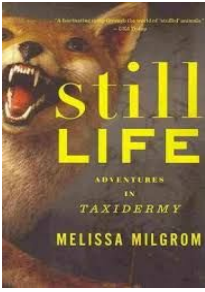
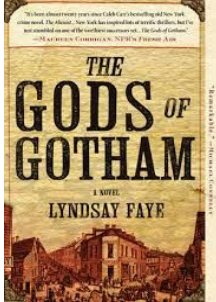


Sarah Bonish, Mississauga Public Library



Still Life: Adventures in Taxidermy by Melissa Milgrom

Still Life is a non-fiction book about journalist Melissa Milgrom's journey through the exciting and bizarre world of taxidermy. She visits the workshop of the last chief taxidermist for the American Museum of Natural History, and the workshop of a three-time World Taxidermy Champion. For some taxidermy centered fiction, try Kristen Arnett's *Mostly Dead Things* and *The Taxidermist's Daughter* by Kate Mosse.



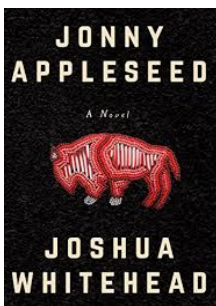
Gods of Gotham by Lindsay Faye

Set in 1864 in New York City, Timothy Wilde is a member of the newly formed NYPD. One night, he encounters a frightened 10 year old girl covered head to toe in blood who tells him terrible tales of bodies buried in a forest. Though he does not fully believe her, he begins to investigate and soon uncovers secrets that threaten to tear the city apart. Fans of Historical Fiction may also enjoy Alex Grecian's *The Yard* and *The Alienist* by Caleb Carr.



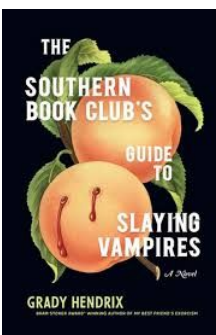
The Hunger by Alma Katsu

The true-life story of The Donner Party, a group of American colonialists, some of whom resorted to cannibalism after being snowed in on their way to California, is already a horrific story. Alma Katsu adds an element of the supernatural which make *The Hunger* a truly terrifying tale. Readers may enjoy *The Indifferent Stars Above: The Harrowing saga of the Donner Party Bride* by Daniel James Brown or, Dan Simmons's *The Terror*.



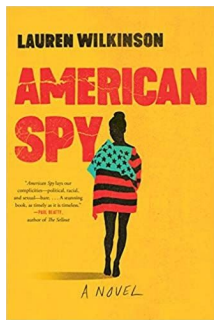
Jonny Appleseed by Joshua Whitehead

The narrator, Jonny, is a young Two-Spirit/Indigiqueer, living in the big city who makes a living as a cybersex worker and is trying to make enough money to get back to the "rez" for his stepfather's funeral. This short novel packs a punch with Jonny's thoughts and memories about love, sex, trauma, growing up queer on the reserve, and his kokum (grandmother). This is a funny and heartbreaking coming of age story. Readers who are looking for similar books may also enjoy *nítisânak* by Lindsay Nixon and *Mamaskatch: A Cree Coming of Age* by Darrel J. McLeod.



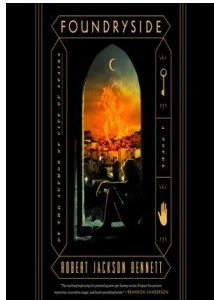
The Southern Book Club's Guide to Slaying Vampires by Grady Hendrix. Patricia Campbell's only respite from her boring, but comfortable life, is her book club. Her life takes a drastic change when she is brutally attacked by an elderly neighbour, bringing the neighbour's handsome and mysterious relative, James Harris, to town. Soon children on the "wrong" side of town are turning up dead and Patricia is convinced that James Harris is to blame. With the help of her book club, she digs into his past, but what she finds out is more terrifying than anything she could have ever imagined. For more terrifying tales of monsters in unexpected places, try *Let the Right One In* by John Ajvide Lindqvist and *Broken Monsters* by Lauren Beukes.

