

Where Reality Rules: An Overview of the Nonfiction Genre

Presented by
Nancy Houseal
State Library Services

Nonfiction = Not Fiction

- Based on real events and characters
- Often contains verifiable facts
- Assumed to be “true”
- Assumed authors have researched, investigated and verified narratives they have created
- Catalogued and arranged according to subject matter
- Varies widely in its readability



Current Trends

- Has been growing in popularity since 2004
- Various subgenres wax and wane in popularity and number of titles published
- Memoirs popular in first decade of 21st century
- “Big Think” books popular
- Continued focus on accessible writing and storytelling

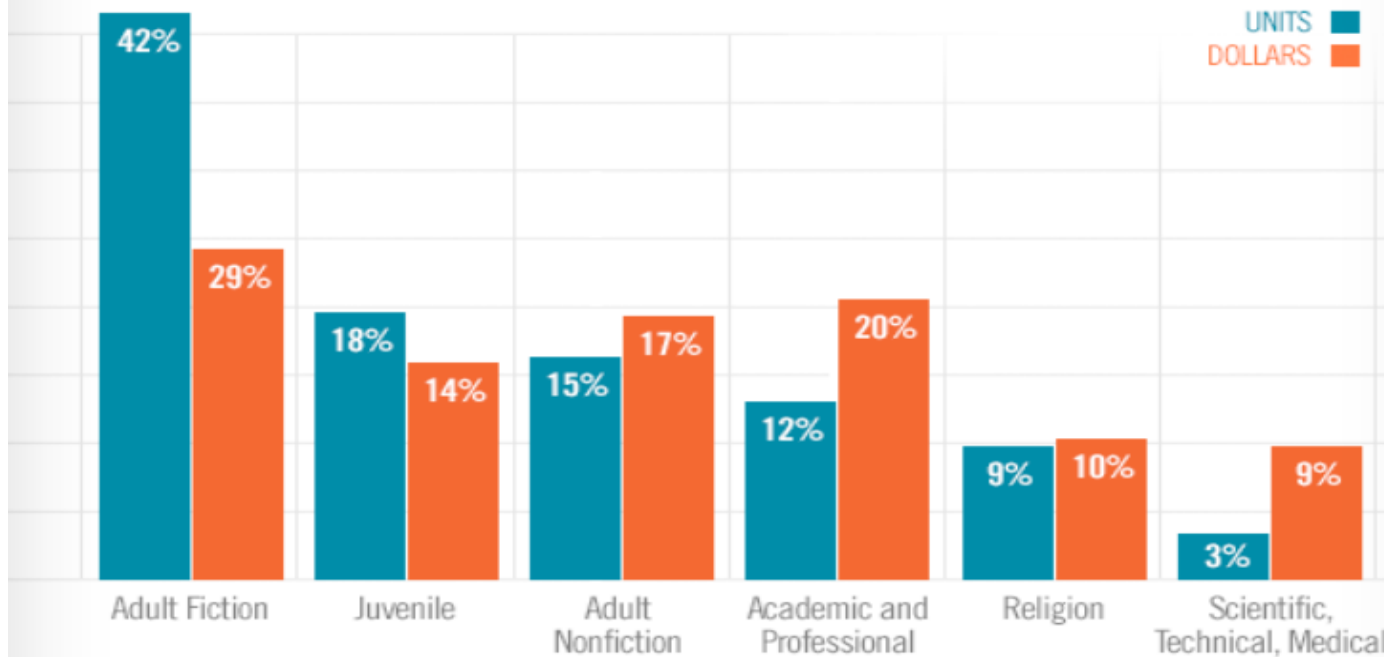


→ WHAT TYPES OF BOOKS ARE PURCHASED?



→ WHAT ARE AMERICANS READING?

Adult fiction continues to dominate what Americans buy



2012 Facts and Figures

- Familiar subjects—politics, cooking, and religion—reigned
- *Topsellers*
 - *Killing Kennedy: The End of Camelot*. Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard
 - *No Easy Day: The Firsthand Accounts of the Mission that Killed Osama Bin Laden*. Mark Owen with Kevin Maurer
 - *Killing Lincoln: The Shocking Assassination that Changed America*. Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard
 - *Barefoot Contessa Foolproof: Recipes You Can Trust*. Ina Garten
 - *Cross Roads*. William Paul Young

Current *New York Times* Nonfiction Bestsellers

Print & E-book

- TWELVE YEARS A SLAVE
- 10% HAPPIER
- UGANDA BE KIDDING ME
- LONE SURVIVOR
- THE MONUMENTS MEN
- HEAVEN IS FOR REAL
- UNBROKEN
- KILLING JESUS
- NOT COOL
- THE NAZI OFFICER'S WIFE

Paperback

- HEAVEN IS FOR REAL
- LONE SURVIVOR
- THE MONUMENTS MEN
- PROOF OF HEAVEN
- THE POWER OF HABIT
- OUTLIERS
- BRAIN ON FIRE
- QUIET
- WILD
- THINKING, FAST AND SLOW,

TABLE 3 TOP NONFICTION CIRCULATORS, PRINT AND EBOOKS

Percentage of respondents listing each subject among top five circulators

Top Circulating Subjects	Print		Ebook	
	%	Rank	%	Rank
Biography/Memoir	57	3	80	1
History	35	6	60	2
Medicine/Health	68	2	57	3
Self Help/Psychology	25	8	49	4
Current Events/Political	18	10	46	5
Cooking	84	1	34	6
Business/Finance/Careers			33	7
Religion/Philosophy	19	9	29	8
How-To/Home Arts	38	5	21	9

SOURCE: *LJ* BOOK BUYING SURVEY 2014

Themes and Types

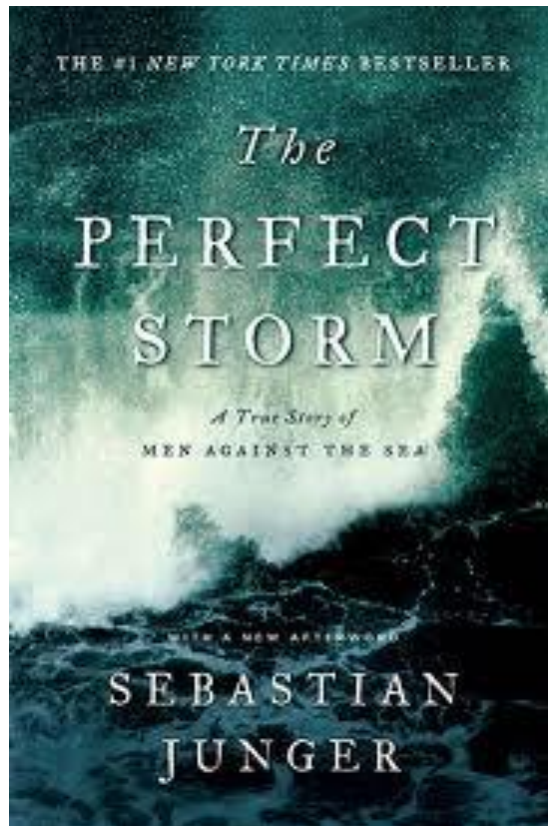
- True Adventure
 - War, Intrigue, Espionage
- Travel
 - Expatriate Life
- True Crime
- Environmental Writing
- Science and Math
- History
 - Microhistories
- Biography
 - Historical Biography
- Memoirs
- Investigative Writing
 - Immersion Journalism
- Big Think Books



