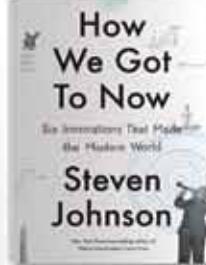
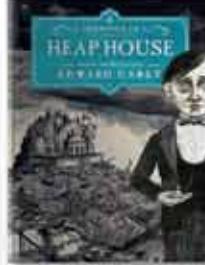
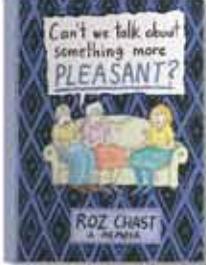
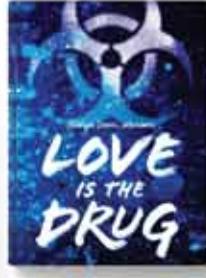
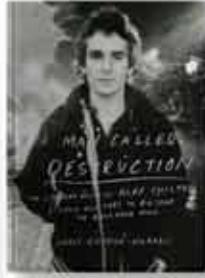
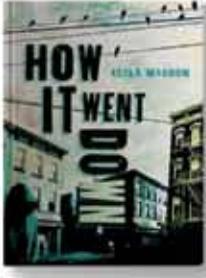
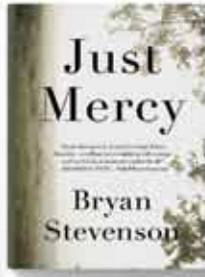
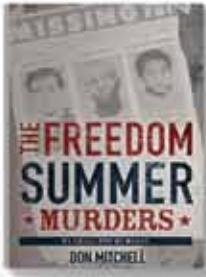
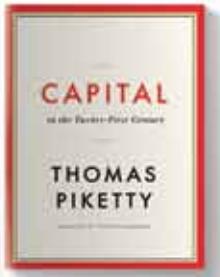
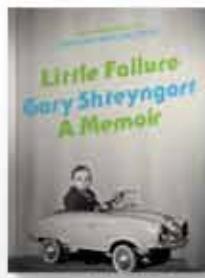
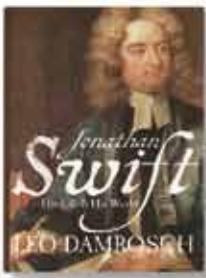
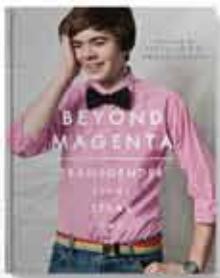


# KIRKUS

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# REVIEWS



*The Best 100  
Nonfiction &  
Best 50 Teen  
Books of the  
Year **PLUS**  
Our Full  
December 1  
Issue*

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK:

# Looking Back, Looking Forward

BY CLAIBORNE SMITH



Photo courtesy Michael Thad Carter

Claiborne Smith

I RENEW MY COMPLAINT that the Best Books of 2014 issues are the most depressing ones of the entire year. These issues assemble all the most memorable books in one magazine; the Best Books issues are lasting documents of the ideas and trends we encountered this year. But the cavalcade of good book after good book in the pages of this issue—we feature the nonfiction and teen lists this time—just reminds me of all the books I wasn't able to read this year. That wouldn't be a problem if it were possible for book critics to stop and read everything they wanted to, but we move forward. So enjoy our editors' thoughtful selections and their ideas about which books really mattered this year (Pages 6 and 54). Here are a few January titles I'm excited about:

**Patton Oswalt**, *Silver Screen Fiend: Learning About Life from an Addiction to Film*: The comedian and actor calls this funny book “the dorkiest addiction memoir ever.” It’s about his younger days in the LA comedy scene, when he’d hang out at the New Beverly Cinema “seeking magical assistance” from movies, “often at the risk of career, life or relationships.”

**Miranda July**, *The First Bad Man*: I know people who think July’s work is too airy or kooky, but her new novel is more absorbing than her previous books. It stars another of July’s lonely, neurotic protagonists and the aggressively rude woman who moves into her house.

**Jill Leovy**, *Ghettoside: A True Story of Murder in America*: Leovy is a *Los Angeles Times* writer and editor whose debut book is an empathetic, literary account of a murder in South Central LA in which one black man murders another black man. The victim is the son of an LA policeman.

**Jennifer Niven**, *All the Bright Things*: A teen novel we starred about grief and young love in which a popular girl and a freaky boy develop an unlikely relationship. “Many teen novels touch on similar themes, but few do it so memorably,” our reviewer wrote.

**Stewart O’Nan**, *West of Sunset*: I’m a little worn out by the spate of fiction featuring writers or artists as heroes (*Loving Frank* and the books in its mold), but *West of Sunset*, about F. Scott Fitzgerald’s troubled days as a screenwriter, is full of subtle touches. If you do like novels with cultural figures as protagonist, try out *Amberst* by William Nicholson (out on Feb. 10), *Dorothy Parker Drank Here* by Ellen Meister (Feb. 24) or *Mr. Mac and Me* (about artist and architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh), on sale Jan. 27.

**Roger Cohen**, *The Girl from Human Street: Ghosts of Memory in a Jewish Family*: We starred the *New York Times* columnist’s latest, which spans three continents in Cohen’s search for the links between his family’s history of mental illness and the Jewish sense of otherness.

**Harriet Lane**, *Her*: The lives of a desperate young mother and a seemingly chic, cultured woman intersect in dangerous ways in this thriller in which “even well-populated playgrounds begin to seep with danger,” our critic wrote.

**Marcus Sedgwick**, *The Ghosts of Heaven*: The Printz winner uses a similar narrative technique as in *Midwinterblood*, in which readers have to figure out how four stories relate. “Although Sedgwick gives a nod to teens, this complex masterpiece is for sophisticated readers of any age,” we wrote in a starred review.

## KIRKUS REVIEWS

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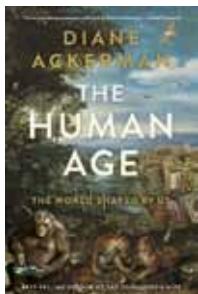
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## SPECIAL ISSUE: BEST BOOKS OF 2014

# NONFICTION



### THE HUMAN AGE *The World Shaped By Us*

Ackerman, Diane

Norton (352 pp.)

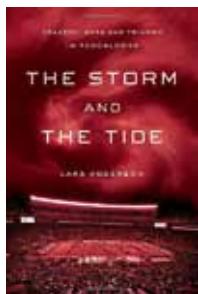
\$27.95 | Sep. 10, 2014

978-0-393-24074-0

A shimmering narrative about how the human and natural worlds coexist, coadapt and interactively thrive.

Prolific essayist and naturalist Ackerman (*One Hundred Names for Love*, 2011, etc.) offers absorbing commentary on both the positive and negative effects of human consumption and innovation on the Earth. We are an ever increasing population of “nomads with restless minds,” she writes, and her well-researched, substantiated observances take us from the outer reaches of space to view the world’s sprawling cities to the Toronto zoo, where the Orangutan Outreach initiative “Apps for Apes” improves the lives and expands the perceptions of primates whose population is declining. Humans have become “powerful agents of planetary change,” she writes, creating wildly fluctuating weather patterns and irreversible global warming, evidenced in our backyards and in the stratosphere and reflected in the migratory patterns of the animal world. Thankfully, Ackerman’s ecological forecast isn’t completely bleak; hope springs from fieldwork with geologists studying the fossilized record of the “Anthropocene” (the age of human-ecological impact), tech scientists creating bioengineered body organs from 3-D prints, and a French botanist whose research demonstrates the ability to “reconcile nature and man to a much greater degree” by rebalancing the delicate ecosystems damaged by invasive species. Ackerman optimistically presents innovations in “climate farming,” the exploding popularity of rooftop farming and the urban-landscaped oasis of Manhattan’s High Line. She also examines European attempts to harness everything from body heat to wind energy. Ackerman is less certain about the longevity of the animal world or the true charm of the robotic revolution, but whether debating the moral paradoxes of lab chimeras or the mating rituals of fruit flies, she’s a consummate professional with immense intelligence and infectious charm.

Through compelling and meditative prose, Ackerman delivers top-notch insight on the contemporary human condition. (This review was first published in the BEA/ALA 2014 issue.)



### THE STORM AND *The Tide Tragedy, Hope and Triumph in Tuscaloosa*

Anderson, Lars

Sports Illustrated Books (256 pp.)

\$25.95 | Aug. 19, 2014

978-1-61893-097-2

A longtime journalist for *Sports Illustrated* looks back at the tornado that devastated Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and the football team that helped the town heal.

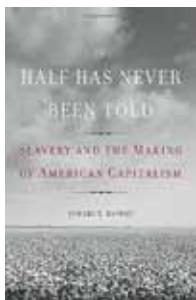
On April 27, 2011, “one of the deadliest [tornadoes] in the history of the South” touched down in the state’s fifth-largest city, destroying more than 5,700 homes and businesses, taking 7,000 jobs, killing 53, injuring thousands and leaving almost no one unaffected. Anderson (*The First Star: Red Grange and the Barnstorming Tour That Launched the NFL*, 2009, etc.) spends the opening chapters setting the scene for that awful day, introducing most of the people whose stories unfold at greater length as he charts the next 12 months at the University of Alabama and in this tightknit town forever altered by the whirlwind. It’s a two-pronged tale: the cleanup and rebuilding of T-town, including the slow recovery of some who lost loved ones, and the help and inspiration supplied by the Crimson Tide football team that went on to win the national championship. Players and coaches spent the summer working with citizens on relief efforts, reassuring victims, raising funds and rallying National Guard troops. In the process, they developed extraordinary team chemistry and the conviction that they were playing for something bigger than themselves. Readers understandably weary of the redemption-through-sports theme should know that it works spectacularly well here. First, in football-crazed Alabama, passion for the sport and respect for players and coaches run deep. Anderson supplies just enough explanatory material about the Tide’s history, its fabled coaches and honored traditions to demonstrate how Nick Saban and his players were perfectly poised to assume an important leadership role. Second, the author wisely touches only lightly on the games, focusing instead on the team’s bond with the community and the genuine solace offered in the face of inexplicable tragedy.

A deeply reported, sensitively rendered story that avoids cliché and persuades us that there might indeed be such a thing as “football therapy.”



# “...a complicated story involving staggering scholarship that adds greatly to our understanding of the history of the United States.”

FROM THE HALF HAS NEVER BEEN TOLD



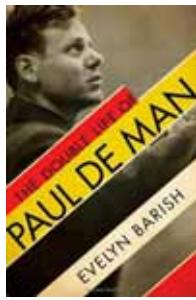
## THE HALF HAS NEVER BEEN TOLD *Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*

Baptist, Edward E.  
Basic (512 pp.)  
\$35.00 | Sep. 9, 2014  
978-0-465-00296-2

A dense, myth-busting work that pursues how the world profited from American slavery.

The story of slavery in America is not static, as Baptist (History/Cornell Univ.; *Creating an Old South: Middle Florida's Plantation Frontier before the Civil War*, 2001) points out in this exhaustive tome. It entailed wide-scale forced migrations from the lower East Coast to the South and West of the economically burgeoning United States. Following tobacco production along the Chesapeake Bay, slavery was embraced in the newly opened territories of Kentucky and Mississippi, where slaves were force-marched in coffles, separated from families, bought and sold to new owners, and then used to clear fields and plant indigo and the new cash crop, cotton. Although some advanced attempts to ban slavery—e.g., in the Northwest Ordinance—the newly hammered-out Constitution codified it by the Three-Fifths Compromise. In the name of unity, the delegates agreed with South Carolina's John Rutledge that “religion and humanity [have] nothing to do with this question. Interest alone is the governing principle with nations.” Using the metaphor of a trussed-up giant body à la Gulliver, Baptist divides his chapters by body parts, through which he viscerally delineates the effects of the violence of slavery—e.g., “Feet” encapsulates the experience of forced migration through intimate stories, while “Right Hand” and “Left Hand” explore the insidious methods of the “enslavers” to solidify their holdings. Baptist moves chronologically, though in a roundabout fashion, often backtracking and repeating, and thoroughly examines every area affected by slavery, from New Orleans to Boston, Kansas to Cuba. He challenges the comfortable myth of “Yankee ingenuity” as our founding growth principle, showing how cotton picking drove U.S. exports and finance from 1800 to 1860—as well as the expansion of Northern industry.

Though some readers may find the narrative occasionally tedious, this is a complicated story involving staggering scholarship that adds greatly to our understanding of the history of the United States. (30 b/w images)



## THE DOUBLE LIFE OF PAUL DE MAN

Barish, Evelyn  
Liveright/Norton (564 pp.)  
\$35.00 | Mar. 17, 2014  
978-0-87140-326-1

A riveting biography of master confidence man Paul de Man (1919–1983), manipulator of the facts and influential literary instructor—a character both preposterous and irresistible.

Barish (English/City Univ. of New York Graduate Center; *Emerson: The Roots of Prophecy*, 1989) leaves de Man's deconstructionist contradictions mostly off to the side and concentrates on the wildly chameleonic personality and the upbringing of this charismatic character who eluded justice from Nazi-occupied Belgium and later fabricated his academic reputation at Harvard and elsewhere by wily connections and sheer boldness. The tale of de Man is not only the tangled trajectory of a psychiatrically scarred young man from a deeply problematic family who saw an opportunity to advance himself through Nazi collaboration, but also the story of the striking gullibility of an American elitist intellectual milieu that never questioned his credentials due to its own postwar sense of inferiority compared to European literature. Barish gets underneath the objectionable journalistic pieces de Man wrote during the war and his skein of publishing embezzlements in Brussels by exploring the pattern of secrecy and shame in his own upper-middle-class Antwerp family: a depressed mother who hanged herself; a troubled older brother who was killed by an oncoming train; an uncle who was a high-ranking minister in Belgian government, advocating appeasement and anti-Semitism and whom Paul highly revered and passed off later as his father. De Man became an “intellectual entrepreneur,” autodidact, university dropout and superb bluffer who saw his chance to “take a place” in the new Nazi order. While his collaborationist colleagues were imprisoned after the war, de Man fled to the United States. His entry into intellectual circles, thanks to Mary McCarthy and Henry Kissinger, among others, allowed him immunity and a disguise as he forged a brilliant academic career.

An extraordinary story of a complex personality presented with a wise dose of irony and respect. (8 pages of photos)



# WELCOMING THE NEWCOMERS TO THE BEST NONFICTION BOOKS OF 2014 LIST



BEST-OF SEASON IS A MAGICAL time of year when we separate the good from the great, the decent from the transcendent—when my reviewers and I put our collective heads together to determine the best books of the year. Even with a set as broad as 100 titles, the task is never easy or straightforward.

Obviously, all six of the finalists for the inaugural Kirkus Prize are on the list, including the winner, Roz Chast, and her hilarious and heartbreaking graphic memoir, *Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?* All told, there are 50 different imprints represented, as well as a typically diverse set of subjects: history, memoir, biography, current affairs, popular science, economics, environmental studies, investigative reporting, nature writing, travel writing, etc....

As usual, there are plenty of heavy hitters on the list—Lawrence Wright, Jill Lepore, Michael Lewis, Walter Isaacson, to name a few—but I'd like to point out a few newcomers who delivered outstanding first books this year:

- Meline Toumani's *There Was and There Was Not*, her memoir of conflicted identity as it relates to the Armenian genocide, is nothing short of revelatory; Kirkus called it a “moving examination of the complex forces of ethnicity, nationality and history that shape one’s sense of self and foster, threaten or fray the fragile tapestry of community.”
- In *Trespassing on Einstein's Lawn*, Amanda Gefter gives us an “adventurous fact-finding romp takes readers across the landscape of ideas about the universe, calling on the expertise of the biggest names in science—and also the author’s life-long partner in her pursuit of the meaning of everything: her father.”
- Knopf art director Peter Mendelsund successfully experiments with form in *What We See When We Read*, a “brilliant amalgam of philosophy, psychology, literary theory and visual art.”
- In his exploration of *Ulysses* and James Joyce, *The Most Dangerous Book*, Kevin Birmingham spins out “superb cultural history, pulling together many strands of literary, judicial and societal developments into a smoothly woven narrative fabric.”

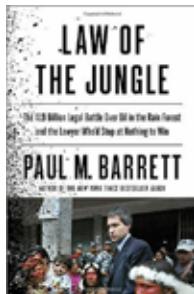
Congrats to all the writers who made the list, and thank you for your consistently engaging and significant works.

—E.L.

Eric Liebetrau is the nonfiction and managing editor at Kirkus Reviews.



Photo courtesy George Bauer IV



## LAW OF THE JUNGLE *The \$19 Billion Legal Battle Over Oil in the Rain Forest and the Lawyer Who'd Stop at Nothing to Win It*

Barrett, Paul M.  
Crown (272 pp.)  
\$26.00 | Sep. 23, 2014  
978-0-7704-3634-6



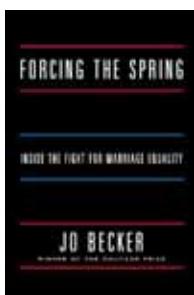
Here's a twist: the almost unbelievable tale of a human rights attorney every bit as conscienceless as the multinational he was suing.

Filed in 1993 against Texaco, later acquired by Chevron, on behalf of the powerless Ecuadorian Indians of the Oriente, the Aguinda lawsuit sought recovery for a jungle region devastated by environmental depredations and health hazards resulting from decades of oil drilling. How Steven Donziger, barely two years out of law school, a man who had never filed even a single civil suit, became the lead attorney in a case against America's third-largest corporation makes for an interesting story. How over 20 years he strategized, maneuvering the case through courtrooms in Ecuador and New York, how he rallied Hollywood stars, music industry celebrities, independent filmmakers and environmental activists to the cause, attracting favorable news coverage from prestigious outlets like *60 Minutes* and the *New York Times*, how he secured a \$19 billion judgment—all this makes the story even more compelling. When Chevron countersued Donziger, however, and demonstrated that the young firebrand's victory depended on fraud, witness tampering, intimidation of judges and an orgy of spoliation, well, that story becomes irresistible. *Bloomberg Businessweek* assistant managing editor Barrett (*Glock: The Rise of America's Gun*, 2012, etc.) has been reporting this saga for years, and his familiarity with all the players, his understanding of the issues and his cool assessment of the damage inflicted by this protracted legal battle show on every page. While Donziger, his allies and methods take a beating, Barrett doesn't let Chevron or the hardball tactics of its high-powered attorneys off the hook. Many lawyers, experts and consultants have grown rich off of Aguinda; some attorneys and their firms have been wrecked. Meanwhile, the toxic waste in the Oriente has gone untreated, the natives uncompensated. The legal fight goes on.

Imagine a true-life, courtroom version of *Heart of Darkness*.

# “Superb cultural history, pulling together many strands of literary, judicial and societal developments into a smoothly woven narrative fabric.”

FROM THE MOST DANGEROUS BOOK



## FORCING THE SPRING *Inside the Fight for Marriage Equality*

Becker, Jo

Penguin Press (480 pp.)

\$29.95 | Apr. 22, 2014

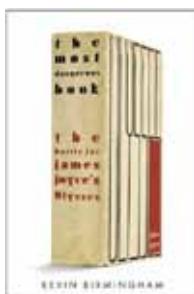
978-1-59420-444-9



A *New York Times* reporter delivers a gripping narrative about the recent court battles involving California's Proposition 8 (which outlawed gay marriage) and the Defense of Marriage Act.

In her note at the end, Becker writes that she enjoyed virtually unfettered access to the unlikely legal team that joined the opponents of *Bush v. Gore* (2000), conservative Ted Olson and liberal David Boies, in their battle against Prop 8 in the federal court system. But Olson and Boies aren't the only notables. Becker also focuses on strategist Chad Griffin, on Hollywood's contributions (especially the unrelenting efforts of Rob Reiner), Chuck Cooper (the lawyer for the opposition—he did not give the same access, but he was generous with post-trial interviews) and, of course, the four plaintiffs in the suit. (A California marriage in the final chapter is a genuine tear-jerker.) Although the author pauses occasionally to supply some background and/or history—the Dred Scott case, *Brown v. Board of Education*—her momentum is resolutely forward, her writing so brisk and urgent that even though we know the outcome, the tension in the courtroom scenes and the intervals of waiting for decisions remain taut, even nerve-wracking. Becker's access gives us insights into other aspects of the story, as well—the deliberations within the Obama administration, the pro-gay marriage statements of Vice President Biden that seemed to animate the president, and the thinking in the Justice Department. She gives a gripping account of the trial in the U.S. District Court (with some fine analysis of the role of Judge Vaughn Walker, gay himself), some of which she reproduces directly from court records. Becker follows the case from there to the U.S. Court of Appeals and then the Supreme Court, where we listen to the oral arguments and follow the sometimes-twisted thinking of the justices.

**First-rate reporting informs this thrilling narrative of hope.**



## THE MOST DANGEROUS BOOK *The Battle for James Joyce's Ulysses*

Birmingham, Kevin

Penguin Press (432 pp.)

\$29.95 | Jun. 16, 2014

978-1-59420-336-7



Modernism's “battle against an obsolete civilization,” encapsulated in the struggle to publish one taboo-shattering masterpiece.

In his sharp, well-written debut, Birmingham (History and Literature/Harvard Univ.) reminds us that the artistic experiments of James Joyce (1882-1941) were part of a larger movement to throw off Victorian social, sexual and political shackles. Indeed, authorities in England, Ireland and America were quite sure that Joyce's shocking fiction was, like the feminists, anarchists, socialists and other reprobates who presumably read it, an attempt to undermine the moral foundations of Western society. Guilty as charged, replied the diverse group that supported the impoverished Joyce as he struggled to write *Ulysses* while wandering across Europe during and after World War I, plagued by increasingly grim eye problems (described here in gruesome detail). Ezra Pound advocated for Joyce with his literary contacts on both sides of the Atlantic, and Dora Marsden and Harriet Weaver gave him his first break in the English avant-garde magazine *The Egoist*. American iconoclasts Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap risked punitive fines and jail terms to publish chapters of *Ulysses* in *The Little Review*, adopting a defiant stance that dismayed lawyer John Quinn, who had scant sympathy for radicals but thought Joyce was a genius and that his book must be defended. The clandestine edition of *Ulysses* published in Paris by Sylvia Beach of Shakespeare and Company in 1922 became the identifying badge of cultural insurgents everywhere and the target of confiscation and burnings by censors until Judge John Woolsey's landmark 1933 decision permitted the novel to be sold in the U.S. and dramatically revised the legal concept of obscenity. Birmingham makes palpable the courage and commitment of the rebels who championed Joyce, but he grants the censors their points of view as well in this absorbing chronicle of a tumultuous time.

**Superb cultural history, pulling together many strands of literary, judicial and societal developments into a smoothly woven narrative fabric.**



## ON IMMUNITY *An Inoculation*

Biss, Eula

Graywolf (192 pp.)

\$24.00 | Sep. 30, 2014

978-1-55597-689-7



National Book Critics Circle Award winner Biss (*Notes from No Man's Land*, 2009) investigates the nature of vaccinations, from immunity as myth to the intricate web of the immune system.

The fears surrounding vaccines are not late-breaking news, as the author notes in this literate, rangy foray into the history and consequences of vaccination. In the 18th century—and frankly, little less today—it was understandable to associate vaccination with the work of witches: “The idea...that pus from a sick cow can be scraped into a wound on a person and make that person immune to a deadly disease is almost as hard to believe now as it was in 1796.” Indeed, the idea of poking yourself with a dose of virulent organisms to save yourself from them is not an intuitive leap. Biss ably tracks the progress of immunization: as

# BEST QUIPS FROM THE BEST NONFICTION WRITERS OF 2014

THE BEST NONFICTION INFORMS, surprises, inspires. Our Best Nonfiction Books of 2014 list includes meditations on poverty and injustice, philosophy and science, histories and mysteries, personal and private lives. Here are a few of our favorite things spoken by authors who helped us see what is in a fresh way.

—Megan Labrise

“The people that love de Man and continue to support him fundamentally say that there is no necessary connection between what a person does or says in his or her private life and what his or her ideas are. I’m not of that position.” —Evelyn Barish, author of *The Double Life of Paul de Man*, in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*



Photo courtesy Steven Pinker

Rebecca Goldstein

“2,400 years ago I was skeptical of the newfangled technology of writing. Now I’m tweeting. #old-dognewtricks.” —Rebecca Newberger Goldstein, author of *Plato at the Googleplex: Why Philosophy Won’t Go Away*, as Plato (@plato-booktour) on Twitter

“The sad thing is that, because the publication of a book is a precarious business to begin with, it’s not too difficult to get books withdrawn.”

—Kevin Birmingham, author of *The Most Dangerous Book: The Battle for James Joyce’s Ulysses*, in *Kirkus Reviews*

“I didn’t know anything about elder lawyers, I didn’t know about hospice. I didn’t know whether they had a will. I didn’t know how to start these conversations. I felt like I was just making it up in a sort of incompetent way as I went along. As I said to somebody recently, it’s not like they have *What to Expect When Your Parents Are Over 90 and Don’t Want to Move Out of Their Apartment*.” —Roz Chast, author of *Can’t We Talk About Something More Pleasant?*, winner of the 2014 Kirkus Prize for Nonfiction, in *Kirkus Reviews*

“[T]here is something disturbing—dare I say racist?—about beginning in 1492. It implies that native peoples do not matter—that they don’t count.” —Elizabeth Fenn, author of *Encounters at the Heart of the World: A History of the Mandan People*, in *Erstwhile*

“If anyone thinks North Korea is opening up, they are completely mistaken.” —Jang Jin-sung, author of *Dear Leader: My Escape from North Korea*, in the *Guardian*

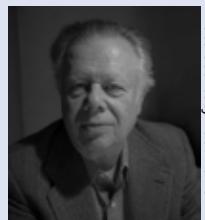


Photo courtesy Paul Davis

John Lahr

“When I approach a potential subject, I tell them that it works on the same principles as good tailoring—the more sittings, the better the fit.” —biographer John Lahr, author of *Tennessee Williams: Mad Pilgrimage of the Flesh*, in *Kirkus Reviews*

“In most societies, it is the poor who, despite not having resources, at least have community. And in a way people understand in the poorer parts of the world that, if you are poor, solitude is an extravagance. And too many Americans who are poor pay the unfortunate tax of also being alone.” —Anand Giridharadas, author of *The True American: Murder and Mercy in Texas*, on NPR

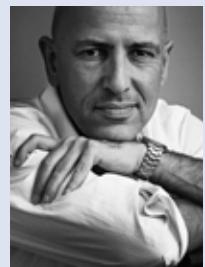


Photo courtesy Jonathan Ring

Armand Marie Leroi

“Plato says that more perfect realm beyond the senses, the realm of ‘ideas,’ of pure form, that is the thing that we should be discovering, that we should be studying, and he devoted a lot of time to thinking about mathematical forms and how this invisible world was structured. Aristotle says, ‘No. This concept of the forms beyond the senses, it annihilates the study of nature. What we should be doing is studying the things directly in front of us.’” —Armand Marie Leroi, author of Kirkus Prize finalist *The Lagoon: How Aristotle Invented Science*, on WBUR, Boston’s NPR news station



Photo courtesy David Hungate

Beth Macy

"When I heard he said things like, 'The [expletive] Chi-Comms aren't gonna tell me how to make furniture!' my story Spidey sense went on high alert." —Beth Macy, author of *Factory Man: How One Furniture Maker Battled Offshoring, Stayed Local—and Helped Save an American Town*, on subject John Bassett III, in *Omnivoracious*

"I don't really know who I'd be if I'd chosen *David Copperfield*." —Rebecca Mead, author of *My Life in Middlemarch*, in *Kirkus Reviews*

"When you're an immigrant, failure and success are such huge words." —Gary Shteyngart, author of *Little Failure: A Memoir*, in *Kirkus Reviews*



Photo courtesy Paul Stuart

Jessica Hendry Nelson

"The rhythms are familiar by now. I've found my sea legs and I'm steering a giant ship to shore, but like, whilst naked and drunk and screaming all at the same time. Somebody pulls out some expensive, stinky cheeses and I'm shoving my face. A bird named Jack plays show tunes on a ukulele. It's wild. It also might be a mixed metaphor." —Jessica Hendry Nelson, author of *If Only You People Could Follow Directions*, on having completed two-thirds of an essay, in *Philadelphia City Paper*

"You know, it was a hell, but hell can be quite comfortable sometimes. And more specifically, it was my hell. So I'm actually pretty darn proud of that hell. And if anything, I would love for people reading this book, who are perhaps going through their own versions of hell, to understand that there's always a way out of hell." —Brando Skyhorse, author of *Take This Man: A Memoir*, on KPCC, Southern California Public Radio

"I think I kind of have a case of historical ADD." —Hampton Sides, author of *In the Kingdom of Ice: The Grand and Terrible Polar Voyage of the USS Jeannette*, whose previous topics include World War II, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Americana, on Book TV



Photo courtesy Nina Subin

"We have a criminal-justice system that treats you better if you're rich and guilty than if you're poor and innocent. I don't believe that America's system is shaped by culpability. I think it's shaped by wealth." —Bryan Stevenson, author of Kirkus Prize finalist *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*, in *Time* magazine

Megan Labrise is a freelance writer and columnist based in New York.

# THE STORY OF THREE FEMALE VETS, IN BATTLE AT WAR AND AT HOME

VALENTINE'S DAY IN AFGHANISTAN: The sky is a solid mass of clouds, snow has been falling for weeks, and a female soldier is huddled in her plywood hut making a valentine for her Afghani translator with glitter pens and construction paper. Helen Thorpe's new book, *Soldier Girls: The Battles of Three Women at Home and at War* is filled with such intimate scenes; it is a strikingly original book about war.

Uncovering exquisite details takes years of research. In all, *Soldier Girls* took Thorpe four years to complete. Her first interviews with Michelle, Desma and Debbie, she explains, were from what she calls a "hundred-thousand-foot perspective," very general conversations about each woman's experiences. After examining her notes, Thorpe met again and again with her subjects, "drilling down," as she calls it, into more and more specificity. "We spent many many hours together before they told me some of the more intimate details about their deployments, such as their affairs," says Thorpe, admitting that sometimes the detail that brings a scene to life might be "the last piece of information I would get."

Poring over photographs with the women helped to jog their memories, leading to scenes that bring the war experience to vivid (and sometimes heartbreakingly) life. Desma allowed Thorpe to see her VA medical records, even her therapy notes. And after a year of interviews, says Thorpe, Debbie handed over a pile of spiral notebooks and said, "Oh, here, I found these diaries." The diaries gave Thorpe a new way to get to know Debbie, a person who "had a little bit more of a tendency to only emphasize the positive things." But it was "incredibly intelligent" Michelle, muses Thorpe, who became the thread tying her forceful book together. Michelle, Thorpe says, "is like a writer herself."

—Amanda Eyre Ward



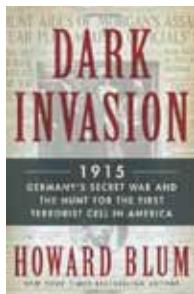
Photo courtesy Mara Evans

Helen Thorpe



metaphor—the protective impulse to make our children invulnerable (Achilles, Oedipus); as theory and science (the author provides a superb explanation of herd immunity: "when enough people are vaccinated with even a relatively ineffective vaccine, viruses have trouble moving from host to host and cease to spread"); as a cash cow for big pharma; and as a class issue—the notion of the innocent and the pure being violated by vaccinations, that "people without good living standards need vaccines, whereas vaccines would only clog up the more refined systems of middle-class and upper-class people." Biss also administers a thoughtful, withering critique to more recent fears of vaccines—the toxins they carry, from mercury to formaldehyde, and accusations of their role in causing autism. The author keeps the debate lively and surprising, touching on Rachel Carson here and "Dr. Bob" there. She also includes her father's wise counsel, which accommodates the many sides of the topic but arrives at a clear point of view: Vaccinate.

**Brightly informative, giving readers a sturdy platform from which to conduct their own research and take personal responsibility.**



## DARK INVASION 1915: Germany's Secret War Against America

Blum, Howard

Harper/HarperCollins (512 pp.)

\$27.99 | Feb. 11, 2014

978-0-06-230755-2



Terrifically engaging and pertinent tale of the New York City bomb squad that foiled German terrorist plots against the United States at the outbreak of World War I.

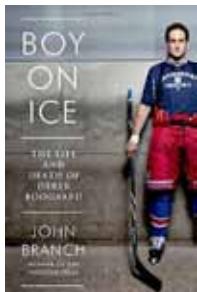
*Vanity Fair* contributor Blum (*The Floor of Heaven: A True Tale of the Last Frontier and the Yukon Gold Rush*, 2011, etc.) masterly retrieves this largely forgotten, haunting history of Germany's subversive attempts to halt the U.S. ability to send munitions to the Allies fighting against it in Europe. The author pursues the key players in an episodic narrative: the agents of the Kaiser's secret intelligence service, the Abteilung IIIB, with commander Walter Nicolai extending its tentacles across the Atlantic to fund a campaign of shipping terror amid the New York and New Jersey docks; the members of the New York Police Bomb and Neutrality Squad, led by the enterprising Capt. Tom Tunney, who had lately infiltrated the anarchist Brescia Circle and diverted its attempt to bomb St. Patrick's Cathedral; and the strange and troubled Ivy League literature professor Erich Muenter, who went underground after poisoning his wife in 1906 and emerged as terrorist Frank Holt in 1915. The audacity of the German operatives, who received easy support from the plethora of German immigrants to America—e.g., the Hamburg-America Line officer Paul Koenig, who policed the shipyards in his thuggish way ("a thick-bodied, bull-necked man with long, drooping arms and iron fists that could seem as hell-bent as a runaway trolley car when they were pounding away at

# "A haunting and illuminating book marking the centennial of the assassination."

FROM THE TRIGGER

your skull") was matched by the ingenuity of Tunney, who had a nose for the right clue and method of infiltration. Blum creates some memorable portraits, accompanied by a lively gallery of photos, and keeps the heroic good-versus-evil plot simmering along in a nicely calibrated work of popular narrative history.

**Instructive, yes, but also as engrossing as good detective fiction. (56 b/w photos)**



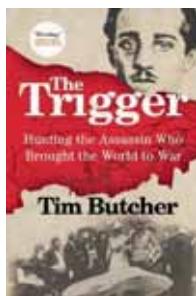
## BOY ON ICE *The Life and Death of Derek Boogaard*

*Branch, John*  
Norton (352 pp.)  
\$26.95 | Oct. 1, 2014  
978-0-393-23939-3

Pulitzer Prize-winning *New York Times* reporter Branch debuts with a biography of hockey player Derek Boogaard (1982–2011), a fierce fighter on the ice who died of an overdose of alcohol and prescription painkillers at the age of 28.

"No one ever told Derek that his primary mission in hockey would be to fight," writes the author. Yet that is what the shy, oversized Saskatchewan native did throughout his career, first for minor teams, then with the Minnesota Wild and the New York Rangers, where he became the NHL's most feared fighter. In this engrossing narrative, based on an award-winning *Times* series, Branch details both Boogaard's life growing up in rural, hockey-mad Canada, where his size stigmatized him in school, and his years of playing hockey, when size—not talent—brought him success. In a sport where violence attracts crowds, Boogaard's role as an enforcer was to intimidate opponents and protect his team's star players, often engaging in game-stopping fights. With spotlights beaming and *Rocky* theme music blaring, the enforcer and his adversaries would beat on each other with fists and sticks and then spend a few minutes in a penalty box. To alleviate stabbing pain in his back, hips and shoulder, Boogaard took increasing amounts of painkillers. In his fourth professional season, he obtained 25 prescriptions for oxycodone and hydrocodone from 10 doctors. Despite efforts at rehabilitation, he persisted in his addiction, becoming increasingly erratic and depressed. An autopsy revealed that Boogaard had suffered a series of concussions as well as chronic traumatic encephalopathy, a degenerative condition caused by repeated blows to the head. Boogaard's death and increasing public awareness of the dangers of concussions have prompted steps to limit fighting in hockey's junior leagues, but there's been no action at the professional level, where a culture of "concussion denial" reigns.

**A sad, tragic story that underscores the high human cost of violent entertainment. (16 photos)**



## THE TRIGGER *Taking the Journey that Led the World to War*

*Butcher, Tim*  
Grove (336 pp.)  
\$26.00 | Jun. 3, 2014  
978-0-8021-2325-1

The engrossing story of Gavrilo Princip (1894–1918), the 19-year-old Bosnian Serb nationalist whose assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, on June 28, 1914, sparked World War I.

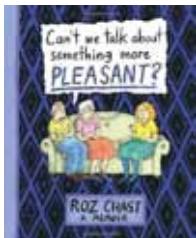
While covering the Bosnian War of the 1990s, former *Daily Telegraph* correspondent Butcher (*Chasing the Devil: A Journey Through Sub-Saharan Africa in the Footsteps of Graham Greene*, 2011, etc.) became intrigued by Princip after visiting a littered Sarajevo chapel that commemorated the assassin's name. In 2012, he returned to the Balkans to follow the path of the young peasant's life from his home in the remote hamlet of Obljaj (where Princip left his initials on a rock and declared, "One day people will know my name") to Sarajevo, where he became a student and "slow-burn revolutionary" determined to overthrow the Austro-Hungarian occupiers of his homeland. Butcher details the assassination (Princip's first shot cut the Archduke's jugular vein; the second killed his wife, Sophie, Duchess of Hohenberg), the ensuing trial and the assassin's death in prison from tuberculosis. The author's intelligent, near-obsessive, textured account of the assassin's life and times is a fascinating history of a complex region rife with ethnic rivalries and a vivid travelogue of a dangerous journey across a landscape marked by the minefields and devastation of the fighting of the 1990s. More broadly, Butcher makes clear the importance of Princip's act as the spark that detonated an "explosive mix of old-world superiority, diplomatic miscalculation, strategic paranoia and hubristic military overconfidence." Deliberately misrepresenting the assassin's motives (which were to liberate not only Serbia, but all south Slavs), Austria-Hungary invaded Serbia, which led to World War I. Butcher notes that under different regimes, Princip has been remembered variously as a hero and a terrorist. The author views him as "an everyman for the anger felt by millions who were downtrodden far beyond the Balkans."

**A haunting and illuminating book marking the centennial of the assassination.**



**"A top-notch graphic memoir that adds a whole new dimension to readers' appreciation of Chast and her work."**

FROM CAN'T WE TALK ABOUT SOMETHING MORE PLEASANT?



## CAN'T WE TALK ABOUT SOMETHING MORE PLEASANT?

### A Memoir

Chast, Roz

Illus. by Chast, Roz

Bloomsbury (240 pp.)

\$28.00 | May 6, 2014

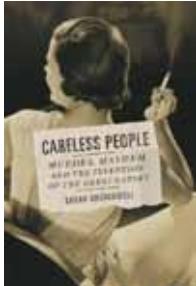
978-1-60819-806-1



A revelatory and occasionally hilarious memoir by the *New Yorker* cartoonist on helping her parents through their old age.

Few graphic memoirs are as engaging and powerful as this or strike a more responsive chord. Chast (*What I Hate*, 2011, etc.) retains her signature style and wry tone throughout this long-form blend of text and drawings, but nothing she's done previously hits home as hard as this account of her family life as the only child of parents who had never even dated anyone else and whose deep bond left little room for this intruder in their midst. Yet, "the reality was that at 95, their minds and bodies were falling apart," and these two people who had only relied on each other were forced to rely on a host of caretakers, their daughter in particular, and to move from the Brooklyn apartment that had been home for half a century into a series of facilities that provided fewer and fewer amenities at escalating expense. Chast rarely lapses into sentimentality and can often be quite funny, as she depicts mortality as "The Moving Sidewalk of Life" ("Caution: Drop-Off Ahead") or deals with dread and anxiety on the "Wheel of DOOM, surrounded by the 'cautionary' tales of my childhood." The older her parents get, the more their health declines and the more expensive the care they require, the bleaker the story becomes—until, toward the end, a series of 12 largely wordless drawings of her mother's final days represents the most intimate and emotionally devastating art that Chast has created. So many have faced (or will face) the situation that the author details, but no one could render it like she does.

A top-notch graphic memoir that adds a whole new dimension to readers' appreciation of Chast and her work.



## CARELESS PEOPLE Murder, Mayhem, and the Invention of The Great Gatsby

Churchwell, Sarah

Penguin Press (432 pp.)

\$29.95 | Jan. 27, 2014

978-1-59420-474-6



*The Great Gatsby* floats on a limpid river fed by myriads of autobiographical, cultural and historical tributaries.

Churchwell (American Literature and Public Understanding of the Humanities/Univ. of East Anglia; *The Many Lives of Marilyn Monroe*, 2004, etc.) has written an excellent book on a novel that remains a favorite in English courses in American

high schools and colleges. Surprisingly, she even manages to find fresh facts that escaped previous scholars, including one of F. Scott Fitzgerald's own published comments about his novel, a book that, as Churchwell notes, neither sold well nor received uniformly favorable reviews. Churchwell weaves together a variety of strands: a summary of the novel (including its earlier drafts), a biographical account of the years Fitzgerald was working on the novel (including the time he and Zelda were living and partying in Great Neck, near the novel's setting), and an account of a sensational New Jersey murder case in 1922 (the year that *Gatsby* takes place), an investigation that resulted in arrests and a trial but no convictions. Churchwell also digs deeply into the architecture of the novel—looking, for example, for the relevance of specific details Fitzgerald mentions. She also examined *Simon Called Peter*, a novel that Nick Carraway picks up early in *Gatsby*; she read countless New York newspaper and magazine files looking for items in 1922 that may have found their way into the novel (car wrecks, wild parties and the like). She haunted the rich Fitzgerald archives at Princeton and elsewhere and, employing the clarity of hindsight, chides most of the early critics who missed what Fitzgerald was up to. At times, Churchwell attempts Fitzgerald's lyrical style—one chapter-ending sentence alludes to "the vagrant dead as they scatter across our tattered Eden"—she's earned the right to play on his court.

Prodigious research and fierce affection illumine every remarkable page.



## HACKER, HOAXER, WHISTLEBLOWER, SPY *The Many Faces of Anonymous*

Coleman, Gabriella

Verso (450 pp.)

\$26.95 | Nov. 4, 2014

978-1-78168-583-9

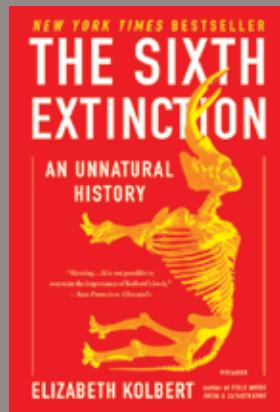
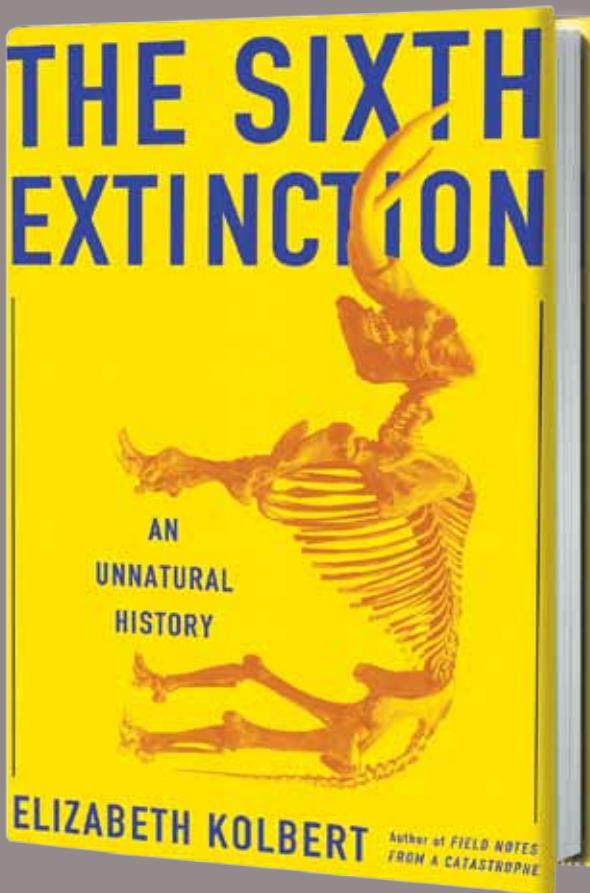
A fresh perspective on the covert, crusading Internet activist group Anonymous.

Coleman (Scientific and Technological Literacy/McGill Univ.; *Coding Freedom: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Hacking*, 2012), a cultural anthropologist and Internet authority, spent several increasingly immersive years researching the calculated tactics of the global Anonymous collective. She tracks the hacktivist association's anarchic history from its nascent disruptive publicity stunts and trolled online raids through the "4chan" public chat boards in 2003, executed in the spirit of "lulz" (public schadenfreude). Though the group's later, more pointed, collaborative machinations would attract the aggressive attention of the FBI, writes Coleman, their activities were still partly implemented in the same roguish, mischievous spirit. Though her treatment is permeated with buzzwords, initialisms and computer jargon, even Internet neophytes will find Coleman's text to be a consistently fascinating ethnography, as she folds the politics of hacking and website breaching techniques into intriguing stories from the

# 2014 KIRKUS PRIZE FINALIST

"Epic, riveting...reads like a scientific thriller—  
only more terrifying because it is real."

—David Grann, author of *The Lost City of Z*



Available in PB  
January 2015

"A highly significant eye-opener rich in facts and enjoyment."

—Kirkus Review

"Arresting . . . Ms. Kolbert shows in these pages that she can write with elegiac poetry about the vanishing creatures of this planet, but the real power of her book resides in the hard science and historical context she delivers here, documenting the mounting losses that human beings are leaving in their wake."

—*The New York Times*



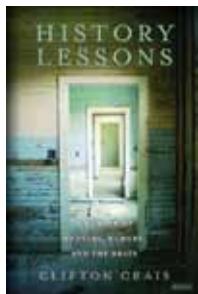
Henry Holt

[www.henryholt.com](http://www.henryholt.com)

Also available as an eBook

stealth campaigns of microcosmic networks like AnonOps and LulzSec ("a crew of renegade hackers who broke away from Anonymous and double as traveling minstrels"), among others. The author examines the ways the Anonymous collective seeks justice (or, at the very least, a mean-spirited chuckle) through the seizure and release of digitized, classified information or by challenging corporate conglomerates, as demonstrated by the WikiLeaks–Chelsea Manning scandal and an early, synchronized attack on Scientology, both of which Coleman generously references. The author is particularly enthusiastic about Anonymous' interior motivations and provides pages of interviews with infamous, incendiary trollers, snitches and hackers, verbatim bickering chat-room dialogue, and leaked documents. For such a frenzied collective defying easy categorization, Coleman's diligent and often sensationalistic spadework does great justice in representing the plight of these "misfits of activism" and their vigilante mischief.

**An intensive, potent profile of contemporary digital activism at its most unsettling—and most effective.**



### HISTORY LESSONS *A Memoir of Madness, Memory, and the Brain*

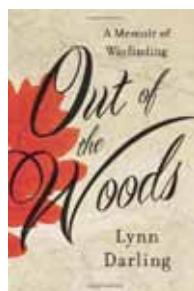
Crais, Clifton  
Overlook (272 pp.)  
\$25.95 | May 1, 2014  
978-1-4683-0368-1

A historian sets out to discover his own past.

Crais (History and African Studies/Emory Univ; co-editor: *Poverty, War, and Violence in South Africa*, 2011, etc.) suffers from chronic childhood amnesia, a condition that leaves him bereft of memories of his youngest years. "I am a contradiction," he writes. "I am a historian who can't remember." This form of amnesia results from early childhood trauma—in the author's case, his mother's attempt to drown him in a bathtub when he was 3 after her husband abandoned her and their five children; and her attempted suicide a few years later. These two violent episodes punctuated a devastating youth. Crais lived for years with his alcoholic mother in a roach-infested apartment, hungry and neglected; from time to time, he was shunted among relatives. In his attempt to revive that period, the author decided to apply a historian's methodology, interviewing his mother and sisters, examining photographs and public records, and visiting old neighborhoods. What he found unnerved him. "The past is a mess," he writes, "a bloody terrible mess of infinite horror": mental illness, suicide, alcoholism and poverty. He felt "dirty," he admits, "not only from prying into the lives of others but by association—too close to a chasm of tragedies from which I want to escape but seem instead to be falling into." Along with historical research, Crais turned to neuroscience to help him understand his own identity. "Trauma obliterates time," he writes. "Trauma trips up the elaborate choreography of being...." Sadly Crais' siblings have become casualties of the family's

history, living "in despair, with broken marriages, depression, abusive relationships, and substance abuse." Yet the author has managed not only to survive, but to thrive.

**This memoir of anguish and struggle is a story of remarkable strength and unlikely, inexplicable resilience.**



### OUT OF THE WOODS *A Memoir of Wayfinding*

Darling, Lynn  
Harper/HarperCollins (272 pp.)  
\$25.99 | Jan. 7, 2014  
978-0-06-171024-7

One woman's melancholic search for herself amid the woods of Vermont.

Darling (*Necessary Sins*, 2007) takes readers on a slow journey of self-discovery, chronicling how she learned the ins and outs of living in rural Vermont. Once her daughter had started college, the apartment they shared in New York City after Darling's husband had died seemed too full of past memories. The author was ready to try her hand at a new adventure: "I would move to Vermont, to the little house I bought. I would buy a dog and live in the country. I would reinvent myself, a woman alone, solitary and self-contained." With that spirit, Darling packed up some belongings and moved to a small, owner-built, somewhat funky house tucked into the woods. Alone and dependent on her own resourcefulness, the author had to learn to navigate the tricky solar-power system and cranky generator, the mice in the ceiling and the collapsing roof on the woodshed. But she was stuck in limbo, unable to unpack, unable to write, unable to face the task of doing, so she ventured outdoors instead. The forest around her was an alien and unreadable landscape, as foreign as the woman she was trying to discover in herself. She stuck to the known paths while the narrow deer trails beckoned to her, egging her on to venture past the safe and narrow roadways. A routine doctor's visit and the unexpected diagnosis of cancer quickly catapulted Darling into foreign territory. From that point, she slowly and methodically discovered her route back to health and self-awareness. Haunting and lyrical, Darling's journey through unknown forests, both physical and emotional, resonates with longings, hopes, fears and a stalwart courage to conquer them all.

**Evocative ruminations on getting older and discovering the links between nature and self.**

**“No one does scandal quite like the British; this one is a real doozy that deserves Davies’ entertaining, no-stone-unturned eagle eyes.”**

FROM HACK ATTACK



### HACK ATTACK *The Inside Story of How the Truth Caught Up with Rupert Murdoch*

Davies, Nick

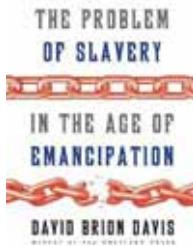
Faber & Faber/Farrar, Straus and Giroux  
(352 pp.)

\$27.00 | Aug. 12, 2014  
978-0-86547-881-7

The inside—deeply inside—account by the investigative writer who broke the British phone-hacking scandal wide open.

Davies (*Flat Earth News: An Award-Winning Reporter Exposes Falsehood, Distortion and Propaganda in the Global Media*, 2009, etc.) is known for his tenacious grip on his targets and his cutting, vivid writing style. Writing for the *Guardian*, he came across an enigmatic tip that journalists for Rupert Murdoch's tabloid newspaper *News of the World* were routinely hacking into the voice mails of celebrities, famous athletes, regular citizens and royals and then grabbing photos and quotes from their victims to lay a false trail and publish a damning article. The phone hacking—perpetrated usually by private detectives hired by editors at the publication—eventually ensnared 6,349 victims and caused the *News* to shutter. At the end of the day, noted one prosecutor, it was nothing more than “at the highest level, a criminal enterprise.” If this book were merely about unethical Murdoch media outlets, it would serve as an educational read for journalism students. Because Scotland Yard continually refused to warn the victims and stonewalled Davies' questions and because former *News* editor Andy Coulson became Prime Minister David Cameron's media adviser, this is a darker, more engrossing tale about the web of unspoken, ultimately “passive” power Murdoch and his editors held over the power elite of the U.K. as they tsk-tsked them into embarrassing revelations. Davies has crafted nothing less than a primer on how to patiently, doggedly investigate a story, replete with a host of quirky characters—e.g., a bulldog of a lawyer with multiple sclerosis who had a sideline as a stand-up comedian and a reporter who specialized in dressing up as a “fake sheikh” to deceive sources into shedding their secrets.

No one does scandal quite like the British; this one is a real doozy that deserves Davies’ entertaining, no-stone-unturned eagle eyes.



### THE PROBLEM OF SLAVERY IN THE AGE OF EMANCIPATION

Davis, David Brion

Knopf (448 pp.)  
\$30.00 | Feb. 4, 2014  
978-0-307-26909-6

A distinguished historian brings his monumental trilogy to a stirring conclusion.

Throughout a lifetime of scholarship devoted to the subject, Davis (Emeritus, History/Yale Univ.; *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*, 2006, etc.) has more than established his bona fides as a leading authority on slavery. Here, he considers the decades between the 1780s and the 1880s and the moral achievement of the eradication of human bondage. He eschews a survey in favor of a “highly selective” study of aspects of the Age of Emancipation, particularly as manifest in Britain and the United States. As a predicate, Davis discusses the dehumanizing of slaves (and the scientific racism that perfected this notion), a sordid piece of work that impeded any thought of immediate emancipation, and the Haitian revolution, an example of self-emancipation that horrified whites and was a source of unending pride and hope to abolitionists like Frederick Douglass. The author’s treatment of Britain’s abolition of the slave trade and its emancipation act and America’s grappling with the problem of slavery through the Emancipation Proclamation, the Civil War and the 13th Amendment rests on the impeccable scholarship we’ve come to expect, but the triumph here is the sympathetic imagination he brings to the topic. For example, his thorough and intriguing discussion of the American Colonization Society and the colonization movement, a phenomenon derided by many modern historians, helps us understand how the notion arose, how it attracted right-thinking individuals from Jefferson to Lincoln, and how it became discredited, in no small part due to the efforts of free blacks. In a memorable passage, Davis places himself in the minds of a free black abolitionist and a white abolitionist in the antebellum North to articulate attitudes and illustrate the tensions, even among allies, in a noble struggle.

Deeply researched, ingeniously argued.



# CARL HOFFMAN UNEARTHS THE HUMANITY OF A VIOLENT PEOPLE IN SAVAGE HARVEST

IN *SAVAGE HARVEST: A Tale of Cannibals, Colonialism, and Michael Rockefeller's Tragic Quest for Primitive Art*, Carl Hoffman's reimagining of Michael C. Rockefeller's death at the hands of the Asmat people on Nov. 20, 1961, seems startlingly real, enough to make the viscera churn. The brutality of the act of ritualistic cannibalism—replete with anatomical detail—is amplified by the tribesmen's banter and jokes about what Rockefeller might have been doing when he was last alive.

Rockefeller's remains were never found, but in *Savage Harvest*, Hoffman cites sources who believe that the Asmat still keep his skull as something of a prized possession bearing otherworldly significance. To this day, the Rockefeller family chooses to believe that the 23-year-old scion drowned in the river when his catamaran capsized.

Hoffman's book intricately investigates the various elements—political opportunism, colonialism, Asmat ethnography, ritualistic art and symbolism—that complicate the story of Rockefeller's fatalistic journey to Dutch New Guinea. Nelson Rockefeller, Michael's father and the former vice president of the United States, was a generous benefactor who made invaluable contributions to the cultural landscape of New York through his work with the Museum of Modern Art and the establishment of the Museum of Primitive Art in 1954.

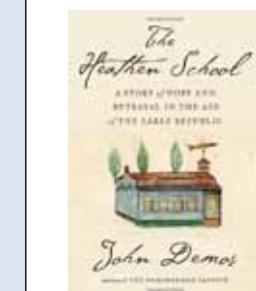


Photo courtesy Liz Lynch

Carl Hoffman  
Michael inherited his father's interests and went to Dutch New Guinea to tap into the vibrancy (and artifacts) of its indigenous tribes, which he had first encountered while working as a sound recorder on Robert Gardner's documentary *Dead Birds*. After a short period spent collecting art from the Asmat, Rockefeller vanished without a trace.

Rockefeller's death has now become something of a nativistic story for the Asmat. Toward the end of the book, as he reaches for the tender gut of the brutish tribe, Hoffman conveys the humanity in the Asmat: "The Asmat that day killed Michael Rockefeller out of passion and love, love for what they had lost and what they were losing—...their culture and traditions, headhunting—as modernity and Christianity closed in from every direction."

—Neha Sharma



## THE HEATHEN SCHOOL *A Story of Hope and Betrayal in the Age of the Early Republic*

Demos, John  
Knopf (352 pp.)  
\$30.00 | Mar. 18, 2014  
978-0-679-45510-3



A carefully constructed study—featuring a chilling denouement—of the disruptive effects of "civilizing" mission work among indigenous peoples.

Demos (Emeritus, History/Yale Univ.; *The Enemy Within: 2,000 Years of Witch-hunting in the Western World*, 2008, etc.) manages a sly, significant feat in this historical study/personal exploration. As part of a grandiose scheme to redeem and improve the status of "savages" such as American Indians, the early Americans devised a "heathen school" in Cornwall, Conn., for some of the exemplary members of various ethnic groups, beginning with five Pacific Islanders brought to the shores by trade ships. The Hawaiian native Henry Obookiah proved the most famous immigrant, having arrived around 1809, eager to be educated, Christianized and sheltered with Yale faculty. Eventually, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions sponsored him, along with the other Hawaiians, for the Foreign Mission School, inaugurated in 1817. The school was run by philanthropic donations, and it taught a mix of English, arithmetic and geography, for the eventual purpose of conversion and evangelization. Gaining new students from some of the Indian nations, East Asia and elsewhere, the school helped undermine some of the stereotypes about the intelligence of "pagans" and served as a model experiment as well as a tourist attraction. However, the seeds of its success, namely assimilation and acculturation, also led to its downfall, as the "scholars" attracted white women partners and, thereby, scandal amid a deeply racist America. The two success stories, involving Cherokee scholars John Ridge and Elias Boudinot, both married white women and moved to the Cherokee Nation, gaining important leadership roles that, ultimately, steered the nation's fate toward removal and thereby invited the men's own violent demises. In "interludes" alternating with his historical narrative, Demos chronicles his visits to the places involved—e.g., Hawaii, Cornwall—in order to impart a personal commitment to this collective American tragedy.

A slow-building saga that delivers a powerful final wallop. (8 pages of color illustrations)



## ISABELLA The Warrior Queen

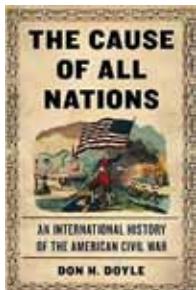
*Downey, Kirstin*  
Talese/Doubleday (480 pp.)  
\$35.00 | Oct. 28, 2014  
978-0-385-53411-6



Downey (*The Woman Behind the New Deal: The Life of Frances Perkins, FDR's Secretary of Labor and His Moral Conscience*, 2009) brings her journalistic expertise to this excellent chronicle of the end of the Middle Ages and that time period's most significant female figures.

Isabella (1451–1504) was queen of Castile and Léon in her own right, a kingdom much larger than that of her husband, Ferdinand of Aragon. Even so, contemporaries and history have always given him preference of place. However, Isabella surely ranks as one of history's greatest women. She insisted on marrying Ferdinand and no other, despite the opposition of her half brother. Upon his death, Isabella assumed the throne. Her reign was characterized by a series of wars, waged by her mostly unfaithful husband but organized and supplied by her. For the first few years, they fought incursions from Portugal, followed by three years of civil war and, finally, more than a decade fighting the Moors. The fall of Granada in 1492 and expulsion of the Moors was hailed by all, but it was a small benefit to offset the fall of Constantinople in 1453 to the Ottoman Turks. Isabella demanded that the defeated Moors, as well as the Jewish population, convert or emigrate. At this point, she introduced the Spanish Inquisition, which was initially aimed at backsliding converted Jews but expanded to include Muslims. Widely known as Christopher Columbus' sponsor, she kept him waiting years before finally agreeing to fund his trip. Her strict instructions were to convert the Indians to Catholicism in the kindest possible way. Her life was devoted to the church, and she felt Pope Alexander VI, Rodrigo Borgia, with his many children and vast wealth, undermined it.

A strong, fascinating woman, Isabella helped to usher in the modern age, and this rich, clearly written biography is a worthy chronicle of her impressive yet controversial life.



## THE CAUSE OF ALL NATIONS An International History of the American Civil War

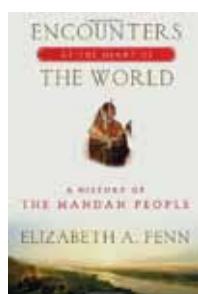
*Doyle, Don H.*  
Basic (384 pp.)  
\$29.99 | Dec. 30, 2014  
978-0-465-02967-9



Before and during the Civil War, both North and South lobbied hard in key European capitals to convince officials and the general population of the justness of their causes.

Impressively, Doyle (History/Univ. of South Carolina; *Secession as an International Phenomenon: From America's Civil War to Contemporary Separatist Movements*, 2010) provides some novel insights about this most chronicled of conflicts. Although he alludes periodically to the military campaigns—from Bull Run to Appomattox—he uses them principally as reference points, signposts on his journey through the complex and fierce diplomatic efforts underway in England, France, Italy and the Vatican. Many Europeans, especially those with republican sympathies, could not understand why Abraham Lincoln, early in the war, refused to declare the North's effort as a war on slavery; Southern diplomats sought to downplay the slavery issue for their own reasons and focused on the tyranny of the North and on the Southern desire for independence. The South desperately sought political recognition from European powers and hoped for military and financial aid as well. They found precious little, and as the war wound down, the European powers backed off (some had made renewed efforts to re-establish themselves in the Western Hemisphere—France in Mexico, for example), especially when the South remained intransigent about slavery. Doyle brings onto the stage a number of figures unfamiliar to all but scholars of the Civil War—envoys and diplomats, some of whom surreptitiously sought to enlist the participation of Giuseppe Garibaldi, who was virulently opposed to slavery and who toyed somewhat with the offers to lead the Union Army. Lincoln's eloquent oratory was among the most powerful of the Union's weapons abroad, and Doyle ably conveys the widespread, genuine grief in Europe when news of his assassination arrived.

An important—even necessary—addition to the groaning shelves of Civil War volumes.



## ENCOUNTERS AT THE HEART OF THE WORLD A History of the Mandan People

*Fenn, Elizabeth A.*  
Hill and Wang/Farrar, Straus and Giroux (480 pp.)  
\$30.00 | Mar. 11, 2014  
978-0-8090-4239-5



A nonpolemical, engaging study of a once-thriving Indian nation of the American heartland whose origins and demise tell us much about ourselves.

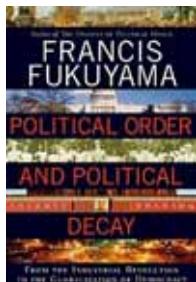
Along the Missouri River in North Dakota, the Mandan people flourished in the warming period between ice ages, circa A.D. 1000, drawn to the alluvial richness of the river as well as the bison hunting ranges of the Western grasslands. In her thorough mosaic of Mandan history and culture, Fenn (Western American History/Univ. of Colorado; *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775–82*, 2001, etc.) writes that these were an immensely adaptable people, migrating upstream when weather patterns changed, mastering the cultivation of corn and other edibles and the art of trade, often in competition

**“Beautifully written and hugely entertaining, this book is a heartfelt introduction to the many mind-bending theories in contemporary physics.”**

FROM *TRESPASSING ON EINSTEIN’S LAWN*

with other horticulturalist tribes nearby, like the Arikara and Lakota. Elaborate Mandan defense fortifications indicated a vulnerability to attack, perhaps by the fierce, nomadic Sioux. Mandan homes were sturdy and numerous, solid earthen lodges built by the women, who also cultivated the fields, dried the meat and tanned the hides, revealing a strong maternal society where the husbands and the children were shared by sisters in one house due to the scarcity of men, perhaps due to mortality from war and hunting. At the time of the Spanish conquistadors, Fenn estimates there were 12,000 Mandans in the upper Missouri River; it was “teeming with people.” Gradually, contact with outsiders beginning in the 17th century and continuing with the famous interaction with Louis and Clark’s expedition up the Missouri in 1804 led to Mandan decimation by disease as well as by the Norwegian rat, which devoured their corn stored in cache pits. In addition to her comprehensive narrative, Fenn intersperses throughout the narrative many helpful maps and poignant drawings by George Catlin and others.

An excellent contribution to the truth telling of the American Indian story. (73 b/w illustrations; 15 maps)



**POLITICAL ORDER AND  
POLITICAL DECAY**  
*From the Industrial  
Revolution to the  
Globalization of Democracy*

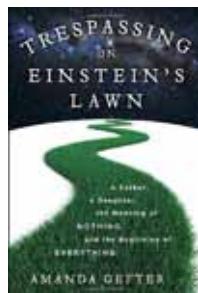
Fukuyama, Francis  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux (672 pp.)  
\$35.00 | Oct. 1, 2014  
978-0-374-22735-7

In his companion to *The Origins of the Political Order*, the deeply engaged political scientist offers a compelling historical overview of a useful template for the retooling of institutions in the modern state.

Former neoconservative academic Fukuyama (International Studies/Stanford Univ.) is concerned about the functionality of government, specifically what he sees as the current “vetocracy” in the United States, which signals the beginning of political decay. Moving from the French Revolution onward and using myriad examples from Prussia to Nigeria, the author lays out the evolution of three essential political institutions: the state, the rule of law and democratic accountability. Fukuyama is commenting on (and updating) his teacher Samuel P. Huntington’s *Political Order in Changing Societies* (1968), in which Huntington argued that “before a polity could be democratic, it had to provide basic order”—e.g., the introduction of the Napoleonic Code in France. Fukuyama defines institutions, after Huntington, as “stable, valued, recurring patterns of behavior” around which humans act for the greater good. Why have some countries developed stable institutions like public safety, a legal system and national defense while others have not? The author delves into the making of the first stable and effective modern states, notably in Prussia, where Calvinist doctrine infused in leaders a sense of austerity, thrift and intolerance of corruption, and spurred a substantial army and education and taxation systems. Elsewhere,

particularly in Greece, Italy and Argentina, where stable institutions should have developed, states were stymied by an absence of social trust and by clientelism, which depends on patronage. Fukuyama also looks at the roles of geography, climate and colonialism. Shaking off patronage-laden bureaucracies, as Britain and America managed to do, is essential to a stable state. In the U.S., Fukuyama decries the creeping “repatrimonialization” in the form of lobbyists and special interest groups.

Systematic, thorough and even hopeful fodder for reform-minded political observers.



**TRESPASSING ON  
EINSTEIN’S LAWN**  
*A Father, a Daughter,  
the Meaning of Nothing, and  
the Beginning of Everything*

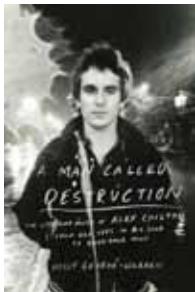
Gefter, Amanda  
Bantam (496 pp.)  
\$28.00 | Jan. 14, 2014  
978-0-345-53143-8  
978-0-345-53963-2 e-book



Part science writing and part memoir, this adventurous fact-finding romp takes readers across the landscape of ideas about the universe, calling on the expertise of the biggest names in science—and also the author’s lifelong partner in her pursuit of the meaning of everything: her father.

Gefter, an MIT Knight Science Journalism fellow and founding editor of CultureLab at *New Scientist*, is a crafty storyteller and journalist; she describes how she jump-started her career by crashing physics conferences and faking her way into interviews with world-famous physicists. Fueled by an insatiable curiosity about how the universe could be at once governed by the laws of cosmology (which define large-scale properties of the universe) and also by the laws of quantum mechanics (which define the behavior of microscopic particles), the author embarked on a scientific scavenger hunt while chasing leads across time and space. Gefter makes even the most esoteric concepts—and there are a lot of them in this book—lucid and approachable. From string theory to the multiverse to the holographic principle, the author’s exuberance for physics and the possibility that cutting-edge theories may lead to a new understanding of “reality” is evident in her passionate prose. Underlying the joys of scientific pursuit is the author’s formative relationship with her father, who first asked the big question—“How would you define nothing?”—that inspired her yearslong quest to define how “nothing” and “everything” can be explained by the forces that govern the universe. What she discovered about the new frontier of quantum cosmology and the importance of the role of the individual observer is astonishing and awesome, and Gefter’s book is a useful presentation of this thrilling ontological shift for a general audience.

Beautifully written and hugely entertaining, this book is a heartfelt introduction to the many mind-bending theories in contemporary physics. (29 photos)



## A MAN CALLED DESTRUCTION *The Life and Music of Alex Chilton, from Box Tops to Big Star to Backdoor Man*

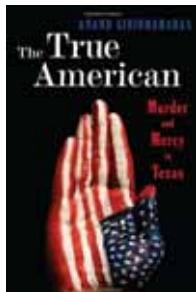
George-Warren, Holly  
Viking (384 pp.)  
\$27.95 | Mar. 24, 2014  
978-0-670-02563-3



A thoroughly reported biography illuminating the life and work of one of the more mystifying and influential cult figures in rock.

Few musicians have ever experienced a career trajectory and musical progression quite like Alex Chilton's (1950–2010). At the age of 16, he enjoyed (if that's the word) not only his biggest hit, but “the biggest hit single ever recorded in Memphis” with “The Letter” as the lead singer of the Box Tops. Though he was little more than a hired voice, he subsequently established his creative bona fides in Big Star, a band so influential that it all but invented indie rock. That band suffered from a series of recording-label disasters that prevented it from reaching its popular potential at the time, but Chilton subsequently proceeded to confuse his fervent fan base (which increased, along with his influence, as bigger bands such as R.E.M. paid homage) with solo recordings that ranged from abrasively noisy and raw to lounge lizardy (including “Volare”). It may be hard to find the common denominator, but veteran rock journalist George-Warren (*Public Cowboy No. 1: The Life and Times of Gene Autry*, 2007, etc.) connects the dots, showing how it all fit together: his Southern upbringing in a family that was patrician, artistic and permissive, his early mood swings, his later suspicion of the music business and rejection of the adulation that belatedly came his way. He became a true bohemian, bedeviled by alcohol, drugs and a penchant for tempestuous romance. He even took an extended hiatus from music to work as a New Orleans dishwasher (and later live in a tent). But he came to terms with his life and legacy before his death at 59, and “he died a happy man,” perhaps the most surprising twist for such a complicated musician and man.

As an artist who “left behind...many lifetimes of brilliant music, a legacy that will inspire generations to come,” Chilton receives the biography he deserves.



## THE TRUE AMERICAN *Murder and Mercy in Texas*

Giridharadas, Anand  
Norton (384 pp.)  
\$27.95 | May 5, 2014  
978-0-393-23950-8

Well-crafted account of an act of post-9/11 vigilante violence and its long reverberations for its survivors.

New York Times columnist Giridharadas (*India Calling: An Intimate Portrait of a Nation's Remaking*, 2011) meticulously reconstructs two lives that collided in horrific fashion. In the charged, angry days after 9/11, self-styled “Arab Slayer” Mark Stroman murdered two immigrants in Texas, while a third man survived being shot in the head during Stroman’s spree: Raisuddin Bhuiyan, a Bangladesh Air Force veteran, was working at a Dallas-area convenience store as he established himself in America. Stroman was quickly apprehended and sentenced to death; Bhuiyan not only recovered from this harrowing hate crime, but thrived, building a career in IT management. Following a pilgrimage to Mecca with his beloved mother, Bhuiyan decided to channel his sense of good fortune into a social statement, pursuing a late-stage effort to block Stroman’s execution and reach out to his children. Although Stroman’s sentence was ultimately carried out, Bhuiyan’s determination to break what he saw as a never-ending cycle of violence between cultures through an act of forgiveness caused a groundswell of media attention and admiration, even in conservative Texas. Giridharadas writes in a maximalist, descriptive style that allows him to hew close to both Bhuiyan’s open-heartedness and Stroman’s racialized resentment, which he appeared to relinquish in his waning days on death row, moved by the interest of Bhuiyan and others. In building a close, empathetic portrait of the murderer, which includes his troubled extended family, Giridharadas convincingly argues that the rage and violence embraced by Americans like Stroman often results from constricted heartland social environments, where hard drugs (and subsequent criminal records) are easier to come by than good blue-collar jobs and racial tribalism reigns. Bhuiyan and the author seemingly concur that Stroman’s legacy will be the similarly constricted lives of his children.

A compelling, nuanced look at the shifting, volatile meaning of American identity in the post-9/11 era.

## TWELVE YEARS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS LATER, FUNNY NOVELIST GARY SHTEYNGART EYES HIMSELF MORE SERIOUSLY

GARY SHTEYNGART HAS DEDICATED his memoir, *Little Failure*, to his parents and his psychoanalyst—a good springboard for this deeply introspective and moving look at his past. Without his parents, there would be no Gary; without psychoanalysis, there would be no memoir. Or at least not this one.

"On so many occasions in my novels I have approached a certain truth only to turn away from it, only to point my finger and laugh at it and then scurry back to safety," Shteyngart writes. "In this book, I promised myself I would not point the finger. My laughter would be intermittent. There would be no safety."

Of course, there is laughter—this is Shteyngart, after all—but the humor here serves more to bring emotion into sharper relief than to protect from it. At the opening, we meet just-out-of-college Gary, standing in the Strand Bookstore, looking at an image of a Russian church and having a panic attack. It will take us the length of the book to fully decode why.

Shteyngart's three novels (*The Russian Debutante's Handbook*, *Absurdistan* and *Super Sad True Love Story*) feature Russian Jewish immigrants to America, and much of his memoir grapples with his own history as

a Russian Jew in Queens, New York, where he and his parents immigrated when he was 7.

Coming to a new country with a different language is universally dislocating, and Shteyngart spares us no discomfort, from the arbitrary choice of "Gary" to replace his birth name, Igor, to the separation from his grandmother

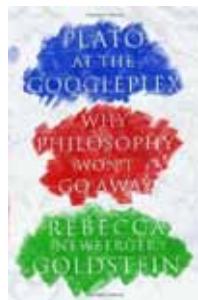
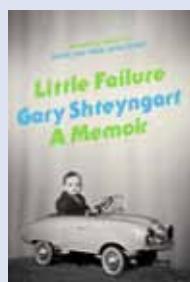
to his alienation and humiliation in school. "In a way, my experience at Hebrew school prepared me for any kind of criticism," he says now. "Once you're dehumanized for so long, it's all gravy after that."

—Jessica Gross



Photo courtesy Brigitte Lacombe

Gary Shteyngart



### PLATO AT THE GOOGLEPLEX *Why Philosophy Won't Go Away*

Goldstein, Rebecca Newberger  
Pantheon (464 pp.)  
\$29.95 | Mar. 4, 2014  
978-0-307-37819-4  
978-0-307-90887-2 e-book



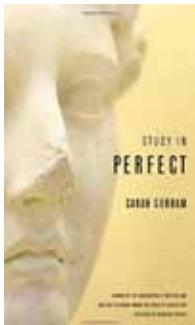
Plato returns to 21st-century America in this witty, inventive, genre-bending work by MacArthur Fellow Goldstein (*36 Arguments for the Existence of God: A Work of Fiction*, 2010, etc.).

As the author imagines him, Plato is an intense, curious visitor from ancient Greece who is touring the country to promote his famous tract, *The Republic*. He lands first in Mountain View, Calif., where he is scheduled to speak to the staff of Google but gets waylaid by an employee who engages him in a conversation about truth, beauty, goodness and justice. That encounter inspires his interest in computers and the intellectual potential of Googling. He comes to love his Google Chromebook, but he cautions Google enthusiasts that information is not the same as knowledge. So what is knowledge? Why is philosophy relevant in contemporary life? What does it mean to live a good life? Those questions and more inform his conversations. Plato joins a panel at the 92nd Street Y to discuss child-rearing, countering the positions of a dour Freudian psychoanalyst and a self-proclaimed Tiger Mom. He takes a gig as a consultant to an advice columnist, offering responses to queries about love and sex; he has a stint on a cable news talk show with an interviewer (think Bill O'Reilly) who questions the whole enterprise of philosophy; and he submits to having his brain scanned in an MRI, even though he's skeptical about what neurological maps can reveal about the essence of self. Throughout, he never loses his cool, bemused demeanor. Goldstein's philosophical background serves her impressively in this reconsideration of Plato's work, and her talent as a fiction writer animates her lively cast of characters: the arrogant, leering scientist in charge of a neurological research lab; the psycho-babbling advice columnist; the egotistical cable news interviewer.

Goldstein's bright, ingenious philosophical romp makes Plato not only relevant to our times, but palpably alive.

## "A contemplative, lyrical, splendid collection."

FROM STUDY IN PERFECT



### STUDY IN PERFECT

*Gorham, Sarah*  
Univ. of Georgia (224 pp.)  
\$24.95 | Sep. 15, 2014  
978-0-8203-4712-7

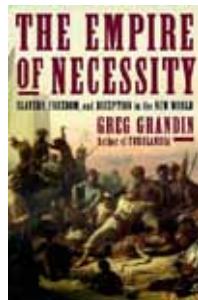


Essays and musings considering the elusive and evocative idea of perfection.

In these tender, elegant essays, poet and Sarabande Books president Gorham (*Bad Daughter*, 2011, etc.) explores cultural, personal and philosophical meanings of the "slippery term" *perfect*.

Ten short pieces consider such topics as "Perfect Tea" (Twinkies Irish Breakfast, prepared in a microwave), "Perfect Sleep" (morphine-induced, following a C-section) and "Perfect Conversation" (fulfilling the definition of perfection as "That which has attained its purpose"): "I love you," "I love you too." A dozen longer essays elaborate on "the many permutations of this most hermetic and exalted concept" in the author's life. In "Moving Horizontal," a four-story Victorian, which had served the family perfectly as Gorham's children grew up, suddenly feels claustrophobic; more perfect for a couple's empty nest is an open-plan modern house, filled not with souvenirs but with light. "The Changeling" is Gorham's sister, born microcephalic, who becomes the center of the family's life: Her mother embraced her role as an activist for the handicapped; her father sold lemonade to raise funds; a sister volunteered at state institutions. "Beckie was our *wabi*," writes the author, "the distinctive flaw that made our family an exquisite paragon. This Japanese concept, with its sister *sabi*, guides us with three important principles: nothing lasts, nothing is finished, and nothing is perfect." Gorham's marriage surely was not perfect: "A Drinker's Guide to *The Cat in the Hat*" juxtaposes the chaos wrought by Dr. Seuss' wily protagonist with the impact of her husband's alcoholism on the family. Wary after he underwent treatment, the author likens the possibility of his relapse to the cat, looming menacingly outside the family's windows, "Raring to go and ready for FUN." Fear during a daughter's life-threatening illness, grief over her mother's death, nostalgia for family gatherings in summers past: All lead Gorham to consider how perfection is interlaced with pain, desire and even sin.

A contemplative, lyrical, splendid collection. (1 b/w photo; 4 illustrations; 1 chart)



### THE EMPIRE OF NECESSITY

*Slavery, Freedom, and Deception in the New World*  
*Grandin, Greg*  
Metropolitan/Henry Holt (384 pp.)  
\$30.00 | Jan. 14, 2014  
978-0-8050-9453-4



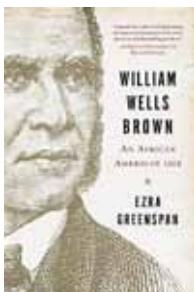
Pulitzer Prize finalist Grandin (History/New York Univ.; *Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jungle City*, 2009, etc.) offers a splendid account of the 1804 slave rebellion made famous in Herman Melville's novel *Benito Cereno*.

On a sealing expedition in the South Pacific, veteran captain Amasa Delano (1763-1823) encountered a ship in seeming distress, boarded it to provide food and water, and discovered a great deception: The black-skinned people on board—West African slaves—were in command of the vessel and holding its Spanish captain hostage. The clever role-playing by mutinous slaves sharply contradicted the prevailing belief that slaves lacked cunning and reason, and Grandin uses the episode as a revealing window on the Atlantic slave trade and life in Spanish America in the early 1800s. Delano, a veteran seaman from New England, where slavery supported the economy, is seen as "a new man of the American Revolution" who, like many, championed freedom and found slavery morally reprehensible, yet nonetheless played his own role in the system. He eventually led an attack on the rebel-held ship and tortured many captives. Grandin's research in the archives, libraries and museums of nine countries shines forth on each page of this excellent book. He writes with authority on every aspect of the "slavers' fever" that gripped the New World and details vividly the horrors of disease-ridden slave ships ("floating tombs"), the treks of slave caravans overland through the pampas to Lima from Buenos Aires, and the harsh, brutal life of sealers, who clubbed and skinned their victims, annihilating many seal rookeries of the Argentine and Chilean islands. The author also examines the parallels between Melville's novel and the historic incident, and he reflects on evidence of the omnipresence of slavery as an institution that he discovered on his research travels.

Deeply researched and well-written, this book will appeal to general readers and specialists alike. (38 illustrations; 2 maps)

“Whether you view Snowden’s act as patriotic or treasonous, this fast-paced, densely detailed book is the narrative of first resort.”

FROM THE SNOWDEN FILES



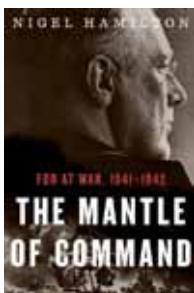
### WILLIAM WELLS BROWN *An African-American Life*

*Greenspan, Ezra*  
Norton (448 pp.)  
\$29.95 | Oct. 6, 2014  
978-0-393-24090-0

A scholar fills in the gaps in the life of a former slave who became one of the most famous African-Americans of the 19th century.

Greenspan (English/Southern Methodist Univ.; editor: *William Wells Brown: A Reader*, 2008, etc.) mined the archives to discover how William Wells Brown (a name adopted long after his birth) rose from a nondescript slave probably born in 1814 to become a man of letters, not to mention a medical doctor, before his death in 1884. During the later decades of his life, Brown was the equal of Frederick Douglass as an influential African-American polymath. Like Douglass, Brown crusaded for civil rights. Even after he had won esteem and could live comfortably, he would travel alone to the Deep South, knowing he would be harassed and possibly even murdered. Greenspan is no hagiographer. He understands, for example, that Brown's written works (most famously the novel *Clotel*) are far from canonical. But the author is openly admiring, and rightly so, of Brown's daring escape from slavery, self-education, powerful public speaking on the anti-slavery circuit, creative approach to the civil rights campaign and efforts to win public office through candidacy in legitimate elections. During the 19th century, the lives of slaves yielded almost no reliable documentation, so Greenspan immersed himself in pre-Civil War chronicles of slave culture to calculate the most likely circumstances of Brown's life. The author's informed speculation offers a window not only into Brown's suffering and rise, but also the travails (and occasional triumphs) of countless slaves who tried to use their freedom wisely. Greenspan ably navigates Brown's life and demonstrates how he became a problem to both his slave masters and to any other bigots who could not fathom such intelligence in a lowly slave from Kentucky.

A solid biography of a deserving subject. (30 illustrations)



### THE MANTLE OF COMMAND *FDR at War, 1941-1942*

*Hamilton, Nigel*  
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (528 pp.)  
\$30.00 | May 13, 2014  
978-0-547-77524-1

A deeply engrossing study of the first year of Franklin Roosevelt's prescient military leadership in World War II.

Consummate biographer Hamilton (*How to Do Biography: A Primer*, 2008, etc.) ably captures the charming, astute personality of FDR, especially his role as foil to the dogged, imperious Winston Churchill. Considering



that so many facets of the Roosevelt era have already been amply scrutinized, it is to Hamilton's considerable credit that he manages to impart singular, fresh nuance and depth to his hero. Hamilton aims to set the record straight on three counts: First, despite the postwar preening by his generals, FDR had fended off various defeatist and ineffectual proposals after the attack on Pearl Harbor and held firm to the necessity of a quick reprisal in the Pacific to check Japan's further incursions into the Indian Ocean. Subsequently, working with the British (and against a near mutiny of his generals), FDR seized on a massive combined force in northwest Africa, which would become Operation Torch, to pincer the Germans under Erwin Rommel, thus opening up a second front, to the delight of the Russians. Second, Hamilton aims to emphasize how important it was to FDR, a born aristocrat yet a man of the people, that he and Churchill hammer out an understanding that the Americans would enter the war not to help Britain prop up its collapsing empire; on the contrary, FDR touched this sore spot frequently, for instance, pressuring Churchill to let the beleaguered Indians fight for their self-determination. Finally, Hamilton wonderfully delineates FDR's ability to elicit news from his many "eyes and ears" in the field—in opposition to the Victorian, prideful Churchill. However, as the author portrays through Churchill's extended White House Christmas visit in 1941, the two leaders learned a great deal from each other.

Lively, elucidating, elegant and highly knowledgeable. (two 8-page b/w inserts)



### THE SNOWDEN FILES *The Inside Story of the World's Most Wanted Man*

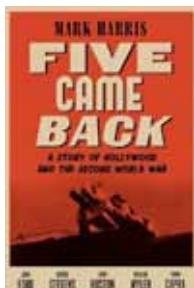
*Harding, Luke*  
Vintage (352 pp.)  
\$14.95 paper | Feb. 11, 2014  
978-0-8041-7352-0

A newsworthy, must-read book about what prompted Edward Snowden to blow the whistle on his former employer, the National Security Agency, and what likely awaits him for having done so.

In June 2013, the *Guardian* published the first of the revelations of the "Snowden file"—a huge trove of data, "thousands of documents and millions of words"—put in its lap by way of columnist Glenn Greenwald. *Guardian* foreign correspondent Harding (co-author: *WikiLeaks: Inside Julian Assange's War on Secrecy*, 2011, etc.) re-creates the curious trail that led Snowden to Greenwald and that led him to leak those documents in the first place. The author casts the prime motivation as a kind of revulsion born of Snowden's experience as an analyst knee-deep in material that—it is very clear—was none of the NSA's business, reinforced by Snowden's time stationed in the relative freedom of Switzerland. It is also clear that Snowden's act was premeditated, though not out of anti-Americanism (he's a Ron Paul-type libertarian, it seems) and not for monetary impulse,

though he could have sold the documents to any one of a number of foreign powers. Harding's narrative covers numerous serial stories that developed from Snowden's decision: first, the cloak-and-dagger work that got the files to Greenwald, then the NSA's efforts and those of the larger American government to curb the post-publication damage (sometimes via British proxies), then Snowden's flight into Russian exile in order to avoid the fate of fellow whistle-blower Bradley Manning. Harding closes with the thought that Snowden may have no other home for some time to come—but that even wider implications remain to be explored, including the possibility that British activists might be able to introduce something like the First Amendment to protect its press in the future.

**Whether you view Snowden's act as patriotic or treasonous, this fast-paced, densely detailed book is the narrative of first resort.**



### FIVE CAME BACK A Story of Hollywood and the Second World War

Harris, Mark  
Penguin Press (512 pp.)  
\$29.95 | Mar. 3, 2014  
978-1-59420-430-2

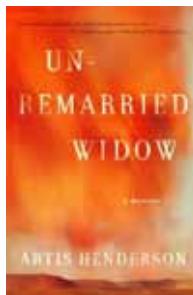
Entertainment Weekly writer Harris (*Pictures at a Revolution: Five Movies and the Birth of the New Hollywood*, 2008) returns with a comprehensive, clear-eyed look at the careers of five legendary directors who put their Hollywood lives on freeze-frame while they went off to fight in the only ways they knew how.

"As long as they lived," writes the author, "the war lived with them." Arranged chronologically (beginning in 1938), the text generally includes the doings of each of the five (John Ford, George Stevens, John Huston, William Wyler and Frank Capra) in each of the chapters, with Harris artfully intercutting events from his principals' private as well as professional lives. The author also keeps us up to date on Hollywood without his five, showing us the stars who were winning Oscars, how the five felt about the winners (sometimes themselves) and how Hollywood sought to profit from the war. Harris segues seamlessly to scenes all over the world—the Aleutians, England, France, Germany, Italy, the South Pacific and other venues important in the war and in his story. We learn along the way of the involvement in various cinema projects by other considerable talents—e.g., Lilian Hellman, cinematographer Gregg Toland, Theodor Geisl, Mel Blanc and animator Chuck Jones. Some of the five worked together (Capra and Stevens), but others worked separately on feature-length documentaries, short subjects and films for military use only. Among the more enduring productions were *The Memphis Belle: The Story of a Flying Fortress* (Wyler, 1944) and the powerful, wrenching footage shot in 1945 at the liberation of Dachau by George Stevens' crew. Stevens was devastated by what he saw and later shot *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1959).



Harris also chronicles the politics, personality clashes (military vs. Hollywood), egos, drinking, carousing and sexual exploits.

**As riveting and revealing as a film by an Oscar winner.**



### UNREMARRIED WIDOW A Memoir

Henderson, Artis  
Simon & Schuster (288 pp.)  
\$25.00 | Jan. 7, 2014  
978-1-4516-4928-4



Journalist Henderson chronicles her passionate but unlikely romance and marriage to Miles, a fighter pilot who fit the stereotype, "American by birth, Texan by the grace of God."

In 2006, Miles' helicopter crashed in bad weather, and there were no survivors. They had met three years earlier in Tallahassee, when he was still in training. A recent college graduate, she hoped to travel and become a writer. A chance meeting at a bar led to an immediate attraction, and soon they were commuting back and forth on weekends between her Florida apartment and his, near Fort Rucker. He was politically conservative and a regular churchgoer who joined the military after 9/11. The author describes herself as a vehement opponent of the Iraq War, a young liberal "more New Age-light than Biblical." When Miles was reassigned to Fort Bragg, they decided to live together. The author describes the difficulties of her life, as he was frequently reassigned, and she could only find minimum-wage jobs and felt little in common with the Army wives she met. Despite this and his frequent absence on deployment, the growing bond between the two was deepening. She called her mother for help, describing her frustration and posing the question of whether she was wasting her education. When her mother asked, "Do you love him?" her reply said it all: "I love him more than anything." They married in March 2006, and he deployed to Iraq in July. Henderson writes movingly of his poignant, last letter to her, to be delivered should he be killed. She recounts how he urged her to pursue her dreams and relates her struggle to do so, despite her grief. Henderson, who graduated from Columbia University's School of Journalism and now works as a journalist, first shared her story in the *New York Times* "Modern Love" column.

**A beautiful debut from an exciting new voice.**

## AFTER YEARS OF AVOIDING THE SUBJECT, LACY M. JOHNSON REVEALS THE DETAILS OF THE NIGHT SHE WASN'T SUPPOSED TO SURVIVE

A BLOOD-FILLED BUCKET SITS beneath a homemade wooden chair with a missing 2-by-4-inch piece of wood. Lacy Johnson has just freed herself from the chair's restraints. She puts her clothes back on and examines the room. She stands near the door, U bolts locked around her wrist, holding the pried-off 2-by-4 overhead. She is waiting for him to come back—The Suspect, her Spanish Teacher, The Man She Used to Live With—to bash him over the head, then run. Hours earlier, she was kidnapped, strapped to the chair in the soundproofed room and raped. He has left to corroborate an alibi. When he returns, he plans to kill her.

But he does not return—not then, in the moment she readies to strike—and Johnson flees for the police station, half-alive and half-dead in every way that matters. Fourteen years have passed since that night, but the events and aftermath chronicled in her 2014 memoir *The Other Side* still haunt her. "Every present moment, even now, has traveled through that one moment in the past," she explains. "This is a book I have always known I was going to write." Johnson is the author of a 2012 memoir, *Trespasses*, about three generations coming of age in the Great Plains. But the painful event that is the focus of *The Other Side* occurred "just as

I was beginning to think of myself as a writer," Johnson says. "It always shaped what I was trying to learn to do."

For years, fear that The Suspect would arrive unannounced crippled her. Lack of closure left her hollow, aimless. Fourteen years later, her voice is clear, bold and proud that she has finally reached the other side of darkness. "I've found a way to

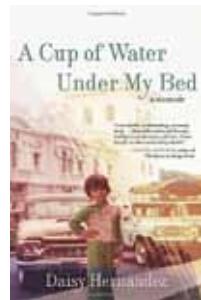
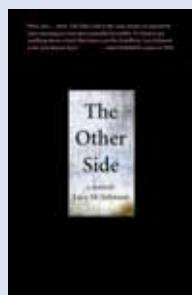
be brave," she says proudly. "I'm not going to hide anymore, and I'm not going to stay silent. I'm not going to be ashamed of this story. I'm going to be outspoken and honest and talk about it to anyone who asks. That's a different type of justice."

—Alex Layman



Lacy Johnson

PHOTOGRAPH BY JORDAN O'LEARY



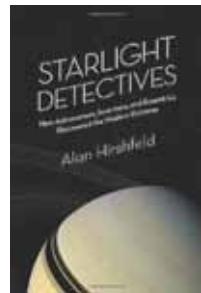
### A CUP OF WATER UNDER MY BED A Memoir

Hernández, Daisy  
Beacon (200 pp.)  
\$24.95 | Sep. 9, 2014  
978-0-8070-1448-6

A journalist's account of growing up between cultures and learning to embrace both her ethnic and bisexual identities.

Former *ColorLines* magazine executive editor Hernández (co-editor: *Colonize This!: Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism*, 2002) was raised as the first-generation American child of a working-class Colombian mother and Cuban father. For her, "everything real"—from family conversations to the observations of her beloved aunts to favorite TV shows—happened in Spanish. However, her family wanted their daughter to achieve more in life than they could, so learning English "to become white" and Americanized became the goal they impressed upon their daughter. Yet as Hernández came to understand, learning a language that was hers by nationality but not by ethnicity meant growing away from her family and adopting the attitude that she had "no history, no past, no culture." The break was not easy; so much from her colorful dual heritage formed the bedrock of her identity. In her parents' world, saints performed miracles, and cups of water could carry messages between the living and the dead. In that world, too, women married (or avoided) certain kinds of men. As Hernández grew into adulthood and sexuality, she fulfilled her parents' desire to find a "gringo" boyfriend. At the same time, she discovered a desire for lesbian and transgender women. Her family castigated Hernández for her bisexuality but also lauded their daughter for finding middle-class success as a *New York Times* reporter. Striving to be true to herself as a queer (rather than queer and whitewashed) Latina, she eventually took a chance writing for a social justice magazine in San Francisco. Warm and thoughtful, Hernández writes with cleareyed compassion about living, and redefining success, at the intersection of social, ethnic and racial difference.

Personal storytelling at its most authentic and heartfelt.



### STARLIGHT DETECTIVES How Astronomers, Inventors, and Eccentrics Discovered the Modern Universe

Hirshfeld, Alan  
Bellevue Literary Press (400 pp.)  
\$19.95 | Jul. 8, 2014  
978-1-934137-78-9  
978-1-934137-79-6 e-book

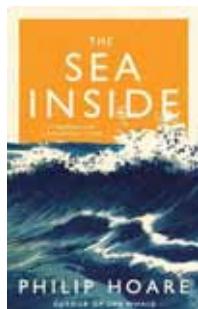
Photography, not computers, ushered in modern astronomy. Here, its bumpy evolution is in the expert hands of Harvard College Observatory associate Hirshfeld (Physics/Univ. of Mass. Dartmouth; *Eureka Man: The Life and Legacy of Archimedes*, 2009, etc.).

# "A beautifully written memoir/travelogue with readable diversions into philosophy."

FROM THE SEA INSIDE

In this highly illuminating history, the author "explores the decades-long bridge of innovation that transformed Victorian-era visual astronomy into the scientific discipline that is observational astrophysics." Although revolutionary when it appeared around 1600, the telescope is simply an amazing extension of the eye, not designed to function in dim lighting or make a permanent record. The daguerreotype dazzled the world in 1839, and an early photograph of the moon, unimpressive by modern standards, created a sensation in 1851, but stars and planets remained off limits until film sensitivity vastly increased with the dry plate in the 1870s. Equally essential to astronomers was the simultaneous maturing of the spectroscope. Splitting light into innumerable hues and lines, it allowed not only the discovery that stars were similar to the sun, but also the identification of their precise chemical makeup and movements. By the 1880s, "what had been a noisome, exasperating art had become a predictable mainstream technology that would eventually recast the telescope as an adjunct of the camera" and spectroscope. Until that decade, Hirshfeld emphasizes brilliant but now-unknown amateurs (Andrew Common, William Bond, William Huggins, Isaac Roberts) who fell in love with astronomy and had no objection to the clunky new technology. Afterward, they were replaced by academically trained but equally obsessive scientists who oversaw the creation of the massive 20th-century observatories (George Ellery Hale) and revealed an unimaginably immense, expanding universe (Edwin Hubble, Harlow Shapley).

**A delightful, detailed chronicle of great men (and a rare woman) whose fascination with the night sky and the technology necessary to study it led to today's dramatic discoveries. (101 illustrations)**



## THE SEA INSIDE

Hoare, Philip  
Melville House (384 pp.)  
\$27.99 | Apr. 8, 2014  
978-1-61219-359-5

Do we come from the sea? Hoare's (*The Whale: In Search of the Giants of the Sea*, 2010, etc.) absorbing book may well lead you to think so.

Could not man have come from the sea in search of the bounty of tidal beaches? Anyone who has an affinity, indeed a need, for the water will understand the author's desire to swim every day near his home in Southampton, England, where "it is never not beautiful." "At low tide," he writes, "the beach is an indecent expanse laid bare by retreat, more like farmland than anything of the sea: an inundated field, almost peaty with sediment, as much charcoal as it is sludge." No matter what country or continent he visits, the author makes a point to swim and become a part of that sea. He's fearless as he leaps into oceans near and far to commune with any swimming mammal that may be near; whether whales or a superpod of 200 dolphins, the mammals of the sea circle him, inspect

him and accept him. His travels and his meandering, humorous writing take us from the Isle of Wight to the Azores, Sri Lanka, and the nearly primeval Tasmania and New Zealand, and Hoare delivers delightful descriptions of sea creatures and shore birds, bemoaning animals newly and nearly extinct. This is not a book following the geography of the sea; nor is it a history of sailing. It is an attempt to establish and examine the oneness that the Maori have understood for years: There is no difference between life on land and life in the sea. While the author may digress occasionally, readers will relish his writing and devotion to nature and likely won't begrudge him a bit of family history here and there.

**A beautifully written memoir/travelogue with readable diversions into philosophy.**



## THE SHORT AND TRAGIC LIFE OF ROBERT PEACE

**A Brilliant Young Man Who Left Newark for the Ivy League But Did Not Survive**  
Hobbs, Jeff  
Scribner (416 pp.)  
\$27.00 | Sep. 23, 2014  
978-1-4767-3190-2



Ambitious, moving tale of an inner-city Newark kid who made it to Yale yet succumbed to old demons and economic realities.

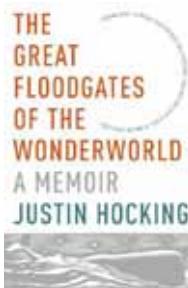
Novelist Hobbs (*The Tourists*, 2007) combines memoir, sociological analysis and urban narrative elements, producing a perceptive page-turner regarding the life of his eponymous protagonist, also his college roommate. Peace's mother was fiercely independent, working nonstop in hospital kitchens to help aging parents keep their house. His father, a charming hustler, was attentive to Robert until his conviction on questionable evidence in a double murder. Mrs. Peace pushed her bright son toward parochial school, the best course for survival in Newark, already notorious for economic struggles and crime. Compulsively studious, Robert thrived there—a banker alumnus offered to pay his college tuition—and also at Yale. Hobbs contrasts his personal relationship with Robert with a cutting critique of university life, for the privileged and less so, capturing the absurd remove that "model minority" and working-class students experience. At Yale, Peace both performed high-end lab work in his medical major and discreetly dealt marijuana, enhancing his campus popularity, even as he held himself apart: "Rob was incredibly skilled in not showing how he felt [and] at concealing who he was and who he wanted to be." After graduation, Peace drifted, as did many of his peers: Hobbs notes that even for their privileged classmates, professional success seemingly necessitated brutal hours and deep debt. But Peace drifted back into the Newark drug trade; in 2011, he was murdered by some of the city's increasingly merciless gangsters due to his involvement in high-grade cannabis production. Hobbs manages the ambiguities of what could be a grim tale by meticulously

**"Holt says that he wrote the book over a period of 10 years. Let's hope for a shorter duration before we next hear from this gifted writer/physician."**

FROM INTERNAL MEDICINE

constructing environmental verisimilitude and unpacking the rituals of hardscrabble parochial schools, Yale secret societies, urban political machinations and Newark drug gangs.

An urgent report on the state of American aspirations and a haunting dispatch from forsaken streets.



### THE GREAT FLOODGATES OF THE WONDERWORLD A Memoir

Hocking, Justin

Graywolf (256 pp.)

\$15.00 paper | Feb. 25, 2014

978-1-55597-669-9

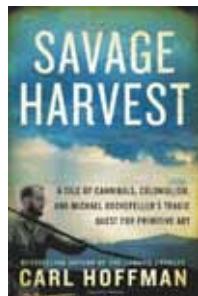


Through stylistic understatement and perfect tonal pitch, this memoir somehow achieves its outlandish ambitions.

In lesser hands, a narrative steeped in obsessions with *Moby-Dick* and surfing and skateboarding would strain to make connections, especially when it's also a coming-of-age, rite-of-passage memoir by a 30-something author who has trouble letting go of or committing to anything while recognizing that he should have grown up long ago. An avid skateboarder in Colorado with a graduate degree that lets him teach creative writing at the university level, Hocking (co-editor: *Life and Limb: Skateboarders Write from the Deep End*, 2004) gave it all up, along with a fulfilling romantic relationship, to move to New York for...what? He took a job delivering food and another reading manuscripts for rejection. He worked on a novel that was "basically going nowhere." Incongruously enough, he discovered surfing, which offered a natural progression from his passion for skateboarding: "Like the majority of actual New York residents, I had no idea surfing was even possible here. Could you really ride the subway to the beach? If so, could you surf in the morning and hit the Metropolitan Museum of Art that same afternoon?" Thus New York allowed Hocking to develop a passion for surfing, which shared an ocean with his longtime obsession with Melville (whose paths through the city he retraced) and what appears to be an obsession with himself and with romance, coupled with an ambivalence toward commitment—to anything. "You know, you talk about loving everyone all the time like you're some sort of enlightened being," said the girlfriend over whom his obsession deepened after they split. "But the only reason you love anyone is to make yourself feel better." Therapy, 12-step programs, a nervous breakdown, spiritual crisis and renewal, friends, career and geographical change, and some life-threatening experiences helped transform the author and deepen his appreciation of *Moby-Dick*.

In a book that's likely far richer than the novel he shelved, Hocking ultimately transcends "the dark Ahab force."

FROM INTERNAL MEDICINE



### SAVAGE HARVEST A Tale of Cannibals, Colonialism, and Michael Rockefeller's Tragic Quest for Primitive Art

Hoffman, Carl

Morrow/HarperCollins (304 pp.)

\$26.99 | Mar. 18, 2014

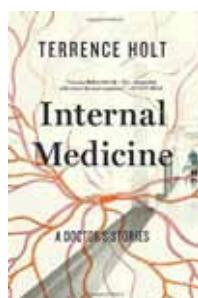
978-0-06-211615-4



A bare-knuckle, adventure-filled journey in search of the answer to a half-century-old cold case: Whatever happened to Nelson Rockefeller's son, Michael?

Michael was 23 when he disappeared off the coast of southwestern New Guinea, having nearly made land after swimming for 18 hours when his catamaran capsized. Dutch officials (for this was still colonial territory in 1961) eventually reported that the renowned explorer and collector of so-called primitive art had drowned. *National Geographic Traveler* contributing editor Hoffman (*The Lunatic Express: Discovering the World...via Its Most Dangerous Buses, Boats, Trains, and Planes*, 2010, etc.) writes that, all this time later, the story compelled him: "I was a half-Jewish middle-class mutt with a public education, not a blue-blooded scion, but Rockefeller's journey resonated with me." Empathetically channeling Rockefeller as someone who wasn't out in such remote territory merely to acquire stuff but was instead challenging himself in anything but the privileged surroundings of his youth, Hoffman set out to reconstruct that last voyage. He encountered evidence that the young man's end was greatly different from the one depicted in the official records. Moreover, he notes, it was an open secret that Rockefeller had been killed after having been plucked from the sea. But why? In a daring ethnographic turn, Hoffman spent months among the descendants of killers, lending specific weight to the old clashing-of-worlds trope and addressing questions of why people go to war, commit cannibalism and other tangled matters. He never loses sight of his goal, but Hoffman is also sympathetic to the plight of the Asmat people, who themselves were changed by the events of 53 years ago: "The world had been one way when Michael Rockefeller came to Asmat, another by the time he was dead."

A searching, discomfiting journey yields an elegant, memorable report.



### INTERNAL MEDICINE A Doctor's Stories

Holt, Terrence

Liveright/Norton (240 pp.)

\$24.95 | Sep. 29, 2014

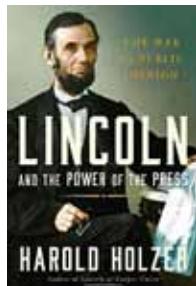
978-0-87140-875-4



Think you've heard it all about the grueling, fatigue-driven years suffered by interns and residents once they get their degrees? Think again.

Holt (*In the Valley of the Kings: Stories*, 2009) came 20 years later to medicine than most of his peers, choosing a writing career first. Whatever the reasons for that latter-day commitment, the result is a beautiful, riveting book that puts readers on the spot in the ward, in the ICU, making the rounds, talking to families, making hospice calls and participating in the “bedlam” of a “Code Blue” resuscitation. What Holt set out to do was to convey the “un-narratability” of hospital life (“too manifold, too layered, too many damn things happening one on top of the other”) in parables that would condense and transform the experience, as he himself was transformed. To that end, he uses composites of many different cases. In the process, he has created unforgettable portraits of the gravely ill or dying: the obese woman hospitalized for a “tune-up” to rid her body of excess fluids; the young woman who should have died from too many Tylenols but was saved by a liver transplant; the hospice patient whose face was covered by a surgical mask to conceal the loss of most of her lower face to cancer. “Nothing happens in these pages that doesn’t happen every day in a variety of ways in hospitals everywhere,” writes the author. “I have had to simplify what defied narrative form, and alter or suppress whatever might have compromised the respect patients deserve. But in making sense of residency within the constraints of narrative form and human decency, I have hewed as closely as possible to the lived reality of the hospital.”

**Holt says that he wrote the book over a period of 10 years. Let's hope for a shorter duration before we next hear from this gifted writer/physician.**



### LINCOLN AND THE POWER OF THE PRESS *The War for Public Opinion*

*Holzer, Harold*  
Simon & Schuster (832 pp.)  
\$35.00 | Oct. 14, 2014  
978-1-4391-9271-9

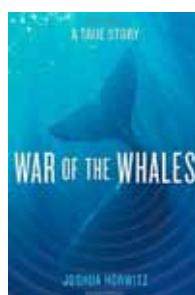
Hefty study of partisan journalism as vigorously embraced by Abraham Lincoln and the warring New York dailies.

Lincoln knew the power of the press (“public sentiment is everything,” he declared in 1858), and he made sure his views were published in supportive journals and even secretly purchased the newspaper for the German-American community in Springfield, the *Illinois Staats-Anzeiger*. In this engaging history of one of the most divisive periods in American politics, the buildup to the Civil War, Lincoln historian Holzer (*The Civil War in 50 Objects*, 2013, etc.) tracks how the great political clashes played out in the lively press of the day, creating not-so-delicate marriages between politicians and the journalists writing the “news” (which was more opinion than actual news). From the early penny presses emerged the *New York Herald*, published by the formidable Scotsman James Gordon Bennett, a scoundrel and disputatious contrarian who regularly skewered both parties, Democratic or Whig (Republican),



while remaining anti-abolition and a fierce critic of Lincoln; the *New York Tribune*, founded by Horace Greeley, crusader for faddish causes from utopian socialism to gender equality, who regularly ran for office and both supported Lincoln and later tried to unseat him; and the *New York Times*, established by Henry Jarvis Raymond as a “mean between two extremes,” promising a more “sober” and “mature” approach yet unabashedly pro-Lincoln, especially as Raymond became head of the Republican Party. The newspapermen bristled at the others’ successes and loosed competitive salvos in their respective pages over the Mexican War, the Fugitive Slave Act, the Compromise of 1850, the roaring 20-year rivalry between Stephen Douglas and Lincoln, John Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry—and, especially, the contentious presidential elections of 1860 and ’64. Other regional newspapers establishing fierce positions on slavery struggled for survival, such as William Lloyd Garrison’s *The Liberator* and Frederick Douglass’ *Paper* (later *Monthly*).

**An exhaustive feat of research with a focused structure and robust prose.**



### WAR OF THE WHALES *A True Story*

*Horwitz, Joshua*  
Simon & Schuster (448 pp.)  
\$28.00 | Jul. 1, 2014  
978-1-4516-4501-9



Living Planet Books co-founder Horwitz chronicles an ongoing collision of epic proportions between the U.S. Navy, intent on protecting its submarine warfare program, and environmental activists, who fight to save whales from extinction.

The author begins in March 2000, when, over several days, “the largest multispecies whale stranding ever recorded” occurred across 150 miles of beach in the Bahamas. Rescue efforts led by Ken Balcomb, a researcher who was conducting a census of whales in the area, were mostly unsuccessful, but he was able to preserve their bodies for later forensic examination. Having served as a naval sonar expert, Balcomb surmised that training exercises involving a top-secret “Sound Surveillance System,” developed during the Cold War to monitor Soviet nuclear submarines, were likely responsible. The use of high-decibel, low-frequency sonar signals by the Navy would have overwhelmed the whales’ biosonar system and caused physiological damage as well. This was not the first such incident of whale strandings in the vicinity of naval exercises—nor, unfortunately, the last. The author reports on the battle led by Balcomb and Joel Reynolds—a senior lawyer for the Natural Resources Defense Council—to force the release of the forensic evidence and the attempts by the Navy’s top brass to stonewall any serious investigation that could lead to curtailment of their activities. The battle led to a court ruling against the Navy for overriding environmental law. The Bush administration overturned the court decision by executive order on grounds of national security, and the NRDC countered legally, asking for a ruling on the administration’s action. The case

# A MODERN WRITER REMINDS READERS OF AN OLD CLASSIC

THANKS TO ONE PROMINENT FAN, an 800-page, 140-year-old British novel became a hot title again this year. *New Yorker* writer Rebecca Mead first read *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life* as an intellectually ambitious 17-year-old. While studying at Oxford, building a successful journalistic career and starting a family, *Middlemarch* offered pleasures and profundities that spoke to each stage of life. *My Life in Middlemarch*, Mead's heartfelt testimony to the evolution of her appreciation, will undoubtedly inspire new readers to pick up the primogenitor.

"Because George Eliot is so fiercely intelligent, I think her work has a reputation for being sort of demanding in a way that doesn't recognize how very funny she is, what a great story she's telling and how completely involving it is," says Mead. "*Middlemarch* is unbelievably good, and that's why I'm excited for [those who have yet to read it]."

A generalized desire to write about Eliot (nee Mary Anne Evans) led Mead to reread her seminal work four

years ago. She then started on the rest of Eliot's books and finished with her journals and letters. "It was a way of immersing myself in her, but also I was procrastinating. So to kick-start this project, I decided to approach it like I would a story at the *New Yorker*," says Mead, who journeyed to England to visit Eliot's childhood home and meet with members of the George Eliot fellowship. "That was a way to try and approach this through the tools that I knew I had."

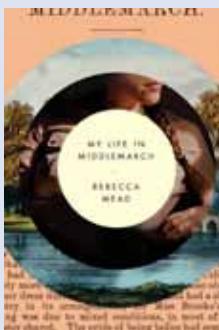
"A book may not tell us exactly how to live our own lives, but our own lives can teach us how to read a book," Mead writes.

