

2023

SUMMER READING GUIDE

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SUMMER WORLD: A SEASON OF BOUNTY

BY BERND HEINRICH

RECOMMENDED BY SARAH HARLAN-HAUGHEY

“THIS IS THE SISTER BOOK TO WINTER WORLD, AND IS A BEAUTIFUL INTRODUCTION TO THE WORLD OF SUMMER IN THE NORTH AS EXPERIENCED BY NON-HUMAN ANIMALS. HEINRICH IS A DEEPLY OBSERVANT NATURALIST, AND HIS WORLD IS OURS: HE LIVES IN WESTERN MAINE. I RETURN TO BOTH OF THESE BOOKS OFTEN AS THE SEASONS TURN”

THE SUMMER BOOK

BY TOVE JANSSON

RECOMMENDED BY KATHERINE MATTHEWS

“DO WE CONTINUE TO WONDER ABOUT OUR WORLD AS WE GROW OLDER? WHAT IS THE GLUE THAT HOLDS THE GENERATIONS TOGETHER? JANSSON INVITES US INTO A STORY OF A YOUNG GIRL, SOPHIA, AND HER GRANDMOTHER, AS THEY SPEND THEIR SUMMER TOGETHER EXPLORING A LITTLE ISLAND IN THE GULF OF FINLAND. IT TURNS OUT THOSE WHO ARE NEW TO THE WORLD AND THOSE WHO ARE SOON TO LEAVE THE WORLD HAVE SOME SIMILAR QUESTIONS TO ASK OF THE PLACES THEY CALL HOME.”

TIGER FLU

BY LARISSA LAI

RECOMMENDED BY AMANDA GARROD

“CLONES, MAD TECH, PANDEMICS, DYSTOPIA, AND SAPPHICS. WILD RIDE OF A BOOK THAT LEAVES YOU GUESSING AT EVERY SINGLE TURN. TW: CHARACTER DEATH, VIOLENCE, BODY HORROR, TWISTED GORE”

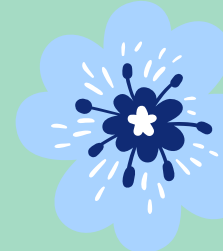
GREEK LESSONS

BY HAN KANG (TRANSLATED BY DEBORAH SMITH AND EMILY YAE WON)

RECOMMENDED BY DR. CARLA BILLITTERI

“I LOVE HAN KANG'S WORK. HER CONCEPTUAL DESIGNS HAVE THE SAME EXQUISITE ELEGANCE OF ITALO CALVINO, A SIGNATURE OF "LIGHTNESS" AND EMPATHY.”





THE SEAS

BY SAMANTHA HUNT

RECOMMENDED BY GABRIELLA FRYER

"A MAGICAL AND HAUNTING STORY, SET IN A NEW ENGLAND-ESQUE TOWN, ABOUT A GIRL WHO THINKS SHE MIGHT BE A MERMAID; IT DREW ME TO THE SEA AND WOULDN'T LET ME GO- ABSOLUTELY DEVASTATING."

FLASH FICTION: 72 VERY SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY: JAMES THOMAS, DENISE THOMAS, TOM HAZUKA

RECOMMENDED BY MICHELLE HOECKEL-NEAL

"IN PREPARATION FOR WRITING MY CREATIVE THESIS, I HAVE IMMERSSED MYSELF IN THE WORLD OF FLASH FICTION. IT FELT ONLY APPROPRIATE TO START WITH THIS COLLECTION OF VERY SHORT STORIES, PUBLISHED IN 1992, IN WHICH JAMES THOMAS COINED THE TERM "FLASH FICTION," AND PROVED TO READERS THAT STORIES UNDER ONE THOUSAND WORDS CAN STILL BE "FULLY DIMENSIONAL AND WHOLLY COMPLETE" (12). I LOVE FLASH FICTION, BECAUSE IT CHALLENGES WRITERS TO DO A LOT WITH ONLY A LITTLE, AND IT CHALLENGES READERS TO SLOW DOWN, SAVIOR EACH DETAIL, AND FIND RICHNESS IN A MINIMALIST SPACE. SO FAR, FRANCINE PROSE'S "PUMPKINS" AND STUART DYBEK'S "GOLD COAST" HAVE CAPTURED MY ATTENTION. I ENCOURAGE YOU TO GRAB ANY COLLECTION OF FLASH FICTION THIS SUMMER (ANOTHER EXCELLENT SELECTION WOULD BE GIADA SCODELLARO'S SOME OF THEM WILL CARRY ME). FLASH FICTION IS PERFECT FOR THOSE IN-BETWEEN MOMENTS: IN THE CAR ON YOUR WAY TO THE BEACH, DURING A QUIET MOMENT ON A MOUNTAIN'S SUMMIT, WHILE YOU WAIT FOR THE GRILL TO HEAT UP, OR AS YOU SIP YOUR MORNING COFFEE AND LISTEN TO THE BIRDS. MAYBE YOU'LL FEEL SO INSPIRED TO WRITE A VERY SHORT STORY OF YOUR OWN!"

