

1. If you liked *All The Light We Can Not See...*

***THE TENTH MUSE* by Catherine Chung (pub.date 6/18/19)**

- Author talk & book signing at the Midtown Scholar on July 12, 2019

From childhood, Katherine knows she is different, and that her parents are not who they seem to be. But in becoming a mathematician, she must face the most human of problems—who is she? What is the cost of love, and what is the cost of ambition? On her quest to conquer the Riemann Hypothesis, the greatest unsolved mathematical problem of her time, she turns to a theorem with a mysterious history that holds both the lock and key to her identity, and to secrets long buried during World War II in Germany. Forced to confront some of the most consequential events of the twentieth century and rethink everything she knows of herself, she strives to take her place in the world of higher mathematics and finds kinship in the stories of the women who came before her—their love of the language of numbers connecting them across generations. In *The Tenth Muse*, Catherine Chung offers a gorgeous, sweeping tale about legacy, identity, and the beautiful ways the mind can make us free.

2. For fans of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*:

***FURIOUS HOURS* by Casey Cep**

- Author talk & book signing at the Midtown Scholar on June 18, 2019
- The WITF-Midtown Scholar “Pick of the Month” for May 2019

Reverend Willie Maxwell was a rural preacher accused of murdering five of his family members for insurance money in the 1970s. With the help of a savvy lawyer, he escaped justice for years until a relative shot him dead at the funeral of his last victim. Despite hundreds of witnesses, Maxwell's murderer was acquitted--thanks to the same attorney who had previously defended the Reverend.

Sitting in the audience during the vigilante's trial was Harper Lee, who had traveled from New York City to her native Alabama with the idea of writing her own *In Cold Blood*, the true-crime classic she had helped her friend Truman Capote research seventeen years earlier. Lee spent a year in town reporting, and many more years working on her own version of the case.

Now Casey Cep brings this story to life, from the shocking murders to the courtroom drama to the racial politics of the Deep South. At the same time, she offers a deeply moving portrait of one of the country's most beloved writers and her struggle with fame, success, and the mystery of artistic creativity.

3. How to Succeed in...(whatever is your passion)

***RANGE* by New York Times bestselling author David Epstein**

- Signed copies available at the Midtown Scholar, and listen online at our Author Podcast Series

A powerful argument for how to succeed in any field: develop broad interests and skills while everyone around you is rushing to specialize! Plenty of experts argue that anyone who wants to develop a skill, play an instrument, or lead their field should start early, focus intensely, and rack up as many hours of deliberate practice as possible. If you dabble or delay, you'll never catch up to the people who got a head start. But a closer look at research on the world's top performers, from professional athletes to Nobel laureates, shows that early specialization is the exception, not the rule. David Epstein examined the world's most successful athletes, artists, musicians, inventors, forecasters and scientists. He discovered that in most fields—especially those that are complex and unpredictable—generalists, not specialists, are primed to excel. Generalists often find their path late, and they juggle many interests rather than focusing on one. They're also more creative, more agile, and able to make connections their more specialized peers can't see. Provocative, rigorous, and engrossing, *Range* makes a compelling case for actively cultivating inefficiency. Failing a test is the best way to learn. Frequent quitters end up with the most fulfilling careers. The most impactful inventors cross domains rather than deepening their knowledge in a single area. As experts silo themselves further while computers master more of the skills once reserved for highly focused humans, people who think broadly and embrace diverse experiences and perspectives will increasingly thrive.

4. Nature Lovers Rejoice!

***THE SECRET WISDOM OF NATURE* by Peter Wohlleben**

The final book in The Mysteries of Nature trilogy by the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Hidden Life of Trees*, Peter Wohlleben. Nature is full of surprises: deciduous trees affect the rotation of the Earth, cranes sabotage the production of Iberian ham, and coniferous forests can make it rain. But what are the processes that drive these incredible phenomena? And why do they matter? In *The Secret Wisdom of Nature*, master storyteller and international sensation Peter Wohlleben takes readers on a thought-provoking exploration of the vast natural systems that make life on Earth possible. In this tour of an almost unfathomable world, Wohlleben describes the fascinating interplay between animals and plants and answers such questions as: How do they influence each other? Do lifeforms communicate across species boundaries? And what happens when this finely tuned system gets out of sync? By introducing us to the latest scientific discoveries and recounting his own insights from decades of observing nature, one of the world's most famous foresters shows us how to recapture our sense of awe so we can see the world around us with completely new eyes.

