

## Fresh Lit! New and Forthcoming Literary Fiction For Readers and Book Groups

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<http://areadersplace.net>

### FAMILY AND DOMESTIC FICTION

**Brelinski, Val.** *The Girl Who Slept With God*. Penguin. Aug., 2015. YA

When Grace Quanbeck, daughter of devout evangelical Christians, returns pregnant from a mission to Mexico, her parents send her and younger sister Jory to live in a remote cabin. Narrated by Jory, the effects of their banishment are quite unexpected. A poignant coming of age novel about the challenges of faith and family with unexpected humor. First novel.

Readalikes: *The Explanation for Everything*, Lauren Grodstein; *When God was a Rabbit*, Sarah Winman; *Coming of Age at the End of Days*, Alice LaPlante (2015); *The Longings of Wayward Girls*, Karen Brown.

**Clegg, Bill.** *Did You Ever Have a Family*. Gallery/Scout Press. Sept., 2015.

The night before her daughter's wedding, a fire kills June Reid's family and her lover. Clegg explores the aftermath of the tragedy through the voices of the survivors. From *Booklist*: "both ineffably sad and deeply inspiring, this mesmerizing novel makes for a powerful debut." First novel.

Previous: *Portrait of an Addict as a Young Man*, *Ninety Days* (both memoirs)

Readalikes: *Everything I Never Told You*, Celeste Ng; *A Little Life*, Hanya Yanigahara; *The Tell-tale Heart*, Jill Dawson (2015); *In the Language of Miracles*, Rajia Hassib; *Small Mercies*, Edward Joyce.

**Daly, Paula.** *The Mistake I Made*. Grove/Atlantic. Sept., 2015.

Roz Toovey's life is in turmoil--she's a divorced mother of small children, her business has just gone bust, and she'll be homeless in two weeks. While attending a party at her sister's home an attractive married man makes her an offer to spend the night with him—for money, lots of money. He wants no-strings-attached intimacy with total discretion. Can this be as foolproof as it sounds?

Author's previous: *Keep Your Friends Close, Just What Kind of Mother Are You?*

Readalikes: *You Should Have Known*, Jean Hanff Korelitz; *Accidents of Marriage*, Randy Susan Meyers.

**de Carlo, Melissa.** *The Art of Crash Landing*. HarperCollins. Sept., 2015. YA

Pregnant Mattie Wallace leaves her self-absorbed boyfriend and heads for Gandy, Oklahoma where she just might get an inheritance from her grandmother and unearth answers to some family mysteries.

Mattie's a smart-mouthed thirty-year old who never met a bad choice she didn't make. Can this be her chance to turn her life around? First novel.

Readalikes: *What I Had Before I Had You*, Sarah Cornwell; *Reunion*, Hannah Pittard; *I Am Having So Much Fun Here Without You*, Courtney Maum.

**Flournoy, Angela.** *The Turner House*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. April, 2015. YA

Publisher: "The Turners have lived on Yarrow Street for over fifty years. Their house has seen thirteen children grown and gone—and some returned; it has seen the arrival of grandchildren, the fall of Detroit's East Side, and the loss of a father. But now, as ailing matriarch Viola is forced to leave her home and move in with her eldest son, the Turner children are called home to decide its fate and to reckon with how each of their pasts haunts—and shapes—their family's future." First novel.

Readalikes: *The Slap*, Christos Tsiolkas; *The Twelve Tribes of Hattie*, Ayana Mathis; *Early Warning, Some Luck*, and *Golden Age*, Jane Smiley; *The Nest*, Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney (March, 2016).

**Gornick, Lisa. *Louisa Meets Bear*.** Farrar, Straus & Giroux. June, 2015.

*PW*: “Gornick’s brilliantly constructed novel offers a seamless series of events, spanning 1961 to 2009, that explore the full spectrum of life in all its bizarre coincidences, tragedies, and passions. An array of interconnected stories that focus on different characters, with shifting uses of first, second, and third person, Gornick’s book ties together her characters as they undergo a variety of life-changing experiences. But...at its heart is the torrid relationship between Louisa and Bear that, decades later, comes full circle in a remarkably revelatory way.”

