

Recommended Book List – League of Women Voters Roseville Area (July 24, 2018)

Title	Author	Genre	Description
The Alice Network	Kate Quinn	Fiction	In an enthralling new historical novel from national bestselling author Kate Quinn, two women—a female spy recruited to the real-life Alice Network in France during World War I and an unconventional American socialite searching for her cousin in 1947—are brought together in a mesmerizing story of courage and redemption.
All Passion Spent	Vita Sackville-West	Fiction	Irreverently funny and surprisingly moving, <i>All Passion Spent</i> is the story of a woman who discovers who she is just before it is too late. After the death of elder statesman Lord Slane—a former prime minister of Great Britain and viceroy of India—everyone assumes that his eighty-eight-year-old widow will slowly fade away in her grief, remaining as proper, decorative, and dutiful as she has been her entire married life. But the deceptively gentle Lady Slane has other ideas. First she defies the patronizing meddling of her children and escapes to a rented house in Hampstead. There, to her offspring’s utter amazement, she revels in her new freedom, recalls her youthful ambitions, and gathers some very unsuitable companions—who reveal to her just how much she had sacrificed under the pressure of others’ expectations.
Day After Night	Anita Diamant	Fiction	Just as she gave voice to the silent women of the Hebrew Bible in <i>The Red Tent</i> , Anita Diamant creates a cast of breathtakingly vivid characters—young women who escaped to Israel from Nazi Europe—in this intensely dramatic novel. <i>Day After Night</i> is based on the extraordinary true story of the October 1945 rescue of more than two hundred prisoners from the Atlit internment camp, a prison for “illegal” immigrants run by the British military near the Mediterranean coast south of Haifa. The story is told through the eyes of four young women at the camp who survived the Holocaust: Shayndel, a Polish Zionist; Leonie, a Parisian beauty; Tedi, a hidden Dutch Jew; and Zorah, a concentration camp survivor. Haunted by unspeakable memories and losses, afraid to hope, the four of them find salvation in the bonds of friendship and shared experience even as they confront the challenge of re-creating themselves in a strange new country.
Diplomat’s Daughter	Karin Tanabe	Fiction	As World War II looms, three young people face internment, violence, and shattered futures. Tanabe (<i>The Gilded Years</i> , 2016, etc.) elegantly shifts among the storylines of Emi Kato, the daughter of a Japanese diplomat, Leo Hartmann, the son of an Austrian-Jewish banker, and Christian Lange, the son of a German-born steel baron. Tanabe gracefully entwines these lives, deftly depicting the psychological devastation of thwarted futures and poignantly sketching the shifts into cherishing the present moment. A gorgeously sweeping tale of the transcendence of love.

Title	Author	Genre	Description
The Forgotten Garden	Kate Morton	Fiction	Kate Morton's <i>The Forgotten Garden</i> takes root in your imagination and grows into something enchanting--from a little girl with no memories left alone on a ship to Australia, to a fog-soaked London river bend where orphans comfort themselves with stories of Jack the Ripper, to a Cornish sea heaving against wind-whipped cliffs, crowned by an airless manor house where an overgrown hedge maze ends in the walled garden of a cottage left to rot. This hidden bit of earth revives barren hearts, while the mysterious Authoress's fairy tales (every bit as magical and sinister as Grimm's) whisper truths and ignite the imaginary lives of children. As Morton draws you through a thicket of secrets that spans generations, her story could cross into fairy tale territory if her characters weren't clothed in such complex flesh, their judgment blurred by the heady stench of emotions (envy, lust, pride, love) that furtively flourished in the glasshouse of Edwardian society. While most ache for a spotless mind's eternal sunshine, the Authoress meets the past as "a cruel mistress with whom we must all learn to dance," and her stories gift children with this vital muscle memory.
