

I make no claims to read everything that gets published in a given year.

I can't even claim - the crates and crates of books that arrive almost

daily to my little corner of the Tulsa World to the contrary - to

receive review copies of every book published. So any "Best Books of the Year"

list your humble correspondent might cobble together would be idiosyncratic in the extreme. Instead,

we turn to our friend the Internet to assemble a selection of lists created

by esteemed and distinguished colleagues from around the country, to provide an overview of

the books that most people who read books for a living enjoyed above all

others in 2012. If any conclusion might be drawn from these lists, it is

that the two most admired books of the year were Hilary Mantel's Man Booker

Prize-winning novel about Thomas Cromwell, "Bring Up the Bodies," and Katherine Boo's account of

life in a subcontinent slum, "Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death and Hope in

a Mumbai Undercity," which earned a National Book Award. Another book frequently cited as

one of the year's best was "House of Stone: A Memoir of Home, Family

and a Lost Middle East," by Oklahoma City native Anthony Shadid, published one month

after the Pulitzer Prize-winning correspondent for the New York Times died while covering the

war in Syria. The New York Times "Bring Up the Bodies," by Hilary Mantel.

"Building Stories," by Chris Ware. A ground-breaking graphic novel presented in 14 separate forms:

pamphlets, books, foldout pages. "A Hologram for the King," by Dave Eggers. Absurdist despair

in Saudi Arabia. "NW," by Zadie Smith. Four childhood friends go their diverse ways

in modern London. "The Yellow Birds," by Kevin Powers. Novel of the Iraq war

by former soldier, about the fate of two young combatants. "Behind the Beautiful Forevers:

Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity," by Katherine Boo. "Far from the

Tree: Parents, Children, and the Search for Identity," by Andrew Solomon. Results of a

decade-long study of raising uniquely challenging children. "The Passage of Power: The Years of

Lyndon Johnson," by Robert A. Caro. Fourth volume in this biography series about a

seminal figure in American politics. "The Patriarch: The Remarkable Life and Turbulent Times of Joseph P. Kennedy," by David Nasaw. Close examination of the Kennedy patriarch and his influence over 20th-century American history. "Why Does the World Exist? An Existential Detective Story," by Jim Holt. Good question. The Washington Post "Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity," by Katherine Boo. "House of Stone: A Memoir of Home, Family, and a Lost Middle East," by Anthony Shadid. Memoir about a year Shadid spent restoring his great-grandfather's home in southern Lebanon. "Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe, 1944-1956," by Anne Applebaum. How Stalin turned this agricultural region into an industrial wasteland. "Marigold: The Lost Chance for Peace in Vietnam," by James G. Hershberg. History of the aborted peace talks in 1966 that could have ended the war. "Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty," by Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson. Argues that institutions make the difference between the wellbeing of a nation. "Arcadia," by Lauren Groff. A hopeful twist on the utopian novel. "Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk," by Ben Fountain. Called the "Catch-22" of the Iraq War. "Bring Up the Bodies," by Hilary Mantel. "Broken Harbor," by Tana French. Psychological thriller set in Dublin. "Canada," by Richard Ford. A man looks back at the turning point of his life, when his parents robbed a bank and hid him away in Saskatchewan. USA Today "Flight Behavior," by Barbara Kingsolver. An encounter with butterflies sets a woman off on a new path in life. "Bring Up the Bodies," by Hilary Mantel. "Are You My Mother? A Comic Drama," by Alison Bechdel. Graphic memoir of unusual family relationship. "Gone Girl," by Gillian Flynn. Brilliant, unsettling thriller about a marriage going wrong. "The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry," by Rachel Joyce. English gent decides to walk the length of England to visit a dying friend. "The Patriarch: The Remarkable Life and Turbulent Times of Joseph P. Kennedy," by David Nasaw. "The Fault in Our Stars," by John Green. Young-adult tragicomedy about teens in a cancer support group. "What It Was," by George Pelecanos. Thriller about a spree killer in

1972 Washington, D.C. "Canada," by Richard Ford. "Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity," by Katherine Boo. Publishers Weekly "Building Stories," by Chris Ware. "Bring Up the Bodies," by Hilary Mantel. "The Round House," by Louise Erdrich, Award-winning coming-of-age story, as an American Indian teenager investigates an attack against his mother. "Happiness Is a Chemical in the Brain," by Lucia Perillo. Short stories by a prize-winning poet. "The Devil in Silver," by Victor LaValle. Thriller set in a psychiatric ward that blends realism and the supernatural. "Detroit City Is the Place to Be: The Afterlife of an American Metropolis," by Mark Binelli. Story of Motor City's dramatic reversal of fortune. "All We Know: Three Lives," by Lisa Cohen. Collection of short biographies pivotal women in early 20th-century history. "People Who Eat Darkness: The True Story of a Young Woman Who Vanished from the Streets of Tokyo," by Richard Lloyd Parry. Dark, true tale of murder that reveals disturbing side of Japanese society. "The Barbarous Years: The Peopling of British North America: The Conflict of Civilizations, 1600-1675," by Bernard Bailyn. Hope and violence in early American history. "Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe, 1945-1956," by Anne Applebaum. Original Print Headline: Best of the 'Best of' lists