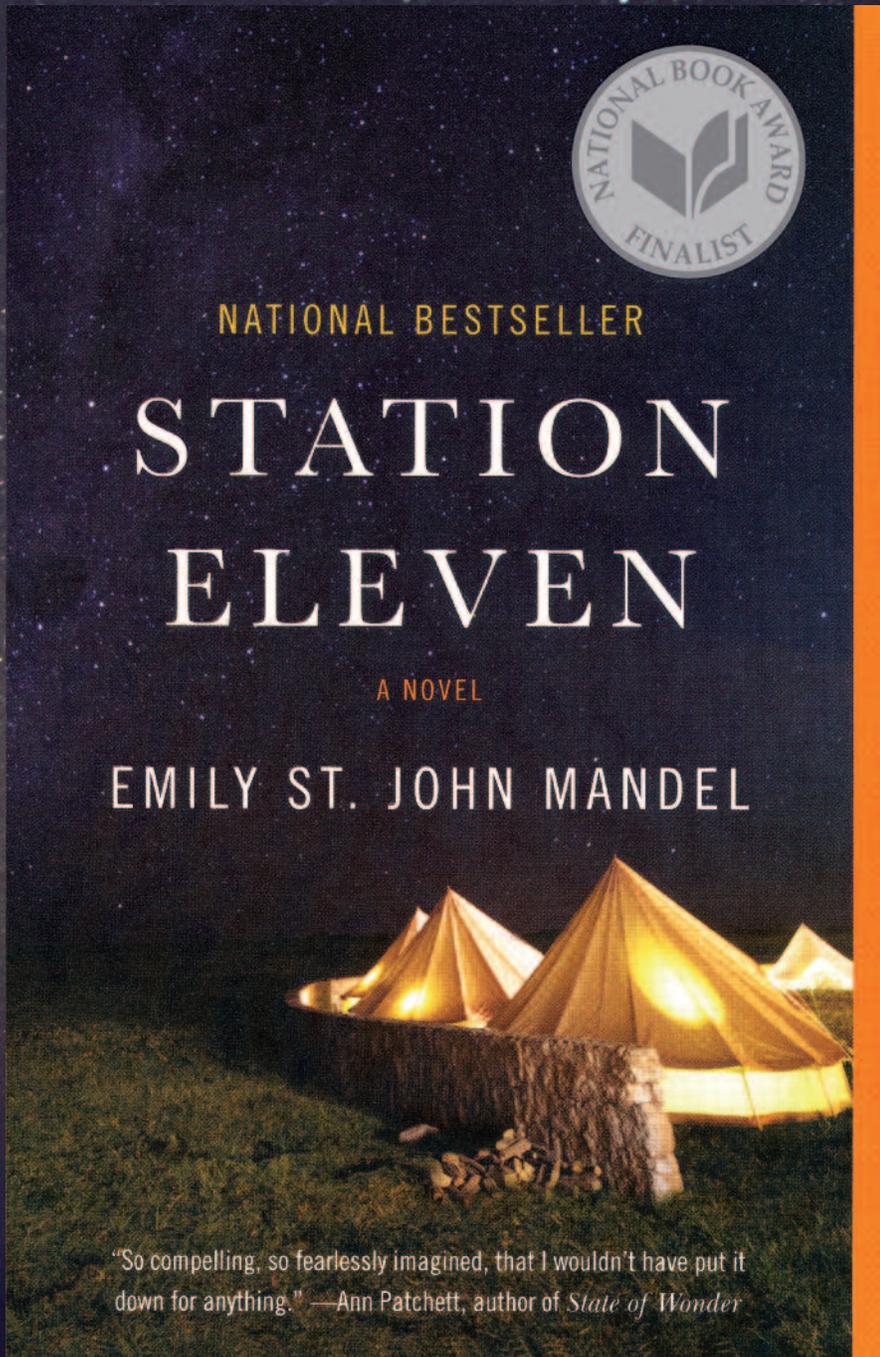


santa  
monica  
reads 2016



JOIN A  
CITYWIDE  
BOOK  
CLUB  
MARCH 12  
THROUGH  
APRIL 16



For free public book discussion groups and other events, check the Santa Monica Reads website at [smp1.org/SMReads.aspx](http://smp1.org/SMReads.aspx) or call 310.458.8600.

