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# NOTABLE BOOKS 1978

Compiled by the  
NOTABLE BOOKS COUNCIL  
REFERENCE AND ADULT  
SERVICES DIVISION  
AMERICAN LIBRARY  
ASSOCIATION

This list has been compiled for use by the general reader and by librarians who work with adult readers. The titles were selected for their significant contribution to the expansion of knowledge or for the pleasure they can provide to adult readers. Criteria include wide general appeal and literary merit.



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*Booklist.*



The Notable Books Council  
gratefully acknowledges the help of the Council's  
participating libraries.

Berg, A. Scott. *Max Perkins: Editor of Genius*. Dutton. The rich biography of the legendary editor who nurtured such literary figures as Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Wolfe.

Bernstein, Jeremy. *Experiencing Science*. Basic Books. Intriguing glimpses into the delights and difficulties of the world of science by a physicist who has been the *New Yorker* "science watcher" for almost twenty years.

Brown, Rosellen. *Tender Mercies*. Knopf. Dan and Laura's solid but not invulnerable marriage is tested to the utmost when his act of careless bravado leaves her a quadriplegic. A moving, disquieting novel.

Chatwin, Bruce. *In Patagonia*. Summit Books. Mysterious South American land revealed in a splendid, witty travel narrative.

Cheever, John. *The Stories of John Cheever*. Knopf. This chronological collection of Cheever's best spans three decades of magnificent storytelling.

Chen Jo-hsi. *The Execution of Mayor Yin and Other Stories from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution*. Indiana Univ. Pr. Memories of ordinary life in China transformed into subtle, subversive fiction.

Clark, Kenneth. *An Introduction to Rembrandt*. Harper. Highly informed and expertly executed biographical essays and critical analyses on the work, themes, and career of the master.

Cowley, Malcolm. —*And I Worked at the Writer's Trade: Chapters of Literary History, 1918–1978*. Viking. Distinguished critic, editor, and historian analyzes with affection trends and trendmakers of the American literary scene.

Davis, John H. *The Guggenheims: An American Epic*. Morrow. A candid and engrossing look at how the Guggenheim mining fortune was built and spent and its impact on economic and cultural history.

Epstein, Samuel S. *The Politics of Cancer*. Sierra Club Books. A well-documented account of the increase in environmentally caused cancers and the failure of both government and business to act.

Erickson, Carolly. *Bloody Mary*. Doubleday. An absorbing, sympathetic, and readable biography of the remarkable Mary Tudor and her tumultuous era.

Fairlie, Henry. *The Parties: Republicans and Democrats in This Century*. St. Martin's. A witty analysis of the fumbblings and failures of leadership in both parties by a veteran British observer.

Furbank, P. N. E. M. *Forster: A Life*. Harcourt. A compassionate account of the hidden life of this important twentieth-century novelist.

Gaines, Ernest J. *In My Father's House*. Knopf. The past cannot be denied in this dramatic confrontation between a wronged son and a successful civil rights leader. A novel.

García Márquez, Gabriel. *Innocent Eréndira and Other Stories*. Harper. Our half-conscious emotions are explored through luscious and fantastic imagery in this collection of intriguingly bizarre tales.

Gifford, Barry and Lawrence Lee. *Jack's Book: An Oral Biography of Jack Kerouac*. St. Martin's. The voices of those who shared Kerouac's spiritual odyssey provide a vivid portrait of the Beat Generation and one of its heroes.

Gordon, Mary. *Final Payments*. Random. The death of her father forces a young Irish Catholic woman to define her own life and deal with her new-found freedom. A novel.

Gornick, Vivian. *The Romance of American Communism*. Basic Books. Probing interviews of forty-seven American men and women explaining their initial infatuation with the Communist party and their ultimate disillusionment.

Greene, Graham. *The Human Factor*. Simon & Schuster. Spellbinding storytelling about the ambiguous world of espionage. A novel.

Hall, Donald. *Remembering Poets: Reminiscences and Opinions: Dylan Thomas, Robert Frost, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound*. Harper. Personal encounters with the forces of creativity and self-destruction in the lives of four giants of twentieth-century poetry.

Hendin, Josephine. *Vulnerable People: A View of American Fiction since 1945*. Oxford Univ. Pr. Provocative interpretations of Updike, Mailer, Vonnegut, Oates, and Didion offer many plausible explanations of today's perplexing novels.

Irving, John. *The World According to Garp*. Dutton. A comic-tragic, realistic-fantastic, hilarious-horrific romp through the life of T. S. Garp. A novel.

