

Passing Nella Larsen

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FINAL THOUGHT

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Passing

Nella Larsen (1891-1964) occupies a central place in African-American and Modernist literature, and her status as a Harlem Renaissance woman writer is rived only by Zora Neale Hurston's. This Norton Critical Edition of Larsen's electrifying 1929 novel is accompanied by Carla Kaplan's insightfully detailed introduction, explanatory annotations, and a Note on the Text "Backgrounds and Contexts" connects Passing to the historical events of the day, most notably the sensational Rhinelander/Jones case of 1925. Fourteen contemporary reviews are reprinted, including those by Alice Dunbar-Nelson, W. B. Seabrook, Mary Griffin, and W. E. B. Du Bois. Little-known documents, including those by Juanita Ellsworth and Caleb Johnson, reveal America's fascination with-and fear of-the cultural phenomenon of passing. Also included are Larsen's statements on the novel and on passing, as well as a generous selection of her letters. The theme of "The Tragic Mulatto(a)" in American literature is explored through related writings by Lydia Maria Child, William Wells Brown, Kate Chopin, Mark Twain, Countee Cullen, and Langston Hughes, among others. Finally, Joseph Seamon Cotter, Jr., Jessie Redmon Fauset, Countee Cullen, W. E. B. Du Bois, Allen Semi [Nella Larsen], George S. Schuyler, Carl Van Vechten, and Langston Hughes voice their impressions of passing from the perspective of the Harlem Renaissance. "Criticism" provides sixteen diverse interpretations of Passing by, among others, Deborah E. McDowell, Judith Butler, Cheryl A. Wall, Thadious M. Davis, George Hutchinson, Mary Helen Washington, Ann duCille, Gayle Wald, Claudia Tate, and Jennifer DeVere Brody. A Chronology and Selected Bibliography are also included. Book jacket.

Passing *GENERAL PRESS*

Generally regarded as Nella Larsen's best work, Passing was first published in 1929 but has received a lot of renewed attention because of its close examination of racial and sexual ambiguities. It has achieved canonical status in many American universities. Clare Kendry is living on the edge. Light-skinned, elegant, and ambitious, she is married to a racist white man unaware of her African American heritage, and has severed all ties to her past after deciding to ‘pass’ as a white woman. Clare’s childhood friend, Irene Redfield, just as light-skinned, has chosen to remain within the African American community, and is simultaneously allured and repelled by Clare’s risky decision to engage in racial masquerade for personal and societal gain. After frequenting African American-centric gatherings together in Harlem, Clare's interest in Irene turns into a homoerotic longing for Irene's black identity that she abandoned and can never embrace again, and she is forced to grapple with her decision to pass for white in a way that is both tragic and telling.

Passing *Restless Books*

Restless Classics presents the ninetieth anniversary edition of an undersung gem of the Harlem Renaissance: Nella Larsen's Passing, a captivating and prescient exploration of identity, sexuality, self-invention, class, and race set amidst the pealing boisterousness of the Jazz Age. When childhood friends Irene Redfield and Clare Kendry cross paths at a whites-only restaurant, it's been decades since they last met. Married to a bigoted white man who has no idea that she is African American, Clare has fully embraced her ability to “pass” as a white woman. Irene, also light-skinned and living in Harlem, is shocked by Clare’s rejection of her heritage, though she too passes when it suits her needs. This encounter sparks an intense relationship between the two women who, as acclaimed critic and novelist Darryl Pinckney writes in his insightful introduction, reflect Larsen’s own experience of being “between black and white, and culturally at home nowhere.” In a culture intent on setting boundaries, Clare and Irene refuse to adhere to expectations of gender, race, or class, culminating in a tragic clash of identities, as their relationship swings between emotional hostility and intense attraction. “Nella Larsen’s Passing is one of those American classics that I’ve always meant to get around to. A new edition is out today from Restless Books, with a handsome cover (and interior illustrations, all by Maggie Lily) and an introduction by the novelist and critic Darryl Pinckney. If I’m going to tackle a classic, I like to have a teacher to help me along the way.... It’s a remarkable book, and Maggie Lily’s dark illustrations end up feeling very appropriate.” —Rumaan Alam, The New York Times Books Newsletter Praise for Passing "Quicksand and Passing are novels I will never forget. They open up a whole world of experience and struggle that seemed to me, when I first read them years ago, absolutely absorbing, fascinating, and indispensable." —Alice Walker "Discovering Nella Larsen is like finding lost money with no name on it. One can enjoy it with delight and share it

