

## Amy's Top 10 of 2022

We all know what it feels like to be in a liminal space—that sometimes exciting, sometimes uncomfortable place of waiting between what is and what's next, or the struggle to leave the familiar behind for the unknown. It's a space of searching and changing, a time when answers don't come easily, and you may have to shift from an old way of thinking to an entirely new perspective. It can also be a surreal time, where you feel *in* this world but not necessarily *of* this world.

Liminal is derived from the Latin word, "limen" which means threshold. Psychologists consider it the place a person is in during a transitional period from major milestones. Think births, deaths, graduations, moving, relationship changes, diagnosis of an illness, identity shifts (e.g., from young girl to woman etc.). One thing ends, another is about to begin but you aren't quite there yet. That uncertainty and inability to know what's next isn't always easy to navigate. Many grasp for the first thing that comes along to reduce discomfort and unpredictability. There are also metaphorical liminal spaces where decisions need to be made but until the person decides what to do the pendulum swings back and forth.

It's a writer's job to put their characters in unpredictable and uncomfortable circumstances. It's the stuff of great stories. This year, my favorite books captured moments of liminality as they embarked on physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual journeys for answers. Often, the answers they found were unexpected and life-changing, requiring a change in perspective not only about the past but the present and future. A few lived in the liminal space between magical thinking and mental illness. Many found redemption as they turned their lives around, turned in a new direction, atoned for a muck-up in their past or succeeded after many a failed attempt to achieve their goal. Others realized that acceptance of their new reality was the best path of all.

As the saying goes, life imitates art. I didn't expect to spend the better half of 2022 searching for answers to a health issue, but that's what happened. I spent gobs of time researching and self-diagnosing and feeling uncertain until I was finally diagnosed with long Covid. My novel also hung in a liminal space as I decided on a new direction for it. I wouldn't call where I'm taking it a 360-degree change, but I turned a 180 with the narrative wheels that required me to give up "what was" for "what's next."

But first, my very long Covid story made short. Dave and I caught the virus at the beginning of the year. As I write this, Dave I are both down with it for the second time, even though we're fully boosted. At least this episode appears to be milder than our first. When I had it back in January, it took me weeks to recover. Little did I know, once my fever was gone and my sense of taste and smell were back, the virus continued to set up shop in my vestibular system. I began having strange bouts of vertigo where I felt like I was on a boat in choppy waters. My normal routines—running, driving, blazing through books and work, drinking a beer on the weekends—ground to a halt.

After a series of doctor visits and tests and plenty of couch time to feel balanced, a neurologist and vestibular physical therapist diagnosed me with Persistent Postural Perceptual Dizziness (PPPD or 3PD, for short) and told me many longhaulers were slowly spinning toward recovery like I was. I finally forged a path toward healing that includes daily exercises and methods for managing situations that trigger my wobbles, like being in a mall, taking an elevator, walking in the dark and even sitting on a high barstool. By year's end, I'm far better off than I was when this all started. The vestibular therapist said, in the cases he's seen, it takes a full year or more to recover and there's the distinct possibility I'll have to

manage PPPD for the rest of my life. I'm grateful to be out of the liminal unknown and have some answers.

So, I reclaimed my health in the last quarter of the year, while also reclaiming my writing life the full year through. You heard it here first: I finally finished the novel I've been working on for seemingly forever. 2023 will be about finding agent representation. I'm putting it out to the universe that I'd like to see this little project on a bookshelf in the future. There's a superstition that the novel you talk about is the novel that never gets published, but I'm over that and I'm hopeful that there's space for me in this incredibly competitive market. When I wasn't working on the novel, I was working for Fifth Third and traveling back to Cincinnati about every 10 weeks. While I considered going part-time at the bank, a few long-term projects have kept me at full-time status. I'll eventually transition to part-time and/or shift to teaching English as a Second Language. For now, the liminality works for me.

