



**Michael Giltz, Contributor** BookFilter creator

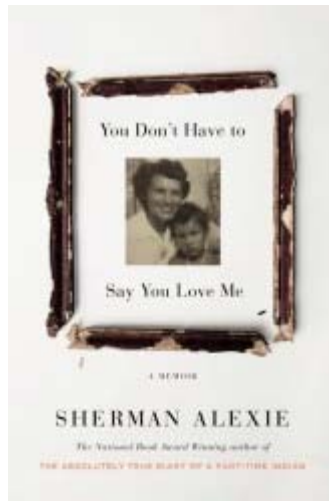
# BookFilter: Sherman Alexie's New Memoir, The Dangers Of Gene Editing and "The Fall Of Shannara"

06/16/2017 12:35 pm ET

**Hey Book Lovers!** Happy Bloomsday and welcome to our latest Top Picks Of The Week! We couldn't resist waiting to Friday, June 16 for this week's newsletter, since that's Bloomsday, the day on which the events of James Joyce's novel *Ulysses* take place. As is our annual tradition, we'll recite the novel from memory at our local pub while having a drink every time the name Stephen is mentioned. Of course public readings take place in Dublin and NYC and indeed all over the world today so find out if it's happening in your area and give a listen. Mind you, if you've never read Joyce, don't start with the daunting *Ulysses*. Head right to his classic collection of short stories, *Dubliners*. And whether you're about to go to your favorite bookstore, library or online retailer, head first to BookFilter and you'll discover all the best new releases in every genre. Then let us know what you think about the newsletter and when it arrives in your box! And stay cool!

## What we're reading:

- YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY YOU LOVE ME by Sherman Alexie (**memoir, current affairs**)
- THE MARSH KING'S DAUGHTER by Karen Dionne (**mystery/thriller**)
- HUNGER by Roxane Gay (**memoir, self-help**)
- THE ACCOMPLISHED GUEST by Ann Beattie (**fiction**)
- A CRACK IN CREATION by Jennifer A. Doudna and Samuel H. Sternberg (**science, memoir**)
- THE FALL OF SHANNARA by Terry Brooks (**fantasy**)
- YOUNG RADICALS by Jeremy McCarter (**history, biography**)
- FOREVER AND A DEATH by Donald E. Westlake (**thriller**)
- BLUE SKY WHITE STARS by Sarvinder Naberhaus and Kadir Nelson (**picture book**)
- THE CHANGELING by Victor LaValle (**fiction, horror**)



## YOU DON'T HAVE TO SAY YOU LOVE ME by Sherman Alexie

Sherman Alexie is a poet, speaker, activist and writer perhaps best known for his young adult classic "The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian." It's somewhat autobiographical and for fans who have read it, this memoir is a funhouse mirror, as stories we have heard pop up but sometimes end differently or are sadder or rawer in ways. But this isn't a memoir covering Alexie's whole life so much as circling around and coming to grips with the complicated relationship he had with his mother. She is the beating heart, the inscrutable mystery and the reason for this work by the Spokane-Coeur d'Alene-American writer. It offers up poetry and stories and facts and descriptions of Sherman and his siblings debating what was and wasn't true about their mother and their lives. This is an essay, a memoir, a history, a cry from the heart, a challenge to other Indians and a baring of his soul. Above all, by insisting on the unvarnished truth, it is an honor song to his mother. Poems can be found throughout but it's also poetry from start to finish..... [Read More](#).

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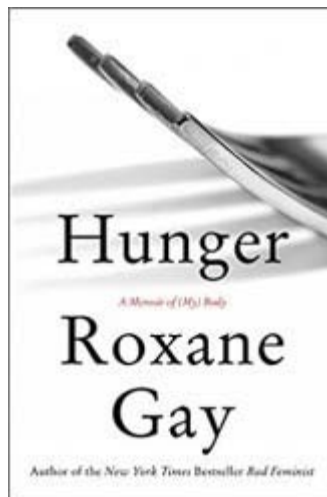


## THE MARSH KING'S DAUGHTER by Karen Dionne

A riveting adventure story that just leaps off the page. This thriller is loosely based on -- well, actually co-mingled with -- Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale of the same name about a lovely young princess cursed by an evil marsh king. Karen Dionne's modern take has all the gruesome violence and desperate circumstances that classic fairy tales are known for. While Helena Pelletier is growing up, she doesn't realize it's unusual to be living in a cabin in the marshes of Michigan's Upper Peninsula without benefit of schooling, communication, modern day conveniences or normal everyday human company. She doesn't particularly respect her mother, a silent and fearful young woman. But she adores her father, who knows all the wilderness lore the family needs to survive in its strange isolation. Dionne writes this part of the book like an entertaining adventure so you don't guess how sinister this book is going to become when she slowly realizes her father abducted her mother, raped her, kept her a prisoner for years and Helena is the result. The novel opens with Helena now a grown woman and mother learning that her father has escaped from the prison she helped put him into years ago. And there is no doubt in her mind who he is coming for..... [Read More](#).