without guilt." —Maya Angelou “Nella Larsen didn’t just eschew tribes — she never had one to begin with.... Unsparing on the madness of racial classification but frank, and very beautiful, on the lure of racial belonging.” —Parul Sehgal, The New York Times “[Passing] is about changing definitions of concepts like race and gender, and the inextricable relationship between whiteness and blackness. It is a meditation on the uneasy dynamic between social obligation and personal freedom. It dramatizes the impossibility of self-invention in a society in which nuance and ambiguity are considered fatal threats to the social order.” —Emily Bernard, Electric Literature “I have read and re-read Passing more than a dozen times. Each time I think I can hear Larsen's own voice more clearly: asking, demanding really, that each of us abandon the labels we've been assigned and celebrate the story that we are.” —Heidi W. Durrow, NPR “Passing broke literary ground as the story of two racially and sexually ambiguous women written by another. Social boundaries can be permeated, but not without cost.” —Natalie Cate, The Guardian, 1000 novels everyone must read

Quicksand and Passing *Rutgers University Press*

"Quicksand and Passing are novels I will never forget. They open up a whole world of experience and struggle that seemed to me, when I first read them years ago, absolutely absorbing, fascinating, and indispensable."--Alice Walker "Discovering Nella Larsen is like finding lost money with no name on it. One can enjoy it with delight and share it without guilt." --Maya Angelou "A hugely influential and insightful writer." --The New York Times "Larsen's heroines are complex, restless, figures, whose hungers and frustrations will haunt every sensitive reader. Quicksand and Passing are slender novels with huge themes." -- Sarah Waters "A tantalizing mix of moral fable and sensuous colorful narrative, exploring female sexuality and racial solidarity."-Women's Studies International Forum Rutgers' all-time bestselling book, Nella Larsen's novels Quicksand (1928) and Passing (1929) document the historical realities of Harlem in the 1920s and shed a bright light on the social world of the black bourgeoisie. The novels' greatest appeal and achievement, however, is not sociological, but psychological. As noted in the editor's comprehensive introduction, Larsen takes the theme of psychic dualism, so popular in Harlem Renaissance fiction, to a higher and more complex level, displaying a sophisticated understanding and penetrating analysis of black female psychology.

Passing *Macmillan Collector's Library*

Nella Larsen’s distinctive and revealing novel about racial identity set in New York in 1929. Part of the Macmillan Collector’s Library; a series of stunning, clothbound, pocket sized classics with gold foiled edges and ribbon markers. These beautiful books make perfect gifts or a treat for any book lover. This edition of Passing features an introduction by Christa Holm Vogelius. Irene Redfield, married to a successful physician, enjoys a comfortable life in Harlem, New York. Reluctantly, she renews her friendship with old school friend, Clare Kendry. Clare, who like Irene is light skinned, ‘passes’ as white and is married to a racist white man who has no idea about Clare’s racial heritage. Even though Irene knows that reigniting her friendship with Clare will lead to trouble, she can't resist allowing Irene into her world. Irene in turn wants to rekindle her bonds with the African American community of her youth. As tensions mount between friends and between couples, this taut and mesmerizing narrative spins towards an unexpected end.

Quicksand

Born to a white mother and an absent black father, and despised for her dark skin, Helga Crane has long had to fend for herself. As a young woman, Helga teaches at an all-black school in the South, but even here she feels different. Moving to Harlem and eventually to Denmark, she attempts to carve out a comfortable life and place for herself, but ends up back where she started, choosing emotional freedom that quickly translates into a narrow existence. Quicksand, Nella Larsen's powerful first novel, has intriguing autobiographical parallels and at the same time invokes the international dimension of African American culture of the 1920s. It also evocatively portrays the racial and gender restrictions that can mark a life. "Fine, thoughtful and courageous. It is, on the whole, the best piece of fiction that Negro America has produced since the heyday of [Charles] Chesnutt." (W. E. B. Du Bois)

The Complete Fiction of Nella Larsen

Passing, Quicksand, and The Stories *Anchor*

This volume brings together the complete fiction of the author of Passing and Quicksand, one of the most gifted writers of the Harlem Renaissance. Throughout her short but brilliant literary career, Nella Larsen wrote piercing dramas about the black middle class that featured sensitive, spirited heroines struggling to find a place where they belonged. Passing, Larsen’s best-known work, is a disturbing story about the unraveling lives of two childhood friends, one of whom turns her back on her past and marries a white bigot. Just as disquieting is the portrait in Quicksand of Helga Crane, half black and half white, who is unable to escape her loneliness no matter where and with whom she lives. Race and marriage offer few securities here or in the other stories in this compulsively readable collection, rich in psychological complexity and imbued with a sense of place that brings Harlem vibrantly to life.

