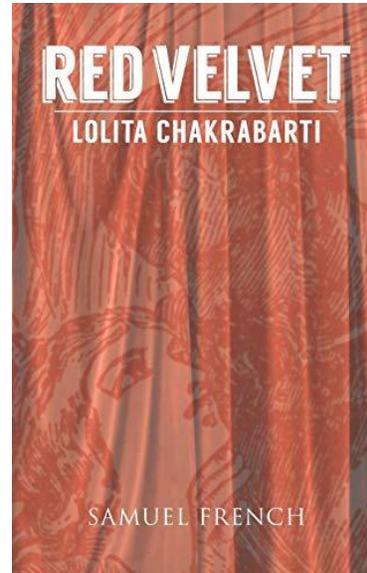


1. **Red Velvet by Lolita Chakrabarti**

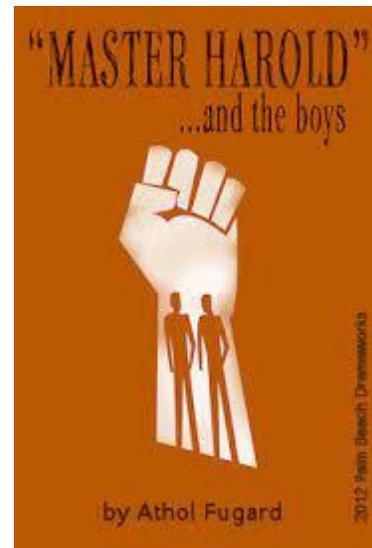
This historical fiction play Lolita Chakrabarti details the story of Ira Aldridge, the first Black actor to play the title role in Othello on the West End, London. Set in the 1800's, this play takes place when slavery in the British colonies was still legal, and the decision to feature a Black actor in a prominent role was met with opposition from the public, critics, and cast. Ira's position becomes



even more tenuous as romantic tension begins to form between he and his white co-star playing Desdemona. This play examines issues of racism and the political nature of casting and theatre.

2. **Master Harold & the Boys by Athol Fugard**

This play by South-African writer Athol Fugard features two Black men, Sam and Willie, waiting in a closed tea shop with Hally, the teenage boy of the family they serve in South Africa, 1950. Sam is the wisest of the three, and guides the others in philosophical discourse about ballroom dancing and history as they wait for news about Hally's father in the hospital. Hally's father is a

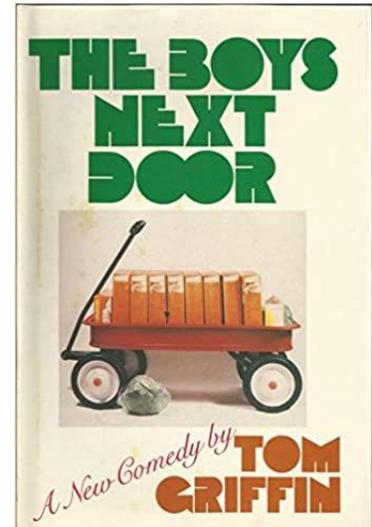


tyrannical drunk and he hopes that he will not be discharged. In spite of the friendliness between the three, class and race prove to be dividing factors between them. And if Hally can't receive paternal love and care from his real father, could Sam be the father

figure he needs? This play explores issues of racism, classism, and the family we choose vs. the family we can't.

3. **The Boys Next Door by Tom Griffin**

This play set in New England in 1989 follows the lives of four men who are mentally impaired, living together in a community for persons with special needs. Each person has specific goals and must grapple with issues of stigma and their own perceptions of the world to try and achieve them. This play filled with heart brings to light the experiences of just a few different people with special needs as they deal with issues of family, trust, and romance.



