

Florida United Church of Christ Women  
Reading for Renewal  
2022– 2023

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My hope is that you will find a book or two that challenges you, entertains you, delights you, engages you and provides a common topic of conversation to share with others both in your home congregation as well as throughout the state of Florida.

You can join the *Reading for Renewal – Florida UCC Women* book club by visiting the website using the following link: <https://bookclubz.com/clubs/32786/join/793c8f/> Once you join you will see the books from this year listed under Books We Want to Read. Please do not add other books to this list but feel welcome to add comments/messages as you are reading. If you are hosting a meeting to discuss any of the books the meeting can be posted on the site. This is a closed club so the link should only be shared with other FL UCC Women and friends.

On a personal note: This is the final list that I will be sharing with you. After 10+ years I am stepping aside and allowing someone new to engage in the challenge of drafting these lists. I hoped that I have inspired you to read new authors and books that you might not have chosen by yourself. My thanks to everyone who continues to stay involved with the women's group through the Reading for Renewal program.

~Terri Crawford, FL UCC Women/Reading for Renewal Chair

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Reading for Renewal List for 2022 – 2023

**#1 All That She Carried: the journey of Ashley's sack, a Black family keepsake** – Tiya Miles (Non-Fiction - Women's History) In 1850s South Carolina, an enslaved woman named Rose faced a crisis: the imminent sale of her daughter Ashley. Thinking quickly, she packed a cotton bag for her with a few items, and, soon after, the nine-year-old girl was separated from her mother and sold. Decades later, Ashley's granddaughter Ruth embroidered this family history on the sack in spare, haunting language. Historian Tiya Miles carefully traces these women's faint presence in archival records, and, where archives fall short, she turns to objects, art, and the environment to write a singular history of the experience of slavery, and the uncertain freedom afterward, in the United States. *All That She Carried* is a poignant story of resilience and love passed down against steep odds. It honors the creativity and resourcefulness of people who preserved family ties when official systems refused to do so, and it serves as a visionary illustration of how to reconstruct and recount their stories today.

**#2 Beside Myself** – Sasha Marianne Salzmann (Contemporary Fiction) *Beside Myself* is the disturbing and exhilarating story of a family across four generations. At its heart is one woman's search for her twin brother. When Anton goes missing and the only clue is a postcard sent from Istanbul, Alissa leaves her life in Berlin to find him. Without her twin, the sharer of her memories and the mirror of her own self, Ali is lost. In a city steeped in political and social changes, where you can buy gender-changing drugs on the street, Ali's search - for her missing brother, for her identity - will take her on a journey for connection and belonging.

**#3 Carolina Built** – Kianna Alexander (Historical Fiction) Josephine N. Leary is determined to build a life of her own and a future for her family. When she moves to Edenton, North Carolina from the plantation where she was born, she is free, newly married, and ready to follow her dreams. As the demands of life pull Josephine's attention away, it becomes increasingly difficult for her to pursue her real estate aspirations. She finds herself immersed in deepening her marriage, mothering her daughters, and being a dutiful daughter and granddaughter. Still, she manages to teach herself to be a businesswoman, to manage her finances, and to

make smart investments in the local real estate market. But with each passing year, it grows more and more difficult to focus on building her legacy from the ground up.

**#4 The Daughters of Yalta: the Churchills, Roosevelts and Harrimans -- a story of love and war** – Catherine Grace Katz (Historical Fiction) Tensions at Yalta threatened to tear apart the wartime alliance of Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin just as victory was close at hand. Catherine Grace Katz uncovers the dramatic story of the three young women who were chosen by their fathers to travel with them to Yalta, each bound by fierce family loyalty, political savvy, and intertwined romances that powerfully colored these crucial days. Kathleen Harriman, daughter of U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union Averell Harriman, was a war correspondent and champion skier. Sarah Churchill, an actress-turned-RAF officer, was devoted to her brilliant father, who depended on her astute political mind. Roosevelt's only daughter, Anna, chosen instead of her mother, Eleanor, to accompany the president to Yalta, arrived there as keeper of her father's most damaging secrets. Situated in the political maelstrom that marked the transition to the postwar world, *The Daughters of Yalta* is a remarkable story of fathers and daughters whose relationships were tested and strengthened by the history they witnessed and the future they crafted together.