True Adventure

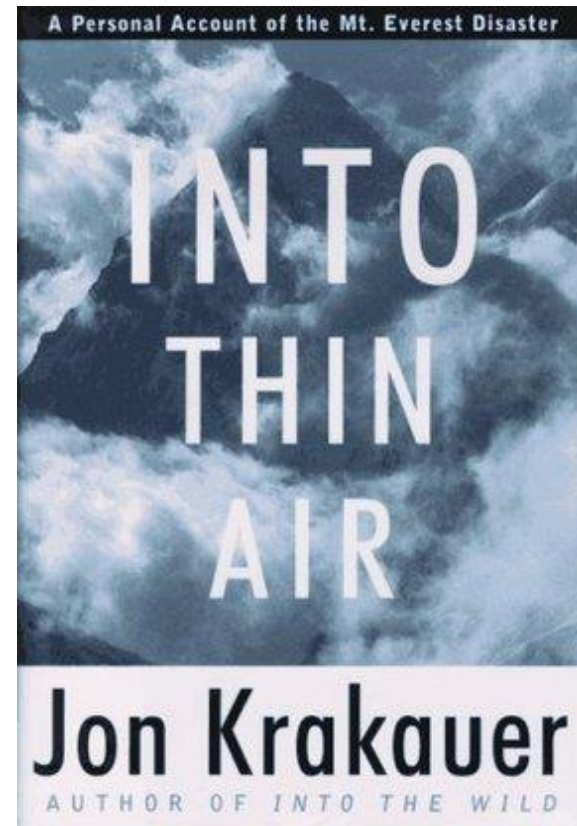
The Perfect Storm

Sebastian Junger



Into Thin Air

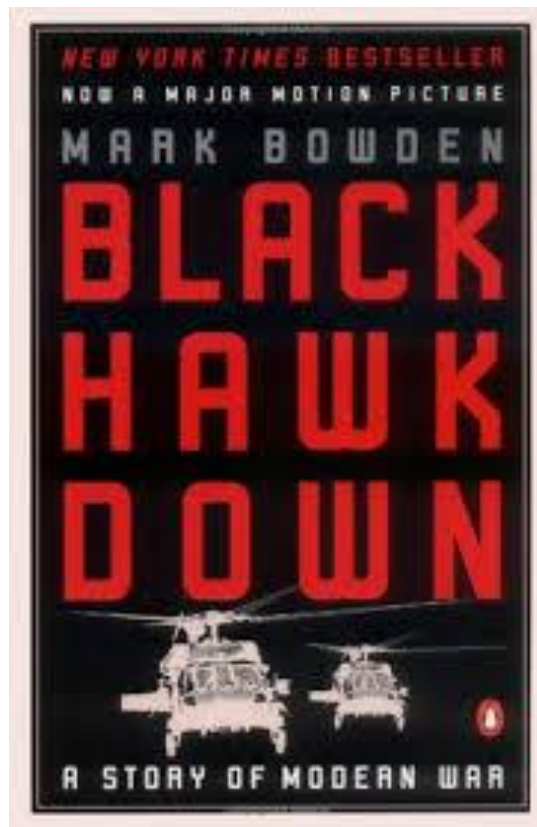
Jon Krakauer



War, Intrigue and Espionage

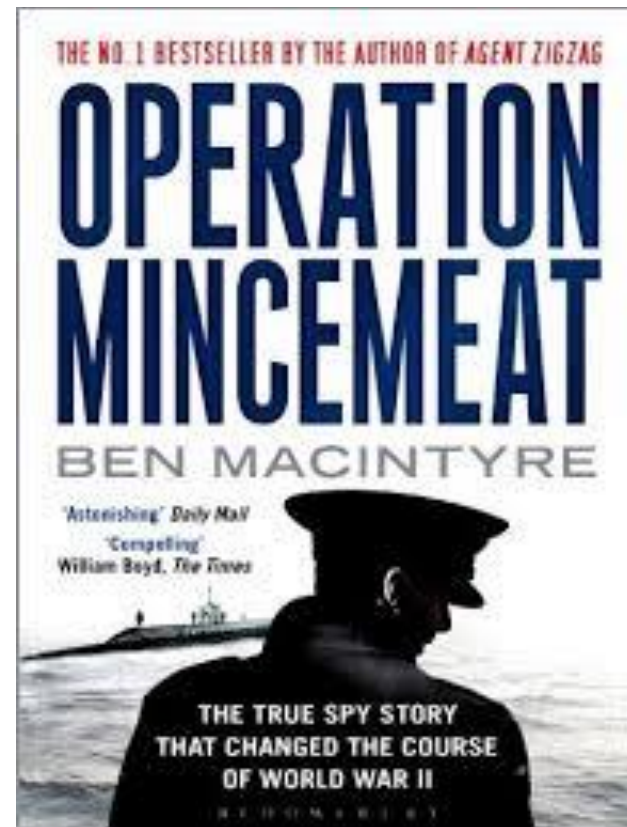
Black Hawk Down

Mark Bowden



Operation Mincemeat

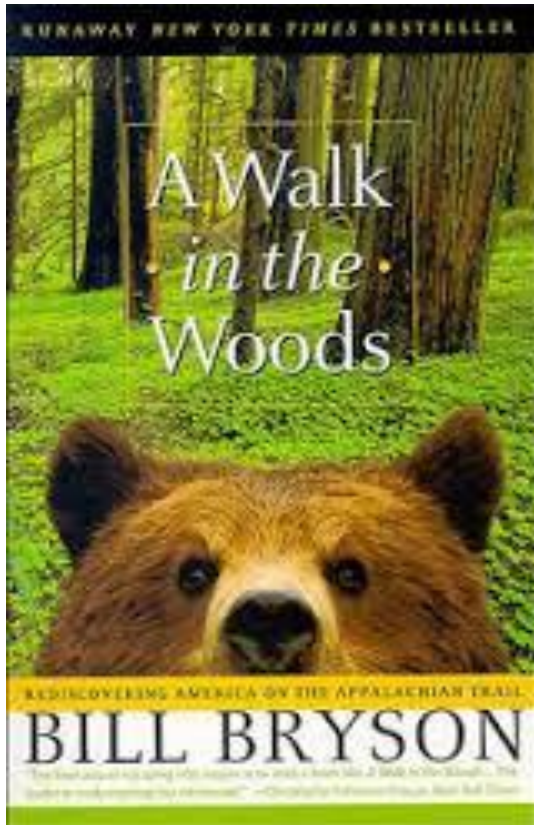
Ben MacIntyre



Travel

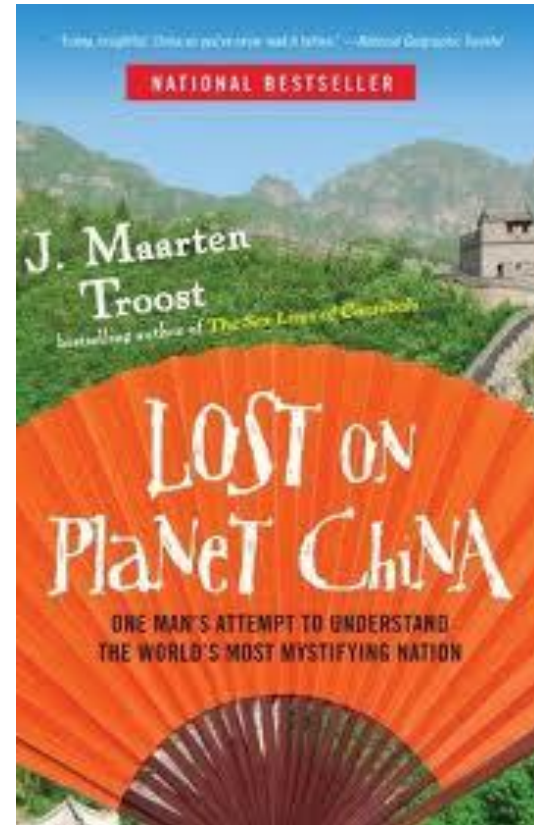
A Walk in the Woods

Bill Bryson



Lost on Planet China

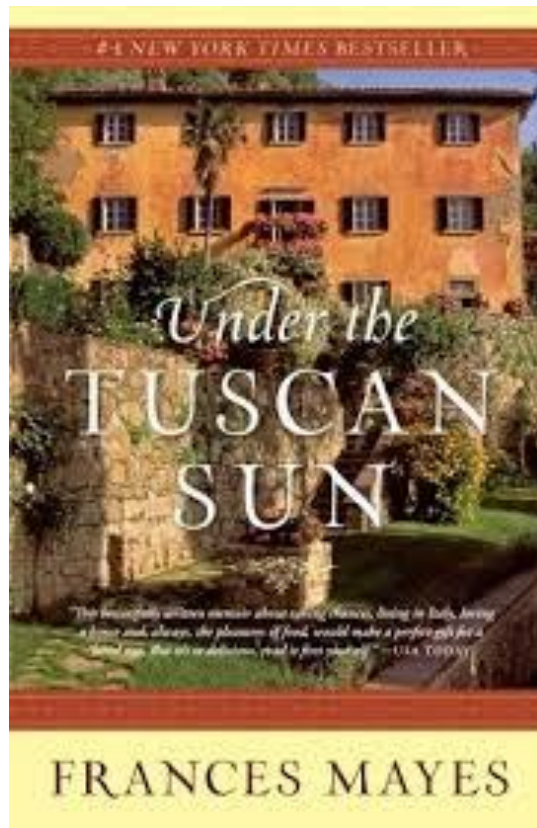
J. Troost



Expatriate Life

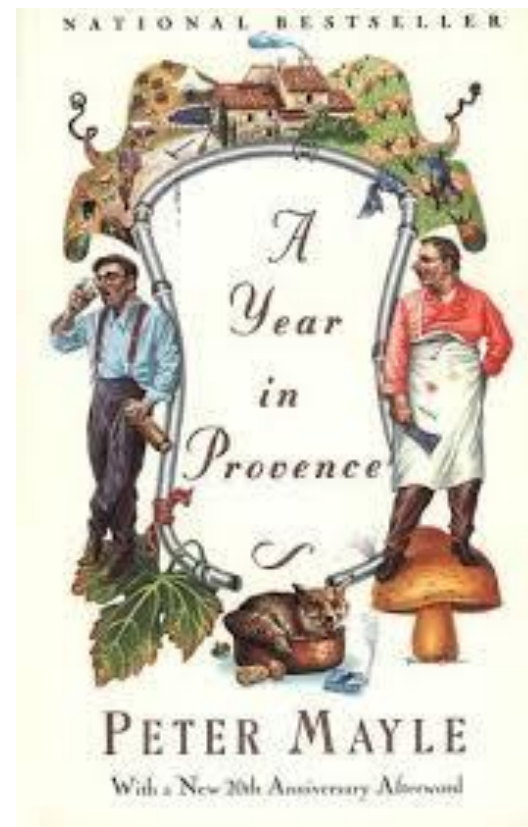
Under the Tuscan Sun

Frances Mayes



A Year in Provence

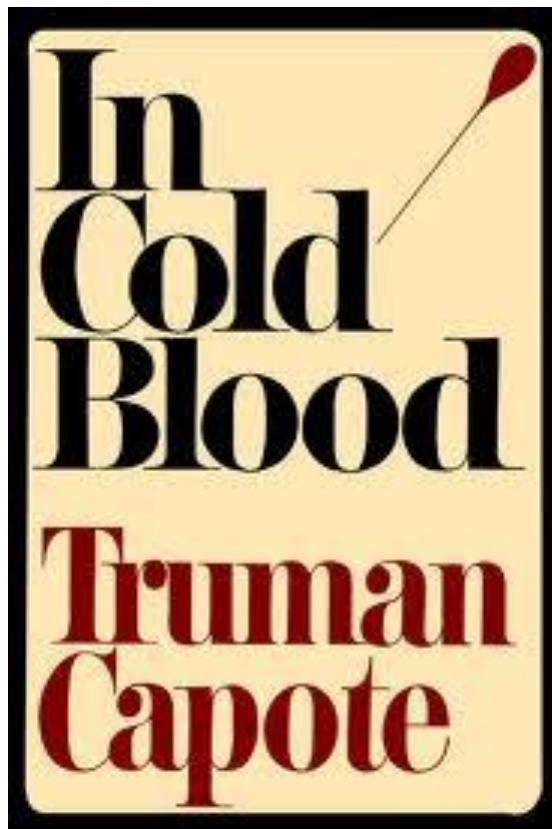
