1 FIRST LADY OF THE BLACK PRESS
Ethel Payne finally gets her due in *Eye on the Struggle* (Amistad, $25.95). Biographer James McGrath Morris traces the fascinating life of the pioneering journalist, who blazed trails as the Chicago Defender’s Washington correspondent. Over her decades-long career, Payne brought readers eyewitness accounts of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the Little Rock school crisis and more. President Lyndon B. Johnson paid homage to the Chicago native by presenting her with a pen he used in signing the Civil Rights Act.

2 THE HAVES AND THE HAVE NOTS
Lani Guinier, Harvard’s first Black female tenured law professor, has the gift of dazzling us in speech and on the page. In *The Tyranny of the Meritocracy: Democratizing Higher Education in America* (Beacon Press, $24.95), she argues that the systems that dictate admission to America’s esteemed institutions are a pipeline for admitting privileged individuals, ensuring future generations of inequity and little diversity. This one is a #mustread!

3 STRONGER THAN PRIDE
LaShonda Katrice Barnett blends fiction and reality to great effect in her novel *Jamil on the Vine* (Grove Press, $24). We chart the jaw-dropping journey of Ivoe Williams, who becomes obsessed with newspapers while growing up in early twentieth century east Texas. After earning a scholarship to college, Ivoe settles in Kansas City, where she and Ona, her former teacher and lover, found Jamil on the Vine, the first female-run African-American newspaper in 1919. Jamil is as addictive as your mom’s fresh-baked buttermilk biscuits, and just as delicious.

4 FAMILY AFFAIR
One of the African writers I discovered in high school was Bessie Head. Her stories had a profound impact on me because she wrote about Black people as we see ourselves, instead of what others might think about us. Twenty-five years later, I felt the same joy reading E.C. Osondu’s latest work. The home in the magisterial *This House Is Not for Sale* (Harper, $25.99) becomes much more than a building. The structure defines and divides a family over generations. In fewer than 200 pages, Osondu has more to say about life and love than many of the classic novels we adore, of which this is a modern one.

5 ROSA PARKS REMEMBERED
No matter how many times I hear the story of Rosa Parks’s quiet defiance on a segregated Montgomery, Alabama, bus, I can always hear it again. I was equally excited to receive *Our Auntie Rosa* (Tarcher/Penguin, $24.95) by Sheila McCauley Keys with Eddie B. Allen, Jr. This tome is as elegant as the woman it celebrates. In *Our Auntie Rosa*, we discover much more about the civil rights icon than previously published.

6 FIND YOUR PURPOSE
After reading *The Other Wes Moore*, I didn’t think there was any more the author could say to top that coup de grâce. I was wrong. In *The Work* (Spiegel & Grau, $25), the former Army captain and White House fellow to Condoleezza Rice uses his life to demonstrate that there’s nothing that can hold us back from our true path. He shares lessons he’s learned from today’s change agents, including Esther Benjamin, a Sri Lankan immigrant who rose to help lead the Peace Corps.

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SCENE: PATRIK'S PICKS

7 SOULS OF BLACK FOLKS
If you love Black culture, you will find a gift on every page of SOS—Calling All Black People: A Black Arts Movement Reader (University of Massachusetts Press, $34.95). Edited by John H. Bracey, Jr., Sonia Sanchez and James Smethurst, SOS documents one of the most significant cultural movements in American history. The stellar list of writers includes Amiri Baraka, Ed Bullins, Nikki Giovanni, Woodie King, Haki Madhubuti, Sonia Sanchez, Askia Toure and Val Gray Ward. For those of us of a certain age, this is the collection of radical thinking about the ways that we viewed our people and the ways we viewed ourselves that was never on our high school or college syllabus, that we learned on our own and that changed us forever.

8 BLOODY SUNDAY
Lynda Blackmon Lowery was jailed nine times before her fifteenth birthday. Why? Securing the right for us to have the privilege of casting a vote. She recounts her story in the stunning memoir Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom: My Story of the 1965 Selma Voting Rights March (Dial, $19.99). If you’ve ever seen Eyes on the Prize, the award-winning documentary about the evolution of the Civil Rights Movement, and wanted more perspective, then you’re in luck. In this retelling, which mixes narrative and images, Lowery shows both young and mature readers what courage looks like at any age, and why it’s important that we take the act of voting seriously, given the many lives lost and the amount of blood that was shed for us to be guaranteed that.

9 DARK & LOVELY
Unlike the moving documentary of the same name, you won’t need a box of tissues on hand when paging through Dark Girls (Amistad, $35). Film director Bill Duke, Sheila P. Moses and Barron Claiborne present a celebration of stunning beauties, from Lupita Nyong'o to Vanessa Williams to ESSENCE's own Mikki Taylor. Filled with rich, vibrant, unforgettable photos of more than 75 remarkable women, Dark Girls is the perfect accessory to dress up your coffee table.

10 LITTLE MALCOLM
Ilyasah Shabazz’s X: A Novel (Candlewick Press, $16.99) is a moving account of her father Malcolm X’s formative years. Throw out much of what you thought you knew about Malcolm Little’s early days. (I know I had to, given I had seen Spike Lee’s film umpteen times and read Alex Haley’s bio nearly as much.) Shabazz and coauthor Kekla Magoon capture the future leader’s drive and his desire to dream even after growing up in the harshest circumstances. Though written for a young audience, this is a page-turner I would recommend you read along with your children.