



Libraries

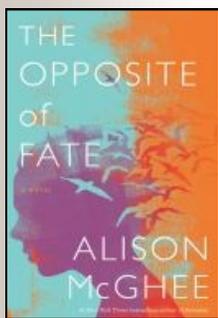
Readers' Advisory Committee

APRIL 2020

STAFF PICKS

To find book suggestions on the web go to www.nccde.org/374

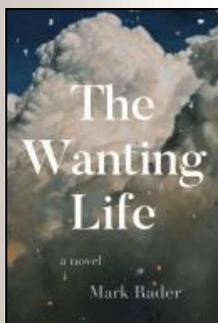
FICTION



***THE OPPOSITE OF FATE* BY ALISON MCGHEE**

(PICKED BY SM)

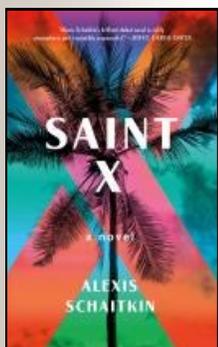
Twenty-one-year-old Mallie Williams—scrappy, headstrong, and wise beyond her years—has just landed on her feet following a tumultuous youth when the unthinkable happens: she is violently assaulted. The crime leaves her comatose, surrounded by friends and family who are hoping against hopes for a full recovery. But soon Mallie's small community finds themselves divided. The rape has left Mallie pregnant, and while some friends are convinced that she would never keep the pregnancy, others are sure that a baby would be the only good thing to come out of all of this pain. Who gets to decide? How much power, in the end, do we have over our own bodies? Mallie, her family, and her town find themselves at the center of a media storm, confronting questions nobody should have to face. And when Mallie emerges from the fog, what will she think of the choices that were made on her behalf? (272 pgs)



***THE WANTING LIFE* BY MARK RADER**

(PICKED BY SM)

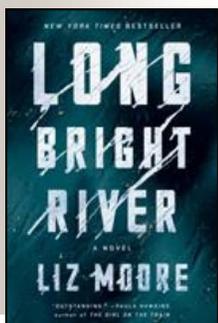
Set in Rome, Cape Cod, and Wisconsin over the course of the summer of 2009, and Rome during the spring of 1970, *The Wanting Life* tells the intertwined story of three members of the Novak family: Father Paul, a closeted gay Catholic priest who's dying of cancer and has secrets he desperately wants to share; Britta, his self-destructive sister and caretaker, who's struggling to find meaning in a world without her beloved husband; and Maura, Britta's daughter—a thirty-nine-year-old artist who's facing a choice between her husband and two children, or the man she believes is her one, true love. Featuring one of most unconventional love stories you'll read this year, *The Wanting Life* is both a compulsively readable family drama about the toll that secrets and loyalty can take on us, and a gorgeous meditation on the comforts (and limits) of faith and intimacy. (295 pgs)



***SAINT X* BY ALEXIS SCHAITKIN**

(PICKED BY SLS & BS)

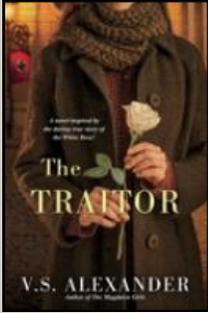
Claire is only seven years old when her college-age sister, Alison, disappears on the last night of their family vacation at a resort on the Caribbean island of Saint X. Several days later, Alison's body is found in a remote spot on a nearby cay, and two local men – employees at the resort - are arrested. But the evidence is slim, the timeline against it, and the men are soon released. The story turns into national tabloid news, a lurid mystery that will go unsolved. Years later, Claire is living and working in New York City when a brief but fateful encounter brings her together with Clive Richardson, one of the men originally suspected of murdering her sister. It is a moment that sets Claire on an obsessive pursuit of the truth - not only to find out what happened the night of Alison's death but also to answer the elusive question: Who exactly was her sister? At seven, Claire had been barely old enough to know her: a beautiful, changeable, provocative girl of eighteen at a turbulent moment of identity formation. As Claire doggedly shadows Clive, hoping to gain his trust, waiting for the slip that will reveal the truth, an unlikely attachment develops between them, two people whose lives were forever marked by the same tragedy. (343 pgs)



