

# Parkdale Book Club

## May 14 2019 – Rhinestone Button and Time to Vote!!

### Schedule

Date (10 am on 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday)

May 14-31	Time to vote – please send votes by the end of May (Friday the 31 <sup>st</sup> )	
June 8	<i>An Unnecessary Woman</i>	by Rabih Alameddine -- Lynn
June 8	list of next year's 10 books ready	

### Now it is Time to Vote!!

Please pick the 10 you like best and get your votes to me at [sloanelm@shaw.ca](mailto:sloanelm@shaw.ca) or 403-262-5340 voicemail. Deadline for voting is May 31. Nominations, in alphabetical order:

1. Joan is nominating Terry Fallis's newest, *Albatross*.
2. Lindsay is re-nominating *Anansi Boys* by Neil Gaiman.
3. Sharon nominated *The Black Candle* by Catherine Cookson.
4. Ruth nominated *A Circle of Quiet (The Crosswicks Journals Book 1)* by Madeleine L'Engle
5. Lynn nominated the next in the Three Pines series, *The Cruellest Month*, Louise Penny
6. Beth nominated *Educated* by Tara Westover
7. Lynn is nominating *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*, by Gail Honeyman.
8. Nomination from Ruth: *Erotic Stories for Punjabi Widows*, by Balli Kaur Jaswal.
9. Beth nominates *The Ghost Keeper* by Natalie Morrill.
10. Ruth is suggesting *Happenstance* by Carol Shield.
11. Beth: *The Hope That Remains* by Christine Magill.
12. Lynn, *A Long Way From Home*, by Peter Carey
13. Lee nominated: *Mary Coin*, by Marisa Silver
14. Ruth is nominating Salmon Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*

15. Sue nominated Marcus Borg's novel, *Putting Away Childish Things*.
16. Lindsay nominated: *There Will Be No Miracles Here* by Casey Gerald
17. Ida nominated *Warlight* by Michael Ondaatje.

1. Joan is nominating Terry Fallis's newest, *Albatross*. Adam Coryell is your average high-school student--well, except for that obsession with fountain pens--when his life changes forever. Based on a study by a quirky Swedish professor that claims that every human being, regardless of athletic inclination, has a body that is suited to excel in at least one sport, it turns out that Adam is good--very good, in fact--at golf. Even though he'd never even picked up a golf club. Almost instantly, and with his coach, hard-nosed Bobbie Davenport by his side, Adam and his new-found talent skyrocket to a prodigy-level stardom that includes tournament titles, sponsorship deals, throngs of fans following his every move, and fodder for tabloids. But here's the catch: Adam doesn't really like golf. And as the life he once knew slips away--including the love of his life, the dream of being a writer, and everyday normalcy--he can't help but wonder if all this success and fame is worth it . . . or if it's enough for him. Heartwarming and funny, sweeping and entertaining, Terry Fallis's new book takes readers on a journey of self-discovery. I have put in a request that the library order this one.
2. *Anansi boys* by Neil Gaiman, suggested by Lindsay (originally nominated in 2015). From Amazon: Charlie's dad wasn't just any dad. He was Anansi, a trickster god, the spider-god. Anansi is the spirit of rebellion, able to overturn the social order, create wealth out of thin air, and baffle the devil. Some said he could cheat even Death himself. Returning to the territory he so brilliantly explored in his masterful

American Gods, the incomparable Neil Gaiman offers up a work of dazzling ingenuity, a kaleidoscopic journey deep into myth that is ... startling, terrifying, exhilarating, and fiercely funny—a true wonder of a novel that confirms Stephen King's glowing assessment of the author as "a treasure house of story, and we are lucky to have him."

