

Best Books of 2020

Based on a selection of lists from 40 newspapers, magazines, book review journals, websites, and award shortlists, as well as favorites from Pollard Library staff. Books are available at PML unless otherwise noted. Alternate formats are included in parentheses.

Appearing on 20 or more lists

Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents by Isabel Wilkerson (OE, OA)

The Vanishing Half by Brit Bennett (LP, OE, OA)

Appearing on 15-19 Lists

Deacon King Kong by James McBride (LP, OE, OA)

Homeland Elegies by Ayad Akhtar (OE, OA)

Leave the World Behind by Rumaan Alam (OE, OA)

Luster by Raven Leilani—**Kirkus Prize Winner** (OE, OA)

Transcendent Kingdom by Yaa Gyasi (OE, OA)

Appearing on 10-14 Lists

Hamnet: A Novel of the Plague by Maggie O'Farrell (OE, OA)

Hidden Valley Road: Inside the Mind of an American Family by Robert Kolker (LP, OE, OA)

Memorial by Bryan Washington (OE, OA)

Memorial Drive: A Daughter's Memoir by Natasha Trethewey—MVLC (OE, OA)

Mexican Gothic by Silvia Moreno-Garcia—MVLC (OE, OA)

The Mirror & the Light by Hilary Mantel (LP, OE, OA)

Shuggie Bain by Douglas Stuart—**Booker Prize Winner** (OE, OA)

Appearing on 9 Lists

A Burning by Megha Majumdar (LP, OE, OA)

The City We Became by N.K. Jemisin—(OE, OA)

The Dead are Arising: The Life of Malcolm X by Les Payne and Tamara Payne—**National Book Award Winner** (OE)

Interior Chinatown by Charles Yu*—**National Book Award Winner** (OE)

Appearing on 6-8 Lists

Blacktop Wasteland by S.A. Cosby (OE, OA)

A Children's Bible by Lydia Millet* (OE, OA)

Cleanness by Garth Greenwell (OE, OA)

The Cold Millions by Jess Walter (OE, OA)

The Death of Vivek Oji by Akwaeke Emezi—MVLC for regular print (LP, OE, OA)

The Dragons, the Giant, the Women by Wayétu Moore—coming soon—MVLC (OE)

Fathoms: The World in the Whale by Rebecca Giggs—MVLC

The Glass Hotel by Emily St. John Mandel (LP, OE, OA)

How Much of These Hills Is Gold by C Pam Zhang (LP, OE, OA)

The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue by V.E. Schwab* (OE, OA)

Just Us by Claudia Rankine—MVLC (OE)

Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning by Cathy Park Hong (OE, OA)

Notes on a Silencing by Lacy Crawford—MVLC (OE)

The Office of Historical Corrections by Danielle Evans

Piranesi by Susanna Clarke*—MVLC (OE)

A Promised Land by Barack Obama—MVLC (OE, OA)

Real Life by Brandon Taylor (OE, OA)

Such a Fun Age by Kiley Reid (pub. 12/31/19) (LP, OE, OA)

Sharks in the Time of Saviors by Kawai Strong Washburn (OE)

Writers & Lovers by Lily King (LP, OE, OA)

Uncanny Valley by Anna Wiener—MVLC (OE, OA)

The Undocumented Americans by Karla Cornejo Villavicencio—coming soon—MVLC

Vesper Flights by Helen Macdonald (OE, OA)

World of Wonders: In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments by Aimee Nezhukumatathil—**Barnes & Noble Book of the Year**—MVLC

MVLC=not at Pollard; request from other libraries

LP=Large Print, OE=Overdrive EBook, OA=Overdrive Audiobook,

CD=Audiobook on CD

*=Staff Pick

Appearing on 4-5 Lists

African American Poetry: 250 Years of Struggle & Song edited by Kevin Young—MVLC

Apeirogon by Colum McCann (LP, CD, OE, OA)

The Book of Eels: Our Enduring Fascination with the Most Mysterious Creature in the Natural World by Patrik Svensson

His Only Wife by Peace Adzo Medie (OE)

Hood Feminism: Notes from the Women That a Movement Forgot by Mikki Kendall (OE, OA)

How to Make a Slave and Other Essays by Jerald Walker—coming soon—MVLC

Hurricane Season by Fernanda Melchor—coming soon—MVLC (OE)

Jack by Marilynne Robinson—coming soon—MVLC (OE)

The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Cartoonist by Adrian Tomine—MVLC

The Lying Life of Adults by Elena Ferrante—MVLC (OE, OA)

Mill Town: Reckoning with What Remains by Kerri Arsenault—MVLC

My Autobiography of Carson McCullers by Jenn Shapland—coming soon—MVLC (OE)

Owls of the Eastern Ice: A Quest to Find and Save the World's Largest Owl by Jonathan C. Slaght—MVLC

Plain Bad Heroines by Emily M. Danforth (OE, OA)

Sigh, Gone: A Misfit's Memoir of Great Books, Punk Rock, and the Fight to Fit In by Phuc Tran

The Splendid and the Vile: A Saga of Churchill, Family, and Defiance During the Blitz by Erik Larson (LP, OE, OA)

Unworthy Republic: The Dispossession of Native Americans and the Road to Indian Territory by Claudio Saunt

Utopia Avenue by David Mitchell—MVLC for regular print (LP, OE, OA)

Weather by Jenny Offill (LP, OE, OA)

When No One is Watching by Alyssa Cole—MVLC (OE, OA)

Wow, No Thank You by Samantha Irby—MVLC (OE, OA)

Staff Picks

Not appearing on previous lists

American Sherlock: Murder, Forensics, and the Birth of American CSI by Kate Winkler Dawson (OE, OA)

Barker House by David Moloney

Beach Read by Emily Henry[^]—MVLC (OE, OA)

Black Brother, Black Brother by Jewell Parker Rhodes (OE)

The Book of Lost Names by Kristin Harmel (OE, OA)

Cemetery Boys by Aiden Thomas[^]—MVLC (OE, OA)

Djinn Patrol on the Purple Line by Deepa Anappara[^] (LP, OE)

The Exiles by Christina Baker Kline[^]—MVLC (OE, OA)

Faster: How a Jewish Driver, an American Heiress, and a Legendary Car Beat Hitler's Best by Neal Bascomb

God's Shadow: Sultan Selim, His Ottoman Empire, and the Making of the Modern World by Alan Mikhail—MVLC

The Great Offshore Grounds by Vanessa Veselka[^]

Home Before Dark by Riley Sager[^]—MVLC (OE, OA)

Legendborn by Tracy Deonn (OE, OA)

The Night Watchman by Louise Erdrich[^] (OE, OA)

Nobody Will Tell You This but Me: A True (as Told to Me) Story by Bess Kalb[^] (OE, OA)

Saving Ruby King by Catherine Adel West[^]

The Secret Lives of Church Ladies by Deesha Philyaw[^]—coming soon—MVLC (OA)

Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You by Ibram X. Kendi and Jason Reynolds[^] (OE, OA)

Three Hours in Paris by Cara Black

Universe of Two by Stephen P. Kiernan

You Know I'm No Good by Jessie Ann Foley—MVLC

MVLC=not at Pollard; request from other libraries

LP=Large Print, OE=Overdrive EBook, OA=Overdrive Audiobook, CD=Audiobook on CD

[^]=Appears on 1-3 Best Books list

Do you need help using Overdrive or requesting a book? Call the Reference Desk at **978-674-4121**. The librarians will be happy to assist you. Please note that due to their popularity, some of the books will have waiting lists.