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# THE GAVEL

VOLUME 60, ISSUE 2

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER AT CLEVELAND-MARSHALL COLLEGE OF LAW

NOVEMBER 2011

## Living legend returns to Cleveland-Marshall: Professor Jane M. Picker speaks on Women's Rights

By David Nichols  
GAVEL CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

In late October, I was privileged to attend a lecture from none other than Professor Emerita Jane M. Picker, who spoke in Fenn Tower. Her lecture was titled, *Litigation and Social Change: Developing Women's Rights in the Twentieth Century*.

Professor Jane M. Picker herself changed the world when she argued *La Fleur v. Cleveland Board of Education* before the United States Supreme Court in 1973. For those of you that have not studied Constitutional Law yet, *La Fleur* was the case that challenged mandatory maternity leave for teachers and set a precedent for later pregnancy issues across the country. She was also a founder of the Women's Law Fund in 1972, which she served for many years as president. The Woman's Law Fund was the first of its kind, a nationally known organization that assisted plaintiffs in precedent-setting cases involving discrimination in employment, housing, education and government benefits.

Professor Picker has dedicated her career to advocating for equality. She has represented plaintiffs in major

employment cases throughout the country on behalf of female police officers, firefighters, teachers and union workers. She has also represented students who sought the right to participate in academic and sports programs, from which they were denied equal access on the basis of their sex. Picker has even litigated issues concerning the protection of American women



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## The Gavel is Hiring!!



**The Gavel will be hiring new editors for Spring and Fall of 2012!**

Requirements:

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- Advanced Writing/Editing Skills

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# Supreme Bar Review Invites Students to Free Exam Review

By Marc D. Rossen  
C-M CLASS OF 1994  
SUPREME BAR REVIEW  
FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR



The Black Law Students' Association and Supreme Bar Review are proud to co-sponsor:

## **The BLSA FALL EXAM REVIEW SESSIONS**

**WHEN?** Saturday, December 3, 2011, 9 AM to 3:30 PM

**WHERE?** Cleveland-Marshall Law School

-- First Year Classes - Room # 11

-- Upper Level Classes - Room # 12

### **FIRST YEAR SUBJECTS (Room #11):**

- Torts – Prof. Stephen Lazarus - 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM
- Contracts – Prof. Matthew Green - 10:30 AM - 11:45 AM
- Property - Prof. Browne Lewis - 12:45 PM – 2:00 PM
- Civil Procedure - Prof. Kevin O’Neill - 2:15 PM - 3:30 PM

### **UPPER LEVEL SUBJECTS (Room #12):**

- Criminal Procedure – Prof. Jonathan Witmer-Rich - 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM
- Constitutional Law – Prof. Stephen Lazarus - 10:30 AM - 11:45 AM
- Evidence - Prof. Kevin O’Neill - 12:45 PM - 2:00 PM

**This event is free and open to all law students.**

**Attendees receive FREE sample outlines!**

-- FREE food and refreshments! (pizza lunch will be served)

-- FREE prize drawings at each review session! Winners can choose from one of the following Supreme Bar Review prizes: First Year Review Outlines, Upper-Level Review Outlines, MPRE Review (includes video lecture)  
For more information about Supreme Bar Review visit: [SupremeBarReview.com](http://SupremeBarReview.com)

We hope to see you there! Good luck with Finals Preparation!



We look will be looking for new writers for the current school year!

Interested in being an Editor-in-Chief? Contact the Gavel staff at [gavel.csu@gmail.com](mailto:gavel.csu@gmail.com)

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the gavel

# We are here to help: What the Office of Career Planning can do for you



*Jennifer Blaga,  
Esq.*

**DIRECTOR,  
OFFICE OF  
CAREER  
PLANNING**

It's November, which means the semester is well under way and in fact will be coming to a close soon. November also marks the time during which 1Ls can begin to utilize the Office of Career Planning. The National Association for Law Placement (NALP) mandates that Career Planning Offices not provide career services to first year law students until November 1st of their first year. Well 1Ls, the time has come...you can now utilize our office to begin planning your legal career through law school and beyond. If you are not a 1L, keep reading, as this article is applicable to every student, with any amount of experience, in any stage of law school.

