Books

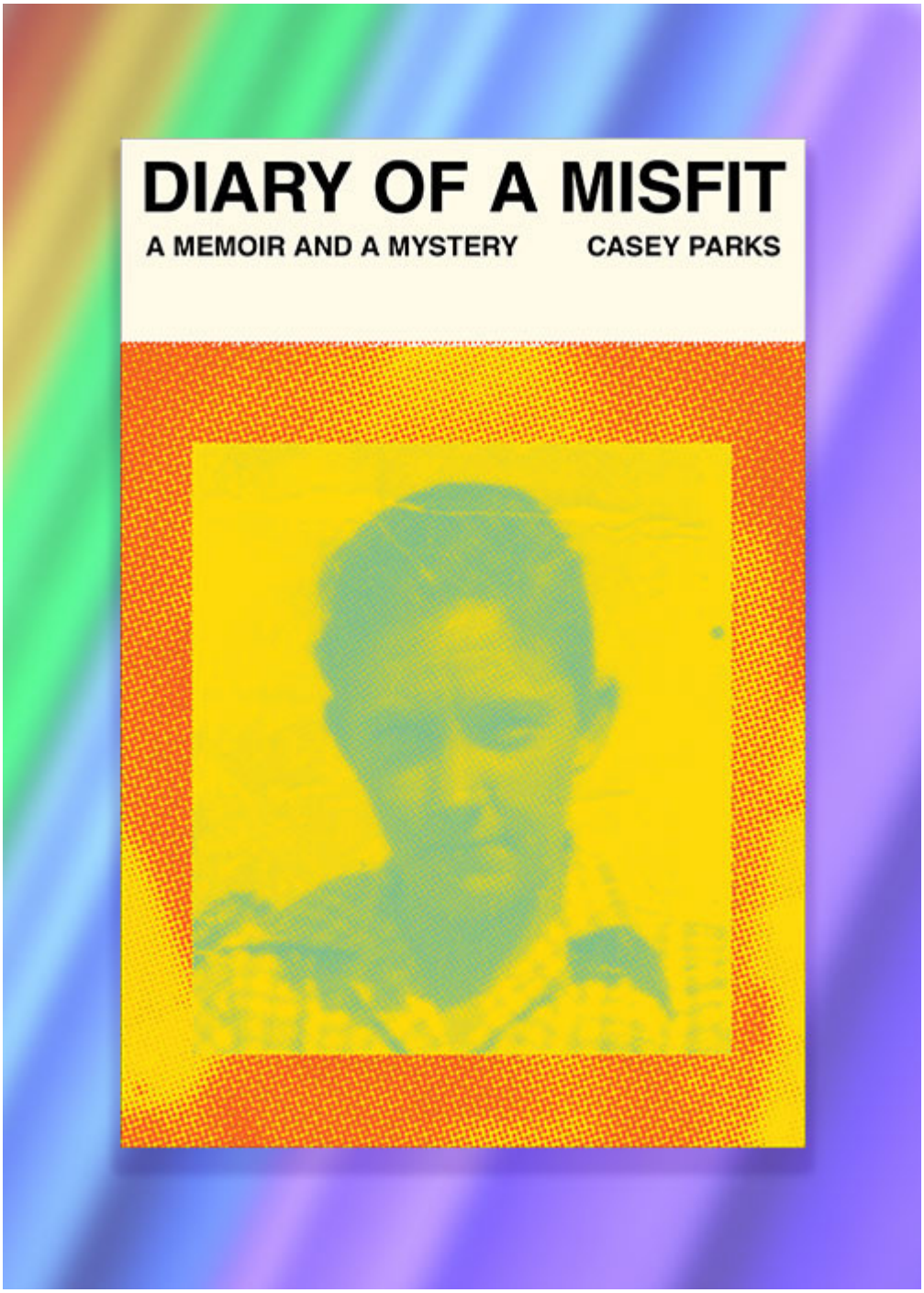
8 Columbia Alumni Books to Read for Pride Month

By
Rebecca Shapiro
|
Jun. 12, 2023



Low Library photo: Eileen Barroso. Book: Jure Divich / Shutterstock

June is Pride month — a time to commemorate the night of June 28, 1969, when a police raid on a Greenwich Village gay bar called the Stonewall Inn sparked an uprising that would help inspire a new age of political activism. These eight books, all by Columbia alumni, celebrate the struggles and the strengths of the LGBTQ+ community and underscore the continuing need to fight for equal rights for all.



