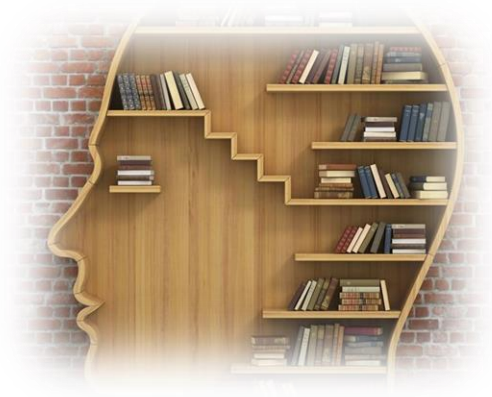


BOOK THOUGHTS

BATCH 32



1. (1) Places You Know, Places You've Been - Hana Shafi
2. (1) Queers Like Me - Michael V. Smith
3. SUPERFAN - Jen Sookfong Lee
4. I'm a Fan - Sheema Patel
5. All The World's a Mall - Rinny Gremaud
6. As The Andes Disappeared - Caroline Dawson
7. Bright Young Women - Jessica Knoll
8. Sadie X - Clara Dupuis-Morency
9. True Reconciliation - Jody Wilson-Raybould
10. Fear of a Black Nation - David Austin

BLUE = MEMOIR OR BIOGRAPHICAL

BLACK = FICTION

DARK RED = EDUCATIONAL + HISTORICAL FICTION

PURPLE = ESSAY OR STORIES

ORANGE = POETRY

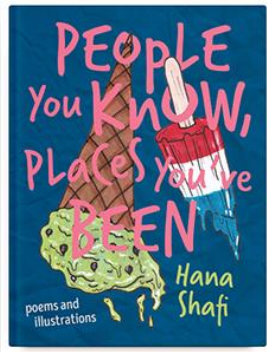
Lindsay Wincherauk

PEOPLE YOU KNOW, PLACES YOU'VE BEEN

HANA SHAFI

A finger on the pulse, one verse at a time.

How did the book make me feel/think?



In the hollow of my hand, I feel the beat,
The pulse that races, a rhythm so sweet,
A sign of life, a sign of fate,
A heart that beats, a soul that waits.

Hana Shafi's hand on my wrist,
She checks the heart, she checks the soul,
A healer's touch, a healer's goal.

I walk the streets, I see the pain,
The suffering, the struggle, the strain,

The poor, the weak, the broken heart,
Their cries, their tears, their every part.

I relate to them, I understand,
Their struggles, their fears, their every hand,
For I have known the same, the same plight,
The same darkness, the same endless night.

But rich and poor, we all are one,
In our hearts, we are not undone,
For love and compassion, they know no bounds,
They know no riches; they know no crowns.

Walls are disappearing, the street calls our names,
Dinner is served, Corelle livingwear, unbreakable,
Forty years old, yet the dinner taste the same.

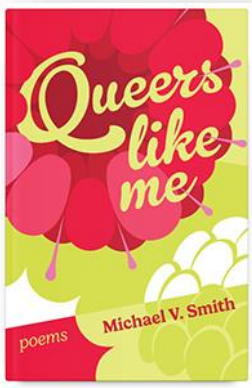
So let us help, let us care,
For all of us, we all are there,
In the hollow of our hands, we hold,
The beat of life, the beat of gold.

Hana Shafi's "People You Know, Places You've Been" immerses readers in the fabric of their everyday lives, a social construct that often leads us astray. Have we become too fixated on the wrong priorities? The homeless person on the street doesn't comprehend the fear-mongering news that separates us from those in pain. Shafi's poetic reinterpretation serves as a reminder of the importance of caring for one another in a world where the media bombards us with messages of materialistic success beyond reach. Despite the chaos beyond our control, it is vital to prioritize the well-being of those around us.

WRITTEN: 29 September 2023

QUEERS LIKE ME

MICHAEL V. SMITH



Reads like a musical track you'd set on repeat...

How did the book make me feel/think?

