

SUMMER 2022  
ISSUE #1

# THE CHECKOUT

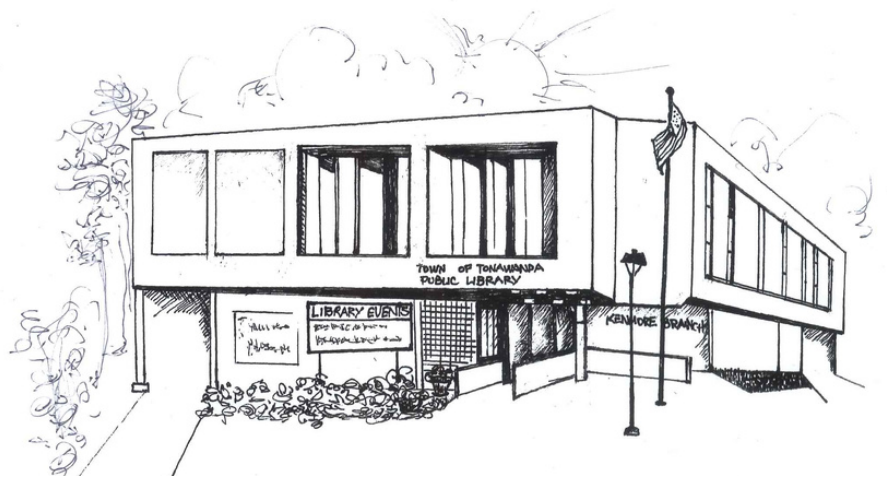
A REVIEW SOURCE WRITTEN BY LIBRARY  
PATRONS FOR LIBRARY PATRONS

A PUBLICATION OF THE KENMORE BRANCH LIBRARY

## WELCOME!

BY CHRISTINA L.

Hi, it's us! Library patrons from our wonderful community that decided to come together to share our adventures as fellow bibliophiles. From author spotlights to new fiction, our first issue kicks off with some recommendations that will have you checking out materials all summer and beyond. Let us know what you think and feel free to submit your own review for our next issue!



ARTWORK BY SUE K.

## NEW & RECOMMENDED

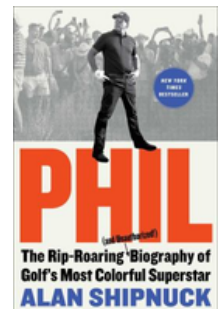
BY CHRISTINA L.



The School of Good Mothers  
by Jessamine Chan

Step into a dystopian world where mothering is strictly policed by the government and a very bad parenting day can land you in a horrifying reeducation camp, complete with a robot toddler who records your every move. Meet Frida and follow her journey as an exhausted mom who just made a mistake and is trying to prove she is worthy of once again parenting her child.

BY STUART R.



Phil: The Rip Roaring (and unauthorized)  
Biography of Golf's Most Colorful Superstar

Just off the press- a real page turner. Acclaimed golf writer, Alan Shipnuck, has followed Phil Mickelson for many years. This extremely well-researched book gives a balanced view of a complicated and controversial character. Please note you don't have to be a golf fan or even a sports fan to connect with this book.

# INSIDE A NYC HOTEL

BY CHLOE S.



The Barbizon: The Hotel that Set  
Women Free  
by Paulina Bren

On the Upper East Side of Manhattan is a building that is now multi-million dollar homes, but was once a beacon of light for independent women. The Barbizon was a women-only residential hotel for women who came to the city for professional opportunities that ranged from secretaries, models and even guest editors for Mademoiselle magazine - one of the first editorial publications for young adults that was run out of the hotel.

The book not only dives into the rich history of the hotel, and its quirks, but also the residents who made it what it was. Grace Kelly, Liza Minnelli, Eileen Ford, Joan Didion and Sylvia Plath are just some of the residents that stayed. Didion and Plath were both guest editors for Mademoiselle and Plath's *The Bell Jar* is largely based on her time there, renaming the hotel "The Amazon" in the novel.

With everything that went on inside the walls, the one common thing everyone shared was a thirst for independence. The hotel opened doors to opportunities that were limited to women in their hometowns and the chance to get out of the box women were put in at the time where marriage was the main goal.

