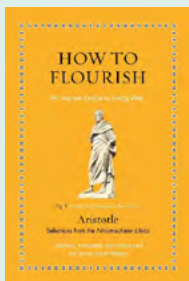
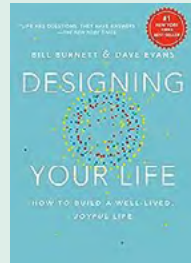


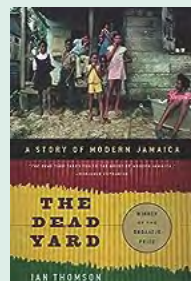
Reading **Nina Simone's [Eunice Waymon]** biography by David Brun-Lambert – brought up many emotions. I felt her struggles and triumphs as a child, girl, woman, and artist. I understand that one story is not the totality of a life, but I appreciate having this window into Nina Simone's life. The rollercoaster journey of her personal and professional life, plus her contributions to the civil rights movement, showed a range of challenges that felt like too much for one lifetime. Brun-Lambert, *Nina Simone: The Biography* offered me an expanded view of the musical legend.



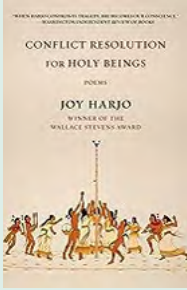
When I noticed this book on the shelf at the bookstore, I was hooked by the word “flourish” and curious about what gems might lie on the pages about what it means to realize one's potential as a human being. ***How to Flourish: An Ancient Guide to Living Well*** is an abridged version of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, in which he explores *what makes for a happy person, a happy life, a life in which we realize our full potential as rational, emotional, and social beings*. Set in fourth-century BCE Athens, the inquiry is still relevant today. It is not about optimizing our lives but about being curious about the values we bring individually and collectively for self-sufficiency.



I featured ***Designing Your Life***, by Bill Burnett & Dave Evans, in the [August e-newsletter](#). As a reminder, it is a guide to help anyone think like a designer by using a design process to figure out what you want and create the life you love. Although this approach can be applied to all aspects of one's life, it is especially useful when building your job and career.



I found Ian Thomson's ***The Dead Yard*** depiction of Jamaica choppy. He shared interviews with Jamaicans who knew the island before its independence and then returned to live on the island nostalgic about the past long gone while removed from the complexities of the current state of the people on the island. He weaves in the island's music, history, politics, and economic plights through the chapters. It is clear that Jamaica's sociopolitical realities are bound to the indigenous and enslaved people, still in the grips of the colonizers' influences. Thomson writes, *“In the half-century since 1962, the hopes for a fairer, better Jamaica have not been met. | Jamaica looks small on the map. Yet it exerts a disproportionate influence abroad for a nation of less than three million.”*



I read select poems between books to shift my mental energy and ***Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings*** by Joy Harjo has been the go-to selection. The poems travel across the experiences of the displaced — lost land — lost history — and the power to reclaim unfinished history.

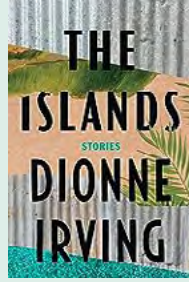
*I thank the body that has | been
my clothing on this journey. It has
served me well for | protection
and enjoyment.*

*My soul's helper who has been |
with me through the stories of my
being say, "You can go back and
change the story."*

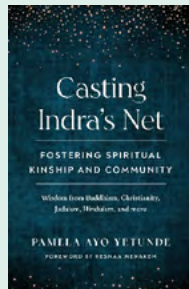
An excerpt from the poem, ***You Can Change the Story, My Spirit Said to Me as I Sat Near the Sea.***



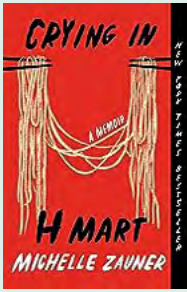
I re-read ***How to Love a Jamaican***, by Alexia Arthurs, because I loved the various perspectives on relationships she shared. There is so much intimacy and vulnerability in naming the complexity of maneuvering through relational and cultural expectations from the lens of the Jamaican. For me, the layered personas in the book defy the singular monocultural references that are sometimes used to depict the Jamaican experience. I enjoyed all the essays — yet was particularly struck by *Mermaid River* — which describes women who leave their children in the care of another woman so they can forge a better life for the family. *"The woman took care of me until the real woman who should have been taking care of me was set up good enough to send for me."*



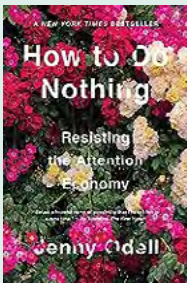
Dionne Irving's ***The Islands Stories*** contains ten essays about Jamaicans who migrated for a better life with the remnants of colonialization. I think of what is left behind or what cannot be brought forward when you leave your culture, especially on a planet that is becoming monoculture. In the story "All-Inclusive," Irving writes, *"Out of an island diaspora spread to every corner of the planet, how was it that he found her, of all people?"* This question speaks to a common desire to be found and seen, even as we carve out a future life in a new land.



What does it mean to be a node on this human web? This is an inquiry that I posed to myself when I received ***Casting Indra's Net*** as a gift. Was that a coincidence? Indra's Net is a metaphor for the interbeing of all things. Pamela Ayo Yetunde frames the book around our mutuality and how nodes on this human web run the risk of reflecting fear and destruction. The book has many contemplations to support the proposed pathways to move toward a *Communitas* — Inclusive Well-being where we are being united while moving away from mobbery.



A lovely book written with heart and vulnerability. Michelle Zauner shares in her memoir **Crying in H Mart** how she cared for her mother in her final days while reflecting on her childhood and a future life without her mother. This book speaks to the complexity of identity, death, cultural loss (gain), and the gift of connecting with one's culture through food and family. There were many pivotal moments in the memoir, yet this passage struck a chord with me, *"I could never be of both worlds, only half in and half out, waiting to be ejected at will by someone with greater claim than me."* There is something redemptive when Michelle learns to cook Korean food, which connects her to the part of herself she thought might have been lost with her mother's passing.



Jenny Odell invites the readers to think deeply about how they use their time in **How to Do Nothing**. The reader is asked to think below the surface of their space, politics, commerce, and relationships that are encouraging the attention economy. *What would it mean to give ourselves time to think, to create nodes of support to incubate spaces for empathy and innovation useful to everyone?* Odell is clear in saying there isn't a singular approach to resisting the attention economy, yet she asks us to consider their intersections—a provocative read.



Children's Books:

The Big Umbrella is a beautiful story of inclusion by providing shelter for those in need. Like a welcoming arm large enough to embrace all, it symbolizes that there is always room. This book is written by Amy June Bates and Juniper Bates, a mother-daughter team who came up with the book idea while sharing an umbrella.



I met Anita Mortley at [Boston's JerkFest](#) and was delighted to support a self-published children's author. A doctoral student in social psychology, she was inspired by her children and the lessons of kindness. In **The Magic of Kindness**, two children in a second-grade class set out to make a machine that gives kindness to everyone in their town after observing how unkind people were to each other.



This lovely children's book, **Pretty Like Jamaica** by Opal Palmer Adisa, explores what it means to be raised by a grandmother. Kathryn grapples with her feelings, wondering why she was not chosen to migrate to the U.S. with her siblings and mother. A common occurrence for many Jamaican families, children split up while women forge a new life for the family in the U.S. I appreciated the attention to the child's feelings and how adults can assist them in processing those feelings of separation. Adisa partners with Dr. Kai Morgan, a clinical psychologist, to offer ways of engaging in conversations with a child about these feelings.