Handmaid's Tale	Margaret Atwood	Fiction	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> is a novel of such power that the reader will be unable to forget its images and its forecast. Set in the near future, it describes life in what was once the United States and is now called the Republic of Gilead, a monotheocracy that has reacted to social unrest and a sharply declining birthrate by reverting to, and going beyond, the repressive intolerance of the original Puritans. The story is told through the eyes of Offred, one of the unfortunate Handmaids under the new social order. <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> is funny, unexpected, horrifying, and altogether convincing. It is at once scathing satire, dire warning, and a tour de force. It is Margaret Atwood at her best.
The Hate U Give	Angie Thomas	Fiction	Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter is a black girl and an expert at navigating the two worlds she exists in: one at Garden Heights, her black neighborhood, and the other at Williamson Prep, her suburban, mostly white high school. Walking the line between the two becomes immensely harder when Starr is present at the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend, Khalil, by a white police officer. Khalil was unarmed. Khalil's death becomes national news, where he's called a thug and possible drug dealer and gangbanger. His death becomes justified in the eyes of many, including one of Starr's best friends at school. The police's lackadaisical attitude sparks anger and then protests in the community, turning it into a war zone. Questions remain about what happened in the moments leading to Khalil's death, and the only witness is Starr, who must now decide what to say or do, if anything. Thomas cuts to the heart of the matter for Starr and for so many like her, laying bare the systemic racism that undergirds her world, and she does so honestly and inescapably, balancing heartbreak and humor. With smooth but powerful prose delivered in Starr's natural, emphatic voice, finely nuanced characters, and intricate and realistic relationship dynamics, this novel will have readers rooting for Starr and opening their hearts to her friends and family.

Title	Author	Genre	Description
Into the Beautiful North	Luis Alberto Urrea	Fiction	Nineteen-year-old Nayeli works at a taco shop in her Mexican village and dreams about her father, who journeyed to the US to find work. Recently, it has dawned on her that he isn't the only man who has left town. In fact, there are almost no men in the village--they've all gone north. While watching <i>The Magnificent Seven</i> , Nayeli decides to go north herself and recruit seven men--her own "Siete Magníficos"--to repopulate her hometown and protect it from the banditos who plan on taking it over. Filled with unforgettable characters and prose as radiant as the Sinaloan sun, <i>Into the Beautiful North</i> is the story of an irresistible young woman's quest to find herself on both sides of the fence.
It Can't Happen Here	Sinclair Lewis	Fiction	A cautionary tale about the fragility of democracy, it is an alarming, eerily timeless look at how fascism could take hold in America. Written during the Great Depression, when the country was largely oblivious to Hitler's aggression, it juxtaposes sharp political satire with the chillingly realistic rise of a president who becomes a dictator to save the nation from welfare cheats, sex, crime, and a liberal press. Called "a message to thinking Americans" by the <i>Springfield Republican</i> when it was published in 1935, <i>It Can't Happen Here</i> is a shockingly prescient novel that remains as fresh and contemporary as today's news.
The Leavers	Lisa Ko	Fiction	One morning, Deming Guo's mother, Polly, an undocumented Chinese immigrant, goes to her job at a nail salon—and never comes home. No one can find any trace of her. With his mother gone, eleven-year-old Deming is left mystified and bereft. Eventually adopted by a pair of well-meaning white professors, Deming is moved from the Bronx to a small town upstate and renamed Daniel Wilkinson. But far from all he's ever known, Daniel struggles to reconcile his adoptive parents' desire that he assimilate with his memories of his mother and the community he left behind. Told from the perspective of both Daniel—as he grows into a directionless young man—and Polly, Ko's novel gives us one of fiction's most singular mothers. Loving and selfish, determined and frightened, Polly is forced to make one heart wrenching choice after another. Set in New York and China, <i>The Leavers</i> is a vivid examination of borders and belonging. It's a moving story of how a boy comes into his own when everything he loves is taken away, and how a mother learns to live with the mistakes of the past.
