



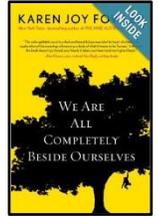
# Season's Readings 2013

From the Staff of Post Learning Commons and Drexel Library

Naomi Cohen

***We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*** by Karen Jay Fowler

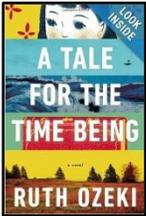
Rosemary transitions to adulthood grieving for her missing brother and twin sister. We know that humans and chimpanzees are very close genetically, but just how far can this family relationship go? A wild read!



Evelyn Minick

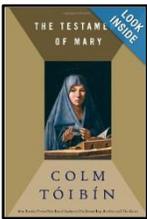
***A Tale for the Time Being*** by Ruth Ozeki

Multilayered and beautifully written, this Booker finalist explores themes of Zen Buddhism, quantum physics, moral choices in wartime, suicide, human telepathy, animal spirits, the Japanese tsunami and adolescent resilience. The story begins when a struggling author in an isolated area of northwest Canada finds a zip lock bag washed up on the shore. It contains the journal of a young Japanese girl, a diary in French and several letters. The journal is so compelling and painful that she is consumed with learning the young girl's fate. Her journey takes her into the lives of a desperately unhappy teenager, a suicidal father, a kamikaze pilot from World War II and his mother, a Buddhist nun. This is a magical read. This book is part of the Popular Reading collection. You can access the record [here](#).



***Testimony of Mary*** by Colm Toibin

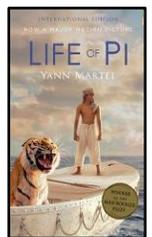
Apparently Jesus was a difficult child, or so it seems from this fictional tale of his rise to prominence, his suffering and death, and the chaotic aftermath as told by his mother Mary. She finds his ragtag band of followers unkempt and dangerous. He won't take her advice anymore. She warns him that if he doesn't tone it down, he will be arrested and killed. He even dismisses her concerns publicly. Then following his death, the "keepers of the faith" are more concerned about the "story" that will be passed on to future generations, than the truth. She was there and she will not lie, no matter how much they threaten her. This is a wonderful, thought-provoking take on a mother simply trying to protect her son from himself.



Marian Courtney

***Life of Pi*** by Yann Martel

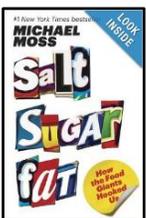
I missed this book when it first came out. However, when I saw the trailer from the award-winning movie, with its surreal images of a shipwrecked boy and tiger, I was intrigued. In reading, I discovered that the boy's name is Pi, like the irrational number. This unique name sets the stage for a very unusual tale where maybe not all is as it seems. If you have seen the movie, but not read the book, you may still find it worth your while. *Life of Pi* is part of the Library collection in both book and audiobook format. You can access the record [here](#).



Stephanie Riley

***Salt Sugar Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us*** by Michael Moss

This quick read gave me a whole new perspective on food, marketing, overeating, and obesity. It's a really comprehensive investigation into food science and processed foods from a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter. *Salt, Sugar, Fat* is a must-read for anyone interested in the foods we eat as a nation. The language is funny and matter-of-fact: not preachy at all. Using interviews with the food engineers themselves, the author is empathetic while getting to the heart of the situation and telling hard truths. This book is part of the Library collection. You can access the record [here](#).



## Kristine Chase

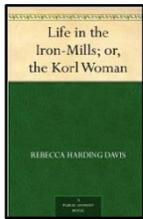


### **Wide Sargasso Sea** by Jean Rhys

*Wide Sargasso Sea* is a 1966 postcolonial parallel novel by Dominica-born British author Jean Rhys, who had lived in obscurity after her previous work, *Good Morning, Midnight*, was published in 1939. *Wide Sargasso Sea* 're-noticed' Rhys, and became her most successful novel. The novel is prequel to Charlotte Brontë's famous 1847 novel *Jane Eyre*. It is the story of Antoinette Cosway, a white Creole heiress, from the time of her youth in the Caribbean to her unhappy marriage to a certain English gentleman—he is never named by the author—who soon renames her, declares her mad and then requires her to relocate to England. Caught in an oppressive patriarchal society in which she belongs neither to the white Europeans nor the black Jamaicans, Rhys's novel re-imagines Brontë's devilish madwoman in the attic. As with many postcolonial works, the novel deals largely with the themes of racial inequality and the harshness of displacement and assimilation.

