



New Fiction for the New Year: Book Recommendations from Where the Sidewalk Ends

by Caitlin Doggart



After avid readers have gorged themselves on the hot holiday season titles of Laura Hillenbrand's **Unbroken** and Mark Twain's **Autobiography**, the cold months of the New Year provide a great opportunity for indulging in new fiction titles.

Just as the Christmas wish lists were dominated by non-fiction this year in our bookstore, heavy strains of history, art, science, and real-life characters resurrected from ancillary historical roles run throughout most of the titles chosen here. Each book outlined here is thought-provoking and entertaining and reason enough on its own to look forward to 2011!

JANUARY FICTION

[Left Neglected](#)



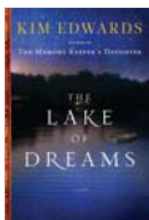
by Lisa Genova

The bestselling author of **Still Alice**, Cape Cod resident Lisa Genova has written a new novel which was chosen by independent booksellers across the U.S. as the #1 book being published in January! Lisa's engaging writing style draws readers in quickly, and her second book is just as compelling for discussion as her immensely successful debut.

Left Neglected tells the story of Sarah Nickerson, a busy executive and mother of three living in the suburbs of Boston, who is distracted by her cell phone during her morning commute. The resulting crash has devastating consequences for the overachieving woman.

With touches of humor combined with a deep understanding of a debilitating neurological disorder rendered accessible to the average reader, Lisa Genova's book will touch a wide variety of readers. Harried 30-somethings juggling children and a career will connect with Sarah's pre-accident life. Sarah's changing relationship with her husband and her mother make her a true-to-life character, and her concerns about her child's emerging ADHD will resonate with many parents.

[The Lake of Dreams](#)



by Kim Edwards

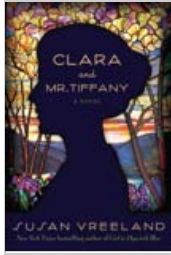
Kim Edwards, the author of the bestselling **The Memory Keeper's Daughter**, has a new compelling drama set in the Finger

Lakes region in upstate New York.

The worldly, intelligent protagonist, Lucy Jarrett, returns home from her hydrology career in Asia and finds her mother contemplating the sale of their centuries-old family home. When Lucy uncovers a packet of letters hidden long ago, it sets her on a course of discovery of family secrets buried long before her father's death ten years prior, and affecting the lives of both those who had passed away and those still living. Lucy's visit home is further complicated by her resurging feelings for her teenage love, now a successful glass artist and preservationist.

Edwards deftly intertwines art history with suffragette narratives, a family drama, and the emotional complexity of a young woman confronting her past in this absorbing tale.

[Clara and Mr. Tiffany](#)



by Susan Vreeland

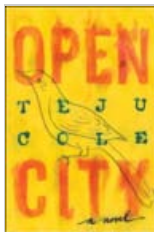
A 2006 exhibit by the New-York Historical Society, "[A New Light on Tiffany: Clara Driscoll and the Tiffany Girls](#)" sparked Susan Vreeland's creative impulses. The result is her well-researched historical novel on the role of Clara Driscoll in the artistic, financial, and scientific development of Tiffany lampshades.

Clara Driscoll (1861-1944) was the head of Tiffany Studios' women's glass cutting department in New York City at the turn of the century. At the time, women were excluded from unions, and strict policies excluded them from Tiffany's work force once they married.

Timely, atmospheric details pervade the novel: bicycle riding in hats tied under the chin, celebrations of the five boroughs becoming one city, and early references to now-famous landmarks. Vreeland deftly captures both the atmosphere of the artistic world and the difficulties of women in the work force in this absorbing tale.

FEBRUARY FICTION

[Open City](#)



by Teju Cole

Exceptional literary talent surges through Teju Cole's debut novel, **Open City**. The illuminating beauty and the exquisite specificity of the language Teju Cole uses to portray his main character's interior monologue will quickly seduce readers of this unusual novel.

As Julius, a German-Nigerian psychology student wanders the streets of New York City and Brussels, his own stories brush with those of people he encounters. Julius is a voluble, yet mysterious character: socially disengaged, yet inspiring frank discussions with strangers; brilliant and opinionated on others, but unable to see himself clearly. The reader is privileged to be exposed to his inner monologue, and still see his alienation and vulnerability.

