THE FRONT LINE

I can’t believe summer is over, and our wonderful summer interns are heading back to school, so I want to start by thanking Alex, Maggie, and Olivia for all their help. Their enthusiasm and energy were appreciated by staff and customers alike.

The good news is that fall is the start of our busiest season and our event calendar is packed! We are particularly excited to host our great friend Rebecca Makkai to discuss her excellent novel, The Great Believers, on Tuesday, September 11 at 6:30 pm at the store. Rebecca has garnered well-deserved praise for her powerful book set in Chicago during the AIDS crisis. That same week, on Thursday, September 13 at 6:30 pm, Crystal Hana Kim will be in the store to talk about her well-reviewed new novel If You Leave Me. Staffer Kathleen Crawford really enjoyed this story about modern Korea. Local financial advisor Nancy Doyle will return to the store on Sunday, September 16 at 2 pm with her new book Manage Your Financial Life that offers financial advice for young people just starting out on their own. Foodies should mark Thursday, September 27 at 6:30 pm on the calendar as Steve Dolinsky (“The Hungry Hound”) visits the store to talk about his new book Pizza City, USA.

Fall is also when lots of new books start landing on our shelves. I’ve been reading a lot this summer and have so many books to recommend! There is a biography of Fred Rogers (The Good Neighbor) by Maxwell King that happily confirmed that the Mr. Rogers I grew up watching on the small black-and-white TV in our family room was, in fact, a compassionate, kind man who dedicated himself to understanding and educating children. As to novelists, I’ve long been a fan of Gary Shteyngart, and I believe that with his latest, Lake Success, he will expand his audience. Funny and bitter-sweet, Shteyngart has created a unique story about a charming, dysfunctional family navigating the complexities of modern life. For another family tale, French Exit by Patrick deWitt was an absolutely delightful yet melancholy story of an unusual mother-son relationship. When their sizeable fortune has run out, mother and son decamp to Paris to stay in a friend’s apartment, which slowly gets more and more crowded. Sarah Smarsh’s Heartland: A Memoir of Working Hard and Being Broke in the Richest Country on Earth is a nuanced memoir of life on a farm in Kansas. For those who enjoyed The Circle, I recommend The Glitch by Elizabeth Cohen, about a stressed out Silicon executive trying to launch a new product with unforeseen consequences. My daughter Katie (21) was delighted by The Mermaid and Mrs. Hancock, which she compared to a supernatural Austen-esque tale. Lexy (17) adored A Winter’s Promise by Christelle Dabos, a young adult fantasy, translated from the French where it was a bestseller. She also read A Heart in a Body in the World by Deb Caletti, which follows a teenage girl as she runs across the country.

There’s always something new at The Book Stall, and I am tickled pink to announce the launch of our Romance section. Romance as a genre has gained in popularity in recent years—a typical romance focuses on a romantic relationship between two people and must always include a happy and emotionally satisfying ending! For customers searching for a literary pick-me-up free of any tragic events, we can now direct you to a whole section. And here too you can count on helpful advice from the Book Stall staff—Betsy Balyeat and Kari Patch curated the section and can help you find just the right book.

Happy Fall and see you in the store.
As anyone who has spent time in Wisconsin knows, strong conservative currents have always been part of the state's history, a counter-balance to the liberal tradition in the southern part of the state. Governorships changed hands between Republicans and Democrats along with seats in the legislature, but the traditions that began with the likes of Robert La Follette and Aldo Leopold and continued by Gaylord Nelson and William Proxmire were deeply ingrained. That said, it was also the state that elected and continues to revere Joe McCarthy. As one of the most liberal states in the country, the question was whether or not it could be brought into the conservative camp. It was a testing ground or, as Gov. Scott Walker noted: 'If we can do it here, we can do it anywhere.' Backed by outside funding, the assaults on labor, education, and the environment began. Kaufman illuminates the reasons that led to the 'fall of Wisconsin.' There is a cautionary tale here: the changes that have occurred in Wisconsin resulted from a concerted effort to divide and conquer, to pit citizen against citizen. It is a strategy that succeeds by playing to our baser instincts.