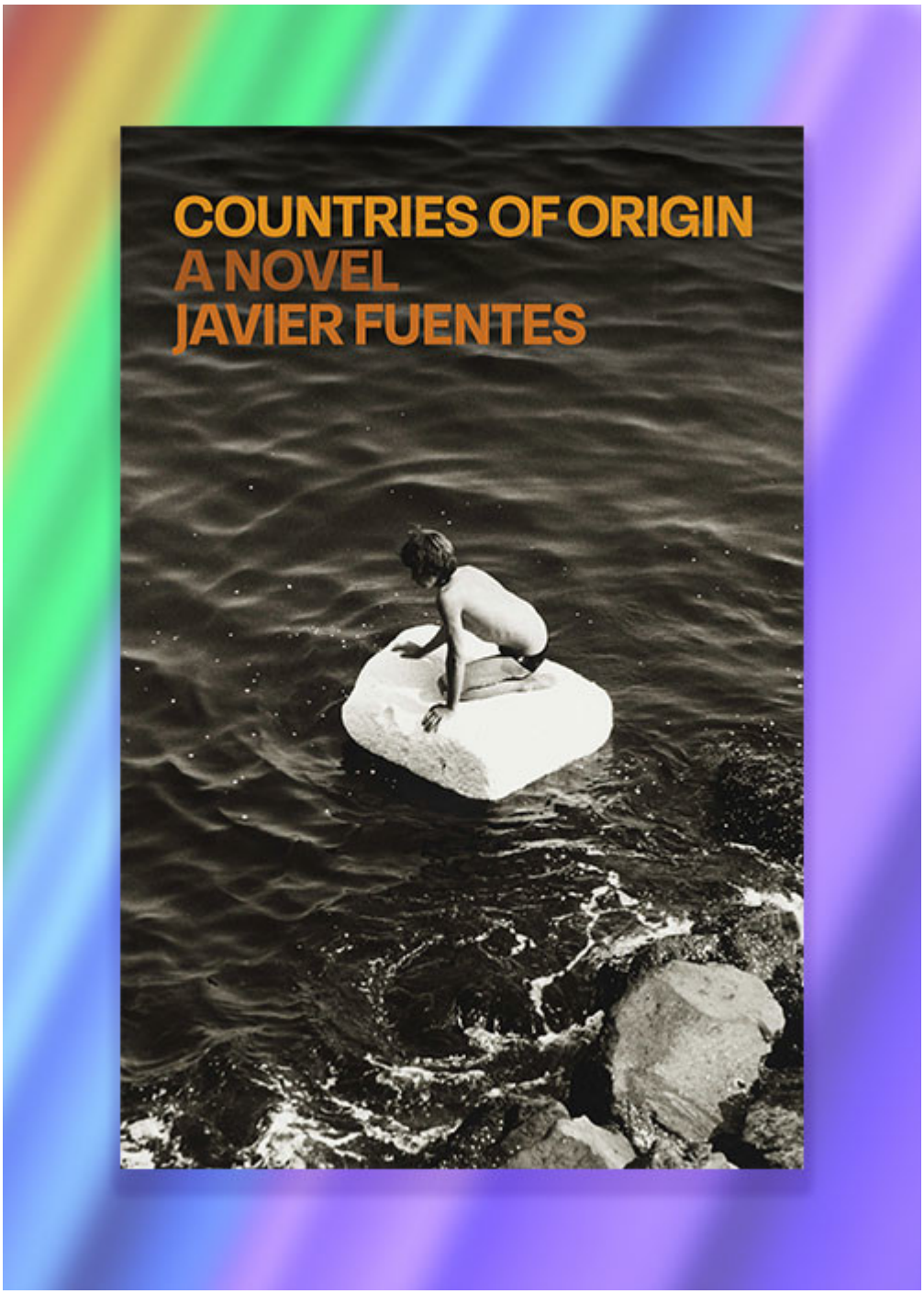
Knopf

Diary of a Misfit

By Casey Parks ’18JRN

Growing up gay in the Deep South, Casey Parks didn’t have a lot of role models to help steer her path. But when she finally came out to her family, she learned that her grandmother had grown up in tiny Delhi, Louisiana, across the street from “a

woman who lived like a man.” Parks spent the next decade visiting Delhi to learn more about that neighbor, the now deceased Roy Hudgins. The product was Parks’s first book — an astounding blend of memoir and journalism and a moving portrait of two misfits and the places they call home.