5. For the Sci-Fi reader (featuring aliens)

***The Lesson: A Novel* by Cadwell Turnbull (pub.date 6/18/2019)**

An alien ship rests over Water Island. For five years the people of the US Virgin Islands have lived with the Ynaa, a race of super-advanced aliens on a research mission they will not fully disclose. They are benevolent in many ways but meet any act of aggression with disproportional wrath. This has led to a strained relationship between the Ynaa and the local Virgin Islanders and a peace that cannot last. A year after the death of a young boy at the hands of an Ynaa, three families find themselves at the center of the inevitable conflict, witness and victim to events that will touch everyone and teach a terrible lesson.

The debut novel by an award-winning writer of short fiction and “a rising star” (*Verge*), African-American author Cadwell Turnbull, a graduate of North Carolina State University with a Creative Writing MFA in Fiction and English MA in Linguistics.

6. Contemporary fiction

***The Travelers: A Novel* by Regina Porter (pub.date 6/18/2019)**

“American history comes to vivid, engaging life in this tale of two interconnected families (one white, one black) that spans from the 1950s to Barack Obama’s first year as president. . . . The complex, beautifully drawn characters are unique and indelible.”—*Entertainment Weekly* | “A gorgeous generational saga.”—*New York Post*

Meet James Samuel Vincent, an affluent Manhattan attorney who shirks his modest Irish American background but hews to his father’s meandering ways. James muddles through a topsy-turvy relationship with his son, Rufus, which is further complicated when Rufus marries Claudia Christie. Claudia’s mother—Agnes Miller Christie—is a beautiful African American woman who survives a chance encounter on a Georgia road that propels her into a new life in the Bronx. Soon after, her husband, Eddie Christie, is called to duty on an air craft carrier in Vietnam, where Tom Stoppard’s play “Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead” becomes Eddie’s life anchor, as he grapples with mounting racial tensions on the ship and counts the days until he will see Agnes again.

These unforgettable characters’ lives intersect with a cast of lovers and friends—the unapologetic black lesbian who finds her groove in 1970s Berlin; a moving man stranded in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, during a Thanksgiving storm; two half-brothers who meet as adults in a crayon factory; and a Coney Island waitress whose Prince Charming is too good to be true. With piercing humor, exacting dialogue, and a beautiful sense of place, Regina Porter’s debut is both an intimate family portrait and a sweeping exploration of what it means to be American today. Award-winning author, playwright-turned-novelist Regina Porter is a graduate of the Iowa Writers’ Workshop. She was born in Savannah, Georgia, and lives in Brooklyn.

7. Historical fiction

The Darwin Affair: A Novel by Tim Mason (pub.date 6/11/2019)

“Intellectually stimulating and viscerally exciting, *The Darwin Affair* is breathtaking from start to stop.” —*The Wall Street Journal*

Get ready for one of the most inventive and entertaining novels of 2019—an edge-of-your-seat Victorian-era thriller, where the controversial publication *On the Origin of Species* sets off a string of unspeakable crimes.

London, June 1860: When an assassination attempt is made on Queen Victoria, and a petty thief is gruesomely murdered moments later—and only a block away—Chief Detective Inspector Charles Field quickly surmises that these crimes are connected to an even more sinister plot. Was Victoria really the assassin’s target? Are those closest to the Crown hiding something? And who is the shadowy figure witnesses describe as having lifeless, coal-black eyes?

Soon, Field’s investigation exposes a shocking conspiracy in which the publication of Charles Darwin’s controversial *On the Origin of Species* sets off a string of murders, arson, kidnapping, and the pursuit of a madman named the Chorister. As the investigation takes Field from the dangerous alleyways of London to the hallowed halls of Oxford, the list of possible conspirators grows, and the body count escalates. And as he edges closer to the Chorister, he uncovers dark secrets that were meant to remain forever hidden.

Tim Mason has created a rousing page-turner that both Charles Dickens and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle would relish and envy. Riveting and engrossing!

