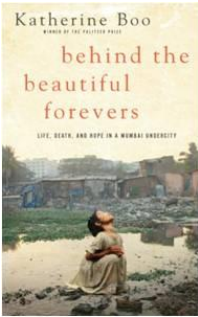


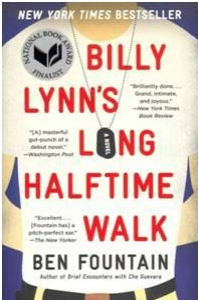
Saratoga Reads! Top Five Books 2014-15



***Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity* by Katherine Boo**

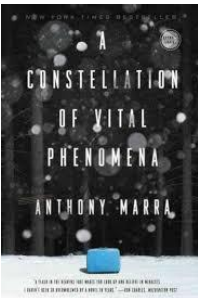
Katherine Boo

Mumbai slum dwellers demonstrate remarkable resourcefulness and creativity in this work of reporting by a Pulitzer Prize winner. Annawadi, a sprawling settlement on the outskirts of Mumbai International Airport, is surrounded by luxury hotels and filled with people from throughout India who have come to the metropolis in search of opportunity in India's booming economy. Based on hundreds of interviews gathered while living among her subjects for years, Boo's reporting illuminates the hopes and desperate circumstances of Annawadi's residents in contrast to the incredible wealth of a few.



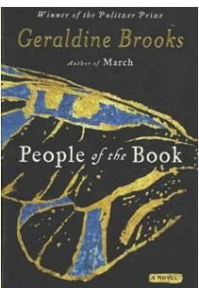
***Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* by Ben Fountain**

Soldiers returning from the Iraq War become heroes when their battle exploits are televised by Fox News in this biting satirical novel chronicling one day of their "Victory Tour." At a Thanksgiving Day Dallas Cowboys game at Texas Stadium, members of the Army's Bravo Company, fresh from battling insurgents, get drunk, cause fistfights, are courted by both cheerleaders and movie producers, and are simultaneously honored as heroes and ignored as individuals. Nineteen-year-old Private Billy Lynn's observations about life are funny, absurd, and tragic, and they are revealing about the state of American patriotism, media, and consumerism.



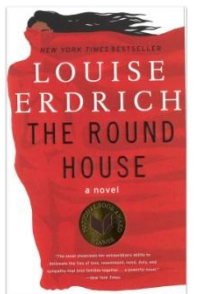
***A Constellation of Vital Phenomena: A Novel* by Anthony Marra**

Tragic wartime circumstances bring three disparate characters together in this novel that explores unexpected connections and the meaning of love. In war-torn Chechnya, Akhmed, a failed medical student and aspiring artist, rescues Havva, an eight-year-old girl hiding from Russian soldiers who have taken away her father and burned down her house. Akhmed takes Havva to a dilapidated hospital where Sonja, the last remaining doctor, has stayed to care for anyone in need of medical attention, despite the inherent dangers.



***People of the Book: A Novel* by Geraldine Brooks**

In this literary mystery, a rare-book conservator discovers the rich history of a recovered ancient manuscript lost during the siege of Sarajevo in the 1990s. Part love story and part historical novel, this work is inspired by the true story of a 14th-century illuminated Jewish religious manuscript, *The Sarajevo Haggadah*. The novel interweaves a series of fictionalized flashbacks revealing episodes in the book's history with the contemporary story of the conservator's love affair with the Muslim librarian who risked her life to preserve it for posterity.



***The Round House: A Novel* by Louise Erdrich**

A young boy hunts for the perpetrator of a violent crime that took place on a North Dakota Ojibwa reservation in a story that explores the meaning of family, friendship, and justice. After his mother is brutally attacked and slowly retreats from the world, 13-year-old Joe searches for clues to help identify her assailant, and for an understanding of the complexity of reservation justice. Vivid with descriptions of reservation life, featuring realistic and relatable characters, this coming-of-age story has drawn comparisons to *To Kill a Mockingbird*.