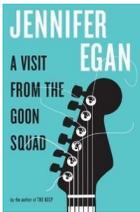


The end of the 2010s inspired dozens of best-books-of-the-decade lists. These five works of fiction were among the most-frequently-cited must-reads.

- Lou



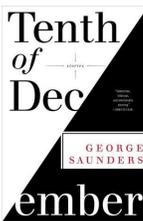
***A Visit from the Goon Squad***, by Jennifer Egan

*Elle* said: "Like its title, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* is utterly unique, an exhilarating novel -in-stories that blends form with whimsy and astute character observations. [It] forces you to reckon with time and its passing, but encourages you to have fun while doing so."



***Sing, Unburied, Sing***, by Jesmyn Ward

*Entertainment Weekly* said: "[This novel is a] haunting, evocative family saga set in the Deep South. Writing in arresting first-person prose, Ward effortlessly blends conventions of the road novel and the ghost story for a timeless tale of family bonds, generational trauma, and national tragedy."



***Tenth of December***, by George Saunders

*Time* said: "[These] 10 immersive fictions felt current [in 2013] but reveal even more clairvoyance six years on... Each of these darkly comic tales cuts to the quick, underpinned by an urgent moral consciousness and well-justified anxiety about what happens when technology starts to overtake humanity."



***Americanah***, by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

*Cool Material* said: "*Americanah*... focuses on the importance of race in America, post-9/11 anti-immigration sentiment, and the dangers of illegal immigration... At the heart of the story is a complicated relationship between two people who started as teenagers in love and were forced to become citizens of the world."

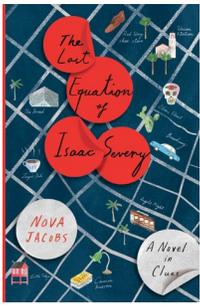


***Station Eleven***, by Emily St. John Mandel

*Buzzfeed* said: "What sets *Station Eleven* apart from so many other recent dystopian novels is the warmth of St. John Mandel's writing, the lived-in details of each of these characters' lives as she toggles back and forth between life before the flu pandemic and life afterward. It's the kind of book that stays with you."

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And in case you missed it, here's some uplifting news from the pollsters at Gallup, who recently reported that "visiting the library remains the most common cultural activity Americans engage in, by far. The average 10.5 trips to the library U.S. adults report taking in 2019 exceeds their participation in eight other common leisure activities. America loves its libraries!

**BOOK OF THE MONTH:****The Last Equation of Isaac Severy [Mystery; Families; Secret Societies]**  
by Nova Jacobs

In this quirky mystery, struggling bookstore owner Hazel Severy receives an enigmatic letter from her grandfather, brilliant mathematician Isaac Severy, days after he died in a suspected suicide. In the letter, Isaac alludes to a secretive organization that is after his final equation, and he requests that Hazel find & deliver this information to a trusted colleague. Isaac also ominously predicts: "Three will die. I am the first."

Hazel must unravel a series of confounding clues hidden inside one of her favorite novels, a posthumous puzzle that she suspects will lead her to his mathematical treasure. Along for the ride are her brother, Gregory, and Isaac's son, Phillip, who feels betrayed by his father and stuck in his own work. The trio ponders whether this final equation will solve all of their problems.

This book is a slow burn, but the payoff is well worth it. In addition to the central mystery, author Nova Jacobs raises a slew of moral and ethical questions to chew on. Recommended if you enjoy witty & entertaining family dramas with a twist of intrigue. It's also a great pick if you enjoyed *Mr. Penumbra's 24 Hour Bookstore* or *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry*.

Jen

All Staff Picks are available through the Ocean State Libraries system.

*Colleen*

- \* **Sontag: Her Life and Work** by Benjamin Moser [Biography; American Women Authors; 20th Century]
- \* **Unashamed: Musings of a Fat, Black Muslim** by Leah Vernon (eZone audiobook) [Biography; Feminism; African American Muslims]

*JAYNE*

- \* **Doxology** by Nell Zink [Political Fiction; Rock Musicians; September 11, 2001]
- \* **How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy** by Jenny Odell [Information Technology; Social Aspects]
- \* **Why We Can't Sleep: Women's New Midlife Crisis** by Ada Calhoun [Psychology; Generation X]

*Kristin*

- \* **Get a Life, Chloe Brown** by Talia Hibbert [Romantic Comedy; Bucket List]
- \* **I Lost My Girlish Laughter** by Jane Allen [Classic Hollywood; Satire]
- \* **Lovecraft Country** by Matt Ruff [Mystery; Pulp Fiction]

*Mary Anne*

- \* **A Lonely Death** by Charles Todd [Mystery; World War I; Sussex, England]
- \* **A Map of Betrayal** by Ha Jin [Spy Fiction; Chinese Americans; Family Secrets]
- \* **A Place for Us** by Fatima Farheen Mirza [Domestic Fiction; East Indian Americans]

*Niles*

- \* **The Fate of Their Country: Politicians, Slavery Extension, and the Coming of the Civil War** by Michael F. Holt [United States Politics; Civil War 1861-1865]
- \* **The First Frontier: The Forgotten History of Struggle, Savagery, and Endurance** by Scott Weidensaul [Frontier Life; Race Relations]