### **Life in the Iron Mills; or, the Korl Woman** by Rebecca Harding Davis

*Life in the Iron Mills; or, the Korl Woman* is a short story (or novella) written by Rebecca Harding Davis in 1861, set in the factory world of the nineteenth century. It is one of the earliest American realist works, and is an important text for those who study labor and women's issues. It was immediately recognized as an innovative work, and introduced American readers to "the bleak lives of industrial workers in the mills and factories of the nation." *Life in the Iron Mills* was initially published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 0007, Issue 42 in April 1861. After being published anonymously, both Emily Dickinson and Nathaniel Hawthorne praised the work. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward was also greatly influenced by Davis's *Life in the Iron Mills* and in 1868 published in *The Atlantic Monthly* "The Tenth of January," based on the 1860 fire at the Pemberton Mills in Lawrence, Massachusetts.



Rebecca Harding Davis was considered one of the nation's first social historians and pioneering literary artists. She wrote to find social change for blacks, women, immigrants, and the working class throughout the Civil War. Throughout her long career, Davis challenged the traditional subjects and older styles of writing. Her family lived briefly in Big Springs, Alabama before moving in 1837 to Wheeling, Virginia (now West Virginia), on the Ohio River. Its iron mills and immigrant populations inspired the setting of *Life in the Iron Mills*.

## Margie Guinan

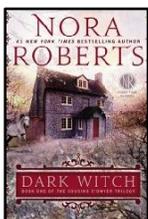
### **The First Phone Call from Heaven: A Novel** by Mitch Albom

*The First Phone Call from Heaven* tells the story of a small town on Lake Michigan that gets worldwide attention when its citizens start receiving phone calls from the afterlife. It is a virtuosic story of love, history and belief. This book is part of the Popular Reading collection. You can access the record [here](#).



### **Dark Witch** by Nora Roberts

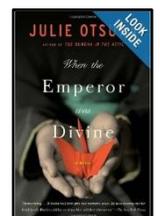
With indifferent parents, Sara Iona Sheehan grew up craving devotion and acceptance. From her maternal grandmother, she learned where to find both: a land of lush forests, dazzling lakes and centuries-old legends of County Mayo and where her destiny awaits. *Dark Witch* is part of the Popular Reading collection. You can access the record [here](#).



## Mary Martinson

### **When the Emperor was Divine** by Julie Otsuka

Concise, powerful and poetic, this is a story of a Japanese-American family and their move from their Berkeley, California home to an internment camp in Utah during World War II. *When the Emperor was Divine* is part of the Library collection in both book and audiobook format. You can access the record [here](#).

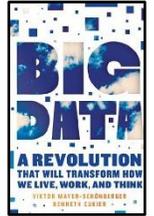


Cynthia Slater

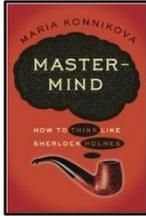
***Big Data: A Revolution That Will Transform How We Live, Work, and Think***

by Viktor Mayer-Schönberger and Kenneth Cukier

An enjoyable overview of Big Data, this book made the shortlist of the [2013 Financial Times and Goldman Sachs Business Book of the Year Award](#). This book is part of the Library collection. You can access the record [here](#).



Daniel Holden



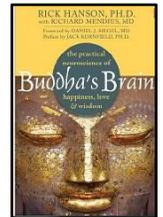
***Mastermind: How to Think Like Sherlock Holmes*** (2013) by Maria Konnikova

Sherlock Holmes is the sleuth that seems above the skills and ability of all. Yet Holmes may have only been a demonstration of the capacity of most human minds. Maria Konnikova blends the worlds of Holmes cannon, psychology, cognition, and theories of learning. Additionally, Konnikova draws from the application of deduction, mindfulness, focused thinking, and modern neurology to show the ability of human mind to retrain itself, becoming a more honed source of learnings, memory, observation and problem-solving. While not completely scientific or overwhelmingly Holmes-centered, this is recommended reading to anyone interested in psychology, cognition, and of course, Sherlock Holmes fans.

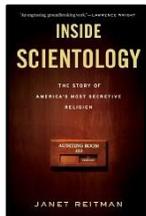
***Buddha's Brain: The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love, & Wisdom***

(2009) by Rick Hanson, with Richard Mendius

For anyone interested in the powerful effects of mindfulness meditation on quality of life, stress reduction, and the ability of the mind to rewire itself. This book discusses the growing realization of the cognitive-behavioral strengths of this ancient form of meditation that carries over in daily life through a rewiring of the mind. For those interested in meditation and meditative practices.



