

AAUW BOOK Group: Suggestions for Fall and Winter Reading (sorted by culture/ethnic group)

Following are some books that members have recommended. Check the newsletter for the current reading selections.

Multi-Ethnic

Caste by Isabel Wilkerson, Author of *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of American's Great Migration*. Using riveting stories about people, Wilkerson explores the factors that underlie caste systems across civilizations, including divine will, bloodlines, stigma, and more. She documents how the Nazis studied the racial systems in America to plan their out-cast of the Jews. She examines why the cruel logic of caste requires that there be a bottom rung for those in the middle to measure themselves against. August 4, 2020; available in Kindle and Hardcover only. This book is very readable. (JM and Gudrun) 447 pp.

Ten Lessons for a Post-pandemic World by Fareed Zakaria-- This book discusses what the world will look like, post pandemic. It won't be "back to normal." Zakaria also dispatches the facile notion that despots like China's Xi Jinping do better than democratic leaders. We owe the coronavirus's leap around the globe to China's suppression of lifesaving data; thereafter, the police state took over. Khamenei's Iran and Erdogan's Turkey performed badly, and so did Brazil, ruled by a would-be *caudillo*. (Gudrun) 319 pp. (hardcover or Kindle)

Somewhere in the Unknown World. "For those who want to better understand the reasons for becoming a refugee from those who become traumatized in their own countries and are compelled to flee their homes, this first person memoir was compiled by award-winning author, Kao Kalia Yang, herself a Hmong born in a refugee camp in Thailand. The stories tell what happened to them - some were children and others were adults when they fled - Yang includes hope-filled stories as the refugees settled and thrived in the Twin Cities of Minnesota.

Although Minnesota itself is one of the least diverse states, they have resettled more refugees per capita than any other state, coming from Myanmar, Bosnia, Bhutan, Somalia, Syria and many other countries. Kao Kalia Yang interviewed the refugees she meets in Minnesota, and with her poetic sense that reaches into their hearts, she listens to their stories and shares them with us in such a way that we "know" these people who have sought refuge in our country. They are not statistics, but threads being added to the cultural cloth of the United States."

African American

Non-Fiction:

White Fragility :Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism by Robin D'Angelo: From the cover: "___DiAngelo explores how fragility develops, how it protects racial inequality, and what we can do to engage more constructively." Mary Feidner 156 pps

The Fire Next Time by James Baldwin Brief description from cover: "A national bestseller when it first appeared in 1963. galvanized the nation, gave passionate voice to the emerging **civil rights movement** and still lights the way to understanding race in American today." Thea 71pps

Odetta: A Life in Music and Protest by Ian Zack. A new biography about Odetta, known as the "Voice of the **Civil Rights Movement**." Thea 309 pps

Fiction:

The Nickel Boys won the [2020 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction](#). Judges of the prize called the novel "a spare and devastating exploration of abuse at a reform school in **Jim Crow-era** Florida that is ultimately a powerful tale of human perseverance, dignity and redemption." It is Whitehead's second win, making him the fourth writer in history to have won the prize for fiction twice. 226 pp. (Dawn and Suzanne)

Go Tell It on the Mountain James Baldwin, a semi-autobiographical novel about a boy growing up in Harlem in the 1930s. Rated as one of the best novels of the 20th C. by Modern Library. 195pps JM`

The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas – Sixteen-year-old Starr lives in two worlds: the poor neighbourhood where she was born and raised and her posh high school in the suburbs. The uneasy balance between them is shattered when Starr is the only witness to the fatal shooting of her unarmed best friend, Khalil, by a police officer. Now what Starr says could destroy her community. It could also get her killed. Inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, this is a powerful and gripping YA novel about one girl's struggle for justice. Ruth Bornholdt 319pps

The Vanishing Half by Brit Bennet-- The Vignes twin sisters will always be identical. But after growing up together in a small southern black community and running away at age sixteen, they have a very different lives as adults. Many years later, the one sister lives with her **black daughter** in the same southern town she once tried to escape. The other secretly passes for white and her white husband knows nothing of her past. June 16, 2020; available in Kindle, Hardcover, Paperback. 308 pp. (Gudrun)

Native American

Non-Fiction:

Killers of the Flower Moon by David Gann. A horrifying but sadly true story of the behavior of the white settlers to their neighbors, the **Osage**. Suzanne 311 pp.

I Am The Grand Canyon: The Story of the Havasupai People by Stephen Hirst--This is the story of the one of the first groups of **Indians** to arrive in North American 20,000 years ago and their epic struggle to regain part of their ancestral lands below the rim of the Grand Canyon. Part of their land was taken from them in the nineteenth century to create Grand Canyon National Park. They fought the loss of another portion of land to enlarge the park. The author lived among the Havasupai for some time and describes their culture. Photos of the people are included. January 2007; available in Kindle or Paperback. 359 pp. (Gudrun Hutchins)

Fiction:

Love Medicine by Louise Erdrich. "The beauty of Love Medicine saves us from being completely devastated by its power." (Toni Morrison) This is Erdrich's first published novel, a saga of two **Native American** families. (Margaret) 241 pp.

The Night Watchmen by Louise Erdrich. Thomas Wazhashk is the night watchman at the jewel bearing plant, the first factory located near the Turtle Mountain Reservation in rural North Dakota. He is also a Chippewa Council member who is trying to understand the consequences of a new "emancipation" bill on its way to the floor of the United States Congress. It is 1953 and he and the other council members know the bill isn't about freedom; Congress is fed up with Indians. The bill is a "termination" that threatens the rights of **Native Americans** to their land and their very identity. (Dawn) 391 pp.

