BOOKLIST
Social Welfare Programs, Policies, and Issues

Choose one.

Free-Choice Books (alongside textbooks)
Rachel Adams’s life had always gone according to plan. She had an adoring husband, a beautiful two-year-old son, a sunny Manhattan apartment, and a position as a tenured professor at Columbia University. Everything changed with the birth of her second child, Henry. Just minutes after he was born, doctors told her that Henry had Down syndrome, and she knew that her life would never be the same.

In this honest, self-critical, and surprisingly funny book, Adams chronicles the first three years of Henry’s life and her own transformative experience of unexpectedly becoming the mother of a disabled child. A highly personal story of one family’s encounter with disability, Raising Henry is also an insightful exploration of today’s knotty terrain of social prejudice, disability policy, genetics, prenatal testing, medical training, and inclusive education. Adams untangles the contradictions of living in a society that is more enlightened and supportive of people with disabilities than ever before, yet is racing to perfect prenatal tests to prevent children like Henry from being born. Her book is gripping, beautifully written, and nearly impossible to put down. Once read, her family’s story is impossible to forget.
Rooted in Gloria Anzaldúa's experience as a Chicana, a lesbian, an activist, and a writer, the essays and poems in this volume profoundly challenged, and continue to challenge, how we think about identity. *Borderlands/La Frontera* remaps our understanding of what a "border" is, presenting it not as a simple divide between here and there, us and them, but as a psychic, social, and cultural terrain that we inhabit, and that inhabits all of us. This twenty-fifth anniversary edition features a new introduction by scholars Norma Cantú (University of Texas at San Antonio) and Aída Hurtado (University of California at Santa Cruz) as well as a revised critical bibliography.
Dennis Banks, an American Indian of the Ojibwa Tribe and a founder of the American Indian Movement, is one of the most influential Indian leaders of our time. In *Ojibwa Warrior*, written with acclaimed writer and photographer Richard Erdoes, Banks tells his own story for the first time and also traces the rise of the American Indian Movement (AIM). The authors present an insider’s understanding of AIM protest events—the Trail of Broken Treaties march to Washington, D.C.; the resulting takeover of the BIA building; the riot at Custer, South Dakota; and the 1973 standoff at Wounded Knee. Enhancing the narrative are dramatic photographs, most taken by Richard Erdoes, depicting key people and events.
In this lyrical debut, Ryan Berg immerses readers in the gritty, dangerous, and shockingly underreported world of homeless LGBTQ teens in New York. As a caseworker in a group home for disowned LGBTQ teenagers, Berg witnessed the struggles, fears, and ambitions of these disconnected youth as they resisted the pull of the street, tottering between destruction and survival. Focusing on the lives and loves of eight unforgettable youth, No House to Call My Home traces their efforts to break away from dangerous sex work and cycles of drug and alcohol abuse, and, in the process, to heal from years of trauma. From Bella’s fervent desire for stability to Christina’s irrepressible dreams of stardom to Benny’s continuing efforts to find someone to love him, Berg uncovers the real lives behind the harrowing statistics: over 4,000 youth are homeless in New York City—43 percent of them identify as LGBTQ. Through these stories, Berg compels us to rethink the way we define privilege, identity, love, and family. Beyond the tears, bluster, and bravado, he reveals the force that allows them to carry on—the irrepressible hope of youth.
In 1932, Mittie Maude Lena Gordon spoke to a crowd of black Chicagoans at the old Jack Johnson boxing ring, rallying their support for emigration to West Africa. In 1937, Celia Jane Allen traveled to Jim Crow Mississippi to organize rural black workers around black nationalist causes. In the late 1940s, from her home in Kingston, Jamaica, Amy Jacques Garvey launched an extensive letter-writing campaign to defend the Greater Liberia Bill, which would relocate 13 million black Americans to West Africa.

