

Summer Reading 2010

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to summer! This paper gives all the instructions and details for how to complete your summer reading assignment. The reverse side of this sheet is your book list.

This summer, each student is asked to read two books, with the exception of seniors, who will read one. The first is a 'Grade Read.' All of these books were selected by the English faculty and will be discussed in English class during the first few weeks of school in the fall. There is no written work required with this book. Seniors do not have the 'Grade Read.'

The second book is to be selected from the appropriate grade list ("Grab Bag"). These lists were put together with input from all CRMS faculty and staff and were built with the intention of giving you some autonomy in choosing how to spend your time this summer. We also strove to give you a broad selection of genres and topics. For this "Grab Bag" read, you are required to complete the following assignment:

Select **one** question from each list.

List A – responses should be approximately a page in length

1. Make a connection between the book and your own life or experiences; this could be a connection you see with a specific character, a location, an issue or a circumstance. Explain the connection and why it was striking to you as a reader.
2. Re-write the ending of the book. If it is fiction, be creative! If it is non-fiction, try to imagine the consequences of a different ending on the larger world. Be as descriptive and specific as possible.

List B – responses should be approximately a page in length

1. How do you visualize the setting of this book? How do you visualize the characters in this book? Using words, pictures, images or art, demonstrate how a character, a location, a particular scene from the book or a combination of all three might "look" to you.
2. Create a dialogue between two or more characters in the book; have them write letters, emails, poems or songs to each other discussing the events of the book. Be creative, descriptive and specific.

This assignment is due on the first day of classes, and is to be turned in to your English teacher. The assignment will be graded on a pass/fail basis. There is no right answer – we are simply looking for completion of the assignment and a demonstration of your understanding and your abilities. You should plan to spend a couple hours answering the questions.

Most major bookstores and public libraries should have all of these titles available. Please see the information & forms page under the parents tab on the CRMS website for brief descriptions of all the summer reading books; we encourage you to do some research before you decide which book you would like to read. Enjoy!

Best,

Meghan Detering
Librarian

Summer Reading Lists 2010

9th Grade Class Read: The Alchemist, Paulo Coelho

10th Grade Class Read: The Long Walk: The True Story of a Trek to Freedom, Slavomir Rawicz

11th Grade Class Read: A Voyage Long and Strange: Rediscovering the New World, Tony Horwitz

**International Students*: 10th grade international students will have an alternate class read, listed below.

10th Grade International Student Class Read: The Accidental Tourist, Anne Tyler

9th Grade Grab Bag

The Concrete Wave: The History of Skateboarding, Michael Brooke

Animal Dreams, Barbara Kingsolver

Mysterious Affair at Styles: A Hercule Poirot Mystery, Agatha Christie

Sailing Alone Around the Room, Billy Collins (poetry)

The Golden Compass, Philip Pullman

American Born Chinese, Gene Leun Yang and Lark Pien (graphic novel)

Radical Equations, Robert P. Moses and Charles E. Cobb, Jr.

The Book Thief, Markus Zusak

10th Grade Grab Bag

Vibe History of Hip-Hop, Alan Light

Girl With a Pearl Earring, Tracy Chevalier

In the Time of the Butterflies, Julia Alvarez

Desert Solitaire, Edward Abbey

Purple Hibiscus, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Interpreter of Maladies, Jhumpa Lahiri

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close, Jonathan Safran Foer

God of Animals, Aryn Kyle

11th Grade Grab Bag

Nature Girl, Carl Hiaasen

All the Pretty Horses, Cormac McCarthy

Motorcycle Diaries, Che Guevara

White Noise, Don DeLillo

Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth, Chris Ware (graphic novel)

The Namesake, Jhumpa Lahiri

Half Broke Horses, Jeannette Walls

Zodiac, Neal Stephenson

12th Grade Grab Bag

Encounters with the Archdruid, John McPhee

The Orchid Thief, Susan Orlean

The Happiness Project, Gretchen Craft Rubin

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee, Dee Brown

The Glass Castle: A Memoir, Jeannette Walls

The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, Junot Diaz

Half Asleep in Frog Pajamas, Tom Robbins

Half of a Yellow Sun, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Summer Reading 2010- Book Descriptions

