



# HONEYBEE CAPITAL FOUNDATION

AUGUST 2017

## SUMMER BOOK LIST

*Dear Honeybees,*

*In the fleeting glory that is New England summer, there is nothing better than flopping down outdoors with a good book, preferably after a long hike in the woods or game of whiffleball or pancake breakfast with a bunch of terrific humans. It's already August, but there is plenty of reading time left before the buzzy energy of fall takes hold. Here are my latest favorites, shared with sunny summery good wishes to all of you.*

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***If you have a garden and a library,  
you have everything you need.***

***- Cicero***

### BOOKS THAT HELP US TO MARVEL

**[THE SONGS OF TREES](#), by DAVID GEORGE HASKELL**

When Haskell says "my forest," he really means it. This forest is a friend to him, a loved one he knows from many angles – scientific, historical, personal. When I finished this book I felt the same as I do after a terrific novel – like I had intimate, detailed, loving knowledge of someone else's home. Yet it's not fluffy or fictional – Haskell describes the science of the forest's connections with detail, accuracy, and nuanced understanding. If you dig mycelium (pun intended), this book will knock your socks off.

**[THE WONDER OF BIRDS](#), by JIM ROBBINS**

Robbins is like the best party host, introducing us to (as the title accurately promises) the wonder of birds, sharing terrific stories, and emphasizing the points of connection between our species and theirs. The next time someone calls you a

birdbrain, you will just beam and say, thank you. (Note this book is a great pairing for The Songs of Trees.)

*With thanks to Joel for recommending this book!*

### **THE NATURE FIX, by FLORENCE WILLIAMS**

If you're interested in biomimicry, the central point of this book is likely already a familiar one: it's good for humans to be outside. Williams explains exactly how good, delving into numerous studies and numerous cultural traditions to provide extra insight and context for this essential lesson. Best read outdoors (obviously).

*You can see more bio-centered book ideas here on the [Biomimicry Institute's terrific summer reading list](#).*

## **BOOKS THAT HELP US TO UNDERSTAND**

### **SCALE, by GEOFFREY WEST**

Fans of the Santa Fe Institute will know of Geoffrey West's long-percolating interest in scale. I spend a lot of time focusing on uniqueness – in nature, in people, in companies – but West's work reminds us that there is also surprising regularity. Did you know that the lifetime heartbeats of a rat and a human and an elephant are all the same? This book explores the differences in scaling in biological systems (like rats) and social systems (like cities, or companies), and includes a thought provoking exploration of the question, why do cities persist when companies die? *You can also hear a mini-report on some of West's work on this [Radiolab Cities](#) episode.*

### **WEAPONS OF MATH DESTRUCTION, by CATHY O'NEIL**

Are you a little worried about our robot overlords, and the algorithms that run them? Cathy O'Neil, known to many from her mathbabe blog (which, incidentally, has a great list of [cool math books](#)), dives deep into a central question of our time: what parts of our own poor decision making are we coding into our automated systems? O'Neil knows whereof she speaks, as a mathematician via Berkeley and Harvard, DE Shaw analyst, and leader of Occupy Wall Street.

## **BOOKS THAT HELP US TO INVEST**

### **BIG MONEY THINKS SMALL, by JOEL TILLINGHAST**

Those of you in the investment profession likely already know of Joel Tillinghast, manager of the Fidelity Low Priced Stock Fund since its inception in 1989. An initial investment in that fund would be 35x higher today, while the S&P is up about 13x. Joel is a true long-term investor, and his book brings wisdom to its purpose: to make the average reader an above-average investor. He also thinks of portfolio management as gardening, not manufacturing – an approach that benefits investments of time and attention as much as investments of dollars and euros.

**[THE CLEAN MONEY REVOLUTION](#), by JOEL SALOMON**

Two brilliant Joels in one section, what luck! Those of you active in the impact investing/regenerative economy/clean money revolution will know that Joel has a wonderful way of weaving together the deeply personal with the urgently global, and this book is a perfect example of that ability. Part memoir, part how-to book, part manifesto, it is both inspiring and informative.

