Rogan's List 2022

Season's greetings all, from late afternoon (aka post-sunset darkness) in the Nordic spot I've been lucky to call home the past few months; more details in 'meals' below. As we all bid farewell—fond? wistful? good riddance?—to 2022, a look back at the year steaming—staggering? roaring? collapsing?—to a close.

Two poetic excerpts to mark the turning, published more than a century apart.

From Christina Rossetti:

Watch with me, men, women, and children dear, You whom I love, for whom I hope and fear, Watch with me this last vigil of the year. Some hug their business, some their pleasure-scheme; Some seize the vacant hour to sleep or dream; Heart locked in heart some kneel and watch apart.

And from **Richard Wilbur**:

These sudden ends of time must give us pause. We fray into the future, rarely wrought Save in the tapestries of afterthought. More time, more time. Barrages of applause Come muffled from a buried radio. The New-year bells are wrangling with the snow.

May your vigils (& businesses, & pleasure-schemes) keep well; wishing you no few applause-barrages...and to us each: more time, more time.



Fiction 2022

- · R.F. Kuang, *Babel*. Grand conceit (words + silver = magic), superbly delivered. Hat-tip SJP!
- · Monica Ali, *Love Marriage*. New angles on plot of our age: complexity of interracial love.
- · Coco Mellors, *Cleopatra & Frankenstein*. Finest new '22 novelist; nails modern urban life.
- · Percival Everett, Dr. No. Cheeky twist on Fleming's 007, with far suppler prose.
- · Emma Donohue, *Haven*. OG version of *On the Road*, starring unforgettable 7th-c. Irish monks.
- · Yiyun Lee, *The Book of Goose*. Sororal friendship's best treatment since Elena Ferrante.
- · Ali Smith, *Companion Piece*. Best of the cornucopia of COVID novels, narrator-isolates all.
- · Antonio Scurati, M: Son of the Century. Captivatingly-told life of Mussolini, in English at last.
- · Katherine Chen, *Joan*. And another brilliant novelistic reconstruction, this time of Joan of Arc.
- · Robert Perišić, *No-Signal Area*. Tragicomic tale of today's Central Europe, propulsively told.
- · Marlen Haushofer, *The Wall*. Published decades ago & just translated, this meeting of Atwood
- (feminist dystopia) and King (invisible dome, here a wall) sustains fascination/dread throughout.
- · Missouri Williams, *The Doloriad*. However bad your family was, the Matriarch has 'em beat.
- · Vigdis Hjorth, *Is Mother Dead*. Title captures theme well. Lovely Charlotte Barslund trans.
- Terry Roberts, *The Sky Club*. Jo Salter the most intriguing protagonist I 'met' this year.
- · Olga Ravn, *The Employees*. Danish future dystopia—ofc including well-run bureaucracy.
- Hernan Diaz, *Trust*. Title our 1st clue—& Diaz subject, money, is 2nd—that little is as it seems.
- · George Saunders, *Liberation Day*. New stories from established master of the form.
- · Jennifer Egan, *The Candy House*. Back to magical *Goon Squad*, in alt.style & some characters.
- · Cormac McCarthy, *The Passenger*. Shift from violent borderlands (*The Road; No Country*...)
- to watery deep & NOLA, with nary a step lost. Eagerly awaiting Vol. 2 (Stella Maris).
- · Emily St. John Mandel, Sea of Tranquility. Her voice—on page or aloud—truly distinctive.

A Game/B Game (novelists whose new 'B' works merit reading, better than most 'A' games)

- Barbara Kingsolver, *Demon Copperhead*. Dickens hero(ish) in today's South. Kingsolver's signature evocation of place (Congo, Tucson, et. al.) oddly diminished in her native region.
- · Namwali Serpell, *The Furrows*. Interest wandered at times; *That Old Drift* beguiled from p. 1.
- · Ian McEwan, *Lessons*. Literary gifts ably on display, if more languid than *Atonement* or *Chesil*.
- Olga Tokarczuk, *The Books of Jacob*. Still wading through this thousand-page tome; her prior (Nobel-winning) *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* haunts me still.
- · Elif Batuman, *Either/Or*. Selin's Harvard sophomore year; missing some of frosh sparkle.
- · Geraldine Brooks, *Horse*. Canters along engagingly... & led me to reread *People of the Book*.
- · Andrew Sean Greer, *Less Is Lost*. A treat to re-encounter Arthur Less, though he's lost a step.
- · Kate Atkinson, Shrines of Gaiety. Familiar ground-WWII aftermath, & ensemble cast.
- · Stephen King, Fairy Tale. King tackles one more genre (adult fairytales), to readable effect.



