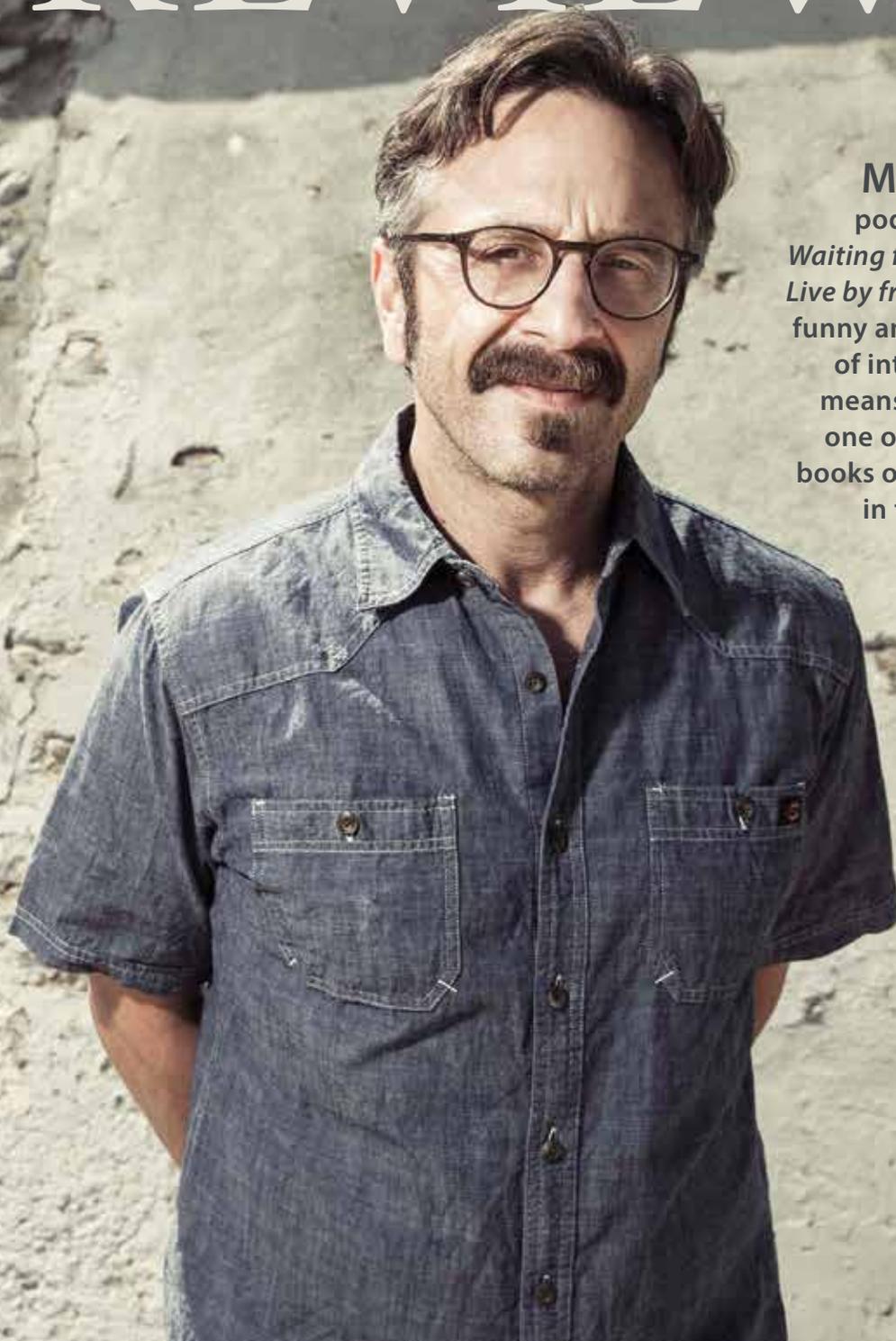


Featuring 446 Industry-First Reviews of Fiction, Nonfiction and Children's & Teen

KIRKUS

VOL. LXXXV, NO. 16 | 15 AUGUST 2017

REVIEWS



In October, comedian **Marc Maron's** *WTF* podcast becomes a book, *Waiting for the Punch: Words to Live by from the WTF Podcast*, a funny and powerful collection of interviews about what it means to be human. It's just one of the most anticipated books of the fall under review in this Fall Preview issue. p. 29

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK:

The Fall Preview Issue

BY CLAIBORNE SMITH



Photo courtesy Michael Thad Carter

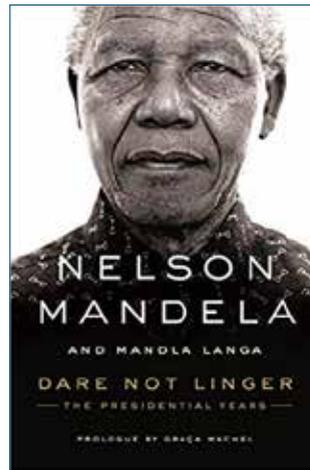
Claiborne Smith

The sensation of discovering great new books is wonderful any time of the year. It's nice to find young talent or an excellent new book by an established writer in the winter; it's nice in the summer. Spring is good, too. But for the sheer prevalence of literary talent, the fall has all other seasons beat.

This would normally be the sentence where I begin to describe all the forthcoming fall books I'm excited about. Instead of listening to me, though, check out the lists and thoughtful round-ups of books our editors have created in our Fall Preview pages.

The editors are limited to choosing 30 books in each section—major books they know will be getting attention this fall and debuts that they think you should consider (because she is in charge of such a massive section, our children's and teen editor Vicky Smith chose 30 picture books, 30 middle-grade titles, and 30 YA books). We've created a number of lists in the Fall Preview pages that highlight fall trends and the most anticipated books of the season (the first list, Big Names in Fall Fiction 2017, appears on p. 8; you'll find several lists in each section of this special issue).

Several months ago, we asked publishers to send us three books per imprint that they hoped we would review in the Fall Preview, but there are always galleys that don't make it to us in enough time to be reviewed for this issue. Some books are embargoed or publishers are working on them until the last minute. So that you'll have a complete sense of all the interesting books coming out this fall, here are a few major fall books we would have liked to review in the Fall Preview but didn't receive early enough to get covered in this issue (look for our reviews of these books closer to their publication dates): *It Takes a Village* by Hillary Rodham Clinton, illustrated by Marla Frazee (Sept. 26); *Dare Not Linger: The Presidential Years* by Nelson Mandela and Mandla Langa (Oct. 24); *Language of Thorns* by Leigh Bardugo (Sept. 26); *We Were Eight Years in Power: An American Tragedy* by Ta-Nehisi Coates (Oct. 3); *The Rooster Bar* by John Grisham (Oct. 24); *Leonardo da Vinci* by Walter Isaacson (Oct. 17); *We're Going to Need More Wine: Stories that Are Funny, Complicated, and True* by Gabrielle Union (Oct. 17); and *Piper* by Thirteen Reasons Why writer Jay Asher, co-written with Jessica Freeburg and illustrated by Jeff Stokely (Oct. 31). Here's to happy fall reading!



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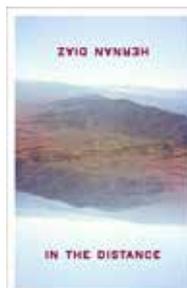
FALL PREVIEW SPECIAL ISSUE

FICTION



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IN THE DISTANCE

Diaz, Hernan
Coffee House (272 pp.)
\$16.95 paper | \$16.99 e-book
Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-56689-488-3
978-1-56689-497-5 e-book

Violent, often surrealistic Wild West yarn, Cormac McCarthy by way of Gabriel García Márquez.

Håkan Söderström is a force of nature, a wild giant whose name, in the frontier America in which he has landed, is rendered as the Hawk. On the docks back in Gothenburg he was separated from his brother, Linus, and he has sworn to find him in a land so big he can scarcely comprehend it. The Hawk lands in California and ventures eastward only to find himself in all kinds of odd company—crooks, con men, prophets, and the rare honest man—and a tide of history that keeps pushing him back to the west. Along the way, his exploits, literary scholar Diaz (Hispanic Institute/Columbia Univ.; *Borges, Between History and Eternity*, 2012) writes, are so numerous that he has become a legend in a frontier full of them; for one thing, says an awe-struck traveler, “He was offered his own territory by the Union, like a state, with his own laws and all. Just to keep him away.” The Hawk protests that most of what has been said about him is untrue—but not all of it. As Diaz, who delights in playful language, lists, and stream-of-consciousness prose, reconstructs his adventures, he evokes the multicultural nature of westward expansion, in which immigrants did the bulk of the hard labor and suffered the gravest dangers. One fine set piece is a version of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, in which religious fanatics dressed as Indians attack a pioneer party—save that in Diaz’s version, Håkan tears his way across the enemy force with a righteous fury befitting an avenging angel. “He knew he had killed and maimed several men,” Diaz writes, memorably, “but what remained most vividly in his mind was the feeling of sorrow and senselessness that came with each act: those worth defending were already dead, and each of his killings made his own struggle for self-preservation less justifiable.”

Not for the faint of heart, perhaps, but an ambitious and thoroughly realized work of revisionist historical fiction. (This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.)



MANHATTAN BEACH

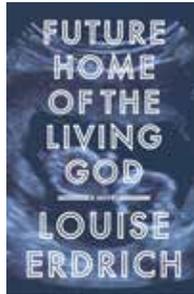
Egan, Jennifer
Scribner (448 pp.)
\$28.00 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-4767-1673-2



After stretching the boundaries of fiction in myriad ways (including a short story written in Tweets), Pulitzer Prize winner Egan (*A Visit from the Goon Squad*, 2010, etc.) does perhaps the only thing left that could surprise: she writes a thoroughly traditional novel.

It shouldn't really be surprising, since even Egan's most experimental work has been rich in characters and firmly grounded in sharp observation of the society around them. Here, she brings those qualities to a portrait of New York City during the Depression and World War II. We meet 12-year-old Anna Kerrigan accompanying her adored father, Eddie, to the Manhattan Beach home of suave mobster Dexter Styles. Just scraping by "in the dregs of 1934," Eddie is lobbying Styles for a job; he's sick of acting as bagman for a crooked union official, and he badly needs money to buy a wheelchair for his severely disabled younger daughter, Lydia. Having rapidly set up these situations fraught with conflict, Egan flashes forward several years: Anna is 19 and working at the Brooklyn Naval Yard, the sole support of Lydia and their mother since Eddie disappeared five years earlier. Adult Anna is feisty enough to elbow her way into a job as the yard's first female diver and reckless enough, after she runs into him at one of his nightclubs, to fall into a one-night stand with Dexter, who initially doesn't realize whose daughter she is. Disastrous consequences ensue for them both but only after Egan has expertly intertwined three narratives to show us what happened to Eddie while drawing us into Anna's and Dexter's complicated longings and aspirations. The Atlantic and Indian oceans play significant roles in a novel saturated by the sense of water as a vehicle of destiny and a symbol of continuity (epigraph by Melville, naturally). A fatal outcome for one appealing protagonist is balanced by Shakespearean reconciliation and renewal for others in a tender, haunting conclusion.

Realistically detailed, poetically charged, and utterly satisfying: apparently there's nothing Egan can't do. (*This review originally appeared in the 07/01/17 issue.*)



FUTURE HOME OF THE LIVING GOD

Erdrich, Louise
Harper/HarperCollins (304 pp.)
\$28.99 | Nov. 14, 2017
978-0-06-269405

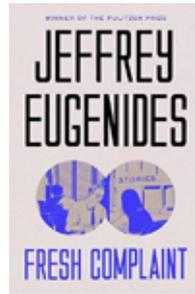


The idea that evolution could suddenly move backward may seem like an incredible fantasy, but in this dreamlike, suspenseful novel, it's a fitting analogue for the environmental degradation we

already experience.

A biological apocalypse has animals suddenly appearing in trippy, shocking manifestations—a dragonfly with a 6-foot wingspan, "golden-green eyes the size of softballs," for example. Humans aren't immune to "life dissolving into its mineral components," which is why the new American government, the Church of the New Constitution, expands the original intent of the Patriot Act and requires all pregnant women to report to birthing centers. During a biological apocalypse set two months in the future, when the borders between Mexico and Canada are sealed off, Cedar Hawk Songmaker—26, pregnant, and with a burning independent streak—eventually learns why the government will do anything to ensure she has her baby under strict surveillance. Not all the pregnant women are as useful to the authorities as Cedar is, because they think she has a rare "normal," unaltered fetus in her womb. Born Ojibwe but adopted by earnest white liberals in Minneapolis, Cedar is a flinty, determined, spiritual woman whose hesitance to trust others comes in handy in a world where suddenly no one should be trusted. And Cedar has three worlds to navigate: the one she was raised in and the Ojibwe family she is just coming to know, not to mention a United States ruled by a religious government in which a creepy, all-seeing, robotic figure named Mother hunts for Cedar. Framed as a letter to Cedar's unborn child, this novel is bracing, humane, dedicated to witnessing the plight of women in a cruel universe, and full of profound spiritual questions and observations. Like some of Erdrich's (*LaRose*, 2016, etc.) earlier work, it shifts adroitly in time and has a thoughtful, almost mournful insight into life on a Native reservation. If Erdrich hasn't previously ventured into tropes normally employed by sci-fi writers, she doesn't show the inexperience here.

There is much to rue in this novel about our world but also hope for salvation: "I think we have survived because we love beauty and because we find each other beautiful," as the novel's protagonist puts it. "I think it may be our strongest quality."



FRESH COMPLAINT

Eugenides, Jeffrey
Farrar, Straus and Giroux (304 pp.)
\$27.00 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-0-374-20306-1



Well-off, well-intentioned people find their just-so lives upended, often in curious ways, in this first collection of short stories by Eugenides (*The Marriage Plot*, 2011, etc.).

Two of the stories here are close cousins to Eugenides' novels: "Air Mail" features Mitchell, the lovelorn spiritual seeker in *The Marriage Plot*, battling a case of dysentery in Thailand, while "The Oracular Vulva" concerns a researcher studying the same intersexual characteristics that stoked the plot of *Middlesex* (2002). But neither of those stories reads like a lesser dry run for a more serious work, and the collection throughout is marked by a rich wit, an eye for detail, and a sense of the absurd. The plots often involve relationships

FORECAST FOR THIS FALL: LESS SMARTPHONE, MORE BOOKS



IF YOU'VE BEEN GLUED to your phone for the past year, unable to look away from the news long enough to read a book, this season will offer many fictional enticements to help you break the Twitter habit. There are novels by Louise Erdrich, Cristina García, Nicole Krauss, James McBride, Alice McDermott, Claire Messud, and Jesmyn Ward

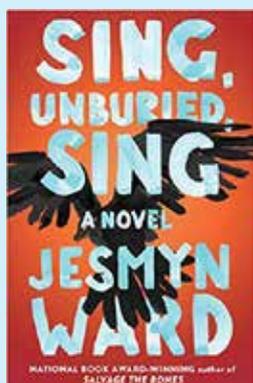
to look forward to. Jeffrey Eugenides is publishing his first book of stories. Stephen King has written a novel with one son, Owen, and his other son, Joe Hill, has a novel of his own. The Martian author Andy Weir returns with *Artemis*, which has been a hit in my son's bunk at camp this summer.

Former Kirkus reviewer Carmen Maria Machado is publishing her first book of stories, *Her Body and Other Parties*, which our review says "showcase her fluency in the bizarre, magical, and sharply frightening depths of the imagination." Other notable debuts include *The Resurrection of Joan Ashby* by film producer Cherise Wolas and *Autonomous* by iO9 co-founder Annalee Newitz. Book-Twitter favorite Celeste Ng returns with a stunning second novel, *Little Fires Everywhere*.

There are so many notable books coming out that we couldn't fit them all in this fall preview. One of my favorite books of 2013 was *Visitation Street* by Ivy Pochoda, a crime novel that's just as much a portrait of Red Hook, an industrial neighborhood in Brooklyn. Pochoda returns this season with *Wonder Valley*, and this time she's exploring Los Angeles. Our review calls it "absorbing, finely detailed, nasty California noir." I can't wait to read it. Dan Brown's *Origin* is embargoed until the pub date of Oct. 3, so we don't have an early review, and the same goes for David Lagercrantz's continuation of the Lisbeth Salander series, *The Girl Who Takes an Eye for an Eye* (Sept. 12).

So to paraphrase Clay Smith on our podcast, *Fully Booked*, you know what to do—turn off that phone and go read a book! —L.M.

Laurie Muchnick is the fiction editor.



hitting the skids, as in "Early Music," in which a couple watches their artistic ambitions crash into the brick wall of fiscal responsibility, or "Find the Bad Guy," about a green-card marriage gone awry. (The contents of the narrator's pockets tell a pathetic tale in itself: "loose change, 5-Hour Energy bottle, and an Ashley Madison ad torn from some magazine.") Eugenides enjoys putting his characters into odd predicaments: "Baster" centers on a woman pursuing a pregnancy via the title's kitchen gadget, while the writer who narrates "Great Experiment" contemplates defrauding his wealthy but stingy employer, using de Tocqueville's writings as a rationalization. But Eugenides never holds up his characters for outright mockery, and the two fine new stories that bookend the collection gracefully navigate darker territory: "Complainers" is narrated by a woman confronting her longtime friend's dementia, and "Fresh Complaint" turns on a young Indian-American woman's provocative scheme to escape an arranged marriage. We humans are well-meaning folk, Eugenides means to say, but life tends to force us into bad behavior.

Sprightly or serious, Eugenides consistently writes about complex lives with depth and compassion. (*This review originally appeared in the 07/01/17 issue.*)



CATAPULT

Fridlund, Emily

Sarabande (240 pp.)

\$16.95 paper | \$9.95 e-book

Oct. 10, 2017

978-1-946448-05-7

978-1-946448-06-4 e-book



Eleven stories of misshapen families and broken friendships disturb and unsettle.

Fridlund follows *History of Wolves* (2017), her marvelous and preternaturally accomplished first novel, with a collection of jarring and polished short fiction. The craft is evident in the perfect titles and the observational acuity of the sentences. In a story called "One You Run From, the Other You Fight," a childless woman trespasses into a boy's room: "Teenage boys always unnerved her, with their dramatic bodies and bad skin, their needy flirtation. They couldn't decide if they wanted to be liked or hated." In quick phrases, Fridlund's characters are vividly embodied, such as Lora, 34, "with her lavish red nails, fingering the dry skin on her elbows." The narrator of this story, "Here, Still," begins with the ambiguous "I do not like her much, Lora, my best friend." Neither will the reader. Fridlund writes about lives that feel, to their owners, "fundamentally unreal and insubstantial." In "Marco Polo," a young man describes his marriage slipping away like the child's game. He ends his tale by donning his ex's earplugs and mask for sleep, "faceless, pitiless, and perfect." The only narrator with much agency is Katie, who remembers being an alpha girl of 14. She begins that summer reading vampire stories and ends it sexually mounting a boy her age who tells her "No, wait" in the unnerving title story, "Catapult." It captures Katie's intelligence and

Hanks writes like a writer, not a movie star.

UNCOMMON TYPE

heedless insistence on launching from childhood. This is darker, thornier terrain than Mattie Furstun navigated in *History of Wolves*, but the geography is similar: the Upper Midwest, the Iron Range, existentially lonely rural and suburban outposts. Each story mixes its humans with other mammals—rabbits, mice, bears, and especially dogs. Fridlund insists on functions primal and rude. She likes the color yellow for teeth and toenails, linoleum, rabbit fur, and toothpicks. Her stories evoke Flannery O'Connor's masterly way with grotesquery but deviate in Fridlund's contempt for faith.

Bracing, often brilliant stories deliver a shock to the routine narratives we tell.



HERE IN BERLIN

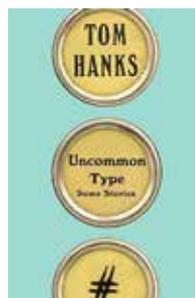
García, Cristina
Counterpoint (224 pp.)
\$26.00 | Oct. 10, 2017
978-1-61902-959-0



A visitor to Berlin accumulates the haunting stories of its residents.

When a nameless traveler comes to contemporary Berlin, to learn about the city and about herself, she confronts first the challenge of language and then, once that is conquered, the challenge of understanding. As she meets more people, walks more streets, her diligent recording illustrates how an interloper can learn by listening, observing, asking. As one character astutely and elegantly notes, “When one no longer belongs to a tribe—or is a newcomer, a visitor, like you—everything reveals itself.” Along the visitor’s way she meets characters of all kind, their binding attribute the lasting effects of the desperation, trauma, and violence of World War II: a Jewish woman who hid for 37 days, buried in a sarcophagus in a church graveyard, surviving on poetry; a man who lived through the war as a “homosexual decoy, recruiting foreign informants”; a woman whose mother tried to kill her three times—once by “stuffing an oil-soaked rag down her throat,” once by abandoning her in a jungle, and once by slashing her with a blunt machete—who is now pregnant with her own child; a man who traveled to Alabama for the Nazi Party to research the preaching abilities of African-American pastors so their skills might be adapted for the Führer. García, author of *Dreaming in Cuban* (1992), which was a finalist for the National Book Award, and more recently *King of Cuba* (2013), is a skilled writer, crafting a complete story from the threads of many glimpses. In the assembly of these glimpses, she has created a vivid portrait of a decimated yet surging Berlin since World War II, of individuality and humankind, of terror and resilience. It is beautifully written in a fluent and evocative prose. It is the story of how people live with their pasts.

A stunning collection of memories, snippets, and spec-ters. (*This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.*)



UNCOMMON TYPE

Hanks, Tom
Knopf (416 pp.)
\$26.95 | \$14.99 e-book | \$29.00 Lg. Prt.
\$40.00 audiobook | Oct. 17, 2017
978-1-101-94615-2
978-1-101-94616-9 e-book
978-0-525-59050-7 Lg. Prt.
978-1-101-92363-4 audiobook

Seventeen wide-ranging and whimsical stories—with a typewriter tucked

into each one.

Only one of the stories in Hanks' debut features an actor: it's a sharp satire with priceless insider details about a handsome dope on a press junket in Europe. The other 16 span a surprisingly wide spectrum. There's a recently divorced mom who's desperate to avoid the new neighbor who might be hitting on her; a billionaire inventor who's become addicted to taking time-travel vacations; a World War II veteran whose Christmas Eve 1953 is disturbed by memories of Christmas Eve 1944; a young man who celebrates his 19th birthday by going surfing with his dad; a Bulgarian immigrant literally just off the boat, spending his first few days as a New Yorker. Three stories are editions of a small-town newspaper column called “Our Town Today with Hank Fiset.” Three others feature a group of pals named MDash, Anna, Steve Wong, and an unnamed first-person narrator. In one story, the friends go bowling; in another, they go to the moon; in the third, the narrator and Anna try dating for three weeks only to find that “being Anna’s boyfriend was like training to be a Navy SEAL while working full-time in an Amazon fulfillment center in the Oklahoma Panhandle in tornado season.” Or as Steve Wong puts it, “We are like a TV show with diversity casting. African guy, him. Asian guy, me. Mongrel Caucasoid, you. Strong, determined woman, Anna, who would never let a man define her. You and her pairing off is like a story line from season eleven when the network is trying to keep us on the air.” There’s a typewriter in every tale, be it IBM Selectric, Royal, Underwood, Hermes 2000, or some other model. Hanks can write the hell out of typing, and his dialogue is excellent, too. Has he read William Saroyan? He should.

While these stories have the all-American sweetness, humor, and heart we associate with his screen roles, Hanks writes like a writer, not a movie star. (*This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.*)

BIG NAMES IN FALL FICTION 2017



HERE IN BERLIN
by Cristina García

MANHATTAN BEACH
by Jennifer Egan

FRESH COMPLAINT
by Jeffrey Eugenides

STRANGE WEATHER
by Joe Hill

SLEEPING BEAUTIES
by Stephen King
& Owen King

FIVE-CARAT SOUL
by James McBride

THE NINTH HOUR
by Alice McDermott

THE BURNING GIRL
by Claire Messud

**LITTLE FIRES
EVERYWHERE**
by Celeste Ng

GLASS HOUSES
by Louise Penny

THE GOLDEN HOUSE
by Salman Rushdie

**SING, UNBURIED,
SING**
by Jesmyn Ward

ARTEMIS
by Andy Weir



Photo courtesy/Paul Emmel

**FUTURE HOME OF THE
LIVING GOD**
by Louise Erdrich



STRANGE WEATHER

Hill, Joe
Morrow/HarperCollins (448 pp.)
\$27.99 | \$14.99 e-book | \$27.99 Lg. Prt.
Oct. 24, 2017
978-0-06-266311-5
978-0-06-266313-9 e-book
978-0-06-268809-5 Lg. Prt.



Horrormeister Hill (*The Fireman*, 2016, etc.) offers a four-pack of mayhem in this sparkling collection of short novels.

Think climate change is bad now? Just wait until those obsidian-sharp blades of rain cut you to pieces come the next storm. Hill, son of Stephen King, has his father's eye for those climacteric moments when the ordinary turns into the extraordinary—and the sinister to boot. In *Rain*, a warm Colorado day turns nasty when silver and gold needles begin to pour down. Hill's narrator, ever the helpful neighbor, watches as they rip a woman to shreds: "Her crinkly silver gown was jerked this way and that on her body, as if invisible dogs were fighting over it." Memorable but icky, that. In such circumstances, you can bet that the ordinary norms don't hold; give humans an emergency dire enough, and civil society collapses, presto! So it is in *Loaded* when a Florida shopping mall becomes the playground of a shooter unusual in more ways than one; what gives the story, which is altogether too probable, creepy luster is the dancing cyclonic firestorm that's heading toward the mall, which may have been what prompted the security-guard protagonist of the tale to add to the death count without the intercession of any apparent conscience. Hill squeezes in some nice pop-culture references along the way, including one to a namesake: "Finally the kid who looked like Jonah Hill had entered the shop, and the shooter, with her dying breath, had put a bullet in his fat, foolish face." Icky again—as it should be for a horror honcho. In homage to "The Illustrated Man," perhaps, in *Snapshot* Hill imagines an ancient mariner sort of psychopath whose Phoenician-script tats invite onlookers to run away but instead lure them in, the easier for him to tinker with their memories, while *Aloft* is a pitch-perfect fable that blends Ted Chiang and Aristophanes into an eerie delight.

Worth waiting in line for, if you're a Hill fan. If you're not, this is the book to turn you into one.

A blood-splattered pleasure.

SLEEPING BEAUTIES



SLEEPING BEAUTIES

King, Stephen & King, Owen

Scribner (720 pp.)

\$32.50 | \$16.99 e-book

\$59.99 audiobook | Sep. 26, 2017

978-1-5011-6340-1

978-1-5011-6342-5 e-book

978-1-5082-3812-6 audiobook



Another horror blockbuster, Mercedes and all, from maestro King (*End of Watch*, 2016, etc.) and his heir apparent

(*Double Feature*, 2013, etc.).

A radio crackles in the cold Appalachian air. “We got a couple of dead meth cooks out here past the lumberyard,” says the dispatcher. A big deal, you might think, in so sparsely populated a place, but there are bigger issues to contend with: namely, half-naked women appearing out of the mist, as if to taunt the yokels. But that’s nothing: the womenfolk of the holler are drifting off to sleep one after another, and they become maenads on being disturbed, ready to wreak vengeance on any dude stupid enough to demand that they make him a sandwich. In a kind of untold Greek tragedy meets *Deliverance* meets—well, bits of *Mr. Mercedes* and *The Shawshank Redemption*, perhaps—King and King, father and son, take their time putting all the pieces into play: brutish men, resourceful women who’ve had quite enough, alcohol, and always a subtle sociological subtext, in this case of rural poverty and dreams sure to be dashed. But forget the fancy stuff. The meat of the story is a whirlwind of patented King-ian mayhem: “It wasn’t every day,” observes our narrator, “that you were taking a whiz in your drug dealer’s trailer and World War III broke out on the other side of the flimsy shithouse door,” delivered courtesy of a woman—half-naked, yes—who’s pounding the tar out of a miscreant, smacking his face into the nearest wall. Is this what gender relations have come to? In the Kings’ near future, so it would seem. The boys get their licks in, too, even if a woman scorned—or awakened too soon—can do an awful lot of damage to an unwary bike gang.

A blood-splattered pleasure. It’s hard to say what the deeper message of the book is save that life goes on despite the intercession of supernatural weirdnesses—or, as one woman says, “I guess I really must not be dead, because I’m starving.” (*This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.*)



THE WORLD GOES ON

Krasznahorkai, László

Translated by Batki, John with Mulzet,

Ottillie and Szirtes, Georges

New Directions (358 pp.)

\$27.95 | Nov. 15, 2017

978-0-8112-2419-2

The world goes on indeed, and it’s not pretty: so Hungarian novelist Krasznahorkai (*The Last Wolf and Herman*, 2016,

etc.) instructs in this existentialism-tinged set of linked stories.

It could just be the Rivotril talking, but when Krasznahorkai’s narrator gets going on the subject of cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, it quickly turns into a conspiracy theory full of ominous warnings about shadowy doctors, vodka, and the KGB: “Gagarin had to disappear for good, and of course, the way in which he died—that one of the nations, indeed one of the world’s greatest heroes would perish due to such a simple test flight—was inconceivable, I had to understand this...” The Gagarin story opens on an urgent note of leave-taking: “I don’t want to die,” Krasznahorkai writes, “just to leave the Earth,” which subtly echoes the opening words of the collection itself: “I have to leave this place, because this is not the place where anyone can be, and where it would be worthwhile to remain...” That echo sounds at many points throughout the book, a whirlwind of sentences that run on for 10 pages and more at a time and that evoke a world-weary pessimism over human beings and their strange ways. Renouncing the very promise of salvation, a bishop declares that “no one shall attain heavenly Jerusalem,” adding, “and the distance which leads to Your Son is unutterable,” while on a more terrestrial plane, a banker grumbles over audits and paper trails and fearful CEOs. The spirit of James Joyce hovers over Krasznahorkai’s pages, and Nietzsche is never far away, either; indeed, the German philosopher appears early on, breaking down into madness on witnessing a horse being whipped in a Turinese street. In dense, philosophically charged prose, Krasznahorkai questions language, history, and what we take to be facts, all the while rocketing from one corner of the world to the next, from Budapest to Varanasi and Okinawa, all places eminently worthy of being left behind.

Complex and difficult, as are all of Krasznahorkai’s works, but worth sticking with.



FOREST DARK

Krauss, Nicole

Harper/HarperCollins (304 pp.)

\$27.99 | \$14.99 e-book | \$27.99 Lg. Prt.

\$39.99 audiobook | Sep. 12, 2017

978-0-06-243099-1

978-0-06-243101-1 e-book

978-0-06-268812-5 Lg. Prt.

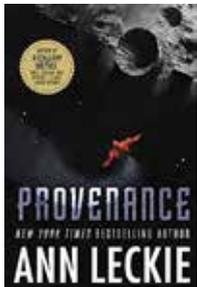
978-0-06-269451-5 audiobook

Two American visitors to Israel undergo separate but similar metamorphoses in this cerebral novel by Krauss (*Great House*, 2010, etc.).

As the story opens, Jules Epstein, a wealthy retired divorcee, has gone missing in Israel, leaving behind a host of questions: why did he trade in his Fifth Avenue apartment for a decrepit seaside hovel? Why did he choose to spend a chunk of his fortune to help fund a biopic about King David? And what prompted the “slow unfurling of self-knowledge” that led him to abandon his well-off life? Meanwhile, in an alternate set of chapters, an unnamed young novelist has come to the Tel Aviv Hilton hoping to kick-start her next book and escape her crumbling marriage. There, she’s contacted by a man soliciting her help on a film based on an unpublished Kafka play and who also

has some hard-to-believe news to deliver about Kafka himself. Jules and the novelist never directly connect, but they share similar existential predicaments: both are struggling to reconcile American and Israeli cultures and wrestle with religious and philosophical questions. Her big questions under the spell of a rabbi who opines on the connection between global and personal transformation, while the novelist revisits Kafka and Freud's concept of *unheimlich*, a sort of world-weary anxiety and dread. Krauss, as ever, writes beautifully about complex themes, and she has a keen eye for the way Israel's culture, slower but more alert to violence, requires its American characters to reboot their perceptions. Her big questions don't always provoke big effects, though, and much of the drama she establishes for her two characters feels dry, with her riffs on Kafka and Judaism more essayistic than novelistic. And though the novel never promised high drama, its low boil makes it harder to inspire the reader to draw connections within her braided narrative.

An ambitiously high-concept tale that mainly idles in a contemplative register. (*This review originally appeared in the 07/01/17 issue.*)



PROVENANCE

Leckie, Ann

Orbit (448 pp.)

\$26.00 | \$13.99 e-book | Sep. 26, 2017

978-0-316-38867-2

978-0-316-38863-4 e-book

A woman seeking the approval of her foster mother takes a desperate gamble and finds herself in the middle of an interplanetary conspiracy.

To help her foster mother, Netano, shame a political rival, Ingray Aughskold of the planet Hwae bribes a broker to smuggle the notorious Pahlad Budrakim out of prison, hoping that Pahlad will reveal the location of the valuable family antiques e stole. (Pahlad is a “neman,” a gender using the pronouns e/eir/em.) This supposedly simple plan soon gets complicated thanks to Ingray's scheming foster brother, Danach, a neighboring planetary government that frames Pahlad for murder, an alien ambassador with a persistent interest in Ingray and her associates...and the fact that Pahlad never stole the antiques in the first place. Setting her new novel in the same universe as her previous books (*Ancillary Mercy*, 2015, etc.), Leckie again uses large-scale worldbuilding to tell a deeply personal story—in this case, to explore what binds children to their families. As always, she impels the reader to consider the power language, and specifically names, has to shape perception and reality. The title is meaningful in several senses. “Provenance” initially refers to vestiges, the antiques so highly valued on Hwae, many of which are probably fakes; but more importantly, it means the struggle to understand where people come from and how it made them what they are, how they will define themselves now, and what labels they will choose to bear going forward. In aid of that point, a deeper look into the relationship between Ingray and Netano might have strengthened the book, and so might evidence of Danach's

much-discussed political ability—all we see from him are smugness and petulance, while Ingray demonstrates far more political adeptness. But since the novel is told from Ingray's perspective, which is that of a woman with poor self-esteem discovering her confidence and true worth, Danach may not have been all that brilliant to begin with.

More intriguing cultures to explore, more characters to care about, more Leckie to love. (*This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.*)



BLUEBIRD, BLUEBIRD

Locke, Attica

Mulholland Books/Little, Brown

(336 pp.)

\$26.00 | \$13.99 e-book | Sep. 12, 2017

978-0-316-36329-7

978-0-316-36326-6 e-book



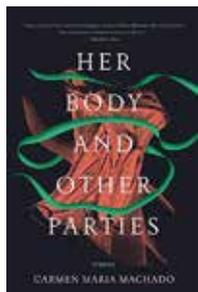
What appears at first to be a double hate crime in a tiny Texas town turns out to be much more complicated—and more painful—than it seems.

With a degree from Princeton and two years of law school under his belt, Darren Mathews could have easily taken his place among the elite of African-American attorneys. Instead, he followed his uncle's lead to become a Texas Ranger. “What is it about that damn badge?” his estranged wife, Lisa, asks. “It was never intended for you.” Darren often wonders if she's right but nonetheless finds his badge useful “for working homicides with a racial element—murders with a particularly ugly taint.” The East Texas town of Lark is small enough to drive through “in the time it [takes] to sneeze,” but it's big enough to have had not one, but two such murders. One of the victims is a black lawyer from Chicago, the kind of crusader-advocate Darren could have been if he'd stayed on his original path; the other is a young white woman, a local resident. Both battered bodies were found in a nearby bayou. His job already jeopardized by his role in a race-related murder case in another part of the state, Darren eases his way into Lark, where even his presence is enough to raise hackles among both the town's white and black residents; some of the latter, especially, seem reluctant and evasive in their conversations with him. Besides their mysterious resistance, Darren also has to deal with a hostile sheriff, the white supremacist husband of the dead woman, and the dead lawyer's moody widow, who flies into town with her own worst suspicions as to what her husband was doing down there. All the easily available facts imply some sordid business that could cause the whole town to explode. But the deeper Darren digs into the case, encountering lives steeped in his home state's musical and social history, the more he begins to distrust his professional—and personal—instincts.

Locke, having stockpiled an acclaimed array of crime novels (*Pleasantville*, 2015, etc.), deserves a career breakthrough for this deftly plotted whodunit whose writing pulses throughout with a raw, blues-inflected lyricism. (*This review originally appeared in the 07/01/17 issue.*)

An exceptional and pungently inventive first book.

HER BODY AND OTHER PARTIES



HER BODY AND OTHER PARTIES

Machado, Carmen Maria

Graywolf (264 pp.)

\$16.00 paper | \$9.99 e-book

\$29.99 audiobook | Oct. 3, 2017

978-1-55597-788-7

978-1-55597-980-5 e-book

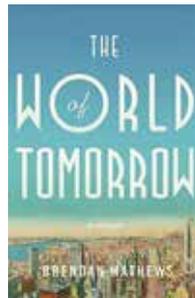
978-1-68168-688-2 audiobook



Machado's debut collection brings together eight stories that showcase her fluency in the bizarre, magical, and sharply frightening depths of the imagination.

Each of the stories in this collection has, at its center, a strange and surprising idea that communicates, in a shockingly visceral way, the experience of living inside a woman's body. In "The Husband Stitch," Machado turns the well-known horror story about a girl who wears a green ribbon around her neck inside out, transforming the worn childhood nightmare into a blistering exploration of female desire and the insidious entitlement that society claims over the female body. "Especially Heinous" turns 12 seasons of *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* into a disorienting, lonely, and oddly hopeful crime procedural crammed with ghosts and doppelgängers. "Difficult at Parties" depicts a woman trying to recover from a sexual assault. She watches porn in the hope that it will help her reconnect with her boyfriend and discovers that she can somehow hear the thoughts of the actors on the screen. Women fade out of their physical bodies and get incorporated into prom dresses. They get gastric bypass surgery, suffer epidemics, have children, go to artist residencies. They have a lot of sex. The fierceness and abundance of sex and desire in these stories, the way emotion is inextricably connected with the concerns of the body, makes even the most outlandish imaginings strangely familiar. Machado writes with furious grace. She plays with form and expectation in ways that are both funny and elegant but never obscure. "If you are reading this story out loud," one story suggests, "give a paring knife to the listeners and ask them to cut the tender flap of skin between your index finger and thumb." With Machado's skill, this feels not like a quirk or a flourish but like a perfectly appropriate direction.

An exceptional and pungently inventive first book.
(This review originally appeared in the 07/01/17 issue.)



THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

Mathews, Brendan

Little, Brown (560 pp.)

\$28.00 | \$13.99 e-book

\$25.98 audiobook | Sep. 5, 2017

978-0-316-38219-9

978-0-316-38220-5 e-book

978-1-478-93278-9 audiobook

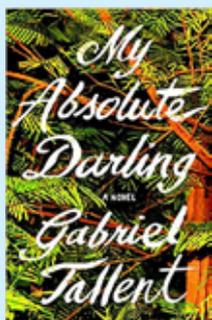


Mathews' colorful debut novel examines the legacy of Irish political violence for a family in both the old country and New York during one busy week in 1939.

Francis Dempsey, who has been jailed for selling banned books and luxury items, gets a furlough from Dublin's Mountjoy Jail for his father's funeral. There, he is joined by his unhappy seminarian brother, Michael, and several old Irish Republican Army buddies of his father's, who rig an escape for the brothers that involves an IRA bomb factory. There, an accidental explosion leaves Michael shellshocked and the brothers in possession of a Republican war chest. Francis uses the money to present himself as a Scottish lord and books passage for himself and his brother to New York on the RMS *Britannic*. His fake title leads Francis to a wealthy Manhattan girlfriend and a dangerous role in a New York mob boss's plans. Michael's dazed state leads to a fascinating relationship with the restless ghost of the recently deceased William Butler Yeats. Meanwhile—and there's a lot of meanwhile in this busy doorstep—a third Dempsey brother, Martin, who has been in New York for 10 years, is trying to get a jazz band together for his sister-in-law's wedding reception and impress recording legend John Hammond. But the bride-to-be, who performs synchronized swimming as an AquaBelle at the World's Fair, is having second thoughts about her nuptials after a night at the Plaza Hotel with Francis. Among the many splashes of New York atmosphere, the strongest are snapshots of the city's prewar musical frenzy. Weaving through it all is an old IRA enforcer with a tragic tie to the Dempseys who found escape on an upstate New York farm until the mob boss forces him to find the war chest and Francis. Mathews' debut shows impressive control of this narrative cornucopia, although his reliance on characters' thoughts to propel the plot can be tiresome.

It's not Doctorow's *Ragtime*, but there's a similar feel in this impressive, wide-ranging debut. (This review originally appeared in the 06/15/17 issue.)

FALL FICTION'S BIG DEBUTS AND BREAKTHROUGHS



**MY ABSOLUTE
DARLING**
by Gabriel Tallent

THE POWER
by Naomi Alderman

IN THE DISTANCE
by Hernan Diaz

UNCOMMON TYPE
by Tom Hanks

THE WORLD GOES ON
by László Krasznahorkai

FOREST DARK
by Nicole Krauss

PROVENANCE
by Ann Leckie

SOLAR BONES
by Mike McCormack

**HER BODY AND OTHER
PARTIES**

by Carmen Maria
Machado

**THE WORLD OF
TOMORROW**
by Brendan Mathews

AUTOMOUS
by Annalee Newitz

UNCERTAIN GLORY
by Joan Sales
(trans. Peter Bush)

**THE RESURRECTION
OF JOAN ASHBY**
by Cherise Wolas



A KIND OF FREEDOM
by Margaret Wilkerson
Sexton



FIVE-CARAT SOUL
McBride, James
Riverhead (320 pp.)
\$27.00 | \$13.99 e-book | \$29.00 Lg. Prt.
\$35.00 audiobook | Sep. 26, 2017
978-0-7352-1669-3
978-0-7352-1671-6 e-book
978-0-525-49885-8 Lg. Prt.
978-0-525-49796-7 audiobook



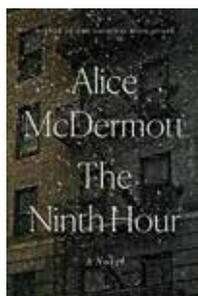
A versatile, illustrious author brings out his first short-fiction buffet for sampling, and the results are provocatively varied in taste and texture; sometimes piquant, other times zesty.

It's not every contemporary fiction collection that includes one story featuring Abraham Lincoln and another (somewhat) unrelated story involving a young mixed-race orphan wandering Civil War battlefields insisting he is President Lincoln's son. But when the imagination at work here is as well-traveled as McBride's, such juxtapositions are easily understood—and widely anticipated. Celebrated for his bestselling family memoir, *The Color of Water* (1996), and his National Book Award-winning antebellum picaresque novel, *The Good Lord Bird* (2013), McBride exhibits his formidable storytelling chops in an array of voices and settings that, however eclectic, are mostly held together by themes of race history and cultural collisions. As with most story collections, some selections work better than others; but those that do resonate profoundly. For instance: the first story, "The Under Graham Railroad Box Car Set," is told from the point of view of a white antique-toy dealer who, upon encountering the black family who now own a rare 19th-century train set once given as a present to Robert E. Lee's son, is nonplused by their willingness to give him the valuable artifact without haggling over money. There is also a poignant four-story cycle bearing the rubric "The Five Carat Soul Bottom Bone Band," referring to a quintet of teen funk band musicians from an at-risk neighborhood in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, a Pittsburgh suburb. McBride is daring enough to apply his realist's sensibilities to fantasy with "The Moaning Bench," in which a flamboyant heavyweight boxer bearing the looks, sass, and swagger, if not the same name, as Muhammad Ali challenges hell's satanic gatekeeper to fight for the souls of five quivering candidates for Eternal Damnation. The best is saved for last: "Mr. P & the Wind," a five-part suite of stories set in a contemporary urban zoo whose menagerie communicates with each other—and at least one human—in what they call Thought Speak. The charm emitted by these whimsical-yet-acerbic tales seems to come from a hypothetical late-19th-century collaboration of Mark Twain and Rudyard Kipling.

McBride emerges here as a master of what some might call "wisdom fiction," common to both *The Twilight Zone* and Bernard Malamud, offering instruction and moral edification to his readers without providing an Aesop-like moral. (*This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.*)

Emotionally intense and quietly haunting.

THE BURNING GIRL



THE NINTH HOUR

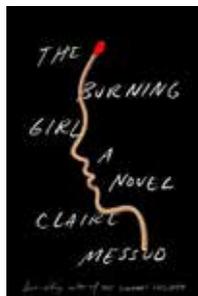
McDermott, Alice
Farrar, Straus and Giroux
(256 pp.)
\$26.00 | Sep. 19, 2017
978-0-374-28014-7



In Brooklyn in the early 20th century, The Little Nursing Sisters of the Sick Poor are intimately involved in the lives of their community.

When a depressed young man with a pregnant wife turns on the gas in his apartment and takes his own life, among the first to arrive on the scene is an elderly nun. "It was Sister St. Savior's vocation to enter the homes of strangers, mostly the sick and the elderly, to breeze into their apartments and to sail comfortably through their rooms, to open their linen closets or china cabinets or bureau drawers—to peer into their toilets or the soiled handkerchiefs clutched in their hands." By the time the fatherless baby is born, St. Savior will have been so instrumental in the fate of the young widow that the baby will be her namesake, called Sally for short. Sally will be largely raised in the convent, where her mother has been given a job helping out with laundry. The nuns also find a friend for the new mother—a neighbor with a houseful of babies—then they finagle a baby carriage, and "the two young mothers negotiated the crowded streets like impatient empresses." This desperately needed and highly successful friendship is just the beginning of the benign interference of the Sisters in the private lives and fates of their civilian neighbors. Partly told by a voice from the future who drops tantalizing hints about what's to come—for example, a marriage between the occupants of the baby carriages—this novel reveals its ideas about love and morality through the history of three generations, finding them in their kitchens, sickbeds, train compartments, love nests, and basement laundry rooms.

Everything that her readers, the National Book Award committee, and the Pulitzer Prize judges love about McDermott's (*Someone*, 2013, etc.) stories of Irish-Catholic American life is back in her eighth novel. (*This review originally appeared in the 06/15/17 issue.*)



THE BURNING GIRL

Messud, Claire
Norton (256 pp.)
\$25.95 | Aug. 29, 2017
978-0-393-63502-7

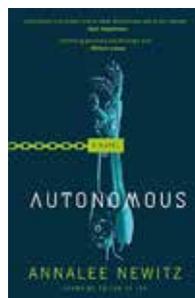


Messud (*The Woman Upstairs*, 2013, etc.) investigates the fraught intricacies of friendship and adolescence as two girls grow up and grow apart in a small Massachusetts town.

About to start her senior year of high school, narrator Julia painfully traces the loss of her childhood friend Cassie, a bold rule-breaker who goaded and thrilled

cautious Julia even as she relied on her friend's good sense to keep them safe. During the charmed intimacy of childhood, Julia wistfully recalls, "we had one mind and could roam its limits together, inventing stories and making ourselves as we wanted them to be." But in seventh grade Cassie drifts away to a more popular crowd, adding insult to injury by dating and then dropping Peter, an older boy she knows Julia likes. With characteristically lucid prose, Messud perfectly captures the agonizing social insecurities of middle school in Julia's seething assessment that Cassie "thought she could laugh at me to my face...she was Regina George from *Mean Girls* and I was Janis." Payback comes when Cassie's widowed mother, Bev, falls in love with Dr. Anders Shute, who may have an unhealthy interest in Cassie and certainly encourages Bev to confine and control her in ways that lead to a crisis. By this time, Julia has new friends of her own and a more secure social niche in ninth grade; she knows Cassie is in trouble but is too hurt and too invested in her new role—this is very much a book about masks and performances—to respond when Cassie tentatively reaches out. Although their shared past gives Julia the knowledge to forestall disaster when Cassie vanishes, Messud also suggests that we never truly know another, not even those we love best. That stark worldview only slowly becomes apparent in a narrative that for a long time seems more overwrought than events call for (it is, after all, narrated by a teenager), but by the novel's closing pages it packs an emotional wallop.

Emotionally intense and quietly haunting. (*This review originally appeared in the 06/15/17 issue.*)



AUTONOMOUS

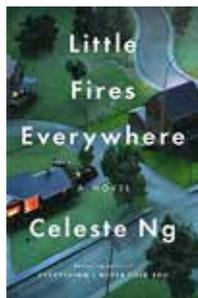
Newitz, Annalee
Tor (304 pp.)
\$25.99 | \$12.99 e-book | Sep. 19, 2017
978-0-7653-9207-7
978-0-7653-9209-1 e-book

This debut work by the co-founder of sci-fi website *io9* explores issues of free will and property in a corporate-run future.

In 2144, genetics engineer-turned-drug pirate Judith "Jack" Chen has reverse-engineered and distributed her own version of Zacuity, the latest drug from the Zaxy corporation. Zacuity is supposed to get people feeling good about working; unfortunately, what it actually does is addict people to their jobs to the point of insanity. With agents from the International Property Coalition on her tail, Jack does her best to manufacture an antidote and find a way to alert the public about Zacuity's effects. She also tries to find a future for Threedez, a young man previously indentured to an addict she killed. Meanwhile, those IPC agents, the human Elias and his new partner, the indentured military bot Paladin, grow physically and emotionally closer together as they ruthlessly track down Jack. Paladin's feelings for Elias, partially programmed, partially personally generated, seem believable, because the bot is new, naïve, and hasn't experienced a great deal of kind human

contact, but Elias's feelings for Paladin, which begin so quickly, seem more like sexual kink than true love; one almost gets the sense that any bot of Paladin's type would've sparked his interest. And Elias's insistence that the obviously genderless Paladin is female seems deluded. Newitz does an excellent job of drawing out the disturbing aspects of this power-imbalanced relationship. There's also something very real about the shaky foundation of this unorthodox union and the uncertain future facing all the characters. In life, sometimes all we get is an ending we can accept, in which not all loose ends are tied up and villains never get their comeuppance. Ultimately, the novel is a vehicle for some very interesting questions: is there a difference between owning a human being or a mechanical being if both possess sentience and feelings and both desire agency? What are our rights in a world where the guiding principle is protection for the owner?

A strong and cerebral start if perhaps a little too open-ended. (This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.)



LITTLE FIRES EVERYWHERE

Ng, Celeste
Penguin Press (384 pp.)
\$27.00 | Sep. 12, 2017
978-0-7352-2429-2

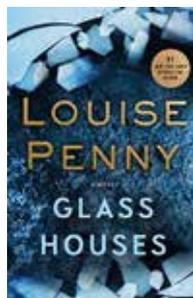


This incandescent portrait of suburbia and family, creativity, and consumerism burns bright.

It's not for nothing that Ng (*Everything I Never Told You*, 2014) begins her second novel, about the events leading to the burning of the home of an outwardly perfect-seeming family in Shaker Heights, Ohio, circa 1997, with two epigraphs about the planned community itself—attesting to its ability to provide its residents with “protection forever against...unwelcome change” and “a rather happy life” in Utopia. But unwelcome change is precisely what disrupts the Richardson family's rather happy life, when Mia, a charismatic, somewhat mysterious artist, and her smart, shy 15-year-old daughter, Pearl, move to town and become tenants in a rental house Mrs. Richardson inherited from her parents. Mia and Pearl live a markedly different life from the Richardsons, an affluent couple and their four high school-age children—making art instead of money (apart from what little they need to get by); rooted in each other rather than a particular place (packing up what fits in their battered VW and moving on when “the bug” hits); and assembling a hodgepodge home from creatively repurposed, scavenged castoffs and love rather than gathering around them the symbols of a successful life in the American suburbs (a big house, a large family, gleaming appliances, chic clothes, many cars). What really sets Mia and Pearl apart and sets in motion the events leading to the “little fires everywhere” that will consume the Richardsons' secure, stable world, however, is the way they hew to their own rules. In a place like Shaker Heights, a town built on plans and rules, and for a family like the Richardsons, who have structured

their lives according to them, disdain for conformity acts as an accelerant, setting fire to the dormant sparks within them. The ultimate effect is cataclysmic. As in *Everything I Never Told You*, Ng conjures a sense of place and displacement and shows a remarkable ability to see—and reveal—a story from different perspectives. The characters she creates here are wonderfully appealing, and watching their paths connect—like little trails of flame leading inexorably toward one another to create a big inferno—is mesmerizing, casting into new light ideas about creativity and consumerism, parenthood and privilege.

With her second novel, Ng further proves she's a sensitive, insightful writer with a striking ability to illuminate life in America. (This review originally appeared in the 07/01/17 issue.)



GLASS HOUSES

Penny, Louise
Minotaur (400 pp.)
\$28.99 | \$14.99 e-book
\$39.99 audiobook | Aug. 29, 2017
978-1-250-06619-0
978-1-4668-7368-1 e-book
978-1-4272-8739-7 audiobook

A dark, still figure, wearing long black robes and a hood, appears on the charming village green of Three Pines, a small Quebec town; though at first it seems scary but harmless, it turns out to be something much more sinister.

The strange figure's appearance coincides with a Halloween party at the local bistro, attended by the usual villagers but also four out-of-town guests. They are friends from the Université de Montreal who meet for a yearly reunion at the B&B in Three Pines. But this event actually happened months ago, and village resident Armand Gamache, now head of the Sureté du Québec, is recounting the story from the witness stand in a courtroom suffering from oppressive summer heat. Gamache's testimony becomes narrative, explaining how over the course of a few days the masked man grew into a fixture on the village green and morphed slowly into an omen. Gamache's son-in-law and second-in-command, Jean-Guy Beauvoir, is asked to research the “dark thing's” back story after one of the B&B guests, a journalist, mentions that the figure reminds him of a story he did on an old Spanish tradition, that of the “debt collector.” It becomes clear, as Gamache relays the events leading up to murder, that “someone in the village had done something so horrific that a Conscience had been called.” But did the dark thing come for a villager or for one of their guests? Conscience is an overarching theme in Penny's latest, seeping into the courtroom narrative as Gamache grapples with an enemy much larger than the dark thing, a war he took on as the new Chief Superintendent. His victory depends on the outcome, and the path, of this murder trial. While certain installments in Penny's bestselling series take Gamache and his team to the far reaches of Quebec, others build their tension not with a chase but instead in the act of keeping still—this is one such book. The tension has never been

An emotional, passionate, and psychologically complex love story.

WRONG TO NEED YOU

greater, and Gamache has sat for months waiting, and waiting, to act, with Conscience watching close by.

A meticulously built mystery that follows a careful ascent toward a breaking point that will leave you breathless. It's Three Pines as you have never seen it before. (This review originally appeared in the 06/15/17 issue.)



WRONG TO NEED YOU

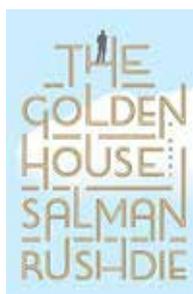
Rai, Alisha
Avon/HarperCollins (384 pp.)
\$7.99 paper | Nov. 28, 2017
978-0-06-256675-1
Series: Forbidden Hearts, 2



A young widow juggling single motherhood and a small business faces her past and creates a new future when her ex-brother-in-law returns after a decade's absence.

The second book in Rai's (*Hate to Want You*, 2017) Forbidden Hearts series brings Jackson Kane back to the upstate New York town that turned on his family and accused him of arson. Traveling only with what he can stash on his motorcycle, Jackson has become a pop-up chef of international renown, but he can't outrun the pull of his family or the strong feelings he has always had for his brother's widow, Sadia Ahmed. Sadia, the product of a family of physicians, struggles to keep her late husband Paul's café afloat while defending her choices to her disapproving but loving parents: "I've tried to be perfect. I've worked really hard at it, and never really quite succeeded....I never get to be...average old me." She may never be able to forgive Jackson, her closest childhood friend, for staying away when she desperately needed support. When Jackson shows up at the bar where Sadia pulls extra shifts to support her young son, her anger and hurt are palpable. But she reluctantly accepts Jackson's offer of help in the café while processing her anger and intense attraction to him. Jackson must come to terms with the role his own family played in the tragedy that unfolded years ago. An intensely introverted man who "never turned down a socially acceptable exit," he must find the line between self-preservation and selfishness. He cannot appreciate Sadia's pain until he allows himself to feel his own. A potentially awkward romance between former in-laws is handled with sensitivity, as Rai manages to weave Sadia's marriage into the narrative of her relationship with Jackson in a way that detracts from neither.

Another emotional, passionate, and psychologically complex love story in a gripping series that follows the fates of two warring families.



THE GOLDEN HOUSE

Rushdie, Salman
Random House (400 pp.)
\$28.99 | \$14.99 e-book
\$45.00 audiobook | Sep. 5, 2017
978-0-399-59280-5
978-0-399-59281-2 e-book
978-0-525-52470-0 audiobook



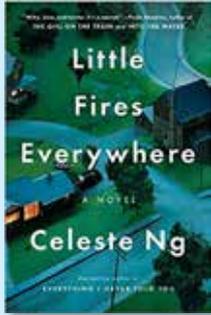
Rushdie (*Two Years Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights*, 2015, etc.) returns with a topical, razor-sharp portrait of life

among the very rich, who are, of course, very different from the rest of us.

Where Tom Wolfe's *Bonfire of the Vanities* sent up the go-go, me-me Reagan/Bush era, Rushdie's latest novel captures the existential uncertainties of the anxious Obama years. Indeed, its opening sentence evokes the image of the newly inaugurated president "as he walked hand in hand with his exceptional wife among the cheering crowds," even as our narrator, shellshocked like everyone else in that time of plunging markets and ballooning mortgages, worried that assassination was the inevitable outcome. Against this backdrop arrives a mysterious immigrant who has taken for himself what he imagines to be a suitably aspirational name: Nero Golden. So beguiling is Golden that, tucked away in a secret palace in a New York affordable only to the very wealthy, he proves an instant lure for our narrator, a filmmaker in search of a subject. Each member of the Golden household harbors secrets, sexual and financial and criminal, but the plot thickens considerably when a Russian *arriviste*, "Vasilisa the Fair," inserts herself into the Golden's world, ticking down a checklist of all the pleasures she can provide for Nero given the proper options package: "You see the categories are ten, fifteen, twenty," she tells Golden of her monthly allowance needs. "I recommend generosity." It seems clear we are not meant to think of Obama but of his successor, whose election closes the book and who gives us Rushdie's decidedly unfunny, decidedly unironic condemnation of an "America torn in half, its defining myth of city-on-a-hill exceptionalism lying trampled in the gutters of bigotry and racial and male supremacism, Americans' masks ripped off to reveal the Joker faces beneath."

A sort of *Great Gatsby* for our time: everyone is implicated, no one is innocent, and no one comes out unscathed, no matter how well padded with cash. (This review originally appeared in the 07/01/17 issue.)

**UNCOMMON CRIMES &
MISDEMEANORS: NOVELS THAT
EXPLORE ARSON, BRIBERY,
CONSPIRACY & MORE**



LITTLE FIRES EVERYWHERE
by Celeste Ng

GLASS HOUSES
by Louise Penny

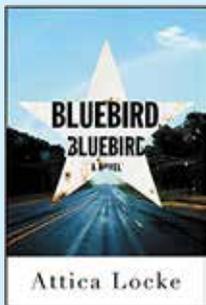
IN THE DISTANCE
by Hernan Diaz

FUTURE HOME OF THE LIVING GOD
by Louise Erdrich

THE GOLDEN HOUSE
by Salman Rushdie

MY ABSOLUTE DARLING
by Gabriel Tallent

STRANGE WEATHER
by Joe Hill



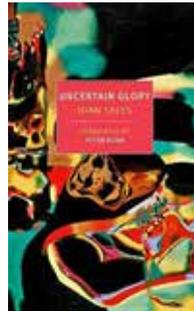
BLUEBIRD, BLUEBIRD
by Attica Locke

PROVENANCE
by Ann Leckie

UNCERTAIN GLORY
by Joan Sales
(trans. Peter Bush)

THE WORLD OF TOMORROW
by Brendan Mathews

SLEEPING BEAUTIES
by Stephen King &
Owen King



UNCERTAIN GLORY

Sales, Joan
Translated by Bush, Peter
New York Review Books (464 pp.)
\$18.95 paper | \$15.99 e-book
Oct. 10, 2017
978-1-68137-180-1
978-1-68137-181-8 e-book



Catalan writer Sales tells a multilayered story of loves, faith, friendships, and ideals tested by the Spanish Civil War in this novel banned by Franco's censors, then published in 1956 after the author's return from exile.

Former school friends Lt. Lluís Rusalleda and Juli Soleràs are reunited in a republican brigade on the Aragon front, fighting "for hygiene and culture" against the fascist forces. In a sacked monastery, Lluís salvages books and searches for a missing certificate for the mysterious lady of the castle. When tins of condensed milk go missing, Soleràs brags of stealing "from soldiers on the front line to give to whores in the rearguard." Sales draws on his own experience in a similar brigade, fighting for Catalan independence; he brings a new perspective to the civil war and writes with authority about "half-burnt bread" and "the sad, obscene songs the recruits sang." But it is the compelling depth of the varied, complex, human characters that shows his true mastery. Lluís wonders, "Which part of us must remain unchangeable? Are we so sure it's more valuable than the part that leaves us at every moment? Or are we entirely ghostlike, clouds whose single hope is to live a moment of glory, one solitary moment, and then vanish?" In Barcelona, Trini Milmany, a geologist and mother of Lluís' son, considers "what the success of these winners represents in terms of geology—less perhaps than that of a mosquito from the Carboniferous Age." The glorious possibility of a Catalan republic devolves into what one disillusioned anarchist calls this "sinister revolutionary carnival," adding, "Our ideals were so beautiful...when nobody had tried to put them into practice!" Amid the horror, the thirst for glory persists: "We have acted like men and we've acted like wild beasts...how can anyone now ever become a notary?" There are moments of transcendent beauty: a castle imagined as "a frigate of stone, people and animals all on board, all sailing together in this huge ship that seems still but is moving across the ocean of time"; a character walking through a town's snow-covered ruins as if "wading through the remnants of a shipwreck." And of humor: "The worst side to wars is the fact they're turned into novels," Soleràs complains. "Foreigners will turn this huge mess into stirring stories of bullfighters and gypsies."

Philosophical and earthy, tragic and funny, honest, raw, superb: Sales makes Hemingway seem thin, even anemic, in comparison. This book is a rich and highly recommended feast. (This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.)

A powerful, well-turned story about abuse, its consequences, and what it takes to survive it.

MY ABSOLUTE DARLING



MY ABSOLUTE DARLING

Tallent, Gabriel

Riverhead (432 pp.)

\$27.00 | \$13.99 e-book | \$29.00 Lg. Prt.

\$45.00 audiobook | Aug. 29, 2017

978-0-7352-1117-9

978-0-7352-1119-3 e-book

978-0-525-49884-1 Lg. Prt.

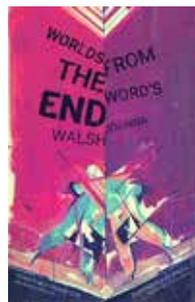
978-0-525-49790-5 audiobook



A 14-year-old girl struggles to escape her father's emotional and physical abuse in this harrowing debut.

Turtle (born Julia) lives with her father, Martin, in the woods near the Mendocino coast. Their home is equipped like a separatist camp, and Martin opines officiously about climate change when he isn't training Turtle in gun skills or, at night, raping her. Unsurprisingly, Turtle is isolated, self-hating, and cruel to her classmates. She also possesses the kind of strength that suggests she could leave Martin if she had help, but her concerned teacher and grandfather are unsure what to do, and once Martin pulls her out of school and her grandfather dies, the point is moot. Can she get out? Tallent delays the answer to that question, of course, but before the climax he's written a fearless adventure tale that's as savvy about internal emotional storms as it is about wrangling with family and nature. Turtle gets a glimpse of a better life through Jacob, a classmate from a well-off family ("she feels brilliantly included within that province of things she wants"), and her efforts to save him in the woods earn his admiration. But when Martin brings another young girl home, Turtle can't leave for fear of history repeating. Tallent often stretches out visceral, violent scenes—Turtle forced to sustain a pull-up as Martin holds a knife beneath her, home-brew surgery, eating scorpions—to a point that is nearly sadistic. But he plainly means to explore how such moments seem to slow time, imprinting his young characters deeply. And he also takes care with Martin's character, showing how the autodidact, hard-edged attitude that makes him so monstrous also gives Turtle the means to plot against him. Ultimately, though, this is Turtle's story, and she is a remarkable teenage hero, heavily damaged but admirably persistent.

A powerful, well-turned story about abuse, its consequences, and what it takes to survive it. (*This review originally appeared in the 06/15/17 issue.*)



WORLDS FROM THE WORD'S END

Walsh, Joanna

& Other Stories (128 pp.)

\$13.95 paper | \$13.95 e-book | Sep. 7, 2017

978-1-911508-10-6

978-1-911508-10-6 e-book



Unsparingly observant and disconcertingly sharp, Walsh's (*Vertigo*, 2016, etc.) latest short story collection is an eerily matter-of-fact chronicle of our own impending doom.

There is loss (literal, figurative) at the center of each of Walsh's surprisingly playful stories, which read less like narratives—though they are—than like parables or prose poems: surreal in their elegance, too slippery and strange to fit into more conventional bounds. In the title story, a woman explains to a former lover why she won't be writing him anymore: because there are literally no words. "Communication went out of fashion," she writes, at "about the same time as we stopped speaking," but then words, she considers, were always inadequate anyway, demanding more words to explain their damage. In "Two Secretaries," a recent graduate working—very temporarily, she is sure—as a self-styled "clerical assistant" explains the rift between herself and a colleague, an actual secretary. "We may look alike," she assures us, "but we are not." In "Hauptbahnhof," a woman takes up indefinite residence in a Berlin train station, waiting for a person who is not waiting for her. Still, she is, like all of Walsh's women, painstakingly practical in her delusion: the biggest problem with living in limbo in the station, she reflects, is the difficulty of recharging her phone. Also, perhaps, the price of water. "Exes," which lasts less than a page, is a meditation on a fraught email signoff; in "Femme Maison," a woman, now single, expands to fit the demands of her house, feeling, for the first time, both ownership of the space and debt to it.

Arresting in their otherworldly simplicity, Walsh's stories are lonely but never sentimental; grief may haunt her prose, but it is as a fact and not a feeling. A singular reading experience that leaves a mark. (*This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.*)



SING, UNBURIED, SING

Ward, Jesmyn

Scribner (304 pp.)

\$26.00 | Sep. 5, 2017

978-1-5011-2606-2

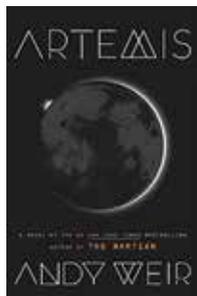


The terrible beauty of life along the nation's lower margins is summoned in this bold, bright, and sharp-eyed road novel.

In present-day Mississippi, citizens of all colors struggle much as their ancestors did against the persistence of poverty, the wages of sin, and the legacy of violence. Thirteen-year-old Jojo is a sensitive

African-American boy living with his grandparents and his toddler sister, Kayla, somewhere along the Gulf Coast. Their mother, Leonie, is addicted to drugs and haunted by visions of her late brother, Given, a local football hero shot to death years before by a white youth offended at being bested in some supposedly friendly competition. Somehow, Leonie ends up marrying Michael, the shooter's cousin, who worked as a welder on the ill-fated Deepwater Horizon oil rig. The novel's main story involves a road trip northward to the Mississippi State Penitentiary, where Michael's about to be released from prison. Leonie, very much a hot mess, insists on taking both children along to pick up their father even though it's clear from the start that Jojo—who's more nurturing to his sister than their mother is—in no way wants to make the journey, especially with his grandmother dying from cancer. Along the way, Jojo finds he's the only one who sees and speaks to another spirit: Richie, an ill-fated friend of his grandfather's who decades before was imprisoned at a brutal work camp when he was slightly younger than Jojo. Ward, a National Book Award winner for *Salvage the Bones*, (2011), has intimate knowledge of the Gulf Coast and its cultural complexities and recounts this jolting odyssey through the first-person voices of Jojo, Leonie, and occasionally Richie. They each evoke the swampy contours of the scenery but also the sweat, stickiness, and battered nerves that go along with a road trip. It's a risky conceit, and Ward has to work to avoid making her narrators sound *too* much like poets. But any qualms are overpowered by the book's intensely evocative imagery, musical rhetoric, and bountiful sympathy toward even the most exasperating of its characters. Remorse stalks the grown-ups like a search party, but grace in whatever form seems ready to salve their wounds, even the ones that don't easily show.

As with the best and most meaningful American fiction these days, old truths are recast here in new realities rife with both peril and promise. (*This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.*)



ARTEMIS

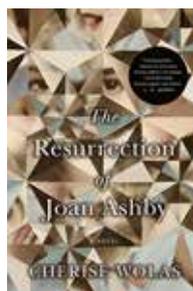
Weir, Andy
Crown (320 pp.)
\$27.00 | Nov. 14, 2017
978-0-553-44812-2

Weir (*The Martian*, 2014) returns with another off-world tale, this time set on a lunar colony several decades in the future.