As the story progresses, the reader uncovers his past in powerful, truncated descriptions. This reviewer wanted to savor every sentence, read and reread passages, and read them aloud to anyone nearby. Teju Cole has a truly remarkable talent.

[The Paris Wife](#)



by Paula McLain

Hadley Hemingway was the wife of Ernest Hemingway during his "Paris years," from 1921 to 1926. Their relationship is vividly portrayed in Paula McLain's fictionalized biography, **The Paris Wife**.

We learn with great intimacy the emotional framework of 28-year-old Hadley when she met the much younger and not-yet-published Ernest at a party in Chicago. Shortly thereafter they married and moved to Paris, using her small inheritance, he could devote himself to his writing career.

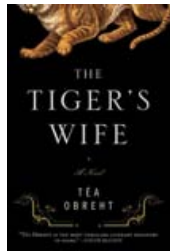
The Paris Wife is a fascinating opportunity for lovers of literature to see an imaginative version of what it was like to accompany Hemingway to Pamplona, Spain for the running of the bulls, the inspiration for his novel **The Sun Also Rises**, and to watch as F. Scott Fitzgerald and his wife Zelda engage in the wild antics of the "modern" life.

McLain slowly reveals Hadley's vertiginous realization of her collapsing marriage. Readers will grieve with the woman who met Ernest Hemingway as a fresh-faced young man brimming with a passion to write, who helped him deal with the rejection letters, and his initial insecurities in connecting with the influential crowd surrounding Ezra Pound and Gertrude Stein in Paris.

Hemingway goes on to become a larger-than-life literary figure, but his "Paris wife" was instrumental in his writing career, and remained his true love throughout his life.

MARCH FICTION

[The Tiger's Wife](#)



by Tea Obreht

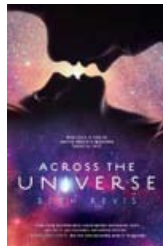
New Yorker magazine named Tea Obrecht one of the 20 best American writers under the age of 40. Born in the former Yugoslavia, she's lived in the U.S. since age 12. **The Tiger's Wife** is her exceptional first novel, told from the perspective of Natalia, a young woman who grew up in an Eastern European city with her mother and grandparents.

The narrative circles around Natalia's recounting of two separate stories told to her by her grandfather as she grew up, which weave tighter and tighter as the book progresses: that of the "deathless man" and that of "the tiger's wife."

Obreht draws the reader in with her mystical descriptions and gives a fascinating history of the Balkans without relying on specific names or groups. She exposes the root of adult fear and recrimination, teenage angst, and conflicted sentiments about flouting fate.

The story delves into what seem like mystical folk tales of the area, but they extrapolate into stories with contemporary power. Obreht gives the reader a perfect pace, with what seem like anecdotes or background character descriptions strengthening into fully captivating tales of their own. Her talent is extraordinary and **The Tiger's Wife** is a pleasure to read.

[Across the Universe](#)



by Beth Revis

Fans of Young Adult fiction who embraced the Twilight Saga and The Hunger Games trilogy can eagerly look forward to the March release of [Across the Universe](#), a futuristic sci fi romance that is the first of a trilogy. Penguin put the first chapter online as a teaser and the response among booksellers was explosively enthusiastic, voting it onto the list of Best Teen Books for Winter 2011 on the IndieNext List.

Amy is the teenage daughter of an American geneticist and military specialist couple, and as such is given the opportunity to accompany her parents as cryogenically-frozen passengers on board the spaceship Godspeed, bound to colonize a new planet 300 years in the future.

She's awakened 50 years too early, in an attempted murder. She must navigate the new society in which she lives, and her emotional attraction to the future onboard leader, Elder, while trying to protect her frozen parents from whomever is murdering the frozen passengers.

An addictive, fast and imaginative read, **Across the Universe** pulls in thought-provoking concepts wrapped in a teenage drama.

Caitlin Doggart worked for both a literary agency and a NYC publishing company before earning a Master's Degree in English Literature from Columbia University.

She opened [Where the Sidewalk Ends Bookstore](#) in Chatham with her mother Joanne in May of 2005, and has enjoyed matching books and readers ever since.

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