Peter Mayle



True Crime

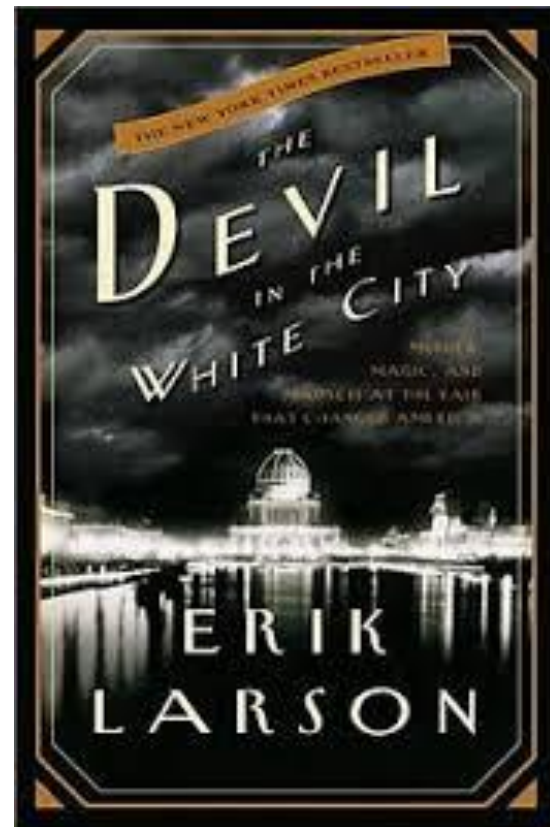
In Cold Blood

Truman Capote



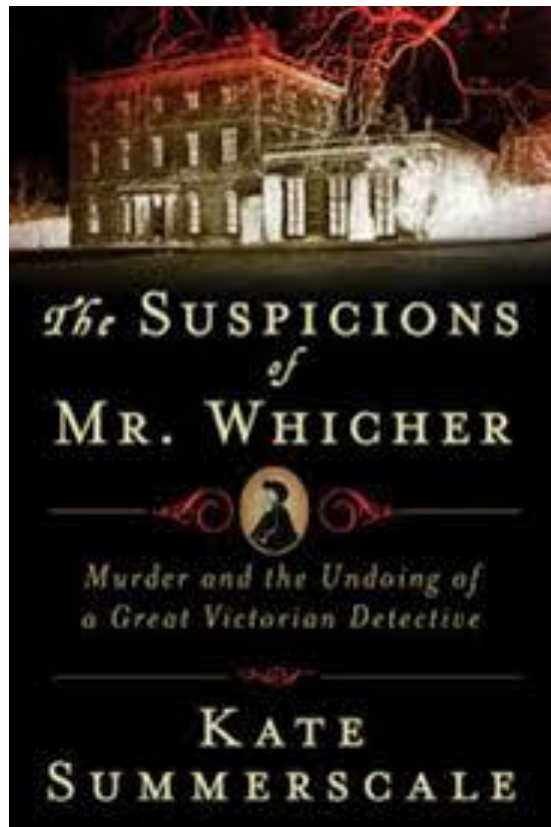
The Devil in the White City

Erik Larson



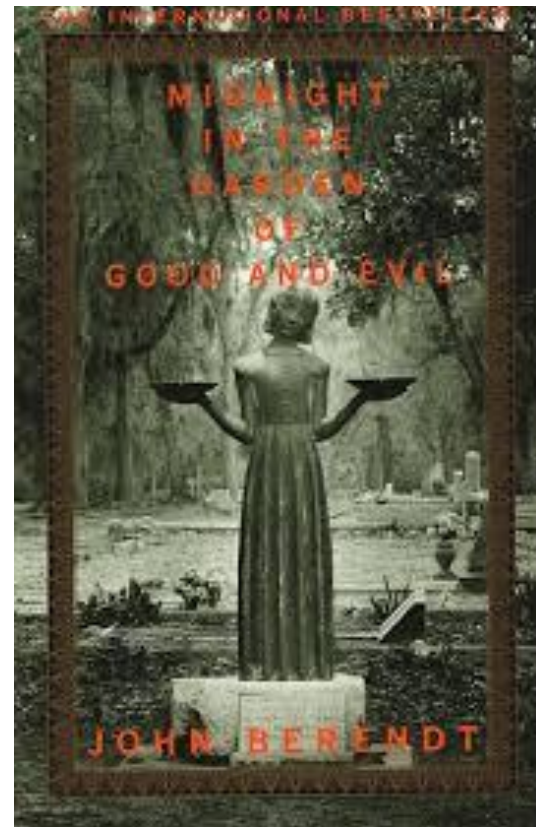
*The Suspicions
of Mr. Whicher*

Kate Summerscale



*Midnight in the Garden
of Good and Evil*

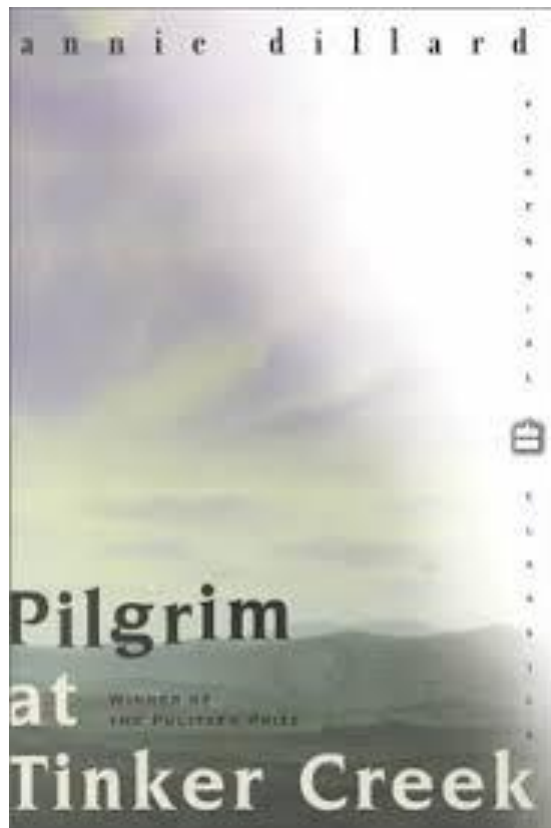
John Berendt



Environmental Writing

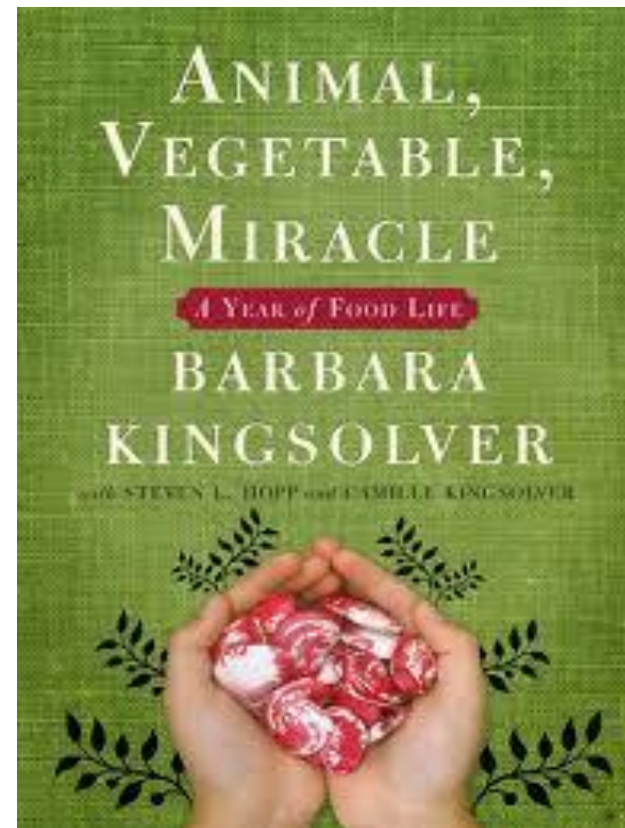
Pilgrim at Tinker Creek

Annie Dillard



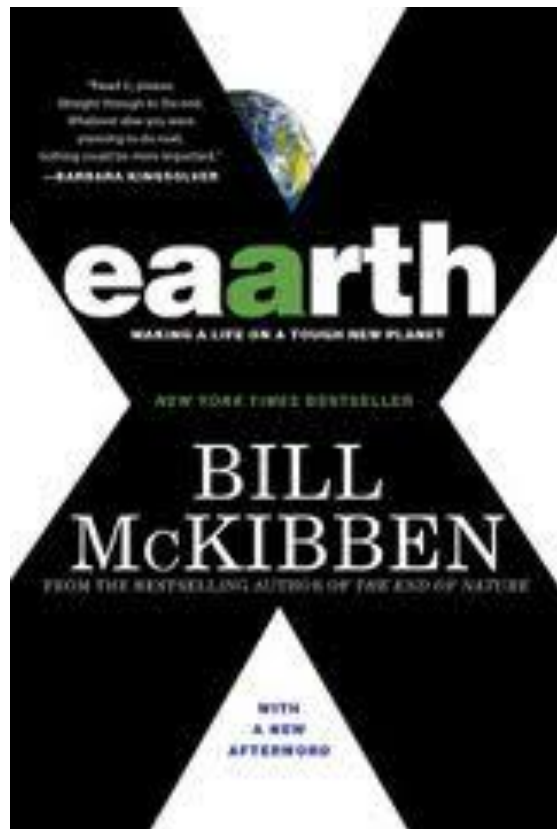
Animal, Vegetable, Miracle

Barbara Kingsolver



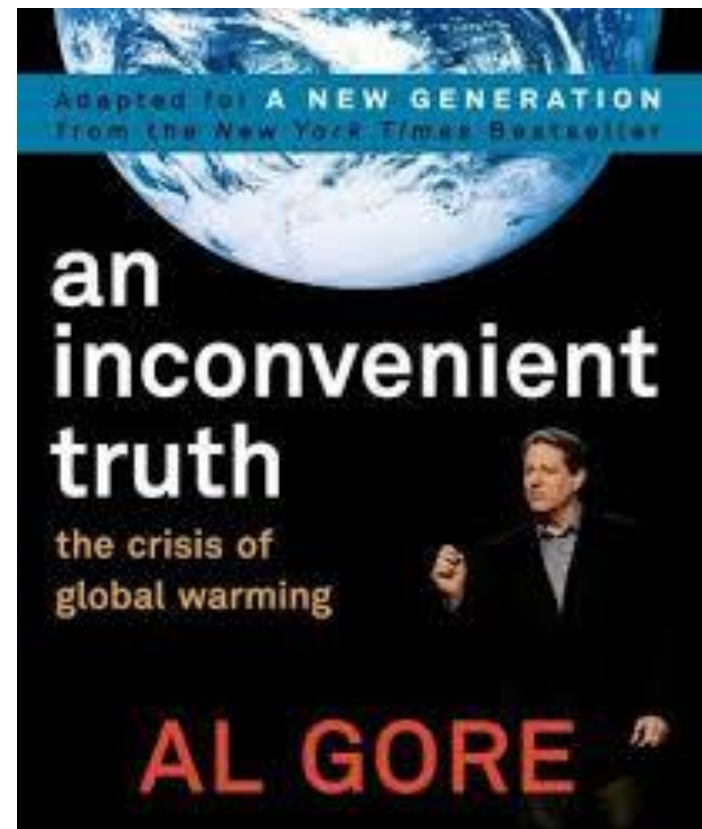
*Eaarth: Making a Life
on a Tough New Planet*

