13 Books You Should Read This Fall



I Read This Over Shabbos is a weekly newsletter about Jewish book culture, book recommendations, and modern ideas. Receive this free newsletter every week in your inbox by subscribing here. Questions, comments, or feedback? Email Rivka at Shabbosreads@18forty.org.

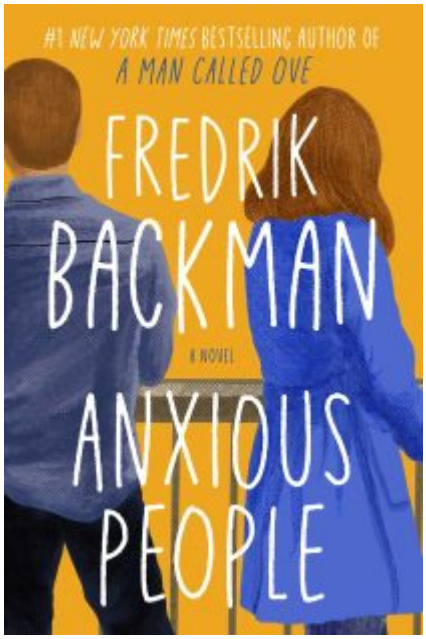
Last week, we shared what we're reading, what's been on our minds, and how we're easing back into the slow, steady rhythm of autumn.

This week, it's your turn. Inspired by a post from 18Forty's previous Shabbos Reads Editor, Arty, I pored over our Twitter feed and gathered a handful of books our IRTOS community has been reading lately. (And if you don't already, follow us on Instagram for more thoughtful, book-related content!)

This list reflects the breadth of the 18Forty community—spanning fiction, Torah, physics, history, and more. If you're still searching for the perfect book to curl up with as the skies turn gray and the leaves change (something I deeply miss about America), try one of these and see where it takes you.

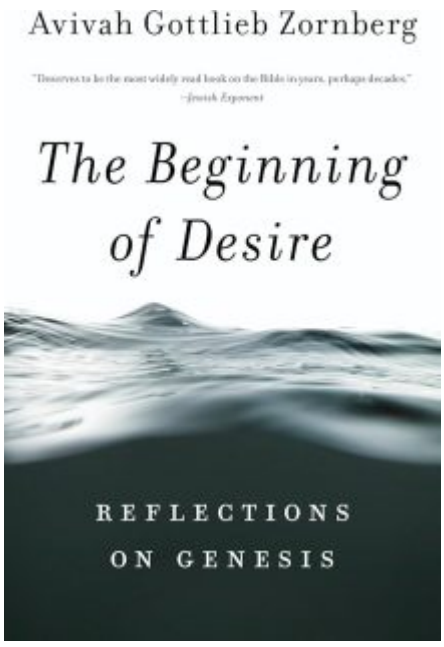
Anxious People **by Fredrik Backman**

A witty, heartfelt story of strangers united by a failed bank robbery who discover unexpected connection and hope.



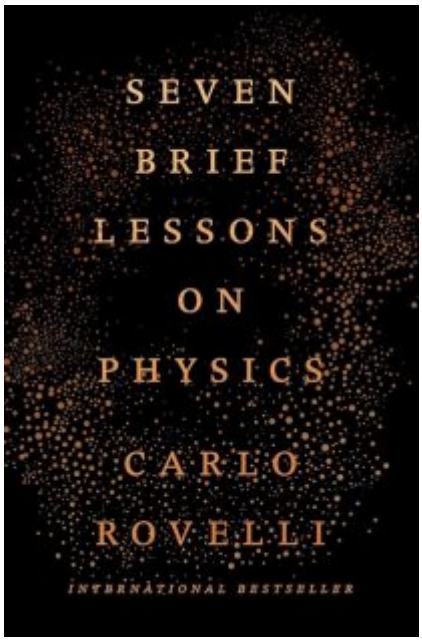
The Beginning of Desire **by Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg**

A psychological exploration of Bereshit, revealing how human desire and divine encounter shape our lives.



