ACE OF SPADES
Author: Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé
Chimakọ Asadu and Devon Richards are selected Senior Prefects during their final year at the elite Niveus Academy. Chimakọ is ambitious, unapologetic, and social climbing. She sets her sights on the Snowflake Ball, a Yale acceptance letter, and an Ivy League boyfriend. Jamie Fitzjohn, Devon is low-key, driven, and reserved. He does not want to make waves with his music. Julliard aspirations, and homosexuality. Chimakọ and Devon are surprisingly linked when a shady figure known as Aces exposes their secrets and lies to Niveus and Devon’s impoverished neighborhood through harassing texts. Chimakọ and Devon must work together to ensure they make history as the first Black graduates or die trying at the hands of Aces, who will do anything and everything to prevent their upward mobility. Readers will love this thriller-mystery reminiscent of Gossip Girl and Get Out.

SISTERS IN ARMS
Author: Kaia Alderson
Grace Steele and Eliza Jones may be from completely different backgrounds, but when it comes to the army, specifically the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), they are both starting from the same level. Not only will they be among the first-class of female officers the army has ever seen, they are also the first Black women allowed to serve. Grace and Eliza know that there is no room for error; they must be more perfect than anyone else. When they finally make it overseas, to England and then France, Grace and Eliza will at last be able to do their parts for the country they love, whatever the risk to themselves. Based on the true story of the 6888th Postal Battalion, Sisters in Arms explores the untold story of what life was like for the only all-Black, female US battalion to be deployed overseas during World War II.

WHITE SMOKE
Author: Tiffany Jackson
Marigold is running from ghosts. The phantoms of her old life keep haunting her, but she moves with her newly blended family from their small California beach town to the embattled Midwestern city of Cedarville might be the fresh start she needs. Her mom has accepted a new job that comes with a free house, one that Mari now has to share with her bratty ten-year-old stepsister, Piper. But the renovated picture-perfect home on Maple Street has its secrets. That’s only half the problem: household items vanish, doors open on their own, lights turn off, shadows walk past walls, and voices can be heard in the walls, and there’s a foul smell pervading the house. Mari learns that the danger isn’t limited to Maple Street. Cedarville has its secrets, too. And secrets always find their way through the cracks.

WE ARE NOT BROKEN
Author: George Johnson
Lil’ Rall, Rasul, George, and Garrett have a bond that was forged over summers spent with their grandmother. They experience challenges that many young black boys face but are bolstered by their grandmother’s unwavering love and support. They learn how to love each other and fight with and for each other, by watching the ways their grandmother handles life’s challenges and figuring out their own paths to success.

VAMPIRES, HEARTS AND OTHER DEAD THINGS
Author: Margie Fuson
Senior year is a time for friends and celebrations, but Victoria is consumed with thoughts of her dad with whom she shares a special bond over their appreciation of vampires and whose illness prevents him from joining her on a trip to New Orleans. Instead, she goes with a friend and an ulterior motive. She’s hoping to find a vampire who will turn her into one so she can then turn her dad into a vampire, too, so that he can live forever. The author takes the traditional view of vampires and turns it on its head, associating them not with death, but with life and positivity.

YOU’D BE HOME NOW
Author: Kathleen Glasgow
A gut-wrenching look at how addiction affects a family and a town. Emory Ward, 16, has long been invisible. Everyone in the small town of Mill Haven knows her as the rich girl; her workaholic parents see her as their good child. Then Emory and her 17-year-old brother, Joey, are in a car accident in which a girl dies. Joey isn’t driving, but he feels nearly overdosed on heroin. When Joey returns from rehab, his parents make Emory his keeper, leading her to rebel in her own way. A dark yet realistic portrayal of addiction and the havoc it creates for victims and families alike.

A GOOD GIRL’S GUIDE TO MURDER
Author: Holly Jackson
Everyone believes that Sali Singh killed his girlfriend, Andrea Bell, five years ago before killing himself. But Pippa Fitz-Amobi, who knew and liked Sal since childhood, believes Sali was not Andie’s killer, and for her senior capstone project she intends to research the crimes and find the truth. With Sal’s younger brother, Ravi, Pip digs deeper, unraveling unsavory facts about Andie and the real reason Sal’s friends couldn’t provide him with an alibi. But someone is watching, and Pip may be in more danger than she realizes.

THE WORDS IN MY HANDS
Author: Asphyxia
Sixteen-year-old Piper has been raised by her single mother to be an independent, oral (speaking) person, even though she became deaf at age three. She has learned to lip-read and using her hearing aids won’t make Piper the prosperous bio-engineer her mother is; instead, it only gives her headaches. Piper is determined to find her own voice by using her hands-to build a garden of sustainable food sources and finally communicate like she never has before.

