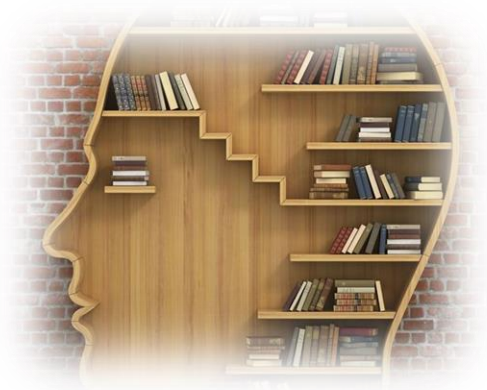


# BOOK THOUGHTS

BATCH 15  
BATCH 15

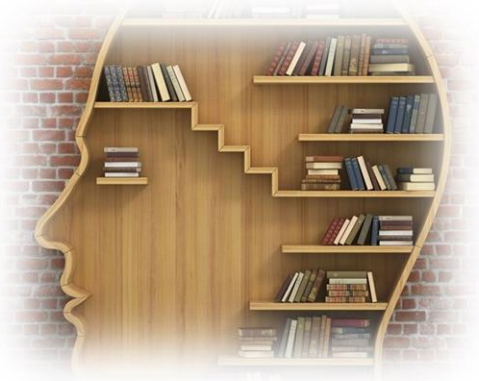


BY **LINDSAY** WINCHERAUK  
BY LINDSAY WINCHERAUK

BOOK THOUGHTS: BATCH 15  
BOOK THOUGHTS: BATCH 15

# BOOK THOUGHTS

## BATCH 15



2

1. HOW TO PRONOUNCE KNIFE – SOUVANKHAM THAMMAVONGSA
2. FLOAT LIKE A BUTTERFLY, DRINK MINT TEA – ALEX WOOD
3. BEGIN BY TELLING – MEG REMY
4. WE, JANE – AIMEE WALL
5. KLARA AND THE SUN – KAZOU ISHIGURO
6. BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS – SULEIKA JAOUAD
7. MEMORIAL – BRYAN WASHINGTON
8. HAUNTED – CHUCK PALAHNIUK
9. CRYING IN THE H MART - MICHELLE ZAUNER
10. SEVERANCE – LING MA
11. SURE, I’LL BE YOUR BLACK FRIEND – BEN PHILIPPE

BLUE = MEMOIR OR BIOGRAPHICAL

BLACK = FICTION

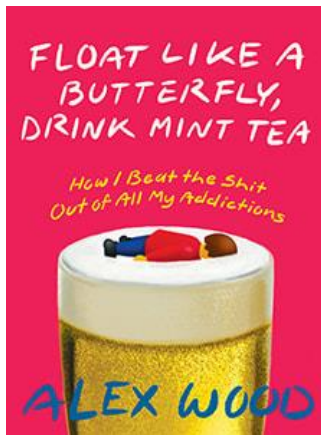
DARK RED = EDUCATIONAL

PURPLE = ESSAY OR STORIES

ORANGE = POETRY

# FLOAT LIKE A BUTTERFLY, DRINK MINT TEA

ALEX WOOD



This is what courage reads like.

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

When I finished the last word of “Float Like a Butterfly, Drink Mint Tea,” I couldn’t help thinking this is what courage reads like. Most of us have demons haunting us. We must knock them down with a right or left hook or an uppercut and then do our best not to let them up off the canvas.

They say comedy comes from pain. Alex Wood is darnnnnnn funny.

What makes this book glow the brightest isn’t Alex’s undeniable sense of humour; it’s his unflinching honesty + unassuming way of giving something back.

We all need to be grateful Alex found the fortitude to pick himself off the canvas of addiction and shared his story instead of becoming another selfish, tragic, boring story.

I write.

The reviews I like most, are the ones saying: I’m funny.

I hope the one Alex appreciates the most is: THANK YOU!

That’s how this book made me feel.

In my Top 25!

WRITTEN: April 9, 2021

## BEGIN BY TELLING

MEG REMY



A gallop past what life may deliver.

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

The things (I) (you) we go through + must overcome.

A man can never understand a father abusing his daughter.

A son can never comprehend why his mother abandoned him at birth.

The mother could never understand why her father sent her to an abhorrent place to give birth—only to try to have her fixed and become marriageable.

2 And the world is too filled with (I) (you) we, strapped in the shackles of conditioning + fuelled by daily noise, for some of us, not to become broken, flawed, violent.