***LONG BRIGHT RIVER* BY LIZ MOORE**

(PICKED BY SLS)

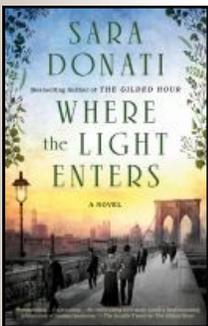
In a Philadelphia neighborhood rocked by the opioid crisis, two once-inseparable sisters find themselves at odds. Kacey, lives on the streets in the vise of addiction. Mickey, walks those same blocks on her police beat. They don't speak anymore, but Mickey never stops worrying about her sibling. Then Kacey disappears, suddenly, at the same time that a mysterious string of murders begins in Mickey's district, and Mickey becomes dangerously obsessed with finding the culprit—and her sister—before it's too late. Alternating its present-day mystery with the story of the sisters' childhood and adolescence, *Long Bright River* is a moving story of sisters, addiction, and the formidable ties that persist between place, family, and fate. (482 pgs)



***THE TRAITOR* BY V.S. ALEXANDER**

(PICKED BY MG)

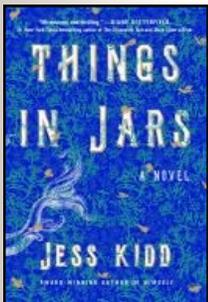
In the summer of 1942, as war rages across Europe, a series of anonymous leaflets appears around the University of Munich, speaking out against escalating Nazi atrocities. The leaflets are hidden in public places, or mailed to addresses selected at random from the phone book. Natalya Petrovich, a student, knows who is behind the leaflets—a secret group called the White Rose, led by siblings Hans and Sophie Scholl and their friends. As a volunteer nurse on the Russian front, Natalya witnessed the horrors of war first-hand. She willingly enters the White Rose's circle, where every hushed conversation, every small act of dissent could mean imprisonment or death at the hands of an infuriated Gestapo. Natalya risks everything alongside her friends, hoping the power of words will encourage others to resist. But even among those she trusts most, there is no guarantee of safety—and when danger strikes, she must take an extraordinary gamble in her own personal struggle to survive. (304 pgs)



***WHERE THE LIGHT ENTERS* BY SARA DONATI**

(PICKED BY SM)

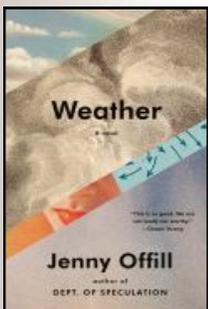
Obstetrician Dr. Sophie Savard returns home to the achingly familiar rhythms of Manhattan in the early spring of 1884 to rebuild her life after the death of her husband. With the help of Dr. Anna Savard, her dearest friend, cousin, and fellow physician, she plans to continue her work aiding the disadvantaged women society would rather forget. As Sophie sets out to construct a new life for herself, Anna's husband, Detective-Sergeant Jack Mezzanotte calls on them both to consult on two new cases: the wife of a prominent banker has disappeared into thin air, and the corpse of a young woman is found with baffling wounds that suggest a killer is on the loose. In New York it seems that the advancement of women has brought out the worst in some men. Unable to ignore the plight of New York's less fortunate, these intrepid cousins draw on all resources to protect their patients. (652 pgs)



***THINGS IN JARS* BY JESS KIDD**

(PICKED BY SLH)

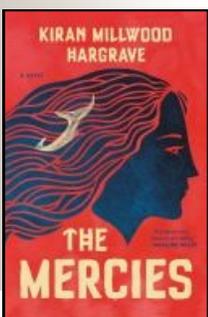
Bridie Devine—female detective extraordinaire—is confronted with the most baffling puzzle yet: the kidnapping of Christabel Berwick, secret daughter of Sir Edmund Berwick, and a peculiar child whose reputed supernatural powers have captured the unwanted attention of collectors trading curiosities in this age of discovery. Winding her way through the labyrinthine, sooty streets of Victorian London, Bridie won't rest until she finds the young girl, even if it means unearthing a past that she'd rather keep buried. Luckily, her search is aided by an enchanting cast of characters, including a seven-foot tall housemaid; a melancholic, tattoo-covered ghost; and an avuncular apothecary. But secrets abound in this foggy underworld where spectacle is king and nothing is quite what it seems. (373 pgs)