8. Short stories with a bit of magic

Orange World and Other Stories by Karen Russell

From the Pulitzer Finalist and universally beloved author of *Swamplandia!* and *Vampires in the Lemon Grove*, Karen Russell’s stunning new collection of short fiction showcases her extraordinary, irresistible gifts of language and imagination. Her comedic genius and mesmerizing talent for creating outlandish predicaments that uncannily mirror our inner lives is on full display in these eight exuberant, arrestingly vivid, unforgettable stories. In “Bog Girl,” a revelatory story about first love, a young man falls in love with a two thousand year old girl that he’s extracted from a mass of peat in a Northern European bog. In “The Prospectors,” two opportunistic young women fleeing the depression strike out for new territory, and find themselves fighting for their lives. In the brilliant, hilarious title story, a new mother desperate to ensure her infant’s safety strikes a diabolical deal, agreeing to breastfeed the devil in exchange for his protection. The landscape in which these stories unfold is a feral, slippery, purgatorial space, bracketed by the void—yet within it Russell captures the exquisite beauty and tenderness of ordinary life. *Orange World* is a miracle of storytelling from a modern master.

9. What to take on a summer hike:

The Selected Poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay

- The Modern Library Edition, edited by Nancy Milford

One of America’s most celebrated poets—and winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1923—Edna St. Vincent Millay defined a generation with her passionate lyrics and intoxicating voice of liberation. Edited by Millay biographer Nancy Milford, this Modern Library Paperback Classics collection captures the poet’s unique spirit in works like *Renascence and Other Poems*, *A Few Figs from Thistles*, and *Second April*, as well as in “The Ballad of the Harp-Weaver” and eight sonnets from the early twenties. As Milford writes in her Introduction, “These are the poems that made Edna St. Vincent Millay’s reputation when she was young. Saucy, insolent, flip, and defiant, her little verses sting the page.”

10. More inspiring poetry – including on fatherhood:

***The Tradition* by Jericho Brown**

- Signed copies available at the Midtown Scholar, and listen online at our Author Podcast Series

The Tradition details the normalization of evil and its history at the intersection of the past and the personal. Brown's poetic concerns are both broad and intimate, and at their very core a distillation of the incredibly human: What is safety? Who is this nation? Where does freedom truly lie? Brown makes mythical pastorals to question the terrors to which we've become accustomed, and to celebrate how we survive. Poems of fatherhood, legacy, blackness, queerness, worship, and trauma are propelled into stunning clarity by Brown's mastery, and his invention of the duplex—a combination of the sonnet, the ghazal, and the blues—is testament to his formal skill. *The Tradition* is a cutting and necessary collection, relentless in its quest for survival while reveling in a celebration of contradiction.

Jericho Brown worked as the speechwriter for the Mayor of New Orleans before earning his Ph.D. in Creative Writing and Literature from the University of Houston. He is the recipient of the Whiting Writers Award and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University, the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, and the Krakow Poetry Seminar in Poland. His first book, *PLEASE (New Issues)*, won the American Book Award. His second book, *The New Testament*, won the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award and was named one of the best of the year by Library Journal, Coldfront, and the Academy of American Poets; the collection was also nominated for the NAACP award for poetry and made *The Believer's* Top 5 Books of the Year. Brown is the director of the Creative Writing Program at Emory University and lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

Bonus Pick # 1 for July (pub.date 7/2/2019) – World War II history

A powerhouse-couple, some of the best Russian literary translators working today, turn their attention from Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy to an incredible collection of World War II stories.

***Last Witnesses: An Oral History of the Children of World War II* by Nobel Prize winner Svetlana Alexievich, translated by Richard Pevear & Larissa Volokhonsky**

For more than three decades, Svetlana Alexievich has been the memory and conscience of the twentieth century. When the Swedish Academy awarded her the Nobel Prize, it cited her for inventing “a new kind of literary genre,” describing her work as “a history of emotions . . . a history of the soul.”

