

Local Beach Reads

Reading can serve as an incredible escape during the summer — either from the heat or from the fact that the heat is temporary and it's only a matter of time before the winter coats and snow shovels come out. This year, in addition to featuring local literature that will help you get lost in a summer night, I decided to combine reading with another great escape: music.

Here are my 10.5 books to help you either enjoy or just tolerate the summer. These can be read anywhere, from the beach to a vacation road trip (assuming you're a passenger and don't get car sick) to a comfortable spot in the house with the air conditioner turned up to 11. This is a big list, probably too big for most to read this summer (unless you're a fast-reading go-getter), but I'm hoping to have left you with enough options to make good choices.

Steven Manchester's *The Changing Season*: This is fitting because it's a coming-of-age tale following Billy during the summer after he graduates. Not knowing what he wants to do for the rest of his life, he plans to have one more carefree summer with friends and his dog, Jimmy. He wants to get as much relaxation and non-adulthood in before heading to UMass in the fall. Things don't always go as planned, and he has to make some grown-up decisions that will impact the rest of his life.

NOFX and Jeff Alulis's *The Hepatitis Bathtub and Other Stories*: I've always been a huge NOFX fan, and the thought of them writing a tell-all book has had me salivating for its release. These guys are entertaining on stage, and have lived through a lot of things off stage, making for a page-turner and a half.

Jeff Danielian's *Walking Further*: This book of poems makes for an enticing collection to bring to the beach. I'm a huge fan of Danielian's simplistic view of the world, taking readers back to a time when things made sense. These poems should be read with feet planted firmly and comfortably in the sand. See review at motifri.com/walkingfurther

Ted Anthony's *Chasing the Rising Sun: The Journey of an American Song*: "House of the Rising Sun" is my favorite song of all time (the Bob Dylan version is my favorite), so I was on board to read a book dedicated to this classic tune. I learned so much and was able to look up different versions of the song. There are a few potential origin stories, and Anthony's research journey was fascinating.

Heather Rigney's *Hunting the Merrow*: Evie McFagan is one of my favorite literary characters, and this adventure doesn't disappoint. While this is the second book of a trilogy, it leaves a lot of questions heading into the third book. This also tells the origins of the malevolent Nomia and introduces mermaid hunters. I do suggest starting with *Waking the Merrow* (Review: motifri.com/book-review-heather-rigneys-waking-the-merrow) if you haven't already. See review at motifri.com/huntingthemerrow

Steven Blush's *American Hardcore: A Tribal History*: This book is a must-read for any fan of early hardcore. Blush goes by geographic location and doesn't leave any band out. This was a history lesson and a half and a tough one to put down. It wouldn't be a bad idea to follow this one up with "All Ages: Reflections on Straight Edge" by Beth Lahickey (this is the .5 I mentioned). Reading both of them will pretty much take you through a decade of hardcore music.

Bill Reynolds' *Hope: A School, a Team, a Dream*: I'm a big fan of Bill Reynolds as a columnist, and

he finds intriguing subjects for his books. This is an inspiring story about the 2012 Hope High School basketball team. This is one of the books that I will be excitedly breaking open this summer.

Charles Wolfe and Kip Lornell's *The Life and Legend of Leadbelly*: This is a story of a man who has, in addition to writing/performing some of the greatest songs ever written, has led a fascinating life. He might be the only person ever to sing his way out of prison. In addition to the music, this goes into incredible detail of his life, the early folk scene and the era.