Jasmine “Jazz” Bashara is a 20-something delivery person, or “porter,” whose welder father brought her up on Artemis, a small multidomed city on Earth's moon. She has dreams of becoming a member of the Extravehicular Activity Guild so she'll be able to get better work, such as leading tours on the moon's surface, and pay off a substantial personal debt. For now, though, she has a thriving side business procuring low-end black-market items to people in the colony. One of her best customers is Trond Landvik, a wealthy businessman who, one day, offers her a lucrative deal to sabotage some of Sanchez Aluminum's

automated lunar-mining equipment. Jazz agrees and comes up with a complicated scheme that involves an extended outing on the lunar surface. Things don't go as planned, though, and afterward, she finds Landvik murdered. Soon, Jazz is in the middle of a conspiracy involving a Brazilian crime syndicate and revolutionary technology. Only by teaming up with friends and family, including electronics scientist Martin Svoboda, EVA expert Dale Shapiro, and her father, will she be able to finish the job she started. Readers expecting *The Martian's* smart math-and-science problem-solving will only find a smattering here, as when Jazz figures out how to ignite an acetylene torch during a moonwalk. Strip away the sci-fi trappings, though, and this is a by-the-numbers caper novel with predictable beats and little suspense. The worldbuilding is mostly bland and unimaginative (Artemis apartments are cramped; everyone uses smartphone-like “Gizmos”), although intriguing elements—such as the fact that space travel is controlled by Kenya instead of the United States or Russia—do show up occasionally. In the acknowledgments, Weir thanks six women, including his publisher and U.K. editor, “for helping me tackle the challenge of writing a female narrator”—as if women were an alien species. Even so, Jazz is given such forced lines as “I giggled like a little girl. Hey, I'm a girl, so I'm allowed.”

One small step, no giant leaps.



THE RESURRECTION OF JOAN ASHBY

Wolas, Cherise
Flatiron Books (544 pp.)
\$27.99 | \$14.99 e-book
\$70.99 audiobook | Aug. 29, 2017
978-1-250-08143-8
978-1-250-08144-5 e-book
978-1-4272-8243-9 audiobook



A literary prodigy allows her husband to convince her to reverse their decision

not to have children.

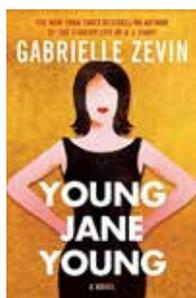
Can you be a mother and also be an artist—or, by extension, pursue any serious ambition at all? This is the question taken up with urgency and all due complexity in lawyer and film producer Wolas' debut novel. The book opens with a hugely laudatory magazine profile of a fictional writer named Joan Ashby, revealing that at age 13 Ashby articulated nine rules for herself. No. 7 was “Do not entertain any offer of marriage,” and No. 8 was “Never ever have children.” Then, the article explains, after having taken the world by storm with two story collections, Ashby got married and became pregnant at 25—and that was the last she was heard from for nearly three decades. After revealing this much, and providing reprints of two of Ashby's famous stories, the article cuts off with this line: “Continued after the break.” The “break” is a 500-plus-page narrative exploring Ashby's struggles during these decades. It's a tribute to Wolas' plot that most of it cannot be decently revealed. And heaven knows, a book this big needs its plot. Wolas provides not only the main story, but several more excerpts from Ashby's work. Maybe she

The most immaculate takedown of slut-shaming in literature or anywhere else.

YOUNG JANE YOUNG

goes a little too far with these digressions, but even in a scene where Ashby is teaching a writing class and the first lines of a dozen student stories are included—they're all great first lines! Like John Irving's *The World According to Garp*, this is a look at the life of a writer that will entertain many nonwriters. Like Lauren Groff's *Fates and Furies*, it's a sharp-eyed portrait of the artist as spouse and householder.

From the start, one wonders how Wolas is possibly going to pay off the idea that her heroine is such a genius. Verdict: few could do better. (*This review originally appeared in the 06/15/17 issue.*)



YOUNG JANE YOUNG

Zevin, Gabrielle
Algonquin (320 pp.)
\$26.95 | Aug. 22, 2017
978-1-61620-504-1



When a young political intern in South Florida has an affair with her boss, it leads to disaster—at least at first.

The best thing to come out of the Monica Lewinsky scandal since Lewinsky's own magnificent TED talk, Zevin's (*The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry*, 2014, etc.) fourth adult novel reinvents the familiar story more cleverly and warmly than one would have thought possible. Five sections come at the situation from different angles. The first is called "Bubbe Meise" ("Old Wives' Tale" in Yiddish), and in it we hear the delightful old-Jewish-lady voice of Rachel Shapiro, a South Floridian who's dipping her toe into online dating. She's on a date that's going quite well until the fellow asks her daughter's name, and she tells him it's Aviva, and he remarks that that was the name of that awful girl who got in trouble with Congressman Levin back in 2001. "You really don't remember her? Well, Rach, she was like Monica Lewinsky...It was a blight on South Florida, a blight on Jews, a blight on politicians if that's even possible, a blight on civilization in general." That's the end of *that* beautiful relationship. Rachel gives us the outlines of the debacle, after which her daughter disappeared, 13 years ago now. "I have a cell phone number. She calls me once or twice a year. I believe I have a grandchild. Yes, I would call this a sadness in my life." To reveal more would be to give away too much, since part of the joy here is the unexpected way the story unfolds. I can tell you, as Rachel Shapiro might say, that you will hear from the eponymous Jane Young, who's a wedding planner in a small town in Maine, and that one of the sections is an adroit takeoff on the structure of the Choose Your Own Adventure books, also seen recently in Nathan Hill's *The Nix*. Must be generational. References to Monica Lewinsky herself are a running theme, recalling the brutal true story underlying this delicious fictional one.

This book will not only thoroughly entertain everyone who reads it; it is the most immaculate takedown of slut-shaming in literature or anywhere else. Cheers, and gratitude, to the author. (*This review originally appeared in the 06/01/17 issue.*)

FALL PREVIEW SPECIAL ISSUE

NONFICTION



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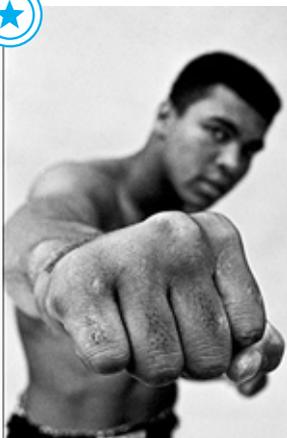
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ALI
A Life
 Eig, Jonathan
 Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
 (640 pp.)
 \$30.00 | \$30.00 e-book
 Oct. 3, 2017
 978-0-544-43524-7
 978-1-328-74497-5 e-book



RIOT DAYS

Alyokhina, Maria
 Metropolitan/Henry Holt (200 pp.)
 \$17.00 paper | \$11.90 e-book
 Sep. 26, 2017
 978-1-250-16492-6
 978-1-250-16491-9 e-book

The inside story of the Russian rock revolutionaries and the trial and prison ordeals that followed their arrest.

Alyokhina is no more a writer than she is a musician or an “official enemy of the people” of Russia, as she was charged under the Putin administration. She is an artist (whose drawings underscore the droll humor of her perspective), a mother, and, more recently, the recipient of the LennonOno Grant for Peace and the Hannah Arendt Award for Political Thought. The slapdash breeziness of this memoir shows the absurdity of Pussy Riot’s imprisonment for subversively performing a protest song in a church. The news of their arrest and the seriousness of the response to what was labeled a “criminal conspiracy” made their action all the more effective and gave it longer-lasting impact. Their first protest was, if anything, more outrageous, as they gave an impromptu performance of “Putin Peed His Pants” in Red Square while setting fire to “a poster of Putin kissing Qaddafi.” “The cops got us afterwards for trespassing,” she writes. “We told them we were drama students.” Their next performance had more serious consequences, as they performed inside a church, shooting a video that they would post on the internet of a performance of a song with the lyric, “Virgin Mary, Mother of God, Be a feminist! Be a feminist!” They escaped from the church, but once the video went viral, the search intensified as the band mates conducted interviews by cellphone from coffee shops or wherever else they stopped while on the run. However, they refused to leave Russia because “revolution is a story. If we fell out of it, disappeared, it would be their story, not ours.” Here, the author reclaims and extends that story, showing how one woman’s refusal to stop agitating, even while incarcerated, gave the Russian government a lot more trouble than it had anticipated.

An inspirational memoir about youthful idealism and the power of popular culture to challenge the status quo.
(This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.)

An authoritative history of national strife from a highly knowledgeable guide.

RED FAMINE



RED FAMINE Stalin's War on Ukraine

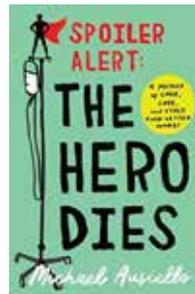
Applebaum, Anne
Doubleday (464 pp.)
\$30.00 | \$30.00 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017
978-0-385-53885-5
978-0-385-53886-2 e-book



A new history of Stalin's oppressive regime, which led to the death by starvation of nearly 4 million Ukrainians between 1931 and 1934.

Drawing on considerable published scholarship and new archival sources, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Applebaum (Practice/London School of Economics; *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe, 1944-1956*, 2012, etc.) offers a chilling, dramatic, and well-documented chronicle of a devastating famine. She argues persuasively that the lack of food resulted from a conflation of political, rather than natural, causes: enforced collectivization, confiscation of food, harsh blacklists imposed on farms and villages, trade restrictions, and a "vicious propaganda campaign designed to persuade Ukrainians to watch, unmoved, as their neighbours died of hunger." Ukraine was especially vulnerable to oppression: "disdain for the very idea of a Ukrainian state had been an integral part of Bolshevik thinking even before the revolution" of 1917; all Russian political parties, Applebaum writes, "shared this contempt" and feared any signs of a Ukrainian national movement. Famine was a scourge in the 1920s, as well; after the outbreak of World War I, a nationalized food distribution system created chaos and shortages. That situation worsened under Stalin's policy known as "War Communism": "take control of grain, at gunpoint, and then redistribute it to soldiers, factory workers, party members and others deemed 'essential' by the state." Food was exported, as well, to fund purchases of arms and machinery. Collectivization, which required farmers to give up their land to the Communist state, "destroyed the ethical structure of the countryside as well as the economic order." When farmers resisted handing over their land and property, collectivization brigades "resorted to outright intimidation and torture." When farmers refused to hand over grain, they were punished like political dissidents. Stalin's draconian policies included the elimination of Ukraine's scholars, writers, and political leaders and the "systematic destruction of Ukrainian culture and memory." Famine was another form of repression. In her detailed, well-rendered narrative, Applebaum provides a "crucial backstory" for understanding current relations between Russia and Ukraine.

An authoritative history of national strife from a highly knowledgeable guide.



SPOILER ALERT The Hero Dies: A Memoir of Love, Loss, and Other Four-Letter Words

Ausiello, Michael
Atria (320 pp.)
\$26.00 | \$13.99 e-book | Sep. 12, 2017
978-1-5011-3496-8
978-1-5011-3498-2 e-book



A veteran entertainment journalist shares the bittersweet story of his relationship with his husband and his tragic death from cancer.

In 2001, Ausiello, founder of TVLine.com, met and instantly gelled with handsome Christopher "Kit" Cowan. A hilariously described "aggressive form of CPR" between the two men sealed the romantic deal, and they became inseparable. Both would endure the navigation of sexual and bodily insecurities and some peculiar quirks like Kit's assortment of sex toys and the author's penchant for wine and an ever blossoming Smurf collection. Rough interpersonal waters would lead to a mutual "soft breakup" and to couples therapy before their world would be spun upside down by an unforeseen scare. The tone of the memoir changes when Kit discovers an abnormality in his colon, which brought up the same cancer fears Ausiello experienced in his youth when his mother and father both passed away by the time he was 22. Kit was diagnosed with a rare aggressive neuroendocrine tumor, which carried a hopeful if precarious prognosis. Faced with the possibility of his time with Kit ending, the author proposed marriage, and Ausiello describes the event in tear-jerking details and blubbering adoration. He intersperses the narrative with anecdotes from their evolution as a couple, sweetened by love and affection yet easily bruised by infidelity, personal differences, and petty bickering. As chemotherapy took its toll on Kit and the prospect of remission dimmed, the author remained a strong, dedicated husband. Kit succumbed to the cancer just 11 months later, leaving Ausiello feeling like "a chunk of me had broken off and attached itself to Kit as he drifted away." Though he was left to deal with the expansive void left in Kit's wake, the memoir's conclusion is leavened with hope, healing, and enduring devotion. Tender, profoundly poignant, and cleverly written with equal parts wit and integrity, the book is grounded in the realities of modern relationships and the grim fate of mortality.

A heartbreaking memoir infused with dark humor and composed with true love. (This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.)

#FALLTRENDS

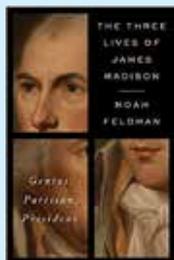


Photo courtesy Leah Overstreet

Doorstop Biographies

This isn't just a fall trend, as I receive at least a dozen 700-plus-page biographies every year, and the results are usually mixed. In the Fall 2017 season, we have exhaustive biographies of a wide variety of historical figures, including, among others, Muhammad Ali (Jonathan Eig's *Ali*), Golda Meir (Francine Klagsbrun's *Lioness*), FDR (Robert Dallek's *Franklin D. Roosevelt*), James Madison (Noah Feldman's *The Three Lives of James Madison*), Herbert Hoover (Kenneth Whyte's *Hoover*), Joseph Stalin (Stephen Kotkin's *Stalin*), Alexander Calder (Jed Perl's *Calder*), William McKinley (Robert W. Merry's *President McKinley*), and Ulysses S. Grant (Ron Chernow's *Grant*).

(*evelt*), James Madison (Noah Feldman's *The Three Lives of James Madison*), Herbert Hoover (Kenneth Whyte's *Hoover*), Joseph Stalin (Stephen Kotkin's *Stalin*), Alexander Calder (Jed Perl's *Calder*), William McKinley (Robert W. Merry's *President McKinley*), and Ulysses S. Grant (Ron Chernow's *Grant*).



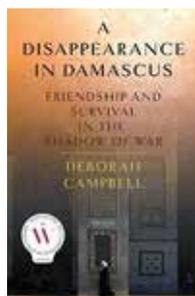
Heavy Hitters

Like spring, the fall publishing season always includes plenty of BIG books from well-known, acclaimed authors, and this year is no different. See the list above, and also look for new work from Ta-Nehisi Coates, Amy Tan, Toni Morrison, Adam Gopnik, John McPhee, A.J. Jacobs, Roz Chast, Michael Korda, John Feinstein, Daniel Mendelsohn, Stephen Greenblatt, and Russell Shorto. (Many of the books by these authors are reviewed in this special issue, though some of them weren't submitted early enough for review in these pages.)

Dump Trump

Trump's train wreck of a presidency—not to mention the vile campaign before it—has instigated outrage and protests in nearly all forms, including a rash of books that attempt to explain/diagnose Trump's rise and/or offer hope and calls to action for the tens of millions of American citizens who are appalled by his behavior. There are several insightful titles, including *One Nation After Trump*, a collaboration between E.J. Dionne Jr., Norman J. Ornstein, and Thomas E. Mann, and *Twilight of American Sanity* by eminent psychiatrist Allen Frances. —E.L.

Eric Liebetrau is the nonfiction and managing editor.



A DISAPPEARANCE IN DAMASCUS *Friendship and Survival in the Shadow of War*

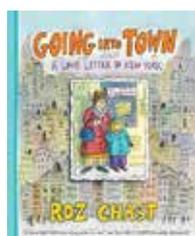
Campbell, Deborah
Picador (352 pp.)
\$27.00 | Sep. 5, 2017
978-1-250-14787-5



A Canadian journalist covering the plight of Iraqis who fled to Syria a decade ago enlists the help of an Iraqi woman in Damascus—friendship and disaster ensue.

In 2007, Campbell (Creative Writing/Univ. of British Columbia), a three-time National Magazine Award winner for foreign correspondence, was working on a major story for *Harper's* about Iraqi refugees when she first made contact with Ahlam, an Iraqi woman who served as her “fixer” (one who clears paths for journalists). Their professional relationship soon grew personal, and the author chronicles what went well and what went terribly wrong. Told principally in the first person, Campbell's story includes not only her stark and frightening experiences in Damascus, but also her fracturing love life back home as well as background on the Iraq War and ensuing civil war and the frangible stability in Syria, the only country to accept large numbers of Iraqi refugees. As she worked on her story, Campbell's friendship with Ahlam flourished and continued when the author left the country. Then Campbell found out that Ahlam had been arrested. The author, feeling profound guilt (was it because of *her*?), employed numerous strategies to find out why she was arrested, where she was being held, and what the charges were. Campbell's text races along—catching readers' hearts as it goes—and after the arrest, the author includes sections of “Ahlam's Story,” grim third-person accounts about the experience of prison: deprivation, interrogations, violence, and terror. These sections increase the tension in readers, who have known since the beginning that dark things were on the way. The author sometimes veers a little toward the melodramatic near the ends of chapters, but it's a small quibble in a powerful book.

In the stormwater's swirl, Campbell has found a bright and tender leaf to follow, and the effect on readers will be transformative. (*This review originally appeared in the 06/15/17 issue.*)



GOING INTO TOWN *A Love Letter to New York*

Chast, Roz
Illus. by the author
Bloomsbury (168 pp.)
\$28.00 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-62040-321-1



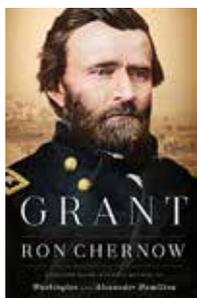
The highly regarded *New Yorker* cartoonist lets readers see the city she loves through her eyes.

Muhammad Ali, the recently departed, self-styled greatest, gets an appropriately outsized—and first-rate—biography.

ALI

As Chast (*Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?*, 2014, etc.) notes early on, this isn't a guidebook—though it could help Manhattan newcomers navigate the streets and the subways. The narrative is really about how an artist sees and how New York is such a treasure trove for the senses. “Maybe one day you will notice the amazing variety of standpipes,” writes the author on one of the pages illustrated with photos rather than drawings. “The more you notice them...the more you will see.” So it is with the rest of Manhattan, where there is so much to discover; even an artist with a sharp eye and a discerning sensibility can never come close to exhausting the inspiration. Chast explains that she left her native Brooklyn for suburbia for the usual family reasons—an affordable house, better schools, neighborhood safety—but that her love for the city has never diminished. She began this work “as a small booklet I made for my daughter before she left her home in Suburbia to attend college in Manhattan.” The result mixes some of the practical advice she must have offered her daughter with a bit of memoir and plenty of sociocultural observation (though she pays less attention to the city's people than its resources and attractions). Chast makes development as an artist and her experience in the city seem inseparable. “I've always preferred cities to Nature,” she writes. “I am interested in the person-made. I like to watch and eavesdrop on people. And I *really* like DENSITY OF VISUAL INFORMATION.” Such density—and the details of visual information—consistently informs her work. The author also underscores the point that even Central Park, that leafy oasis that comprises 6 percent of the island, is actually man-made: “It contains lots of Nature, but is no more ‘natural’ than an arrangement of flowers from your neighborhood florist.”

Chast's voice and vision make this a singular love letter to a singular city. (*This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.*)



GRANT

Chernow, Ron

Penguin Press (928 pp.)

\$40.00 | \$40.00 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017

978-1-59420-487-6

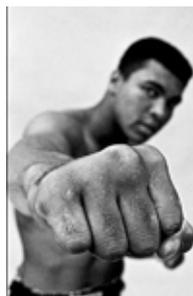
978-0-525-52195-2 e-book

A massive biography of the Civil War general and president, who “was the single most important figure behind Reconstruction.”

Most Americans know the traditional story of Ulysses S. Grant (1822-1885): a modest but brutal general who pummeled Robert E. Lee into submission and then became a bad president. Historians changed their minds a generation ago, and acclaimed historian Chernow (*Washington: A Life*, 2010, etc.), winner of both the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize, goes along in this doorstep of a biography, which is admiring, intensely detailed, and rarely dull. A middling West Point graduate, Grant performed well during the Mexican War but resigned his commission, enduring seven years of failure before getting lucky. At the outbreak of the Civil War, he

was the only West Point graduate in the area, so local leaders gave him a command. Unlike other Union commanders, he was aggressive and unfazed by setbacks. His brilliant campaign at Vicksburg made him a national hero. Taking command of the Army of the Potomac, he forced Lee's surrender, although it took a year. Easily elected in 1868, he was the only president who truly wanted Reconstruction to work. Despite achievements such as suppressing the Ku Klux Klan, he was fighting a losing battle. Historian Richard N. Current wrote, “by backing Radical Reconstruction as best he could, he made a greater effort to secure the constitutional rights of blacks than did any other President between Lincoln and Lyndon B. Johnson.” Recounting the dreary scandals that soiled his administration, Chernow emphasizes that Grant was disastrously lacking in cynicism. Loyal to friends and susceptible to shady characters, he was an easy mark, and he was fleeced regularly throughout his life. In this sympathetic biography, the author continues the revival of Grant's reputation.

At nearly 1,000 pages, Chernow delivers a deeply researched, everything-you-ever-wanted-to-know biography, but few readers will regret the experience. For those seeking a shorter treatment, turn to Josiah Bunting's *Ulysses S. Grant* (2004). (*This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.*)



ALI A Life

Eig, Jonathan

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (640 pp.)

\$30.00 | \$30.00 e-book | Oct. 3, 2017

978-0-544-43524-7

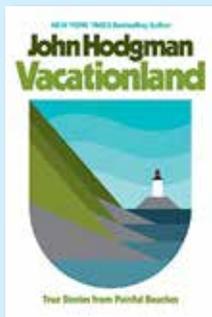
978-1-328-74497-5 e-book

Muhammad Ali (1942-2016), the recently departed, self-styled greatest, gets an appropriately outsized—and first-rate—biography.

Ali, who began boxing as a professional nearly 60 years ago, was not exposed to much in the way of literature early on; he complained that his own supposed autobiography “made me look like a fool” and added that, after all, he’d “never read a book in my life.” However, as *Wall Street Journal* contributor Eig (*The Birth of the Pill: How Four Crusaders Reinvented Sex and Launched a Revolution*, 2014, etc.) makes clear, Ali was possessed of a certain kind of poetic genius on top of a gift for self-appreciation to which layers of legend would be added. As an instance of that mythologizing, it is certain that when facing the draft in 1966, Ali said, “I ain't got no quarrel with the Viet Cong”—but the more commonly quoted rejoinder, “No Viet Cong ever called me nigger,” was added on, something that African-American protesters had said of the Vietnam War before Ali's number came up. In charting Ali's life, which was marked by plenty of personal difficulty but by a relatively comfortable upbringing, Eig observes that he seldom shied from controversy but, though reviled by some for becoming a Black Muslim and for some of his well-aired public statements, was also widely recognized for



FIRST-PERSON FRISSON: FALL 2017's NOTEWORTHY MEMOIRS



VACATIONLAND
*True Stories from
Painful Beaches*
by John Hodgman

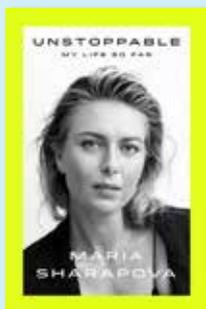
DIARY OF A RELUCTANT DREAMER
Undocumented Vignettes from a Pre-American Life
by Alberto Ledesma

WAITING FOR THE PUNCH
Words to Live by from the WTF Podcast
by Marc Maron

AN ODYSSEY
A Father, a Son, and an Epic
by Daniel Mendelsohn

SURVIVOR CAFÉ
The Legacy of Trauma and the Labyrinth of Memory
by Elizabeth Rosner

COMING TO MY SENSES
The Making of a Counterculture Cook
by Alice Waters



UNSTOPPABLE
My Life So Far
by Maria Sharapova

RIOT DAYS
by Maria Alyokhina

SPOILER ALERT
The Hero Dies—A Memoir of Love, Loss, and Other Four-Letter Words
by Michael Ausiello

A DISAPPEARANCE IN DAMASCUS
Friendship and Survival in the Shadow of War
by Deborah Campbell

THE WINE LOVER'S DAUGHTER
A Memoir
by Anne Fadiman

ADMISSIONS
Life as a Brain Surgeon
by Henry Marsh

his talent. The opponent he beat in his first professional fight as an 18-year-old Cassius Clay, a West Virginia police chief, said, “He’s a very good boxer for a kid; best I’ve met for a boy just starting out.” Other opponents would have similarly high regard, though not without talking a lot of smack. Eig does a fine job of covering all the bases, and though the book is occasionally overwritten, it’s only out of enthusiasm for his undeniably great subject, about whom the author is now working with Ken Burns to develop a documentary.

An exemplary life of an exemplary man who, despite a few missteps, deserves to be remembered long into the future. (16-page insert with 24 b/w photos)

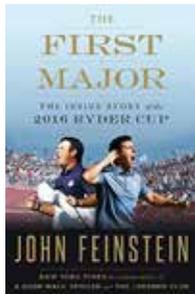


HOTEL SCARFACE
Where Cocaine Cowboys Partied and Plotted to Control Miami
Farzad, Roben
New American Library (320 pp.)
\$26.00 | \$26.00 e-book | Oct. 17, 2017
978-1-59240-928-0
978-0-698-40982-8 e-book

A history of the infamous Mutiny at Sailboat Bay hotel and nightclub, the epicenter of Miami’s cocaine boom years.

Miami’s reputation in the 1980s as the stronghold of the cocaine trade was popularized by the film *Scarface* and TV series *Miami Vice*, but the real story may eclipse even these portrayals. Through turf wars, assassinations, and arrests, the only certainty in Miami’s drug trade was the hangout for the industry’s key players to show off and flash their dirty money. In his investigation into the Mutiny, Farzad, who hosts *Full Disclosure* on NPR, captures the excess, decadence, and debauchery of the Mutiny in its heyday. This was where kingpins did business in the hotel suites, crooked lawyers and financiers held office hours at the club, and the entire staff were all in on it. With interviews from many of the people who lived it firsthand, the author showcases a cast of characters composed mostly of Cuban exiles and Colombian immigrants, including Ricardo “Monkey” Morales, Rodolfo “Rudy Redbeard” Rodriguez Gallo, and the legendary Willie Falcon and Sal Magluta. The story of the Mutiny and Miami’s cocaine gold rush is primarily a tale of the American dream, its corruption, and the lengths an immigrant community will go to fulfill a capitalist fantasy of affluence. But for all the glitz and glamour of the Mutiny and the lifestyle of cocaine elite, there was a brutal and nasty flip side. Suspicion, paranoia, and murder were common practice in the trade, a fact epitomized by the symbolic Dadeland Massacre in 1979, which ushered in an unprecedented wave of violence that earned the city the title of murder capital of America. The luster of cocaine and the Mutiny eventually faded, as crack became the preferred form of the drug and federal investigators prosecuted many of the Mutiny’s habitués. But the legend lives on in Farzad’s narrative retelling of the Mutiny, which provides a crucial piece to Miami’s history as the era’s cocaine epicenter.

A gripping account of how the Mutiny's role in Miami's cocaine business changed not only the city, but America. *(This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.)*



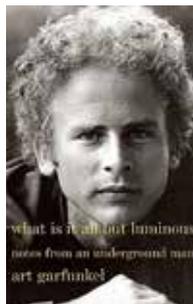
THE FIRST MAJOR
The Inside Story of the 2016 Ryder Cup

Feinstein, John
Doubleday (304 pp.)
\$27.95 | \$30.00 paper | \$27.95 e-book
Oct. 24, 2017
978-0-385-54109-1
978-0-525-52811-1 paper
978-0-385-54110-7 e-book

An exciting story of the “terror...absolute joy and absolute despair” that are the Ryder Cup matches.

Noted sports columnist and prolific author Feinstein (*The Legends Club: Dean Smith, Mike Krzyzewski, Jim Valvano, and an Epic College Basketball Rivalry*, 2016, etc.) returns to the world of golf with this in-depth portrait of the dramatic 2016 Ryder Cup matches between the U.S. and European teams at the Hazeltine Golf Course in Minnesota. Golf fans love Feinstein's books because he's trusted by the pros and thus can give inside information no other journalist can capture, plus he has a flair for telling a great story. He's been waiting 23 years to write a book about the Ryder Cup, and he covers a lot of material here. The author begins at the end of the matches, with Ryan Moore (the last American to make the team) putting to win the matches for the U.S., the first win since 2008. He provides a succinct history of the matches, which began in 1926, before moving on to more detailed tales about the most recent ones and the key players involved in them. Then it's on to the 2016 competition. He provides terrific behind-the-scenes information about how Davis Love was chosen as team captain for the second time in a row as well as the scrap between Phil Mickelson and Tom Watson and how Love decided to implement a strategy similar to what captain Paul Azinger used in the American's 2008 victory: the task force, which gave “the players the input they needed to be prepared to succeed.” The opening ceremony had seating for 1,500. There were some 45,000 on the course, and 30,000 stayed for the ceremony. Feinstein's coverage of the actual matches only takes up about a quarter of the book, and his journalistic style of short, pithy paragraphs drives the narrative along at breakneck speed.

Recommended for any sports enthusiast and a must for golfers of all handicaps. *(This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.)*



WHAT IS IT ALL BUT LUMINOUS
Notes from an Underground Man

Garfunkel, Art
Knopf (256 pp.)
\$27.95 | \$27.95 e-book | Sep. 26, 2017
978-0-385-35247-5
978-0-385-35246-8 e-book

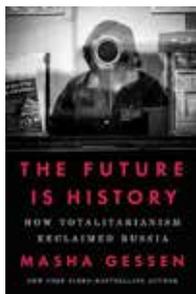
The silky voiced singer looks back on his career and life.

It would be hard to improve on the author's description of his younger self: “I live in my own rarified air. I put the ‘e’ in ‘artist’ every day.” There have been few popular music memoirs with more literary references and less of a sense of self-deprecating humor. Though Garfunkel (*Still Water: Prose Poems*, 1989) knows that he is generally dismissed as the secondary partner to songwriter Paul Simon—“I was a ‘BOUNCE,’ a sort of wall / and he of course had the ball”—this singular mixture of verse, doggerel, blog and diary entries, soul-baring confession, and lists of hundreds of books read is less about setting the record straight on Simon and Garfunkel than allowing readers to gaze into the poetic soul of an artist who variously sees himself as Don Quixote, James Joyce, Rimbaud, Odysseus, Whitman, and Prometheus. “I have these vocal cords. Two,” he writes. “They have vibrated with the love of sound since I was five and began to sing with the sense of God's gift running through me.” Simon may have written the songs, but Garfunkel had the voice, the hair, and the looks, and he got the girls. But all things must pass. “Does anyone notice the faint aroma of slowly decaying flesh?” he asks. “I'm depressed. All is vanity. Where is meaning?” Much of the book is about the joy he has found as a husband and a father, and some of it is about his acting career, which established him as a presence apart from Simon. “Before there was Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, there was Simon and Garfunkel—an extraordinary, a singular love affair,” he writes, though the relationship is as ambivalent as it is symbiotic. Now, many decades on, “I am an old boatman / I cast my net of pretense before me / Then I sail into it.”

There are many voyages here, some flashes of vision, and plenty of pretense. *(This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.)*

A superb, alarming portrait of a government that exercises outsize influence in the modern world, at great human cost.

THE FUTURE IS HISTORY



THE FUTURE IS HISTORY *How Totalitarianism Reclaimed Russia*

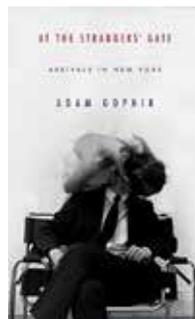
Gessen, Masha
Riverhead (528 pp.)
\$28.00 | \$17.00 paper | \$17.00 e-book
Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-59463-453-6
978-0-525-53406-8 paper
978-0-698-40620-9 e-book



A brilliant if somber look at modern Russia, a failed democracy, by prize-winning journalist Gessen (*The Brothers: The Road to an American Tragedy*, 2015, etc.).

First there were the serfs, and then “Homo Sovieticus,” the gloomily obedient men, women, and children who waited in bread lines and slaved in mines and factories. Are they the avatars of the good old days? With Vladimir Putin’s rise and increasingly absolutist rule, there may be something to the old saw that the Russian soul craves authoritarianism. Yet, as Gessen, who has written extensively on Putin, writes, that may flat out not be so. As she notes in this urgent chronicle, examining the Russian character through sociological instruments was frowned on, even banned, until the late 1960s, when Yuri Levada, who turns up at several points in this long narrative, began to look at how ordinary Russians thought about their society. For one thing, later surveys showed that although some wanted “rockers,” “hippies,” and “pederasts” (read: homosexuals) to be “liquidated,” a far larger number advocated tolerance, especially younger Russians. Those younger Russians are the focus of the author’s character-driven approach, a kind of nonfiction novel that compares favorably to the work of Svetlana Alexievich. One of Gessen’s cases in point, a still-youngish woman named Masha, has learned to work every angle thanks to a resourceful mother who, among other things, figured out ways to “teach Soviet Jews to beat the anti-Semitic machine.” By all rights, Masha, entrepreneurial and smart, ought to be in the forefront of Russian development, but having run afoul of Putin’s regime, she is effectively a nonperson, “a de facto political prisoner.” So it is with Zhanna, whose father, opposition leader Boris Nemtsov, was gunned down on a Moscow bridge in 2015, “with the Kremlin as the backdrop for the murder.” All Gessen’s players harbor the low-level dread on which totalitarian regimes thrive—and all, a refrain has it, believe that their country is dead.

A superb, alarming portrait of a government that exercises outsize influence in the modern world, at great human cost.



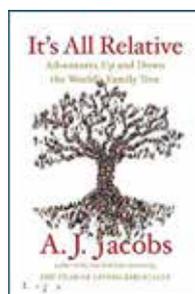
AT THE STRANGERS' GATE *Arrivals in New York*

Gopnik, Adam
Knopf (272 pp.)
\$26.95 | \$26.95 e-book | Sep. 5, 2017
978-1-4000-4180-0
978-1-101-94750-0 e-book

A longtime *New Yorker* contributor writes about his early years in the city—the 1980s principally—ruminating about art and artists, love and apartments, writing and reading and speaking, and the city that he loves.

Gopnik—the author of numerous works on sundry subjects (*The Table Comes First: Family, France, and the Meaning of Food*, 2011, etc.)—returns with an affecting memoir about his many dawns: his love life (there is much here about Martha, his wife of many years), writing career, and friendships with significant figures such as Richard Avedon and Jeff Koons. This is a highly allusive text, with references ranging across the cultural landscape, from Anthony Trollope to *X-Men*, from Falstaff and Prince Hall to professor Irwin Corey. But Gopnik will engage most firmly those interested in the art world of the 1980s. He studied art history, worked as a docent at the Museum of Modern Art, and did his earliest publishing in art magazines. Later, he moved to *GQ*, where he wrote about men’s fashion, then to Knopf as an editor before settling in at the *New Yorker*, his promised land. The text is also an extensive love letter to his wife—and includes a carefully erotic section about their sex life and about sex among married people in general. Throughout, readers will become aware of the author’s great fortune in his career: meeting important people, acquiring jobs that even he knew he was not qualified for—e.g., Knopf and editing. However, Gopnik retains an appealing modesty throughout and has some very entertaining stories to tell, including one about an invasion of rats in their loft (some foul secrets of the city, he learns, lie below).

Not exactly a Horatio Alger story but an engaging tale of a writer finding his way in work and life. (*This review originally appeared in the 07/01/17 issue.*)



IT'S ALL RELATIVE *Adventures Up and Down the World's Family Tree*

Jacobs, A.J.
Simon & Schuster (336 pp.)
\$27.00 | \$12.99 e-book | Nov. 7, 2017
978-1-4767-3449-1
978-1-4767-3451-4 e-book

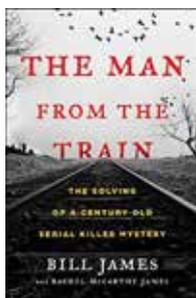
The bestselling immersion journalist embarks on a world-spanning journey of family and genealogy.

For years, Jacobs (*Drop Dead Healthy: One Man's Humble Quest for Bodily Perfection*, 2012, etc.) has built a significant following



at *Esquire*, where he is a contributing editor, with articles that mix serious inquiry with laugh-out-loud humor, usually featuring the author as his own main character. He used the same formula for his bestselling books, in which he tried to absorb more miscellaneous knowledge than anyone else alive (*The Know-It-All*), live daily life according to biblical commandments (*The Year of Living Biblically*), or sculpt his body into its best possible shape (*Drop Dead Healthy*). In his latest book, Jacobs delves into his own genealogy and that of his wife, Julie, and he chronicles his plans for what he hoped would become the largest “family” reunion in history. Along the way, the author provides a cornucopia of information about genealogy and ancestry: how males often dominate family trees while females remain in the background, the impact of American slavery on family histories, his own Jewish heritage, the complications of working with the Mormon archive (“every year, more data is added to this vault than is contained in the entire Library of Congress”), how non-human animals fit into the equations, the reliability of DNA testing as a genealogical tool, and the reliance on the story of Adam and Eve as the beginning of humanity. Some of the short chapters are almost entirely entertainment, as when Jacobs and his wife travel with their twin sons to a large gathering of families with twins. But whether the author is being ruminative or rollicking, he is consistently thought-provoking in his “adventure in helping to build the World Family Tree,” and his natural gift for humor lightens the mood of even the most serious discussion.

A delightful, easy-to-read, informative book.



THE MAN FROM THE TRAIN
The Solving of a Century-Old Serial Killer Mystery

James, Bill and James, Rachel McCarthy
 Scribner (416 pp.)
 \$28.00 | Aug. 1, 2017
 978-1-4767-9625-3

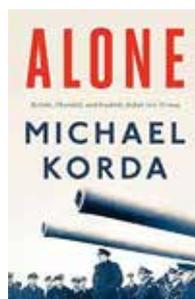
A baseball detective attempts to solve a homicide cold case.

With his statistics-driven “abstracts,” James (*The Bill James Handbook: Baseball*

Info Solutions, 2017, etc.) is famous for revolutionizing the way fans look at baseball. Here, the author and his daughter deliver a provocative book that employs his prodigious research techniques in an effort to solve a famous, 100-year-old mass murder case. Murders, actually, as their research on this case led them to a startling conclusion. On June 9, 1912, in Villisca, Iowa, a family of eight was brutally murdered with an ax at night in their home. No one was ever convicted. James believed other, similar mass murders might have occurred around the same time: “And then I found one, and another one, and another one. I hired my daughter as a researcher, and then she started finding them.” The authors’ research uncovered at least a dozen similar murders from 1909 to 1912 that occurred from Virginia to Oregon to Kansas, 48 murders in all. They kept digging and found a few dozen more during the period 1900 to 1906, with the locations

ranging from Nova Scotia to Arkansas to Florida. The authors became convinced they were committed by one person. The murderer’s *modus operandi* revealed a pattern: he worked for a living, probably in mining or logging, committed the crimes on weekends with an ax, often burning down the house, and didn’t steal anything. Since the murders were always close to train lines, the authors figured he traveled by train. Eventually, they came up with a suspect. They include detailed discussions of investigative techniques back then and stories about people wrongly (they feel) executed for the crimes. Told in workman-like, journalistic prose with plenty of personal injections—“hear me out. Have I got a story to tell you”—the narrative becomes addictive, and it’s easy to get caught up in the elaborate search and the authors’ conclusions, which are plausible.

Fans of true crime—as well as detectives in homicide bureaus—will relish this book. (*This review originally appeared in the 06/01/17 issue.*)



ALONE
Britain, Churchill, and Dunkirk: Defeat Into Victory

Korda, Michael
 Liveright/Norton (564 pp.)
 \$29.95 | Sep. 19, 2017
 978-1-63149-132-0

A swiftly paced, illuminating account of events at the opening of World War II in Europe, recounting “a military defeat with a happy ending.”

Revived in part thanks to Christopher Nolan’s 2017 film *Dunkirk*, the history of the British Expeditionary Force is compelling even in its barest bones. Korda (*Clouds of Glory: The Life and Legend of Robert E. Lee*, 2014, etc.), noted as both a historian and publisher, brings a personal touch to the story with that of his own family’s flight from Europe a step or two ahead of the advancing Nazis. So it was with the BEF, caught in France at the beginning of the German blitzkrieg. They fought valiantly as they retreated toward the coast, then were evacuated, famously, by a flotilla of both military and civilian boats that crossed the Channel under extreme danger, attacked by Stuka bombers and heavy artillery all the while. As the author observes, these unfolding events occasioned the first sustained contact between the French and British commands, to uneasy results. Some of the French commanders were highly effective, others not, while of the ordinary French troops, as one British veteran recounted, “their zest and delight in shooting Germans was most entertaining.” Even so, Winston Churchill found it necessary to deny the French access to the Royal Air Force, since, the British leader reasoned, the French army might well fold, as it did, and leave the British to fight the war alone. To craft this narrative, full of set pieces both political and military, Korda has scoured the archives, citing, for instance, the journals of “that rarest of observers, a well-educated public school Oxonian serving in the ranks” and looking deeply into all kinds of records. The author has a fine eye for the telling detail, too, such as the

**HOW WE, THE PEOPLE, GOT
HERE...& WHERE WE'RE GOING:
FALL'S CRUCIAL CULTURAL CRITICISM &
IMMERSION JOURNALISM**



Photo courtesy/Nina Sabin

**WE WERE EIGHT
YEARS IN POWER**
*Essays on the
Obama Era*
by Ta-Nehisi Coates

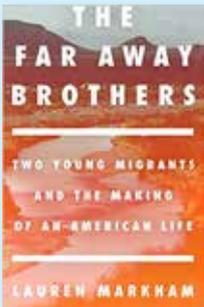
FANTASYLAND
*How America Went
Haywire—A 500-Year
History*
by Kurt Andersen

HOTEL SCARFACE
*Where Cocaine Cow-
boys Partied and Plot-
ted to Control Miami*
by Roben Farzad

THE FIRST MAJOR
*The Inside Story of the
2016 Ryder Cup*
by John Feinstein

**THE NAUGHTY
NINETIES**
*The Triumph of the
American Libido*
by David Friend

IT'S ALL RELATIVE
*Adventures Up and
Down the World's
Family Tree*
by A.J. Jacobs



**THE FAR AWAY
BROTHERS**
*Two Young Migrants
and the Making of an
American Life*
by Lauren Markham

**THE MAN FROM THE
TRAIN**
*The Solving of a Cen-
tury-Old Serial Killer*
by Bill James & Rachel
McCarthy James

**DAWN OF THE NEW
EVERYTHING**
*Encounters with Real-
ity and Virtual Reality*
by Jaron Lanier

**THE ORIGIN
OF OTHERS**
by Toni Morrison

BUNK
*The Rise of Hoaxes,
Humbug, Plagiarists,
Phonies, Post-Facts,
and Fake News*
by Kevin Young

fact that British trucks captured at Dunkirk turned up among the German military train during the invasion of Russia in the following months.

An excellent revisit of a critically important set of battles that, once a byword for courage, have faded in memory. (This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.)



**DAWN OF THE NEW
EVERYTHING**
*Encounters with Reality and
Virtual Reality*

Lanier, Jaron
Henry Holt (368 pp.)
\$30.00 | \$21.00 e-book | Nov. 7, 2017
978-1-62779-409-1
978-1-62779-410-7 e-book

The author has seen the future, and it wears a headset.

Perhaps better known for his hairstyle and hippie-ish ways (“in those days, it was super rare for white people to have dreadlocks, so I was quite exotic”) than for any specific bit of technology, computer pioneer and civil libertarian Lanier (*Who Owns the Future?*, 2013, etc.) has two purposes here. The first is to offer a vision of what virtual reality is and the cool things it can do, while the second is an amiable tour through his life and his perhaps unlikely course through the very beginnings of VR. As to the former, suffice it to say that Lanier was a smart, geeky kid who was thinking outside thoughts even as a child (“I was obsessed with what’s usually called philosophy, and it helped”), and he had the benefit of growing up in an eccentric household that encouraged his explorations. As to the latter, working in a state university computer lab to wrestle out the secrets of code and algorithm, Lanier writes that he got hooked early on—not just by the nerdy coolness of the computer world, but also by the outright wonder of the sci-fi things it can bring to real life. In that aspect, the author is an evangelist for the good side of VR, which now offers insights into human perception and cognition that are forcing a radical re-evaluation of who we are. That’s definitely cool stuff. In relating it, Lanier veers between the plainspoken (“the human brain is so finely tuned to watching the human face that if anything is slightly off, the strangeness quickly becomes creepy”) and the mystical (“if the whole universe is your body, then talking would be beside the point”), with lots of solid tech-manual ponderings on phenotropic systems and formulas to boot.

A spirited exploration of tech by a devotee who holds out the hope that bright things are just around the corner. (34 b/w illustrations)

An insightful collection of interviews about what it means to be human. This book, it turns out, helps explain W is TF.

WAITING FOR THE PUNCH



DIARY OF A RELUCTANT DREAMER *Undocumented Vignettes from a Pre-American Life*

Ledesma, Alberto

Illus. by the author

Mad Creek/Ohio State Univ. Press

(120 pp.)

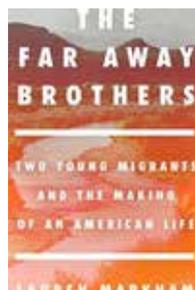
\$17.95 paper | Sep. 22, 2017

978-0-8142-5440-0

Mexican-American scholar/writer/artist Ledesma (Graduate Diversity Director/Univ. of California) recounts his own experience of “the immigrant experience,” with its tiers of risk and layers of aspiration.

Drawing on a mix of prose, sketches, and other drawings that commemorates his emergence as a “critical cartoonist” to match his work in literary critical theory, the author describes his long years “underground” as the undocumented child of undocumented immigrants from Mexico, a “dreamer” who wanted nothing more than to go to college and have a chance at success. “Being undocumented,” he writes, “as I’m sure you can imagine, meant that we always lived with the fear of being caught, that any misstep we took could endanger the entire family.” This fear is why undocumented immigrants tend to be very law-abiding, and when they’re caught, they have developed skillful strategies, sometimes keeping silence, sometimes talking a strange patter of doublespeak. None of that helps in the end; Ledesma writes of his own father saying that no matter how well he spoke English, he still was a target: “*la migra* will still get you.” A good chunk of Ledesma’s text is given over to an ABC of immigrant life—for example, “R is for the resilience of undocumented immigrant mothers”; “B is for the back pay that was withheld from your father’s paycheck those few years when he worked as a *bracero*”; “M is for machine, the inevitable result of an immigrant worker’s metamorphosis from human being to mechanical instrument.” Ledesma and his family have been legal residents of the United States since the 1980s, but the old fears remain, he writes, especially given the anti-immigrant sentiment of the new administration. As he writes in closing, “President Trump? Even thinking about the phrase feels as if I am uttering an uncouth incantation. He has stood in front of Weimar multitudes, ratcheting up jack-booted antagonisms targeted towards my people.”

Affecting, highly charged, and deserving of broad attention. (*This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.*)



THE FAR AWAY BROTHERS *Two Young Migrants and the Making of an American Life*

Markham, Lauren

Crown (320 pp.)

\$27.00 | \$27.00 e-book | Sep. 12, 2017

978-1-101-90618-7

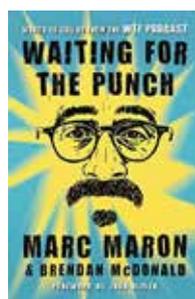
978-1-101-90619-4 e-book



Markham relies on her roles as a journalist and a worker in the realm of refugee resettlement and immigrant education to craft a powerful narrative about an experience that plays out every day in the United States.

Focusing primarily on one family’s struggle to survive in violence-riddled El Salvador by sending some of its members illegally to the U.S., the author never loses sight of the big-picture issues regarding immigration. Throughout, she inserts brief chapters about those concerns in a compellingly intimate narrative about the Flores family. Markham keenly examines the plights of juveniles sent to America without adult supervision, a large, constantly growing contingent that includes twins Ernesto and Raúl Flores, who sought to escape their hometown because they feared for their lives among the rampant gang violence plaguing their country. Knowing almost nothing about the U.S., the Flores twins lacked both money for their journey and any marketable job skills, and they spoke no English. Their journey was harrowing, to say the least (spoilers omitted), and their transition to life in the U.S., mostly in Oakland, continues, raising new difficulties each day. As they have tried to balance their minimum-wage restaurant jobs with education, the schooling has suffered. Meanwhile, their parents and most of their siblings continue to live in highly dangerous circumstances in El Salvador. Markham met the twins in her job as a counselor at a public high school with a heavy influx of juvenile refugees without documentation, and her experience in that role informs the eye-opening narrative. Most of the book takes place before the election of Donald Trump, but it’s clear that the policies of the new administration will make the lives of the Flores twins and countless others even more terrifying.

One of the most searing books on illegal immigration since Sonia Nazario’s *Enrique’s Journey* (2006). (*This review originally appeared in the 07/01/17 issue.*)



WAITING FOR THE PUNCH *Words to Live by from the WTF Podcast*

Maron, Marc & McDonald, Brendan

Flatiron Books (416 pp.)

\$27.99 | \$14.99 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017

978-1-250-08888-8

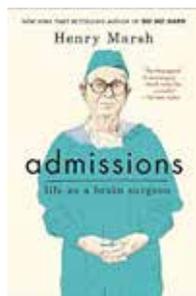
978-1-250-08889-5 e-book

A popular podcast gets the book treatment.

FICTION | NONFICTION | PICTURE BOOKS | MIDDLE-GRADE | TEEN

An accomplished and long-respected comedian, Maron is perhaps best known for his wildly popular eponymous podcast *WTF with Marc Maron*, which premiered in 2009. Throughout the podcast's successful run, Maron has shown a unique knack for getting famous (and semifamous) people to talk. And talk. As they talk, his guests reveal amazing—and often previously unexplored—depths about their personal experiences. In the process, they also reveal a great deal about life in general, especially the many difficulties in navigating all the absurdity, drama, and tragicomedy. Maron did the majority of the work to get these words out there, as they are drawn from his podcast, but he strongly implies that the transcription was someone else's job. It is unclear who made perhaps the most important decision of all: organizing these transcriptions by theme. The book coalesces around chapters about such timeless themes as family, sex, addiction, mortality, and success and failure. Many of Maron's subjects are among his professional colleagues and friends—among dozens of others, Robin Williams, Judd Apatow, Amy Poehler, Jimmy Fallon, Garry Shandling, Kevin Hart, Cheech Marin, Sarah Silverman—but he has interviewed a wide range of people from other walks of life, including Terry Gross, Melissa Etheridge, David Sedaris, Paul Thomas Anderson, and even then-President Barack Obama. As readers will expect, there are plenty of laugh-out-loud moments, but what is more surprising and refreshing is how many profound and powerful insights Maron manages to draw from his guests. Many of the most tragic situations come from the comedians, and some of the funnier moments come from those whose job is not necessarily to make people laugh.

An insightful collection of interviews about what it means to be human. This book, it turns out, helps explain W is TF. (*This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.*)



ADMISSIONS *Life as a Brain Surgeon*

Marsh, Henry

Dunne/St. Martin's (288 pp.)

\$26.99 | \$12.99 e-book | Oct. 3, 2017

978-1-250-12726-6

978-1-250-12727-3 e-book

A retired British neurosurgeon delivers the follow-up to his well-received debut memoir, *Do No Harm: Stories of Life, Death, and Brain Surgery* (2015).

The author's first book received rave reviews and sold well. While follow-ups to exceptional first books have a spotty record, readers who open Marsh's sophomore effort will quickly realize that they are in the hands of a master. Now retired, Marsh looks back over his life and career but mostly recounts his volunteer work in Nepal and Ukraine, extremely poor nations with abysmal medical care. He meticulously describes his successes but, as usual, feels more distress at failures. Ironically, these occur too often because the patients in these countries often believe that doctors can work miracles, so they often insist on surgery even after a careful explanation that it's unlikely to

help. Operating on a cerebral hemorrhage or incurable brain tumor regularly converts a quick death to a slow, miserable one. American readers will note that this belies Marsh's statement that "only in America have I seen so much treatment devoted to so many people with such little chance of making a useful recovery." They will also learn of his admiration for American surgeons and his opinion—widely shared—that because they are paid each time they operate, they do so too often. In all his travels, the only nation where the subject of payment has never arisen is Britain. Marsh justifiably rages against elected officials who could eliminate the National Health Service's most desperate need, money, by raising taxes but don't because it might endanger their chances of re-election.

Another thoughtful, painful, utterly fascinating mixture of nut-and-bolts brain surgery with a compassionate, workaholic surgeon's view of medicine around the world and his own limitations. Readers will hope that a third volume is in the works. (*This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.*)



DRAFT NO. 4 *On the Writing Process*

McPhee, John

Farrar, Straus and Giroux (208 pp.)

\$26.00 | Sep. 5, 2017

978-0-374-14274-2

The renowned writer offers advice on information-gathering and nonfiction composition.

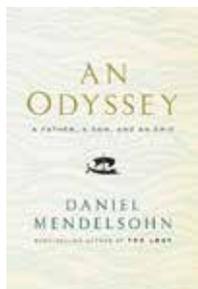
The book consists of eight instructive and charming essays about creating narratives, all of them originally composed for the *New Yorker*, where McPhee (*Silk Parachute*, 2010, etc.) has been a contributor since the mid-1960s. Reading them consecutively in one volume constitutes a master class in writing, as the author clearly demonstrates why he has taught so successfully part-time for decades at Princeton University. In one of the essays, McPhee focuses on the personalities and skills of editors and publishers for whom he has worked, and his descriptions of those men and women are insightful and delightful. The main personality throughout the collection, though, is McPhee himself. He is frequently self-deprecating, occasionally openly proud of his accomplishments, and never boring. In his magazine articles and the books resulting from them, McPhee rarely injects himself except superficially. Within these essays, he offers a departure by revealing quite a bit about his journalism, his teaching life, and daughters, two of whom write professionally. Throughout the collection, there emerge passages of sly, subtle humor, a quality often absent in McPhee's lengthy magazine pieces. Since some subjects are so weighty—especially those dealing with geology—the writing can seem dry. There is no dry prose here, however. Almost every sentence sparkles, with wordplay evident throughout. Another bonus is the detailed explanation of how McPhee decided to tackle certain topics and then how he chose to structure the resulting pieces. Readers already

A well-told story that underscores the power of storytelling.

AN ODYSSEY

familiar with the author's masterpieces—e.g., *Levels of the Game*, *Encounters with the Archdruid*, *Looking for a Ship*, *Uncommon Carriers*, *Oranges*, and *Coming into the Country*—will feel especially fulfilled by McPhee's discussions of the specifics from his many books.

A superb book about doing his job by a master of his craft. (This review originally appeared in the 06/01/17 issue.)



AN ODYSSEY A Father, a Son, and an Epic

Mendelsohn, Daniel

Knopf (256 pp.)

\$26.95 | \$26.95 e-book | Sep. 12, 2017

978-0-385-35059-4

978-0-385-35060-0 e-book

An account of the lessons learned by a son and his father as they study the Greek epic together.

There have been plenty of gimmicky books about returning to the classics and unearthing the contemporary implications and timeless wisdom therein. This sharply intelligent and deeply felt work operates on an entirely different level—several of them, in fact. A frequent contributor to the *New Yorker* and *New York Times Book Review* and winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for Autobiography, Mendelsohn (*Waiting for the Barbarians: Essays from the Classics to Pop Culture*, 2012, etc.) is also a classics scholar who teaches a seminar on *The Odyssey* at Bard College. His father, a retired mathematician and research scientist, had been interested in the classics during his school days and decided to continue his education by studying with his son. The two also embarked on an educational cruise that attempts to re-create the journey of Odysseus. This would seem to present challenges for a man nearing his 82nd birthday, but it proved to be more of a trial for his son. Ultimately, this is a book about what they learn about each other and what they know about each other and what they can never know about each other. The author uses a close reading of the epic to illuminate the mysteries of the human condition, and he skillfully and subtly interweaves the classroom textual analysis and the lessons of the life outside it. “That’s how I was trained, and that’s how the people who trained me were trained,” he writes. “If the work has real coherence, all these details will add up, even if they’re not noticeable at first and even if the big picture isn’t clear. Only by means of close reading can we understand what the big picture is and how the pieces, the small things, fit into it.” Revelations for Mendelsohn provide epiphanies for readers as well.

A well-told story that underscores the power of storytelling. (This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.)



THE ORIGIN OF OTHERS

Morrison, Toni

Harvard Univ. (116 pp.)

\$22.95 | Sep. 18, 2017

978-0-674-97645-0

Essays focused on an overarching question: “What is race (other than genetic imagination), and why does it matter?”

Melding memoir, history, and trenchant literary analysis, Nobel Prize laureate Morrison (Emeritus, Humanities/Princeton Univ.; *God Help the Child*, 2015, etc.) offers perceptive reflections on the configuration of Otherness. Revised from her Norton Lectures at Harvard, the volume consists of six essays that consider how race is conceived, internalized, and culturally transmitted, drawing in part on writers such as Hemingway, Faulkner, Flannery O’Connor, Joseph Conrad, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and the African writer Camara Laye, whose novel *The Radiance of the King* Morrison greatly admires. Laye told the story of a white man, stranded and destitute in Africa, struggling to maintain his assumptions of white privilege. For Morrison, the novel illuminates the pressures that “make us deny the foreigner in ourselves and make us resist to the death the commonness of humanity.” She also offers insightful glosses into her own aims as a novelist. “Narrative fiction,” she writes, “provides a controlled wilderness, an opportunity to be and to become the Other. The stranger. With sympathy, clarity, and the risk of self-examination.” In *Beloved*, for example, she reimagined the story of Margaret Garner, a slave who had killed her children rather than see them enslaved, as she had been. In *A Mercy*, she examined “the journey from sympathetic race relations to violent ones fostered by religion.” In *Paradise*, she delved into the issue of hierarchies of blackness by looking at “the contradictory results of devising a purely raced community”; she purposely did not identify her characters’ race in order to “simultaneously de-fang and theatricalize race, signaling, I hoped, how moveable and hopelessly meaningless the construct was.” In *God Help the Child*, Morrison considered “the triumphalism and deception that colorism fosters.” Her current novel in progress, she discloses, explores “the education of a racist—how does one move from a non-racial womb to the womb of racism?”

As sharp and insightful as one would expect from this acclaimed author. (This review originally appeared in the 06/15/17 issue.)

GENERAL STUDIES: FALL'S BEST BOOKS ON THE ART OF WAR & THE FIGHT TO MAKE ART



RED FAMINE
Stalin's War on Ukraine
 by Anne Applebaum

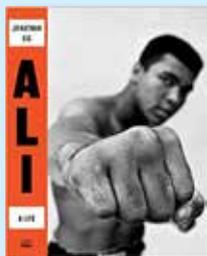
GRANT
 by Ron Chernow

THE FUTURE IS HISTORY
How Totalitarianism Reclaimed Russia
 by Masha Gessen

AT THE STRANGERS' GATE
Arrivals in New York
 by Adam Gopnik

BUNNY MELLON
The Life of an American Style Legend
 by Meryl Gordon

ALONE
Britain, Churchill, and Dunkirk—Defeat into Victory
 by Michael Korda

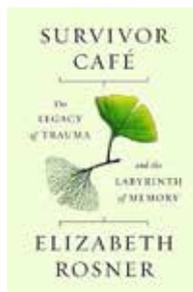


ALI
A LIFE
 by Jonathan Eig

DRAFT NO. 4
On the Writing Process
 by John McPhee

DON'T SAVE ANYTHING
Uncollected Essays, Articles, and Profiles
 by James Salter

GORBACHEV
His Life and Times
 by William Taubman



SURVIVOR CAFÉ
The Legacy of Trauma and the Labyrinth of Memory
Rosner, Elizabeth
 Counterpoint (288 pp.)
 \$26.00 | Sep. 12, 2017
 978-1-61902-954-5

Trauma informs a memoir palpable with anger, sorrow, and frustration.

Poet, essayist, and novelist Rosner (*Electric City*, 2014, etc.) feels an intimate connection to the Holocaust: her father was imprisoned in Buchenwald concentration camp when he was 15, and her mother, at the age of 12, fled from her home in the Vilna ghetto and lived in hiding for two years, until the Russians drove the Nazis out of Poland. The two met later, married, and immigrated to the United States, where Rosner and her siblings were born. German culture and language were forbidden in her family, yet the author's life was shadowed by her parents' history. "Shards of their past lodged themselves inside me at birth, if not before," she writes, which infused her life with "grief, anxiety, rage, and so much more." Those emotions are shared, Rosner knows, with many others whose lives were blighted by atrocities: Vietnamese boat people, victims of the Cambodian Killing Fields, Japanese descendants of atom-bomb survivors or families interned in American camps, and survivors of Armenian, Rwandan, or Native American genocides. Although she empathetically considers others' experiences, her focus is on how her own identity has been shaped. The author looks to epigenetics for evidence of intergenerational trauma, passed to offspring in "mother's milk drenched in sadness" and other visceral ways: "we are inheriting more than the overt repeating of survival stories." Rosner acknowledges the need "to interrupt the cycle of trauma" through therapy and, at the same time, believes that the culture urgently needs those stories to ensure that the past will not be forgotten. She repeatedly expresses frustration with the inadequacy of words to convey horrific reality as well as by memorials and museums that fall short of offering "a personal shape for such collective and monumental mourning." Central to the narrative are three visits to Buchenwald with her father, for a commemoration, where inmates, liberators, and German residents gathered at a Survivor's Café, an emotional reunion.

A thoughtful, probing meditation on the fragility of memory and the indelible inheritance of pain. (*This review originally appeared in the 06/15/17 issue.*)



UNSTOPPABLE
My Life So Far

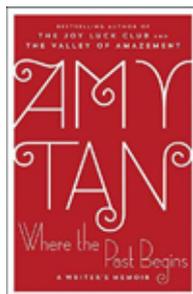
Sharapova, Maria
Sarah Crichton/Farrar, Straus and Giroux (304 pp.)
\$28.00 | \$19.60 e-book | Sep. 12, 2017
978-0-374-27979-0
978-0-374-71531-1 e-book

Professional tennis celebrity Sharapova relates her remarkable immigration saga and writes candidly about her career, family,

and personal life.

The author's father, Yuri, became interested in tennis by chance as an adult. When young Maria started tagging along with him to watch matches, Yuri recognized her natural ability and decided he would devote his life to developing her into the world's top female tennis player. Yuri persuaded his wife to surrender seeing Maria for at least a couple of years, and he and 7-year-old Maria spent the family savings on airplane tickets to Florida, where top youth tennis camps, especially the IMG Academy, trained future stars. Yuri and Maria spoke no English, did not contact any of the academies in advance, and had no idea how to find a residence, but through a series of fortunate, unlikely occurrences, Maria gained entry into IMG. With fierce determination, she drilled every day with her father and coaches, and eventually her mother was able to obtain a rare visa to enter the U.S., reuniting the family. After a major growth spurt, the young Sharapova quickly ascended the youth ranks. At age 17, she defeated the top seed, Serena Williams, to win Wimbledon, becoming the third-youngest woman to win the prestigious tournament. Williams appears often throughout the remainder of the book, as she becomes Sharapova's chief rival and the most dominant force in the women's game. For tennis players and fans, the memoir is filled with solid insights about on-the-court strategy and off-the-court psychology. "I can get fancy and sweet about it," she writes, "but at bottom my motivation is simple: *I want to beat everyone....* Ribbons and trophies get old, but losing lasts." For readers with no interest in tennis, the author delivers an impressive immigration tale, an inspiring coming-of-age narrative, and a host of useful advice on navigating celebrity culture.

Sharapova demonstrates consistent dedication and impressive wisdom for her age. (*This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.*)



WHERE THE PAST BEGINS
A Writer's Memoir

Tan, Amy
Ecco/HarperCollins (400 pp.)
\$28.99 | \$28.99 paper | \$17.99 e-book
Oct. 17, 2017
978-0-06-231929-6
978-0-06-268819-4 paper
978-0-06-231930-2 e-book

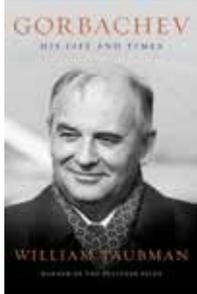
The bestselling author reflects on family, reading, writing, and language in a memoir characterized by "free-form spontaneity."

After Tan published her last novel (*The Valley of Amazement*, 2013, etc.), her editor suggested that she compile a volume drawn from some of the thousands of emails she sent him during the time she wrote the book. It would be "easy to pull together," he said, as well as "compelling" and "insightful." Fortunately, Tan rejected that idea, although she does include one chapter containing a selection of emails between them, some of which offer glimpses of her writing process. The rest of her uneven memoir consists of "a potluck of topics and tone": chapters about her response to music, the idea of genius, emotions, her own personality as "unstoppable," learning to read, and her family. Readers of Tan's previous fiction and nonfiction will find a familiar character: her mother, a difficult, moody woman who had an indelible influence on the author. "The main problem, as I saw it growing up," Tan reflects, "is that she was negative in her thinking. She saw falsity in people who were nice. She saw slights in how people treated her." Bad thoughts festered in her mind until they emerged "in an explosive threat" that blighted Tan's life. A psychiatrist who knew her mother marveled that Tan didn't suffer "from a disabling psychiatric disorder as an adult." But she admits that her childhood experiences made her "intolerant of emotional manipulation." Tan is forthcoming about various illnesses, especially her treatment for seizures with a medication that left her feeling unusually happy. When a friend suggested she stop taking the mood-altering drug, she resisted: "Whatever the medication had done to my brain, I had become protective of my new sympathetic nervous system friend." Tan's candid revelations make much of the book entertaining, but the slight journal entries and short pieces she calls "quirks" read like filler, and many chapters would have benefited from further editing.

A composite portrait that should appeal to the author's fans. (*This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.*)

An engaging, poignant portrayal of one of the most significant of Russian leaders.

GORBACHEV



GORBACHEV *His Life and Times*

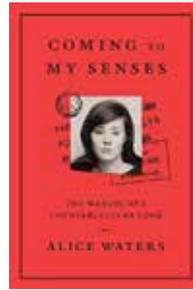
Taubman, William
Norton (768 pp.)
\$39.95 | Sep. 7, 2017
978-0-393-64701-3



The long-awaited biography of the enigmatic Soviet leader whose “new thinking” sent shock waves throughout the Soviet Union and indeed the world.

Taubman (Emeritus, Political Science/Amherst Coll.), who won the National Book Critics Circle Award and Pulitzer Prize for *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (2003), is perfectly qualified to delve into the political psyche of Mikhail Gorbachev (b. 1931), who had everything to do with ending the Cold War and managed to emerge—rather miraculously unscathed—from the layers of Soviet intrigue. The author delivers a series of intriguing questions to drive his page-turning, chronological narrative—e.g., “how did he become Communist party boss despite the rigorous imaginable arrangement of checks and guarantees designed to guard against someone like him?” From his earliest years, Gorbachev, the son of peasants, developed a remarkable self-confidence derived from a tremendous intelligence and dedication to join the great mission of his country. His early education at Moscow State University, work on a collective farm, and formative first job as head of the Komsomol regional committee in Stavropol gave him a good sense of how “rotten” the inner workings of the Soviet system had grown. Moreover, his close relationship with his wife, philosopher Raisa Titarenko, provided him an intellectual partner with whom to exchange and develop his ideas of reform. Those ideas evolved through the de-Stalinization campaign of the Khrushchev years and the subsequent smashing of the Prague Spring of 1968. Indeed, Gorbachev referred to himself as a “man of the sixties” who gradually ascended the ranks under Leonid Brezhnev and was the only viable leader who remained to take the reins in 1985 after the power vacuum left by the deaths of the aged leaders Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko. He was young, groomed, well-read in texts once banned by the Soviets, and Westernized, and he had a glamorous, intellectual equal as a wife—all of which allowed him to take the world by storm. Taubman follows it all with gusto.

An engaging, poignant portrayal of one of the most significant of Russian leaders. (*This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.*)



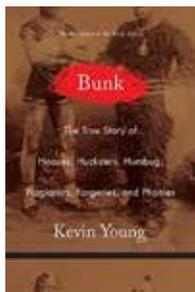
COMING TO MY SENSES *The Making of a Counterculture Cook*

Waters, Alice
Clarkson Potter (304 pp.)
\$27.00 | \$27.00 e-book | Sep. 5, 2017
978-0-307-71828-0
978-1-101-90665-1 e-book

The veteran and much-honored chef and writer returns with a memoir that shows how bumps, bruises, and even youthful confusion and clumsiness can form the Yellow Brick Road.

Waters—founder and longtime owner of Chez Panisse Restaurant and Café in Berkeley, California, and the author of numerous other cooking-related titles (*My Pantry: Homemade Ingredients that Make Simple Meals Your Own*, 2015, etc.)—came of age in the 1960s and lived her youthful years in such a free-spirited way that they seem almost to define, if not caricature, the era: France for a junior year abroad, where she rarely attended classes; numerous sexual relationships with evanescent commitments; some time teaching in a Montessori School, which she realized was not for her; and an almost magical life in Berkeley that has enabled her to meet celebrities in a variety of areas, including music, cinema, cooking, and graphic design. Waters opened Chez Panisse in 1971—“chaos” and “mayhem” abounded—but it caught on very quickly and served as a launching pad for even greater success. Waters employs an interesting technique for her asides, divergent thoughts, flashbacks, and ruminations: she puts them in italics. They occur often and deal with such sundry things as a clambake, French bread, cheese, meeting Francis Ford Coppola and President Bill Clinton, and getting hooked on movies—a passion she now ranks right near cooking. The author does an artful job of showing how even the most apparently unrelated experiences helped lead her to her profession. She is also quite frank about her failures; her relationships with lovers, friends, and colleagues; and her pride in remaining a part of the 1960s counterculture that nourished her. She also writes affectionately about her parents and siblings and her colleagues.

