

Regan's List
Best of 2021

2020 

2021 

2022 

Merry List-mas to all, & to all a joyous '22.

Fiction 2021. *Best way to make sense of our jumbled past, abnormal present, & opaque future.*

- Elliot Ackerman & James Stavridis, *2034*. Eerily believable “pre-history” of next world war.
- Naima Coster, *What’s Mine and Yours*. From ‘90s Piedmont NC to today’s LA & Paris, epic.
- Andy Weir, *Hail Mary*. Imagineer of *The Martian* trains his creative eye on interstellar space.
- Maggie Shipstead, *Great Circle*. “I was shaped to the earth like a seabird to a wave.” ♥
- Imbolo Mbue, *How Beautiful We Were*. A step up from her spellbinding *Behold the Dreamers*.
- Kim Stanley Robinson, *Ministry for the Future*. Missed this eerily credible dystopia last year.
- Sadeqa Johnson, *Yellow Wife*. Pheby Brown joins Eliza, Linda Brent, Sethe, & Cora as vividly-imagined fictive American heroines defying slavery’s terrible yoke.
- Stephen Rowley, *The Guncle*. You won’t soon forget poignant-comic “Gay Uncle Patrick.”
- Morgan Jerkins, *Caul Baby*. “Something was bound to happen to Laila’s baby”: did it ever.
- Chip Schorr, *The Price*. Gripping political thriller; bends but doesn’t break plausibility meter.
- Ash Davidson, *Damnation Spring*. Naturalist’s ‘70s NoCal: Stephen King’s best read of year.
- John LeCarré, *Silverview*. Unsurpassed espionage dramatist’s beautiful coda of a novel.
- Rumaan Alam, *Leave the World Behind*. Microcosmic dystopia: grid goes down...or does it?
- Terry Roberts, *My Mistress’ Eyes Are Raven Black*. Dean of southern fiction turns eye north.
- Leesa Cross-Smith, *This Close to Okay*. Star of Bookmarks-fest delivers a redemptive gem.
- Karl Ove Knausgård, *The Morning Star*. No fan of his richly-drawn interior lives? Should be.
- Steve Nedvidek, *Jekyll Island Chronicles: A Last Call*. Absorbing trilogy thunders to close.
- Haruki Murakami, *First Person Singular*. Eight stories, displaying a breathtaking inventive range, from an imaginary Charlie Parker album to an appealingly believable talking monkey.
- Colson Whitehead, *Harlem Shuffle*. Crackling dialogue on every page of fun-ride heist tale.
- Katie Kitamura, *Intimacies*. Closely-examined cosmopolitan--& ultimately unmoored—life.
- Amor Towles, *The Lincoln Road*. Such realized characters I dreamt I’d joined their epic trip.
- Chang-Rae Lee, *My Year Abroad*. Title meant ironically; therein lies unputtable-down tale.
- Dana Spiotta, *Wayward*. As if an Anne Tyler lead fetched up in a very dark place.
- Jason Mott, *Hell of a Book*. Truth in packaging.
- Kazuo Ishiguro, *Klara and the Sun*. Poses new Turing (fictional AI) test: emphatic teary ‘yes.’
- Lauren Groff, *Matrix*. Twelfth-century poet Marie de France unforgettably re-imagined.
- Honoree Fanonne Jeffers, *The Love Songs of W.E.B. Du Bois*. Compelling fiction debut.
- Anthony Doerr, *Cloud Cuckoo Land*. David Mitchell x Madeline Miller, to staggering effect.

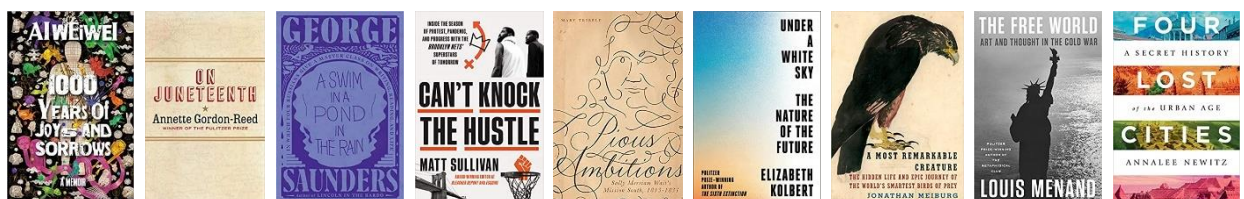
A Game/B Game [Great novelists not at best--& still top others’ A game. Hat-tip to Drew L.]