Mulatto Womanhood and Literary Traditions in Nella Larsen's "Passing" *GRIN Verlag*

Seminar paper from the year 2013 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 1,3, Free University of Berlin, language: English, abstract: The 1850 United States Census offered for the first time three options in the category of color: In addition to ‘white’ and ‘black,’ the option of ‘mulatto’ was introduced (Douglas and Yates 44). The idea for this inclusion was forwarded by the northern states of the U.S. as the South was not keen on acknowledging any mixing of the races: A mulatto or mulatta is a child born to one white and one black parent. During slavery, thousands of mulatto children were born to slave mothers and white free men, most often the masters of the women. Due to the one-drop rule (which classified anyone with as little as one drop of African blood as black), these children inherited the race and status from their mothers.In the 1920s, when the author

Nella Larsen came to fame, the ‘color line’ between black and white Americans was drawn more sharply than ever before (cf. Kaplan xv). As mulattoes and mulattas can be of a very light complexion, they are predestined to ‘pass’ for white. This means that they can cross the constructed color line and live as white people. There are various, widely differing, guesses as to how many mulatto and black people passed in the late 1920s: The numbers range from 5,000 people in the U.S.each year to 75,000 people in only one city per day (cf. Kaplan xv). The concept of passing created two distinct feelings. The fact that people could simply assume another racial identity created fascination, on the one hand, and terror, on the other hand. The two protagonists of Nella Larsen’sPassing (1929), Irene and Clare, are mulattas. Though they have grown up together, they have made different choices and lead different lives: Clare has passed for white formany years, whereas Irene has stayed within the black community.A detailed comparison shows that these two women do not only represent different options for mulatto people, but that they also share characteristics. As far as character types are concerned, Clare represents the tragic mulatta. Yet Larsen puts forth a revision of this literary tradition and character type. Irene exemplifies the moral black bourgeoisie, though it becomes evident that Larsen distances herself from Irene and the black bourgeoisie’s morals and ethics. Irene, in addition, also possesses tragic elements. Despite representing different character types, both Irene and Clare are the literary descendants of Iola Leroy, title character of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper’s novel Iola Leroy; or, Shadows Uplifted.

Black Deutschland

A Novel *Macmillan*

Jed--young, gay, black, out of rehab and out of prospects in his hometown of Chicago--flees to the city of his fantasies, a museum of modernism and decadence: Berlin. The paradise that tyranny created, the subsidized city isolated behind the Berlin Wall, is where he's chosen to become the figure that he so admires, the black American expatriate. Newly sober and nostalgic for the Weimar days of Isherwood and Auden, Jed arrives to chase boys and to escape from what it means to be a black male in America. But history, both personal and political, can't be avoided with time or distance. Whether it's the judgment of the cousin he grew up with and her husband's bourgeois German family, the lure of white wine in a down-and-out bar, a gang of racists looking for a brawl, or the ravaged visage of Rock Hudson flashing behind the face of every white boy he desperately longs for, the past never stays past even in faraway Berlin. In the age of Reagan and AIDS in a city on the verge of tearing down its walls, he clammers toward some semblance of adulthood amid the outcasts and expats, intellectuals and artists, queers and misfits. And, on occasion, the city keeps its Isherwood promises and the boy he kisses, incredibly, kisses him back. An intoxicating, provocative novel of appetite, identity, and self-construction, Darryl Pinckney's Black Deutschland tells the story of an outsider, trapped between a painful past and a tenebrous future, in Europe's brightest and darkest city.

Beyond Passing

The Further Writings of Nella Larsen

Nella Larsen's 1929 novel Passing is hailed today as a significant literary work of Harlem Renaissance, though for several decades it, like all of her works, was out of print. As history rights a wrong and recommits Larsen's name to memory, it is beneficial to look at the other writings she published over her short career, collected here in Beyond Passing: The Further Writings of Nella Larsen. Contained within are her autobiographical novel Quicksand, and three short stories "Freedom," "The Wrong Man," and "Sanctuary." With a growing number of titles under its Magna Releases banner, CSRC Storytelling promotes and provides positivity, power and presence in print, restoring literary classics across genres and making them newly accessible to modern readers. This collection of Nella Larsen stories is a CSRC Storytelling Magna Release.

