

Community Book Picks

Mostly submitted during the Andover-Harvard Theological Library Centennial Open House, October 27, 2011, and compiled, December 12, 2011

Adams, Noah. *Piano Lessons: Music, Love & True Adventures*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1996. [A book for anyone who has wanted to learn a new skill at midlife, who enjoys music, who has played Schumann's "Traumerei," or who enjoys listening to NPR. Follow NPR host Noah Adams as he writes about the year he devoted to learning how to play the piano age 52. Music lovers might also enjoy: *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank: The Hidden World of a Paris Atelier* by Thaddeus Carhart or *Out of Silence: A Pianist's Yearbook* by Susan Tomes.] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Alcott, Louisa May. *Little Women*. Penguin Classics. New York, N.Y., U.S.A.: Penguin Books, 2007. [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Austen, Jane. *Sense and Sensibility; Mansfield Park; Persuasion in The Complete Novels*. Penguin Classics. New York: Penguin Books, 2006. [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Barrett, Judi and (illustrated by) Ron Barrett. *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*. New York: Atheneum, 1978. Use [WorldCat](#) to find it in a nearby library or use [this link](#) to suggest the Harvard Library purchase it.

Barron, Stephanie. *Jane and the Man of the Cloth*. New York: Bantam Books, 1997. [Link to HOLLIS](#).

----- . *Jane and the Unpleasantness at Scargrave Manor*. New York: Bantam Books, 1996 [Link to HOLLIS](#). [And others work by her (click on a HOLLIS link and then click the author's name) If you enjoy Austen, you will also enjoy these mystery novels, which feature the author as a detective. They give a rich picture of English life in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, with much more emphasis on political and national security issues, and a much greater range of socioeconomic and class levels, than the novels provide.]

Beck, Martha Nibley. *Expecting Adam: A True Story of Birth, Rebirth, and Everyday Magic*. New York: Times Books, 1999. [On the surface, this is an interesting look at the life of a woman student at Harvard in the 1980s. But it is one of those books that can't easily be described—you just have to read it!] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Bell, Rob. *Love Wins: A Book about Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived*. New York, NY: HarperOne, 2011. [This book saved my life. And transformed my theology. I will read it again and again....] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Brooks, Geraldine. *March*. New York: Penguin Books, 2006. [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Bushman, Richard L. and Jed Woodworth. *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005. [Cultural biography of Mormon prophet Joseph Smith. A fantastic look into 19th century American life and a must-read for anyone interested in the foundations of Mormonism. Written by Richard Bushman (PhD Harvard), Gouverneur Morris Professor of History, Emeritus, at Columbia University.] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Caldwell, Gail. *Let's Take the Long Way Home: A Memoir of Friendship*. 1st ed. New York: Random House, 2010. [This is a beautifully written memoir about a deep friendship that develops between two women who have dogs. Both are writers, and, in addition to their dogs, love books, the outdoors and sports. Then, one becomes ill and dies and the other is left behind to chronicle the illness, loss and grief. Written by Gail Caldwell, former book critic for the Boston Globe, about her friendship with Caroline Knapp, the book begins: "It's an old, old story. I had a friend and we shared everything, and then she died and we shared that too."] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Cline, Ernest. *Ready Player One*. 1st ed. New York: Crown Publishers, 2011. [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Cunningham, Michael. *Land's End: A Walk through Provincetown*. Crown Journeys Series. 1st ed. New York: Crown Publishers, 2002. ["Cunningham, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his novel *The Hours* (1998), first came to the small, sandy town with its astonishingly liquid and moody light 20 years ago, and he fell in love with this mercurial 'eccentric' sanctuary....' [He] presents an enchanting history and walking tour of his beloved home, charting, along the way, its powerful and diverse artistic legacy, which includes the work of Edward Hopper, Eugene O'Neill, Norman Mailer, and Mary Oliver." --*Donna Seaman*, © *American Library Association*.] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Cuppy, Will. *How to Get from January to December*. New York: Holt, 1951. [Cuppy distilled thousands of factoids on note cards into interesting and humorous entries for each day of the year. The laughs helped me get through a divorce. You might like his other books: *How to Be a Hermit*, *How to Tell Your Friends from the Apes*, *The Decline and Fall of Practically Everybody*.] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Eisenberg, Deborah. *The Collected Stories of Deborah Eisenberg*. New York: Picador/Farrar, Straus And Giroux, 2010. [I can't try to describe Deborah Eisenberg's writing—it's too mercurial, too subtle, too complex..., and don't forget funny! Suffice to say she's in a league with a very few other short story writers: Flannery O'Connor, Alice Munro, and Lydia Davis come to mind. Newcomers, start with "A Cautionary Tale" and "Mermaids."] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Federici, Silvia. *Caliban and the Witch*. New York: Autonomedia, 2004. [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*. New York: HarperCollins, 2008. [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Fitzpatrick, Ellen F. (editor). *Letters to Jackie: Condolences from a Grieving Nation*. 1st ed. New York: Ecco, 2010. [A book of the condolence letters sent to Jackie Kennedy after the death of President Kennedy.] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Grahame-Smith, Seth. *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*. New York: Grand Central Pub, 2010. [On the heels of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, Smith tackles the true untold story of the martyred 16th president and the secret behind his rise to power: VAMPIRES!] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Grondin, Martin. *LOLcat Bible: In Teh Beginnin Ceiling Cat Maded Teh Skiez an Da Erfs n Stuffs*. Berkeley, Calif.: Ulysses Press, 2010. [This Bible parody tells stories in "LOLcat": "In the beginning Ceiling Cat maded the skiez an da erfs n stuffs." A new translation?] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Hardy, Thomas. *Jude the Obscure*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Henderson, Zenna. *Ingathering: The Complete People Stories of Zenna Henderson*. Framingham, Mass.: NESFA Press, 1995. ["This is a 1995 compilation of some often-overlooked early classic science fiction. Her themes of loss, hope, and the search for "home" have fueled several generations of writers' imaginations. And you'll love "The People.""] While Houghton has several of the first printings of her books, this one does not seem to be at Harvard yet. Use [WorldCat](#) to find it in a nearby library or use [this link](#) to suggest the Harvard Library purchase it.

