



HONEYBEE CAPITAL

FOUNDATION

SUMMER BOOK LIST 2022

Friends, I hope this season has offered a window for reflection and replenishment. Firefly season in New England is already faded, but we are still seeing peak blueberry productivity, which means there is still plenty of time for summer reading!

*Here's to the sweetness and zest of life, in all forms.
May we catch each fleeting flicker, and cherish the more durable glow.*

BOOKS THAT HELP US TO CONNECT

AN IMMENSE WORLD, Ed Yong

THE BIGGEST IDEAS IN THE UNIVERSE, Sean Carroll (coming in September)

Sometimes I am surprised how much rhyming there is across different fields of research. For example, this week I listened to a great (and understandable) commentary on quantum physics from [Sean Carroll](#) (part of the Santa Fe Institute's community lecture series), where one key thread of discussion was about how to measure things we can't directly observe. Ed Yong's book illuminates a complementary arc of discovery in biology, the idea that all kinds of capacities across different organisms are revealed as our own human tools of observation improve. In both cases, we are reminded of the mega (or meta) inquiry overarching all - *what is true, but unseen?*

Yong is one of my favorite science writers, a great storyteller and careful researcher. That boring wax moth I just cleared out of my beehive? It can hear at greater frequencies than any other animal. That loggerhead turtle paddling along aimlessly? It is navigating using the Earth's magnetic field. That octopus stretching out along the seafloor? Its arms are exploring even without direction from the central brain. What a magnificent world we get to inhabit.

HORIZON, Barry Lopez

At its core, this book is a memoir told in place, a deep exploration of Lopez' experiences in different landscapes. But rather than being self-centered, it is place-centered, and this makes all the difference. Lopez conveys complex history in a subtle way, and does not paper over the sorrows – through all of this, his love of place shines through.

SAND TALK, Tyson Yunkaporta

This is the kind of book that makes you want to race ahead to soak up the breadth of its wisdom, and also simultaneously to slow down so that you can appreciate the depth. Tyson is an academic and member of the Apalech clan in northern Queensland, and is more interested in bringing Indigenous perspective to the current state of the world than in putting it on a romantic and separate pedestal. I find that a short paragraph cannot effectively convey that this is one of the most important and impactful books I've read in years.

UNDER THE SEA-WIND, Rachel Carson

If you are by the coast this summer, this book is the perfect companion. Many know Carson's *Silent Spring*, but *Under the Sea-Wind* is her own self-described favorite, a scientific work disguised as an oceanic novel (or vice versa), and the first of her "sea trilogy." The creatures in Carson's descriptions are imbued with life, as she describes their seasons and interactions and homes. Yes, perhaps it personifies a fish to give him a name and inner thoughts, but it also makes us love him, and it helps us to appreciate the science that's conveyed... all in all, a wonderful combination.

ENTANGLED LIFE: HOW FUNGI MAKE OUR WORLDS, CHANGE OUR MINDS, AND SHAPE OUR FUTURES, Merlin Sheldrake

I recently viewed a [video](#) where Merlin Sheldrake was cooking up a dish of mushrooms that had sprouted from the pages of his own book (intentionally seeded), so that he could "eat my own words." Maybe this is all the recommendation needed for this glorious book! One of my favorite themes is, "fungi will save us all," and this book explores some of the reasons why, from their vital roles in ecosystems to medicines to building materials. There is so much to learn from the world just under our feet, and who better to learn it from than a man named Merlin Sheldrake? This book is well-matched with the movie [Fantastic Fungi](#), from the incredible Louie Schwartzberg.

BOOKS THAT HELP US TO CONSIDER

LIMITS TO GROWTH, Club of Rome - Donella Meadows et al

DONUT ECONOMICS, Kate Raworth

It's the 50 year anniversary of the Limits to Growth publication, and the topics examined are still relevant. So is the bristling - and sometimes fury - over the very idea that there are indeed limits to growth, which is its own fascinating question. (To redirect some of that energy, I prefer to highlight the idea that there are different dimensions or types of growth - but that's a topic for another time). Back to this book... While a corner of critique over the years has focused on the inaccuracies of some specific projections, the more worthwhile and enduring elements of this analysis are clear. In particular, it highlights connections between individual risk, collective risk, and systemic risk, the important distinctions between efficiency and effectiveness, and the dynamics of sub linear and super linear activities intersecting. As a publication, it is also a neat example of both the benefits and fallibilities of long-term questioning and forecasting.