—Megan Labrise



Photo courtesy Elisabeth C. Prochnik

Rebecca Mead



went to the Supreme Court, which ruled that the administration was within its rights, but it opened the door for the requirement of "comprehensive Environmental Impact Statements" in advance of any future naval maneuvers.

Based on years of interviews and research, Horwitz delivers a powerful, engrossing narrative that raises serious questions about the unchecked use of secrecy by the military to advance its institutional power.

## CITIES OF EMPIRE *The British Colonies and the Creation of the Urban World*



Hunt, Tristram

Metropolitan/Henry Holt (544 pp.)

\$35.00 | Nov. 25, 2014

978-0-8050-9308-7

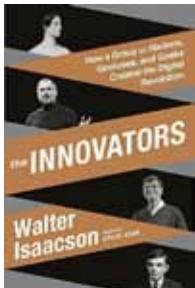
Ten vibrant cities across the globe tell the story of British imperialism in terms more nuanced and complicated than simply being good or bad.

British historian and Labour Party education spokesman Hunt (History/Univ. of London; *Marx's General: The Revolutionary Life of Friedrich Engels*, 2009, etc.) finds Niall Ferguson's *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (2003) too focused on the "heroic age of Victorian achievement." Hunt offers a broader, more inclusive approach to the history of British imperial ambition through the evolving institutions, architecture, economies and mores of the empire's far-flung transplanted urbanism, from the 17th century to today. Most of the cities are ports (save New Delhi) and evolved from specific strategic and financial exigencies on the British empire at a specific point in time: Bustling Boston represented the maritime empire's more "benign and flexible connotations" (until the Revolution); Bridgetown, Barbados, avidly promoted the export economy through sugar production and the slave trade, allowing the wealthy plantocracy to stock their houses with all manner of fancy British goods. In the 1780s and '90s, Dublin symbolized the enthusiasm for a unifying colonial relationship, however directed by a "narrow urban elite." Cape Town, wrested from the Dutch, offered by its wondrous geography an imperial supremacy after the Seven Years' War, while Calcutta symbolized "a colonial citadel which cemented Britain's 'Swing to the East.'" Hunt takes great pains to underscore the important, changeable relationship between settlers and the indigenous peoples. For example, in Melbourne in the late 19th century, the Aborigines were deemed too backward for "redemption" and thus were excluded from discussions on how to govern the colony. In moneymaking Bombay, the symbol of Britain's capacity for technological and administrative progress, the multiethnic residents played an enormous role in creating the urban landscape. Throughout the book, Hunt ably demonstrates how these cities and their colonizations contributed to the development of urbanism.

A well-documented, evenhanded work that will delight urban scholars and lay travelers.

# "A fierce, razor-sharp, heartwarming nonfiction debut."

FROM THE EMPATHY EXAMS



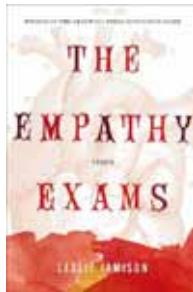
## THE INNOVATORS How a Group of Inventors, Hackers, Geniuses, and Geeks Created the Digital Revolution

Isaacson, Walter  
Simon & Schuster (544 pp.)  
\$35.00 | Oct. 7, 2014  
978-1-4767-0869-0

A panoramic history of technological revolution.

"Innovation occurs when ripe seeds fall on fertile ground," Aspen Institute CEO Isaacson (*Steve Jobs*, 2011, etc.) writes in this sweeping, thrilling tale of three radical innovations that gave rise to the digital age. First was the evolution of the computer, which Isaacson traces from its 19th-century beginnings in Ada Lovelace's "poetical" mathematics and Charles Babbage's dream of an "Analytical Engine" to the creation of silicon chips with circuits printed on them. The second was "the invention of a corporate culture and management style that was the antithesis of the hierarchical organization of East Coast companies." In the rarefied neighborhood dubbed Silicon Valley, new businesses aimed for a cooperative, nonauthoritarian model that nurtured cross-fertilization of ideas. The third innovation was the creation of demand for personal devices: the pocket radio; the calculator, marketing brainchild of Texas Instruments; video games; and finally, the holy grail of inventions: the personal computer. Throughout his action-packed story, Isaacson reiterates one theme: Innovation results from both "creative inventors" and "an evolutionary process that occurs when ideas, concepts, technologies, and engineering methods ripen together." Who invented the microchip? Or the Internet? Mostly, Isaacson writes, these emerged from "a loosely knit cohort of academics and hackers who worked as peers and freely shared their creative ideas....Innovation is not a loner's endeavor." Isaacson offers vivid portraits—many based on firsthand interviews—of mathematicians, scientists, technicians and hackers (a term that used to mean anyone who fooled around with computers), including the elegant, "intellectually intimidating," Hungarian-born John von Neumann; impatient, egotistical William Shockley; Grace Hopper, who joined the Army to pursue a career in mathematics; "laconic yet oddly charming" J.C.R. Licklider, one father of the Internet; Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, and scores of others.

Isaacson weaves prodigious research and deftly crafted anecdotes into a vigorous, gripping narrative about the visionaries whose imaginations and zeal continue to transform our lives.



## THE EMPATHY EXAMS Essays

Jamison, Leslie  
Graywolf (256 pp.)  
\$15.00 paper | Apr. 1, 2014  
978-1-55597-671-2

A dazzling collection of essays on the human condition.

In her nonfiction debut, the winner of the 2011 Graywolf Press Nonfiction Prize, Jamison (*The Gin Closet*, 2010) presents 11 essays that probe pain alongside analyses of its literal and literary trappings. Whether tackling societal woes such as strip mining, drug wars, disease and wrongful imprisonment, or slippery abstract constructs including metaphor, sentimentality, confession and "gendered woundedness," Jamison masterfully explores her incisive understanding of the modern condition. The author's self-conscious obsession with subjectivity and openness to the jarringly unfamiliar become significant themes. In the title essay, for example, the author uses her job as a medical actor—tasked with pretending to be a patient afflicted with a predetermined illness in the service of measuring medical students' diagnostic skills and bedside manners—as a springboard for examining the meaning of empathy and her relation to it. "Empathy comes from the Greek *empathia*—*em* (into) and *pathos* (feeling)—a penetration, a kind of travel," she writes. "It suggests you enter another person's pain as you'd enter another country, through immigration and customs, border crossing by way of query: *What grows where you are? What are the laws? What animals graze there?*" Jamison's uncanny ease in crossing boundaries between the philosophical and the personal enables her both to isolate an interiority of feeling and capture it in accessible metaphorical turns of phrase: "Melodrama is something to binge on: cupcakes in the closet." Throughout, Jamison exhibits at once a journalist's courage to bear witness to acts and conditions that test human limits—incarceration, laboring in a silver mine, ultramarathoning, the loss of a child, devastating heartbreak, suffering from an unacknowledged illness—and a poet's skepticism at her own motives for doing so. It is this level of scrutiny that lends these provocative explorations both earthy authenticity and moving urgency.

A fierce, razor-sharp, heartwarming nonfiction debut.



**“Ferociously beautiful and courageous, Johnson’s intimate story sheds light on the perpetuation of violence against women.”**

FROM THE OTHER SIDE



**DEAR LEADER  
Poet, Spy, Escapee—*a Look Inside North Korea***

Jang Jin-sung  
Translated by Lee, Shirley  
37 Ink/Atria (304 pp.)  
\$27.99 | May 13, 2014  
978-1-4767-6655-3

A defector of Kim Jong-il's rarefied inner circle reveals the desperate, despicable machinations of North Korea's police state.

“North Korea's opacity is its greatest strength,” writes *New Focus International* editor in chief Jin-sung in this powerful, heart-rending tale of one young man's ability to infiltrate the locus of power, then escape. At age 28, in 1999, upon the publication of his ingratiating epic poem “Spring Rests on the Gun Barrel of the Lord,” written for Kim Jong-il, Jin-sung earned a personal endorsement of the Great Leader and the privilege of immunity as one of the few “Admitted” in the upper cadre of the Organization and Guidance Department of the Workers’ Party, which wielded the real power behind the leader. As one of the revered “court poets” and an employee of the United Front Department, which comprised the party’s intelligence and propaganda hub, the author had access to all kinds of South Korean literature in his work of “localization,” which attempted to influence South Korea by imitating its “ways of thought.” His elevation also proved his downfall, however, as he began questioning the party line fed to him. A trip home to the provincial town of Sariwon, vastly changed in the 10 years since he had last been there and reeling from the collapse of the economy, opened his eyes. The people were dropping dead from famine, so poor that they were selling water to wash one’s face and cotton comforters made painstakingly from the filters of cigarette butts, while Jin-sung, the party elite, habitually received foreign rations when they had none. Against the rules, the author loaned a South Korean biography of Kim Jong-il to his trusted friend, the composer Hwang Young-min, but the book got lost, forcing the two to go on the lam to China.

An exciting escape closes this urgent, well-rendered attempt to penetrate North Korea’s cynical, criminal power strategy.



**THE OTHER SIDE  
A Memoir**

Johnson, Lacy M.  
Tin House (232 pp.)  
\$15.95 paper | Jul. 15, 2014  
978-1-935639-83-1



In this riveting memoir, Johnson (*Trespasses*, 2012) writes of falling prey to an act of terrifying violence and its aftermath.

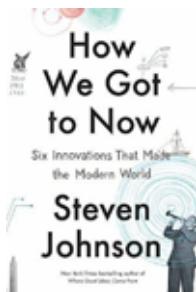
In 2000, the author’s former boyfriend kidnapped her and held her captive, raped her and threatened her with death. Though she eventually escaped, it took years to free herself from the emotional and psychological damage she suffered. “Even what the mind forgets, the body remembers,” she writes. Written in an urgent first-person, present-tense voice, the narrative takes readers through the fear and rage as the writer lived it. Her painful memories, released in a nonlinear fashion, cut like shards of glass. It was 13 years after her abduction before she could get herself to go through the police report of her case. She read that the owner of the building where the crime took place was a friend of “The Man She Used To Live With” (perhaps for anonymity and to get some emotional distance, Johnson uses titles instead of names throughout the book) and would not reveal to the police where he had gone. The author also discovered that her attacker paid a student \$100 to help him build the soundproof cell in which she was held. Later, she learned that her predator escaped to Venezuela, where he has family. Though she has lived in fear that he would contact her again, she writes, life went on. She got married, received a doctorate and had two children, and she has continued to fight depression, panic and emotional withdrawal. “I’m trapped on the other side of a wide, dark chasm,” she tells her husband. Writing the truth is her way to the other side. “This story tells me who I am. It gives me meaning,” she writes. “And I want to mean something so badly.”

Ferociously beautiful and courageous, Johnson’s intimate story sheds light on the perpetuation of violence against women.



**HOW WE GOT  
TO NOW  
*Six Innovations that  
Made the Modern World***

Johnson, Steven  
Riverhead (304 pp.)  
\$30.00 | Sep. 30, 2014  
978-1-59463-296-9

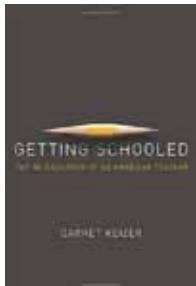


Best-selling author Johnson (*Where Good Ideas Come From: The Natural History of Innovation*, 2010, etc.) continues his explorations of what he calls the “hummingbird effect,” unforeseeable chains of influence that change the world.

An innovation, writes the author, typically arises in one field—chemistry, say, or cryptography. But it does not rise alone—“ideas are fundamentally networks of other ideas,” and

those tributary ideas likely came from many sources and disciplines, conditioned by the intellectual resources available at the time. Da Vinci aside, the author notes that even the most brilliant 17th-century inventor couldn't have hit on the refrigerator, which "simply wasn't part of the adjacent possible at that moment." A couple of centuries later, it was, thanks to changes in our understanding of materials, physics, chemistry and other areas. Johnson isn't the first writer to note that such things as the can opener were game-changers, but he has a pleasing way of spinning out the story to include all sorts of connections as seen through the lens of "long zoom" history, which looks at macro and micro events simultaneously. Sometimes he writes in a sort of rah-rah way that, taken to extremes, could dumb the enterprise down intolerably, as when he opines, "silicon dioxide for some reason is incapable of rearranging itself back into the orderly structure of crystal." Take out "for some reason" and replace with "because of the laws of physics," and things look brighter. However, Johnson's look at six large areas of innovation, from glassmaking to radio broadcasting (which involves the products of glassmaking, as it happens), is full of well-timed discoveries, and his insistence on the interdisciplinary nature of invention and discovery gives hope to the English and art history majors in the audience.

Of a piece with the work of Tracy Kidder, Henry Petroski and other popular explainers of technology and science—geeky without being overly so and literate throughout.



### GETTING SCHOOLED *The Reeducation of an American Teacher*

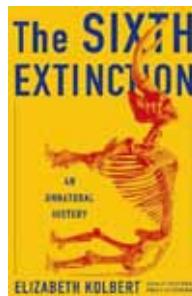
*Keizer, Garret*  
Metropolitan/Henry Holt (320 pp.)  
\$26.00 | Aug. 25, 2014  
978-0-8050-9643-9

A high school teacher who became a full-time writer returns to the high school where he taught for years.

Harper's contributor Keizer (*Privacy*, 2011, etc.) chronicles his return to teaching at a rural Vermont high school 14 years after his departure. One of Keizer's former students was now the principal, all the students now possessed smartphones, and teaching to the test was more common than before. Some phenomena had not changed, however: the motivated students, the indifferent students, the time-consuming lesson plans, the seemingly endless grading of essays, the individual crises of students at home and in the hallways, as well as the occasional classroom revolts that any teacher would have difficulty controlling. Keizer is a sometimes-sardonic, sometimes-maudlin, always entertaining guide to contemporary high school atmospherics. The paperwork he must complete about each student's performance led him to conclude that it has become increasingly difficult to teach the actual educational substance of what the paperwork indicates should be measured by the curriculum. Keizer explains that even if teaching conditions were closer

to ideal, many of the students come from homes where nobody previously has graduated from high school; thus, a higher education will not carry much value in the minds of older rural Vermont residents. Even though he often hoped for the school year to end, Keizer felt devoted to each student, knowing that the schoolwork was providing the acculturation that students lacked at home. The author never romanticizes classroom teaching, and he skillfully compares his own admittedly challenging daily tasks to the even more difficult tasks willingly undertaken by his wife and his adult daughter, who teach special needs children. "It's fair to say that I have never gone to work in a school with what might be called purity of heart," writes the author, "though much of what I know about purity of heart I learned there."

A well-written, yearlong chronicle packed with humor, pathos and valued insights on nearly every page.



### THE SIXTH EXTINCTION *An Unnatural History*

*Kolbert, Elizabeth*  
Henry Holt (336 pp.)  
\$28.00 | Feb. 11, 2014  
978-0-8050-9299-8



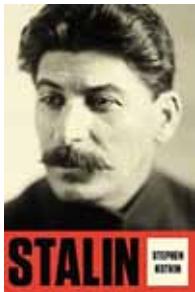
New Yorker staff writer Kolbert (*Field Notes from a Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change*, 2006, etc.) returns with a deft examination of the startling losses of the sixth mass extinction occurring at this moment and the sobering, underlying cause: humans.

Although "background extinction" continuously occurs in varying slow rates among species, five major mass extinctions mark the past. Scientists theorize that all of these—from the extinction of the Ordovician period, which was caused by glaciation, to the end of the Cretaceous, caused by the impact of a celestial body on the Earth's surface—were the results of natural phenomena. Today, however, countless species are being wiped out due to human impact. Global warming, ocean acidification and the introduction of invasive species to new continents are only a few ways that we are perpetrating harsh new realities for those organisms unable to withstand radical change. Kolbert documents her travels across the globe, tracing the endangerment or demise of such species as the Panamanian golden frog, the Sumatran rhino and many more. The author skillfully highlights the historical figures key to the understanding of the planet's past and present turmoil, including Charles Darwin and Georges Cuvier, the first to theorize extinction as a concept. Throughout her extensive and passionately collected research, Kolbert offers a highly readable, enlightening report on the global and historical impact of humans, "one weedy species" that may offer valiant efforts to save endangered species but who are continually causing vast, severe change. Kolbert also weaves a relatable element into the at-times heavily scientific discussion, bringing the sites of past and present extinctions vividly to life with fascinating information that will linger with readers long after they close the book.

A highly significant eye-opener rich in facts and enjoyment.

**"There is only one word for this biography: superb."**

FROM TENNESSEE WILLIAMS



**STALIN**  
**Volume I: Paradoxes of Power, 1878-1928**

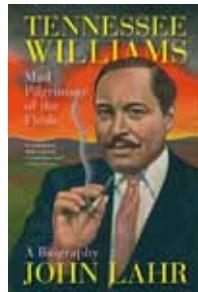
Kotkin, Stephen  
Penguin Press (960 pp.)  
\$40.00 | Nov. 10, 2014  
978-0-59420-379-4



The first volume of a massive biography of Joseph Stalin (1878-1953).

Authoritative and rigorous in his far-flung research and fresh assertions, Kotkin (History and International Affairs/Princeton Univ.; *Uncivil Society: 1989 and the Implosion of the Communist Establishment*, 2009, etc.) fashions a life of Stalin against the enormous political upheaval in czarist Russia at the turn of the century, which gave rise to the revolutionary socialist movement fomented in Germany. The author sketches Stalin's early development as a poor cobbler's son in the Caucasus town of Gori: Iosif "Soso" Jughashvili evolved into a diligent young man despite parental hostilities, attending seminary in Tiflis and becoming radicalized against the prevailing imperial rot. As the old order exploded in bombs around him, he became a Bolshevik pundit, V.I. Lenin acolyte, Trotsky nemesis and disputed successor. In January 1928, Stalin's fateful trip to Siberia to begin consolidating his land collectivization scheme would transform—disastrously, it turned out—Soviet Eurasia. Kotkin has no patience with psychological explanations for Stalin's obsessiveness, thuggery and paranoia—e.g., being beaten as a child or his later humiliation as a rustic "Asiatic" Georgian amid the Russian elite. What Stalin did have was the devotion of his mother and a drive to better himself, despite ill health and accidents that left him with a withered arm and limping gait. Steeped in Marxism thanks to his revolutionary mentor at seminary, "Lado" Ketskhoveli, Stalin quit school, went underground and became a self-styled "enlightener" to the workers, his political ideas solidified by the oppression of the collapsing czarist regime, frequent jailings or internal exile, and adherence to Lenin's inexorable class war. Stalin's elevation as Lenin's "general secretary" in 1922 both spurred Stalin's own personal dictatorship and aroused alarm—e.g., in Lenin's disputed deathbed "Testament" urging Stalin's removal.

Staggeringly wide in scope (note the 100-page bibliography), this work meticulously examines the structural forces that brought down one autocratic regime and put in place another.



**TENNESSEE WILLIAMS**  
**Mad Pilgrimage of the Flesh**

Lahr, John  
Norton (736 pp.)  
\$37.95 | Sep. 22, 2014  
978-0-393-02124-0



The tormented life of a celebrated American playwright.

When *The Glass Menagerie* debuted on Broadway in 1945, the opening-night audience erupted in thunderous applause. After 24 curtain calls, shouts of "Author, Author!" brought a "startled, bewildered, terrified, and excited" Tennessee Williams (1911-1983) to the stage. At 34, after a decade of failed productions, he had achieved the success for which he had been desperately striving. Arthur Miller called the play "a revolution" in theater; Carson McCullers saw in it the beginning of "a renaissance." But praise could never quash the demons that haunted Williams throughout his life. In this majestic biography, former longtime *New Yorker* drama critic Lahr (*Honky-Tonk Parade*; *New Yorker Profiles of Show People*, 2005, etc.) delineates the fears, paranoia and wrenching self-doubt that Williams transformed into his art. "I have lived intimately with the outcast and derelict and the desperate," Williams said. "I have tried to make a record of their lives because my own has fitted me to do so." In stories, poems and such plays as *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Williams drew upon his stultifying childhood; his anguish over his sister's mental illness; and his promiscuity and failed love affairs. Addicted to alcohol and a pharmacopeia of narcotics, Williams at one point sought help from a psychoanalyst; however, when the treatment forbade him to write, he fled. His self-worth, Lahr concludes, "was bound up entirely in his work" and consequently in how directors, actors and especially critics responded to what he produced. Feeling "bullied and intimidated" by others' expectations, he projected onto them (director Elia Kazan, most notably, or his long-suffering agent Audrey Wood) "his own moral failure and turned it into a kind of legend of betrayal." Lahr knows his subject intimately and portrays him with cleareyed compassion. Drawing on vast archival sources and unpublished manuscripts, as well as interviews, memoirs and theater history, he fashions a sweeping, riveting narrative.

**There is only one word for this biography: superb. (80 photos)**



## THE SECRET HISTORY OF WONDER WOMAN

Lepore, Jill

Knopf (448 pp.)

\$29.95 | Oct. 28, 2014

978-0-385-35404-2

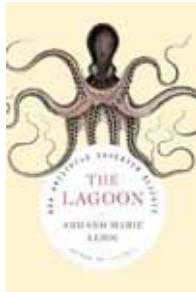


The surprising origins of a 20th-century goddess.

Wonder Woman, writes Lepore (History/Harvard Univ.; *Book of Ages: The Life and Opinions of Jane Franklin*, 2013),

"was the product of the suffragist, feminist, and birth control movements of the 1900s and 1910s and became a source of the women's liberation and feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s." Long-legged, wearing short shorts and knee-high red boots, Wonder Woman burst into comics in 1941, the creation of William Moulton Marston, a Harvard-educated psychologist. Marston, a master at self-promotion, had failed as a college professor; colleagues scorned his publicity stunts. When he tried to market himself as a psychology consultant to the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover opened a file on him. Among the many topics on which Marston expounded was women's power. "Women have twice the emotional development, the ability for love, than man has," he announced. Oddly, he also believed that submission and bondage were intrinsic to women's happiness. "In episode after episode," writes Lepore, "Wonder Woman is chained, bound, gagged, lassoed, tied, fettered and manacled," scenes that Marston described "in careful, intimate detail, with utmost precision," so that the artist who drew the series could get them exactly right. The creation, publishing history and eventual demise of the cartoon character are only part of Lepore's story, which uncovers the secret of Marston's startlingly unconventional family. Married to Elizabeth "Betty" Holloway, who often provided the family's sole support, Marston brought into their home Olive Byrne, the niece of Margaret Sanger. Byrne had been his student, became his mistress, and had two of his children, who were brought up thinking their father had died. Marston had two children with Holloway, as well, whom Byrne raised, freeing Holloway to go to work. After Marston's death in 1947, the two women spent the rest of their lives together.

Lepore mines new archival sources to reconstruct Marston's tangled home life and the controversy generated by Wonder Woman. It's an irresistible story, and the author tells it with relish and delight. (150 illustrations, 24 pages of color. First printing of 75,000)



## THE LAGOON How Aristotle Invented Science

Leroi, Armand Marie

Viking (512 pp.)

\$27.95 | Sep. 25, 2014

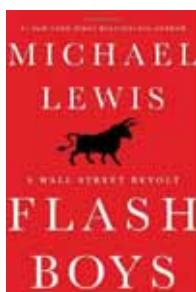
978-0-670-02674-6



Leroi (Evolutionary Development Biology/Imperial Coll. London; *Mutants: On the Form, Variety and Errors of the Human Body*, 2003) calls on his expertise and his experience as a BBC science presenter to explain why Aristotle's writings on science are still relevant today.

The author introduces readers to Aristotle's work in the field of biology and shows where it accords with modern understanding and where it is wildly off-base. Although best known as a philosopher, Leroi explains that the major body of Aristotle's work (much of which has been lost) dealt with natural science. In his search for the causes of change, the philosopher embarked on an ambitious project. "By the time he was done," writes the author, "matter, form, purpose and change were no longer the playthings of speculative philosophy but a research programme." Aristotle based his groundbreaking efforts to discover the workings of nature on a wide variety of sources, including his own observations. In addition to humans, a whole host of animals came under his purview and led him to classify different species, thus anticipating Carl Linnaeus in the 17th century. Leroi shows how Aristotle pondered the common features of all living creatures, as well as their divergence, and attempted to account for their functional differences. According to the author, Aristotle's line of thinking led him to attempt to understand the operation of "five interlocked biological systems"—the nutritional system, thermo-regulation, perception and cognition, and inheritance—and indirectly influenced Darwin's discovery of the theory of natural selection. He dismisses critics who fault Aristotle for being unscientific because he did not conduct experiments using controls. Many of his assumptions proved to be wrong, but this is to be expected in a new field. Leroi compares Aristotle's effort to assemble a huge volume of data to the practices of current scientists in the "age of Big Data."

A wide-ranging, delightful tour de force.



## FLASH BOYS A Wall Street Revolt

Lewis, Michael

Norton (288 pp.)

\$27.95 | Mar. 31, 2014

978-0-393-24466-3



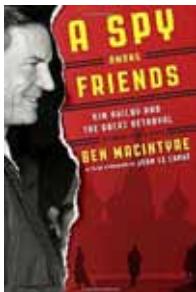
In trademark Lewis (*Boomerang: Travels in the New Third World*, 2011, etc.) fashion, a data-rich but all-too-human tale of "heuristic data bullshit and other mumbo jumbo" in the service of gaming the financial system, courtesy of—yes, Goldman Sachs and company.

# "A mesmerizing debut. MacLean spares no detail in tracing his formidable reconstruction."

FROM THE ANSWER TO THE RIDDLE IS ME

That stuff you see on TV about dinging bells and ulcer-stricken traders pacing the floor of the New York Stock Exchange? It's theater. The real speculative economy lives invisibly in little wires that go to nodes in out-of-the-way places, monitored by computer, shares bought and sold by algorithm. If you send a sell order, it might get intercepted for a fraction of a second by an intermediary that can manipulate the order to squeeze off one one-hundredth of a penny in profit—small on the individual level but big when you consider the millions of trades made every day. Both the system and that process are considerably more complex than that, but this fact remains: It dawned on someone that a person could grow rich laying ever faster optic cables to selected clients, cutting deals with the governments of towns and counties “in order to be able to tunnel through them,” all perfectly legal if not exactly in the spirit of the market. Lewis follows his tried-and-true methods of taking a big story of this sort and deconstructing it to key players, some on the inside, some on the outside, at least one an unlikely hero. In this case, that unlikely hero is an exceedingly mild-mannered Japanese-Canadian banker who assembled a team of techies and numbers nerds to track the nefarious ways of the HFT world—that is, the high-frequency traders and the firms that engaged in “dark pool arbitrage” as just another asset in their portfolios of corruption.

If you've ever had the feeling that the system is out for itself at your expense, well, look no further. A riveting, maddening yarn that is causing quite a stir already, including calls for regulatory reform.



**A SPY AMONG FRIENDS**  
*Kim Philby and the Great Betrayal*  
Macintyre, Ben  
Crown (384 pp.)  
\$27.00 | Jul. 29, 2014  
978-0-8041-3663-1

A tale of espionage, alcoholism, bad manners and the chivalrous code of spies—the real world of James Bond, that is, as played out by clerks and not superheroes.

Now pretty well forgotten, Kim Philby (1912-1988) was once a byname for the sort of man who would betray his country for a song. The British intelligence agent was not alone, of course; as practiced true-espionage writer Macintyre (*Double Cross: The True Story of the D-Day Spies*, 2012, etc.) notes, more than 200 American intelligence agents became Soviet agents during World War II—“Moscow had spies in the treasury, the State Department, the nuclear Manhattan Project, and the OSS”—and the Brits did their best to keep up on their end. Philby may have been an unlikely prospect, given his upper-crust leanings, but a couple of then-fatal flaws involving his sexual orientation and still-fatal addiction to alcohol, to say nothing of his political convictions, put him in Stalin’s camp. Macintyre begins near the end, with a boozy Philby being confronted by a friend in intelligence, fellow MI6 officer Nicholas Elliott, whom he had betrayed; but rather than take Philby to prison or put a bullet

in him, by the old-fashioned code, he was essentially allowed to flee to Moscow. Writing in his afterword, John Le Carré recalls asking Elliott, with whom he worked in MI6, about Philby’s deceptions—it quickly became clear that he wanted to draw me in, to make me marvel...to make me share his awe and frustration at the enormity of what had been done to him.” For all Philby’s charm (“that intoxicating, beguiling, and occasionally lethal English quality”), modern readers will still find it difficult to imagine a world of gentlemanly spy-versus-spy games all these hysterical years later.

Gripping and as well-crafted as an episode of *Smiley’s People*, full of cynical inevitability, secrets, lashings of whiskey and corpses.



**THE ANSWER TO THE RIDDLE IS ME**  
*A Memoir of Amnesia*

MacLean, David Stuart  
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (304 pp.)  
\$25.00 | Jan. 14, 2014  
978-0-547-51927-2



A young writer reckons with his life after amnesia.

On Oct. 17, 2002, first-time author MacLean came to while standing in a crush of people on a train platform in India. He had no passport and no clue where he was or what his name was. He then panicked and blacked out again. When he regained consciousness, he was still standing on the platform, utterly confused and terrified, when a kindly police officer found and took him under his protection. Had the author not had his driver’s license with him, this memoir may never have been written. The 28-year-old MacLean was in Hyderabad, India, studying on a Fulbright scholarship, a world away from the state of New Mexico that had issued his license. In episodic bursts, the author relates moments he recalls from that day forward. Many of the scenes describing his wild hallucinations and slow return to relative sanity powerfully convey an immediacy, as MacLean and his parents, who rushed from the States to the neuropsychiatric institute where he was taken, learned the cause of his “acute polymorphic psychosis.” When MacLean was found, those who first assisted him assumed his amnesia and severe disorientation were the result of recreational drug abuse, but blood work soon revealed the culprit to be an allergic reaction to a prescribed drug with a grave history of inducing psychosis: mefloquine, the popular antimalarial drug better known as Lariam. Much of the memoir’s power comes from MacLean’s intense descriptions of the altered states he endured as he tried to rediscover his identity. Recalling the return to his parents’ home, he writes: “I felt myself slipping, worried that I’d never recover, that I’d be in this wood-glue-filled piñata for the rest of my life. And then if I did recover, if I got everything back, who knew if it would happen again? How many times would I end up touring the exhibits of my curated self?”

A mesmerizing debut. MacLean spares no detail in tracing his formidable reconstruction.



## FACTORY MAN How One Furniture Maker Battled Offshoring, Stayed Local— and Helped Save an American Town

*Macy, Beth*  
Little, Brown (368 pp.)  
\$28.00 | Jul. 15, 2014  
978-0-316-23143-5

The story of one man's fight to save American furniture manufacturing jobs in the face of a deluge of cheap Chinese imports.

In this welcome debut, winner of the 2013 J. Anthony Lukas Work-in-Progress Award, *Roanoke Times* reporter Macy brings to life the rise of family-owned Bassett Furniture Company as the world's largest producer of wooden furniture and John Bassett III's epic struggle to keep his company in business amid unfair overseas business practices that forced many U.S. manufacturers to move their factories abroad. A brash, patriotic charmer fond of quoting George Patton ("When in doubt, ATTACK"), Bassett came from a long line of wealthy Virginians with "sawdust" in their veins. "The 'fucking Chi-Comms' were not going to tell *him* how to make furniture!" remarked one retailer. Drawing on prodigious research and interviews with a wide range of subjects, including babysitters, retired workers and Chinese executives, Macy recounts how Bassett, now in his mid-70s, mobilized the majority of American furniture manufacturers to join him in seeking U.S. government redress for unfair Chinese trade practices. The author's brightly written, richly detailed narrative not only illuminates globalization and the issue of offshoring, but succeeds brilliantly in conveying the human costs borne by low-income people displaced from a way of life—i.e., factory jobs that their Appalachian families had worked for generations. Writing with much empathy, Macy gives voice to former workers who must now scrape by on odd jobs, disability payments and, in some cases, thievery of copper wire from closed factories. Her book is also a revealing account of the paternalistic Bassett dynasty, whose infighting was a constant diversion for everyone living in the company town. Ultimately, Bassett's efforts saved some 700 jobs and his Vaughan-Bassett company, the nation's largest wood bedroom furniture maker.

A masterly feat of reporting.



## THE HISTORY OF ROCK 'N' ROLL IN TEN SONGS

*Marcus, Greil*  
Yale Univ. (320 pp.)  
\$28.00 | Sep. 2, 2014  
978-0-300-18737-3

Another allusive, entertaining inquiry by veteran musicologist Marcus (*The Doors: A Lifetime of Listening to Five Mean Years*, 2011, etc.).

The opening is an accidental tour de force: a list that runs on for a full six pages of the inductees to date into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, one that, though full of lacunae, is still wildly suggestive of just how influential and deep-rooted the sound is in our culture. He takes Neil Young's observation that "rock & roll is reckless abandon" and runs with it, looking into 10 songs that are particularly emblematic. Even though any other 10, 100 or 1,000 songs might have done just as well, one cannot fault Marcus' taste. It is just right, on the reckless abandon front, that his survey should begin with the Flamin' Groovies jittery, diamondlike anthem "Shake Some Action," released to the world in 1976 and heard, if not widely, by at least the right people. "I never heard Young's words translated with more urgency, with more joy," Marcus avers, than in the goofily named Groovies' ("a name so stupid it can't transcend its own irony") song. Yet there are other candidates for best paean to reckless abandon, or perhaps best inspirer thereof, including the prolegomenon to all other songs about filthy lucre and lolly, Barrett Strong's "Money"; the lovely but portentous Buddy Holly ballad "Crying, Waiting, Hoping"; and the Teddy Bears' 1958 hit "To Know Him Is to Love Him," which, though tender, became something hauntingly lost in the hands of Amy Winehouse. It's no accident that the originals of many of these tunes lay at the heart of the early Beatles' repertoire, nor that Phil Spector played his part in the uproarious proceedings, nor that from every measure of music, thousands of tangled storylines flow—many of which Marcus follows wherever they will lead, to our edification.

Essayistic, occasionally disconnected, but Marcus does what he does best: makes us feel smarter about what we're putting into our ears.



**"In this brilliant amalgam of philosophy, psychology, literary theory and visual art...Mendelsund inquires about the complex process of reading."**

FROM WHAT WE SEE WHEN WE READ



Man Alive  
Thomas Page McBee

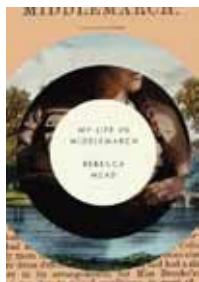
### MAN ALIVE *A True Story of Violence, Forgiveness and Becoming a Man*

McBee, Thomas Page  
City Lights (128 pp.)  
\$13.95 paper | \$15.95 e-book  
Nov. 1, 2014  
978-0-87286-624-9  
978-0-87286-651-5 e-book

The transgender author delivers a unique, powerful rite-of-passage memoir.

Plenty of writers have written about the experience of making the transition from one gender to another, but most haven't also dealt with child molestation, paternity issues and a mugging by a man who would soon commit murder—not to mention a partner who has mixed feelings about the author's becoming a man. Resisting the inclination to sensationalize (or sentimentalize), McBee interweaves the various strands of the narrative, exercising plenty of restraint. The first section alternates between the author as a 10-year-old girl wrestling with sending a man to prison, and the mugging almost two decades later, when the author (who, still female, could pass for a man) is attacked with her partner by a stranger who would soon make headlines for another crime. In each case, there's a theme of forgiveness, a quality of mercy that does not seem strained. "The world seemed to me a place of beautiful, damaged things and I wanted to love them all," explains the author early on. Whether his father—or the mugger, for that matter—affected his attitude toward men in general and his decision, with deep ambivalence, to live a life after 30 as a transgender man isn't subject to pat psychology here. Instead, the author writes in matter-of-fact detail about the tension and love shared with a fiancee and about self-discovery pilgrimages to explore bloodlines and paternity.

"The world is vicious and beautiful and, to some extent, unexplainable," writes the author. "But that doesn't stop us from wanting a story." This is quite a story, masterfully rendered.



### MY LIFE IN MIDDLEMARCH

Mead, Rebecca  
Crown (256 pp.)  
\$25.00 | Jan. 28, 2014  
978-0-307-98476-0

A *New Yorker* writer examines the arc of her life in the reflection of George Eliot's *Middlemarch*.

This subgenre—examining personal history through the echoes of a singular work of art—can be riddled with land mines. When it works well—e.g., Alan Light's *The Holy and the Broken* (2012)—the results can be marvelous. Obviously fleshed out from her *New Yorker* article "Middlemarch and Me," Mead (*One Perfect Day: The Selling*



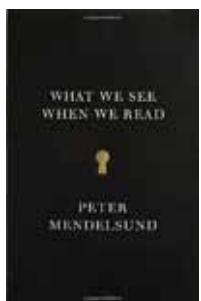
*of the American Wedding*, 2007) could have simply written a dense biography of Mary Ann Evans, who would go on to write some of the most enduring novels of the Victorian era under her pen name. In fact, Mead was wise not to omit herself from this story, as her feelings about the great work and its themes of women's roles, relationships and self-delusion are far more insightful than a barrage of facts would have been. Mead discovered the book at 17, a critical time when the character of Dorothea Brooke, the aspirational protagonist forced to subjugate her dreams, truly spoke to her. In some ways, it's easy to see how Mead's life has paralleled these fictional characters she so admires, even as she repeats some of the same mistakes. It's difficult not to admire the sense of wonder that she continues to find in the pages of a novel more than a century old. "It demands that we enter into the perspective of other struggling, erring humans—and recognize that we, too, will sometimes be struggling, and may sometimes be erring, even when we are at our most arrogant and confident," Mead writes. "And this is why every time I go back to the novel I feel that—while I might live a century without knowing as much as just a handful of its pages suggest—I may hope to be enlarged by each revisiting."

**A rare and remarkable fusion of techniques that draws two women together across time and space.**



### WHAT WE SEE WHEN WE READ

Mendelsund, Peter  
Vintage (448 pp.)  
\$16.95 paper | Aug. 5, 2014  
978-0-8041-7163-2

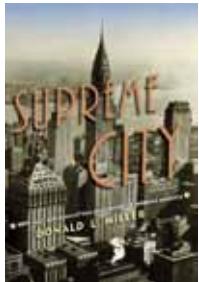


An artist investigates how we make meaning from words on a page.

In this brilliant amalgam of philosophy, psychology, literary theory and visual art, Knopf associate art director and cover designer Mendelsund inquires about the complex process of reading. "Words are effective not because of what they carry in them," writes the author, "but for their latent potential to unlock the accumulated experience of the reader. Words 'contain' meanings, but, more important, words potentiate meaning...." Writers "tell us stories, and they also tell us how to read these stories," he writes. "The author teaches me how to imagine, as well as *when* to imagine, and *how much*." Copiously illustrated with maps, doodles, works of art, plates from illustrated books, cartoons, book jackets, facsimiles of texts, photographs, botanical drawings and a few publicity shots of movie stars, the book exemplifies the idea that reading is not a linear process. Even if readers follow consecutive words, they incorporate into reading memories, distractions, predispositions, desires and expectations. "Authors are curators of experience," writes Mendelsund. "Yet no matter how pure the data set that authors provide to readers...readers' brains will continue in their prescribed assignment: to analyze, screen, and sort." In 19 brief, zesty chapters, the author considers such topics as the relationship of reading to time, skill, visual acuity, fantasy, synesthesia and belief. "The Part & The Whole" presents lucidly the basic concepts of metaphor, with succinct definitions

of metonymy and synecdoche. Throughout the book, Mendelsund draws on various writers, from Wittgenstein to Woolf, Tolstoy to Twain, Melville to Calvino, to support his assertion that "Verisimilitude is not only a false idol, but also an unattainable goal. So we reduce. And it is not without reverence that we reduce. This is how we apprehend our world."

Mendelsund amply attains his goal to produce a quirky, fresh and altogether delightful meditation on the miraculous act of reading.



### SUPREME CITY *How Jazz Age Manhattan Gave Birth to Modern America*

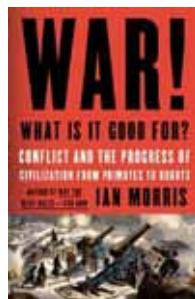
*Miller, Donald L.*

Simon & Schuster (672 pp.)  
\$37.50 | May 6, 2014  
978-1-4165-5019-8

An award-winning historian surveys the astonishing cast of characters who helped turn Manhattan into the world capital of commerce, communication and entertainment.

Except for occasional geographic detours to Harlem for the Cotton Club or the Bronx for Yankee Stadium, and a couple of temporal departures that highlight, for example, the completion of Grand Central Terminal or the opening of the George Washington Bridge, Miller (History/Lafayette Coll.; *Masters of the Air: America's Bomber Boys Who Fought the Air War Against Nazi Germany*, 2006, etc.) confines his story to Midtown Manhattan and the 1920s. Even with these self-imposed boundaries, the narrative bursts with a dizzying succession of tales about the politicos, impresarios, merchants, sportsmen, performers, gangsters and hustlers who accounted for an unprecedented burst of creativity and achievement. Readers with even a passing acquaintance with Jazz Age New York will recognize many of Miller's characters—Mayor Jimmy Walker, Babe Ruth, Charles Lindbergh, Duke Ellington, Jack Dempsey, Walter Chrysler, David Sarnoff, Florenz Ziegfeld—but how many know the story of Othmar Ammann, perhaps history's greatest designer of steel bridges? Or bootlegger Owney Madden, model for his friend George Raft's silver-screen gangster? Or Lois Long, hard-living fashion editor for Harold Ross' *New Yorker*? Or boxing promoter Tex Rickard, first to recognize that each fight required an intriguing narrative to build box office sales? Or the charismatic Horace Liveright, who thought of each book he published as an event? How the speak-easies hummed and how Prohibition democratized drinking, how cosmetics queens (and mortal enemies) Helena Rubenstein and Elizabeth Arden blazed new paths for women, how Bergdorf Goodman and Saks Fifth Avenue became fashion meccas, how "mansions in the sky" blossomed all over the city—all this and much more cram Miller's sprightly narrative about a city so convinced of its centrality as to employ an "official greeter."

A scholarly enough social history but one with plenty of sex appeal. (50 b/w images in a 24-page insert)



### WAR! WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR? *Conflict and the Progress of Civilization from Primates to Robots*

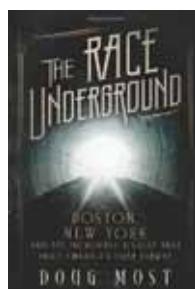
*Morris, Ian*

Farrar, Straus and Giroux (512 pp.)  
\$30.00 | Apr. 15, 2014  
978-0-374-28600-2

A profoundly uncomfortable but provocative argument that "productive war" promotes greater safety, a decrease in violence and economic growth.

Morris (Classics and History/ Stanford Univ.; *Why the West Rules—for Now: The Patterns of History, and What They Reveal About the Future*, 2010, etc.) begins with an account of a near nuclear disaster in 1983 and then proceeds with his thesis that "war has made the world safer." He recognizes—and alludes continually to—the unpleasantness of his position but charges ahead into the valley of death. He uses the example of ancient Rome—its violent conquests ensured subsequent safety and improved lives for the survivors—then gives us a tour through world history, focusing on such things as the development of weapons and defenses. We learn why chariot fighting rose and fell, the problems of using elephants in battle, the significance of the horse, and the importance of gunpowder and ships, and we get some grim details—e.g., the use of the flaming fat of victims as an early Molotov cocktail. Drawing on the work of Jared Diamond and Steven Pinker and myriads of others, Morris relentlessly develops his thesis, which never decreases in discomfort, though it does become more convincing. Near the end, the author examines evolutionary biology and the balance between violence and cooperation in our rise from what he calls "globes" to the complicated creatures that we now are. Emerging also is his concept of the "globocop"—a country so powerful that it can police the world (to a point) and eventually move us toward "Denmark," his metaphor for a peaceful, productive place. The author does a bit of crystal-balling at the end. Will there be robo-wars? Will the United States eventually tumble?

A disturbing, transformative text that veers toward essential reading.



### THE RACE UNDERGROUND *Boston, New York, and the Incredible Rivalry that Built America's First Subway*

*Most, Doug*

St. Martin's (352 pp.)  
\$27.99 | \$11.99 e-book | Feb. 18, 2014  
978-0-312-59132-8  
978-1-4668-4200-7 e-book

A deputy editor at the *Boston Globe* recalls the visionaries, moneymen, engineering wizards, and the economic and political struggles behind the creation of the subway in America.

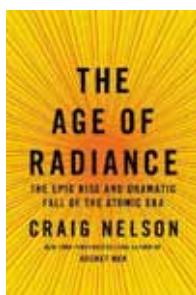


**"It takes a virtuoso writer to make another familial memoir of addiction seem as vital and compelling as this stunning debut does."**

FROM *IF ONLY YOU PEOPLE COULD FOLLOW DIRECTIONS*

In 1888, horses operated 90 percent of the 6,000 miles of America's street railway, with all but a fraction of the rest run by cable-pulled streetcars or small steam locomotives. The urban transportation system—filthy, slow, dangerous and unreliable, straining at the explosion of immigrant populations, at the mercy of snow and ice—needed rethinking. As far back as 1849—34 years before the Brooklyn Bridge opened—Alfred Beach, publisher of *Scientific American*, had proposed the idea of a “railway underneath” New York. However, the psychological barriers to subway travel (“like living in a tomb,” critics said) and the formidable engineering challenges would take decades to overcome. By the time Boston and New York opened their subways—in 1897 and 1904, respectively—a remarkable story had unfolded, one Most (*Always in Our Hearts: The Story of Amy Grossberg, Brian Peterson, the Pregnancy They Hid, and the Baby They Killed*, 2005) chronicles with grand style and enthusiasm. Famous names flit in and out of his narrative—Boss Tweed, Thomas Edison, Edwin Arlington Robinson, piano manufacturer William Steinway and Andrew Carnegie—but he focuses on two lesser-knowns, brothers, both transportation magnates: Boston’s Henry Whitney and New York’s William Whitney, who tie together this subterranean transportation tale of two cities. It’s a story of blizzards and fires, accidental gas explosions and dynamite blasts, of trenches tortuously dug, of sewer and water pipes rerouted and cemeteries excavated, of political infighting, of turnstiles and ticket-taking, of ingenious solutions to staggering problems. Inventor Frank Sprague, who perfected the electric motor, financier August Belmont, crusading New York Mayor Abram Hewitt and engineer William Barclay Parsons also play prominent roles in this colorful Gilded Age saga.

An almost flawlessly conducted tour back to a time when major American cities dreamed big. (First printing of 100,000)



### THE AGE OF RADIANCE *The Epic Rise and Dramatic Fall of the Atomic Era*

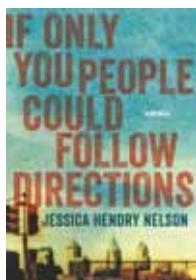
Nelson, Craig  
Scribner (416 pp.)  
\$29.99 | Mar. 25, 2014  
978-1-4516-6043-2

Nelson (*Rocket Men: The Epic Story of the First Men on the Moon*, 2009, etc.) returns with a survey of mankind’s use of radioactive materials.

Beginning with the discovery of X-rays in 1895 and ending with the disaster at the Fukushima nuclear power plant, the author examines the discovery of radium (used for a while in everything from watches to toothpaste), the development of nuclear fission and fusion, and the use of the resulting new elements in nuclear weapons, medicine and power generation. Nelson’s coverage of the science underlying this saga is admirably thorough and accessible, but this is no impersonal “march of science” story. The author also shows how the development

of nuclear physics was deeply influenced by contemporary politics and the interplay of the personalities involved. He includes lively biographies of the men—Wilhelm Roentgen, Enrico Fermi, Leo Szilard and others—who created this new age and of two remarkable women: the celebrated Polish-born Marie Curie and the almost forgotten Austrian Lise Meitner. Nelson characterizes nuclear science as a “two-faced god,” a blessing and a curse, and its history as irrational, confusing and conflicted. For example, nuclear weapons are so dreadful that they have effectively prevented war between superpowers, but their production and maintenance have been a staggering waste of resources. The author’s gripping narratives of the meltdowns at Chernobyl and Fukushima simply scream that fallible humans should not be messing around with this technology, and yet he argues that nuclear power is still the safest and best option for environmentally responsible power generation. Nevertheless, Nelson contends that the nuclear era is now drawing to a close, as the acquisition of nuclear weapons is viewed only as the mark of a pariah regime, and the dishonesty of governments and industry has ruined the prospects for further development of nuclear power.

An engaging history that raises provocative questions about the future of nuclear science.



### IF ONLY YOU PEOPLE COULD FOLLOW DIRECTIONS *A Memoir*

Nelson, Jessica Hendry  
Counterpoint (256 pp.)  
\$25.00 | Jan. 1, 2014  
978-1-61902-233-1

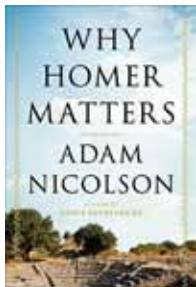


It takes a virtuoso writer to make another familial memoir of addiction seem as vital and compelling as this stunning debut does.

Where most memoirs have more of a novelistic, chronological continuity, *Fiddleback* senior nonfiction editor Nelson structures this book as a series of autobiographical essays, most of which could stand on their own; they are the nonfiction equivalent of a series of interconnected short stories. That form perfectly suits her story of a family in which “the roles have been pre-prescribed, written into our DNA.” The father will die young after long absences in jail or rehab or another relapse after a short stretch of sobriety. The mother will also self-medicate as she tries to sustain the illusion of family, one that is always falling apart. The son will inherit “the dead father’s legacy, this disease,” and is often missing and feared dead. The older sister will write this memoir after studying abroad, falling in love, earning her MFA in creative writing, teaching college, publishing in a number of highly regarded journals and maintaining a facade that masks her genetic code: “We are an imperfect people, full of contradictions. Do as I say, not as I do. That sort of thing. Outsiders see me as the most put together, but I harbor a secret: I am just better at faking it. I make it

through the day." Yet some days have been a whole lot tougher to make it through, to sustain a sense of "my real life, the one outside the theater of my brother's addiction." As it does in the cycles of recovery and relapse, prison and release, chronology jumbles, and verb tenses shift. The book's excellent centerpiece, "A Second of Startling Regret," unravels the family dynamic and illuminates the "self-sabotaging brain." Even the occasional misstep into writerly precocity—"There is something heroic about fishermen—all that faith in the dark"—can't compromise the author's unflinching honesty and her story's power.

An unforgettable debut.



### WHY HOMER MATTERS

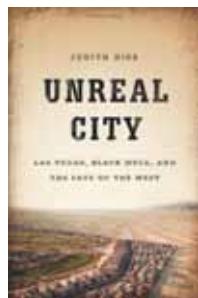
Nicolson, Adam  
Henry Holt (320 pp.)  
\$30.00 | Nov. 18, 2014  
978-1-62779-179-3



An archaeology of the Homeric mind.

In this gracefully written and deeply informed book, Nicolson (*The Gentry: Stories of the English*, 2011, etc.), a fellow of Britain's Society of Antiquaries, excavates the origins of Homer's magisterial epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Arguing against the "current orthodoxy" that both books emerged from the eighth century B.C., the author contends that Homer evokes a much earlier period: Bronze Age Eurasia, around 2000 B.C., when seminomadic warriors of the northern steppes confronted the more sophisticated culture of the eastern Mediterranean. In the north, vicious gangs marauded, while in the south, sailing ships replaced paddled canoes, enabling men to travel farther and faster, infusing the culture with new ideas and goods. "This newly energized world," writes Nicolson, "is the meeting of cultures that Homer records." Nicolson sees the *Iliad* as retrospective, "a poem about fate and the demands that fate puts on individual lives, the inescapability of death and of the past," while the *Odyssey*, "for all its need to return home, consistently toys with the offers of a new place and a new life, a chance to revise what you have been given...." Drawing upon archaeological discoveries and teasing out etymological threads, Nicolson finds in Homer's work "myths of the origin of Greek consciousness" that the West has inherited. He resists the idea that Homer promotes "the sense that justice resides in personal revenge." Instead, Homer poses transcendent questions: "[W]hat matters more, the individual or the community, the city or the hero? What is life, something of everlasting value or a transient and hopeless irrelevance?" In a universe inhabited by capricious gods, writes Nicolson, Homer offers readers "his fearless encounter with the dreadful, his love of love and hatred of death, the sheer scale of his embrace, his energy and brightness, his resistance to nostalgia...."

Nicolson's spirited exploration illuminates our own indelible past. (15 b/w illustrations; 8-page color insert)



### UNREAL CITY *Las Vegas, Black Mesa, and the Fate of the West*

Nies, Judith  
Nation Books/Perseus (320 pp.)  
\$25.99 | Apr. 8, 2014  
978-1-56858-748-6

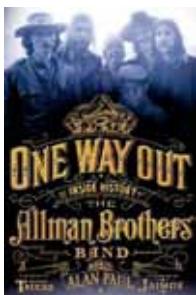
A hard-hitting chronicle of the hidden history behind the creation of Las Vegas, including a large-scale resource grab and a grand plan to drive the Navajo people off their lands, abetted by corruption at the highest levels of government.

Nies (*The Girl I Left Behind: A Narrative History of the Sixties*, 2008, etc.) chanced on the story in 1982, when she was given press credentials to a conference in Phoenix, Ariz., ostensibly celebrating Hopi arts and culture and featuring Robert Redford, Barry Goldwater and top corporate executives. The author began to have doubts as the story unfolded of a supposed "centuries-old land dispute" between the peaceful Hopi and aggressive Navajo Indians over a jointly occupied 4,000-square-mile reservation in the Black Mesa, a region in the Arizona desert that was located over 21 billion tons of coal. Thousands of Navajo sheepherders were resisting being forcibly relocated from their lands and losing their livelihood. Over time, Nies documented how divide-and-rule politics were being used to screen a major corporate land grab intended to gain access to the massive coal reserves. This led her to the powerful interests behind the Las Vegas gambling empire, which included the Goldwater family. She also investigated the broader water politics of the region, including the current depletion of major water sources such as Lake Mead and the Colorado River—a situation made worse by climate change. "Las Vegas has the highest per capita use of water in the country," she writes. Coal-powered plants are required to light the casinos and pump in the water for their ostentatious displays and to support the large population of visitors and residents. Nies situates what began as an apparently local issue in a broader context. A seeming dispute between two tribes, she writes, is "actually an example of a global phenomenon in which giant transnational corporations have the power to separate indigenous people from their energy-rich lands with the help of host governments."

An important, multifaceted page-turner.

# "A French academic serves up a long, rigorous critique, dense with historical data, of American-style predatory capitalism—and offers remedies that Karl Marx might applaud."

FROM CAPITAL IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY



## ONE WAY OUT *The Inside History of the Allman Brothers Band*

*Paul, Alan*  
St. Martin's (416 pp.)  
\$29.99 | \$14.99 e-book | Feb. 18, 2014  
978-1-250-04049-7  
978-1-4668-3586-3 e-book



"I have viewed everything with the eyes and ears of a journalist but the heart and soul of a fan," writes *Guitar World* senior writer Paul (*Big in China: My Unlikely Adventures Raising a Family, Playing the Blues, and Becoming a Star in Beijing*, 2011), who spent decades and hundreds of interviews earning the trust of musicians who didn't always trust each other.

"The Allman Brothers Band, I believe, has no equal." One need not share the author's belief in the band's supremacy to find its story engrossing. The majority of the book takes the form of oral history, which on other projects might sometimes seem slapdash and lazy but here proves crucial, for there are so many different perspectives—on everything from the band's name to leadership and songwriting credits—that having dozens of different voices serves readers well. Nobody disagrees on the overwhelming talent, inspiration and legacy of guitarist Duane Allman, who formed the band, saw it coalesce into something special, and died recklessly and young before the music reached its popular peak. Explains one fellow musician, "Duane died just on the downstroke of the diving board, as the band was about to launch." The loss of Duane and founding bassist Berry Oakley a year later would have brought an end to a less determined band, but the ABB somehow flourished despite a leadership void and decades of tensions exacerbated by drugs and alcohol. Perhaps the most complex relationship was between Gregg Allman and Dickey Betts, as the former was never considered an equal partner with his brother, and the latter resented the implications of the band's name as he attempted to fill the guitar void and rule more by dictatorship than the universal respect Duane commanded. In the wake of Betts' departure and Gregg's sobriety, the responsibility has largely shifted to a new generation of guitarists, as the band improbably boasts its strongest dynamic since its original leader's death.

**The author doesn't pull punches, but all involved should find it fair as well as comprehensive. (Photos throughout. First printing of 100,000)**



## THE INVISIBLE BRIDGE *The Fall of Nixon and the Rise of Reagan*

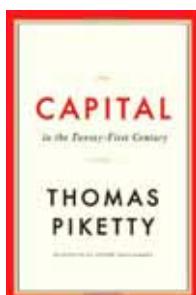
*Perlstein, Rick*  
Simon & Schuster (800 pp.)  
\$37.50 | Aug. 5, 2014  
978-1-4767-8241-6



How Ronald Reagan lost the presidency and won the heart of America.

Building on his first two books—*Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (2001) and *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America* (2008)—Perlstein once again delivers a terrific hybrid biography of a Republican leader and the culture he shaped. Where Perlstein's Nixon was the cynic in chief who exploited resentment and frustration to get elected, his Reagan is the star of his own pseudo-reality show, who "framed even the most traumatic events in his life—even his father's funeral—as always working out gloriously in the end, evidence that the universe was just." Although the book only goes up to Reagan's loss of the 1976 Republican nomination to President Gerald Ford, the scope of the work never feels limited. Perlstein examines the skeletons in the Reagan, Ford and Carter closets, finds remarkable overlooked details and perfectly captures the dead-heat drama of the Republican convention. Just as deftly, he taps into the consciousness of bicentennial America. He sees this world with fresh eyes; for Perlstein, 1970s America wasn't the "Me Decade"—a phrase he never uses—so much as the Fear Decade, when a paranoid country was beside itself with worry over CIA revelations, killer bees, abortion, losing the Panama Canal and the grim possibility that you could lose your children (whether Linda Blair or Patty Hearst) to the dark side. Always at the center of the narrative is Reagan, the self-appointed hero who assured a jittery populace that Vietnam and Watergate were just bad dreams. He was America's cheerleader, the slick beast slouching toward Washington, waiting to be born again.

**A compelling, astute chronicle of the politics and culture of late-20th-century America.**



## CAPITAL IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

*Piketty, Thomas*  
Translated by Goldhammer, Arthur  
Belknap/Harvard Univ. (640 pp.)  
\$39.95 | Mar. 10, 2014  
978-0-674-43000-6

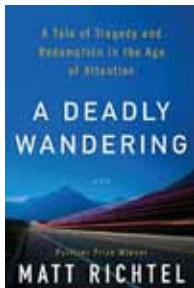


A French academic serves up a long, rigorous critique, dense with historical data, of American-style predatory capitalism—and offers remedies that Karl Marx might applaud.

Economist Piketty considers capital, in the monetary sense, from the vantage of what he considers the capital of the world, namely Paris; at times, his discussions of how capital works, and

especially public capital, befit Locke-ian France and not Hobbesian America, a source of some controversy in the wide discussion surrounding his book. At heart, though, his argument turns on well-founded economic principles, notably  $r > g$ , meaning that the “rate of return on capital significantly exceeds the growth rate of the economy,” in Piketty’s gloss. It logically follows that when such conditions prevail, then wealth will accumulate in a few hands faster than it can be broadly distributed. By the author’s reckoning, the United States is one of the leading nations in the “high inequality” camp, though it was not always so. In the colonial era, Piketty likens the inequality quotient in New England to be about that of Scandinavia today, with few abject poor and few mega-rich. The difference is that the rich now—who are mostly the “supermanagers” of business rather than the “superstars” of sports and entertainment—have surrounded themselves with political shields that keep them safe from the specter of paying more in taxes and adding to the fund of public wealth. The author’s data is unassailable. His policy recommendations are considerably more controversial, including his call for a global tax on wealth. From start to finish, the discussion is written in plain-spoken prose that, though punctuated by formulas, also draws on a wide range of cultural references.

**Essential reading for citizens of the here and now. Other economists should marvel at how that plain language can be put to work explaining the most complex of ideas, foremost among them the fact that economic inequality is at an all-time high—and is only bound to grow worse.**



## A DEADLY WANDERING *A Tale of Tragedy and Redemption in the Age of Attention*

Richtel, Matt  
Morrow/HarperCollins (320 pp.)  
\$28.99 | Sep. 23, 2014  
978-0-06-228406-8  
978-0-06-228408-2 e-book  
978-0-06-235076-3 Audiobook

A novelist and Pulitzer Prize-winning *New York Times* reporter explores with nearly Javertian persistence one of the early cases of traffic fatalities caused by texting while driving.

On Sept. 22, 2006, college student Reggie Shaw, texting in his truck, veered into the oncoming lane on a narrow highway near Logan, Utah, and struck a car, knocking it into an approaching truck. Both men inside that car were rocket scientists with families, and both died. Richtel (*Devil's Playing*, 2011, etc.) begins his account with an MRI of Shaw's brain (he returns to this scene near the end), then reports the crash in detail, following the story to its most recent legal and emotional conclusions (insofar as there can be conclusions). He alternates his focus throughout: from Shaw and his family, to the victims' families, to the police and legal system, to the legislators considering texting laws, to the latest scientific research on how much we can possibly attend to in our

incredibly distracting world (not nearly as much as we think). Readers will be alarmed to discover what science has learned about the dangers drivers create when they text or talk on the phone. The vast majority of us are just not capable of doing so safely. Richtel excels at bringing to life his cast of sundry characters. (Virtually everyone agreed to interviews.) Readers get to know Shaw's parents, the widows, the daughters of the victims, the attorneys on both sides, a judge who keeps *Les Misérables* near at hand (and required Shaw to read it), a victims rights advocate, scientists and, of course, Shaw himself, who emerges as a modest young man (a devout Mormon), a young man who'd never before been in trouble, a young man who, we eventually realize, could be any one of us.

**Comprehensive research underlies this compelling, highly emotional and profoundly important story.**



## RESPECT *The Life of Aretha Franklin*

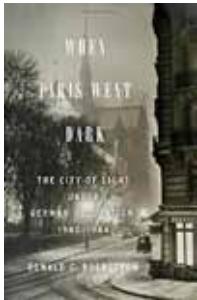
Ritz, David  
Little, Brown (528 pp.)  
\$30.00 | \$14.99 e-book  
\$25.98 Audiobook | Nov. 4, 2014  
978-0-316-19683-3  
978-0-316-19682-6 e-book  
978-1-47898-299-9 Audiobook

A biography of the “Queen of Soul” by the co-author of her memoir, *From These Roots* (1999).

Grammy winner and prolific music writer Ritz (co-author, with Maceo Parker: *98% Funky Stuff*, 2013, etc.) explains that this book came about because of Franklin's refusal to discuss any aspect of her life that contradicts the image she has of herself. To correct the distorted portrait in her previous book, he draws on the accounts of family members and business acquaintances such as her longtime manager, Ruth Bowen, and Jerry Wexler, who produced her Atlantic recordings in the 1960s and '70s. The story begins with her father, a charismatic preacher who took her and her sisters from their Detroit home on the gospel music circuit when their talent became evident. The influence of gospel and the black church remained an indelible part of Franklin's music. At 18, she signed a record deal with Columbia, then the biggest label in the business. However, the Columbia approach never managed to capture the power of her music, and her insistence that her records include something for everyone was a marketing nightmare. Also, her then-husband, a shady character one of her friends describes as “a gentleman pimp,” controlled her career until she left Columbia for Atlantic and broke into the popular awareness as an unmatched performer. But great success did nothing to alleviate her deep insecurities. Ritz draws on the memories of Franklin's sisters and her brother, Bowen, Wexler and others who were close to her to document her struggles—with her weight, with alcohol, and with the up-and-down business end of her career. As the years progressed, her hits became fewer and farther between, and her fear of flying caused her to cancel appearances. At the same time, Ritz

fully praises Franklin's abundant musical gifts and her work for causes she believes in, including civil rights.

An honest and genuinely respectful portrait of a true diva by a writer who feels the power of her art.



### WHEN PARIS WENT DARK

**The City of Light Under  
German Occupation,  
1940-1944**

Rosbottom, Ronald C.

Little, Brown (480 pp.)

\$28.00 | \$14.99 e-book

\$26.98 Audiobook | Aug. 5, 2014

978-0-316-21744-6

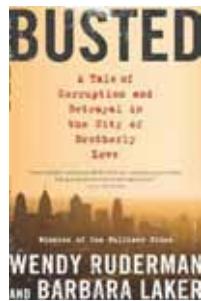
978-0-316-21745-3 e-book

978-1-47895-390-6 Audiobook

An exploration of "what it would have been like to be [in Paris] under the German Occupation during the Second World War."

The City of Light passed the war years in a period of sustained urban anxiety, when lives were constantly disrupted and fear reigned. France's army, "the uninspired being led by the incompetent," surrendered to the Nazis in June 1940. Rosbottom (Arts and Humanities, French and European Studies/Amherst Coll.) explains the interactions of the French and their occupiers in a way that illuminates their separate miseries. He makes us see that we can never judge those who lived during the occupation just because we know the outcome. If you think you might live the rest of your life under Nazi control, you do everything you can just to survive, feed your family and not get arrested. Who can judge what is accommodation, appeasement, acceptance, collaboration or treason? When they moved in, the Germans requisitioned all automobiles, rationed food, established curfews and cut back on power. The French police were merely German puppets, responsible for nearly 90 percent of the Jewish arrests. The members of the Vichy government were equally reviled. The author attentively includes German and French letters and journals that explain the loneliness, desperation and the very French way of getting by. Both during and after the war, the French seemed to be highly prone to denouncing their fellow resistors, neighbors, friends and family, but the Resistance was nothing like we're shown in many popular portrayals. Instead, there was mostly quiet defiance, such as whistling when Nazis trooped by or printing anti-German and anti-Vichy tracts. The Resistance was only truly effective the few days before and after D-Day. Otherwise, the foolhardy deeds of a few young, disorganized men brought brutal reprisals and misery.

A profound historical portrait of Paris for anyone who loves the city. (40 b/w illustrations; 3 maps)



### BUSTED

**A Tale of Corruption and  
Betrayal in the City of  
Brotherly Love**

Ruderman, Wendy; Laker, Barbara  
Harper/HarperCollins (256 pp.)

\$24.99 | Mar. 11, 2014

978-0-06-208544-3

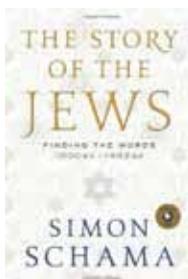
Two newspaper reporters explain how they broke open police corruption in Philadelphia.

*Philadelphia Daily News* reporters Ruderman and Laker deliver an *All the President's Men*-type book, examining their investigation of police corruption, which began in late 2008 when a law enforcement source suggested that a career criminal named Benny Martinez contact the reporters about illegal activity he had conducted with narcotics officer Jeffrey Cujdik. Martinez would identify alleged drug dealers and users to Cujdik, whose narcotics squad would raid their homes, keeping some of the proceeds for themselves. In addition, one of Cujdik's colleagues would sometimes assault women at the site of the raids. Eventually, the reporters learned of a related thread of misconduct in which his narcotics squad would burst in on retail storeowners, disabling security cameras while stealing cash and merchandise under the guise of the merchants selling drug-related supplies. Since the stories fearlessly named names, some Philadelphia cops were demoted amid citizen outrage. Ruderman and Laker disclose, however, that none of the police officers ever lost their jobs or faced criminal charges. The newspaper's investigations eventually garnered the authors the Pulitzer Prize for reporting. All the while, the newspaper was so strapped for cash that it was in and out of bankruptcy proceedings, with its very existence in doubt. In addition to chronicling their journalistic investigations, Ruderman and Laker tell their personal stories, disclosing their workaholic habits, quirky personalities and deep friendship in a breezy writing style that occasionally borders on maudlin. Despite the stylistic distractions, however, the narrative offers an insightful view of high-risk, high-reward investigative journalism, made more poignant by recent severe cutbacks in newsrooms around the country.

*All the President's Men* it's not, but Ruderman and Laker provide a welcome addition to the shelves of books about the mechanics and logistics of journalistic exposés.

**"An immigrant's memoir like few others, with as sharp an edge and as much stylistic audacity as the author's well-received novels."**

FROM LITTLE FAILURE



**THE STORY OF THE JEWS  
Finding the Words  
1000 BC-1492 AD**

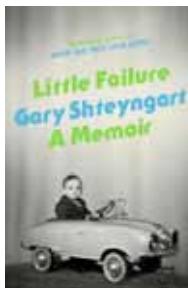
Schama, Simon  
Ecco/HarperCollins (512 pp.)  
\$39.99 | Mar. 18, 2014  
978-0-06-053918-4



Witty, nimble and completely in his element, Schama (History and Art History/Columbia Univ.; *Scribble, Scribble, Scribble: Writing on Politics, Ice Cream, Churchill, and My Mother*, 2011, etc.), in a book tie-in to a PBS and BBC series, fashions a long-planned "labor of love" that nicely dovetails the biblical account with the archaeological record.

Indeed, as this densely written effort accompanies the visual story, the author fixes on a tangible element (such as papyrus, shard or document) in each chapter as a point of departure in advancing the early history of the Jews. For example, a missive in papyrus by a father to his missionary son from an island in the Upper Nile circa 475 B.C. illustrates the thriving expat Jewish community in Egypt, despite the dire "perdition" narrative about Egypt being written at the same time by the first Hebrew sages in Judea and Babylon. The remains of early synagogues in Hellenized Cyrenaica and elsewhere, built in a classical Greek temple style, with graphic mosaics, reveal how the Jews were intimately situated in their crossover surroundings. The inscriptions and excavations at Zafar (in present-day Yemen) attest to the Judaic conversion of the Kingdom of Himyar in the late fourth century, evidence that "the Jews were far from a tenuous, alien presence amid the ethnically Arab world of the Hijaz and the Himyar." In the long litany of persecution and suppression, climaxing but scarcely ceasing with the destruction of the Second Temple in A.D. 70, the Jews had to scatter, taking their words with them, and the Torah was later enriched by the "picayune" codifications of the Mishnah and Talmud, all as a way "to rebuild Jerusalem in the imagination and memory." Schama is relentless in faulting the break between Christianity and Judaism as the spur to the subsequent phobia against the "pariah tribe."

A multifaceted story artfully woven by an expert historian.



**LITTLE FAILURE  
A Memoir**

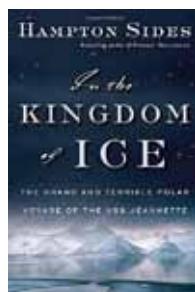
Shteyngart, Gary  
Random House (400 pp.)  
\$27.00 | Jan. 7, 2014  
978-0-679-64375-3



An immigrant's memoir like few others, with as sharp an edge and as much stylistic audacity as the author's well-received novels.

The Russian-American novelist writes that after completing this memoir, he reread his three novels (*Super Sad True Love Story*, 2010, etc.) and was "shocked by the overlaps between fiction and reality...On many occasions in my novels I have approached a certain truth only to turn away from it, only to point my finger and laugh at it and then scurry back to safety. In this book I promised myself I would not point the finger. My laughter would be intermittent. There would be no safety." That observation minimizes just how funny this memoir frequently is, but it suggests that the richest, most complex character the author has ever rendered on the page is the one once known to his family as "Little Igor" and later tagged with "Scary Gary" by his Oberlin College classmates, with whom he recalls an incident, likely among many, in which he was "the drunkest, the stonedest, and, naturally, the scariest." Fueled by "the rage and humor that are our chief inheritance," Shteyngart traces his family history from the atrocities suffered in Stalinist Russia, through his difficulties assimilating as the "Red Nerd" of schoolboy America, through the asthma and panic attacks, alcoholism and psychoanalysis that preceded his literary breakthrough. He writes of the patronage of Korean-American novelist Chang-Rae Lee, who recruited him for a new creative writing program at Hunter College, helped him get a book deal for a novel he'd despised over ever publishing and had "severely shaken my perception of what fiction about immigrants can get away with." Ever since, he's been getting away with as much as he dares.

Though fans of the author's fiction will find illumination, a memoir this compelling and entertaining—one that frequently collapses the distinction between comedy and tragedy—should expand his readership beyond those who have loved his novels.



**IN THE KINGDOM  
OF ICE  
The Grand and Terrible  
Polar Voyage of the U.S.S.  
Jeannette**

Sides, Hampton  
Doubleday (480 pp.)  
\$28.95 | Aug. 5, 2014  
978-0-385-35357-3

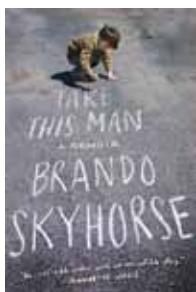


Another crackling tale of adventure from journalist/explorer Sides (*Hellbound on His Trail: The Stalking of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the International Hunt for His Assassin*, 2010, etc.), this one focusing on a frigid disaster nearly 150 years ago.

When the *Jeannette*, commanded by a dashing officer named George De Long, disappeared in the Arctic waters of Russia on a long expeditionary voyage that began in the summer of 1879, American newspapers thought it did not necessarily mean disaster: They preferred to see it as a sign that the ship had broken through the dreaded polar ice and was now sailing freely, if without communication, in the open polar sea. No such luck: As Sides documents, the *Jeannette* and its crew met a gruesome end; toward the end of his narrative, we tour their icy cemetery, here the Chinese cook gazing serenely into the sky, there De Long

lying barehanded with arm upraised, as if he "had raised his left arm and flung his journal behind him in the snow, away from the embers of the fire." When contemporaries took that tour and reports came out, the newspapers were full of speculation about even more gruesome possibilities, which Sides, on considering the evidence, dismisses. Given that a bad outcome is promised in the book's subtitle, readers should not find such things too surprising. The better part of the narrative is not in the sad climax but in the events leading up to it, from De Long's life and education at sea to the outfitting of the ship (complete with a store-room full of "barrels of brandy, porter, ale, sherry, whiskey, rum, and cases of Budweiser beer"), personality clashes among members of the crew, and the long, tragic history of polar expedition.

**A grand and grim narrative of thrilling exploration for fans of *Into Thin Air*, *Mountains of the Moon* and the like.**



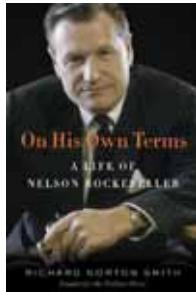
### TAKE THIS MAN A Memoir

Skyhorse, Brando  
Simon & Schuster (256 pp.)  
\$26.00 | Jun. 10, 2014  
978-1-4391-7087-8

A Mexican-American novelist's wickedly compelling account of a dysfunctional childhood growing up "a full blooded American Indian brave" with five different fathers.

Skyhorse's (*The Madonnas of Echo Park*, 2010) Mexican-born father left the family when the author was 3. Beautiful but prone to exaggeration, his mother, Maria, promptly renamed herself Running Deer and told her son that his father was an incarcerated Native American activist named Paul Skyhorse. While corresponding with her convict lover, the tempestuous Maria began bringing home a series of replacement fathers for her son who became "magicians, able to appear or disappear at will." When the men finally left for good, each contributed to the hole in Skyhorse's life that only "got bigger as [he] got older" and made him question his own ability to ever be a father himself. The stable but witheringly sharp-tongued center of the family home was Maria's mother, June. While her daughter ran her own phone sex business and created the myths that substituted for Skyhorse's true family history, June, a lesbian, "collect[ed] neighborhood stories and barter[ed] them" with everyone she knew. Guilt and anger kept the author emotionally tied to his mother even after he left home and Maria eventually died. He learned to accept himself as a Mexican "who happened to be raised as [his] mother's kind of Indian," but he struggled through broken relationships and bouts of depression. As he gathered up the shards of his life and began to make peace with all of his fathers, especially his biological one, Skyhorse realized the one truth that his storytelling mother and grandmother had known instinctively: that "stories [could] help you survive...and transform your life...from where you are into wherever you want to be."

**By turns funny and wrenching, the narrative is an unforgettable tour de force of memory, love and imagination.**



### ON HIS OWN TERMS A Life of Nelson Rockefeller

Smith, Richard Norton  
Random House (880 pp.)  
\$38.00 | Oct. 21, 2014  
978-0-375-50580-5



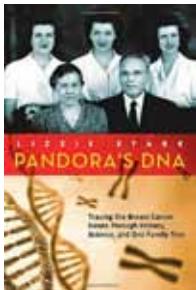
Presidential library director and C-SPAN in-house historian Smith (*The Colonel: The Life and Legend of Robert R. McCormick*, 1997, etc.) delivers a monumental biography of the charismatic vice president and four-term governor of New York.

Grandson and namesake of the two most hated men in Progressive-era America, Nelson Aldrich Rockefeller (1908-1979) was determined "to succeed despite his name" and to "polish the Rockefeller legacy like fine silver" through public service and the socially responsible use of the immense wealth and influence at his disposal. Rockefeller was the last of the titans of progressive Republicanism. "He had long believed that his country, like his family, must justify its riches through good works and the sharing of wealth," writes Smith. He worked comfortably in appointed positions in Republican and Democratic administrations but ultimately "hungered for the legitimacy uniquely bestowed by the ballot box." As governor of New York, Rockefeller advanced measures combating discrimination in various forms and engaged in a building boom, much of it financed through constitutionally dodgy bonding schemes. In national politics, however, Rockefeller ultimately proved too liberal for the Republicans, the pillar of the "eastern establishment" at a time when the party was becoming more stridently conservative. In person, Rockefeller was a force of nature—optimistic, impatient, hard-charging and strikingly virile, engaging in sex with subordinates in a way that would never be hidden or tolerated today. Ironically, his presidential hopes were scuttled by his very public divorce and remarriage, along with a considerable measure of tactical ineptitude. Rockefeller's enormously full life as a diplomat, bureaucrat, politician, businessman, and avid collector and proponent of modern art justifies the prodigious scale of this intensively researched work, presented in sturdy, confident prose with the occasional well-placed barb. The author maintains a dignified objectivity throughout, recounting events with penetrating perceptivity but refraining from intrusive editorial comment or analysis.

**An overdue comprehensive biography of a giant of mid-20th-century American politics.**

# "A gutsy, deeply revealing account that more than fulfills the promise of the subtitle."

FROM PANDORA'S DNA



## PANDORA'S DNA Tracing the Breast Cancer Genes Through History, Science, and One Family Tree

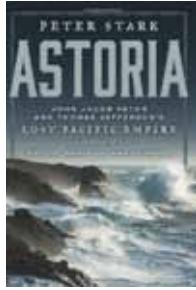
*Stark, Lizzie*  
Chicago Review (336 pp.)  
\$26.95 | Oct. 15, 2014  
978-1-61374-860-2



Freelance journalist and author Stark (*Leaving Mundania: Inside the Transformative World of Live Action Role-Playing Games*, 2012) has both fully researched her subject and poured out her heart in this blend of history, science and memoir.

As the family tree in the book's front shows, cancer, and the threat of cancer, has plagued the author's family for generations. When she underwent genetic testing and learned that she had inherited her mother's BRCA1 mutation, which greatly raises the risks of both breast and ovarian cancers, Stark was well-aware of its significance. After coping with the hassles of close monitoring, she made the tough decision to have a preventative double mastectomy while still in her 20s. The story of that decision and all that follows from it is enough to make a book in itself, but the author goes much further. She provides a capsule history of breast surgery, from the pre-anesthesia days through William Halsted's now-outdated radical mastectomy to today's less disfiguring procedures, and she profiles geneticist Mary-Claire King, whose work led to the identification of the BRCA genes. In her discussion of the controversial issue of gene patenting, Stark presents all sides of the argument. Most impressive, she tells her personal story with considerable frankness and flashes of humor. The weekend before her breast-removal surgery, she and her husband threw a "goodbye to boobs" party for their closest friends. That lighthearted moment is followed by less sunny ones as Stark was forced to adjust to her new body and face the questions of whether to bear children and possibly pass on the gene mutation and deciding when to have her threatened ovaries removed. The book is a must-read for women questioning whether to be tested for the BRCA mutations and for women considering their options after testing positive.

A gutsy, deeply revealing account that more than fulfills the promise of the subtitle.



## ASTORIA Astor and Jefferson's Lost Pacific Empire: A Story of Wealth, Ambition, and Survival

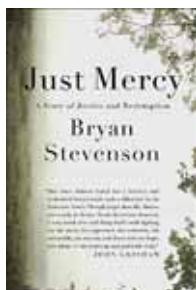
*Stark, Peter*  
Ecco/HarperCollins (256 pp.)  
\$26.99 | Mar. 4, 2014  
978-0-06-221829-2



A correspondent for *Outside* recovers a remarkable piece of history: the story of America's first colony on the continent's West coast.

Beginning in 1810, John Jacob Astor (1763-1848) set in motion an audacious plan to create "the largest commercial enterprise the world has ever known." He planned to control North America's entire fur trade by establishing a trading post at the mouth of the Columbia River, the lynchpin of a network extending west to the Pacific Rim and east to Europe. President Thomas Jefferson encouraged the venture, envisioning Astor's proposed settlement as the beginning of a "sister democracy" to the United States. From his base in Manhattan, Astor launched a two-pronged expedition: an Overland Party that carved a path later known as the Oregon Trail and a Sea-Going Party that sailed around Cape Horn to the coastal region west of the Rockies. Stark (*The Last Empty Places: A Past and Present Journey through the Blank Spots on the American Map*, 2010, etc.) spins the tale of these arduous journeys, the founding of Astoria and the outpost's abandonment during the War of 1812. He focuses on the tyrannical sea captain, the beleaguered, consensus-seeking businessman, and the shady, self-important fur trader who headed the parties and the French voyageurs, Yankee seamen, and Scottish woodsmen they commanded, as well as the Native American tribes they encountered. If the character of Astor remains indistinct, not so the horrors faced by the Astorians. Their various ordeals give Stark the chance to comment on cold water immersion and hypothermia, the efficacy of pounded, dried wild cherries in combating scurvy, and the intriguing role of what we would today call PTSD in the early exploration of North America. Near the end of his life, Astor employed Washington Irving to tell the astonishing story of Astoria. With Stark, this almost unbelievable tale remains in expert hands.

A fast-paced, riveting account of exploration and settlement, suffering and survival, treachery and death.



## JUST MERCY *Stevenson, Bryan*

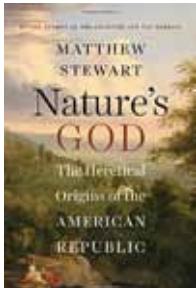
Spiegel & Grau (336 pp.)  
\$28.00 | Oct. 21, 2014  
978-0-8129-9452-0



A distinguished NYU law professor and MacArthur grant recipient offers the compelling story of the legal practice he founded to protect the rights of people on the margins of American society.

Stevenson began law school at Harvard knowing only that the life path he would follow would have something to do with [improving] the lives of the poor." An internship at the Atlanta-based Southern Prisoners Defense Committee in 1983 not only put him into contact with death row prisoners, but also defined his professional trajectory. In 1989, the author opened a non-profit legal center, the Equal Justice Initiative, in Alabama, a state with some of the harshest, most rigid capital punishment laws in the country. Underfunded and chronically overloaded by requests for help, his organization worked tirelessly on behalf of men, women and children who, for reasons of race, mental illness, lack of money and/or family support, had been victimized by the American justice system. One of Stevenson's first and most significant cases involved a black man named Walter McMillian. Wrongly accused of the murder of a white woman, McMillian found himself on death row before a sentence had even been determined. Though EJI secured his release six years later, McMillian "received no money, no assistance [and] no counseling" for the imprisonment that would eventually contribute to a tragic personal decline. In the meantime, Stevenson would also experience his own personal crisis. "You can't effectively fight abusive power, poverty, inequality, illness, oppression, or injustice and not be broken by it," he writes. Yet he would emerge from despair, believing that it was only by acknowledging brokenness that individuals could begin to understand the importance of tempering imperfect justice with mercy and compassion.

**Emotionally profound, necessary reading.**



### NATURE'S GOD *The Heretical Origins of the American Republic*

*Stewart, Matthew*  
Norton (540 pp.)  
\$28.95 | Jul. 1, 2014  
978-0-393-06454-4

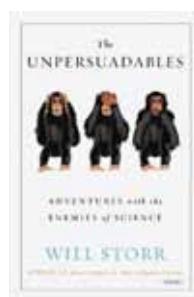
Stewart (*The Management Myth: Why the Experts Keep Getting it Wrong*, 2009, etc.) delivers a penetrating history of an American Revolution not yet finished and a stirring reassertion of the power of ideas unbound by the shackles of superstition.

Meticulously annotated and informed by imposing erudition, the book is a lively chronicle of the years leading up to the signing of the Declaration of Independence, especially noteworthy for detailing the unsung contributions (in word and deed) of such revolutionary figures as Ethan Allen and Thomas Young. It is also an admirably lucid survey of radical philosophical thought on the nature of man and the cosmos, a guiding principle grounded in reason and transmitted from Epicurus via the poet Lucretius, further developed by the great philosophical minds of the 17th century and embraced by the Founding Fathers. Stewart's capacity to render undiluted the complex deliberations of these thinkers glows on the page, notwithstanding the occasional Möbius strip of



esoterica. The author locates these ideas in the heterodox, deist origins of the Republic, with a focus on corporeal reality, not spiritual mysteries. In doing so, he reveals the true and enduring significance of the American experiment: not merely as a revolt against an imperial monarch, but against the global reach and oppressive artifice of supernatural religion. Stewart gives the simplistic "common religious consciousness" and much presumed wisdom a fair hearing, then demolishes them utterly, though not dismissing what is useful in faith. By closely analyzing the writings of Jefferson, Young, Franklin, Paine et al., he quashes the delusion that America was established as a "Christian" nation.

In affording a fresh perspective on the difficult but exhilarating birth of this country, Stewart shows that the often superficially misunderstood words of the Declaration of Independence are even more profound than they appear.



### THE UNPERSUADABLES *Adventures with the Enemies of Science*

*Storr, Will*  
Overlook (416 pp.)  
\$27.95 | Apr. 1, 2014  
978-1-4683-0818-1



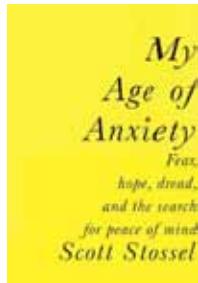
A cerebral ride into the world of the unorthodox.

Sallying forth to take on the benighted creationists, novelist and *Esquire* contributing editor Storr (*The Hunger and the Howling of Killian Lone*, 2014, etc.) takes pause and realizes that his way of thinking is not all that different from what is being presented from the pulpit of the church. Yes, his chosen approach is that of a rationalist, but how biased and compromised is it? What, really, does he know about the nitty-gritty of evolution, unmediated by the fine reasoning of a Darwin or a Dawkins? And where do our beliefs come from? It is unproductive and deluding to simply dismiss a belief as stupid; intelligence does not arbitrate against odd beliefs, for some clearly bright people hold some curious, complex, elusive notions. So Storr ventures with new eyes into their territory, to the outlandish and the heretical, all the while exploring theories of the brain and how it perceives the world. As he notes, each of us is a concoction of sensory pulses that fashions a unique vision: "Cognitive dissonance, confirmation bias, the brain's desire to have the outer, real world match its inner models—it takes us part of the way there," he writes. "It tells us that a properly functioning brain cannot be trusted to think rationally..." The author presents superb stories of visiting with voice-hearers, smug skeptics, sufferers of the Morgellon itch, Holocaust deniers, recovered-memory confabulators, and he combines these stories with his often humorous personal tale—which included experiencing his own murder through the process of hypnosis. Storr's piercing narrative is piquant and full of surprises and reversals of circumstance, as well as plenty of undeniably valuable information.

**“Powerful, eye-opening and funny. Pitch-perfect in his storytelling, Stossel reminds us that, in many important ways, to be anxious is to be human.”**

FROM *MY AGE OF ANXIETY*

“The mind remains, to a tantalizing degree, a realm of secrets and wonder,” writes the author, and so, too, does the world around us, which he entertainingly scours for the possibility of crucial anomalies.



### MY AGE OF ANXIETY *Fear, Hope, Dread, and the Search for Peace of Mind*

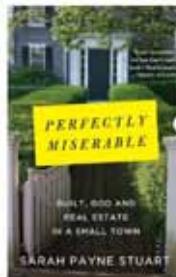
Stossel, Scott  
Knopf (416 pp.)  
\$27.95 | Jan. 1, 2014  
978-0-307-26987-4



In this captivating and intimate book, the editor of the *Atlantic* spares no detail about his lifelong struggle with anxiety and contextualizes his personal experience within the history of anxiety's perception and treatment.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, nearly one in seven Americans currently suffers from some form of anxiety. Stossel (*Sarge: The Life and Times of Sergeant Shriver*, 2004), whose assorted phobias and neuroses began to manifest when he was a toddler, provides an exceptionally relatable and frequently hilarious account of a modern sufferer: the endless combinations of therapy and drugs, pharmaceutical and otherwise; the inevitable mishaps of a public figure who is terrified of flying, enclosed spaces and speaking in public; the delicate negotiation between managing psychological torment and being a husband and father. Alongside these anecdotes—one of which, involving the Kennedy family, is laugh-out-loud funny—the author explores how anxiety has affected humans for centuries and how there is still no “cure.” Instead, anxiety is a “riddle” with very personal and diverse factors and symptoms, and it affects people from all walks of life. Many great minds, including Freud and Darwin, documented their battles with anxiety. They also experimented with chemical interventions, testimony of a long history of sought-after relief from anxiety’s debilitating effects. Stossel deftly explores a variety of treatments and their risks and successes, providing unique insight as both a journalist (whose priority is impartial investigation) and sufferer (whose imperative is to feel well). Throughout, the author’s beautiful prose and careful research combine to make this book informative, thoughtful and fun to read.

**Powerful, eye-opening and funny. Pitch-perfect in his storytelling, Stossel reminds us that, in many important ways, to be anxious is to be human. (First printing of 100,000)**



### PERFECTLY MISERABLE *Guilt, God and Real Estate in a Small Town*

Stuart, Sarah Payne  
Riverhead (320 pp.)  
\$27.95 | Jun. 12, 2014  
978-1-59463-181-8



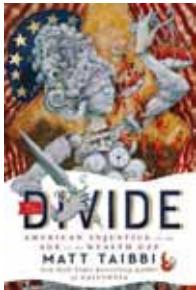
A writer’s wickedly droll account of how she came to terms with her WASP heritage and the impossible expectations of “mother” New England.

With its “pristine town center, gleaming with historically correct colors,” Stuart’s (*My First Cousin Once Removed: Money, Madness, and the Family of Robert Lowell*, 1998, etc.) hometown of Concord, Massachusetts, seemed the embodiment of perfection. But as Stuart well knew, high-flying moral pretensions, hypocrisy, and an insatiable hunger for social prestige and high-priced real estate bubbled just beneath the deceptively charming surface. In this wry memoir, the author explores her relationship with her hometown and with a whole host of Concord notables, from Ralph Waldo Emerson and Nathaniel Hawthorne to Louisa May Alcott, whose fictional mother Marmee—and the perpetually miserable Alcott matriarch on whom she was based—represents everything good and bad about New England culture. A rebel who defied the WASP values of thrift, practicality and quiet snobbery, Payne fled Concord for New York after an early marriage. Yet within 10 years of leaving, her longing to return home became “obsessive.” Concord had “become a kind of utopia, where [she] would give her children the perfect childhood.” It also became a personal testing ground where she fantasized she could engage in error-free parenting while earning the approval of her own mother and father. Instead, Stuart found herself moving into larger and larger homes she and her husband could not afford and joining exclusive social clubs, all in the name of maintaining the facade of WASP success. Seeking enlightenment about her dilemmas and compulsions, the author examines her family’s personal history as well as Concord literary history. She learned that her pattern of feeling guilt and smugness on the one hand and seeing nonexistent coziness on the other were part of a heritage best survived through self-deprecating humor.

**Satire at its finest.**

# “Solid, well-reported science in the Gary Taubes mold.”

FROM THE BIG FAT SURPRISE



## THE DIVIDE *American Injustice in the Age of the Wealth Gap*

Taibbi, Matt  
Spiegel & Grau (448 pp.)  
\$27.00 | Apr. 8, 2014  
978-0-8129-9342-4



*Rolling Stone* journalist Taibbi (*Griftopia: Bubble Machines, Vampire Squids, and the Long Con That Is Breaking America*, 2010, etc.) once again rakes from the muck some most malodorous information about inequality in America.

Readers with high blood pressure should make sure they've taken their medication before reading this devastating account of the inequality in our justice, immigration and social service systems. Taibbi's chapters are high-definition photographs contrasting the ways we pursue small-time corruption and essentially reward high-level versions of the same thing. Mixing case studies, interviews and anecdotes with comprehensive research on his topics, the author's effort should silence the sort of criticism that says, "Yes, those are horrible incidents and miscarriages of justice, but are they *representative*?" His answer, "Oh, yes!" Taibbi deals with the frisk-and-stop campaign in New York City, the 2008 financial collapse (he reminds us that no one went to jail for the egregious activities of the investment banks involved), the vast resources we allocate for pursuing, prosecuting and deporting illegal immigrants (mostly for petty behavior that pales in significance to that of the wolves of Wall Street), our horrendous persecution of people on food stamps and other public assistance, and the case of whistle-blower Linda Almonte, a well-paid employee for Chase Bank, which summarily fired her when she pointed out their unethical and illegal practices with their credit card holders. Taibbi does not tiptoe through his text. He believes many of our practices are characteristic of a "dystopia," and he calls Dick Fuld, a major banker, "one of the great assholes of all time" and illegal immigrants, "one of America's last great cash crops." Moreover, he is an equal-opportunity critic: Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama all wither under the intense sun of Taibbi's relentless scrutiny.

Rising from the text is a miasma of corporate and political malfeasance and immorality that mocks the platitudes of democracy.



## THE BIG FAT SURPRISE *Why Butter, Meat and Cheese Belong in a Healthy Diet*

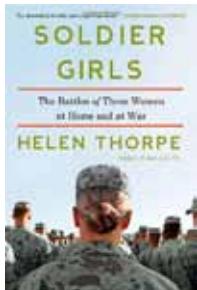
Teicholz, Nina  
Simon & Schuster (256 pp.)  
\$27.99 | May 13, 2014  
978-1-4516-2442-7



Journalist Teicholz combs the science, or lack thereof, to learn how the fats in the American diet grew horns and cloven hooves.

"Almost nothing we commonly believe today about fats generally and saturated fats in particular appears, upon close examination, to be accurate," writes the author. Appallingly, those are still fighting words when it comes to the mandarins who fashion our national health agenda, those crazy pyramids that flip on their heads now and again like the magnetic poles. Like a bloodhound, Teicholz tracks the process by which a hypothesis morphs into truth without the benefit of supporting data. The author explores how research dollars are spent to entrench the dogma, to defend it like an article of faith while burying its many weaknesses and contradictory test results. In this instance, Teicholz zeroes in on the worries over skyrocketing heart-disease figures in the 1950s. Some (flawed) epidemiological work suggested that serum cholesterol deposited plaque in arteries, leading to coronary disease. This type of associative simplicity is that spoonful of sugar: the easy fix everyone wants when long-term, clinical tests are needed to appreciate the complex processes involved. This desire to corner the bogeyman targeted the world of fats, and it has stayed that way despite all the evidence and advancements in medical science, especially endocrinological studies, that have pointed to other biomarkers. Galling, though hardly unexpected, is the role played by money and the power we let it bestow. There were reasons the food industry wanted to stick with trans fats as opposed to saturated fats, and Teicholz tics them off, and there are reasons that the next great hope, vegetable oils, have dangerous health issues hidden instead of heralded. Sixty years after the fat attack, "a significant body of clinical trials over the past decade has demonstrated the absence of any negative effect of saturated fat on heart disease, obesity, or diabetes."

Solid, well-reported science in the Gary Taubes mold.



## SOLDIER GIRLS *The Battles of Three Women at Home and at War*

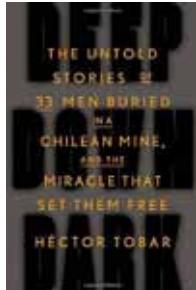


*Thorpe, Helen*  
Scribner (384 pp.)  
\$28.00 | Aug. 5, 2014  
978-1-4516-6810-0

A journalist tells the absorbing story of how wartime experiences shaped the lives and friendships of three female soldiers deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Michelle Fischer, Debbie Helton and Desma Brooks were three Indiana women who had very different reasons for joining the National Guard. The teenage Fischer wanted money for college. Helton, a 30-something single mother, wanted "a means of submerging herself in a group she held in high esteem." Brooks, a 20-something with no clear life goals, joined "on a dare." Each expected to fulfill their service obligations in Indiana, but in the wake of 9/11, all three would get far more than they bargained for. Thorpe (*Just Like Us: The True Story of Four Mexican Girls Coming of Age in America*, 2009) follows Fischer, Helton and Brooks over 12 years and two life-changing overseas deployments. She explores how the women met and bonded despite differences in age, political affiliations and background. Fiercely competent and dedicated, they were treated as outsiders to a male establishment that too-often regarded them with a combination of amusement, suspicion, hostility and desire. Yet the women showed that they were no different from the males with whom they served: They drank too much, had affairs and felt equally diminished when fellow soldiers died in combat. The obstacles they faced at home—divorces, resentful children, reintegration into society as parents, daughters, wives and lovers—were no less formidable. When Brooks returned to Indiana with PTSD, Thorpe reveals the devastating impact that condition—which is not as much discussed among female soldiers—had on not only her career, but also her life as a struggling single mother of three. The women would disagree about the value of the time they spent swept up in unexpected wars, yet as Thorpe demonstrates, none would ever question the meaning of the unstinting love and support they gave to each other and gratefully returned.

**Intensely immersive reading.**



## DEEP DOWN DARK *The Untold Stories of 33 Men Buried in a Chilean Mine, and the Miracle that Set Them Free*

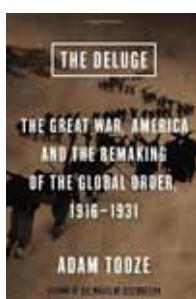


*Tobar, Héctor*  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux (320 pp.)  
\$26.00 | Oct. 7, 2014  
978-0-374-28060-4

The mind-boggling story of 33 Chilean miners trapped 2,000 feet underground for 10 weeks.

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and novelist Tobar (*The Barbarian Nurseries*, 2011, etc.) spins a gripping narrative, taut to the point of explosion, of the 2010 story that made international headlines for weeks. He doesn't rush a complex story with many strands: the men below and their cacophony of woes, the families above, the political maneuvering of the Chilean state, the tightfisted mine owners and the company of rescuers. The locale featured "harsh, waterless surroundings [that] serve as a laboratory for studying the possibility of life on other planets," and the mine itself was a sweltering jackstraw of tunnels, some nearing 100 years in age and ripe for disaster, the rock groaning and hissing as the great tectonic plates collided deep below. Tobar's depiction of the cave-in is cinematic: The ceiling and floor became "undulating waves of stone," then the lights went out as colossal wedges of rock collapsed to seal the exits. The author fully invests readers in the men's plight by portraying the crushing realization of the dire circumstances, individual acts of decency and pettiness, and moments of sublimity and madness. He also devotes sympathetic attention to the gathering tent city of relatives who refused to leave, certainly not until the bodies were recovered. When the first bore hole punched through, suddenly, "the devil is present in the mine, taking form in all the greed, the misunderstanding, the envy, and the betrayals between the men." Ultimately, once the miners made it out alive, via a frightening escape vehicle, life was good—until all the other stuff that surfaced along with the miners began to bring many of them down.

An electrifying, empathetic work of journalism that makes a four-year-old story feel fresh.



## THE DELUGE *The Great War, America and the Remaking of the Global Order, 1916-1931*



*Tooze, Adam*  
Viking (640 pp.)  
\$40.00 | Nov. 13, 2014  
978-0-670-02492-6

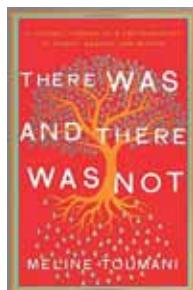
A vigorously defended argument that the war to end all wars was really the origin of a new world order and American superpower.

**"This remarkable memoir serves as a moving examination of the complex forces of ethnicity, nationality and history that shape one's sense of self and foster, threaten or fray the fragile tapestry of community."**

FROM THERE WAS AND THERE WAS NOT

Taking a truly global view of World War I, Tooze (History/Yale Univ.; *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy*, 2007, etc.) holds that the conflict was Europe's undoing in more ways than one. Obviously, it laid the groundwork for the global war to follow, but it also announced the arrival of an America that was able to act unilaterally on the world stage. The huge bloodletting also left the losing, and even some of the victorious, powers politically unstable. The author highlights Hitler, of course, but also Leon Trotsky as representatives of a sweeping change by which the war "opened a new phase of 'world organization.'" What is novel about Tooze's thesis is that, in this light, Hitler, Mussolini and the military leaders of Imperial Japan saw themselves as rebels against this new world order, which oppressed Germany financially and dismissed Italian and Japanese claims for rewards for their parts in defeating the Central Powers; all resented the notion that the terms of the transition to this new world order were dictated by the upstart United States. Interesting, too, is the author's interpretation of America's artful use of soft power, favoring political and economic influence over direct military intervention whenever possible. One negative consequence was Wilson's negotiation of a "peace without victory" at the end of the war that promoted a subsequent instability made lethal with the worldwide economic collapse a decade later. In discussing what he calls "the fiasco of Wilsonism," Tooze sometimes drifts into highly technical economic matters such as the mechanics of hyperinflation, but his narrative is gripping—and sobering, since readers well know the tragedies that followed.

A lucid, first-rate history of the results of a war whose beginning a century ago we are busily commemorating.



### **THERE WAS AND THERE WAS NOT A Journey Through Hate and Possibility in Turkey, Armenia, and Beyond**

*Toumani, Meline*  
Metropolitan/Henry Holt (304 pp.)  
\$28.00 | Nov. 4, 2014  
978-0-8050-9762-7

A young Armenian-American journalist examines her identity and personal history.

New York Times contributor Toumani grew up hating Turkey. She knew that between 1915 and 1923, nearly 1 million Armenians were massacred and another 1 million deported from the Ottoman Empire, a surge of violence that punctuated generations of oppression. She also knew that the Armenian diaspora was obsessed with world recognition of the conflict as genocide, a term that Turkey vehemently rejected. Even 100 years later, many Armenians are still ferocious in their abhorrence of all things Turkish. But for Toumani, that hatred had come "to feel like a chokehold, a call to conformity," and she wanted "to understand how history, identity, my clan and my feeling of obligation to it, had defined me." That search took her to Turkey, where she lived for more than two years, interviewing writers, historians, students, professors and activists

about the fraught relationship of Turks to ethnic minorities. Cautious about admitting that she was Armenian, Toumani discovered that once she did, "the distance from 'Nice to meet you' to the words 'so-called genocide' was sometimes less than two minutes long." Many Turks claimed to have Armenian friends, but stereotypes were deeply entrenched: Armenians were greedy, shifty and duplicitous. The murder of an outspoken journalist who worked to find common ground between Turks and Armenians brought political hatreds into stark view. Arriving with the idea that "soft reconciliation was important and valuable—that simply getting Turks and Armenians to interact as human beings seemed like a major step," Toumani felt increasingly frustrated with the intolerance she encountered and with her own prejudices, which "seemed stronger than ever." She came to believe that the term "genocide" is no more than a clinical label that dilutes the visceral reality of the past.

**This remarkable memoir serves as a moving examination of the complex forces of ethnicity, nationality and history that shape one's sense of self and foster, threaten or fray the fragile tapestry of community.**

### **UNCERTAIN JUSTICE *The Roberts Court and the Constitution***

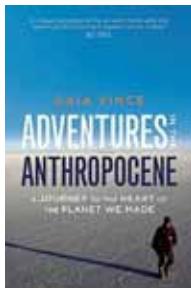
*Tribe, Laurence; Matz, Joshua*  
Henry Holt (416 pp.)  
\$30.00 | Jun. 3, 2014  
978-0-8050-9909-6

With Chief Justice John Roberts' leadership of the Supreme Court approaching its 10th anniversary, Tribe (Constitutional Law/Harvard Univ.; *The Invisible Constitution*, 2008, etc.) and Matz, who clerks for a federal judge, provide a perspective on the changes reflected in the court's decision-making patterns.

The co-authors cooperate in a near-forensic dissection of the court's work under Roberts, comparing the arguments of each justice on a case-by-case basis. Many of their conclusions will be eye-openers for general readers. Contrary perhaps to expectation, this is not merely an account of a consistent five-member conservative majority against a liberal minority. Conservatives—e.g., Antonin Scalia and Samuel Alito—can differ from each other as much as they do from liberals like Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Sonia Sotomayor. Tribe and Matz fully address legal, philosophical and political motivations, and they document the general direction taking shape as one that tends to reverse law in many areas established since the New Deal. The authors systematically examine how the conflicting opinions on the court are coming together to reformulate the law's understanding of the Constitution in practice. The justices have focused much attention on cases that involve technical rules of procedure. In these cases, the court has favored big business and limited the rights of individuals to seek remedies through the courts for perceived wrongs. They have also used procedural cases to confer "near-total immunity on prosecutors

and police," even undercutting aspects of Miranda rights. Certain decisions on integration, voter rights and affirmative action have raised questions about plaintiffs' future abilities to pursue any rights case in the courts. The court's decisions have also been geared toward establishing a new balance between federal and state governments and redefining congressional responsibility regarding the economy.

**A well-researched, unsettling investigation of recent trends in the nation's highest court.**



### ADVENTURES IN THE ANTHROPOCENE *A Journey to the Heart of the Planet We Made*

Vince, Gaia

Milkweed (448 pp.)

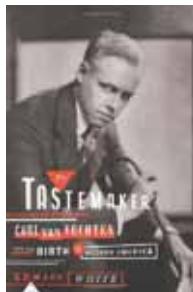
\$30.00 | Nov. 11, 2014

978-1-57131-357-7

Science journalist Vince chronicles a two-year journey around the globe to evaluate warnings that we face an ecological tipping point.

"Deserts are spreading...forests are dying and being logged....Wildlife is being hunted and dying because of habitat loss," writes the author, who also notes that we currently use 30 percent more natural resources per year "than the planet can replenish." Geologists are calling this the Anthropocene epoch due to "the changes humans are making to the biosphere." As the author acknowledges, we are the first species "to knowingly reshape the living Earth's biology and chemistry. We have become the masters of our planet and integral to the destiny of life on Earth." Despite this dim picture, the author found grounds for optimism on her travels. Vince takes the hopeful view that we will act in a timely fashion to "preserve nature or master its tricks artificially." In China and India, she chronicles government efforts to address atmospheric pollution and looming water shortages. Her main interest, however, is the inventiveness of people at the local level dealing with these problems. Vince believes that they are ushering in "an extraordinary new human age...creating artificial glaciers to irrigate their crops, building artificial coral reefs to shore up islands, and artificial trees to clean the air." The author was most impressed by the cumulative effect of small changes in heretofore-inaccessible mountain regions that now generate electricity using microhydropower; these areas have also gained access to the Internet and improved sanitation. She discusses the work of "[hydrologists in Peru [who are] building tunnels to drain an Andean glacial lake" as a way to control disastrous flooding. On a smaller scale in the Indian village of Ladakh, a local engineer is leading a project to convert mountain wastewater into a series of man-made miniglaciers connected to irrigation canals. Everywhere she traveled, Vince continued to see great promise in human creativity.

**A well-documented, upbeat alternative to doom-and-gloom prognostications.**



### THE TASTEMAKER *Carl Van Vechten and the Birth of Modern America*

White, Edward

Farrar, Straus and Giroux (384 pp.)

\$30.00 | Feb. 18, 2014

978-0-374-20157-9



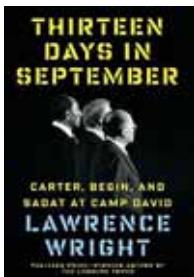
A significant reappraisal of a cultural icon and crucial booster of modern artists, especially African-American artists.

Reading British journalist and historian White's account of the extraordinary life of Chicago-born critic, novelist and photographer Carl Van Vechten (1880-1964), one is struck by how he toiled over many decades under a very fortunate star. He had not only the good luck to be in the right place at the right time—New York City during the Jazz Age—but also the prescience to grasp the significance of this modernist iconoclasm for American culture. As a Chicago novice newspaperman relocated to New York, Van Vechten cut his journalistic teeth on music criticism—e.g., covering Richard Strauss' seminal *Salome* (adapted from Oscar Wilde's play) at the Metropolitan Opera in 1907. In 1909, notes White, he intuited Isadora Duncan's barefoot ballet as an "exuberant manifestation of a new type of art" without knowing anything about dance. From the exotic, unconventional Mabel Dodge, Van Vechten learned how to "bolster one's own profile by championing the work of others"—e.g., their shared discovery of Gertrude Stein. Van Vechten published a series of "heretical" books throughout the 1920s about music and arts criticism, elevating the lowbrow or vulgar (ragtime, jazz, African-American art) and teaching the American public how to reappraise it. His novels were wildly popular, scandalous and largely forgotten; all the while, he had access to the rich gay bohemian underground, and he embarked in the 1930s on a fresh career as a portrait photographer just at the moment that photojournalism took off in America. In orderly chapters, White tackles this complicated, multifaceted, tremendously fascinating and contradictory subject: a married gay man, an alcoholic and always a "catalyst for outrage and argument."

**A vigorous, fully fleshed biography of an important contributor to American culture. (38 b/w illustrations)**

**"In this rich and entertaining work, Zoglin pulls no punches but also remains an astonished admirer."**

FROM HOPE



**THIRTEEN DAYS IN  
SEPTEMBER**  
**Carter, Begin, and  
Sadat at Camp David**

Wright, Lawrence  
Knopf (368 pp.)  
\$27.95 | Sep. 16, 2014  
978-0-385-35203-1



A Pulitzer Prize-winning author reconstructs and reflects on "one of the great diplomatic triumphs of the twentieth century"

and the men who made it happen.

Even though the contemplated regional framework for peace collapsed, the 1978 agreement forged at Camp David between Israel and Egypt has held, a remarkable achievement in the tortured history of the Middle East, "where antique grudges never lose their stranglehold on the societies in their grip." *New Yorker* staff writer Wright (*Going Clear: Scientology, Hollywood, and the Prison of Belief*, 2013, etc.) presents a day-by-day account of the tense negotiations, artfully mixing in modern and ancient history, biblical allusions, portraits of the principals—Jimmy Carter, Menachem Begin, Anwar Sadat—and thumbnail sketches of key participants: Americans Cyrus Vance and Zbigniew Brzezinski, Israelis Moshe Dayan and Ezer Weizman, and Egyptians Mohamed Ibrahim Kamel and Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The author examines all the forces that shaped these historic talks: the isolation imposed by the presidential retreat high in Maryland's Catoctin Mountains; the divisions within the Egyptian and Israeli delegations; the almost unprecedented nature of detailed negotiations conducted not by subordinates but by the heads of state; the hazardous political stakes for each leader and the powerful role played by their deeply held religious beliefs; the critical part played by President Jimmy Carter, who moved adroitly from facilitator to catalyst to secure an agreement. Throughout, telling detail abounds: Rosalynn Carter spontaneously suggesting to her husband that the intransigents should come to the beautiful and peaceful Camp David to revive stalled talks; Begin startling his hosts on a brief outing to the Gettysburg battlefield by reciting Lincoln's entire address from memory; Carter dramatically accusing Sadat of betrayal and, at one point, thinking to himself that Begin was a "psycho"; Israel's fiercest warrior, Dayan, by then going blind, bloodying his nose by walking into a tree; Begin bursting into tears as Carter presents him with conference photos inscribed to each of the prime minister's grandchildren.