3. Sharon nominated ***The Black Candle*** by Catherine Cookson. Sharon says, "It's about Bridget Dene Mordaunt who inherits her father's business, but looks after her cousin Victoria, who is rather irresponsible. She insists upon marrying someone Bridget doesn't approve of but learns to live with her cousin's choices." Here's the review from Amazon: Bridget Deane Mordaunt was a woman of some consequence in her own part of the world. Inheriting her father's businesses at the age of nineteen, by the time she was twenty-three in 1880 she was running them with as firm and confident a hand on the tiller as any man. She had also become known as a good and considerate employer whose workers could regard their 'Miss Bridget' with affection as well as respect. Yet the path destiny required Bridget to follow was not an easy one. Her feckless cousin Victoria became infatuated with Lionel Filmore, the fortune-hunting elder son of an old but impoverished family living in the decayed grandeur of Grove House. Bridget had no illusions about Lionel, but at the same time Victoria's happiness was something for which she would give and yield much. So a pattern began to form that would shape the lives of generations to come; a pattern of some good and some great evil, but all of it inexorably linking Bridget ever more closely with the Filmores and their House. *The Black Candle* displays all the skills of narrative and the shrewd perception of human strengths and frailties. This is a story spanning nearly half a century, ever engrossing, with a diversity of brilliantly realised characters, particularly Bridget Mordaunt, a strikingly memorable woman who illustrates the truth that while people are changed by events they remain essentially the same inside." The Calgary Public Library has one copy of Cookson's *The Black Candle* and one copy of the DVD.
4. Ruth nominated ***A Circle of Quiet (The Crosswicks Journals Book 1)*** by Madeleine L'Engle. In this first journal of L'Engle's nonfiction series, the author shares fruitful reflections on life and career prompted by her visit to her personal place of retreat near her country home. There are four books in this series of memoirs that includes L'Engle's thinking on creativity, family and faith. L'Engle is a prolific author who wrote *A Wrinkle in*

*Time*. From a review on Goodreads: "A *Circle of Quiet* is part memoir/journal, part love story, part spiritual journey, and also in part advice for writers, her teachings and observations as Writer-in-Residence. The author covers a lot of bases, and a significant amount of a lifetime, but it never feels as though she's doing more than just having a conversation with a friend -- a string of chats on the front porch. For me, the topics that grabbed me the most were her descriptions of the surroundings of Crosswicks, their home in a small town surrounded by woods, and reading, although I enjoyed reading all of this. There's a lightness to her tone in much of her writing that makes this very easy reading, even when the topic might be heavier. Most stories are funny, or inspirational, some delightfully observational. I enjoyed this immensely." Calgary Library has one copy of this book (which is sitting right now on my desk!).

5. Lynn nominated the next in the Three Pines series, ***The Cruellest Month*** (unless someone else wants to make this their nomination). From *Publisher's Weekly*: Chief Insp. Armand Gamache and his team investigate another bizarre crime in the tiny Quebec village of Three Pines in Penny's expertly plotted third cozy (after 2007's *A Fatal Grace*). As the townspeople gather in the abandoned and perhaps haunted Hadley house for a seance with a visiting psychic, Madeleine Favreau collapses, apparently dead of fright. No one has a harsh word to say about Madeleine, but Gamache knows there's more to the case than meets the eye. Complicating his inquiry are the repercussions of Gamache having accused his popular superior at the Surete du Quebec of heinous crimes in a previous case. Fearing there might be a mole on his team, Gamache works not only to solve the murder but to clear his name. Arthur Ellis Award-winner Penny paints a vivid picture of the French-Canadian village, its inhabitants and a determined detective who will strike many Agatha Christie fans as a 21st-century version of Hercule Poirot. (really??)
6. Beth nominated ***Educated*** by Tara Westover. Tara Westover was 17 the first time she set foot in a classroom. Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, she prepared for the end of the world by stockpiling home-canned peaches and sleeping with her "head-for-the-hills bag". In the summer she stewed herbs for her mother, a midwife and healer, and in the winter she salvaged in her father's junkyard. Her father forbade hospitals, so Tara never saw a doctor or nurse. Gashes and concussions, even burns from explosions, were all treated at home with herbalism. The family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received an education and no one to intervene when one of Tara's older brothers became violent. Then, lacking any formal

education, Tara began to educate herself. She taught herself enough mathematics and grammar to be admitted to Brigham Young University, where she studied history, learning for the first time about important world events like the Holocaust and the civil rights movement. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge. Only then would she wonder if she'd traveled too far, if there was still a way home. *Educated* is an account of the struggle for self-invention. It is a tale of fierce family loyalty and of the grief that comes with severing the closest of ties. With the acute insight that distinguishes all great writers, Westover has crafted a universal coming-of-age story that gets to the heart of what an education is and what it offers: the perspective to see one's life through new eyes and the will to change it. *Educated* was last month's Kaleidoscope book, and we heard that the presentation was very good.

