

2018

Alderman, Naomi

**The Power** (with Handmaid's tale)

All over the world women are discovering they have the power.  
With a flick of the fingers they can inflict terrible pain - even death.  
Suddenly, every man on the planet finds they've lost control.  
The Day of the Girls has arrived - but where will it end?

Atwood, Margaret

**The Handmaid's tale** (with The power)

Offred is a Handmaid in The Republic of Gilead, a religious totalitarian state in what was formerly known as the United States. She is placed in the household of The Commander, Fred Waterford – her assigned name, Offred, means 'of Fred'. She has only one function: to breed. If Offred refuses to enter into sexual servitude to repopulate a devastated world, she will be hanged. Yet even a repressive state cannot eradicate hope and desire. As she recalls her pre-revolution life in flashbacks, Offred must navigate through the terrifying landscape of torture and persecution in the present day, and between two men upon which her future hangs.  
Masterfully conceived and executed, this haunting vision of the future places Margaret Atwood at the forefront of dystopian fiction.

Backman, Fredrik

**Britt-Marie was here**

Britt-Marie can't stand mess. A disorganized cutlery drawer ranks high on her list of unforgivable sins. She begins her day at 6 a.m., because only lunatics wake up later than that. And she is not passive-aggressive. Not in the least. It's just that sometimes people interpret her helpful suggestions as criticisms, which is certainly not her intention. She is not one to judge others--no matter how ill-mannered, unkempt, or morally suspect they might be.

But hidden inside the socially awkward, fussy busybody is a woman who has more imagination, bigger dreams, and a warmer heart that anyone around her realizes.

When Britt-Marie walks out on her cheating husband and has to fend for herself in the miserable backwater town of Borg--of which the kindest thing one can say is that it has a road going through it--she is more than a little unprepared. Employed as the caretaker of a soon-to-be demolished recreation center, the fastidious Britt-Marie has to cope with muddy floors, unruly children, and a (literal) rat for a roommate. She finds herself being drawn into the daily doings of her fellow citizens, an odd assortment of miscreants, drunkards, layabouts--and a handsome local policeman whose romantic attentions to Britt-Marie are as unmistakable as they are unwanted. Most alarming of all, she's given the impossible task of leading the supremely untalented children's soccer team to victory. In this small town of big-hearted misfits, can Britt-Marie find a place where she truly belongs?

Funny and moving, observant and humane, *Britt-Marie Was Here* celebrates the unexpected friendships that change us forever, and the power of even the gentlest of spirits to make the world a better place.

Barry, Sebastian **Days without end** (US army, 2 teenagers, 1850s, Indian and US civil war)

After signing up for the US army in the 1850s, aged barely seventeen, Thomas McNulty and his brother-in-arms, John Cole, fight in the Indian Wars and the Civil War. Having both fled terrible hardships, their days are now vivid and filled with wonder, despite the horrors they both see and are complicit in. Then when a young Indian girl crosses their path, the possibility of lasting happiness seems within reach, if only they can survive.

**Benaddi, Janette et al**

**Four Mums in a boat** (with Mistress and Commander)

The incredible true story of four ordinary working mums from Yorkshire who took on an extraordinary challenge and broke a world record along the way.

Janette, Frances, Helen and Niki, though all from Yorkshire, were four very different women, all juggling full time jobs alongside being mothers to each of their 2 children. They could never be described as athletes, but they were determined to be busy and the local Saturday morning rowing club was the perfect place to go to have a laugh and a gossip, get the blood pumping in the open air, and feel invigorated.

Brought together by their love of rowing, they quickly became firm friends, and it wasn't long before they cooked up a crazy idea over a few glasses of wine: together, they were going to do something that fewer people than had gone into space or climbed Everest had succeeded in doing. They were going to cross 3,000 miles of treacherous ocean in the toughest row in the world, The Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge.

Yes, they had children and husbands that they would be leaving behind for two months, yes they had businesses to run, mortgages to pay, responsibilities. And there was that little thing of them all being in their 40s and 50s.

But two years of planning, preparation, fundraising, training and difficult conversations later, and they found themselves standing on the edge of the San Sebastian harbour in the Canary Islands, petrified, exhilarated and ready to head up the race of their lives.

This is the story of how four friends together had the audacity to go on a wild, terrifying and beautiful adventure, not to escape life, but for life not to escape them.

**Cannon, Joanna**

**The trouble with goats and sheep**

England, 1976.