Your goal as a law student should be to gain as much substantive legal experience as possible before you graduate. Law school is different from undergrad and other academic programs in that legal employers will expect you to have plentiful legal experience on your resume by the time you graduate. Also, practicing law is very different from being a student in law school. Experience is crucial to landing that first permanent, PAYING position.

C|M|LAW is known for producing law students who have gained practical experience and are ready to hit the ground running after graduation (and passing the bar, of course).

C|M|LAW offers an impressive externship program, clinics, and Office of Career Planning, if we don't say so ourselves! No matter where your interests lie, we can help you start your career planning now. For those of you that aren't sure what you want to do, we can

be equally beneficial.

Our office offers resume and cover letter reviews, interviewing and networking tips, career related programming and events, and personalized counseling among other valuable resources and tools. We are here to make sure you are where you need to be, every step of the way, as you navigate through law school.

If you are a 1L, start talking to us now. We just introduced ourselves in your 1L classes so you know who we are. Now, here is a snapshot of what you should be thinking about as you move forward:

- Get your resume updated and in legal format and have a counselor from our office review it.
- Meet with a counselor in the OCP to discuss what you should be doing over the Winter Break in order to plan for the spring semester and coming summer (stay tuned for our article in next month's publication for some great ideas and tips).
- An email will be sent to you at the beginning of November containing log on information for your Symplicity Student Account. Sign up to attend a Symplicity training session (to be held November 9th and 10th) by logging onto Symplicity, clicking on the Events tab, and then clicking on the RSVP button next to the session you would like to attend.
- Prepare for spring On Campus Interviewing (OCI) during which some legal employers will recruit 1Ls for summer positions.
- And of course, focus on school. You are about to take your first round of law school final exams. Grades will play an important part in shaping your job prospects.

To the rest of the student body reading this, no matter where you are in your law school career, it is NEVER too late. Visiting our office is the first step to

take in pursuing your career goals.

We look forward to meeting and working with all of you!



Would **YOU** like to write a column about politics, law school life, or anything else during the 2011-12 academic year? Email [gavel.csu@gmail.com](mailto:gavel.csu@gmail.com) to stake your claim!

Would **YOU** like to publicize your organization's events? Make an announcement? Or write an incredible reflection about a conference you attended? **WE CAN HELP!** Email [gavel.csu@gmail.com](mailto:gavel.csu@gmail.com).

# Alumni Spotlight: Introducing Professor Maya Simek

By David Nichols  
GAVEL Co-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

This month, the Gavel had a chance to speak with Cleveland-Marshall's Visiting Clinic Professor Maya Simek. Prof. Simek received her J.D. from Cleveland-Marshall in 2010 after getting her Masters of Social Services Administration from Case Western Reserve University. As a student, she has worked for the Equal Rights Advocates and for the Honorable Judge Holli Gallagher in the Cuyahoga Court of Common Pleas. As an attorney, she has also worked for the Cleveland Legal Aid Society.

In addition to her legal work, Prof. Simek is a social worker with extensive experience throughout the city of Cleveland. Not only is she teaching Cleveland-Marshall students in the Employment Law Clinic, she also works as a Medical Case Manager for the Neuva Luz Urban Resource Center where she assesses the needs of individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Equally significant, Prof. Simek is currently facilitating a new legal clinic with the help of several Cleveland-Marshall students based on the Community Lawyering Model.

*What do you enjoy most about being an attorney?*

I really love that as a lawyer, you have the ability to help people in so many ways. There are a lot of people who do not have access to resources that will

enable them to utilize the law to fix their problems. Law affords attorneys the power to assist people both at a micro and macro level. The law also provides lawyers with multiple ways to effectuate change in the lives of others.

*In what ways would you characterize a good attorney?*

Well... ethical adherence aside, the best characteristics of a good lawyer, in my opinion, are heart and compassion. A good lawyer believes in what he or she is doing. Also, tenacity to help you get through some of the rough cases.

*How are you enjoying being a professor at your own alma mater Cleveland-Marshall?*

I absolutely love it. Having seen the program from both sides, as a student and faculty-member, teaching here has definitely been an amazing experience. It is so great to be a part of the community here.

*Are there any tips you have for students currently preparing to take the bar?*

First of all, do not underestimate the power of a study partner. Having someone there to help you keep focused was very

important for me. I call it having an accountability buddy. It really works to just have someone around to keep you on task.

