

Recap: “Why We Read What We Read” (May 12, 2022)

From Discussion Leader Susan Gutches, additions from Cathy Roberts

Here are titles I particularly remember from the discussion held at Reunion:

- Cloud Cuckoo Land by Anthony Doerr
- The Lincoln Highway by Amor Towles
- The Emperor off Maladies by Siddhartha Mukherjee, a major tome about cancer
- The Anatomy of Hope by Jerome Groopm
- Being Mortal by Atul Gawande

Some recent favorites of mine:

- Any Human Heart and Restless, both by William Boyd
- How the Word is Passed by Clint Smith (describes how slavery is interpreted at several historic sites, starting with Monticello)

Suggestions from other participants follow, in no particular order:

1. Julie Arnold has been reading: “historical fiction by a couple authors: Sharon Kay Penman and Elizabeth Chadwick. Having inherited books from my father I discovered H. Rider Haggard wrote some entertaining tales.”
2. Ellen Case suggests:
 - Hamnet by Maggie O’Farrell
 - The Lincoln Highway by Amor Towles
 - Utopia Avenue by David Mitchell
3. Karen Burke recommends:

John Kabat-Zinn, Full Catastrophe Living (1990 but updated more recently). He founded the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction program (MBSR) at U Mass Medical Center.
4. Christine Ethier Murphy

FICTION:

 - Mercy Streetby Jennifer Haigh
 - A Constellation of Vital Phenomena,by Anthony Marra
 - The Rose Code, Kate Quinn
 - The Violin Conspiracy,by Brendan Slocumb
 - Honor by Thrity Umrigar

NON-FICTION:

 - The Beauty of Dusk: On Vision Lost and Found by Frank Bruni
 - Children of Ash and Elm: A History of the Vikings by Neil Price
5. Chree Perkins
 - Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Klimmer
 - AND, because it's not a page-turner
 - Nine Perfect Strangers* by Liane Moriarty because it is a page-turner

6. Missy Marshall

FICTION: Songbirds by Christy Lefteri

NON-FICTION:

-Wilding by Isabella Tree (for those with an interest in environmental issues, beautifully written.)

-Genius of Place – The Life of Frederick Law Olmsted by Justin Martin (totally appropriate for his Bicentennial. As the subtitle says -- Abolitionist, Conservationist and Designer of Central Park. My subtitle is Great Man.)

7. Virginia Thiebaud suggests:

-The Dictionary of Lost Words, by Pip Williams

-Sounds Wild and Broken by David George Haskell

-Birdology by Sy Montgomery

- And my usual steady diet of SciFi/Fantasy. Eric Flint is a current favorite author, others are Mercedes Lackey and Anne McCaffrey

8. Kathy Merrill recommends:

Memoirs of Hector Berlioz

9. Recommendations from Jan Swetenburg:

-Meet Me at the Museum by Anne Youngson

-The Accidental President by A. J. Blaine

-Grandma Gatewood's Walk by Ben Montgomery

-The Sentence by Louise Erdrich

10. This list was handed to me during Reunion. My apologies, I cannot remember by whom.

-Undermoney: A Novel by Jay Newman

-Disappearing Earth by Julia Phillips (coincidentally our own Elaine Bromka's daughter)

-Biographies by Kai Bird, specifically on Jimmy Carter, Robert Oppenheimer, and John J. McCloy

-The Fourth Turning by Neil Howe and William Strauss

11. Additional suggestions compiled by Cathy Roberts after the Discussion:

-The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone by Heather McGhee

-Disappearing Earth by Julia Phillips

-Bark Skin by Annie Proulx

-The Overstory by Richard Powers

-Monster of God: The Man-Eating Predator in the Jungles of History and the Mind by David Quammen

-Books by Jill Lepore

-The Anatomy of Hope by Jerome Groopman

-American Prometheus by J. Robert Oppenheimer

-Generations: The History of America's Future by William Strauss

-How the Word is Passed by Clint Smith

-On Consolation: Finding Solace in Dark Times by Michael Ignatieff