

In Memoriam by Alice Winn (2023)

It's 1914, and World War I is ceaselessly churning through thousands of young men on both sides of the fight. The violence of the front feels far away to Henry Gaunt, Sidney Ellwood and the rest of their classmates, safely ensconced in their idyllic boarding school in the English countryside. News of the heroic deaths of their friends only makes the war more exciting.

Gaunt, half German, is busy fighting his own private battle—an all-consuming infatuation with his best friend, the glamorous, charming Ellwood—without a clue that Ellwood is pining for him in return. When Gaunt's family asks him to enlist to forestall the anti-German sentiment they face, Gaunt does so immediately, relieved to escape his overwhelming feelings for Ellwood. To Gaunt's horror, Ellwood rushes to join him at the front, and the rest of their classmates soon follow. Now death surrounds them in all its grim reality, often inches away, and no one knows who will be next.

An epic tale of both the devastating tragedies of war and the forbidden romance that blooms in its grip, *In Memoriam* is a breathtaking debut.

About the author: Winn grew up in Paris and was educated in the UK. She has a degree in literature from Oxford University and now lives in Paris.

The Authenticity Project by Clare Pooley (2020)

Julian Jessop, an eccentric, lonely artist and septuagenarian believes that most people aren't really honest with each other. But what if they were? And so he writes—in a plain, green journal—the truth about his own life and leaves it in his local café. It's run by the incredibly tidy and efficient Monica, who furtively adds her own entry and leaves the book in the wine bar across the street. Before long, the others who find the green notebook add the truths about their own deepest selves—and soon find each other in real life at Monica's café.

Very sweet. If you need a palate cleanser from heavier books, this would be a good bet. Its feel-good vibes might even inspire you to live more authentically. Real life doesn't necessarily work the way this novels wished it would, but it is nice to think that it could.

Readalikes:

Man Called Ove/Fredrik Backman--A grumpy yet loveable man finds his solitary world turned on its head when a boisterous young family moves in next door.

Less/Andrew Sean Greer--You are a failed novelist about to turn fifty. A wedding invitation arrives in the mail: your boyfriend of the past nine years now engaged to someone else. You can't say yes--it would all be too awkward--and you can't say no--it would look like defeat. On your desk are a series of half-baked literary invitations you've received from around the world. How do you arrange to skip town? You accept them all.

The Storied Life of AJ Fikry/Gabrielle Zevin--Enjoyable read with a snobby main character that I had no trouble getting behind and rooting for. Some of the tangential storylines were a little too soapy for me: the sister-in-laws marriage and subsequent romance, for instance. Reminded me a little of BBC's Doc Martin: social

misfit who gets a small town to love him despite all of his best efforts and to his chagrin. A perfect beach read for the bookishly inclined.

Let the Great World Spin by Colum McCann (2009)

2009 NATIONAL BOOK AWARD WINNER for FICTION 2009 • Colum McCann's beloved novel inspired by Philippe Petit's daring high-wire stunt

In the dawning light of a late-summer morning, the people of lower Manhattan stand hushed, staring up in disbelief at the Twin Towers. It is August 1974, and a mysterious tightrope walker is running, dancing, leaping between the towers, suspended a quarter mile above the ground. In the streets below, a slew of ordinary lives become extraordinary in bestselling novelist Colum McCann's stunningly intricate portrait of a city and its people.

About the author & notes: Colum McCann is the author of seven novels, three collections of stories and two works of non-fiction. Born and raised in Dublin, he has been the recipient of many international honors including the U.S National Book Award and the International Dublin Literary Prize, and he received an Oscar nomination for writing the 2005 short live action film *Everything in this Country Must*. In 2017 he was elected to the American Academy of Arts. His work has been published in over 40 languages. He is the President and co-founder of the non-profit global story exchange organization, Narrative 4. He is the Thomas Hunter Writer in Residence in Hunter College, in New York, where he lives with his wife Allison and their family.

