

## Quiet Pursuit: What we're reading.

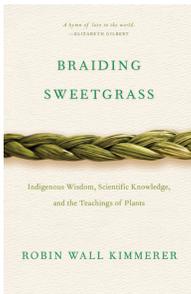
The cold months ahead call for quiet contemplation--a deliberate effort to self-examine--as we retreat indoors. And the practice of introspection and daily reading, though we understand can be daunting in the digital age, is a healthier alternative to late-night doomscrolling and provides the much-needed relief and distraction during these tumultuous times. Here, a reading list of the best books we found solace in, books that have helped pave a pathway to inner peace for our writers and editors: to feel, self-reflect, and experience the world outside our walls of quarantine. We hope they do the same for you.



### Bluets *Maggie Nelson*

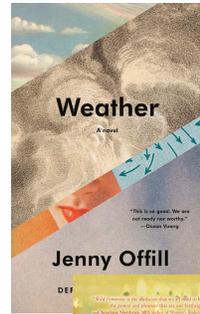
At the beginning of quarantine, when time became elastic and the days unspooled unceremoniously, I could not read. I could not do much of anything, except stare at the endless scroll of Twitter and take meandering walks through the patchwork hills above my house. Fearing for my attention span, I reread Bluets, Maggie Nelson's slim yet sprawling excavation of loneliness, loss, love and desire, all woven together within the lucid lens of the color blue.

Intertwining philosophy, theory, and autobiography, her kaleidoscopic prose poems never fail to kickstart my mind, staggering me with their strange, stark, visceral wonder. They plunge into unanswerable questions, sink deep and shamelessly into the pain and pleasure of womanhood. It's the kind of book that evolves alongside you. Every time you finish it, you emerge dazed and different, and a little less alone. *Alison Greene*



### Braiding Sweetgrass *Robin Wall Kimmerer*

Kimmerer, a botanist and member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, weaves personal memoir with her knowledge of the natural world, history, motherhood and indigenous tradition. She gives equal voice to people as she does to flora and fauna, recognizing the essence that connects all life forms. Kimmerer's voice is compassionate and empathetic. Her lyrical style dances on the page. This book is a balm for these turbulent days; a treasure to be savored, one heartfelt essay at a time. *Lindsay Comstock*

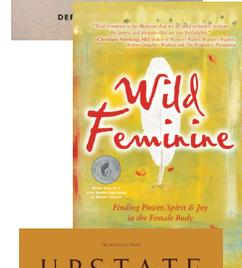


### Weather *Jenny O'fills*

I love reading fiction that takes place in current times. Weather is a darkly humorous take on climate change, technology-overload, Brooklyn as a brand, and the peculiarities of family dynamics narrated through the perspective of a sardonic librarian named Lizzie, a failed academic who is deeply self-aware that she has yet to meet her potential. Jenny O'fills writes prose in a unique and fragmented style that's both a language of her own and completely relatable. Her observations of human behavior are told in a way that makes you nod in recognition and relief that there's someone out there who just gets it. *Jillian Scheinfeld*

### Wild Feminine: Finding Power, Spirit & Joy in the Female Body *Tami Lynn Kent*

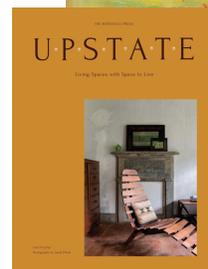
I was introduced to this book by a girlfriend at the start of my pregnancy, and I only wish I'd known about it sooner. In a world where we are undereducated about our bodies, Kent's knowledge of the female body is enlightening, and her words profound. I find myself returning to it again and again, each time connecting to something new. Pregnant or not, it will leave you feeling inimitably empowered in your own skin—a gift we all so deserve. *Alexandria Haechler*



### Upstate: Living Spaces with Space to Live

#### *Lisa Przystup*

Much of Writer Lisa Przystup's work is informed by her strong design background—her aesthetic: simple and subtle, rustic yet refined. Her keen sensibility would find its way in her latest work, a gorgeous coffee book aptly named, Upstate, which features the private spaces of some of the most inspiring creatives in the upstate community. But Przystup's approach in uncovering the way people live isn't arbitrary. She's chosen to focus on upstate homes of those with whom she shares a personal connection. To Przystup, Upstate isn't just a collection of pretty houses and pretty objects; it's a celebration of the sacred spaces we call home, which, during these times, is so important. *Laura Ferrara*



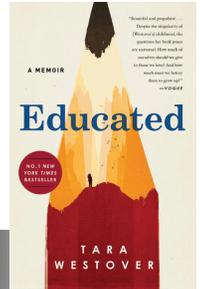
Upstate Woman

### Educated *Tara Westover*

In Educated, the protagonist grows up in a survivalist Mormon family in Idaho's mountains, deprived of any education and is a victim to violence at home. She escapes her family trauma to study at Cambridge and then Harvard. This book is a true testament to overcoming the limitations of our sex outside of our own control. It reminded me that anything is possible for women despite the fact that we have been oppressed in different ways for so long. Educated gave me so much life and hope at a challenging time in my own life and reminded me of the unstoppable force and strength of strong women. *Kate Atkinson*

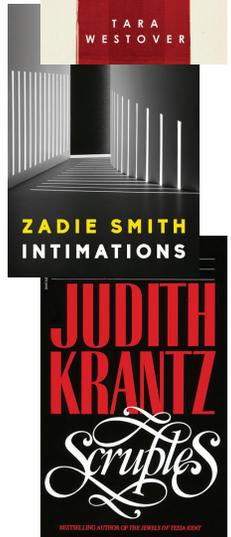
### Intimations *Zadie Smith*

I often yearned for female conversations outside my own household during quarantine. I yearned to be in the company of good friends, discussing deeply, the distressing state of our world and how things ought to be. That moment of consolation came in the form of a book. In reading Intimations, a compilation of short stories by Zadie Smith, it seemed as if I were comforted by a close confidante during isolation. Her razor sharp and powerfully feminine take on why things are the way they are in our post-pandemic world gave me clarity in an otherwise confusing time. She does more than call attention to what we may all be going through; she offers a road map of how we should move forward, with love and compassion. *Nhi Mundy*



### Scruples *Judith Krantz*

As a teenager in the Hudson Valley in the 90s, Krantz was my first education on intricate social constructs, lesbian sex, and women's political and sexual freedom. Her exhaustive, Ken Burns-worthy research was a crash course in luxury commerce, real estate development, interiors, the great fashion houses, the hospitality and culinary industries, and how to handle myself should I land anywhere from Marbella to Bel Air. Her first book, Scruples, published when she was 50, was No. 1 on the New York Times Best Seller List in 1978. I read it cover to cover every time I need a palate cleanse. *Janet Marcel*



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