**#5 Disability Visibility: first-person stories from the Twenty-First century** – Alia Wong (Non-Fiction - Biography) One in five people in the United States lives with a disability. Some disabilities are visible, others less apparent—but all are underrepresented in media and popular culture. Now, just in time for the thirtieth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, activist Alice Wong brings together this urgent, galvanizing collection of contemporary essays by disabled people. From Harriet McBryde Johnson's account of her debate with Peter Singer over her own personhood to original pieces by authors like Keah Brown and Haben Girma; from blog posts, manifestos, and eulogies to Congressional testimonies, and beyond: this anthology gives a glimpse into the rich complexity of the disabled experience, highlighting the passions, talents, and everyday lives of this community. It invites readers to question their own understandings. It celebrates and documents disability culture in the now. It looks to the future and the past with hope and love.

**#6 Five Tuesdays in Winter: stories** – Lily King (Short Stories) Told in the intimate voices of complex, endearing characters, *Five Tuesdays in Winter* intriguingly subverts expectations as it explores desire, loss, jolting violence, and the inexorable tug toward love at all costs. Romantic, hopeful, brutally raw, and unsparingly honest, this wide-ranging collection of ten selected stories by one of our most accomplished chroniclers of the human heart is an exciting addition to Lily King's acclaimed fiction.

**#7 The Genius of Women: from overlooked to changing the world** – Janice Kaplan (Non-Fiction – Women's Studies) Even in this time of rethinking women's roles, we define genius almost exclusively through male achievement. When asked to name a genius, people mention Albert Einstein, Leonardo da Vinci, and Steve Jobs. As for great women? In one survey, the only female genius anyone listed was Marie Curie. Janice Kaplan set out to determine why the extraordinary work of so many women has been brushed aside. Using her unique mix of memoir, narrative, and inspiration, she makes surprising discoveries about women geniuses now and throughout history, in fields from music to robotics. Across the generations, even when they face less-than-perfect circumstances, women geniuses have created brilliant and original work. In *The Genius of Women*, you'll learn how they ignored obstacles and broke down seemingly unshakable barriers. The geniuses in this moving, powerful, and very entertaining book provide more than inspiration—they offer a clear blueprint to everyone who wants to find her own path and move forward with passion.

**#8 The Healing of Natalie Curtis** – Jane Kirkpatrick (Christian Historical Fiction) Classically trained pianist and singer Natalie Curtis isolated herself for five years after a breakdown just before she was to debut with the New York Philharmonic. Guilt-ridden and songless, Natalie can't seem to recapture the joy music once brought her. In 1902, her brother invites her to join him in the West to search for healing. What she finds are songs she'd never before encountered—the haunting melodies, rhythms, and stories of Native Americans. But their music is under attack. The US government's Code of Offenses prohibits American's indigenous people from singing, dancing, or speaking their own languages as the powers that be insist on assimilation. Natalie makes it her mission not only to document these songs before they disappear but to appeal to President Teddy Roosevelt himself, who is the only man with the power to repeal

the unjust law. Will she succeed and step into a new song . . . and a new future? Award-winning author Jane Kirkpatrick weaves yet another lyrical tale based on a true story that will keep readers captivated to the very end.

**#9 Joan Is Okay** – Weike Wang (Contemporary Fiction) Joan is a thirtysomething ICU doctor at a busy New York City hospital. The daughter of Chinese parents who came to the United States to secure the American dream for their children, Joan is intensely devoted to her work, happily solitary, successful. She does look up sometimes and wonder where her true roots lie: at the hospital, where her white coat makes her feel needed, or with her family, who try to shape her life by their own cultural and social expectations. Once Joan and her brother, Fang, were established in their careers, her parents moved back to China, hoping to spend the rest of their lives in their homeland. But when Joan's father suddenly dies and her mother returns to America to reconnect with her children, a series of events sends Joan spiraling out of her comfort zone just as her hospital, her city, and the world are forced to reckon with a health crisis more devastating than anyone could have imagined.