The Short Fiction of Nella Larsen *Simon and Schuster*

Nella Larsen was an important writer associated with the Harlem Renaissance. While she was not prolific her work was powerful and critically acclaimed. Collected here are all three of her published short stories; "Freedom," "The Wrong Man," and "Sanctuary." These stories are about love, loss, mistaken identity, and death.

High Cotton

A Novel *Macmillan*

The narrator engages in an existential search for the meaning of his black identity--from his Indianapolis roots to his taste of the expatriate life in Paris--in a novel that addresses the issues pertaining to upper-middle-class blacks. 15,000 first printing.

Nigger Heaven *New York : Knopf*

"Negro life in Harlem." Cf. Hanna, A. Mirror for the nation

The Relationship Between Nella Larsen's "Passing" and the Rhinelander Case *GRIN Verlag*

Seminar paper from the year 2015 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Culture and Applied Geography, grade: 2,7, University of Bonn, language: English, abstract: Passing by Nella Larsen, published in 1929, features the issue of racial passing in a society which segregates people of Negro descent from the dominant white American class. Wall claims that "Not only is Passing set in Harlem at the height of its vogue, it is itself a product of the vogue. Aptly then, it acknowledges the opportunities as well as the risks that the more fluid racial and cultural boundaries of the period created". Irene Redfield, one of the two female protagonists, is able to pass, but still chose a life within Harlem and a coloured husband. Her

counterpart Clare Kendry, on the contrary, is completely passing by being married to a white man who does not know about her descent. Still, she is highly fascinated by the life Irene leads in Harlem and thus she attempts at leading a double-life. As Clare becomes increasingly involved in the black culture of that time, she also has to fear about her husband finding out the truth about her. In order to set the issue of racial passing in a historical and cultural framework, I attempt at focusing on the connection between the novel and a jurisdictional case from 1925, called the Rhinelander Case. This case is also being referred to in *Passing*: "What if Bellew should divorce Clare? Could he? There was the Rhinelander case". Furthermore, Madigan claims the following: "That Larsen has the case enter Irene's mind so quickly, however, testifies to the Rhinelanders' importance to discussions of miscegenation, the law, and racial passing during the period of the Harlem Renaissance". Leonard Kip Rhinelander, who was from the upper white class of New York, got married to Alice Jones, who was mixed-raced and from the working class. Rhinelander attempted at annulling the marriage as he claimed he had not known about his wife's race before the wedding. She countered by claiming that he has known about their race before their marriage as it was unmistakable. The jury the young couple had to face was all-male and white. Thereupon, this term paper will deal with the following research question: How can the relationship between the Rhinelander Case and Nella Larsen's *Passing* be defined and which are the means by which this relationship is being constituted?

Collected works by Nella Larsen. Illustrated

Passing, Quicksand, The Wrong Man, Freedom, Sanctuary *Strelbytskyy Multimedia Publishing*
Nellallitea 'Nella' Larsen (first called Nellie Walker) was an American novelist of the Harlem Renaissance who wrote two novels and a few short stories. A revival of interest in her writing has occurred since the late 20th century, when issues of racial and sexual identity have been studied. Her works have been the subjects of numerous academic studies, and she is now widely lauded as "not only the premier novelist of the Harlem Renaissance, but also an important figure in American modernism." Since the late 20th century, *Passing* has received renewed attention from scholars because of its close examination of racial and sexual ambiguities and liminal spaces. It has achieved canonical status in many American universities. *Passing* Quicksand The Wrong Man Freedom Sanctuary

A Study Guide for Nella Larsen's "Passing" *Gale, Cengage Learning*
A Study Guide for Nella Larsen's "Passing", excerpted from Gale's acclaimed Novels for Students.This concise study guide includes plot summary; character analysis; author biography; study questions; historical context; suggestions for further reading; and much more. For any literature project, trust Novels for Students for all of your research needs.