Author’s previous: ***Tinderbox, A Private Sorcery***

Readalikes: ***Olive Kitteridge***, Elizabeth Strout; ***Fates and Furies***, Lauren Groff (2015); ***Nothing is Quite the Same***, Alice Mattison; ***A Short History of Women***, Kate Walbert; ***Three Junes***, Julia Glass; ***The God of Love and Techno***, Anthony Marra (2015).

**Gottlieb, Eli. *Best Boy*.** Liveright/Norton. Aug., 2015. YA

Living in a “therapeutic community” for autism since age eleven, Todd Aaron is now in his fifties. A cheerful man who rereads the encyclopedia, he is unnerved by the sudden arrival of a new staffer, a new roommate, and a new resident with romantic intentions. A moving story, filled with humor and heartache, told in the first person by Todd.

Author’s previous: ***The Boy Who Went Away, Now You See Him, The Face Thief***

Readalikes: ***Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time***, Mark Haddon; ***The Rosie Project***, Graeme Simsion; ***Still Alice, Lisa Genova; Piece of Mind***, Michelle Adelman (Feb., 2016).

**Joyce Edward. *Small Mercies*.** Penguin Press. March, 2015. YA

Ten years after 9/11, an Italian-Irish family continues to cope with the loss of their son in that disaster. Told from multiple viewpoints and filled with humor and insight into family life and the insular culture of firemen and policemen in Staten Island. First novel.

Readalikes: ***Golden State***, Michelle Richmond; ***Flying Shoes***, Lisa Howorth; ***The Grief of Others***, Leah Hager Cohen.

**Pierpont, Julia. *Among the Ten Thousand Things*.** Random House. July, 2015.

Publisher: “Jack Shanley is a well-known New York artist, charming and vain, who doesn’t mean to plunge his family into crisis. His wife, Deb, gladly left behind a difficult career as a dancer to raise the two children she adores. But then an anonymously sent package arrives in the mail: a cardboard box containing sheaves of printed emails chronicling Jack’s secret life. The package is addressed to Deb, but it’s delivered into the wrong hands: her children’s.” First novel.

Readalikes: ***Fates and Furies***, by Lauren Groff (2015); ***The Good Life***, Jay McInerney; ***Housebreaking***, Dan Pope (2015); ***Bird in Hand***, Christina Baker Kline; ***The Forgotten Waltz***, Anne Enright.

## MULTICULTURAL FICTION

**Cruzet, Jennine Capo. *Make Your Home Among Strangers*.** St. Martin’s Press. Aug., 2015. YA

Publisher: “When Lizet--the daughter of Cuban immigrants and the first in her family to graduate from high school--secretly applies and is accepted to an ultra-elite college, her parents are furious at her decision to leave Miami. Weeks before she's set to start school, her parents divorce and her father sells her childhood home, leaving Lizet, her mother, and Leidy--Lizet's older sister, a brand-new single mom--without a steady income and scrambling for a place to live.” The first generation immigrant experience well told: funny and poignant, with great dialogue.

Author’s previous: ***How to Leave Hialeah*** (short stories)

Readalikes: ***How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents***, Julia Alvarez.

**Ferriss, Lucy. *A Sister to Honor*.** Penguin. Jan., 2015. YA

Afia Satar and her brother Shahid leave their devout Islamic home in Pakistan to study in the U.S. Shahid has promised their parents he will protect his sister but when a Facebook photo show Afia holding hands with an American boy, the consequences spiral out of Shahid's control--a riveting and relevant novel.

Author's previous: ***The Lost Daughter, Leaving the Neighborhood***

Readalikes: ***The Lowlands***, Jhumpa Lahiri; ***In the Language of Miracles***, Rajia Hassib (2015); ***The Reluctant Fundamentalist***, Mohsin Hamid; ***All Who Go Do Not Return***, Shulem Deen (memoir).

**Fouroutan, Parnaz. *The Girl From the Garden*.** HarperCollins. August, 2015.

LJ: "Mahboubeh Malacouti, an elderly woman living in Los Angeles, recalls the stories surrounding her family in early 1900s Iran. Mahboubeh brings to life her Uncle Asher, the wealthiest Jewish man in the town of Kermanshah, and his young, barren wife, Rakhel. As Mahboubeh describes Asher's obsession with having an heir, she begins to unravel the mysteries surrounding her mother's death and confronts the unsavory darkness beneath her uncle's exterior...an immersive tale of the inner strength of women living in a time and within a culture when their thoughts and opinions were meant to be kept to themselves." First novel.