An almost charmed restaurant life that exhales the sweet aromas of honesty and self-awareness. (*This review originally appeared in the 06/15/17 issue.*)



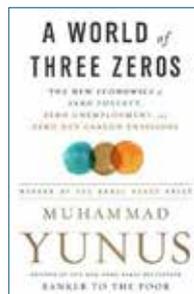
BUNK
The Rise of Hoaxes, Humbug, Plagiarists, Phonies, Post-Facts, and Fake News

Young, Kevin
 Graywolf (480 pp.)
 \$30.00 | \$14.99 e-book | Nov. 14, 2017
 978-1-55597-791-7
 978-1-55597-982-9 e-book

Is flimflamery, like jazz, a pure product of America? So wonders *New Yorker* poetry editor Young (*Blues Laws: Selected and Uncollected Poems 1995-2015*, 2016, etc.), adding another Americanism to the mix: Jim Crow.

For whatever reason, Americans have always thrilled at being conned: thus televangelists and bullshit artists. Thus Herman Melville's great novel *The Confidence-Man*, and thus the result of the most recent presidential election. By Young's vigorous, allusive account, the suckerdom whose numbers are added to every minute has no end of choices when it comes to shopping for bunkum. What makes this book a valuable addition to the literature—otherwise, it might just be an update to Daniel Boorstin's half-century-old study *The Image*—is Young's attention to the racial component: P.T. Barnum built his fortune, after all, on the backs of people like Joice Heth, billed as a supposed 161-year-old wet nurse to George Washington, and putative cannibals from the South Pacific, and the like. Much bunkum had to do with the clash of cultures and races, from the mundane to the fabulous. Young's wide-ranging text takes in not just circus sideshows, but also the literary/journalistic fabrications of JT LeRoy, Stephen Glass, Jayson Blair, Lance Armstrong, and other exemplars of what Young calls the "Age of Euphemism." Oh, and Rachel Dolezal, too, who infamously tried to pass as black not so long ago: "Did Dolezal really fool those black folks around her? I have a strange feeling she didn't, that many simply humored her. You have to do this with white people, from time to time." If that doesn't stir up identity-politics conflict, then nothing will....

A little harsh here, a little overstated there, but all in all a fascinating, well-researched look at the many ways Americans hoodwink each other, often about race. (20 b/w images)



A WORLD OF THREE ZEROS
The New Economics of Zero Poverty, Zero Unemployment, and Zero Net Carbon Emissions

Yunus, Muhammad with Weber, Karl
 PublicAffairs (320 pp.)
 \$28.00 | Sep. 26, 2017
 978-1-61039-757-5

A book to make Wall Street quake—if Wall Street paid attention to the developing world.

The classic description of capitalism, writes Bangladeshi economist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Yunus (*Building Social Business: The New Kind of Capitalism that Serves Humanity's Most Pressing Needs*, 2010, etc.), assumes that the free market imposes curbs on economic inequality. In fact, it does not work that way, and inequality is growing markedly across the world, requiring a rethinking of the tenets of not only free-market capitalism, but also the marketplace. Such a rethinking, by the author's account in this hortatory but accessible text, makes room for a hybrid "social business" that is not quite for-profit and not quite non-profit but something that partakes of both while leveraging the human propensity for selflessness. In this regard, Yunus' experiments in microfinance and microcredit, loaning small sums of money to businesspeople actual and aspiring, are cases in point. At the same time, he adds, a re-envisioned economics will recognize that humans are naturally entrepreneurs, best served not by jobs as such but by opportunities to make their own ventures in the marketplace. Again, his microfinancial work "introduced a new program of offering new-entrepreneur loans from Grameen Bank to support...efforts to create businesses" on the part of young Bangladeshis. Entrepreneurship catering to the mass market, Yunus argues, will prove more sustainable in the end than "trying to sell a few more luxury goods to a handful of wealthy people who already have more things than they will ever need." A third plank of a revised economics includes sustainable, clean energy, which Yunus believes developing nations are better positioned to adapt than many advanced economies, precisely because they are more of a blank slate. While antithetical to the prevailing capitalism, the author's reforms, he insists, will yield an economic system that more closely corresponds to who humans really are: partners and not predators.

The author's humane proposal for economic reform, far from impractical, makes for provocative reading for development specialists. (This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.)

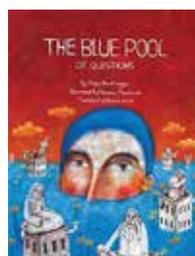
FALL PREVIEW SPECIAL ISSUE

PICTURE BOOKS



These titles earned the Kirkus Star:

- CROWN** by Derrick Barnes; illus. by Gordon C. James..... 37
- FEATHER** by Cao Wenxuan; illus. by Roger Mello;
trans. by Chloe Garcia Roberts..... 37
- BEFORE SHE WAS HARRIET** by Lesa Cline-Ransome;
illus. by James E. Ransome..... 38
- CRAZY ABOUT CATS** by Owen Davey..... 39
- HER RIGHT FOOT** by Dave Eggers; illus. by Shawn Harris..... 40
- SLEEP TIGHT, CHARLIE** by Michaël Escoffier;
illus. by Kris Di Giacomo..... 40
- WHEN'S MY BIRTHDAY?** by Julie Fogliano;
illus. by Christian Robinson..... 40
- LETTERS TO A PRISONER** by Jacques Goldstyn..... 41
- SLEEP WELL, SIBA AND SABA** by Nansubuga Nagadya Isdahl;
illus. by Sandra van Doorn..... 42
- LEAP!** by Jon Arno Lawson; illus. by Josée Bisaillon..... 44
- GOOD NIGHT, PLANET** by Liniers..... 44
- LUDWIG THE SPACE DOG** by Henning Löblein..... 44
- WHEN A WOLF IS HUNGRY** by Christine Naumann-Villemin;
illus. by Kris Di Giacomo..... 45
- BIG MACHINES** by Sherri Duskey Rinker; illus. by John Rocco..... 46
- THE ANTLERED SHIP** by Dashka Slater; illus. by Terry &
Eric Fan..... 47
- TRIO** by Andrea Wisniewski..... 47



THE BLUE POOL OF QUESTIONS

Abu-Alhaysat, Maya
 Illus. by Manasrah, Hassan
 Translated by Awad, Hanan
 Penny Candy (40 pp.)
 \$16.95 | \$13.95 paper | Sep. 12, 2017
 978-0-9987999-0-2
 978-0-9972219-68-5 paper

From Palestinian writer Abu-Alhaysat comes a lyrical tale of a strange man who is rejected by the people of the city but finds comfort in his curiosity.

With dried flowers, strange songs, and stacks of books that turn everything into questions, the odd man wanders through town. When the questions become a pool in the city streets, and then a lake, and then an ocean, the people are furious, confused and frightened. The cool blues, vibrant greens, warm reds, and haunting whites of the remarkable, angularly surreal illustrations make up a palette of deep, almost tangible emotion suitable to the story's journey. Something inside the pool invites the man to come in, and the people of the city urge him to go. Inside the pool, the man finds the Answer, personified in the text but not corporeal in the illustrations. Everything is different, and he is no longer strange. The man and the Answer become friends, and they only know kindness and questions. Readers are encouraged "to ask more questions, throw them into the blue pool, be brave, and dive in." The overt moral on the final page takes the tale in the direction of a legend, a tidy ending for this otherwise unusual story.

Deliciously confounding and deeply moving, this book is a work of art in pictures and words for adults and children alike. (Picture book. 6-adult)



AGUA, AGÜITA / WATER, LITTLE WATER

Argueta, Jorge
 Illus. by Alcántara, Felipe Ugalde
 Translated by Baeza Ventura, Gabriela
 Piñata Books/Arté Público (32 pp.)
 \$17.95 | Oct. 31, 2017
 978-1-55885-854-1

In this bilingual (Spanish/English) book the poet reminds readers that water is life.

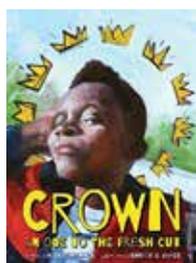
"My name / is Water / but everyone / calls me 'Little Water.'
 " So begins this poem written in free verse about water. Little Water tells about being born in Mother Earth; climbing to the

This book oozes black cool and timely, much-needed black joy.

CROWN

surface, entangling in roots, and climbing along rocks; resting on leaves, spider webs, and flower petals when it reaches the surface. Drop by drop Little Water becomes a river, a lake, and an ocean, eventually climbing to the sky. When Little Water becomes a cloud, drop by drop it returns to Mother Earth. "I am Little Water / I am life." concludes the poem. Mixed-media full-page illustrations accompany the text, giving visual focus to Little Water's cycle of life. Forms are appropriately rounded, with repeating patterns that emulate ripples and waves even when depicting plants and landscapes. At the end of the book readers will find the poem written in Nahuatl, the language of the Pipil-Nahua people of El Salvador in Central America. Argueta himself is a Pipil-Nahua, a people not many children in the United States may be aware of.

Hopefully this poem will spark conversations not only about water, its cycle, and life-giving importance, but also about the different cultures in our hemisphere. (*Poetry. 5-10*)



CROWN An Ode to the Fresh Cut

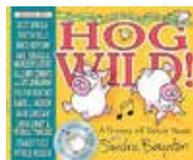
Barnes, Derrick
Illus. by James, Gordon C.
Bolden/Agate (32 pp.)
\$17.95 | Oct. 10, 2017
978-1-57284-224-3



Safe to say, there's nothing like the feeling of the fresh cut. You feel so extra visible with a fresh new cut, and this book built from that experience translates it in a way never before brought to the children's bookshelf.

Basquiat-inspired king insignias and a bit of Kehinde Wiley flair shape portraits of all the various ways men (and women too!) come into the black barbershop to restore their cool, leaving the chair with high self-esteem, self-pride, and confidence—if only for as long as their hairlines remain crisp. It's sacred. The all-important line and the diverse styles take center stage here. The Big Daddy Kane—homage flat-top. The part. The light shape-up surrounded by cornrows and locs. The taper. The classic wavy dark Caesar. Barnes' imaginative prose mirrors the hyperbole and swagger of the barbershop. No cut is just good. It will have you looking "presidential," "majestic." Like you own "a couple of acres of land on Saturn." The swagger is on a million. The sauce is drippin'. James' oil-based portraiture will send many readers reminiscing. This book oozes black cool and timely, much-needed black joy, using the unique and expansive experience of the barbershop to remind young boys that their inner lives have always mattered there.

One of the best reads for young black boys in years, it should be in every library, media center, and, yes, barbershop. (*Picture book. 5-12*)



HOG WILD! A Frenzy of Dance Music

Boynton, Sandra
Illus. by the author
Workman (72 pp.)
\$17.95 | Sep. 19, 2017
978-0-7611-8992-3

The doyenne of children's rhyming texts gives listeners of all ages a musical collection accompanied by her signature animal performers.

Each of the 11 songs is given three different treatments: a few pages with words to read and pictures to enjoy, the accompanying sheet music for budding musicians, and a CD with bouncy, cheery songs sure to get little bodies moving. A star-studded cast including Samuel L. Jackson, "Weird Al" Yankovic, and Laura Linney perform, creating a musical compilation perfectly appropriate for the youngest listeners and also remarkably aesthetically pleasing for parents and caregivers. Songs range from jazzy to folky to electronic, with a full orchestra behind. Boynton's expressive animal characters are in full force here, with a rollerblading robot, worried hippos rushing around Manhattan, and a charmingly nerdy T. Rex in need of a self-esteem boost. The text is suited more for singing aloud than reading aloud, but any household with a CD player could find something to love.

Whimsical yet satisfying, this book will have even the most down-in-the-dumps fans of musical children's media dancing along. (*Picture book. 2-5*)



FEATHER

Cao Wenxuan
Illus. by Mello, Roger
Translated by Roberts, Chloe Garcia
Elsewhere Editions (48 pp.)
\$18.00 | \$18.00 e-book | Sep. 19, 2017
978-0-914671-85-5
978-0-914671-86-2 e-book



In this first collaboration between Chinese author Cao and Brazilian artist Mello—both of whom are recent Hans Christian Andersen award winners—a feather embarks on a quest to discover to whom she belongs.

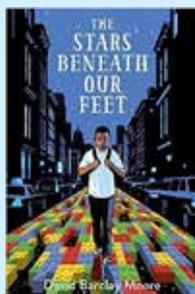
From a kingfisher and cuckoo to wild geese and a peacock, the birds universally ignore Feather at first but ultimately convey the same message: she does not belong to them. The protagonist believes that finding her bird of origin will enable her to fly even higher, so she continues the journey. The creatures have distinctive voices, and the compositions fuse a sense of Asian design with a South American palette. Each bird takes center stage on the double-page spreads, a marvel of extravagant pattern against solid, vibrant backgrounds. Pottery and natural features provide occasional context. The feather is an abstract silhouette on the right border of each scene. At the climax, a kindly skylark lifts Feather to new heights but falls prey, alas, to a circling hawk. (The demise occurs offstage.) Devastated, Feather floats to Earth, where she eventually spots a parade

FALL 2017: DIVERSITY EVERY WHICH WAY



AS I NEAR THE SUMMIT of the mountain of books that is the children's and teen fall season, I am reminded once again of the incredible diversity of our literature.

I speak here not of diversity of identity, although there is plenty of that, with new books from established talents such as Francisco X. Stork (*Disappeared*, about a young journalist and her brother in Ciudad Juárez), Patrick Ness (*Release*, about the gay son of an evangelical preacher), and Kimberly Brubaker Bradley (*The War I Finally Won*, about evacuee Ada, who finds recovering from an operation to heal her clubfoot may be easier than recovering from her trauma). They are joined by such newcomers as graphic novelist Nidhi Chanani, whose *Pashmina* finds Indian-American teen Pri Das engaging for the first time with her South Asian roots; Mark Gonzales, whose debut for children, *Yo Soy Muslim*, illustrated by Mehrdokht Amini, encourages its young subject to be proud of her joint Muslim and Maya identity; and David Barclay Moore, whose *The Stars Beneath Our Feet* invites readers into Trinidadian-American Lolly's Harlem neighborhood.



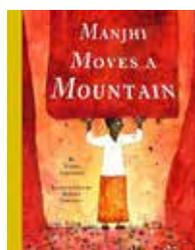
No, the diversity I see in the titles included in our Fall Preview issue extends past identity to format as well. Joëlle Jolivet's *An Indian Beach*, a concertina picture "book," unfolds to reveal panoramic views of the titular beach by day and by night; readers can even color it in if they want. Martin Hegbrook's *A Moment in Time* similarly defies traditional front-to-back reading with an inventive, zigzag binding that allows readers to travel through all 39 time zones in a round. Lisa Charleyboy and Mary Beth Leathersdale offer a follow-up to their eclectic anthologies *Dreaming in Indian* and *Urban Tribes* with *#NotYourPrincess*, an equally dazzling collection of stories, poems, and art that celebrates the complexity of contemporary indigenous femininity. Similarly, Lauren Oliver repeats the dos-à-dos storytelling of last year's *Replica* with its sequel, *Ringer*, proving that her feat of successfully writing two separate yet dovetailing stories was not a one-off. Jorge Argueta brings readers the picture book *Agua, Agua / Water, Little Water*, illustrated by Felipe Ugaide Alcátara and translated by Gabriela Baeza Ventura, a bilingual celebration of water in English and Spanish that he closes with a third rendering, in Nahuatl, an indigenous language of El Salvador. And *The Blue Pool of Questions*, written by Maya Abu-Alhyyat, illustrated by Hassan Manasrah and translated by Hanan Awad, offers readers of all ages a sumptuous, mesmerizing meditation on curiosity.

Oh, and then there's Mark Twain's new book, *The Purlloining of Prince Oleomargarine*, adapted by Philip C. Stead and illustrated by Erin E. Stead. It is indeed a great time to be in kids' books. —V.S.

Vicky Smith is the children's & teen editor.

of chicks marching into the sunshine; mother hen is missing a feather. The author wisely allows readers to ponder a potential conversation and next steps.

This Zen exploration of belonging and groundedness is further enhanced by a sensitive translation and pithy, philosophical introductions by both creators—masterful storytelling. (Picture book. 5-8) (This review originally appeared in the 07/01/17 issue.)



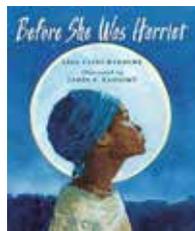
MANJHI MOVES A MOUNTAIN

Churnin, Nancy
 Illus. by Popovici, Danny
 Creston (32 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Sep. 1, 2017
 978-1-939547-34-7

One determined man brings two villages together with a hammer, chisel, and an iron will.

Deep in the heart of India, a mighty mountain separates two villages. Manjhi lives on one side, where nothing grows. On the other, rice and wheat flourish. The people there are affluent, while Manjhi's village struggles with hunger. Manjhi climbs to the top of the mountain to ponder this problem. When he throws a stone, it triggers a sprinkle of powder, which gives him an idea. Manjhi trades his trio of goats for a hammer and chisel. Hurrying back to the top of the mountain, he positions the chisel and strikes it with the hammer. Powdered rock and tiny chips spray. He continues until he's exhausted, but he's also filled with hope. Even though people tell him he's "crazy," day after day Manjhi returns to the mountain. After a year, Manjhi is a little stronger, and the hole he has made a little deeper. He perseveres and, when he returns to his task each day, notices that others have continued his work. It takes 22 years, but Manjhi lives to see the day that two villages become one, sharing water, hopes, and dreams. Churnin's prose has an elegance appropriate for her inspiring tale, which is based on a true story. Popovich's double-page illustrations use a warm palette and are nicely composed.

Heartening. (Picture book. 5-8) (This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.)



BEFORE SHE WAS HARRIET

Cline-Ransome, Lesa
 Illus. by Ransome, James E.
 Holiday House (32 pp.)
 \$17.95 | \$17.95 e-book | Nov. 7, 2017
 978-0-8234-2047-6
 978-0-8234-3892-1 e-book

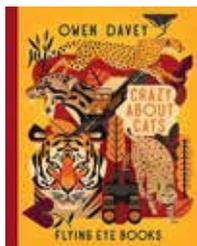
A memorable, lyrical reverse-chronological walk through the life of an American icon.

In free verse, Cline-Ransome narrates the life of Harriet Tubman, starting and ending with a train ride Tubman takes as an old woman. "But before wrinkles formed / and her eyes failed,"



Tubman could walk tirelessly under a starlit sky. Cline-Ransome then describes the array of roles Tubman played throughout her life, including suffragist, abolitionist, Union spy, and conductor on the Underground Railroad. By framing the story around a literal train ride, the Ransomes juxtapose the privilege of traveling by rail against Harriet's earlier modes of travel, when she repeatedly ran for her life. Racism still abounds, however, for she rides in a segregated train. While the text introduces readers to the details of Tubman's life, Ransome's use of watercolor—such a striking departure from his oil illustrations in many of his other picture books—reveals Tubman's humanity, determination, drive, and hope. Ransome's lavishly detailed and expansive double-page spreads situate young readers in each time and place as the text takes them further into the past.

A picture book more than worthy of sharing the shelf with Alan Schroeder and Jerry Pinkney's *Minty* (1996) and Carole Boston Weatherford and Kadir Nelson's *Moses* (2006). (Picture book/biography. 5-8)



CRAZY ABOUT CATS

Davey, Owen
Illus. by Davey, Owen
 Flying Eye Books (40 pp.)
 \$19.95 | Sep. 12, 2017
 978-1-91171-16-4



An informational picture book explores the mammal family of felids—cats.

Author/illustrator Davey uses the same basic template as in *Mad About Monkeys* (2015) to explore the world of wild cats. The book begins with an overview (what cats are, their evolutionary lineages, and their habitats) then gets into specifics as it details the physiological attributes that make them such superb hunters (and shares the interesting fact that cats must eat meat to have their nutritional needs met). The “Featured Creatures” segments examine a few specific cats in more detail, which gives readers a break from generalities. A vast amount of facts—hunting adaptations, territory, reasons for fur coloration, kittens/cubs, and even cat mythology—are presented in a lively, organized, and entertaining manner. The wonderfully illustrated “To Scale” double-page spread, intended to show the comparative size of selected cats to a human, may need to be explained to nonmetric readers, since the scale across the top of the page could be interpreted by those unfamiliar with metric as showing that a meter is 6 inches long (all the measurements in this British import are metric). Davey's entertaining headings (“Eat, Prey, Hunt”; “Pride and Predators”; “Kitten Caboodle”) are a delight. Finally, Davey ends with a statement that many cats are rare or endangered and offers readers accessible ways to help.

There's lots going on here, and all of it good. (index) (Informational picture book. 5-10) (This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.)



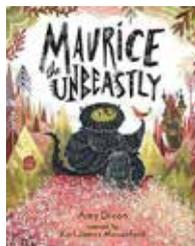
COCO Miguel and the Grand Harmony

de la Peña, Matt
Illus. by Ramirez, Ana
 Disney Press (48 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Oct. 10, 2017
 978-1-4847-8149-4

Miguel loves music and wants to be a musician more than anything, but his family prohibits him from pursuing his greatest love.

La Música, who narrates in the first person, appears at the strum of a guitar, in wedding bells, in a static-y radio, in the strains of a single violin, whirling through town, joining musicians through the plaza, rising and rising, until Miguel's abuelita storms out of a shop and demands the musicians stop. “You'll upset Mamá Coco!” They fumble and stumble away. La Música notices a young boy staring at the guitars in the hands of the musicians, longing for music just as she disappears. Each time she appears again, she looks for the boy and finds him, secretly watching musicians on a hidden TV in his play area, “playing” his broom, but just as she's about to whisper her name in his ear, his family pulls him away. La Música arranges a careful series of events to help Miguel indulge in music, and the surprise ending lingers in the air like an overheard harmony. Readers don't learn exactly why Miguel's family has forbidden music, and though this would be puzzling in a stand-alone book, this book is a side story about the characters in Disney Pixar's *Coco*. The tenderness and emotional intelligence of this story serves as a great incentive to learn more about Miguel.

De la Peña wonderfully expresses the impact of music on the soul, and Ramirez's bright, expressive watercolor illustrations underscore the poetic prose style perfectly. ¡Que viva La Música! (Picture book. 5-8)



MAURICE THE UNBEASTLY

Dixon, Amy
Illus. by Mountford, Karl James
 Sterling (32 pp.)
 \$16.95 | Sep. 5, 2017
 978-1-4549-1953-7

A misfit monster comes into his own when the Abominable Academy for Brutish Beasts is invaded by a scary creature.

Sweet of voice, vegetarian, and “ridiculously photogenic,” Maurice is not only the despair of his hairy parents, but on the verge of being kicked out of school for singing when he should be roaring, dancing when he should be practicing havoc-wreaking, and sneaking alfalfa fritters into the rioting lunchroom. When a frightening invader—which is to say, a frisky small dog—sends the monstrous students and teachers into tizzies, though, Maurice tames the beast with a fritter and so earns the title of Official Creature Whisperer. Not content to rest on his laurels, he leverages this “gargantuan success” by going on to organize

an a cappella group called The Barbaritones and campaign for more lunch options (“Raise Your Tail for Kale”). Just as the story celebrates differences, so do Mountford’s cartoon illustrations, which surround Maurice (a Wild Thing outtake with green skin and human facial features) with an array of fellow student monsters, no two of whom look even remotely alike.

An urbane take on the “nice monster” theme. (*Picture book. 6-8*)



HER RIGHT FOOT

Eggers, Dave
Illus. by Harris, Shawn
 Chronicle (104 pp.)
 \$19.99 | Sep. 19, 2017
 978-1-4521-6281-2



Everyone knows what the Statue of Liberty stands for—but, as Eggers notes, she’s not actually “standing” at all.

Taking his time, as usual, at getting to the point, Eggers opens with the often told tale of the monument’s origins, preliminary construction, deconstruction, and shipping to “a city called New York, which is in a state also called New York.” He describes the statue’s main features, from crown to gown (“a very heavy kind of garment,” likely to cause “serious lower back issues”)—and points out that her right heel is not planted but lifted. What does this signify? That “...she is walking! This 150 foot woman is on the go!” She’s stepping out into the harbor, he suggests, to give new arrivals from Italy and Norway, Cambodia and Estonia, Syrians, Liberians, and all who have or will come an eager welcome. After all, he writes, she’s an immigrant too, and: “She is not content to wait.” In Harris’ ink-and-construction-paper collages, Parisian street scenes give way to close-up views of the brown (later green) ambulatory statue, alternating with galleries of those arrivals and their descendants, who are all united in their very diversity of age, sex, dress, and skin color. Photos, including one of the Emma Lazarus poem, cap this urgent defense of our “Golden Door.”

Occasionally mannered but heartfelt throughout and indisputably timely. (bibliography, source list) (*Picture book. 9-13, adult*) (*This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.*)



SLEEP TIGHT, CHARLIE

Escoffier, Michael
Illus. by Di Giacomo, Kris
 Princeton Architectural Press (56 pp.)
 \$17.95 | Sep. 5, 2017
 978-1-61689-599-0

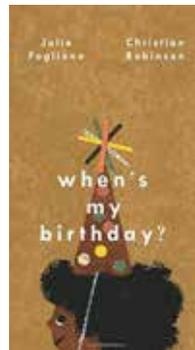


Charlie, a rabbit who loves an established bedtime routine, grows grouchy when noisy animal neighbors disrupt his sleep.

Victorian clothes (Charlie even wears his bowler hat to bed!), dreary colors (cardboard browns, cement grays, faded blues), and antique objects (an iron bed, a Victrola, keyed roller skates)

describe the rabbit’s quirky, austere lifestyle—one perhaps unsuited for intrusion or surprise. Just when Charlie finishes preparing for bed, doing the things he always does, in order, (glass of water on his bedside table, slippers on the rug, monster check under the bed, teddy-bear hug, one eye closed, then the other) a thunderous “TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP” jolts him awake. It’s Bird hammering on trees (with a hammer)—then it’s Squirrel crunching nuts, then Mouse squeaking on the swings. Double-page spreads with only the enormous, block-letter, onomatopoeic words stretching their length make the volume and intensity of the interruptions clear. Soon Charlie’s routine is hopelessly jumbled. Charlie’s eyes grow smudgy and ringed with dark circles. His rage mounts. Children involved with their own bedtime rituals will enjoy following the incremental dismantling of Charlie’s. Voicing Charlie’s confrontations with his neighbors and amping up the animals’ annoying sounds make for a delightful ruckus and funny read-aloud.

Sooty illustrations, dark humor, and deft pacing place this book on top of the stack. (*Picture book. 3-6*) (*This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.*)



WHEN’S MY BIRTHDAY?

Fogliano, Julie
Illus. by Robinson, Christian
 Neal Porter/Roaring Brook (45 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Sep. 5, 2017
 978-1-62672-293-4



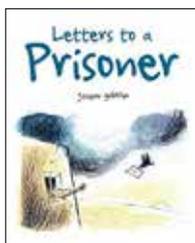
A picture book to celebrate.

Fogliano is at her best here, with text reminiscent of Charlotte Zolotow’s, Margaret Wise Brown’s, and Ruth Krauss’ writing. Her spare, singsong verse pairs perfectly with Robinson’s naïve style expressed in joyful, retro, multimedia collage. The striking, narrow portrait layout recalls Marc Simont’s Caldecott-winning *A Tree Is Nice*, but this picture book is much more than nice. It’s splendid. Illustrations feature an ever shifting multiracial cast of children, not to mention cakes, balloons, wrapped gifts, and markers of changing seasons, to accompany and expand upon the text. Whimsical details, such as the inclusion of a giraffe and a sloth as party guests in the illustrations, add levity and surprise. The repeated refrain—“when’s my birthday? / where’s my birthday? / how many days until / my birthday?”—lends cohesion to the book despite the lack of a linear textual narrative. One little girl with straight black hair, olive skin, and large dark eyes (who looks a bit like Robinson’s protagonist from *The Smallest Girl in the Smallest Grade*, written by Justin Roberts, 2014) appears multiple times, signaling that she is the one anticipating her birthday. The antepenultimate spread shows her losing a fight against sleep as she waits for her birthday to arrive the next morning, and the closing page turns when the big day arrives are “happy happy!” indeed.

A gift of a picture book that’s at once nostalgic and fresh. (*Picture book. 2-6*) (*This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.*)

The cartoons are masterful black-ink sketches with highlights of watercolor.

LETTERS TO A PRISONER



LETTERS TO A PRISONER
Goldstyn, Jacques
Illus. by the author
 Owlkids Books (48 pp.)
 \$18.95 | Sep. 15, 2017
 978-1-77147-251-7



In this wordless picture book, a light-skinned man moves from a peaceful protest march with his young child to imprisonment for his views and finally back to his home—with the help of letters from around the world.

The cartoons are masterful black-ink sketches with highlights of watercolor. Placards carried by the man and his cohorts bear bright red, filled-in circles, similar to the appearance of his daughter's balloon. When the amorphous, peaceful band of protestors reaches an official-looking building, a frightening, well-organized phalanx of dark-blue soldiers in helmets appears, threatening violence. One soldier injures the man, who is then

dragged into an ambulance. Not brutal enough? The soldier deliberately pops the daughter's balloon. The man languishes in solitary confinement, sharing bread crumbs with a mouse and a bird. The cartoons illustrate the prisoner's experiences of nostalgia, tedium, and hopelessness. When letters start arriving, the man's joy is short-lived; the guard burns them. But as diverse groups and individuals send more and more letters, the dark smoke sends an SOS around the world. An image both beautiful and funny shows the man flying on wings of letters, as the guard below utters profanities. An author's note (translated by Angela Keenlyside) informs readers that Goldstyn was inspired by the letter-writing campaigns of human rights organization Amnesty International. His book is an accessible and inspiring tribute.

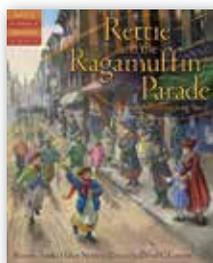
"The pen is mightier than the sword" lives on. (author's note) (*Picture book. 8-12*) (*This review originally appeared in the 06/15/17 issue.*)

SPECTACULAR FALL PICTURE BOOK PREVIEW



Roof Octopus

978-1-58536-997-3 | Hardcover | \$16.99
 An octopus is sitting atop Nora's apartment building. The octopus is friendly and Nora makes friends with him, but when she shares her plans to take him to school for show-and-tell, he vanishes!



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 A Thanksgiving Story**

978-1-58536-960-7 | Hardcover | \$17.95
 "A parade brings good tidings to an immigrant community beset by war, poverty, and illness ... Noble's tale of parades and tenement life positively brims to overflowing with good cheer, culminating on Thanksgiving Day 1918."
 —*Kirkus Reviews*, July 2017



Piece By Piece

978-1-58536-999-7 | Hardcover | \$16.99
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Working in pastels and digital art, van Doorn integrates fanciful details and unusual shapes and patterns into the artwork and in so doing, creates a visually sumptuous story.

SLEEP WELL, SIBA AND SABA



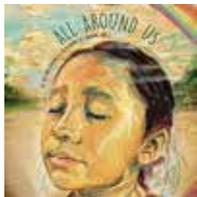
**YO SOY MUSLIM
A Father's Letter to His
Daughter**

Gonzales, Mark
Illus. by Amini, Mebrdokbt
Salaam Reads/Simon & Schuster (32 pp.)
\$17.99 | \$17.99 e-book | Aug. 29, 2017
978-1-4814-8936-2
978-1-4814-8937-9 e-book

In Gonzales' first book for children, a father tells his Latin American indigenous, Muslim daughter to face the world's questions with pride in her identity.

This "Father's Letter to His Daughter" faces the question of identity head-on. The intimate text instructs the girl to remember Mayan pyramids as she walks "in the steel shadows" of cities and assures her that "there are questions we all ask / when we are learning what it means to be human." The father then prepares her for the "questions this world will ask" without smiling: "What are you? / And / where are you from?" Father instructs daughter to say, "Yo soy Muslim. / Our prayers were here / before any borders were." Stylized illustrations emphasize light and dark, warm and natural colors, highlighting the girl, with her orange, patterned dress and large eyes gazing out at readers or up at other characters in her world and the things her father shows her. The girl's gestures and gaze show that she is absorbing all that is happening around her. A poetic celebration of heritage and faith, past and future, this book is unique for its blend of indigenous, Spanish-speaking cultural content with Muslim religious identity.

This book will be cherished by Muslim families seeking to boost their children's confidence and intriguing for non-Muslim families seeking to learn. (Picture book. 3-9) (This review originally appeared in the 06/15/17 issue.)



ALL AROUND US

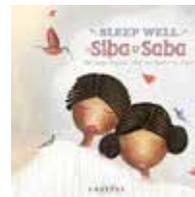
González, Xelena
Illus. by Garcia, Adriana M.
Cinco Puntos (32 pp.)
\$16.95 | Sep. 12, 2017
978-1-941026-76-2

In González and Garcia's picture-book debut, a girl and her grandfather reflect on the cycles that characterize life, death, and renewal.

"Grandpa says circles are all around us." Above the girl's head, a rainbow stretches across the sky, a vibrant half circle. The other half? It's beneath the Earth, unseen, nourishing. With this modest declaration, González asks readers to rethink the world as one full of unceasing rebirth. A clearer example of this viewpoint soon follows. In the garden, Grandpa and the girl tend to their lettuce, carrots, and chiles, with the resulting stems, leaves, and seeds going back into the ground. "What we take from the earth we return," says Grandpa. Measured and subdued, the bare-bones story demands patience, which may irk readers with a preference for livelier stories, but the author's

direct approach and light touch soften the otherwise weighty subject matter. Faded, sketched lines and arcs of dense light enclose the girl and Grandpa (both depicted with golden-brown skin) in half-formed and fully formed circles from picture to picture, while shadows and colors intertwine with people and the scenes around them. On a smaller scale, the duo notes how circles shape their bellies as well as their eyes. Yet it's the final scene—a girl and her grandfather sitting near the buried ashes of their ancestors—that brings everything full circle. In her author's note, González, a member of the Auteca Paguame family of the Tap Pilam Coahuitecan nation, references her, and by extension her characters', mestizo heritage.

Life-affirming in its quiet splendor. (author's note) (Picture book. 3-7)



**SLEEP WELL, SIBA
AND SABA**

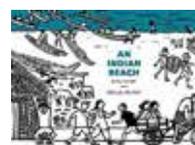
Isdahl, Nansubuga Nagadya
Illus. by van Doorn, Sandra
Lantana (32 pp.)
\$17.99 | Oct. 1, 2017
978-1-9113-7309-4



A picture book that will transport readers to another place and time...where dreams come to life.

Siba and Saba, two brown-skinned sisters wearing cornrowed hair, constantly lose things: shoes, scarves, sweaters, and more. They do, however, always keep track of each other. When they sleep, they dream of finding all they've lost. But one night, when Papa sings "Sula bulungi, Siba and Saba," as he always does, they dream not of lost things but of delightful new found things. Soon, the dreams come true in a way that portends a bright future for them both. Ugandan-American first-time author Isdahl weaves Ugandan culture into the tale by incorporating Luganda, the language of Uganda, into Papa's good-night song, through characters' names, and through the flora and fauna Siba and Saba encounter. And van Doorn, a French artist based in Australia, brings the whimsical story of these close-knit sisters vibrantly to life with colorful images of Ugandan plants, animals, and places the sisters encounter. Working in pastels and digital art, van Doorn integrates fanciful details and unusual shapes and patterns into the artwork and in so doing, creates a visually sumptuous story.

This imaginative international tale will delight readers of all ages. (Picture book. 3-7) (This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.)



AN INDIAN BEACH

Jolivet, Joëlle
Illus. by the author
Tara Publishing (16 pp.)
\$19.95 | Sep. 15, 2017
978-93-83145-67-6

Observations of hustle and bustle on both sides of a beach's waterline.

Printed on a long continuous strip that, once pulled out of its sleeve, can either be examined section by section or opened into a large circle, Jolivet's wordless linocut scenes record the passage of a day and a night on Elliot's Beach, near the southern Indian city of Chennai. Viewers who begin where night gives way to dawn can see fishing boats pushed out in the background, joggers and commuters in modern or traditional dress and conveyances passing in the foreground, and goats and other animals sharing the sand in between with beached catamarans and people on diverse errands. Along with stands and small dwellings, morning crowds of vendors and visitors suddenly appear, vanish in the afternoon heat, then return in early evening until darkness brings another temporary lull. The author supplies general commentary for all of this on the sleeve, but she also invites readers to identify or make up stories about what her figures are doing—and, if so moved, to color them in. She herself colors only the ocean, with a solid blue that continues around to the loop's inside, where schools of unlabeled but identifiable fish and other sea life (also, potentially, colorable) are thickly packed.

A literal as well as figurative round that cinematically captures a sense of daily rhythms at this popular gathering place. (diagram of display options) (*Novelty. 5-7*)



THE ONLY LONELY PANDA

Lambert, Jonny
Illus. by the author
 Tiger Tales (32 pp.)
 \$16.99 | Sep. 1, 2017
 978-1-68010-065-5

After several setbacks, Panda finds a best friend. Deep in the dewy forest, Panda sits alone, wishing for a friend. Not far away, he sees another panda chewing on bamboo shoots and thinks this might be a likely friend, but he doesn't know how to approach. He tries dancing like the flamingos, but it is a series of missteps—literally. Bouncing like the lemurs just has him landing with a plop. The blue-footed boobies strut majestically, and the peacock has dazzling feathers. Panda can't

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master the booby walk, and bamboo leaves are no substitute for the grandeur of the peacock's tail. Panda trudges off into the forest to eat his dinner. At this lowest moment, the other panda peeks out from between the bamboo to say hello. Panda has "his best idea yet." He offers to share, and a friendship is born. Lambert's lovely illustrations carry the story with minimal text; his pages have a shiny silver background, against which his realistic animal figures pop. His message on friendship persuades, to a point: can't Panda also be friends with animals who are different? The other panda is distinguished from Panda only by the brown of her eye patches; gray-patched Panda often appears multiple times on the page, which may lead younger listeners to wonder exactly how many pandas are in this book, so it's best used with older preschoolers who are practiced at decoding pictures.

Sweet. (*Picture book. 4-6*) (*This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.*)



LEAP!

Lawson, Jon Arno
 Illus. by Bisailon, Josée
 Kids Can (32 pp.)
 \$16.99 | Sep. 5, 2017
 978-1-77138-678-4

Creatures great and small spring into action on a sunny day.

With a determined cadence and a graphic bang, Lawson and Bisailon wed their talents in presenting a sumptuous snapshot of nature on the go. Lawson's animated poem starts small with an irritated flea's decision to "LEAP!" that then leads to other creatures making similar jumps in a great crescendo of movement that climaxes when a horse leaps a fence before things return full circle to the flea at rest. Motivated by the irresistible impulse to move, the flea hops "into the path / of a little grasshopper," who then lands on a bunny, who "bounds out / as the clouds roll in," inspiring a dog to jump into a lake and scare the fish "wide awake," as they "break the surface with a / flip, flop, shake" and "knock off a bullfrog's / lily-pad crown" as he springs and lands right "next to the nose / of a high-strung horse," who rears back from taking a drink of lake water, and...one gets the idea. Bisailon's vibrant, watercolor-inspired mixed-media illustrations capture the fullness of the domino effect of Lawson's action-packed lyric, vibrantly showcasing the interconnectedness of flora, fauna, sun, and sky.

Like a ball rolling downhill, the combined momentum of verse and page turn should impel pre-readers to leap and then sleep—but not before demanding that those reading to them repeat: not to be missed. (*Picture book. 3-7*) (*This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.*)



GOOD NIGHT, PLANET

Liniers
 Illus. by the author
 TOON Books & Graphics (40 pp.)
 \$12.95 | Sep. 12, 2017
 978-1-943145-20-1
 Series: Toon, Level 2

After a day full of play with her toy fawn, Planet, a little blonde white girl drifts off to sleep—and Planet is off to play for the night.

Once the toy is downstairs, it hears a sound it can't identify and becomes so frightened it passes out. Coming to, it sees it's the family dog, a spaniel named Elliot, and though the toy is relieved, the calm doesn't last long, as Elliot chases Planet and, catching the toy, gives it a playful, vigorous shake. They decide to go to the kitchen for a snack of cookies, where they meet a friendly rat called Bradley, who takes them on a new adventure to capture the biggest cookie they've ever seen. After their big adventure, Planet gets a few hours of sleep before they're up to play again. Liniers has a gift for wordless storytelling through his art-only panels, using muted tones in watercolor under skillfully drawn pen-and-ink lines that create thin outlines and heavy areas of shading. The lettering is distinct and whimsical, and the lines of dialogue are funny, conveying Planet's personality as patient, kind, and quick-witted. The Spanish-language version, *Buenas Noches, Planeta*, changes only Planet's name, and though Liniers is Argentine, the Spanish is not localized to any one dialect, making it an easy inclusion in kids' libraries and a perfect matched pair for kids who would benefit from the same book in English and Spanish.

Liniers continues his run of clever comics for kids, with a fun adventure and panels full of easy-to-follow action. Delightful. (*Graphic fantasy. 4-8*) (*Buenas Noches, Planeta: 978-1-943145-21-8, 978-1-943145-19-5 paper. This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.*)



LUDWIG THE SPACE DOG

Löblein, Henning
 Illus. by the author
 Kane/Miller (32 pp.)
 \$12.99 | Sep. 1, 2017
 978-1-61067-648-9

3-D illustrations propel into orbit this imported tale of a dog with stars in his eyes.

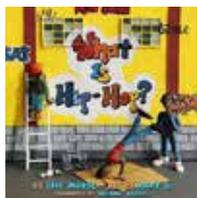
The heavens feature sausages and other doggy treats as well as stars and planets in Ludwig's dreams—and also in reality, as he discovers after a repair job on a penguinlike alien's damaged spacecraft earns him a free ride. Thanks to particularly effective placement of cutout figures and shadows to go with the separated color lines, Löblein's collage scenes when viewed through the (supplied) red/cyan spectacles feature rockets and celestial

From the start, the text and the masterful, mixed-media artwork are both funny and suspenseful.

WHEN A WOLF IS HUNGRY

bodies as well as feathers, wads of paper, postcards, and other items that seem to burst up from the page surfaces, while an uncommon depth of view makes the star-studded backdrops look as if they go on forever. Ludwig's voyage reaches a truly spectacular climax, with planets cut from printed maps on the outside of a double gatefold giving way to a dizzying starscape of floating moons, ETs, and UFOs, along with such less-likely items as a wedge of cheese, fruits, and a rubber ducky. "WOW!" as the canine cosmonaut aptly puts it. The pictures do need the special glasses to look their dazzling best, but the narrative is readable with or without them.

The right stuff for all young would-be space explorers. (*Novelty picture book.* 6-9)



WHAT IS HIP-HOP?

Morse, Eric & George, Nelson

Illus. by Yi, Amy

Black Sheep/Akashic (36 pp.)

\$15.95 | \$4.99 e-book | Sep. 5, 2017

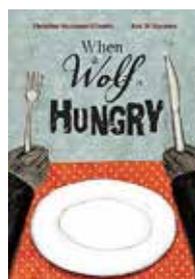
978-1-61775-584-2

978-1-61775-610-8 e-book

In this follow-up to *What is Punk?* (2015), the author-and-illustrator team takes on hip-hop, in consultation with hip-hop historian, cultural critic, and Brooklynite George.

In rhythmic, rhyming verse, Morse offers a genealogy of hip-hop royalty that begins with the Boogie Down Bronx's DJ Kool Herc and Grandmaster Flash and walks readers into today with Nicki Minaj, Drake, and Kendrick Lamar. In between the origins and now, readers find a rare gender-inclusive narrative of hip-hop history that uplifts B-girls like Queen Latifah and Missy Elliott along with legendary male groups such as NWA and Wu-Tang. Veteran hip-hop heads might note some chronological inconsistencies—a page for Eminem before Biggie and Tupac?—and, as with anything hip-hop, there will be some controversy over who makes it and who gets cut. Where's Scarface? Master P? These debates should only stand to enhance the experience; it's as much a part of the culture as the break-dancing, graffiti, and fashion that have influenced people all around the world. What everyone will agree upon will be the magnificent 3-D clay illustrations, which include an intricately produced remake of Tribe Called Quest's legendary "Midnight Marauders" cover. Tying these images back to their original sources makes for quite the history lesson. Make sure to keep a device nearby.

A must-read reference for any hip-hop family. (*Informational picture book.* 5-adult) (*This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.*)



WHEN A WOLF IS HUNGRY

Naumann-Villemin, Christine

Illus. by Di Giacomo, Kris

Eerdmans (34 pp.)

\$16.00 | Aug. 7, 2017

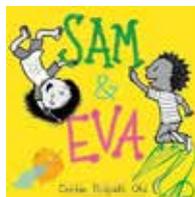
978-0-8028-5482-7



Lone wolf Edmond Bigsnout sets off from his country home to kill and eat a "city bunny"—and becomes enmeshed in a life-altering adventure.

From the start, the text and the masterful, mixed-media artwork are both funny and suspenseful. The elegantly dressed wolf strides across the autumn-tree-studded initial pages, sharp knife in carefully manicured paw, as he heads for his urban craving: "a grain-fed, silky-haired rabbit, one with just a hint of sweetness." The wolf rides his bike to the city, soon finding an apartment building with a promising tenant for his culinary desires: "Max Omatose, miniature rabbit, 5th floor." In his haste to reach said floor, Edmond leaves his knife in the elevator, where it is soon appropriated by a third-floor turkey. Edmond pedals back to the country, this time grabbing his chain saw. Each time he arrives with a different sinister tool, some other resident, thinking Edmond is a new tenant, gratefully borrows the tool. (Edmond may be bloodthirsty, but he is unfailingly polite.) By the time he has lugged a barbecue to the apartment house, the hungry lone wolf is greeted by the most come-hither-looking lupine lady in picture-book history: Miss Eyestopper. Edmond is still determined to eat that rabbit, but fate steps in and ensures a happy ending for everyone.

As funny and as exquisitely put together as Edmond Bigsnout himself. (*Picture book.* 4-9) (*This review originally appeared in the 06/15/17 issue.*)



SAM & EVA

Obi, Debbie

Illus. by Obi, Debbie

Simon & Schuster (40 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Oct. 17, 2017

978-1-4814-1628-3

978-1-4814-1629-0 e-book

A power tussle between two kids plays out through mischievous drawings.

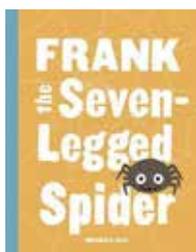
"Sam had just begun to draw when Eva arrived." Sam looks surprised to see Eva appear; Eva smiles broadly. Eva compliments Sam's pony, sketched in a few green lines; "It's a velociraptor," corrects Sam, unthruled. Eva "suggest[s] a collaboration" by adding to Sam's drawing without permission; Sam "decline[s]" by smudging out Eva's work with a rag. Their canvas is the blank white wall of whatever room they're in; Eva paints on it, Sam draws on it. They seesaw control over the mural's content: Sam's giant piano falls from the sky to squash Eva's creatures; Eva changes the piano into confetti and makes it tickle the creatures instead of squashing them. Eva, metafactively, paints over

The beautiful symbiosis of text and art works on several levels—
as a biography, a study of the artist’s creative process, and a
demonstration of the themes of change and survival.

BIG MACHINES

the text’s descriptions and rewords them to match her newest drawing. Ohi’s illustrations are digital. The childlike drawings on the wall are in color but bland; however, the kids themselves, rendered in black and white, sparkle. Eva, who’s Asian, and Sam, who’s black, are full of movement, their postures and facial expressions different on every spread. When their mural becomes frantic and out of hand, the kids escape in a way that Crockett Johnson’s Harold would be proud of.

Expressive, high-spirited one-upkidship via artwork on walls—there’s nothing wrong with that. (Picture book. 4-6) (This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.)



FRANK THE SEVEN-LEGGED SPIDER

Razi, Michael

Illus. by the author

Sasquatch (32 pp.)

\$16.99 | Sep. 12, 2017

978-1-63217-128-3

After losing a leg, a spider sets out to find it—and his identity.

Frank likes spinning beautiful webs—they’re works of art, really—and scaring humans, which also entertains (most of) his friends. But above all, he likes his eight “beautiful, glorious” legs. When he wakes up missing one, (most of) his friends wonder what happened. Is he still a spider? After getting his balance, Frank searches for his leg in unusual places to no avail. Fortunately, some practical ants remind him that he can still spin and jump, averting his identity crisis; the last scene finds Frank pranking an unsuspecting cyclist, who’s about to ride smack into Frank’s grinning, seven-legged self-portrait. But wait—is that a sneakered severed leg somebody’s holding in the credits? The story’s short, direct sentences and speech-balloon dialogue are reassuringly pragmatic, acknowledging difficulties and moving on. The deceptively straightforward text lures readers into the digital illustrations’ silly punch lines and droll grace notes, the figures and their muted colors magnified against minimal background. Composed of simple, high-contrast circles, Frank conveys everything from annoyance to joy with his wide eyes and tiny-fang-tipped mouth. Frank’s infectious expressions and humorous misadventures give his disability a refreshingly lighthearted treatment, but the Jon Klassen-esque twist puts a wicked spin on his journey to acceptance.

By turns hilarious, affirming, and an itsy bit disturbing. (Picture book. 4-8) (This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.)



BIG MACHINES
The Story of Virginia Lee Burton

Rinker, Sherri Duskey

Illus. by Rocco, John

HMH Books (48 pp.)

\$17.99 | Sep. 5, 2017

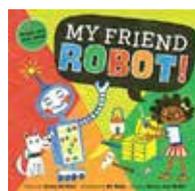
978-0-544-71557-8



Virginia Lee Burton’s big machines roar to new life in a new biography of the author.

Rinker, author of *Goodnight, Goodnight Construction Site* (2014; illustrated by Tom Lichtenheld), is right at home describing the life and times of big machines. “Ting, Ting, Ting!...CLINGETY-CLANG!” comes Maybelle the cable car. “CHUG! CHUG! CHUG!” says Katy the crawler tractor as she digs her way through a double-page spread of snow. Clearly a labor of love for Rocco, the illustrations demonstrate the same care for book design evident in Burton’s work. Endpapers depict Burton’s Little House encircled by big machines, an effect akin to the block-printed fabrics of the Folly Cove design group the illustrator worked with in Massachusetts. Rocco’s illustrations capture the look, personality, and energy of the machines without being overly imitative, and he offers playful departures, such as the final double-page spread featuring a spirited procession of Choo Choo, Mary Anne the steam shovel, Katy, and Maybelle as “their stories come to life...quite magically... / for Aris and Michael,” Burton’s sons, represented as her inspirations. The beautiful symbiosis of text and art works on several levels—as a biography, a study of the artist’s creative process, and a demonstration of the themes of change and survival evident in Burton’s picture books.

Alive, bursting with color and action, this volume introduces Virginia Lee Burton to a new generation of big machine enthusiasts. (author’s note) (Picture book/biography. 4-10) (This review originally appeared in the 07/01/17 issue.)



MY FRIEND ROBOT!

Scribens, Sunny

Illus. by Skipp, Hui

Barefoot (32 pp.)

\$16.99 | \$9.99 paper | Oct. 1, 2017

978-1-78285-322-0

978-1-78285-323-7 paper

STEM content on simple machines and robotics meets play and compassion.

A diverse group of children with varying skin tones and hair textures works with a robot to build a treehouse. A black girl emerges as the leader of the group, and it’s her friend Robot who assists them. Robot lends a fantastic feel to the story, since illustrations make it look like something out of *The Jetsons* rather than a robot like those described in backmatter, but the things it introduces (a wedge, a wagon with wheels, screws, a hammer, a ladder, and a pulley) are immediately relevant and accessible to child readers learning about simple machines and



other tools. Singsong text (set to the tune of “London Bridge” in the backmatter and on an accompanying CD, performed by Norma Joan Wright) shifts from the pragmatic to the emotional when, after resourceful Robot helps build the treehouse, it is stumped as to how to help a fretful dog get up to it. The children use emotional intelligence and say “Pet him in a gentle way, gentle way—it’s been a long day” and successfully sooth the dog so it can join them in the treehouse as Robot departs. Throughout, illustrations highlight the key tools and steps in the building process, and the backmatter provides more comprehensive information about their functions.

Likely to be a friend to STEM elementary educators. (Picture book. 5-7) (This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.)



THE ANTLERED SHIP

Slater, Dashka
 Illus. by Fan, Terry & Fan, Eric
 Beach Lane/Simon & Schuster (48 pp.)
 \$17.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Sep. 12, 2017
 978-1-4814-5160-4
 978-1-4814-5161-1 e-book



A philosophical fox full of questions boards a ship with strangers and discovers that finding friends is even better than finding answers.

Russet-furred Marco wonders about everything. His fellow foxes care mainly about dinner. When a great, antlered wooden ship, captained by a deer named Sylvia, docks in the harbor, Marco goes down to see it. Intrigued by the possibility of finding other foxes who share his curiosity, Marco decides to set sail, as do an adventurous flock of pigeons led by Victor, pictured as a one-legged bird in a bandanna. While they struggle a bit with the unfamiliar tasks and are beset by the typical dangers that sailors face, Marco, Sylvia, and Victor each contribute to the success of their journey. In the mostly dreamy, delicate pen-and-pencil illustrations, colored digitally, Marco the fox and the other animals are shown as sapient but not completely anthropomorphized. The antlered ship is delightfully detailed and decorated, the pirates our heroes encounter are appropriately toothy and threatening (even the cutlass-wielding mouse), and the sepia-colored maps on the endpapers feature deliciously evocative names. The old-fashioned appearance of the Fans’ artwork perfectly suits Slater’s contemplative, musing tone. While the ending is hardly a surprise, it feels right, true, and not the least bit clichéd.

A beautifully composed package filled with whimsy and wisdom—the story of this unique vessel will inspire and entertain thoughtful listeners. (Picture book. 4-7) (This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.)



**TRIO
 The Tale of a Three-Legged Cat**

Wisniewski, Andrea
 Illus. by the author
 Godine (40 pp.)
 \$17.95 | Oct. 19, 2017
 978-1-56792-608-8

Despite having only three legs, Trio the cat lives a full, happy life.

Trio is born “different.” But different is definitely not less-than, as the narration points out. Trio may struggle at times, but in general, he can do what other kittens do: “pounce...sneak... [and] jump, whoops, well sort of!” Trio and his siblings share their home with a flock of chickens. Trio, in particular, enjoys emulating the chickens’ behavior, though he discovers that he does *not* like eating bugs. After figuring out how to climb up into the nesting boxes, Trio regularly makes himself at home. Then one day his cozy snoozing is interrupted by an unexpected event. Wisniewski’s astonishingly beautiful illustrations combine paper cutting, printing, and watercolor to bring Trio’s story to life. Her technique works particularly well for texture and shading, as seen on the flowers, fabrics, feathers, and fur. Trio, the other kittens, and Uno the chick are all utterly adorable, and the beady-eyed hens are equally appealing. The matter-of-fact tone of the text keeps the story from sounding sentimental, while gently humorous asides add to its charm. Simple declarative sentences have a pleasing rhythm and conversational tone, allowing the story to flow naturally.

Lovely to look at, a pleasure to read aloud, and offering plenty of details to pore over, Trio’s story seems destined to become a favorite for many families. (Picture book. 4-7)

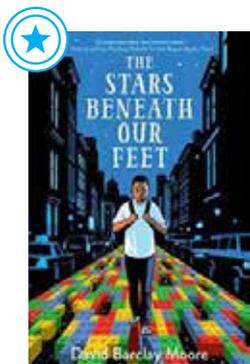
FALL PREVIEW SPECIAL ISSUE

MIDDLE-GRADE

BOOKS

 These titles earned the Kirkus Star:

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- THE WONDERLING** by Mira Bartók..... 48
- THE WAR I FINALLY WON** by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley..... 49
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- GHOSTS OF GREENGLASS HOUSE** by Kate Milford; illus. by Jaime Zollars..... 55
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THE STARS BENEATH OUR FEET
 Moore, David Barclay
 Knopf (304 pp.)
 \$16.99 | \$16.99 e-book
 \$19.99 PLB |
 Sep. 19, 2017
 978-1-5247-0124-6
 978-1-5247-0126-0 e-book
 978-1-5247-0125-3 PLB



RISE OF THE JUMBIES
 Baptiste, Tracey
 Algonquin (272 pp.)
 \$16.95 | Sep. 19, 2017
 978-1-61620-665-9

Corinne La Mer has settled back into island life after her fight with the jumbie Severine (*The Jumbies*, 2015), but no sooner does normalcy arrive than it leaves again when an earthquake rocks the island and her friend Laurent goes missing.

Other children start to disappear, and Corinne's only clue leads her to the water. With steadfast friends Malik, Bouki, and Dru, she sets out to uncover what mysterious force has taken the children and defeat it. She makes a bargain with the water jumbie Mama D'Leau for help, but even with a supernatural boost, Corinne will need all of her strengths to defeat the mysterious kidnapper and save her friends. Baptiste's colorful, rich Caribbean characters return triumphantly in this sequel, and the mythos of the island continues to expand. Baptiste deepens what could be a light and charming undersea adventure with ties to African religions and the historical legacy of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. As other young children of the African diaspora sort out their feelings about and relationships with slavery, so do Corinne and her loyal friends. While other tales may address it with a casual aside or scrub out the grimmest bits, leaving history in a shiny, tidy package removed from reality, Baptiste allows her characters to find and create ways to grapple with uncomfortable truths.

A stirring and mystical tale sure to keep readers thinking past the final page. (Fantasy. 8-12) (This review originally appeared in the 07/01/17 issue.)



THE WONDERLING
 Bartók, Mira
 Illus. by the author
 Candlewick (464 pp.)
 \$21.99 | Sep. 26, 2017
 978-0-7636-9121-9

A young groundling, or animal hybrid, escapes a horrible orphanage to discover his past.

The shy, foxlike groundling known as No. 13 has only the faintest memory of a song and the far-off sounds he can hear with his single furry ear to keep him wondering why he exists. He's imprisoned along with dozens of other unwanted

Ada's struggles with her trauma are portrayed with such incredible nuance and heart-wrenching realism that readers are sure to empathize deeply.

THE WAR I FINALLY WON

groundlings in a former monastery-turned-grim workhouse where food and comfort are scarce. The seemingly human headmistress has dark secrets, and her assistants are cruel to the orphans. When a clever and resourceful new friend springs Arthur, as she calls No. 13, and herself from the institution, the two embark on an epic journey that will eventually bring them back to free the other orphans. Bartók's language is full of rich description and effulgent inventories of food and places. Her world includes Christmas and Beethoven, along with homes in hollow trees, clockwork beetles, police patrols on flying bicycles, and allusions to ancient magic, both good and evil. Arthur, sweetly innocent throughout his journey, must make his way in Lumentown, where groundlings are at best second-class citizens and High Hats control everything. Arthur's harrowing encounters with cruelty, hunger, and filth are interspersed with gentle humor and kindness. Though the origins of the groundlings are never explored (perhaps saved for the planned sequel), the worldbuilding otherwise has an impressive level of conviction and credibility. Bartók's lovely, detailed illustrations and drawings throughout support the sense of enchantment in this imaginative adventure.

Captivating and with great potential as a read-aloud. (*Fiction. 9-13*) (This review originally appeared in the 07/01/17 issue.)



ALAN COLE IS NOT A COWARD

Bell, Eric

Katherine Tegen/HarperCollins (272 pp.)

\$16.99 | \$7.99 e-book | Sep. 5, 2017

978-0-06-256702-4

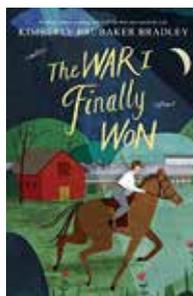
978-0-06-256705-5 e-book

Alan Cole starts out as a coward but doesn't end as one in this harrowing but inspiring debut.

White seventh-grader Alan's home life has taught him that it's best to stay out of the way. He conceals his crush on Connor Garcia. He doesn't want friends but eats lunch at the Unstable Table with Madison Truman, who's bullied about his weight, and Zack Kimble, who cheerfully lives by his own rules. He tries to avoid abuse from his father and violence from his brother Nathan. His mother is a largely passive figure, though she does shed some (unsatisfying) light on the source of their familial trauma. Nathan, who is both sympathetic and frightening as a victim and perpetrator of abuse, wants to crush his brother once and for all in an ongoing contest Nathan calls Cole vs. Cole. As the brothers struggle through their list of tasks for this particularly trying game of CvC—from getting kissed to standing up to their father—Alan realizes his own potential for strength, the value of friendship, and the warped reasoning behind his father's rage. Alan's burgeoning gay identity is only a small part of his larger angst, and his slow but steady growth from cowed endurance to self-assured advocacy makes for a rewarding, if at times difficult, read. The intensity of the family relationships is so effectively rendered that this book has the potential to appeal to older teens as well

as a middle school audience.

The potential horrors of white, middle-class, suburban public school are well-documented and creatively managed here, though readers could easily come away either contented or depressed. (*Fiction. 11-16*) (This review originally appeared in the 06/15/17 issue.)



THE WAR I FINALLY WON

Bradley, Kimberly Brubaker

Dial (400 pp.)

\$16.99 | \$16.99 e-book | Oct. 3, 2017

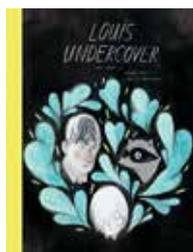
978-0-525-42920-3

978-0-698-19713-8 e-book

Ada returns in this sequel to Newbery Honor book *The War That Saved My Life* (2015).

Shortly after the events that closed the last book, a successful surgery means overjoyed 11-year-old, white Ada no longer has a clubfoot. She can walk, run, and ride relatively pain-free, but pain returns in a different way: Ada's abusive birth mother has been killed in an air raid. Enough back story is provided that readers new to Ada's story won't be lost. Patient Susan, providing a home to Ada and her little brother, Jamie, during the Blitz, becomes their legal guardian, but Ada, damaged by 10 years of abuse, doesn't ever feel safe. Living in the midst of a world war only adds to Ada's constant worries, and from blackout screens to rations, the stress and strain felt in everyday Kent during World War II is plain. But Ada finds comfort in her horse, Butter, and her family, which grows to include privileged Lady Thorton and Ruth, a teenage, Jewish German refugee. Ada's struggles with her trauma are portrayed with such incredible nuance and heart-wrenching realism that readers are sure to empathize deeply and revel in the joy of watching thoughtful, introspective Ada heal and grow. When tragedy strikes, all suffer, but Ada is able to help another in greater agony than herself thanks to lessons from her own painful past.

Thoughtful, brave, true, and wise beyond her years, Ada is for the ages—as is this book. Wonderful. (*Historical fiction. 10-14*)



LOUIS UNDERCOVER

Britt, Fanny

Illus. by Arsenault, Isabelle

Translated by Morelli, Christelle & Ouriou, Susan

Groundwood (160 pp.)

\$19.95 | \$19.95 e-book | Oct. 3, 2017

978-1-55498-859-4

978-1-55498-860-0 e-book

As his family falls apart, a young teen boy struggles to approach the girl he admires from afar.

While the book covers well-worn territory about bicultural and immigrant conflicts, it also dramatically explores the ways women are constrained by patriarchy.

PASHMINA

Happy family memories recede into the past for Louis. His alcoholic father wallows in self-pity, holed up in the old family home; his mother, meanwhile, is unable to move beyond the weight of her worries. Thankfully, Louis' younger brother, Truffle, remains a jolly light in Louis' life. Spotting unmarked "ghost cop cars" on the highway with his friend Boris also helps Louis forget about his family's troubles. But school brings more problems for Louis, who hasn't yet worked up the nerve to talk to Billie, a girl whose words explode the world "in clusters of honey and fire." With his parents in mind, he hesitates to say hello for a reason: "What I did know was that, for the most part, love ends badly." Though laced with heartbreak and fragile hope, Louis' narrative glows with quiet wit and compassion thanks to Britt's careful, nuanced, and true-to-life examination of familial relationships. Arsenault's expressive pencil-and-ink drawings render the story in simple lines and drab smears with occasional bursts of color, primarily yellow and light blue. Hopeful episodes—Louis nursing a baby raccoon back to health, Louis' father rallying to free himself from alcoholism's grip on an ill-fated family vacation—inevitably end in something less than ideal, but it all fades away, if momentarily, when Louis finds his voice in the face of love. (A white default is assumed.)

An unflinching, delicate portrait of a boy and his broken family. (*Graphic novel.* 10-14) (This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.)



ELSIE MAE HAS SOMETHING TO SAY

avanaugh, Nancy J.
Sourcebooks Jabberwocky (304 pp.)
\$16.99 | Sep. 5, 2017
978-1-4926-4022-6

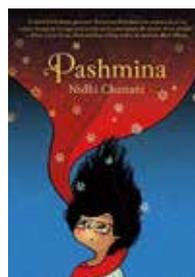
Eleven-year-old Elsie Mae lives for her summers spent with her grandparents on Honey Island in the Okefenokee Swamp—so when the swamp is threatened by a developer, she decides to do

something to save the most beautiful place on Earth.

The canal project is only part of the drama in this Depression-era tale. A hog thief, a Bible-thumping cousin, and a dog that cannot seem to stay out of trouble all conspire to make this the most exciting and problem-filled summer ever. But Elsie Mae is so focused on making a name for herself that she neglects to consider how her actions will affect those around her. She seems to create more problems than she solves. Is this the fall her cousin warned would follow her pride? Or are the complications really just blessings in disguise? Gators, huckleberry pie, and sweet tea on the porch are all part of the swamper way of life. Elsie Mae is spunky, headstrong, and kind, but she also has moments of jealousy and recklessness. The mystery surrounding the hog thefts falls flat, but the distinctive setting, the intriguing characters, and the glimpse at a culture that is unfamiliar to most are enough to carry it through. Elsie Mae narrates, and characters' dialogue is rendered in a broad dialect.

Absence of racial markers implies that they are white. A historical note explains the actual events surrounding the Georgia swamp's protection.

Swamp magic. (*Historical fiction.* 9-12) (This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.)



PASHMINA

Chanani, Nidhi
Illus. by the author
First Second (176 pp.)
\$21.99 | \$16.99 paper | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-62672-088-6
978-1-62672-087-9 paper

In this feminist graphic novel, a young woman searches for the truths of her past with the help of a long-lost aunt; Shakti, the Divine Mother Goddess; and a mysterious shawl.

Indian-American teenager Priyanka "Pri" Das, a talented artist and a bit of a loner, wants to know both why her deeply religious mother left India for California so abruptly years ago and her father's whereabouts. But Pri's mother refuses to speak of India: "That subject is permanently closed." Soon, Pri discovers a mysterious pashmina tucked away in a forgotten suitcase in her Los Angeles home. When she wraps it around her shoulders, she is transported to an imagined, romanticized India—one as colorful as a Bollywood movie, in contrast to the black-and-white images of her everyday life. There, a talking elephant and bird introduce Pri (and readers) to the country's festivals, foods, and fashion, but Pri knows this isn't the "real" India. To find "her" India and uncover her mother's secrets, Pri will travel to the subcontinent, where she learns about women's choices—especially her mother's—and living without fear. While the book covers well-worn territory about bicultural and immigrant conflicts, it also dramatically explores the ways women are constrained by patriarchy. Pri is the daughter of a single mother, a family structure rarely represented in young people's literature of the South Asian diaspora.

An original graphic novel, the first written and illustrated by an Indian-American creator, this is both a needed contribution and a first-rate adventure tale. (*Graphic novel.* 10-14) (This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.)



THE EMBER STONE

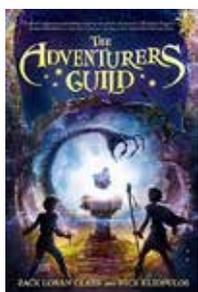
Charman, Katrina
Illus. by Norton, Jeremy
Branches/Scholastic (96 pp.)
\$15.99 | \$4.99 paper | \$4.99 e-book
Sep. 26, 2017
978-1-338-12230-5
978-1-338-12213-8 paper
978-1-338-12242-8 e-book
Series: Last Firehawk, 1

The first entry in the Last Firehawk series introduces the

whimsical adventures of a brave little owl and his friends.

In the land of Perodia, a dark Shadow encroaches on Valor Wood. The evil vulture Thorn (who, oddly, doesn't appear in this first book though he's mentioned in the introduction) controls The Shadow's dark magic, aiming, for reasons unknown, to destroy the beautiful forest. Enter Tag, a small barn owl with big dreams. He longs to join the Owls of Valor, a group of warriors who protect Valor Wood from threats like Thorn and The Shadow. When Grey, their wise old leader, forbids all animals from entering the treacherous Howling Caves, Tag sees his chance to prove his bravery. Tag and his best pal, Skyla, a mischievous, slingshot-wielding girl squirrel, set off to investigate the caves, where they find a mysterious golden egg. Soon, the egg hatches the eponymous last firehawk, whom Tag names Blaze. Firehawks are magical birds, long thought extinct, who guard the Ember Stone against any who might use it for ill. Unfortunately, the Stone is broken and scattered about Perodia. Tag, Skyla, and Blaze must race to collect the Stone's pieces before Thorn can get his vile talons on them and destroy the world. The black-and-white sketches depict Disney-esque, wide-eyed animals, while onomatopoeia pops off the page at regular intervals. The story is heavy on dialogue, with no shortage of exclamation points, keeping the energy level high and pages turning.

