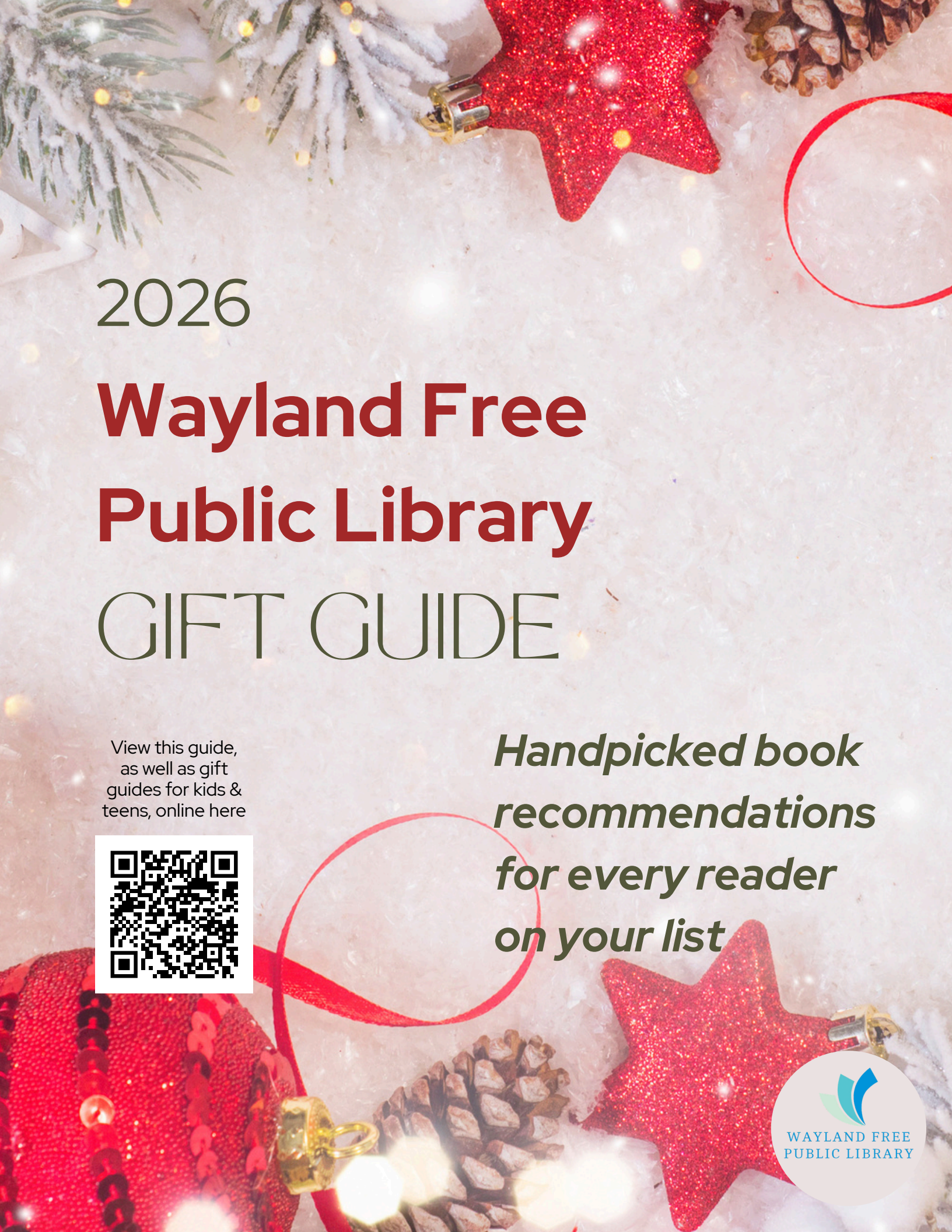


2026

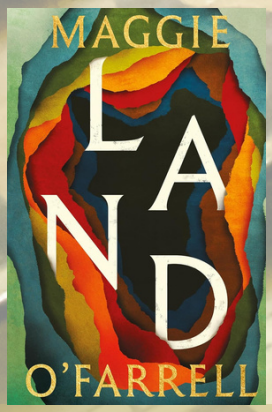
Wayland Free Public Library

GIFT GUIDE

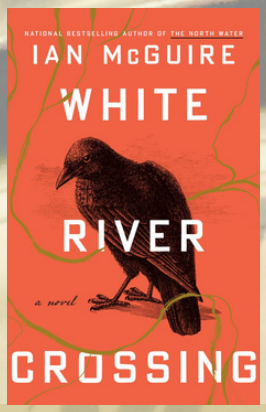
View this guide, as well as gift guides for kids & teens, online here

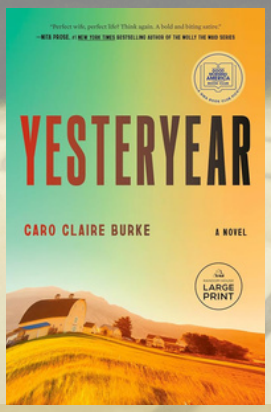
Handpicked book recommendations for every reader on your list

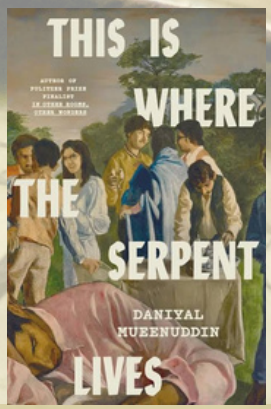
WAYLAND FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY











For the Armchair Time Traveler

LAND BY MAGGIE O'FARRELL

On a windswept peninsula stretching out into the Atlantic, Tomás and his reluctant son, Liam, are working for the great Ordnance Survey project to map the whole of Ireland. The year is 1865, and in a country ravaged by the Great Hunger, the task is not an easy one.

KIN BY TAYARI JONES

Set in the Jim Crow-era American South, *Kin* explores the lifelong bond and divergent paths of Vernice and Annie, who call themselves "cradle friends" because they were raised together from birth.

WHITE RIVER CROSSING BY IAN MCGUIRE