Do we need professional sports?

“Begin by Telling,” triggered in me, unfixable memories I live every day...must live every day.

“Begin by Telling” awakened me to the weight + beauty of listening because if we did, we’d understand listening is the root of kindness + shines a bright light on the path to a better world.

That’s how this book made me feel.

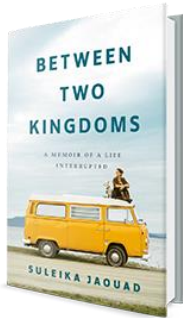
In my Top 25!

“I’m not pregnant in the pandemic. I pray for anyone who needs an abortion during this time.”

WRITTEN: April 9, 2021

## BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS

SULEIKA JAOUAD



Unfortunately, at some time, Cancer connects us all.

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

A yellow Volkswagen bus drives through the pages of *Between Two Kingdoms* for a few pages, and then dawns the cover. It should have been a Subaru.

I give this book 5-Stars, but I didn't love it. The story is essential, but somehow it lost me – not in a literal way. I'll explain.

I cheered for Suleika. I'm ecstatic she survived the unrelenting wrath of Cancer to be able to share her incredible story. I visited hospitals at least 1500 times, watching my father and then my mother battle cancer, eventually succumbing. Unlike Suleika, who unfairly became inflicted at a youthful age, there wasn't the love + support of newfound love in my parents' cases. There wasn't the endless camaraderie between the others inflicted. And there wasn't the upset of the unfairness of Cancer tearing apart a young life.

I found the incredible detail of Suleika's illness to be anything but comforting. I may burn in (h...) for those thoughts.

I also found the book to 'countlessly' speak about how her writing had helped others to the point I wished there was another word for countless.

I never connected with Suleika's 100-Day-Journey around America, visiting other Cancer survivors + a death row inmate, 'Little GQ.' I found it to be self-serving. It read like I was reading a creative writing class where vulnerability had been replaced with flowery verbiage. Each stop along the way was laced with a propensity to highlight stereotypes under the guise of becoming awakened.

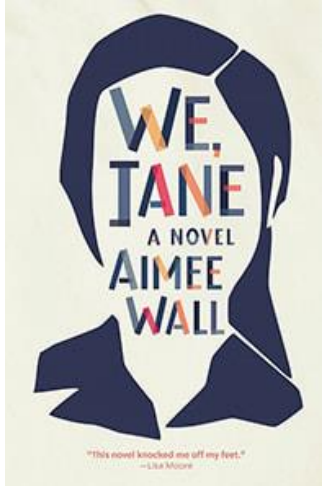
A Yellow Volkswagen bus drives over a few pages of this story. It should've been a Subaru – that would have been more vulnerable – and would have, for me, connected me, as opposed to giving me the feeling I had read too many references about self to count.

I watched, alongside my mother, my father, die because of Cancer. I then watched my mother die. Twenty-nine years later, I watched my mother lose her battle to Cancer a second time (a long story). Young or not, there is no fair time.

WRITTEN: April 21, 2021

# WE, JANE

## AIMEE WALL



The definition of loneliness = abortion.

### *How did the book make me feel/think?*

Too many men are trapped in the archaic belief we each have our place/ roles, and a woman's role is to be subservient to a man.

Too many of us allow men to control this world unchecked.

We are really the same. We want love + a meaningful life, + a place of belonging but are swallowed by the murkiness of conformity. Many people are lost on society's fringes wanting everything in their lives to be different, fulfilling. Still, they are trapped in a dream of wanting more in a world where everything is ephemeral + controlled by the marketed flavour of the day, as life slips by.

Man. Woman. Listening is a problem. Belief in what we're sold only exacerbates the divide. We can never fully understand each other because man can never possibly understand the emotions of having another life growing inside. Or the horrible decision (almost) always made (always) made alone to say goodbye + the unrecoverable pain of continuing living. We're pregnant, isn't a thing.

The definition of loneliness = abortion.

Nobody considers the emotional toll bestowed upon those who perform the abortions — it must be devastating.

A man can run. A woman can never escape pregnancy.

Men mostly talk about nothing, sports, blah, blah, blah. Women keep us alive.

Men must learn to listen, to evolve.

I was born in a secret place. I was to be sold or adopted out to a farm family. My mother was never to speak of me again—religion was going to fix her to become suitable for marriage after I was long gone. I was an afterthought; I survived, I'm okay.

Adopted out or aborted — I'm here. A choice was made. I'm happy to be here.