A promising start to a series for fledgling fantasy readers. (*Animal fantasy. 6-9*) (This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.)



THE ADVENTURERS GUILD

Clark, Zack Lorán & Eliopulos, Nick
Disney-Hyperion (320 pp.)
\$16.99 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-4847-8801-1



Zed, a half-human, half-elven boy with brown skin, and white, human Brock are best friends eager for Guildculling.

Zed, the son of a single-parent human mother, has always wanted to join the Mages Guild. Brock's choice of the Merchants Guild is rooted in family tradition. Covert, orchestrated circumstances lead the boys into the lowly Adventurer's Guild, however, which only the guildless or unwanted enter. Zed and Brock soon learn that the Adventurer's Guild is a rowdy mix of humans, elves, dwarves—and an archivist who can cast a mean spell or two when he has to—run by a ragged old woman by the name of Alabasel Frond. On their very first day, they and the other new apprentices are challenged to survive their first night beyond Freestone's wall. A surprise attack by the Dangers that lurk without almost leads to the loss of life—and to a royal command that Frond eliminate the threat of the Dangers. On the mission to find the crystal that would protect the city, Zed and Brock's friendship becomes closer than ever even as their kinship within the Adventurer's Guild is deepened. Told in alternating chapters from the third-person perspectives of the two

main characters, this tale is a page-turner that has the perfect mix of suspense, *Princess Bride* humor, and engaging characters, one that's definitely earned the sequel to come.

A dazzling adventure sure to become a classic, if not a movie. (*Fantasy. 8-12*) (This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.)



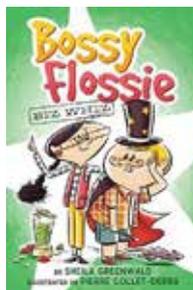
THE PAINTING

Cotter, Charis
Tundra (288 pp.)
\$16.99 | \$16.99 e-book | Sep. 19, 2017
978-1-10191-887-6
978-1-10191-888-3 e-book

The painting of a Newfoundland lighthouse that Annie finds in her attic becomes a portal to the place itself and the lonely girl who lives there.

Claire, 12, white, a serious student and avid reader, lives with her mother, Maisie, a fiercely self-sufficient painter, in an old lighthouse on the coast of Newfoundland. Claire longs to move back to their home in St. John's, where her younger sister died. Annie, also 12, white, and a gifted artist, lives in Toronto with her accomplished parents. The night her mother is injured in a car accident Annie finds herself falling into the real world of the lighthouse, where Claire immediately recognizes her as an older version of her sister, Annie. Claire blames herself for young Annie's death and believes that her mother does, too. Alternating subchapters in Claire's and Annie's voices weave a cleverly constructed, compellingly paced mystery that's part time-slip story, part ghost story, part meditation on the power of dreaming. Epigraphs drawn from *Through the Looking Glass* and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* about the nature of dreams and reality preface each of the nine chapters. As Annie begins to realize who she and Claire might be to each other, Claire and Maisie clash over a series of portraits imagining the young Annie growing older.

Full of emotional truth and connection. (*Fantasy. 9-13*) (This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.)



BIZ WHIZ

Greenwald, Sheila
Illus. by Collet-Derby, Pierre
Penguin Workshop (96 pp.)
\$5.99 paper | \$5.99 e-book | \$15.99 PLB
Sep. 19, 2017
978-0-448-48885-1
978-1-5247-8665-6 e-book
978-0-448-48886-8 PLB
Series: Bossy Flossie, 1

Third-grader Flossie is not among the favorites of her classmates.

They find her overbearing and rather bossy. When the class learns that they need to raise money in order to fund a new garden, Flossie has—as always—lots of ideas. In fact, every time

she gets one of these great (from her point of view) plans, she begins “to tingle and glow from head to toe.” Since her ideas have a track record of, well, failure, no one really wants to team up with her. That lot falls to hapless Billy, the new boy, who happens to live in her building. Flossie decides they should sell produce grown on Billy’s family farm—not a success. The next plan is to cater a classmate’s birthday party and provide a magic show. The pet rat Flossie brings along finishes that scheme off disastrously. Flossie is discouraged, but Billy helps her come up with a workable scheme. The happiest news, however, is that he’s now her friend. Presented in a large, easy-to-read font and accompanied by Collet-Derby’s ample, stylized illustrations, in black, white, and green, this early chapter book features believable interactions between the sexes. Billy and Flossie are both paper-white, but one illustration shows that two of their classmates are of another race (depicted as green!).

Amusing and not too daunting for transitioning readers. (Fiction. 6-8) (This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.)



A MOMENT IN TIME A Perpetual Picture Atlas

Hegbrook, Thomas
 Illus. by Hegbrook, Thomas
 360 Degrees (80 pp.)
 \$24.99 | Sep. 1, 2017
 978-1-944530-07-5
 Series: StoryWorlds

A round-the-world trip in pictures through each of our planet’s 39 time zones.

After opening with a world map keyed to said zones (with explanations for that big jog in the mid-Pacific and the fact that several zones represent only 30-minute intervals) Hegbrook kicks off his tour at 6:00 a.m. with images of curlews and a Sally Lightfoot crab on Baker and Howland Islands. From there it’s on to a peaceful bay on Niue Island at 7:00, and so westward to scenes of coffee harvesters in Colombia (1:00 p.m.), pedestrians in London and lions in Nigeria (7:00 p.m.), constellations of lights in Hong Kong skyscrapers and the skies over Perth (2:00 a.m.), and finally back around to Fiji and Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. Done in a painterly style, the art varies city, rural, and nature settings in a range of sizes and viewpoints, thus staving off visual monotony as well as underscoring the diversity of activities going on at the same moment. Human figures are not individualized, but they are dressed in modern rather than stereotypically national clothing and—at least in most urban settings—exhibit a range of skin colors. There’s no narrative beyond captions specifying each scene’s location and, at the very end, brief notes tied to thumbnails that identify the wildlife or activity on view. In a cute ploy that suggests the journey’s circularity and encourages viewers to begin at a random opening, the volume is split into three parts that are separated by hard covers bound zigzag fashion.

A sumptuous take on the perspective-broadening notion of simultaneity in an attention-grabbing format. (Informational picture book. 6-10) (This review originally appeared

in the 06/15/17 issue.)



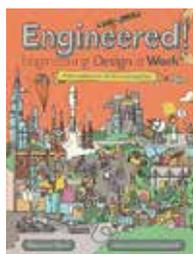
MABEL OPAL PEAR AND THE RULES FOR SPYING

Hosch, Amanda
 Illus. by van Langeweyde, Ira Sluyterman
 Capstone Young Readers (272 pp.)
 \$14.95 | Oct. 1, 2017
 978-1-62370-805-4

Mabel tries to “be in control,” “trust her instincts,” and “anticipate surprises” after her secret-agent parents disappear.

A “curious, brave, and clever” (almost) 11-year-old white girl, Mabel lives near Mount Rainier in Washington, where her mother operates an antique-spoon museum. When her parents are away on secret missions for the Agency, Mabel’s aunt Gertie acts as her guardian. As soon as Mabel’s parents leave on another mission, her long-lost greedy uncle, his obnoxious wife, and their meddling daughter unexpectedly descend under the auspices of watching over Mabel because Aunt Gertie’s been falsely arrested. Taking control of Mabel’s house and life, they clearly want the museum as well. Meanwhile, duplicitous Inspector Montgomery accuses Mabel’s parents of international smuggling and interrogates her about a mysterious red suitcase. Learning from the Agency her parents are indeed missing and uncertain whom she can trust, Mabel follows her *Rules for a Successful Life as an Undercover Secret Agent* (reproduced in full in the backmatter) as she tackles each surprising element of the case. Mabel’s first-person narration reveals a clearheaded and resourceful but lonely and somewhat resentful girl whose efforts to protect her parents’ secrets deny her the normal social life she deserves.

A suspenseful, multifaceted puzzler with a savvy girl sleuth. (author’s note) (Mystery. 9-12) (This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.)



ENGINEERED! Engineering Design at Work

Hunt, Shannon
 Illus. by Hancock, James Gulliver
 Kids Can (48 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Sep. 5, 2017
 978-1-77138-560-2

Hunt draws a welcoming introduction to the engineering trade, which isn’t just bridges, tunnels, and highways anymore.

Engineering has a hard-nosed reputation. Though it is true that engineers use “math, science and technology skills to find creative solutions to problems,” Hunt explains that their work is more than mastering a slide rule and engineering drawing. It’s the discipline’s creative aspect that Hunt concentrates on (“If existing technology won’t solve the problem, engineers create

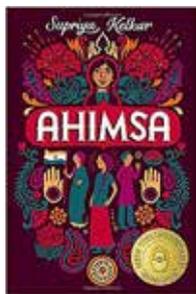


Kelkar complicates Western impressions of Mohandas K. “Mahatma” Gandhi and introduces readers to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a figure rarely mentioned in texts for young people in the United States.

AHIMSA

new technology, such as a machine that prints skin substitutes for burn victims”), and how cool is that? Hancock’s artwork is both bell-clear and engaging, a combination that might bring to mind David Macaulay but is a very different animal. Here the illustrations have a board-game appeal to complement the warmth of the writing, which remains approachable despite tongue twisters such as “manganese dioxide for the cathode, zinc for the anode and an alkaline (the opposite of acidic) substance called potassium hydroxide for the electrolyte.” Hunt explains the steps used in engineering design—defining the problem, investigating requirements, developing and comparing solutions, creating, testing, optimizing, sharing—bringing in examples that range from aerospace to biomedical to civil to geomantics (“These engineers monitor climate change, predict floods and study how animals adapt to changing environments”). As she makes her way through each example, an inventive use of iconographics informs readers when they are at each particular stage—comparing solutions, optimizing—of the design process.

Eye-opening, encouraging, and attractive—a winning trifecta. (*Nonfiction. 10-16*) (This review originally appeared in the 06/15/17 issue.)



AHIMSA

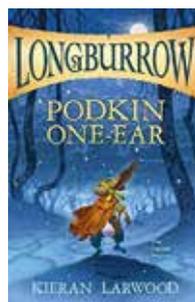
Kelkar, Supriya
Tu Books (304 pp.)
\$18.95 | Oct. 1, 2017
978-1-62014-356-8

Although Kelkar’s debut novel takes place in colonial India in the 1940s, when Indian citizens were fighting for independence from British rule, it is uncannily timely: 10-year old Anjali grapples with issues of social justice in many of

the same ways young people are today.

When Anjali’s mother quits her job to become a freedom fighter, Anjali is reluctant to join the struggle, as it means she will have to eschew her decorated skirts and wear home-spun khadi (hand-woven cotton) instead, inviting the mockery of her school nemeses. But as her relationship with her mother evolves, her experience of and commitment to activism change as well. When her mother is imprisoned and commences a hunger strike, Anjali continues her work and begins to unlearn her prejudices. According to an author’s note, Kelkar was inspired by the biography of her great-grandmother Anasuyabai Kale, and the tale is enriched by the author’s proximity to the subject matter and access to primary sources. Kelkar also complicates Western impressions of Mohandas K. “Mahatma” Gandhi—Anjali realizes that Gandhi is flawed—and introduces readers to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a figure rarely mentioned in texts for young people in the United States but who is best known for campaigning against social discrimination of Dalits, or members of India’s lower castes.

This 2015 New Visions Award winner offers a complex narrative and inspires readers to check their privilege to address ongoing injustices. (*Historical fiction. 8-12*)



PODKIN ONE-EAR The Legend Begins

Larwood, Kieran
Illus. by Wyatt, David
Clarion (256 pp.)
\$16.99 | \$16.99 e-book | Sep. 5, 2017
978-1-328-69582-6
978-1-328-82891-0 e-book
Series: Longburrow, 1

A traveling bard tells the story of how legendary warrior rabbit Podkin lost his ear and confronted the treacherous Gorm.

When rabbits walked upright and lived in elaborate underground villages, Podkin “was perhaps the laziest, most spoiled son of a chieftain in the whole Five Realms.” One Bramblemas Eve, the Gorm—mutant, evil, iron-infused, red-eyed rabbits—invade Munbury Warren searching for Starclaw, a magical knife. While the Gorm murder his father, Podkin flees with his sister, brother, and Starclaw. With the Gorm in pursuit, the siblings barely escape (Podkin sacrificing his ear in the process) and are rescued by an ancient rabbit healer/seer who seems to know everything about them. She sends them to an underground warren of other refugees from the Gorm, where they find allies, but can Podkin, now chieftain of Munbury Warren, hope to avenge his father and rescue his mother from the seemingly invincible Gorm? An omniscient third-person narrator speaks directly to readers, inviting them to listen to the mysterious storyteller who relates Podkin’s gripping tale in language replete with amusing asides, rabbit lore, stories within stories, and a curious insider perspective. Realistic black-and-white illustrations highlight dramatic scenes.

An original fantasy with warrior rabbits, fierce foes, sibling loyalty, riveting adventure, and genuine storytelling. (map) (*Animal fantasy. 10-12*) (This review originally appeared in the 07/01/17 issue.)



SLUG DAYS

Leach, Sara
Illus. by Bender, Rebecca
Pajama Press (120 pp.)
\$15.95 | \$9.95 paper | Oct. 27, 2017
978-1-77278-022-2
978-1-77278-032-1 paper

Lauren, a white grade schooler with autism spectrum disorder, has good days and bad days. On the bad days she feels just like a slug—slow, slimy, and friendless.

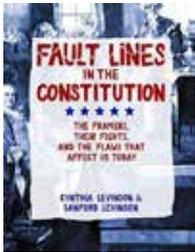
Lauren has lots to contend with. She prefers predictable routines; changes—which are all too common—make her want to “flip my lid,” as she puts it. A new bus driver who hasn’t saved her favorite seat, missing reading because she had to take so much time tying her shoes just right, and frustrations with trying to write neat versions of the letters G and P all create believably depicted obstacles. Lauren’s narrative voice is honest, poignant,

A fascinating, thoughtful, and provocative look at what in the Constitution keeps the United States from being “a more perfect union.”

FAULT LINES IN THE CONSTITUTION

and spot-on in describing her often baffled perceptions as she tries but frequently fails to navigate a confusing world. Her parents' and teacher's successes and communication and occasional losses of patience, together with angry responses of annoyed classmates, add dimension to Lauren's world. Her victories, such as finding a friend, subtly hint at progress. Bender's pencil-and-digital illustrations appear on nearly every generously leaded spread. Her tender, winsome depictions of Lauren, sometimes endearingly engaged but other times steamy with anger, broaden the tale and make it accessible to even children transitioning to chapter books.

This nondidactic effort is a fine, affecting addition to the literature for kids on the spectrum and for those who know those kids—in short, for just about everyone. (author's note) (Fiction. 5-9)



FAULT LINES IN THE CONSTITUTION *The Framers, Their Fights, and the Flaws that Affect Us Today*

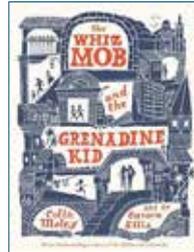
Levinson, Cynthia & Levinson, Sanford
Peachtree (192 pp.)
\$19.95 | Sep. 1, 2017
978-1-56145-945-2



The United States Constitution has been amended 27 times since its 1788 ratification, but the Levinsons make the reasonable and compelling case that further revision will make it even more efficient and just.

Cynthia Levinson, the author of *We've Got a Job* (2012), teams up with her husband, Sanford Levinson, a constitutional law scholar and professor, to explain how many of the political issues we struggle with today are rooted in flaws in the U.S. Constitution. Among the issues explored, in lively, accessible prose, are bicameralism, the Electoral College, emergency powers, gerrymandering, the presidential veto, and voter-identification requirements. In the chapters examining these issues, real-life examples illustrate each constitutional flaw (the 2000 election illustrates the problems in the Electoral College, for instance). Putting it in historical and contemporary context, the authors explain the problem, make comparisons to constitutions of other nations, and suggest viable solutions. The Levinsons grade the Constitution's success in meeting its primary goals as outlined in the Preamble, giving it a C-plus overall. The text concludes with the authors debating the pros and cons of a second Constitutional Convention.

A fascinating, thoughtful, and provocative look at what in the Constitution keeps the United States from being “a more perfect union.” (timeline, bibliography, endnotes) (Nonfiction. 10-18) (This review originally appeared in the 07/01/17 issue.)



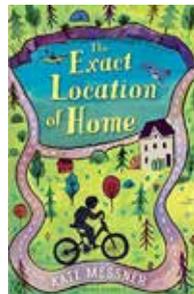
THE WHIZ MOB AND THE GRENADINE KID

Meloy, Colin
Illus. by Ellis, Carson
Balzer + Bray/HarperCollins (448 pp.)
\$17.99 | Oct. 24, 2017
978-0-06-234245-4
978-0-06-234247-8 e-book

Charlie, the shy son of an American diplomat in France, discovers a thrilling, dangerous underworld whose young denizens prey on the unsuspecting elite of 1961 Marseille.

Watching Amir, a gifted young pickpocket, in action, the 12-year-old white boy is impressed and, after helping him avoid arrest, asks Amir to teach him his trade. With Amir's support, Charlie is admitted to his gang, the multiracial Whiz Mob of Marseille: kids who hail from Lebanon, the U.S., Europe, Japan, and Africa. In their lair under a derelict bar, the mob plots elaborate heists, targeting the wealthy where they congregate. Neglected by his estranged parents (German heiress mother, remote Anglo dad), Charlie's thrilled to belong. But the deeper he's drawn in, the higher the stakes become, culminating in a perilous journey to the remote School of Seven Bells in Colombia. Meloy takes his time moving pieces on his elaborate chessboard, describing the vivid scenery, human and otherwise, and introducing characters whose dialogue is adorned with colorful pickpocket argot (glossary provided). Patient readers are rewarded as Charlie is pulled into the whiz mob and suspense mounts. Even then the omniscient narrator will interrupt with comments on authorial choices: Charlie refuses a glass of champagne, readers are told, to meet the expectations of librarians and booksellers. Ellis' charming illustrations (finished art not seen) adeptly capture the playful tone and decidedly period setting.

A gleefully metafictional caper and middle-grade picaresque bound to appeal to discerning young readers. (Adventure. 8-12) (This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.)



THE EXACT LOCATION OF HOME

Messner, Kate
Bloomsbury (256 pp.)
\$16.99 | Sep. 12, 2017
978-1-68119-548-3

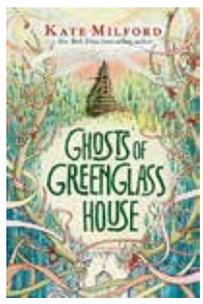


Following the precise coordinates of geocaching doesn't yield the treasure Kirby Zagonski Jr. seeks: his missing father.

Geeky eighth-grader Kirby can't understand why his mother won't call his dad after their generous landlady dies and they're evicted for nonpayment of rent. Though his parents have been divorced for several years and his father, a wealthy developer, has been unreliable, Kirby is sure he

could help. Instead he and his mother move to the Community Hospitality Center, a place “for the poor. The unfortunate. The homeless.” Suddenly A-student Kirby doesn’t have a quiet place to do his schoolwork or even a working pencil. They share a “family room” with a mother and young son fleeing abuse. Trying to hide this from his best friends, Gianna and Ruby, is a struggle, especially as they spend after-school hours together. The girls help him look for the geocaches visited by “Senior Searcher,” a geocacher Kirby is sure is his father. There are ordinary eighth-grade complications in this contemporary friendship tale, too; Gianna just might be a girlfriend, and there’s a dance coming up. Kirby’s first-person voice is authentic, his friends believable, and the adults both sometimes helpful and sometimes unthinkingly cruel. The setting is the largely white state of Vermont, but the circumstances could be anywhere.

Middle school worries and social issues skillfully woven into a moving, hopeful, STEM-related tale. (*Fiction. 10-14*)



GHOSTS OF GREENGLASS HOUSE

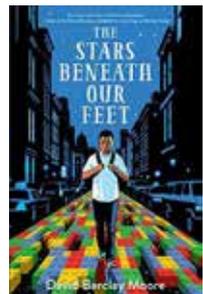
Milford, Kate
Illus. by Zollars, Jaime
 Clarion (464 pp.)
 \$17.99 | \$17.99 e-book | Oct. 3, 2017
 978-0-544-99146-0
 978-1-328-82892-7 e-book



Winter in the inn above the River Skidwreck finds Milo and his parents hosting several guests who are not what they seem—and a mystery to be solved.

Just before Christmas Greenglass House is filled with unexpected visitors. A young man who claims to be an art student, studying the famous stained-glass windows of the house, is the sole guest until Georgie and Clem, young women who met the year before at Greenglass House, arrive. They’ve recently pulled off a caper, recovering a stash belonging to legendary smuggler Violet Cross. They hoped to find Cross’ *derrotero*, an incalculably valuable nautical map of the impossible, changing River Skidwreck. And then a troupe of midwinter revelers arrives in a kind of Morris-dancing tradition, singing carols and traveling with the horned skull of a hobby horse and a chimney sweep. Milo and his parents invite the carolers in, but a ceremonial chimney cleaning results in an overnight stay—and the game is afoot. Milford’s clever, complex plot is full of humor, tantalizing clues, and stories within the story. Adopted Milo, who has become conscious of the ways the world assumes things about him and his Chinese heritage, takes on a new hero persona that offers him confidence and insight into his emotions and strengths.

A brainy, satisfying assemblage of puzzles with an immensely likable protagonist. (*Mystery/fantasy. 10-14*) (*This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.*)



THE STARS BENEATH OUR FEET

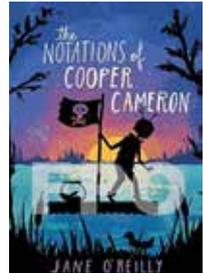
Moore, David Barclay
 Knopf (304 pp.)
 \$16.99 | \$16.99 e-book | \$19.99 PLB |
 Sep. 19, 2017
 978-1-5247-0124-6
 978-1-5247-0126-0 e-book
 978-1-5247-0125-3 PLB



Multicultural Harlem lives again in this daringly diverse tale of growing up against the odds and the imaginative, healing possibilities that we can create through the choices we make.

Moore turns his back on the newly whitewashed Harlem, taking readers to the St. Nick projects to meet brown-skinned West Indian (Trini, to be exact) Wallace “Lolly” Rachpaul, full of contradiction and agency. Moore surrounds Lolly with a grand ensemble of characters that echo the ample cross sections and cultural milieus of the big city. There’s Lolly’s mother, who has embraced her queer sexuality with toy-store security guard Yvonne, who becomes a secondary caregiver after the tragic loss of Lolly’s older brother, Jermaine to the drug-hustling crew underworld of Harlem. Lolly hopes that he and his dark-skinned Dominican best friend, Vega, can resist its allure. Mr. Ali is the veteran social worker with marginal resources and a big heart, refashioning his little basement space to unravel the traumas and difficult choices that could lead astray the black and brown youth he serves. And don’t forget Big Rose (who doesn’t like to be called Big). Then there are Lolly’s Legos, which, block by block, help him imagine a healthy future. These characters are vibrantly alive, reconstituting the realness that is needed to bring diverse, complicated stories to the forefront of our shelves.

A debut that serves as a powerful instructive for writing from and reading the intersections—125th Street—size intersections for all readers to enjoy. (*Fiction. 10-14*) (*This review originally appeared in the 06/15/17 issue.*)



THE NOTATIONS OF COOPER CAMERON

O'Reilly, Jane
 Carolrhoda (320 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Oct. 1, 2017
 978-1-5124-0415-9



An attentive observer and methodical worrier, soon-to-be-sixth-grader Cooper Cameron learns about resilience as he works to protect those he loves most.

A bittersweet summer tale set in Minnesota, this book will be most appreciated by those who enjoy a thoughtful story. Literally. This narrative is entirely expressed through Cooper’s thoroughly engrossing thoughts, and it’s full of the musings and observations that he records in a small notebook. Two years after the death of his grandfather

and the onset of intrusive thoughts about death and his family's endangerment, Cooper develops patterns and behaviors to ensure their protection, such as reading the words, lines, and pages of books three times over, washing his hands in invisible water, and closely observing everything. But even as he endeavors to keep his family from bursting into flames, Cooper's behavior worries everyone and puts pressure on an already-strained fault line between his parents and also between himself and the rest of the family. O'Reilly (*The Secret of Goldenrod*, 2016) delivers a nuanced and empowering narrative that uplifts rather than undermines Cooper's unique perspective on his world, even as he works to reconcile that perspective with his family's. The book pulls no punches with regard to the realities of intolerance (even among loved ones) toward neurodivergence while nevertheless validating Cooper's methods of making meaning as he navigates trauma and grief on his own terms. Racial markers are absent, as is any evidence of racialized experience.

Intricate, meticulous, unforgettable. (author's note)
(Fiction. 9-13)



THE WITCH BOY

Ostertag, Molly Knox

Illus. by the author

Graphix/Scholastic (224 pp.)

\$24.99 | \$12.99 paper | \$12.99 e-book

Oct. 31, 2017

978-1-338-08952-3

978-1-338-08951-6 paper

978-1-338-08953-0 e-book



Thirteen-year-old Aster is of age to find the animal that will deem him worthy to take its shape as a shape-shifter. There's just one problem. Aster doesn't want to shape-shift—he wants to do witchery, which is forbidden for boys.

Aunt Vervain teaches witchery to the girls, and Aster hides, taking careful notes—but he's caught. His mother tells him a family secret: his grandmother's male twin was attracted to witchery. After dabbling in forbidden magic, he morphed into something terrible, caused a disaster in their village, and was cast out. Though Aster's horrified, he can't resist practicing magic alone in the woods. To his delight, it works, but he's seen by Charlie, a black girl from outside his community, and eventually she becomes the confidante and adviser he's needed. On the night of the Finding, a boy is taken by a mysterious creature. Aster knows he can help with witchery, but he'd have to admit how much he's learned. Ostertag's story is straightforward, acting as a parable for gender conformity that's pitched just right to middle-grade audiences. Her panels are clear, colorful, and friendly, and her worldbuilding flawless, Aster's magic-working community sitting cheek by jowl with Charlie's suburb. Characters are all different races: Aster's mother appears white, his father appears Asian, and Aster has darker skin than his mother but has her red hair.

With charming artwork, interesting supporting characters, natural-feeling diversity, and peeks of a richly developed world, this book leaves readers wishing for more.
(*Graphic fantasy. 8-12*)



THE FIRST RULE OF PUNK

Pérez, Celia C.

Viking (304 pp.)

\$16.99 | \$16.99 e-book | Aug. 22, 2017

978-0-425-29040-8

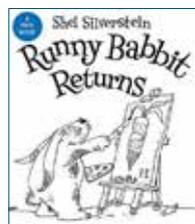
978-0-425-29041-5 e-book



Malú wants to be totally punk at her new middle school, but her Mexican-American mother would prefer she learn to be a proper *señorita*.

Twelve-year-old María Luisa O'Neill-Morales, aka Malú, loves punk-rock music, hanging out at her father's indie record store, and making zines. She *doesn't* love moving from her home in Gainesville, Florida, to Chicago for her professor mother's two-year appointment at a university. Although she loves both of her amicably divorced parents, Malú—who favors Chuck Taylors and music T's—feels closer to her laid-back, artsy white father than her supportive but critical academic mother, whom she calls “SuperMexican.” At Malú's new majority-Latino school, she quickly makes an enemy of beautiful Selena, who calls her a “coconut” (brown on the outside, white on the inside) and warns her about falling in with the class “weirdos.” Malú does befriend the school misfits (one activist white girl and two fellow “coconuts”) and enlists them to form a band to play a punk song at the Fall Fiesta. Middle-grade readers will appreciate the examples of Malú's zines and artwork, which delightfully convey her journey of self-discovery. The author surrounds the feisty protagonist with a trio of older women (including her mom, her best friend Joe's tattooed, punk-loving mother, and his humorous Abuela) who help her embrace being Mexican *and* punk.

A charming debut about a thoughtful, creative preteen connecting to both halves of her identity. (Fiction. 9-13) (This review originally appeared in the 06/15/17 issue.)



RUNNY BABBIT RETURNS Another Billy Sook

Silverstein, Shel

Illus. by Silverstein, Shel

Harper/HarperCollins (96 pp.)

\$19.99 | \$20.89 PLB | Sep. 19, 2017

978-0-06-247939-6

978-0-06-247985-3 PLB

Twelve years later, a return to the ween goods for more vunny ferses.

Runny Babbit and his spooneristic woodland friends are back in 41 new silly, short poems full of nonsense and linguistic play. This volume starts off with the same explanatory poem

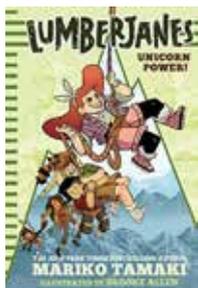
Twain's presence in the narrative allows Philip Stead to both acknowledge his literary debt and retain the freedom to make the tale his own.

THE PURLOINING OF PRINCE OLEOMARGARINE



as *Runny Babbit: A Billy Sook* (2005): “Way down in the green woods / Where the animals all play, / They do things and say things / In a different sort of way— / Instead of sayin’ ‘purple hat,’ / They all say ‘hurple pat.’” Runny “Snoes Gorkeling” and loses his “trimming swunks.” He rides a “coller roaster” at the “founty cair” and loses his lunch. He meets Santa Claus and an evil witch —er, “wevil itch.” He eats soup, celebrates his birthday, and finds a dinosaur egg. Each poem is accompanied by one of Silverstein’s scratchy line drawings, each matching perfectly. In many of the drawings, the denizens of the green woods speak in their own spoonerisms. Though these poems did not make the first collection, which Silverstein had been working on for years before his death, they do not feel second-rate. They echo all that readers loved and all that made them laugh in Uncle Shelby’s work.

Ceas with rare and lave a good haugh; there can’t be too many more like these. (*Poetry*, 6-12) (*This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.*)



UNICORN POWER!

Tamaki, Mariko
Illus. by Allen, Brooke
 Amulet/Abrams (256 pp.)
 \$14.99 | Oct. 10, 2017
 978-1-4197-2725-2
 Series: Lumberjanes (novels)



In a winning reversal, a popular graphic-novel series is adapted into a prose novel.

At Miss Qiunzella Thistkwin Pinniquil Thistle Crumpet’s Camp for Hardcore Lady Types, the Lumberjanes spend their days like many other scouts: earning badges, enjoying the outdoors, and spending time with friends. While working on their Living the Plant Life badge, friends April, Mal, Molly, Jo, and Ripley discover a field of strange blue flowers being eaten by horribly malodorous—but undeniably adorable—unicorns. There the girls spy a mysterious color-changing mountain marked by an illegible but still ominous sign. The Lumberjanes decide to climb it in hopes of earning their Extraordinary Explorers medal. However, when the sassy scouts find themselves marooned on the mountain, they must use their Lumberjane know-how to save the day. Without missing a beat, this novelization has successfully sustained the fun, feminist feel and lively vernacular of the beloved graphic-novel series, a notable feat. This buoyant adventure will easily draw new readers to the series and should satisfy established followers. With its just-right blend of giggeworthy jokes, LGBTQ-positive characters, and affirmative emphasis on friendship, this middle-grade charmer can make even the coldest, bleakest day feel like a sunny day at summer camp. April and Molly are white; Mal, Jo, and Ripley are girls of color.

Awesome to the max! (*Fantasy*, 7-14)



THE PURLOINING OF PRINCE OLEOMARGARINE

Twain, Mark & Stead, Philip C.
Illus. by Stead, Erin E.
 Random House (160 pp.)
 \$24.99 | Sep. 26, 2017
 978-0-553-52322-5

This recently discovered Twain fairy tale finds life as a picture book.

Completing a story penned by arguably America’s greatest author is no easy feat, but the Caldecott-winning author-illustrator (and husband-wife) team proves more than equal to the task, transforming Twain’s jotted notes in an 1879 journal entry about a story told to his daughters into a beautifully illustrated fable that showcases the exemplary talents of all three artists. The tale follows the adventures of Johnny, a kindhearted African-American child being raised by his cruel grandfather. Forced to sell his only friend—a pet chicken—Johnny, rather like Jack before him, instead acquires seeds, the flowers from which enable him to converse with animals. When Prince Oleomargarine—the kingdom’s heir—is kidnapped, Johnny and his animal friends mount a rescue. Interwoven through the fairy tale is a series of author’s notes detailing a fictitious meeting between Twain and the author, from which this story emerges. Twain’s presence in the narrative allows Philip Stead to both acknowledge his literary debt and retain the freedom to make the tale his own. He is aided by Erin Stead’s sublime print illustrations, which demonstrate her masterful ability to create physical presence and characters’ emotions as well as landscapes; the muted greens, soft blues, and light pinkish-brown hues of her double-page spreads set a magical tone for a world that mirrors, but is not quite, our own.

A pensive and whimsical work that Twain would applaud. (*Picture book*, 8-adult) (*This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.*)



GERTIE MILK AND THE KEEPER OF LOST THINGS

Van Booy, Simon
 Razorbill/Penguin (256 pp.)
 \$16.99 | Oct. 3, 2017
 978-0-448-49458-6

A 12-year-old girl gets a very strange job in this new fantasy.

Gertie Milk awakens on a peculiar coast suffering amnesia. She determines her name through a label sewn onto her gown but doesn’t have long to contemplate it. An encounter with a terrifying creature sends her running until a man who calls himself the Keeper of Lost Things, or Kolt, finds her. Turns out the creature is a gentle example of a species now extinct on Earth...and the island is not quite on Earth. Kolt’s explanations are never straightforward, but Gertie is a practical girl who

Caleb's first-person narration allows readers to sympathize with the frustration and fear that cause him to act out, and it propels the plot to a credible, nuanced conclusion.

CALEB AND KIT

wants answers. Their rapport is quick and witty, their personalities strong and quirky. Gertie learns that she is a Keeper, too. Together, they time travel to return lost items for the good of humankind, as directed by the B.D.B.U., a book containing the knowledge of the world. This is just the start of philosophical discussions that cover time, the value of life, the transformation of death, the importance of progress, and the danger posed by the Losers, a band that's trying to eradicate knowledge. Lest the battle for the fate of humankind get too dire, it's all balanced by fantastic encounters with extraordinary characters, human and not, in the most vivid settings. For all its modern themes, it feels very old-fashioned, with voice reminiscent of mid-20th-century British fantasy that will have readers seeing Gertie and Kolt as white.

Their last assignment reveals tantalizing clues about Gertie's past and the war that stranded her on the Skudark, leaving readers waiting breathlessly for the next volume. (*Fantasy. 9-12*)



CALEB AND KIT

Vrabel, Beth

Running Press Kids (256 pp.)

\$16.99 | \$16.99 e-book | Sep. 12, 2017

978-0-7624-6223-0

978-0-7624-6224-7 e-book

A 12-year-old boy attempts to take charge of his own life.

Caleb, a white boy born with cystic fibrosis, hates being one of only two kids his age in summer day camp. His mom refuses to let him stay home alone while she works, his irresponsible dad is off gallivanting with his new fiancée, and his perfect older brother has a summer internship—with, of all things, the local CF foundation. Caleb's longtime best friend is busy with football and baseball—sports Caleb can no longer play. When he meets a mystical girl (also white, as all the main characters seem to be) in the woods behind his home, he's intrigued; when she encourages him to escape the ordinary and to do whatever he wants, he goes along, skipping camp and spending days with her. But Kit is burdened with her own problems and secrets, and what Kit wants them to do is sometimes illegal or dangerous. Caleb's first-person narration allows readers to sympathize with the frustration and fear that cause him to act out, and it propels the plot to a credible, nuanced conclusion. The cystic fibrosis is well-handled—it affects every part of Caleb's life but never defines who he is.

A realistic story with strong, recognizable characters that doesn't reduce cystic fibrosis to a tragedy. (*Fiction. 8-12*) (*This review originally appeared in the 06/15/17 issue.*)

FALL PREVIEW SPECIAL ISSUE

TEEN BOOKS

 These titles earned the Kirkus Star:

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WILD BEAUTY by Anna-Marie McLemore 65

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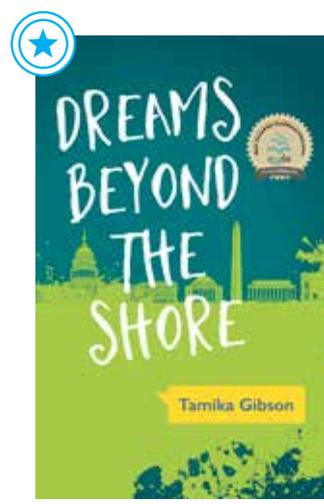
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DREAMS BEYOND THE SHORE
Gibson, Tamika
 Blouse & Skirt Books
 (190 pp.)
 \$12.99 paper
 \$12.99 e-book
 Sep. 15, 2017
 978-976-8267-06-1
 978-976-8267-07-8 e-book



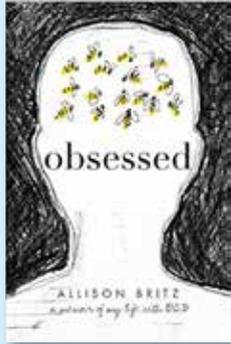
TOOL OF WAR
Bacigalupi, Paolo
 Little, Brown (336 pp.)
 \$17.99 | \$10.00 paper | \$9.99 e-book
 Oct. 10, 2017
 978-0-316-22083-5
 978-0-316-22081-1 paper
 978-0-316-22082-8 e-book

Bacigalupi returns to probe his brutal, post-apocalyptic American landscape and darkly provocative characters in this third installment of the series begun in *Ship Breaker* (2010) and continued in *The Drowned Cities* (2012).

Following the pattern of existential fracture found in its predecessors' narratives, this latest novel further explores the consequences of war and corruption with a focus on the DNA-spliced "augment" called Tool. Tool (also called Blood, Blade, and Karta-Kul the Slaughter-Bringer) is a finely honed weapon, bred for massacre, survival, and loyalty. But after breaking free of his conditioned servitude, Tool represents a serious threat to his former masters, who attack with everything available in their considerable arsenal to destroy him lest they be forced to face the terrifying question of what happens when a weapon turns on its creators. For Tool was uniquely designed for more than just the tactical strategy and lethal bloodlust of most augments—he has a power that, now unleashed, could spell the end for a violently factionalized, inhumanly cruel humanity. Told in third person, the novel alternates among the perspectives of several new as well as familiar characters, none of whom shy away from the constant gore and near-paralyzing moral complexities of their war-torn existence. After playing fascinating, catalyzing roles the first two books, Tool is at center stage at last as readers move through Bacigalupi's exploration of the intricate relationships connecting hunter and prey, master and enslaved, human and monster.

Masterful. (*Dystopian. 14-adult*)

LEADERS, LIVES, & LEARNING: BEST OF FALL YA NONFICTION



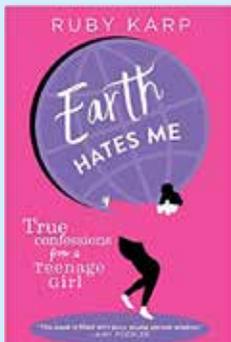
OBSESSED
*A Memoir of My Life
with OCD*
by Allison Britz

TWELVE DAYS IN MAY
Freedom Ride 1961
by Larry Dane Brimner

**ALEXANDER HAMIL-
TON, REVOLUTIONARY**
by Martha
Brockenbrough

#NOTYOURPRINCESS
*Voices of Native
American Women*
ed. by Lisa Charleyboy
& Mary Beth
Leatherdale

3D PRINTING
*The Revolution in Per-
sonalized Manufac-
turing*
by Melissa Koch



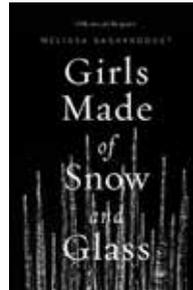
EARTH HATES ME
*True Confessions
from a Teenage Girl*
by Ruby Karp

SPINNING
by Tillie Walden

**FAULT LINES IN THE
CONSTITUTION**
*The Framers, Their
Fights, and the Flaws
That Affect Us Today*
by Cynthia Levinson &
Sanford Levinson

**MORE GIRLS WHO
ROCKED THE WORLD**
by Michelle Roehm
McCann

THE 57 BUS
*A True Story of Two
Teenagers and the
Crime That Changed
Their Lives*
by Dashka Slater



**GIRLS MADE OF
SNOW AND GLASS**
Bashardoust, Melissa
Flatiron Books (384 pp.)
\$18.99 | \$9.99 e-book | Sep. 5, 2017
978-1-250-07773-8
978-1-250-07774-5 e-book

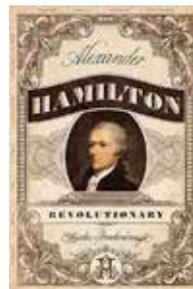


Magic, mother-daughter conflict, and the quest for self-identity are given a dark and fantastical treatment in this chilling feminist adaptation of the “Snow White”

fairy tale.

Bashardoust sets her debut novel in a kingdom cursed with eternal winter, which serves as a pointed metaphor for the physical beauty that is currency and curse for both Lynet, the beloved daughter of King Nicholas, and Mina, the neglected daughter of an infamous magician who eventually becomes Lynet’s “wicked” stepmother. The narrative, which alternates between the characters’ points of view, unites them with a mutual feeling of objectification. Both women are shaped and magically controlled by their fathers, who are also their creators, the insidiousness of which the story fully explores. Well-developed, strong female characters abound, from the tree-climbing Lynet (whose skin is olive-brown) and golden-brown Mina, a sympathetic survivalist queen, to a court surgeon and a royal ancestor whose maternal grief is powerful enough to eternally banish springtime from the northern kingdom. The author’s rich fantasy landscape incorporates the fairy tale’s traditional iconography while providing her with room to create a new story emphasizing the shallowness of a male-dominated society that places a ruinously high premium on beauty at the expense of female individuality. The decisive clash is between mother and daughter, but misogyny is the narrative’s true destructive force.

A hauntingly evocative adaptation that stands on its own merits. (*Fantasy. 14-adult*) (*This review originally appeared in the 07/01/17 issue.*)



**ALEXANDER HAMILTON,
REVOLUTIONARY**
Brockenbrough, Martha
Feiwel & Friends (384 pp.)
\$19.99 | \$9.99 e-book | Sep. 5, 2017
978-1-250-12319-0
978-1-250-12320-6 e-book

Over 200 years after his death in a duel with former Vice President Aaron Burr, founding father Alexander Hamilton’s story is a major player in popular culture.

Brockenbrough begins her narrative with a list of the contradictions of Hamilton’s life and then sets out to describe many of them in detail. Hamilton’s wretched childhood and struggles for survival and an education set a tone that depicts him as the consummate self-made man whose flaws damaged both his political career and personal life. Hamilton’s courtship and marriage

The vital message that it offers is that Indigenous women continue to shatter stereotypes through their personal successes and creative expression.

#NOTYOURPRINCESS

to Elizabeth Schuyler, a daughter of one of the country's most influential families, is a key part, along with prominent figures from American history. Sometimes the intricacies of Revolutionary War strategy and Constitutional Convention maneuvering slow things down, making the pace uneven. However, tidbits about Hamilton's role in the episode with Benedict Arnold and his close relationships with fellow soldier John Laurens and his sister-in-law Angelica Church are intriguing. The story is targeted to an older audience than Teri Kanefield's *Alexander Hamilton: The Making of America* (2017), so the sex scandal that derailed Hamilton's political career is part of the story, as is, of course, the duel that ended his life. After the epilogue, the volume includes information on 18th-century medicine, attire, and warfare among other contextualizing topics; the volume will be illustrated with archival material (not seen).

With the demand for all things Hamilton still strong, this will resonate with many teen readers. (timeline, source notes, bibliography, index) (Biography. 12-18)



#NOTYOURPRINCESS Voices of Native American Women

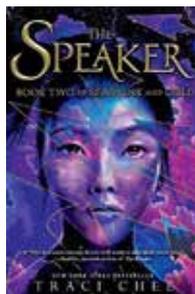
Charleyboy, Lisa & Leatherdale, Mary Beth—Eds.
Annick Press (112 pp.)
\$19.95 | Oct. 10, 2017
978-1-55451-958-3



A unique cultural anthology of stories gathered from Indigenous women representing nations in the U.S. and Canada.

The voices in these stories defy and deconstruct the common stereotype of the Native American woman as docile tribal “princess.” The hashtag in the title is an intentional signal to readers that Native American women are a significant presence in the digital age. This book acts as a platform that allows Indigenous women to express their stories through poetry, vibrant and colorful art, personal photos, short stories, and traditional song. This tapestry of voices addresses reclaiming Indigenous rights, overcoming abandonment and abuse, navigating mixed identity, and cultural appropriation; there is also an homage to 13-year-old Anna Lee Rain Yellowhammer, a young Water Protector who gathered more than a quarter-million signatures to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline. Each page offers eye-catching images that represent the wide diversity among Indigenous women. A poignant interview with Dr. Janet Smylie (Cree/Métis) reveals both her personal struggle with depression as a teenager and the challenges she faced while attempting to finish medical school. Co-edited by author Charleyboy (İsilhqot’ın) and Leatherdale, this collection was created as a love letter to young Indigenous women. The vital message that it offers is that Indigenous women continue to shatter stereotypes through their personal successes and creative expression.

Both testament to the complexity of Indigenous women’s identities and ferocious statement that these women fully inhabit the modern world. (Anthology. 12-adult) (This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.)



THE SPEAKER

Chee, Traci
Putnam (512 pp.)
\$19.99 | \$19.99 e-book | Nov. 7, 2017
978-0-399-17678-4
978-0-698-41063-3 e-book
Series: Sea of Ink and Gold, 2



The adventure continues in Chee's second installment of the Sea of Ink and Gold series.

Sefia and Archer have escaped the Guard, but the danger is far from over. They are still being hunted, and their past and future, slowly being revealed by the Book, are catching up to them. Struggling to accept the dark truths of their pasts, Sefia and Archer embark on a crusade to eliminate all the impressors and free the boys whom, like Archer, the impressors have kidnapped and brutally trained to kill. Meanwhile, the pirate Reed and his colorful crew are derailed from their pursuit of eternal glory when they find out the Blue Navy is threatening their way of life by hunting and eliminating their fellow outlaws at sea. New characters are introduced, and with them, more secrets are revealed. Chee's skill at managing complex storylines shines through as stories upon stories meet and intertwine in startling ways. Throughout it all, Sefia delves deeper into the book and her parents' past for clues of her and Archer's future. What she finds will catapult them into an even more dangerous and impossible mission. The novel features a diverse cast of characters, and Sefia has East Asian features.

Filled with even more magic and intrigue than its predecessor, this is a gripping follow-up that will leave readers speculating and wanting more. (Fantasy. 14-adult)



THE DOOR TO JANUARY

French, Gillian
Islandport Press (200 pp.)
\$16.95 | Sep. 5, 2017
978-1-944762-10-0

Natalie has returned to her small, mostly white Maine town for the summer, primarily to figure out why she's having vivid nightmares about a derelict house.

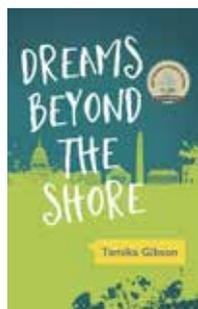
While there she's less interested in making peace with the three bullies who assaulted her and her brainy cousin, Teddy, with a gun a couple of years previously—an event that ended with the shooting death of a fourth miscreant, Peter. In her dreams, the house is icy cold. During visits to the house with ever intrepid Teddy, she's transported back in time to 1948, when an evil resident of the house is just beginning a career as a serial murderer. As disquieting as those surreal experiences are—since she can only observe and not intervene to save the three victims—the present is also disturbing. She repeatedly encounters her former attackers: Lowell, who seems reformed and is becoming increasingly attractive to Natalie, and the intimidating pair of scarily out-of-control Jason

The island dialect gives the story a tangible dimension; the smell of sea breeze is almost palpable.

DREAMS BEYOND THE SHORE

and unstable Grace, who is devoted to, or perhaps controlled by, him. French neatly manages the complications of three intertwined storylines: Natalie's emerging peril in the present, the terrifyingly depicted past inhabited by the three well-realized victims, and the third thread of what actually happened on the day Peter died.

Chilling and suspenseful, this paranormal thriller with a touch of romance will keep readers on the edges of their seats. (*Paranormal thriller. 12-18*) (*This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.*)



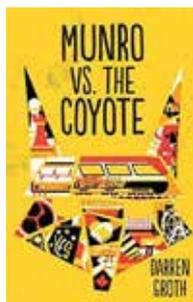
DREAMS BEYOND THE SHORE

Gibson, Tamika
Blouse & Skirt Books (190 pp.)
\$12.99 paper | \$12.99 e-book
Sep. 15, 2017
978-976-8267-06-1
978-976-8267-07-8 e-book

Chelsea Marchand does not care about politics, law, or Oxford University.

This is an unfortunate circumstance, given that her father, Dr. Peter Marchand, is running for prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago and would like her to study law in England. Chelsea wants to pursue her dreams at the Writers' Corner at Georgetown University, not shuffle along her father's campaign trail. A chance meeting while waiting for test-prep classes at the Clark Centre introduces Chelsea to Kyron Grant, a handsome student footballer. Kyron understands living with a difficult father. Although his father is not physically present, Grafton Walters' influence fills every space in his home. The two cultivate a friendship, on the edge of something more, when the sudden, gruesome murder of one of Walters' employees uncovers family secrets for both Kyron and Chelsea. The future of their relationship unclear, Kyron and Chelsea search for an escape from the sins of their fathers. Gibson's debut effortlessly captivates. The characters saunter in and out of focus like a well-choreographed dance, Chelsea and Kyron alternating narration in vivid, distinctive voices. None take up more time than necessary, and all shine in their moments. Scenes between Kyron and his father are especially compelling. The island dialect gives the story a tangible dimension; the smell of sea breeze is almost palpable.

A beautiful, gently woven reflection on family, choices, and the power of perception. (*Fiction. 13-17*)



MUNRO VS. THE COYOTE

Groth, Darren
Orca (288 pp.)
\$19.95 | \$19.95 e-book | Oct. 17, 2017
978-1-4598-1409-7
978-1-4598-1411-0 e-book

Groth, a former special education teacher, introduces readers to a sympathetic main character who is trying to move through trauma and to a sparkling supporting cast that gives voice to

disability.

White Canadian 16-year-old Munro Maddux is trying to free himself from the Coyote, which is what he calls the thoughts in his head that constantly remind him of all his failings—in particular, how he failed to save his 13-year-old sister, Evie, who had Down syndrome and a heart defect, from dying the year before. A student exchange program to Australia is just the ticket toward healing, and Munro hopes that when he returns home he'll have left the Coyote Down Under. As he gets to know his host family and starts volunteering at Fair Go Community Village, connecting with its special needs residents, his plan seems to be working. But is the Coyote gone or just prowling? Readers may find Munro's journey and character development awfully linear, but his first-person narration is strong (both sassy and heart-wrenching) and the thoughtful handling of trauma and difference, both genuine and relevant.

Characters that will steal readers' hearts with their humor and resilience, smooth writing, and a satisfying and hopeful ending make this a book to enjoy both emotionally and critically. (*Fiction. 12-18*) (*This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.*)



THAT INEVITABLE VICTORIAN THING

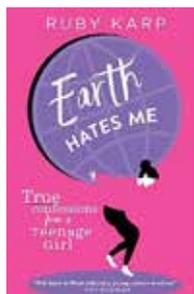
Johnston, E.K.
Dutton (336 pp.)
\$17.99 | \$11.50 paper | \$11.50 e-book
Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-101-99497-9
978-0-7352-3159-7 paper
978-1-101-99457-3 e-book

Three young adults negotiate sexuality in a science-fiction Ontario where the British Empire took a decidedly different path.

Helena, shy and practical, looks forward to marrying her best friend, August, after what she hopes will be a quiet, small-town debut. A surprise invitation to Toronto, where the queen herself will be visiting, upsets all her plans. Margaret, a visitor to Toronto from England, forms a bosom friendship with Helena but doesn't reveal her secret: Margaret is Her Royal Highness, the Princess Victoria-Margaret, disguised heir to the throne. Helena has her own secret. When she enters her DNA into the Computer at the core of the Empire's religion, it records her

as having XY chromosomes. In an empire that believes genetic compatibility is holy and the Computer's inspired by God, will being an intersex woman destroy Helena's chance of happiness? Convenient coincidences and the teens' own thoughtful choices come to the rescue. The worldbuilding, though clunky, fascinates. In this alternate history, Queen Victoria married her children outside of Europe's royal houses. Brown-skinned Margaret, with kinky hair and epicanthic folds, has genes from "Hong Kong, Iraq, Zululand, and more besides." This queer-friendly Canada is multiethnic (August is of Hong Kong, Chinese, and Irish heritage, while Helena is predominantly white); culturally, despite hijabs, kippon, and salwar kameez, it's overwhelmingly Anglo-Canadian. Despite this bustle, the tale itself is a lovely, quiet coming-of-age.

A thoughtful exploration of class consciousness, genetics, and politics that doesn't lose track of the human story. (author's note) (*Science fiction. 14-adult*)



EARTH HATES ME
True Confessions From a Teenage Girl

Karp, Ruby
Running Press (288 pp.)
\$15.99 | \$9.99 e-book | Oct. 3, 2017
978-0-7624-6260-5
978-0-7624-6261-2 e-book

Advice for teens is gleaned from the life of 16-year-old UCB Comedy performer Karp in this memoir.

Beginning with a Q-and-A session between Karp and *Broad City* actress Ilana Glazer, this offering goes on to discuss everything from white, Jewish Karp's embrace of humor and feminism to her explanation of FOMO, or "fear of missing out," which she feels is experienced by young people in regard to their use of social media and the difficulty many have in disconnecting themselves from it. She also parses bullying, pointing out that it's rarely as clear-cut as is portrayed in popular culture, and frankly discusses sex education, advocating for the inclusion of much more instruction around rape. She displays a self-aware understanding both that some of her worries are problems of privilege but also that they are unfairly dismissed by some adults as teen angst. Teens will appreciate and easily identify with this multilayered experience of cultural power even if at times the writing feels a bit clichéd, as when she exhorts her readers to "Live your life the way you want to be living it" or to "Be the change." Yet overwhelmingly, Karp's conversational narrative is positive, direct, and embedded with a confidence that will appeal to like-minded youth.

A thoughtful blend of encouragement and entertaining personal stories. (*Memoir. 12-18*)



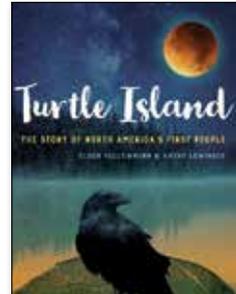
THE RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR MEDIATING MYTHS & MAGIC

Lukens, F.T.
Duet (298 pp.)
\$16.99 paper | \$6.99 e-book
Sep. 7, 2017
978-1-945053-24-5
978-1-945053-38-2 e-book

Assisting an intermediary between the worlds of myths and humans is easier than asking the football hero to homecoming.

High school senior Bridger Whitt is determined to escape humdrum Midden, Michigan, so he can finally be himself (read: determine his hetero-, homo-, or bisexuality far from familiar faces). When he is accepted by a Florida college, he realizes the only way he and his single mom can afford it is to fatten his co-fers via part-time employment. Answering a very peculiar ad, he's hired to assist the terminally tackily attired Pavel Chudinov,

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978-1-55451-944-6 hc



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978-1-55451-958-3 hc

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**SPOOKY, SPIRITED, & SOULFUL:
BEST OF FALL YA HORROR,
THRILLER, & FANTASY**



RINGER
by Lauren Oliver

**GIRLS MADE OF SNOW
AND GLASS**
by Melissa Bashardoust

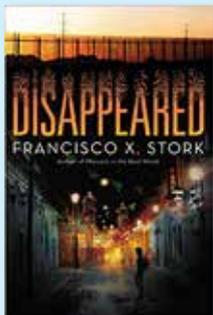
**THE DOOR TO
JANUARY**
by Gillian French

WARCROSS
by Marie Lu

SPLICED
by Jon McGoran

MASK OF SHADOWS
by Linsey Miller

SHADOWHOUSE FALL
by Daniel José Older



DISAPPEARED
by Francisco X. Stork

**WHEN I CAST YOUR
SHADOW**
by Sarah Porter

BROKEN CIRCLE
by J.L. Powers &
M.A. Powers

THE DIRE KING
by William Ritter

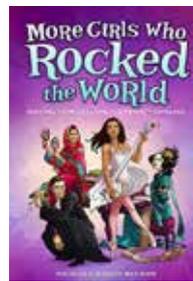
**AN ENCHANTMENT OF
RAVENS**
by Margaret Rogerson

STRANGE FIRE
by Tommy Wallach

ODD & TRUE
by Cat Winters

who is charged with ensuring humans don't mix with cryptids. And the sudden abnormal influx of creatures in Midden (troll, unicorn, mermaids, etc.) has them burning the mythic candle at both ends. As if dodging toxic troll spit while maintaining his GPA wasn't challenge enough, Bridger must also contend with his burgeoning feelings for dreamy Puerto Rican neighbor Leo, who just might also be into him. Bridger, gal pal Astrid, and Pavel are white. The strength of the content, pace, and character cast outweigh intermittent and repetitive pronouncement of clichés or reminders of a character's weirdness. Bridger's inner turmoil over his sexuality is delivered as confusion not self-deprecation, and on the periphery, he gradually realizes that he's making a bigger deal out of it than any of his contemporaries.

Creatures, comedy, and coming out: check. (*Fantasy. 13-17*)



**MORE GIRLS WHO ROCKED
THE WORLD**
*Heroines from Ada Lovelace
to Misty Copeland*

McCann, Michelle Roehm
Beyond Words/Aladdin (320 pp.)
\$21.99 | \$11.99 paper | \$8.99 e-book
Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-58270-640-5
978-1-58270-641-2 paper
978-1-4814-9688-9 e-book

Like its predecessor, *Girls Who Rocked the World* (2012), this appealing compendium features brief profiles of women from around the world who achieved greatness at a young age.

The 45 short biographies of such well- and lesser-known women as Queen Esther of Persia, Jazz Jennings, Chloe Kim, and Mary Lou Williams are a disparate group, save that all their subjects made their marks on the world before the age of 20. Written in an engaging, conversational style, many profiles are followed with comments from girls and young women who explain their own plans for rocking the world. There are minor quibbles with some of McCann's wording, as when she identifies Ada Byron Lovelace as a "computer programmer," a bit of an oversimplification. Emma Watson is identified as an actress and activist, but only one paragraph explains her work as a United Nations goodwill ambassador. One perplexing inclusion is Naya Nuki, identified as a "survivor." A Shoshone girl, Nuki was captured along with Sacagawea when both were 11 in a Hidatsa raid and forced to march over 1,000 miles from their home. Other than Lewis' diary entry describing her reunion with Sacagawea during the Lewis and Clark expedition, there is no other record, so the profile is mostly speculative. These minor speed bumps don't diminish the pleasure and inspiration to be had in the whole. There are suggestions for further reading on all the subjects.

A diverse compendium that will entertain, inform, and inspire. (*bibliography, websites, endnotes*) (*Nonfiction. 10-14*)

Part mystery, part love story, this evocative, lush novel is a delight for sophisticated readers.

WILD BEAUTY



WILD BEAUTY

McLemore, Anna-Marie
 Feiweil & Friends (352 pp.)
 \$17.99 | \$9.99 e-book | Oct. 3, 2017
 978-1-250-12455-5
 978-1-250-12456-2 e-book



Estrella and her four cousins have been told anyone they love too deeply will vanish, so what happens if they all fall for the same young woman?

McLemore's latest original fairy tale follows the Nomeolvides ("Forget-Me-Not") women, of implied Mexican descent: for generations, they've tended the gardens of La Pradera, a beautiful property set in an undisclosed location (and time period). Although they possess inexplicable abilities to grow flowers with their bare hands, Estrella, Azalea, Calla, Dalia, and Gloria pay a price for their magic. Their elders have warned them that if they love someone, he will eventually disappear. They must also never permanently leave the grounds, or

they will die. When the cousins realize, to shared horror, that they are all in love with wonderful Bay Briar—heiress to La Pradera—they pray for her safety by scattering treasured offerings in the magical garden's dark pond. The next day, Estrella discovers the garden has given something back: a mysterious Spanish-speaking young man, in century-old clothes, with nothing more than a half-ripped label spelling "FEL." The women speculate that Fel, who can remember nothing about his past, is one of their predecessor's missing lovers. As Estrella bonds with the sensitive and attentive Fel, she begins to question the rules governing the Nomeolvides women's lives, the legendary curse keeping them tied to this garden, and the nature of love. A garden is the perfect setting for McLemore's plush, sensuous prose, which unspools the story with delicious languor.

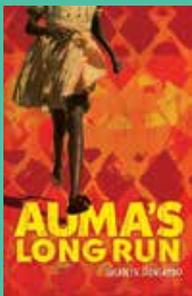
Part mystery, part love story, this evocative, lush novel is a delight for sophisticated readers. (*Magical realism. 13-adult*)

DAZZLE READERS WITH STORIES OF
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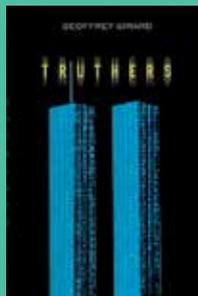
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 illus. Victo Ngai
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 ★ School Library Journal



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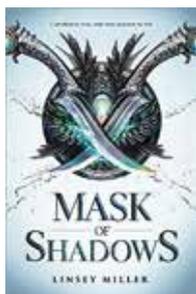


www.lernerbooks.com



What makes these scenes rise above the mundane is Ness' ability to drop highly charged emotion bombs in the least expected places.

RELEASE



MASK OF SHADOWS

Miller, Lindsey

Sourcebooks Fire (352 pp.)

\$17.99 | Sep. 5, 2017

978-1-4926-4749-2

A scarred street thief competes to become an elite assassin.

Sal comes from Nacea, a country and people obliterated in a war between other countries. After years living under an unsavory gang leader, robbing and fighting just to survive, Sal—who's genderfluid and signals by that day's clothing whether they want to be called "he," "she," or "they"—sees the perfect chance to get revenge for Nacea. The Queen's Left Hand, which is "her collection of assassins and personal guards named for the rings she w[ears]—Ruby, Emerald, Opal, and Amethyst," needs a new Opal. As Opal, Sal would have access to the wealthy lords responsible for the Nacean genocide. The trials for the new Opal unfold bloodily, with three rules: kill the competition, don't harm anyone else, and don't get caught. Both Auditioners and the Left Hand wear masks throughout. Sal has brown skin, trauma, a set of skills, and a heady crush on a noblewoman. Political exposition reads messily, and some microflaws in the logic feel sloppy (for example, Sal bathes and eats in their room *before* nailing the door shut against the other murderous aspirants). However, the killing games and court intrigue—which may or may not involve magical specters previously used for torturing and killing Naceans—are breathless and terrifying.

Gory, well-plotted, suspenseful on every page, and poised for the sequel. (*Fantasy. 14-adult*) (This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.)



RELEASE

Ness, Patrick

HarperTeen (288 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$14.39 e-book | Sep. 19, 2017

978-0-06-240319-3

978-0-06-240321-6 e-book

An extraordinary, ordinary day in the life of Adam Thorn.

Seventeen-year-old, tall, white, blond, evangelical-raised Adam begins his day buying chrysanthemums for his overbearing, guilt-inducing mother. From the get-go, some readers may recognize one of many deliberate, well-placed Virginia Woolf references throughout the narrative. He goes on a long run. He has lunch with his bright, smart-alecky best friend, Angela Darlington, who was born in Korea and adopted by her white parents. In a particularly uncomfortable scene, he is sexually harassed by his boss. He also partakes in a 30-plus-page act of intimacy that leaves little to the imagination with his new boyfriend, Linus, also white. The scene is fairly educational, but it's also full of laughter, true intimacy, discomfort, mixed

feelings, and more that elevate it far beyond pure physicality. Meanwhile, in parallel vignettes, the ghost of a murdered teenage girl armed with more Woolf references eerily haunts the streets and lake where she was killed. Her story permeates the entire narrative and adds a supernatural, creepy context to the otherwise small town. What makes these scenes rise above the mundane is Ness' ability to drop highly charged emotion bombs in the least expected places and infuse each of them with poignant memories, sharp emotions, and beautifully rendered prose so moving it may cause readers to pause and reflect.

Literary, illuminating, and stunningly told. (*Fiction. 14-18*) (This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.)



SHADOWHOUSE FALL

Older, Daniel José

Levine/Scholastic (304 pp.)

\$18.99 | \$18.99 e-book | Sep. 12, 2017

978-0-545-95282-8

978-0-545-95283-5 e-book

Series: Shadowshaper Cypher, 2

Sierra and the shadowshapers are back in this sequel to *Shadowshaper* (2015).

A few months after the close of *Shadowshaper*, Nuyorican Sierra Santiago has grown in her shadowshaping powers but feels overwhelmed by her new role as Lucera, head of Shadowhouse. One night in Prospect Park, a girl from school attempts to give Sierra a creepy playing card from the Deck of Worlds, warning Sierra that the Deck is in play again and the Sorrows (who tried to wipe out the shadowshapers in the last book) are out to get them once more. Meanwhile, Older paints a compelling picture of contemporary life for black and brown teens in cities: Afro-Latinx Sierra and her friends deal with police harassment and brutality, both on the streets of Bed-Stuy and at school, themes that feel especially timely and relevant. When Sierra learns the Sorrows want her to join them in order to complete their magic, she must take a dangerous chance in order to protect herself and those that she loves. Older excels at crafting teen dialogue that feels authentic, and props to everyone involved for not othering the Spanish language. This second volume features a tighter plot and smoother pacing than the first, and the ending will leave readers eagerly awaiting the further adventures of Sierra and her friends.

Lit. (*Urban fantasy. 14-adult*) (This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.)



RINGER

Oliver, Lauren
 Harper/HarperCollins (528 pp.)
 \$19.99 | \$11.99 e-book | Oct. 3, 2017
 978-0-06-239419-4
 978-0-06-239421-7 e-book

It has been three weeks since the Haven Institute fell, but it still has subjects Lyra and Gemma in its insidious grip.

Lyra's time is running out; as a result of Haven's research, she's terminally ill. She and Caelum set out to locate Dr. Saperstein, the man who gave her the disease. Failing that, they search for Lyra's old friend, Dr. O'Donnell—but she seems to be hiding something. Alone but for Caelum, Lyra doesn't know whom to trust. Meanwhile, Gemma's powerful father arranged Lyra and Caelum's new living situation, promising Gemma he wouldn't give them up. When he breaks that promise, Gemma and Pete go to try to warn them. On their

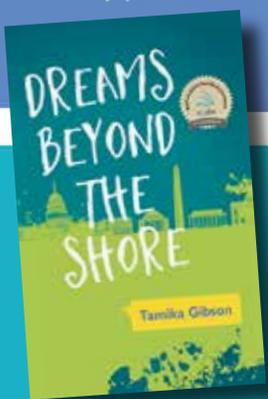
return home, they're believed to be Lyra and Caelum and are kidnapped, taken to a decommissioned airplane hangar where surviving replicas have been packed in by the hundreds. Gemma and Pete will have to find a way to survive here until they're rescued. Lyra, Gemma, and Pete are white, Caelum has dark skin, and a number of important minor characters are described as having dark, black, or brown skin. As with *Replica* (2016), Gemma's and Lyra's interlocking stories are told separately, bound together in a *dos-à-dos* volume that gives readers control over how to go forward. The third-person narration plunges along at a positively addicting pace.

Speculative fiction at its core, Oliver's novel is also a reflection on the nature of humanity as explored through the dualities of life/death, autonomy/ownership, truth/lies, and good/evil. (*Science fiction. 15-adult*) (*This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.*)

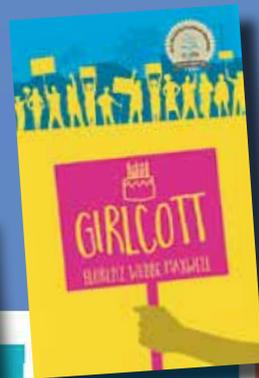
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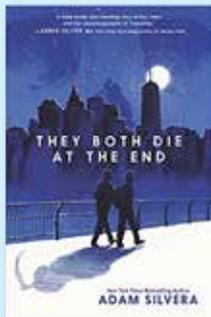
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CHALLENGING -ISMS: YA NOVELS THAT SPEAK TO SOCIAL ISSUES



THEY BOTH DIE AT THE END
by Adam Silvera

KALEIDOSCOPE SONG
by Fox Benwell

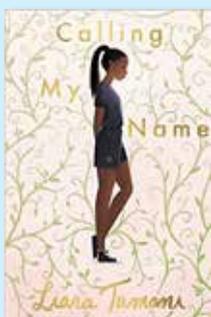
GLOW
by Megan E. Bryant

MUNRO VS. THE COYOTE
by Darren Groth

THAT INEVITABLE VICTORIAN THING
by E.K. Johnston

WILD BEAUTY
by Anna-Marie McLemore

I AM ALFONSO JONES
by Tony Medina



CALLING MY NAME
by Liara Tamani

RELEASE
by Patrick Ness

THE NOWHERE GIRLS
by Amy Reed

LONG WAY DOWN
by Jason Reynolds

THE AGONY OF BUN O'KEEFE
by Heather Smith

DEAR MARTIN
by Nic Stone



WHEN I CAST YOUR SHADOW
Porter, Sarah
Tor Teen (384 pp.)
\$17.99 | \$9.99 e-book | Sep. 12, 2017
978-0-7653-8056-2
978-0-7653-9756-0 e-book

Porter (*Vassa in the Night*, 2016, etc.) presents a ghost story in which the dead wait on the far side of dreams.