Michael V. Smith's poetry in **"Queers Like Me"** forms an intimate connection with readers. Poetry, being a personal and subjective art, often leaves readers feeling like outsiders. Yet, when stumbling upon a collection like this, the impact can be truly transformative.

Smith's work can be described as a **"lyrical memoir offering solace through acceptance."**

Poetry uniquely captures and expresses the essence of one's experiences and emotions, defying the boundaries of traditional prose. Smith has masterfully achieved this, crafting a poetic journey that delves into both personal and universal themes of identity and individuality.

"Queers Like Me" reads like a melodic track on constant repeat. With each subsequent play (read), it evolves into a work of art that resonates so deeply that one is compelled to revisit it time and time again.

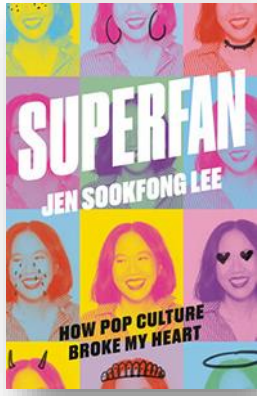
Undoubtedly, a contender for the Top 10 of the year!

WRITTEN: 23 September 2023

Lindsay Wincherauk

SUPERFAN

JEN SOOKFONG LEE



A powerful, eye-opening work.

How did the book make me feel/think?

“SUPERFAN” (memoir) by Jen Sookfong Lee is a powerful, eye-opening work, offering a candid exploration of Lee’s experiences as a Canadian born (Canadian) woman (mother) in Canada and as a writer in a predominately white-run publishing industry. Lee tackles themes of identity, discrimination, and the challenges of belonging in a world that may not always be accepting of those who are considered “other.”

Lee’s courage to share her life, warts, and all, highlights the importance of the need for greater cultural understanding and empathy. Some individuals, particularly those from the dominant culture (white), are often hesitant to engage with the experiences and perspectives of people from different backgrounds, potentially out of fear or insecurity. Lee’s nuanced call for readers to step outside their comfort zones and listen to the stories of others without preconceived notions or judgements is valuable.

Lee must be commended for her courage in sharing her experiences subtly and parallel with how Pop Culture shapes our lives and encouraging readers, especially from the dominant culture (white), to broaden their perspectives and become more open to the experiences of others.

The book also explores the double standards faced by mothers who write compared to male writers, which is a thought-provoking aspect of Lee’s memoir. A male writer can be a drunk, and it benefits his brand. Whereas female writers can never escape society’s expectations of them to be nurturers.

I’m white and from Saskatchewan originally. And never once has someone asked, “Where are you originally from?” This reality underscores the different experiences people from diverse backgrounds encounter. It’s a reminder of the importance of recognizing and addressing biases and assumptions that may inadvertently contribute to discrimination or othering. We, whites, need to step out of our comfort zones and understand our life experiences are not the only ones that matter. Reading “SUPERFAN” is an excellent starting point!

WRITTEN: 23 September 2023

3

I'M A FAN

SHEENA PATEL



Deception. Want. Desire. Unfaithfulness. Obsession.

How did the book make me feel/think?

Sheena Patel's novel, *I'm a Fan*, delves into profound themes of deceit, longing, infidelity, and fixation, particularly in the backdrop of the glamorous yet tumultuous world of celebrities and the relentless pursuit of societal ideals.

Within the confines of celebrity lives and the often-hidden shadows of fame, there lies an unfulfilled desire, tightly wound in greener pastures, causing emotional turmoil despite external achievements.

In this captivating narrative, Patel skillfully exposes the insatiable thirst for identity appropriation, as individuals attempt to make themselves more enticing and captivating to their idolized stars and adoring fans.

I'm a Fan revolves around wounded spirits, yearning for love within the confines of privilege, while grappling with the repercussion of inherited issues and a limited capacity for personal growth.

WRITTEN: 19 November 2023

ALL THE WORLD'S A MALL

RINNY GREMAUD



A horrifying account of the ills of consumerism.

How did the book make me feel/think?

A long time ago, during my university spring break, I spent an entire week at West Edmonton Mall.

