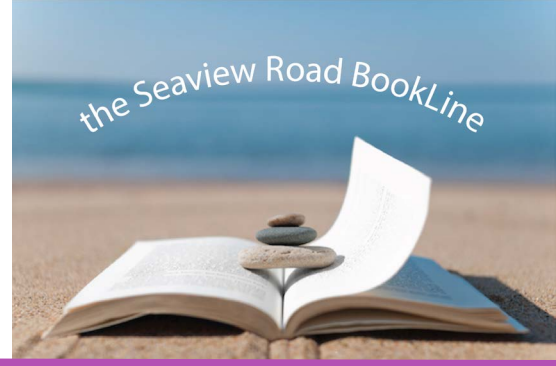


# APRIL 2021 BOOKLIST



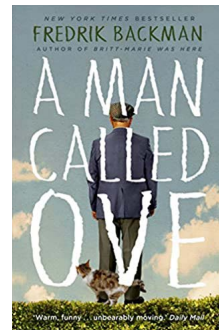
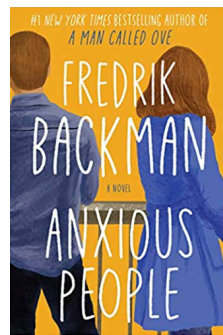
*“The best moments in reading are when you come across something — a thought, a feeling, a way of looking at things — which you had thought special and particular to you. Now here it is, set down by someone else, a person you have never met, someone even who is long dead. And it is as if a hand has come out and taken yours.”*

—from Alan Bennett’s ‘The History Boys’

## ANXIOUS PEOPLE

by Fredrik Backman

A poignant comedy about a crime that never took place, a would-be bank robber who disappears into thin air, and eight extremely anxious strangers who find they have more in common than they ever imagined. As police surround the premises and television channels broadcast the hostage situation live, the tension mounts and even deeper secrets are slowly revealed. Before long, the robber must decide which is the more terrifying prospect: going out to face the police, or staying in the apartment with this group of impossible people. A whimsical plot serves up unforgettable insights into the human condition and a gentle reminder to be compassionate to all the anxious people we encounter every day. — Sharon Muzzin



## A MAN CALLED OVE

by Fredrik Backman

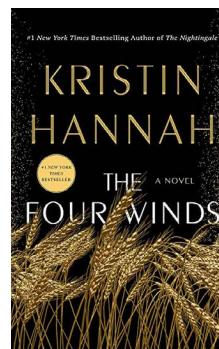
A funny, moving, uplifting tale of love and community that will leave you with a spring in your step. At first sight, Ove is almost certainly the grumpiest man you will ever meet. He thinks himself surrounded by idiots — neighbours who can’t reverse a trailer properly, joggers, shop assistants who talk in code, and the perpetrators of the vicious coup d’etat that ousted him as Chairman of the Residents’ Association. In the end, you will see, there is something about Ove that is quite irresistible. — Sharon Muzzin

## THE KEEPER OF LOST THINGS

Winner of the Richard & Judy Book Club Readers’ Award

by Ruth Hogan

This is a good summer read. It is an easy, light story of two parallel stories of people who have lost things and perhaps themselves. Good ending. — Sharon Emmerson



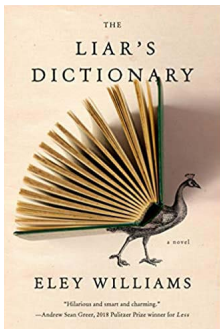
## THE FOUR WINDS

by Kristin Hannah

This latest novel by Kristin Hannah explores the years of the Great Depression, and specifically, the phenomena that was known as the Dust Bowl. I found this novel quite fascinating in that it reveals

the lesson we have still to learn...how climate can not only disrupt economies, but also the very social fabric of a nation. In addition, Hannah touches on another volatile theme...how big business is dependent on immigration for cheap labour, and yet the pursuit of profit undermines the very tenet of American society that all are created equal. History does indeed repeat itself.