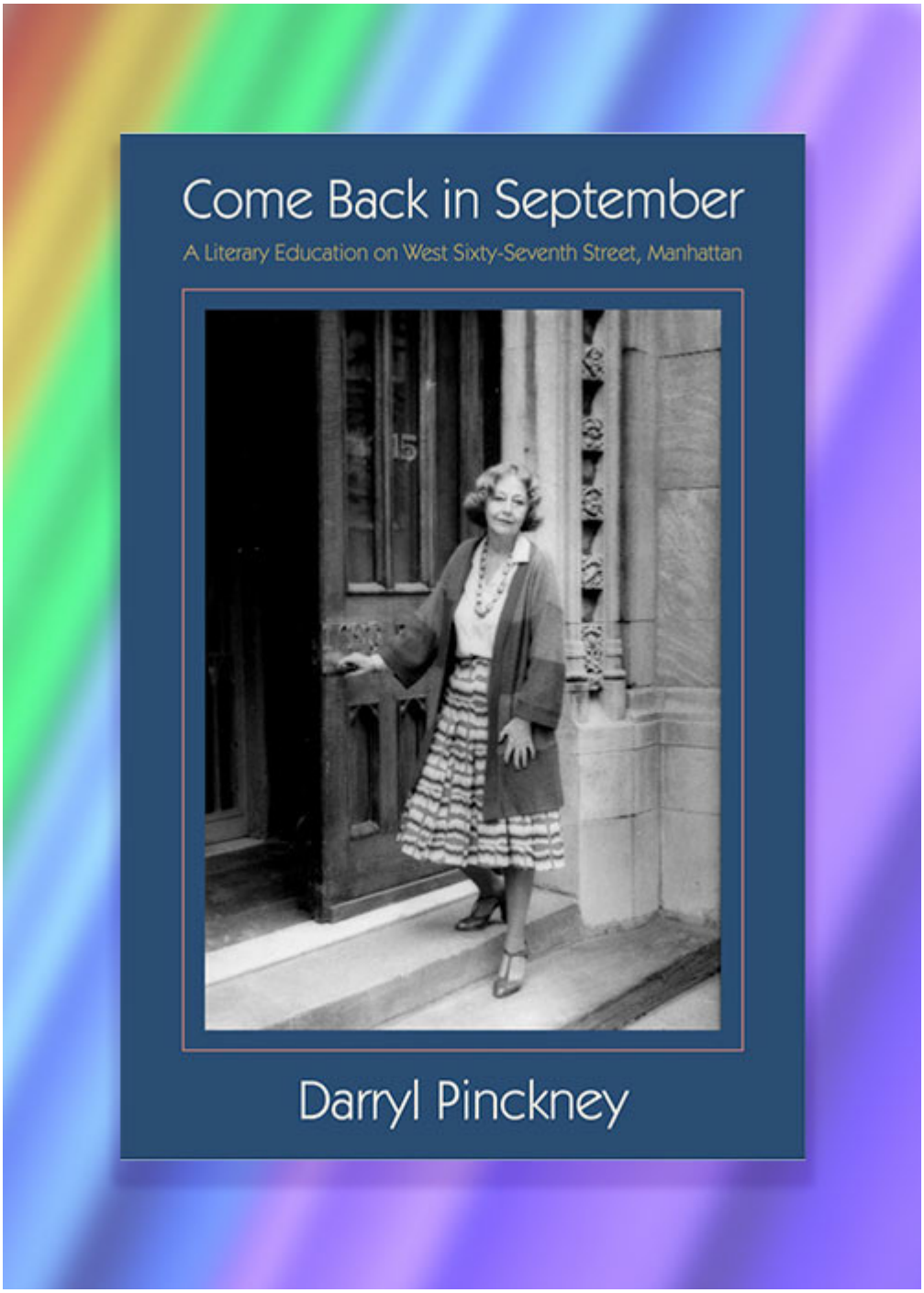


Pantheon

Countries of Origin

By Javier Fuentes ’14SOA

Javier Fuentes’s debut novel, out this month, tells the story of two men who meet on a flight from New York City to their native Spain. Pastry chef Demetrio is returning to his homeland after many years living in fear as an undocumented worker, while NYU student Jacobo is on break, visiting his upper-crust, right-wing family in Madrid. Sparks fly despite class differences, and the two embark on a tenuous relationship, which grows all the more complicated as they settle into real life.