7. Lynn nominated ***Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine***, by Gail Honeyman. From the library site: Smart, warm, uplifting, the story of an out-of-the-ordinary heroine whose deadpan weirdness and unconscious wit make for an irresistible journey as she realizes the only way to survive is to open her heart. No one's ever told Eleanor that life should be better than fine. Eleanor Oliphant is, well, a bit of an oddball--albeit a loveable one. She struggles with appropriate social skills and tends to say exactly what she's thinking . . . and that, combined with her unusual appearance (scarred cheek, a tendency to wear the same clothes year after year), means that Eleanor has become a bit of a loner. But for Eleanor, nothing really important is missing in her carefully timetabled life of avoiding perplexing social interactions, where weekends are punctuated by frozen pizza, Glen's Vodka, and phone chats with "Mummy." But everything changes when Eleanor meets Raymond, the bumbling and sweet IT guy from her office. When she and Raymond together save Sammy, an elderly gentleman who has fallen on the sidewalk, the three become the kind of friends who rescue one another from the lives of isolation they have each been living. And it is Raymond's big heart that will ultimately help Eleanor find the way to repairing her own damaged one. Smart, warm, and uplifting, *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* is the story of a quirky yet lonely woman whose social misunderstandings and deeply ingrained routines could be changed forever--if she can bear to confront the secrets she has avoided all her life. But if she does, she'll learn that she, too, is capable of finding friendship--and even love--after all, if only she can learn to open her heart.
8. Nomination from Ruth: ***Erotic Stories for Punjabi Widows***, by Balli Kaur Jaswal. From the library site: A lively, sexy, and thought-provoking East-meets-West story about community, friendship, and women's lives at all ages. . . Nikki lives in

cosmopolitan West London, where she tends bar at the local pub. The daughter of Indian immigrants, she's spent most of her twenty-odd years distancing herself from the traditional Sikh community of her childhood, preferring a more independent (that is, Western) life. When her father's death leaves the family financially strapped, Nikki, a law school dropout, impulsively takes a job teaching a "creative writing" course at the community center in the beating heart of London's close-knit Punjabi community. Because of a miscommunication, the proper Sikh widows who show up are expecting to learn basic English literacy, not the art of short-story writing. When one of the widows finds a book of sexy stories in English and shares it with the class, Nikki realizes that beneath their white dupattas, her students have a wealth of fantasies and memories. Eager to liberate these modest women, she teaches them how to express their untold stories, unleashing creativity of the most unexpected--and exciting--kind. As more women are drawn to the class, Nikki warns her students to keep their work secret from the Brotherhood, a group of highly conservative young men who have appointed themselves the community's "moral police." But when the widows' gossip offers shocking insights into the death of a young wife--a modern woman like Nikki--and some of the class erotica is shared among friends, it sparks a scandal that threatens them all.

9. Beth sent a couple of suggestions with her regrets for our last meeting. First, ***The Ghost Keeper*** by Natalie Morrill. From Amazon: "Winner of the HarperCollins/UBC Prize for Best New Fiction, this powerful, sweeping novel set in Vienna during the 1930s and '40s centres on a poignant love story and a friendship that ends in betrayal. In the years between the two world wars, Josef Tobak builds a quiet life around his friendships, his beloved wife, Anna, and his devotion to the old Jewish cemeteries of Vienna. Then comes the Anschluss in 1938, and Josef's world is uprooted. His health disintegrates. His wife and child are forced to flee to China. His closest gentile friend joins the Nazi Party--and yet helps Josef escape to America. When the war ends, Josef returns to Vienna with his family and tries to make sense of what remains, including his former Nazi friend who, he discovers, protected Josef's young female cousin throughout the war. Back among his cemeteries in Austria's war-shattered capital, Josef finds himself beset by secrets, darkness and outward righteousness marred by private cruelty. As the truth is unearthed, Josef's care for the dead takes on new meaning while he confronts his own role in healing both his devastated community and his deepest wounds. *The Ghost Keeper* is a story about the terrible choices we make to survive and the powerful connections to communities and friends that define us. Here is a finely accomplished novel that introduces an exciting new voice to our literary landscape."

