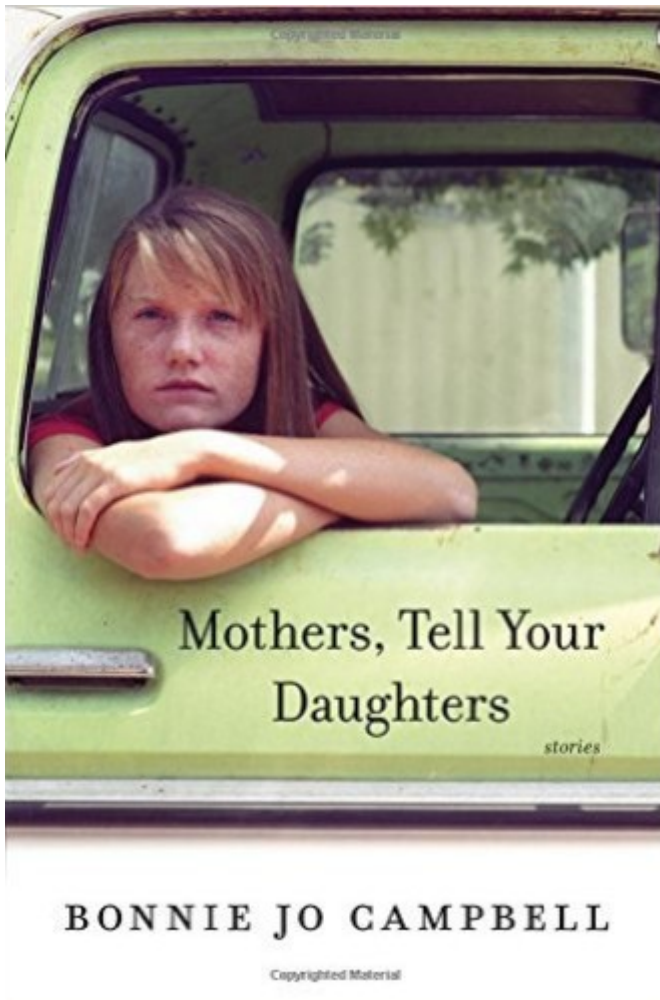


Thomas Lynch's Christmas picks

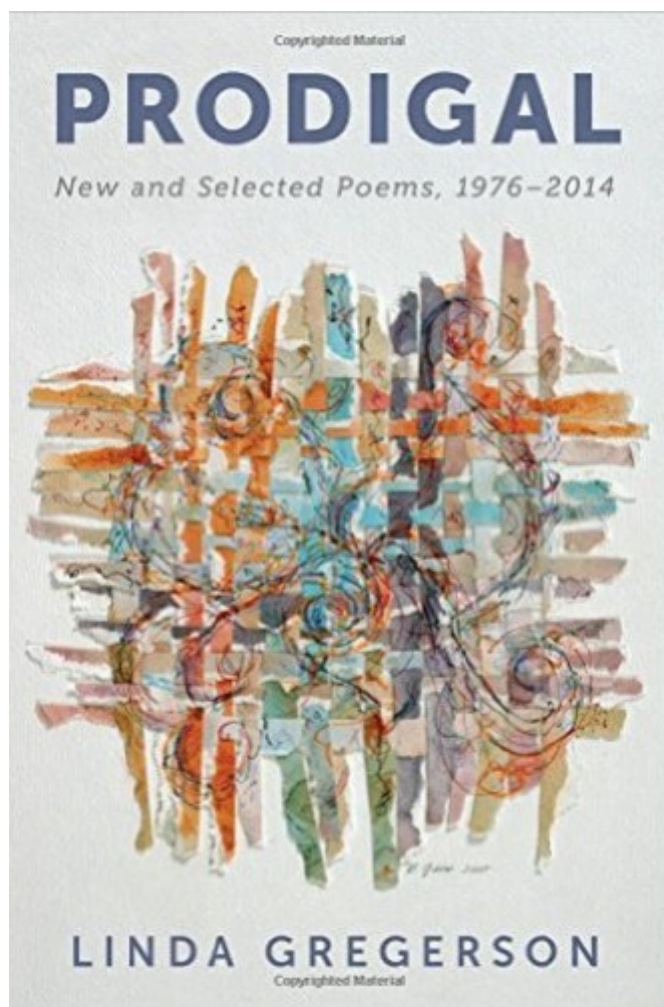
selected by [Thomas Lynch](#) in the [December 9, 2015](#) issue

