

# Favorite Books of 2017

I didn't read nearly as much as I should in the past year, and hope to do better next year. Of the books I did read in 2017, here are my Top 5, in order.

## **5. Laura Jane Grace's *Tranny: Confessions of Punk Rock's Most Infamous Anarchist***

**Sellout:** I've always been a huge fan of Against Me!, so reading this was a no-brainer. While it discusses Tom Gabel's transition into Laura Jane Grace, the reasoning is sprinkled throughout the memoir instead of told in one fell swoop. She does a great job showing how she became to be who she currently is, but it's the oral history of Against Me! that was truly compelling. Grace comes off as pompous and arrogant, but real and not afraid to show her true self. That's bravery.

**4. Russell Hoban's *Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas*:** Yes, this book was published in 1971 and turned into a TV movie in 1977. I have loved the movie since I watched it at my elementary school, but didn't know it was a book until this year. The book gives some details left out in the movie, and has some sad moments, but Emmet and Alice Otter maintain a positive outlook throughout, which is sometimes all people have to keep them going. It's a great story with an inspiring message.

**3. Rick Massimo's *I Got a Song: A History of the Newport Folk Festival*:** This is a wonderful telling of the history of the Newport Folk Festival. Massimo, in great detail, discusses its start and the ups and the downs, revealing how it came to be such an important part of both musical and Rhode Island history. This is well-researched with a ton of great stories from the people who were there. As I've mentioned before, my favorite part is the unique way he told the tale of Dylan going electric.

**2. EA Mann's *One American Robin*:** This is about as real as a piece of fiction can get. Mann takes a few months of protagonist Robin's life and paints it on the page as if it were a family member telling a story. There are true emotions and mistakes that people make. There's a reason *One American Robin* won an award for Best Literary Fiction. This is real life.

**1. Heather Rigney's *Caging the Merrow*:** I've been waiting to find out what would happen to Evie, Nomia, Nix, Paddy, Rachel and Ronan for about two years, and I haven't been disappointed. Rigney is my favorite local author and Evie McFagan is one of my favorite literary characters. I tore into this book like Nomia used to tear into her prey. The final installment of The Merrow Trilogy had me turning every page as fast as possible, eager to learn how everything would turn out, but not wanting it to end.