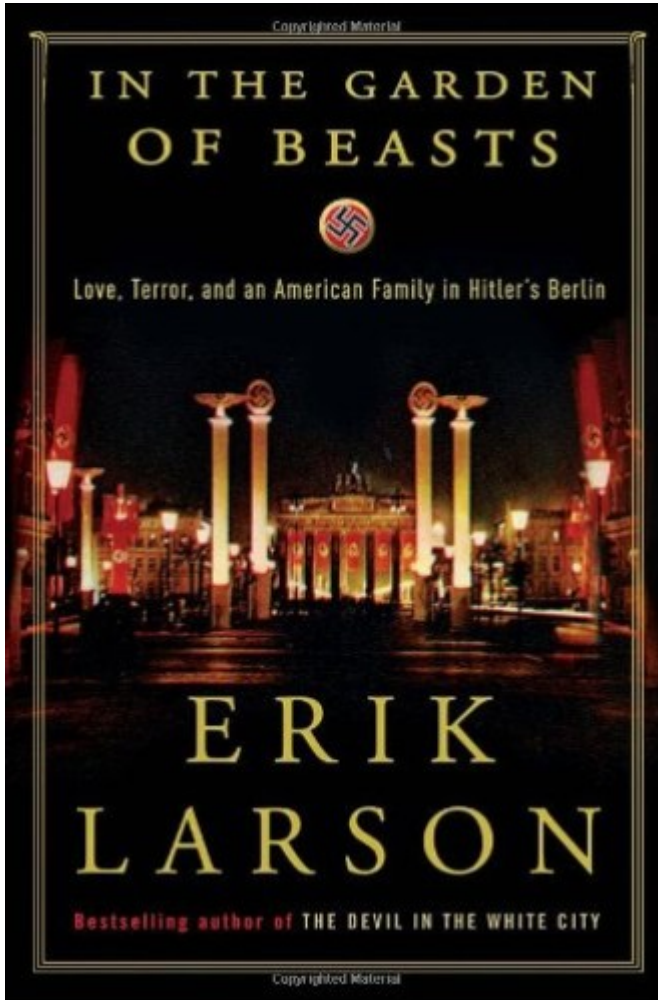


Summer reading list

By [Richard A. Kauffman](#)

