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NOTABLE
BOOKS

Notable Books 1981
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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Allen, Gay Wilson. *Waldo Emerson*. Viking. Material from thousands of unpublished Emerson papers included in this authoritative literary biography reveals the transcendental leader's personal and intellectual struggles.

Ashbery, John. *Shadow Train*. Viking. This collection of fifty sixteen-line poems is mysteriously seductive, puzzlingly evocative.

Atwood, Margaret. *Two-Headed Poems*. Simon & Schuster. Poems of life stripped to the essentials, of grim humor confronting terror, violence, and death, of severe tenderness and inextinguishable hope.

Berke, Roberta. *Bounds Out of Bounds: A Compass for Recent American and British Poetry.* Oxford Univ. Pr. An inviting introduction to the major schools of poetry, the poets who shaped them, and the works they created.

Bowen, Elizabeth. *The Collected Stories of Elizabeth Bowen.* Knopf. Bowen's civilized prose controls themes of passion, the occult, and the imaginative life of children in these seventy-nine stories.

Brent, Peter. *Charles Darwin: A Man of Enlarged Curiosity.* Harper. The development of Darwin's curiosity about and reverence for nature throughout his life, unfolded in the setting, pace, and texture of his Victorian world.

Carpenter, Humphrey. W. H. Auden: A Biography. Houghton. Enriched by Auden's previously unpublished letters and manuscripts, this biography delineates the passions and eccentricities of a leading poet of our century.

Carver, Raymond. *What We Talk about When We Talk about Love.* Knopf. Seventeen stark, haunting stories of ordinary individuals encountering horrific aspects of human nature and suffering the dislocations of an unpredictable existence.

Fallows, James. *National Defense.* Random. Advocating realistic, cost-effective defense options for the United States in the 1980s, Fallows provocatively critiques current military policies and planning.

From the Country of Eight Islands: An Anthology of Japanese Poetry. Edited and translated by Hiroaki Sato and Burton Watson. Univ. of Washington Pr. Japanese poetry spanning fifteen centuries as it evolved from pure, classic simplicity and highest idealization of emotion, to an individualized voice under Western influence.

Garside, Roger. *Coming Alive: China after Mao.* McGraw. A summary of the political upheavals after the death of Mao, in which the conservative thrust of Deng Xiaoping prevailed.

Goodfield, June. *An Imagined World: A Story of Scientific Discovery.* Harper. This account of the struggle, insight, and creativity of a young scientist, researching the nature of Hodgkin's disease, enhances our understanding of scientific discovery.

Gordimer, Nadine. *July's People.* Viking. Fleeing the black revolution, a liberal South African white family becomes totally dependent on their former servant. An eloquent, prophetic novel that exposes the distorting heritage of colonialism.

Gould, Stephen Jay. *The Mismeasure of Man.* Norton. Can human intelligence be determined without the influence of the social and political environment on the scientist's theory and practice?

Halberstam, David. *The Breaks of the Game.* Knopf. An expansive investigation of the making and breaking of a professional basketball team—the Portland Trail Blazers.

Haml, Patricia. *A Romantic Education.* Houghton. A young Minnesota poet and writer of the sixties generation seeks her roots in golden Prague, the dream city of her spirited grandmother.

Hughes, Robert. *The Shock of the New.* Knopf. A lively text, coupled with plentiful illustrations, provides a fascinating account of modern art from 1889 through the early seventies.

Johanson, Donald C., and Edey, Maitland A. *Lucy: The Beginnings of Humankind.* Simon & Schuster. An animated presentation of modern theory about man's ancestors, with emphasis on the early fossil skeletal remains unearthed by Johanson at Hadar, Ethiopia.

McCullough, David. *Mornings on Horseback.* Simon & Schuster. Theodore Roosevelt's early years, when his personality and character were molded and tempered by his devoted father, "Greatheart," and an uncommon array of canny and nurturing women.

Malone, Dumas. *The Sage of Monticello (Jefferson and His Time, vol. 6).* Little. Thomas Jefferson living his retirement years in fruition as an educational entrepreneur, gardener, architect, reader, letter writer, and family man.

Mariani, Paul. *William Carlos Williams: A New World Naked.* McGraw. The grandly human story of how a pediatrician from a small town in New Jersey became a major voice in twentieth-century poetry.