21 Lessons for the 21st Century by Yuval Noah Harari ($28; available September 28). After looking at the past (Sapiens) and the future (Homo Deus), acclaimed author Yuval Harari now turns his attention to the present. What, he asks, is happening, and what does it mean? Terrorism, nationalism, religion are all seeing resurgence. Their impacts can be both direct, as with a suicide bombing; or indirect, as stress and fear come to dominate our lives. He refers back to his earlier books to show how humans were at one time more in tune with their environment, and how innovation can create, in future, a "useless class" of non-workers. Add in a coming bio-disaster, as our climate shifts, and it seems that there is not much we can do. This difficult book paints a grim picture, so why would anyone want to read it? The answer is simple: devising solutions requires an understanding of the problems and their interrelationships. The capacity of Sapiens to solve complex problems has brought us to where we are today. That same creativity is necessary to solve the problems we have made. As with all of Harari's books, readers will find themselves disagreeing with some of his theses. Here, Harari challenges the reader to refute his arguments. That is no easy task.

ANNE KEIL

Lands of Lost Borders: A Journey on the Silk Road by Kate Harris ($24.99). Growing up on a farm in Ontario, Kate Harris dreamt of exploring Mars. By the time she was of college-age, Kate's adventurous spirit turned to seeing some of the wildest, least-inhabited parts of the world. Putting her talent for writing to use enabled her to get grants to track rhinos in Sumatra, horses in Mongolia, and ski the Juneau Ice Field. Her ultimate goal was to bicycle along Marco Polo's route on the Silk Road. Kate, and her best friend Mel, set off from the nation, and where its world-class university no longer ranks among the top five research schools. If you said Wisconsin, you said it all. For over a century, Wisconsin was known for its progressive ideas and good government, "the laboratory of democracy" with innovative policies affecting labor, education, and the environment. The so-called Wisconsin Idea was a concept that linked the knowledge and expertise of world-class thinkers to the solution of problems at the national, state, and local levels.
Istanbul on their two heavily laden bikes and trekked through Turkey, Armenia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, the Tibetan Plain, and ended at the Siachen Glacier. Along the way, they camped in surreal conditions, existed on ramen noodles, and scuttled under and around some very tightly guarded borders. If you are a fan of travel or adventure writing, this exhilarating book is as good as it gets.

Chesapeake Requiem: A Year with the Watermen of Vanishing Tangier Island by Earl Swift. ($28.99). Tiny Tangier Island, in Virginia, sits in the middle of the widest part of the Chesapeake Bay, and it has the distinction of being the world’s biggest supplier of blue soft-shelled crabs. Most of the 481 residents are related, and, just like their forefathers, nearly all are dependent on the sea for their livelihood. Author Earl Swift spent a year on Tangier examining this unique community and chronicling a disappearing way of life. Visiting the island is like stepping back in time. Commuting is done by golf carts, scooters, or bicycles, as there are few cars. Cell phones tend not to work at all, and there is only one restaurant open year-round.

The town empties in the morning as the watermen head to the boats before daybreak. Though they will return in the early afternoon, the unloading and sorting of crabs into holding tanks may continue far into the night. It is a tough, grueling existence, but one which the islanders want to continue. Sadly, Tangier is very rapidly eroding away. It is likely that its remaining 1.3 square miles will be completely submerged in 25 years. The U.S. government estimates it would cost between 20 to 30 million dollars to save Tangier by building a seawall and dumping massive amounts of dredged sand, and, as yet, it has made no move to start on the project. If Tangier sinks, it will be the first casualty of climate change in the U.S. This moving book asks critical questions about what makes a place, and a way of life, important enough to save.

Mark Twain’s statement that “truth is stranger than fiction” is readily apparent in John Carreyrou’s marvelous true story, Bad Blood: Secrets and Lies in a Silicon Valley Startup ($27.95). Carreyrou, a two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, meticulously chronicled the rise and fall of the former Silicon-Valley darling, Theranos. Founded by narcissist, Stanford dropout, and Steve Jobs-imitator Elizabeth Holmes, Theranos was a blood testing company that promised laboratory blood tests, using a pinprick rather than a syringe to draw blood. The problem was, the “revolutionary” technology didn’t exist, and lab results were often faked. Holmes, along with her boyfriend and Theranos COO Sunny Balwani, created a caustic corporate culture of fear and competition. At times with her boyfriend and Theranos COO Sunny Balwani, created, and just like their forefathers, nearly all are dependent on the sea