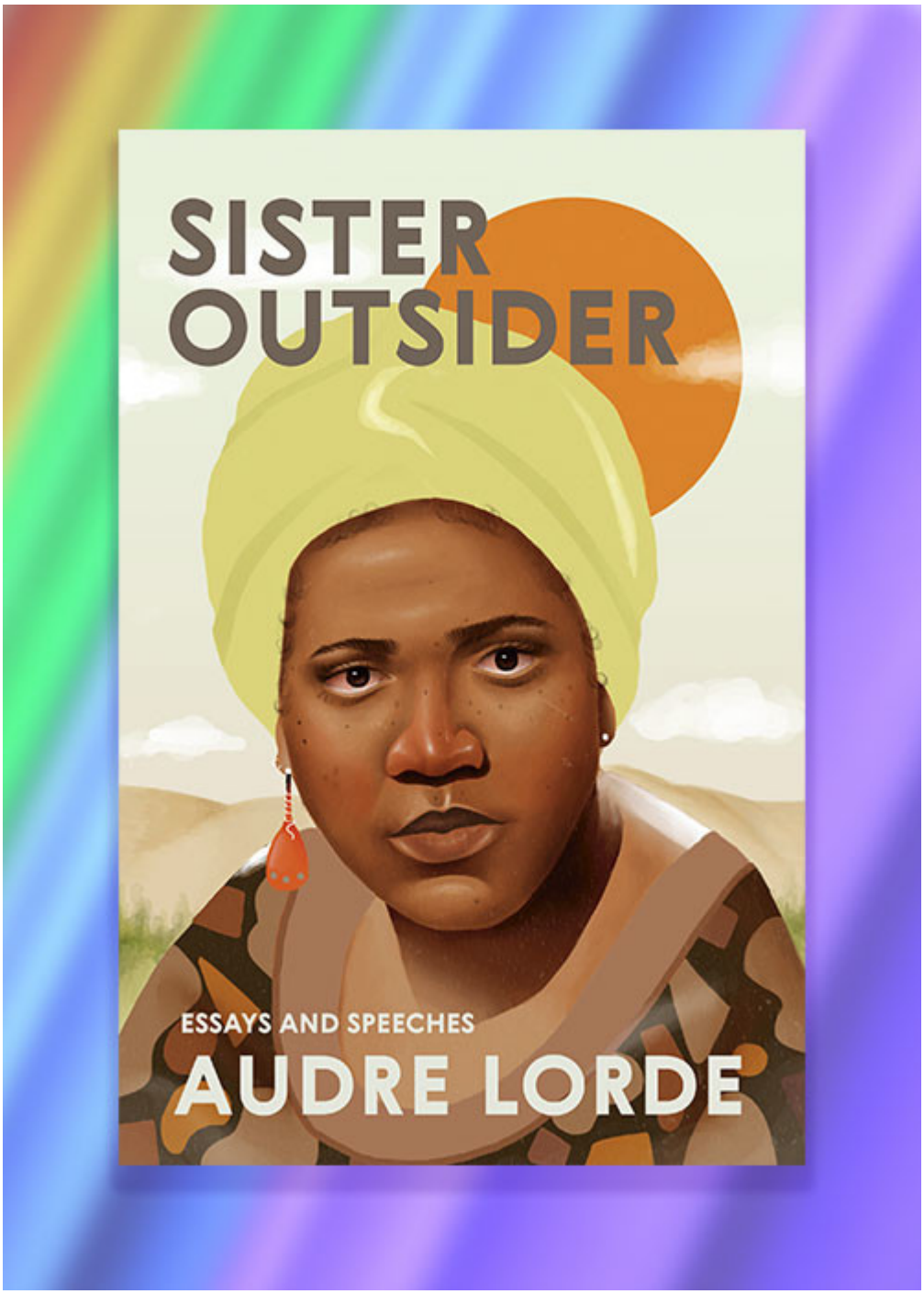
Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Come Back in September

By Darryl Pinckney ’88CC

The crux of Darryl Pinckney’s memoir is his life-altering friendship with writer Elizabeth Hardwick, whom he first encountered when he was a student in her Barnard creative-writing seminar in the fall of 1973. But it’s also very much a

coming-of-age story, about a young gay man from Indiana exploring his sexual and artistic freedom. The novel offers a beautiful window into his journey of self-discovery and a fascinating portrait of a very specific moment in New York's cultural history.

