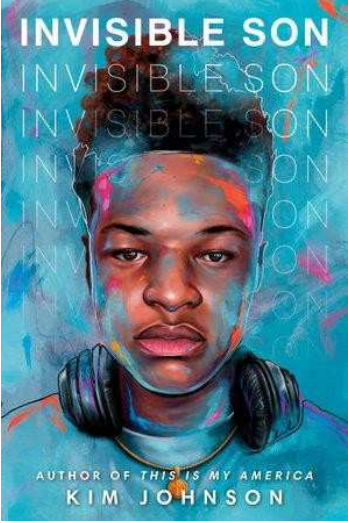
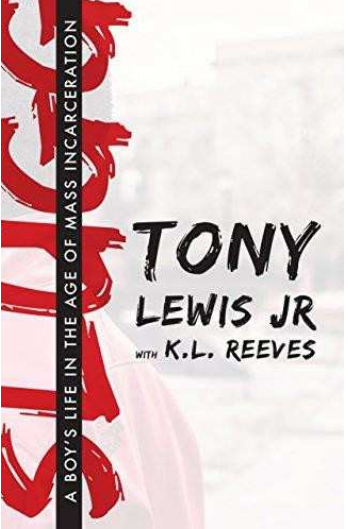
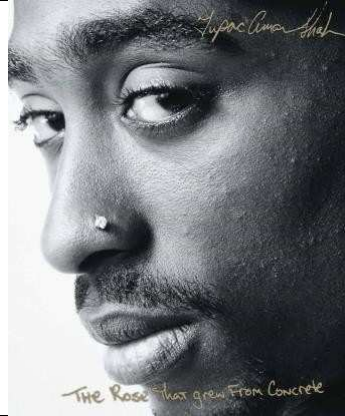


Sample Book Ballots: Free Minds Book Club

This document contains examples of book selection ballots used with different groups in Free Minds programs in juvenile detention centers, jails, prisons, and reentry.

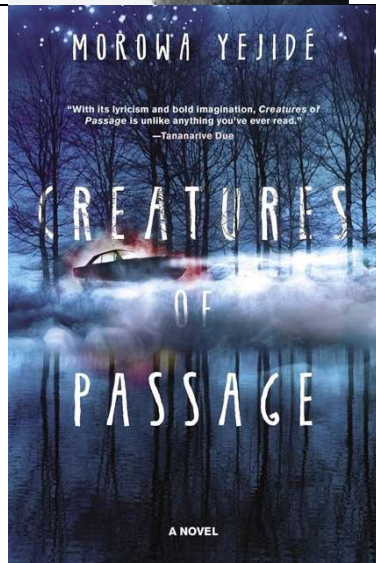
Incarcerated Youth (ages 16-18) Book Club

	<p><i>Invisible Son</i> by Kim Johnson</p> <p>Andre Jackson is determined to reclaim his identity. But returning from juvie doesn't feel like coming home. His neighborhood is rapidly gentrifying, and COVID-19 shuts down school before he can return. And Andre's suspicions about his arrest for a crime he didn't commit even taint his friendships. It's as if his whole life has been erased. The one thing Andre is counting on is his relationship with the Whitaker kids—especially his longtime crush, Sierra. But Sierra's brother Eric is missing, and the facts don't add up as their adoptive parents fight to keep up the act that their family is picture-perfect. If Andre can find Eric, he might uncover the truth about his own arrest. But in a world where power is held by a few and Andre is nearly invisible, searching for the truth is a dangerous game.</p>
	<p><i>Slugg: A Boy's Life in the Age of Mass Incarceration</i> by Tony Lewis, Jr.</p> <p>When Lewis was two years old, his father was 19, a drug kingpin, and a millionaire. As a child, the author led a pampered life in a big house with cars, electronics, and the trappings of wealth, even going to private schools. At age nine, his life descended into chaos when his father was arrested and given a life sentence. Lewis's mother became increasingly paranoid, succumbing to mental illness. This book holds page after page of insight and reflection about prison, choices, fatherhood, and connection. Lewis went from seeing his father every day to seeing him three times in the 13 years he was incarcerated. The young man struggles with his own demons and what he is going to make of his life. Eventually, he goes on to win national awards for community service, and readers cheer him on as he does.</p>



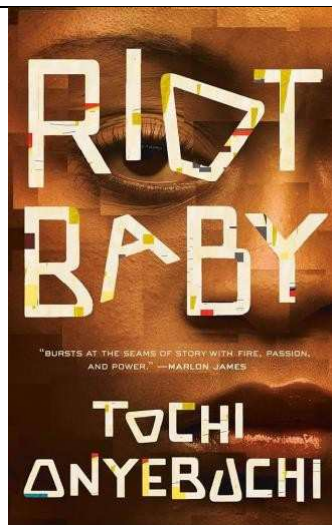
***The Rose That Grew from Concrete* by Tupac Shakur**

His talent was unbounded—a raw force that commanded attention and respect. His death was tragic—a violent homage to the power of his voice. His legacy is indomitable—as vibrant and alive today as it has ever been. This collection of deeply personal poetry is a mirror into the legendary artist's enigmatic world and its many contradictions. Written in his own hand from the time he was nineteen, these seventy-two poems embrace his spirit, his energy—and his ultimate message of hope.



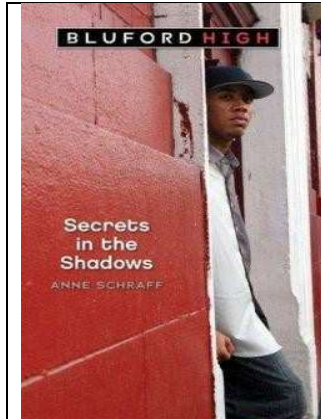
***Creatures of Passage* by Morowa Yejidé**

Nephthys Kinwell is a taxi driver of sorts in Washington, DC, ferrying passengers in a 1967 Plymouth Belvedere with a ghost in the trunk. Endless rides and alcohol help her manage her grief over the death of her twin brother, Osiris, who was murdered and dumped in the Anacostia River. Unknown to Nephthys, her estranged great-nephew, ten-year-old Dash, is finding himself drawn to the banks of that very same river. It is there that Dash—reeling from having witnessed an act of molestation at his school, but still questioning what and who he saw—has charmed conversations with a mysterious figure he calls the "River Man." When Dash arrives unexpectedly at Nephthys's door bearing a cryptic note about his unusual conversations with the River Man, Nephthys must face what frightens her most.