***WEATHER* BY JENNY OFFILL**

(PICKED BY SLS)

Lizzie Benson slid into her job as a librarian without a traditional degree. But this gives her a vantage point from which to practice her other calling: she is a fake shrink. For years she has tended to her God-haunted mother and her recovering addict brother. They have both stabilized for the moment, but Lizzie has little chance to spend her new free time with husband and son before her old mentor, Sylvia Liller, makes a proposal. She's become famous for her prescient podcast, *Hell and High Water*, and wants to hire Lizzie to answer the mail she receives: from left-wingers worried about climate change and right-wingers worried about the decline of western civilization. When her brother becomes a father and Sylvia a recluse, Lizzie is forced to address the limits of her own experience—but still she tries to save everyone, using everything she's learned from her years of wandering the library stacks . . . And all the while the voices of the city keep floating in—funny, disturbing, and increasingly mad. (207 pgs)



***THE MERCIES* BY KIRAN MILLWOOD HARGRAVE**

(PICKED BY SLS)

Finnmark, Norway, 1617. Twenty-year-old Maren Bergensdatter stands on the craggy coast, watching the sea break into a sudden and reckless storm. Forty fishermen, including her brother and father, are drowned. With the menfolk wiped out, the women of the tiny town of Vardø must fend for themselves. Three years later, Absalom Cornet comes from Scotland, where he burned witches in the northern isles. He brings with him his young Norwegian wife, Ursa, who is both heady with her husband's authority and terrified by it. In Vardø, and in Maren, Ursa sees something she has never seen before: independent women. But Absalom sees only a place untouched by God and flooded with a mighty evil. As Maren and Ursa are pushed together and are drawn to one another in ways that surprise them both, the island begins to close in on them with Absalom's iron rule threatening Vardø's very existence. Inspired by the real events of the Vardø storm and the 1620 witch trials. (336 pgs)

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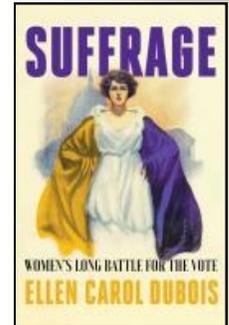
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NON-FICTION

SUFFRAGE BY ELLEN CAROL DUBOIS

(PICKED BY SMC)

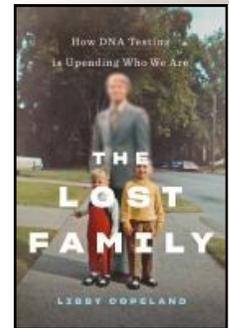
Historian Ellen Carol DuBois begins in the pre-Civil War years with foremothers Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Sojourner Truth as she explores the links of the woman suffrage movement to the abolition of slavery. After the Civil War, Congress granted freed African American men the right to vote but not white and African American women. She introduces new champions Carrie Chapman Catt and Alice Paul, who brought the fight into the 20th century, and she shows how African American women, led by Ida B. Wells-Barnett, demanded voting rights even as white suffragists ignored them. DuBois explains how suffragists built a determined coalition of moderate lobbyists and radical demonstrators in forging a strategy of winning voting rights in crucial states to set the stage for securing suffrage for all American women in the Constitution. DuBois follows women's efforts to use their voting rights to win political office, increase their voting strength, and pass laws. (400 pgs)



THE LOST FAMILY BY LIBBY COPELAND

(PICKED BY SMC)

