Best of 2018: Non-Fiction Books

written by Entropy | December 5, 2018

We continue our “Best of 2018” series curated by the entire Entropy community and present some of our favorite selections as nominated by the diverse staff and team here at Entropy, as well as nominations from our readers.

This list brings together some of our favorite nonfiction books published in 2018.

(For last year’s list, click here.)

In no particular order…

1. Sick: A Memoir by Porochista Khakpour (Harper Perennial)

Sick is Khakpour’s grueling, emotional journey—as a woman, an Iranian-American, a writer, and a lifelong sufferer of undiagnosed health problems—in which she examines her subsequent struggles with mental illness and her addiction to doctor prescribed benzodiazepines, that both aided and eroded her ever-deteriorating physical health… A story of survival, pain, and
transformation, *Sick* candidly examines the colossal impact of illness on one woman’s life by not just highlighting the failures of a broken medical system but by also boldly challenging our concept of illness narratives.

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2. **Heart Berries** by Terese Marie Mailhot (Counterpoint)

*Heart Berries* is a powerful, poetic memoir of a woman’s coming of age on the Seabird Island Band in the Pacific Northwest. Having survived a profoundly dysfunctional upbringing only to find herself hospitalized and facing a dual diagnosis of post traumatic stress disorder and bipolar II disorder; Terese Marie Mailhot is given a notebook and begins to write her way out of trauma. The triumphant result is *Heart Berries*, a memorial for Mailhot’s mother, a social worker and activist who had a thing for prisoners; a story of reconciliation with her father—an abusive drunk and a brilliant artist—who was murdered under mysterious circumstances; and an elegy on how difficult it is to love someone while dragging the long shadows of shame.

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3. **Carceral Capitalism** by Jackie Wang (Semiotext(e) / Intervention Series)
In this collection of essays in Semiotext(e)’s Intervention series, Jackie Wang examines the contemporary incarceration techniques that have emerged since the 1990s. The essays illustrate various aspects of the carceral continuum, including the biopolitics of juvenile delinquency, predatory policing, the political economy of fees and fines, cybernetic governance, and algorithmic policing. Included in this volume is Wang’s influential critique of liberal anti-racist politics, “Against Innocence,” as well as essays on RoboCop, techno-policing, and the aesthetic problem of making invisible forms of power legible.

4. *All You Can Ever Know* by Nicole Chung (Catapult)

Nicole Chung was born severely premature, placed for adoption by her Korean parents, and raised by a white family in a sheltered Oregon town. From childhood, she heard the story of her adoption as a comforting, prepackaged myth. She believed that her biological parents had made the ultimate sacrifice in the hope of giving her a better life, that forever feeling slightly out of place was her fate as a transracial adoptee.
But as Nicole grew up—facing prejudice her adoptive family couldn’t see, finding her identity as an Asian American and as a writer, becoming ever more curious about where she came from—she wondered if the story she’d been told was the whole truth. With warmth, candor, and startling insight, Nicole Chung tells of her search for the people who gave her up, which coincided with the birth of her own child. All You Can Ever Know is a profound, moving chronicle of surprising connections and the repercussions of unearthing painful family secrets—vital reading for anyone who has ever struggled to figure out where they belong.

5. How To Write an Autobiographical Novel by Alexander Chee (Mariner Books)

How to Write an Autobiographical Novel is the author’s manifesto on the entangling of life, literature, and politics, and how the lessons learned from a life spent reading and writing fiction have changed him. In these essays, he grows from student to teacher, reader to writer, and reckons with his identities as a son, a gay man, a Korean American, an artist, an activist, a lover, and a friend. He examines some of the most formative experiences of his life and the nation’s history, including his father’s death, the AIDS crisis, 9/11, the jobs that supported his writing—Tarot-reading, bookselling, cater-waiting for William F. Buckley—the writing of his first novel, Edinburgh, and the election of Donald Trump.

Jenny Boully’s essays are ripe with romance and sensual pleasures, drawing connections between the digression, reflection, imagination, and experience that characterizes falling in love as well as the life of a writer. Literary theory, philosophy, and linguistics rub up against memory, dreamscapes, and fancy, making the practice of writing a metaphor for the illusory nature of experience. Betwixt and Between is, in many ways, simply a book about how to live.

