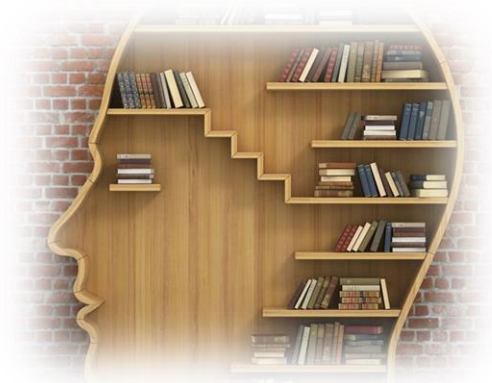


# BOOK THOUGHTS

## BATCH 36



1. Sky Full of Elephants - Cebo Campbell
2. These Songs I Know by Heart - Erin Brubacher
3. We Used to Live Here - Marcus Kliewer
4. **Going to Seed - Kate J. Neville**
5. Atomweight - Emi Sasagawa
6. **Monsters, Martyrs, and Marionettes - Adrienne Gruber**
7. **Oh, Witness Dey! - Shani Mootoo**
8. **The False White Gospel - Jim Wallis**
9. Bruise - Adrian Markle
10. Disobedience - Daniel Sarah Karasik

**BLUE = MEMOIR OR BIOGRAPHICAL**

**BLACK = FICTION**

**DARK RED = EDUCATIONAL + HISTORICAL FICTION**

**PURPLE = ESSAY OR STORIES**

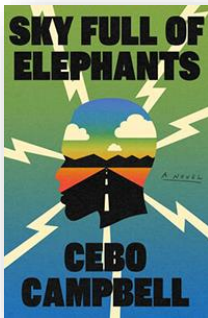
**ORANGE = POETRY**

## SKY FULL OF ELEPHANTS

CEBO CAMPBELL

*A Bold Confrontation of Racism and a Vision of True Equality*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*



“Sky Full of Elephants” will be on every critic worth his weight in salt best books of the year list – if it isn’t, it should be.

In this captivating ride, Campbell masterfully confronts racism head-on. Imagine a world where the very concept of ‘white’ is debunked. Following a catastrophic event where every white person in America walks into a body of water, symbolizing a cleansing, and drowns, systemic racism is thrust into the spotlight. In a society finally free from the shackles of capitalism, rampant consumerism masked as values, and greed, those left

behind must navigate the remnants of a nation that has denied equality for all citizens for over four hundred years.

‘How can the free truly be free,’ they ponder, ‘when they were never granted the same opportunities for education, growth, and employment as those who drowned?’ As they rebuild their society without their oppressors, a new era begins, but the scars of systemic racism remain.

“Sky Full of Elephants” is a deftly crafted read and a must-read for anyone seeking a deeper understanding of true equality. White is an idea, and maybe, just maybe, it’s time for it to start fading away.

WRITTEN: 22 June 2024

## THESE SONGS I KNOW BY HEART

ERIN BRUBACHER

*A symphony of emotions, each not resonating with authenticity...*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*



“These Songs I Know by Heart,” by Erin Brubacher, is a raw poetic journey through the labyrinth of life, illuminated by the unwavering light of unconditional friendship and love. The characters are vivid and deeply human and navigate the ever-changing landscape of existence, revealing what it means to live and love in a world in constant flux.

Brubacher’s prose is a symphony of emotions, each note resonating with the authenticity of lived experiences. The book’s title is apt, as these stories will embed themselves in your soul, leaving you humming their tunes long after the last page. Through the life unfolding within, you’ll find reflections of your struggles and triumphs and discover the essence of being a decent, loving human.

“These Songs I Know by Heart” is more than a book; it’s a lyrical odyssey that will echo in your heart, a testament to the power of friendship and the beauty of finding oneself amidst the chaos of life. Prepare to be moved, reflect, and cherish the raw, natural moments that define our shared humanity.

WRITTEN: 21 June 2024

## WE USED TO LIVE HERE

MARCUS KLIEWER

*...a descent into madness, a journey into the heart of fear itself.*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*



Prepare yourself for a spine-chilling experience like no other. With each turn of the page in Marcus Kliewer's "We Used to Live Here," you're not just opening a book but unlocking a gateway to your darkest fears. As the past comes knocking at your door, it brings a wave of terror that threatens to engulf not just your existence, but the fabric of your family's life.

Every word in this chilling tome is a whispered invitation into the abyss of the unknown, where reality blurs and nightmares reign supreme. Kliewer's mastery lies in his ability to colour in

the dots of a puzzle filled with suspense so thick that it suffocates reason and leaves you gasping for breath. Your hair will stand on end, your skin will crawl with goosebumps, and your mind will reel with the sheer intensity of the horrors lurking within.

In this living house of nightmares, every shadow conceals a sinister secret, every creaking floorboard echoes with the footsteps of malevolent spirits, and every illusion threatens to shatter the fragile façade of sanity. As you delve deeper into the darkness, you'll question whether escape is possible or if you're doomed to wander the twisted corridors of this haunted house forever.