Mrs Creasy is missing and The Avenue is alive with whispers. As the summer shimmers endlessly on, ten-year-olds Grace and Tilly decide to take matters into their own hands.

And as the cul-de-sac starts giving up its secrets, the amateur detectives will find much more than they imagined...

**Dalton, Amelia**

**Mistress and Commander** (with 4 mums in a boat)

Weary of her Yorkshire county life of grouse moors and hunt balls, Amelia Dalton threw herself instead into converting a deep sea trawler into a holiday cruiser. Unprepared by her background, she had to deal with the closed community of fishermen in NE Scotland in the 90s, negotiate red tape, oversee shipyards and deal with engineers, while coping with demanding shareholders and wayward employees. What began as a love affair with the romance of the sea became a battle to stay afloat financially and literally. This is a lively account of an adventure like no other and a voyage of self-discovery.

Delaney, J.P. *The girl before* (with Try not to breathe)

Psychological thriller

***Enter the world of One Folgate Street and discover perfection . . . but can you pay the price?***

Jane stumbles on the rental opportunity of a lifetime: the chance to live in a beautiful ultra-minimalist house designed by an enigmatic architect, on condition she abides by a long list of exacting rules. After moving in, she discovers that a previous tenant, Emma, met a mysterious death there - and starts to wonder if her own story will be a re-run of the girl before.

As twist after twist catches the reader off guard, Emma's past and Jane's present become inexorably entwined in this tense, page-turning portrayal of psychological obsession.

**Dunmore, Helen**

**Birdcage walk** (final novel before she died)

It is 1792 and Europe is seized by political turmoil and violence.

Lizzie Fawkes has grown up in Radical circles where each step of the French Revolution is followed with eager idealism. But she has recently married John Diner Tredevant, a property developer who is heavily invested in Bristol's housing boom, and he has everything to lose from social upheaval and the prospect of war. Diner believes that Lizzie's independent, questioning spirit must be coerced and subdued. She belongs to him: law and custom confirm it, and she must live as he wants.

But as Diner's passion for Lizzie darkens, she soon finds herself dangerously alone.

**Fergusson, Ben**

**The Other Hoffman sister** (with Essex serpent)

***For Ingrid Hoffmann the story of her sister's disappearance began in their first weeks in Southwest Africa...***

Ingrid Hoffmann has always felt responsible for her sister Margarete and when their family moves to German Southwest Africa in 1902, her anxieties only increase. The casual racism that pervades the German community, the strange relationship between her parents and Baron von Ketz, from whom they bought their land, and the tension with the local tribes all culminate in tragedy when Baron von Ketz is savagely murdered. Baroness von Ketz and their son, Emil, flee with the Hoffmanns as the Baron's attackers burn down the family's farm.

Both families return to Berlin and Ingrid's concerns about Margarete are assuaged when she and Emil von Ketz become engaged on the eve of the First World War. But Margarete disappears on her wedding night at the von Ketz's country house. The mystery of what happened to her sister haunts Ingrid, but as Europe descends into chaos, her hope of discovering the truth becomes ever more distant.

After the war, in the midst of the revolution that brings down the Kaiser and wipes out the aristocracy that her family married into, Ingrid returns to the von Ketzes' crumbling estate determined to find out what really happened to her sister.

**Forster, E M**

**Howard's End**

**'The poor cannot always reach those whom they want to love, and they can hardly ever escape from those whom they love no longer. We rich can'**

'Only connect.' is the idea at the heart of this book, a heartbreaking and provocative tale of three families at the beginning of the twentieth century: the rich Wilcoxes, the gentle, idealistic Schlegels and the lower-middle class Basts. As the Schlegel sisters try desperately to help the Basts and educate the close-minded Wilcoxes, the families are drawn together in love, lies and death.

Frequently cited as E. M. Forster's finest work, *Howards End* brilliantly explores class warfare, conflict and the English character.

The Penguin English Library - 100 editions of the best fiction in English, from the eighteenth century and the very first novels to the beginning of the First World War.

