Spring 2020
Book Buzz Picks

American Dirt (Cummings, Jeanine)
Forced to flee her comfortable life in Acapulco with her young son after her family is massacred by local drug lords, Lydia joins the stream of migrants heading north to America. Although not an easy read, this is an essential book for our times as it gives voice to the desperation facing the migrants and refugees who look to the US with hope.

Beheld(Nesbit, TaraShea)
This thoughtful, well-researched tale of the first murder at Plymouth Colony is told through the voices of actual women who were there. Engrossing and melancholy, this is a terrific historical read. Great for book clubs.

The Blaze (Dundas, Chad)
Struggling with amnesia, Iraq War vet Matt Rose returns to his Montana hometown to settle his father’s estate when he is caught up in an arson investigation. Propulsive and exciting – a good choice for fans of Joseph Finder or David Baldacci.

Book of Longings (Kidd, Sue Monk)
What if Jesus had had a wife? Based on extensive research, Monk Kidd imagines Jesus’ life as a married man during the time of his ministry from the point of view of Ana, his beloved wife who is a fully realized and sympathetic character forced by her society to live in his shadow. Thought provoking and fascinating story.

Chosen Ones (Roth, Veronica)
The adult debut by the author of Divergent features brilliant worldbuilding, breakneck pacing, and engaging characters. Ten years after a group of Chosen Ones defeated The Dark Lord, they’re called back into action against a new (or possibly old) foe, with earth-shattering results.

Conjure Women (Atakora, Afia)
The intertwined relationships of a slave girl, her mother, and a plantation owner’s daughter are at the heart of this transporting debut novel. The story, which alternates between Slaverytime in 1854 and Freedomtime in 1867, is a haunting, richly written tale about a tragic time in American history.

Deacon King Kong (McBride, James)
An old church deacon nicknamed “Sportcoat” is the heart and soul of James McBride’s hilarious new novel set in the Brooklyn projects of the 1960s. McBride’s writing is exquisite and funny. He brings humanity and humor to his characters while dealing with poverty, racism, drugs and violence.

Eight Perfect Murders (Swanson, Peter)
A mystery bookshop owner is drawn into the investigation of murders that closely follow a list he drew up years before highlighting what he deems “perfect” murders in some eight murder mysteries. Swanson’s witty ode to the mystery genre is twisty and satisfying.

The Fountains of Silence (Sepetys, Ruta)
In 1957 Madrid, three young Spaniards and a wealthy American teen struggle with Franco’s brutal regime and the legacy of the Spanish Civil War. With believable and complex characters, this nuanced, compelling story sheds light on a tragic and lesser-known time in history.

The Glass Hotel (Mandel, Emily St. John)
The collapse of a massive Ponzi scheme reveals surprising links in the lives of a compelling cast of seemingly lightly-connected characters. A wonderful new novel by the author of Station Eleven about relationships, fate and -- literally, in some instances -- the haunting presence of guilt.

The Holdout (Moore, Graham)
Thoroughly entertaining page-turner in which a juror who once led the effort to acquit a murderer faces dire personal consequences on the tenth anniversary of the trial. Maya Seale, now a dedicated defense attorney, finds herself a suspect in a murder directly related to the original case.

In Five Years (Searle, Rebecca)
A compulsively organized New York woman has an unexpected premonition of her life in five years, and then the man from that vision appears in her life – as her best friend’s new boyfriend. This is a surprising, poignant story of friendship, love, and grief.
Love Lettering (Clayborn, Kate)
A trendy Brooklyn calligrapher inserts a secret message - "mistake" - into a wedding program. A year later, the former groom wants answers. The unlikely pair strike up a friendship that gradually turns to romance. Effervescent, heartfelt, and wildly creative.

The Love Story of Missy Carmichael (Morrey, Beth)
Missy Carmichael suffers from aching loneliness and thinks her life is over. But the kindness of neighbors, family and dogs helps her realize that even at 79, life is worth living. This bittersweet debut novel will appeal to fans of A Man Called Ove by Fredrik Backman.

The Most Fun We Ever Had (Lombardo, Claire)
The story of a Chicago family and four adult daughters' relationships with their still madly in love parents and each other. Secrets and rivalries abound in this novel of love and family.

The Night Watchman (Erdrich, Louise)
A moving portrait of the determination of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians to protect their culture and traditions in the early 1950's. Inspired by the true story of Erdrich's grandfather, who fought efforts by the Federal government to terminate the rights of Native American tribes in 1953.

Ninth House (Bardugo, Leigh)
A fantasy/mystery tale set at Yale University. The novel features Galaxy "Alex" Stern, the girl who sees ghosts, and her oversight of Yale's secret societies.

Nothing More Dangerous (Eskens, Allen)
High school freshman Boady, who is white, and his neighbor, Thomas, who is black, are unlikely friends in their small Southern town in the 1970s which is still under the influence of a KKK-like group of thugs. When they find a body in the woods, they inadvertently stir up a hornet's nest of racism that reaches deep into the heart of their community.

Red At The Bone (Woodson, Jacqueline)
The story of three generations and the repercussions of teenage pregnancy. Told back and forth in time and through multiple characters.

Redhead by the Side of the Road (Tyler, Anne)
Staff favorite Tyler has written a wonderful story centering on Micah Mortimer, who runs Tech Hermit out of his Baltimore apartment. This creature of habit lacks social skills, which ends up making his girlfriend leave him. Then a teenager shows up on his doorstep, saying he is Micah's son. Full of humor and compassion for her quirky characters, this is a feel-good read to savor.

Remembrance (Woods, Rita)
Historical fiction with a magical realism bent -- four women across two centuries struggle with the brutalities of slavery. A village on the Underground Railroad, invisible to slavers, provides sanctuary -- but disaster looms. Imaginative, evocative, and complex, with distinctive and strong-willed women at its heart.

Tuesday Mooney Talks to Ghosts (Racculia, Kate)
Down on her luck and out of a job, Tuesday Mooney and a motley crew join a Edgar Allan Poe-themed treasure hunt. This quirky story captured my imagination as I raced through the darker sides of Boston with Tuesday to find the treasure and survive the competition. The Westing Game for grown-ups!

Weather (Offill, Jenny)
A librarian takes a second job answering reader mail for a disaster-themed podcast and finds herself growing increasingly unsettled while navigating family drama. Told in brief, diary-like entries, it's dryly funny and sharply observed, and a testimony to the importance of connection in the modern world.

The Yellow Bird Sings (Rosner, Jennifer)
A loving tribute to the unbreakable bond between mothers and daughters set in war-torn Poland in the early 1940's. Both heartbreaking and hopeful, the story is an inspiring reminder of the ability of art and beauty to sustain us through the most difficult times.