Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *Americanah.* The Nigerian author presents a love story set in Princeton and Lagos. This novel deftly explores issues of race and national identity.

Adiga, Aravind. *The White Tiger.* This novel, the author's first, won the Man Booker Prize for its caustic depiction of the economic inequity in a rapidly changing India.

Ali, Monica. *Brick Lane.* This ambitious first novel tells of a Pakistani woman who emigrates to London after her arranged marriage.

Allende, Isabel. *The House of the Spirits.* This combination of family chronicle, historical novel and magic realism presents three generations of the ardent, political and sometimes bizarre Truebas family as they survive and often instigate the personal and governmental revolutions in twentieth-century Chile.

Allison, Dorothy. *Bastard Out of Carolina.* This novel is a first-person account of growing up poor and white without respectability or family stability in the South.

Alvarez, Julia. *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents.* Here are fifteen interconnected stories about the four Garcia sisters, uprooted from their home in the Dominican Republic, starting out in New York City in 1960, and caught between an old life and a new.

Ariete, Silvano. *The Parnas.* In one of the most readable and compassionate holocaust accounts ever written, Arieti, a psychiatrist who made his way to America and returned to his native Pisa after the war, describes what he learned from interviews with neighbors about the last day in the life of "the parnas," the leader of the Pisan Jewish community.

Atkinson, Kate. *When Will There Be Good News.* In her third Jackson Brodie novel, Atkinson delivers a thrilling detective story that is as beautifully written as it is suspenseful.

Atwood, Margaret. *The Robber Bride.* Three women rejoice too soon at the supposed death of their old rival, but eventually find ways of exercising her power over them and the men in their lives.

Baldwin, James. *Going to Meet the Man.* This is a collection of short stories, many set in Harlem or Greenwich Village, by this distinguished American writer.

Barrett, Andrea. *Servants of the Map.* This is a collection of short stories, several of them set in the 19th century, about isolated and passionate characters with a keen interest in the natural sciences.

Bechdel, Alison. *Fun Home.* A brilliantly illustrated tragic-comic memoir about Bechdel's relationship with her father, an English teacher and funeral home director, as she comes to recognize and embrace herself as a lesbian.

Begley, Louis. *Wartime Lies.* This novel, autobiographical in nature, recounts how two Polish Jews, a
boy and his aunt, survive the Holocaust by living as Catholics in Warsaw and on remote farms until the war ends.

de Bernieres, Louis. *Corelli's Mandolin*. During World War II, the ill-fated, ill-advised Italian campaign in Greece sets the victories of art and humanity against the squalid brutalities of war.

Bitton-Jackson, Livia. *I Have Lived A Thousand Years*. This account by a professor emerita of Judaic Studies at CUNY deals with her internment as a young girl in the camps in 1943-1945, and her return to her village.

Byatt, A. S. *Possession*. Researching the life of a Browning-like nineteenth-century poet, Roland Mitchell, a young academic and literary critic, finds a mid-Victorian scandal, a modern mystery, a wealth of manuscripts, and a romance of his own.

Calvino, Italo. *Cosmicomics*. This witty book makes cosmology domestic and all too human.


Chang, Jung. *Wild Swans*. Chang's memoir recounts the stories of her grandmother, mother and herself: three generations of women whose lives encompass the major cultural and political changes of twentieth-century China.

Coetzee, J. M., *Boyhood*. Written in the third person, *Boyhood* is a gorgeous, intriguing memoir about Coetzee's experience of growing up in South Africa.


Conway, Jill Ker. *The Road from Coorain*. The former President of Smith College, Conway chronicles her life in the Australian outback. Surviving heat, wind, dust storms and back-breaking work, her mother, through will, energy, and devotion, held together the family and brought security as well as challenge to her children.

Cunningham, Michael. *The Hours*. This short novel, winner of the 1999 Pulitzer Prize, is a story of the intellectual, emotional, and sexual complexities of life in Greenwich Village in the 1990's. It is enriched by its many echoes of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Danticat, Edwidge. *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. A young Haitian girl joins her mother in New York City, but cannot leave her Haitian heritage behind.

