

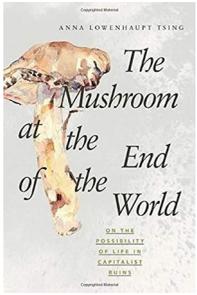
# Transition Marquette County Reading Group Books for 2019-2020

September 12

*The Mushroom at the End of the World: on the possibility of life in capitalistic ruins*

- Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing

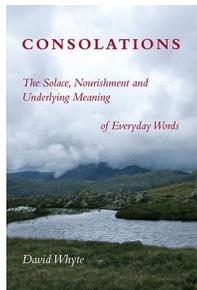
Matsutake is the most valuable mushroom in the world—and a weed that grows in human-disturbed forests across the northern hemisphere. Through its ability to nurture trees, it helps forests to grow in daunting places. It is also an edible delicacy in Japan, where it sometimes commands astronomical prices. In all its contradictions, matsutake offers insights into areas far beyond just mushrooms and addresses a crucial question: what manages to live in the ruins we have made? *The Mushroom at the End of the World* follows one of the strangest commodity chains of our times from the worlds of Japanese gourmets, capitalist traders, Hmong jungle fighters, industrial forests, Yi Chinese goat herders, Finnish nature guides, and more. These companions also lead us into fungal ecologies and forest histories to better understand the promise of cohabitation in a time of massive human destruction. *The Mushroom at the End of the World* presents an original examination into the relation between capitalist destruction and collaborative survival within multi-species landscapes, the prerequisite for continuing life on earth.



October 10

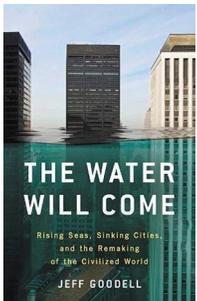
*Consolations – thoughts on 52 words about life* - David Whyte

Selected one of the top 15 books of 2015 by Elizabeth Gilbert, author of *Eat, Pray, Love* and *Big Magic*, and Maria Popova of *Brain Pickings*. With the imagery of a poet and the reflection of a philosopher, David Whyte turns his attention to 52 ordinary words, each its own particular doorway into the underlying currents of human life. Beginning with Alone and closing with Work, each chapter is a meditation on meaning and context, an invitation to shift and broaden our perspectives on the inevitable vicissitudes of life: pain and joy, honesty and anger, confession and vulnerability, the experience of feeling besieged and the desire to run away from it all. Through this lens, procrastination may be a necessary ripening; hiding an act of freedom; and shyness the appropriate confusion and helplessness that accompanies the first stage of revelation. *Consolations* invites readers into a poetic and thoughtful consideration of words whose meaning and interpretation influence the paths we choose and the way we traverse them throughout our lives.



November 14

*The Water Will Come* – Jeff Goddell

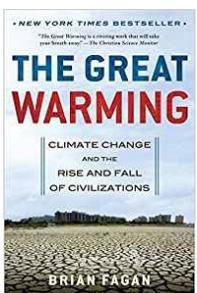


"An immersive, mildly gonzo and depressingly well-timed book about the drenching effects of global warming, and a powerful reminder that we can bury our heads in the sand about climate change for only so long before the sand itself disappears." (Jennifer Senior, *New York Times*)

December 12

*The Great Warming* – Brian Fagan

From the 10th to 15th centuries the earth experienced a rise in surface temperature that changed climate worldwide—a preview of today's global warming. In some areas, including much of Western Europe, longer summers brought bountiful crops and population growth that led to cultural flowering. In others, drought shook long-established societies, such as the Maya and the Indians of the American Southwest, whose monumental buildings were left deserted as elaborate social structures collapsed. Brian Fagan examines how subtle changes in the environment had far-reaching effects on human life, in a narrative that sweeps from the Arctic ice cap to the Sahara to the Indian Ocean. The lessons of history suggest we may be yet be underestimating the power of climate change to disrupt our lives today.

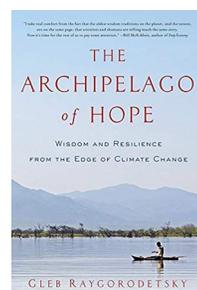


January 9

*The Archipelago of Hope – Wisdom and Resilience from the Edge of Climate Change*

- Gleb Raygorodetsky

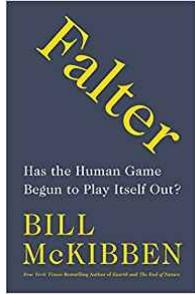
While our politicians argue, the truth is that climate change is already here. Nobody knows this better than Indigenous peoples who, having developed an intimate relationship with ecosystems over generations, have observed these changes for decades. For them, climate change is not an abstract concept or policy issue, but the reality of daily life. Raygorodetsky shows how these communities are actually islands of biological and cultural diversity in the ever-rising sea of development and urbanization. They are an “archipelago of hope” as we enter the Anthropocene, for here lies humankind's best chance to remember our roots and how to take care of the Earth. We meet the Skolt Sami of Finland, the Nenets and Altai of Russia, the Sapara of Ecuador, the Karen of Myanmar, and the Tla-o-qui-aht of Canada. Though there are brutal realities - pollution, corruption, forced assimilation—Raygorodetsky's prose resonates with the positive, the adaptive, the spiritual—and hope.



