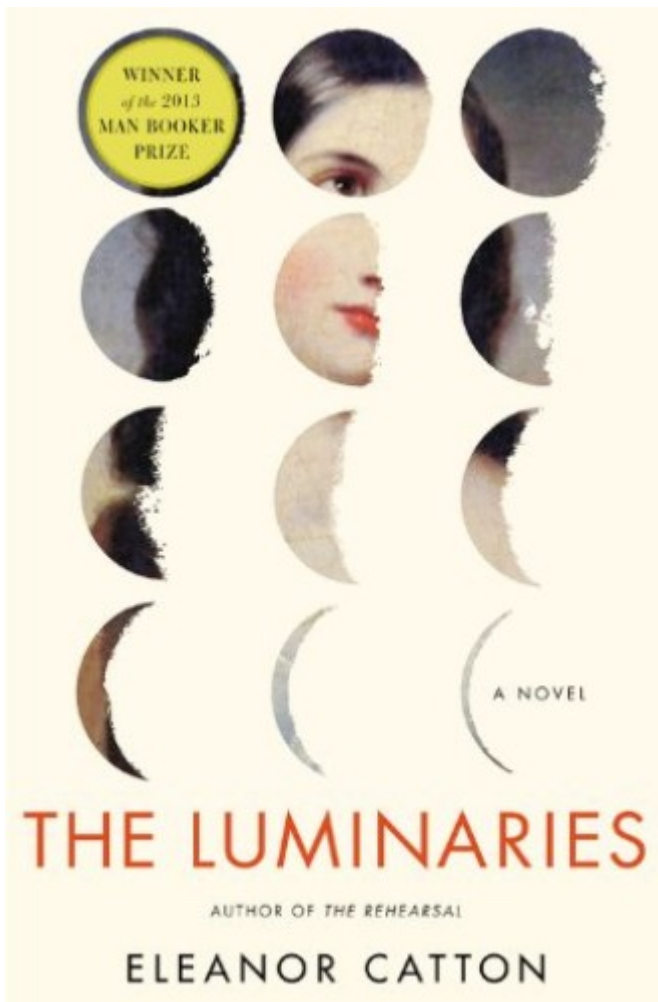


Carol Howard Merritt's Christmas list

by [Carol Howard Merritt](#) in the [December 10, 2014](#) issue

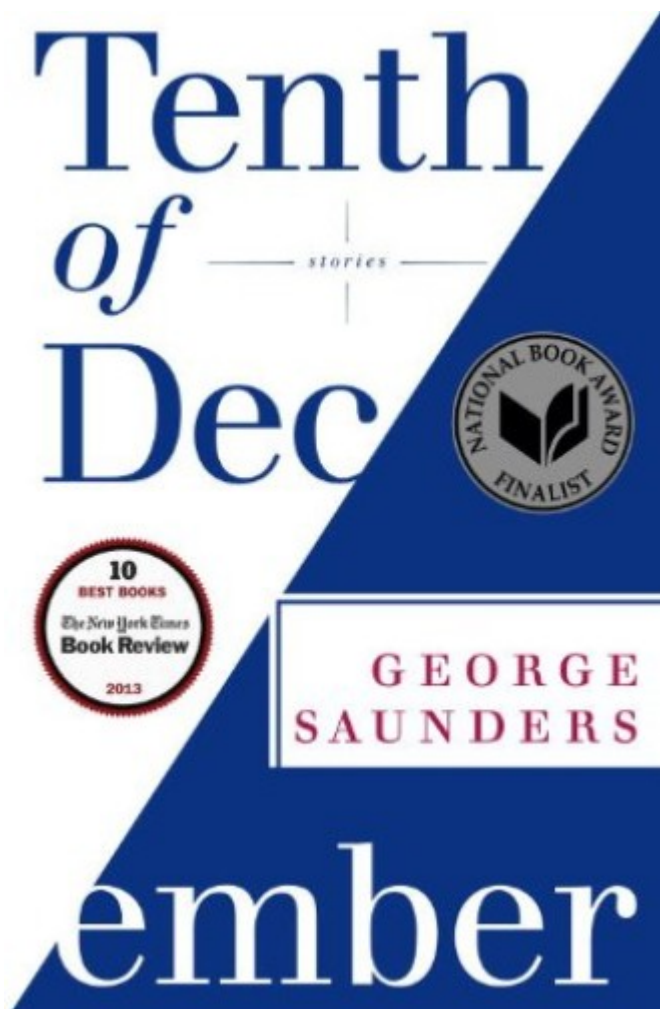
In Review



The Luminaries

by Eleanor Catton

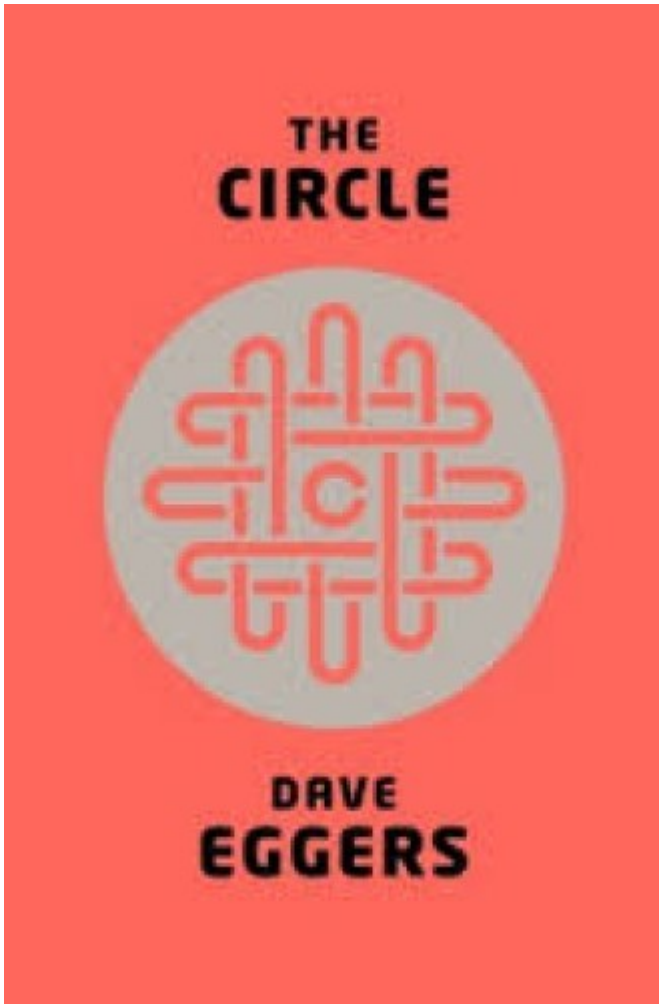
Little, Brown and Company



Tenth of December

by George Saunders

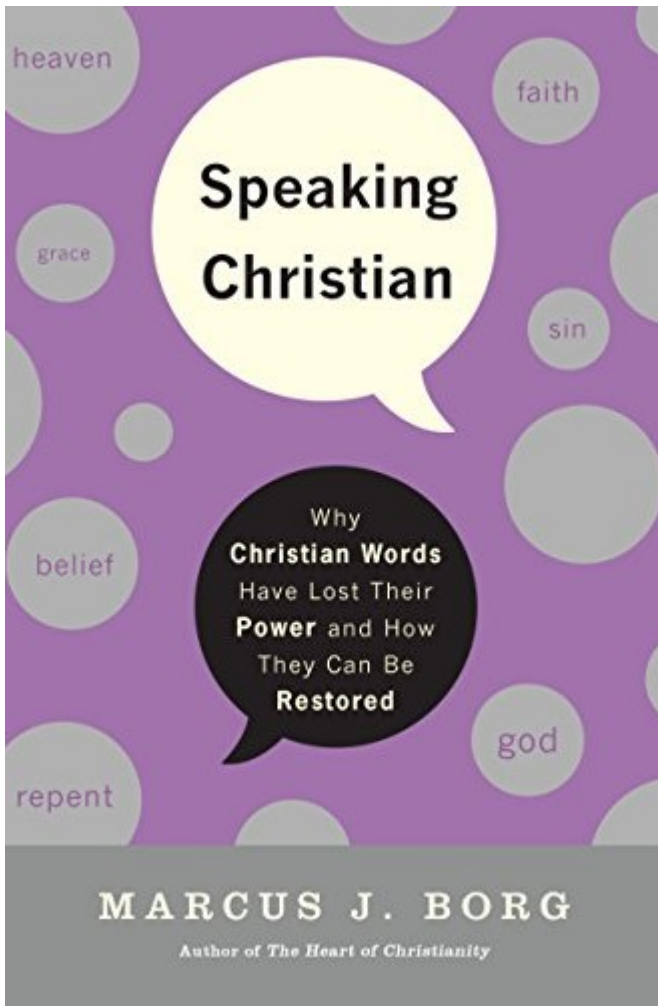
Random House



The Circle

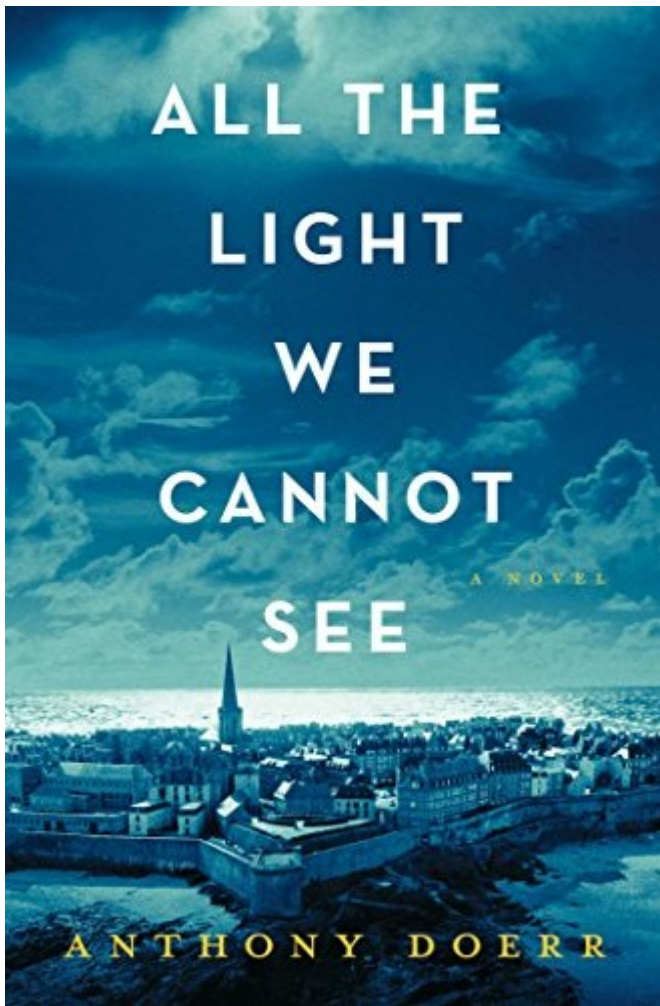
by Dave Eggers

Knopf



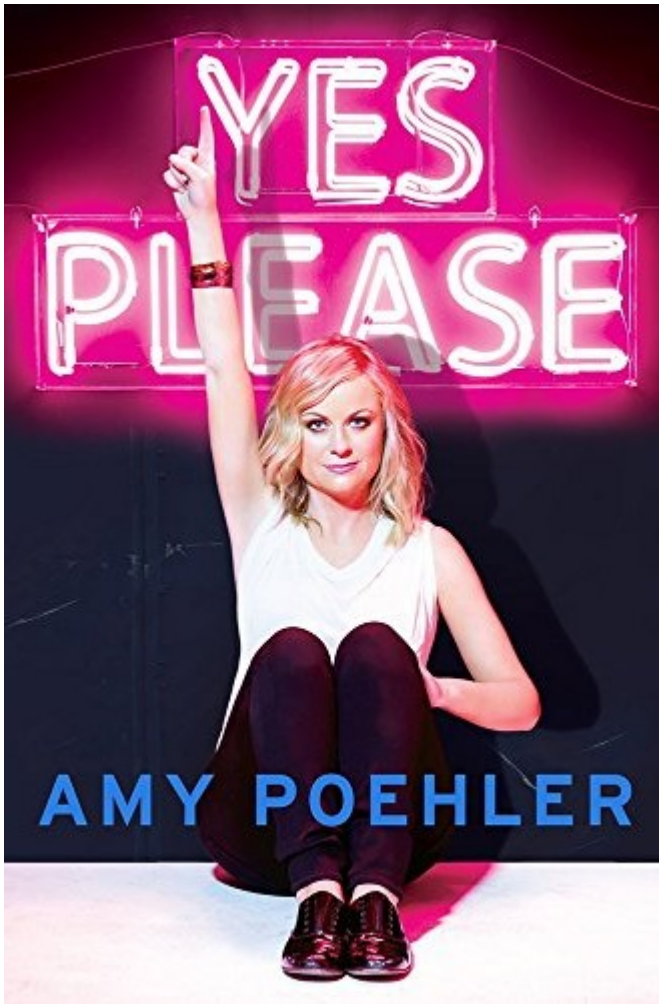
Speaking Christian

by Marcus J. Borg
HarperOne



All the Light We Cannot See

by Anthony Doerr
Scribner



Yes Please

by Amy Poehler
Dey Street

To give