Desai, Anita. *In Custody*. In this novel set in India, a young scholar goes in search of the last of the great Urdu poets, and finds him.
Diaz, Junot. *This Is How You Lose Her*. This collection of humorous yet poignant short stories follows Yunior, a young Dominican American man, and a range of other characters as they experience many types of love and loss.

Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee. *Arranged Marriage*. This collection of stories describes the adjustment and struggle of Indian-born young women in America. Caught between two cultures, these women must search to define themselves.

Dubus, Andre. *House of Sand and Fog*. A story of the clash between an American young woman and a proud Iranian immigrant family that culminates in a tragedy that is as spare and inevitable as the great works of Sophocles.

Eggers, Dave. *The Circle*. An idealistic young woman takes a job at the Circle, a rapidly growing and powerful internet company of the not-so-distant future. She soon finds herself entangled in a series of events that bring issues of social networking, privacy, memory, and freedom to the forefront.

Fallada, Hans. *Every Man Dies Alone*. In this powerful novel, based on actual events in World War II Berlin, a working class couple respond to the death of their son on the Russian front by leaving postcards in buildings around the city with such words as: "The Fuhrer has murdered my son...The Fuhrer will murder your sons too...."

Fitzgerald, Penelope. *The Blue Flower*. This is a brief and lyrical recreation of the German romantic poet Novalis's love for a tubercular girl.

Fowler, Karen Joy, *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*. A book about life when your sister is a chimpanzee. This novel is hilarious and poignant.

Franzen, Jonathan. *Freedom*. Franzen’s most recent novel provides an ambitious and nuanced portrayal of the Berglunds, a seemingly perfect Minnesota family that is more complex than it seems.

Frazier, Charles. *Cold Mountain*. A fictional Civil War odyssey set in North Carolina as the war is ending, this novel tells the story of a soldier’s long walk home to be reunited with his love and is full of lively, memorable characters.

Gardam, Jane. *Old Filth*. No, not ancient porn. The acronym FILTH - Failed In London, Try HongKong - identifies Sir Edward Feathers, whose worldly eminence belies the eccentricity of his emotional arrangements, where secrets lurk. A curiously inviting novel, the first of three that examine the same relationships from different points of view.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. *Colored People*. In his memoir of a West Virginia childhood in the 1950's, this eminent writer and scholar provides a personal view not only of his memorable relatives and neighbors, but also of a time in American history when desegregation was changing the ways in which racial boundaries and issues would be regarded for years to come.
Gilbert, Elizabeth. *The Signature of All Things.* This novel follows the life of Alma Whittaker, a brilliant botanist in nineteenth-century Philadelphia.

Goldberg, Myla. *Bee Season.* A girl’s newly discovered gift for spelling unleashes her family’s dysfunction. As her uncanny talent spurs her family members to look at her with new eyes, their gaze also shifts uncomfortably inward, with disturbing and stunning results.


Gordimer, Nadine. *Selected Stories.* In these tightly written stories, Gordimer explores the complexity of racial identity in South Africa during the Apartheid era.

Grossman, David. *The Book of Intimate Grammar.* Trapped in a stunted body and a blighted family, an imaginative young boy in Israel dreams of emulating his hero, the escape-artist Houdini.

Guterson, David. *Snow Falling on Cedars.* In a small island community in the Pacific Northwest, a Japanese-American is accused of murdering a white fisherman. This suspenseful courtroom drama is also a novel of love and honor shadowed by racism.

Hartnett, Annie. *Rabbit Cake.* The novel follows the narrator, her father, and her older sister in the wake of her mother’s death. The narrative voice is engaging, humorous, and full of interesting information about topics like sleepwalking and animal behavior, and the novel takes a compassionate if unconventional view of grief and family.


Ishiguro, Kazuo. *The Remains of the Day.* A British butler looks back on his employer’s involvement with fascism between the two World Wars and his own unrealized love for the housekeeper. This novel was the winner of the 1989 Booker Prize in Great Britain.