Gordon, Allen, and Jacques Garvey—as well as Maymie De Mena, Ethel Collins, Amy Ashwood, and Ethel Waddell—are part of an overlooked and understudied group of black women who take center stage in Set the World on Fire, the first book to examine how black nationalist women engaged in national and global politics from the early twentieth century to the 1960s. Historians of the era generally portray the period between the Garvey movement of the 1920s and the Black Power movement of the 1960s as one of declining black nationalist activism, but Keisha N. Blain reframes the Great Depression, World War II, and the early Cold War as significant eras of black nationalist—and particularly, black nationalist women's—ferment.

In Chicago, Harlem, and the Mississippi Delta, from Britain to Jamaica, these women built alliances with people of color around the globe, agitating for the rights and liberation of black people in the United States and across the African diaspora. As pragmatic activists, they employed multiple protest strategies and tactics, combined numerous religious and political ideologies, and forged unlikely alliances in their struggles for freedom. Drawing on a variety of previously untapped sources, including newspapers, government records, songs, and poetry, Set the World on Fire highlights the flexibility, adaptability, and experimentation of black women leaders who demanded equal recognition and participation in global civil society.
Rafael Campo, the author of The Other Man Was Me and What the Body Told, is both a doctor and an important contemporary poet. In The Desire to Heal, he uses his gift for language to delineate and explicate the connections between his two vocations, writing and healing, and his roles as a gay man and an educator. Campo's topic is always the body; he understands its fragility and resistance, its power and grace. His prose is precise and poetic, and his insights are revelations. The Desire to Heal is a work of literary grace and compassion—a memoir that illuminates the world with new light and urgency.
For Francisco Cantú, the border is in the blood: his mother, a park ranger and daughter of a Mexican immigrant, raised him in the scrublands of the Southwest. Driven to understand the hard realities of the landscape he loves, Cantú joins the Border Patrol. He and his partners learn to track other humans under blistering sun and through frigid nights. They haul in the dead and deliver to detention those they find alive. Plagued by a growing awareness of his complicity in a dehumanizing enterprise, he abandons the Patrol for civilian life. But when an immigrant friend travels to Mexico to visit his dying mother and does not return, Cantú discovers that the border has migrated with him, and now he must know the full extent of the violence it wreaks, on both sides of the line.
In 2014, Theranos founder and CEO Elizabeth Holmes was widely seen as the female Steve Jobs: a brilliant Stanford dropout whose startup "unicorn" promised to revolutionize the medical industry with a machine that would make blood testing significantly faster and easier. Backed by investors such as Larry Ellison and Tim Draper, Theranos sold shares in a fundraising round that valued the company at more than $9 billion, putting Holmes's worth at an estimated $4.7 billion. There was just one problem: The technology didn't work.

A riveting story of the biggest corporate fraud since Enron, a tale of ambition and hubris set amid the bold promises of Silicon Valley.
Brian Castner served three tours of duty in the Middle East, two of them in Iraq as the head of an Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit. Whenever IEDs were discovered, he and his men would lead the way in either disarming the deadly devices or searching through rubble and remains for clues to the bomb-makers’ identities. And when robots and other remote means failed, one technician would suit up and take the Long Walk to disarm the bomb by hand. This lethal game of cat and mouse was, and continues to be, the real war within America’s wars in the Middle East. When Brian returned stateside to his wife and family, he entered an equally inexorable struggle against the enemy within, which he comes to call the “Crazy.” This thrilling, heartbreaking, stunningly honest book alternates between two harrowing realities: the terror, excitement, and camaraderie of combat, and the lonely battle against the unshakeable fear, anxiety, and survivor guilt that he—like so many veterans—carries inside.
Vikram Chandra has been a computer programmer for almost as long as he has been a novelist. In this extraordinary new book, his first work of nonfiction, he searches for the connections between the worlds of art and technology. Coders are obsessed with elegance and style, just as writers are, but do the words mean the same thing to both? Can we ascribe beauty to the craft of writing code?