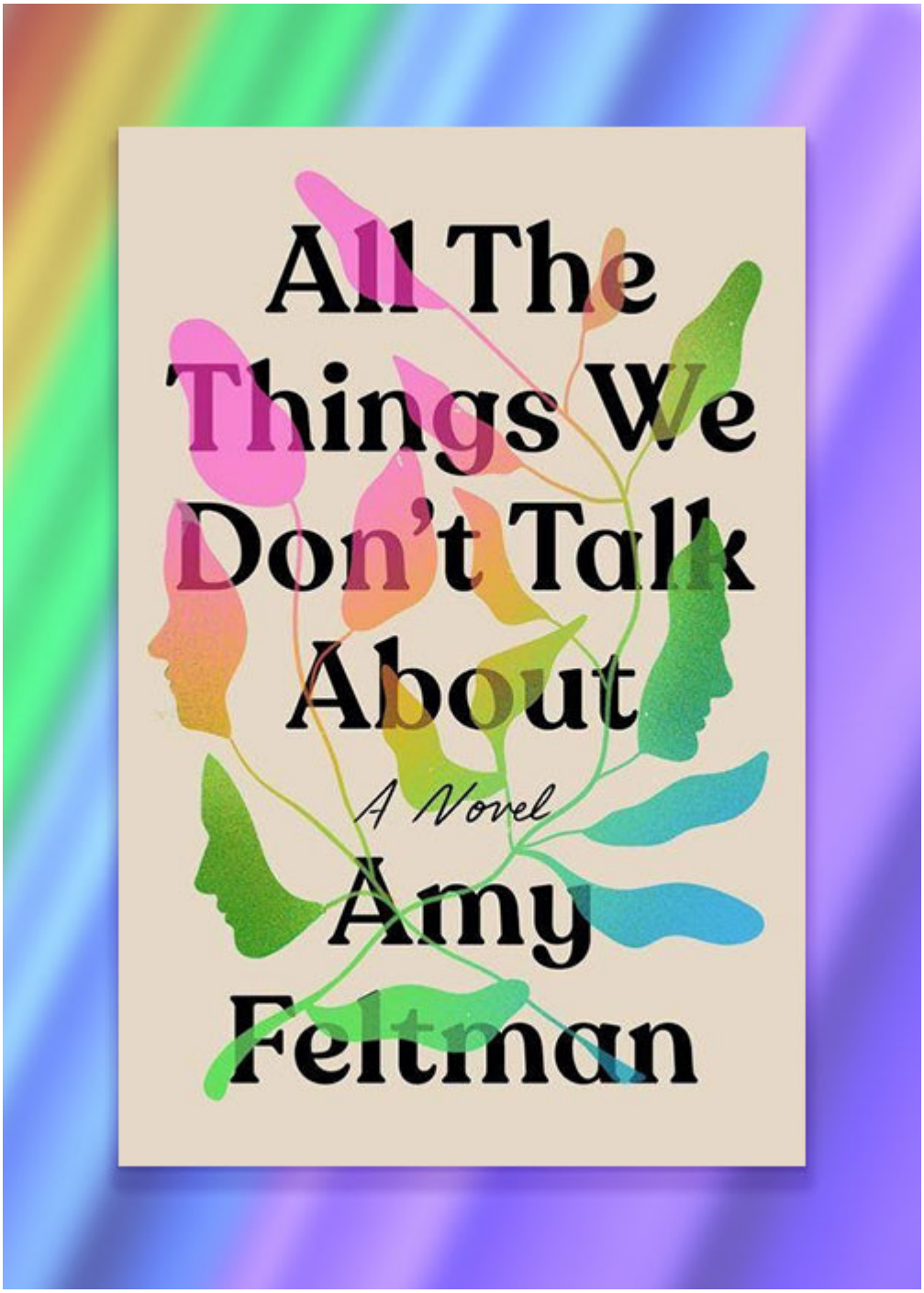


Crossing Press

Sister Outsider

By Audre Lorde ’60LS

Audre Lorde — poet, librarian, professor, and feminist icon — spent her life working against racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia. *Sister Outsider*, a collection of Lorde’s speeches and essays, has become a mainstay of Black, women’s, and queer studies. Lyrical and powerful, it’s an essential introduction to Lorde’s work and a call to arms.