Readalikes: ***Henna House***, Nomi Eve; ***The Language of Threads***, Gail Tsukuyama; ***Snow Flower and the Secret Fan***, Lisa See; ***And the Mountains Echoed***, Khaled Hosseini.

**Gowdy, Shilpa Somaya. *The Golden Son*.** HarperCollins. Jan., 2016. YA

Publisher: "The first of his family to go to college, Anil Patel, the golden son, carries the weight of tradition and his family's expectations when he leaves his tiny Indian village to begin a medical residency in Dallas." Caught between two worlds, especially after his father dies, Anil must decide where and how he must live to remain true to himself.

Author's previous: ***Secret Daughter***

Readalikes: ***The Newlyweds***, Nell Freudenberger; ***The Story Hour***, Thrity Umrigar; ***Brick Lane***, Monica Ali; ***Cutting for Stone***, Abraham Verghese; ***In the Language of Miracles***, Rajia Hassib (2015).

**Hashimi, Nadia. *When the Moon is Low*.** Morrow. July, 2015. YA

When her husband is murdered by the Taliban, Fereiba is forced to flee Kabul with her 3 children, desperate to cross Europe and find her family in London. This ripped-from-the-headlines story puts a very human face on the refugee crisis.

Author's Previous: ***The Pearl That Broke its Shell***

Readalikes: ***A Thousand Splendid Suns***, Khaled Hosseini; ***The Blue Between Sky and Water***, Susan Abulhawa (2015); ***Tortilla Curtain***, T.C. Boyle.

**Okparanta, Chinelo. *Under the Udala Trees*.** Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Sept., 2015. YA

The war in Nigeria kills 11-year old Ijeoma's father and uproots her from her home. While living with family friends, she meet Amina, an orphan; the two girls fall in love, and begin exploring their sexuality, at risk from strict legal and cultural taboos. Discovered by Ijeoma's mother, they continue to wrestle with their feelings for each other, but are each forced to marry men. Ultimately, Ijeoma must contend with her feelings and make a decision.

Author's previous: ***Happiness, Like Water*** (short stories)

Readalikes: ***Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away***, Christie Watson; ***The Fishermen***, Chigozie Obioma (2015).

**Park, Patricia. *Re Jane*.** Penguin. May, 2015. YA

Jane Re, a half Korean orphan, lives with her uncle in Flushing, Queens and works at his store, yearning to put her college degree to better use. A chance to work as an *au pair* in Brooklyn starts well, but then turns sour, and Jane returns to Korea to discover who she really is, in this upbeat retelling of Jane Eyre. First novel.

Readalikes: ***The Flight of Gemma Hardy*** by Margot Livesey (another Jane Eyre takeoff); ***Americanah***, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

### **EDGY, SUSPENSEFUL NOVELS; LITERARY MYSTERIES; POLITICAL NOVELS**

**Morton, Kate. *The Lake House*.** Atria Books, Oct., 2015. YA

In 1930s England, on a great estate in Cornwall, 14-year old Alice Edevane's little brother Theo disappears during a party and is never found. Sixty years later, police detective Sadie Sparrow of the London police stumbles on the estate and re-opens the case. Family secrets, shifting chronology, and multiple narrators make an atmospheric tale. *Kirkus*: "An artful, engulfing interweaving of past, present, and personalities."

Author's previous: ***The Secret Keeper***, ***The Distant Hours***, others.

Readalikes: ***The Secret Life of Viola Grant***, Beatriz Williams; ***The Cuckoo's Calling***, Robert Galbraith (aka J.K. Rowling) ***Sight Unseen***, Robert Goddard; ***The Crooked House***, Christobel Kent (Jan, 2016).

**Moshfegh, Otessa. *Eileen*.** Penguin. August, 2015.

Eileen Dunlop spends her days as a secretary in a boys' prison outside Boston and her nights cleaning up after her alcoholic father. She dreams about the good-looking prison guard at work and plots revenge and escape. When Rebecca Saint John arrives on the scene as the new prison counselor, Eileen is enchanted and unable to resist what appears to be a budding friendship, but Rebecca pulls her into complicity in a crime that surpasses her wildest imaginings. Creepy and mesmerizing.

Author's previous: ***McGlue***

Readalikes: ***The Other Typist***, Suzanne Rindell; ***Jack of Spades***, Joyce Carol Oates (2015); ***House of Thieves***, Charles Belfoure (2015); ***The Passenger***, Lisa Lutz (Mar., 2016); Patricia Highsmith's novels.