July 12, 2011

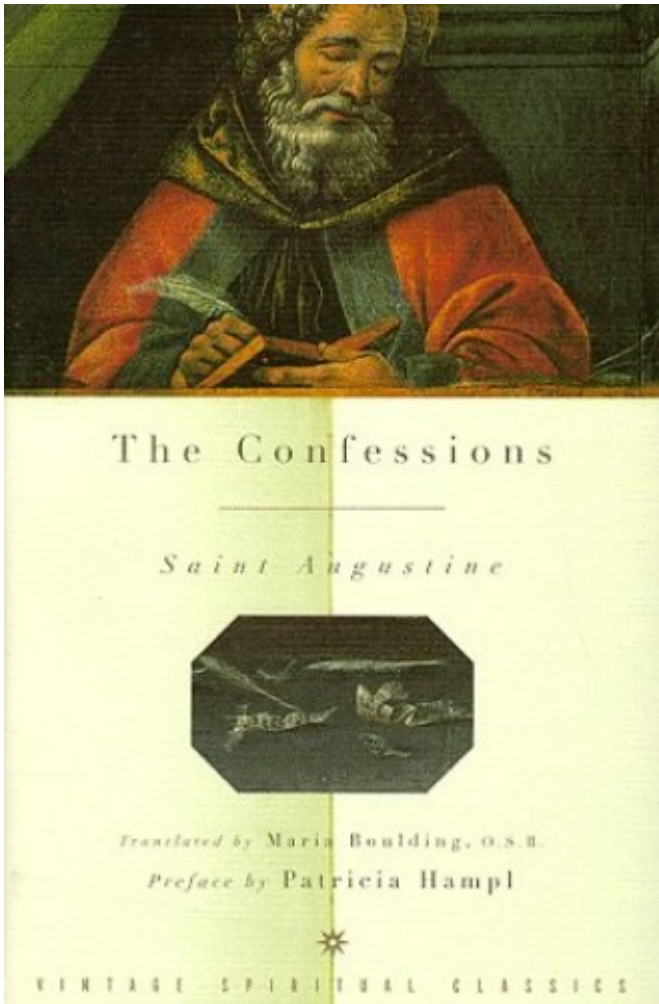
In Review



In the Garden of Beasts

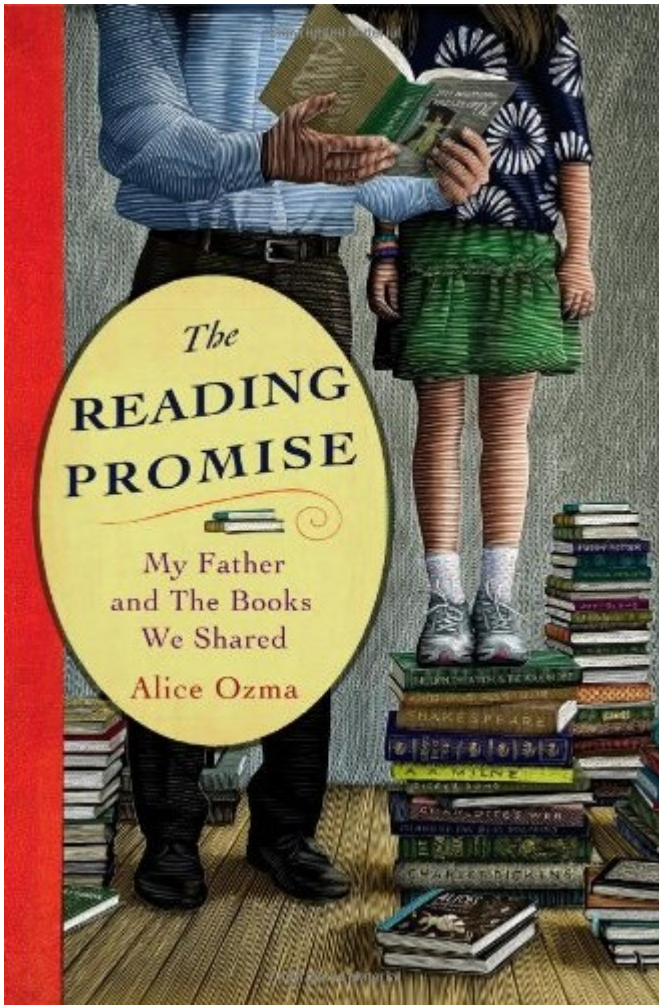
by Erik Larson

Crown



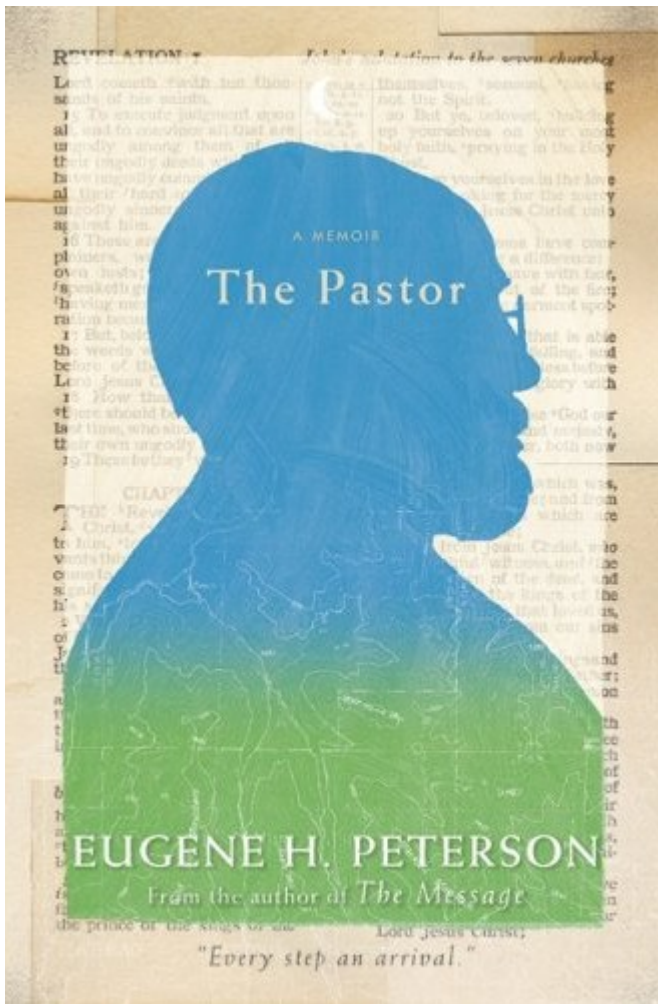
The Confessions

by Saint Augustine, translated by Maria Boulding
Vintage



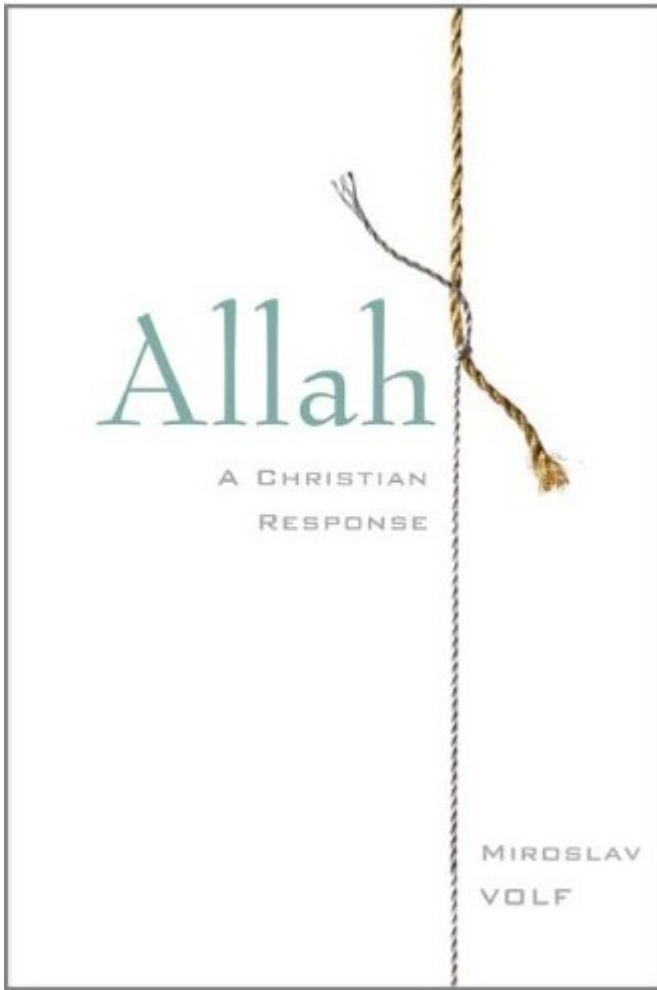
The Reading Promise

by Alice Ozma
Grand Central



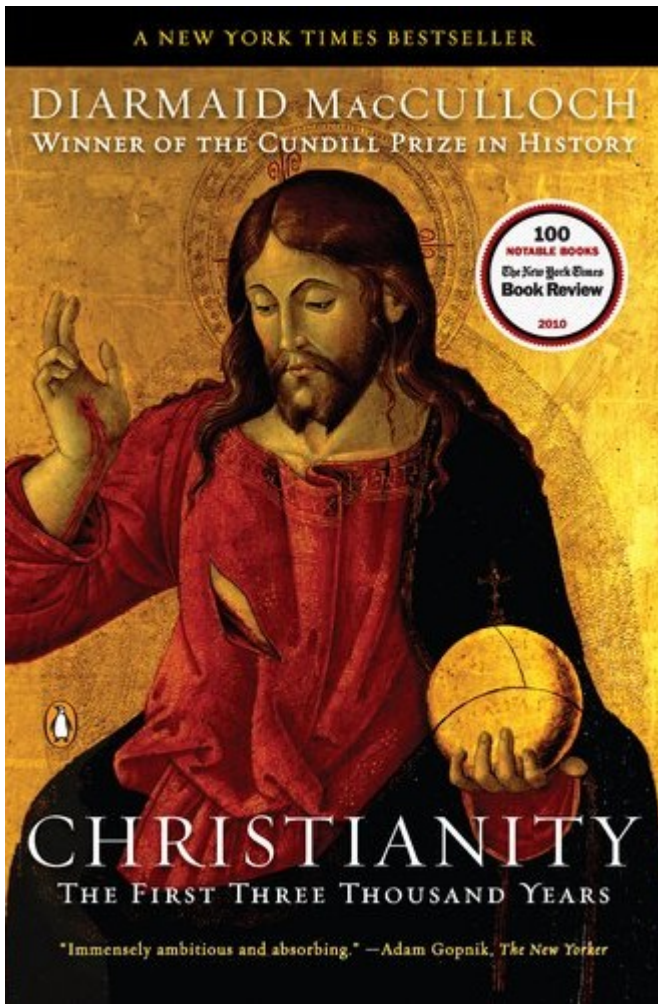
The Pastor

by Eugene H. Peterson
HarperOne



Allah

by Miroslav Volf
HarperOne



Christianity

by Diarmaid MacCulloch
Penguin

What are you hoping to read this summer? We posed this question to the Century staff, a group of people with diverse tastes and interests. Along with commenting on our choices, feel free to post your own in the comments. --Ed.

Right now I'm reading *In the Garden of Beasts*, by master storyteller Erik Larson. It is the captivating story of William E. Dodd, U.S. ambassador to Germany during Hitler's rise to power. Dodd's young adult daughter Martha, a socialite who had affairs with the head of the Gestapo and a