***Riot Baby* by Tochi Onyebuchi**

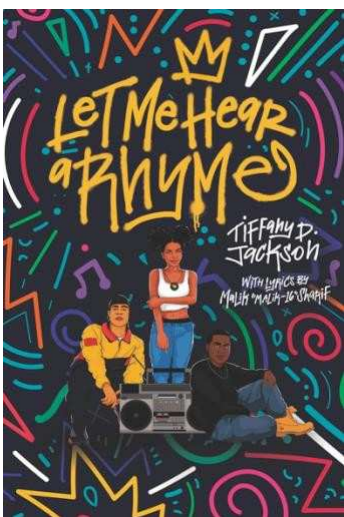
Ella has a Thing. She sees things that haven't happened yet. Kev, born while Los Angeles burned around them, wants to protect his sister from a power that could destroy her. But when Kev is incarcerated, Ella must decide what it means to watch her brother suffer while holding the ability to wreck cities in her hands. Rooted in the hope that can live in anger, *Riot Baby* is as much an intimate family story as a global dystopian narrative. It burns fearlessly toward revolution and has quietly devastating things to say about love, fury, and the Black American experience. Ella and Kev are both shockingly human and immeasurably powerful. Their childhoods are defined and destroyed by racism. Their futures might alter the world.



Secrets in the Shadows (Bluford High Series) by Anne Schraff

Roylin Bailey is living a nightmare--and it's all his fault. It started when the new student, Korie Archer, arrived in his history class. She was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen, and unlike most people at Bluford High, she seemed to like him. But when Roylin tried to impress her, he made a terrible mistake. Now one of his friends is gone, and someone is out to destroy him. Caught in a tightening web of lies and threats, Roylin is desperate for a way out.

Emerging Adults (Ages 18-22) Book Club at the DC Jail



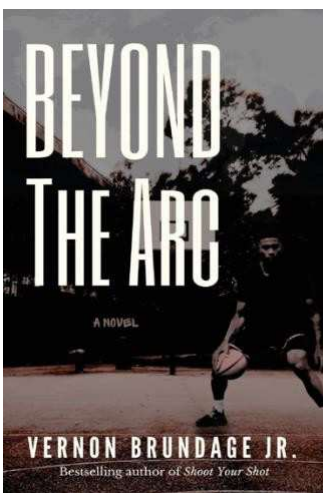
***Let Me Hear a Rhyme* by Tiffany D. Jackson**

Brooklyn, 1998. Biggie Smalls was right: Things done changed. But that doesn't mean that Quadir and Jarrell are cool letting their best friend Steph's music lie forgotten under his bed after he's murdered—not when his rhymes could turn any Bed Stuy corner into a party. With the help of Steph's younger sister Jasmine, they come up with a plan to promote Steph's music under a new rap name: the Architect. When his demo catches the attention of a hotheaded music label rep, the trio must prove Steph's talent from beyond the grave. As the pressure of keeping their secret grows, Quadir, Jarrell, and Jasmine are forced to confront the truth about what happened to Steph. And with everything riding on Steph's fame, they need to decide what they stand for or lose all that they've worked so hard to hold on to—including each other.



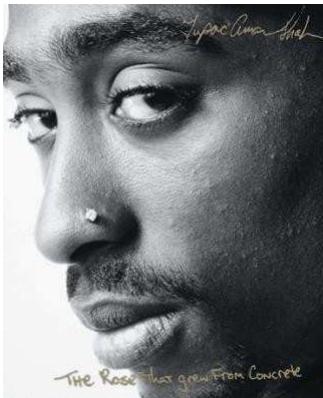
***Akata Witch* by Nnedi Okorafor**

Sunny Nwazue lives in Nigeria, but was born in New York City. Her features are West African, but she's albino. She's an amazing athlete, but can't go out into the sun to play soccer. There seems to be no place where she fits in. And then she discovers something amazing—she is a "free agent" with latent magical power. And she has a lot of catching up to do. Soon she's one of four magic students, studying the visible and invisible, learning to change reality. But as she's finding her footing, Sunny and her friends are asked by the magical authorities to help track down a career criminal. Not just a run-of-the-mill bad guy, but a real-life hardcore serial killer with abilities far stronger than theirs. Will their training be enough?



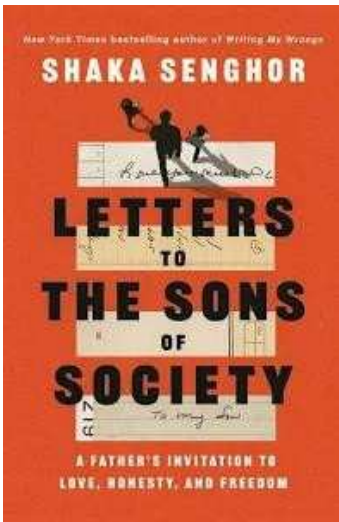
***Beyond the Arc* by Vernon Brundage, Jr.**

Twenty-one-year-old DJ Joyner has always wanted to play in the NBA. But even after a standout college basketball career, he goes unselected in the NBA Draft. Unwilling to give up on his dream, DJ heads to Las Vegas to compete in the NBA's Summer League showcase for the chance to earn his way onto a team's roster. While in Vegas, DJ is approached by Marion Lake—a low-profile, referral-only player development coach who has been hired by an anonymous sponsor to train and prepare DJ for an NBA contract. Though skeptical at first, DJ accepts Marion's offer and tries to make the leap to the NBA as an undrafted rookie. However, what starts out as a quest to realize a childhood dream evolves into a journey of self-discovery that transcends the game of basketball.



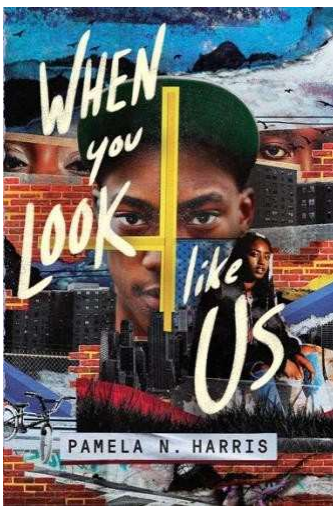
***The Rose That Grew from Concrete* by Tupac Shakur**

Tupac Shakur's most intimate and honest thoughts were uncovered only after his death with the instant classic *The Rose That Grew from Concrete*. This collection of deeply personal poetry is a mirror into the legendary artist's enigmatic world and its many contradictions. Written in his own hand from the time he was nineteen, these seventy-two poems embrace his spirit, his energy—and his ultimate message of hope.



