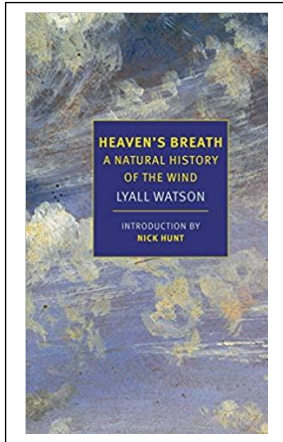


2026 Fall Read: *Wind and Weather*

Book List

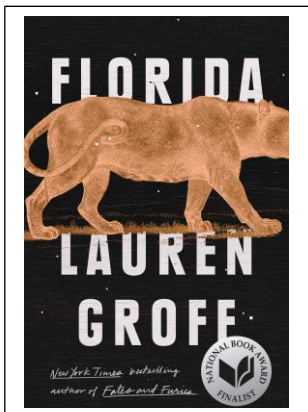


Heaven's Breath: A Natural History of the Wind by Lyall Watson, 2019

We rarely stop to think about the wind. We feel it on our faces, watch it ripple through wheat fields, hear it rustle the trees, yet it remains one of nature's most familiar—and most mysterious—forces. Invisible but ever present, the wind has shaped landscapes, influenced history, inspired artists and scientists, and quietly touched our lives every day.

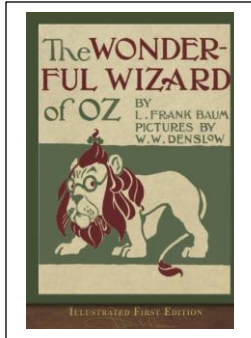
In *Heaven's Breath: A Natural History of the Wind*, Lyall Watson invites us to look more closely. Blending science, history, culture, and storytelling, he explores the many ways wind has influenced both the natural world and human civilization. It's a book that rewards curiosity and reminds us that even the most familiar parts of our world can reveal extraordinary stories when we pause to notice them.

Florida by Lauren Groff, 2018 (fiction, short stories)



Every place has its own weather, and every landscape leaves its mark on the people who live there. While the High Plains are shaped by wind, wide horizons, and sudden storms, Florida is a place of heat, humidity, lush landscapes, and the ever-present possibility of hurricanes. In Lauren Groff's acclaimed collection of short stories, weather is never just a backdrop. It influences how people live, what they fear, what they hope for, and how they understand home.

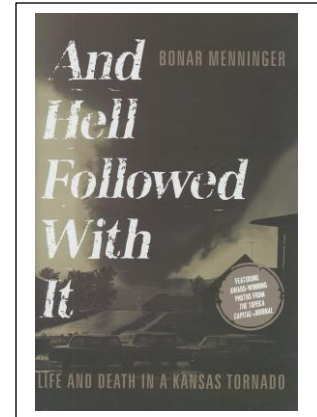
Groff's stories are sometimes funny, sometimes unsettling, and always deeply human. Her characters navigate relationships, family, loneliness, resilience, and change while living in a place where nature is both beautiful and unpredictable. Readers on the High Plains may recognize something familiar. Although our storms are different, weather has a way of shaping our routines, our memories, and even our sense of who we are.



The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (Illustrated First Edition): 100th Anniversary OZ Collection by L. Frank Baum (Author), W. W. Denslow (Illustrator) (June 12, 2019)

AND/OR

And Hell Followed with It: Life and Death in a Kansas Tornado by Bonar Menninger, 2010



Every High Plains family seems to have a tornado story. Some are rooted in history. Some become family legends. Others begin with the simple words, "*My dad always used to say...*" Long before weather apps, Doppler radar, and instant alerts, people learned to live with the uncertainty of tornadoes by sharing stories—some practical, some reassuring, and some simply unforgettable.

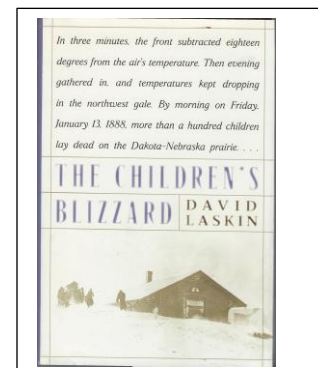
This year's paired selection explores two very different ways of understanding one of nature's most powerful storms. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* transformed a Kansas tornado into one of America's most enduring works of fiction, carrying Dorothy from the prairie into a world of imagination and possibility.

And Hell Followed With It recounts the devastating 1966 Topeka tornado, where the long-held belief that Burnett's Mound protected the city was shattered by one of the most destructive storms in Kansas history.

Together, these books invite us to explore how tornadoes become both folklore and history—and how the stories they leave behind help define a place and its people.

The Children's Blizzard by David Laskin, 2005 (historical)

On January 12, 1888, what began as an ordinary winter morning across the Great Plains became one of the deadliest weather disasters in American history. A sudden Arctic front swept across the prairie with little warning, trapping children on their way home from one-room schools, isolating families, and forever changing the communities that survived it.



In *The Children's Blizzard*, David Laskin tells two remarkable stories. One is the deeply personal story of the people who lived through the storm. Drawing on letters, diaries, newspaper accounts, and personal recollections, he reconstructs the experiences of ordinary families whose voices might otherwise have been lost to history. Their stories

remind us why preserving personal memories matters—not only for families, but for all who seek to understand our shared past.

The second is the story of a nation still learning how to understand and communicate the weather. The blizzard exposed the limitations of the nation's early weather forecasting and communication systems, reminding us that accurate forecasts, timely warnings, and public trust can save lives. The lessons learned from tragedies like the Children's Blizzard helped shape the weather forecasting and emergency communication systems we rely on today.

2026 Fall Read: *Wind and Weather*

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Florida by Lauren Groff, 2018

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (Illustrated First Edition): 100th Anniversary OZ Collection by L. Frank Baum, illus by W. W. Denslow, 2019 (classic)

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ON-AIR, LIVE DISCUSSION
Sunday, November 15, 2026