Dave had his own liminal moments in his artistic and work lives. After kicking ass for a year as Dust City Opera's drummer and getting acquainted with the regional music scene, he felt ready to refocus his time and energy on his own music. He formed a new band called Radio Free ABQ with some of the musicians he's met over the past year. Their first shows are at the end of January, and I'm overjoyed to hear his songs again with Dave drumming and singing.

Having the band practice at our house again also brings me as much joy as seeing Dave hone his drumming and composition skills through his lessons with the world-renowned drummer and composer Mark Guiliana, best known for his work with David Bowie and St. Vincent. From a job perspective, Dave made the healthy decision to leave the dysfunctional United Way and move to the University of New Mexico's Cradle to Career Policy Institute as a senior research scientist. New Mexico currently has the most progressive child care and family support policies in the country, and Dave is co-leading a study to evaluate their impact. You can read more about Dave and his work [here](#).

We continue to enjoy the sunshine, mountain views, craft breweries and positive vibes of Albuquerque. Note that the ABQ is not in Arizona—it's become a running joke that people ask us how we like Arizona as if New Mexico is a forgotten state. With a full year-and-a-half here in the books, we've settled in and established a community of friends. Our little Louie is also settling in and settling down after a full year of separation anxiety training. Talk about being in a liminal space. We experienced plenty of unknowns and uncertainty with him as we sorted out his physical and psychological issues. He's a textbook example of why puppies need a safe, secure environment in their first several months of life. Annie adores him and is having a renaissance of her own. She's more playful now than she was when we first adopted her, and we have Louie's energy to thank for that.

Now for the piece de resistance—the top 10 of 2022. But wait, there's more! This year, I'm breaking tradition and adding a companion read to each of my selections, so it's double the recos, double the fun. You'll find a variety of redemption stories here as well as fascinating and fantastical characters.

During the first year of the pandemic, I turned to the library more than I purchased books, a habit I've continued. Out of my 50-ish reads, only eight are sitting on my bookshelf right now. With each of those purchases, I perused my bookshelves and selected an old read to donate to one of the Little Free Libraries in our neighborhood. What I love about curating my personal library is that the books that remain contain stories I truly adore.

The other great thing about relying on the library is that I'm often reading books that aren't new or on the bestseller list which brings me to the few rules I adhere to every year: the books on this list don't have to be published in 2022 and my No. 1 pick is my numero uno, with the remaining books not necessarily ranked in order.

If this list is old hat to you, then you know the drill. Read my picks, pass the list along, email or message me with your fave reads of the year so I can put them on my list. I still dream of my list somehow making it to other famous readers like Barack Obama, Martin Sheen, Oprah Winfrey, Jenna Bush Hager, Reese Witherspoon etc. etc. etc. or famous people like Dave Grohl, whose book I intend to read in 2023 since I didn't get to it this year. Someday, Dave Grohl will read this list and tell me he thinks it's fucking cool. If you can get me to Dave Grohl, I'll think you're fucking cool.

Here's wishing all of you a happy, healthy, joy-filled 2023. As you enter what's next in your journey, may you be surrounded by good people, good books and good stories.