- Russell Banks, *Foregone*. Exquisite prose stylist’s most cantankerously unloveable protagonist.
- Louise Erdrich, *The Sentence*. Love her writing so; this an uneven mix of ghost story & reality.
- Mieko Kawakami, *Heaven, Breasts & Eggs* a 2020 smash; this a newly-translated early work.
- Stephen King, *Billy Summers*. Surprisingly moving anti-hero’s journey; up there with *1963*.
- Margaret Verble, *When Two Feathers Fell From the Sky*. Engaging; fell short of *Maud’s Line*.



Non-Fiction '21. *Deep gratitude to those who, amid plague, wrote on every imaginable subject.*

- **Arts/Culture:** Louis Menand, *The Free World*. Art/thought during the Cold War: magisterial.
- **Autobiography:** Ai Weiwei, *1000 Years of Joys & Sorrows*. The unlikely rise of a true artist.
- **Biography, Collective:** Rebecca Traister et al, *Take Up Space*. AOC phenomenon in vignettes.
- **Biography, As Told To:** Winfred Rembert, *Chasing Me to My Grave*. Art-making in Jim Crow.
- **Biography:** Peter Bergen, *The Rise & Fall of Osama bin Laden*. Amazing access to details.
- **Cognition:** Julia Galef, *The Scout Mindset*. You just *think* you're the rational one. Illuminating.
- **Economics:** Dorothy Brown, *The Whiteness of Wealth*. Equitable tax reforms. Great rec Kami!
- **Election 2020:** Amie Parnes & Jonathan Allen, *Lucky*. Sweeping retelling of Biden 2020 win.
- **Environment:** Elizabeth Kolbert, *Under a White Sky*. Clear-eyed look at our parlous future.
- **Food:** Bailey/Morisamo, *Black, White & The Grey*. Food as portal to friendship. Hat-tip José.
- **Good Life:** Whitney Tilson, *The Art of Playing Defense*. Much wisdom, vivifyingly told.
- **Humanism:** Clint Smith, *How the Word is Passed*. Searing, poetic survey of slavery's legacy.
- **Horology:** David Rooney, *About Time*. A trip through human civilization via a dozen...clocks.
- **Int'l Relations:** Kahl & Wright, *Aftershocks*. Rise & fall of international order. Thanks Beth!
- **Life-Inspiration:** Brené Brown, *Atlas of the Heart*. Wasn't a believer until COVID, but now—
- **Literary Masterclass:** George Saunders, *A Swim in a Pond in the Rain*. Sign me up.
- **Memoir:** Nastassja Martin, *In the Eye of the Wild*. Head-spinning trip opens with bear attack.
- **Military:** Malcolm Gladwell, *The Bomber Mafia*. WWII tech gets the Gladwell treatment.
- **Moral Philosophy:** Christian Miller, *Honesty*. 1st serious study of this crucial topic in years (!).
- **Music:** Kelefa Sanneh, *Major Labels*. NYer music critic collects trenchant & reliable reviews.
- **NYC:** Thomas Dyja, *New York, New York, New York*. How the edgy 70s begat the rest.
- **Pandemic:** Michael Lewis, *The Premonition*. True heroes who kept COVID from being worse.
- **Poetry:** Rita Dove, *Playlist for the Apocalypse*. Better than anything you'll find on Spotify.
- **Political Culture:** George Packer, *Last Best Hope*. American passion for equality may save us.
- **Political Philosophy:** Kei Hiruta, *Hannah Arendt & Isaiah Berlin*. Honest clash of ideas.
- **Racial Justice:** Yusef Salaam, *Better, Not Bitter*. Stirring account by member of Central Park 5.
- **Religion:** Henry L. Gates Jr., *The Black Church*. How the Word was also passed. H/tip Mycha.
- **Science:** Carlo Rovelli, *Helgoland*. Quantum revolution accessibly dissected.
- **Social Media:** Pete Davis, *Dedicated*. "Case for commitment in an age of infinite browsing."
- **South, Culture:** Ed Southern, *Fight Songs*. The South, college football, life its ownself. A++.
- **South, History:** Mary Tribble, *Pious Ambitions*. Honor to blurb this sterling recovery of a life.
- **Sport:** Matt Sullivan, *Can't Knock the Hustle*. Brooklyn Nets hoops & social justice in Covid.
- **Travel:** Jonathan Meiburg, *A Most Remarkable Creature*. Truly, a most remarkable book.
- **Urbanity:** Annalee Newitz, *Four Lost Cities*. A telling & heartbreaking quartet; rec-thx Maria.
- **US History, Essays:** Annette Gordon-Reed, *On Juneteenth*. Deftly mixing memoir & analysis.
- **US History, Narrative:** Alan Taylor, *American Republics*. First 75 years of the US experiment.
- **Wine:** Ian Taplin, *The Napa Valley Wine Industry*. Fresh illuminations on every page; cheers!