SHARMAN McGURN
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LIZ ROGATZ
Whiskey When We’re Dry by John Larison ($26). In 1885 Jess Harney finds herself an orphan trying to keep life together on her family’s homestead. Her mother died giving birth to Jess, so she’s never really known “women’s ways,” and these are not times when it was safe for a woman to be alone on the frontier. Jess decides she will conceal her gender and ride west to find her outlaw brother to bring him back to help work the farm. Jess is a skilled rider and sharp shooter, but trying to ride alone and not be ambushed, man or woman, is very dangerous. Jess has leads to track down her brother through “Most Wanted” posters that bear high price tags on her brother’s head. She eventually takes work as a sharp shooter for the governor to earn some money and feed herself, all the while pretending to be male. The governor is a gambler and uses Jess as a tool to win money off constituents. This serves her for a while, but then she must continue her travel with a price tag on her own head. The perilous journey continues for her as she single-mindedly believes she will find her brother before the authorities and bounty hunters do. A gritty page turner that has you rooting for the “bad guys” at times as you are transported through the untamed wild west.

The Boy at the Keyhole by Stephen Giles ($25.99). Nine-year-old Samuel is left in the care of the housekeeper when his widowed mother departs in the middle of the night to try to raise funds to keep their Cornwall estate running. Samuel misses his mother terribly and every day prays for her return. The only thing that keeps him going are the occasional postcards that arrive from faraway cities his mother is traveling through—Boston, San Francisco, Dallas. As time drags on for Samuel, his mother is now gone for months, with no telephone call and no telegram from her. Samuel starts to suspect that the housekeeper, Ruth, has done something sinister to his mother. Ruth rules with an iron fist and does some unusual and suspicious things. Samuel’s only friend Joseph fans Samuel’s suspicions. I read this book in one afternoon—it was so creepy good I couldn’t put it down. As Ruth and Samuel become further locked in their adversarial relationship, you can feel the tension come right off the page. At each turn you think you have the conclusion figured out, but I assure you, you will be surprised!

Lake Success by Gary Shteyngart ($28). This book is a huge success on many levels, in my opinion. Pick it up if you are looking for a smart thrill ride. It is insightful, relevant, and tackles many issues that adults have when trying to reinvent themselves after their “dreams” don’t come true. The book opens during a disastrous dinner party among wealthy New York neighbors. Barry and Seema Cohen are imploding after the diagnosis that their 3-year-old son, Shiva (ironic name), is diagnosed with autism. Their hosts for the evening, Julianna and Luis, have the perfect son, and it is excruciating for the Cohens to see this and also keep their son’s diagnosis a secret. Things spiral out of control in many ways, and the Cohens can no longer pretend to be happy or in love. This leads Barry to run from his failing hedge fund, his NY life, and all contacts to take a cross-country Greyhound road trip. Both he and Seema immediately rebound into ill-fated relationships and lots of soul searching. The results are at times hysterical, poignant, and optimistic. And, the boy at the center of the story, though much loved, is just hoping to be understood.
SUNDAY, SEPT. 15 continued from page 1

2 pm at the store

CAROLYN ARMSTRONG
Because of Khalid
Winnetka resident Carolyn Armstrong presents her debut middle grade novel about a 12-year-old African-American boy who meets a young Maasai warrior in the Serengeti, where his parents run a safari camp. See page 6.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 16
2 pm at the store

NANCY DOYLE
Manage Your Financial Life: Just Starting Out
Winnetka resident and New Trier graduate Nancy Doyle speaks about her new book, designed to help those in the early years of their careers who face multiple savings goals and financial commitments. It provides an easy system for getting organized, analyzing your financial profile, educating yourself about investing, and putting your money to work.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 18
4:30 pm at the store

MAC BARNETT
Mac Undercover
Mac B: Kid Spy
We’re delighted to welcome back to the store award-winning author Mac Barnett, whose new book tells readers that when he was a kid, he was recruited to be a spy by the Queen of England! See also page 6.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 20
5:30 pm at University Club, 76 E. Monroe, Chicago

STEVE DOLINSKY
Pizza City, USA:
101 Reasons Why Chicago Is America’s Greatest Pizza Town
Chicago food reporter Dolinsky (“the Hungry Hound” on WLS-Channel 7) embarks on a pizza quest, methodically testing more than a hundred different pizzas in Chicagoland, a testament to Dolinsky’s passion for great, unpretentious food. And this quest is not his alone: the book’s foreword is by Grant Achatz. (Note: Mr. Dolinsky will also appear at The Book Stall on Thursday, Sept. 27.)