Lilac Girls	Martha Hall Kelly	Fiction	New York socialite Caroline Ferriday's world is forever changed when Hitler's army invades Poland in September 1939—and then sets its sights on France. Kasia Kuzmerick, a Polish teenager, senses her carefree youth disappearing as she is drawn deeper into her role as courier for the underground resistance movement. For Herta Oberheuser, an ad for a government medical position seems her ticket out of a desolate life. Once hired, though, she finds herself trapped in a male-dominated realm of Nazi secrets and power. The lives of these three women are set on a collision course when the unthinkable happens and Kasia is sent to Ravensbrück, the notorious Nazi concentration camp for women. Their stories cross continents—from New York to Paris, Germany, and Poland—as Caroline and Kasia strive to bring justice to those whom history has forgotten.

Title	Author	Genre	Description
One of Ours	Willa Cather	Fiction	"One of Ours" is Willa Cather's Pulitzer prize winning story of Claude Wheeler, a Nebraska native at the turn of the 20th century. Claude is a young man who finds himself conflicted by the constraints of his overly pious mother and the demands that his father's successful farm places on his education and life. With the country on the brink of World War One, "One of Ours" is an important document of a changing American frontier and the plight of one young man to deal with it.
Ordinary Grace	William Kent Krueger	Fiction	The narrator, Frank Drum, writes as a middle-age man looking back on a summer in 1961 in New Bremen, Minnesota, when he was 13; the Minnesota Twins were in their first season; and death, in five different instances, shook his family and their community in the Minnesota River valley. The first death is that of Frank's sometime friend Bobby Cole. The proximate cause was a train, but the mystery is whether Bobby stood in front of that train, or was pushed or placed there. More deaths follow, one of which rips apart Frank's family. This coming-of-age story is obviously an attempt to show how grace can work through the fissures of suffering. While the setting is well rendered, the characters are too flat, and Krueger keeps striking the same monologist's meditative note throughout, while most readers will long for variety in style.
Orphan Train	Christina Baker Kline	Fiction	A long journey from home and the struggle to find it again form the heart of the intertwined stories that make up this moving novel. Foster teen Molly is performing community-service work for elderly widow Vivian, and as they go through Vivian's cluttered attic, they discover that their lives have much in common. When Vivian was a girl, she was taken to a new life on an orphan train. These trains carried children to adoptive families for 75 years, from the mid-nineteenth century to the start of the Great Depression. Novelist Kline brings Vivian's hardscrabble existence in Depression-era Minnesota to stunning life. Molly's present-day story in Maine seems to pale in comparison, but as we listen to the two characters talk, we find grace and power in both of these seemingly disparate lives. Although the girls are vulnerable, left to the whims of strangers, they show courage and resourcefulness. Kline illuminates a largely hidden chapter of American history, while portraying the coming-of-age of two resilient young women.
Sing, Unburied, Sing: A Novel	Jesmyn Ward	Fiction	For her third novel, National Book Award winning Jesmyn Ward, tells the story of Jojo, a young black Mississippi boy raised by his grandparents, who is forced to become a man far before he should because his mother is a drug addict, his father is in jail, and his baby sister needs a guardian. When Jojo's dad is released from prison, Leonie packs Jojo and Kayla in the car, picks up her meth addled friend and drives north. What transpires is a nightmarish journey that weaves in and out of the present – Leonie's meth induced highs, when she dreams of her dead brother who was killed by white hands decades ago, and the past -- when a man named Ritchie served time alongside Jojo's grandfather. <i>Sing, Unburied, Sing</i> shimmers with mythic southern memories to tell a story of the drugged and the damned and the fluttering promise of youth.

Title	Author	Genre	Description
Still Life (Chief Inspector Gamache Mystery Series: Book 1)	Louise Penny	Fiction	Chief Inspector Armand Gamache of the Surêté du Québec and his team of investigators are called in to the scene of a suspicious death in a rural village south of Montreal. Jane Neal, a local fixture in the tiny hamlet of Three Pines, just north of the U.S. border, has been found dead in the woods. The locals are certain it's a tragic hunting accident and nothing more, but Gamache smells something foul in these remote woods, and is soon certain that Jane Neal died at the hands of someone much more sinister than a careless bow hunter. <i>Still Life</i> introduces not only an engaging series hero in Inspector Gamache, who commands his forces---and this series---with integrity and quiet courage, but also a winning and talented new writer of traditional mysteries in the person of Louise Penny.