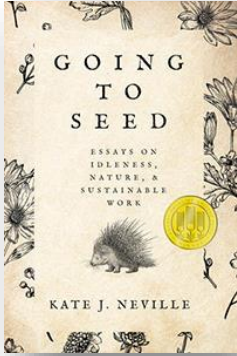
"We Used to Live Here" is not just a book; it's a descent into madness, a journey into the heart of fear itself. Brace yourself for a rollercoaster of terror that will leave you breathless and trembling.

WRITTEN: 21 June 2024

Lindsay Wincherauk

## GOING TO SEED

KATE J. NEVILLE



*We must learn to slow down from nature. If we don't, what's the point?*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

The author's raw, emotional journey shared in "Going to Seed" struck a chord with me, mirroring my own struggles and fears amidst job loss and uncertainty. It underscored the importance of compassion and empathy towards others, particularly society's most vulnerable.

Kate J. Neville emphasizes learning from nature and the benefits of idleness, challenging the stereotype equating idleness with laziness. She critiques the relentless pace driven by greed and the quest for power, which keeps humanity on a

relentless march to exhaustion.

Neville suggests in our rush, we lose the ability to pause and enjoy simple pleasures – the kind late-stage capitalism overlooks because it requires us to remain at our breaking point, without time to breathe or contemplate what truly matters.

Asking whether this relentless pace can be halted seems futile, but without attempting to change, what quality of life are we ensuring for our future, and how long can we maintain it?

Idleness offers not laziness but a moment to recharge and reflect on what is truly important.

While I remain optimistic on a personal level, I am less so globally due to the deep entrenchment of capitalistic drives. We owe it to future generations – and to Gaia herself – to try and slow down, however daunting that may seem.

At the pandemic's outset, I lost my job to someone younger and less costly, a change that brought both economic hardship and emotional strain. Yet, this loss also provided a chance to reassess my values and view the world more compassionately.

Recently, I turned down a demanding job offer that at 64 would have required me to work over 12 hours a day. This reflection made me realize accepting the position would not mean living but simply surviving as another cog in the corporate machine until an untimely end.

This is the impact that "Going to Seed" had on me.

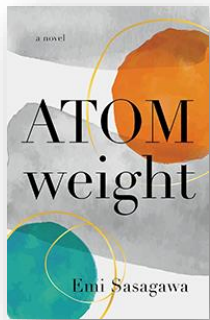
WRITTEN: 6 May 2024

## ATOMWEIGHT

EMI SASAGAWA

*No straight person has ever...*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*



Atomweight is a riveting debut that delves into the tumultuous life of Aki, a queer young woman besieged by the harrowing fear of abandonment.

It is a raw and unflinching exploration of the fight for self-acceptance in a world where sexuality can unjustly eclipse one's entire being.

Sasagawa masterfully capture the essence of Aki's struggle, painting a vivid picture of a life marred by violence (emotional + physical) and promiscuity – a desperate attempt to reconcile her identity amidst parental expectations and societal pressures.

The story navigates the complexities of cultural divides, where love must wear a mask and, people bury their true selves under layers of despair. Aki's confrontation with misogyny, racism, and the insidious nature of self-gaslighting is a testament to the courage required to transform mere tolerance into unconditional love.

Atomweight is sometimes a shocking and violent tale, yet it is undeniably compelling. It beckons readers to open their hearts to a truth where individual sexuality is sacred, and love – free from the constraints of whomever it is directed towards – is the ultimate measure of our humanity.

Sasagawa's novel is not just a story, but an inducement towards empathy and understanding, challenging us to see love not as a threat but as the essence of our existence. It is a powerful reminder the true battle lies in overcoming the fears that divide us and embracing the love that unites us.

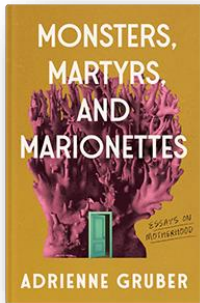
WRITTEN: 7 May 2024

## MONSTERS, MARTYRS, AND MARIONETTES

ADRIENNE GRUBER

*A raw, unapologetic, unflinching dive into motherhood...*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*



“Monsters, Martyrs, and Marionettes” by Adrienne Gruber is a collection of essays on motherhood that pull no punches. Brace yourself for an unflinching dive into the emotional, physical, and life-consuming roles mothers play on this wildly spinning planet.

Gruber shares motherhood’s brutal and beautiful truths, expressing both its darkness and light. Her raw, unapologetic prose delves into the depths of what it means to be the ones responsible for our every breath.

This book is a must-read for every man, especially fathers, to gain a profound understanding of the sacrifices and relentless demands mothers face to keep children safe and healthy, often at great expense to themselves. Mothers can’t escape these realities, but fathers – read this book.

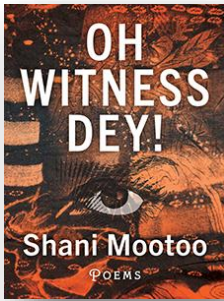
WRITTEN: 21 June 2024



**OH, WITNESS DEY!**  
**SHANI MOOTO**

*Exploring the profound effects of colonization and slavery...*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*



Shani Mootoo's poetry collection, "Oh, Witness Dey!" explores the profound effects of colonization and slavery on individuals forcibly uprooted and relocated.

