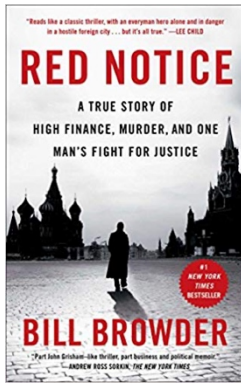


Charles Pennell

Suddenly, A Knock on the Door

Etgar Keret

The bite-size candy bar of this year's reading list. These stories are funny, weird, and very, very short. So go ahead—take a break from that super-depressing long-form article and enjoy a couple of these instead.



Julie Pierce

Red Notice
Bill Browder

The subtitle says it all: “A True Story of High Finance, Murder, and One Man’s Fight for Justice.” This book will dispel any doubts you might have about how evil Putin & Company can be.



Sophie Robert

Regards from the Dead Princess
Kénizé Mourad

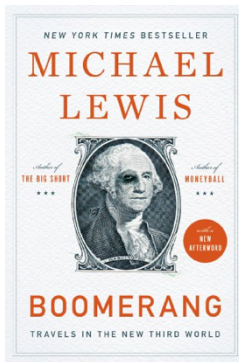
The book is the first in a series of three that tell the story of the author’s mother, a princess who grew up during the fall of the Ottoman Empire and is forced into exile to Lebanon, India and finally Paris, France. It’s powerful, personal and explores the challenges faced by a woman who is treated as a ‘stranger’ everywhere she goes in different contexts of political turmoil. And it’s also refreshing to read about a part of history that is often overlooked.



Katy Schneider Riddick

Travel Home
Caitlin Flemming and Julie Goebel

A book proving that your teachers are cooler than you thought...Written by my 7th grade global studies teacher, it’s a peek into curated spaces in the homes of leading designers “that reflect favorite places and experiences.”

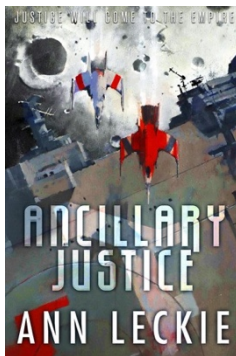


Sagar Sane

Boomerang: Travels in the New Third World

Michael Lewis

A great read exploring how countries can rapidly descend from the heights of prosperity to the depths of financial ruin.

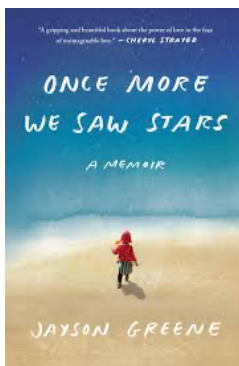


Samuel Savin

Ancillary Justice

Ann Leckie

Your New Year's resolution for 2020 should be to read more sci-fi.

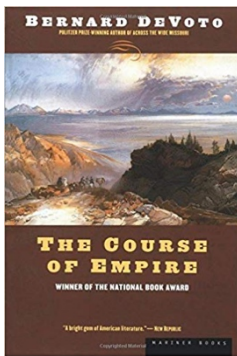


Susan Wile Schwarz

Once More We Saw Stars

Jayson Greene

Jayson Greene was a music journalist who wrote his first book, a memoir, following the accidental death of his two-year old daughter, Greta. The circumstances of her death are horrendous (and were sensational news here in NYC) and what he and his wife endured – and survived – is difficult to even contemplate. But the rest of us are better for it. Greene is such a truly gifted writer that our world would be less had he never been inspired to write outside of Pitchfork. This is one of the best books I've read in years. And while it's expectedly devastating, it is also a deeply beautiful, human, and ultimately life-affirming love story.

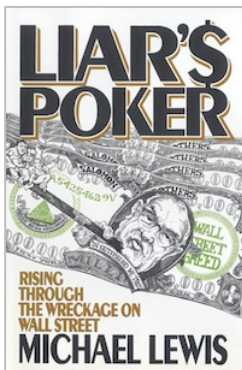


Kevin Stach

The Course of Empire

Bernard DeVoto

A sweeping history of the epic, century-long struggle between England, France, Spain and the fledgling United States to explore the interior of North America and win control of the American West.

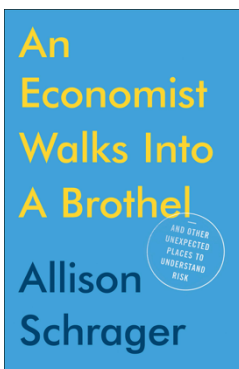


Victor Topouria

Liar's Poker

Michael Lewis

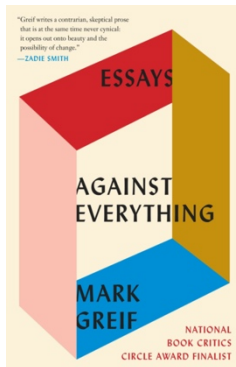
Thirty years since its publication, Liar's Poker remains the most infamous book on Wall Street. It is a down and dirty look into the cynical world of money in the 1980s, full of macho antics, creative profanity and larger than life personalities. Michael Lewis' gift is his ability to weave explanations of complex financial concepts into amazingly outlandish, usually hilarious and supposedly true anecdotes. Liar's Poker is one of the most fun and enlightening books I've ever read.



An Economist Walks into a Brothel

Allison Schrager

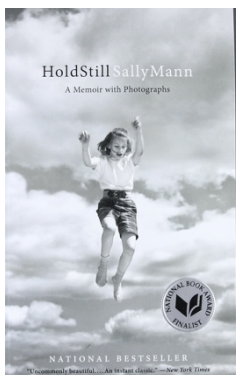
Economist Allison Schrager takes us on a journey into the underbelly of the American economy to uncover how sex workers, paparazzi, horse breeders, online poker players, Hollywood executives and other professionals view and calculate risk. The book gives a fascinating behind-the-scenes look into industries that most of us only know from a distance, but, more important, it demonstrates that risk lives everywhere and that all risk can be quantified and calculated.



Against Everything: Essays

Mark Greif

As a Zillennial in a digital society, I usually turn to the meme accounts on Twitter and Instagram to feed me micro doses of cultural commentary. But when I want long-form examinations of our popular culture's most interesting obsessions, I open this contrarian (see title) and entertaining collection of essays. Mark Greif uses his encyclopedic knowledge to draw parallels between seemingly unrelated subjects and gives an alternative perspective on some of our favorite things: food, sex, exercise, pop music, reality TV, "experiences," and more.

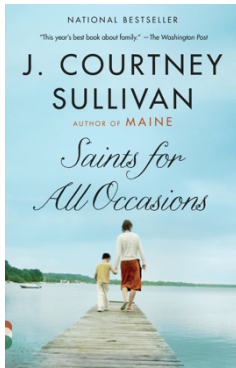


Ben Westhoven

Hold Still: A Memoir with Photographs

Sally Mann

I rate this memoir from photographer Sally Mann a 9/10. While it may shed more light on being southern than on being a photographer, it failed to earn the full 10/10 due to the fact that it is a book not about me.



Ben Williams

Saints for All Occasions

J. Courtney Sullivan

Saints for All Occasions is like one long Irish Catholic family Thanksgiving dinner. In other words, it's full of great characters who love each other, but don't always say so out loud, and hate each other, but don't always say it out loud, with all the other complex family dynamics you could think of in-between. The characters are compelling and complicated; the story touches on religion, politics, immigration, race, and more; and the descriptions of life as a family of Irish immigrants in New England are vivid. I enjoyed this book, and I hope you do too.