*You are both an attorney and social worker. Can you describe some of the ways that social work and legal work intertwine?*

I firmly believe that social work and the law go hand in hand. Social work affords you with the ability to learn how to connect with people and communicate effectively with them. It also helps you to provide resources to people who need them. In these ways, it is very similar to work that lawyers do for their clients.

*Throughout your legal career, you have been involved in many community service groups. What advice can you give to students who want to incorporate their legal knowledge to better their communities?*

I would say that where ever you are, you should familiarize yourself with the means and resources that are available to people. It will never depend on what area of law you specialize in. As a lawyer, there are always ways that you can help people use these resources or, in the alternative, you are at least able to point people in the right direction so that they can obtain help elsewhere. It isn't difficult. There are tons of opportunities for students or lawyers to give back to the

community. Many of these opportunities are facilitated by the University. There are also a number of local lawyers that participate in pro bono activities and these often take place in combination with a variety of local agencies and public services organizations. There are any number of ways to get involved.

*What's the coolest non-legal book you have read recently?*

'Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close' by Jonathan Safran Foer.

*You are obviously involved in a whole lot of different activities right now. What advice can you give regarding time management for law students?*

First of all, never underestimate the ability online websites have to disrupt your daily activities. Secondly, do not forget to take some time away at least once a week to ensure that you are keeping yourself well-rounded as a person. I am a firm advocate of surrounding yourself with friends and people who aren't in law school. For example, I would sometimes study in a coffee shop. It gives you a chance to be around people who aren't at the same stress level as you are. Keep friends around that can keep you focused and relaxed. When you work hard, it is beneficial to give your brain a break.

## In the Arts: Cleveland State University hosts a national poetry slam

By David Nichols  
GAVEL Co-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Of course it is difficult to get around as a law student. We have books we have to memorize, internships we have to apply for, clinics taking up all of our leisure time. As weary as the lifestyle can be, I find that my mental health requires finding some time to take my head out of the legal arena. Usually, I seek out artistic events. In this, Cleveland's downtown offers a number of neat events. This month, I was able to volunteer for the 8th Annual Individual World Poetry Slam Championships, a week-long tournament that was sponsored and hosted by Cleveland-State University.

A poetry slam is like a poetry

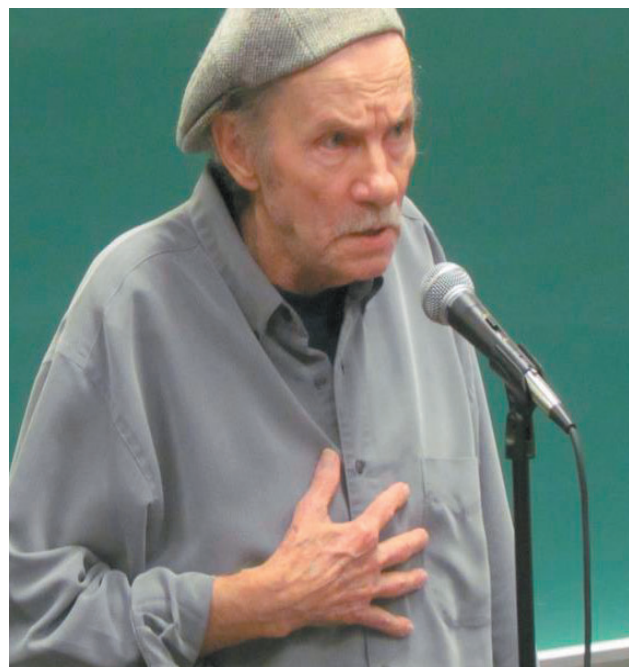
contest. A handful of poets read a poem to an audience and the audience gets to decide who had the best poem. The winner gets a prize. As it was first described to me: "It's sort of like bowling for English majors." Every year a non-profit organization called the National Poetry Slam Inc. invites a poet from each major city in the United States, and several other countries, for an 80 person competition. The winner gets a trophy and bragging rights. There are several basic rules. For instance, the poems cannot be more than 3 minutes. You cannot use costumes or props. And you can only read original poems. As a volunteer, I got to assist with the managing of several of the on campus events that took place during the week.