The Thin Woman (Ellie Haskell Series: Book 1)	Dorothy Cannell	Fiction	Ellie Simons longs to be thin—and married. But with her single-minded passion for éclairs and clotted cream, her prospects on both counts seem dim. That's why the summons to attend a family reunion at the old ancestral home is about as welcome as a snakebite. How <i>can</i> she show up with her embarrassingly full figure in her humble unmarried state and keep her chins up? Enter Bentley T. Haskell of Eligibility Escorts, a devastatingly attractive writer of smutty novels who also cooks like a dream. With Bentley posing as her besotted beau, Ellie feels brave enough to beard her batty relations in their den. But moldering Merlin's Court is nothing like Ellie remembers, and with her wretchedly beautiful cousin Vanessa making eyes at Ben, and her malevolent old uncle Merlin popping up in the most unexpected places, it's enough to put Ellie off her food. And the best—and worst—is yet to come, as the weekend leads to sudden death, unexpected romance, and a treasure hunt that promises epicurean Ellie wealth, hearth, and happiness . . . if she survives.
The Women in the Castle	Jessica Shattuck	Fiction	The women referred to in the title are widows of three conspirators involved in the assassination attempt on Hitler. Marianne von Lingenfels, whose moneyed pedigree has protected her from the more unsavory punishments of the war, has been tasked with locating the other resistance widows, and ensuring their safety. But she is no superhero. Along with the naïve Benita and inscrutable Ania, they represent the everyday, ordinary Germans swept up in the extraordinary, who survived as best they could when the right thing to do wasn't always clear (or even an option). If you're curious about what it was like to be a typical citizen during this time--if you struggle to comprehend how a society could become a breeding ground for Hitler's brand of evil, <i>The Women in the Castle</i> offers some insight. It also draws some chilling parallels to things brewing in the political climate today.

Title	Author	Genre	Description
Astrophysics for People in a Hurry	Neil deGrasse Tyson	Nonfiction	America's most approachable astrophysicist distills the past, present, and (theoretical) future of the cosmos into a quick and thoroughly enjoyable read for a general audience. In his signature conversational style, Tyson (<i>Space Chronicles: Facing the Ultimate Frontier</i> , 2012, etc.), director of the Hayden Planetarium at the American Museum of Natural History and host of <i>StarTalk</i> , shows once again his masterly skills at explaining complex scientific concepts in a lucid, readable fashion. In fun, digestible chapters, he covers all the basics: the constituent bits that make up the universe, the forces and laws that govern their interaction, and the pioneering scientists who pieced together the mechanics fabricating our reality. Substituting down-to-earth wit for unnecessary jargon, Tyson presents ideas in clean, straightforward language and allows for the awesome nature of the universe to impress itself on readers unadorned. In short order, you'll be conversant in mind-bending trivia about "star stuff" that may fundamentally shift your perspective of our place in the universe—and convince you to pursue some of the many fine longer-form books on the subject.
Born a Crime	Trevor Noah	Nonfiction	Trevor Noah's unlikely path from apartheid South Africa to the desk of <i>The Daily Show</i> began with a criminal act: his birth. Trevor was born to a white Swiss father and a black Xhosa mother at a time when such a union was punishable by five years in prison. <i>Born a Crime</i> is the story of a mischievous young boy who grows into a restless young man as he struggles to find himself in a world where he was never supposed to exist. It is also the story of that young man's relationship with his fearless, rebellious, and fervently religious mother—his teammate, a woman determined to save her son from the cycle of poverty, violence, and abuse that would ultimately threaten her own life. The stories collected here are by turns hilarious, dramatic, and deeply affecting; Trevor illuminates his curious world with an incisive wit and unflinching honesty. His stories weave together to form a moving and searingly funny portrait of a boy making his way through a damaged world in a dangerous time, armed only with a keen sense of humor and a mother's unconventional, unconditional love.
