David Lipsky
Author of Alouf of Course You End Up Becoming Yourself
Suggests: This summer I'm going to be a sunburned Martin Amis packhorse. His new novel, The Pregnant Widow, will dent up the tote bag; there's also his great 1984 Money. Money is the best celebrity novel I know: the stars who demand and wheedle their way across his plot seem less like caricature and more like photorealism every year. Amis' narrator is all appetite—a mouth with hands and that's it, plus the loveliest prose voice since Humbert Humbert—for money, pornography, bad food, any stimulation. And he's exhausted by it. The vibe seems just right for this moody summer of loans being called, water going inky and the world turning slippery at the edges.

Michael Koryta
Author of So Cold the Rivers
Suggests: As the heat and humidity rise, I often find myself searching for a whiskey-soaked Southern gothic. The novel to which I've returned this summer is Provinces of Night by William Gay. Set in a gloriously depicted corner of rural Tennessee, Provinces of Night is a powerful epic featuring wayward brothers, voodoo hexes, a gifted banjo player, wounded lovers and some of the finest prose you'll ever encounter. Looking for summer atmosphere? Here's Gay on fireflies: "They seemed not separate entities but a single being, a moving river of light that flowed above the dark water like its negative image and attained a transient and fragile dominion over the provinces of night." Ready to take this one out to the screened-in porch yet?

David Mitchell
Author of The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet
Suggests: Here comes a summer without the faintest shadow of a deadline for me, so I'm ushering The Good Soldier Svejk by Jaroslav Hasek to the front of the queue. A friend described it as a Catch-22 of WWI, in which Svejk gets chap-finned in the cogs of the Austro-Hungarian war machine. The novel is meaty—more than 700 pages—but my friend assures me, it's funny, engaging and excellent company. Best of all, I have no reason to read this book other than "just because I want to."

Ann Brashares
Author of My Name Is Memory
Suggests: I've been thinking a lot about memory lately, which drew me to Speak, Memory by Vladimir Nabokov. I am enchanted by the lost world of his early childhood in St. Petersburg and Vyra and by the thrilling climb up the family tree, ornamented by glimpses of Dos toyesky (Nabokov's great-uncle was his jailer and lent him novels in prison), Tostovsky, Pushkin and Chekhov. I love the many places in which Nabokov summons the tininess Mmesy. She is Memory, daughter of Earth (Gaia), mother of Poetry (Erato), Music (Euterpe), History (Clio), Comedy (Thalia) and the rest of the nine Muses. That's about the loveliest conception of memory I can imagine.

Sebastian Junger
Author of Wargames
Suggests: Recently I have been re-reading RadicalHope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation by Jonathan Lear. Don't be alarmed by its grimy academic title; it is one of the most profound and elegantly written books to come out in decades. The book discusses a Crow Indian leader named Plenty Coups, who led his people through their brutal transition from a nomadic hunting culture to confinement on a government reservation. This is not a work of history or anthropology, however, but an inquiry into how an entire society can radically transform itself in order to survive. Lear's book is visionary and—if you take its message to heart—transformative. He has done one of those rare things: produced a work that applies to literally every person on the planet.

Mary Pols
Every summer I allow myself just one new hardback. This year's was Tom Rachman's The Imperfectionists, a wickedly astute novel that takes a scathing yet fond look at a floundering Rome newspaper.

Radhika Jones
I'm going to take them to the beach and happily refresh my memory.