SATURDAY, SEPT. 22
10:30 am, Saturday Storytime at the store

HAMLET MENESES
Mi Amigo Hamlet: Happy Land Is Terra
We welcome Mr. Meneses, an area educator, artist, and musician, for a CD release party celebrating his new Spanish/English album that will have kids dancing and singing in two languages. See details on page 6.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 23
2 pm at the store

ANDREW GROSS with Kathy Brock
Button Man
We welcome newly retired WLS-Channel 7 anchor Kathy Brock, who’ll host a conversation with international bestselling author Andrew Gross. His new novel Button Man is the story of a Jewish family brought together in the dawn of the women’s garment business and torn apart by the birth of organized crime in New York City in the 1930s. Open to the public.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 25
7 pm, Highland Park Library, 494 Laurel

KIM BROOKS
Small Animals: Parenthood in the Age of Fear
Chicago author Kim Brooks discusses her highly praised new nonfiction book, fueled by the urgency and emotional intensity of her own personal story. She examines how competitive, anxious, and judgmental parenting can profoundly alter the experiences of parents and children.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 27 and FRIDAY, SEPT. 28
Winnetka Public Library “One Book Two Villages”

THURSDAY, Winnetka Community House
6 – 9 pm Cocktails and Appetizers + Book Lecture
7:30 – 9 pm, Book Lecture and Signing
FRIDAY, Happ Inn, Northfield
11:30 am, Luncheon and Discussion

JENNIFER EGAN, Manhattan Beach

Chicago-born Pulitzer Prize-winner Ms. Egan speaks about her award-winning book at two events. On Thursday, at the Winnetka Community House, there will be a 6 – 9 pm reception and book lecture ($50 includes cocktail bar and appetizers, plus a reserved lecture seat) or the lecture only ($15). On Friday, Ms. Egan will attend a luncheon and book discussion at Happ Inn at 11:30 am ($35). For reservations to these events, please go to eventbrite.com.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 27
6:30 pm at the store

STEVE DOLINSKY
Pizza City, USA
See description of Thursday, Sept. 20. Join us for pizza and a food talk here at the store.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 28
4 pm at the store

KEVIN HENKES
A Parade of Elephants
We’re proud to welcome Caldecott Medalist Kevin Henkes to the store in celebration of his new book that follows five joyful elephants as they march from dawn to dusk. See more on page 6.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 29
3 pm at the store

ANDREW SMITH
Rabbit & Robot
We are delighted to host award-winning young adult author Andrew Smith for a conversation with Evanston librarian, author, reviewer and blogger Betsy Bird. See details on page 6.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 30
2 pm at the store

JOHN FLANAGAN
The Red Fox Clan
Ranger’s Apprentice: The Royal Ranger #2
We’re thrilled to host this #1 bestselling author, who returns to the world of Ranger’s Apprentice, continuing the story arc starring fan favorites, Will and Maddie (The Royal Ranger: A New Beginning). See page 6 for details.
**Book Stall Fall Book Discussion Groups**

**Wednesday, September 26, at 9:30 am**
*The Immortalists*
by Chloe Benjamin
Led by Nancy Buehler

It's 1969 in New York City's Lower East Side, and word has spread of the arrival of a traveling psychic who claims to be able to tell anyone the day they will die. The Gold children—four adolescents on the cusp of self-awareness—sneak out to hear their fortunes.

**Wednesday, October 3, at 9:30 am**
*The Alice Network*
by Kate Quinn
Led by Roberta Rubin

Two women—a female spy recruited to the real-life Alice Network in France during World War I and an unconventional American socialite searching for her cousin in 1947—are brought together in a story of courage and redemption.