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9th Grade Grab Bag

The Concrete Wave: The History of Skateboarding, Michael Brooke

The Concrete Wave is the first detailed history of one of the most daring and intense sports to appear in the latter half of this century. Complete with hundreds of color images (board graphics, action shots of champion skaters) the book covers 40 years of skateboarding history. The story includes topics such as: how Larry Stevenson single-handedly bridged the gap between surfing and a skate toy to create the sport of skateboarding, profiles of skateboard superstars like Tony Alva, freestyle pioneer Rodney Mullen and Tony Hawk, how surfer Frank Nasworthy came up with the idea of using urethane wheels to replace clay and started the second skateboard revolution, how hundreds of thousands of ball bearings spilling in a warehouse spawned the birth of the precision skateboard wheel, and what gave Wes Humpston the inspiration to design the first graphics on the bottom of skateboards.

Animal Dreams, Barbara Kingsolver

"Animals dream about the things they do in the day time just like people do. If you want sweet dreams, you've got to live a sweet life." So says Loyd Peregrina, a handsome Apache trainman and latter-day philosopher. But when Codi Noline returns to her hometown, Loyd's advice is painfully out of her reach. Dreamless and at the end of her rope, Codi comes back to Grace, Arizona to confront her past and face her ailing, distant father. What she finds is a town threatened by a silent environmental catastrophe, some startling clues to her own identity, and a man whose view of the world could change the course of her life. Blending flashbacks, dreams, and Native American legends, *Animal Dreams* is a suspenseful love story and a moving exploration of life's largest commitments.

Mysterious Affair at Styles: A Hercule Poirot Mystery, Agatha Christie

The famous case that launched the career of Hercule Poirot. When a wealthy heiress is murdered, Poirot steps out of retirement to find the killer. As the master detective makes his way through the list of suspects, he finds the solution in an elaborately planned scheme almost impossible to believe.

Sailing Alone Around the Room, Billy Collins (poetry)

Sailing Alone Around the Room, by America's Poet Laureate, Billy Collins, contains both new poems and a generous gathering from his earlier collections *The Apple That Astonished Paris*, *Questions About Angels*, *The Art of Drowning*, and *Picnic, Lightning*. These poems show Collins at his best, performing the kinds of distinctive poetic maneuvers that have delighted and fascinated so many readers. They may begin in curiosity and end in grief; they may start with irony and end with lyric transformation; they may, and often do, begin with the everyday and end in the infinite. Possessed of a unique voice that is at once plain and melodic, Billy Collins has managed to enrich American poetry while greatly widening the circle of its audience.

The Golden Compass, Philip Pullman

In a landmark epic of fantasy and storytelling, Philip Pullman invites readers into a world as convincing and thoroughly realized as *Narnia*, *Earthsea*, or *Redwall*. Here lives an orphaned ward named Lyra Belacqua, whose carefree life among the scholars at Oxford's Jordan College is

shattered by the arrival of two powerful visitors. First, her fearsome uncle, Lord Asriel, appears with evidence of mystery and danger in the far North, including photographs of a mysterious celestial phenomenon called Dust and the dim outline of a city suspended in the Aurora Borealis that he suspects is part of an alternate universe. He leaves Lyra in the care of Mrs. Coulter, an enigmatic scholar and explorer who offers to give Lyra the attention her uncle has long refused her. In this multilayered narrative, however, nothing is as it seems. Lyra sets out for the top of the world in search of her kidnapped playmate, Roger, bearing a rare truth-telling instrument, the compass of the title. All around her children are disappearing victims of so-called "Gobblers" and being used as subjects in terrible experiments that separate humans from their daemons, creatures that reflect each person's inner being. And somehow, both Lord Asriel and Mrs. Coulter are involved.

American Born Chinese, Gene Leun Yang and Lark Pien (graphic novel)

A tour-de-force by rising indy comics star Gene Yang, *American Born Chinese* tells the story of three apparently unrelated characters: Jin Wang, who moves to a new neighborhood with his family only to discover that he's the only Chinese-American student at his new school; the powerful Monkey King, subject of one of the oldest and greatest Chinese fables; and Chin-Kee, a personification of the ultimate negative Chinese stereotype, who is ruining his cousin Danny's life with his yearly visits. Their lives and stories come together with an unexpected twist in this action-packed modern fable. *American Born Chinese* is an amazing ride, all the way up to the astonishing climax.