Elizabeth Campbell, Bradford West Gwillimbury Public Library



American Spy by Lauren Wilkinson

This story of espionage features paranoia and multiple agendas, tropes familiar to anyone who watches the tv shows *Homeland* or *The Americans*. The novel is enhanced by the personal story of the protagonist, Marie, a young black woman trying to forge a career at the FBI in the 1980s. Family circumstances influence her life-altering decision to work on behalf of a shadowy CIA-affiliated agency, seeking to disrupt the government of Burkina Faso. Aware that her actions derive from multiple motives, Marie comes to understand much about her identity and her choices as she completes her mission. Suspenseful and reflective, this is a great read.



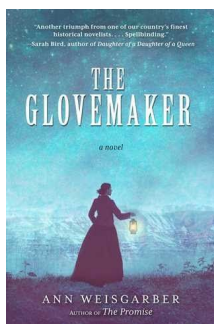
Foundryside by Robert Jackson Bennett

An innovative mixture of magic and technology are at the heart of this fast-paced fantasy story, set in an industrial, lawless city. A young thief and the magical artifact she “acquires” become entangled in murderous industrial rivalries, while on the run from the authorities. Great characters, a very imaginative world, neat magic, and a compelling story propel the book. This is the first book in *The Founders* series. Book 2, *Shorefall*, is publishing in April 2020. For fans of *Uprooted* by Naomi Novik or *The Bear and the Nightingale* series by Katherine Arden.



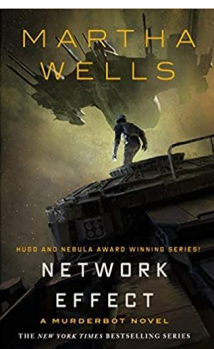
Pumpkinheads by Rainbow Rowell and Faith Erin Hicks

This is a graphic novel by the dream team of author Rowell (a queen of dialogue who also wrote *Eleanor and Park* and *Fangirl*) and illustrator Hicks (*Nameless City* series, *Friends with Boys*, *The Adventures of Superhero Girl*). It's an amusing tale of a pair of high school grads on their last night of work at a local pumpkin-themed amusement park. Many truths are realized, many sugary snacks are consumed. And there's a goat on the loose. Full of jokes and fun and a great entry point to other books by these authors.



The Glovemaker by Ann Weisgarber

My favourite book of 2019, *The Glovemaker* is set in a Mormon frontier community in Utah, just after the Civil War. The heroine has her hands full, running her farm while awaiting the overdue return of her husband, an itinerant wheelwright who has been away from home for several months. A stranger appears at her door one winter night, setting off violence and unrest in the community. A deceptively slow and reflective writing style coupled with action and fully-realized characters makes for a great read. For another book which evokes loneliness and landscape very well, try Jojo Moyes' *The Giver of Stars*.



Network Effect by Martha Wells

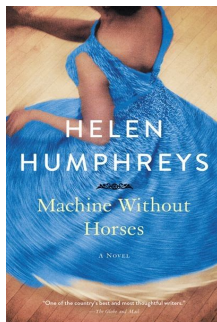
If you are not yet acquainted with Murderbot, the introverted, supercapable security robot who wants nothing more than to hide in a locker and binge watch space operas through their feed, you are in for a treat. First, read the four novellas already in print (*All Systems Red*, *Artificial Condition*, *Rogue Protocol* and *Exit Strategy*). Then you'll be ready for the first full-length novel due out in May. Murderbot is a funny, cranky character, who is struggling with their identity and their sense of responsibility for humans, while being unwillingly embroiled in a battle with evil corporations. Another recent novel which centers on the emotional growth of artificial intelligence is *A Closed and Common Orbit* by Becky Chambers, book 2 of *The Wayfarers* series.

