



Over the Rainbow Booklist

LITERARY AND GENERAL INTEREST FICTION

Bastarda. Trifonia Melibea Obono. Feminist Press, 2018. Seventeen-year-old Okomo lives in the tribal town of Ayá Esang in Equatorial Guinea with her grandparents. From the beginning, we learn that Okomo's mother is dead, that her father is a scoundrel, and that she is illegitimate because her father did not pay a dowry before sleeping with her mother. She deals with cultural and familial strictures and personal abuse but fights for her life and love. Obono is the first woman writer from Equatorial Guinea to be translated into English. Her novel brings a refreshing take on the coming-of-age story and on feminist and queer culture in Central Africa.

Book of Hats. Dov Zeller. Tiny Golem Press, 2018. In this mystical epic, Ida is a trans boy coming of age during the early to mid-20th century surrounded by her family's hat-making business. (Although it's obvious Ida is trans, the pronoun used throughout is she.) When the truth about Ida begins to unravel, she escapes to New York where she falls in with fellow queers who help create the community and family she is seeking.

Boy at the Edge of the World. David K. Yeh. Guernica Editions, 2018. In this dramedy we follow the romantic adventures of Daniel from coming out to his best friend Karen in high school to university in Toronto and the city's queer culture. Filled with diverse characters on the universal pursuit of love and intimacy.

The Daddies. Kimberly Dark. Brill, 2018. A multi-faceted rich exploration of masculinity, patriarchy, and domination from a lesbian perspective. This work is part novel, part memoir, and part social analysis all combined--a surprising and challenging read.

Drapetomania: or, the narrative of Cyrus Tyler and Abednego Tyler, lovers. John R. Gordon. Team Angelica Publishing, 2018. When Abednego, a house-servant, is sold away, his lover Cyrus, a field-hand, realizes that he must go after him in this thrilling tale of the love between gay slaves in captivity set in the 1860's. *Drapetomania* is a groundbreaking tale of black freedom and devotion.

Great Believers. Rebecca Makkai. Viking, 2018. A saga that begins in 1980s Chicago with Yale, a young gay man about to discover the art find of the century while all his friends around him die of AIDS, including his friend Nico. Reaching forward into present day Paris, Nico's younger sister Fiona desperately tries to rescue her estranged daughter from a cult, and winds up meeting a photographer who documented the AIDS crisis in Chicago. Two spectacular stories intertwine to teach the lessons of love, friendship, community, and family.

Heart's Invisible Furies. John Boyne. Hogarth/Penguin Random House, 2018. A tour de force about one man's struggle to accept his sexuality in Ireland's homophobic society throughout much of the modern era. The story begins in 1945. Cyril Avery is adopted by an eccentric Dublin couple, who always told him that he was not a real Avery. Cyril's life is told in seven-year intervals. With equal parts sadness and humor, Boyne conveys to the reader the hardship and toll that repression can bring when a people are not able to be true to themselves.

House of Impossible Beauties. Joseph Cassara. Ecco/HarperCollins, 2018. For fans of the FX show *Pose* or the documentary *Paris Is Burning*, Cassara lovingly documents the NYC ball scene of the 1980s when queer people of color were able to compete in a vicious and loving environment of fierce queens with even

fiercer support. Tough issues like AIDS and racism are addressed head on as the vivid characters navigate love, life, and loss with their wigs tightly secured and their lipstick unsmudged.

Into?: A Novel. North Morgan. Flatiron Books, 2018. Morgan paints an insipid and shallow portrait of a sex, drug, and alcohol-addicted subculture of young gay musclemen. Obsessed with image and social media, each chapter is a groundhog's day of hook-ups and gym selfies with a side of delusion and childish narcissistic temper tantrums. A wonderfully satirical portrayal of a privileged and selfish – but very visible – segment of the gay community.

Jonny Appleseed. Joshua Whitehead. Arsenal Pulp Press, 2018. Finalist: Governor General's Literary Award for Fiction. Longlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize. Jonny Appleseed, a young Two-Spirit/Indigiqueer, must return to the reservation that he grew up on to attend his stepfather's funeral. The resulting narrative is a soaring, chaotic, stream of consciousness spanning Jonny's memories of growing up gay on the rez, remembrances of his kokum (grandmother), his work webcamming, falling in love with one of his best friends, and struggling to build a life in Winnipeg. Whitehead's vivid, startling prose paints a picture of Jonny's struggles to reconcile the pieces of his life in this startling debut novel.