Regardless of my life, I don't think it is my responsibility to choose what's the right path for others.

I believe all we are collectively supposed to do, is listen + learn, + evolve.

That is how this book made me feel/think.

In my Top 25

goodreads

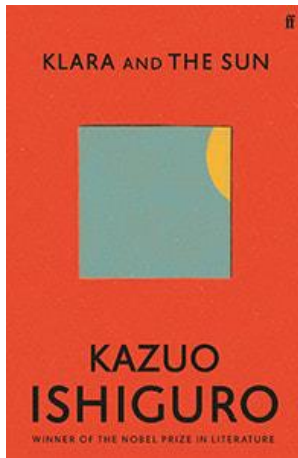


**Jodi** posted a new comment on [Lindsay's review of We, Jane](#)

Lindsay, I'm in awe of your beautiful review and of your honesty. I'm sorry for the pain you may have gone through as a child, but I'm very happy that you seem to really 'get it'! If it's true that everything happens for a reason, your experience has perhaps given you the rare ability to see things from a woman's perspective, and that is very much appreciated. Thank you, Lindsay! 🙏

# KLARA AND THE SUN

KAZOU ISHIGURO



Unconditional is found in the unlikelyst of friendships.

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

I've heard Klara and The Sun be described as a masterpiece. Yes.

I've been lucky lately; I've been on a reading roll. Ten out of the fifteen books I've read in 2021 have landed in my subjective Top 25! The books have run the gamut from Talking Animals navigating New York City to being black in America to the unquenchable quest for Happiness to addiction to abortion and now to Artificial Intelligence (Klara and The Sun).

What makes Ishiguro's writing brilliant – well – I shed a tear for an Artificial Friend (not a spoiler). Who'd of thought an Artificial

Friend could teach us valuable life lessons?

Rhetorical?

6 I'm not sure. We, humans, are deeply flawed, beautiful, complex, troubled beings. Imagine a sick girl needing friendship—an artificial friend is introduced |Klara| she's not the most advanced model. She's dated. But there is something about her in this world where everyone, and everything, is replaceable. The new phones have arrived, this time purple...must get it...my life will be so much better.

The young girl's sickness progresses, the humans in her orbit care, but primarily for how the girl's illness will impact their lives. Not Klara: her love and duty for the girl is the precise definition of unconditional. If the humans only listened, they'd understand. Klara does; she sees a fractured world filled with pollution and the transitory nature of living. Klara doesn't care about what people think – she only cares about the well-being of the girl who selected her as a friend.

I shed a tear for Klara. I shed a tear for the naivete of unconditional love + the lessons we can learn if only we knew how to get there.

The new phones are here. Goodbye.

That is how this book made me feel/think.

In my Top 25

WRITTEN: May 5, 2021



# MEMORIAL

BRIAN WASHINGTON



A Perfect Combustion of Character and Life.

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

Gay or straight or otherwise, who cares?

If you do, you missed boarding the evolution train + are probably an anti-masker/vaxxer.

Tolerate is a violent word.

Nobody has ever uttered these words, "Mom, Dad, I'm straight" – and were then thrown out of their home.

Memorial by Bryan Washington is a deftly written, what's another word for compelling? –captivating read, shining a

light on the reality a gay person's life is messed up, just like everyone else – only with different sex.

Brilliant.

It was so enthralling, I thought I was reading a memoir. Until I didn't.

That is how this book made me feel/think.

In my Top 25

WRITTEN: May 21, 2021

# HAUNTED

## CHUCK PALAHNIUK



Taking boring people and turning their lives into electrifying nightmares.

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

Palahniuk is not likely everybody's cup of tea. However, he is so ridiculously gifted in storytelling he could author a story about a cup of tea that would not only disgust you, but it would make you wet yourself in laughter while making you consider if you could ever drink tea again because somehow, he's turned tea into a monster.

Mundane. Broken. Ordinary. You. Me. It's all fair game.

Easily in my top twenty-five, currently landing at my number two spot. Seriously.

At times I felt like I was going to pass out as Chuck described the wants, needs, and pains of dull, damaged people, as they faced their deepest, darkest, most revolting fears.

Which of your friends would you want to die first, so you could eat them because there is no refrigeration available?

Chuck Palahniuk needs to be on the must-read list of every writer because he with the utmost deftness understands what takes a story from ordinary to great is we all want something, even if it leads to our own demise. Telling stories about want; what do you want?