**Thursday, October 11, at 6:30 pm, Evening Discussion**
*I’ll Be Gone in the Dark, One Woman’s Obsessive Search for the Golden State Killer*
by Michelle McNamara
Led by Kathleen Crawford

The haunting true story of the serial rapist turned murderer who terrorized California during the 70s and 80s, and of the gifted journalist who died tragically while investigating the case—which was solved in April 2018.

**Wednesday, October 31 at 9:30 am**
*The Female Persuasion*
by Meg Wolitzer
Led by Nancy Buehler

To be admired by someone we admire: the private, electrifying pleasure of being singled out by someone of esteem. But sometimes it can also mean entry to a new kind of life, a bigger world.

**Wednesday, November 7 at 9:30 am**
*Virgil Wander* (out October 2)
by Leif Enger
Led by Elise Barack

A timeless all-American story that follows the inhabitants of a small Midwestern town in their quest to revive its flagging heart. Enger is the author of the bestseller *Peace Like a River*.

**Wednesday, November 14 at 6:30 pm, Evening Discussion**
*Less*
by Andrew Sean Greer
Led by Alice Moody

A struggling novelist travels the world to avoid an awkward wedding in this hilarious novel full of "arresting lyricism and beauty." Winner of the 2018 Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

A $5 book discussion group participation charge is fully redeemable for merchandise in the store.

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**Go Green Reads Group**

**Monday, September 17 at 6:30 pm, Evening Discussion**
*American Wolf: A True Story of Survival and Obsession in the American West*
by Nate Blakeslee

The story of the rise and reign of O-Six, the celebrated Yellowstone wolf, and the people who loved or feared her.

Note: There is no cost for the "Go Green Reads" discussions.
the children’s line...

KARI PATCH

Hello Children’s Book Fans,

The layout of the children’s department had a few changes over the summer, so be sure to stop in to check out the new sections. We’ve moved the graphic novels section and expanded it just in time for some big new releases! Dave Pilkey’s Dog Man: Lord of the Fleas and The Baby-Sitters Club: Kristy’s Big Day by Ann Martin are both just out, and mark your calendars for the end of the month because the eighth book in the Amulet series, Supernova, appears on September 25!

And check out some of my favorite new stand-alone graphic novels: Fake Blood by Whitney Gardner, about a boy who decides to ‘be’ a vampire to impress his vampire-obsessed crush; Making Friends by Kristen Gudsnu, a story about the perils of middle school and the magic of friendship (and also some actual magic); and Sheets by Brenna Thummler, the story of a 13-year-old dealing with loss and laundry and possibly a haunting.

We also have a great series of events this month for young readers. Our school year events kick off on Wednesday, September 12 at 4:30 pm with author Elizabeth Eulberg for the latest in her Shelby Holmes series, The Great Shelby Holmes and the Coldest Case. The books are perfect for readers ages 8 and up, and are beloved by all our young mystery fans. We'll serve cake and have fun! And we’ll learn more about Shelby and her best friend John Watson and their newest case that forces them to go undercover as an award-winning skating team.

On Tuesday, September 18 at 4:30 pm, a truth will be revealed at our book release party for Mac Undercover! When famous children’s book writer Mac Barnett was a kid, he was recruited to be a spy by none other than the Queen of England. She recruited him to find the crown jewels (well, the stolen Coronation Spoon), and so Mac embarked on his first adventure as a secret agent. Maybe Mac Undercover has to be called “fiction” for legal reasons, but we know it’s really a memoir. Kids who love humor, and are just moving into the world of chapter books, are going to love this new series as much as we do. Please join us for a party! We would serve crumpets, but we are not sure what crumpets are, really, so we’ll resort to cake.

We continue our very popular storytime every Saturday morning at 10:30 am, when we read some of our favorite books for 3-6-year-olds. Two Saturdays this month, we’ll have special guest readers. On Saturday, September 15 we welcome special guest Kathleen Doherty, reading her new picture book Don’t Feed the Bear! As an extra special treat, we are going to have some magic tricks, courtesy of Kathleen’s husband! And on the following Saturday, September 22, we welcome area educator, artist, and musician Hamlet Meneses to the store for a CD release party, as he debuts his new album, Mi Amigo Hamlet: Happy Land Is Tierra Feliz. Hamlet will get our Saturday storytime crew dancing and singing in two languages with his Spanish/English tunes. He’s been delighting kids at nearby Harkness House for many years now, and kids ages 3 and up will love this live mini-concert.