**1. *The Book of Form & Emptiness* by Ruth Ozeki.** If we talked books this year, I mentioned Ozeki's masterpiece. I was certain it would run away with some of the big literary awards; alas, it didn't win the Pulitzer or National Book Award, but it was selected for the Women's Prize for Fiction. I have Dave to thank for recommending this gem. He learned of the novel through an Ezra Klein podcast, read it, and then handed it over to me. What struck me most in this magical realist tale was Ozeki's compassionate treatment of mental illness and obsessive-compulsive disorders; namely, hoarding. In fact, as 14-year-old Benny hears voices coming from the objects surrounding him, you wonder if his ability is a special gift more than an illness. Ozeki is a virtuoso at allowing the reader to live in that strange liminal space between reality and fantasy. The overarching narrator here is a Book—a book that is trying to help Benny tell his story. When Benny's father dies, he and his mother, Annabelle, sink into their grief in different ways. Annabelle gains weight and begins hoarding while Benny begins hearing voices from everyday objects like a coffee cup, scissors, a table leg. The more his mother collects, the louder the voices become. Soon, Benny is struggling in high school. He's sent off to a clueless psychiatrist who puts him on meds and then admits him to a psych ward where he meets Alice, a troubled homeless young girl whom he befriends. Once released, Benny ditches school and hides at the library where he reconnects with The Aleph (aka Alice) and meets Slajov, "The Bottlemán," an old, usually drunk philosopher. Slajov and The Aleph come and go from Benny's life, leaving the reader to wonder if they're figments of his imagination, just like the voices he hears. Meanwhile, Annabelle's hoarding is so out of control, there's barely room for Benny in their house. We journey with both characters to the rockiest of rock bottoms before their moments of redemption appear and they're able to move forward. The importance and impact of books and the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves are main themes here, as are loss, poverty, consumerism and viewing mental illness through a more compassionate lens. You'll find yourself rooting for Benny and Annabelle to find their true selves and become comfortable with who they are. You'll also want to read more about the [Hearing Voices Network](#), an organization that aims to challenge negative stereotypes, stigma and discrimination against people who hear voices or have related experiences.

**Companion read: *Strangers to Ourselves* by Rachel Aviv** for attempting to redefine mental illness through real-world stories. Aviv shares her own story along with six others that show how standard psychological diagnosis and inexplicable reasons for their behavior and pain sit at a crossroads. If you've ever read any Oliver Sacks, you'll like this one.

## **2. *Cloud Cuckoo Land* by Anthony Doerr**

This epic saga was my pal while I had Covid. It's the type of book that's best read when you have a long stretch of time because the story and characters are so interconnected. I'm a huge fan of Doerr's work, and not just because I took a workshop with him years ago and he had nice things to say about my writing. While this may feel like a departure from his Pulitzer-winning *All the Light We Cannot See*, *Cuckoo* holds two similarities—multiple points of view and short chapters. Like *Book of Form & Emptiness* there's an important book—an ancient lost text by Diogenes called *Cloud Cuckoo Land*—at the center of the story. We follow five characters from five different eras. There's old Zeno who's directing a children's play that's interrupted by young Seymour who's armed with explosives and is ready to turn to violence to prove a point about environmental ruin. Then there's Omeir and Anna in 15<sup>th</sup> century Constantinople. And finally, there's Konstance in the 22<sup>nd</sup> century on a spacecraft that's left a decimated Earth in search of more habitable environs. If you're baffled by how these disparate stories intersect, don't be alarmed. Like great Shakespearean drama, everything comes together in the end and makes sense. And the connector is that ancient work by Diogenes that narrowly escapes destruction century over century, only to end up in the hands of the characters, although I can't tell you how that happens because that would ruin the fun. Don't be intimidated by this doorstopper of a novel. The chapters are short, the pace is fast (with a few exceptions) and you'll feel like a kid again trying to solve the mystery and connections between Doerr's diverse cast of characters.

**Companion: *Sea of Tranquility* by Elizabeth St. John Mandel** Oh, a time traveling we a' go in this slim story that takes us from 1912 to present day to the 23<sup>rd</sup> century. There's Olive who's traveling back to Earth for a book tour, a strange video clip, an other-worldly incident in a forest and an investigation into how all of the characters connect. It's quiet, speculative fiction that mesmerizes you as much as it makes you think.

