

Reading 2022

A collection by title and date of my reading for the year. A few details in each entry, but more than anything, this is a simple chronological record. You will find previous years' lists and my "Watching" list for Films and TV in my [DayBook directory](#).

[Vivian Gornick can't stop rereading](#), NYT. | Gornick's new book is part memoiristic collage, part literary criticism, yet it is also an urgent argument that rereading offers the opportunity not just to correct and adjust one's recollection of a book but to correct and adjust one's perception of oneself.... It is one of the great ironies of consuming literature that as much as we read to expand our minds, we often take in only whatever it is that we are primed to absorb at a particular moment. Do not, Gornick says in this brief, incisive book, let that be the end of it. The book: **Unfinished Business: Notes of a Chronic Re-reader**. Similar story in [The New Yorker](#).

| [Pianist Mitsuko] Uchida, 74, is an artist who returns to the familiar, especially the works of Mozart, Schubert and Beethoven, as part of a lifelong argument for the benefits of repeated examination. "The great composers always change," she once said [in an interview](#). "And as you change, they change." [Link to recording in Apple Music](#). NYT review of [Uchida's Carnegie Hall concert](#) on Feb 24, 2023.



Favorites for rereading shelf, Nov 15, 2023. From left: *Catch-22* (Heller); *A Prayer for Owen Meany* and *Cider House Rules* (Irving); *Crossing to Safety* (Stegner); *True Grit* (Portis); *A Gentleman in Moscow* and *The Lincoln Highway* (Towles); *Team of Rivals* (Goodwin); *Lonesome Dove* (McMurtry); *All the King's Men* (Warren); *Prodigal Summer* (Kingsolver).

Salman Rushdie: "It is an interesting question to ask oneself: Which are the books that you truly love? Try it. The answer will tell you a lot about who you presently are." — [The Stories We Love Make Us Who We Are](#), NYT 052421

Here's my reading list for 2022:

1. *Home* (2008). Marilynne Robinson. Hardcover. Started 123121. Completed 010322.
2. *Lila* (2014). Paperback. Started 010422. Completed 011022.
3. *Jack* (2020). Hardcover. Started 011222. Completed 011622.
4. *On Animals* (2021), Susan Orlean. Hardcover. Started 011722. Completed 012422. Notes in Jan 2022 notebook. Margaret Renkl [review](#) in NYT.
5. *The Thousand Crimes of Ming Tsu* (2021), Tom Lin. Hardcover. Started 012622. Completed 012722. [NYT story](#). "I wanted to write a character who was unarguably American, whose belonging to the land was totally above question, and yet as he goes through the book, he's continuously confronted by a society that wants to other him and reduce him." [NYT review](#). "The question of death leads to the question of who will be remembered. It is the prophet who makes the connection between memory, the body and the land. "Remembrance is the burden of the

memory, the body and the land. Remembrance is the burden of the

body, not of the mind," he says, pointing to scars he can't remember how he got." Notes in Jan 2022 notebook.