Exploring such varied topics as logic gates and literary modernism, the machismo of tech geeks, the omnipresence of an "Indian Mafia" in Silicon Valley, and the writings of the eleventh-century Kashmiri thinker Abhinavagupta, Geek Sublime is both an idiosyncratic history of coding and a fascinating meditation on the writer's art. Part literary essay, part technology story, and part memoir, it is an engrossing, original, and heady book of sweeping ideas.
In the glorious wasteland of 1990s Los Angeles, Nikki Darling alternates between cutting class and getting high, falling into drugs, crushes, and counterculture to figure out how she fits into the world. Running increasingly wild with other angst-ridden outcasts, she pushes herself to the edge only to find herself trapped in the cyclical violence of growing up female.

Written in dreamy, subterranean prose, this debut novel captures the reckless defiance and fragility of girlhood.
In *Evicted*, Princeton sociologist and MacArthur “Genius” Matthew Desmond follows eight families in Milwaukee as they struggle to keep a roof over their heads. Hailed as “wrenching and revelatory” (The Nation), “vivid and unsettling” (New York Review of Books), *Evicted* transforms our understanding of poverty and economic exploitation while providing fresh ideas for solving one of 21st-century America’s most devastating problems. Its unforgettable scenes of hope and loss remind us of the centrality of home, without which nothing else is possible.
An extraordinary debut novel, Freshwater explores the surreal experience of having a fractured self. It centers around a young Nigerian woman, Ada, who develops separate selves within her as a result of being born "with one foot on the other side." Unsettling, heartwrenching, dark, and powerful, Freshwater is a sharp evocation of a rare way of experiencing the world, one that illuminates how we all construct our identities.

Ada begins her life in the south of Nigeria as a troubled baby and a source of deep concern to her family. Her parents, Saul and Saachi, successfully prayed her into existence, but as she grows into a volatile and splintered child, it becomes clear that something went terribly awry. When Ada comes of age and moves to America for college, the group of selves within her grows in power and agency. A traumatic assault leads to a crystallization of her alternate selves: Asụghara and Saint Vincent. As Ada fades into the background of her own mind and these selves—now protective, now hedonistic—move into control, Ada's life spirals in a dark and dangerous direction.

Narrated from the perspective of the various selves within Ada, and based in the author's realities, Freshwater explores the metaphysics of identity and mental health, plunging the reader into the mystery of being and self. Freshwater dazzles with ferocious energy and serpentine grace, heralding the arrival of a fierce new literary voice.
The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down explores the clash between a small county hospital in California and a refugee family from Laos over the care of Lia Lee, a Hmong child diagnosed with severe epilepsy. Lia's parents and her doctors both wanted what was best for Lia, but the lack of understanding between them led to tragedy. Winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for Nonfiction, the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Current Interest, and the Salon Book Award, Anne Fadiman's compassionate account of this cultural impasse is literary journalism at its finest. The current edition, published for the book's fifteenth anniversary, includes a new afterword by the author that provides updates on the major characters along with reflections on how they have changed Fadiman's life and attitudes.
New York Times bestselling author Roxane Gay has written with intimacy and sensitivity about food and bodies, using her own emotional and psychological struggles as a means of exploring our shared anxieties over pleasure, consumption, appearance, and health. As a woman who describes her own body as “wildly undisciplined,” Roxane understands the tension between desire and denial, between self-comfort and self-care. In Hunger, she casts an insightful and critical eye on her childhood, teens, and twenties—including the devastating act of violence that acted as a turning point in her young life—and brings readers into the present and the realities, pains, and joys of her daily life.