Dashiell, a white boy with irresistible gray eyes and strawberry-gold hair, is two months dead. His younger siblings, 16-year-old twins Ruby and Everett, also white but not nearly so beautiful, know this, but they're also starting to realize that he isn't actually gone. He's come back for them. Ruby would do anything to get her beloved older brother back, but Everett isn't quite sure where he stands; both must examine whether Dashiell is a danger to them—and perhaps always was. They also have to decide who they are in relation to the force he's forever been in their lives. The story's uneven, with prose that sometimes moves from poetic to overwrought and characters that vacillate between compelling and absurd. Nevertheless, it delivers a deliciously disturbing and engaging portrait of the complexities of familial love and takes readers to the boundaries between innocence and corruption, self-preservation and sacrifice, the dreaming and the dead. Alternating first-person chapters (including all three siblings and the voice of the villain, among others) aid in portraying the nuances at play.

A haunting tale of possession that explores the ghostly landscape of dreams and nightmares—but more importantly, the particular dynamics among siblings, both oppressive and redemptive. (*Horror*. 14-18) (*This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.*)



BROKEN CIRCLE
Powers, J.L. & Powers, M.A.
Akashic (320 pp.)
\$14.95 paper | \$14.95 e-book
Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-61775-580-4
978-1-61775-595-8 e-book

Adam Jones is a 15-year-old white boy who just wants to be “normal,” but his life is anything but.

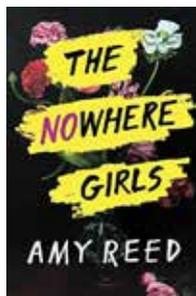
Unable to go to sleep for dread of monsters that stalk his dreams, Adam's insomnia leads to a breakdown at school. At home, his mother's been dead for years, and his eccentric father is often absent. Add his paranoid grandfather, who is convinced the family's at risk. But is it really paranoia? Adam is forced to confront all this when a strange man with a broken-circle medallion shows up, demanding that Adam's father get Adam in line with his “True Destiny.” This destiny involves a special boarding school, where things become stranger and scarier. But Adam finally begins

The structure of the novel heightens the tension, as each stop of the elevator brings a new challenge until the narrative arrives at its taut, ambiguous ending.

LONG WAY DOWN

to understand some things, and somehow he feels he belongs with this group of strangers, due in large part to their common roles as shepherds for souls of the newly dead. All is not bliss in his new life though, as it seems his new classmates are from competing families who seek to control lucrative territories in North America. A slowly unwinding tale about life and death and the in-between, this sibling collaboration may initially frustrate readers with its withholding of answers, but the Powers' worldbuilding and writing will keep them hooked. They will find themselves questioning what is fact and what is fiction and cheering Adam on as he journeys in this new, strange world.

A gripping, philosophical paranormal thriller. (*Fantasy*. 12-16) (This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.)



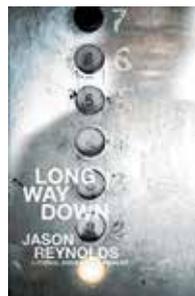
THE NOWHERE GIRLS

Reed, Amy
Simon Pulse/Simon & Schuster (416 pp.)
\$17.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017
978-1-4814-8173-1
978-1-4814-8175-5 e-book

Enraged by unpunished sexual assaults and the unchallenged rape culture at their high school, three new friends resolve to take action.

White high schooler Grace Salter has just moved to Prescott, Oregon, and finds messages of pain and anguish scratched into the walls of her new room. Overtaken by curiosity, she does the unthinkable for a new girl at school and talks to two girls during lunch: Rosina Suarez, a Mexican-American queer punk rocker, and Erin DeLillo, a white girl with Asperger's who admires the android Data from Star Trek. They both explain that the former occupant of Grace's room was effectively run out of town after accusing three popular jocks, two of them current students, of gang-raping her at a party. Grace is incensed and, together with Rosina and Erin under the collective pseudonym the Nowhere Girls, rallies other girls in the school to rise up against misogyny, rapists, and the power structures that protect both. Reed's refusal to shy away from the entrenched realities of sexism as well as the oft-overlooked erasure of intersectionality within feminism yields a highly nuanced and self-reflective narrative that captures rape culture's ubiquitous harm without swerving into didactic, one-size-fits-all solutions or relying on false notions of homogenous young womanhood.

Scandal, justice, romance, sex positivity, subversive anti-sexism—just try to put it down. (*Fiction*. 13-17) (This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.)



LONG WAY DOWN

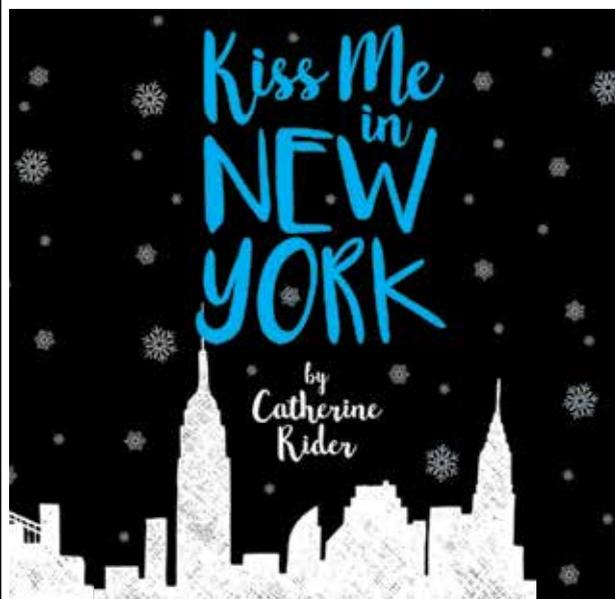
Reynolds, Jason
Caitlyn Dlouhy/Atheneum
(320 pp.)
\$17.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Oct. 17, 2017
978-1-4814-3825-4
978-1-4814-3827-8 e-book

After 15-year-old Will sees his older brother, Shawn, gunned down on the streets, he sets out to do the expected: the rules dictate no crying, no snitching,

and revenge.

Though the African-American teen has never held one, Will leaves his apartment with his brother's gun tucked in his waistband. As he travels down on the elevator, the door opens on certain floors, and Will is confronted with a different figure from his past, each a victim of gun violence, each important in his life. They also force Will to face the questions he has about his plan. As each "ghost" speaks, Will realizes how much of his own story

Can the city's magic mend two broken hearts?



"A sweetly paced and smartly wrought romance."

— Kirkus Reviews



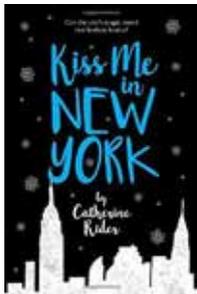
Jackaby is a delightful supernaturalist Sherlock, but Rook carries the story, narrating with dry wit, alliteration, and an appreciation for the absurd.

THE DIRE KING



has been unknown to him and how intricately woven they are. Told in free-verse poems, this is a raw, powerful, and emotional depiction of urban violence. The structure of the novel heightens the tension, as each stop of the elevator brings a new challenge until the narrative arrives at its taut, ambiguous ending. There is considerable symbolism, including the 15 bullets in the gun and the way the elevator rules parallel street rules. Reynolds masterfully weaves in textured glimpses of the supporting characters. Throughout, readers get a vivid picture of Will and the people in his life, all trying to cope with the circumstances of their environment while expressing the love, uncertainty, and hope that all humans share.

This astonishing book will generate much needed discussion. (*Verse fiction. 12-adult*) (This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.)



KISS ME IN NEW YORK

Rider, Catherine
KCP Loft/Kids Can (200 pp.)
\$16.99 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-77138-848-1

Two lovelorn teens connect on Christmas Eve.

A blizzard has struck New York City, grounding Charlotte's plane home to Britain. Charlotte is still getting over a rough breakup, and on a whim she purchases *Get Over Your Ex in Ten Easy Steps!* from the trashy airport gift shop. Before long Charlotte bumps into Anthony, who has just been dumped by his long-distance girlfriend, returning to the city for the holidays. The pair lick their wounds and unite to perform the 10 steps enumerated as they travel across the city. The author hangs smart character work and swooning romance upon this structure, teasing out the main characters' hang-ups and quirks while effectively fanning the flames of their romance. The book's pace is neither frantic nor too navel-gazey, with these well-rounded protagonists bouncing off a variety of tertiary characters that are less developed but move the plot forward at all times. Charlotte and Anthony, both white, aren't the most original pair, but there's a pleasant ease to their chemistry that will have readers rooting for them. The clichéd backdrop of "Christmas Eve in New York" doesn't overplay its twee possibilities. There's certainly a bit of magic in the city, but the grit of the real New York peaks out here and there.

A sweetly paced and smartly wrought romance. (*Fiction. 12-16*) (This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.)



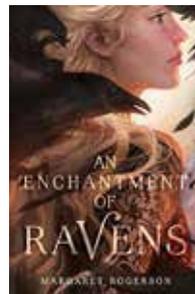
THE DIRE KING

Ritter, William
Algonquin (352 pp.)
\$17.95 | Aug. 22, 2017
978-1-61620-670-3
Series: Jackaby, 4

A paranormal private investigator and his clever companion make a last stand against the forces of chaos in this fourth and final book.

As an assistant to eccentric detective/seer R.F. Jackaby, Abigail Rook experiences magic, mysteries, and romance. A "lady of science and reason" who accepts the supernatural, Rook prizes her madcap American adventures over her comfortable yet confining British childhood, but she finds her new home threatened by war. As a wave of racist attacks turns their whimsical house at 926 Augur Ln. into a cryptozoological asylum, Jackaby, Rook, and resident ghost Jenny Cavanaugh take a new case and uncover a bigger conspiracy. Hunting mythical talismans, the trio discovers the veil between the mundane world and that of the Annwyn (fae) weakening and the Unseelie armies of the Dire King gathering. Jackaby is a delightful supernaturalist Sherlock, but Rook carries the story, narrating with dry wit, alliteration, and an appreciation for the absurd; faced with war, bureaucrats, and a diabolical life-sucking machine, Rook frets about a potential proposal from her Om Caini (lycanthropic) swain, Charlie. Ritter sets his story in a geographically nonspecific, slightly steampunk 1890s New England port city. It's helmed by a trio of white protagonists but offers a pointed and timely message about pluralism and the value of bridges over barriers.

A humorous, energetic, action-packed, and magical conclusion. (*Fantasy. 12-adult*) (This review originally appeared in the 06/15/17 issue.)



AN ENCHANTMENT OF RAVENS

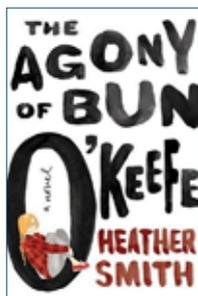
Rogerson, Margaret
McElderry (304 pp.)
\$17.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Sep. 26, 2017
978-1-4814-9758-9
978-1-4814-9760-2 e-book

A practical painter meets a tortured fairy prince, and layers upon layers of magic and intrigue engulf them in this debut.

In Regency-esque Whimsy, where time seems suspended and it's always summer, humans practice Craft (making) for the pleasure of the capricious fair folk. Fair-skinned human Isobel, 17, is a portrait painter of unsurpassed talent who has mastered the art of wrangling practical enchantments from her clients. When she paints sorrow into the eyes of the autumn prince, she becomes embroiled in a complex web of fairy-court intrigues. Golden-brown, beautiful Rook (autumn and summer folk are

darker skinned; spring and winter lighter) kidnaps her in retaliation; in their uncomfortable flight they fall for each other, dooming themselves to death. The occasionally busy first-person narration blossoms with unexpected humor (appealing-but-alien Rook consider tears “leaks”); rich, detailed descriptions of the beautiful but dangerous world of the folk will seduce readers, while the unexpectedly action-filled flight (there’s a wild hunt, a ball, magic battles, and extreme painting) keeps the pages turning. Rogerson draws on fairy lore while changing myriad details to suit her story, and in Isobel she provides a strong, confident heroine who may lose her heart but never her head.

No glamour is needed to make readers fall for this one. (*Fantasy. 12-adult*) (This review originally appeared in the 07/01/17 issue.)



THE AGONY OF BUN O'KEEFE

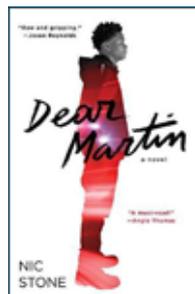
Smith, Heather
Penguin Teen (224 pp.)
\$16.99 | \$8.99 paper | \$8.99 audiobook
Sep. 5, 2017
978-0-14-319865-9
978-0-14-319867-3 paper
978-0-14-319866-6 audiobook



In 1986, a Newfoundland teen learns that family isn't always the one you're born into—sometimes it's the one that takes you in.

Bun O'Keefe has grown up isolated in a run-down house with her mother, a 300-pound hoarder, who has deprived Bun of love, care, conversation, and education. When Bun's mother tells her to get out, the literal-minded 14-year-old white girl goes to St. John's, where she meets a close-knit group of disillusioned young adults. There's Busker Boy, a Sheshatshiu Innu street performer; Big Eyes, a lapsed Catholic, white good girl who can't bring herself to swear; Chef, a talented, white culinary student; and Cher/Chris, a white drag queen. The found family of four takes Bun in, feeds and clothes her, and teaches her what it means to be loved and supported. Although Bun is 14, she possesses the endearing naïveté and honesty of a child, but her first-person narration isn't sappy or immature. She's self-taught, courtesy of the many books and video tapes her mother has brought home, and her point of reference for the world is the 1978 documentary *The Agony of Jimmy Quinlan*, about an alcoholic on the streets of Montreal. Smith's talent lies in deftly handling numerous heavy topics: suicide, sexual abuse, neglect, AIDS, homophobia, transphobia, and racism, without making them feel forced or gratuitous—they're facts of life.

Bun O'Keefe will settle comfortably at home in readers' hearts. (*Historical fiction. 13-17*) (This review originally appeared in the 07/01/17 issue.)



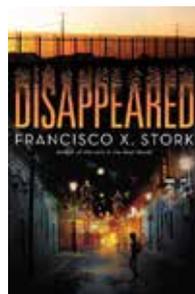
DEAR MARTIN

Stone, Nic
Crown (224 pp.)
\$17.99 | \$17.99 e-book | \$20.99 PLB
Oct. 17, 2017
978-1-101-93949-9
978-1-101-93951-2 e-book
978-1-101-93950-5 PLB

In this roller-coaster ride of a debut, the author summons the popular legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. to respond to the recent tragic violence befalling unarmed black men and boys.

Seventeen-year-old black high school senior Justyce McAllister, a full-scholarship student at the virtually all-white Braxelton Prep, is the focus. After a bloody run-in with the police when they take his good deed for malice, Justyce seeks meaning in a series of letters with his “homie” Dr. King. He writes, “I thought if I made sure to be an upstanding member of society, I’d be exempt from the stuff THOSE black guys deal with, you know?” While he’s ranked fourth in his graduating class and well-positioned for the Ivy League, Justyce is coming to terms with the fact that there’s not as much that separates him from “THOSE black guys” as he’d like to believe. Despite this, Stone seems to position Justyce and his best friend as the decidedly well-mannered black children who are deserving of readers’ sympathies. They are not those gangsters that can be found in Justyce’s neighborhood. There’s nuance to be found for sure, but not enough to upset the dominant narrative. What if they *were* the successful kids? While the novel intentionally leaves more questions than it attempts to answer, there are layers that still remain between the lines.

Though constrained, the work nevertheless stands apart in a literature that too often finds it hard to look hard truths in the face. Take interest and ask questions. (*Fiction. 14-18*)



DISAPPEARED

Stork, Francisco X.
Levine/Scholastic (336 pp.)
\$17.99 | \$17.99 e-book | Sep. 26, 2017
978-0-545-94447-2
978-0-545-94584-4 e-book



Sara Zapata and her brother, Emiliano, do their best to survive with their integrity intact while their beloved Juárez is overrun and endangered by a web of criminals that even involve the police and local government officials.

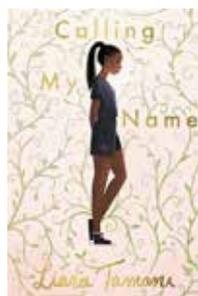
Sara is a journalist who writes about her best friend, Linda, the latest girl kidnapped by the cartels. The heartfelt story sends ripples through the community, and the paper receives grateful letters from the families of other kidnapped girls—and death threats warning her to drop her investigation. Meanwhile, Emiliano is prospering after his foray into petty thefts

Storytelling and the blur between truth and fiction are at the heart of this metafictional narrative.

ODD & TRUE

and subsequent capture ushered him under the wing of Brother Patricio, the leader of his explorer club, the Jiparis, and his soccer coach. Emiliano's a star soccer player and has started a side business selling some Jiparis' artisan crafts to shop owners. Despite this, he's still too poor to date his crush, Perla Rubi, so when he's tempted into the same web of criminals that are coming after Sara and have taken Linda, the pull of wealth and a future with Perla Rubi is stronger than his need to do the right thing. Stork deftly writes criminals who aren't monsters but men who do monstrous things, and while his understanding of Emiliano's coming-of-age is fully engaging, he really impresses with his evocation of Sara's need to navigate the advances of men she knows and doesn't know and the powerful women equally dangerous to her.

A tense thriller elevated by Stork's nuanced writing and empathy for every character, including the villains—superb. (Thriller. 12-adult) (This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.)



CALLING MY NAME

Tamani, Liara

Greenwillow (320 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$11.99 e-book | Oct. 24, 2017

978-0-06-265686-5

978-0-06-265688-9 e-book

An African-American girl living in Houston, Texas, with her close-knit family—parents, younger sister, and older brother—grows from flat-chested pre-adolescent to a young woman about to

go to college.

Readers meet her on a Sunday morning when she uses the excuse of an upset stomach to stay home from church—and loves it. Brought up in a strictly religious household, Taja begins to question the existence of God and the way of life that she has been taught to lead. When she falls in love for the first time, her inner conflict strains further, and Taja is faced with the biggest challenge of her life thus far. Taja deals with the insecurities that most young people feel regarding identity, love, and fitting in. Her relationship to her spirituality as well as her negotiations with self-discovery, acceptance, and burgeoning sexuality are also explored. With Taja as narrator, readers see her life juxtaposed against her older brother's, who is given the freedom traditionally afforded boys and not girls, not just in church, but also by society in general. It's a slow-build narrative coated in ornate language that may initially distract readers but pays off in the end, bringing them close to the heart of Taja and the higher power she yearns toward.

Stylish prose brings home quiet depths. (Fiction. 14-18) (This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.)



STRANGE FIRE

Wallach, Tommy

Simon & Schuster (400 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Oct. 3, 2017

978-1-4814-6838-1

978-1-4814-6840-4 e-book

Series: Anchor & Sophia, 1

Religion and science clash in a post-apocalyptic adventure.

Brothers Clive, 18, and Clover, 16, accompany their father, a traveling minister for the Descendancy, to the hinterlands. An encounter with people hiding “the anathema”—technology—leads to tragedy and death. What's left of the band travels home to the Anchor. Clover returns to his studies in the Library, the repository of all of humankind's knowledge from before the great Conflagration. Clive joins the church's Protectorate in a holy war against a scientific academy called Sophia and a tribe of women warriors. Wallach builds a plausible world with richly evocative descriptions of action: “And now the two silhouettes reappeared....One of them unfurled to human height and began hurtling pell-mell for the pumphouse, like an angry piece of night.” But while individual scenes and characters come to life in beautiful writing that will send some readers to the dictionary (“She escaped into the fresh night air, into the tranquil chaos of the sylvan biome: arrhythmic clicking of crickets, plangent hoots of owls”), the real challenge of this series opener is its structure of multiple storylines. The rather thin main plot is likely to be expanded in future volumes, but here it's framed by a tantalizingly brief prologue, interlude, and epilogue, each with its own cast of characters. There are few indications as to the racial and ethnic makeup of this future American West save the occasional Spanish name sprinkled among the mostly English ones.

A provocative novel of a society riven by subterfuge and zealotry. (Science fiction. 14-adult) (This review originally appeared in the 08/01/17 issue.)



ODD & TRUE

Winters, Cat

Amulet/Abrams (368 pp.)

\$17.99 | Sep. 12, 2017

978-1-4197-2310-0

A tale of two sisters unfolds in Winters' (*The Steep and Thorny Way*, 2016, etc.) latest historical offering of monsters, magic, and family.

Storytelling and the blur between truth and fiction are at the heart of this metafictional narrative as sisters Trudchen “Tru” and Odette “Od” Grey each tell parts of their personal and family histories. In 1909, 15-year-old Tru, rendered pragmatic by life on an Oregon farm with a polio-related and painful disability, no longer believes her sister's many fantastical tales of their mother's

adventures as a monster hunter. She is adamant that their family (and herself especially) is nothing but ordinary, but no sooner has Tru set aside fanciful hearth magic and fears of the supernatural than Od suddenly appears to whisk her away across the country to hunt down monsters. Od's part of the story, on the other hand, begins 15 years earlier as she recounts a fraught family legacy of loss, pain, and perseverance and of the "real-life monsters" that stalk the stories of her mother's and her own lives. As the sisters cautiously confront the legendary Leeds Devil, a demonic beast attacking New Jersey and nearby states in 1909, storytelling becomes both a weapon and a lens through which they come to see and better understand their family and themselves.

Winters has woven an intricate and innovative pattern of structure, genre, and history that cannot fail to capture readers' imaginations. (*Historical fiction. 14-adult*) (*This review originally appeared in the 07/15/17 issue.*)

FICTION



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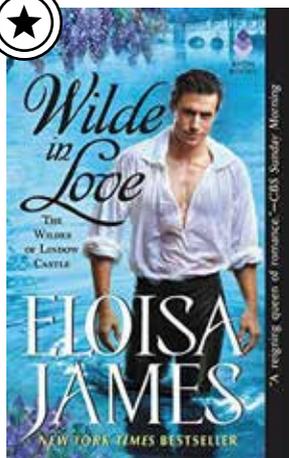
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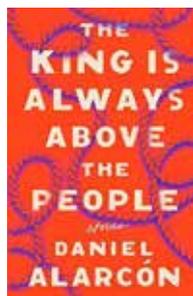
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WILDE IN LOVE
James, Eloisa
 Avon (384 pp.) \$7.99
 paper | Oct. 31, 2017
 978-0-06-238947-3



THE KING IS ALWAYS ABOVE THE PEOPLE

Alarcón, Daniel
 Riverhead (256 pp.)
 \$27.00 | Oct. 31, 2017
 978-1-59463-172-6

A clutch of well-turned stories filled with characters concerned with the limits of their personalities.

“The Ballad of Rocky Rontal,” a brief, early story in Alarcón’s *(City of Clowns, 2015, etc.)* second collection, turns on a question that recurs throughout the book: what circumstances make us who we are, and how much can we change? Rocky grows up in an abusive home and murders a man as an adult, but after 32 years in prison he returns to a “world that’s disappointingly familiar,” and Alarcón is deliberately vague about how much he is (or can be) rehabilitated. Similarly, “República and Grau” turns on a 10-year-old boy who’s put to work by his father to help a blind man beg on the streets, playing with the question of how much looking like a beggar actually makes him one. And in the closing “The Auroras,” a man takes a one-year leave from his university job and stumbles into a relationship with a married woman; after lying about being a doctor, a host of other questions rises up about what he can make himself into (a violent person, for one), culminating in a twist ending that shows how liberating your sense of self can be a kind of entrapment. The tone throughout the stories is flat and nonjudgmental, though sometimes you can sense a smirk in Alarcón’s prose about the predicaments: in “The Bridge” a blind couple falls “steadily, lovingly, to [their] death[s]” off a bridge broken in an accident, and a man pretending to be his brother in “The Provincials” takes a detour into the format of a comic play. But the overall message is that we mess with our personalities at our peril.

A smart and understated collection that puts some new twists on old-fashioned identity crises.



IN THE MIDST OF WINTER

Allende, Isabel
 Translated by Caistor, Nick &
 Hopkinson, Amanda
 Atria (304 pp.)
 \$28.00 | Oct. 31, 2017
 978-1-5011-7813-9

Thrown together by a Brooklyn blizzard, two NYU professors and a Guatemalan nanny find themselves with a body to dispose of.

“Blessed with the stoic character of her people, accustomed as they are to earthquakes, floods, occasional tsunamis, and political cataclysm,” 61 year-old Chilean academic Lucia Maraz is nonetheless a bit freaked out by a snowstorm so severe that it’s reported on television “in the solemn tone usually reserved for news about terrorism in far-off countries.” Her landlord and boss, the tightly wound Richard Bowmaster, lives right upstairs with his four cats, but he rebuffs her offer of soup and company. Too bad: she might have a crush on him. Enter Evelyn Ortega, a diminutive young woman from Guatemala Richard meets when he skids into her Lexus on the iced-over streets. Evelyn’s hysterical reaction to the fender bender seems crazily out of proportion when she shows up on his doorstep that night, and he has Lucia come up to help him understand why she’s so upset. The Lexus, it turns out, belongs to her volatile, violent employer... and there’s a corpse in the now-unlatchable trunk. Once Lucia gradually pieces together Evelyn’s story—she was smuggled north by a coyote after barely surviving gang violence that killed both of her siblings—the two professors decide to help her, and the plan they come up with is straight out of a *telenovela*. While that’s getting underway, Allende (*The Japanese Lover*, 2015, etc.) fills in the dark and complicated histories of Richard and Lucia, who also have suffered defining losses. The horrors of Evelyn’s past have left her all but mute; Richard is a complete nervous wreck; Lucia fears there is no greater love coming her way than that of her Chihuahua, Marcelo.

This winter’s tale has something to melt each frozen heart.



MIS(H)ADRA

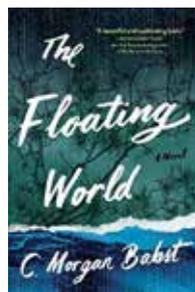
Ata, Iasmin Omar
 Illus. by the author
 Gallery Books/Simon & Schuster
 (272 pp.)
 \$25.00 | Oct. 3, 2017
 978-1-5011-6210-7

Artist, illustrator, and game designer Ata presents the story of a college student struggling with epilepsy while trying to live a normal life.

It’s been five years since the first seizure, and life isn’t getting any easier for Isaac. His frazzled, fragile state has him missing school while classmates spread rumors that he’s on drugs.

In fact, he *is* on drugs—pills to battle his epilepsy. Isaac is painfully aware of his illness and its triggers (lack of sleep, intense physical and emotional stress, and even anxiety about epilepsy), but unfortunately, most of the people around him (roommates, teachers, doctors, family) underplay the severity of his condition. Frustrated by the limitations his illness imposes on him, Isaac pushes himself to enjoy something close to a normal life—going to parties and drinking with friends—which eventually leads to a violent seizure that lands him in the hospital. But the injury also earns the attention of friend-of-a-friend Jo, who feels an intense sympathy for Isaac’s plight. But will even Jo’s efforts be enough to help Isaac push through the daily agony of his condition? Ata renders the story in a vibrant manga style, most strikingly depicting Isaac’s seizures as a swarm of floating daggers, each blade bearing a single eye and trailing a long string of beads, the weapons encircling Isaac in hypnotizing patterns before slicing him to shreds. The details of Isaac’s illness feel decidedly lived-in, and Isaac’s exhaustion with the struggle required to live his life is palpably, dramatically realized. But while the specifics of the story are compellingly unique (if occasionally flirting with opacity), the arc feels overly familiar. Nevertheless, the spotlight shone on an underrepresented demographic is commendable.

Big and stylish—of particular interest to those dealing with epilepsy or wanting to know more about the condition.



THE FLOATING WORLD

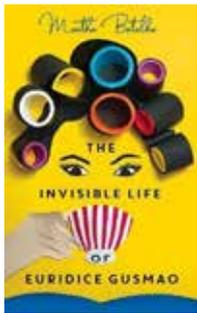
Babst, C. Morgan
 Algonquin (384 pp.)
 \$26.29 | Oct. 17, 2017
 978-1-61620-528-7

A New Orleans family is shattered and scattered by Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath.

“Grief was infinite, though, wasn’t it,” thinks one of the characters midway through this powerful, important novel, “something like love that, divided, did not diminish.” Babst’s debut tracks the experiences of five family members from the pre-Katrina evacuation of the city through late November 2005, 93 days after landfall. Dr. Tess Eshleman is a psychiatrist, an Uptown blue blood married to Joe Boisdoré, a Creole sculptor descended from freed slaves whose work has made it as far as the Guggenheim; the couple raised their two mixed-race daughters in a historic house on the Esplanade. By the time the hurricane drops a magnolia tree through the roof of that home, Tess and Joe have evacuated to Houston, taking with them Joe’s father, who suffers from advanced Lewy body dementia and was in an institution until it shut down for the storm. Their daughter Cora, who struggles with mental illness and depression, refused to leave with the family, then cannot be found when they return. By the time their other daughter, Del, arrives from New York City in October, the pressures of the storm have driven Tess and Joe to separate—and though Cora has been found, drinking tea with an elderly friend of the family

in the ruins of her garden, she is catatonic. Much of the plot is devoted to unpacking exactly what happened to her during the storm and the flood. This novel is New Orleans to the bone, an authentic, detailed picture of the physical and emotional geography of the city, before, during, and after the tragedy, its social strata, its racial complications, the zillion cultural details that define its character: the parrots in the palm trees, the pork in the green beans, the vein in the shrimp, “the goddamned tacky way he flew his Rex flag out of season.”

Deeply felt and beautifully written; a major addition to the literature of Katrina.



THE INVISIBLE LIFE OF EURIDICE GUSMAO

Batalha, Martha
Translated by Becker, Eric M.B.
Oneworld Publications (240 pp.)
\$25.99 | Oct. 10, 2017
978-1-78607-172-9

A charming family tale of the Gusmao sisters—whose lives diverge and eventually come together again.

The Gusmao family lives in Rio de Janeiro in the 1940s. Euridice worships teenage Guida; Guida tolerates Euridice. Volatile Guida battles her parents until the night she sneaks off with her forbidden boyfriend and doesn't return. Devastated, Euridice mourns the loss; her parents' emotions run the gamut until they write off their eldest. Life goes on, and Euridice marries a sensible choice to please her parents and leaves home to live a lonely life despite her husband and two children. Driven to distraction by boredom, she struggles to fill her days with projects other than cooking and maintaining the home, hiding such ventures from her traditional husband, Antenor, who repeatedly quashes her ambitions when he discovers all that she's hidden from him. Discouraged, a now passively resistant Euridice becomes a mere shadow in the background. Guida unexpectedly returns with her son and a wild tale of her broken relationship, and Euridice's spirit fills with life once again. Batalha's well-rounded characters show how beliefs and decisions—whether acted on openly, as Guida does, or covertly like Euridice—affect their own lives and the lives of others. Batalha portrays the bleakness that can arise in marriage—not an absence of love as much as an absence of appreciating the other's needs or, conversely, of sacrificing one's own needs. Be prepared to love invisible Euridice, who has so much more to offer than the confines of life in Rio allowed at the time. And be prepared to want to kick her in the butt and say, “Come on, woman! Don't give in!” She doesn't.

For those who enjoy delving into characters and love to watch life unfold for others, this thought-provoking tale will satisfy. A worthy debut for Batalha, full of wry humor.



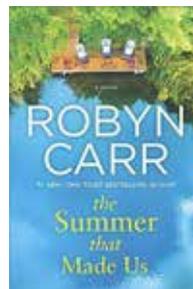
TÓMAS JÓNSSON, BESTSELLER

Bergsson, Gudbergur
Translated by Smith, Lytton
Open Letter (411 pp.)
\$17.95 paper | Jul. 11, 2017
978-1-940953-60-1

A modernist classic from Iceland, half a century old, makes its first appearance in the U.S.

He's a mean man, a sick man. And, though “descended from the bravest, bluest-eyed Vikings,” Tómas Jónsson doesn't strike much of a heroic figure; old and fast falling apart, hidden away in a basement flat, he spends his time filling the pages of composition books with reflections, sometimes aphoristic and sometimes stream-of-consciousness floods, on the things he has seen and done. “I am completely bound to the passing moment,” he records. “I am the passing moment. I am time itself. I have no remarkable experiences. I have no spare moments from the past.” Ordinary though his experiences may have been in the larger human story, they're enough to sustain an off-kilter, often dyspeptic worldview. First published in 1966, a decade after Halldór Laxness became the first and so far only Icelandic writer to win the Nobel Prize in literature, Bergsson's novel has a Joycean quality to it, *Finnegans Wake* as much as *Ulysses*, with portraits of the artist as a man at various stages of life, all of them querulous. Jónsson frets that he cannot be a real writer because he lacks a callused pen finger, and that's only the first of his strict attentions to the body and its functions, as when Bergsson via Jónsson describes a woman eating a boardinghouse meal even as other diners “de-wind themselves with a couple of farts”: “She put it in her mouth on the tines of her fork, her jaws swinging to and fro, bjabb-bjabb, as the steak mashes down her esophagus down to the stomach grog-grog.” It's not the most appetizing of visions, but Bergsson's shaggy (and, in a couple of instances, carefully shaven) dog stories have a certain weird charm, even as it develops that Jónsson has discovered one great *raison d'être* for writing a memoir: revenge.

Nothing much happens on the surface of Bergsson's yarn, but underneath there's plenty of magma bubbling.



THE SUMMER THAT MADE US

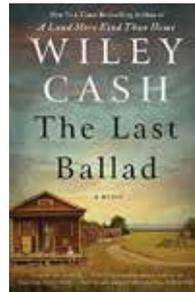
Carr, Robyn
Harlequin MIRA (336 pp.)
\$15.99 paper | Oct. 3, 2017
978-0-7783-3086-8

A family in crisis returns to the lake house where, years ago, an unexpected tragedy tore them apart.

When the Hempstead sisters decide to spend the summer together in Lake Waseka, Minnesota, Charley has just lost her job as a daytime television host, Meg has stage 4 breast cancer, and they both need a break from their worried partners. But

their mother, Louise, has forbidden them from using the house ever since the summer their youngest sister, Bunny, drowned at the same time Charley, then a teenager, found out she was pregnant. Meg's dying wish for a family reunion inspires Charley to enlist the help of her Aunt Jo and her cousins Hope, Beverly, and Krista to get Louise to change her mind. Jo's family also fell apart when Bunny died, and though time hasn't healed everything—Hope is struggling to cope with her divorce, Krista is in prison, and Beverly has kept her distance after leaving the family for foster care—everyone is hoping for a fresh start. With so many mothers, daughters, sisters, and cousins to track (not to mention their husbands and boyfriends), there are many sides to each story and no shortage of drama as the women confront their past. The summer flies by as old wounds are healed, new alliances are formed, and lives are changed forever.

It sounds like a nightmare of a family vacation, but with strong relationship dynamics, juicy secrets, and a heart-warming ending, it's a blissful beach read.

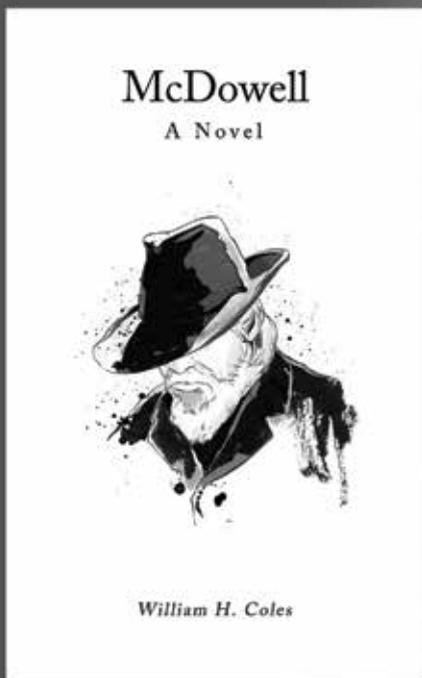


THE LAST BALLAD

Cash, Wiley
Morrow/HarperCollins (304 pp.)
\$26.99 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-0-06-231311-9

Inspired by the events of an actual textile-mill strike in 1929, Cash (*This Dark Road to Mercy*, 2014, etc.) creates a vivid picture of one woman's desperation.

Ella May Wiggins works long, grueling hours in a mill, but it still isn't enough to keep her children fed. The year is 1929, and fed-up workers are fighting for rights like a standard wage, a five-day work week, and equal pay for equal work. Ella's curiosity about the union leads her to attend a rally in a neighboring town, but when she gets up on stage to sing a song that she wrote, she becomes an unexpected star of the labor movement. Her prominence makes her a target for those who view union members as communists, and Ella's belief that African-Americans should be included in the union



McDowell
A Novel
by William H. Coles

A novel follows a surgeon who possesses all the material comforts anyone could want, but harbors a deep lacking in his soul.

"...expertly weaves together varied threads..."

"Coles has a knack for creating distinct characters."

"No player is wasted as a mere plot device."

"This worthy tale delivers an epic feel and strong characters."

—Kirkus Reviews

mcdowellbycoles.com

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ISBN: 978-0-9961903-4-3 (hardcover)
ISBN: 978-0-9961903-5-0 (ebook)

For information on publishing or film rights, please contact: whcoles@aol.com

places her in even more danger. But Ella's voice isn't the only one Cash explores—there are multiple points of view, including Ella's now-elderly daughter Lilly, an African-American porter named Hampton, and several others whose lives intersect with Ella's. Cash vividly illustrates the difficulties of Ella's life; her exhaustion and desperation leap off the page. She faces extreme hardship in her fight for workers' rights, but it's always clear that she keeps going because of her love for her children. Although it is initially a bit difficult to keep so many points of view straight, it is satisfying to see them all connect. It's refreshing that Cash highlights the struggles of often forgotten heroes and shows how crucial women and African-Americans were in the fight for workers' rights.

A heartbreaking and beautifully written look at the real people involved in the labor movement.



WINTER WARNING

Charyn, Jerome
Pegasus Crime (304 pp.)
\$25.95 | Oct. 1, 2017
978-1-68177-348-3

Isaac Sidel, last seen (*Under the Eye of God*, 2012) as vice president-elect, becomes president when his top guy is forced to resign. Fireworks ensue, most of them not especially patriotic.

Swept into the second spot and then the top spot by the Slaughter of '88, Isaac finds himself with a lot less power than when he was the Pink Commish, and later the mayor, of New York. His trusted chief of staff, Brenda Brown, has fled the Beltway madness; her successor, Ramona Dazzle, seems to think keeping her boss in the dark is at the heart of her job description; and there are rumors that Vice President Bull Latham is really running the country. Dazzled by the constant conflicts between everybody and everybody else, Isaac soon realizes that the real power brokers are unelected thugs, financiers, and apparatchiks like Gen. Raymond Tollhouse, head of private-security octopus Wildwater; Baron Pierre de Robespierre, Renata's Swiss banker; German publishing baron Rainer Wolff; and Viktor Danzig, the tattoo artist dubbed Rembrandt for his flawless counterfeit \$50 bills. Counterfeiting indeed provides a radical figure for the action here, although prolific, multitiered Charyn (*Jerzy*, 2017, etc.) floats enough demotic metaphors within some paragraphs to swamp the nominal action. Isaac, "a clown with a Glock" adrift in a world in which anything can happen to anyone by the end of any sentence, bounces like a bagatelle ball from a school for assassins to the Sons of Rossiya and an uprising at Rikers, where he earns the headline "POTUSTOP COP" before achieving the ultimate Oval Office accolades: Saul Bellow compares him to Isaac's beloved Augie March, and Danzig tells him that "he was now a registered werewolf."

Less antic than some of its waggish hero's earlier chronicles but still manically inventive, proudly undisciplined, and peopled with dark lords and ladies best characterized by wildly inflated epithets—in other words, nothing at all like any presidencies since 1988.



THE LAST MRS. PARRISH

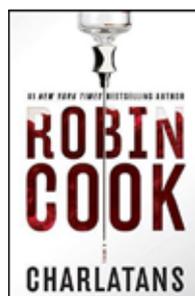
Constantine, Liv
Harper/HarperCollins (400 pp.)
\$25.99 | Oct. 17, 2017
978-0-06-266757-1



A wealthy woman with a handsome husband is preyed on by a ruthless con artist.

One day at the gym, Amber Patterson drops the magazine she's reading between her exercise bike and that of the woman who happens to be beside her, Daphne Parrish. As she bends to pick it up, Daphne notices that it's the publication of a cystic fibrosis foundation. What a coincidence—Daphne's sister died of cystic fibrosis, and, why, so did Amber's! "Slowing her pace, Amber wiped her eyes with the back of her hand. It took a lot of acting skills to cry about a sister who never existed." Step one complete. "All she needed from Daphne was everything." Everything, in this case, consists of Daphne's outlandishly wealthy and blisteringly hot husband, Jackson, and all the real estate that comes with him; Daphne can definitely keep her two whiny brats. Amber hates children. But once she finds out that Daphne's failure to give Jackson a male heir is the main source of tension in the marriage, she sees exactly how to make this work. Amber's constant, spiteful inner monologue as she plays up to Daphne is the best thing about this book. For example, as Daphne talks about the many miseries her sister Julie went through before her death, Amber is thinking, "At least Julie had grown up in a nice house with money and parents who cared about her. Okay, she was sick and then she died. So what? A lot of people were sick. A lot of people died....How about Amber and what she'd gone through?" Meanwhile, poor, stupid Daphne is so caught up in the joy of finally having a friend, she seems to be handing Jackson to her on a platter. Constantine's debut novel is the work of two sisters in collaboration, and these ladies definitely know the formula.

A *Gone Girl*-esque confection with villainy and melodrama galore.



CHARLATANS

Cook, Robin
Putnam (448 pp.)
\$27.00 | Aug. 22, 2017
978-0-7352-1248-0

Four decades after rocketing up the bestseller lists with his debut, *Coma*, Cook (*Host*, 2015, etc.) shows he hasn't lost a microgram of his ability to scare the hospital gown off a prospective patient.

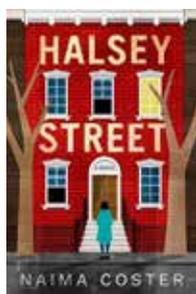
Dr. Noah Rothaus is new chief surgery resident at the prestigious teaching hospital Boston Memorial. He quickly finds himself leading an inquiry into three operating-theater

A quiet gut-punch of a debut.

HALSEY STREET

deaths involving Dr. Ava London, BMH's star anesthesiologist. London has handled thousands of cases without injury: now there have been three accidental deaths in a matter of weeks. Worse, the hospital's overbearing, narcissistic surgeon (whose specialty brings in big dollars) Dr. William Mason resents London and wants her fired. Starting his investigation, Rothauser learns that London's lifestyle and Beacon Hill mansion can't be reconciled with her hospital salary. Then he discovers she also works as a highly paid lobbyist for the Nutritional Supplement Council, representing an industry Rothauser considers "snake-oil manufacturers." He's even more confused over London's supposed personal and professional history and her obsession with her multiple social media accounts using aliases. Perhaps he shouldn't have jumped into bed with London, especially considering that Mason soon discovers his indiscretion and threatens his job, too. Add assassins working for a Blackwater-type mercenary outfit and a princely amount of Machiavellian M.D. egomania and the complex yet fast-paced plot searches hard for nice-guy characters—Rothauser arrives as a hardworking poor kid who made it through Harvard Medical School but has a nasty secret lurking; London is opaque, part chameleon, part sociopath. Cook is up-to-date on sophisticated medical equipment, but the high-tech setting is really irrelevant to the tale. Where Cook shines is in illuminating that combination of impersonal professionalism and potential terror haunting every hospital corridor.

A return to form for the master of medical malevolence.



HALSEY STREET

Coster, Naima
Little A (332 pp.)
\$24.95 | Jan. 1, 2018
978-1-5039-4117-5



A quiet gut-punch of a debut, Coster's novel is a family saga set against the landscape of gentrifying Brooklyn.

After five years away in Pittsburgh—a city whose primary appeal is its distance from Brooklyn—Penelope Grand, former artist and current bartender, reluctantly returns to Bedford-Stuyvesant to care for her ailing and beloved father, Ralph, moving into a sublet a few streets away from her childhood home. But the neighborhood has changed in her absence: her landlords, the Harpers, new to the block from the West Village, embody the shift—a young family, white, wealthy, attracted to the "historic" homes and the lower price tags. And yet the Harpers' charming yellow house—and the affections of the charming father—offer Penelope an escape from the life she's returned to. At least for a while. But when a postcard from her estranged mother, Mirella, shows up addressed to her from the Dominican Republic (Penelope isn't the only one in her family desperate for escape), Penelope is forced to deal with a past she'd rather ignore. Alternating between Penelope's perspective and Mirella's, moving seamlessly back and forth in time, Coster pieces together the story of the Grand family: Mirella

and Ralph's early courtship and the first days of their marriage in Brooklyn, Ralph's iconic record store and the accident that followed its closing, Penelope's miserable freshman year at the Rhode Island School of Design, her childhood trips with Mirella to the DR, and now—in the present—their final chance at something like reconciliation. Gorgeous and painfully unsentimental, the book resists easy moralizing: everyone is wonderful and terrible, equal parts disappointed and disappointing. The plot is simple, relatively speaking, but Coster is a masterful observer of family dynamics: her characters, to a one, are wonderfully complex and consistently surprising.

Absorbing and alive, the kind of novel that swallows you whole.

WAYFARERS

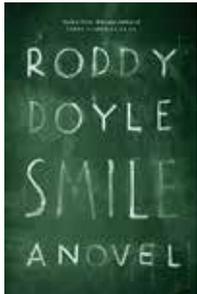
A NOVEL BY WINFRED O. COOK

A gay historical novel tells of a love forged across class and racial lines.

“...well-crafted...”

“An affecting story of two souls separated by slavery and war.”
—Kirkus Reviews

For information on publishing or film rights, please contact winfredcook@yahoo.com



SMILE

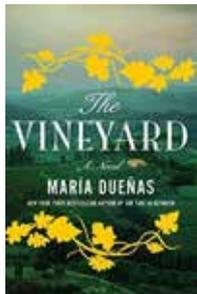
Doyle, Roddy
Viking (224 pp.)
\$25.00 | Oct. 17, 2017
978-0-7352-2444-5



A return to form for the Dublin novelist, who illuminates the troubled psyche of a writer who can't quite bring himself to write.

After hitting his peak renown a couple of decades ago (*Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha* won the Booker Prize in 1993), Doyle has sometimes seemed to be drifting on autopilot. Not here, where the first-person narrative is fresh and bracing from Page 1. Victor has come to a pub looking for a place to become a regular after his recent split from his wife, a TV celebrity with a weekly show. In the pub, he encounters a man who says he remembers him from school and seems to know more about him than anyone besides Victor himself should. As Victor returns to his single-man's flat, and to the writing that haunts him because he can never accomplish much, he muses on the life that has brought him here. He remembers the Christian Brothers, his teachers, one of whom molested him at least once. He remembers his days as a rock critic and then his move into political journalism, which resulted in his chance meeting with the beautiful, irresistible Rachel. She would become Ireland's television sweetheart, beloved by all, but for some reason she loved only Victor. The reader can't figure out why. Victor can't figure out why. The friends he makes in the pub can't figure out why. "What did she see in you?" one asks. Their split is also something of a mystery. Meanwhile, Victor keeps running into that same guy in the pub, the stranger who has now become his best friend. "He'd know—he knew—more than I'd want known," Victor fears, more than he'd want to tell the others in the pub or even the reader. The writing that obsesses him is "about the rot that is at the heart of Ireland," that is within Victor himself, a corrosion that began in his school days. It isn't until the final pages that the reader understands just what Doyle has done, and it might take a rereading to appreciate just how well he has done it.

The understatement of the narrative makes the climax all the more devastating.



THE VINEYARD

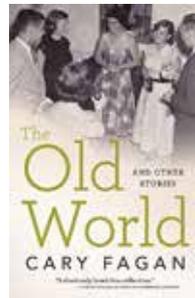
Dueñas, María
Atria (544 pp.)
\$26.00 | \$12.99 e-book | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-5011-2453-2
978-1-5011-2455-6 e-book

When Mauro Larrea is bankrupted by a business deal shattered by the American Civil War, he embarks on a great adventure to build his fortunes anew.

From Mexico City to Havana to Jerez de la Frontera, Spain, Dueñas' (*The Heart Has Its Reasons*, 2012,

etc.) sweeping tale of fortunes made and lost abounds with dramatic characters and operatic plot twists. Damsels in distress, devious *femme fatales*, conniving gamblers—all beset Mauro on his quest to make enough money in four months to pay off the uxorious moneylender Tadeo Carrús. Mauro is a self-made man, shaped by working the silver mines of Mexico. Tenacious and shrewd, he swiftly learned how to gamble on shady financing that enabled him to found his own companies. Losing everything doesn't frighten Mauro. Yet at 47, he has more than himself to worry about: his daughter, Mariana, can fend for herself, concealing the bankruptcy from her mother-in-law, the Countess of Colima, until Mauro's fortunes turn again, but his son, Nicolás, has not yet married Teresita, the daughter of Don Gorostiza, and the scandal may ruin his prospects. Mauro's plans to seek a lucrative business deal in Cuba are complicated immediately by the Countess' meddling and by Don Gorostiza's insistence that Mauro deliver a small fortune to his sister, Carola. Carola wants Mauro to secretly invest it for her in an unsavory deal, but Mauro balks. Meanwhile, her husband, Zayas, challenges him to a duel at the billiard table. At stake are access to Carola and the possession of an estate and vineyard in the south of Spain, an estate Zayas inherited from his cousin Luisito, who died abruptly. Soon Mauro owns the estate, which introduces him to not only the bewitching and enigmatic Soledad Montalvo, but also the mysteries of the Montalvo-Gorostiza family saga.

Though sometimes buckling under its own weight, this sprawling tale will charm fans of historical romance.



THE OLD WORLD AND OTHER STORIES

Fagan, Cary
Astoria Press (304 pp.)
\$15.95 paper | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-4870-0146-9

A collection of microfiction takes anonymous photographs as its inspiration. Fagan (*Little Blue Chair*, 2017, etc.) has tapped into one of storytelling's most pleasurable impulses in his newest book of short stories: imagining the stories behind quotidian images. But rather than simply generate work using old photos that have been separated from their original context—a worthy exercise for any creative writer suffering a block—Fagan makes the images part of the story, printing the black-and-white photos before each tale. The result is a collection that lets readers peek behind the curtain of the creative process while also keeping the pages turning. Readers will wonder, for example, what Fagan will make of a photo depicting a boy marionette facing a skeleton. As it turns out, in "Who I've Come For," it's a macabre Punch and Judy show about the unexpected nature of mortality. With a photo of a woman at a piano, in "The Traveller," Fagan creates an unexpected story of escaping an unhappy marriage. A dour, bespectacled girl inspires a dialogue between two concerned school authorities in "Subversion." Aside from the clever concept of the book, Fagan is also smart to recognize the need

for variety to keep things surprising. Many of these stories are quite funny; others aren't afraid to be earnest or skirt sentimentality. And it's not just the tone that varies, but the structure, as well. Fagan gives us a soldier's diary, short plays, letters, meeting minutes, and even a dialogue between a woman and her beloved pet crow. The stories don't always land, especially when Fagan works too closely from the photographic inspiration, but the overall premise never loses its inventiveness.

Fagan's clever and wide-ranging stories put the act of imagining front and center.

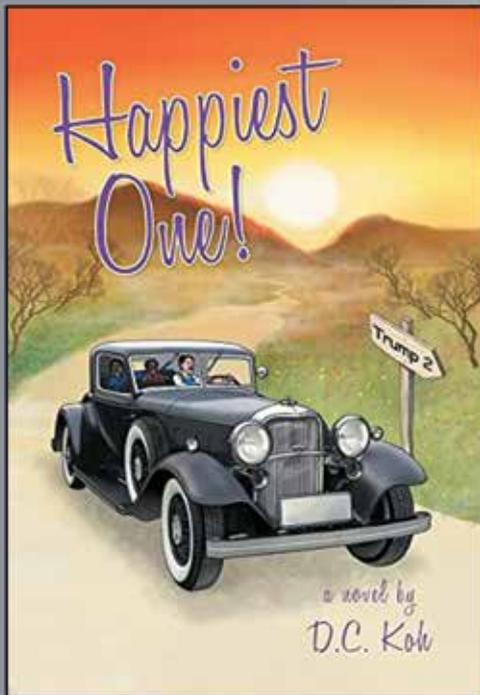


START WITHOUT ME

Feldman, Joshua Max
Morrow/HarperCollins (288 pp.)
\$26.99 | Oct. 17, 2017
978-0-06-266872-1

It's Thanksgiving, and two 30-something strangers—"a couple of strays"—join forces to help each other survive the family dramas that lie ahead.

Adam Warshaw, nine months and four days sober, wants to spend the holiday with his parents and siblings after many years of absence but still doesn't seem quite capable of going through with it. Flight attendant Marissa Russell, struggling with work and a secret pregnancy, needs to join her in-laws for the Thanksgiving meal while simultaneously trying to mend her fraying marriage. When Adam's and Marissa's paths cross in an anonymous Connecticut hotel restaurant (he's decided to flee back to San Francisco; she's heading to her family), the familiar scenario



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ISBN# for Soft Cover - 9781524580100
ISBN# for E-book - 9781524580094

HAPPIEST ONE!

by D.C. Koh

In this debut novel, the title character turns out to be a handsome, slim, tough, good-natured, but short-tempered Italian immigrant machinist in 1930s America.

"...an intriguing tale..."
"The dialogue is musical, if idiosyncratic...Absorbing..."
—Kirkus Reviews

"...alive with energy...marvelous characters..."
—Joe Kilgore, Pacific Book Review
"...entrancing...seduces the reader at an emotional level..."—David Lloyd Sutton,
San Francisco Book Review

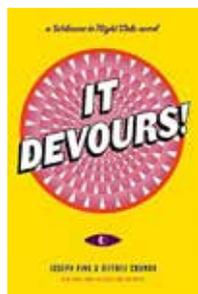
For publishing rights or agent representation, please contact oursidewins@gmail.com

We're back in the weird town of Night Vale, where all the conspiracies you've ever heard of are true.

IT DEVOURS!

underpinning Feldman's (*The Book of Jonah*, 2014) readable second novel is set in motion: Adam changes his mind again and the pair set off on a drive to Vermont, hitting problems en route and alternately propping each other up until resolution can be found. If the conventions of this time-honored holiday dramedy formula are simmering tensions, bad behavior, black-sheep tendencies, and bedrock truths revealed, so it goes with these two: Adam's family struggles to welcome him back into the fold, while Marissa's in-laws, an improbable mixed-race group marked by political aspirations and short tempers, offer the antithesis of a warm embrace. Incorporating psychology and a musical back story, Feldman's novel aims high but loses its momentum, spending too much time looking backward and indulging the central characters' internal monologues. The road-trip narrative line becomes ragged, and sketchy secondary characters offer little engagement. The overriding questions in Thanksgiving entertainments are usually: can mistakes be corrected, new leaves turned, and survival ensured? The answers here will not come as any great surprise.

A new recipe for turkey? Not quite.



IT DEVOURS!

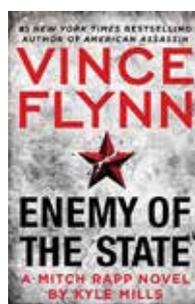
Fink, Joseph & Cranor, Jeffrey
Harper Perennial/HarperCollins
(368 pp.)
\$21.99 | Oct. 17, 2017
978-0-06-247605-0

A scientist and a man of faith must find common ground to save a friendly desert community in the American Southwest.

Just kidding—of course we're back in the weird town of Night Vale, where all the conspiracies you've ever heard of are true. For interlopers who haven't yet experienced *Welcome to Night Vale*, it started as a podcast mimicking a bizarre community radio broadcast, later became a live touring production, and lives on in a first novel by Fink and Cranor (*Welcome to Night Vale*, 2015, etc.). This sequel will be a delight for fans but also features a funny but nuanced story about the chasm between faith and science. Our lead character is Nilanjana Sikdar, a levelheaded scientist from Indiana who has come to work with head scientist Carlos, husband to Cecil Palmer, the voice of Night Vale. But strange things start happening when first Larry Leroy's house and later Big Rico's Pizza fall into giant sinkholes. On the trail of a suspect known as "the Wordsmith," Nilanjana meets Darryl Ramirez, a good-natured proselytizer for the Joyous Congregation of the Smiling God, a faith that believes redemption comes from being devoured by... something. The book includes whimsical pamphlets designed by Jessica Hayworth explaining the faith. While the new story is light on our friend Cecil—whose romance with Carlos is quietly breathtaking—readers spend more time with Carlos, whose story answers some lingering questions about this strange otherworld. As the Smiling God grows more dangerous, the fundamental conflict between Darryl's faith and Nilanjana's

science threatens to tear the town asunder. With cameos from minor characters and the same fanciful sense of humor, the authors deliver not only a love letter to fans, but also a compelling drama that shows people coming together in a world that feels like it's coming apart—which isn't the worst message to broadcast these days.

A confident supernatural comedy from writers who can turn from laughter to tears on a dime.



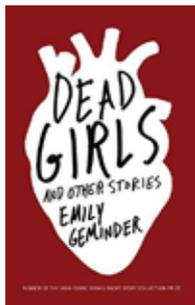
ENEMY OF THE STATE

Flynn, Vince & Mills, Kyle
Atria (400 pp.)
\$28.99 | Sep. 5, 2017
978-1-4767-8351-2

In the 16th installment of the series started by the late Flynn, author Mills (*Order to Kill*, 2016, etc.) continues CIA agent Mitch Rapp's deadly derring-dos.

Fondly recalling the 9/11 attacks, Prince Talal bin Musaid believes that "America was a wounded animal. And he had become the lion." Meaning, of course, he doesn't know Mitch Rapp, who has killed so many bad guys it's a wonder there are any left in the world. The prince is the Saudi Arabian king's nephew, and he plans to help finance a large-scale Islamic State group attack inside the United States. Meanwhile, Rapp and his lady friend, Claudia, take an extended vacation so he can mend old wounds, but he soon decides that "having a life was a monumental pain in the ass." When he returns, U.S. President Alexander summons him to say he wants bin Musaid dead but that if Rapp is caught, he's on his own. So he goes from "the extreme edges of the U.S. intelligence apparatus" to "beyond black." He resigns from his CIA team and blames injuries from his last op, but then he starts his own rogue group. For \$1 he hires Grisha Azarov, an ex-Russian agent whom series fans will recognize as "the most dangerous opponent [Rapp had] ever faced." And never mind that Azarov had nearly killed Rapp's CIA boss, Scott Coleman. Hey, it's nothing personal—they're all just killers with a job to do, and each "could be as good a friend as...deadly an enemy." The action is nearly nonstop as the body count builds. Oddly, an Iraqi colonel thinks the "natural state of humanity was chaos," and America was simply holding it at bay. A lily-livered reader might see an automatic weapon as a curious tool for staving off chaos, but said reader won't be following this series anyway.

Fast-moving, fun, and not overly deep. But if the U.S. has a real-life version of Flynn and Mills' hero, that could be scary.



DEAD GIRLS AND OTHER STORIES

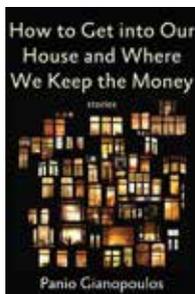
Geminder, Emily
 Dzanc (192 pp.)
 \$16.95 paper | Oct. 17, 2017
 978-1-945814-33-4



A chorus of dead and living girls and women in nine stories.

Geminder's cohesive debut features diverse settings, but whether in India, Cambodia, or New York, her female protagonists face similar anxieties. These are the horrors of the body, the limitations of language, and the constant presence of death. Events recur and become motifs. In "Edie," the narrator recounts the rape of a high school girl. The strange part, she thinks, is her own inability to remember how she first heard of it. "It was as if the story had been conveyed not in the usual way, person to person, but had existed quietly inside me and was only now revealed." In "Coming To," the staff of a Cambodian newspaper begins using the term "rape-murder" in their articles despite questions from the copy chief. "Almost every day, there's at least one rape in the paper...Sometimes they are rape-murders." There is an eerie convergence of female identities and experiences across time and space—mass faintings, possession by aliens and by spirits, and the horrific series of dead girls that permeates the lives of the living in the title story and throughout. We meet an old hippie man who refers to all girls by the same name—Annie—and in "Phnom Penh," four women, narrating in a collective first person, give voice to this concept themselves: "We'd come to replace a dead girl," they explain. "We were replacements," they note. "We were girls."

Startling, far-reaching tales of women who haunt and are haunted.



HOW TO GET INTO OUR HOUSE AND WHERE WE KEEP THE MONEY

Gianopoulos, Panio
 Four Way (236 pp.)
 \$17.95 paper | Sep. 5, 2017
 978-1-945888-02-0



A wonderful collection of nine stories combining wry humor, engaging characters, and shrewd psychological insight.

It's hard to pick a favorite here, but one of the best (and funniest) stories is "Love and Heuristics," in which a man named Jonah, both hapless and clueless, can't figure out why he can't keep a girlfriend—especially since he's thrifty enough to buy Valentine's candy a day late at 50 percent off (which he gives to his current girlfriend on Feb. 15) and won't give flowers because "they just die." In other words, he doesn't have a romantic bone in his body—and things get even worse when he starts to rely on advice about women from the office Lothario. The story that gives the book its title introduces us to Ethan, who finds himself

drawn to Maggie, the girl next door and his daughter's swimming teacher. Unfortunately, everything starts to go wrong in Ethan's life: the position he wanted has been filled by the 27-year-old son of the company's CEO, and Ethan's nephew, Scudder, a graffiti artist ("Yo, it's not *vandalism*. It's freedom of expression"), comes to live with them, with comic—and almost dire—consequences. "Girlfriend" focuses on the culture of the recently divorced. While Hannah "seethes" at men in general, she does show some nominal interest in Nicholas when she meets him picking up his children at school: "he was not bad looking, in the simplistic way that any man could be acceptable if you were angling for competence." But it turns out Nicholas is far more interested in Joyce, Hannah's mother. And in yet another thwarted love relationship, in "Venus in Fur," the woebegone George confirms what he always suspected—that his love for Helen can never compete with Helen's for Millie, her Pomeranian.

Witty, discerning, and laugh-out-loud funny.

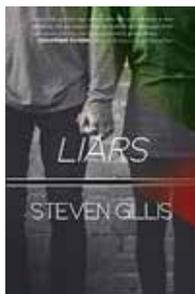
Making It Work
 A NOVEL BY BY KATHLEEN GLASSBURN

In Glassburn's (*Ridin' High*, 2015, etc.) novel, a young woman embarks on a journey of self-discovery after her new husband enlists in the military during the Vietnam War.

"...gripping..."

"A thoughtful, sensitive examination of the effects of war, sexism, and unfulfilling relationships."
 —Kirkus Reviews

For information on publishing or film rights, please contact kathleenglassburn@comcast.net



LIARS

Gillis, Steven

Rare Bird Books (208 pp.)

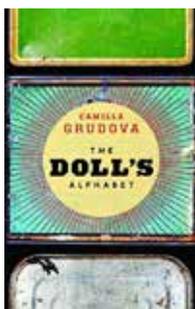
\$24.00 | Oct. 17, 2017

978-1-945572-47-0

In this novel of midlife malaise and creative frustration, a novelist insinuates himself into the seemingly idyllic life of a local couple, with emotional destruction in mind.

Eric McCanus, the narrator of Gillis' (*The Consequences of Skating*, 2010, etc.) novel, leads a complicated life. He's the author of a literary cult classic, but as he's grown older, his time has been increasingly spent working in the music industry. He remains friendly with his ex-wife, Lidia, and he's begun a nebulous relationship with Gloria, a musician. As the novel opens, he sees a couple, Matt and Cara, who seem to be perfectly happy—and so he decides to befriend both with the hope of putting their marriage to the test and obtaining material for a new novel along the way. "I have come to regard every relationship as its own intimate deception," he says early in the book, and some of the tension in the novel arises as he attempts to prove himself right, treating the very real lives around him as though they're as malleable as characters in a book. Gillis periodically incorporates passages from Eric's work in progress, demonstrating the gulf between his imagined version of Cara and Matt and the actual version of the couple. The five main characters each have wildly different takes on the nature of love and creative expression, and the discussions that they have are lively. Gillis doesn't let Eric's more controlling or condescending tendencies go unnoticed: at one point, he quips to Gloria, "What do you know about Berryman?" It's a heady book that also acknowledges the dangers of headiness.

A smart chamber drama about the ways aesthetics can govern lives—and, at times, can make people toxic to those around them.



THE DOLL'S ALPHABET

Grudova, Camilla

Coffee House (176 pp.)

\$15.95 paper | \$15.99 e-book

Oct. 17, 2017

978-1-56689-490-6

978-1-56689-499-9 e-book

Short stories that combine steampunk imagery with absurdist fantasy to explore gender roles.

In her debut collection, Grudova borrows whirling gears from steampunk fantasy and clicking carapaces from horror, but these slender stories lack the robust plot conventions of the more popular genres they draw from, belonging instead in the genre of literary fiction. The stories' principal emotion is melancholy disgust, often tinged with longing and dread. Grudova name-checks Hans Christian

Andersen, Isak Dinesen, and Ovid; her characters metamorphose into wolves, insects, machines. "I feel part wrought iron, part human and, I won't lie, part vermin," says the narrator of "Notes from a Spider," but that could be a line from almost any of these stories. In the opening story, "Unstitching," first one woman and then another finds a way to "unstitch" herself, letting her clothes, skin, and hair fall away: "She did not so much resemble a sewing machine as she was the ideal form on which a sewing machine was based. The closest thing she resembled in nature was an ant." The men who try to do the same, however, end up "wounded and disappointed. They had no 'true, secret' selves inside, only what was taught and known." The most successful of the stories are the ones that most explicitly address gender roles and women's sexual and reproductive autonomy. In "Waxy," women work in factories to support their Men, who go to school (forbidden to women) and study for Exams; to avoid the expense of contraception or raising children, many Men prefer to have sex with girls who have not yet begun to menstruate. In "The Moth Emporium," the narrator looks at her husband differently after he allows an artist to install sculptures depicting a rape and murder in their home, which is also a costume shop.

The effect of the absurd, unnatural, cruel, and unfair social rules in these stories is to cast light on how absurd, unnatural, cruel, and unfair the rules of contemporary society can be.



A FIELD GUIDE TO THE NORTH AMERICAN FAMILY

Hallberg, Garth Risk

Knopf (144 pp.)

\$22.00 | Oct. 31, 2017

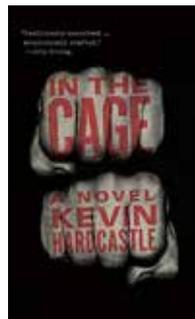
978-1-101-87495-0

What kind of relationships are best described in a guidebook supported by art photos? It's complicated.

The success of Hallberg's 2015 epic, *City on Fire*, prompted the reissue of this short but structurally ambitious novella, first published by a small press in 2007. As the title suggests, the story takes the form of a guidebook. Verso pages provide brief narrative sketches under thematic headings such as "Angst," "Freedom," and "Midlife Crisis"; recto pages feature documentary photos in a Mary Ellen Mark/Robert Frank vein, with cross-references and faux scientific captions. ("Fidelity is a lesser-known relative of the more common Infidelity.") Despite all that apparatus (readers are also encouraged to bounce around chapters, à la Julio Cortazar's *Hopscotch*), the plot is straightforward, capturing the anxieties and tragedies of two neighboring middle-class Long Island families. The Harrisons are broken after the death of their patriarch while the Hungate parents have split up, forcing the teenage children in both houses to try various coping strategies: Tommy Harrison tells oversized lies about his accomplishments, Gabriel Hungate gets overly into graffiti and drugs, and cheerleader Lacey Harrison gets overly into Gabriel. Gabriel, we learn early on, has suffered an accident that sent him to a burn unit, and the various perspectives

are unified by a mood of somberness and regret. (“Optimism is enormous at birth, and gradually shrinks to its adult size,” goes one typical intonation.) But there’s a disconnect between the pathos of the story and the medium through which Hallberg delivers it, a sense that for all the seriousness of the plight of the Harrisons and Hungates, they’re essentially satirical targets, half-awake booshwa suburbanites too concerned with “Entertainment” and “Fiscal Responsibility” when they should focus on “Meaning, Search For.”

Hallberg has a fine novelist’s grace and sensitivity but delivers this story with a taxonomist’s heart.



IN THE CAGE

Hardcastle, Kevin
 Biblioasis (256 pp.)
 \$14.95 paper | Oct. 10, 2017
 978-177196-147-9

A mixed martial arts gladiator falls prey to local hoodlums when he and his family return home to rural Ontario.