Welcome to  
**santa monica**  
**reads**

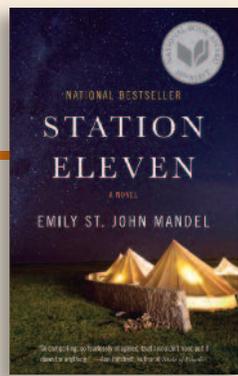
Santa Monica is a community of readers, thinkers and debaters, so it is fitting that as a community we come together to read and discuss a single book with SANTA MONICA READS. This celebrated one-book program is in its 14th year and is one of the longest-running programs of its kind in the United States.

This year's featured book is *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel. A finalist for the 2014 National Book Award, the novel follows a diverse cast of characters who survive a catastrophic flu that wipes out much of earth's population. As the story weaves back and forth in time, depicting life before and after the pandemic, we come to know the characters and see the delicate strands of fate that tie them together. The novel also challenges readers to question what they would miss from their current lives, and what would inspire them to push forward in the face of such a calamity.

I invite you to take a break and jump into a future, altered world in which a diverse group of survivors tries to keep art and humanity alive. This challenging story gives us pause as a community to contemplate the everyday grace of living. We look forward to seeing you at one or all of the many free, public events being held around the city from March 12 to April 16.

I hope that your participation in SANTA MONICA READS is a rewarding experience that brings us together as a community through literature.

*Maria Carpenter*  
Maria Taesil Hudson Carpenter  
City Librarian / Santa Monica Public Library



## about the book

***"While many post-apocalypse novels focus on the survival of humanity, Station Eleven focuses instead on the survival of our culture."*** – Andrew M. Butler,  
Arthur C. Clarke Award Judging Committee

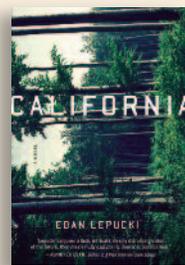
Describing *Station Eleven* to new readers without revealing too much is difficult. That said, it is a post-apocalyptic novel that tracks a diverse cast of characters before, during and after a global flu wipes out much of human civilization. Straying far from the well-hewn path of following characters as they struggle to survive in the aftermath of a catastrophic event, *Station Eleven* looks instead into the hearts and souls of its characters and determines that "when there is nothing else, art remains."

The novel begins in the present, as a child actress named Kirsten Raymonde watches actor Arthur Leander die onstage during a performance of *King Lear*. Outside, the world is being consumed by a virulent flu that will rapidly lay waste to most of humanity. As the layered novel unfolds, Emily St. John Mandel follows her characters through time, in flashbacks providing back story, in the present as characters realize what is happening, and fifteen years on as Kirsten and other survivors make their way through the broken landscape that remains.

First published in September 2014 by Alfred A. Knopf, *Station Eleven* was awarded the 2015 Arthur C. Clarke Award, was a finalist for the 2014 National Book Award in fiction, and made numerous year-end best lists. As *Game of Thrones* author George R.R. Martin observed, "One could, I suppose, call it a post-apocalypse novel, and it is that, but all the usual tropes of that sub-genre are missing here. It's a deeply melancholy novel, but beautifully written, and wonderfully elegiac."

## recommended reads

### ***California* by Edan Lepucki**

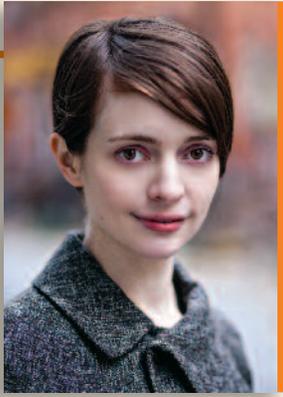


The landscape of post-apocalyptic fiction is rife with novels that examine the impact on society at large, but this intimate, debut novel is a close examination of what happens to a marriage after civilization's collapse. In *California*, young couple Cal and Frida flee the crumbling metropolis of Los Angeles for a solitary life in the western wilds, but when Frida gets pregnant, they are forced to consider reentering society and all of the complications and dangers that implies.