Other titles by McCann: *American Mother* (2024); *Apeirogon* (2020); *Transatlantic* (2013)

Related books & films:

The Man Who Walked Between the Towers by Mordicai Gerstein (2007)

The Walk book and feature film (2015)

Man on Wire (2008) Academy award-winning documentary

Great Jones Street by Don DeLillo

Just Kids by Patti Smith

Moon of the Crusted Snow by Rice Waubgeshig (2018)

With winter looming, a small northern Anishinaabe community goes dark. Cut off, people become passive and confused. Panic builds as the food supply dwindles. While the band council and a pocket of community members struggle to maintain order, an unexpected visitor arrives, escaping the crumbling society to the south. Soon after, others follow.

The community leadership loses its grip on power as the visitors manipulate the tired and hungry to take control of the reserve. Tensions rise and, as the months pass, so does the death toll due to sickness and despair. Frustrated by the building chaos, a group of young friends and their families turn to the land and Anishinaabe tradition in hopes of helping their community thrive again. Guided through the chaos by an unlikely leader named Evan Whitesky, they endeavor to restore order while grappling with a grave decision.

Blending action and allegory, *Moon of the Crusted Snow* upends our expectations. Out of catastrophe comes resilience. And as one society collapses, another is reborn.

About the author: Waubgeshig Rice is an author and journalist originally from Wasauksing First Nation. He now splits his time between Sudbury and Wasauksing.

Other books by Rice: *Midnight Sweatlodge* (2012), *Legacy* (2014)

Related books: *Indian Horse* (2018) by Richard Wagamese, *Five Little Indians* (2020) by Michele Good, *The Marrow Thieves* (2017) by Cherie Dimaline

All You Have to Do Is Call by Kerri Maher (2023)

A dramatic novel based on the true story of the Jane Collective and the women who fought for the right to choose, from the national bestselling author of *The Paris Bookseller*. The best-known secret in the city, Jane is a women's health organization composed entirely of women helping women. In this historic era when the personal was nothing if not political, when television, movies, and commercials told women they'd "come a long way, baby," Veronica, Margaret, and Patty must make choices that will change the course of their lives forever.

Excellent historical fiction about an underground abortion group in 1970's Chicago. Characters are sound, all with issues that would have affected the women of that time period. Underlines the importance of access to safe, legal abortions and what women are willing to do when they are denied access to them.

Readalikes:

***Mercy Street*/Jennifer Haigh**--a riveting story about the disparate lives that intersect at a women's clinic in Boston.

***Madame Restell*/Jennifer Wright**--This is the gilded age story of one of the boldest women in American history: a self-made millionaire, a celebrity in her era, a woman beloved by her patients and despised by the men who wanted to control them.

None of This Is True by Lisa Jewel (2023)

One night at the pub, two women meet and realize they are birthday twins: they are both turning forty-five that very day. Alix Summer is a popular podcaster whose life looks very much like a perfectly curated social media grid, and Josie Fair appears to be nothing more than a plain Jane. They meet again a few days later, and Alix can't resist turning Josie's story into a podcast. But the more Alix probes, the more disturbing Josie's story becomes, and suddenly Alix finds that Josie has infiltrated her own life. Dark characters, sudden plot twists, and a moody—and perfect—ending should keep Jewell's fans happy, while also earning her new readers.

About the author: Her first novel, *Ralph's Party*, was the best-selling debut novel of 1999. Since then she has written another twenty novels, most recently a number of dark psychological thrillers. Lisa is a *New York Times* number-one bestselling author who has been published worldwide in over thirty languages. She lives in north London with her husband and two daughters.