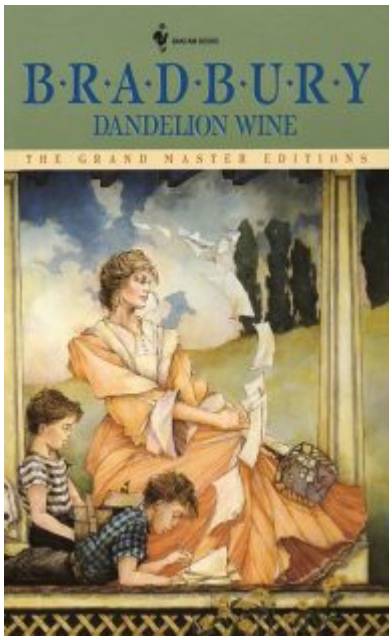
Seven Brief Lessons on Physics **by Carlo Rovelli**

A lyrical, accessible meditation on modern physics that distills relativity, quantum theory, and the nature of time into reflections on the universe and our place within it.



Dandelion Wine **by Ray Bradbury**

A tender coming-of-age story capturing one boy’s magical summer in a small Midwestern town, where moments of joy, wonder, and loss reveal the beauty and fragility of life.

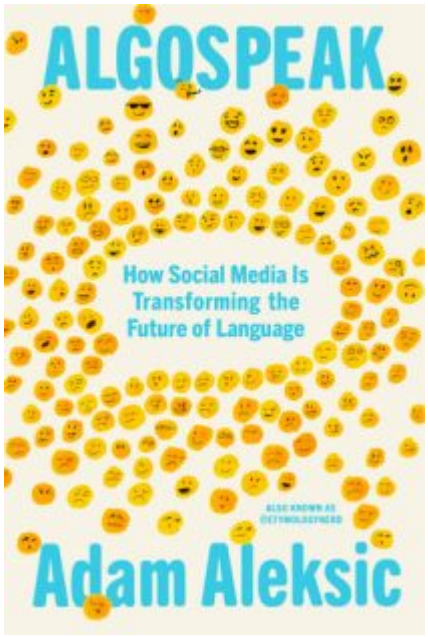


Kabbalah and the Rupture of Modernity **by Eli Rubin**

A penetrating study of how Chabad Hasidism reimagines Kabbalistic themes—especially *tzimtzum*—to grapple with the existential and spiritual challenges of modernity.

Algospeak **by Adam Aleksic**

A spirited exploration of how social-media algorithms are actively shaping our language—creating new slang, coded speech, and communication habits in the digital age.



The Sabbath **by Abraham Joshua Heschel**

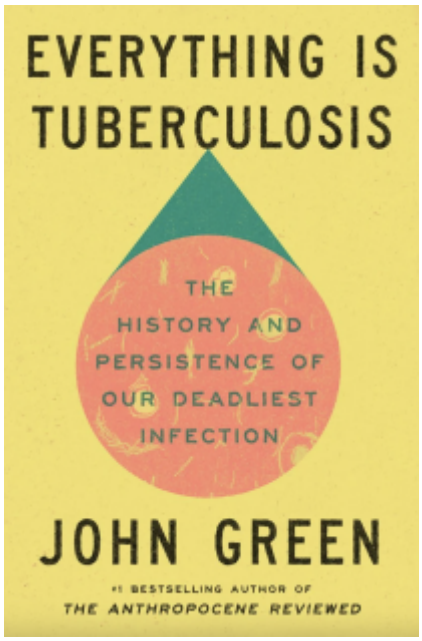
A contemplative reflection on Shabbos, presented as a “sanctuary in time,” elevating the sacredness of time over space and material accumulation.

(I personally think this is the ideal fall read!)



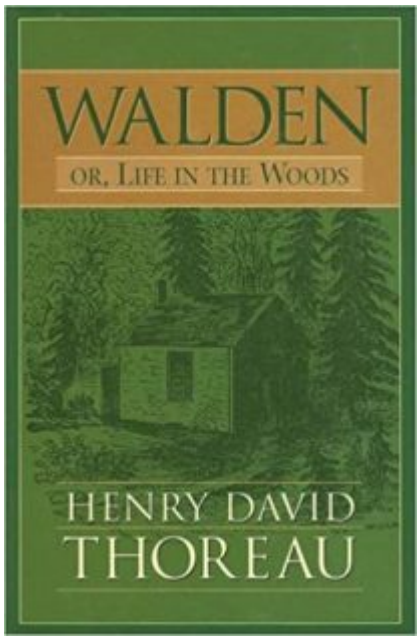
Everything is Tuberculosis **by John Green**

A powerful blend of memoir and science revealing how tuberculosis endures as a global killer through inequality and human failure.