6. Main Street, Sinclair Lewis. LoA hardcover. Started 013022. Completed 020922. Carol Milford and Will Kennicott. Gopher Prairie, MN. Bea Sorensen. Notes in Feb 2022 Notebook. [Robert Gottlieb essay in NYTBR](#). "Lewis himself was clear about his feelings for Gopher Prairie: He recognized it, he deplored it and he loved it." "Yes, this is a feminist story, but one with an inconclusive resolution: Soon enough, she's back to husband and Gopher Prairie, mortified, but with a growing appreciation of the decencies of its people and the wholesomeness of its life. And despite the humiliating setback, Carol plows on, more tactfully than before, perhaps, but indefatigable. Was she meant to be taken as a high-minded emissary of enlightenment or was she as much an object of Lewis's satire as Main Street itself? A century has gone by and we're still not sure." Gottlieb essay in NYTBR puts Babbitt at the top of the list of Lewis's work. The hero is a real estate expert and city booster in Zenith. It will be interesting to see how much George B is a fleshed out version of Jim Blausser.
7. Festival Days (2021), Jo Ann Beard. Hardcover. Started 020922. Completed 021322. Collection of essays. [WaPo review](#): "In a world increasingly lived online, there is a grounding comfort to Jo Ann Beard's refreshingly analog voice. This isn't to say her writing isn't relevant or that her language doesn't wow. Beard's power comes from phrasings and insights that aren't just screaming for likes. Few writers are so wise and self-effacing and emotionally honest all in one breath." Also, [The Essay That Made Jo Ann Beard Want to Write Nonfiction](#), NYT. See Author Notebook. "Featuring characters mostly drawn from life confronting illness, loss, violence and death, this exquisite collection of pieces defies classification, blending intuition and observation into something unaccountably yet undeniably real."
8. Young Men and Fire: A True Story of the Mann Gulch Fire (1992), Norman Maclean. Hardcover. Started 021422. Abandoned 021722 (p. 115). Recommended by Michael Lewis in his podcast. [Loving piece on author in The New Yorker](#), July 8&15, 2024 issue.
9. Lake Success (2018), Gary Shteyngart. Paperback. Started 021822. Abandoned 021922. It was amusing, but generally too light for me. Some of the plot and plodding rang true to experience. But the hero, Barry Cohen ("a man with \$2.4 billion of assets under management ..."), was part Reacher (without the violence or do-gooding), part Kerouac (out to see America), Bonfire of the Vanities (without Gecko). Seema and Shiva. "That other thing ..." "Shiva would be a permanent immigrant. His encounters with the world would always contain the unexpected. Even his young mother's love would need subtitles." (60) Timely, at times: Trump. Omar Little from The Wire. Sandy is his executive assistant.
10. Lunch at the Piccadilly (2003), Clyde Edgerton. Paperback. Started 022122. Completed 022222. ("Twos-day.") A jolly ride with characters ranging from Aunt Lil, L. Ray Flowers, Anna, a shoe fetishist, and Mr. Rhodes (Rosehaven's owner). Features/includes several songs, including "Safety Patrol."
11. Rhode Island Red (1997), [Charlotte Carter](#). Paperback. Started and completed 022322. Nanette Hayes Mystery Series. "Ask any Negro. They'll tell you: a woman does not play a saxophone. / Except for me. / Actually, I don't play sax. It's more like I noodle." (3) More notes in Feb 2022 Notebook.
12. Anxious People: A Novel (2019), Fredrik Blackman. Paperback. Started 022422. Open reminds me of the kind of absurdity in Catch-22 or Laurel and Hardy. Recommended (and loaned) by Kim. | The book is equal parts comedy, relationship drama and locked-room mystery — "It's not a murder or something gruesome" — in which a failed bank robber blunders into an open house and holds the attendees hostage. They're a motley crew; on the first page, Backman writes, "This is a book about a lot of things, but mostly about idiots." (From [NYT](#))
13. Autobiography of Mark Twain, Volume 1. The Complete and

- Authoritative Edition. Hardcover. Started 022822. Edited by Harriet Elinor Smith.
14. The Mark Twain Anthology: Great Writers on His Life and Works. Hardcover. Started 030122. Edited by Shelley Fisher Fiskin.
 15. Innocents Abroad, LoA edition. Started 030522. Completed 032222.
 16. Life on the Mississippi, LoA edition. Started 032522.
 17. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, LoA edition, Mississippi Writings. Started 032822. Completed 040322.
 18. Premonition: A Pandemic Story, Michael Lewis. Kindle. Rereading after listening to Lewis and Kara Swisher in Sway interview. Started 040422. Completed 041122.
 19. The Godfather, Mario Puzo. 1969. Hardcover. Started 041622. Completed 041922. Anticipating watching the film in this the 50th anniversary year. Book 2 is not in the film. Johnny Fontane in Hollywood with Nino. Book 3 is the background for Vito Corleone. Book 4 ends with Sonny's murder. Book 5 is a kind of interlude after the big Saturday meeting among the Dons. We meet Dr. Jules and revisit with Lucy Mancini, then Johnny Fontane. Book 6 is Michael in Sicily, culminating with Appolonia's death. Book 7 closes with Don Corleone's heart attack and death. Book 8 brings revenge.
 20. A River Runs Through It and Other Stories, [Norman Maclean](#). Paperback. Started 042022. Completed 042122.
 21. Freezing Order: A True Story of Money Laundering, Murder, and Surviving in Vladimir Putin's Wrath, Bill Browder. 2022. Hardcover. TEDx [talk](#) from 2018. Started 042222. Completed 042522. Follow-up to Red Notice, which I read in 2017. Putin ... how can he survive this? Follow-up: [Another American in Russia](#).
 22. Born Standing Up: A Comic's Life. Steve Martin. Paperback. Started 042622. Completed 042722. A memoir, mostly serious, but occasionally witty. I enjoyed it, especially where Steve Martin breaks down the change in his approach from punch lines (rim shot!) to something less predictable, more immersive.
 23. The Next Century, David Halberstam (1991). Hardcover. Started 042722. A slim volume, essay-like. I picked it off the shelf to remind myself (1) of Halberstam's style, which I always admired, and (2) of his vision and how things look now some 30 years later. Completed 042822. Notes in Halberstam notebook.
 24. Shadow Country, Peter Matthiessen. Hardcover. Started 043022. See [NYT review from 2008](#). Also mentioned in NYT multimedia article: "Six Days Afloat in the Everglades." Completed Book 2 on 052322. This was the historian's story, L. Watson Collins, aka, Lucius Watson. From NYT review: "By reducing his Watson materials to one volume, Matthiessen has sacrificed qualities that gave those novels their powerful reinforcing illusions of authenticity and artlessness. Book I still has that Ten Thousand Islands quality, but "Shadow Country" as a whole is like the Tamiami Trail that crosses the Everglades. It offers a quicker and easier passage through the swamp, but fewer shades and shadows."
 25. The Cider House Rules (1985), John Irving. Hardcover. A reread brought on during the last days (?) of Roe v. Wade and legal abortion on a national level. Started 052622. Completed 060222.
 26. Something Happened (1974), Joseph Heller. Hardcover. Started 060322. After about 1/3, I wonder if I can continue. Seem to recall, however, that it gets better, so I'll soldier on a bit more ... completed 060922. Vonnegut in NYT review: "We keep reading this overly long book, even though there is no rise and fall in passion and language, because it is structured as a suspense novel. The puzzle which seduces us is this one: Which of several possible tragedies will result from so much unhappiness? The author picks a good one."
 27. The Children (1998), David Halberstam. Hardcover. Started 061122; completed 062722. A few notes in Halberstam notebook.
 28. River of the Gods: Genius, Courage, and Betrayal in the Search for the Source of the Nile (2022), Candice Millard. Started 062722.
 29. Cloud Cuckoo Land (2021), Anthony Doerr. Started 063022. Completed 070522. "The siege will begin any day now, the scholars say, and the weapon that they pull will secure victory, click the wheels of fate in their

