

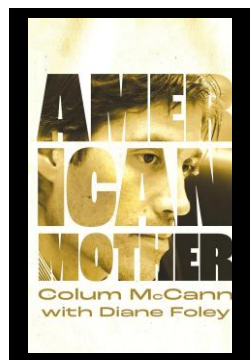
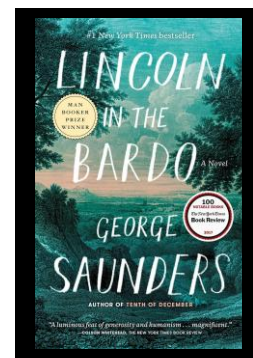


An Undercurrent of Grief

2025 Fall Read Booklist

Lincoln in the Bardo: A Novel by George Saunders (2017)

In the early days of the Civil War, President Lincoln's beloved eleven-year-old son Willie lies gravely ill upstairs in the White House. When Willie dies and is laid to rest in a Georgetown cemetery, Lincoln said, "My poor boy. He was too good for this earth. God called him home." Based on his subsequent mourning, Lincoln's grief forms the basis for George Saunders' unforgettable story of family love and loss. The boy finds himself in a strange world where ghosts mingle, commiserate and quarrel. In this transitional state – the Tibetan tradition called "the bardo" a struggle erupts over Willie's soul. The question is, how do we live and love when we know that everything we love must end?

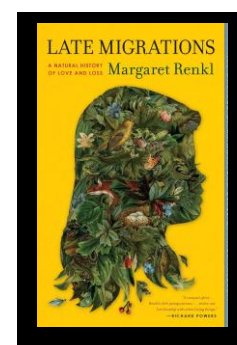


American Mother by Colum McCann with Diane Foley (2024)

Mother Diane Foley actually sat at a table across from her son's killer, a member of ISIS when the member of the group "The Beatles" was about to serve life imprisonment. What would she say? Would she be able to forgive him. Thus begins *American Mother*, a book some call a "thriller, a biography, a mystery and a literary examination of Grace." The book covers son Jim's childhood, journalism career and determination to report on the killing fields of the world. This mother "also charts the tenacity it takes to turn her grief into grace as she seeks to give voice to those who are still being kidnapped and wrongfully detained around the world." (*Amazon*)

Late Migrations: A Natural History of Love & Loss, by Margaret Renkl (2021)

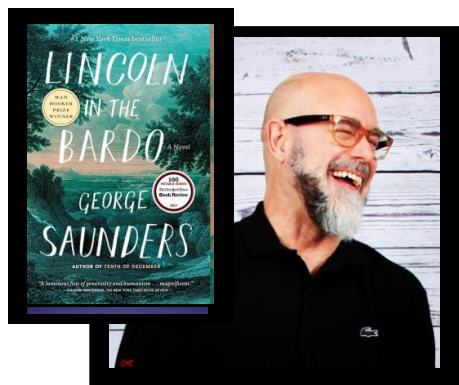
In her debut book of brief essays, Renkl creates a portrait of her creative mother, her steady father and the bittersweet moments that cover both growing up and caregiving. Sprinkled in are Renkl's observations on the world surrounding her suburban Nashville home. "Ringing with rapture and heartache, these essays convey the dignity of bluebirds and rat snakes, monarch butterflies and native bees. As these two threads haunt and harmonize with each other, Renkl suggests that there is astonishment to be found in common things: in what seems ordinary, in what we all share. For in both worlds—the natural one and our own—the shadow side of love is always loss, and grief is only love's own twin." The striking illustrations supplied by her brother make Renkl's book more than worth reading. They are worth sharing and keeping.





An Undercurrent of Grief

2025 Fall Read Book Discussion Leaders



Chris Hudson was born in Amarillo, Texas. He earned a BA from the Plan II Honors Liberal Arts program, MA in Latin American Studies, and PhD in English--all from the University of Texas at Austin. He attended graduate school in philosophy at the New School for Social Research and studied law at the Law Center at the University of Houston. He worked at the Texas Senate as a bill editor, a legislative aide, the Legislative Director and later Director of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee, which he later directed and as the Chief-of-Staff for Senator Judith Zaffirini. He then taught literature for 15 years at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College in Indiana. He is now a Professor of English at Amarillo College, directs the Creative Mind Lecture Series, and is Vice President of the Faculty Senate. Dr. Hudson has lived in Texas, Indiana, New York, Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil.

Marjory Hall has taught English at Oklahoma Panhandle State for nearly 20 years. She's originally from Florida, but has taught in South Carolina and in Garden City, Kansas. She holds a master's in divinity and a Doctorate in Biblical Studies as well as a Masters n English. When she's not teaching English or reading, she is involved in theater or playing with her two furry kids.



Mildred Rugger was born in Spokane, Washington, and then lived a few years in each of these places: Plainview, Texas; two Idaho towns; several Iowa towns; and the Mexico City area. When she settled in San Antonio, Texas, she met a wonderful archivist who became her husband. In 2008, his work led them to Canyon, Texas. For over 25 years, Mildred taught English to adult non-native speakers from over 50 countries. After some years of formation, she was ordained a deacon in the Episcopal Church in 2016. This led to six years working as a hospice spiritual caregiver. She is now retired but continues as an active deacon at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, serving those in need.