The poems poignantly depict the hardships of those exploited and enslaved, who managed to make a home in the Caribbean despite the atrocities inflicted by their colonizers. The vivid imagery of being torn from one's homeland and shipped to the Caribbean underscores themes of displacement and loss,

accentuating the trauma of forced removal.

The poems delve into the complexities of establishing a sense of belonging in a new place, exacerbated by the colonizers' disregard for the indigenous populations.

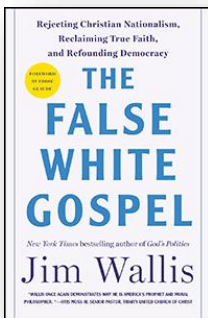
Mootoo's work highlights the divisive strategies used by colonizers to assert control, often pitting different groups against one another to advance their own interests. The collection addresses the lasting impact of colonization and slavery, reflecting on the persistent challenges of belonging and identity in a post-colonial world.

"Oh, Witness Dey!" offers a compelling and provocative look at the enduring scars of colonization and slavery, while celebrating the resilience and enduring spirit of those who overcome immense challenges.

WRITTEN: 7 May 2024



## THE FALSE WHITE GOSPEL THE FALSE WHITE GOSPEL JIM WALLIS



*A fight for the very soul of democracy itself.*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

“The False White Gospel” by Jim Wallis is a powerful, eye-opening critique that will resonate deeply with readers of all beliefs. Wallis masterfully illuminates the profound essence of spirituality and exposes how the pernicious forces of white supremacy have perverted religious teachings for their malicious ends.

Wallis compels us to offer aid to those struggling in the currents of societal injustice and venture upstream and confront the source of these injustices head-on. By delving into the tenets of true spirituality, Wallis reveals how false prophets have twisted religion into a tool for spreading racism and division.

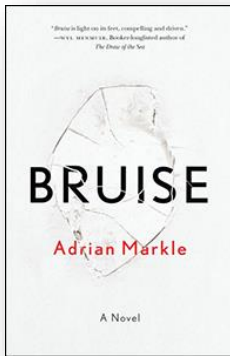
Wallis’ exploration is crucial for anyone who values democracy and human dignity. It underscores the importance of reclaiming faith’s positive, unifying power from those who seek to corrupt it for divine purposes. We take a vital step towards ensuring justice and equality by confronting and dismantling these corrupt ideologies.

“The False White Gospel” is more than just a critique, it is a call to action. It urges us to recognize the insidious hijacking of spiritual values and to fight fervently against the root causes of hatred and division. This is not just a fight for religious integrity, but for the very soul of democracy itself.

WRITTEN: 21 June 2024

## BRUISE

ADRIAN MARKLE



*Jabbing into the intricacies of a family plagued by...*

*How did the book make me feel/think?*

“Bruise” is a riveting novel that jabs into the intricacies of a family plagued by history and a protagonist’s struggle to rise above a chaotic past.

Jamie, the main character, is tormented by the memory of his abusive father, who has passed away, and seeks refuge in the brutal world of MMA fighting – his means of claiming control over his fate.

The novel delves into themes of personal identity and the tenacity required to navigate life’s hurdles, especially when faced a catastrophic career-ending injury and unforeseen challenges.

Jamie’s odyssey demands readers contemplate how to reconstruct their lives after suffering and hardship. Adding depth to the tale, Jamie’s relationship with his brother reveals the complexities of each sibling forging their way in a world that’s quick to judge and laden with conflict.

The narrative artfully juxtaposes the scars of bygone traumas with the pursuit of present dreams, underscoring the universal yearning for recovery and integrity in the face of hardship. In essence, “Bruise” offers a layered and stirring portrayal of familial drama that cuts deep into the themes of loss, presenting a rich examination of the human spirit and the pursuit of identity in an often-inhospitable environment.

This moving and thought-provoking story invites readers to question their beliefs about identity, endurance, and the possibility of redemption.

WRITTEN: 5 May 2024

## DISOBEDIENCE

Daniel Sarah Karasik

A Speculative Queer Fiction Masterpiece



*How did the book make me feel/think?*

“Disobedience” by Daniel Sara Karasik is a work of speculative queer fiction that delves deep into the complexities of liberation and power dynamics. This thought-provoking novel challenges readers to ponder a crucial question: When we escape oppression, are we destined to become passive or oppressors ourselves?

As the characters navigate a quest for a world basking in equality, the story explores whether humans are truly capable of living and letting live or if there will always be those who thirst for control. Karasik masterfully examines the cyclical nature of power and the inherent struggles that come with it.

“Disobedience” not only captivates with its rich narrative but also pushes readers to reflect on the paradoxes of freedom and the often-rhetorical nature of questions surrounding human behaviour and societal structures. This novel is a must-read for anyone seeking to understand the nuanced interplay between liberation, equality, and the human condition.

WRITTEN: 22 June 2024

10