Conan Doyle for the Defense: A True Story of a Sensational Murder, a Quest for Justice, and the World's Most Famous Detective Writer	Margalit Fox	Nonfiction	For all the scores of biographies of Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of the most famous detective in the world, there is no recent book that tells this remarkable story—in which Conan Doyle becomes a real-life detective on an actual murder case. In <i>Conan Doyle for the Defense</i> , Margalit Fox takes us step by step inside Conan Doyle's investigative process and illuminates a murder mystery that is also a morality play for our time—a story of ethnic, religious, and anti-immigrant bias.

Title	Author	Genre	Description
Educated: A Memoir	Tara Westover	Nonfiction	Tara Westover wasn't your garden variety college student. When the Holocaust was mentioned in a history class, she didn't know what it was (no, really). That's because she didn't see the inside of a classroom until the age of seventeen. Public education was one of the many things her religious fanatic father was dubious of, believing it a means for the government to brainwash its gullible citizens, and her mother wasn't diligent on the homeschooling front. If it wasn't for a brother who managed to extricate himself from their isolated—and often dangerous--world, Westover might still be in rural Idaho, trying to survive her survivalist upbringing. Eventually earning a PhD from Cambridge University may have been the easy part, at least compared to what she had to sacrifice to attain it. The courage it took to make that sacrifice was the truest indicator of how far she'd come, and how much she'd learned. <i>Educated</i> is an inspiring reminder that knowledge is, indeed, power.
Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City	Matt Desmond	Nonfiction	Matthew Desmond explores the stories of tenants and landlords in the poorest areas of Milwaukee during 2008 and 2009. It's almost always a compliment to say that a nonfiction book reads like a novel and this one does – mostly because Desmond gets very close to the “characters,” relating their words and thoughts and layering on enough vibrant details to make every rented property or trailer come alive. You can almost forget that these are actual people with actual problems until he delivers a raw jolt of reality. Through both personal stories and data, Desmond proves that eviction undermines self, family, and community, bearing down disproportionately hard on women with children. On the face of it, it may seem easy to side with the landlords—of course tenants should pay their rent. But as <i>Evicted</i> pulls back layer after layer, what's exposed is a cycle of hurt that all parties—landlord, tenant, city—inflict on one another. Whether readers agree with Desmond's conclusions for how to break this cycle in order to strengthen families and neighborhoods, it's obvious by the end of <i>Evicted</i> that there is no easy fix, and that people—some addicts, some criminals—will slip through the cracks. But it should be just as obvious that we must still try.
Forty Autumns: A Family's Story of Courage and Survival on Both Sides of the Berlin Wall	Nina Willner	Nonfiction	In this illuminating and deeply moving memoir, a former American military intelligence officer goes beyond traditional Cold War espionage tales to tell the true story of her family—of five women separated by the Iron Curtain for more than forty years, and their miraculous reunion after the fall of the Berlin Wall. A personal look at a tenuous era that divided a city and a nation, and continues to haunt us, <i>Forty Autumns</i> is an intimate and beautifully written story of courage, resilience, and love—of five women whose spirits could not be broken, and who fought to preserve what matters most: family.
The Genius of Birds	Jennifer Ackerman	Nonfiction	Birds are astonishingly intelligent creatures. According to revolutionary new research, some birds rival primates and even humans in their remarkable forms of intelligence. In <i>The Genius of Birds</i> , acclaimed author Jennifer Ackerman explores their newly discovered brilliance and how it came about. As she travels around the world to the most cutting-edge frontiers of research, Ackerman not only tells the story of the recently uncovered genius of birds but also delves deeply into the latest findings about the bird brain itself that are shifting our view of what it means to be intelligent. At once personal yet scientific, richly informative and beautifully written, <i>The Genius of Birds</i> celebrates the triumphs of these surprising and fiercely intelligent creatures.