Other books by Lisa Jewell: *The Family Upstairs* (2019); *Watching You* (2019), *Then She Was Gone* (2017), *I Found You* (2016),

Related books: *The Woman Upstairs* by Claire Messud, *The Paris Apartment* (2022), *The Guest List* (2020), and *The Hunting Party* (2018) by Lucy Foley

The Laughter by Sonora Jha (2023)

A white male college professor develops a dangerous obsession with his new Pakistani colleague in this modern, iconoclastic novel. Dr. Oliver Harding, a tenured professor of English, is long settled into the routines of a divorced, aging academic. But his quiet, staid life is upended by his new colleague, Ruhaba Khan, a dynamic Pakistani Muslim law professor. Ruhaba unexpectedly ignites Oliver's long-dormant passions, a secret desire that quickly tips towards obsession after her teenaged nephew, Adil Alam, arrives from France to stay with her. Drawn to them, Oliver tries to reconcile his discomfort with the worlds from which they come, and to quiet his sense of dismay at the encroaching change they represent—both in background and in Ruhaba's spirited engagement with the student movements on campus. After protests break out demanding diversity across the university, Oliver finds himself and his beliefs under fire, even as his past reveals a picture more complicated than it seems. As Ruhaba seems attainable yet not, and as the women of his past taunt his memory, Oliver reacts in ways shocking and devastating. An explosive, tense, and illuminating work of fiction, *The Laughter* is a fascinating portrait of privilege, radicalization, class, and modern academia that forces us to confront the assumptions we make, as both readers and as citizens.

About the author: After a career in journalism in India and Singapore, Dr. Jha is now a professor of journalism and an associate dean at Seattle University, USA.

Other Books by: *How to Raise a Feminist Son; A Memoir and a Manifesto* (2022)

Related books: *I Have Some Questions for You* by Rebecca Makkai (2023), *Yellowface* (2023), *Black Buck* (2021) by Mateo Askaripour

One Woman Show by Christine Coulson (2023)

Author Christine Coulson spent twenty-five years writing for the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Her final project was to write wall labels for the museum's new British Galleries. During that time, she dreamt of using The Met's strict label format to describe people as intricate works of art. The result is this bullet of a novel that imagines a privileged twentieth-century woman as an artifact—an object prized, collected, and critiqued.

Such a unique premise. You might find yourself doubting that you can capture a portrait of someone using only small descriptive vignettes of the type you'd find beneath a museum portrait, but Coulson does it, quite elegantly. Her characters are more fully drawn than those in books 4 times the size. Recommended for readers who enjoy non-traditional narratives and museum aficionados who don't take themselves too seriously.

Readalikes:

***The Lover's Dictionary*/David Levithan**—the story of a love affair told through dictionary definitions A-Through these short entries, he provides an intimate window into the great events and quotidian trifles of being within a couple, giving us an indelible and deeply moving portrait of love in our time.

The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store by James McBride (2023)

Named a Must Read for the Summer by the New York Times, The Washington Post, The Boston Globe, Time, AARP, Town & Country, St. Louis Post-Dispatch

In 1972, when workers in Pottstown, PA, were digging the foundations for a new development, the last thing they expected to find was a skeleton at the bottom of a well. Who the skeleton was and how it got there were two of the long-held secrets kept by the residents of Chicken Hill, the dilapidated neighborhood where immigrant Jews and African Americans lived side by side and shared ambitions and sorrows. Chicken Hill was where Moshe and Chona Ludlow lived when Moshe integrated his theater and where Chona ran the Heaven & Earth Grocery Store. When the state came looking for a deaf boy to institutionalize him, it was Chona and Nate Timblin, the Black janitor at Moshe's theater and the unofficial leader of the Black community on Chicken Hill, who worked together to keep the boy safe.

Themes: As these characters' stories overlap and deepen, it becomes clear how much the people who live on the margins of white, Christian America struggle and what they must do to survive. When the truth is finally revealed about what happened on Chicken Hill and the part the town's white establishment played in it, McBride shows us that even in dark times, it is love and community—heaven and earth—that sustain us.

About the author: McBride's father, Rev. Andrew D. McBride was African-American and his mother, Ruchel Dwajra Zylska (name changed to Rachel Deborah Shilsky, and later to Ruth McBride Jordan), was a Jewish immigrant from Poland. James was raised in Brooklyn's Red Hook housing projects until he was seven years old and was the last child Ruth had from her first marriage, the last child of Rev. Andrew McBride, and the eighth of 12 children.