With the bracing candor, vulnerability, and authority that have made her one of the most admired voices of her generation, Roxane explores what it means to be overweight in a time when the bigger you are, the less you are seen. Hunger is a deeply personal memoir from one of our finest writers, and tells a story that hasn’t yet been told but needs to be.
A young, hopeful doctor’s memoir—an unforgettable love story and an informative journey into the world of medicine and kidney transplantation that ultimately asks: What does it mean to let go of something that you love, even if it is life itself? When Vanessa fell in love with Robert, she had no idea that the relationship would thoroughly transform her life. Robert suffered from end-stage kidney disease, which required him to endure years of debilitating dialysis to stay alive, at least until his failed organ could be replaced by a kidney transplant. Although Vanessa was a primary care doctor, she developed a deeper understanding of the difficulties Robert faced with dialysis and in finding a donor. Despite their being early in their relationship, she volunteered one of her own kidneys—and discovered that she was a match. This life-affirming experience forged a bond that would become a pillar of Vanessa and Robert’s marriage—and the beginning of her new career. Motivated by Robert’s experience and her newfound knowledge, Vanessa became a nephrologist—a kidney doctor—and discovered far more about the realities of the specialty. Shaped by Vanessa’s remarkable experiences as a doctor, a woman of color, a mother, and a kidney donor, *Hundreds of Interlaced Fingers* is a love story, an exposé, and a clarion call for us all to consider the dualities of both loving and letting go.
Flint was already a troubled city in 2014 when the state of Michigan—in the name of austerity—shifted the source of its water supply from Lake Huron to the Flint River. Soon after, citizens began complaining about the water that flowed from their taps—but officials rebuffed them, insisting that the water was fine. Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, a pediatrician at the city’s public hospital, took state officials at their word and encouraged the parents and children in her care to continue drinking the water—after all, it was American tap water, blessed with the state’s seal of approval. But a conversation at a cookout with an old friend, leaked documents from a rogue environmental inspector, and the activism of a concerned mother raised red flags about lead—a neurotoxin whose irreversible effects fall most heavily on children. Paced like a scientific thriller, this book shows how misguided austerity policies, the withdrawal of democratic government, and callous bureaucratic indifference placed an entire city at risk. And at the center of the story is Dr. Mona herself—an immigrant, doctor, scientist, and mother whose family’s activist roots inspired her pursuit of justice. What the Eyes Don’t See is a riveting, beautifully rendered account of a shameful disaster that became a tale of hope, the story of a city on the ropes that came together to fight for justice, self-determination, and the right to build a better world for their—and all of our—children.
Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies provides an intimate examination of the everyday lives and suffering of Mexican migrants in our contemporary food system. An anthropologist and MD in the mold of Paul Farmer and Didier Fassin, Holmes shows how market forces, anti-immigrant sentiment, and racism undermine health and health care. Holmes’s material is visceral and powerful. He trekked with his companions illegally through the desert into Arizona and was jailed with them before they were deported. He lived with indigenous families in the mountains of Oaxaca and in farm labor camps in the U.S., planted and harvested corn, picked strawberries, and accompanied sick workers to clinics and hospitals. This “embodied anthropology” deepens our theoretical understanding of the ways in which social inequalities and suffering come to be perceived as normal and natural in society and in health care.
Born in 1954, Cleve Jones was among the last generation of gay Americans who grew up wondering if there were others out there like himself. There were. Like thousands of other young people, Jones, nearly penniless, was drawn in the early 1970s to San Francisco, a city electrified by progressive politics and sexual freedom.

Jones found community—in the hotel rooms and ramshackle apartments shared by other young adventurers, in the city’s bathhouses and gay bars like The Stud, and in the burgeoning gay district, the Castro, where a New York transplant named Harvey Milk set up a camera shop, began shouting through his bullhorn, and soon became the nation’s most outspoken gay elected official. With Milk’s encouragement, Jones dove into politics and found his calling in “the movement.” When Milk was killed by an assassin’s bullet in 1978, Jones took up his mentor’s progressive mantle—only to see the arrival of AIDS transform his life once again.

By turns tender and uproarious, When We Rise is Jones’ account of his remarkable life. He chronicles the heartbreak of losing countless friends to AIDS, which very nearly killed him, too; his co-founding of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation during the terrifying early years of the epidemic; his conception of the AIDS Memorial Quilt, the largest community art project in history; the bewitching story of 1970s San Francisco and the magnetic spell it cast for thousands of young gay people and other misfits; and the harrowing, sexy, and sometimes hilarious stories of Cleve’s passionate relationships with friends and lovers during an era defined by both unprecedented freedom and violence alike.