In Review



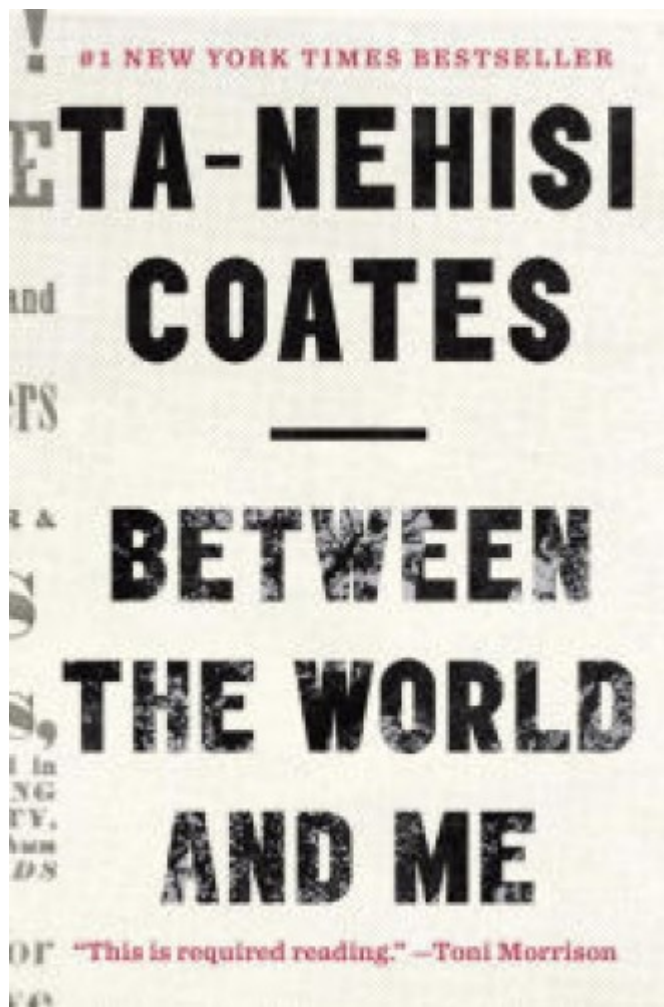
Mothers, Tell Your Daughters

by Bonnie Jo Campbell
Norton



Prodigal

by Linda Gregerson
Mariner Books



Between the World and Me

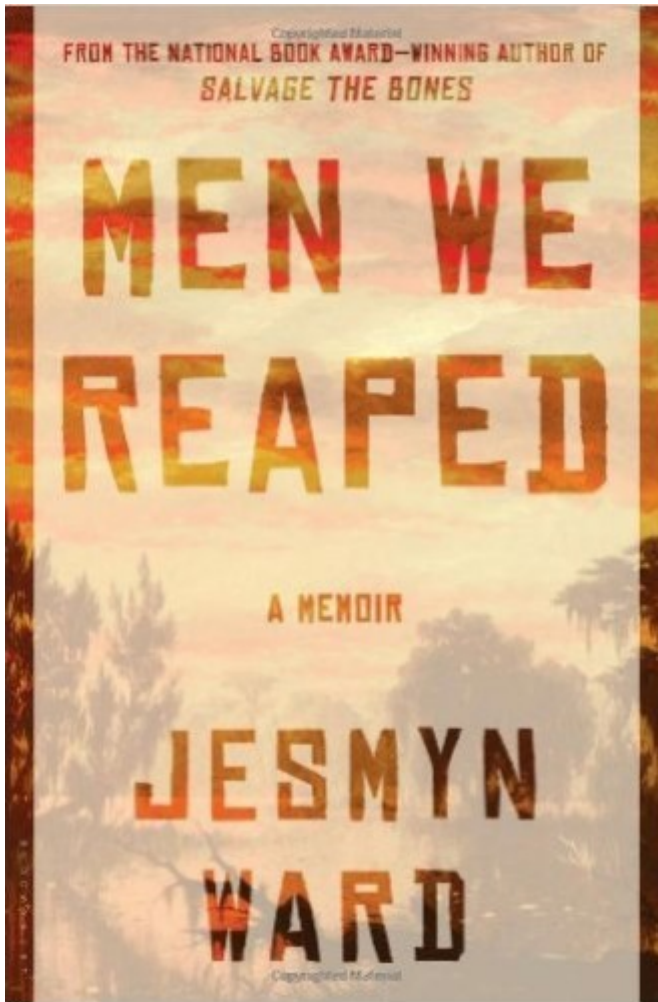
By Ta-Nehisi Coates
Spiegel & Grau



Essays After Eighty

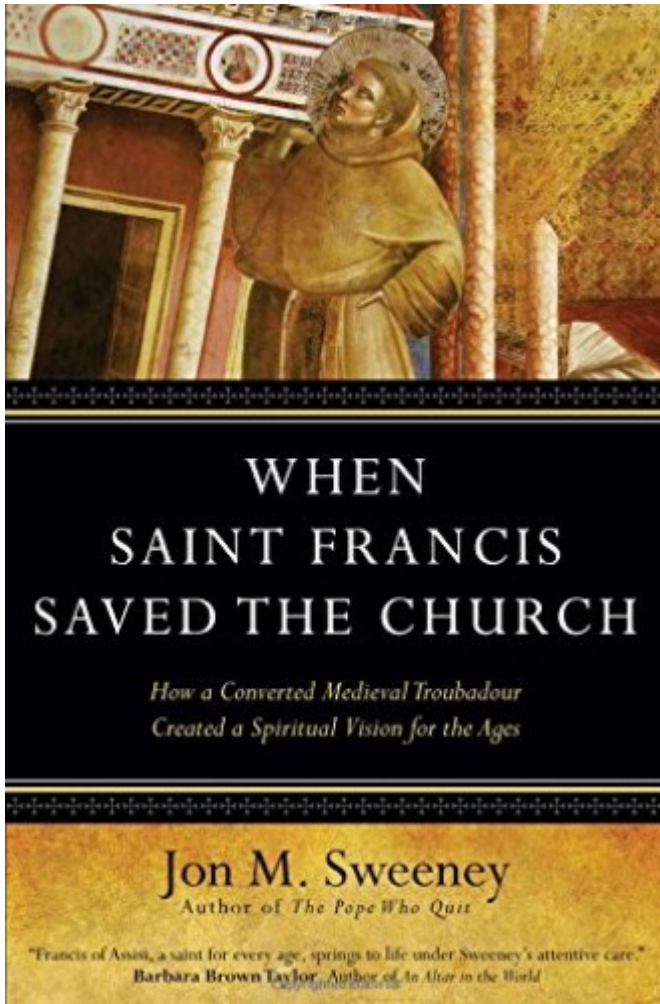
by Donald Hall

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt



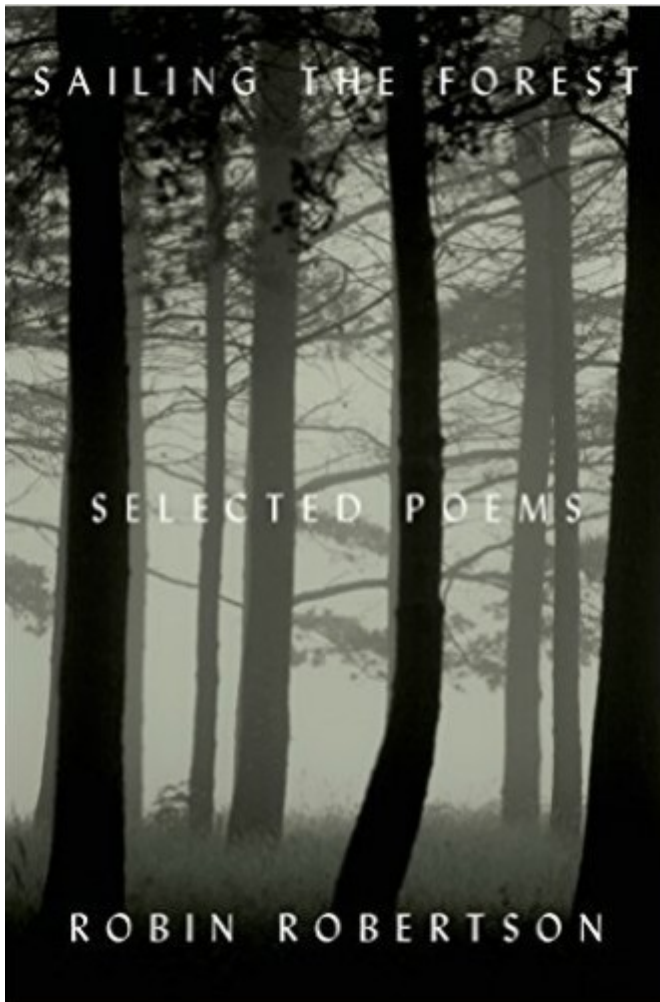
Men We Reaped

by Jesmyn Ward
Bloomsbury USA



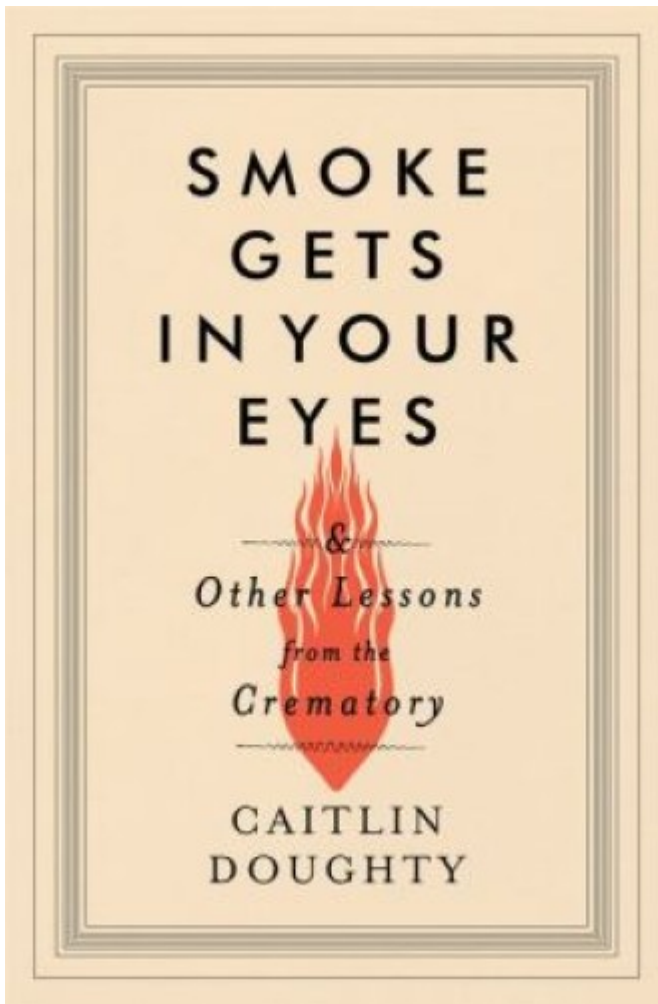
When Saint Francis Saved the Church