7. *Heavy: An American Memoir* by Kiese Laymon (Scribner)

In *Heavy*, Laymon writes eloquently and honestly about growing up a hard-headed black son to a complicated and brilliant black mother in Jackson, Mississippi. From his early experiences of sexual violence, to his suspension from college, to his trek to New York as a young college professor, Laymon charts his complex relationship with his mother, grandmother, anorexia, obesity, sex, writing, and ultimately gambling. By attempting to name secrets and lies he and his mother spent a lifetime avoiding, Laymon asks himself, his mother, his nation, and us to confront the terrifying possibility that few in this nation actually know how to responsibly love, and even fewer want to live under the weight of actually
becoming free.

8. **Litany for the Long Moment** by Mary-Kim Arnold (Essay Press)

The orphan at the center of LITANY FOR THE LONG MOMENT is without homeland and without language. In three linked lyric essays, Arnold attempts to claim her own linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic lineage. Born in Korea and adopted to the US as a child, she explores the interconnectedness of language and identity through the lens of migration and cultural rupture. Invoking artists, writers, and thinkers—Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Francesca Woodman, Susan Sontag, among others—LITANY FOR THE LONG MOMENT interweaves personal documents, images, and critical texts as a means to examine loss and longing.

9. **A Handbook of Disappointed Fate** by Anne Boyer (Ugly Duckling Presse)
Sometimes it seems that we are defeated by our very substance so we can celebrate our remains. Is this our fate? Or is it even more deadly and more numerous? Having been placed on trial and held there, in the twin intensities of love of poetry and hatred of the world, Anne Boyer’s essays meet disappointment with a succor forged in rage. Her writing is a balm and a bomb all its own. —Fred Moten

10. **When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir**
   by Patrisse Khan-Cullors and Asha Bandele (St. Martin’s Press)

This remarkable book reveals what inspired Patrisse’s visionary and courageous activism and forces us to face the consequence of the choices our nation made when we criminalized a generation. This book is a must-read for all of us. —Michelle Alexander, New York Times bestselling author of *The New Jim Crow*

A poetic and powerful memoir about what it means to be a Black woman in America—and the co-founding of a movement that demands justice for all in the land of the free.

11. **This Will Be My Undoing** by Morgan Jerkins (Harper Perennial)
Morgan Jerkins is only in her twenties, but she has already established herself as an insightful, brutally honest writer who isn’t afraid of tackling tough, controversial subjects. In *This Will Be My Undoing*, she takes on perhaps one of the most provocative contemporary topics: What does it mean to “be”—to live as, to exist as—a black woman today? This is a book about black women, but it’s necessary reading for all Americans. Doubly disenfranchised by race and gender, often deprived of a place within the mostly white mainstream feminist movement, black women are objectified, silenced, and marginalized with devastating consequences, in ways both obvious and subtle, that are rarely acknowledged in our country’s larger discussion about inequality. In *This Will Be My Undoing*, Jerkins becomes both narrator and subject to expose the social, cultural, and historical story of black female oppression that influences the black community as well as the white, male-dominated world at large.

**12. Raymond Carver’s *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love***
by Brian Evenson (Ig Publishing / Bookmarked)

A haunting meditation on love, loss, companionship, and finding one’s way through the dark, Raymond Carver’s *What We Talk About
When We Talk About Love is one of the most important and influential short story collections in contemporary literature. In his entry in the esteemed Bookmarked series, acclaimed author Brian Evenson offers his personal and literary take on this classic Carver collection.

13. **Tonight I’m Someone Else: Essays** by Chelsea Hodson (Holt Paperbacks)

Starting with Hodson’s own work experience, which ranges from the mundane to the bizarre—including modeling and working on a NASA Mars mission—Hodson expands outward, looking at the ways in which the human will submits, whether in the marketplace or in a relationship. Both tender and jarring, this collection is relevant to anyone who’s ever searched for what the self is worth. Hodson’s accumulation within each piece is purposeful, and her prose vivid, clear, and sometimes even shocking, as she explores the wonderful and strange forms of desire. **Tonight I’m Someone Else** is a fresh, poetic debut from an exciting emerging voice, in which Hodson asks, “How much can a body endure?” And the resounding answer: “Almost everything.”

14. **Beyond Measure** by Rachel Z. Arndt (Sarabande Books)
With mordant humor and penetrating intellect, Rachel Z. Arndt casts her gaze beyond event-driven narratives to the machinery underlying them: judo competitions measured in weigh-ins and wait times; the significance of the elliptical’s stationary churn; the standardized height of kitchen countertops; the rote scripts of dating apps; the stupefying sameness of the daily commute. “How much can data tell us?” Arndt asks, challenging us to consider the simultaneous comfort and absurdity of our exhaustively quantified—yet never entirely quantifiable—lives.