When We Rise is not only the story of a hero to the LGBTQ community, but the vibrantly voice memoir of a full and transformative American life.
At the age of thirty-six, on the verge of completing a decade’s worth of training as a neurosurgeon, Paul Kalanithi was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer. One day he was a doctor treating the dying, and the next he was a patient struggling to live. And just like that, the future he and his wife had imagined evaporated. When Breath Becomes Air chronicles Kalanithi’s transformation from a naïve medical student “possessed,” as he wrote, “by the question of what, given that all organisms die, makes a virtuous and meaningful life” into a neurosurgeon at Stanford working in the brain, the most critical place for human identity, and finally into a patient and new father confronting his own mortality.

What makes life worth living in the face of death? What do you do when the future, no longer a ladder toward your goals in life, flattens out into a perpetual present? What does it mean to have a child, to nurture a new life as another fades away? These are some of the questions Kalanithi wrestles with in this profoundly moving, exquisitely observed memoir.

Paul Kalanithi died in March 2015, while working on this book, yet his words live on as a guide and a gift to us all. “I began to realize that coming face to face with my own mortality, in a sense, had changed nothing and everything,” he wrote. “Seven words from Samuel Beckett began to repeat in my head: ‘I can’t go on. I’ll go on.’” When Breath Becomes Air is an unforgettable, life-affirming reflection on the challenge of facing death and on the relationship between doctor and patient, from a brilliant writer who became both.
Raised by a single mother in an impoverished neighborhood in Los Angeles, Patrisse Khan-Cullors experienced firsthand the prejudice and persecution Black Americans endure at the hands of law enforcement. For Patrisse, the most vulnerable people in the country are Black people. Deliberately and ruthlessly targeted by a criminal justice system serving a white privilege agenda, Black people are subjected to unjustifiable racial profiling and police brutality. In 2013, when Trayvon Martin’s killer went free, Patrisse’s outrage led her to co-found Black Lives Matter with Alicia Garza and Opal Tometi. Condemned as terrorists and as a threat to America, these loving women founded a hashtag that birthed the movement to demand accountability from the authorities who continually turn a blind eye to the injustices inflicted upon people of Black and Brown skin. Championing human rights in the face of violent racism, Patrisse is a survivor. She transformed her personal pain into political power, giving voice to a people suffering inequality and a movement fueled by her strength and love to tell the country—and the world—that Black Lives Matter. *When They Call You a Terrorist* is Patrisse Khan-Cullors and asha bandele’s reflection on humanity. It is an empowering account of survival, strength and resilience and a call to action to change the culture that declares innocent Black life expendable.
"Stories are wondrous things. And they are dangerous." In *The Truth About Stories*, Native novelist and scholar Thomas King explores how stories shape who we are and how we understand and interact with other people. From creation stories to personal experiences, historical anecdotes to social injustices, racist propaganda to works of contemporary Native literature, King probes Native culture's deep ties to storytelling. With wry humor, King deftly weaves events from his own life as a child in California, an academic in Canada, and a Native North American with a wide-ranging discussion of stories told by and about Indians. So many stories have been told about Indians, King comments, that "there is no reason for the Indian to be real. The Indian simply has to exist in our imaginations." That imaginative Indian that North Americans hold dear has been challenged by Native writers - N. Scott Momaday, Leslie Marmon Silko, Louis Owens, Robert Alexie, and others - who provide alternative narratives of the Native experience that question, create a present, and imagine a future. King reminds the reader, Native and non-Native, that storytelling carries with it social and moral responsibilities. "Don't say in the years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story. You've heard it now."
“ZAMI is a fast-moving chronicle. From the author’s vivid childhood memories in Harlem to her coming of age in the late 1950s, the nature of Audre Lorde’s work is cyclical. It especially relates the linkage of women who have shaped her . . . Lorde brings into play her craft of lush description and characterization. It keeps unfolding page after page.”—Off Our Backs