Kristen Caschera, London Public Library



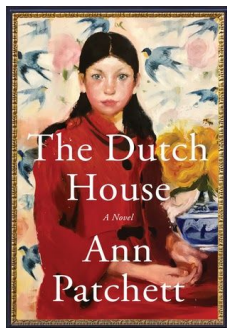
Our Homesick Songs by Emma Hooper

This beautifully written, lyrical novel is steeped in mysticism and magic realism. When the fish disappear from the Newfoundland fishing town of Big Running, so do most of the families - except the Connors. Parents Aidan and Martha try to eke out a living, while daughter Cora dreams of a bigger life elsewhere and son Finn desperately clings to his hometown. For a book with a similar descriptive feel, try M.L. Stedman's *The Light Between Oceans*; or try *Personal Effects* by Carmel Macdonald Graeme for another story about starting over.



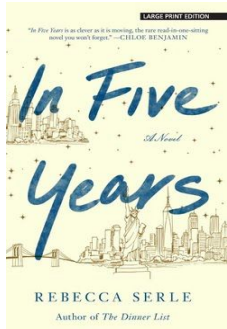
Machine Without Horses by Helen Humphreys

A truly unique read that is part biographical fiction, part "writing about writing," and two great books combined into one. In part one, an unnamed author works through her writing process. Part two is biographical, the life story of famed salmon-fly dresser Meghan Boyd, who's fascinating and notoriously private life is perfect fodder for fiction. Pro tip: read the second half first! For another book about writing, try *Unless* by Carol Shields.



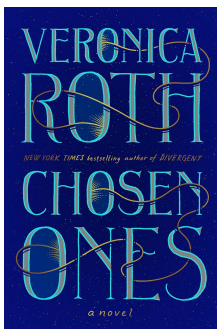
The Dutch House by Ann Patchett

Spanning five decades, *The Dutch House* is the story of how Danny and Maeve Conroy's sibling relationship both sustains them and constrains them. Thrust into poverty after the death of their father, Danny and Maeve learn to rely on each other - and only each other. *The Children's Crusade* by Ann Packer also follows a family over multiple decades, and *Family of Origin* by C.J. Hauser centres on a sibling relationship after the loss of a parent.



In Five Years by Rebecca Serle

Falling asleep one evening, Dani Shapiro contemplates her perfect life: she has a new high-powered job, a successful career, a handsome partner, and a brand new engagement. But when she wakes up, she is five years in the future, beside a strange man, with a different ring on her finger. Is it a dream, or a portent of things to come? For other books about parallel realities, try Taylor Jenkins Reid's *Maybe in Another Life* or Leigh Himes' *The One That Got Away*.



Chosen Ones by Veronica Roth

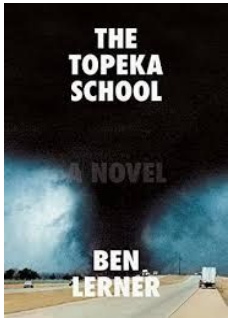
It's been ten years since five teens were selected by a secret government organization to defeat The Dark One, an evil entity causing death and destruction all over the world. Now, a decade later, a new evil faces society and the Chosen Ones are called to duty. With elements of urban fantasy, science fiction and steampunk, this book will appeal to readers who enjoy Lev Grossman's *The Magicians* series or *Six of Crows* by Leigh Bardugo.

Jeff Dodge, Vaughan Public Library



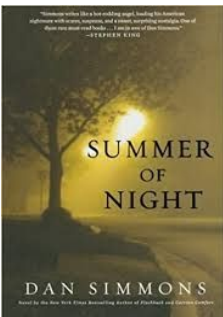
Lost Children Archive - Valeria Luiselli

Luiselli's first book written in English is a smartly inventive look at the road trip novel in which an unnamed married couple and their two (adorable) young children drive cross country to Arizona. Long stretches spent in the car allow the two narrators, the wife/mother and son, to privately consider the marriage's publicly unacknowledged slide into disintegration. Add to that a parallel story addressing the tragic results of the U.S. immigration policy and the heart wrenching toll it takes on fractured families. Reminiscent of W.G. Sebald (*The Emigrants*) and *Children of the Land* (Marcelo Hernandez Castillo)