With so many writers from around the world wandering around, there was no surprise that there were a ton of literary-themed events that went on that week downtown. A good example took place at the Cleveland Restaurant, which hosted a late night erotic poetry open mic. Likewise, there were a myriad of writing workshops, LGBT themed readings, independent press

showcases, booksales, and open mic events on campus for both students and local writers. It was very interesting to see the diverse casts of aspiring poets. The readings ranged from young writers reading their works aloud for the very first time, to Pushcart Prize winners reading from their latest publications.

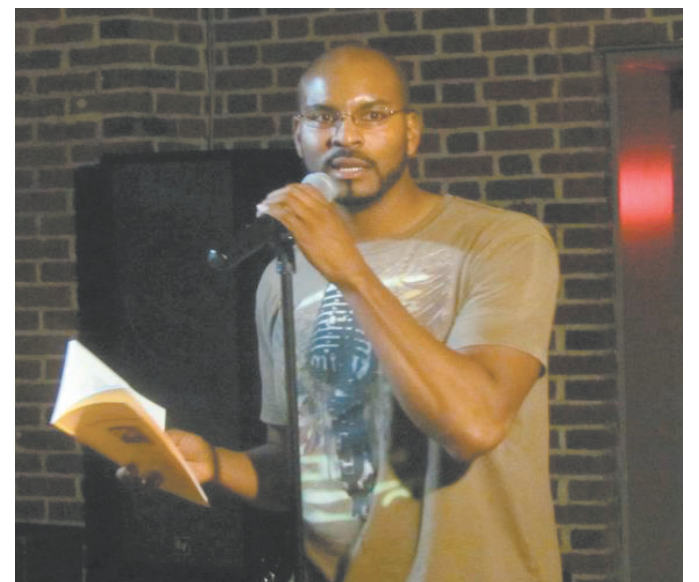
Who

won? A writer named Chris August from Baltimore, Maryland took first place at the final match-up that took place in the University's Waetjen Auditorium. More importantly, every student involved seemed to have had a great time hearing and seeing the astounding speakers and empowering performances. It was certainly an experience I will carry with me. Especially during my period of final exam studying when I need an enlivening word to keep me motivated. Thank you to everyone who helped make this national event such an awesome spectacle.



**Pictured Above: Local poet Thomas "One Truth" Parrish reads a poem to an audience before a competition.**

**Pictured on the right: Legendary poet Jack McCarthy recites a poem to a classroom during the slam.**



# Advice to study by: What is the best way to outline in order to prepare for final exams?

*Legal Writing  
Professor  
Karin Mika*

THE LEGAL  
WRITING  
COLUMN

Different people have different learning styles and are able to “master” information in varying increments.

One of the misapprehensions about law school (and maybe about learning in general) is that an outline is this thing with definitive rules and that once you write it down on paper it’s permanent and unchangeable – even if it’s later discovered to be incorrect. An outline is no more than a processing of information that enables each individual to put some organization to what he/she has learned. It is a tool to organize an individual’s thoughts rather than this creation (looking something like Gilbert’s) that has every conceivable correct answer to a test question. To that end, it’s best to both write an outline during the semester as you’re going along and reorganize that outline at the end of the semester. During the semester, take a step back every once in a while and organize what you think you’ve learned (even if it doesn’t seem to be a whole lot), and then when the semester is over, try to organize the larger picture

of the full semester’s material. Additionally, there’s nothing wrong with organizing your material in conjunction with a commercial publication (such as a Hornbook or Gilbert’s outline) just so long as you use the materials only to clear up what you might be confused about rather than to eliminate the work involved in creating your own outline.

I might note that I have seen a variety of ways that students have used in preparing for exams. I, personally, had only a sketchy (one page) outline of each course that jogged my memory about a case or lecture. I also had friends who learned by writing and re-writing text from lectures, supplements, and other materials winding up with outlines well over 200 pages per class. I also had friends who tested successfully using no written outlines whatsoever. However, keep in mind that



situations. Thus, writing a nice outline but not practicing the application of concepts to new fact situations won’t do much good. For that, my advice is to review old exams (or even released exams) and answers and see how close you got. To the extent that you can simulate taking exams under exam conditions, that should be done as much as possible.

these latter people did not actually skip outlining. They merely processed and parceled the knowledge as it came in and constructed their outlines mentally. It all comes down to the same thing – organizing information in a way that is best for you the individual to access in an exam setting.