James, P. D. *Original Sin.* When the gorgeously impractical headquarters of a prestigious, if financially embattled, publishing house becomes the scene of murder, the police arrive to encounter, in its owners and employees, a company of ardent, eccentric, manipulative, obsessed suspects. This novel is a very good read with few claims to profundity.

Jin, Ha. *Waiting.* A woman waits eighteen years for her lover to divorce his village wife, so that they can marry. Unspiring yet humane in its vision and language, this National Book Award winning novel traces the effects of time on love against the backdrop of China’s Cultural Revolution.

Jones, Edward P. *The Known World.* Winner of the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, this novel is the story of Henry Townsend, an African-American slaveowner in antebellum Virginia.

Kincaid, Jamaica. *Lucy.* A young woman from Antigua becomes an au pair in a stylish Manhattan family with troubles of its own. It is a relentlessly clear-headed look at both adolescence and the
adult world.

Kingston, Maxine Hong. *The Woman Warrior*. Kingston’s memoir blends fact, fantasy and myth to describe the life of a Chinese-American young woman who grows up in California with a mother who was formerly a doctor in China, a secret only her family shares.

Knausgaard, Karl Ove. *Autumn*. A selection of personal essays by the Norwegian writer.

Kushner, Tony. *Angels in America*. Two full-length plays—*Millenium Approaches* and *Perestroika*—use techniques of surrealism and the interaction of fictional and historical characters in order to explore the corruption of the Reagan Administration, the AIDS crisis, homosexual identities, and the meaning of living and dying in contemporary America.

Lahiri, Jhumpa. *Unaccustomed Earth*. In this collection of short stories, Lahiri writes with empathetic precision about the lives of Bengali Americans living between two worlds.

Lamott, Anne. *Bird by Bird*. In this witty and encouraging guide to fiction writing, Lamott weaves together practical advice and personal anecdotes.

Lee, Andrea. *Sarah Phillips*. The title character is a member of what she calls the “old-fashioned black bourgeoisie,” and this novel is about racism and sexism as experienced by a privileged class.

Lee, Chang-Rae. *Aloft*. With wit and deep feeling, this novel portrays a Long Island widower forced to confront the life he has made when his girlfriend of twenty years moves out and his pregnant daughter and her fiancé move in.

Lee, Rebecca. *Bobcat*. Each tale in this diverse collection of short stories is original, strange, and perfectly realized.

Levy, Deborah. *Hot Milk*. A young, somewhat directionless anthropologist travels with her mother, who has ongoing, unexplainable health problems, to a clinic in southern Spain.

Mahfouz, Naguib. *Palace Walk*. The first of a three-volume saga about a large, traditional Muslim family living in Cairo at the time of the British occupation of Egypt in the early years of this century.

Malouf, David. *An Imaginary Life*. Ovid’s exile at the end of his life to the shores of the Black Sea and to a primitive people whose language he does not know is imagined in extraordinary and complex ways that reflect his great work, *The Metamorphoses*.


Mamet, David. *Oleanna*. A university professor’s office is the setting for a drama of pedagogical and sexual harassment. You get to decide whether the drama is a problem play or a dark comedy of personal and intellectual dishonesties.
McCarthy, Mary. *Memories of a Catholic Girlhood.* This 1957 memoir by a renowned American woman of letters coolly and intellectually chronicles a painful childhood and youth, with emphasis on her education, her religious conflicts and her striving to be a "superior girl."

McDermott, Alice. *That Night.* This spare, reflective account of a single incident remembered "as the moment everything changed forever" captures the power and poignancy of first love. McDermott is the author of *Charming Billy,* winner of the 1998 National Book Award.

McEwan, Ian. *Atonement.* In a novel that begins in an English manor house in 1935 and progresses to Dunkirk and London during World War II, a young woman writer must face the consequences to those she loves of a youthful mistake and the elusive quality of forgiveness.

Mishima, Yukio. *Spring Snow.* The first novel in Mishima's tetralogy, *The Sea of Fertility,* chronicles the problematic love affair of two young Japanese aristocrats trapped by their families' expiring courtly conventions.

Moore, Lorrie. *Birds of America.* This is a funny and idiosyncratic collection of short stories.