**Rothschild, Hannah. *The Improbability of Love*.** Knopf/Doubleday, Nov., 2015.

Annie McDee, a private chef working for unscrupulous art dealers, buys a painting in a junk shop that turns out to be an 18th century masterpiece. The ensuing scramble in the art world for ownership of the painting is equal parts detective story, romance, and satire. One of the narrative voices is the painting itself! First novel.

Readalikes: ***The Goldfinch***, Donna Tartt; ***The Art Forger***, B.A. Shapiro.

**Scotton, Christopher. *The Secret Wisdom of the Earth*.** Grand Central. Jan., 2015. YA

Kevin Gillooley reflects on the revelatory summer he spent as a teenager in a remote Appalachian coal town. He learned to appreciate the beauty of the mountains, but also saw the workings of local prejudice, and the greed of the mining company that desecrated the surrounding hills. A powerful coming-of-age novel about loss and redemption with an environmental punch. First novel.

Readalikes: ***A Land More Kind Than Home***, Wiley Cash; ***Flight Behavior***, Barbara Kingsolver; ***Lost Canyon***, Nina Revoyr (2015); ***Above the Waterfall***, Ron Rash (2015).

**Urza, Gabriel. *All That Followed*.** Henry Holt, Aug., 2015.

Set in Muriega, a small town in the Basque region of Spain, where a complicated political history has left a legacy of secrets. The book opens 5 years after the kidnapping and murder of a local politician and

“peels away the layers of a crime complicated by history, love, and betrayal. The accounts of three townspeople--the councilman's beautiful young widow, the teenage radical now in jail for the crime, and an aging American teacher hiding a traumatic past of his own--hold the key to what really happened. For these three, it's finally time to confront what they can find of the truth.”--Publisher. First novel.

Readalikes: **No. 4 Imperial Lane**, Jonathan Weisberg (2015); **The Way Things Were**, Aatish Taseer (2015); **A Constellation of Vital Phenomena**, Anthony Marra; **Leaving Berlin**, Joseph Kanon (2015); **To the End of the Land**; David Grossman; **High Dive**, Jonathan Lee (Mar., 2016)

**Wagamese, Richard. *Medicine Walk*.** Milkweed Press. May, 2015. YA

Franklin Starlight has never really known his biological father, Eldon. The few times he's seen the alcoholic man have ended in disaster, but at the end of his life, his father reaches out, asking Franklin to take him to a spot in the wilderness so he can die in the warrior pose. Together they make the difficult trip through beautiful, rugged backcountry. In the process, Franklin comes to understand his father's choices. *PW*: “Wagamese's muscular prose and spare tone complement this gem of a narrative, which examines the bond between father and son.”

Author's previous: **Ragged Company**, others

Readalikes: **Sweetland**, Michael Crummey (2015); **The High Divide**, Lin Enger; **All the Pretty Horses**, Cormac McCarthy; **Three Day Road**, Joseph Boyden; **The Underpainter**, Jane Urquhart.

#### HEAVY HITTERS IN LITERARY FICTION

**Atkinson, Kate. *A God in Ruins*.** Little, Brown, May, 2015.

Publisher: “tells the dramatic story of the 20th Century through the story of Teddy Todd-- would-be poet, heroic pilot, husband, father, and grandfather--as he navigates the perils and progress of a rapidly changing world...An ingenious and moving exploration of one ordinary man's path through extraordinary times.” This follow-up to Atkinson's *Life After Life* stands on its own and is filled with her trademark elegance and wit.

Author's previous: **Case Histories**, **Behind the Scenes at the Museum**.

Readalikes: **Consequences**, Penelope Lively; **Atonement**, Ian McEwan; **Double Vision**, Pat Barker.

**Atwood, Margaret. *The Heart Goes Last*.** Knopf/Doubleday. Sept., 2015.

*Kirkus*: “To escape living as paupers in their own car, Stan and Charmaine have agreed to join this tightly-regulated community, where pairs of couples alternate monthly between a suburban home and a lock-down prison. At first, the arrangement seems to work for the novel's main characters, but then a fly in the ointment appears in the form of lust.”