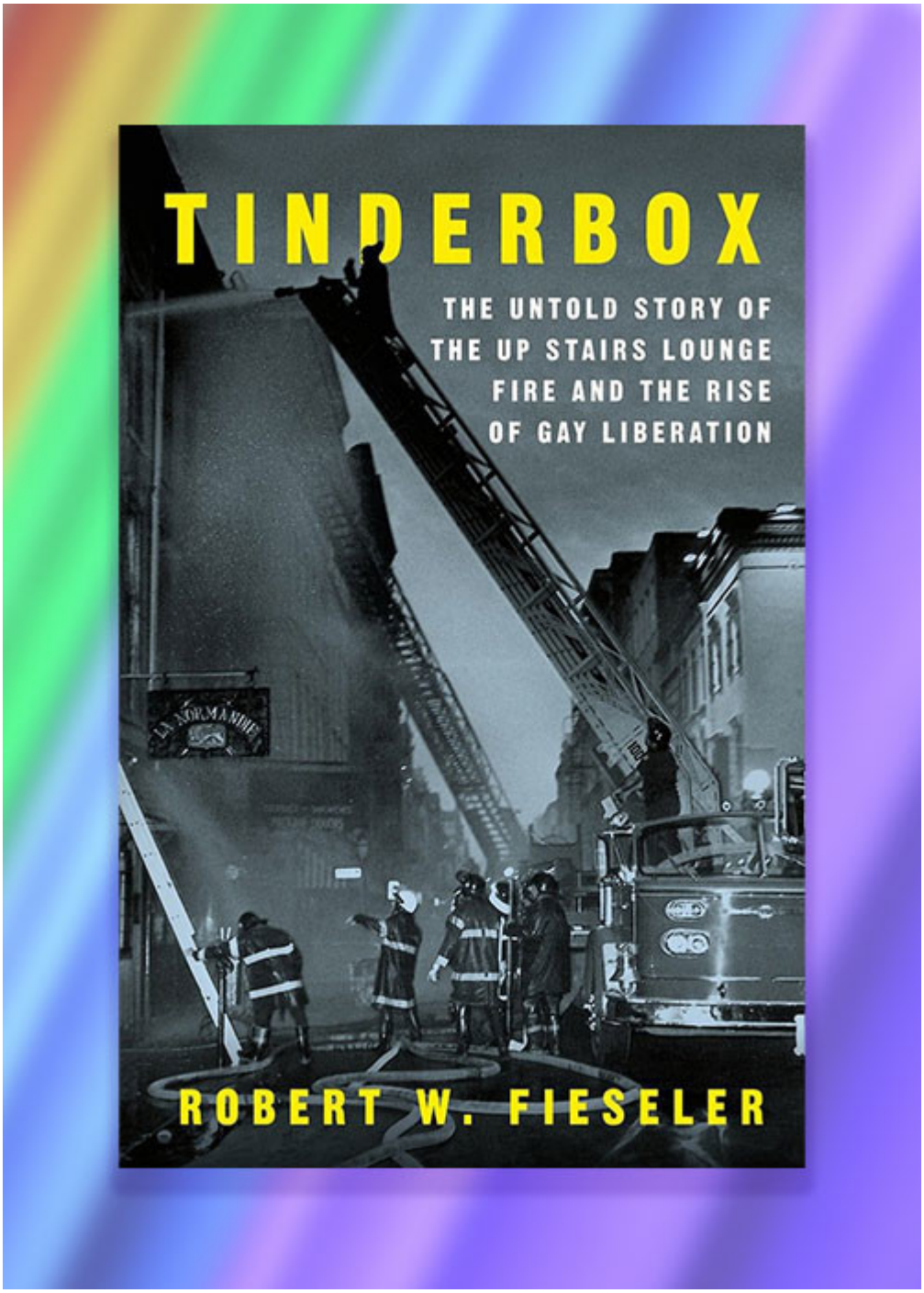


Grand Central Publishing

All the Things We Don’t Talk About

By Amy Feltman ’16SOA

Nonbinary teen Morgan Flowers is on the brink of their first romance when family drama erupts. Their estranged mom Zoe shows up after many years away, upending the quiet dynamic Morgan has built with neurodivergent dad Julian. It’s a complicated road for the thoroughly modern family but one that author Amy Feltman depicts with empathy and good humor.