**[THE WISDOM OF FINANCE](#), by MIHIR DESAI**

Mihir Desai is a professor at Harvard Business School and Harvard Law School, yet this is anything but a dense academic approach to finance - the explicit goal is "to humanize finance by bridging the divide between finance and literature, history, philosophy, movies, and religion." Anyone who can comment on the risk management philosophy of Elizabeth Bennet is automatically one of my favorite people on earth.

*With thanks to Nicole for recommending this book!*

**BOOKS THAT HELP US TO IMAGINE**

**[LILLIAN BOXFISH TAKES A WALK](#), by KATHLEEN ROONEY**

If you are the type who wonders about the people you pass on busy city streets, if you are the type who reads a clever jingle and thinks, 'who came up with that?', if you are the type who loves the crazy circus-like feeling that everyday life can have, this book will delight you. Rooney's story is based on a real life pioneer in 1930's advertising, Macy's Margaret Fishback, and it is clever and witty and – as all truly clever things are – a little bit wise as well. This is the most enjoyable book I have read all year.

**[THE DARK DARK: STORIES](#), by Samantha Hunt**

Given the title, I expected these stories to be depressing or creepy or maybe both – but the darkness here kind of sneaks up on you, and makes you do a double take. This, of course, makes for terrific reading. I especially love short stories in the summer, because they are perfectly hammock or beach-towel or campfire-sized. (TW: A number of these stories involve pregnant women and sad fates for animals, though usually not at the same time.)

Hunt is also the author of a novel about Tesla (the man, not the company), [The Invention of Everything Else](#), which was finalist for the Orange Prize. I am pretty sure it will differ from these stories in meaningful ways, and I like Hunt's prose, so it is next on my reading list.

**[THE HANDMAID'S TALE](#), by MARGARET ATWOOD**

I was going to put this in the oldies section, except that Margaret Atwood is still alive and this tale is suddenly back on bestseller lists. This time 'round I read it in paper form and also listened to the terrific audio version, narrated to perfection by Clare Danes. It's just as creepy as it was in the late 80's - in large part because it is (still, again) not all that hard to imagine.

### **[ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE](#), by Elizabeth Strout**

You might know Strout from her novels [Olive Kitteridge](#) and [My Name is Lucy Barton](#) (both also Honeybee favorites, along with the excellent screen version of Olive) – reading this book is like visiting with both of those again, with characters and setting that are familiar across all three publications. This latest is infused with Strout’s signature style – that mix of beautiful prose, quirky detail, with a current of sadness that is not dramatic or despairing, because it’s just so real, and paired with a similarly deep, unshowy, matter-of-fact love.

## **BOOKS THAT HELP US TO REFLECT:**

### **[LETTERS FROM A STOIC](#), by SENECA**

Each summer I revisit an oldie... in this case, a very old oldie. It is chock-full of observations like this one, each passage worthy of its own long walk to mull things over.

*Friendship produces between us a partnership in all our interests. There is no such thing as good or bad fortune for the individual; we live in common... This fellowship, maintained with scrupulous care, which... holds that the human race have certain rights in common, is also of great help in cherishing the more intimate fellowship which is based on friendship... For he that has much in common with a fellow-man will have all things in common with a friend.*

### **[ETHICS](#), by BARUCH SPINOZA**

A little while back, thanks to inspiration from [RSF Social Finance](#), I did some neat research on the links between Goethe and Rudolf Steiner, and both of them pointed me back even further, to Baruch Spinoza. The central idea Spinoza explores in Ethics is that knowledge comes in multiple forms - as opinion, reason, and intuition - and that body and mind are not separate, but elements of a coherent whole. Long ago we seem to have taken a collective turn in favor of Descartes, who presented the appealing but perhaps inaccurate notion that our minds are independent, rational, reasoning machines. It seems like it might be a good time to revisit Spinoza’s point of view.