***Letters to the Sons of Society* by Shaka Senghor**

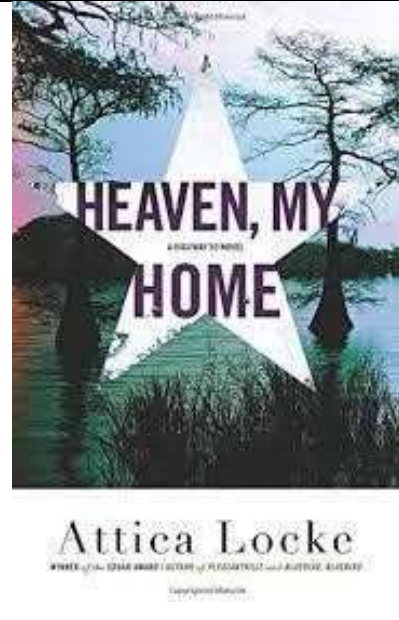
Shaka Senghor has lived the life of two fathers. With his first son, Jay, born just after Senghor was incarcerated for second-degree murder, he experienced the regret of his own mistakes and the disconnection caused by a society that sees Black lives as disposable. With his second, Sekou, born after Senghor's release, he has experienced healing, transformation, and love. In this collection of letters to Jay and Sekou, Senghor traces his journey as a Black man in America and unpacks the toxic and misguided messages about masculinity, mental health, love, and success that boys learn from an early age. He issues a passionate call to all fathers and sons—fathers who don't know how to show their sons love, sons who are navigating a fatherless world, boys who have been forced to grow up before their time—to rewrite the story that has been told about them.



***When You Look Like Us* by Pamela N. Harris**

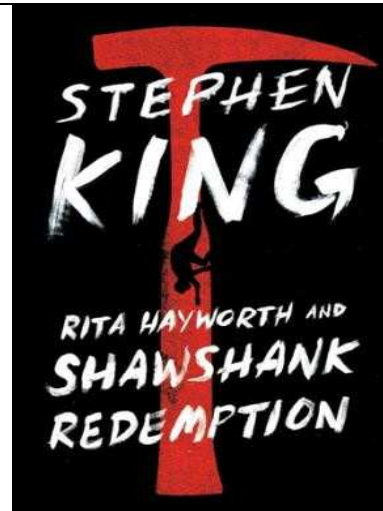
When you look like us—brown skin, brown eyes, black braids or fades—everyone else thinks you're trouble. No one even blinks twice over a missing Black girl from public housing because she must've brought whatever happened to her upon herself. I, Jay Murphy, can admit that, for a minute, I thought my sister Nicole just got caught up with her boyfriend—a drug dealer—and his friends. But she's been gone too long. Nic, where are you? If I hadn't hung up on her that night, she would be at our house, spending time with Grandma. If I was a better brother, she'd be finishing senior year instead of being another name on a missing persons list. It's time to step up, to do what the Newport News police department won't: Bring her home.

Men's Book Club (Ages 18+) at the DC Jail



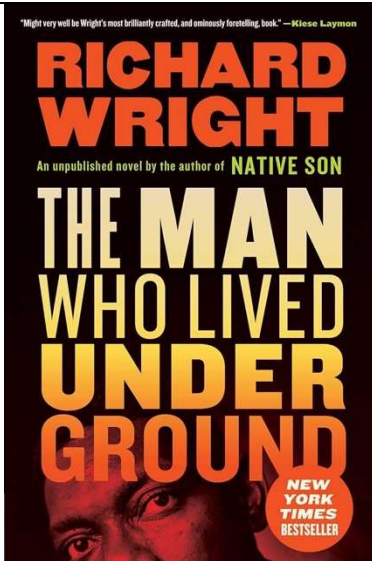
***Heaven, My Home* by Attica Locke**

In this captivating crime novel, Texas Ranger Darren Mathews is on the hunt for a missing child - but it's the boy's family of white supremacists who are his real target. Nine-year-old Levi King knew he should have left for home sooner; now he's alone in the darkness of vast Caddo Lake, in a boat whose motor just died. A sudden noise distracts him - and all goes dark. Darren Mathews is trying to emerge from another kind of darkness; after his previous investigation, his marriage is in a precarious state of rebuilding, and his career and reputation lie in the hands of his mother, who's never exactly had his best interests at heart. Now she holds the key to his freedom, and she's not above a little maternal blackmail to press her advantage. Levi's disappearance has links to Darren's last case. Darren's race to find the boy, is also in a race to save himself.



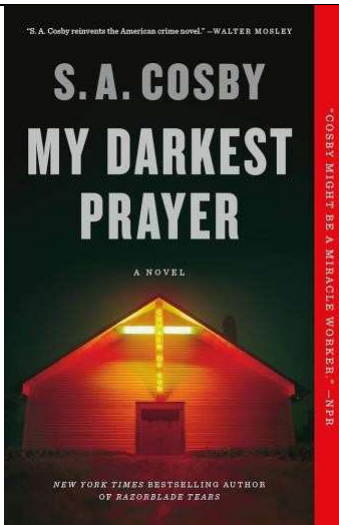
***Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption* by Stephen King**

Stephen King's story about Andy Dufreshne, a man wrongfully convicted of murder, who seeks his strangely satisfying ultimate revenge, was the basis for the Oscar winning film, *Shawshank Redemption*. It is suspenseful, mysterious, and heart-wrenching.



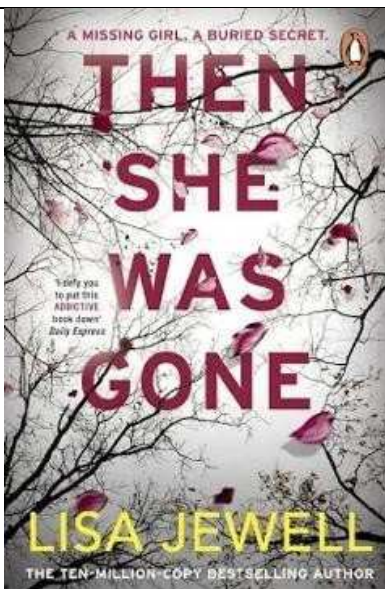
***The Man Who Lived Underground* by Richard Wright**

Fred Daniels, a Black man, is picked up by the police after a double murder and tortured until he confesses to a crime he did not commit. After signing a confession, he escapes from custody and flees into the city's sewer system. Now, for the first time, by special arrangement with the author's estate, the full text of this incendiary novel about race and violence in America, the work that meant more to Wright than any other ("I have never written anything in my life that stemmed more from sheer inspiration"), is published in the form that he intended, complete with his companion essay, "Memories of My Grandmother."