THE BOX IN THE WOODS
Author: Maureen Johnson
Amateur sleuth Stevie Bell needs a good murder. After catching a killer at her high school, she’s back at home for a normal (that means boring) summer. But then she gets a message from the owner of Sunny Pines, formerly known as Camp Wonder Falls—the site of the notorious unsolved case, the Box in the Woods Murders when back in 1978, four camp counselors were killed in the woods outside of the town of Barlow Corners, their bodies left in a gruesome display. The new owner offers Stevie an invitation: Come to the camp and help him work on a true crime podcast about the case.

LAST NIGHT AT THE TELEGRAPH CLUB
Author: Malinda Lo
Seventeen-year-old Lily Hu can’t remember exactly when the feeling took root—that desire to look, to move closer, to touch. Whenever it started growing, it definitely bloomed the moment she and Kathleen Miller walked under the flashing neon sign of a lesbian bar called the Telegraph Club. Suddenly everything seemed possible. But America in 1954 is not a safe place for two girls to fall in love, especially not in Chinatown. Red-Scare paranoia threatens everyone, including Chinese Americans like Lily. With deportation looming over her father—despite his hard-won citizenship—can Lily and Kath risk everything to let their love see the light of day?
Take Me With You When You Go
Author: David Levithan and Jennifer Niven

Teenage sibs desperately search for ways to escape a toxic domestic situation. When his big sister, Bea, disappears just two months before her Indiana high school graduation, leaving him without an ally at home against their passive aggressive mom and viciously abusive stepfather, 15-year-old Ezra oscillates between rage and terror—even after Bea emails that she's (more or less) OK. Fortunately, Ezra can look to his boyfriend, Terrence, and other outside allies for support when the punishments and public scenes get to be too much. At the same time, Bea has set out on a quest of her own, only to discover that their mother hasn't been exactly straight about important elements of their family history. Sometimes the reasons that people have for doing what they do, including parents, are more complicated than they seem, and maybe seeing oneself clearly is the first step toward real change.

One of the Good Ones
Author: Maika Moulite

Keziah Leah Smith is a YouTube vlogger and activist. She’s just turned 18, and she’s excited about attending her first Black Lives Matter protest, but an interaction with police at the rally ends with Kezi losing her life. Her sisters Happi and Genny and her best friend Ximena and Derek decide to honor Kezi by taking a road trip on Route 66. This special road trip was designed by Kezi as a graduation gift to herself and a way for her to reconnect with her sisters. Kezi, a Black history enthusiast, used the Negro Motorestor Green Book to craft her trip. Now her sisters will take the journey for her. Happi is a reluctant traveler as she laments her broken relationship with Kezi. As the trip unfolds, Happi learns not only about the history of her family’s involvement with the Green Book but also how she can reconnect with the older sister she didn’t get a chance to truly know. The novel makes it clear that there are multiple ways to be a Black person in America, and that acceptability doesn’t equal safety.

Me Moth
Author: Amber McBride

Moth is a Black teen whose life changed forever the day a car crash killed her family. Once a dancer who lived so hard she drank the sun, now she lives quietly with her aunt Jack in suburban Virginia. She no longer dances and is struggling with the guilt of her family’s deaths. But then she meets Sani, a Navajo boy who lives with his white mother and abusive white stepfather. Moth and Sani take off on a road trip out west, back to the reservation where Sani’s Navajo father lives. Along the way, their stories entwine. Sani recounts the origin story of the Navajo, and Moth shares about her grandfather who taught her hoodoo. Told in free verse, Me Moth is a story about teens on personal transformational journeys, literal and figurative.

The Girl from the Sea
Author: Molly Knox Ostertag

In this graphic novel, 15-year-old Morgan Kwon wants to escape. After her parents’ divorce, her household is tense: her little brother is angry; her mother is sad. Morgan wants to get away from tiny Wilner Island, where she’s lived since she was little. Morgan, who’s a lesbian but not yet out, longs to go to college, where she can truly be herself. But she takes pleasure in walking along the beautiful and soothing yet treacherous cliffs. When she slips and falls into the water, she meets Keiti, a selkie who rescues her. Convinced she’s having a near-death hallucination, Morgan kisses Keiti. True love’s kiss gives Keiti her land legs and makes her eager to discover her fate alongside Morgan which directly jeopardizes Morgan’s carefully regimented plans. With a finely environmentalism subplot about how tourism and pollution affect seal habitats, the romance and coming-of-age narrative wind together in a story about identity, family, and friendship.

