

# Delve Deeper into *The Overnighters*

A film by Jesse Moss

**This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Robert Surratt of the San Diego Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *The Overnighters*.**

*Chasing the American dream, thousands of workers flock to a North Dakota town where the oil business is booming. But instead of well-paying jobs, many find slim work prospects and a severe housing shortage. Pastor Jay Reinke converts his church into a makeshift dorm and counseling center, allowing hundreds of men, some with checkered pasts, to stay despite the congregation's objections and neighbor's fears. When opposition to the "overnighters" reaches a boiling point, Pastor Jay makes a decision with shattering consequences.*

---

## ADULT NONFICTION

**Avery, Samuel. *The Pipeline and the Paradigm: Keystone XL, Tar Sands, and the Battle to Defuse the Carbon Bomb*. Washington DC: Ruka Press, 2013.** This thoroughly researched and wholly engaging book investigates the economic, ecological, political, and psychological issues behind the Keystone XL pipeline, a project so controversial it has inspired the largest expression of civil disobedience since the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s.

**Gold, Russell. *The Boom: How Fracking Ignited the American Energy Revolution and Changed the World*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014.** Fracking has vociferous critics and fervent defenders, but the debate between these camps has obscured the actual story: Fracking has become a fixture of the American landscape and the global economy. It has upended the business models of energy companies around the globe, and it has started to change geopolitics and global energy markets in profound ways.

**Jenkins, Clay. *For the love of North Dakota and other essays: Sundays with Clay in the Bismarck Tribune*. Washburn, ND: Dakota Institute Press of the Lewis & Clark Fort Mandan Foundation, 2012.** A compilation of essays, many of which began as newspaper columns in the Bismarck Tribune, exploring themes of change in North Dakota.

**Klein, Naomi. *This Changes Everything: Capitalism Vs. the Climate*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014.** In *This Changes Everything* Naomi Klein argues that climate change isn't just another issue to be neatly filed between taxes and health care. It's an alarm that calls us to fix an economic system that is already failing us in many ways.

**Levine, Phillip. *What Work Is: Poems*. New York: Knopf, 1991.** This collection amounts to a hymn of praise for all the workers of America. These proletarian heroes, with names like Lonnie, Loo, Sweet Pea, and Packy, work the furnaces, forges, slag heaps, assembly lines, and loading docks at places with unglamorous names like Brass Craft or Feinberg and Breslin's First-Rate Plumbing and Plating. Only Studs Terkel's *Working* approaches the pathos and beauty of this book. But Levine's characters are also significant for their inner lives, not merely their jobs.

**Peters, Lisa Westberg. *Fractured Land: The Price of Inheriting Oil*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2014.** What does an environmentalist do when she realizes she will inherit mineral rights and royalties on fractured oil wells in North Dakota? Catapulted into a world of complicated legal jargon, spectacular feats of engineering, and rich history, Lisa Westberg Peters travels to the oil patch and sees both the wealth and the challenges brought by the boom. She interviews workers and farmers, geologists and

lawyers, those who welcome and those who reject the development, and she finds herself able to see shades of gray in what had previously seemed black and white.

**Prud'Homme, Alex. *Hydrofracking*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.** There may be no more decisive environmental issue in America today than hydrofracking, or "fracking" as it is commonly called, referring to the use of highly pressurized water and chemicals to extract gas trapped in subterranean shale formations.

**Silverstein, Ken. *The Secret World of Oil*. London: Verso, 2014.** Oil is the lifeblood of modern civilization, and the industry that supplies it has been the subject of intense interest and scrutiny, as well as countless books. And yet, almost no attention has been paid to one aspect of the modern oil industry: the questionable characters—these fixers, gangsters, and dictators—allyed with competing governments and multinational corporations.

---

## ADULT FICTION

**Florio, Gwen. *Dakota. Sag Harbor, NY: The Permanent Press, 2014.*** Former brash journalist Lola Wicks chose to stay in Montana, having fallen for the sheriff and gotten a job at the local paper. Now covering the local tribal beat, she is deeply troubled about the death of Judith, a Blackfeet girl found dead in the snow. By chance, Lola learns that a number of teenagers have recently gone missing from the reservation, and she pieces together a disturbing picture of young women working as prostitutes in "the patch," an area in North Dakota where the fracking boom is centered.