Bringing together dozens of voices in her distinctive style, *Last Witnesses* is Alexievich's collection of the memories of those who were children during World War II. They had sometimes been soldiers as well as witnesses, and their generation grew up with the trauma of the war deeply embedded—a trauma that would change the course of the Russian nation. Collectively, this symphony of children's stories, filled with the everyday details of life in combat, reveals an altogether unprecedented view of the war. Alexievich gives voice to those whose memories have been lost in the official narratives, uncovering a powerful, hidden history from the personal and private experiences of individuals. *Last Witnesses* is a powerful and poignant account of the central conflict of the twentieth century, a kaleidoscopic portrait of the human side of war.

Bonus Pick # 2 for July (pub.date 7/16/2019) – Compelling historical fiction

***Nickel Boys: A Novel* by Pulitzer Prize & National Book Award winner Colson Whitehead** (author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *The Underground Railroad*)

Colson Whitehead brilliantly dramatizes the story of two boys sentenced to a hellish reform school in Jim Crow-era Florida. Based on the real story of a reform school that operated for one hundred and eleven years and warped the lives of thousands of children, *The Nickel Boys* is a devastating, driven narrative & tour-de-force.

For Young Adult Readers

1. ***On the Come Up* by Angie Thomas** – sequel to the #1 *NYTimes* bestseller *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.

Insightful, unflinching, and full of heart, *On the Come Up* is an ode to hip hop from one of the most influential literary voices of a generation. It is the story of fighting for your dreams, even as the odds are stacked against you; and about how, especially for young black people, freedom of speech isn't always free.

2. ***Dear Evan Hansen: The Novel* by Val Emmich with Steven Levenson, Benj Pasek, and Justin Paul** – a profoundly moving coming-of-age story for today's teens and their parents, too

From the show's creators, the groundbreaking novel inspired by the *Tony* award-winning Broadway musical.

Dear Evan Hansen,

Today's going to be an amazing day and here's why...

When a letter that was never meant to be seen by anyone draws high school senior Evan Hansen into a family's grief over the loss of their son, he is given the chance of a lifetime: to belong. He just has to stick to a lie he never meant to tell, that the notoriously troubled Connor Murphy was his secret best friend.

Suddenly, Evan isn't invisible anymore—even to the girl of his dreams. And Connor Murphy's parents, with their beautiful home on the other side of town, have taken him in like he was their own, desperate to know more about their enigmatic son from his closest friend. As Evan gets pulled deeper into their swirl of anger, regret, and confusion, he knows that what he's doing can't be right, but if he's helping people, how wrong can it be?

No longer tangled in his once-incapacitating anxiety, this new Evan has a purpose. And a website. He's confident. He's a viral phenomenon. Every day is amazing. Until everything is in danger of unraveling and he comes face to face with his greatest obstacle: himself.

A simple lie leads to complicated truths in this big-hearted coming-of-age story of grief, authenticity and the struggle to belong in an age of instant connectivity and profound isolation.

For Middle School Readers

Just published: ***The Misadventures of Max Crumbly 3: Masters of Mischief* by Rachel Renée Russell**, author of the #1 *NYTimes* bestselling *Dork Diaries*

The third book in a series about Max Crumbly and his daily ups and downs in middle school. When we last left our courageous hero, Max Crumbly, and his trusty sidekick Erin, they had just finished foiling the plans of some bumbling thieves. But Max and Erin were trapped in a smelly, dangerous dumpster of doom and about to be discovered by the last people they wanted to find them.

Now in this latest installment of Max's journals, Max and Erin face foes both new and old as their misadventures continue. Can the two friends avoid detection—and detention!—while keeping South Ridge Middle School safe from bullies and criminals?

Picture Book – Top Pick

***Little Dreamers: Visionary Women Around the World* by Vashti Harrison**

Featuring the true stories of 35 women creators, ranging from writers to inventors, artists to scientists, *Little Dreamers: Visionary Women Around the World* inspires as it educates. Readers will meet trailblazing women like Mary Blair, an American modernist painter who had a major influence on how color was used in early animated films, actor/inventor Hedy Lamarr, environmental activist Wangari Maathai, architect Zaha Hadid, filmmaker Maya Deren, and physicist Chien-Shiung Wu. Some names are known, some are not, but all of the women had a lasting effect on the fields they worked in. The charming, information-filled full-color spreads show the Dreamers as both accessible and aspirational so readers know they, too, can grow up to do something amazing.