Remember also that your exams will not be about memorizing elements or about memorizing cases. The exams will be about understanding concepts (e.g., “What does it mean to intend an act?”) and then apply those concepts to new fact

## A One L’s Guide to a Successful Law School Social

Anyone who made it past orientation week is undoubtedly familiar with the law school social. They are held by a number of student organizations, ranging from the Student Bar Association to the French-Canadian Environmental Law Association (ok, maybe that one is made up). The idea behind the law school social is a pretty simple one. For a flat fee, say \$10 or \$20, you get unlimited drinks at some bar for a prescribed amount of time. The law school social can be a great way to meet fellow classmates and unwind from a stressful week. However, it can also be an awkward experience with potentially unfavorable outcomes. This article will lay out a few tips which, while not guaranteeing a great law school social experience, will improve your odds of having a good time.

First of all, it is highly recommended that you have at least a few drinks. I’m not suggesting that you should go out and “pull an Amy Winehouse,” but not drinking at all can be quite awkward. Striking up an enjoyable conversation in a room full of type A personalities can be uncomfortable, even for the most socially adept. A couple of brews and a mixed drink can go a long way in helping you feign interest in the mundane exchanges that are sure to come. The good news is that the general awkwardness that occurs at

the beginning of the social will wear off and, much like a Junior High School dance, people will become more sociable. So, do yourself and others around you a favor by having a few tasty adult beverages. Your lame stories will seem a lot cooler and that weird kid from Section 2 won’t seem quite as creepy. It’s a win-win situation.

Now that you’ve had a few beers and are feeling relaxed, it’s time to go out and mingle. One of the greatest aspects of the law school social is connecting with fellow classmates. There is something to be said about the camaraderie that develops between people as they go through the crucible that is law school. Law school socials are a great way to enhance this already blossoming relationship. However, it would be wise to avoid “over connecting” with your classmates. By “over connecting” I am, of course, referring to hooking up. I know that a law school social seems like a great place to finally get with that “hot blonde” who sits in front of you in Torts. However, you may want to reconsider this decision. Keep in mind that you will be having class with this person every day for an entire year. You are all but guaranteed to see them every day at some point or another. If



that’s not a recipe for a few awkward locker encounters then I don’t know what is. Keep in mind, though, this advice mostly applies to hook-ups with actual classmates. If you get your chance with that 2L who has been staring you down all week, go for it. You probably won’t see him/her around too much, so the reward

outweighs the risk.

Well, there you go. Those are just a few suggestions on how to approach a law school social. Remember, please drink (responsibly), and don’t get intimate with people in the same section as you.

the anonymous **1L**

*The second column in a series tracking the experiences of an anonymous first-year law student.*

## PICKER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

from discrimination by American employers overseas.

In addition to her worldwide activism, Professor Picker was a much-loved faculty-member at our own Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, where she taught the first course ever on Women and the Law. Not only did she teach students in the classroom, she was the founder and director of C|M|Law's Fair Employment Practices Clinic. She was also the co-founder of the Russian U.S. Legal Education Foundation. She has additionally served on the Advisory Committee of the ACLU's Women's Rights Project and on its Litigation Committee, and similarly served on the Cleveland Executive Committee of the NAACP. Therefore, when I say that a living legend came and spoke

on campus, this is no exaggeration.

The lecture was what you would expect from such a legendary speaker and celebrated feminist. It was nothing less than inspiring. The introductory speaker was none other than the plaintiff of the La Fleur case, Jo Carol Nessel-Sale, who described her appearance as a 30 year homecoming (she had proudly attended C|M|Law in 1974). In her touching

introduction, Ms. Nessel-Sale spoke about the power and value of pro-bono work, which she said exemplified the character of great lawyers like Professor Picker, lawyers who would not yield to challenges and who pushed the boundaries of legal principle for the sake of promoting fairness and advancing civil rights.

*Professors & faculty, The Gavel wants to learn more about you and your work! Please send your interesting tidbits, projects, and ideas to [gavel.csu@gmail.com](mailto:gavel.csu@gmail.com).*



## Pass the Bar: The Comprehensive Checklist

*Professor Mary Jane McGinty*

**DIRECTOR OF BAR EXAM PREPARATION**

As the school year is winding down, students are gearing up for the 2012 Bar Examinations. Now is the time to review the C|M|LAW Six-Point Plan for Bar Success and assess if you are on track for your own bar success. Make a resolution this New Year to do all that you can to be ready to Pass the Bar!

