DETROIT PUBLIC LIBRARY

2019 AFRICAN AMERICAN BOOKLIST



Inventing Lives: Black Women Writing Our Story

2019 AFRICAN AMERICAN BOOKLIST

The Detroit Public Library has published its African American Booklist for 51 years. This bibliography provides a selected list of books by and/or about African Americans. The works of fiction and nonfiction for adults, children and young adults were reviewed and recommended by librarians of the Detroit Public Library.

The African American Booklist began as a way to commemorate Black History Month and since that time has continued to feature the accomplishments of African Americans in the literary world. Our booklist has become an annual tradition in the community and continues to be a highly anticipated publication for book lovers all across the nation.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

BLACK NATIONAL ANTHEM	4
FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	5
PEARL CLEAGE: I'M WRITING FOR MY LIFE	7
INVENTING LIVES: BLACK WOMEN WRITING OUR STORY	10
CONTEMPORARY BLACK WOMEN WRITERS: A RECOMMENDED READING LIST	24
CRITICAL STUDIES: 20TH AND 21ST CENTURY BLACK WOMEN'S FICTION	25
YOUTH BOOKS	27
BEST OF FICTION 2018	32
FICTION	33
BEST OF NON-FICTION 2018	36
NON-FICTION	37
ART, MUSIC & POETRY	37
BIOGRAPHY	38
BUSINESS/FINANCE	40
COOKING	40
HEALTH/SCIENCE	40
HISTORY	41
INSPIRATIONAL/RELIGION	41
POLITICAL/SOCIAL SCIENCES	41
RELATIONSHIPS	43
SPORTS AND RECREATION	43
FORTHCOMING TITLES 2019	44
OUR MISSION	45

BLACK NATIONAL ANTHEM

LIFT EV'RY VOICE AND SING

Lyrics by: James Weldon Johnson
(1871-1938)

Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us,
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who has by Thy might
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,
Lest our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand.
True to our God,
True to our native land.

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



PHOTO CREDIT:
KATHRYN DOWGIEWICZ

The theme of our 2019 African American Booklist is the literary tradition of African American women. Many years ago, on different occasions, I had the honor and pleasure of meeting Gwendolyn Brooks, Gloria Naylor, and Alice Walker. They, among others, represent the rich and unique perspective African American women bring to storytelling.

We are pleased that Dr. Mary Helen Washington, professor at the University of Maryland, has written an insightful historical essay about the literary genius of African American women. She is no stranger to Detroit, having earned her PhD from the University of Detroit in 1976, which she followed by serving as director of Black Studies at the university from 1976-1980. She is the editor of *Black-Eyed Susans and Midnight Birds: Stories by and About Black Women* and *Invented Lives: Narratives of Black Women, 1860-1960*. Dr. Washington's current project is *Afterlives: Legacies of the Black Literary Left.*

Author, playwright, essayist and poet Pearl Cleage epitomizes the creative literary energy of African American women. Like Dr. Washington, Ms. Cleage has a Detroit connection – she grew up in the city where her father, a political and social justice advocate, founded the Shrine of the Black Madonna. She is the author of several novels including *What Looks Like Crazy on an Ordinary Day, Babylon Sisters,* and *Till You Hear from Me*. Theaters across the country have staged her plays including *Blues for an Alabama Sky, Flyin' West*, and *What I Learned in Paris.* Author and editor, Denene Millner, provides an enlightening interview with Ms. Cleage that describes the development of her literary style.

DPL's librarians have thoughtfully selected current fiction and non-fiction titles that will engage readers of all ages. Dr. Washington has shared classic titles that exemplify the creative tradition of African American women.
To all book lovers, I am certain that our 2019 Booklist provides a variety of titles that will appeal to your many interests and passions. Whether the format is a traditional book, an audio book, or an e-book, please visit your favorite DPL location and find that thought provoking, compelling or just plain fun "good read."

Thank you for your continued support of the Detroit Public Library.

Yours for reading,

Jo Anne G. Mondowney

Jo Anne G. Mondowney
Executive Director



PEARL CLEAGE: I'M WRITING FOR MY LIFE

By Denene Millner

There is something to be said about this legend—this keeper of our stories, this sower of our narratives, this painter of words who splashes color across page, across heart. She digs and pulls and holds us up to the light, exposing our underbellies, yes, but also bearing witness to our truths. We need her like we do…air. Pearl Cleage is balm. Salvation. Necessary.

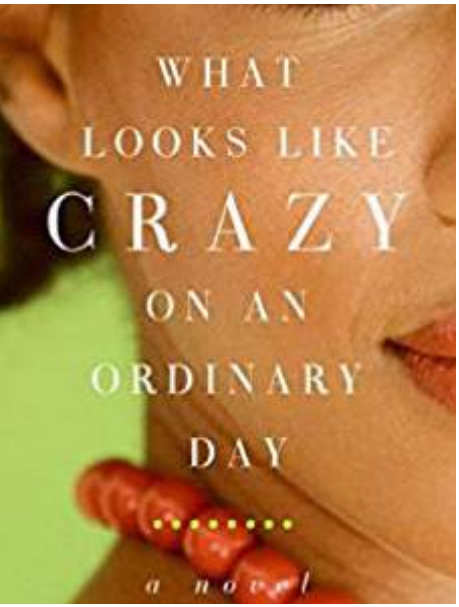
With 12 books and countless plays under her belt (including *The New York Times* bestselling Oprah book selection *What Looks Like Crazy on an Ordinary Day* and the renowned play *Blues for an Alabama Sky*), each featuring her clear-eyed centering of the condition of black folk—specifically Black women—in all our many manifestations, the author, playwright, essayist and former Spelman College professor takes her place amongst the stars of the Black women's canon: Morrison. Walker. Hurston. Brooks. Shange. We've sang a black girl's song for each of these extraordinary writers. We sing, too, for Mother Pearl.

Her position as a champion of Black women and the stories that honor them is divined—discovered in the crib, absorbed at the knee of her elementary school mom, activist father and the coterie of intelligentsia that filled her childhood home with radical black thought, and honed in the halls of the Detroit Public Library, where, she said, she spent many afternoons reading, exploring, learning and dreaming the worlds that would find their way into her award-winning, best-selling, critically-acclaimed work. Her memories of listening to, making up and searching for stories are crystal clear.

"I remember leaning over the side of the crib making up stories and telling them to my sister, who was four. She actually would stop and listen to me telling these stories," Cleage said. "I always tell her this is all her fault because I figured if I could make a four-year-old stop and listen, I must be really good at something."

She was about nine years old when she realized "there was such a thing as a writer," and that it was a vocation she wanted to pursue. Her grandfather nurtured the seed she'd planted by keeping her stocked with pencils and little spiral notebooks in which she could jot down notes for her stories. She found those stories all around Detroit—at the park, in the store, even on the city bus.

CLEAGE (con't)



What Looks Like Crazy on an Ordinary Day

"I would ride the bus in Detroit and I'd be writing down conversations that people had. My sister was always mortified, like somebody was going to see us and I'd get in trouble for writing down conversations," Cleage said, laughing at the memories. "I was nine years old. Nobody cares what a nine-year-old kid is doing. But I was listening to these women talk about their boyfriends and their husbands and just trying to get the rhythms of how people actually talked in my head because that was important to me. My father was such a good speaker and I knew the power of speaking the language in a way that really could move people. I wanted to be able to do that."

And she has. Through her words—whether in the form of novels, plays or essays—Cleage explores the human condition: womanhood, motherhood, family, love, relationships, friendship, passion, anger, violence, poverty, social unrest, politics, strength, grief, betrayal, sex, growth, with a clear-eyed approach that is all-at-once unpretentious but nuanced, familiar and pregnant with truths. *Our* truths. It's a style that Cleage says is very much deliberate; after filling her writing space at her Atlanta home with candles and clearing her mind with meditation, she sits and writes characters who are either deeply loved or truly hated, with stories that grab "regular people who don't have big advanced degrees and all of those wonderful things, and don't feel like they're outside of the story because they don't understand the language or because you have to have a working knowledge of the Greeks in order to get this, or because if you don't know Shakespeare you won't get the joke. It's like, 'No, I want us to get the joke.'"

Accessible language, stories that resonate, characters that draw in viewers and readers alike—these, Cleage said, are what she uses to help her audiences let their guard down. When that happens, she added, they invest in the story and its grand ideas "'til the end when whatever it is that you've been trying to tell them should come to some kind of conclusion where they say, 'Oh my goodness, that was great. I never saw this particular story told in this particular way.'"

It's a style that's earned Cleage critical praise, including an Oprah Book Club pick for her debut novel, *What Looks Like Crazy On an Ordinary Day*—it spent nine weeks on *The New York Times* bestseller list—an NAACP Image Award for Literature for her novel, *Baby Brother's Blues*, five AUDELCO Awards for outstanding achievement off-Broadway, and, among many prestigious grants, a playwriting residency at Atlanta's Alliance Theatre.

Though she is appreciative, it's not the accolades that move Cleage; it is the words themselves. The work. In her 1990 essay collection, *Mad at Miles: A Black Woman's Guide to the Truth*, she explained why she writes:

> "I am writing to expose and explore the point where racism and sexism meet. I am writing to help understand the full effects of being black and female in a culture that is both racist and sexist. I am writing to try and communicate that information to my sisters first and then to any brothers of good will and honest intent who will take the time to listen. . .. I am writing to allow myself to feel the anger. I am writing to keep from running toward it or away from it or into anybody's arms. . . I am writing, writing, writing, for my life."

And we are grateful for this.
For her.



Denene Millner is *The New York Times* bestselling author of 28 books, host of Georgia Public Broadcasting's Emmy-nominated talk show, "A Seat at the Table," and editor of Denene Millner Books, her own award-winning children's book imprint with Simon & Schuster.

The ability of writers to imagine what is not the self, to familiarize the strange and mystify the familiar, is the test of their power.

- Toni Morrison

INVENTING LIVES: BLACK WOMEN WRITING OUR STORY

by Mary Helen Washington, PhD

INTRODUCTION

Black women writers who were creating fiction at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century weren't just creating texts: they were challenging old notions of black womanhood and fighting against the restrictions that prevented full articulation of the complex and evolving experiences of black women. Some of those restrictions took the form of what scholar Claudia Tate calls "protocols" that black women were pressured to maintain, especially "protocols" of propriety, racial uplift, True Womanhood, domesticity, and subservience to men. With the recovery of Hannah Crafts' 1850s novel *The Bondswoman's Narrative*, we can now document almost two centuries of fiction by black women.[1] This personal sketch traces two centuries of black women's fiction, describing the daring and imaginative ways black women writers have resisted those protocols, transformed literary history, and given us new models of womanhood. What follows is only a brief look at some of the most innovative writing by black women writers during each era, with samplings of the work that helped produce this extraordinary literary history.



Burton Collection

THE FACE OF THE RACE: EARLY BLACK WOMEN WRITERS

For black women writers of the 19th century, literature was a political weapon. These women wrote in the shadow of slavery, Jim Crow, and racial violence, and they wrote with the understanding that they were "The Face of the Race," the people by whom the race would be judged. Moreover, to gain a public voice as women writers and activists, they also had to confront the dominant ideologies of womanhood—some called it "true womanhood"—that applied to white women but marginalized, excluded, and demeaned them. While black women were labeled immoral and degraded by their

1 Originally discovered in 1948 by pioneering librarian Dorothy Porter Wesley, and recovered by literary scholar Henry Louis Gates in 2001, *The Bondswoman's Narrative* is considered the first novel by an African American woman and the first by a female slave in the United States. *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, 3rd edition, Volume 1.

enslavement, black women writers worked to uphold notions of female propriety and to uplift the race. In 1895 in Boston, when Victoria Earle Matthews addressed the Congress of Colored Women of the United States, she challenged the systems that first enslaved black women and then refused to allow them to claim the qualities of womanhood that were bestowed on white women. Matthews exclaimed that "all that a woman holds sacred, all that ennobles womanhood" had been denied to black women. Despite these challenges, the 1890s through the 1920s was a period of intense intellectual and political activity for black women. They lectured at colored conventions and at women's rights conventions, and they published widely in journals and newspapers, always working for what they called the uplift of the race and on behalf of women. Hazel Carby calls this early black women's movement an "uprising," through which black women sought "to produce an alternative discourse of black womanhood."[2] Their fiction was part of these efforts. For Frances E. W. Harper and Pauline Hopkins, two of the most important black women writers at the turn of the 20th century, the path was clear. Their role as writers was to make black women central to their fiction and to depict black women as brilliant, virtuous, and dedicated to the uplift of the race. When Harper spoke in 1866 at the National Women's Rights Convention in New York, she challenged white women's focus on their rights: "*You white women here speak of rights. I speak of wrongs*, she told her audience."[3]



Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Mrs. Frances E. W. Harper

Born free in Baltimore in 1825 when Maryland was still a slave state, Frances Harper fully intended for her fiction to be a political weapon. She wrote that she wanted to make "songs for the weary, to hush the sorrow and pain and wrong" black women had endured. She wrote poems about the slave mother's shriek as she is whipped, the despair of a mother whose child is sold into bondage, the shame of women who bore children for a white master. In 1895 at age 67 with a lifetime of public activism behind her, Harper published her first novel, *Iola Leroy*, a novel that inaugurated a new black feminism for this post-slavery moment. Consider how Harper treats the fate of her two main characters, Iola, a beautiful, very light-skinned mixed-race woman and former slave, and the dark-skinned free black woman, Lucille Delaney. Both are educated and noble, with high moral standards, a love for the race, and determination to overcome the barriers of race and color prejudice. Dr. Gresham, the white doctor at the hospital where Iola works as a nurse, falls in love and wants to marry her, but Iola refuses because of his pleas for her to pass as white. Instead, Iola marries Dr. Latimer, an Oxford-educated, mixed-race man, who, despite his light skin, claims his blackness. Lucille Delaney is, however, the woman Harper most admires: "the pure African," with dark skin and Negro hair: "Neither [her]

2 Hazel Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist*, Oxford UP, 1987, p. 6.

3 Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, "We Are All Bound Up Together," in *Proceedings of the Eleventh Women's Rights Convention* (New York: Robert J. Johnston, 1866).

hair nor complexion show the least hint of blood admixture."[4] Lucille is also a brilliant teacher dedicated to teaching her people. In the second happy ending of the novel, Lucille marries the light-skinned Harry, Iola's brother, who also chooses blackness over the privileges of his nearly white skin. Because Harper was more concerned with racial progress than romance and marriage, she shows both couples at the end of the novel working together in black institutions to serve the race. When Iola expresses the desire to help her people, Dr. Latimer suggests that she write a "good, strong book" that would "inspire men and women with a deeper sense of justice and humanity."[5] *Iola Leroy* became that book.[6]



In 1900, Pauline Hopkins, born free in in Portland, Maine, serialized her novels in the *Colored American Magazine* and explicitly proclaimed that the black writer should use fiction as a moral, racial, and literary challenge. She wrote: "No one will do this for us: we must develop the men and women who will faithfully portray the inmost thoughts and feelings of the Negro with all the fire and romance which lie dormant in our history."[7] For 21st century readers, it might be difficult to imagine the constraints that burdened black women in the early 1900s. As part owner and editor of Boston's *Colored American Magazine*, which depended on white support, Hopkins and the other editors had to walk a fine line between appealing to white contributors and satisfying white as well as black readers. In contrast to Harper, most of Hopkins' women characters claim their status as mixed-race, which plays into her goal of advocating racial intermarriage to destabilize the idea of whiteness and to expose the hypocrisy of the U.S. racial caste system. In Hopkins' 1900 short story, "Talma Gordon," Dr. William Thornton, a prominent white doctor in Boston, tells the shocking story of Talma Gordon to the members of his club. A blonde, blue-eyed, mixed-race woman, Talma is accused of murdering her wealthy white father for trying to deprive her of her rightful inheritance when he discovers that his wife's mother was part black, an octoroon. Talma is thus one-thirty-second black. Hopkins condemns the white father's rejection of his own daughter as "the monstrous injustice" of race and class prejudice.[8] Once she is revealed as black, Talma is jailed for murder, put on trial, though finally acquitted for lack of evidence. Only when the real murderer is finally caught and convicted, can Talma's innocence be established.

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4 *Iola Leroy*, p. 199.

5 *Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted, The Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers*, 1988, p. 262.

6 *Iola Leroy*, p. 199.

7 Pauline Hopkins, "Editorial and Publishers' Announcements," *Colored American Magazine* 6 (May/June 1903): p. 466.

8 *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, 3rd edition, Volume 1, p. 639.

At the end of the story of a black woman's trauma, we learn that Talma is now the wife of the same prominent doctor, who is narrating this story in order to advocate for interracial marriage. He turns to his audience and proudly reveals his mixed-race wife: "I shall have much pleasure in introducing you to my wife—nee Talma Gordon."[9] Hopkins uses this multi-layered story of murder, guilt, and an interracial sexual relationship to appeal to the sympathies of a white audience and to show that it is never easy for black women, even when they are virtuous, educated, and socially prominent, to be accorded the privileges that white women can take for granted. These stories of hidden black ancestry represent the subversive tactics 19th century black women writers used to make their readers aware of the violence against black women and to expose the absurdity of racial constructs. The next generation of black women writers would blow open the cover of these secrets.

ON BEING YOUNG, A WOMAN, AND COLORED IN THE 1920s



Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

The explosion of black cultural production in the 1920s is justifiably called a "Renaissance," and black women were very much a part of the explosion of art, music, dance, poetry, fiction, and drama that appeared during the Roaring Twenties. These "New Women" began to challenge the limitations imposed on earlier women writers, exploring sexuality, traveling internationally, challenging male power, and revising the stories of black women. In one of the boldest essays of this period, "On Being Young—A Woman—and Colored," which appeared in 1925 in *The Crisis* magazine, Marita Bonner made clear how a segregated and sexist world created harsh conditions for black women. Stereotyped as sexually "uncontrolled," discriminated against in the world of work, and shut out of the larger world of artistic endeavor, black women of the 1920s live in what Bonner condemns as "a world that stifles and chokes." Even as the essay ends with Bonner searching to find the wisdom and faith in the future, she concludes bitterly, "You long to explode and hurt everything white." [10]

Considering Bonner's powerful evocation of these obstacles for black women, we might be surprised that many black women of this period—sometimes called the Harlem or New Negro Renaissance—were well educated and highly mobile. Novelist Nella Larsen studied at Fisk University and in Copenhagen, worked for a time as a nurse and then as a librarian in New York, and, in 1930, became the first black

9 "Talma Gordon," p. 645.

10 "On Being Young—a Woman—and Colored," in *Invented Lives: Narratives of Black Women, 1860-1960*, ed. Mary Helen Washington, Doubleday, 1987, p. 170-171.

woman to win a Guggenheim award. A major writer of the Harlem Renaissance, Zora Neale Hurston studied at Howard University and Barnard College and traveled to the Caribbean for her fieldwork. Writer Jessie Fauset graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Cornell University and became an editor at *The Crisis*, where she covered Pan-African issues and encouraged younger writers such as Langston Hughes and Hurston.

Despite their own personal successes, these New Negro women writers explored the darker side of the middle class lives of their women characters. In Fauset's 1929 novel *Plum Bun*, the young Angela aspires to be an artist but is blocked by her family, who want her to settle for a practical occupation such as teaching. She is also stifled by the cultural conventions which discouraged female ambitions. Nevertheless, Angela chooses to be an artist, but, like the real-life sculptor Augusta Savage, Angela finds that her scholarship to study in France is revoked when the donors discover she is black. Then, when she passes for white in the bohemian world of Manhattan and takes a white lover, she discovers that women who are sexually independent are scorned and debased, especially in the world of the black middle class. A similar fate awaits Larsen's character Helga Crane in Q*uicksand* (1928). Suffocated by the narrow worlds of a black southern college and the equally stifling world of the black bourgeoisie in New York, Helga sets out for Copenhagen, thinking that there she will find freedom from the constrictions of race. Instead, she becomes an exotic object, courted by a Danish artist who offers marriage in order to attain this beautiful and desirable woman. When she finally returns to the U.S. and marries a black southern preacher, she encounters the hardships of any poor black woman, burdened by children and a husband who tires of her and has his eye out for a more vibrant and younger woman. Thus, while writers and artists such as Fauset and Larsen attained a certain status as black middle class professional women, they used their writings to explore the complex lives of women who are inhibited and stunted by the cultural scripts that deny them any "awakenings" and punish them for their defiance of race and gender norms.



Jessie Fauset

ZORA NEALE HURSTON AND THE 1930s

The Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II created new realities for black writers who were impacted by the poverty, racism, and segregation in black lives. There's a new story in these next two decades focused on southern rural black working-class people and one that put a woman at the center of such a community. Born and raised in Eatonville, Florida, Zora Neale Hurston published her now-famous novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) in the midst of the Depression. Because *Their Eyes* was not a conventional social protest novel, it was scorned by black male critics for being too humorous and too folksy for an era of widespread poverty and entrenched segregation. More than Hurston's refusal to write in the tradition

of protest, many of these critics were not ready for Hurston's focus on women and gender issues. Literary scholar Barbara Christian suggested that these male critics couldn't accept a novel about "play, pleasure, and sensuality."[11] But Hurston's novel was about more than play and passion. Her main character, Janie Starks, represents the struggles of the women in black southern communities for voice, identity, sexuality, and equality in the face of a male dominated community. When the newly-widowed, forty-something Janie falls in love with the twenty-something Tea Cake, she turns her back on a life of propriety and property and goes to live and work alongside him in a community of field workers. The novel represents their passionate relationship as Janie chooses an adventurous, risk-taking life over the safety and security of money, property, and home. After Tea Cake dies tragically, Janie returns home to tell her friend Pheoby about her adventure: "Ah been a delegate to de big 'ssociation of life. Yessuh! De Grand Lodge, de big convention of livin' is just where Ah been dis year and a half y'all aint' seen me." As she listens to her friend's story, Pheoby realizes that she is eager for greater experience: "Ah done growed ten feet higher from jus' listenin' tuh you, Janie. Ah ain't satisfied wid mahself no more."[12] This friendship between women and their sharing of their experiences and their emotional lives was part of the something new Hurston brought to black women's fiction and what inspired a generation of black women writers and readers. Although *Their Eyes* was out of print for years, it was brought back into prominence by a host of scholars including Alice Walker, who in 1973, located Hurston's unmarked grave in Eatonville and erected a headstone engraved, Zora Neale Hurston "A Genius of the South."



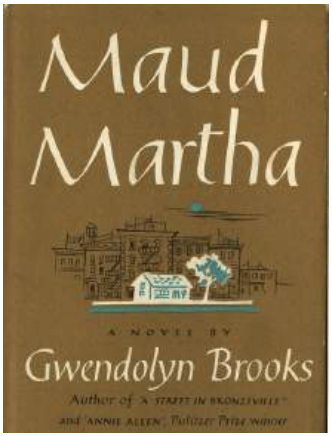
Zora Neale Hurston

THE VOICE OF BLACK FEMALE MODERNITY

World War II: As southern migrants turned up by the thousands in Chicago, the winds of cultural and social change blew westward, and the Windy City began to rival New York as a center of black literary and cultural production. Chicago's black population grew from 44,000 in 1910 to over 200,000 by 1930 and, by 1950, half a million blacks lived in Chicago. Farah Jasmine Griffin reminds us that black migrants who fled the south hoping to find a freer space, encountered instead the "sophistication of modern urban power"— new forms of segregation, devastating poverty,

11 Barbara Christian, "Trajectories of Self-Definition: Placing Contemporary Afro-American Women's Fiction," in *Conjuring: Black Women, Fiction, and Literary Tradition*, ed. Marjorie Pryse and Hortense J. Spillers, p. 236.

12 *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Perennial Classics, 1990, p. 192.



Maud Martha

class conflict, and racial discrimination.[13] The women writers most often associated with the 1940s and the post- World War II period are Gwendolyn Brooks, Margaret Walker, Ann Petry, and Dorothy West, but the most sophisticated and illuminating voice representing black women of the 1940s and early 1950s is Gwendolyn Brooks. Her 1945 volume of poetry, *A Street in Bronzeville*, exposes the way black women encountered and, in their own ways, countered the segregated spaces of the city and other forms of social hierarchy and power that attempted to make them invisible. In 1949, Brooks won a Pulitzer Prize for her second volume of poetry, *Annie Allen*. Six years later, Brooks published *Maud Martha*, the first novel that allowed a dark-skinned black woman character a rich interior life. Maud Martha is an artist, a woman of imaginative and intellectual power, as well as a woman who exists in the world outside her role as wife and mother. Maud Martha, much like Brooks herself, is both a working class woman and an intellectual observer, who makes sharp critiques of the cultural values that devalue black women. Maud appreciates her "cocoa straight" skin, but she also knows that the culture, black as well as white, really values "a little cream-colored thing with curly hair." When Maud travels to the University of Chicago to hear "the newest young Negro author speak," and is snubbed by a group of pretentious college students with superior airs, she makes us feel her righteous anger. She fights back in other small ways, quitting her domestic job when her white employer is condescending. She marries and has two children, but she also refuses to accept the cultural demands for women to remain satisfied with a domestic life. She turns instead to her imaginative and artistic life, wondering how does the artist create "shimmering form." In the final chapter of the novel called "back from the wars," Maud is not in the kitchen but is "out-of-doors," enjoying the beautiful weather that "was bidding her bon voyage" and making her whisper, "What, *what* am I do with of all of this life?"[14] The chapter ends with Maud speculating about her own future, as she is also contemplating the casualties of World War II, the sexist portrayals of black women in the "Negro press," and the "latest of the "Georgia and Mississippi lynchings" Brooks thus gives us a modern black female figure, much like the ones depicted in Elizabeth Catlett's paintings, women of intense interiority, conscious of antagonistic forces against them, but with a critical imagination to confront those forces. Scholar Barbara Christian recognized that *Maud Martha* was a turning point in black women's fiction, incorporating the political and racial issues of the protest novel of the 1940s but also creating a complex inner "feminine" voice that protests the constraints on women in a patriarchal and racist culture.[15]

13 Farah Griffin, "*Who set you flowin'?": The African-American Migration Narrative*, Oxford, 1995, p. 102.

14 All quotations from *Maud Martha*, Harper & Brothers, 1953.

15 Barbara Christian, "Trajectories of Self- Definition," in *Conjuring: Black Women, Fiction, and Literary Tradition*, ed. Marjorie Pryse and Hortense J. Spillers, p. 238.