Nonfiction 2022

From origins of starlight (Ellis) to the promise of hope (Lamb, Setiya), best explorations of '22.

· Agriculture. Ellyn Gaydos, *Pig Years*. Life on smallholder farm, in our Age of Big Food. (For a darker portrait: Corban Addison's *Wastelands*, where poor NC residents take on hog giants.) · Architecture. Witold Rybczynski, The Story of Architecture. Monumental and accessible. · Astronomy. Richard Ellis, When Galaxies Were Born. Spellbinding, with photos to match. · Biography, 17th c. Katherine Rundell, *Super-Infinite*. Fascinating paradox of John Donne. · Biography, 19th c. Eric Wilson, *Dream-Child*. Supremely evocative account, singular subject. · Biography, 20th c. Justin Tinsely, *It Was All a Dream*. Life & rhythms of Notorious B.I.G. · Biotech. Amy Webb & Andrew Hessel, The Genesis Machine. Best of times, worst of times... · Comp Lit. Megan Walsh, The Subplot: What China is Reading & Why it Matters. Essential. · Criminal Justice. Nicholas Dawidoff, The Other Side of Prospect. Emphasis on 'justice.' • Dance. Jennifer Homans, Mr. B. Especially gripping: Balanchine's 1962 return to Russia. · Dictators. Andrew Weiss, Accidental Czar. Animation the perfect medium for Putin's life/lies. · Economics. Elizabeth P. Berman, *Thinking Like an Economist*. More indictment than paean. · Eire. Fintan O'Toole, We Don't Know Ourselves. Modern Ireland, in dark times & light. • Endings. Geoff Dyer, *The Last Days of Roger Federer*. Final works, from artists to athletes. · Essays. Zora Neale Hurston, You Don't Know Us Negroes. Pieces have aged achingly well. · Generations. Elizabeth Alexander, *The Trayvon Generation*. Searing...and redemptive. · Good Life. Emily Austin, *Living for Pleasure*. Happiness without anxiety? Epicurus's key. • Happiness. Arthur Brooks, Strength to Strength. How best to navigate life's downslope. · History, Deep. D. Graeber & D. Wengrow, The Dawn of Everything. Graeber's early death a tragic loss. Astonishing rethinking of human history, contra versions dating to Rousseau/Locke. · History, US modern. Adam Hochschild, American Midnight. When we were last this divided. · History, US early. M.J. Lee & Jarrod Atchison, We Are Not One People. Nor were we ever. · Journalism. Jonas Bendiksen, The Book of Veles. Exposé of fake-news capital--itself faked(!). · Libertarians. Andrew Koppelman, Burning Down the House. Sharp & incisive: classic Andy! · Linguistics. Marina Yaguello, *Imaginary Languages*. I read w/Babel, both wondrous-strange. · Medicine. Jay Wellons, All That Moves Us. Pediatric neurosurgeon also gifted wielding pen. • Memoir. Hua Hsu, *Stay True*. 1st-gen Taiwanese-American twin tale: self & departed friend. • Memoir. Marie Yovanovitch, *Lessons From the Edge*. US envoy to Ukraine; hair-raising. · Military. Halik Kochanski, *Resistance*. Various Europeans vs. WWII Nazis. Stirring, moving. • Nature. Karen Armstrong, *Sacred Nature*. Leading religious mind muses on vital intersection. · Peacemaker. Allen Pietrobon, Norman Cousins. Towering Cold War figure. Thx Emily W! • Philosophy. Kieran Setiya, *Life is Hard*. Ain't it just. Persuasive claim: philosophy can help. · Political Thought. Michael Lamb, A Commonwealth of Hope. Augustine as hopeful optimist. · Public Health. Sandro Galea, The Contagion Next Time. May we be better prepared. • Travel. Colin Thubron, The Amur River. /Epic 3000 miles along Chinese/Russian border. • Wetlands. Annie Proulx, *Fen, Bog & Swamp*. Fiction maestra enthuses eloquently on swamps. · Writing. Haruki Murakami, Novelist as a Vocation. Engrossing even for us non-novelists.