15. **Not that Bad: Dispatches from Rape Culture** Edited by Roxane Gay (Harper Perennial)

In this valuable and revealing anthology, cultural critic and bestselling author Roxane Gay collects original and previously published pieces that address what it means to live in a world where women have to measure the harassment, violence, and aggression they face, and where they are “routinely second-guessed, blown off, discredited, denigrated, besmirched, belittled, patronized, mocked, shamed, gaslit, insulted, bullied” for speaking out.
Contributions include essays from established and up-and-coming writers, performers, and critics, including actors Ally Sheedy and Gabrielle Union and writers Amy Jo Burns, Lyz Lenz, and Claire Schwartz. Covering a wide range of topics and experiences, from an exploration of the rape epidemic embedded in the refugee crisis to first-person accounts of child molestation, this collection is often deeply personal and is always unflinchingly honest. Like Rebecca Solnit’s *Men Explain Things to Me*, *Not That Bad* will resonate with every reader, saying “something in totality that we cannot say alone.”

16. **Feel Free** by Zadie Smith (Penguin Press)

Arranged into five sections—In the World, In the Audience, In the Gallery, On the Bookshelf, and Feel Free—this new collection poses questions we immediately recognize. What is The Social Network—and Facebook itself—really about? “It’s a cruel portrait of us: 500 million sentient people entrapped in the recent careless thoughts of a Harvard sophomore.” Why do we love libraries? “Well-run libraries are filled with people because what a good library offers cannot be easily found elsewhere: an indoor public space in which you do not have to buy anything in order to stay.” What will we tell our granddaughters about our collective failure to address global warming? “So I might say to her, look: the thing you have to appreciate is that we’d just been through a century of relativism and deconstruction, in which we were informed that most of our fondest-held principles were either uncertain or simple wishful thinking, and in many areas of our lives we had already been asked to accept that nothing is essential and everything changes—and this had taken the fight out of us somewhat.”

Growing up in poverty in the rural backwoods of southern Maryland, the Pentecostal church was at the core of Jessica Wilbanks’ family life. At sixteen, driven by a desire to discover the world, Jessica walked away from the church—trading her faith for freedom, and driving a wedge between her and her deeply religious family. But fundamentalist faiths haunt their adherents long after belief fades—former believers frequently live in limbo, straddling two world views and trying to reconcile their past and present. Ten years later, struggling with guilt and shame, Jessica began a quest to recover her faith... When I Spoke in Tongues is a story of the painful and complicated process of losing one’s faith and moving across class divides. And in the end, it’s a story of how a family splintered by dogmatic faith can eventually be knit together again through love.


In 1953, Yoko Ono wrote a score called “Secret Piece,” an open-ended formula
for musical performance in a forest at daybreak. Beginning with this invitation to creation, and using essays, diary entries, prose maps, and verse fragments, Kazim Ali marks a path through quantum physics, sixth-century Chola Empire sculptures, the challenges of literary translation and of climate change, and destruction of a priceless set of handmade flutes by airport security.

19. *Idiophone* by Amy Fusselman (Coffee House Press)

Leaping from ballet to quiltmaking, from the *Nutcracker* to an Annie-B Parson interview, *Idiophone* is a strikingly original meditation on risk-taking and provocation in art and a unabashedly honest, funny, and intimate consideration of art-making in the context of motherhood, and motherhood in the context of addiction. Amy Fusselman’s compact, beautifully digressive essay feels both surprising and effortless, fueled by broad-ranging curiosity, and, fundamentally, joy.

20. *Ladies Lazarus* by Piper J. Daniels (Tarpaulin Sky)
Equal parts séance, polemic, and love letter, Piper J. Daniels’ *Ladies Lazarus* examines evangelical upbringing, sexual trauma, queer identity, and mental illness with a raw intensity that moves between venom and grace. Fueled by wanderlust, Daniels travels the country, unearthing the voices of forgotten women. A tear appears in the universe: girls and ghosts speak freely, murdered women serve as mentors, and those who’ve languished in unmarked graves convert their names to psalms. At every turn, Daniels invites the reader to engage, not in the soothing narrative of healing, but in the literal and metaphorical dynamism of death and resurrection.