### 1 Take Commercial Bar Review Courses

- Take a full-service commercial bar exam preparatory course such as Barbri, Supreme Bar Review, or Kaplan. These courses are essential to help you review and fill gaps in your knowledge to prepare for the MBE, essay, and MPT portions of the exam.

AND

- Take the MBE Boot Camp course, the Kaplan PMBR course. This is a supplemental course that specializes in preparing students for the MBE.

### 2 Take Six to Eight Weeks Off to Study

We strongly recommend that you take a minimum of six weeks (eight would be preferable) completely off of work to prepare for the rigors of the Ohio Bar Examination. This period requires advance planning and preparation in terms of employment situation, vacation time, family support, and financial matters. You must also address time management issues.

### 3 Make Adequate Financial Arrangements

Application fees for the Ohio Bar Exam are more than \$500, commercial bar preparation courses cost about \$3000,

and time lost from employment may add to these financial burdens. In addition, you will have to pay for three nights at a hotel during the bar exam. Plan ahead to meet these expenses. Look at your student loans, private lenders, and bar review scholarships through CMLAA and the bar review companies.

### 4 Take the Ohio Bar Exam Strategies and Tactics Course

Ohio Bar Exam Strategies and Tactics ("OBEST") is a three-credit law school course that provides you with an opportunity to preview some of the substantive law covered on the bar and to become familiar with the modes of testing. This class is a supplement to a commercial bar review class, NOT a substitute for one. Data analysis conducted for a review of our bar preparation program confirms that students who successfully complete the OBEST course and who also participate in other bar preparation programs have higher passage rates than their non-participating counterparts.

### 5 Take Bar Subjects in Law School

Plan your course schedule with the Bar Exam in mind.

These required course subjects are tested on the bar exam:

- Civil Procedure
- Constitutional Law
  - Contracts
  - Criminal Law
  - Evidence
- Legal Profession (Legal Ethics)
- Property (Real and Personal)
  - Torts



In addition, the following courses cover areas tested on the exam:

- Commercial Law
- Corporations (Business Associations including Corporations, Agency and Partnership)
- Criminal Procedure I (and possibly Criminal Procedure II; both Crim Law and Procedure are tested on the Bar Exam)
- Estates and Trusts (Wills)
- First Amendment (Con Law)
- Secured Transactions

### 6 Participate in the MPT Workshops

The Ohio Bar Exam has two Multistate Performance Tests (MPTs). The MPT is 90 minutes long and requires applicants to perform lawyering tasks that would be asked of a first-year associate. Applicants create various documents from a File and Library. The MPT is worth 13% of the possible points on the bar, more than 75 points

After graduation, the MPT Workshops meet weekly for six weeks before the February and July bar exams. Each week you will discuss strategies for approaching the MPT and take practice MPTs from past bar exams. You will get feedback on your work including suggestions on how to improve your scores and you will receive copies of the official Point Sheet used by bar graders, and copies of a high-scoring MPT response released by the Ohio Supreme Court. Our data demonstrated that taking the MPT Workshops is associated with bar exam success. The best preparation for the MPTs is to practice taking them.

*Questions? Please contact Mary Jane McGinty at 216.687.2297 or [maryjane.mcginity@law.cusohio.edu](mailto:maryjane.mcginity@law.cusohio.edu)*