**Gray, Charles**

**Herbal detective**

The Herbal Detective is a comic tale of love and unintended consequences. Rosie McLeod, pub proprietor and a gifted herbalist of local renown, is thirty-nine and holding, but only just. The talons of her fortieth birthday are in her back and her bloody, bloody husband hasn't laid a lustful hand on her for months. Rosie sets out to discover if her husband is having an affair, using deductive powers based solely on the careful preparation of plants and herbs. But as her well-laid plans entirely fall apart, the sighting of a large black cat sets her off in another direction to solve a murder before she becomes the next victim. Strange things have started to happen in the small town of Holy Cross. Black cats, sneaking suspicions and wine-powered ecstasy lay their grip on the clueless inhabitants and local news strongly suspects witches are behind it all. Meanwhile, poor Rosie McLeod is simply trying to deal with day to day catastrophes including lapsang souchong tea, carpet slippers and the impending doom of old age. With the innocent brewing of some herbs the frontiers between innocence and guilt, logic and magic, start to shift and events come thick and fast. Charles Gray's debut novel is a highly entertaining trip to Scottish village life and what really happens beneath its apparent dullness. The pillars of every community church, politics, and pub take a pounding and events of mystical origin claim their sacrifices. But who is the offender? And what is the charge? The Herbal Detective is an outstanding story that stays gripping until the very end.

**Gyasi, Yaa**  
**Homegoing**

Effia and Esi: two sisters with two very different destinies. One sold into slavery; one a slave trader's wife. The consequences of their fate reverberate through the generations that follow. Taking us from the Gold Coast of Africa to the cotton-picking plantations of Mississippi; from the missionary schools of Ghana to the dive bars of Harlem, spanning three continents and seven generations, Yaa Gyasi has written a miraculous novel - the intimate, gripping story of a brilliantly vivid cast of characters and through their lives the very story of America itself.

**Harper, Jane**  
**The dry**

Amid the worst drought to ravage Australia in a century, it hasn't rained in small country town Kiewarra for two years. Tensions in the community become unbearable when three members of the Hadler family are brutally murdered. Everyone thinks Luke Hadler, who committed suicide after slaughtering his wife and six-year-old son, is guilty. Policeman Aaron Falk returns to the town of his youth for the funeral of his childhood best friend, and is unwillingly drawn into the investigation. As questions mount and suspicion spreads through the town, Falk is forced to confront the community that rejected him twenty years earlier. Because Falk and Luke Hadler shared a secret, one which Luke's death threatens to unearth. And as Falk probes deeper into the killings, secrets from his past and why he left home bubble to the surface as he questions the truth of his friend's crime.

**Hogan, Ruth**  
**Keeper of Lost things**

Once a celebrated author of short stories now in his twilight years, **Anthony Peardew** has spent half his life collecting lost objects, trying to atone for a promise broken many years before.

Realising he is running out of time, he leaves his house and all its lost treasures to his assistant **Laura**, the one person he can trust to fulfil his legacy and reunite the thousands of objects with their rightful owners.

But the final wishes of the '**Keeper of Lost Things**' have unforeseen repercussions which trigger a most serendipitous series of encounters...

Honeyman, Gail

Eleanor Oliphant is completely fine

**Eleanor Oliphant has learned how to survive – but not how to live**

Eleanor Oliphant leads a simple life. She wears the same clothes to work every day, eats the same meal deal for lunch every day and buys the same two bottles of vodka to drink every weekend.

Eleanor Oliphant is happy. Nothing is missing from her carefully timetabled life. Except, sometimes, everything.

One simple act of kindness is about to shatter the walls Eleanor has built around herself. Now she must learn how to navigate the world that everyone else seems to take for granted – while searching for the courage to face the dark corners she's avoided all her life.

Change can be good. Change can be bad. But surely any change is better than... fine?

Johnstone, Doug

Gone again

As Mark Douglas photographs a pod of whales stranded in the waters off Edinburgh's Portobello Beach, he is called by his son's school: his wife, Lauren, hasn't turned up to collect their son. Calm at first, Mark collects Nathan and takes him home but as the hours slowly crawl by he increasingly starts to worry.

With brilliantly controlled reveals, we learn some of the painful secrets of the couple's shared past, not least that it isn't the first time Lauren has disappeared. And as Mark struggles to care for his son and shield him from the truth of what's going on, the police

Kirby, Emma Jane *The Optician of Lampedusa* (immigrants at sea)

**From an award-winning BBC journalist, this moving book turns the testimony of an accidental hero into a timeless story about human fellowship and the awakening of courage and conscience.**

*'I can hardly begin to describe to you what I saw as our boat approached the source of that terrible noise. I hardly want to. You won't understand because you weren't there. You can't understand. You see, I thought I'd heard seagulls screeching. Seagulls fighting over a lucky catch. Birds. Just birds.'*

Emma-Jane Kirby has reported extensively on the reality of mass migration today. In *The Optician of Lampedusa* she brings to life the moving testimony of an ordinary man whose late summer boat trip off a Sicilian island unexpectedly turns into a tragic rescue mission.

