

QUEST

A film by Jonathan Olshefski and Sabrina Schmidt Gordon



This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Susan Conlon, MLS, and Kim Dorman, Community Engagement Coordinator of Princeton Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *QUEST*.

Filmed with verite intimacy for nearly a decade, QUEST is the moving portrait of a family from North Philadelphia. Beginning during the Obama presidency, Christopher "Quest" Rainey and his wife, Christine's "Ma Quest" raise a family while nurturing a community of hip-hop artists in their basement home music studio. Epic in scope, QUEST is a vivid illumination of race and class in America and a testament to love, healing and hope.

ADULT NONFICTION

Countryman, Matthew J. *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia*. University of Pennsylvania Press, PA, 2005.

Although Philadelphia rarely appears in the histories of the modern civil rights struggle, the city was home to a vibrant and groundbreaking movement for racial justice in the years between World War II and the 1970s. By broadening the chronological and geographic parameters of the civil rights movement, *Up South* explores the origins of civil rights liberalism, the failure of the liberal program of anti discrimination legislation and interracial coalition-building to deliver on its promise of racial equality, and the subsequent rise of the Black Power movement.

Rankine, Claudia. *Citizen: An American Lyric*. Minneapolis, MN: Graywolf Press, 2014.

Claudia Rankine's bold new book recounts mounting racial aggressions in ongoing encounters in twenty-first century daily life and in the media. Some of these encounters are slights, seemingly slips of the tongue, and some are intentional offensives in the classroom, at the supermarket, at home, on the tennis court with Serena Williams and the soccer field with Zinedine Zidane, online, on TV—everywhere, all the time. The accumulative stresses come to bear on a person's ability to speak, perform, and stay alive.

Rothstein, Richard. *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*. New York, NY: WW Norton, 2017.

Richard Rothstein, a leading authority on housing policy, explodes the myth that America's cities came to be racially divided through *de facto* segregation - that is, through individual prejudices, income differences, or the actions of private institutions like banks and real estate agencies. Rather, *The Color of Law* incontrovertibly makes clear that it was *de jure* segregation - the laws and policy decisions passed by local, state and federal governments - that actually promoted the discriminatory patterns that continue to this day.

Smith, Mychal Denzel. *Invisible Man, Got the Whole World Watching*. New York: Nation Books, 2016.

How do you learn to be a black man in America? For young black men today, it means coming of age during the presidency of Barack Obama. It means witnessing the deaths of Oscar Grant, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Akai Gurley, and too many more. It means celebrating powerful moments of black self-determination for LeBron James, Dave Chappelle, and Frank Ocean. In *Invisible Man, Got the Whole World Watching*, Mychal Denzel Smith chronicles his own personal and political education during these tumultuous years.

Smith, Tracy K. *Ordinary Light: A Memoir*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015.

In *Ordinary Light*, Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Tracy K. Smith tells her remarkable story, giving us a quietly potent memoir that explores her coming-of-age and the meaning of home against a complex backdrop of race, faith, and the unbreakable bond between a mother and daughter. Here is the story of a young artist struggling to fashion her own understanding of belief, loss, history, and what it means to be black in America.

Winfrey Harris, Tamara. *The Sisters Are Alright: Changing the Broken Narrative of Black Women in America*. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2015.

Tamara Winfrey Harris delves into marriage, motherhood, health, sexuality, beauty, and more, taking sharp aim at pervasive stereotypes about black women. She counters warped prejudices with the straight-up truth about being a black woman in America. "We have facets like diamonds," she writes. "The trouble is the people who refuse to see us sparkling." *The Sisters Are Alright* exposes anti-black-woman propaganda and shows how real black women are pushing back against distorted cartoon versions of themselves.

Wolfinger, James. *Philadelphia Divided: Race and Politics in the City of Brotherly Love*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.

In a detailed study of life and politics in Philadelphia between the 1930s and 1950s James Wolfinger demonstrates how racial tensions in working-class neighborhoods and job sites shaped the contours of mid-twentieth-century liberal and conservative politics. As racial divisions fractured the working class, he argues, Republican leaders exploited these racial fissures to reposition their party as the champion of ordinary white citizens besieged by black demands and overwhelmed by liberal government orders.

ADULT FICTION

Clemmons, Zinzi. *What We Lose*. New York, NY: Viking, 2017.