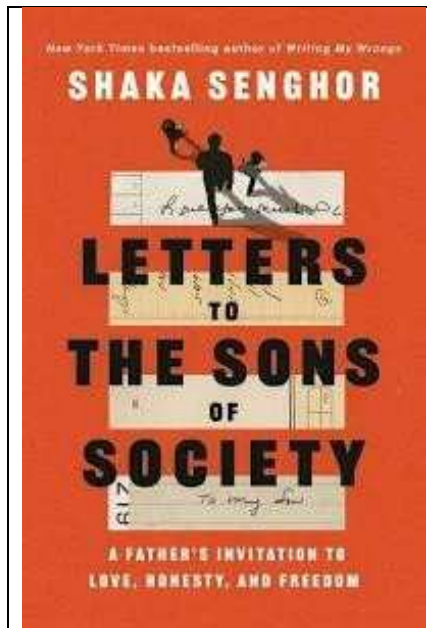
***My Darkest Prayer* by S.A. Cosby**

Whether it's working at his cousin's funeral home or tossing around the local riffraff at his favorite bar, Nathan Waymaker is a man who knows how to handle the bodies. A former marine and sheriff's deputy, Nathan has built a reputation in his small town as a man who can help when all other avenues have been exhausted. When a local minister is found dead, his parishioners ask Nathan to make sure the death isn't swept under the rug. What starts out as an easy payday soon descends into a maze of mayhem filled with wannabe gangsters, vicious crime lords, porn stars, crooked police officers, and a treacherous preacher and his mysterious wife. Nathan must use all his skills and some of his wit to navigate the murky waters of small town corruption even as secrets of his own threaten to come to the surface.



***Then She Was Gone* by Lisa Jewell**

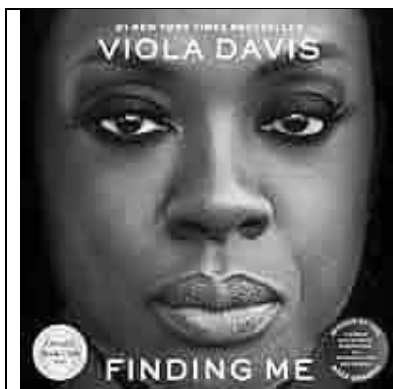
Fifteen-year-old Ellie Mack was the perfect daughter. Everyone loved her. She and her boyfriend made a teenage golden couple. She had her whole life ahead of her. And then she was gone. Now her mother, Laurel Mack, is trying to put her life back together. It's been 10 years since her daughter disappeared, seven since her marriage ended, and only months since the last clue in Ellie's case was unearthed. When she meets an unexpectedly charming man in a cafe, she is surprised at how quickly their flirtation develops into something deeper. Before she knows it, she's meeting Floyd's daughters - and his youngest, Poppy, takes her breath away. Looking at her is like looking at Ellie. And now the unanswered questions she has tried so hard to put to rest haunt her anew...



***Letters to the Sons of Society* by Shaka Senghor**

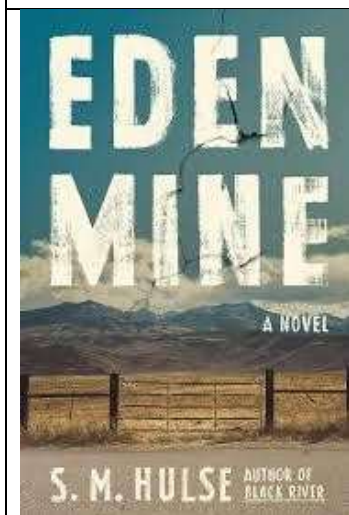
Shaka Senghor has lived the life of two fathers. With his first son, Jay, born just after Senghor was incarcerated for second-degree murder, he experienced the regret of his own mistakes and the disconnection caused by a society that sees Black lives as disposable. With his second, Sekou, born after Senghor's release, he has experienced healing, transformation, intimacy, and the possibilities of a world where men and boys can openly show one another affection, support, and love. In this collection of letters to Jay and Sekou, Senghor traces his journey as a Black man in America and unpacks the toxic and misguided messages about masculinity, mental health, love, and success that boys learn from an early age. He issues a passionate call to all fathers and sons—fathers who don't know how to show their sons love, sons who are navigating a fatherless world, boys who have been forced to grow up before their time—to rewrite the story that has been told about them.

Women's Book Club (18+) at the DC Jail



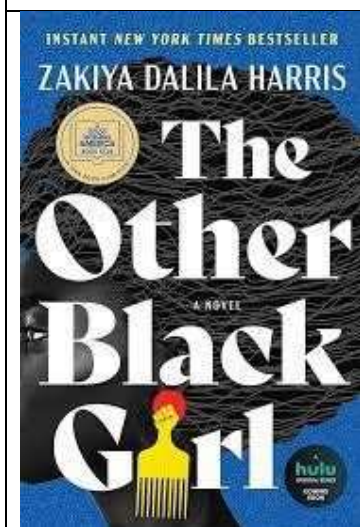
***Finding Me* by Viola Davis**

This is my story, from a crumbling apartment in Central Falls, Rhode Island, to the stage in New York City, and beyond. This is the path I took to finding my purpose but also my voice in a world that didn't always see me. I wrote this for anyone running through life untethered, desperate and clawing their way through murky memories, trying to get to some form of self-love. For anyone who needs reminding that a life worth living can only be born from radical honesty and the courage to shed facades and be . . . you. My hope is that my story will inspire you to light up your own life with creative expression and rediscover who you were before the world put a label on you.



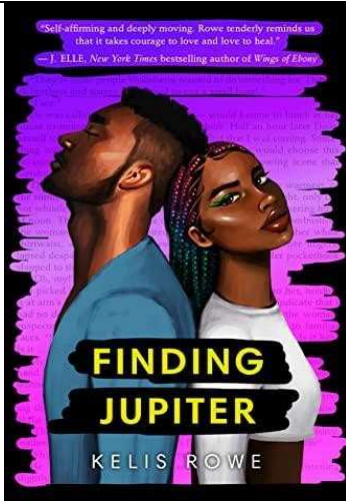
***Eden Mine* by S.M. Hulse**

For generations, the Fabers have lived near Eden Mine, scraping by on their family's land in Montana. Jo and her brother, Samuel, will be the last. Despite a long battle, their property has been seized by the state—something Samuel deems a government theft. As Jo packs, she hears news of a bombing and learns Samuel was last seen by a security camera near the courthouse—now a crime scene—in Elk Fork. And the nine-year-old daughter of a pastor at a nearby church lies in critical condition. Can the person Jo loves and trusts most have done this terrible thing? Can she have missed the signs? What secrets has he been keeping? As Jo watches the authorities hunt down a criminal, she wrestles with an impossible choice: Must she tell them where Samuel might be? Must she choose between loyalty and justice? Between the brother she knows and the man he has become?