By Jon M. Sweeney
Ave Maria Press



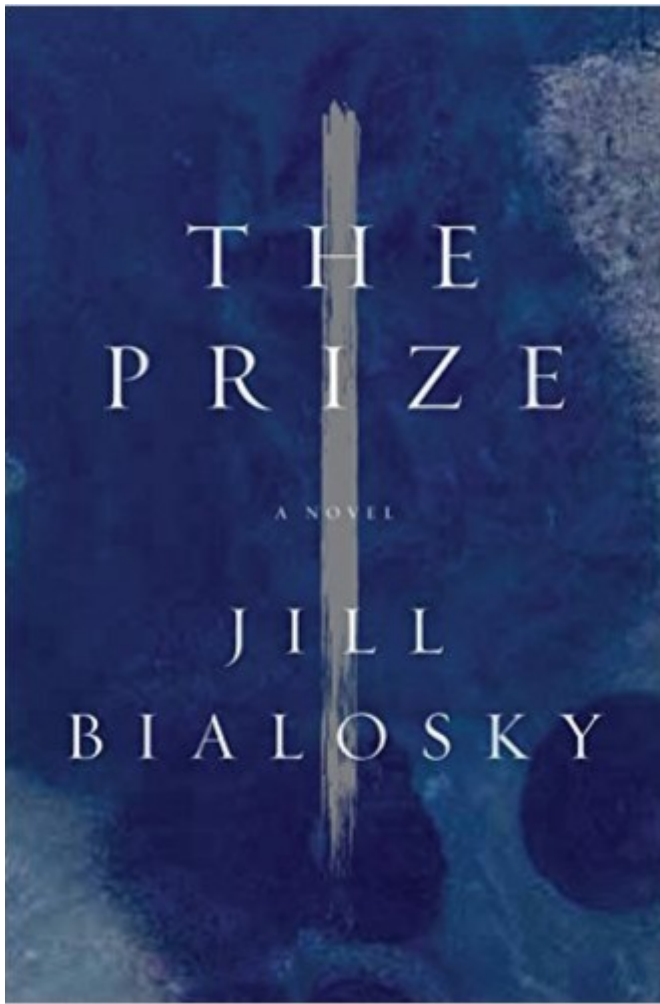
Sailing the Forest

by Robin Robertson
Farrar, Straus and Giroux



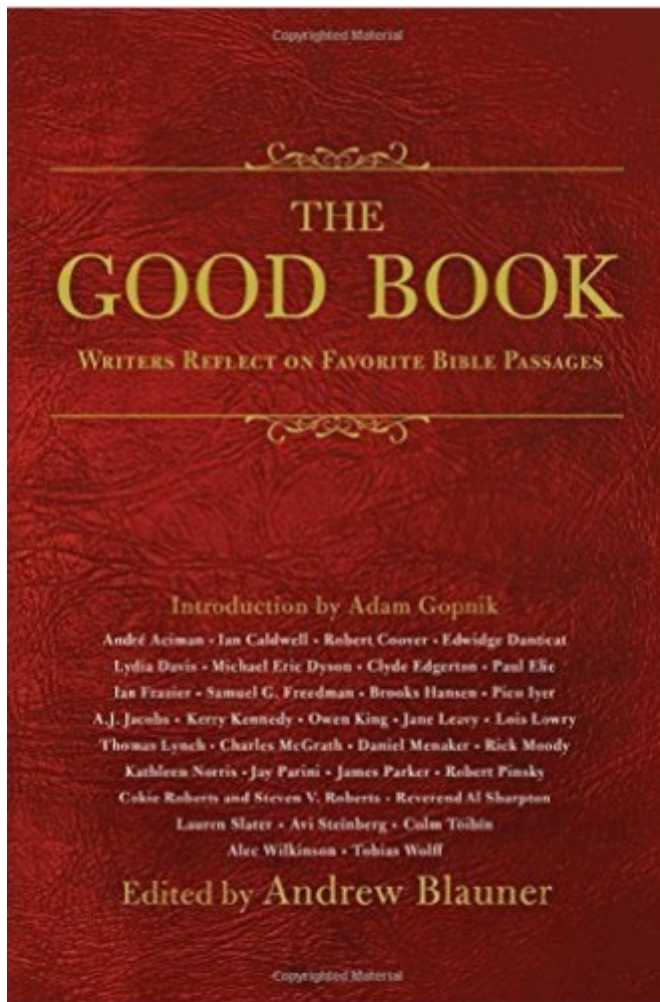
Smoke Gets in Your Eyes

By Caitlin Doughty
W. W. Norton



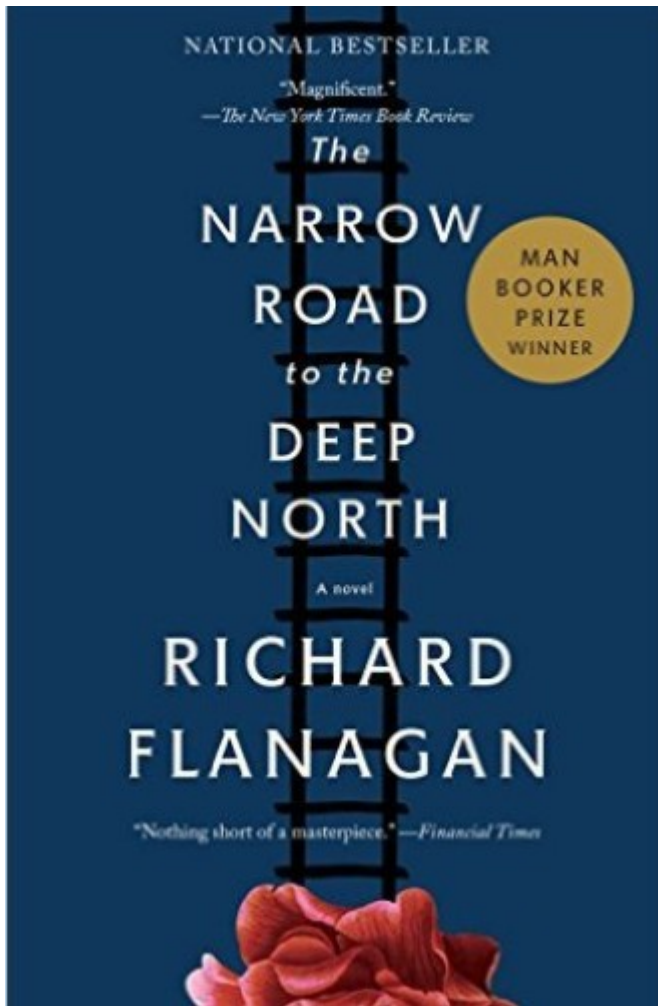
The Prize

by Jill Bialosky
Counterpoint



The Good Book

edited by Andrew Blauner
Simon & Schuster



The Narrow Road to the Deep North

Richard Flanagan
Knopf

I recommend Bonnie Jo Campbell's *Mothers, Tell Your Daughters* (Norton), a selection of short stories about mostly