Bill McKibben



An Inconvenient Truth

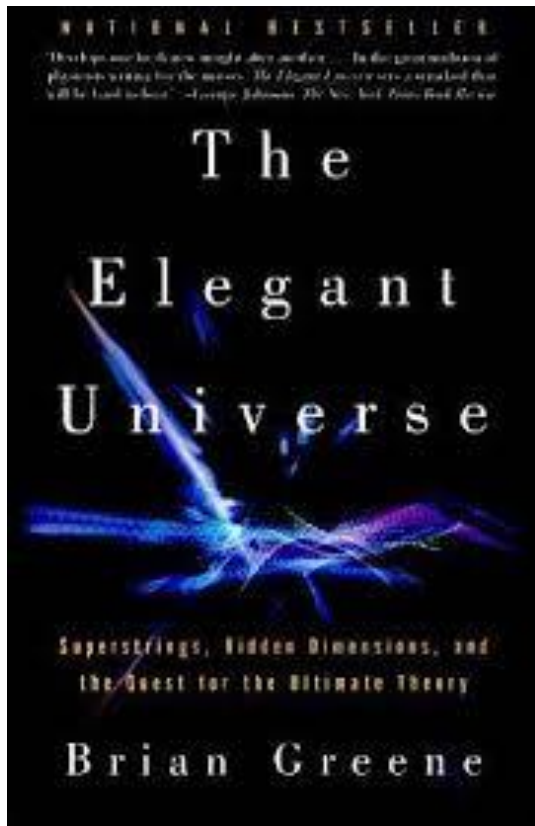
Al Gore



Science and Math

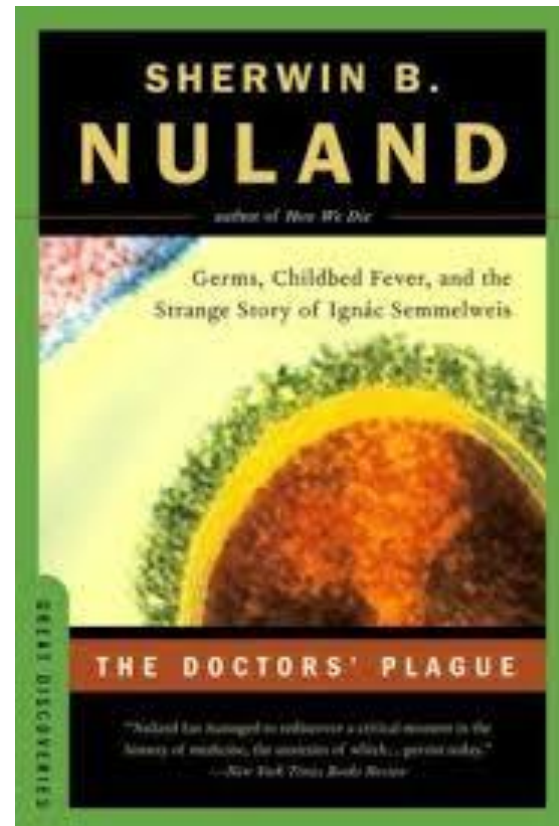
The Elegant Universe

Brian Greene

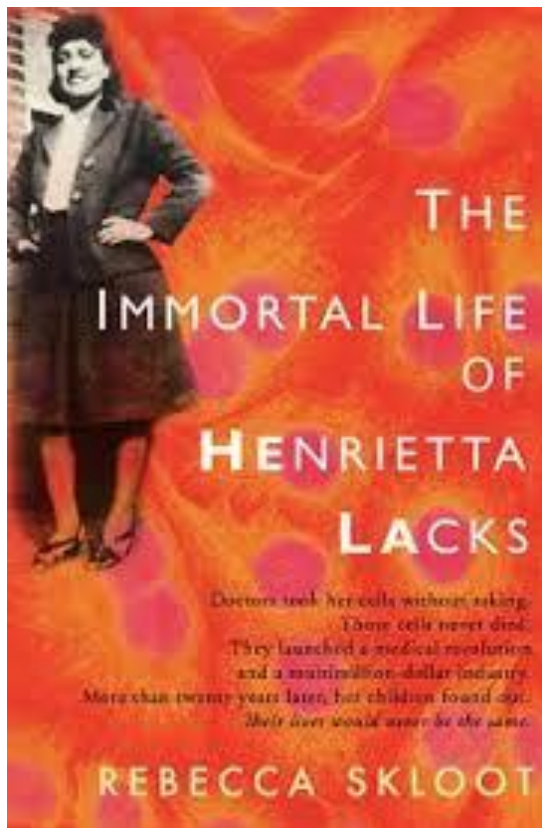


The Doctor's Plague

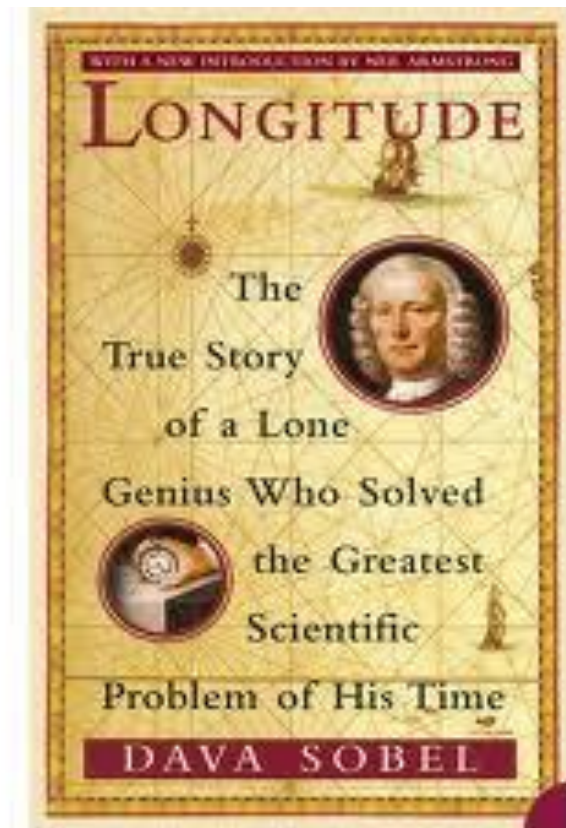
Sherwin B. Nuland



*The Immortal Life
of Henrietta Lacks*
Rebecca Skloot



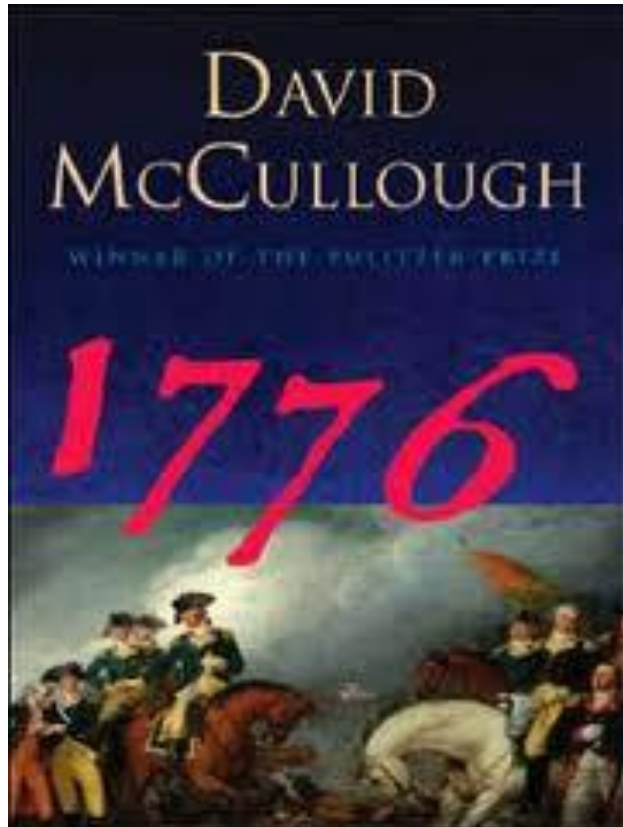
Longitude
Dava Sobel



History

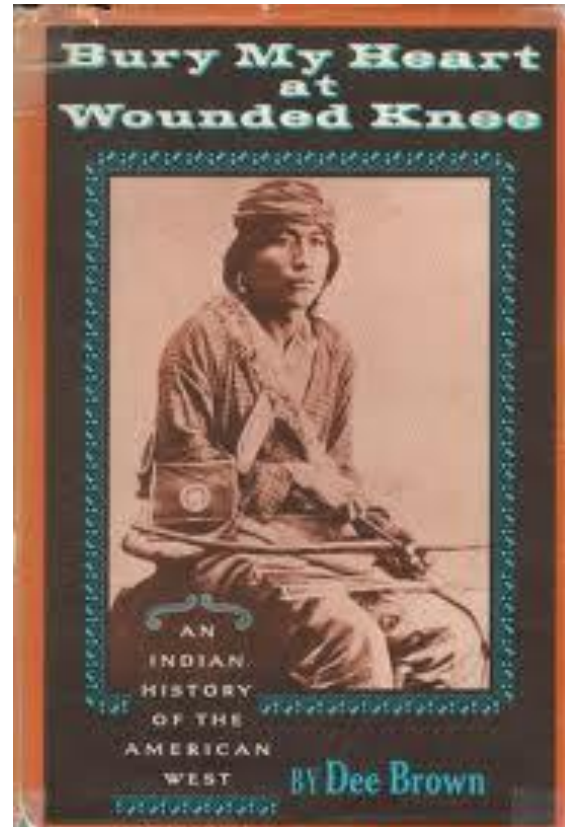
1776

David McCullough



***Bury My Heart at
Wounded Knee***

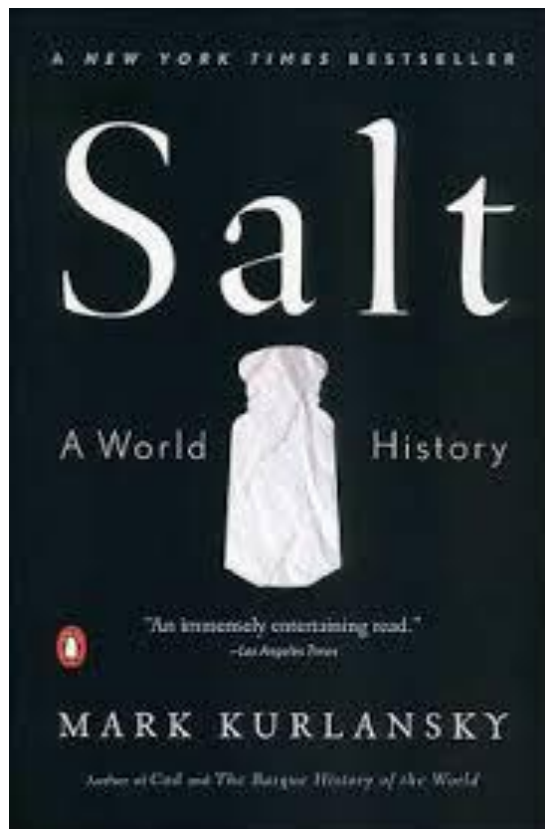
Dee Brown



Microhistories

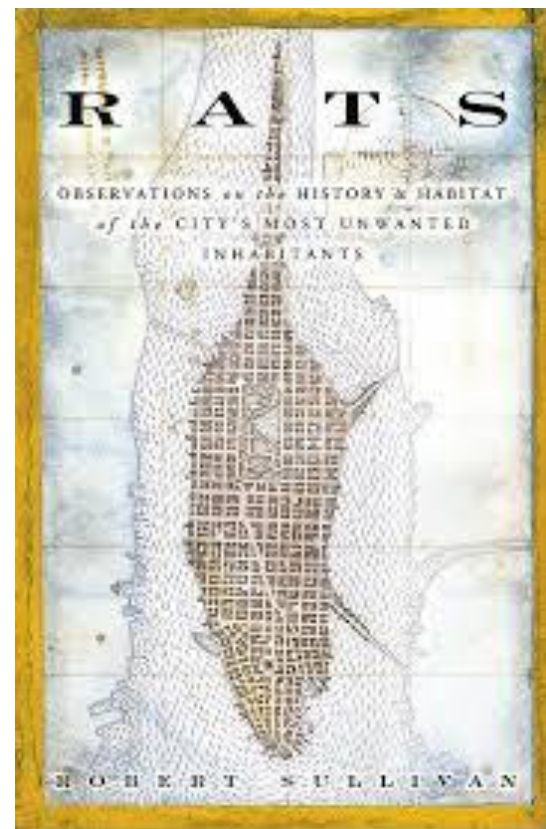
Salt: A World History

Mark Kurlansky



Rats

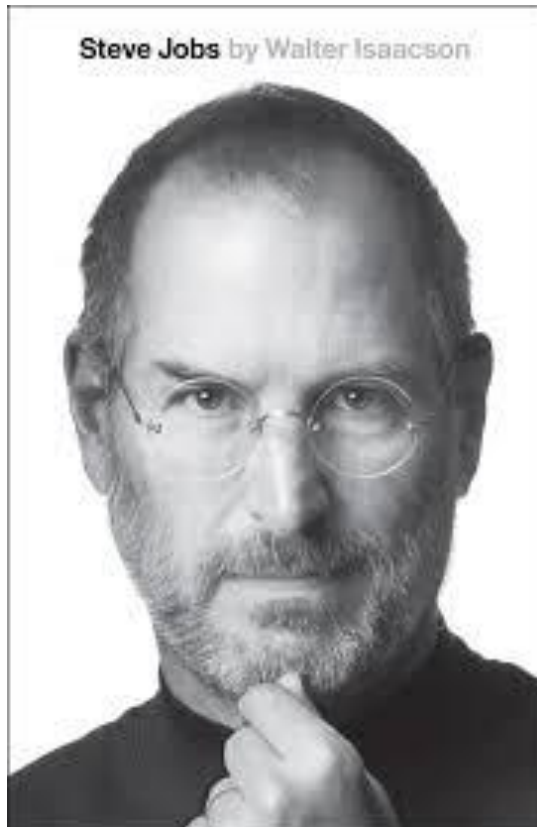
Robert Sullivan



Biography

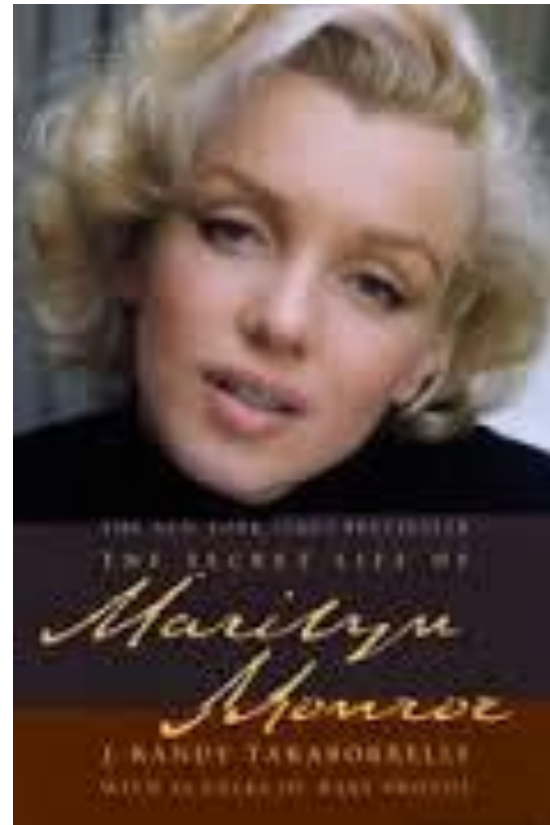
Steve Jobs

Walter Isaacson



*The Secret Life of Marilyn
Monroe*

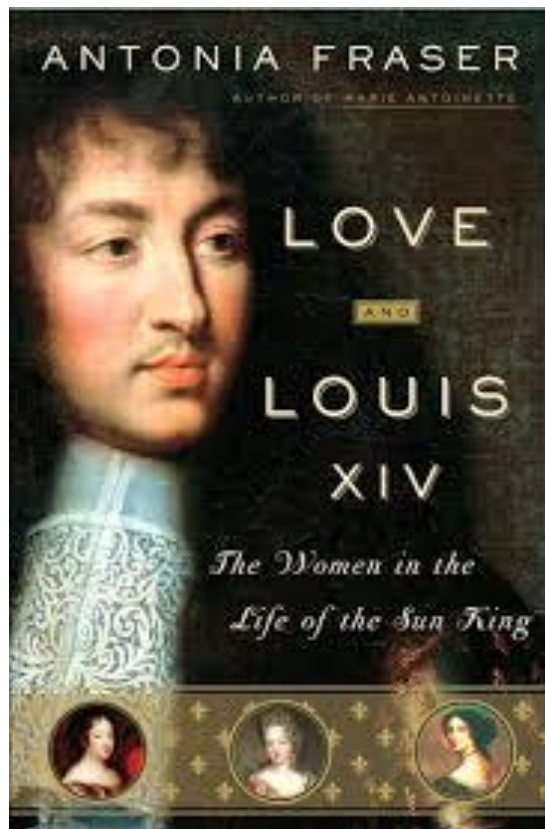
J. Randy Taraborrelli



Historical Biography

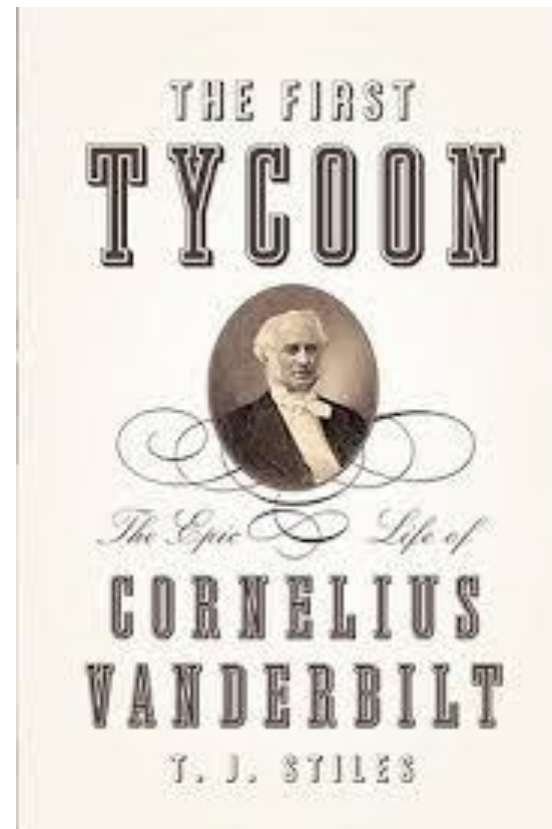
Love and Louis XIV

Antonia Fraser



The First Tycoon

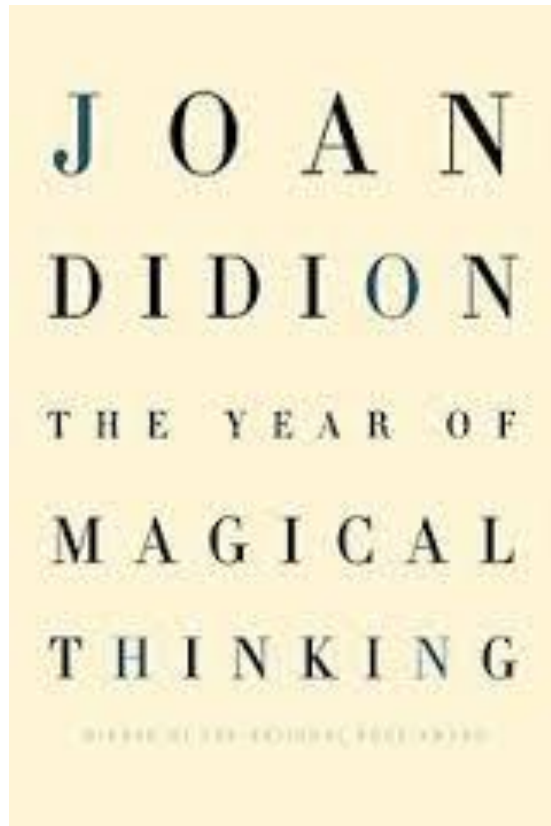
T. J. Stiles



The Year of Memoirs

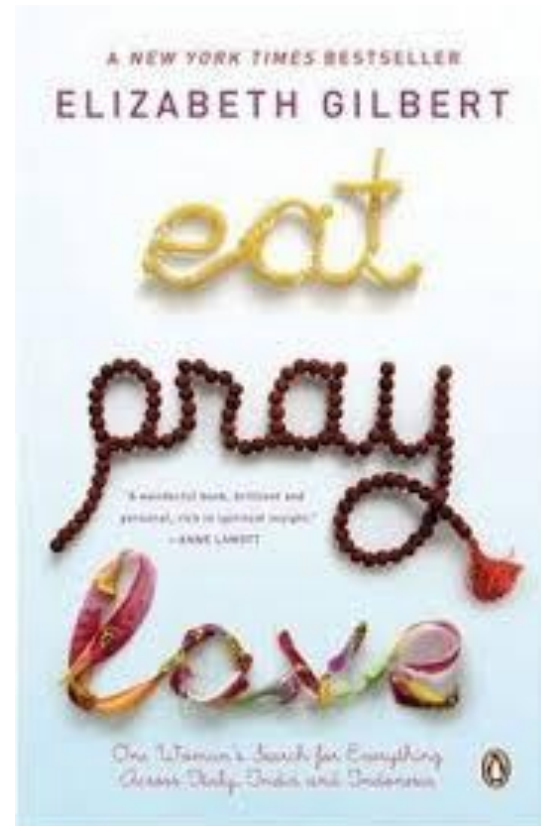
Magical Thinking

Joan Didion

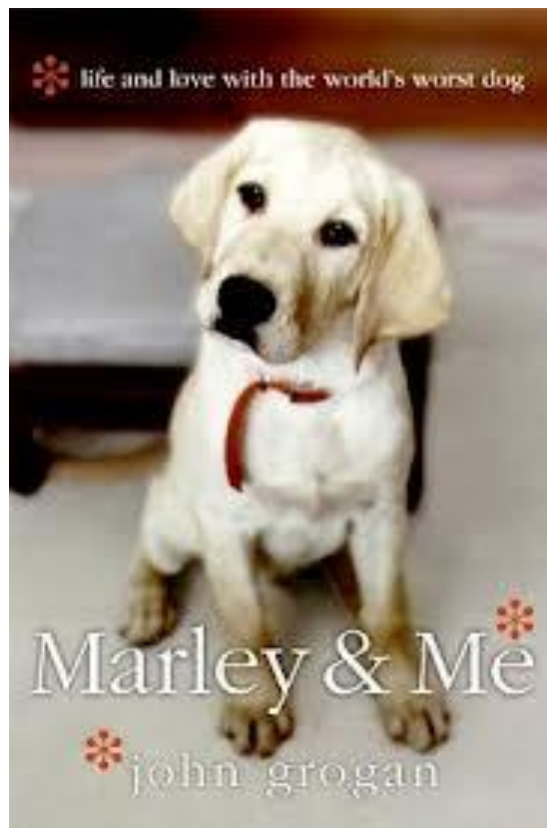


Eat, Pray, Love

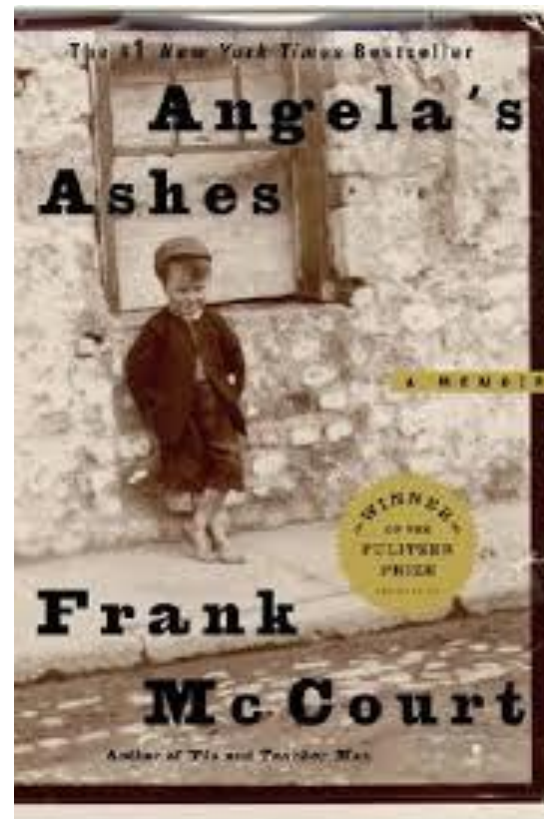
Elizabeth Gilbert



Marley and Me
John Grogan



Angela's Ashes
Frank McCourt



Investigative Writing

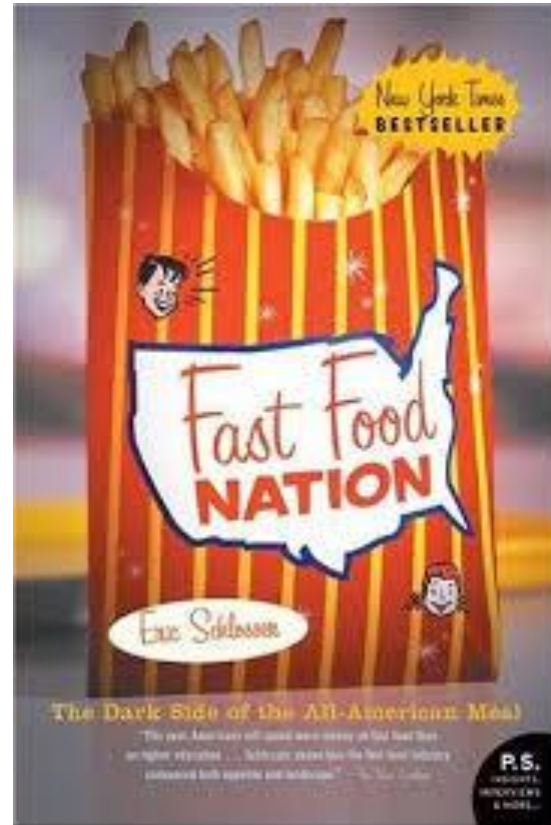
