

Float away from your front porch or armchair with these 6 new paperbacks

By **Moira Macdonald**
The Seattle Times

Time again for a paperback roundup! Here are six new ones, all guaranteed to take you somewhere far from your armchair or front porch.

"TRANSCENDENT KINGDOM" BY YAA GYASI (Vintage, \$16)

The author of "Homegoing" returns with the tale of a graduate neuroscience student from an immigrant evangelical family.

"THE CITY WE BECAME" BY N.K. JEMISIN (Orbit, \$17.99)

Jemison won three Hugo Awards in a row for her "Broken Earth" trilogy; now the acclaimed science fiction/fantasy author launches a new Great Cities series, examining the idea of a city's soul. Her first book "unfolds

in present-day New York City, with its crosstown bus delays, hot garbage reek and all its other mundane problems — plus one large, looming supernatural one," wrote New York Times reviewer Amal El-Mohtar.

"VESPER FLIGHTS" BY HELEN MACDONALD (Grove Atlantic, \$17)

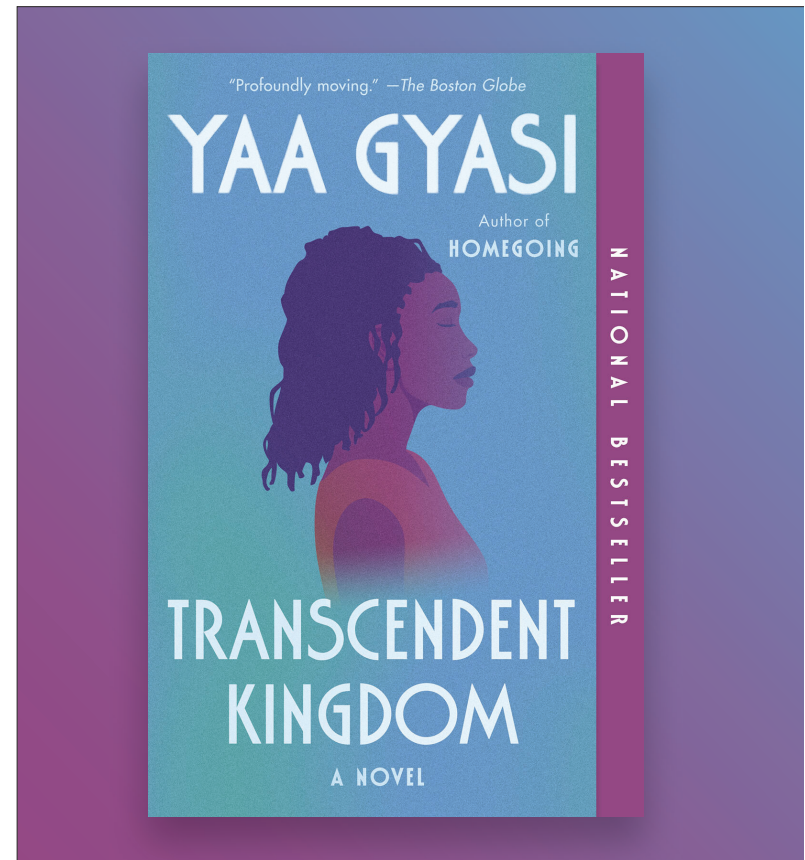
Macdonald, author of the bestselling "H Is for Hawk" (and no relation), here collects 41 new and previously published essays about nature. "For all its elegiac sentences and gray moods, 'Vesper Flights' is a book of tremendous purpose," wrote Washington Post reviewer Jake Cline. "Throughout these essays, Macdonald revisits the idea that as a writer it is her responsibility to take stock of what's happening to the natural world and to convey the value of the living things within it."

"AGENT SONYA: THE SPY NEXT DOOR" BY BEN MACINTYRE (Crown, \$18)

In 1930, a pregnant young wife — a German expatriate in Shanghai — accepted an offer to become a Communist spy; over the next decade, she raised her children and became a colonel in the Red Army, spying in the Soviet Union, Switzerland, London and rural Oxfordshire, England.

"THE KINGDOM" BY JO NESBO (Vintage Crime, \$17)

The prolific Norwegian crime author is best known for the Harry Hole series, but this one's a stand-alone, involving brothers Roy and Carl. The book "puts all the murky, violent twists on brotherly love that you'd expect from this leading exponent of Nordic noir," wrote



Penguin Random House/TNS

Kirkus Reviews, which named it one of the best mystery/thrillers of 2020.

"FORTUNE FAVORS THE DEAD" BY STEPHEN SPOTSWOOD (Vintage Crime, \$16)

One more mystery: I discovered this zippy series opener, set in 1940s New York, last spring and devoured every

word, falling hard for Willowjean "Will" Parker, a former circus knife thrower (!) turned assistant to famous New York detective Lillian Pentecost. It's great, jazzy fun — Spotswood has a knack for the sort of phrase you'd hear in an exceptionally smart film noir — and you'll want to get this one read (and reread) before the sequel, "Murder Under Her Skin," arrives in December.

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