On Saturday, September 15, at 2 pm, we host Winnetka author Carolyn Armstrong, whose debut middle grade novel, Because of Khalid, is the story of a 12-year-old African American boy from Chicago who moves to western Serengeti to help his parents run a tented safari camp. There, he meets a young Maasai warrior, who teaches him the language and all about the land.

The last weekend of the month has a blockbuster event every day! Friday, September 28 at 4 pm, we welcome Caldecott Medalist Kevin Henkes to celebrate his new book, A Parade of Elephants! It follows five joyful elephants as they march from dawn to dusk. This engaging picture book is just right for the youngest reader and is a perfect choice for storyline and bedtime sharing. We ask that you buy your copy of A Parade of Elephants from The Book Stall in order to enter the book-signing queue. Signing line numbers will be given out with purchase starting on Sept. 25. Mr. Henkes will be happy to sign any newly purchased backlist titles and one book from home when you buy his new book.

Saturday, September 29 at 3 pm, we are delighted to welcome award-winning young adult author Andrew Smith for a conversation with librarian, author, reviewer, and blogger Betsy Bird. They will discuss Andrew’s new book, Rabbit & Robot. Told with his signature dark humor, Rabbit & Robot is the story of Cager Messer, a boy stranded on the Tennessee—his father’s lunar-cruise utopia—with insane robots. We recommend this event for readers ages 14 and up.

Rounding out the month on Sunday, September 30 at 2 pm, is internationally bestselling author John Flanagan, coming to us all the way from Australia for a U.S. tour celebrating his return to the world of Ranger’s Apprentice. Picking up where The Royal Ranger: A New Beginning left off, his new book The Red Fox Clan continues the story arc featuring young apprentice, Maddie, and the student-turned-master, Will Treaty. The time has come for the next generation to assume the mantle and become protectors of the kingdom of Araluen! We recommend this event for readers ages 10 and up.

That’s it for September, but keep an eye out for some great events early in October!

Kari P.
Betsy Balyeat

The Boy, The Boat, and The Beast by Samantha Clark ($17.99). Stranded on a menacing tropical island with no memories, a boy must confront his fears in order to find his past. When he awakens on a deserted beach, he has no idea who he is or how he got there. As he sets off to follow a light shining in the distance, an internal voice nags at him constantly, berating him and bullying him. On one side of him are crashing waves that threaten to drag him into the ocean; on the other side is a large green wall where a monstrous wolf lurks. Themes of courage and love play a large part in the story, and the character development shines clearly. A gripping adventure with a moving conclusion make this an excellent choice for 8-to-12-year-old readers.

Nightbooks by J.A. White ($16.99). A spine-tingling dark fantasy about the power of facing fears and choosing your own fate. Alex loves horror stories, but the night he sets out to destroy his beloved “Nightbooks” notebooks of his original tales, he finds himself trapped by a witch in an enchanted apartment. Natacha, the witch, requires Alex to tell her one of his horror stories each night...or else! As Alex runs out of stories, he enlists the help of the apartment’s other trapped occupants—a cautious girl named Yasmin and the witch’s cat, Lenore, to find a way to escape. This is an engrossing and creepy tale that blends elements of Hansel and Gretel and the 1,000 Arabian Nights. Fans of Adam Gidwitz and Neal Gaiman are sure to love it. Grades 4-6

And the Ocean Was Our Sky by Patrick Ness ($19.99). Here comes a haunting tale of power and obsession that turns the story of Moby Dick upside down. The whales are in charge, and Bathsheba’s pod, led by the formidable whale Captain Alexandra, live for the hunt. They fight a never-ending war against men. When they attack a man ship, instead of finding easy prey they find the trail of a myth, a monster, perhaps the devil himself. With their relentless captain leading the chase, the whales embark on a final hunt, one that will forever change the worlds of whales and men. The powerful story is enhanced by beautiful shadowy illustrations by Rovina Cai that feature looming whales, men upside down—all amid dense swirls of water and blood. A wrenched, dark, and fascinating tale. Ages 13 and up