In *The Luminaries*, Eleanor Catton entwines rich characters into the stunning landscape of historic New Zealand. Catton constructed a fascinating view of vocations, economy, and culture, while employing a unique structure that waxes and wanes with the moon.

I have never related to despicable people more than when I read George Saunders's latest collection of short stories, *Tenth of December*. Saunders sets up traps by building surreal and terrible situations and then, through humor and compassion, developing an awkward alliance between the reader and the perpetrators. Through it all we begin to question social injustices all around us and see our part in them.

Like Margaret Atwood, David Eggers has the ability to take our current technological trajectories and follow them to their extreme ends. *The Circle* is such a warning, a not-so-far-off glimpse into an unchecked future.

To receive

As a writer, I'm itching to read what others have to say on the subject. Marcus Borg has had a profound effect on my thinking, and I expect that his new book, *Speaking Christian*, will have the same sort of impact on my words.

On several occasions I picked up Anthony Doerr's book *All the Light We Cannot See* but didn't buy it. Now that I've finished Barbara Brown Taylor's *Walking in the Dark*, I wonder if there's any resonance between the two books. For that reason, *Light* has moved to the top of my wish list.

I devour books by comedians. Tina Fey, Amy Sedaris, Mindy Kaling, and Samantha Bee made me long for some words from Amy Poehler. Now she has written *Yes Please*, and I cannot wait to read it.