### **[THE BOOK OF QUALITIES](#), by RUTH GENDLER**

Near my favorite chair in my favorite place, I keep this little book, and it never fails to inspire better thoughts, better questions, and better actions. Dozens of qualities are turned into tiny descriptive stories. Take these lines, for example: “Fear almost convinced me that he was a puppet master and I was a marionette.” Or, “Sometimes we need to remind Service to take a vacation.” This book is a gem.

## **BOOKS THAT NOURISH**

### **[THE POETRY OF DEREK WALCOTT](#), by DEREK WALCOTT**

#### **[OMEROS](#), by DEREK WALCOTT**

Derek Walcott passed away earlier this year and I am sad to say that it’s only now I am reading his poetry more intentionally, despite our longtime shared town and my seeing him at several readings over the years. For a sense of the power and appeal

of Walcott's writing, you could start with this "blown canes" meditation and [remembrance](#) by poet Ishion Hutchinson.

**[GOODNIGHT STORIES FOR REBEL GIRLS](#), by ELENA FAVILLI  
and FRANCESCA CAVALLO**

If you are looking to round out the messages received by children in your life, without getting all preachy about it, this is the book for you. Real stories of real women, written in fairy tale style and illustrated beautifully by 60 female artists. If your kids are inclined towards business you could also tell them how the book's creation is one of the greatest successes in crowd funding. Great as a companion to the terrific and beautiful [Women in Science](#) and [Women in Sports](#), both by Rachel Ignotofsky.

**...AND HERE ARE A FEW COMING ATTRACTIONS:**

*These are already on my pre-order list for fall! Can you tell I am looking forward to having all of my kitchen stuff out of storage?*

- [MYERS & CHANG AT HOME](#), by Joanne Chang
- [SWEET: DESSERTS FROM OTTOLENGHI](#), by Yotam Ottolenghi
- [SMITTEN KITCHEN EVERYDAY](#), by Deb Perelman
- [BRAVING THE WILDERNESS](#), by Brené Brown

**...PLUS SOME HOLDOVERS FROM OUR WINTER LIST:**

*If you are like me, there is always a big reading pile that happily transfers over from one season to the next. Here are a few favorites from our winter list, and you can review this [full list](#) plus prior years in the [Archives](#) section of our Library.*

- [A SMALL PORCH](#), by Wendell Berry. Berry's Sabbath poems, continued from This Day. Worth savoring.
- [LAB GIRL](#), by Hope Jahren. Part memoir, part ode to soil and leaves and trees, part platonic love story. The audio version is great too.
- [THE VEGETARIAN](#), by Han Kang. Mesmerizing and creepy. This is not a cookbook.
- [MY NAME IS LUCY BARTON](#), by Elizabeth Strout. Strout writes quiet stories that stick (see above).
- [MISTER MONKEY](#), by Francine Prose. Quirky, funny, bittersweet.
- [A CRUDE LOOK AT THE WHOLE](#), by John Miller. He's really into ants and bees and slime molds, so you know he's cool.
- [THE HIDDEN LIFE OF TREES](#), by Peter Wohlleben. The best science writing is something very close to poetry.
- [I CONTAIN MULTITUDES](#), by Ed Yong. Again, poetic science.

## **A NOTE ON BOOKSELLERS**

*Some people want to see every baseball park before they die. I would like that, but would be even more excited to follow Ann Patchett's outstanding [Bookstore Pilgrimage](#) list instead. Of course, I would add [Brookline Booksmith](#) and [Tattered Cover](#) to the list, and probably dozens of others, too. Alert readers may have noticed that many of our links connect you with a Very Large Online Retailer, and indeed, we appreciate that this retailer provides terrific customer service and helpful product detail. We are also loyal patrons of local booksellers, of course. In fact, one of my favorite ways to get to know a new area is to seek out its bookstore and its coffee shop (sometimes one and the same, or at least next door neighbors). The IndieBound organization can help you find these local booksellers wherever you may be (including my personal favorite, Brookline Booksmith) – and if you are an e-loving person, they have handy online functions too.*

<http://Brooklinebooksmith.com>

<http://www.indiebound.org>

***Beware the person of one book.***

***- Thomas Aquinas***