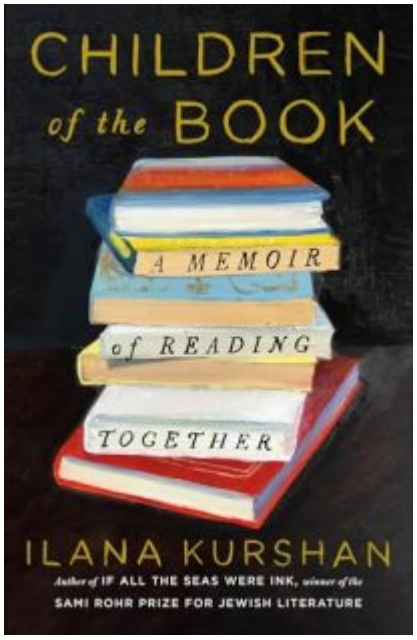
Walden **by Henry David Thoreau**

Henry David Thoreau’s reflection on simple living and self-reliance drawn from his time living at Walden Pond.



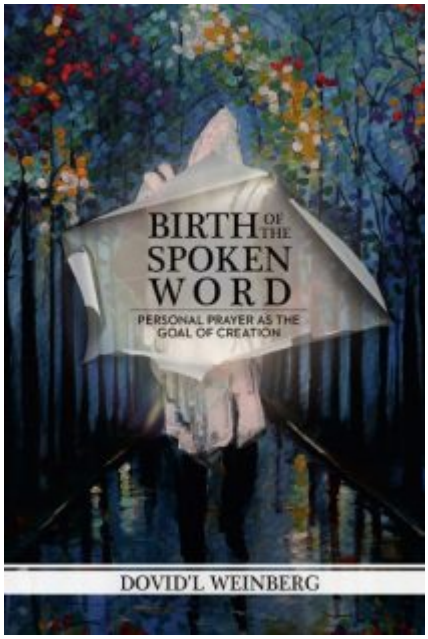
Children of the Book **by Ilana Kurshan**

Ilana Kurshan uses shared reading with her children—both sacred and secular—as a way to deepen their bond, explore literature's power, and connect family life to ancient wisdom.



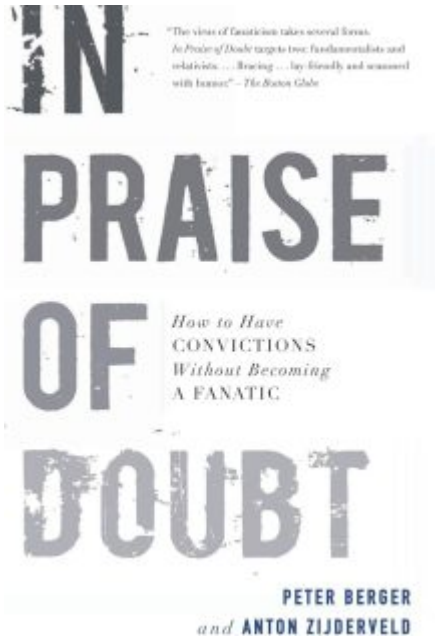
Birth of the Spoken Word **by Dovid'l Weinberg**

A profound exploration of how prayer lies at the heart of creation, blending rich Jewish scholarship with spiritual insight.



In Praise of Doubt **by Peter Berger and Anton Zijderveld**

A guide to navigating between extremist certainty and rootless relativism, showing how you can hold convictions without turning them into fanaticism.



The Day We Found the Universe **by Marcia Bartusiak**

A sweeping historical narrative of early 20th-century astronomy, when pioneering scientists revealed that our universe is expanding beyond the confines of our galaxy.