A novel about the lust for gold and its bloody consequences, set in the unforgiving landscape of the sub-Arctic Canadian wilderness.

YESTERYEAR BY CARO CLAIRE BURKE

A traditional American woman, a "tradwife" influencer, suddenly awakens in the brutal reality of 1855 - where she must unravel whether this living nightmare is an elaborate hoax, a twisted reality show, or something far more sinister.

THIS IS WHERE THE SERPENT LIVES BY DANIYAL MUEENUDDIN

Moving from Pakistan's dazzling chaotic cities to its lawless feudal countryside, the novel powerfully evokes contemporary feudal Pakistan, following destinies of a dozen unforgettable characters whose lives are linked through violence tragedy, triumph, and love.

For the Hopeless Romantic

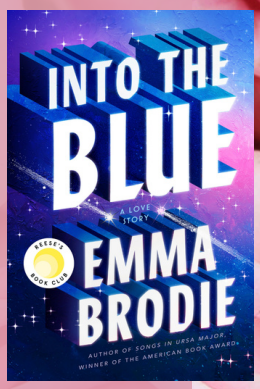
AND NOW, BACK TO YOU BY B.K. BORISON
Longtime rivals are forced to team up to cover a historic, record-breaking snowstrom in the mountains.



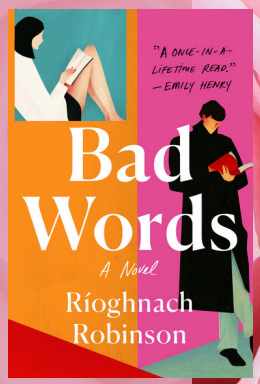
ONE & ONLY BY MAURENE GOO
A romantic novel about a woman thrown a curveball by fate, and the family secret that makes her question everything.