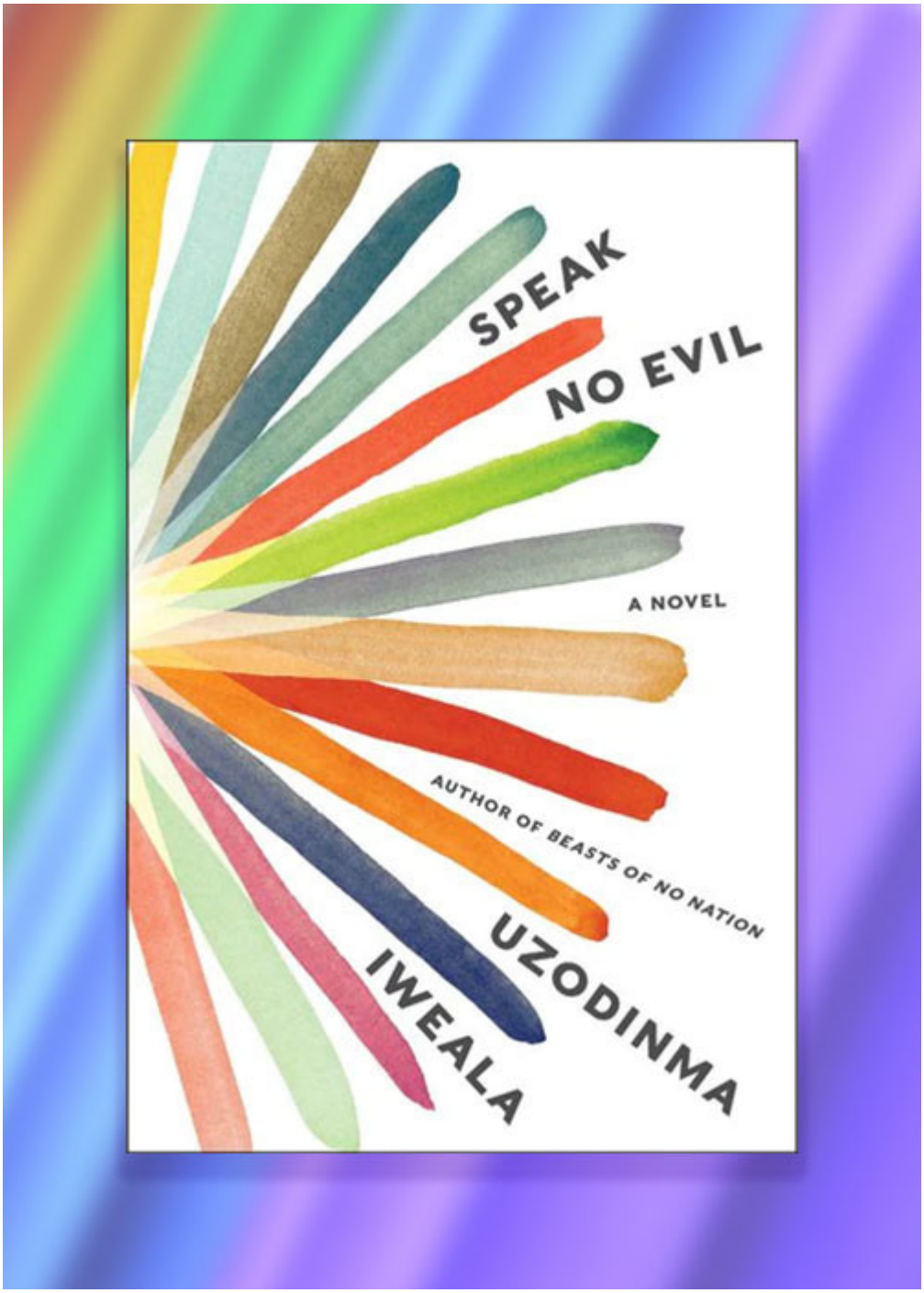
Liveright

Tinderbox

By Robert W. Fieseler ’13JRN

The Up Stairs Lounge, a gay bar on the outskirts of New Orleans’s French Quarter, was “the kind of neighborhood place that seemed to welcome all.” That is, until the summer night in 1973 when someone intentionally set it aflame, killing thirty-two

people. Robert W. Fieseler's brilliantly reported book, which tells the tragic story of the arson attack, is somber but also defiant and ends on a hopeful note about the resilient community that emerged from the ashes.

