

## **ANIMALS / NATURE**

### **Running with Sherman: The Donkey with the Heart of a Hero by Christopher McDougall**

From the best-selling author of *Born to Run*, a heartwarming story about training a rescue donkey to run one of the most challenging races in America. When Chris McDougall agreed to take in a donkey from an animal hoarder, he thought it would be no harder than the rest of the adjustments he and his family had made after moving from Philadelphia to the heart of Pennsylvania Amish country. But when he arrived, Sherman was in such bad shape he could barely move, and his hair was coming out in clumps. Chris decided to undertake a radical rehabilitation program designed not only to heal Sherman's body but to heal his mind as well. It turns out the best way to soothe a donkey is to give it a job, and so Chris taught Sherman how to run. Along the way, he shows us the life-changing power of animals, nature, and community.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

### **Sontag: Her Life and Work by Benjamin Moser**

The definitive portrait of one of the American Century's most towering intellectuals: her writing and her radical thought, her public activism and her hidden private face. No writer is as emblematic of the American twentieth century as Susan Sontag. Mythologized and misunderstood, lauded and loathed, a girl from the suburbs who became a proud symbol of cosmopolitanism, Sontag left a legacy of writing on art and politics, feminism and homosexuality, celebrity and style, medicine and drugs, radicalism and Fascism and Freudianism and Communism and Americanism, that forms an indispensable key to modern culture. Utilizing hundreds of interviews conducted from Maui to Stockholm and from London to Sarajevo—and featuring nearly one hundred images—*Sontag* is the first book based on the writer's restricted archives, and on access to many people who have never before spoken about Sontag, including Annie Leibovitz. It is a definitive portrait—a great American novel in the form of a biography.

## **HISTORY**

### **The Second Founding: How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution by Eric Foner**

From the Pulitzer Prize-winning scholar, a timely history of the constitutional changes that built equality into the nation's foundation and how those guarantees have been shaken over time. The Declaration of Independence announced equality as an American ideal, but it took the Civil War and the subsequent adoption of three constitutional amendments to establish that ideal as American law. Like all great works of history, this one informs our understanding of the present as well as the past: knowledge and vigilance are always necessary to secure our basic rights.

## **MEMOIR**

### **The Yellow House: A Memoir by Sarah Broom**

Winner of the National Book Award for Nonfiction, a brilliant, haunting and unforgettable memoir from a stunning new talent about the inexorable pull of home and family, set in a shotgun house in New Orleans East. Located in the gap between the "Big Easy" of tourist guides

and the New Orleans in which Broom was raised, *The Yellow House* is a brilliant memoir of place, class, race, the seeping rot of inequality, and the internalized shame that often follows. It is a transformative, deeply moving story from an unparalleled new voice of startling clarity, authority, and power.

## **NOVELS / LITERARY**

### **The Secrets We Kept by Lara Prescott**

**A BANNED MASTERPIECE:** 1956. A celebrated Russian author is writing a book, *Doctor Zhivago*, which could spark dissent in the Soviet Union. The Soviets, afraid of its subversive power, ban it. But in the rest of the world it's fast becoming a sensation. **TWO FEMALE SPIES:** The CIA plans to use the book to tip the Cold War in its favor. Their agents are not the usual spies, however. Two typists – the charming, experienced Sally and the talented novice Irina – are charged with the mission of a lifetime: to smuggle *Doctor Zhivago* back into Russia by any means necessary. **A BOOK THAT CHANGED HISTORY:** It will not be easy. There are people willing to die for this book – and agents willing to kill for it. But they cannot fail - as this book has the power to change history.

### **Quichotte by Salman Rushdie** (*Author talk at the Midtown Scholar Bookstore, Monday, Dec.9*)

Inspired by the Cervantes classic, Sam DuChamp, mediocre writer of spy thrillers, creates *Quichotte*, a courtly, addled salesman obsessed with television who falls in impossible love with a TV star. Together with his (imaginary) son Sancho, *Quichotte* sets off on a picaresque quest across America to prove worthy of her hand, gallantly braving the tragicomic perils of an age where “Anything-Can-Happen.” Meanwhile, his creator, in a midlife crisis, has equally urgent challenges of his own. Just as Cervantes wrote *Don Quixote* to satirize the culture of his time, Rushdie takes the reader on a wild ride through a country on the verge of moral and spiritual collapse. And with the kind of storytelling magic that is the hallmark of Rushdie's work, the fully realized lives of DuChamp and *Quichotte* intertwine in a profoundly human quest for love and a wickedly entertaining portrait of an age in which fact is so often indiscernible from fiction.