**#10 Last Dance of the Debutante** – Julia Kelly (Women's Fiction) When it's announced that 1958 will be the last year debutantes are to be presented at court, thousands of eager mothers and hopeful daughters flood the palace with letters seeking the year's most coveted invitation: a chance for their daughters to curtsy to the young Queen Elizabeth and officially come out into society. In an effort to appease her traditional mother, aspiring university student Lily Nichols agrees to become a debutante and do the Season, a glittering and grueling string of countless balls and cocktail parties. In doing so, she befriends two very different women: the cool and aloof Leana Hartford whose apparent perfection hides a darker side and the ambitious Katherine Norman who dreams of a career once she helps her parents find their place among the elite. But the glorious effervescence of the Season evaporates once Lily learns a devastating secret that threatens to destroy her entire family.

**#11 Local Woman Missing** – Mary Kubica (Mystery) *People don't just disappear without a trace...* Shelby Tebow is the first to go missing. Not long after, Meredith Dickey and her six-year-old daughter, Delilah, vanish just blocks away from where Shelby was last seen, striking fear into their once-peaceful community. Are these incidents connected? After an elusive search that yields more questions than answers, the case eventually goes cold. Now, eleven years later, Delilah shockingly returns. Everyone wants to know what happened to her, but no one is prepared for what they'll find...

**#12 The Loneliest Americans** – Jay Caspian Kang (Non-Fiction – Immigrant History) In 1965, a new immigration law lifted a century of restrictions against Asian immigrants to the United States. Nobody, including the lawmakers who passed the bill, expected it to transform the country's demographics. But over the next four decades, millions arrived, including Jay Caspian Kang's parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. *The Loneliest Americans* is the unforgettable story of Kang and his family as they move from a housing project in Cambridge to an idyllic college town in the South and eventually to the West Coast. Their story unfolds against the backdrop of a rapidly expanding Asian America, as millions more immigrants, many of them working-class or undocumented, stream into the country. At the same time, upwardly mobile urban professionals have struggled to reconcile their parents' assimilationist goals with membership in a multicultural elite—all while trying to carve out a new kind of belonging for their own children, who are neither white nor truly "people of color."

**#13 The Love of My Life** – Rosie Walsh (Mystery) Emma loves her husband Leo and their young daughter Ruby: she'd do anything for them. But almost everything she's told them about herself is a lie. And she might just have got away with it, if it weren't for her husband's job. Leo is an obituary writer; Emma a well-known marine biologist. When she suffers a serious illness, Leo copes by doing what he knows best – researching and writing about his wife's life. But as he starts to unravel the truth, he discovers the woman he loves doesn't really exist. Even her name isn't real. When the very darkest moments of Emma's past finally emerge, she must somehow prove to Leo that she really is the woman he always thought she was . . .but first, she must tell him about the other love of her life.

**#14 The Ministry for the Future** – Kim Stanley Robinson (Science/Climate Fiction) *The Ministry for the Future* is a masterpiece of the imagination, using fictional eyewitness accounts to tell the story of how climate change will affect us

all. Its setting is not a desolate, postapocalyptic world, but a future that is almost upon us. This extraordinary novel from visionary science fiction writer Kim Stanley Robinson will change the way you think about the climate crisis.

**#15 Mrs March** – Virginia Feito (Thriller Fiction) George March's latest novel is a smash. No one could be prouder than his dutiful wife, Mrs. March, who revels in his accolades. A careful creature of routine and decorum, she lives a precariously controlled existence on the Upper East Side until one morning, when the shopkeeper of her favorite patisserie suggests that her husband's latest protagonist—a detestable character named Johanna—is based on Mrs. March herself. Clutching her ostrich leather pocketbook and mint-colored gloves, she flees the shop. What could have merited this humiliation? That one casual remark robs Mrs. March of the belief that she knew everything about her husband—and herself—thus sending her on an increasingly paranoid journey that begins within the pages of a book. As she begins to decode her husband's secrets, her deafening anxiety and fierce determination threaten everyone in her wake.