Bren's book does an excellent job at balancing larger discussions on women's culture at the time with the nitty gritty details of all the different lives of the residents. Whether you are a huge fan of one of the residents or simply looking to learn about what life was like back then in New York, *The Barbizon* is a great pick for you!

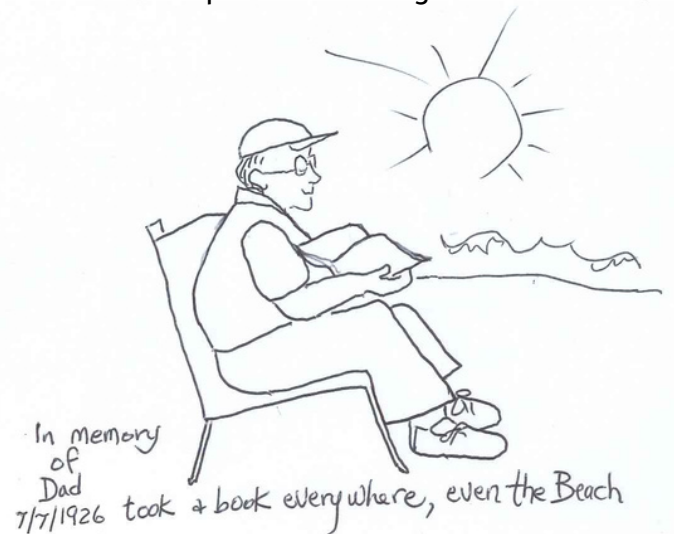
# AN ODE TO THE BARD

BY KAREN B.



Hamnet: A Novel of the Plague  
by Maggie O'Farrell

I read this book during our current time of Covid shortly after its somewhat eerie initial publication date of 2020. (Did the author guess that a modern pandemic was coming?) Its subtitle reached out to me as a way to maybe understand how human beings fared in earlier pandemics, and its setting in England in the late 1500s appealed to the history buff in me. I found this book to be a story of both historical fiction and literary imagination. It describes what the life of William Shakespeare's son Hamnet might have been like before he died at the age of 11. It imagines the child's death as the reason for Shakespeare writing *Hamlet* (another version of his son's name) and in so doing, memorializing his son's short life. It explores the dynamics of both promise and sorrow with its backstory of the marriage of William and Agnes, both of whom marched to the beat of their own drummers in a time, then as now, when conformity is expected. Its themes of redemption and remembrance are universal. This book offers an insightful glimpse into the sixteenth century while also serving as a fitting tribute to Shakespeare's own imagination.



ARTWORK BY SUE K.

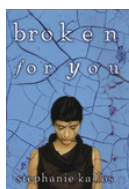
# AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: STEPHANIE KALLOS

BY SUE K.



There are some authors who touch your heart while making you laugh, cry, and long for the book to never end. One of my favorites is Stephanie Kallos, a former actress who makes her home in Seattle, WA. She has three books : Broken for You, set in the Capitol Hill area in Seattle; Sing Them Home, set in a tightly knit Welsh community in Nebraska; and Language Arts, a family story of autism. My favorite of the three is Broken For You, her first book from 2004. While I love recognizing streets and places I have walked and biked with my sister, what really has me returning to the book every few years is the characters. They are each quirky and fairly lovable, though each has a pretty heavy load of baggage trailing in their wake. And none more than the title character, Margaret Hughes, a solitary single woman with a mansion on Capitol Hill filled with priceless porcelain. When she opens her house to boarders after a terminal cancer diagnosis, there is no end of complicating characters who come together somehow to become family for each other. There are too many plot twists for me to give away- the story is literally broken open with each page. In the breaking, something incredibly unique emerges. If you love lots of interesting characters and their backstories pulled together into a story that won't let you go to the last page, this book is for you.

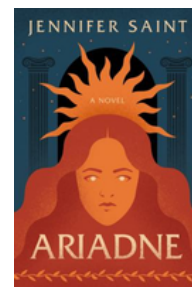
For more information about the author: <https://www.stephaniekallos.com/>



# THESEUS AND THE MINOTAUR REVISITED

BY KAREN B.

