

Fiction News

The Ridgefield Library's Fiction Newsletter

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Enriching Minds.
Enhancing Community.

May 2017

GRANTA'S LIST OF BEST YOUNG AMERICAN NOVELISTS

Every ten years, *Granta, the Magazine of New Writing*, devotes an issue to new American fiction, showcasing the young novelists (under age 40) deemed to be the best of their generation – writers of remarkable achievement and promise, still in their twenties and thirties. Here are some of the twenty-one authors from *Granta's* Best of Young American Novelists of 2017, outstanding writers who capture the preoccupations of modern America, with examples of their work.

Jesse Ball

How to Set a Fire and Why

A singular, blistering novel about a teenage girl who has lost everything—and will burn anything.



Emma Cline

The Girls

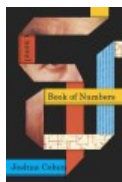
Mesmerized by a band of girls she perceives as enjoying a life of careless abandon, 1960s teen Evie Boyd becomes obsessed with gaining acceptance into their circle, only to find herself drawn into a cult and seduced by its charismatic leader.



Joshua Cohen

The Book of Numbers

Hired by a dying tech company tycoon to ghostwrite his memoirs, failed novelist Josh Cohen learns the history of the man's profoundly influential company before being initiated into the high-stakes truth behind the autobiography project.



Lauren Groff

Fates and Furies

In this modern portrait of marriage, Lotto Satterwhite is the center, the hub around which all the characters revolve in the first half of the book. In the second half of the book, the lens turns to Lotto's wife Mathilde, and her side of the lopsided partnership gives us a totally different view.



Yaa Gyasi

Homegoing

Introduces two half-sisters whose fates could not be more different. There's Effia, who becomes the mistress of a British slave-trader, and Esi, who survives the Middle Passage only to live out her days in bondage on an American plantation. In the centuries that follow, Effia's family experiences the destructive legacies of British imperialism and warfare while Esi's descendants live through the Civil War, the Great Migration, the Harlem Renaissance, and the Civil Rights Movement.



Garth Risk Hallberg

City on Fire

Set in New York City, this novel is an unforgettable story about love and betrayal and forgiveness, about art and truth and rock n roll: about what people need from each other in order to live and about what makes the living worth doing in the first place.



Sana Krasikov

The Patriots

Three generations of a Jewish-American family endure the difficult challenges of the Depression and the Cold War while pursuing dreams of better lives and reflecting on painful experiences from their earlier lives in Moscow.



Ben Lerner

10:04

While enjoying his newfound literary success, the narrator deals with a potentially fatal medical condition and a request to help his best friend conceive a child while living in New York, a city where there are frequent superstorms and unrest.



Karan Mahajan

The Association of Small Bombs

After witnessing his two friends killed by a "small" bomb that detonates in the Delhi marketplace, Mansoor Ahmed becomes involved with a charismatic activist, whose allegiances and beliefs are more changeable than he could've imagined.



Anthony Marra

The Tsar of Love and Techno

This collection of interwoven tales explores themes of family, sacrifice, war, and the redemptive power of art.



Dinaw Mengestu

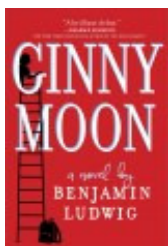
All Our Names

A story of an African young man who was drawn into African revolution and leaves behind his country and friends for America as the path of revolution leads to destruction. There, pretending to be an exchange student, he falls in love with a social worker and settles into the routines of small-town life. Yet this idyll is darkened by the secrets of his past.



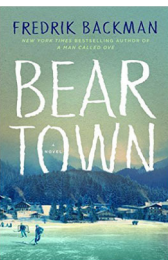
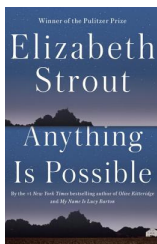
NEW FICTION

(Annotations from *NoveList* and *BookLetters*)



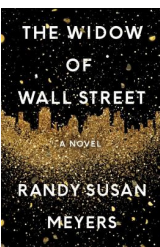
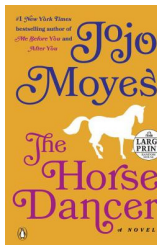
Ginny Moon by Benjamin Ludwig.
Ludwig effectively captures the voice, thought process, and behaviors of a young autistic girl who has escaped a harrowing living situation and has finally settled into a new “forever” home. Unfortunately, she becomes obsessed with returning to her old home to find her “baby doll,” jeopardizing both her own and her new family’s safety. Ginny truly is an original, and readers will be captivated by her story. - Vicki Nesting for LibraryReads.

Anything Is Possible by Elizabeth Strout.
Strout revisits the residents of Lucy Barton’s (the heroine of *My Name Is Lucy Barton*) hometown. The janitor at the local school has his faith tested in an encounter with an isolated man he has come to help; a grown daughter longs for mother love even as she comes to accept her mother’s happiness in a foreign country; and the adult Lucy Barton returns to visit her siblings after seventeen years of absence.