— *Lesley Bird*



### THE LIAR'S DICTIONARY

by Eley Williams

A love-it or hate-it book filled with playfully exuberant writing, this story of two lexicographers separated by a century and connected by Swansby's New Encyclopaedic Dictionary shares some special insights about the

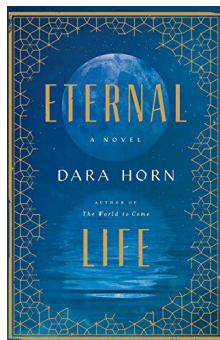
deep relationships among language, creativity and our humanity. — *Shelly Hollingshead (available at the library)*

### ETERNAL LIFE

by Dara Horn

2000 years ago, in Roman occupied Jerusalem, Rachel took a vow to save her dying son's life and now must commit to eternal life. But eternal life is not the dream

we might think it is...Rachel faces a litany of trouble spanning dozens of countries, scores of marriages, and hundreds of children. But as the twenty-first century begins and her children and grandchildren—consumed with immortality in their own ways—Rachel knows she must find a way out. Gripping, hilarious, and profoundly moving,



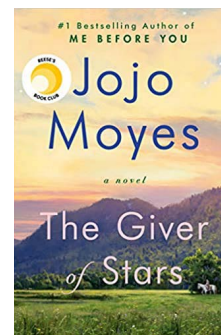
Eternal Life celebrates the bonds between generations, the power of faith, the purpose of death, and the reasons for being alive. — *Deborah Camp*

### OLD FILTH

by Jane Gardam

It's the life story of a lawyer from 'birth to death'. Old Filth was a Raj orphan and was one of many sent 'home' from the East to be fostered and educated in England. This is the first one of a trilogy and is excellent reading.

— *Maureen Ashbaugh*



### THE GIVER OF STARS

by JoJo Moyes

Set in a small Kentucky town in Depression-era America, the novel details the lives of five women who become travelling librarians on horseback, delivering books to the people of Kentucky. The story follows Alice Wright, a British

woman, who moves out after marrying the Kentucky native Bennett Van Cleve. — *Lois Clyde*

### CRY, HEART, BUT NEVER BREAK

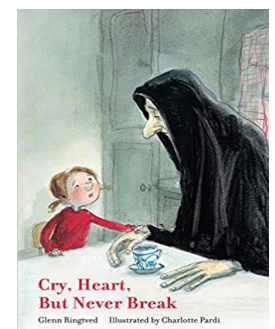
by Glen Ringved

(illustrated by Charlotte Pardi)

Not only is it an amazingly gentle book on the subject of death, the illustrations are beautiful. A children's book but a wonderful book for any age to explain the realities of death and loss in a positive way.

— *Shelly Hollingshead*

(available at the library)



## THE VANISHING HALF

by Brit Bennett

This is a compelling novel that is reminiscent of 'Imitation of Life', the 1959 American drama film which was adapted from the novel of the same name by Fannie Hurst. Set between the 1940s and 1990s, 'The Vanishing Half' follows the lives of identical twins, who are light-skinned black sisters born in Mallard, Louisiana. While both of them leave their home town at the tender age of 16, their lives take very different and separate paths. A great study of how the past shapes a person's life decisions and why some choose to reject it. — *Elaine Prodor*



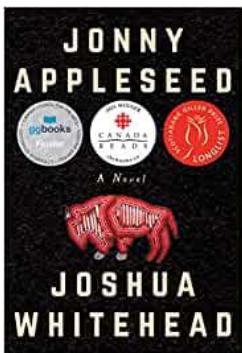
## JONNY APPLESEED

by Joshua Whitehead

Winner of the 2021 Canada Reads

Finalist of the Governor General's Literary Awards

Longlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize



This debut novel by Joshua Whitehead is about "a two-spirit Indigiqueer young man who leaves the reserve and becomes a cybersex worker in the big city to make ends meet." When Jonny's stepfather dies and he must find a way back home, the story weaves through relationships and eventual revelations

in the reckoning of his past. Funny, frank, messy, traumatic, and tender, this book examines a myriad of characters on the 'Rez' and in city life through the eyes of a loveable narrator. — *Elaine Prodor*

(Note: 'Jonny Appleseed' was intended for a young adult audience, though Whitehead admits the sexually explicit content means it might not be suitable for all young people.)

