3/20/13:

We are pleased to announce the KCC Reads
Common Reading for the 2013 - 2014 Academic Year:

*Eating Animals*, by Jonathan Safran Foer

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**Book Nominations 2013 – 2014: The Short List (12/12/12)**

We are pleased to announce our Short List for next year:


Next year’s KCC Reads book will be selected from this Short List. The final vote will take place in March 2013.

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*In Alphabetical Order by Nominator Name:*

~~*Dear Marcus: A Letter to the Man Who Shot Me*, Nominator: Florence Berkowitz

**Author:** Jerry McGill, 2012  
**Genre:** Memoir/Autobiography  
**Synopsis:** The book is the author’s memoir of his life before, during, and after the time he was the victim of a shooting when he was a young ghetto teen over thirty years ago. Jerry writes the book in the form of a letter to the person who fired the gun and transformed his life from that of a young man with typical problems that afflict the young and poor, to a person who would spend the rest of his life in a wheelchair. Since the perpetrator was never caught or apprehended, Jerry has spent a good deal of his life thinking about the unknown person who had such a profound impact on his life and speaks to him (her) in order to find closure for himself and to inspire others like him to take the bad turns in life and make the most of them.
~**Girls Like Us: Fighting For a World Where Girls are Not for Sale**, **Nominator:** Loretta Brancaccio-Taras

**Author:** Rachel Lloyd, 2011  
**Genre:** Memoir/Autobiography  
**Synopsis:** Founder of the Girls Educational and Mentoring Service (GEMS) Lloyd recounts her journey from an enslaved sex worker to a leader assisting young girls as they attempt to leave the life of sex trafficking.

~**Intuition**, **Nominator:** Loretta Brancaccio-Taras

**Author:** Allegra Goodman, 2006  
**Genre:** Literary Non-Fiction  
**Synopsis:** High powered research scientists, in a quest to submit a grant, have different interpretations of data. Their graduate students question one another and one becomes a whistle blower.

~**Eating Animals**, **Nominator:** Maureen Fadem

**Author:** Jonathan Safran Foer, 2009  
**Genre:** Literary Non-Fiction  
**Synopsis:** *Eating Animals* is an unusual text in that it is both a well-researched work of journalism—centered on issues of science, health, ethics and the food industry—and a memoir that tells of the author's journey to answer a personal, political, and ethical question. Foer and his wife's first pregnancy brings them to a crisis: after years of moving in and out of vegetarianism, they must decide, once and for all, will we or will we not eat animals, and will we feed our child animals? In response, Foer embarks on an extensive and indeed daunting research mission to learn everything he can conceivably uncover about animal husbandry, food production and food related health concerns in the United States and, along the way, to think through his weighty question. As the author clarifies with some vigor, the book is neither a defense of vegetarianism nor is it a moralizing text drawing conclusions about the general ethicality of eating animals. Rather, it is the investigative narrative of a personal search—one that begins with the author’s memories of his grandmother, who barely survived the Holocaust and her (resulting) relationship to food, and goes on to develop as both a deeply scientific, research-driven "thick description" of factory farming, animal husbandry and related concerns (such as climate change and food-based pandemics) and a deeply poignant story of a new parent and erstwhile dog owner with a genuine and urgent query. Foer manages these narrative poles, usually considered too extreme to "live together" in a single text, with remarkable deftness and grace. His book is every bit as good as Michael Pollan's important food science books, except... *better* -- because this scientific, economic, historical report is conveyed through the frame of literary memoir.

~**The Handmaid's Tale**, **Nominator:** Robin Frankel

**Author:** Margaret Atwood, 1998  
**Genre:** Science Fiction / Other: dystopian speculative fiction  
**Synopsis:** The book is set in the near future. The US has been replaced by the Republic of
Gilead a Christianity-based totalitarian regime. Women are second class citizens. The main character is a woman known as "Offred" which means "of Fred." Fred is the man she serves. She is a concubine whose sole purpose is to give a childless couple children by having passionless sex with the husband. The husband takes a liking to her and begins an illegal relationship in which he shows her contraband - cosmetics, fashion magazines, and books (women are not allowed to read). It is possible he is sterile so the wife sets her up with another man, Nick in an attempt to get Offred pregnant. Nick may or may not be a part of the May Day resistance which is trying over overthrow Gilead. At the end, Offred is taken by secret police into a van where she may be jailed or she may be rescued. We are left uncertain.