21. *Migrant Brothers: A Poet’s Declaration of Human Dignity* by Patrick Chamoiseau, Translated by Matthew Amos and Fredrik Rönnbäck (Yale University Press)

As migrants embark on perilous journeys across oceans and deserts in pursuit of sanctuary and improved living conditions, what is the responsibility of those safely ensconced in the nations they seek to enter? Moved by repeated tragedies among immigrants attempting to enter eastern and southern Europe, Patrick Chamoiseau assails the hypocrisy and
detachment that allow these events to happen. *Migrant Brothers* is an urgent declaration of our essential interconnectedness that asserts the necessity to understand one another as part of one human community, regardless of national origin.

22. **Light Magic for Dark Times** by Lisa Marie Basile (Fair Winds Press)

Basile’s magic feels like a dip into *The Artist’s Way* for witches, structured with journal prompts to help the reader get a better sense of their goals, ailments, and passions. Basile doesn’t shy away from acknowledging the naturalness and usefulness of our shadow selves, which let us know what we need, what hurts, what we’re capable of, and what we fear. She lets us know that the most interesting and authentic light emerges from darkness. The words over the Oracle of Delphi read, “Know Thyself,” and that is the purpose of this book: to come to the crossroads, wand in hand, and work the magic of self-knowledge. Crystals, perfume, roses, and magical baths are encouraged, not required. –Jessica Reidy, *Bust Magazine*

23. **Mother Winter** by Sophia Shalmiyev (Simon & Schuster)
Russian sentences begin backward, Sophia Shalmiyev tells us on the first page of her striking, lyrical memoir, *Mother Winter*. To understand the end of her story we must go back to her beginning. *Mother Winter* is the story of Shalmiyev’s years of travel, searching, and forging meaningful connection with the worlds she occupies—the result is a searing observation of the human heart and psyche’s many shades across time and culture. As critically acclaimed author Michelle Tea says, “with sparse, poetic language Shalmiyev builds a personal history that is fractured and raw; a brilliant, lovely ache.”

24. **Old in Art School** by Nell Irvin Painter (Counterpoint)

How are women and artists seen and judged by their age, looks, and race? What does it mean when someone says, “You will never be an artist”? Who defines what “An Artist” is and all that goes with such an identity, and how are these ideas tied to our shared conceptions of beauty, value, and difference? *Old in Art School* is Nell Painter's ongoing exploration of those crucial questions. Bringing to bear incisive insights
from two careers, Painter weaves a frank, funny, and often surprising tale of her move from academia to art.

25. **California Calling** by Natalie Singer (Hawthorne Books)

*California Calling* is a lyrical self-interrogation of obsession, emigration, and identity. Natalie Singer’s story opens in a courtroom on a witness stand, where she’s forced to testify in a family breakup that changes the course of her life. At sixteen Natalie emigrates from Montreal and the secrets it holds to the golden promise of the California Bay Area, just as her Jewish ancestors fled Russia and went west for a new life. Through uneasy rituals of high school pep rallies and college sex in boats and the backs of pickups, to a summer tracing a serial killer through the heart of Gold Country, to an eventual journalism career in San Francisco and the deserts of Palm Springs, Natalie aches to forge an American identity. At once an intimately unflinching memoir and a probing examination of the family and cultural myths that shape us, *California Calling* calls upon history, reportage, witness interrogation tactics, music and pop culture, and the iconography of the West to explore whether we can cure loneliness through landscape. Ultimately, *California Calling* is a search for a state of belonging.

26. **The Displaced: Refugee Writers on Refugee Lives** Edited by Viet Thanh Nguyen (Harry N. Abrams)
Viet Nguyen, called “one of our great chroniclers of displacement” (Joyce Carol Oates, The New Yorker), brings together writers originally from Mexico, Bosnia, Iran, Afghanistan, Soviet Ukraine, Hungary, Chile, Ethiopia, and others to make their stories heard. They are formidable in their own right—MacArthur Genius grant recipients, National Book Award and National Book Critics Circle Award finalists, filmmakers, speakers, lawyers, professors, and New Yorker contributors—and they are all refugees, many as children arriving in London and Toronto, Oklahoma and Minnesota, South Africa and Germany. Their 17 contributions are as diverse as their own lives have been, and yet hold just as many themes in common.