hardscrabble, down-market women in southwestern lower Michigan. Campbell makes fiction look easy. Linda Gregerson is the author of *Prodigal: New and Selected Poems, 1976-2014*, the best from one of our best poets, well worth reviewing for anyone interested in contemporary American poetry.

In *Between the World and Me* (Spiegel and Grau), *Atlantic* essayist Ta-Nehisi Coates writes a letter to his son on race and culture. This is must reading for white Christians. Donald Hall's *Essays After Eighty* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) are meditations on age from a master poet. Jesmyn Ward's memoir, *Men We Reaped*

(Bloomsbury USA), is powerful writing from a National Book Award-winning author. *When Saint Francis Saved the Church* (Ave Maria Press) is about Jon Sweeney's pilgrimage of faith alongside the first Franciscan.

Robin Robertson is one of the language's best emissaries, son of the manse, master of the unadorned line. His most recent book is *Sailing the Forest: Selected Poems* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux). In *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes, and Other Lessons from the Crematory* (Norton), Caitlin Doughty reports on the mortuary trade for the selfie set. There is more here than meets the eye.

Jill Bialosky, a fine writer and mighty poet, wrote *The Prize* (Counterpoint). Richard Flanagan, in *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (Knopf), tells our fathers' war stories.

Finally, I recommend *The Good Book: Writers Reflect on Favorite Bible Passages* (Simon & Schuster), which includes essays by Adam Gopnik, Michael Eric Dyson, Kathleen Norris, Al Sharpton, Cokie Roberts, Tobias Wolff, Colm Tóibín, and yours truly.