Looking for the perfect gift for the book lover in your life? We recommend these 2021 books by Grotto writers.

**FICTION**  
pages 2-5

**NON-FICTION**  
pages 6-8
Thomas McGurrin is a fourth-grade teacher and openly gay man at a private primary school serving Portland, Oregon's wealthy progressive elite when he is falsely accused of inappropriately touching a male student.

Davison's novel explores the discrepancy between the progressive ideals and persistent negative stereotypes among the privileged regarding social status, race, and sexual orientation and the impact of that discrepancy on friendships and family relations.

Maddy Donaldo, homeless at twenty, lives with her dog and makeshift family in the hidden spaces of San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park. She thinks she knows how to survive and whom to trust until she accidentally witnesses the murder of a young man.

Winner of the 2019 PEN/Bellwether Prize for Socially Engaged Fiction awarded by Barbara Kingsolver, At The Edge of the Haight takes the reader inside a world that most of us manage not to see, even if we walk past it on sidewalks every day.
If someone on your holiday list loves

FICTION

IN THE EVENT OF CONTACT
by Ethel Rohan

Winner of the 2019 Dzanc Short Story Collection Prize, In the Event of Contact chronicles characters profoundly affected by physical connection, or its lack. Among them, a scrappy teen vies to be the next Sherlock Holmes; an immigrant daughter must defend her decision to remain childless; a guilt-ridden woman is haunted by the disappearance of her childhood friend; a cantankerous crossing guard celebrates getting run over by a truck; an embattled priest with dementia determines to perform a heroic, redemptive act, if he can only remember how; and an aspirational, angst-ridden mother captains the skies.

HERE IS A GAME WE COULD PLAY
by Jenny Bitner

A dreamlike novel set in Pennsylvania in the 1990s, Here Is a Game We Could Play is the story of Claudia, an intelligent eccentric trapped in the rundown industrial town she grew up in—a place plagued with troubling memories and hidden threats. Seeking escape from tedium, loneliness, and her obsessive fear of poisoning, Claudia retreats into books... and into a fantasy life with her perfect lover, to whom she addresses letters about her life, all the while imagining outlandish sexual scenarios.
If someone on your holiday list loves

FICTION

BRAVE IN THE WATER
by Stephanie Wildman; illustrated by Jenni Feidler-Aguilar

Are you afraid to put your face in the water? So is Diante. He would like to play in the pool with other children. Can Diante become brave in the water?

(Also available in Spanish as Valiente en el Agua)

SARAH AND THE BIG WAVE
by Bonnie Tsui; illustrated by Sophie Diao

Have you ever seen a big wave? One that’s twenty, thirty, forty, even fifty feet tall? Here’s a better question: Would you ever surf a big wave? Sarah Gerhardt did—and this is her story.

Sarah and the Big Wave, a tale of perseverance and indomitable spirit, is about the first woman to ride the waves at Mavericks, one of the biggest and most dangerous surf breaks in the world.
THE SAMOSA REBELLION

by Shanthi Sekharan

Before his grandmother moved from India to the island of Mariposa, Muki Krishnan’s life was good. But now? He has to share his bedroom with Paati, his grandmother, who snores like a bulldozer and wakes him up at dawn to do yoga.

The Samosa Rebellion tells the story of a young boy and his friends who must rescue his grandmother from a relocation camp after their country’s descent into xenophobia.

OFF: THE DAY THE INTERNET DIED: A BEDTIME FANTASY

by Chris Colin; illustrated by Rinee Shah

One day all the screens went dark, and we couldn't even post about it? What would an analog world actually look like? OFF paints a picture that's a little Edenic and a little demented.
If someone on your holiday list loves
NON-FICTION

KILLER LOOKS: THE FORGOTTEN HISTORY OF PLASTIC SURGERY IN PRISONS
by Zara Stone

From the 1920s up to the mid-1990s, half a million prison inmates across America, Canada, and the U.K willingly went under the knife, their tab picked up by the government.

Killer Looks is the definitive story about the long-forgotten practice of providing free nose jobs, face-lifts, breast implants, and other physical alterations to prisoners, the idea being that by remodeling the face you remake the man.

PRIVILEGED REVEALED: HOW INVISIBLE PREFERENCE UNDERMINES AMERICA
by Stephanie Wildman, Margalynne Armstrong, Adrienne D. Davis, and Trina Grillo

Twenty-five years since its first publication, Privilege Revealed is more relevant than ever. With a new preface and foreword, this book offers readers important insight into the inequalities still pervading American society and encourages us all to confront these too often invisible privileges.
FOCAL POINT

by Jenny Qi

Winner of the 2020 Steel Toe Books Poetry Award, Focal Point is a scientist's unofficial dissertation, a daughter's faithful correspondence, and a coming-of-age story.

Written largely while Jenny Qi was a young Ph.D. student conducting cancer research after her beloved mother’s death from cancer, the collection turns to "all the rituals of all the faiths," invoking Western and Eastern mythology and history, metaphors from cell biology, and even Jimi Hendrix, as Qi searches for a container to hold grief.

STEAMED

by Rachel Levin & Tara Duggan

Whip, pound, grate, and grind your way to culinary catharsis with Steamed, an irreverent cookbook for when you need to get dinner and your feelings on the table.

Where is taking your feelings out with heavy mallets and sharp knives not just allowed—but encouraged? The kitchen, of course! Steamed offers readers fifty funny, feisty, and full-flavored dishes to channel frustration and rage into something utterly delicious.
If someone on your holiday list loves

CREATIVITY

A RIFF OF ONE'S OWN: GENDER, QUEERNESS AND HYSTERIA IN GLAM METAL

by Beth Winegarner

It’s been decades since the heyday of Skid Row, Def Leppard and other popular metal bands of the 1980s, but some of us haven’t stopped thinking about them. A Riff Of One’s Own offers two new essays looking back at ‘80s glam/hair metal through a personal, sociological and feminist lens.

LIT STARTS: LITTLE BOOKS OF WRITING PROMPTS

by The Writers Grotto

While technically not published in 2021, we’d be remiss if we didn't include these perennial favorites for the aspiring writer in your life: WRITING HUMOR (foreword by Chris Colin), WRITING DIALOGUE (foreword by Shanthi Sekaran), WRITING CHARACTER (foreword by Constance Hale), WRITING ACTION (foreword by Bonnie Tsui), WRITING MEMOIR (foreword by Julie Lythcott-Haims), and WRITING SCI-FI & FANTASY (foreword by Dorothy Hearst).

The Writers Grotto urges you to support local independent booksellers.

Check out the Writers Grotto bookshelf at https://bookshop.org/lists/sf-writers-grotto-2021-releases