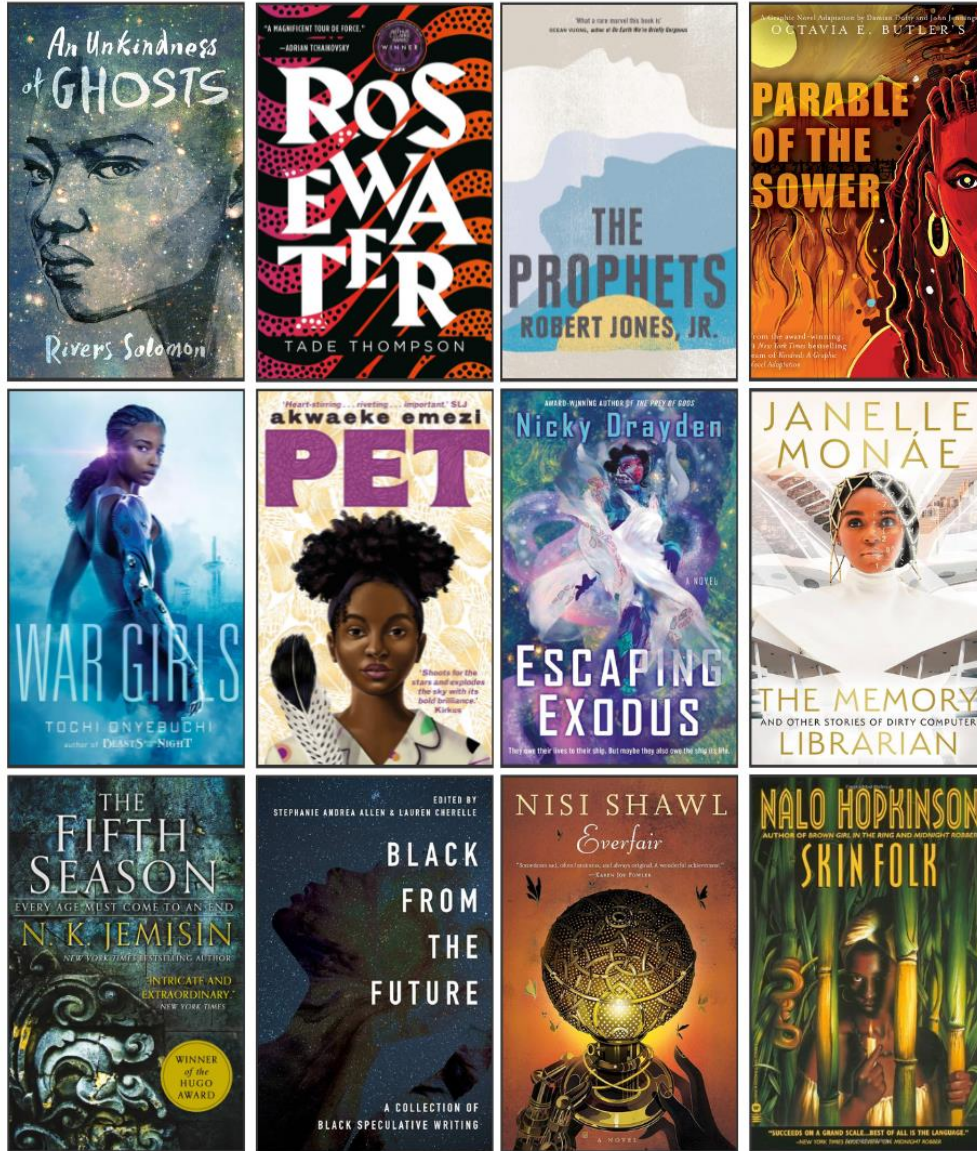


# WTBBL Recommended Reads: Afrofuturism



Though the name may imply a genre exclusively concerned with far-off dystopian futures, the reach of Afrofuturism is expansive, encompassing a wide variety of speculative fictions such as fantasy, magical realism, sci-fi and alt-history -- all utilizing and subverting the tools of their individual genres to comment on the Black experience. These authors teach us that sometimes, to make sense of our current moment in history, we must first look to a different plane of reality altogether.

**An Unkindness of Ghosts** by Rivers Solomon, 2017. ([DB091322](#))

Odd-mannered Aster lives in the low-deck slums of the HSS *Matilda*, a space vessel organized much like the antebellum South. For generations, the *Matilda* has ferried the last of humanity to a mythical Promised Land. On its way, the ship's leaders have imposed harsh moral restrictions and deep indignities on dark-skinned sharecroppers like Aster, who they consider to be less than human. When the autopsy of *Matilda's* sovereign reveals a surprising link between his death and her mother's suicide some quarter-century before, Aster retraces her mother's footsteps. Embroiled in a grudge with a brutal overseer and sowing the seeds of civil war, Aster learns there may be a way off the ship if she's willing to fight for it. – Book Description from Goodreads

**Rosewater** [#1, Wormwood Trilogy] by Tade Thompson, 2018. ([DB092496](#))

Rosewater is a town on the edge. A community formed around the edges of a mysterious alien biodome, its residents comprise the hopeful, the hungry and the helpless—people eager for a glimpse inside the dome or a taste of its rumored healing powers. Kaaro is a government agent with a criminal past. He has seen inside the biodome, and doesn't care to again—but when something begins killing off others like himself, Kaaro must defy his masters to search for an answer, facing his dark history and coming to a realization about a horrifying future. – Book Description from Goodreads