4. **A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry**



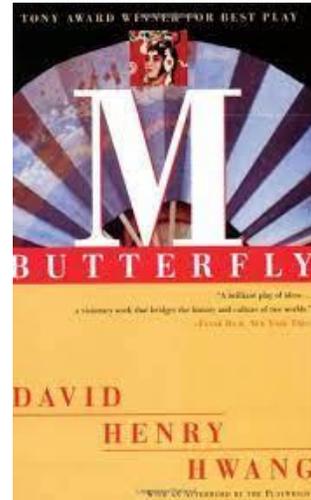
This play features the Younger family, an impoverished African-American family living in the South-Side of Chicago in the mid-1900's. Mama (Lena) Younger is the elderly

matriarch whose husband passes away, leaving the family a large sum of money from his life insurance check. Mama spends half of the money on a new house for the family in an all-white neighborhood, and gives the rest to her adult son, Walter to use as he sees fit. But the family soon realizes that it's more than just money that makes it challenging to

cross racial lines. This play addressing issues of racism, economic inequality, and Black identity.

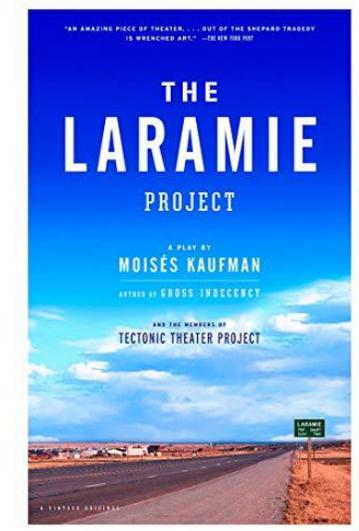
5. **M. Butterfly by David Henry Hwang**

This play is a deconstruction of the opera, *Madama Butterfly*. In the play, Rene Gallimard is a French diplomat who falls in love with Chinese opera performer, Song, while visiting her country on business. Little does he know that Song is actually a communist spy trying to illicit information from him. He's also unaware that Song is actually a man, and is so in love with Song that he is in complete denial of Song's true gender. This play explores issues of Western cultural dominance, East-Asian cultural identity, LGBT issues, and racial tensions.



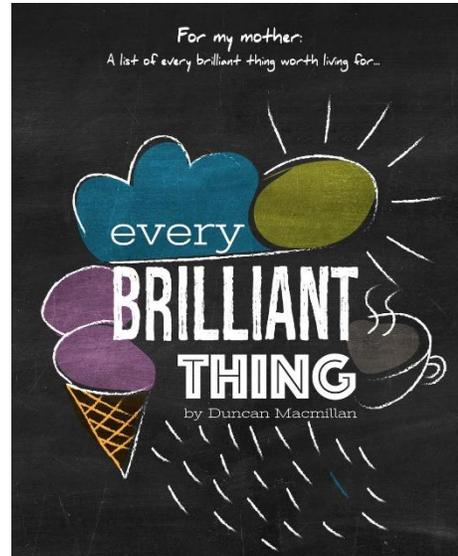
6. **The Laramie Project by Moises Kaufman**

This play is a piece of verbatim theatre, a form of theatre which is comprised of real interview excerpts. A gay man was murdered in Laramie, WY and the people in the town, parents of the alleged victim and aggressor, witnesses, and police all have a story and perspective to share. Was Matthew Shepard's murder a hate crime? And what does this incident reveal about homophobia in midwestern America? This play explores issues of homophobia, misinformation, and hate crimes.



7. **Every Brilliant Thing by Duncan Macmillan**

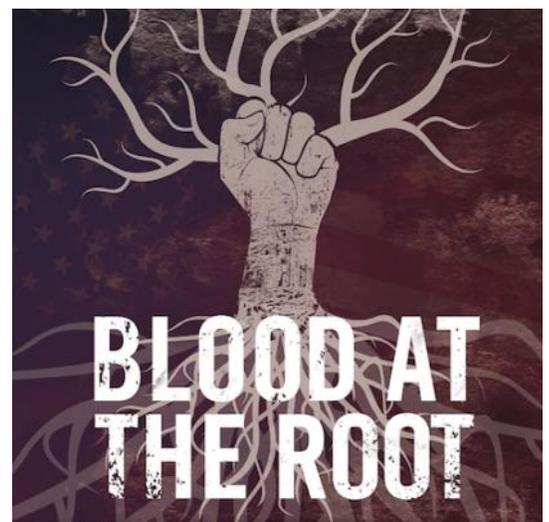
Every Brilliant Thing is a comic memoir, told by a single narrator, about depression. Their mother attempts suicide while they are still a child, and they are inspired to write a list of every reason to keep living. Ranging from the simplest pleasures to moments that come once in a lifetime, the list grows and ages with the narrator, as they learn