This debut novel by Canadian writer Hardcastle (*Debris*, 2016) is a scorched-earth crime story built out of brittle prose and barely suppressed violence. Our protagonist is Daniel, once a renowned cage fighter who has given up the sport due to injury and worries from his wife, Sarah, and young daughter, Madelyn. The first contemporary scene opens on the wreckage of Daniel’s truck, stolen and trashed by a perturbed local. Daniel is something of a wreck himself, having returned to his hometown in shame and working odd jobs to get by. We soon learn that he’s fallen in with an

FISH WIELDER

“...rivals the wryness of Neil Gaiman...Hardison’s comedic inventiveness and stamina are miraculous to behold.”

—Kirkus Reviews (starred review) 

I’m not sure I’ve seen such preposterously determined critic-baiting parody since Xanth or Asprin’s Myth-begotten series.”

—Piers Anthony author of the Xanth series

“It’s ‘Princess Bride’ meets Monty Python.”

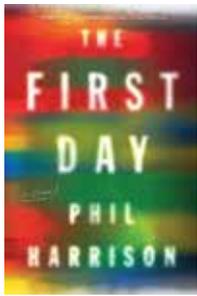
—GeekMom.com

ISBN: 978-0-9968943-1-9

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old friend of his father's named Clayton, a thug up to his ears in drugs, theft, and other crimes. Daniel is just providing muscle, but he finds his craving to fight runs deeper than he imagined. He starts training with Jasper, a trainer at a small gym. Asked if her husband is even fit to fight, Sarah says, "We won't know unless he actually fights....But, whatever he thinks, I don't believe he's the kind of man to just take this back up as a hobby." Finally, Daniel agrees to a competitive match in a local ballroom, with Clayton betting a significant sum on him to win. This is a masterful mashup between genres, matching the masculine violence of the cage match with country-tinged, Mamet-esque dialogue that elevates these characters into rich portraits of desperate people living for sheer survival.

A crime novel with the pulse of a sports drama and the bitter toxicity of the best country noir.



THE FIRST DAY

Harrison, Phil
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (224 pp.)
\$23.00 | Oct. 24, 2017
978-1-328-84966-3

Irish filmmaker Harrison's cerebral yet emotional first novel shows how a "brief moment of continuity between two lovers" can have stark and long-lasting consequences.

In 2012 Belfast, deeply religious 38-year-old car mechanic-turned-preacher Samuel Orr, a happily married father of three young sons, falls into a passionate if unlikely affair with 26-year-old Anna Stuart, a Beckett scholar at Queen's University. Their sexual attraction burns with fervor, but Harrison also wants his readers to view the affair in philosophical terms with his references to Beckett and transgressive literary philosopher Georges Bataille. An academic intellectual with poetic leanings, Anna is drawn to the way Orr sees "no line between the sacred and the profane." When she becomes pregnant, Orr tells his wife straightforwardly about the affair while acknowledging that he doesn't know what he plans to do. He continues to see Anna yet remains stalwart in his faith in God and himself. Then Orr's wife dies—whether accidentally or on purpose is left unclear—when struck by a train. Orr's oldest son, 12-year-old Philip, begins to demonstrate a quiet fury against his father; Anna senses the boy embodies his father's sense of guilt. When Anna's baby, named Samuel after both Beckett and Orr, is almost a year old, Orr breaks off their relationship. Philip's rage against his father becomes psychological warfare that culminates in violence. Cut ahead 35 years to a near, non-science-fiction future. Philip has disappeared. Anna has become an accomplished poet and married an artist. Sam Orr works at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art and has brought his father, Samuel, now a blind old man, from Ireland to live with him. One day Philip shows up at the museum, and the careful world Sam, a repressed gay man, has erected shatters. The three Orrs must face their capacity for faith, vengeance, and forgiveness as well as their bonds of family love.

Despite the borderline pretentious discussions of philosophy and theology, Harrison's elegant prose and deeply felt characters create a novel with a fiercely beating heart.



PARIS IN THE PRESENT TENSE

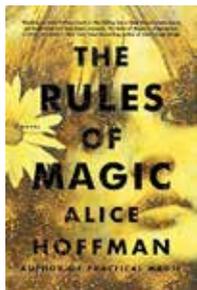
Helprin, Mark
Overlook (400 pp.)
\$28.95 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-4683-1476-2



A modern-day story of love, music, and death, with echoes of the Nazi retreat in World War II France.

Septuagenarian Jules Lacour is a widower and a cellist in agony after losing his wife, Jacqueline. His grandson, Luc, has leukemia and will die without treatments that neither Jules nor his daughter, Cathérine, can possibly afford. Stage fright has always prevented him from achieving fame and fortune, and he considers himself a failure. Though in terrific physical shape—he runs, he rows on the Seine—he wants to die and be with Jacqueline again, because "he himself did not need to live. It was Luc who needed to live." Then, *mirabile dictu*, a "giant international conglomerate" asks him to write "telephone hold music," promising obscenely high pay that would easily cover Luc's treatment. Jules delivers beautifully, but alas, complications ensue. An intelligent and deeply sympathetic man, Jules remembers the day in 1944 when a Nazi soldier retreating through Reims heard his father playing Bach on his cello instead of *La Marseillaise*, realized the cellist was a hidden Jew and executed the family, leaving only 4-year-old Jules. That shock shaped the man Jules became, but it's just one thread the author weaves. He is in no hurry to finish telling this beautiful tale as he lavishes attention on characters such as Armand Marteau, perhaps the worst insurance salesman in France; a team of homicide detectives, a Muslim and a Jew, eating a ham lunch with a judge; and women of ineffable beauty with whom Jules falls into instant love. One, Éloidi, is a cellist 50 years his junior. Even the conglomerate has a personality: "the great, indefatigable, trillion-dollar machine of Acorn, a *dispositif* with neither soul nor conscience." As Éloidi declares to Jules that she will be his student, he sees "directly into her eyes, and never had he beheld a more elegant and refined woman, not even Jacqueline." The conversations often read like mini-essays, as when Jules tells Éloidi about the "jealous" God of the Jews—arguing with Him is "like a goddamn wrestling match."

A masterpiece filled with compassion and humanity. Perfect for the pure pleasure of reading.



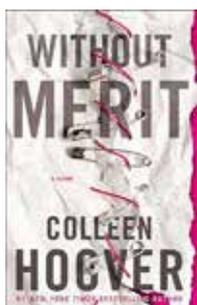
THE RULES OF MAGIC

Hoffman, Alice
 Simon & Schuster (384 pp.)
 \$27.99 | Oct. 10, 2017
 978-1-5011-3747-1

The Owens sisters are back—not in their previous guise as elderly aunts casting spells in Hoffman’s occult romance *Practical Magic* (1995), but as fledgling witches in the New York City captured in Patti Smith’s memoir *Just Kids*.

In that magical, mystical milieu, Franny and Bridget are joined by a new character: their foxy younger brother, Vincent, whose “unearthly” charm sends grown women in search of love potions. Heading into the summer of 1960, the three Owens siblings are ever more conscious of their family’s quirkiness—and not just the incidents of levitation and gift for reading each other’s thoughts while traipsing home to their parents’ funky Manhattan town house. The instant Franny turns 17, they are all shipped off to spend the summer with their mother’s aunt in Massachusetts. Isabelle Owens might enlist them for esoteric projects like making black soap or picking herbs to cure a neighbor’s jealousy, but she at least offers respite from their fretful mother’s strict rules against going shoeless, bringing home stray birds, wandering into Greenwich Village, or falling in love. In short order, the siblings meet a know-it-all Boston cousin, April, who brings them up to speed on the curse set in motion by their Salem-witch ancestor, Maria Owens. It spells certain death for males who attempt to woo an Owens woman. Naturally this knowledge does not deter the current generation from circumventing the rule—Bridget most passionately, Franny most rationally, and Vincent most recklessly (believing his gender may protect him). In time, the sisters ignore their mother’s plea and move to Greenwich Village, setting up an apothecary, while their rock-star brother, who glimpsed his future in Isabelle’s nifty three-way mirror, breaks hearts like there’s no tomorrow. No one’s more confident or entertaining than Hoffman at putting across characters willing to tempt fate for true love.

Real events like the Vietnam draft and Stonewall uprising enter the characters’ family history as well as a stunning plot twist—delivering everything fans of a much-loved book could hope for in a prequel.



WITHOUT MERIT

Hoover, Colleen
 Illus. by Adams, Brandon
 Atria (384 pp.)
 \$16.00 paper | Oct. 3, 2017
 978-1-5011-7062-1

With the help of unusual houseguests, a teenage girl who tries to rebel by airing her family’s dirty laundry cleans up her act instead.



To Merit Voss, the white picket fence around her house is the only thing normal about the family it contains. She lives in a converted church with her father, stepmother, and siblings, and although her parents have been divorced for years, her mother still lives in the basement, struggling with social anxiety. No one in her family is religious, so her brother Utah updates the church marquee every day with fun facts instead of Bible verses. Merit is less accomplished than her identical twin sister, Honor, so she likes to buy used trophies to celebrate her failures. But Honor seems to have a fetish for terminally ill boys, so it’s a surprise to Merit when Sagan, who is perfectly healthy, kisses Merit after mistaking her for her sister—and then reveals that he’s living in their house. Soon they have another houseguest, Luck, whose connection to the family makes Merit even more convinced she’s living in a madhouse. So why is everyone so angry at her? Merit has a love/hate relationship with her sister. She’s conflicted by her feelings for Sagan, who leaves intriguing sketches (illustrated by Adams) around the house for her to decipher. She’s simultaneously intrigued and repulsed by Luck, who annoys her with his questions but is also her confidant. She

Mistress Suffragette
 BY DIANA FORBES

Set in Gilded Age New England, Forbes’s debut novel follows teenage Penelope Stanton as she struggles through dubious attachments and financial ruin to become a suffragist leader.

“A delight from beginning to end...”

ISBN-13: 978-1944409073
 www.DianaForbesNovels.com
 Available on Amazon

“A sprightly, winning historical novel about an unexpected romance—between a young woman and her own power.”
 —Kirkus Reviews (starred review)

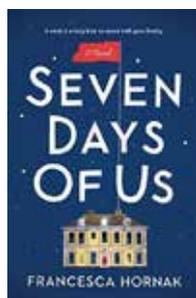
For information on publishing or film rights, please contact dianaforbes1@hotmail.com

A boy in Bangladesh with an unusual heritage finds himself enmeshed in a secret society of supernatural creatures.

DJINN CITY

can't sit through dinner without starting a fight; she's been skipping school for days; and when she decides to give her whole family the silent treatment, Sagan is the only one who notices. In fact, he and Luck are the only people in the house who recognize Merit's quirks for what they really are—cries for help. And when Merit takes drastic measures to be heard, the fallout is both worse and much better than she feared. Hoover (*It Ends With Us*, 2016, etc.) does an excellent job of revealing the subtle differences between healthy teenage rebellion and clinical depression, and Merit's aha moment is worthy of every trophy in her collection.

This quirky, complex, and frustrating heroine will win hearts and challenge assumptions about family dysfunction and mental illness in a life-affirming story that redefines what's normal.



SEVEN DAYS OF US

Hornak, Francesca

Berkley (368 pp.)

\$26.00 | \$12.99 e-book | \$28.00 Lg. Prt.

\$40.00 audiobook | Oct. 17, 2017

978-0-451-48875-6

978-0-451-48877-0 e-book

978-0-525-52450-2 Lg. Prt.

978-0-525-49890-2 audiobook

A family must spend seven days quarantined together—with all their disagreements, resentments, and secrets—in this debut novel.

Olivia Birch feels right at home treating patients of the Ebola-like Haag epidemic in Liberia. She feels less at home, however, at her own family's country house. Since she has nowhere else to go, she returns home for Christmas, and because she was exposed to a deadly virus, her entire family must stay in quarantine with her. While monitoring herself for symptoms and missing the doctor with whom she had a secret and ill-advised romantic relationship, Olivia rolls her eyes at what she sees as her family's frivolous concerns. Her relatives, however, are dealing with their own problems. Her younger sister, Phoebe, is wrapped up in planning a wedding to a man she's not all that passionate about. Her restaurant-reviewer father, Andrew, has just received an email from the grown son he didn't know he had. And her mother, Emma, just got a cancer diagnosis that she's determined to keep from the family until after the quarantine is over. The family's already tenuous bond is turned upside down when Andrew's son shows up at the door. Soon, secrets are spilling out, and everyone realizes they don't know quite as much about their family as they thought they did. Hornak skillfully juggles each character's distinct point of view and creates a family that readers will grow to love. This holiday read is perfect for fans of cozy Christmas films like *Love Actually* and *The Family Stone*.

An emotional but ultimately uplifting holiday story.



DJINN CITY

Hossain, Saad Z.

Unnamed Press (238 pp.)

\$16.00 paper | Oct. 24, 2017

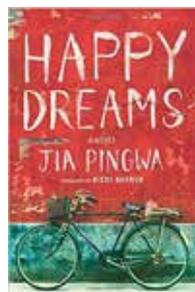
978-1-944700-06-5

A boy in Bangladesh with an unusual heritage finds himself enmeshed in a secret society of supernatural creatures.

Hossain's debut (*Escape from Baghdad!*, 2015) was a delicious mashup of pulpy adventure novel and sarcastic war satire,

so why not follow it up with a supernatural adventure steeped in Eastern lore? It begins with a boy discovering his true calling. Ten-year-old Indelbed is a smart youngster living under the shadow of his eccentric father, Dr. Kaikobad. Dad keeps his son in the dark about most things, including school and the fate of his mother, whose death certificate says only "Death by Indelbed." But when Dr. Kaikobad falls into an "occultocephalus coma"—the beginning of much jargon-laced worldbuilding—Indelbed's family is forced to confess that his mother was a djinn, a supernatural creature in Islamic culture anglicized to "genie." His older cousin Rais is not impressed: "And you guys all believe in magic? Like Harry Potter-type magic?" he says to another cousin, the Ambassador, who tells them the news. It turns out Indelbed is a half-breed, now the subject of a hunt by a violent splinter group of djinn. After his father's lawyer, Siyer Dargo Dargoman, sells Indelbed to psychopathic djinn Matteras, he winds up in a "murder pit" with exiled Ifrit Givaras, who has the unenviable task of teaching Indelbed the ways of the djinn and keeping him safe from the carnivorous rock worms that roam the pit. "You came here a frightened little boy," says Givaras. "I have indeed made you a monster. You said you wanted to survive. This is the price. There are no knights in shining armor in this world, boy. When fighting monsters, what else can you do but become one?" What follows is an epic fantasy adventure with spellcasting duels, steampunk-ish vehicles alongside flying carpets, and a battle of wills between virtual gods and a hero with the heart of a dragon.

A delightful fantasy adventure with a YA spirit, a PG rating, and a rich introduction to Arabian mythology.



HAPPY DREAMS

Jia Pingwa

Translated by Harman, Nicky

AmazonCrossing (492 pp.)

\$14.95 paper | \$3.99 e-book | Oct. 1, 2017

978-1-61109-742-9

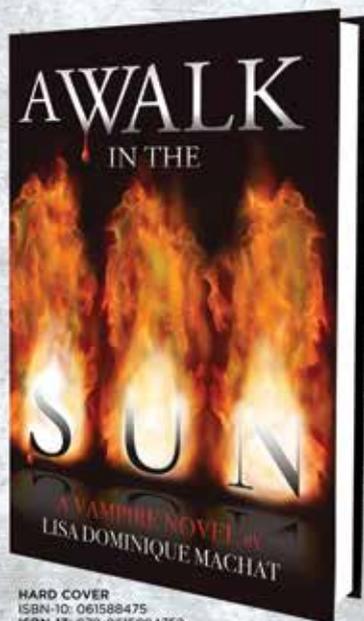
978-1-4778-2827-4 e-book

Dreaming of success, hapless peasants move to the big city in Jia's newly translated 2007 novel.

Liu, after optimistically changing his first name to "Happy," arrives in the booming metropolis of Xi'an, in central China, with his friend Wufu in tow. Both men

are part of a vast wave of displaced rural Chinese who can no longer make a living farming small plots in their home villages. First-person narrator Liu has a particular reason for choosing Xi'an: he sold a kidney to raise money for a marriage that never happened, and he knows his organ went to a Xi'an man. He also keeps a pair of high heels as a souvenir of his dashed conjugal hopes. Once in Xi'an, Liu and Wufu run up against the harsh realities of income inequality. The only work they can get is scavenging garbage, and they move into a ramshackle tenement shared with fellow trash pickers. Scatological slapstick runs throughout this rambling, episodic, and largely plotless tale. The first chapter begins with a flash-forward: Liu lugs the dead Wufu on his back as he offers explanations to police. Consequently, the manner of Wufu's death is the main, if not the only, source of suspense. Many anecdotes illustrate the vagaries of culling and selling trash, a lucrative shadow enterprise existing alongside municipal waste management. References to obscure regional cuisine occasionally spice things up—noodle porridge, anyone? Liu's stated reason for moving to the city, finding his "alter-ego," the kidney recipient, is soon

subsumed by his daily grind, until he encounters Mighty, an exemplar of China's growing entrepreneurial class. Liu's new love, Meng Yichun, who wears stilettos identical to his own, is a prostitute working out of a beauty salon on a street where all such salons are fronts for brothels. Although the characters suffer the socio-economic upheavals of contemporary China, they accept their plights and muddle through—this is not a novel of pointed political commentary.
Easily digestible but bland.



HARD COVER
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5 STAR CLARION REVIEW

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"Ensnaring tale, intriguing, potent and strong... Rich writing and captivating plot embody the vampire essence in Machat's engaging and exciting novel." — *Forward Reviews*

"A fast moving romantic vampire story... With it's briskly paced story and direct engaging style, fans may find much to satisfy them in this engaging thriller."

— *Kirkus Reviews*

"Reminiscent of the earliest vampire novels such as Bram Stoker's Dracula."

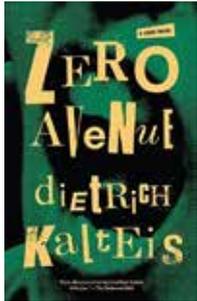
— *Kirkus Reviews*

"I Love this book"

— *Bonnie Hearn Hill*
 NY Times best selling author



Lisa Dominique Machat



ZERO AVENUE

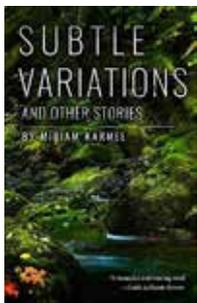
Kalteis, Dietrich
ECW Press (240 pp.)
\$14.95 paper | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-77041-365-8

Sex, drugs, and punk rock in No Fun City.

Frankie Del Ray is a guitar player and singer who, along with bass player Arnie Binz and drummer Joey Thunder, constitutes Waves of Nausea. Trying to make

it in the overcrowded punk scene in Vancouver is no easy feat, and Frankie supplements her meager income by working as a drug mule for Marty Sayles. Marty is interested in more than Frankie's musical talents, but she stalls his further advances when she catches him in the filthy bathroom at the Falco's Nest club with a drugged-up blonde. Marty may be the man with the money, but his ambitious driver and bodyguard, tough guy Zeke Chamas, soon starts bossing the other hirelings around. Though she's fortunate to live with the aunt who brought her up, Frankie, chronically short on cash, keeps hauling dope even after her run-in with Sayles and a smacking around from Chamas. Johnny Falco, who's renting his club from Sayles, is behind on his rent and other bills. Binz, who works part-time for Falco, has already suggested a way to make some money: ripping off some marijuana from one of the farms where Sayles has small patches planted in cornfields. Before Falco can agree to help, Binz goes off on his own, runs into resistance from Sayles' pot minders, Sticky and Tucker, and ends up buried in the corn field. After Frankie, who's been using the farm's barn for practice sessions, can't find Binz, Falco shows up and sits in, kindling suspicion in the minds of the caretakers. Once Frankie and Falco fall into a sexual relationship, she agrees to help him steal the pot. But a sudden calamitous turn seems to doom Frankie's plans for a record deal to a swift and deadly finish.

Kalteis (*House of Blazes*, 2016, etc.) paints a down-and-dirty picture of a punk-rock scene fueled by drugs and marred by violence but buoyed by a heroine with plenty of faults and a grim determination to succeed.



SUBTLE VARIATIONS AND OTHER STORIES

Karmel, Miriam
Holy Cow! Press (192 pp.)
\$15.95 paper | Oct. 15, 2017
978-0-9986010-0-7

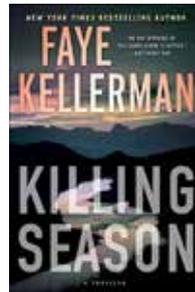
Crisp snapshots of men and women conducting everyday lives, skirting the aches of both love and loss.

With a nod to Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, Karmel's *Being Esther*, 2013)

short story collection opens with a woman planning, evolves through a series of meditations on the past, and ends with a party. The families of many of Karmel's characters have been

brutalized by the Holocaust, and their lives are fraught with ghosts and trauma; her stories often abruptly break at the end, the emotional terrain too difficult to traverse. The narratives echo with memories of pots and pans confiscated by the Nazis, wedding photographs burned in concentration camps, flight from the ambiguous boundary between Poland and Russia, and a violence that reverberates from suburban parks to Iraq. Instead of planning an evening soiree like Clarissa Dalloway, Sophie is planning a visit to her grandmother's grave, remembering her Nonna's love of Lucy and Ricky Ricardo, her refusal to accept the Arnaz divorce, her talented matchmaking, and her insistence on thoughtfully selected bouquets. In one of the more heartbreaking tales, Lydia cannot pass through her grief over her daughter's death, creating a shrine made of jars of marmalade through which the sunlight conjures her presence—yet to Lydia's husband, Lyle, the marmalade symbolizes the past's malevolent pull on their marriage. In the end, William Hill throws the closing party for his wife, Nora, who is quickly succumbing to breast cancer despite his hopes for one final moment of grace before his identity shifts from husband to widower. Blue silks and satins, sprigs of bougainvillea, mikvahs performed in the still water of a backyard swimming pool—these and other leitmotifs thread through several of the stories, tethering the characters to each other and creating a mournful harmony.

Beautifully wistful, quiet portraits of grief.



KILLING SEASON

Kellerman, Faye
Morrow/HarperCollins (704 pp.)
\$15.99 paper | Oct. 17, 2017
978-0-06-227024-5

A curious stand-alone from the creator of Rina Lazarus and Peter Decker (*Bone Box*, 2017, etc.): a New Mexico teen tracks down clues in the rape and strangling of his older sister three years ago while he faces the pressure and angst

common to all high school seniors.

The police have never solved the murder of Ellen Vicksburg. Detective Sam Shanks, of River Remez Homicide, suspected Tim Sanchez, who had a crush on Ellen, and tried to link her death to the work of Billy Ray Barnes, the Albuquerque Demon, to no avail. But Ellen's brother, Ben, has never given up. He's still surfing the web for material about similar homicides and meeting regularly with Shanks, who likes the boy but can't help wishing he'd go away. Ben's obsessive focus on his sister's death has naturally taken a toll on his social life, but with the arrival of Dorothy Majors from New York, things seem to take a new turn. Though she's nominally the girlfriend of football star JD Kirk, Ro reaches out to Ben repeatedly, sympathizing with his loss, taking him seriously in a way his other friends don't, and signaling that her liaison with JD is more a matter of status and convenience than genuine attraction. As Ben painstakingly gathers information he hopes will identify Ellen's killer, the turning

points in his investigation are consistently linked to pivotal moments in his relationship with Ro: their quarrels, their rapprochements, their debates about the senior prom. The result is a peculiar amalgam of one-quarter amateur detective work and three-quarters high school romance, like a Stephenie Meyer epic with a serial killer substituting for the vampires.

The mystery, with a forgettable killer whose most serious threat against the hero is slashing his tires, gets buried in the coming-of-age story. If you want to spend 700 pages revisiting the normal yet fraught rituals of adolescent romance, though, here's your chance.

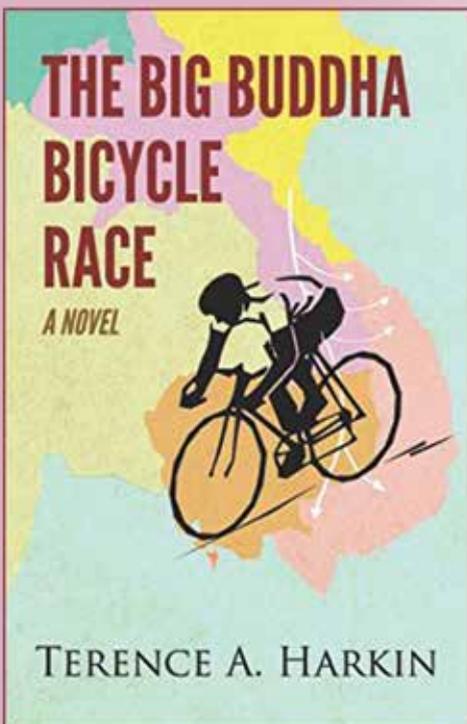


THE SECOND SISTER

Kendal, Claire
 Harper/HarperCollins (496 pp.)
 \$15.99 paper | \$10.99 e-book
 Sep. 26, 2017
 978-0-06-229764-8
 978-0-06-229765-5 e-book

A woman searches for the truth about her sister's long-ago disappearance when new evidence comes to light.

Ten years ago, when Melanie "Ella" Brooke was 20, her 30-year-old sister, Miranda, disappeared, leaving Ella and their parents to care for her 10-week-old son, Luke, in Bath. There was speculation that murderer Jason Thorne could have had something to do with it, and he's now languishing in a high security psychiatric hospital. New evidence certainly points to Thorne: Miranda supposedly called him a month before she disappeared. Ella wants to speak to Thorne, hoping to gain some insight, but her parents don't



THE BIG BUDDHA BICYCLE RACE

by Terence A. Harkin

An unusual Vietnam-era novel that features a bicycle race along with much soul-searching.

"And Harkin's prose is lyrical at times: 'With a hundred incarnations of Death as their companion, ground pounders never had a chance to be lonely, especially in the hot and spicy nighttime when they were caressed by their desperate mistress, Fear.'"

"An excellent, thoughtful book about the Vietnam War."
 —*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)



ISBN 978-616-215-132-3

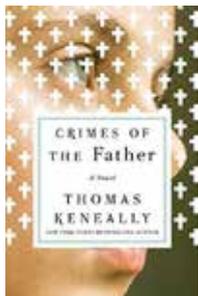
Available on Amazon and Silkworm Books

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approve, and neither does Ted, a policeman she's known since they were 4 and who was her first love. When the police return a box of her sister's things, Ella starts going through the contents, uncovering more questions about Miranda. How did Miranda, a nurse, afford a BMW and the purchase of an elegant flat, and why did she never reveal the identity of Luke's father? Meanwhile, the attentions of handsome psychiatrist Adam Holderness, who accompanies her when she visits Thorne, aren't unwelcome, but they're a distraction in Ella's single-minded pursuit of the truth. Ella, who narrates as if she's speaking to her sister, appears prickly at times, but her standoffish nature seems to have emerged from being a woman constantly in her more outgoing sister's shadow until she was forced to make her way in the world on her own. If there's any question about her empathy, it's put to rest in the way she interacts with the women, and men, who seek her help in escaping abusive relationships through her job as a self-defense trainer and especially in her fierce love for her nephew. Readers may have to suspend disbelief as the threads start to weave together with the help of more than a few coincidences, but Kendal's (*The Book of You*, 2014) considerable storytelling prowess saves the day.

A tense, absorbing thriller that explores the complex bonds of sisterhood as seen through the eyes of a strong, capable woman who will stop at nothing in her very personal quest for answers.



CRIMES OF THE FATHER

Keneally, Thomas

Atria (352 pp.)

\$26.00 | \$13.99 e-book | Oct. 31, 2017

978-1-5011-2848-6

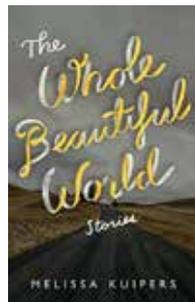
978-1-5011-2850-9 e-book

The sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests in Australia gets a sensitive but uneven treatment by the author of *Schindler's List*.

From the moment Father Frank Docherty returns to Australia in 1996 after a long absence, he is embroiled in controversy. The woman driving his cab angrily refuses money when she learns he is a cleric. Docherty, a psychologist studying abusive priests, thinks she is part of the "enlarging rage now loose in the world" as cases have begun to emerge publicly. He finds out that she is a former victim and an ex-nun. When a suicide note in another case names a local monsignor, Docherty must confront the priest's sister, with whom he nearly strayed from his vow of celibacy when he was younger. Australian writer Keneally (*Napoleon's Last Stand*, 2016 etc.) portrays the older Docherty as a man who favors caution over outrage. Even as he advises families struck by abuse, he's also trying to resume priestly work in Australia after having been banished in the 1960s for his political beliefs and doesn't want to ruffle his cardinal's feathers. Weaving through the novel is the ongoing case of a victim who refuses the church's current cash settlement and its demand of silence, thus bringing the issue to court and the press. The scenes with the church panel

seeking settlement—which includes the predatory monsignor—point up the oily eloquence and spiritual clout brought to bear against any further undermining of an edifice already weakened by skepticism and secularism. Most painful are passages in which victims are wooed in the confessional box, a particularly cynical manipulation of youthful guilt and an awful perversion of the Catholic sacrament.

Keneally's earnest effort to encompass the many legal and religious facets of this issue unfortunately results in more of an agenda than a novel.



THE WHOLE BEAUTIFUL WORLD

Kuipers, Melissa

Brindle & Glass (208 pp.)

\$18.00 paper | Oct. 31, 2017

978-1-927366-62-2

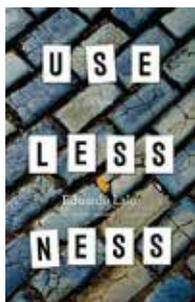
Stories explore the inner turmoil of characters struggling against the constraints of family, religion, and love.

At the end of "Mother of the Bride Dress," the sixth story in Kuipers' debut collection, a late-middle-aged woman shimmies across the dance floor at her daughter's wedding. Recently reinvigorated by a stray compliment and attendance at a Pentecostal church service, the woman notices her daughter watching her "with delight or perhaps with derision" but decides that the look "would turn to delight if she danced long enough." Kuipers is especially interested in working toward these types of quiet revelations, though they aren't always for the better. In "Holy Oil," a young girl who tries to exorcise her wily younger brother with oil she bought from a TV preacher has to confront the reality of televangelism—and her family. In "Road Pizza," a group of friends can no longer find ways to communicate after a freak accident shadows their relationships. Kuipers grew up in a Dutch-Canadian Christian community, and many of her stories are shot through with spiritual turmoil, though her treatment of this turmoil is satisfyingly nuanced. In "Happy All the Time," one of Kuipers' few male protagonists is able to cope with an abrasive stepfather by turning to youth groups and Bible study until his commitment to God turns him into the type of man he was trying to run away from. These are quiet stories, sometimes eschewing traditional notions of arc and climax, and often quite short; the result is that they can feel more like blueprints for stories than full narratives. But Kuipers' light touch and eye for telling details will keep the reader wanting more.

A collection of delicate sketches that mark Kuipers as a writer of promise.

A young artist occupies Paris and San Juan without ever becoming a true citizen of either place.

USELESSNESS



USELESSNESS

Lalo, Eduardo
 Translated by Levine, Suzanne Jill
 Univ. of Chicago (208 pp.)
 \$18.00 paper | Sep. 27, 2017
 978-0-226-20779-7

A young artist occupies Paris and San Juan without ever becoming a true citizen of either place.

Following the English translation of *Simone* (2015, etc.) comes this translation of Lalo's 2004 autobiographical novel. The unnamed first-person narrator is a writer of Puerto Rican heritage living in Paris and half-heartedly studying at university. He's on the downside of a poisonous relationship with his on-again, off-again girlfriend, Marie, a mentally distressed young woman. In many ways, the novel is a chronicle of disappointment and regret, as much about the passage of time as it is about coming to terms with one's own choices. The writer bounces between Marie,

who later attempts suicide, and Simone, a lover who is much kinder but inspires less passion in him. Eventually, he decides to leave Paris and return home. "I couldn't entirely justify, in words, my decision to leave Paris," he writes. "It was something I will never be able to completely understand—perhaps associated with the lost and eternal world of childhood." The second half of the book chronicles the remainder of the writer's life in Puerto Rico, which is just as bleak and regretful as his earlier years. He finds some solace in mentoring a troubled poet and some comradeship with a dying professor, but ultimately, there's not much resolution or reconciliation to be had. "That is my story," he tells us. "I do not know how much of it is true, or how much I have rationalized my defects and weaknesses. But I do know that coming home to Puerto Rico was more important than all my travels. I don't think it was merely a fleeing, an escape, but that no longer matters. Paris (or any other place) has ceased to be *Paris*. I have no more trips left to take."

A compellingly written but emotionally barren travelogue by a lost soul.

Rules of Thumb

A NOVEL by JERRY MACNEIL

After the football game, Orville Osentoski, Canton High's eighteen-year-old center, fell asleep in a locker room toilet stall. The team bus left without him. What happened next would change his life, and the lives of many others, profoundly and irrevocably.

...the prose delivers excellent psychological nuances;... An honest look at ugliness, hope and love in a struggling small town. —Kirkus Reviews

★★★★★
 This is a splendid piece of work by a gifted writer with an extraordinary eye for detail, [and] a tuned ear for dialogue... —Lee Gruenfeld, bestselling author of Halls of Justice and Becoming Holyfield

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OUTSIDE IS THE OCEAN

Lansburgh, Matthew

Univ. of Iowa (192 pp.)

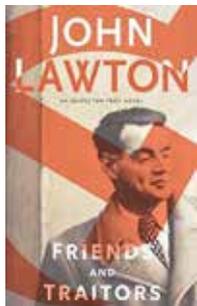
\$17.00 paper | Oct. 15, 2017

978-1-60938-527-9

Fifteen short stories follow a German immigrant mother and her two children over the span of 50 years.

Heike, a German woman who survived World War II by fleeing her home as a 5-year-old and immigrated to the United States as a young woman, struggles to connect with her lovers and her children. She marries Ray, a womanizer, with whom she has a son, Stewart. After the divorce, Heike and Stewart move to California, where she marries several more times. Stewart becomes a professor and moves to Boston, in no small part to avoid his mother, and also struggles first with his sexuality and then with maintaining a relationship. Heike also adopts a Russian orphan, Galina, and struggles to connect with her. This collection masterfully details moments in which these characters work to understand each other and the heartbreak when their efforts too often fall short. The stories are arranged in nonsequential order, which allows a slow unfolding of insights about each character's formative moments and their motivations. Narrators shift, as stories are told in the first person by both Heike and Stewart (as well as in the form of letters) and in the third person but focused on Galina, Ray, and others. This fluidity of movement underscores how different two people's experience of the same event can be and creates characters of deeply affecting complexity. Lansburgh's portraits of Heike and Stewart are unflinching in examining their neuroses, guilt trips, and emotional withholdings: Heike seeks devotion and understanding but is self-consumed without an understanding of boundaries, while Stewart longs for stability and connection but frequently retreats into himself and avoids all interactions. Not for the faint of heart, this collection is relentless and intense, but Lansburgh's prose offers stunning moments of tenderness amid its stark depictions of loneliness.

Arresting and pointed.



FRIENDS AND TRAITORS

Lawton, John

Atlantic Monthly (384 pp.)

\$26.00 | Oct. 3, 2017

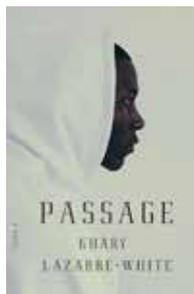
978-0-8021-2706-8

The treason of the Cambridge Five, and especially Guy Burgess, casts a long shadow over the life of Scotland Yard's Inspector Troy.

Lawton's narrative moves fluidly from 1935, when Frederick Troy is a young policeman, to 1958, when he's Chief Superintendent of Scotland Yard, with stops at various points in between. When

he first meets the infamous Burgess at a posh party at the family home, he's utterly charmed by him before he learns from his elder brother Rod, who was at Cambridge with Burgess, of his sexual voraciousness and his duplicitous behavior in Russia. Over the next decade or so, Troy sees Burgess intermittently, ignoring his brother's warning, and feels a significant tug toward Burgess' hedonism, though their association never develops into a sexual relationship. In the 1950s, as the focus moves from London to Venice to Paris to Vienna to Moscow, the relationship between England and Russia becomes more complex, and earlier suspicions of misconduct by Burgess and fellow Cambridge mates Anthony Blunt and Donald Maclean blossom into charges of treason. Not until 1958 does Troy first realize that he's being followed. When Troy and his mistress, Foxx, meet with Rod to trade opinions and discuss options, the situation is complicated by the growing insanity of Troy's sister, Sasha. Of course the reader knows that the pursuer is Burgess, who duly confronts Troy at the symphony. The past, it seems, is never dead.

Burgess makes a delicious antagonist in this eighth installment in the franchise (*A Lily of the Field*, 2010, etc.). Lawton, who writes with rueful acumen, puts a human face on the moral and political complexities of the Cold War.



PASSAGE

Lazarre-White, Kbarry

Seven Stories (192 pp.)

\$23.95 | \$15.99 e-book | Sep. 26, 2017

978-1-60980-783-2

978-1-60980-784-9 e-book

A teen wanders through a racially charged, dystopian New York City in this debut novel.

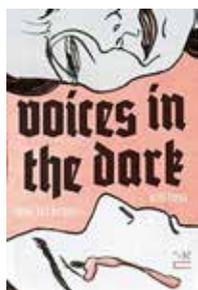
Writer and activist Lazarre-White writes of Warrior, a black teen questioning his place in the world in 1993. Warrior is prone to visions in which he encounters demons, a "claw," "wolves," and voices from the African-American diaspora. His only law is confrontation. "If there's something you fear," the voices tell him, "if there's a nightmare on your heels, don't run." In a nightmarish echo of Holden Caulfield's journey, Warrior wanders the city, remarking on its various characters and institutions. Police are "blue soldiers" bent on destruction of black bodies. Schools acutely focus pain and racial inequality; Warrior's is a place where he is both underserved and vexed by well-meaning teachers. "She thinks I'm gonna tell her a damn thing about me, like I'm a damn experiment," he says. While Warrior's rage against systematic racism imbues the narrative, the characters lack important dimension that would allow for deeper confrontation of the issues at hand. As a protagonist, Warrior is uncomplicated and static; other characters function only to highlight his heroism. Other issues arise out of unclear mysticism and clunky, forced similes. "It was a darkness," Lazarre-White writes, for example, "like the kind you find in dense, overgrown woods, in the Deep South." Conclusions are too easily drawn ("he learned his true

While recording radio propaganda at the home of a Nazi officer, a man begins a friendship with the man's six children.

VOICES IN THE DARK

lessons through the countless books he read...the education that comes with living”), and the book never moves beyond the symbolic representation of systemic racism and bias.

These are issues that must be discussed. But while misunderstanding and violence haunt Warrior's visions, this slim volume does not quite do justice to its subject matter.



VOICES IN THE DARK

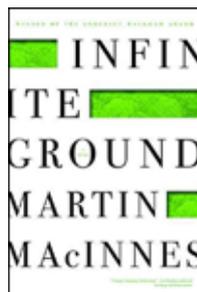
Lust, Ulli
Illus. by the author
 Translated by Brownjohn, John & Knight, Nika
 New York Review Comics (368 pp.)
 \$29.95 | Oct. 10, 2017
 978-1-68137-105-4



A peculiar man obsessed with the human voice and the preteen daughter of a Nazi propagandist cross paths during the later stages of World War II: Austrian cartoonist Lust's (*The Big Feminist But*, 2014, etc.) first graphic novel is an adaptation of Marcel Beyer's novel *The Karnau Tapes* (1995).

Hermann Karnau has been fascinated by sound since he was a young boy savoring the silence of early mornings (before it was ruined by “imperious voices” and “clamor and commotion”), and this aural obsession eventually leads him to audio engineering work for the Third Reich. While recording radio propaganda at the home of a Nazi officer—a never-named Joseph Goebbels—Karnau begins a friendship with the man's six children, particularly the oldest, Helga, who notices troubling incongruities between the world her parents portray to her and the world she directly observes. Karnau and Helga alternate narration, with Karnau indulging his obsession with perverse experiments and dissections in search of the bloody biology behind voice and sound and Helga growing aware of the lies and ugliness propping up her life of privilege and luxury, especially as the Soviet advance sends her and her siblings into a crumbling bunker with the retreating Nazi elite—where her parents' words of reassurance are increasingly betrayed by the desperation they can't keep from physically manifesting. The book is troubling and profound, with characters driven to find truths that ultimately prove devastating. Lust's clean, confident lines richly convey everything from a child's discomfort with a haircut to a dog's eagerness to play to Karnau's sheer bliss from a “quivering glottis.” Lust's inventive paneling both offers diagrammatic images to underscore Karnau's reductive mind and, combined with onomatopoeic captions, deftly ratchets the tension. The illustration style and muted color palette (like an aged newspaper) achieve a haunting realism despite cartoonish exaggeration and expressionistic flourishes.

Stunning.



INFINITE GROUND

MacInnes, Martin
 Melville House (272 pp.)
 \$25.99 | Oct. 17, 2017
 978-1-61219-685-5

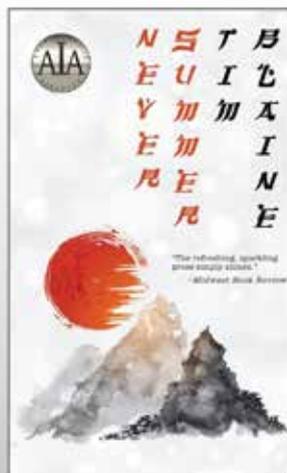
A missing persons case is merely the starting point for Scottish writer MacInnes' mind-bending debut, which takes impersonation, infection, and simulation as its metaphors for the unstable nature of reality.

An unnamed police inspector is called out of retirement to investigate the disappearance of a man named Carlos from a family dinner at a restaurant in an unspecified city somewhere in Latin America. A series of early discoveries rapidly signals that things are not what they appear. The grieving mother the inspector thought he was interviewing turns out to be “employed by the mother to speak on her behalf.” The financial institution where Carlos worked—“in the process of a large and

Never Summer

A Samurai Western

By Tim Blaine



“Blaine imbues his novel with the true spirit of the so-called “Romantic Disease,” weaving into his tale all the vigor and moodiness that one would expect of a Byronic hero's adventures in the American West”

“...Blaine seems just as interested in evoking Herman Melville's work as he is Zane Grey's.”

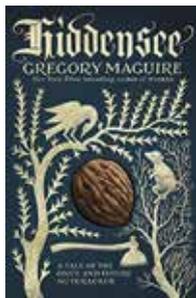
ISBN-10: 1941861350
 ISBN-13: 978-1941861356

“Adventure fans of all stripes will find something compelling in the tragic, mysterious protagonist. An original, philosophically minded Western adventure.” -*Kirkus Reviews*

<http://harvardsquareeditions.org>

complex merger, leaving it for the moment without a name”—populates its office with pretend workers from a “performance agency” to make a good impression on prospective clients. “Trust me,” the agency’s director tells the inspector, “they appear much more convincing in the role of hard-working employees than such employees do themselves.” At first, it seems that all this play-acting screens a sinister mystery that could actually be solved: the corporation has been sued by activists claiming it has illegally occupied land belonging to indigenous peoples illegally resettled, and the inspector follows this trail into the country’s rain-forest interior. There, however, reality and the inspector come completely unglued—a development forecast by a chapter bluntly subtitled “Suspicious, Rumours, Links,” which offers multiple explanations for Carlos’ disappearance and many other puzzles while making it obvious that all explanations are provisional and suspect. MacInnes skillfully creates an atmosphere of lowering menace, aided by excerpts from an enigmatic anthropological text, *Tribes of the Southern Interior*, while deft satires of forensic analysis and ecotourism keep the tone from getting too misty. The inspector is the only person drawn with any depth, but characterization isn’t the point in a narrative that aims to unsettle and provoke.

Vividly suggestive and filled with haunting images, though probably best appreciated by readers with a strong taste for the avant-garde.



HIDDENSEE A Tale of the Once And Future Nutcracker

Maguire, Gregory
Morrow/HarperCollins (304 pp.)
\$26.99 | Oct. 31, 2017
978-0-06-268438-7

A delightful, mystical, mythical confection by zeitgeist whisperer Maguire (*After Alice*, 2015, etc.), who likes nothing more than to work at the dark edges of

a fairy tale.

As evidenced especially in *Wicked* and its sequels, Maguire has a sharp appreciation for what struck Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm way back when: especially if they’re German, the stories we tell our children are marvels of mayhem, compressed slices of violence and bleakness gussied up with an occasional shiny poisoned apple. In them, death is always present. So it is with this latest foray, in which Maguire locates a perhaps unwilling hero in a young foundling, Dirk Drosselmeier, who, having courted death himself, proves to be inept enough with an ax at his adopted woodcutter father’s house to be packed off into the world—narrowly avoiding death, it seems, at the hands of the old man and his wicked-witch-ish wife. “He’s witnessed enough to be scared already, I can’t make it worse,” she cackles, and off he goes. But the world has plenty of terrors of its own to offer, including the fact that everyone he loves will die or otherwise leave him. He learns to live on his own wits and resources; “I’m more like a spider,” he says, “I cling with strings and hooks only to every

passing day.” Improbably, in the face of all that sorrow and odd encounters with the likes of the quack Doctor Mesmer, he makes good; he wasn’t so handy with a hatchet, but with smaller blades he carves out a formidable nutcracker that evolves, in his hands, “from *it to be*.” *Shades of Pinocchio!* It’s at this juncture that, as if a mist lifting, the darkness of the story brightens and, magically, the familiar story that we know from Tchaikovsky’s Christmas classic, *Klara and the King of Mice* and all, resolves with brilliant clarity. It’s a fine bit of sorcery on Maguire’s part, but of course, as all things must, it ends darkly.

A splendid revisitation of folklore that takes us to and from familiar cultural touchstones into realms to make Freud blanch. Wonderful.



THE MURDERER’S MAID

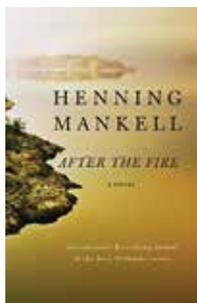
Mailman, Erika
Bonhomie Press (398 pp.)
\$25.00 | Oct. 30, 2017
978-0-9970664-4-9

The 1892 story of accused axe murderer Lizzie Borden (and her maid) intersects with that of a domestic’s daughter in 2016.

Bridget, maid to the Borden family of Fall River, Massachusetts, has long been aware that there is something “off” about the Bordens, particularly the younger spinster daughter, Lizzie. Needing to send money home to her family in Ireland, however, she’s convinced by Abby Borden to stay on. She feels sympathy for Mrs. Borden, the second wife of miserly mill owner Andrew Borden, who’s never won the affection of her husband’s eldest daughter, Emma. Emma, who still remembers her late mother, has also turned Lizzie, who doesn’t, against their stepmother. Cut to 2016. Brooke (real name Felicita), a Mexican-American woman whose mother, Magdalena, a housekeeper, died when she was 13, is on the run. After aging out of foster care, she’s in the latest of many apartments, under the latest of many assumed names, working the latest menial, under-the-table job. The reason for all this subterfuge emerges in flashbacks: years ago, the night Magdalena’s affair with her wealthy employer was exposed, the employer’s wife drowned. Brooke is convinced that the employer’s two sons were responsible for Magdalena’s “accidental” death and that now they are after her: she’s received sinister messages reminding her that “Revenge is a dish best served cold.” Genealogy sites reveal that Brooke’s absent father, known on her birth certificate only as “Dirtbag,” was a Belgian exchange student and a descendant of an illegitimate child of none other than Lizzie Borden, who fled to Europe to give birth. Thus these parallel stories converge. The reimagining of the many grievances that possibly stoked Lizzie’s murderous rage is fascinating, but the extensive rehash of the familiar forensics surrounding the infamous “40 whacks” overshadows more intriguing questions surrounding the legitimacy of Brooke’s paranoia. The period-esque language of the 1890s portions is mostly convincing if at times overly ornate.



A complex and riveting parallax view of domestic crimes, decades apart.



AFTER THE FIRE

Mankell, Henning
 Translated by DeLargy, Marlaine
 Vintage (416 pp.)
 \$16.95 paper | Oct. 31, 2017
 978-0-525-43508-2

Eight years after his barren but settled life was harrowed by a series of once-in-a-lifetime crises (*Italian Shoes*, 2009), ignominiously retired surgeon Fredrik Welin is beset by an even more traumatic

event in this final novel by the creator of beloved police detective Kurt Wallander.

Awakening one night to find his house on fire, Welin has just enough time to don two boots before fleeing the inferno. The home built by his grandparents is a dead loss, along with everything inside it; even the pair of boots he grabbed wasn't really a pair. Thinking of Louise, the daughter whose existence he never suspected until she was an adult, he reflects: "Did I want to rebuild the house or should I let Louise inherit the site of a fire?" That pivotal question is complicated by several other developments. Louise is a thief and perhaps a prostitute; she won't tell Welin who fathered her baby; she's arrested on a trip to Paris; and in the meantime, the local police have shown considerable interest in Welin as the leading suspect in what looks more and more like a case of arson. Even the new boots he orders turn out to be the wrong size. Only his growing friendship with journalist Lisa Modin seems to hold out any hope of renewal for Welin's frozen life. Yet here too the path is strewn with difficulties: Lisa is a generation younger than Welin, she has baggage of her own, and it's not at all obvious that she returns his romantic interest. No wonder Welin concludes, "There was no god in my caravan." Yet amid all his ruminations and flashbacks and flirtations with despair, Mankell shows his unlikely hero's indomitable will to survive and, if possible, to make the next chapter of his life an improvement on what's gone before.

A bracing look at a twilight year in the life of an old man who, when confronted daily by perfectly good reasons for giving up altogether, doesn't so much rise above as plow stoically through them.



THE LOST PRAYERS OF RICKY GRAVES

Mattson, James Han
 Little A (368 pp.)
 \$24.95 | \$14.95 paper | Oct. 10, 2017
 978-1-5039-4248-6
 978-1-5039-4247-9 paper

After a lonely teenage outcast commits a horrific crime, his family and friends are left to pick up the pieces.

A cruel prank orchestrated by local bad boy Wesley Thompson pushes the closeted Ricky Graves to kill both himself and his tormenter. Once the reporters drift away, no one wants to talk about what happened with Ricky, least of all his sister, Alyssa. With "no job, little money, [and] no real friends," Alyssa returns to small-town New Hampshire to help her mother deal with Ricky's suicide, "this totally messed-up thing, like impossible to process." In a series of fast-paced, first-person vignettes, Mattson collects the voices of those

INVISIBLE INK
 NAVIGATING RACISM IN CORPORATE AMERICA

by Stephen M. Graham



Graham, an attorney, details his confrontations with deep but subtle racism in his debut memoir.

"Overall, his book acts as an effective reminder that prejudice doesn't have to be obvious to be harmful, and the current political climate makes Graham's goal – to see an effective, national discussion on race – even more vital."

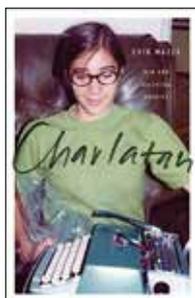
"...Graham makes it clear that the stakes involved are high, and that much work needs to be done to counteract ignorance and resistance."

—Kirkus Reviews

For information on publishing or film rights, please contact sgraham@fenwick.com

still reeling from Ricky's death, from classmates to internet chat buddies. There's Jeremy Little, the San Francisco-based accountant Ricky reached out to via Man-Date chat rooms; Corky Meeks, Alyssa's ex-boyfriend and Ricky's self-appointed mentor; Mark McVitry, a classmate suffering from PTSD and bloody visions of Ricky's murder-suicide; and Claire Chang, who feels compelled to help Mark recover but whose reasons for doing so are murky even to herself. While at times the structure of the novel forces its themes, Mattson expertly teases out the relationships between our real lives and our social media feeds, the faces we show to the world and the ones we must confront in the mirror.

A moving debut about the intersections of rural queerness, the internet, and forgiveness.



CHARLATAN

Mazza, Cris
Curbside Splendor (320 pp.)
\$16.95 paper | Oct. 10, 2017
978-1945883-06-4



A chronological compilation of Mazza's (*Something Wrong With Her*, 2013, etc.) substantial body of short fiction, spanning the years 1979 to 2013.

Adulterers, introverts, photographers, and people who fish; dog lovers, mediocre musicians, mediocre parents, people on the fringes or moving toward the fringes; people who are pretty sure the fringes are all there is—it's as hard to qualify a typical Mazza character as it is to qualify a typical Mazza story except to say that they're not typical. Using forms that disrupt or interrupt (the he said, she said columns of text in "Is It Sexual Harassment Yet?"; the inset blocks of type running through "Our Time Is Up"), Mazza's stories explore the interstices between desire and satiation; they roil with queasy fever-dream intensity; they intuit the power of sex, of gender, of domination but neither condemn nor condone its abuses. In this insightfully edited collection, Mazza's well-earned reputation for guileless depictions of sexuality and for characters who are complicated by their obsessive introversion is on display, as is her equally well-earned reputation for critical insight into the nonbinaries, absences, and mobile social dynamics of post-feminist thought. However, far from being a paean to the author's role as a scholar, critic, or polarizing auteur within what can loosely be defined as experimental fiction, Mazza's newest work stands first and foremost as a supremely accomplished body of individual artistry. Again and again, what this collection showcases is Mazza's rarest of talents: the ability to leave judgment out of exploration, to create characters whose desires may enact violence (both emotional and physical) but whose existence is not an examination of how society "should" react to that violence. Rather, the only societies in these stories are the ones the characters make for themselves. Mazza stays out of it. The reader's preconceptions should as well.

An impressive compendium of an important career—Mazza's work shines.



57 OCTAVES BELOW MIDDLE C

McIlvoy, Kevin
Four Way (184 pp.)
\$17.95 paper | Sep. 5, 2017
978-1-935536-98-7

An offbeat batch of short and flash fiction, generally concerned with domesticity but more notably obsessed with the sound and feel of language.

These experimental stories from McIlvoy (*The Complete History of New Mexico*, 2005, etc.) revel in their peculiar setups. A man buys a lawnmower from the poet Basho; a group of suburban men run through their neighborhood like werewolves, "a pack of men pulling a sleigh full of prostration"; vets go golfing in the snow; a narrator contemplates a person dressed as a Sprite can. Straightforward plots never follow from these premises, but McIlvoy is more interested in wordplay and observation than narrative. That can have some pleausurably jarring effects: one cycle of stories concerns a skateboarding-obsessed man named Teacher Reptile who writes epic fantasy novels and speaks in a patter that's half King James Bible, half *Thrasher* magazine. ("Give unto me the great chain, that I may rule the pit without bottom, the session that hath not end of grind.") McIlvoy can play up the humor and absurdity of language, as when he connects possessives like boxcars ("Inside their home's heart's sounds: the tub's faucet's dripping's splashing...") or upends the conventional aggression of the bank-robbery note. Even so, the overall mood is somber and contemplative, filled as the stories are with the likes of drowned people returning home, lonesome ghosts playing music in a bar bathroom, and hard-luck types aimlessly riding a bus in New Mexico. Most somber (and revealing) of all the stories is one teacher's recollection of a student producing a grammatically clumsy but charming sentence. "I have needed, wanted your flooding truth to kill what I have been," the narrator writes, echoing McIlvoy's consistent urge to distrust telling the story straight and to let the provocative premise and odd delivery carry the day.

A challenging but fresh and inventive set of prose poems.



THEMYSTERY.DOC

McIntosh, Matthew
Grove (1,664 pp.)
\$35.00 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-0-8021-2491-3

A vast, beguiling, but mixed-bag postmodern novel of ideas, misread intentions, and robots, told in words, pictures, symbols, and even blank pages.

After a long absence following the 2003 publication of his ambitious but much shorter novel, *Well*, McIntosh returns with a sprawling yarn that at first plays with the conventions of the mystery

On the verge of her arranged marriage, a teenage girl begins questioning the cult she has been raised in.

HANNA WHO FELL FROM THE SKY

genre; a writer awakens to find that he cannot remember who he is, while a beautiful woman asks gently, "You all right, babe? You look kind of dazed." He is even more puzzled to find a blank document on his computer—if it is indeed his computer in his own house—with the title "themystery.doc," which, a helpful friend reminds him, he has described as "a post-post-neo-modern mystery story." Shades of meta—and with a Schrödingerian dead cat to boot. If the reader isn't similarly dazed at this point, then he or she hasn't quite appreciated what's going on in a tableau as blurry as our protagonist's glassless vision. Now, why can't he remember where and who he is? One clue is that his head hurts—and, given the diet of drugs that flows through the book, it's small wonder, to say nothing of the spasms of violation and violence. Like kindred spirits William Vollmann and Mark Danielewski, McIntosh aspires to philosophy; one preoccupation is religion, with small lessons delivered here and there by characters like the plumber who snakes the drain while describing "a system of commerce which was run according to Christian principles," aspirationally called "Kingdom of Heaven, Incorporated, International." It being a mystery, the angel of death hovers always in the wings, with tabloid-ish news flashes, photos of the twin towers collapsing, and so forth to remind us of our mortality—and, it seems, our vulnerability in the face of the helpful bots ("Hello, I am Michele, I am the website greeter") who pepper these pages.

Perplexing but often wonderful; while some of this seems written in a self-indulgent private code, what is accessible can be provocative and fascinating.



HANNA WHO FELL FROM THE SKY

Meades, Christopher
Park Row Books (352 pp.)
\$24.99 | \$11.99 e-book | Sep. 26, 2017
978-0-7783-2873-5
978-1-4603-0035-0 e-book

On the verge of her arranged marriage, a teenage girl begins questioning the cult she has been raised in.

Hanna will be 18 in less than two weeks, and as is tradition in Clearhaven, she will be wed on her birthday. She is betrothed to her father's friend Edwin and will be his fifth wife. But as the day approaches, Hanna becomes increasingly uneasy about leaving her disabled younger sister, Emily, as well as her other siblings and sister-mothers, in her abusive father's care. Hanna also meets Daniel, a boy her own age who has been across The Road and into the city beyond, and during their conversations, Hanna begins to question what kind of future she wants. Hanna's mother, Kara, encourages her to consider options other than being forced into marriage by offering her more details about her birth, including a story in which Hanna "fell from the sky." As the day of her wedding approaches, Hanna must decide whether she can protect herself and her family from the future that her father and Edwin have preordained. In his U.S. debut, Meades (*For the Love of Mary*, 2016, etc.) excels

at creating a world both familiar and strange, in which the stories people are told, and the ones they choose to believe, wield great power. The emphasis on faith, the fantastical and mythological, invites the reader to also question what elements of the story are real and which are the collective delusion of a small, removed community—and then to ask whether that would make these experiences any less real. Characters are dynamic, full of complex needs and desires, and the story moves quickly with ever increasing urgency as Hanna's day of reckoning approaches with exigent dangers from both inside and outside her home.

An engrossing, richly layered novel.

the Iron Couch

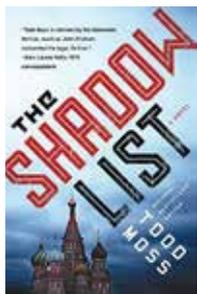
a novel by daniel ross madsen

ISSN e-book: 978-0-999-0473-0-4
ISBN Paperback: 978-0-999-0473-1-1

In this debut novel, a professor tries to recover lost memories centering on his invention, a quantum computer with amazing properties.

"An entertaining psychological and scientific thriller with a satisfying finish."
—Kirkus Reviews

For publishing or agent representation, please contact drmadsen@cox.net



THE SHADOW LIST

Moss, Todd
Putnam (368 pp.)
\$27.00 | Sep. 5, 2017
978-0-399-17594-7

Another fast-paced diplomatic thriller featuring State Department crisis manager Judd Ryker (*Minute Zero*, 2015).

A gullible businessman in London falls hard for a free-money scam and disappears. Under an influential congressman's pressure, Judd Ryker is reassigned from an important project to find the man. Then Judd's wife, Jessica Ryker, who heads a covert unit at the CIA in Langley, is assigned to meet and learn about the Bear, a Russian mobster and "monster" who "operates a vast criminal syndicate from St. Petersburg" that extends worldwide, dealing in everything from "vodka and toilet paper" to "heroin and whores." Then pirates attack an oil platform off the Nigerian coast, leaving no survivors. Fascinating characters populate the pages, like the 7-foot-2-inch Nigerian NBA player Tunde Babatunde; the fearsome Queen Sheba, who is a faux contract killer and really a CIA agent; Funke Kanju, the colorful internet personality and thorn in the Nigerian government's side; and the obligatory venal congressman. Don't get attached to everyone, though, because many don't survive. All the while, young Nigerians engage in romantic intercontinental email conversations, deftly duping lonely hearts into writing large checks for airfare or medical bills. It was "the art of the scam in the age of free email...shaping the pitch to catch your perfect marks." The action moves swiftly from Langley to Lagos to Saint Petersburg, with hardly time for a quiet bowl of borscht—trouble is always boiling, danger always present. But living on the edge for the CIA is a career well suited for Judd and Jessica, because they thrive on tension and challenge. The two are smart, appealing characters readers will enjoy spending a few hours with.

Far more action than diplomacy in this page-flipping yarn. Fans of diplomatic thrillers will love this one.



PARSIMONY

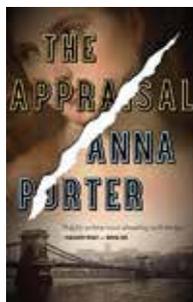
Nash, Peter
Fomite (227 pp.)
\$15.00 paper | Oct. 1, 2017
978-1-944388-11-9

A dutiful son helps his increasingly demented father make his last life transition, into a nursing home, despite their uneasy relationship.

European in feel, Nash's (*The Life and Times of Moses Jacob Ezekiel*, 2014) novel unspools nonchronological layers of memory, spreading out from a single day, as David Ansky assists his irascible father, Jacob, who recently assaulted his maid, move from his Florida apartment to a care facility. Jacob—himself the son of Joseph Ansky, "professional Communist, imperious foreign editor for

the *Daily Worker*"—is a retired Russian history professor who taught at Cornell and wrote a book on Trotsky. While, in the here and now, David sorts Jacob's belongings, soothes his rants, and gentles him along the last lap of a none-too-happy life, filaments of the past unfurl and connect, offering glimpses of David's childhood; his failed marriage; his choice of career, in part a repudiation of his father's dry academia and barren politics. There's a Sebald-ian flavor to this melancholy web of recollections, regrets, vignettes, infidelities, and mood moments, colored with intellectual and historical detail and some archaic vocabulary—"oppugning," "sesquipedalian," "impetrates." And, occasionally, the story switches point of view from David's resigned practicality to Jacob's cacophony of sights, smells, and flickering thoughts. Nash's composed tapestry of a family is delicate and poetic, although it accrues meaning more from the accumulation of episodes than penetration of character. There's a late squall of melodramatic confrontation—"When I look at you now...all I can do is weep." "I didn't want to end up like you"—but the concluding mood is sweetly generous in its acknowledgement of generational love and loss.

Nash treads deftly into archetypal territory.



THE APPRAISAL

Porter, Anna
ECW Press (336 pp.)
\$15.95 paper | Oct. 17, 2017
978-1-77041-410-5

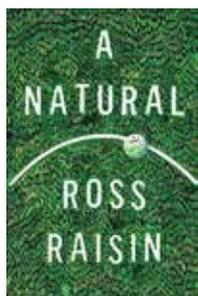
Verifying the authenticity of a controversial Titian proves a deadly assignment for a resourceful, and not entirely lawful, art appraiser.

While enjoying the summer bustle in Budapest's Vörösmarty Square, Attila Feher watches a long-legged redhead who has a short exchange with a man Attila recognizes as the slightly disreputable owner of a posh art shop before she makes a beeline for the Gellért Hotel. Retired from the Budapest Police Department but still in possession of his detective skills, Attila follows. The redhead's name is Helena Marsh, the red hair is a wig, and at the Gellért she totally changes her appearance. Porter discloses the reason for her deceptions, and her presence in Budapest, in tantalizing bits. Helena's been brought to the city to verify the authenticity of a Titian being sold by local Dr. Krestin. Helena's a thorn in the side of some felonious "Ukrainians." Porter's offbeat thriller yields tension and humor from its revolving perspectives as well as its deep bench of colorful supporting characters, all obsessed with nationality, be they Canadian, Russian, American, or something else. When a murder victim is discovered in Helena's hotel room, Attila reveals that he's working freelance for the Budapest police but, when push comes to shove, will he stand with or against Helena?

This peppy thriller from Porter (*Kasztner's Train*, 2008, etc.) bursts with banter and tantalizes the reader with half-revelations and game-changing twists. Not a nail-biter but definitely a romp.

A deft collection of spooky fables that pivots from classic stylings to postmodern irony.

WHITE DIALOGUES



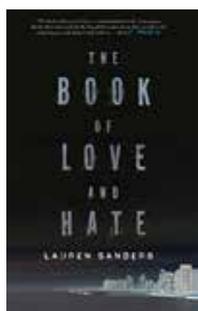
A NATURAL

Raisin, Ross
Random House (400 pp.)
\$27.00 | Oct. 17, 2017
978-0-525-50877-9

A closeted gay soccer player and an injured teammate's estranged wife offer an intimate picture of life in the lower reaches of professional British football.

Raisin (*Waterline*, 2011, etc.), whose first novel, *God's Own Country* (2008), was shortlisted for several prizes, has twice inhabited the fictional world of the outsider and does so again with this third novel. Nineteen-year-old Tom Pearman showed promise as a Premier League junior but isn't promoted and must settle for a fourth-division team named Town. (Be not bemused, Yank reader: Raisin keeps the sport's arcana to a minimum.) Tom has a "quiet, solitary way" and remains largely apart from the other players, but he soon is drawn to the groundskeeper, Liam. Elsewhere, team captain Chris Easter sees his season collapse under a terrible leg injury that sends him moping to his home's spare room, physically and emotionally distant from his wife, Leah, and young son. Leah was already feeling isolated as a football spouse, finding it difficult to socialize with other team couples. The focus is largely on Tom and Liam's affair, which is rendered with restraint and sympathy; it's a bold theme, since not a single active British footballer has come out so far. For a while, though, it is Leah's story that seems to engage Raisin more, with its telling domestic details and an isolation for which there is no prospect of the numbing distraction in the next match. Yet neither of these parallel narratives generates much spark until a link between them and a leak to an internet fan forum stirs devastating fears in Tom and reveals the mindless prejudice and cruelty of his fellow players and fans.

This is a sensitive treatment of very different kinds of solitude and pain.



THE BOOK OF LOVE AND HATE

Sanders, Lauren
Akashic (350 pp.)
\$15.95 paper | \$15.99 e-book
Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-61775-582-8
978-1-61775-600-9 e-book

A torrid tale of sex, lies, and intrigue set against the backdrop of the 2008 Gaza War.

In 1988, speed skater Jennifer Baron slammed into a wall while competing at the Calgary Olympics, injuring her leg and ending her career. Twenty years later, Jennifer is a recovering alcoholic who oversees the charitable foundation established by her father, an eccentric billionaire who recently fled the United States and is now on the run from Homeland Security, the FBI, and the Jewish Mafia. While at

a conference in Tel Aviv, Jennifer meets her father's lover and business associate, Gila Zyskun, who seduces Jennifer and convinces her to smuggle sensitive information out of the country. Jennifer does the job and flies back to New York without incident but then can't stop thinking about Gila. When rumors surface suggesting that her father has been killed in Jerusalem, Jennifer seizes the opportunity and returns to the Middle East. With conflict brewing between the Israelis and the Palestinians and assorted intelligence agencies watching her every move, Jennifer endeavors to find Gila and uncover the truth regarding her father. Lambda Literary Award winner Sanders (*With or Without You*, 2005, etc.) squanders artfully drawn, psychologically complex characters with muddy storytelling, florid prose, and a melodramatic narration that's riddled with digressions and pseudo-philosophical asides.

Though Sanders excels at writing love and its complexities, the thriller portions of her plot are poorly executed.



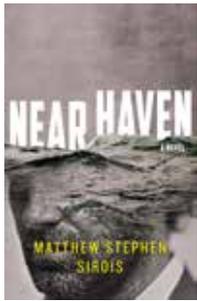
WHITE DIALOGUES

Sims, Bennett
Two Dollar Radio (212 pp.)
\$15.99 paper | Sep. 12, 2017
978-1-937512-63-7

Eleven eerie, dryly witty short stories by novelist Sims (*A Questionable Shape*, 2013).

There are some clever literary stunts scattered throughout this collection, but there's no doubting the inventiveness of the author's prose, pacing, and ability to build tension and occasionally dispel it with laughter. The first entry, "House-sitting," is a gothic nightmare in the vein of "The Tell-Tale Heart," about a housesitter driving themselves insane with the specters of ghosts. "You keep thinking: you are living in the cabin of a madman," writes Sims. "You wonder: how long can you live in a madman's home without going mad yourself?" "The Bookcase" is a very meta exercise in which a mean-spirited scrap between neighbors becomes fodder for an episode of Ira Glass' *This American Life*. "Ekphrases" is another experimental work, one that catalogs works of art completed at "the edge of death." What seems to be a trifle in "Two Guys Watching *Cujo* on Mute" turns out to be some emotional stories traded between friends as the titular film plays out in the background. There's a travelogue of monsters in "City of Wolfmen" and a Kafka-esque play on kaiju movies in "Destroy All Monsters." Sims goes down the gothic horror road again in the two-pager "A Premonition," which begins with the delicious line, "It was late and I was beset by a black wind." There's a final ghost story of sorts in "Radical Closure," in which a writer ruminates on the nature of death. The collection ends with an eerie multimedia work that mashes up the film criticism of Lebanese author Jalal Toufic, images from the Hitchcock film *Rear Window*, and the spiraling madness of a film critic choking on his own critique. Touché.