### ***The Dog Stars* by Peter Heller**



Like *Station Eleven*, *The Dog Stars* is set in a post-apocalyptic world that has been largely wiped out by a flu pandemic. In this wasteland, former pilot Hig finds himself alone except for his dog Jasper and unhinged survivalist Bangley. A dreamer with no access to star or navigation maps, Hig spends his nights renaming the constellations for dogs. When he hears a crackling, distant signal over his plane's radio, he's finally driven to look for life beyond the only borders he knows.



## about the author

***“First we only want to be seen, but once we’re seen, that’s not enough anymore. After that, we want to be remembered.”***

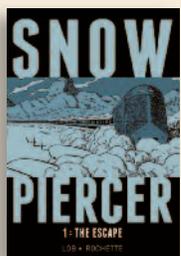
– Emily St. John Mandel, *Station Eleven*

Emily St. John Mandel was born in 1979 in Comox, a small town on the west coast of British Columbia, Canada, and raised on the nearby Denman Island.

A dancer by training, she left home at 18 to study contemporary dance at the School of Toronto Dance Theatre. After graduating, she briefly relocated to Montreal, a city where she was underemployed and did not speak the language. No longer interested in a career in dance, she chose to spend her spare time writing and began to think of herself as an author. Armed with the core of what would become her first novel, she relocated to New York with her soon-to-be husband, playwright Kevin Mandel, and began shopping her work around to publishers. The small press Unbridled Books published her first three novels – *Last Night in Montreal*, *The Singer’s Gun*, *The Lola Quartet* – each of them literary fiction with a noir crime edge, and Mandel began collecting fans amongst readers, librarians and booksellers. In 2012, she was signed by Random House publishing imprint Alfred A. Knopf and began writing *Station Eleven*.

Following its publication, *Station Eleven* became a finalist for a National Book Award, the PEN/Faulkner Award, and won the Arthur C. Clarke Award. In addition to her four novels, Emily is the author of numerous short stories and essays that have been published and anthologized in several collections, including *Best American Mystery Stories 2013*. She currently lives in Brooklyn with husband Kevin and their newborn child.

## ***Snowpiercer, Vol. 1: The Escape***

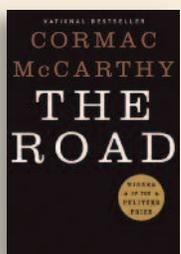


by Jacques Lob, illustrated by Jean-Marc Rochette

*Station Eleven* derives its title from a post-apocalyptic comic book created by a character within the novel. The comic book/graphic novel field is one of the strongest sources of today’s post-apocalyptic storylines and this French release is a prime example of the genre. Set in a future world in which the planet has been frozen in an environmental accident, the story follows the few remaining survivors who live on a perpetually-moving

train that circles the globe—the well-to-do living in luxury at the front of the train, the poor and unwanted barely surviving at the back.

## ***The Road* by Cormac McCarthy**



In this novel set in an indefinite, futuristic, post-apocalyptic world, a father and his young son make their way through the ruins of a devastated American landscape, struggling to survive and preserve the last remnants of their own humanity. Winner of the 2006 Pulitzer Prize, National Book Award and National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction.

## resources

### **Emily St. John Mandel Author Website**

Find out more about Emily St. John Mandel and her novels at her website, which also includes listings of upcoming events and links to several essays by the author.

[emilymandel.com](http://emilymandel.com)

To keep up with her on a more regular basis, follow the author on her Tumblr page.

[emilystjohnmandel.tumblr.com](http://emilystjohnmandel.tumblr.com)

And Twitter [@EmilyMandel](https://twitter.com/EmilyMandel)

### **Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Fiction**

Whether it is Emily St. John Mandel’s literary take on the aftermath of an apocalyptic event, or a more speculative take such as Robert Kirkman’s *The Walking Dead* or Justin Cronin’s *The Passage*, the genre of apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fiction has a rich history. While not complete, the Wikipedia entry on the genre offers a compelling look at the origins and various iterations of how authors have depicted the end of civilization and its aftermath.

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apocalyptic\\_and\\_post-apocalyptic\\_fiction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apocalyptic_and_post-apocalyptic_fiction)

### **How to Survive an Apocalypse**

While served up with a healthy sense of humor, the advice offered on the Wikihow website on surviving an apocalypse is practical and easy to read. From listing basic fundamentals of things you’ll want to have on hand, to offering advice on how to hunt, the website serves up its content in an easygoing fashion that won’t crank up your anxiety.