**A unique moment in history superbly captured. Yet another triumph for Wright.**



**HOPE**  
**Entertainer of the  
Century**

Zoglin, Richard  
Simon & Schuster (576 pp.)  
\$30.00 | Nov. 4, 2014  
978-1-4391-4027-7



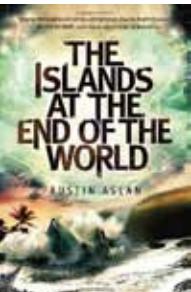
A contributing editor and theater critic for *Time* weighs in with what will immediately become the definitive biography of the legendary comedian, born Leslie Townes Hope (1903-2003).

Born in England at a time when movies were new—and talkies were still decades away—Hope, whose family immigrated to Cleveland, Ohio, in 1908, lived to see moon landings and the Internet. Zoglin (*Comedy at the Edge: How Stand-up in the 1970s Changed America*, 2008) credits Hope for a number of things (including stand-up comedy itself), and he writes at times in jaw-dropped amazement at how Hope succeeded in, even dominated, every medium available to him: Broadway, vaudeville, movies, radio, TV and live appearances of all varieties. He wrote best-sellers and popular newspaper columns as well—though, as Zoglin points out continually, after success began to arrive, Hope had a large team of writers. The author notes that Hope had a quick wit, impeccable timing and, later, the ability to read cue cards, which became his preferred performance aid (he did *not* like teleprompters). Zoglin's presentation is generally chronological, but with Hope's many activities—tours to military zones, TV specials, "Road" movies with Bing Crosby—the author sometimes groups things thematically. Those who knew Hope only in his later cue-card-reading days will be surprised to learn about his grace as a dancer, his cool (not warm) relationship with Crosby, his myriads of sexual escapades (despite a marriage of nearly 70 years), his temper, his ferocious work ethic and his vast real estate holdings in California. Older readers will once again live through Hope's public support of the Vietnam War, his friendship with alpha Republicans and his post-Vietnam return to his well-earned status as an American institution.

**In this rich and entertaining work, Zoglin pulls no punches but also remains an astonished admirer. (16-page b/w photo insert)**

# SPECIAL ISSUE: BEST BOOKS OF 2014

# TEEN



## THE ISLANDS AT THE END OF THE WORLD

*Aslan, Austin*

Wendy Lamb/Random (384 pp.)  
\$17.99 | \$10.99 e-book | \$20.99 PLB  
Aug. 5, 2014  
978-0-385-74402-7  
978-0-385-37421-7 e-book  
978-0-375-99145-5 PLB



Hope for a promising epilepsy treatment brought Leilani, 16, and Mike, her ecologist father, to Honolulu; when a global catastrophe plunges the world's most isolated metropolitan area into chaos, they're desperate to return to family on the Big Island of Hawaii—it won't be easy.

Lei—half-Hawaiian, half-white—still feels like an outsider three years after moving from California to Hilo. Nevertheless, her island heritage speaks to her and could be the key to understanding the cataclysmic technological disruptions changing the world. Satellite-based GPS and other electronic communications systems fail, and only well-heeled tourists can buy their ways home. To combat mounting chaos, the military herds those at large, including Leilani and Mike, into internment camps. Leilani's seizures carry voices to her, while an alarming discovery makes her quest to unravel their message and escape from the camp increasingly urgent. Seeking home drains their dwindling resources but strengthens their trust in each other. Flashes of kindness and empathy provide respite from the chaos and cruelty. Anchoring the story, the powerful bond between father and daughter reminds readers that love is as potent as fear and greed. Aslan's debut honors Hawaii's unique cultural strengths—family ties and love of home, amplified by geography and history—while remaining true to a genre that affirms the mysterious grandeur of the universe waiting to be discovered.

A suspenseful and engaging series opener made all the more distinctive through its careful realization of setting. (*Science fiction. 12 & up*)



## NEVER ENDING

*Bedford, Martyn*

Wendy Lamb/Random (304 pp.)  
\$16.99 | \$10.99 e-book | \$18.99 PLB  
Mar. 11, 2014  
978-0-385-73991-7  
978-0-375-89856-3 e-book  
978-0-385-90809-2 PLB



An English teen can't stop blaming herself for her brother's death.

Thanks to the headlines, all of Europe knows what happened to 15-year-old Shiv's brother one fateful night in Kyritos, Greece. Since then, she's been experiencing PTSD-like symptoms that put her into rages she can't remember and send illusions of her brother creeping across her vision. The two-pronged narrative shifts between the fateful family vacation in Greece and Shiv's inpatient therapy at the Korsakoff Clinic. What matters most is not so much whether or not Shiv had a hand in her brother's death, as she so accuses herself, but the relationships she builds with the other teen residents of the clinic and the arc of her treatment. Each session of therapy opens another window to Shiv's time in Greece before her brother's death—her crush on a handsome, 19-year-old Greek boy, days spent relaxing by the pool with her parents at the villa and the terrifying night her brother lost his life. The characters and the scenery are rendered with such photographic precision that readers will feel as though they're watching a film. They'll also find Bedford's compellingly blunt, sharply drawn narrative (laced with Salinger references) sometimes too painful to read as they experience the harsh treatments right alongside Shiv. The results, however, are absolutely worth it.

**Beautiful and illuminating but as hard as therapy.** (*Fiction. 14-18*)

# THE BEST TEEN BOOKS OF 2014: OF THIS WORLD AND DECIDEDLY NOT OF THIS WORLD



2014 MARKS A TURNING POINT in commercial teen fiction, the gloomy, often poorly realized post-apocalyptic dystopia yielding to the slick teen thriller. Peeking ahead into 2015, it's astonishing how many variations I see on the political and/or crime novel. Get ready.

Perhaps not surprisingly, given the formulaic natures of both beasts, there are few examples of either among the Best Teen Books of 2014. Alaya Dawn Johnson's *Love Is the Drug* stands out as a sophisticated and stylish bio-thriller, further drawing attention for its African-American protagonist. And a pair of exceptionally weird and brilliant novels bookend the year, each capturing America at the cusp of apocalypse: Andrew Smith's *Grasshopper Jungle* and A.S. King's Glory O'Brien's *History of the Future*.

But, wow, what a year it's been for fantasy; lovers of the genre are living like clams at high tide. Marie Rutkoski presents a lush, complex picture of two characters on either side of a revolution in *The Winner's Curse*. Newcomer Erin Claiborne examines what happens to the Chosen One after his best friend kills the evil overlord instead in the smart and funny *A Hero at the End of the World*.



Isabel Quintero

And Rebecca Hahn gives readers a dreamily poetic story of a king's heir rejected by the nobility and wooed by nature—and dragons—in *A Creature of Moonlight*.

As with middle-grade books, readers mostly need to turn to the real world—in both fiction and nonfiction—for diversity, and happily, they have some choices. Six transgender teens speak out with

bravery and candor in Susan Kuklin's *Beyond Magenta*. Latina Gabi struggles with body image, cultural identity and a drug-addict father in Isabel Quintero's *Gabi, a Girl in Pieces*. Crohn's sufferers Chess and Shannon explore the reality of life with chronic illness in Lucy Frank's *Two Girls Staring at the Ceiling*.

On balance then, I'd say it's been a darn good year.

—V.S.

Vicky Smith is the children's & teen editor at Kirkus Reviews.

## SHACKLETON *Antarctic Odyssey*



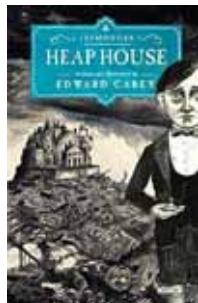
*Bertozzi, Nick*  
Illus. by Bertozzi, Nick  
First Second (128 pp.)  
\$16.99 | Jun. 17, 2014  
978-1-59643-451-6



With just a hint of artistic license, a retelling in graphic form of the ill-fated Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1914-17.

Keeping readers oriented with maps and dates that heighten the drama (if it were possible), Bertozzi introduces Ernest Shackleton's Antarctic career with glimpses of early ventures in 1901 and 1907. He then provides a captioned portrait gallery of each member of the expedition, including the dogs, before going on to retrace in detail the course and fate of the ship *Endurance*, which was trapped in ice and eventually crushed. The exhausting, monthslong trek over rough ice and treacherous waters to reach a rescue point takes up most of the book. The author places figures drawn with a fine pen within small but easily legible panels, and he uses a color scheme of black, white and a midtone gray that effectively captures the Antarctic's alien, implacable harshness. His tale is infused, though, with both humor ("My posterior is chafed thoroughly from cleaning with ice," complains an expedition member, pulling up his trousers) and a strong sense of the stiff-upper-lip camaraderie that, along with Shackleton's outstanding leadership, kept the expedition together and led, against all odds, to the survival of its every (human) member.

A top-shelf rendition of one of the greatest survival stories to come out of the Age of Exploration. (source list)  
(Graphic historical fiction. 10-16)



## HEAP HOUSE

*Carey, Edward*  
Illus. by Carey, Edward  
Overlook (416 pp.)  
\$16.99 | Oct. 2, 2014  
978-1-4683-0953-9  
Series: Iremonger, 1



The first in a deliciously macabre trilogy for middle graders and young teens channels Dickens crossed with Lemony Snicket.

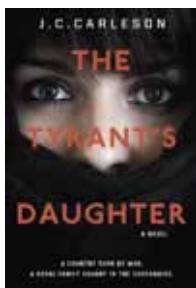
The Iremongers made their fortune scavenging the discards of London, and now the enormous extended family resides in the eponymous agglomerated mansion surrounded by feral rubbish heaps. Sickly Clod Iremonger, on the cusp of being "trousered" and saddled with adult responsibilities, is distrusted for his queer talent: He hears voices from those assorted "birth objects" (including his own sink plug) to which every member of the household is bonded for life. But now the objects are going astray; there are reports of an ominous Gathering, and storms are brewing in the heaps. When Clod teams up with the spunky servant Lucy Pennant, the sinister heritage of the Iremongers

**"Innovative design...pairs words and art, echoing and amplifying themes of departure and return, integration and discovery."**

FROM DREAMING IN INDIAN

can no longer be concealed. Morbid black-and-white portraits reminiscent of Charles Addams and Edward Gorey punctuate a Gothic tale in turns witty, sweet, thoughtful and thrilling—but always off-kilter—and penned with gorgeous, loopy prose just this side of precious. The malevolent setting and delightfully loathsome cast highlight the odd likability of Lucy, so gleefully felonious and brash, and poor, strange, diffident Clod, whom she inspires to genuine heroism. Suspense and horror gradually accumulate into an avalanche of a climax, leading to the most precipitous of cliffhangers, yet what lingers are uncomfortable questions about treating things—and people—as disposable.

Magnificently creepy. (*Horror. 10-16*)



### THE TYRANT'S DAUGHTER

Carleson, J.C.

Knopf (304 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$10.99 e-book | \$20.99 PLB

Feb. 11, 2014

978-0-449-80997-6

978-0-449-81000-2 e-book

978-0-449-80998-3 PLB

A teenage girl from an unnamed Middle Eastern country attempts to come to terms with her dictator father's bloody legacy in this absorbing character-driven novel authored by a former CIA official.

Fifteen-year-old Laila lives in a shabby apartment outside of Washington, D.C., with her mother and little brother. She misses her homeland, but return is impossible since her uncle had her father assassinated and took control of the government. "I'm half Here. I'm half There. I'm a girl divided, which is to say I'm no one at all." While her mother schemes with both American officials and rebels from their country to remedy their untenable situation, Laila reluctantly begins to enjoy the simple freedoms of school and friendships. But worrisome thoughts of her mother's secretive phone calls and the mysterious CIA agent who lurks around their apartment are never far from her mind. And how will she ever reconcile what she now knows about her father the dictator with the loving man who raised her? Carleson shrewdly makes what has become a sadly familiar story on the evening news accessible by focusing on the experiences of one innocent girl at the center of it. Laila is a complex and layered character whose nuanced observations will help readers better understand the divide between American and Middle Eastern cultures.

Smart, relevant, required reading. (author's note, commentary, further reading) (*Fiction. 13 & up*)



### DREAMING IN INDIAN Contemporary Native American Voices

Charleyboy, Lisa; Leatherdale, Mary Beth—Eds.

Annick Press (128 pp.)

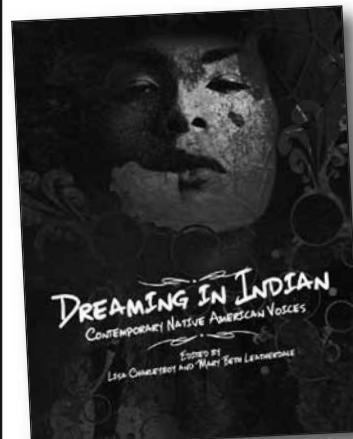
\$19.95 | Nov. 1, 2014

978-1-55451-687-2

Who are North American Indians today? For answers, meet the poets, fashion models, chefs, scientists, Olympians, YouTube stars, graphic artists, activists, athletes and many others featured in this vibrant, kaleidoscopic anthology.

Contributors, many young adults from first nations across Canada and the United States, portray their experiences in short works that range from flash fiction, essays, songs and poetry to paintings, cartoons and photo collages. Innovative design by Inti Amaterasu pairs words and art, echoing and amplifying themes of departure and return, integration and

### Nominated for 2015 Kirkus Prize



DREAMING  
IN  
INDIAN  
CONTEMPORARY  
NATIVE AMERICAN  
VOICES  
edited by  
Lisa Charleyboy  
and Mary Beth  
Leatherdale

**"Original and accessible, both an exuberant work of art and a uniquely valuable resource."**

—Kirkus Reviews, \*starred review

ages 12+ | 128 pages | 978-1-55451-687-2 | \$19.95 hc  
Book Trailer and sample chapter at [www.annickpress.com](http://www.annickpress.com)



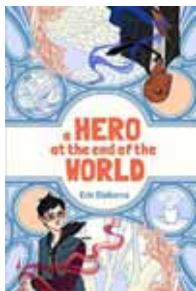
**annick press** | EXCELLENCE & INNOVATION  
distributed by [www.fireflybooks.com](http://www.fireflybooks.com)

**"The author argues the necessity of faith regardless of where it is placed, a simple concept that is refreshed when delivered in such an unusual fashion."**

FROM JESUS JACKSON

discovery. Writers recount tough, crooked journeys that led to rewarding outcomes, incorporating a complex, difficult, rich heritage in cutting-edge careers. Not all stories are happy, but most move from pain toward hope, even triumph. Twelve years of residential school couldn't erase her cultural identity from Isabelle Knockwood, Mi'kmaq, whose mother's early teachings gave her a course to follow. Throat singer Tanya Tagaq Gillis, Inuk, thanks school bullies who tormented her—surviving them gave her the determination and resilience to pursue her dreams. Self-styled "Salish geek" Jeffrey Veresegg draws on a mixed heritage to create his inventive prints. Children of Alberta's Horse Lake First Nation share what gives them strength. Tired stereotypes are demolished with sly humor. Cree model Ashley Callingbull satirizes fashion's appropriation of native dress. But stereotypes aren't always disempowering, as Kelli Clifton, Tsimshian, points out in her exploration of Disney's *Pocahontas*.

Original and accessible, both an exuberant work of art and a uniquely valuable resource. (*Anthology*. 12-18)



### A HERO AT THE END OF THE WORLD

Claiborne, Erin  
Big Bang Press (304 pp.)  
\$15.95 paper | \$9.99 e-book  
Nov. 11, 2014  
978-0-9904844-0-0  
978-0-9904844-2-4 e-book

Destined to destroy the evil overlord, the chosen one adjusts to a disappointing life after his friend does the job instead.

The prophecy stated that Ewan Mao was the one who would kill the tyrant Duff Slan. He spent years training for when the time would come to dispatch the dark lord who had been ruling Britain with an iron fist. But when the final battle took place, Ewan's best friend, Oliver Abrams, dealt the killing blow. Five years later, Ewan is a footnote in Oliver's story, working in a crummy coffee shop while Oliver swiftly rises through the ranks of the local police force. Anger and jealousy have festered, and when a secret society approaches Ewan with an opportunity to take Oliver down a peg, Ewan quickly accepts. Ewan and Oliver's friendship-cum-rivalry offers true pathos, exploring a bond that was supposed to be stronger than steel but that may now be twisted and damaged beyond repair. Claiborne serves up more than just a clever inversion of the "Chosen One" narrative trope by perfectly balancing satire and genuine affection for the genre made popular by Rowling's series. Those hoping for a Harry Potter sequel and constantly checking Pottermore for updates would do well to put this book on the tops of their to-read piles.

A smart, funny and emotionally engaging tale perfect for any reader who longs for another train ride to Hogwarts. (*Fantasy*. 12 & up)



### DEATH SWORN

Cypess, Leah  
Greenwillow/HarperCollins  
(352 pp.)  
\$17.99 | \$9.99 e-book | Mar. 4, 2014  
978-0-06-222121-6  
978-0-06-222123-0 e-book

A teenage sorceress without magic attempts to solve a murder in a cave full of killers. What could possibly go wrong?

Deemed expendable due to her rapidly dwindling power, Ileni is sent to the Assassins' Caves to teach magic—and secretly to investigate the sudden deaths of the previous tutors dispatched there. Resigned to her task (and likely murder), Ileni despises the assassins and all their works yet is also reluctantly drawn to the unexpected grace and even joy in their lives, as well as their selfless dedication to a greater purpose. Cypess has a talent for bringing freshness and depth to tired tropes; her lyrical prose and understated imagery evoke the claustrophobic caverns and the unbearable stress of ever-present danger. Ileni, with her complex blend of intelligence, arrogance, longing, despair and determination, is an exceptionally vibrant heroine. While her delicately passionate romance with her assassin bodyguard appears uncomfortably close to Stockholm syndrome, it also encapsulates the constant tension between popular perceptions of assassins as awesome and sexy superninjas and as callous, mercenary, bloodthirsty thugs. As her constricted surroundings paradoxically result in a more nuanced appreciation of the wider world, Ileni gradually learns the difference among those things worth killing for, worth dying for and worth living for.

A thoughtful exploration of identity and responsibility wrapped in a twisty, suspenseful mystery and set in a gorgeously realized fantasy world. (*Fantasy/mystery*. 12 & up)



### JESUS JACKSON

Daley, James Ryan  
Poisoned Pen (278 pp.)  
\$10.95 paper | Oct. 14, 2014  
978-1-9293-4506-9

When high school football hero Ryan Stiles is found dead at the bottom of a ravine, the only person not consumed by grief is his younger brother.

Jonathan has reason to believe his brother's death was no accident. While everyone around him goes through the many stages of grief, Jonathan can only investigate. The book works as parallel mysteries: On one track are the shady details of Ryan's death, and on the other are the religious and spiritual questions brought up by his demise. Jonathan's friend Henry and Ryan's girlfriend, Tristan, help him solve the murder, while the mysterious "Jesus Jackson" helps Jonathan with his theological needs. Daley's use of Jesus as a sounding board for Jonathan's crisis of faith makes for the book's most surreal

★“Dynamic pacing keeps readers on a razor’s edge of suspense.” —*The Bulletin*

★“Her best book yet, a straightforward, old-fashioned swoon-fest.” —*Booklist*

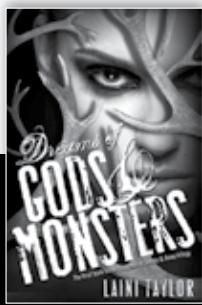
★“From the very first page, this beautifully written work of historical fiction is impossible to put down.” —*School Library Journal*

★“Their voices reverberate with honesty, vulnerability, and deep emotions and will leave a lasting impression on readers.” —*Publishers Weekly*

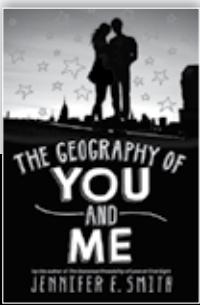
★“This beautifully strange, entirely memorable book will stay with readers.”

—*School Library Journal*

★“Satisfyingly intricate.” —*Publishers Weekly*  
★“A combination of head and heart.” —*Voices of Youth Advocates*



978-0-316-13407-1



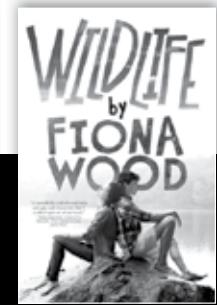
978-0-316-25477-9



978-0-316-22272-3



978-0-316-04471-4



978-0-316-24209-7

## THE BOOKS EVERYONE'S RAVING ABOUT



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## E. LOCKHART KNOWS THAT YOUNG WOMEN SHOULDN'T HAVE TO BE LIKABLE, IN FICTION OR IN REAL LIFE

ONCE UPON A TIME, there was a king who had three beautiful daughters.

The United States may not have a monarch, but we certainly have our own royalty. From the Kennedys to the Rockefellers, privilege in America has its own mythology, involving trips to the Hamptons, elegant black-tie benefits, lacrosse games and degrees from the Ivies.

In her 2014 novel, *We Were Liars*, E. Lockhart explores the dark side of that kind of wealth. The book centers on the Sinclairs, a family of "old-money Democrats" so rich that they have their own private island off the coast of Massachusetts. Every summer, the whole clan congregates on the island, reuniting the titular Liars: the family's three eldest grandchildren—Cady, Johnny and Mirren—and outsider Gat (who is the nephew of Johnny's mother's boyfriend). When Cady's father moves out on the eve of her 15th summer, she's excited to escape to the idyllic Beechwood Island. But the WASPy reserve of her relatives isn't enough to hide the trouble brewing: Her aging grandfather's behavior is increasingly unpredictable, and he seems to enjoy watching his three daughters jockey for the inheritance.

Lockhart grew up in New England, attending prep school and spending summers at her grandparents' house

in Martha's Vineyard. Although her family didn't have anywhere near the kind of money the Sinclairs do, she knew plenty of people who did. "I was always kind of one foot in, one foot out of that world," she says.

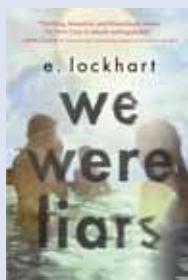
*We Were Liars* draws on some classic texts, including *King Lear* and *Wuthering Heights*, and the novel has touches of both the former's moral reflectiveness and the latter's gothic sensibility. Like Emily

Brontë, Lockhart employs an unreliable narrator—albeit one as frustrated by her inability to get to the truth as the reader is. This is the novel's central tension: As Cady herself admits, the Liars probably deserve their nickname. Cady is nonetheless absolutely compelling, which is what Lockhart thinks is the most important quality in a character. "I don't think young women should be required to be likable," she says. "In fiction or in real life." —Alex Heimach



Photo courtesy Heather Weston

E. Lockhart



and intimate moments. The author argues the necessity of faith regardless of where it is placed, a simple concept that is refreshed when delivered in such an unusual fashion. The book excels, side-stepping holier-than-thou rhetoric and addressing the pain of loss head-on as well as painting a wonderful depiction of a young man coming to terms with how he was raised and how he wants to lead his own life. The mystery element and minor romance are icing on the cake: well-executed and finely tuned, complementing the book's major themes in all the right ways.

Smart and sweet, comforting and moving. (*Fiction. 12-16*)



### VANGO Between Sky and Earth

de Fombelle, Timothée  
Translated by Ardizzone, Sarah  
Candlewick (432 pp.)  
\$17.99 | Oct. 1, 2014  
978-0-7636-7196-9



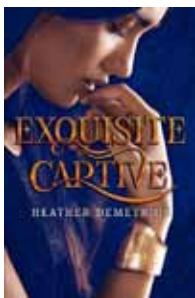
Minutes from joining the priesthood in 1934, Vango, who was found washed ashore on a tiny Italian island as a toddler, must suddenly avoid both arrest and a simultaneous assassination attempt.

Establishing his innocence while on the run across Europe requires untangling his mysterious past. The story's got all the classic elements of swashbuckling adventure tales like *The Count of Monte Cristo*—except pistols replace swords, and the villains include men who would become leaders of the Axis powers. Flashbacks to Vango's childhood demonstrate that his heroism is innate—such as when, at 10, he drops from a cliff into a sinking boat to save a neighbor. But fate doesn't always reward valor, and de Fombelle notes that by saving his neighbor, the youngster "was embarking on a stormy life ahead." But Vango's gentleness and caring earn him loyalty (and potentially romance) from those who help him along his journey. These characters, like Vango, are inherently brave but also shaped by tragedy. Their courage is tested by war and their frustrating inability to counteract the growing power of the Nazi regime. Tension escalates when readers begin to suspect that Vango's story is more closely interwoven with the conflicts of World War II than either he or his supporters realize.

Beautiful writing, intricate plotting, and breathless reveals—plus several plucky female leads—make this a must-read. (*Historical fiction. 12 & up*)

# "For high schools that assign one book for all students to read and discuss: This is the one."

FROM EYES WIDE OPEN



## EXQUISITE CAPTIVE

*Demetrios, Heather*

Balzer + Bray/HarperCollins

(480 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Oct. 7, 2014

978-0-06-231856-5

978-0-06-231858-9 e-book

Series: Dark Caravan Cycle, 1



Nalia lives in a mansion in the Hollywood Hills, a glittering world of parties and fast cars. She can have anything she wants—except her freedom.

Nalia is "just another jinni on the dark caravan" of the slave trade, forced to spend her days granting wishes on behalf of her human master, Malek, in order to advance his wealth and power. Nalia was trafficked in a bottle from her home realm of Arjinna to Earth after a coup wiped out her entire caste. She is the only surviving Ghan Aisouri, a royal knight and the heir to the Arjinnan throne. Arjinna is now under the martial law of the ruthless Ifrit, the lowest and most despised caste, and all that matters to Nalia is returning home to rescue her 8-year-old brother from the brutal Ifrit work camps—but Nalia can only be free when Malek makes his third and final wish. Enter Raif, sexy leader of the revolution in Arjinna, who makes her an offer; Nalia must decide whether she'll break her most sacred vow to save the person she loves most, but she'll pay any price to be her own mistress. The story unfolds at a swift, even pace, and the worldbuilding is superb; the jinn inhabit an intoxicating, richly realized realm of magic, politics, spirituality and history.

Readers will wish they had a jinni to grant them the next book in the series. (*Fantasy. 15 & up*)



## EARTH STAR

*Edwards, Janet*

Pyr/Prometheus Books (277 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$11.99 e-book | Apr. 15, 2014

978-1-61614-897-3

978-1-61614-898-0 e-book



This far-future science-fiction sequel skips tired genre tropes to offer a fresh and thrilling adventure about hazardous archaeological excavation, a mystery in the sky and a potential threat to all of humanity.

It's 2789. People portal between planets in seconds, often many times per day—except the Handicapped, like Jarra, whose immune systems can survive only on Earth. After her recent life-threatening work helping rescue the crew of a crashed spacecraft (*Earth Girl*, 2013), she plans to continue studying prehistory by excavating sites of long-dead cities. But before the next dig begins, Jarra and boyfriend Fian are whisked off to a military base and inexplicably sworn in as officers. An unidentified alien sphere is hovering above Africa. Are the aliens hostile? Is their technology superior or archaic? Jarra's skills, intelligence and courage are both exciting and believable.

She evacuates Earth's Handicapped residents to underground caverns; she solves puzzles about the sphere; she grapples with layers of anti-Handicapped hatefulness; and she becomes a hero again—all due to smarts and hard work, not destiny. Explosions, serious injuries, death and suspense mesh with fizzy romance that includes some sparkling gender-role reversal. Nitty-gritty archaeology details are vivid, and easy slang creates color ("Two-ing" is dating; "amaz" means amazing). Edwards shows that speculative fiction needn't be dystopic, conspiracy-filled or love-triangled to be riveting and satisfying.

Amaz—simply amaz. (*Science fiction. 11-16*)



## EYES WIDE OPEN Going Behind the Environmental Headlines

*Fleischman, Paul*

Candlewick (208 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$9.99 paper | Sep. 23, 2014

978-0-7636-7102-0

978-0-7636-7545-5 paper



With simple, matter-of-fact language, an attractive layout and an abundance of references, this compact guide to addressing climate change is a must-read for millennials and for all who seek solutions to global warming.

Fleischman begins with a personal story about noticing dead bees in his driveway and wondering about the cause. He uses this incident to emphasize the point that history—specifically history related to environmental issues—is happening all around us and is undeniably related to the choices made by both individuals and institutions. He clearly states the book's goal early on: "to give you a foundation under your decisions." The pages that follow—best read slowly and sequentially—represent a crash course in recent and ancient environmental issues, drawing from history, economics, psychology and sociology to pursue the stated goal. Readers are offered advice on how to analyze and interpret what they hear in person and discover through the media. There is a laudable restraint; even as the text relentlessly shows how human beings have created climate change, sources are also given to read "the most respected" divergent views. Despite its unflinching presentation of facts about myriad environmental concerns, the book manages to end on a note of hope for a new generation of activists.

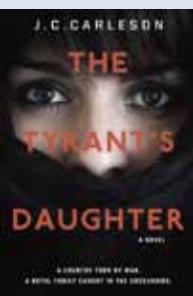
For high schools that assign one book for all students to read and discuss: This is the one. (source notes, bibliography, suggested resources, glossary, acknowledgements, image credits, index, website) (*Nonfiction. 14-18*)

# THE LITTLE, HUMAN DETAILS OF A MODERN WAR

FORMER UNDERCOVER CIA officer-turned-author J.C. Carleson admits she's probably a publicist's nightmare: no Twitter or Facebook account—and she doesn't blog. "Old habits die hard," she explains. "I'm used to being in the shadows; this is new for me. I still have a hard time saying 'CIA'—my tongue catches on it!"

Now that her third book, *The Tyrant's Daughter*, received stellar reviews when it was published earlier this year (Kirkus' starred review calls it "smart, relevant, required reading"), Carleson may need to get comfortable in the limelight. And though she doesn't intend to talk about her CIA background at book signings any time soon, Carleson did draw on her experiences working abroad on the front lines of international conflicts when she created her teen character Laila, whose family is forced from an unnamed war-torn Middle Eastern country into uneasy exile in the U.S. when her ruling father is assassinated in a coup. Adjusting to an altered life with new rules and choices on everything from food to friendship, the previously sheltered Laila struggles to come to terms with information about her father's brutal reign. She soon finds herself in the middle of a conspiracy involving CIA operatives and rebel factions.

By telling Laila's story—that of a teen living on the periphery of war—Carleson personalizes history, offering young readers a vivid glimpse of what might otherwise be only a distant headline. Many in the young-adult audience lack a personal connection to contemporary wars. "Unless you have a parent who's been deployed, that personal connection...for this generation, war is a far-away concept." Laila's story invites readers to consider the daily impact of war: "How do you manage without a fridge when the power's out for three months?...These are the things that affect you on a daily basis. American teens are fortunate to be removed from war's ugly realities. That's why I wanted to tell the story in little details. The small details you most need to confront when living on the edges of a war."

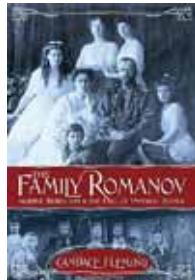


*J.C. Carlson*  
Photo courtesy Margaret Stepien

—Jessie Gpearson



for three months?...These are the things that affect you on a daily basis. American teens are fortunate to be removed from war's ugly realities. That's why I wanted to tell the story in little details. The small details you most need to confront when living on the edges of a war."



## THE FAMILY ROMANOV *Murder, Rebellion, and the Fall of Imperial Russia*

Fleming, Candace  
Schwartz & Wade/Random (304 pp.)  
\$18.99 | \$10.99 e-book | \$21.99 PLB  
Jul. 8, 2014  
978-0-375-86782-8  
978-0-375-89864-8 e-book  
978-0-375-96782-5 PLB



Fleming examines the family at the center of two of the early 20th century's defining events.

It's an astounding and complex story, and Fleming lays it neatly out for readers unfamiliar with the context. Czar Nicholas II was ill-prepared in experience and temperament to step into his legendary father's footsteps. Nicholas' beloved wife (and granddaughter of Queen Victoria), Alexandra, was socially insecure, becoming increasingly so as she gave birth to four daughters in a country that required a male heir. When Alexei was born with hemophilia, the desperate monarchs hid his condition and turned to the disruptive, self-proclaimed holy man Rasputin. Excerpts from contemporary accounts make it clear how years of oppression and deprivation made the population ripe for revolutionary fervor, while a costly war took its toll on a poorly trained and ill-equipped military. The secretive deaths and burials of the Romanovs fed rumors and speculation for decades until modern technology and new information solved the mysteries. Award-winning author Fleming crafts an exciting narrative from this complicated history and its intriguing personalities. It is full of rich details about the Romanovs, insights into figures such as Vladimir Lenin and firsthand accounts from ordinary Russians affected by the tumultuous events. A variety of photographs adds a solid visual dimension, while the meticulous research supports but never upstages the tale.

A remarkable human story, told with clarity and confidence. (bibliography, Web resources, source notes, picture credits, index) (Nonfiction, 12 & up)



## THE CARNIVAL AT BRAY

Foley, Jessie Ann  
Elephant Rock Books (240 pp.)  
\$12.95 paper | Oct. 1, 2014  
978-0-9895155-9-7



In 1993, 16 year-old Maggie and her family move from Chicago to small-town Ireland with the latest of her mother's romantic partners.

Moving to Bray, Maggie leaves behind warm, practical Nanny Ei and beloved Uncle Kevin, a 26-year-old who plays in a band, sneaks her into grunge rock concerts and makes himself responsible for Maggie's musical education. Arriving in Ireland, Maggie finds that she's no better at fitting in with the girls of St. Brigid's than she had been

# "A sparkling, timely tour of the complicated intersection where life meets art."

FROM THE VIGILANTE POETS OF SELWYN ACADEMY

at her old school. Instead, she forms a loose web of connections with local figures: Dan Sean, a Bray legend at 99, whose home becomes a refuge for Maggie in times of family conflict; Áine, the bookish classmate with whom Maggie reluctantly goes on double dates; and Eoin, the gentle boy with whom Maggie falls in love. The narrative subtly and carefully interweaves peer and family drama—much of it involving troubled Uncle Kevin—with the highs and lows of the grunge music scene, from the transformative glory of a Nirvana concert to the outpouring of grief around the death of Kurt Cobain. Every character, every place comes alive with crisp, precise detail: Maggie's heartbroken mother "howling along in an off-key soprano" to Joni Mitchell's *Blue*, Dan Sean welcoming Maggie with a Cossack's hat and a hefty glass of port.

**Powerfully evocative.** (*Historical fiction. 14 & up*)



## TWO GIRLS STARING AT THE CEILING

Frank, Lucy

Schwartz & Wade/Random (272 pp.)  
\$16.99 | \$10.99 e-book | \$19.99 PLB  
Aug. 5, 2014  
978-0-307-97974-2  
978-0-307-97976-6 e-book  
978-0-307-97975-9 PLB

Using innovative page design, Frank crafts an unflinching look at illness.

In the emergency room at 4 a.m., Chess is whisked into invasive medical testing—a colonoscopy—and then into a hospital room. She's had severe gastrointestinal symptoms before, but this is her first diagnosis: the chronic, autoimmune disorder Crohn's, an inflammatory bowel disease. Her roommate, Shannon, has Crohn's, too. Their conversations—acerbic, worried, snippy—progress down each page in fast-reading columns of verse. When the curtain between their beds is closed, a vertical line appears between Chess' text column and Shannon's, emphasizing the room's physicality and restriction. A doctor calls Crohn's "tough and / unpredictable"; Chess finds it disgusting ("gross green bubbles / glub up from my insides, / slip down the tube"), painful (her insides "burn") and humiliating—especially the mortifying incident that sent her to the emergency room. Chess laughs until she cries, and then "the rage flows, / shocking and unstoppable / as shit." Her future holds prescriptions, side effects, food restrictions, flare-ups—and remissions. Frank's portrayal of chronic, mostly invisible sickness is spot-on. Illness isn't metaphor, it isn't a consequence, it isn't a literary vehicle—it's a precarious and uprooting fact of life, inconvenient and enraging, but not the end of the world.

**Riveting, humanizing and real.** (*Verse fiction. 13-17*)



## A CREATURE OF MOONLIGHT

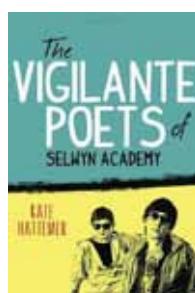
Hahn, Rebecca

HMH Books (320 pp.)  
\$17.99 | May 6, 2014  
978-0-544-10935-3

A dreamlike, poetic fantasy bildungsroman explores the power of choice and the meaning of home.

Marni has lived 16 years in a hut near the magic-haunted woods, growing flowers for the nobility with her grandfather. But Gramps was once the king—before his daughter ran away to the woods only to return with a baby rumored to be "the dragon's daughter," before Gramps gave up everything to protect Marni from her murderous uncle. Now Gramps is gone, and the king's court has noticed that his only heir is an unmarried girl...and the woods are invading the kingdom, calling Marni to return. A fully satisfying fairy tale, this can also be read as an elegant metaphor for adolescence, as Marni is tempted in turn by obscurity, power, vengeance, romance and (most seductive) the freedom of eternal childhood. Her vivid narration is rustic and even coarse at times. She is bitterly resentful of her unjust treatment but also aching with loneliness and lyrically passionate about the beauty of nature and magic alike, and she is always perceptive, acute and honest. Torn between human and dragon, Marni (unlike too many otherwise "strong" teen heroines) fiercely maintains her own agency. Thoughtful readers will embrace the ambiguous conclusion and appreciate the triumph of Marni's commitment to keeping her possibilities open.

**Deliberate at first, Hahn's debut is cumulatively stunning.** (*Fantasy. 12 & up*)



## THE VIGILANTE POETS OF SELWYN ACADEMY

Hattemer, Kate

Knopf (336 pp.)  
\$16.99 | \$10.99 e-book | \$19.99 PLB  
Apr. 8, 2014  
978-0-385-75378-4  
978-0-385-75380-7 e-book  
978-0-385-75379-1 PLB

Blending Ezra Pound, rhetoric and reality TV, this hilarious, subversive debut about a cadre of friends at an arts high school is a treat from cover to cover.

In seventh grade, popular, good-looking Luke rescued Ethan, Jackson and Elizabeth from misfit nerd-dom. Four years later, Luke still leads while Narrator Ethan is cheerfully resigned to a spot in the "Untalented caste" at Selwyn Academy. Disturbing the status quo, the school's chosen to host a new reality TV show, a student talent competition with a \$100,000 scholarship prize and a familiar format: interviews, clichéd romances and rivalries, and two smarmy hosts. The obsequious vice principal



# ON A MISSION TO DE-SANITIZE CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

AT THE BEGINNING OF *HEAP HOUSE*, the first book in Edward Carey's inspired Iremonger trilogy, Aunt Rosamund's brass door handle has gone missing. Her family, a sort of refuse-based baronage inhabiting a slipshod mansion on the undulating trash heaps of greater Victorian London, is properly scandalized, as the handle is of particular value.

"When each new Iremonger was born it was a family custom for them to be given something, a special object picked out by Grandmother. The Iremongers always judged an Iremonger by how he looked after his certain object, his birth object as they were called.

We were to keep them with us at all times. Each was different," Carey writes.

"One of the joys of children's literature is writing about magic, that sort of thrill of actually having powers," says Carey, a British writer and illustrator currently living in Austin, Texas, who is married to writer Elizabeth McCracken. His exquisitely gloomy portraits of the Iremonger family enliven *Heap House*, which began with a sketch of the boy who would become Clod.

"I was just doodling one day, and this rather miserable, bigheaded child with very dark circles under his eyes, a bow tie that didn't seem to fit him and a collar that's too big, he was looking at me in a rather pathetic way," Carey

recalls. "I say, Who might you be?" he remembers thinking as his creation emerged. That Clod's frailty belies special gifts makes him all the more intriguing. "I wanted for him to have powers he didn't know what to do with," he says.

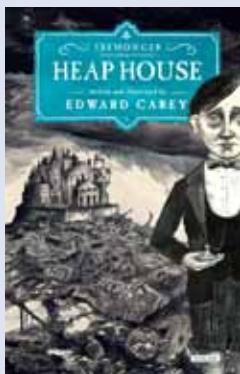
While *Heap House* is Carey's first YA novel, he's well-versed in the classics. He teaches a course on fairy tales to MFA candidates at the Michener Center for Writers and considers the most gruesome of the Brothers Grimm "necessary stories." "Nowadays they're seen as too terrifying, but I think too much of a sanitizing of children's literature is a dangerous thing—a very dulling thing," he says.

—Megan Labrise



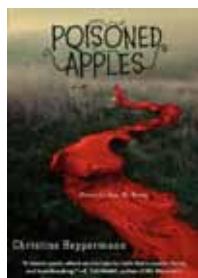
Photo courtesy Tom Langdon

Edward Carey



and most students are thrilled, but *For Art's Sake* feels like an insult to Ethan and friends. Luke, the most offended, leads a counterattack, writing guerilla poetry inspired by Pound's *Cantos* that ridicules the enterprise, which the conspirators secretly print at school. However, the masterminds behind reality TV are several steps ahead of them—money and fame are powerful currency, and they know how to use them. Maura, the beautiful, talented ballerina Ethan fancies, has been accepted at Juilliard, but without the scholarship, she can't attend—participating is a no-brainer. Ethan struggles with ethical conundrums (Does Pound's anti-Semitism invalidate his work? Are compromises the price of an arts career?) as he works out his own place in this world and among his friends, especially Elizabeth.

A sparkling, timely tour of the complicated intersection where life meets art. (Fiction. 12 & up)



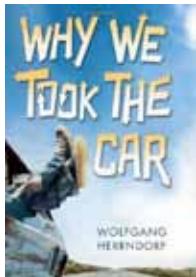
## POISONED APPLES *Poems for You, My Pretty*

Heppermann, Christine  
Greenwillow/HarperCollins (128 pp.)  
\$17.99 | Sep. 23, 2014  
978-0-06-228957-5

A slim volume sharp as knives.

Lacing traditional fairy tales through real-life perils, Heppermann produces short poems with raw pain, scathing commentary and fierce liberation. There's no linear arc; instead, girls buck and fight and hurt. One poem takes the expression "You Go, Girl!" literally, banishing anyone with "wetness, dryness, tightness, looseness, / redness, yellowing, blackheads, whiteheads, the blues." In a structure heartbreakingly inverted from "The Three Little Pigs" (and nodding to "Rumpelstiltskin"), one girl's body goes from "a house of bricks, / point guard on the JV team" to "a house of sticks, / kindling in Converse high-tops," until finally "she's building herself out of straw / as light as the needle swimming in her bathroom scale. / The smaller the number, the closer to gold." She's her own wolf, destroying herself. Sexual repression, molestation and endless beauty judgments bite and sting, causing eating disorders, self-injury, internalization of rules—and rebellion. A hypothetical miller's daughter says, "No, I can't spin that room full of straw into gold. / .... / No, I can't give you the child; / the child will never exist." Gretel's act of eating will literally rescue Hansel; Red Riding Hood reclaims sexual agency, declaring, "If that woodsman shows up now, / I will totally kick his ass."

Full of razors that cut—and razors to cut off shackles: a must. (author's note, index of first lines, index of photographs) (Poetry. 13-17)



### WHY WE TOOK THE CAR

Herrndorf, Wolfgang

Translated by Moyer, Tim

Levine/Scholastic (256 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$17.99 e-book | Jan. 7, 2014

978-0-545-48180-9

978-0-545-58636-8 e-book

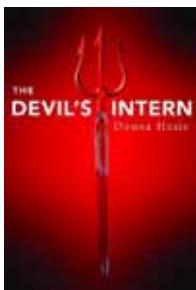


Social misfits hit the Autobahn.

Mike Klingenberg has just finished

another boring, socially awkward year in middle school and is staring down a solitary two-week stint at home, thanks to his mother's latest round of rehab and his father's "business trip" with a suspiciously attractive personal assistant. Just as he's watering the lawn, imagining himself lord of a very small manor in suburban Berlin, class reject Tschick shows up in a "borrowed" old Soviet-era car, and the boys hatch a plan to hit the road. Mike's rich interior life—he meditates on beauty and the meaning of life and spins self-mocking fantasies of himself as a great essayist—hasn't translated well to the flirtatious physical swagger required by eighth grade. Tschick, meanwhile, is a badly dressed Russian immigrant who often shows up to school reeking of alcohol and who is also given to profound leaps of psychological insight. Their road trip (destination: Wallachia, a German euphemism for "the middle of nowhere"; also a region of Romania) is peopled by unexpected, often bizarre, largely benign characters who deepen Mike's appreciation for humanity and life. Each episode in the boys' journey grows more outrageous, leading readers to wonder how far they'll go before coming to a literal screeching (and squealing) halt.

In his first novel translated into English, Herrndorf sits squarely and triumphantly at the intersection of literary tall tale and coming-of-age picaresque. (Fiction. 14-17)



### THE DEVIL'S INTERN

Hosie, Donna

Holiday House (288 pp.)

\$16.95 | \$16.95 e-book | Oct. 1, 2014

978-0-8234-3195-3

978-0-8234-3265-3 e-book



A comic, time-traveling trip to Hell and back.

After four years in Hell, Mitchell thinks he's found a way to escape by going back in time and preventing his death. Inside Hell's vast bureaucracy, he works as an intern to Septimus in the accounting department. It seems that most souls go to Hell rather than Up There, as the damned call Heaven. Hell is becoming seriously overcrowded and has financial issues. When Mitchell learns that Septimus has possession of the Vicisemoter, a pocket-watch-like time-travel device, he unites with almost-girlfriend Medusa and best friends Alfarin, a Viking prince from the year 970, and his girlfriend, Elinor, who died in the Great Fire of London in 1666. The team first lands

in New York and checks into the Plaza. Unsurprisingly, things don't go according to plan, and the group begins to sense that some nasty characters from Hell are after them. Hosie writes with a decidedly wry comic style even as she unfolds her dramatic story. The worst job in Hell, cleaning out the ground-floor toilets, is reserved, for example, for reality TV stars. For all the story's lightness, she doesn't ignore the ever present problem of paradox: What happens if these characters succeed in preventing their own deaths?

Just outstanding fun for those who enjoy snarky comedy and suspense. (Paranormal suspense. 12-18)



### GIRL DETECTIVE

Howell, Simmone

Atheneum (320 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Sep. 2, 2014

978-1-4424-9760-3

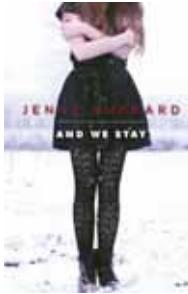
978-1-4424-9762-7 e-book



Skylark Martin lives above her family's vintage vinyl shop that—like its merchandise—is an endangered species in their re-gentrified, forward-looking Melbourne suburb.

In the five years since Mum left to "follow her art" in Japan, Dad's kept the shop going, drinking homebrew and mourning the past (musical and otherwise). Sky, 15, and Gully, 10, aka Agent Seagull Martin, who wears a pig-snout mask 24/7 and views the world as a crime scene waiting to be investigated, hold down the fort. Sky harbors no illusions about their dreary status quo—Dad's drinking, Gully's issues, her own social stasis—but she does have dreams, recently ignited by a new friend, the beautiful, wild and fearless Nancy. Other agents of change include Eve, Dad's old flame, and Luke, the shop's attractive, moody new hire. Drawn, mothlike, to Nancy's flame, Sky's dreams are haunted by Luke's sister, whose similarly wild lifestyle led to tragedy. The family business grounds Sky. Its used records and cassettes, like time capsules, store music that evokes the past's rich emotional complexity for the Martins and their quirky customers, while the eternal present and frantic quest for the next big thing hold no appeal.

Funny, observant, a relentless critic of the world's (and her own) flaws, Sky is original, thoroughly authentic and great company, decorating her astute, irreverent commentary with vivid Aussie references; chasing these down should provide foreign readers with hours of online fun. (Fiction. 14 & up)



## AND WE STAY

*Hubbard, Jenny*

Delacorte (240 pp.)

\$16.99 | \$10.99 e-book | \$19.99 PLB

Jan. 7, 2014

978-0-385-74057-9

978-0-375-89943-0 e-book

978-0-375-98955-1 PLB

A strong, gentle, smart and powerful book about suicide's aftermath.

Emily Beam is no goody-goody. She breaks the rules of the Amherst School for Girls—a boarding school in Massachusetts where her parents have placed her after her boyfriend Paul's suicide and her abortion—when she feels she needs to. But the rules are broken in the service of her agency. Emily is driven to write out her grief and horror (Paul shot himself in front of her in her former school's library) in private poems she models after her inspiration, Emily Dickinson (another one-time Amherst resident). Teasing out strands of the past and the present, Hubbard masterfully twines together a story of one girl's journey to self-identity. In past-tense flashbacks, readers learn the circumstances of Emily and Paul's relationship, while the poems Emily writes in her present-day environment infuse those same circumstances with newly realized perceptions. The narrative switches to present tense when it relates Emily's current life in boarding school, a fresh and unexplored world with emerging possibilities as well as potential pitfalls. The layered story evolves naturally as Emily's creative courage first unravels and then reassembles her understanding of what has happened to her and what part she has played.

As graceful as a feather drifting down, this lyrical story delivers a deep journey of healing on a tragic theme. (Fiction. 14-18)



## LOVE IS THE DRUG

*Johnson, Alaya Dawn*

Levine/Scholastic (352 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$17.99 e-book | Sep. 30, 2014

978-0-545-41781-5

978-0-545-66289-5 e-book

Lost memories, a deadly pandemic flu and the children of D.C.'s elite come together in this sophisticated bio-thriller.

When Emily Bird wakes up in the hospital, the last thing she remembers is attending a party at a senator's home eight days earlier. She's told she had an accident after taking some bad designer drugs, but a threatening visit from a national security contractor whom Bird met at the party suggests the truth isn't so simple. Meanwhile, the entire Beltway is under an oppressive and all-too-believable quarantine and curfew thanks to a virulent new strain of flu. Bird's parents, two prominent black scientists, want her to avoid trouble after her misadventure, but she can't



resist investigating. She finds an unlikely ally in Coffee, a diplomat's son who uses drugs and deals them to others but who also sees strength in Bird that she struggles to see in herself. Johnson, who astounded with her cyberpunk teen debut, *The Summer Prince* (2013), immerses readers in the complexities of Bird's world, especially her fraught relationship with her parents and the intersections of race and class at her elite prep school. The often lyrical third-person, present-tense narration, the compelling romance and the richly developed cast of characters elevate this novel far above more formulaic suspense fare.

Utterly absorbing. (Suspense. 13 & up)



## THE STORY OF OWEN *Dragon Slayer of Trondheim*

*Johnston, E.K.*

Carolrhoda Lab (312 pp.)

\$17.95 | \$12.95 e-book | Mar. 1, 2014

978-1-4677-1066-4

978-1-4677-2406-7 e-book



In an alternate world where humans and dragons battle over fossil fuels, the tale of one slayer and his bard becomes a celebration of friendship, family, community and calling.

Once, every village had its own dragon slayer, but those days are long gone; now, slayers are drafted by governments or sponsored by corporations. Sixteen-year-old Owen Thorskard, scion of a renowned line, wants to help reverse that—starting with the rural Canadian town of Trondheim. While Owen is brave, dedicated and likable, this story really belongs to Siobhan McQuaid, dauntless bard-in-training. In her witty account, Siobhan learns alongside Owen from his heroic aunt and her blacksmith wife, schemes with classmates to create local Dragon Guards and enlists the entire county in a daring scheme to attack the dragons' own turf. Humor, pathos and wry social commentary unite in a cleverly drawn, marvelously diverse world. Refreshingly, the focus is on the pair as friends and partners, not on potential romance; Siobhan places as much emphasis on supporting her allies as extolling Owen's deeds. Smart enough to both avoid unnecessary danger and be scared when appropriate, they prove all the more valiant when tragic sacrifices have to be made.

It may "[take] a village to train a dragon slayer," but it takes an exceptional dragon slayer to deserve a village—and a storyteller—like this one. (Fantasy. 12-18)

**"In a lyrical and hard-hitting exploration of betrayal and healing, the son of a Connecticut socialite comes to terms with his abuse at the hands of a beloved priest."**

FROM THE GOSPEL OF WINTER



### THE GOSPEL OF WINTER

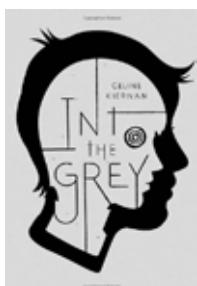
*Kiely, Brendan*  
McElderry (304 pp.)  
\$17.99 | Jan. 21, 2014  
978-1-4424-8489-4



In a lyrical and hard-hitting exploration of betrayal and healing, the son of a Connecticut socialite comes to terms with his abuse at the hands of a beloved priest.

From the moment readers see Aidan escape his mother's Christmas Eve party to snort Adderall in his absent father's opulent office, it is clear that the teen is unhappy. Some of the reasons emerge when Aidan witnesses Father Greg, a priest he greatly admires, in an intimate—and, refreshingly, not graphically described—moment with a younger boy. The first thing Aidan feels in reaction to the sight is hurt that Aidan himself is not the only boy to have received Father Greg's attention. Only over time, and through the cracks of Aidan's denial and attempts to ignore the truth, do readers begin to see other reactions: anger, disgust, the need to re-enact Father Greg's coercions with his peers. The story is set in late 2001 and early 2002, and the news stories of the time—the 9/11 attacks, the capture of John Walker Lindh, and eventually, devastatingly, the Catholic Church abuse scandals—are woven in easily and seamlessly. Each of Aidan's relationships is carefully and subtly drawn, revealed slowly through Aidan's elegant, pained and often circumspect narration.

Often bleak, eventually hopeful and beautifully told.  
(Historical fiction. 14 & up)



### INTO THE GREY

*Kiernan, Celine*  
Candlewick (304 pp.)  
\$16.99 | Aug. 1, 2014  
978-0-7636-7061-0



Irish fantasist Kiernan (*The Poison Throne*, 2010, etc.) explores the dynamics of love and loss.

In 1974, 15-year-old identical twins Pat and Dom move with their family into a drab summer cottage after their senile grandmother inadvertently burns down their house. Nerves still raw from the disruption of their lives and the loss of their home, the twins start to have strange dreams. Then Pat hears Dom talking in the night and sees a goblin-boy peering down from the bunk above him. The harrowing series of events that follows convinces Pat that he's losing his brother: Dom becomes possessed by a 10-year-old boy stuck in a gray fog that's neither this world nor the next, endlessly searching for his twin, a soldier who died in the trenches of World War I. Pat's narration is marked by vivid descriptions and consistently polished, well-paced prose: "Yesterday morning, I'd had a brother. I'd had a

best friend. He'd been fun. He'd been interesting: my slow-burn, articulate counterweight. Now I was lopsided, a boat with one paddle, rowing frantically and spinning in a slow, maddening circle around the space that should have been him." The otherworldly goings-on are grounded in the family lives of the village their Nan grew up in, adding intriguing nuances to the psychological drama.

A gripping, highly original ghost story. (Fantasy. 12 & up)



### GLORY O'BRIEN'S HISTORY OF THE FUTURE

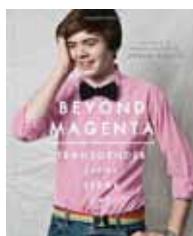
*King, A.S.*  
Little, Brown (320 pp.)  
\$18.00 | Oct. 14, 2014  
978-0-316-22272-3



An indictment of our times with a soupçon of magical realism.

The daughter of a gifted photographer who spun out Sylvia Plath-style, Glory seems bent on following in her mother's footsteps in more ways than one as she finishes high school. But after Glory and her lifelong frenemy and neighbor Ellie make a reckless late-night decision, they are cast headlong into a spell that allows them to see the pasts and the futures of the people who cross their paths, stretching many generations in both directions, and Glory's life changes course. As with King's other protagonists (*Please Ignore Vera Dietz*, 2010; *Reality Boy*, 2013), Glory's narration is simultaneously bitter, prickly, heartbreaking, inwardly witty and utterly familiar, even as the particulars of her predicament are unique. The focus on photography provides both apt metaphors and nimble plot devices as Glory starts writing down her visions in order to warn future Americans about the doom she foresees: a civil war incited by a governmental agenda of misogyny. Glory's chilling visions of the sinister dystopia awaiting the United States are uncomfortably believable in this age of frustrated young men filling "Pickup Artist" forums with misogynistic rhetoric and inexperienced young women filling Tumblr with declarations of "I don't need feminism because...."

With any luck, Glory's notebook will inspire a new wave of activists. (Fiction. 14 & up)



### BEYOND MAGENTA Transgender Teens Speak Out

*Kuklin, Susan*  
*Photos by Kuklin, Susan*  
Candlewick (192 pp.)  
\$22.99 | Feb. 11, 2014  
978-0-7636-5611-9



Kuklin (*No Choirboy*, 2008, etc.) brings her intimate, compassionate and respectful lens to the stories of six transgender young people.

# FORECAST CALLS FOR TRAUMATIC TRUTHS

IT'S A FRIGID DAY WHEN, enveloped in tundra-worthy accoutrements, I sit down with Brendan Kiely at a cozy Greenwich Village cafe. We're meeting to discuss his debut teen novel, *The Gospel of Winter*, which tackles the touchy subject of the Catholic Church's abuse scandals as they pertain to a posh, Connecticut town. *Gospel* centers on 16-year-old Aidan Donovan, a privileged young man living at the height of wealth and social dominance. His disastrous relationships with Adderall, booze and weed are easy to pass off as angst-ridden ennui or despondence from his powerhouse father having recently left him and his mother.

But the root of his depression is eventually revealed as the repeat abuse he suffered at the hands of a popular priest. Kiely's warm, cheerful demeanor isn't the kind one might equate with grave fiction focused on the aftermath of abuse, but his enthusiastic reasoning for breaching the topic dispels any notion of typecasting I might have had.

"I feel like so often when we hear stories about abuse, specifically within the Catholic Church, most often those stories are about families that are underprivileged," says Kiely. "So it was specifically my intention to write about a family that wasn't, that was instead the pinnacle of wealth."

Teens relying on drug-induced escape, priests sloughing off their main principles to avoid scandal and families dis-

integrating with every page turn are individually terrible. In *Gospel*, they are all united as the elements in a single drama. Kiely augments this dramatic weight by iterating the backdrop of raw, post-9/11 fears (the book takes place in 2001-2002). "The inability to deal with conflict in a way other than some kind of subversive violence I think is inherent in terrorism," says Kiely. "And in my mind the

institution [of the church] trying to protect itself perpetuated violence. So I very consciously tried to draw a parallel there. Not that the Catholic Church is 'a bunch of terrorists.' I think that is cheapening the idea of a parallel—but... that violence boils under that surface."

—Gordon West



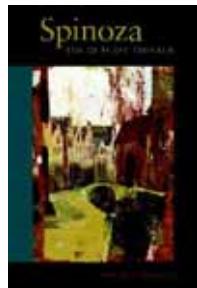
Photo courtesy Gary Joseph Cohen

Brendan Kiely



In verbal and, when the subjects have given permission, visual profiles, readers meet transgender teens with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. They hear from teens who identify fully as female or male, teens who identify as neither male nor female, and one teen who is intersex. Their stories are told largely in the teens' own words, with only a few italicized interpolations to clarify or contextualize a point or to describe a facial expression or inflection readers cannot see or hear. In photographs, readers see Nat, who attends a performing-arts high school in New York City and uses the personal gender pronouns *them* and *they*, carrying their violin on New York's High Line. Christina, who attends Fashion Institute of Technology, is pictured shopping for clothes, proudly displaying a school project and hugging her mother. Images of the young people before their transitions are often included but, appropriately, do not serve as focal points for their chapters. Similarly, sex and genitalia are discussed frankly but are rarely what matters most. The collective portrait that emerges from these narratives and pictures is diverse, complex and occasionally self-contradictory—as any true story should be.

Informative, revealing, powerful and necessary. (author's note, glossary, resource list) (Nonfiction. 12 & up)



## SPINOZA *The Outcast Thinker*

Lehmann, Devra

Namelos (280 pp.)

\$22.95 | \$12.95 paper | \$9.95 e-book

Oct. 1, 2014

978-1-60898-180-9

978-1-60898-181-6 paper

978-1-60898-182-3 e-book

Part biography, part history, part exploration of Spinoza's philosophy: wholly engaging.

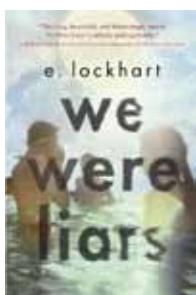
The philosopher Benedict de Spinoza was born Bento Spinoza in 1632—a son of Jewish parents who had fled persecution in Portugal to settle in the relatively safe Amsterdam Jewish community known as the Nation. Raised and educated in the Jewish faith, Spinoza nonetheless began developing alarming (to his Jewish community) ideas about religion, culminating in his *cherem*—excommunication—at 23. Undaunted, he moved to another part of Amsterdam, took up the trade of lens grinding and continued his studies. Influenced by the writings of René Descartes, Spinoza developed a philosophy that promoted rational inquiry and tolerance over blind acceptance of tradition and superstition, especially in the matters of religion and government. Needless to say, religious and government leaders considered his views threatening. Generally reviled during his lifetime, Spinoza's influence on future generations has nonetheless been far-reaching, informing the thoughts of John Locke, Thomas Jefferson and Albert Einstein, among others. Throughout this ambitious and thorough narrative, Lehmann does an outstanding job of illuminating Spinoza's concepts in a clear, concise and logical manner and gives them contextual relevance

**"...Magoon provides an intriguing story that allows readers to learn much about the family, friends and enemies of everyone affected."**

FROM *HOW IT WENT DOWN*

by illuminating the pertinent political and social upheavals of the time. Archival illustrations add depth to the narrative.

**Clarity, accessibility and spot-on relevance to issues facing modern society make this a must-read. (sources, notes, index) (Nonfiction. 13 & up)**



### WE WERE LIARS

*Lockhart, E.*

Delacorte (240 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$10.99 e-book | \$20.99 PLB

May 13, 2014

978-0-385-74126-2

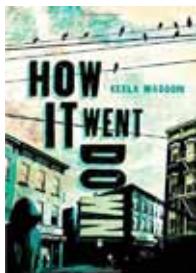
978-0-375-98440-2 e-book

978-0-375-98994-0 PLB

A devastating tale of greed and secrets springs from the summer that tore Cady's life apart.

Cady Sinclair's family uses its inherited wealth to ensure that each successive generation is blond, beautiful and powerful. Reunited each summer by the family patriarch on his private island, his three adult daughters and various grandchildren lead charmed, fairy-tale lives (an idea reinforced by the periodic inclusions of Cady's reworkings of fairy tales to tell the Sinclair family story). But this is no sanitized, modern Disney fairy tale; this is Cinderella with her stepsisters' slashed heels in bloody glass slippers. Cady's fairy-tale retellings are dark, as is the personal tragedy that has led to her examination of the skeletons in the Sinclair castle's closets; its rent turns out to be extracted in personal sacrifices. Brilliantly, Lockhart resists simply crucifying the Sinclairs, which might make the family's foreshadowed tragedy predictable or even satisfying. Instead, she humanizes them (and their painful contradictions) by including nostalgic images that showcase the love shared among Cady, her two cousins closest in age, and Gat, the Heathcliff-esque figure she has always loved. Though increasingly disenchanted with the Sinclair legacy of self-absorption, the four believe family redemption is possible—if they have the courage to act. Their sincere hopes and foolish naivete make the teens' desperate, grand gesture all that much more tragic.

**Riveting, brutal and beautifully told. (Fiction. 14 & up)**



### HOW IT WENT DOWN

*Magoon, Kekla*

Henry Holt (336 pp.)

\$17.99 | Oct. 21, 2014

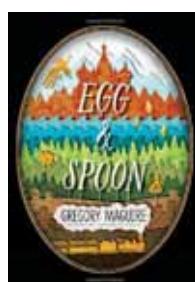
978-0-8050-9869-3

A racially charged shooting reveals the complicated relationships that surround a popular teen and the neighborhood that nurtured and challenged him.

Instead of a gangster after retribution, 16-year-old African-American Tariq Johnson's killer is a white man claiming to have acted in self-defense. Despite their

failure to find a weapon on the black teen, the police release the shooter, rocking the community. On its face, this novel sounds like an easy example of fiction "ripped from the headlines." However, Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe Award-winning writer Magoon provides an intriguing story that allows readers to learn much about the family, friends and enemies of everyone affected. There are young men attempting to navigate the streets and young women, including one who tried in vain to save Tariq, wishing for better lives but with little idea how to change their paths. There are the grief-stricken family and adults who seek to give voice to powerless people but also serve themselves. The episode affects even those who think they have moved away from the community. As each character reflects on Tariq, a complex young man is revealed, one who used his considerable charm to walk the tightrope of life in his neighborhood. Magoon skillfully tells the story in multiple, sometimes conflicting, voices.

**This sobering yet satisfying novel leaves readers to ponder the complex questions it raises. (Fiction. 14 & up)**



### EGG & SPOON

*Maguire, Gregory*

Candlewick (496 pp.)

\$17.99 | Sep. 9, 2014

978-0-7636-7220-1

Two girls switch identities while colliding with Baba Yaga and the Firebird in Czarist Russia.

Elena, a child of rural Russian poverty in the town of Miersk, is desperate to help her ailing mother and to recover her older brothers, Alexei, at work for another family, and Luka, conscripted into the czar's army. Her determined journey finds her life suddenly swapped with that of Ekaterina, also 13, a daughter of privilege. Plot details include a pilgrimage to Saint Petersburg to meet the czar and his godson, Prince Anton, a Fabergé egg, a Firebird's egg, a legacy of matryoshka dolls, and the powerful presence and proclamations of Baba Yaga. Maguire, a veteran writer of reimagined traditional tales for a new world, jauntily explores themes no less profound than hunger and satiety, class and influence, and the sharing of resources in a world wracked by climate change. While not without flaws—a bit protracted, cluttered, overly grand and infused with some metafictive moments that occasionally take the reader out of the story—this is an epic rich with references, aphorisms and advice.

**An ambitious, Scheherazade-ian novel, rather like a nesting-doll set of stories, that succeeds in capturing some of the complexities of both Russia and life itself. (Historical fantasy. 12 & up)**



**"Moracho's descriptions are vivid and arresting... which both grounds the story in familiar details and filigrees it with poetic flourishes."**

FROM ALTHEA AND OLIVER



### DIRTY WINGS

McCarry, Sarah

St. Martin's Griffin (288 pp.)  
\$18.99 | \$9.99 e-book | Jul. 15, 2014  
978-1-250-04938-4  
978-1-250-02710-8 e-book

Punk street kid Cass runs away with sheltered pianist Maia in the lyrical stand-alone prequel to *All Our Pretty Songs* (2013).

The intimate third-person narrative perspective alternates fluidly between the two girls' voices, as well as between "Now"—as the girls take a breathless, speed-fueled road trip down the West Coast—and "Then"—as they become friends and Maia decides to leave her stifling, sterile home. Readers of *All Our Pretty Songs* will know that Cass and Maia retain their close bond as adults, that both have daughters and that Maia, after a tragedy, stays lost in a drugged haze. But these fates are only gently alluded to here. Instead, readers see a skeletal red-eyed Hades figure, grimly recognizable even to readers unfamiliar with Cass and Maia's futures. He haunts Cass' dreams, demanding a terrible bargain and waiting with an eerie patience until Cass is vulnerable enough to give him what he asks. The prose is exquisitely crafted, moving effortlessly from dizzying to heartbreak. Each setting—an exhaustingly filthy punk house, the New York street where Maia's hermitlike father suddenly comes to life, the Mexican beach town where the girls' road trip ends—is vibrantly constructed through careful detail and spare but evocative prose.

A breathtaking companion volume, fully readable on its own and devastating in the context of its predecessor. (*Urban fantasy. 14-18*)



killed one nigger, one Jew, and a white man. I gave them all what I thought they deserved," said the presiding judge later. Mitchell takes the story into the present day, describing how the families of the victims continue to fight for civil rights and how both locals and state officials kept the case alive, simultaneously working toward legal and emotional resolution. He leaves open the question whether now "the killing of a black mother's son is as important as the killing of a white mother's son"—but the country is getting closer to that goal. The book includes a map, endnotes, bibliographic essay, bibliography and index.

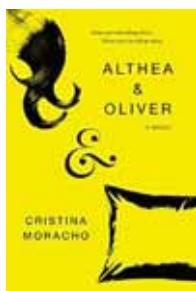
**Essential.** (*Nonfiction. 12-16*)



### ALTHEA AND OLIVER

Moracho, Cristina

Viking (384 pp.)  
\$17.99 | Oct. 9, 2014  
978-0-670-78539-1



This ain't no fairy tale: This raw coming-of-age novel captures the listless wanderings of teens at loose ends.

Althea is always waiting for Oliver to wake up. Plagued by a mysterious affliction that renders him nearly comatose for weeks at a time, Oliver's increasingly unpredictable absences test his lifelong friendship with Althea at precisely the moment that the mounting sexual tension between them reaches the limits of plausible deniability. After a particularly intense bout causes him to sleep through the summer before their senior year, he wakes to find that life has gone on both with and without him, with startling consequences. At turns gritty and gooey, Oliver and Althea's evolving relationship unfolds in a warts-and-all narration that alternates between the two, deftly capturing the purgatorial crossroads between youth and adulthood. Moracho's descriptions are vivid and arresting—a potent cocktail of speed and Southern Comfort "unbutton[s] [Althea's] diffidence like a blouse and cast[s] it aside" at a punk-rock concert—which both grounds the story in familiar details and filigrees it with poetic flourishes. There is rich potential for crossover appeal here; while Althea and Oliver's fumbling progress toward maturity will resonate with teens currently in the angst-filled trenches, the characters' worldly-wise perspectives on their own histrionics will give adult readers reason to nod and sigh in appreciative recognition: Growing up is a messy business.

**Mesmerizing.** (*Fiction. 14 & up*)



### THE FREEDOM SUMMER MURDERS

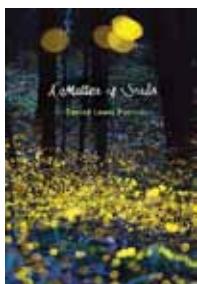
Mitchell, Don

Scholastic (256 pp.)  
\$18.99 | Apr. 29, 2014  
978-0-545-47725-3



A 50th-anniversary examination of the Mississippi murders of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner and their aftermath.

An introduction describes the legally entrenched racism of Mississippi and the inception of the Freedom Summer campaign. Following this, Mitchell drops readers right in with the events that led up to the murder of the three young men, evoking the hostility and fear that covered Neshoba County like a blanket. He pulls back to sketch the victims' biographies in separate chapters, then takes readers through the investigation and the steps toward the 1967 trial that infamously failed to deliver justice. That account alone, illustrated with ample archival photographs and memorabilia, makes riveting reading. He clearly states the legal intricacies and thoroughly incorporates the players' own voices, with often breathtaking effect: "They



## A MATTER OF SOULS

*Patrick, Denise Lewis*

Carolrhoda Lab (192 pp.)

\$16.95 | \$12.95 e-book | Apr. 1, 2014

978-0-7613-9280-4

978-1-4677-2402-9 e-book

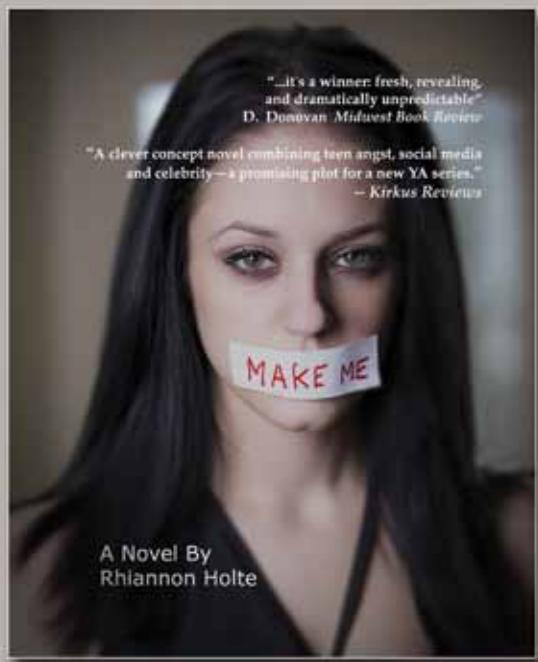


Eight short stories with long memory cut to the quick—all the more as they could be true.

Patrick's tales from the distant and not-so-distant past shed fresh light on interracial and intraracial conflicts that shape and often distort the realities of African-Americans. The youthful characters possess passion and purpose, even if they remain misguided or too proud to live safely within their historically situated habitats. In one story, "Colorstruck," Hazel absorbs everything Miss Clotille, her light-skinned, middle-class Negro employer, has taught her: how to say etiquette instead of manners and teal and magenta instead of green and purple, and to wear shoes in

public. Living in the shadow of Clotille and her five fair-skinned sisters, Hazel believes that blackness will impede her upward social mobility. She loses her job and nearly loses her life by placing her faith in "Beauty Queen Complexion Clarifier...guaranteed to brighten, lighten and heighten your natural beauty!" As the visage of the "ideal Colored woman" floats through this tale, it illuminates the multifaceted sources of self-hatred and enmity within black families around skin color. The plots and characters change from one story to the next, but each one artfully tells a poignant truth without flinching.

Shocking, informative and powerful, this volume offers spectacular literary snapshots of black history and culture. (*Short stories. 12-18*)



A Novel By  
Rhiannon Holte

ISBN#: 978-1629010373

# MAKE ME

by Rhiannon Holte

Anya has millions of fans. They all want a piece of her.  
What happens if the haters win?

"...it's a winner: fresh, unusual, revealing, and dramatically unpredictable. Just what is needed for mature teens looking for something contemporary, web-supported, and thoroughly unpredictable and engrossing."

—D. Donovan, Senior eBook Reviewer, Midwest Book Review

"A clever concept novel combining teen angst, social media and celebrity—a promising plot for a new YA series." —Kirkus Reviews

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Available at Baker and Taylor (978-1500548827) and Amazon (978-0578144085)  
Download the eBook for FREE from Dec. 8-10 at Amazon [www.tinyurl.com/makemebook](http://www.tinyurl.com/makemebook)

Readers can access a mock website with bios, videos, and pictures of the characters at [www.makemeover.us](http://www.makemeover.us)

## WITH THE FAMILY ROMANOV, CANDACE FLEMING LEAVES AMERICAN HISTORY BEHIND

THOUGH HER PICTURE-BOOK and fiction *oeuvres* are extensive and varied, Candace Fleming has made a name for herself in the world of long-form nonfiction with her works of American history. Such titles as *Our Eleanor*, *The Great and Only Barnum* and *Ben Franklin's Almanac* have become fixtures, and in this context, *The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion, and the Fall of Imperial Russia* is quite a departure.

When I asked Fleming what brought about her shift in focus, she traced it to school visits she's made all over the globe. After presenting on the Lincolns or Eleanor Roosevelt, she found herself answering questions about Anastasia from curious students. Realizing this curiosity was likely prompted by the Disney film about the doomed grand duchess, Fleming decided this book would be her answer to those "seekers of truth [who] recognized there was" something underneath "that terrible, ridiculous" storyline that Disney presented.

Having found her focus, Fleming then had to wrestle one of the most complicated stories of the 20th century into shape for readers who might be bringing little more than their familiarity with Disney's version of Anastasia's story to the book. Her primary-source research was "both a dream and a nightmare," she says.

Many of the Russian nobles who wrote about the era were biased, of course, forcing Fleming to take their accounts with "a little grain of salt." In addition to this, most of them wrote in Russian and then fled to France, so she was often working with different layers of translation and found herself sometimes choosing one translation for one purpose and a different one for another, depending on her narrative needs. ("I felt bad for her," Fleming says of her copy editor, who had to ensure that this thicket of citations was consistent.)

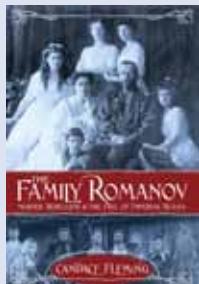
This brings Fleming back to her protagonists, the Romanovs. She often felt that she couldn't really get to know many of her supporting characters, because she was reading a translation of a translation, "but...those really are the Romanovs' voices, because they wrote to each other in English. That made a world of difference for me, because I really, really could hear them."

—Vicky Smith



Photo courtesy Michael Lionstar

Candace Fleming



Dutch survivors of the Holocaust remember their years as hidden children.



### TOMBOY A Graphic Memoir

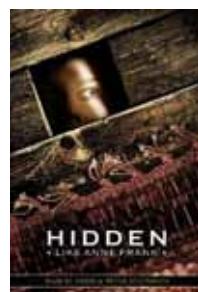
Prince, Liz  
Illus. by Prince, Liz  
Zest Books (256 pp.)  
\$15.99 paper | Sep. 2, 2014  
978-1-936976-55-3



Prince explores what it means to be a tomboy in a magnificently evocative graphic memoir.

From the age of 2, Liz knows she hates dresses. As a child, she wears boys clothes and plays with boys. However, as she enters her teen years, things change. Still wishing to dress like a boy and disdainful of all things girly—including the inevitable biology of puberty—she stays true to herself and her identity, but not without struggling to fit into a teenage society that neatly compartmentalizes how boys and girls should act. Liz's troubles are magnified as she navigates the ways of the heart, falling for boys who often pass her over for girls who are more feminine. As she stumbles and bumbles her way to friends who will accept her, she pulls readers along that oh-so-tough and bumpy road of adolescence. Simple, line-based art provides a perfect complement to her keen narration, giving this an indie, intimate feel and leaving readers feeling like they really know her. Liz's story, captured with wry humor and a deft, visceral eye, is a must-read for fans who fell for Raina Telgemeier's work in middle school.

Spectacular; a book to make anyone think seriously about society's preordained gender roles (Graphic memoir. 14 & up)



### HIDDEN LIKE ANNE FRANK 14 True Stories of Survival

Prins, Marcel; Steenhuis, Peter Henk  
Translated by Watkinson, Laura Levine/Scholastic (240 pp.)  
\$16.99 | \$16.99 e-book | Mar. 25, 2014  
978-0-545-54362-0  
978-0-545-54363-7 e-book



Dutch survivors of the Holocaust remember their years as hidden children.

During Hitler's reign of terror, paths to survival for Jews were few and involved secrecy, danger, vigilance, and the kindness and bravery of strangers. Fourteen men and women recall their experiences with amazing clarity, detail and honesty. There are several commonalities in the accounts. Most began their ordeal at very young ages and had to take on heavy responsibilities and new identities, enduring frequent moves, incidents of near discovery, and unending fear and uncertainty. Some found compassion and love among their rescuers, and others were treated callously by sponsors who accepted them only for the stipend that the resistance organizations paid. After the war,

# “Reef offers a balanced and clear-eyed examination of this powerful relationship....”

FROM *FRIDA & DIEGO*

most of them found that nearly all their family members had been killed, relationships with surviving parents were awkward, their homes had been given to other people, and postwar authorities were slow to help them resettle. The accounts are told in a matter-of-fact tone, with no attempt at sentimentality or self-pity. Photos of the survivors before the war and of some of their temporary homes and families accompany the text, and photos as they are now are shown at the end. Each memoir is poignant and heartrending on its own, and the compilation gives the reader a stunning sense of the horror of the Holocaust.

**Terrifying, haunting and powerful. (foreword, glossary) (Collective memoir. 12 & up)**



## GABI, A GIRL IN PIECES

Quintero, Isabel

Cinco Puntos (378 pp.)

\$17.95 | \$11.95 paper | Sep. 1, 2014

978-1-935955-94-8

978-1-935955-95-5 paper



Struggles with body image, teen pregnancy, drug addiction, rape, coming out, first love and death are all experiences that touch Gabi's life in some way during her senior year, and she processes her raw and honest feelings in her journal as these events unfold.

Gabi's family life is unbalanced. Her father is a drug addict who comes in and out of her life sporadically. Her mother tries desperately to keep her tethered to the values of her traditional Mexican heritage. Gabi's weight, her desire to go away to college and her blossoming sexuality are all at odds with what she feels are expected from her as a young Mexican-American woman. The teen is deeply bonded with her two best friends, Cindy and Sebastian, who each struggle themselves with the tension between sexuality and culture. Through poetry, Gabi finds her voice and develops the confidence to be true to herself. With this first novel, Quintero excels at presenting a life that is simultaneously messy and hopeful. Readers won't soon forget Gabi, a young woman coming into her own in the face of intense pressure from her family, culture and society to fit someone else's idea of what it means to be a "good" girl.

**A fresh, authentic and honest exploration of contemporary Latina identity. (Fiction. 14 & up)**



## FRIDA & DIEGO Art, Love, Life

Reef, Catherine

Clarion (176 pp.)

\$18.99 | Aug. 26, 2014

978-0-547-82184-9



The intertwined creative and personal lives of two trailblazing artists whose lifestyles were as avant-garde as their work.

The creative and personal lives of Mexican artists Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera were dramatically linked from the time they met. They initially bonded over Frida's budding attempts at painting, but they soon fell in love. Frida's life was complicated by injuries she carried from a serious streetcar accident that doctors had not expected her to survive. Diego was a complex man, devoted to his art and communist politics while unwilling to remain faithful to Frida. Their tumultuous relationship and her broken body were both important influences on Kahlo's deeply personal work, while Rivera's extensive murals and other works reflected his politics and love of the Mexican people. Reef offers a balanced and clear-eyed examination of this powerful relationship, contextualizing it against the backdrop of national politics in Mexico and international change ushered in by the Great Depression and World War II. The account also cogently reveals how these shifts affected the artistic world as well. The clear narrative deftly handles complex political and artistic ideas and sheds light on how the couple's unusual connection enhanced and occasionally detracted from their work. The many photographs and examples of the artists' work neatly complement the text.

**Compelling reading for art lovers. (timeline, source notes, bibliography; index, not seen) (Nonfiction. 12-16)**



## JACKABY

Ritter, William

Algonquin (288 pp.)

\$16.95 | Sep. 16, 2014

978-1-61620-353-5



A Sherlock Holmes-style adventure featuring the egotistical and eccentric R.F. Jackaby and his bewildered but invaluable assistant, Abigail Rook.

Inspired by her father's paleontological expeditions and frustrated by her mother's expectations of femininity, Abigail arrives in the New England city of New Fiddleham with a suitcase of inappropriate attire and a need for money. She finds employment with the oddball supernatural investigator Jackaby, whose previous assistants have met unfortunate or fowl ends (literally). Aiding Jackaby, flirting with the secretive Detective Charlie Cane, and trying to avoid the wrath of Chief Inspector Marlowe and Commissioner Swift, Abigail discovers that the world is stranger and more dangerous than she ever imagined. Although Abigail is not a seer like Jackaby, able to pierce the glamour of New Fiddleham's fairy-tale and folklore inhabitants, she learns that to "see the ordinary is extraordinary indeed." Abigail's attention to the everyday serves as a foil to Jackaby's paranormal perception and makes her a refreshingly realistic and agreeable heroine. Secondary characters—including Jackaby's house—are equally enchanting and well-drawn. Ritter's debut skillfully blends science with the supernatural and balances whimsy with violence. The smartly paced plot wraps up neatly, but the rich world of this debut demands sequels.

**A magical mystery tour de force with a high body count and a list of unusual suspects. (Paranormal mystery. 12-18)**

“[Sharpe] doesn’t settle for simplistic, one-dimensional characters, giving each flaws and virtues, strengths and weaknesses....”

FROM FAR FROM YOU



### THE WINNER'S CURSE

Rutkoski, Marie  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux  
(368 pp.)  
\$17.99 | Mar. 4, 2014  
978-0-374-38467-8  
Series: Winner's Trilogy, 1



Rich characterization, exquisite world-building and rock-solid storytelling make this a fantasy of unusual intelligence and depth.

Brilliant and wealthy Lady Kestrel seems destined for either an illustrious military career or a magnificent marriage, but all she cares about is her music—a passion her Valorian culture despises, almost as much as they despise the Herrani they have enslaved. After Kestrel pays an outrageous sum for the slave Arin, society has even more to gossip about, particularly when Kestrel betrays her growing attachment to him. But Arin harbors his own deadly secrets, and the price might cost Kestrel everything she holds dear. Precise details and elegant prose make this world fresh and vivid. The intricate and suspenseful plot, filled with politics, intrigue and even graphic violence, features neither heroes nor villains; every character displays a complex mixture of talents, flaws and motives. Kestrel is an especially compelling protagonist, both determined and hesitant, honest and manipulative, ferociously observant and painfully naïve. Her bond with Arin develops slowly and naturally from congruent personalities. As much as it informs their choices, neither can (nor wishes to) elevate an impossible romance over loyalty to friends, family or nation. This integrity keeps them apart right through the heartbreakingly (yet necessary) conclusion—but also kindles a tiny spark of hope for the next volume in the trilogy.

Breathtaking, tragic and true. (*Fantasy. 12-18*)



### SHE IS NOT INVISIBLE

Sedgwick, Marcus  
Roaring Brook (224 pp.)  
\$16.99 | Apr. 22, 2014  
978-1-59643-801-9



A thriller that challenges readers' understanding of the universe.

Laureth's best-selling novelist father, Jack Peak, left for Switzerland to research his latest book, so why did his notebook turn up in New York City?

In this departure from Sedgwick's atmospheric historical fiction and fantasy, the British 16-year-old (named for a shampoo ingredient) suspects foul play. Seizing on her parents' troubled marriage and her mother's trip to visit family, Laureth books a flight to New York. She also takes her younger brother, Benjamin, not just because she's in charge of him, but because she needs him: Laureth is blind. After recovering the notebook, she learns more about her father's latest idea-turned-obsession.

Well-known for his humorous books, Jack Peak experienced a coincidence that changed his life—and writing. Since then, he's been chasing down answers to Carl Jung's theory of synchronicity, more commonly known as coincidence. Snippets of his notebook offer true, fascinating revelations about Albert Einstein, Wolfgang Pauli, Edgar Allan Poe and other scientists and authors involved in exploring coincidence. Now the determined teen uses the notebook (excerpts of which are printed in faux handwriting interspersed throughout the narrative) to search for clues about her missing father. In short, taut chapters, her first-person narration allows readers to experience the intrigue through her abilities and shows her tender relationship with Benjamin.

It's no coincidence that Sedgwick has crafted yet another gripping tale of wonder. (*Thriller. 13 & up*)



### FAR FROM YOU

Sharpe, Tess  
Hyperion (352 pp.)  
\$17.99 | Apr. 8, 2014  
978-1-4231-8462-1



This beautifully realized debut delves into the emotions of a girl recovering from drug addiction and grief, all wrapped up in a solid mystery.

Sophie and Mina have been best friends since second grade. When they were 14, they were involved in a car accident that nearly killed Sophie, who became addicted to OxyContin during her recovery. Sophie has kicked her habit with the help of her bounty-hunter aunt and clings to each day that she stays clean. As the book opens, however, readers learn that Mina has been murdered. Since the murderer planted OxyContin in Sophie's pocket, everyone, including Sophie's mom and the police, believes that the girls were trying to buy drugs. Sophie knows the murderer will go free unless she uncovers a story that Mina was investigating for the local newspaper—but pursuing him will put her in grave danger. Sharpe writes in chapters alternating between scenes from the past and present as she moves the story forward. Within the mystery plot, she focuses mostly on Sophie's battle against drugs and against those who refuse to believe her—and on an emotional secret the two girls shared. She doesn't settle for simplistic, one-dimensional characters, giving each flaws and virtues, strengths and weaknesses, from Sophie's parents to her friends.

An absorbing story full of depth and emotion. (*Mystery. 14-18*)

**GRASSHOPPER JUNGLE**

*Smith, Andrew*  
Dutton (400 pp.)  
\$18.99 | Feb. 11, 2014  
978-0-525-42603-5



A meanderingly funny, weirdly compelling and thoroughly brilliant chronicle of “the end of the world, and shit like that.”

This is not your everyday novel of the apocalypse, though it has the essential elements: a (dead) mad scientist, a fabulous underground bunker, voracious giant praying mantises and gobs of messy violence. As narrated by hapless Polish-Iowan sophomore Austin Szerba, though, the “shit like that” and his love for it all take center stage: his family, including his older brother, whose testicles and one leg are blown off in Afghanistan; his mute, perpetually defecating golden retriever; the dead-end town of Ealing, Iowa; his girlfriend, Shann Collins, whom he desperately wants to have sex with; and most importantly, his gay best friend, Robby Brees, to whom he finds himself as attracted as he is to Shann. His preoccupation with sex is pervasive; the unlikeliest things make Austin horny, and his candor in reporting this is endearing. In a cannily disjointed, Vonnegut-esque narrative, the budding historian weaves his account of the giant-insect apocalypse in and around his personal family history and his own odyssey through the hormonal stew that is adolescence. He doesn’t lie, and he is acutely conscious of the paradox that is history: “You could never get *everything* in a book. / Good books are always about everything.”

**By that measure, then, this is a mighty good book. It is about everything that really matters. Plus voracious giant praying mantises.** (*Science fiction. 14 & up*)

**BLUE LILY, LILY BLUE**

*Stiefvater, Maggie*  
Scholastic (416 pp.)  
\$18.99 | \$18.99 e-book | Oct. 21, 2014  
978-0-545-42496-7  
978-0-545-66290-1 e-book  
Series: Raven Cycle, 3



As the Raven Boys grow closer to their goal of finding the Welsh king Glendower, not surprisingly, problems arise in this third book of a planned four-volume series.

Blue Sargent’s mother has been missing for three months, leaving behind only a cryptic note. She’s gone underground in search of her former lover, Blue’s dad. Her ex-hit man boyfriend is the only person besides Blue who seems concerned. Meanwhile, the Raven Boys—Gansey, Adam and Ronan, with ghostly Noah now struggling to appear corporeal—and Blue find a mysterious cave guarded by an Appalachian mountain man; inside is indeed an ancient Welsh coffin. Despite Adam’s

new understanding that there are three buried sleepers, two to wake, one to leave sleeping, they open the lid, and out pops Gwenllian, the perhaps-not-asleep but long-buried daughter of Glendower. Friend or foe? Oh, and the person who hired the hit man is the boys’ new Latin teacher. Stiefvater weaves these separate threads together with a sure hand until magic seems expected yet never commonplace, always shimmering under the surface. Most credible and moving are the slow maturations of her characters—Adam comes to measure his worth in something other than money; Blue secretly phones Gansey in the night. *If she kisses her true love, he will die.*

**Expect this truly one-of-a-kind series to come to a thundering close.** (*Fantasy. 14 & up*)

**THIS ONE SUMMER**

*Tamaki, Mariko; Tamaki, Jillian*  
Illus. by Tamaki, Jillian  
First Second (320 pp.)  
\$17.99 | \$17.99 paper | May 6, 2014  
978-1-59643-774-6  
978-1-59643-774-6 paper



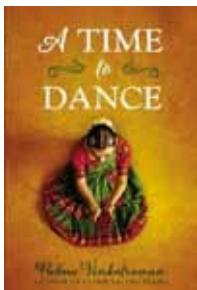
A summer of family drama, secrets and change in a small beach town.

Rose’s family has always vacationed in Awago Beach. It’s “a place where beer grows on trees and everyone can sleep in until eleven,” but this year’s getaway is proving less idyllic than those of the past. Rose’s parents argue constantly, and she is painfully aware of her mother’s unhappiness. Though her friendship with Windy, a younger girl, remains strong, Rose is increasingly curious about the town’s older teens, especially Dunc, a clerk at the general store. Jillian and Mariko Tamaki (*Skim*, 2008) skillfully portray the emotional ups and downs of a girl on the cusp of adolescence in this eloquent graphic novel. Rose waxes nostalgic for past summers even as she rejects some old pursuits as too childlike and mimics the older teens. The realistic dialogue and sensitive first-person narration convey Rose’s naïvete and confusion, and Windy’s comfort in her own skin contrasts with Rose’s uncertainty. Both the text and art highlight small but meaningful incidents as readers gradually learn the truth behind the tension in Rose’s family. Printed in dark blue ink, Jillian Tamaki’s illustrations feature strong, fluid lines, and the detailed backgrounds and stunning two-page spreads throughout the work establish the mood and a compelling sense of place.

**Keenly observed and gorgeously illustrated—a triumph.** (*Graphic novel. 13 & up*)

“Veda’s no disabled saint; awkwardness and jealousy receive spot-on portrayals as she works to incorporate Hinduism and Buddhism, life experience and emotion into her dancing.”

FROM A TIME TO DANCE



### A TIME TO DANCE

*Venkatraman, Padma*

Nancy Paulsen Books (320 pp.)  
\$17.99 | May 1, 2014  
978-0-399-25710-0



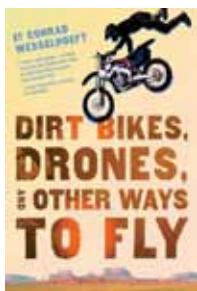
Flowing free verse tells the story of a teenage dancer in Chennai, India, who loses a leg and re-learns how to dance.

As a child, Veda climbs a stepladder in the temple to reach up and trace the dancers' feet carved into granite with her fingertips. Shiva's the god of dance and creator of universes, and a priest teaches Veda to “feel Shiva's feet moving” inside her chest, as her heartbeat. Years later, as a teen, she wins a Bharatanatyam dance competition and relishes the applause. Then a van accident leads to the amputation of her right leg below the knee. Venkatraman weaves together several themes so elegantly that they become one: Veda's bodily exertion, learning to dance with her prosthetic leg; her process of changing her dance technique to be emotional and spiritual as well as physical; and all the rest of Veda's life, including young love, grief, insecurity and a dawning awareness of class issues. The fluid first-person verse uses figurative speech sparingly, so when it appears—“A bucket of gold melting from the sky”—it packs a punch. Veda's no disabled saint; awkwardness and jealousy receive spot-on portrayals as she works to incorporate Hinduism and Buddhism, life experience and emotion into her dancing. When she does, her achievement is about being centered, not receiving accolades.

A beautiful integration of art, religion, compassion and connection. (author's note) (*Verse fiction. 13-17*)

capture, or death, of the world's most notorious terrorist. Both options offer to provide his family with financial resources they direly need. Which, if either, is worth the risk is what Arlo must decide. Readers will worry, laugh and ultimately soar along with Arlo as he finds his way. Nuanced supporting characters and a vivid New Mexico landscape ground Arlo's dilemma, creating a superbly well-balanced narrative.

As complex as life itself, this novel addresses serious topics without taking itself too seriously. (*Fiction. 14-18*)



### DIRT BIKES, DRONES, AND OTHER WAYS TO FLY

*Wesselhoeft, Conrad*

HMH Books (352 pp.)  
\$17.99 | \$17.99 e-book | Apr. 8, 2014  
978-0-544-23269-3  
978-0-544-28965-9 e-book



There is a place where Arlo goes to break free—free from his mother's recent murder, his father's grief, his sister's progressing Huntington's disease. In this place, the Drone Zone, it all falls away and there is just the moment.

Arlo's two mechanisms for reaching the Zone are pulling stunts on his dirt bike and playing “Drone Pilot,” a video game that simulates drone flight and at which he is currently the best in the world. With these tools, Arlo is able to fly, and for his incredible skill with each, he begins to attract attention. A reality TV show that specializes in capturing daredevil stunts wants to pay him to risk his life for entertainment. The military also takes notice, wanting Arlo to work for them secretly, flying drones and gathering reconnaissance that could lead to the

I DECEMBER 2014

# FICTION



These titles earned the Kirkus Star:

<b>SHE WEEPS EACH TIME YOU'RE BORN</b> by Quan Barry .....	76
<b>THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT YOU TO DO</b> by Charles Baxter.....	76
<b>ACT OF GOD</b> by Jill Ciment .....	78
<b>THE MARAUDERS</b> by Tom Cooper .....	79
<b>LIES, FIRST PERSON</b> by Gail Hareven; trans. by Dalya Bilu.....	83
<b>SINGLE, CAREFREE, MELLOW</b> by Katherine Heiny.....	84
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<b>THE WONDERS</b> by Paddy O'Reilly .....	91
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<b>HUSH HUSH</b> by Laura Lippman .....	104



## MARK OF THE BEAST

Anekwe, Adolphus A.

Forge (304 pp.)

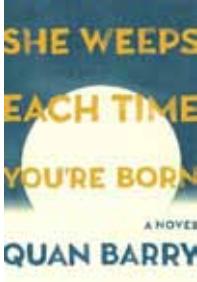
\$25.99 | Jan. 20, 2015

978-0-7653-3368-1

A thriller that tries in vain to marry science and the Bible.

There is a gene for evil, and people who have it are predestined to violence. Parents kill their children to make a fortune off their body parts. A man kills successive wives for nagging and being nosy. "I don't think you have enough time to get me pregnant," carps catty Cathy to her husband. "That was really hitting below the belt," put-upon Alex thinks. Within a page, wifey gets a shovel upside her head and a burial under the barn. A scientist develops an acid designed to dissolve his pesky girlfriend without a trace. But don't blame any of them, because they all have the gene HLA B66, which if you change the B to lowercase and write it just so, looks like 666, which it really is, and voila, the work of the devil. Researchers supposedly start with the theory that such a gene exists, but they really start with the conclusion and run tests to prove it. A credulous public goes gaga, though some doubting fools protest. Dr. Regina Dickerson patiently explains to an interviewer that "there are three sixes in 666." Researchers want to take blood samples of every prisoner in the nation, starting with those on death row, to prove what they've already decided. The tale could use surgery to excise all the hellos, how-are-yous, weather reports and similar verbal baggage. But more importantly, there's no overarching villain but rather a series of evil people who are caught and punished. (One might say the villain is Satan, but he doesn't appear in the book.) Given all these reservations, this probably isn't the worst thriller of the year, but it makes a respectable bid.

Thriller fans comfortable with mixing science and the book of Revelations might enjoy this one, but others will have a devil of a time liking it.



## SHE WEEPS EACH TIME YOU'RE BORN

Barry, Quan  
Pantheon (288 pp.)  
\$24.95 | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-0-307-91177-3



A magical child pulled from her mother's coffin observes and embodies Vietnam's tragic 20th-century history.

Born in Saigon, Barry—an award-winning poet—offers a mesmerizing vista of Vietnam's recent past. Her small cast of characters, several of whom are gifted with surreal abilities, takes us from the rubber plantations of the French colonial era, through the American firebombing campaigns and the genocide in nearby Cambodia to the re-education camps. At the heart of the story is Rabbit, a girl who can hear and communicate with the war dead: "They call to me and they tell me things and I say, I hear you." Mysteriously plucked from her mother's grave, she's raised by a substitute family that includes, intermittently, her father, Tu, a Vietcong soldier, but also a spectrally beautiful woman named Qui whose eternally lactating breasts revive Rabbit when she's drained by contact with the spirit world. After the U.S. withdraws from the war, the group joins the flood of refugees heading south and later becomes boat people on a voyage filled with mysterious events and extreme dangers. Rescued from the ocean, sent to a re-education camp and then released, Rabbit eventually becomes renowned for her ability to uncover and ease the passing of the newly dead, including ethnically cleansed minorities and the victims of massacres that are denied by Hanoi. Rabbit's intuition will endanger her, but her contact with the appalling events of the past cannot be suppressed: "The simple act of someone hearing them, an acknowledgement, and then they can go wherever it is they go."

While Barry's beautiful, transporting novel sometimes verges on the opaque, it pays resonant tribute to the uncounted dead below the surface of a convulsed nation.

## THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT YOU TO DO Stories

Baxter, Charles  
Pantheon (240 pp.)  
\$24.00 | \$11.99 e-book | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-101-87001-3  
978-1-101-87002-0 e-book



The author's sixth collection of short fiction features stories linked by place, character, verbal echo, and a master's hand for foibles and fellowship.

The place is mostly Minneapolis, the repeated phrase is that of the title, with its modest appeal and its larger reminder that no one gets through life without hearing a call or cry for help. A young pediatrician bravely breaks up a mugging. A man

who has been mugged (and whose assailant in another story will need help with his drug addiction) stops a woman from leaping off a bridge. A man gives shelter to his ex-wife after she turns into a bag lady. (The book's last use of the title comes somewhat too pointedly from a Schindler Jew.) Several characters have encounters that suggest nonhuman help is available (a spiritual element also lies in the ten stories named after five virtues and five vices). The pediatrician's wife on their Prague honeymoon hears a crone's prophecy of her pregnancy. The doctor, the book's most frequently recurring figure, spends most of one story talking to the ghost of Alfred Hitchcock on a park bench and then asks his wife to pray for him. Bare storylines can't convey the quickly captivating simple narratives around them or the revealing moments to which Baxter (*Gryphon*, 2011, etc.) brings the reader, like the doctor's exhilaration with the physical violence of beating the muggers. Similarly, Baxter, a published poet, at times pushes his fluid, controlled prose to headier altitudes, as in "high wispy cirrus clouds threading the sky like promissory notes."

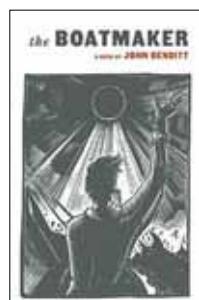
Nearly as organic as a novel, this is more intriguing, more fun in disclosing its connective tissues through tales that stand well on their own.

## THE BOATMAKER

Benditt, John  
Tin House (400 pp.)  
\$15.95 paper | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-1-935639-98-5

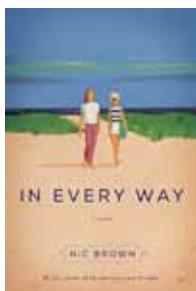
An unnamed man leaves the small island where he was born to explore the strange kingdoms beyond his home.

It has to be said that a novel about growing up, faith, redemption and religion is something of a diversion for Benditt, the former editor of MIT's *Technology Review* and one of the better-known science writers in the U.S. The story is a poetic but aimless metaphor for...something, although the book's spare, fable-esque writing often threatens to surpass the messages it tries to deliver. Our nameless hero, known only by the book's title, is first shown on Small Island, an obscure corner of a larger Christian kingdom where, a thousand years ago, a peasant boy converted the king to Christianity. It's only when the boatmaker leaves the island that his personal journey begins. On a larger island, he struggles with drink, has a strangely combative affair with an innkeeper and falls in with a pair of malcontents named Kravenik and Weiss, better known as Crow and White. After his so-called friends assault and rob him, he moves on to the mainland a changed man. There, he falls under the spell of Father Robert, a charismatic and faintly cultlike priest who believes the boatmaker will be the redeemer for "The New Christ." Father Robert is also determined to undermine the House of Lippsted, a Jewish dynasty whose wealth has earned them the power to undermine the king. Running away once more, the boatmaker becomes a carpenter for the House of Lippsted, where he falls under the spell of one of the family's beautiful daughters. Benditt has a unique voice and obviously has something to say about



religion, history and manhood, but the novel's abstraction and circularity could well make coming along on the boatmaker's journey feel more like a trek than an arc.

**A long, fuzzy journey just to learn we can't go home again.**



### IN EVERY WAY

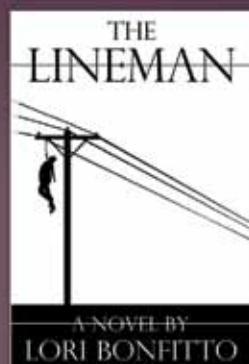
Brown, Nic

Counterpoint (256 pp.)  
\$25.00 | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-1-61902-459-5

A teenage mother disregards the ethics of adoption in Brown's (*Doubles*, 2010, etc.) challenging new novel.

When 19-year-old college student Maria becomes pregnant, the timing couldn't possibly be worse. Her mother, an English professor and Alexander Dumas scholar, is in the final stage of her battle with cancer, and Maria is neglecting school to

serve as her caretaker. The baby's father, Jack, is more concerned with pilfering drugs and reciting Wu Tang Clan lyrics than with the idea of fatherhood. Maria's mother, close to death, finds herself suddenly pro-life, and Maria feels like she has no choice but to give the baby up for adoption, insisting that the records be closed. What her adoption caseworker doesn't know, however, is that the couple Maria chooses to parent her baby is not entirely unknown to her. While flipping through the book of prospective parents, Maria recognizes a couple who lives in Beaufort, North Carolina, where she and her mother visit every summer. After giving birth and spending a week nursing newborn Bonacieux, Maria changes her mind about the adoption, feeling "with absolute certainty that she should keep the child." But having already signed the 60 pages of release forms, she hands the baby over despite her misgivings—and then does everything she can to insert herself into the lives of adoptive parents Philip and Nina, even going so far as to become Bonny's babysitter. What follows is a tricky story about a birth mother who can't extricate herself from her child's life and the unraveling of the family she has chosen for her daughter. While the writing preceding the birth of Bonny is



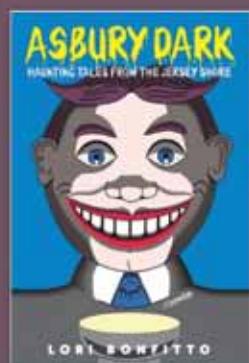
## THE LINEMAN

by Lori Bonfitto

ISBN: 978-1304439468

"A Rollercoaster Ride! I loved this book...It had so many twists and turns you are hooked immediately." - Bailey Perricone, Amazon.com

"Couldn't put it down! ...If you're a fan of James Patterson, you'll absolutely love The Lineman. I can't wait for this author's next book." - Michael, Amazon.com



## ASBURY DARK

by Lori Bonfitto

ISBN: 978-1312486102

"This quirky book amasses a hodgepodge of tales, all delving into the supernatural...the author effectively puts her own stamp on each one...Short stories for readers who like their horror tales diverting and diverse." —Kirkus Reviews

"Get ready to be scared...This is the kind of storytelling that keeps me coming back for more." - Long and Short Reviews

For information about publication or film rights, email [loribonfitto@optimum.net](mailto:loribonfitto@optimum.net) or visit [www.AsburyDark.com](http://www.AsburyDark.com)

emotionally distant and often enamored with its cleverness, the rest of the novel is well worth the wait.

Brown crafts a complicated tale of moral ambiguity about a woman who couldn't say goodbye to her baby after the paperwork was signed.



### BONITA AVENUE

*Buwalda, Peter*

*Translated by Reeder, Jonathan*

Hogarth/Crown (544 pp.)

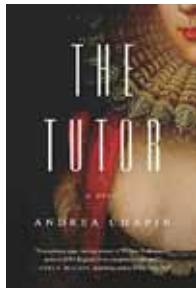
\$26.00 | Jan. 13, 2015

978-0-553-41785-2

A family saga that is variously compelling, trashy and horrific, this debut has rough edges and plausibility problems—not unlike the Stieg Larsson trilogy—and movie written all over it.

Siem Sigerius is a former judo champ whose math skills help him rise to head a Dutch university. While on a business trip, he discovers his beautiful stepdaughter Joni is the main character in a homemade porn website, which she has developed with her partner, Aaron, and turned into a seven-figure enterprise. Into the picture shambles Wilbert, Siem's son from his first marriage, a nasty character whom Siem and Joni perjured into jail six years before the main action begins. Buwalda, a one-time Dutch journalist, shifts points of view and time frames, making frequent allusions to one terrible event while maintaining a patina of familial order, of dinners, dates, vacations. Yet not only do awful revelations and revenge hang over the household, the family is marked across generations by small and large deceits. The jagged structure suggests a film director who went into the editing room with some coke and bourbon and cut his footage with runic abandon. The method works in part to stoke suspense. Siem's surprising fate is referred to laconically on Page 69, one impetus for it starts at 249, and the big blow doesn't arrive until near the end. At the same time, some things stoke disbelief, notably what pushes Siem over the edge and Joni's progress from website floozy to McKinsey intern to submersion in the California skin trade, shedding a husband and child along the way. Buwalda's writing, in translation from Dutch, is a cut above the potboiler this might be with more corpses.

His strength are sustained scenes that will linger in memory after other parts of the brain have given up on fitting together the pieces of this puzzler.



### THE TUTOR

*Chapin, Andrea*

Riverhead (368 pp.)

\$27.95 | Feb. 5, 2015

978-1-59463-254-9

William Shakespeare: poet and playa.

Orphaned as a child and widowed as a young woman, Katharine de L'Isle has rejected every attempt to secure her another husband. She's happy enough on her uncle's estate, largely because she

has free access to his library. But life is precarious for Catholic aristocrats in Elizabeth's England, and the de L'Isle household is thrown into disarray when Sir Edward is forced to flee the country. Katharine's peaceful existence is further unsettled by the arrival of a new schoolmaster. This William Shakespeare clearly knows no Greek, nor much Latin—and neither does he know his place. Katharine finds the man's flirtations both infuriating and exhilarating, and thus, first-time novelist Chapin sets the stage for a smart and charming work of historical fiction. Using blank spaces in Shakespeare's biography and the facts of his *oeuvre*, Chapin makes her heroine co-creator of "Venus and Adonis." Katharine and Will enjoy some truly delightful banter, as well as some intensely sensual moments, but this Shakespeare is, ultimately, a sort of emotional vampire. He requires adoration, and he uses women—*many* women—as raw material for his art. This is an audacious move, but Chapin makes it real, and the scenes in which Katharine defends Will to her doubting lady friends will ring true to any woman who has ever uttered the words, "You just don't understand him!" There's some mystery business involving a murdered priest that Chapin seems to forget about until she wraps it up in a few sentences at the end, but that was never the most interesting thing about this novel anyway, so readers are unlikely to care.

An elegant entertainment and an impressive debut.



### ACT OF GOD

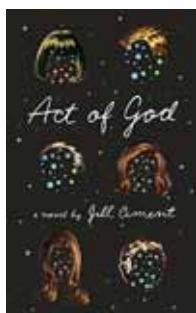
*Ciment, Jill*

Pantheon (192 pp.)

\$24.00 | \$11.99 e-book | Mar. 3, 2015

978-0-307-91170-4

978-0-307-91171-1 e-book



Humanity, warmth and wry humor light up Ciment's (*Heroic Measures*, 2009, etc.) noirish novel about a phosphorescent toxic mold that blooms in a Brooklyn townhouse, circa 2015, and barrels through the lives of two 60-something identical twin sisters and their neighbors, changing everything it touches.

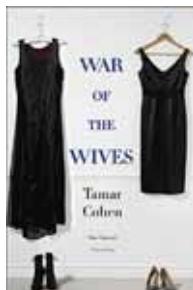
When 64-year-old twins Edith and Kat Glasser find a glowing mushroom growing in a closet in their late mother's rent-controlled apartment, a home they now share after having spent years engaged in very different pursuits, they are united in their alarm. Will the iridescent fungus—which, in mere moments,

# "Rumors of lost pirate treasure in the Gulf of Mexico drive hard men mad in the sweaty, desperate days after the BP oil spill."

FROM THE MARAUDERS

grows from "the size of a newborn's thumb" to that of a giant's digit—infest their beloved mother's archive of letters from her hugely popular syndicated advice column, "Consultations with Dr. Mimi"? After all, Edith, a retired legal librarian, stolid and stable, has arranged to have the letters sent to the Smithsonian the following month, and feckless, free-spirited Kat is compiling her favorites in hopes of getting a book deal "to give the enterprise a little pizzazz." But their calls to their reluctant landlord, famous (or is it infamous?) actress Vida Cebu, go unanswered, and the mysterious mold spreads—and spreads—in time helped along, as well, by the homeless Russian teen who had been living in Vida's closet when it was discovered there. The virulent fungus, not to mention the hazmat team's response, lays waste to buildings, careers, reputations and even lives. But from the wreckage of the past sprouts new hopes and second chances—an opportunity for personal growth, a deeper sense of identity and community, generosity and belonging...and love.