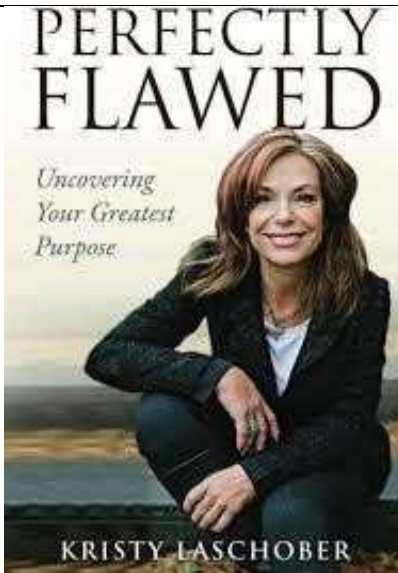
***The Other Black Girl* by Zakiya Dalila Harris**

Twenty-six-year-old editorial assistant Nella Rogers is tired of being the only Black employee at Wagner Books. Fed up with isolation and microaggressions, she's thrilled when Harlem-born and bred Hazel is hired. They've only just started comparing natural hair care regimens, though, when a string of uncomfortable events elevates Hazel to Office Darling, and Nella is left in the dust. Then the notes begin to appear on Nella's desk: LEAVE WAGNER. NOW. It's hard to believe Hazel is behind these hostile messages. But as Nella starts to spiral and obsess over the sinister forces at play, she soon realizes that there's a lot more at stake than just her career!



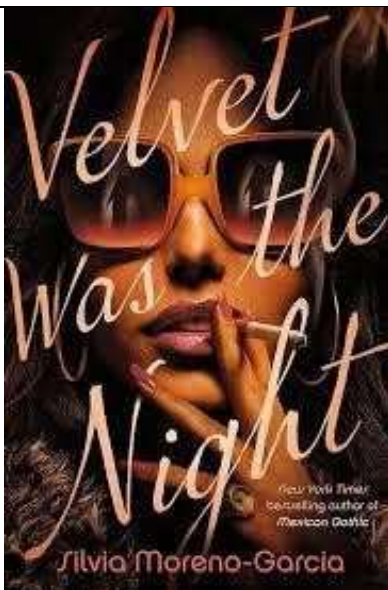
***Finding Jupiter* by Kelis Rowe**

Sparks fly when Orion and Ray meet for the first time at a roller rink in Memphis. But these star-crossed souls have a past filled with secrets that threaten to tear them apart before their love story even begins. Found poetry, grief, and fate collide in this powerful debut. This stunning novel captures young Black love and a decades-old family secret that may shatter a romance that feels written in the stars.



***Perfectly Flawed: Uncovering Your Greatest Purpose* by Kristy Laschober**

Kristy Laschober had a thriving business as a wardrobe stylist in Southern California. Born with a rare medical condition, she became addicted to opioids as a child. After nearly 10 years of sobriety and a failed marriage to a police officer, Kristy relapsed and eventually getting caught selling drugs to a priest and landing in prison. There she starts on the long journey to learn to love and value herself for the first time. *Perfectly Flawed* offers a raw, interactive reflective reading experience, revealing the complexity of the human spirit, in all its glory, pain and compassion. Both memoir and workbook, the book contains journaling prompts allowing the reader to travel on their own journey of acceptance and self-love.

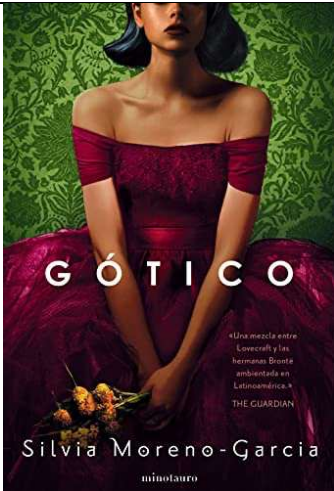


***Velvet Was the Night* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia**

Mexico in the 1970s is a dangerous country, even for Maite, a secretary who spends her life seeking the romance found in cheap comic books and ignoring the activists protesting around the city. When her next-door neighbor, the beautiful art student Leonora, disappears under suspicious circumstances, Maite finds herself searching for the missing woman—and journeying deeper into Leonora's secret life. Elvis, a goon with a passion for rock 'n' roll, knows more about kidney-smashing than intrigue. When Elvis is assigned to find Leonora, he begins a blood-soaked search for the woman—and his soul. In their swirling parallel search for Leonora, Maite and Elvis run into hitmen, government agents, and Russian spies.

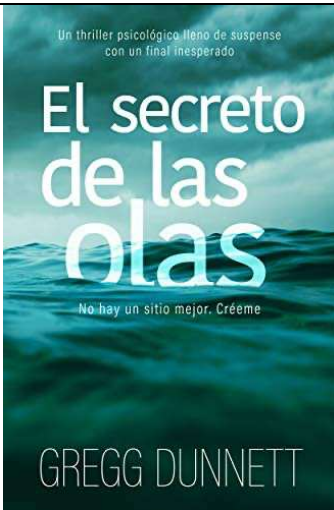
Mentes Libres (“Free Minds”) Spanish Language Book Club at the DC Jail