Marrs, John

The One

DNA and online dating

One simple mouth swab is all it takes. A quick **DNA test to find your perfect partner** – the one you're genetically made for.

A decade after scientists discover everyone has a gene they share with just one other person, millions have taken the test, desperate to find true love. Now, five more people meet their Match. But **even soul mates have secrets. And some are more shocking – and deadlier – than others...**

Mina, Denise

The long drop

Glasgow, 1957. It is a December night and William Watt is desperate. His family has been murdered and he needs to find out who killed them.

He arrives at a bar to meet Peter Manuel, who claims he can get hold of the gun that was used. But Watt soon realises that this infamous criminal will not give up information easily.

Inspired by true events, *The Long Drop* follows Watt and Manuel along back streets and into smoky pubs, and on to the courtroom where the murder trial takes place. Can Manuel really be trusted to tell the truth? And how far will Watt go to get what he wants?

Nicholls, David

Us

Douglas Petersen understands his wife's need to 'rediscover herself' now that their son is leaving home. He just thought they'd be doing their rediscovering together.

So when Connie announces that she will be leaving, too, he resolves to make their last family holiday into the trip of a lifetime: one that will draw the three of them closer, and win the respect of his son.

One that will make Connie fall in love with him all over again.

The hotels are booked, the tickets bought, the itinerary planned and printed.

What could possibly go wrong?

Packham, Chris

Fingers in the sparkle jar

**The memoir that inspired Chris Packham's BBC documentary, *Asperger's and Me***

*Every minute was magical, every single thing it did was fascinating and everything it didn't do was equally wondrous, and to be sat there, with a Kestrel, a real live Kestrel, my own real live Kestrel on my wrist! I felt like I'd climbed through a hole in heaven's fence.*

An introverted, unusual young boy, isolated by his obsessions and a loner at school, Chris Packham only felt at ease in the fields and woods around his suburban home. But when he stole a young Kestrel from its nest, he was about to embark on a friendship that would teach him what it meant to love, and that would change him forever. In his rich, lyrical and emotionally exposing memoir, Chris brings to life his childhood in the 70s, from his bedroom bursting with fox skulls, birds' eggs and sweaty jam jars, to his feral adventures. But pervading his story is the search for freedom, meaning and acceptance in a world that didn't understand him.

Beautifully wrought, this coming-of-age memoir will be unlike any you've ever read.

Perry, Sarah *Essex serpent* (with The Other Hoffman Sister)

London, 1893. When Cora Seaborne's controlling husband dies, she steps into her new life as a widow with as much relief as sadness. Along with her son Francis - a curious, obsessive boy - she leaves town for Essex, in the hope that fresh air and open space will provide refuge.

On arrival, rumours reach them that the mythical Essex Serpent, once said to roam the marshes claiming lives, has returned to the coastal parish of Aldwinter. Cora, a keen amateur naturalist with no patience for superstition, is enthralled, convinced that what the local people think is a magical beast may be a yet-undiscovered species. As she sets out on its trail, she is introduced to William Ransome, Aldwinter's vicar, who is also deeply suspicious of the rumours, but thinks they are a distraction from true faith.

As he tries to calm his parishioners, Will and Cora strike up an intense relationship, and although they agree on absolutely nothing, they find themselves at once drawn together and torn apart, affecting each other in ways that surprise them both.

*The Essex Serpent* is a celebration of love, and the many different shapes it can take.

Peterson, Alice

A song for tomorrow

Living with CF

**Tom** fell in love with Alice the moment he saw her. He realises that being with her will not be easy, but she is a force of nature, a burst of sunlight in his otherwise ordinary world.

Some people might look at **Alice** and think she has everything, but Alice knows she is not like other women. Her life is complicated, unpredictable, difficult. Alice does not like pity. All she wants to do, has

ever wanted to do, is sing.

Alice has been told not to follow her dreams. So has Tom. But when fate has already dealt a tough hand, it's time to stop listening to everyone else and only follow their hearts.

**Preston, John**

**A very English scandal**

**The shocking true story of the first British politician to stand trial for murder**

Behind oak-panelled doors in the House of Commons, men with cut-glass accents and gold signet rings are conspiring to murder. It's the late 1960s and homosexuality has only just been legalised, and Jeremy Thorpe, the leader of the Liberal party, has a secret he's desperate to hide. As long as Norman Scott, his beautiful, unstable lover is around, Thorpe's brilliant career is at risk. With the help of his fellow politicians, Thorpe schemes, deceives, embezzles - until he can see only one way to silence Scott for good.