Radical Equations, Robert P. Moses and Charles E. Cobb, Jr.

At a time when popular solutions to the educational plight of poor children of color are imposed from the outside-national standards, high-stakes tests, charismatic individual saviors-the acclaimed Algebra Project and its founder, Robert Moses, offer a vision of school reform based in the power of communities.

Begun in 1982, the Algebra Project is transforming math education in twenty-five cities. Founded on the belief that math-science literacy is a prerequisite for full citizenship in society, the Project works with entire communities-parents, teachers, and especially students-to create a culture of literacy around algebra, a crucial stepping-stone to college math and opportunity.

Telling the story of this remarkable program, Robert Moses draws on lessons from the 1960s Southern voter registration he famously helped organize: "Everyone said sharecroppers didn't want to vote. It wasn't until we got them demanding to vote that we got attention. Today, when kids are falling wholesale through the cracks, people say they don't want to learn. We have to get the kids themselves to demand what everyone says they don't want." We see the Algebra Project organizing community by community. Older kids serve as coaches for younger students and build a self-sustained tradition of leadership. Teachers use innovative techniques. And we see the remarkable success stories of schools like the predominately poor Hart School in Bessemer, Alabama, which outscored the city's middle-class flagship school in just three years.

The Book Thief, Markus Zusak

It's just a small story really, about among other things: a girl, some words, an accordionist, some fanatical Germans, a Jewish fist-fighter, and quite a lot of thievery. . . . Set during World War II in Germany, Markus Zusak's groundbreaking new novel is the story of Liesel Meminger, a foster girl living outside of Munich. Liesel scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist--books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement before he is marched to Dachau. This is an unforgettable story about the ability of books to feed the soul.

10th Grade Grab Bag

Vibe History of Hip-Hop, Alan Light

Music, fashion, dance, graffiti, movies, videos, and business: it's all in this brilliant tale of a cultural revolution that spans race and gender, language and nationality. The definitive history of an under-documented music genre, The VIBE History of Hip Hop tells the full story of this

grassroots cultural movement, from its origins on the streets of the Bronx to its explosion as an international phenomenon. Illustrated with almost 200 photos, and accompanied by comprehensive discographies, this book is a vivid review of the hip hop world through the eyes and ears of more than 50 of the finest music writers and cultural critics at work today, including Danyel Smith, Greg Tate, Anthony deCurtis, Dream Hampton, Neil Strauss, and Bönz Malone.

Girl With a Pearl Earring, Tracy Chevalier

History and fiction merge seamlessly in this luminous novel about artistic vision and sensual awakening. *Girl with a Pearl Earring* tells the story of sixteen-year-old Griet, whose life is transformed by her brief encounter with genius ... even as she herself is immortalized in canvas and oil.

In the Time of the Butterflies, Julia Alvarez

It is November 25, 1960, and three beautiful sisters have been found near their wrecked Jeep at the bottom of a 150-foot cliff on the north coast of the Dominican Republic. The official state newspaper reports their deaths as accidental. It does not mention that a fourth sister lives. Nor does it explain that the sisters were among the leading opponents of Gen. Rafael Leonidas Trujillo's dictatorship. It doesn't have to. Everybody knows of Las Mariposas - "The Butterflies." In this extraordinary novel, the voices of all four sisters - Minerva, Patria, María Teresa, and the survivor, Dedé - speak across the decades to tell their own stories, from hair ribbons and secret crushes to gunrunning and prison torture, and to describe the everyday horrors of life under Trujillo's rule. Through the art and magic of Julia Alvarez's imagination, the martyred Butterflies live again in this novel of courage and love, and the human cost of political oppression.

