

RTC LIBRARY E-NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2020

Welcome to the MARCH 2020 issue of *RTC LIBRARY E-NEWSLETTER*

In this issue: Recommended Reads: *The God of Small Things*, *How to Write an Autobiographic Novel*, *Revenge*, *The Art of Being Normal*, *Notes from Underground*.

Recommended Reads from the RTC community

The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy

This is a novel about how the very things that bind us—love, family, lust, political ideology, religion, nationality, ethnicity, caste—can simultaneously divide and destroy us. At the heart of the story are two young fraternal twins and a major tragedy (and a few small ones) that transform their lives. Roy’s narrative vacillates between the time leading up to the misfortune (when Rahel and Esthappen were just young children) and their reunion years afterward as adults. Her language is captivating; her sentiments, hauntingly beautiful. While the novel’s narrative structure is extraordinary—and Roy’s use of foreshadowing, suspense, and repetition are artful—at times I also just wanted to wrap myself up and live forever in a single phrase or sentence. Roy crafts language and stories in unforgettable ways that will long stay with me

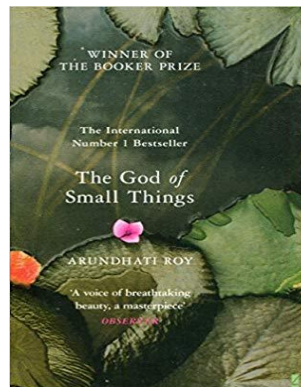
Thank You

Dana M. Polanichka, Ph.D.

Social Sciences

Professor (Part-time)

Location: FIC 823 ROY



How to Write an Autobiographic Novel. Essays by Alexander Chee

“I was by now used to people being surprised by me and my background, and their surprise offended me. I was always having to be what I was looking for in the world, wishing that the person I would become already existed- some other I before me. I was forever finding even the tiniest way to identify with someone to escape how empty the world seemed to be of what I was.”

The word I use most often when describing a collections of essays (or even short stories), even by a beloved or brilliant writer, is “uneven.” Inevitable there will be some pieces that miss the mark, that don’t live up to the promise of the better pieces in the collection and others that read like they belong in better company. This collection of mostly autobiographical essays by the American writer Alexander Chee, on the other hand, is uniformly remarkable. The writing on a sentence by sentence level is beautiful, there is no other way to describe it. Frequently there are these unexpected but perfect inflections that land almost viscerally, you feel them in your gut. The essays themselves explore a wide range of topics from sexuality and family history to class and race, to writing (as a career choice) and growing roses, to writing advice and tarot reading. They are unsparingly honest and self-aware. They feel personal and raw, like the kind of whispered secrets that cement lifelong friendships. Cheesy as it sounds, the thing I love the most about autobiographical essays, particularly a set like this that span the career (so far- I hope there is much more writing to come) of a writer, is that you finish it with a feeling that you don’t just *know about* the author but that you now *know* the author. Of course the intimacy of a personal essay is a literary device, the heartfelt confessions and shared secrets are carefully curated and edited but in the hand of a master, like Chee, there is such a satisfying sense of real connection.

Thank You
Dr. Dolma Choden Roder
Associate Professor
Social Sciences

Revenge by Yoko Ogawa (translator: Stephen Snyder)

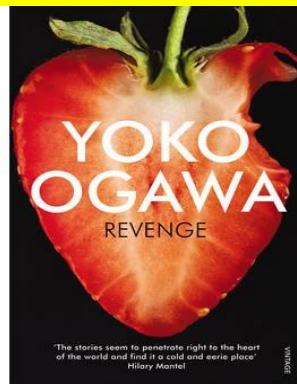
The book starts off as a series of seemingly unconnected short stories, but as you read on, elements, settings, and characters from previous ones start popping up in others, more often than not in startling fashion. It's like the proverbial serpent finally let go of its tail only to start snapping viciously at different parts of its body.

The writing is simple and elegant, which is somehow perfect for the dark and often bizarre, even macabre, material. I couldn't help feeling a sense of coiled sexuality hanging over the whole thing, even though there is very little mention of actual sex.

At a little over 150 pages, it's a great one-sitting read to grab if your Sunday gets a little too cheerful to handle.

Thank you
Utsav Khatiwara Sharma
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The Art of Being Normal by Lisa Williamson

I've read tons of LGBT books – I'm obsessed about them – so it's a little surprising that this is my first transgender book. This is a sweet, light-hearted book about two people who want to be someone else. David Piper has always been different. His parents think he's gay. The school bully thinks he's a freak show. The truth, though, is that he wants to be a girl.

Leo Denton, transferred to Eden Park School, wants to be invisible. So attracting the attention of the most beautiful girl in Year Eleven is a roller coaster ride because the more he falls in love with her, the higher the chance that his secret will have to come out.

When Leo stands up for David in a fight, an unlikely friendship blooms between the two. But things soon become messy because secrets have a way of finding their way out.

I'd recommend this book to anyone who wants a feel-good read, and especially in light of the recent events where the National Council amended the discriminatory sections on the penal code, giving hope to the LGBT community in Bhutan.

Thank you
Kezang Choden
BA Political Science & Sociology
Former Student



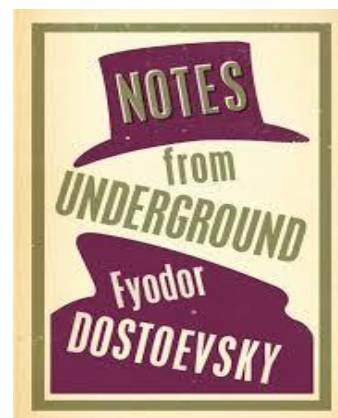
Notes from Underground by Fyodor Dostoevsky

Notes from Underground is an absurd modernist piece of work that calls on readers to pay attention to the detrimental side of society during the time that Dostoevsky lived, and yet it remains highly applicable today. This may be one of the first times that an anti-hero is introduced to the world: the 'Underground Man' is not the typical protagonist one has been accustomed to see. Instead of admiration and fondness, one can only feel pity for him. We are confused by the 'Underground Man' and yet his character is pivotal to the world today; Dostoevsky, with this work, forces his readers to face the stark problems of our society and shows that these problems can no longer be ignored.

Notes from Underground is written in the first person narrative by a man who has rejected society and has decided to see the world from the space between two floorboards of a ground. The name of this man is not mentioned throughout the novella and is commonly attributed to as the 'Underground Man'. It is a story about the life of a man obliterated by harsh societal behavior and portrays how unwelcome people can be to strange and new entities that are away from what one is accustomed to see.

Dostoevsky brings about themes of life & existence, suffering, isolation, and societal class in this work. It is a story that leaves the readers unsettled even after it has been long completed. It compels one to ponder upon the powerful information of society that is brought to our attention. It is a cry for help and yet, it is the savior.

Thank You
Dilisha Subba
BA English & Environmental Management
Former Student.



Wanted! Book reviews from Faculty, Staff, and Students

If you have read a good book and would like to contribute a review to the Library Newsletter, we would love to receive one from you. Tell us a little about the book and why you liked it in 250-500 words. If interested, send your review to gyanupradhan@rtc.bt or come by the library and see the library staff.

Thanks!!

YOU MUST TELL YOURSELF, “NO MATTER HOW HARD IT IS, OR HOW HARD IT GETS, I AM GOING TO MAKE IT...”-Les Brown.