McBride graduated from Oberlin College in 1979, and received his journalism degree from Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in 1980

Others by the James McBride: His memoir, *The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother* (1995), describes his family history and his relationship with his mother; *Deacon King Kong*; National Book Award-winning *The Good Lord Bird*, a novel about small-town secrets and the people who keep them.

Related books: *The Color of Love: A Story of a Mixed-Race Jewish Girl* by Marra B. Gad; *Black White and Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Shelf* by Rebecca Walker; *Small Island* by Andrea Levy

Migrations by Charlotte McConaghy (2020)

Franny Stone has always been the kind of woman who is able to love but unable to stay. Leaving behind everything but her research gear, she arrives in Greenland with a singular purpose: to follow the last Arctic terns in the world on what might be their final migration to Antarctica. Franny talks her way onto a fishing boat, and she and the crew set sail, traveling ever further from shore and safety. But as Franny's history begins to unspool—a passionate love affair, an absent family, a devastating crime—it becomes clear that she is chasing more than just the birds. When Franny's dark secrets catch up with her, how much is she willing to risk for one more chance at redemption?

Epic and intimate, heartbreaking and galvanizing, Charlotte McConaghy's *Migrations* is an ode to a disappearing world and a breathtaking page-turner about the possibility of hope against all odds.

About the author: Charlotte is an Australian author living in Sydney with her partner and son. She has a Masters Degree in Screenwriting from the Australian Film Television and Radio School, and a number of published SFF works in Australia.

Other books : *Once There Were Wolves* (2021),

Related books: *Birnam Wood* by Eleanor Catton (2023), *The Land of Milk and Honey* (2023) by C. Pam Zhang, *What We Fed to the Manticore* (2022) by Talia Laskhimi Kolluri

Love and Fury by Samantha Silva (2021)

From Samantha Silva, the author of *Mr. Dickens and His Carol*, a beautiful, engrossing novel based on the life of proto-feminist icon Mary Wollstonecraft, narrated to her newborn daughter, Mary Shelley. Beautifully written, it alternates between the reality of the childbirth room where Wollstonecraft is succumbing to childbed fever and the life story that she is telling her newborn daughter.

Readalikes:

Mary and the Birth of Frankenstein/Anne Eekhout--A novel of innocence, young love, and gothic mystery that is a reimagining of Mary Shelley's life, and a wonderfully imaginative exploration of the roots of her literary masterpiece, *Frankenstein*.

Shrines of Gaiety/Kate Atkinson--In a country still recovering from the Great War, London is the focus for a delirious nightlife. In her Soho club, *There*, Nellie Coker is a ruthless ruler, ambitious for her six children. But success breeds enemies.

The Fury by Alex Michaelides (2024)

“This is a tale of murder. Or maybe that’s not quite true. At its heart, it’s a love story, isn’t it? Lana Farrar is a reclusive ex-movie star and one of the most famous women in the world. Every year, she invites her closest friends to escape the English weather and spend Easter on her idyllic private Greek island. I tell you this because you may think you know this story. You probably read about it at the time — it caused a real stir in the tabloids, if you remember. It had all the necessary ingredients for a press sensation: a celebrity; a private island cut off by the wind ... and a murder. We found ourselves trapped there overnight. Our old friendships

concealed hatred and a desire for revenge. What followed was a game of cat and mouse—a battle of wits, full of twists and turns, building to an unforgettable climax. The night ended in violence and death, as one of us was found murdered. But who am I? My name is Elliot Chase, and I'm going to tell you a story unlike any you've ever heard."

About the author:

Alex Michaelides was born and raised in Cyprus. He has an M.A. in English Literature from Trinity College, Cambridge University, and an M.A. in Screenwriting from the American Film Institute in Los Angeles. *The Silent Patient* was his first novel, debuting at #1 on the *New York Times* bestseller list, and has sold more than 6.5 million copies worldwide. The rights have been sold in a record-breaking 51 countries, and the book has been optioned for film. His second novel, *The Maidens*, was an instant *New York Times* bestseller and has been optioned for television by Miramax Television and Stone Village.