Jacobsen, Josephine. *A Walk with Raschid and Other Stories*. Jackpine Press. Elegantly written, tension-edged portrayals of moments of personal revelation.

Johnson, Diane. *Lying Low*. Knopf. Perceptive characterization and graceful writing in a novel about people hiding out in an old boardinghouse.

Jones, James. *Whistle*. Delacorte. This posthumous novel completes the author's World War II trilogy and depicts the deleterious effects of army life on American G.I.s in peace and war.

Kazin, Alfred. *New York Jew*. Knopf. New York City ambience and the peccadilloes of many significant U.S. writers are spliced within this critic's memoir.

Le Roy Ladurie, Emmanuel. *Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error*. Braziller. Based on Inquisition records, this is a uniquely fascinating account of the daily life, manners, and mores of a heretical village in fourteenth-century France.

Madden, David. *The Suicide's Wife*. Bobbs-Merrill. A startling psychological portrait of a woman who must cope with her husband's bewildering death and her sudden independence from the past. A novel.

Manchester, William. *American Caesar: Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*. Little. A reappraisal of the paradoxical character and career of the controversial American general.

Matthiessen, Peter. *The Snow Leopard*. Viking. A physically arduous trek through the Himalayas proves a revealing counterpoint to the author's own spiritual pilgrimage.

Meyer, Susan E. *America's Great Illustrators*. Abrams. Lucid commentary on popular American illustrators whose art mirrors our past and present. Handsomely illustrated.

Murdoch, Iris. *The Sea, the Sea*. Viking. Women, both incidental and central to his past, intrude upon a meddlesome egotist writing his memoirs in a secluded house by the sea.

O'Brien, Tim. *Going after Cacciato*. Delacorte. Reality blurs into fantasy in this surrealist novel about a young Vietnam War deserter and his pursuers.

Porter, Andrew. *Music of Three Seasons: 1974-1977*. Farrar. A collection of distinguished and illuminating opinion and commentary from the music critic of the *New Yorker*.

Rich, Adrienne. *The Dream of a Common Language: Poems 1974-1977*. Norton. In succinct, powerful language Rich explores a variety of relationships among women.

Salisbury, Harrison E. *Black Night, White Snow: Russia's Revolutions, 1905-1917*. Doubleday. A fast-moving narrative describing the series of events which toppled the Tsarist regime and ultimately brought the Bolsheviks to power.

Sarton, May. *A Reckoning*. Norton. Laura Spelman makes her dying a positive experience and finds her greatest support in a lifelong friend rather than in her family. A novel.

Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr. *Robert Kennedy and His Times*. Houghton. Written by a longtime friend and associate, this is an extensive, partisan account of the man, his background, and his accomplishments.

Shapiro, Karl. *Collected Poems: 1940-1977*. Random. The writer's choice from a lifetime of self-revelatory achievement.

Shaw, Irwin. *Short Stories: Five Decades*. Delacorte. The collected tales of a popular storyteller reflect changes in our lives and outlooks over the past fifty years.

Silberman, Charles E. *Criminal Violence, Criminal Justice*. Random. Demolishes myths long held about crime, criminals, and the American legal system.

Sontag, Susan. *Illness as Metaphor*. Farrar. A brilliant essay on how we wrongly conceptualize illness and the resultant harrowing effects on both patient and society.

Swenson, May. *New and Selected Things Taking Place*. Atlantic/Little. A unique, humorous, and thoughtful collection of poems which are accessible on many levels.

Theroux, Paul. *Picture Palace*. Houghton. Unrequited incestuous passion compels photographer Maude Pratt to question her artistic success and personal failure in this novel of wit and invention.

Tuchman, Barbara W. *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous Fourteenth Century*. Knopf. A picture of society in the Middle Ages which makes clear the gulf that separates the modern and medieval world and those striking similarities which make that age a mirror of our own.

Warren, Robert Penn. *Now and Then: Poems 1976-1978*. Random. These poems reveal the many varieties of talent in a poet still growing and developing.

White, Theodore H. *In Search of History: A Personal Adventure*. Harper. Recollections of a life spent on the journalistic front lines reveal an intense search for traditional American values.

Wilhelm, Kate. *Somerset Dreams and Other Fictions*. Harper. Those uncomfortable areas that hover between the real and unreal are explored in this finely crafted collection of speculative fiction.

Will, George F. *The Pursuit of Happiness, and Other Sobering Thoughts*. Harper. Writing about everything from *Playboy* magazine to raising children, Will, an articulate conservative, always makes us think.

Wills, Garry. *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence*. Doubleday. An informative reinterpretation of the philosophies and foundations of the Jefferson Declaration.

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