**Black Water** by Louise Doughty

Harper wakes every night, terrified of the sounds outside his hut halfway up a mountain in Bali. He is afraid that his past as a mercenary has caught up with him - and that his life may now be in danger. As he waits to discover his fate, he meets Rita, a woman with her own past tragedy, and begins a passionate affair. Their relationship makes Harper realise that exile comes in many forms - but can Rita and Harper save each other while they are putting each other very much at risk? Moving between Indonesia, the Netherlands and California, from the 1960s to the 1990s, Black Water turns around the 1965 Indonesian massacres, one of the great untold tragedies of the twentieth century.

**Golden Hill** by Francis Spufford

One rainy evening in November, a handsome young stranger fresh off the boat pitches up at a counting-house door in Golden Hill Street: this is Mr Smith, amiable, charming, yet strangely determined to keep suspicion simmering. For in his pocket, he has what seems to be an order for a thousand pounds, a huge amount, and he won't explain why, or where he comes from, or what he can be planning to do in the colonies that requires so much money.

Should the New York merchants trust him? Should they risk their credit and refuse to pay? Should they befriend him, seduce him, arrest him; maybe even kill him?

An astonishing first novel, as stuffed with incident as a whole shelf of conventional fiction, Golden Hill is both a book about the eighteenth century, and itself a novel cranked back to the form's eighteenth century beginnings, when anything could happen on the page, and usually did, and a hero was not a hero unless he ran the frequent risk of being hanged.

**The Allegations** by Mark Lawson

On the morning after he has celebrated his 60th birthday party at a celebrity-filled party, Ned Marriott is in bed with his partner, Emma, when there's a knock on the door. Detectives from the London police force's 'Operation Millpond' have come to arrest him over an allegation of sexual assault.
Ned is one of the country's best-known historians - teaching at a leading university, advising governments and making top-rating TV documentaries - but this 'historic' claim from someone the cops insist on calling 'the victim' threatens him with personal and professional ruin and potential imprisonment.
Professor Marriott would normally turn for support to Tom Pimm, his closest friend at the university, but Tom has just been informed that a secret investigation has raised anonymous complaints, which may end Dr Pimm's career.
Swinging between fear, bewilderment and anger, Ned and Tom must try to defend themselves against the allegations, and hope that no others are made. The two men's families and friends are forced to question what they know and think. Can the complainants, detectives, HR teams, journalists and Tweeters who are driving the stories all be seeing smoke that has no fire behind it?

**Devil and the Bluebird** by Jennifer Mason-Black

Blue Riley has wrestled with her own demons ever since the loss of her mother to cancer. But when she encounters a beautiful devil at her town crossroads, it’s her runaway sister’s soul she fights to save. The devil steals Blue’s voice—inherited from her musically gifted mother—in exchange for a single shot at finding Cass.

Armed with her mother’s guitar, a knapsack of cherished mementos, and a pair of magical boots, Blue journeys west in search of her sister. When the devil changes the terms of their deal, Blue must reevaluate her understanding of good and evil and open herself up to finding family in unexpected places.

**Homegoing** by Yaa Gyasi

The unforgettable New York Times best seller begins with the story of two half-sisters, separated by forces beyond their control: one sold into slavery, the other married to a British slaver. Written with tremendous sweep and power, Homegoing traces the generations of family who follow, as their destinies lead them through two continents and three hundred years of history, each life indelibly drawn, as the legacy of slavery is fully revealed in light of the present day.

**Tender** by Belinda McKeon

When they meet in Dublin in the late nineties, Catherine was a sheltered college student; James an adventurous, charismatic young artist. In a city brimming with possibilities, he spurs her to take life on with gusto. But as Catherine opens herself to new experiences, James's life becomes a prison; as changed as the new Ireland may be, it is still not a place in which he feels able to truly be himself. As time moves on, she discovers there is a fine line between helping someone and hurting him further. When crisis hits, Catherine finds herself at the mercy of feelings she cannot control, leading her to jeopardise all she holds dear.

**The Kindness** by Polly Samson

Julian's fall begins the moment he sets eyes on Julia.

Julia is married and eight years his senior; he is a gifted English student, a life of academia ahead. Ignoring warnings from family and friends, they each give up all they have to be together. Their new life in London offers immense happiness, especially after their longed-for daughter Mira is born.

When Julian hears that Firdaws, his adored boyhood home, is for sale, he sets out to recreate a lost paradise for his new family. Once again, love blinds him. It is only when Mira becomes terrifyingly ill that it is impossible for Julia to conceal from him the explosive secret that she has been keeping at the heart of their lives.

Lyrical, haunting and exquisitely rendered, Polly Samson's second novel explores a deception that comes wrapped as a gift, a betrayal that is clothed in kindness, and asks if we can ever truly trust another. The result is an unforgettable story of love, grief, betrayal, and reconciliation, masterfully plotted and beautifully told.

**Nine Folds Make a Paper Swan** by Ruth Gilligan

Three intertwining voices span the twentieth century to tell the unknown story of the Jews in Ireland. A heartbreaking portrait of what it means to belong, and how storytelling can redeem us all.

**The Gustav Sonata** by Rose Tremain

What is the difference between friendship and love? Or between neutrality and commitment? Gustav Perle grows up in a small town in 'neutral' Switzerland, where the horrors of the Second World War seem a distant echo. But Gustav's father has mysteriously died, and his adored mother Emilie is strangely cold and indifferent to him. Gustav's childhood is spent in lonely isolation, his only toy a tin train with painted passengers staring blankly from the carriage windows.

**Five Rivers Met on a Wooded Plain** by Barney Norris

One quiet evening in Salisbury, the peace is shattered by a serious car crash. At that moment, five lives collide – a flower seller, a schoolboy, an army wife, a security guard, a widower – all facing their own personal disasters. As one of those lives hangs in the balance, the stories of all five unwind, drawn together by connection and coincidence into a web of love, grief, disenchantment and hope that perfectly represents the joys and tragedies of small town life.

**This Must Be the Place** by Maggie O’Farrell

Meet Daniel Sullivan, a man with a complicated life. A New Yorker living in the wilds of Ireland, he has children he never sees in California, a father he loathes in Brooklyn, and a wife, Claudette, who is a reclusive ex–film star given to pulling a gun on anyone who ventures up their driveway. Claudette was once the most glamorous and infamous woman in cinema before she staged her own disappearance and retreated to blissful seclusion in an Irish farmhouse.

But the life Daniel and Claudette have so carefully constructed is about to be disrupted by an unexpected discovery about a woman Daniel lost touch with twenty years ago. This revelation will send him off-course, far away from wife, children, and home. Will his love for Claudette be enough to bring him back?

**Some Rain Must Fall** by Karl Ove Knausgaard

At twenty, Karl Ove moves to Bergen. As the youngest student to be admitted to the prestigious Writing Academy, he arrives full of excitement and writerly aspirations.

Soon though, he is stripped of youthful illusions. His writing is revealed to be puerile and clichéd, and his social efforts are a dismal failure. Awkward in company and hopeless with women, he drowns his shame in drink and rock music.

Then, little by little, things take a brighter turn. He falls in love, gives up writing in favour of the steady rewards of literary criticism, and the beginnings of an adult life take shape.

That is, until his self-destructive binges and the irresistible lure of the writer’s struggle pull him back.

In this fifth instalment of the My Struggle cycle, Karl Ove discloses his personal and often deeply shameful battles with introversion, alcohol abuse, infidelity and artistic ambition.