

## Best of the Best 2017

Atwood, Margaret **Hagseed** Still bristling from the loss of his job as Artistic Director of a regional arts festival, Felix plots his revenge in staging a production of **The Tempest** in a prison.

Backman, Fredrick **My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry** Seven year old Elsa has just one friend, her eccentric grandmother, who enchants her with elaborately created fairy tales and crazy stunts. Elsa is asked to deliver apology letters for her grandmother after she dies, introducing her to a world of potential new friends and insight into the fairy tales that may not be imaginary after all.

Chabon, Michael **Moonglow** An author learns the story of the life of his grandfather, World War II soldier, prisoner, and rocket aficionado as the grandfather reveals his life and that of his Holocaust survivor wife as he copes with terminal illness. A novel/memoir.

Church, Elizabeth **The Atomic Weight of Love** Aspiring ornithologist, Meridian Wallace puts her scientific ambitions on hold by marrying her professor and moving to Los Alamos where he is involved in the development of the atomic bomb. Stifled by her marriage and 1950s society, she focuses on studying the local crows and meets a man who may offer her an escape.

Conroy, Pat **A Lowcountry Heart** A collection of some of the last writing of Pat Conroy, author of **The Prince of Tides** and **The Great Santini**.

Dray, Stephanie and Kamore, Laura **America's First Daughter** Fictionalized story of Thomas Jefferson's elder daughter, Martha 'Patsy' Jefferson.

Gaiman, Neil **The View from the Cheap Seats** Essays on art, life, and literary genres, including the speech, "Make Good Art".

Gyasi, Yaa **Homegoing** Beginning with the stories of two half-sisters (who never know each other), Gyasi traces seven generations of descendants from African villages to slavery, and lives over decades of change in America.

Harrigan, Stephen **A Friend of Mr. Lincoln** Early years of Abraham Lincoln's career as a young lawyer and politician as recounted Cage Weatherby, a poet writer, and friend of Mr. Lincoln.

Harris, Robert **Conclave** A pope has died and Dean of the College of Cardinals, Lomeli, is charged with managing the conclave to choose a successor. Ambition, secrets, and a mysterious Cardinal all feature in this thriller.

Hawley, Noah, **Before the Fall** The crash of a private jet from Martha's Vineyard to New York has two survivors, a painter and the four year old son of the wealthy plane owner. Nine others, all influential, are dead, setting off an investigation and a media firestorm.

Hoffman, Alice **Faithful** Shelby lives an ordinary teenage life on Long Island until a car accident leaves her best friend in a coma and Shelby saddled with guilt. The book recounts her journey from rock bottom to a forging life of her own.

Ivey, Eiwyn **to the Bright Edge of the World.** Leading a small group of men in a dangerous expedition into Alaska Territory, Col. Allen Forrester records his experiences for his young pregnant wife, Sophie, left behind in Vancouver. Sophie has difficulties living within the restrictions of an officer's wife but taken with the beauty of the nature around her, she explores photography, helping to overcome the hardships and challenges of her life.

Jiles, Paulette **News of the World** Capt. Jefferson Kidd agrees to reunite a ten year old girl with her family by taking her across dangerous post-Civil War Texas. The girl, Johanna, was captured and released by the Kiowa, and remembers only tribal life.

Johnson, Julia Clairborne **Be Frank With Me** Reclusive author M.M. Banning has been living with her son Frank in Bel Air off the proceeds from a wildly popular novel. When she loses her money in an investment scheme, her editor assigns Alice Whitley, his assistant, to keep Banning on task with the completion of a long promised novel and to handle the household, including caring for Frank, an eccentric nine year old who dresses like a 1930s movie star and has little in common with his peers.

Lutz, Lisa **The Passenger** When her husband falls down the stairs and dies, wife Tanya leaves a note that she didn't kill him and flees, taking on a new identity with the help of a mysterious source. She assumes and discards identities, not for the first time, and understands the dangers of becoming someone else. . Uncharacteristically, she develops a friendship with Blue, a bartender with secrets of her own, as she attempts to safely live off the grid.