Longreads 2022

E. Alford, "How Wednesday Addams Birthed a Generation of Cynics," Longreads. Mordant fun. K. Bakker, "How to Speak Honeybee," Noema. Apiarist friends found this as fascinating as I. G. Bishop, "Scenes & Soul from Saudi Arabia," SI. Cryptic kingdom honors World Cup upset. J. Bradley, "Should We Be Eating Three Meals a Day?" BBC. Nutrition research suggests not. D. Campbell, "The Humiliating History of the TSA," Verge. Are we safer? Alas: no. D. Chalmers, "Adventures in Technophilosophy," Literary Hub. Rise & future of virtual worlds. L. Cookman, "The Siege of Azovstal," 1843. Standout amid wealth of Ukraine war reporting. H. Darken, "What is a Square?" Plus. Instructive, striking piece by...19-y/o (!) student Hannah. J. Douglas, "The Case for the 16-Year-Old Vote," Wash. Monthly. Movement has momentum. D. Eggers, "Glorified Backpack of Tubes & Turbines," Guardian. Why don't jetpacks catch on? R. Friedman, "An End-of-Life Doula's Advice..." Vox. EOL doula wisdom, encapsulated. C. Goldhaber, "Hume's Real Riches," Hist. of Philosophy Q. A life of failures—yet cheery still. E. Gruner, "I No Longer Grade My Students' Work," The Conversation. Joys of 'ungrading.' C. Hanner, "News of the World," WF Magazine. Arts & 'blockchain for good': go Deacs! P. Hessler, "<u>A Bitter Education</u>," New Yorker. Cancel culture, China style. A. Hochschild, "Who's to Blame?" NY Review Books. How Americans got so damn polarized. D. Irving, "Inside the Booker Prize," FT. As inadvertent Booker judge (long story), I ate this up. F. Jabr, "Can We Really Be Friends w/an Octopus?" Hakai. For all Octopus Teacher weepers. D. Johnson, "How You Perceive Time Depends on Your Income," Nat'l Geographic. Whoa. E. Johnson, "Alone at the Edge of the World," Atavist. Susie Goodall's impossible solo sail. N. Jones, "Color is In the Eye/Brain of the Beholder," Knowable. Color perception: subjective. S. Kahn, "Against Shock," 3:AM. Must art shock? Crucial query, in NFT/everything-goes era. B. Kessler, "In Remote Alaska, Meal Planning is Everything," Eater. The freezer as literal life. L. Kinstler, "The Good Delusion," Economist. 'Effective altruism' jumps the shark. Kirkpatrick & Kruks, "Old Not Other," Aeon. Poignant meditation on how we view aging. M. Krislov, "Does It Matter if Universities Look Like America?" Chronicle. As Court mulls. B. Laker et. al. "The Surprising Impact of Meeting-Free Days," MITSloan Review. Liberation!