Title	Author	Genre	Description
God's Hotel: A Doctor, a Hospital, and a Pilgrimage to the Heart of Medicine	Victoria Sweet	Nonfiction	San Francisco's Laguna Honda Hospital is the last almshouse in the country, a descendant of the Hôtel-Dieu (God's hotel) that cared for the sick in the Middle Ages. Ballet dancers and rock musicians, professors and thieves—"anyone who had fallen, or, often, leapt, onto hard times" and needed extended medical care—ended up here. So did Victoria Sweet, who came for two months and stayed for twenty years. Laguna Honda, relatively low-tech but human-paced, gave Sweet the opportunity to practice a kind of attentive medicine that has almost vanished. Gradually, the place transformed the way she understood her work. Alongside the modern view of the body as a machine to be fixed, her extraordinary patients evoked an older idea, of the body as a garden to be tended. <i>God's Hotel</i> tells their story and the story of the hospital itself, which, as efficiency experts, politicians, and architects descended, determined to turn it into a modern "health care facility," revealed its own surprising truths about the essence, cost, and value of caring for the body and the soul.
Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI	David Grann	Nonfiction	Greed, depravity, and serial murder in 1920s Oklahoma. During that time, enrolled members of the Osage Indian nation were among the wealthiest people per capita in the world. This vast wealth attracted the attention of unscrupulous whites who found ways to divert it to themselves by marrying Osage women or by having Osage declared legally incompetent so the whites could fleece them through the administration of their estates. For some, however, these deceptive tactics were not enough, and a plague of violent death—by shooting, poison, orchestrated automobile accident, and bombing—began to decimate the Osage in what they came to call the "Reign of Terror." Corrupt and incompetent law enforcement and judicial systems ensured that the perpetrators were never found or punished until the young J. Edgar Hoover saw cracking these cases as a means of burnishing the reputation of the newly professionalized FBI.
Not a Crime to Be Poor: The Criminalization of Poverty in America	Peter Edelman	Nonfiction	In addition to exposing racially biased policing, the Justice Department's <i>Ferguson Report</i> exposed to the world a system of fines and fees levied for minor crimes in Ferguson, Missouri, that, when they proved too expensive for Ferguson's largely poor, African American population, resulted in jail sentences for thousands of people. Peter Edelman explains in <i>Not a Crime to Be Poor</i> , Ferguson is everywhere in America today. Through money bail systems, fees and fines, strictly enforced laws and regulations against behavior including trespassing and public urination that largely affect the homeless, and the substitution of prisons and jails for the mental hospitals that have traditionally served the impoverished, in one of the richest countries on Earth we have effectively made it a crime to be poor. Edelman connects the dots between these policies and others including school discipline in poor communities, child support policies affecting the poor, public housing ordinances, addiction treatment, and the specter of public benefits fraud to paint a picture of a mean-spirited, retributive system that seals whole communities into inescapable cycles of poverty.

Title	Author	Genre	Description
On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century	Timothy Snyder	Nonfiction	A historian offers a set of 20 prescriptions for how to live under a dictatorship. If we read our history properly, we have plenty of examples of how people have held up under tyranny, some resisting, some complying, some collaborating. In this slim book, Snyder finds many of those examples in Greek and Roman history but many more in the totalitarian history of the 20th century. Both fascism and communism, he warns, were “responses to globalization” and to rising inequality. Throughout, Snyder carefully weighs his rules for radicals against historical benchmarks. Those committed to resistance will want to study up on them all the same.
The Real Wealth of Nations: Creating a Caring Economics	Riane Eisler	Nonfiction	The great problems of our time such as poverty, inequality, war, terrorism, and environmental degradation are due in part to our flawed economic models that set the wrong priorities and misallocate resources. Conventional economic measures, policies, and practices fail to give visibility and value to the most essential human work the work of caring and caregiving. This powerful book proposes that we need a radical reformulation of economics, one that supports caring and caregiving at the individual, organizational, societal, and environmental levels. This "caring economics" takes into account the full spectrum of economic activities from the life-sustaining activities of the household, to the life-enriching activities of caregivers and communities of all types, to the life-supporting processes of nature. Eisler exposes the economic double standard that devalues anything stereotypically associated with women and femininity and shows how this distorts our values and our lives.