INTO THE BLUE BY EMMA BRODIE
In the summer of 2000, AJ Graves dreams of writing for SNL; instead, she's stuck working in a video rental store. Then in walks Noah Drew, the enigmatic and intense scion of the Drew acting dynasty, and her life changes forever.



BAD WORDS BY RIOGHNACH ROBINSON
When a writer and a critic cross paths and clash in person, a video of their confrontation goes viral. The public sparring explodes across social media and the publishing world, turning them into bitter public enemies.



DOLLY ALL THE TIME BY ANNABEL MONAGHAN
A hardworking single mom returns to her seaside hometown and stumbles into a fake dating situationship with a wealth, workaholic scion.



For the Sci-Fi / Fantasy Fan

OPERATION BOUNCE HOUSE BY MATT DINNIMAN
A man must fight for his planet against impossible odds when gamers from Earth attempt to remotely annihilate it.

THE ELSEWHERE EXPRESS BY SAMANTHA SOTTO YAMBAO
When you lose your way in life, the Elsewhere Express just might find you. Step on board the train that may take you to your life's purpose in this wistful, Ghibli-esque fantasy.

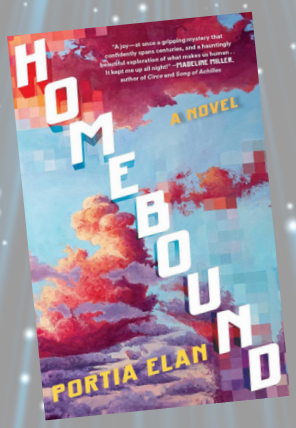
HOMEBOUND BY PORTIA ELAN
In a dazzling ode to human inventiveness and the desire for meaning, four lives are entangled across time by one unfinished story, saved to a floppy disc in the 1980s and destined to ripple across the centuries.

AGNES AUBERT'S MYSTICAL CAT SHELTER BY HEATHER FAWCETT
A woman who runs a cat rescue in 1920s Montréal turns to a grouchy but charming magician to help save her shelter in this heartwarming cozy fantasy.

A TRADE OF BLOOD BY ROBERT JACKSON BENNETT
Detective Ana Dolabra must prove a condemned man's innocence and confront a terrifying magical technology in this fantasy-mystery novel.

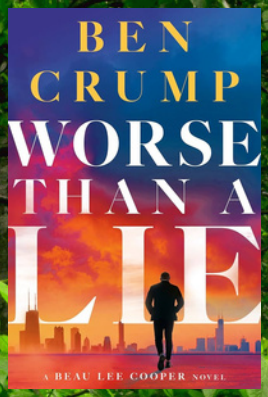


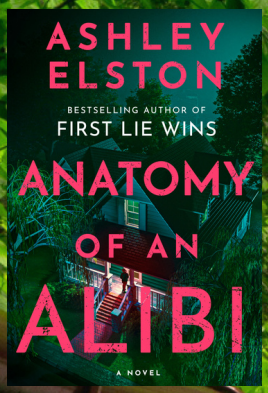


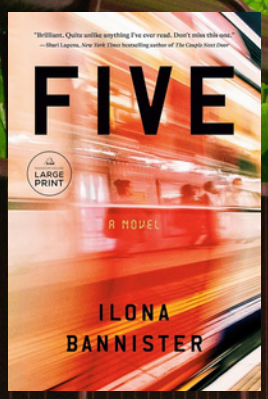




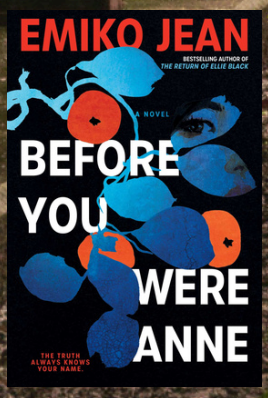












For the Thrill Seeker

WORSE THAN A LIE BY BEN CRUMP
A Black ex-police officer is shot ten times by white officers in Chicago. Truth and justice are called into questions and Attorney Beau Lee Copper must find out what actually happened.