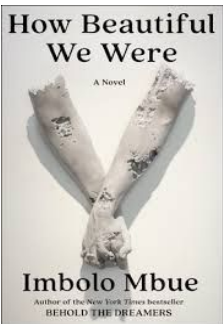
The Topeka School - Ben Lerner

It's the late 90s and Adam Gordon (Lerner's stand-in) is near high school graduation. We get a portrait of the poet as a young man; practicing for debate championships and honing his dubious free-style rap skills. Adam's psychiatrist parents (Harriet Lerner is the author's real mother) also narrate the story which astutely transitions from the pre-90s to present day. The range here is formidable, tackling experiences of privilege, exclusion and the breakdown of civil discourse. Other autofiction include Knausgaard's *My Struggle* and Rachel Cusk's *Outline Trilogy*.



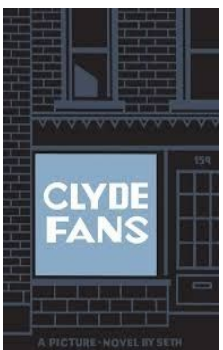
Summer of Night - Dan Simmons

As an admirer of that small but mighty sub-genre: *nostalgic-coming-of-age-tales-of-small-town-kids-on-bikes-facing-peril* I could have chosen *It* or *Boy's Life* but landed on Simmons' own stab at it. Massive Old Central School has long loomed large as a foil to five friends' sense of freedom and fun so you'd think the last day of grade 6 would be a welcome relief. But that is exactly when things take some very dark turns. Something evil lurks in those unhallowed halls! King, McCammon and Simmons surely provided some inspiration for *Stranger Things*.



We Were Once Beautiful - Imbolo Mbue

Colonialism, corruption and corporate greed have laid waste to the fictional African village Kosawa. We follow young Thula over 40 years as her homeland is ruined from oil spills and her friends and family die from toxic pollution and soldiers' bullets. Throughout all, she never gives up hope for restitution and revolution and she longs for the day when her village's destiny will be in their own hands and not controlled by foreign resource extractors and brutal dictators. For background, try Thula's favourite *The Wretched of the Earth* (Franz Fanon) or other west African authors Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie or Chigozie Obioma



Clyde Fans by Seth

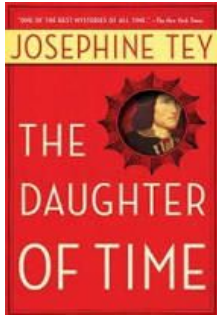
The classic line from L.P. Hartley's wonderful *The Go Between* "The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there" could apply to the world Seth has created over two decades. The graphic novel pays tribute to a vanished 20th century landscape since displaced by box stores and the demands of mass consumerism. The toll this takes on two brothers and their fan business is infused with tenderness, nostalgia and melancholy. It's a searing indictment of the cost advanced capitalism has had on our communities and our mental well-being. Plus, the artwork is stunning! *Death of a Salesman* (Arthur Miller) and *Julius Knipl: Real estate Photographer* (Ben Katchnor) dip their toes into similar waters, albeit in very different ways.

Kat Drennan-Scace, Hamilton Public Library



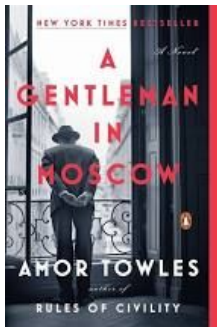
Station Eleven by Emily St John Mandel

This timely dystopian read looks at Canada post-pandemic. Centering around an aging movie star and the many people in his life, *Station Eleven* asks how do we keep our sanity and humanity in the midst of crisis? Moving back and forth in time, this literary, character-driven page-turner will stay with you long after the last page. For other immersive dystopian reads, try Justin Cronin's *The Passage*, a 2019 Best Bet, or *California* by Edan Lepucki.