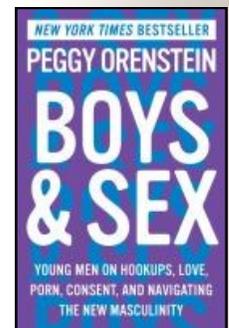
You swab your cheek or spit in a vial, then send it away to a lab somewhere. Weeks later you get a report that might tell you where your ancestors came from or if you carry certain genetic risks. Or the report could reveal long-buried family secrets and upend your entire sense of identity. Soon a lark becomes an obsession, a relentless drive to find answers to questions at the core of your being, like "Who am I?" and "Where did I come from?" In *The Lost Family*, Libby Copeland investigates what happens when we embark on a vast social experiment with little understanding of the ramifications. She explores the culture of genealogy buffs, the science of DNA, and the business of companies like Ancestry and 23andMe, all while tracing the story of one woman, her unusual results, and a relentless methodical drive for answers that becomes a thoroughly modern genetic detective story. (304 pgs)



BOYS & SEX BY PEGGY ORENSTEIN

(PICKED BY KT)

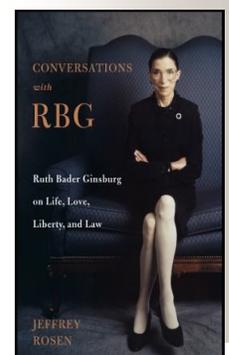
Peggy Orenstein's *Girls & Sex* broke ground, shattered taboos, and launched conversations about young women's right to pleasure and agency in sexual encounters. Boys are subject to the same cultural forces as girls—steeped in the same distorted media images and binary stereotypes of female sexiness and toxic masculinity—which equally affect how they navigate sexual and emotional relationships. In *Boys & Sex*, Peggy Orenstein dives back into the lives of young people to once again give voice to the unspoken, revealing how young men understand and negotiate the new rules of physical and emotional intimacy. *Boys & Sex* dissects so-called locker room talk; how the word "hilarious" robs boys of empathy; pornography as the new sex education; boys' understanding of hookup culture and consent; and their experience as both victims and perpetrators of sexual violence. By surfacing young men's experience in all its complexity, Orenstein is able to unravel the hidden truths, hard lessons, and important realities of young male sexuality in today's world. (304 pgs)

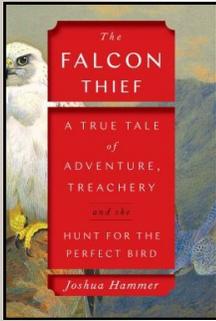


CONVERSATIONS WITH RBG BY JEFFREY ROSEN

(PICKED BY KT)

This book presents a unique portrait of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, drawing on more than twenty years of conversations with Jeffrey Rosen, starting in the 1990s and continuing through the Trump era. Rosen, a veteran legal journalist, scholar, and president of the National Constitution Center, shares with us the justice's observations on a variety of topics, and her intellect, compassion, sense of humor, and humanity shine through. In *Conversations with RBG*, Justice Ginsburg discusses the future of *Roe v. Wade*, her favorite dissents, the cases she would most like to see overruled, the #MeToo movement, how to be a good listener, how to lead a productive and compassionate life, and of course the future of the Supreme Court itself. These frank exchanges illuminate the steely determination, self-mastery, and wit that have inspired Americans of all ages to embrace the woman known to all as "Notorious RBG." Whatever the topic, Justice Ginsburg always has something interesting—and often surprising—to say. And while few of us will ever have the opportunity to chat with her face-to-face, Jeffrey Rosen brings us by her side as never before. (272 pgs)

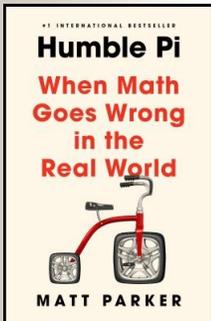




THE FALCON THIEF BY JOSHUA HAMMER

(PICKED BY SLH & SLS)

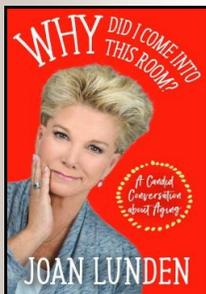
On May 3, 2010, an Irish national named Jeffrey Lendrum was apprehended at Britain's Birmingham International Airport with a suspicious parcel strapped to his stomach. Inside were fourteen rare peregrine falcon eggs snatched from a remote cliffside in Wales. So begins a tale following the parallel lives of a globe-trotting smuggler who spent two decades capturing endangered raptors worth millions of dollars as race champions—and Detective Andy McWilliam of the United Kingdom's National Wildlife Crime Unit, who's hell bent on protecting the world's birds of prey. The Falcon Thief whisks readers from the volcanoes of Patagonia to Zimbabwe's Matobo National Park, and from the frigid tundra near the Arctic Circle to luxurious aviaries in the deserts of Dubai, all in pursuit of a man who is reckless, arrogant, and gripped by a destructive compulsion to make the most beautiful creatures in nature his own. (336 pgs)