Morrison, Toni. *Song of Solomon.* The saga of an African-American family coming to terms with dreams and possibilities of life in modern America, this novel exemplifies the rich language and the deep, generous, and often humorous understanding for which Morrison is famous.

Morton, Brian. *Starting Out in the Evening.* A young woman writes her masters' thesis on her favorite novelist, a seventy-two-year-old member of the so-called New York Intellectuals. This funny and thoughtful novel depicts their relationship and examines the pitfalls and joys of the artistic life.

Nemirovsky, Irene. *Suite Francaise.* The author was deported to Auschwitz before she could write the third in this trilogy of novels about the German occupation of France.

Ng, Celeste. *Everything I Never Told You* -- a sensitive portrait of a Chinese-American family living in a small town in Ohio in the wake of a mysterious tragedy.

Nguyen, Viet Thanh. *The Refugees.* A collection of short stories that looks closely at the experiences of Vietnamese and Vietnamese-Americans, as characters negotiate both Vietnamese and American culture.

Celeste Ng *Everything I Never Told You* -- a sensitive portrait of a Chinese-American family living in a small town in Ohio in the wake of a mysterious tragedy.


O'Neill, Joseph. *Netherland.* This is an exciting and vivid tale of New York City, unlikely friendships, and cricket, narrated by a newly emigrated Dutchman.
Oyeyemi, Helen. *Bird, Snow, Boy.* This dark, magical tale, loosely based on the story of Snow White, tells of family, race, and passing in small-town Massachusetts.

Paley, Grace. *Enormous Changes at the Last Minute.* Published in 1974, this is a collection of short stories about modern urban life.

Price, Richard. *Clockers.* Set primarily in a housing project, this is the story of a young drug dealer and his world.

Robinson, Marilynne. *House-keeping.* This elegant tale focuses on a drifter aunt and her two nieces.

Rodriguez, Richard. *Hunger of Memory.* A young Mexican-American scholar writes regretfully of how academic ambition and success have distanced him from his native language and culture and, even more painfully, from his parents and childhood world.

Seth, Vikram. *A Suitable Boy.* Set in contemporary India, this is the saga of four families and one mother's quest for a suitable husband for her daughter.

Shalamov, Varlam. *Kolyma Tales.* A former inmate writes about life in the Gulag, the Soviet prison camps in Siberia. The tales are translated from the Russian.

Shepard, Sam. *Curse of the Starving Classes. Fool for Love.* Although Shepard admits to few influences apart from early rock groups and country-western lyrics, his plays of familial violence, emotional loss and American delusion belong also, if eccentrically, to the tradition of Eugene O'Neill.

Smiley, Jane. *Ordinary Love and Good Will.* These two novellas explore with subtlety, poignancy, and eloquence the complexities of modern family life.

Smith, Alison. *Name All the Animals.* A stunning memoir in which Smith recounts the story of her closeness with and sudden death of her older brother alongside her first experience of falling in love with a woman.

Smith, Zadie. *White Teeth.* Two generations of families (one white and Jamaican, the other Bangladeshi) living in London are at the heart of this funny novel of ideas.

Soyinka, Wole. *Death and the King's Horseman.* A Nigerian king's chief companion wills himself to follow his sovereign into death in a world where British rule is merely—if tragically—an “incident.”

Stoppard, Tom. *Arcadia.* Landscape gardening and Fermat’s last theorem are only two of the issues that connect characters from 1809 to characters from 1989 in a play where the second law of thermodynamics yields to the inexplicable attractions of sex.

Strout, Elizabeth. *Amy and Isabelle.* A girl and her single mother brave a long hot summer during the late 60’s, working in a mill. The point of view shifts from the daughter to the mother, as each discovers the secrets of the other.
Suleri, Sara. *Meatless Days*. Suleri weaves together the genres of political history and personal memoir in her recollections of childhood in postcolonial Pakistan and immigration to the United States.

Tan, Amy. *The Joy Luck Club*. Three generations of Chinese women tell the stories of their lives in China and in the United States. Daughters and mothers struggle to create their own identities and to find meaning against the backdrop of immense social change.