Longreads 2021

So many vibrant new journals...thankfully, with so many new topics to ponder. Besides variants.

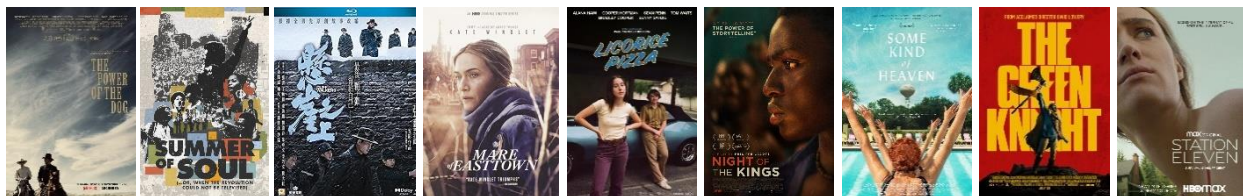
- Matthieu Aikins, "[Inside the Fall of Kabul](#)," *NYT Mag*. Harrowing read. H/tip to Adam.
- William Antholis, "[Why Greece Can Be a Powerful Ally](#)," *The Dispatch*. Σύμμαχοι forever.
- Anne Appelbaum, "[The Bad Guys Are Winning](#)," *Atlantic*. 21st c. as totalitarianism rising.
- Neil Atkinson, "[Suddenly Liverpool Was Having A Pint](#)," *The42*. UK football prose: brilliant.
- Michael Azzerad, "[My Time With Kurt Cobain](#)," *New Yorker*. Moving as hell, 25 years on.
- Ann Babe, "[You Can't Go Home Again](#)," *Rest of World*. Korean adoptees unified on Facebook.
- Janet Bednarek, "[How People End Up Living In Airports for Years](#)," *The Conversation*. !!!
- Aaron Benanav, "[Do We Need to Work?](#)" *Nation*. For most of our history, we valued free time.
- Matt Bennett/Jon Cowan, "[Staying Centered: Biden Best Bet](#)," *Ripon Forum*. Op-ed as augury.
- Dylan Byron, "[No Thanks to the Academy](#)," *Lapham's Quarterly*. What English dearly needs.
- Nile Cappelo, "[The Girl in the Picture](#)," *The Atavist*. Don't read late at night.
- Clio Chang, "[OK, Seriously](#)," *CJR*. How *Teen Vogue* became bastion of socialist feminism (!).
- Kieran Dahl, "[One-Horse Town](#)," *Eater*. The sole resident of Monowi, Nebraska, tells all.
- Wolfgang de Melo, "[Gender in Latin & Beyond](#)," *Antigone*. How languages gender their nouns.
- Geraldine DeRuiter, "[Worst Michelin Starred Restaurant, Ever](#)," *Everywhereist*. Stay away.
- Aaron Dodson, "[Serena Williams' 1st Endorsement Deal](#)," *Undefeated*. Money, race, & sport.
- Rob Dongoski, "[Digital Agriculture: Enough to Feed Rapidly Growing World?](#)" *EY*. Prolly not.
- Briohny Doyle, "[Aftermath](#)," *Griffith Review*. "We wait for aftermath so we might be renewed."
- Lee Drutman, "[How Much Longer Can This Political Gridlock Last?](#)" *538.com*. Indeed.
- Pete Dyson, "[Designing Transport for Humans, Not Econs](#)," *Behavioral Scientist*. If only.
- Katherine Eban, "[The Lab-Leak Theory](#)," *Vanity Fair*. Tangled research on COVID origins.
- Jordan Ellenberg, "[The Math of the Amazing Sandpile](#)," *Nautilus*. How sandpiles explain us.
- Hilal Elver, "[The Global Food System Isn't Working](#)," *Project Syndicate*. COVID in full effect.
- Anjali Enjeti, "[Bizarro Bavaria](#)," *Bitter Southerner*. Not heard of Helen, GA? Take a gander.
- Jason Fagone, "[The Jessica Simulation](#)," *SF Chronicle*. Love, loss, & AI 'rebirth'—whoa.
- Jiayang Fan, "[Gatekeepers: What Food is Disgusting](#)," *New Yorker*. Sweden's bizarre museum.
- Linda Greenhouse, "[Grievance Conservatives Here to Stay](#)," *NYRB*. Religion, culture, & law.
- Carol Hanner, "[Reading the River](#)," *WFU Magazine*. A life spent literally in the flow.
- Carl Hart, "[I Am a Heroin User](#)," *Nautilus*. Responsibly-used heroin: the new alcohol?
- Simone Haysom, "[The Genius of Retreat](#)," *Popula*. How hyper-dense urban living will save us.
- Morela Hernandez, "[Why Good Leaders Fail](#)," *MIT Review*. Better support systems can help.
- Lauren Hilgers, "[We Are So Divided Now](#)," *Guardian*. China extends thought/speech control.
- Danny Hillis, "[6 Things/Designing Your Child](#)," *Neo.Life*. Jonathan Swift parody, updated.
- Matthew von Hippel, "[The Big Bang](#)," *4gravitons*. What we know about the universe's origins.
- Judith Hoare, "[One Woman's Six-Word Mantra](#)," *Psyche*. Devised 60 years ago; fresh still.
- James Hobson, "[Guide to Your Stagecoach Journey](#)," *G&V Britain*. Haute travel, 205 yrs ago.