**Littlefield, Sophie. *The Missing Place*. New York: Gallery Books, 2014.** Set against the backdrop of North Dakota's oil boom, two very different mothers form an



# Delve Deeper into *The Overnighters*

A film by Jesse Moss

uneasy alliance to find their missing sons in this heartrending and suspenseful novel from the Edgar Award-nominated author of *Garden of Stones*. The booming North Dakota oil business is spawning "man camps," shantytowns full of men hired to work on the rigs, in towns without enough housing to accommodate them. In such twilight spaces, it's easy for a person to vanish.

**Sinclair, Upton. *Oil!*. New York: Penguin Books, 2007.**

Fashioned out of the oil scandals of the Harding administration, *Oil!* provides a detailed picture of the development of the oil industry in Southern California. Bribery of public officials, class warfare, and international rivalry over oil production are the context for Sinclair's story of a genial independent oil developer and his son, whose sympathy with the oilfield workers and socialist organizers fuels a running debate with his father.

**Steinbeck, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. New York: Viking, 2014.**

An epic of the Great Depression, Steinbeck chronicles the Dust Bowl migration of the 1930s and tells the story of one Oklahoma farm family, the Joads, driven from their homestead and forced to travel west to the promised land of California. Out of their trials and their repeated collisions against the hard realities of an America divided into haves and have-nots evolves a drama that is intensely human yet majestic in its scale and moral vision, elemental yet plainspoken, tragic but ultimately stirring in its human dignity.

---

## NONFICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

**Marrin, Albert. *Black Gold: The Story of Oil in Our Lives*. New York: Albert A. Knopf, 2012.**

Thick and slippery, crude oil has an evil smell. Yet without it, life as we live it today would be impossible. Albert Marrin traces the history of oil, from its geological origins through the industrial revolution and to its

role in contemporary international relations. With graphics, a comprehensive glossary, and a thorough index, this work will be a helpful resource for young adult readers.

**McCully, Emily Arnold. *Ida M. Tarbell : The Woman Who Challenged Big Business--and Won!* Boston: Clarion Books, 2014.**

Tarbell was the catalyst for exposing the truth behind corruption and unfair business practices. She investigated and published works about the Standard Oil Trust for McClure's Magazine that informed the world of shady business dealings and skyrocketed her into the public eye. She wrote inspiring and engaging biographies on public figures, her most notable on Abraham Lincoln. Although largely forgotten as the country forged ahead into the 20th century, her writing of the truth lives on.

**Partridge, Elizabeth. *Restless spirit: The Life and Work of Dorothea Lange*. New York: Viking, 1998.**

Born During her career, Dorothea Lange captured some of the most desperate and beautiful faces America has seen in photographs. She did her most celebrated work in the 1930s and 40s during the depression years and the second World War. Following Lange's life from her childhood on the Lower East Side of New York to her famous work for the government photographing starving migrant workers in California, author Elizabeth Partridge creates an intimate portrait of the artist who put faces on some of the darkest episodes in America's history, shedding light on the struggles of Americans lives disrupted by migration and poverty

**Sanna, Emily. *Gay Believers: Homosexuality and Religion*. Broomall, Pa.: Mason Crest Publishers, 2011.**

For centuries, organized religion has been one of the main forces of prejudice and rejection of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and

transgender (LGBT) people. But the fact is, not all religious traditions are unfriendly to LGBT people, and some old ways of reading the Bible are being re-examined in new and welcoming ways. While many LGBT people struggle with the conflicts of being both religious and gay, many others are finding support and inclusion in religious communities that have entered the twenty-first century committed to the full inclusion of LGBT people.

---

## FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

**Danforth, Emily. *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*. New York: Blazer + Bray, 2012.**

Set in rural Montana in the early 1990s, the young teenager Cameron Post rebels against her conservative Montana ranch town and her family when they send her to a religious conversion camp that is supposed to "cure" her homosexuality.

**Maclachlan, Patricia. *Fly Away*. New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2014.**

Lucy and her family make their annual trip to visit Aunt Frankie in North Dakota just as the floodwaters rise, threatening her home. Meanwhile, Lucy shares a secret with her little brother, Teddy: though the rest of the family thinks that he can't talk yet, she knows that he can.