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## HUNGER by Roxane Gay

The self-help books of people struggling with issues of body image and extreme obesity are rarely written by authors of this calibre. Which may explain why best-selling author Roxane Gay (*Bad Feminist*) could potentially both inspire people struggling with weight and already produce a book earning raves from the likes of Ann Patchett.... [Read More](#).

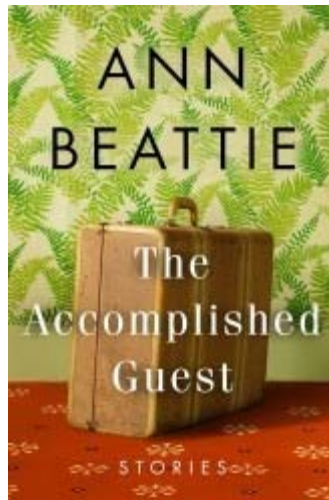
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## THE CATHOLIC CHURCH DROPS ITS LIST OF BANNED BOOKS

Pope Pius VI was a bit of a party pooper. On June 14, 1966, he ended the Catholic Church's formal listing of banned books, known by the Latin name of the Index Librorum Prohibitorum. That took some of the fun out of reading no-no's like the Greek classic *The Last Temptation Of Christ* and Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. The index was no dusty relic of the past, by the way. In the 1940s and 1950s, the Church banned two books by Simone de Beauvoir and everything by André Gide, Jean-Paul Sartre and Alberto Moravio, among others. So why'd they stop? Too many books! A bishop complained there was simply too much commercial fiction for the Church to keep up. Fun fact: Charles Darwin's *On The Origin Of Species* was never on the list.

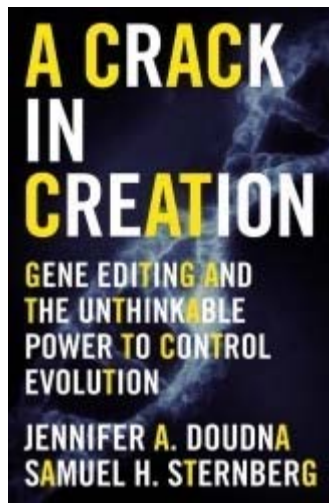
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### THE ACCOMPLISHED GUEST by Ann Beattie

More than 40 years after publishing both her first novel and first collection of stories in 1976, Ann Beattie returns with new tales to tell. As the title suggests, many stories revolve around trips and dealing with guests or being a guest and the perils in whatever role you're playing. Droll humor of course is a constant.... [Read More](#).[Discover 36 New Fiction Titles Here!](#)

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A CRACK IN CREATION by Jennifer A. Doudna and Samuel H. Sternberg

We often imagine scientists pushing forward the frontiers of knowledge. ethics be damned. But it was scientists who first grappled with the awesome power of nuclear weapons. And now it is scientists who are awed and fearful of the extraordinary potential and danger of gene editing. Jennifer Doudna has been at the forefront of both the discover of gene editing as a practical tool and the call for a moratorium on its usage until the implications can be wrestled with. This is a scientific thriller, a primer on gene editing and a memoir of Doudna and her part in unlocking one of the most potentially revolutionary breakthroughs in history.... Read More.

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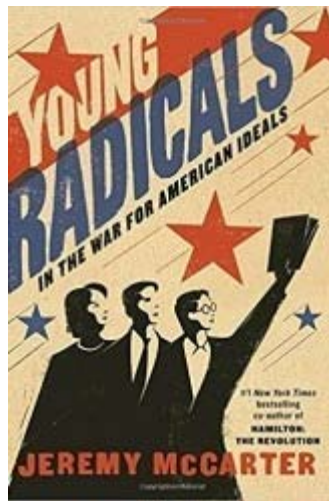


THE FALL OF SHANNARA by Terry Brooks

As a kid, the first fantasy I dove into after devouring *The Lord Of The Rings* was *The Sword Of Shannara* by Terry Brooks. Even my nascent critical thinking as a pre-teen sensed this was a pale copy of Tolkien. But by god it was fantasy and I wanted more Tolkien-like fantasy so it would do. Brooks got better and the Shannara series extended again and again with prequels and sequels. Here we have the promise of the chronological end of the series in a four book arc. Note that Brooks isn't saying these will be the last Shannara books the 73 year old author pens, just the last in the cycle. Like fantasy authors everywhere, Brooks has created his hugely popular post-apocalyptic world and he never really wants to leave.... [Read More](#).