- favor. Because of their efforts, taking the city will be easier than peeling an egg. Easier than lifting a single hair from a cup of milk." (235) "We leave our bodies behind in this world so that we may take flight into the next." (380) Completed 070622. From NPR review: "The book is a puzzle. The greatest joy in it comes from watching the pieces snap into place. It is an epic of the quietest kind, whispering across 600 years in a voice no louder than a librarian's. It is a book about books, a story about stories. It is tragedy and comedy and myth and fable and a warning and a comfort all at the same time. It says, *Life is hard. Everyone believes the world is ending all the time. But so far, all of them have been wrong.*" [NYT review](#).
30. The Whistler (2016), John Grisham. Kindle. Started 070822. Completed 071022.
 31. The Judge's List (2021), John Grisham. Kindle. Started 071122. Completed 071722.
 32. The Code Breaker, Walter Isaacson. Kindle. Started and stopped on 071822. Couldn't fight my way through the science.
 33. Frozen In Time: An Epic Story of Survival and a Modern Quest for Lost Heroes of World War II, Mitchell Zuckoff. Paperback. Started 071922. From Roger Privette.
 34. A Prayer for Owen Meany, John Irving. Hardcover. Started rereading for the nth time on 073022. Completed 080622. Notes in John Irving notebook.
 35. The Overstory (2018), Richard Powers. Reread via Kim's paperback. Started 080822. Completed 081622. Last read at end of 2020 (Kindle). The Brinkmans and their books. (208) [Kindle notes](#).
 36. The Headmaster: Frank L. Boyden of Deerfield by John McPhee (1966). Kindle. Started and completed 081822.
 37. A Sense of Where You Are: Bill Bradley at Princeton by John McPhee. Kindle. Started 081922. Completed 082122.
 38. Levels of the Game (1) by John McPhee. Reread in The New Yorker. Started 082122. Completed 082722.
 39. Essays: 1969-1990, Wendell Berry. Library of America 2-volume set: What I Stand On. Read "The Unsettling of America" on 082922.
 40. [Silent Spring & Other Writings of the Environment](#), Rachel Carson. Library of America. Started 090322. Completed 090922.
 41. Crossing to Safety, Wallace Stegner. Kindle. First read in June 2020. Decided to revisit and started 091022. Completed 091822. Ch 5 Sid meets Aunt Emily. Part 1 introduces the players. Part 2 brings them together and near the end, tells us of the Women's ailments. Part 3 ... [Kindle notes](#).
 42. Mr. Lincoln's Army, v1 of [The Army of the Potomac Trilogy](#). (1951) Bruce Catton. LofA. Completed 111122. From LoA: *Mr. Lincoln's Army* (1951) tells the story of the Army of the Potomac's formation under the command of the gifted yet deeply insecure George McClellan and how his conflicts with President Lincoln over military operations and political policy became irreconcilable. The narrative covers the Peninsula Campaign and Second Bull Run, culminating in a brilliant account of Antietam.
 43. Demon Copperhead, Barbara Kingsolver. 2022. Hardcover. Started 111122. Completed 112222.
 44. Lessons in Chemistry, Bonnie Garmus. 2022. Hardcover. Started 112322. Completed 112722.
 45. Cry Me a River, T.R. Pearson. 1993. Rereading. Paperback. Started 113022. Completed 120422. Google Books: | [In] his sixth novel, Pearson writes of murder and its consequences in a small Southern town. When an officer of the law is brutally slain, a fellow cop - one with a particular sensitivity to the darker corners of the human heart - sets out to solve the crime, not at first suspecting that, in his words, "we were after all, under the surface of things, a community of passionate people who sometimes slaughtered each other for love."
 46. Kindred, Octavia Butler. 1979. LofA volume. Started 120422. Completed 120722.
 47. Slow Horses, Mick Herron. Completed 121022. [Kindle notes](#). Jill Lepore: | Le Carré wrote about Moscow rules; Herron added London rules. Moscow rules: watch your back. London rules: cover your ass. The