Tartt, Donna. *The Secret History*. Set on the campus of an unusually progressive New England college, this novel examines the dynamics of a group of friends whose intellectual interests include murder.

Toibin, Colm. *Brooklyn*. A lyrical account of a young Irish woman caught between her heritage and the temptations of her new environment in 1950's Brooklyn.

Tolstoya, Tatiana. *On the Golden Porch*. These are contemporary Russian short stories.

Truong, Monique. *The Book of Salt*. Written from the point of view of Bihn, the Vietnamese chef who cooked for Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, the novel merges scenes of Steins and Toklas's domestic, literary and artistic life in Paris together with descriptions of food preparation, the narrator's intimacy with men, and his painful past in Vietnam.


White, Antonia. *Frost in May*. This coming-of-age story focuses on a teenage girl in a convent school, whose trials with family, friends, and teachers complicate life.

Whitehead, Colson. *The Underground Railroad*. The story of the harrowing journey of two young enslaved persons trying to escape to freedom in the 1800s.

Wolff, Tobias. *Old School*. A boy at a New England prep school is consumed by two obsessions: winning a school literary competition, the prize for which is a private audience with a famous visiting writer, and maintaining the fictional self he has created in order to conceal his modest background from his classmates.

Wolff, Tobias. *This Boy's Life*. Wolff's memoir is highly regarded.

X, Malcolm. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. The famed autobiography (as told to and partly written by another writer, Alex Haley) tells the story of a leader whose journey from obscurity to crime and imprisonment to impassioned authority is now almost legendary.
A SELECTION OF CONTEMPORARY POETS

Bergin, Tara. *This Is Yarrow*. An exciting new Irish voice, Bergin draws on fables, nursery rhymes, and masks to depict illicit loves and histories.

Boland, Eavan. *Against Love Poetry*. Poems against traditional idealization of love and marriage by a foremost Irish poet.


Collins, Billy. *Sailing Around the Room*. Collins invites you in, gives you a cup of tea, and talks about himself.

Corral, Eduardo C. *Slow Lightning*. The poems here light a fuse. They are about the usual topics, love, family, and crossing the border.

Glück, Louise. *Firstborn*. Technically assured, emotionally harrowing, this is the first book of one of America's most talented poets writing now.


Howe, Marie. *What the Living Do*. Poems about grief and survival. Howe's brother died of complications arising from AIDS.

Miller, Kei. *The Cartographer Tries to Map a Way to Zion*. The Rastafarian and the Cartographer debate about the possibility of mapping a way to Zion. Guess who wins.

Muldoon, Paul. *New Weather*. The book that announced the arrival of a distinctive Irish poetic voice. If you like Seamus Heaney, you must read the one who got away from him.

O'Hara, Frank. *Lunch Poems*. Written during O'Hara's lunch break while working at the MoMA, these poems are witty, urbane, and surprisingly affecting.

Oliver, Mary. *House of Light*. Sharply etched poems about wildlife. When Oliver leaves off her moralizing, she is a wonderful recorder of nature.

Plath, Sylvia, *Ariel*. Lush, grotesque, captivating, Plath was enormously vulnerable and ambitious. She is a goddess to her acolytes.

Ponsot, Marie. *Springing*. Musical and metaphysical, the poems are powerfully inspired by Hopkins.

Ryan Kay. *The Niagara River*. Her poems are sinuous with thought and music. She can be biting and funny too.


Sexton, Anne. *All My Pretty Ones*. She turned mental illness into art, and confession into poetry.

Smith, Stevie. *New Selected Poems*. Very weird. In the English kind of way. Her most famous poem is "Not Waving But Drowning."

Smith, Tracy K. *Life on Mars*. Life, the universe, and all that. Mobile verse with a Hubble lens. It's all in the family.

Stallings, A.E. *Olives*. Re-imaginings of the Greek and Roman classics with a very contemporary sensibility. An American living in, and with, Greece.

Vuong, Ocean. *Night Sky with Exit Wounds*. Deeply affecting poems about leaving Vietnam as a refugee and coming out as a gay man.