

Best Books of 2021

Based on a selection of lists from 50 newspapers, magazines, book review journals, websites, and award lists, 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

Empire of Pain: The Secret History of the Sackler Dynasty by Patrick Radden Keefe (OE, OA)

Harlem Shuffle by Colson Whitehead (LP, OE, OA)

Klara and the Sun by Kazuo Ishiguro (PA, OE, OA)

Appearing on 15-19 Lists

Cloud Cuckoo Land by Anthony Doerr (OE, OA)

Crying in H Mart by Michelle Zauner (OE, OA)

Detransition, Baby by Torrey Peters (OE, OA)

Great Circle by Maggie Shipstead (OE, OA)

How the Word is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America by Clint Smith (PA, OE, OA)

A Little Devil in America: Notes in Praise of Black Performance by Hanif Abdurraqib (OE)

The Love Songs of W. E. B. DuBois by Honorée Fannone Jeffers* (OE, OA)

Matrix by Lauren Groff (OE, OA)

No One is Talking About This by Patricia Lockwood (OE, OA)

Appearing on 10-14 Lists

Afterparties by Anthony Veasna So (CD, OE, OA)

All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack, a Black Family Keepsake by Tiya Miles—**National Book Award Winner** (OE, OA)

Beautiful World, Where Are You by Sally Rooney (LP, OE, OA)

Crossroads by Jonathan Franzen (OE)

Intimacies by Katie Kitamura (OE, OA)

Harrow by Joy Williams—**Kirkus Prize Winner**

The Prophets by Robert Jones (PA, OE, OA)

Seek You: A Journey Through American Loneliness by Kristen Radtke (OE)

The Sentence by Lousie Erdrich (OE, OA)

Appearing on 6-9 Lists

Bewilderment by Richard Powers (OE, OA)

The Dangers of Smoking in Bed by Mariana Enriquez

Everyone Knows Your Mother Is a Witch by Rivka Galchen (OE)

The Five Wounds by Kristin Valdez Quade (OE)

Hell of a Book by Jason Mott—**National Book Award Winner** (OE)

How Beautiful We Were by Imbolo Mbue (MVLC for print, PA, OE, OA)

Let Me Tell You What I Mean by Joan Didion (OE, OA)

Libertie by Kaitlyn Greenidge (LP, OE, OA)

The Life of the Mind by Christine Smallwood

The Lincoln Highway by Amor Towles (LP, CD, OE, OA)

Milk Blood Heat by Dantiel W. Moniz (OE)

Milk Fed by Melissa Broder (OE, OA)

My Monticello by Jocelyn Nicole Johnson (OE, OA)

On Juneteenth by Annette Girdon-Reed (PA, OE)

The Other Black Girl by Zakiya Dalila Harris (CD, OE, OA)

People We Meet on Vacation by Emily Henry (LP, OE, OA)

Project Hail Mary by Andy Weir (LP, OE, OA)

Razorblade Tears by S. A. Cosby (OE, OA)

Second Place by Rachel Cusk (OE, OA)

Smile: The Story of a Face by Sarah Ruhl (OE)

Somebody's Daughter by Ashley C. Ford (LP, OE, OA)

The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together by Heather McGhee —coming soon (MVLC, OE, OA)

A Swim in a Pond in the Rain by George Saunders* (OE, OA)

These Precious Days by Ann Patchett (OE, OA)

Under a White Sky: The Nature of the Future by Elizabeth Kolbert (OE, OA)

MVLC=not at Pollard—request from other libraries, LP=Large Print, OE=Overdrive eBook, OA=Overdrive Audiobook, CD=Audiobook on CD, PA=Playaway -over-

