

My Name is Lucy Barton

By Elizabeth Strout

Set in the mid-1980s, Lucy Barton, hospitalized for nine weeks, is surprised when her estranged mother shows up at her bedside. Her mother talks of local gossip, but underneath the banalities, Lucy senses the love that cannot be expressed. This is the story that Lucy must write about, the one story that has shaped her entire life.

April 2017 WITCC Lifelong Learning Book Club Read

Read-alikes compiled by Sioux City Public Library Staff

Character-Driven Novels with a Melancholy Tone:

[*The Memory Keeper's Daughter*](#) by Kim Edwards (Fic Edw)
In a tale spanning twenty-five years, a doctor delivers his newborn twins during a snowstorm and, rashly deciding to protect his wife from their baby daughter's affliction with Down Syndrome, turns her over to a nurse who secretly raises the child.

[*And Every Morning the Way Home Gets Longer and Longer*](#) by Fredrik Backman (New Fic Bac)
A portrait of an elderly man's struggle to hold on to his most precious memories, and his family's efforts to care for him even as they must find a way to let go.

[*The Light Between Oceans*](#) by M.L. Stedman (Fic Ste)
After moving with his wife to an isolated Australian lighthouse where they suffer fertility problems, Tom allows his wife to claim an infant that has washed up on the shore, a decision that has devastating consequences.

[*The Age of Miracles*](#) by Karen Thompson Walker (Fic Wal)
On an ordinary Saturday, 11-year-old Julia awakes to the news that the earth's rotation is slowing and that the environment has been thrown into disarray. With the apocalypse looming, Julia is forced to cope with the deepening fissures in her family, the loss of friends, the hopeful anguish of love and other normal disasters of everyday life.


Moving Mother/Daughter Stories:

[*Where We Belong*](#) by Emily Giffin (Fic Gif)
Marian Caldwell is a 36-year-old TV producer living her dream in New York City. But one night, she answers a knock on the door...only to find Kirby Rose, an 18-year-old girl with a key to the past that Marian thought she'd locked away forever.

[*Once Upon a River*](#) by Bonnie Jo Campbell (Fic Cam)
Margo Crane, a beautiful 16-year-old and uncanny markswoman, takes to the Stark River after being complicit in the death of her father and embarks on an odyssey in search of the alcoholic self-indulgent mother who abandoned her.

[*We Are All Welcome Here*](#) by Elizabeth Berg (Fic Ber)
It is the summer of 1964 and tensions are mounting over civil-rights demonstrations occurring across Mississippi. But in Paige Dunn's small, ramshackle house, there are more immediate concerns. Challenged by the effects of polio she contracted while pregnant, Paige is determined to live as normal a life as possible and to raise her daughter, Diana, in the way she sees fit—with the support of her tough-talking black caregiver, Peacie.

[*The Year of Magical Thinking*](#) by Joan Didion (813.54 Did)
An autobiographical portrait of marriage and motherhood, detailing Didion's struggle to come to terms with life and death, illness, sanity, personal upheaval, and grief.

More great read-alike suggestions on the back 



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Read-alikes compiled by Sioux City Public Library Staff Continued

Lyrical Tales of Forgiveness:

[*The Language of Flowers*](#) by Vanessa Diffenbaugh (Fic Dif)
Abandoned at birth and declared “unadoptable”, Victoria has grown up in a string of bad foster homes. Her last foster parent, Elizabeth, gives her a chance at a real home life and teaches her the Victorian meanings of flowers. As she turns 18 and is forced to support herself, Victoria lands a job with a florist and uses her knowledge of flowers to slowly make her way back into the world, overcoming the challenges of her past.

[*The Last Time They Met*](#) by Anita Shreve (Fic Shr)
A story of a highly charged and doomed love affair, told in reverse time and starting with the present. Linda and Thomas, now in their fifties and both distinguished writers, reconnect at a literary festival. Having met only three times in the last thirty-five years, Thomas and Linda have married others, had children, and endured tragedies that have etched their lives with pain.

[*And the Dark Sacred Night*](#) by Julia Glass (Fic Gla)
Kit Noonan, a 40-year-old unemployed college professor and father of twins, is in need of a jolt to his life. At the urging of his wife, he begins a journey through complicated family relationships to track down a father he never knew, against his mother’s wishes. With the help of his stepfather, Kit finds his paternal grandmother, a devout Catholic woman, still grieving the loss of her son—Kit’s father, to AIDS.

[*Mountain Time*](#) by Ivan Doig (Fic Doi)
Mitch and Lexa, two transplanted Montanans living overbusy lives in Seattle, are called back to Montana by Mitch’s father, Lyle, who is dying of leukemia and anxious to sell his land in the Rockies to a gravel company. Lyle’s death unleashes complex memories for the family, and tensions between Mitch, Lexa, and her sister Mariah come to a head on Phantom Woman Mountain, where Lyle has ordered that his ashes be scattered.

Stories Set in 1980s New York City:

[*Tuesday Nights in 1980*](#) by Molly Prentiss (New Fic Pre)
This novel follows a colorful love triangle set in the gritty, energetic, and exciting art scene of New York City at the dawn of the 1980’s. Lucy, a lovely innocent from Idaho experiencing life in the big city; James, an up-and-coming art critic with a unique gift; and Raul, a painter who has fled the war in Argentina, find their lives entwined in many ways.

[*Tell the Wolves I’m Home*](#) by Carol Rifka Brunt (Fic Bru)
Shy and introverted, 14-year-old June is grieving the death of her beloved uncle Finn, a famous painter who died of AIDS. June is shocked when her uncle’s partner, Toby—the man her mother blames for her uncle’s death, secretly contacts her to give her several gifts that Finn had left for her.

[*The Bonfire of the Vanities*](#) by Tom Wolfe (Fic Wol)
On a clandestine date with his mistress one night, top Wall Street investment banker Sherman McCoy misses his turn on the freeway and gets lost in the South Bronx; he finds himself arrested following a freak accident and becomes involved with prosecutors, politicians, the media, and assorted hustlers. A classic exploration of New York City’s class, racial and political structure in the 1980s.

[*The Fall of Princes*](#) by Robert Goolrick (New Fic Goo)
Rooney, a successful Wall Street trader in the 1980’s, tells his story through a series of vignettes that recount his experiences—the rise to great wealth, his recklessly extravagant and wasteful lifestyle, and his fateful mistake with a powerful client that ends his career.