

WTBBL Recommended Reads: Asian American Pacific Islander Month, 2023

During the Carter Administration, a congressional joint resolution was passed designating Asian Pacific American Week as the first 10 days of May – chosen in commemoration of the first Japanese immigrant arriving in the U.S. in May of 1843, and the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869, which was made possible through the labor of the Chinese track-layers – and was later expanded into a month-long celebration by George H.W. Bush in the Early 90's. Facing violence and discrimination generation after generation, the AAPI community remains steadfast, with May recognizing the contributions, tribulations, and vibrant cultures of the 26 AAPI ethnic groups who have helped shape U.S. History. So, dive into some fresh hum-bao, and enjoy these books by AAPI authors recommended by our staff!

I. ***A Tale for the Time Being*** by Ruth Ozeki, 2013
([DB076696](#))

In Tokyo, sixteen-year-old Nao has decided there's only one escape from her aching loneliness and her classmates' bullying, but before she ends it all, Nao plans to document the life of her great-grandmother, a Buddhist nun who's lived more than a century. A diary is Nao's only solace—and will touch lives in ways she can scarcely imagine. – Goodreads Annotation

II. ***Arsenic and Adobo*** by Mia P. Manansala, 2021
([DB103534](#))

Lila Macapagal feels as though her life's a romantic comedy when she goes home after a bad breakup and is tasked with saving her Tita Rosie's failing restaurant. But when a nasty food critic--and her ex-boyfriend--drops dead, the rom-com turns into an Agatha Christie case. – Library Catalog Annotation

III. ***For Today I am a Boy*** by Kim Fu, 2014
([DB078127](#), [BR020439](#))

Peter Huang grows up in Ontario, the celebrated only son of immigrant parents. His father hopes and dreams that Peter will become the epitome of a Western man. But Peter has a secret: he is really a girl on the inside. – Library Catalog Annotation

IV. ***Kauai Stories*** by Pamela Varma Brown, 2015
([DBC24616](#))

Enjoy the warmth, spirit and adventure of Kauai in 50 inspiring, humorous and touching personal stories told by the island's people. Discover the aloha spirit through their stories of growing up island-style, living in multi-cultural sugar plantation "camps," going barefoot until high school and making toys with whatever was on hand, like Frisbees from car-flattened, sun-dried toads. Feel the ocean spray as Kauai residents share their love of surfing, canoe paddling and strolling along secluded sandy beaches, often making the only footsteps in the sand. – Paraphrased from the Publisher's Annotation

- V. ***Last Night at the Telegraph Club*** by Malinda Lo, 2021 ([DB104015](#), [LP026279](#), [BR024064](#))

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—Lily and Kath risk everything to let their love see the light of day. – Goodreads Annotation

- VI. ***Love and Other Consolation Prizes*** by Jamie Ford, 2017 ([DB089046](#))

Seattle, 1909. At the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific World Exposition, twelve-year-old half-Chinese orphan Ernest Young finds himself raffled off. The winner is Madame Flora, owner of a notorious brothel. He finds a home and love. Fifty years later, he tries to hide his secrets from his family. – Library Catalog Annotation

- VII. ***Midnight in Broad Daylight : A Japanese American Family Caught Between Two Wars*** by Pamela Rotner Sakamoto, 2017 ([DBC06855](#), [BRC01840](#))

After their father's death, Harry, Frank, and Pierce Fukuhara - all born and raised in the PNW - move back to Hiroshima, their mother's ancestral home. Harry, the only brother to later return to America, is sent to an internment camp after Pearl Harbor, only later to become one of the most distinguished Japanese translators in the U.S. Army. Frank and Pierce in the meantime have joined the Japanese Imperial Army. An atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima is the only thing that stays the

inevitable reunion of the brothers in battle. This true story is an epic tale of family, divided loyalties, a scathing examination of racism and xenophobia, and honorary to the Japanese American contribution to the American war effort. - Paraphrased from the Publisher's Annotation