THE MAKING OF BLACK LEFT FEMINISM

Although the 1950s is the decade of the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) Supreme Court decision desegregating public schools and the Civil Rights Movement, it is also the decade of the Red Scare, when black intellectuals and artists were targeted by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and put under FBI surveillance because of their racial activism. I want to foreground two writers of this period, Lorraine Hansberry and Alice Childress, because they represent black left feminism that put black women at the center of political struggle and laid the groundwork for a generation of politically active literary women.[16] Both Hansberry and Childress developed their political radicalism working together in the 1950s in New York on Paul Robeson's leftist newspaper *Freedom* (1951-1955). That radicalism is represented in their treatment of racial issues, in their focus on women, and in their critiques of U.S. national and international politics. When we recall the spectacular success of Lorraine Hansberry's Broadway play *A Raisin in the Sun (*1959), which centered around the Younger family's fight for racial equality, we should also remember that Hansberry was under FBI surveillance, and, an FBI agent was sent to the opening of *Raisin* to determine if there were any "communist" ideas in the play.[17] Though the agent failed to find any subversive intentions, Hansberry's play was tackling one of the major tools of white supremacy in the 1950s—the restriction of black mobility through residential segregation. The Younger family in *Raisin* is trapped in the same kind of cramped kitchenette building (with four or five families sharing a bathroom) as Maud Martha, and fighting against the attempt to confine black people to spaces intended to restrict and demean them. Using the language of the political left, Hansberry wrote: "We want an end to the evasions . . . so that all the world can see who our oppressors are and what lies at the root of their evil." [18] Since Hansberry died of cancer at the age of 34, we may never know how her feminism would have developed, but it is forecast in the character of Beneatha, the younger sister in the Younger family. Beneatha aims to be a doctor, she rejects middle class aspirations, questions the existence of God, supports women's reproductive freedom, and openly critiques colonialism. When her mother mentions doing missionary work to save Africans, Beneatha counters, "they need more salvation from the British and the French." Though Beneatha shows only hints of Hansberry's left feminism, we know that after her divorce Hansberry began to write for the lesbian journal *The Ladder* about "the economic and psychological pressures



A Raisin in the Sun

16 "Black left feminism" is a term I coined in *The Other Blacklist: The African American Literary and Cultural Left,* (Columbia UP, 2014) to describe the black women literary radicals of the post-World War II era.

17 *The Other Blacklist*, p. 214.

18 Lorraine Hansberry, "The Mystery of the Invisible Force: Images of the Negro in Hollywood Films," cited in Margaret B. Wilkerson, "Introduction" to *A Raisin in the Sun: The Unfilmed Original Screenplay*, ed. Robert Nemiroff, 1958, p. xliii.

that impel many conscious lesbians into marriage."[19] Hansberry's letters suggest that this radical socialist would have also embraced a radical lesbian feminism.

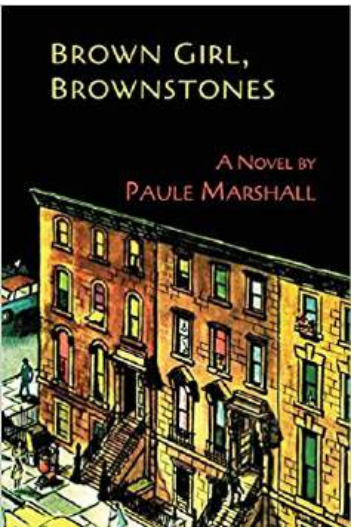
Playwright and novelist Alice Childress was also on the FBI's "subversive" list for her political activism. Born in 1916 in South Carolina and raised by her grandmother in New York, Childress published over 17 plays, essays, and 4 novels. She published her first play, *Florence*, in 1950 in the Marxist journal *Masses & Mainstream* to prove to her male colleagues at the American Negro Theatre (among them Sidney Poitier) that a woman could represent the race as well as a man. For her entire career, Childress represented black women as radical racial rebels. Childress' 1956, novel *Like One of the Family*, began as a series of columns in *Freedom*, that focused on Mildred, a black domestic worker, who gives voice to Childress's political ideas on race, class, gender, and national security. Mildred explodes in anger when her white employers ask what *she* is going to do about attacks on the civil rights workers. Turning the tables, Mildred asks them to explain what *white people* are going to do: "they're shootin' at little children ridin' school buses! They're shootin' down their fathers for tryin' to get 'em into the schools, they won't sell us no food because we want our children educated, they turnin' us off of jobs and tryin' to drive us out of our homes . . . .. And you ask me what *I'm* gonna do!" As a radical leftist, Mildred is especially attuned to issues of class. In this integrationist era, when there was pressure for blacks to aspire to middle class acceptability, she preaches a gospel that values working class people: "Why workin' people are the grandest folks in the whole wide world. They set the steamships on the ocean and the lighthouse on the land, they give us our breakfast coffee and a roof over our heads at night . . . it is the work of their hands that keeps the world alive and kickin'." During the McCarthy Red Scare, Childress was one of the few intrepid writers who refused to be intimidated by the U.S. government's repression of left activism. Mildred calls McCarthyism a form of legalized terror in which everyone from the Army to ordinary housewives is being investigated, and predicts, "we are all going to suffer much more until we wake up and defend the rights of Communists."[20]



Alice Childress

19 Adrienne Rich, "The Problem With Lorraine Hansberry," in *Freedomways*, Vol. 19. No. 4, 1979, p.252.

20 All quotations from Mary Helen Washington, "Alice Childress, Lorraine Hansberry, and Claudia Jones: Black Women Write the Popular Front, in *Left of the Color Line: Race, Radicalism, and Twentieth-Century Literature of the United States*, eds. Bill V. Mullen and James Smethurst, 2003, pp. 183-204.



Brown Girl, Brownstones

One of the most important novels of the Cold War is Paule Marshall's 1959 *Brown Girl, Brownstones*, a coming-of-age novel set in Brooklyn and featuring a young Barbadian-American girl, Selina Boyce. As Selina's immigrant parents work tirelessly in factories, striving for upward mobility and the American Dream of homeownership, Selina observes the destructive aspects of their capitalistic goals. Her father and her friend Suggie are crushed by the dead-end labor in the factory, and even the powerful mother Silla is wrecked by her quest for materialistic success. The children of these striving communities are shown as docile and conventional, unable to imagine or pursue their own independence. We must remember that one of the goals of Cold War ideology was to promote this "American" Dream of materialistic success and, in the process, to discredit political resistance as "un-American." Radicals such as Hansberry and Childress, who protested against economic inequality, racial injustice, and governmental repression were put under FBI surveillance. Others such as Paul Robeson, Claudia Jones, and W.E.B. Du Bois had their passports confiscated, and, in the case of Du Bois and Jones, were jailed for their activism. In *Brown Girl*, Marshall signals her critique of Cold War ideologies in several ways: she shows how workers in this capitalistic culture are devalued, their lives and aspirations subordinated to the demands of corporate capitalism, and thus their desire to openly resist racial and class oppression is muted. The resisting young protagonist Selina is the hopeful center of this novel. Selina refuses to take the path of conformity her community lays out for her, openly contesting their values but also exploring ways to understand her community. *Brown Girl, Brownstones* did not become widely read and appreciated until it was reprinted in 1981 by Feminist Press and became one of its best-sellers. Alongside the work of Hansberry and Childress, Marshall's depiction of a strong, sexual, and resisting young intellectual laid the groundwork for black women writers of the next generation—the 1960s and 1970s—and beyond.

BLACK WOMEN'S LITERARY RENAISSANCE OF THE 1970s: "SAVING THE LIFE THAT IS YOUR OWN"

Several important journals, essays, and anthologies set the stage for the literary Renaissance of black women in the 1970s. The first is the 1970 volume, *The Black Woman: An Anthology,* edited by Toni Cade [later Toni Cade Bambara]. The essays and stories in this groundbreaking volume were concerned with destroying illusions and smashing myths that had for centuries restricted and dominated black women. Patricia Murphy Robinson's essay in *The Black Woman* focuses on disrupting myths about women's bodies, their intellectual capacity, their physical beauty, their power and their sexuality. Toni Cade's essay "On the Issue of Roles" takes on masculinist assumptions about women as passive, retiring, or physically delicate, ideas about women that she dismisses as "Disney-caliber." In her 1975 essay, "Saving the

> "I think writing really helps you heal yourself. I think if you write long enough, you will be a healthy person. That is, if you write what you need to write, as opposed to what will make money, or what will make fame."
>
> -Alice Walker

Life That Is Your Own," Alice Walker reminded us that writers such as Nella Larsen, Jessie Fauset, Zora Neale Hurston were once "out of print, abandoned, discredited, maligned, nearly lost" and that a "Renaissance" required us to recover these brilliant and neglected women writers. Barbara Smith's essay, "Towards A Black Feminist Criticism," published in the feminist journal *Conditions: Two* in 1977, reminded us of another "literary silence," the suppressed perspective of Black lesbian lives and literature. In 1979, Ann Shockley's essay "The Black Lesbian in American Literature: An Overview" in *Conditions: Five*, *The Black Woman's Issue*, documented how often depictions of black lesbians reinforce negative stereotypes. Shockley's own novel, *Loving Her*, which features an interracial lesbian relationship, appeared in 1974. The two anthologies of black women's writings, *Black-Eyed Susans: Classic Stories By and About Black Women* (1975) and *Midnight Birds: Stories of Contemporary Black Women Writers* (1980), edited by Mary Helen Washington, were the first anthologies to document a contemporary black women's literary tradition, gathering together for the first time such writers as Toni Morrison, Paule Marshall, Gwendolyn Brooks, Alexis DeVeaux, Toni Cade Bambara, Alice Walker, Ntozake Shange, Paulette Childress, Gayl Jones, and Sherley Anne Williams. In Paule Marshall's 1962 short story, "Reena," Reena and Paulie meet after twenty years at the wake of Paulie's Aunt Vi and talk throughout the night about their lives. As Paulie narrates Reena's life story, we realize that she is describing, not just these two particular lives, but the complex task of representing the history and the meaning(s) of being black and woman in America:

> She made vivid without knowing it what is perhaps the most critical fact of my existence-that definition of me, of her and millions like us, formulated by others to serve out their fantasies, a definition we have to combat at an unconscionable cost to the self and even use at times, in order to survive; the cause of so much shame and rage as well as, oddly enough, a source of pride: simply, what it has meant, what it means, to be a black women in America.[21]

21 Paule Marshall, "Reena," in *Black-Eyed Susans: Classic Stories By and About Black Women*, ed. Mary Helen Washington, Doubleday, 1975, p. 115.