27. **The Leftovers** by Shaelyn Smith (CSU Poetry Center)

Shaelyn Smith’s THE LEFTOVERS extends the table of Judy Chicago’s *The Dinner Party*: it pronounces more of the names that should be pronounced; it draws in a wider range of practicing artists; it expands and complicates the context through which we read Chicago’s
feminist and recuperative gesture. But, most exciting of all, the book writes itself and the subject of its study into an ecological system, where many different voices rise out history, rise out of the contemporary moment, and put time and thought into a sustained rhythm. Through its unfolding THE LEFTOVERS learns how to care for each level in this living environment and leaves the reader with a feeling that she’s learned something and planted something simultaneously. —Renee Gladman


*Rockhaven: A History of Interiors* is a research project and book exploring the histories, politics, and presentations of female mental health via the proto-feminist psychiatric institution, Rockhaven Sanitarium. Founded in the Crescenta Valley in 1923 by nurse Agnes Richards, Rockhaven Sanitarium was owned and operated as an all-female psychiatric facility until 1967, when Agnes passed the institution on to her granddaughter Patricia Traviss, who ran it as a convalescent home for elderly women until 2001. Recently awarded listings on the California Register of Historical Resources and the National Register of Historic Places, Rockhaven is currently owned by the City of Glendale and today sits empty.

29. **Spain** by Caren Beilin (Rescue Press)
While the other art colonists around her ‘are making the world soft’—photographers setting day-long exposures and textile artists felting cocoons—Caren Beilin’s SPAIN is hard: made and re-made in its mosaic shards. Abject, affronted and audacious, the resilient narrator, who incidentally might faint at a thought, if it’s a rigorous thought, who might then rouse wherever, in the company of countryside sheep, is on the perilous cusp of insight on multiple fronts. She looks up from her book in her book to assert that form is a better heroine than Emma in Madame Bovary, and proceeds to ‘read against what was happening.’ The beginning of the end of fiction. —Brian Blanchfield

30. The Barefoot Woman by Scholastique Mukasonga, Translated by Jordan Stump (Archipelago Books)
loving, funny, devastating tribute to her mother Stefania, a tireless protector of her children, a keeper of Rwandan tradition even in the cruelest and bleakest of exiles, a sage, a wit, and in the end a victim, like almost the entire family, of the Rwandan genocide. But it’s also a wry, sharp-eyed portrait of the world her mother lived in, from its humblest commonplaces (beer, sorghum, bread) to its deepest horrors (rape, murder, unimaginable loss). In a telling both affectionate and haunted, Mukasonga sinks her feet into this dense “land of stories.” Each step, each verse of her careful lament carries both the weight of her mourning and the fortitude of the myriad silenced voices she speaks for. Whether describing the dry, cracked layers of mud on her mother’s feet, or the stretch marks that line strong legs, Mukasonga follows the threaded rivulet of her mother’s pulsing memory.

31. **Wrestling with the Devil: A Prison Memoir** by Ngugi wa Thiong’o (The New Press)

Wrestling with the Devil, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s powerful prison memoir, begins literally half an hour before his release on December 12, 1978. In one extended flashback he recalls the night, a year earlier, when armed police pulled him from his home and jailed him in Kenya’s Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, one of the largest in Africa. There, he lives in a prison block with eighteen other political prisoners, quarantined from the general prison population. In a conscious effort to fight back the humiliation and the intended degradation of the spirit, Ngũgĩ—the world-renowned author of *Weep Not, Child; Petals of Blood*; and *Wizard of the Crow*—decides to write a novel on toilet paper, the only paper to which he has access, a book that will become his classic, *Devil on the Cross*.

32. **Eloquent Rage** by Brittney Cooper (St. Martin’s Press)
Eloquent rage keeps us all honest and accountable. It reminds women that they don’t have to settle for less. When Cooper learned of her grandmother’s eloquent rage about love, sex, and marriage in an epic and hilarious front-porch confrontation, her life was changed. And it took another intervention, this time staged by one of her homegirls, to turn Brittney into the fierce feminist she is today. In Brittney Cooper’s world, neither mean girls nor fuckboys ever win. But homegirls emerge as heroes. This book argues that ultimately feminism, friendship, and faith in one’s own superpowers are all we really need to turn things right side up again.

33. *So You Want to Talk About Race?* by Ijeoma Oluo (Seal Press)

In *So You Want to Talk About Race*, Editor at Large of The Establishment Ijeoma Oluo offers a contemporary, accessible take on the racial landscape in America, addressing head-on such issues as privilege, police brutality, intersectionality, micro-aggressions, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the “N” word. Perfectly positioned to bridge the gap between people of color and white Americans struggling with race complexities, Oluo answers the questions readers don’t dare ask, and explains the concepts that continue to elude everyday Americans.
Poetry, Frost is often quoted as having said, is what is lost in translation, and American poets and critics have long taken this as their cue to subordinate translation to other forms of literary activity and to disqualify translated texts. In TRANSGRESSIVE CIRCULATION, poet, translator, and publisher Johannes Göransson reverses this dynamic, holding that we should use translation to re-assess our entire aesthetic establishment. Rather than argue against the denigration and abjection of translation—and most foreign texts—this book investigates those dark zones of expulsion as grounds for new possibilities, not just for translation but for literature as a whole.