McBride, James **Kill 'em and Leave: Searching for James Brown and the American Soul** An unconventional biography of James Brown, the godfather of soul, a man no one really knew.

Miller, Louise **The City Baker's Guide to Country Living** When Boston pastry chef Livvy sets her both her Baked Alaska and the restaurant dining room on fire, she flees to her friend in Vermont where she finds a job and eventually a community.

Patchett, Ann **Commonwealth** Five decades in the life of a blended family.

Pears, Ian **Arcadia** Professor Henry Lytton, a former spy, is working on a fantasy novel based in 'Anterworld' but when young neighbor Rosie, chasing his cat, finds and enters a doorway in his basement, she enters an actual Anterworld.

Perri, Camille **The Assistants** Tina Fontana is the very competent assistant to the CEO of the Titan Corporation. While booking a flight, usually comped for her wealthy boss, she pays airfare from her own credit card, and files for reimbursement. The airline cancels the charge but Tina also gets the check and is faced with the dilemma of keeping the money (chances are no one would notice) or return it. The money could resolve her student loan debt, but Tina's situation doesn't go unnoticed by other coworkers who hatch a scheme to compensate the underpaid.

Prose, Francine **Mister Monkey** An Off- Off-Broadway revival of the children's musical **Mister Monkey** as observed and experienced by the members of the production and the audience.

Rothschild, Hannah Mary **The Improbability of Love** London Chef Annie McDee buys a painting from a secondhand shop as a birthday gift for a new lover. The relationship doesn't pan out but researching the painting propels Annie into a dark side of the art world, and pursuit by unscrupulous parties who want the artwork.

Russo, Richard **Everybody's Fool** Ten years after the close of **Nobody's Fool**, we return to North Bath, NY, this time focusing on Doug Raymer, now police chief and his obsession to find the man his late wife was about to leave him for.

Semple, Maria **Today will be Different** Today Eleanor resolves to be a better wife, mother, friend but today is the day her son Timby fakes illness for some 'mom' time, a lunch with a former colleague raises memories of a broken relationship, and some secrets revealed.

Simonson, Helen **The Summer Before the War** In 1914, Beatrice Nash is hired as Latin teacher, with the help of an influential woman. Penniless after the death of her father, Beatrice needs the job and wants to pursue teaching but soon becomes part of the small English town as war erupts.

Smith, Zadie **Swing Time** Love of dance brings two mixed raced girls from a housing project together but only one is talented enough to try for a dancer's career. The other, the nameless narrator, becomes an assistant to a musical superstar whose interests take her to Africa to assist in the opening of a school. The friendship ends but the connections are felt for years.

Springsteen, Bruce **Born to Run** Autobiography of the Boss.

Towles, Amor **A Gentleman in Moscow** In 1922, Count Alexander Rostov is sentenced to house arrest at the elegant Metropol Hotel in Moscow, but his accommodations are no longer a luxury suite but an attic room. As the years go by, he experiences and participates in the changes in the USSR despite his isolation, and his friendship with a young girl in the hotel, changes his life.

Whitehead, Colson, **The Underground Railroad** Abused slave Cora flees the plantation to take the Underground Railroad to freedom. This railroad is an actual railroad with conductors, tracks and rails. Safety is elusive since different stops pose different threats, and Cora is tracked by a slave catcher eager to capture her.

Willis, Connie **Crosstalk** Briddey Flannigan and new beau Trent work for a telecom company on state of the art smartphones. Briddey is trying to keep their relationship secret, particularly from her over-involved family so while she is delighted that Trent wants to enhance their relationship by having an EED, a procedure that will enable them to communicate telepathically, she does not want her family to get involved. She agrees to the EED disregarding the warnings of a colleague only to rely on him when things go very wrong.

Woodson, Jacqueline **Another Brooklyn** A chance encounter with a friend evokes August's memories of growing up in 1970s Brooklyn with three girlfriends in this poetic novel.