Brown Girls

A Novel *Random House*
NEW YORK TIMES EDITORS' CHOICE • A blazingly original debut novel about a group of friends and their immigrant families from Queens, New York—a tenderly observed, fiercely poetic love letter to a modern generation of brown girls. “An acute study of those tender moments of becoming, this is an ode to girlhood, inheritance, and the good trouble the body yields.”—Raven Leilani, author of Luster ONE OF THE MOST ANTICIPATED BOOKS OF 2022—Zakiya Dalila Harris for Entertainment Weekly, Bustle, Chicago Review of Books, Nylon, Ms. magazine, PopSugar, The Rumpus, The Millions, Electric Lit If you really want to know, we are the color of 7-Eleven root beer. The color of sand at Rockaway Beach when it blisters the bottoms of our feet. Color of soil . . . Welcome to Queens, New York, where streets echo with languages from all over the globe, subways rumble above dollar stores, trees bloom and topple over sidewalks, and the funky scent of the Atlantic Ocean wafts in from Rockaway Beach. Within one of New York City’s most vibrant and eclectic boroughs, young women of color like Nadira, Gabby, Naz, Trish, Angelique, and countless others, attempt to reconcile their immigrant backgrounds with the American culture in which they come of age. Here, they become friends for life—or so they vow. Exuberant and wild, together they roam The City That Never Sleeps, sing Mariah Carey at the tops of their lungs, yearn for crushes who pay them no mind—and break the hearts of those who do—all while trying to heed their mothers’ commands to be obedient daughters. But as they age, their paths diverge and rifts form between them, as some choose to remain on familiar streets, while others find themselves ascending in the world, beckoned by existences foreign and seemingly at odds with their humble roots. A blazingly original debut novel told by a chorus of unforgettable voices, *Brown Girls* illustrates a collective portrait of childhood, adulthood, and beyond, and is a striking exploration of female friendship, a powerful depiction of women of color attempting to forge their place in the world today. For even as the conflicting desires of ambition and loyalty, freedom and commitment, adventure and stability risk dividing them, it is to one another—and to Queens—that the girls ultimately return.

Quicksand and Passing

A writer of the Harlem Renaissance, Nella Larsen wrote just two novels, published here, and a handful of short stories. Critically acclaimed, both speak powerfully of the contradictions and restrictions experienced by black women at that time.Quicksand, written in 1928, is an autobiographical novel about Helga Crane, a mixed race woman caught between fulfilling her desires and gaining respectability in her middle class neighbourhood. Written a year later, *Passing* tells the story of two childhood friends, Clare and Irene, both light skinned enough to pass as white. Reconnecting in adulthood, Clare has chosen to live as a white woman, while Irene embraces black culture and has an important role in her community.Nella Larsen's novels are moving, characterful, and important books. She pioneered writing about the conflicts of sexuality, race and the secret suffering of women in the early twentieth century.

We Love You, Charlie Freeman

A Novel *Algonquin Books*
A FINALIST FOR THE 2016 CENTER FOR FICTION FIRST NOVEL PRIZE AND THE 2017 YOUNG LIONS AWARD “A terrifically auspicious debut.” —Janet Maslin, The New York Times “Smart, timely and powerful . . . A rich examination of America’s treatment of race, and the ways we attempt to discuss and confront it today.” —The Huffington Post The Freeman family--Charles, Laurel, and their daughters, teenage Charlotte and nine-year-old Callie--have been invited to the Toneybee Institute to participate in a research experiment. They will live in an apartment on campus with Charlie, a young chimp abandoned by his mother. The Freemans were selected because they know sign language; they are supposed to teach it to Charlie and welcome him as a member of their family. But when Charlotte discovers the truth about the institute’s history of questionable studies, the secrets of the past invade the present in devious ways. The power of this shattering novel resides in Greenidge’s undeniable storytelling talents. What appears to be a story of mothers and daughters, of sisterhood put to the test, of adolescent love and grown-up misconduct, and of history’s long reach, becomes a provocative and compelling exploration of America’s failure to find a language to talk about race. “A magnificently textured, vital, visceral feat of storytelling . . . [by] a sharp, poignant, extraordinary new voice of American literature.” —Téa Obreht, author of The Tiger’s Wife

Quicksand Penguin

Born to a white mother and an absent black father, and despised for her dark skin, Helga Crane has long had to fend for herself. As a young woman, Helga teaches at an all-black school in the South, but even here she feels different. Moving to Harlem and eventually to Denmark, she attempts to carve out a comfortable life and place for herself, but ends up back where she started, choosing emotional freedom that quickly translates into a narrow existence. Quicksand, Nella Larsen's powerful first novel, has intriguing autobiographical parallels and at the same time invokes the international dimension of African American culture of the 1920s. It also evocatively portrays the racial and gender restrictions that can mark a life. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