Author's previous: **The Handmaid's Tale**, **Oryx and Crake**, many others

Readalikes: **On Such a Full Sea**, Chang-Rae Lee; **Gold Fame Citrus**, Claire Vaye Watkins (2015).

**Ferrante, Elena. *The Story of the Lost Child*.** Europa, Sept. (Neapolitan Novels series #4)

Those who have read the first 3 novels in this remarkable series will be eager to find out the fates of Lila and Elena, friends since childhood, locked in a devoted but combative relationship as they try to escape the hold of the village near Naples where they grew up.

Author's previous: **Days of Abandonment**, **The Lost Daughter**

Readalikes: **The Golden Notebook**, Doris Lessing; **The Four-Gated City**, Doris Lessing; **My Brilliant Career**, Miles Franklin; **The Robber Bride**, Margaret Atwood; **Testament of Youth**, Vera Brittain.

Memoirs: **A Tale of Love and Darkness**, Amos Oz; **Fierce Attachments**, Vivian Gornick.

**Franzen, Jonathan. *Purity*.** Farrar, Straus & Giroux. Sept., 2015.

The heroine of this twisty tale is Pip, who we meet when she's in a dead-end job, living in a squat, wondering why her mother won't tell her who her father is. She accepts an internship in South America with the Sunlight Project, a Wiki-leaks style group, aiming to reveal all the world's secrets, headed up by the mysterious Andreas Wolf. Pip falls into a world of extremism, idealism and murder. Kirkus: "An expansive, brainy, yet inviting novel that leaves few foibles unexplored."

Author's previous: ***The Corrections, Freedom***

Readalikes: ***The Circle***, Dave Eggers; ***A Visit From the Goon Squad***, Jennifer Egan.

**Hallberg, Garth Risk. *City on Fire*.** Knopf. Oct., 2015.

An enormous, totally absorbing novel, that requires--and rewards--patience, a crime story filled with heartbreaking and evil characters. Set in New York, in the late 1970s, at the height of the city's financial meltdown, when crime, disaffection, and punk music were rampant. Characters range from the most wealthy to the most down-and-out, from the criminal world to the art/music world to the financial world. The author slowly weaves several strands of stories together and they reach their riveting climax during the blackout of July 13, 1977. First novel.

Readalikes: ***The Whites***, Harry Brandt (aka Richard Price, 2015); ***Bonfire of the Vanities***, Tom Wolfe; ***Underworld***, Don DeLillo; ***A Brief History of Seven Killings***, Marlon James.

**Hijuelos, Oscar. *Twain and Stanley Enter Paradise*.** Grand Central. Nov., 2015.

Mark Twain and Henry M. Stanley did know each other, but Hijuelos fabricated letters and diaries to concoct this story of their friendship. LJ: "The novel...succeeds in conjuring a bygone era from rural 19th-century Cuba to upper-class London society. Well written and engaging, this novel may lack some of the fire of the author's best-known work, but it is an intriguing entry in his output and will appeal to his fans and those who enjoy historical fiction." Hijuelos worked on this novel for 10 years; he was still revising it when he died in 2013.

Author's previous: ***The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love, Beautiful Maria of My Soul***

Readalikes: ***Euphoria***, Lily King; ***March***, Geraldine Brooks; ***Twain's End***, Lynn Cullen (2015).

**Winterson, Jeanette. *The Gap of Time*.** Crown/Hogarth. Oct., 2015.

A modern version of Shakespeare's late play, *The Winter's Tale*, a problem drama where lost children reappear, the dead live again, and the plot is filled with unlikely coincidences. Winterson updates the story, reinventing the two main characters as a hedge fund manager and a video game designer, who struggle with money, status, technology and the nature of time. Fun whether you know the play or not. The first in a series of re-imaginings of Shakespeare's plays.

Author's previous: ***Oranges are Not the Only Fruit, Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal***

Additional (forthcoming) titles in the series: ***Shylock is my Name***, Howard Jacobson (*The Merchant of Venice*); ***Vinegar Girl***, Anne Tyler (*Taming of the Shrew*); Margaret Atwood on *The Tempest* (untitled); others are listed on the Hogarth site: [www.hogarthshakespeare.com](http://www.hogarthshakespeare.com)

Readalikes: ***We Were the Mulvaneys***, Joyce Carol Oates; ***The Meursault Investigation***, Kamel Daoud.