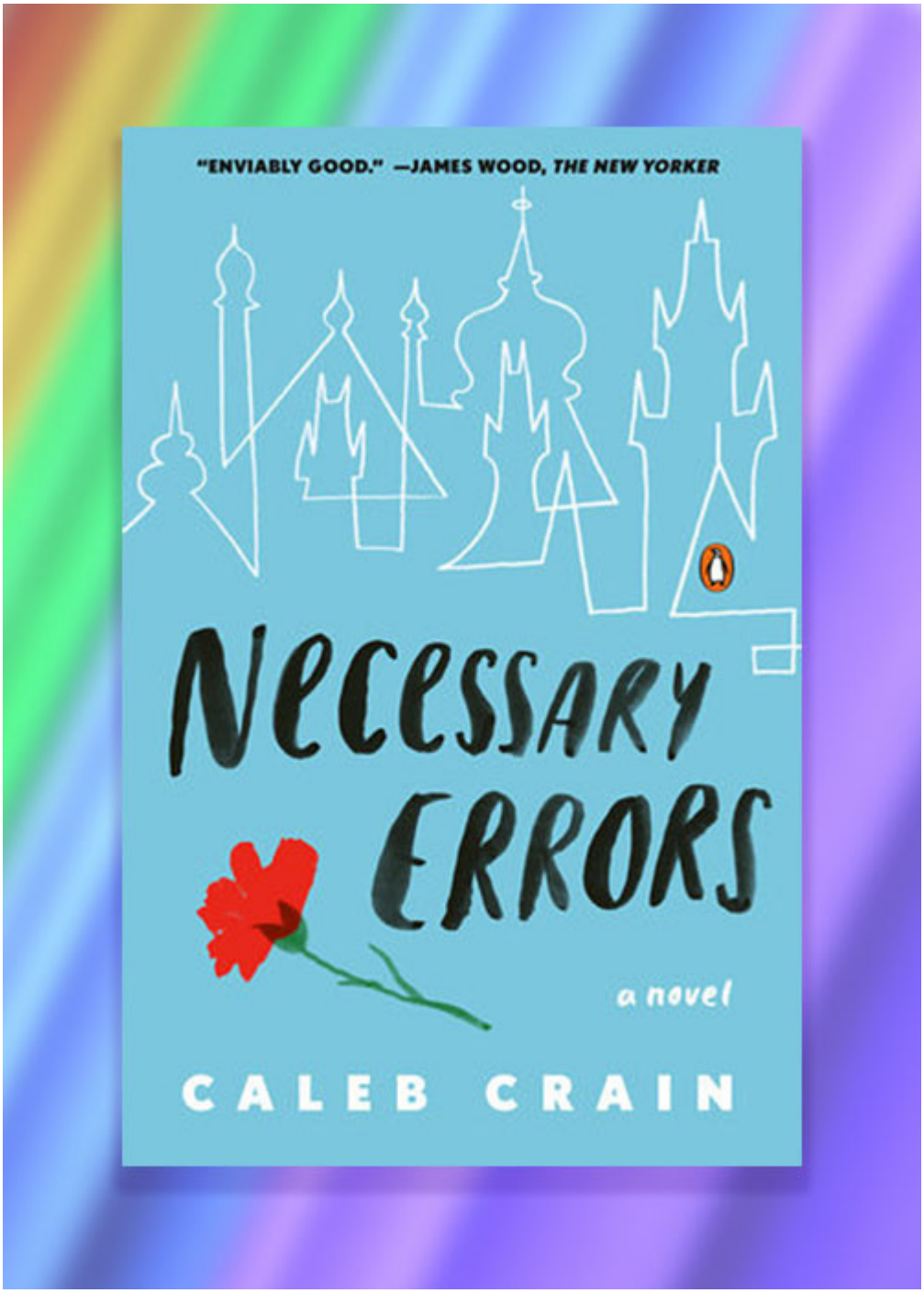


HarperCollins

Speak No Evil

By Uzodinma Iweala ’11VPS

Uzodinma Iweala is best known for his debut novel, *Beasts of No Nation*, narrated by a fictional child soldier in an unnamed African nation. But his second book, about a high-achieving Nigerian-American teen struggling to come out to his conservative immigrant parents, is searing in its own way — a personal and powerful story of a young man trying to find his place in an often unwelcoming world.



Penguin Books

Necessary Errors

By Caleb Crain ’99GSAS

In 1990, Prague was a city alive with post-revolutionary energy, which journalist and critic Caleb Crain captures beautifully in his first novel. His protagonist, Jacob, is an American expat English teacher and aspiring writer, eager to take it all in — though for him the freedom is personal as well as political. Newly out of the closet, Jacob seizes upon the remarkable moment to explore the city’s nascent gay subculture, navigating complex friendships and relationships along the way.

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