H. Lewis, "The Guggenheim's Scapegoat," Atlantic. Minefields of our era, unnavigable? B. Lindbergh, "Past, Present & Future of Faraway Worlds," Ringer. Field guide to universe. R. Madole, "Can Avant-Garde Filmmaker Save Us From the 21st C.?" Spike. Deep weirdness. P. Mutalik, "How to Win at Wordle (Without Cheating)," Quanta. Wordleians, unite! A. Ng, "What Your Car Knows About You," Politico. E. Quinton, "How Artists Get Paid From Streaming," Pudding. Terrific visual explanation. J. Ramirez, "The Mushrooms That Ate Luke Perry," Orion. Far more beautiful than macabre. M. Reeves, "The Race to Save Hip-Hop's Lost Eras," Pitchfork. Seminal moments, fading fast. S. Reiss, "How Marion Nestle Changed the Way We Talk About Food," GQ. Yeah she did! K. Romer, "How A.I. Conquered Poker," NY Times. As ex-poker tourneyman, read as elegiac. C. Rotella, "All the Way," WashPost Mag. Marathoning in middle age...literal & figurative. J. Rothman, "Are You the Same Person You Used to Be?" New Yorker. Readable existentialism. D. Routt, "Medieval Power Struggle Inspired House of Dragon," Smithsonian. Back to future. O. Sandu, "How We Give Birth in Romania," DoR. Harrowing & essential; o brave author! O. Schwartz, "What Was the TED Talk?" The Drift. Requiem: all those ideas, none realized. K. Setya, "Don't Treat Your Life as a Project," Nautilus. Sage reaction to our age's mantra. M. Solomon, "Poison Pill," Medium. Terrifying Tylenol murders, 40 years on...never solved. J. Somers, "How to Stock an Apocalypse Pantry," Lifehacker. May this remain theoretical. C. Smith, "What We Ask of Black American Athletes," Atlantic. World Cup version; sobering. C. Starnino, "Robots Are Writing Poetry; People Can't Tell the Difference," Walrus. Gaaaaah. A. Thompson, "Hot Summer: One of Coolest of Rest of Our Lives," Scientific Am'n. O woe. D. Tortorici, "Why is Everything So Ugly?" n+1. Our dismal visual field, from design to films. M. Venkat & C. Intaglia, "What Makes Us Dance?" NPR. Turns out Meghan Trainor was right. I. West-Knights, "My 8 Deranged Days on the Gone Girl Cruise," Slate. Ain't that America. J. White, "How America Lost 1 Million People," NY Times. Lest we forget: terrible COVID toll. S. Williams, "Stone Skipping Is a Lost Art," Outside. Remarkable tale of world-champ skipper. S. Wolfson, "Why Do People, Like, Say 'Like' So Much?" Guardian. Like, read it. V. Zubock, "Can Putin Survive?" Foreign Affairs. Amid Ukraine war horror, illuminating piece.

Screens 2022 (Film, TV, Longform video). If you're in the mood for ...

Hi-EQ drama, 1: *Pachinko*. Loved 2017 novel, rendered as an eight-episode sumptuous drama.
2: *The Banshees of Inisherin*. Oddball throughout—& done brilliantly, to compelling close.
3: *Decision to Leave*. Park Chan-wook's intimate black-widow noir.

Animation for grown-ups, 1: Flee. True story, unfolding expansively from simple premise.
2: Belle. Beauty & the Beast reimagined—in the metaverse. Mamoru Hosoda's career peak.
3. Pinocchio. Guillermo del Toro's is best of the rash of recent 'Real Boy' retellings.

History-enlivened doc: Malcolm Venville's superlative *Abraham Lincoln* (Bruce H. hat-tip). *Audiography doc*: Music/Foleys made Bond, vividly told in *Sound of 007* (Dr. Popoli hat-tip). *Shrinking-planet doc*: Room for humans & gorgeous wild creatures? *Tiger 24* poses ? indelibly.

Bang-flash, 1: The Batman. Another one?—many of you may wonder. Yep, & among Bat-best.
2: Top Gun/Maverick. Geopolitically baffling (Middle East foe...no, snowy terrain) but fun.
3: Everything Everywhere All At Once. As if Hayao Miyazaki directed Dr. Strange.

Just Plain Fun, 1: Harry Potter heroes look back 20 years (!), in *Return to Hogwarts*.
2: *Baby Assassins*. Japanese ironic take on Gen Z work/social complexities...joyously absurd.
3: *Weird: The Al Yankovic Story*. Rainn Wilson! L-MM! Madonna! Harry Potter!

Otherworldly TV, 1. Foundation. Asimov classic finally gets worthy screen treatment.
2. Andor. Star Wars spinoff sans space lasers, Baby Yoda, or Darths. Must-watch all the more.
3. House of the Dragon. Two-centuries-prior prequel goes far beyond filling in backstory.