## HISTORICAL FICTION

**Allende, Isabel. *The Japanese Lover*.** Atria Book., Nov., 2015. YA

When Moldovan refugee Irina Bazili begins working at an assisted living home, she is drawn into the life of wealthy Alma Belasco, a retired designer. As a young girl, Alma fell in love with the Ichimei, the Japanese gardener's son; their love survived his internment during World War II and became part of

Alma's secret life. A lovely tribute to the triumph of the spirit among the elderly, written in Allende's usual expansive, warm style.

Readalikes: ***Our Souls at Night***, Kent Haruf (2015); ***Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet***, Jamie Ford; ***The Garden of Evening Mists***, Tan Twan Eng; ***The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry***, Rachel Joyce; ***Major Pettigrew's Last Stand***, Helen Simonson.

**Baily, Virginia. *Early One Morning***. Little, Brown. Sept., 2015. YA

*LJ*: "Chiara Ravello is preparing to flee to her grandparents' house when she happens across families being forcibly removed from the Jewish ghetto. Without thinking, she rescues a boy from his mother's arms, an action that has three decades' worth of repercussions for Chiara, the boy, Daniele, and eventually his daughter, Maria... This is not a sentimental tale of a good deed met with the instant reward of a happily ever after but is instead the story of two women coming to terms with themselves as they search for a man who touched both their lives in different ways."

Author's previous: *first novel published in U.S.*

Readalikes: ***The Hand That First Held Mine***, Maggie O'Farrell; ***The Orphan Train***, Christina Baker Kline; ***Consequences***, Penelope Lively.

**Clark, Clare. *We That Are Left***. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Oct., 2015. YA

For fans of *Downton Abbey* and *Testament of Youth*, an engrossing story of loss and recovery in the aftermath of World War I. The Melvilles have lived in Ellinghurst for 300 years, but when the heir Theo, is killed in the war, all is uncertain. Older sister Phyllis scorns tradition and makes a break to live in London, first as a nurse, then as an archaeologist. Her sister, Jessica, pines for the coming out season that would have netted her a husband. Family friend Oscar Greenwood is the most insightful, may be the only one who can save the castle. *Kirkus* called this a "vivid, layered, and provocative period drama about the trade-offs of backing tradition versus letting go."

Author's previous: ***The Great Stink, Savage Lands***

Readalikes: ***Testament of Youth***, Vera Brittain; ***Life Class***, Pat Barker; ***The Sense of an Ending***, Julian Barnes; ***The Children's Book***, A.S. Byatt; ***The Summer Before the War***, Helen Simonson (Mar. 2016); ***Noonday***, Pat Barker (March, 2016).

**Evans, Lissa. *Crooked Heart***. Harpercollins. July, 2015. YA

from *NYTBR*: "...in Lissa Evans's absorbing and atmospheric comic novel, another quietly heroic orphan joins the canon...This is a wonderfully old-fashioned, Dickensian novel, with satisfying plot twists that invoke the flavor (and scams) of wartime London...Evans...has created a story both darkly funny and deeply touching—and no less joyous for its predictability. We know that these two people, hapless and unappreciated alone and initially so distrusting of each other, are going to connect; the pleasure is in discovering how they do it...It's a series of unfortunate (and fortunate) events, many of them legally wrong, most of them morally right. It's a crooked journey, straight to the heart."

Author's Previous: (first title published in US)

Readalikes: ***About a Boy***, Nick Hornby; ***The Little Friend***, Donna Tartt; ***Perfect***, Rachel Joyce; ***Be Frank With Me***, Julia Claiborne Johnson (Feb., 2016).

**Patel, Shona. *Flame Tree Road***. Mira. June, 2015. YA

*LJ*: Set "in a small riverside village in 1870s India, where caste and tradition determine one's lot in life. When young Biren Roy's mother suffers the worst possible fate for a woman, widowhood, Biren swears he will become a lawyer and fight for women's rights in India. Eventually, he becomes the lawyer he set out to be...but Biren faces a whole new set of challenges fighting the barriers of India's history and

tradition. Achieving his dream seems hopeless until he meets the passionate Maya. Armed with new hope, Biren must find a balance between heritage and progress to attain his goals. Strong setting, slow pacing, beautifully written.”

Author’s previous: *Teatime for the Firefly*

Readalikes: *The Pearl That Broke its Shell*, Nadia Hashimi; *The Lives of Others*, Neel Mukherjee.