- Linda Holmes, "[What I Learned From Watching Every Sport at Tokyo Olympics](#)," *NPR*. 🏰
- Herminia Ibarra, "[3 Phases of a Major Life Change](#)," *HBR*. Worth a look, whatever your lot.
- Sun Jiahui, "[Things Confucius Never Said](#)," *World of Chinese*. Charming & instructive.
- Christopher K, "[Is There Still a Space for Long Hip-Hop Albums?](#)" *OKPlayer*. Maybe....
- Eric Klinenberg, "[Infrastructure...Is About the Society We Want](#)," *NYT*. Amen, brother.
- Dirk Kurbjuweit, "[The Era of Missed Opportunities](#)," *Der Spiegel*. Merkel's legacy, first cut.
- Zachary Loeb, "[The Magnificent Bribe](#)," *Real Life*. Trading our autonomy for wondrous tech.
- Matias López, "[Risk of Democratic Reversal in the U.S.](#)," *PS*. Polisci tackles a grave concern.
- Adewale Maja-Pearce, "[One Foot Out of the Grave](#)," *London Review of Books*. Rwanda redux.
- Lauren Markham, "[The Crow Whisperer](#)," *Harper's*. We've come a long way, Dr. Doolittle.
- Katie Mather, "[Bun! A Taxonomy of the British Bread Roll](#)," *Pellicle*. All there in the title.
- Alexis McCrossen, "[Why Do We Count Down to the New Year?](#)" *Zocalo*. New since '70s (!).
- Paula Mejia, "[The Secret Life of H.G. Carrillo](#)," *Rolling Stone*. Jaw-droppingly tragic.
- Ligaya Mishan, "[Hayao Miyazaki Casts One Last Spell](#)," *NYT Style*. Artisanal filmmaker's last.
- Mitch Moxley, "[Knives Outback](#)," *Truly Adventurous*. All 12 town residents: murder suspects.
- Mandy Nguyen, "[Animals that May Exist in a Million Years](#)," *Vox*. As imagined by biologists.
- Suzanne O'Sullivan, "[Why Children Fell Into Endless Sleep](#)," *Nautilus*. Another parent worry.
- Gabriella Paiella, "[How the Maestro Got His Hands Back](#)," *GQ*. The wonders of bionic gloves.
- Shane Parrish, "[How to Remember What You Read](#)," *FS*. Useful how-to (for a list-keeper, eg!).
- Anne Patchett, "[How to Practice](#)," *New Yorker*. On shedding possessions, all-too-humanly.
- Faith Pinho, "[They Set Out to Hike US's 3 Longest Trails...](#)" *LA Times*. Triple Crown: elusive.
- Emily Ratajkowski, "[Buying Myself Back](#)," *The Cut*. 'Owning' our own images in digital age.
- Mickey Rapkin, "[Beeple Maina](#)," *Esquire*. How an artist named Mike makes millions on pixels.
- Carlo Rotella, "[The Queen's Gamble](#)," *Wash. Post Mag*. Legendary blues singer turns political.
- Jennifer Senior, "[What Bobby McIlvaine Left Behind](#)," *Atlantic*. Best of 9/11 20th sorrows.
- Baya Simons, "[The Most Brilliant Bookshops in the World](#)," *FT*. My post-COVID travel roster.
- Vaclav Smil, "[Gigantism a Never-Ending Temptation](#)," *Spectrum*. From Pyramids to Hummer.
- Rogers Smith, "[White Protectionism in America](#)," *Perspectives on Politics*. Trump examined.
- Jude Stewart, "[The Act of Smelling](#)," *Believer*. Science solved all our senses—except this one.
- Samanth Subramian, "[No One Knows How \\$80b in Climate Financing Was Spent](#)," *QZ*. Damn.
- Sharon Suh, "[Loving Lies](#)," *Airmail*. Stephen Glass, 20+ years on, telling one last (lovely) lie.
- Gina Anne Tam, "[The Invention of Chinese](#)," *History Today*. How Mandarin became official.
- Kaitlyn Tiffany, "[Rise/Fall: American Tech Giant](#)," *Atlantic*. Kodak Moments fewer & fewer.
- Boen Wang, "[The 21st Chromosome](#)," *SLR*. Who decides whose life is worth living?
- John Wentworth, "[Making Vaccine](#)," *LessWrong*. Can-do US DIY spirit...in a pandemic.
- Kevin Williamson, "[What is Texas?](#)" *National Review*. Engrossing existential exploration.
- Graeme Wood, "[Putin's Potemkin Paradise](#)," *American Scholar*. Read it and плакатъ.
- Caitlin Zaloom, "[The Broken Promise of Retirement](#)," *NYRevBks*. Made me fear for US future.
- Carl Zimmer, "[What Is Life?](#)" *Quanta*. Indelible: biologists' attempt to define the undefinable.