Red Notice: A True Story of High Finance, Murder, and One Man’s Fight for Justice	Bill Browder	Nonfiction	This is a story about an accidental activist. Bill Browder started out his adult life as the Wall Street maverick whose instincts led him to Russia just after the breakup of the Soviet Union, where he made his fortune. Along the way he exposed corruption, and when he did, he barely escaped with his life. His Russian lawyer Sergei Magnitsky wasn’t so lucky: he ended up in jail, where he was tortured to death. That changed Browder forever. He saw the murderous heart of the Putin regime and has spent the last half decade on a campaign to expose it. Because of that, he became Putin’s number one enemy, especially after Browder succeeded in having a law passed in the United States—The Magnitsky Act—that punishes a list of Russians implicated in the lawyer’s murder. Putin famously retaliated with a law that bans Americans from adopting Russian orphans. A financial caper, a crime thriller, and a political crusade, <i>Red Notice</i> is the story of one man taking on overpowering odds to change the world, and also the story of how, without intending to, he found meaning in his life.
Singing Solo: In Search of a Voice for Mom	Jaclynn Herron	Nonfiction	As dementia transported her mother into a world devoid of memory, language, and ability, the author shed denial and began a ceaseless struggle for the only “treatment” that her mother needed: compassionate care. <i>Singing Solo: In Search of a Voice for Mom</i> relates a family’s true story of the perils of growing old and vulnerable in America.

Title	Author	Genre	Description
Tailspin: The People and Forces Behind America's Fifty-Year Fall—and Those Fighting to Reverse It	Steven Brill	Nonfiction	In this revelatory narrative covering the years 1967 to 2017, Steven Brill gives us a stunningly cogent picture of the broken system at the heart of our society. He shows us how, over the last half-century, America's core values--meritocracy, innovation, due process, free speech, and even democracy itself--have somehow managed to power its decline into dysfunction. They have isolated our best and brightest, whose positions at the top have never been more secure or more remote. The result has been an erosion of responsibility and accountability, an epidemic of shortsightedness, an increasingly hollow economic and political center, and millions of Americans gripped by apathy and hopelessness. By examining the people and forces behind the rise of big-money lobbying, legal and financial engineering, the demise of private-sector unions, and a hamstrung bureaucracy, Brill answers the question on everyone's mind: How did we end up this way? Finally, he introduces us to those working quietly and effectively to repair the damages. At once a diagnosis of our national ills, a history of their development, and a prescription for a brighter future, <i>Tailspin</i> is a work of riveting journalism--and a welcome antidote to political despair.
They Can't Kill Us Until They Kill Us	Hanif Abdurraqib	Nonfiction	At first glance, discovering deep meaning in the performance of top-40 songstress Carly Rae Jepsen might seem like a tough assignment. However, Abdurraqib does more than just manage it; he dives in fully, uncovering aspects of love and adoration that are as illuminating and earnest as they are powerful and profound. If he can do that with Jepsen's pop, imagine what the likes of Bruce Springsteen, Prince, or Nina Simone might stir in him. But as iconic as those artists may be, the subjects found in these essays often serve to invoke deeper forays into the worlds surrounding the artists as much as the artists themselves. Although the author is interested in the success and appeal of The Weeknd or Chance the Rapper, he is also equally—if not more—intrigued with the sociopolitical and existential issues that they each managed to evoke in present-day America. In all of Abdurraqib's poetic essays, there is the artist, the work, the nation, and himself. The author effortlessly navigates among these many points before ultimately arriving at conclusions that are sometimes hopeful, often sorrowful, and always visceral.
Waking Up White: and Finding Myself in the Story of Race	Debby Irving	Nonfiction	<i>Waking Up White</i> is the book Irving wishes someone had handed her decades ago. By sharing her sometimes cringe-worthy struggle to understand racism and racial tensions, she offers a fresh perspective on bias, stereotypes, manners, and tolerance. As Irving unpacks her own long-held beliefs about colorblindness, being a good person, and wanting to help people of color, she reveals how each of these well-intentioned mindsets actually perpetuated her ill-conceived ideas about race. She also explains why and how she's changed the way she talks about racism, works in racially mixed groups, and understands the antiracism movement as a whole.

