

extraordinary endurance against the violence and deprivation he faced daily. That he was able to emerge whole from his odyssey within America’s prison and judicial systems is a triumph of the human spirit, and makes his book a clarion call to reform the inhumanity of solitary confinement in the U.S. and around the world.

**Trick Mirror: Reflections on Self-Delusion**  
by Jia Tolentino:

A writer at The New Yorker examines the fractures at the center of contemporary culture. In each essay, Tolentino writes about a cultural prism: the rise of the nightmare social internet; the advent of scamming as the definitive millennial ethos; the literary heroine's journey from brave to blank to bitter; and the punitive dream of optimization, which insists that everything, including our bodies, should become more efficient and beautiful until we die.

**Trust Exercise: A Novel by Susan Choi:**

In an American suburb in the early 1980s, students at a highly competitive performing arts high school struggle and thrive in a rarified bubble, ambitiously pursuing music, movement, Shakespeare, and, particularly, their acting classes. When within this striving 'Brotherhood of the Arts,' two freshmen, David and Sarah, fall headlong into love, their passion does not go unnoticed~or untold~by anyone, especially not by their charismatic acting teacher, Mr. Kingsley. The outside world of family life and economic status, of academic pressure and of their future adult lives, fails to penetrate this school's walls~until it does, in a ... spiral of events that catapults the action forward in time and flips the premise upside-down.

**We Live In Water: Stories by Jess Walter**

We Live in Water, the first collection of short fiction from New York Times bestselling author Jess Walter, is a suite of diverse, often comic stories about personal struggle and diminished dreams, all of them marked by the wry wit and generosity of spirit that has made him one of our most talked-about writers. In 'Thief, ' a blue-collar worker turns unlikely detective to find out which of his kids is stealing from the family vacation fund. In 'We Live in Water, ' a lawyer returns to a corrupt North Idaho town to find the father who disappeared thirty years earlier. In 'Anything Helps, ' a homeless man has to 'go to cardboard' to raise enough money to buy his son the new Harry Potter book. In 'Virgo, ' a local newspaper editor tries to get back at his superstitious ex-girlfriend by screwing with her horoscope. And the collection's final story transforms slyly from a portrait of Walter's hometown into a moving contemplation of our times.

**The Yellow House by Sarah Broom:**

Sarah M. Broom's [memoir] The Yellow House tells a hundred years of her family and their relationship to home in a neglected area of one of America's most mythologized cities. This is the story of a mother's struggle against a house's entropy, and that of a prodigal daughter who left home only to reckon with the pull that home exerts, even after the Yellow House was wiped off the map after Hurricane Katrina.



# President Obama’s Recommended Reading Early 2020 Edition



**The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power**  
by Shoshana Zuboff:

Zuboff tackles the social, political, business, personal, and technological meaning of "surveillance capitalism" as an unprecedented new market form. It is not simply about tracking us and selling ads, it is the business model for an ominous new marketplace that aims at nothing less than predicting and modifying our everyday behavior~ where we go, what we do, what we say, how we feel, who we're with

**The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of the East India Company** by William Dalrymple:

As William Dalrymple shows in his rampaging, brilliant, passionate history, 'The Anarchy,' the East India Co. was the most advanced capitalist organization in the world . . . Mr. Dalrymple gives us every sword-slash, every scam, every groan and battle cry. He has no rival as a narrative historian of the British in India. 'The Anarchy' is not simply a gripping tale of bloodshed and deceit, of unimaginable opulence and intolerable starvation. It is shot through with an unappeasable moral passion." - The Wall Street Journal

**Furious Hours: Murder, Fraud, and the Last Trial of Harper Lee** by Casey Cep:

The stunning true story of an Alabama serial killer, and the trial that obsessed the author of To Kill a Mockingbird in the years after the publication of her classic novel ~ a complicated and difficult time in her life that, until now, has been very little examined. Willie Maxwell was a Baptist reverend in Alabama; he also happened to be a serial killer. Between 1970 and 1977, his two wives and brother all died under suspicious circumstances ~ each with hefty life insurance policies taken out by none

other than the Reverend himself.

**Girl, Woman, Other**  
**by Bernardine Evaristo:**

:The twelve central characters of this multi-voiced novel lead vastly different lives: Amma is a newly acclaimed playwright whose work often explores her black lesbian identity; her old friend Shirley is a teacher, jaded after decades of work in London's funding-deprived schools; Carole, one of Shirley's former students, works hard to earn a degree from Oxford and becomes an investment banker; Carole's mother Bummi works as a cleaner and worries about her daughter's lack of rootedness despite her obvious achievements. From a nonbinary social media influencer to a 93-year-old woman living on a farm in Northern England, these unforgettable characters also intersect in shared aspects of their identities, from age to race to sexuality to class. Sparklingly witty and filled with emotion, centering voices we often see othered, and written in an innovative and fast-moving form that borrows from poetry, *Girl, Woman, Other* is a polyphonic and richly textured social novel that reminds us of everything that connects us to our neighbors, even in times when we are encouraged to be split apart.