## **3. *The Many Daughters of Afong Moy* by Jamie Ford**

My Aunt Wendy, a fellow book lover, recommended this to me on a day I happened to be near Bookworks, my favorite bookstore in Albuquerque. I popped in the store and the book was sitting front and center on a table of recommended reads. The coincidence was too strong to pass up, so I bought the book and spent the next three days with Afong, Faye, Dorothy, Zoe, Greta, Lia King and Annabel. The book centers around epigenetics—the theory that it's possible to inherit memories and trauma. (Most often, we think of epigenetics in terms of Holocaust survivors passing trauma to the next generation.) Ford turns to seven generations of Chinese women and the love and trauma that binds them together across time. Afong Moy was inspired by the first Chinese woman to set foot in America in the 1830s. We first meet Afong with a traveling circus where she's treated as a curiosity with her bound feet and "foreign" looks. At the other end of time, it's 2045 and a storm is bearing down on Seattle where Afong's descendant, Dorothy, is experiencing hallucinations about places and people that are unfamiliar to her, but whom the reader knows are other Moy women. Dorothy's young daughter, Annabel, suffers the same affliction. In an attempt to spare her daughter mental anguish, Dorothy agrees to experimental therapy to discover the origins of these mysterious memories of airplanes and ships and a soldier and more. The novel moves back and forth in time, hitting key moments in history like the bubonic plague in the 1900s, World War II and the not so distant past when people were learning how to swipe right or left on dating apps. Each of the Moys encounter memories from the past in different ways and each woman's story gives a glimpse of the changing roles and expectations of women over time. I thoroughly enjoyed this interconnected, time-hopping romp through the power our lineage can hold, for better and for worse.

**Companion read: *How High We Go in the Dark* by Sequoia Nagamatsu** Fair warning, this collection of interlinked stories is about a climate change virus in 2030 that alters humanity centuries in the future. The stories can take a grim turn but the writing is absolutely gorgeous. It's one of the most imaginative collections that I've read in years. There's an Arctic plague, a euthanasia theme park and a test pig that stole my heart and will steal yours too. I'll be on the lookout for more of Nagamatsu's work. Inherited memories and trauma factor into the stories.

#### **4. *Small Things Like These* by Claire Keegan**

This was a tough choice because I liked Keegan's novel as much as I liked my companion selection, *The Swimmers*. Both were master classes in minimalist writing with maximalist impact. *Small Things Like These* won by a hair because Keegan's quiet novel deals with big secrets in a small town in Ireland. Quiet, secrets, Ireland—that's a trifecta for me when it comes to novel. It's Christmas in 1985 and Bill Furlong is thinking about his mother who gave birth to him when she was a teenager. He never knew his father. Happily married and now a father himself, Furlong straddles the fence of wanting something exciting to happen to him and wanting to keep the peace. When there's trouble at the convent up the lane, Furlong's life and past history take a surprising turn. Those familiar with the secrets and tragedies surrounding Ireland's Magdalen laundries will see where this story is headed. As *Kirkus Review* stated: "The Magdalen laundries, this novel implicitly argues, survived not only due to the cruelty of the people who ran them, but also because of the fear and selfishness of those who were willing to look aside because complicity was easier than resistance."

**Companion: *The Swimmers* by Julie Otsuka** Recommended to me by my writing pal, Judy, I dove right in (pun intended) to this equally slim but powerful novel that explore dementia, community and the bonds between mother and daughter. Told in first person plural, the "we" are the swimmers at the community pool who all have their quirks and therapeutic need for being in the water, including Alice, a survivor of a Japanese internment camp when she was a child, who becomes the central character and connector to the first and second.

#### **5. *The Marriage Portrait*, Maggie O'Farrell**

The tiger chapter had me gasping out loud on my flight to Cincinnati (apologies to the man sitting next to me). O'Farrell's *Hamnet* was a stunner, and this one comes close for its fictionalized look at history and its lush writing. Normally, I'm not a fan of reading about 1500s royalty and castles and, let's face it, how poorly women were treated, but I was hooked from the get-go. Lucrezia de Medici is 15 years old when she's wedded for political reasons to Alfonso, the Duke of Ferrara. Just a year into their marriage, she's convinced Alfonso is going to murder her. We learn this in the first chapter. From there, we travel back in time through Lucrezia's childhood up to the wedding. She's a curious child with artistic abilities. Among her siblings, she's the black sheep and often ignored. When she's not being ignored, she's misunderstood. Once she becomes Alfonso's wife, she begins to see him for who he truly is—a man determined to cement his hold on the dukedom and produce an heir. Her only solace is in painting and, perhaps, Jacopo, an apprentice to the painter commissioned to create her marriage portrait. Even though the history books tell us that Lucrezia's death was a mystery, we read to see how O'Farrell will manage it and what we'll decide to believe. O'Farrell is a master at not only keeping the reader in suspense but also providing beautiful prose along the way. Again, the tiger chapter.