There, There by Tommy Orange--Tommy Orange's wondrous and shattering bestselling 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; Dene Oxendene, pulling his life together after his uncle's death and working at the powwow to honor his memory; and 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. 229 pp. (Dawn)

Hispanic

Fiction:

House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros. The *House on Mango Street* is the remarkable story of Esperanza Cordero, a young Latina girl growing up in **Chicago**, inventing for herself who and what she will become. Told in a series of vignettes-sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes deeply joyous-Sandra Cisneros' masterpiece is a classic story of childhood and self-discovery. (Dawn) 132 pp.

Bless me Ultima by Rudolpho Anaya (Dawn) Antonio Marez is six years old when Ultima comes to stay with his family in **New Mexico**. She is a curandera, one who cures with herbs and magic. Under her wise wing, Tony will probe the family ties that bind and rend him, and he will discover himself in the magical secrets of the pagan past--a mythic legacy as palpable as the Catholicism of **Latin America**. And at each life turn there is Ultima, who delivered Tony into the world... and will nurture the birth of his soul. (Dawn) 276 pp.

Dreaming in Cuban by Christina Garcia-- For three generations of Cuban women, the ties that bind are impassioned and profound. Matriarch Celia resides by the sea in Castro's **Cuba**. Daughter Felicia, who is bewitched by voodoo, suffers delusions brought on by her husband's "gift" of syphilis, while in Brooklyn, Lourdes converses with her dead father and struggles to connect with young Pilar. The youngest generation favors music by the Sex Pistols . . . but yearns for the homeland. For the del Pino women, there will be no agreement on Castro or the Revolution. The rewards of this narrative dwell in the insightful and varied glimpses of Cuban life in both New York and Havana. (Dawn) 274 pp.

Fiebre Topical – Juli Delgado Lopera. A **Colombian** teen's coming of age as she plunges headfirst into lust and evangelism in Miami. (KW) 221 pp.

Sabrina & Corina: Stories by Kali Fajardo-Anstine. Stories of **Latino** women living in the Denver area and dealing with numerous different issues. Nominated for the National Book Award, 2019 KW

Asian-American

Non-Fiction:

The Woman Warrior by Maxine Hong Kingston. Blend of autobiography and mythology, of world and self, of hot rage and cool analysis. First published in 1976, it has become a classic in its innovative portrayal of multiple and intersecting identities—immigrant, female, Chinese, American. As a girl, Kingston lives in two confounding worlds: the California to which her parents have immigrated and the China of her mother's "talk stories." A warrior of words, she forges fractured myths and memories into an incandescent whole, achieving a new understanding of her family's past and her own present. 201 pp. (Dawn)

Fiction:

Snow Falling on Cedars by David Guterson. Above all, the island is haunted by what happened to its Japanese residents during the Second World War, when an entire community was sent into exile while its neighbors watched. 482 pp.

The Buddha in the Attic by Julie Otsuka --This slim novel is told entirely in first-person plural, and captures the collective experience of the **Japanese** picture brides who came to America in the early 1900s. Each short chapter depicts another era of their lives in varied and imagined detail, resulting in an affecting book that illuminates the voices of the women who, in Otsuka's hands, demand to be heard. (Dawn) 132 pp.

Go Home! Asian diasporic writers imagine "home" in the twenty-first century through an array of fiction, memoir, and poetry. Both urgent and meditative, this anthology moves beyond the model-minority myth and showcases the singular intimacies of individuals figuring out what it means to

belong. *Go Home!* is published in collaboration with the **Asian American Writers' Workshop**. Established in 1991, AAWW is a national not-for-profit arts organization devoted to the creating, publishing, developing and disseminating of creative writing by Asian Americans through a New York events series and online editorial initiatives. [Kathy]

Muslim

Non-Fiction:

Nomad by Ayaan Hirsi In her powerful new memoir, the #1 bestselling author of *Infidel* tells the stirring story of her search for a new life as she tries to reconcile her **Islamic** past with her passionate adherence to democracy and Western values. A unique blend of personal narrative and reportage, moving, engaging, wryly funny at times, *Nomad* gives us an inside view of her battle for equality in the face of considerable odds. 308 pp. (Mary Brady)

Fiction:

Asymmetry by Lisa Halliday, Winner of a 2017 Whiting Award. Zadie Smith: "A novel about a young American editor and her relationship with a famous older male writer, and also about Amar, an **Iraqi-American** man and his adventures and how their stories interact." (Margaret) 244 pp

Judaism

Unorthodox by Deborah Feldman--Memoir about a woman born and raised in the **Hassidic set of Judaism**, her escape from the sect, and her life after. Suzanne 247pp.

Books by or about Women

NON FICTION:

A Woman of No Importance by Sonia Purnell – Nonfiction – a story about a woman who worked for US intelligence in France. (Norma McShane) 436pps

The Red Queen by Philippa Gregory. Historical fiction by a very well known and much-loved British writer. (Audrey Jones) Audrey mentioned that this is part of a series.

The Lost Girls of Paris by Pam Jenoff - Kindle intro: "Jenoff seamlessly weaves the stories of three remarkable women in this fast paced title that boast an intriguing plot and strong female characters." (Norma) 314 pp.

The Hollow Land by Jane Gardam. A charming story written for children but enjoyed very much by adults. Two boys from different social classes become friends for life; their families follow suit. Gardam was awarded a long list of prizes for this and other of her writings, including the Booker. Pub in 1988 Gardam uses a poem from William Morris in her book. 169 pp. (Margaret)

Time of Reckoning by Carolyn Heilman. A memoir about aging and her reflections as Heilman reaches 80, beautifully done, and timely! (Margaret) 145 pp.