35. Dept. of Posthumous Letters by Dot Devota and Caitie Moore (Argos Books)
the dialogic. “In a letter you cannot listen. You must always be speaking,” writes Devota, as her letters to Moore narrate anecdotes that read like overheard myths—webs of observation, reversal and misunderstanding that signal the presence of an attentive listener. Line drawings by Brandon Shimoda intensify the enchantment that unfolds out of Moore and Devota’s voices. “Have you ever played this game: Horse/Muffin/Bird?” Moore asks Devota. Intelligently-framed questions ranging from philosophical to purely affectionate interlace these poems like veins of honey. “It’s a proportion thing, an order thing. I am, certainly, no part Muffin.”

36. John Okada: The Life and Rediscovered Work by the Author of No-No Boy ed. by Frank Abe, Greg Robinson, and Floyd Cheung (University of Washington Press)

No-No Boy, John Okada’s only published novel, centers on a Japanese American who refuses to fight for the country that incarcerated him and his people in World War II and, upon release from federal prison after the war, is cast out by his divided community. In 1957, the novel faced a similar rejection until it was rediscovered and reissued in 1976 to become a celebrated classic of American literature. As a result of Okada’s untimely death at age forty-seven, the author’s life and other works have remained obscure. This compelling collection offers the first full-length examination of Okada’s development as an artist, placing recently discovered writing by Okada alongside essays that reassess his lasting legacy. Meticulously researched biographical details, insight from friends and relatives, and a trove of intimate photographs illuminate Okada’s early life in Seattle, military service, and careers as a public librarian and a technical writer in the aerospace industry. This volume is an essential companion to No-No Boy.

37. Pasolini’s Our by Nathanael (Nightboat Books)
The body of the filmmaker is itself a discrepancy. This may be one of this book’s claims, if it were to advance something like an argument. Instead it writes its way through to a dry swamp, in the elusive company of Pier Paolo Pasolini, Mizoguchi Kenji, and the albatross, evincing procedures of extinction that owe something to both translation and photography. Its armament, approximating the latent architectures of the Berlin Wall, is held up against the declensions of film, its destructibility. What might otherwise be read as a criminal investigation whose many pieces of evidence reproduce a body whose principal characteristic is that it is found neither in language nor at the edge of a scrubby beach.

38. To Float in the Space Between: A Life and Work in Conversation with the Life and Work of Etheridge Knight by Terrance Hayes (Wave Books)

In these works based on his Bagley Wright lectures on the poet Etheridge Knight, Terrance Hayes offers not quite a biography but a compilation “as speculative, motley, and adrift as Knight himself.”
Personal yet investigative, poetic yet scholarly, this multi-genre collection of writings and drawings enacts one poet's search for another and in doing so constellates a powerful vision of black literature and art in America.

39. **Lyric Multiples** by George Albon (Nightboat Books)

*LYRIC MULTIPLES* comprises four essays written over the last decade. The subject is poetry but the essays range over such topics as the evolution of the human call, ascensional modes of thinking, pop songs, the built environment and its discontents, the post-punk moment, its fruitful aftermath, and much else. Throughout this book, Albon explores unencountered varieties of aesthetic experience and the contributions they make to an ideal of social interconnectivity.

40. **Refuge** by Ming Lauren Holden (Kore Press)

*Refuge* is a book of lyric essays about a young woman’s life as a budding writer and an international development and aid worker.
Spanning twelve years and multiple continents, it focuses in large part on her advocacy and theater work with refugees. From crossing the border into one of Syria’s refugee camps in 2013; to an interview with a man who fled Aleppo for the peace and security of Sweden in 2015; to working in a sustainable forestry foundation near Siberia in 2003; to taking the train from Mongolia to China to visit the home and wife of an exiled writer in 2008; to founding a self-sustaining theater project with Congolese refugee women in a slum of Nairobi in 2013; to finding George Oppen’s old typewriter in the attic of a farmhouse in Maine in 2004; to working as a nude model for artists’ groups in college—the work these lyric essays illuminates is that of a twenty-something year old woman trying to find herself and her world by putting her body in places, within boundaries, others might not ever consider stepping foot inside of.