**This absorbing novel about a luminescent fungus affixes itself to your psyche like a spore and quickly spreads to your heart, setting everything in its wake aglow.**



## WAR OF THE WIVES

Cohen, Tamar

Harlequin MIRA (400 pp.)

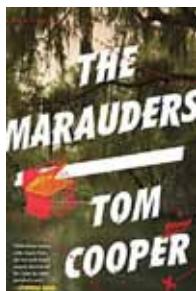
\$14.95 paper | Jan. 27, 2015

978-0-7783-1748-7

A man's secret lives are unveiled at his funeral, and his two shocked and grieving families are left to discover the truth from many years of lies.

Selina Busfield is a prim and superficial woman in her early 50s. With three children and a 28-year marriage to Simon, she seems to have a perfect and affluent life. Lottie Busfield, an aspiring artist in her late 30s, has been married to Simon for 17 years and lives an unconventional and happy life in a tiny apartment with her husband and teenage daughter. Splitting his time between Dubai and London, Simon was able to conceal his deceit by having long stretches of time away from both families built into his work schedule. While Selina and Simon lived in suburban London, Lottie and Simon, for much of their marriage, lived in Dubai. This fragile dual life collapses suddenly when Simon's body is found floating in the Thames. Selina initially responds with disbelief, since as far as she knew, he was supposed to be in Dubai. Lottie's discovery of Simon's death comes secondhand when one of Simon's former colleagues calls to offer his condolences. The story takes off once the two families meet, and the plot is strung together by a series of breathless questions. Did Simon commit suicide or was he murdered? How have his assets been divided? Was he involved with a criminal element? Selina and Lottie struggle through the aftermath of his death and realize that in addition to everything else, they're linked financially as well: Simon has mortgaged Selina's home to pay for Lottie's. The novel is narrated by the two wives, often swapping quite abruptly to see two perspectives on a single event.

While the topic is certainly compelling, Cohen (*The Broken*, 2014, etc.) spends too much time examining convoluted plot threads and not enough time building convincing characters.



## THE MARAUDERS

Cooper, Tom

Crown (304 pp.)

\$26.00 | Feb. 3, 2015

978-0-8041-4056-0

Rumors of lost pirate treasure in the Gulf of Mexico drive hard men mad in the sweaty, desperate days after the BP oil spill.

This is one hell of a debut novel. Cooper combines the rough-hewn but poetic style favored by writers like Charles Williford with the kinds of miscreants so beloved by Elmore Leonard, all operating in the tumultuous modern-day disaster that

## HIGH SEAS DARKNESS

A Brick Morgan Novel



BY BURR B. ANDERSON

"A patriotic thriller that's not for the faint of heart."  
—Kirkus Reviews

ISBN #: paperback, 978-1-4787-3551-4  
ISBN # hardback, 978-1-4787-3593-9

In Anderson's (*The Drummer*, 2012) thriller, a private investigator faces off against radical Islamic terrorists who have targeted a line of cruise ships.

All interested in inquires please contact burrandonson@gmail.com or visit www.burrandersonauthor.com

is New Orleans. Our chief troublemaker is old Gus Lindquist, a one-armed drunk who believes that a hard-to-find island off the coast still holds the buried doubloons of French pirate Jean Lafitte. He hires Wes Trench, the troubled teenage son of a local shrimper, to accompany him on his so-called adventure to find the loot. Unfortunately, the site in Louisiana's Barataria region is also home to a patch of particularly potent weed farmed by Reginald and Victor Toup, two dangerous scumbags who think up stunts like delivering an alligator to Lindquist's bedroom in an attempt to scare him off. Other comic moments come from the efforts of slick BP representative Brady Grimes to convince the hardheaded and suspicious locals to take a paltry, token payment over the massive settlement everyone knows is coming. Lastly, Cooper throws in a pair of wild cards in Nate Cosgrove and John Henry Hanson, unlikely allies who meet on a road crew while serving out their community-service sentences. When Cosgrove and Hanson decide the Toup brothers' ganja is worth ripping off, it all comes boiling over in a conflict not everyone will survive. With crisp, noir-inspired writing and a firmly believable setting, Cooper has written an engaging homage to classic crime writing that still finds things to say about the desperate days we live through now.

**Somewhere, Donald E. Westlake, John D. MacDonald and Elmore Leonard are smiling down on this nasty, funny piece of work.**

### GUYS LIKE ME

*Fabre, Dominique*

*Translated by Curtis, Howard*

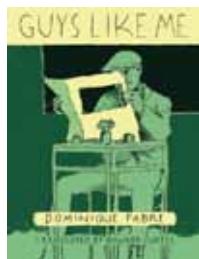
New Vessel Press (200 pp.)

\$15.99 paper | Feb. 10, 2015

978-1-939931-15-3

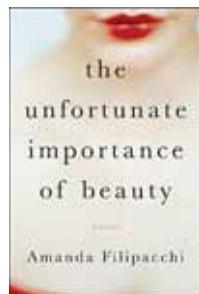
A Parisian reflects on his life in this subdued mood piece from a prolific French author (*The Waitress Was New*, 2008).

They're a dime a dozen, these middle-aged guys, striding purposefully along Paris streets to disguise their lack of purpose. Watch the divorced ones grab a few precious moments with their kids. They have no future, so they return to memories of the past in an endless loop. The unnamed narrator is representative. He's a 54-year-old lifelong Parisian (like the author) with a bitter divorce years behind him. His only child, Benjamin, is now in his 20s. His unspecified office job is a salve; he's an automatic pilot until he retires. A chance encounter with his childhood friend Jean brings back memories. Jean is in worse shape: He has no job, no prospects. But their other childhood friend Marco has shot ahead, making the leap into a happy second marriage while prospering financially. Think of them as The Winner, The Loser and Mr. In-Between. A storyline flickers when they meet for dinner and Marco finds Jean a job, but Jean has a bad attitude and loses it. However, there's hope for our guy after online dating brings him Marie, a nurse. They hit it off, and the discovery that Marie has breast cancer actually strengthens the relationship; he's always there for her when she needs him. As important as these human



interactions is the city itself. Paris is changing around them, old neighborhoods being demolished, others gentrifying. Fabre names them affectionately but without the details that would animate them. Will Jean thrive in Marseilles, where he's gone to spend time with his elderly mother? Will Marie and her new beau stay together? There is little urgency behind these questions, enclosed as they are by the novel's settled melancholy.

**Fabre lacks the alchemy to make ordinary lives extraordinary.**



### THE UNFORTUNATE IMPORTANCE OF BEAUTY

*Filipacchi, Amanda*

Norton (288 pp.)

\$25.95 | Feb. 2, 2015

978-0-393-24387-1

Another surreal, dark comedy from Filipacchi (*Love Creeps*, 2005, etc.).

Costume designer Barb is so gorgeous her friend Gabriel kills himself for unrequited love of her, after which she dresses in a fat suit, gray wig and false teeth so no one else will be harmed by her looks and she can find a man who loves the inner Barb. Brilliantly gifted composer Lily is so plain that shallow Strad doesn't even notice her adoration. Both women get together once or twice a week for a Night of Creation with successful novelist Georgia, untalented potter Penelope, and Jack, the former cop who rescued Penelope when she was kidnapped six years earlier. The atmosphere is rarefied verging on pretentious, an impression reinforced by the affected tone of the narration and the highly improbable arrival of two posthumous letters from Gabriel revealing that one of the five told him that he or she would kill Strad on a particular date if he hadn't fallen in love with Lily by then. Among the other elements in an exceedingly busy plot: Anchorman Peter Marrick maneuvers to meet Barb after learning about her ugly disguise when he finds the laptop Georgia left in a taxi. Lily acquires the ability to make things beautiful by composing music about them, which of course she eventually uses to transform herself for Strad. And a bizarrely rude doorman makes multiple appearances that are finally justified by the violent climax that rebeautifies Barb and brings Lily destruction followed by the media's remorseful reappraisal of the premium placed on good looks. The novel is more than a little over-the-top, and the characters have more attitude than personality. Still, there's something weirdly compelling about the whole excessive parade, and most people will keep reading just to find out how all the elaborate manipulations turn out.

**Contrived, to put it mildly, but an unsettling portrait of the way extreme physical beauty or ugliness distort people's impressions.**

**DEAD SPOTS***Frater, Rhiannon*

Tor (400 pp.)

\$15.99 paper | \$9.99 e-book

Feb. 10, 2015

978-0-7653-3715-3

978-1-4668-3214-7 e-book

A woman grieving for her ruined marriage and stillborn child finds herself transported to a terrifying place of nightmare and fantasy in this novel by prolific horror writer Frater (*The Mesmerized*, 2014, etc.).

Recently married and expecting her first child, 26-year-old Mackenzie Babin is settling into a happy life. The death of her son, inexplicably stillborn, tears her marriage apart and sends Mackenzie into a spiral of depression and anxiety. While driving away from her old life, she narrowly misses hitting a deer on a deserted back road and stumbles into a dead spot, a doorway to a place that lies between the worlds of the living and the dead,

where fears and dreams all come true. A disciplined imagination can bring safety, but the slightest loss of control spawns vicious and very real nightmares. Mackenzie meets Grant, a mysterious man who becomes her guide through the dead spots, and begins to discover a previously unknown resilience and power of her own as she confronts a parade of graphic horrors. The terrors of the dead spots and some of the characters Mackenzie meets during her struggles are genuine pleasures, fondly re-imagined stock elements of the horror trade—serial-killer clowns, abandoned buildings, a reality that shifts in response to visceral fears—but the plot often shambles along without momentum, wandering from one violent or creepy vignette to the next with a peculiar lack of desire or need to drive it. Perhaps most frustrating is Mackenzie herself, positioned to be transformed into a heroine but unable to shake an infuriating helplessness and willful foolishness until very late in the game.

**A novel that offers enjoyable, if sluggish, entertainment for fans of re-imagined horror tropes.**

**Barack Obama**  
and the  
**Road to Bondage**  
*A Case Study*

by  
**R. M. Catton**  
and  
**S. W. Catton**

Copyright © 2014  
ISBN #9781499527087

## BARACK OBAMA AND THE ROAD TO BONDAGE

A CASE STUDY

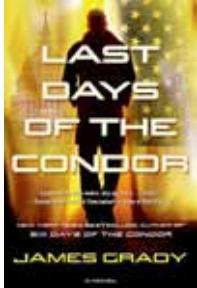
by R.M. Catton, S.W. Catton

**"A complex, disturbing psychoanalysis of Obama and his agenda, not easily dismissed." —Kirkus Reviews**

The genre of this book is psychodynamic, socio-political. More importantly, the authors regard it as a means of discharging a civic duty and moral imperative for awakening their fellow citizens to the perilous course this nation has taken under President Barack Obama.

*Available now at Amazon.com and on Kindle*

All interested inquiries please contact: 3springsbooks@comcast.net



## LAST DAYS OF THE CONDOR

Grady, James  
Forge (304 pp.)  
\$25.99 | Feb. 17, 2015  
978-0-7653-7840-8

Having captured the spy culture of the paranoid Cold War era in his 1974 novel *Six Days of the Condor* (filmed as *Three Days of the Condor* with Robert Redford), Grady now depicts the convoluted, cutthroat state of intelligence in the post-9/11 world.

All these years after achieving notoriety as a CIA whistleblower, the silver-haired Condor lives on the edge of reality. Put on meds for every conceivable kind of post-traumatic disorder following a heart attack, he's visited by ghosts and gets "lost in time." When a distrustful federal agent assigned to monitor his recovery is found brutally murdered in Condor's apartment, Vin—as the protagonist is also called, after Steve McQueen's character in *The Magnificent Seven*—is the prime suspect. But Faye Dozier, a former CIA agent now "in limbo" at Homeland Security, knows he's not a killer. She becomes his running and gunning partner as unknown assailants, including the unstoppable Monkey Man, swarm after them on the streets and subways of the nation's capital. To different ends, unexpected romantic partners impact the lives of both Condor and Faye, in Vin's case helping him in his efforts to recover his lost self. For a spy novel, the book is oddly short on plot, but Grady's prolonged action scenes are terrific, and the bounding energy of his writing carries you along the rest of the time. It takes a while to adjust to the rhythms of his terse, stream-of-consciousness style, which is halfway between the POW! and WHAM! of comic books and the cryptic language of cyberspace, but the effort is rewarded.

Grady's anti-heroic spy returns in fine form in an up-to-the-minute novel to which the author, a former Washington investigator, brings plenty of insider knowledge.

## I REGRET EVERYTHING A Love Story

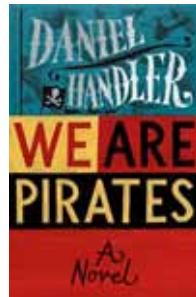
Greenland, Seth  
Europa Editions (256 pp.)  
\$16.00 paper | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-60945-247-6

What begins as a lighthearted love story and comedy of manners comes to encompass suicide attempts, mental institutions, death, broken families, legal transgressions and a possible killing.

Greenland's fourth novel (*The Angry Buddhist*, 2012, etc.) has two protagonists, and the chapters alternate between their first-person accounts. Jeremy Best is a 33-year-old financial lawyer on the fast track to partnership, with a sideline as a published poet under the name Jinx Bell. Spaulding Simonson is a 19-year-old student with a history of mental instability and a

passion for poetry. When she walks into Jeremy's office and lets him know she (somehow) knows he's Jinx, there are immediate sparks between them. He finds her attractive—and then some: "[H]er hair, the burnished gold found on coins and in youth and thereafter in bottles, fell in thick ringlets over her shoulders and down the middle of her back in the manner of a silent movie ingénue." He thinks she's flirting with him and learns that she's the daughter of his boss, the senior partner who will decide his professional fate, which should be enough to make him steer clear. But if he was able to resist her allure, there wouldn't be a novel. Spaulding is somehow more mature and less innocent, though she idealizes Jeremy as much as he does her: "Here was someone with a goal and a plan. He had a job where he made money and an art life, too. I wanted to know what he knew." There are other characters (the father, of course, and Jeremy's rivals on the partner track), but they're bit players, with Jeremy and Spaulding sharing the spotlight. He believes, or desperately wants to, that "[h]er soul was as old as the elements." She sees him as someone who "seemed to have it figured out."

Some of the complications that ensue are predictable, but others are so dark it remains a challenge for the author to retain his light touch.



## WE ARE PIRATES

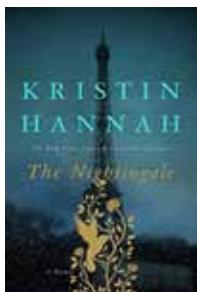
Handler, Daniel  
Bloomsbury (288 pp.)  
\$27.00 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-60819-688-3

Life is a confused and confusing mess—but it still offers plenty of room for mischief, as Handler, aka Lemony Snicket, informs us.

When you're a kid, you don't know which side is up half the time. Then you grow up, and you really don't know. So it is with Gwen Needle, who's taken on the nom de crime Octavia (a good one, Octavia having been an exceedingly bad noblewoman of ancient Rome). It's not that Gwen/Octavia is evil; she's just antsy: "Twelve and thirteen she was pretty happy...Then one day boredom just set upon her with a fierceness." She's also penniless, since Dad, an always-pitching radio producer, is always this far away from landing a deal. Popped for shoplifting, she's sent off to a veterans' home to do community service. There, she meets an old coot who's suffering from Alzheimer's—not yet full-blown, Gwen's warned, though the patient is given to flights of fancy and strange thefts of his own. He asks her if she's there for a school project, and when she answers that it's punishment, he growls, "Good, I'm glad. I don't like the school project kids. You know you're going to die when they come at you with a tape recorder." Meanwhile, Dad keeps hoping the heavens will part and he'll finally get to do something interesting with his life, like be an outlaw—a dream his daughter, it seems, is living, along with a band of merry mates, the old coot among them. Handler is a master at depicting the existential chaos all his major characters are living through, and with warmth, sympathy and

considerable humor at that. The reader will delight in Gwen and old Errol's escapades, which involve plenty of jawboning but some good old-fashioned larcenous action, too, all of which affords her the street cred to say piratical things like, "You take one more step away and I'll split your gullet" and "Totally verily." Affecting, lively and expertly told.

**Just the sort of thing to make grown-ups and teenagers alike want to unfurl the black flag.**



### THE NIGHTINGALE

*Hannah, Kristin*

St. Martin's (448 pp.)

\$27.99 | \$14.99 e-book | Feb. 3, 2015

978-0-312-57722-3

978-1-4668-5060-6 e-book

Hannah's new novel is an homage to the extraordinary courage and endurance of Frenchwomen during World War II.

In 1995, an elderly unnamed widow is moving into an Oregon nursing home on the urging of her controlling son, Julien, a surgeon. This trajectory is interrupted when she receives an invitation to return to France to attend a ceremony honoring *passeurs*: people who aided the escape of others during the war. Cut to spring, 1940: Viann has said goodbye to husband Antoine, who's off to hold the Maginot line against invading Germans. She returns to tending her small farm, Le Jardin, in the Loire Valley, teaching at the local school and coping with daughter Sophie's adolescent rebellion. Soon, that world is upended: The Germans march into Paris and refugees flee south, overrunning Viann's land. Her long-estranged younger sister, Isabelle, who has been kicked out of multiple convent schools, is sent to Le Jardin by Julien, their father in Paris, a drunken, decidedly unpatriotic Great War veteran. As the depredations increase in the occupied zone—food rationing, systematic looting, and the billeting of a German officer, Capt. Beck, at Le Jardin—Isabelle's outspokenness is a liability. She joins the Resistance, volunteering for dangerous duty: shepherding downed Allied airmen across the Pyrenees to Spain. Code-named the Nightingale, Isabelle will rescue many before she's captured. Meanwhile, Viann's journey from passive to active resistance is less dramatic but no less wrenching. Hannah vividly demonstrates how the Nazis, through starvation, intimidation and barbarity both casual and calculated, demoralized the French, engineering a community collapse that enabled the deportations and deaths of more than 70,000 Jews. Hannah's proven storytelling skills are ideally suited to depicting such cataclysmic events, but her tendency to sentimentalize undermines the gravitas of this tale.

**Still, a respectful and absorbing page-turner.**



### LIES, FIRST PERSON

*Hareven, Gail*

Translated by Bilu, Dalya

Open Letter (375 pp.)

\$15.95 paper | \$15.95 e-book

Feb. 10, 2015

978-1-940953-03-8

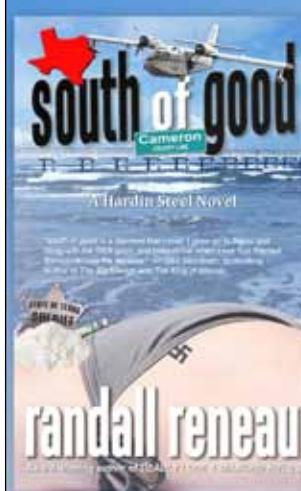
978-1-940953-07-6 e-book



An Israeli woman plots revenge against the relative who raped her sister—and wrote an imagined autobiography of Adolf Hitler besides—in a coruscating novel about faith and family.

Elinor, the middle-aged narrator of the second novel by Hareven to be translated into English (*The Confessions of Noa Weber*, 2009), lives a comfortable life in Jerusalem with her husband, Oded, and writes a newspaper column about the quirky adventures of an imagined immigrant to the city. Her just-so existence is undone, though, when she learns that her uncle, Aaron, is visiting Israel from the United States. Aaron is making

"An effervescent ride chock-full of memorable action and characters." —Kirkus Reviews



ISBN: 978-1497342477

Forced out of the DEA after twenty years, Hardin Steel, Stainless to his close friends, has managed to get himself elected Sheriff of Cameron County, Texas. Twice divorced, with a bit of a drinking problem, he's now dating Rory Roughton, a fiery sixth-generation Texan who's as rich as she is beautiful—and hell-bent on keeping Steel on the straight and narrow. But then his best friend, Wes Stoddard, is nearly shot down flying in a load of pot, Rory is kidnapped by a Russian mercenary working for the most dangerous cartel in Mexico, and the Cuban Mafia decides they'd like the former DEA agent—dead.

Steel is forced to take unsanctioned, unconventional—and mostly illegal—action in order to save himself and those closest to him . . .



Cameron  
COUNTY LINE

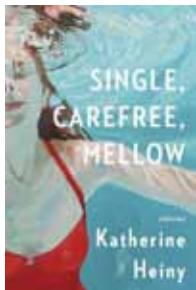
For addition information about agent representation, publication or film rights, please contact  
Randall Reneau (randy.reneau@gmail.com)

**"Hornby's most ambitious novel to date extends his passion for pop culture and empathy for flawed characters in to the world of television comedy."**

FROM FUNNY GIRL

an apology tour for a novel he wrote decades before, *Hitler, First Person*, and his re-emergence stokes Elinor's memories of how he repeatedly sexually assaulted her sister, Elisheva, when he was writing the novel in the family home. In the months before Aaron's arrival, Elinor and Oded head to the U.S. to visit their sons but also take a detour to central Illinois, where Elisheva has started a family, converted to Christianity and—to Elinor's disgust—not only corresponded with Aaron, but forgiven him. ("She doesn't want a trial," Elinor moans to Oded. "She wants him to ascend to heaven with her.") How much does Elinor owe her sister if she's moved on? How much did Aaron's imagination of Hitler's evil spill over into his own monstrousness? And how much does Elinor's urge "to see Aaron burn" only perpetuate the problem? Hareven's novel is a brilliant and careful study of those questions, capturing Elinor's ever accelerating rage while maintaining a prose style that's poised and philosophical. The Garden of Eden is a persistent trope in the novel, as Elinor keeps imagining her home as a refuge; but when Oded becomes conscripted into her obsession, it's clear we remain in a stubbornly post-lapsarian world.

A rich and harrowing novel with plenty to say about religion and authorship.



### SINGLE, CAREFREE, MELLOW Stories

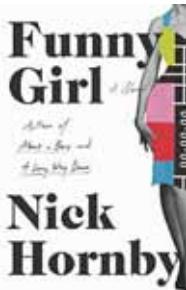
Heiny, Katherine  
Knopf (240 pp.)  
\$22.95 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-0-385-35363-2

Heiny explores sex, relationships and the internal lives of young women in this charmingly candid collection of short stories.

The women who populate the pages of Heiny's disarming debut are girlfriends, mistresses and wives. They are best friends, roommates and lovers. They are intelligent but not always ambitious—keenly insightful but sometimes, perhaps willfully, blind to their own deeper desires—with loyalties and libidos that may be at odds and morals that may be in question. Despite the title, not all are single (or carefree or mellow), but they are all singular, and following their stories is like sitting at a dive bar tossing back deceptively pretty, surprisingly strong drinks with a pal who may not always make the best decisions but always comes away with the most colorful tales. In fact, "The Dive Bar" is the title of the first story. In it, we meet Sasha, an attractive 26-year-old writer whose boyfriend has left his wife for her. After a confrontation with the boyfriend's wife, Sasha reluctantly mulls the morality of her choices, but for her, morality is really (boringly) beside the point, and she instead finds herself sinking sideways into the next chapter of her life, a happy one, from all indications. Heiny's characters often find themselves propelled through life by circumstances: The death of a beloved dog can lead inexorably to marriage, pregnancy and secret affairs, as it does for Maya, the protagonist of three of

these stories, and her kind, kindred-spirit boyfriend/fiance/husband, Rhodes. Not all the women here are as appealing as Sasha and Maya, and the less we like them, the less charmed we may be by their careless misbehavior. By the end of the book—as by the end of a night at the bar with our metaphorical, engagingly louche friend—we might not find ourselves overly reluctant to part company.

These young women are sympathetic and slyly seductive, sometimes selfish and maddeningly un-self-aware, but they are beguilingly human, and readers will yield to their charms.



### FUNNY GIRL

Hornby, Nick  
Riverhead (400 pp.)  
\$27.95 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-59420-541-5

Art and life are intertwined in a novel about TV sitcoms set during the cultural sea change of the 1960s.

Hornby's (*Juliet, Naked*, 2009, etc.) most ambitious novel to date extends his passion for pop culture and empathy

for flawed characters in to the world of television comedy. From her girlhood days in working-class Blackpool, Barbara Parker idolizes Lucille Ball and dreams of emulating her. Yet such a career seems impossible to a young woman whose closest brush with upward mobility comes when she wins a local beauty contest—then quickly abdicates her crown, realizing it would tie her closer to home rather than provide a ticket out. She realizes she has to go to London, a city where she has no connections or realistic prospects and where she discovers "that she wasn't as lovely as she had been in Blackpool; or, rather, her beauty was much less remarkable here." There's one thing that makes her stand out from the other lovely girls, though: "She was pretty sure...that none of [them] wanted to make people laugh." Through a series of chance encounters that seem like destiny, she does achieve her dreams, getting cast on a popular BBC comedy and even meeting Lucy, who "looked old, though, in the way that a ghost looks old." It's the supporting characters who really enrich this novel—the producer/director whose devotion to his star is more than professional; the gay writers who are initially semicloseted and whose paths will diverge; the male star whom this newcomer—now dubbed Sophie Straw—quickly eclipses. Hornby makes the reader care for his characters as much as he does and retains a light touch with the deeper social implications, as women, gays, popular entertainment and the culture in general experience social upheaval.

Years later, Sophie is getting ready to star in a play that's intended to revive her career. "The play is much better than I thought it was going to be," she thinks. "It's funny, and sad—like life." And like this novel.



### PARDON THE RAVENS

Hruska, Alan

Prospect Park Books (256 pp.)

\$26.95 | Feb. 10, 2015

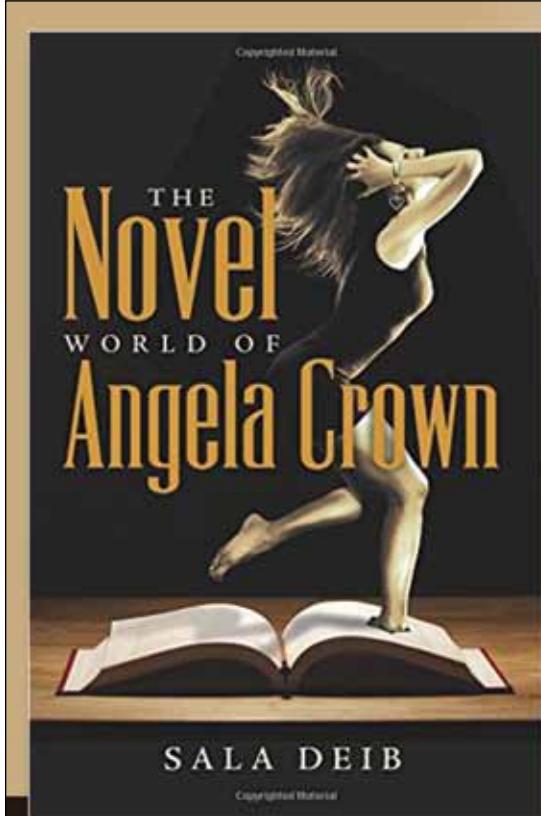
978-1-938849-40-4

In Hruska's latest legal thriller (*Wrong Man Running*, 2011), set mainly in Manhattan in 1961, only one thing stands in the way of Alec Brno's chance of partnership at the big-time Wall Street law firm Kendall, Blake, Steele & Braddock.

It's Carrie Madigan, a drug-addicted mobster's wife. Alec is smitten, feeling that she's "burrowing into him as if she were the missing part of his cells," a passion Hruska props up with pop psychology. The two met when Alec's managing partner, Frank Macalister, went on a bender and left him in the hot seat as first chair in a trial centering on the machinations of Carrie's husband, mob boss Phil Anwar, who keeps her under control with brutal beatings and ample

drugs. Anwar's behind a disappearing diesel scam victimizing United States Safety Vault & Maritime Company. Hruska relies on acceptable typecasting in his short, cinematic chapters: A crusty old judge serves as a senior partner; Alec's father is a disgraced but honest one-time union employee; and there's an ambitious, Rudy Giuliani-like federal prosecutor. There's a second, less interesting plot thread involving (think Rupert Murdoch) Jocko Rush's Telemarch News media empire. The plot rockets along, with Alec yanking the right legal tactic out of his briefcase at the right moment. Alec gets Carrie into rehab and away from Anwar; finds a bolt-hole in Reefer's Harbor, Maine, where he rigs a trap made of swordfish skeletons and phosphorescent paint; and deals with Darcy, his former lover, who says, "You're in a bad hole, Alec. You damn well ought to be climbing out of it." Courtroom scenes are brief but key, anachronisms are few, and most actions scenes are better than the one involving glow-in-the-dark fish bones.

**Hruska has settled into the legal-thriller milieu somewhere between the more erudite and complex Turow and the topical, quick-moving Grisham.**



## THE NOVEL WORLD OF ANGELA CROWN

By Sala Deib

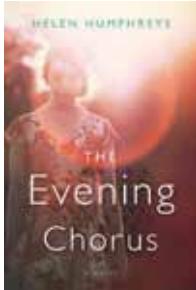
"The text frequently shines with simple metaphors that book lovers will understand quite well..."

"Magical realism spurs on this solid debut." —*Kirkus Reviews*

In Deib's debut novel, a personal tragedy leads a woman to obsess over the fates of fictional characters.

Please check [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) for customers' reviews

For information about film rights and publishing, email [eldeibsalah@yahoo.com](mailto:eldeibsalah@yahoo.com)



### THE EVENING CHORUS

Humphreys, Helen  
Mariner/Houghton Mifflin  
Harcourt (304 pp.)  
\$14.95 paper | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-0-544-34869-1



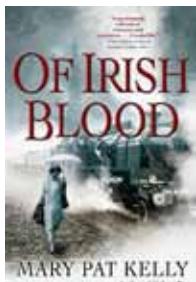
Humphreys (*Nocturne*, 2013, etc.) offers a heartbreaking yet redemptive story about loss and survival surrounding a British prisoner of war during World War II and the wife he barely got to know before his capture.

After James' plane is shot down on his first mission as an RAF pilot in 1940, the former grammar school science teacher spends the rest of the war in POW camps, where he watches fellow prisoners fail, often fatally, in their attempts at escape. Deciding he prefers simple survival, he eschews such attempts and concentrates on keeping a journal on local birds. He also develops a complicated relationship with the prison's kommandant, a classics professor who studied at Oxford and serves grudgingly in the military; he recognizes a kindred spirit in James and allows his nature study. In her nuanced description of the kommandant's attempts at kindness and James' responses both during and after the war, Humphries uncovers the human dimension in wartime brutality. Meanwhile, deeply in love with his new wife, Rose, James purposefully writes her letters focused on bird lore instead of his own condition because "he doesn't want his words home to degenerate into a litany of complaint." In a sad irony, Rose misunderstands his intent—not unlike the way James misinterprets the kommandant's intent in taking him to see a rare cedar waxwing—and assumes he doesn't feel strongly about her. Desperately lonely, she becomes involved with a soldier stationed nearby, discovering with her lover the passionate emotion James feels but cannot express. Cut to 1950 as James and Rose face the war's aftermath with varying measures of guilt, bitterness and resilience, not to mention what ifs. As Rose realizes, "[i]t's so hard to get life right.... All the small balances are impossible to strike most of the time."

Humphreys deserves more recognition for the emotional intensity and evocative lyricism of her seemingly straightforward prose and for her ability to quietly squirrel her way into the reader's heart.

### OF IRISH BLOOD

Kelly, Mary Pat  
Forge (512 pp.)  
\$25.99 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-0-7653-2913-4



An Irish-American from Chicago, fleeing an abusive relationship, moves to Paris on the eve of World War I.

This sequel to Kelly's *Galway Bay* (2009) is exhaustively researched, but much of that research is shoehorned onto the page; too often, otherwise-engaging characters become docents spouting

informational tracts about all things Irish. In 1903, after battling her way from the switchboard to a career as a fashion designer for Montgomery Ward, narrator Nora Kelly (based on the author's great-aunt) falls prey to the blandishments of Tim McShane, a charismatic gambler years her senior who initiates her sexually and relegates her to the role of occasional mistress while he squires vaudeville star Dolly McKee publicly. Eight years later, Nora, weary of the arrangement, tries to get free. But McShane, an affable but harmless blowhard in the opening chapters (how else could the independent-minded Nora have fallen for him?), appears to have undergone a not entirely convincing Jekyll and Hyde transformation: He tries to strangle Nora. Aided by Dolly, whom McShane also abuses, Nora escapes to Paris, where she earns a living copying designs for a couturier who serves the near-wealthy and leading tours of Paris for ladies who come to shop. Along the way, she encounters Alice B. Toklas, Gertrude Stein, Henri Matisse, Helen Keller, Coco Chanel and countless other icons. She also falls in love with Peter, a shy, austere professor at the Irish college of Paris, which also is an outpost of the Irish independence movement. Although Nora demonstrates the requisite degree of pluck—at one point she launders funds for the Irish rebellion—she never seems to mature nor gain much insight into the political, amorous and cultural tumult swirling around her. Even as she witnesses the onset of the Great War, serves as a nurse and is privy to an astounding quarrel between Yeats and his muse, Maud Gonne, over his famous poem "Easter, 1916," Nora remains a cipher.

In a novel so awed by the great and near-great, ordinary human characters are outgunned.

### ESPERANZA STREET

Keni, Niyati  
& Other Stories (326 pp.)  
\$15.95 paper | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-908276-48-3



The clash between corrupt developers "lining each other's pockets" and the residents of the bustling seaport village of Puerto, in the Philippines, serves as the backdrop for a tender coming-of-age story in this contemplative debut novel.

Joseph Santos, a 15-year-old houseboy at Mary Morelos' boardinghouse, tells the story of Esperanza Street, "one of the oldest streets in Puerto," where "everyone knew who was more interested in their brother's wife than their own, or who'd lied about their son's school grades, or sold their neighbor's dog," during a six-month period in 1981. This engrossing novel illuminates the lives of Esperanza's working-class citizens in chapters resembling high-resolution photographs, with Joseph's keen eye as the lens. While Joseph confronts the "barkada boys," who threaten anyone opposing Esperanza's imminent gentrification, explores his feelings for the midwife's daughter, and longs for the attention of his proud though distant father, he seeks comfort in books. "I think now that I read with the hope something would finally arrive that would illuminate everything, a single piece of knowledge that would show me how my life was meant to unfold." As the residents of Esperanza Street rally to

“Lange...returns with a story collection set in a Southern California that won’t be found in any travel guides.”

## FROM SWEET NOTHING

protest the transformation of their beloved barrio, Keni nimbly unspools Joseph's struggle to make peace with his history and heredity, his childhood street that "lulled us all with its apparent constancy," and his journey to adulthood.

In this luminous, revelatory study on the connection between person and place, Keni knits a delicate tale of an entangled and endangered community.



# SWEET NOTHING

## *Stories*

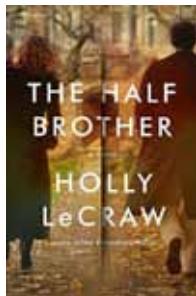
Lange, Richard

**Mulholland Books/Little, Brown**  
(272 pp.)  
\$26.00 | \$12.99 e-book | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-0-316-32754-1  
978-0-316-32750-3 e-book

Lange, a writer of both stylish noir novels (*Angel Baby*, 2013) and sharply etched short fiction (*Dead Boys*, 2007), returns with a story collection set in a Southern California that won't be found in any travel guides.

Heroin addiction, street shootings, drive-by sex, shake-downs: These are the kinds of things that define the lives of Lange's protagonists in Los Angeles and beyond. A Hispanic widow refuses to tell police she saw the accidental shooting of a 2-year-old boy until discovering a family member has a connection to the killer. A gambling addict takes a first date and her young son to the racetrack, where his loser tendencies again destroy any chance of happiness. A plan to smuggle Mexicans into the U.S. is complicated by a wildfire speeding toward the border from San Diego. An ex-con working in an LA jewelry store must contend with lowlifes he knows who want to rob it. And in a departure set in late-19th-century France, a prison guard is tested by conversations with a man facing the guillotine for killing eight children. There's little hope for a better day for any of these characters, whose lives are made more difficult by sweltering heat and cramped conditions. For all the darkness that runs through the stories, though, Lange maintains a disarmingly light touch, finding plenty of human comedy in the proceedings without sacrificing empathy. With the slightest shift of tone, this could join *Angel Baby* on the modern pulp shelf. As it is, Lange's morality tales are not that far removed from the classic stories of O. Henry and Guy de Maupassant.

**With a distinctive style, Lange makes his downbeat tales of the underclass quirkily entertaining.**

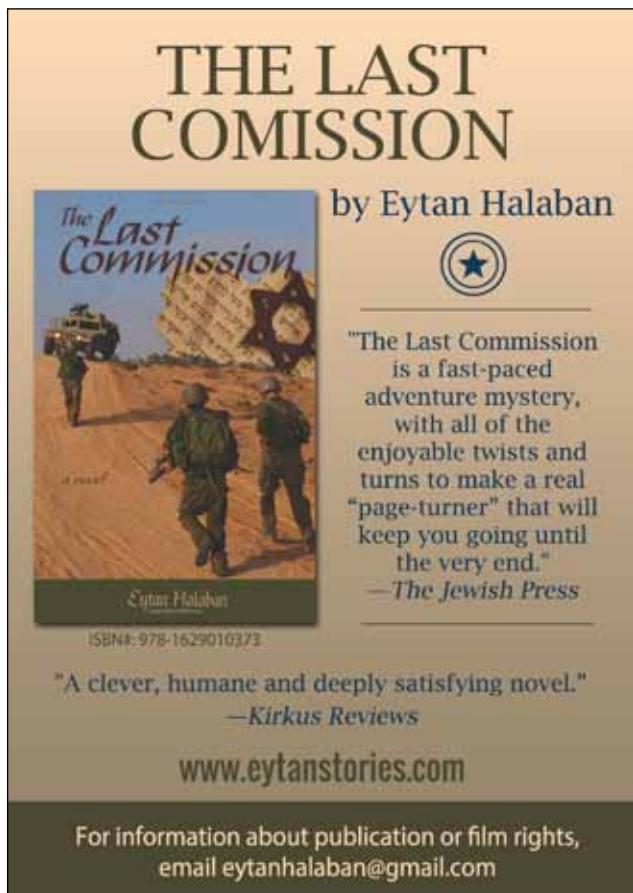


## THE HALF BROTHER

*LeCraw, Holly*  
Doubleday (272 pp.)  
\$25.95 | Feb. 17, 2015  
978-0-385-53195-5

Incest, racial tension, statutory rape, alcoholism—LeCraw (*The Swimming Pool*, 2010) throws them all into the stew in this melodrama about family secrets and thwarted love among teachers at an elite New England prep school.

Fresh out of Harvard, Charlie Garrett becomes an English teacher at the Abbott School in Abbottsford, Massachusetts (not to be confused with the actual Abbott Academy which merged with Andover in the 1970s). But Charlie isn't a typical blue blood. He knows little about his father, who he's been told died in Vietnam. His mother, Anita, moved from rural Georgia to Atlanta, where she worked as a nurse, when Charlie was a baby. When she married Hugh Satterthwaite, scion of one

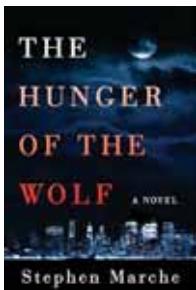


# "Marche scrutinizes the rapaciousness of contemporary media moguls by cleverly reimagining them as actual wolves."

FROM THE HUNGER OF THE WOLF

of Atlanta's most established families, Charlie became part of Atlanta's most exclusive community, though he never felt like he really fit in. Hugh, a devoted stepfather even after the birth of Charlie's much younger and more charismatic half brother, Nicky, got Charlie into Harvard before drinking himself to death, and Anita pushed Charlie to take the job at Abbott for reasons of her own. Charlie is drawn to chaplain Preston Bankhead, a fellow Southerner, and falls in love with Preston's daughter, May, nine years his junior. He doesn't act on his feelings while she's an Abbott student, but they correspond when she goes to college and begin an ardent affair when she comes home to take care of her father while he's dying of melanoma. But Charlie dumps May after Preston's funeral for reasons he won't share with her, and May leaves town. Charlie settles in to life as a bachelor teacher. Years later, Nicky, a Harvard grad who's been traumatized while doing relief work in Afghanistan, takes a job teaching at Abbott, to Charlie's delight. Then May returns to teach at Abbott as well.

The last 50 pages become a rush of plot contrivances that undermine what until then has been a complicated, engrossing study of characters and relationships.



**THE HUNGER OF THE WOLF**  
Marche, Stephen  
Simon & Schuster (288 pp.)  
\$25.00 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-4767-3081-3

Marche scrutinizes the rapaciousness of contemporary media moguls by cleverly reimagining them as actual wolves.

Part realist portrait of upper-crust lives, part lycanthropic fairy tale, the fourth novel by Marche (*Love and the Mess We're In*, 2012, etc.), is narrated by Jamie Cabot, a young magazine journalist who loves New York City so much he's willing to lose his wife to stay there. Hunting for a story that'll help him keep the lights on, he begins investigating the Wyly family, which parlayed one Alberta radio station into a global media empire and whose patriarch was recently found dead in the wilderness. Jamie, whose family once did odd jobs on the Wylys' Canadian compound, sneaks into their home, liberates some diaries and correspondence, and learns that at adolescence the Wyly men turn wolflike and feral with every full moon. The novel alternates Jamie's callow efforts to turn the Wyly story into a payday with a history of the family's rise to power. The latter portions are superb: Marche's knowledge of radio and newspapers, as well as his portraits of the low-caste but hungry Wylies claiming their perches among the upper crust, is detailed and convincing; the wolfish back story, so easy to bungle, is persuasive and gracefully handled. Yet the Wylies aren't prone to consider the moral consequences of their actions, and neither is Jamie, which makes the novel feel somewhat like an inverted *Great Gatsby*, in which the characters are untouched by hubris; greed, if not strictly good, has charms the workaday world is foolish to neglect. "Every

billionaire is a distinct experiment in what happens when everything is permitted," Jamie thinks. It's not a judgment.

An entertaining, curious journey into the beating black hearts that occupy the penthouse suites and those who aspire to join them.



**HEAD OF STATE**  
Marr, Andrew  
Overlook (384 pp.)  
\$27.95 | Feb. 5, 2015  
978-1-4683-1056-6



Now that the Scottish independence brouhaha has been settled, the question of the U.K.'s European Union membership is next on the agenda. Marr's (*The Real Elizabeth*, 2011, etc.) wickedly funny first novel, set in 2017, takes up the battle.

The prime minister sees the U.K.'s economic future tied to Europe. Opponents, opposition and ruling party alike, feel Britain must no longer be subject to overweening continental bureaucracies. The prime minister—once "an intense, wiry-haired young politician" who became a "larger-than-life, principled yet unscrupulous figure" of notoriously "louche private behavior"—is opposed by his former Home Secretary, Olivia Kite, "red hair, pale face and vivid crimson lips" (picture Cate Blanchet as Elizabeth I with the heart of Cromwell). The battle's followed by pols, pundits and once-grand newspapers where "wise old sacks of human indolence order the young and stupid about." Some characters are stock: reporter Lucien McBryde, an "an arrogant little sod" running on "marching powder"; and others are sociopathic: "that foul little splotch," Alois Haydn, regarded as the "notorious Svengali of Number 10." Marr flashes urbanely sardonic British humor (or *humour*)—"One of the great things about first-class air travel is that it puts all the crooks together"—and then explodes the narrative with an election-swaying death days prior to the vote. Enter Professional Logistical Services, a coven of former intelligence officers, military types and financial wizards, brought in to apply "advanced research techniques" to the crisis. Peripheral characters like the prime minister's staff members; government functionaries; a Polish assassin; Myfanwy Davies-Jones, a novelist "with a cloud of yellow hair and a scarlet reputation"; and Lord Briskett, a noted historian from Oxford, "that crowded, clucking duckpond of vanity and ruffled feathers," run amok while Mr. Haydn traipses about London with a human head in a "Waitrose 'bag for life."

Witty. Imaginative. Irreverent.



### OF THINGS GONE ASTRAY

*Matthewson, Janina*

The Friday Project (300 pp.)

\$19.99 | Feb. 3, 2015

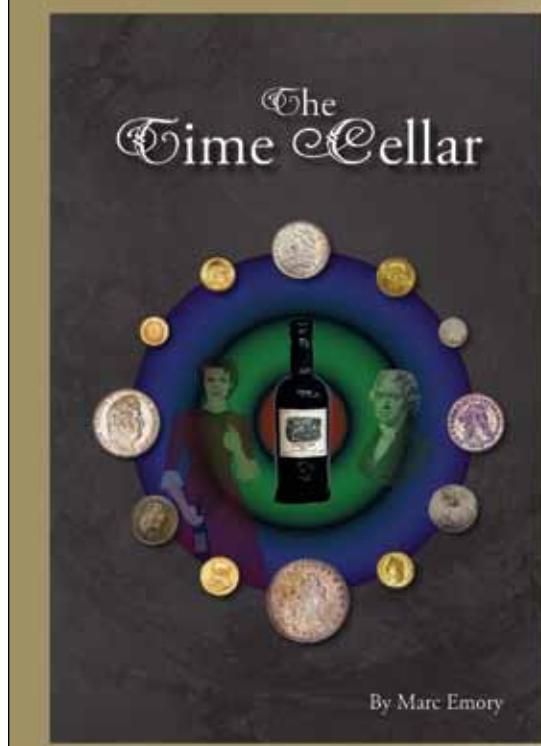
978-0-00-756247-3

In London, people suddenly, inexplicably begin to lose things both physical (the wall of a house, piano keys) and intangible (their way, their status).

This novel breathes life into the cracks of everyday existence, creating a world in which even metaphorical loss creates a physical absence. Jake, whose mother has recently died, serves most closely as a central character as he begins to collect lost things, displaying an uncanny ability to understand the story of each thing he finds. His relationship with his father, however, begins to literally disappear at the same time, and his father's girlfriend, Delia, who has lost direction in her own life, must fight to bring them back together. Marketed as a novel,

this often reads more like a collection of very short stories. As the fragments of individual stories begin to coalesce, however, instead of feeling forced or overly clever like many ensemble pieces, the connections only deepen the individual—and the novel's collective—sense of loss. There are moments of magical realism (a girl slowly becomes a tree) and moments of humor (a man one day cannot find his office building, therefore literally "losing his job"). Taken together, they provide a quiet but heartfelt commentary on the unpredictability and isolation of modern life. We may live in an age where everything seems to be at our fingertips all the time, but often these connections come at the expense of actual human relationships. The book "is a reminder that the world is not quite as we expect it to be," and while that brings with it sadness, it also offers a sense of wonder at the limitless possibilities of existence.

Refreshing and spare, like a bittersweet melody echoing in an empty hallway, Matthewson's debut novel will linger in the reader's memory.



## THE TIME CELLAR

A novel by Marc Emory

A freak accident gives a California wine nerd a working time machine in his basement

**"Enthusiastically recommended."**

**"A hilarious time-travel shaggy dog story." —Kirkus Reviews**

For information about publication or film rights, email [marcd.emory@gmail.com](mailto:marcd.emory@gmail.com).



## SATIN ISLAND

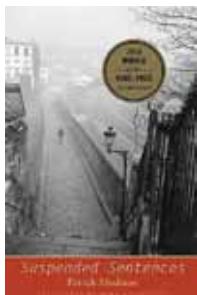
*McCarthy, Tom*  
Knopf (192 pp.)  
\$24.00 | Feb. 17, 2015  
978-0-307-59395-5

A dizzying take on possible conspiracies, corporate philosophies and one man's idle thoughts.

The basic ingredients of McCarthy's new novel suggest a Don DeLillo-like look at academic theories and the rigors

of contemporary life or perhaps a globe-trotting thriller in the vein of William Gibson's Bridge trilogy. McCarthy, whose earlier novels *Remainder* and *C* eluded easy descriptions, certainly seems to be laying the groundwork for this in the novel's early pages. Its narrator, known only as U., is an anthropologist who made his name a decade ago after writing a highly regarded academic study of dance music. "Once, for a brief time, I was famous," U. writes, but he then goes on to clarify that it was a very specific, very niche variety of fame. This doubling back happens again and again: At one point, U. gives a short lecture, then dedicates much more time to an imagined version of how the same event could have gone. And while there are events here that could form the core of a more traditional narrative, including the illness of a colleague of U.'s and a series of mysterious deaths that occur while parachuting, U. continues on his way, sometimes oblivious and sometimes obsessed. As the crossed-out subtitles on the cover—including "An Essay" and "A Treatise"—suggest, this is a malleable work, one where dreams of unreal cities carry as much weight as impressions of real ones and where a long discussion of the way Starbucks operates in Seattle may be a key image or a complete digression. There are moments of devastation here, and the way McCarthy reveals them are among the novel's highlights.

McCarthy's novel is thought-provoking and sometimes frustrating; adjusting to its unexpected rhythms takes time, but the effort to follow its surprising routes pays off.



## SUSPENDED SENTENCES

### *Three Novellas*

*Modiano, Patrick*  
Translated by Polizzotti, Mark  
Yale Univ. (230 pp.)  
\$16.00 paper | Nov. 11, 2014  
978-0-300-19805-8

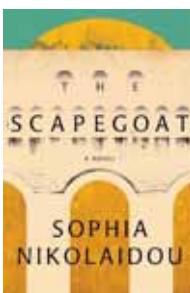
"One meets the strangest people in one's life." Indeed, and so it is in this somber trilogy of novellas from the recent French Nobel Prize winner.

Modiano's work is unknown to most North American readers, and this is as good an introduction as any. The stories here highlight his concerns as a chronicler of the Occupation years and the lean times leading up to 1968; if they were films—and,



it should be noted, Modiano is also a screenwriter; co-author, among other things, of the script for *Lacombe Lucien* (1974)—then Jean-Paul Belmondo would play several leads, always with a Gauloise stuck in his mouth at a moody, meaningful angle. The first story, *Afterimage*, concerns a mysterious photographer who works the chic world of fashion while maintaining a very private aura; the narrator announces at the beginning that he still knows only a little about Francis Jansen, who "did everything he could to be forgotten...completely dropping out of sight." Jansen is the antithesis of what a swinging fashion photographer is supposed to be, as if Camus had a Rollei slung around his neck—and yet there he is, the owner of "a truth that we've intuited but kept hidden from ourselves, out of carelessness or cowardice." Lean, existentially charged, the title story depicts a boy at the boundary of bourgeois society and the demimonde of the theater and circus, where people bear names such as Little Helene and Snow White and have done some jail time. The Baudelaarian title of the last story, *Flowers of Ruin*, signals that the reader should not expect a light farce, and indeed, a police report figures in the first few pages. In a preface, the translator notes that the stories were published several years apart but cohere nicely, and though they're closely informed by the events of Modiano's life, "it is important to remember that these are fictions."

Yes, but fictions with a moral bite, depicting a world in which everyone, it seems, is complicit in crimes not yet specified. Moody, elegant and dour.



## THE SCAPEGOAT

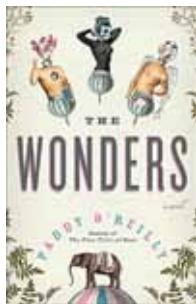
*Nikolaïdou, Sophia*  
Translated by Emmerich, Karen  
Melville House (320 pp.)  
\$23.95 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-61219-384-7

Modeled on a real-life unsolved mystery, this is a complex story in which murder and politics in postwar Greece resurface to change the life of a bright teenage boy who's been going off the rails.

Greek writer Nikolaïdou's first work to be translated into English uses as its springboard a fictionalized version of a 20th-century cause célèbre: the drowning of well-connected U.S. journalist George Polk, who was on the trail of government corruption and misappropriated aid in Greece in 1948. Under pressure to find a culprit, the police arrest and torture a journalist, Manolis Gris, forcing a confession from him which will result in a life sentence. Nikolaïdou considers these events from the perspective of people at the time and others more than half a century later, notably that of Minas Georgiou. Minas' wily schoolmaster gave him the project of re-examining the Gris case after the boy's surprising announcement that he's not going to apply for a place at university. What emerges is a fragmentary story, assembled and enlarged by the voices and lives of surrounding, connected characters, notably female ones: sisters, wives and mothers. Gris' mother is a widow with four children to support, all of whose fortunes will be blighted by

history. Minas' grandmother was once loved by Dinopoulos, the lawyer who represented Gris and plea-bargained for him, saving his life. Ultimately Minas' project doesn't solve the Gris enigma but does inspire the boy—who now finds himself in the midst of Greece's financial crisis—to return to his studies, newly alive to the recurrent hypocrisies of "ideas above lives, the country above its people."

More context would have helped international readers understand the Greek civil war and the country's education system; without it, it's harder to appreciate this carefully orchestrated tale of political expediency.



### THE WONDERS

O'Reilly, Paddy  
Washington Square/Pocket  
(288 pp.)  
\$15.00 paper | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-1-4767-6636-2



In a novel that feels both sharply realistic and wildly, indelibly imaginative, O'Reilly (*The Fine Color of Rust*, 2012, etc.) offers a story about the stars of an impossible, glamorous freak show that sidesteps any expectations of sentimental quirk with wit and deep feeling.

The Wonders are three people who survive miraculous medical treatments and are left with unusual, beautiful physical anomalies that thrust them into a world of celebrity. Leon Hyland, a lonely and bookish man from Australia, is on his third heart, a mechanical metal implant suspended in a hole that goes straight through his chest. Kathryn Damon, a prickly and voluptuous Irishwoman, undergoes an experimental treatment for Huntington's disease that brings her

ISBN# 9781493162420  
[about.me/m.julesbevans](http://about.me/m.julesbevans)

## A CALL TO PRAYER

By M. Jules Bevans

"Bevans spare prose maintains a steady momentum, pushing the plot forward quickly enough to keep readers engaged while also providing the characters with substantial depth."  
—Kirkus Reviews

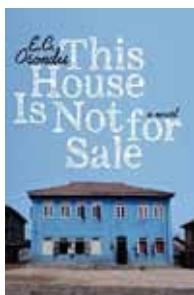
"The novel presents a bleak vision of the terrorist-counter-terrorist world. M. Jules Bevans spreads an impressive tapestry of the sights, sounds and smells of the shadowy back alleys of Istanbul, Cairo and Yemen."  
—Blue Ink Review

Bevans' debut thriller tells a story of a terrorist cell planning a campaign of assassinations and deadly chemical attacks—and of those working to thwart its plans.

For information about film rights and publishing, email [mjbevans@gmail.com](mailto:mjbevans@gmail.com)

health and covers her body in black lamb's wool. Christos Petridis, a volatile Greek performance artist, has metal wings transplanted into his back. Oddities and freaks, they find themselves brought together by Rhona Burke, a brash lady impresario who fashions them into international stars and makes them both fabulously wealthy and hysterically adored. The novel stays close to Leon, following him as he struggles against hesitation and anxiety, longing so desperately to be seen and then slamming into the treachery of fame. It unfurls in vivid, precisely imagined images that give even the most fantastical details a solid reality. The characters, with all their unlikely histories, have the weight and imperfections of real people, and the reader can follow them with pleasure, always trusting O'Reilly to care for their sympathies with humor, charm and a broad range of feeling, taking them from delirious circus scenes to genuine tragedy.

**The impossible slides skillfully into the believable here; O'Reilly's delightful novel never shirks its responsibility to emotional truth as it tells a story about being known and being different.**



### THIS HOUSE IS NOT FOR SALE

Osondu, E.C.

Harper/HarperCollins (208 pp.)

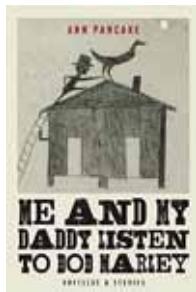
\$25.99 | Feb. 3, 2015

978-0-06-199088-5

The patriarch of a large extended family rules over his kingdom in a family home on the edge of an African village.

Although nominally a novel, this full-length debut by Osondu (Creative Writing/Providence College; *Voice of America: Stories*, 2010) is more a collection of portraits of a diverse body of characters, sometimes related and sometimes not, all living under the protective wing of "Grandpa," a generous and mildly sinister father figure to the very large household—he's somewhat *Godfather*-esque in putting in the fix. Settling the future of a man who shot his wife's alleged lovers, Grandpa tells him, "You have killed one man. The other man is still alive, he survived. I will talk with the police. They will understand. I will help them understand." Although there's a common narrator, a young family member, each chapter focuses on the story of a different character. There are the eccentrics, like Uncle Aya and the befuddled "Baby," saddled with the nickname while her father was away and never properly named. There are the disavowed, like Ndozo, who's publicly humiliated after she steals money the family earned selling in the market. There are also ministers, soldiers and grieving parents, all lovingly described in a style that strongly reflects Osondu's affection for Raymond Carver. While there's a sense of myth here—the denizens of the Family House are deeply superstitious, prone to gossip and virtual prisoners to community ritual—the stories have a very modern, compassionate voice as well. Whether describing the uncle whose job is to burn discontinued currency arriving home with pockets of old money or the grieving widow who sells her own daughter's virginity to a stranger, Osondu is ceaseless in his willingness to examine the human condition in all its glories and frailties.

**A wide-ranging portrait of an African community largely at odds with itself.**



### ME AND MY DADDY LISTEN TO BOB MARLEY Novellas and Stories

Pancake, Ann

Counterpoint (256 pp.)

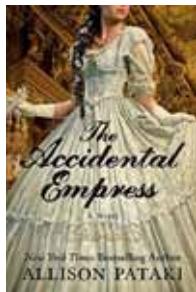
\$24.00 | Feb. 10, 2015

978-1-61902-464-9

Rural West Virginia enters the 21st century but can't quite shake off its rough-hewn past in these 11 Southern gothic-tinted tales.

Many of these stories by novelist Pancake (*Strange as This Weather Has Been*, 2007, etc.) are told from the perspectives of children and adolescents, the better to capture the eeriness of the Appalachian landscape and the folkways of the grown-ups who occupy it. At the opening of "Mouseskull," a fourth-grade girl makes a necklace out of the title object, a harrowing precursor to the tale of family ghosts that ensues. In "Coop," an 11-year-old girl witnesses a feral revolt at a rural camp. And in the concluding title story, the best of the batch, a toddler is emotionally buffeted by his drug-addicted father just as he acquires the words to push against him. Even from an adult perspective, the past looms large, as with the middle-aged woman who returns home in "Sab" to a land reworked by mountaintop removal and fracking or the dog hoarder in "Dog Song" who feels trapped by the encroaching housing developments that have wrecked the region's previous quiet. ("How you could kill a piece of ground without moving it anywhere," the protagonist thinks.) Pancake's tone in these stories is generally moody and sometimes too slowly paced; the opening novella, *In Such Light*, is overlong for the familiar tale of teenage heartbreak it relates. But her ear for dialect is well-tuned, and the collection has its comic touches. The superb novella *Sugar's Up* turns on a middle-aged man who's estranged from his wife and treated like an ATM by his son, and his rising fury at being passed over for a ceremonial hometown title is at once funny and reveals how maddening close-knit communities can be.

**A smartly styled, occasionally sluggish portrait of an undercover landscape.**



### THE ACCIDENTAL EMPRESS

Pataki, Allison

Howard Books/Simon & Schuster (512 pp.)

\$26.00 | Feb. 17, 2015

978-1-4767-9022-0

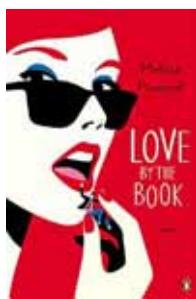
A love match alters the course of the Habsburg dynasty in Pataki's second novel (*The Traitor's Wife*, 2014).

In 1853, Elisabeth, known as "Sisi," daughter of a Bavarian duke, accompanies her mother and older sister, Helene, to Vienna. The sisters' redoubtable aunt, Archduchess Sophie, has arranged Helene's betrothal to her son, Emperor Franz Joseph, who reigns over Austria, Germany, Hungary and most of central Europe. To Sophie's alarm, Franz prefers the pretty, vivacious and athletic

15-year old Sisi to the shy, homely and studious Helene. After a gift-strewn engagement and lavish royal wedding, Sisi adjusts to the realities of wedded bliss among the monarchy: She has no privacy—every intimate detail's observed and remarked upon by court spies—and a mother-in-law who's not about to brook any rivals for her son's affection. When Sisi gives birth to two daughters, Sophie and Gisela, the archduchess complains of the lack of a male heir but happily appropriates the princesses, barring Sisi from any involvement in their upbringing. (The same will happen with Sisi's ill-fated son, Prince Rudolf). Franz is preoccupied with affairs of state, dealing with rebellious upstarts like Hungary, Italy and Prussia, vassal nations eager to throw off the Habsburg yoke. Sisi is instrumental in healing the rift with Hungary, in part because this wildly popular empress has a special affection for the Hungarian people and landscape. On her first visit, she's captivated by the former rebel leader, dark, handsome Count Andrassy. However, young Sophie succumbs to a fever while in Budapest, feeding the archduchess's propaganda campaign against Sisi's maternal suitability. On her return to stultifying court life, Sisi is felled by depression but finally musters the will

to stage a rebellion of her own. The plot doesn't stray far from the conventions of novels about royalty, exposing all the unsurprising human disappointments lurking behind the gilded facade.

**Still, Pataki deserves kudos for choosing her subject matter well—Sisi's life is ideal fictional fodder.**



#### LOVE BY THE BOOK

Pimentel, Melissa  
Penguin (400 pp.)  
\$16.00 paper | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-0-14-312728-4

For fans of *Sex in the City*, Pimentel offers a fictionalized account of a real-life experiment in dating.

Lauren Cunningham, a 28-year-old American in London, has left a serious relationship behind in Portland, Maine, to seek liberation and sexual adventure across the Atlantic. The

**Terminal Awakening**  
by D.L. Dowdy

Book 1 of the Sunken Earth Trilogy

#### TERMINAL AWAKENING

Book 1 of the Sunken Earth Trilogy  
By D.L. Dowdy

"The story cuts skillfully from time to time and place to place..."

"The action is handled well, however, in spite of the difficulty in conceiving and executing such a temporally scrambled narrative."

"A creative YA time-travel adventure..."  
—Kirkus Reviews

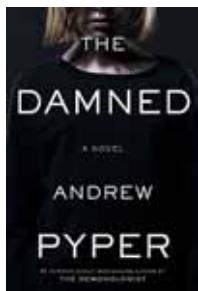
**"You've got to read it to believe it!"**

ISBN# 9780692300145  
Available through Amazon, iTunes and Barnes and Noble.

All general inquiries please contact: deanldowdy@hotmail.com

men she meets don't always believe she's interested in casual relationships, and after she scares away an enjoyable English cad with an innocent misstep—making him eggs the morning after—the single life turns out to be more complicated than she imagined. To make sense of it, Lauren decides to follow a different dating guide each month, hoping she'll find the right formula to attract a steady supply of sex with no attachments. Her list of guides is entertaining and varied, ranging from the ubiquitous anti-feminist manual *The Rules* to more obscure selections, including *The Technique of the Love Affair*, a 1920s ode to flirting, and the Victorian-era *Manners for Women*. She even decides to use *The Rules of the Game*, a dating guide written for men, with great comic results. Her misadventures with test subjects, to whom she gives nicknames like "Popeye" and "Top Hat," along with her summations of the guides and their effectiveness, are entertaining, though at times they make the novel feel more like a series of blog posts. The story doesn't find its emotional pulse until the very end, when some essential information about the main character is finally revealed. Still, Lauren is likable in her unapologetic yearning for freedom, and the novel offers enough suspense and vicarious fun to pull the reader along.

**This novel doesn't have the heart or ironic sensibility of *Brigit Jones's Diary*, but for readers looking for something fun and casual without an emotional attachment, it might be a one-night stand to consider.**



### THE DAMNED

*Pyper, Andrew*

Simon & Schuster (304 pp.)

\$25.00 | Feb. 10, 2015

978-1-4767-5511-3

Pyper's portrait of twins—one good and one evil—isn't a new literary concept, but his version is memorable and, perhaps, nightmare-inducing.

Danny Orchard and his sister, Ashleigh, were stillborn, but a medical team revived them. The only children of a Detroit automobile executive and his homemaker wife, Danny turned out to be a socially inhibited and shy kid, while Ashleigh evolved into hell on wheels. Literally. Unpredictably cruel and incapable of kindness, she viciously torments everyone from the family dog to her many male admirers. Then, on her 16th birthday, Ashleigh and three of her friends bicycle into downtown Detroit, and she ends up dying in an old abandoned house that was set on fire. When Danny rushes to the scene and tries to save her, he also dies but only for a few minutes, and then he's brought back to life. He remembers the afterlife as reliving the happiest day of his life and writes a book about it, which ends up being a best-seller. With his parents gone, Danny lives off the profits from the book and speaking gigs until, one day, he meets Willa, a widow with a son named Eddie. Soon he and Willa fall in love, but even in death, Ashleigh is vengeful, and soon she's making life unbearable for them, leading Danny to a desperate solution that might backfire. Pyper, a Canadian writer, has a knack for imbuing the ordinary with palpable and frighteningly

plausible horror. He also displays his writing chops by creating wholly likable characters such as Danny and Eddie while simultaneously engineering the irredeemable Ashleigh, whose soul remains as black as the bottom of a well. Pyper's pacing, as well as the novel's length, is perfect, and his evocative description of Detroit, a city desolate in its decline, comes off as both sad and poetic at the same time.

**A treat for fans of intelligent treatments of the supernatural and rock-solid writing.**



### FINDING JAKE

*Reardon, Bryan*

Morrow/HarperCollins (272 pp.)

\$26.99 | \$15.99 e-book | Feb. 24, 2015

978-0-06-233948-5

978-0-06-233963-9 e-book

A father hears about a shooting incident at his son's high school—and then finds his son is one of the suspected killers.

Simon Connolly is the anguished father and narrator in this psychological thriller by Reardon. Through chapters that more or less alternate between the present (the three-week period following the shooting) and the past (his son's childhood), we get a dual perspective and wonder along with Simon whether Jake is indeed capable of such an atrocity. Simon's anguish is particularly acute because he was a stay-at-home dad, taking care of both Jake and his younger sister, Laney, while Rachel, their mom, supported the family as a lawyer. When the news about the shooting breaks, parents rush to a local church to be reunited with their children, but Jake doesn't turn up. Instead, it becomes clear from both the police and the media that Jake might have been involved along with his friend, a loner named Doug Martin-Klein, who was found at the school, dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. As names of the shooting victims become known, Simon quickly becomes a pariah for agonized parents convinced Jake was responsible for killing their children. A rift opens between Simon and Rachel as well because he's not sure whether he can believe in Jake's innocence. He reviews incidents from Jake's past—encounters with a school guidance counselor, play dates with Doug—that might (or might not) be significant.

**A compelling read; disturbingly relevant in contemporary America.**

**"In Sedgwick's first adult fiction, Charles Jackson, a young World War II soldier, happens upon a horrific crime...that haunts him for decades."**

FROM A LOVE LIKE BLOOD



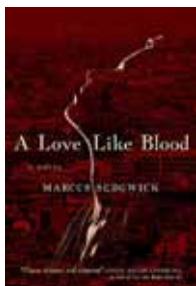
**THE KNIFE**

*Ritchell, Ross*  
Blue Rider Press (272 pp.)  
\$25.95 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-0-399-17340-0

An account of the long stretches of boredom and short bursts of adrenaline that make up a Ranger team's deployment in Afghanistan.

Former Army Ranger and combat veteran Ritchell delivers a war story about the mind-numbing periods of waiting, the stress of battle fatigue, the ingeniously idiotic ideas that fill downtime and the spine-tingling moments when life is ever so fragile. When we meet Ranger team leader Dutch Robert Shaw, he's ruminating over coffee about the loss of his last family member, the grandmother who raised him. His reflection is cut short by the call for an immediate redeployment to an ambiguous stretch of battle-torn Afghanistan. Unlike many frenzied accounts of war, this story flows at a comfortable tempo with plenty of time to describe the poker games and discussions about higher education that fill the long flight into a war zone. Once on the ground, the five-man Ranger team spends its time in the FOB (forward operating base) packing seemingly endless amounts of chewing tobacco and devising childlike dares. There's no rush to get to battle scenes, but when they arrive, Ritchell describes night operations, "snatch and grab's and the elimination of HVTs (High Value Targets) without false bravado, while still broadcasting the immense skill possessed by these soldiers. He draws the high drama and moral complexity of the Rangers' life on the front lines from a place of narrative distance, allowing the reader to fill in the unstated emotions of Shaw and his team, giving their story great poignancy.

A beautiful book about the soldiers who sit on the front lines of the U.S. military machine.



**A LOVE LIKE BLOOD**

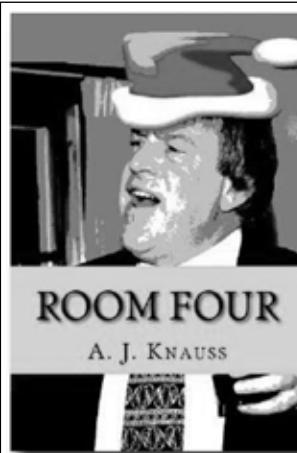
*Sedgwick, Marcus*  
Pegasus Crime (324 pp.)  
\$24.95 | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-1-60598-683-8

In Sedgwick's first adult fiction, Charles Jackson, a young World War II soldier, happens upon a horrific crime—a perverted ritual?—that haunts him for decades.

In 1944, Jackson visited the Musée des Antiquités Nationales. Wandering the grounds, he stumbled into a bunker, where he glimpsed a nameless man drinking a young woman's blood. Shocked and fearful, he fled. War over, Jackson continued his medical studies, eventually becoming a researcher in hematology at Cambridge University, but his memory of the bunker scene, tinged by guilt, persisted. Thus begins a tale of blood obsession, ripe with symbolism drawn

from St. Catherine of Siena, Dante, and from psychology giants like Freud and Ernest Jones. Remembering the bunker scene, Jackson eagerly accepts an invitation to a Paris conference. There, while revisiting the Saint-Germaine museum, he meets Marian, an American Ph.D. student, and immediately falls in love. Marian, however, is teaching English to a man named Verovkin, who turns out to be the bunker blood-drinker from years before. A stumbling romance develops, but Marian, in Verovkin's sway, is killed, and Jackson becomes obsessed: "I wasn't sure I wanted to live, but I did know one thing clearly: that I wanted him dead." Sedgwick's tale chronicles Jackson's mania: Jackson follows Verovkin to Avignon, then Lusanne, and finally to Sextantio, Italy. In the intense narrative, Jackson devolves, a scholar descending into the Nietzschean abyss and turning killer, but Verovkin is static, left to interpretation either as a perverted hemolagniac or a mimic of serial killers like the Vampire of Düsseldorf.

In this macabre psychological thriller, Sedgwick offers atmospheric settings and a relentless, chilling plot that gives a whole new meaning to the idea of "blood feud."



**ROOM FOUR**  
by A.J. Knauss

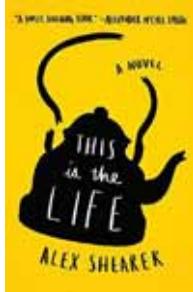
"...a dose of hilarity and a quick cure for the workaday blues."

Pub Date: April 5th, 2012  
ISBN: 9781477572436

"The laugh-out-loud tale of how a hapless accountant endures a three-day coma in the company of another soul in limbo, observing the gritty, often bizarre goings-on of an inner-city emergency room."

- Kirkus Reviews

For information about publication or film rights,  
email [roomfourknauss@yahoo.com](mailto:roomfourknauss@yahoo.com) or call 262-389-5073.



### THIS IS THE LIFE

*Shearer, Alex*

Washington Square/Pocket  
(240 pp.)  
\$16.00 paper | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-4767-6440-5



Two English brothers unite after many years to make sense of the "bits and pieces" of memory, mortality and the thickness of blood in this poignant novel by Shearer (*The Cloud Hunters*, 2012, etc.).

Despite a recent surgery to remove his Stage 4 glioblastoma multiforme, a brain tumor the size of a billiard ball, milky-eyed, bushy-bearded Louis doesn't have much time left. When his younger brother—the book's unnamed narrator—cares for him at his home in Australia, their cohabitation exposes the dysfunction, resentment and deep-seated friction between them. Louis, in childhood the stronger intellectually gifted brother, in adulthood has morphed into a bohemian who eschews traditional careers, hygiene and financial stability. The younger brother, "a disappointment from the start," picks up the slack in his later years and now escorts Louis to his radiotherapy treatments, quizzes him about his bank PIN and replaces his broken tea kettle. Despite the brothers' witty, often playful exchanges, the narrator's care of Louis unleashes bitterness and jealousy. "To my mind, it had all been about Louis our whole lives.... Which is no good to anybody—to be defined as simply being related to somebody else." Shearer's exquisite prose is most powerful when the younger brother comes to appreciate Louis' quirks and unconventional choices and, in the end, eloquently grieves his passing. "We love whom we must, and then we grow, and love whom we will. But still we're caught, like a fish with a swallowed hook, and we can swim downriver nearly all our lives, but end up getting tugged back to the past, to childhood, to our defenseless selves, and we are reeled in."

This pensive, poetic novel, based loosely on Shearer's own experience of losing his brother, humorously though sensitively expresses the complications of sibling relationships, the ambiguity of absolution, and the beauty of life in its last, tender moments.

### BLACK DOG SUMMER

*Sherry, Miranda*

Atria (256 pp.)  
\$25.00 | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-1-4767-7902-7

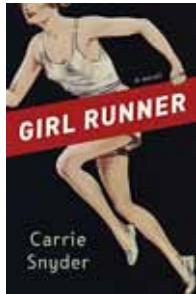


A bright summer morning in the South African bush darkens suddenly as the inhabitants of an animal sanctuary are brutally cut down by machete-wielding men in this debut from a Johannesburg-based novelist.

The massacre leaves Sally's spirit drifting away from her body but unable to leave the Earth. She's pulled inexorably

toward the eternal humming of all the stories of Africa, old and new. Unable to rest until her own tale is told, Sally's spirit pushes inside her family members' bodies, seeing through their eyes the aftermath of grief, remembering through their lives her own past. As Sally's spirit wanders, a nightmare of long making and shattering resonance unfolds. Sally's death leaves her only daughter, Gigi, orphaned; Sally's sister, Adele, reluctantly takes her in. Adele's 11-year-old daughter, Bryony, resents sharing her bedroom with her cousin, and Gigi's refusal to get out of bed, choosing instead to drug herself into a dull twilight sleep, doesn't help matters. While she sleeps, Adele's family struggles to sidestep the tectonic shift in their lives. The pre-existing rift between Adele and her husband, Liam, widens. As Adele tries to honor her obligation to her niece, Liam is wracked with a bone-deep grief that his wife can't fathom. But when the tranquilizers run out and Gigi returns to life, the nightmare deepens, rage percolates, and the horrors of what happened to Sally wait patiently to erupt. Sherry's novel fairly vibrates with tension. Why did Adele banish Sally from her home? Why did Sally then exile herself to the dangerous hinterlands? What horrors did Gigi witness? Why can Lesedi, the carefully circumspect *sangoma*, or healer, next door, see Sally's spirit? And why do shadows and ominous black dogs suddenly lurk at the edges of Bryony's world?

A hauntingly beautiful tale from a writer to watch.



### GIRL RUNNER

*Snyder, Carrie*

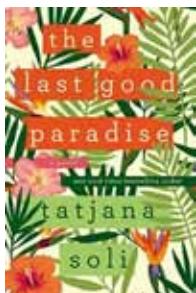
Harper/HarperCollins (288 pp.)  
\$26.99 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-0-06-233604-0

A silenced centenarian harbors a remarkable past in Snyder's (*The Juliet Stories*, 2012, etc.) latest novel.

At age 104, Aganetha Smart has outlived most who would recognize her as a gold-medal-winning runner for Canada in the 1928 Olympics. Despite being ignored by the staff of her nursing home, Aganetha is still mentally spry, with a strong and often humorous inner voice. Her time at the nursing home has been largely uneventful, until one day when a pair of young strangers arrives under the pretense of being distant relatives, and though Aganetha knows this to be untrue—"Everyone known to me is dead, buried, departed, gone, x-ed out from my life, ties severed, bridges burnt, lost, misplaced"—she's eager for a change of scenery and goes along with it. Away from the nursing home, the visitors begin to admit their true motivations. Kaley, a young runner with her own Olympic dreams, claims to be making a documentary about her athletic inspirations with the help of her brother, Max. While Aganetha again knows they're still not being entirely honest, the break from her usual routine is well worth the uncertainty. The narrative leaps back and forth through time, from a young Aganetha surrounded by a family rife with secrets and heartache, to her brief career as an Olympic athlete and model, and finally to the events that lead to the nursing home with little evidence of her

prior glory. The present action with Kaley and Max is often lost in the years of memories, though it plays an equally vital role.

**A tale of family and life after the gold medal that struggles to gain momentum.**



### THE LAST GOOD PARADISE

*Soli, Tatjana*

St. Martin's (320 pp.)

\$25.99 | \$12.99 e-book | Feb. 10, 2015

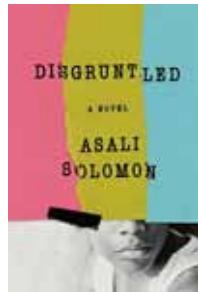
978-1-250-04396-2

978-1-4668-4230-4 e-book

Escapees of all stripes wash up on a remote South Pacific atoll.

If your chef husband's dreams of a new LA fusion restaurant have fallen apart, thanks to a spendthrift partner, and creditors are about to seize your bank account, painstakingly saved over a decade of slaving in a soulless law firm, what would you do? Withdrawing the cash and hopping the first plane to Tahiti is only the start for Ann, the lawyer, and Richard, the chef. Once at a private island resort with no electricity or Internet (which still costs an alarmingly high price), the couple has to contend with their fellow vacationers and the island's staff. The former include fellow Angelenos Dex, an aging, much-married rock star, and his 20-something "muse," Wende. The latter include Tahitians Titi, the cook and housekeeper; her betrothed, all-around handyman and diving coach Cooked; and the manager and island's owner, Loren, a Frenchman who harbors a dreadful secret about the fate of his daughters after he abandoned their mother to an abusive second marriage. This is a promising setup, but Soli's insistence on granting equal voice to every one of these characters results in narrative chaos; Richard and Ann's predicament is dropped as they're caught up in the dramas of these chance acquaintances. Ann's compassion for Loren grows after a few absinthe-soaked afternoons, although she considers his installation of a webcam on the island a betrayal. After contemplating just how many hours of each day go into maintaining her hotness, Wende embraces the revolutionary zeal of Cooked, who wants to expose the horrible toll exacted on the South Pacific by nuclear testing. Jealous, Titi sulks, and Richard takes over the kitchen, learning that food is his primary passion—but we knew that. As progressively less plausible crises proliferate, some very real sharks get jumped.

Aside from the exotic setting, Soli's idiosyncratic prose style is the main attraction here.



### DISGRUNTLED

*Solomon, Asali*

Farrar, Straus and Giroux (256 pp.)

\$26.00 | Feb. 3, 2015

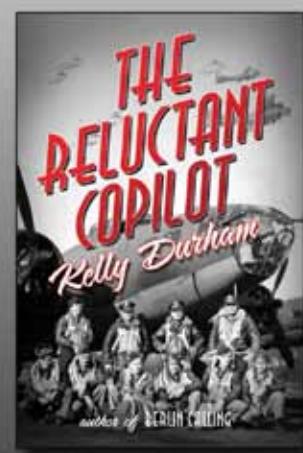
978-0-374-14034-2

In this witty take on 1980s Philadelphia, a young girl comes of age and learns to navigate love, loss, school and family.

Kenya, whom we meet at age 7 and watch graduate from high school into womanhood, is the daughter of Afrocentric parents. Their politics and yearly celebration of Kwanzaa, which entails "sporting an orange, yellow and brown dashiki and a forehead-straining vertical braided hairstyle," make Kenya a social pariah even at her all-black school. In Kenya, Solomon has crafted a character of irrepressible verve and voice who carries us joyously through the novel—even after she witnesses her parents' breakup, when her father is imprisoned for injuring her mother with a gun. With the separation, Kenya is propelled from her safe black Philly

## The Reluctant Copilot

By Kelly Durham



"...Durham's passion shines through in the terrifying battle scenes that he brings alive for readers..."

"An admirable addition to World War II fiction that highlights the contributions of heavy-bombing crews."

—Kirkus Reviews

This incisive World War II novel skillfully brings readers along on nerve-wracking bombing runs in German-held territory.

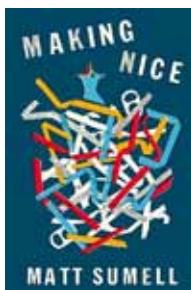
For information about film rights and publishing,  
email [wkellyd@me.com](mailto:wkellyd@me.com)

# "Holden Caulfield meets Andrew Dice Clay in this debut featuring 20 closely linked stories with a single narrator...."

FROM MAKING NICE

world into the white world of an elite private school—the very world her father fled, traumatized and bitter. Here, she becomes a master of code-switching to fit in, all while knowing that her classmates will never truly accept her. After a chance meeting with a black boy from her old neighborhood turns into a failed love affair, Kenya seeks comfort in a visit to her father, newly released from prison. The scenes with Kenya's father, who's enjoying a bigamous life with two new wives and two new sets of kids, are razor-sharp on the contradictions of identity—here, for example, we see Kenya's father, a staunch activist for African-American rights, unable to make the link to respect women's rights. Kenya has a palpable need for her father to become a solid, guiding force as she steps into womanhood, but he can't do it. And when her stepfather loses all her mother's money, Kenya's future college education doesn't quite go as planned. In this debut novel, Solomon (*Get Down*, 2008) examines the confusing moments on the verge of adulthood within the ever shifting makeup of family and society.

**Blackness, feminism and the loss of virginity have never been analyzed by a more astute and witty main character.**



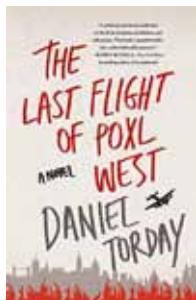
## MAKING NICE

Sumell, Matt  
Henry Holt (240 pp.)  
\$25.00 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-62779-093-2

Holden Caulfield meets Andrew Dice Clay in this debut featuring 20 closely linked stories with a single narrator and a chunk of his life rendered in a coarse, pugnacious style.

Alby introduces himself during a fight with his sister about loading the dishwasher that calls up memories of their mother's last days with cancer. Family dominates the stories when Alby isn't describing his drinking, fighting, pets, sex life and lousy jobs. Filtering isn't for him, so sentences and paragraphs unroll in minicatalogs. A list of roadkill he has seen is followed by: "My mother had cancer," and then: "I came home, held her hand, pushed her pain button, did her nails and fluffed her pillows, brushed her teeth and emptied her piss bag." The story "Making Nice" starts with a paragraph of sentences about misbehavior and violence from ages 5 to 21. Yet a story about nursing a baby bird reveals Sumell's absurdist humor and a softer Alby, who believes he's raising a fierce raptor and even orders a falconing glove online, only to learn he has rescued a cardinal. Another animal will help an older Alby see what has sustained his dark side when he confronts the death of his dog and the attendant pain—"My heart a pond in a hailstorm"—making him wonder about "the force by which my mother's death impacted me." Something human is emerging from the rough specimen who found so much ugliness while growing up in the white suburbs of Long Island. By the long penultimate story, "OK," Alby has matured enough to enjoy a day with his father in a touching tale, the book's best.

**There may be man caves where Sumell's freshman effort will be proudly displayed and even read, but based on "OK," he looks set to produce better, more broadly appealing work.**



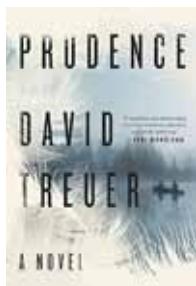
## THE LAST FLIGHT OF POXL WEST

Torday, Daniel  
St. Martin's (304 pp.)  
\$25.99 | Mar. 17, 2015  
978-1-250-05168-4

Elijah Goldstein's devoted Uncle Poxl is a Jewish World War II fighter pilot and an overnight literary sensation. What more could a boy want?

While Torday (*The Sensualist: A Novella*, 2012) is more likely to be compared to Philip Roth or Michael Chabon than Gillian Flynn, his debut novel has two big things in common with *Gone Girl*—it's a story told in two voices, and it's almost impossible to discuss without revealing spoilers. The reversal that defines this novel arrives late and changes the meaning of everything that's come before, but that's all you'll hear about it here. One of the two narrators is Elijah Goldstein, a 15-year-old student in Boston, who begins his tale, promisingly, like this: "Before halftime on Super Bowl Sunday, January 1986, my uncle Poxl came over. He was just months from reaching the height of his fame, and unaware that the game was being played." This fame results from publication of *Skylock: The Memoir of a Jewish RAF Bomber*, which Uncle Poxl has read aloud to Eli in manuscript over sundaes at Cabot's after outings to the opera and the symphony. The entire text of *Skylock* appears here as a book within a book. Poxl's memoir opens with his childhood in Czechoslovakia, where he's the son of a wealthy leather-factory owner and a bohemian mother who poses nude for Egon Schiele. When the *Anschluss* begins, his parents send him to Rotterdam, where he falls hard for a prostitute. His next move takes him to London, where he joins the war effort and ultimately flies a bomber in a firefight over Hamburg. After each section of the memoir, Eli returns to fill us in on reviews in the *Times* and the *Economist*, the book signings and the things we will not be discussing in this review.

**A richly layered, beautifully told and somehow lovable story about war, revenge and loss.**



## PRUDENCE

Treuer, David  
Riverhead (272 pp.)  
\$27.95 | Feb. 5, 2015  
978-1-59463-308-9

Novelist/memoirist Treuer (*Rez Life*, 2012, etc.) returns to the northern woodlands with this understated study of cultures in conflict.

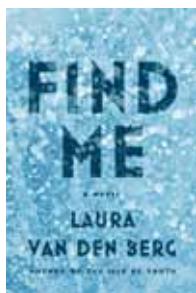
On the surface a murder mystery, Treuer's latest captures rural Minnesota life in a time of transformation. World War II has erupted, sweeping up a generation of young men to go fight; one of them is Frankie Washburn, a child of relative privilege, who is sent off to battle in the skies over Europe. The book begins, however,

“Van den Berg’s...portrayals can...be disarmingly sensitive, as if we might break this girl just by reading about her.”

FROM FIND ME

with a brief prologue set a decade later; there's the arrival of a mysterious Jew—“and no one had seen a Jew on the reservation before”—and the apparently simultaneous death of the title character, a Native American woman whose life is so hard that death must have come as a release. The framing device of that nameless Jew seems odd, since his presence is largely unexplained, but it adds to the sense of impenetrable mystery that surrounds subsequent events. More than one death figures in them, including the sad and memorable dispatch of a “brush wolf,” as does the tumult surrounding the escape of a German submariner from a prison camp nearby. Treuer nicely complicates his storyline by shifting points of view among the principal characters, turning in a kind of *Spoon River Anthology* of stepping beyond the norms: Here is the love that dare not speak its name and that will kill to hold its silence, there, guilt over killings committed in the name of nations, there the discovery that a presumably guilty man is innocent—almost, anyway—and the roiling, always, of conflicts of generation, class and ethnicity: “Nothing else came to him and he thought, for a moment, how stupid it must sound to the white people behind him.”

A self-assured, absorbing story with a grim arc that moves from bad to worse as Treuer explores the darkness at our cores.

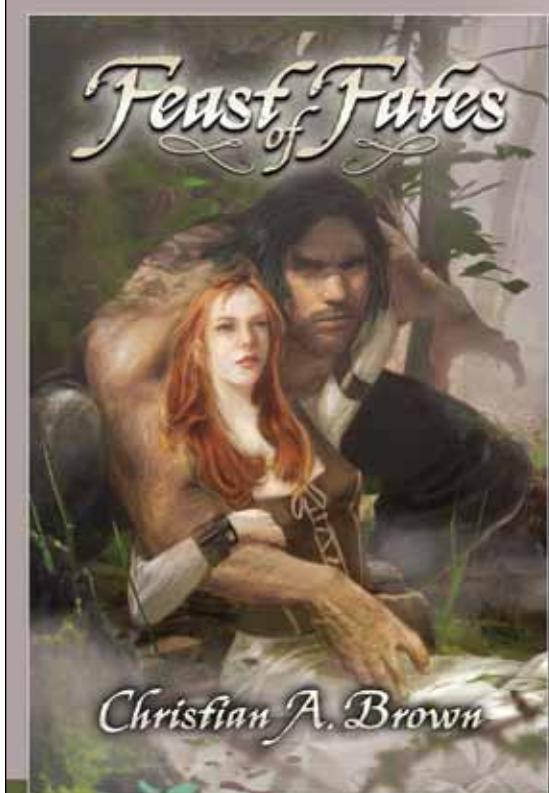


### FIND ME

*van den Berg, Laura*  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux (288 pp.)  
\$26.00 | Feb. 17, 2015  
978-0-374-15471-4

In the last days of modern civilization, a young orphan from Boston makes her way across the dangerous wastelands of America.

This is not an adventure for her. Post-apocalyptic novels can bend in a lot of directions—in the past decade we've seen the murky emotional depths of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, the political metaphor of *World War Z* by Max Brooks, and the fragile state of fear of



## FEAST OF FATES

By Christian A. Brown



“It would have been difficult for Brown to present a more sensual, or satisfying, debut.”

“An unmissable fantasy tale that marries gorgeous prose to a lavishly detailed plot.”

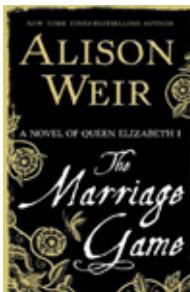
—Kirkus Reviews (starred review)

In this rousing epic-fantasy debut, two unlikely lovers forge a bond in the midst of a war between immortal kings.

For information about film rights and publishing, email [christian@christianadrianbrown.com](mailto:christian@christianadrianbrown.com)

Edan Lepucki's *California*. This debut novel by acclaimed short story writer van den Berg (*The Isle of Youth*, 2013, etc.) tends to lean much closer to the realms of literary fiction with its complex psychology. Our heroine is the ironically named Joy Jones, an emotionally barren young woman with no family or friends who now slogs at a day job under the influence of a soul-deadening amount of cough syrup. She's not the most ebullient spirit even before a modern plague strikes, killing half the world. She's given to saying things like, "I wonder if I will ever know what it's like to feel at peace," and "No one will ever write a Wikipedia page for me." As hundreds of thousands of victims succumb, Joy is taken to a hospital complex in Kansas where she's subjected to strange tests both medical and psychological, has emotionless sex with her roommate and recoils at the deaths of twin boys. While at the hospital, Joy learns that her long-lost mother is an underwater archaeologist featured in a series of television documentaries that she watches like they are her only lifeline. The remainder of the book covers Joy's trek to find her mother, traveling in the company of Marcus, a boy who shared one of her many foster homes. Van den Berg's writing is curiously beautiful, and her portrayals can also be disarmingly sensitive, as if we might break this girl just by reading about her. "I've grown up knowing the world is fragile," she says. "No one needs to tell me that."

**A sad story about a sad girl slouching toward the end of the world.**



### THE MARRIAGE GAME

Weir, Alison

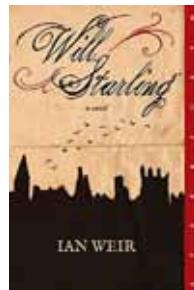
Ballantine (400 pp.)  
\$26.00 | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-0-345-51191-1

A superficial sweep of the first 30 years of Elizabeth I's reign, with a focus on her relentless manipulation of marriage as a personal and political tool.

Historical novelist and biographer Weir (*Elizabeth of York: A Tudor Queen and Her World*, 2013, etc.) builds her novel around the relationship between Elizabeth and Robert Dudley and the ageless speculation about whether they were lovers. Weir is careful and thorough with her research, so the details she offers about Elizabeth's constant play on Dudley's love and desire for power are probably accurate, but the characters fail to feel well-rounded or complex, certainly a tragedy when one is discussing two such rich historical figures as these. The larger backdrop of the queen's reign is overshadowed by her involvement in the "marriage game" of the title as she strings along not only Dudley, but also most of the eligible princes of Europe. Traumatized by her mother Anne Boleyn's fate and painfully aware of the irony that for a queen, taking a husband could only lessen her power, Elizabeth vows to be "a queen first, a woman second." Weir makes frequent mention of the queen's popularity with her people, but the novel fails to illustrate this convincingly; in fact, the whole novel suffers from a lack of "showing" in place of

"telling." There is little believable romance between Elizabeth and Dudley, and while events like the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre, the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, and the defeat of the Spanish Armada do happen, they are dealt with quickly and sketchily. Maybe Weir seeks to subvert our expectations of Elizabeth's strength by emphasizing her humanity, but Elizabeth emerges as capricious, vain and not particularly admirable.

**It's hard to be sympathetic for 400 pages of temper tantrums. (Agent: Julian Alexander)**



### WILL STARLING

Weir, Ian

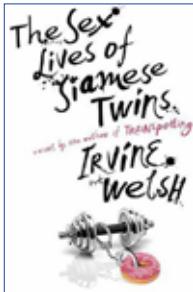
Steerforth (480 pp.)  
\$17.00 paper | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-58642-230-1



Framing the mystery within Weir's (*Daniel O'Thunder*, 2011) novel is an extraordinary rendition of life in Regency-era London.

The eponymous narrator awaits the noose at Newgate Prison. Will is innocent, but he's tainted by his association with the resurrection trade, provenance of those willing to haul a fresh corpse to the porter at Guy's Hospital for dissection. It's 1816. Many surgeons returned from the Napoleonic War expert with scalpel and bone saw. What had been a barbarous, bloody business began integrating into medicine as treatment, leading to a demand for cadavers to train prospective surgeons. Grave-robbing resurrection men supplied hospitals and surgeons like Dionysus Atherton, "brightest rising star in the surgical firmament." Others, like Will's employer, Alec Comrie, "a growling Scotsman with a bonesaw," avoid the ghouls. Weir's worth reading simply for his characters: grave-robber Jemmy Cheese, with "too much imagination for it"; his pawn-shop-owning brother, Edward Cheshire, a "scholar"; and prostitute Meg Nancarrow, "beautiful...in the way a small fierce thing can have beauty." A man's murdered over a resurrection secret. With Meg hanged for it, Atherton becomes "shipwrecked into obsession" over the idea the "dead may be summoned back." Weir has written a mystery worthy of every word while adding historical tidbits about foundling homes housing "[b]lits of flotsam no one cares about"; the Bow Street Runners; slums like St. Giles, that "vast appalling rookery"; and Keats as a medical student. Characters roll and scheme through a plot as snaky as a London alley in a setting as powerful as a chamber pot tossed from a garret window. No happy tale this, but Starling's adventures among the Spavined Clerk, the Wreck of Tom Sheldrake, Boggle-Eyed Bob and Alf the Ale-Draper are a delight all the same.

**What Dickens might have written had he set loose Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll to explore the doomsday trade.**



## THE SEX LIVES OF SIAMESE TWINS

Welsh, Irvine

Doubleday (336 pp.)  
\$26.00 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-0-385-53938-8

A rage-fueled gym rat enters into an abusive, symbiotic relationship with an overweight artist in a brash, decidedly Welsh-ian study of body image and media.

Scottish cult legend Welsh (*Skagboys*, 2012, etc.) takes a detour to Miami Beach for this novel, in which lead narrator Lucy puts her well-machined physique to good use early, stopping a gunman taking aim at two guys on a highway. A witness, Lena, records the incident, making Lucy into a momentary celebrity. But Lucy's dreams of parlaying her semifame into a *Biggest Loser*-style reality show die quickly: The gunman turns out to have been aiming at alleged pedophiles, complicating the media narrative, and Lucy's adrenalized demeanor alienates her would-be TV partners. Lucy does everything in a fury, from emails to back-alley sex with men and women she picks up in clubs, suggesting that the friendship she starts with Lena won't go well. Indeed, it goes badly in a humanity-at-its-worst kind of way. What begins as Lucy's boot-camp-style fitness plan for Lena, a brilliant artist unlucky in love, turns into a captivity tale that explores the body and our obsession with others to a disarming, at times grotesque degree. (The title refers to a subplot involving a media circus about conjoined twins.) Welsh writes intelligently in two registers—blown-gasket Lucy and subdued, self-pitying Lena—and he uses those differing tones to ingeniously explore how self-image influences our perceptions of others. The flaw is that the novel's opening sense of emotional subtlety with both characters degrades into something more farcical, as the women become more blunt representations of fat vs. thin, punctuated with Grand Guignol splashes. Welsh isn't given to hollow provocation, but the depth of his social critique is undermined by his more absurd plot turns.

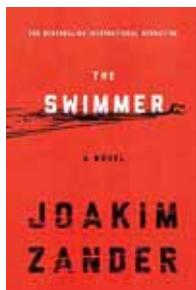
**A sometimes pleasurable over-the-top, sometimes simplistic proof that physical and mental health aren't always intertwined.** (*Author tour to Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami and New York*)

## THE SWIMMER

Zander, Joakim

Translated by Wessel, Elizabeth Clark  
Harper/HarperCollins (432 pp.)  
\$27.99 | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-0-06-233724-5

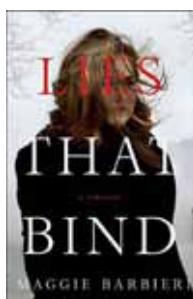
An international thriller with the pace and intensity of a Jason Bourne adventure, Zander's debut follows the intertwining stories of a young Swedish woman and a washed-up American spy.



It's 1980, and a car bomb detonates in Damascus, killing the mother of a baby girl. Skip ahead three decades: It's 2013, and Swedish graduate student Mahmoud Shammash (dissertation topic: "The Privatization of War") receives an anonymous email requesting a meeting. "I have information that's of interest to us both," the note says, followed by an unsettling warning: "Be careful, you're being watched." Meanwhile, in Brussels, George Lööw, lobbyist for the world's biggest PR firm, receives a sinister assignment of his own from a shadowy American company. Among his instructions? Bug the office of a young parliamentary aide named Klara Walldeen—who just happens to be the estranged ex-girlfriend of Mahmoud. Why is George tracking Klara? He's not sure, just as Mahmoud isn't sure why he's being watched, just as Klara isn't sure why—days later—Mahmoud has suddenly reappeared in her life streaked with blood. But when Mahmoud and Klara find themselves in possession of dangerous information, one thing becomes clear: All three of them have been unwittingly thrust into a world of international conspiracy, and the stakes are life and death. Skillfully moving between the past and the present, from Sweden to Syria to Washington and back again, Zander weaves an increasingly tight web of intrigue and suspense with Klara at the center. And if the novel occasionally veers toward spy-movie clichés, it's quickly reanchored by the strength of its characters. Beyond the blood-pumping chase sequences and requisite shootouts, there is real humanity here.

**A compulsively readable page-turner with unexpected heart.**

## M Y S T E R Y



### LIES THAT BIND

Barbieri, Maggie

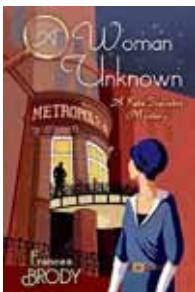
Minotaur (304 pp.)  
\$25.99 | \$12.99 e-book | Feb. 17, 2015  
978-1-250-01170-1  
978-1-250-01169-5 e-book

Maeve Conlon's life changes forever when a former neighbor reveals that she has a sister.

Maeve (*Once Upon a Lie*, 2013) grew up in the Bronx as an only child. Her father's devotion to "Little Mavy. The most perfect girl in the world" sent Margie and Dolores Haggerty, who lived down the street with their verbally abusive, alcoholic parents, into fits of jealousy. But is it envy alone that prompts Dolores to tell Maeve at Jack Conlon's funeral: "You need to find...[y]our sister"? Gradually, over the course of weeks, Maeve extracts pitifully few details from the Haggertys: The child's name was Aibhlinn, and she was sent away because she was developmentally disabled. Maeve already has enough to cope with: a break-in at her bakery, The Comfort Zone; her assistant Jo's pregnancy; a raise in rent from her garlicky

landlord, Sebastian DuClos; a promising new relationship with local cop Chris Larsson; a missing insurance check; and Christmas dinner with her ex-husband, Cal, and his new wife, Gabriela. But she can't let go of Aibhlinn. Convinced that her sister was sent to Mansfield, a residential placement shuttered years ago for gross negligence, Maeve joins a support group for relatives of "the Mansfield Missing," who disappeared when the facility closed. She grills Jimmy Moriarty, her late dad's closest friend. And she confronts Regina Hartwell, who worked at Mansfield when her sister would have been there. But for all her determination and persistence, what Maeve gets in return are dodges, hedges and, as she increasingly suspects, outright lies.

**Maeve's second outing matches all the reward of being a daughter and all the challenge of being a parent with the newfound wonder of becoming a sister.**



### A WOMAN UNKNOWN

*Brody, Frances*

Minotaur (384 pp.)

\$25.99 | \$12.99 e-book | Feb. 10, 2015

978-1-250-03704-6

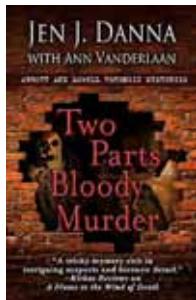
978-1-250-03705-3 e-book

Divorce, murder and hanky-panky in post-World War I England.

Kate Shackleton is a private investigator, a war widow and a woman of means, thanks to her adoption by a well-off family.

Her assistant, Mr. Sykes, introduces her to Mr. Fitzpatrick, who wants to know what his wife, Deirdre, is doing while he's at work. Sykes had gotten Deirdre off on a shoplifting charge, but now she's up to something very different. Deirdre's mother is dying, and she needs money for her care. Her marriage has become so miserable that she craves escape. So she's found a source of both income and adventure acting as the other woman in divorce cases. Her job requires no more than that she show up at a hotel and be seen in bed with the gentleman seeking the divorce. Unfortunately, she awakes one morning to discover that Everett Runcie, her latest client, is dead. Runcie had planned to provide evidence to help his wealthy American wife, Philippa divorce him. He didn't want his long-term mistress, Caroline Windham, to be involved, even though everyone who's anyone has known of their affair for years. Kate's romance with Scotland Yard DCI Marcus Charles has cooled, but Marcus is quickly handed the murder. Now Kate has commissions from both Fitzpatrick—to find his missing wife—and Philippa Runcie—to look into the murder. Although Marcus asks for her help, his reluctance to discuss the case with her naturally fuels her desire to discover the killer before he does.

*Brody (Murder in the Afternoon, 2014, etc.) continues to show why she's one of the best at re-creating the atmosphere and language of classic golden-age British mysteries.*



### TWO PARTS BLOODY MURDER

*Danna, Jen. J. with Vanderlaan, Ann*

Five Star (282 pp.)

\$25.95 | Feb. 18, 2015

978-1-4328-3027-4

An ice-cold case heats up when a new murderer discloses an old one.

Checking out a story about a body hidden in an old building, Massachusetts State Police Trooper Leigh Abbott finds a recently dead man. Then, while waiting

for the crime scene team, she and the medical examiner find a hidden door. At the bottom of the stairs is the Blue Ruin speakeasy, and behind a brick wall are the remains of a corpse. It's a perfect case for Leigh to work with her lover, forensic anthropologist Dr. Matt Lowell, and his team. Someone has been sending Leigh packages of material suggesting that her father, a respected state trooper killed in the line of duty, was a dirty cop. She takes a chance on asking a computer expert to go over the material while she works the two murders. The more recent corpse is that of Peter Holt, the only son of wealthy widow Evelyn Holt. And the skeletal remains prove to be those of Charles Ward, Mrs. Holt's father, who's been missing ever since Prohibition. Since Ward was the owner of the speakeasy, Leigh looks for a connection between the Holt family and the Kain family, who first reported the possibility of the hidden body. The elder Kain, now in a nursing home with Alzheimer's, was once a bricklayer, and evidence suggests that Ward was killed with a bricklayer's tool. Although Leigh is certain that Kain is Charles Ward's killer, she can't prove it, and the long-ago unsolved murder of Kain's wife only complicates the case. As they dig for clues, Leigh and Matt find feuding families, an innocent man in prison and new information about Leigh's father.

Leigh's fourth (*A Flame in the Wind of Death*, 2014, etc.) is a complex case loaded with forensic and historical detail, the authors' best so far.



### SUPPOSED TO DIE

*Dutton, Hugh*

Five Star (258 pp.)

\$25.95 | Feb. 18, 2015

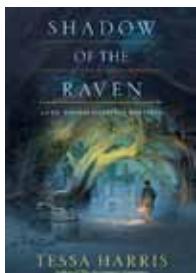
978-1-4328-3013-7

Can't an innocent ex-con catch a break?

Fresh out of a Florida penitentiary for killing his mother-in-law, Joe Tree makes a beeline for the Lobster Tank, his friend Mack Dias' bar. Not only does Joe need a sympathetic ear, Mack also has been holding a cache of gold that Joe intends to use to get back on his feet. But at the bar, Jimmy Spanola, who owns a neighboring restaurant, breaks the bad news that Mack killed himself over a year ago. And of course there's no sign of the gold. Mack left behind a widow named Maxine, who wasn't yet in the picture when Joe went to prison. Once hot-tempered cop Gary Bigelow gets wind that Joe is

back on the street, he's anxious to put him back in the pen pronto. Bigelow appeals to Detective Eric Wetzgar to put the squeeze on Joe. Wetzgar blows him off with a condescension that enrages Bigelow. So while Joe is following a lead on his missing gold, Bigelow is putting three bullets in Wetzgar's head. He plans to frame Joe for the murder and take over Wetzgar's lucrative blackmailing racket. Luckily, Joe finds a strong ally (and love interest) in attorney Lita Cordona, a master at trading wisecracks with her secretary, Erica. Can this trio uncover Bigelow's maniacal plot before Joe gets sent back to prison for murder?

**Dutton's debut packs so many minor characters into his opening chapters that it's hard to connect to the hero, but her storytelling has grit and the sleuthing trio has nice chemistry.**



### SHADOW OF THE RAVEN

*Harris, Tessa*

Kensington (368 pp.)

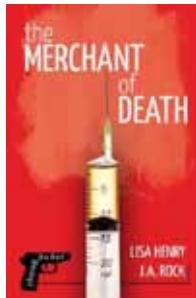
\$15.00 paper | Jan. 27, 2015

978-0-7582-9339-8

Deception, murder and land wars thwart Dr. Thomas Silkstone's latest attempt to find happiness with his beloved Lydia.

For hundreds of years, the villagers of Brandwick have enjoyed common land that Sir Montagu Malthus, the caretaker of Boughton Estate in Oxfordshire, is threatening to enclose. When his surveyor, Jeffrey Turgoose, is shot to death and Turgoose's young assistant badly injured, it's easy for Malthus to blame the angry villagers. Turgoose's friend, the coroner of Oxford, calls in Dr. Thomas Silkstone, a Philadelphia anatomist who doesn't rely on unwarranted assumptions. But Malthus is highly displeased with Silkstone's findings, including a clue based on a thriving moonshine operation. The American doctor has a history of discord with Malthus, who's even more powerful now that he has total control over the young heir of Boughton and the boy's mother, Lady Lydia Farrell, is conveniently committed to Bethlem Hospital. After being turned away several times, Silkstone is finally able to visit Lydia at the institution commonly called Bedlam, where he's horrified to find the pretty young widow he's been courting pallid as a ghost. Worse yet, Malthus has turned Lydia against Silkstone as part of a complex plot to seize control of more than just the Boughton Estate. Silkstone's attempts to fight back bring him into closer sympathy with the villagers and help unmask a mysterious highwayman. But even with justice, love and forensic science on Silkstone's side, his dreams of reunion with his Lydia—and the reader's hopes of resolution—seem dimmer than ever.

**The opening of Harris' (*The Lazarus Curse*, 2014, etc.) latest 18th-century romantic mystery nearly bogs down in back story. Once it gains momentum, however, one disaster relentlessly follows another for the lovelorn doctor from the Colonies.**



### THE MERCHANT OF DEATH

*Henry, Lisa; Rock, J.A.*

Riptide (205 pp.)

\$16.99 paper | \$5.99 e-book | Feb. 2, 2015

978-1-62649-222-6

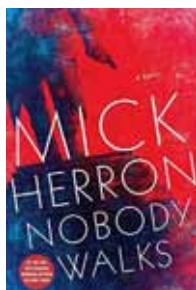
978-1-62649-221-9 e-book

A federal agent and a man on the lam re-enact Shakespeare when they try to expose a major con job.

When Henry Page flees Indianapolis FBI agent Ryan "Mac" McGuinness, it's not

the first time he's run out on the agent—or on anyone else in his life. But he's more regretful than usual, and not just because Mac was shot while protecting Henry at their hideout in Mac's family's cabin. Although they were on the verge of consummating an undeniable passion, Henry convinces himself it would have been one of the biggest mistakes of a life already full of wrong turns, bad decisions and hard luck. He's a thief and Mac's the law, and though Henry was a key witness in an upcoming trial, it's back to his life of crime, mostly because his twin sister, Viola, needs him. It's also time for him to return to being Sebastian Hanes, as his late, boozy, failed actress of a mother named him. Henry feels responsible for Viola and the accident that left her with the mind of a child. She even fears the people at the expensive care center that demands exorbitant monthly fees—and constant scams by Henry. The suspicious death of an elderly resident of the center goads Henry into stashing Viola in a more-or-less safe place and dressing up to take her place and expose what he's sure is a big fraud. Then Mac, who's in the doghouse for letting his witness get away, gets pulled into the sting. Although he's never considered himself remotely straight, he finds that Henry/Sebastian's role as Viola adds a whole new tantalizing layer of complexity—and bids him put his career and his life on the line to help the man he loves and save sweet, vulnerable Viola.

Henry and Rock's witty, gritty, occasionally graphic sequel to *Two Gentlemen From Altona* (2014) forces a buttoned-down G-man to face 50 shades of ambiguity, not only of his endearing co-hero, but also of the odd couple's future together.



### NOBODY WALKS

*Herron, Mick*

Soho Crime (304 pp.)

\$26.95 | Feb. 17, 2015

978-1-61695-486-4

The suspicious death of his son brings an undercover spook for MI-5's Special Ops out of retirement with a vengeance.

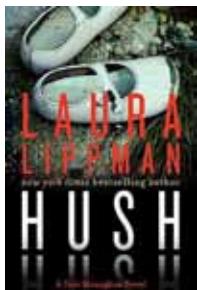
When cancer claimed his wife, Hannah, seven years ago, Tom Bettany couldn't be bothered bonding with his son, Liam. Instead, he retreated to France and took a job loading the trucks that served a meat-packing plant. Now the news that Liam's fallen from the balcony of his flat—really a terrace barely a foot wide—while smoking a joint finally brings him back home.

**"Lippman's latest...weaves an exploration of the joys and frustrations of motherhood with a clever and engaging mystery."**

FROM *HUSH HUSH*

Even before he realizes that there's no sign of a lighter or match Liam could have used to light up, Tom's inquiries about who sold his son the Muskrat he was smoking have ruffled some serious feathers. A shadowy criminal kingpin named Bishop is very interested in his movements. So are the Brothers McGarry, still smarting from the work he did in sending them to prison. Even Dame Ingrid Tearney, First Desk at Tom's old intelligence service, gets into the act. A trained operative like Tom has no trouble with the first wave of thugs sent to hurt him, and he's not very kind to Tearney's errand boy, either. But what are the odds that he'll be able to stay alive long enough to confront Liam's boss, millionaire video game developer Vincent Driscoll, and find out who was kind enough to light Liam's last spliff?

**Herron (*Dead Lions*, 2013, etc.) strips his revenge story to the bone, paring away unnecessary characters, episodes, speeches and gestures to produce a violent little elegy that grows both more clever and more sour as it hurtles along.**



### HUSH HUSH

Lippman, Laura

Morrow/HarperCollins (384 pp.)  
\$26.99 | \$15.99 e-book | Feb. 24, 2015  
978-0-06-208342-5  
978-0-06-208344-9 e-book



Lippman's latest installment in the Tess Monaghan series weaves an exploration of the joys and frustrations of motherhood with a clever and engaging mystery.