# Seven Profound yet Easy Reads for Law Students who Don't Have Time for Moby Dick

David Nichols

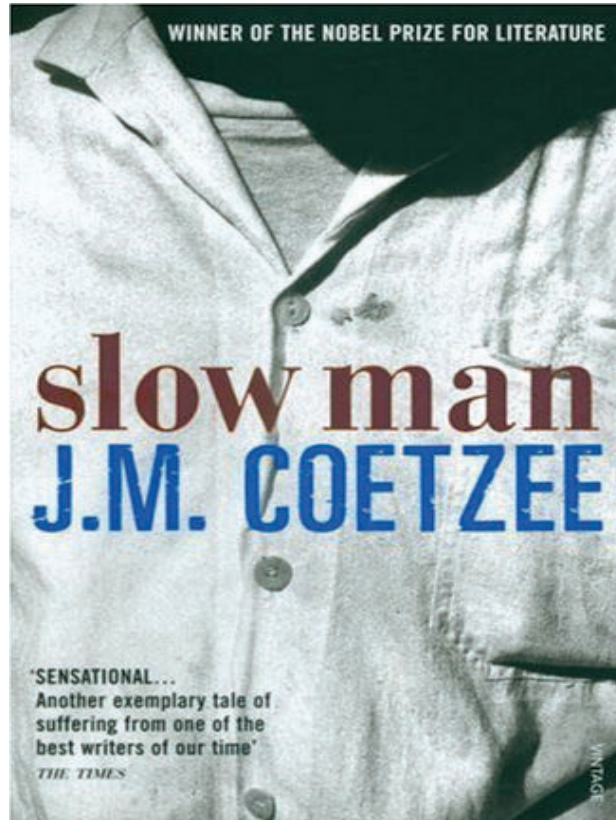
CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

## #1. **Sula** by Toni Morrison

One of the great champions in feminist literature, Sula is basically the coolest protagonists of all time. Although its author is famous for her hugely epic (and often depressing) novels about the Black American Identity throughout American history, *Sula* is a short novel about the relationship between two young girls who reconnect in adulthood after a traumatic accident occurs mythically altering the history of their small Ohio town. While Nel chooses the path of being a conventional wife and mother, Sula chooses to become an outsider and game-changer. If you haven't read it, read it. Toni Morrison will have you holding tissues, but she is probably the best writer of the last century.

## #2. **We the Animals** by Justin Torres

A brand new book by a brand new author. *Animals* reads like someone's performance art project. A very short novel with a 7 year old narrator, this novel conveys the harsh beauty of growing up bi-racial and poor in the midst of dysfunction. The narrator and his two young brothers make the most of their surroundings by dancing, arguing and otherwise fighting their hunger in Brooklyn, New York City. The chapters are short; each one depicts a small snapshot of a moment of poetic nostalgia. The tales are often littered with poetic rhythm (similar to the writings of a young Sandra Cisneros). If you need something to help you drift away from the fussiness of finals week, help yourself by reading *We the Animals*.



## #3. **When Will Jesus Bring the Pork Chops?** by George Carlin

If you can survive the offensive nature of his monologues, the late George Carlin's writing is nature's gift to cynical law students. This book qualifies as sheer humor. It is not formatted in any traditional sense of essays, linear chapters or chronological sequence. Instead, *Pork Chops* is the hysterical ramblings of a late master of the English language and an utterly brilliant stage entertainer. Something you don't need a bookmark for, basically. It works to bring a quick laugh at those difficult moments between commercial law flash-cards when you need it the most. Raw and hilarious.

## #4. **Slow Man** by J.M. Coetzee

I discovered Coetzee during a conversation with a literature nerd in Madison, Wisconsin. We were standing among shelves upon shelves of unorganized second-hand books at a closet in the middle of a campus strip (I think it was called: "Used Book Store" or something

equally creative). I was vocalizing my love for Haruki Murakami (an author you will meet later in this review sheet) and he recommended that I read *Life and Times of Michael K*. Since, I have become sincerely obsessed with the man's work, most recently the outstanding *Slow Man*. This novel is about an old man, Paul, who loses his leg during a bike accident and crushes on his Croatian nurse, a married woman he employs to care for him after the crash. Things get really crazy when a novelist Elizabeth Costello appears randomly at his door and decides to involve herself in Paul's personal life. You get the sense that Costello (a protagonist in another Coetzee novel) is strangely omnipotent and beginning to exercise some creative authority over the escalating plot. Coetzee's style of writing has complex meaning, but is generally frank, and produces easily digestible pages. Perfect reading for a student sitting on one of those uncomfortable stools in Chipotle who is catching a quick lunch.