**Weisberg, Jonathan. No. 4 Imperial Lane.** Twelve/Grand Central. Aug., 2015.

In this beautifully written, engrossing debut novel, a young American signs on as a caregiver to a quadriplegic to extend his year abroad in Britain. As David gets to know the Bromwells, he learns about their tragic connection to war-torn Angola and his own life is changed by that knowledge. First novel.

Readalikes: *The Tsar of Love and Techno*, Anthony Marra (2015); *Double Vision*, Pat Barker; *A Change of Climate*, Hilary Mantel; *The Hungry Tide*, Amitav Ghosh.

### HISTORICAL FICTION REAL (or literary) CHARACTERS

**Attenberg, Jami. Saint Mazie.** Grand Central. June, 2015. YA

*Kirkus*: “Early 20th-century New York and its denizens portrayed through the fictional diary of a nonfictional heroine. Mazie Phillips was a real person, a rough-and-ready Mother Theresa who walked the streets of Lower Manhattan in the early 1930s, giving out money for food, buying drinks, calling ambulances.” Mazie’s unique portrait is pieced together through recollections, diary entries, and her own memoir.

Author’s previous: *The Middlesteins*

Readalikes: *Orphan #8*, Kim Van Alkemade (2015 ); *The Boston Girl*, Anita Diamant; *Girl Waits With Gun*, Amy Stewart (2015); *Away*, Amy Bloom; other early 20th cent immigrant stories.

**Brooks, Geraldine. The Secret Chord.** Penguin, Oct., 2015.

*LJ*: “An aging King David reflects upon the battles, loves, and the slaying of a giant that have brought him to his prophesied glory. He requests his longtime confidant, Natan, to visit the key players in his life and chronicle his unvarnished past...Pulitzer Prize winner Brooks has given us a portrait of a monarch who is despicable, heartless, and cruel and yet can inspire and reciprocate passionate love and fierce loyalty... her writing is insightful and impeccably researched.”

Author’s previous: *People of the Book, March*, others

Readalikes: *Cleopatra’s Shadow*, Emily Holleman (2015); *The Dovekeepers*, Alice Hoffman; *The Red Tent*, Anita Diamant.

**Cantor, Jillian. The Hours Count.** Penguin, Oct., 2015. YA

Publisher: “On June 19, 1953, Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were executed for conspiring to commit espionage. The day Ethel was first arrested in 1950, she left her two young sons with a neighbor, and she never came home to them again. Brilliantly melding fact and fiction, Jillian Cantor reimagines the life of that neighbor, and the life of Ethel and Julius, an ordinary-seeming Jewish couple who became the only Americans put to death for spying during the Cold War.”

Author’s previous: *Margot*

Readalikes: *The Aviator’s Wife*, Melanie Benjamin; *Mrs. Lincoln’s Dressmaker*, Jennifer Chiaverini.

**Hoffman, Alice. The Marriage of Opposites.** S&S. Aug., 2015.

*LJ*: “Hoffman takes us to early 1800s St. Thomas to reveal the story of renowned French painter Camille Pissarro’s origins. As the story opens, headstrong young Rachel, part of a small community of Jews whose forbears had fled the Inquisition, is summarily married off to a widower with three children to



save her father's business. When her husband dies, his nephew Frédéric travels from France to settle the estate, and Rachel gets to live her dreams as she launches into a scandalous affair and remarriage."

Author's previous: *The Dovekeepers*, many others

Readalikes: *Paris Red*, Maureen Gibbon (2015); *Madame Picasso*, Anne Girard.

**McLain, Paula. *Circling the Sun*.** Random House. July, 2015.

Publisher: "McLain, brings to life the fearless and captivating Beryl Markham, a record-setting aviator caught up in a passionate love triangle with safari hunter Denys Finch Hatton and Karen Blixen, author of the classic memoir *Out of Africa*. Brought to Kenya from England as a child and then abandoned by her mother, Beryl is raised by her father and the native Kipsigis tribe who share his estate. Her unconventional upbringing transforms Beryl into a bold young woman with a fierce love of all things wild and an understanding of nature's delicate balance."

Author's previous: *The Paris Wife*

Readalikes: *Villa America*, Lisa Klausman (2015); *Loving Frank*, Nancy Horan.

