



## **Page Turners**

### **The Great Outdoors**

**Titles selected by staff at the  
Monroe Township Public Library**

**August 2021**

Bryson, Bill

#### ***A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail***

Bill Bryson is surely the most entertaining guide you'll find. He introduces us to the history and ecology of the trail and to some of the other hardy (or just foolhardy) folks he meets along the way—and a couple of bears. Already a classic, *A Walk in the Woods* will make you long for the great outdoors (or at least a comfortable chair to sit and read in). (Goodreads)

Cox, Lynn

#### ***Grayson***

The story of a miraculous ocean encounter that happened to author Lynn Cox when she was seventeen and in training for a big swim. It was the dark of early morning; Lynne was in 55-degree water as smooth as black ice, two hundred yards offshore, outside the wave break. She was swimming her last half-mile back to the pier before heading home for breakfast when she became aware that something was swimming with her.

Whatever it was, it felt large enough to be a white shark coursing beneath her body. It wasn't a shark. It became clear that it was a baby gray whale—following alongside Lynne for a mile or so. Lynne had been swimming for more than an hour; she needed to get out of the water to rest, but she realized that if she did, the young calf would follow her onto shore and die from collapsed lungs. This is the story—part mystery, part magical tale—of what happened . . . (Goodreads)

Crummey, Michael

#### ***Sweetland***

For twelve generations, when the fish were plentiful and when they all-but disappeared, the inhabitants of this remote island in Newfoundland have lived and died together.

Now, in the second decade of the 21st century, they are facing resettlement, and each has been offered a generous compensation package to leave. But the money is offered

with a proviso: everyone has to go; the government won't be responsible for one crazy coot who chooses to stay alone on an island. (Goodreads)

This novel has a great sense of place. The main character tries to hold onto the land that was named after his family who lived here for generations. Most of this story takes place in the cold and rugged outdoors of a remote island.

Cutter, Nick

***The Deep***

In a sealed research lab eight miles under the surface of the Pacific Ocean, three scientists work feverishly to find a cure for a plague that threatens to wipe out humanity. When communications from the lab fall silent, veterinarian Luke Nelson -- whose brother is one of the scientists there -- travels into the depths to find out what's wrong. He discovers a nightmarish scene, where violence and hallucination blur the lines of reality. (Novelist)

Deraniyagala, Sonali

***Wave***

On the morning of December 26, 2004, on the southern coast of Sri Lanka, Sonali Deraniyagala lost her parents, her husband, and her two young sons in the tsunami she miraculously survived. In this brave and searingly frank memoir, she describes those first horrifying moments and her long journey since. (Goodreads)

Hannah, Kristin

***The Great Alone***

Hannah takes readers on a journey to Alaska in the 1970s with the Allbright family: damaged Vietnam vet Ernt; his devoted wife, Cora; and their 13-year-old daughter, Leni, the novel's protagonist. Initially unhappy to leave her Seattle home, Leni soon falls in love with the wilds of remote Kaneq. Leni adjusts to the lack of electricity, running water, and indoor plumbing, but her father's increasingly erratic and violent behavior is much harder to endure. Leni finds an escape in her books and her one-room school, where she meets Matthew, the only other kid her age in the area. Matthew becomes Leni's best friend and eventually her first love. But Leni's father's irrational hatred of Matthew's family threatens to keep them apart, and Leni fears her father's uncontrollable rage could be the death of her and her fragile mother. Though smaller in scope than her previous blockbuster, in this tightly focused drama, Hannah vividly evokes the natural beauty and danger of Alaska and paints a compelling portrait of a family in crisis and a community on the brink of change. (Booklist)

Harmon, Amy

***Where the Lost Wander***

The Overland Trail, 1853: Naomi May never expected to be widowed at twenty. Eager to leave her grief behind, she sets off with her family for a life out West. On the trail, she

forms an instant connection with John Lowry, a half-Pawnee man straddling two worlds and a stranger in both. But life in a wagon train is fraught with hardship, fear, and death. Even as John and Naomi are drawn to each other, the trials of the journey and their disparate pasts work to keep them apart. John's heritage gains them safe passage through hostile territory only to come between them as they seek to build a life together. When a horrific tragedy strikes, decimating Naomi's family and separating her from John, the promises they made are all they have left. Ripped apart, they can't turn back, they can't go on, and they can't let go. Both will have to make terrible sacrifices to find each other, save each other, and eventually ... make peace with who they are.