Beartown by Fredrik Backman.
The author of *A Man Called Ove* returns with a novel about a small town with a big dream - and the price required to make it come true. People say Beartown, a tiny community nestled deep in the forest, is finished. But down by the lake stands an old ice rink, and in that ice rink is the reason people in Beartown believe tomorrow will be better than today. Their junior ice hockey team is about to compete in the national semifinals. All the hopes and dreams of this place now rest on the shoulders of a handful of teenage boys.

The Horse Dancer by JoJo Moyes.
When her grandfather is ill, her life takes an unexpected turn, forcing Sarah, and her horse Boo, to rely on Natasha, a lawyer whose job is to represent the best interests of children.



The Widow of Wall Street by Randy Susan Meyers.
This provocative new novel by bestselling-author Randy Susan Meyers is about the seemingly blind love of a wife for her husband as he conquers Wall Street, and her extraordinary, perhaps foolish, loyalty during his precipitous fall.

Miss Burma by Charmaine Craig.
A beautiful and poignant story of one family during the most violent and turbulent years of world history, *Miss Burma* is a powerful novel of love and war, colonialism and ethnicity, and the ties of blood. Based on the story of the author’s mother and grandparents, *Miss Burma* is a captivating portrait of how modern Burma came to be and of the ordinary people swept up in the struggle for self-determination and freedom.

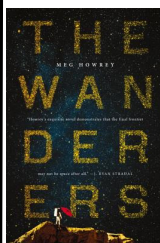
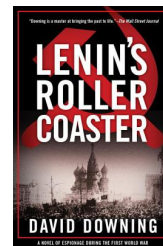


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STAFF PICKS

Elise’s Picks

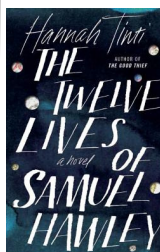
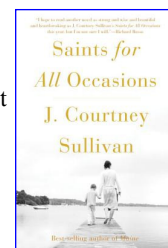
Lenin’s Roller Coaster by David Downing.
The third entry in this engrossing historical series finds progressive journalist Caitlin Hanley covering the assignment of a lifetime, the idealistic start of the Russian Revolution. Friendly with some of the rising female stars of the movement, Caitlin struggles to maintain her professional objectivity and to continue her complicated relationship with British agent, Jack McColl. Dispatched by Whitehall to keep Central Asia and Ukraine out of the Kaiser’s control, McColl knows Caitlin is in Moscow, and as his mission takes him closer and closer to Russia, he fears that he will be ordered to work with the allied coalition that seeks to sabotage the Bolshevik cause. Rich in historical detail with two attractive and principled leads, this entertaining and informative espionage novel offers an atypical perspective on WWI alliances and the hopeful but tumultuous start of the Russian Revolution.



The Wanderers by Meg Howry.
Before embarking on the first manned mission to Mars, an elite team of astronauts is subjected to a highly realistic simulation of their future flight. The 17-month test in the Utah desert has been ingeniously designed by a private space company, and the three astronauts, an American woman and a Russian and a Japanese man, have been carefully selected for their complementary skills and temperaments. Despite all the extensive planning, the stresses of long-term confinement, separation from loved ones, and constant invasive monitoring take their toll on the crew and their families back home. As much about inner space as it is about outer space, *The Wanderers* is a lyrical, thought-provoking novel that explores both the appeal of scientific journeys and the psychological challenges human missions face.

Dorothy’s Picks

Saints for All Occasions by J. Courtney Sullivan.
Spanning six decades from the late 1950s to 2009, this novel follows Nora and Theresa Flynn on their divergent journeys from young Irish immigrants to adulthood. Their paths are forged by a misstep made by Theresa and by Nora’s response to it. Nora’s decision, made in the name of family loyalty and in line with her Catholic faith, has unintended consequences for both sisters and for the four children that Nora will raise. Capturing the vagaries of sibling dynamics, this is a story of hope and heartbreak for readers of family sagas and for Sullivan’s many fans.



The Twelve Lives of Samuel Hawley by Hannah Tinti.
Samuel Hawley has twelve scars from bullet holes, and each one has a story from his colorful criminal past and his life on the road. Hawley is also a single father, and he decides to end his vagabond ways and settle with his beloved young daughter Loo in Olympus, Massachusetts, the town where Loo’s deceased mother was born. But, Hawley can’t escape his past, and as the years go by both Samuel and Loo must confront his dark secrets. This hard-to-categorize novel is Dickensian in feel and a literary wild ride. It is a coming-of-age story, a tale of fatherly love, and a thriller packed with mystery and suspense. Filled with both tenderness and violence, it is impossible to put down. I was a huge fan of Tinti’s first novel, *The Good Thief*, and her new novel does not disappoint.