

# myTunes

ERICKA MCINTYRE

## “Every Day I Write the Book...”

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Good writing is good writing, whether in the pages of a book or in the verses of a song. My favorite songs tell great stories, and my favorite books are lyrical. So here are the soundtracks to three of them.

### Just Kids by Patti Smith

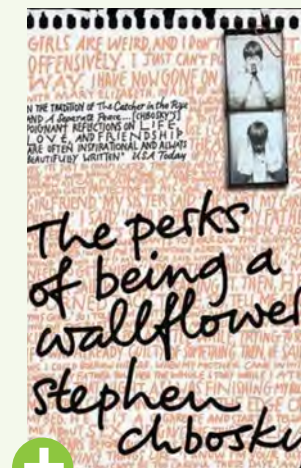
One of the best, most important albums in history is *Horses* (1975), the debut album by Patti Smith. Its combination of punk rock and poetic lyrics had immeasurable influence on the New York music scene in the 1970s—and in every decade since its release. The album also features one of the most iconic cover images of all time: Smith staring at you in a photo

taken by Robert Mapplethorpe, for whom Smith gives a requiem in her gripping memoir, *Just Kids* (2010).

Equally about Smith’s journey to becoming an artist, the book is by turns lyrical and gut-wrenching—just like Smith’s music. Listen to her hit “Because the Night” (*Easter*, 1978), in which the desperate edge in her voice reminds us there’s no moment but this one. (Fun fact: this song was cowritten by Bruce Springsteen.) Smith’s latest album, *Banga*, was released in 2012.

### *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky

When was the last time someone gave you a really good mix tape? Chbosky does this for readers in this often-banned coming-of-age novel. Protagonists Charlie and Sam have great taste in music—the Smiths, Nick Drake, Ride—and they spend much of the novel sharing it with one another (and with us).



Today, I think they’d be listening to acts like Camera Obscura, whose latest album, *Desire Lines*, was released this past summer; The Yugos, whose current album, *Life Is Awesome and Then You Live Forever*, recalls the 1980s New Wave that Sam and Charlie loved (and with lyrics like “Let’s get married / And skip school!” was made for them); and Jessica Lea Mayfield, whose lovely and aching song “Our Hearts Are Wrong” could’ve been written for Charlie and Sam. The book contains a line that easily could be a lyric: “We accept the love we think we deserve.” God speaks to us in many voices—we need only listen. If God loves us in such a radical way, why accept anything less than what God wants for us: the whole world.

### *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

It wasn’t a success when it was released, but now Fitzgerald’s novel has permeated American culture. What other “failure” of a book has inspired so many albums and film adaptations? Case in point—this year’s *The Great Gatsby* from director Baz Luhrmann. The film’s main (and very modern) soundtrack has lots to get a party moving, from Jay-Z to Fergie. It also contains one of the best alternative songs of the year—“Young and Beautiful” by Lana Del Rey—the perfect distillation of Daisy and Gatsby’s folly and doom.

Those who crave the jazz of the *Gatsby* era itself should snap up two more records, both by the Bryan Ferry Orchestra—*Yellow Cocktail Music* and *The Jazz Age*. +