BEYOND THE 1970s



Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University

Black Women's Writing Group in the 1970s:

Back row, left to right: Vertamae Grosvenor, Alice Walker, Lori Sharpe, Toni Morrison, June Jordan
Front row, left to right: Nana Maynard, Ntozake Shange, Audrey Edwards

"The community of black women writing in the United States can now be regarded as a vivid new fact of national life."
Hortense Spillers, 1985 [22]

Since the 1970s, black women writers have become, in the words of Hortense Spillers, "a vivid new fact of national life." They have garnered a receptive and critical audience, especially notable in the number of book clubs black women readers have organized. That audience was

22 Spillers, "Afterword: Cross-Currents, Discontinuities: Black Women's Fiction," in *Conjuring: Black Women, Fiction, and Literary Tradition*, eds. Marjorie Pryse and Hortense J. Spillers, 1985.

greatly enhanced when Toni Morrison won the Pulitzer Prize for *Beloved* in 1983 and the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993, and when Oprah's Book Club began in 1996 to widely publicize books by black women. Since Gwendolyn Brooks won the Pulitzer Prize in 1950, black women writers have captured a number of distinguished awards, including the Pulitzer, the National Book Award, the Hurston-Wright Award, the Anisfield-Wolf Award, with many being named an Oprah Book Club Selection. In her 2018 anthology, *The Well-Read Black Girl: Finding Our Stories, Discovering Ourselves*, Glory Edim describes the legacy of black women writers as "extensive, diverse, beautifully complicated" and "always becoming."[23] How do we begin to map this incredible range and diversity of contemporary black women's fiction? We might look at four of the most popular narrative forms and themes that black women writers chose at the end of the 20th century--The Coming-of-Age Novel, The Neo-Slave Narrative, The Diasporan Novel, and the Science Fiction Novel--each of which allowed black women writers to (re) imagine and (re)construct alternative identities:

> **The Coming-of-Age Novel or Bildungsroman:** In response to the promises of the Civil Rights Movement, many writers chose to write coming-of-age novels, also known as the Bildungsroman. The coming-of-age novel gave black women the space to give voice to the particular concerns of black girlhood, such as sexuality, physical beauty, female power, the importance of female models, and the role of education. Additionally, the Bildungsroman allowed these writers to contest the optimism of the civil rights movement, showing how that optimism is often undercut by poverty, continued inequality, and what Christina Sharpe calls the always present "disaster of Black subjection."[24] Paule Marshall, *Brown Girl, Brownstones* (1959), Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (1970), Louise Meriwether, *Daddy Was A Number Runner*, (1970), Rosa Guy, *The Friends*, (1973), Audre Lorde, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (1974), Jamaica Kincaid, *Annie John* (1983) and *Lucy* (1990), Andrea Lee, *Sarah Phillips* (1984), Tina McElroy Ansa, *Baby of the Family* (1989), Alice Walker, *The Color Purple* (1982), Ntozake Shange, *Betsey Brown* (1985), Thulani Davis, *1959* (1992), Danzy Senna, *Caucasia* (1998), Sapphire, *Push* (1996), A. J. Verdelle, *The Good Negress* (1995), Asali Solomon, *Disgruntled* (2015)

"You don't start out writing good stuff. You start out writing crap and thinking it's good stuff, and then gradually you get better at it. That's why I say one of the most valuable traits is persistence."

-Octavia Butler

23 *The Well-Read Black Girl*," p. xxi.

24 Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, 2016.

The Neo-Slave Narrative: As black women writers confronted an historical archive of slavery that rarely foregrounded the particular experiences of the enslaved black woman, they were inspired to rewrite the narrative of slavery in order challenge white-authored myths and to focus on the unique experiences of women in slavery: Margaret Walker, *Jubilee* (1966), Sherley Anne Williams*, Dessa Rose (1986),* Toni Morrison*, Beloved* (1987), Octavia Butler, *Wild Seed* (1988), Louise Meriwether, *Fragments of the Ark* (1994), Pearl Cleage, *Babylon Sisters: A Novel* (2005)

Engagement with the Diaspora: One of the most important developments in the writings of contemporary U.S. black women writers is their embrace of a diasporic identity that connects them to a larger geopolitical world. The writers in this group show black women living in all parts of the world-- from the Caribbean and Africa, to Europe and South and Central America-- and extricating themselves from the limitations of a national identity: Paule Marshall, *The Chosen Place, The Timeless People (1969)* and *Daughters* (1991)*,*Toni Morrison, *Tar Baby* (1981), Gloria Naylor*, Mama Day (1988),* Gayl Jones*, Corregidora* (1976), Michelle Cliff, *No Telephone to Heaven* (1987), Andrea Lee, *Interesting Women* (2002), Edwidge Danticat, *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994), *The Farming of Bones* (1998), and *The Dew Breaker* (2004)

The Science Fiction Novel: (Re) Imagining the Future: Black women writers used the genre of science fiction to expand a tradition once dominated by white male writers. While these writers imagine a future world, they also use this form to challenge the racist and sexist ideas in the contemporary moment. These writers have captured many of the most prestigious awards for science fiction, including the Hugo Award, Canadian Literature of the Fantastic, World Fantasy Award, and the Nebula: Octavia Butler*, Kindred (1979), Dawn* (1987), *Patternmaster* (1976), *Wild Seed* (1980), *Parable of the Sower* (1993), *Fledgling* (2005), Tananarive Due, *My Soul to Keep* (2011), Nalo Hopkinson, *Brown Girl in The Ring* (1998) and *Skin Folk* (2001), N.K. Jemisin, *The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms* (2010), Nnedi Okorafor, *Who Fears Death* (2010), Nisi Shawl, *Filter House* (2008), Karen Lord, *Redemption in Indigo* (2008)

Contemporary Black Women Writers:
A Recommended Reading List - Mary Helen Washington, PhD

Toni Morrison
Sula (1973)
A Mercy (2008)
Home (2012)

Fran Ross
Oreo (1974)

Toni Cade Bambara
Gorilla, My Love (1972)
The Sea Birds Are Still Alive: Collected Stories (1977)

Andrea Lee
Sarah Phillips (1984)
Interesting Women (2002)

Sherley Anne Williams
Dessa Rose (1986)



Fran Ross
***Oreo* (1974)**

Jamaica Kincaid
Annie John (1985)
Lucy (1990)

Edwidge Danticat
Breath, Eyes, Memory (1994)

Michelle Cliff
No Telephone to Heaven (1987)

Alice Walker
The Third Life of Grange Copeland (1970)
In Love and Trouble (1973)

Paule Marshall
Brown Girl, Brownstones (1959)
Soul Clap Hands and Sing (1961)
The Chosen Place, The Timeless People (1969)

Octavia Butler
Kindred (1979)

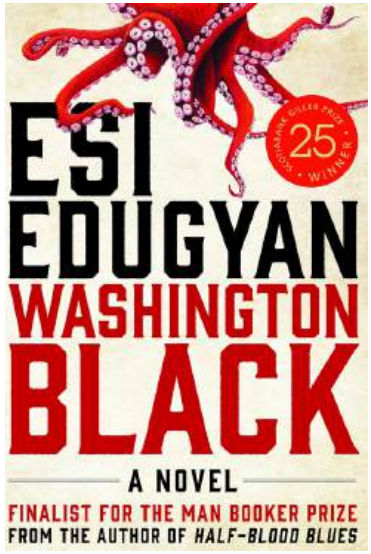
Esi Edugyan
Washington Black (2018)

Ayana Mathis
The Twelve Tribes of Hattie (2012)

Taiye Selasi
Ghana Must Go (2013)

Tayari Jones
Leaving Atlanta (2002)
An American Marriage (2018)

ZZ Packer
Drinking Coffee Elsewhere: New Stories From the South (2008)



Esi Edugyan
***Washington Black* (2018)**

Angela Flournoy
The Turner House (2015)

Jesmyn Ward
Salvage the Bones (2011)
Sing, Unburied, Sing (2017)

Danzy Senna
Symptomatic (2004)
You Are Free (2011)
New People (2017)

Barbara Neely
Blanche on the Lam (1992)
Blanche Among the Talented Tenth (1994)

Critical studies: 20th and 21st Century Black Women's Fiction



Dr. Mary Helen Washington is the Distinguished University Professor of English at the University of Maryland, College Park, specializing in 20th and 21st century African American literature.

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YOUTH BOOKS

PICTURE BOOKS

Bolden, Tonya
No Small Potatoes
Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2018
Working for a pittance this hero's dedication and hard work helps him build a wealthy empire.

Diaz, Junot
Island Born
Dial Books, 2018
A little girl is heartbroken when she moves from her home island to America and realizes that the island is still part of who she is.

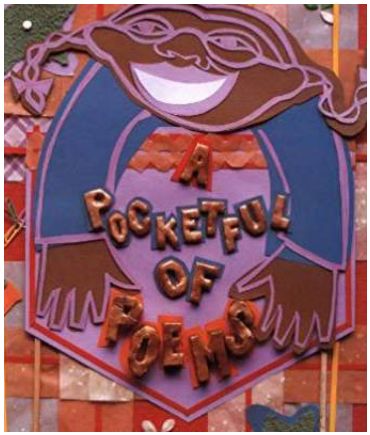
Diggs, Taye
I Love You More Than...
Feiwel & Friends, 2018
A poetic story of parental love.

Elliot, Zeta
Dragons in a Bag
Random House Books for Young Readers, 2018
When Jackson is sent to spend a day with an old mean old lady his mother calls mom, he finds out she is really a witch.

Grimes, Nikki
Pocketful of Poems
HMH Books for Young Readers, 2018
A fusion of creative illustrations and poems from two famous writers.

Hudson, Katura
I'm a Big Sister Now
Marimba Books, 2018
A new baby brings joy, excitement, and pride to an older sister.

Latour, Francie
Auntie Luce's Talking Paintings
Groundwood Books, 2018
A young girl connects to her family history by tracing and understanding the portraits painted by her favorite aunt.



Nikki Grimes
Pocketful of Poems

Luebbe, Tara
I Am Famous
Albert Whitman & Company, 2018
A little girl is forced to prove her talent when asked to perform at Grandpa's birthday party.

Miller, Sharee
Don't Touch My Hair
Little Brown Books for Young Readers, 2018
A young girl is proud of her show-stopping hair that grows towards the sun like a flower.

Newton-Brantley, Vanessa
Grandma's Purse
Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2018
Nana comes to visit her granddaughter who can't wait to see what treasures are hidden in her purse.

Reynolds, Peter
The Word Collector
Orchard Books, 2018
Messages from a little boy that cherishes the meaning of words.

Shabazz, Ilyasah
Betty Before X
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018
A little girl finds a loving home after escaping an abusive childhood.

Slade, Suzanne
Astronaut Annie
Tilbury House Publishers, 2018
A little girl chooses her own career path despite the family's suggestions.

YOUTH BOOKS (con't)

JUVENILE FICTION

Allen, Crystal
The Wall of Fame Game, Magnificent Mya Tibbs (Series)
Balzer + Bray, 2018
As Mya awaits arrival of her new baby sister, she's tricked into a bet with her enemy that forces her to enter a chili cook-off despite her limited cooking skills.

Beals, Melba Pattillo
March Forward, Girl
HMH Books for Young Readers, 2018
A story of white oppression and the determination and courage of a girl to move forward for civil rights.

Callender, Kheryn
Hurricane Child
Scholastic Press, 2018
Young Caroline believes she is cursed until she finds Kalinda who she likes a lot.

Cline-Ransome, Lesa
Finding Langston
Holiday House, 2018
Eleven-year-old boy feels lonely when his family moves from Alabama to Chicago until he happily discovers a welcoming public library.

Cummings, Pat
Trace
HarperCollins, 2018
Haunted by flashbacks of the accident that killed his parents, a young boy finds a mysterious friend that helps him understand what happened.

Curtis, Christopher Paul
Journey of Little Charlie
Scholastic Press, 2018
Twelve-year-old sharecropper son falls on hard times after the death of his father in the deep South.

English, Karen
Pizza Party: The Carver Chronicles, (Book Six)
Clarion Books, 2018
Third graders are disappointed when their favorite teacher becomes ill and a mean substitute teacher dampens their chance of having a party for good citizenship
.

Grant, Shauntay
Africville
Groundwood Books, 2018
A story of a young girl's view of what life was like in her village in the 1960s.



Melba Pattillo Beals
March Forward, Girl

Hargrave, Kiran Millwood
The Island at the End of Everything
Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2018
Ami is forced to leave her homeland and family because her mother has leprosy.

Lyons, Kelly Starling
Sleepover Scientist #3 (Jada Jones)
Penguin Workshop, 2018
Sleepover activities change from scientific experiments to just plain "hanging out."

Magoon, Kekla
Reign of Outlaws (A Robyn Hoodlum Adventure)
Bloomsbury USA, 2018
Robyn sets out to save her parents and ends up leading a government rebellion.

Magoon, Kekla
Season of Styx Malone
Wendy Lamb Books, 2018
Two brothers have summer time adventures with a new friend, Styx Malone.

Maldonado, Torrey
Tight
Nancy Paulsen Books, 2018
Bryan enjoys doing the right thing until pressure from his peers almost leads him in the wrong direction.

Pate, Alex
Being You
Capstone Editions, 2018
A book of poetry that teaches ways to celebrate just being yourself.

Rhodes, Jewell Parker
Ghost Boys
Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2018
Jerome comes back as a ghost when he is shot by a police officer who mistakes his toy gun for a real threat.

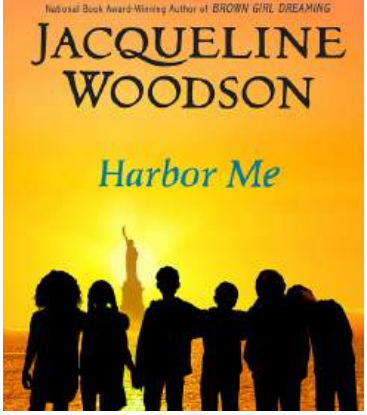
Youngblood, Leslie C.
Love Like Sky
Disney-Hyperion, 2018
A blended family tries to work on their differences after a divorce.