10. Nominated by Ruth -- ***Happenstance*** (1980) by Carol Shield. This is the same story told twice from the husband's side and from the wife's side. It is an interesting take on their different interpretations of a week where she goes away and a neighbour tries to commit suicide. From Calgary Public Library: These two unique novels tell the stories of Jack and Brenda Bowman during a rare weekend apart in their many years of marriage. Jack is at home coping with domestic crises and two uncouth adolescents, while immobilized by self-doubt and questioning his worth as a historian. Brenda, travelling alone for the first time, is in a strange city grappling with an array of emotions and toying with the idea of an affair. Intimate and insightful yet never sentimental, *Happenstance* is a profound portrait of a marriage and the differences between the sexes that bring life -- and a sense of isolation -- into even the most loving of relationships.
11. Second from Beth: ***The Hope That Remains*** by Christine Magill. Christine Magill grew up in Bowness in Calgary. She currently teaches high school at Strathmore and has taken students to Rwanda several times. Beth could invite her to our book club discussion if we decide to read her book. From Amazon: "Every immigrant that comes to Canada has a story. This book captures ten of those stories and the remarkable resiliency and fortitude of the human spirit. In 1994 one of the worst genocides in human history took place in Rwanda--over one million people were killed in 100 days. Each chapter in *The Hope that Remains* focuses on a Rwandan survivor and their journey to escape the violence and chaos that overtook their country. Two of the featured stories follow individuals who fled before the killing began and the events that caused them to flee. Both were then faced with the challenge of being outsiders looking in as events deteriorated and their families were slaughtered. The other eight survivors share their detailed and gripping experiences of trying to stay alive while trapped in a nation of killers. Twenty-five years after the Rwandan Genocide the scars are still very real and rebuilding and coping with the trauma remains an emotional struggle. Despite their horrific pasts the survivors share feelings of hope, forgiveness, and a belief in a better future. They demonstrate the strength and courage it takes to leave the known behind to seek a better life in a new country. Their journeys to Canada contain humorous moments, thoughtful insights, and an overwhelming love and pride for the nation they now call home."
12. From Lynn, ***A Long Way From Home***, by Peter Carey. The advantage of being the one who does the newsletter is that I can switch out

one of my nominations at the last minute -- and oddly, the new one fits into the same place alphabetically. Not having read it yet, I was not very attached to *The Island of Sea Women*. OTOH, I just finished this book by Carey and found it quite compelling. From the library site: Over the course of his stellar writing life, Peter Carey has explored his homeland of Australia in such highly acclaimed novels as *Oscar and Lucinda*, *True History of the Kelly Gang* and *Amnesia*. Writing at the peak of his powers, Carey takes us on an unforgettable journey that maps his homeland's secrets in this extraordinary new novel. Wildly inventive, funny and profoundly moving, *A Long Way from Home* opens in 1953 with the arrival of the tiny, handsome Titch Bobs, his beautiful doll of a wife, Irene, and their two children in the small town of Bacchus Marsh. Titch is the best car salesman in southeastern Australia. Irene loves her husband, and loves to drive fast. Together they enter the Redex Trial, a brutal endurance race around the ancient continent, over roads no car is designed to survive. With them is their neighbour and navigator, Willie Bachhuber, a quiz show champion and failed school teacher who calls the turns and creek crossings on a map that will lead them, without warning, away from the white Australia they all know so well. (The novel) begins in one way and takes you somewhere you never thought you'd be. Often funny, the book is also and always a page-turner, surprising you with history these characters never even knew themselves. Its profound reckoning with Australia's brutal treatment of the continent's aboriginal people will also resonate strongly with Canadian readers. I found some eerie echoes of *Medicine Walk*.