Columbine

Dave Cullen



Fast Food Nation

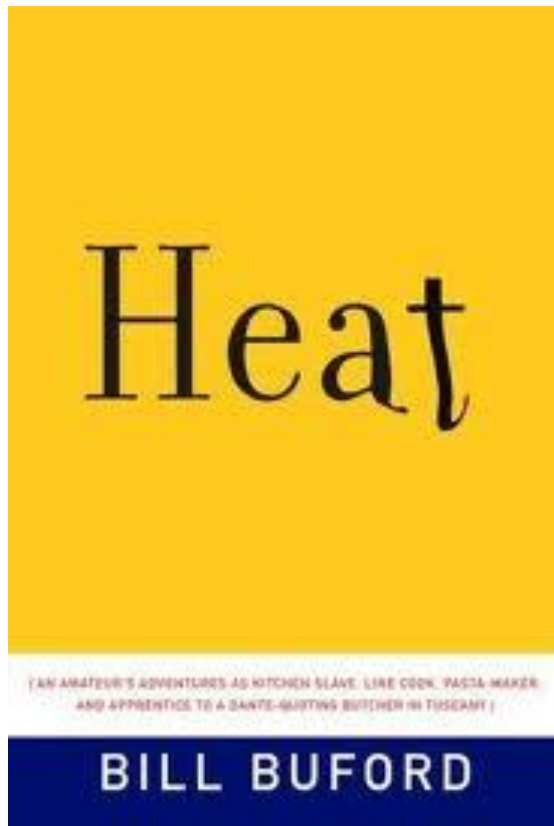
Eric Schlosser



Immersion Journalism

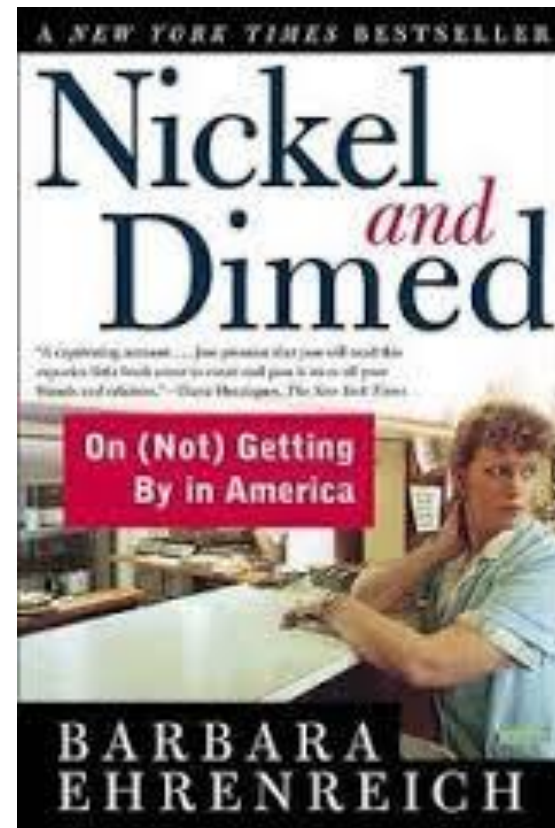
Heat

Bill Buford



Nickel and Dimed

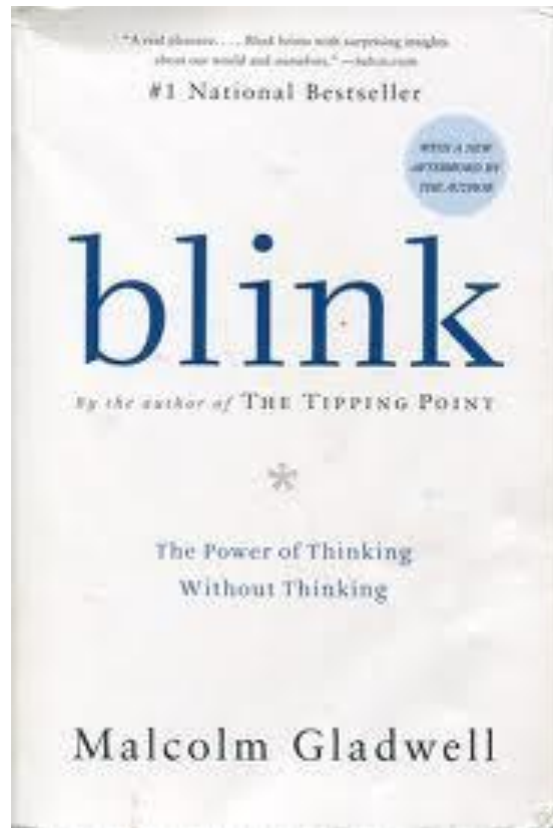
Barbara Ehrenreich



Big Think Books

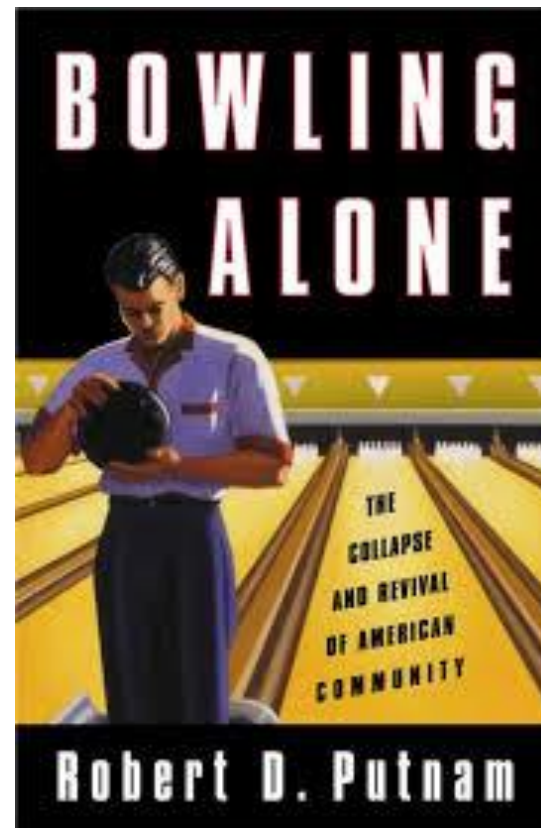
Blink

Malcolm Gladwell



Bowling Alone

Robert D. Putnam



Understanding Nonfiction

- Narrative Continuum
- Subject
- Type
- Appeal



Finding the Appeal

RA factors:

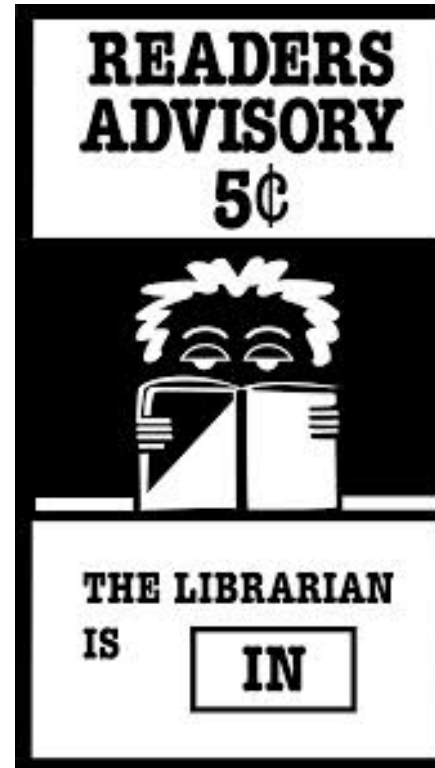
- Pacing
- Characterization
- Story line
- Detail
- Learning/experiencing
- Language
- Setting
- Tone



Readers Advisory

Barriers to nonfiction:

- Ourselves
- Our space
- Our collections
- Our readers



Reading Nonfiction

- How much narrative?
- What is the subject of the book?
- What type of book?
- Articulate appeal:
 - What is the pacing?
 - Describe the characters.
 - How does the story feel?
 - What is the intent of the author?
 - What is the focus of the story?
 - Does the language matter?
 - Is the setting important and well described
 - Are there details and, if so, of what?
 - Are there graphic materials (charts, maps, etc.)
 - Does the book stress moments of learning, understanding or experience?
- Why would a reader enjoy this book? Rank appeal factors

Reading Advisory Matrix

Where is the book on the narrative continuum?

- Highly narrative (reads like fiction)