**#16 No Land to Light On** – Yara Zgheib (Family Fiction) Sama and Hadi are a young Syrian couple in love, dreaming of their future in the country that brought them together. Sama came to Boston years before on a prestigious Harvard scholarship; Hadi landed there as a sponsored refugee from a bloody civil war. Now, they are giddily awaiting the birth of their son, a boy whose native language will be freedom and belonging. When Sama is five months pregnant, Hadi's father dies suddenly, and Hadi decides to fly back to Jordan for the funeral. He leaves America, promising his wife he'll be gone only for a few days. On the date of his return, Sama waits for him at the arrivals gate, but he doesn't appear. As the minutes and then hours pass, she becomes increasingly alarmed, unaware that Hadi has been stopped by US Customs and Border Protection, detained for questioning, and deported.

**#17 Passing** – Nella Larsen (Urban Fiction) Irene Redfield is a Black woman living an affluent, comfortable life with her husband and children in the thriving neighborhood of Harlem in the 1920s. When she reconnects with her childhood friend Clare Kendry, who is similarly light-skinned, Irene discovers that Clare has been passing for a white woman after severing ties to her past—even hiding the truth from her racist husband. Clare finds herself drawn to Irene's sense of ease and security with her Black identity and longs for the community (and, increasingly, the woman) she lost. Irene is both riveted and repulsed by Clare and her dangerous secret, as Clare begins to insert herself—and her deception—into every part of Irene's stable existence. First published in 1929, Larsen's brilliant examination of the various ways in which we all seek to "pass," is as timely as ever.

**#18 Sisters in Arms: a novel of the daring Black women who served during World War II** – Kaia Alderson (Historical Fiction) Grace Steele and Eliza Jones may be from completely different backgrounds, but when it comes to the army, specifically the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), they are both starting from the same level. Not only will they be among the first class of female officers the army has even seen, they are also the first Black women allowed to serve. As these courageous women help to form the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, they are dealing with more than just army bureaucracy - everyone is determined to see this experiment fail. For two Northern women, learning to navigate their way through the segregated army may be tougher than boot camp. Grace and Eliza know that there is no room for error; they must be more perfect than everyone else. When they finally make it overseas, to England and then France, Grace and Eliza will at last be able to do their parts for the country they love, whatever the risk to themselves. Based on the true story of the 6888th Postal Battalion (the Six Triple Eight), *Sisters in Arms* explores the untold story of what life was like for the only all-Black, female US battalion to be deployed overseas during World War II.

**#19 Sold on a Monday** – Kristina McMorris (Historical Fiction) 2 CHILDREN FOR SALE - The sign is a last resort. It sits on a farmhouse porch in 1931, but could be found anywhere in an era of breadlines, bank runs and broken dreams. It could have been written by any mother facing impossible choices. For struggling reporter Ellis Reed, the gut-wrenching scene evokes memories of his family's dark past. He snaps a photograph of the children, not meant for publication. But when it leads to his big break, the consequences are more devastating than he ever imagined. Inspired by an actual newspaper photograph that stunned the nation, *Sold on a Monday* is a powerful novel of love, redemption, and the unexpected paths that bring us home.

