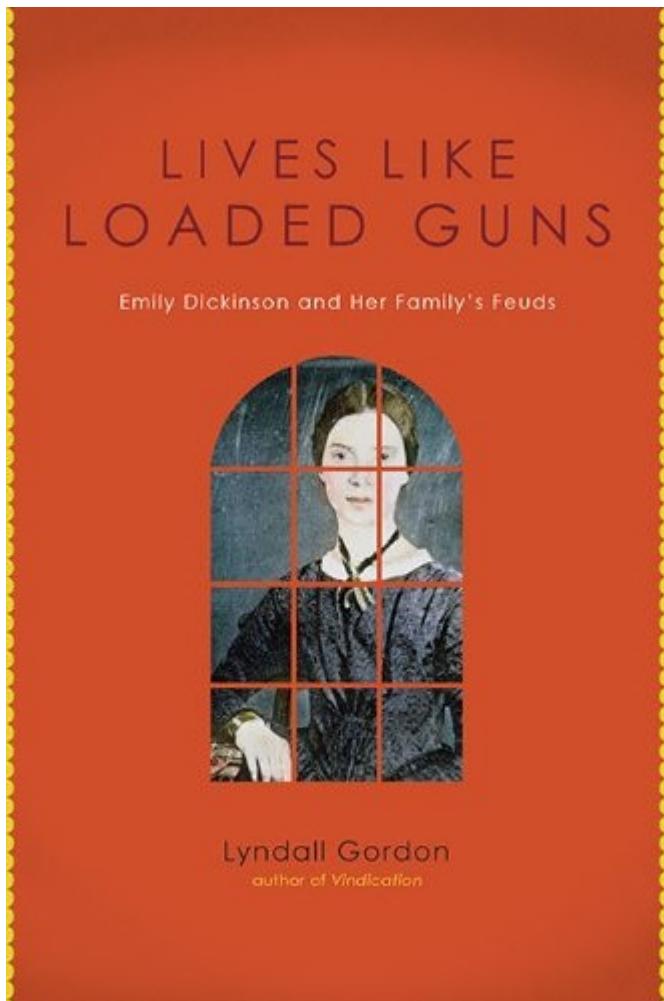


Summer reading list

By [Amy Frykholm](#)

June 28, 2011

In Review



Lives Like Loaded Guns

by Lyndall Gordon

Viking Adult

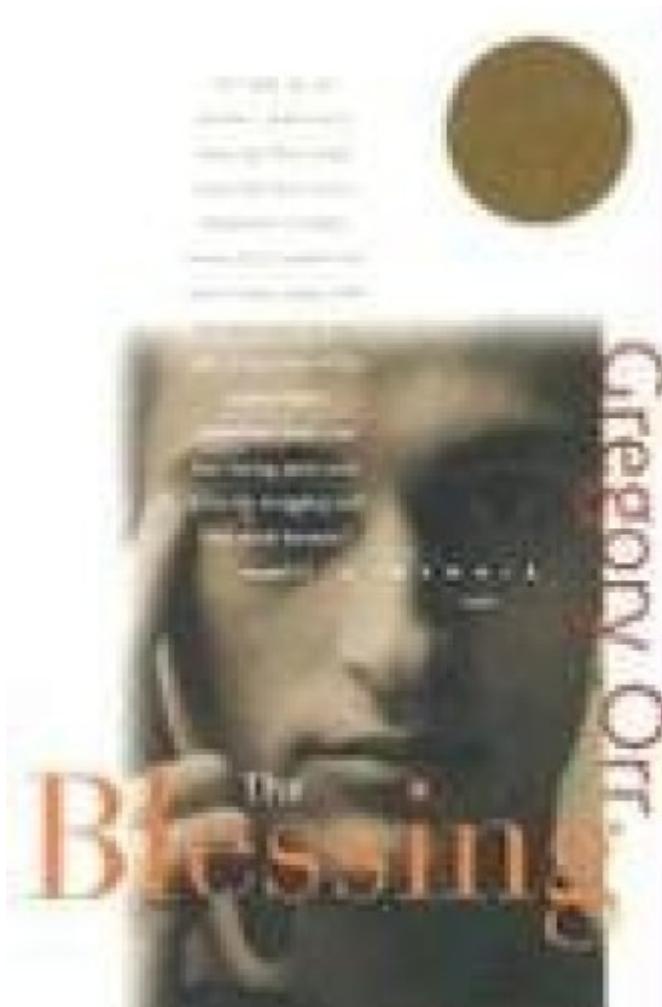


The Gospel of an Icon

KATHRYN LOFTON

Oprah

by Kathryn Lofton
University of California Press



The Blessing

by Gregory Orr
Council Oak

What are you hoping to read this summer? We posed this question to the Century staff, a group of people with diverse tastes and interests. Along with commenting on our choices, feel free to post your own in the comments. --Ed.

Up until now, my ideas about summer reading were driven largely by guilt. My bookshelf is packed to the gills with books that I "should" read: books people have given me and I need to return, or books that have been sitting there so long, I have given myself

ultimatums--either read this or get rid of it.

But

recently, a couple of books have drifted my way that I cannot wait to dive into and that will usurp all the guilt-ridden "shoulds" of my bookshelf.

One is *Lives*

Like Loaded Guns: Emily Dickinson and her Family's Feuds, by Lyndall Gordon. I have long

been fascinated by Dickinson, drawn like many others to the image of her reclusive life, her choice to remove herself from the world. But Gordon's version of Dickinson is poised to give me another view of the anything-but-tranquil home life of this visionary poet.

Also

newly arrived on my desk is Kathryn Lofton's *Oprah: The Gospel of an Icon*. Lofton, a professor at Yale,

reads Oprah through the prosperity gospel and the consumer-driven ideal of always starting anew, what Lofton calls "makeover as social rite." Since I've long preferred analyzing Oprah to watching her show or reading her magazine, this book is tantalizing.

Finally,

I am eager to begin reading poet Gregory Orr's memoir *The Blessing*. It begins with this impossible

question: "Do I dare say my brother's death was a blessing? Who would recoil first from such a statement?" When Orr was 12 years old, he killed his brother in a hunting accident. This event both completely unmade and then re-made his life. Orr explores the haunting territory of tragedy transformed into beauty.