 - A mix (combines highly narrative moments with periods of fact-based prose)
 - Highly fact based (has few or no narrative moments)
-

What is the subject of the book?

What type of book is it?

Articulate appeal

What is the pacing of the book?

Describe the characters of the book.

How does the story feel?

What is the intent of the author?

What is the focus of the story?

Reading Matrix (2)

Does the language matter?

Is the setting important and well described?

Are there details and, if so, of what?

Are there sufficient charts and other graphic materials? Are they useful and clear?

Does the book stress moments of learning, understanding, or experience?

5. Why would a reader enjoy this book (rank appeal)?

1.

2.

3.

Matrix Example

84, Charing Cross Road
Helene Hanff



It began with a letter inquiring about secondhand books, written by Helene Hanff in New York, and posted to a bookshop at 84, Charing Cross Road in London. As Helene's sarcastic and witty letters are responded to by the staid and proper Frank Doel of Marks & Company, a relationship blossoms into a warm, charming, feisty love affair.

THE READERS' ADVISORY **MATRIX** FOR 84, *CHARING CROSS ROAD*, BY HELENE HANFF

1. Where is the book on the narrative continuum?

- Highly narrative (reads like fiction)
- A mix (combines highly narrative moments with periods of fact-based prose)
- Highly fact based (has few or no narrative moments)

2. What is the subject of the book? *The literary life—the book is really about loving literature and the relationships between the main characters.*

3. What type of book is it? *A memoir in epistolary form.*

4. Articulate appeal

What is the pacing of the book? *It reads quickly but the pace is leisurely.*

Describe the characters of the book. *It is a character-focused story. The two main characters are Helene Hanff, a woman living in NYC who is on a particular reading path, and Frank Doel, a manager in an antiquarian bookshop in London.*

How does the story feel? *Warm, cozy, uplifting, and reassuring.*

What is the intent of the author? *To share her experience.*

What is the focus of the story? *The lives of the main characters in their particular times and the importance of books and how they affect and shape a life.*

Does the language matter? *Yes.*

Is the setting important and well described? *The settings are only important in that they are real and the time period of the war matters. But they are not well described and not really important to the story.*

Are there details and, if so, of what? *Lots of details: about books and about looking for and buying books.*

Are there sufficient charts and other graphic materials? Are they useful and clear? *None.*

Does the book stress moments of learning, understanding, or experience? *All three, learning through literature and about the book trade, understanding what life was like at that*