**Pulley, Natasha**

**Watchmaker of Filigree Street**

In 1883, Thaniel Steepleton returns to his tiny flat to find a gold pocketwatch on his pillow. When the watch saves Thaniel's life in a blast that destroys Scotland Yard, he goes in search of its maker, Keita Mori - a kind, lonely Japanese immigrant. Meanwhile, Grace Carrow is sneaking into an Oxford library, desperate to prove the existence of the luminiferous ether before her mother can force her to marry. As the lives of these three characters become entwined, events spiral out of control until Thaniel is torn between loyalties, futures and opposing geniuses.

**Sansom, C J**

**Dissolution**

Henry V111 lawyer Shardlake

Dissolution is the first in the phenomenal Shardlake series by bestselling author, C. J. Sansom, followed by Dark Fire, Sovereign, Revelation, Heartstone and Lamentation.

It is 1537, a time of revolution that sees the greatest changes in England since 1066

Henry VIII has proclaimed himself Supreme Head of the Church and the country is waking up to savage new laws, rigged trials and the greatest network of informers ever seen. Under the order of Thomas Cromwell, a team of commissioners is sent through the country to investigate the monasteries. There can only be one outcome: the monasteries are to be dissolved.

But on the Sussex coast, at the monastery of Scarnsea, events have spiralled out of control. Cromwell's Commissioner Robin Singleton, has been found dead, his head severed from his body. His horrific murder is accompanied by equally sinister acts of sacrilege - a black cockerel sacrificed on the altar, and the disappearance of Scarnsea's Great Relic.

Dr Matthew Shardlake, lawyer and long-time supporter of Reform, has been sent by Cromwell into this atmosphere of treachery and death. But Shardlake's investigation soon forces him to question everything he hears, and everything that he intrinsically believes . . .

**Sedden Holly**

**Try not to breathe** (with the girl before)

Thriller

**Alex is sinking.** Slowly but surely, she's cut herself off from everything but her one true love - drink. Until she's forced to write a piece about a coma ward, where she meets Amy.

**Amy is lost.** When she was fifteen, she was attacked and left for dead in a park. Her attacker was never found. Since then, she has drifted in a lonely, timeless place. She's as good as dead, but not even her doctors are sure how much she understands.

Alex and Amy grew up in the same suburbs, played the same music, flirted with the same boys. And as Alex begins to investigate the attack, she opens the door to the same danger that has left Amy in a coma...

**Sedgwick, Helen**

**The comet seekers**

Sendker, Jan-Philipp *The art of hearing heartbeats*

A poignant and inspirational love story set in Burma, 'The Art of Hearing Heartbeats' spans the decades between the 1950s and the present. When a successful New York lawyer suddenly disappears without a trace, neither his wife nor his daughter Julia has any idea where he might be - until they find a love letter he wrote many years ago, to a Burmese woman they have never heard of. Intent on solving the mystery and coming to terms with her father's past, Julia decides to travel to the village where the woman lived. There she uncovers a tale of unimaginable hardship, resilience, and passion that will change her life once more.

**Sepetys, Ruta**

**Salt to the sea**

WINNER OF THE CILIP CARNEGIE MEDAL 2017

It's early 1945 and a group of people trek across Germany, bound together by their desperation to reach the ship that can take them away from the war-ravaged land. Four young people, each haunted by their own dark secret, narrate their unforgettable stories. Fans of *The Book Thief* or Helen Dunmore's *The Siege* will be totally absorbed.

This inspirational novel is based on a true story from the Second World War. When the German ship the *Wilhelm Gustloff* was sunk in port in early 1945 it had over 9000 civilian refugees, including children, on board. Nearly all were drowned. Ruta Sepetys, acclaimed author of *Between Shades of Grey*, brilliantly imagines their story.

'Ruta Sepetys is a master of historical fiction' Elizabeth Wein, author of *CODE NAME VERITY*

Simsion, Graeme *the rosie project (with boy made of blocks)*

Spark, Muriel – 3 each of *The Comforters*, *Memento Mori*, *The Girls of Slender means* and *The prime of Miss Jean Brodie* - all in the new Polygon/Birlinn imprint editions

**Strout, Elizabeth**

**My name is Lucy Barton**

Lucy is recovering from an operation in a New York hospital when she wakes to find her estranged mother sitting by her bed. They have not seen one another in years. As they talk Lucy finds herself recalling her troubled rural childhood and how it was she eventually arrived in the big city, got married and had children. But this unexpected visit leaves her doubting the life she's made: wondering what is lost and what has yet to be found.