ANATOMY OF AN ALIBI BY ASHLEY ELSTON
Two women swap identities for 12 hours to uncover secrets, but when one's husband is found murdered the next morning, they both need airtight alibis.

FIVE BY ILONA BANNISTER
Five strangers are waiting on a train platform. When the train arrives in five minutes, one of them will die.

THE ENDING WRITES ITSELF BY EVELYN CLARKE
Six writers compete to finish Arthur Fletch's manuscript at his remote Scottish home, but when one is murdered, they must solve the crime while suspicion falls on all of them.

BEFORE YOU WERE ANNE BY EMIKO JEAN
After a woman is killed and her daughter vanishes, detective Chelsey Calhoun uncovers a legacy of violence and survival that spans from Japan to Seattle in this propulsive novel.



For the Lover of Literary Fiction

VIGIL BY GEORGE SAUNDERS
Vigil follows a spirit guide who must usher an unrepentant oil CEO into the afterlife while supernatural visitors demand a reckoning for his corporate greed.

VILLA COCO BY ANDREW SEAN GREER
A young archivist assists eccentric aristocrat Coco in the Tuscan countryside, entertaining guests and helping reunite her with a lost love.

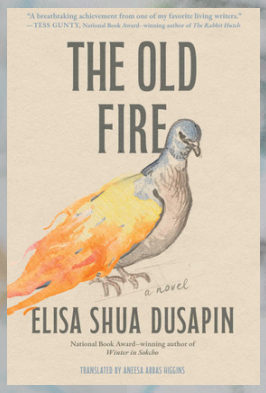
GOOD PEOPLE BY PATMEENA SABIT
The novel centers on the Sharaf family, Afghan refugees who have achieved the American dream, and the suspicious death of their eldest daughter, Zorah.

THE DISAPPEARERS BY MARLON JAMES
Eight gay men in 1980s Kingston, Jamaica rehearse a play, but after a savage attack kills one, survivors confront bigotry and trauma.

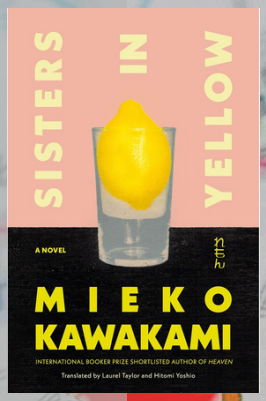
ETNA BY PAUL YOON
A literary novel that follows an ex-military dog who leaves the soldiers he once served and sets out on an odyssey across a war-torn country in search of home, hope, and a life beyond conflict.

For the Cosmopolitan

THE OLD FIRE BY ELISA SHUA DUSAPIN
Two estranged sisters come together to clean up their parents' house after the death of their father. The portrayal of family, secrets and silence is set against the backdrop of a crumbling house in the French countryside.



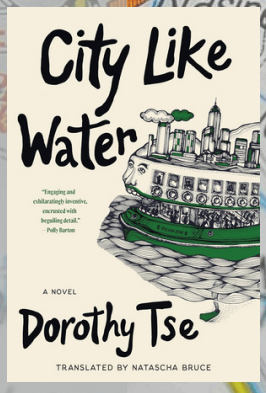
SISTERS IN YELLOW BY MIEKO KAWAKAMI
A novel about sacrifice and the tumultuous bonds of sisterhood, set in the gritty Tokyo of the 1990s.



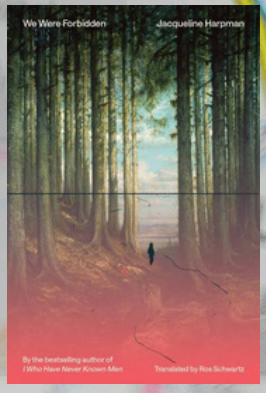
NOW I SURRENDER BY ÁLVARO ENRIGUE
A woman's desperate flight from an Apache raid unfolds into a sweeping tale of the Mexico-US border wars.