February 13

*Falter – Has the Human Game Begun to Play Itself Out?* - Bill McKibben

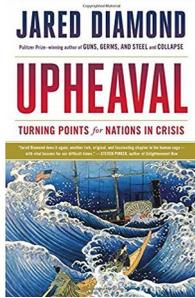
Thirty years ago Bill McKibben offered one of the earliest warnings about climate change. Now he broadens the warning: the entire human game, he suggests, has begun to play itself out. Bill McKibben's groundbreaking book *The End of Nature* -- issued in dozens of languages and long regarded as a classic -- was the first book to alert us to global warming. But the danger is broader than that: even as climate change shrinks the space where our civilization can exist, new technologies like artificial intelligence and robotics threaten to bleach away the variety of human experience. *Falter* tells the story of these converging trends and of the ideological fervor that keeps us from bringing them under control. And then, drawing on McKibben's experience in building 350.org, the first truly global citizens movement to combat climate change, it offers some possible ways out of the trap. We're at a bleak moment in human history -- and we'll either confront that bleakness or watch the civilization our forebears built slip away. *Falter* is a powerful and sobering call to arms, to save not only our planet but also our humanity.



March 12

*Upheaval* - Jared Diamond

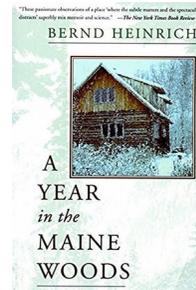
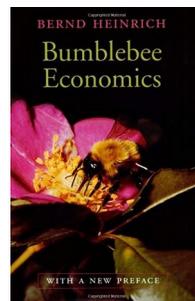
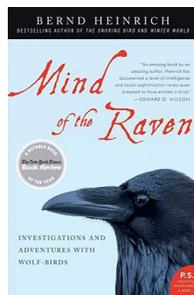
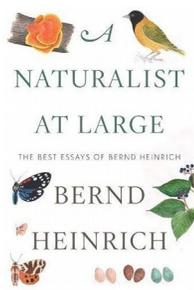
Diamond compares how six countries have survived recent upheavals -- ranging from the forced opening of Japan by U.S. Commodore Perry's fleet, to the Soviet Union's attack on Finland, to a murderous coup or countercoup in Chile and Indonesia, to the transformations of Germany and Austria after World War Two. Because Diamond has lived and spoken the language in five of these six countries, he can present gut-wrenching histories experienced firsthand. These nations coped, to varying degrees, through mechanisms such as acknowledgment of responsibility, painfully honest self-appraisal, and learning from models of other nations. Looking to the future, Diamond examines whether the United States, Japan, and the whole world are successfully coping with the grave crises they currently face. Can we learn from lessons of the past? Adding a psychological dimension to the in-depth history, geography, biology, and anthropology that mark all of Diamond's books, *Upheaval* reveals factors influencing how both whole nations and individual people can respond to big challenges. The result is a book epic in scope, but also his most personal book yet.



April 9

Reader's Choice - Something by Bernd Heinrich

*A Naturalist at Large; Mind of the Raven; Bumblebee economics; A Year in the Maine woods*



May 14

*Dark Age America* John Michael Greer

Forget the comfortable platitudes-this is our most likely future. After decades of missed opportunities, the door to a sustainable future has closed, and the future we face now is one in which today's industrial civilization unravels in the face of uncontrolled climate change and resource depletion. What is the world going to look like when all these changes have run their course? Author John Michael Greer seeks to answer this question, and with some degree of accuracy, since civilizations tend to collapse in remarkably similar ways. *Dark Age America*, then, seeks to map out in advance the history of collapse, giving us an idea of what the next 500 years or so might look like as globalization ends and North American civilization reaches the end of its lifecycle and enters the stages of decline and fall.



June 11

*Sapiens/Homo Deus* - Dr. Yuval Noah Harari

From a renowned historian comes a groundbreaking narrative of humanity's creation and evolution—a #1 international bestseller—that explores the ways in which biology and history have defined us and enhanced our understanding of what it means to be “human.” One hundred thousand years ago, at least six different species of humans inhabited Earth. Yet today there is only one—homo sapiens. What happened to the others? And what may happen to us? Most books about the history of humanity pursue either a historical or a biological approach, but Dr. Yuval Noah Harari breaks the mold with this highly original book that begins about 70,000 years ago with the appearance of modern cognition. From examining the role evolving humans have played in the global ecosystem to charting the rise of empires, *Sapiens* integrates history and science to reconsider accepted narratives, connect past developments with contemporary concerns, and examine specific events within the context of larger ideas. In *Homo Deus*, Dr. Harari also compels us to look ahead, because over the last few decades humans have begun to bend laws of natural selection that have governed life for the past four billion years – more people die from eating too much than too little; more die from old age than from infectious diseases; more commit suicide than are killed by soldiers, terrorists and criminals together. As self-made gods of planet Earth, what destinies will we set ourselves? Where is this leading us, and what do we want to become?