Palahniuk also comprehends better than most, humans are intrinsically flawed and when tragedy strikes, we are more interested in the sheer scope of suffering instead of the humanity lays within.

Go for it. Chase it. Live.

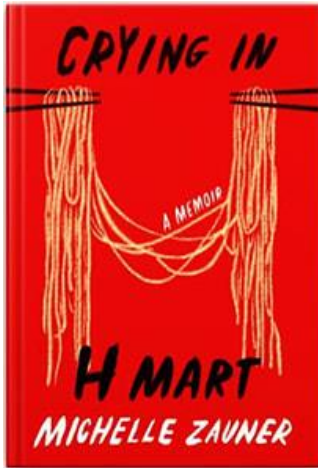
Haunted could quite easily be the most terror-inducing book I've read.

#2

WRITTEN: June 16, 2021

# CRYING IN THE H MART

MICHELLE ZAUNER



I must have been dehydrated.

How did the book make me feel/think?

I hated writing my thoughts on this book. Writing them makes me feel like a word starting with an “a” ...and finishing with “hole.”

I wanted to love this book. I had predetermined I would.

It started off in a flurry, I was in!

I witnessed the wraths of cancer taking away my father, my mother, and then, my mother a second time.

I cry easily. I believe I could turn pro if there was a crying circuit. Is there?

I even cried during an episode of Bob’s Burgers.

I’ve been to Korea twice. I’ve been to an H-Mart, numerous times.

Anytime an author (anyone) shares their journey about the vulnerability of losing a loved one to cancer — is a vitally important story to share.

Here comes the waterworks. No. I must be dehydrated. I’m getting mad at myself. I turn a page. Why am I not crying? Cry dammit. It even says crying in the title.

No tears.

What is this book about?

Too many words.

“...towering over her head by more than a foot. It was remarkable that someone so large could grow from a woman so small.”

I just learned what it is like to go from child to adult (it must be deeper).

These are sentences in an International Bestseller: Why?

Please ban creative writing. Stories need to move along. I want to cry.

Why is the first thing in the author description about a band? If you understand Japanese + Korean history, it would be highly unlikely, for any Korean, to use Japanese in their band name.

There is one less bestselling (bestselling) author.

I must go watch Bob’s Burgers.

Does the previous sentence make me an “a” ...?

I am terribly sorry for Michelle’s loss. I wanted to cry.

I would not have written my thoughts on this book if it wasn’t a BESTSELLER.

WRITTEN: June 18, 2021

**O STARS**  
O 2LVK2

## HOW TO PRONOUNCE KNIFE

### SOUVANKHAM THAMMAVONGSA



*Every entitled Caucasian (male) should read this book.*

#### *How did the book make me feel/think?*

“How to Pronounce Knife” should be essential reading for every Caucasian male to help them understand how ridiculously entitled they are.

When I cracked the book open, I found the stories to be cute, hilarious, light-hearted, romps filled with laughter at a life I’ve never had to encounter.

I never had to give up everything to live the life I live, or leave my country, often rife with strife—leaving loved ones behind, or forgo my dreams to be exploited by companies that use those who’ve come to North America chasing an elusive dream—

working in plants and slaughterhouses and anywhere where language isn’t a barrier for employment.

11 This book is profoundly hilarious and heartbreaking at the same time.

“My father did not grieve. He had done all his grieving when he became a refugee.” At the halfway mark, my mind opened to what place of birth bestows upon us, yet many of us whine about how hard done by, often throwing barbs at those we don’t understand.

“He was happy someone at the factory was talking to him instead of pulling at the skin on the side of their eyes and laughing as they walked by.”

I wrote this with the Morning Show playing in the background. While listening to the show’s vapidness and the guests talking about “how to buy stuff to hold onto your youth”—I couldn’t help but wonder: who is this for?

Who it isn’t for is, for those who’ve sacrificed everything leaving their pasts behind in search of a new place of belonging?

Every white | person | should read this book. You will laugh, guaranteed. But what you might do even more, if you open your heart is, realize the struggles of many don’t revolve around creams to erase the character lines around their eyes.

In my Top 25!

That’s how this book made me feel.

WRITTEN: April 7, 2021

# SEVERANCE

## LING MA



The premise makes for a fabulous short story.

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

I did not like writing my thoughts on this book.

The premise would have made for a great short story.

I got fired at the start of COVID-19. A fifteen-career gone without severance.