In arresting and unsettling prose, we watch Thandi's life unfold, from losing her mother and learning to live without the person who has most profoundly shaped her existence, to her own encounters with romance and unexpected motherhood. Through exquisite and emotional vignettes, Clemmons creates a stunning portrayal of what it means to choose to live, after loss.

Flournoy, Angela. *The Turner House*. City: New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015.

The Turners have lived on Yarrow Street for over fifty years. Their house has seen thirteen children grown and gone—and some returned; it has seen the arrival of grandchildren, the fall of Detroit's East Side, and the loss of a father. The house still stands despite abandoned lots, an embattled city, and the inevitable shift outward to the suburbs. But now, as ailing matriarch Viola finds herself forced to leave her home and move in with her eldest son, the family discovers that the house is worth just a tenth of its mortgage. The Turner children are called home to decide its fate and to reckon with how each of their past haunts—and shapes—their family's future.

Mathis, Ayana. *Twelve Tribes of Hattie*. New York, NY: Random House, 2012.

In 1923, fifteen-year-old Hattie Shepherd, swept up by the tides of the Great Migration, flees Georgia and heads north. Full of hope, she settles in Philadelphia to build a better life. Instead she marries a man who will bring her nothing but disappointment, and watches helplessly as her firstborn twins are lost to an illness that a few pennies could have prevented. Hattie gives birth to nine more children, whom she raises with grit, mettle, and not an ounce of the tenderness they crave.

Jones, Tayari. *An American Marriage*. New York, NY: Algonquin Books, 2018.

Newlyweds, Celestial and Roy, are the embodiment of both the American Dream and the New South. He is a young executive and she is artist on the brink of an exciting career. They are settling into the routine of their life together, when they are ripped apart by circumstances neither could have imagined. Roy is arrested and sentenced to twelve years for a crime Celestial knows he didn't commit.

NONFICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Abdul-Jabbar, Kareem. *What Color Is My World? The Lost History of African-American Inventors*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2012.

Did you know that James West invented the microphone in your cell phone? That Fred Jones invented the refrigerated truck that makes supermarkets possible? Or that Dr. Percy Julian synthesized cortisone from soy, easing untold people's pain? These are just some of the black inventors

and innovators scoring big points in this dynamic look at several unsung heroes who shared a desire to improve people's lives. [Grades 3-7]

Alexander, Kwame. *The Playbook: 52 Rules to Aim, Shoot and Score in This Game Called Life*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017.

What if we were the star players, moving and grooving through the game of life? What if we had our own rules of the game to help us get what we want, what we aspire to, what will enrich our lives? Illustrated with photographs by Thai Neave, *The Playbook* is intended to provide inspiration on the court of life. Each rule contains wisdom from inspiring athletes and role models such as Nelson Mandela, Serena Williams, LeBron James, Carli Lloyd, Steph Curry and Michelle Obama. [Grades 5-7]

Giovanni, Nikki. *I Am Loved*. New York, NY: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2018.

There is nothing more important to a child than to feel loved, and this gorgeous gathering of poems written by Nikki Giovanni celebrates exactly that. Hand-selected by Newbery honoree Ashley Bryan, he has, with his masterful flourish of color, shape, and movement, added a visual layering that drums the most important message of all to young, old, parent, child, grandparent, and friend alike: You are loved. [Preschool-grade 4]

FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Perkins, Useni Eugene. *Hey Black Child*. New York, NY: LB Keys/Little, Brown and Company, 2017.

A lyrical, empowering poem that celebrates black children and seeks to inspire all young ones to dream big and achieve their goals. [Preschool-Grade 3]

Barnes, Derrick. *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut*. Chicago, IL: Bolden, an Agate imprint, 2017.

This rhythmic, read-aloud title is an unbridled celebration of the self-esteem, confidence, and swagger boys feel when they leave the barber's chair—a tradition that places on their heads a figurative crown, beaming with jewels, that confirms their brilliance and worth and helps them not only love and accept themselves but also take a giant step toward caring how they present themselves to the world.. [Kindergarten-Grade 3]

Elliott, Zatta. *Bird*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books, 2008.

Bird, an artistic young African American boy, expresses himself through drawing as he struggles to understand his older brother's drug addiction and death, while a family friend, Uncle Son, provides guidance and understanding. [Grades 1-5]

Thomas, Angie. *The Hate U Give*. New York, NY: Balzer + Bray, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2017.

After witnessing her friend's death at the hands of a police officer, Starr Carter's life is complicated when the police and a local drug lord try to intimidate her in an effort to learn what happened the night Kahlil died. [Ages 14+]