

GPUC Book Discussion Reading List for 2019-2020

- **Tuesday, July 16, 5:30pm at the home of Erika Baer**

My Antonia by Willa Cather

This 1918 novel, the last of Cather's "prairie trilogy", tells the stories of an orphaned boy from Virginia, Jim Burden, and the elder daughter of a family of Bohemian immigrants, Antonia Shimerda, who are each brought as children of pioneers in Nebraska towards the end of the 19th century. Both the pioneers who first broke the prairie sod for farming as well as the harsh but fertile land itself feature in this American novel. The first year in the very new place leaves strong impressions on both children, affecting them all their lives. This novel is considered Cather's first masterpiece. (Wikipedia)

Reviewed by Anne Roberts

- **Tuesday, August 20, 5:30pm at the home of JoAnn Kelly**

Erotic Stories for Punjabi Widows by Balli Kaur Jaswal

Going against the wishes of her Punjabi Sikh family, Nikki Grewal works in a pub in London. When her father dies and the family needs money, she takes a job teaching creative writing to older Sikh widows who are expecting to learn Basic English. When one of the widows finds a book of sexy stories in English and shares it with the class, Nikki realizes that beneath their white dupattas her students have a wealth of fantasies and memories. Eager to liberate these modest women she teaches them to express their untold stories, unleashing creativity of the most unexpected – and exciting – kind. (Wikipedia)

Reviewed by Randi Borys

- **Tuesday, October 15, 5:30pm in the Church Library**

Unsheltered by Barbara Kingsolver

"Unsheltered" is the compulsively readable story of two families, in two centuries, who live at the corner of Sixth and Plum in Vineland, New Jersey, navigating what seems to be the end of the world as they know it. With history as their tantalizing canvas, these characters paint a startlingly relevant portrait of life in precarious times, when the foundations of the past have failed to prepare us for the future. (book jacket)

Reviewed by Juli Moore

- **Tuesday, November 19, 5:30pm in the Church Library**

Becoming by Michelle Obama

"Becoming" is the 2018 memoir of former United States First Lady Michelle Obama. Described by the author as a deeply personal experience, the book talks about her roots, how she found her voice, her time in the White House, her public health campaign, and her role as a mother. (Wikipedia)

Reviewed by Ann Lipsitz

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- **Tuesday, January 21, 5:30pm in the Church Library**

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens

Perfect for fans of Barbara Kingsolver and Karen Russell, “Where the Crawdads Sing” is at once an exquisite ode to the natural world, a heartbreaking coming-of-age story, and a surprising tale of possible murder. Owens reminds us that we are forever shaped by the children we once were, and that we are all subject to the beautiful and violent secrets that nature keeps. (Penguin Random House)

Reviewed by Amy Thelen

- **Tuesday, February 18, 5:30pm in the Church Library**

Mr. Penumbra’s 24 Hour Bookstore by Robin Sloan

This 2012 novel combines elements of fantasy, mystery, friendship and adventure as a way of looking at the modern conflict and transition between new technology (electronic) and old (print books). The protagonist is a laid-off Silicon Valley tech worker who begins working at a dusty bookstore with few customers, only to start discovering one secret after another. The mysterious old books, along with the store’s owner, lead to a 500-year-old secret society. (Wikipedia)

Reviewed by Erin O’Mara

- **Tuesday, March 17, 5:30pm in the Church Library**

The Muralist by Barbara Shapiro

Alizee Benoit, an American painter working for the WPA, vanishes in New York City in 1940 amid personal and political turmoil. No one knows what happened to her... Entwining the lives of both historical and fictional characters and moving between the past and the present, “The Muralist” plunges readers into the divisiveness of prewar politics and the largely forgotten plight of European refugees refused entrance to the United States. It captures both the inner workings of today’s New York art scene and the beginnings of the vibrant and quintessentially American school of Abstract Expressionism. (Goodreads) **Reviewed by Susan Boynton**

- **Tuesday, April 21, 5:30pm in the Church Library**

In celebration of **Poetry Month** Barbara Corrado will distribute a compilation of poems at the March meeting that she will discuss at our **April** meeting.

Other books considered:

Becoming Dr. Seuss: Theodor Geisel and the Making of an American Imagination by Brian Jay Jones

The Great Believers by Rebecca Makkai

Anna Karenina by Leo Tolstoy

The Whole Town’s Talking by Fannie Flagg

Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

The Other Einstein by Heather Terrell

Southernmost by Silas House

The Assistants by Camille Perri

The Night Tiger by Yangsze Choo