*=staff pick

Appearing on 5 Lists

- The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story* created by Nikole Hannah-Jones and the New York Times Magazine—coming soon (MVLC, OE)
- All the Frequent Troubles of Our Days: The True Story of the American Woman at the Heart of the German Resistance to Hitler* by Rebecca Donner (CD, OE, OA)
- The Committed* by Viet Thanh Nguyen (OE)
- The Copenhagen Trilogy* by Tove Ditlevsen (MVLC)
- Damnation Spring* by Ash Davidson (OE, OA)
- Dear Senthuran* by Akwaeke Emezi* (OA)
- The Final Girl Support Group* by Grady Hendrix (LP, OE, OA)
- The Final Revival of Opal & Nev* by Dawnie Walton (LP, OE)
- Finding the Mother Tree: Discovering the Wisdom of the Forest* by Suzanne Simard (OE, OA)
- I Love You but I've Chosen Darkness* by Claire Vaye Watkins (OE)
- Infinite Country* by Patricia Engel (OE, OA)
- Invisible Child: Poverty, Survival & Hope in an American City* by Andrea Elliott (OA)
- Light Perpetual* by Francis Spufford (CD, OE)
- The Man Who Lived Underground* by Richard Wright (MVLC, OE)
- Nightbitch* by Rachel Yoder (MVLC, OE, OA)
- The Promise* by Damon Galgut—**Booker Prize Winner** (OE)
- She Who Became the Sun* by Shelley Parker-Chan (OE, OA)
- The Sweetness of Water* by Nathan Harris (PA, OE, OA)
- The Twilight Zone* by Nona Fernandez (OE)
- Wayward* by Dana Spiotta (OE)
- When We Cease to Understand the World* by Benjamin Labatut—coming soon (MVLC, OE)

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.

MVLC=not at Pollard; request from other libraries, LP=Large Print, OE=Overdrive EBook, OA=Overdrive Audiobook, CD=Audiobook on CD, PA=Playaway

*staff pick

^=Appears on 1-3 Best Books list

Staff Picks—Adult and Young Adult

Not appearing on previous lists

- Across the Grass Green Fields* by Seanan McGuire (OE, OA)
- The Bone Code* by Kathy Reichs (CD, LP, PA, OE, OA)
- Chasing Me to My Grave: An Artist's Memoir of the Jim Crow South* by Winfred Rembert, as told to Erin I. Kelly^
- The Chosen and the Beautiful* by Nghi Vo^ (LP, OE, OA)
- Christmas Promise* by Richard Paul Evans
- Counting Down with You* by Tashie Bhuiyan (OE)
- Eternal* by Lisa Scottoline (PA, OE, OA)
- Fuzz: When Nature Breaks the Law* by Mary Roach^ (OE)
- The Galaxy, and the Ground Within* by Becky Chambers (OE, OA)
- The Guncle* by Steven Rowley (OE, OA)
- The Lost Village* by Camilla Sten and Alexandra Fleming (OE)
- Mary Jane* by Jessica Anya Blau^ (OE, OA)
- The Morning Star* by Karl Ove Knausgaard (OE)
- Nubia: Real One* by L.L. McKinney
- Our Darkest Night* by Jennifer Robson (OE, OA)
- The Paris Library* by Janet Skeslien Charles (MVLC for print, PA, OE, OA)
- Six Crimson Cranes* by Elizabeth Lim (OE, OA)
- Songs for the End of the World* by Saleema Nawaz
- We Free the Stars* by Hafsah Faizal (OE)
- The Woman They Could Not Silence: One Woman, Her Incredible Fight for Freedom, and the Men Who Tried to Make Her Disappear* by Kate Moore^ (LP, OE, OA)
- The Woman with the Blue Star* by Pam Jenoff (LP, CD, OE, OA)
- You Love Me* by Carolyn Kepnes (OE, OA)

Staff Picks—Children

- Ahmed Aziz's Epic Year* by Nina Hazma
- Amari and the Night Brothers* by B. B. Alston (OE, OA)
- Cat Problems* by Jory John
- Eyes that Kiss in the Corners* by Joanna Ho (OE)
- Katie the Catsitter* by Colleen A. F. Venable
- Miles Morales: Shock Waves* by Justin A. Reynolds (OE)
- Milo Imagines the World* by Matt de la Peña (OE)
- The Sea in Winter* by Christine Day