CITY LIKE WATER BY DOROTHY TSE
The city you grew up in is gone, as if sunk to the bottom of the ocean. Yet you still catch snatches of conversation lingering in the air and glimpse sun-dazzled residents retreating into dark crevices.



WE WERE FORBIDDEN BY JACQUELINE HARPMAN
Three novellas explore defiance through women who challenge societal constraints: a forest wanderer, a questioning student in 1940s Casablanca, and a wife locked in a loveless marriage in the Belgian Bourgeoisie.



For the Deep Thinker

AMERICAN STRUGGLE: DEMOCRACY, DISSENT, AND THE PURSUIT OF A MORE PERFECT UNION BY JON MEACHAM

Many see America as perfect; many others argue that the national experiment is fundamentally flawed. The truth, Meacham shows, likely lies between these extremes. America has had shining hours, and also dark ones.

VIBE: THE SECRETS OF STRONG CONNECTIONS IN A LONELY WORLD BY ADAM GRANT

Grant illuminates the surprising science of chemistry and closeness.

CHAIN OF IDEAS: THE ORIGINS OF OUR AUTHORITARIAN AGE BY IBRAM X. KENDI

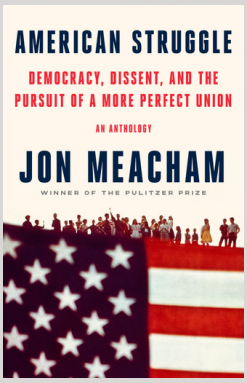
Kendi offers an unsettling but indispensable global history of how great replacement theory brought humanity into this authoritarian age - and how we can free ourselves from it.

THE VANISHING FAMILY: LOVE, FATE, AND THE QUEST TO END DEMENTIA BY ROBERT KOLKER

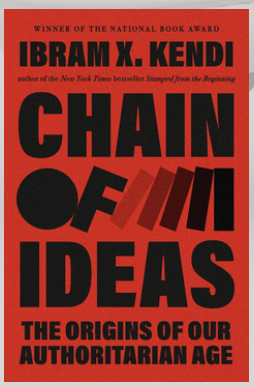
The heart-wrenching journey of a family facing an unthinkable destiny, whose flawed genetic code might hold the long-sought key to a cure for dementia.

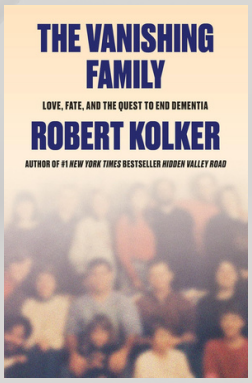
ON WITNESS AND RESPAIR BY JESMYN WARD

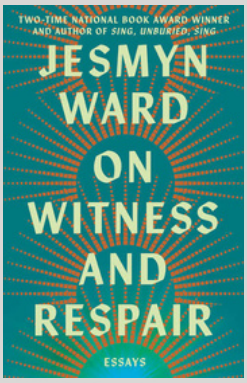
Ward reflects on literature, personal tragedy, and raising a Black son, exploring themes of resilience and hope through powerful essays.











For the Foodie



THE DIASPORA SPICE CO. COOKBOOK: SEASONAL HOME COOKING FROM SOUTH ASIA's BEST SPICE FARMS
BY SANA JAVERI KADRI & ASHA LOUPY
Celebrating beautiful, simple, and seasonal cooking with 85 recipes adapted from India and Sri Lanka's best family spice farms.



SPAIN MY WAY: EAT, DRINK, AND COOK LIKE A SPANIARD
BY JOSÉ ANDRÉS
Andrés shares traditional Spanish cooking techniques and ingredients from Spain's rich culinary culture.



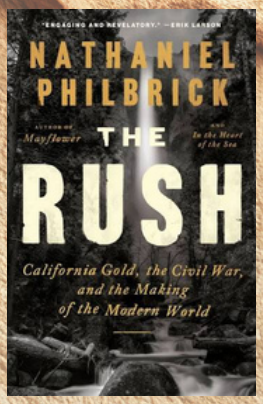
HELLO, HOME COOKING: DO-ABLE DISHES FOR EVERY DAY BY HAM EL-WAYLLY
El-Waylly showcases recipes that blend flavors from Latin America, the Middle East, and beyond, designed to be made after a single, uncomplicated trip to the local supermarket.