**The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present**  
**by David Treuer:**

The received idea of Native American history has been that it essentially ended with the 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee. Growing up Ojibwe on a Minnesota reservation and training as an anthropologist, David Treuer has uncovered a different narrative: the story of American Indians from the end of the nineteenth century to the present is one of unprecedented resourcefulness

and reinvention. Melding history with reportage and memoir, Treuer traces the tribes' distinctive cultures from first contact, exploring how the depredations of each era spawned new modes of survival.

**How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy**  
**by Jenny Odell:**

When the technologies we use every day collapse our experiences into 24/7 availability, platforms for personal branding, and products to be monetized, nothing can be quite so radical as...doing nothing. Here, Jenny Odell sends up a flare from the heart of Silicon Valley, delivering an action plan to resist capitalist narratives of productivity and techno-determinism, and to become more meaningfully connected in the process.

**Lost Children Archive** by Valeria Luiselli:

Lost Children Archive is a retelling of the American road novel, with a twist. In this version, there is no flight from the domestic—the journey has been taken to save a marriage, and the squalling children are in tow. Luiselli is a superb chronicler of children, and the narrator's 5-year-old daughter and her husband's 10-year-old son feel piercingly real—perceptive, irreplaceable, wonderfully odd...Luiselli drives home just how much pain and sacrifice we are prepared to accept in the lives of others. She dramatizes what it takes for people to stare hard at their own families, to examine their complicity in other people's suffering. To call these morals or messages does a disservice to the novel's rangy storytelling and panoptic curiosity. Better to think of it as a challenge. - The New York Times - In the city of Houston - a sprawling, diverse microcosm of America - the son of a black

mother and a Latino father is coming of age. He's working at his family's restaurant, weathering his brother's blows, resenting his older sister's absence. And discovering he likes boys.

Around him, others live and thrive and die in Houston's myriad neighborhoods: a young woman whose affair detonates across an apartment complex, a ragtag baseball team, a group of young hustlers, hurricane survivors, a local drug dealer who takes a Guatemalan teen under his wing, a reluctant chupacabra.

**Lot: Stories** by Bryan Washington:

Bryan Washington's brilliant, viscerally drawn world vibrates with energy, wit, raw power, and the infinite longing of people searching for home. With soulful insight into what makes a community, a family, and a life, *Lot* explores trust and love in all its unsparing and unsteady forms.

**Normal People** by Sally Rooney:

At school Connell and Marianne pretend not to know each other. He's popular and well-adjusted, star of the school football team, while she is lonely, proud, and intensely private. But when Connell comes to pick his mother up from her job at Marianne's house, a strange and indelible connection grows between the two teenagers—one they are determined to conceal. A year later, they're both studying at Trinity College in Dublin. Marianne has found her feet in a new social world while Connell hangs at the sidelines, shy and uncertain. Throughout their years at university, Marianne and Connell circle one another, straying toward other people and possibilities but always magnetically, irresistibly drawn back together. And as she veers into self-destruction and he begins to search for meaning elsewhere, each must confront how far they are willing to go to save the other.

**The Orphan Master's Son** by Adam Johnson:

Pak Jun Do is the haunted son of a lost mother—a singer “stolen” to Pyongyang—and an influential father who runs a work camp for orphans. Superiors in the North Korean state soon recognize the boy’s loyalty and keen instincts. Considering himself “a humble citizen of the greatest nation in the world,” Jun Do rises in the ranks. He becomes a professional kidnapper who must navigate the shifting rules, arbitrary violence, and baffling demands of his overlords in order to stay alive. Driven to the absolute limit of what any human being could endure, he boldly takes on the treacherous role of rival to Kim Jong Il in an attempt to save the woman he loves, Sun Moon, a legendary actress “so pure, she didn’t know what starving people looked like.”

**Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland** by Patrick Radden:

"Masked intruders dragged Jean McConville, a 38-year-old widow and mother of 10, from her Belfast home in 1972. In this meticulously reported book — as finely paced as a novel — Keefe uses McConville's murder as a prism to tell the history of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Interviewing people on both sides of the conflict, he transforms the tragic damage and waste of the era into a searing, utterly gripping saga." - New York Times Book Review, Ten Best Books of the Year

**Solitary** by Albert Woodfox:

Solitary is the unforgettable life story of a man who served more than four decades in solitary confinement—in a 6-foot by 9-foot cell, 23 hours a day, in notorious Angola prison in Louisiana—all for a crime he did not commit. That Albert Woodfox survived was, in itself, a feat of