Mooney, Ted. *Easy Travel to Other Planets: A Novel.* Farrar. A marvelous first novel in which the author weaves his tale effortlessly through time and space with glimpses of the many shapes of love along the way.

Neely, Richard. *How Courts Govern America.* Yale Univ. Pr. With humor and clarity, a Virginia Supreme Court judge discusses the structure of the judicial system in America and the role of the courts and legislative bodies in effecting change in American life.

Nijinska, Bronislava. *Bronislava Nijinska: Early Memoirs.* Translated and edited by Irina Nijinska and Jean Rawlinson. Holt. A leading dancer, choreographer, and teacher for five decades, Nijinska recalls a dazzling era in dance history and provides unique insight into her brother Vaslav Nijinsky's development and artistic achievement.

O'Connor, Frank. *Collected Stories.* Knopf. The loneliness of the human condition threads through these vivid, humorous tales of Irish life by a master of the modern short story.

Peters, F. E. *Ours: The Making and Unmaking of a Jesuit.* Marek. The author's growth during nine years as a seminarian, from entry at eighteen to his decision to leave, reveals the shaping of a person by a community.

Plante, David. *The Country.* Atheneum. This elegant and precisely written novel explores the anguish of seven sons as their aged parents become more withdrawn and their father dies.

Plath, Sylvia. *The Collected Poems.* Edited by Ted Hughes. Harper. This volume allows the reader to follow a major poet's development, from schoolgirl experimentation to meticulous poetic expression and anguished authority.

Pond, Elizabeth. *From the Yaroslavsky Station: Russia Perceived.* Universe. Russian history is contrasted with contemporary Soviet life and attitudes, as revealed by Pond's traveling companions on a trans-Siberian railroad.

Robinson, Marilynne. *Housekeeping.* Farrar. Images of a river haunt this novel of recollection about unbearable choices between permanence and transience.

Santoli, Al. *Everything We Had: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Thirty-Three American Soldiers Who Fought It.* Random. Candid and gripping reminiscences by officers and enlisted men and women—platoon leaders, nurses, rear echelon organizers, and POWs.

Schwartz-Nobel, Loretta. *Starving in the Shadow of Plenty.* Putnam. Facts combined with personal experiences document the problems related to hunger in the United States today: energy misuse, vanishing natural resources, depreciating farmlands, inflation, and sources of funding.

Smith, Adam. *Paper Money.* Summit. Our loss of the financial power game and its long-range effect on our fiscal stability, told with a taunting, vibrant wit.

Spence, Jonathan D. *The Gate of Heavenly Peace: The Chinese and Their Revolution, 1895-1980.* Viking. The violence and vitality of modern China made comprehensible through biographical vignettes of intellectuals and artists who commented revealingly on this turbulent era.

Spencer, Elizabeth. *The Stories of Elizabeth Spencer.* Doubleday. Superb evocation of people and places characterizes these thirty-three stories written over five decades.

Stratton, Joanna L. *Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier.* Simon & Schuster. The rigorous challenges of life on the prairie are revealed in personal recollections and wonderful photographs.

Timerman, Jacobo. *Prisoner without a Name, Cell without a Number.* Knopf. An Argentine newspaper publisher's harrowing account of his imprisonment and torture as an advocate of social justice and of the inner strength that enabled him to survive.

Totman, Conrad. *Japan before Perry: A Short History.* Univ. of California Pr. How Japan, its social institutions, and increasing population developed in cycles of fragmentation and reconsolidation from prehistoric through early modern times.

Tuchman, Barbara. *Practicing History: Selected Essays.* Knopf. A splendid potpourri of essays and addresses that includes the craft of historical writing as well as an effective discourse on what our nation can learn from history.

Updike, John. *Rabbit Is Rich.* Knopf. Middle-aged and middle-class Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom is beset by his troublesome son and by images of mortality in Updike's poetic, acutely observed novel of contemporary American life.

Wilford, John Noble. *The Mapmakers.* Knopf. A survey of the development of cartography: its metamorphosis from guesswork to science, from antiquity to the modern era.

Woods, Donald. *Asking for Trouble: Autobiography of a Banned Journalist.* Atheneum. This recounting of Woods's lifelong struggle for journalistic integrity, a tenet which resulted in his exile from South Africa, culminates with an exciting escape.

Many of the books are available in braille, talking books, or large type. Consult your Regional Library for the Blind.

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