Title	Author	Genre	Description
The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration	Isabelle Wilkerson	Nonfiction	Ida Mae Brandon Gladney, a sharecropper's wife, left Mississippi for Milwaukee in 1937, after her cousin was falsely accused of stealing a white man's turkeys and was almost beaten to death. In 1945, George Swanson Starling, a citrus picker, fled Florida for Harlem after learning of the grove owners' plans to give him a "necktie party" (a lynching). Robert Joseph Pershing Foster made his trek from Louisiana to California in 1953, embittered by "the absurdity that he was doing surgery for the United States Army and couldn't operate in his own home town." Anchored to these three stories is Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Wilkerson's magnificent, extensively researched study of the "great migration," the exodus of six million black Southerners out of the terror of Jim Crow to an "uncertain existence" in the North and Midwest. Wilkerson deftly incorporates sociological and historical studies into the novelistic narratives of Gladney, Starling, and Pershing settling in new lands, building anew, and often finding that they have not left racism behind.
Without You There is No Us: Undercover Among the Sons of North Korea's Elite	Suki Kim	Nonfiction	A haunting account of teaching English to the sons of North Korea's ruling class during the last six months of Kim Jong-il's reign. Life at Pyongyang University of Science and Technology (PUST) is lonely and claustrophobic, especially for Suki, whose letters are read by censors and who must hide her notes and photographs not only from her minders but from her colleagues—evangelical Christian missionaries who don't know or choose to ignore that Suki doesn't share their faith. As the weeks pass, she is mystified by how easily her students lie, unnerved by their obedience to the regime. At the same time, they offer Suki tantalizing glimpses of their private selves—their boyish enthusiasm, their eagerness to please, the flashes of curiosity that have not yet been extinguished. She in turn begins to hint at the existence of a world beyond their own—at such exotic activities as surfing the Internet or traveling freely and, more dangerously, at electoral democracy and other ideas forbidden in a country where defectors risk torture and execution. But when Kim Jong-il dies, and the boys she has come to love appear devastated, she wonders whether the gulf between her world and theirs can ever be bridged.
The Woman's Hour: The Last Furious Fight to Win the Vote	Elaine Weiss	Nonfiction	A history of the political battle in Tennessee in 1901 over the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The approval by the Tennessee legislature would meet the requisite number of states to provide women the vote in all elections. The efforts by women—and plenty of men—to secure universal suffrage date back to the beginning of the Republic, and journalist Weiss (<i>Fruits of Victory: The Woman's Land Army of America in the Great War</i> , 2008) weaves useful historical context throughout the book. The author clearly explains how the opposition by women—a stance that will surprise some modern readers—derived partly from their desire to be sheltered from politics, partly from the negative influence of men in their lives, and partly from racism (providing ballots to white women would open the floodgates of black women voters). Although the outcome of the Tennessee drama is obvious—after all, we all know the amendment was ratified—Weiss expertly builds the suspense, and the closeness of the eventual vote by the Tennessee legislature adds to the drama.

Title	Author	Genre	Description
The Wright Brothers	David McCullough	Nonfiction	In this “enjoyable, fast-paced tale” (<i>The Economist</i>), master historian David McCullough “shows as never before how two Ohio boys from a remarkable family taught the world to fly” (<i>The Washington Post</i>) and “captures the marvel of what the Wrights accomplished” (<i>The Wall Street Journal</i>). He draws on the extensive Wright family papers to profile not only the brothers but their sister, Katharine, without whom things might well have gone differently for them. Essential reading, this is “a story of timeless importance, told with uncommon empathy and fluency...about what might be the most astonishing feat mankind has ever accomplished... <i>The Wright Brothers</i> soars” (<i>The New York Times Book Review</i>).