



## Brookfield Public Library

2020 Calendar

Books are available at the Circulation Desk one month before the meeting date.

Please see bookmark insert each month for that title's selected stories.

**Thursday, January 9, 2020****1:00pm****Harnischfeger Room***The Thing Around Your Neck*

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

This short story collection examines, in illuminating detail, issues and concerns facing women who won't find solace in a Prada bag. With these thought-provoking stories, Adichie aims for mind expansion instead of mental escapism. No less hopeful than typical chick lit but certainly more poignant and serious, this collection should spur spirited conversation among readers willing to discuss comparisons. (*Booklist*)

**Thursday, February 13, 2020****1:00pm****Harnischfeger Room***Stories of Your Life and Others*

Ted Chiang

Chiang begins with a startling bit of oddity, then, as readers figure out what part of the familiar world has been twisted, they realize that it was just a small part of a much larger structure of marvelous, threatening strangeness. Reading a Chiang story means juggling multiple conceptions of what is normal and right. His stories are audacious, challenging and moving. (*Publishers Weekly*)

**Thursday, March 12, 2020****1:00pm****Harnischfeger Room***Everything Inside*

Edwidge Danticat

Families fracture and reform in Danticat's outstanding and deeply memorable story collection. Set among the Haitian "dyaspora", the tales describe the complicated lives of people who live in one place but are drawn elsewhere. In plain, propulsive prose, and with great compassion, Danticat writes both of her characters' losses and of their determination to continue: "There are loves that outlive lovers." (*Publishers Weekly*)

**Thursday, April 9, 2020****1:00pm****Harnischfeger Room***Fragile Things*

Neil Gaiman

This collection of short fictions and wonder ranges from a tale of zombies to a series of meditations inspired by singer Tori Amos's album, *Strange Little Girls*. As in his other books, there are fantastical elements. Gaiman follows no overarching theme, but that is what makes these stories charming, at times creepy, and good fun. They read like dreams and meditations, with a stream-of-consciousness quality to their presentation. Gaiman also explains some of the inspiration behind the stories to help put them in perspective. (*Library Journal*)

**Thursday, May 14, 2020****1:00pm****Harnischfeger Room***Where the Light Falls*

Nancy Hale

Hale's early stories have coming-out parties, jazz orchestras, Ivy League athletics, fast driving in fancy cars. Yet they paint quietly acid pictures of Southern, male dominance masking fragility, and ethnic tensions in summer communities. Hale acknowledged women's ambivalence about having children and the potential oppressiveness of marriage. Hale's prose is elegant without calling attention to itself, like the well-cut dresses one is sure her female characters wear. (*Kirkus Review*)

**Thursday, June 11, 2020****1:00pm****Harnischfeger Room***The Bus Driver Who Wanted To Be God*

Etgar Keret

Brief, intense, painfully funny, and shockingly honest, Keret's stories are snapshots that illuminate with intelligence and wit the hidden truths of life. Hilarity and anguish are the twin pillars of his work. Keret covers a remarkable emotional and narrative terrain. These wildly inventive, uniquely humane stories are for fans of transforming, brilliant fiction. (Riverhead Books)

**Thursday, July 9, 2020**

**1:00pm**

**Harnischfeger Room**

*The Boat*

Nam Le

From a Colombian slum to the streets of Tehran, seven characters in seven stories struggle with very particular Swords of Damocles in Le's accomplished debut. The story's ironies are masterfully controlled by Le, and reverberate through the rest of this peripatetic collection. Taken together, the stories cover a vast geographic territory and are filled with exquisitely painful and raw moments of revelation, captured in an economical style as deft as it is sure. (*Publishers Weekly*)

**Thursday, August 13, 2020**

**1:00pm**

**Harnischfeger Room**

*We Love Anderson Cooper*

R.L. Maizes

Maizes depicts characters who feel ostracized from their peers under an array of circumstances in her delightfully eclectic collection. She excels in humanizing the characters through their occasionally self-destructive flaws. United under the loose common theme of isolation, the stories meld together nicely, giving the collection a satisfying cumulative feel. Maizes's direct manner of storytelling and her imperfect yet unmistakably human characters are sure to win over readers. (*Publishers Weekly*)

**Thursday, September 10, 2020**

**1:00pm**

**Harnischfeger Room**

*After the Quake*

Haruki Murakami

Murakami's haunting short stories were born in the aftermath of the terrible Kobe earthquake of 1995, which continues to preoccupy and concern this keen and poetic writer. Spare yet richly mysterious and emotionally prismatic, these unpredictable tales explore the subtle ways the earthquake affected those who live far from its epicenter yet who are nonetheless shaken to their very core. Murakami magically links the mythical past, when animals spoke to humans and dreams mattered, to today's anxious world, where, tattooed by the fitful light of televisions emitting images of disaster, people stand on ever-shifting ground and valiantly offer a hand, and their love, to one another. (*Booklist*)

**Thursday, October 8, 2020**

**1:00pm**

**Harnischfeger Room**

*Maggie Brown & Others*

Peter Orner

The 44 concise and stinging tales simmering here, along with a stunningly piquant novella, express a full spectrum of caustic observations, nuanced emotions, and life-warping predicaments. Set in California, Chicago, upstate New York, and shabby Fall River, Massachusetts, Orner's poignant and hilarious stories feature fractious Jewish families, angry teens, marriages moribund and vital, estranged friends, and outright enemies. Each milieu reflects daunting social biases, while each of Orner's wise-cracking, cynical, brainy, secretive, yearning, and combative characters vividly embodies the grating contradictions and surprising depths of human nature. (*Booklist*)

**Thursday, November 12, 2020**

**1:00pm**

**Harnischfeger Room**

*Pastoralia*

George Saunders

Saunders's extraordinary talent is in top form in his second collection, in which his vision of a hellishly exaggerated dystopia of late capitalist America is warmed and impassioned by his regular, irregular and flat-out wacky characters. Saunders's five stories and title novella feature protagonists who are losers yet also innocent dreamers. These characters may not have much, but they do possess the author's compassion. Saunders, with a voice unlike any other writer's, makes these losers funny, plausible and absolutely winning. (*Publishers Weekly*)

**Thursday, December 10, 2020**

**1:00pm**

**Harnischfeger Room**

*Lovers on All Saints' Day*

Juan Gabriel Vasquez

Vásquez now brings his keen eye and rich prose to the themes of love and memory in these seven powerful stories. Vásquez achieves an extraordinary unity of emotion with these fragmented lives. In these stories, there are love affairs, revenge, troubled pasts, and tender moments that reveal a person's whole history in a few sentences. Vásquez is a humane, deeply insightful writer, and these stories leave one feeling transformed from the experience of reading them. (Riverhead Books)

