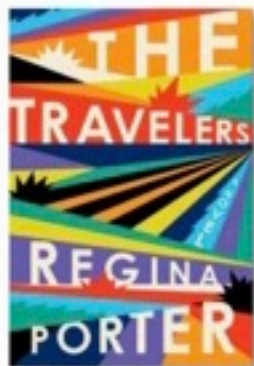


Great Summer Beach Reads

Steal away for a few moments near the pool, on the sand or even at the park with a juicy book. We found five sizzling page-turners to help you wind down as the temperatures heat up

BY BRIDGETTE BARTLETT ROYALL

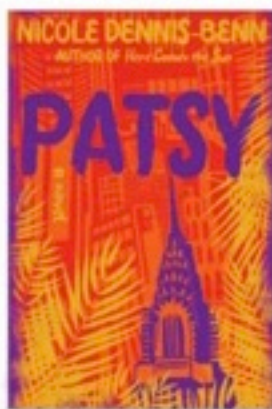


AN AMERICAN ODYSSEY

What does it mean to be American? In her novel **The Travelers** (Hogarth, \$27), author Regina Porter explores this complicated question, beginning in the 1950's and following two families—one Black, one White—through pivotal moments in this country's history. From an audacious Black lesbian to a Vietnam veteran with PTSD, Porter's characters are memorably brought to life.

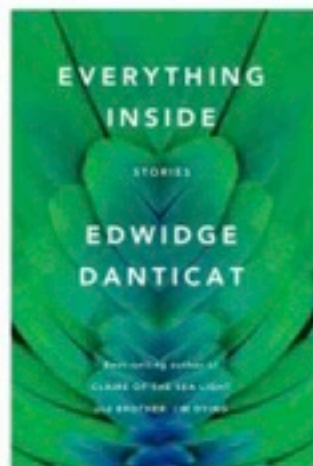
REBEL WOMAN

In Princeton University lecturer Nicole Dennis-Benn's latest effort, **Patsy** (Liveright, \$26.95), the book's namesake leaves her 5-year-old daughter, True, in her native Jamaica as she searches for a happier life in Brooklyn, where she reunites with ex-lover Cicely. Peppered with Jamaican patois, the tome defies convention with themes of reluctant motherhood, homosexuality and the realities of immigration.



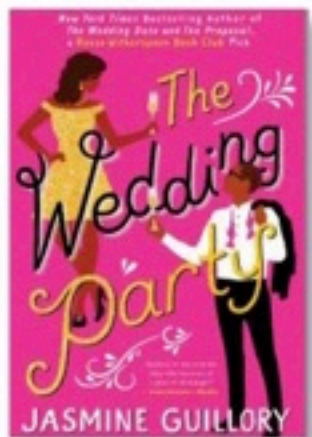
NOLA DARLING

Sarah M. Broom's obsession with her childhood home in New Orleans is the focal point of her intimate nonfiction debut, **The Yellow House** (Grove Press, \$26). Set in various parts of the Big Easy (specifically New Orleans East, where most tourists never go), this brave work delves into such issues as poor housing, subpar health care, family bonds, personal erasure and survival.



HEART SONGS

Internationally acclaimed Haitian-born author Edwidge Danticat returns with **Everything Inside** (Knopf, \$25.95), a vivid collection of eight powerful short stories that weave together tales of tenacity, family and unexpected love.



CRAZY, SEXY LOVE

Steamy sex overtakes sanity in the exhilarating new offering from Jasmine Guillory. **The Wedding Party** (Berkley, \$15) will seduce you with the unlikely rendezvous of Maddie and Theo, who are attending the nuptials of a mutual friend. The two can't keep their hands to themselves as they slowly discover they might actually like each other with their clothes on too. »



ON HER BOOKSHELF

Jesus and Jollof podcaster Luvvie Ajayi—who's appearing at Essence Fest this year—gives us the scoop on one of her fave books and an early gift for her mom

Luvvie Ajayi knows a thing or two about being funny. In fact, the self-professed professional shade thrower even keeps a few hilarious selections in rotation. **"The Broke Diaries** by Angela Nissel is the first book I ever read that made me laugh out loud," she says. "I was on the bus reading it and cackling. It was the book that showed me that telling our stories can bring people joy." Ajayi flexed her own comedic muscles in 2016 with her *New York Times* best seller, **I'm Judging You: The Do-Better Manual** (Holt). "The book's success opened many doors and changed what I could ask for and the rooms I could stand in," she says. "I was able to retire my mom, which was a lifelong dream. I am so grateful." —**B.B.R.**