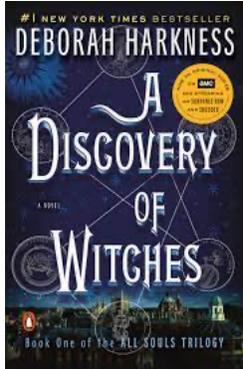


May 2022

Featured Recommendations from Yvonne Hammond

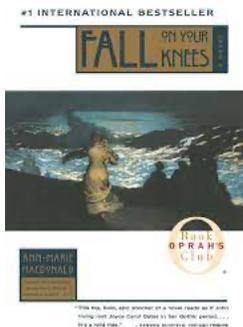
A brief explanation: The following recommendations are all books that I read over the summer, some of them are all summer reads, some of them were books on tape as I drove from New Jersey to Montana with my mom. I hope you enjoy them as much I did.



I read this book over the summer of 2020, most of it in the cool breeze on my sister's porch in Montana. I am a sucker for a good vampire book, and this doesn't disappoint. Written by a history professor (yeah, she really is a history professor and teaches in California), the text offers a casual fantasy novel with a world of magic and witches, demons and vampires, and marries it with time travel(s). Think Outlander plus a good vampire book (I'll let you decide what that looks like). My biggest issue with the text was not the effort to make vampires real, but the suggestion that someone could easily get a tenure track job in academia by the age of 26.

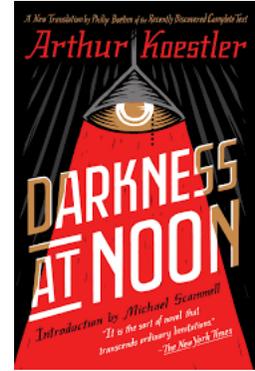


If you enjoy fantasy and careful, I mean careful, world building, this is the book for you. I listened to this book with my mom and oldest child as we drove almost 3,000 miles. Set in a world of alomancy, empire, intrigue, and the clash between old world and new, the novel features a female protagonist who is orphaned and living under the rule of an abusive crime lord. I don't want to tell you too much, but Vin is a diamond in the rough guided by a man who finds her and mentors her, all while planning an insurrection of impossible size. Sanderson is a masterful storyteller, who offers a society complicated by various social identities and inequities.

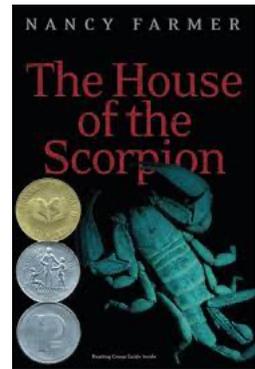


Whenever I must answer that most painful of questions: "so, what's your favorite book?" this is my go to answer. I first read this book in Germany, where it was very difficult to acquire books written in English. The military store offered a sad collection of dime store trash, and Oprah books. This book was life changing for me, and it became the inspiration for my graduate studies. The book traces the short rise and slow fall of a family torn apart by secrets, each of which becomes metaphorically buried with the baby by the lake. The prose is haunting and made more so by the various narrative perspectives that weave points of contact between a diverse range of people. Ultimately, the novel begs us to consider how to heal from trauma.

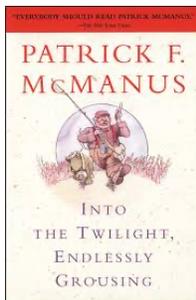
I am cheating a tiny bit with this one, but I wanted to include this book because it is not likely to come across your everyday book recommendations. Set in Russia, the book is a fascinating exploration of the psychology of terrorism through the lens of Stalin era purges. I read the book at the end of a semester in a course about the history of terrorism, extremist movements, and their leaders. One of the more interesting aspects of the book is its frank look at prison, particularly the impact of isolation. I know that I am not pitching this well, but it reads a bit like a “true crime” type of t.v. show if that is your thing.



I might not have ever read this book had I not assigned it to my students for a class on YA fiction, but it became one of my favorite books that summer. One of the more frighteningly/thrilling aspects of the story is the dystopian setting that doesn't always feel dystopian (which is what makes a good dystopian, right?). The book considers the ethics and impacts of humanity through clones used for body parts to extend the lives of cartel drug leaders. The story considers issues of race, national boundaries, personal freedom, and the source of humanity. I have blocked the ending, so I can't spoil, but know that it is part of a series.

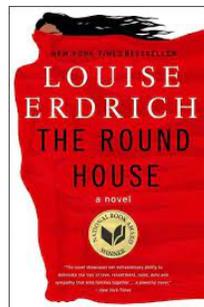


Just some fun additions:



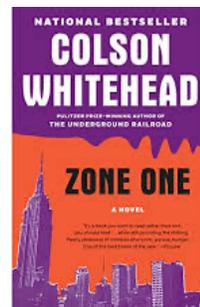
Looking for something light?

Patrick McManus is a satirist who writes about life in the Northwest through a series of essays, that rarely fail to elicit a laugh.



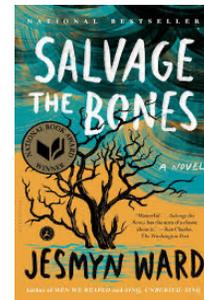
Interested in Native American Literature?

I could list so many, but I think Erdrich is a beautiful writer whose books offer complicated explorations of family and love.



Who I am reading this summer:
Colson Whitehead

I often read *The Nickel Boys*, so I am excited to tackle *Zone One*, where I will encounter zombie America.



Who I am reading this summer:
Jesmyn Ward

I have read *Men We Reaped*, and *Sing, Unburied, Sing*—both of which are gorgeous pieces of writing. If you haven't yet read her, make it a life goal. You won't regret it.