Ariadne by Jennifer Saint



Treachery, betrayal, lust, and compassion. They are all here, along with religious ecstasy, megalomania, and suicidal depression, accompanied of course by bravery and cleverness. Welcome to the world of Greek mythology! This book tells the tale of a princess of Crete, Ariadne, and a prince of Athens, Theseus, who contrive successfully to kill the Minotaur and escape from the Labyrinth. The Labyrinth was set up by King Minos, Ariadne's father, as a showcase to display Crete's might in order to terrorize its enemies (such as Athens). The twist comes when Theseus abandons Ariadne to die on an island that he thinks is uninhabited. Unbeknownst to Theseus, the god Dionysus lives there, who saves and then later weds Ariadne. And unbeknownst to Ariadne, her younger sister has been unwillingly wed to Theseus to seal a political alliance between Crete and Athens. After many adventures, Ariadne encounters Theseus again, at which point she dismisses him in order to tend to her sister. The author deftly weaves the concept of an archaic honor code into this story. This results in a book that vividly recreates the high drama among mortals and gods that continues to fascinate.

# DOWNLOAD THIS! :

BY REBECCA K.

What's all the HOOPLA?!? It definitely isn't an unnecessary fuss. Hoopla has come to the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library and we are so extremely lucky. Our library already has amazing access to audiobooks and ebooks through Libby, but with Hoopla you have access to books, movies, and videos!

Hoopla either works as an app that can be downloaded to your device for your app store, or you can login directly through their website at <https://www.hoopladigital.com/>.

For first time users either go to "Get Started" or "Don't have an account? Sign Up." Then you create a username and a password. From there you pick your library "Buffalo & Erie County Library" and plug in your library card number (minus letters or spaces). Voila!

Once you create an account it is yours to be used simultaneously on your phone, laptop, desktop, or tablet. So if you are listening at work on your desktop to a wonderful piece of music, you can pick up on your way home through your phone, and then finish on your tablet while you are relaxing before bed. You can even link to a streaming device. Anything you download will be accessed through this account. No other app is needed for viewing. When you find something you like, you hit borrow and then either read or play. There are many options for young children, teenagers and adults. Hoopla is for everyone.

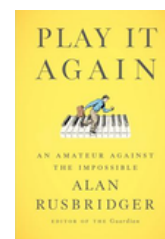
Hoopla gives you immediate access to books (audiobooks, comics and ebooks), videos (movies and television shows) and music. That's correct- immediate access if it is in their database. No waiting! You can borrow books for 21 days, music for 7 days, and videos for 3 days. After the loan time it will automatically be returned. You don't have to remember when you borrowed it, just that you borrowed it so you don't miss out on the enjoyment. The only drawback is you have only 5 downloads a month. If you have a household with multiple library cards, then each library card can have an account.

Get a Hoopla account today. You won't be disappointed.

## NOT JUST FOR MUSIC FANS

BY STUART R.

**Play It Again: An Amateur Against the Impossible**  
by Alan Rusbridger



You don't have to be a musician to find this book interesting and enjoyable.

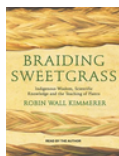
Written in diary form by the editor of the Guardian, the British equivalent of the New York Times, it describes the author's goal to master the virtuoso piano piece Ballade No. 1 in G Minor composed by Frederic Chopin.

Rusbridger is an accomplished musician but as suggested in the subtitle his goal is pushing him to a significantly higher level.



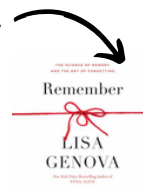
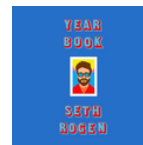
# AUDIO FOR ALL

BY NICOLE B.



Available on  
audiobook  
CD or as an  
eAudio

Available as  
eAudio on Libby



There is nothing quite like the experience of hearing an author's words in their own voice. I've found that audiobooks have brought me to a whole other level of reading- where I not only look forward to what I am learning or the story I am being told, but also the voice that is telling it. I tend to gravitate to non-fiction- memoirs and informational books provide me with a view into another person's life or help me to understand the life I live and the world around me. Here are a few audiobooks that I highly recommend, not only for their subject matter but the fact that the author is the reader and they bring their whole self to the telling.

## Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants

by Robin Wall Kimmerer

This audiobook is a fascinating journey into the author's knowledge of botany, Indigenous connection to the land, and the relationship of all living things. The positive and uplifting spirit of the author can be heard in every sentence and I came away with a deep appreciation for plants that I never knew before. This book is a gift to all who read it.