LEVIATHAN WAKES

BY JAMES S.A. COREY

RECOMMENDED BY RYAN DIPPRE

"THIS IS THE FIRST BOOK OF THE EXPANSE BOOK SERIES (THERE'S ALSO A FIVE-SEASON SHOW ON AMAZON PRIME), SO IF YOU REALLY LIKE IT, THERE ARE EIGHT MORE BOOKS YOU CAN GO AHEAD AND READ. THE FIRST BOOK IS A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHING: GRITTY SCI-FI FARE, SCARY ALIEN STUFF, A HARDBOILED DETECTIVE, CORPORATE INTRIGUE, A COLD WAR IN SPACE, THE WORKS. A GOOD WAY TO KICK OFF YOUR SUMMER."



BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS

BY KURT VONNEGUT

RECOMMENDED BY JEREMY PARKER

"AS I APPROACHED MY FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY, I HAD BECOME MORE AND MORE ENRAGED AND MYSTIFIED BY THE IDIOT DECISIONS MADE BY MY COUNTRYMEN. AND THEN I HAD COME SUDDENLY TO PITY THEM, FOR I UNDERSTOOD HOW INNOCENT AND NATURAL IT WAS FOR THEM TO BEHAVE SO ABOMINABLY, AND WITH SUCH ABOMINABLE RESULTS: THEY WERE DOING THEIR BEST TO LIVE LIKE PEOPLE INVENTED IN STORY BOOKS. THIS WAS THE REASON AMERICANS SHOT EACH OTHER SO OFTEN: IT WAS A CONVENIENT LITERARY DEVICE FOR ENDING SHORT STORIES AND BOOKS. WHY WERE SO MANY AMERICANS TREATED BY THEIR GOVERNMENT AS THOUGH THEIR LIVES WERE AS DISPOSABLE AS PAPER FACIAL TISSUES? BECAUSE THAT WAS THE WAY AUTHORS CUSTOMARILY TREATED BIT-PART PLAYERS IN THEIR MADE-UP TALES. AND SO ON. ONCE I UNDERSTOOD WHAT WAS MAKING AMERICA SUCH A DANGEROUS, UNHAPPY NATION OF PEOPLE WHO HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH REAL LIFE, I RESOLVED TO SHUN STORYTELLING. I WOULD WRITE ABOUT LIFE. EVERY PERSON WOULD BE EXACTLY AS IMPORTANT AS ANY OTHER. ALL FACTS WOULD ALSO BE GIVEN EQUAL WEIGHTINESS. NOTHING WOULD BE LEFT OUT. LET OTHERS BRING ORDER TO CHAOS. I WOULD BRING CHAOS TO ORDER, INSTEAD, WHICH I THINK I HAVE DONE. IF ALL WRITERS WOULD DO THAT, THEN PERHAPS CITIZENS NOT IN THE LITERARY TRADES WILL UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS NO ORDER IN THE WORLD AROUND US, THAT WE MUST ADAPT OURSELVES TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF CHAOS INSTEAD. IT IS HARD TO ADAPT TO CHAOS, BUT IT CAN BE DONE. I AM LIVING PROOF OF THAT: IT CAN BE DONE." — KURT VONNEGUT, BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS

ANNIHILATION

BY JEFF VANDERMEER

RECOMMENDED BY CHRIS GARDNER

"SOME FUN SUMMERTIME COSMIC HORROR! A GROUP OF FOUR SCIENTISTS (ALL WOMEN) VENTURE ON THE ELEVENTH EXPEDITION INTO AREA X. THE PREVIOUS EXPEDITIONS ALL CAME BACK CHANGED, IF THEY CAME BACK AT ALL. A MASTERWORK OF SUSPENSE AND WORLDBUILDING THAT I READ ON MY FRONT PORCH OVER THE COURSE OF A WEEK A FEW SUMMERS BACK, HIGHLY RECOMMEND FOR ANYONE WHO WANTS TO BE SCARED BY WHAT'S HIDING AND THE BUSHES, AND ALSO WHAT'S HIDING IN YOU..."