The Personal Librarian Penguin

The Instant New York Times Bestseller! A Good Morning America* Book Club Pick! "Historical fiction at its best!"* A remarkable novel about J. P. Morgan's personal librarian, Belle da Costa Greene, the Black American woman who was forced to hide her true identity and pass as white in order to leave a lasting legacy that enriched our nation, from New York Times bestselling authors Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray. In her twenties, Belle da Costa Greene is hired by J. P. Morgan to curate a collection of rare manuscripts, books, and artwork for his newly built Pierpont Morgan Library. Belle becomes a fixture in New York City society and one of the most powerful people in the art and book world, known for her impeccable taste and shrewd negotiating for critical works as she helps create a world-class collection. But Belle has a secret, one she must protect at all costs. She was born not Belle da Costa Greene but Belle Marion Greener. She is the daughter of Richard Greener, the first Black graduate of Harvard and a well-known advocate for equality. Belle's complexion isn't dark because of her alleged Portuguese heritage that lets her pass as white--her complexion is dark because she is African American. The Personal Librarian tells the story of an extraordinary woman, famous for her intellect, style, and wit, and shares the lengths she must go to--for the protection of her family and her legacy--to preserve her carefully crafted white identity in the racist world in which she lives.

The Nella Larsen Collection; Quicksand, Passing, Freedom, the Wrong Man, Sanctuary

The Nella Larsen Collection is comprised of five Nella Larsen fiction including; Quicksand, Passing, Freedom, The Wrong Man, and Sanctuary. Quicksand, Larsen's first novel, tells the story of Helga Crane who is the lovely and refined daughter of a Danish mother and a West Indian black father who abandons Helga and her mother soon after Helga is born. Unable to feel comfortable with any of her white-skinned relatives, Helga travels America, visits Denmark searching for people she feels at home with. In *Passing* Clare and Irene are childhood friends who lose touch when Clare's father dies and she moves in with two white aunts. By hiding that Clare was part-black, they allowed her to 'pass' as a white woman and marry a white racist. Irene lives in Harlem, commits herself to racial uplift, and marries a black doctor. *Passing* centers on the meeting of these childhood friends later in life, and the unfolding of events as each woman is fascinated and seduced by the other's daring lifestyle. *Freedom*, *The Wrong Man*, and *Sanctuary* are three stories about love, loss, mistaken identity, and death. Nellallitea 'Nella' Larsen was an American novelist of the Harlem Renaissance. Though her literary output was scant, what she wrote earned her recognition by her contemporaries and by present-day critics.

Imitation of Life Duke University Press

A reprint of the 1933 classic novel, the basis for two film versions, with a new introducton.

Blackballed: The Black Vote and US Democracy

With a New Essay New York Review of Books

An incisive reflection on black electoral politics, disenfranchisement, and the lasting legacy of the civil rights movement—now with a brand-new essay on the Covid-19 pandemic, reparations, and the 2020 George Floyd protests. Blackballed is Darryl Pinckney’s meditation on a century and a half of participation by blacks in US electoral politics. In this combination of memoir, historical narrative, and contemporary political and social analysis, he investigates the struggle for black voting rights from Reconstruction through the civil rights movement to Barack Obama’s two presidential campaigns. Drawing on the work of scholars, the memoirs of civil rights workers, and the speeches and writings of black leaders like Martin Luther

King and Stokely Carmichael, Andrew Young and John Lewis, Pinckney traces the disagreements among blacks about the best strategies for achieving equality in American society as well as the ways in which they gradually came to create the Democratic voting bloc that contributed to the election of the first black president. Interspersed through the narrative are Pinckney’s own memories of growing up during the civil rights era and the reactions of his parents to the changes taking place in American society. He concludes with an examination of ongoing efforts by Republicans to suppress the black vote, with particular attention to the Supreme Court’s recent decision striking down part of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Also included here is Pinckney’s essay “What Black Means Now,” on the history of the black middle class, stereotypes about blacks and crime, and contemporary debates about “post-blackness,” as well as a new essay, “Buck Moon in Harlem,” which reflects on Juneteenth and the ongoing fight for racial justice, and offers a glimpse of New York City amid the Covid-19 pandemic and the protests following the killing of George Floyd.

Queen Sugar

A Novel *Penguin*

The inspiration for the acclaimed OWN TV series produced by Oprah Winfrey and Ava DuVernay “Queen Sugar is a page-turning, heart-breaking novel of the new south, where the past is never truly past, but the future is a hot, bright promise. This is a story of family and the healing power of our connections—to each other, and to the rich land beneath our feet.” —Tayari Jones, author of *An American Marriage* Readers, booksellers, and critics alike are embracing Queen Sugar and cheering for its heroine, Charley Bordelon, an African American woman and single mother struggling to build a new life amid the complexities of the contemporary South. When Charley unexpectedly inherits eight hundred acres of sugarcane land, she and her eleven-year-old daughter say goodbye to smoggy Los Angeles and head to Louisiana. She soon learns, however, that cane farming is always going to be a white man’s business. As the sweltering summer unfolds, Charley struggles to balance the overwhelming challenges of a farm in decline with the demands of family and the startling desires of her own heart.