	<p><i>El prisionero del cielo</i> por Carlos Luis Zafón</p> <p>Barcelona, 1957. Daniel Sempere y su amigo Fermín, los héroes de La Sombra del Viento, regresan de nuevo a la aventura para afrontar el mayor desafío de sus vidas. Justo cuando todo empezaba a sonreírles, un inquietante personaje visita la librería de Sempere y amenaza con desvelar un terrible secreto que lleva enterrado más de dos décadas en la oscura memoria de la ciudad. Al conocer la verdad, Daniel comprenderá que su destino le arrastra irremediabilmente a enfrentarse con la mayor de las sombras: la que crece en su interior. Rebosante de intriga y emoción, <i>El Prisionero del Cielo</i> es una novela magistral donde los hilos de <i>La Sombra del Viento</i> y <i>El Juego del Ángel</i> convergen a través del embrujo de la literatura y el enigma que se oculta en el corazón del Cementerio de los Libros Olvidados.</p>
	<p><i>El dador</i> por Lois Lowry</p> <p>La comunidad donde vive Jonas es idílica. Es un mundo sin conflicto, sin desigualdad, sin desempleo, sin dolor... pero también sin elección. A los ciudadanos se les asigna una pareja y un trabajo. Nadie hace preguntas. Todo el mundo obedece. Excepto Jonas.</p> <p>Al cumplir doce años, es seleccionado para desempeñar un trabajo muy especial, y comienza a recibir lecciones de un misterioso anciano conocido como el Dador. Poco a poco, Jonas aprenderá que el verdadero poder reside en los sentimientos. Sin embargo, cuando debe salvar a alguien a quien ama, su propio poder es puesto a prueba.</p>
	<p><i>Donde somos humanos</i> por Reyna Grande y otros</p> <p>Durante este tiempo de inestabilidad política e incertidumbre, esta colección de ensayos, poesía y arte tiene como objetivo cambiar el imaginario colectivo de la nación sobre los migrantes y refugiados hacia uno arraigado en la humanidad y la justicia. Los escritores de esta antología cambiarán la percepción de sí mismos y de sus comunidades a través de la narración y el arte, para declarar en voz alta y con orgullo que, aquí y en todas partes, son humanos a pesar de la militarización fronteriza, la detención masiva y la legislación antiinmigrante draconiana. Aquí, hablan de su experiencia, no solo lidiando con su estado migratorio actual, sino en un reflejo matizado de su propia existencia antes de la migración y su hambre colectiva por un futuro sin fronteras.</p>



Gótico por Silvia Moreno-García

Tras recibir una extraña carta de su prima recién casada, Noemí Taboada se dirige a High Place, una casa en el campo en México, sin saber qué encontrará allí. Noemí no parece tener dotes de salvadora: es glamurosa, más acostumbrada a asistir a cócteles que a las tareas de detective. Pero también es fuerte, inteligente y no tiene miedo: ni del nuevo marido de su prima, un inglés amenazante y seductor; ni de su padre, el antiguo patriarca que parece fascinado por Noemí; ni de la casa, que empieza a invadir los sueños de Noemí con visiones de sangre y fatalidad. El único amigo que Noemí encontrará es el hijo menor de la familia, quien también da la impresión de estar tapando secretos oscuros. Porque hay muchos secretos escondidos en las paredes de High Place, como descubrirá Noemí cuando empiece a desenterrar historias de violencia y locura. Cautivada por este mundo aterrador a la par que seductor, a Noemí le resultará difícil salvar a su prima... O incluso escapar de esa enigmática casa.



El secreto de las olas por Greg Dunnnett

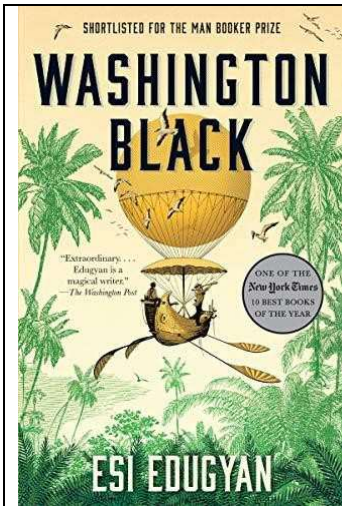
La vida de Natalie, una joven psicóloga, se desmorona cuando su marido Jim desaparece haciendo surf. Todo parece indicar que no ha sido más que un trágico accidente hasta que recibe una llamada telefónica que le hace sospechar lo contrario. A partir de ese momento, Natalie se embarca en una búsqueda de la verdad. Pero ¿va a revelar un secreto que puede acabar costándole la vida? Tras la trágica muerte de su padre, Jesse, un adolescente de trece años, se ve obligado a abandonar su adorada Australia y a empezar de nuevo en Gales. Allí conoce a John, un joven carismático con quien entabla una estrecha amistad, hasta que un accidente cambia sus vidas para siempre. Dos historias aparentemente desconectadas. Cómo se entrelazan te mantendrá leyendo hasta altas horas de la noche. Y su inesperado final te resultará asombroso.



Lágrimas en H-Mart por Michelle Zauner

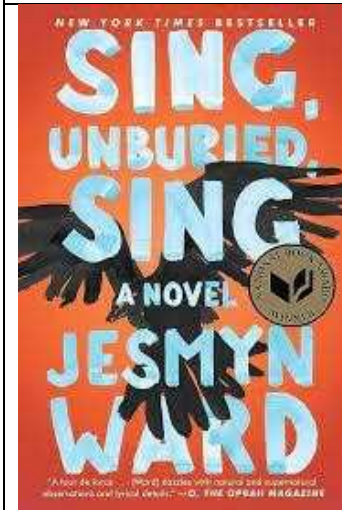
Desde que mi madre murió, lloro en H Mart. H Mart es una cadena de supermercados especializada en comida asiática. La H es por han ah reum, una frase en coreano que podría traducirse como 'un brazo lleno de comestibles'. Mi madre expresaba su amor por medio de la comida. Por muy crítica o cruel que pudiera parecer —no dejaba de presionarme para que colmara sus utópicas expectativas—, yo siempre sentía que su afecto irradiaba de los platos que me preparaba exactamente como a mí me gustaban. Y si bien apenas hablo coreano, cuando estoy en H Mart es como si lo dominara. Acaricio los productos y digo los nombres en voz alta: melón chamoe, danmuji. Recuerdo las chucherías que mi madre me contaba que comía cuando era niña y el empeño que ponía yo en intentar imaginarla a mi edad. Quería que me gustaran todas las cosas que le gustaban a ella, quería ser ella

Long Distance, Federal Prison Book Club



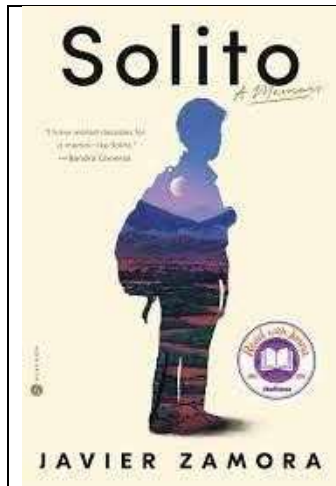
***Washington Black* by Esi Edugyan**

Eleven-year-old George Washington Black is enslaved on a Barbados sugar plantation and is initially terrified when he is chosen to be the manservant of the plantation master's brother. To his surprise, however, the eccentric Christopher Wilde turns out to be a naturalist, explorer, inventor, and abolitionist. When a man is killed and a bounty is placed on Wash's head, they abandon everything and flee together. Over the course of their travels, what brings Wash and Christopher together will tear them apart, propelling Wash ever farther across the globe in search of his true self. Spanning the Caribbean to the frozen Far North, London to Morocco, *Washington Black* is a story of self-invention and betrayal, of love and redemption, and of a world destroyed and made whole again.