AMERICAN SONNETS FOR MY PAST AND FUTURE ASSASSIN

BY TERRANCE HAYES

RECOMMENDED BY SARAH SPENCER



“ORPHEUS WAS ALONE WHEN HE INVENTED WRITING. HIS MANIC DRAWING BECAME A KIND OF WRITING WHEN HE SENT HIS BELOVED A SKETCH OF AN EYE WITH AN X STUCK THROUGH IT. HE MEANT I AM BLIND WITHOUT YOU. SHE THOUGHT HE MEANT I NEVER WANT TO SEE YOU AGAIN. IT IS POSSIBLE HE MEANT THAT TOO.” I SPENT A SEMESTER AT MY PREVIOUS UNIVERSITY STUDYING HAYES' POETRY, AND WHILE I AM NOT WELL VERSED IN POETRY, THIS COLLECTION WAS A STANDOUT THAT I FIND MYSELF RETURNING TO. EACH WORK FALLS UNDER THE SAME TITLE, WRITTEN DURING THE FIRST TWO HUNDRED DAYS OF TRUMP'S PRESIDENCY. HAYES EXPLORES THE IDEAS OF AMERICA, THE ERRORS AND HOPE FOR THE COUNTRY, AND TOYS WITH THE CONCEPT OF AN ASSASSIN, ALWAYS LURKING THROUGH THE COLLECTION. EACH POEM IS A SONNET AS THE TITLE IMPLIES, AND IN THE INDEX AT THE BACK OF THE COLLECTION CONTAINS FIVE ADDITIONAL SONNETS COMPRISED OF THE FIRST LINE OF EACH WORK. TO QUOTE THE BLURB, AMERICAN SONNETS IS “INVENTIVE, COMPASSIONATE, HILARIOUS, MELANCHOLY, AND BEWILDERED.”

RIDERS IN THE CHARIOT

BY PATRICK WHITE

RECOMMENDED BY ALEX STROUT

“FROM NYRB CLASSICS: PATRICK WHITE'S BRILLIANT 1961 NOVEL, SET IN AN AUSTRALIAN SUBURB, INTERTWINES FOUR DEEPLY DIFFERENT LIVES. AN ABORIGINE ARTIST, A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR, A BEATIFIC WASHERWOMAN, AND A CHILDLIKE HEIRESS ARE EACH BLESSED—AND STRICKEN—WITH VISIONARY EXPERIENCES THAT MAY OR MAY NOT ALLOW THEM TO TRANSCEND THE MACHINATIONS OF THEIR FELLOW MEN. TENDER AND LACERATING, PURE AND PROFANE, SUBTLE AND SWEEPING, RIDERS IN THE CHARIOT IS ONE OF THE NOBEL PRIZE WINNER'S BOLDEST BOOKS. THIS BOOK IS ALSO INCLUDED ON CARMEN CALLIL AND COLM TÓIBÍN'S LIST OF “THE MODERN LIBRARY: THE 200 BEST NOVELS IN ENGLISH SINCE 1950”

WE AS SELF: OURI, INTERSUBJECTIVITY, AND PRESUBJECTIVITY

BY HYE YOUNG KIM

RECOMMENDED BY ELIZABETH NEIMAN

“I HAVE JUST STARTED THIS BOOK MYSELF-- WHICH PROMISES AN EXCITING AND ILLUMINATING REASSESSMENT OF THE SELF/OTHER BINARY”



AN IMMENSE WORLD

BY ED YONG

RECOMMENDED BY KATIE SWACHA

"DID YOU KNOW THAT HARBOR SEALS CAN TRACK FISH BY FOLLOWING THEIR INVISIBLE (TO US) TRAILS WITH THEIR WHISKERS? OR THAT FLOWERS OFTEN HAVE MARKINGS ONLY PERCEIVABLE TO ANIMALS WHO CAN SEE IN ULTRAVIOLET? IN 'AN IMMENSE WORLD,' SCIENCE JOURNALIST ED YONG TAKES US INTO THE WORLD OF ANIMAL SENSES BY ASKING US FIRST TO IMAGINE THEM ON THEIR OWN TERMS. IN DOING SO, HE HELPS READERS TO APPRECIATE ANIMAL EXPERIENCES FAR REMOVED FROM OUR OWN, AND YET HE SOMEHOW ALSO BUILDS EMPATHY IN DOING SO. THERE ARE LAYERS AND LAYERS TO THE WORLD THAT WE SIMPLY CANNOT PERCEIVE BUT OTHER ANIMALS CAN! I HAVE NOT CONSCIOUSLY KILLED EVEN THE TINIEST OF BUGS SINCE READING THIS BOOK! IN HIS WORDS: 'FOR ALL OUR VAUNTED INTELLIGENCE, IT IS VERY HARD FOR US TO UNDERSTAND OTHER CREATURES, OR TO RESIST THE TENDENCY TO VIEW THEIR SENSES THROUGH OUR OWN. ...THE ULTIMATE FEATS OF UNDERSTANDING—WORKING OUT WHAT IT'S BE A BAT, OR AN ELEPHANT, OR A SPIDER—ALWAYS REQUIRE WHAT PSYCHOLOGIST ALEXANDRA HOROWITZ CALLS 'AN INFORMED IMAGINATIVE LEAP' (13)."