13. ***Mary Coin*** by Marisa Silver, nominated by Lee. From NPR: Do you remember those school assignments where you were asked to make up a story based on a picture? With *Mary Coin*, Marisa Silver looks long and hard at an image that has been seared into our nation's consciousness -- Dorothea Lange's iconic Depression-era photograph "Migrant Mother" -- and compassionately imagines the lives behind it. The result is a fresh angle on the Great Depression and a lesson in learning how to really look and see. Silver anchors her novel with research into Lange and her migrant subject, Florence Owens Thompson. But by renaming her photographer Vera Dare and her destitute itinerant farmer Mary Coin, she slips the constraints of facts, freeing herself to create her own remarkable, quietly heroic yet very human characters. But the real triumph of Silver's novel -- which follows *The God of War* (2008) and her second story collection, *Alone With You* (2010), both of which feature contemporary settings -- is its structural composition. Although it spans 91 years, between 1920 and 2011, *Mary Coin* is as expertly cropped and framed as a fine photographic print. Silver deftly braids Mary and Vera's stories with that of a social historian named Walker Dodge, whose name, of course, evokes Walker Evans, another photographer who put a

face on the Depression with his haunting portrait of sunken-cheeked Allie Mae Burroughs. After Dodge's father dies in 2010, he returns home to Porter, Calif., to pack up the farmhouse that has been in his family for 130 years. During his "slow, careful excavation through time," he confronts a family mystery.

14. Nominated by Ruth: ***Midnight's Children*** (1981) by Salman Rushdie. *Midnight's Children* deals with India's transition from British colonialism to independence and the partition of British India. It is considered an example of postcolonial, postmodern, and magical realist literature.

From Amazon: Saleem Sinai is born at the stroke of midnight on August 15, 1947, the very moment of India's independence. Greeted by fireworks displays, cheering crowds, and Prime Minister Nehru himself, Saleem grows up to learn the ominous consequences of this coincidence. His every act is mirrored and magnified in events that sway the course of national affairs; his health and well-being are inextricably bound to those of his nation; his life is inseparable, at times indistinguishable, from the history of his country. Perhaps most remarkable are the telepathic powers linking him with India's 1,000 other "midnight's children," all born in that initial hour and endowed with magical gifts. This novel is at once a fascinating family saga and an astonishing evocation of a vast land and its people—a brilliant incarnation of the universal human comedy. *Midnight's Children* stands apart as both an epochal work of fiction and a brilliant performance by one of the great literary voices of our time.

15. Sue, and last year, Jean, nominated Marcus Borg's novel, ***Putting Away Childish Things***. From Library Journal: Set in the Midwest, this evangelical story introduces Kate, a professor at a small liberal arts college whose tenure is threatened because her teaching and writing are considered too Christian. In her classes and out of them, she expounds on what the Bible has to say about major subjects of contention in the world today. Bestselling author, Bible scholar, and theologian Marcus Borg uses his core teachings on faith and the Bible to demonstrate their transformative power and potential in *Putting Away Childish Things*: the moving, inspirational story of a college professor, her students, and a crisis of faith.

16. Lindsay nominated: ***There Will Be No Miracles Here*** by Casey Gerald. From CPL: Marlon James says: "Somehow Casey Gerald has pulled off the most urgently political, most deeply personal, and most engagingly spiritual statement of our time by just looking outside his window and inside himself. Extraordinary." The testament of a boy and a generation who came of age as the world came apart—a generation

searching for a new way to live. Casey Gerald comes to our fractured times as a uniquely visionary witness whose life has spanned seemingly unbridgeable divides. His story begins at the end of the world: Dallas, New Year's Eve 1999, when he gathers with the congregation of his grandfather's black evangelical church to see which of them will be carried off. His beautiful, fragile mother disappears frequently and mysteriously; for a brief idyll, he and his sister live like *Boxcar Children* on her disability checks. When Casey—following in the footsteps of his father, a gridiron legend who literally broke his back for the team—is recruited to play football at Yale, he enters a world he's never dreamed of, the anteroom to secret societies and success on Wall Street, in Washington, and beyond. But even as he attains the inner sanctums of power, Casey sees how the world crushes those who live at its margins. He sees how the elite perpetuate the salvation stories that keep others from rising. And he sees, most painfully, how his own ascension is part of the scheme. *There Will Be No Miracles Here* has the arc of a classic rags-to-riches tale, but it stands the American Dream narrative on its head. If to live as we are is destroying us, it asks, what would it mean to truly live? Intense, incantatory, shot through with sly humor and quiet fury, *There Will Be No Miracles Here* inspires us to question—even shatter—and reimagine our most cherished myths.