Less. Andrew Sean Greer. Lee Boudreaux Books/Little Brown/Hachette, 2017. How should you go about avoiding your problems? Arthur Less, a middle-aged writer who receives an invitation to the wedding of his young ex-boyfriend runs away from them. He has accepted every award and invitation to speak, no matter how obscure the destination. He'll do anything to make himself unavailable for the next year. He travels from San Francisco to New York, Mexico, Italy, Germany, Morocco, India, and Japan. Naturally, things don't go according to plan and hilarity ensues. Figuring out who is actually telling the story is one of the most fun parts of this 2018 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel.

My Ex-Life. Stephen McCauley. Flatiron Books/McMillan, 2018. Gay fifty-something David Hedges is suffering a mid-life crisis of sorts. He has a successful career in San Francisco but he was recently dumped by his boyfriend and his rent-controlled apartment is up for sale. When he receives an unexpected email from his ex-wife describing her high school daughter Mandy's poor decisions, David decides to head east to New England to help them. During this process, the pair rediscover a strong friendship. Witty and topical, McCauley's prose is fun and light-hearted. "All couples start off as Romeo and Juliet and end up as Laurel and Hardy."

So Lucky. Nicola Griffith. Macmillan, 2018. Mara Tagarelli's life is seemingly perfect until in the space of a week, her wife leaves her, she is diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, and she loses her job. At first, when everything begins to feel threatening and terrifying and Mara feels utterly helpless, she assumes it is simply the vulnerability of the new illness. When other MS survivors begin to turn up on the news, murdered in their own homes, she realizes that the threats are unshakably real. How does anyone defend themselves when their own body can't be trusted? Griffith's work is equal parts mystery, horror, and disability narrative.

Sparsholt Affair. Alan Hollinghurst. Knopf, 2018. A tale of honesty and being true to oneself, this novel tackles themes of lust, sex, and societal expectations in post-WWII Great Britain. In 1940, David Sparsholt, a dashing, first-year engineering student at Oxford, has an affair with a man, causing a scandal. David's son, Johnny, lives with the aftermath of his father's sordid past. Johnny is an artist and trying to live honestly as a gay man in the homophobic Britain of the 1960s. The consequences of his choices affect all parties involved and expose the cultural and sexual revolutions that have happened in the twentieth century in Britain.

Speak No Evil. Uzodinma Iweala. Harper, 2018. The story focuses upon two privileged teenagers from different backgrounds and experiences. A gay African American, Niru and his friendship with a white

heterosexual female, Meredith. We see how shame and silence lead to a tragic event with devastating consequences that change lives forever.

Stray City. Chelsey Johnson. Custom House/William Morrow, 2018. Andrea Morales is a dedicated member of Portland's thriving 1990s queer scene whose life is utterly changed when she sleeps with a man, gets pregnant, and decides to keep the baby. This warm and heartfelt debut goes back and forth in time between the late 1990s and 2009, showcasing the evolving queer community in Portland as well as the ways in which Andrea grows and builds a life with her chosen family and young daughter.

Tin Man. Sarah Winman. Penguin Random House/GP Putnam's Sons, 2018. Ellis and Michael are childhood friends who eventually become lovers. As adults, Ellis marries Annie and the three share an unbreakable bond, until Michael vanishes from their lives. This beautifully written tale of friendship and love will break your heart into a million pieces.

White Houses. Amy Bloom. Penguin Random House, 2018. Bloom's latest novel recreates the clandestine romance between Eleanor Roosevelt and journalist Lorena "Hick" Hickock. Told in reminiscences after their relationship has ended shortly after FDR died, Hick's bittersweet narrative conveys to the reader the depth of her continued feelings for Eleanor. Poignant tales of the two together will tug at the heartstrings. The juxtaposition of the relationship between Eleanor and Hick and the world-changing events happening around them are very well-played, driving the narrative forward, but ultimately cause the women's relationship to end. It's all about the journey, not the destination.