## Yearbook by Seth Rogen

This collection of personal essays by actor/comedian Seth Rogen is an absolute delight. Told by Seth (with a full cast of his friends and family), this memoir is full of humor and heart and will definitely have you laughing out loud. Be prepared to have people look at you funny if you end up laughing to yourself when you're listening to it out in public.

## Remember: The Science of Memory & the Art of Forgetting

by Lisa Genova

Lisa Genova is a neuroscientist and author, which would make her seem intimidating, but listening to this book was like listening to a trusted friend. I learned so much about how our brains work, how to best hold on to memories, and how to accept that some things are better left forgotten. A great listen by a multi-talented author.

## Love That Story: Observations from a Gorgeously Queer Life by Jonathan Van Ness

In this new collection of essays, Jonathan Van Ness explores topics such as trauma, body issues, identity, privilege, and belonging in a way only he can do- with empathy, humor, and passion. From speaking about his small hometown's LGBTQ history to his discovery of his HIV positive status, Jonathan reveals his truth while encouraging others to embrace theirs. A wonderful listen that celebrates diversity in all its forms.

You can download these as audiobooks on the Libby and/or Hoopla app, or check out the audiobook CDs from the library!

# AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: CLARICE LISPECTOR

BY MICHAELA M.



Image: <https://www.nytimes.com>



Although overused, the words "underrated" and "genius" perfectly describe Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector.

Born in 1920 in what is now Ukraine, Lispector's Jewish family survived pogroms during the Russian Civil War, fleeing to Brazil when she was an infant. Lispector's later life was as mysterious as her words—from her marriage to a Brazilian diplomat to her unexpected beauty. Benjamin Moser's 2009 biography has since renewed interest in her work, leading to numerous retranslations.

Lispector published nine novels and dozens of short stories and children's books. In 1943, her first novel, *Near to the Wild Heart*, was published when she was just 23 and became an instant sensation among Brazilian critics for its stream-of-conscious style. Often considered her most accessible—and controversial—book, *An Apprenticeship, or the Book of Pleasures* (1968), is an unconventional love story about a woman who meets an enigmatic professor and endeavors to "learn" how to finally live. Her final novel, the strange and haunting *The Hour of the Star*, was published months before her death from ovarian cancer in 1977. Lispector's work is undoubtedly not for everyone. Her stories often have little plot, focusing on the interior life, philosophical questions, and the metaphysical, which makes them challenging. Their magic, however, is the writing itself—urgent, breathless, beautiful.

# WHO WAS HUMBOLDT?

BY KAREN B.



The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt's New World by Andrea Wulf

Humboldt Parkway in Buffalo, along with many other places in the world, is named after a German scientist from the early 1800s, Alexander von Humboldt. Starting as a mining inspector, Humboldt became the foremost expert in botany and geology, or what was known as natural history, from his many travels around the world. He was admired by scientists, writers, presidents, and social revolutionaries. Now mostly forgotten, this book aims to renew his legacy. It credits him with inventing how we think of nature today. Humboldt saw nature as a web of connections, with humans as part of a greater whole. He arrived at this idea by seeing global patterns in climate, vegetation, and geology. He also saw connections among science, economics, politics, and social conditions. Preferring fieldwork to abstract theorizing, and poetic description to dry prose, Humboldt also changed how science investigations were conducted and disseminated. His studies laid the groundwork for today's investigations of climate change and calls for environmental awareness. For readers interested in history and environmentalism, and for citizen scientists, this book is a goldmine of information.

# UNKNOWN GEMS: MAGAZINES

BY STUART R.

Attention!! Terrific selection of magazines in our well stocked Kenmore Library.

For patrons who do not buy the Sunday New York Times, please note that we have my two favorites available to check out: The New York Times Magazine and The New York Times Book Review. Enjoy at your leisure!

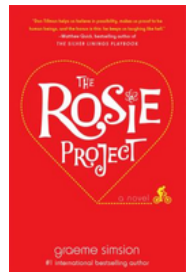


Image: <https://www.nytimes.com>



Artwork by N. Dilweg

# PROJECT ROMANCE



BY CHRISTINA L.