Desert Solitaire, Edward Abbey

When *Desert Solitaire* was first published in 1968, it became the focus of a nationwide cult. Rude and sensitive. Thought-provoking and mystical. Angry and loving. Both Abbey and this book are all of these and more. Here, the legendary author of "The Monkey Wrench Gang, Abbey's Road" and many other critically acclaimed books vividly captures the essence of his life during three seasons as a park ranger in southeastern Utah. This is a rare view of a quest to experience nature in its purest form -- the silence, the struggle, the overwhelming beauty. But this is also the gripping, anguished cry of a man of character who challenges the growing exploitation of the wilderness by oil and mining interests, as well as by the tourist industry. Abbey's observations and challenges remain as relevant now as the day he wrote them. Today, *Desert Solitaire* asks if any of our incalculable natural treasures can be saved before the bulldozers strike again.

Purple Hibiscus, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Fifteen-year-old Kambili's world is circumscribed by the high walls and frangipani trees of her family compound. Her wealthy Catholic father, under whose shadow Kambili lives, while generous and politically active in the community, is repressive and fanatically religious at home. When Nigeria begins to fall apart under a military coup, Kambili's father sends her and her brother away to stay with their aunt, a University professor, whose house is noisy and full of laughter. There, Kambili and her brother discover a life and love beyond the confines of their father's authority. The visit will lift the silence from their world and, in time, give rise to devotion and defiance that reveal themselves in profound and unexpected ways. This is a book about the promise of freedom; about the blurred lines between childhood and adulthood; between love and hatred, between the old gods and the new.

Interpreter of Maladies, Jhumpa Lahiri

Navigating between the Indian traditions they've inherited and the baffling new world, the characters in Jhumpa Lahiri's elegant, touching stories seek love beyond the barriers of culture and generations. In "A Temporary Matter," published in *The New Yorker*, a young Indian-American couple faces the heartbreak of a stillborn birth while their Boston neighborhood copes with a nightly blackout. In the title story, an interpreter guides an American family through the India of their ancestors and hears an astonishing confession. Lahiri writes with deft cultural insight

reminiscent of Anita Desai and a nuanced depth that recalls Mavis Gallant. She is an important and powerful new voice.

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close, Jonathan Safran Foer

Meet Oskar Schell, an inventor, Francophile, tambourine player, Shakespearean actor, jeweler, pacifist, correspondent with Stephen Hawking and Ringo Starr. He is nine years old. And he is on an urgent, secret search through the five boroughs of New York. His mission is to find the lock that fits a mysterious key belonging to his father, who died in the World Trade Center on 9/11. An inspired innocent, Oskar is alternately endearing, exasperating, and hilarious as he careens from Central Park to Coney Island to Harlem on his search. Along the way he is always dreaming up inventions to keep those he loves safe from harm. What about a birdseed shirt to let you fly away? What if you could actually hear everyone's heartbeat? His goal is hopeful, but the past speaks a loud warning in stories of those who've lost loved ones before. As Oskar roams New York, he encounters a motley assortment of humanity who are all survivors in their own way. He befriends a 103-year-old war reporter, a tour guide who never leaves the Empire State Building, and lovers enraptured or scorned. Ultimately, Oskar ends his journey where it began, at his father's grave. But now he is accompanied by the silent stranger who has been renting the spare room of his grandmother's apartment. They are there to dig up his father's empty coffin.

God of Animals, Aryn Kyle

A breathtaking and beautiful novel set on a horse ranch in small-town Colorado. When her older sister runs away to marry a rodeo cowboy, Alice Winston is left to bear the brunt of her family's troubles -- a depressed, bedridden mother; a reticent, overworked father; and a run-down horse ranch. As the hottest summer in fifteen years unfolds and bills pile up, Alice is torn between dreams of escaping the loneliness of her duty-filled life and a longing to help her father mend their family and the ranch. To make ends meet, the Winstons board the pampered horses of rich neighbors, and for the first time Alice confronts the power and security that class and wealth provide. As her family and their well-being become intertwined with the lives of their clients, Alice is drawn into an adult world of secrets and hard truths, and soon discovers that people -- including herself -- can be cruel, can lie and cheat, and every once in a while, can do something heartbreaking and selfless. Ultimately, Alice and her family must weather a devastating betrayal and a shocking, violent series of events that will test their love and prove the power of forgiveness.