Best Supporting Actress, 1. Claire Foy, Women Talking. Best of Sarah Polley's glittering group.
2. Janelle Monáe, Glass Onion. Hard to stand out amid strong ensemble cast: Monáe does.
3. Carey Mulligan, She Said. We should all be so lucky to have genius actors playing our story.

and Best Actress, 1. Michelle Williams, Fabelmans. Animating legendary director's mom: wow.

2. Danielle Deadwyler, *Till*. Impossibly draining role, soaringly performed.

3. Emma Thompson, *Good Luck to You, Leo Grande*. Fearless & moving. H/tip Ash.

Global Stories, 1. *Nostalgia*. Mario Martone's morally intricate paean to Naples home.

2. Saloum. Bangui Hyenas not what they seem. Gorgeous West Africa desert/coast locations.

3. *Goodnight Oppy*. In this case, interplanetary. Oppy the cutest robo-star since Wall-E.

Intensity Dialed Up, 1. *1883*. Part of Taylor Sheridan's ever-expanding western empire. 2. *Nope*. Jordan Peele's signature genres-mashup in service of taut social commentary.

3. Our technosapien future, heart-poundingly realized in *After Yang*...Colin Farrell never better.



Music 2022: Two Playlists

With new music <u>down to around 30% of US music market</u> & much industry \$ going to back catalogues and vinyl remixes of 60s/70s/80s (etc.), am genuinely pleased to showcase fave 2022 creations, in <u>this playlist</u>. *If you aren't Spotify-er & want list, I'll send you a YouTube version.

Much creative fun here, from artists *familiar* (Regina Spektor, Kendrick Lamar—rapping about N95 masks—Eddie Vedder, Florence + The Machine, Eels), *brand new*—to me, at least (Koffee, Wet Leg, Breland, Ethel Cain—whose 'American Teenager' conjures early Lana Del Rey), *less renowned than they deserve* (Shearwater, led by music imagineer Jonathan Meiburg; Hank, Pattie & the Current, scintillating musicians all; Irish roots musician Síomha—h/tip Clare o'County Clare!), *back after hiatus* (Sonic Youth, Macy Gray, Tears for Fears), *jazz virtuosi* (Mary Halvorson, Immanuel Wilkins, yes-still-at-it Keith Jarrett), *bending genres* (Tamil rapper Priya Ragu, español duet by John Legend, silky-sound indie French/American duo Freedom Fry discover the banjo), &c. &c.

And in a nod to many List faithful who ask each year "where's MY music?"—a 2nd playlist, of <u>best '22 covers</u>. *Special prize to under-40s who can name even half the original artists.

Such rich material: *youngsters* (Chloe Kay, Dawson Hollow, Korantemaa) revisit sources of inspiration; *oldsters* salute one another (Chuck D hat-tips Johnny Cash, Stevie Nicks & Chris Isaak honor Elvis, The Boss pays homage to Diana Ross, Beyoncé joins with Ronald Isley on an Isley Brothers chestnut, Willie Nelson & Lucinda Williams induce a tear with Highwaymen hit); *emergent stars* (Natalie Taylor, Tiffany Thompson, Kid Moxie) cover classic hits with assurance.

And for you visual types, my Top Ten '22 music videos...

- · Lyrics Born, <u>Alligator Boots</u>. If Magritte had access to Claymation, this video the result.
- Toro y Moi, <u>Postman</u>. Dude really wants that letter to arrive.
- · CKay, Emiliana. Amid plethora of minimalist videos, big-screen spectacular.
- · Florence + The Machine, My Love. Mannequins, frozen zombies, mad dancers...F+TM!
- · Ethel Cain, American Teenager. Sweet & disconcerting, all at once, just like high school.
- · Psy, <u>That That</u>. "Gangnam Style" hero returns, catchily...w/major assist from BTS's SUGA.
- Chance the Rapper, <u>Child of God</u>. With star turn by Gabonese visual artist Naïla Opiangah.
- · Felly, Bad Radio. Whimsical little fable turns unexpectedly dark.
- · Blackpink, <u>Pink Venom</u>. Biggest spend on video production outside Beyoncé, to fine effect.
- · JID, Money. Dickens by way of Atlanta. "Ironic that being broke is an expensive lifestyle."