[wikihow.com/Survive-an-Apocalypse](http://wikihow.com/Survive-an-Apocalypse)

### **Santa Monica Youth Orchestra “Traveling Symphony”**

Sat, March 12 at 2:00pm | Ocean Park Branch Library

Sat, March 19 at 12:00pm | Pico Branch Library

Our own “Traveling Symphony” drops by two of our branches for outdoor concerts that celebrate the value of keeping art alive.

### **The Museum of Civilization and Other Coping Mechanisms**

Tue, March 15 at 7:00 pm | Main Library, Multipurpose Room

Join us as we plant the seeds for our own Museum of Civilization, and hear from UCLA psychologist Dr. Stephen Sideroff, author of *The Path: Mastering the Nine Pillars of Resilience and Success*, on the ways in which human beings cope in the aftermath of a traumatic or catastrophic event.

### **Twilight in the Altered World: Shakespeare on Station Eleven**

Sat, March 19 at 2:00pm | Main Library, MLK Jr. Auditorium

Actor/director Tony Cronin and members of the Theatre for a Small Space share insights on the hidden Shakespeare connections many readers might miss in *Station Eleven*, then perform selected scenes from *King Lear* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

### **Screening & Lecture: Snowpiercer (2013) and Other Graphic Novels**

Wed, March 23 at 6:00 pm | Main Library, MLK Jr. Auditorium

Graphic novels, an extended form of the comic book, are the source of many apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic tales. Join us as we explore the format with a brief talk, then screen the film *Snowpiercer*, based on a French post-apocalyptic graphic novel. (Film runtime: 126 min.)

### **Edan Lepucki in conversation with Charles Yu**

Tue, March 29 at 7:00pm | Main Library, MLK Jr. Auditorium

Homegrown talent Edan Lepucki discusses her post-apocalyptic novel *California* with Santa Monica-based author Charles Yu. A book sale and signing follows.

### **Family Screening: WALL-E (2008)**

Wed, March 30 at 2:00pm | Main Library, MLK Jr. Auditorium

In this animated Pixar film that allows kids to get in on the Santa Monica Reads fun, a small waste-collecting robot inadvertently embarks on a space journey that will ultimately decide the fate of mankind. (98 min.)

### **The Beginnings of the End: Post-Apocalyptic Fiction Before Station Eleven**

Sat, April 2 at 3:00pm | Main Library, Multipurpose Room

Literature professors Robert Latham (UC Riverside) and Jeffrey Hicks (Cal State LA) discuss the pioneers of post-apocalyptic and dystopian fiction.

### **How to Survive an Apocalypse**

Thur, April 7 at 7:00pm | Main Library, Multipurpose Room

The end of civilization can come in many ways: pandemic, natural disaster, nuclear attack, technological breakdown, monsters and aliens. In this practical demonstration, adventure gear specialists REI provide survival techniques that could help you save your life.

### **An Afternoon with Emily St. John Mandel**

Sat, April 16 at 2:00pm | Main Library, MLK Jr. Auditorium

Author Emily St. John Mandel presents an engaging discussion of *Station Eleven*, her past work and her future plans. A book sale and signing follows.

## book discussions

Trained volunteer facilitators lead these free public book discussions. No registration required. Discussions are open to readers of all ages.

**Wednesday, March 16 at 7:00pm** | Montana Branch Library, 1704 Montana Avenue\*

**Thursday, March 17 at 7:00pm** | Pico Branch Library, 2201 Pico Boulevard\*

**Thursday, March 31 at 4:00pm** | Ken Edwards Center, 1527 4th Street\*

**Monday, April 4 at 7:00pm** | Barnes & Noble, 1201 Third Street Promenade

**Saturday, April 9 at 11:00am** | Ocean Park Branch Library, 2601 Main Street\*

**Wednesday, April 13 at 7:00pm** | Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, 1343 Ocean Park Boulevard

**Thursday, April 14 at 6:30pm** | Santa Monica Bay Woman's Club, 1210 4th Street

**Saturday, April 16 at 11:00am** | Main Library, 601 Santa Monica Boulevard\*

\*City of Santa Monica facilities are wheelchair accessible. To request a disability-related accommodation, call Library Administration 310-458-8606 (TDD 395-8499) at least one week prior to event.

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