Other books by Alex Michaelides: *The Silent Patient* (2019); *The Maidens*

Related books: *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* by Taylor Jenkins Reid; *The Villa* by Rachel Hawkins (2023); *The Guest List* by Lucy Foley (2020); *The Chateau* by Jaclyn Goldis (2023); *Rock Paper Scissors* by Alice Feeney (2022)

Run Towards the Danger by Sarah Polley (2022)

Oscar-nominated screenwriter, director, and actor Sarah Polley's *Run Towards the Danger* explores memory and the dialogue between her past and her present. These are the most dangerous stories of my life. The ones I have avoided, the ones I haven't told, the ones that have kept me awake on countless nights. As these stories found echoes in my adult life, and then went another, better way than they did in childhood, they became lighter and easier to carry. Sarah Polley's work as an actor, screenwriter, and director is celebrated for its honesty, complexity, and deep humanity. She brings all those qualities, along with her exquisite storytelling chops, to these six essays. Each one captures a piece of Polley's life as she remembers it, while at the same time examining the fallibility of memory, the mutability of reality in the mind, and the possibility of experiencing the past anew, as the person she is now but was not then. As Polley writes, the past and present are in a "reciprocal pressure dance." Polley contemplates stories from her own life ranging from stage fright to high-risk childbirth to endangerment and more. After struggling with the aftermath of a concussion, Polley met a specialist who gave her wholly new advice: to recover from a traumatic injury, she had to retrain her mind to strength by charging towards the very activities that triggered her symptoms. With riveting clarity, she shows the power of applying that same advice to other areas of her life in order to find a path forward, a way through. Rather than live in a protective crouch, she had to run towards the danger. In this extraordinary book, Polley explores what it is to live in one's body, in a constant state of becoming, learning, and changing"

About the author:

Sarah Polley is the award winning filmmaker of *Women Talking* along with *Away from Her* and *Stories We Tell*. Polley began her acting career as a child, starring in many productions for film and television.

Related books: I'm Glad My Mom Died by Jenette McCurdy (2023), I Am, I Am, I Am: Seventeen Brushes with Death (2018)

Thirst for Salt by Madelaine Lucas (2023)

The unnamed protagonist is 24 and on holiday with her mother when she sees an older local man, Jude, at the beach. She is fascinated with him and they begin an affair that turns her life on its axis. Gorgeously written. Really captures the drama and heartache of your first "adult" love affair. For readers who don't mind a slow walk through a narrative.

Readalikes: Sally Rooney novels

Luster/Raven Leilani --Edie is messing up in her dead-end admin job in her all-white office, is sleeping with all the wrong men, and has failed at the only thing that meant anything to her, painting. And then she meets Eric, a white middle-aged archivist with a suburban family and finds herself falling head-first into Eric's home and family.

Western Lane by Chetna Maroo (2023)

Shortlisted for the 2023 Booker Prize; A New York Times Notable Book of the Year; Named a Best Book of the Year by The Guardian, NPR, and Kirkus

A taut, enthralling first novel about grief, sisterhood, and a young athlete's struggle to transcend herself. Eleven-year-old Gopi has been playing squash since she was old enough to hold a racket. When her mother dies, her father enlists her in a quietly brutal training regimen, and the game becomes her world. Slowly, she grows apart from her sisters. Her life is reduced to the sport, guided by its rhythms: the serve, the volley, the drive, the shot and its echo. But on the court, she is not alone. She is with her pa. She is with Ged, a thirteen-year-old boy with his own formidable talent. She is with the players who have come before her. She is in awe. An indelible coming-of-age story, *Western Lane* is a valentine to innocence, to the closeness of sisterhood, to the strange ways we come to know ourselves and each other.

About the author: Chetna Maroo lives in London, UK. Her stories have been published in the *Paris Review* and she was the recipient of the 2022 Plimpton Prize for Fiction. *Western Lane* is her first novel. *Western Lane* is her first novel.

Related books: *The Expectations* by Alexander Tilney (2019); *True* by Karl Taro Greenfield (2018); *How to Behave in a Crowd* by Camille Bordas (2017)