Harper, Jane

### ***The Dry***

A small town hides big secrets in *The Dry*, an atmospheric debut mystery by award-winning author Jane Harper. After getting a note demanding his presence, Federal Agent Aaron Falk arrives in his hometown for the first time in decades to attend the funeral of his best friend, Luke. Twenty years ago when Falk was accused of murder, Luke was his alibi. Falk and his father fled under a cloud of suspicion, saved from prosecution only because of Luke's steadfast claim that the boys had been together at the time of the crime. But now more than one person knows they didn't tell the truth back then, and Luke is dead. Amid the worst drought in a century, Falk and the local detective question what really happened to Luke. As Falk reluctantly investigates to see if there's more to Luke's death than there seems to be, long-buried mysteries resurface, as do the lies that have haunted them. And Falk will find that small towns have always hidden big secrets.

Harper, Jane

### ***Force of Nature***

Five women go on a hike. Only four return. *Force of Nature* begs the question: How well do you really know the people you work with? When five colleagues are forced to go on a corporate retreat in the wilderness, they reluctantly pick up their backpacks and start walking down the muddy path. But one of the women doesn't come out of the woods. And each of her companions tells a slightly different story about what happened. Federal Police Agent Aaron Falk has a keen interest in the whereabouts of the missing hiker. In an investigation that takes him deep into isolated forest, Falk discovers secrets lurking in the mountains, and a tangled web of personal and professional friendship, suspicion, and betrayal among the hikers. But did that lead to murder?

Harper, Jane

### ***The Lost Man***

In an isolated belt of Australia, their homes a three-hour drive apart, the brothers were one another's nearest neighbors. Cameron was the middle child, the one who ran the family homestead. But something made him head out alone under the unrelenting sun.

Nathan, Bub and Nathan's son return to Cameron's ranch and to those left behind by his passing: his wife, his daughters, and his mother, as well as their long-time employee and two recently hired seasonal workers. While they grieve Cameron's loss, suspicion starts to take hold, and Nathan is forced to examine secrets the family would rather leave in the past. Because if someone forced Cameron to his death, the isolation of the outback leaves few suspects.

Harper, Jane

***The Survivors***

Kieran and his girlfriend, Mia, return to their childhood hometown in Tasmania with their infant daughter to help Kieran's parents move to mainland Australia. Twelve years earlier a terrible storm left two men dead, including Kieran's brother, Finn, who died trying to rescue Kieran. A young girl also went missing in the storm's aftermath. Burdened by guilt, Kieran moved to Sydney and has not been home since. When a woman is found murdered on the beach, the police begin to question whether the previous deaths are in some way connected. Rumors begin spreading in the small town, and Kieran must face the possibility that the events of the past may not be as he remembers them. Further complicating the matter is that Kieran's father, suffering from dementia, was the last person to be seen with both the missing girl years ago and the current victim. (Library Journal)

Ivey, Eowyn

***The Snow Child***

Alaska, 1920: a brutal place to homestead, and especially tough for recent arrivals Jack and Mabel. Childless, they are drifting apart -- he breaking under the weight of the work of the farm; she crumbling from loneliness and despair. In a moment of levity during the season's first snowfall, they build a child out of snow. The next morning the snow child is gone--but they glimpse a young, blonde-haired girl running through the trees. This little girl, who calls herself Faina, seems to be a child of the woods. She hunts with a red fox at her side, skims lightly across the snow, and somehow survives alone in the Alaskan wilderness. As Jack and Mabel struggle to understand this child who could have stepped from the pages of a fairy tale, they come to love her as their own daughter. But in this beautiful, violent place things are rarely as they appear, and what they eventually learn about Faina will transform all of them.

Heat-Moon, William Least

***Blue Highways***

Hailed as a masterpiece of American travel writing, *Blue Highways* is an unforgettable journey along our nation's backroads. His adventures, his discoveries, and his recollections of the extraordinary people he encountered along the way amount to a revelation of the true American experience. (Goodreads)

Heller, Peter

***The River***

"They'd been smelling smoke for days." So opens Heller's fourth novel (after *Celine*), foretelling a disastrous outcome for what begins as a leisurely canoe trip by best friends Jack and Wynn. Experienced wilderness instructors, they paddle through creeks, white water, and a river in northern Ontario and soon encounter a creepy pair of drunk campers, whom they try to warn about the oncoming wildfire. When they hear a couple arguing at another campsite, they decide not to interfere, but the husband, Pierre, later arrives at their campsite disoriented and disheveled because wife Maia has disappeared into the woods after their argument and never returned. When Jack and Wynn travel back upstream to search for her, they find her barely alive, but how was she injured? The drunk campers? Pierre? A bear? Jack and Wynn find further trouble when they return to their campsite, and the two men are tested beyond endurance, with tragic results. (Library Journal)

