



HONEYBEE CAPITAL

FOUNDATION

WINTER BOOK LIST 2022

In these darkest days of the year, as the holiday hubbub subsides, there is nothing like the comfort of curling up with a great book. I'm happy to share a few favorites here, a mix of new issues and old friends.

Here's to the solstice, the return of the light!

BOOKS THAT HELP US TO CONNECT

THE MOTH SNOWSTORM, Michael McCarthy

Bookstores are full of new releases on climate change, sometimes technical, sometimes policy-centered, sometimes grief-filled. The Moth Snowstorm reminds us of something even more essential, the great, glorious root of it all – our deep and abiding love for the world. McCarthy weaves together tangible, beautiful stories of his own place – like the seasons when moths were so abundant they clouded all vision - and reminds us of the love we hold for our own times and our own places, and all that such a love makes possible.

AN IMMENSE WORLD, Ed Yong

THE BIGGEST IDEAS IN THE UNIVERSE, Sean Carroll

Sometimes I am surprised how much rhyming there is across different fields of research. For example, a little while back 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.

BOOKS THAT HELP US TO CONSIDER

MAGNIFICENT REBELS, Andrea Wulf

THE INVENTION OF NATURE

Well I am not the only one who loves this book – it is appearing on all of the "best of" lists for the year, and racking up all kinds of well-deserved awards. If I told you that you had to cancel your weekend plans to read about Goethe, Schiller, and Hegel, you might give me a funny look. But if you actually did it, you would be forever grateful. Like all of the best historical research, it reads like a novel and shines light on ideas that still influence us deeply. Wulf's account of von Humboldt, [The Invention of Nature](#), is another all-time favorite.

PURPOSE + PROFIT, George Serafeim

As the term "ESG" has risen in use across a wide range of settings, its functions have become blurred. In some settings ESG implies a compliance function, in others a regulatory function, in others a communications function. More than most researchers, George Serafeim from Harvard Business School has helped the field of practice to focus on the strategic function of ESG analysis, centered on the areas where a company's own business prospects intersect with the real world around us. Purpose and Profit explores the potential for assessing alignment of purpose and profit, in a way that is both theoretically and empirically robust. In a time when the pull toward superficial report-card approaches to ESG issues is strong, Serafeim helps us to ask bigger, more essential questions about what might be possible, and valuable.

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 instead of starting with a one-sided agenda, his perspective is one of reporter, researcher, and analyst.

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 REFLECT

BITTERSWEET, Susan Cain

QUIET

For many years my personal mantra was “mind over matter,” and indeed this can be a helpful slogan at times. But matter matters. Our lives are impoverished if we insist on an relentlessly sunny view, squeezing out the importance of sorrow and longing. Cain has a way of surfacing the unspoken undercurrents in our lives, putting them in generous and purposeful perspective. Especially after these last strange, hard years, this book is a treasure. Of course Cain's earlier publication, *Quiet*, is also an all-time favorite, and Bittersweet would be a wonderful pairing with Annie Duke's *Quit*.

QUIT, Annie Duke
THINKING IN BETS

Many of us have been steeped in the idea that perseverance, grit, and resilience are virtues above all others. Indeed, these are useful and sometimes even noble qualities and skills. But here Annie Duke illuminates the idea that the opposite of a virtue can also be a virtue – that knowing when to walk away can also be valuable. Duke is, of course, a former professional poker player and author of the (also terrific) Thinking in Bets. This book is perfect input for new year's reflections, one that prompts new questions and new insights. A wonderful pairing with Susan Cain's Bittersweet.

POETRY UNBOUND, Pdraig O Tuama
A SWIM IN THE POND IN THE RAIN, George Saunders

Fans of the terrific Poetry Unbound podcast (part of On Being Project) will need no further encouragement to rush out and acquire this book. Each poem is presented with personal reflection and insightful commentary from O Tuama, leaving readers knowing they've not just read a poem but explored its swoops and swirls, like attending the best poetry seminar of our lives.

This volume is well-paired with **George Saunders' A Swim in the Pond in the Rain**, with its deep dive (no pun intended) exploring the writing of four Russian masters.

WINTERING, Katherine May

"To everything there is a season." The great gift of May's writing is that she reminds us that we are not required to rush through or reject the winters, the fallow times in our own lives. Seasonal cycles of all sorts offer different ways to recover, restore, and grow, and are not just interruptions in a linear life path. May offers examples from history, cultural and faith traditions, the natural world, and personal experience, all of which leave the reader feeling comforted and un-alone. One of my favorite – and most needed - reads of the past few years. *This conversation with Krista Tippett is a terrific complement to the book:*
<https://onbeing.org/programs/katherine-may-how-wintering-replenishes/>

WOMEN HOLDING THINGS, Maira Kalman

Don't you just love it when something clever and entertaining turns out to be wise and insightful? Maira Kalman's illustrations sneak up on me every time, in the best possible way. This book makes a great gift for all the women, holding all of the things.

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 this slim volume was my only companion, yet plenty, 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.

SURRENDER, Bono

I've always had some aversion to audio books, reserving this format for extra-long or dense books that can be whittled away during extended transit times. But once in a while, you need to hear a book instead of reading it. Surrender is one of these. I'll admit that if you are not already a U2 fan, these stories are not likely to convert you – but if you ARE already a fan, there is no greater joy than to hear them as if Bono is speaking just to you. Beyond the expected – and terrific - details about the band and its members, especially the lead singer, there are

unanticipated tributes and insights throughout, like when Bono observes how Frank Sinatra was able to see that “My Way” contained two songs within one, the brash and the wistful.

BOOKS THAT HELP US TO IMAGINE

TOMORROW AND TOMORROW AND TOMORROW, Gabrielle Zevin

Oh, how pitch perfect this novel is! Set during the first video game era in Cambridge, Massachusetts (and beyond), the story follows a friendship that spans decades, full of creation and conflict and confusion and the kind of deep devotion that can only fully develop over a lifetime. I am not a gamer but if I were, I might love this story even more.

THE SWIMMERS, Julie Otsuka

The first part of this story is a masterful portrait of a swimming club and its quirky collection of members. The second part follows the increasing hold that dementia takes on one member, Alice. It’s a beautiful and heartbreaking and curiously constructed book, one that lingers long after the last page is turned.

THE MIDNIGHT LIBRARY, Matt Haig

THE SANDMAN SERIES, Neil Gaiman

I admit that I scooped up this book because it earned a positive comment from Neil Gaiman, which is reason enough to give anything a try. If you loved those “choose your own adventure” books as a kid, this story will appeal, with enough grown-up perspective to keep the premise from feeling contrived. Who isn’t captivated by the idea of multiple possibilities for our lives, and a library that holds them all? Though I might suggest Gaiman’s own Sandman series (both book and Netflix production) ahead of all other content he endorses, the Midnight Library was a delightful way to travel through a cold and stormy afternoon.

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 reader’s 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.

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 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 and months later, this story is still curling through my thoughts and dreams.

A NOTE ON BOOKSELLERS

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<https://www.arionpress.com>

<https://www.juniperbooks.com>

<https://persephonebooks.co.uk>

STAYING IN TOUCH

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***And now we welcome the new year,
full of things that have never been.
- Rainer Maria Rilke***