how to live with their own depression. Sometimes they can add several things at a time, and sometimes it takes years to think of anything new. They find love, lose it, and finally must help their father through the death of their mother. But no matter the personal struggle, new brilliance comes from the most unexpected places. This play deals with issues regarding trauma and mental health. The narrator is intentionally left nameless, and has no specific gender, ethnicity, or sexuality.

8. **Blood at the Root by Dominique Morisseau**

This play is based on the true story of the Jena Six, a group of Black students who were initially charged with attempted murder for starting a fight on a college campus after being provoked with nooses hanging from a tree. This play addresses issues of racism, the criminal justice system, and Black family life.



9. Forever by Dael Orlandersmith



This autobiographical one-woman play by Dael Orlandersmith follows her on her journey visiting the graves of some of her favorite artists and writers buried in Paris. Orlandersmith considers how it is that we form such emotional bonds to people we have never met, and life's bitterest lessons that she learned from one of the closest people to her. Orlandersmith continues to discuss and describe her relationship with her abusive mother, the

struggles of growing up in Harlem, and the pain and beauty of both. This play examines issues of abuse, Black identity, and rising through past trauma.

10. Orlando by Virginia Woolf, Adapted by Sarah Ruhl

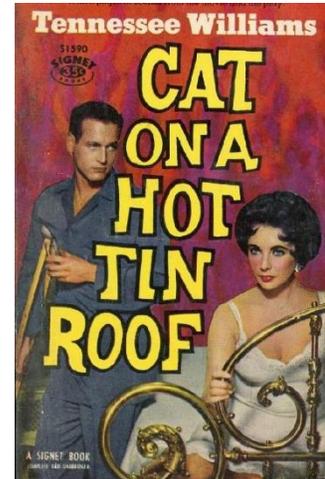
Orlando is a young English nobleman who ends up in a love affair with Queen Elizabeth. After his time in court is done, Orlando continues to meet other nobles of Europe and find and lose love, until his exploits eventually turn him into a woman via metamorphosis. As a woman, Orlando travels to



America and discovers more about her feminine side and what her gender and sexuality mean. This fantastical theatrical adaptation of the book by Virginia Woolf examines issues of gender, cultural perceptions of gender as binary, and LGBT issues.

11. Cat on a Hot Tin Roof by Tennessee Williams

This play is a family drama set in Mississippi in the mid-1900's. Big Daddy is a wealthy landowner, and the family doctor has informed the family that he may not have long to live. Big Daddy wants to leave his estate to Brick, his oldest son, but Brick's recent descent into alcoholism has the family trying to change that decision. Brick's wife, Maggie, wants to pull Brick out of his depression, start a family with him, and inherit the estate, but can't figure out the sudden cause of his change in demeanor. Will Brick take control of his life again? And what does his deceased friend, Skipper, have to do with his sudden, intense depression? This play examines issues of family politics, mental health, and LGBT issues.



12. Fences by August Wilson

This play offers a complex psychological tapestry of the mind of Troy Maxson. Troy is a working-class Black patriarch in the mid-1900's. After leading a troubled youth, Troy works hard to make sure that his family is provided for, at the expense of his emotional absence from them. When his family starts asking him for more emotional support, will Troy be able to overcome the trauma which has shaped his perception of what the ideal, self-made man is supposed to look like? This play deals with issues concerning trauma, family dynamics, perceptions of masculinity, socioeconomic inequality, racism, and Black identity.