Passing *Everbind*

Great middle greats fiction.

Quicksand & Passing

Two Novellas *Random House*

Passing *Picador*

Nella Larsen's distinctive and revealing novel about racial identity set in New York in 1929. Soon to be a major motion picture starring Tessa Thompson, Ruth Negga and Alexander Skarsgård. Irene Redfield, married to a successful physician, enjoys a comfortable life in Harlem, New York. Reluctantly, she renews her friendship with old school friend, Clare Kendry. Clare, who like Irene is light skinned, 'passes' as white and is married to a racist white man who has no idea about Clare's racial heritage. Even though Irene knows that reigniting her friendship with Clare will lead to trouble, she can't resist allowing Irene into her world. Irene in turn wants to rekindle her bonds with the African American community of her youth. As tensions mount between friends and between couples, this taut and mesmerizing narrative spins towards an unexpected end. This edition of Passing features an introduction by writer and academic, Christa Holm Vogelius.

The Speech

The Story Behind Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Dream *Haymarket Books*

In this “slim but powerful book,” the award-winning journalist shares the dramatic story surrounding MLK’s most famous speech and its importance today (Boston Globe). On August 28, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. led the historic March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, where he delivered the most iconic speech of the civil rights movement. In *The Speech*, Gary Younge explains why King’s “I Have a Dream” speech maintains its powerful social relevance by sharing the dramatic story surrounding it. Today, that speech endures as a guiding light in the ongoing struggle for racial equality. Younge roots his work in personal interviews with Clarence Jones, a close friend of Martin Luther King Jr. and his draft speechwriter; with Joan Baez, a singer at the march; and with Angela Davis and other leading civil rights leaders. Younge skillfully captures the spirit of that historic day in Washington and offers a new generation of readers a critical modern analysis of why “I Have a Dream” remains America’s favorite speech. “Younge’s meditative retrospection on [the speech’s] significance reminds us of all the micro-moments of transformation behind the scenes—the thought and preparation, vision and revision—whose currency fed that magnificent lightning bolt in history.” —Patricia J. Williams, legal scholar and theorist

In Search of Nella Larsen

A Biography of the Color Line *Harvard University Press*

Born to a Danish seamstress and a black West Indian cook, Nella Larsen lived her life in the shadows of America's racial divide. Her writings about that life, briefly celebrated in her time, were lost to later generations--only to be rediscovered and hailed by many. In his search for Nella Larsen, George Hutchinson exposes the truths and half-truths surrounding her, as well as the complex reality they mask and mirror. His book is a cultural biography of the color line as it was lived by one person who truly embodied all of its ambiguities and complexities.

Leave Me Alone, I'm Reading

Finding and Losing Myself in Books *Vintage*

In this delightful memoir, the book critic for NPR’s Fresh Air reflects on her life as a professional reader. Maureen Corrigan takes us from her unpretentious girlhood in working-class Queens, to her bemused years in an Ivy League Ph.D. program, from the whirl of falling in love and marrying (a fellow bookworm, of course), to the ordeal of adopting a baby overseas, always with a book at her side. Along the way, she reveals which books and authors have shaped her own life—from classic works of English literature to hard-boiled detective novels, and everything in between. And in her explorations of the heroes and heroines throughout literary history, Corrigan’s love for a good story shines.

White Like Her

My Family's Story of Race and Racial Passing *Simon and Schuster*

White Like Her: My Family's Story of Race and Racial Passing is the story of Gail Lukasik’s mother’s “passing,” Gail’s struggle with the shame of her mother’s choice, and her subsequent journey of self-discovery and redemption. In the historical context of the Jim Crow South, Gail explores her mother’s decision to pass, how she hid her secret even from her own husband, and the price she paid for choosing whiteness. Haunted by her mother’s fear and shame, Gail embarks on a quest to uncover her mother’s racial lineage, tracing her family back to eighteenth-century colonial Louisiana. In coming to terms with her decision to publicly out her mother, Gail changed how she looks at race and heritage. With a foreword written by Kenyatta Berry, host of PBS's Genealogy Roadshow, this unique and fascinating story of coming to terms with oneself breaks down barriers.