**Stuart, Keith**

**A boy made of blocks** with the Rosie project

***Boy Made of Blocks* is a funny, heartwarming story of family and love inspired by the author's own experiences with his son, the perfect latest obsession for fans of *The Rosie Project*, David Nicholls and**

**Jojo Moyes.**

**A father who rediscovers love**

Alex loves his wife Jody, but has forgotten how to show it. He loves his son Sam, but doesn't understand him. He needs a reason to grab his future with both hands.

**A son who shows him how to live**

Meet eight-year-old Sam: beautiful, surprising - and different. To him the world is a frightening mystery. But as his imagination comes to life, his family will be changed . . . for good.

**Sullivan, Mark**

**Beneath a Scarlet sky**

Pino Lella want nothing to do with the war or the Nazis. He's a normal Italian teenager—obsessed with music, food, and girls—but his days of innocence are numbered. When his family home in Milan is destroyed by Allied bombs, Pino joins an underground railroad helping Jews escape over the Alps, and falls for Anna, a beautiful widow six years his senior.

In an attempt to protect him, Pino's parents force him to enlist as a German soldier—a move they think will keep him out of combat. But after Pino is injured, he is recruited at the tender age of eighteen to become the personal driver for Adolf Hitler's left hand in Italy, General Hans Leyers, one of the Third Reich's most mysterious and powerful commanders.

Now, with the opportunity to spy for the Allies inside the German High Command, Pino endures the horrors of the war and the Nazi occupation by fighting in secret, his courage bolstered by his love for Anna and for the life he dreams they will one day share.

Fans of *All the Light We Cannot See*, *The Nightingale*, and *Unbroken* will enjoy this riveting saga of history, suspense, and love.

**Taylor, Alan**

**Appointment in Arezzo** (hardback, £12.99) Nov 2017

Thien , Madeleine

Do not say we have nothing (China cultural revolution) Caanada in 1991, ten-year-old Marie and her mother invite a guest into their home: a young woman who has fled China in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square protests. Her name is Ai-Ming. As her relationship with Marie deepens, Ai-Ming tells the story of her family in revolutionary China, from the crowded teahouses in the first days of Chairman Mao's ascent to the Shanghai Conservatory in the 1960s and the events leading to the Beijing demonstrations of 1989. It is a history of revolutionary idealism, music, and silence, in which three musicians, the shy and brilliant composer Sparrow, the violin prodigy Zhuli, and the enigmatic pianist Kai struggle during China's relentless Cultural Revolution to remain loyal to one another and to the music they have devoted their lives to. Forced to re-imagine their artistic and private selves, their fates reverberate through the years, with deep and lasting consequences for Ai-Ming - and for Marie. Written with exquisite intimacy, wit and moral complexity, *Do Not Say We Have Nothing* magnificently brings to life one of the most significant political regimes of the 20th century and its traumatic legacy, which still resonates for a new generation. It is a gripping evocation of the persuasive power of revolution and its effects on personal and national identity, and an unforgettable meditation on China today.

**Whitehead, Colson**

**The Underground Railway**

Praised by Barack Obama and an Oprah Book Club Pick, *The Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead won the National Book Award 2016 and the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction 2017.

Cora is a slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia. All the slaves lead a hellish existence, but Cora has it worse than most; she is an outcast even among her fellow Africans and she is approaching womanhood, where it is clear even greater pain awaits. When Caesar, a slave recently arrived from Virginia, tells her about the Underground Railroad, they take the perilous decision to escape to the North.

In Whitehead's razor-sharp imagining of the antebellum South, the Underground Railroad has assumed a physical form: a dilapidated box car pulled along subterranean tracks by a steam locomotive, picking up fugitives wherever it can. Cora and Caesar's first stop is South Carolina, in a city that initially seems like a haven. But its placid surface masks an infernal scheme designed for its unknowing black inhabitants. And even worse: Ridgeway, the relentless slave catcher sent to find Cora, is close on their heels. Forced to flee again, Cora embarks on a harrowing flight, state by state, seeking true freedom. At each stop on her journey, Cora encounters a different world. As Whitehead brilliantly recreates the unique terrors for black people in the pre-Civil War era, his narrative seamlessly weaves the saga of America, from the brutal importation of Africans to the unfulfilled promises of the present day. *The Underground Railroad* is at once the story of one woman's ferocious will to escape the horrors of bondage and a shatteringly powerful meditation on history.