Slough House books are haunted by the Cold War. Lamb is a service legend; at some point, he went undercover in Berlin, and there are veiled hints that he was captured and tortured by the Stasi. He has a mysterious history with the whip-smart Molly Doran, M.I.5's archivist, who's in a wheelchair: her legs got blown off. Lamb, differently damaged, came home, Herron writes, "in that blissful break when the world seemed a safer place, between the end of the Cold War and about ten minutes later."

48. *Glory Road: The Bloody Route from Fredericksburg to Gettysburg*, v2 of [The Army of the Potomac Trilogy](#). (1952) Bruce Catton. LofA. Completed 122222. "Hooker — was Hooker; strange mixture of the conniver and the sincere patriot." (402) Then Burnside. Then Meade. "In the month of March (1863), accordingly, the country went over to this new system of recruitment, which embodied, all in all, one of the most revolutionary changes ever made in the American form of government, since it permanently reduced the role of the states in the American political picture. State sovereignty, South, had fired cannon at Fort Sumter, leading to a great deal of this and that along the border. Now it was state sovereignty, North, which was coming under the guns." (515) "Looking down a lengthy Adams nose through cold Bostonian eyes, Charles Francis Adams wrote ... that Hooker's tent was a place to which no gentleman cared to go and to which no lady could go." (529) "There it was, for the last time in this war, perhaps for the last time anywhere, the grand pageantry and color of war in the old style, beautiful and majestic and terrible; fighting men lined up for a mile and a half from flank to flank, slashed red flags overhead, soldiers marching forward elbow to elbow, officers with drawn swords, sunlight gleaming from thousands of musket barrels, lines dressed as if for parade. Up and down the Federal firing line ran a low murmur: 'There they are.... There comes the infantry!'" (703) "This war could be won, once and forever, between Pennsylvania and the Potomac River, in this month of July, 1863, if someone really set out to win it." (718) Gettysburg ceremony set for 19 November. "An oration was an oration in those days, and it had to have a certain style to it — classical allusions, a leisurely approach to the subject matter, a carefully phrased recital of the background and history of the occasion, the role working up to a peroration which would sum everything up in memorable sentences. Mr. Everett was a master of this art form ..." (726). "It had seemed once that there was some compelling reason to bring these men here — something so broad that it would encompass all of the terrible contradictory manifestations of the country's pain and bewilderment, the riots and the lynchings, the hysterical conspiracies with their oaths written in blood, the hard hand that had been laid upon the countryside, the scramble for riches and the scheming for high place, and the burdens carried by quiet folk who wanted only to live at peace by the faith they used to have." (727) From LoA: | *Glory Road* (1952) follows the Army of the Potomac from the nightmarish slaughter at Fredericksburg through the squandered opportunity for victory at Chancellorsville to the epic struggle at Gettysburg, where three days of deadly battle would give President Lincoln the chance to speak "so that the dry bones of the country's dreams could take on flesh."
49. *Horse*, Geraldine Brooks. Started 122222. Hardcover. Completed 122922. Legacy story of a legendary horse, Daeley/Lexington, and how his racing, his sire-ing, painting, groomsman and trainer ... how all come together to include slavery, Reconstruction, racism, and violence to the present day. Theo, Jess. Henry and Jarret. Troye and Thomas Scott. Ten Broeck — even [Quantrill's Raiders](#). | Catherine stepped up to the exhibit label on the plinth and drew out her reading glasses. "Horse!" she read. "I can't believe it! I don't suppose you people have the *Mona Lisa* stashed somewhere, labeled *Smiling Girl!*?" (70) | It had seemed to him an evil fate, a geographical accident, that had forced them to take up arms in what was, to him, a war to secure the rich man's wealth. Beyond what was strictly required for their care, he should talk to them, to better know their minds. But after a time, he had stopped seeking such dialogue. They were, all of them, lost to a narrative untethered to

anything he recognized as true. Their mad conception of Mr. Lincoln as some kind of cloven-hoofed devil's scion, their complete disregard — denial — of the humanity of the enslaved, their fabulous notions of what evils the Federal government intended for them should their cause fail — all of it was ingrained so deep, beyond the reach of reasonable dialogue or evidence. (337) [A real-life horse whisperer. NYT story from 2024.](#)

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