**#20 The Spanish Daughter** – Lorena Hughes (Historical Fiction) As a child in Spain, Puri always knew her passion for chocolate was inherited from her father. But it's not until his death that she learns of something else she's inherited—a

cocoa estate in Vinces, Ecuador, a town nicknamed “París Chiquito.” Eager to claim her birthright and filled with hope for a new life after the devastation of World War I, she and her husband Cristóbal set out across the Atlantic Ocean. But it soon becomes clear someone is angered by Puri’s claim to the estate... When a mercenary sent to murder her aboard the ship accidentally kills Cristóbal instead, Puri dons her husband’s clothes and assumes his identity, hoping to stay safe while she searches for the truth of her father’s legacy in Ecuador. Though freed from the rules that women are expected to follow, Puri confronts other challenges at the estate—newfound siblings, hidden affairs, and her father’s dark secrets. Then there are the dangers awakened by her attraction to an enigmatic man as she tries to learn the identity of an enemy who is still at large, threatening the future she is determined to claim.

**#21 The Taking of Jemima Boone** – Matthew Pearl (Historical Fiction) On a quiet midsummer day in 1776, weeks after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, thirteen-year-old Jemima Boone and her friends Betsy and Fanny Callaway disappear near the Kentucky settlement of Boonesboro, the echoes of their faraway screams lingering on the air. A Cherokee-Shawnee raiding party has taken the girls as the latest salvo in the blood feud between American Indians and the colonial settlers who have decimated native lands and resources. Hanging Maw, the raiders’ leader, recognizes one of the captives as Jemima Boone, daughter of Kentucky’s most influential pioneers, and realizes she could be a valuable pawn in the battle to drive the colonists out of the contested Kentucky territory for good. With Daniel Boone and his posse in pursuit, Hanging Maw devises a plan that could ultimately bring greater peace both to the tribes and the colonists. But after the girls find clever ways to create a trail of clues, the raiding party is ambushed by Boone and the rescuers in a battle with reverberations that nobody could predict. This telling of a forgotten and dramatic series of events from early in the Revolutionary War opens a window into America’s transition from colony to nation, with the heavy moral costs incurred amid shocking new alliances and betrayals.

**#22 Taste: my life through food** – Stanley Tucci (Non-Fiction - Memoir) Stanley Tucci grew up in an Italian American family that spent every night around the kitchen table. *Taste* is a reflection on the intersection of food and life, filled with anecdotes about his growing up in Westchester, New York; preparing for and shooting the foodie films *Big Night* and *Julie & Julia*; falling in love over dinner; and teaming up with his wife to create meals for a multitude of children. Each morsel of this gastronomic journey through good times and bad, five-star meals and burned dishes, is as heartfelt and delicious as the last.

**#23 To Paradise** – Hanya Yanagihara (Literary/Dystopian Fiction) In an alternate version of 1893 America, New York is part of the Free States, where people may live and love whomever they please (or so it seems). The fragile young scion of a distinguished family resists betrothal to a worthy suitor, drawn to a charming music teacher of no means. In a 1993 Manhattan besieged by the AIDS epidemic, a young Hawaiian man lives with his much older, wealthier partner, hiding his troubled childhood and the fate of his father. And in 2093, in a world riven by plagues and governed by totalitarian rule, a powerful scientist’s damaged granddaughter tries to navigate life without him—and solve the mystery of her husband’s disappearances. These three sections are joined in an enthralling and ingenious symphony, as recurring notes and themes deepen and enrich one another: A townhouse in Washington Square Park in Greenwich Village; illness, and treatments that come at a terrible cost; wealth and squalor; the weak and the strong; race; the definition of family, and of nationhood; the dangerous righteousness of the powerful, and of revolutionaries; the longing to find a place in an earthly paradise, and the gradual realization that it can’t exist. What unites not just the characters, but these Americas, are their reckonings with the qualities that make us human: Fear. Love. Shame. Need. Loneliness.

**#24 Violeta** – Isabel Allende (Literary Fiction) Violeta comes into the world on a stormy day in 1920, the first girl in a family with five boisterous sons. From the start, her life is marked by extraordinary events, for the ripples of the Great War are still being felt, even as the Spanish flu arrives on the shores of her South American homeland almost at the moment of her birth. Through her father’s prescience, the family will come through that crisis unscathed, only to face a new one as the Great Depression transforms the genteel city life she has known. Her family loses everything and is forced to retreat to a wild and beautiful but remote part of the country. She tells her story in the form of a letter to someone she loves above all others, recounting times of devastating heartbreak and passionate affairs, poverty and wealth, terrible loss and immense joy. Her life is shaped by some of the most important events of history: the fight for women’s rights, the rise and fall of tyrants, and ultimately not one, but two pandemics.