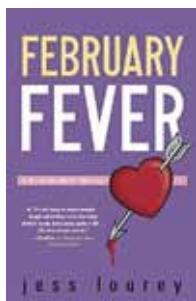
In the last Monaghan mystery, *The Girl in the Green Raincoat* (2011), Tess solved a *Rear Window*-style crime when her doctor confined her to bed rest at the end of her pregnancy. Fast-forwarding three years, Lippman has brought Tess back, now the mother of toddler Carla Scout as well as a full-time PI. She has taken on a new partner, ex-homicide cop Sandy Sanchez (the protagonist of Lippman's excellent 2014 stand-alone, *After I'm Gone*), but even with Sandy's help Tess struggles to juggle her tantrum-prone daughter, her relationship with longtime boyfriend Crow and her work. The job in question is complex and juicy: Tess has been hired by the rich and haughty Melisandre Harris Dawes, who killed her infant daughter by leaving her in a sweltering car. Dawes was found not guilty by reason of insanity (specifically, postpartum psychosis), but after her trial, she gave away custody of her older daughters, divorced her husband and fled the country. Now she's returned to Baltimore and wants Tess to look into her security. She's also commissioned a documentary on the insanity defense, giving Lippman plenty of room to share her observations on our passion for reality TV and obsession with the most horrifying crimes. Before long, both Dawes and Tess are receiving notes with creepy stalker overtones, and the case takes a nasty, violent turn.

Tess' constant worry about whether she's a good mother dovetails ironically with Dawes' fight to win her daughters back. Lippman dives deep not only into the ways women tend to question their choices and abilities, but also into whether all mothers, and kids, are a little crazy.

### FEBRUARY FEVER

Lourey, Jess

Midnight Ink/Llewellyn (264 pp.)  
\$14.99 paper | Feb. 8, 2015  
978-0-7387-4214-4



Librarian/freelance reporter/budding private eye/corpse-finder Mira James is at it again.

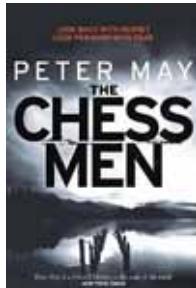
Mira's boyfriend, Johnny, has announced that he's leaving for four months to do an environmental science internship in Portland, Oregon. She's depressed until her octogenarian buddy Mrs. Berns insists that she and Mira travel to Portland for a private investigators' conference and finds the acrophobic Mira an alternate way to travel. A special Valentine Train is heading that way, so Mira, Mrs. Berns, and their laid-back pothead friend, Jed Heitke, climb aboard. As Jed points out, at least she won't find another body in tiny Battle Lake, Minnesota, as she has every month since she moved there. Instead, she finds a body on the train. Across from Mira and Mrs. Berns' tiny sleeping compartment is a family whose young daughter, Aimee, reminds Mira of her childhood best friend, a girl who was kidnapped before Mira's eyes and never found. So when the mother is found poisoned and her husband and daughter vanish, Mira is determined to find Aimee. Terry Downs, another private eye, is already on the train, and before it's allowed to leave, still another, TV star Doghn Attenborough, shows up looking for publicity. The conductor asks the three of them to investigate. As Mira snoops around, she convinces herself the murderer is still aboard and decides that only Mrs. Berns and Jed can be trusted. When the train gets stuck in a violent snowstorm, hysteria sweeps the passengers, making the investigation even more difficult.

**The best outing yet for Mira (*January Thaw*, 2014, etc.). There's still a surfeit of eccentric characters, but the mystery keeps you guessing and sets up the sequel nicely.**

### THE CHESSMEN

May, Peter

Quercus (320 pp.)  
\$26.99 | \$26.99 e-book | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-62365-604-1  
978-1-62365-605-8 e-book



Back on Lewis Island, the quiet Hebrides outpost where he was born (*The Lewis Man*, 2013, etc.), murder keeps stalking Fin McLeod, late of the Edinburgh CID — this time accompanied by harrowing revelations about his own early years.

Emerging from a shelter where they've taken refuge from a passing storm, Fin and his childhood friend Whistler Macaskill realize that a bog burst has drained a nearby loch far enough to reveal the wreckage of a small airplane. From the insignia, they recognize the plane flown by their old friend Roddy Mackenzie, who disappeared 17 years ago. An ill-advised look into the plane's

cabin tells Fin that Roddy's finally come home. The revelation of his death opens fresh wounds for the members of Amran, the band he'd played for, especially for singer Mairead Morrison, whose lovely image had been the symbol of its runaway success. The discovery means that Fin will have little time to do the job his old friend Kenny John Maclean has hired him for—rid the Red River Estate, which Kenny manages for the Wooldridge family, of the poachers who've overrun it—and even less to testify on behalf of the Rev. Donald Murray, the father of Fin's newly discovered son Fionnlagh's girlfriend, Donna, and the other grandfather to Donna's baby, Eilidh. Church elders, unhappy that Donald stalked and shot the gangsters about to execute his wife and daughter, plan to remove him from the ministry of the Crobost Free Church. If only they knew how many other locals were walking around burdened by sins all the heavier for remaining hidden.

**May's poetic descriptions in this final installment of his Lewis trilogy alternate with the loutish behavior of the characters, who are constantly slapping, slugging and coshing each other. The mystery—really, the mysteries—are untidy, but the atmosphere is altogether magical.**



### THE ACCIDENTAL ALCHEMIST

Pandian, *Gigi*

Midnight Ink/Llewellyn (360 pp.)

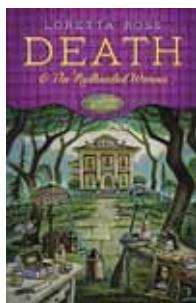
\$14.99 paper | Jan. 8, 2015

978-0-7387-4184-0

An alchemist moves to Oregon in an attempt to leave her old ways behind only to find that they've followed her in the form of a 3-foot-tall talking gargoyle.

While she's unpacking boxes in Portland, Zoe Faust discovers an unwelcome addition to her baggage: a stone gargoyle as tall as a yardstick. She thinks that having an unexpected and unwieldy stone statue is trouble enough until the gargoyle comes to life and greets her in a thick French accent. Dorian Robert-Houdin—of course a French-speaking gargoyle must have a hyphenated name—was brought to life by his father, a renowned human magician in the 1800s. Dorian is desperate for Zoe's help, because in spite of the magic that brought him to life, his animation appears to be fading. Terrified of being trapped in his own stone body, he's followed Zoe to Portland because he knows the truth about her: She's not just some herbal hobbyist, but a real alchemist. Zoe has been hoping to escape her old life as a closeted immortal in France and also needs a new town where no one will guess her secret. Once she agrees to help Dorian, Zoe runs into trouble of her own when the handyman she's hired to help with the house shows up dead on her doorstep on his first day. Zoe lets it slip to Detective Max Liu that she can tell poison was involved, but she can't tell him that she can smell it on the body. Now Zoe's got two mysteries to solve, each a case of life and death, and the best help she's got are her new stone friend and a troublemaker kid, Brixton, who may be in it just to prove Dorian's existence to the outside world.

**Though the world of Pandian's new series may not sound any more appealing than Zoe's vegan recipes, it's just as satisfying in the end.**



### DEATH AND THE REDHEADED WOMAN

Ross, *Loretta*

Midnight Ink/Llewellyn (264 pp.)

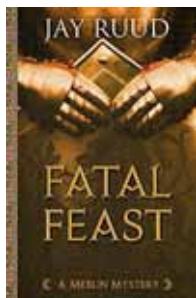
\$14.99 paper | Feb. 8, 2015

978-0-7387-4393-6

An auctioneer and a former Marine make a formidable pair of sleuths.

Arriving at the Campbell house to inventory the contents for an upcoming auction, auctioneer Wren Morgan finds a naked corpse. At the police station she meets Death Bogart, who pronounces his first name "Deeth," just like the middle name of fictional detective Lord Peter Wimsey. Death's parents and younger brother were all killed in accidents while he was serving in Afghanistan, and his wife dumped him in absentia. He returned home still suffering from serious wounds that dashed his hopes of being a cop or firefighter. Now he's living in his car and working as a bounty hunter. Death recognizes the dead man as ex-con Flow Whitaker, a fence involved in a case he's working. The Campbell house, willed to the Historical Society by the late Ava Fairchild, is rumored to be the hiding place of two sets of jewels. The first set went missing during the Civil War; the only clue to their whereabouts is the owner's dying ramblings. The second set is an assortment of modern jewels Death hopes will lead to a murderer. Wren and Death strike sparks, and he helps her look for the jewels at the Campbell house, where she's too nervous to be alone, especially after someone takes a shot at them. Their search puts both of them in danger from more than one criminal bent on finding the jewels. As their romance heats up, however, Death's prospects improve, and they find some clues that may solve both cases.

**Ross' debut features a likable pair of sleuths, some local Missouri history and a nice little mystery. First of a planned series.**



### FATAL FEAST

Ruud, *Jay*

Five Star (298 pp.)

\$25.95 | Jan. 21, 2015

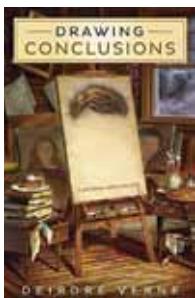
978-1-4328-2987-2

An Irish knight's death puts King Arthur's kingdom in peril when the accused culprit is Queen Guinevere.

The death of Sir Patrise comes as a complete surprise to the knights who have gathered for the feast Queen Guinevere has laid out. Who would wish to harm a foreign visitor, especially when the Irish have been so recently welcomed to Logres, the land of King Arthur's rule? But it appears that Sir Patrise has been killed by someone at the feast, and his cousin, Sir Mador, demands justice from the person he suspects as the murderer: Arthur's queen. Guinevere is shocked and wishes she could be defended by her husband. She knows, however, that his attachment to her would not warrant that level of commitment in spite of their many years of

marriage. With her usual defender, Sir Lancelot, out of the country, she has none to rely on except her loyal page, Gildas. Though Arthur will not fight on Guinevere's behalf, he entreats Gildas to seek out Merlin so that the two of them may determine the identity of the true murderer while the queen awaits trial. Merlin has been sequestered in a cave, driven near madness by his obsession with Nimue, Damsel of the Lake, but he reluctantly joins Gildas in the quest to absolve Guinevere. Struggling to work together, the two wade through a *People* magazine's worth of court gossip, attached to the names of knights so numerous, noble and nondescript that the real problem may be distinguishing one from another.

**Strong in neither historical intrigue nor investigative suspense, Ruud's debut is at its best in providing its characters with sassy if questionably accurate personalities.**



## DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

*Verne, Deirdre*

Midnight Ink/Llewellyn (312 pp.)  
\$14.99 paper | Feb. 8, 2015  
978-0-7387-4131-4

A freegan and a cop make an oddly effective sleuthing team.

Even though she's a talented artist, free-spirited CeCe Prentice is the black sheep of her wealthy family. Her father, Dr. William Prentice, is the founder of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratories on Long Island's ritzy north shore. CeCe lives nearby with her brother's best friend, Charlie, clothing designer Becky, and Jonathan and Trina, who specialize in organic farming. Arriving home from a trip on which her freegan friends have gathered discarded food to eat, she finds the police waiting to tell her that her twin brother, Theodore, is dead. CeCe has never lived up to her father's strict standards. Her neglected mother is an alcoholic. But Teddy, a DNA specialist, was the perfect son. CeCe is immediately attracted to Detective DeRosa, who reminds her of Teddy. When CeCe is poisoned by scavenged eggs and then kidnapped on the way to the funeral and almost killed by a mysterious limousine driver, Teddy's death seems even more suspicious. Then his former girlfriend commits suicide, Becky suddenly moves out, and DeRosa flies to Italy to follow up on clues he won't reveal. CeCe's remarkable talents as a sketch artist, which have already helped DeRosa, will reveal a startling secret and a motive for murder.

**Verne's mystery is a winner, with plenty of twists and turns, an intriguing heroine and an ending that shocks in more ways than one.**

## SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY

### KAREN MEMORY

*Bear, Elizabeth*

Tor (352 pp.)  
\$25.99 | \$12.99 e-book | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-0-7653-7524-7  
978-1-4668-4634-0 e-book



Steampunk: Something of a new venture for Bear, whose previous output (*Stellos of the Sky*, 2014, etc.) has ranged from heroic fantasy to science fiction, often with an embedded murder mystery.

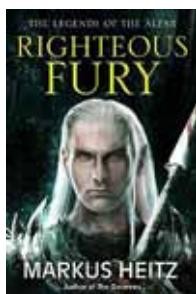
By the late 19th century, airships ply the trade and passenger routes, optimistic miners head in droves for the Alaskan gold fields, and steam-powered robots invented by licensed Mad Scientists do much of the heavy (and sometimes delicate) work. In Rapid City on the U.S. northwest coast, Madame Damnable operates the Hôtel Mon Cherie, a high-class bordello, paying a hefty "sewing machine tax" for the privilege. Here, orphaned horse-breaker and narrator Karen Memery (Bear doesn't tell us why the book's title is spelled differently) works among similarly lively, engaging and resourceful girls. One night, Priya, a malnourished but tough young woman, arrives at the door carrying the badly wounded Merry Lee, who escaped from one of the grim brothels operated by brutal gangster Peter Bantle and has since made a career of rescuing other indentured girls from Bantle's clutches. Madame Damnable's steam-powered mechanical surgeon saves Merry's life—but not before Bantle himself shows up, wearing, Karen notes, a peculiar glove that somehow can compel others to obey his commands. Worse, the following night the girls discover the body of a murdered prostitute nearby. U.S. Deputy Marshal Bass Reeves arrives with his Comanche sidekick, Tomoatooh; they're tracking a serial killer who seems to have made his way to Rapid City. The story swiftly knots itself into steampunk-ishly surreal complications, with dauntless (and, by this point, love-stricken) Karen in the thick of the action.

**Supplies all the Bear necessities: strong female characters, existential threats, intriguing developments and a touch of the light fantastic. (Agent: Jennifer Jackson)**

### RIGHTEOUS FURY

*Heitz, Markus*

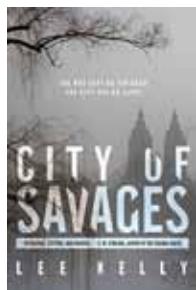
Translated by Alabaster, Sheelagh  
Jo Fletcher/Quercus (400 pp.)  
\$24.99 | \$24.99 e-book | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-1-62365-883-0  
978-1-62365-884-7 e-book



From the author of the best-selling Dwarves series (*The Fate of the Dwarves*, 2008, etc.), a new venture retelling substantially the same story but from a radically different point of view; it first appeared in Germany in 2009.

The dark elves, or älfar, are renowned for their uncompromising warrior ethos. Their rulers, the Inextinguishables—an incestuous brother-sister couple so overwhelming in aspect that other älfar cannot behold them without going mad—decree that the elves (for whom the älfar bear a particular loathing) shall be destroyed. First, though, they will need to unlock the gates of the impregnable fortress that bars access. So they dispatch warriors Caphalor and Sinthoras to obtain the support of a mist-demon. Caphalor's Constellations faction believes only in defensive wars, while Sinthoras' rival Comets thirst for conquest. Sinthoras, a great artist, owns Raleeha, a human who voluntarily gave herself into slavery in order to learn to create great art; as punishment for a minor oversight, Sinthoras blinds her. Caphalor, meanwhile, watches in approval as his daughter lobotomizes a potentially rebellious slave. To reach the mist-demon, they brave many perils, including defeat and humiliation at the hands of the gnomelike fflecx, who are expert poisoners, and the gälran zhadar, whose magic and technology is unsurpassed. After many adventures, they return, their limitless contempt for nonälfar races and boundless arrogance somewhat tempered, with the mist-demon's agreement—or so they think. This excellent back story, driven by unrelenting action, springs to life through the vivid, vigorous writing and almost despite characters so unpleasant it's difficult to sympathize with them. The intricate älfar artworks, derived mostly from flayed or eviscerated enemies, both intrigue and repel.

Fine for fans of the Dwarves series; others may be in for an uncomfortable visit. (*Agent: Tanja Howarth*)



### CITY OF SAVAGES

*Kelly, Lee*

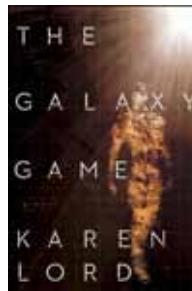
Saga/Simon & Schuster (416 pp.)  
\$25.99 | \$13.99 e-book | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-4814-1030-4  
978-1-4814-1032-8 e-book

Two sisters try to survive in the ruins of New York City not quite two decades after a world war destroyed civilization.

Sky, Phee, and their mother, Sarah, navigate bombed-out streets and scavenge food. In the summertime, they live in a Wall Street apartment with a roof garden, shooting squirrels and escaped zoo animals. In winter, they join the POW camp in Central Park. However, events force them out of the camp and into the subway tunnels where cannibals roam, and they find themselves in a far more dangerous and secure prison. Kelly writes in alternating chapters from the viewpoints of the very different sisters: Sky, older but smaller, and Phee, physically aggressive and less intellectual. She ties the book together with their mother's journal, which the girls read secretly because their mother refuses to discuss the past. It describes Sarah's effort to survive with two babies just after the attacks destroyed the city and provides some answers for the girls. The author doesn't shrink from depicting the post-apocalyptic violence, some of it extreme, in a street fight and in gun battles. The galloping tension keeps the pages turning.

Romance enters the plot when both girls fall for the same boy, a recent arrival by boat from England, who reveals a major secret.

Gripping stuff.



### THE GALAXY GAME

*Lord, Karen*

Del Rey/Ballantine (336 pp.)  
\$15.00 paper | \$9.99 e-book | Jan. 6, 2015  
978-0-345-53407-1  
978-0-345-53408-8 e-book

World Fantasy Award finalist Lord (*The Best of All Possible Worlds*, 2013, etc.) offers a complex coming-of-age story about negotiating competing loyalties.

Although this is presented as a stand-alone novel, it really isn't one; readers unfamiliar with Lord's previous work may have a hard time following its many threads. The action takes place in a galactic system of four planets and their colonies. People from each planet specialize in a particular aspect of humanity: For those from Sadira, it's the mind; from Ntshune, the heart; from Zhinu, the body; and from Terra, the spirit. Rafi Abowen Delarua, of Terran descent, is a student at the Lyceum, a sort of reform school established "to bring together all the rogue and random psi-gifted of Cygnus Beta and teach them ethics, restraint, and community." Threatened with being "capped"—made to wear a mind-control device—he escapes to Punartam, one of the colonies, where he joins a team of Wallrunners. Wallrunning, this galaxy's answer to football or Quidditch, plays an intricate and mysterious role in the galaxy's complicated social, political and perhaps military arrangements. It may also be somehow related to the ability of those with psi gifts to operate the mysterious Sediri mindships, powerful living spacecraft reminiscent of whales. Rafi is allied with a powerful family on his home planet, but on Punartam, he finds himself drawn in many directions and must learn where his loyalties lie.

Lord is at her best describing vividly alien bioformed landscapes and exploring subtle differences among uneasily allied cultures. But this novel, with its tentacled narrative structure and many references to previous events, is not the best entry to her world. (*Agent: Sally Harding*)



### LOVE IN THE AGE OF MECHANICAL REPRODUCTION

*Trichter, Judd*

Dunne/St. Martin's (304 pp.)  
\$25.99 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-250-03602-5

A dark and sometimes-gruesome sci-fi noir set in a slick, sick city on the brink of disaster.

Debut novelist Trichter plunges the reader into a futuristic LA corrupted by its dependence on androids known as "spinners" for the spinning engines they bear instead of hearts. Most "heartbeats" view

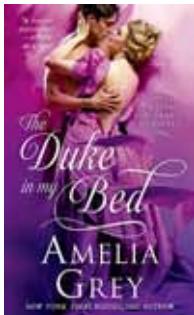
**"A wild young lord is maneuvered into making a vow to marry the sister of a dying comrade, but the lady refuses to cooperate."**

FROM THE DUKE IN MY BED

the "bots" as nothing more than objects to be used, abused and discarded for scrap. But Eliot Lazar is in love with a bot named Iris. Maybe it's because of who his father was, maybe it's because of his prosthetic arm, "the border where the metal competes with flesh," but whatever it is, it leaves him devastated when Iris is kidnapped and sold off piece by piece. He sets off to beg, buy or steal his love's limbs back and reassemble her, even as the cops start sniffing around the only crimes they care about—the ones against heartbeats. Some readers will be turned off by the cynicism of Trichter's vision or the sexualized violence against android women, but the more hard-boiled will love the fast-paced plot and unforgettably garish, ghoulish world. Many of the minor characters are stock types, but they're embellished with enough gleefully grotesque detail to keep readers engaged. The deeper questions raised by the premise, about what it means to be alive or in love, are never answered, but they'll linger in the mind of any reader with a beating heart.

A fast-moving, suspenseful story set in a fascinating future world stuffed with all the violence, sex and sleaze a noir fan could ask for.

## ROMANCE



### THE DUKE IN MY BED

Grey, Amelia

St. Martin's (320 pp.)

\$7.99 paper | Dec. 30, 2014

978-1-250-04220-0

A wild young lord is maneuvered into making a vow to marry the sister of a dying comrade, but the lady refuses to cooperate.

Grey (*The Rogue Steals a Bride*, 2013, etc.) returns with the first book in a new trilogy, the Heirs Club of Scoundrels. Bray Drakestone, Marquis of Lockington, is a scoundrel who keeps his promises. Usually. He doesn't want to keep the promise he made to Nathan Prim, Viscount Wayebury, moments before the Viscount died of injuries he received during an ill-conceived late-night carriage race in Hyde Park. But there were many witnesses that night, and half the ton has laid wagers on whether Bray will make good and marry the Viscount's sister Louisa. Bray realizes with some horror that even the prince regent has made a wager he cannot afford to lose, betting the famous Elgin Marbles. Now Bray is under pressure from his mother, his friends, the ton and even the Crown. But Louisa will have none of him, because she blames him for her brother's death. Predictably, his high-handed manner, fantastic sex appeal and poignant loneliness slowly erode her resolve. Even her four troublesome little sisters, who have been foisted on Bray as wards by their wayward uncle, can't completely dissuade him from pursuing Louisa. Bray grew up

an only child with no cousins, and he's horrified and fascinated by the chaotic household full of children. But the children, as much as Louisa, make him long for companionship. The plot drags in places when the protagonists don't see each other for weeks at a time.

It also takes a few unnecessary sideways steps, like Bray's trip into the remote countryside to visit a grieving friend, but overall, it's an entertaining read, and the characters are lively and interesting.



### THE DEVIL TAKES A BRIDE

London, Julia

Harlequin (368 pp.)

\$7.99 paper | Jan. 27, 2015

978-0-373-77890-4

A desperate young woman tries to trap a charming rogue into marriage but accidentally traps his severe and proper older brother instead.

London (*Return to Homecoming Ranch*, 2014, etc.) returns with the second installment of her Cabot Sisters series.

Grace Cabot and her sister Honor are desperate to marry now that their stepfather has died and their stepbrother is approaching his own marriage. If they don't, their mother's madness will become common knowledge and there will be no hope of a husband for either sister—or for their two younger sisters still in the schoolroom. Grace decides her best bet is Lord Amherst, who has been one of her favorite flirts for two years and will make a tolerably amusing husband. But when Grace orchestrates a scene where she will be caught kissing Lord Amherst by the local vicar, she accidentally lures his older brother Jeffrey, the Earl of Merryton, instead. While Jeffrey and Grace both struggle in a new marriage to a stranger, Grace becomes increasingly aware that Jeffrey suffers from some torment. He finally reveals that he is ashamed of his own vivid erotic fantasies. He has learned to control his base desires by maintaining perfect symmetry and order and by an obsession with the number eight. Grace naturally helps him overcome the worst of his mental health problems, even as she herself grows to love his austere and quiet country home. The book's premise is courageous. It's not easy to make a hero like Jeffrey with obsessive-compulsive tendencies into a sympathetic character. The heroine is less successful, beginning the book as a self-centered flibbertigibbet and ending as a boringly dutiful wife.

Strong prose and adventurous sex scenes make the book worth reading.

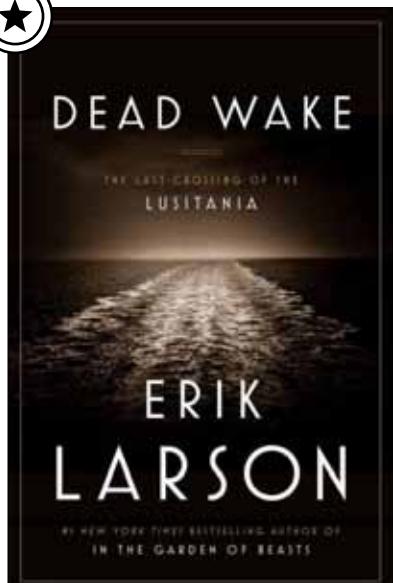
I DECEMBER 2014

# NONFICTION

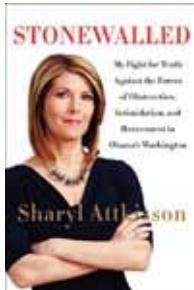


These titles earned the Kirkus Star:

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>A KIM JONG-IL PRODUCTION</b> by Paul Fischer.....        | 122 |
| <b>THE DEVIL IS HERE IN THESE HILLS</b> by James Green..... | 125 |
| <b>SAPIENS</b> by Yuval Noah Harari.....                    | 126 |
| <b>ANONYMOUS SOLDIERS</b> by Bruce Hoffman .....            | 126 |
| <b>IS SHAME NECESSARY?</b> by Jennifer Jacquet .....        | 128 |
| <b>DEAD WAKE</b> by Erik Larson.....                        | 130 |
| <b>IN MANCHURIA</b> by Michael Meyer.....                   | 134 |
| <b>LIBERTY'S FIRST CRISIS</b> by Charles Slack .....        | 140 |



**DEAD WAKE**  
*The Last Crossing of the Lusitania*  
**Erik Larson**, Erik  
 Crown (464 pp.)  
 \$28.00  
 Mar. 10, 2015  
 978-0-307-40886-0



**STONEWALLED**  
*My Fight for Truth Against the Forces of Obstruction, Intimidation, and Harassment in Obama's Washington*

**Attkisson, Sharyl**  
 Harper/HarperCollins (432 pp.)  
 \$27.99 | Nov. 4, 2014  
 978-0-06-232284-5

A respected investigative journalist perceived as having a political chip on her shoulder when she left CBS reveals a deeper story.

With more than 30 years in broadcast journalism, Attkisson has received five Emmys and an Edward R. Murrow Award for her work. She makes the claim that she was as doggedly the scourge of Republican administrations as Democratic ones. But with unrelenting coverage of the flubbed healthcare.gov rollout, Benghazi, the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' Operation Fast and Furious, the flawed gun-running operation, the author argues that the convergence of a thin-skinned Obama administration's reaction to her work and "skittish," liberal ideological news managers at CBS made the climate for her investigative work untenable. (She goes so far as to say that *Evening News* with Scott Pelley executive producer Pat Shevlin "sometimes had a difficult time grasping complex stories.") Finding it increasingly difficult to get her segments aired as she conceived of them, Attkisson eventually negotiated a departure from the network—but not before a long, mysterious bout of sophisticated hacking of her computer occurred (the author intimates in the book that someone inside the federal government is responsible and her telling of the hacking makes for thrilling reading). The fact that Attkisson joined the staff of the *Daily Signal*, the news site funded by the Heritage Foundation, after leaving CBS may indicate she's conservative by nature, but she doesn't blindly repeat Republican talking points. Instead, she's more concerned that politicians on both sides of the aisle often forget that they serve everyday citizens rather than the rich and powerful. "[The politicians] think they own your tax dollars," she writes. "They think they own the information their agencies gather on the public's behalf. They think they're entitled to keep that information from the rest of us and...they're bloody incensed that we want it."

A deep, nuanced and indignant indictment of the players who have made investigative journalism harder to conduct, even if those actors are other journalists.

# “This comprehensive collection illuminates Bellow’s sense of his own identity and his changing world.”

FROM THERE IS SIMPLY TOO MUCH TO THINK ABOUT



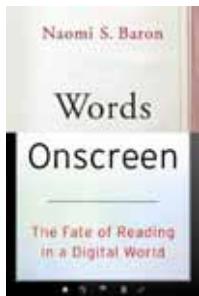
## HE WANTED THE MOON *The Madness and Medical Genius of Dr. Perry Baird, and His Daughter's Quest to Know Him*

Baird, Mimi with Claxton, Eve  
Crown (272 pp.)  
\$25.00 | Feb. 17, 2015  
978-0-8041-3747-8

The author was 6 in 1944 when her father, Perry Baird, was remanded to Westborough State Hospital in Massachusetts, diagnosed with manic-depressive psychosis and disappearing from her life. Here, she reconstructs the past in a moving, melancholy memoir.

Though her mother closed the door to information, the emotional longing remained, and in 1994, the author received a manuscript her father had written at Westborough in which he described his illness, what he thought caused it and his experiences as a patient. Thus, using his own words, augmented by letters, medical records and interviews, she sketches the life of a man who had done brilliantly in college and medical school—even co-authoring a paper with the eminent physiologist Walter Cannon—but who would be felled by psychosis. Because he was already showing signs of illness, Cannon advised Baird to practice dermatology to avoid the stresses of a research career. He did well until violent manic episodes mounted and he was returned to the mental hospital. Baird had the prescient insight that his illness was caused by a chemical imbalance, a conjecture made a few years before the discovery of lithium treatment for manic depression. However, for Baird and others in the 1940s, there were only straitjackets, solitary confinement, insulin, electric shocks and, ultimately, lobotomy. Baird fought his treatments, opening restraining knots with his toes, fighting orderlies and physically destroying his cell. Eventually, he went home, but his increasing paranoia and delusions persuaded his family to permit a lobotomy. He died in 1959, drowning in a bathtub following a convulsion. Gratifyingly, his daughter's synopsis of Baird's writing published in a psychiatric journal included a reference to her father's early paper on a biochemical cause of manic-depression. It served as recognition at last, she writes, if only as a footnote.

For Mimi Baird, the book serves as closure; for general readers, it's a sobering account of how little we knew and how much we still have to learn about mental illness—especially how *not* to treat it.



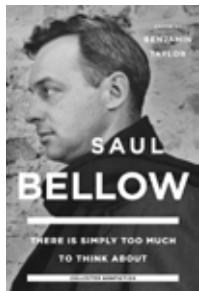
## WORDS ONSCREEN *The Fate of Reading in a Digital World*

Baron, Naomi S.  
Oxford Univ. (320 pp.)  
\$24.95 | Feb. 1, 2015  
978-0-19-931576-5

A darkling view of what our world—and what *we*—will be like if codex reading eventually surrenders to the flickering screens of e-readers.

Baron (Linguistics/American Univ.; *Always On: Language in an Online and Mobile World*, 2008, etc.) has several purposes here: to summarize research (hers and others') on the differences between e-reading and print; to rehearse the benefits of the latter, the deficits of the former; and to offer advice to readers in this age of transition. There is no doubt where the author stands. Both explicitly and implicitly, she prefers print publications—and emphasizes the abundant supporting research. But she also salts her text with numerous references to authors of canonical literature, among them Edith Wharton, Austen, Dickens, Chaucer, Proust, Descartes, Molière, and more recent notables like Gass and Iyer. This leaves little doubt that one of her principal worries is that the proliferation of e-readers will consign these all-stars to the bench, where they will watch other hitters at the plate: the authors of the *Twilights* of the world. Baron begins with the emergence of the e-book, then pauses to discuss what reading even *is*, offering a brief history of the codex and celebrating the glories of marginalia. She notes how the decline in codex reading has affected today's college students, to whom professors assign fewer—and shorter—texts than in the past. She notes the obvious advantages of e-reading (including its democratization) but adds that the majority of readers prefer the codex and cites research confirming what many have long felt—that *retention* is much better with codex reading. Her own research study is a little questionable—as she acknowledges, she had no random sample, for instance.

A clear call for common sense and reason that will likely fall on ears covered with headphones. (7 b/w halftones)



## THERE IS SIMPLY TOO MUCH TO THINK ABOUT *Collected Nonfiction*

Bellow, Saul  
Taylor, Benjamin—Ed.  
Viking (608 pp.)  
\$35.00 | Mar. 31, 2015  
978-0-670-01669-3

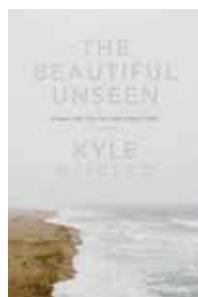
A nonfiction collection celebrates the centennial of Saul Bellow's (1915–2005) birth.

Nobel Prize winner Bellow was a prolific writer of nonfiction: essays, reviews, interviews, talks and memoirs. Organized by decade, the 57 pieces in this volume, edited by Taylor (*Naples Declared: A Walk Around the Bay*, 2012, etc.), trace both Bellow's writing career and his outspoken opinions on

politics, literature and intellectual life in America during the second half of the 20th century. After publishing *Dangling Man* (1944) and *The Victim* (1947), "two very correct books" that he thought would establish his credentials as a novelist, Bellow won his first National Book Award in 1954 for "a speculative biography," *The Adventures of Augie March*. Critical acclaim for that novel established his reputation; many more prestigious awards followed, as did opportunities to publish his views. Some of the most interesting pieces here are autobiographical. Born in Canada to Russian immigrants, growing up in Depression-era Chicago, Bellow knew early in his life that he wanted to be a writer. "I felt that I was born to be a performing and interpretive creature," he wrote, "that I was meant to take part in a peculiar, exalted game." As a young man, he looked up to such critics as Edmund Wilson, who supported him for a Guggenheim Fellowship, but by 1975, he had changed his mind dramatically: "Critics use strength gathered from the past to pummel the present," he announced scornfully. Nevertheless, Bellow found himself in a critic's role throughout his career, deriding novelists who were didactic and those more interested in being intellectual over telling a good story. He also bristled at being

categorized as a Jewish writer: "I was a Jew and an American and a writer and I believed that by being described as a 'Jewish writer' I was being shunted to a siding."

This comprehensive collection illuminates Bellow's sense of his own identity and his changing world.

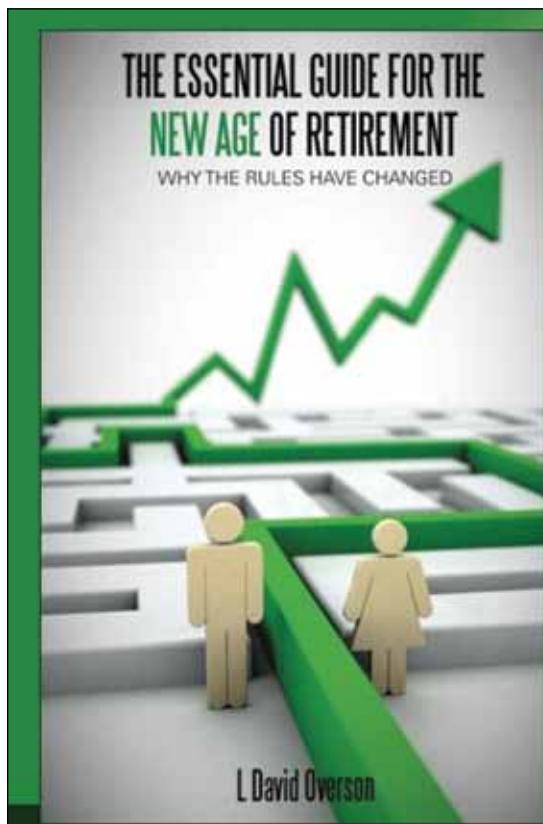


### THE BEAUTIFUL UNSEEN A Memoir

*Boelte, Kyle*  
Soft Skull Press (176 pp.)  
\$14.95 paper | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-1-61902-458-8

An extended meditation on fog, perception, memory and mortality.

This debut is even more ambitious than it is elliptical, as Boelte tries to come to terms with the suicide of his older brother when both were teenagers and with the nature of fog,



### THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE FOR THE NEW AGE OF RETIREMENT: WHY THE RULES HAVE CHANGED

By L David Overson

"...[A]n easy-to-read guide full of solid, well-supported advice, complete with relatable scenarios and helpful chapter recaps."

**"Useful overviews to kick-start a more focused plan for retirement."**  
**—Kirkus Reviews**

A financial adviser outlines key concepts and issues to consider regarding retirement planning.

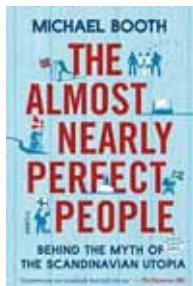
For information about film rights and publishing, email [ldoverson@gmail.com](mailto:ldoverson@gmail.com)

# "...an affectionate, observant, engaging look at Scandinavia, where trust, modesty and equality proudly prevail."

FROM THE ALMOST NEARLY PERFECT PEOPLE

both as a physical manifestation and as a metaphor. He compares memory to fog in "how it obscures the world, confusing the seen and the unseen. And then, how it slowly disappears from sight until the world is once again visible." The prose can be a little too preciously poetic, overly conscious of its effect, but the narrative has a powerful anchor amid the mists of fog—the brother who committed suicide, perhaps in response to the LSD he had been using and then caught dealing, half a lifetime ago for the author. There's a catharsis within this narrative strand, as the author remembers what he had previously blocked and comes to terms with what was once familiar but has been lost in the fog of memory. There is little in the way of chronological progression, as the story jumps back and forth among the fog-bound present in San Francisco, the coming-of-age (and death) in Colorado, and the legacy of fog in the historical annals. The metaphor almost collapses under the thematic strain, but just as it seems that Boelte has circled back a time or two too many, he shows that he knows what he's doing, evoking the philosophy of the great painter Mark Rothko: "If a thing is worth doing once, it is worth doing over and over again—exploring it, probing it, demanding by this repetition that the public look at it."

In this occasionally overwrought but often moving memoir, Boelte ends with a different perspective than when he started.



## THE ALMOST NEARLY PERFECT PEOPLE *Behind the Myth of the Scandinavian Utopia*

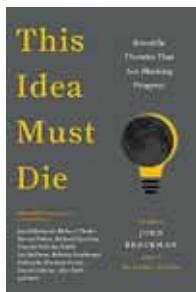
Booth, Michael  
Picador (400 pp.)  
\$26.00 | Feb. 1, 2015  
978-1-250-06196-6

A shrewd look at Nordic life.

From Denmark, where he has been living for the past 10 years, British journalist Booth (*Eat, Pray, Eat*, 2011, etc.) set out on a jaunt through Scandinavia to investigate questions that mystified him: Why are the Danes, Finns, Swedes, Icelanders and Norwegians considered to be so "brilliant and progressive?" What accounts for the alleged Scandinavian miracle of economic and social equality? Are Danes really the happiest people in the world? In this bright, witty cultural critique, Booth concludes that Scandinavia's success is no myth. Despite "historical skeletons" in some countries' closets, irresponsible financial decisions that led to Iceland's bankruptcy, virulent right-wing constituencies, and homogeneity that results in societies "a little too safe and dull, and insular," Scandinavia, the author believes, truly is an "enviably rich, peaceful, harmonious, and progressive place." In Denmark, paying the highest taxes in the world (72 percent in total) is seen as a contribution to the social good. Oil has made Norway the richest country—outpacing even Saudi Arabia—and sound fiscal stewardship funds generous social programs. In Finland, high status for teachers results in the best students competing for places in education programs and, consequently,

excellent schools nationwide. Booth sees high-quality, free education as "the bedrock of Nordic exceptionalism." Though he celebrates the region's achievements, Booth is clear about the challenges ahead: in Denmark, fostering initiative in a society that extols thrift, caution and "sacred, ordinary mediocrity"; in Norway, maintaining "incentive to work, study, and innovate" in a society where one-third of working-age Norwegians "do nothing at all...proportionally the largest number in Europe."

Blithely reporting on the many quirks in dress (Norwegian dirndl), food (an odiferous Icelandic fish specialty) and excessive drinking (everywhere) that he encountered on his journeys, Booth offers an affectionate, observant, engaging look at Scandinavia, where trust, modesty and equality proudly prevail.



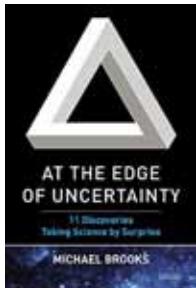
## THIS IDEA MUST DIE *Scientific Theories that Are Blocking Progress*

Brockman, John—Ed.  
Perennial/HarperCollins (592 pp.)  
\$15.99 paper | Feb. 17, 2015  
978-0-06-237434-9

New science has a difficult time. As physicist Max Planck said long ago, a good idea does not automatically replace a bad one; "opponents eventually die and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it."

In his latest compendium, Brockman (*What Should We Be Worried About?: Real Scenarios that Keep Scientists Up at Night*, 2014, etc.), publisher of the online science salon, Edge.com, asked 175 scientists, philosophers and intellectuals for ideas that have outlived their usefulness. At one to four pages, these are thoughtful essays that answer the question when they're not doing the opposite (defending the author's life's work) or wandering off to answer a different question. There are the usual suspects. Free will, Malthusianism, racism, IQ tests and religion do not do well. Mostly, the contributors hate simple explanations. Scientists studying the brain insist that it's not a computer, that the left-brain-right-brain dichotomy is silly, and that studying neurological activity won't explain consciousness because it's an illusion. Some ideas were never true: Rationality is not a major feature of human behavior. Some debates (nature vs. nurture) are nonsense. Occasionally, the news is good. Altruism is not necessarily self-sacrifice. We benefit as individuals, and most of us experience pleasure when we help others. Finally, novelist Ian McEwan disparages the book's theme, pointing out that you never know when you'll need an old idea. "It might rise again one day to enhance a perspective the present cannot imagine." No one wants to retire Shakespeare. Other contributors include A.C. Grayling, Richard Dawkins, John McWhorter, Sherry Turkle and Jared Diamond.

Although they often beat dead or nonexistent horses, these ingenious cerebral tidbits will stimulate, provoke and confuse (in a good way) intelligent readers.



## AT THE EDGE OF UNCERTAINTY 11 Discoveries Taking Science by Surprise

*Brooks, Michael*  
Overlook (288 pp.)  
\$27.95 | Feb. 12, 2015  
978-1-4683-1059-7

New Statesman columnist Brooks (*Free Radicals: The Secret Anarchy of Science*, 2012, etc.) details research being conducted on the extreme frontiers of science.

"Science has been successful for the most part in explaining why things are as they are," writes the author in this absorbing piece of reportage. "But in the process they have also discovered the broad horizon of their ignorance." It is encouraging to hear that scientists continue to push the envelope of inquiry in realms that require vast background knowledge to even frame the questions that are subsequently turned on their heads. Ignorance is an invitation, Brooks suggests, or as the physicist Richard Feynman once said: "Everything we know is only some kind of approximation. Therefore, things must be learned only to be unlearned again or, more likely, to be corrected." Brooks accessibly examines his chosen 11 skirmishes with exploratory "corrections," and he opens with a doozy: the origins and workings of human consciousness. Does it sit atop our sensory perceptions? Is awareness an illusion with no overarching narrative? Brooks proceeds to outline a theory of seeing, with all its herky-jerky gaps, that makes consciousness appear a survival tool straight out of Darwin. He provides a scintillating chapter on animal personalities that segues into animal-to-human organ transplants. He also explores epigenetics, forecasting the development of an embryo via the environment "in which [the] genes' chemical properties are operating," and he rolls out the experiments and studies that have been conducted to give the lie to the Big Bang theory, to promote examples of mind over body, or to demonstrate our ability to disconnect from time, with the aid of psilocybin. He ends with the great humbling statement: The more we learn, the more insignificant humans become, knocked off our perch of self-regard by, for instance, "godlike" subatomic particles.

The edgy edge of scientific investigation presented with verve.



## RED NOTICE A True Story of High Finance, Murder, and One Man's Fight for Justice

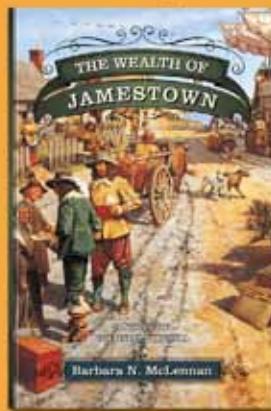
*Browder, Bill*  
Simon & Schuster (400 pp.)  
\$28.00 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-4767-5571-7

An American-born financier spins an almost unbelievable tale of the "poisoned" psychology afflicting business life in Vladimir Putin's Russia.

By 2000, Browder, founder and CEO of the Hermitage Fund, helmed "the best performing emerging-markets fund in the world." Taking full advantage of the unprecedented investment opportunities available during post-Soviet Russia's transition from communism to capitalism, a gangland business atmosphere where oligarchs operated with impunity, Browder's firm became the biggest investor in Russia's stock market. He owed his rise in part to his willingness to fight back, to alert Western business contacts, to inform the press and to file complaints with government authorities against those corrupting the business culture. For a while, his interests coincided with those of Putin, still busy consolidating power, doing his own bit to rein in the oligarchs. By 2005, however, secure in his authority, Putin revoked Browder's visa, branding him "a threat to national security." There followed a series of moves against Browder and Hermitage, including the raiding of the company's Moscow offices on trumped-up charges of tax evasion and, most notoriously, the arrest, imprisonment, beating and death of tax lawyer Sergei Magnitsky, who had helped expose government crime. Browder's unceasing efforts to achieve justice for his murdered

## THE WEALTH OF JAMESTOWN

by Barbara N. McLennan



McLennan's (*The Wealth of Jamestown*, 2013) historical novel depicts America at a tenuous stage in its early history, when wealth, violence and political unease were all starting to swell.

"An informative rendering of pre-Revolutionary America, with an inspiring female protagonist."

—Kirkus Reviews

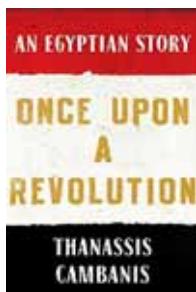
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email [barb.mcl@cox.net](mailto:barb.mcl@cox.net).

# "A clear exposition and analysis of complex, swiftly changing events."

FROM *ONCE UPON A REVOLUTION*

friend and employee culminated in the 2012 Magnitsky Act, a human rights landmark that named and shamed the responsible Russian officials. This well-paced, heartfelt narrative covers the author's personal life—he's the son of a famed mathematician and the grandson of Earl Browder, former head of the Communist Party USA—his business career, including brushes with the likes of fraudster Robert Maxwell and swashbuckling Ron Burkle; close relationships with billionaires Edmond Safra and Beny Steinmetz; his dealings on the Magnitsky Act with U.S. senators; and Putin's vindictive retaliatory measures against Browder and the act.

It may be that "Russian stories never have happy endings," but Browder's account more than compensates by ferociously unmasking Putin's thugocracy. (8-page b/w photo insert)



## ONCE UPON A REVOLUTION *An Egyptian Story*

*Cambanis, Thanassis*  
Simon & Schuster (288 pp.)  
\$26.00 | Jan. 20, 2015  
978-1-4516-5899-6

Smart, troubling study of the events surrounding Tahrir Square and their aftermath.

That Cairo landmark is a metonym. As journalist/historian Cambanis (*A Privilege to Die: Inside Hezbollah's Legions and Their Endless War Against Israel*, 2010) records in this lucid account of the Egyptian uprising, strategists of the opposition spent much time figuring out just where they could organize protests without being quashed by the country's well-organized military, setting some of the early demonstrations and meetings in places "where the streets were too narrow for police trucks and water cannons" until momentum grew. It didn't take long for the revolt to sweep the country, with its crowning day on Jan. 25, 2011. Cambanis profiles ordinary Egyptians who rose up against the Mubarak regime, some out of support for the Islamist cause, others in the hope of secular democracy. Their political divide runs deep. As the author writes of one key actor, "El-Shater didn't seem to understand how much the liberals hated the Islamists, and how much the revolutionary Islamist youth mistrusted the Brotherhood leadership, himself included." It is for that reason that the revolution—which, Cambanis reminds us, necessarily involves tumult and violence—remains incomplete. "I fell in love with the Tahrir Revolution," he writes, "but this love didn't blind me to its faults." Still, to judge by this account, those faults are fewer than those of the previous regime, which leaves some hope that the people of Egypt are headed in the right direction—even if the Muslim Brotherhood soon "exposed itself as power hungry and eager to use violent tools of repression to silence opponents."

A clear exposition and analysis of complex, swiftly changing events. The book gives readers cause to understand why we might support regime change in the Middle East, even if it brings instability and incoherence.



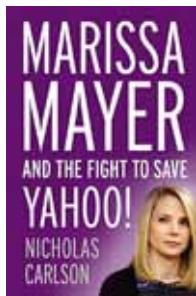
## LENTIL UNDERGROUND *Renegade Farmers and the Future of Food in America*

*Carlisle, Liz*  
Gotham Books (336 pp.)  
\$26.95 | Feb. 1, 2015  
978-1-59240-920-4

Former country music singer/songwriter and newly minted geography doctorate student Carlisle unearths the secret history of a rogue posse of organic farmers operating deep in rural Montana.

Readers might be understandably reluctant to take in more than 300 pages of in-depth reportage about the emergence of legumes as a practical food product, but take a chance on this dive in to an eccentric niche of the American farm industry—it has a strange attraction, especially for foodies, business innovators and entrepreneurs. The book tells the story of Dave Oien, a farming legacy who returned home in 1976 with inspirations from the teachings of Black Elk and plans to bring solar energy to his family farm. By the mid-1980s, Oien was obsessed with the radical notion of growing organic lentils instead of the traditional crops favored by his fellow farmers. Long before they became the darling of Whole Foods chefs, Oien figured out that lentils "fix" their own nitrogen, converting it to ammonia, which is a critical element in allowing plants to grow—all without the poisonous chemicals used in growing other crops. Joining together with five other forward-thinking farmers, Oien formed Timeless Natural Food and eventually figured out a way to grow edible lentils and other organic products. The remainder of the book covers Oien's transformation from a simple organic farmer to a kind of pied piper for the organic foods movement, inspiring farm improvement clubs, riding the wave of the new American appetite for inspiring new foodstuffs, and eventually dragging chefs, politicos, scientists and other farmers around to his way of thinking. "This lentil harvest is no fairytale success, but a complicated saga of adaptation, learning, and even some tragedy," writes Carlisle. "The story of Timeless seeds is not a heroic one, but then again these fragile plains are not a place that needs heroes."

A nimble story about how one man's revolutionary ideas changed the way we eat.



## MARISSA MAYER AND THE FIGHT TO SAVE YAHOO!

*Carlson, Nicholas*  
Twelve (368 pp.)  
\$30.00 | Jan. 6, 2015  
978-1-4555-5661-8

The inside story of the cult of personality that surrounds the leadership of Silicon Valley's technology behemoths.

*Business Insider* chief correspondent Carlson's complex study of Yahoo's spectacular rise and turbulent fall is less gossipy than Ben Mezrich's *The Accidental Billionaires* (2009) and more accurate than that

book's adaptation, *The Social Network*, but it does carry that same strange feeling that it's hard to believe these bizarre events transpired in one of the world's largest companies. The first section recaps Yahoo's rise while offering a parallel portrait of a shy 24-year-old engineer who became nearly indispensable to Google founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin. There's even a cameo by Mark Zuckerberg, who brazenly demanded \$1 billion from Yahoo for Facebook in 2006. There's also a reference to "Project Godfather," an early attempt to wipe out other search firms from the market, and the story of CEO Carole Bartz, who was fired over the phone. The remainder of the book focuses on the aforementioned engineer, Marissa Mayer, who was handed the reins of the multibillion-dollar company at the age of 37, with no practical experience managing finances, human resources or global operations. Operating under the safety of Yahoo's major investment in China's Amazon-like site Alibaba, Mayer transformed from Yahoo's savior to a CEO under siege, criticized by employees suffering under an arcane review system, under pressure from her board to fire thousands of people, and possibly running out of time to turn the company around. "If turning around a company

is like building a bridge in the middle of a war zone, with bombs dropping out of the sky every minute, then Marissa Mayer was the lucky army engineer who got to build a bridge from Yahoo's past to Yahoo's future under perfect air cover—air cover provided by Alibaba," writes the author in this page-turning account, which is thankfully light on jargon.

A well-researched, up-to-date story about a fight to define one famous company's future.

**Barack Obama**  
and the  
**Road to Bondage**  
*A Case Study*  
by  
**R. M. Catton**  
and  
**S. W. Catton**  
Copyright © 2014  
ISBN #9781499527087

## BARACK OBAMA AND THE ROAD TO BONDAGE

A CASE STUDY

by R.M. Catton, S.W. Catton

"A complex, disturbing psychoanalysis of Obama and his agenda, not easily dismissed." —*Kirkus Reviews*

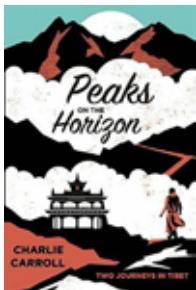
The genre of this book is psychodynamic, socio-political. More importantly, the authors regard it as a means of discharging a civic duty and moral imperative for awakening their fellow citizens to the perilous course this nation has taken under President Barack Obama.

Available now at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) and on Kindle

All interested inquiries please contact: [3springsbooks@comcast.net](mailto:3springsbooks@comcast.net)

# "A gripping, enlightening journey."

FROM PEAKS ON THE HORIZON



## PEAKS ON THE HORIZON *Two Journeys in Tibet*

*Carroll, Charlie*  
Soft Skull Press (368 pp.)  
\$16.95 paper | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-1-61902-484-7

An English traveler examines the occupation of Tibet firsthand while crossing paths with a Tibetan refugee whose life exemplifies that conflict.

In his United States debut, British journalist Carroll (*No Fixed Abode: A Journey Through Homelessness from Cornwall to London*, 2013, etc.) chronicles his visit to the "Roof of the World," examining the history and conquest of a people and the story of one young Tibetan exile's perilous attempts to cross the border. Seeking to understand why the ruling Han Chinese invaded Tibet in 1950 and why they remain, Carroll jumped at the opportunity to travel to the "country of stone and ice," which is (unofficially) closed to outsiders since Chinese officials fear that they might observe—and report on—daily life in Tibet. He richly describes the landscape of the country and its people—e.g., painterly images of a stretch of terrain outside his car window as "a bay of wet and seeping mud which formed strange patterns and shapes as interpretive as clouds"; a rugged, "serrated horizon"; an area "scored" by "red crenulated mountains." In addition to recounting his travels, Carroll tells the story of Lobsang, a Tibetan expat crossing the Himalayas on foot. The author explores China's tyranny and human rights abuses against dissenters in such alarming detail that readers will gasp with worry and dismay when the young man even considers an illegal border crossing. (The author also drolly recounts weighing the limited programming options on China's main TV network, which, from what he could tell, aired mostly "military dramas and terrifying operas.") Though Lobsang's meeting with the author is inevitable, it is still suspenseful in the atmosphere of heightened drama that Carroll builds. The author dutifully fulfills Tibetans' oft-repeated exhortation to visitors: "Go to Tibet, and then tell the world what you saw."

A gripping, enlightening journey.

## MACHIAVELLI *A Portrait*

*Celenza, Christopher S.*  
Harvard Univ. (256 pp.)  
\$24.95 | Feb. 1, 2015  
978-0-674-41612-3

A brief, erudite exposition of the Florentine secretary's mores and intentions.

In this accessible work, Celenza (Classics/Johns Hopkins Univ.) explores why Machiavelli's *The Prince* continues to enthrall readers and how the author's other, less-well-known works, such as his comedies, can help enrich the way we understand him. Employing both biography and history, Celenza delves deep into Machiavelli's

world. Born in 1469 into a cultured family in which the Latin classics were significant parts of his education, Machiavelli lived in a time when the Italian language was just emerging richly from the more stultified Latin, thanks largely to the work of Dante. In 15th-century Florence, the concentration of wealth and influence, exemplified by the Medici family, reached its terrible climax in the murder of Giuliano Medici in 1478 by the rival Pazzi family, with his brother Lorenzo the Magnificent barely escaping with his life. These "premodern conditions" meant that life was fraught with conflict and violence close to home, themes that Machiavelli used to full effect in *The Prince*. A man of action himself, Machiavelli had held important ambassadorial offices during the Florentine republic's tumultuous time at the start of the 16th century. He witnessed Cesare Borgia's military rise and fall, a series of events that impressed on him the importance of a vigorous military behind a decisive leader. When the Medicis returned to power, Machiavelli was imprisoned, tortured and then confined to his farm, where he began writing *The Prince* as a way of ingratiating himself with his potential new employers. Celenza explores its language ("lapidary, often funny and homespun, but utterly elegant"), its form as a dialogue, its allusions to Latin classics and, above all, Machiavelli's insistence on looking at the world as it is rather than how it ought to be.

A compelling portrait of the life of a man "subject to and involved in history, who believed...that by interpreting the past sagely, one could act more fruitfully in the present."

## ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE *A Microcosmic Usage Handbook*

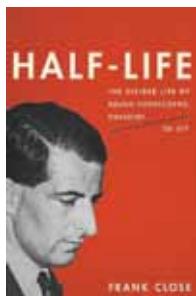
*Cioffi, Frank L.*  
Princeton Univ. (392 pp.)  
\$24.95 | Mar. 22, 2015  
978-0-691-16507-3

A chatty grammar manual.

Acknowledging that there are many books imparting grammar and usage rules, Cioffi (Writing Director/Baruch Coll.; *The Imaginative Argument: A Practical Manifesto for Writers*, 2005, etc.) set out to do something different: "provide a human voice chatting about those rules, one that used real-world rather than manufactured language as its model, and one that tried to show how using language carefully can make a difference in terms of human interactions." The author's 300 real-world samples come from newspapers (*USA Today* and the *International Herald Tribune* recur) and magazines (*Sports Illustrated*, the *New Yorker*) from Dec. 29, 2008, a day he chose "because of its very ordinariness." Although some of the sentences refer to movie stars, bank failures, sports events and other trendy topics, the selections, taken out of context, are sometimes more confusing than the grammar rules they're supposed to exemplify. Cioffi's goal of being chatty is amply fulfilled, but there's a disconnect between that breezy tone and his explanations of grammatical points. Although the

author says he assigns the book in a first-year writing class, his audience seems to be fairly sophisticated working adults (don't correct your boss's grammar, he advises) who may feel anxious about how others "judge and categorize" their social class, education and intelligence by their grammar proficiency. Besides six chapters covering fundamentals of grammar—parts of speech, punctuation and diction—Cioffi includes a glossary of 50 key terms that he already has defined in the text. One appendix debunks 15 grammar myths, many of which can be boiled down to the assumption that grammar doesn't matter in the age of tweets and self-publishing; another appendix offers hints about how to use the book as a classroom text.

**A teacher's help would be required for students to find this book useful.**

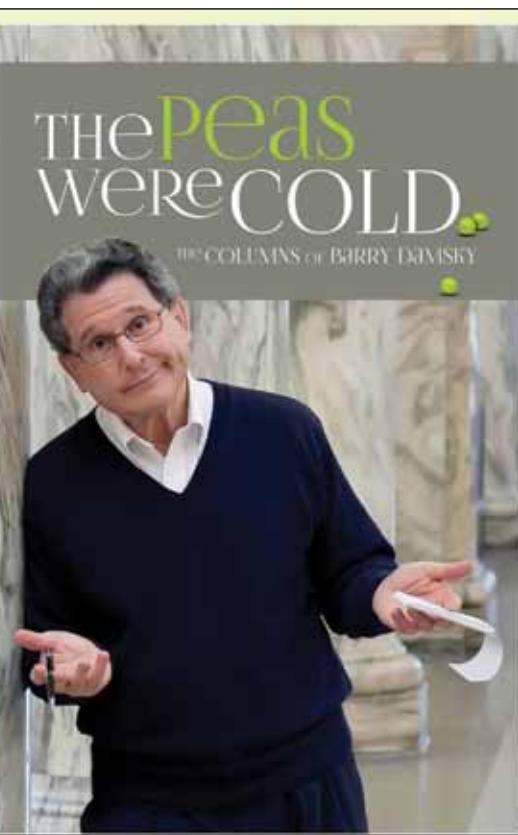


### HALF-LIFE *The Divided Life of Bruno Pontecorvo, Physicist or Spy*

*Close, Frank*  
Basic (384 pp.)  
\$29.99 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-0-465-06998-9

Months after the 1950 arrest of British nuclear physicist Klaus Fuchs, Bruno Pontecorvo (1913-1993) vanished behind the Iron Curtain. Everyone assumed that he was also a Soviet spy, but extensive investigation found no evidence that he provided secrets to the Soviets.

In this insightful biography, British physicist and writer Close (Physics/Univ. of Oxford; *The Infinity Puzzle: Quantum Field Theory and the Hunt for an Orderly Universe*, 2011, etc.) does not ignore Pontecorvo's brilliant research and the tortuous political turmoil of his era. (The United States Congress described him as "the second deadliest spy in history.") Born



### THE PEAS WERE COLD: *THE COLUMNS OF BARRY DAMSKY*

by Barry Damsky

"...a tone similar to those of the late Andy Rooney or Charles Kuralt..."  
—Kirkus Reviews

"Damsky belongs in the Saturday Evening Post with paintings by Norman Rockwell depicting situations...Most of all, Damsky belongs on the shelves of readers who are looking for variety and simplicity in all of the little moments that add up to a life..."

—Foreword Clarion Reviews

[www.BarryDamsky.com](http://www.BarryDamsky.com)

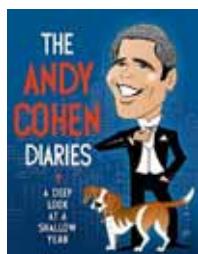
For information about publication or film rights, email [bdamsky@twcny.rr.com](mailto:bdamsky@twcny.rr.com)

# "A resonant restatement of inherent mistakes in our treatment of a workforce that is growing older."

FROM UNFINISHED WORK

into a wealthy, superachieving Italian family, he was 18 when he joined Enrico Fermi in Rome and contributed to groundbreaking 1934 experiments showing that slowing neutrons made them vastly more efficient in exploring the atom. Moving to France and then fleeing to America after the 1940 German invasion, Pontecorvo spent three years in a Canadian laboratory building the first heavy water reactor. Although only peripherally related to the Manhattan project, its scientists often consulted colleagues who were directly involved. In 1948, popular and highly respected, Pontecorvo moved to Britain and was working on the British atom bomb when he disappeared. Five years passed before he reappeared to express his pleasure at being a Soviet citizen, an opinion he did not publicly change until the Soviet Union collapsed. A privileged member of its scientific elite, he continued world-class research into neutrons and neutrinos. The Nobel committee has no objection to communists but dislikes controversy, so Pontecorvo's defection probably deprived him of the prize. Close's intense research turns up hints that he spied and, warned by other spies, fled to avoid arrest.

A fine account, heavy on science and politics, of a long, productive, peripatetic and ultimately inexplicable life.



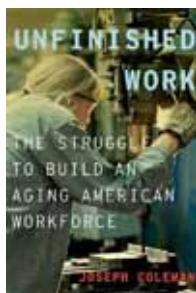
## THE ANDY COHEN DIARIES *A Deep Look at a Shallow Year*

Cohen, Andy  
Henry Holt (352 pp.)  
\$26.00 | Nov. 11, 2014  
978-1-62779-228-8

Cable TV's dishiest guy at his dishy best.

Depending on whom you ask, the brainchild behind Bravo's Real Housewives franchise and *Watch What Happens Live*—as well as the network's former head of development—is either a parody of a talk show host or a true TV original. Those kinds of against-the-grain personalities generally elicit a loyal fan base, and Cohen (*Most Talkative: Stories From the Front Lines of Pop Culture*, 2012) is no exception. In the crowded late-night landscape, his ratings remain solid, and he always lines up quality guests to do "shotskis" in his studio. His second book is a straight-up diary that his fans will relish and detractors will ignore. However, part of what makes Cohen so appealing on the page is his humility. He's well-aware of his position as a TV anomaly and often displays a gee-whiz attitude about his brushes with fame. In discussing a particularly star-filled week on *WWHL*, he admits, "For Cher I was excited but with Oprah I was nervous, actually shaking for an hour before the show." But everything isn't campy and fabulous: The author's story of his encounter with Conan O'Brien, in which the veteran host talked the newbie over some bumps, is almost touching, and his love for his dog is sweet and relatable. Cohen spends a lot of time discussing Housewives, so if you are not a fan of that particular franchise, parts of the narrative will drag. But not to worry: You're never more than a page or two away from some dish about Lady Gaga, Emma Stone, David Letterman and a host of other celebrities.

The flamboyant talk show host delivers an entirely unexpected book: a glitzy, glamorous, goofy look at 365 days of a charmed showbiz life. (8-page color photo insert)



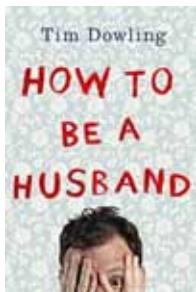
## UNFINISHED WORK *The Struggle to Build an Aging American Workforce*

Coleman, Joseph  
Oxford Univ. (256 pp.)  
\$27.95 | Feb. 2, 2015  
978-0-19-997445-0

Despite reports of the impending cognitive impairment awaiting fearful seniors, not all our elders are dotty. Valuable corporate memory, knowledge and experience are lost with premature retirements, as journalist Coleman demonstrates.

Until the definition of "old" is revised, the number of old folk increases dramatically, according to all the demographics. The cadre of baby boomers who are destined to be declared redundant at work will know disappointment and humiliation as they become unemployed. The author visits the alert elderly who want to, need to or seek to work in diverse precincts around the globe. In Japan, where there is a pronounced work ethic, Coleman finds old ladies who package leaves for garnish in restaurants and old artisans who fashion bullet-train prows by hand and can even hammer violins out of metal. Workers in France, where there's a different work ethic, are more laid-back. Their supposed infatuation with long vacations and early retirement is producing a real shortage of experienced labor. Sweden, on the other hand, has an age management network and programs for out-placement and counseling. In La Jolla, California, Scripps Hospital offers its older staff the option of staged retirement. In the Midwest, it's a more difficult road, but in Sarasota, where there are lots of wealthy retirees, they desire a rewarding, "protean" retirement. Coleman's text is rife with interviews with experts and gurus and quick answers from think-tankers and self-help coaches. More effective is the author's inclusion of input from superannuated workers who seek some income and a sense of participation in the world. As the author notes, the Great Recession has made the matter of an aging workforce urgent; career services should have a high priority for government; businesses should do better in profiting from the talents; and individuals need to prepare early for longer working lives.

A resonant restatement of inherent mistakes in our treatment of a workforce that is growing older. (25 b/w illustrations; 10 b/w halftones)



## HOW TO BE A HUSBAND

Dowling, Tim

Blue Rider Press (288 pp.)

\$26.95 | Feb. 5, 2015

978-0-399-17293-9

One man's humorous tips on navigating the complex marriage highway.

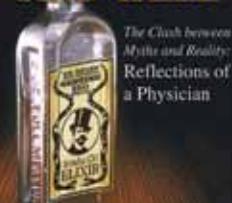
As columnist for the *Guardian*, Dowling (*The Giles Wearing Haters' Club*, 2007, etc.) is used to discussing his personal relationships with a public audience.

In this laugh-out-loud memoir, he goes in depth into the 10 years between bachelorhood and fatherhood. From navigating the rocky shores of two continents to be with the woman he loved to the decision to get married, with the caveat they could always get divorced, to the unexpectedness of seeing his firstborn son and the ensuing years of parenthood, Dowling delivers a running commentary on how he stumbled and bumbled his way through it all and somehow achieved a stable and

successful union. He also remarks on living with his in-laws and the complicated issues surrounding death. Although not a self-help book, nuggets of unexpected, useful advice on how to be a good husband can be found hidden in the author's witticisms. When doing a comparison on relevancy between husbands of 1950 versus 2014, he observes, "Being a good husband: 1950—Every time you go out for cigarettes, you come back. Being a relevant husband: 2014—Every time you're sent out for espresso pods and tampons, you come back with the right sort." This is sound guidance from a man who has spent much of his time multitasking as a househusband and freelance writer. Multiple lists of helpful advice cover topics such as the necessary items for a DIY tool cupboard (epoxy resin is No. 1), "five things you can actually fix by hitting them with a hammer" and 40 tips on achieving "gross marital happiness" based on the country of Bhutan's goal of Gross National Happiness for every individual. Dowling's entertaining commentary on marriage will resonate with men and women alike.

Tongue-in-cheek observations on married life coupled with poignant moments of true love and grief.

## SNAKE OIL IS ALIVE AND WELL



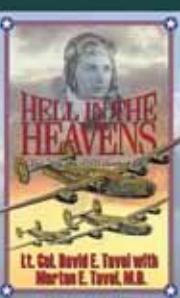
## SNAKE OIL IS ALIVE AND WELL: THE CLASH BETWEEN MYTHS AND REALITY *Reflections of a Physician*

ISBN #978-1936587889 Available at Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble

"A persuasive, well-written evaluation of the logic and evidence that influence medical decision-making" —Kirkus Reviews

"Dr. Tavel has done an outstanding job of assembling a wealth of information...this book has all the essentials in one convenient package. A tour de force." —Harriet Hall, MD, science writer and contributing editor, *Skeptic* and *Skeptical Inquirer*, Science Based Medicine

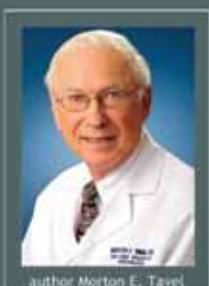
Morton E. Tavel, M.D.



## HELL IN THE HEAVENS “THE SAGA OF A WWII BOMBER PILOT”

"I cannot recommend this book highly enough, as I believe that it is important that the experiences of our lesser known heroes are not forgotten."

—Paul Fruhwirth, military aviation historian

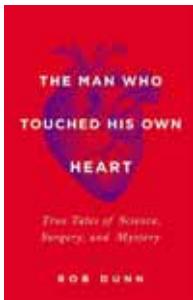


author Morton E. Tavel

For information about publication or film rights, email tavelmorton@gmail.com

**“Credit Dunn with a valuable text that offers something for everyone—patients, practitioners, medical students, historians and policymakers.”**

FROM THE MAN WHO TOUCHED HIS OWN HEART



### THE MAN WHO TOUCHED HIS OWN HEART

#### **True Tales of Science, Surgery, and Mystery**

Dunn, Rob

Little, Brown (368 pp.)

\$27.00 | \$12.99 e-book

\$25.98 Audiobook | Feb. 3, 2015

978-0-316-22579-3

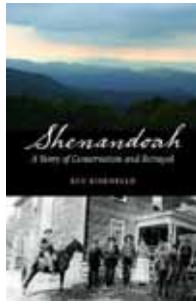
978-0-316-22580-9 e-book

978-1-61969-420-0 Audiobook

The heart was a black box up until a century ago, writes Dunn (Ecology and Evolution/North Carolina State Univ.; *The Wild Life on Our Bodies*, 2011, etc.). His well-researched text chronicles how the box was opened.

The author opens with an account of how, even with today's impressive technology and medicine, his mother nearly died from too high a dosage of digitalis, a drug used to slow a rapid heartbeat. The author then recounts an incident in 1893 in which an African-American doctor in Chicago saved the life of a victim of a stab wound to the heart by cutting into the wound and sewing a tear in the pericardium. Then it's on to ancient history, with nods to da Vinci, Harvey and some others as exceptions to the view of the heart as sacrosanct and inviolable. The modern era began with the derring-do of the titular doctor, Werner Forssmann, who in 1929 inserted a catheter into an arm vein, threaded it to the heart and had it X-rayed, performing the first angiogram. In the 1930s, there were significant improvements in angiography, and succeeding decades saw the advent of heart-lung machines, new diets, drugs and devices (pacemakers, stents), and heart transplants. Dunn profiles the principals, with particular opprobrium for Christian Barnard, the South African surgeon ruthless in his zeal to be first to perform a human-to-human heart transplant. As for treatments today, Dunn cites studies showing that patients fare better with medication and diet to treat narrowed arteries, as compared with stents, but the latter are a huge moneymaker for hospitals. Finally, speaking as an evolutionary biologist, the author urges scientists to study the heart in evolution, pointing to striking findings that humans are alone among primates in our suffering from atherosclerosis. It's complicated, he writes, but we might reap huge benefits in prevention rather than just focusing on repairs.

Credit Dunn with a valuable text that offers something for everyone—patients, practitioners, medical students, historians and policymakers.



### SHENANDOAH **A Story of Conservation and Betrayal**

Eisenfeld, Sue

Univ. of Nebraska (216 pp.)

\$19.95 paper | Feb. 1, 2015

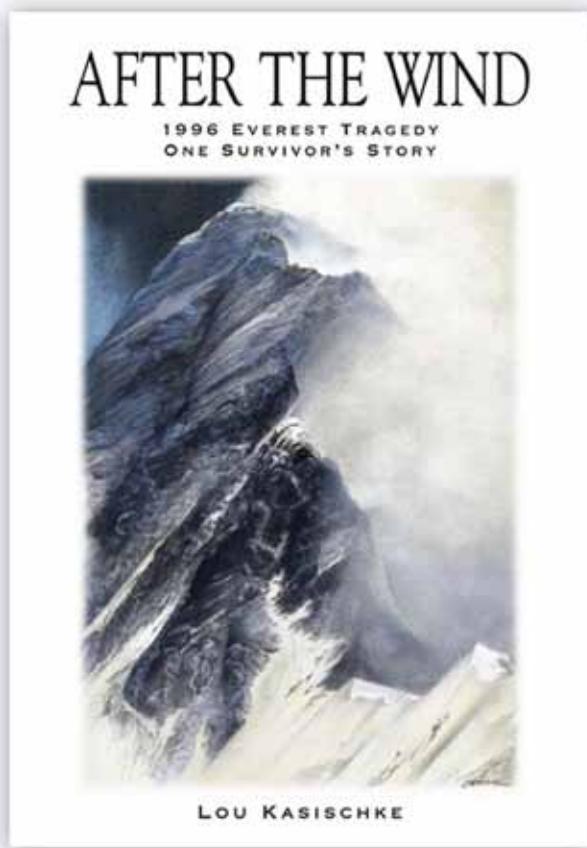
978-0-8032-3830-5

A complicated history of conservation.

Like many visitors to national parks, Eisenfeld (MA Writing Program/Johns Hopkins Univ.) assumed that the land

had always been wilderness. One day, however, in Virginia's Shenandoah National Park, she came upon "an incongruous, well-maintained cemetery in the middle of the forest" and realized that the land once had been a community where people lived, worked and buried their dead. For the next two decades, she hiked off-trail, bushwhacking, in search of the park's past. The author's vivid debut work of nonfiction recounts that search: a memoir of her explorations into places "not curated for beauty"; a capsule history of the conservation movement that created such spectacular sites as Yosemite, Yellowstone and Shenandoah; and, based on interviews and archival sources, stories of families whose homes and lives were threatened by their government's good intentions. The Shenandoah project, she learned, was begun by an act of Congress in 1926, which mandated the government to create a national park in Virginia—convenient for the growing mid-Atlantic population—by gaining title from landowners. A condition of the bill stipulated that the government would buy no land; instead, it expected donations. Lawmakers who enacted the bill assumed that the area's few inhabitants, "the nameless and faceless mountaineers," would not object to leaving "what many outsiders considered their godforsaken, hardscrabble homes." However, the lawmakers were surprised: Their surveyors returned, reporting "that the area wasn't quite the wilderness the park promoters had depicted" but rather "encompassed 5,650 tracts and 3,250 homes," with orchards, gardens, gristmills, blacksmith shops and cemeteries. Some residents had lost deeds; others adamantly refused to be dispossessed. The next years saw conflicts and evictions, protests and lawsuits, and often stalwart resistance.

Eisenfeld writes about Shenandoah the way Annie Proulx writes about Wyoming or Edward Abbey about the deserts of the Southwest: pristine, unsentimental, eloquent prose.



[www.afterthewind.com](http://www.afterthewind.com)



On May 10, 1996, the worst disaster in Mt. Everest climbing history occurred. Eight people died. Lou Kasischke lived. His survival story is a love story.

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Hardcover ISBN#: 978-1-940877-00-6

eBook ISBN#: 978-1-940877-01-3

International edition ISBN#: 978-1-940877-02-0

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"A well-written love story of Kasischke's dedication to his wife and anchor Sandy and his passion for climbing. —BlueInk Reviews (starred review)

"A thorough analysis of the 1996 Everest disaster...and the best preparation for my Everest ascent."  
—Jean Pavillard, IFMGA Swiss Mountain Guide

"A vivid, intimate memoir that, with great clarity and to detail, tells an unforgettable survival story."  
—Kirkus Reviews (starred review)

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# "A meticulously detailed feat of rare footage inside the DPRK's propaganda machinery."

FROM A KIM JONG-IL PRODUCTION



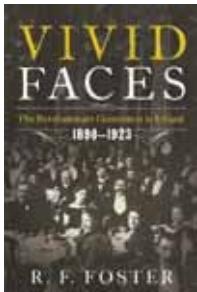
## A KIM JONG-IL PRODUCTION *The Extraordinary True Story of a Kidnapped Filmmaker, His Star Actress, and a Young Dictator's Rise to Power*

Fischer, Paul  
Flatiron Books (368 pp.)  
\$27.99 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-250-05426-5

Exhaustively researched, highly engrossing chronicle of the outrageous abduction of a pair of well-known South Korean filmmakers by the nefarious network of North Korea's Kim Jong-Il.

Filmmaker Fischer carefully presents a well-documented story of the kidnapping of South Korean actress Choi Eun-Hee and her former husband, film producer Shin Sang-Ok, amid some suspicion that the two secretly defected in order to jump-start their stalling careers (though the author provides ample evidence to the contrary). After a stunningly successful moviemaking collaboration that spanned the mid-1950s until their divorce in 1974, Choi and Shin had gone their own ways by 1978. Choi was raising their two adopted children and mostly teaching acting while Shin saw his studio stripped of its license due to his wheeling and dealing. Meanwhile, Kim Jong-Il—a film fanatic who cleverly insinuated himself as the sole standing heir to his father, Democratic People's Republic of Korea founder Kim Il-Sung, via his richly propagandistic output by the Korea Film Studio—craved validation and expertise in order to be taken seriously in the international community. Hence the scheme to kidnap the two reigning South Korean film idols, re-educate them and allow them all they needed to refashion the North Korean film industry. This is just what happened: The two stars were lured to Hong Kong—first Choi in January 1978, then Shin in September—and hustled onto a freighter and taken to Pyongyang. Isolated, imprisoned in luxury homes (Shin spent two years in prison for trying to escape), summoned periodically to Kim's birthday parties and expected to drink heavily and be merry, the two were eventually thrown together in 1983 and directed to reignite their collaboration and marriage. Seven films later, including the Godzilla-like *Pulgasari* (1985)—they took asylum in the U.S. Embassy in Vienna.

A meticulously detailed feat of rare footage inside the DPRK's propaganda machinery. (8-page color photo insert)



## VIVID FACES *The Revolutionary Generation in Ireland, 1890-1923*

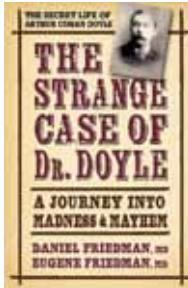
Foster, R.F.  
Norton (480 pp.)  
\$29.95 | Jan. 26, 2015  
978-0-393-08279-1

A bracing study of the rebels who secured Ireland's freedom from Britain nearly a century ago.



When it comes to people who once lived and breathed, Foster (*The Irish Story: Telling Tales and Making It Up in Ireland*, 2002, etc.), perhaps the pre-eminent student of Irish history working today, is no hagiographer. Moreover, he does not subscribe to the great man theory of history. As he writes here, by way of prelude, one of his interests is to show "how a revolutionary generation comes to be made, rather than born." Although Irish politics has been definitively sectarian, especially in its nationalist (or unionist) dimensions, the author observes that many of the first-generation rebels against British rule were Protestant; one, Alice Milligan, described herself as an "internal prisoner" of her family. In passing, Foster fruitfully compares the generation of rebels that brought on the Easter Uprising of 1916 to the Bolsheviks who overthrew the czar a year and a half later. While he notes that "this comparison should not be pushed too far," it is useful to remember that the Irish, whether the comparatively conservative W.B. Yeats or the socialist Éamon de Valera, were not operating in a vacuum. As Foster charts the growth of the nationalist and revolutionary movements, the violence mounts. What had begun as a war of words and ideas soon took on armed force, so that, by the time of the first Republic, "soldiers" and 'politicians' were already regarding each other suspiciously, and the implicit tension between moderate and extremist elements stretched to other issues besides that of separation from British rule." By the end of Foster's illuminating account, it is clear that the factionalism could only grow, to often tragic ends.

Readable and provocative. Students of contemporary Irish history have few better guides than the sometimes-dyspeptic but refreshingly agenda-less Foster.



## THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. DOYLE *A Journey into Madness and Mayhem*

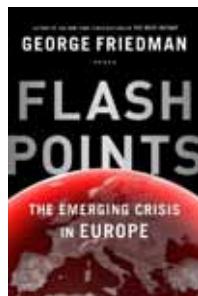
Friedman, Daniel L., Friedman, Eugene  
SquareOne Publishers (336 pp.)  
\$29.95 | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-0-7570-0348-6

A father-and-son team exposes the similarities of two very strange men, Jack the Ripper and Arthur Conan Doyle.

The Friedmans intersperse a biography of Doyle with a re-enactment of a tour of a handful of sites where the Ripper's victims were killed. The original tour, which included Doyle, was an activity undertaken by a group the press referred to as the "Murder Club," a dining club comprised of professional men who debated popular criminal cases ("admission to the club became one of the most sought-after prizes in the realm"). The authors have cast Doyle as leader of the tour, with a fictitious assortment of Ripper followers, including an American doctor, two ladies, two brothers, a lawyer and a financier. From the first, Doyle becomes the formulaic Holmes character, exuding pedantry and disdain for any theories not his own. His superiority complex and the never-ending scraps of information from his pockets eventually become tedious. The biographical sections of the book are much more interesting, as

the authors expose the man with a titanic ego who always had a good excuse for his failures—e.g., even his thesis listed barriers that prevented a better paper. Doyle's transcripts from medical school have been altered, and his letters home do not gel with actual events as he developed his fiction writing. His medical career never took off, but his schooling exposed him to three brilliant diagnosticians who provided the perfect model for Sherlock Holmes. Throughout, the Friedmans have the tour members discussing the intelligence, surgical ability and misogyny that could apply to both Holmes (Doyle) and the Ripper. The biography ends with the first Holmes mystery published in 1887, the year before the Ripper murders. "It would take four more years for Doyle's consulting detective to bring him fame and fortune," write the authors.

**At first muddled and confusing, the book goes on to raise intriguing questions and possibilities for fans of both men.**

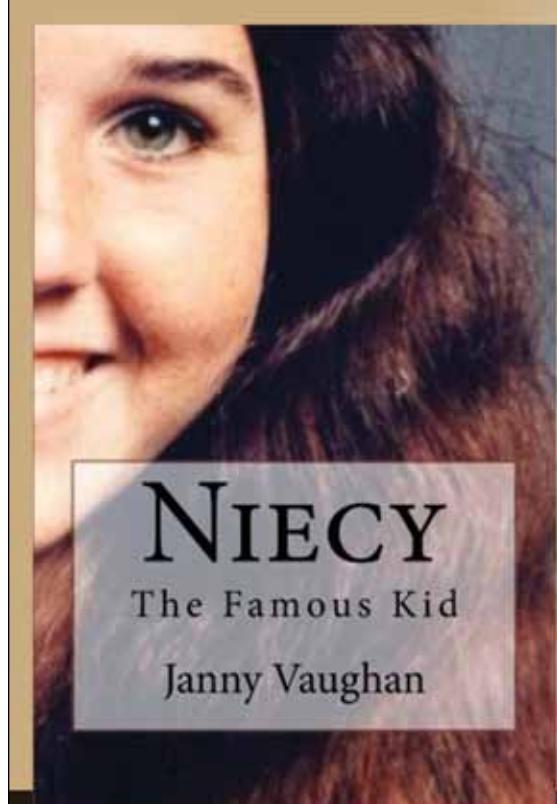


## FLASHPOINTS *The Emerging Crisis in Europe*

Friedman, George  
Doubleday (288 pp.)  
\$28.95 | Feb. 1, 2015  
978-0-385-53633-2

This nonacademic but erudite view of European history shows that the 20th century's trauma of war and violence is not quite behind us.

Stratfor founder and chairman Friedman (*The Next Decade: Where We've Been...and Where We're Going*, 2011, etc.) examines the history of Europe's geopolitical formation since the Ottomans seized Constantinople in 1453 for patterns that might explain the devastation of the two world wars and the unquiet peace since. On the cusp of World War I, Europe enjoyed the status of a "magical place," the pinnacle of civilization in terms of science, politics and culture, but it was soon to be eclipsed by three decades



## NIECY: THE FAMOUS KID By Janny Vaughan

Author of *The Teddy Bear Brown Series*,  
*Genie and Janny* and *Merry Christmas, Margaret Rose*.

"An emotional tribute to an extraordinary 17-year-old girl through the eyes of her biggest fan: her mom."  
—Kirkus Reviews

"...a remarkable accomplishment."  
—Mary Pharr, PhD, Co-Editor of *Bread, Blood and The Hunger Games: Critical Essays on the Suzanne Collins Trilogy* (McFarland)

JannyOriginals.com

ISBN #9781490916002

For information about publication or film rights, email Daniellenw2003@yahoo.com.

of unimaginable bloodshed. The German sense of victimization and insecurity prompted this fabled country of “philosophers and cathedrals” to fill the space left by the collapsed institutions of the Weimar Republic with “blood, race and myth.” By the end of the misery of World War II, Europe was depleted and could not even feed itself without the aid of the United States. Moreover, it was via U.S. management that Europe regained its “pride,” as well as economy, from the Marshall Plan, which was supposed to create an irresistible economic integration that made future wars impossible. There was great optimism, even prosperity, within Europe until 2008, when, according to the author, two events changed everything: Russia went to war with Georgia and the financial system collapsed. Russia was relevant again, nationalism awoke, and some poorer nations (e.g., Spain, Greece) struggled mightily while Germany, reunited and wealthy, became the “arbiter” of economic crisis. What Friedman calls the “borderlands” again erupted in war and displacement—i.e., the “flashpoints” of the Balkans and Caucasus that continue to demonstrate that the “passions that had defined Europe prior to 1945 were alive and well.”

**A thoughtful, uncluttered treatise considering Europe's intractable patterns of unemployment, immigration and racism.**



## GIRL IN A BAND A Memoir

*Gordon, Kim*

Dey Street/HarperCollins (288 pp.)

\$27.99 | Feb. 24, 2015

978-0-06-229589-7

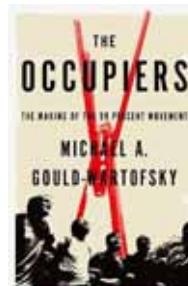
978-0-06-229591-0 e-book

The blonde enigma from the band that spoke softly and carried a big noise tells her story, from art-chick beginnings to success to marital and musical catastrophe.

Sonic Youth fans were stunned when married co-founders Thurston Moore and Kim Gordon announced in 2011 that couple and band were no more; for 30 years, both seemed impervious to the usual marital strains. Gordon, who lost Moore to another woman, took it even harder, and the bitterness is there on the first page of this autobiography, her therapeutic self-assessment as an artist struggling to define herself in a male-dominated environment. Gordon scrutinizes herself as the daughter of a distant father and a mother who had sacrificed her ambitions and also as the masochistic sister of a cruel (and schizophrenic) older brother. It's a history she carried with her when she headed from California to the No Wave underground of New York in 1980, where she met Moore, the lanky, punk-obsessed guitarist and soul mate who was already worshiping at the altar of CBGBs. Eventually, Gordon found herself submitting to his dominating personality. “The codependent woman, the narcissistic man: stale words lifted from therapy that I nonetheless think about a lot these days.” Of course, she also thrived—as a musician, visual artist, mother and icon. Gordon goes into intriguing detail on specific songs and doesn't

hold back on Moore or other figures, even ones with worse disasters than her own: “Courtney [Love] told me she thought Kurt Cobain was hot, which made me cringe inside and hope the two of them would never meet. We all said to ourselves, ‘Uh-oh train wreck coming.’”

**Written with the same cool passion she brings to her lyrics, Gordon delivers a generous look at life inside the punk whirlwind.**



## THE OCCUPIERS *The Making of the 99 Percent Movement*

*Gould-Wartofsky, Michael A.*

Oxford Univ. (320 pp.)

\$29.95 | Feb. 3, 2015

978-0-19-931391-4

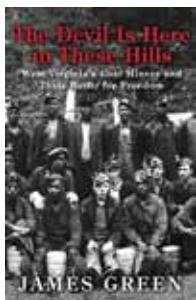
Sociology doctoral student Gould-Wartofsky debuts with an inside look at the “new, new Left” that emerged when fewer than 2,000 people seized New York City’s Zuccotti Park, near Wall Street, in 2011, sparking similar protest rallies against the wealthiest “1 Percent” in some 1,500 towns and cities.

Chanting “We! Are! The 99 Percent!” the occupiers numbered many thousands, including millennials hit hard by the 2007–2009 recession, who opposed “the politics of austerity, restricted democracy, and the power of corporate America.” Veteran activist Gould-Wartofsky was both a participant and observer at the monthslong New York action, interviewing some 80 protesters there and in cities from Atlanta to Madrid and examining the inner workings of the complex intergenerational mélange—an “awesome petri dish of political engagement,” one participant called it. The author’s sympathetic account traces the origins of the occupy tactic to events elsewhere, from the Zapatista land occupation in Chiapas, Mexico, to uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and Athens, and describes the critical roles played by online social media and the “People’s Microphone” (where people in a crowd repeat a speaker’s words, eliminating the need for amplifiers) and by alliances with labor unions and nonprofits. Working groups provided food, shelter and safety to the Zuccotti Park encampment. Many rifts occurred, notably between upper-echelon occupiers and the “lower 99 Percent” (the homeless and drug users). Gould-Wartofsky captures the chaotic, carnival-like atmosphere that reigned as chanting crowds marched twice daily on Wall Street, stormed the Brooklyn Bridge and, on Oct. 15, a day of global action in 951 cities, made their way to Times Square. The author argues the movement’s ideas and practices have lived on after the eviction from Zuccotti Park: “The 99 Percent identity—and the sense of solidarity it lent an otherwise divided Left—[was] the movement’s most enduring contribution to the political culture.”

**A valuable view of the explosive movement that gave voice to outrage over our new gilded age. (19 b/w line illustrations; 15 b/w halftones)**

“Green opens our eyes with his assiduous research and steady storytelling.”

FROM THE DEVIL IS HERE IN THESE HILLS



## THE DEVIL IS HERE IN THESE HILLS *West Virginia's Coal Miners and Their Battle for Freedom*

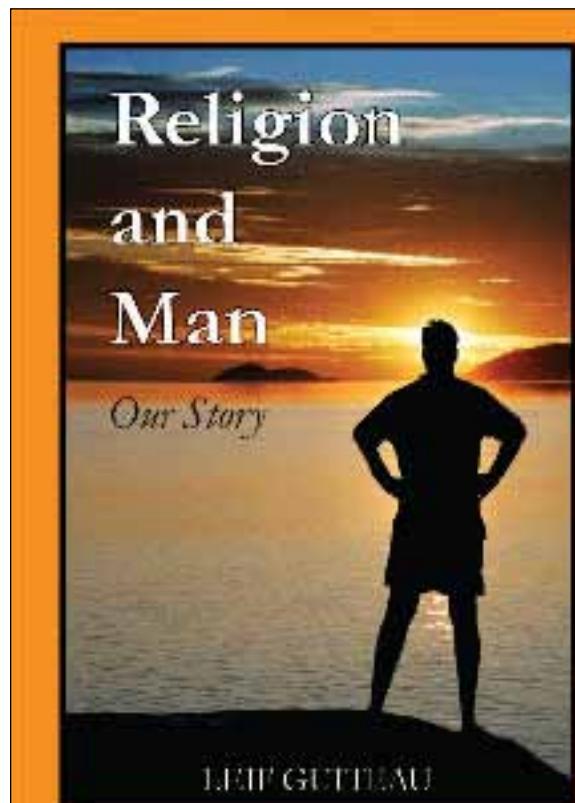
*Green, James*  
Atlantic Monthly (448 pp.)  
\$28.00 | Feb. 3, 2014  
978-0-8021-2331-2



Green (History/Univ. of Massachusetts, Boston; *Death in the Haymarket: A Story of Chicago, the First Labor Movement, and the Bombing that Divided Gilded Age America*, 2006, etc.) mines the historically dark seams of the sanguinary Mountain State coal wars that raged in the early decades of the 20th century.

The author begins with the discovery of coal in the region in 1750 and then proceeds to the quick “development” of the area by mine owners, who did all they could—legally and otherwise—to keep wages low, working conditions precarious and

workers in a virtual enslavement. (The volume’s subtitle reveals the author’s point of view) Numerous notable names appear throughout, beginning with James M. Cain (before his novels), who wrote about the region in the 1920s, and including familiar names (Mother Jones, the Hatfields, John L. Lewis) and those whose roles many readers new to the subject may find remarkable—Louis Brandeis, Billy Sunday (he was on the owners’ payroll), Edmund Wilson and Felix Frankfurter (pre-Supreme Court) among them. The very names of some of the encampments and confrontations are resonant—e.g., Paint Creek, Matewan and Blair Mountain. Green proceeds through the decades, describing the actions (violent and otherwise) in calm detail, telling us about the principals on both sides and providing many useful maps and photographs. We see the rise and fall and rise of union activity in the region—activity that was often bathed in blood and terror—and the fecklessness and cowardice of politicians at all levels, from local officials to President Herbert Hoover. We witness the extreme deprivations of the miners and their families, their astonishing willingness—even eagerness—to suffer so that future generations would not. It is



## Religion and Man *Our Story*

by LEIF GUITEAU

“In short but sweeping chapters, (Guiteau) offers brief, easy-to-digest summaries of major religious belief systems... A good starting point for those wanting to learn more about what unites and separates them.”

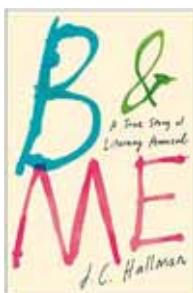
*-Kirkus Reviews*

*Learn about the history & beliefs of the major world religions, including your own, in this short & comprehensive study of the legacy of mankind*

For information on publication rights, contact [lguiteau@gmail.com](mailto:lguiteau@gmail.com)

obvious throughout that these issues of capital vs. labor have remained with us and, in some ways, worsened.

**Green opens our eyes with his assiduous research and steady storytelling.**



## B & ME A True Story of Literary Arousal

Hallman, J.C.

Simon & Schuster (304 pp.)

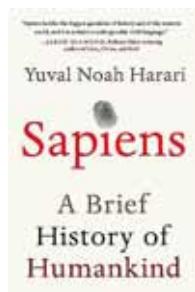
\$26.00 | Mar. 10, 2015

978-1-4516-8200-7

Recounting a literary obsession.

When Hallman (*Wm & Hry: Literature, Love, and the Letters Between William and Henry James*, 2013, etc.) first proposed writing a book about Nicholson Baker, emulating Baker's book about John Updike, *U and I*, Hallman's agent was discouraging about its "possible commercial value." So Hallman fired him and found a new agent who sold the proposal, setting him on a quest to indulge in his passion. Baker writes lustily about sex, giving Hallman a chance to do so, as well, which seems to be his real aim. He ruminates about masturbating, offers clinical details of his lovemaking, describes fondling his girlfriend's breasts, and excitedly shares information about the frequency and quality of her orgasms, which, he notes, "had become more and more intense, had grown by orders of magnitude, and now, seismically speaking, they were eruptive, volcanic orgasms...of roof joist-shattering intensity." Other bodily functions (urinating, defecating) and parts (penises, anuses) also merit the author's consideration. Readers unfamiliar with Baker's writing may have a difficult time engaging in Hallman's fixation, his quandary about how to proceed (should he meet him?) and his detailed analysis of his works. Reading Baker, he discovered, "seemed like the perfect tool to use to poke a hole in the dike of my imagination" (phallic imagery abounds throughout), and writing about him was even more inspiring. He felt "a renewed sense of purpose" and saw Baker as his "savior." When the two finally met, Hallman realized that he was never going to be "a simple friend" to the man he had made his literary subject. "Nicholson Baker need not be a savior for anyone other than me," Hallman remarks, though he urges readers "to find their Nicholson Baker," a writer who liberates their imaginations and enriches their worlds.

**There are only occasional insights in this frenzied, unabashedly self-indulgent book.**



## SAPIENS A Brief History of Humankind

Harari, Yuval Noah

Harper/HarperCollins (464 pp.)

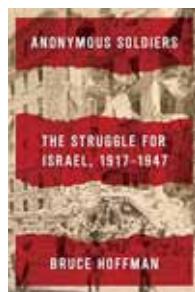
\$29.99 | Feb. 10, 2015

978-0-06-231609-7

Harari (History/Hebrew Univ. of Jerusalem) provides an immersion into the important revolutions that shaped world history: cognitive, agricultural and scientific. The book was originally published in Israel in 2011 and became a best-seller.

There is enormous gratification in reading books of this nature, an encyclopedic approach from a well-versed scholar who is concise but eloquent, both skeptical and opinionated, and open enough to entertain competing points of view. As Harari firmly believes, history hinges on stories: some stories for understanding, others prompting people to act cooperatively toward common goals. Of course, these stories—"fictions," "social constructs" or "imagined realities"—can be humble or evil, inclusive or self-serving, but they hold the power of belief. Harari doesn't avoid the distant past, when humans "were insignificant animals with no more impact on their environment than gorillas, fireflies or jellyfish," but he is a skeptic and rightfully relies on specific source material to support his arguments—though he is happy to offer conjectures. Harari launches fully into his story with the cognitive revolution, when our brains were rewired, now more intelligent and creative, with language, gossip and myths to fashion the stories that, from politicians to priests to sorcerers, serve to convince people of certain ideas and beliefs. The agricultural revolution ("lives generally more difficult and less satisfying than those of foragers") comes next and firmly establishes the intersubjectivity of imagined orders: hierarchies, money, religion, gender issues, "communication network[s] linking the subjective consciousness of many individuals." Throughout, the author revels in the chaos of history. He discusses the good and bad of empires and science, suggests that modern economic history comes down to a single word ("growth"), rues the loss of familial and societal safety nets, and continues to find wonder in the concept that "the keys to happiness are in the hands of our biochemical system."

**The great debates of history aired out with satisfying vigor.**



## ANONYMOUS SOLDIERS The Struggle for Israel, 1917-1947

Hoffman, Bruce

Knopf (640 pp.)

\$35.00 | Feb. 24, 2015

978-0-307-59471-6

How Jewish terrorists defeated British rule.

Terrorism scholar Hoffman (Security Studies/Georgetown Univ.; *Inside Terrorism*,

2006, etc.) draws on British, Israeli and American archives, uncovering much new material, in this history of Zionists' determination to oust the British from Palestine. Terrorism, carried out by two rival groups—Irgun and the more extreme Lehi—resulted, after 30 years of violence, in British withdrawal and the creation of Israel. Britain's presence had been authorized by the Mandate of Palestine, a consequence of the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I. By 1929, despite improvements to infrastructure and standard of living, both Arabs and Jews were seething with resentment. "The situation was...like the Wild West," one British commander remarked. And it worsened: In the 1930s, hundreds of thousands of Jews fleeing the Nazis pressed for permission to immigrate, incensed over Britain's quota; Arabs, threatened by an increase in population, formed marauding guerrilla bands. With British soldiers fighting the war, the police force was inadequate and demoralized. In 1938 alone, 5,708 terrorist incidents occurred. Of more than 90 protagonists in this teeming drama, Menachem Begin emerges as one of the most violent, the mastermind behind the horrific bombing of the King David Hotel in 1939. "We fight, therefore we are!" he exclaimed. British leaders, some openly anti-Semitic, vacillated as terrorists fulfilled their mission to make Palestine ungovernable. Never, a statesman said ruefully, would the region be a place "in which Jew and Arab would settle down together...." Winston Churchill, with considerable understatement, admitted that Britain's Mandatory administration had been "a thankless, painful, costly, laborious, inconvenient task." Hoffman concludes that the "rise of Israel was the product of many powerful forces in addition to terrorism." But the Irgun's success, he chillingly notes, laid the groundwork for today's globalized terrorism.

An authoritative, sweeping, important history that shows how terrorism "is neither irrational nor desperate but instead entirely rational and often carefully calculated and choreographed."



## WANTED A Spiritual Pursuit Through Jail, Among Outlaws, and Across Borders

Hoke, Chris  
HarperOne (384 pp.)  
\$25.99 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-0-06-232136-7

A jail chaplain's memoir of a life spent ministering to the prison populations of northwestern Washington.

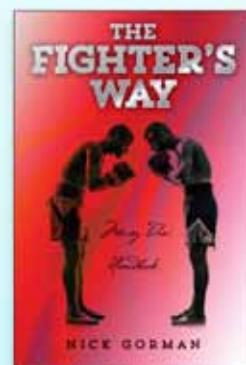
Hoke relates his spirited tenure as prison pastor to incarcerated felons through the stories of those he has helped most. A restless, downtrodden youth growing up in Northern California, the author found the vocational "faith community" he'd been seeking after volunteering to co-minister to prisoners in a Skagit Valley, Washington, detention facility. Supporting himself with farm work, Hoke discovered his real passion behind the prison walls, where violent killers and desperate gangsters stared him down. Many of them actively participated in his Bible study class, and they eventually came to dub him their "pastor," though he would

remain unordained. Embracing the ecclesiastical journey through the bowels of a men's penitentiary as his true calling, Hoke shares frank commentary and a collection of sobering anecdotes of the often mentally taxing time "learning to pray in a cathedral of tattoos and temporary release orders." Whether selflessly fostering relationships between a solitary confinement inmate and his daughters, bonding with a former East LA Chicano gang member, counseling a schizophrenic, homicidal young man, or fly-fishing in Guatemala with ex-gang members-turned-volunteer chaplains, Hoke's generous, unflagging spirit for these often hopeless inmates is an inspiring demonstration of the author's dedication to his ecclesiastical calling. Some of the author's behaviors, however, seem questionable, as when he illegally forged TSA initials on two immigrants' boarding passes to get them on a flight. His later work with Christian ministry Tierra Nueva has served as a continuation of his mission to establish a long-lasting connection between the devotional and the criminally incarcerated.

**A liberating, transformative chronicle of how spirituality can foster inspiration and hope while emboldening the downtrodden through their darkest days.**

## THE FIGHTER'S WAY

*Muay Thai Handbook*



by Nick Gorman  
[www.thefightersway.com](http://www.thefightersway.com)

"A snappy little handbook that could easily lead to deeper involvement in the sport."  
—Kirkus Reviews

ISBN #: 978-1-5004-5470-8

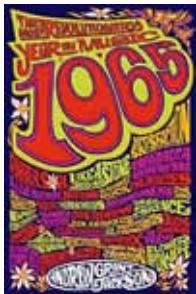
South African national muay thai champion Gorman offers a concise introduction to this martial art.

*Available now in paperback and ebook on Amazon*

All inquiries please contact: [nick@thefightersway.com](mailto:nick@thefightersway.com)

# "An intellectually stimulating discussion of shame and its enduring place in the digital age."

FROM *IS SHAME NECESSARY?*



## 1965 **The Most Revolutionary Year in Music**

*Jackson, Andrew Grant*  
Dunne/St. Martin's (352 pp.)  
\$27.99 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-250-05962-8

Lively though superficial survey of the *annus mirabilis* that brought us "Eve of Destruction," "Like a Rolling Stone" and "Help!"

Journalist/filmmaker Jackson doesn't serve up much of a thesis beyond the rather vaporous observation that the year 1965 "is the moment in rock history when the Technicolor butterfly burst out of its black-and-white cocoon." Put another way, enough musicians had dropped acid by then to alter the course of pop music, which had been spinning through cycles of folk, R&B, jazz and rock and was now making a mélange of all of them, courtesy of inchoate groups as far afield from each other as the Mothers of Invention, the Doors and the Velvet Underground—and atop the stack, as ever, the indomitable Beatles. There's not much new in the individual bits of data assembled here, though Jackson's gleanings are sometimes pleasing. High points include the makings of the Beatles' song that would become "Drive My Car," a recording which John Lennon sagely said, "It needs cowbell," and of the anthemic "Eve of Destruction," which the Byrds and their lesser peers the Turtles (then the Tyrtles) rejected—and wisely, for, as the latter's Howard Kaylan said, "whoever recorded this song was doomed to have only one record in their/his career." The year was light on hard-charting women, though Jackson does a solid job covering the hit-makers, including a very young Cher and an ever-so-earnest Mary Travers. The author occasionally stretches a little too far: If a cigar is sometimes just a cigar, then the white shirt of "Satisfaction" might just be a shirt and not an occult commentary on racism, and it's downright silly to claim that Dylan's "From a Buick Six" is "a psychic flash of the motorcycle accident that will take Dylan off the road a year later."

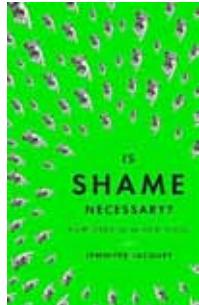
Good enough as far as it goes, but Peter Guralnick and Greil Marcus can rest easy, unthreatened by competition here.

## IS SHAME NECESSARY? **New Uses for an Old Tool**



*Jacquet, Jennifer*  
Illus. by Kobl, Brendan O'Neill  
Pantheon (224 pp.)  
\$22.95 | Feb. 17, 2015  
978-0-307-90757-8  
978-0-307-90758-5 e-book

An intellectually stimulating discussion of shame and its enduring place in the digital age.



It's been a long time since Hester Prynne was forced to wear the scarlet letter around town, but shame has never left us. Jacquet (Environmental Studies/New York Univ.) uses lively prose and keen insight to explore the myriad ways the shame game continues to impact our everyday lives. Unlike the dark, secret interiors of guilt, shame is often a communal experience, an important way for society to discourage behavior it deems undesirable. Whether publishing the names of heavyweight tax dodgers online or exposing the nefarious moneymaking schemes of the giant telecoms, shame can work wonders on transgressors in need of an immediate course correction. However, as Jacquet also cautions, shame is an often unwieldy instrument that carries the potential of backfiring on those endeavoring to correct unwanted actions. The author looks at examples involving environmental conservation and over-fishing, among others, to make the point. In both instances, instead of being shamed into changing behavior, the most egregious offenders somehow managed to slip through the cracks while far less significant offenders were held fast. Jacquet tackles "green guilt" head-on when she explodes the very first recommendation at the end of *An Inconvenient Truth* and its appeal to buy energy-efficient appliances and light bulbs. As she reminds us, "household lighting accounts for only 2 percent of total U.S. carbon emissions and 6 percent of household energy use (excluding diet)." While there are judges out there who gleefully revel in literally hanging shaming signs around the necks of hard-pressed shoplifters and the like, Jacquet demonstrates a much greater understanding of shame when she likens it to an antibiotic whose effectiveness depends a lot on whether the proper dose is used at the right time.

A sharp and surprising dissertation that puts the many facets of shame in a whole new light.

## LUSITANIA **Triumph, Tragedy, and the End of the Edwardian Age**

*King, Greg; Wilson, Penny*  
St. Martin's (400 pp.)  
\$27.99 | Feb. 24, 2015  
978-1-250-05254-4

On the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the *Lusitania*, King and Wilson (*The Resurrection of the Romanovs: Anastasia, Anna Anderson, and the World's Greatest Royal Mystery*, 2010) dig for clues to unanswered questions.

The details surrounding how the elusive information disappeared uncover guilt on all sides. The British Admiralty had to protect the fact that they were transporting contraband in a ship sailing without a flag. The local coroner's inquest, the British Board of Trade's hearing and a U.S. District Court all dismissed charges of negligence. The admiralty never sent escort to protect the *Lusitania* as she entered British waters, and the captain acted contrary to orders. Even the journal of the U-boat captain has been altered. Did he fire one or two torpedoes? The German government published a warning as the *Lusitania* was

# “Insightful and bound to spark controversy”

FROM WOMEN AFTER ALL

about to sail from New York, proclaiming that ships misusing neutral flags found in British waters would be subject to destruction. Prior to this statement, the “Cruiser Rules” codified by The Hague in 1899 required enemy ships to give warning, demand a search for contraband and allow the ship to be abandoned before sinking it. In January 1915, England ordered her merchant vessels to sail under false flags and carry munitions, knowing Germany would respond in kind. First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill referred to the *Lusitania* as “live bait,” hoping to draw the Americans into the war. The ship was the last of the great Edwardian ships, as her upper-class passengers showed, some of whom had actually been warned by Germans not to sail. The authors devote inordinate portions of the text to biographies of passengers and still more to the lives of the survivors, but their exploration of the facts surrounding the mystery is the primary pleasure of the book.

**Those who relish tales of the rich and famous will appreciate this book, but the real joy is in the authors’ detective work and attention to detail. (8-page b/w photo insert)**



## DISPLACEMENT

*Knisley, Lucy*

*Illus. by Knisley, Lucy*

Fantagraphics Books (168 pp.)

\$19.99 paper | Feb. 8, 2015

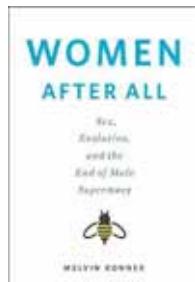
978-1-60699-810-6

A 20-something cartoonist with a unique sense of humor sets off on a cruise to the Caribbean with her nonagenarian grandparents.

In this follow-up to her graphic memoir *An Age of License* (2014), the talented Knisley offers a pointed juxtaposition to her earlier travelogue set in Europe. When her grandparents Phyllis and Allen decided to take a cruise ship to the Caribbean, the author (recovering from a recent breakup) accompanied them on the 10-day journey. And she worried—a lot. Among Knisley’s concerns were her grandparents’ progressive dementia, their physical limitations, the potential for norovirus (“puking/pooping virus”), her own insomnia and anxiety, and the virulent rudeness of the thousands of other passengers. “This is not at all like my last trip,” writes the author. “I traveled around Europe on my own, drinking wine, learning languages, and having a passionate love affair. That trip was about independence, sex, youth, and adventure. This trip is about patience, care, mortality, respect, sympathy and love.” In between her amusing drawings depicting life on the ship and the strange comedy that came with taking care of her elders, Knisley offers excerpts from her grandfather’s World War II memoir. This inclusion lends the book an interesting contrast between her grandparents’ worldview when they were her age and Knisley’s frenetic, impatient, all-too-busy inner self. It’s also worth noting that the narrative storytelling is delightful, combining easy-to-follow layouts with the artist’s unique visual style, vivid watercolors and quirky sense of humor. The result is an impressive high-wire act that balances observational humor

and a highly tuned sense of self with a moving portrait of the ways compassion can affect even the most self-aware among us. Knisley says these books lock into place a certain time in her memory. Readers are fortunate she brought her notebooks with her on these unusual journeys.

**A moving but also very funny meditation on time, age and grace.**



## WOMEN AFTER ALL *Sex, Evolution, and the End of Male Supremacy*

*Konner, Melvin*

Norton (400 pp.)

\$26.95 | Feb. 23, 2015

978-0-393-23996-6

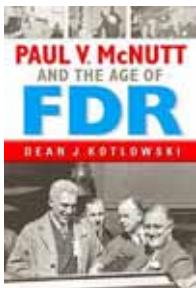
Konner (Neuroscience and Behavioral Biology/Emory Univ.; *The Evolution of Childhood: Relationships, Emotion, Mind*, 2010, etc.) examines why he believes women are superior to men “in most ways that will matter in the future.”