Films/TV 2021

If you're seeking...

- 1930s **noir** spy thriller set in...old China: **Cliff Walkers**. Zhang Yimou: Oscar worthy.
- 1940s **noir** drama set in...carnivals & mentalists: **Nightmare Alley**. Toni Collette: ditto.
- 1950s **noir** heist set in...Detroit: **The Card Counter**. Don Cheadle: ditto again..
- Understated buddy film with Colin Firth & astonishing Stanley Tucci: **Supernova**.
- Understated true tale of WWII-eve treasure-trove UK find, a gem in own right: **The Dig**.
- 60s music/cultural scene reinvigorated, documentary style, I: **The Velvet Underground**.
- 60s (etc.) II, exhuming glorious 1969 Harlem Cultural Festival: **Summer of Soul**.
- 60s (etc.) III, Peter Jackson's gripping reconstruction of ~~Hobbits~~ Beatles history: **Get Back**.
- New Ryusuke Hamaguchi joint: **Drive My Car**. New to this deft magical minimalist? Enjoy!
- New Wes Anderson joint: **The French Dispatch**. Vintage Anderson: wacky & wise by turns.
- New Jane Campion joint (her best yet): **The Power of the Dog**.
- Best offbeat series since *Fleabag*: **Only Murders In the Building**. Martin/Short/Gomez: ✨
- Best gambling film since *Rounders*: **The Card Counter**. Has Oscar Isaac ever disappointed?
- Best '70s period piece since *Boogie Nights*: **Licorice Pizza**. Well hello, Haim baby sister!
- Best Star Wars since *Star Wars*: **Space Sweepers**. Our dystopian moment, via South Korea.
- Beats *Squid Games* at own game: **Vincenzo**. Ironic/dark comedy at its finest, in any language.
- Beats *WandaVision* at own game: **Loki**. Far better than expected. (And I liked WandaVision!)
- Beats COVID at own game: **Station Eleven**. Star of my 2015 novels list reborn as must-see TV.
- Beats every magic show ever: Derek Delgaudio/*In & Of Itself*. Gob-smacking. H/tip Matty.
- Unclassifiable Ivory Coast drama, evoking Scheherazade/1001 tales: **Night of the Kings**.
- Unclassifiable Nic Cage return to screen triumph, evoking Michael Pollan: **Pig**.
- Chinese dream, ascending: **Ascension**. Were I an Academy voter, best int'l documentary.
- Zimbabwean dream, deferred: **President**. Amazing Camilla Nielsson portrait of stolen election.
- American dream, declining: **Some Kind of Heaven**. Intimate portrait of Villages retirees.
- Italians dream of truffles: **The Truffle Hunters**. Old men & their truffle dogs (not pigs!).
- Superb superhero drama: **The Green Knight**. Dev Patel brings irony & dignity equally.
- Superb nonfiction TV adaptation: **Dopesick**. Arresting without turning overly preachy.
- Superb sad-cop series: **Mare of Easttown**. Kate Winslet a richly deserving Emmy winner.
- Politics movingly onscreen, I: **Mayor**. Charismatic leader of troubled Ramallah (Palestine).
- Politics (etc.), II: **Judas & the Black Messiah**. Unflinching account of Fred Hampton murder.
- Politics (etc.), II: **Belfast**. The Troubles a shadow in Kenneth Branagh love letter to his youth.