Woodson, Jacqueline
Harbor Me
Nancy Paulsen Books, 2018
A story about American political and social issues that affect children on a daily basis.

JUVENILE NON-FICTION

Hood, Susan
Shaking Things Up
HarperCollins, 2018
A book of poems that introduces fourteen revolutionary young women.

Hoose, Phillip
Attucks! Oscar Robertson and the Basketball Team that Awakened a City
HMH Books for Young Readers, 2018
A family thinks they are escaping Jim Crow practices by migrating to the North but surprisingly experience the same level of racism in the North.



Jacqueline Woodson
Harbor Me

Hudson, Wade
We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices
Crown Books for Young Readers, 2018
Voices of young people told in prose, letters and personal essays of prejudices in America.

Moyer, Naomi
Black Women Who Dared
Second Story Press, 2018
Inspirational stories of ten black women who were slave activists, healthcare workers, and literacy leaders for their communities.

Robinson, Monica Clark
Let the Children March
HMH Books for Young Readers, 2018
In 1963 many children marched for Civil Rights in Birmingham, Alabama, facing fear, hate, and danger.

JUVENILE BIOGRAPHY

Barton, Chris
What Do You Do with a Voice Like That?
Beach Lane Books, 2018
The extraordinary story of Congresswoman Barbara Jordan.

Bolden, Tonya
No Small Potatoes
Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2018
While working for a pittance, this hero's dedication and hard work help him build a wealthy empire.

Cline-Ransome, Lesa
Game Changers: The Story of Venus and Serena Williams
Simon & Schuster/Paula Wiseman Books, 2018
Hard work and love from family help fill the dreams of these tennis champions.

Cooper, Floyd
Sisters and Champions: The Story of Venus and Serena Williams
Philomel Books, 2018
A story of two of the greatest tennis players of all time.

Halfmann, Janet
Midnight Teacher Lily Ann Granderson and Her Secret School
Lee & Low Books, 2018
An enslaved woman secretly teaches herself to read and risked her life sharing this with others.

Partridge, Elizabeth
Boots on the Ground: America's War in Vietnam
Viking Books for Young Readers, 2018
The story of brutal conflicts of the Vietnam War using storytelling format for children.

Pinkney, Andrea Davis
Martin Rising
Scholastic Press, 2018
Poems explore the troublesome last months of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s life.

YOUTH BOOKS (con't)

Rockliff, Mara
Born to Swing: Lil Hardin Armstrong's Life in Jazz
Calkins Creek, 2018
Chronicles the life of a female jazz pioneer.

Veirs, Laura
Libba: The Magnificent Musical Life of Elizabeth Cotton
Chronicle Books, 2018
Little girl beats the odds of learning to play the right hand guitar to become one of the most famous folk song artists of the 20th century.

Wallace, Sandra Neil
Between The Lines: How Ernie Barnes Went from the Football Field to the Art Gallery
Simon & Schuster, 2018
Great sportsman grows up in segregated South, refuses to allow bullies to kill his desire of becoming a well-respected artist.

Warner, Jody
Viola Desmond Won't Be Budged!
Groundwood Books, 2018
Set in 1946, a young activist settles into a main floor seat in a theater and refuses to move to a seat in the balcony's "colored" section.

TEEN FICTION

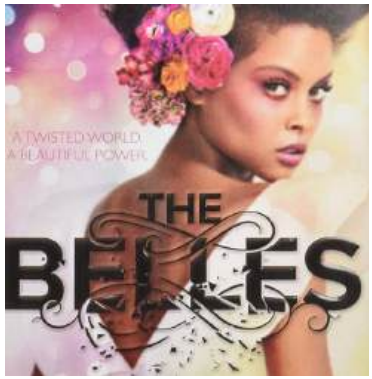
Acevedo, Elizabeth
The Poet X
Harper Teen, 2018
This 2018 National Book Award winner poetically tells Xiomara Batista's story.

Adeyemi, Tomi
Children of Blood and Bone
Henry Holt and Co., 2018
Story influenced by African heritage that resonates in today's social and political changes.

Alexander, Kwame
Swing
Blink, 2018
Two high school teen athletes learn to use their voices to find solutions to prejudice and racial divides.

Clayton, Dhonielle
The Belles
Freeform, 2018
Camellia uses her magical powers to save herself and sisters and changes the ways of their world forever.

Colbert, Brandy
Finding Yvonne
Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2018
Story of a talented girl with a broken heart and how it mends to make her a better person.



Dhonielle Clayton
The Belles

Gibney, Shannon
Dream Country
Dutton Books for Young Readers, 2018
The heartbreaking story of five generations of young people from a single African-and-American family pursuing an elusive dream of freedom.

Guevara, Glynis
Black Beach
Inanna Publications,2018
A sixteen-year old struggles with her mom's mental health issues and the absence of her boyfriend who moves out of their village.

Ireland, Justina
Dread Nation
Balzer + Bray, 2018
Slavery comes to halt when the dead on Civil War battlefields begin to rise and eat their compatriots.

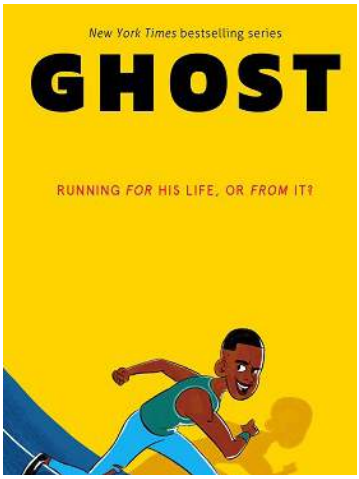
McKinney, L.L.
A Blade So Black
Imprint, 2018
Alice battles monstrous creatures in her dark dreams until she learns how to fight with magic weapons.

Older, Daniel Jose
Dactyl Hill Squad
Arthur A. Levine Books, 2018
Orphans use flying dinosaurs to save friends and defeat the evil magistrate.

Reynolds, Jason
Sonny (Track Series)
Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books, 2018
A bad relationship with his father causes a young boy to doubt himself until he discovers the art of dance.

Reynolds, Jason
Ghost Boys
Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2018
Jerome comes back as a ghost when he is shot by a police officer who mistakes his toy gun for a real threat.

Reynolds, Jason
Lu (Track Series)
Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books, 2018
Lu learns to jump over the hurdles of life with the support of his family.



Jason Reynolds
Ghost Boys

Rhuday-Perkovich, Olugbemisola
Naomis Too
Balzer + Bray, 2018
A coming of age story about two girls who are members of a blended family.

Ribay, Randy
After the Shot Drops
HMH Books for Young Readers, 2018
A friendship is tested when a boy leaves his neighborhood school to attend an upscale private school where he wins a basketball title.

Simon, T.R.
Zora & Me: The Cursed Ground
Candlewick, 2018
Two friends discover the town mute has a secret about an enslaved girl's struggle for freedom.

Stone, Nic
Odd One Out
Crown Books for Young Readers, 2018
A friendship between two girls leads to a sexual attraction.

Zoboi, Ibi
Pride
Balzer + Bray, 2018
Should Zuri give love to all the new folks trying to change her 'hood?

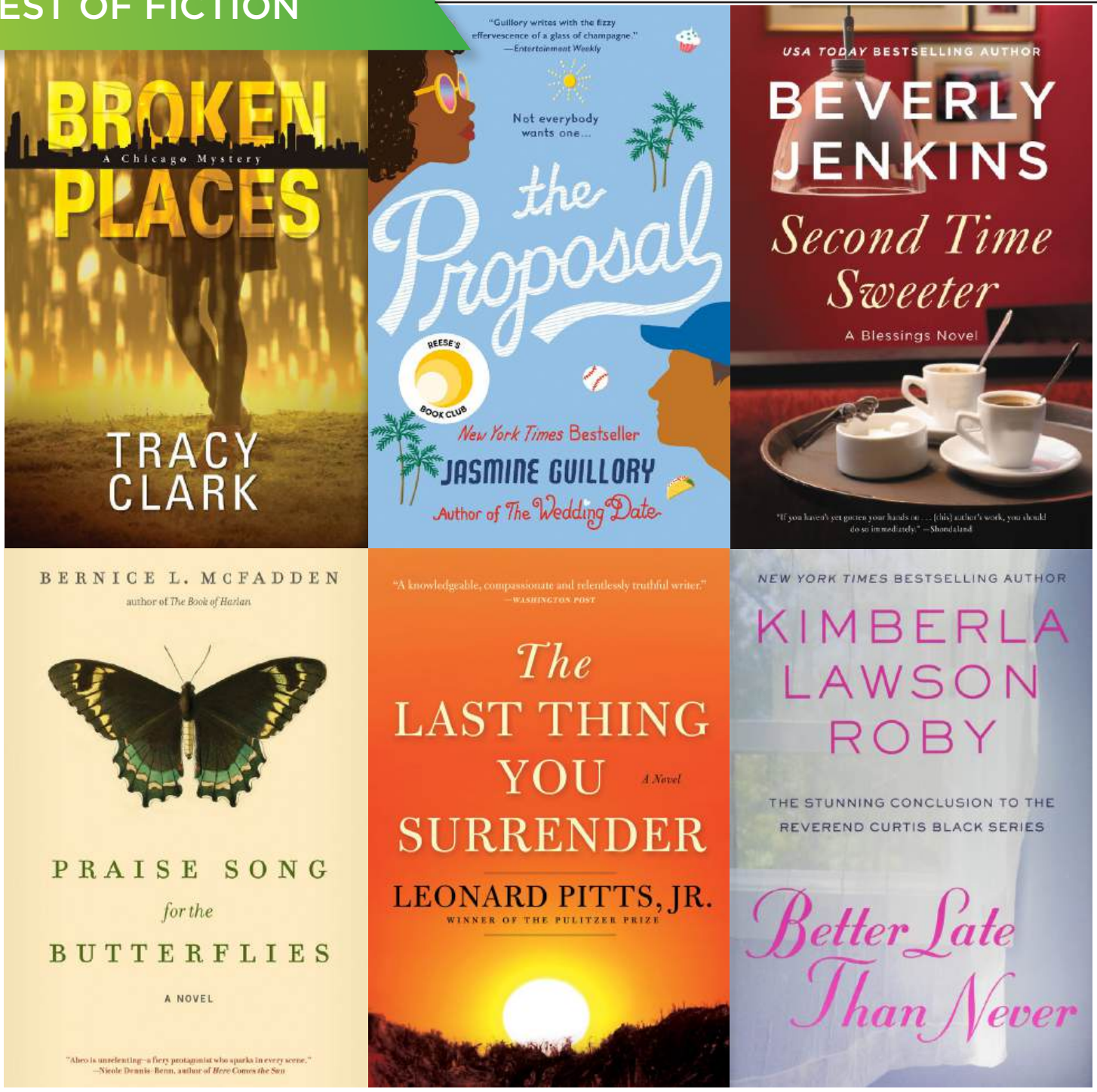
TEEN NON-FICTION

Anderson, Carol
We Are Not Yet Equal
Bloomsbury YA, 2018
A thoughtful analysis of race in the United States that provides an historical perspective for teen readers.

Chambers, Veronica
Resist: Thirty-Five Profiles of Ordinary People Who Rose Up Against Tyranny and Injustice
HarperCollins, 2018
Profiles of men and women who resisted tyranny, racism, and stood up to the bullies that threatened to harm their communities.

Nwaubani, Adaobi Tricia
Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree
Katherine Tegen Books, 2018
A timely story of one girl who was taken from her home in Nigeria and her harrowing fight for survival.

Stevenson, Bryan
Just Mercy (Adapted for Young Adults): A True Story of the Fight for Justice
Delacorte Press, 2018
An attorney and longtime justice advocate recounts his work on behalf of those falsely accused of crimes.


BROKEN PLACES
A Chicago Mystery
TRACY CLARK
"Guillory writes with the fizzy effervescence of a glass of champagne."
—Entertainment Weekly
Not everybody wants one...
the Proposal
REESE'S BOOK CLUB
New York Times Bestseller
JASMINE GUILLORY
Author of The Wedding Date
USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR
BEVERLY JENKINS
Second Time Sweeter
A Blessings Novel
BERNICE L. MCFADDEN
author of The Book of Harlan
PRAISE SONG for the BUTTERFLIES
A NOVEL
"A knowledgeable, compassionate and relentlessly truthful writer."
—WASHINGTON POST
The LAST THING YOU SURRENDER
A Novel
LEONARD PITTS, JR.
WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR
KIMBERLA LAWSON ROBY
THE STUNNING CONCLUSION TO THE REVEREND CURTIS BLACK SERIES
Better Late Than Never

BEST OF 2018

Clark, Tracy
Broken Places (A Chicago Mystery)

Guillory, Jasmine
The Proposal

Jenkins, Beverly
Second Time Sweeter: A Blessings Novel

McFadden, Bernice L.
Praise Song for the Butterflies

Pitts Jr., Leonard
The Last Thing You Surrender

Roby, Kimberla Lawson
Better Late Than Never

Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem
Mycroft and Sherlock
Titan, 2018
Sherlock neglects his studies to help his brother catch a killer.