The Rosie Project by Graeme Simsion

I am a romance novel lover through and through. First there is the chance meeting, then the moment when characters realize they NEED to be together (swoon!), followed by a confrontation that almost always resolves in an overly optimistic and "buttoned up" conclusion. Ahhhh ☺ Happily ever after with butterflies and rainbows. You know... absolutely nothing like real life. Well, this one checked all those traditional boxes with a good dose of humor and social awkwardness. We get to explore what it really means to be human and normalize the different ways people meet and fall in love. If you're looking for romance this summer, The Rosie Project may not help you become a top-notch sweep 'em off their feet kind of person, but it will entertain, and most importantly push us to lean into all the imperfections we encounter on the romantic side of relationships.

# ELIN HILDERBRAND: MORE THAN "QUEEN OF THE BEACH READS"

BY REBECCA K.



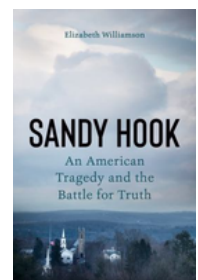
Image: <https://www.elinhilderbrand.net/>

For years I had seen books in the library by Elin Hilderbrand and thought those aren't for me, I need more substance and I couldn't have been more wrong. All but three of her novels do take place on Nantucket, where she is a full time resident, and all but four have summer or warm weather serving as the backdrop for the stories but they are more than fluffy love stories. Love is a theme through all the books but it is not just romantic, lost, or unrequited love but also familial, parental and the love between friends. The books can be nostalgic, heartwarming, heartbreaking, and thought-inspiring all at the same time. In the 28 books she has written, and yes I've read the majority of them, the stories aren't formulaic so that you sit and say, "didn't I already read this one?" The plots, challenges, and situations are unique. Not all her protagonists are good people, they are human and they are flawed. One of the most recent is *Golden Girl* about a novelist who was killed in a hit and run accident and the story is told mostly from her point of view watching all the events unfold. One of my favorites is *Beautiful Day*, which revolves around planning a wedding where, "plans are being made according to the wishes of the bride's late mother, who left behind *The Notebook*: specific instructions for every detail of her youngest daughter's future nuptials" I also enjoyed the Winter Series, four books that take place during the Christmas season on Nantucket. I would agree that the books are best read when you have an abundance of time, such as during a beach vacation, since they are hard to put down but you can read them anytime. The biggest drawback about her books is that the characters aren't diverse; they are fairly homogeneous. All of her books are available in some form (book, ebook, CD and/or audio) from the library. Often, especially during the summer, there is a waiting list but don't let that stop you. Check out a book and enjoy.

## NEW & NOTEWORTHY

BY NICOLE B.

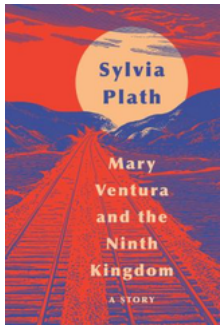
*Sandy Hook: An American Tragedy and the Battle for Truth*  
by Elizabeth Williamson



Compelling and heartbreaking, this book is an essential read for those seeking understanding of how conspiracy theories have upended truth in even the most proven atrocities of our society. It's a sad and harrowing account of the torment the parents of Sandy Hook's victims have endured due to pushers and profiteers of the "belief" that the 2014 Newtown elementary school mass shooting of 20 1st graders and 6 educators was a government-sponsored hoax. What unfolds is a terrible escalation of lies for profit and fame being peddled unencumbered (largely due to built-in recommendation algorithms) over social media and other platforms. You will wonder how ordinary citizens can become so distorted and cruel, and ache for the families who not only have to grieve their child's horrific death, but also have to endure being terrorized online (and sometimes, in person) by people who believe their slain children never existed or are still alive. Only through deplatforming efforts and recent legal action, such as the defamation suits against Alex Jones, have any true repercussions been felt by the promulgators of these lies. Rather than turn away, I urge all who care about humanity to read this book. While a difficult read, its exposure of our dependence on information from largely for-profit, unregulated platforms (the internet, social media) and the gradual distortion of truth has resulted in a truly terrible combination.