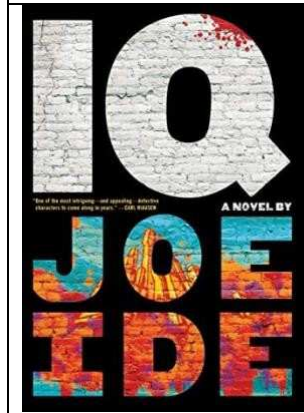
***Sing, Unburied, Sing* by Jesmyn Ward**

Jojo is thirteen years old and trying to understand what it means to be a man. He doesn't lack in fathers to study, chief among them his Black grandfather, Pop. But there are other men who complicate his understanding: his absent White father, Michael, who is being released from prison; his absent White grandfather, Big Joseph, who won't acknowledge his existence; and the memories of his dead uncle, Given, who died as a teenager. His mother, Leonie, is an inconsistent presence in his and his sister's lives. She wants to be a better mother but can't put her children above her own needs, especially her drug use. When the children's father is released from prison, Leonie packs her kids and a friend into her car and drives north to the heart of Mississippi and Parchman Farm, the State Penitentiary. At Parchman, there is another thirteen-year-old boy, the ghost of a dead inmate who carries all the ugly history of the South with him in his wandering. He too has something to teach Jojo about fathers and sons, about legacies, about violence, about love.



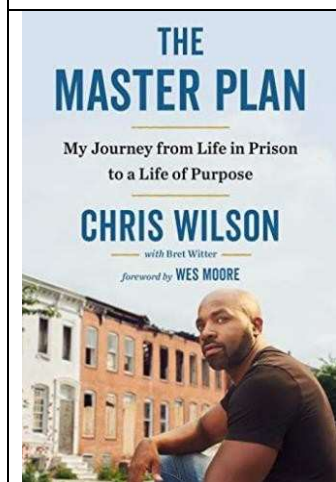
***Solito* by Javier Zamora**

Nine-year-old Javier Zamora’s *adventure* is a three-thousand-mile journey from his small town in El Salvador to the U.S. border. He will leave behind his beloved aunt and grandparents to reunite with a mother who left four years ago and a father he barely remembers. Traveling alone amid a group of strangers and a “coyote” hired to lead them to safety, Javier expects his trip to last two short weeks. He cannot foresee the perilous boat trips, relentless desert treks, pointed guns, arrests and deceptions that await him; nor can he know that those two weeks will expand into two life-altering months alongside fellow migrants who will come to encircle him like an unexpected family. *Solito* is Javier Zamora’s story, but it’s also the story of millions of others who had no choice but to leave home.



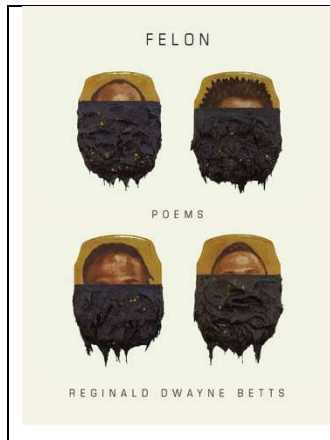
***IQ* by Joe Ide**

In East Long Beach, the police are struggling to keep up with the neighborhood’s high crime rate. IQ, a loner and high school dropout, has taken it upon himself to help solve cases the police won’t touch. He takes any client that can pay, whether through a set of tires or homemade casserole. Tasked to save a rap mogul whose life is in danger, he discovers a vengeful ex-wife, a vicious dog, and an unstable hitman. The deeper he digs, the more dangerous the case becomes.



***The Master Plan: My Journey from Life in Prison to a Life of Purpose* by Chris Wilson**

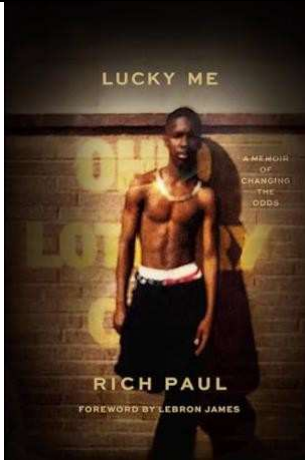
A DC native who grew up amidst violence and trauma, Wilson was 17 years old when he was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. While incarcerated, Wilson began a personal journey of growth and healing through reading, working out, learning new languages, and starting a business. At 19, he created a list of everything he wanted to accomplish and how he could do it, calling it his “Master Plan.” A roadmap for personal redemption, this memoir is a powerful demonstration of how everyone is capable of achieving great things.



***Felon: Poems* by Reginald Dwayne Betts**

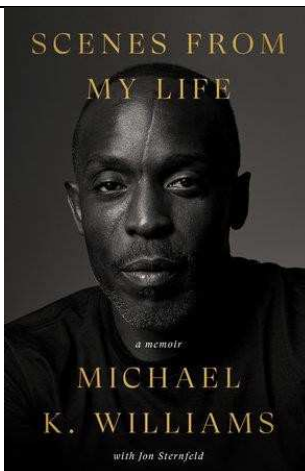
Felon is a glimpse into the effects of incarceration, written by long-time Free Minds friend, Reginald Dwayne Betts. It explores a variety of emotions and experiences, including domestic violence and drug abuse, being unhoused and unemployed, fatherhood and family obligations, and more.