17. Nominated by Ida: ***Warlight*** by Michael Ondaatje. Like Natalie Morrill's *Ghost Keeper*, *Warlight* takes place in post-World War II. Here's the blurb from Amazon: "In a narrative as beguiling and mysterious as memory itself -- shadowed and luminous at once -- we read the story of fourteen-year-old Nathaniel, and his older sister, Rachel. In 1945, just after World War II, they stay behind in London when their parents move to Singapore, leaving them in the care of a mysterious figure named The Moth. They suspect he might be a criminal, and they grow both more convinced and less concerned as they come to know his eccentric crew of friends: men and women joined by a shared history of unspecified service during the war, all of whom seem, in some way, determined now to protect, and educate (in rather unusual ways) Rachel and Nathaniel. But are they really what and who they claim to be? And what does it mean when the siblings' mother returns after months of silence without their father, explaining nothing, excusing nothing? A dozen years later, Nathaniel begins to uncover all that he didn't know and understand in that time, and it is this journey--through facts, recollection, and imagination--that he narrates in this masterwork from one of the great writers of our time."

## Rhinestone Button

Eight of us had a great discussion of Lindsay's choice, **A Rhinestone Button** by Gail Anderson-Dargatz. Lindsay did a particularly good job of leading us given that she'd read the book 17 years ago when it first came out. Some of our reactions:

-  I loved the book – read it in 2 evenings
-  Phenomenal book; enjoyed the book
-  I liked that it's a Canadian author
-  Fantastic descriptions – nature, Liv's kitchen...
-  Liv went to United Church: Oh, that explains everything
-  Dithy could be the inspiration for Ruth Zardo
-  I liked Dithy – calling Divine on his hypocrisy. "Shit just happens." Then a psychiatrist prescribed her medication
-  I was interested in the **synaesthesia**
-  Does synaesthesia decrease with age?
-  Did Job's synaesthesia decrease with stress? We suppress things when we are not living in comfort
-  **Setting:** I like the setting – that is how prairie communities work
-  (Listen to Connie Kaldor's Margaret's Waltz on Youtube)
-  but too many prairie clichés – the aerial photo of farm on kitchen wall...
-  small town gossipy Peyton Placey
-  I felt like I knew the people in the story, because of location
-  The name should change to Godsfingers
-  Magical realism – destruction of church by God's finger
-  **Job:** Irritated at Job for his low opinion of self
-  Lived his life for what others wanted
-  Felt called to move out of house
-  "the long loud effect of fathers" (from review of The Italian Teacher)
-  drawn to Job's character because he is different
-  Author's husband had mystical experiences and crisis of faith in youth
-  Parallel to Job in the Bible – did not think himself worthy
-  Why would a parent name a child Job??
-  **Cruelty and abuse:** This is a book about cruelty. It could be a text for how to injure others.
-  disturbing how easily father would strap the child
-  After Emma's death, "Abe cried at night, and his boys heard him through the thin walls of the house, but he didn't tolerate their tears..." "Quit that or I'll give you something to cry about."