A deft collection of spooky fables that pivots from classic stylings to postmodern irony.



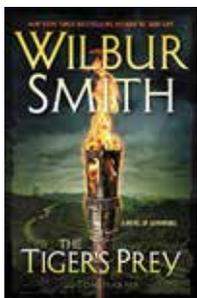
NEAR HAVEN

Sirois, Matthew Stephen
Belle Lutte Press (329 pp.)
\$16.00 | Sep. 1, 2017
978-0-9973260-4-8

Sirois' promising debut is an apocalypse novel with a twist.

It's 1987, and Tom Beaumont, an apprentice boat builder in Maine, is coming to grips with impending catastrophe: a comet is streaking toward Earth, and its impact, less than a year away, is said to be both unavoidable and fatal for humanity. Civil society has begun collapsing: long-distance communication is faltering; food and fuel are growing ever scarcer; many townsfolk have fled, the infirm have died, and suicide is epidemic. Tom is a thoughtful loner and a skeptic—a "shomee"—but he's too hermitlike and too taciturn to be much of a revolutionary. The book is full of action scenes, as Tom encounters ragtag paramilitaries, a corrupt and venal church, feral animals, a band of pirates...and all this mayhem takes place on home ground. Sirois' intriguing innovation is to keep the focus hyperlocal: Tom strays as rarely as possible from his seaside village or from the dockside workshop where he lives. He's either going to die from the impact or ride it out, but either way he'll be *here*. The result is a book that focuses not on geopolitics or conspiracy theories or the truth/untruth of the prediction of doom but on Tom's elemental interactions with the land, the weather, marauders, his few remaining friends, and the wreckage of civilization. During the lean, cold winter he even comes, unexpectedly, to *appreciate* this simpler, more violent, and brutish world. Survival turns out to be the full-time, full-commitment job he's yearned for: "Books and televisions and washing machines were all just filters, ways he had kept the world at a distance. But the world, ignorant of these barriers, was still there." The prose can be florid, and there are occasional plot gaps or clichés, but when Sirois focuses on creating a chronicle of and meditation on life in a postindustrial hellscape, his book impresses.

A worthy addition to a genre pioneered by writers like Cormac McCarthy and Matt Bell: the post-human pastoral.



THE TIGER'S PREY

Smith, Wilbur & Harper, Tom
Morrow/HarperCollins (432 pp.)
\$28.99 | Oct. 17, 2017
978-0-06-227650-6

Turning the time machine back to the 17th century, Smith (*War Cry*, 2017, etc.) shifts the Courtney family saga to Tom Courtney's battles with the British East India Company.

Tom is persona non grata in England, suspected of murdering his brother Black Billy, but he's done well in exile. Currently he's trading along the East African coast. It's perilous, though. Tom must avoid the East India Company, which

enforces its monopoly with its own military. There are also dread pirates. In fact, a recent confrontation cost Tom his ship. Now he's retreated to Cape Town to outfit a new ship, *Kestrel*. With his brother Dorian and their wives aboard, the *Kestrel's* fleet enough to slip into the East India Company's rich territory. All goes well until a monsoon tosses Tom's crew into the clutches of a vicious jungle queen. This time he loses Neptune, a sword presented to an ancestor by Sir Francis Drake. Along the way, Tom has discovered two long-lost nephews, one of whom goes rogue while the other joins Tom. Characters other than never-say-die Tom are realistic; but some interesting characters are introduced and immediately disappear. Skimming the surface rather than probing its depth, the story is all sails, swordplay, and sinister betrayal. Descriptions are spare yet proficient: ashore it's mostly monsoon, beastly heat, or cutthroat sultans atop war elephants while aboard ship, sailor-speak livens up the thoroughly cinematic battle scenes. There's some PG-rated sex, while the fight scenes include multiple dismemberments and a cringe-inspiring method of execution that will become the stuff of nightmares.

A cyclone of nonstop action-adventure with enough swordplay and bodice-ripping to recall the Errol Flynn swashbuckler pirate movies of old.



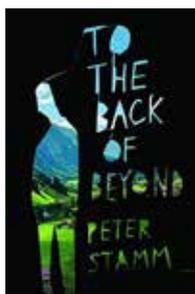
LIVE FROM MEDICINE PARK

Squires, Constance
Univ. of Oklahoma (224 pp.)
\$19.95 paper | Oct. 5, 2017
978-0-8061-5733-7

A rocky encounter with a rock icon changes a filmmaker's life in Squires' (*Along the Watchtower*, 2011) heartfelt novel.

Ray Wheeler is down on his luck thanks to bad judgment on his last documentary: he kept filming while a man was shot and wounded; now Ray is saddled with both guilt and a lawsuit. Ray accepts a gig to document the comeback of Lena Wells, a 1970s country-rock superstar whose music he never cared for. A Western visionary and one-time glamour figure who seems a cross between Stevie Nicks and Lucinda Williams, Lena has a past shrouded in mystery. Her relationship with her guitarist, Cy, is intense but ambiguous, and her son, Gram, has never learned who his own father is. The more Ray investigates her life the messier things get, as he develops sexual chemistry both with Lena and with Gram's wife, Jettie. As Lena's comeback show in her Oklahoma hometown of Medicine Park draws closer, it gets more likely that either the event or Ray will fall apart. Rock aficionados will appreciate references to cult heroes Los Lobos and Gram Parsons, and the lyrics Squires provides for Lena's songs are good enough to pass as genuine '70s rock artifacts. Squires gets it right on both sides, making Lena a convincingly grizzled rock & roll survivor while giving resonance to Ray's journey to personal redemption.

You don't need to be a rock fan to appreciate this rite-of-passage story, but Squires' fellow rockers will also appreciate her attention to details.



TO THE BACK OF BEYOND

Stamm, Peter

Translated by Hofmann, Michael

Other Press (160 pp.)

\$15.95 paper | Oct. 3, 2017

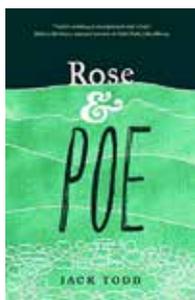
978-1-59051-828-1

A man abandons his family for no discernible reason.

In the latest from Swiss novelist Stamm (*Agnes*, 2016), Thomas and Astrid are relaxing outside their house shortly

after returning from vacation. One of their two children cries out, and one of them must go see what's the matter. She goes and stays inside. Without premeditation, he waits and then starts walking. And keeps walking. With no chapter divisions, the narrative alternates between the two of them after he leaves, generally around four pages for each, describing what he does and how she feels. It is plain that both of them had been operating on autopilot, doing and saying the same things day after day for years on end. Maybe this was the problem. Maybe this is the human condition. In a rare moment of reflection, Thomas ponders the routine that had been his life, "the faith, the conviction that it was the right thing to do. He too had once formed part of this quiet consensus, he had functioned in the way that was expected of him, without it ever having been discussed." Now, on impulse, he has freed himself from that consensus in order to walk wherever for however long. Astrid also feels some freedom, along with various other emotions associated with stages of denial and acceptance. She doesn't quite feel that he is gone, because so much of her own routine remains unchanged. In fact, she felt like she "was making herself Thomas's accomplice...as though she was joined with him in some secret conspiracy." She covers for him with the kids and at his work, waiting for him to return, wondering if he will, wondering why he left. They had never argued. Maybe that was the problem. It would seem that there are only two ways that the novel can resolve itself, that either Thomas will return or he won't, but a Stamm parable is never so cut and dried. Toward the end, "the years had no particular chronology, the journeys no direction, the places stood in no discernible relation to one another."

In this densely detailed, largely opaque book, the novelist leaves his readers as unmoored as his characters.



ROSE & POE

Todd, Jack

ECW Press (248 pp.)

\$15.95 paper | Oct. 17, 2017

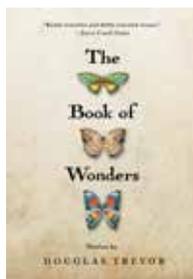
978-1-77041-399-3

Innocence is savagely confronted by intolerance in a modern morality tale with classical roots.

Meet Poe Revere Didelot, aka The Giant Poe, impossibly tall and broad, with a "port-wine stain like a blood sign

splashed on his face and neck," a "hump on his back," and "strange eyes of two different colors." He has six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, and he's the beloved son of indomitable cheese-maker Rose in the isolated rural community of Belle Coeur County. A freak of nature, Poe lives a peaceful life, tending goats, fishing, and admiring from afar Miranda Thorne, the lovely, clever daughter of mentally failing, previously stellar Boston trial lawyer Prosper Thorne. Add a "sprite" of a courier named Airmail, riding a Kawasaki Ninja motorbike, and you have the bones of Shakespeare's cast list for *The Tempest*, updated by Todd (*Rain Falls Like Mercy*, 2011, etc.) and reshaped as a simpler fable with a contemporary edge. Poe, a sweeter version of Caliban, has the misfortune of observing the rape and beating of Miranda, a crime for which he is arrested, tried, and acquitted, after which a larger and even more devastating attack is inflicted—on the Didelots—by the community. Todd's curiosity of a novel touches on the familiar features of the original play—a once-powerful man in exile; a wondrous daughter; a suggestion of magic and fantastical beasts—but its shape is both different and more familiar: Poe is a "gentle giant, the man who wouldn't hurt a fly," assailed by a society fearful of and vengeful toward the "other." Though the writing is lyrical and the storytelling sincere, a sense of stereotype infuses this strange mix of police procedural and legend.

A sympathetic but slight fairy tale is overshadowed by its more nuanced forebear, *The Tempest*.



THE BOOK OF WONDERS

Trevor, Douglas

SixOneSeven Books (267 pp.)

\$14.00 paper | Oct. 17, 2017

978-0-9848245-5-7

Trevor's (*Girls I Know*, 2013) second book of stories is nimble and smart—bookish in a mostly good way.

These characters, often academics, tend to be feeling hapless in middle age,

and they crave life changes that their habits and mildness and shore-hugging aren't likely to allow—until Trevor puts them into collisions with big disruptive forces: a boyfriend who seems sprung from mythology ("Endymion"), an iconoclastic writer of experimental fiction ("The Novelist and the Short Story Writer"), the threat of exposure as an embezzler ("The Program in Profound Thought"). The satiric elements in these stories, especially toward their beginnings, can be a bit easy and overboard, but by taking his characters' emotional plights with utmost seriousness even as he lampoons their circumstances, Trevor manages again and again to steer the stories into deeper, weirder, more fascinating waters. In "The Detroit Frankfurt School Discussion Group," for example, Colin, a recently divorced sad-sack adjunct instructor in English, having failed to reorder his life through golf, Thai cooking, learning Russian, strong drink, internet dating, and so on, is kidnapped off the street and driven to an abandoned, rat-ridden book depository in the wrecked inner city, where his charge is to explain by candlelight how German critical theory can help fix Detroit. Trevor

Five characters—two of whom are ghosts—are linked by the time they spend at Kew Gardens.

A THOUSAND PAPER BIRDS

ingeniously stretches the thin filament of this conceit, and by the end it's become a surprising and even poignant small-scale novel of ideas featuring two formidable characters: the resurgent Colin and his charismatic abductor, a drug dealer-turned-philosopher named Ty.

Well-made, erudite, often witty short stories from an accomplished veteran of the form.



A THOUSAND PAPER BIRDS

Udall, Tor

Bloomsbury (336 pp.)

\$28.00 | Oct. 3, 2017

978-1-4088-7863-7

Five characters—two of whom are ghosts—are linked, in part, by the time they spend at Kew Gardens in London.

Udall's debut novel introduces a music teacher, Jonah Wilson, who gave up a recording career so he and his late wife, Audrey, could try to start a family.

Readers learn through the remembrances of Jonah and another man named Harry Barclay that Audrey, a linguist, had a series of miscarriages before she died and had been visiting Harry, who cares for plants at Kew. Harry looks after Milly, a little girl who loves the gardens as much as he does, but something is amiss—Harry warns her away from some Kew visitors, and others can't see Harry or Milly. Jonah meets Chloe Adams in the gardens, where she's preparing for an exhibit of her elaborate paper art and origami. Udall folds all of this into a story about grief, pain, and longing but also love, friendship, and desire. Details about Audrey's lost pregnancies and Jonah's life as a widower are vivid, and botanical and historical information about Kew Gardens add interest. The supernatural aspects of the story distract from rather than enhance it, though. Some of the prose is a bit overwrought, as in this passage about Jonah on a sleepless night: "He lumbers from room to room, switching on lights, wearing only a T-shirt. His lower half is naked, as vulnerable as a child's." The big reveals about what happened to Audrey, who Harry and Milly are, and what will become of Jonah and Chloe come quickly one after the other, lending a slightly rushed feel to the end of the book, although there is room for readers to come to their own conclusions.

A quirky debut novel, heartfelt in its portrayal of human emotions, pleasantly surprising, but slightly overdone.



GOD, THE MOON, AND OTHER MEGAFUNA

Wells, Kellie

Univ. of Notre Dame (188 pp.)

\$20 paper | Sep. 30, 2017

978-0-268-10226-5

A vibrant collection of 15 thematically linked stories shaped by surrealism, narratives seemingly reflected in a fun-house mirror.

Many of these stories seem only one step away from normalcy, but that's a step made into a strained, twisted reality. An example comes in "Kansas," in which the state is personified as a woman, dismissive of the "arrogant coasts" and plagued by a Colorado who insists on being called "Co-co." Other stories might be called fairy tales—"The Grift of the Magpie"—shape-shifted into adult fare. Bricks of language, syntax, and wordplay build narratives that lure readers into entering a bizarre world: for instance, meet "Guillaume, the mysophobic pig, who suffered from painful hoof bunions due to ill-fitting galoshes." These blocks of wordplay grow and combine and multiply to become metaphor or parable or flights of fancy. How else to find "great stage potential" in the Tom Thumbery of *L'Enfant du Paradis*? In a fablelike story, God boots Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, leaving them "awaiting a radioactive salvation." And then sometimes individual words are piled up or shoved together in wispy, allusive sentences meant to reveal character or motivation: "Indeed it was the very finger girdle of wedlock she had so long admired in the lint-smithy's window!"; or a fairy tale is warped into a new truth as in "The Girl, the Wolf, the Crone." This is not a book to be read in one sitting. Some stories are obscure. Some read like prose poems. All are worth appreciation.

Wells is a writer like no other. Prepare for magic allusive and illusive, intelligent and innovative.



A SELFIE AS BIG AS THE RITZ

Williams, Lara

Flatiron Books (160 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$9.99 e-book | Oct. 31, 2017

978-1-250-12662-7

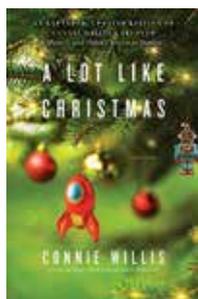
978-1-250-12663-4 e-book

This spare debut collection of short stories provides a moody snapshot of modern life and love.

A sense of transience and dislocation pervades this collection of 21 short stories about the slippery relationships and maturational struggles and setbacks of 20- and 30-somethings today. The men and women who provisionally populate these pages often appear to be passing through chapters in their lives, moving from one place or phase to another. They are divorcing spouses, leaving lovers (or being left by them), quitting jobs, packing up house and moving on, or away, or back home. Written in spare prose

that in several cases casts the reader as its subject—“You’ve quit your job, your flat, your boyfriend,” Williams writes in “Sundaes at the Tipping Yard,” about a woman who begins a Creative Writing MFA—the stories feel confessional, deeply personal, almost diaristic, as if they are being downloaded directly into our own brains or perhaps not intended for other ears at all. They also convey a broad everything-at-once awareness in which the ends of things are written into the beginnings of them: the eventual divorce apparent at the moment of marriage or the inevitable bad outcome of a date foretold in the care one has taken to dress for it. Loves are found and lost. A sense of self is lost and found. Williams can limn huge swaths of a character’s life in a handful of pages by zeroing in on details that communicate everything about everything, all in an instant.

Williams’ painstakingly, pointillistically composed portraits capture the small moments that can change the trajectory of a life.



A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS

Willis, Connie

Del Rey/Ballantine (544 pp.)

\$17.00 paper | Oct. 10, 2017

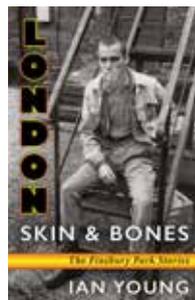
978-0-399-18234-1

A collection of Christmas stories with just the right blend of sugar and spice.

Willis (*Crosstalk*, 2016, etc.) has strong opinions about Christmas, from the perfect Christmas movie to watch (not *It’s*

a Wonderful Life) to what’s wrong with most Christmas stories: they’re “improbably sentimental and saccharine.” The good news is that Willis has avoided falling into that trap with this book of stories, an expanded version of *Miracle and Other Christmas Stories* (1999). “Miracle” and “deck.halls@boughs/holly” deliver a pleasantly old-fashioned screwball-comedy tone, complete with romance. In “Adaptation,” a story that deftly balances heartfelt emotion and satire, a divorced father yearning to spend Christmas with his daughter encounters the Spirit of Christmas Future—working as a bookstore clerk. In another story that’s part satire, part romantic comedy, the narrator of “All Seated on the Ground” struggles to figure out why alien visitors to Earth have responded to a Christmas carol when nothing else has gotten through to them. Some stories, such as “In Coppelius’s Toyshop,” strike a darker tone or tackle the issue of faith directly, as in “Epiphany.” Not all the stories hit—the pod-people premise of “Newsletter” is both too mean-spirited and not pointed enough to work—but those that do are sweet and sharp, whimsical and heartfelt, funny and warm, just like the Christmas stories, movies, and TV episodes Willis recommends at the end of this volume.

Fans of Willis’ gently comic speculative fiction will love this collection, and it will also appeal to readers looking to get into the holiday spirit.



LONDON SKIN & BONES The Finsbury Park Stories

Young, Ian

Illus. by Kimber, William

Squares & Rebels (140 pp.)

\$18.00 paper | Oct. 15, 2017

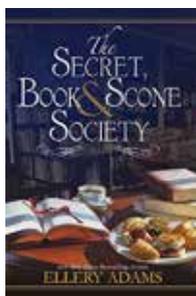
978-1-941960-07-3

Young’s short story collection chronicles life in London’s Finsbury Park neighborhood in the early 1980s.

There’s a fantastic sense of place and time in Young’s collection, which focuses on a group of working-class gay men living in London in the early years of Margaret Thatcher’s administration. Early in the book, the narrator—who shares some biographical details with the author—notes that Finsbury Park is “even in daytime the grayest of London districts.” That sets the mood neatly: Young isn’t here to romanticize this neighborhood but to give a sense of place for good and for ill. The episodic nature of this collection means that some of the characters are introduced multiple times, which can feel somewhat repetitive. Ultimately, though, Young is interested in discovering ways in which these characters can surprise his narrator, themselves, and one another. A politically inclined poet with a distaste for Thatcher’s politics and a fondness for writing misanthropic letters to the editors of various periodicals turns out, in person, to be warm and hospitable; a grotesque man with fascist inclinations hopes the people around him will turn a blind eye to his leftist past. Young neatly evokes a variety of settings, including political demonstrations, bars, and a stamp shop at which several of the characters are regulars. Among the running threads here is the legacy of the second world war and the Holocaust: in the powerful “In My Dreams I Can Drive,” the narrator meets an aging man who may have encountered his one-time Nazi tormentor—or may be losing his mind. In telling the narrator’s story, Young leaves room for plenty of others, to memorable effect.

Creating an impressive and tactile sense of the era in which they’re set, Young’s stories summon up a host of memorable personages.

M Y S T E R Y



THE SECRET, BOOK & SCONES SOCIETY

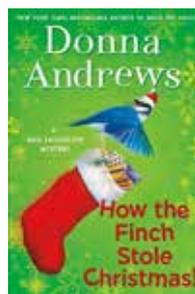
Adams, Ellery
Kensington (304 pp.)
\$25.00 | Oct. 31, 2017
978-1-4967-1237-0

Four women with hidden secrets form a group to combat deceit and solve murders.

The ladies of Miracle Springs work in mysterious ways. Former librarian

Nora Pennington, owner of Miracle Books, helps people deal with their troubles by recommending specific reading material. Hester Winthrop, owner and baker at the Gingerbread House, creates scones individually tailored to different people's needs. Estella Sadler, owner of Magnolia Salon and Spa, is a high-maintenance gal with a bad reputation with men. Quiet June Dixon works at the Miracle Springs thermal pools. All are haunted by terrible events that continue to cast long shadows. The ladies' passing acquaintance with one another deepens when Neil Parrish, a man who'd chatted with Nora and bought a scone from Hester, falls or is pushed in front of a train. After Sheriff Todd calls them in for interviews because they'd all spoken with the dead man, they confide in each other their suspicions that Parrish was murdered despite the sheriff's ready assumption that his death was suicide. Parrish was one of the partners in Pine Ridge Properties, a new housing development going up near Mineral Springs, and June, who talked to him at the pools, said he seemed to have regrets about the project. Incensed by the way the misogynist sheriff treats them, the ladies form a secret society to investigate. When Nora expresses interest in buying a house in Pine Ridge, she's surprised to learn that she qualifies for a loan from the local bank run by the sheriff's brother. As the ladies investigate, another partner in the suspicious building project is killed, and Estella is arrested for his murder. Now the friends are even more determined to discover the truth.

Adams (Peach Pies and Alibis, 2013) kicks off a new series featuring strong women, a touch of romance and mysticism, and both the cunning present-day mystery and the slowly revealed secrets of the intriguing heroines' pasts.



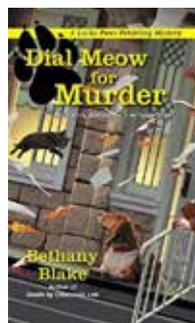
HOW THE FINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS!

Andrews, Donna
Minotaur (288 pp.)
\$25.00 | Oct. 24, 2017
978-1-250-11545-4

The Yuletide festivities in Caerphilly, Virginia, are threatened by an inebriated actor, a slight case of murder, and 23 Gouldian finches.

It looks like so much work for professor Michael Waterston to both direct and star in the community/college production of *A Christmas Carol* that's grown out of his well-received one-man show that the board hires Malcolm Haver to play Scrooge instead, figuring that the increased box-office take Haver's name guarantees will more than offset the visitor's salary. That turns out to be a decision only the Grinch could endorse. Haver's only sort of a name, only sort of an improvement on Michael even when he's sober, and only sort of sober even on his best days. So Michael's wife and assistant director, Meg Langslow, adds wrangling the star to her extensive resume (*Gone Gull*, 2017). Even though Meg gets help from her mother; Mayor Randall Shiffley; and the usual suspects, it's a tall order, partly because once Randall gets Haver cut off from legitimate sources of alcohol, the sozzled thespian finds an obliging bootlegger, and partly because Meg has other problems on her mind: an unidentified corpse found in a local stream; a persistent fan of Haver's who's pressing the Rev. Robyn Smith to mount a celebration of Weaseltide, whatever that is; a collection of finches Meg's endlessly resourceful grandfather has added to his menagerie; and eventually a murdered bootlegger. Will this last development keep the headliner sober long enough to tread the boards come Christmas Eve?

A mildly curdled take on the most wonderful time of the year that won't offend the most devout celebrants. Spoiler alert: the finch doesn't steal Christmas, and the tale ends with a celebration of Weaseltide and the triumphant premiere of *A Christmas Carol*. Whew.



DIAL MEOW FOR MURDER

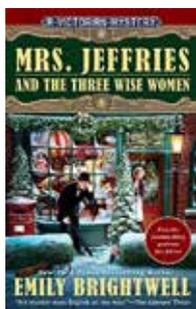
Blake, Bethany
Kensington (342 pp.)
\$7.99 paper | Sep. 26, 2017
978-1-4967-0740-6

A petsitter is saddled with a troublesome Persian while trying to solve the mystery of his murdered owner.

Sylvan Creek petsitter Daphne Templeton is battenning down the hatches to take care of wealthy Lillian Flynt's pride and joy, a Persian cat. Budgety's Sir Peridot Tinkleston, known simply as Tinkleston, has an attitude unbecoming his pedigree. Daphne's gifted with pets, however, and she's certain she can tame the spoiled feline when she visits

him in Flynt Mansion. She's taken by surprise when the house, which she'd been told would be empty, is being shown by her realtor mother to Elyse Hunter-Black, the out-of-town ex of Daphne's friend and local police officer Jonathan Black. As she confides in her friend Moxie, Daphne's almost as surprised to hear of Elyse's interest in the property as she is to learn that Elyse kept her ex-husband's last name. There's barely time for Daphne to adjust to thinking about Elyse's move back to town and her relationship with Jonathan before she discovers that Lillian hasn't gone away as reported but has instead been murdered. As her incredulous mother berates her for finding yet another body (*Death by Chocolate Lab*, 2017), Daphne effortlessly switches gears from petsitter to amateur sleuth, reviewing her ideas about motive (most obviously money) with Moxie. Her leading suspect is her former high school classmate Tamara Fox, whose recent friendship with Pastor Pete and his potentially disreputable church dealings provide ample motive. With her canine companion, Socrates, at her side, Daphne searches for a murderer while trying to tame Tinkleston.

Though Blake doesn't stand out in the genre, she gamely ties together bits of mystery, romance, scandal, dogs, cats, and pet-friendly recipes in a story that covers all the bases.



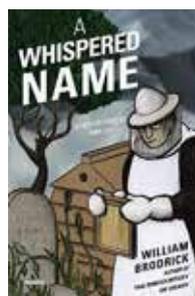
MRS. JEFFRIES AND THE THREE WISE WOMEN

Brightwell, Emily
Berkley Prime Crime (288 pp.)
\$25.00 | Oct. 17, 2017
978-0-399-58422-0

Victorian sleuths from every social stratum imaginable work in the background to solve cases.

Six weeks after he's given the case of Christopher Gilhaney, killed in an apparent botched robbery on his way home from a Guy Fawkes Night dinner party, bungling Inspector Nivens has gotten no results. Now the police, thinking it was a deliberate murder, hand the case to Inspector Gerald Witherspoon, who, along with his reliable constable Barnes, has a near-perfect record at catching killers. Not even Witherspoon realizes that the secret to his success is his network of sleuthing servants, gossips, informants, and wealthy friends who supply tidbits the police would never hear. This time, his housekeeper, Mrs. Jeffries, and her staff are less eager to get involved because Christmas is near and they fear their holiday plans will be ruined if they don't solve the case in record time. Gilhaney was a financial genius hired by Newton Walker to work his magic on the failing Walker and Company. Abigail Chase, who, with her husband, Gordon, hosted the Guy Fawkes party, remains so incensed by his rude behavior that six weeks later she still remembers most of what he said to the people he insulted, all of whom have ties to Walker and Company. Convinced that one of the party guests had to be the killer, Witherspoon sets out to investigate their backgrounds. The sulking staff, aware that the only way to salvage their Christmas plans is to find the culprit, fan out far and wide in search of clues.

Fans of Brightwell's venerable series (*Mrs. Jeffries Rights a Wrong*, 2017, etc.) will be delighted to revisit the clever sleuths as they wade through a plethora of suspects and motives in this pleasant holiday tale.



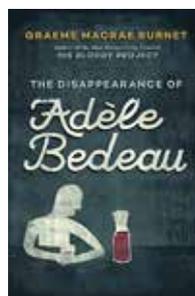
A WHISPERED NAME

Brodrick, William
Overlook (352 pp.)
\$27.95 | Sep. 19, 2017
978-1-4683-1115-0

A sleuthing clergyman gets more than he bargained for when he delves into war records to clear the reputation of a fellow monk.

Father Anselm, beekeeper of Larkwood Priory and a former barrister, meets distraught Kate Seymour at the grave of his deceased friend, Father Herbert Moore. She impugns Moore's reputation, implying misconduct during the first world war, though in vague terms. Anselm and Herbert were close friends who shared their journeys to Larkwood in a search for life's meaning. Nonagenarian Father Sylvester swears that Herbert never in his life mentioned World War I, but the prior gives Anselm a letter that Herbert was holding next to his heart at the time of his death. Addressed to a Pvt. Harold Shaw of the British Expeditionary Force, it gives Anselm a solid starting point for the investigation the prior gently insists he undertake. From here, the story branches off into two parallel tracks, with Capt. Herbert Moore injured on the front lines in 1917 and Anselm gathering as much intel as he can at the Public Record Office before his planned meeting with Kate Seymour. The picture gets much darker before it clears, with implications of desertion, a military trial, and a fatal relationship.

The third of six mysteries in Brodrick's cycle (*The Discourtesy of Death*, 2017, etc.), this complex thriller, winner of the Crime Writers' Association Gold Dagger Award, explores some of life's biggest moral questions and puts a human face on the war to end all wars.



THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ADELE BEDEAU

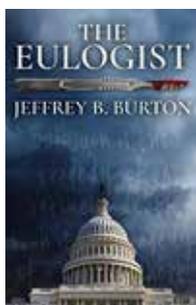
Burnet, Graeme Macrae
Arcade (240 pp.)
\$24.99 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-5107-2309-2

A waitress's disappearance pits a dogged detective against a man trapped by his own falsehoods.

Manfred Baumann is an unusually regular regular at the Restaurant de la Cloche in Saint-Louis, a nondescript town at the far edge of Alsace. He always eats at the same table, drinks a carafe of wine one glass at a time even though he ends up paying twice as much,

and has a secret crush on Adèle Bedeau, the sullen young waitress. Years ago, Manfred's grandfather bought the restaurant for his parents, but it slipped through their hands, and Manfred remains an awkward patron on the fringe of life. By day he's a bank manager; once a week he joins in a poker game at the restaurant; and he has a regular appointment at a brothel in a ritual that never changes. But Adèle interests him, and one night he hides in some bushes to watch her meet her boyfriend and ride off with him on a motor scooter. When she doesn't show up for work the next day, Manfred is so embarrassed about spying on her that he lies to Inspector Georges Gorski—then continues lying, even about things like having changed his normal lunch order the day Adèle disappeared. Despite his aversion to hunches, Gorski has a strong intuition that Manfred is covering up something. Gorski often recalls, and even revisits, the scene of an old murder, a case that the once-junior detective hoped would advance him into a better position in a bigger city. Instead, he's still stuck in a provincial town and a loveless marriage, but his dedication to his work drives him to push Manfred harder. Gorski's persistence only increases Manfred's innate paranoia, and a door to the past leads to unintended consequences for both the hunter and the hunted. Burnet (*His Bloody Project*, 2016) sets up the book as an old French mystery that he's newly translated, attaching a "translator's afterword" to the back, but the metafictional elements add little to the novel.

Dreary but worth reading for its insight into its sad, flawed, and sometimes-repellent characters.



THE EULOGIST

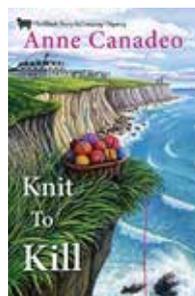
Burton, Jeffrey B.
Permanent Press (360 pp.)
\$29.95 | Oct. 31, 2017
978-1-57962-502-3

His third case pits Special Agent Drew Cady, who thought he'd left the Washington office of the FBI for a quiet desk job with the Medicare Fraud Strike Force in Minneapolis, against the assassin who leaves a eulogy with every corpse.

We'd all like to be well-remembered after death, but few of us get the pre-emptive boost accorded the victims of the contract killer dubbed the Canadian, who's nice enough to include a duly flattering send-off at every crime scene. The first beneficiary of this largesse seems to be Sen. Taylor Brockman, D-Va., stabbed so neatly in the ribs that the experts think it was a professional hit. But wait: only a week ago, some perp with the exact same M.O. seems to have killed drug-wasted pharmaceuticals scion Thaddeus Jay Aadalén, whom Brockman had gotten pardoned after he was sentenced to 14 years in prison for his involvement in a car accident that resulted in the death of his classmate Evan Sandin. Roped back into the action while he's on a routine visit to D.C., Cady (*The Lynchpin*, 2014, etc.) questions TJ's parents: no response, especially from his father, who stepped down as CEO after he suffered an incapacitating stroke. He questions Evan's father, vindictive

retiree Karl Sandin, at his trailer park in Lynchburg: nothing. For better or worse, however, the Canadian is intent on providing new evidence, or at least new crime scenes. Soon after the remarkably similar murder of TJ's older brother, Colin, who might have been a more steadying influence if he hadn't been keeping company with major drug dealer Jorge Hierra, Cady and company get a lead that promises a major break in the case—if they can keep the Canadian from breaking them first.

Add a few points for some expertly handled action sequences, subtract a few points for some logical slackness—just why was it so important to leave those eulogies?—and you have, on balance, a pretty average thriller.



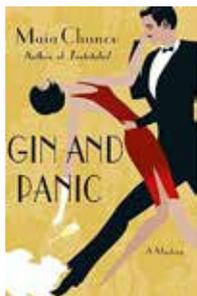
KNIT TO KILL

Canadeo, Anne
Kensington (320 pp.)
\$25.00 | Oct. 31, 2017
978-1-4967-0861-8

A pre-wedding getaway is interrupted by murder.

The members of the Black Sheep knitting group are busily preparing for Lucy Binger's nuptials when real estate agent Suzanne Cavanaugh proposes a stress-relieving long weekend at Osprey Shores, a gated community on a coastal Maine island where her college roommate, Amy Cutler, has a spare cottage they can use for free. Knitshop owner Maggie, her talented young assistant, Phoebe, Lucy, and Dana all pile into Suzanne's SUV and head for Maine. Their first night, as Maggie is giving a knitting class at the refurbished mansion that anchors the community, the group is disturbed by a loud argument from a nearby card room, where Derek Pullman accuses Dr. Julian Morton of cheating. The next morning Phoebe heads for the cliff walk to take pictures of birds while the rest go to the yoga class offered by Meredith Quinn, the ex-wife of Julian Morton, whose current wife, Tanya, also joins the class, which is soon disturbed by loud sirens. They learn that Julian fell over the cliff to his death and that he might have been pushed. Although the group has had sleuthing experience (*Till Death Do Us Part*, 2012, etc.), the women prefer to not get involved until Amy's husband becomes a suspect. Julian was a despicable person whose whole life had been littered with nasty incidents and others' suffering. Both his wives hated him. So did the son he recently cut out of his will. He stole a valuable medical discovery from Amy's husband and sold it as his own. As a young man, he'd pushed the brother of another Osprey resident into a campfire. Those are just the people who live nearby; who knows how many others may have hated him enough to kill him?

A leisurely investigation into a murder with plenty of time for beautiful scenery, delicious food, and, of course, knitting.



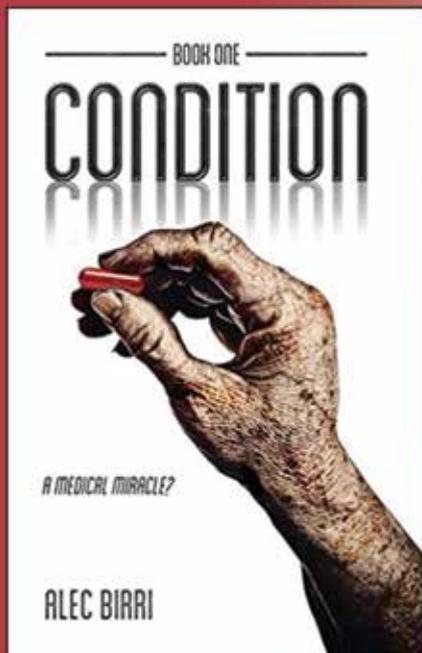
GIN AND PANIC
Chance, Maia
 Minotaur (304 pp.)
 \$25.99 | Oct. 24, 2017
 978-1-250-10905-7

A socialite-turned-private eye makes waves in an investigation of a hunting trophy that turns into a murder case.

Though the Discreet Retrieval Agency is hardly a profitable pursuit, widow Lola Woodby is determined to continue solving mysteries (*Teetotaled*, 2016, etc.) with her former cook, Berta, a formidable Swede. Their latest client is wealthy Lord Eustace Sudley, who wants them to retrieve a stuffed and mounted rhinoceros head from his friend and hunting companion Rudy Montgomery, saying it actually belongs to him. Berta is eager for the agency to take the case, if only to keep them in chocolate cake. Lola has her eyes on a bigger prize: she's sure that her boyfriend, Ralph Oliver, is about to give her a ring. But

Lola may not be the detective she believes she is, for when she meets Ralph at dinner, he presents her a gift box containing a gun, indicating that he'd rather she be safe in her single state than become his wife. Thrown by Ralph's lack of commitment, Lola decides to take the job with Lord Sudley, and she and Berta head to Connecticut's Montgomery Hall to hunt the rhinoceros trophy in its newest habitat. Forced to hobnob with weekend guests, Lola feels right at home with her wealthy employer and friends, unlike Berta, who just wants to get the job done. The stakes rise dramatically when Rudy is shot and killed and Lord Sudley hires the agency for a proper murder investigation. Berta doesn't trust Lord Sudley's intentions, but Lola thinks the investigation might offer a way to get over Ralph, and the possibility that Lord Sudley wants to keep her around for romantic reasons is the perfect olive in her martini.

Gratuitous complications weigh down the charms of this jinxed investigation, which don't ring as true as the setups of Chance's modern-day series (*Bad Housekeeping*, 2017, etc.).



ISBN # 978-1785899683
 www.alecbirri.com

CONDITION

A MEDICAL MIRACLE BUT AT WHAT COST?

by Alec Birri

After a terrible accident, a British soldier grapples with the severity of his injuries in this debut novel.

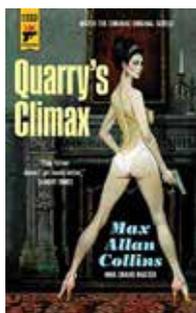
“[Birri] slowly, tantalizingly divulges each detail of the plot, pulling readers in while always leaving them hungry for more.”

“An astute and gripping sci-fi-tinged mystery.”
—Kirkus Reviews

For information regarding publishing or film rights, please contact mail@alecbirri.com

A 1970s hit man who starred in last year's Cinemax series gets his strangest assignment to date.

QUARRY'S CLIMAX



QUARRY'S CLIMAX

Collins, Max Allan
Hard Case Crime (240 pp.)
\$9.95 paper | Oct. 10, 2017
978-1-78565-180-9

A 1970s hit man who starred in last year's Cinemax series gets his strangest assignment to date: to prevent an unknown rival contractor from killing his target.

Jack Quarry—not his real name—can hardly believe his ears when the Broker, who sends a good deal of work his way, tells him that he not only turned down a contract to have Memphis porn king Max Climer killed, but that he wants to make sure that whoever got the contract fails. Climer, whose operations have grown from the Climax Club to *Climax*, the magazine that's giving *Playboy* and *Hustler* runs for their money, is just too big a money-spinner for the Broker to lose. That means somebody else has to lose: first whoever's been hired to kill Max, then whoever did the hiring. Who might want Max dead? Pretty much everybody, says the Broker. But Quarry (*Quarry in the Black*, 2016, etc.) meets precious few candidates for the honor, because this isn't that kind of story. Arriving in Memphis with his gay partner, Boyd, whose partnership, he insists, is purely professional, Quarry instantly makes his way to Max's office in order to show him how lax his security is. Max, hearing his story, hires him ostensibly as a security consultant, leaving Quarry free to prowl around the Climax Club, meeting Vernon, Max's cousin and sidekick; Vernon's daughter, Cordelia Colman, who demonstrates her rebellious streak by joining local protests against Climax Enterprises, which sounds absolutely worthy of them; and coupling with every stripper and publisher's niece he can find, till he protests, "How much sex did these people think I could stand?"

Plenty of fatalities, but you won't mourn them, since they're all a lot more forgettable than the vintage '70s soundtrack that seems to be pounding away in every room in Memphis.



MURDER FOR CHRISTMAS

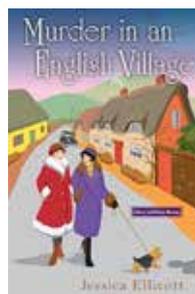
Duncan, Francis
Sourcebooks (288 pp.)
\$15.99 paper | Sep. 26, 2017
978-1-4926-5170-3

Duncan, the pseudonym for William Underhill (1918-88), returns to print with a classic Christmas country-house puzzle.

Although Sherbroome House is the ancient seat of the Melvin family, no one of their line is the present owner. The manse was purchased from the penurious last living relative and completely redone by Benedict Game, who is well-known for celebrating Christmas in a sweeping, old-fashioned way. Among this year's guests are Game's old friend Jeremy Ranier, Ranier's ward,

Denys Arden, and her boyfriend, Roger Wynton, whom Ranier appears to dislike. Old favorites include Rosalind Marsh, Austin Delamere, Mr. and Mrs. Napier, and the stunning Lucia Tristram. New additions this year are professor Loring and Mordecai Tremaine, a talented amateur sleuth. Game's secretary, Nicholas Blaise, is the glue that holds things together for the disparate guests. And adhesive seems to be needed this year, for Tremaine notices a good deal of tension among the guests because several of them are hiding secrets. He's seen Game's sister Charlotte in the nearby town having tea with an unknown man, though she denies she was there. It's her screams that awaken the household on Christmas Eve, the night Game famously hangs presents for all his guests on the Christmas tree. This cycle of gifts includes a body lying beneath the tree. The murdered man, who at first everyone assumes is Game, turns out to be Ranier. Tremaine is fortunate that Superintendent Cannock is an old friend of an officer Tremaine once worked with and is willing to let him investigate. As is often the case in golden-age mysteries, seemingly innocent discussions reveal the secrets so many are trying to hide, at least one of which is dangerous enough to kill for.

Fans of classic British mysteries will delight in this Christmas tale loaded with red herrings and cleverly planted clues.



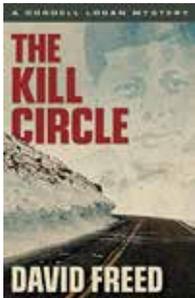
MURDER IN AN ENGLISH VILLAGE

Ellcott, Jessica
Kensington Books (304 pp.)
\$25.00 | Oct. 31, 2017
978-1-4967-1050-5

Two ladies of a certain age rekindle their friendship and solve a murder in 1920 England.

Beryl Helliwell, a famed American adventuress now seeking a quieter life, finds her old school chum Edwina Davenport in need of the company, not to mention the ready cash, a lodger would bring. Beryl sweeps in to the rescue and even props up Edwina's standing in the village by implying that her advertisement for a lodger was not prompted by need but was instead a coded message to His Majesty's Secret Service. The rumor backfires when someone in the village feels threatened enough by this possibility to attempt to strangle Edwina in her own back garden. The only motive Edwina and Beryl can imagine for the attack is linked to the Women's Land Army, which farmed the local estate during the war, and one of the Land Girls who went missing. Just as Beryl and Edwina begin to ask their neighbors about the past, they stumble over a local maid, Polly Watkins, dead in a field. Could Polly's murder be linked to the old disappearance? The local constable, who disapproves of fast women, refuses to investigate, insisting that Polly's death was an accident. So it falls to Beryl and Edwina to find the missing girl and Polly's murderer. With great relish the pair uncover even more village scandals and bring the killer to justice.

As formulaic as its title suggests, Ellicott's debut delivers the traditional trappings of the cozy mystery without adding any bothersome complications or emotions.



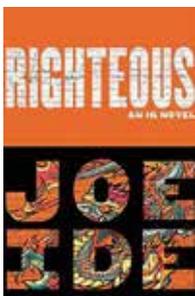
THE KILL CIRCLE

Freed, David
Permanent Press (280 pp.)
\$29.95 | Oct. 31, 2017
978-1-57962-511-5

One accidentally killed CIA analyst is a tragedy. Two accidentally killed CIA agents is a job for Cordell Logan.

CIA officer Layne Sterling, of the Casualty Assessment Matrix, visits pilot/retired government assassin/amiable narrator Cordell Logan (*Hot Start*, 2016, etc.) with an offer she hopes he can't refuse. CIA operative Rico Perris recently drove off the road and into a river during a blizzard near Denver, and another CIA agent in Phoenix died in a suspicious hit-and-run last month. But Sterling goes too far when she implies that she could expose Logan's past CIA deeds, and he angrily ends the meeting. After his former handler Buzz, still with the CIA, reams him for passing up this opportunity to do something meaningful, Logan reconsiders his refusal and changes his mind. Sterling gives him a crash course in the careers of the two agents, both heavily invested in theories surrounding the Kennedy assassination. The likelihood that their two deaths were coincidental gets fainter and fainter. Beneath Logan's contentious relationship with Sterling is undeniable sexual tension. The duo's examination of the accident locations triggers unusual suspicion and resistance. They question Perris' live-in girlfriend, who has little to tell them, and a Vietnam buddy, who has nothing good to say about Perris. Just when they think they've hit a dead end, a gun battle with police, followed by a lame excuse, convinces them that they're close to a perilous truth.

Freed's mostly formulaic thriller, the sixth in this series, is best in its one-on-one scenes and observations of modern life.



RIGHTEOUS

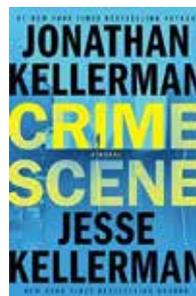
Ide, Joe
Mulholland Books/Little, Brown
(336 pp.)
\$26.00 | \$11.99 e-book | Oct. 17, 2017
978-0-316-26777-9
978-0-316-26776-2 e-book

The game's afoot once again for 20-something genius sleuth Isaiah Quintabe, who has two cases to deal with: one leading him to mayhem in Las Vegas, the other to the man responsible for his brother's death.

Things are pretty much as we left them with Isaiah in Ide's acclaimed debut mystery/thriller, *IQ* (2016). He's still leading a

mostly solitary life in his East Long Beach, California, neighborhood, using his agile intellect to help old ladies find lost jewelry, chase away abusive ex-husbands, or deal with volatile gang members who think he's too smart for his own good. The one case he'd most like to crack involves the hit-and-run death of his beloved older brother, Marcus. Just as he's finally figured out that Marcus' death was no accident, IQ gets a call from drop-dead-gorgeous Sarita Van, his late brother's one-time fiancée, who's now a high-powered attorney. She wants him to find her younger sister, Janine, a Vegas-based club DJ who shares a gambling addiction with her ne'er-do-well boyfriend, Benny. They're on the run from Leo, a vicious loan shark, whose collector in chief is a 7-foot-tall, broad-shouldered, dead-eyed Canadian named Balthazar. Isaiah's only backup on this mission is his short-fused but dauntless neighborhood buddy, Dodson, whose own plate is full trying to make his food truck profitable and waiting for his wife to give birth to their first child. Once on the Vegas strip, this post-Millennial Holmes and Watson get far more than they bargained for as they have to fight and think their way through waves of Chinese mob muscle led by a baleful sex trafficker leaning heavily on Sarita and Janine's craven, corrupt father. Ide weaves the often antic events of this case in tandem with Isaiah's lonesome inquiry into his brother's death; a pursuit that leads him to the sinister Seb Habimana, an East African refugee who's made his mark in Isaiah's hood in shady real estate dealings and shadier money laundering operations. The plots of these separate cases collide as much as they interweave, and Ide can sometimes go a little too long and deep on background info. But he keeps your head in the game throughout with his witty style and edgy storytelling, both of which show greater assurance than in his first novel—and even bigger potential for the future.

A thrilling follow-up to one of the more auspicious detective-series debuts in recent memory.



CRIME SCENE

Kellerman, Jonathan & Kellerman, Jesse
Ballantine (401 pp.)
\$28.99 | Aug. 1, 2017
978-0-399-59460-1

Kellerman Senior (*Heartbreak Hotel*, 2017, etc.) and Junior (*Potboiler*, 2012, etc.) team up again in this tale of a case so cold it's been marked solved for years.

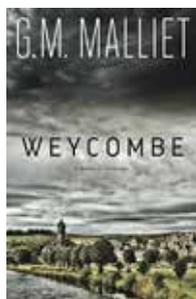
No matter what his daughter says, all the evidence suggests that former Berkeley psychology professor Walter Rennert died of natural causes after falling down a flight of stairs in his own home. But Tatiana Rennert-Delavigne tells Deputy Clay Edison, of the Alameda County Coroner's Bureau, that she can't forget the remarkably similar death 12 years ago of Rennert's graduate student Nicholas Linstad. Rennert and Linstad had already achieved the worst kind of fame imaginable when Julian Triplett, one of the subjects they'd chosen for a study of how exposure to violent images affects learning and impulse control, fatally stabbed Rennert's

The rich are indeed different from you and me: they're better at hiding their secrets.

WEYCOMBE

lab assistant, Berkeley undergrad Donna Zhao, back in 1993, and Tatiana would dearly love to see her father posthumously vindicated of any role, however unwilling, in Donna's murder. As Clay quickly realizes, however, there's no obvious reason to reopen the case. Triplett confessed years ago and served his time in prison, and both Linstad and Rennert are dead, the latter of nothing more sinister than a ruptured aorta. So Clay, whose interest in Tatiana gradually develops an amatory dimension, has to battle everyone he meets, from uncooperative witnesses to the defensive counterparts who handled the original investigation to his own boss, who wants him to stick to his own caseload. Clay's own work on the case is unrelenting, and his heart is clearly in the right place, but neither the Kellermans' flat prose nor the dearth of interesting suspects nor the plodding detection generates much momentum. Even so, the hero's job gives his perspective welcome novelty, and the treatment is never less than professional.

First of a series apparently aimed at readers willing to invest their time and attention in the hope of more excitement down the road.



WEYCOMBE

Malliet, G.M.

Midnight Ink/Llewellyn (384 pp.)

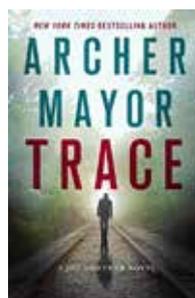
\$24.99 | Oct. 8, 2017

978-0-7387-5426-0

The rich are indeed different from you and me: they're better at hiding their secrets.

Residents of the wealthy English village of Weycombe are too classy and buttoned-up to express overt disagreement about anything more fraught than the mission statement of the local book club. But resident Jillian White is American, and even though she's married into an aristocratic family, she hasn't fully adjusted to the lack of outward conflict. Perhaps that's why she's so entranced when her neighbor Anna Monroe is murdered. Jill finds herself drawn to investigate Anna's life and uncover her extramarital dalliances, which may be the least shocking of the secrets she was hiding. Reaching out to Anna's closest friends, Jill learns that the other women in town may have known more about Anna than anyone realized. Although Jill conscientiously questions Anna's social-climbing boyfriend, her chronically ill husband, and various trophy wives and DIY queens, she can claim all too little personal companionship of the sort that might have given her the more complex voice necessary to motivate the plot twists. As Jill un.masks substantive facts that could explain Anna's death, she approaches the insight that her interest in the subject is helping her avoid a more thorough examination of her own life and relationships.

The self-referential witticisms give the tale a very slow start; the windup reads like *Gone Girl* on a Train. One thing's for sure: Malliet has departed sharply in setting and style from the bucolic world of the Max Tudor novels (*Devil's Breath*, 2017, etc.).



TRACE

Mayor, Archer

Minotaur (336 pp.)

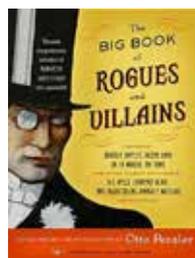
\$25.99 | Sep. 26, 2017

978-1-250-11326-9

Can the Vermont Bureau of Investigation get along without Special Agent Joe Gunther (*Presumption of Guilt*, 2016, etc.)? Joe's 28th case gives them a chance to find out.

The Green Mountain State is a beautiful place, but it's not the best spot to recuperate from the Lyme encephalitis afflicting Joe's mother. So Joe squires her to a specialized Missouri facility for state-of-the-art care. While he's away, crime doesn't accommodatingly cease. Jayla Robinson, on the run after nearly killing her seriously abusive boyfriend back in Albany, gets off a bus in Burlington and is promptly hit by a car driven by Rachel Reiling, the daughter of Joe's girlfriend, state medical examiner Dr. Beverly Hillstrom. Dr. Tina Sackman brings to Special Agent Lester Spinney unwelcome new evidence that the traffic stop three years ago that led to the deaths of both Senior Trooper Ryan Paine and Kyle Kennedy, the driver he pulled over, was anything but a routine case of mutually assured destruction. And a 10-year-old girl brings three teeth she's found along the railroad tracks to Sgt. Colin Guyette of the Windsor Police Department. As Joe sits by his mother's bedside cheering her every improvement, Rachel plunges herself into danger back home by inviting Jayla to sleep on the couch in her place till she gets settled; Lester patiently interviews everyone he can imagine might throw some light on that 3-year-old shooting; those teeth lead the VBI on a winding path to an unusually inventive case of sabotage; and Joe returns just in time for a celebratory barbecue.

Solid, unspectacular work from all hands, including Mayor, who as usual forgoes high-concept mystery for the slow-burning pleasures of the multitrack regional procedural.



THE BIG BOOK OF ROGUES AND VILLAINS

Penzler, Otto—Ed.

Vintage Crime/Black Lizard (928 pp.)

\$25.00 paper | Oct. 24, 2017

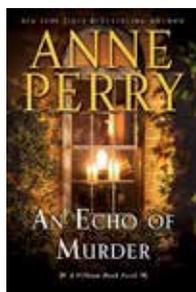
978-0-525-43248-7

Black Lizard's latest plus-size anthology, reprinting 72 stories, practically all of them published in the U.S. and U.K. over the past two centuries, is a monument to bad behavior.

With obvious exceptions like Hannibal Lecter and Count Dracula, fictional criminals have rarely attracted the same attention as fictional detectives because they've rarely had the same staying power. Even so, veteran anthologist Penzler (*Bibliomysteries*, 2017, etc.) has assembled a lineup of franchise

luminaries likely to quicken the pulse of many a genre fan: Grant Allen's Colonel Clay, E.W. Hornung's A.J. Raffles, Thomas W. Hanshew's Hamilton Cleek, Maurice Leblanc's Arsène Lupin, Clifford Ashdown's Romney Pringle, K. and Hesketh Prichard's Don Q, Sax Rohmer's Dr. Fu Manchu, Frederick Irving Anderson's The Infallible Godahl and Sophie Lang, O. Henry's Jeff Peters and Andy Tucker, Jack Boyle's Boston Blackie, Gerald Kersh's Karmesian, Edgar Wallace's Four Square Jane, Leslie Charteris' Simon Templar, Erle Stanley Gardner's Ed Jenkins, Lester Leith, Paul Pry, and the Patent Leather Kid, Edward D. Hoch's Nick Velvet, Robert L. Fish's Kek Huuygens, Lawrence Sanders' Bernie Rhodenbarr, Martin Ehrengraf, and John Keller, Max Allan Collins' Quarry, Donald E. Westlake's Dortmund, and of course Dracula. The most notable omission, mentioned in Penzler's brief Introduction but unaccountably absent from the table of contents, is Melville Davisson Post's crooked lawyer, Randolph Mason. Although these franchise entries are naturally of varying quality, many of them mark their villains' (or their rogues'—Penzler's conscientious attempt to categorize every single one of these nefarious leads as either one or the other or both seems a pointless exercise) first appearances, giving this collection an added historical interest. Newcomers may want to begin with the most celebrated nonfranchise tales: Robert Louis Stevenson's "The Body Snatcher," Richard Connell's "The Most Dangerous Game," Thomas Burke's "The Hands of Mr. Ottermole," Ben Hecht's "The Fifteen Murderers," and William Irish's "After-Dinner Story." Old hands may note that bad guys can make just as big a splash in a short story as in a long one: the lengthiest item here, Donald E. Keyhoe's pulp novella *The Mystery of the Golden Skull*, packs no greater punch than the oldest story of all, one of the shortest, and one of the most shockingly unexpected from its source, Washington Irving's "The Story of a Young Robber."

Weighing in at a svelte 928 pages, Penzler's omnibus is equally impossible to pick up and put down.



AN ECHO OF MURDER

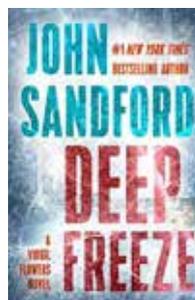
Perry, Anne
Ballantine (304 pp.)
\$28.00 | Sep. 19, 2017
978-0-425-28501-5

Cmdr. William Monk, of the Thames River Police, is faced with a series of murders among Shadwell's Hungarian circle as sanguinary as they are ritualistic.

If Hungarian immigrants have not completely integrated into London's larger community by 1870, their history in the city is marked more by peaceful separatism than strife. But that sense of peace is shattered by pharmacist Antal Dobokai's discovery of the body of widowed Imrus Fodor in the warehouse he owned on Shadwell Dock—a crime whose location calls Monk (*Revenge in a Cold River*, 2016, etc.) to the scene. Fodor has been killed by a bayonet. His fingers have been broken, his lips severed and crammed into his mouth. Seventeen burning candles, two of

them purple, decorate the murder scene. Dobokai, who clearly aspires to a leadership position among his people, offers to serve Monk as a translator and guide, but with no obvious suspect, Monk can only wait for further developments, which arrive in the form of a second corpse. Impoverished former landowner Lorand Gazda has been stabbed to death in the kitchen of his Garth Street home, his wounds, the condition of the body, and even the 17 candles obvious echoes of the earlier crime scene. More murders follow the same pattern, until a mob desperate to find a scapegoat outside their borders fastens on Dr. Herbert Fitzherbert, who worked alongside Monk's wife, Hester Latterly, during her days as an unlicensed nurse in Crimea. Fitz, fluent in Hungarian and still dogged by nightmares of his service, honestly can't remember whether he killed anyone, and Monk is obliged to arrest him to save his life. The ensuing trial produces no notable twists before a denouement whose last-minute arrival masks its essential lack of surprise.

Lesser work from a sometime master, less striking for its echoes of a Victorian past than for its previsions of a xenophobic future marked on both sides by distrust and fear.



DEEP FREEZE

Sandford, John
Putnam (400 pp.)
\$29.00 | Oct. 17, 2017
978-0-399-17606-7

Virgil Flowers, of Minnesota's Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, works an altogether unremarkable murder and a surprisingly inventive case on the side.

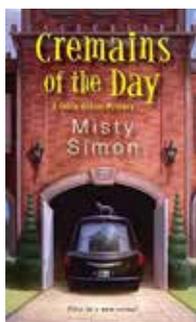
The night before Gina Hemming is fished from a frozen river, someone bashes her in the head with a champagne bottle shortly after a meeting of the committee to organize her 25th high school reunion. Since Gina holds the power of the purse over virtually everyone in Tripton—she inherited the town's bank on her father's death—and the bruises on her body suggest habitual S&M play, there are lots of suspects, from Lucy and Elroy Cheever, whose business loan application she was about to deny, to heavy-equipment operator Corbel Cain, her sometime lover, to Fred Fitzgerald, who recently purchased a whip from Bernie's Books, Candles 'n More. But none of them murdered Gina; the opening chapter shows lovelorn exterminator David Birkmann, who's been carrying a torch for her since their school days, killing her when she indicates in the most direct way possible that she doesn't return his interest. The investigation is every bit as routine as it sounds, and it's nice for Virgil that Sandford has thrown in an unrelated complication: the arrival of LA gumshoe Margaret Griffin, who's gotten the Minnesota governor's support in serving a federal cease and desist order against Virgil's classmate Jesse McGovern, who's been doing a brisk mail-order business hawking her X-rated creations, Barbie O and Boner Ken. On second thought—since the Barbie knockoffs get Virgil beaten up by four oversized females and his truck burned to the

A detective with the Botswana CID tackles two baffling cases.

DYING TO LIVE

ground—it may be less nice for Virgil than for his fan base.

As so often in Sandford's small-town adventures (*Escape Clause*, 2016, etc.), the greatest pleasures here are incidental: clipped conversations, quietly loopy humor, locals mouthing off to and about each other. Pull up a seat, make yourself comfortable, and enjoy.



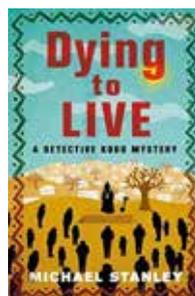
REMAINS OF THE DAY

Simon, Misty
Kensington (250 pp.)
\$7.99 paper | Oct. 31, 2017
978-1-4967-1221-9

A former rich snob who's transformed her lifestyle and attitude faces further—involuntary—changes.

All right, Tallulah "Tallie" Graver was a spoiled brat while married to the insufferable Walden Phillips III, aka Waldo, who left her with nothing after a bitter divorce that she initiated. Now she's cleaning houses for former friends and working part-time at her parents' funeral home while refusing the money her grandchild-obsessed mother urges on her. Still, her life is much happier until she goes in search of sauerkraut for a funeral dinner and finds her frenemy, Katie Mitchner, tied up in a chair in her caterer cousin Gina's store. Katie's story is suspicious, especially the part about Waldo being dead in the alley behind the store. Waldo's there but not dead, only recovering from a stun-gun attack to a very tender part of his anatomy. Although the timeline for her to have done it is tight, Police Chief James Burton considers Tallie a fine suspect. Trouble finds her again when she stumbles on the body of wealthy Darla Hackersham, one of the ex-friends for whom she now cleans house. Now Burton's even more suspicious of Tallie, even when she points out that Darla's husband, maid, and pool boy all had equal opportunities. Meanwhile, Tallie's apparently being stalked by a flower deliveryman who turns out to be her childhood friend Max Bennett, an investigator with the tax bureau who's trying to keep her out of trouble. Evidently Waldo hasn't paid taxes in years, and she may be on the hook for a hefty sum. Although sparks fly between them, Tallie doesn't entirely trust Max, and since Burton still considers her a suspect, she decides to poke around, a decision that could end in her demise.

Simon kicks off a new series that combines a bit of humor and romance with a heroine who knows no boundaries while searching for the truth that will keep her out of jail.



DYING TO LIVE

Stanley, Michael
Minotaur (320 pp.)
\$27.99 | Oct. 24, 2017
978-1-250-07090-6

A detective with the Botswana CID tackles two baffling cases while managing his growing department and dealing with family issues.

An elderly Bushman found dead in the Kalahari is more of a nuisance than a mystery to Botswana DS Batwe Segodi. That is, until an autopsy reveals that the internal organs of the dead man place his age at about 40. Though the man died of a broken neck, the coroner also finds a bullet in his body, dating back several decades. Assistant Superintendent David Bengu, nicknamed Kubu ("hippo" in the Setswana language) for his size, has little patience for the paradoxical, but he does take notice when the corpse is stolen from the morgue in Gaborone, Botswana's capital. Though thefts like this are not uncommon, usually to harvest organs, here the Bushman's was the only corpse taken. Meanwhile, Kubu's first female detective, Samantha Khama, is following up on the disappearance of famous witch doctor Botlele Ramala while also battling sexism in the department. For her part, Kubu's wife, Joy, has little use for old-fashioned witch doctors. Kubu's investigation of the Bushman takes him to a professor in Minnesota; Samantha finds blood evidence in a home in Gaborone. Could the two cases be related? An additional disappearance adds credence to this theory. On the home front, an illness rocks Kubu's world.

The sixth installment in Stanley's franchise (*A Death in the Family*, 2015, etc.) is the best yet, with both an ingenious mystery and a deeper and more textured depiction of modern Botswana and Kubu's piece of it.



THE DEVIL'S WEDDING RING

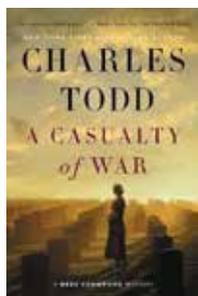
Sundstøl, Vidar
Translated by Nunnally, Tiina
Univ. of Minnesota (280 pp.)
\$25.95 | Sep. 26, 2017
978-1-5179-0280-3

Max Fjellanger returns to Norway for the funeral of an old friend and finds himself immersed in a 30-year-old murder case in Sundstøl's (*The Ravens*, 2015, etc.) latest.

As young policemen in Eidsborg, Max Fjellanger and Knut Abrahamsen investigated a missing person case that was never solved; shortly afterward, Max left the police force and moved to America, where he became a private investigator and married Ann. He and Knut did not keep in touch, but when he hears about his old friend's death, he impulsively returns to Norway for the funeral and confronts memories of the past. Knut's death, ruled a suicide at first, seems suspicious, as does the

recent disappearance of a young woman who was researching an old stave church and its wooden saint. The missing man from 30 years ago also had a scholarly interest in that church and its ritual traditions. Assuming this is no coincidence, Max teams up with a librarian named Tirill to uncover the truth behind these disappearances and Knut's death. Rumors suggest that some members of the church community may be conducting their own, more pagan rituals connected to the summer solstice. Max and Tirill must be careful whom they trust, because some people are clearly willing to kill to protect their centuries-old secret. There is a clever plot here, and Max and Tirill are an engaging duo, but the novel lacks emotional depth. Most of the characters just don't seem complex enough to drive the action-packed plot, and this leaves many scenes feeling flat. Though the novel moves somewhat slowly, the climax manages to feel rushed and lacks full explanation and development. The connection between early Christianity and paganism, while not new, could have been more thoroughly explored to add complexity and resonance.

A Scandinavian *Wicker Man* without the atmosphere.



A CASUALTY OF WAR

Todd, Charles
Morrow/HarperCollins (400 pp.)
\$26.99 | Sep. 26, 2017
978-0-06-267878-2

In the aftermath of World War I, a surgical nurse tries to help a wounded officer who insists his cousin tried to kill him.

As the Great War is winding down, Bess Crawford, a member of Queen Alexandra's army nursing corps, meets handsome Capt. Alan Travis at a hospital in France. Travis, who grew up in Barbados, is from a cadet branch of a wealthy Suffolk family, and he's passing through on his way to rejoin his men as they fight the retreating enemy. Shortly after Bess is transferred to a forward aid station, she encounters Travis again, this time as a patient who claims he got his head wound from a fellow officer who looks like his own great-uncle. Bess means to help when she asks if any cousins in Travis' generation have the same look, and Travis immediately thinks of his cousin James, whom he'd met briefly a year ago. Travis' wound is minor enough that he returns to the front and is shot again—again, he says, by James. Bess feels responsible for making Travis think of his cousin, especially when she learns the captain's been sent back to an English clinic for head-wound patients and is considered hopelessly insane. No one believes his obsession with James, who, it seems, was actually killed in battle a year earlier. As Travis' only advocates, Bess and Sgt. Maj. Simon Brandon, her trusted family friend, travel to the ancestral Travis home and into a tangle of contested wills, imposter claimants, and a murder charge that ensnares Capt. Travis, who arrives after escaping from his clinic, and even Bess herself.

In their ninth installment (*The Shattered Tree*, 2016, etc.), the authors writing as Todd move from a poignant description of Armistice Day—when soldiers drop to their knees at the sudden cessation of gunfire—to one soldier's plight back in England. Although the action includes a couple of perilous scenes too many, readers will love the heroine for her courage and determination.



NEXT OF KIN

Tucker, James
Thomas & Mercer (348 pp.)
\$15.95 paper | Oct. 17, 2017
978-1-5420-4566-7

A detective is pressed into guarding a 10-year-old boy who's the last surviving member of his family.

NYPD detective Buddy Lock is surprised when lawyer Ray Sawyer calls him and asks for his help solving the murder of a family upstate. Buddy's jurisdiction is limited to Manhattan, and though he's flattered that Ray would want his help, he doesn't think he knows anything that might solve the New Year's killings of virtually an entire branch of the wealthy Brook family. Even so, Buddy agrees to look into the case along with his brother Ward Mills, an expert in safe houses and human behavior. While they investigate Camp Kateri, the site of the murders, Ray is asked to care for the last remaining Brook, Ben, who somehow managed to escape while his parents and sister were killed. Whoever murdered the rest of Ben's family comes after him while he's in Ray's care, and though Ben survives, the lawyer's wife is killed in the attack. Convinced that the killer will stop at nothing until he's dead, Ben begs Buddy to keep him safe. Buddy agrees to bring him to the home he shares with his girlfriend, Mei. The two work round-the-clock to care for Ben and keep him safe, and Mei bonds with the traumatized boy, offering him mothering while he's most vulnerable. Buddy and Ward do their part by researching the Brook family tree to find out who might have something to gain by killing the eponymous next of kin.

Direct and fast-paced, Tucker's debut takes readers on an adventurous ride that extends from questions about custody of a young charge to an art deal that may have its roots in the exploitation of Jews in World War II.



EVEN IF IT KILLS HER

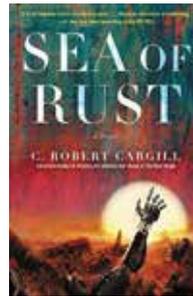
White, Kate
Harper/HarperCollins (432 pp.)
\$15.99 paper | Oct. 31, 2017
978-0-06-244887-3

A true-crime writer travels to small-town Massachusetts to investigate the murder of a friend's family years earlier only to find a tangle of secrets and lies.