Antoinette, Ashley
Ethic 3
Ashley Antoinette Incorporated, 2018
A man's desire for love and happiness could be destroyed because of his haunting past.

Adjei-Brenyah, Nana Kwame
Friday Black
Mariner Books, 2018
Mysticism and horror themes are used to depict issues surrounding race relations.

Ahmed, Saladin; Sami Kivela
Abbott
Boom! Studios, 2018
In 1970s Detroit, a reporter investigates a series of grisly crimes believed to be the work of dark occult forces.

Alers, Rochelle
Room Service
Dafina Books, 2018
A recently divorced entrepreneur is reluctant to enter into a relationship with New Orleans' most eligible bachelor.

Alexander, Kianna
Couldn't Ask for More
Sourcebooks Casablanca, 2018
Brian and Alexis' fake engagement works well as a business arrangement until real feelings get in the way.

Allen, Jayne
Black Girls Must Die Exhausted
Quality Black Books, 2018
A young journalist evaluates her life goals and relationships after receiving challenging health news.

Arthurs, Alexia
How to Love a Jamaican
Ballantine Books, 2018
A collection of stories depicts the complex history, life and culture in Jamaica.

Billingsley, ReShonda Tate
The Book in Room 316
Gallery Books, 2018
Troubled souls find solace in the word of God.

Braithwaite, Oyinkan
My Sister, the Serial Killer
Doubleday, 2018
When two sisters want the same man – things get really complicated.

Brick and Storm
Eraserheads: A Hood Misfits Novel
Urban Books, 2018
Members of a car theft ring must quickly discover who is out to double cross them.

Clark, Tracy
Broken Places (A Chicago Mystery)
Kensington, 2018
Former cop, turned private investigator, seeks justice for her murdered childhood mentor.

Cooper, Sharon C.
Accused
Amaris Publishing, 2018
The new relationship between two security experts is threatened by dangerous secrets.

Cole, Alyssa
A Duke by Default: Reluctant Royals
Avon, 2018
A spoiled party girl discovers herself and love in Scotland.

Diamond, De'nesha; A'zayler
No Loyalty
Dafina Kensington, 2018
Two stories explore the betrayal and vengeance within a family.

Dreamz, Deshon
Relationship Status
Urban Renaissance, 2018
Three couples are determined to overcome different obstacles and fight to stay together.

Edugyan, Esi
Washington Black
Knopf Publishing Group, 2018
From slave to sailor, eleven-year-old Barbados plantation worker "Wash" is given the opportunity to embark on a new life inside a hot-air balloon.

FICTION (con't)



T.C. Little
Arm Candy

Ellis, Shelly
In These Streets (The Branch Avenue Boys)
Dafina, 2018
Three men who formed a bond in juvenile detention try to keep their friendship alive.

Erin, Keisha
First Wives Club: Melanin Magic
Color Me Pynk Publications, 2018
These ladies discover that marriage is not the real answer to their dreams.

Eureka
Torn by the Code
Urban Books, 2018
A powerful Chicago attorney lives a secret life as a crime boss.

Guillory, Jasmine
The Proposal
Jove Books, 2018
After a public proposal at a baseball game goes awry, Nik begins a romance with a handsome doctor.

Head, Cheryl A.
***Wake Me When It's Over*: A Charlie Mack Motown Mystery**
Bywater Books, 2018
A Detroit-based detective and her team rush to foil a scheme to blow up the auto show.

Hobbs, Allison
Flesh & Blood
Simon & Schuster, 2018
A father must decide how far to go in order to protect his son.

Holmes, JM
How Are You Going to Save Yourself
Little, Brown and Company, 2018
The friendship between four young men is threatened by their different life experiences.

Jackson, Brenda
At Long Last
Madaris Publishing, 2018
Dr. Logan Montgomery courts Claire Fowler and teaches her heart to love again.

Jackson, Brenda
Love in Catalina Cove
HQN, 2018
Upon inheriting her aunt's B&B, Vashti tries to reconstruct her life in the town she left behind.

Jemisin, N. K.
How Long 'Til Black Future Month?: Stories
Orbit, 2018
Twenty-two powerful stories use science fiction, fantasy and mysticism to detail the struggles of African Americans throughout history.

Jenkins, Beverly
Second Time Sweeter: A Blessings Novel
William Morrow Paperbacks 2018
One resident of Henry Adams is seeking forgiveness for his transgressions while another hopes to reconnect with his ex-girlfriend at their high school reunion.

King, Camryn
Triple Threat
Dafina Kensington, 2018
A journalist risks her life and career to investigate the death of her best friend.

Karrington, Blake
Scheming for Love
Urban Renaissance, 2018
A female assassin falls in love with the man she was paid to kill.

Little, T.C.
Arm Candy
Urban Books, 2018
A young woman must decide if she should continue her relationship with her cheating boyfriend just as his music career takes off.

Mason, J.D.
The Woman Trapped in the Dark
St. Martin's Griffin, 2018
A woman is kidnapped by someone who wants to destroy her fiancé.

McFadden, Bernice L.
Praise Song for the Butterflies
Akashic Books, 2018
Abeo Kata must sacrifice her life to atone for her family's crimes.

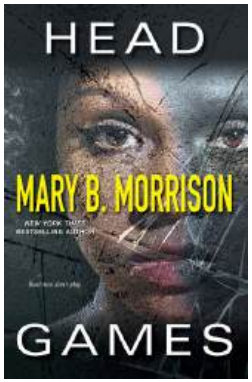
Martin, Alexa
Intercepted
Berkley Books, 2018
After suffering from a broken heart, a woman vows never to date another professional athlete.

Moore, Wayetu
She Would Be King
Graywolf Press, 2018
Liberia's 19th century beginning is seen and experienced by three of the earliest settlers.

Moore, Michel; Treasure Hernandez and Katt
Girls from Da Hood 13
Urban Books, 2018
Young women learn how hard it is to keep love alive under the pressure from the streets.

Morrison, Mary B.
Head Games
Dafina, 2018
Karma is the reward for four men competing for a million-dollar prize involving compromising sexual trysts.

Mosley, Walter
John Woman
Atlantic Monthly, 2018
As Cornelius attempts to reinvent himself, he discovers there are others who might know about his hidden past.



Mary B. Morrison
Head Games

Murray, Victoria Christopher
Envy: A Seven Deadly Sins Novel
Touchstone, 2018
One sister plots revenge against her father's other daughter.

Pitts Jr., Leonard
The Last Thing You Surrender
Agate Bolden, 2019
Three people deal with the harsh realities of race and violence during World War II.

Roby, Kimberla Lawson
Better Late Than Never
Grand Central, 2018
Pastor Curtis Black and his wife Charlotte's negative past impacts their youngest daughter and other relationships.

Shelton, Denese
Awaken: A Novel
She Writes Press, 2018
A successful realtor has a series of dreams that force her to deal with a painful secret.

Smith, Ian K.
The Ancient Nine
St. Martin's Press, 2018
The prestigious Delphic Club has secrets that must be kept, even at the expense of innocent lives.

Tamirat, Nafote
The Parking Lot Attendant: A Novel
Henry Holt and Company, 2018
An Ethiopian-American father does not approve of his daughter's friendship with a shady parking lot attendant.

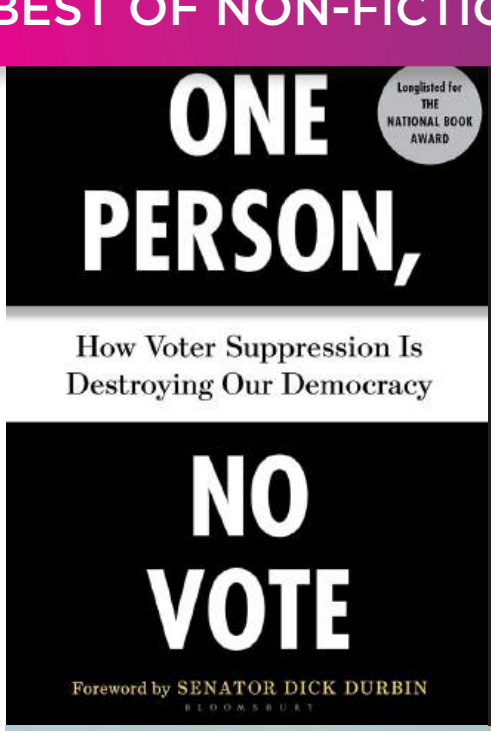
Taylor, Goldie
Paper Gods: A Novel of Money, Race, and Politics
All Points Books, 2018
A political machine will stop at nothing to maintain its powerful grip on a city.

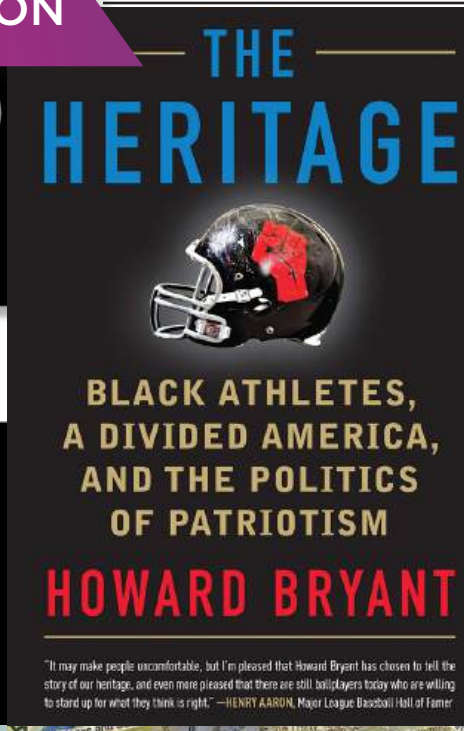
Woods, Genesis; Shantae
Bikes, Toys, and Hot Boyz
Urban Renaissance, 2018
Sisters live under the weight of their father's motorcycle club legacy.

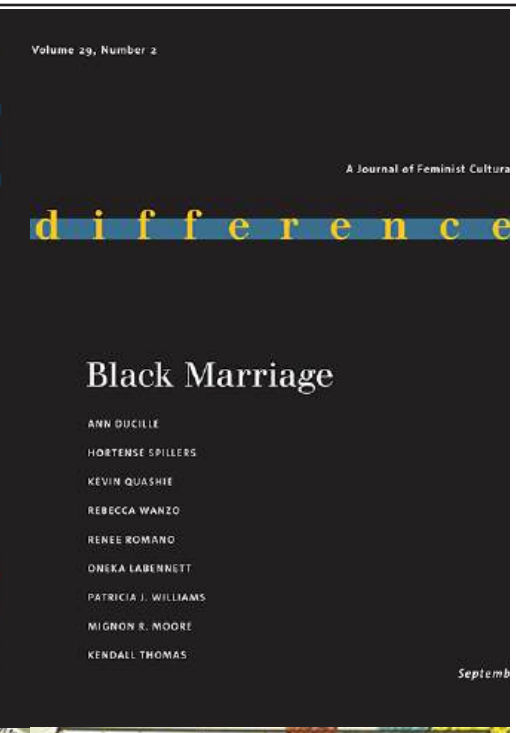
Wright, Elle
Pleasured by You
Dafina, 2018
After many years of avoiding any contact with his family, Bryson returns home after the death of his father.

Writer, Storm
Drake and Zion: A Hood Love Story
Major Key Publishing, 2018
Happy to take a step back when her best friend believes he has found the love of his life, Zion discovers Drake's new love can't be trusted.