Isaacson, Walter. *Steve Jobs*. 1st Simon & Schuster hardcover ed. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011. [The official biography of the genius who invented an industry. Also: *Einstein* by the same author.] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Jantzen, Grace. *Death and the Displacement of Beauty*. London: Routledge, 2010. [Multi-volume study of death and beauty in Western thought by a celebrated scholar of religion. Three volumes have been published: *Foundations of Violence*, *Violence and Eternity*, and *A Place of Spring*] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Jones, Diana Wynne. *Deep Secret*. New York: Tor, 1999. [A spoof for all ages of a fantasy lovers' convention, but they don't know the fantasy is real. A huge sprawling social comedy, filled with bustle, hilarity, politics, far-off empires, charismatic people..., and fantasy writers. It's a lark! Jones is one of the best fun fantasy writers of the century! Anything else Diana Wynne Jones has written - All are deep! All are fun! She's a genius!] Use [WorldCat](#) to find it in a nearby library or use [this link](#) to suggest the Harvard Library purchase it.

Katz, Sandra L. *Dearest of Geniuses: A Life of Theodate Pope Riddle*. Windsor, Conn.: Tide-Mark, 2003. Use [WorldCat](#) to find it in a nearby library or use [this link](#) to suggest the Harvard Library purchase it.

Kidd, Sue Monk. *The Secret Life of Bees*. New York: Penguin, 2002. [Really beautifully written!] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Maugham, W. S. *The Razor's Edge*. Philadelphia: Blakiston, 1944. [Link to HOLLIS](#)

McCarthy, Cormac. *The Road*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006. [Everyone has heard of it. It's not too long. It's Biblical in cadence and power. It's pure post-apocalyptic terseness. You don't have to like post-apocalypticism. It is unforgettable.] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

McGregor, Jon. *If Nobody Speaks of Remarkable Things*. London: Bloomsbury, 2002. [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Miller, Arthur. *Death of a Salesman*. New York: Penguin Books, 1996. [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Nicholson, William. *Seeker*. Orlando: Harcourt, 2006. Also others in *The Noble Warriors* series. [Great Young Adult fantasy trilogy. As good as it gets!] Use [WorldCat](#) to find it in a nearby library or to use [this link](#) to suggest the Harvard Library purchase it.

Perrotta, Tom. *The Leftovers*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011. [Three years after a Rapture-like event disappears part of the world's population, a small suburban community deals with the aftermath. Smart, funny, and heartbreaking – a great read.] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Phillips, Arthur. *The Tragedy of Arthur*. New York: Random House, 2011. [A novel written as a memoir written as an introduction to a lost (forged?) Shakespeare play. A fascinating journey exploring the sometimes gray area between memoir and fiction and the importance of “authenticity.” Clever, well-written and often funny, the author includes the text of his found Shakespeare play (which is really good!). I loved reading this new kind of novel.] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Pollan, Michael. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. New York: Penguin Press, 2006. [“Eat Food. Mostly Plants. Not too much.”] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Śāntideva. *The Bodhicaryāvatāra* translated by Kate Crosby and Andrew Skilton. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. [Buddhist classic from 8th century India. A central text of Tibetan Buddhism. English titles also include *The Way of the Bodhisattva*, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, and *Entering the Path of Enlightenment*.] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Schiff, Stacy. *Cleopatra: A Life*. New York: Little, Brown and Co, 2010. [A familiar story but told with the skill that makes it a page turner (at least at the end!). My dry, academic knowledge of some of this time was really solidified and brought to life.] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Shteyngart, Gary. *Super Sad True Love Story*. New York: Random House, 2010. [Satirical dystopia. America in the ambiguous future. Great stuff.] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Slavitt, David R. *Change of Address: Poems, New and Selected*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005. [Especially “A Zemel for Rabbi Nachman” about why we, or God, may perhaps need prayer, or is it useless?] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Spring, Justin. *Secret Historian: The Life and Times of Samuel Steward, Professor, Tattoo Artist, and Sexual Renegade*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010. [A different and fascinating look at 20th century literary figures and pre- and early post-Stonewall queer life.] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Stockett, Kathryn. *The Help*. New York: Amy Einhorn Books, 2009. [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Verghese, Abraham. *Cutting for Stone*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009. [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Wells, Rebecca. *Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood*. New York: HarperPerennial, 2004. [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Williams, John Edward. *Stoner*. New York: Viking Press, 1965. [First published in 1965, this novel of academic life was reissued by NYRB Classics a few years ago. William Stoner is a dirt poor farm boy who’s sent to college to study agronomy, falls in love with literature, and never leaves. His intellectual awakening, toxic marriage, and thwarted career are rendered with a full spectrum of light and darkness, comedy and tragedy. Features the most gripping account imaginable of a doctoral candidate’s orals.] [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Young, William P. *The Shack*. Newbury Park, Calif.: Windblown Media, 2007. [Link to HOLLIS](#)

Zusak, Markus. *The Book Thief*. Sydney: Picador, 2005. [Link to HOLLIS](#)