Russian spy, steals the show. Next I plan to read Stephen Ozment's sweeping survey *A Mighty Fortress: A New History of the German People*.

I am slowly working my way through Augustine's *Confessions*, using Maria Boulding's translation. This may not be the best translation from a scholar's point of view, but I find it elegant and a pleasure to read. I want to follow this up with Garry Wills's *Augustine's Confessions*, part of Princeton University Press's new series on the "Lives of Great Religious Books."

I enjoy reading books about books, including Pat Conroy's *My Reading Life*, which is memoir-like, and Alan Jacobs's *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction*, which is more about the reading process. Next up is Alice Ozma's *The Reading Promise: My Father and the Books We Shared*. When Ozma was a child, her father pledged to read to her 100 nights in a row before bed. After 100 nights they couldn't stop, so they continued until she departed for college. (I'm hoping to get some reading suggestions for my grandchildren.)

Two books recently excerpted in the *Christian Century* have my attention: Eugene Peterson's *The Pastor: A Memoir* and Miroslav Volf's *Allah: A Christian Response*. Peterson's is a story about how a budding biblical scholar turned into a pastor, developed a writing ministry and ended up as a pastor to pastors. Volf examines Christian-Muslim relationships theologically, arguing that there's more convergence between these two religions than commonly thought.

Soon a review will appear in the *Century* of Tom Montgomery Fate's latest work, *Cabin Fever: A Suburban Father's Search for the Wild*. A fine essayist, Fate divides his time between suburban Chicago and a cabin in Michigan.

Christianity: The First Three Thousand

Years by Diarmaid

MacCulloch beckons from the nightstand by my bed. But I'll never read this 1,200-page history of Christianity unless I buy a Kindle version to read during my commute.