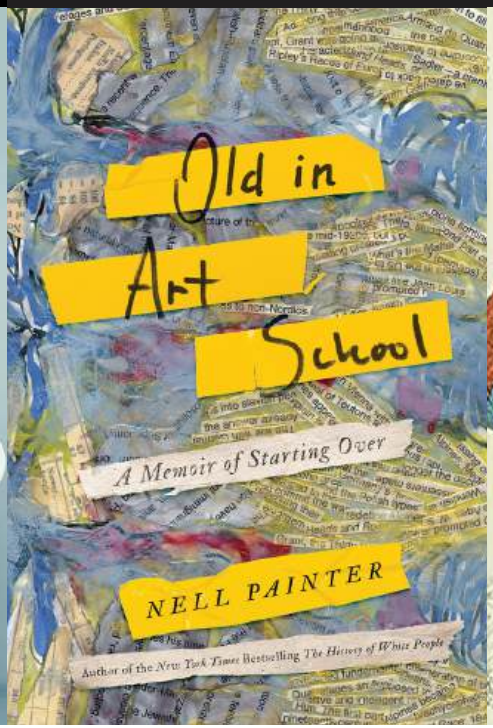
BEST OF NON-FICTION

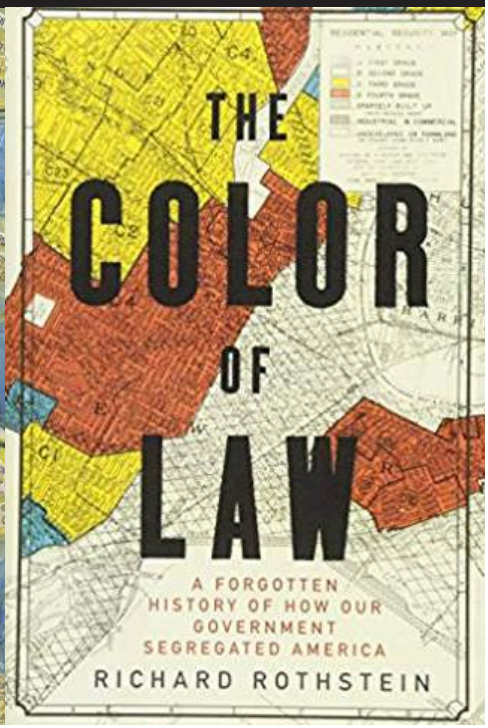












BEST OF 2018

Anderson, Carol
One Person, No Vote: How Voter Suppression Is Destroying Our Democracy

Bryant, Howard
Heritage: Black Athletes, a Divided America, and the Politics of Patriotism

Ducille, Ann
Black Marriage

Obama, Michelle
Becoming

Painter, Nell
Old in Art School: A Memoir of Starting Over

Rothstein, Richard
Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America

NON-FICTION

ART, MUSIC, AND POETRY

Baker, Soren
History of Gangster Rap: From Schoolly D to Kendrick Lamar, the Rise of a Great American Art Form
Abrams Image, 2018
An examination of the evolution and relevance of the art form in pop culture.

Browne, Mahogany L.; Idrissa Simmonds; Jamila Woods (Eds.)
The BreakBeat Poets Vol.2: Black Girl Magic
Haymarket Books, 2018
Poets testify to the varied experiences and lives of black women through the lyricism and cadences of hip hop.

Dawson, Erica
When Rap Spoke Straight to God
Tin House Books, 2018
Rap, poetry and lyrics are used to express liberation and the triumph over obstacles that blacks endure.

Edim, Glory
Well-Read Black Girl: Finding Our Stories, Discovering Ourselves
Ballantine Books, 2018
Anthology discusses the experiences of black women who see themselves reflected in literature.

Green, Myrah Brown; Chirlane McCray
Brooklyn on My Mind: Black Visual Artists from the WPA to the Present
Schiffer Publishing, 2018
Collection of over eighty years of beautiful images of black artists and their outstanding works.

Henderson, Cinque
Sit Down and Shut Up: How Discipline Can Set Students Free
St. Martin's Press, 2018
A substitute teacher reveals the true reason some students lack the proper discipline needed to succeed.

Hughley, D L; Doug Moe
How Not to Get Shot: And Other Advice from White People
William Morrow and Company, 2018
Legendary comedian and activist instructs blacks on how to survive in America by following his how-to-guide.

Oliver, Stephanie Stokes; Nikki Giovanni
Black Ink: Literary Legends on the Peril, Power, and Pleasure of Reading and Writing
Atria Books, 2018
Over 250 years of black literature is surveyed from the resistance writings of Frederick Douglass to the political essays of Ta-Nehisi Coates.

Smith, Tracy K.
Wade in the Water: Poems
Graywolf Press, 2018
Poet Laureate of the United States explores the American experience, past and present.

Troupe, Quincy
Ghost Voices: A Poem in Prayer
Triquarterly Books, 2018
Poetry and rhythm are used to portray the essence of African Ancestors while paying homage to the lost voice of Africa, Cuba, and the US.

Walker, Alice
Taking the Arrow Out of the Heart
Atria Books, 2018
An insightful collection of poems whose themes range from activism to the simplicity of baking.

NON-FICTION (con't)

Wendell, Eric
Experiencing Herbie Hancock: A Listener's Companion
Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2018
Going beyond a mere examination of Hancock's life, his impact on the world of music is celebrated.

BIOGRAPHY/MEMOIRS

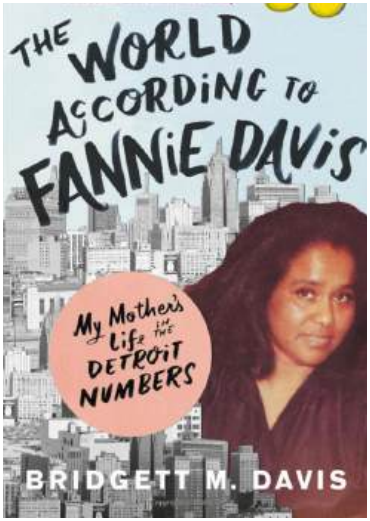
Allen, Al; Elizabeth Ann Atkins; Catherine M. Greenspan
We're Standing By
Atkins & Greenspan, 2018
Detroit broadcast legend shares his personal and professional experiences on reporting both local and national news.

Arceneaux, Michael
I Can't Date Jesus: Love, Sex, Family, Race, and Other Reasons I've Put My Faith in Beyoncé
Atria/37 INK, 2018
Sharp and witty essays about growing up black and gay in America.

Arsenaulth, Raymond
Arthur Ashe: A Life
Street Smart, 2018
The life of the first African American man to win the Wimbledon, U.S. and Australian Open singles titles is examined on and off the tennis court.

Baylor, Elgin; Alan Eisenstock
Hang Time: My Life in Basketball
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018
One of the first superstars of the game discusses basketball, race and political protests by athletes.

Carter, Stephen L.
Invisible: The Forgotten Story of the Black Woman Lawyer Who Took Down America's Most Powerful Mobster
Henry Holt & Company, 2018
The true story of a black woman who reigned in the judicial realm when social and political oppression was at the forefront.



Bridgett M. Davis
World According to Fannie Davis: My Mother's Life in the Detroit Numbers

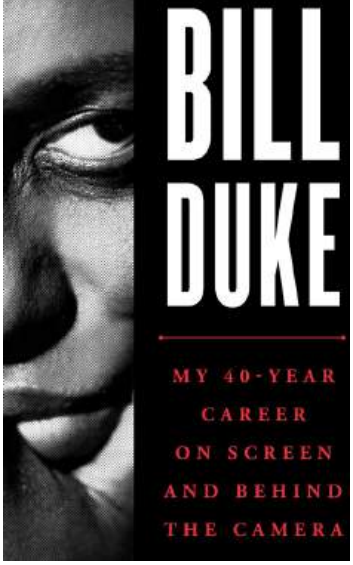
Davis, Bridgett M.
World According to Fannie Davis: My Mother's Life in the Detroit Numbers
Little Brown and Company, 2018
Native Detroiter pays homage to her mother in this story of strength and survival.

Duke, Bill
Bill Duke: My 40-Year Career on Screen and Behind the Camera
Rowman & Littlefield, 2018
Acting icon shares vignettes from both his personal and professional lives.

Gerald, Casey
There Will Be No Miracles Here: A Memoir
Riverhead Books, 2018
From the sanctuary to the football field, a religious gay, black man unveils his struggles with sexuality and identity as well as societal pressures.

Harris, Barbara C.
Hallelujah, Anyhow! A Memoir
Church Publishing, 2018
First female bishop in the Episcopal Church unveils her life through tales of her childhood, careers, obstacles and influences.

Hurston, Zora Neale
Barracoon: The Story of the Last "Black Cargo"
Amistad, 2018
Enslaved for 50 years after the slave trade was outlawed, Cudjo Lewis tells his story to the renowned social anthropologist and folklorist.



Bill Duke
Bill Duke: My 40-Year Career on Screen and Behind the Camera

Laymon, Kiese
Heavy: An American Memoir
Scribner Book Company, 2018
An examination of issues surrounding identity, sexuality and weight among African American men.

Lomax, Tamura
Jezebel Unhinged: Losing the Black Female Body in Religion and Culture
Duke University Press, 2018
Through experience, research and observation the author blames black culture and religion for perpetuating the stereotypical depictions associated with black female bodies.

Leon, Kenny
Take You Wherever You Go
Grand Central Publishing, 2018
Author shares how his Grandma Mamie instilled life lessons of perseverance and reverence through a difficult, but soul-nurturing childhood.

Morgan, Joan
She Begat This: 20 Years of the Miseducation of Lauryn Hill
Atria Books, 2018
In celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the seminal debut work, the author dissects both the artist and the history making album.

Obama, Michelle
Becoming
Crown, 2018
Surprising revelations and truths abound in this stages of life chronicle written by our former FLOTUS.

Painter, Nell
Old in Art School: A Memoir of Starting Over
Counterpoint, 2018
Coming of age story explores self-discovery and second chances; how hard can it be to reinvent your life?

Perry, Imani
Looking for Lorraine: The Radiant and Radical Life of Lorraine Hansberry
Beacon Press, 2018
A thorough and honest look at the acclaimed playwright who was also known
for her unapologetic commitment to social justice.

Prince, James; Jasmine D. Waters
The Art & Science of Respect: A Memoir by James Prince
First N-The-Water Publishing, 2018
Founder of Rap-A-Lot Records employed heart, loyalty, commitment and a healthy dose of faith to build an empire.

Ramsey, Franchesca
Well That Escalated Quickly: Memoirs and Mistakes of an Accidental Activist
Grand Central Publishing, 2018
Blogger and television host explores race, racism, and online activism in a series of humorous essays.

Tha God, Charlamagne
Shook One: Anxiety Playing Tricks on Me
Simon & Schuster, 2018
Popular radio and television personality explains how he deals with his mental health issues.

Turner, Tina
My Love Story: A Memoir
Atria Books, 2018
An emotionally wrought expression details the highs and lows in the singer's personal life and legendary career.

Wiley, Marcellus
Never Shut Up: The Life, Opinions, and Unexpected Adventures of an NFL Outlier
Dutton, 2018
NFL veteran shares his views on life in general and the controversies of the league in particular.

Zirin, Dave
Jim Brown: Last Man Standing
Blue Rider Press, 2018
Sports legend has lived many lives: actor, political activist, peacemaker, and lightning rod for controversy.

NON-FICTION (con't)

BUSINESS, FINANCE AND PROFESSIONAL

Brown, Jeannette E.
African American Women Chemists in the Modern Era
Oxford University Press, 2018
An oral history presents the achievements of African American women who became leaders in their field.

Jackson, Charreah K.
Boss Bride: The Powerful Woman's Playbook for Love and Success
St. Martin's Press, 2018
Essence senior editor dispenses advice about how to be successful at home and in the workplace.

Brooks, Marion E.; Nathan Hale Williams
What You Don't Know Is Hurting You: 4 Keys to a Phenomenal Career
Bookbaby, 2018
Insights on how to advance your career and reach your full potential.

COOKING

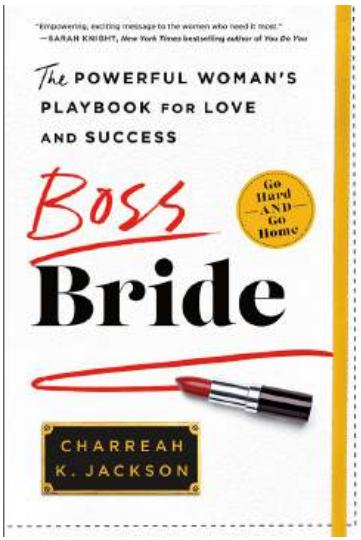
Dogg, Snoop; Ryan Ford
From Crook to Cook: Platinum Recipes from Tha Boss Dogg's Kitchen
Chronicle Books, 2018
Collection of Snoop's favorite dishes, engaging stories and photos.

Gaines, Fabiola; Roniece Weaver
New Soul Food Cookbook for People with Diabetes
American Diabetes Association, 2018
Over 150 recipes to help manage diabetes, nutritional information included.

Hall, Carla; Genevieve Ko
Carla Hall's Soul Food: Everyday and Celebration
Harper Wave, 2018
A collection of recipes that pairs light and healthy dishes with African American culinary traditions.

Jenkins, Malachi; Roberto Smith; Marisa Mendez
Trap Kitchen: "Mac N' All Over the World": Bangin' Mac N' Cheese Recipes from Around the World
Vodka & Milk, 2018
Exotic yet simple to prepare recipes for the ultimate comfort food.

NMAHHC
Sweet Home Cafe Cookbook: A Celebration of African American Cooking
Smithsonian Books, 2018
Named for the cafe at the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C., this collection features classic and contemporary dishes inspired by historically African American foods.