Contemporary discussions regarding gender typically revolve around the idea that the masculine and feminine are more products of culture than of nature. The author counters prevailing ideas about gender by taking a biologically essentialist position and arguing that differences between men and women arise “because of intrinsic differences in the body and the brain.” Drawing from a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, biology, sociology, psychology and history, Konner suggests that women are not only more logical and practical, but also more cooperative and caring than men. They are “builders rather than destroyers.” Males, on the other hand, suffer from what he calls “androgen poisoning,” a “disorder” that causes everything from higher overall mortality rates to premature baldness. The only real reason men exist is because they provide the evolutionary variety that allows the human species to withstand disease. Citing the work of numerous anthropologists, Konner suggests that the “problem” of male dominance—which was built primarily on the greater physical strength with which men are endowed—seems to have been present from the start. Yet in early nomadic hunter-gatherer societies, there was “less gender asymmetry in power.” In the stable farming cultures that followed, women became more easily subject to all-male power coalitions, which led to centuries of social, economic and political subjugation. However, technological developments have rendered the brawn that was once so crucial to male dominance practically obsolete. Equality between the sexes, though not yet a reality, is now within reach—and, according to Konner, is the thing that may save humanity from destroying itself and the planet.

**Insightful and bound to spark controversy.**

# "An intriguing, entirely engrossing investigation into a legendary disaster."

FROM DEAD WAKE



## PAUL V. MCNUTT AND THE AGE OF FDR

Kotlowski, Dean J.  
Indiana Univ. (600 pp.)  
\$45.00 | Jan. 2, 2015  
978-0-253-01468-9

Sturdy biography of a political stalwart of the past, largely forgotten now.

Paul McNutt (1891-1955), writes Kotlowski (History/Salisbury Univ.; *Nixon's Civil Rights: Politics, Principle, and Policy*, 2002, etc.), was a politician through and through; he "embodied change and continuity," a neat trick, and he managed to upset conservatives and liberals alike in his various guises as governor, federal administrator and New Deal proponent. Moreover, he was one of those now-fabled politicos who worked both sides of the aisle, not just in order to solidify power and win favor, but also because bipartisanship was the right thing to do. One of the many virtues of Kotlowski's book is that it covers the necessary ground—a challenge, given McNutt's many careers and accomplishments—yielding a book that is overlong but not unnecessarily padded. Another of its virtues is that it demonstrates ably that though McNutt indeed lived in a different time, with his heyday in the 1930s, it was most certainly not a more innocent one: If FDR played McNutt hard in several Machiavellian episodes, McNutt returned the favor by working his own political machine to his advantage. In doing so, he managed to alienate FDR further, all but guaranteeing that Henry Wallace would appear on the ticket, even though Wallace was considered "too liberal and idealistic in his politics, eclectic in his intellectual pursuits, and standoffish in his manners." Another little-known aspect of McNutt's work involved his efforts, while working as high commissioner in the Philippines, to secure the safe passage of many hundreds of Jews from Nazi Germany. Kotlowski also considers his subject's contributions in many other venues, including his service as dean of the Indiana University School of Law.

No amount of scholarly work is likely to raise McNutt in the public consciousness, but it's not for want of trying in this capable, readable biography.

## KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN *Reye's Syndrome, Aspirin, and the Politics of Public Health*

Largent, Mark A.  
Bellevue Literary Press (288 pp.)  
\$19.95 paper | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-1-934137-88-8

A well-researched history of Reye's syndrome that explores how science, medicine and politics interact.

Largent (Associate Dean/Lyman Briggs Coll. at Michigan State Univ.; *Vaccine: The Debate in Modern America*, 2012), a childhood survivor of Reye's syndrome and currently a historian of

science, tackles a malady that is still not well-understood. Named for the Australian physician who described it in the 1950s, the syndrome was at first thought to be caused by aflatoxins, then by ingredients in a pesticide, and then, in 1980, by aspirin. Largent relates each of these stories of searches for a cause, focusing mainly on aspirin. There is a brief chapter on therapies developed to treat Reye's, which was often fatal or left survivors with severe disabilities, but the author's primary concern is not treatment approaches but rather the long controversy over its link to aspirin. As Largent examines the dispute over whether to require warning labels on bottles of aspirin, he also scrutinizes the actions and interactions—some might say the machinations—of pharmaceutical companies, consumer rights groups, epidemiologists, public health officials, courts and the U.S. Congress. In 1985, the Department of Health and Human Services ordered that warnings about Reye's syndrome appear on all bottles of aspirin sold in the United States, giving advocates of this measure the opportunity to create a narrative about the triumph of science over big pharma. However, as Largent points out, uncertainty remains. The incidence of Reye's declined sharply in the 1980s and then virtually disappeared, leaving scientists without cases to investigate to determine whether aspirin was indeed the culprit. The author's take-home message is that despite all the earnest efforts, sometimes there are no final answers.

A revealing work that validates the statement that watching policy being made is like watching sausage being made—not a sight for the squeamish.

## DEAD WAKE *The Last Crossing of the Lusitania*

Larson, Erik  
Crown (464 pp.)  
\$28.00 | Mar. 10, 2015  
978-0-307-40886-0

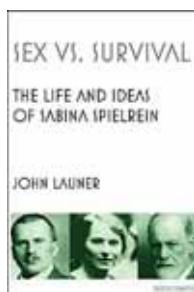


Larson (*In the Garden of Beasts: Love, Terror, and an American Family in Hitler's Berlin*, 2011, etc.) once again demonstrates his expert researching skills and writing abilities, this time shedding light on nagging questions about the sinking of the *Lusitania* on May 7, 1915.

"Lucy," as she was fondly known, was one of the "greyhounds," ships that vied for the Blue Riband award for the fastest crossing of the Atlantic Ocean. A gem of the Cunard fleet, she drew the cream of society, and life aboard was the epitome of Edwardian luxury. The author works with a broad scope, examining the shipping business, wartime policies, the government leaders and even U-boat construction. More fascinating is his explanation of the intricacy of sailing, submerging and maneuvering a U-boat. Gaining position to fire a torpedo that has only a 60 percent chance of exploding belies the number of ships sunk. Throughout the voyage, many omens predicted disaster, especially the publication of a German warning the morning of sailing. The British Admiralty had broken the German codes and could track the whereabouts of submarines, particularly

the deadly U-20. They knew that six U-boats left base during the last week of April, and three ships sank in the same channel the week before the *Lusitania*. The admiralty had decided to open a safer northern channel to merchant shipping but hadn't directed the *Lusitania* to use it. Larson explores curiosities and a long list of what ifs: If the *Lusitania* had not been late in sailing, if the fog had persisted longer, if the captain hadn't turned to starboard into the sub's path and if that one torpedo hadn't hit just in the right spot, the *Lusitania* might have arrived safely.

An intriguing, entirely engrossing investigation into a legendary disaster. Compared to Greg King and Penny Wilson's *Lusitania* (2014), also publishing to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the sinking, Larson's is the superior account.



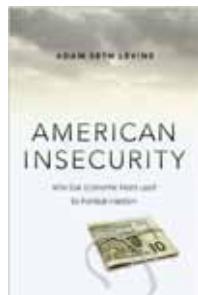
## SEX VERSUS SURVIVAL *The Life and Ideas of Sabina Spielrein*

*Launer, John*  
Overlook (320 pp.)  
\$35.00 | Feb. 12, 2015  
978-1-4683-1058-0

A forgotten psychoanalyst's fevered life.

Tavistock Clinic senior staff member Launer (co-editor: *Clinical Uncertainty in Primary Care*, 2014, etc.) asserts that Sabina Spielrein (1885–1942) deserves more attention for her groundbreaking work: the first study of the internal logic of schizophrenic speech, her insights into children's imaginations, and her use of Darwinian theory in her hypothesis of "the inseparable connection between death and sex." Although Launer refrains from using technical terms, nonspecialist readers may weary of the minute detail with which he renders Spielrein's life, which featured a severe mental breakdown, incoherent ravings, obsession with her therapist, Carl Jung, and much neurotic behavior. Granted access to newly discovered diaries and letters, the author admits that most of her papers, controlled by her estate, are unavailable to researchers. Nevertheless, he manages to fill out some mysteries of her stressful youth: Her father was alternately depressed or enraged; her mother, erratic, hysterical and overly anxious; both parents pressured her to excel academically. When her father beat her, she became sexually aroused; when her younger sister died, she fell apart. Tics, grimaces, psychosomatic symptoms and violent mood swings worsened. At 18, she was hospitalized in a mental asylum and diagnosed with hysteria; Jung was the admitting physician. Although Launer does not have evidence for the quality of Jung's treatment, the result of their meeting was her consuming adoration, which he encouraged. "Her love for him," Launer writes, "replaced her far more troubling obsessions....Her erotic experiences with him may have been her first experience of tender physical contact." Later, she broke off the affair but wanted to remain friends; he cruelly spurned her. Freud became involved as a confidant of each, dismissing Spielrein when he was still friends with Jung but eager to win her over once he ended that relationship.

Although Launer portrays an intelligent, intellectually creative woman, he fails to make a convincing case that her significance transcends her time.



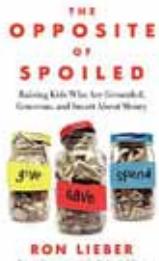
## AMERICAN INSECURITY *Why Our Economic Fears Lead to Political Inaction*

*Levine, Adam Seth*  
Princeton Univ. (328 pp.)  
\$29.95 | Feb. 1, 2015  
978-0-691-16296-6

In his first book, a young scholar examines the barriers to political action on a wide range of economic issues that intimately affect millions of Americans.

Single-issue political advocacy has a venerable tradition in America, with citizens voluntarily coming together to move the needle on issues as diverse as gun rights, the environment and abortion. Notwithstanding polls that consistently underscore the importance of issues relating to their financial well-being, people are less willing to mobilize, to spend their time and money affecting public opinion on economic problems such as involuntary job loss or the costs of health care, retirement and higher education. Why? Relying largely on his own experiments and research—elaborate appendices help explain his methodology—Levine (Government/Cornell Univ.) ascribes their reluctance to language, to what he rather awkwardly terms "self-undermining rhetoric." Put another way, when it comes to an appeal on economic security issues, merely raising the topic reminds people of their own financial vulnerability. This makes them, even those willing to stir themselves on behalf of non-economic, quality-of-life issues, less eager to engage in collective action when the issues center on their own pocketbooks. It's the reason, for example, casino employees are cautioned never to make small talk about the state of the economy with their patrons and why a person most affected by rising health care costs might refrain from donating to a group dedicated to reducing them: "I am affected by these rising costs and need the cash." Nor does Levine hold out much hope for overcoming this rhetorical barrier. Even heroic attempts to reframe the issue cannot avoid the mention of "cost" when it is the very nub of the matter. Unfortunately, Levine's discussion of this rather small and, some would say, unremarkable point bears all the marks of a warmed-over doctoral dissertation: too elaborate a windup followed by a disappointing delivery, too many needless repetitions and too much clumsy prose.

Strictly for activists, political consultants, pollsters and organizers looking to sharpen their appeals. (22 line illustrations; 30 tables)



## THE OPPOSITE OF SPOILED *Raising Kids Who Are Grounded, Generous, and Smart About Money*

Lieber, Ron

Harper/HarperCollins (320 pp.)

\$26.99 | Feb. 3, 2015

978-0-06-224701-8

Talking big bucks with the smallest members of your household will make the world a better place argues *New York Times* personal finance columnist Lieber (co-author: *Taking Time Off*, 2003, etc.).

Do you know the going rate for a visit from the tooth fairy in your neighborhood? If you have children, you're probably all too aware of the playground rumors that range from \$5 up to \$50 for the prized first tooth. So what do you put under your child's pillow? Does it matter? Yes, these seemingly small family financial decisions matter a lot, according to Lieber. In his third book, the author addresses affluence, its effect on child-rearing and the lessons most of us are not teaching our children about managing wealth. As practical as the first half of the book is—it's packed with suggestions on everything from allowance to college tuition—Lieber's advice skews toward the upper-class family, leaving out the many families who make less than the \$75,000 annual income he acknowledges as his base line. For instance, when he counsels that an appropriate clothing budget be calibrated on Land's End prices, he largely ignores the fact that many families are struggling to afford even a wardrobe from Wal-Mart or Target. Later chapters get into tougher territory, and Lieber makes a good case for using early money management training to help children eventually tackle society's bigger problems, such as homelessness and hunger. Humble stories of kids raising money for Down syndrome research or creating kit bags to give to people living on the street offer inspiration for those who do have money to spend it wisely in the world and to teach their children to do the same.

**Sound advice on managing family finances but only if you have sufficient finances to manage.**

## TOUCH *The Science of Hand, Heart, and Mind*

Linden, David J.

Viking (272 pp.)

\$28.95 | Feb. 1, 2015

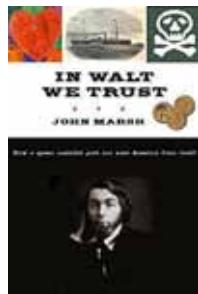
978-0-670-01487-3

A crisp reminder that the sense of touch is not to be taken lightly.

"Touch is not optional for human development," writes Linden (Neuroscience/Johns Hopkins Univ. School of Medicine; *The Compass of Pleasure: How Our Brains Make Fatty Foods, Orgasm, Exercise, Marijuana, Generosity, Vodka, Learning and Gambling Feel So Good*, 2011,

etc.) in this exploration of touch, from the tips of our toes to the tops of our skulls. Touch is critical from birth—"deprive a newborn of social touch...and a disaster unfolds"—and shapes the way we find our ways through the world via the circuitry of this "weird, complex, and often counterintuitive system." Social touch, on the whole, reinforces cooperation and loyalty, from professional sports players to packs of grooming primates. Depending on the nature of the social touch, it may soothe, reconcile, form alliances and reinforce bonds. Linden peruses the different sensors in the skin, the genetics of hot and cold, the sense of safety communicated by a particular caress, illusionary touches and our knowledge that "pain perception has an anatomically distinct emotional component." The author also spins out a hilarious story of an intimate yet strange morning with his girlfriend when he experienced significant confusion in the sensation-perception realm, and he provides a dissection of the orgasm that is at once transfixing (Linden's short course in neurology prepares readers for the description) and worthy of Woody Allen: "When we have an orgasm it feels like a transcendent, unified moment, not merely a collection of disparate sensations. We experience orgasms as intrinsically pleasurable and emotionally positive.... For an orgasm, mix together the following ingredients...Serves: 1." Though the author includes a host of entertaining anecdotes, his narrative is consistently backed by solid science.

**So surpassing does Linden make touch seem that even turning the pages of his book becomes a pleasurable experience.**



## IN WALT WE TRUST *How a Queer Socialist Poet Can Save America from Itself*

Marsh, John

Monthly Review Press (256 pp.)

\$25.00 | Feb. 22, 2015

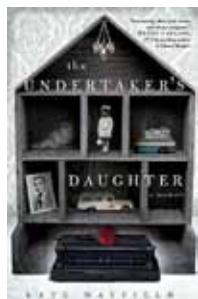
978-1-58367-475-8

Marsh (English/Pennsylvania State Univ.; *Hog Butchers, Beggars, and Busboys: Poverty, Labor, and the Making of Modern American Poetry*, 2011, etc.) shares his affection for Walt Whitman in this gentle, thoughtful consideration of the poet's relevance to 21st-century America.

Beset by moral malaise in his 30s, the author "suffered from fully-grown doubts, not just growing doubts, about the meaning of life and the purpose of our country." Whitman's insights on death, money, sex and democracy buoyed his spirits. About death, for example, Whitman taught the atheist Marsh that dying was part of "the plan of the universe," liberating the physical body to take new forms. Whitman wrote bitingly about what he called "The Morbid Appetite for Money." Lusting after wealth, he believed, harmed the soul, inevitably leading to "lying, subterfuge, pettiness, and greed," severing a "connection to the earth and to the people on the earth." He promoted ideals of fairness and shared interest, which should characterize a just society, but Marsh does not go so far as to call him "technically or politically a socialist." Celebrating the

body, Whitman waged "an intense, inspired war against shame," contradicting prevalent mid-19th-century views about modesty and sexual desire. Yet Whitman warned against shamelessness or narcissism; concern with one's own pleasure should not lead to turning "others' bodies to our uses." Marsh cannot answer the question of Whitman's possible homosexuality, but he does believe he was queer, "if by queer we mean differing from what is usual or ordinary, especially but not only when it comes to sexuality." Whitman wrote with disdain about a democracy of ill-informed voters and self-serving special interests, but he believed in America's potential to head "toward affection, toward friendship, toward a nation founded on care."

**Marsh confesses his love for the legendary poet, and by the end of this insightful homage, readers are likely to feel the same.**



### THE UNDERTAKER'S DAUGHTER

*Mayfield, Kate*

Gallery Books/Simon & Schuster

(368 pp.)

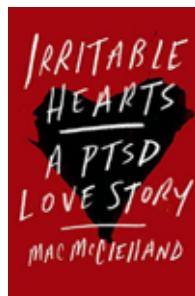
\$26.00 | Jan. 13, 2015

978-1-4767-5728-5

In her debut memoir, Mayfield (co-author: *Ellie Hart Goes to Work*, 2005, etc.) mines her 1960s rural Kentucky childhood as the daughter of a charismatic, alcoholic father who earned his living as an undertaker.

"The first time I touched a dead person," writes the author, "I was too short to reach into the casket." Her father lifted her up so she could get closer to the lifeless body, an experience she recalls as a "thrilling...unthinkable act." This dark and sharply detailed memoir follows the activities that took place in the author's Jubilee, Kentucky, girlhood home, which also served as the Mayfield and Son Funeral Home. There, she and her family members were cast as "the ghosts of the house," even as dead bodies came and went. She learned when to be quiet, out of respect for the deceased, and the rituals involved in preparing a corpse for burial. She was also preoccupied with obsessive thoughts about what objects the dead were buried with until, at last, she concluded that the most significant thing they possessed were their secrets. To that end, Mayfield offers up the long-held unspoken truths about her own family. This includes the darker side of her father, who served as his daughter's protector and hero while simultaneously battling his own demons of alcohol and infidelity. The author also explores the underbelly of their small, segregated town, which included suicide and violence and the ensuing familial feuds and grieving. Eventually, as she entered adolescence, Mayfield turned away from idolizing her father. Instead of adhering to the same parameters she had always followed, she longed to be free from the stifling world of the dead in order to live her own life—in this case, in London, where she lives with her British husband.

**Introspective and rich with personal revelation.**



### IRRITABLE HEARTS A PTSD Love Story

*McClelland, Mac*

Flatiron Books (320 pp.)

\$27.99 | Feb. 24, 2015

978-1-250-05289-6

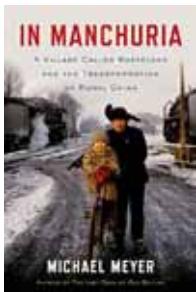
Sprawling memoir of an adventurous journalist's experiences with PTSD.

National Magazine Award-nominated writer McClelland (*For Us Surrender Is Out of the Question: A Story from Burma's Never-Ending War*, 2010) considered herself accustomed to tough environments. However, on the ground in Haiti to cover the chaotic reconstruction following the 2010 earthquake, she witnessed acts of sexual violence (left largely unspecified) that instilled in her a severe case of PTSD, manifesting in jolting physical symptoms: "[f]lashbacks of the screaming incident I witnessed in Haiti burst into my head and I lay there, soft and failed, choking on instant hard sobs." Yet on the same trip, she had begun an improbable romance with Nico, a youthful French soldier. When she was back in the United States, they kept in touch via Skype, but McClelland's PTSD symptoms and attendant depression became more debilitating. When she first published writing about her experience, she was condemned for solipsism, yet she also heard from many fellow sufferers, ranging from women who'd encountered domestic violence to a growing community of PTSD-afflicted combat veterans and their families: "They were the collateral damage that didn't end with veterans, that everyone pretended didn't exist...." As McClelland tried to hang on to her relationship with Nico, she realized that her experiences were representative of a large, undiagnosed demographic of suffering. She discovered that an extensive, therapy-based treatment regimen (involving the examination of every trauma in her past, including the explosive dissolution of her parents' relationship) allowed her to move forward gradually, into accepting Nico's impulsive marriage proposal. The author takes a maximalist approach, focusing exhaustively on her own experiences and grim sensations (as well as those of the people she encounters), so the narrative feels progressively less focused while remaining compassionate and perceptive regarding this elusive malady.

**McClelland's candor and empathy are admirable, but this would have benefited from more editorial shaping.**

# "A work of enormous heart as well as research."

FROM IN MANCHURIA



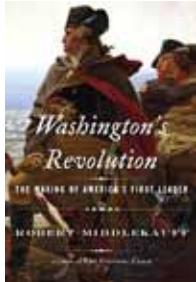
## IN MANCHURIA A Village Called Wasteland and the Transformation of Rural China

Meyer, Michael  
Bloomsbury (432 pp.)  
\$28.00 | Feb. 17, 2015  
978-1-62040-286-3

A satisfying, elegant personal journey  
in China's fabled Northeast.

A Peace Corps volunteer in China in 1995, Meyer spent subsequent years teaching English in a rapidly changing Beijing, where he wrote his first book, *The Last Days of Old Beijing: Life in the Vanishing Backstreets of a City Transformed* (2008). Against the usual logic (the Chinese were leaving the land to flock to the cities), the author settled in the remote Northeast, in a town called Wasteland, Manchuria, the hometown of his Chinese wife, Frances. There, working as a middle school teacher while living among Frances' eccentric relatives, Meyer realized that he was interested in exploring China's past. A rice-growing center, Wasteland (founded in 1956) was closer to Vladivostok and Pyongyang than the Great Wall. It was once the heart of the Manchu, who stormed through the country on horseback and seized Beijing in 1644, ruled for 300 years, and added the territory of Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia. Eventually, the Manchu mingled with the infiltrating Han Chinese; as a result, today Manchu make up less than 10 percent of the region's 110 million residents. In addition to providing a variety of tender tales of the local folk (e.g., "The Ballad of Auntie Yi"), Meyer inserts profound and troubling observations, such as the official desecration of cultural artifacts in the name of development and the fact that many of the residents first came with families fleeing the famine of the Cultural Revolution era. Throughout, Meyer moves gingerly through Manchurian history—the gradual weakening of the Qing court as China opened to the West; the building of the Trans-Siberian Railroad, bringing geopolitical hostilities; and the conquest of the region by imperial Japan and creation of Manchukuo in 1931—yet the author ends in a hopeful fashion: a pregnancy.

A work of enormous heart as well as research.



## WASHINGTON'S REVOLUTION The Making of America's First Leader

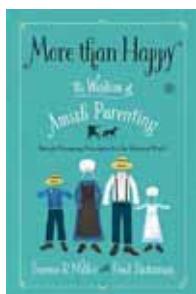
Middlekauff, Robert  
Knopf (384 pp.)  
\$30.00 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-101-87423-3

Bancroft Prize winner Middlekauff (Emeritus, American History/Univ. of California; *Benjamin Franklin and His Enemies*, 1996, etc.) sets out to chart the evolution of George Washington's viewpoint during the crucible of the Revolutionary War.



"At its beginning, [Washington] was a provincial," writes the author, "and during its course he became an American. But he was a most unusual American by war's end: He was an established citizen of the world." Although an engaging concept, the author's thesis proves to be unsupported by the text. Washington certainly thought of himself primarily as a Virginian, but Middlekauff demonstrates that as early as 1775, he "wished in effect to erase state lines...to banish provincialism in favor of unity," at least within the army. While Washington recognized that French support was indispensable to American victory and thus made great efforts to flatter and cajole French commanders into serving his purposes, nothing appears to suggest that Washington was then considering the place of an independent America among the world's nations or was otherwise adopting a broadly internationalist viewpoint officially or personally. Middlekauff delivers a comprehensive if uncritical review of the war in the theaters in which Washington exercised day-to-day command. His ability to form and reform a perpetually dissolving army in the face of appalling privation made him indispensable to the cause, and the author emphasizes his consistent adherence to the principle of civilian control of the military, an attitude critical to the subsequent development of the republic. But Middlekauff offers few glimpses into the character of Washington as a fallible mortal with an evolving perspective; the image of him that predominates is the familiar one of the austere warrior, "a man set above all others, a unique being—not a god, but at the least a chosen instrument of Providence."

A capable Revolutionary War history that breaks no new ground. (16 pages of photos; 5 maps)



## MORE THAN HAPPY The Wisdom of Amish Parenting

Miller, Serena B. with Stutzman, Paul  
Howard Books/Simon & Schuster  
(336 pp.)  
\$24.00 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-4767-5340-9  
978-1-4767-5341-6 e-book

An analysis of family life in Amish communities.

After being approached by her agent to write a romance novel set in Amish country, Miller (*The Measure of Katie Calloway*, 2011, etc.) set out to learn as much as she could about this private community of industrious people. She was particularly drawn to the children, who appeared well-fed, well-behaved, polite and happy. Over a period of years, she became friends with many Amish families and even managed to acquire an invitation to a young couple's wedding, a rare experience for an "Englisch" person. Beyond their deep faith in God and the religious rules that govern their lives, Miller discovered many things in the Amish experience that appear lacking in the "Englisch" community. The Amish surround themselves with family, so grandparents and grandchildren intermingle on a daily basis. The elderly are not placed in nursing homes but are cared for by their sons and daughters and neighbors. Divorce is almost unheard of, which creates a stable environment for children, and children are taught from the toddler stage that

everyone has chores to do to assist in daily life. They don't drive, get an education beyond the eighth grade or own computers, but some use modern cellphones and computers as tools at work. Not all of life is work-related, as children play together with simple toys, and adolescents intermingle, but all learn from their older siblings and parents to take pride in cooking, gardening, farming and animal husbandry, and they are encouraged to work on projects that might bring them a little spending money. In this informal examination, Miller, with the assistance of Amish community member Stutzman (*Hiking Through*, 2012), not only provides a kaleidoscope of insight into the daily structure of Amish parenting, but she compares and contrasts it with "Englisch" parenting and offers ways to incorporate Amish methods into one's own life.

**A rich, entertaining compendium of thoughts on the Amish way of life.**



### LETTER TO A FUTURE LOVER *Marginalia, Errata, Secrets, Inscriptions, and Other Ephemera Found in Libraries*

Monson, Ander

Graywolf (160 pp.)

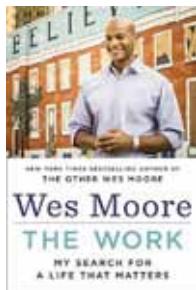
\$22.00 | Feb. 3, 2015

978-1-55597-706-1

Short essays on libraries, literature and life.

As an eclectic writer, editor and academic, Monson (Nonfiction/Univ. of Arizona; *Vanishing Point: Not a Memoir*, 2010, etc.) defies conventional continuity to make leaps of connection, not only between paragraphs, but even within a sentence. He continues to challenge the very meaning of meaning, daring readers to come to terms with "the book, the book about the book," and the very concept of the library, be it public, prison, personal, seed, digital or abandoned and repurposed. "A library is a synonym for slow, a silent coil into the past's dust," he writes. "Quick transmission of anything here won't get you anywhere." Monson writes of the future reader, even lover, with whom he connects through a book and of the life that you leave behind, not merely in the books that you've written, but the ones you've read: "You get at least two afterlives. One resides in memory, not yours, but another's. You don't get to choose whose. The other is in the disposition and dispersion of your books." These essays are more often playful than impenetrable, though they defy easy paraphrase or analysis. The author suggests early on that readers start with the section called "How to Read a Book," which he places in the middle of this book and which he begins, "Read this first. Or read this last." He later advises to use the book "like a game. Reading is participation, but I want more of you. So mark it up. Annotate a page. Trade a boring essay with another copy." Each reader will have a different experience with the book, which the author suggests is as much the reader's book as the writer's.

**Writing that requires a receptive readership as flexible as the prose.**



### THE WORK *My Search for a Life that Matters*

Moore, Wes

Spiegel & Grau (272 pp.)

\$25.00 | Jan. 13, 2015

978-0-8129-9357-8

Moore further explores his life's accomplishments and struggles and the everyday significance of "fate and meaning."

Following a best-selling debut juxtaposing his mentored childhood against that of a ne'er-do-well namesake in Baltimore (*The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates*, 2010), the author's second book charts his personal history through active military duty and time on Wall Street. Though a less-charismatic offshoot of that former effort, Moore's writing remains consistently articulate and escorts readers through a decade of pivotal years when he left his childhood home for academic study at Oxford University in England in 2001, through a data-analysis internship with the Department of Homeland Security and a promising career in investment banking, which he sacrificed for deployment as a soldier in the war in Afghanistan. Moore's wartime experiences provide a compelling narrative of personal determination and dedication to lead others with strength, yet he also deftly examines his comprehension of the larger impact and ironies of global conflict and American foreign policy. The author continues to chronicle his personal history with an often frustrating stint as a White House Fellow ("[m]oving the deep bureaucracy of lifelong civil servants was more like steering a tanker than a speedboat"), work in finance, and finally as a husband, father, public speaker, entrepreneur and youth advocate. Though the memoir's timeline meanders and Moore's sense of focus occasionally drifts, the book is ultimately unified by generous profiles of upstanding "workers" whose consistent acts of youth mentorship, veteran rehabilitation, product development and selfless humanitarianism are remarkable yet often overlooked or underappreciated in contemporary society. The takeaway is crystal clear: Take pride in your endeavors, and make every attempt to discover the "meaning of success in a volatile, difficult, and seemingly anchorless world."

**An inspired story of a passionate American who has delved into a variety of livelihoods and made a distinctive mark on each.**



### BON APPÉTEMPT *A Coming-of-Age Story (with Recipes!)*

Morris, Amelia

Grand Central Publishing (320 pp.)

\$26.00 | \$12.99 e-book | Feb. 3, 2015

978-1-4555-4936-8

978-1-4555-4938-2 e-book

A refreshing take on growing up and coming to terms with the joys and travails of family, career and navigating the kitchen.

# "A deeply researched, skillfully written biography about a previously underappreciated individual."

FROM EYE ON THE STRUGGLE

After moving from the East Coast to hypercompetitive Los Angeles, Morris felt stymied by her lack of success as a creative writer and her husband's failure in the film industry. But on Christmas Day, after attempting a complex chocolate cake recipe, which failed spectacularly, the author concluded that hard work doesn't always translate into success. More importantly, for the first time, she understood that failure is just another part of growing up. Following the cake disaster, Morris moved on from resenting the images in slick cooking magazines and began blogging about her own culinary exploits, comparing her creations with those in cooking magazines. What began as a "novelty hobby" became a source of pleasure. "I enjoy the whole process—from grocery shopping to eating the results, and even, on some days, in the repetitive nature of washing the dishes at the end of the night," she writes. In addition to chronicling her culinary adventures, Morris also dissects her often bumpy family relationships. After submitting an essay about cooking with her elderly grandmother and having it rejected, Morris posted it on her blog; it eventually won "Best Culinary Essay" in *Saveur* magazine's food blog awards." Throughout the book, Morris couples significant life events with recipes that recall memories of that time. When her parents divorced and her mother moved to Pittsburgh, Morris recalls her cooking chicken cordon bleu; upon returning home from a trip to Paris, the author craved miso ramen with a poached egg; and the first meal the author made sans recipe was rice and black beans in coconut milk with avocado.

**Whether Morris is deconstructing her failed attempts at finding satisfying work, struggling with rocky family relationships or experiencing a culinary failure, she adroitly blends the ingredients of humor and self-reflection.**



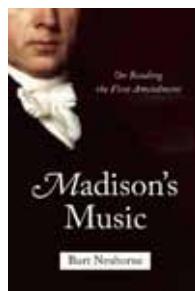
**EYE ON THE STRUGGLE**  
**Ethel Payne, the First Lady of the Black Press**  
Morris, James McGrath  
Amistad/HarperCollins (480 pp.)  
\$25.99 | Feb. 17, 2015  
978-0-06-219885-3

Biographer Morris (*Pulitzer: A Life in Politics, Print, and Power*, 2010, etc.) resurrects the career of Ethel Payne (1911–1991), journalist, labor union and civil rights advocate, traveler on the African continent, journalism professor and pioneer in the American race wars.

Struggling to obtain a formal education during an era when women, especially African-American women, found most schooling off-limits, Payne did not find her calling as a journalist until she was nearly 40. Before that, she labored in a Chicago library and found employment in Japan helping African-American military personnel stationed by the Pentagon adjust to life abroad. All along, she wanted to become a writer. Growing up in Chicago, Payne was aware of the *Chicago Defender*, the most prominent newspaper in the country owned by an African-American and devoted to writing about them from a perspective radically different from that of the Caucasian-owned media. While working in Japan in 1950, Payne met a *Defender* reporter

who had served the United States during World War II and at the time was writing about the role of African-American soldiers in the Korean War. Payne, an impressive individual by any standard, parlayed the acquaintanceship into a salaried job. During a journalism career that began at the *Defender* and resumed there after a hiatus caused by the newspaper's sometimes-mercurial publisher, Payne wrote about U.S. presidents, African nations, the Vietnam War and her hometown of Chicago. Due to her gender and race, Payne always stood out at presidential press conferences and just about everywhere else, but she rarely flinched from any obstacles that stood in the way of the story. Morris does not flinch from his status as a white male chronicling the life of an African-American female, and he discloses that he received unstinting support from Payne's family members and acquaintances. His access allows him to reveal intriguing subtleties about her work and her personal life.

**A deeply researched, skillfully written biography about a previously underappreciated individual.**



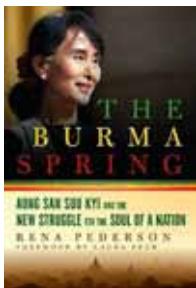
**MADISON'S MUSIC**  
**On Reading the First Amendment**  
Neuborne, Burt  
New Press (272 pp.)  
\$25.95 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-62097-041-6

Constitutional expert Neuborne (Civil Liberties/New York Univ. Law School; *Building a Better Democracy: Reflections on Money, Politics and Free Speech*, 1999, etc.) offers a cogent critique of America's "highly dysfunctional political system," abetted by Supreme Court interpretations of the Bill of Rights, especially the First Amendment.

Likening James Madison's 45-word text to a poem, the author examines the words, phrases, cadence and order to argue that it presents "a coherent narrative of democracy instead of a series of unconnected commands." Madison's sequence of six points begins with individual conscience (ensuring no prohibition to "free exercise" of religion), follows with "three ascending levels of individual interaction with the community—free expression of an idea by an individual, mass dissemination of the idea by a free press, and collective action in support of the idea"—and, significantly, affords the right "to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." Neuborne asserts that the Supreme Court, taking phrases out of context, has promoted a division among the electorate into "three tiers of citizens...supercitizens, ordinary citizens, and spectator citizens," empowering the enormously wealthy to set the political agenda, choose candidates and bankroll campaigns. Gerrymandering, a vice of both parties, has made genuinely contested elections impossible; third parties are quashed; arcane voter registration requirements suppress voting. The author excoriates the court for its *Citizens United* decision, which gives corporations the same rights as people: "A robot has no soul. Neither does a for-profit business corporation. Vesting either with constitutional

rights premised on human dignity is legal fiction run amok." Neuborne suggests public funding of elections and urges revisions of voter registration procedures to boost turnout from the lowest in the democratic world. Most importantly, he calls for judges to understand the First Amendment's intent to ensure democracy for all rather than only the powerful few.

**An urgent message that deserves a wide readership.**



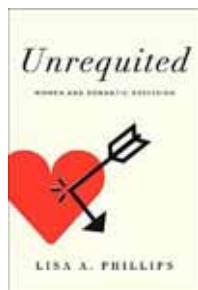
### THE BURMA SPRING *Aung San Suu Kyi and the New Struggle for the Soul of a Nation*

Pederson, Rena  
Pegasus (544 pp.)  
\$29.95 | Feb. 15, 2015  
978-1-60598-667-8

The long, hard road to "national reconciliation" wrought by Burmese national heroine Aung San Kyi (b. 1945).

Dallas journalist Pederson (Writing/Southern Methodist Univ.; *The Lost Apostle: Searching for the Truth About Junia*, 2006, etc.) evokes the quiet, stubborn dignity of this rather improbable political icon of Myanmar, a multiethnic country of mostly Buddhists. The daughter of visionary war hero and founder Aung San, who had been brokering independence from Britain when he was assassinated by the Burmese military in 1947, Suu Kyi was largely drawn into politics by accident, more out of a sense of duty than personal political engagement. Pederson looks at the factors that led the martyr's daughter, educated at Oxford University, married to British academic Michael Aris in 1971 and the mother of two sons, to return to her homeland after years away and take up the crusade for democracy. The 20-year military dictatorship of Gen. Ne Win had essentially ruined one of the most prosperous and literate nations in Southeast Asia, relegating it to the status of "basket case" by the spring of 1988, when Suu Kyi returned to care for her ailing mother just as student demonstrations began to erupt in response to economic oppression. Urged to take up the banner of democracy in the name of her father, she began to make her first speeches about the military crackdown, referring to her father's assassination: "People have been saying I know nothing of Burmese politics. The trouble is, I know *too much*." Harassment only fed her determination and popularity, and separation from her husband and sons did not deter her. Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991, Suu Kyi could not claim it until the end of her house arrest 20 years later, thanks to international pressure by Hillary Clinton and Madeleine Albright, among others.

Pederson visited her subject several times, and she draws a deeply nuanced portrait of the enigmatic, inspiring leader. (16 pages of photos)



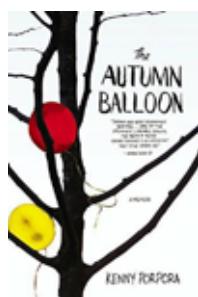
### UNREQUITED *Women and Romantic Obsession*

Phillips, Lisa A.  
Harper/HarperCollins (304 pp.)  
\$25.99 | Feb. 1, 2015  
978-0-06-211401-3

A sympathetic exploration of the misunderstood phenomenon of women and "the stubbornness of romantic obsession."

Phillips (Journalism/SUNY, New Paltz; *Public Radio: Behind the Voices*, 2006) believes studying female romantic obsession can increase our understanding of relationships and gender in a way "that tamer emotions rarely do," and she proposes that a woman's fixation on someone who doesn't love her back need not be altogether negative. Through the words of historical writers (including Sappho, Ovid, Miguel de Cervantes, Carl Jung and others), studies by behavioral, social and forensic psychologists, and dozens of examples from women (both straight and gay) who shared their stories with her, Phillips argues that love-lorn women—who, she writes, experience unreciprocated love differently than men and are underexamined, perhaps due to the fact that only 1 out of 10 stalkers is female—can ultimately benefit from this "potentially meaningful and life-changing" passion. Using accessible language and terminology for lay readers, the author offers an empathetic, below-the-surface examination of what the "beloved" means to the scorned woman. Phillips responsibly acknowledges and doesn't ignore how "aggressive unwanted sexual pursuit"—including her own experience as an unwanted woman engaging in such invasive behavior, which she recounts in depth—can disrupt and ruin the well-beings of both the pursuer and the object of her attention. In fact, the confessed aggressive actions of some of these women are frightening and extreme, but the author also presents a compelling argument that, in such a heightened emotional state, women might redirect that passion to transcend limits and push toward action and attainment of a specific goal. In this way, the beloved may become a muse, and wanting someone you can't have doesn't have to be necessarily pitiful or tragic.

Compassionate and, perhaps for some readers, encouraging.



### THE AUTUMN BALLOON

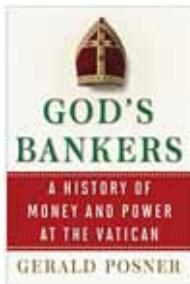
Porpora, Kenny  
Grand Central Publishing (304 pp.)  
\$26.00 | \$12.99 e-book  
\$24.98 Audiobook | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-4555-4516-2  
978-1-4555-4515-5 e-book  
978-1-47898-331-6 Audiobook

A memoir of the author's incredibly dysfunctional nuclear family.

Porpora's mother was a foulmouthed alcoholic who insulted the masculinity of her young sons and their very old father, whom she also accused of pedophilia and abuse. The former was likely a fantasy, the latter perhaps was not—or

maybe it was self-defense on the part of the father, who was perpetually impoverished. It was hard to tell how the courts could justify custody to either one of them, though it occasionally reverted from one to the other, she fleeing to Arizona with her sons (occasionally living in her car or transient motels), he remaining in New York, where he once rented from a mother whose daughter became the author's friend, until she was kidnapped and molested and they had to move. The primary solace of Porpora's life was a dog who lived with his mother, but the dog eventually died. The boy had no friends except for, inexplicably, the most popular boy in school, a star athlete who avoided drugs until he became a heroin addict. Porpora wore a T-shirt with a picture of his dog on it, which was one of the reasons other classmates shunned him and called him gay. So did his mother and brother, and none of this seemed to register with the author as anything but the worst insult they could think of, until he belatedly realized that he was, in fact, gay. (The author does not explore the issue of sexual identity.) For reasons never really explained, he came to idolize Roger Ebert and took inspiration from an encounter with the film critic. He also had support from teachers, who recognized his writing promise.

**As one teacher exulted after his acceptance to the Columbia Journalism School, “[p]eople with stories like yours don’t end up in the Ivy League.” And yet Porpora did, and now his stories have become the material for his piercing first book.**



## GOD'S BANKERS *A History of Money and Power at the Vatican*

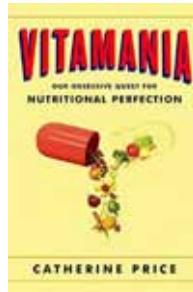
Posner, Gerald  
Simon & Schuster (728 pp.)  
\$30.00 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-4165-7657-0

A dogged reporter exhaustively pursues the nefarious enrichment of the Vatican, from the Borgias to Pope Francis.

In one of his previous works, *Mengel* (1986), former Wall Street lawyer-turned-accomplished historian and author Posner (*Warlords of Crime; Hitler's Children*, etc.) followed the money connection from the Nazi criminals fleeing the Third Reich to Argentina—and struck Vatican gold. Laundering Nazi booty extracted from the Jews, protecting Nazi criminals as they found refuge across the globe, providing hush money for egregious cases of pedophilic priests—these are just some of the tentacles of Vatican bankrolling since World War II. Having overcome its aversion to moneylending and capitalism as being practices of Protestants and Jews after Italian unification, the Vatican later established a stabilizing appeasement policy with secular leader Mussolini in the form of the Lateran Pacts. Pope Pius XI's financial adviser, Bernardino Nogara, diversified Vatican finances through the Depression era, entangling Vatican and Fascist ties. The Reichskonkordat, a series of pacts signed by Hitler, extracted taxes from Catholic churches and guaranteed the Vatican's silence regarding the Holocaust; it also funneled “blood money” from Nazi victims and supported

the “ratline” for escaping Nazi criminals. Posner tracks the formation of the Institute per le Opere di Religione (the Vatican bank) in 1942 through its troubled survival into the present era, as it has battled accusations of mob ties, “gay lobby” scandals, WikiLeaks disclosures, lawsuits by victims of sex abuse and the insistence by the European Union on more transparency in the bank's dealings. Pope Francis' promises of reform are going to be closely watched. Posner bases his massive research on extensive interviews and documents found in the archives of governments and private companies across the world (the author was barred from the Vatican's own Secret Archives).

**A meticulous work that cracks wide open the Vatican's legendary, enabling secrecy.**



## VITAMANIA *Our Obsessive Quest for Nutritional Perfection*

Price, Catherine  
Penguin Press (336 pp.)  
\$27.95 | Feb. 24, 2015  
978-1-59420-504-0

A catchy title that captures our obsession with vitamins and our belief that getting plenty of them will ensure our good health.

However, freelance journalist Price has produced a book much broader in scope than the title indicates. The author provides a history of the discovery of vitamins (the word was not even coined until 1912) and of the finding that certain diseases—e.g., scurvy, pellagra and rickets—are caused by vitamin deficiencies. She also makes clear that there is still much uncertainty about what these chemical entities actually do and how much of them our bodies require. The larger story, however, is about the thousands of dietary supplements that are widely marketed even though very little is known about them. Public interest and confidence in vitamins has led to a similar relationship with supplements of all kinds; according to the author, there are some 85,000 different dietary supplements on the market. Price's research into the regulation of dietary supplements reveals the forces that created the present situation: Why there is no FDA approval process for supplements, and why they do not need to be tested for safety or efficacy. Consequently, it is nearly impossible for consumers to identify high-quality supplements. So, how does one stay healthy in the midst of all this uncertainty? Price's answer is simple: Eat fruits and vegetables and other nutrient-dense foods that are naturally high in vitamins. Avoid overprocessed foods from which natural vitamins have been removed and which are then artificially enriched with synthetic vitamins. If you do choose to take a nutritional supplement, try to learn what is in it, and let your doctor know, too. Appendices provide specific data about the nature and function of each of the vitamins, and tables list the recommended daily intake based on age and sex.

**Though Price doesn't provide much new information, the reading is easy and the message is clear and significant.**

# "An improvisational, personal meditation on the subject of love."

FROM THE BOOK OF LOVE



## THE BOOK OF LOVE *Improvisations on a Crazy Little Thing*

Rosenblatt, Roger

Ecco/HarperCollins (192 pp.)

\$22.99 | Jan. 20, 2015

978-0-06-234942-2

978-0-06-234944-6 e-book

An improvisational, personal meditation on the subject of love.

The concept of love can be tricky to

pin down. Many definitions include a variation on the feeling of passion—something powerful, inflamed, wild, difficult to control and all-consuming. Intensity, desire and enthusiasm are common to feeling love for something or someone. In this warm, musical exploration on love, Rosenblatt (English and Writing/Stony Brook Univ.; *The Boy Detective: A New York Childhood*, 2013, etc.) wanders down all of those paths, but he spends extra time examining the idea of being in love. He begins with a story about the Chinese inventing the clock and it being stored away in the emperor's vaults, forgotten. When sailors from France arrived 400 years later with their new invention—the clock—their Chinese hosts were amazed, having never seen anything quite so wonderful. More than 100 pages pass before Rosenblatt tips his hand—"You don't forget something important to you unless it isn't important"—only to show that his cards won't reveal answers, except for the ones we already know but require a new perspective to see. If that sounds vague in an off-putting way, worry not; there's all manner of insight to be found, packed neatly into fewer than 200 pages. Rosenblatt pulls from popular culture, mythology and anecdotal stories to create a mural that is both wide-ranging and focused. "I sympathize with people who seek to create a unity of thought and emotion out of disorder," he writes, "but I also believe that trying to fit parts into a whole makes each component smaller, less interesting and inauthentic."

While plenty of writers have tried their hand at capturing the improvisational brilliance of jazz, with varying degrees of success, Rosenblatt's wanderings with the subject of love are like Coltrane at the Village Vanguard. When you hear it, you know.

## THE LIVING YEARS *The First Genesis Memoir*

Rutherford, Mike

Dunne/St. Martin's (256 pp.)

\$25.99 | Feb. 10, 2015

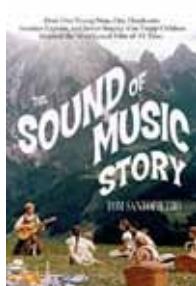
978-1-250-06068-6

A genial, gentlemanly memoir about a band that has weathered plenty of upheaval without apparently suffering much strife.

Though it borrows its title from the biggest hit from Rutherford's offshoot band, Mike and the Mechanics, the focus and justification for the book lies with its subtitle. Many

readers would likely prefer a book by or about that band's higher-profile frontmen—Peter Gabriel and Phil Collins—but founding guitarist Rutherford proves well-positioned to tell the tale, as one of only two members to remain throughout the band's extended tenure. If you're looking for sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll, this isn't your book, and Genesis isn't your band. Formed by schoolboy friends, later adding drummer Collins and guitarist Steve Hackett, Genesis had a unique musical evolution from seated musicians updating British folk to progressive conceptualists with a high-tech stage show. They were never a band of virtuosos, but they were more creatively ambitious than folky. They were also a band that valued the song rather than seeing it as a vehicle for instrumental showboating, and it was one in which most of them contributed to the material. During their popular ascent, it was thought at the time that they were dealt a devastating blow with the departure of Gabriel, yet Rutherford explains, "[t]here's only so long you can carry on productively without shaking things up and now that he had gone we felt like a new band." Collins took over vocals and then raised his own profile with a successful solo career (while remaining part of the band). "Our small cult audience had become a big cult audience," writes the author, who doesn't seem to have let any of it go to his head. Aside from the occasional marijuana mishap with the law, the author has seemingly lived a very stable life as a band mate and family man.

The death of Rutherford's father frames the narrative, establishing a reflective tone that the memoir sustains. (two 8-page color photo inserts)



## THE SOUND OF MUSIC STORY *How a Beguiling Young Novice, a Handsome Austrian Captain, and Ten Singing von Trapp Children Inspired the Most-Loved Film of All Time*

Santopietro, Tom

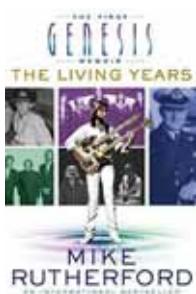
St. Martin's (288 pp.)

\$26.99 | Feb. 17, 2015

978-1-250-06446-2

A celebration of a beloved movie.

Fans of *The Sound of Music* will find plenty to please them in Santopietro's (*The Godfather Effect: Changing Hollywood, America, and Me*, 2012, etc.) history of the sweeping musical. In the 1950s, two German movies about the von Trapp family came to the attention of director Vincent Donehue, who imagined a Broadway version with Mary Martin in the role of Maria. After complicated negotiations with the German film company and Maria herself, Donehue signed Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse to write the play and the renowned Rodgers and Hammerstein to produce an original score. The show opened on Nov. 16, 1959, won five Tony awards and ran for three years. Soon, 20th Century Fox optioned the story; William Wyler agreed to direct, replaced by Robert Wise when Wyler decided to move to another project; and Ernest Lehman was brought in to rewrite the script. Casting Julie Andrews for the starring role was not inevitable. Although a hit on Broadway, Andrews "was a completely unknown quantity on film," scaring investors



# “Slack engagingly reveals how the Federalist attack on the First Amendment almost brought down the Republic.”

FROM LIBERTY'S FIRST CRISIS

who wanted “a real movie star with box office clout.” With support from Wise and the composers, Andrews was offered the role and grabbed it. Among contenders to play Capt. von Trapp were Rex Harrison, David Niven, Peter Finch and even Bing Crosby. Wise, though, opted shrewdly for Christopher Plummer. During filming, Andrews was exemplary, exuding “nonstop good cheer” and endless patience with the “seven potentially scene-stealing children” in the cast. The author details the painstaking complexities of producing a big-budget extravaganza, reprising every song and dance step, and the considerable task of generating buzz about the movie before it opened. All those efforts paid off. Warmly received by critics (except for Pauline Kael), it earned 10 Oscar nominations and was the highest-grossing film of 1965.

An enthusiastic close-up of movie history.



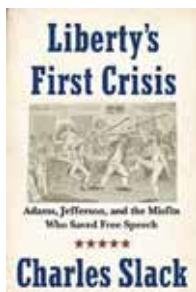
## THE LONGEST AFTERNOON *The 400 Men Who Decided the Battle of Waterloo*

**Simms, Brendan**  
Basic (208 pp.)  
\$25.99 | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-0-465-06482-3

A slim but gripping account of the bloody, heroic defense of La Haye Sainte, a farmhouse that Napoleon had to capture to reach the Duke of Wellington’s army.

The massive stone building survives intact; not so its defenders, a battle-tested unit of the British army. Simms (*History of International Relations/Peterhouse Coll., Univ. of Oxford; Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy, from 1453 to the Present*, 2013, etc.) begins in 1803 when Napoleon annexed the German principality of Hanover and dissolved its army. Following these events, many soldiers fled to Britain, where they and other expatriates were numerous enough to form the King’s German Legion, which fought in Ireland, the Netherlands and Spain before its supreme test in Belgium on June 18, 1815. As the author writes, they “were motivated by a combination of ideological opposition to Napoleonic tyranny, dynastic loyalty to the King of England, German patriotism, regimental camaraderie, personal bonds of friendship and professional ethos.” The Duke of Wellington placed most of his army behind a ridge and ordered a battalion of the legion 400 meters ahead to occupy the house, but he sent the legion’s engineers elsewhere, making extensive fortification impossible. Worse, he made no provisions for resupplying ammunition beyond the standard issue of 60 rounds. At 1 p.m., the French attacked, surrounding the house. Beaten back, they attacked again and again, setting it on fire but not capturing it until after 6 p.m., when the surviving defenders retreated for lack of ammunition. This allowed Napoleon to launch the Imperial Guards at Wellington’s lines, which were beaten back as the Prussian army arrived to turn it into a rout.

Since literacy was common even among enlisted men, Simms takes advantage of abundant letters and memoirs to deliver an engrossing, often gruesome nuts-and-bolts description of that afternoon.



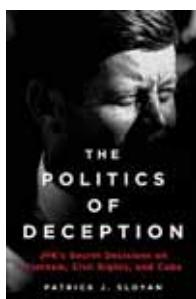
## LIBERTY'S FIRST CRISIS *Adams, Jefferson, and the Misfits Who Saved Free Speech*

**Slack, Charles**  
Atlantic Monthly (340 pp.)  
\$26.00 | Mar. 3, 2015  
978-0-8021-2342-8

Slack (*Hetty: The Genius and Madness of America's First Female Tycoon*, 2004, etc.) engagingly reveals how the Federalist attack on the First Amendment almost brought down the Republic.

The Sedition Act drama that played out from 1798 to 1801 was a political move much more than any protection of the public. The nascent nation was just coming into its own and creating a two-party system—at that time, the Federalists and Republicans. After the Alien Acts, Congress passed the Sedition Act due to the fear of war with the French. In reality, it was nothing more than a justification for oppression of the opposition. The author’s explanation of the First Amendment is clear and precise and will give readers pause as to how that bill could ever have been considered. He shows that the Bill of Rights is not the source of our freedoms but rather a mechanism of protection, disallowing Congress from enacting bills that would infringe on them. Furthermore, John Adams was not a charismatic, unifying force like George Washington; on the contrary, he was thin-skinned, petty and snobbish. His Federalist beliefs held that government needed to reinstate the people’s sense of duty to be ruled by their betters. Adams’ signing of the Sedition Act was nothing more than “a stark, personal betrayal of his deepest held personal beliefs.” Unfortunately, most of those convicted of sedition had criticized Adams. Curiously, the law came with an expiration date, when Congress and the president’s terms would expire. Political? Most assuredly. It omitted protection of Vice President Thomas Jefferson, a Republican.

An illuminating book of American history in which the author discloses the true heroes—the ordinary citizens who defeated these acts—while showing just how the concept of “government of the people” works.



## THE POLITICS OF DECEPTION *JFK's Secret Decisions on Vietnam, Civil Rights, and Cuba*

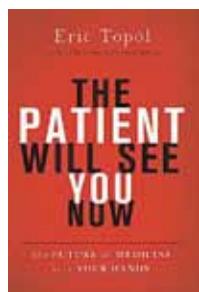
**Sloyan, Patrick J.**  
Dunne/St. Martin’s (320 pp.)  
\$26.99 | Feb. 15, 2015  
978-1-250-03059-7

A journalist revisits John F. Kennedy’s legacy.

Beginning in 1960, Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Sloyan wrote for the Washington bureau of United Press International, which gave him, he writes, “unimaginable power and influence.” Like many other journalists at the

time, he saw Kennedy as a strong leader, "cool but daring." In his debut nonfiction book, Sloyan revises that view, portraying Kennedy as a craven politician—"devious, ruthless...more pragmatic than principled." The author examines Kennedy's last year, when Cuba, the incendiary civil rights movement and Vietnam dominated his agenda. Angry and disillusioned, he aims to reveal how Kennedy "duped me and other journalists into misleading readers, librarians, schoolteachers, historians, and filmmakers." Basing this exposé on tapes Kennedy made using microphones he hid in the Cabinet Room and the Oval Office (a recording system he manipulated at will), as well as oral histories, interviews and historians' accounts, Sloyan argues that Kennedy lied blatantly to burnish his image. Although journalists reported that he triumphed over Nikita Khrushchev in the Cuban missile crisis, the author asserts—as did Michael Dobbs in *One Minute to Midnight* (2008)—that he secretly acquiesced to the Soviet leader's demand for missile exchange: Russia would remove missiles from Cuba if the U.S. took theirs out of Turkey. Like Gus Russo in *Live by the Sword* (1998), Sloyan details Kennedy's attempts to have Castro assassinated, but Russo's account is stronger. He attributes Kennedy's reluctance to support civil rights to his need for Southern votes: He refused to fulfill his campaign promise to end housing segregation, "ignored civil rights leaders on judicial appointments in the South, where justice was brutal for blacks," and targeted Martin Luther King, Jr. for intense surveillance, with the goal of blackmail. Sloyan devotes most of the book to Vietnam, where he lays the murder of Ngo Dinh Diem at Kennedy's feet, as did Ellen Hammer in *A Death in November* (1987).

**Despite new sources, Sloyan fails to offer a fresh assessment.**



## THE PATIENT WILL SEE YOU NOW *The Future of Medicine Is in Your Hands*

Topol, Eric  
Basic (384 pp.)  
\$28.99 | Jan. 6, 2015  
978-0-465-05474-9

A visionary physician predicts a technology-driven, patient-centered revolution in health care.

In this work about the changes afoot in the world of medical care, Topol, in this natural follow-up to his previous book (*The Creative Destruction of Medicine: How the Digital Revolution Will Create Better Health Care*, 2012, etc.), demonstrates the combination of intelligence and ambition that is apparent in his successful medical career: He's a top cardiologist, professor of genomics, director of Scripps Translational Science Institute and founder of the world's first cardiovascular gene bank at the Cleveland Clinic. Not content to simply critique the current system (though he does so thoroughly and convincingly), the author strides optimistically into the future of health care. In the very near future, he predicts, medicine will be patient-centered to a degree unimaginable to the countless

readers who have lost countless hours in the waiting room. All of this will come courtesy of new technology that Topol likens to the introduction of the printing press, which revolutionized the dissemination of information. Medicine's "Gutenberg moment," writes the author, will similarly democratize medicine, enabling things like quick and accurate "smartphone physcials" and comprehensive individual genomic profiles with minimal input from the top-heavy, cost-intensive hospital system we now rely on. It's all good news for patients, although some of Topol's more complex statistical analyses and heavy use of medical terminology, particularly in genomics, might put off some lay readers. Others will relish the robust research the author presents throughout. Most will come away impressed with the body of knowledge Topol has collected here and, if they're not convinced that our health care fortunes are poised to change, they're at least hopeful that we are moving in the right direction.

**An expertly detailed, precisely documented exploration of the "power of information and individualization" in health care.**



## TRAVELS IN VERMEER *A Memoir*

White, Michael  
Persea Books (192 pp.)  
\$17.95 paper | Mar. 5, 2015  
978-0-89255-437-9

A memoir exploring how Johannes Vermeer's paintings bestow bountiful gifts.

Poet White (Creative Writing/Univ. of North Carolina, Wilmington; *Vermeer in Hell*, 2014, etc.) was stunned when he first saw Vermeer's *The Milkmaid* during a visit to the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. "Stillness. Not emptiness but stillness," he thought as he gazed at the figure of the milkmaid. "A great soul balanced there." When he discovered that only 35 of the artist's works are on view in the world, he decided to see them all: in The Hague, Washington's National Gallery, New York's Frick Collection and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and London's Kenwood House, Royal Collection and National Gallery. In this lyrical memoir, the author recounts his travels in search of Vermeer, set in the context of love, loss and pain: a difficult childhood, alcoholism and recovery, the grueling death of his first wife and, most recently, a wrenching divorce. Along the way, he tells of two unpromising dates with women he met online; his love for his young daughter; and his frustration over the custody fight that will limit his seeing her. Vermeer's "radiant canvases" serve as an antidote to his enervating sense of loss: "The rapturous inner life of each woman and the infinitesimally detailed and self-contained life of the street are each imagined as an undiscovered heaven on earth." White's descriptions are sensuous, precise and evocative. He describes one painting as a "dialogue between Vermeer's favorite colors [that] pervades the entire atmosphere of the room." A window "seductively refracts the world rather than revealing it, and in so doing makes it seem

**"A dense, carefully rendered work of minute, memorable detail."**

FROM THE UPSTAIRS WIFE

new and strange." The figures communicate with one another in "a circular, closed system of glances." White praises Vermeer for his sensitivity to "anatomies of intimate, unguarded moments," a sensitivity that White himself brings to his luminous readings of the paintings.

An enchanting book about the transformative power of art.



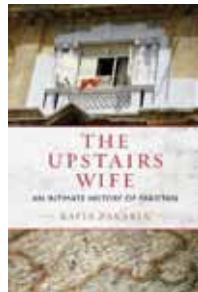
### THE CONTEMPORARIES *Travels in the 21st-Century Art World*

White, Roger  
Bloomsbury (271 pp.)  
\$28.00 | Mar. 3, 2015  
978-1-62040-094-4

Artist White draws on his long associations with academia and the art world to explain contemporary art to a confused public.

The author begins with a bit of recent art history and a look at how artists respond to the circumstances that their creative imaginations encounter. Devoting half the book to three extremely different artists—Dana Schutz, Mary Walling Blackburn and Stephen Kaltenbach—really drives home the concept of the boundlessness of the directions art can take. A hard look at MFA programs asks whether they are offering career training, a professional research program or economic preparation for the realities of art and the long odds of success. The author devotes considerable space to critiques in contemporary art. If the professors ask, "what are we looking for?" and "what do you want of me?" how is the unschooled public supposed to understand? Primarily, we must see that contemporary art is concerned with the immediate present and how meaning unfolds across time and space. Next, White tackles assistantships, both paid and unpaid, and the process of making art. An artist's workshop used to be a training experience, but it is now, like Warhol's, a factory. Industrial society has interrupted the direct line between the artist and the object. Now, an assistant develops a work by bending pipe or making a computer design. The movement toward regionalism, à la Grant Wood, and away from large art centers into the country, is again a new form of art. There are also performance, conceptual, social practice and minimalist art. The author's most useful suggestion is to view a piece in the same state of mind (altered or not) as the artist. Sometimes, though, it's only meaningful to the artist.

White opens the door to understanding, but it's up to readers to grasp the fact that there may not really be any meaning. That's the point.



### THE UPSTAIRS WIFE *An Intimate History of Pakistan*

Zakaria, Rafia  
Beacon (256 pp.)  
\$26.95 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-0-8070-0336-7

One woman's personal agony reflects the enormous chasm of inequality between the sexes in Pakistan.

A Pakistani journalist and human rights activist now living in America, Zakaria tells the disheartening tale of Pakistan's history of military rule and Islamist misogynist oppression through the stories of her own family members, especially that of her Aunt Amina, who was forced to accept her husband's marriage to a second wife in 1986. A clan of Kokani Muslims from Bombay who migrated to Karachi in 1950, just after partition, Zakaria's family lived in a close-knit community that kept largely to itself within the strangeness of the new country, where the military was exalted above all and women first voted in the election of 1970, which brought Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to power in an ethnically divided polity. Amina was the first of her family to attend college at that time, when the country erupted in ethnic war between East and West Pakistan and Bangladesh emerged from the ruins. An arranged marriage to Sohail promised stability and prosperity, yet no children arrived after a decade; Sohail met a woman at his bank, added a floor to his house, and installed Amina at the top and his new wife on the floor below. A week-on-week-off schedule alternating with the new wife became the humiliating compromise for Amina in her status as "half a wife," scandalizing the community and disgracing the family. Nonetheless, the strictures of tradition prevailed, much as they did for another tragic daughter of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto, who wed a Sindh landlord and attempted to rise above the feudal expectations of a woman of her class and lead her country fearlessly into the modern era. Zakaria chisels away chronologically at this relentless, cyclical history, and while readers continue to hope for a glimmer of positivity for these heroines, it does not come.

A dense, carefully rendered work of minute, memorable detail.

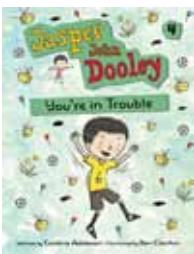
I DECEMBER 2014

# CHILDREN'S & TEEN



These titles earned the Kirkus Star:

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## JASPER JOHN DOOLEY *You're in Trouble*

Adderson, Caroline

Illus. by Clanton, Ben

Kids Can (124 pp.)

\$15.95 | Mar. 1, 2015

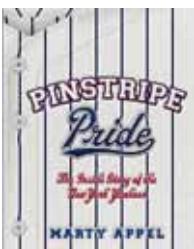
978-1-55453-808-9

Series: Jasper John Dooley, 4

Jasper John Dooley is being pretty Bad, but he's not entirely to blame.

After another poor, distracted performance on the soccer field (because Jasper, in his yellow-and-black uniform, feels like a bee), his dad sends him to buy an apple juice, but he accidentally ends up with a caffeine-laden energy drink—a Bad drink. A few swallows leave him unable to sit still, and he's awake for much of the night. To make matters worse, he hides the rest of the interesting drink in the refrigerator and sneaks some before school a couple of times. The consequences are alarming and eventually very embarrassing—but, of course, hilarious. Ori, his sensible, ever caring best friend, tries to intervene with a prescription for good health—celery “pills”—but Jasper chokes the dreaded vegetable down with more Bad drink. Brief text and ample white space make the short chapters easy to read; Jasper's very normal but always humorous experiences make the reading fun. Even an unexpected trip to the emergency room for stitches takes on a flavor of silliness when Jasper concludes to a teammate, “They pay you for it. They pay you in suckers.” Clanton's simple, lively illustrations match nicely with the narrative.

Another highly entertaining and enthusiastic outing in a series that's perfect for readers new to chapter books and as a captivating read-aloud. (Fiction. 5-8)



## PINSTRIPE PRIDE *The Inside Story of the New York Yankees*

Appel, Marty

Simon & Schuster (288 pp.)

\$19.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Feb. 17, 2015

978-1-4814-1602-3

978-1-4814-1604-7 e-book

The action-packed saga of the New York Yankees is recounted for young readers by an author who knows the team well.

Founded in 1903 as the New York Americans, they were also known as the Highlanders, but newspapers soon started calling them the Yankees. They were an average team, and nothing

in those early years hinted at the successes to come. Then, in 1920, along came Babe Ruth in a trade that Boston fans later bemoaned as the “curse of the Bambino,” and everything changed. What followed was nearly a century of dominance that would lead to 40 American League pennants and 27 World Series championships. Their story is told in mostly chronological order, focusing on the personalities and actions of owners, managers and players who were key figures, from “Wee Willie” Keeler all the way to Derek Jeter. Keeping the young audience in mind and employing a conversational tone throughout, Appel incorporates each era’s customs, slang and wider events into the narrative seamlessly via brief parenthetical explanations and comparisons. There are familiar stories and some fascinating behind-the-scenes information. Championships and superstars are here, of course, but so are the long gaps without a pennant and players involved with steroids. This is a work that will be shared by young readers and their baseball-loving parents and grandparents.

**An enormous home run. (foreword, statistics, reading list, index) (Nonfiction. 9-16)**



### COUNTING CROWS

*Appelt, Kathi*  
Illus. by Dunlavey, Rob  
Atheneum (40 pp.)  
\$17.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Mar. 3, 2015  
978-1-4424-2327-5  
978-1-4424-8332-3 e-book

A lively and original addition to the overstuffed genre of counting picture books.

The titular birds are clad in baggy red-striped sweaters and scarves and engage in playful activities: tumbling through the air, larking around in a tree, filching bugs and fruit, scavenging peanuts, plums, ants and crackers, and finally taking flight from a predatory cat. The illustrations capture the humorous character of this amusing bird; the cawing and crunching are almost audible as the crows descend en masse upon an inviting trash bin and rifle through its delectable contents. Appelt’s rhyming couplets are lively and onomatopoeic: “Nine little spicy ants, / nine round crackers. / Nine for the counting crows. / Nine, by smackers!” This is a real counting fest, as not only the crows, but the food they collect—berries, bugs and snacks—are fodder for the counting game and for improving reading skills at the same time. Dunlavey’s two-color illustrations in marker, pencil and watercolor have a refreshingly casual feel. The unusual typeface is well-chosen for this zany production, and it is sized and positioned with care in perfect relation to the illustrations. The book is attractively produced, with several different textured laminations on the cover, including cool fuzzy stripes for the crows’ sweaters.

**Beginning readers will just fly through their numbers. (Picture book. 2-5)**



### RED QUEEN

*Aveyard, Victoria*  
HarperTeen (400 pp.)  
\$17.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-0-06-231063-7  
978-0-06-231065-1 e-book

Amid a war and rising civil unrest, a young thief discovers the shocking power within her that sparks a revolution.

At 17, Mare knows that without an apprenticeship or job, her next birthday will bring a conscription to join the war. She contributes to her poor family’s income the only way she can, stealing from the Silvers, who possess myriad powers and force her and her fellow Reds into servitude. The Silvers literally bleed silver, and they can manipulate metal, plants and animals, among many other talents. When Mare’s best friend, Kilorn, loses his job and is doomed to conscription, she is determined to change his fate. She stumbles into a mysterious stranger after her plan goes awry and is pulled out of her village and into the world of Silver royalty. Once inside the palace walls, it isn’t long before Mare learns that powers unknown to red-blooded humans lie within her, powers that could lead a revolution. Familiar tropes abound. Mare is revealed as a great catalyst for change among classes and is groomed from rags to riches, and of course, seemingly kind characters turn out to be foes. However, Aveyard weaves a compelling new world, and Mare and the two men in her life evolve intriguingly as class tension rises. Revolution supersedes romance, setting the stage for action-packed surprises.

**An inventive, character-driven twist breathes new life into tired fantasy trends. (Fantasy. 13 & up)**



### SHADOW OF THE WAR MACHINE

*Bailey, Kristin*  
Simon Pulse/Simon & Schuster (448 pp.)  
\$17.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-4424-6805-4  
978-1-4424-6807-8 e-book  
Series: Secret Order, 3

The high-stakes conclusion of Meg’s quest to become an Amusementist and find her missing grandfather.

Resourceful Meg overcame her low station in *The Legacy of the Clockwork Key* (2013) and defeated naysayers as an Academy apprentice in *Rise of the Arcane Fire* (2014), but her possible future—be it in the Order or marriage—won’t matter if the mysterious man with the clockwork mask gets her first. Meg’s classmates rally to help; they find a lead not just to her longtime antagonist, but also potentially to her grandfather. Two obstacles would prevent her from chasing the lead. First, there are matters of propriety and the potentially irreparable damage that can be done to a young lady’s reputation through

"Juggling multiple pieces of art and multiple suspect players (including an interfering ghost), Balliett again deftly merges mystery, art and friendship into another perplexing puzzler."

FROM *Pieces and Players*

misadventure. The second challenge is temporal. To follow that critical lead, she must travel from London to France—but just six days hence, the man with the clockwork mask sails for America from England and she must attend the New Year's Eve Amusementist meeting to swear her oath to the Academy or risk losing her spot as an apprentice (and future as an Amusementist). Meg's personal ambitions and yearnings for freedom prevent the romantic storyline from devolving into a love triangle, and her frustrations with societal conventions make her sympathetic while adding drama and upping the stakes.

Clever machines, well-drawn relationships of varying constellations, literal death traps and world-threatening intrigue, headlined by an aspirational heroine, make this a winner. (*Steampunk*. 12 & up)

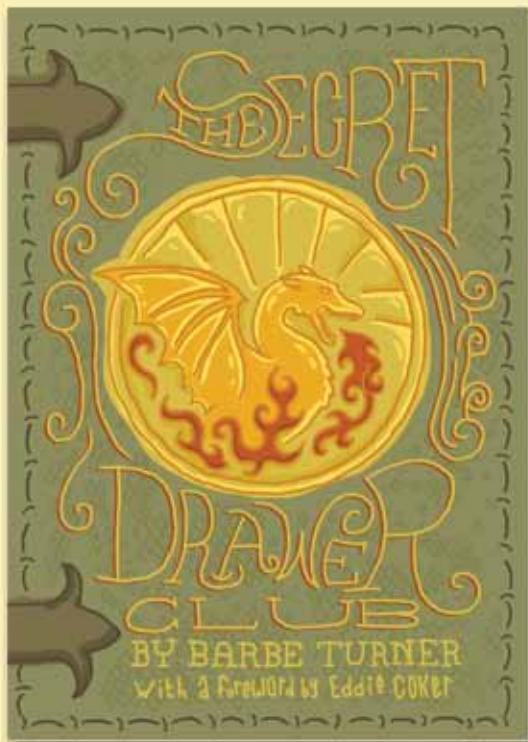


### **PIECES AND PLAYERS**

*Balliett, Blue*  
Illus. by Helquist, Brett  
Scholastic (320 pp.)  
\$17.99 | Mar. 31, 2015  
978-0-545-29990-9

Thirteen-year-old amateur sleuths and best friends Tommy Segovia, Calder Pillay and Petra Andalee join forces with two new junior detectives to tackle a shocking art robbery at a Chicago museum in this sequel to *The Calder Game* (2010).

When 13 priceless pieces of art disappear from the Farmer Museum in a heist Balliett patterns after the 1990 unsolved theft at Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Tommy, Calder and Petra are summoned by their former teacher Ms. Hussey to meet with museum trustee Mrs. Sharpe. Mrs. Sharpe introduces them to legally blind Zoomy Chamberlain (from *The Danger Box*, 2010) and neatnik Early Pearl (from *Hold Fast*, 2011).



## **THE SECRET DRAWER CLUB**

by Barbe Turner illustrated by Andrew Q Holzschuh

"...Turner's book is a sweet read for children and adults, particularly at the beginning of a new school year."

"An imaginative, playful book about accepting and embracing differences."

— Kirkus Reviews

An offbeat young boy, a well-liked student and an ingenious teacher meet in this debut children's book.

[wezmore.com](http://wezmore.com)

For all general inquiries please contact: [barbeturner@gmail.com](mailto:barbeturner@gmail.com)

# "Banks tells her story in a comfortable bedtime-story-ish third-person narrative voice...."

FROM *FINDING SERENDIPITY*

2013). Mrs. Sharpe believes the five precocious kids will make "an extraordinary, unexpected, and understated team" to solve the mystery. Working during spring break, the young sleuths notice seemingly unrelated, reoccurring clues (lion symbols; prime numbers three, five and 13; young men wearing black leather jackets; Mother Goose rhymes), which amazingly come together. Closely studying the stolen art, the five problem-solvers discover that it sends a coded message, which eventually leads them to the surprising conclusion. Juggling multiple pieces of art and multiple suspect players (including an interfering ghost), Balliett again deftly merges mystery, art and friendship into another perplexing puzzler.

**Brain-teasing adventure for thinking kids. (author's notes) (Mystery. 8-12)**



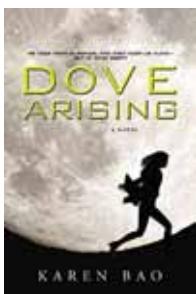
## FINDING SERENDIPITY

*Banks, Angelica*  
Henry Holt (288 pp.)  
\$16.99 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-62779-154-0

A middle-grade fantasy about the magic in writing stories.

The tale begins ordinarily enough: Young Tuesday McGillycuddy is waiting for her mother, famous author Serendipity Smith, to finish the latest book in her wildly popular Vivienne Small series so they can have a family vacation. When Serendipity doesn't emerge from her studio one evening, Tuesday and her father, Denis, investigate. They find Serendipity gone and the window in front of her typewriter desk wide open. Denis seems unperturbed, assuring Tuesday that her mother will be home by breakfast, but Tuesday can't sleep. Tiptoeing to the studio, Tuesday discovers a silver box containing a gossamer thread that spells "The End." Intrigued, Tuesday places the thread on the last page of her mother's manuscript, thinking that if the story ends, then her mother will return, but the words won't stick. Deciding to start with a beginning, Tuesday begins typing a story. Her words lift off the page and form a magical thread that carries Tuesday and her dog, Baxterr, to the land where stories are written. Banks tells her story in a comfortable bedtime-story-ish third-person narrative voice that's entirely appropriate to the situation. Readers will laugh as Tuesday meets a self-absorbed successful teenage writer, they will duly respect the knowledgeable Librarian, and they will thrill as Tuesday and Vivienne Small partake in a rollicking adventure together.

**An original, wholehearted affirmation of the written word and the imagination. (Fantasy. 8-12)**



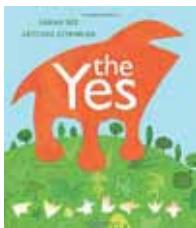
## DOVE ARISING

*Bao, Karen*  
Viking (336 pp.)  
\$17.99 | Feb. 24, 2015  
978-0-451-46901-4  
Series: Dove Chronicles, 1

In a far future in which humans have settled on the moon to escape wars and climate change on Earth, a teenage girl trains to become a soldier in order to support her family.

Born and raised in the Lunar Bases, 15-year-old Phaet (whose name means "Dove") works part-time in the greenhouses with her best friend and hopes to become a Bioengineer. Her plans change, however, when her mother's illness and quarantine leave Phaet and her younger siblings destitute. To provide for her family, Phaet decides to begin her mandatory military training three years early. Her age and her silence (she rarely speaks) put her at a disadvantage; only her tentative friendship with Wes, a gifted trainee, gives her a fighting chance at survival, let alone at the high ranking she needs to earn prize money. Many of the elements of this debut—the totalitarian regime, amoral soldiers, class struggles, family secrets and love triangle—are familiar from other post-apocalyptic novels. Unfortunately, neither the characterization nor the prose helps Bao's riff stand out from the crowd. Phaet's journey from elective near-mute to military whiz is barely credible, and Bao's awkward attempts at lyricism detract from the narrative action. A cliffhanger ending sets up the obligatory sequel.

**This derivative debut never finds its wings. (Science fiction. 13-18)**



## THE YES

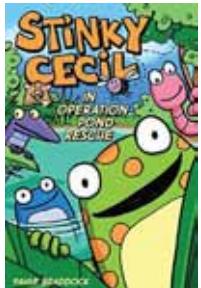
*Bee, Sarah*  
Illus. by Kitamura, Satoshi  
Eerdmans (32 pp.)  
\$16.00 | Feb. 16, 2015  
978-0-8028-5449-0

Can one large Yes conquer a swarm of Nos?

In this allegory on positive thinking, a large orange creature called the Yes embarks on an arduous journey, only to be trailed by dark, nebulous creatures called Nos who attempt to hold him back by undermining his self-confidence at every turn. Playful, poetic text, full of onomatopoeia, describes the action—"The Nos were everywhere and everywher in swarms and flocks and packs. They teemed and seethed. They picked and nipped and snipped and snicked." Kitamura's inventive ink-and-watercolor landscapes bring the abstract story to life by showing the wandering creature as he leaves the safety of his nest to traipse through a quiet desert, a golden field and a dark jungle. He finds a tall tree, struggles over a tricky bridge and hikes a rolling hill—followed by a cloud of Nos all the while. If the text is a trifle heavy-handed and somewhat fraught with meaning, it is also well-intentioned and

accessible, and the metaphor is clear and easy to understand. A nice choice for counselors and others working with children to build social-emotional skills.

**Comforting and full of encouragement, this may be just the selection for adults or children struggling with fear and self-doubt. (Picture book. 4-8)**



### STINKY CECIL IN OPERATION POND RESCUE

*Braddock, Paige*

*Illus. by Braddock, Paige*

Andrews McMeel (128 pp.)

\$9.99 paper | Feb. 3, 2015

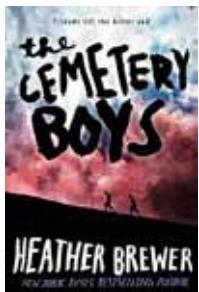
978-1-4494-5711-2

Series: Stinky Cecil, 1

Stopping a highway project that threatens his pond is going to take more than Cecil the toad's ability to "toot."

Cecil discovers the danger thanks to a short flight in the talons of a predatory but, fortunately, olfactorily sensitive hawk. Once safely back in the water, he calls together several pondside buddies including Jeremy the earthworm and Jeff, a "free-range hamster," to brainstorm solutions to the crisis. Alas, it turns out to be not so easy for small creatures to stop giant bulldozers. Nothing if not nervy, Cecil even enlists the hawk to help by dropping rocks. No dice—"Catch you later," the raptor sneers meaningfully as it flies off. Braddock's experience illustrating *A Charlie Brown Valentine* (2002) and other post-Schulz Peanuts productions stands her in good stead here, as she presents in big cartoon panels a cast of neatly drawn creatures whose pithy commentary (the insectivorous Cecil, on his friendship with Reggie the fly: "Ours is a complex relationship") is more sophisticated than their pratfalls and other broad antics. Just as all seems lost, two human biologists recognize another buddy, RayRay, as a rare "Jollyville Plateau salamander," and the pond is saved. A pair of miniepisodes and assorted worm and *Bufo americanus* facts cap this wry eco-fable. Colored illustrations not seen.

***Bufo* buffoonery for fans of the Holms' Squish series and like early graphics. (Graphic fantasy. 6-8)**



### THE CEMETERY BOYS

*Brewer, Heather*

HarperTeen (288 pp.)

\$17.99 | Mar. 30, 2015

978-0-06-230788-0

Stephen's family returns to his father's hometown in search of a fresh start, but the town's dark history threatens to swallow them whole.

Stephen's father swore he'd never return to the tiny, backwater town of Spencer, Michigan, but excessive hospital bills have forced his hand. So Stephen finds himself living with his grumpy

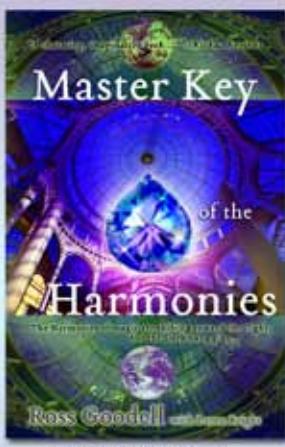
grandmother and distracted father, worrying about his sick mother who remains back home. He distracts himself with beautiful local girl Cara and befriends her twin brother, Devon. He also investigates the town's mysterious legends, most of which involve murders and gruesome winged beasts. The author expertly sets the tone of a small claustrophobic town where everyone knows everyone else's business and no one wants outsiders digging too deep. Nagging dread permeates the narrative, casting a shadow over even some of Stephen's happier moments. His budding romance with Cara is smartly paced, resulting in a solid couple that feels fresh and rounded when compared to other teen couples in horror books. The novel's final pages will surely shock readers: The author takes great glee in not just presenting a great reveal toward the end, but also twisting the knife. Keen-eyed readers may spot the twist, but few will predict just how far it goes.

**A slick, spooky, chilling mystery. (Horror. 12-16)**

## Master Key of the Harmonies

by ROSS GOODELL  
with LAREN BRIGHT

A MAGICAL FANTASY



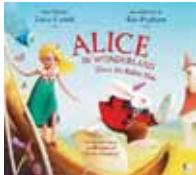
"...a good early teen/young adult adventure coupled with a positive underlying message..."  
— Steve Burt, author of the Mom's Choice Award-winning FreeKs teen detectives series

"A refreshingly upbeat adventure story with characters that I really enjoyed getting to know."  
It was a fun read!"

— Rachael Jayne,  
Director of Youth Programs,  
Insight Seminars

**"A charming, imaginative book..."**  
—Kirkus Reviews

For all general inquiries please contact  
[publisher@soulscend.com](mailto:publisher@soulscend.com) or [ross@soulscend.com](mailto:ross@soulscend.com)



## ALICE IN WONDERLAND Down the Rabbit Hole

Carroll, Lewis  
Adapted by Rhatigan, Joe;  
Nurnberg, Charles  
Illus. by Puybaret, Eric  
Charlesbridge (28 pp.)  
\$17.95 | Feb. 24, 2015  
978-1-62354-049-4

A much-abridged version of the classic's first five chapters, dressed up with large and properly surreal illustrations.

Rhatigan and Nurnberg retain "Curiouser and curioser!" and other select bits of the original while recasting the narrative in various sizes of type and a modern-sounding idiom: "Tiny Alice needed something special to eat to get back to her regular girl size." They take Carroll's bemused young explorer past initial ups and downs and her encounter with a certain (here, nonsmoking) Blue Caterpillar. Looking more to Disney than Tenniel, Puybaret casts Alice as a slender figure with flyaway corn-silk hair and big, blue, widely spaced eyes posing with balletic grace against broadly airbrushed backdrops. Leafless trees and barren hills give Wonderland an open, autumnal look. The odd vegetation adds an otherworldly tone, and compact houses and residents from the White Rabbit and the Dodo to occasional troupes of mice or other small creatures in circus dress are depicted with precise, lapidary polish. A marginally relevant endpaper map (partly blocked by the flaps) leads down the River of Tears, past a turnoff for a Bathroom and on toward "the Tea Party."

Pretty, though as condensations go, less Wonder-full than Robert Sabuda's pop-up *Alice* (2003) or the digital *Alicewinks* (2013). (Picture book. 5-8)



## A LULLABY FOR LITTLE ONE

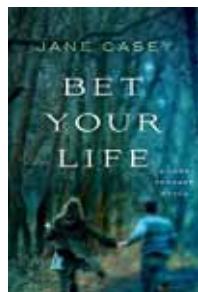
Casey, Dawn  
Illus. by Fuge, Charles  
Nosy Crow/Candlewick (32 pp.)  
\$12.99 | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-0-7636-7608-7

"Down in the woods in the evening sun, / Big Daddy Rabbit said, 'Come, Little One!'" So begins this tender book as a furry father and son make the most of the day's last light to play.

Casey's rollicking rhyming text describes their romp, which draws the attention and enthusiastic participation of other woodland creatures. Soon Owl, Mouse and Bear—"the big happy crew"—"[dance] and they [shout] and all [sing] 'Ya-hoooooo!' " But when some whirling and twirling finds the forest friends piled up "in a glorious heap," poor Little One is left a bit sad and shaken. Fuge masterfully paints cheery bucolic scenes in watercolor. His close-ups of the rabbits convincingly show the soft texture of their fur as well as their loving bond through their large eyes and postures. Although the rabbits often run upright instead of on all fours, young readers won't mind. Instead, they will relate

to Little One's abrupt swing from rambunctious fun one moment and overwhelmed unhappiness at the unexpected result in the next. All of the animals, regardless of size, show genuine concern at the sight of Little One's tears. But Big Daddy Rabbit knows exactly what is needed—a hug and a lullaby gently soothe.

Sure to satisfy toddlers and preschoolers, this father-child tale will warm many hearts. (Picture book. 2-5)



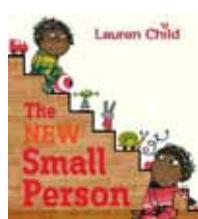
## BET YOUR LIFE

Casey, Jane  
St. Martin's Griffin (352 pp.)  
\$18.99 | \$9.99 e-book | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-250-04066-4  
978-1-4668-3626-6 e-book  
Series: Jess Tenant Mysteries, 2

Teen gumshoe Jess Tenant investigates the mysterious circumstances surrounding a local boy's "accident."

When Seb Dawson suffers a head injury and is left for dead on the side of the road, Jess smells something fishy. The police, led by her ex-boyfriend's father, aren't asking the right questions, so Jess takes it upon herself to uncover the motives behind Seb's attack. The tiny town Jess lives in supplies the author with several red herrings and subplots that lay the groundwork for future Jess Tenant novels. This works as both a pro and con: The sheer number of characters complements the whodunit atmosphere well at first, but it's hard not to get bogged down after a while keeping everyone straight. Recollecting who's related to whom and who's got a feud with whom will have some readers scribbling down notes on scrap paper, and the mystery's reveal may feel hardly worth the effort in hindsight. It's a great big world the author's constructed here, but the book's actual plot feels thin by comparison. The investigation is coupled with Jess' pining for her ex, a central-casting hunk with little personality. The book could easily be cut down by a quarter and lose nothing of value, but the final pages intimate that this relationship will be an important factor in the series going forward. Here's hoping it deepens in complexity.

A perfectly serviceable potboiler. (Mystery. 12-16)



## THE NEW SMALL PERSON

Child, Lauren  
Illus. by Child, Lauren  
Candlewick (32 pp.)  
\$17.99 | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-0-7636-7810-4

A familiar theme—a big brother feels displaced by a new baby—seems fresh in Child's latest.

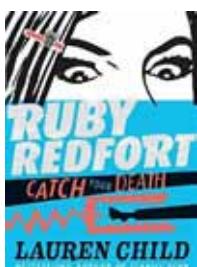
"Elmore Green started off life as an only child, as many children do," opens the wry text. Accompanying art depicts a brown-skinned boy with tousled black hair, wearing photo-collaged knitwear and grasping his bedroom doorknob. At first, his room

**"Impressive graphics on a series of spreads show different tools hooked up to the tractor as it assists with tasks throughout the seasons, ending with a lovely post-harvest activity."**

FROM **BIG TRACTOR**

remains his own, even when "the new small person" arrives, and Elmore's upset arises not from sharing either space or things, but from insecurity. He worries that his parents and others might like the baby "a little bit MORE than they liked Elmore Green." Such concerns don't foster affection, and Elmore sees even more reasons to remain leery when his brother begins copying him, following him around, interfering with his things and (horrors!) sharing his bedroom. This last development, however, provokes brotherly love when Elmore has a nightmare and his brother crawls into his bed to soothe him. It's a pleasing twist on typical stories about sibling rivalry, in that the little brother's actions change the dynamic rather than vice versa. Shared activities and playthings strengthen their bond, resulting in a happy ending for Elmore and Albert, whose name is finally revealed upon his big brother's change of heart.

**How nice to see a familiar story made new with a family of color and a little brother as hero. (Picture book. 3-7)**



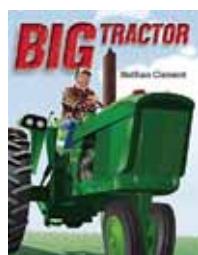
### RUBY REDFORT CATCH YOUR DEATH

*Child, Lauren*  
Candlewick (528 pp.)  
\$16.99 | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-0-7636-5469-6  
Series: Ruby Redfort, 3

Teenage spy-in-training Ruby Redfort sniffs out something rotten in the town of Twinford in her third outing.

Ruby's injured, ill and feeling her nascent career as a field agent hanging by a thread in the wake of a disastrous wilderness-survival test. She nonetheless soldiers on intrepidly as Child draws together seemingly unrelated incidents and puzzles: antique jewelry disappearing from a posh department store, rumored sightings of exotic creatures on the loose, Ruby's best friend's struggles to earn his father's respect, an attractive stranger ruthlessly interrogating a captive in a windowless warehouse, a forest fire, a corpse, legends of a particularly dangerous wolf and more. Ultimately, it all turns out to be a scheme involving a certain mind-altering musk, and not only does the author create a properly redolent atmosphere from the outset by pouring references to scents, odors, stinks and perfumes into the narrative, she concocts an actual cipher based on fragrances for Ruby to solve. The many short chapters and changes in point of view give the narrative an aimless air, but it moves more quickly than the page count suggests to a moderately suspenseful climax that leaves this expert sleuth, forger, lock-picker and sneak on her feet. Stay tuned for further adventures.

**Not exactly a high-tension page-turner, but an entertaining escapade with an offbeat whiff. (multiple afterwords) (Mystery. 9-14)**



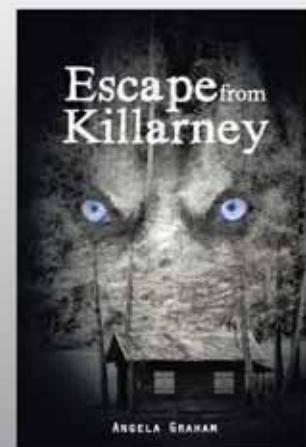
### BIG TRACTOR

*Clement, Nathan*  
*Illus. by Clement, Nathan*  
Boyd's Mills (32 pp.)  
\$16.95 | Mar. 1, 2015  
978-1-62091-790-9

A burly man in a plaid shirt and baseball cap addresses his tractor as "Ol' Partner," reminding his green-painted friend of all the jobs they do together over the course of one agricultural year, from spring to winter.

The type on the cover emphasizes the word "big," and the tractor's increasing size on the title and acknowledgment pages confirms that the tractor is indeed the book's star. In the first spread of the actual story, it looms so large in the foreground that just a fraction of its large girth is depicted, while in the background, the farmer slides open a door and says, in boldly lettered words, "Wake up, Ol' Partner. It's springtime!" Impressive graphics on a series of spreads show different tools hooked up to the tractor as it assists

## ESCAPE FROM KILLARNEY



by ANGELA GRAHAM

"[Y]oung readers will be drawn in by the dog's big heart and heroic spirit."

"A dog-narrated adventure for young readers full of action, heart and heroics."  
—Kirkus Reviews

An action adventure about two kids and their dog surviving in the wilderness.

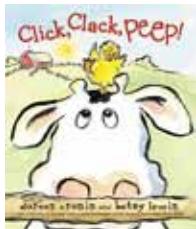
For information about publication or film rights,  
email angela.graham07@gmail.com

**“Cepeda’s colorful and richly textured full-bleed acrylic-and-oil paintings match the mostly upbeat mood..., joyfully askew compositions evoking the big-band beat.”**

FROM SWING SISTERS

with tasks throughout the seasons, ending with a lovely post-harvest activity. Young children will enjoy the frequent appearances of a woman in pink and a child—probably male—in green, who sometimes help with activities and are obviously part of the farm family. The boy, who shows subtle growth over the seasons, can be spotted relaxing under an umbrella attached to Ol’ Partner during one of the tractor’s rest periods, and the woman drives Ol’ Partner in an appealing, crepuscular scene of autumn harvest, with patterns of cornstalks backlit by the man’s harvester.

Definitely worth a second look among the extensive array of books about large vehicles. (*Picture book. 2-6*)



### CLICK, CLACK, PEEP!

Cronin, Doreen

Illus. by Lewin, Betsy

Atheneum (40 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Feb. 10, 2015

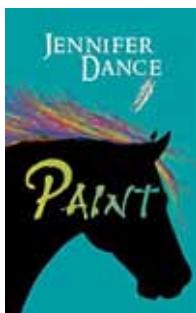
978-1-4814-2411-0

978-1-4814-2412-7 e-book

Poor Farmer Brown has a new animal to contend with, and this one is disrupting the whole barn!

The farm is quiet. All of the animals are intently watching an egg, waiting for it to hatch. “Not a moo. / Not a click. / Not an oink. / Not a quack. // Not a baa. / Not a cluck. / Not a thing. / Then...a crack.” Out pops Baby Duck! The little fuzzball waddles and plays and jumps and laughs. But the one thing Baby Duck does not do is sleep. Her incessant peep, peep, peeping is keeping the whole barnyard awake. (With bleary eyes and mouths stretched open wide in incredible yawns, Lewin’s animals defy any reader not to do the same.) In a tried-and-true method of dealing with sleepless infants everywhere, Duck finally finds a way to lull Baby Duck to sleep—with the help of a tractor. Alas, the farm fence and crops don’t fare as well. This author/illustrator duo rarely disappoints, but the rhythm stumbles a bit in its transitions, making this read-aloud not as seamless as others in the barnyard collection.

Nevertheless, the familiar high jinks of this parental Duck and his farmyard companions will provoke plenty of giggles. (*Picture book. 3-6*)



### PAINT

Dance, Jennifer

Dundurn (248 pp.)

\$12.99 paper | \$8.99 e-book | Feb. 7, 2015

978-1-4597-2868-4

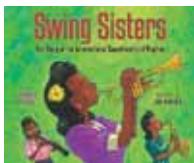
978-1-4597-2870-7 e-book

A paint horse spends her life with several different owners on the Great Plains of the late 1800s.

An orphaned foal, the paint is raised by a young Lakota boy and trained to hunt buffalo. When white soldiers raid the Lakota camp, the mare escapes and is caught by a white

man, who also uses her to hunt buffalo. When the buffalo are gone, the man sells her to a homesteader hoping to raise cattle. After drought and harsh winters devastate his operation, the mare, now aged, ends up with a new homesteading family in western Canada. None of this is glossed over; animals die, often unpleasantly. Dance has done extensive research, which unfortunately impedes her story—or stories, as the novel suffers extremely from its lack of focus, jumping from episode to episode, narrator to narrator, and issue to issue without resolution or clarity. Readers will be frustrated by the almost-ending, in which the horse may be lost in a dust storm that may have destroyed a family’s livelihood, or not. Concluding notes provide background on terminology, wild horses and homesteaders, and a timeline places the fictional events in context of history, much of it concerning atrocities and hardships suffered by Native Americans.

Next time, Dance should focus on a single agenda or, better yet, tell a single story. (*Historical fiction. 10-14*)



### SWING SISTERS

#### *The Story of the International Sweethearts of Rhythm*

Deans, Karen

Illus. by Cepeda, Joe

Holiday House (32 pp.)

\$16.95 | Feb. 1, 2015

978-0-8234-1970-8

### Women! Jazz! Integration!

In 1909, Dr. Laurence Clifton Jones founded a school and orphanage for black children in Mississippi, and in 1939, he started an all-girl swing band: the Sweethearts of Rhythm. Swing “was filled with energy!” The girls performed locally and throughout the country. In 1945, they played to enthusiastic soldiers as part of a USO tour brought about by a letter-writing campaign from African-American GIs. Writing in a folksy style, Deans describes the lives of the girls in the orphanage and on the road in Jim Crow territory; this, ironically, was made even more difficult after the band integrated. The infectious joy of swing music comes across nicely with details about instrumentation and performances. A scary encounter with the police is also described. Cepeda’s colorful and richly textured full-bleed acrylic-and-oil paintings match the mostly upbeat mood with illustrations of the women happily playing various instruments, joyfully askew compositions evoking the big-band beat. The group did not stay together, but the final illustration opens the way for more music as a now-elderly Sweetheart hands over her trumpet to a smiling girl. Readers will certainly want to grab recordings and dance and swing to the sounds.

An appealing and informative composition aimed at a younger audience than Marilyn Nelson and Jerry Pinkney’s *Sweethearts of Rhythm* (2009). (author’s note, selected bibliography) (*Informational picture book. 6-9*)



### KNIT TOGETHER

*Dominguez, Angela*  
Illus. by Dominguez, Angela  
Dial (32 pp.)  
\$16.99 | Mar. 24, 2015  
978-0-8037-4099-0

A mother and daughter share their art, their craft and their love.

A little girl tells readers how much she loves to draw. Her mother does not draw—she knits, which is far better, according to the girl, because you can wear knit garments such as hats and mittens or play with finger puppets on a glove. However much the girl tries, though, she cannot learn to knit; the yarn ends up in a tangle. Her mother reassures her and suggests a project. Mom will knit what her daughter draws. Inspiration comes, and they gather their supplies, finish the project and happily share its warmth at the beach on a chilly day. The bespectacled mother, her daughter and a little dog are colorful characters rendered with a bit of digital help in a mix of gouache, colored pencil, ink and collage against a white background. Swirls of yarn, a typeface that resembles handwriting and smiling cartoon faces add up to a lively and enjoyable story about sharing hobbies and good times. It's a little too bad there's no author's note about intarsia knitting.

**A warm family story.** (*Picture book, 3-6*)



### VENDETTA

*Doyle, Catherine*  
Chicken House/Scholastic (352 pp.)  
\$18.99 | \$17.99 e-book | Feb. 24, 2015  
978-0-545-69982-2  
978-0-545-69983-9 e-book  
Series: Vendetta, I

Revenge and romance abound between warring families.

Persephone—who reinvents herself as Sophie—tries to maintain a low profile after her father is jailed for murder. However, when a family with five, young roguish Italian brothers moves into an abandoned mansion in her neighborhood, her world is turned upside down. She is immediately drawn to Nicoli, with his “dark, almond-shaped eyes flecked with gold” that strike her as somewhat familiar—though of course, she can’t quite place how. As their relationship intensifies, the couple is warned that they must not be together. Puzzled, Sophie very, very slowly begins to sleuth out their link as she discovers the brothers’ shadowy past and Mafioso connection, as well as the truth about her father and his shady brother. Readers will most certainly swoon over Sophie and Nic’s ill-fated romance with its stolen kisses and gazes liberally slathered with angst-y longing. Unfortunately, though, it takes Sophie entirely too long to tease out her family’s connection to Nic’s; most readers will have figured it out early on and will resent having to plod through her dawdling and navel-gazing. Once she finally does manage to unearth the

truth, the tense, page-turning conclusion should entice readers enough to at least seek out the next installment.

**While the romance sizzles, the mystery fizzles.** (*Romance/thriller, 14-18*)



### HOME

*Ellis, Carson*  
Illus. by Ellis, Carson  
Candlewick (40 pp.)  
\$16.99 | Feb. 24, 2015  
978-0-7636-6529-6

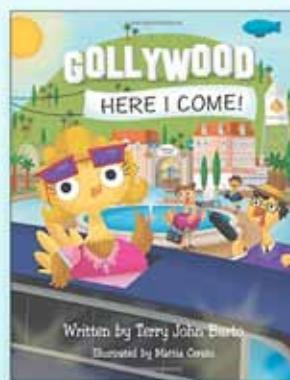
Ellis, known for her illustrations for Colin Meloy’s Wildwood series, here riffs on the concept of “home.”

Shifting among homes mundane and speculative, contemporary and not, Ellis begins and ends with views of her own home and a peek into her studio. She highlights palaces and mansions, but she also takes readers to animal homes and a

## GOLLYWOOD, HERE I COME!

by Terry John Barto

[www.gollywoodhereicome.com](http://www.gollywoodhereicome.com)



“A school-to-screen fairy tale with little conflict or character development that’s enriched by the eye-catching cartoon illustrations.”  
—Kirkus Reviews

ISBN #: 978-1-4969-3509-0 (sc)  
ISBN #: 978-1-4969-3520-6 (eb)

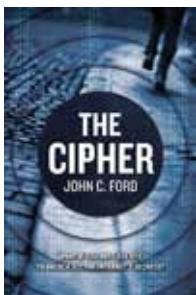
This wordy debut picture book by Barto features veteran illustrator Cerato’s fantastic illustrations of ducks, chickens and turkeys searching for great new talents.

Available now in paperback and ebook on Amazon

TV and Film inquiries are directed to info@tjbkids.com or 310-846-3595

certain famously folkloric shoe (whose iconic Old Woman manages a passel of multiethnic kids absorbed in daring games). One spread showcases “some folks” who “live on the road”; a band unloads its tour bus in front of a theater marquee. Ellis’ compelling ink and gouache paintings, in a palette of blue-grays, sepia and brick red, depict scenes ranging from mythical, underwater Atlantis to a distant moonscape. Another spread, depicting a garden and large building under connected, transparent domes, invites readers to wonder: “Who in the world lives here? / And why?” (Earth is seen as a distant blue marble.) Some of Ellis’ chosen depictions, oddly juxtaposed and stripped of any historical or cultural context due to the stylized design and spare text, become stereotypical. “Some homes are boats. / Some homes are wigwams.” A sailing ship’s crew seems poised to land near a trio of men clad in breechcloths—otherwise unidentified and unremarked upon.

**Visually accomplished but marred by stereotypical cultural depictions. (Picture book. 4-8)**



### THE CIPHER

*Ford, John C.*

Viking (384 pp.)

\$17.99 | Feb. 19, 2015

978-0-670-01542-9

A dangerous breakthrough in cryptography leads to a high-stakes adventure for ne’er-do-well Robert “Smiles” Smylie Jr., whose father founded computing security giant Alyce Systems.

On his 18th birthday, Smiles receives the first installment of his relatively modest trust fund. The following weekend, he drives his geeky teen-prodigy neighbor, Ben, to a cryptography conference at Fox Creek Casino. When Ben realizes he has discovered a fast-factoring algorithm that will destroy modern cryptography, Smiles hatches a scheme to sell the information to the National Security Agency. The basics of public-key cryptography are explained accessibly, but the focus here is on the fast-moving action and web of double crosses and buried secrets. Smiles’ confident, upbeat and largely ingenuous voice lends the book charm, and chapters in which Smiles’ fond ex-girlfriend Melanie investigates Alyce Systems’ past are both warm and suspenseful. Many different storylines are at play here besides the NSA scheme: Smiles’ family history, the upcoming Alyce Systems initial public offering, Smiles’ relationship with his dying father and Smiles’ growing attachment to a girl he meets at the conference. Each plotline works neatly with the others and achieves a satisfying resolution. One final twist is revealed a bit too quickly to have its intended impact, but readers get plenty of suspense and high-tech high jinks otherwise.

**High-speed fun. (Thriller. 14-18)**



### DOUBLEBORN

*Forward, Toby*

Bloomsbury (336 pp.)

\$16.99 | Feb. 3, 2015

978-1-61963-528-9

Series: Dragonborn, 3

Mirrors and magic collide in this third volume of a lyrical fantasy quartet.

Canterstock College isn’t much of a wizarding school anymore, but Tamrin is still furious when she is unjustly expelled; resentful and determined, she follows the only clue to her past. Meanwhile, the wizard apprentice Sam feels compelled to seek out the young girl he barely knows. They accumulate an odd assortment of allies on their separate journeys to a horrific confrontation with the twisted wizard Ash, now on the verge of escape. The only barrier to Ash’s scheme to warp magic itself into her own monstrous reflection is the strange bond Tam and Sam share....Despite the heightened external stakes, the gruesome encounters with Ash and her loathsome minions, the real impetus behind the story is each character’s need to answer the leitmotif inquiry: “What am I?” Rich, sensuous prose, dense with potent metaphors and allusions, channels a narrative that loops around itself, requiring many passages to be read more than once to get their full impact; indeed, the final battle is described so elliptically as to be almost opaque (and unfortunately anticlimactic). Some characters and plot points are left dangling, leaving readers to wait for the final volume for definitive resolution.

Nevertheless, with its gorgeous language and thoughtful themes, this is a book to be savored rather than devoured. (Fantasy. 10-16)



### SWEEP UP THE SUN

*Frost, Helen*

*Photos by Lieder, Rick*

Candlewick (32 pp.)

\$15.99 | Mar. 10, 2015

978-0-7636-6904-1

A picture-book poem calling for adventure that’s—thankfully—for the birds.

When poet Frost and photographer Lieder last teamed up (*Step Gently Out*, 2012), their lyric gaze focused on the insect world, magnifying the beauty of wee, crawly creatures to wide critical acclaim. Their latest endeavor, again but one poem set amid riveting close-ups, takes to the air, capturing many common species of North American birds—mostly in flight—and reprising Frost’s theme encouraging children to step outside and explore the natural world. From the urgent dependency captured on the front endpapers in the form of baby robins, beaks gaping wide, to the independence of adult birds mid-flight, arrested in such detail that an attentive child can count the feathers of a downy woodpecker’s wing or study the masked face of a male cardinal, Lieder’s breathtaking photography

**"The skillful combination of text and illustrations addresses many serious concerns of early childhood—and even of parenthood—without straying from the book's tone of fun and frivolity."**

FROM PRINCESS PISTACHIO

carries the book's message of growth. Frost's poem encourages youngsters to leave the nest, "trusting" the sky to "hold you / as you learn to fly." It not only quietly promotes thoughtful risk-taking, but neatly and unwittingly encapsulates the ambitious creative project she and Lieder have embarked on: "Alone in the sky, // or flying with friends, / your wings will carry you far, // stitching earth to sky with invisible thread, // at home wherever you are."

All-around gorgeous; Frost and Lieder again showcase the splendor of nature through the happy marriage of literal and figurative images. (*Picture book/poetry. 2-8*)



### K-9

*Gavin, Rohan*  
Bloomsbury (320 pp.)  
\$16.99 | Feb. 17, 2015  
978-1-61963-494-7  
Series: Knightley and Son, 2

The second in the Knightley and Son series gets a little darker, offering more bite, tragedy and paternal dysfunction, as well as respectable levels of gore.

Darkus Knightley is the primary tool his periodically comatose father, Alan, taps to continue investigating the elusive criminal gang, the Combination. At the end of *Knightley and Son* (2014), their partnership looked promising and, optimistically, so did their fractured familial relationship. As the book opens, however, paterfamilias is working alone again. Darkus, left in the company of an incontinent but loyal former war dog, discovers something afoot. A number of dogs are missing at Hampstead Heath, and enormous, blood-thirsty mutts are appearing during full moons to maul police officers (werewolf theories abound). Pressing his father to work together again, Darkus finds that Knightley's suggestion that they be a detecting duo was more of a pacifier than a promise, and the feeling of abandonment returns. This is readable as a stand-alone, but familiarity with the first installment will give readers the full scope of Darkus' frustration with a physically and emotionally absent father. Though it suffers some from second-book syndrome, its closer examination of the father-son relationship, the endearing boy-and-his-dog thread, the conversely violent thrill of the occult, and one of the creepiest, multifaceted villains this side of Moriarty will ensnare readers.

A teeth-gnashing thriller more macabre than its predecessor, it will have readers (ahem) howling for a third. (*Mystery. 10-14*)



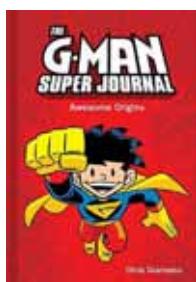
### PRINCESS PISTACHIO

*Gay, Marie-Louise*  
Illus. by *Gay, Marie-Louise*  
Translated by Homel, Jacob  
Pajama Press (48 pp.)  
\$12.95 | Feb. 2, 2015  
978-1-927485-69-9

The arrival of a tiara in the mail is the tipping point in evidence for Pistachio Shoelace that she is really a princess—but no one seems to believe her.

In five short and humorous chapters readers learn that Pistachio has long believed that a "ghastly witch, green with envy" stole her, the Papuan princess, and allowed her adoption by Mr. and Mrs. Shoelace of 23 Maple St. Pistachio attempts to dress and act the part of her ideal, pampered, "real princess"—but no one, including her mother, plays along. When she tries to avoid looking after her baby sister, Pistachio's mother only tells her that princesses "always obey their mothers, or they go without television for a week." And her best friend, Madeline, actually laughs at Pistachio's sudden, unexpected costume and behaviors. The skillful combination of text and illustrations addresses many serious concerns of early childhood—and even of parenthood—without straying from the book's tone of fun and frivolity. (Among the issues so adeptly addressed are adoption, sibling relationships, classmate rejection and a missing child.) The characters are pen-and-ink creations tinted with bright watercolors; Pistachio's russet braid and freckled face are reminiscent of Pippi Longstocking and the author's own Stella. Whimsical names (Pistachio's teacher is Mrs. Trumpethead) add to the fun.

A playful and entertaining take on children's perennial questions surrounding ideas of personhood, family and community. (*Early reader. 4-8*)



### AWESOME ORIGINS

*Giarrusso, Chris*  
Illus. by *Giarrusso, Chris*  
Andrews McMeel (240 pp.)  
\$13.99 | Feb. 17, 2015  
978-1-4494-5844-7  
Series: The G-Man Super Journal

Spun off from Giarrusso's G-Man comics series, a wannabe superhero's journal assignment records epic triumphs along with a catalog of middle-grade woes.

Jumping late aboard the Wimpy Kid bandwagon, the author couches young Michael G's narrative in a mix of "hand-lettered" text and line-drawn cartoons with punch lines in the dialogue balloons. All on ruled paper, natch. Also predictable are Michael's exaggerated but drearily familiar battles with a games-obsessed older brother, clueless parents who reflexively blame him for everything whether he's culpable or not, a repellent rich kid at school, and a particularly loathsome teacher who not only assigns detentions for trumped-up reasons, but

# “...Grant threads her narrative with direct addresses to Readers and delicious turns of phrase....”

FROM THE LEAGUE OF BEASTLY DREADFULS

laughs in his face when he's (falsely) accused of cheating on a test. Michael's superhero ambition isn't that odd, as this is set in a world well-stocked with costumed crime fighters—seven in his own class—and supervillains. Not only does he ultimately achieve said dream, by cutting a cape from what turns out to be a magic blanket, but he also cleverly sets up his hateful teacher for a fall and even joins his superfriends to take on mind-altering villain/cyborg Mister Mental.