**Companion: *Circe* by Madeline Miller** This retelling of ancient Greek lore from the powerful Circe was so much fun. It also made me realize how much I'd forgotten about Greek mythology. Odysseus, Scylla, Daedalus, Helios, Hermes—all the big names in Greek myth are here for us mere mortals to enjoy.

d halves of the novel. And then there's a crack in the pool's foundation that's a symbolic throughline to the cracks appearing in Alice's memory. This is a tender and sometimes humorous read. If you've loved someone who has dementia, I'd recommend it for its ability to make you feel less alone in that journey.

### **6. *The Lincoln Highway* by Amor Towles**

The hero's journey at its finest. Adventure is afoot in 1954 when Emmet Watson is released from the juvenile detention camp and returns home to discover that his father is dead and that he's now the caretaker for his 8-year-old brother. With the farm in foreclosure, Emmet wants to set off for California, but two friends, Duchess and Wooly, who escape from the camp have other plans. Instead of the young men heading west, they travel to New York City. Duchess isn't what you'd call a trustworthy travel companion. Wooly is psychologically scarred. Billy is a precocious young kid. And Emmet just wants to find their mother in California and live the American Dream but is steered in the wrong direction by Wooly's belief that his grandfather stashed \$150,000 in a cabin in the Adirondacks. When Duchess and Wooly take Emmet's Studebaker, Emmet and Billy set off to catch up with them. Along the way, they meet a WW II veteran named Ulysses (of course there's a Ulysses – this is a hero's journey structure after all). There's also Sally, a kindly neighbor who has a crush on Emmet and has become protective of Billy. Told from multiple points of view, the journey takes place over ten days that are jam-packed with action. The novel takes a surprising U-turn near the end, reminding us that our paths into adulthood and in life are never straight.

**Companion: *We Begin at the End*, Chris Whitaker** Friend and fellow book fan, Jennifer Heffron, recommended this read. Part thriller, part coming of age saga, part Western, the story centers around Duchess Day Radley. When Duchess was a teenager, her sister was killed. Thirty years later, Vincent, the man responsible for her death is being released from prison. His return to their town brings the past into the present and endangers Duchess, her mother Star and her younger brother Robin. Another death occurs that brings Chief Walker into the picture who is friends with both Star and Vincent. There's a lot to unpack in this twisted mystery built around friendships and family love and dysfunction.

### **7. *Klara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro**

What is friendship? What does it mean to be sentient and alive? Ishiguro never shies away from the big questions. Set in the near future where technology has rendered people jobless and the "lifted" are the privileged class, we meet Klara who's on display in a department store. She's an Artificial Friend, a sophisticated robot looking for a human companion. Josie comes into the store with her mother and they decide on Klara even though she's not the latest model. Once home, Klara learns that Josie has a mysterious illness. Klara, who's powered by the Sun, asks for a special gift from the Sun for Josie, thinking this will heal her. Of course, as much as Klara tries to understand her new best friend and humans in general, a few major misunderstandings lead to mishaps with dire consequences. Throughout the story, the reader questions whether Klara can feel love as a human can (I say yes). Through Klara, we also think about the meaning and importance of friendships, whether technology increases or decreases our loneliness (or both) and what we will sacrifice for love. This story will make you think about your own relationships, especially with the impact of the pandemic. Fair warning: I cried during a couple of scenes.