## **NOVELS / FANTASY**

### **The Water Dancer: A Novel by Ta-Nehisi Coates**

Young Hiram Walker was born into bondage. When his mother was sold away, Hiram was robbed of all memory of her—but was gifted with a mysterious power. Years later, when Hiram almost drowns in a river, that same power saves his life. This brush with death births an urgency in Hiram and a daring scheme: to escape from the only home he's ever known. So begins an unexpected journey that takes Hiram from the corrupt grandeur of Virginia's proud plantations to desperate guerrilla cells in the wilderness, from the coffin of the Deep South to dangerously idealistic movements in the North. Even as he's enlisted in the underground war between slavers and the enslaved, Hiram's resolve to rescue the family he left behind endures. This is the dramatic story of an atrocity inflicted on generations of women, men, and children—the violent and capricious separation of families—and the war they waged to simply make lives with the people they loved. *The Water Dancer* is a propulsive, transcendent work that restores the humanity of those from whom everything was stolen.

## **The Starless Sea by Erin Morgenstern**

From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Night Circus*, a timeless love story set in a secret underground world—a place of pirates, painters, lovers, liars, and ships that sail upon a starless sea. Zachary Ezra Rawlins is a graduate student in Vermont when he discovers a mysterious book hidden in the stacks. As he turns the pages, entranced by tales of lovelorn prisoners, key collectors, and nameless acolytes, he reads something strange: a story from his own childhood. Bewildered by this inexplicable book and desperate to make sense of how his own life came to be recorded, Zachary uncovers a series of clues—a bee, a key, and a sword—that lead him to a masquerade party in New York, to a secret club, and through a doorway to an ancient library hidden far below the surface of the earth.

## **SCIENCE**

### **The Great Pretender: The Undercover Mission That Changed Our Understanding of Madness by Susannah Cahalan**

Doctors have struggled for centuries to define insanity--how do you diagnose it, how do you treat it, how do you even know what *it* is? In search of an answer, in the 1970s a Stanford psychologist named David Rosenhan and seven other people--sane, healthy, well-adjusted members of society--went undercover into asylums around America to test the legitimacy of psychiatry's labels. Forced to remain inside until they'd "proven" themselves sane, all eight emerged with alarming diagnoses and even more troubling stories of their treatment. Rosenhan's watershed study broke open the field of psychiatry, closing down institutions and changing mental health diagnosis forever. But, as Cahalan's explosive new research shows in this real-life detective story, very little in this saga is exactly as it seems. What really happened behind those closed asylum doors?

## **ESSAYS**

### **Trick Mirror: Reflections on Self-Delusion by Jia Tolentino**

Jia Tolentino is a peerless voice of her generation, tackling the conflicts, contradictions, and sea changes that define us and our time. Now, in this dazzling collection of nine entirely original essays, written with a rare combination of give and sharpness, wit and fearlessness, she delves into the forces that warp our vision, demonstrating an unparalleled stylistic potency and critical dexterity. In each essay, Tolentino writes about a cultural prism: the rise of the nightmare social internet; the advent of scamming as the definitive millennial ethos; the literary heroine's journey from brave to blank to bitter; the punitive dream of optimization, which insists that everything, including our bodies, should become more efficient and beautiful until we die. Gleaming with Tolentino's sense of humor and capacity to elucidate the impossibly complex in an instant, and marked by her desire to treat the reader with profound honesty, *Trick Mirror* is an instant classic of the worst decade yet.

**YOUNG ADULT / FANTASY: Children of Virtue and Vengeance by Tomi Adeyemi**

Children of Virtue and Vengeance is the long-awaited, stunning sequel to Tomi Adeyemi's New York Times bestselling debut Children of Blood and Bone, the first title in her Legacy of Orisha trilogy. After battling the impossible, Zélie and Amari have finally succeeded in bringing magic back to the land of Orisha. But the ritual was more powerful than they could've imagined, reigniting the powers of not only the maji, but of nobles with magic ancestry, too. With civil war looming on the horizon, Zélie finds herself at a breaking point: she must discover a way to bring the kingdom together or watch as Orisha tears itself apart.

**CHILDREN'S / PICTURE BOOK: Sulwe by Lupita Nyong'o, illus. by Vashti Harrison**

From Academy Award-winning actress Lupita Nyong'o comes a powerful, moving picture book about colorism, self-esteem, and learning that true beauty comes from within. Sulwe has skin the color of midnight. She is darker than everyone in her family. She is darker than anyone in her school. Sulwe just wants to be beautiful and bright, like her mother and sister. Then a magical journey in the night sky opens her eyes and changes everything. In this stunning debut picture book, actress Lupita Nyong'o creates a whimsical and heartwarming story to inspire children to see their own unique beauty.