A Kind of Freedom

A Novel *Catapult*

Long-listed for the National Book Award Winner of the Crook’s Corner Prize Winner of the First Novelist Award from the Black Caucus of the American Library Association A New York Times Notable Book “Brilliantly juxtaposing World War II, the ’80s and post-Katrina present, Sexton follows three generations of a black New Orleans family as they struggle to bloom amid the poison of racism.” —People Evelyn is a Creole woman who comes of age in New Orleans at the height of World War II. In 1982, Evelyn’s daughter, Jackie, is a frazzled single mother grappling with her absent husband’s drug addiction. Jackie’s son, T.C., loves the creative process of growing marijuana more than the weed itself. He was a square before Hurricane Katrina, but the New Orleans he knew didn’t survive the storm. For Evelyn, Jim Crow is an ongoing reality, and in its wake new threats spring up to haunt her descendants. Margaret Wilkerson Sexton’s critically acclaimed debut is an urgent novel that explores the legacy of racial disparity in the South through a poignant and redemptive family history.

Remember Me to Harlem

The Letters of Langston Hughes and Carl Van Vechten *Vintage*

Langston Hughes is widely remembered as a celebrated star of the Harlem Renaissance -- a writer whose bluesy, lyrical poems and novels still have broad appeal. What's less well known about Hughes is that for much of his life he maintained a friendship with Carl Van Vechten, a flamboyant white critic, writer, and photographer whose ardent support of black artists was peerless. Despite their differences — Van Vechten was forty-four to Hughes twenty-two when they met-Hughes’ and Van Vechten’s shared interest in black culture lead to a deeply-felt, if unconventional friendship that would span some forty years. Between them they knew everyone — from Zora Neale Hurston to Richard Wright, and their letters, lovingly and expertly collected here for the first time, are filled with gossip about the antics of the great and the forgotten, as well as with talk that ranged from race relations to blues lyrics to the nightspots of Harlem, which they both loved to prowl. It’s a correspondence that, as Emily Bernard notes in her introduction, provides “an unusual record of entertainment, politics, and culture as seen through the eyes of two fascinating and irreverent men.

Harlem Renaissance Novels

The Library of America Collection

Presents classic novels from the 1920s and 1930s that offer insight into the cultural dynamics of the Harlem Renaissance era and celebrate the period's diverse literary styles.

Passing

Now a major Netflix film starring Tessa Thompson, Ruth Negga and Alexander SkarsgårdChildhood friends Clare and Irene are both light-skinned enough to pass as white, but only one of them has chosen to cross the colour line and live with the secret hanging over her. Clare believes she had successfully cut herself off from any connection to her past. Married to a racist white man who is oblivious to her African-American heritage, it is vital to her that the truth remains hidden. Irene is living as a middle-class Black woman with her husband and children in Harlem, taking on an important role in her community and embracing her origins.Both women are forced to re-examine their relationships with each other, with their husbands and with the truth, confronting their most closely guarded fears. Nella Larsen's powerful, tragic and acutely observant writing established her as a lodestar of America's Harlem Renaissance. Almost a century later, Passing and its nuanced exploration of the many fraught ways in which we seek to survive remains as timely as ever

Minnie's Sacrifice *BoD – Books on Demand*
Reproduction of the original: Minnie's Sacrifice by Frances E.W Harper

We the Animals *Houghton Mifflin Harcourt*
An award-winning novel in stories surrounding a young, half-white, half-Puerto Rican boy grappling with life, love, and identity as he comes of age. In this groundbreaking debut, Justin Torres plunges us into the chaotic heart of one family, the intense bonds of three brothers, and the mythic effects of this fierce love on the people we must become. NOW A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE “A tremendously gifted writer whose highly personal voice should excite us in much the same way that Raymond Carver’s or Jeffrey Eugenides’s voice did when we first heard it.” —Washington Post “We the Animals

is a dark jewel of a book. It’s heartbreaking. It’s beautiful. It resembles no other book I’ve read.”—Michael Cunningham “A miracle in concentrated pages, you are going to read it again and again.”—Dorothy Allison “Rumbles with lyric dynamite...Torres is a savage new talent.”—Benjamin Percy, Esquire “A fiery ode to boyhood...A welterweight champ of a book.”—NPR, Weekend Edition “A novel so honest, poetic, and tough that it makes you reexamine what it means to love and to hurt.”—O, The Oprah Magazine “The communal howl of three young brothers sustains this sprint of a novel...A kind of incantation.”—The New Yorker

The Complete and Unabridged Fiction of Nella Larsen

Slash *Lulu.com*