-  Jacob's (?unwitting?) cruelty with the cow giving birth.
-  Lilith's cruelty to the cat
-  Lilith's taking over the kitchen, throwing out Job's jujubes, and worse, his books.
-  Will's treatment of Ed in the 'intervention.'
-  Jacob's cruelty in letting the bull drown.
-  **Religious abuse** – religion as excuse to be abusive
-  "(Job) thought for certain that Will would drop him as a friend now that he was back at church. Another fish caught. He was right."
-  The section on fundamentalist religion-based conversion 'therapy' on Will made me feel nauseous.
-  Debbie's treatment of Will at their blind date (going off with Jerry instead), that cruelty attributed to God "you're beautiful and all, but God has led me to want more. God wants me to have ... a large house and a new car." (Then Debbie left Jerry "She said I couldn't bring her all God had in mind for her and that she'd bound her true soulmate in a welder from Stony Plain.")
-  how religion can go overboard
-  Evangelizing through guilt.
-  Penny's "We'll see who gets the most converts. It's like a scavenger hunt!" scavenging for people's pain
-  Jacob's requiring son to beat him, and then comparing himself to Jesus
-  **Resolution:** it took a tornado to straighten everything out (not that everyone wanted to be straightened)
-  I'm glad Job found his own version of faith
-  relieved that Will escaped and found a different church
-  I'm glad that Ed and Job developed a friendship. I'm glad things worked out for Ed.
-  Grace came back (the cat that disappeared after Lilith's cruelty of putting her in the dishwasher). But GRACE CAME BACK after the 2<sup>nd</sup> tornado.
-  Job at the end: "... in his face an ease, a happiness, had crept in. If he saw that man on the street, he'd want to know him. Count him as a friend. A tingle of recognition ran through him. This is where he wanted to be, in this moment."
-  "Job collected moments like these, noting the colours in the duck's wings, the smell of thawing earth, the cool of the beer in one hand and the warmth of Liv's hand in the other. ... who knew what else this world might offer him if he was attentive to its details." "... it might be that God was found, not in a church or some hazy hereafter, but in the tart taste of a beer, in the worm hand of a lover, on the whistling wings of ducks flying low overhead."
-  **Etc.**
-  Today's children miss out if they only have iPads and no button jars

- I liked that Job got to see the northern lights through the hole in his roof. They “pulsed in hues that were at once saturated and iced, like lime and raspberry sherbet. ... brilliant red bands of aurora pulsed inward from each side towards the corona directly overhead. A heart beating in the sky... He felt rapture in his chest... How had he watched this display all those nights and missed this awe? And this terror.”
- body image plays such a role in our lives – the accident of birth and how you end up looking
- Abe wanted to be a cowboy – wannabe cowboy – Rhinestone Cowboy
- Wasn't it lovely that Ed saved the relationship between Liv & Job, letting Liv know how inexperienced Job was?
- Why did Divine want a half-way house? How many homeless people would there be in Godsfinger? Or want to be in Godsfinger?
- I liked the role the ducks played: the pet mallard that Ed and Will had; the dead bufflehead dropping out of the sky to hit the back of Job's head. The pet mallard, kicked out, giving Will the sign he was looking for – a sign that he should agree to the half-way house taking over his farm. The lesser scaup falling down the chimney (fortunately this one flew away). Foreshadowing the fire? Then a flock of Northern shovelers with bills like spatulas flew overhead during the junk party. →
- With respect to the latter part of our discussion, this wonderful quotation: “Let us rise up and be thankful, for if we didn't learn a lot today, at least we learned a little, and if we didn't learn a little, at least we didn't get sick, and if we got sick, at least we didn't die.” - Gautama Siddhartha

## Other reading –

### *what have you read lately?*

**The Power** by Naomi Alderman (AlderMAN) is a powerful and important speculative fiction that looks at the question, what if there was a reversal of which gender has greater physical power? In this story, because women develop, or re-learn, that they have the potential of electrical power to protect themselves and harm others, the male dominance appletart is upset. I appreciated that this story was told from the POVs of different women so that different geographical and cultural contexts were explored. I appreciated the very Margaret-Atwood feeling of the novel. There is a great deal of violence but to me it seemed essential to the narrative -- the cultural/political power reversal wasn't going to happen just because women now had the potential to overpower. But ultimately I felt discouraged that the author's answer to what-if is that there would be a simple and essentially symmetrical reversal. In the acknowledgments, the author noted that two of the illustrations, "Serving Boy" and "Priestess Queen," are based on real archeological finds. She says: "... despite the lack of context, the archeologists who unearthed them called (the first one) "Priest King" and (the second one) "Dancing Girl. ... Sometimes I think the whole of this book could be communicated with just this set of facts and illustrations."

