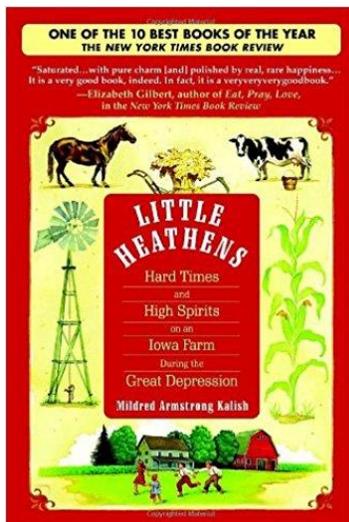


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Readings in the

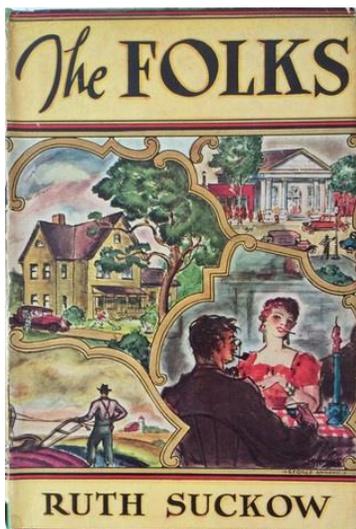
Dirty Thirties



Feb. 6 – Mildred Armstrong Kadish, *Little Heathens*.

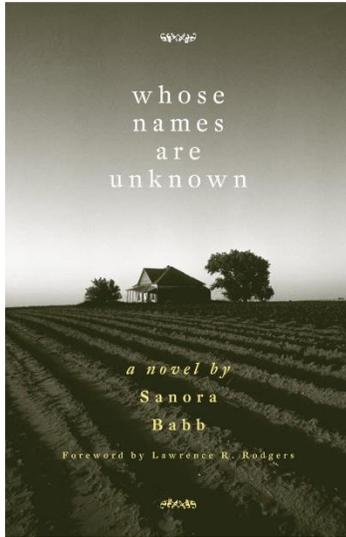
Most of Iowa was shocked when the *NY Times* reviewed *Little Heathens* on the front page of the *Book Review*, with embarrassingly high honors. Most everyone knows similar stories of growing up poor on an Iowa farm. But Mildred Armstrong Kadish will have you in stiches anyway, nodding your head, not just in appreciation but in full accord with the world she delightfully brings to life in *Little Heathens*. I hesitate to say it, but some of you may

well find this book the best we read. (I hope not!)



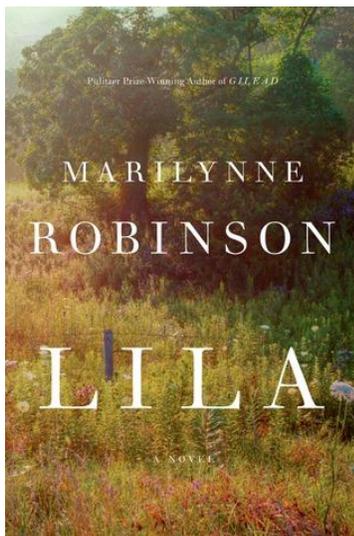
March 6 – Ruth Suckow, *The Folks*

Hawarden's Ruth Suckow published some very well received novels in her time, novels set right here in our backyard, in small-towns where family and church and women's clubs were the pillars of the community. Even though she's now rather completely out of style (sad!), she's especially readable and loveable here in America's small towns, where her stories consistently take place. Many consider *The Folks* her masterpiece, but it's a brick—more than 700 pages!



April 3 – Babb, *Whose Names are Unknown*

Babb's short novel, after *The Folks*, will seem like a short story. What most critics say is that this little Great Depression gem never received the honors it should have. Its publication was pulled after Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* came out and portrayed the Dust Bowl in ways that most people determined could never be done with any power again. Steinbeck's masterpiece still reigns, but Babb's little Depression-era novel has found its own proud standing in the literature of the era.



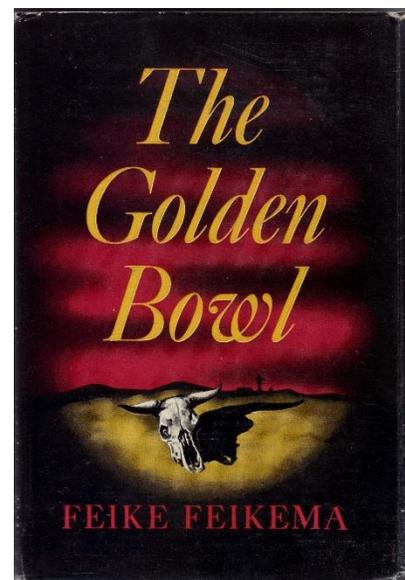
May 1 – Marilynne Robinson, *Lila*.

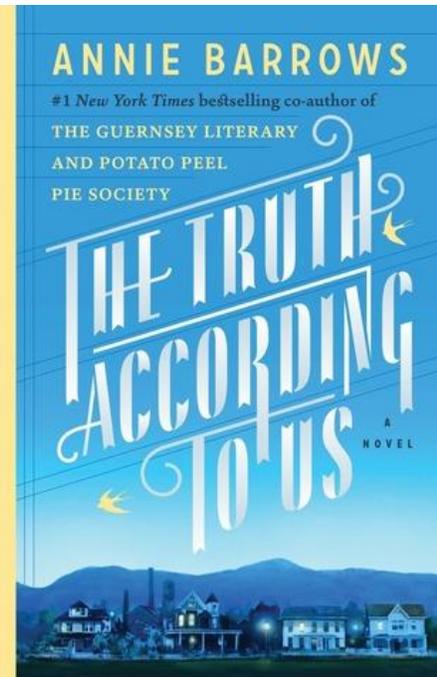
Anyone who thinks that great novels can't be written about Iowa small towns hasn't heard of Marilynne Robinson's work, especially *Gilead*, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 2005. Since that time, Robinson has published two more novels set in the same town in the backyards of the same characters. *Lila* is the third of the Gilead novels. Lila is the wife of John Ames, the protagonist of *Gilead*. She is significantly younger than he is and something of a mystery in

Gilead. *Lila* tells us her own story.

June 5 – Frederick Manfred, *The Golden Bowl*

Manfred's long writing life outlined much of his own by mapping out stories that approximate his own experiences. *Green Earth* maps out his boyhood on a farm just outside of Doon. *The Golden Bowl* is built on his experiences out west after returning from college. He'll bring us directly into the Dust Bowl.





July 3 – (iffy) *The Truth According to Us*

“In the summer of 1938, Layla Beck’s father, a United States senator, cuts off her allowance and demands that she find employment on the Federal Writers’ Project, a New Deal jobs program. Within days, Layla finds herself far from her accustomed social whirl, assigned to cover the history of the remote mill town of Macedonia, West Virginia, and destined, in her opinion, to go completely mad with boredom. But once she secures a room in the home of the unconventional Romeyn family, she is drawn into their complex world and soon discovers that the truth of the town is entangled in the thorny past of the Romeyn dynasty.”

That’s the Goodreads summary. I’ve not read the novel, but I like to include at least one book of recent publication that looks back at the era we’ve visited.

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Meeting times and places yet to be determined. Earlier classes have met in varied places around the area.