Tunes 2021: A cornucopia of musicians kept us centered. [Spotify link](#) (w/a few bonus tunes).

- A Winged Victory for the Sullen, [So That the City Can Begin to Exist](#). Lives up to its name.
- Aisha Badru, [The Way Back Home](#). Thomas Wolfe rebutted, via Yonkers & Nigeria.
- Arooj Aftab, [Last Night](#). Pakistani/Brooklyn singer-songwriter blends jazz & neo-Sufi sound.
- beabadoobee, [Last Day on Earth](#). Finest current confessional bedroom pop practitioner.
- Bela Fleck, [Charm School](#). Best picker alive jams merrily with equally gifted bluegrass-mates.
- Bhi Bhiman, [Paranoid](#). “Think I’ll lose my mind/If I don’t find something to pass it by.”
- Brandee Younger, [Reclamation](#). Greatest jazz harpist of our time w/strong new album.
- Brandi Carlile, [Right on Time](#). Precocious alt-country darling stronger in 40s. [Video](#) good too.
- Buena Vista Social Club (!), [Vincenta](#). 25 years on, remastered/rereleased & still transporting.
- Cynthia Erivo, [The Good](#). Ace debut album from captivating actress/equally talented musician.
- Daisy the Great, [Record Player](#). Indie-folk Brooklyn duo cut ’21’s most fun record. H/tip Ash!
- Dar Williams, [Time, Be My Friend](#). First saw her in ’93; time’s been her muse, at least.
- Death Cab for Cutie, [King of Carrot Flowers Pt. 1](#). Neutral Milk Hotel classic, 4-star cover.
- Donna Missal, [sex is good \(but have you tried\)](#). A cappella lilt, parental-consent lyrics.
- Freedom Fry, [Stayin’ Alive](#). Even better en français: “Oui tu peux voir, que dans ma demarche.”
- HAIM, [Gasoline](#). Frontsister Alana’s acting turn ([Licorice Pizza](#)) minor detour. Taylor guests.
- Jenn Grant, [Sons & Daughters](#). Close harmony, soaring spirits: Unbroken Circle, please cover!
- Jenny Lewis & Serengeti, [Unblu](#). Poignancy on vinyl (& digital 0010110s, etc.).
- Jensen McRae, [Immune](#). Witty backstory & tuneful extended metaphor for love in Covid age.
- José González, [Swing](#). Infectious beat from Argentinian-born, Swedish-raised musical maestro.
- Juice WRLD, [Life’s A Mess II](#). And still we beat on, boats against the current &c.
- Kabza De Small, [Folasade](#). Breakout amapiano hit, South Africa’s signature joyous sound.
- Lana Del Rey, [Text Book](#). Mesmerizing as ever; love [Arcadia](#) too, but no resisting this title...
- Lo Village, [Lost in America](#). Propulsive trip through modern US: “Tell me what’s going on?”
- Lorde, [Fallen Fruit](#). Anti-global warming anthem, with [video](#) to strengthen message.
- Maisie Peters, [John Hughes Movie](#). Fave title of year; song allllmost lives up to it.
- Mannequin Pussy, [Control](#). On verge of losing theirs throughout this fever-pitch banger.
- Masked Wolf, [Astronaut in the Ocean](#). The simile for our past 22 pandemic months.
- Mitski, [Working for the Knife](#). #MeToo—and #FlexWorkersUnite—in stirring song form.
- Moby (et. al.), [Natural Blues](#). Greatest vegan DJ remakes—w/guests—all-time classic [Play](#).
- Of Monsters & Men, [Phantom](#). Iceland’s finest produce their best since [I of the Storm](#).
- Old Sea Brigade, [Nothing Clever](#). Millennial love song: sweet-nostalgic, tortured, ambiguous.
- Paul McCartney & Beck, [Find My Way](#). 60s moptop, 90s badboy, 70s ([Talking Heads](#)) sound.
- Rita Payés & Elisabeth Roma, [Quien lo Diría](#). Timeless tune & sorrowful tale.
- Silk Sonic, [Leave the Door Open](#). All-star cast reinvents Seventies R&B; check it [out](#).
- Snøw, [Spilled My Coffee](#). Lads’ microcosmic bad day lament, Lo-fi style.
- SUUNS, [Witness Protection](#). Dark-electro innovators, messaging from world of their own.
- Valerie June, [Call Me a Fool](#). Soulful gospel-born voice recalls Aretha. Even better on [video](#).
- Vic Mensa, [SHELTER](#). “There’s a war goin’ on outside...” With genius Chance guest turn.
- The Weather Station, [Atlantic](#). Could listen all year to Tamara Lindeman’s voice.
- Tobacco City, [Never On My Mind](#). New band (not fm. Winston, alas) spins answer to Willie.
- Yumi Zouma, [In Camera/Unplugged](#). Cerebral indie quartet remakes intricate puzzle of a song.

