Books

6 New Books for Fall 2026

By
Rebecca Shapiro
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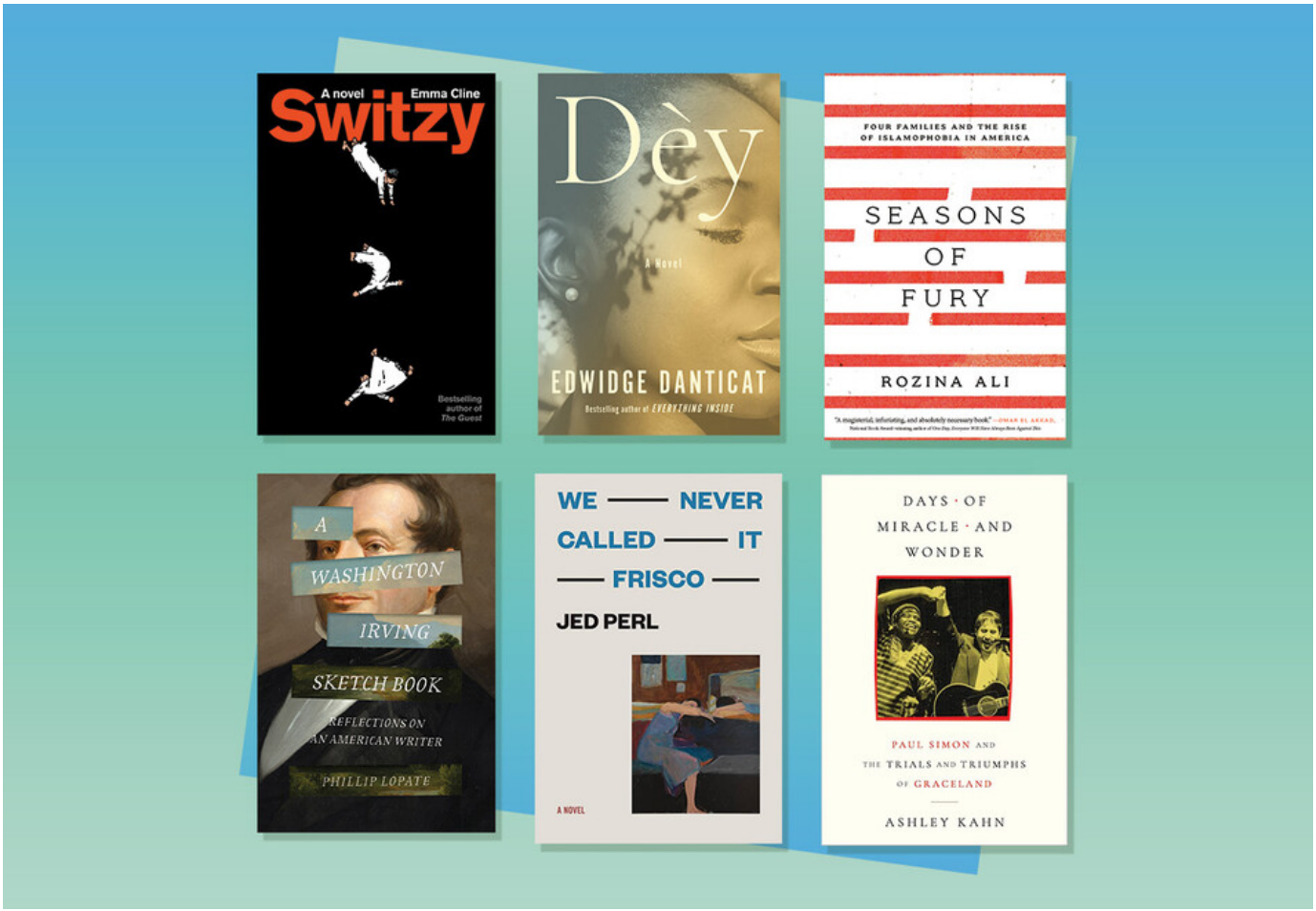
Fall 2026



Switzy

By Emma Cline ’13SOA

This is the last trip of David Hastings’s life — a goodbye tour of Europe by private plane that the retired executive’s addled mind struggles to understand. His final

stop, in more ways than one, is Zurich, where Hastings is scheduled to die by assisted suicide before he descends completely into dementia. Cline's third novel is a wild thematic departure from *The Girls* (her splashy debut about a Manson-style cult) and *The Guest* (about a grifter working her way through the Hamptons). But Cline treats this weighty topic with the same deftness, confidence, and even humor as her earlier works.

A Washington Irving Sketch Book

By Phillip Lopate '64CC

It's easy to equate Washington Irving with the Hudson Valley — it's there that his famed Headless Horseman roamed in "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and there that the titular Rip Van Winkle took his very long nap. But, argues essayist, critic, and longtime Columbia writing professor Phillip Lopate, there's far more to Irving than his two most famous tales. In his latest book, Lopate makes an engaging case for a deep dive into Irving's surprisingly global oeuvre, works that were inspired by his seventeen years abroad, as well as travels across the then-nascent United States. Arguably America's first literary celebrity, Irving is worthy of a second look, especially with a guide as charming and knowledgeable as Lopate.

We Never Called It Frisco

By Jed Perl '72CC

When the legendary San Francisco art critic Marcia Lang collapses and dies, she leaves behind the manuscript for an epic unfinished memoir, a "coffee-table book for intelligentsia." Her lover Burt, himself a poet and publisher, is tasked with completing the project, and their contrasting voices provide a vibrant portrait of the city's postwar bohemian scene. Perl has had a storied career in criticism (including a twenty-year stint as art critic of *The New Republic*), and this is his first novel — a fun, intellectually engaging pivot.

Seasons of Fury

By Rozina Ali ’09SIPA

For many Muslim American families, the early aughts ushered in an unprecedented period of fear and anxiety, as post-9/11 Islamophobia gripped the nation. But, argues *New York Times* journalist Rozina Ali in her new book, anti-Islam sentiment began in this country long before 2001. In a true feat of reporting, Ali follows four multigenerational Muslim families, each with roots in this country that date back more than a century, and tracks the hardships and bigotry they have long faced as they pursued, like so many others, the American dream.

Days of Miracle and Wonder

By Ashley Kahn ’83CC

Few albums are as iconic as Paul Simon’s *Graceland*, which sold sixteen million copies and ushered the new genre of “world music” into the spotlight in the 1980s. In his latest book, Grammy-winning music historian, journalist, and producer Ashley Kahn (who once DJed on Columbia’s WKCR as the Cincinnati Kid) tells the incredible story of how the album came to fruition, from the moment a bootleg cassette of South African street music took hold of Simon to the win for Album of the Year at the 1986 Grammys.

Dèy

By Edwidge Danticat ’90BC

It’s an ordinary day in Miami, until suddenly it isn’t. Magnolia, a real estate agent, decides to make an impromptu stop at a shopping mall to buy a birthday present for her daughter. She’s there when shots ring out in the food court, killing three. Magnolia is safe, but after the incident, she unravels, silently obsessing about the victims while telling none of her loved ones that she had been there at all. Meanwhile, her parents arrive from Haiti, fleeing violence in their own community. But what refuge will they find in Miami, in America as a whole? In Haitian Creole, *dèy*

is a word for mourning, and it’s a fitting title for this powerful novel, the first in more than a decade from beloved author and Columbia professor Edwidge Danticat. But while the book is in many ways an exploration of grief, it also has tremendous warmth, and even hope.

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