HUMBLE PI BY MATT PARKER

(PICKED BY SLS & BS)

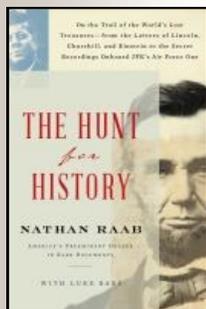
Our whole world is built on math, from the code running a website to the equations enabling the design of skyscrapers and bridges. Most of the time, this math works quietly behind the scenes...until it doesn't. All sorts of seemingly innocuous mathematical mistakes can have significant consequences. Math is easy to ignore until a misplaced decimal point upends the stock market, a unit conversion error causes a plane to crash, or someone divides by zero and stalls a battleship in the middle of the ocean. Exploring and explaining a litany of glitches, near misses, and mathematical mishaps involving the internet, big data, elections, street signs, lotteries, the Roman Empire, and an Olympic team, Matt Parker uncovers the bizarre ways math trips us up, and what this reveals about its essential place in our world. (314 pgs)



WHY DID I COME INTO THIS ROOM? BY JOAN LUNDEN

(PICKED BY BS)

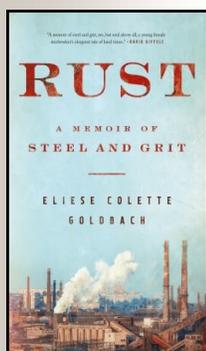
Joan Lunden delves into the various phases of aging that leave many feeling uncomfortable, confused, and on edge. In her hilarious book, Lunden takes the dull and depressing out of aging, replacing it with wit and humor. Lunden goes where others fear to tread, openly talking about wrinkles, diminished energy, disrupted sleep, changes in sex drive, ageism. *Why Did I Come into This Room?* also explores the science of aging, including how it impacts the body and brain, while dispelling myths and revealing useful options to stave off the aging process as long as possible. Lunden goes beyond the physical aspects of aging by closely examining the mental and emotional minefields that come with our advancing years. (336 pgs)



THE HUNT FOR HISTORY BY NATHAN RAAB

(PICKED BY SLH)

A box uncovered in a Maine attic with twenty letters written by Alexander Hamilton; a handheld address to Congress by President George Washington; an unpublished letter written by Albert Einstein, discussing his theory of relativity. Each day, people from all over the world contact Nathan Raab for help understanding what they have, what it might be worth, and how to sell it. Most weeks, he travels the country, scours auctions, or fields phone calls and emails from people who think they *may* have found something of note in a grandparent's attic. Raab shares some fascinating stories about his professional exploits- locating copies of missing audio that had been recorded on Air Force One as the plane brought JFK's body back to Washington. Every document and artifact Raab uncovers comes with a spellbinding story. (272 pgs)



RUST BY ELIESE GOLDBACH

(PICKED BY SMC)

To ArcelorMittal Steel Eliese is known as #6691: Utility Worker, but this was never her dream. Fresh out of college, eager to leave behind her conservative hometown and come to terms with her Christian roots, Eliese found herself applying for a job at the local steel mill. The mill is everything she was trying to escape, but it's also her only shot at financial security in an economically devastated and forgotten part of America. In *Rust*, Eliese brings the reader inside the belly of the mill and the middle American upbringing that brought her there in the first place. She takes a long and intimate look at her Rust Belt childhood and struggles to reconcile her desire to leave without turning her back on the people she's come to love. The people she sees as the unsung backbone of our nation. Faced with the financial promise of a steelworker's paycheck, and the very real danger of working in an environment where a steel coil could crush you at any moment or a vat of molten iron could explode because of a single drop of water, Eliese finds unexpected warmth and camaraderie among the gruff men she labors beside each day. (320 pgs)