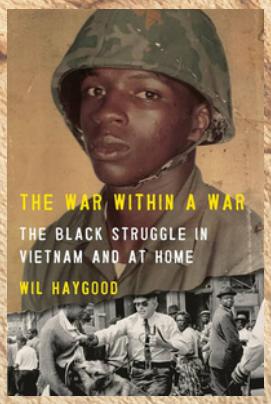


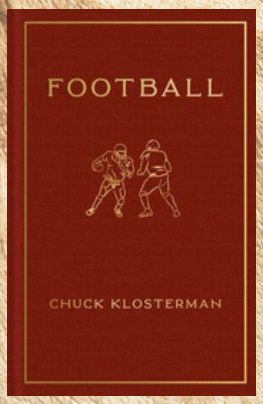
WHAT TO COOK WHEN YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE COOKING
BY CAROLINE CHAMBERS
A cookbook for busy people who want simple, flavorful meals with minimal ingredients and easy recipes.

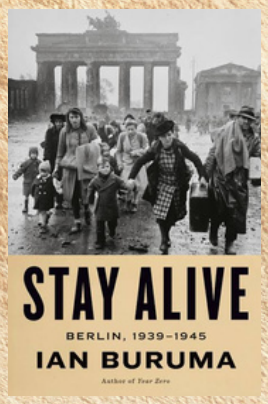


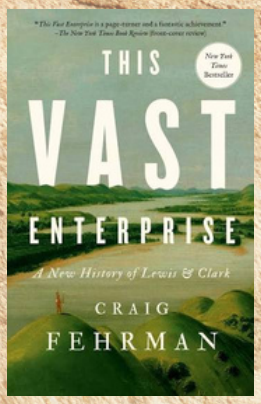
OBSESSED WITH THE BEST: 100+ METHODICALLY PERFECTED RECIPES BASED ON 20+ HEAD-TO-HEAD TESTS BY ELLA QUITTNER
Quittner walks readers through the results of 24 head-to-head tests of cooking methods to help you find the perfect choice for your palate.











For the History Buff

THE RUSH: CALIFORNIA GOLD, THE CIVIL WAR, AND THE MAKING OF THE MODERN WORLD BY NATHANIEL PHILBRICK
Philbrick reveals how California's Gold Rush forged the modern United States - and lit the long fuse to Civil War.

THE WAR WITHIN A WAR: THE BLACK STRUGGLE IN VIETNAM AND AT HOME BY WIL HAYGOOD
The book explores how the Vietnam War became a mirror for the struggle of Black Americans and a powerful lens through which to understand the racial and political divides that continue to shape American life.

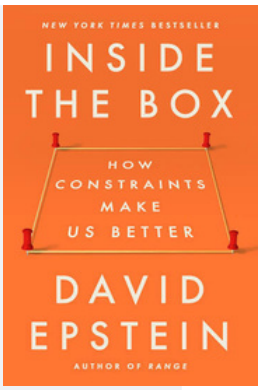
FOOTBALL BY CHUCK KLOSTERMAN
Klosterman examines American football not just as a sport, but as a cultural "hyperobject"—an inescapable, massive force that has deeply shaped American society and television.

STAY ALIVE: BERLIN, 1939-1945 BY IAN BURUMA
An astonishing account of life under a murderous regime amid a great city's descent into utter annihilation.

THE VAST ENTERPRISE: A NEW HISTORY OF LEWIS & CLARK BY CRAIG FEHRMAN
Fehrman offers a fresh and more accurate account of one of the most important episodes in American history.