A writer, activist, and mother of two, Audre Lorde grew up in 1930s Harlem. She earned a master’s degree in library science from Columbia University, received a National Endowment for the Arts grant for poetry, and was New York State’s Poet Laureate from 1991 to 1993. She is the author of twelve books, including ZAMI and THE BLACK UNICORN. Lorde died of cancer at the age of fifty-eight in 1992.
When Roya, an Iranian American high school student, is asked to identify her race, she feels anxiety and doubt. According to the federal government, she and others from the Middle East are white. Indeed, a historical myth circulates even in immigrant families like Roya's, proclaiming Iranians to be the "original" white race. But based on the treatment Roya and her family receive in American schools, airports, workplaces, and neighborhoods—interactions characterized by intolerance or hate—Roya is increasingly certain that she is not white. In The Limits of Whiteness, Neda Maghbouleh offers a groundbreaking, timely look at how Iranians and other Middle Eastern Americans move across the color line.

By shadowing Roya and more than 80 other young people, Maghbouleh documents Iranian Americans' shifting racial status. Drawing on never-before-analyzed historical and legal evidence, she captures the unique experience of an immigrant group trapped between legal racial invisibility and everyday racial hyper-visibility. Her findings are essential for understanding the unprecedented challenge Middle Easterners now face under "extreme vetting" and potential reclassification out of the "white" box. Maghbouleh tells for the first time the compelling, often heartbreaking story of how a white American immigrant group can become brown and what such a transformation says about race in America.
Heart Berries is a powerful, poetic memoir of a woman's coming of age on the Seabird Island Band in the Pacific Northwest. Having survived a profoundly dysfunctional upbringing only to find herself hospitalized and facing a dual diagnosis of post traumatic stress disorder and bipolar II disorder; Terese Marie Mailhot is given a notebook and begins to write her way out of trauma. The triumphant result is Heart Berries, a memorial for Mailhot's mother, a social worker and activist who had a thing for prisoners; a story of reconciliation with her father—an abusive drunk and a brilliant artist—who was murdered under mysterious circumstances; and an elegy on how difficult it is to love someone while dragging the long shadows of shame. Mailhot trusts the reader to understand that memory isn't exact, but melded to imagination, pain, and what we can bring ourselves to accept. Her unique and at times unsettling voice graphically illustrates her mental state. As she writes, she discovers her own true voice, seizes control of her story, and, in so doing, reestablishes her connection to her family, to her people, and to her place in the world.
This "tender and lyrical" memoir (New York Times Book Review) remains one of the most compelling documents of the AIDS era—"searing, shattering, ultimately hope inspiring account of a great love story" (San Francisco Examiner). A National Book Critics Circle Award finalist and the winner of the PEN Center West literary award.

"Wrenching in its detail, this account of the author's final two years with his companion and "beloved friend" Roger Horwitz, who died of AIDS in 1986, personalizes the epidemic's appalling statistics with heartbreaking clarity. Poet and novelist Monette (Love Alone: 18 Elegies for Rog) applies admirable candor and control to the task of chronicling the suffering endured in the months between the diagnosis and death of the man with whom he had spent over 10 years. Monette brings to the narrative a poet's eye for the telling image or metaphor, and makes this far more than a simple compendium of medical disasters: the memoir transcends the particulars of the AIDS epidemic to stand as an eloquent testimonial to the power of love and the devastation of loss, the courage of the ill and the anger, fear and dedication of their loved ones. Despite its universal resonances, the book is perhaps most valuable as a vital addition to the literature of the AIDS epidemic. Affluent and exceptionally well connected in the L.A. gay elite, Horwitz was no typical AIDS patient: Monette maneuvered him into various experimental programs (he was the first AIDS patient west of the Mississippi to have access to AZT), and the firsthand glimpse of the "netherworld of the sick," negotiating the byzantine route to the next "magic bullet" offers vivid confirmation of the human cost of the government's initial policy of informed neglect. "A gay man seeks his history in mythic fragments, random as blocks of stone in the ruins covered in Greek characters, gradually being erased in the summer rain," the author writes of a trip to Greece he and Horwitz took shortly before the diagnosis. Monette's moving history is just such a fragment for future generations, a touchstone reference to a tragic time that we cannot allow to be erased." - Publishers Weekly
In her profound and courageous New York Times bestseller, Janet Mock establishes herself as a resounding and inspirational voice for the transgender community—and anyone fighting to define themselves on their own terms.