Johnston, Tim

***Descent***

In Johnston's sorrowful and suspenseful first adult novel, a family is forced to face its worst nightmare when one of its members goes missing. Caitlin Courtland, an 18-year-old runner about to enter college on a track scholarship, is vacationing with her family in the Rockies when she fails to come back from an early morning run. Over the course of the next two years, the family fractures as no sign of Caitlin is ever found. Grant Courtland, Caitlin's father, remains in the Rockies, while mother Angela tries to pick up the pieces back home in Wisconsin, where she eventually makes a failed attempt at suicide. Meanwhile, Caitlin's younger brother, Sean, drives aimlessly around the country, getting in and out of trouble. Although it begins as one more variation on Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones*, a late-in-the-novel coincidence sends the narrative in a new direction and turns it into a survival story involving a character who, heretofore, has played a relatively minor part in the drama. Johnston has a poet's eye for the majestic and forbidding nature of the Rockies, and a sociologist's understanding of how people act under pressure. He also has a knack for creating characters that the reader will come to care about, no matter how flawed they are. (Publishers Weekly)

Joyce, Rachel

***The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry***

Spontaneity has never been Harold Fry's strong suit, especially once he retired. Just ask his long-suffering wife, Maureen. So imagine her surprise when Harold abruptly decides to walk 500 miles to the north of England in a naive attempt to save a dying woman, a colleague he once knew briefly but to whom he hadn't spoken in 20 years. It's the proverbial case of a man going out to mail a letter and never coming home. Clad only in his everyday garb, lacking a cell phone, backpack, or reliable sense of direction, Fry puts one poorly shod foot in front of the other and trudges through villages and

hamlets, often relying on the kindness of strangers to keep his momentum going. To the object of his inspiration, the fading Queenie Hennessy, he writes pithy postcards, bravely exhorting her not to die. Solitary walks are perfect for imagining how one might set the world to rights, and Harold does just that, although not always with uplifting results, as he ruminates on missed opportunities and failed relationships. (Booklist)

Kingsolver, Barbara

***Flight Behavior***

Drawing on both her Appalachian roots and her background in biology, Kingsolver delivers a passionate novel on the effects of global warming. Dellarobia Turnbow got pregnant in high school; now, some 11 years into her unhappy marriage, she's ready for a big change, and she thinks she's found it with a randy young telephone lineman. But on her way to a rendezvous, she is waylaid by the sight of a forest ablaze with millions of butterflies. Their usual migratory route has been disrupted, and what looks to be a stunningly beautiful view is really an ominous sign, for the Appalachian winter could prove to be the demise of the species. The phenomenon draws the whole world to Dellarobia's doorstep—scientists, the media, hordes of tourists—and gives her new and galvanizing insight into her poverty-stricken life on the sheep farm of her disapproving in-laws. (Booklist)

Kingsolver, Barbara

***Prodigal Summer***

*Prodigal Summer* weaves together three stories of human love within a larger tapestry of lives inhabiting the forested mountains and struggling small farms of southern Appalachia. From her outpost in an isolated mountain cabin, Deanna Wolfe, a reclusive wildlife biologist, watches a den of coyotes that have recently migrated into the region. She is caught off-guard by a young hunter who invades her most private spaces and confounds her self-assured, solitary life. On a farm several miles down the mountain, Lusa Maluf Landowski, a bookish city girl turned farmer's wife, finds herself unexpectedly marooned in a strange place where she must declare or lose her attachment to the land that has become her own. And a few more miles down the road, a pair of elderly feuding neighbors tend their respective farms and wrangle about God, pesticides, and the possibilities of a future neither of them expected.

Over the course of one humid summer, these characters find their connections to one another and to the flora and fauna with whom they share a place. (Goodreads)

Koepcke, Juliane

***When I Fell From the Sky***

She was 17-years-old on a Christmas Eve flight 40 years ago to join her father for Christmas when the unimaginable happened. The Lockheed L-188A Electra, on the way from Lima to Pucallpa, flew directly into a thunderstorm. A strike of lightning left the plane incinerated, and Juliane Diller (Koepcke), still strapped to her plane seat, fell

through the night air two miles above the Earth. Her survival is unexplainable and considered a modern day miracle. Her mother was among the 91 dead and Juliane the sole survivor. For 11 days she crawled and walked alone through the jungle, fighting for her survival again with hunger and despair her only companions as maggots ate their way into her wounds. Juliane ultimately survived and went on to live an inspiring life as a scientist continually drawn back to the terrain that threatened to take her. On the 40th anniversary, she shares not only the private moments of her survival and rescue but her life in the wake of the dramatic true story. (Goodreads)