For the Curious-Minded

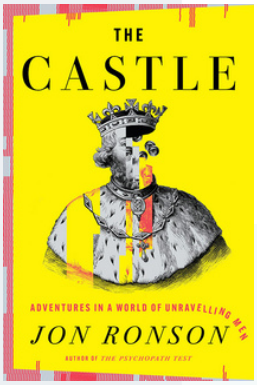
INSIDE THE BOX: HOW CONSTRAINTS MAKE US BETTER
BY DAVID EPSTEIN
Epstein argues how we can do more with less and use limits to stimulate creativity, innovation, and collaboration.



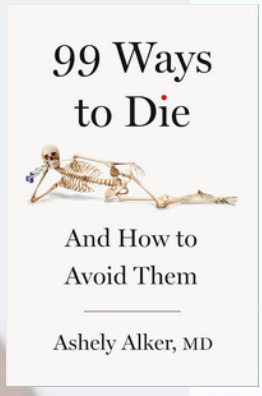
YOU'VE BEEN POOPING ALL WRONG: HOW TO MAKE YOUR BOWEL MOVEMENTS A JOY
BY TRISHA PASRICHA
A GI's guide to the brain-gut-microbiome connection, including research on why people develop IBS and how anyone can achieve poophoria.



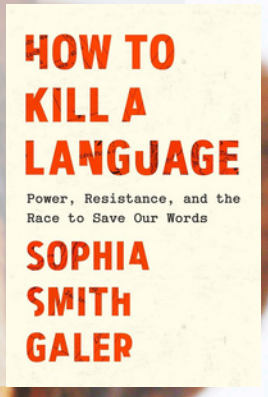
THE CASTLE: ADVENTURES IN A WORLD OF UNRAVELING MEN BY JON RONSON
Through a mix of humor, empathy, and unease, Ronson tries to make sense of why so many modern men feel lost, disconnected, or reactionary in a rapidly changing world.



99 WAYS TO DIE: AND HOW TO AVOID THEM
BY ASHELY ALKER
An illuminating, hilarious, and practical guide to 99 of the most terrifying ways to die and how to avoid them from an emergency medicine doctor.



HOW TO KILL A LANGUAGE: POWER, RESISTANCE, AND THE RACE TO SAVE OUR WORDS
BY SOPHIA SMITH GALER
The book investigates how languages die, shifting the focus from passive "endangerment" to active or systemic destruction—termed "linguisticide".



For Those Who Like to Keep Up

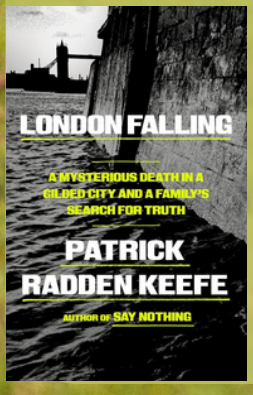
LONDON FALLING: A MYSTERIOUS DEATH IN A GILDED CITY AND A FAMILY'S SEARCH FOR TRUTH BY PATRICK RADDEN KEEFE
A spellbinding account of a family devastated by the sudden death of their teenage son, only to discover that he had created a secret life which drew him into the dangerous criminal underworld.

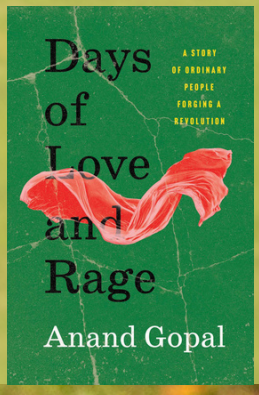
DAYS OF LOVE AND RAGE: A STORY OF ORDINARY PEOPLE FORGING A REVOLUTION BY ANAND GOPAL
Gopal tells the epic and enthralling account of how six Syrians began a movement that overthrew a brutal dictatorship.