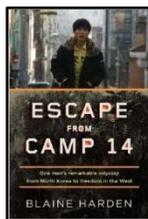
Catherine Collins



***Inside Scientology: The Story of America's Most Secretive Religion*** (2011) by Janet Reitman

Whether you view Scientology as a con, a cult, or a religion, its history is fascinating, as evidenced by the number of recent articles, books, and websites devoted to the subject. Rumors of brainwashing, spying, kidnapping, stalking, and even torture have followed Scientology for years, but only in the last decade have details on the church's core beliefs and recruitment tactics come to light in the mainstream media. *Rolling Stone* contributing editor, Janet Reitman, has written *Inside Scientology*, one of the latest in a series of recent books on L. Ron Hubbard's mysterious movement. Equally entertaining and frightening, *Inside Scientology* grew out of Reitman's five years researching the subject, leading to a lengthy 2006 article and eventually this extensive account of the controversial religion's first 60 years. It's hard to put down.

Michael Brooks



***Escape from Camp 14: One Man's Remarkable Odyssey from North Korea to Freedom in the West*** by Blaine Harden

This book is a remarkable biographical narrative of Shin Dong-hyuk, the only person known to successfully escape from a North Korean prison camp into which he was born.

Having escaped from a life most can't imagine, Shin Dong-hyuk's recollections describe what it was like growing up in a harsh, oppressive place where the betrayal of family and friends was considered normal and encouraged; where executions and disappearances were commonplace. He witnessed the executions of his mother and brother.

Everything he knew and how everyone lived was seen as normal until a chance encounter with a prisoner from the outside whose fascinating stories of what life was like outside the camp kindled a curiosity and a desire to discover and live that life.

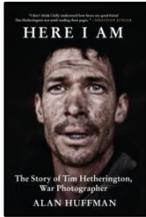
Martha VanAuken

***The Christmas Cookie Club: A Novel*** by Ann Pearlman

Ann Pearlman's irresistible debut novel provides the perfect ingredients for a fun and touching read about a group of women who gather each year to share a journey of friendship, hope, heartbreak—and recipes.



Christopher Dixon

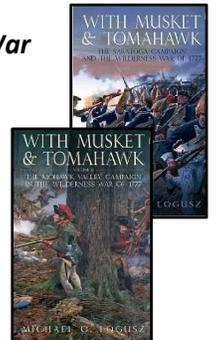


***Here I Am: The Story of Tim Hetherington, War Photographer*** by Alan Huffman

Tim Hetherington was a renowned photojournalist. Perhaps, he was best known for his collaboration with author Sebastian Junger (*The Perfect Storm*) on the Academy Award nominated documentary *Restrepo*, which told the story of a remote U.S. combat outpost in Afghanistan. Tragically, Hetherington was killed during a mortar attack while reporting on the Libyan Civil War in 2011. He was not unlike many other correspondents, both men and women, who put their lives on the line to cover the news.

***With Musket and Tomahawk: The Saratoga Campaign and the Wilderness War of 1777*** and ***With Musket and Tomahawk Volume II: The Mohawk Valley Campaign in the Wilderness War of 1777*** by Michael Logusz

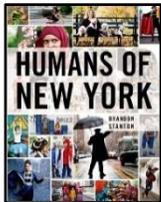
These two books must be read together in order to understand just how pivotal the control of the Hudson and Mohawk river valleys was to the outcome of the American Revolution. Had the British prevailed at Saratoga, the American cause for independence might have ended then and there. These campaigns were war at its worst along the New York wilderness in 1777.



Anne Krakow

***Humans of New York*** by Brandon Stanton

Photographer Brandon Stanton began his blog “Humans of New York” in late 2010. He began with the intent of creating a photographic census of the city of New York, and ended up with very personal and touching profiles of the many individuals that make up the great city. When taking each photo, Stanton would ask one question such as “What was the saddest moment in your life?” or “When have you been the happiest?” Their answer, which often turns into an anecdote, appears next to their photo. The blog, which has over a million followers, has been turned into a book of 400 color photographs and profiles.



Blog: <http://www.humansofnewyork.com/>

Susan Clayton

***A Compendium of Collective Nouns: From an Army of Aardvarks to a Zeal of Zebras***

by Woop Studios; text by Jay Sacher

This imaginative and beautifully illustrated guide to over 2000 collective nouns is a great gift for trivia aficionados, language lovers, even young readers. Arranged in dictionary fashion, the book includes familiar terms such as a *nest of crocodiles* and a *shower of bullets* – but who knew a group of two or more dentists is a *wince of dentists*? An interesting and fun read!