## #5. **The Keep** by Jennifer Egan

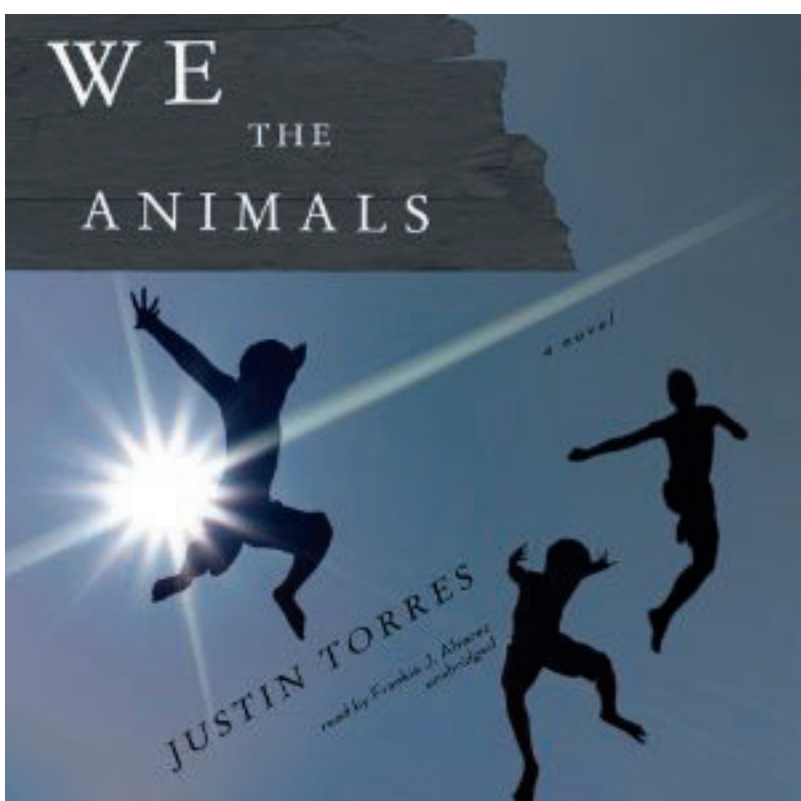
Egan has been around for a while, although her name is suddenly familiar due to her immensely popular and impressive new novel *A Visit From the Goon Squad* (with its one chapter famously composed on Microsoft PowerPoint). *The Keep* is an earlier novel that is less of a head-scratcher. Its dreamy narrative revolves around two cousins who meet for the first time since an awkward childhood prank at one of the cousin's newly purchased haunted castle. Somehow this story mirrors a coinciding tale involving a writing instructor's relationship with a prison detainee. *The Keep* ends up being an indescribable experience by one of the hippest authors in America. It's suspenseful and moving and doesn't hog the brain-cells you may need during the stretch of final exams.

## #6. **Something Wicked This Way Comes** by Ray Bradbury

It's autumn time in Cleveland. The wind is destroying your umbrella. The upswept sidewalks stuff dead leaves in your shoes. The city is changing colors. I read *Something Wicked* every year around this time. It is a magical tale of two kids in the Midwest country around Halloween who visit a mysterious old-fashioned festival. The boys experience the nightmarish spectacle, whose actors include the Dust Witch and the Illustrated Man. Mr. Bradbury, the old mastermind of fantasy and macabre, writes like a possessed poet blending his monstrous love of libraries, lightning rods and circus sideshows with ridiculous visual imagery. Like many of his other works, *Something Wicked* is adolescent fiction written for imaginative adults craving raw escapism. Does that sound like you during finals period?

## #5. **Sputnik Sweetheart** by Haruki Murakami

I could spend loads of newspaper surface exclaiming how drastically unique the write Haruki Murakami is. He's a middle-aged champion marathon runner from Japan who was a nightclub manager most of his life, read Raymond Chandler and decided to try his hand at creative composition. He's basically nuts. His novels are elaborate mixes of the mundane and the unexplainable. Watch out for talking cats and stopped elevators. Complex and post-modern, existential, Kafkaesque, subconscious stories that reverberate your own senses and imagination. Yet despite these weighted words, *Sputnik Sweetheart* is relatively light. It's fuzzy and romantic. It is adequately simplistic without sacrificing its subtle sophistication. In other words, it won't squeeze your brain. In fact, *Sputnik Sweetheart* is about two college students, one of them in love with the other. It chronicles their journeying, their journaling and their telephone conversations from old-style telephone booths.





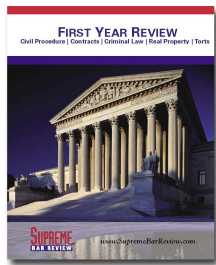
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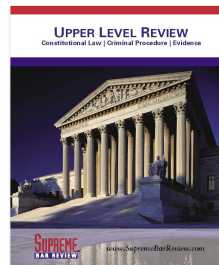
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