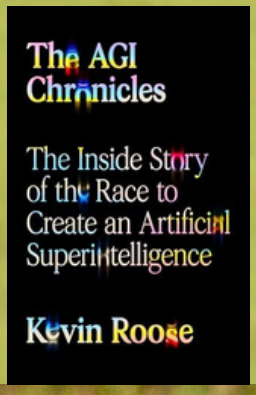
THE AGI CHRONICLES: THE INSIDE STORY OF THE RACE TO CREATE AN ARTIFICIAL SUPERINTELLIGENCE BY KEVIN ROOSE
The definitive, behind-the-scenes account of the trillion-dollar sprint to create AGI.

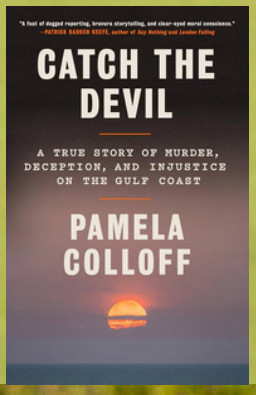
CATCH THE DEVIL: A TRUE STORY OF MURDER, DECEPTION, AND INJUSTICE ON THE GULF COAST BY PAMELA COLLOFF
The riveting, true story of an audacious con man who helped send another man to death row for a murder he did not commit.

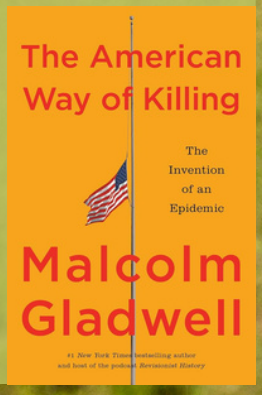
THE AMERICAN WAY OF KILLING: THE INVENTION OF AN EPIDEMIC BY MALCOLM GLADWELL
Gladwell's most urgent book yet: a provocative investigation of America's epidemic of gun violence.



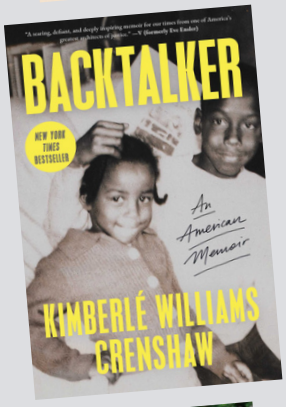




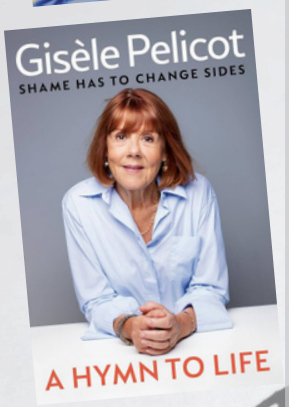


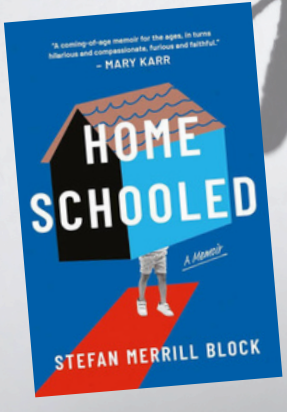












For the Biography (and Memoir) Lover

STRANGERS: A MEMOIR OF MARRIAGE
BY BELLE BURDEN
A memoir about divorce, but it's also a forensic examination of a love and a marriage gone wrong, seemingly without any warning.

BACKTALKER: AN AMERICAN MEMOIR
BY KIMBERLÉ WILLIAMS CRENSHAW
A powerful and intimate story of how a little girl from Canton, Ohio, came up with a new way to look at the world.

FAMESICK BY LENA DUNHAM
In this rowdy, frank reflection on illness, fame, sex, and everything in between, the remarkable mind behind the hit series *Girls* asks whether fulfilling her creative ambitions has been worth the pain.

A HYMN TO LIFE: SHAME HAS TO CHANGE SIDES
BY GISÈLE PELICOT
The sexual assault that stunned the world. A courageous woman's rallying call for shame to "change sides."

HOMESCHOOLED: A MEMOIR
BY STEFAN MERRILL BLOCK
A memoir about a mother's all-consuming love, a son's perilous quest to discover the world beyond the front door and the unregulated homeschool system that impacts millions like him.