YA Em
Emezi, Akwaeke. Bitter. Bitter attends Eucalyptus, a special school where she can focus on her painting surrounded by other creative teens. But outside this haven, the streets are filled with protests. Her instinct is to stay safe within the walls of her school, but her friends aren’t willing to settle for a world that’s so far away from what they deserve. She isn’t sure where she belongs—in the studio or in the streets. Gr. 9+

YA Ha
Hammonds-Reed, Christina. The Black Kids. With the Rodney King riots closing in on high school senior Ashley and her family, the privileged bubble she has enjoyed, protecting her from the difficult realities most black people face, begins to crumble. Gr. 9+

YA Jo
Jones, Kimberly. I’m Not Dying With You Tonight. Lena, who is black, knows she’s going to make it big. Campbell, who is white, is just trying to get through the year at her new school. When both girls attend the Friday-night football game, neither expects everything to descend into sudden mass chaos that unexpectedly throws them together. When the city is up in flames, they only have each other to rely on if they’re going to survive the night. Gr. 9+

YA La
Lathain, Irene. African Town. Chronicling the story of the last Africans brought illegally to America in 1860. Gr. 7+

YA Mo
Moulite, Maika. One of the Good Ones. When teen social activist and history buff Kezi Smith is killed, her devastated sister Happi and their family are left reeling. Happi begins to question the idealized way her sister is remembered. Perfect. Angelic. One of the good ones. Why are only certain people deemed worthy to be missed? Happi and her sister Genny embark on a journey using an heirloom copy of The Negro Motorist Green Book as their guide. Gr. 9+

YA St
Stone, Nic. Dear Martin. Writing letters to the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., seventeen-year-old college-bound Justyce McAllister struggles to face the reality of race relations today and how they are shaping him. Gr. 9+

YA Wi
Williams-Garcia, Rita. A Sitting in St. James. In 1860 Louisiana, eighty-year-old Madame Sylvie decides to sit for a portrait, as horrific stories that span generations from the big house and the fields are revealed. Gr. 10+

YA Zo
Zoboi, Ibi. Punching the Air. Novel in verse. Amal has always been an artist and a poet. Even in a diverse art school, he’s seen as disruptive and unmotivated by a biased system. One night, an altercation in a gentrifying neighborhood escalates into tragedy. At 16 years old, Amal’s bright future is upended: he is convicted of a crime he didn’t commit and sent to prison. Despair and rage almost sink him until he turns to the refuge of his words, his art. Gr. 9+

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