ENTANGLED LIFE: HOW FUNGI MAKE OUR WORLDS, CHANGE OUR MINDS & SHAPE OUR FUTURES

BY MERLIN SHELDRAKE

RECOMMENDED BY SARAH HARLAN-HAUGHEY

"WHAT A NAME THIS GUY HAS! I HAVE BEEN AN AMATEUR MYCOLOGIST FOR MANY YEARS, READING ALL I CAN GET MY HANDS ON AS I PREPARE FOR MY SUMMERTIME FORAGING--THIS BOOK GOES FARTHER INTO THE WEIRD AND WIRED WORLD OF MUSHROOMS AND IS MORE ENCHANTING THAN MANY OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS WONDROUS SUBGENRE OF NATURE/SCIENCE WRITING"



WORDS ARE MY MATTER

BY URSULA K. LE GUIN

RECOMMENDED BY CORA SADDLER



“MORE RECENTLY, I’VE BEEN TRYING TO ADD MORE NONFICTION BOOKS TO MY LIBRARY, AND IN PARTICULAR, I PICKED THIS LITTLE GEM UP FROM MY FAVORITE BOOKSTORE IN CHICAGO. I USED TO WALK THERE AFTER WORK AND WOULD CRACK THE BOOK OPEN ON MY TRAIN RIDE HOME. I PICKED UP THIS BOOK BECAUSE THE FIRST PAGE I FLIPPED TO MENTIONED JOHN KEAT’S NEGATIVE CAPABILITY, AND AT THE TIME, I HAD BEEN EXCHANGING KEATS’ POEMS WITH A FRIEND BACK HOME. EASY TO READ AND QUITE A COMFORTING WAY TO SPEND A QUIET EVENING, THIS BOOK IS WARM, PUNCHY, AND HIGHLIGHTS LE GUIN’S POWERFUL ADVICE ON WRITING AND MORE GENERALLY, LIFE.”



TRU BIZ

BY SARAH NOVIĆ

RECOMMENDED BY HOLLIE ADAMS



“TRUE BIZ (2022) BY SARAH NOVIĆ IS A VERY RECENT READ FOR ME THAT I ENJOYED VERY MUCH AND WHOLEHEARTEDLY RECOMMEND. THE NOVEL TAKES PLACE AT RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF, A BOARDING SCHOOL THAT FEBRUARY WATERS, A CODA (CHILD OF DEAF ADULTS), RUNS AND FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD CHARLIE, WHO WAS RAISED BY HEARING PARENTS, TRANSFERS INTO. THE CHAPTERS ALTERNATE IN TERMS OF FOCALIZATION, PROVIDING READERS WITH THE PERSPECTIVES OF FEBRUARY, CHARLIE, AND OTHER CHARACTERS INCLUDING AUSTIN, THE SCHOOL’S GOLDEN BOY, DESCENDENT OF A REVERED DEAF FAMILY. INTERSPERSED AMONG THESE CHAPTERS ARE OTHER “DOCUMENTS”: ILLUSTRATED GUIDES TO LEARNING BASIC ASL AND FEBRUARY’S LESSON PLANS ON DEAF CULTURE AND HISTORY, FOR EXAMPLE. THERE’S A COMING-OF-AGE-STORY IN HERE AND SOMETHING OF A ROMANCE, BUT THIS IS AN ACTIVIST NOVEL AT ITS CORE. TRUE BIZ IS A TAKEDOWN OF ABLEIST SOCIETY, A CRITIQUE OF INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS EDUCATION AND HEALTH, AND A CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEBATE AS TO WHETHER DEAF INFANTS SHOULD RECEIVE COCHLEAR IMPLANT SURGERY. ANYONE WITH AN INTEREST IN EDUCATION, LANGUAGE, AND DISABILITY RIGHTS WILL APPRECIATE THIS NOVEL. PLUS, IT’S A FUN AND ENGAGING READ (I BOUGHT IT TO READ ON MY PLANE RIDE POST-SPRING BREAK AND WAS IMMENSELY ENTERTAINED). I AM THANKFUL TO NOVIĆ FOR WHAT I LEARNED IN THIS NOVEL ABOUT A.S.L. AND DEAF CULTURE. FOR INSTANCE, I NOW KNOW THAT “TRUE BIZ” IS AN A.S.L. EXPRESSION MEANING “SERIOUSLY” OR “REAL TALK.” TRUE BIZ, YOU SHOULD READ THIS BOOK.”