**Companion: *Our Missing Hearts* by Celeste Ng** A companion only because it takes place in the near future and the themes it addresses will hit close to home. Here, the U.S. has experienced "The Crisis," an economic breakdown allegedly caused by China which makes anyone with Chinese roots suspect, including Bird and his mother, a poet who abandons the family. A line from her poem – our missing

hearts – is popular with an underground insurrection movement and Bird’s best friend Sadie believes his mother is leading the charge. Bird sets out to find her and the truth, risking punishment under a heavily surveilled and fearful environment. The situation is thought-provoking and the writing is as stellar as always.

### **8. *When We Fell Apart* by Soon Wiley**

Two young lovers meet in Seoul. Min is Korean American and Yu-Jin is the Korean daughter of a high-powered military leader. In the first few chapters, we learn that Yu-Jin allegedly commits suicide but Min refuses to believe it, and sets out to find answers. Wiley moves back in time so we get to know Yu-Jin and her two roommates, Misaki and So-Ra. As Min continues to search for answers surrounding Yu-Jin’s death in the present, a past secret relationship between So-Ra and Yu-Jin comes to light. We also learn of the social pressures Yu-Jin is attempting to balance and how her father and mother are driven to ensure Yu-Jin conforms to society and becomes the perfect, successful Korean daughter. Min’s story is told in third person while Yu-Jin’s is told in first person. I loved the structure Wiley employs as the story unfolds. Through Yu-Jin, we learn things before Min does and vice versa. While there are plenty of other themes here, the one that struck me the most is that you never truly know the people you love and can never truly walk in their shoes. This is Wiley’s debut novel and I’m looking forward to whatever comes next from him.

**Companion: *The Furrows* by Namwali Serpell** I’m a fan of magical realism especially when it mirrors a character’s psychology. Cassandra’s brother Wayne drowned when she was a young girl – or did he? Her memory of the incident is sketchy and, as she continues to process and grieve as an adult, she imagines different versions of his death in the first half of the book. In the second half, Cassandra experiences some strange encounters that makes her wonder if Wayne is still alive—like her mother believes. Suspension of disbelief is a must while reading this and it may not appeal to those who prefer a clear narrative and more action versus interiority. I chose this as Wiley’s companion because it focuses on grief and on the mystery surrounding the death of a loved one.

### **9. *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt**

Hurray for another debut novel that was thoroughly entertaining. Marcellus is a giant, highly intelligent octopus stuck in an aquarium in a fictional town near the Puget Sound. Tova, an elderly woman who cleans the aquarium, is his best friend. Both of them are lonely and Tova is still grieving the loss of her son 30 years ago who disappeared in Puget Sound and whose cause of death was ruled a suicide even though Tova refuses to believe it. There’s also Ethan, an elderly Scottish grocer who has the hots for Tova, as well as Cameron, whose appearance in town both brings Tova and Ethan closer, and also upends Tova’s peaceful life. All the while, Marcellus may hold the answer Tova has been seeking for years. Even though the plot deals with grief, this ode to unlikely friendships holds plenty of humor and a story that will warm your heart. If you like everything tied up nice and tidy at the end, you’ll find it here.

### **Companion: *Anxious People* by Fredrik Backman**

I laughed my way through most of this story. The characters are equal parts outrageous and ridiculous. Sometimes you want to reach into the pages and smack them, but you’re laughing while you do it. There’s an apartment viewing, a bungled bank robbery and eight people who assume they’re being held hostage by a bank robber when they really aren’t. The two local detectives on the case are Jim and Jack, father and son. They try to make sense of the case by interviewing the hostages but nothing makes

sense—until it finally does. The whodunnit elements of the story will keep you guessing until the end. Backman’s twists and turns are such good fun.