Found Poem: Generational Voices
(Lyrics all penned by 20-somethings.)

I used to think I'd be done by twenty
Now at twenty-nine, the road ahead appears the same
Though maybe at thirty I'll see a way to change
That I'm living for the knife
(Mitski, Working for the Knife)

Thinking I should get all this dying off of my mind
I should really know better than to read the headlines
Does it matter if I see it?
No really, can I not just cover my eyes?
(Weather Station, Atlantic)

Thought I had it under control
But it shook me, gripped me, grabbed my soul
Heard it pound, it knocking on the door
(Valerie June, Call Me a Fool)

The darker the berry you feel a way
From Satchmo to Cab Calloway
Lost in America: Real saints of the latter day
(Lo Village, Lost in America)

Quién lo diría
ay mira que ironía (que ironía)
(Rita Payés & Elisabeth Remy, Quien lo Diría)

Grace far beyond my grasp
The rest is silence
(Arcoj Aftab, Last Night)

I am just a man on a rock
Who can't even find a matching pair of white Nike socks
That's a problem with my faith, I re-wire it, why do I even trip
But whatever, got this coffee, I'm taking another sip
(Snow, Spilled My Coffee)

Can you help me
Occupy my brain?
(Bhi Bhiman, Paranoid)

2021 Food: Blessed pre-Delta window's memorable meals included Clancy's (NOLA), NYC's Rezdôra & Blue Willow, Salt (Great Pond USVI), & John Currence's Oxford MS latest, Bouré. COVID still meant much Winston takeout as well as UPS delivery from **beloved spots** below.



Parkway Po'Boy (NOLA)



Antique Bakery (NYC)



Louie Mueller BBQ (Taylor TX)



The Grey (Savannah)



Ambassador General (London)



Langer's Deli (LA)



Skyline Chili (Cincinnati)



Emmy Squared (Bklyn)



Stüber Tuff (PDX). In [homage](#).

2021 Podcasts: All these great 'casts; so little time...

[Blind Date with a Book](#). Dating game matching guests with...a terrific new book. Good recs too.

[Crime Story](#). Annual list-lead; from [Ahmaud Arbery](#) murder to [Robert Durst](#) trial, spellbinding.

[Dish City](#). Pandemic-era food delivery, examined fully; politics & delectability in equal measure.

[Hit Parade](#). Eclectic pop-music history & trivia; [episodes](#) on punk's rise & fall will hook you.

[Mr. Difficult](#). Novelist Jonathan Franzen dissected. Still reading *Freedom* so that [episode](#)'s next.

[Not Past It](#). History's downstream lessons; [try](#) how Nazi occupation of Norway led to ABBA.

[Science Talk](#). Sheer breadth of topics stunning; listen in & you'll have a STEM honorary degree.

[Sweet Bobby](#). A true-life catfishing episode so disturbing you'll writhe along with Kirat Assi.

[This Is Love](#). Esp. "[What Gets Told](#)," with 100-year old civil rights activist Betty Reid Soskin.