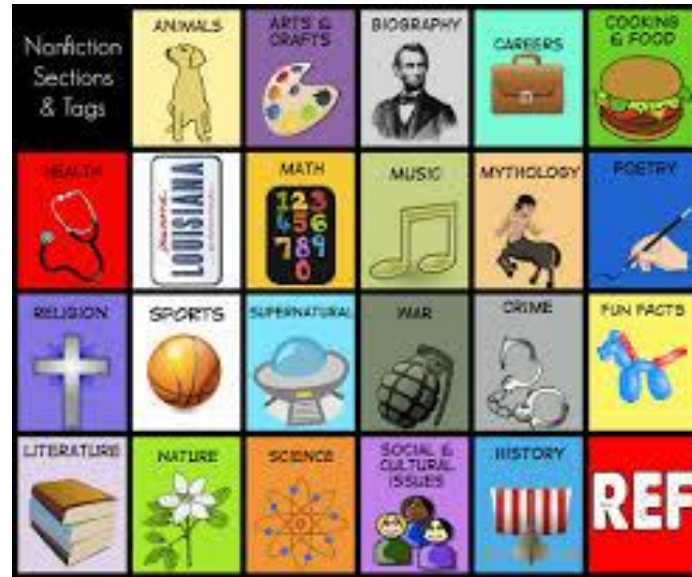
Learning the Collection

- Walk the nonfiction stacks
 - Note subject concentrations
 - Pull titles for displays or personal reading
- Scan titles
 - Read covers and blurb
 - Look at arrangement
 - Read a sample page
- Read reviews
- Begin subject awareness campaign
 - Talk to colleagues and patrons
 - Notice book buzz on news shows, publishers' catalogs
 - Notice nonfiction titles on display in retail locations



Marketing the Collection

- Genre stickers
- Shelf talkers
- Displays
- New book area
- Staff
- Website
- Catalog
- Reading guides





Nonfiction Subject Guide

- Pick a subject
- Find out who is writing and what they are writing about
- Look at the books
- Think about the aspects of nonfiction—narrative, subject, types and appeal
- Create a subject summary
- Integrate what you now know into your work



Consumer Health

Provides resources to help consumers better understand their health and diagnosed conditions. Consult with a qualified health care professional for a diagnosis and for answers to your questions.

Sicherer, Scott H. *Food Allergies: A Complete Guide for Eating When Your Life Depends on It*. Johns Hopkins.

Allergy specialist Sicherer presents a **practical, informative** overview of food allergies **geared toward the general reader**. Using a **question-and-answer format**, he **debunks** myths, **clarifies** terminologies, and discusses how allergies develop, whether they are likely to go away, and prevention and treatment options, including in response to anaphylactic shock. Complex questions are covered more thoroughly in **breakout sections**.

Review

Besser, Richard, M.D. with Jeanne Besser. *Tell Me the Truth, Doctor: Easy-to-Understand Answers to Your Most Confusing and Critical Health Questions*. Hyperion.

Dr. Besser, pediatrician, chief health and medical editor for ABC news and visiting fellow at the Harvard School of Public Health, answers the **common questions** that patients ask their physicians. Using a **question and answer format**, Dr. Besser discusses a variety of topics related to diet and nutrition, exercise and fitness, medications, vitamins, and supplements, preventing disease, and the efficacy of medical tests and treatments. Juice fasts, pet ownership, antibacterial soap, PSA tests, and staying safe in the hospital are among the topics covered. Each question receives a **two- to three-page discussion** followed by “Dr. B’s **Bottom Line**,” a **summary** and list of **bullet points** of his advice about the topic. Whether it is the proper technique for hand washing, using sunscreen effectively, or choosing the best pain reliever, Dr. Besser provides **sound, useful advice** to help readers stay healthy. This is a **helpful book** for those seeking **basic information** about **common** health problems.

Find helpful words/phrases used in the review.

Chödrön, Pema. *How To Meditate: A Practical Guide to Making Friends with Your Mind*. Sounds True.

American Buddhist nun Chödrön's well-written, accessible book guides readers through meditation practices, often using her own regimen as an example. The book's five-part, workbook-like structure has takeaways for beginners and veterans and includes occasional exercises. Chödrön doesn't overwhelm readers, and the result stands out among the many titles in a crowded field.

Exercise Key

Chödrön, Pema. *How To Meditate: A Practical Guide to Making Friends with Your Mind*. Sounds True.

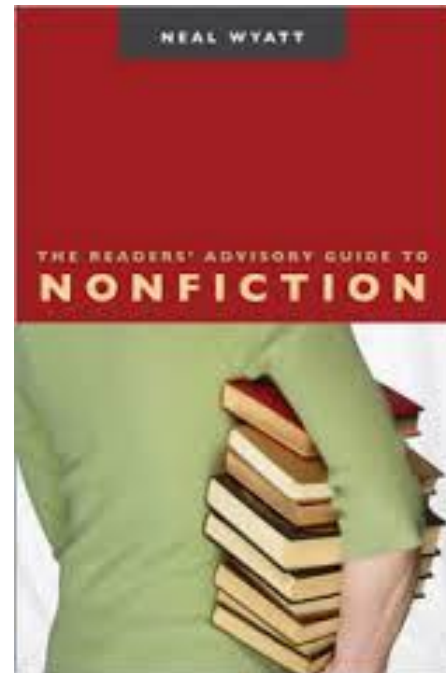
American Buddhist nun Chödrön's **well-written, accessible** book guides readers through meditation practices, often using her own regimen as an example. The book's **five-part, workbook-like** structure has **takeaways** for **beginners and veterans** and includes occasional exercises. Chödrön **doesn't overwhelm** readers, and the result stands out among the many titles in a crowded field.

How many did you find?

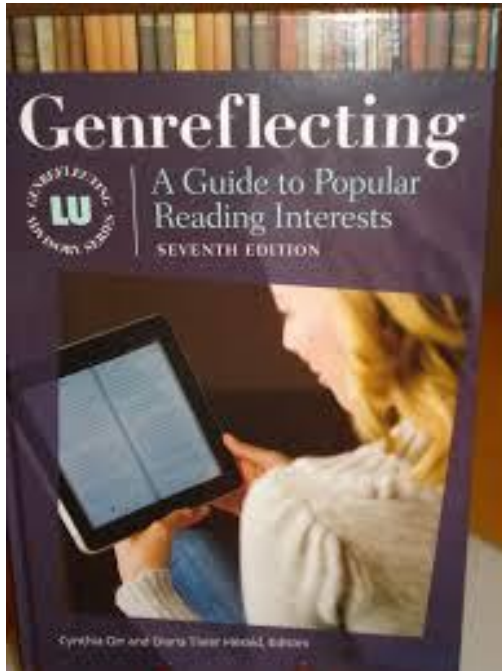
Available through ILL from KDLA

Wyatt, Neal. *The Readers' Advisory Guide to Nonfiction*. Chicago: ALA, 2007.

Focuses on eight nonfiction categories. Explains scope, style, popularity, authors and works, and position in RA interview.



Available through ILL from KDLA



Herald, Diana Tixier and
Cynthia Orr, eds.

*Genreflecting: A Guide
to Popular Reading
Interests.* 7th ed. Santa
Barbara, CA: Libraries
Unlimited, 2013.

Covers RA basics and 14
genres, including
nonfiction, mainstream
fiction, and women's
fiction.

Review Sources

- Booklist Online
 - <http://www.booklistonline.com/>
 - Selection of *Booklist* features and reviews
 - Email newsletters and webinars
- Kirkus
 - <http://www.kirkusreviews.com/>
 - Subscription publication
 - Print or digital edition
 - Email newsletter available

More Review Sources

- Library Journal Reviews
 - <http://reviews.libraryjournal.com/>
 - Prepub Alert emails
 - Readers' Advisory emails
 - Webinars
- Publisher's Weekly
 - <http://subs.publishersweekly.com/>

we are in *love*
with nonfiction

Helpful Databases and Websites

- NoveList– part of KYVL resources

- Reader's Advisor Online

<http://www.readersadvisoronline.com>

- Fiction_L

<http://www.mgpl.org/read-listen-view/fl/flmenu>

- Overbooked.org

<http://www.overbooked.org/>

Five Book Challenge

- *Lost in Shangri-La: A True Story of Survival, Adventure, and the Most Incredible Rescue Mission of World War II* by Mitchell Zuckoff (true adventure)
- *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot (science and math)
- *The Worst Hard Time* by Timothy Egan (history)
- *Steve Jobs* by Walter Isaacson (biography)
- *Just Kids* by Patti Smith (memoir)



CONCLUSION

Downloading Presentation

- Click on “Where Reality Rules” in the box
- Click “Download file”
- In the pop-up window:
 - “Click to Download”
 - “Save”
 - Choose where to save it
 - “Save”

<http://kdla.ky.gov>

Continuing Education Calendar

The screenshot shows the website for the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives. The browser address bar displays <http://kdla.ky.gov/Pages/default.aspx>. The page header includes the Kentucky.gov logo and navigation links for 'KY Agencies' and 'KY Services'. The main navigation menu is divided into sections: Librarians, Archivists, Researchers, State Employees, and Records Management. The 'Librarians' section is expanded, showing a list of links including 'Kits', 'Administrators', 'Ask a Librarian', 'Funding for Libraries', 'Kentucky Talking Book Library', 'Library Policies', 'Library Programs', 'Library Staff Development', 'Public Library Standards', 'Statistics and Directories', and 'Trustees'. The 'Library Staff Development' link is highlighted with a red box, and its sub-menu is open, showing 'Certification', 'Continuing Education', 'KDLA Archived Webinars', 'Library Science Resources', 'Listservs', and 'Professional Organizations'. The 'Continuing Education' link is also highlighted with a red box. The main content area features a 'LIBRARY MONTH' graphic with a heart and the text 'LIBRARY MONTH LOVERS'. The right sidebar contains links to 'KDLA Catalog', 'e-Archives', 'Ask a Librarian', 'Public Library Directory', 'Kentucky Library Job List', 'Records Retention Schedules', and 'Kentucky Talking Book Library'. The browser status bar at the bottom shows 'File Find Disable View Images Cache Tools Validate', 'Browser Mode: IE9 Document Mode: IE9 standards', and the system tray with the time '2:33 PM' and date '2/24/2014'.

Tell Us What You Think

You will be receiving two emails with:

1. Link to online survey about today's training
We would appreciate your input!



2. Your training certificate

Thank you for participating in today's session.