With unflinching honesty and moving prose, Janet Mock relays her experiences of growing up young, multiracial, poor, and trans in America, offering readers accessible language while imparting vital insight about the unique challenges and vulnerabilities of a marginalized and misunderstood population. Though undoubtedly an account of one woman’s quest for self at all costs, Redefining Realness is a powerful vision of possibility and self-realization, pushing us all toward greater acceptance of one another—and of ourselves—showing as never before how to be unapologetic and real.
Not Here is a flight plan for escape and a map for navigating home; a queer Vietnamese American body in confrontation with whiteness, trauma, family, and nostalgia; and a big beating heart of a book. Nguyen’s poems ache with loneliness and desire and the giddy terrors of allowing yourself to hope for love, and revel in moments of connection achieved.

Hieu Minh Nguyen was born in 1991, a child of Vietnamese immigrants, his debut collection of poetry, This Way to the Sugar, was a finalist for both the MN Book Awards and the Lambda Literary Awards. Nguyen has received awards and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, Kundiman, the Vermont Studio Center, the Minnesota State Arts Board, and the Loft Literary Center. His poems have appeared in Poetry, The Offing, BuzzFeed, The Academy of American Poets, and elsewhere. He lives in Minneapolis.
We live in the age of the algorithm. Increasingly, the decisions that affect our lives—where we go to school, whether we get a car loan, how much we pay for health insurance—are being made not by humans, but by mathematical models. In theory, this should lead to greater fairness: Everyone is judged according to the same rules, and bias is eliminated. But as Cathy O’Neil reveals in this urgent and necessary book, the opposite is true. The models being used today are opaque, unregulated, and uncontestable, even when they’re wrong. Most troubling, they reinforce discrimination: If a poor student can’t get a loan because a lending model deems him too risky (by virtue of his zip code), he’s then cut off from the kind of education that could pull him out of poverty, and a vicious spiral ensues. Models are propping up the lucky and punishing the downtrodden, creating a “toxic cocktail for democracy.” Welcome to the dark side of Big Data. Tracing the arc of a person’s life, O’Neil exposes the black box models that shape our future, both as individuals and as a society. These “weapons of math destruction” score teachers and students, sort résumés, grant (or deny) loans, evaluate workers, target voters, set parole, and monitor our health. O’Neil calls on modelers to take more responsibility for their algorithms and on policy makers to regulate their use. But in the end, it’s up to us to become more savvy about the models that govern our lives. This important book empowers us to ask the tough questions, uncover the truth, and demand change.
In 1929, in the blue-collar city of Portsmouth, Ohio, a company built a swimming pool the size of a football field; named Dreamland, it became the vital center of the community. Now, addiction has devastated Portsmouth, as it has hundreds of small rural towns and suburbs across America—addiction like no other the country has ever faced. How that happened is the riveting story of Dreamland.

With a great reporter’s narrative skill and the storytelling ability of a novelist, acclaimed journalist Sam Quinones weaves together two classic tales of capitalism run amok whose unintentional collision has been catastrophic. The unfettered prescribing of pain medications during the 1990s reached its peak in Purdue Pharma’s campaign to market OxyContin, its new, expensive—and extremely addictive—miracle painkiller. Meanwhile a massive influx of black tar heroin—cheap, potent, and originating from one small county on Mexico’s west coast, independent of any drug cartel—assaulted small towns and mid-sized cities across the country, driven by a brilliant, almost unbeatable marketing and distribution system. Together these phenomena continue to lay waste to communities from Tennessee to Oregon, Indiana to New Mexico.

