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# Notable Books

## *The 2010 Selection of Titles*

### RUSA Notable Books Council

**Notable Books, 2010**, committee members are Alicia Ahlvers, chair, Kansas City Public Library; Susie Brown, Shaker Heights Public Library; Julie Elliott, Indiana University–South Bend; Lucy Lockley, St. Charles City-County Library District; Valerie Taylor, Lewisville Community Library; Elizabeth Olesh, Nassau Library System; Jessica Pigza, New York Public Library; Nancy Pearl; A. Issac Pulver, Saratoga Springs Public Library; Heather Robideaux, Fayetteville Public Library; Nonny Schlotzhauer, The Pennsylvania State University; and Andrea Slonosky.

Since 1944, the Notable Books Council has annually selected a list of 25 very good, very readable and at times very important fiction, nonfiction and poetry books for the adult reader. Books may be selected because they possess exceptional literary merit; expand the horizons of human knowledge; make a specialized body of knowledge accessible to the non-specialist; have the potential to contribute significantly to the solution of a contemporary problem; and/or present a unique concept.

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### FICTION

Jessica Anthony. *The Convalescent*. McSweeney's. \$22 (ISBN 978-1-934-78110-4).

Rovar Pfieman, bus-dwelling meat salesman, fulfills his destiny as the last of his clan in this oddly imaginative tale.

Margaret Atwood. *The Year of the Flood: A Novel*. Doubleday/Nan A. Talese. \$26.95 (ISBN 978-0-385-52877-1).

In the near future, two women survive an apocalyptic event in a queasily enthralling work.

Nicholson Baker. *The Anthologist: A Novel*. Simon & Schuster. \$25 (ISBN 978-1-416-57244-2).

Poet Paul Chowder, a charming failure, struggles to regain his muse and his girlfriend while watching deadlines slip by.

Dan Chaon. *Await Your Reply: A Novel*. Ballantine. \$25 (ISBN 978-0-345-47602-9).

This chilling exploration of the modern meaning of identity follows three people on the fringes of society.

Chris Cleave. *Little Bee: A Novel*. Simon & Schuster. \$24 (ISBN 978-1-416-58963-1).

The compelling voice of a refugee illuminates the life-changing friendship between two women that began with a horrifying encounter on a secluded Nigerian beach.

Pete Dexter. *Spooner*. Grand Central. \$26.99 (ISBN 978-0-446-54072-8).

A boy struggles to navigate the vagaries of the world with the lifelong guidance of his stepfather in this funny and heartbreaking tale.

Paul Harding. *Tinkers*. Bellevue Literary. \$14.95 (ISBN 978-1-934-13712-3).

In this lyrical novel, the life of a dying man is examined through the smallest moments of time and memory.

Yiyun Li. *The Vagrants: A Novel*. Random House. \$25 (ISBN 978-1-400-06313-0).

The execution of a dissident woman reverberates through her small town in the aftermath of China's Cultural Revolution.

Colum McCann. *Let the Great World Spin: A Novel*. Random House. \$25 (ISBN 978-1-400-06373-4).

Phillipe Petit's highwire walk between the Twin Towers provides the backdrop for this rich portrait of the unlikely connections between a group of New Yorkers in the 1970s.

Toni Morrison. *A Mercy: A Novel*. Knopf. \$23.95 (ISBN 978-0-307-26423-7).

Four women—white, mixed race, black, and Native American—become a makeshift family under the care of a “good” man in colonial America.

Richard Powers. *Generosity: An Enhancement*. Farrar. \$25 (ISBN 978-0-374-16114-9).

In this postmodern indictment of the biotech industry, a student's unnerving happiness seems to hold the key to banishing despair from the human genetic code.

Colm Tóibín. *Brooklyn: A Novel*. Scribner. \$25 (ISBN 978-1-439-13831-1).

A young Irish woman faces heart-wrenching decisions in this unabashedly romantic and deceptively simple story of immigration and belonging.

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## NONFICTION

Dave Cullen. *Columbine*. Twelve. \$26.99 (ISBN 978-0-446-54693-5).

This fine work of investigative journalism challenges the myths and misconceptions of the Columbine tragedy.

Dave Eggers. *Zeitoun*. McSweeney's. \$24 (ISBN 978-1-934-78163-0).

This powerful account explores the devastation of post-Katrina New Orleans through the eyes of a Syrian American who remained during the storm and endured the resulting chaos and confusion.

David Finkel. *The Good Soldiers*. Farrar. \$26 (ISBN 978-0-374-16573-4).

An embedded reporter describes the human cost paid by a U.S. Army battalion on the streets of Iraq in language that is searing, visceral, and immediate.

David Grann. *The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession in the Amazon*. Doubleday. \$27.50 (ISBN 978-0-

385-51353-1).

An intrepid reporter sets out to uncover the mysterious fate the last of the great Victorian explorers in this thrilling adventure.

Emmanuel Guibert. *The Photographer: Into War-torn Afghanistan with Doctors without Borders*. First Second. \$29.95 (ISBN 978-1-596-43375-5).

Using mixed visual media, this stunning memoir vividly depicts the struggles and accomplishments of a humanitarian mission in an unforgiving terrain.

Richard Holmes. *The Age of Wonder: How the Romantic Generation Discovered the Beauty and Terror of Science*. Pantheon. \$40 (ISBN 978-0-375-42222-5).

This lively, stellar group biography animates the engrossing accounts of the research that inspired a sense of awe in poets and scientists alike.

Patrick Radden Keefe. *Snakehead: An Epic Tale of the Chinatown Underworld and the American Dream*. Doubleday. \$27.50 (ISBN 978-0-385-52130-7).

Human trafficking and its subsequent effects on the American economy and social structures are documented in this fast-paced panoramic expose.

Christopher McDougall. *Born to Run: A Hidden Tribe, Superathletes, and the Greatest Race the World Has Never Seen*. Knopf. \$24.95 (ISBN 978-0-307-26630-9).

One journalist's quest to discover the secrets of the reclusive Tarahumara Indians leads to an exciting and dangerous endurance race.

Michael Norman and Elizabeth M. Norman. *Tears in the Darkness: The Story of the Bataan Death March and Its Aftermath*. Farrar. \$30 (ISBN 978-0-374-27260-9).

In-depth, brutal, and moving, this narrative provides multiple perspectives into a tragic World War II episode in the Philippines.

Lainey Salisbury and Aly Sujo. *Provenance: How a Con Man and a Forger Rewrote the History of Modern Art*. Penguin. \$26.95 (ISBN 978-1-594-20220-9).

This enthralling page-turner describes how archivists uncovered one of the most extensive frauds in recent art history.

David Small. *Stitches: A Memoir*. Norton. \$24.95 (ISBN 978-0-393-06857-3).

Stark drawings give voice to the horrors of a child who finds redemption in art while growing up in a repressed and disturbed family.

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