Music/Found Poem

(Mostly) rising-gen voices, singing the challenges & opportunities of their moment.

Arcade Fire, Age of Anxiety I

It's the age of doubt And I doubt we'll figure it out Is it you or is it me? The age of anxiety

Daisy the Great, "Aluminum"

I've got sand in my mouth I don't know how to speak about Whether it's generational Or personal misery

Sylo, "Millions"

Illuminate/All the pain It's the chase/Get away To sunny days

Muna, "Kind of Girl"

I'm a girl who's learning everything I say isn't definitive I'm not some kind of minor trope Who's never gonna change: that's so...derivative

Flogging Molly, "These Are the Days'

These are the days of the lost generation Scorned to be told empty words of frustration

Kate Bollinger, "Running"

Wait, I'm always running I can't keep up it seems Even in my dreams

Monica Martin, "Go Easy, Kid"

We've been talking out back by the garbage cans 'Bout dreams that we had and the five-year plan Missing the mark, we're laughing in the dark 'Cause after all, no one's in control



Podcasts & Blogs 2022

A salute to the solo adventurers...some of whose sites have grown into mega-ventures. Best of the blogs/posts & podcasts that I followed—or stumbled upon with delight—this year.

22 Goals. Honoring '22 World Cup, counting down the <u>22 most memorable</u> past Cup goals.

D. Bordwell, "The Ten Best Films of ... " Annual delight-top films, 90 years on. 1932 up soon!

Crime Story, "The Trial of Kyle Rittenhouse." Indispensable site covers every twist & turn.

cherry-flavored, "Nicotine Patches for Your News Habit." Useful Gen Z'er digital lifehack.

P. Cohen, "Status of the Book in the Age of Digital Media," TheSmartSet. Witty yet mournful.

T. Dalrymple, "Inflationary Vice," Law & Liberty. Inflation threatens virtue as well as finances.

Experimental History, "Why Aren't Smart People Happier?" Another Mastroianni provocation.

T. Farrey, "What if NBA Developed Its Player Pipeline?" Aspen Institute. Beyond one & done.

Gastropod, "Black Gold: The Future of Food We Throw Away." One of many stellar episodes.

M. Gladwell, "Princeton: 1st Perpetual Motion Machine," OhMG. Read & weep, all other univs!

M. Haas, "Want Safer Streets? Cover Them in Art," reasons to be cheerful. Amen.

Moxie, "My First Impressions of web3." Tech-savvy humanist demystifies crypto & apps et. al.

M. Popova, "The Enigma of the Eel," The Marginalian. New astonishments in every post.

Old Man & the Three. JJ Redick, once-hated Duke hoopster, starts podcast, wins critics over.

Politics War Room. Two all-time finest political observers—Hunt & Carville. Reliably riveting.

V. Rao, "Infirmity," Ribbonfarm. The precarious years (months? weeks?) awaiting us all.

We, the Citizens. The redoubtable Kirsten Han, covering Singapore politics & culture.

Meals: Copenhagen Edition

Best of food world epicenter, beyond rez-impossible Trinity (Geranium, NOMA, Alchemist).

- · Relaxed, exquisite tasting-menu **Høst** a draw anyplace; here, another of many fine choices.
- · Rene Rezdepi's Covid burger pop-up at NOMA lives on, as best-in-show POPL Burger.
- Mushroom salad at **Tigermom** best dish I ate this year. Sadly closed, but thx Myanna/Chiara!
- Koreansk BBQ. In daily-transforming former port area, excellent Korean served by...robots.
- · Borgen fans: Tårnet (featured in S2/E3) for classic Danish cuisine inside Parliament building.
- Dazzling vegan fare at **Bistro Lupa** includes 'fried chicken'—basement-grown mushrooms.
- · JATAK, by Covid casualty Relae chef-genius Jonathan Tam. Name is Danish for Yes, chef!
- Trois Cochons. On Værnedamsvej, Time Out's "coolest street in world." Tasty bistro fare.
- Will Smith (CPH chef, not slapper) opened Goldfinch last month & OMG Cantonese delish.
- Every night's a party at CPH's finest & funnest Italian spot, **Barabba**.