Introducing a memorable cast of characters—pharma pioneers, young Mexican entrepreneurs, narcotics investigators, survivors, and parents—Quinones shows how these tales fit together. Dreamland is a revelatory account of the corrosive threat facing America and its heartland.
One teenager in a skirt. One teenager with a lighter. One moment that changes both of their lives forever. If it weren’t for the 57 bus, Sasha and Richard never would have met. Both were high school students from Oakland, California, one of the most diverse cities in the country, but they inhabited different worlds. Sasha, a white teen, lived in the middle-class foothills and attended a small private school. Richard, a black teen, lived in the crime-plagued flatlands and attended a large public one. Each day, their paths overlapped for a mere eight minutes. But one afternoon on the bus ride home from school, a single reckless act left Sasha severely burned, and Richard charged with two hate crimes and facing life imprisonment. The case garnered international attention, thrusting both teenagers into the spotlight.
The first Hispanic and third woman appointed to the United States Supreme Court, Sonia Sotomayor has become an instant American icon. Now, with a candor and intimacy never undertaken by a sitting Justice, she recounts her life from a Bronx housing project to the federal bench, a journey that offers an inspiring testament to her own extraordinary determination and the power of believing in oneself. Here is the story of a precarious childhood, with an alcoholic father (who would die when she was nine) and a devoted but overburdened mother, and of the refuge a little girl took from the turmoil at home with her passionately spirited paternal grandmother. But it was when she was diagnosed with juvenile diabetes that the precocious Sonia recognized she must ultimately depend on herself. She would learn to give herself the insulin shots she needed to survive and soon imagined a path to a different life. With only television characters for her professional role models, and little understanding of what was involved, she determined to become a lawyer, a dream that would sustain her on an unlikely course, from valedictorian of her high school class to the highest honors at Princeton, Yale Law School, the New York County District Attorney’s office, private practice, and appointment to the Federal District Court before the age of forty. Along the way we see how she was shaped by her invaluable mentors, a failed marriage, and the modern version of extended family she has created from cherished friends and their children. Through her still-astonished eyes, America’s infinite possibilities are envisioned anew in this warm and honest book.
Bryan Stevenson was a young lawyer when he founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice dedicated to defending those most desperate and in need: the poor, the wrongly condemned, and women and children trapped in the farthest reaches of our criminal justice system. One of his first cases was that of Walter McMillian, a young man who was sentenced to die for a notorious murder he insisted he didn’t commit. The case drew Bryan into a tangle of conspiracy, political machination, and legal brinksmanship—and transformed his understanding of mercy and justice forever. Just Mercy is at once an unforgettable account of an idealistic, gifted young lawyer’s coming of age, a moving window into the lives of those he has defended, and an inspiring argument for compassion in the pursuit of true justice.
Extraordinary Bodies is a cornerstone text of disability studies, establishing the field upon its publication in 1997. Framing disability as a minority discourse rather than a medical one, the book added depth to oppressive narratives and revealed novel, liberatory ones. Through her incisive readings of such texts as Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin and Rebecca Harding Davis's Life in the Iron Mills, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson exposed the social forces driving representations of disability. She encouraged new ways of looking at texts and their depiction of the body and stretched the limits of what counted as a text, considering freak shows and other pop culture artifacts as reflections of community rites and fears. Garland-Thomson also elevated the status of African-American novels by Toni Morrison and Audre Lorde. Extraordinary Bodies laid the groundwork for an appreciation of disability culture and an inclusive new approach to the study of social marginalization.
Pedro Zamora changed lives. When the HIV-positive AIDS educator appeared on MTV's The Real World: San Francisco, he taught millions of viewers about being gay and living with AIDS. Pedro's roommate on the show was Judd Winick, who created Pedro and Me to honor Pedro Zamora, his friend and teacher and an unforgettable human being. First published in 2000, Pedro and Me was a graphic novel pioneer. Its moving portrait of friendship and its urgent message have already reached thousands of people. Now, Pedro's story is reintroduced to today's graphically focused culture with a gorgeous, eye-catching new cover and a foreword from Judd.