#### **10. *Lucy by the Sea* by Elizabeth Strout**

I’ve read everything by Strout so, of course, I wasn’t going to pass up her latest even if it’s about the pandemic. This is Lucy Barton’s third appearance in Strout’s novels. It’s as if Lucy always has more to say and, this time, it’s about the unanchored, disoriented feeling we all experienced during the pandemic. Lucy flees New York City for Maine with her ex-husband William. At first, she’s uncertain why she needs to be concerned about the pandemic but it becomes clear soon enough. In Maine, she misses her city home, her daughters and her old life, but she also comes to appreciate the safety and serenity of her new home. Lucy cycles through some familiar territory—her relationship with William and her daughters, her grief over her second husband’s death, her childhood woes. It’s one of those books where not much happens except for the pandemic rolling along and Lucy’s ruminating on her past. While I didn’t love this one nearly as much as Strout’s other two Barton books, I did appreciate her take on the early days of the pandemic and how everything seemed so surreal, including wiping down our groceries. Remember those days?

#### **Companion: *Our Country Friends* by Gary Shteyngart**

I selected this as a companion because it also takes place during the pandemic. Several wealthy New Yorkers converge on a home in the Hudson Valley and dysfunction and hilarity ensue. I admit that I found the characters privileged and annoying at turns, but there’s good satire here as well as commentary on failed art and failed relationships.

#### **What I Read in 2022 (in order)**

The Vanishing Half, Brit Bennett  
Cloud Cuckoo Land, Anthony Doerr  
A World on the Wing, Scott Weidensaul  
Margreete’s Harbor, Eleanor Morse  
The Great Circle, Maggie Shipstead (did not finish)  
Klara and the Sun, Kazuo Ishiguro  
Harlem Shuffle, Colson Whitehead  
Call Me Cassandra, Marciel Gala  
Anxious People, Fredrik Backman  
Believers: Making a Life at the End of the World, Lisa Wells  
Beautiful Ruins, Jess Walter  
Intimacies, Katie Kitamura  
Lost Children Archive, Valeria Luiselli  
Ishmael, Daniel Quinn  
We Begin at the End, Chris Whitaker  
White Ivy, Susie Yang  
The Liar’s Dictionary, Eley Williams  
Such a Fun Age, Kiley Reid  
Our Country Friends, Gary Shteyngart  
The Dive from Clausen’s Pier, Ann Packer (re-read for novel purposes)  
The Book of Form & Emptiness, Ruth Ozeki  
The Sea of Tranquility, Elizabeth St. John Mandel  
Where the Forest Meets the Stars, Glendy Vanderbaugh



Remarkably Bright Creatures, Shelby Van Pelt  
White Fur, Jardine Lebaire  
Save the Cat Writes a Novel, Jessica Brody  
Faithful, Alice Hoffman  
How High We Go in the Dark, Sequoia Nagamatsu  
Tides, Sara Freeman  
Henry, Himself, Stewart O’Nan  
Circe, Madeline Miller  
We Are the Brennans, Tracey Lange  
Goodbye, Vitamin, Rachel Khong  
Rock Paper Scissors, Alice Feeney  
When We Fell Apart, Soon Wiley  
I Never Promised You a Rose Garden, Joanne Greenberg (first classic for the year)  
The Lincoln Highway, Amor Towles  
The Marriage Plot, Jeffrey Eugenides  
Sorrow & Bliss, Meg Mason  
The Swimmers, Julie Otsuka  
The Many Daughters of Afong Moy, Jamie Ford  
Macbeth, William Shakespeare (second classic for the year)  
If Women Rose Rooted, Sharon Blackie  
The Strange Bird, Jeff Vandermeer  
Small Things Like These, Claire Keenan  
The Witches of Moonshyne Manor, Bianca Marais  
Lucy by the Sea, Elizabeth Strout  
Our Missing Hearts, Celeste Ng  
The Furrows, Namwali Serpell  
Strangers to Ourselves, Rachel Aviv  
The Marriage Portrait, Maggie O’Farrell

**First on the nightstand for 2023**

Flight, Lynn Steger Strong  
The Storyteller, Dave Grohl  
Now Is Not the Time to Panic, Kevin Wilson  
Stepping Back from the Ledge, Laura Trujillo  
The Change, Kirsten Miller