11th Grade Grab Bag

Nature Girl, Carl Hiaasen

A fully loaded, riotous and righteous, non-stop hilarious novel from Carl Hiaasen. Honey Santana is embarking on a scheme to help rid the world of irresponsibility, indifference, and dinnertime telemarketers. She's taking gullible, rude, telemarketer Boyd Shreave and his less-than-enthusiastic mistress, Eugenie, into the Ten Thousand Island Wildlife Refuge off the coast of southeast Florida for a gentle lesson in civility.

All the Pretty Horses, Cormac McCarthy

All the Pretty Horses is the tale of John Grady Cole, who at sixteen finds himself at the end of a long line of Texas ranchers, cut off from the only life he has ever imagined for himself. With two companions, he sets off for Mexico on a sometimes idyllic, sometimes comic journey to a place where dreams are paid for in blood.

Motorcycle Diaries, Che Guevara

These travel diaries capture the essence and exuberance of the young legend, Che Guevara. In January 1952, Che set out from Buenos Aires to explore South America on an ancient Norton motorcycle. He encounters an extraordinary range of people -- from native Indians to copper miners, lepers and tourists -- experiencing hardships and adventures that informed much of his later life.

White Noise, Don DeLillo

White Noise tells the story of Jack Gladney, his fourth wife, Babette, and four ultramodern offspring as they navigate the rocky passages of family life to the background babble of brand-name consumerism. When an industrial accident unleashes an "airborne toxic event," a lethal black chemical cloud floats over their lives. The menacing cloud is a more urgent and visible version of the "white noise" engulfing the Gladneys-radio transmissions, sirens, microwaves, ultrasonic appliances, and TV murmurings-pulsing with life, yet suggesting something ominous.

Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth, Chris Ware (graphic novel)

This first book from Chicago author Chris Ware is a pleasantly-decorated view at a lonely and emotionally-impaired "everyman" (Jimmy Corrigan, the Smartest Kid on Earth), who is provided, at age 36, the opportunity to meet his father for the first time. An improvisatory romance which gingerly departs itself between 1890's Chicago and 1980's small town Michigan, the reader is helped along by thousands of colored illustrations and diagrams, which, when read rapidly in sequence, provide a convincing illusion of life and movement. The bulk of the work is supported by fold-out instructions, an index, paper cut-outs, and a brief apology, all of which concrete to form a rich portrait of a man stunted by a paralyzing fear of being disliked.

The Namesake, Jhumpa Lahiri

The Namesake takes the Ganguli family from their tradition-bound life in Calcutta through their fraught transformation into Americans. On the heels of their arranged wedding, Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli settle together in Cambridge, Massachusetts. An engineer by training, Ashoke adapts far less warily than his wife, who resists all things American and pines for her family. When their son is born, the task of naming him betrays the vexed results of bringing old ways to the new world. Named for a Russian writer by his Indian parents in memory of a catastrophe years before, Gogol Ganguli knows only that he suffers the burden of his heritage as well as his odd, antic name. Lahiri brings great empathy to Gogol as he stumbles along the first-generation path, strewn with conflicting loyalties, comic detours, and wrenching love affairs. With penetrating insight, she reveals not only the defining power of the names and expectations bestowed upon us by our parents, but also the means by which we slowly, sometimes painfully, come to define ourselves.

Half Broke Horses, Jeannette Walls

In *Half Broke Horses*, Jeannette Walls brings us the story of her grandmother, told in a first-person voice that is authentic, irresistible, and triumphant.

"Those old cows knew trouble was coming before we did." So begins the story of Lily Casey Smith, Jeannette Walls's no nonsense, resourceful, and spectacularly compelling grandmother. By age six, Lily was helping her father break horses. At fifteen, she left home to teach in a frontier town -- riding five hundred miles on her pony, alone, to get to her job. She learned to drive a car ("I loved cars even more than I loved horses. They didn't need to be fed if they weren't working, and they didn't leave big piles of manure all over the place") and fly a plane. And, with her husband Jim, she ran a vast ranch in Arizona. She raised two children, one of whom is Jeannette's memorable mother, Rosemary Smith Walls, unforgettably portrayed in *The Glass Castle*.

Lily survived tornadoes, droughts, floods, the Great Depression, and the most heartbreaking personal tragedy. She bristled at prejudice of all kinds -- against women, Native Americans, and anyone else who didn't fit the mold. Rosemary Smith Walls always told Jeannette that she was like her grandmother, and in this true-life novel, Jeannette Walls channels that kindred spirit.