For a Muse of Fire by Heidi Heilig ($17.99). Sixteen-year-old shadow puppeteer Jetta performs with her family’s traveling troupe, the Ros Nai. The dark-haired, dark-skinned Chakrans have been colonized by the pale blonde Aquitans, who prize their sugar and sapphires, and their shadow theatre, too. But Jetta has a secret—instead of sticks and strings, she binds souls with blood and magic and tucks them inside her puppets. Jetta is desperate to impress the Aquitan general and win passage to Aquitan, where she hopes to find a cure for an illness she suffers. When the Ros Nai collide with Chakran guerrillas, Jetta and her family are plunged into the chaos of the rebellion. This start to a new trilogy is a fast-paced and gripping adventure. It is a thoughtful commentary on the long-lasting ramifications of war and colonization. Chakran and Aquitan are inspired by Asian culture, as well as French colonialism, which comes through in cultural touchstones such as food, dress, and language. A must read with an inclusive cast, a rarely-seen setting, and a compelling heroine. Perfect for fans of Leigh Bardugo and Sabaa Tahir. Ages 14 and up

Amy Trogdon

How Do Dinosaurs Learn To Read? by Jane Yolen and Mark Teague ($16.99). If you were a dinosaur, what would you do with a book? Would you stomp on, eat it, or roar at it? No, no, no! It is a fact that dinosaurs love books. They read them with friends, with their parents, or by themselves. They read them again and again. You will read this new addition to Jane Yolen and Mark Teague’s dinosaur books again and again too, laughing all the while! At the end of the book, the dinos give some helpful hints about the alphabet and letter sounds. Great fun for the whole family! Ages 4-7

Click, Clack, Quack to School! by Doreen Cronin and Betsy Lewin ($17.99). Farmer Brown’s farm animals are very excited. They have been invited to spend a whole day at school! The pigs hooted, the chickens clapped, the cows stomped, and the duck...was being ducky. Farmer Brown was worried that the animals would not behave, so he set down some rules: No Hooting, No Clapping, Stomping, or Being Ducky! However, they were all in for a big surprise when they arrived at school! A silly adventure that is sure to have everyone giggling, along with some reminders of proper school behavior. Sure to be a hit! Ages 4-8

We Don’t Eat Our Classmates by Ryan T. Higgins ($17.99). Penelope T. Rex was so excited for the first day of school. She wanted to make lots of friends, but making friends can be hard when they taste so good! Mrs. Noodleman made her spit them out at once but the kids were all afraid Penelope would eat them again. She decided to make friends with Walter, the goldfish. But Walter gives her some of her own medicine! A great book for back-to-school laughs! Ages 4-8

Saving Winslow by Sharon Creech ($16.99). Fans of The One and Only Ivan and Charlotte’s Web will love this story of Louie, a young boy who adopts a sickly mini-donkey. Louie’s family and friends warn him that the odds of the donkey surviving are not good, but Louie is eternally optimistic. He also befriends a young girl, Nora, who has suffered a lot of loss and is very pessimistic about life. Louie and the donkey, Winslow, continue to bond, teaching Nora and others about letting go, friendship, and love. This engaging tale works well as a read-aloud or read alone. It’s Creech at her best! Ages 7-12

Just Mercy: A True Story of the Fight for Justice by Bryan Stevenson ($16.99). Bryan Stevenson states, “Each of us is more than the worst thing we’ve ever done.” This important book examines the broken U.S. justice system, sharing stories of the author’s challenges and the inequities that exist. Through the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), founded by Stevenson when he was a young lawyer, work continues to protect the basic human rights for the vulnerable in our society. A must read and a valuable addition to any classroom. Ages 12-18
To the Light of September
by W.S. Merwin

When you are already here you appear to be only a name that tells of you whether you are present or not and for now it seems as though you are still summer still the high familiar endless summer yet with a glint of bronze in the chill mornings and the late yellow petals of the mullein fluttering on the stalks that lean over their broken shadows across the cracked ground

but they all know that you have come the seed heads of the sage the whispering birds with nowhere to hide you to keep you for later you who fly with them you who are neither before nor after you who arrive with blue plums that have fallen through the night perfect in the dew

—Poetry Foundation