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YOUNG RADICALS by Jeremy McCarter

Jeremy McCarter caught the break of a lifetime when he co-authored Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton: The Revolution* about the making of the runaway hit musical and its basis in history. Now he hopes to capitalize on that name recognition with this work of popular history. It looks at five young radicals who were fired up by a passion for social justice at the turn of the last century...only to see their ideals swallowed up by the tunnel-vision patriotism of World War I. His subjects include Randolph Bourne, Max Eastman, Walter Lippmann, Alice Paul and John Reed (the hero of Warren Beatty's film *Reds*). Their goals included peace, women's rights, freedom of speech and economic equality. Needless to say, each one is worthy of a full biography and their issues are still issues today..... [Read More](#).

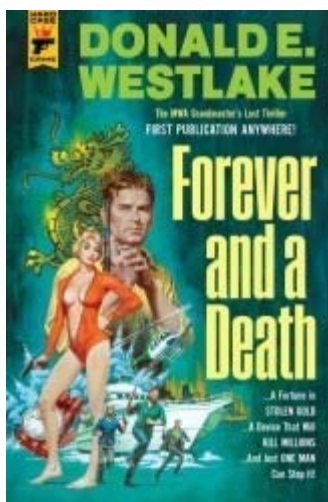
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**BLOOMSDAY IS HERE! JOYCEANS REJOYCE!**

Yes, June 16th is Bloomsday (and June 19th is Juneteenth, but that's an entirely different kettle of fish). Fans of James Joyce and his novel *Ulysses* read parts or all of it aloud in pubs and theaters and street corners around the world. It was never on the Pope's index of banned books, but it was wildly controversial. The magazine that serialized it was deemed pornographic and the book itself was banned virtually everywhere. The US was at the forefront of this and the Post Office would burn copies it seized throughout the 1920s. That ended in the 1930s when Random House forced a court case and won, making the US the first country in the English-speaking world where the book could be bought openly. (The judge wrote that despite its unusual frankness "I do not detect anywhere the leer of the sensualist." Besides, he added in reference to the randy bits, it was important to remember that "the characters are Celtic and the time is Spring.") Mind you, it's filled more with dense word play and metaphoric madness than naughty bits a la *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Joyce's Ireland never banned the book, mainly because for years no one dreamed of even trying to sell it there.

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## FOREVER AND A DEATH by Donald E. Westlake

Here's the Bond film that got away. Admired by fellow mystery writers, the late Donald E. Westlake never became a name-brand author but he turned out a lot of great books, some very funny, some very tough-minded and all of them ideal for turning into movies and tv shows. (He wrote the Oscar-nominated script for *The Grifters*.) Westlake had enough juice to be approached in the 1990s by the producers behind James Bond to come up with a scenario for a new film. He did, setting it in Hong Kong. For various reasons, they took a pass but Westlake couldn't let a good idea die and turned it into a novel and then promptly filed it away. Now it's resurfaced and being officially published for the first time. Oh what Pierce Brosnan might have done with this.... [Read More](#).

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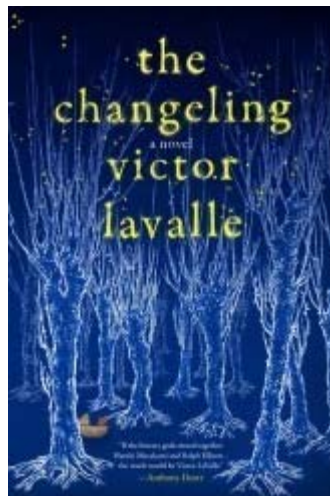


## BLUE SKY WHITE STARS by Sarvinder Naberhaus and Kadir Nelson

Here's a welcome reminder about what makes America great and the diverse people that embody our country. This picture book for kids includes everything from views of the Statue of Liberty from Ellis Island to Civil Rights marches to a rocket blasting off from Cape Canaveral, all of it wrapped in American flags in one form or another.... [Read More.](#)

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## THE CHANGELING by Victor LaValle

Here is a modern fairy tale set in New York City, a Grimm fairy tale with the grimness front and center. LaValle begins in compelling mode, telling of the romance and marriage of a young couple up to the point where the



wife Emma gives birth on a stalled subway train in a scene that is charm itself. Then things go wrong. The wife becomes more and more depressed (post-partum?) and the husband simply doesn't know what to do other than begging her to keep taking the medicine she's been prescribed. Things go truly off the rails in a way that would terrify any new parent. Part *Rosemary's Baby* (the movie, not the book), part Stephen King, LaValle's story is emotionally rich long before it treads into dark fantasy territory. It's creepy and fun and unexpected and if I wasn't wholly on board by the end (horror isn't quite my thing), I have to respect a book that I put aside once or twice because it was freaking me out a little. If you've just welcomed a newborn into the world, you might want to wait a while before reading this.... [Read More](#).

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