Zodiac, Neal Stephenson

Sangamon Taylor's is a New Age Sam Spade who sports a wet suit instead of a trench coat and prefers Jolt from the can to Scotch on the rocks. He knows about chemical sludge the way he knows about evil -- all too intimately. And the toxic trail he follows leads to some high and foul places. Before long Taylor's house is bombed, his every move followed, he's adopted by reservation Indians, moves onto the FBI's most wanted list, makes up with his girlfriend, and

plays a starring role in the near-assassination of a presidential candidate. Closing the case with the aid of his burnout roommate, his tofu-eating comrades, three major networks, and a range of unconventional weaponry, Sangamon Taylor pulls off the most startling caper in Boston Harbor since the Tea Party. As he navigates this ecological thriller with hardboiled wit and the biggest outboard motor he can get his hands on, Taylor reveals himself as one of the last of the white-hatted good guys in a very toxic world.

12th Grade Grab Bag

Encounters with the Archdruid, John McPhee

The narratives in this book are of journeys made in three wildernesses - on a coastal island, in a Western mountain range, and on the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon. The four men portrayed here have different relationships to their environment, and they encounter each other on mountain trails, in forests and rapids, sometimes with reserve, sometimes with friendliness, sometimes fighting hard across a philosophical divide. The four men are: Charles Park, a mineral engineer who believes that our economic well-being rests on finding metals and extracting them from the earth wherever they are found; Charles Fraser, a resort developer who regards all conservationists as druids ("religious figures who sacrifice people and worship trees"); Floyd Dominy, a builder of gigantic dams, who grew up in dry Western country and deeply believes in the impoundment of water; and David Brower, the most militant conservationist in the world. In turn, Park, Fraser, and Dominy encounter Brower, whether in rapids, in forests, on mountain trails, on a raft, in a jeep, or on foot, now reserved, now friendly, now fighting hard across a philosophical divide.

The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, Junot Díaz

The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, the 2007 novel by author Junot Díaz, won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction, along with multiple other awards. This modern-day tale of an unlikely hero takes readers on the dark journey of a contemporary immigrant.

The novel's main character, Oscar de León, is a "ghetto nerd" from a family of immigrants from the Dominican Republic. Plagued by the *fukú* curse brought upon the aboriginal people of the Americas by Christopher Columbus, Oscar portrays himself as a hero in search of his personal Grail—a "pure and unadulterated love." Obsessed with science fiction and fantasy, Oscar is alienated in his lower-class community. Throughout high school, and into his teaching career, he is the victim of the narrow perspectives of those without his imagination and vision.

Told from the point of view of Oscar's sister Lola and his best friend Yunior, this tale of the search for redemption leads the reader through the darkest corners of a country under dictatorial control. Lola seeks her own redemption, away from her family and her heritage. She loves only her younger brother Oscar and seeks to protect him from the curse that tragically affects their family. Yunior, his best friend and college roommate, does not quite understand Oscar, yet loves him just the same and sees that there is something within Oscar that begs to be understood. As the primary narrator of the novel, Yunior provides a loving portrait of a tortured soul within a tortured family. The redemption of Oscar's "brief wondrous life" comes at a significant, but justified, price.

The Orchid Thief, Susan Orlean

In Susan Orlean's mesmerizing true story of beauty and obsession is John Laroche, a renegade plant dealer and sharply handsome guy, in spite of the fact that he is missing his front teeth and has the posture of al dente spaghetti. In 1994, Laroche and three Seminole Indians were arrested with rare orchids they had stolen from a wild swamp in south Florida that is filled with some of the world's most extraordinary plants and trees. Laroche had planned to clone the orchids and then sell them for a small fortune to impassioned collectors. After he was caught in the act, Laroche set off one of the oddest legal controversies in recent memory, which brought together environmentalists, Native American activists, and devoted orchid collectors. The result is a tale that is strange, compelling, and hilarious.