**#25 We Are Not Like Them** – Christine Pride (Contemporary Fiction) Riley and Jen have been best friends since they were children, and they thought their bond was unbreakable. It never mattered to them that Riley is Black and Jen is white. And then Jen's husband, a Philadelphia police officer, is involved in the shooting of an unarmed Black teenager and everything changes in an instant. This one act could destroy more than just Riley and Jen's friendship. As their community takes sides, so must Jen and Riley, and for the first time in their lives, the lifelong friends find themselves on opposing sides. But can anyone win a fight like this?

**#26 What the Fireflies Knew** – Kai Harris (Contemporary Fiction) An ode to Black girlhood and adolescence, *What the Fireflies Knew* follows KB after her father dies of an overdose and the debts incurred from his addiction cause the loss of the family home in Detroit. Soon thereafter, KB and her teenage sister, Nia, are sent by their overwhelmed mother to live with their estranged grandfather in Lansing, Michigan. Over the course of a single sweltering summer, KB attempts to navigate a world that has turned upside down. Her father has been labeled a fiend. Her mother's smile no longer reaches her eyes. Her sister, once her best friend, now feels like a stranger. Her grandfather is grumpy and silent. The white kids who live across the street are friendly, but only sometimes. And they're all keeping secrets. As KB vacillates between resentment, abandonment, and loneliness, she is forced to carve out a different identity for herself and find her own voice. A dazzling and moving novel about family, identity, and race, *What the Fireflies Knew* poignantly reveals that heartbreaking but necessary component of growing up--the realization that loved ones can be flawed and that the perfect family we all dream of looks different up close.

**#27 The Woman They Could Not Silence: one woman, her incredible fight for freedom, and the men who tried to make her disappear** – Moore (Historical Fiction) 1860: As the clash between the states rolls slowly to a boil, Elizabeth Packard, housewife and mother of six, is facing her own battle. The enemy sits across the table and sleeps in the next room. Her husband of twenty-one years is plotting against her because he feels increasingly threatened—by Elizabeth's intellect, independence, and unwillingness to stifle her own thoughts. So he makes a plan to put his wife back in her place. One summer morning, he has her committed to an insane asylum. The horrific conditions inside the Illinois State Hospital in Jacksonville, Illinois, are overseen by Dr. Andrew McFarland, a man who will prove to be even more dangerous to Elizabeth than her traitorous husband. But most disturbing is that Elizabeth is not the only sane woman confined to the institution. There are many rational women on her ward who tell the same story: they've been committed not because they need medical treatment, but to keep them in line—conveniently labeled "crazy" so their voices are ignored. No one is willing to fight for their freedom and, disenfranchised both by gender and the stigma of their supposed madness, they cannot possibly fight for themselves. But Elizabeth is about to discover that the merit of losing everything is that you then have nothing to lose...

**#28 Yinka, Where Is Your Husband?** – Lizzie Damilola Blackburn (Contemporary Fiction) Yinka's Nigerian aunties frequently pray for her delivery from singledom, her work friends think she's too traditional (she's saving herself for marriage!), her girlfriends think she needs to get over her ex already, and the men in her life...well, that's a whole other story. But Yinka herself has always believed that true love will find her when the time is right. Still, when her cousin gets engaged, Yinka commences Operation Find-A-Date for Rachel's Wedding. Aided by a spreadsheet and her best friend, Yinka is determined to succeed. Will Yinka find herself a *huzband*? And what if the thing she really needs to find is herself?