## POETRY CORNER

### Walk Slowly

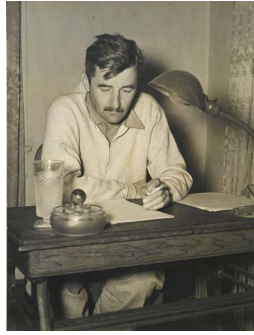
by Danna Faulds

It only takes a reminder to breathe, a moment to be still, and just like that, something in me settles, softens, makes space for imperfection. The harsh voice of judgment drops to a whisper and I remember again that life isn't a relay race; that we will all cross the finish line; that waking up to life is what we were born for. As many times as I forget, catch myself charging forward without even knowing where I'm going, that many times I can make the choice to stop, to breathe, and be, and walk slowly into the mystery.

*Thank you, everyone, who submitted to The Booklist this month. The Seaview Road Bookline comes out once a month; the next submission deadline is May 15th (I will send out a reminder a week beforehand). I'm also interested in articles that feature works of a particular author or that focus on a book series—one per issue—first submitted, first printed. Fiction only, please. Poetry welcome!*  
[seaviewbreezenews@gmail.com](mailto:seaviewbreezenews@gmail.com)



## William Faulkner, Immeasurable Giant



For a quick gauge of William Faulkner's literary impact, look at almost any list of the hundred best English language novels of the Twentieth Century. His books typically occupy at least one spot and up to four on these lists. Often cited are the titles **As I Lay Dying**, **The Sound and the Fury**, **Absalom, Absalom!**, and **Light in August**. They helped him to win the Nobel Prize in 1949. Pulitzer Prizes were awarded for **A Fable** in 1955 and **The Reivers** in 1963, posthumously. Only three other novelists have won more than once in a century of Pulitzers.

Perhaps no other writer has created such a large body of work with a cohesive sense of place and time. Most of Faulkner's eighteen novels and many short stories are set in fictional Yoknapatawpha County, modelled on the area where he lived near Oxford, Mississippi, with a time frame generally from the Civil War to the Depression era. Some characters cross over from one story to another.

Readers who choose to embark on a Faulkner binge will become immersed in a complicated literary universe featuring compassion for the struggles of the desperately poor and the aristocratic; for Black, White and Indigenous characters; and for the honest and dishonest. Many are caught in a society rigidly beholden to its Civil War past and murky on its future. As Faulkner says in **Requiem for a Nun**, "The past is never dead. It's not even past."

Faulkner's stories mine myriad elements of the human condition while exposing the intricately tangled web of racial issues in the American South. He masterfully employed a wide range of literary techniques such as stream of consciousness and multiple narrative perspectives. Some works are very challenging to read, but also gratifying, while others use straight-forward narrative. Gradually easing into Faulkner is a good

option, because he's worth the effort for an eventual deep dive.

With that in mind it's useful to view **The Sound and the Fury**, his dizzying masterpiece, as avant-garde, while his hilarious final novel **The Reivers** is mainstream. Faulkner's short stories offer a fine place to start as well. Two of his longer ones that I enjoyed are **Spotted Horses**, involving the devious Flem Snopes, and **Old Man**, about the immense power of the flooding Mississippi River.

Above all, I love the darkly comic **As I Lay Dying**, which Faulkner rightfully called his tour de force. Although its complex structure features fifteen narrators, the novel is so fascinating that it can pull readers swiftly to the tragically humorous conclusion. This tale of a poor family intent on carting their matriarch home for burial with her relatives, come hell or high water — and both do come, is audacious in its concept and execution. The novel is a stunning achievement with multiple layers of meaning; I highly recommend it.

Faulkner disliked the attention the Nobel Prize brought. I recall seeing Anne Nagle, the widow of the great screen writer and director Preston Sturges, tell a revealing story about both men. At a Hollywood dinner party, Faulkner introduced himself to guests as a farmer, which he was. Finally, Sturges couldn't abide the modesty any longer and announced, "I'd like you to meet William Faulkner, the Nobel Prize winner." When all the guests then focused on his friend, Sturges became upset and whispered audibly, "He may have the Nobel Prize, but he's still short."

At about five feet five inches, Faulkner was below average in physical stature. But as a writer, he was an immeasurable giant. He didn't manage to complete high school or college, but before dying at 64 he had the talent and stamina to write enough wonderful stories to burden a bookshelf, keep readers engrossed for months, and occupy scholars for a lifetime.

— *Bill Mathis*