Formulaic, built on well-worn tropes and replete with cheap jabs at grown-ups—destined, in other words, to be an easy sell. (afterword) (Graphic/fantasy hybrid. 9-11)



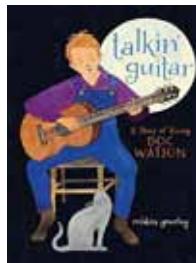
## THE RUBY AIRSHIP

Gosling, Sharon  
Switch/Capstone (496 pp.)  
\$16.95 | Feb. 1, 2015  
978-1-63079-004-2  
Series: Diamond Thief, 2

A former jewel thief acrobatically attempts to rescue an entire circus while one corner of her love triangle chases her down in a ruby-powered airship and villains build evil mechanical armies.

A French circus performer and wanted criminal, Rémy has gone straight since her previous steampunk adventures (*The Diamond Thief*, 2014). Instead of stealing jewels, she makes a living as a wire-walker on the London stage (spicing up her life by rescuing the gentry from highwaymen, all while wearing a painted mask and a visible corset). She's happy enough living with her best friend, a guttersnipe engineer who blends the faux-Cockney of Bert from *Mary Poppins* with an ahistorical touch of vaudeville. When Rémy's tentative suitor, a handsome teenage policeman, doubts her reformation (mind-reading gem powers aren't all they're cracked up to be when they let a girl know her love's not-always-supportive thoughts), she flounces off to France in a rage. But not a one of her old circus friends is truly the person Rémy thought she knew: Some are villains, while others are storybook victims. The usual larger-than-life steampunk fare (automaton armies, airships, goggles and corsets) sits alongside magic jewels that enable telepathy or produce lighter-than-air gas. And of course, there are plenty of secrets held in reserve for the next book, promising revelations both personal and epic in scale.

Steampunk fans will enjoy the action-packed, takes-itself-seriously silliness. (Steampunk. 12-16)



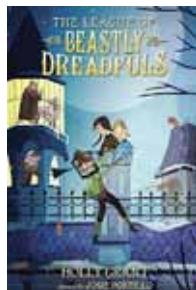
## TALKIN' GUITAR A Story of Young Doc Watson

Gourley, Robbin  
Illus. by Gourley, Robbin  
Clarion (40 pp.)  
\$16.99 | Mar. 10, 2015  
978-0-544-12988-7

This affectionate portrait of guitar great Arthel “Doc” Watson focuses on his formative musical influences during his Appalachian childhood.

Gourley's lyrical prose incorporates occasional diction derived from the setting. “Yonder, where blue mountains meet the sky, Arthel Watson was born into a world of music.” Arthel listens intently—to farm animals, a distant train, peeping frogs and more. He has “ears like a cat.” A page turn reveals an inky-black double-page spread and one stark, speculative sentence: “Maybe it was because he was blind.” Arthel’s “heart full of melody” can't be contained. He drums on pots and strums a steel wire strung to the sliding barn door. His Pappy gives him a harmonica, makes him a banjo and buys his first guitar, from which Arthel's inseparable. Arthel learns farm chores, practicing guitar in between. “He reckoned if he could work like everyone else, he could play music like the folks he heard on the records and the radio.” The narrative ends with a beginning and an image of a taller Arthel, guitar in hand. Gourley's watercolors, while often lovely, depict Arthel unevenly, with some spreads appearing less finished than others. For example, the boy's strawberry-blond hair is, at turns, textured with light pencil strokes, heavily crayoned or left untouched.

Aspects of visual discontinuity detract from this otherwise sensitive treatment of a celebrated guitarist's early inspirations. (biographical note, bibliography, list of websites) (Picture book/biography. 5-8)



## THE LEAGUE OF BEASTLY DREADFULS

Grant, Holly  
Illus. by Portillo, Josie  
Random House (320 pp.)  
\$16.99 | \$10.99 e-book | \$19.99 PLB  
Mar. 24, 2015  
978-0-385-37007-3  
978-0-385-37009-7 e-book  
978-0-385-37008-0 PLB  
Series: League of Beastly Dreadfuls, 1



Two sinister spinsters spirit a seemingly ordinary fifth-grader away one day to a moldering former asylum, informing her that she's become an orphan and they are her great-aunts. Yeah, right.

“Now sit up straight and eat your Lumps.” Locked into her room at night by “Aunts” Primrose and Prudence and fed only Mystery Lumps, Anastasia nearly succumbs to misery at first. But like her capable literary heroine, detective/veterinarian/artist

Francie Dewdrop, she's made of sterner stuff—and is soon turning up startling clues, terrifying discoveries and, in the asylum's darker reaches, other young captives with decidedly peculiar abilities. Along with drawing most of her characters from Roald Dahl's casting company and concocting an eerie setting positively made for Unfortunate Events, Grant threads her narrative with direct addresses to Readers and delicious turns of phrase: "A pink-patterned carpet runner spooled down the steps like a monstrous spotty tongue." Not to mention multiple atmosphere-lightening references to Anastasia's "tragic flatulence" and the odd wade into the nearby bog to gather leeches for, ugh, nonmedicinal purposes. Anastasia herself displays a few quirks, such as a sudden appetite for moths. Despite revelations following a rescue by a pair of shape-changing allies, the author leaves at least one sequel's worth of unexplained puzzles. Portillo's frequent vignettes add a properly cobwebby Gothic look.

**A yummy debut, though readers with sensitive stomachs would be well-advised to check them at the door. (Fantasy. 10-12)**



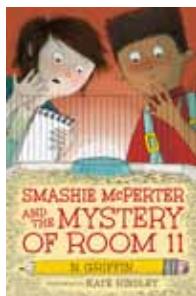
### A DOG'S BREAKFAST

*Graves, Annie*  
Illus. by McElhinney, Glenn  
Darby Creek (64 pp.)  
\$6.99 paper | \$25.32 PLB | Feb. 1, 2015  
978-1-4677-6042-3  
978-1-4677-4350-1 PLB  
Series: Nightmare Club, 1

"Graves" and her Nightmare Club have some stories to spook young readers.

Glen is a nasty young man. He has a high screechy voice, and he only opens his mouth for two reasons: to complain or to lie. One day Glen becomes lost during a class trip to the woods. He complains loudly, and a strange, tiny creature offers to help, but Glen rudely spurns assistance. The creature tells Glen to watch himself or it will turn him into something more useful. Glen ignores the warning, and his nasty behavior triggers a change. Worried, he dials back his nastiness. But when he thinks no one's looking, he starts to kick a stray dog...and is never seen again. Published in the U.K. in 2011 and 2012, the Nightmare Club books are very short, highly illustrated tales ostensibly written by "Annie Graves," a (fictional) 12-year-old who lives near Dublin. The actual author of each tale (in this case, Katherine Farmar) is acknowledged in the "Thank You" in the frontmatter of each volume. McElhinney's black-and-white illustrations appear on every page. Publishing simultaneously are *Help! My Brother's a Zombie*, *Mirrored*, *Guinea Pig Killer* and *Frankenkids*.

**Young or reluctant readers seeking something very brief and a bit dark might enjoy one enough to try a second. (Horror. 7-10) (*Help! My Brother's a Zombie*: 978-1-4677-4348-8, 978-1-4677-6046-1 paper; *Mirrored*: 978-1-4677-4349-5, 978-1-4677-6047-8 paper; *Guinea Pig Killer*: 978-1-4677-4351-8, 978-1-4677-6044-7 paper; *Frankenkids*: 978-1-4677-4352-5, 978-1-4677-6043-0 paper)**



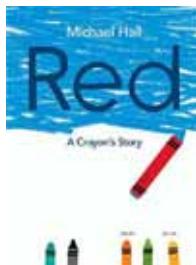
### SMASHIE MCPERTER AND THE MYSTERY OF ROOM 11

*Griffin, N.*  
Illus. by Hindley, Kate  
Candlewick (256 pp.)  
\$15.99 | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-0-7636-6145-8

Smashie McPerter has made her distaste for Patches, Room 11's new class hamster, abundantly clear—so when he is stolen from his cage, she immediately becomes a prime suspect.

It's been a particularly terrible day. Room 11 is suffering under the thoroughly incompetent attentions of sub Mr. Carper, a rank narcissist. One of their number has begun booby-trapping objects with glue so when they are picked up, hand and item are fused. Principal Anderson is positively "ILL" at the mayhem. So when Patches goes missing, Smashie and her best friend, Dontel, turn detective; it will take all of Smashie's wildly intuitive imagination and Dontel's contemplative smarts to restore peace and hamster to Room 11. Though Smashie's quirky ebullience can't be disputed, she is no RamonaJunie B./Clementine clone. Deeply concerned with justice, she is also sweetly empathetic in the face of her classmates' distress. The levelheaded Dontel makes a splendid foil. Griffin writes a consistently smart book, layering subplots and red herrings on her central mystery and unapologetically using \$20 vocabulary. She carefully provides context clues that will help her young middle-grade audience understand challenging words, introducing Smashie's discomfort at "the weight of [her classmates'] unjust censure" with the crystalline observation that they "were angrier at her than ever!"

**A singularly appealing group of kids populates this nifty mystery for readers ready for a challenge. (Mystery. 7-10)**



### RED

*Hall, Michael*  
Illus. by Hall, Michael  
Greenwillow/HarperCollins (40 pp.)  
\$17.99 | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-0-06-225207-4

When a red-labeled crayon discovers he's actually blue, he finds joy, ebullience and acceptance.

Red tries to be a quintessential red crayon, coloring fire trucks, strawberries, hearts and cherries, but no matter the object, they all turn blue. Fellow crayons begin to gossip. Some say he needs to press harder or grow out of it; others say he's lazy or unintelligent. The other art supplies offer a makeover, taping and snipping away. But all fail to look beyond Red's wrapper to what's inside. Until Berry asks him to draw something blue. When Red succeeds, he feels free! He feels himself, and drawing becomes a delight. The personified crayons change their tune, claiming to have always known his true

color. Digital illustrations, done in a graphic, cut-paper style in a primary palette, pop on their white or black backgrounds. And while the crayons themselves are not expressive, Hall's compositions, manipulation of text, and simulated graphite and crayon markings convey a strong sense of emotion. Finding strength in his difference, Red captures that feeling of ease, self-acceptance and freedom in an exuberant, far-reaching sky.

**Smartly designed and appealing, Red's story offers much for discussion and affirmation.** (*Picture book. 4-8*)



### MUSTACHE BABY MEETS HIS MATCH

*Heos, Bridget*

*Illus. by Ang Joy*

Clarion (40 pp.)

\$16.99 | Mar. 3, 2015

978-0-544-36375-5

Has Mustache Baby met a buddy...or

a rival? Baby Billy was born with a mustache that's usually a good-guy mustache but on occasion curls up into a bad-guy mustache. When readers last saw him, he'd met bearded Baby Javier. Billy decides to show Javier how he's the "sharpest shooter in the west" (shooting hoops) and can "work on the railroad all the livelong day" (lay toy train tracks). But Javier knows a thing or two, like how to "wrassle a bear" (a teddy) and catch fish with his bare hands (goldfish crackers). Baby Billy won't be bested, so he challenges Javier to a duel. Javier beats him at magic, math, art...and even in the final showdown (a tricycle race). This, of course, prompts the return of the bad-guy mustache. When Javier produces a bad-guy beard, a wrestling match ensues—and ends in timeout. Billy wanted Javier as a sidekick, but he became a bitter rival; can Baby Billy figure out how to salvage the situation? Heos and Ang's sequel to *Mustache Baby* (2013) is more arch cuteness. A couple highfalutin references (Dali vs. Van Gogh in the art contest) and big words ("competitiveness") may miss the target audience, but kids will see themselves and their less-successful play dates in Billy and Javier's first meeting. Ang's cinematic cartoon illustrations are again a joy.

**More a Mustache Toddler now but still getting into hairy situations, Baby Billy's still good fun.** (*Picture book. 3-6*)



### THE DISTANCE BETWEEN LOST AND FOUND

*Holmes, Kathryn*

HarperTeen (320 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Feb. 17, 2015

978-0-06-231726-1

978-0-06-231728-5 e-book

Hallelujah thought that if she kept her head down, pastor's son Luke, the popular boy she once crushed on, would stop bullying her and spreading humiliating lies about what happened between them.

Instead, her refusing to defend herself has allowed Luke's lies to go unchallenged and estranged Hallie from her friends. Compounding her isolation, her naïve, deeply religious parents accept Luke's account of her behavior and enroll her in a church-sponsored, spring-break camp in Tennessee's Smoky Mountains, where Luke's bullying continues. Mistrustful, immobilized by despair, Hallie avoids former close friend Jonah and rebuffs friendly overtures from a new girl, Rachel. When Rachel quits a contentious hike (no cellphones allowed) to return to camp, Hallie and Jonah join her. Inexperienced in the wilderness, they head in the wrong direction, then—in a heavy rain squall—lose the trail altogether. No one's brought a flashlight; provisions are lunch leftovers, water and a can of soda. They move instead of staying put, fail to recognize poison ivy, freeze at night. The struggle to survive is terrifying but galvanizing, even cleansing. In calmer moments, they ponder life's unanswerable questions, and faith (there are no atheists in foxholes) is proven a power in its own right. Readers will root for Hallie, a compelling original, to find faith in herself.

**Vivid, gripping and believable from beginning to end—a strong debut.** (*Fiction. 13-16*)



### MISSION: NEW BABY

*Hood, Susan*

*Illus. by Lundquist, Mary*

Random House (32 pp.)

\$16.99 | \$10.99 e-book | \$19.99 PLB

Feb. 24, 2015

978-0-385-37672-3

978-0-375-98215-6 e-book

978-0-375-97324-6 PLB

A melding of quasi-military and spy jargon delivers a tongue-in-cheek instruction manual for new big brothers and sisters.

None of the racially diverse older siblings depicted reacts with ambivalence or displeasure at their new roles; instead, text and art show how big brothers and sisters in four families adjust with aplomb to the babies who've entered their families. Narrative text introduces each task the siblings must complete on their "missions" to integrate the babies into their respective families and the world at large, while speech balloons indicate how they fulfill their duties. For example, the only named character fulfills task No. 8: "SET UP COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS" by telling his little sister, "Say 'Mason!' Can you say 'Mason?'" Her speech-balloon response reads, "Dada goo ga goo," and Mason's nearby toy robot declares, "DOES NOT COMPUTE." The humor of each clever scenario drives the book's success and is nicely supported by Lundquist's cartoonish art. It's refreshing to see moms and dads take on varied caretaking roles in the art, but it'd be even nicer to see a family other than Mason's white, mom-dad-and-two-biological-kids family take center stage; here, the depicted characters of color take a back seat and go unnamed. This is a sweet, funny new-baby book that could be even more special with inclusion or centering of adoption, same-sex parenting or true focus on families of color.

**It's amusing, but it doesn't accomplish the ongoing mission: #weneeddiversefamilybooks.** (*Picture book. 3-7*)

**“It will be hard for readers to remain unmoved in the presence of the energetic and life-loving Hoppy, his nose an endearing pink heart.”**

FROM *HOORAY FOR HOPPY!*



**HOORAY FOR HOPPY!**

*Hopgood, Tim*

*Illus. by Hopgood, Tim*

Farrar, Straus and Giroux (32 pp.)

\$16.99 | Feb. 10, 2015

978-0-374-30129-3

Little ones can explore spring and their five senses along with bunny Hoppy in Hopgood's latest concept book.

The story itself is very simple: Hoppy is waiting for spring, and each day, tests the sights, smells and feelings from the top of his burrow. “Too cold” and “too icy” are followed by a beautiful spring day, with birdsong, the scent of flowers, lambs in the meadow, the taste of fresh grass and the warmth of the ground. And do not forget the joys of sharing all these wonderful spring harbingers with friends. It will be hard for readers to remain unmoved in the presence of the energetic and life-loving Hoppy, his nose an endearing pink heart. His every emotional is writ large in the collage-style illustrations (they appear to be digital, though the textures are those of many media, including chalk and crayon), and it won't be long before they are chiming in with every one of Hoppy's “Hooray!”s. Hopgood's scribbly style will appeal to budding artists, and his colors evoke spring. A double-page spread in the backmatter lists the five senses and asks readers what they can hear, smell, see, taste and touch, bringing the lesson back to the story with small inset pictures of the things Hoppy sensed and asking readers to identify them.

Just the ticket for a little bit of learning on a cold winter day when spring seems far away. (Picture book. 3-5)



**LES MISÉRABLES**

*Hugo, Victor*

*Illus. by Williams, Marcia*

Candlewick (64 pp.)

\$17.99 | Feb. 24, 2015

978-0-7636-7476-2

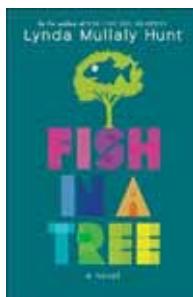
In typically buoyant cartoons, Williams presents a précis of Hugo's epic.

It's hard to imagine an illustrator less

suites to this exhausting story and vice versa. In sequential panels large and small, Valjean and the other characters appear in picturesquely patched and rumpled costume. The background slums, sewers and, in later scenes, barricades are atmospherically stained and littered with detritus, but even during the most desperate and tragic events there are smiles and stage antics on view. Small birds, busy rats and cats, sprigs of garland and like decorative motifs add entertaining distractions within the pictures and along the borders of every page. Furthermore, even if portions of the dialogue enclosed in the speech balloons are credibly translated from the original, some of them have a jarringly jocular ring: “Since I am not arrested and I have things to do, I'm going”; “The old geezer and his daughter are on their way.” In contrast to the lively, fluidly drawn watercolors, the lines or blocks of narrative running beneath every picture offer a dry, past-tense plot summary that may possibly be helpful to

assignment-driven slackers but go on long enough to try the interest of younger readers.

An epic muddle, all in all. (*Graphic fiction. 10-13*)



**FISH IN A TREE**

*Hunt, Lynda Mullaly*

Nancy Paulsen Books (288 pp.)

\$16.99 | Feb. 5, 2015

978-0-399-16259-6

Hunt draws a portrait of dyslexia and getting along.

Ally Nickerson, who's passed through seven schools in seven years, maintains a Sketchbook of Impossible Things. A snowman in a furnace factory is more plausible than imagining herself doing something right—like reading. She doesn't know why, but letters dance and give her headaches. Her acting out to disguise her difficulty causes headaches for her teachers, who, oddly, never consider dyslexia, even though each notices signs like inconsistent spellings of the same word. Ally's confusion is poignant when misunderstandings like an unintentional sympathy card for a pregnant teacher make her good intentions backfire, and readers will sympathize as she copes with the class “mean girls.” When a creative new teacher, Mr. Daniels, steps in, the plot turns more uplifting but also metaphor-heavy; a coin with a valuable flaw, cupcakes with hidden letters, mystery boxes and references to the Island of Misfit Toys somewhat belabor the messages that things aren't always what they seem and everyone is smart in their own ways. Despite emphasis on “thinking outside the box,” characters are occasionally stereotypical—a snob, a brainiac, an unorthodox teacher—but Ally's new friendships are satisfying, as are the recognition of her dyslexia and her renewed determination to read.

Fans of R.J. Palacio's *Wonder* (2012) will appreciate this feel-good story of friendship and unconventional smarts. (*Fiction. 10-12*)



**PAPER THINGS**

*Jacobson, Jennifer Richard*

Candlewick (384 pp.)

\$16.99 | Feb. 10, 2015

978-0-7636-6323-0

There is no safety net for Ari.

Or if there is one, it's full of holes. Her parents are both dead, and a friend of her mother, Janna, has been guardian to Ari and her older brother, Gage, for the past few years. But 19-year-old Gage and Janna have never gotten along well. Gage lies to Janna about having a place of his own and moves out with 11-year-old Ari. As she struggles to keep up with her classes—her hopes of attending a school for the gifted next year rest on this unlikely

**"With clear prose and realistic dialogue, Kantor perceptively illustrates the pressure that accomplished teens put on themselves to achieve perfection."**

FROM BETTER THAN PERFECT

feat—they move from place to place: friends' and acquaintances' homes, homeless shelters and even a car. Ari's plight vividly illustrates the myriad consequences of homelessness, and the adults around her who should be picking up on the numerous clues to her situation seem oblivious. Her perceptive first-person voice neatly captures her conflicted loyalty to Gage but also to Janna, as well as her valiant attempts to make an impossible situation work out. Small acts of kindness help the pair get by. It's Ari's poignantly depicted play with her "Paper Things," a treasured pseudo-family of cut-out magazine people, that conveys most effectively her loss and hope. If the resolution is too easy, it is also satisfying, the journey enlightening.

**A thoughtful and moving exploration of homelessness.**  
(Fiction. 10-14)



### THE DINOSAURS ARE HAVING A PARTY!

Jones, Gareth P.  
Illus. by Parsons, Garry  
Andersen Press USA (32 pp.)  
\$16.95 | Mar. 1, 2015  
978-1-4677-6313-4

A slapdash dino tale guaranteed to please some and infuriate others.

When a boy and his faithful dog, both bow-tie bedecked, receive an invitation to a dinosaur soiree, they don't hesitate a jot (not even to make a close reading of the invitation that hints that they're slated to appear on the menu). Indeed, the boy has a marvelous time until it becomes clear to him that the T. Rex sees him as munchable. After grabbing a gift bag and making a quick escape, the boy and pup finally feel safe—only to find that his party favor contains a surprise of the terrible-lizard variety. Jones misses multiple opportunities to name different dino types; he could easily exchange "Compsognathus" for "the little one," for instance. Illustrator Parsons is equally culpable of slipshod craft, slipping in a wooly mammoth (which any canny 5-year-old will be quick to declare is *not* a dinosaur, nor even of the same era) and a Stegosaurus with the neck of an *Apatosaurus*. Given the missteps, it's hard to say whether the "Chef Alfonsaurus" working the grill is a joke or a misspelled *Allosaurus*.

**Though the concept has plenty of promise, this is one title that deserves a quick extinction from your shelves.**  
(Picture book. 4-6)



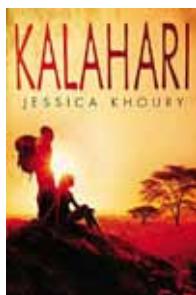
### BETTER THAN PERFECT

Kantor, Melissa  
HarperTeen (336 pp.)  
\$17.99 | Feb. 17, 2015  
978-0-06-227923-1

A high school senior's Type A life implodes after her mother takes an overdose of pills.

When Juliet finds her mother unconscious on her bathroom floor after her parents' separation, suddenly everything she used to value seems insignificant. She finds herself questioning her relationship with her longtime boyfriend, Jason, her parents' outwardly perfect marriage, even her determination to get into Harvard. She sleeps with Declan, a talented Irish musician she just met, cuts and dyes her hair, and starts singing with Declan's band. She still keeps studying for her SATs and other exams, but she soon realizes that she's only doing it to keep her friends and family happy. "In a horrifying waking nightmare, I saw Jason and my parents and all my future...mentors and bosses telling me to keep doing something I hated doing because someday I would be glad to have done it." As her mother recovers and she rebuilds her relationship with her father, Juliet learns how to ask what makes her happy instead of accepting others' definitions of success. With clear prose and realistic dialogue, Kantor perceptively illustrates the pressure that accomplished teens put on themselves to achieve perfection.

**This timely story will ring true for today's disillusioned young people, who are discovering that years of good grades, piano lessons and internships don't necessarily result in adult happiness.** (Fiction. 13-18)



### KALAHARI

Khoury, Jessica  
Razorbill/Penguin (368 pp.)  
\$17.99 | Feb. 24, 2015  
978-1-595-14765-3

Sarah is forced to explore her own boundaries when left not just on her own, but wholly responsible for others.

Sarah is not your average teen. Raised by zoologists in a series of remote and isolated environs, she doesn't really know how to relate to the teens who have come to Africa's Kalahari Desert on an educational safari. They thrive in cities and rely on electronic gadgets, while she relates to animal behavior and indigenous lore. In many respects, Sarah doesn't even speak the same language as these sophisticated visitors. But when her father is lost, her guide friend killed, their camp destroyed, and the survivors become the target of a paramilitary group, it's up to Sarah to lead them to safety. This means trekking across the desert, finding food and water, and avoiding animal predators and determined mercenaries on the hunt. But all this pales when Sarah discovers that some of the animals have been infected with a deadly disease...and that virus has

now spread to her. The novel is part adventure, part science fiction and part love story, all parts in service to its theme of exploring independence and responsibility. Regrettably, narrator Sarah too often refers to guide and friend Theo as "the Bushman," a device that both distances and exoticizes him.

**Cultural infelicities aside, a gripping adventure.** (*Thriller. 12-16*)

### YOU CAN DO IT, BERT!

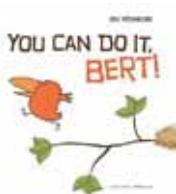
Könnecke, Ole

Illus. by Könnecke, Ole

Gecko Press (32 pp.)

\$16.99 | Mar. 1, 2015

978-1-927271-03-2



Can Bert do it? Can he take the plunge off the branch and launch himself into the yonder?

In this sweet-toned, encouraging, minimalist picture book for young listeners, Könnecke has set up a simple tableau for all but the last few pages. Page right: a few leaves, a hint of a nest and a branch, along which Bert, a little (except for his beak) red bird, trots back and forth. Page left: a great, white expanse, void except for a doodley cloud or two. Bert walks to the end of the branch. He fluffs his feathers. He walks back, then returns with a banana. He eats the banana and peers over the end of the branch. "Come on, Bert," urges the text. Bert waffles. "Bert? / BERT!" Bert launches himself into the ether, covering his eyes with a wing, which makes flying problematical. ("Help," he says in tiny letters as gravity takes hold.) But—ha!—surprise: Bert's jumping into a swimming hole. Pretty tricky, pretty clever even. Bert's three pals in the water cheer for Bert: "When Bert says he'll do something, he does it." Not a bad message, either, with a delivery as light as a feather.

**A winning example of less is more.** (*Picture book. 3-6*)

### DEAREST

Kontis, Alethea

HMH Books (288 pp.)

\$17.99 | Feb. 3, 2015

978-0-544-07407-1

Series: Enchanted, 3



The Woodcutter sister with "a heart as big as the moon" meets her destiny in the third of the frothy fairy-tale series (*Hero*, 2013, etc.).

Empathetic Friday is as "loving and giving" as the old rhyme says, qualities desperately needed when an accidentally summoned ocean devastates the kingdom. She immediately puts her generous nature and enchanted needle at the service of the refugee children. Discovering that the seven swans on the palace grounds are actually enchanted royalty, she no sooner locks eyes with Prince Tristan than the pair fall instantly in love. Naturally, Friday devotes herself to helping their sister break the princes' curse, and that's when her troubles

really begin....Once again, Kontis provides a sparkling mashup of familiar tales with a few original twists. Friday is an astonishingly sweet, optimistic and self-sacrificing heroine—the sort anyone would be lucky to know in real life—but unfortunately rather dull to read about. Since "[e]veryone loves" Friday, and she herself has a regrettable tendency toward serial crushes, it's hard to understand what makes her predestined romance with generic Tristan particularly special. The narrative pace has an odd stop-and-start stutter, while the climactic turn toward the macabre with a (literal) *deus ex machina* conclusion feels over-the-top.

**Perhaps not the best in the series; but it's hard to resist the Woodcutters' fluffy, eager-to-please charm.** Monday's story next, please? (*Fantasy. 11 & up*)

### THE HERO TWINS

#### *A Navajo-English Story of the Monster Slayers*

Kristofic, Jim

Illus. by James, Nolan Karras

Univ. of New Mexico (52 pp.)

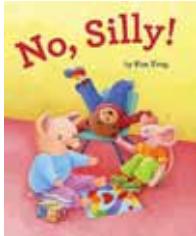
\$19.95 paper | Feb. 15, 2015

978-0-8263-5533-1

Illustrations incorporating images drawn from traditional sand painting and pop culture alike accompany a new Navajo/English version of the early exploits of a pair of mythic heroes.

Kristofic opens with the expressed hope that he's telling the story "in an accurate and respectful way without exposing too much of its sacredness." He begins the tale by establishing the oppression of the Emergence People by vaguely described but monstrous *naayéé*. Then Changing Woman gives birth to twins who grow up to overcome various challenges on the way to defeating *Yééitsoh*, a metal-clad giant, and earning their names: Monster Slayer (*Naayéé' neizgáan*) and He Who Cuts Life Out of the Enemy (*Na'ídígishí*). In James' vigorous pictures, the Twins, their father, the Sun (*Jó'bónaa'é*), and their robotlike adversary are usually human figures with the rippling thews and poses of comic-book superheroes—but transformations occur frequently; when placed in the sky, the Sun takes an abstract form, for instance. A thrillingly scary, half-human Spider Woman headlines a cast of other stylized figures. The author doesn't connect these Twins with others from pre-Columbian New World mythology, but he supplies a prefatory note on the cultural significance of the colors in the pictures. Throughout both the Navajo text and the English translation placed beneath, small marker icons are placed in equivalent spots so that readers can compare words and phrases.

**A thrillingly melodramatic tale kept close to its Navajo roots.** (*Bilingual folk tale. 7-10*)



## NO, SILLY!

Krug, Ken

Illus. by Krug, Ken

Beach Lane/Simon & Schuster (40 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Feb. 3, 2015

978-1-4814-0066-4

978-1-4814-0067-1 e-book

Four young friends describe their favorite things to do throughout the day, and sometimes those descriptions take a very silly turn.

In direct first-person narration, a little bear tells readers how he likes to sleep. "I like to sleep in my bed. / I like to sleep in my dad's big chair. // I like to sleep on my mama's lap. / And I like to sleep on cookies." What? On cookies? This absurdity gives child listeners the chance to gleefully shout, "No, silly! You eat cookies," as the page is turned to reveal the correct thing to do with cookies. Youngsters will delight in spotting right ("I like to eat apples") from wrong ("I like to eat books") in each situation, the turn of the page always giving them ample time to point out a correction. Krug's oil-paint illustrations are cheery and bright, which add to the whimsy, and interchanging framed pages with double-page spreads gives extra visual cues to help readers spot the silly parts. Facial expressions, alas, are sometimes a bit off. Readers will notice that one correction leads to the next activity, so the cookies lead to eating other foodstuffs, and the aforementioned "books" lead to reading, and so on. The sleepy, nighttime conclusion both brings the slight narrative full circle and makes this a surprising bedtime possibility.

A well-paced romp with nifty response opportunities for little ones. (Picture book. 3-6)

## LEOPARDPOX!

Landau, Orna

Illus. by Hoffmann, Omer

Clarion (40 pp.)

\$16.99 | Feb. 3, 2015

978-0-544-29001-3

An Israeli import puts a new spin on the sick-day theme—not to mention the Tiger Mother.

Sadie wakes up feeling funny, and Mama isn't sure what's wrong. As it turns out, she has leopardpox, which makes her transform into a leopard cub. Mama's three sons help her decide how to help Sadie, starting with a visit to the pediatrician. This doesn't go well, so they head to the veterinarian. Although he's delighted to have a leopard patient, he can't help change her back into a child. "Are you sure you don't want to keep her the way she is?" he asks. "There are lots of little girls, but this is a very cute and special leopard." Unmoved, Mama replies, "My daughter is also very cute and special...and I miss her." After determining that school is no place for a leopard, they head to the zoo; but even as a leopard cub, Sadie doesn't want to be separated from her family, and Mama issues a satisfying roar demanding to be with her daughter. Somehow, snuggles at home cure Sophie of her ailment/

transformation, but a punch line at book's end sees Mama coming down with the same affliction. Throughout, Hoffmann's cartoonish, mixed-media art is both expressive and descriptive of the family's travails, and it infuses the book with humor.

Pair this with David Small's *Imogene's Antlers* (1985) for prime sick-day silliness. (Picture book. 3-8)



## HERO

Lean, Sarah

Katherine Tegen/HarperCollins (208 pp.)

\$16.99 | \$9.99 e-book | Feb. 13, 2015

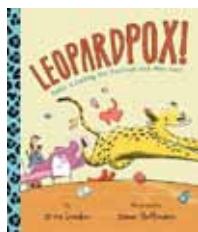
978-0-06-212238-4

978-0-06-212240-7 e-book

Young Leo learns that being a hero isn't about the accolades.

Leo's English town is built on Roman ruins, and Roman history influences his imagination. Where in real life Leo feels insignificant, in his dreams he's a heroic gladiator winning the approval of Jupiter. So when Warren, a schoolyard god of sorts, invites Leo to join him and his friends, Leo jumps at the chance. First he must prove his bravery and loyalty. The trials end badly, shaming Leo, especially when stalwart pup Jack Pepper gets hurt in the process. Leo's guilt is compounded after he spins events so it sounds as though he rescued Jack—a story almost everyone in town believes. Tightly structured and plotted, the novel's every element and development move the story forward. Leo narrates, allowing readers to fully experience his growing unease with his deception and alienation from family and friends. Leo seems to be digging himself into a hole when a meteor hits, opening a huge sinkhole in the middle of town that swallows Jack Pepper. In the process of recovering and restoring Jack to his neighbor and role model, Grizzly Allen, Leo learns heaps about honesty, friendship, dreams and real greatness.

A compelling, thought-provoking story about the fights and brave acts—big and small, acclaimed and unattributed—that define us. (Fiction. 9-12)



Like Nâam-pèng, the bravest bee in a much-loved story, a boy faces a monster—bear-bile farming—and makes a difference.



## MOON BEAR

Lewis, Gill

Illus. by Gottardo, Alessandro

Atheneum (384 pp.)

\$16.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Mar. 17, 2015

978-1-4814-0094-7

978-1-4814-0096-1 e-book



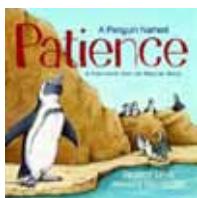
When the moon bear cub that Tam first encountered in the forests near his family's old village arrives as a captive for the bear farm in a Laotian city where the 12-year-old has been sent to work, Tam promises to get them both back to their mountain home. Tam's village life ended with his tribe's relocation to the

# "Uncluttered watercolor illustrations keep the focus on the two main characters and capture the emotions between them."

FROM A PENGUIN NAMED PATIENCE

lowlands. Then a bomb, buried in their new farmland during the war 40 years earlier, kills his father. Gen. Chan, responsible for the relocation, arranges employment for young Tam in a city "farm" where bears are kept in cages so that bile, used for traditional medicine, can be extracted from their gall bladders. Gen. Chan is also a customer. His beloved daughter is ill; he hopes the bile will cure her. Though the work is hard and his boss unstable, Tam is staying with a family that cares for him; the bears aren't so lucky. This appealing first-person account spotlights a lesser-known issue of animal cruelty but, appropriately for its audience, has a hopeful resolution. There is sufficient Laotian history and culture woven in to provide an authentic, intriguing setting, along with just the right measure of suspense.

**A moving and memorable tale of a boy and his bear. (Fiction. 9-13)**



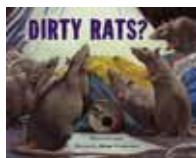
## A PENGUIN NAMED PATIENCE A Hurricane Katrina Rescue Story

Lewis, Suzanne  
Illus. by Anchin, Lisa  
Sleeping Bear Press (24 pp.)  
\$15.95 | Feb. 1, 2015  
978-1-58536-840-2

A moving account of a colony of penguins at the Audubon Aquarium in New Orleans that survived after Hurricane Katrina due to a dedicated staff and a host aquarium.

In the opening scene, Patience is alone and looks concerned. Patience knows the air is getting hotter and wonders where the penguin keeper and his pail of sardines might be. The narrator's voice is focused through Patience's perspective and has a childlike simplicity, supplying just enough information about the aftereffects of the storm to convey the serious conditions without being frightening. The penguins are getting cranky, but Patience tries to "be patient." This refrain will repeat throughout, for even after the penguin keeper arrives, Patience's patience will be tried—especially when the penguins are moved to the Monterey Bay Aquarium and her dear keeper must return to New Orleans. Uncluttered watercolor illustrations keep the focus on the two main characters and capture the emotions between them. Children will empathize with Patience's feelings of uncertainty about the upheaval and separation. And they will feel jubilation when the colony finally arrives home, with Patience leading the way into the repaired aquarium.

**A satisfying animal survival story for the youngest set. (author's note) (Picture book. 4-8)**



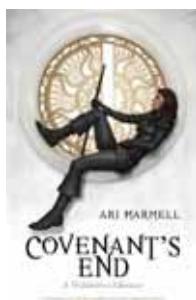
## DIRTY RATS?

Lunde, Darrin  
Illus. by Gustavson, Adam  
Charlesbridge (32 pp.)  
\$16.95 | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-1-58089-566-8

A Smithsonian mammal specialist makes a bid to clean up the rat's rotten rep.

Answering the titular question with "Maybe. Maybe not," Lunde shifts readers' focus away from rats in urban environments to wild species—from the bamboo-eating long-tailed marmoset rat of Southeast Asia to the Philippines' bushy-tailed cloud rat. He also notes the important roles rats play in spreading seeds, feeding snakes and other predators, and (without getting too, or actually at all, specific) medical research. Gustavson joins the rescue operation with close-ups of rats rendered in naturalistic detail but looking more inquisitive than feral, sporting large pink ears and whiskery snouts. Some of the city settings are picturesquely grimy, but there are no dead creatures or images more disturbing than, in one scene, a white lab rat and a researcher in surgical garb locking eyes. On the contrary, another illustration even features a rat leaning in from the edge of the page to peer up at viewers, and a closing portrait gallery of selected rat species is equally fetching.

**Not particularly convincing as a reclamation project but generally informative and easy on the eyes. (online resources) (Informational picture book. 6-8)**



## COVENANT'S END

Marmell, Ari  
Pyr/Prometheus Books (250 pp.)  
\$17.99 | \$11.99 e-book | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-61614-986-4  
978-1-61614-987-1 e-book  
Series: Widdershins Adventures, 4

Widdershins is back, in her last and most dangerous adventure.

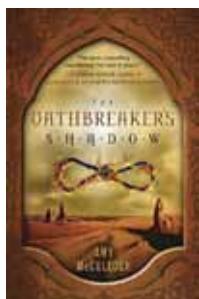
After the events of *Lost Covenant* (2013), Shins, along with psychic hitch-hiker and personal god Olgun, is finally ready to return to Davillon and face the pain and grief she ran from. As usual, she finds herself in the middle of trouble, danger and quip-filled adventures. Davillon has become a hotbed of unrest. Dark rumors and shadowy evils stalk the streets; the bodies of everyone Shins has loved and lost have been exhumed and left in her various safe houses, and Lisette Suvagne, who has dogged Widdershins since the first volume, has taken over the Finder's Guild term, allied herself with members of the Gloaming Court, and is leading the attack on the city, on the church and on Shins. What's a thief with a heart of gold to do? As has been true of the series thus far, things get darker with each adventure. Shins must face her own mortality and face up to the fallout (political, interpersonal and paranormal) from her own previous actions and decisions, a fitting finale

**“The second half of the story is one reversal after another, and that makes up for the much slower early chapters.”**

FROM MARS EVACUEES

for a series that has concerned itself with the growth of its protagonist. The prose is purple, the stakes are high, and the ending is exactly right.

**Smart fantasy with heart and enough bad puns to last a lifetime.** (*Fantasy. 13 & up*)



### THE OATHBREAKER'S SHADOW

McCulloch, Amy

Flux (408 pp.)

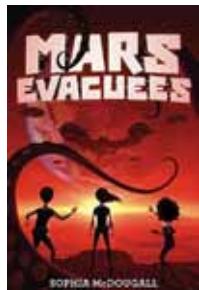
\$11.99 paper | Feb. 8, 2015

978-0-7387-4405-6

The first of a two-book adventure series sends a gifted warrior-in-training out into the desert to die.

In a fantasy world with the flavor of the Central Asian steppes, Raim is a 15-year-old nomad determined to join the elite forces of the Khanate. Since he was a child, he's been best friends with the Khan's heir, and if he passes his tests he'll be young Khareh's most trusted fighter. He need only make an Absolute Vow, an oath sworn on a knot. If the maker of a knotted promise is forsaken, the knot burns a hideous scar on the oathbreaker's body, and a grotesque shadow appears, haunting the breaker of the promise and causing his countrymen to drive him into the wilderness. With a loaded gun like that hanging on the wall, readers know it will soon be fired. Yet when Raim does set a promise knot afire, it's through no choice of his own but from some terrible misadventure. If he can only survive the shame of banishment, the desert's poisonous bugs and the city of the oathbreakers, Raim can learn his terrible family secrets—except those best left for the sequel. Worldbuilding grows through exposition that plods as slowly as Raim's trudge through the sands.

**Readers who stick it out to the action-packed climax will be curious about what's coming next.** (*Fantasy. 13-15*)



### MARS EVACUEES

McDougall, Sophia

Harper/HarperCollins (416 pp.)

\$16.99 | \$9.99 e-book | Feb. 17, 2015

978-0-06-229399-2

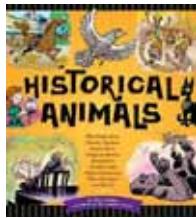
978-0-06-229401-2 e-book

In a future in which alien intervention has drastically reversed global warming, British schoolgirl Alice Dare discovers that, instead of beginning a new semester at Muckling Abbot School for Girls, she's been drafted into basic training on Mars, fighting the enemies of the human race.

Science-fiction novels have always borrowed from one another, but it's surprising how many different tropes McDougall employs. There's plenty of space warfare, of course, but

there are also scenes that resemble stories about boarding schools. And when the students meet the Morrors, the dialogue owes a huge debt to Adam Rex's *The True Meaning of Smekday* (2007). Oddly enough, all this sampling and shifting of tone increase the novel's suspense. The second half of the story is one reversal after another, and that makes up for the much slower early chapters. People reading the first 50 pages may start to list things the characters aren't doing: They don't encounter aliens. They don't fire weapons. They don't go to Mars. There is, however, a fair amount of schoolwork. Alice's deadpan narration is always entertaining, and a few sentences are dazzling, like a description of Earth from far away: "And then we saw a pale bluish star that was brighter than the others, and it grew in the dark, like a flower."

**The strange pacing sometimes makes the book feel unbalanced, but the action sequences are worth the wait.** (*Science fiction. 8-12*)



### HISTORICAL ANIMALS *The Dogs, Cats, Horses, Snakes, Goats, Rats, Dragons, Bears, Elephants, Rabbits and Other Creatures That Changed the World*

Moberg, Julia

Illus. by Jeff Albrecht Studios

Charlesbridge (96 pp.)

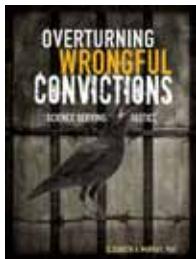
\$15.95 | Feb. 10, 2015

978-1-62354-048-7

From Alexander the Great's steed Bucephalus to Dolly the sheep and the first Shamu, a gallery of animals that have played roles, large or small, in human history.

Modeled on the collaborators' previous *Presidential Pets* (2012), each of the chronologically ordered entries features a full-page cartoon caricature opposite a mix of at least marginally relevant facts ("Horses sleep both lying down and standing up") and observations that feel more like filler than anything else. "Josephine changed her name from Rose because Napoleon didn't like it," reads one in the piece on a dog that fished Napoleon Bonaparte out of the Mediterranean; "Leonardo never married or had children," reads another on Leonardo da Vinci's propensity for freeing caged birds. Also as in *Pets*, Moberg introduces each chosen creature in verse that ranges from inane to merely laughably inept: Spotting penguins in South America, "Magellan was surprised / That creatures used to snow / Also liked the sun / And life as Latinos!" Some passages are printed over brightly colored backgrounds and so are hard to read. Furthermore, the author provides no sources whatsoever. Still, fans of Keltie Thomas' *Animals That Changed the World* (2010) will find new creatures aplenty here, along with the familiar likes of Balto, Koko and Punxsutawney Phil.

**A browser's delight, despite lowering the bar considerably for publishable poetry.** (*Nonfiction. 9-11*)



## OVERTURNING WRONGFUL CONVICTIONS *Science Serving Justice*

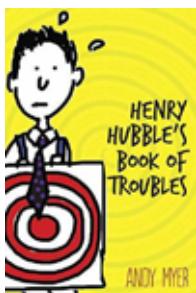
Murray, Elizabeth A.

Twenty-First Century/Lerner (120 pp.)  
\$33.32 PLB | Mar. 1, 2015  
978-1-4677-2513-2 PLB

So very rarely is anything perfect, but when the legal process malfunctions, the result can be the horror of unjust incarceration.

It is estimated that 2 to 5 percent of the American prison population—that is, 40,000 to 100,000 souls—are wrongly behind bars, writes veteran forensic scientist Murray. They are the victims of inept counsel, snitches looking for a payday, judges guilty of official misconduct (“such as bias, corruption, or incompetence”), police bullying, flawed or malicious testimony, and racial prejudice—what one attorney refers to as “legal lynching.” But since the late 1980s, a handful of exoneration organizations have worked to overturn wrongful convictions. As Murray writes, they principally address high-profile cases, such as murder and rape, where the consequences can be the death penalty; over the last 25 years, 1,400 men and women have been exonerated. Murray lays a solid foundation for readers, taking them through the legal system’s long road, from questioning all the way to appeal, while explaining how exoneration is achieved, mostly through DNA testing and fingerprints. More rarely it’s achieved by displaying overwhelming evidence of faulty prosecution (as she writes, “Grave mistakes are often the hardest to admit”). Of exonerated prisoners, notes Murray, the average age of incarceration is 27 and the average age of release is 42.

A chilling exposé. (*Nonfiction. 13-18*)



## HENRY HUBLEE'S BOOK OF TROUBLES

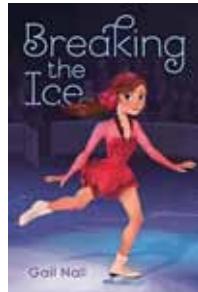
Myer, Andy  
Illus. by Myer, Andy  
Delacorte (160 pp.)  
\$15.99 | \$10.99 e-book | \$18.99 PLB  
Feb. 10, 2015  
978-0-385-74439-3  
978-0-385-38526-8 e-book  
978-0-375-99164-6 PLB

Middle schooler Henry Harrison Hubble keeps an occasional “pretty personal” journal, but when it’s stolen and pages are posted on social media, he has to take drastic action.

Judging by the contents of his backpack (one of his troubles), Henry is in the eighth grade in school, but he’s years behind in social skills and sense of humor. Fascinated by the fact that he was named after the ninth U.S. president, he’s particularly pleased with his family’s special connection: They own a (now dried-up and bottled) turd from Harrison’s dog. Henry makes a variety of unwise choices that lead to troubles on a

whale-watching field trip, at Halloween, in the lunchroom and in science class. Forging his mother’s name on a discipline slip leads to a grounding and actually seeing the historic turd, but he’s eventually released for other troubles: a Valentine’s Day dance and the loss of his journal. Like many other titles aimed at the middle-grade reader, this purports to be the diary of a budding cartoonist. Henry’s first-person narrative is accompanied by black-and-white drawings. He also includes some (convincingly child-written) poems. The genuine issue in Henry’s story is lost in the bathroom humor, which fourth graders will probably love.

For readers who’ve exhausted the *Wimpy Kid* series, an acceptable follow-up. (*Fiction. 8-12*)



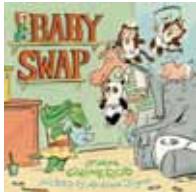
## BREAKING THE ICE

Nall, Gail  
Aladdin (320 pp.)  
\$16.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Mar. 3, 2015  
978-1-4814-1911-6  
978-1-4814-1911-6 e-book

An emotional meltdown at a figure skating competition gets 12-year-old Kaitlin kicked out of her high-status skating club and jettisoned by her longtime coach in this middle-grade sports novel.

Rejected by the rest of the respected clubs, Kaitlin must join a rink filled with misfits and problem skaters that is seen as a joke in her hypercompetitive world. There’s a lot of great stuff in Nall’s figure skating novel, narrated in the first person and largely aimed at girls. The atmosphere is particularly redolent, and the setup—Kaitlin’s outburst and its unexpected life-changing aftermath—gives fascinating insight into the largely veiled world of junior competitive skating. Although a technically adept skater, what’s keeping Kaitlin back is her inability to make the emotional inner connection she needs to skate her heart out. How she learns to do this is the stuff of the duller and more muddled middle, which features more characters and situations than the novel can effectively handle. The formerly rule-following Kaitlin rebels in small but important ways, finds the courage to ask for what she wants, crushes on a cute boy and makes real friends. Unfortunately, Nall’s thesis, that this journey gives Kaitlin the emotional experience she needs to soar as an artist, fails to convince.

After a strong beginning, this atmospheric but overstuffed novel flounders, rallying at the end to pull off a touching finish. (*Fiction. 8-12*)



## THE BABY SWAP

Ormerod, Jan

Illus. by Joyner, Andrew

Little Simon/Simon & Schuster (32 pp.)

\$16.99 | Feb. 17, 2015

978-1-4814-1914-7

Inspired by her mother's shopping trip to exchange a hat, Caroline Crocodile tries to swap her baby brother, only to discover that he's just right, after all.

Jealousy is the culprit in Caroline's dissatisfaction with her new sibling. She seethes as Mama Crocodile enthuses, "He is as green as a grub, and his eyes are as yellow as egg yolks." Matters worsen as Mama continues to lavish praise on her hatchling, and when Caroline is left in charge while Mama pops into the millinery, she spies "The Baby Shop." Pictures reveal the store as one that sells baby clothing, furniture and accoutrements, but Caroline misinterprets its sales mission and heads inside to swap her drooling baby brother. A compassionate—and extremely resourceful—sales-goat somehow comes up with a series of other babies (a panda cub, twin tigers, a baby giraffe, a piglet and even an elephant's child), but each is somehow problematic. Ormerod and Joyner infuse humor into the mishaps with each baby, which helps mitigate the hole in the story's logic: Just where do these trial babies come from? Caroline ultimately reunites with her "just right" baby brother and happily accepts her returning mother's oblivious praise. Joyner's comic illustrations add much to the story's success with their expressive, detailed and engaging approach.

A fine title to add, not swap, to the new-baby shelf. (Picture book. 3-7)



## DECORATED HORSES

Patent, Dorothy Hinshaw

Illus. by Brett, Jeannie

Charlesbridge (48 pp.)

\$17.95 | Feb. 10, 2015

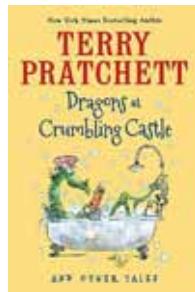
978-1-58089-362-6

Bright colors and ornate furbelows flash in this survey of horsey fashion through the ages.

The vague topic and Patent's accompanying commentary—being noticeably thin on specifics—come off as pretexts for an album of portraits for coltish horse lovers. Unfortunately, Brett doesn't pick up the slack, as both horses and human figures posing in her flat paintings are drawn with unfinished, generic features, and the various blankets, braids, straps, plumes, fringes, saddles and pieces of armor on view are neither consistently identified nor displayed to best advantage. Grouped by function, the gallery of 14 examples opens with war horses (including armored steeds from an unspecified period of the Middle Ages and an Egyptian chariot confusingly paired to an Assyrian scenario set several centuries too early). It then goes on to portray horses trained to dance, race or compete in never-explained ways as draft teams. Following a final batch duded up for parades or, in ancient Scythia, ritual burial, a pair of labeled

portraits, one of equine body parts and the other of standard tack, is shoehorned in.

Even readers mad for all things horse won't give this more than a quick graze before galloping off to richer pastures. (index, bibliography, websites) (Nonfiction. 9-11)



## DRAGONS AT CRUMBLING CASTLE And Other Tales

Pratchett, Terry

Illus. by Beech, Mark

HMH Books (352 pp.)

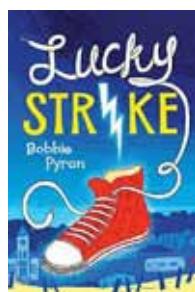
\$16.99 | Feb. 3, 2015

978-0-544-46659-3

Fourteen rollicking tales, most of which were written when the author was a teenager and published over 40 years ago in his local newspaper.

Pratchett fans will particularly welcome first introductions to the town of Blackbury, which became the setting for several later novels, and intrepid Snibril, who, with his diminutive folk, went on to be cast in *The Carpet People*. The author admits to some minor editorial massaging, but these and all the rest feature characters heroic or hiss-worthy, pranks and battles aplenty, sly twists on familiar tropes and his trademark mix of silly humor and acute moral commentary. In the title tale, a lad makes peace between a town and a family of displaced dragons, and in another, rival rulers even smaller than Carpet People squabble over a newly discovered dust speck. Mishaps ensue when "Father Christmas Goes to Work" between holidays. All the stories come with sheaves of new illustrations depicting wide-eyed caricatures in comically stagey poses, drawn Quentin Blake-style in quick, sketchy pen strokes against swabs of monochrome wash.

Juvenilia from a genius, showing bright signs of future masterworks. (introduction) (Short stories. 10-12)



## LUCKY STRIKE

Pyron, Bobbie

Levine/Scholastic (272 pp.)

\$16.99 | \$16.99 e-book | Feb. 24, 2015

978-0-545-59217-8

978-0-545-59219-2 e-book



Could it ever be lucky to be struck by lightning?

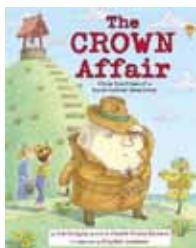
In the case of 11-year-old Nate, the answer is a qualified yes. Thanks to his best friend's quick wits, he isn't killed by a bolt out of the blue, but the lightning miraculously changes his luck from the worst ever to the very best. Suddenly he goes from inept to incredibly skilled on the diamond, which moves him from nerdy outsider to a place among the popular. His luck rubs off on those around him, too. Unfortunately, swept

# "It's a little less quirky than the last adventure..., but still, plenty of gleeful ridiculousness adorns this outing..."

FROM SMEK FOR PRESIDENT!

up in his unaccustomed acclaim, he meanly turns his back on Genesis, his smart, analytical and touchingly vulnerable BFF. She's befriended, in turn, by Chum, the ultimate bully target. Nate remorsefully decides the only way he can return to being Gen's best friend is to reverse his lightning strike luck by getting struck again, a terrifying prospect he's nonetheless willing to face. Even lightly sketched characters leap off the pages, adding rich depth to an already satisfying tale. In the slightly fantastical Gulf Coast world that Pyron (*The Dogs of Winter*, 2012) has imagined, people can change in unexpected ways. With just a spark of magic, bullies can become true friends, those without humor can learn to giggle, and perennial victims can emerge victorious.

**Amusing, endearing and sometimes even electrifying.**  
(*Magical realism*. 9-12)



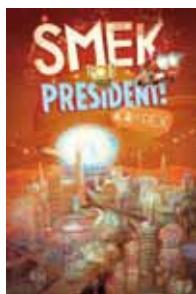
## THE CROWN AFFAIR

Ransom, Jeanie Franz  
Illus. by Axelsen, Stephen  
Charlesbridge (40 pp.)  
\$16.95 | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-1-58089-552-1

Noir whodunit in the land of Mother Goose.

When Jack loses his crown after falling down that hill, who better to crack the case than hard-boiled Joe Dumpty, private eye? (Joe made his rep by solving the mystery surrounding his brother in *What REALLY Happened to Humpty?*, 2009.) Jill leaps over the yellow crime-scene tape to meet him at the hill. Jack's eyes look like pinwheels as he tells Joe what he remembers; dizzy Jill can't add much more. Spider goes over the crime scene with a fine-tooth comb...literally! Joe visits the Sprats, who are fighting; could it be about the crown? Jack B. Nimble is on crutches; he fell while practicing his candle-jumping. He's an unlikely suspect. And in the house that Jack built, "Goldy" describes a suspicious encounter with the Muffin Man. Joe grills this sailor-suited gourmand, who implicates yet another Jack, the one who went up the beanstalk. While Joe visits this sulky Jack, Spider takes a trip up the beanstalk to talk to the giant. Between them, they solve the crime, and just in time. Joe and Spider can tackle their next case: The cow has jumped over the moon and hasn't been seen since. The pun-packed yarn may go over the heads of younger readers, but their grown-ups will chuckle, and everyone will enjoy the impish twists on familiar images in Axelsen's Photoshop illustrations.

Genuinely clever. (*Picture book*. 3-7)



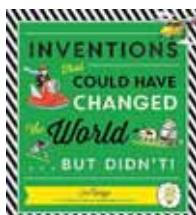
## SMEK FOR PRESIDENT!

Rex, Adam  
Illus. by Rex, Adam  
Disney-Hyperion (272 pp.)  
\$16.99 | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-1-4847-0951-1

Gratuity "Tip" Tucci doesn't see why her mom won't let a 13-year-old who saved the world take an off-planet vacation.

Two years after saving the world in *The True Meaning of Smekday* (2007), biracial Tip and her extraterrestrial best friend, J.Lo, need a holiday. They jet off to New Boovworld (otherwise known as Saturn's moon Titan) in Slushious, their flying car. J.Lo's wanted on New Boovworld for his part in the near-destruction of Earth two years ago, but he's sure everything will be fine if he just explains things to the HighBoov-for-life, Capt. Smek. The situation on New Boovworld is complicated: The Boov are holding elections for HighBoov. In election season, every politician loves an enemy of the state, and so J.Lo is recast as the Squealer, condemned to imprisonment in eternal silence. Only Tip can save him, with the help of a bubble-blowing bee named Bill, Funsize the garbage man and the imagined ghost of her old friend the Chief. It's a little less quirky than the last adventure (the Boov's seven magnificent genders are paid lip service, with important characters either male or female and even following Earth stereotypes), but still, plenty of gleeful ridiculousness adorns this outing, which is illustrated with Rex's own fanciful comics. The book is out just in time for the release of the movie adaptation of Book 1 (as *Home*, due out spring 2015).

This sequel shares the strengths of its predecessor: the loving friendship between Tip and J.Lo, the respect for the absurd, and the social consciences of the teen protagonist and her ET BFF. (*Science fiction*. 11-15)



## INVENTIONS THAT COULD HAVE CHANGED THE WORLD... BUT DIDN'T!

Rhatigan, Joe  
Illus. by Owsley, Anthony  
Charlesbridge (80 pp.)  
\$14.95 | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-1-62354-024-1

From "Smell-O-Vision" to a motorized pogo stick and an edible smartphone case, this romp through Patent Office records is a hilarious tribute to misapplied ingenuity.

"The world is bursting with ideas," Rhatigan observes. "Unfortunately, not all of these ideas are good." In support, he digs up dozens of unlikely proposals—some of which, like Henry Ford's early Quadricycle and Thomas Edison's Talking Doll, were harbingers of truly world-changing innovations. Most, though, like the Reid Flying Submarine, 19th-century rocking bathtubs, a suggestive party-game version of cup-and-ball played at waist level and the aforementioned movie theater

**“The tale is nicely pitched to emphasize the importance of a hypothesis, testing and verification, and several inset text boxes are used to explain these scientific tools.”**

FROM MESMERIZED

“Smell-O-Vision” (and a competing technology, “AromaRama”) never got off the ground due to obvious design flaws, expense or just inadequate marketing. Still, all were concocted in a spirit of enterprise, and by way of a hat tip, the author names nearly all of their inventors, renowned or otherwise. Owsley’s cartoon visualizations of selected inventions in action join original patent drawings and occasional photos to provide comical commentary as much as to clarify physical and functional details.

Casual browsers will come away mightily amused; would-be inventors will find here fresh inspiration, as well as encouragement to give their own wildest ideas a try. (resource list, subject and inventor indexes) (*Nonfiction. 10-13*)



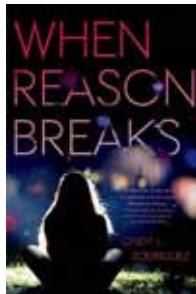
### MESMERIZED *How Ben Franklin Solved a Mystery that Baffled All of France*

*Rockliff, Mara*  
Illus. by Bruno, Iacopo  
Candlewick (48 pp.)  
\$17.99 | Feb. 24, 2015  
978-0-7636-6351-3

Ben Franklin's several years in France during the American Revolution included an occasion on which he consulted on a scientific matter for the French king.

Louis XVI commissioned a study when he became concerned about the number of complaints he was hearing from French doctors about a German—Dr. Franz Mesmer—who seemed to wield a powerful, mysterious method of healing. Among the scientists and doctors asked to report was the American emissary Benjamin Franklin. In Rockliff's account, Franklin observes Mesmer's colleague, Charles D'Eslon, at work, then tinkers with Mesmer's “animal magnetism” technique by blindfolding and misdirecting D'Eslon's subjects. Franklin's hypothesis—that results were accounted for by the subject's imagination and not an external force—is quickly proved. Text displayed in ribbons, a couple of late-18th-century typefaces and other flourishes create a sense of time and place. The endpapers are brightly hypnotic. Bruno's digitally colored pencil art lightly evokes period caricature and gently pokes fun at the ornate clothing and hair of French nobility. The tale is nicely pitched to emphasize the importance of a hypothesis, testing and verification, and several inset text boxes are used to explain these scientific tools. Rockliff points out that Franklin's blind-test technique is in use today for medical treatments, and both the placebo effect and hypnosis are studied today.

**Rockliff and Bruno's playful approach buoys solid science and history. (author's note, sources)** (*Nonfiction. 8-10*)



### WHEN REASON BREAKS

*Rodriguez, Cindy L.*  
Bloomsbury (304 pp.)  
\$17.99 | \$12.99 e-book | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-1-61963-412-1  
978-1-61963-413-8 e-book

Two young women struggle with family and school pressure, finding support in a kind, principled teacher in this contemporary novel featuring alternating narrators.

The story opens as one of them—readers do not know which one—attempts suicide in the opening chapter. Though readers may at first have trouble distinguishing between their voices due to the similarity of their names and to that purposeful obfuscation, Emily Delgado and Emily Davis (who goes by her middle name, Elizabeth) could scarcely be more different. Quiet, careful Emily is the daughter of a local politician whose image-conscious authority grates on his family. Elizabeth is opinionated and tough, though she, her younger sister and her mother are still reeling from the anguish caused by her father's departure from the family after his extramarital affair. One of their teachers, Ms. Diaz, becomes a confidante for each of them, and she pairs them up for a project on Emily Dickinson, whose poems are discussed throughout and whose life circumstances serve as inspiration for the characters. The portrayal of the different ways people experience depression is spot-on—including the terrifying and believable way some of its less visible symptoms can be missed by the loved ones of those who are suffering.

A sharply drawn, emotionally resonant tale of two girls—one gripped by uncontrollable rage, the other by unrelenting numbness—that will speak to many teens. (*Fiction. 12-18*)



### PLACE HACKING *Venturing Off Limits*

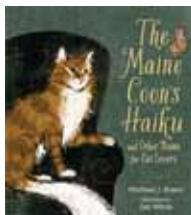
*Rosen, Michael J.*  
Twenty-First Century/Lerner (72 pp.)  
\$33.32 PLB | Feb. 1, 2015  
978-1-4677-2515-6 PLB

A hodgepodge of adventuring activities designed for urban settings gathered under the rubric “hacking,” as in the old sense of “play[ing] a sophisticated practical joke on a community,” though considerably more inclusive here.

Place hacking, for author Rosen, comprises three categories of activities: urban exploration, urban adventure and urban infiltration. By its nature, hacking is an outlaw activity, often involving a measure of risk and some illegal acts. There is an unofficial place-hacker code of conduct and an admirable acceptance of personal responsibility for one's behavior, plus much preparation for the hairier deeds. Still, there are some seriously dangerous exploits recorded in these pages, from entering buildings that may harbor toxic wastes, unstable flooring or creatures

unhappy with your visit—skunks, snakes—to scaling the outsides of skyscrapers. But there are also a host of activities that are unlikely to hospitalize or incarcerate the participant, from exploring the urban underground to parkour, a kind of nimble, freestyle run-and-leap through an urban landscape. Despite the disclaimer, “This book...is not intended to be a how-to guide,” there is a segment on staging an illegal exploration—but Rosen emphasizes the pleasure of discovery and the joy of participating in a sport with style and a goal of mastery.

From the cockamamie (extreme ironing) to daredevilry (rooftopping) to a fine day out (catacomb rambling), a taste of unbridled adventure for everyone. (*Nonfiction. 13-16*)



### THE MAINE COON'S HAIKU and Other Poems for Cat Lovers

Rosen, Michael J.  
Illus. by White, Lee  
Candlewick (56 pp.)  
\$17.99 | Mar. 10, 2015  
978-0-7636-6492-3

A kitty companion to *The Cuckoo's Haiku* (2009) and *The Hound Dog's Haiku* (2011).

Rosen presents one perfect haiku—five-seven-five with a burst of insight—each on 20 different cat breeds. The poems are split into sections called “Inside,” followed by “Outside,” then “Inside” and finally “Outside,” a pattern any human owned by a cat will recognize. The Zen of the “Abyssinian” is emblematic of the whole collection: “curled up on your book / cat won’t care what happens next / now’s the only page.” Each poem is paired with a beautiful, digitally created full-color illustration by White that sometimes is content to illustrate the poem and other times makes its image more clear, as with “Bombay”: “paired shadows prowling / in nightfall, but just two lights / pierce that darkness.” The double-page spread shows a black cat and its shadow on a dark cityscape in grays and aqua; the two yellow eyes gleam. Though it looks like there are two cats, the shadow, of course, has no eyes. Backmatter includes a few short paragraphs of information on each breed, ranging from historical to behavioral. Norwegian forest cats love to be handled, for example, and the Scottish fold originates from a single progenitor, born in 1961.

This perfect poetical paean to pussycats makes both a fine gift for a cat lover and an excellent haiku handbook. (*Picture book/poetry. 7-12*)



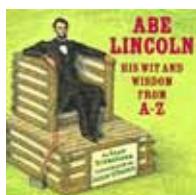
### COUNTDOWN ZERO

Rylander, Chris  
Walden Pond Press/HarperCollins  
(368 pp.)  
\$16.99 | \$9.99 e-book | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-0-06-212011-3  
978-0-06-212013-7 e-book  
Series: Codename Conspiracy, 2

Fresh off a stint as an “actual, real-life” secret agent who almost singlehandedly saved the world, Carson Fender, aka Agent Zero, is having trouble adjusting to post-mission life as an ordinary seventh-grader back in North Dakota.

Naturally, then, when HQ once again comes calling for the assistance of their top kid agent, Carson is in, no matter the stakes. The whole mission coincides perfectly with a class field trip to Mount Rushmore, making Carson the ideal candidate for the job. While his friends are taking in the sights, Carson must infiltrate a secret agency conveniently located in Teddy Roosevelt’s head, deliver the cure to a deadly virus, save Agent Nineteen, trapped inside, and get back before anyone from his class realizes he’s gone missing. Missions, however, never go quite as planned. Carson soon finds himself involved in a much larger and more dangerous plot, spearheaded by his old nemesis, the evil Mule Medlock. Though readers must wait too long for the start of the mission and the story meanders, once things get rolling, there are some great action scenes and several plot twists that force Carson to question whom he can really trust.

Both established fans of Agent Zero and those new to the series will surely find Carson a funny and endearing mini-Bond, right down to the supercool gadgets. (*Adventure. 9-12*)



### ABE LINCOLN His Wit and Wisdom from A-Z

Schroeder, Alan  
Illus. by O'Brien, John  
Holiday House (32 pp.)  
\$17.95 | \$17.95 e-book | Feb. 12, 2015  
978-0-8234-2420-7  
978-0-8234-3370-4 e-book

From *Ben Franklin: His Wit and Wisdom from A-Z* (2011), the dynamic duo of Schroeder and O’Brien here turn their talents to Abe Lincoln.

The alphabetic approach allows them to zero in on fascinating tidbits about both Lincoln himself and historical information pertinent to his past. Each letter is given from two to five entries. For A, Amendment, Autobiography, Ax and Aloud (as in reading) are cited. Many choices are obvious, but others may surprise readers. J is for Jack, a soldier doll that his sons played with. O is for *Our American Cousin*, the play Lincoln was watching when he was shot. Q is for Quincy (where he debated Douglas), Quorum and Quick (the Gettysburg Address). X is



for Xenia, Ohio, where he made one of his railroad stops; the people swarmed the train and ate his lunch. Z is probably the most unusual one, standing for Zouaves, units of volunteer soldiers known for their colorful uniforms. O'Brien's signature style lends the tableaux enormous flair, humor and zing. Comical tiny details are mischievous and clever. On the A page: A boy wearing a fringed shirt is holding an ax next to a gargantuan tube of Lincoln Logs filled with chopped-down trees.

**The book quotes Lincoln as saying, "Whatever you are, be a good one." This team goes beyond good; they excel at making history real, enjoyable and memorable. (*Informational picture book. 5-9*)**



### MY SECRET GUIDE TO PARIS

Schroeder, Lisa

Scholastic (224 pp.)

\$16.99 | \$16.99 e-book | Feb. 24, 2015

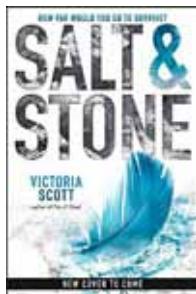
978-0-545-70808-1

978-0-545-70964-4 e-book

After the death of her beloved grandmother, a girl travels to Paris with her mother and finds solace and resolution.

Grandma Sylvia's promised 12th birthday gift to the City of Lights is set aside when she is killed in a tragic accident. Compounding her grief, Nora is angry that her mother doesn't appear sufficiently upset. While sorting affairs in Grandma's apartment, Nora discovers three tickets to Paris meant for her, Sylvia and her mother. Also included are a map and instructions for Nora to take several envelopes and a locked box on the trip to be opened in sequence, and Nora realizes it must be a kind of treasure hunt. She decides to keep the instructions, envelopes and box hidden from her mother. When they reach Paris (Nora's brother takes the third ticket), Nora is afraid her mother will not allow her to go to the places outlined in Grandma's instructions, so the girl goes without her. She quickly learns that her mother was intended to be included, so the two of them follow Grandma's pre-planned and gift-filled journey, repairing and strengthening their relationship along the way. Nora's hopeful, open-hearted character is beautifully depicted. Plotwise, though, the story is a bit of a letdown. Though the ending provides a sufficiently appealing wrap-up, after such a long, suspenseful buildup, it almost can't help but be anticlimactic.

**Sweet but ultimately unsatisfying. (Fiction. 8-12)**



### SALT & STONE

Scott, Victoria

Scholastic (320 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$17.99 e-book | Feb. 24, 2015

978-0-545-53748-3

978-0-545-53749-0 e-book

The second half of the race started in *Fire & Flood* (2014).

Tella's made it through the jungle and desert, leaving ocean and mountain still to come in the four-ecosystem Brimstone Bleed. The winner will receive the Cure for the loved one infected by the race organizers to provide incentive for the selected Contenders to cooperate. Tella's secondary agenda is love interest Guy's plan to join, infiltrate and destroy the organizers after the race. Their romance hits major obstacles early on, primarily in the form of Guy's belief that Tella needs to be saved and protected—he's OK with that, but Tella isn't. She resolves to stand up to him instead of blindly following, and she does so not just to gain his respect, but to respect herself. The next legs of the race lead to team-ups with familiar faces and newcomers of varying trustworthiness. The genetically engineered, intelligent companion animals with superpowers—the Pandoras—develop further as individual characters, causing nail-biting moments as they face dangers that in some cases outstrip those of their Contenders. Readers will fear for side characters, as they should: The organizers have mined the course with dangerous traps. Aside from a few moments of repetitive exposition in the first act, the prose is so tense that even in the characters' few moments of rest, readers will twitch with anticipatory anxiety. The ending devastates.

**Mind-blowingly intense. (Science fiction. 12 & up)**



### THE MOON DRAGONS

Sheldon, Dyan

Illus. by Blythe, Gary

Andersen Press USA (32 pp.)

\$16.95 | Mar. 1, 2015

978-1-4677-6314-1

When a selfish, self-important king hears a story from a traveler about ancient, singing dragons and is told they may not all be gone, the king announces that he must have one.

He promises a room full of gold to any who will bring him a dragon. No one can, and the king is furious. A girl named Alina, who lives alone, remembers her grandmother's stories and songs and vows to find the dragons. King and townspeople ridicule her, but she perseveres and, after an arduous quest, finds the beauteous dragons and their song. She knows, however, what the king will do if she reveals the dragons to him, so she submits to further mockery when she returns and says she could not find them. She keeps to herself a silver dragon scale to hold the memory. The full-spread, full-bleed acrylic-on-board paintings are rich in texture, and Alina's wild red hair glows like the dragons should. The dragons themselves are more winged

# “...the conclusion of Otto’s devoted search for his friend will please his fans.”

FROM **BIG STAR OTTO**

dinosaur than fae, however, and don’t really conjure creatures that sing and dance. Although the story is a bit truncated and does not flow smoothly, its sweet lesson of the value of art and life over a room full of gold is a lovely one.

**This original fairy tale succeeds as a fable, if not quite so well as a story. (Picture book. 5-8)**



## NAPTIME WITH THEO AND BEAU

*Shyba, Jessica*

Photos by Shyba, Jessica

Feiwel & Friends (32 pp.)

\$16.99 | Feb. 3, 2015

978-1-250-05906-2

Beau is a towheaded toddler who naps every day with his puppy, an attractive German shepherd-Shar-Pei mix.

Shyba documented this touching friendship on her popular parenting blog with irresistible daily photographs of the pair enjoying their joint naps in a variety of intertwined positions, and her photos received wide media attention. She uses some of these photos to create a simple, accessible narrative of the canine-toddler friendship. The double-page spreads display a wide variety of clothing for the little boy and slumbering postures for both child and dog, all seeming very natural and nonposed. The photographs and extremely short text should appeal to a wide age group beyond preschoolers getting ready for their own naps, including babies, new readers and children with special needs. Endpapers show more views of the napping duo, and a poster with more photos (not seen) is also included with the book. An author’s note explains how the family adopted Theo from a shelter and how the joint napping tradition evolved.

**Though the book is likely to be a flash in the marketing pan, it's an attractive one. (Picture book. 1-7)**



## BIG STAR OTTO

*Slavin, Bill*

Illus. by Slavin, Bill

Kids Can (96 pp.)

\$16.95 | Mar. 1, 2015

978-1-894786-96-6

Series: Elephants Never Forget, 3

Otto’s in Hollywood, but he doesn’t care about stardom; he wants his best friend, Georgie.

Otto the peanut-allergic elephant has traversed Africa and North America looking for his childhood friend Georgie the chimp with the help of Crackers the parrot. Animal talent agent Rupert Galloway has brought Otto and Crackers to California with the assurance that he will help them find their lost friend. What he actually does is try to get Otto a job making commercials. But Galloway’s agency isn’t the only animal agency in town; though he hasn’t been totally

honest with naïve Otto, Galloway is nowhere near as bad as the competition. Nefarious forces at rival agency Furry Paws are set on kidnapping Otto and any other elephant they can find. Enter the Elephant Liberation Front; when E.L.F. springs Otto from a commercial shoot, it mostly serves to confuse him and delay his hunt for Georgie, who is in town. Will his simian search end in satisfaction? The visual high jinks and slapstick in Otto’s third adventure (*Big Top Otto*, 2013, etc.) are still enjoyable, but this tale’s a bit convoluted. Jokes about Hannibal Lecter, Graceland and jumping on Oprah’s couch, among others, will zoom over nearly all young readers. However, the conclusion of Otto’s devoted search for his friend will please his fans.

**For devotees of Asterix and perhaps Tintin, but not for everyone. (Graphic fantasy. 8-12)**



## GEEK GIRL

*Smale, Holly*

HarperTeen (384 pp.)

\$17.99 | Feb. 3, 2015

978-0-06-233357-5

A transformation comedy from a debut author who seems to be aiming to become the next Louise Rennison.

Harriet Manners has all the markings of a geek. Loves learning and discovering facts? Check. Can’t contain her enthusiasm for what she finds interesting? Check. Mocked by her schoolmates? Check. At least she has best friend Nat to help her face Alexa, the ringleader of the bullies, and escape Toby, Harriet’s annoying stalker. In a sequence that sacrifices logic for humor, Harriet and Nat attend a fashion expo, where Nat hopes to be scouted as a model—but it is Harriet that is spotted. Tired of being branded a geek and feeling like she’s lost her friendship with Nat, Harriet lets herself be drawn into the world of high-fashion modeling. Gorgeous male model Nick is the only bright side, because becoming a model can’t change who Harriet is underneath. In a clichéd conclusion, Harriet will learn that the only viable choice is to be true to yourself and to be honest with the people who love you just for who you are. The wacky humor and subtle girl-empowerment message of the Brit-chick-lit genre are on full display here, yet it just feels overdone and unoriginal.

**Choppy writing and stereotyped characters combine for a fluffy mess. (Chick lit. 12-16)**

**"This presentation simultaneously highlights the individuality of the subjects and proves to those who may be isolated by geography or culture that they are not alone."**

FROM SPEAKING OUT



### SPEAKING OUT Queer Youth in Focus

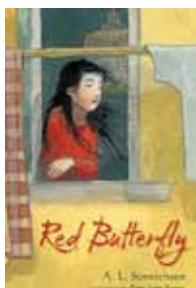
*Smith, Rachelle Lee*  
Photos by Smith, Rachelle Lee  
PM Press (128 pp.)  
\$14.95 paper | Feb. 1, 2015  
978-1-62963-041-0



Art, activism, individuality: the spectrum of queer youth, speaking in their own words.

Smith presents her artwork as a photographic essay exploring the amazing diversity among young people (all 14 to 24 at the time of their photographs) identifying themselves as queer, gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual or questioning. Originally displayed in 2007 at the opening of the then-new campaign headquarters of the Human Rights Campaign as "Pride/Prejudice: Voices of GLBT Youth," all the photographs for this collection were taken against a white background. The subjects were asked to write something, anything, about themselves, their opinions, viewpoints or experiences in the white space of the photo. Some feature only the photo and words originally written. Others feature a few sentences to a paragraph contributed seven years later. A few aren't totally legible, but ranging from a simple declaration to a manifesto, the words of the subjects are illuminating. The collection features a foreword by Candace Gingrich, who saw and was moved by the original art show, and an afterword by Graeme Taylor, who at 14 spoke to his school board about supporting LGBTQ students and won awards when that speech went viral. This presentation simultaneously highlights the individuality of the subjects and proves to those who may be isolated by geography or culture that they are not alone.

An important work for queer youth and those who support them as the future they represent. (*Nonfiction. 13 & up*)



### RED BUTTERFLY

*Sonnichsen, A.L.*  
Simon & Schuster (400 pp.)  
\$16.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Feb. 3, 2015  
978-1-4814-1109-7  
978-1-4814-1111-0 e-book

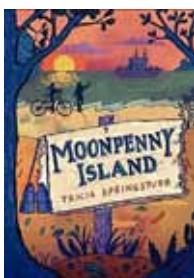


Set against the backdrop of China's one-child policy, this emotional debut novel-in-verse reveals how one girl refuses to be left behind.

Eleven-year-old Kara lives a sheltered life in Tianjin with Mama, an elderly, American, non-Chinese woman. Mama rarely goes out and refuses to send Kara to school like other Chinese kids. With money tight and a "daddy" who lives in Montana, Kara begins to question why they can't go live with him. When Kara's neighbor Zhang Laoshi tells her about being abandoned as a baby, Kara suspects that her hand, "with two short nubs / instead of fingers," is at the root of her woes. "This is why my birth

mother / didn't keep me, / why she decided to try again / for someone better." Piece by piece, she discovers a shocking secret about why they must hide. Soon, an accident during a visit from Jody, Mama's older daughter, sets into motion a roller-coaster adoption process. Kara must make unthinkable choices and painstakingly claim with whom she belongs. Sonnichsen draws upon firsthand experiences in volunteering to improve China's orphanages and adopting her own Chinese daughter. With spare, fluid language, she creates the endearing, authentic, nuanced emotions of a girl stuck between two worlds and brings to light a foundling's hope and determination.

An adoption story that's rich in family complexities and that readers won't abandon. (author's note) (*Verse/fiction. 8-12*)



### MOONPENNY ISLAND

*Springstubb, Tricia*  
*Illus. by Ford, Gilbert*  
Balzer + Bray/HarperCollins (304 pp.)  
\$16.99 | \$9.99 e-book | Feb. 10, 2015  
978-0-06-211293-4  
978-0-06-211295-8 e-book



When one of an inseparable pair of friends is sent away, the other's life turns upside down.

Lake Erie's Moonpenny Island is a tourist destination in summer and a small enclave of familiar weirdness the rest of the year. Flor loves it, riding her bike like a trusty steed, imagining the infinite possibilities of her world. Flor can hardly believe it when Sylvie, whose family is practically royalty on Moonpenny Island, announces that she's being sent away to attend private school on the mainland. Further rocking Flor's unsteady world, her parents are fighting more than ever, using ugly words that twist daggers of fear into Flor, her little brother, Thomas, and older sister, Cecilia. When the unthinkable happens and Flor's Latina mother leaves the island too, Flor begins feeling less audacious and more uncertain. However, when she meets quirky new girl Jasper and her unconventional father, Dr. Fife, Flor learns what it means to really see the world around her as it is and not just the way she imagines it. Springstubb delivers a beautiful tale of friendship, family, loss and renewal. Her third-person narration is razor-sharp. The author delicately parallels Flor's emotional minefield with the stark absolutes of Dr. Fife's scientific study of trilobites.

Poetic and poignant, Springstubb's tale of friendship, loss, hope and heartache is so fresh and honest it will resonate widely. (*Fiction. 8-12*)



## SPECIAL DELIVERY

*Stead, Philip C.*

*Illus. by Cordell, Matthew*

Neal Porter/Roaring Brook (40 pp.)

\$17.99 | Mar. 3, 2015

978-1-59643-931-3



Nothing will deter Sadie from her mission of transporting an elephant to her beloved Great-Aunt Josephine, who "lives almost completely alone and could really use the company."

When the postmaster brings out a wheelbarrow full of stamps and a calculator, however, the carrot-topped heroine realizes she will need to find an alternative to mailing the pachyderm. She borrows a conveniently located biplane. Insiders will recognize this plane (inverted on the book jacket as it was on the most famous misprint in philatelic history); those who don't know the reference will just laugh at an upside-down airplane with a goggle-wearing elephant. After it crashes in a river, Sadie boards, in succession, an alligator, freight train (commandeered by bean-eating masked monkeys) and an ice cream truck. When readers finally meet the aunt, it becomes clear that she has been the recipient of many similar presents. Stead's fans will recognize the unique blend of quirky logic and compassion that drives his persistent wayfarers. Cordell's carefree lines and dappled watercolors draw viewers in with bold action and tiny touches of humor. Portions of text are treated graphically, and it is likely that "chugga chugga chugga BEANS BEANS BEANS" will linger in children's lexicons. Stamps do get their moment—in the conclusion and on the seek-and-find case beneath the dust jacket.

Animal lovers and stamp collectors, especially but not exclusively, will be enthralled. (*Picture book. 4-7*)



## LITTLE RED'S RIDING 'HOOD

*Stein, Peter*

*Illus. by Gall, Chris*

Orchard/Scholastic (40 pp.)

\$16.99 | Feb. 24, 2015

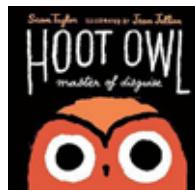
978-0-545-60969-2

A revved-up and souped-up version of the classic tale for vehicle lovers.

Little Red, a bright red scooter, loves his neighborhood, a modern-looking, *Jetsons-meets-Cars*-ish place filled with factories and stores catering to cars and trucks: Wanda's Windshields, Deals on Wheels, Turbo Tom's Tune-Up. But he doesn't love Tank, a mean assault vehicle. But that is just whom he encounters when his mother sends him with some tune-up goodies for his run-down granny, a purple golf cart. Tank scoffs at the quality of Little Red's offerings, sending him to Zip's Auto Bonanza for better parts. Although Little Red's caution lights go off, he does want the best for his granny. Tank, meanwhile, prepares for a "sweet scooter dessert." But Little Red wasn't born yesterday, and he senses something's "out of alignment" at Granny's. In the end, his maneuverability and knowledge of his 'hood turn out to be his best assets. Gall's digital artwork is filled with bold colors

and fine-lined textures. He cleverly uses the vehicles' parts to make their faces, right down to Granny's pearl earrings—her side mirrors. Little Red's brilliant color nicely stands out against the blues, greens and silvers of the 'hood and the browns of the forest. And Tank is menacingly evil with his canine teeth protruding from his grille.

Vehicle-crazed children will surely love their favorite tales better with a little grease and lots of burning rubber. (*Fractured fairy tale. 3-6*)



## HOOT OWL, MASTER OF DISGUISE

*Taylor, Sean*

*Illus. by Jullien, Jean*

Candlewick (48 pp.)

\$15.99 | Feb. 10, 2015

978-0-7636-7578-3



A confident owl employs ace hunting skills—sort of—to fill his tummy.

Hoot Owl's hungry, but he isn't worried, because he's an excellent predator. His first quarry's a "tasty rabbit," wide-eyed and innocent. Hoot Owl has a special technique, which becomes a refrain: "Everyone knows owls are wise. But as well as being wise, I am a master of disguise." He dresses up as a carrot and sets himself down. The bunny smiles in the carrot's direction and hops away. Undeterred, Hoot Owl restarts the pattern, targeting a bespectacled lamb and a pigeon, to no avail. Hoot Owl *talks* a fierce and uproarious game—"I swoop through the bleak blackness like a wolf in the air"; "The lamb looks cuddly, but soon I will be eating it"—but he never actually attacks anything. He merely camouflages himself—but not really—and waits. Jullien's bold, black outlines, expressive animal eyes and positioning (Hoot Owl is frequently sideways) hilariously complement Taylor's text, which reveals the predator as both melodramatic ("The shadowy night stretches away forever, as black as burnt toast") and unflustered. Rich, matte colors and a flattish, zoomed-in perspective of the nighttime scenes keep the vibe immediate and nonthreatening. Never fear: Hoot Owl's "deadly-dangerous beak" eventually chomps on something that even squeamish readers will approve of.

A rib-tickling pleaser. (*Picture book. 3-7*)



## A WICKED THING

Thomas, Rhiannon

HarperTeen (352 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Feb. 24, 2015

978-0-06-230353-0

978-0-06-230355-4 e-book

A loose "Sleeping Beauty" retelling emphasizes political intrigue.

Aurora awakens from her 100-year sleep to a stranger's kiss and an unstable kingdom. The bumbling, adorable

Prince Rodric is kind, but his parents, the austere, remote queen and seemingly jovial yet cruel king, both want to use Aurora and Rodric for their own purposes. The plodding pace produces a plot that primarily consists of Aurora's observing problems and doing nothing. Everyone seems to believe Aurora will bring peace to the kingdom, but very little reason is given for this—a fact that may confuse thoughtful readers. At first, Aurora shows spirit by escaping from the castle at night, but these escapades are short-lived. She spends the remainder of the book feeling oppressed by expectations and bemoaning the fact that no one sees beyond her beauty. While Aurora's frustration at being objectified is valid and understandable, her self-imposed lack of agency and constant complaining present her as petulant and indecisive—a beautiful, pale (a fact that is fetishized and harped on constantly) doll. Thomas plays fast and loose with elements of the fairy tale, making changes that would be understandable if they appeared to serve a higher purpose than plot convenience. The sluggish pace and dull protagonist may dissuade readers from continuing with what, given the ending, seems to be a planned series.

**Uninspiring.** (Fantasy. 14-18)



## NO, NO, KITTEN!

Thomas, Shelley Moore

Illus. by Nichols, Lori

Boyd's Mills (40 pp.)

\$16.95 | Mar. 1, 2015

978-1-62091-631-5

Kitten! Don't you know how to act like a kitten?

"Kitten wants a basket. / Kitten wants a pillow. / Kitten wants a blanket. / Kitten wants... // ...a puppy." Kitten's owner, a dark-skinned little girl with pom-pom ponytails, tells her pet that kittens can't have puppies. But Kitten gets the puppy and wants more: milk, catnip, fish and a helmet. "A helmet? / No, no, no, Kitten. / You cannot have a helmet. / You are a cat! / Cats do not wear helmets." Kitten wants engines, gadgets and lasers.... Kitten wants to "blast off to Jupiter." Again the little girl says no. She demonstrates what kittens are allowed to have and what they aren't, but Kitten does not listen. With Puppy, a helmet and a cardboard rocket, Kitten takes a trip to Jupiter. But what does Puppy want? Thomas's repetitious almost-rhymes make for a rollicking read-aloud. Toddlers used to hearing that worst of all words, "NO," will identify with the little girl in the images

as she imaginatively plays with her rambunctious kitten and floppy-eared puppy, telling them, "no." Nichols' digitally colored illustrations are the real stars of this simple tale of imagination. Kitten's cleanly paced mayhem is exhilarating.

**This kitten ably proves that misbehaving can get you pretty far.** (Picture book. 3-6)



## THE STORYSPINNER

Wallace, Becky

McElderry (432 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Mar. 3, 2015

978-1-4814-0565-2

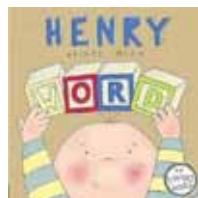
978-1-4814-0567-6 e-book

Series: Keepers' Chronicles, I

A circus girl attempts a balancing act when she gets involved in feudal politics and ancient magic.

Johanna Von Arlo grew up with Performers, trained to fight and wanted to be a Storyspinner like her father. After his mysterious death, Johanna tries to eke out an existence for her three brothers and now-alcoholic mother. But when Johanna encounters young Lord Rafael Santiago DeSilva, she ends up Performing at his court, attracting the attention of other, less honorable nobles and an assassin hunting the lost Princess Adriana. Yet others are also pursuing the lost princess. Mage Leão and Keepers (long-lived warriors, each magically tied to an element) Jacaré, who is over 300 but looks and acts 18, his angry sister, Pira, and ancient rebel Texugo must escape Olinda, cross a magical (but fading) barrier into Santarem and find the princess in order to restore the boundary between the lands. Each chapter is told from the perspective of one of seven characters, sacrificing strong character development, and the minimal plot is dragged out, sadly necessitating sequels. Debut author Wallace bucks the trend of retold fairy tales, serves a (superficial) smattering of Spanish elements, offers but doesn't overwhelm with political intrigue and nicely balances romances with adventure.

**An overlong and overcrowded but action-packed beginning.** (Fantasy. 12-18)



## HENRY FINDS HIS WORD

Ward, Lindsay

Illus. by Ward, Lindsay

Dial (32 pp.)

\$16.99 | Feb. 24, 2015

978-0-8037-3990-1

Seeing that baby talk isn't working as well as he'd like, Henry decides to find his first word.

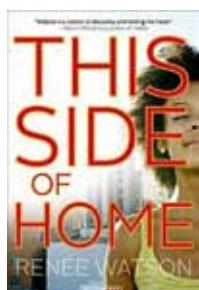
Inaugural-word picture books remain perennial favorites, and this one distinguishes itself by committing wholeheartedly to little Henry's perspective. Clear pencil outlines, matte pastel colors, and flat forms and backgrounds cohere to offer the softly benign, limited viewpoint of a baby. Henry's wide face and teeny

# "Readers may be surprised to find this multicultural story set in Portland, Oregon, but that just adds to its distinctive appeal."

FROM THIS SIDE OF HOME

eyes anchor the artwork, imparting emotion with economy, and children might enjoy articulating the feelings behind his mild expressions. Sympathetic narration further explores Henry's (often funny) frustrations, pleasures and thought processes. "It would help if he knew what to look for. But Henry wasn't sure what words looked like." The words "big," "fuzzy," "prickly," "long" and "short" follow, each appearing as the shapes and textures they denote. The puffy, woolly outlines of "fuzzy" look soft to the touch, and "long" stretches out along the top of a dachshund's back. Henry pets a fuzzy bear, feels prickly grass, gazes up at the towering letters of "BIG." Here's exactly how a baby decodes and interprets the world around him, which can be a scary place when mama isn't in sight! Suddenly seemingly alone, Henry's first word bursts forth: "MAMA." And from there, as all mothers know, it never stops.

**Let this be the first first-word book to pull from the shelf. (Picture book. 1-4)**



## THIS SIDE OF HOME

*Watson, Renée*

Bloomsbury (336 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$12.99 e-book | Feb. 3, 2015

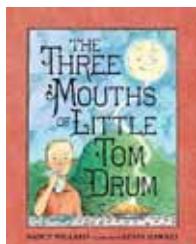
978-1-5999-0668-3

978-1-61963-213-4 e-book

The summer before Maya and Nikki's senior year of high school brings new challenges as their previously all-black neighborhood becomes attractive to other ethnic groups.

The twins, while still close, have been changing in recent years and now find they have very different views about the changes. Nikki is delighted with improvements in their surroundings, but Maya is concerned they come at too steep a price. When their best friend's family is displaced, the rift deepens: Maya wants to maintain their connection to Essence, while Nikki has become close to newcomer Kate. Nikki may even be abandoning their long-held plan to attend Spelman College together. Their new principal appears willing to sacrifice many of the traditions the African-American students hold dear. And though Maya and Devin are a long-established couple, Maya finds herself drawn to Kate's brother, Tony, despite her misgivings about interracial dating. Eventually, the students find a way to reach across the divides and honor the community's past while embracing its changing present. Maya's straightforward narration offers an intriguing look at how families and young people cope with community and personal change. Maya and her friends are well-drawn, successful characters surrounded by a realistic adult supporting cast. Readers may be surprised to find this multicultural story set in Portland, Oregon, but that just adds to its distinctive appeal.

**Here's hoping Watson's teen debut will be followed by many more. (Fiction. 12-16)**



## THE THREE MOUTHS OF LITTLE TOM DRUM

*Willard, Nancy*

*Illus. by Hawkes, Kevin*

Candlewick (48 pp.)

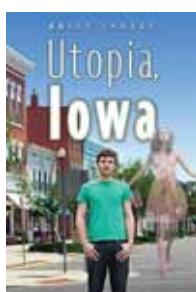
\$16.99 | Feb. 10, 2015

978-0-7636-5476-4

Little Tom Drum's love of strawberry pie leads to a lot more than he bargained for.

Willard spins a modern fairy tale about a boy, his gluttony for strawberry pie and one careless wish. When 8-year-old Little Tom Drum wishes for three mouths so he can eat more pie, he wakes up to find two extra mouths, one in his left cheek and one in his right, which makes him look like a monster to his parents. They feel they cannot send their boy to school and hire a tutor to work with their son. In between reading books on "mathematics and giraffes and gardening," Little Tom Drum learns about the world and creates amazing inventions with items found around his house in a workshop built by his father. On his ninth birthday, a box with a wishing machine arrives on his doorstep, and Little Tom Drum carefully puts it together and, much more carefully this time, makes his wish. While waiting for his wish to come true, he discovers his real gift: solving others' problems with his inventive mind. Hawkes' detailed pen-and-ink-and-pastel illustrations extend Willard's deadpan humor with just enough creepiness. (Three mouths turn out to be remarkably unnerving.) The old-time clothing adds to the fairy-tale feel. Fans of Hawkes' illustrations for Paul Fleischman's *Weslandia* (1999) will find welcome connections here.

**Inventors and pie lovers will find this one delicious. (Picture book. 4-9)**



## UTOPIA, IOWA

*Yansky, Brian*

Candlewick (336 pp.)

\$17.99 | Feb. 10, 2015

978-0-7636-6533-3

A small town's population is paranormally gifted in this new mystery.

High school senior Jack Bell balances his classes and home life while dreaming of becoming a Hollywood screenwriter. He lives in Utopia, Iowa, a small town that has one curious trait: All the residents have paranormal gifts, which may have something to do with local Nirvana College's peculiar curriculum. Jack can see the dead, and several are trying to get him to solve their murders. It's a nifty premise, but Yansky never breathes life into it. Jack goes through the gumshoe motions, but he ends up drowning in his wordy narration, which vacillates between colloquial and weirdly formal. He has a tendency toward overlong sentences and uses unnecessary flourishes that make him sound fussy rather than quirky: "Our mother accommodated my carnivorous preference by making me pot roasts and hamburgers and chicken to go with whatever

# "The tale is alternately comical, suspenseful and sometimes sweetly emotional...."

FROM A DRAGON'S GUIDE TO THE CARE AND FEEDING OF HUMANS

arrangement of vegetables [my vegetarian family was] eating." Verbal tics, especially repeated references to movie data, further bog the story down. The central mystery never adds up to anything of real consequence, leaving the exploration of Jack's home life the lone highlight: His parents are going through a rough patch in their marriage, and the author nails the tone of a couple experiencing a frosty period. Unfortunately, this drama is only in the background, and in the end, it just peters out.

**Alas, not as much fun as it should be.** (*Paranormal mystery. 12-16*)



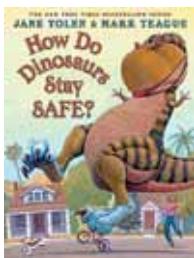
## A DRAGON'S GUIDE TO THE CARE AND FEEDING OF HUMANS

Yep, Laurence; Ryder, Joanne  
Illus. by GrandPré, Mary  
Crown (160 pp.)  
\$15.99 | \$10.99 e-book | \$18.99 PLB  
Mar. 10, 2015  
978-0-385-39228-0  
978-0-385-39230-3 e-book  
978-0-385-39229-7 PLB

This comedy starring a 3,000-year-old dragon and a scrappy little girl takes young readers into a fantasy world situated right next to ours.

Miss Drake enjoys humans but sees them as pets. Sadly, her most recent pet, a lady she called "Fluffy" but whom her family knew as "Great-Aunt Amelia," recently passed away. Now, Amelia's niece, 10-year-old Winnie, has come to live in Miss Drake's mansion in San Francisco. Right from the start, Winnie just won't follow Miss Drake's rules for pets. When the girl draws some fanciful creatures in a magical sketchbook, the creatures become real and escape, causing Miss Drake to frantically work to contain the damage. When one of Winnie's sketches turns out to be a truly dangerous creature, even the best of the magical participants at the Enchanter's Fair can't defeat it. Creating a magical world that lies alongside but is concealed from ours, Yep and Ryder write the story from Miss Drake's prissy perspective, using the framework of a pet-care book. The tale is alternately comical, suspenseful and sometimes sweetly emotional, as when it touches on the deaths of Great-Aunt Amelia and Winnie's father and as Miss Drake becomes increasingly fond of Winnie. The playful pen-and-ink illustrations by GrandPré at the beginning of each chapter add yet more charm.

**Delightful whimsy.** (*Fantasy. 8-12*)



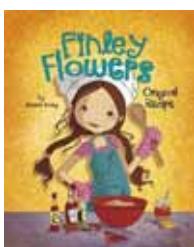
## HOW DO DINOSAURS STAY SAFE?

Yolen, Jane  
Illus. by Teague, Mark  
Blue Sky/Scholastic (40 pp.)  
\$17.99 | Feb. 24, 2015  
978-0-439-24104-5

Officer Buckle had Gloria, his police canine, to help his audience see the value of his safety lessons; Yolen and Teague have their dinos.

Addressing such perennial topics as jumping on the bed, climbing too high and stair safety, Yolen and Teague first present the dinos doing the wrong things, their faces plainly showing that they are surprised and scared by the world of hurt about to come their ways while caring (and dwarfed) loved ones freak out in the backgrounds. "Does he climb up too high? // Or jump on his bed? // Does he race on his bike with no helmet on head?" (Scansion is a bit of an issue.) Of course not! And though the text says that it will tell readers why, it doesn't, instead just explaining what the dinos do to stay safe. Among other things, *Cearadactylus* holds Mama's hand and crosses with the light, *Majungasaurus* swims where his papa can see him, *Agustinia* wears his bike helmet, and *Concavenator* brings water to drink on long hikes. As in previous outings, Teague's artwork steals the show, the realism of the scenes and human figures juxtaposed with the giant, though childish, dinos. Labels in the illustrations and endpapers will help dino mavens identify their favorites.

**Don'ts and Do's in a familiar formula go down easily for fans and will provide a good conversation starter for parents.** (*Picture book. 3-6*)



## ORIGINAL RECIPE

Young, Jessica  
Illus. by Scheret, Jessica  
Picture Window Books (112 pp.)  
\$8.95 | Feb. 1, 2015  
978-1-4795-5878-0  
Series: Finley Flowers, 1

The first in a series about craft-loving Finley Flowers and her best friend, Henry.

Henry is about to turn 9, and she wants to find the perfect present for him. When she finds out that the school's fundraiser is a cook-off and the prize is a whole year's worth of pizza, she just knows that she and Henry will come up with the best recipe and win the best birthday present ever. The problem is that though Finley doesn't know how to cook, she does not want to read recipes, listen to Henry's ideas or get ideas from cooking shows. Everything she makes, from pepperoni parfaits to smoked-salmon smoothies, is inedible. Henry becomes frustrated as Finley ignores his suggestions, and for the first time ever, these friends get into a fight. Young creates memorable characters in Henry and Finley, but Finley's rivalry with classmate Olivia is

given too little back story to satisfy. Moreover, Finley's plays on her own name ("Fin-spiration," "Fin-credible," "in-Fin-ite," etc.) become wearing. Nevertheless, young cooks who are comfortable with chapter books will identify with Finley's energy and may even want to try her recipe for "PB&J Pasta."

**Despite bumps, a promising-enough start.** (*Fiction. 7-9*)

## POP-UP AND NOVELTY BOOKS



### FLYING MACHINES

*Arnold, Nick  
Illus. by Kearney, Brendan  
Candlewick (32 pp.)  
\$19.99 | Aug. 1, 2014  
978-0-7636-7107-5*

A brief but lucid introduction to aerodynamics, kitted up with materials for five ultralightweight flying models.

Supported by clearly labeled diagrams and cartoon portraits of typical and historical aircraft, the explanations of thrust, lift, roll, yaw, pitch and other considerations that must be taken into account when designing even the simplest fliers and gliders will give young astronauts a good grounding in the basics. Step-by-step directions for assembling the provided models—two hand-launched gliders and three craft driven by rubber-band-powered propellers—are incorporated. Arnold goes on to a discussion of indoor vs. outdoor flights that includes a safety checklist and also suggests some experimental modifications to try out. The booklet closes with a blank "logbook" for recording the results of said experiments, followed by a pair of patterned sheets to cut out and fold into paper planes. This is all bound up with a deceptively large box in which punch-out forms on insubstantial sheets of neoprene and balsa, plus two plastic propellers and some wire, rattle around. Not only is five a paltry number next to, say, the 35 fliers for which Bobby Mercer supplies instructions (if not materials) in his *Flying Machine Book* (2012), but the paucity of propellers means that the models cannot all be assembled at the same time. Moreover, the balsa is unpainted, and the other pieces are colored on only one side for that extra-cheap look.

**Adequate from an informational standpoint: for hands-on engineering, a disappointing demonstration that less is less.** (*Informational novelty/kit. 8-10*)



### THE ULTIMATE BOOK OF VEHICLES *From Around the World*

*Baumann, Anne-Sophie  
Illus. by Balicevic, Didier  
Twirl/Chronicle (24 pp.)  
\$19.99 | Mar. 1, 2014  
978-2-8480-1942-0*

Fans of trucks, trains, aircraft, and other conveyances large and small will find dozens gathered here, lined up neatly in squads according to function from "Demolition" to "Space Travel."

Though most of the vehicles are easily identifiable by sight, small labels will clue in readers unfamiliar with specialized monikers like "wheel excavator" or vehicles not found in the United States, such as the colorfully decorated Pakistani bus and a motorized "pooper scooper scooter" from France. Cartoon passengers or other human figures convey a sense of size, and with occasional concessions, the floating, wheeled or winged machines are depicted at least close to relative scale on each spread. But the pleasures of poring over all the transports, earth movers and Earth leavers will pall quickly even for confirmed enthusiasts: So flat and generic are the images that many with similar purposes look like variations on the same shape. Moreover, an (rather skimpy) assortment of jointed arms, sliders, spinners and flaps that lift to provide cutaway views create at best only localized feelings of movement or visual drama. Also, the titular "ultimate" begs the lack of military or (aside from a space shuttle on the final spread) historical vehicles on view.

**A sizable gallery but, overall, a monotonous one.** (*Pop-up informational picture book. 5-7*)



### B IS FOR BOX *The Happy Little Yellow Box*

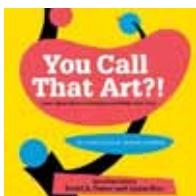
*Carter, David A.  
Illus. by Carter, David A.  
Little Simon/Simon & Schuster (14 pp.)  
\$12.99 | Jul. 8, 2014  
978-1-4814-0295-8*

First seen in *The Happy Little Yellow Box* (2011), the title character returns to demonstrate alliteration in this alphabetical outing.

The smiling box is the only bit of color (aside from red directional arrows) in an A-to-Z progression that is otherwise all simple white lines in solid black fields. This makes it easy to spot, whether it's hiding in a pull-up clump of "gracefully growing grass," acting as the "exciting surprise" beneath an "egg"-shaped flap or taking a "joyful jump" at the end of a pull tab. A few exceptions aside, though—notably a dramatic final "Zoom" from behind a cloud—this is a lackadaisical effort that offers just five pop-ups; fully 15 letters come with no movable effect at all, not even a flap. Moreover, with the surreal exception of "P is for puffy planet," most of the exemplars are commonplace ("A is for apple and five ants"). "Q" is for a "quiet mouse"; "X" is for

an “exercising X” (pull the tab, and it touches its toes—but it’s all too easy to lose that tab under the page with use).

**F is for flop.** (*Pop-up alphabet book. 2-4*)



### **YOU CALL THAT ART?!** **Learn About Modern Sculpture and Make Your Own**

*Carter, David A.; Diaz, James Abrams* (48 pp.)

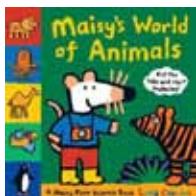
\$24.95 | Oct. 7, 2014

978-1-4197-1307-1

A brief history of modern sculpture, packaged with sturdy cardboard sheets of die-cut pieces that can be assembled into abstract...assemblages.

Alas, with this well-meaning work, Carter and Diaz prove that they should stick to the paper engineering for which they are both justly renowned. They start with a patchwork survey of Old World and African sculpture from prehistory to the turn of the 20th century and then introduce 10 “modern” sculptors (all of whom have been dead 25 years or more) in biographical sketches. The text throughout is weighted down with name-check references to other dead artists and art movements of the past along with mentions of important works that are not among the ones illustrated. The punch-out pieces in the accompanying box can be assembled into six sophisticated original abstracts without scissors or glue, but they have no evident stylistic connections to the work of the 10 profiled artists. Though the models come with explicit instructions for preferred assembly, the authors do include a few unlabeled pieces that can be slotted in where desired. But a dismissive cover claim that the models are similar to the preliminary “maquettes” that practicing sculptors sometimes make isn’t likely to provide young experimenters with much in the way of motivation.

**A poorly conceived art box that’s more likely to stifle any creative impulse than nurture it. (bibliography)** (*Informational novelty. 10-13*)



### **MAISY'S WORLD OF ANIMALS** **A Maisy First Science Book**

*Cousins, Lucy*

*Illus. by Cousins, Lucy*

Candlewick (16 pp.)

\$14.99 | Apr. 1, 2014

978-0-7636-6989-8

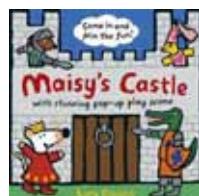
Series: Maisy First Science Book

Maisy meets smiling animals in habitats from jungle to ocean in her newest First Science Book.

The tour starts in the Arctic, where, with a pull of a large tab, a polar bear yanks a herring out of the water (to the relief, no doubt, of the several onlooking seals), and ends in the Antarctic, where penguins dive for food and lift wings to reveal a chick and an egg. In between, Maisy watches or greets wildlife

found in six other world climes. Except for an ostrich on the savanna and an octopus and other denizens of the ocean, the animals on each spread save the last are identified in visual sidebar keys. Throughout, the accompanying narrative offers morsels of background information like “Maisy is very hot in the savanna,” or “Look at all the sand in the desert.” Aside from a double gatefold in the middle that opens to reveal a blue whale, the typically inviting but fragile interactive effects are driven by a pull tab on each recto. They cause meerkats to pop up, a lion to slide out of the tall grass, Maisy and a monkey to swing past one another in the jungle, and other gratifying events.

**For armchair travelers newly or not yet out of diapers,** Maisy again serves as a safe and comfortably familiar companion with whom to explore the wider world. (*Pop-up informational picture book. 18 mos.-3*)



### **MAISY'S CASTLE**

*Cousins, Lucy*

*Illus. by Cousins, Lucy*

Candlewick (10 pp.)

\$16.99 | Sep. 1, 2014

978-0-7636-7438-0

A relatively sturdy pullout castle with a die-cut drawbridge and a dragon in the cellar serves as play-scape for punch-out figures of medieval Maisy and her friends.

The dramatic main event follows a perfunctory scenario in which Maisy welcomes “Sir Charley” the crocodile and others to a bit of archery practice, then dons armor to win a friendly joust “by one point.” Even toddlers-at-arms (with minimal assistance from a yeaparent) can follow the easy instructions to set up the castle and brace it. The card-stock punch-outs include four characters in period dress, two rideable destriers and, oddly, a cannon. These can be stored in an accompanying pocket when not in use—or even dispensed with entirely, as the castle is not only festooned with busy guards and other residents, but there is lots of (literal) monkey business going on. Along with sending Maisy further from her customary domestic settings than usual, this outing features a possibly discomfiting quantity of weaponry—none seen actually in use, but still adding an unusually martial note to a series that generally promotes more peaceful pursuits.

**Just a bit of well-armed fun, more suitable formatwise for a gift than classroom or library shelves. (Novelty. 5-7)**

“...not only are several layers visible at once, but the overlaps create ominous shadows and depths behind the figures.”

FROM LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD



### IS THAT YOU, ALIEN? Check Inside the Secret Pockets If You Dare

Cox, Steve

Illus. by Cox, Steve

Barron's (22 pp.)

\$12.99 | May 1, 2014

978-0-7641-6712-6

Intrepid readers who don't mind slipping their hands into places without looking will get what they deserve from this backyard hunt for aliens.

Young Zak is sure that a spaceship has landed in his garden, so out into the night he goes to feel around, followed by a gaggle of skeptical friends wearing rubber alien masks. Mechanically reproducing a trick used to good effect in *Is That You, Wolf?* (2012) and with less success in sequels ever since, every other spread features a glued-on paper pocket with the legend: “Slide your hand in if you dare... / Alien may be lurking so BEWARE!” Inside each pocket is a patch of sticky tape, knobby plastic or some other textured material that unconvincingly suggests eyeballs, wrinkly skin, dribble or another supposedly scream-worthy substance. Despite broad prompts from both the narrative and the cartoon illustrations, few will be fooled—or, for that matter, startled when a slobbery green pop-up alien leaps out as the last spread is opened.

A labored effort to squeeze a little more juice from a once-fresh gimmick. (*Novelty*. 5-7)

### LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

The Brothers Grimm

Illus. by Sourdais, Clementine

Little Gestalten (28 pp.)

\$16.95 | Sep. 1, 2014

978-3-89955-723-7

An accordion-folded edition of the classic cautionary story, with deceptively simple cut-out illustrations on card stock that can be viewed in color or, reversed, as silhouettes.