It may sound crazy, but before I left, my friends had asked me to bring back something from either “The Gap,” “Beaver Canoe,” or “Benneton.” Can you believe it?

Little did I know my time at the mall would profoundly impact me. The monotonous air that filled the mall seemed to seep into my very being. I became just another consumer, mindlessly browsing.

Years later, those very same stores opened in my hometown. As malls continue homogenizing, I couldn't help but wonder if there's any reason to visit them anymore. They all offer the same products, competing for the same dollars.

I realized that allowing kids to hang out at malls is a deceptive ploy, an indoctrination into a shallow consumer culture. It's as if a hand constantly reaches into our wallets, leaving us with nothing.

In Rinny Gremaud's book, “All The World's a Mall,” she embarks on a journey across the globe to explore these temples of consumption and excess. I have to say, it was one of the most horrifying reads of the year. Every mall, no matter where Rinny went, was eerily similar. They are the result of men's egos, each trying to outdo the other in size and catering to the misguided notion of what women want. It's disheartening.

Take, for example, the presence of sharks and penguins in a mall in Dubai. It may sound like a strange sight, but the answer to that question is truly depressing.

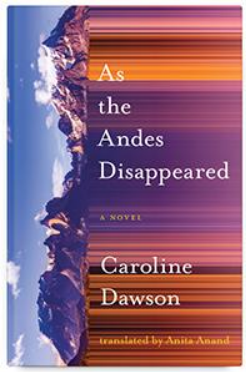
After my experience at West Edmonton Mall, I sympathized with Rinny. Thankfully, I developed a strong aversion to shopping malls. I no longer have the desire to browse or shop aimlessly. I genuinely hope Rinny is doing okay. The mall environment is a microcosm of all the problems that plague humanity.

And I genuinely hope those penguins and sharks have a good sense of humour.

WRITTEN: 19 November 2023

AS THE ANDES DISAPPEARED

CAROLINE DAWSON



A vivid portrayal of the struggles of assimilation.

How did the book make me feel/think?

Caroline Dawson's captivating novel, "**As the Andes Disappeared**," skillfully portrays the agonizing narrative of escaping oppression only to find oneself ensnared in the relentless grip of conformity.

Dawson vividly portrays the struggles of assimilating into a new world, only to gradually witness the erosion of one's true identity.

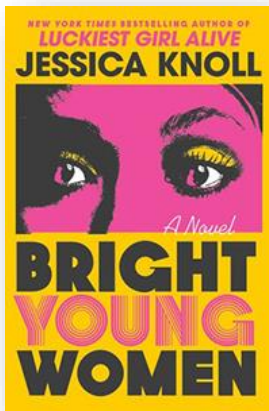
Dawson undergoes a transformation in the pursuit of survival, tragically forsaking the very essence of her being.

"As the Andes Disappeared" is a riveting tale that emphasizes the crucial importance of maintaining a sense of self, an arduous endeavour that may seem insurmountable.

WRITTEN: 19 November 2023

BRIGHT YOUNG WOMEN

JESSICA KNOLL



Harrowing and compelling, gripping readers from the very first page and never letting go.

How did the book make me feel/think?

Jessica Knoll's "**Bright Young Women**" immediately captivates readers and maintains their engagement until the very last word. It skillfully delves into the experiences of women in a world filled with predators, shedding light on the challenges they face in overcoming victimization and the importance of remembering and honouring the victims instead of glorifying the perpetrators.

pursuit of justice.

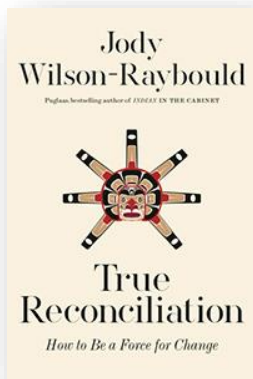
Knoll's writing style is both harrowing and compelling, gripping readers from the very first page and never letting go.

The emotional impact it delivers is profound, leaving a lasting impression.

Not only is "**Bright Young Women**" a captivating read, but it also provokes deep contemplation. Fearlessly delving into pressing societal matters, Knoll masterfully weaves realistic fiction to expose the unsettling truth of monsters lurking in our midst.

