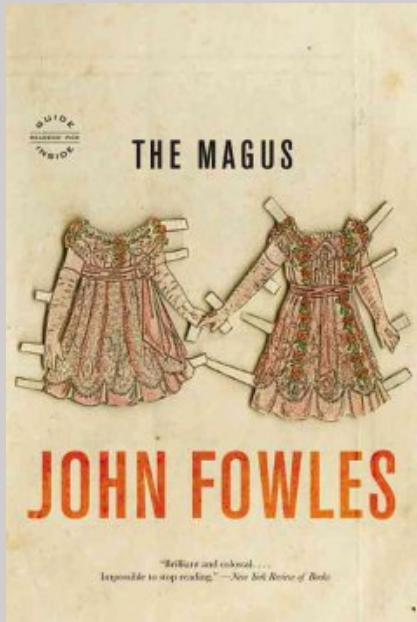




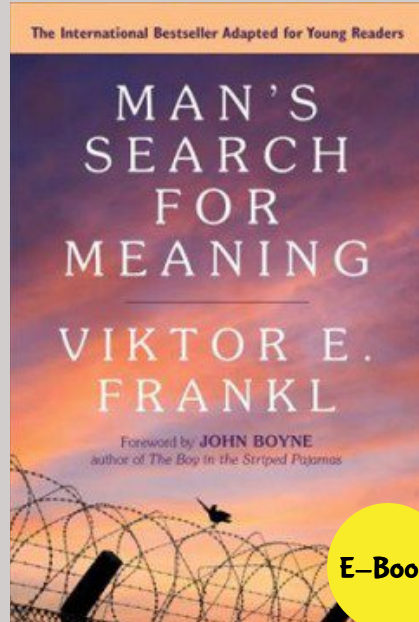
# READER SPOTLIGHT

## Laura Danforth



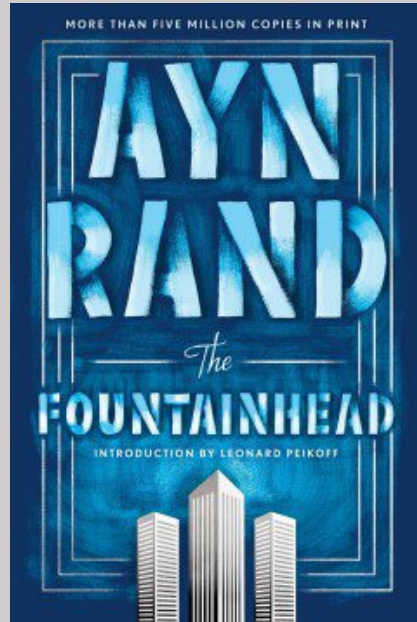
John Fowles  
*The Magus*

This is my favorite work by John Fowles, if not my favorite book of all time. An English man moves to a Greek island. Intrigued by fantasy, beauty and mystery, he befriends a millionaire and unknowingly walks into a prepared psychological labyrinth. Constantly trying to figure out what's around the next corner, this novel is like peeling an onion to find out it's a horse....to find out it's actually a mermaid... to find out it's a carrot....!



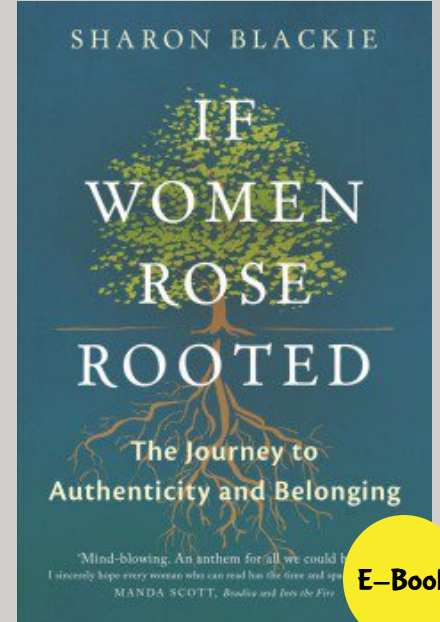
Viktor Frankl  
*Man's Search for Meaning*

This is required reading, in my opinion, and medicine for self-pity. Frankl describes his horrific life story in Nazi internment camps, and the death of all those he loved deeply; then goes on to lay out the process of survival, not just of body, but of mind and spirit. His observations from a psychologist's standpoint show that humans find authentic meaning, not through the avoidance of pain, but through how we choose to be transformed by our pain, thus allowing purpose.



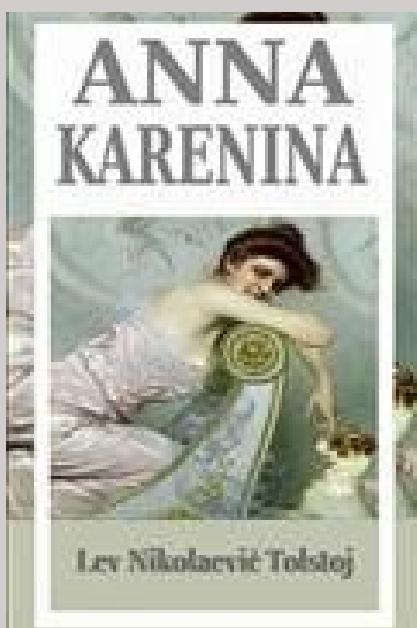
Ayn Rand  
*The Fountainhead*

Everyone says they love non-conformity, but this book exemplifies the strong societal urge to remain status quo. Get ready for some serious snarled-teeth, floor-stomping throw-downs to save the precious ego towers of success from burning to the ground! It's philosophical, psychological, and maybe the juiciest character development ever--between the architect protagonist and the love and conflict with Dominique Francon.