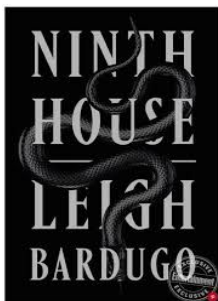
Daughter of Time by Josephine Tey

While hospital bound, Scotland Yard Inspector Alan Grant looks at pictures to pass the time. One in particular stands out – King Richard III. The longer Alan looks at it, the more he thinks this isn't the face of a murderer. He enlists the help of several characters to help him get to the bottom of his hunch. Library and research nerds will appreciate the excitement behind uncovering a long-buried mystery in this unusual whodunit. For other historical mysteries, try P.D. James or the Josephine Tey mysteries by Nicola Upson.



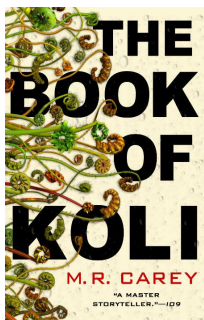
A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles

In 1922, Count Alexander Rostov is living in the Metropol, a grand hotel in Moscow. He is sentenced to house arrest by a Bolshevik tribunal and moves into the dingy attic. Unfailingly witty, and resourceful, Count Alexander changes the lives of many that enter the hotel. Beautifully written and immersive, you will have a hard time putting this book down. For intricate historical fiction, try *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr or *Bel Canto* by Ann Patchett.



Ninth House by Leigh Bardugo

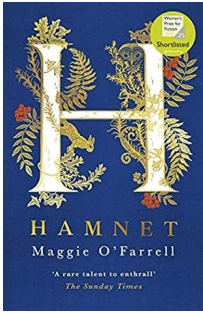
Since she was little, Alex has been able to see ghosts. This ability has led her down many dark roads but none could prepare her for being recruited for a mysterious project at Yale - monitoring supernatural secret societies. As she's swept into the dark, corrupt world of the ultra-rich and powerful, she realizes she's in over her head. The first in a series, *Ninth House* is a twisty turny slow burn of a book. For another spooky read, try *The Diviners* by Libba Bray. For a similar setting, try the *All Souls* trilogy by Deborah Harkness.



Book of Koli by M. R. Carey

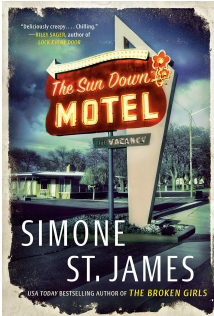
Koli's world is isolated, surrounded by man eating trees. Within his village are the Ramparts, a chosen few who have access to ancient tech. Koli dreams of being a Rampart himself but when he gets caught trying to steal tech, he is ostracized from his village and forced into the dangerous outside world. *Book of Koli* has great worldbuilding and a unique narrative voice that will suck you into this dangerous world. Readers may also like the *Dust Lands* trilogy by Moira Young or the *Chaos Walking* trilogy by Patrick Ness.

Jennifer Green, Oshawa Public Library



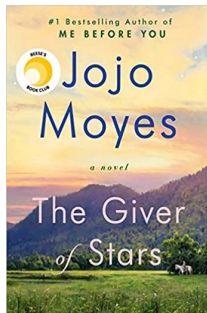
Hamnet & Judith by Maggie O'Farrell

This is the story of the family behind the great English playwright William Shakespeare. O'Farrell's book is a beautifully written story that jumps between the past and present, and introduces readers to wife Agnes and his daughter, Susannah, and twins Hamnet and Judith. Sad, lovely, and absorbing, *Hamnet & Judith* is a wonderful read for those who enjoyed *Longbourn* by Jo Baker and *Song of Achilles* by Madeline Miller.



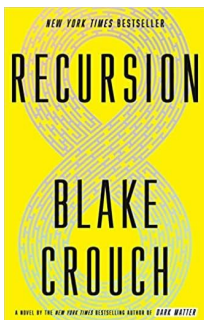
The Sun Down Motel by Simone St. James

Thirty-five years ago, Viv Delaney disappeared while working at the Sun Down Motel in upstate New York. Her niece wants to find out the truth. Add a few supernatural elements and some mystery and you have Simone St. James's new paranormal mystery. A light, atmospheric read that's similar to *The Shape of Night* by Tess Gerritsen or *The Invited* by Jennifer McMahon.