~The Tyranny of E-Mail, Nominator: Maggie Hill

Author: John Freeman, 2009
Genre: Non-Fiction
Synopsis: An intelligent, real-world, historical, philosophical, practical look at how (dis)connected we are. Written in a cool, articulate, accessible manner, Freeman is brilliantly entertaining.

~Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity, Nominator: Stuart Kermes

Author: Katherine Boo, 2012
Genre: Non-Fiction
Synopsis: The author (a MacArthur Fellow) chronicles the lives of several children and families who live in a Mumbai slum next to the international airport over several years. Through the day to day struggles that these people face, one gets a clear and gripping experience of what life is like on the underside of the global economy.

~The Warmth of Other Suns, Nominator: Ray Neinstein

Author: Isabel Wilkerson, 2010
Genre: Non-Fiction
Synopsis: This is the story of the "great migration" of African Americans out of the Jim Crow south to the north and the west of the U.S. from 1915 – 1970. The author focuses on the experiences of three representative individuals to tell the story of approximately six million people. The book shows how modern urban America came to be.

~The Hockey Stick and the Climate Wars: Dispatches from the Front Lines, Nominator: Robert Schenck

Author: Michael Mann, 2012
Genre: Science/Nature
Synopsis: Michael Mann is a climate researcher at Penn State, who produced the well-known "Hockey Stick" graph, showing rising global temperatures over time. This, and other research of his, became the center of a public debate on the nature of science and the reality of Global Warming. People on both sides of the debate/controversy are familiar with his work and his
Hockey Stick Graph, which has made its way into popular works and textbooks on climate science. The book also discusses the extremely contentious and sometimes vicious public arguments over the science, adding a political and social science/cultural dimension to the issue.

~ *Hands of the Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts of Women in the SNCC,*  
Nominator: Debra Schultz

**Author:** Judy Richardson, Dorothy Zellner, Faith Holsaert, Martha Prescod Norman, Jean Smith and Betty Garman, 2010  
**Genre:** Memoir/Autobiography / History / Non-Fiction  
**Synopsis:** An unprecedented women's history of the Civil Rights Movement, from sit-ins to Black Power, *In Hands on the Freedom Plow,* fifty-two women--northern and southern, young and old, urban and rural, black, white, and Latina--share their courageous personal stories of working for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) on the front lines of the Civil Rights Movement. The testimonies gathered here present a sweeping personal history of SNCC: early sit-ins, voter registration campaigns, and Freedom Rides; the 1963 March on Washington, the Mississippi Freedom Summer, and the movements in Alabama and Maryland; and Black Power and antiwar activism. Since the women spent time in the Deep South, many also describe risking their lives through beatings and arrests and witnessing unspeakable violence. These intense stories depict women, many very young, dealing with extreme fear and finding the remarkable strength to survive. The women in SNCC acquired new skills, experienced personal growth, sustained one another, and even had fun in the midst of serious struggle. Readers are privy to their analyses of the Movement, its tactics, strategies, and underlying philosophies. The contributors revisit central debates of the struggle including the role of nonviolence and self-defense, the role of white people in a black-led movement, and the role of women within the Movement and the society at large. Each story reveals how the struggle for social change was formed, supported, and maintained by the women who kept their "hands on the freedom plow." [...] [Truncated: get copy of the full summary from Maureen Fadem.]

~ *Eating Animals,*  
Nominator: Michelle Zeltsman

**Author:** Jonathan Safran Foer, 2009  
**Genre:** Literary Non-Fiction  
**Synopsis:** From the Website: Like many others, Jonathan Safran Foer spent his teenage and college years oscillating between omnivore and vegetarian. But on the brink of fatherhood, facing the prospect of having to make dietary choices on a child’s behalf, his casual questioning took on an urgency. This quest ultimately required him to visit factory farms in the middle of the night, dissect the emotional ingredients of meals from his childhood, and probe some of his most primal instincts about right and wrong. This book is what he found. Brilliantly synthesizing philosophy, literature, science, memoir, and his own detective work, *Eating Animals* explores the many stories we use to justify our eating habits, folklore and pop culture, family traditions and national myth, apparent facts and inherent fictions, and how such tales can lull us into a brutal forgetting. Marked by Foer’s moral ferocity and unvarying generosity, as well as the humor and style that made his previous books, *Everything Is Illuminated* and *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close,* widely loved, Foer’s latest tour de force informs and delights, challenging
us to explore what is too often conveniently brushed aside. A celebration and a reckoning, Eating Animals is a story about the stories we've told, and the stories we now need to tell.