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**MISSION STUDY BOOKS: *The Lord's Earth: Caring for Creation***

**#29 Consider the Lilies: Christians and creation care** – James Hindson (Non-Fiction) Apart from singing about it at a harvest festival and recycling as much as possible, many Christians don't give much faith-based thought to their relationship with God's creation. This book explores what we are doing to creation and how a lack of care harms our relationship with both God and our neighbors. It provides the motivation for change and some ideas for action.

**#30 Finding the Mother Tree: discovering the wisdom of the forest** – Suzanne Simard (Non-Fiction) Suzanne Simard is a pioneer on the frontier of plant communication and intelligence. Simard brings us into her world, the intimate world of the trees, in which she brilliantly illuminates the fascinating and vital truths—that trees are not simply the source of timber or pulp, but are a complicated, interdependent circle of life; that forests are social, cooperative creatures connected through underground networks by which trees communicate their vitality and vulnerabilities with communal lives not that different from our own. As she writes of her scientific quest, she writes of her own journey, making us understand how deeply human scientific inquiry exists beyond data and technology, that it is about understanding who we are and our place in the world.

**#31 Fox and I: an uncommon friendship** – Catherine Raven (Non-Fiction) When Catherine Raven finished her PhD in biology, she built herself a tiny cottage on an isolated plot of land in Montana. One day she realized that a mangy-looking fox was showing up on her property every afternoon at 4:15 p.m. Her scientific training had taught her not to anthropomorphize animals, yet as she grew to know him, his personality revealed itself and they became friends. From the fox, Catherine learned the single most important thing about loneliness: we are never alone when we are connected to the natural world. *Fox and I* is a poignant and remarkable tale of solitude and belonging as well as a timeless story of one woman whose immersion in the natural world will change the way we view our surroundings—each tree, weed, flower, stone, or fox.

**#32 Islands of Abandonment: nature rebounding in the posthuman landscape** – Cal Flynn (Non-Fiction) Cal Flynn, an investigative journalist and exceptional nature writer visits the eeriest and most desolate places on Earth that due to war, disaster, disease, or economic decay, have been abandoned by humans. What she finds every time is an "island" of teeming new life: nature has rushed in to fill the void faster and more thoroughly than even the most hopeful projections of scientists. *Islands of Abandonment* is a tour through these new ecosystems, in all their glory, as sites of unexpected environmental significance, where the natural world has reasserted its wild power and promise. And while it doesn't let us off the hook for addressing environmental degradation and climate change, it is a case that hope is far from lost, and it is ultimately a story of redemption: the most polluted spots on Earth can be rehabilitated through ecological processes and, in fact, they already are.

**#33 Nature's Best Hope: a new approach to conservation that starts in your yard** – Douglas W. Tallamy (Non-Fiction) *Nature's Best Hope* shows how homeowners everywhere can turn their yards into conservation corridors that provide wildlife habitats. Because this approach relies on the initiatives of private individuals, it is immune from the whims of government policy. Even more important, it's practical, effective, and easy—you will walk away with specific suggestions you can incorporate into your own yard. If you're concerned about doing something good for the environment, *Nature's Best Hope* is the blueprint you need. By acting now, you can help preserve our precious wildlife—and the planet—for future generations.

**#34 Rooted: life at the crossroads of science, nature and spirit** – Lyanda Lynn Haupt (Non-Fiction) In *Rooted*, cutting-edge science supports a truth that poets, artists, mystics, and earth-based cultures across the world have proclaimed over millennia: life on this planet is radically interconnected. Our bodies, thoughts, minds, and spirits are affected by the whole of nature, and they affect this whole in return. In this time of crisis, how can we best live upon our imperiled, beloved earth? Lyanda Lynn Haupt's book is a brilliant invitation to live *with* the earth in both simple and profound ways—from walking barefoot in the woods and reimagining our relationship with animals and trees, to examining the very language we use to describe and think about nature. She invokes *rootedness* as a way of being in concert with the wilderness—and wildness—that sustains humans and all of life. Each chapter provides tools for bringing our unique gifts to the fore and transforming our sense of belonging within the magic and wonder of the natural world.