**Shapiro, B.A. *The Muralist*.** Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill. Nov., 2015. YA

In Shapiro's second novel set in the art world, Danielle Abrams, working at Christie's auction house, comes across paintings done by her great-aunt Alizee Benoit in the late 1930s when she was part of the Works Progress Administration. Alizee worked alongside the early Abstract Expressionists: Pollock, Rothko, and Krasner, but she vanished in 1940, never to be heard from again. In this split-screen historical, we see Alizee's growing fears for her relatives in France as Danielle tries to solve the mystery of Alizee's disappearance in the present.

Author's Previous: *The Art Forger*

Readlikes: *Sarah's Key*, Tatiana de Rosnay; *Love and Treasure*, Ayelet Waldman (2015); *The Nightingale*, Kristin Hannah (2015).

**Trigiani, Adriana. *All the Stars in Heaven*.** HarperCollins, Oct., 2015. YA

In this reimagining of the life of film star Loretta Young, "...author and filmmaker Trigiani re-creates the golden age of Hollywood with...rich, sumptuous detail. Her ability to breathe life into the luminous cast of characters, which includes Spencer Tracy, Myrna Loy, David Niven, and Carole Lombard, will captivate readers. A tinsel-trimmed treat for movie buffs and Trigiani fans alike." LJ

Readalikes: *Falling From Horses*, Molly Gloss; *Stardust*, Joseph Kanon; *Beautiful Ruins*, Jess Walter; *Along the Infinite Sea*, Beatriz Williams (2015); *The Swans of Fifth Avenue*, Melanie Benjamin (2015); *West of Sunset*, Stuart O'Nan (2015).

**Wright, Ronald. *The Gold Eaters*.** Penguin, Nov., 2015.

PW: "Wright tackles the complex and tragic story of Spanish explorer Francisco Pizarro and his army of conquistadores, as they ravage and destroy Peru's Inca civilization in their insatiable hunger for gold during the years 1526–1544. Waman, an adolescent fisherman in northern Peru, is captured at sea by a Spanish ship...and kept as a slave, to be Pizarro's interpreter. As years pass Waman witnesses Spanish duplicity, treachery, and brutality. This is a rousing adventure tale of bold exploration and conquest, but best is Wright's vivid portrayal of unrestrained 16th-century Spanish imperialism, complete with villains, victims, and a few heroes."

Author's previous: *Henderson's Spear*, others

Readalikes: *The Poisonwood Bible*, Barbara Kingsolver; *A Different Sky*, Meira Chand; *Daughter of Fortune*, Isabel Allende; *Ines of My Soul*, Isabel Allende; *Aztec* series by Gary Jennings, *Scarpia*, Piers Paul Read (March 2016).

**A few 2016 novels to watch for (beyond the titles listed in readalikes, above):**

**Chevalier, Tracy. *At the Edge of the Orchard*.** Viking. Mar. 2016.

previous: *Girl With a Pearl Earring, The Last Runaway*, others

**DeLillo, Don. *Zero K*.** Scribner. May, 2016.

previous: *Underworld, White Noise, Libra*, others

**Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee. *Before We Visit the Goddess*.** S&S. April, 2016.

previous: *Mistress of Spices, Oleander Girl*, others.

**Grissom, Kathleen. *Glory over Everything: Beyond the Kitchen House*.** S&S. April, 2016.

previous: *The Kitchen House*

**Faulks, Sebastian. *Where my heart used to beat*.** Henry Holt. Jan., 2016.

previous: *Birdsong, Charlotte Gray*, others

**Hadley, Tessa. *The Past*.** Harper. Jan., 2016.

previous: *The London Train, Clever Girl*, others

**Martel, Yann. *The High Mountains of Portugal*.** Spiegel & Grau. Feb. 2016.

previous: *The Life of Pi*

**Mitchard, Jacquelyn. *Two if by Sea*.** S&S. Marcy, 2016.

previous: *The Deep End of the Ocean*

**O’Nan, Stewart. *City of Secrets*.** Viking. April, 2016.

previous: *West of Sunset, City of Secrets*, others

**Quindlen, Anna. *Miller’s Valley* (2016)**

previous: *Still Life with Breadcrumbs; Lots of Candles, Plenty of Cake*, others

**Strout, Elizabeth. *My Name is Lucy Barton* (2016)**

previous: *Olive Kitteredge, The Burgess Boys, Amy and Elizabeth*