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee, Dee Brown

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee is Dee Brown's eloquent, fully documented account of the systematic destruction of the American Indian during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Using council records, autobiographies, and firsthand descriptions, Brown allows the great chiefs and warriors of the Dakota, Ute, Sioux, Cheyenne, and other tribes to tell us in their own words of the battles, massacres, and broken treaties that finally left them demoralized and defeated. A unique and disturbing narrative told with force and clarity, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* changed forever our vision of how the West was really won.

The Glass Castle: A Memoir, Jeannette Walls

The Glass Castle is a remarkable memoir of resilience and redemption, and a revelatory look into a family at once deeply dysfunctional and uniquely vibrant. When sober, Jeannette's brilliant and charismatic father captured his children's imagination, teaching them physics, geology, and how to embrace life fearlessly. But when he drank, he was dishonest and destructive. Her mother was a free spirit who abhorred the idea of domesticity and didn't want the responsibility of raising a family. The Walls children learned to take care of themselves. They fed, clothed, and protected one another, and eventually found their way to New York. Their parents followed them, choosing to be homeless even as their children prospered.

Half Asleep in Frog Pajamas, Tom Robbins

When the stock market crashes on the Thursday before Easter, you -- an ambitious, although ineffectual and not entirely ethical young broker -- are convinced you're facing the Weekend from Hell. Before the market reopens on Monday, you're going to have to scramble and scheme to cover your butt, but there's no way you can anticipate the baffling disappearance of a 300-pound psychic, the fall from grace of a born-again monkey, or the intrusion in your life of a tattooed stranger intent on blowing your mind and most of your fuses. Over these fateful three days, you will be forced to confront everything from mysterious African rituals to legendary amphibians, from tarot-card bombshells to street violence, from your own sexuality to outer space. This is, after all, a Tom Robbins novel -- and the author has never been in finer form.

Half of a Yellow Sun, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

With effortless grace, celebrated author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie illuminates a seminal moment in modern African history: Biafra's impassioned struggle to establish an independent republic in southeastern Nigeria during the late 1960s. We experience this tumultuous decade alongside five unforgettable characters: Ugwu, a thirteen-year-old houseboy who works for Odenigbo, a university professor full of revolutionary zeal; Olanna, the professor's beautiful young mistress who has abandoned her life in Lagos for a dusty town and her lover's charm; and Richard, a shy young Englishman infatuated with Olanna's willful twin sister Kainene. *Half of a Yellow Sun* is a tremendously evocative novel of the promise, hope, and disappointment of the Biafran war.

The Happiness Project, Gretchen Craft Rubin

This relatable, inspiring project is the result of the author's 12-month adventure in becoming a happier person. Written with a wicked sense of humor and sharp insight, her story will inspire readers to embrace the pleasure in their lives and remind them how to have fun. Gretchen Rubin had an epiphany one rainy afternoon in the unlikeliest of places: a city bus. "The days are long, but the years are short," she realized. "Time is passing, and I'm not focusing enough on the things that really matter." In that moment, she decided to dedicate a year to her happiness project. In this lively and compelling account of that year, Rubin carves out her place alongside the authors of bestselling memoirs such as *Julie and Julia*, *The Year of Living Biblically*, and *Eat, Pray, Love*. With humor and insight, she chronicles her adventures during the twelve months she spent test-driving the wisdom of the ages, current scientific research, and lessons from popular culture about how to be happier. Rubin didn't have the option to uproot herself, nor did she really want to; instead she focused on improving her life as it was. Each month she tackled a new set of resolutions: give proofs of love, ask for help, find more fun, keep a gratitude notebook, forget about results. She immersed herself in principles set forth by all manner of experts, from Epicurus to Thoreau to Oprah to Martin Seligman to the Dalai Lama to

see what worked for her-and what didn't. Her conclusions are sometimes surprising-she finds that money can buy happiness, when spent wisely; that novelty and challenge are powerful sources of happiness; that "treating" yourself can make you feel worse; that venting bad feelings doesn't relieve them; that the very smallest of changes can make the biggest difference-and they range from the practical to the profound. Written with charm and wit, *The Happiness Project* is illuminating yet entertaining, thought-provoking yet compulsively readable. Gretchen Rubin's passion for her subject jumps off the page, and reading just a few chapters of this book will inspire you to start your own happiness project.