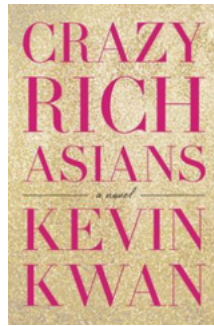


# QUICK TAKES



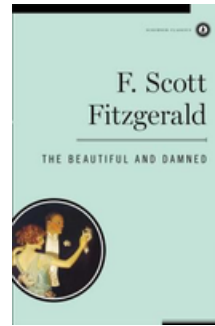
## Mary Ventura and the Ninth Kingdom by Sylvia Plath

A woman goes on a train and things are not as they seem, with strange encounters and a cliff-hanger ending. This short story is a symbolic tale written by the famous poet that twists and turns despite its short page count.



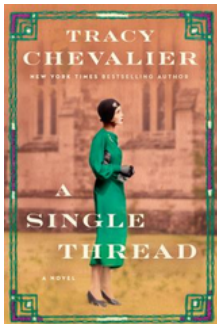
## Crazy Rich Asians by Kevin Kwan

As it says in the title, crazy and rich. A fabulous, over-the-top look at extravagant wealth and what it means to put family over everything.



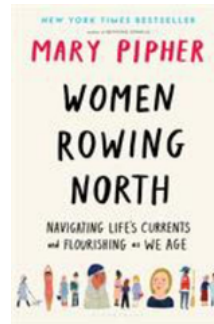
## Beautiful and the Damned by F. Scott Fitzgerald

This is a book that I revisit every so often because as I get older the story of Anthony Patch and Gloria Gilbert resonates in different ways. The first time I read this novel I was 20 and now at 47 I have a different appreciation and set of life experiences under my belt. If it's been awhile for you or you've never read it, I would give it a read.



## A Single Thread by Tracy Chevalier

A story of resilience, this novel describes the life of a woman who lost much in England after the First World War. She comes to terms with her losses and learns to move forward by leaving her own legacy through brodering, a centuries old craft of embroidering cathedral kneelers that stand the test of time.



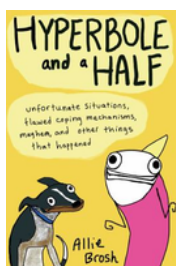
## Women Rowing North by Mary Pipher

The subtitle says it all: "Navigating Life's Currents and Flourishing As We Age." This book serves as a guide for women entering a life after careers and motherhood in a way that celebrates and prepares us for the good things that can happen later in life.



## Me Talk Pretty One Day by David Sedaris

This is a collection of humorous essays about the author's family, childhood and life that make you laugh out loud while reading. If you are looking for something funny, upbeat and different then this is for you. For me this is one of his best.



## Hyperbole and a Half: Unfortunate Situations, Flawed Coping Mechanisms, Mayhem, and Other Things That Happened by Allie Brosh

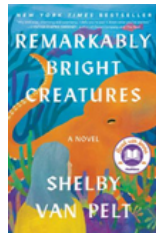
If you've never read a graphic novel, I say dip your toe in with this funny crowd-pleaser. If you're a dog lover, a little manic about some things, or have strange habits you will definitely see yourself in some of the pages.



# PATRON RECOMMENDATIONS

## REMARKABLE!

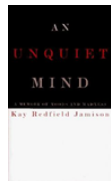
REVIEW BY  
HEATHER



Remarkably Bright Creatures tells the story of three characters: Tova, a 70-year-old widow, still grieving the loss of her son just before his 18th birthday; 30-year-old Cameron, the son of a largely absent addict mother and a father he never knew, struggling to find something in himself worth loving; and Marcellus, a bright but bored giant Pacific octopus, counting down the days to his death when at least he'll finally be free of captivity at the local aquarium where Tova works. Tova, Cameron, and Marcellus cross paths when Cameron, in town to try to connect with the man he thinks is his father, begins working part-time at the aquarium. The book alternates between the three characters' points-of-view with the chapters narrated by Marcellus being especially delightful. While I figured out how the pieces were going to come together a bit before they finally did in the book, watching them come together was still a pleasure. While the story is about loneliness, grief, and how difficult it can be to move through it, it's ultimately a heart-warming story about the importance of connection to other living creatures, human and otherwise.