McGoran, Jon

***Drift***

Doyle Carrick is not having a good year. First, he buries his mother, and then he gets suspended from his job as a Philadelphia narcotics cop. He decides to take the forced time off to settle his parents' affairs at the farmhouse they had bought in rural Pennsylvania. Surprises await; he discovers a young farmhand staying in the house, spots some known drug dealers driving around town, and finds a couple of burned-down meth houses in the not-so-idyllic burg. He falls for his neighbor, a passionate young woman trying to make a go of her organic farm, and she educates Carrick on the genetically modified food industry. Being on suspension doesn't seem to stop Carrick from investigating the drug dealers in his new neighborhood, and the local sheriff doesn't take kindly to the interference. This biotech thriller delivers a complex Frankenfood story, with lots of twists and turns leading to a startling ending. (Booklist)

McMurty, Larry

***Roads: Driving America's Great Highways***

As he crisscrosses America—driving in search of the present, the past, and himself—Larry McMurty shares his fascination with this nation's great trails and the culture that has developed around them. (Goodreads)

Murphy, Brian

***81 Days Below Zero: The Incredible Survival Story of a World War II Pilot in Alaska's Frozen Wilderness***

Shortly before Christmas in 1943, five Army aviators left Alaska's Ladd Field on a routine flight to test their hastily retrofitted B-24 Liberator in harsh winter conditions. The mission ended in a crash that claimed all but one—Leon Crane, a city kid from Philadelphia with no wilderness experience. With little more than a parachute for cover and an old Boy Scout knife in his pocket, Crane now found himself alone in subzero temperatures. *81 Days Below Zero* recounts, for the first time, the full story of Crane's remarkable saga. In a drama of staggering resolve and moments of phenomenal luck, Crane learned to survive in the Yukon's unforgiving wilds. His is a tale of the capacity to endure extreme conditions, intense loneliness, and flashes of raw terror—and emerge stronger than before. (Goodreads)

Paull, Laline

***The Bees***

Born into the lowest class of her society, Flora 717 is a sanitation bee, only fit to clean her orchard hive. Living to accept, obey and serve, she is prepared to sacrifice everything for her beloved holy mother, the Queen. Yet Flora has talents that are not typical of her kin. And while mutant bees are usually instantly destroyed, Flora is reassigned to feed the newborns, before becoming a forager, collecting pollen on the wing. Then she finds her way into the Queen's inner sanctum, where she discovers secrets both sublime and ominous. Enemies roam everywhere, from the fearsome fertility police to the high priestesses who jealously guard the Hive Mind. But Flora cannot help but break the most sacred law of all, and her instinct to serve is overshadowed by a desire, as overwhelming as it is forbidden . . . (Goodreads)

Strayed, Cheryl

***Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Coast Trail***

At twenty-two, Cheryl Strayed thought she had lost everything. In the wake of her mother's death, her family scattered and her own marriage was soon destroyed. Four years later, with nothing more to lose, she made the most impulsive decision of her life. With no experience or training, driven only by blind will, she would hike more than a thousand miles of the Pacific Crest Trail from the Mojave Desert through California and Oregon to Washington State — and she would do it alone.

Told with suspense and style, sparkling with warmth and humor, *Wild* powerfully captures the terrors and pleasures of one young woman forging ahead against all odds on a journey that maddened, strengthened, and ultimately healed her. (Goodreads)

Zuckoff, Mitchell

***Frozen In Time: An Epic Story of Survival and a Modern Quest for Lost Heroes of World War II***

On November 5, 1942, a US cargo plane slammed into the Greenland Ice Cap. Four days later, the B-17 assigned to the search-and-rescue mission became lost in a blinding storm and also crashed. Miraculously, all nine men on board survived, and the US military launched a daring rescue operation. But after picking up one man, the Grumman Duck amphibious plane flew into a severe storm and vanished. *Frozen in Time* tells the story of these crashes and the fate of the survivors, bringing vividly to life their battle to endure 148 days of the brutal Arctic winter, until an expedition headed by famed Arctic explorer Bernt Balchen brought them to safety. Mitchell Zuckoff takes the reader deep into the most hostile environment on earth, through hurricane-force winds, vicious blizzards, and subzero temperatures.

Moving forward to today, he recounts the efforts of the Coast Guard and North South Polar Inc. — led by indefatigable dreamer Lou Sapienza — who worked for years to solve the mystery of the Duck's last flight and recover the remains of its crew. (Goodreads)