Giver of Stars by Jojo Moyes

Who doesn't love to read about librarians? Based on the real Packhorse Librarians of Kentucky in the 1920s, Moyes's story revolves around Margery, a spit-fire who loves to help her local community, and Alice, a British woman trying to find her way in a small American town. The women are fabulous, and the tone is typical Moyes—a little romantic and emotional. For a similar read, try *Book Woman* by Michele Richardson or *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café* by Fannie Flagg.



Recursion by Blake Crouch

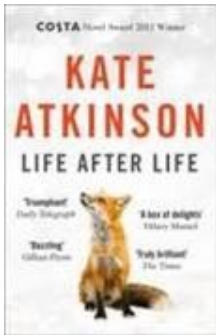
People are being driven mad with memories of a life they've never lived. New York cop tries to find out what's happening and discovers that people's desire to re-live past memories could end up destroying us all. Crouch's books are fast-paced and exhilarating. There are lots of twists and turns, and he explains the science behind the ideas in layman's terms. If you enjoy thrilling sci-fi stories, try *Cold Storage* by David Koepp or *Daemon* by Daniel Suarez.



Nevernight by Jay Kristoff

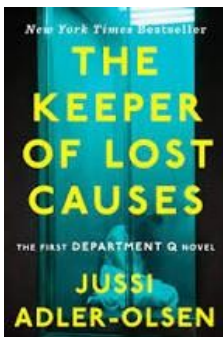
After watching her father die, Mia Corvere vows to avenge his death and the destruction of her family. While on the run, she meets with a retired killer who introduces her to a school of assassins. This is the first book in a fast-paced, dark fantasy trilogy, which was completed in 2019. A great read for those who miss *Game of Thrones* (Mia reminds me of Arya Stark).

Laura Peacock, Waterloo Public Library



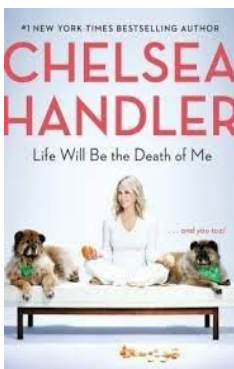
Life After Life by Kate Atkinson

There is something beautiful about the power of choice. Ursula Todd can be married or a spinster; sexually free or make choices that scar her forever. In a Groundhog Day-esque pattern, Ursula lives, make choices, then dies. Then she lives again, makes similar or drastically different choices, then dies, only to live again. At times the narrative is repetitive, but like other timeline stories like *The Time Travellers Wife* by Audrey Niefeneger, the effort to follow the pattern is well worth it. Engaging settings, from quaint country homes to middle of war-torn London only increases the draw into this narrative. This historical tale makes you question what kind of selfish or utilitarian decisions you would make if you understood how you could impact the future.



The Keeper of Lost Causes by Jussi Adler-Olsen

Returning to work after a shootout that killed one cop and paralyzed another, the historically difficult Carl Morck becomes an arduous partner. To save his colleagues from his attitude, Morck is moved to his own department, Department Q. There's no denying Morck was once great at his job, but the road back to caring about anything – especially his job - is a long one. It takes affable assistant Assad's constant poking to bring Morck out of his stupor long enough to work on solving one of Department Q's cold cases. Fans of Henning Mankell's *Wallander* series or Anders De la Motte's *MemoRandom* series will recognize the high suspense, but they'll be pleasantly enthralled but the unique characters and complex cases Adler-Olsen created.



Life Will Be the Death of Me... and You Too! By Chelsea Handler

Not known for sharing her serious side, Chelsea Handler's new memoir packs a strong personal punch. After Trump took office, Handler couldn't stop being angry. Hell hath no fury like a comedian scorned. The book chronicles her time discovering a therapist whose methods worked for her and the revelation that her older brothers' death when she was a small child had drastically painted all of her relationships and ability to mature as a person. The reveals are emotional. It is profoundly relateable to anyone who has experienced loss at a young age. Of course, there's still a touch of the Chelsea Handler we know and this is a very compelling addition to the celebrity memoir genre. Combine with Chelsea's podcast by the same title for even more background.