**The Prophets** by Robert Jones, 2021. ([DB101843](#))

Isaiah was Samuel's and Samuel was Isaiah's. That was the way it was since the beginning, and the way it was to be until the end. In the barn they tended to the animals, but also to each other, transforming the hollowed-out shed into a place of human refuge, a source of intimacy and hope in a world ruled by vicious masters. But when an older slave seeks to gain favor by preaching the master's gospel on the plantation, the enslaved turn on their own. As tensions build and the weight of centuries – of ancestors and future generations to come – culminates in a climactic reckoning, **The Prophets** fearlessly reveals the pain and suffering of inheritance, but also the heroic power of love. – Book Description annotated from the Publisher

**Parable of the Sower** by Octavia E. Butler, 1993. ([BR021257](#), [DB039777](#), en español [DB105355](#))

Lauren Olamina and her family live in one of the only safe neighborhoods remaining on the outskirts of Los Angeles. Behind the walls of their defended enclave, Lauren's father, a preacher, and a handful of other citizens try to salvage what remains of a culture that has been destroyed by drugs, disease, war, and chronic water shortages. While her father tries to lead people on the righteous path, Lauren struggles with hyperempathy, a condition that makes her extraordinarily sensitive to the pain of others. When fire destroys their compound, Lauren's family is killed and she is forced out into a world that is fraught with danger. With a handful of other refugees, Lauren must make her way north to safety, along the way conceiving a revolutionary idea that may mean salvation for all mankind. – Book Description from Goodreads

**War Girls** by Tochi Onyebuchi, 2019. ([BR022921](#), [DB097502](#))

The year is 2172. Climate change and nuclear disasters have rendered much of earth unlivable. In a war-torn Nigeria, battles are fought using flying, deadly mechs and soldiers are outfitted with bionic limbs and artificial organs meant to protect them from the harsh, radiation-heavy climate. Two sisters dream of peace and a future together, even if they have to fight an entire war to get there. – Book Description from Library Staff

**Pet** by Akwaeke Emezi, 2019. ([DB097604](#), [LPO26061](#))

There are no monsters anymore, or so the children in the city of Lucille are taught. But when Jam meets Pet, a creature who some might call monstrous but, in reality, is anything but, she must reconsider what she's been told. Pet has emerged to hunt a true monster, and the shadow of something grim that lurks in town. This award-winning novel from a rising-star author asks: What really makes a monster, and how do you save the world from something if no one will admit it exists? – Book Description from the Publisher

**Escaping Exodus** by Nicky Drayden, 2019. ([DB099819](#))

Earth is a distant memory. For generations, humanity has been clinging to survival by establishing colonies within enormous vacuum-breathing space beasts and mining their resources to the point of depletion. Rash, dreamy, and unconventional, Seske Kaleigh is unexpectedly thrust into the role of clan matriarch, responsible for thousands of lives in a harsh universe where a single mistake can be fatal, until her own sister challenges her claim to the throne. But Seske's unorthodox outlook and incorruptible idealism may be what the clan needs to save themselves and their world. – Book Description from Library Staff

**The Memory Librarian: And Other Stories of Dirty Computer** by Janelle Monáe, 2022. ([DB108252](#))

In *The Memory Librarian: And Other Stories of Dirty Computer*, singer-songwriter, actor, fashion icon, activist, and worldwide superstar Janelle Monáe brings to the written page the Afrofuturistic world of one of her critically acclaimed albums, exploring how different threads of liberation—queerness, race, gender plurality, and love—become tangled with future possibilities of memory and time in such a totalitarian landscape...and what the costs might be when trying to unravel and weave them into freedoms. – Book Description from Goodreads

**The Fifth Season** [#1, Broken Earth series] by N. K. Jemisin, 2015.

([BR023399](#), [DB082240](#), en español [DBG17462](#))

This is the way the world ends ... for the last time. On an unfriendly planet, a single supercontinent is subjected every few centuries to cataclysmic climate change, called “The Fifth Season”. Beginning with a great rift across the continent spewing enough ash to blot out the sun for centuries, to the fall of the mightiest empire, the planet’s populace’s endurance is tested and faces an uncertain future. Except for Essun. She WILL have her daughter back from her murdering, kidnapping husband. As the world crumbles around her, she vows she will break the earth herself, if she must, to save her remaining child. – Book Description from the Publisher

**Black From the Future: A Collection of Black Speculative Writing** edited by Stephanie Andrea Allen and Lauren Cherelle, 2019. ([DB097405](#))

Within this revelatory 22-piece anthology of prose and poetry across the horror, fantasy, and science fiction genres, editors Allen and Cherelle have gathered works by some of the best and boldest voices in African American speculative writing. – Book Description from Publisher's Weekly

**Everfair** by Nisi Shawl, 2016. ([DB088813](#))

**Everfair**, the brilliant Neo-Victorian alternate-history novel, potently explores the question of what might have come of Belgium's disastrous colonization of the Congo if the native populations had adopted steam technology as their own ahead of the imperialists. – Book Description adapted from Goodreads

**Skin Folk** by Nalo Hopkinson, 2001. ([DB055300](#))

A girl whose mouth spews valuable coins and precious gems whenever she tries to talk or sing. A self-conscious woman undergoes elective surgery to alter her appearance, only to be shocked days later when she sees her former body climbing onto a public bus. A young newlywed ignores her intuition regarding her husband's superstitions .... with terrifying consequences. And more. Within this collection of short stories, explore tales of science fiction, Caribbean folklore, passionate love, and chilling horror from an award-winning Afrofuturist author. – Book Description from Library Staff