## CLASSIC READ

REVIEW BY LIZ



An Unquiet Mind by Dr. Kay Jamison is an unparalleled exploration of mental health. Reading Jamison's words is like being in conversation with both the clinical and teaching psychiatrist and the human being living with manic-depressive disorder, also known as bipolar disorder. Using humor and wit, Jamison's memoir outlines her youth, education, and professional life alongside her experiences with manic episodes, psychosis, hospitalization, and suicidal depression. Jamison has made mood disorders the focus of her research career, while also staying wary of her bias. She relates to her patients on a level other clinicians simply cannot; ranking psychiatric facilities based on how much she would like to stay there herself. According to the National Institutes of Mental Health, 3% of Americans experienced bipolar disorder from 2001 to 2003. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 21% of Americans experienced a mental health disorder in 2020. We all know someone in that 21%. Learning from an expert psychiatrist with personal experience is a fantastic exercise in empathy and staying informed.

## QUICK TAKE

REVIEW BY PAT



I haven't purchased a book in more than 15 years. However, if I were to buy one it would be *The Last Thing He Told Me*. Laura Dave has created a story of family, sacrifice, truth and love with a surprise ending that will knock your socks off.

## TRY THIS MANGA SERIES



REVIEW BY DORIAN TERN

Although Pride Month; celebrating civil rights fought for by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, plus (LGBTQIA+), community is over for 2022; it is always a great time to read the Japanese manga series, *Our Dreams at Dusk* by Yuhki Kamatani. Over four short volumes, Kamatani uses captivating images of a seaside town, its aging buildings, and magical realism to explore the rich internal and external lives of LGBTQIA+ characters. The protagonist, closeted gay high school student Tasuku Kaname, stumbles upon a community center run by a mysterious person and an associated organization renovating old buildings. Tasuku confronts his relationship with himself, his peers, and his community, while learning about himself alongside his new friends; including a lesbian couple, a transgender man, a gender questioning child, an asexual nonbinary person, an older gay man, and unexpectedly, his crush from school. *Our Dreams at Dusk* stands out for its breadth and depth of LGBTQIA+ representation in an emotionally driven coming of age story about coming out, self-acceptance, and the power of community in an unaccepting world.



## REEL REVIEW

BY CHLOE S.



Inland Empire (Dir. David Lynch, 2006)

Unsettling, surreal, and maybe just plain weird - this thriller by David Lynch (Mullholland Drive, Eraserhead, Twin Peaks) stars Laura Dern as an actress named Nikki Grace.

Nikki lands a role in a film about a cursed Polish woman, based on a folktale where a cheating wife is punished by her abusive husband she tried to escape by reliving her life over and over again. As filming goes on, Nikki's life starts to resemble the film and lines are blurred to the point of total chaos.

Shot entirely on a Sony camcorder and created without a complete script, the film is definitely not for everyone. If you are looking for a linear plot, forget it. However, there is nothing like this film. It is something that makes you think, making sense of what's real and what's not - a trademark of Lynch's work.

Although recently restored for a short theatrical run, this film is not available on streaming and physical copies are rare - which is why we all love the library!

## ONE LAST THING...



Kenmore Library: 5 star review

Favorite library, great vibes. Staff terrific-knowledgeable, service oriented, friendly. Great collection. Look forward to going there. Feel good atmosphere makes my day!  
(Submitted by Stu R.)

## WORTH A LISTEN: SIGUR RÓS

BY NICOLE B.



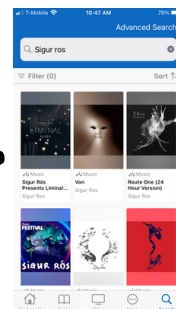
Seeing a band live can really reignite a passion for their music. That definitely was my experience after seeing the band Sigur Rós in Toronto this summer.

For those who aren't familiar, they are an Icelandic post-rock/ambient/dream pop band active since 1994. The combination of the lead singer, Jónsi's, angelic falsetto and reverberating guitar and the band's otherworldly sound will transport you out of the humdrum of regular life into a whole new universe. Start with the song "Svefn-g-englar" from the Ágætis byrjun album to get a real feel for their sound and artistry.

And don't feel lost if you have no idea what they're saying- although they speak Icelandic, many of their songs are in a made-up language called Hopelandic. OK, I know, this all must sound very strange but I promise you they are amazing! Think of it as a musical version of modern art with a heavy dose of magic mixed in.

Borrow the CDs from the library (use the QR code above) or download their albums on

hoopla



# THE CHECKOUT STAFF

Christina L., Chloe S., Karen B. Michaela M., Nicole B., Nicole D., Rebecca K., Sue K., and Stuart R.

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