Charreah K. Jackson
Boss Bride: The Powerful Woman's Playbook for Love and Success

HEALTH & SCIENCE

Deshazo, Richard D.
Racial Divide in American Medicine: Black Physicians and the Struggle for Justice in Health Care
University Press of Mississippi, 2018
Documents the long-standing injustices and the struggle for equity in health and health care by African Americans in Mississippi and the United States.

Smith, JJ
Think Yourself Thin: A 30-Day Guide to Permanent Weight Loss
Atria Books, 2018
Guidebook makes long-term weight loss a reality as it uncovers the five psychological stages required to lose weight and keep it off.

HISTORY

Bell, Janet Dewart
Lighting the Fires of Freedom: African American Women in the Civil Rights Movement
The New Press, 2018
The fight for racial justice is told through the words of nine dynamic activists who recall the historical struggle and provide commentary on the current issues facing African American women.

Blair, Cynthia M.
I've Got to Make My Livin': Black Women's Sex Work in Turn-Of-The-Century Chicago
University of Chicago Press, 2018
Depicts the struggles of African American women since the nineteenth century and beyond.

Bradley, Stefan M.
Upending the Ivory Tower: Civil Rights, Black Power, and the Ivy League
New York University Press, 2018
Examines the black student experience in an Ivy League environment and the struggles of discrimination and lack of acceptance from nonblack cohorts and faculty.

Cox, Anna-Lisa
Bone and Sinew of the Land: America's Forgotten Black Pioneers and the Struggle for Equality
PublicAffairs, 2018
Recounts the stories and struggles of Black pioneers during the nation's first Great Migration.

Penniman, Leah
Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land
Chelsea Green, 2018
Author presents an historical treatise on black farming and a step-by-step guide to creating a community-based farm.

Smart-Grosvenor, Vertamae
Thursdays and Every Other Sunday Off: A Domestic Rap by Verta Mae
University of Minnesota Press, 2018
Explores the lives of African American domestic workers during the mid-twentieth century.

Taylor, Clarence
Fight the Power: African Americans and the Long History of Police Brutality in New York City
New York University Press, 2018
Alarming incidents surrounding police brutality against African Americans are uncovered before airwaves, headlines and national news.

INSPIRATIONAL/RELIGION

Abrams, Stacey
Minority Leader: How to Lead from the Outside and Make Real Change
Henry Holt & Company, 2018
Personal stories and practical advice for those with leadership aspirations.

Fluker, Walter Earl
The Ground Has Shifted: The Future of the Black Church in Post-Racial America
New York University Press, 2018
Author presents a passionate and thorough discussion of the role race plays in the contemporary black church.

Gray III, John W.
Win From Within: Finding Yourself by Facing Yourself
Faithwords, 2018
Biblical lessons are used to help readers overcome challenges and struggles with negative behavior.

RuPaul
GuRu
Dey Street Books, 2018
Television personality encourages self-examination in an effort to uncover your true self.

Sampson, Freda G.
"I Think I Said Something…" The Life, Legacy & Ministry of Rev. Dr. Frederick G. Sampson, II
Vision Publishing, LLC, 2018
Details the life and ministry of Rev. Dr. Frederick G. Sampson, II, pastor of the Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church in Detroit, where he served from 1971 until his death in 2001.

Taylor, Mikki
Editor in Chic: How to Style and Be Your Most Empowered Self
Atria Books, 2018
Practical advice and insider tips are sprinkled throughout this style manual that promotes beauty and the development of your own personal style.

POLITICAL/SOCIAL SCIENCES

Anderson, Carol
One Person, No Vote: How Voter Suppression Is Destroying Our Democracy
Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018
Professor Anderson discusses how the law is being used to suppress the right to vote.

NON-FICTION (con't)

Asim, Jabari
We Can't Breathe: On Black Lives, White Lies, and the Art of Survival
St. Martin's Press, 2018
Eight essays are used to accurately portray black realism while putting stereotypical depictions to rest.

Best, Stephen
None Like Us: Blackness, Belonging, Aesthetic Life (Theory Q)
Duke University Press, 2018
Discusses how slavery continues to play a role in the current state of American politics.

Brazile, Donna; Yolanda Caraway; Leah Daughtry; Minyon Moore
For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Politics
St. Martin's Press, 2018
Four powerful women divulge secrets, behind-the-scenes political intrigue and know how.

Carr, Gwen
This Stops Today: Eric Gardner's Mother Seeks Justice After Losing Her Son
Rowman & Littlefield, 2018
A mother recounts details surrounding the death of her son causing her to become an activist for equality.

Carruthers, Charlene
Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements
Beacon Press, 2018
Author encourages leaders of social justice movements to become more effective through principled struggle and healing justice.

Fleming, Crystal Marie
How to Be Less Stupid about Race: On Racism, White Supremacy, and the Racial Divide
Beacon Press, 2018
An unflinching investigation of America's ignorance regarding race, racism and white supremacy.

Haywood, D'Weston
Let Us Make Men: The Twentieth-Century Black Press and a Manly Vision for Racial Advancement
University of North Carolina Press, 2018
Examines how newspapers and literature led to strong depictions of black men and black civilization as a whole.

Hinton, Anthony Ray; Lara Love Hardin
The Sun Does Shine: How I Found Life and Freedom on Death Row
St. Martin's Press, 2018
On death row and after being unjustly imprisoned for 30 years, a man is still able to build a life and a community within prison walls.



Pete Souza
Shade: A Tale of Two Presidents

Kirabo, Sincere T.
Black Conscious Rage: Humanist Writings on Identity, Culture, Oppression, and Liberation
Pitchstone Publishing, 2018
Examines and questions America's influences on racism, religion and prejudice.

McPherson, Miles; Drew Brees
The Third Option: Hope for a Racially Divided Nation
Howard Books, 2018
Author asserts that in order to quell racial tension in our country we must actively attempt to understand others and embrace God.

Muhammad, Ibtihaj; Lori Tharps
Proud: My Fight for an Unlikely American Dream
Hachette Books, 2018
Although a late comer to the sport of fencing, the Olympian endured the pressures of being the first because of her race, gender, and religion.

Newman, Omarosa Manigault
Unhinged: An Insider's Account of the Trump White House
Gallery Books, 2018
Former Director of Communications for the Office of Public Liaison in Donald Trump's White House reveals all.

Purdy, Michelle
Transforming the Elite: Black Students and the Desegregation of Private Schools
University of North Carolina Press, 2018
Story of historically white, elite private schools that opted to desegregate, allowing black leaders to emerge.

Ransby, Barbara
Making all Black Lives Matter: Reimaging Freedom in the Twenty-First Century
University of California Press, 2018
Ransby uncovers the important roles of black feminist groups during the struggles of police abuse and violence against blacks in America.

Rothstein, Richard
Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America
Liveright, 2018
Local housing authorities with the complicity of federal housing agencies unconstitutionally kept communities segregated.

Ryan, April
Under Fire: Reporting from the Front Lines of the Trump White House
Rowman & Littlefield, 2018
White House correspondent describes how racism and misogyny clouds coverage of the Trump administration.

Souza, Pete
Shade: A Tale of Two Presidents
Little, Brown and Company, 2018
Official White House photographer for former President Obama uses his medium to contrast the presidential styles of the Obama and Trump administrations.

Stallworth, Ron
Black Klansman: Race, Hate, and the Undercover Investigation of a Lifetime
Flatiron Books, 2018
Engaging story of the first black detective on the Colorado Springs Police Department who was granted membership in the Ku Klux Klan.

Tinsley, Omise'eke Natasha
Beyoncé in Formation: Remixing Black Feminism
University of Texas Press, 2018
A critique of Beyoncé's *Lemonade* album and its influences, sparking conversations surrounding feminism and women's empowerment.

RELATIONSHIPS

Johnson, Rainbow
Keeping Up with the Johnsons: Bow's Guide to Black-ish Parenting
Kingswell, 2018
Popular sitcom mother dispenses child-rearing advice.

Mann, David; Tamelal Mann
Us Against the World: Our Secrets to Love, Marriage, and Family
Thomas Nelson, 2018
The Manns share their day-to-day challenges, successes and how they have been able to keep the spark burning through all these years.

Ducille, Ann
Black Marriage
Duke University Press, 2018
Contributors address the subject of "black marriage," from legal, historical and literary vantage points while addressing current concerns threatening the concept.

SPORTS & RECREATION

Bryant, Howard
Heritage: Black Athletes, a Divided America, and the Politics of Patriotism
Beacon Press, 2018
Journalist discusses the pressure that black athletes have always been under to either embrace or avoid political activism.

Bryant, Kobe; Andrew D. Bernstein
The Mamba Mentality: How I Play
MCD, 2018
Superstar dissects his mental and physical strategies and how he conditioned himself for the game of basketball.

Tyus, Wyomia; Elizabeth Terzakis
Tigerbelle: The Wyomia Tyus Story
Edge of Sports, 2018
Uplifting story of an Olympian, known for her values and personal strength on and off the track.

Wiggins, David K.
More Than a Game: A History of the African American Experience in Sport
Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2018
Sportswriter covers the black athlete from slave competitions to the political activism of today.

FORTHCOMING TITLES IN 2019



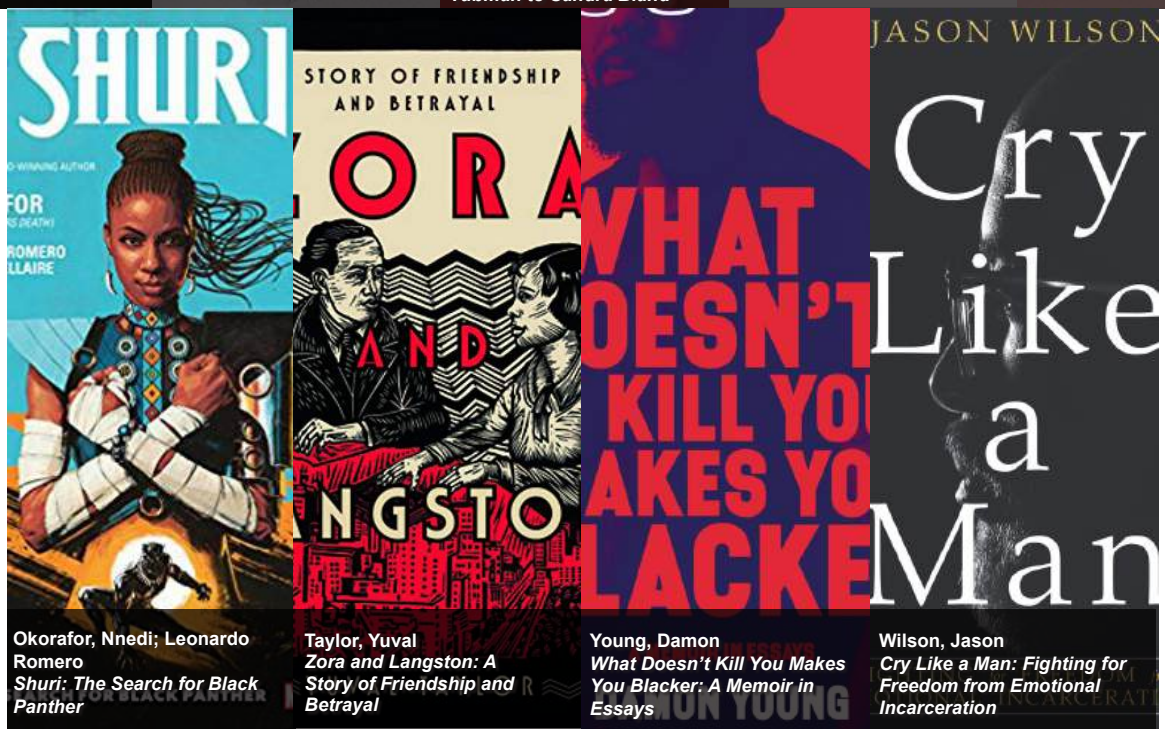
Burke-Sivers, Harold
Father Augustus Tolton: The Slave Who Became the First African-American Priest

Chambers, Veronica
Queen Bey: A Celebration of the Power and Creativity of Beyoncé Knowles-Carter

Hill, Damaris
A Bound Woman Is a Dangerous Thing: The Incarceration of African American Women from Harriet Tubman to Sandra Bland

Lemon, Don
The Hundred

Morrison, Toni
The Source of Self-Regard: Selected Essays, Speeches and Meditations



Okorafor, Nnedi; Leonardo Romero
Shuri: The Search for Black Panther

Taylor, Yuval
Zora and Langston: A Story of Friendship and Betrayal

Young, Damon
What Doesn't Kill You Makes You Blacker: A Memoir in Essays

Wilson, Jason
Cry Like a Man: Fighting for Freedom from Emotional Incarceration



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