Well-paired with *Donut Economics* from Kate Raworth, a matter-of-fact consideration of how we might create an economy that supports core needs of all, without compromising the future.

ENERGY AND CIVILIZATION, Vaclav Smil

Like any complicated topic, current discussions about energy systems tend to be full of strongly stated views backed by slightly arcane data - and pretty often these statements are accurate, but incomplete. Smil's review helps to put all of our current questions in a bigger and more complete context, both in terms of scope and in terms of time. This is not a light read - it's closer to textbook than to novel - but it's well-researched and valuable grounding for anyone who wants to have a more informed view of energy systems, how our current landscape developed, and where things might go from here. Smil is a prolific author with a growing and slightly cult-ish following - I appreciate that in this area where so much writing starts with a specific agenda to promote, his perspective is one of a researcher, analyst, and reporter.

EXPECTATIONS INVESTING, Michael Mauboussin and AI Rappaport

It is rare that an investment classic stands the test of time, and even more unusual to see an update that reveals newly illuminated relevance. This book reminds us that investing is so much more interesting than speculation-oriented soundbites, and that our most perplexing questions can be approached with care and analytical acumen. I especially appreciate the authors' focus on valuation (not just multiples) and on the essential insight that understanding can be gained by working backwards to see what expectations are already reflected in a stock price. There are also real-life learning tools linked to the publication, so that practitioners can easily link to models and methods that can be used in our own practice. For anyone who aims to make thoughtful investment decisions, this book is full of essential and foundational wisdom.

GREAT MENTAL MODELS, VOLUME 3: SYSTEMS & MATHEMATICS, Farnam Street, Rhiannon Beaubien, Rosie Leizrowice

Fans of the Farnam Street organization will instantly recognize this as the third volume in the group's series (**Volume One** focused on General Thinking Concepts and **Volume Two** on Physics, Chemistry, and Biology). All of these publications have value that goes beyond mere compilation: concepts are illustrated in relevant ways, and interconnections are clear. In this latest volume, I especially appreciate the combination of systems *and* mathematics, so that concepts like feedback loops and systems failures are considered side by side with compounding, scale, and sample sizes. **Farnam Street's** broader purpose - developing a library of mental models to foster better thinking and decision-making — shines through these volumes, to great effect.

BOOKS THAT HELP US TO IMAGINE

THE CARRYING, Ada Limon

I happened to pick up this publication just before Limon was named as our new Poet Laureate and woah, I can't imagine a better selection. On a long trip recently this slim volume was my only companion, as each line demands its own space and time. "I am a hearth of spiders these days: a nest of trying." Stop. Let it all sink in.

TO BE TAUGHT, IF FORTUNATE, Becky Chambers

Oh my gosh, this book was such a delightful revelation! From the touching descriptions of well-designed tools for space travel to the rollicking variety of worlds that the astronauts explore, this story is sure to spark each readers' imagination. As the tale progresses, some deep philosophical questions emerge, addressed with thought and care - and not a sermon in sight.

TERMINATION SHOCK, Neal Stephenson

MINISTRY FOR THE FUTURE, Kim Stanley Robinson

The only trouble with sci-fi, near-future, and magical realism stories lately is that they all seem to be hitting pretty close to home. *Termination Shock* is a great example of this phenomenon: would any of us really be surprised if the headlines tomorrow revealed that a billionaire in Texas is single-handedly experimenting in geoengineering to mitigate climate change? In addition to the ripped-from-the-headlines feeling, this book is well-researched and wonderfully engaging. It is well-paired with Kim Stanley Robinson's *Ministry for the Future*, the masterpiece platypus of a book that is part novel, part policy brief, part scientific review, part call to action.