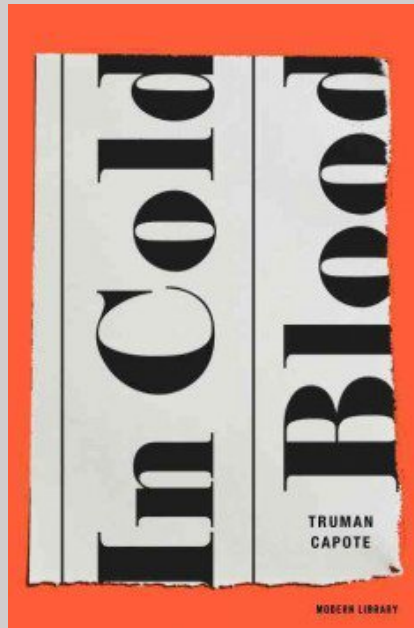
Sharon Blackie  
*If Women Rose Rooted*

Sharon Blackie uses the stories of Irish and Welsh mythology as a launching point, relating the ancient myths to women's systemic domestication and sexual oppression throughout history. This is part memoir and part recounting of other women's rediscovery of the feminine self, through tapping into art and nature and resisting the societal forces that squelch authentic desires and true expressions of selfhood.



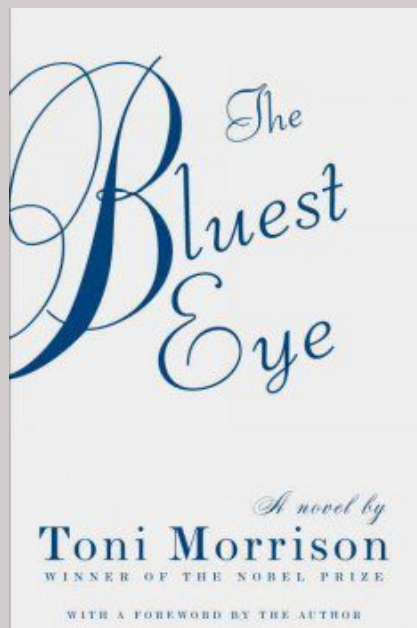
Leo Tolstoy  
*Anna Karenina*

Gotta represent Russian Lit! I once read that Tolstoy regarded *War and Peace* as crap, and that *Anna Karenina* was his true masterpiece. And it totally is! Tolstoy's insight into his feminine protagonist's struggle to figure it all out (*oh honey...!*), in addition to other richly developed characters in Anna's circle, make this novel my favorite of all the Russians by far.



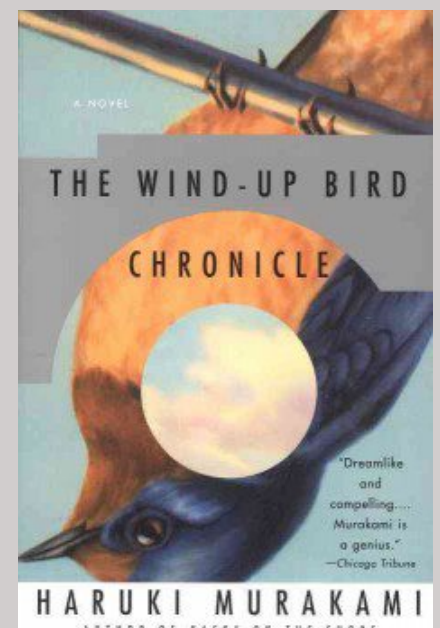
Truman Capote  
*In Cold Blood*

Anyone that knows me knows how preoccupied I am with True Crime stories. Capote tells the story of a small town murder and the detective-work to understand what motivates the darkest of human behaviors. I think True Crime allows insight into humans at our worst, which we don't usually get to safely observe; behaviors more common than we'd like to admit.



Toni Morrison  
*The Bluest Eye*

This was Morrison's first novel. It is both innocent and tragic. It exposes the inner landscape of a black child's absorption of societal norms and beauty standards based on whiteness. It depicts human depravity, and represents something (white) people are unwilling to stare at. It turns the concept of race as a social construct into a powerful narrative.



Haruki Murakami  
*The Wind-Up bird Chronicle*

This is a sci-fi, detective, comedy nightmare version of *Alice in Wonderland*, set in Tokyo. It's a fable-like adventure that follows a Japanese man going down a rabbit hole search that intertwines characters by strange coincidences, and paints a fantastical series of events that are otherworldly. It's like the Japanese Anime director Miyazaki had a love child with the movie *Inception!*