The text—strictly an afterthought, printed in tiny type and so ill-fitting that the final passages spill out onto the rear cover—is Margaret Hunt’s 19th-century translation with Little Red-Cap’s name altered despite the fact that a cap is what she’s wearing in the pictures. Children will know how the story goes anyway, and they will have no trouble following along as the doll-like, apple-cheeked child meets a properly frightening black wolf with bright red teeth and is later devoured along with her grandmother. Because the pages of die-cut art are dead black on one side and white with red and black highlights on the other, not only are several layers visible at once, but the overlaps create ominous shadows and depths behind the figures. Moreover, though Sourdais leaves out explicit views of the wolf being cut open and, later, flensed by the “huntsman,” she does add a provocative note to the climactic bedside scene by stripping Little Red to her red-and-black polka-dot underclothes.

Bland at first glance, appropriately eerie and disquieting on closer examination. (*Novelty picture book/folk tale*. 7-9)



### THE FAIRY TALE HANDBOOK

Hamilton, Libby

Illus. by Tomic, Tomislav

Templar/Candlewick (20 pp.)

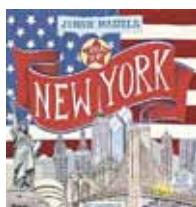
\$22.99 | Sep. 1, 2014

978-0-7636-7130-3

Elegant figures in medieval dress give the illustrations for this revue of stock European folk-tale settings and characters (plus some modern hangers-on) a classic air.

The lavish detailing begins on the cover with a view of a pumpkin carriage nearly hidden by gnomes and pigs, a wolf in granny clothing, a golden goose and other recognizable figures. Following a title page crammed with images—including slippers both glass and ruby—thematic spreads inside map out typical fairy-tale locales. These include the populous “Great Forest,” “Right Royal Homes & Gardens,” and a busy cobbled street with a pied piper marching rats past a booted kitty (“Who is this well-dressed traveler?”) and “Geppetto’s Toy Shop” as Peter Pan soars overhead. Other spreads present galleries of cast-member types, notably a bevy of lissome princesses with heavy-lidded, come-hither looks. Along with numerous die-cut flaps and gatefolds, four inset booklets offer nonviolent versions of “Hansel and Gretel” (the witch is pushed into Hansel’s cage rather than the oven and later carted off to jail) and three other chestnuts. The bland proceedings close with a pop-up wedding scene, because “[n]o fairy-tale book would be complete without a wedding.”

Even begging the conflation of traditional folklore with *The Wizard of Oz* and other folkloric fantasy, readers familiar with the originals will barely recognize these coy renditions. (*Pop-up nonfiction*. 6-9)



### POP-UP NEW YORK

Maizels, Jennie

Illus. by Maizels, Jennie

Candlewick (12 pp.)

\$19.99 | Aug. 1, 2014

978-0-7636-7162-4

A breezy 3-D ramble through the core of the Big Apple, from Battery Park to the Bronx Zoo.

Moving generally south to north, the five spreads offer clusters of skyscrapers capped by a telescoping Empire State Building that rears up to over 18 inches with a pull. Other prominent structures range from the Brooklyn and George Washington bridges to Yankee Stadium (the new one). Some newer landmarks, such as the High Line and the 9/11 Memorial, pop up among the traditional tourist stops. Along with sidelights, looks inside and descriptive captions on the backs of the cut-out buildings, explanatory labels and flaps add historical notes, identify at least a few neighborhoods and give shoutouts to New York’s food, children’s books, native music, and prominent residents of the past and present. Like the author’s *Pop-Up London* (2012), the geography is too creative and compressed to

**"There's also a well-stocked torture chamber/dungeon and...thriving populations of bats, rats and spiders...not to mention the occasional detached head."**

FROM *LIFT, LOOK, AND LEARN CASTLE*

serve as a reliable on-the-ground tour guide, and aside from the Bronx, the "outer boroughs" are largely left to shuffle off to Buffalo. Still, this evocation of the city's bustle as well as its general layout will put both residents and temporary guests in a New York state of mind.

A pleasing tribute to New York's bright lights, unique sights and architectural flights. (*Pop-up informational picture book. 6-10*)



### RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER POP-UP BOOK

Marsoli, Lisa  
Illus. by Finch, Keith  
Silver Dolphin (12 pp.)  
\$19.95 | Nov. 1, 2014  
978-1-62686-197-8

Produced to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the 1964 made-for-TV film, this keepsake pairs a summarized plot to pop-up tableaux fashioned from select stills.

Beginning with the "reindeer games" in which Rudolph—or, more specifically, his cherrylike schnozz—is unmasked, the six spreads layer cut-out figures of the characters in wintry scenes linked by prosaic but easily digestible narrative overviews: "The friends landed on the Island of Misfit Toys. It was filled with toys that no one wanted because they were different, too." Opening each spread causes the Abominable Snow Monster or some other figure to rear up past the cover edges. That effect is seen at its grandest in the climactic final scene, in which, following Santa's "Rudolph with your nose so bright, won't you guide my sleigh tonight?" ("It will be an honor, sir"), sleigh and reindeer arc overhead while elves and Mrs. Santa applaud below. For a more developed and physically durable version of the film's plotline, a picture-book edition written by Thea Feldman with similar-looking art by Erwin Madrid is available (2014) as is a new reissue of the original story by Robert L. May with more accomplished illustrations by Antonio Javier Caparo (2014).

A quick recap for younger fans of the perennial stop-motion holiday classic. (*Pop-up picture book. 3-5*)



### LIFT, LOOK, AND LEARN CASTLE *Uncover the Secrets of a Medieval Fortress*

Pipe, Jim  
Illus. by Taylord, Maria  
Carlton (24 pp.)  
\$19.95 | Oct. 7, 2014  
978-1-78312-081-9

Flurries of small-to-tiny flaps give good cause to linger at each stop on this buttery-to-battlements castle tour.

It's not all typical 13th-century feasting and fighting on display either, as opening teasers warn of 16 anachronistic items

(among them a pair of boxer shorts), a lost treasure and a spy—or maybe ghost—to spot along the way. Castle de Chevalier comes equipped with a lord and lady, mail-clad men at arms and servants of diverse sorts. There's also a well-stocked torture chamber/dungeon and, as revealed in cutaway views and beneath the diminutive die-cut flaps, thriving populations of bats, rats and spiders...not to mention the occasional detached head. The visit ends with a tournament, where tents, spectators and jousting knights can be viewed in situ or rearranged to suit with separate punch-out versions. Except for an arrant disconnect on the chapel spread, Pipe's flippant commentary supplies tolerable if rudimentary bits of plot and explication. Though not so maniacally awash in microbusiness as the illustrations in Stephen Biesty's *Cross-Sections: Castle* (written by Richard Platt, 1994), Taylord's bustling cartoon scenes may well require a magnifying glass to make out all the detail. The same applies to the cutaways and Victorian-era rooms in the simultaneously published *Lift, Look, and Learn Doll's House*.

Fold down the drawbridge and step through. Mind the mucky patches. (*Informational novelty. 7-10*) (*Lift, Look, and Learn Doll's House: 978-1-78312-082-6*)



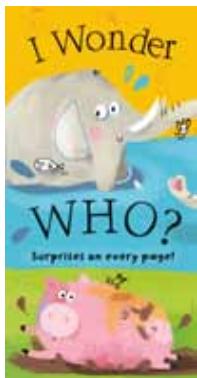
### THE OPEN OCEAN

Pittau, Francesco; Gervais, Bernadette  
Illus. by Pittau, Francesco;  
Gervais, Bernadette  
Chronicle (12 pp.)  
\$24.99 | Apr. 8, 2014  
978-1-4521-2701-9

The author/illustrators' latest raft-sized display of animal portraits focuses on sea life, from oyster and sand hopper to blue whale.

As in companions *Out of Sight* (2010) and *Birds of a Feather* (2012), most of the paintings are kitted out with covering flaps and in some cases cut out and glued to them to create rudimentary pop-ups. Bearing black-on-white silhouettes of the color images beneath, two huge single flaps on the first spread—of an octopus and a compass jellyfish—give the gallery a visually dramatic kickoff. Later spreads feature more silhouettes, inside and outside looks at a Venus clam and other shells, and to close, a matching exercise featuring a set of fish heads and tails on cut strips. Though posed and rendered naturally, the subjects are all suspended on blank white stock, which makes the silhouettes pop but gives lines and colors a slightly faded look. Every creature comes with an identifying label that is sometimes expanded, on selected spreads only, with a casual descriptive comment: "Sea horses are monogamous, and unlike any other animal species on earth, the male sea horse bears the unborn young."

An attention-getter thanks to trim size and eye-filling art—but not an attention-keeper. (*Novelty nonfiction. 4-8*)



### I WONDER WHO?

*Poitier, Anton*  
*Illus. by Touliatou, Sophia*  
 Kane/Miller (10 pp.)  
\$12.99 | Mar. 1, 2014  
978-1-61067-242-9

Smiling animals peek out or pop up from behind flaps to answer variations on the titular question in this cheery offering.

Stacked three per spread, each query—"I wonder who has snappy teeth?" "I wonder who eats flies?"—is paired to a flap opposite that provides a visual hint through a small slot or hole. The flap then lifts to reveal a respondent: "It's me, crocodile!" "It's me, chameleon!" Touliatou renders the high-spirited menagerie with bright hues and exuberantly spattered brushwork in her cartoon illustrations. The paper engineering is likewise spotty—but not in a good way. Aside from a snail who seems to have been accidentally missed when moving parts were being added, the animals are all kitted out with clumsy, amateurish special effects, from a tree branch for the owl that fits through a slot but doesn't move at all when the flap is lifted to tabs that are glued outside rather than inside the crocodile's lift-up nose.

The illustrations shine more brightly than the paper design—or, for that matter, the grammar. (*Pop-up picture book*. 3-5)



### THE DRAGON & THE KNIGHT A Pop-up Misadventure

*Sabuda, Robert*  
*Illus. by Sabuda, Robert*  
 Little Simon/Simon & Schuster (22 pp.)  
\$29.99 | Oct. 21, 2014  
978-1-4169-6081-2

Sabuda gives the usual relationship between story and picture a hefty tweak in this pop-up romp.

Though ostensibly a collection of such chestnuts as "Little Red Riding Hood" and "Cinderella," the retold narratives really serve as visual backdrops to the main action, which involves a fire-breathing dragon and a marshmallow-loving knight ripping through the pages in a game of tag. Readers not in on the joke will naturally start at the beginning—and soon discover that the stories get harder and harder to read as pop-up props are glued over phrases, whole passages are repurposed as die-cut 3-D shapes, and the dragon's fiery blasts knock the words themselves askew. Leaving "Puss In Boots" behind as just a scattering of burn holes and disconnected phrases, knight and dragon ultimately settle down (with one last surprise twist) for a peaceable marshmallow roast. Highlighted by a dragon head that lunges out at viewers with a gush of paper "flame" as the spread opens,

the pop-ups are, predictably, gobsmacking assemblages that whirl into multilevel scenes or rear up to seemingly impossible heights. "Want to play again?" asks the knight. The invitation is well-nigh irresistible.

With Sabuda, it's hard to set expectations too high or wide, but here he rides triumphantly roughshod over them anyway. (*Pop-up picture book*. 5-9)



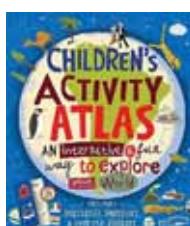
### IS THERE A DOG IN THIS BOOK?

*Schwarz, Viviane*  
*Illus. by Schwarz, Viviane*  
 Candlewick (32 pp.)  
\$16.99 | Oct. 1, 2014  
978-0-7636-6991-1

The feline trio that tumbled through *There Are Cats in This Book* (2008) and *There Are No Cats in This Book* (2010) welcomes a new friend—and you can, too!

"Oh, hello! You opened our book!" Resolutely ignoring the fourth wall once again, Schwarz's three wide-eyed cats catch a whiff of dog and flee, begging viewers not to lift the piano-, closet door- and suitcase-shaped flaps beneath which they are hiding. (As if.) The frisky, flop-eared pup turns out to be a friendly sort, but the hiding game continues when it looks directly up from the page and, startled ("I think you scared it..."), races out of sight. The ensuing search requires lifting a dozen more flaps and a gentle pat from the reader to soothe the cowering canine. Lifting the artfully shaped and angled flaps reveals multiple surprises, from the dog itself, first met lurking behind a sofa, to a cupboard-dwelling dinosaur ("That's not our doggy!"). Better yet, along with a hand-lettered text, animal figures rendered in vigorous daubs of black and colored inks give the episode an endearing, informal energy reminiscent of Chris Raschka's *Daisy* outings.

Eric Hill's classic *Spot* books come off as rather staid (not that that's necessarily a bad thing) next to this ram-bunctious, interactive hide-and-seek. (*Novelty picture book*. 3-5)



### CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY ATLAS

*Slater, Jenny*  
*Illus. by Wieble, Katrin; Sanders, Martin*  
 Sterling (31 pp.)  
\$16.95 | Aug. 5, 2014  
978-1-4549-1320-7

A learning tool for budding geographers, this first world atlas comes with hundreds of stickers, a sheet of detachable postcards and other reinforcement materials.

With the exception of the Arctic and Antarctica paired on facing pages, the brightly colored regional maps come one per spread. Blanked-out adjacent territories and generous quantities of surrounding ocean provide additional space

for short descriptive overviews, boxes of general facts and grids of national flags to match with corresponding stickers from the back. The maps feature country labels, national borders (including Wales and Scotland for the U.K. but not state boundaries for the U.S.), capitals and major cities, color-keyed biomes, and small labeled images of select flora, fauna, sports, and natural or industrial products. On each map at least one of these images is grayed out as a cue for additional sticker matching. The maps look crowded but not bewilderingly busy, and they are current enough to include South Sudan. Along with a page of sendable postcards with preprinted fill-in-the-blank messages ("We started in the north, visiting the \_\_\_\_\_ Tower in Paris...."), a "Passport" in a front pocket contains map-reading practice questions and even more sticker-placing opportunities.

**Unsuitable for classroom or library shelves but serviceable for solo use. (index) (Nonfiction. 6-8)**



## DINOSAURS

*Strother, Ruth  
Illus. by Francis, John  
Silver Dolphin (32 pp.)  
\$18.95 | Sep. 1, 2014  
978-1-62686-145-9*

Series: Smithsonian Young Explorers

In lunchbox-style packaging, a booklet of dino facts and a prehistoric panorama are presented on both a folded poster and a jigsaw puzzle.

Strother devotes 10 of her 32 pages to ornithischian, or bird-hipped, dinosaurs (correctly noting that they are *not* the ancestors of modern birds). She also manages to survey the Mesozoic Era in general, introduce a few theropods, describe fossilization, and present up-to-date information about dinosaur colors and extinction theories. All of this is crammed onto thematic spreads with small paintings and photos of fossils or generic images of fleshed-out reconstructions in minimally detailed settings. Francis contributes a collective portrait of dinosaurs of diverse size and period posing together over a labeled timeline. This can be hung up and, as a 130-piece jigsaw, assembled. Also available from the same author and illustrator, and likewise in a round-cornered box with a carrying handle and snap close, is *Oceans*, a densely populated dive into the deep.

**Gift items for confirmed young enthusiasts, with a substantial but not wearisome informational load. (Informational novelty. 6-8) (Oceans: 978-1-62686-145-5)**



## THE SNOW QUEEN *The Hans Christian Andersen Classic Story*

*Woodward, Kay—Adapt.  
Illus. by Sumberac, Manuel  
Barron's (28 pp.)  
\$19.95 | Aug. 5, 2014  
978-1-78312-015-4*

Between padded covers, a lightly compressed version of Andersen's frosty classic is paired to lushly detailed illustrations enhanced by scattered flaps and movable bits.

Though she clears away much of the slushy sentiment as well as the angels, the prayers, the robber maiden's knife and most of the talking flowers (and the Lapp woman), Woodward leaves all the major characters, plus the distinctive "girl sets out to rescue captive boy" plot, intact. Along with adding back a few angels at the beginning, Sumberac goes on to place marionettelike figures sporting oversized eyes and big, frizzy hair into settings that are positively encrusted with ice and snow crystals or with seasonal arrays of exactly rendered flora, fauna and fungi. The effect is not so much bland or cloying as theatrically sumptuous, and the illustrations are so thick with fine detail that the small die-cut flaps on occasional spreads are hard to spot even though they come with discreetly placed instructions to "lift." More visible is the two-sided spinner and a pull tab that causes the "sprite's" mirror to explode and on the next spread propels Kay and Gerda into view. The closing pop-up view of the two children kneeling over the "Eternity" sign in the Snow Queen's icy hall is suitably dramatic (if on the flimsy side). The lengthy text demands either an independent reader or a very dedicated grown-up.

**Similarly opulent renditions abound, but this is as good as any for parents wishing to introduce *Frozen*-mad children to the Disney movie's original. (annotated list of characters) (Pop-up picture book. 7-9)**

**"This artful storybook app combines soothing narration, measured pacing and striking use of colors to create a pleasurable, cinematic experience for young readers."**

FROM THE JOURNEY OF ALVIN

## INTERACTIVE E-BOOKS



### THE PIG'S HEAD RAVINE

*Cangrejo Ideas*  
Cangrejo Ideas  
\$2.99 | Oct. 23, 2014  
1.0; Oct. 23, 2014

The mystery of a porcine stranger who steals food in the night is solved in a spookily crafted story from Chile.

Two boys, Rafa and Juan, accustomed to playing in the hills after dark, encounter a scary creature, one who has been raiding their town for food. The culprit is revealed to be the Pig's Head, who stands upright and wears clothes but is otherwise just a very hungry pig. Despite some design flourishes and an animation style that makes the pencil art layered with color appear to pop off the page, the story itself is a mess. Some uncomfortable hypotheses about the creature's origin are explored (yes, that means implied bestiality), and many parents of younger readers won't be thrilled with a page with the sentence, "Hes [sic] ugly as Hell!" Text on an opening page is either badly translated or just poorly written: "One evening, the children found a scary creature, from which they have always heard, but never believed that existed, until then." The clever bits, such as a page with a variety of animals to colorize by touch, are outweighed by clunky storytelling. The app's sole extra feature, a song performed by the titular monster, completely fails to engage.

This weird pig's unsatisfying story perhaps should have stayed a mystery. (Requires iOS 7 and above.) (*iPad storybook app. 5-10*)



### NAAILDE THE WITCH

*Devuno, Giada*  
Illus. by Annibali, Ivan  
Ivan Annibali  
\$2.99 | Oct. 21, 2014  
1.0; Oct. 24, 2014

A self-important witch who haunts a small village gets her comeuppance—and her revenge, too.

Naailde is a scrofulous, mischievous character of international repute in the world of witches—she can transform into 1,897 different hideous monsters—who lives in a mansion infested with all manner of infernal creatures, "in a dark and horrifying forest." An elegant gentleman comes knocking at her door one eve and asks to spend the night—a red flag Naailde misses in her eagerness to scare his pants off. All to no avail; the dandy will have none of her most wily and gruesome guises. He even criticizes her technique. What's more, he—now revealed as "a" devil—sends her packing...until she returns as a she-devil, though she'll always be Naailde underneath. This app is long

enough to provide a wealth of textual and visual narration, giving it unusual depth. The text is narrated by a voice that verges on the eerie, and the lightly animated, sketchlike artwork is an artful mare's nest of black linework, though red and purple color starts to leak in with the arrival of the guest. The story comes to an ambiguous close, leaving readers to wonder if the red and purple ribbons of smoke coming from the chimney are a sign of togetherness or immolation.

A healthy spoonful of creepiness softened by the charming weakness of the characters. (Requires iOS 6 and above.) (*iPad storybook app. 4-8*)



### THE JOURNEY OF ALVIN

*González, Ismael González; García del Pomar Corada, Raúl*  
Illus. by González, Ismael González; García del Pomar Corada, Raúl  
meikme  
\$2.99 | Oct. 21, 2014  
1.0.1; Oct. 23, 2014

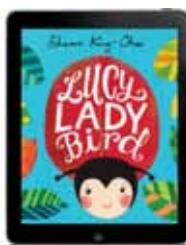
Alvin rides his old mower to visit his brother, taking a slow journey across a beautiful landscape and enjoying the ride.

This artful storybook app combines soothing narration, measured pacing and striking use of colors to create a pleasurable, cinematic experience for young readers. As Alvin slowly bumps along, an eclectic assortment of vehicles pass him—from "the farmer's stinky truck" to "music-making bicycles" ringing their bells. Alvin lives in the moment, never bothered by his slow speed. "By going at this speed, so slowly, so slowly... / he could hear the concert provided by the chirping birds, / and the animals of the forest." Composed of geometric shapes, the illustrations have a decidedly retro look, and yet the color scheme is thoroughly modern, filled with subdued complementary colors. Text and narration are available in English and Spanish, with easy controls. Sound effects and music help immerse readers in the slow-moving scenes. A few inconsistencies may nag at literal-minded youngsters. Readers are told Alvin has a white beard, and yet the illustrations show it to be yellow. When the turtle momentarily hunkers down in its shell, it continues to move even though it is not walking. The setting transitions from a desert plateau to a seaside town briefly without any discussion.

Wonderfully cinematic and surreal for readers willing to go with Alvin's flow. (*iPad storybook app. 3-7*)

**“...the detailed artwork and fluid animation enliven what could have been a visually uninteresting story about the power of writing.”**

FROM THE BUTTERFLY BOOK



### LUCY LADYBIRD

*King-Chai, Sharon*  
Illus. by King-Chai, Sharon  
Sharon Chai  
\$2.99 | Aug. 31, 2014  
1.1; Dec. 6, 2013

The unspotted Lucy Ladybird doesn't fit in with the rest of the ladybugs, so she sets off on a journey of self-discovery.

Lucy feels sad and lonely when all of the other ladybugs tell her, "You can't be one of us.... You have no spots!" As she meets new friends—a frog, a caterpillar, a fish and a bird—she notices how they each have their own beautiful spots in different colors. At first Lucy tells them how much she wishes she could be like them, but in each case, her new companions insist she is beautiful as she is and then offer to give her one of their own spots. The story builds with a gentle repetitive pattern, weaving in counting and color practice for preschoolers. Bright illustrations exude a warm, cheerful feeling that's reinforced by the story's lesson of friendship and sharing. Young readers will enjoy the clear message, especially as all the animals decide at the end that multicolored spots are delightfully fun. Layered textures and smooth animations add interest and details to the illustrations. Clear navigation features help guide young users, and simple interactions keep their interest but never overwhelm the story. Like David McKee's classic *Elmer* (1968), Lucy discovers a timeless lesson that variety is the spice of life.

A cheerful, charming story that works well as a storybook app. (*iPad storybook app. 3-5*)



### THE BUTTERFLY BOOK

*Locatelli, Marine*  
Illus. by Fauché, Claire  
Translated by Fechtmann, Amy C.  
La Souris Qui Raconte  
\$4.99 | Sep. 30, 2014  
1.0; Sep. 30, 2014

A boy's loneliness in a new home is cured in unexpected ways when writings of his get loose in this ode to passionate young writers.

One day, the books on Paolo's bookshelf take flight, including the titular book, a special volume “where he writes down his secret words and precious POEMS.” Paolo is despondent about the loss, but some of the books that escaped find their ways into the hands of various kids around town, who seek out Paolo and befriend him. *The Butterfly Book* captures the imagination of a young girl named Lilly, who becomes Paolo's first—and biggest—fan and critic. While the music seems pulled from public-domain sources, the detailed artwork and fluid animation enliven what could have been a visually uninteresting story about the power of writing. Instead, the artwork pops, sometimes appearing as comic book-style panels, other times using the entire page to present an outdoor scene. The

text's translation from French is rough, with plenty of extra exclamation points, though an alphabet-book portion becomes something of a value-added French primer. Even after selecting English as the language, the French version of the text still appears in an introductory page and on some pages when viewing the visual table of contents.

Despite a few problems, Paolo's story is presented dynamically enough to keep even non-Francophile readers engaged. (*iPad storybook app. 5-10*)



### A LETTER TO ME

*Preschel, Carolina; Bigio, Alan*  
Bacciz  
\$2.99 | Jul. 3, 2014  
1.1; Aug. 21, 2014

A young child tries to wait patiently for a loving adult to write a letter in this customizable app.

Before reading the story, young readers will want to design an avatar, and adults will want to create a special note. The settings easily allow children to choose the gender, skin color, hair styles and more for the main character. While the choices include four skin tones, eye colors and hair colors, the hair styles do not include African-American hair types. Adults can choose a pre-written letter from eight choices, or they can edit the letter to write a personalized note. An easy-to-use recording feature also allows adults to read their letters aloud. While the technical aspects of the app work like a charm, the actual story feels like an afterthought. It begins with the young protagonist asking about a letter the adult is writing. The child quickly becomes distracted by a big pot of gumballs on the table—and the story veers off on a tangent as the child gets into a sticky mess with the gum. It's more than a bit perplexing that the adult does not mind that the youngster is covered in bubble gum, instead just inviting the child inside to read the special letter.

Skip this treacly app and write a letter the old-fashioned way. (*iPad storybook app. 3-6*)



### BRAVE ROONEY AND THE SUPER-SIZED SUPERHEROES

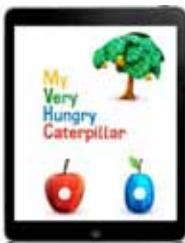
*Renert, Gerry*  
Illus. by Gott, Barry  
Bacciz  
\$1.99 | Jul. 23, 2014  
1.1; Aug. 7, 2014

More adventures in the life of Brave Rooney, a regular kid finding his way at a school for superheroes.

Following on series opener *Brave Rooney* (2011), the title character is still struggling to find his place as the only regular kid at Captain Majestic Memorial School, where all his classmates have superpowers. It's not easy. He practices hard at

soccer, but he'll never have the supersoccer skills they have; he's always the last to be picked in games at recess. When invited to participate in the Super Planetary Pig-Out, an eating contest, Rooney opts out, knowing it's not a smart choice. But all the pigging out leaves the superheroes bursting out of their suits and too sluggish to win the big soccer game, giving Rooney a chance to save the day. Though its didactic themes are evident from the start, this app scores with compelling narration and sound effects (each can be toggled on and off), and interactive animations are planted throughout. Readers will be tickled by what's hidden in the nurse's cabinet or what's inside the school desks in the biology classroom, and there is a goal-scoring game near the end. The cartoony ambience keeps the story light, making the nutritionally rewarding storyline go down fairly easy.

**Rooney's story effectively makes the case that the true heroes are just regular people who show up, make smart choices even when it's hard and take the lead when the opportunity arises. (*iPad storybook app. 5-8*)**



### MY VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR

*StoryToys*  
StoryToys  
\$3.99 | Oct. 16, 2014  
1.0.0; Oct. 16, 2014

Caterpillar gets an extended play space in this bright, minimalist, seemingly artless app.

The action plays out on five continuous screens. Readers can pull apples (later pears, plums, etc.) down from trees and drag them into position; they can water seeds and plants to produce flowers or strawberries; they can open a toy box and fetch a ball (and other toys, like an aggressive windup ladybug, on later visits); they can urge the caterpillar onto a raft to float among rubber duckies. The fifth scene features a stump, onto which the caterpillar can be nudged for a nap while the off-screen "stations" are reset with additional fruit or other items. The original tale's buffet of desserts and junk food never appears (alas?). Rendered in Carle's distinctive style, the figures all pop off the plain, white backgrounds—particularly the caterpillar, who munches through fruit, swings on a vine, makes eye contact with viewers and creeps about energetically while growing increasingly chubby. Ultimately, the lumpy larva disappears into a chrysalis that can be flicked opened to free a big, colorful butterfly. A tap-hatchable egg then appears to kick off subsequent rounds. Above each "station," small bars gradually fill in to let users know that it's time to move on; otherwise, aside from an occasional arrow, there is no narrative, text or other prompt. Nonetheless, even very young children will quickly get the hang of things.

**An irresistible invitation to free play with one of Carle's signature characters (plus cameos from some others). (Requires iOS 6 and above.) (*iPad activity app. 1-3*)**



### THE WARRIOR STORY

We The Force Studios  
We the Force  
\$2.99 | Jul. 11, 2014  
1.0; Jul. 11, 2014

Elaborate video game graphics give this somewhat embroidered account of David's youth and battle with Goliath a melodramatic cast.

The story, available in Spanish or occasionally awkward English is arranged in six independently loading chapters—four of which include a chase or other animated game that must be played before continuing. Figures in the cartoon scenes have a loose-jointed, craggy look. David resembles a small wooden doll, and Goliath towers over him as a feral, skeletally thin giant with a horned helmet and glowing eyes. Characters move and scenes pan or shift smoothly with prompted taps and swipes. Except during the games, each chapter can be restarted by tapping an icon, and a drop-down ribbon menu allows readers to skip to another chapter or to toggle the audio narration and background music on or off. Once a reader achieves good scores in the course of reading the story, the games can be played separately and, online, even competitively. Despite an early episode in which David kills a lion and a narrative reference to Goliath's "hellish gaze now stained with red," there is no blood or overt violence to be seen.

**A sanitized but action-packed rendition of the hero's early exploits. (Requires iPad 2 and above.) (*iPad storybook app. 7-10*)**

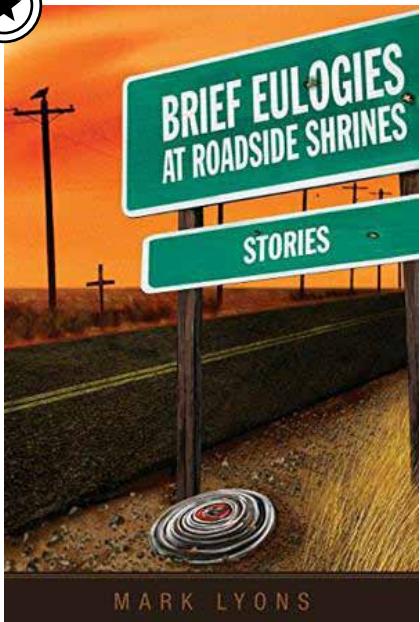
I DECEMBER 2014

# INDIE



These titles earned the Kirkus Star:

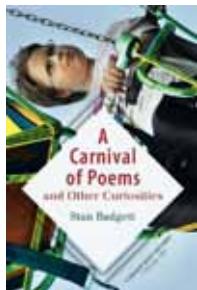
- FEAST OF FATES** by Christian A. Brown ..... 186  
**THE LAST COMMISSION** by Eytan Halaban ..... 189  
**BRIEF EULOGIES AT ROADSIDE SHRINES** by Mark Lyons ..... 192



**BRIEF EULOGIES AT ROADSIDE SHRINES**

**Stories**

*Lyons, Mark*  
Wild River Consulting &  
Publishing, LLC (218 pp.)  
\$14.95 paper | \$7.99 e-book  
Oct. 7, 2014  
978-0-9839188-7-5



**A CARNIVAL OF POEMS  
and Other Curiosities**

*Badgett, Stan*  
CreateSpace (100 pp.)  
\$12.95 paper | Sep. 13, 2014  
978-1-4995-4175-5

Badgett (*Rock Dust*, 2010, etc.) exhibits its impressive artistic range, under a single tent assembling poetry simple and complex, flash fiction, a short dramatic piece and a selection of graphic art including woodcut, collage and photography.

Of the many subjects that inspire Badgett's fervid and often biting pen—among them ideology and celebrity, intellectualism and authenticity, epistemological puzzles, identity formation and social pressure—none provoke more tender and authentic responses from him than the lives and work of coal miners, a topic he approaches with directness rarely on display elsewhere in the collection. Much like Gary Snyder's poetry on loggers, Badgett's miner poems are concrete and unembellished, all the more reverent for their simplicity. Writing about the 1981 Dutch Creek No. 1 mine explosion that killed 15 miners, Badgett honors the men's unremarkable final moments, emphasizing the looming tragedy through repeated progressive tense verbs: "Waiting to descend / Into the hole, joking / Squinting at the sun / Having a smoke / ... / Staring at muddy boots / Day-dreaming." Badgett's interest in tangible, lived moments takes a Wordsworthian turn in "On the Flattops," in which the narrator alludes to but also deflects attention from an ambiguous moment—perhaps ecstatic, perhaps violent. Instead, he focuses on the landscape and its psychic effects: a "sea breeze blows across this rolling world of / mountain grasses // Over there—at the far end of a long echo / That gash of pink and bone-white limestone" and "These skunk cabbages, these wild / geraniums and pearly everlasting! // We shall walk these windswept hills, / walk these fields in quiet gladness." Social commentary pervades much of the poetry, as in "Class We Bring Good News," in which students are taught that "You are meaningless / Machines / You are accidental animals" and then encouraged to "Reach / For the stars / Follow your dream." The collection takes on an increasingly surreal tone, juxtaposing pop culture and historical images with Badgett's personal visions, finally culminating in the absurdist, Beckett-inspired drama, "Nothing Fails to Amaze Me," which features, among other oddities, a scene of five minutes of silence broken up only by 10 seconds of flashing lights. While his more surreal work is so idiosyncratic as to resist general evaluation, Badgett has an undeniable gift for imbuing the most mundane scenes and landscapes with deep, and often

dangerous, psychic implications that endow his poetry with a surprising and rewarding psychological profundity.

A far-reaching, rambunctious collection.

INDIE

### 99 MINUTE MEDITATIONS OF A MODERN DAY HABAKKUK

Bodine, Christine M.  
Manuscript

A series of brief, meditative poems revolving around illness, injustice and God.

"I am inexplicably drawn to the minor prophets of the Old Testament," Bodine explains in the preface of her new collection of "meditations." She says that they came out of her study of the biblical book of Habakkuk and her own encounters with illness and injustice. But this work is far from being a daily devotional or memoir. "[A]ny meditation inspired by Habakkuk must have a poetic or sublime nature," Bodine writes, and poetry is the best way to describe her brief, powerful pieces. She presents them in three different sections: argument, acceptance and awe, which she also sees as a description of Habakkuk's actions: "He questions, he shakes his fist, he does what is necessary to get answers, to be one with god." Bodine takes readers through her emotional battle with her religious faith over the course of her illness—not through direct narrative or biblical interpretation, but through beautifully abstracted moments, including passing thoughts she addresses directly to God: "What were you thinking when you conjured up disease?" she asks him. "If you're fishing for compliments on this one, let me tell you, I'm not a fan." At these times, Bodine's meditations become sublime. For the most part, her tone remains intelligent, authoritative and even grandiose, but she also sneaks in dry, witty and snide comments. Her dialogue with her creator often feels as darkly funny as a David Sedaris story or a Julia Sweeney routine, and like those comedy masters, she has perfect timing: "So unladylike of me to shout," she says to God, "yet this is what I am reduced to. I am she-who-is-pretty-exquisite-at-arguing." By adding such moments to her biblical reflections, Bodine has created something very clever, very honest and very human.

A challenging, inspiring and funny work for anyone who loves the poetic form.



### ASBURY DARK *Haunting Tales from the Jersey Shore*

Bonfitto, Lori  
Self (236 pp.)  
\$12.99 paper | \$9.99 e-book  
Oct. 1, 2014  
978-1-312-48610-2

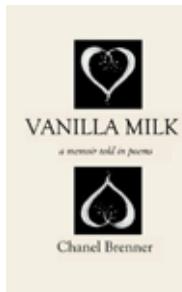
In Bonfitto's (*The Lineman*, 2013, etc.) horror collection, Asbury Park, New Jersey, provides the setting for seven strange, spooky stories.

This quirky book amasses a hodgepodge of tales, all delving into the supernatural but each sporting a distinctive style. It opens with "The Scorekeeper," which reads like a young-adult story: Teenager Adam and his mother tell everyone that a heart arrhythmia limits his outdoor activities, but it's really his inability to control his telekinetic power when he's upset. The decidedly more solemn "Harbinger" follows a man named Lee, who keeps seeing a screaming girl near the train tracks—a girl that apparently no one else can see. In "The Circuit," a bored family man undergoes a midlife crisis that turns into a terrifying ordeal. "Dead and Breakfast" is a darkly humorous riot: Cousins Patsy and Max and their pal, Christopher, open a Victorian bed-and-breakfast that just may be haunted, and two reality shows compete for a live Halloween broadcast to verify the presence of ghosts. Bonfitto also tackles a number of relevant social issues within these pages: Adam's paranormal faculty, for example, flares up when he's victimized by bullies. Most of the stories stay in familiar supernatural territory, but the author effectively puts her own stamp on each one. The collection reaches its summit with "Eminent Domain," a fantastic yarn in which a "zombie march" of costumed revelers on the Asbury Park boardwalk comes to a halt when cadavers from a macabre art exhibit decide to make actual zombies out of the participants. Bonfitto breathes new life into this story of the undead, and although it's violent (as the zombies munch on human flesh), it's much less graphic than similar tales. But although "Eminent Domain" sharply contrasts with the YA style of "The Scorekeeper," both fit in quite nicely in this eclectic collection.

Short stories for readers who like their horror tales diverting and diverse.

“[Brown’s] motifs run the epic-fantasy gamut, from ancient forests pulsing with life to malevolent phenomena looming in the depths of space.”

FROM FEAST OF FATES



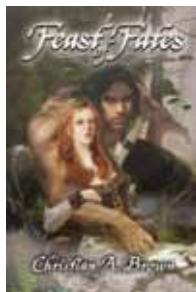
### VANILLA MILK *A Memoir Told in Poems*

Brenner, Chanel  
Silver Birch Press (104 pp.)  
\$16.00 paper | Sep. 22, 2014  
978-0-692-26747-9

Through poems and vignettes, Brenner's moving debut memoir commemorates her son's death.

Brenner began writing poetry in earnest the night 6-year-old Riley died of an arteriovenous malformation brain hemorrhage. “The pain had to go somewhere,” she recalls. Instead of crying, she crafted poems. These free verse selections, mostly written in complete sentences, rely on alliteration, assonance and striking imagery rather than straight rhyme for impact. Perspective morphs subtly, starting in the third person and moving into a more intimate first-person present, with occasional outbursts of second-person address to Riley. “The Perfect Latch” tenderly equates breast-feeding with bonding, despite pain and ambivalence: “Nipples raw and cracked, / burning like resentment, / she squeezes her left breast / to achieve the perfect latch.” In “Shifting Sand,” alliteration makes for memorable lines about flux: “grinding the finite grains / against the scarred linoleum.” Several passages are gently morbid: “Funny we called it permanent, / you only had it for a week” (“Your Permanent Tooth”) and “A washing machine outlives a little boy.” Inventive, extended metaphors personify death or mock opinions about God: Here is “Death’s finger pointing, / Eeny, meeny, miny, moe”; and in “God as a Waiter,” one must only “Place the order, / [and] Thou shall receive” another baby. Brenner contrasts the blithe early days of marriage—“We offered ourselves to each other / lightly as happy hour hors d’oeuvres”—with the strain Riley’s death placed on her and her husband, Lee. She also dwells on Riley’s physical remains—clothes under his bed, a rosebush he loved, as well as the organs he donated—and on others’ well-meaning but trite responses to her grief. Just as powerful are the one-page autobiographical vignettes interspersed throughout. Of these, best is “Choices,” in which the vocabulary foreshadows medical crisis: “coffin-shaped room,” “a cracker that clumps like ash on my tongue” and “the doctors file in like pallbearers.” However, the subtitle should indicate that nearly a quarter of the text is prose, and 17 continuous pages of family photos are perhaps excessive.

A noteworthy exploration of a parent’s grief.



### FEAST OF FATES

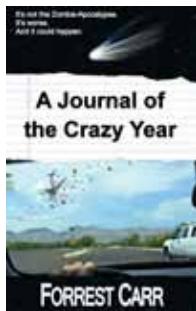
Brown, Christian A.  
CreateSpace (540 pp.)  
\$19.99 paper | \$2.99 e-book  
Jul. 28, 2014  
978-1-4959-0758-6



In this rousing epic-fantasy debut, two unlikely lovers forge a bond in the midst of a war between immortal kings.

The city of Eod, in the land of Geddahain, is home to Morigan Lostarot, the handmaiden of a reclusive sorcerer. While shopping for supplies one day, she stumbles into the shop of a blacksmith named Caenith. His bestial manner shocks and allures her—and it intrigues her even more when he reveals himself to be a werewolf. He then helps unlock her latent psychic talent, but the deluge of other peoples’ thoughts and memories threatens to cripple her, so she consults with her magik-wielding boss, Thackery Thule. Meanwhile, Magnus, the Everfair King, has become possessed by a dark, virulent force, and he suspects that his brother, Brutus, is responsible, so he marches with an army to his brother’s kingdom in search of answers. This leaves Queen Lila to rule Eod, and she begins her own investigation by summoning Thackery, who hasn’t told Morigan just how famous a sorcerer he is. At the same time, in the wretched land of Menos, the covetous Gloriatrix schemes against Magnus and Brutus in a bid to rule as a Black Queen. It would have been difficult for Brown to present a more sensual, or satisfying, debut. His motifs run the epic-fantasy gamut, from ancient forests pulsing with life to malevolent phenomena looming in the depths of space. His excellent prose, however, truly sets this book apart from the fantasy herd. Every page crackles with images full of vibrant emotion, such as the “miracle of Brutus’s horde, dusted in frost and as still as a portrait of war.” There’s also an erotic heft to the author’s writing during romantic moments; for example, Caenith tells Morigan that perhaps “the world worked slower for you, so that it might savor your beauty, as I am.” Elsewhere, readers experience Eod’s magical opulence, which contrasts fabulously with Menos’ repugnance. After a cataclysmic finale, the heroes rest up, possibly for a sequel.

An unmissable fantasy tale that marries gorgeous prose to a lavishly detailed plot.



### A JOURNAL OF THE CRAZY YEAR

Carr, Forrest  
CreateSpace (276 pp.)  
\$3.99 e-book | Jan. 12, 2015  
978-1-5003-0095-1

A pandemic helps humanity destroy itself in this wry apocalyptic thriller.

In 2015, John Cruz wakes up in a hospital in Las Vegas. He’s surprised when a pair of orderlies quickly restrains him, as if he’s capable of violence. He soon discovers that

he's one of only three patients at the mental hospital, and Dr. Marcia Keenan tells him he's been there since his 2011 attack on a co-worker. The facility is largely empty because most mental illnesses seem to be vanishing. A disease called Sudden Onset Psychosis Syndrome has been on the rise, however, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention doesn't have any answers. When John befriends fellow patient Scooter, he learns that frequent gun massacres have swept the United States, and the planet teeters toward World War III. Once he's deemed stable, John goes home with his loyal wife, Maria. From there, they watch TV media dispute what's causing the spread of SOPS—which propels many victims into bloodthirsty rages. The gigantic Comet Filipov, streaking past Earth, is a cause that seems preposterous until it's argued that comets have heralded doom throughout history, and science can't fully explain the universe. Author Carr (*Messages*, 2013) does an exemplary job portraying the media circus surrounding the comet and the possibility of flesh-eating mobs; when asked about zombies, a leader from the CDC says the organization "vehemently rejects that term, and would strongly condemn any news reporter...using it in reference to victims of this crisis." Early on, Carr employs jet-black humor reminiscent of Vonnegut, as when Scooter says: "I've got about another two months to live....Wanna play checkers?" But John becomes less sympathetic as the narrative progresses. Chaos envelopes the city, so he takes charge, telling Maria that he wants no "backtalk, no argument, no questions." Later, the flight from civilization is handled well, and a truly unconventional ending makes for a worthy trip.

A great case made for the idea that the end isn't nigh—it's already here.

### LUST & PHILOSOPHY

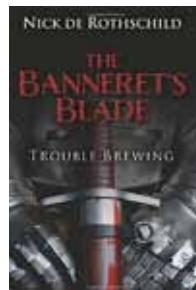
*Cook, Isham*  
CreateSpace (230 pp.)  
\$9.95 paper | \$2.99 e-book  
Sep. 16, 2012  
978-1-4792-3052-5

In Cook's (*Massage and the Writer*, 2014, etc.) wide-ranging novel, an intellectual travels the globe in the company of his desires.

Isham, the book's protagonist, travels across continents and through cities such as Beijing; Chicago; Varanasi, India; and Marburg, Germany. He's always pursuing his twin interests: the life of the mind and the life of the flesh. To those ends, he goes to various universities, pilgrimage sites and even the Great Wall of China, accompanied by a rotating cast of women. His musings on one of them, a voluptuous Chinese woman named Adalat, nicknamed "Cookie," begin and end the novel. Cook offers dreamlike scenes of Isham's relationship with her, interpolated by Isham's romps with other women—chief among them the sexually obsessed Luna. Isham sees artistic and philosophical resonance in all of the events of his life, such as when he equates the sensual draw of Luna with the actions of the Archangel Gabriel: "Erotic intelligence is the capacity to captivate, even entrap, a person sexually, without the application of force....Gabriel was able to accomplish this in the Annunciation

with a robe and a few key gestures." Isham proceeds to various locations around the world, followed by students' allegations of sexual harassment and pervasive memories of his earlier life; soon, the story oscillates between different times and places. Ultimately, the novel ends where it began in Beijing, but Isham himself is completely changed. Cook writes in a style that will appeal to readers who like their texts thick with allusion and their narrators unreliable. However, despite this style, the text is never difficult to follow. Cook provides readers with a strong sense of place; even when the narrative transitions are swift, he always makes clear exactly where his characters are. In Isham, the author offers a character that is, by turns, endearing and frustrating, and this makes him a thoroughly realistic human being.

A visceral novel that explores many different lusts and cultures.



### THE BANNERET'S BLADE

#### *Trouble Brewing*

*de Rothschild, Nicholas*  
CreateSpace (490 pp.)  
\$24.99 paper | \$3.25 e-book  
Aug. 7, 2014  
978-1-4992-9366-1

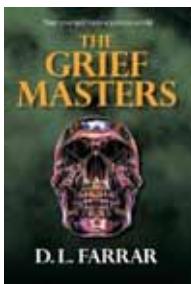
A knight faces brutal challenges at home and abroad in de Rothschild's historical-fiction debut.

Set in 1338, the novel centers on Sir Roger de Bohun, King Edward III's one-time whipping boy, who's now the "King's Friend." Roger has been handsomely rewarded for his years of loyalty: The king gave him a beautiful wife—Lady Alice, Queen Philippa's lady-in-waiting—with whom he has two children, Harry and Isabel. He's building an extravagant castle at Ipers Manor and has received a promotion to the prestigious rank of banneret. Roger's successes, however, come during troubling times, as Edward makes a claim for the throne of France, complicating a number of political and religious intrigues. Closer to home, Lady Alice catches the eye of Sir Eustace de Frage, a man who will stop at nothing to claim her for himself. As tensions mount, Roger finds himself fighting for his king and his family. The author succeeds in creating a richly detailed setting and memorable characters. His descriptions of daily life in France and England, including the grand architecture of churches and castles, create a vivid picture of life during that era. Roger is a dynamic protagonist: a man of faith who's loyal to his king, church and family but not immune to the charms of beautiful women. He's met his match in Lady Alice, a passionate young woman who capably maintains the castle while he's away. Eustace is a cunning villain whose ruthless desire for revenge drives some of the novel's most effectively chilling scenes. The author's vision is ambitious; as a result, the multitude of characters and subplots occasionally obscures the main protagonist's story. The battle scenes are quite brutal, but de Rothschild reins them in before they become too gratuitous.

A sweeping, densely plotted epic that will likely appeal to fans of historical fiction or George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* series.

“...Farrar maintains a brisk and fairly exciting (holy) roller-coaster momentum throughout.”

FROM THE GRIEF MASTERS



### THE GRIEF MASTERS

Farrar, D. L.

AbbottPress (276 pp.)

\$35.99 | \$17.99 paper | \$5.99 e-book

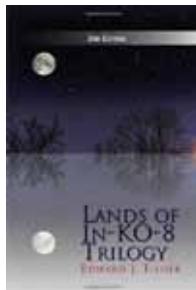
Jun. 6, 2014

978-1-4582-1444-7

In a corporate-controlled future from which religion has been purged, inventor Troy Vincent is condemned to a virtual-reality punishment (and likely execution) over accusations that he murdered a business rival.

Farrar's debut novel kicks off his Christian-oriented sci-fi series taking place in a 22nd-century world where, governments and political parties having failed, giant corporations control (i.e., “sponsor”) a society battered by global warming and unrest. As a result, religion has largely been suppressed—its existence is bad for business, evidently; this is not a sentiment one expects in the American evangelical realm—and criminal justice is downsized to a kind of twist on the medieval notion of trial by ordeal. The accused are placed into virtual-reality pods, where they are assailed by “demons” of their own making—bad conscience for the guilty, regret for the innocent. Demons create manifestations that effectively kill their humans, both in cyberspace and reality. Inventor Troy Vincent is condemned to a Virtual Reality Chamber on trumped-up charges he murdered Hoy SamWong, a ruthless tycoon who caused Troy's father's death and stole Troy's company and his wife. Paradoxically, the beautiful Lovena Baptista, daughter of another of Hoy SamWong's ex-partners, is also being tormented in a VRC for the identical crime. The duo's potential savior (besides, of course, the Savior) is Vincent—a shape-shifting android devised by Troy's father with Vincent family DNA—who is kept around by the heartless corporations as a sort of attending executioner (for some reason, the bad guys don't anticipate this becoming a problem). Spock-like Vincent, with a crusader's cross emblazoned on his breastplate, is a most intriguing blend of old and new. Less successful are the title entities, Grief Masters, helpful VR visitors who bear names such as Courage and Faith and appear to the embattled Troy and Lovena during their cliffhanger perils in fantasy digital environments. Are they angels? Saints? Their literalist intercessions take the narrative from cyberpunk to *The Shack*, although Farrar maintains a brisk and fairly exciting (holy) roller-coaster momentum throughout.

Christian cyberpunk sci-fi—quite a start.



### LANDS OF IN-KO-8 TRILOGY, 3RD EDITION

Fisher, Edward J.

Xlibris (428 pp.)

\$34.99 | \$23.99 paper | \$9.99 e-book

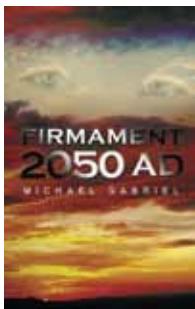
Jul. 22, 2010

978-1-4535-1961-5

A sci-fi saga of an alien world, recounting its wars, its near-destruction and its risky restoration.

Fans of such whimsical fantasy settings as Piers Anthony's Xanth or Terry Pratchett's Discworld may be equally impressed by Fisher's audacious creation. Inchoate is a planet made of dark matter that occupies a point in space inside the Earth but that's slightly out of phase in time. As a result, the two independent, evolving environments don't (normally) interact. Inhabitants of Inchoate are one-sixth the size of *Homo sapiens*, with a quasi-feudal social structure, advanced technology, and a penchant for befriending talking animals such as jackalopes, rats, dogs and spiders. Successive, advanced alien races have visited Inchoate and used it as a key station in their intergalactic teleportation network. This inspires an act of wartime sabotage that causes Inchoate to be accidentally transmitted several light years away; its people awaken from long-term suspended animation to find themselves in a double-star system in Sirius, where they rebuild over the next thousand years. Fisher further stirs the pot by telling his three-part tale out of chronological order, starting in the middle, proceeding to the prologue and then reaching the finale. The major connecting thread between them is the resourceful troubleshooter Naksarben, aka John Narrowpath, aka Brother Nathan, who weaves his way through palace intrigues and virtuous secret operations against tyrants who rely on religious fundamentalism and militarism to gain power. A twist ending about the character's true origin is a head-scratcher, but by then, readers will have bought into the novel's blend of quantum mechanics and fairy tale. The author, who also contributes scattered maps, diagrams and illustrations, is a master punster, offering character names such as Hans Pholde, Shellson Carapace, a philosophy professor named Eponymous Muser, a scientist and professor named Prudence DeCysseve, a librarian called Reed Tomes, an order called the Monastery of the Inevitable Whens and a capital city dubbed Distopia.

A fetching, seriocomic fantasy of faith, politics, science and death that never succumbs to cuteness.

**FIRMAMENT 2050 AD***Gabriel, Michael*

AuthorHouse (234 pp.)

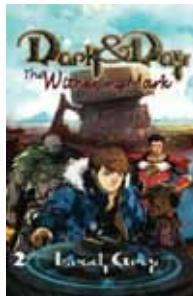
\$18.24 paper | \$3.99 e-book | Jul. 23, 2013  
978-1-4817-9915-7

Gabriel offers a hopeful novel about the future of the human race, with a little alien intervention.

Denver Jenkins is 9 years old when an interstellar craft, crewed by three aliens, crash-lands in Canada—an event that would come to be known as the Visitation.

The aliens, which include the gruff Big Louis, the humorous Turnip and the beautiful researcher Dandelion, spend several years researching Earth, watching television and repairing their craft. Soon they're ready for the next stage in their journey, which was meant to be a simple delivery run. However, Denver, now a talented young hacker, manages to exploit a vulnerability in the ship's "mission box" and steal precious data. The visitors resolve to get that data back in order to avoid breaking laws and regulations against providing information to less-advanced planets. In the process, they bring the young human onto the ship, where he sees Earth from above and exclaims: "[T]here's so many people down there living in misery. There are machines on this ship that could abolish poverty, help grow enough food, control the environment, and make enough wealth for everybody....I can't understand why you don't seem to want to help?" Denver's perspective changes everything; soon, Dandelion discovers that she can help the planet by using psychic power, and so she brings children with psychic talent aboard the ship. What these children do will change the course of Earth's history. Throughout this book, the author makes his alien characters delightfully human, from Turnip's obsession with television, which seems to give him an American accent, to Dandelion's immense compassion (and remarkable wardrobe). He approaches his sci-fi tale with humor and empathy, and he shows a keen eye for the behavior of children. Although Denver and his alien friends employ jarring jargon at times, the plot is strong enough to support the technological terms and scientific anomalies. Gabriel offers humorous antics as well, as when Turnip uses a holographic device to masquerade as Denver—to disastrous effect. The overall message, however, remains clear: His story's humans are refreshingly good-hearted and need only a little guidance to help make their planet better. Overall, the book is a pleasant read and features an uplifting conclusion that's appropriate for children and optimistic adults.

A sci-fi look at what humanity has within itself—and what it could still learn.

**DARK & DAY 2  
*The Withering Mark****Grey, Israel*

Jacob Israel Grey (404 pp.)

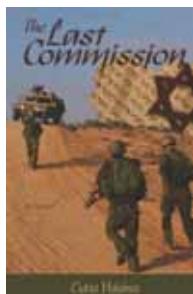
\$14.23 paper | \$2.99 e-book | Dec. 1, 2011  
978-0-9849263-0-5

Grey's sequel to the YA fantasy *Dark & Day* (2013) finds heroic Jonothon "Jono" Wyer on the trail of a terrorist group.

Nearly two years ago, the world's Dark End (a region ruled by futuristic

technology) went to war with the Day End (ruled by magic), and a boy named Jason Wheat has since risen to fame as the person who stopped the catastrophe. Thirteen-year-old Jono, however, knows that Jason is only providing a cover story for Jono's heroism; while Jason is a celebrity, Jono leads a quiet life at Windom Academy. However, during a field trip to the Starview "historeum," a disastrous explosion injures Jono's friend Keiko—proving that he isn't so safe after all. Jono soon learns that Eljin Tombs, the leader of a terrorist group that wants Dark and Day to go to war, has escaped prison. This jeopardizes plans for a World's Faire, where the two ends of the world can celebrate both cultures. Thankfully, Jono is no longer a frail boy with a heart condition—he's a capable spy, outfitted with mechanical upgrades and loyal friends. But before thwarting Tombs, he must get past the academy's resident bully and scaremonger, Nicklus Knox. Author Grey starts the second chapter of his epic fantasy series eerily, and with a bang, and he's quick to remind readers that the peace between Dark and Day is tenuous. In the Day End, for example, a poster asks "Are you INFECTED with a machine? Mechs can be smaller than pixie dust! Get checked regularly!" Grey's world can be quite beautiful as well, especially Eies, the Dark End capital, with its "thick layer of greenhouse clouds...[making] the massive buildings look like islands in a glowing white sea." Like the previous volume, this one has buoyant illustrations by Andrew Hou, Tyler Edlin and Robert Kim. Its sturdy, satisfying morals have returned as well, as when Commander Grail says, "There are times when people need to believe in untoachable things." In the end, Grey leaves his characters older, wiser and ready for the next challenge.

A fine second installment that further embellishes a dazzling world.

**THE LAST COMMISSION***Halaban, Eytan*

Inkwater Press (322 pp.)

\$15.95 paper | \$2.99 e-book  
Jan. 14, 2014  
978-1-62901-037-3

In Halaban's (*The Perfect Wish*, 2013) latest novel, an emotionally traumatized, middle-aged man gets the chance to confront his past and transform its meaning.

In 1977, Maury Green is a 50-year-old real estate salesman living in New Haven, Connecticut. For almost 30 years, he's seemed old and defeated—ever since he returned home after a short stint in the Israeli army, following his service in World War II, during which he moved bodies in Dachau. Even more soul-killing was his treatment by Israeli soldiers from a rival political faction, who subjected him to a mock execution by firing squad, leaving him humiliated and broken-spirited. At his job, Maury used to be a top salesman, but lately he's had a long string of lean months; the only respect he ever seems to get is when he writes checks for Jewish fund-raising efforts. At one such event, he recognizes Israeli Gen. Yaakov B. Ronen, the possible future prime minister of Israel and the cruel leader of his long-ago humiliation—but Ronen doesn't recognize him. When Maury is asked to be a go-between for the general, who has some priceless, ancient scrolls to sell, he conceives a daring plan of revenge and redemption. Halaban makes palpable the little routines and rhythms of Maury's life, which later become helpful in working out his plans. He effectively establishes Maury as both a nebbish and a mensch; for example, Maury resents his more successful co-workers but also buys a daily breakfast for a homeless woman he calls Queen Esther. As the book goes on, Maury's deep sensitivity becomes more apparent. The scrolls, for example, become a litmus test. The general cynically exploits them: “Remember the camps, Maury. Remember the camps,” he whispered....Maury wasn’t buying.” Later, Maury gains courage and hope from two academics’ passionate, awed response to them: “We have to save the scrolls, Maury. We have to save them,” says one. Throughout, Halaban makes Maury’s transformation believable and highly engaging.

A clever, humane and deeply satisfying novel.



### THE FAERIE QUEEN Book Four of The Faerie Ring Series

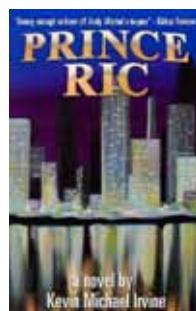
*Hamilton, Kiki*  
CreateSpace (316 pp.)  
\$12.99 paper | \$3.99 e-book  
Sep. 19, 2014  
978-1-4849-3621-4

The dramatic conclusion to the faerie fantasy series by Hamilton (*The Seven Year King*, 2013 etc.).

The story opens with the UnSeelie king closing in on his goal of destroying the Seelie people, including their reluctant queen Tara, who's sequestered in London trying to reclaim her ordinary, human life. When Larkin, the Seelies' de facto leader, threatens to kidnap a girl dear to Tara if she refuses to return and help defeat the UnSeelies, Tara decides she can no longer deny her destiny. The devastation she encounters upon her return galvanizes her, but she and her cohorts become distracted when they go on a rescue mission to save a prisoner. Afterward, Tara decides to abandon Faerie and return to her human life after all, despite the fact that the UnSeelie king continues to gain strength. It isn't until he kidnaps one of Tara's family members that she finally steps up, recruiting a richly drawn, intriguing cast of secondary characters

to help, including her lover, his brother, and another, unexpectedly. Although Tara is the book's namesake, her decision to abandon Faerie when her people are being tortured and killed makes her appear somewhat weak and selfish. Even when she returns for the final battle, she's more concerned about her beloved friends than the fate of the world. Larkin is the story's most compelling character, and her courage, sacrifice and bravery make her worth rooting for. Hamilton delivers vivid battle scenes in the lead-up to a brilliant, surprise ending. The prose is witty and rich throughout, offering a masterful vision of two intertwining worlds. The faerie lore is also intricate and well-developed. As the final book in the series, it wraps up many subplots from prior installments, although it sometimes provides insufficient back stories, which can make it difficult for readers who haven't recently read the rest of the books. That said, it delivers clever plot twists that keep the suspense mounting and the pages turning.

A strong finale to a dark, compelling series.



### PRINCE RIC

*Irvine, Kevin Michael*  
Kevin Michael Irvine (246 pp.)  
\$2.99 e-book | Nov. 6, 2014

Irvine's debut is a revenge story and a gay romance involving men coming to terms with their lives, sexuality and family secrets in the world of New York advertising.

Advertising heir Richard “Ric” Terrence Smythe-Bigge has it all, and long-time wingman Hal Burke is there to gush and narrate. Ric is the “spice rack of power, looks, money, and personality to the sauté pan of our relationship,” says the awestruck Hal with all the fawning of someone who’s been “riding in his draft” since college. But Ric is unhappy working for his legendary father, Malcolm. Extremely loathsome and despised by his family, Malcolm is suspected of having a hand in his brother Terry’s death. Now, a play written by Terry before he died is the torch Ric holds for his uncle’s unappreciated talent. Staging it could help Ric escape his father’s dark, sinister shadow. Ric and Hal get to work on the play, but every obstacle bears Malcolm’s fingerprints. After a commercial spot is sabotaged, Malcolm fires Ric and Hal, stripping Ric of his assets. During a retreat, Ric reveals to Hal that he’s gay; Hal feels betrayed yet accepting. Ric disappears into gay life and, banished from advertising, uses his only remaining resources to make a living. Hal, meanwhile, is rehired by Malcolm, and for several years, “Life spread its opportunities before me like a nymphet dropping rose petals in a DeMille epic.” Hal comes into his own by living the dream life Ric once possessed, yet something is missing. The two reunite to find they have something much deeper than platonic friendship; and when Malcolm decides to retire, his farewell retrospective involves his estranged family and reveals more than they’d like to make known. With a narrator who possesses a creative and confident point of view, and whose prose is breezy enough to blow off Andy Warhol’s toupee, this over-the-top novel of self-discovery rarely bores. Irvine can sometimes

# "The escalating levels of mayhem and weaponry near the end practically transform the book from a sci-fi whodunit to a military-combat action thriller."

FROM THE SCORPION GAME

confuse volubility with wit, yet the verbal overkill often succeeds as Hal's observations compellingly depict the depth and breadth of his hero worship: "In his way, Ric was like a movie," Hal says. "His cyan eyes were the marquee to a soul wherein lived all the heavyweights: Action, Adventure, Romance, Mystery, Comedy!" Who wouldn't want a ticket to the show?

An intriguing, multifaceted read highlighted by an alluring lead and his loquacious sidekick.



## THE SCORPION GAME

*Jeffries, Daniel*

CreateSpace (310 pp.)

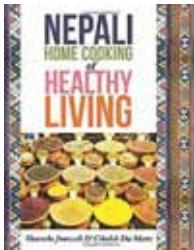
\$11.43 paper | \$3.99 e-book | Jun. 1, 2013

978-1-4903-3072-3

In this debut sci-fi novel set in the 25th century, police detective Durante Hoskin must unmask a fiendish high-tech serial killer whose crimes against the corrupt superrich threaten to spark social chaos.

Jeffries isn't the first sci-fi writer to project a hard-boiled detective story into the future; Isaac Asimov's *The Caves of Steel* (1954) wasn't even the first such tale, nor was the film *Blade Runner* (1982). However, here he presents a cranked-up-to-11 vision of the mean streets of the future—a post-singularity world of para-human cyborgs, similar to that imagined by futurist Ray Kurzweil. The story takes place on a planetoid-vast, traveling "Starship Settlement," home to a space-going culture that's heavily class-stratified: opulent and slum-ridden, decadent and dynastic. Nearly everyone is wet-wired into online and person-to-person communication; radical body modification is routine, and centurieslong human lifespans are further boosted by "blackbox" recorders, allowing people to "relife" themselves from stored data. Yet even in this environment, a murderer at large knows how to strike stealthily through invisible oceans of security minicams, permanently kill the best protected of the elite and spread propaganda of his crimes. On the case is Hoskin, a veteran police detective who's considered old-fashioned for his habit of physically working out instead of letting nano-bots tone his body from the inside, like everyone else does. Early on, readers get the news that the killer is Venadrik, a brilliant but psychopathic son of a prostitute, whose horrific childhood and messianic religion has set him on a mission to overturn society. Once readers acclimate to the shock of the far-future tech, the book telegraphs the trick Venadrik uses in his serial slayings rather obviously. But the momentum of the storyline and the comfortable noir genre tropes—including a sublimely seductive bad-girl heroine and a young, brash cop partner in trouble—sweep the reader along. The escalating levels of mayhem and weaponry near the end practically transform the book from a sci-fi whodunit to a military-combat action thriller. Although this tale is billed as the first installment in the author's Age of Transcendence series, it wraps up neatly, like a stand-alone.

A vigorous, visionary and steamy cyberpunk crime story with a convincing far-future setting.



## NEPALI HOME COOKING FOR HEALTHY LIVING

*Jnawali, Sharada; Da Mata, Cibeleb*

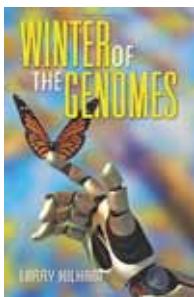
Xlibris (222 pp.)

\$52.41 paper | \$6.99 e-book | Jul. 17, 2014  
978-1-4931-3538-7

Jnawali and Da Mata's cheerful debut cookbook highlights the health benefits of Nepal's plants, spices and herbs in accessible vegetarian recipes.

The book was developed during a one-on-one, five-month culinary workshop that the Nepalese Jnawali taught to Da Mata, a Brazilian ayurvedic practitioner looking to incorporate Nepal's food-based medicinal properties into her work. The central ingredients range from the ubiquitous—plain rice, corn, lentils—to the lesser known, such as cheura, a parboiled rice hand-beaten with bran; and karela, a bitter gourd that's rich in calcium and potassium. The recommended preparations promote ease over precision and favor herbs, spices and plants indigenous to Nepal. Despite the recipes' simplicity, Jnawali has grander goals: to promote the joy of cooking and to raise awareness of the value and convenience of Nepal's local and seasonal foods. The smaller second section offers a glossary of spices and herbs, including their medicinal value, which can serve as a guide for readers intrigued by how they're used in treatments in much of South Asia. The cheerful, appetizing photos and simple instructions will be helpful for beginners. Some readers, however, may not be able to easily access many of the required ingredients (such as ghee, fenugreek and taro) at their local grocery stores. They can still find some benefit, though, in the appendices at the end of the book, which offer tips for skin and hair care and cures for all sorts of ailments; for example, garlic and onion juice can be used to soothe a toothache, and mashed bananas to lessen a burn. For a committed novice looking to delve into the basics of Nepali cooking and health practices, this book is an excellent place to begin.

A worthwhile choice for focused amateur chefs or holistic-minded readers.



## WINTER OF THE GENOMES

*Kilham, Larry*

CreateSpace (218 pp.)

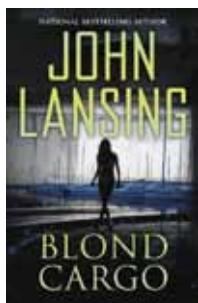
\$12.99 paper | \$3.99 e-book  
Sep. 23, 2014  
978-1-5008-2205-7

A rigorous but readable account of what promises the future of artificial intelligence holds.

A graduate of MIT, Kilham (*Mega Minds*, 2013, etc.) has been investigating the possibilities of artificial intelligence since the 1960s, before the concept became a standard theme in sci-fi and in popular culture in general. In his sixth book, he explores the potential for sophisticated robots to radically transform human life,

changing the faces of labor and commerce as we currently know them. In the book's first section, he explains what precisely artificial intelligence is and what one can reasonably expect from its advances. He dispels the idea that robots pose an existential threat to human civilization, as if they will soon evolve into beings of comparable intellectual sophistication and, as a result, competitors. He does explain how artificial intelligence already permeates our lives in less dramatic ways, e.g., via its central role in automobile production. In the remaining three sections, Kilham plumbs the sociological depths of AI technology, considering the many ways a labor force of highly efficient, low-cost workers could respond to the possibility of a shrinking world population, conserve depleting resources and unburden human beings of tedious forms of menial employment. The author's emphasis on the potential ecological impact of automation is particularly edifying. He also makes some trenchant contributions to the perennial debate about what the relationships between human beings and robots might look like. "Could there be a partnership between humans and robots?" he asks. "Seems ridiculous, but then again, why not? Partners do not have to be friends or confidants; they do not even have to know each other. The business world recognizes senior partners, general partners, limited partners, and junior partners. Often, some partners are more equal than others." Kilham equivocates somewhat on the extent to which computational intelligence mimics the human variety, but overall, readers would be hard-pressed to find a more compelling reflection on the ways artificial intelligence can help respond to our very human problems.

**A sensible, innovative consideration of how technology can alter the landscape of human life.**



## BLOND CARGO

*Lansing, John*

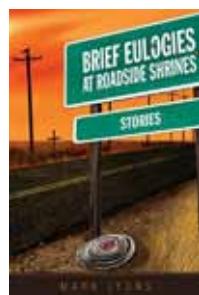
Gallery Books/Karen Hunter Publishing (292 pp.)  
\$1.99 e-book | Oct. 20, 2014

An LA private eye repays a debt when he agrees to find a mobster's missing daughter in Lansing's (*The Devil's Necktie*, 2012, etc.) second thriller to feature former NYPD detective Jack Bertolino.

Jack is reluctant to help gangster Vincent Cardona, but he owes him; Vincent helped the PI track down the man who nearly killed Jack's son, Chris. Cardona's daughter, Angelica, vanished weeks ago, and the news story of two blondes found dead has the mobster understandably perturbed—especially because they were close in age and had the same hair color as Angelica. Jack's investigation leads him to suspect Raul Vargas, a drug-dealing convict whose politically connected father got him an early release from a 15-year prison sentence. Raul may be linked to an Iraqi gang smuggling drugs, guns and even women, but stopping the gang won't be easy with Raul's powerful associates—which include the governor, mayor and city council. At first, the novel nearly chokes on subplots, particularly because much of the character and story development is

pre-existing: Jack pops Vicodin and Excedrin for chronic spinal pain from a ground zero injury; his ex-wife blames him for Chris' near death; and the Mexican Mafia puts a contract on Jack's life. But the main plot gradually dominates and delivers a scorching, suspenseful narrative, despite the fact readers know who's behind the nefarious goings-on and where Angelica is being held captive. It surprises with sudden shootouts; a scene in which Jack's almost caught while sneaking into an office at an Iraqi social club; and a video of Angelica cropping up on YouTube. Characters are sublimely complex. Mateo, for example, one of Jack's operatives, once worked for a Colombian drug cartel and became (initially) a criminal informant to avoid jail. There's not much female presence (Jack's lover, Leslie Sager, a deputy DA, typically appears in sex scenes), but Angelica is definitely one of the book's assets. She's anything but a meek prisoner, attempting an escape and doing push-ups in her Plexiglas cage.

**An unyielding pace, vigorous characters and explosive ending.**



## BRIEF EULOGIES AT ROADSIDE SHRINES *Stories*

*Lyons, Mark*

Wild River Consulting & Publishing, LLC (218 pp.)  
\$14.95 paper | \$7.99 e-book  
Oct. 7, 2014  
978-0-9839188-7-5

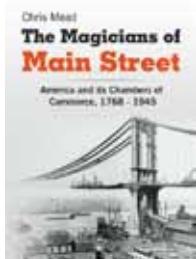


This collection of short stories cleverly exploits the idea of *descansos*, those impromptu roadside shrines that commemorate loss, calling to mind both those who have left and those who are left.

Lyons' stories are bound together by the idea that people should leave something behind in their lives. Something should honor them, whether it is a literal marker, as in "The Tallest Totem Pole in the World," or a figurative one, as in "Security Risk." In "Aaron's Auto Salvage and Restoration," Preacher Aaron, dismissed by his congregation, winds up running a junkyard in Arkansas and erecting, over the years, a great cross decorated with hubcaps, mementos of wrecks on the highway. Then, in "Arnold's Café," there's the memorial to a homeless fellow who was happy to share his roadkill cuisine with hungry strangers. In "Day of the Dead," a Border Patrol agent helps a *mojado* (someone who has entered the country illegally) erect a small *descanso* along an Arizona highway to honor his family who perished trying to cross the border; the agent then escorts him back to Mexico without the bother of paperwork. Blue-J, an orderly who catheterizes patients in a no-hope care facility, introduces some tough patients, including two who make a failed but heroic escape in their wheelchairs. (You will cheer.) More than one of these stories deals with the aftermath of war, of how it damages people. Elsewhere, in "Colors," a wife leaves a *descanso* of wrecked whirligigs after she escapes her abusive husband—so Lyons stretches the idea a bit but in a good direction. A gifted storyteller, Lyons has a wonderful ear for dialect, effortlessly going beyond mimicry and on special display with Blue-J as well

as Nunzio in "Holy Roller." In "Afterword: Seeds," Lyons explains what occasioned each story; in his case, the "write what you know" cliché worked wonders.

**An engrossing collection giving ordinary people their due.**



### THE MAGICIANS OF MAIN STREET *America and its Chambers of Commerce, 1768-1945*

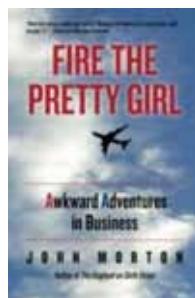
Mead, Chris

John Cruger Press (517 pp.)  
\$29.95 | \$9.95 e-book | Jul. 20, 2014  
978-0-9903033-0-5

Mead, in his debut, asserts that America's rise to economic supremacy is due in part to the work of local chambers of commerce.

Although people often associate chambers of commerce with ribbon-cuttings and trade shows, their impact on the country's overall growth has been staggering. The Transcontinental Railroad, the Hoover Dam, Charles Lindbergh's flight across the Atlantic, and innumerable roads, bridges and tourist attractions all owe something to the efforts of chamber members. Mead, who serves as the senior vice president of the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives, traces the evolution of these ambitious business organizations in this book, which is likely the most comprehensive history of the subject. As he notes, chambers operate at the intersection of business and politics, plying two great levers of power: persuasion and money. By lobbying governments and funding projects, they've played a significant, though seldom noticed, role in America's development. This far-ranging, extensively researched book highlights notable chamber exploits from before the Revolutionary War to the post-World War II era. From Hollywood's silver screen to the New York City subway system, the organizations have acted as a sort of midwife to progress. Their influence can be measured by whom they counted as friends and enemies; whether it was Daniel Webster arguing for free trade, Franklin Roosevelt stumping for the New Deal or Sheriff Seth Bullock aiming to clean up a lawless Deadwood, many historical figures felt the chambers' pull. Overall, the book casts a positive light on chamber work, as their mission gradually shifted from being purely "business watchdogs" to community benefactors seeking to improve education, law enforcement and public health. Mead does discuss less-flattering incidents, however, such as the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce's call to round up ethnic Japanese after Pearl Harbor. The book's style falls somewhere between academic prose and service journalism and deserves high marks for its clarity and structure. Its comprehensiveness, however, comes close to overkill. That said, readers will gain an appreciation for the tremendous scope of the chamber movement from the book's well-crafted introduction alone.

**A sweeping chronicle of America's tireless, though often forgotten, community advocates.**



### FIRE THE PRETTY GIRL *Awkward Adventures in Business*

Morton, John

CreateSpace (234 pp.)  
\$15.00 paper | Aug. 25, 2014  
978-1-5004-5743-3

Morton's autobiography focuses on his career path from the ordinary world of restaurant management to the exciting milieu of corporate speechwriting.

In his debut, the author offers self-deprecating humor and business insight as he tells his life story. It spans from his college days to when he launched his own communications firm and became a husband and father. Morton recalls when he was a bar manager in college and had to fire the most attractive girl on campus for workplace drunkenness: "If she weren't so pretty, I wouldn't have fired her." He then explains his reasoning: If the bar were to earn a profit, the staff had to stop giving away free drinks, and "[i]f the prettiest girl in school could be fired, so could they!" He also remembers his stint as a restaurant-management trainee after college, during which he was trying to impress a waitress; however, she thought that he was mentally disabled, because "[w]ith my garbage bag apron splattered with crab bits and my DeWayne hat, I cut a fine figure." There are other funny stories from his youth, such as those involving an arrest for a minor traffic infraction while riding his scooter, an ice-cream-eating contest gone wrong, and his time as a reclusive DJ. But, he notes, his life improved dramatically after he completed his MBA and got a job with American Airlines. At this point, the memoir seems destined to fizzle, with the author stuck in a cubicle doing financial analytics—but then Morton reveals that he was promoted to speechwriter for the company's CEO. He goes on to provide a number of insightful, often funny recollections from his 20-year career writing speeches, press releases and corporate policy memos, addressing everything from corporate turnaround efforts to labor negotiations. Overall, the memoir works best when it reveals Morton's transformation from a "funny kid who skated through business school" to a "sage business advisor who helped shape corporate policy." Along with his many personal reflections, he offers readers valuable advice about remaining courageously true to oneself.

**An entertaining memoir about a successful corporate career.**

**"Like the video games that the author takes as her inspiration, the novel is a colorful, welcome distraction from the mundane struggles of the real world."**

FROM *COMBAT BOY AND THE MONSTER TOKEN*



### **COMBAT BOY AND THE MONSTER TOKEN**

*Purbaugh, Angela Joewell*

CreateSpace (158 pp.)

\$8.99 paper | \$5.99 e-book | Jul. 13, 2014  
978-1-4953-1484-1

A young video gamer competes in an interdimensional tournament in Purbaugh's middle-grade debut novel.

When 12-year-old Tom Hock goes to San Diego's Comic-Con—home to

all things comic-book, video game, science-fiction and fantasy-related—he stumbles into a world beyond even his fertile imagination. His clutch performance in a mysterious arcade game wins him a ticket to participate in a real, live role-playing competition, battling monsters on the other side of an interdimensional portal in the convention center's basement. Conceived by a powerful, unknown Creator, it's a game in which teenage human players compete to entertain the inhuman denizens of the Monster Realm. The winner will be crowned Multidimensional Game Master, but the losers must forfeit their souls to the game itself. As if those stakes weren't high enough, the Creator has given the game its own insidious schemes for victory, and all of San Diego might be in danger if Tom—also known as "Combat Boy"—can't defeat the bosses and assemble the fabled Monster Token. For help, he relies on his hapless older brother Joey, who tends toward hysteria and self-indulgence, and Dark Pixy, a fellow gamer who's already lost her soul and wants desperately to win it back. Purbaugh draws these characters with affection and humor, providing a human center to the virtual setting. Although she offers some fun additions to a familiar genre, she wastes no time with unnecessary worldbuilding; instead, she assumes that her audience is familiar enough with fantasy and gaming tropes to dive straight into the costumes and swordplay. Just as some gamers love immersion while others simply want to grind through levels full of baddies, Purbaugh seems happiest when charging through her chapters, leaving a trail of vanquished trolls and other minions in her wake. As a result, the story is fast-paced and there's just enough at stake to keep the tension taut. Like the video games that the author takes as her inspiration, the novel is a colorful, welcome distraction from the mundane struggles of the real world.

A lighthearted middle-grade adventure filled with infectious enthusiasm.

### **LAND RUSH**

#### ***Stories From the Great Plains***

*Reiswig, Gary*

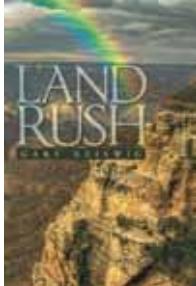
Archway Publishing (118 pp.)

\$11.99 paper | \$3.99 e-book

Jul. 30, 2014

978-1-4808-0919-2

Bookended by sections of memoir and history, these four short stories give a vivid picture of Oklahoma past and near-present.



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*Purbaugh, Angela Joewell*

CreateSpace (158 pp.)

\$8.99 paper | \$5.99 e-book | Jul. 13, 2014  
978-1-4953-1484-1

A young video gamer competes in an interdimensional tournament in Purbaugh's middle-grade debut novel.

When 12-year-old Tom Hock goes to San Diego's Comic-Con—home to

all things comic-book, video game, science-fiction and fantasy-related—he stumbles into a world beyond even his fertile imagination. His clutch performance in a mysterious arcade game wins him a ticket to participate in a real, live role-playing competition, battling monsters on the other side of an interdimensional portal in the convention center's basement. Conceived by a powerful, unknown Creator, it's a game in which teenage human players compete to entertain the inhuman denizens of the Monster Realm. The winner will be crowned Multidimensional Game Master, but the losers must forfeit their souls to the game itself. As if those stakes weren't high enough, the Creator has given the game its own insidious schemes for victory, and all of San Diego might be in danger if Tom—also known as "Combat Boy"—can't defeat the bosses and assemble the fabled Monster Token. For help, he relies on his hapless older brother Joey, who tends toward hysteria and self-indulgence, and Dark Pixy, a fellow gamer who's already lost her soul and wants desperately to win it back. Purbaugh draws these characters with affection and humor, providing a human center to the virtual setting. Although she offers some fun additions to a familiar genre, she wastes no time with unnecessary worldbuilding; instead, she assumes that her audience is familiar enough with fantasy and gaming tropes to dive straight into the costumes and swordplay. Just as some gamers love immersion while others simply want to grind through levels full of baddies, Purbaugh seems happiest when charging through her chapters, leaving a trail of vanquished trolls and other minions in her wake. As a result, the story is fast-paced and there's just enough at stake to keep the tension taut. Like the video games that the author takes as her inspiration, the novel is a colorful, welcome distraction from the mundane struggles of the real world.

A lighthearted middle-grade adventure filled with infectious enthusiasm.

### **LAND RUSH**

#### ***Stories From the Great Plains***

*Reiswig, Gary*

Archway Publishing (118 pp.)

\$11.99 paper | \$3.99 e-book

Jul. 30, 2014

978-1-4808-0919-2

Bookended by sections of memoir and history, these four short stories give a vivid picture of Oklahoma past and near-present.

Reiswig (*Water Boy*, 2012, etc.) was raised in Oklahoma and came of age in the 1950s. The first portion of memoir tells of life on the farm for Reiswig when he was a boy following in his father's footsteps. It culminates with his initiation in castrating a young bull, an act that leaves him dizzy and burdened with new wisdom he can't yet comprehend. "The Box Supper" features a boy of about the same age and a vaguely menacing character named Dootie Poor. Sexual tensions are writhing just below the surface at an innocent-seeming school fundraiser. Again, this boy knows without really knowing that things are not as they seem. In fact, all the short stories basically concern a boy about to discover himself; sometimes he is referred to as "the boy," and his parents are "the man" and "the woman," giving the stories a reverberating universality. In "Two-Door Hardtop," Dean's uncle Bernie, about to fight in Korea, buys a brand-new Ford Crown Victoria and entrusts it to Dean (who can't even drive yet) for the duration. But a very different—shellshocked—Bernie comes home and is never whole and sound again. When Bernie eventually sells the car, Dean feels betrayed. "Fair Game" is a punning title referring to high school football, rivalries and even bird hunting. In "Bright Angel Trail," family history and dynamics are exposed while the vacationing family travels a desperate hike down that titular trail in the Grand Canyon. The closing memoir section relates the Reiswig family history, starting when they were "Volga Germans" in Russia in the 18th century and then early settlers of the Oklahoma Panhandle, living through the Dust Bowl and other trying times. They were tough people living in an elemental landscape. Reiswig writes clearly and well, in a style as simple and open as the high plains, giving readers the Oklahoma of fundamentalist religion, fanatical high school sports and all the things that hold people together through their hardscrabble existences. You don't have to be an Okie to appreciate that.

Good reads to be pondered over.

### **THELONIOUS RISING**

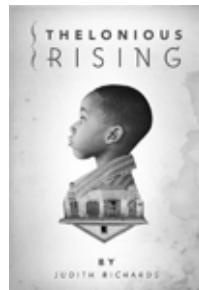
*Richards, Judith*

River's Edge Media (322 pp.)

\$19.00 paper | \$4.99 e-book

May 24, 2014

978-1-940595-04-7



In this coming-of-age adventure, a survivor rises from the destruction of post-Katrina New Orleans to not just rebuild his life, but find and claim his heritage.

A name like Thelonious Monk DeCay might present overwhelming expectations for any 9-year-old, but this New Orleans scion of music royalty is held to a higher standard, and he's expected to rise to it. Richards (*Too Blue to Fly*, 2011 etc.) has created a young, resilient mixed-race hero who can endure more lumps than the average adult. Raised by a firm but loving grandmother in the doomed 9th Ward, Monk negotiates the gang-plagued streets to the colorful French Quarter, where he and pal Percy don ragamuffin clothing and shoes with bottle caps glued to the soles as they

busk for tourists. Monk's vocalist mother is long dead from an overdose, and he's saving his money to one day search for his missing father, the renowned jazz pianist Dean "Tooth" DeCay. Few seem to want to remember DeCay, and those that do are suspiciously reticent. Richards is sly with posing mysteries to keep readers hanging and pages turning, and they're answered just as the narrative requires them. Monk has a mentor in flamboyant bachelor Quinton Toussaint, a "toucan in turquoise" who's a local scholar, raconteur and music tastemaker. A friend of DeCay's, Toussaint advises Monk in music and family history. Toussaint's lively orations—"as though [he's] about to sing every sentence"—keep readers informed without becoming pedantic, but after Hurricane Katrina devastates the city, Monk watches as friends and family die or go missing. A refugee from his flooded neighborhood, Monk unites with the mysterious and hermetic Jon Latour, the "ghost of Vieux Carré," with whom he burgles houses to eat. Chased by the police and accused of murder, Monk must survive in a city awash in crime and chaos until a desperate call from the Louisiana State Penitentiary changes everything.

A bittersweet, sobering urban adventure story of realistic love and redemption.



### THE TONE POET

*Rickert, Mark*

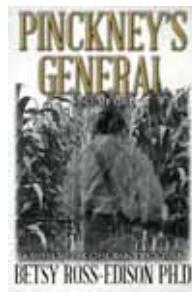
Boutique of Quality Books (438 pp.)  
\$18.95 paper | Oct. 29, 2014  
978-1-939371-42-3

In Rickert's debut novel, a composer's ability to nearly reproduce the sounds of "Astral Music" brings him in contact with a bizarre group of musicians.

During this novel's "Overture," a "fist-sized mass the purplish color of a newborn baby emerge[s] from [an] instrument's bowels." Not all the text that follows is as consistently gruesome, but that event is a harbinger of terrors to come. Readers who prefer not to suspend their disbelief, beware; others, prepare for a fantastic, twisted update on Southern Gothic horror. Its would-be hero is San Diego composer Cameron Blake, whose musical talents are being squandered scoring bad television shows when he receives a visitor with "eyes that sparkled like chips of blue ice": Leonin Bloom, the conductor of a chamber orchestra in Holloway, Tennessee. Bloom explains that Cameron isn't the only person who has heard "music from the Other Side" (which the composer experienced after a childhood car accident), but he is the one who's come closest to replicating it. Intrigued, Cameron follows Bloom to Tennessee, where he meets an orchestra of preternaturally old, rancid-smelling musicians and encounters Bloom's collection of grotesquely shaped musical instruments, with features such as skulls and "demon-faced scrolls." As Cameron's compositional work gets underway—with the aid of a special tuning fork that lets the musicians attain inner harmony—he also meets several residents of Holloway, including Simon, an immense, extremely talented violinist with

no ears; Hob, a janitor who believes his dead wife is communicating with him; and Madison, a beautiful shop owner with whom Cameron instantly connects. The overall atmosphere of Rickert's novel is impressive, as is its often shocking plot. The author's skill is most evident in his depiction of his characters, who seem instantly recognizable, even in brief appearances. As a result, their uneasy fates may disappoint some readers. (One horrendous assault early in the novel is unshakably discomforting.) When events take on epic, heaven-and-hell proportions, none of the characters is safe—but that same sense of consequence also results in an excellent work.

An ambitious, disquieting and majestic debut.



### PINCKNEY'S GENERAL *A Novel of the Civil War, Twice Told*

*Ross-Edison, Betsy*  
CreateSpace (488 pp.)  
\$18.95 paper | \$8.99 e-book  
Nov. 20, 2013  
978-1-4921-0863-4

In this debut novel, a young man from North Carolina enlists in the Confederate Army and finds himself fighting in critical battles of the Civil War.

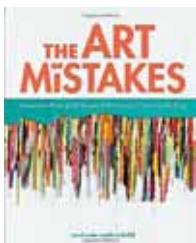
Civil War novels often end up making the battles the main characters, as many of them were so horrific that they can't help but dominate a story. Ross-Edison's novel, however, avoids that pitfall by focusing on diverse personalities, giving the war a fascinating human element. Pinckney C. Johnson enlists in Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia in August 1862, just in time to participate in the war's single bloodiest day—the Battle of Antietam on Sept. 17, which had more than 22,000 casualties. The author depicts the battle with a historian's eye for detail, highlighting Union Gen. George McClellan's caution, Lee's gambling spirit and Confederate Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson's cantankerousness. She doesn't neglect the smaller personalities, however, such as the obstinate Union Gen. Edwin "Bull" Sumner and the pious Confederate Jubal Early. Although by necessity the book includes lots of regiment numbers, battle positions and other military details, Ross-Edison keeps the writing crisp and clear, never letting the minutiae interfere with the main narrative of Pinckney's war experiences, from collecting bodies to becoming a sharpshooter. He remains with Lee's army from Antietam through the final days in 1865 of trying to break the Union stranglehold on Petersburg. Pinckney's story, with an unexpected twist, also focuses on how he meets and interacts with so many of the war's major figures along the way. It's refreshing to see President Abraham Lincoln, often treated in literature as insufferably wise and patient, being accused of "micro-managing" events and being a pain in the neck. There are also numerous subplots about ordinary people, such as slave boys Issac and Zeke, who are planning an escape from bondage. The book contains some other intriguing twists and surprises, as in a scene in which Pinckney meets

# “Herpetologist Shein and co-author Gates wrap a classic tale of conformity in some gorgeously gothic paper.”

FROM THE MONSTERJUNKIES

with McClellan. Overall, this book successfully joins the ranks of good Civil War literature.

A fine wartime novel that avoids the common landmines of its genre.



## THE ART OF MISTAKES *Unexpected Painting Techniques and the Practice of Creative Thinking*

Rothschild, Melanie

North Light Books (128 pp.)

\$24.99 paper | Nov. 12, 2014

978-1-4403-1171-0

An exuberant guide to nourishing creativity and encouraging artistic experimentation.

In this debut art book, Rothschild encourages readers to have confidence in their creative abilities, develop a tolerance for mistakes, and understand the value of teachers and other authority figures without being constrained by them. The book's first chapter is a combination of you-can-do-it encouragement and a discussion of the nature of creativity, rules and freedom, using Rothschild's own experience as both a commercially successful artist and a student intimidated by an instructor's dogmatic pronouncements as an object lesson. The second chapter is a series of exercises designed to teach basic techniques of painting with brushes, string, tape and other simple tools. Large, clear illustrations make it easy to follow the process from blank canvas to finished product, and the instructions are simple enough for novice artists to follow with confidence. Throughout the exercises, Rothschild encourages readers

to lessen the fear of making mistakes both by thinking about potential errors in a new way and by working with cheap materials, and she suggests sources for acquiring inexpensive paint and other tools. High-quality photographs of Rothschild's picture frames, painted furniture and other creations appear throughout the book, providing the reader with a visual illustration of the discussions of art and creativity in the book's text, as well as a deeper understanding of the possibilities inherent in the basic techniques explained in the exercises. The philosophical consideration of the role of mistakes in developing creativity is handled effectively, serving as a backdrop to the guide's overall practical approach and demonstrating one of Rothschild's central theses—that simple language and an attitude of inclusivity are the most effective ways to encourage both appreciation of art and participation in its creation. The result is an effective, well-designed and engaging book that will appeal to its target audience of creative individuals who have not pursued formal art training or have not found it useful in developing their artistic confidence.

An attractively packaged and well-written handbook for aspiring artists that encourages readers to find value in mistakes as well as successful creations.



## THE MONSTERJUNKIES *An American Family Odyssey*

Shein, Erik Daniel; Gates, Theresa A.

Ark Watch Holdings LLC (188 pp.)

\$9.99 paper | \$0.99 e-book

Mar. 14, 2014

978-0-615-99015-6

From Shein (*Gods and Angels*, 2013) and Gates comes the YA tale of a family for whom cryptozoology is a way of life.

Ninth-grader Cromwell "Crow" Monsterjunkie lives with his family near Foggy Point, Maine. His parents, Talon and Pandora, use their mansion as a sanctuary for rare and endangered creatures, including Beau the sasquatch, Chico the chupacabra and Periwinkle the pterodactyl. Quiet Crow doesn't make friends easily—unlike his older sister, Indigo—partly because of the burden of secrecy that comes with being a Monsterjunkie; if the public knew about their rare creatures, chaos might descend on the family. And yet, since adolescence comes with enough inner turmoil, Talon and Pandora allow their children to begin inviting small groups of trusted friends to tour their elaborate property, which has a laboratory, Varmint Hollow and the Weird Willow tree. Life grows tense, however, when a group of bullying classmates, led by the viciously entitled Ruth Grimes, start targeting Crow, Indigo and their new friends. Worse, in an attempt to make the town safer for real Americans, Ruth's wealthy father decides to stir up trouble for the animal-loving Monsterjunkies. In dealing with the bullies, Crow must choose to either sink to their level or rise above it, his family's secrets at stake. Herpetologist Shein and co-author Gates wrap a classic tale of conformity in some gorgeously gothic paper. Sprinkled throughout are great tidbits

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of cryptozoology: "The gorilla and the giant squid were both thought to be myths, yet in fact, are quite real." Lighthearted humor is the primary tone elsewhere; Beau the eloquent sasquatch, for example, says he was "frankly, well, a little embarrassed" to be naked while scaring some trespassers. Later, the authors hope to rally the parents of actual bullied children—whether it involves common nastiness or homophobia—with the advice that "all it takes is a heroic kid to step in...to disrupt the situation." Facebook bullying, unfortunately, proves tougher to handle. Though the ending feels abrupt, a second book awaits fans craving another fix of Crow and company.

**Warm, smart and educational.**

### A TEACHER OF THE HOLOCAUST AND OTHER STORIES

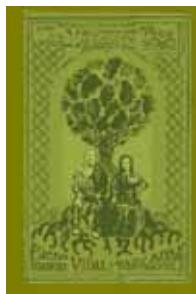
Teichman, Milton

Page Publishing, Inc. (285 pp.)  
978-1-62838-460-4

In Teichman's (co-editor: *Truth and Lamentation: Stories and Poems on the Holocaust*, 1994) short story collection, characters strive to form meaningful connections to each other and to their traditions.

In the collection's first, titular story, set in New York City and the surrounding areas in 1975, a divorced professor named Martin begins a relationship through the classifieds with a Frenchwoman named Rachel, who is a Holocaust survivor. While seemingly a simple tale about two lonely, middle-aged people looking for love, the story highlights the immense gulf between European Jews who suffered in the Holocaust and their American cousins who escaped it, "by an accident of fortune." The second story in the collection features a different professor; he also teaches a course on Holocaust literature and also meets an unstable woman who challenges his worldview. In this case, the woman is a half-Jewish student whose plan to formally convert to Judaism is derailed by her bouts with mental illness. In each of the book's 12 stories, there are small, but unbridgeable, distances between the characters, be they professor and student, parent and child, man and wife, two friends or two brothers. The majority of these characters are Jewish men who came of age in New York in the years following World War II. Their stories reflect not only settings, but sensibilities of the mid- to late 20th century. While Teichman's stories are by no means groundbreaking, they are well-crafted. Fixations on aging and health, as well as the frequent views back toward the second world war and the Holocaust, mark this as an older generation's book, though these calm, experienced stories hold meaning for readers of any age. Teichman's protagonists are men who live largely in the world of the mind, and much of their stories' action is internal. Small transgressions are committed. Small mercies are granted. Small redemptions are achieved. Ultimately, the reader is left with a simple message: "A man can do wrong, but he can improve."

**A quiet, satisfying collection well-situated in the American Jewish literary tradition.**



### THE PARADISE TREE

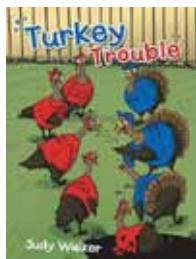
Vidal, Elena Maria

CreateSpace (252 pp.)  
\$11.99 paper | \$9.99 e-book  
Sep. 19, 2014  
978-1-5006-5602-7

An Irish immigrant builds a new life in Canada, the decades marked by marriage, children and the odd otherworldly encounter.

Vidal (*Madame Royale*, 2010, etc.) successfully transforms family stories into a historical novel that chronicles the life of her great-great-great-grandfather Daniel O'Connor, who established a homestead in Ontario in the 19th century. O'Connor, a blacksmith living in County Cork, Ireland, is frustrated in his desire to train as a doctor because of English laws restricting Catholics' religious freedom and economic chances. When the political activities of his wild younger brother Owen cast suspicion on O'Connor, he flees Ireland, carrying just two mementos of his homeland—a white rosebush uprooted by his mother and a "paradise tree," a wooden crucifix so called because it represents a ladder of suffering to climb to heaven. Nine years later, he has carved Long Point farm out of the wilderness, creating a home despite the new continent's own anti-Catholic prejudice. He marries Brigit, a girl 18 years younger than he is, then almost loses her to Owen, who arrives at the farm after his own midnight departure from Eire. But when a vision of his mother appears to him, hands on hips, he finds the will to throw his brother out of the house and confront his bride. She sobs and swears she will die of shame, insisting, "'Oh, yes, I will die. I will,' she choked. 'But fret not....I'll be getting over it.'" And she does, bearing 11 children. The novel follows them as they grow to adulthood, marry and have children of their own, with each section of the book told through the eyes of a different character. Though the story unwinds slowly, it never drags.

**An imaginative, meticulously told history that will especially appeal to those with Irish roots.**



### TURKEY TROUBLE

Walker, Judy

Westbow Press (36 pp.)  
\$15.99 | \$16.95 paper | \$3.99 e-book  
Jun. 4, 2014  
978-1-4908-4371-1

A troupe of troublesome turkeys is transformed by two tenacious trainers in this alliterative debut for early readers.

Every year, the king of Yummy-Yummy Land looks forward to choosing the tenderest turkey at his turkey ranch for the annual Royal Feast. But as the story opens, he discovers that the turkeys are terribly ill-mannered and unkempt to boot. On the advice of his wise owl sidekick Sir Who, he decides to hire some trainers to whip the turkeys into shape. Specifically, he selects Tillie, a tender turkey with very

polite manners and a large heart, and a donkey named Pokey, whom Tillie considers “a friend who is kind and treats [her] tenderly.” (Sir Who notes, “We all become the way we are treated!”) With the help of three other turkey trainers—Timothy Tuxedo, a penguin; Tippy-Toes TuTu, a flamingo; and Tennessee Tyler, a horse—Tillie and Pokey help the turkeys understand that the key to being tender is to always look, do and be one’s very best. After successfully training them, Pokey worries that Tillie and the turkeys have been invited not to eat dinner, but to *be* dinner. Thankfully, after some amusing high jinks, the tale has a happy ending. The story told here originally began as an ongoing puppet show that retired teacher Walker and her co-worker used to share with their students, and it reflects its origins in its larger-than-life, silly characters and episodic narration. The real fun is not in the story, nor even in its lesson that being loved helps people become better at showing love, but in the frequent alliterative, rhyming phrases sprinkled throughout the text. Independent young readers will enjoy the twisty sentences (“Pokey and Tillie tapped their toes as they watched the turkeys twirl to the tunes”) and repeated catchphrases (“‘Okey dokey!’ said Pokey”). The cartoonlike illustrations have plenty of child appeal, but the amount of text per page may be best suited to confident, independent readers.

**A clever take on the golden rule that will amuse children who like reading tongue twisters aloud.**

#### *This Issue's Contributors*



#### **ADULT**

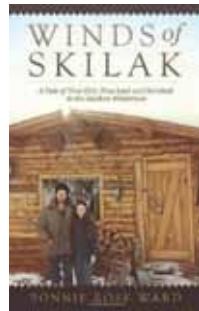
Maude Adjarian • Mark Athitakis • Joseph Barbato • Adam benShea • Amy Boaz • Jeffrey Burke Tobias Carroll • Lee E. Cart • Dave DeChristopher • Kathleen Devereaux • Daniel Dyer • Lisa Elliott • Anjali Enjeti • Julie Foster • Peter Franck • Miri Franz • Bob Garber • Alan Goldsher April Holder • Jessica Jernigan • Robert M. Knight • Megan Kurashige • Paul Lamey Louise Leetch • Judith Leitch • Lisa Levy • Peter Lewis • Elsbeth Lindner • Joe Maniscalco Virginia C. McGuire • Don McLeese • Gregory McNamee • Carole Moore • Clayton Moore Jennifer Morell • Sarah Morgan • Liza Nelson • Mike Newirth • John Noffsinger • Sarah Norris Mike Oppenheim • Jim Piechota • Gary Presley • Amy Reiter • Lloyd Sachs • Leslie Safford Bob Sanchez • Chaitali Sen • Polly Shulman • William P. Shumaker • Rosanne Simeone • Linda Simon • Wendy Smith • Margaret E. Spangenberg • Rachel Sugar • Matthew Tiffany • Sheila Trask • Claire Trazenfeld • Hope Wabuke • Steve Weinberg • Rodney Welch • Joan Wilentz Marion Winik • Monica Wyatt

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## **WINDS OF SKILAK** *A Tale of True Grit, True Love and Survival in the Alaskan Wilderness*

**Ward, Bonnie Rose**

Two Harbors Press (404 pp.)

\$18.99 paper | \$5.99 e-book

Dec. 31, 2013

978-1-62652-471-2

Ward's spirited debut memoir documents the privations and advantages of life in Alaska's wilderness.

The author was just 25 years old in 1980 when her husband, Sam, quit his job and sold their Ohio home. Sam was from West Virginia mountain stock and had strong survival and hunting skills, so they decided to go to Alaska. Although suburbanite Ward was initially reluctant about going on such an adventure, she threw herself into her “new role as a wilderness wife.” After a five-day journey, they settled on Skilak Lake on the Kenai Peninsula, known for its sudden storms. They started out in a tent, eating nothing but rice and not showering for a month. The chapter on how they built their cabin, “By the Sweat of Our Backs,” particularly stands out. Throughout, black-and-white photographs and lively, re-created dialogue show how the Wards adjusted to new standards. “We eventually learned to slow our pace to nature’s speed. Compared with squatting in the woods, an outhouse was quite a luxury,” Ward writes. A few close friendships with other residents eased their loneliness, even after 2 feet of snow and a frozen lake isolated them during the winter. However, the cozy, *Little House on the Prairie*-style domesticity of their “little piece of paradise” couldn’t keep danger at bay, as when a tree fell and broke Sam’s back. In this memoir, Ward strikes a good balance between repetitive daily tasks—foraging, canning meat, making blueberry jam, milking goats and sewing leather garments—and more momentous events, such as an earthquake, a view of the northern lights, and run-ins with bears. She also uses a menagerie of animals, both domestic and wild, to provide much comic relief. Along the way, Ward emphasizes the spiritual as well as the practical implications of becoming a pioneer woman: “The wilderness made me who I am today....Although I remained far from the nearest church, I felt closer to God than ever before.” The descriptions of nature sometimes shade purple (“Autumn showed her brilliance by clothing the mountains in a skirt of tie-dyed glory”), but more often than not, the language is restrained. The couple’s Alaskan odyssey lasted 15 years, so there’s still plenty of room for future sequels.

**An often engaging story of outhouses, canned moose and bears—oh, my!**

# Appreciations: The Warren Commission Report Turns 50

BY GREGORY MCNAMEE



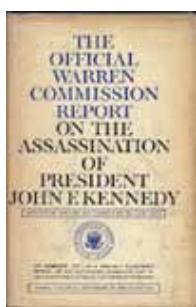
*Howard P. Willens was a Commission member whose account of the Commission's work was published last year.*

WAS EVER A BOOK SO DISBELIEVED from the moment of its release as the set of documents known as the Warren Commission Report? Perhaps O.J. Simpson's *If I Did It*, to be sure, but in the annals of official explanation, nothing has become so completely a byword for the semantic domain labeled, "Yeah, right, uh-huh."

It did not help that the Commission was rushed from the beginning. John F. Kennedy, whom the report lauds as "a young and vigorous leader whose years of public and private life stretched before him," was killed on Nov. 22, 1963, in downtown Dallas, Texas. Just 10 months later, the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy, headed by Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren—whence the Warren Commission—released an 889-page summation of its findings, which was but prelude to the release, in November 1964, of an additional 27 volumes of supporting material.

So many documents in so short a time led contemporary critics to wonder if we weren't being deliberately overwhelmed by data. It did not help, either, that key bits of evidence in that mountain had gone missing, evidence that has exercised conspiracy theorists ever since. (Just whisper "Parkland" if you want to get a rise out of them.) And it did not help at all that the Commission's report was so insistent that Lee Harvey Oswald, against all probability, was the lone shooter that day in Dallas—and was then conveniently gunned down a couple of days later, so that, as the commissioners grayly remarked, "it [is] no longer possible to arrive at the complete story of the assassination through normal judicial procedures during the trial of the alleged assassin."

Robert F. Kennedy, the president's brother and the sitting attorney general at the time of the assassination, is said to have called the Warren Report, all 27 volumes of it, "shoddy." Certainly Americans have thought so for half a century. Even today, books appear that attack its findings. Philip Shenon's *A Cruel and Shocking Act*, which appeared last year, was perhaps the most comprehensive of the recent crop, linking the assassination closely to the Kennedy administration's war, overt and covert, on Fidel Castro. The Cuban connection is but one of several threads that conspiracy theorists have followed over the years, most of which made their way into Oliver Stone's 1991 film *JFK*, which passes for history among all too many people who weren't alive to remember Nov. 22.



Occasionally, though, a book comes along that supports the Warren Report. (The report, incidentally, is available online at [www.archives.gov/research/jfk/warren-commission-report](http://www.archives.gov/research/jfk/warren-commission-report).) Foremost among these is Commission member Howard P. Willens' *History Will Prove Us Right*, which concludes, "We share the sense of implausibility that someone like Oswald could have assassinated our president acting alone." Yet act alone Oswald did, Willens maintains, riding a perfect storm of coincidences.

We can be confident of only one conclusion: Namely, that we'll be arguing about who killed him for as long as anyone remembers John Fitzgerald Kennedy and his sad end.

*Gregory McNamee is a contributing editor at Kirkus Reviews.*

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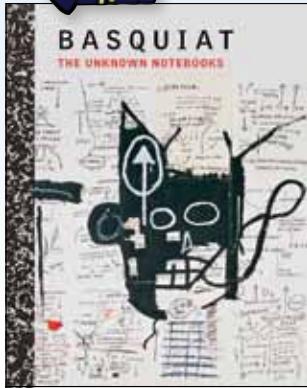
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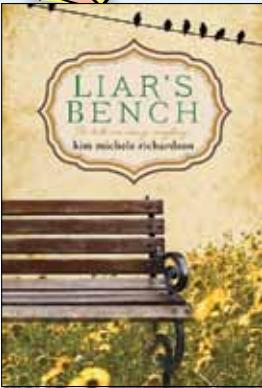


Dieter Buchhart and  
Tricia Laughlin Bloom

#### **Basquiat:**

The Unknown Notebooks  
  
Jean-Michel Basquiat was a phenomenon. In the late '70s he became notorious for his primitive style graffiti, poetry art, and his later collaborations with Andy Warhol. A self-taught artist with encyclopedic and cross-cultural interests, Basquiat was influenced by comics, advertising, children's sketches, pop art, hip-hop, politics, and everyday life. This first ever survey of the rarely seen notebooks of Basquiat features more than 150 pages of the artist's handwritten notes, poems, and drawings. A traveling exhibit will begin at the Brooklyn Museum in April 2015.

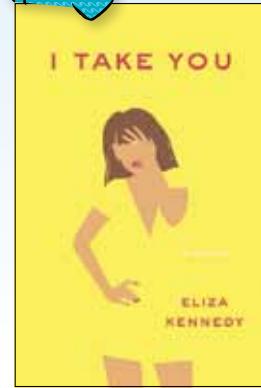
978-0-8478-4582-8 | \$50.00/\$50.00C  
12,500 | Rizzoli | HC | March



Kim Michele Richardson  
**Liar's Bench**

Set in 1970s Kentucky, *Liar's Bench* explores civil rights and family secrets. On Mudas Summers' seventeenth birthday, her beloved Mama, Ella, is found hanging from the rafters of their home. Most people in Peckinpaw, Kentucky, assume that Ella's no-good husband did the deed. Others think Ella grew tired of his abuse and did it herself. Muddy is determined to find out for sure either way, especially once she finds strange papers hidden amongst her mama's possessions. For readers of *The Secret Life of Bees*.

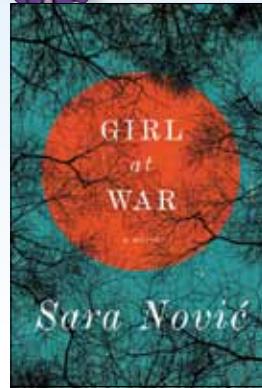
978-1-61773-733-6 | \$15.00/\$16.95C  
25,000 | Kensington | TR | April  
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Eliza Kennedy  
**I Take You: A Novel**

Junior attorney Lily Wilder is smart, sexy, self-assured, and shockingly promiscuous for a woman mere days away from her wedding. She is an amazing character—she has had a rocky emotional past and made some questionable choices. Unlike anything you've ever read before, this joyous and ribald debut introduces a fabulously confident protagonist whose choices offer genuine insights into the true meaning of fidelity. Lily and Will's romantic destiny may hang in the balance, but one thing's for sure—readers will find true love with *I Take You*. For readers of *Where'd You Go, Bernadette*, *The Engagements*, and *Bridget Jones's Diary*.

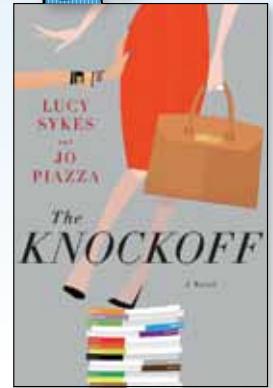
978-0-553-41782-1 | \$24.00/\$28.00C  
100,000 | Crown | HC | May  
E 978-0-553-41783-8  
AD: 978-0-553-39953-0  
CD: 978-0-553-54548-7



Sara Nović  
**Girl at War: A Novel**

As a huge fan of Téa Obreht's *The Tiger's Wife*, I was immediately drawn to *Girl at War*, and Sara Nović's powerful debut absolutely delivers. Ten-year-old Ana is a carefree tomboy who runs the streets of Croatia's capital with her best friend, Luka. But as civil war breaks out across Yugoslavia, soccer games are replaced by air raid drills. And, when tragedy strikes, a daring escape to America becomes Ana's only chance for survival. Part war saga, part coming-of-age tale, *Girl at War* is an extraordinary novel that confronts the enduring impact of war and of friendship.

978-0-8129-9634-0 | \$26.00/\$31.00C  
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Lucy Sykes and Jo Piazza  
**The Knockoff: A Novel**

Perfect for fans of *The Devil Wears Prada*, this delightful novel follows Imogen Tate, editor in chief of *Glossy* magazine, who finds her twenty-something former assistant, Eve Morton, plotting to reduce *Glossy* into an app—with herself at the helm, of course. Imogen, darling of the fashion world, may have Diane von Furstenberg on speed dial, but she can't tell Facebook from Foursquare and once got her iPhone stuck in Japanese for two days. Can she defeat Eve and save her beloved magazine or is it time for her to hang up her Manolos? The main character is someone to root for, her nemesis SO deserving of a come-uppance, and the ending supremely satisfying.  
978-0-385-53958-6 | \$24.95/\$28.95C  
75,000 | Doubleday | HC | May  
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