WRITTEN: 6 October 2023

TRUE RECONCILIATION
JODY WILSON-RAYBOULD



We must expand our minds and open our hearts.

How did the book make me feel/think?

True Reconciliation, as explored by Jody Wilson-Raybould, shatters the notion that white culture is immune to the need for change and emphasizes the importance of continuous engagement in the pursuit of equality and understanding.

For some, the concept of reconciliation is mistakenly reduced to mere financial implications. However, Wilson-Raybould skillfully dismantles this misconception, underscoring that achieving True Reconciliation is an ongoing process that requires us all to expand our minds and open our hearts. By

doing so, we can hope to acquire the knowledge necessary to comprehend why it is absolutely crucial for every individual to actively seek empathy and compassion.

As individuals belonging to the white community, we must acknowledge the weight of our history. We have inherited the consequences of forcibly taking from the original guardians of this land without guilt or opportunity for restitution.

It is essential, therefore, that reconciliation encompasses not only guilt but also an unwavering determination to transform the way we perceive and treat those who have been exploited. By enhancing this aspect of the story, the reader gains a greater understanding of the complexities involved in True Reconciliation and the necessary steps individuals must actively take toward a more equal and empathetic world.

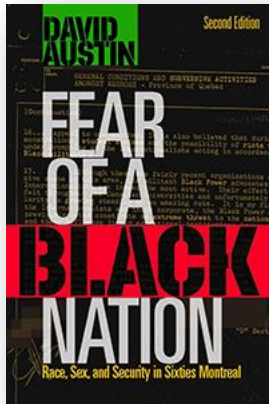
WRITTEN: 19 November 2023

FEAR OF A BLACK NATION

JESSICA KNOLL

An essential read addressing important historical and social issues...

How did the book make me feel/think?



David Austin's "Fear of a Black Nation" is an essential read addressing important historical and social issues, particularly racism and its impact on Montreal in the 1960s. Austin's work sheds light on the divisive and destructive nature of racism and its connections to late-stage capitalism and greed.

The book serves as a warning against the dangers of maintaining systems that perpetuate divisions and inequalities, with the potential for these systems to erode the very foundations of society eventually. "Fear of a Black

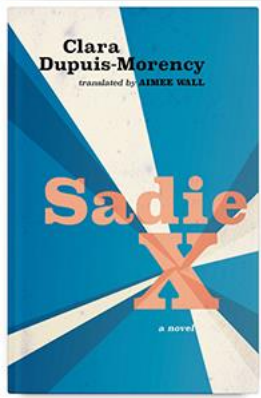
Nation" is a powerful, thought-provoking read that urges readers to reflect on the need for significant changes in how we live, think, and perceive the world.

"Fear of a Black Nation" is a vital tool for raising awareness and prompting discussions about social issues and the need for positive change, emphasizing the importance of addressing these issues to avoid marginalization and division in society.

WRITTEN: 21 October 2023

SADIE X

CLARA DUPUIS-MORENCY



Questioning the fragments of living.

How did the book make me feel/think?

I must maintain my focus. I am about to embark on a perplexing journey.

A monumental virus is discovered. Sadie is a researcher in a patriarchal realm, guided by a virologist with an immense ego that borders on god-like. Sadie is valuable, but she is also subservient.

In Clara Dupuis-Morency's "Sadie X," readers will be compelled to question how life can be reduced to fragments.

Similar to the virus, the past, the specters that haunt us, our desires, and fears, and even Sadie's struggles within a male-dominated society all come under scrutiny.

The goal is to understand how we evolve and to examine the aspects that shape us, both positive and negative, with the precision of a microscope. Perhaps, in doing so, we can transform these fragments into something more manageable.

"Sadie X" challenges readers to reflect on the complexities of existence, the dynamics of power and mentorship, and the significance of pivotal moments in one's life. It seems to encourage readers to look beneath the surface of life to uncover the more profound meaning and significance of our experiences.

WRITTEN: 22 October 2023