VIII. ***Murder Frames the Scene: A Hawai'i Mystery*** by Victoria Nalani Kneubuhl, 2016 ([DBC24611](#))

A thoroughly entertaining, yet complex, whodunit set in 1930s Hawai'i featuring a pair of unlikely sleuths--part-Hawaiian Mina Beckwith and her fiance, part-Samoan Ned Manusia, who find themselves unraveling a deadly web of espionage and murder. As the story opens, Ned is in Japanese-occupied Shanghai, where he has been sent to rescue his friend Nigel, a British spy being ruthlessly hunted by the Japanese police. The action moves to Honolulu where Mina is embroiled with a group of eccentric artists whose numbers are being depleted in a series of dramatically staged murders. While Mina investigates the murders of the artists, Ned and Nigel attempt to ferret out a spy sending reports on the activities of the Navy at Pearl Harbor to the Japanese government. The two plotlines become intertwined as Ned and Mina are enmeshed in a dangerous net of international intrigue. - Library Catalogue Annotation

IX. ***My So-called Bollywood Life*** by Nisha Sharma, 2018 ([DB096670](#), [BR022845](#))

While a pundit predicted Winnie Mehta's love was written in the stars, and the love of her life

would manifest before she was 18, she never really believed it. Still, as a self-proclaimed Bollywood expert, she knows that her prophesied perfect ending did not involve her boyfriend Raj hooking up with another girl while Mehta was away from summer film camp. Now, as she starts falling for fellow film geek Dev, Mehta questions fate, happily ever after, and attempts to get her Bollywood-like life back on track. – Paraphrased from the Publisher’s Annotation

X. ***No-No Boy*** by John Okada, 1976 ([DBC16991](#))

A 25-year-old man returns home to Seattle after spending two years in an internment camp for being Japanese-American, and another two years in prison for refusing to join the United States Army during World War II. He has earned the hostility of his family and community, and subverts the stereotype post-war “model minority” through his lament of guilt, rage, and blame as he attempts reentry into a shattered reality. – Annotation from Librarian

XI. ***On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous*** by Ocean Vuong, 2019 ([DB095459](#), [BR022925](#))

Combining prose and poetry in a letter to his mother, who is unable to read, Little Dog divulges hidden parts of himself alongside contemplation of his broken family tree’s history. At once tender of the love between single mother and son, and starkly honest of addiction, violence, and generational trauma, Little Dog’s story is one of race, class, and pressure of fulfilling masculine expectations. At its heart, a story that asks how we survive, how we heal

and rescue one another, without forsaking who we are. – Annotation from Librarian

XII. ***Pride, Prejudice, and Other Flavors*** by Sonali Dev, 2019 ([DB095480](#)) The influential Raje family, descended from Indian royalty and now living in San Francisco, has three rules: never trust an outsider, never do anything to jeopardize brother's political aspirations, and never, ever, defy the family. Dr. Trisha Raje, San Francisco's most acclaimed neurosurgeon, has broken all three of her family's rules – but has a chance at redemption, until she clashes with the Cordon Bleu chef, DJ Caine, hired by her mother for an important event. He's used to being judge by people like this, for his less-than-satisfactory upbringing, and pedigree over character, and needs the job to help save his sister from progressive brain cancer ...who happens to be a patient of none other than Trisha Raje. More than a cure lies at stake, as initial disdain blossoms into attraction, as the two raise arms against classism, racism, familial expectations, and their own personal insecurities. – Annotation from Librarian

XIII. ***Re Jane*** by Patricia Park, 2015 ([DB081639](#)) Jane Re is a half-Korean, half-American orphan who grows up in Queens, where she works in her uncle's grocery store and strictly follows the traditional principle of nunchi (a combination of good manners, hierarchy, obligation, and upholding harmony). Eager to escape the Korean community that never seemed to fully accept her, Jane is inducted into a new life as a live-in nanny for the

Mazer-Farleys, two progressive Brooklyn English professors and their adopted Chinese daughter. When a family death interrupts her blossoming (and forbidden) affair with one of the professors, Jane is called away and reconnects to her Korean culture in Seoul. This coming-of-age follows Jane falling in love, finding strength, and learning to live not just out of obligations to others, but to herself. – Annotation from Library Staff

XIV. ***Yolk*** by Mary H. Choi, 2021 ([DB104179](#))

Korean-American sisters Jayne and June, have nothing in common. June, the eldest, is a successful financier, with an uptown, albeit soulless, apartment, whose opinion is that Jayne needs to step up from being a self-obsessed basket case and stop wasting their parents' money. Now, the estranged sisters find themselves in an uncomfortable situation: living together, switching places, and committing insurance fraud to save one sister from her diagnosis of uterine cancer. – Annotation from Librarian