What I gleaned from this book is unfettered capitalism sucks, being young is hard. I didn't learn anything new about the immigrant experience (I guess I un-gleaned that point). I wanted to learn more; I think.

There was an overdone theme about the shackles of religion, I think. I didn't laugh, once. Sad.

Severance is an easy read, unfortunately, littered with too many paragraphs like this:

"In my new studio, we took a break. There was nothing to drink, so we opened boxes of mismatched dishes and had some tap water. The former tenant had left ice in the freezer."

Page after page after page of the likes of ↑↑↑

Seriously, this is a paragraph in "NAMED THE BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR BY —"

Creative writing shouldn't be a thing.

Progressing through the book there were chapters that could have easily been called "I" —I is a tedious character, at least for me.

The praise for the book sure is good. I am not sure all the praise-people read the book. I'm certain the editor didn't. If he/she would have, I wouldn't know what |bildungsroman| means. Seriously, in the praise section it was used twice. I can't pronounce it, and I most certainly am averse to using it: who is the word for?

Hey, did you hear about the book that delivers a bildungsroman?

A what?

For a moment, during the last 100-pages or so, the book turned for the better. Then it didn't. It became littered in product placements, I thought I was reading a terrible Amazon Prime movie in book form.

Montblanc. Enterprise Rent a Car. Swingline. Muji. Weleda Skin Food. Kraft. Frosted Mini-Wheats. Old Navy. HotHands. Amazon. FedEx. UPS. USPS. DHL. iPhone. iPhone. iPhone. ChapStick. Juicy Couture. Dyson. Maruchan Instant Lunch. Heinz. Manischewitz.

Kiehl's. Ultra Facial Moisturizer. Mario Badescu Facial Spray. Sephora.

That was in about twenty pages. I don't know why it bothered me. It just did.

That, along with, lines like these:

"I peered down the length of the staircase, its lower half submerged in shadow. The skunky scent of leftover beer, the aroma of cheap weed."

And

"The move-in day was long and draining. I was exhausted by evening."

Again, I don't know why this bothered me, (maybe) it was because of the cheap weed?

I finished the book. That's a good thing.

One last thing about the praise, one of the people lauding the book said, "When I finished it, I immediately picked it up and read it all over again."

Why?

I don't believe you.

When I read the last word, I pondered: Is storytelling dead? Has it been killed off like a millennials' fever dream?

I got up. Went to the washroom. I walked back to the computer. I wrote another sentence. And then, I repeated the routine.

That is how this book made me feel/think.

My eighteenth favourite book of the year (out of nineteen thus far).

WRITTEN: June 21, 2021

O STARS  
O STARS



# SURE, I'LL BE YOUR BLACK FRIEND

BEN PHILIPPE



Hey white people; we need to evolve.

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

First off, I want Ben to be my friend.

We'd be an odd pair. I'm a soon-to-be 61-year-old lifelong conditioned Caucasian; I'm working on breaking my conditioning.

At times beyond hilarious (whatever that means), this book crosses generational and cultural biases with tickling aplomb.

Reading about the experiences of others helps us realize our individual lives are not the only ones that matter. While reading, I became hypersensitive to those walking amongst us.

IN THREE DAYS

Two twentysomething white guys passed me on the street. There was a poster of a missing indigenous woman on a street pole. They ignored the pain of 'missing' and began making fun of her name.

The next night out for a few pops at our local watering hole. Instead of hello, a friend plops down and chooses to rant about the veracity of the number of indigenous babies found buried at a residential school. He then switched gears too, "The city did a great job cleaning up the homeless from a city park. Finishing strong by questioning if it was a good decision by the opposition leader (politician) to be wearing a turban because it turned people off.

The following morning a lady asked me on the street, "How did you get so brown?" She then added, "I can only get white or pink."

And finally, a couple locking up their bikes, I overheard a middle-aged white woman say to her friend, "You pick the restaurant. It doesn't matter which one you pick; they have taken over this street. They are all the same."

I don't want to be those people I've mentioned above. I don't want those people in my life.

Part of my conditioning busting is stopping using those/they/them, but in this case, I think it suits those.

Thanks, Ben, for sharing your experiences. I'll leave you with this, something no Caucasian can ever have an opinion on other than just listening.

"I cross the street coming out of the subway at night because that little old lady in front of me is visibly terrified of the Black Man behind her, and she shouldn't be scared, but she is literally shaking, so why not do her that unfair kindness?"

That is how this book made me feel/think.

WRITTEN: July 6, 2021