Reentry Book Club (formerly incarcerated in the community)



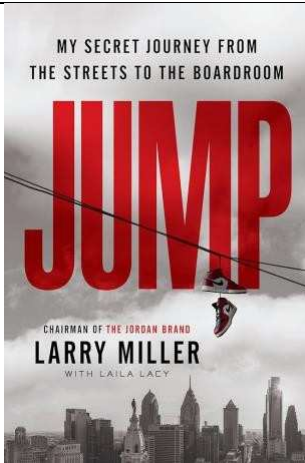
***Lucky Me: A Memoir of Beating the Odds* by Rich Paul**

There's a story about Rich Paul that everyone knows: A twenty-one-year-old kid from Cleveland who sells sports jerseys out of his car meets a high school basketball phenom named LeBron James at an airport—the two become friends and forge a decades-long partnership that reinvents the business of sports. That random meeting might seem like the lucky break that changed Paul's life. But a moment of good fortune means nothing without the struggle that gets you there. And the truth is, Paul had always been lucky. Rich Paul became a gambler at an early age. Shooting dice wasn't just a pastime; it was a way to earn money for his family as his mother struggled under the weight of drug addiction. He learned the secret science of dice in the same place he found all the lessons of his young life: the corner store his father operated, the center of the neighborhood's frantic action. Paul's father had another family but kept his son close working at the store. Paul dreamed of becoming a star athlete, but the streets were where he thrived, building a lucrative enterprise on shaky ground. When he found himself at a dangerous crossroads, he summoned the teachings of his past to create a different future. It's the inspiring story of the luck that's all around us, if we know where to look.



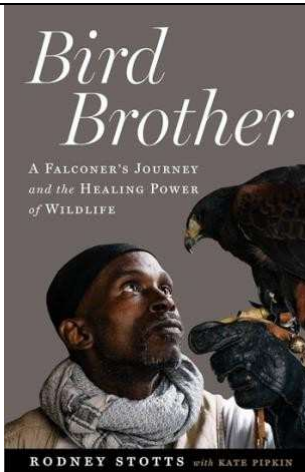
***Scenes From My Life: A Memoir* by Michael K. Williams**

When Michael K. Williams died on September 6, 2021, he left behind a career as one of the most electrifying actors of his generation. Williams inhabited a slew of indelible roles that he portrayed with a rawness and vulnerability that leapt off the screen. At the time of his death, Williams had nearly finished a memoir that tells the story of his past while looking to the future, a book that merges his life and his life's work. Mike, as his friends knew him, was so much more than an actor. In *Scenes from My Life*, he traces his life in whole, from his childhood in East Flatbush to his battles with addiction and the bar fight that left his face with his distinguishing scar. He was a committed activist who dedicated his life to working with social justice organizations and his community, especially in helping at-risk youth find their voice and carve out their future. Imbued with poignance and raw honesty, *Scenes from My Life* is the story of a performer who gave his all to everything he did—in his own voice, in his own words, as only he could.



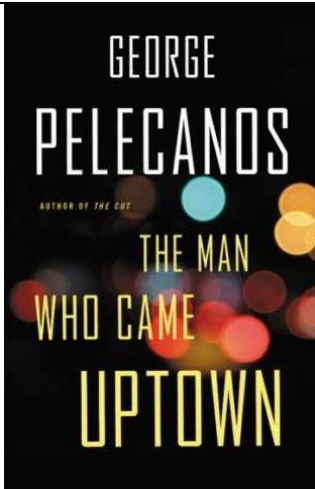
***Jump: My Secret Journey from the Streets to the Boardroom* by Larry Miller**

Jump tells Larry Miller's journey from the violent streets of West Philly in the 1960s to the highest echelons of American sports and industry. Miller wound up in jail more than once, especially as a teenager. But he immersed himself in the educational opportunities, eventually took advantage of a Pennsylvania state education-release program offered to incarcerated people, and was able to graduate with honors from Temple University. When revealing his past caused him to lose his first major job opportunity, Miller vowed to keep it a secret. He climbed the corporate ladder until Nike hired him to run its domestic apparel operations. Around the time of Michael Jordan's retirement, Larry Miller was named president of the newly formed Jordan Brand. More than a rags-to-riches story, *Jump* is also a passionate appeal for criminal justice reform and expanded educational opportunities for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people across the United States.



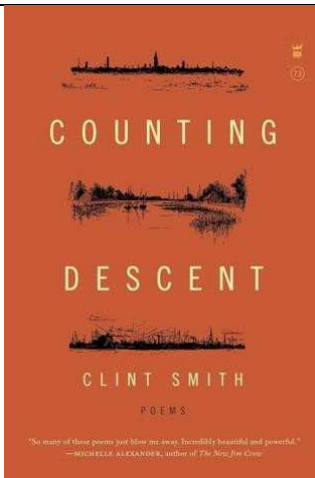
***Bird Brother: A Falconer's Journey and the Healing Power of Wildlife* by Rodney Stotts**

To escape the tough streets of Southeast Washington, D.C. in the late 1980s, young Rodney Stotts would ride the metro to the Smithsonian National Zoo. There, the bald eagles and other birds of prey captured his imagination. In *Bird Brother*, Rodney shares his journey to becoming a conservationist and one of America's few Black master falconers. Rodney's life was nearly upended when he was arrested on drug charges in 2002. The jail sentence sharpened his resolve to get out of the hustling life. With the fierceness of the raptors he had admired for so long, he began to train to become a master falconer and to develop his own raptor education program and sanctuary. Eye-opening, witty, and moving, *Bird Brother* is a love letter to the raptors and humans who transformed what Rodney thought his life could be. It is an unflinching look at the uphill battle Black children face in pursuing stable, fulfilling lives, a testament to the healing power of nature, and a reminder that no matter how much heartbreak we've endured, we still have the capacity to give back to our communities and follow our wildest dreams.



***The Man Who Came Uptown* by George Pelecanos**

Michael Hudson spends the long days in prison devouring books given to him by the prison's librarian, a young woman named Anna who develops a soft spot for her best student. Anna keeps passing Michael books until one day he disappears, suddenly released after a private detective manipulated a witness in Michael's trial. Outside, Michael encounters a Washington, D.C. that has changed a lot during his time locked up. Once shady storefronts are now trendy beer gardens and flower shops. But what hasn't changed is the hard choice between the temptation of crime and doing what's right. Trying to balance his new job, his love of reading, and the debt he owes to the man who got him released, Michael struggles to figure out his place in this new world before he loses control.



***Counting Descent: Poems* by Clint Smith**

Clint Smith's debut poetry collection is a coming of age story that seeks to complicate our conception of lineage and tradition. Smith explores the cognitive dissonance that results from belonging to a community that unapologetically celebrates Black humanity while living in a world that often renders Blackness a caricature of fear. His poems move fluidly across personal and political histories, all the while reflecting on the social construction of our lived experiences. Smith brings the reader on a powerful journey forcing us to reflect on all that we learn growing up, and all that we seek to unlearn moving forward.