A CHILDREN'S BIBLE, Lydia Millet

I admit that I avoided opening this novel for more than a year, since I kept noticing that the rave reviews were always accompanied with a pained expression. And the idea of ineffective parents

abandoning their kids during a climate-related vigilante-ridden dystopia is not such a sunny premise. But woah, what a story, one that illustrates how quickly things can devolve - and sometimes resolve. I found myself laughing even as I squirmed at the darker and darker turns along the way.

THE MUTUAL FRIEND, Carter Bays

Carter Bays is the creator of “How I Met Your Mother,” and it’s a sign of my own bias that I assumed that meant this book was a super light beach read. Instead, it was the best kind of surprise, a pretty great novel wrapped up in a breezy disguise. The story gradually maps a sprawling web of characters as their lives criss-cross in New York, managing to address issues of technological development, human relations, and search for life’s meaning without being preachy or heavy-handed. As a bonus, there is an AI-related joke embedded in the story that is both hilarious and profound.

QUARTET IN AUTUMN, Barbara Pym

REMAINS OF THE DAY, Kazuo Ishiguro

I see Barbara Pym as the Jane Austen of the 20th century. Her writing is quiet yet incisive, subtle yet powerful. She’s not so widely known in the United States, and to be fair I worry that these books were written specifically for me, a lover of stories where a whole lifetime is condensed into a few short lines and meaningful looks. For example, *Quartet in Autumn* follows four middle-aged coworkers through the monotonous (and momentous) everyday developments of their lives. If you are the kind of person who rolled their eyes at *Remains of the Day*, moaning that nothing haaaaaaappened, then please leave Barbara Pym alone. But if you love finely crafted writing where any given phrase might pierce your heart, you will be mesmerized.

THE NIGHT WATCHMAN, Louise Erdrich

I’ve discussed this book with a few friends, and each of us had different highlights and summary comments. One of us focused on the backdrop of government action against the Chippewa Turtle Mountain people, one focused on the central character who was inspired by Erdrich’s own grandfather, one focused on a love story within, one focused on the relationship between sisters. This is the sign of a great book, that each reader could find a specific point of connection and meaning and resonance, while all also benefited from the whole.

OH, WILLIAM! Elizabeth Strout

By now I feel like I know the people in Elizabeth Strout’s books intimately, as if I’ve grown up in the same communities with them and witnessed both their inner and outer worlds. Oh, William! centers on the connection between Lucy Barton and her ex-husband William, and Strout conveys the subtlety and complexity and pain and humor of human relationships in a terrifically matter-of-fact way, illustrating both the smallness and grandness of life in one swoop. Like Strout’s other writing, I left this book feeling like I’d visited with some especially dear and sometimes trying friends – the kind of friends that are family.

This book is the third part of a trio with My Name is Lucy Barton and Anything is Possible.

THE MEMORY POLICE, Yoko Ogawa

Oh my, this is a haunting and beautiful tale! Imagine a world where, bit by bit, things are disappeared, deleted – not just forbidden, but erased altogether, even from stories and memories. What lives on beyond the physical? Where is the edge of life? Months later, this story is still curling through my thoughts and dreams.

BACK TO SCHOOL NOTE

Aside from bookstore visits, one of my favorite outings of the year is back to school shopping. Of course I am a grown woman, so I technically do not require new notebooks and pens every Labor Day, but something about the season sits deep within me. (I have watched You've Got Mail approximately 1000 times, just for that "bouquet of newly sharpened pencils" reference.) ANYWAY, I have revised this seasonal ritual a bit in recent years, and now in addition to stocking up on my own school supplies, I aim to support some teachers, too. Two helpful resources here are Donors Choose and Amazon Wish Lists - for the former, teachers submit projects for their classrooms and you can sort by region, project type, or other criteria to help make your selection. I have sponsored owl pellets for science class, new cushions for reading circle, and books of all sorts through this program. On Amazon, you can find teacher wish lists by using a direct link from a teacher you know, scanning under Amazon's "find a wish list" function for keywords like "teacher" or "classroom," or scrolling through social media for tags like #clearthelist or #amazonclassroomlist.

<https://www.donorschoose.org>

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