Kaleidoscope
Author: Brian Selznick

A ship. A garden. A library. A key. In Kaleidoscope, the incomparable Brian Selznick presents the story of two people bound to each other through time, space, memory, and dreams. At the center of their relationship is a mystery about the nature of grief and love which will look different to each reader. Kaleidoscope is a feat of storytelling that illuminates how even the wildest tales can help us in the hardest times.

 Ain’t Burned All the Bright
Author: Jason Reynolds
Illustrator: Jason Griffin

Prepare yourself for something unlike anything: A smash-up of art and text that captures what it is to be Black. In America. Right Now. Jason Reynolds and his best bud Jason Griffin had a mind-meld, and they decided to tackle it, in one fell swoop, in about ten sentences and 300 pages of art. This collaboration is described as “contemplation-manifesto-fame—vulnerable-gorgeous-terrifying—What’sWrongWithHumans-hope-filled-hopeful—Eye-Pop-pingly-Illustrated-tender-heartbreaking—How-The-HECK-did-They-Co-me-UP-with-This-project-about-oxygen.” For anyone who didn’t really know what it means to not be able to breathe, REALLY breathe, for generations, now you know. And those who already do, you’ll be nodding yep yep, that is exactly how it is.

Lore Olympus Volume One
Author: Rachel Smythe

Hades, king of the underworld, meets newbie spring goddess Persephone at a swanky party and sparks fly. But divine forces assemble to keep the couple apart, including jealous love goddess Aphrodite, rapacious leather-jacketed, and Persephone’s protective roommate Artemis. The gods inhabit a modern world of luxury cars, cell phones, and espresso machines. A dramatic and amusing re-telling of Greek myths in today’s context.

Black Birds in the Sky: The Story and Legacy of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre
Author: Brandy Colbert

In the early morning of June 1, 1921, a white mob marched across the train tracks in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and into its predominantly Black Greenwood District—a thriving, affluent neighborhood known as America’s Black Wall Street. They brought with them dynamite, gasoline, and explosives. In a few short hours, they’d razed thirty-five square blocks to the ground, leaving hundreds dead. The Tulsa Race Massacre is one of the most devastating acts of racial violence in US history. But how did it come to pass? What exactly happened? And why are the events unknown to so many of us today? The Tulsa Race Massacre has long failed to fit into the story Americans like to tell themselves about the history of their country. This book, ambitious and intimate in turn, ropes in the ways in which the story of the Tulsa Race Massacre is the story of America and, by showing us who we are, points to a way forward.
The 1619 Project
Author: Amanda Gorman

Most Americans were introduced to poet Amanda Gorman when she read her work at President Biden’s inauguration. In this volume, Gorman casts a scrutinizing eye on United States history and current events while being hopeful about the future. Gorman’s opening poem, “Ship’s Manifest,” lays out her intentions: “This book is a message in a bottle. / This book is a letter. / This book does not let up. / This book is awake. / This book is a wake. / For what is a record but a reckoning?”

The Woman All Spies Fear
Author: Amy Greenfield Butler

Most people have likely never heard of Elizebeth Smith Friedman, but she is one of the most prolific code breakers in U.S. history. Often overshadowed by her husband, with whom she worked closely, this biographical account of her life brings her story to young adult readers. From falling into code breaking by landing a job for an eccentric millionaire during a visit to the library to falling in love with a fellow code breaker and working her way through two world wars solving ciphers and more, Smith Friedman’s life story is a fascinating one.

The Other F Word
Author: Angie Manfredi

This outstanding anthology of essays, illustrations, poems, and letters is a celebration of every body and presents a revolutionary message about fat acceptance and self-love. Bringing together 31 intersectional and diverse voices, the volume includes selections by gay, Latinx, big and tall model Ady Del Valle; nonbinary Chinese-American writer S. Qiouyi Lu; and African-American plus-size model, blogger, and activist Saucyé West. The volume sends the powerful, straightforward message that individuals have the right to determine what is best for their own bodies and selves, regardless of size or societal assumptions about health or worth.

Revolution in Our Time
Author: Kekla Magoon

In this thorough, well-researched work, Magoon offers an in-depth look at the Black Panthers that we’ve not really seen—one that is honest and offers a much-needed corrective. Members of the party, particularly the founders, are highlighted; these historical figures are fleshed out as complex individuals. The compelling narrative also covers the history of the entire organization. Magoon doesn’t shy away from presenting the troubles and challenges the party faced, including numerous arrests, and how despite their mission for racial equality, gender equality didn’t seem to be an issue they wanted to tackle. She brilliantly shares the positive, such as how they allowed their offices to be used for childcare and free meals, and how they set up survival programs to help people in need. The free breakfast program schools have today is thanks to the Black Panthers.