Bailey Weggins (*So Pretty It Hurts*, 2012, etc.) leads a comfortable life in Manhattan: she has a new book out and is on the hunt for her next subject. When Jillian Lowe walks into one of Bailey's author events, it's a blast from the past, and not an entirely pleasant one. They were college pals 16 years earlier when Jillian left school abruptly after her parents and two younger siblings were slaughtered in their home in Dory, Massachusetts. Neighborhood teen Dylan Fender confessed to the crime, and Bailey has always regretted that she never reached out to Jillian after the murders, letting their friendship lapse. Now Jillian has a professional proposition for Bailey and a way for her to atone for her friendship sins: DNA evidence just proved that Fender was wrongly convicted—though he tragically died in jail before being exonerated—and Jillian wants Bailey to find the real killer. Returning to Dory is jarring for Jillian and informative for Bailey, whose investigation often seems to hinge more on luck than on deductive reasoning skills. White (*The Secrets You Keep*, 2017, etc.) leans heavily on the cliché of the smaller the town, the bigger (and dirtier) its secrets, but Bailey's digging into the lives of the not-so-perfect Lowes does yield a few genuine twists. The continued and unsuccessful attempts on Bailey's life is a well-worn trope but isn't out of place here.

A murder case almost two decades old often takes a back seat to the ups and downs of a friendship finding its footing after years and tragedy have taken their tolls—a familiar but well-executed mix.

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY



SEA OF RUST

Cargill, C. Robert
Harper Voyager (384 pp.)
\$27.99 | Sep. 5, 2017
978-0-06-240583-8

Cargill (*Queen of the Dark Things*, 2014, etc.) takes readers to Earth's post-human future in which robots struggle to survive and remain free of their own robot overlords.

The last human died 15 years ago at the end of the human-robot war that arose from a robot uprising. The robots fought for their freedom, but it was short-lived: now the world is dominated by One World Intelligences, massively powerful AIs bent on absorbing individual robots into their ever growing hive mind. North America is the battleground for two OWIs, VIRGIL and CISSUS, with unclaimed territories shrinking every year before the OWIs' expansion. As the OWIs have seized the means of production, the robots who remain must trade, fight, and scavenge for parts to keep surviving. One such scavenger is Brittle, a former Caregiver robot haunted by memories of the war and the fates of the humans she once served, first as a nurse and then as a friend. All Brittle wants is to retain her independence and keep ticking, but some of her vital parts are failing, and Caregiver robots are rare—rare enough that the only other one around, Mercer, wants Brittle's parts, too. An attack by Mercer locks both robots into a race for time, and an attack by CISSUS drags Brittle, Mercer, and other bots into a tense secret mission that may end the OWIs' hungry rule—if our heroes can survive explosions, plasma cannons, four-oh-fours (robots who have gone entirely insane), betrayal, and their own deterioration.

Innovative worldbuilding, a tight plot, and cinematic action sequences make for an exciting ride through a blasted landscape full of dying robots.



THE TETHERED MAGE

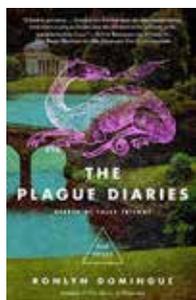
Caruso, Melissa
Orbit (480 pp.)
\$15.99 paper | Oct. 24, 2017
978-0-316-46687-5

The first of a trilogy set in a land inspired by late-17th-century Venice—but with magic, gender equality, and same-sex marriage.

Bookish Lady Amalia Cornaro will one day have to step into her mother's role as intelligencer and politically powerful member of the

Council of Nine, rulers of the Serene Empire of Raverra. But her reluctant entree into politics comes more quickly than she would have expected or wished when she volunteers to bind herself to Zaira, a rogue warlock who in a fit of anger has unleashed balefire that could devastate the whole city. The only way to stop her is for Amalia to put a tether on the girl's wrist, which will link them for the rest of their lives. All the mage-marked in Raverra are conscripted into the Falcons, the empire's cadre of magical soldiers, and each is linked to a Falconer, who can loose or seal the mage's power on command. A noblewoman such as Amalia isn't supposed to be a Falconer, and Zaira has spent her entire life in the gutter hiding from the Falcons. But Zaira is too potent a weapon for anyone to ignore. Amalia will have to win over the furious warlock and take a more active political role when it becomes clear that someone is fomenting war between Raverra and Ardence, a neighboring client realm where Amalia has many friends. It's a pleasure to journey with shy and slightly awkward Amalia as she puts her scholarship in magic and puzzle-solving skills to good use, gaining confidence and proving that perhaps she's not as politically unskilled as she thought. There is an obvious but still sweet, star-crossed incipient romance between Amalia and Marcello Verdi, lieutenant of the Falconers. That Amalia and Zaira will eventually build trust feels like a foregone conclusion in books of this type, but debut author Caruso does a decent job in creating moments of doubt and tension at key points in the novel.

Charming and solidly fun.



THE PLAGUE DIARIES

Domingue, Ronlyn

Atria (432 pp.)

\$25.00 | Aug. 29, 2017

978-1-4767-7428-2

Series: Keeper of Tales, 3

Secret Riven—archivist to the mysterious Fewmany, a man who controls nearly every industry in Rothwyke—finally has the opportunity to decode the arcane manuscript her mother left

behind. But the translation may throw everything she holds dear into turmoil.

This compelling conclusion to Domingue's (*The Chronicle of Secret Riven*, 2014, etc.) Keeper of Tales trilogy deftly twines together elements from fairy tales, the gothic, and the quest journey into a mythology for the fantasy realm of Rothwyke. Rejected from the high academies, most likely because she wears skirts, Secret accepts a job as archivist of the vast libraries of mysterious magnate Fewmany, ne Lesmore Bellwether. Fewmany's mansion is a veritable Gothic labyrinth, riddled with hidden rooms, locked chambers—all must remain locked, Secret is reminded—and restricted groves. While her beloved Nikolas, Prince of the Realm, journeys on goodwill visits to neighboring kingdoms, Secret finds herself drawn deeply into Fewmany's decadent world. Soon she has left her father's home to rent rooms in a less respectable ward and begins drinking

wine, attending dinner parties with actors and intellectual glitterati, and even joining in the debauched revelries of a masquerade ball. Eager to put behind her the difficulties of her special abilities, she's tried to ignore the animals and bees who seem desperate to communicate with her, yet Fewmany's intentions for her will demand all of her talents and courage. Fewmany sets Secret on a quest that will at last expose the meaning of the symbols she's dreamed of since childhood, her ruptures into another world, the arcane manuscript, and the mystery of her mother's ancestry. Fortuitously, Nikolas returns and joins Secret. But the quest will release a Plague of Silences that will disrupt and utterly change their world.

An exciting, genre-melding journey into magical realms and the mending power of love.

Believe

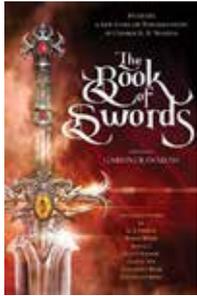
BY ANNALIESE DARR

A supernaturally gifted woman comes to terms with her past in Darr's debut novel.

"The author's depiction of the simplicity and beauties of life in rural Appalachia are semipoetical..."

"An evocative, involving novel about how mystical powers can complicate one's life."
—*Kirkus Reviews*

For information on publishing or film rights, please contact adefee@cox.net



THE BOOK OF SWORDS

Dozois, Gardner—Ed.
Bantam (544 pp.)
\$30.00 | Oct. 11, 2017
978-0-399-59376-5



Dozois, an indefatigable editor (*The Year's Best Science Fiction: Thirty-Fourth Annual Collection*, 2017, etc.), introduces an all-new compendium of 16 original stories, many set in their authors' established fantasy universes.

In his extensive and knowledgeable introduction, Dozois explains that the term "sword & sorcery" was coined by fantasy great Fritz Leiber (the Fafhrd/Gray Mouser yarns) and ranges from its birth in the old pre-WWII pulps through Tolkien up to today's doorstoppers and blockbusters. Many of the entries group themselves naturally. K.J. Parker and, less successfully, Cecelia Holland take up the theme of revenge. Other authors expose the moral ambiguities implicit in much of the subgenre's culture (Ken Liu, Ellen Kushner), and a Rich Larson standout features a pair of curiously principled rogues. Of those set in established worlds, Robin Hobb writes of FitzChivalry Farseer and the Red Ship raiders; Matthew Hughes draws inspiration from Jack Vance's renowned Dying Earth scenario; Walter Jon Williams offers a promising sampler of a forthcoming series; Garth Nix's tales of Sir Hereward and the sorcerously animated ventriloquist's dummy, Master Fitz, are justly famous; Elizabeth Bear writes enthrallingly about the Dead Man, formerly an emperor's guard, and his companion mercenary, the Gage, a brass automaton with a human soul, the stars of her latest novel and series; Lavie Tidhar weighs in with one of his *guns-and-sorcery* tales about Gorel of Goliris; and, disappointingly, George R.R. Martin offers an undramatic, ultraviolent chronicle set in an era well before the current *Game of Thrones* books. The remainder defy classification. Kate Elliott's fine effort portrays a mysterious exile from the spirit world who challenges the emperor of Rome; Daniel Abraham captivates with his fine knotty tale of a thief, a prince, and a mysterious magic tower; C.J. Cherryh wonders what happened after Beowulf slew the monster Grendel; and a thrill-a-minute yarn from Scott Lynch somewhat resembles a sorcerous *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

When fine writer and expert editor Dozois beckons, authors deliver—and this surely will be one of the year's essential anthologies.



IRONFOOT

Duncan, Dave
Night Shade (344 pp.)
\$24.99 | \$15.99 paper | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-59780-930-6
978-1-59780-917-7 paper

A magical medieval murder mystery that will keep readers guessing until the evildoer is revealed.

Durwin, known as Ironfoot ever since a childhood accident crushed his leg, shouldn't amount to anything. He's a Saxon, the son of a peasant, and he lives in an England ruled by Norman conquerors. But his skill with horses and sharp wits have endeared him to a Sage from a nearby academy and won him a place there studying alchemy, herbal medicine, logic—and enchantment. And when a prophecy predicts murder, Durwin finds himself on the road to adventure and intrigue, sent to the castle at Barton, along with a Sage named Rolf and the recalcitrant, difficult Squire William, to find out what the prophecy means and why Rolf's brother, the count, used a dangerous spell to summon him home. Durwin must untangle the mystery—and convince the contemptuous William to help him. A vivid cast of characters that includes a brawny count, a sneering priest, the count's beautiful young daughter, and the count's disfigured fool helps keep this tale of intrigue lively. There's never any real doubt that Durwin will penetrate the mystery and save the day—his skill is somehow always equal to the difficult enchantment at hand—but the plot moves along nimbly enough to keep the reader engaged.

An entertaining, fast-paced read that will please readers looking for mystery and enchantment set amid castles, horses, counts, and peasants.



A PLAGUE OF GIANTS

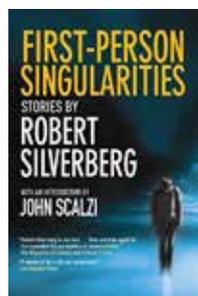
Hearne, Kevin
Del Rey (640 pp.)
\$28.99 | Oct. 17, 2017
978-0-345-54860-3

The author of *Besieged* (2017, etc.), kicks off a new doorstopper fantasy trilogy in which a peaceful continent suffers coincidental invasions by different giant races.

In this convincingly realized world, most races have their own particular magic endowment, or "kenning," whose rites of passage few postulants survive; those that do learn that using their power overmuch causes rapid physical aging. A huge volcanic explosion drives the 12-foot-tall Hathrim (kenning: fire) from their homeland. Their leader, Gorin Mogen, long ago laid plans to illegally build a new city in the unoccupied forests of Ghurana Nent—a move neighboring Forn (kenning: plants) refuse to countenance. The Nentians themselves, preoccupied with internecine political struggles, have no kenning

and can bring only armies to oppose the invaders. Until, that is, young Abhi survives an attack by wild animals and discovers he's found the sixth kenning. A second race, meanwhile, called Bone Giants for the strange armor they wear, invades Bryn (water). They speak an unknown language, until Kaurian (air) scholar Gondel Vedd learns from a Bone Giant captive that his race seeks the (unknown) seventh kenning, insisting that the seventh will defeat the other six. All this is sturdily constructed and exceptionally well thought out, though don't expect great characters. Hearne, totally unnecessarily, frames the entire narrative as a performance by Fintan, a Raelch (earth) bard personally involved in the action but distrusted by many, whose kenning enables him to take on the semblance of each actor in the drama. Dervan, a scribe writing it all down, provides still another entanglement with his own involved personal life. It's all vividly described, moves briskly, and features a splendid climax that resolves the main issue while leaving plenty still to come. Most intriguing of all are the ways the various kennings interact, reminiscent of Fred Saberhagen's *Lost Swords* yarns.

A genuine page-turner: dependable entertainment with no claims to profundity.



FIRST-PERSON SINGULARITIES

Silverberg, Robert
Three Rooms Press (444 pp.)
\$19.95 paper | Oct. 31, 2017
978-1-94111063-8

The unifying theme of this collection of stories from science-fiction grandmaster Silverberg—spanning five decades, from 1956 to 1997—is that they're all told in the first person singular.

The sheer diversity of storylines is nothing short of extraordinary. In "House of Bones," a time traveler is marooned more than 20,000 years in the past and is forced to assimilate into a tribe of nomadic cavemen. "Ishmael in Love" chronicles a bottle-nosed dolphin's attempt to woo a human researcher with whom he's fallen in love. The Nebula Award-winning "Passengers" tells the tale of a man living in a future where aliens have invaded Earth and can temporarily take possession of human minds and hijack their bodies. "Going Down Smooth" is told from the perspective of a computer, designed to help psychoanalyze troubled human patients, that finds itself slowly losing its sanity. "Caliban" chronicles a normal man's plight in a world where everyone looks like a model. But arguably the most memorable story is "The Reality Trip," about an alien spy—a beetleish creature living inside a humanlike body made of synthetic flesh—who must deal with an amorous woman who lives, as he does, in Manhattan's Chelsea Hotel and is bent on seeking an intimate relationship with him. While the first-person theme might not add much to the book for science-fiction aficionados, the high quality of the stories makes this book a master class in first-person narrative for aspiring writers. Additionally, each story is preceded by a short introduction by Silverberg

that offers invaluable insight into the cultural landscape, the publishing industry, and the author's personal life at the time of writing.

Decades after being originally published, most of these stories are still just as entertaining and powerful as they were when first released. A singularly unique collection.

R O M A N C E



THE DUKE

Ashe, Katharine
Avon/HarperCollins (416 pp.)
\$7.99 paper | Sep. 26, 2017
978-0-06-264172-4



A devilish duke and a missionary's widow form an unlikely pair.

From the age of 8, Amarantha Vale knows exactly whom she'll marry; unfortunately, at 17, she mistakenly thinks she's found him. Her engagement to the young missionary carries her across the ocean to Jamaica; it also sends her careening into the decidedly nonmissionary Lt. Gabriel Hume in the middle of her first hurricane. After a short time, just as they admit their feelings for each other, Gabe is ordered to command a ship, causing Amarantha to marry the patronizing reverend. Years later, widowed, she reverses her journey across the Atlantic in search of Gabe, now the Duke of Loch Irvine, known throughout the Scottish highlands as the Devil's Duke. Rumors abound about the possibly homicidal duke, but she doesn't believe them, and upon meeting again, the couple finds that they are both older, wiser, and still mad for each other. In a genre where love stories usually unfold over the course of a single season, this story, which begins with the couple's meeting in 1817 and ends happily in 1823, is unusually complex, and delightfully so. Ashe's *(Captive Bride, 2017, etc.)* thorough research enlivens corners of the Regency era unseen by London society and creates many moments for both Gabe and Amarantha to engage in small individual efforts to combat the evils of slavery and misogyny. Not that their passion is neglected; the longer-than-average story allows ample time for the bedroom, and in great detail. Readers who enjoyed the first two titles in The Devil's Duke series will be delighted to find that this entry is the best of the series so far—but new readers can jump right in.

This decidedly un-English Regency romance will win over historical fiction readers from all corners.



READY FOR WILD

Blake, Liora

Pocket (384 pp.)

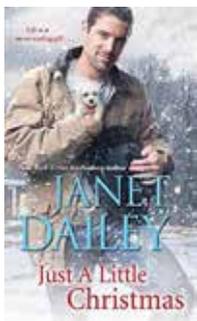
\$16.00 paper | Oct. 31, 2017

978-1-5011-5517-8

A surly mountain man and a celebrity with a big personality wrestle with their chemistry in the great outdoors.

Braden Montgomery is a brooding, solitary game warden who prefers the company of his dog and the great outdoors. Amber Regan is the host of a popular TV show about hunting who lives in the public eye. When she scouts the land in Braden's unit for an elk hunt, sparks fly. Unfortunately, they're the kind of sparks that can result in glowering resentment—or the type of sexual chemistry that could start a forest fire. Braden begins their working relationship by making a lot of broad assumptions about Amber: that she's superficial and a poor imitation of a hunter. In fact, Amber is not only a good hunter, but she also shares Braden's moral code about the sport. And this hunt is her last shot at saving her show, which has declining ratings. Eventually, their relationship evens out with the benefit of distance and the help of a frequent text exchange. Tension gives way to attraction as the two get to know one another and realize how much they have in common. When Amber comes back to get in one last scouting trip before hunting season, they finally hook up, spending two nearly perfect days together before distance drags them apart again. During hunting season, Amber stays at Braden's cabin as he goes after a deer that's eluded him for several years. While they're on their respective hunts, Braden can't keep his mind off Amber and returns early to offer help. When she declines and misses her mark, Braden is there to help her recover. But when her show isn't renewed and Amber is offered a starring role in a steamy reality show, things get a little muddled for the otherwise happy couple.

Blake (*Second Chance Season*, 2017, etc.) offers scenic descriptions almost as lush as the sex between the main characters.



JUST A LITTLE CHRISTMAS

Dailey, Janet

Zebra/Kensington (320 pp.)

\$7.99 paper | Sep. 26, 2017

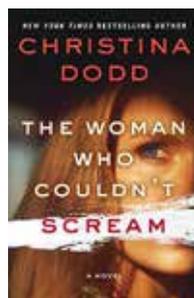
978-1-4201-4008-8

Can a pregnant divorcée and a widowed cowboy let go of the past long enough to rekindle the flame of first love?

When Ellie Marsden left Branding Iron, Texas, she didn't look back—not even at Jubal McFarland, whose heart she broke. Now that she's back, fate seems to keep throwing them together. On the night of their high school graduation, Jubal proposed to Ellie, asking her to return after she finished college. Eager to live a bigger life than their small

town allowed, she turned him down. Later, she quit law school to marry Brent, who abused her and cheated on her with one of his legal clients. Pregnant and divorced, Ellie returns to her mother's house in her hometown with her tail tucked between her legs. Jubal has his own complications. A car accident left him a widower with an 8-year-old daughter, and an unpaid loan of his father's left the land he grew up on the property of a mysterious outfit called Shumway and Sons Property Management. In spite of all their baggage, Jubal comes to Ellie's rescue when her car is hit by a falling tree branch. Ellie helps Jubal research the mysterious property company that might have cheated his father out of the farm. Predictably, the two grow closer, and Ellie's baby, her lap dog, and a Christmas miracle all contribute to a sweet if formulaic happy-ever-after. While watching the love between Jubal and Ellie unfold is the main event, Jubal's precocious daughter, Gracie, and Ellie's teacup poodle almost steal the show.

A good pick for some wholesome family-oriented romance.



THE WOMAN WHO COULDN'T SCREAM

Dodd, Christina

St. Martin's (352 pp.)

\$27.99 | Sep. 5, 2017

978-1-250-02848-8

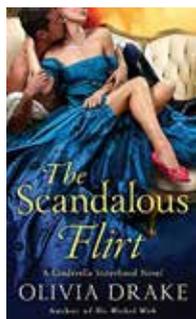
Beautiful, mute Merida Falcon arrives in Virtue Falls with revenge in mind, but she may find redemption yet.

As the young widow of a controlling, narcissistic billionaire, Merida Falcon has changed her name and her look, downplaying the gorgeous face her husband paid to create through plastic surgery. Both the designed features and her mutism are aftereffects of a traumatic explosion she believes was an attempt on her life. Free from Brasseur's oppressive control, she plans to bring down the man she believes tried to kill her, whom she once loved. She hopes for anonymity and reinvention in Virtue Falls, but things go awry when she is confronted with people she knew not only as Helen Brasseur, but also as Merry Byrd, the joyful, socially conscious girl she was before the explosion. Meeting up with her childhood friend Kateri Kwinault, who is now sheriff of the town, makes her aware that there's a serial killer on the loose, but it's hard to tell if it's the local vengeful outlaw doing the most damage or some other shadowy figures, especially when Benedict Howard, the target of her own revenge plot, shows up. Certainly all is not what it appears to be in seemingly idyllic Virtue Falls. Meanwhile Kateri, a series favorite, is navigating emotional turmoil—guilt, romance, and uncertainty—while finding her footing as sheriff. Both Kateri and Merida must learn to trust and forgive, putting complicated pasts and enemies behind them in order to find peace and love. Dodd's (*Because I'm Watching*, 2017, etc.) new title delivers complex storytelling, a rollicking pace, and surprising twists and turns, plus sly humor, a touch of the supernatural, and a full cast of interesting and diverse characters.

Readers will be thrilled to get back to Virtue Falls.

When society thinks you're a walking scandal, you might as well use it to your advantage.

THE SCANDALOUS FLIRT



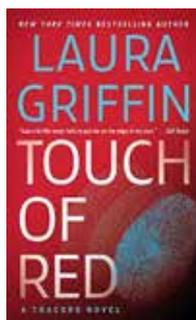
THE SCANDALOUS FLIRT

Drake, Olivia
St. Martin's (352 pp.)
\$7.99 paper | Oct. 31, 2017
978-1-250-06031-0

When society thinks you're a walking scandal, you might as well use it to your advantage.

Aurora "Rory" Paxton has been living in Norfolk with her aunt for eight years when the mysterious Lady Milford shows up at her door with a familiar pair of shoes. Despite having been banished from society after an indecorous liaison, Rory is needed back in London to save her family from an even bigger scandal. After learning that her stepmother is being blackmailed and it's threatening her sister's pending marriage, she sets off to use her reputation to catch the blackmailer: "stone-faced prig" Lucas Vale, Marquess of Dashell. But Lucas, as it turns out, is too concerned with repairing his family's finances to blackmail anybody. After a steamy run-in in his bedchamber, Rory and Lucas discover they're on the same side and begin to work together to find the extortionist. Though Lucas is about to propose to another young heiress, he finds that the scandalous girl he fell for back when she made her debut may be worth a life of penny-pinching, just as Rory discovers that the man behind the marquess is far warmer than she thought. Avid readers of the Cinderella Sisterhood series (*His Wicked Wish*, 2016, etc.) know that when Lady Milford appears, a magical story is about to unfold, and this is no exception. Once again, the matchmaker has put together a fairy-tale Regency couple bolstered by a remarkable supporting cast of family members whose own stories are just as romantic. Though Rory and Lucas' passion is muted at times, the mature hero and heroine have a bond that will charm readers.

A solidly scandalous Regency romance with a touch of magic.



TOUCH OF RED

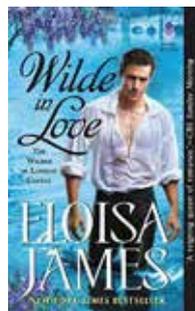
Griffin, Laura
Pocket (368 pp.)
\$7.99 paper | \$7.99 e-book | Oct. 31, 2017
978-1-5011-6237-4
978-1-5011-6238-1 e-book

Forensics expert Brooke Porter has been working with Detective Sean Byrne for a while, and when a brutal case brings them closer together, her heart-pounding terror will only be quelled by a certain handsome heartthrob.

This 12th book in Griffin's Tracers series starts at the scene of a bloody, violent murder where Brooke gathers evidence that indicates a missing witness—a child who saw a woman murdered. In addition to finding the killer, she is also concerned with protecting this kid. As if that weren't enough to worry

about, her ex is stalking her. It's only after she's shot at while protecting their witness that Brooke finally opens up to Sean, both physically and emotionally. Despite her protestations of not wanting a relationship and his of being patient, the romance unfolds as seamlessly as it can with a dangerous murderer on the loose. A second victim turns up more clues, and Brooke's insistence on helping with the investigation leads her and Sean to their only real argument. When she realizes that his motivation is her safety and not total control, her fears of falling into another relationship like her last are resolved. Ultimately, the best part of this well-paced thriller comes in the last 50 or so pages when the killer is revealed and the chase is on. It would be easy to fall into the helpless victim/heroic savior trope, but Griffin does a good job of turning those clichés on their sides. Brooke is as independent and stubborn as Sean is nurturing and sensitive.

Scorching-hot chemistry and a happily-ever-after you'll enjoy rooting for, but readers put off by graphic violence might find that it's not for the faint of heart.



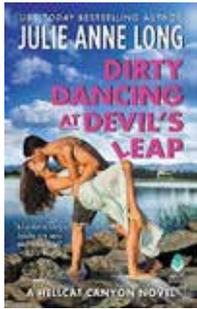
WILDE IN LOVE

James, Eloisa
Avon (384 pp.)
\$7.99 paper | Oct. 31, 2017
978-0-06-238947-3

An adamantly private lady seeks a sensible match, but a notorious and rakishly handsome adventurer proves difficult to resist in the first of a Georgian-set historical romance series.

Lord Alaric Wilde, the long-absent third son of the Duke of Lindow, has just returned to England a celebrity thanks to his bestselling swash-buckling memoirs. Alaric has no idea of his own fame until his ship is met by mobs of screaming ladies who have stocked up on Lord Wilde memorabilia and repeat viewings of *Wilde in Love*, a scandalous and unauthorized play about the handsome rogue. During a house party at Lindow Castle, his family's ancestral seat, Alaric encounters the very reserved Miss Willa Ffynche. He is intrigued at first by her lack of interest in him and later by her wit and intelligence. The trouble is that Willa "had absolutely no desire to be married to a man whose printed image was concealed in young ladies' Bibles." This first in James' (*Seven Minutes in Heaven*, 2017, etc.) new Georgian-set series about the aptly named Wilde family and its sprawling estate in Cheshire is full of her signature style: witty repartee between a sensual hero and a smart, unconventional heroine and an effortlessly interconnected cast of characters you can't wait to get to know better. A terrific writer, James conveys both the ordinariness and transcendence of sexual desire: "Yet reining in her desire felt like reining in the dusk. Or the rain. Something real, natural, uncontrollable."

A charming, romantic, and unexpectedly funny start to a very promising new series. A must for James fans and a sure bet for everyone else.



DIRTY DANCING AT DEVIL'S LEAP

Long, *Julie Anne*

Avon/HarperCollins (384 pp.)

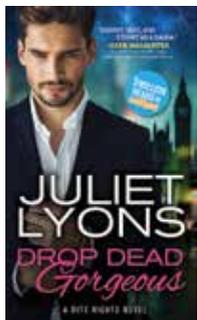
\$7.99 paper | Aug. 29, 2017

978-0-06-267288-9

Memories of teen heartbreak surface when a Silicon Valley businesswoman at a personal and professional crossroad returns to her roots in California hill country—and runs into her first love.

Long (*Wild at Whiskey Creek*, 2016, etc.) brings us back to Hellcat Canyon in this third novel in her contemporary romance series. The town and its residents will provide a familiar backdrop to readers of the previous books, who will place Avalon Harwood as the daughter and sister of recurring characters and invest in her losses and dreams. Chief among them is Avalon's adolescent soul mate, Mac Coltrane, who never loved anyone like he did his childhood frenemy and has felt unmoored all his life since their parting. The son of a rich resident of the town, Mac reinvented himself after the family money vanished but avoids emotional ties. Meeting after a dozen years, the former couple find themselves quarreling over the rightful ownership of his old house and bickering as they skate around the truth of why their love ended so abruptly. Renewing their childhood pattern of smirking competition, they lob sallies at each other through creative revenge tactics, but the game is underlaid by their decadeslong unconsummated sexual tension. As comic scenes alternate with moments of potent memory and sizzling desire, the new relationship unfolds in the manner of a tango. Cheeky repartee, liquid imagery, and quiet reflection on roads not taken show the author's expanding stylistic palette (notwithstanding the clichéd allusion to rom-com classic *Say Anything*, which seems to be epidemic in the genre).

For fans of Americana romance and Susan Elizabeth Phillips and those who root for the healing of a bruised heart, especially one that scorned romance or let it go as a childish thing.



DROP DEAD GORGEOUS

Lyons, *Juliet*

Sourcebooks Casablanca (352 pp.)

\$7.99 paper | Oct. 3, 2017

978-1-4926-4533-7

A woman gives up on human men to give vampires a try, namely in the form of a hot, blond, and fanged detective.

Mila Hart was devastated to learn that her boyfriend of two years happened to be married and had two children. To get back in the saddle, she hits up V-Date,

a dating website with vampire clientele. Her first date with the undead seems to be going swimmingly until the vamp tries to

kill her. In the nick of time, Mila is saved by law enforcement, which includes the devastatingly handsome Inspector Vincent Ferrer. Unfortunately, Mila's date escapes in the fray, a disappointment to the team that's been tracking him for months; Mila wasn't his first victim. Vincent's immediate attraction to Mila's calm under pressure is palpable, and he takes a vested interest in seeing to her well-being after the attack. But as a man—even an undead man—dedicated to his job and hundreds of years old, he realizes love is only a fleeting distraction. However, mutual attraction is another story. Mila is a quirky heroine with her deep love of movies, constantly making comparisons to how events in her life might mirror famous scenes in cinema history. This also works as a coping mechanism for Mila as she tries to regain her life after heartbreak. Despite being a vampire, Vincent is rather normal, unlike typical overbearing alpha heroes of paranormal romance. He's easygoing, reassuring Mila that not all of his kind are killers out for blood, but as a leading man he needs a bit more...bite. Since Mila's attacker is still out there, there's an element of suspense, though it quickly gets lost between the main characters' constant ogling of one another during rather tense moments.

A tad superficial, but at least it doesn't take itself too seriously.

NONFICTION



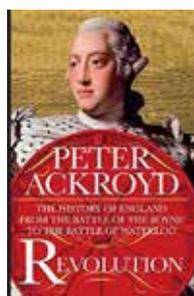
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REVOLUTION *The Battle of the Boyne to the Battle of Waterloo*

Ackroyd, Peter
Dunne/St. Martin's (416 pp.)
\$29.99 | \$14.99 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017
978-1-250-00364-5
978-1-4668-8016-0 e-book

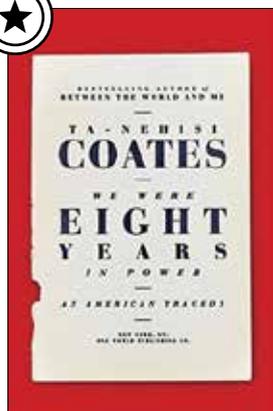


Ackroyd (*Queer City: Gay London from the Romans to the Present Day*, 2017, etc.)

fans rejoice! The fourth volume of the author's History of England series has arrived.

As usual, history buffs will find plenty to ponder, and casual readers will enjoy Ackroyd's storytelling manner as he continues to expose little-known facts of British history—e.g., the Bank of England was originally a subscription effort, and the pound sterling became the monetary standard under Sir Isaac Newton. In the third volume, Ackroyd dealt with the Glorious Revolution of 1688; here, he digs deeply into the financial revolution under William and Mary. The Bank of England, pound, and the stock exchange were initiated to fund the latest war with France. New finances encouraged the lower gentry—those with money and land but no lineage—in their slavery to the false gods of aspiring “middling” classes. The time period also saw a significant agricultural revolution, with an increase in enclosures of large estates; wide-scale farmers looked to new methods of drainage, hedging and rotating crops, putting many peasant farmers out of business and forcing them to the cities. The conversion from wood to coal required miners; the arrival of steam gave birth to mills and factories, which required the small hands of women and children; and the union with Scotland created the largest free-trade area in the world. While the Enlightenment barely touched England's shores, the Industrial Revolution could only have been born there, where geography, material and mineral riches, and thriving colonial trade all combined to make the perfect spot. The loss of America showed Britain that it was easier to trade with colonies than to rule them. In this dizzying era, there was also time for the birth of the Fourth Estate because Parliament forgot to extend a censorship law, giving rise to the golden age of political journalism. Through it all, the author is a delightful guide.

All chroniclers of popular history should be required to study Ackroyd's writing, his methodology, and the totality of his treatment of his subjects.

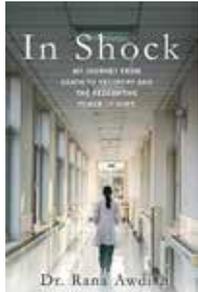


WE WERE EIGHT YEARS IN POWER

An American Tragedy
Coates, Ta-Nehisi
One World/Random
House (416 pp.)
\$28.00 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-0-399-59056-6

An exemplary contribution to the history of the Civil War and its aftermath.

THE THIN LIGHT OF FREEDOM



IN SHOCK My Journey from Death to Recovery and the Redemptive Power of Hope

Awdish, Rana

St. Martin's (272 pp.)

\$25.99 | \$18.19 e-book | Oct. 24, 2017

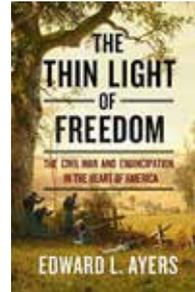
978-1-250-11921-6

978-1-250-11922-3 e-book

A physician learns firsthand about the adverse aspects of the patient experience through her own catastrophic illness.

Detroit-based critical care physician Awdish began experiencing waves of abdominal pain and nausea while seven months pregnant with her first child and checked in at her workplace emergency department. Even before she was diagnosed and treated, she personally acknowledged the detachment patients often experience between themselves and the medical professionals charged with their clinical care, something she categorizes as an “unsettling, largely unspoken reality” in contemporary medicine. While she blames the conventional methodology of physician training, with its unwavering focus on disease diagnosis and distance to avoid burnout, she also recognizes that, as a doctor, she was in need of compassionate care training in order to connect with patients on more levels than directly pathological. “Despite completing my training,” she writes, “despite being surrounded by every form and severity of disease, I had yet to learn what it meant to be sick.” This, and further episodes of enlightenment, underpins the book’s core foundation. Awdish’s initially unknown malady eventually ballooned into an affliction of nightmarish proportions. Miraculously delivered from her deathbed, she survived internal bleeding, a stroke, liver tumors, and a heartbreaking miscarriage. Awdish also had to suffer the callous missteps and insensitive presuppositions made by hospital staff. Punctuated by descriptions of harrowing moments like waking up while on a mechanical respirator or developing hernias after surgeons applied quick stitches meant for an irremediable patient, the utter senselessness of illness reverberates throughout this carefully written chronicle of suffering and recovery. As the author returned to her livelihood as a humbled physician and grateful mother, she fully embodied and shared the knowledge that there could indeed be “reciprocity in empathy” in medicine.

A sobering, well-rendered reality check on the desperate need for advanced training on compassion-centric modes of patient care.



THE THIN LIGHT OF FREEDOM The Civil War and Emancipation in the Heart of America

Ayers, Edward L.

Norton (640 pp.)

\$35.00 | Oct. 24, 2017

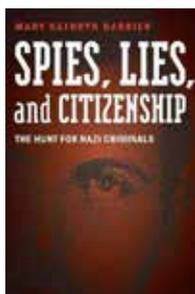
978-0-393-29263-3



The renowned historian of the Civil War and Reconstruction continues the story begun in his Bancroft Prize-winning *In the Presence of Mine Enemies* (2003), recounting those events as they played out beyond the Blue Ridge.

The Civil War was fought on many fronts but perhaps none more malleable than that in the Great Valley, which runs from Pennsylvania through Maryland and into Virginia. There, writes University of Richmond president emeritus Ayers (*What Caused the Civil War?: Reflections on the South and Southern History*, 2005, etc.) in this luminous account, Union armies threatened the Confederacy with near impunity, while Rebel forces attempted to do the same, as at Monocacy, Chambersburg, and other northward forays. As the author chronicles, these movements were calculated as much to prolong the war in the hope of costing Abraham Lincoln the 1864 election as to achieve any lasting military victory, reason enough for Robert E. Lee to raid into Pennsylvania, thus “making Northerners feel what it meant to live in an occupied land.” Along the Pennsylvania border of this heartland, communities of emancipated African-Americans, who contributed many troops to the Union cause, suffered raids that returned prisoners to slavery—even as, late in the war, Lee endorsed using black troops in the Confederate ranks. More than any other place, Ayers argues persuasively, the valley had special reason to fear the resumption of campaigning in the spring of 1864, when it “could come under assault from north and south, east and west, inside and outside.” It was no less contested during Reconstruction, when voting laws were engineered to displace former rebels and impose rule by so-called carpetbaggers, an early instance of gerrymandering. As elsewhere in the South, the narrative on the war and its causes diverged from that favored in the North, building a lasting division even as the Supreme Court tolerated and even encouraged “complete legal segregation, disenfranchisement, and subjugation of black Southerners.”

An exemplary contribution to the history of the Civil War and its aftermath. (30 illustrations; 10 maps)



SPIES, LIES, AND CITIZENSHIP
The Hunt for Nazi Criminals

Barbier, Mary Kathryn
Potomac Books (360 pp.)
\$32.95 | Oct. 1, 2017
978-1-61234-727-1

Barbier (History/Mississippi State Univ.; *D-Day Deception: Operation Fortitude and the Normandy Invasion*, 2007, etc.) builds on mounting research into the lack of persecution of Nazi war criminals who were granted entrance into the United States after World War II.

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 specifically blocked the immigration of Nazi criminals into the U.S., while between 1948 and 1953, a whopping 600,000 European refugees had already entered under the Displaced Persons Act of 1948. The sheer numbers overwhelmed consular bureaucracy, yet there was upper-level leniency at play as well in turning a blind eye to the questionable pasts of some of these immigrants. Among many others, these included Otto von Bolschwing, a chief SS officer stationed in Romania whose collaboration with postwar American military intelligence allowed him entrance into the U.S. in 1954; Andrija Artukovic, “Butcher of the Balkans,” who managed to get a visa to the U.S. and a job in California; and Karl Linnas, who “ran a concentration camp in Estonia” yet squeaked by authorities to arrive with his family in New York state in 1951. Barbier traces how the important Office of Special Investigations, established in 1979 within the U.S. Department of Justice—thanks to public outcry in the 1970s over the denaturalization and extradition of Hermine Braunsteiner, a German-born New York City housewife who lied about her work at a Nazi death camp—finally was able to pursue these criminals ensconced comfortably in the U.S. Besides delineating other high-profile cases, such as those of Klaus Barbie, Josef Mengele, and Kurt Waldheim, the author chronicles the scandalous mission of Operation Paperclip, which allowed top German scientists and technicians—who had perfected their talents trying to destroy the Allies with the V-1 and V-2 projects and the use of chemical weapons—were lured to the U.S. to keep them from sharing their knowledge with the Soviets.

Well-researched state secrets forced into the light of truth. (photos)



THE ART OF LOADING BRUSH
New Agrarian Writings

Berry, Wendell
Counterpoint (240 pp.)
\$26.00 | Oct. 31, 2017
978-1-61902-038-2

Further cultural and agricultural writings from the dean of modern literary agrarians.

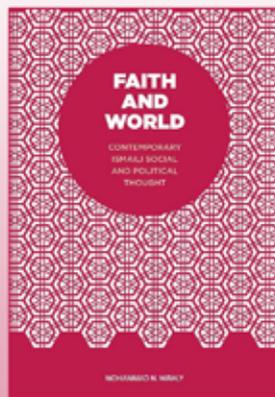


As a novelist, essayist, and poet, Berry (*Roots to the Earth*, 2016, etc.) has been writing work that is all of a piece for more than half a century; reduced, if it must be, his aim is the old agrarian ideal of standing for what one stands on, defending one’s place on Earth. The author notes his wife’s observation that “my principal asset as a writer has been my knack for repeating myself,” a gentle jibe that is true, but necessarily so. There’s no end to threats to small farmers, or an economy of health, or “good work,” the opposite of which is “waste of fertility and of the land itself.” Apart from a little peevish attention at the beginning of the book to the thought that old-time Southern agrarianism, its roots in tobacco and tradition, is by definition racist—it isn’t, he insists, and never mind what a postmodern ecocritic might say—Berry looks keenly into the future and the possibilities of locally based economies that are “reasonably coherent, reasonably self-sufficient and self-determining.” If that’s a little ecotopian, so be it. Berry’s essays, continuing arguments begun in *The Unsettling of America* 40 years ago, will be familiar to longtime readers, blending his farm work with his interests in literature old and new. To them he adds a fine long poem and several new

FAITH AND WORLD

Contemporary Ismaili Social and Political Thought

by Mohammad N. Miraly



A searching appraisal of contemporary Ismaili philosophy and its relation to modernity.

“Miraly’s erudition is breathtaking, and the rigor of his analysis unrelenting...”

ISBN # - 1491789735
www.faithandworld.com

“A compelling analysis of the relationship between Islamic thought and modernity.”
—Kirkus Reviews (starred review)

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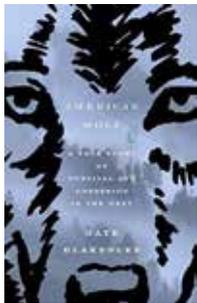
A treasure trove for fans of the *New Yorker*, political satire, and graphic design.

BLITT



stories set in his Port William, Kentucky, the latter centering on yeoman hero Andy Catlett, who reiterates a Jeffersonian ideal: “If you want people to love their country, let them own a piece of it.” Some of Catlett’s guiding principles align very neatly with the author’s: he counsels against buying anything one doesn’t strictly need and for going out in the world to do good—advice that always stands repeating.

Vintage Berry sure to please and instruct his many admirers.



AMERICAN WOLF *A True Story of Survival and Obsession in the West*

Blakeslee, Nate

Crown (336 pp.)

\$28.00 | \$28.00 e-book | Oct. 17, 2017

978-1-101-90278-3

978-1-101-90279-0 e-book

On-the-ground reporting on the fate of *Canis lupus* as a creature once nearly extirpated struggles to regain a home in

the Rockies.

Think life is tough for American humans? Try living as a wolf, even with the putative protection of the federal government in Yellowstone National Park. As Thomas McNamee reported 20 years ago in *The Return of the Wolf to Yellowstone*, reintroduction was a venture as much political as ecological. Now comes *Texas Monthly* writer Blakeslee (*Tulia: Race, Cocaine, and Corruption in a Small Texas Town*, 2005) to chronicle just how true that observation remains. The author serves up two protagonists: a renegade biologist named Rick McIntyre who, more than any living individual, was instrumental in returning the wolf to its former home and keeping it safe there, and a wolf named O-Six, an alpha female who was a star in the social media world thanks to some canny promotion by reintroduction activists. As Blakeslee tracks O-Six’s movements through the Lamar Valley of Wyoming and surrounding areas, he examines the lives of other wolves in and around the park, some in her pack, others in competing wolf clans. O-Six’s travels led to tragedy, as he writes; he interviews the hunter who killed her, who proudly tells him, “I’m against wolves...I want to make sure that’s clear.” It is. Blakeslee takes pains to try to understand the views of hunters and ranchers while making sure that it’s similarly clear that the wolves merit a place in the sun. Along the way, he examines the long and ongoing back and forth of listing and delisting the wolf on the federal list of protected species, the wolf being, to many in the western states affected, a sort of federal agent and therefore automatically suspect.

In the main, Blakeslee’s well-rendered story will be familiar to anyone who has followed the Yellowstone wolves, but those who have not will find this a solid overview of recent events—evenhanded but clearly and rightly on the side of the wolves. (family tree; 2 maps)



BLITT

Blitt, Barry

Illus. by the author

Riverhead (176 pp.)

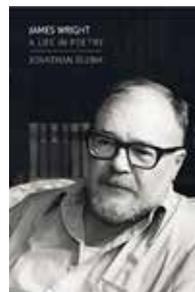
\$40.00 | Oct. 24, 2017

978-0-399-57666-9

Indelible images from one of America’s leading political cartoonists.

Though he claims that “my comprehension of politics was and remains superficial,” Blitt’s (*The Founding Fathers!*, 2016, etc.) magazine covers, especially for the *New Yorker*, have not only spurred considerable dialogue in the culture at large, but also helped frame the dialogue in American political discourse. There was the image of the Obamas giving each other fist bumps while dressed in terrorist garb; the one with the Monty Python–esque “silly walks” showing Brits walking off the cliff with Brexit; and the flooding of the Bush cabinet in the wake of Hurricane Katrina—not to mention the many involving the 2016 election of Trump in general, who has been the gift that keeps on giving. How does Blitt do it? He does his best to explain, showing his drafting table and sheets covered with inkblots. He offers a “neurotic’s diary,” the daily routine, and he provides revelatory glimpses of the process, the sketches, and drafts preceding the finished illustration. He also inventories the “tools of the trade”—not only the array of artistic supplies, but a pharmacy’s worth of prescribed medications. So here you have everything that goes into a Blitt cartoon, but unless you are Blitt, you will never achieve what he does with those ingredients. He admits that not even he knows how he does what he does or even exactly what a powerful image might mean. But accompanying these illustrations is plenty of testimony on what sets him apart. Frank Rich praises “the spontaneity, grace, and power of Barry’s art,” which often accompanied the columnist’s Sunday pieces for the *New York Times*. “Paying attention to small details, Blitt manages to make points about big issues,” says Francoise Mouly, the *New Yorker*’s art editor. Many of these illustrations remain fresh in memory, though the tossed-off sketches and previously unpublished work are every bit as illuminating.

A treasure trove for fans of the *New Yorker*, political satire, and graphic design.



JAMES WRIGHT *A Life in Poetry*

Blunk, Jonathan

Farrar, Straus and Giroux (528 pp.)

\$35.00 | \$16.99 e-book | Oct. 17, 2017

978-0-374-17859-8

978-0-374-71737-7 e-book

An authorized biography of the Pulitzer Prize–winning American poet.

Even though they never met, in Blunk, poet and co-editor of Wright’s *Selected Letters*, James Wright (1927–1980) has found his Boswell.

Blunk's account of the poet's life is often a day-by-day record of just about everything significant he did. Anne, Wright's second wife, provided his biographer with reams of primary source material—Wright was a relentless letter writer—and Blunk conducted hundreds of interviews and compiled a detailed schedule of Wright's readings. Thanks to a prodigious memory, he could entertain his audiences by reciting hundreds of poems as well as his own. He was born in the run-down, industrial town of Martins Ferry on the Ohio River and was always desperate to leave it, which he did with a stint in the Army. His first wife, Liberty, even married him "to get out." But Wright never really left, and it inspired his poems, with themes of a "baffled loneliness," poverty, and down-and-out people. Blunk meticulously explores Wright's years of teaching, his painful bouts of depression, his recurring alcoholism, and how his poems were crafted. Wright was a maker of poems, revising them over and over, constantly constructing, tearing down, and rebuilding. Quoting generously from Wright's poems throughout, Blunk carefully chronicles the ongoing development of his style as he moved from regular meter and rhyme to free verse, simple language, and

striking imagery. His many translations of contemporary Spanish poetry helped contribute to this evolution—as did Wright's close friend, poet and editor Robert Bly, who did "more than any other poet to secure Wright's legacy." Virtually every important poet of the age had links to Wright, including James Dickey, Donald Hall, W.S. Merwin, Theodore Roethke, and Galway Kinnell. He became especially close to Anne Sexton.

A much-needed, engaging, and discerning biography that should help Wright find a new generation of readers.
(16 pages of b/w illustrations)



The Golden Valley

The Untold Story of
The Other Cultural Center of Tibet

David Huber
and
Dave Glantz

Book ISBN # 978-0-9975669-2-5

www.BaronetWorldWide.com

The Golden Valley

The Untold Story of the
Other Cultural Center of Tibet

by David Huber and Dave Glantz

This nonfiction debut illuminates the cultural heritage of the Golden Valley region in eastern Tibet, including its art, furniture, and rituals.

"Huber and Glantz gather information available nowhere else; they set the record straight on matters such as what is or is not a reading desk; they get into the nitty-gritty of materials, techniques, and changing styles; and they provide a wealth of photographs documenting their study."

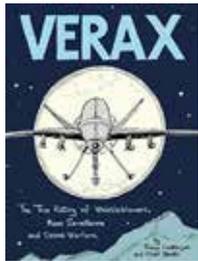
"An invaluable resource for students of Tibetan Buddhist art, history, symbolism, and culture."

—Kirkus Reviews

For information on publishing or film rights, please contact: David_Baronet@Fastmail.fm

A riveting study delves deeply into the conditions of the perfect storm that allowed Hitler and his Nazi party to seize and wield unprecedented power.

THE THIRD REICH

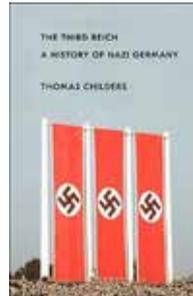


VERAX
The True History of Whistleblowers, Drone Warfare, and Mass Surveillance
Chatterjee, Pratap
Illus. by Khalil
 Metropolitan/Henry Holt (240 pp.)
 \$25.00 paper | \$11.99 e-book
 Oct. 24, 2017
 978-1-62779-355-1
 978-1-62779-356-8 e-book

A graphic indictment of American surveillance and drone malfeasance.

International investigative reporter Chatterjee (*Halliburton's Army: How a Well-Connected Texas Oil Company Revolutionized the Way America Makes War*, 2009, etc.) and political cartoonist Khalil (*Mission Accomplished: Wicked Cartoons by America's Most Wanted Political Cartoonist*, 2007, etc.) join forces for an account that eliminates nearly all ambiguity from the tale of how Edward Snowden, Julian Assange, and a small group of concerned journalists alerted the world to the massive scale of "tracking, hacking and mass surveillance" that American security forces had undertaken. Chatterjee was initially employed by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, but as he was making headway into the National Security Agency's security reach, he saw his job eliminated because it was costing too much for too little payoff. He stayed on the case, however, often digging into his own pocket to do so, and the main result of his work was to show how the government had mistargeted innocent victims for drone attack, how it deceived the public during the coverup, and how often those responsible for inflicting those attacks suffered from PTSD. The moral conclusions here are clear, but the narrative seeks equal clarity where conclusions have been mixed and murky. Take the case of Snowden, who was forced to flee to Russia after he made classified information public. "The U.S. Congress was sharply divided on Snowden," writes the author. "Some called him a hero, others a traitor." Chatterjee and Khalil leave no doubt that they side with the former, and they never really explain much of a case for the latter. In fact, the very title of the book is in tribute to the heroism of Snowden and others who have brought such information out of the darkness. In Latin, the text informs, *Verax* means "truth teller." The narrative effectively blends first-person prose with journalistic reporting and presents a complex story with cohesion. However, some of the subtleties might require more than a comic book.

An accessible book that sounds the alarm on how modern technology can be used by the government against its citizenry.



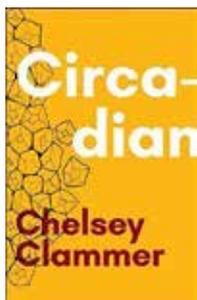
THE THIRD REICH
A History of Nazi Germany
Childers, Thomas
 Simon & Schuster (704 pp.)
 \$35.00 | \$16.99 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017
 978-1-4516-5113-3
 978-1-4516-5115-7 e-book



A riveting study delves deeply into the conditions of the perfect storm that allowed Hitler and his Nazi party to seize and wield unprecedented power.

The Nazis, first and foremost, were opportunists. In this compelling narrative, historian Childers (*Soldier from the War Returning: The Greatest Generation's Troubled Homecoming from World War II*, 2009, etc.) begins with Hitler's lackluster early life and sense of thwarted ambition, which took a sharp new direction after Germany's crushing defeat in World War I. From Vienna, where he was first inculcated in virulent anti-Semitic influences, to postwar Munich, a hotbed of left-wing revolutionary turmoil, Hitler seized the two pillars of what would become Nazi ideology: anti-Semitism and anti-Marxism. He assumed leadership of one of the many small paramilitary parties that had sprung up before 1920 and rebranded it the National Socialist German Workers Party, complete with swastika symbol and thuggish paramilitary army, led by loyalist Ernst Röhm; the group was envisioned more as an ideological movement than a political party. From this point, Childers meticulously lays out the conditions that fed the growth of this objectionable group: Hitler's talent for oratory, which won over rich donors; the conservative Catholic Bavarian base that was tolerant of "nationalist-*Völkisch* extremists of all kinds"; the shocking leniency meted out to him after the failed Beer Hall Putsch of 1923; the inspired choice of Joseph Goebbels to organize a Nazi propaganda machine, instigating the party rallies and Hitler cult that appealed to disenchanted voters and heavily influenced the breakthrough election of 1930; and, as the author emphasizes, the fatally misdirected backroom connivances by former chancellor Franz von Papen and others, which handed the chancellorship to Hitler in 1933. Once in power, the Nazis ensured with breathtaking rapidity that everything began to "fall in line," with one edict after the other consolidating power and strangling the rights of Jews especially—all facing little resistance by Germans citizens or the rest of the world.

An elegantly composed study, important and even timely, given current trends in American and global politics. (*maps and photos*)



CIRCADIAN

Clammer, Chelsey
 Red Hen Press (178 pp.)
 \$14.95 paper | Oct. 3, 2017
 978-1-59709-603-4

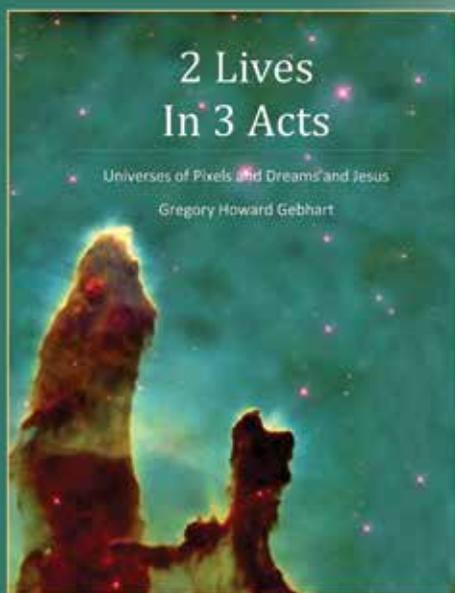
Unconventional essays offer intimate glimpses into a writer's heart and mind.

In her second collection, Clammer (*BodyHome*, 2015) once again stretches the boundaries of the form, pushing against "the tenuous fences between poetry and

fiction and nonfiction and humor and critical writing and academic writing and blogging and every other genre that has existed, ever, in order to discover how to discuss our lives." The essays are notable for their inventive language; many take the form of prose poems or verbal collages; one is constructed of bullet-pointed sentences; another, like a class syllabus. As the title suggests, the essays circle around several recurring themes: Clammer's relationship with her father, an "outstanding alcoholic" and "the catalyst," she writes, "for every problem in my life"; her various health

problems, including PTSD, an eating disorder, bipolar disorder, and alcoholism; suicide (she made two attempts); and the writing life. The title essay focuses on a particular circadian image: her father, pacing in circles as he tried to get relief from the "throbbing, clobbering" cluster headaches that blighted his life, the aftereffect of a head injury. Sometimes he howled with pain; he self-medicated with alcohol, and he tried to kill himself. After he died, Clammer was left with traumatic memories of his suffering: "there was no healing. No desire for sobriety. No want for life. The only thing present was his continuous hurt." Suicide recurs in several pieces, especially one essay about her work in a mental hospital for homeless adolescents with addiction and mental health issues. "I was just a woman with a sober heart, with a steady and medicated brain, with a belief in each youth's sobriety," she writes. She felt attached to one girl, who eventually died—accidentally, though she often threatened to kill herself—and Clammer struggles to understand the depression, vulnerability, and fear that led to the young woman's death.

An affecting memoir emerges from a dozen circuitous, digressive essays.



2 Lives in 3 Acts:
Universes of Pixels and Dreams and Jesus
 by Gregory Howard Gebhart

Gebhart (*Deere is Right Here!*, 2016, etc.) offers a memoir about his lifelong struggle with mental illness and his reflections on a higher power.

"...readers will come away, in the end, with an understanding that it's only through difficulty that one can hope to find purpose."

"A vivid, well-paced account of one man's winding personal journey."
 —*Kirkus Reviews*

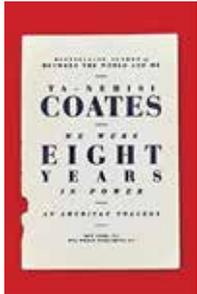
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 ISBN-10: 1544631235

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Biting cultural and political analysis from the award-winning journalist.

WE WERE EIGHT YEARS IN POWER



WE WERE EIGHT YEARS IN POWER *An American Tragedy*

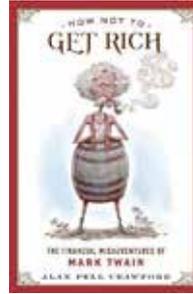
Coates, Ta-Nehisi
One World/Random House (416 pp.)
\$28.00 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-0-399-59056-6



Biting cultural and political analysis from the award-winning journalist.

Coates (*Between the World and Me*, 2015, etc.), a MacArthur Fellow and winner of the National Book Award and Kirkus Prize, reflects on race, Barack Obama's presidency and its jarring aftermath, and his own evolution as a writer in eight stunningly incisive essays, most of which were published in the *Atlantic*, where he is national correspondent. He contextualizes each piece with candid personal revelations, making the volume a melding of memoir and critique. The opening essay focuses on Bill Cosby's famous effort to shake black men "out of the torpor that has left so many of them...undereducated, over-incarcerated, and underrepresented in the ranks of active fathers." Cosby's black conservatism, writes the author, reflected "a collective feeling of disgrace that borders on self-hatred." Obama's ascent, though, felt like "the wind shifting," and it coincided with Coates' visibility as a writer. After writing a profile of Michelle Obama ("American Girl"), he started a blog that came to the *Atlantic's* attention and soon joined the magazine. After "Fear of a Black President" won a National Magazine Award in 2012, Coates was sought out as a public intellectual for his insights about race. His conclusions are disquieting, his writing passionate, his tenor often angry: "white supremacy," he argues, "was so foundational to this country that it would not be defeated in my lifetime, my child's lifetime, or perhaps ever." He considers "The Case for Reparations" to be "the best piece in this volume to my mind," but surely "My President is Black," his assessment of Obama ("he walked on ice and never fell") and crude, boorish Trump, is a close contender. Coates considers bigotry to be the deciding factor in Trump's appeal. "It is almost as if the fact of Obama, the fact of a black president, insulted Trump personally," and he unleashed violent resentment among his supporters. Although Coates subtitles the book "An American Tragedy," he allows a ray of hope for "a resistance intolerant of self-exoneration, set against blinding itself to evil."

Emotionally charged, deftly crafted, and urgently relevant essays.



HOW NOT TO GET RICH *The Financial Misadventures of Mark Twain*

Crawford, Alan Pell
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (240 pp.)
\$27.00 | \$27.00 e-book | Oct. 17, 2017
978-0-544-83646-4
978-0-544-83671-6 e-book

"To succeed in business...avoid my example" —Mark Twain (1901).

Journalist Crawford (*Twilight at Monticello: The Final Years of Thomas Jefferson*, 2008, etc.) offers up a zesty financial biography of Twain (1835-1910) the businessman, noting that his subject tried to be "an Edison as well as a Shakespeare," as one of his great nephews recalled. The author chronicles Twain's adventures as an entrepreneur, investor, and inventor; like a diligent accountant, he carefully itemizes Twain's wins and losses in today's monetary values, making them all the more shocking. When Twain went to Carson City, Nevada, as a novice writer, he also had a hankering for a quick buck. After all, he believed the mountains were "literally bursting with gold and silver." Though the mining didn't pan out, as a "resourceful and ingenious" fellow, he had "cause for hope." He struck pay dirt when he married Livy Langdon, whom he deeply loved. The young bride's wealthy father built them a huge, furnished, fully staffed house as a wedding gift; when her father died, Livy inherited more than \$4,400,000. After they moved to New Haven, Connecticut, in 1872, to another formidable house, Twain wrote *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and invented the Self-Pasting Scrap Book. It sold well, but his partner swindled him, and he went on to invest in other projects: odorless rubber cloth, a vaporizer to extract steam from coal, a Fact and Date board game, and the Kaolotype engraving process to create book illustrations. Twain then started his own publishing company, and after giving Ulysses S. Grant's widow an unheard-of royalty, he published her husband's *Memoirs*. It sold like hot cakes, and she made \$11,000,000. However, his company's other major book, *The Life of Pope Leo XIII*, was a flop. Fortunately, Twain was a "superb manager of his own image," a talent that kept his family fed.

Light and frothy, this humorous biography is a lively read.



I'M FINE...AND OTHER LIES

Cummings, Whitney
Putnam (288 pp.)
\$27.00 | \$27.00 e-book | Oct. 3, 2017
978-0-7352-1260-2
978-0-7352-1262-6 e-book

A witty memoir detailing the misfortunes of a Hollywood comedian, actor, and writer.

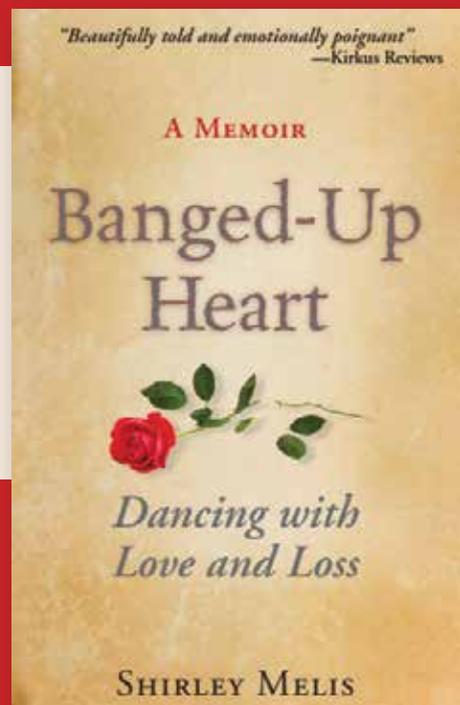
Dedicated to the voices in her head who told her she could never write a book, Cummings' debut offers what she deems is "a whole

book's worth of yummy, humiliating schadenfreude" as well as "mortifying situations that'll make you feel way better about your own choices." It's an extremely self-deprecating assault on a laundry list of proclivities, insecurities, and intimate fears many readers will easily relate to. A problematic journey along the "yellow brick road of healers" results in a few opening chapters rife with ineffective therapists, pointed neuroses, and a bold admittance of chronic co-dependency, about which the author wrote in Lena Dunham and Jenni Konner's newsletter, inspiring the book. Cummings writes about the misogyny of the stand-up comedy industry (and its audiences), her perfectionist tendencies, egg freezing, her 15-year struggle with anorexia (which included bouts of "sleep eating"), a surprise scoliosis diagnosis, and a horrifying attack by her pet pit bull. While all of these situations had disastrous potential, the author takes the sting out of each with deflating humor and straight-up honesty, humility, and a keen sense of humanity. Akin to the inner-critical narrative voice of Amy Schumer, Cummings' observations expectedly tackle the uncomfortable and the embarrassing, including a somewhat overanalyzed encounter with drunk guys

in a Las Vegas hotel hallway and an illuminating cross-cultural lesson with Middle Eastern women about wearing headscarves. Occasionally, the author brushes up against some painful truths that even she seems surprised to have publicly admitted, such as her debilitating issues with body dysmorphia and self-esteem. After years of anxiety and denial about everything from heckled stand-up gigs to asymmetrical breasts, Cummings seems content that she can now openly admit that becoming truly happy and satisfied with life is a continuous work in progress.

A zippy, unabashed narrative confronting personal adversity with an equal mix of humor and sincerity.

THE STORY OF AN ORDINARY WOMAN, HER DEEPLY FELT GRIEF BUTTING UP AGAINST HER DESIRE FOR MORE THAN COMPANIONSHIP: PASSION, SEXUAL FULFILLMENT, AND SELF-REALIZATION.



"Melis' stirring story is beautifully told, both philosophically reflective and emotionally poignant. Her account is also remarkably candid. Despite the heartbreaking losses she endured, she manages to produce a life-affirming memoir detailing personal triumph."

—Kirkus Reviews



\$19.95
 Paperback: 300 pages
 Terra Nova Books
 February 2017
 ISBN-10: 193828870X

For publishing and film rights please contact shirleymeliswriter@gmail.com

Fans of true crime and readers curious about the inner workings of Mexican drug cartels should enjoy this well-researched story.

BLOODLINES



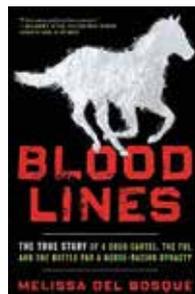
EXTREME CITIES
The Peril and Promise of Urban Life in the Age of Climate Change

Dawson, Ashley
Verso (240 pp.)
\$29.95 | \$29.95 e-book | Oct. 17, 2017
978-1-78478-036-4
978-1-78478-037-1 e-book

A book that conveys much more of the peril than the promise of today's urban life in the age of climate change.

After Donald Trump made the ill-advised decision to pull the United States out of the Paris climate agreement, much has been made of the city as a bulwark against climate change, but Dawson (English/CUNY; *Extinction: A Radical History*, 2016, etc.) explains why today's cities may be too simple an antidote to our future problems. While experts often note that the per capita carbon emissions of city-dwellers are lower than in rural areas, the author points out that not only do cities supply a disproportionate contribution to the planet's overall carbon budget, but within cities like New York, just a few luxury high rises account for the bulk of that contribution. This leads inevitably to what Dawson calls "climate apartheid," a future in which "wealthy elites" profit from environmental crises while those already struggling face disaster. Using examples of imperiled cities around the world, but returning repeatedly to New York in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, the author documents the failures of city planners, governments, urban recovery efforts, and even local first responders when faced with environmental challenges. While based in solid research, the conclusions Dawson draws are often so hypercritical and contentious that they might become unconvincing. The book is a call for a revolutionary shift, not just regarding the structure and function of cities, but also requiring a massive overhaul of economic, governmental, and social structures around the world. Dawson argues that our current capitalistic societies must be dismantled in order to make way for a more equitable future in which environmental conditions become increasingly unstable.

A tough read that will mostly appeal to critics of neoliberalism, but also a substantive contribution to the growing dialogue about our response—or lack thereof—to climate change.



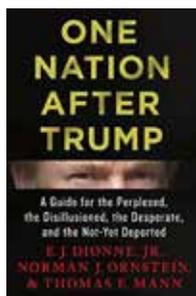
BLOODLINES
The True Story of a Drug Cartel, the FBI, and the Battle for a Horse-Racing Dynasty

del Bosque, Melissa
Ecco/HarperCollins (400 pp.)
\$27.99 | \$22.39 e-book | Sep. 12, 2017
978-0-06-244848-4
978-0-06-244850-7 e-book

Two FBI agents work to take down members of a drug cartel wrapped up with quarter horse racing in Texas.

In her first book, *Texas Observer* investigative reporter del Bosque follows new agent Scott Lawson and his eventual partner, identified here with a pseudonym because she has family in Mexico, as they work with Tyler Graham, the young owner of a horse farm, to uncover a money laundering scheme set into motion by the Zetas, a violent cartel controlled by the Treviño family. The author describes scenes of action in suspenseful detail without neglecting the more mundane aspects of the investigation, including the painstaking tracing of the money trail between the cartel's leaders in Mexico and their agents, who often spend unusual amounts of cash to buy horses in the United States. The author has a clear understanding of the often counterproductive conflicts among the various government agencies working the drug war in Texas, and she builds tension in the narrative by emphasizing how close the FBI's carefully built case came to being scuttled by the agendas of other agencies. Del Bosque also follows closely the trial of those accused of money laundering, analyzing the ups and downs of the prosecution of the case. While the account is, as might be expected, skewed toward the points of view of those participants who were willing to talk with her, particularly Lawson, the author skillfully uses a variety of sources to convey the intricacies of a complicated case and builds in bits of background without slowing down the movement of the story. The working relationship between Lawson and his partner is particularly well-defined.

Fans of true crime and readers curious about the inner workings of Mexican drug cartels should enjoy this well-researched story. Though different in execution, this book pairs nicely with Joe Tone's *Bones*, which covers the same subject.



**ONE NATION AFTER TRUMP
A Guide for the Perplexed,
the Disillusioned, the Desperate,
and the Not-Yet Departed**

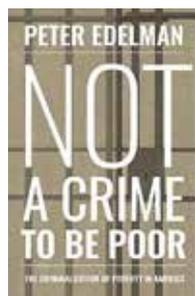
Dionne Jr., E.J. & Ornstein, Norman J. & Mann, Thomas E.

St. Martin's (336 pp.)
\$25.99 | \$18.19 e-book | Sep. 19, 2017
978-1-250-16405-6
978-1-250-16406-3 e-book

A trio of acclaimed political scholars and journalists do their best to encourage those bemoaning the path of America's government.

Dionne (*Why the Right Went Wrong*, 2016, etc.), Ornstein, and Mann (co-authors: *It's Even Worse than It Looks: How the American Constitutional System Collided with the New Politics of Extremism*, 2012, etc.) offer a unified voice of sanity in a world gone mad, and their arguments are well-supported by citations of other political writers. On the question of whether Trumpism is a new phenomenon, they point out that the radicalization of the Republican Party has been underway for nearly three decades, and the hatred of the liberal media began with Nixon and Agnew. Now, conservatives have delegitimized the traditional media and empowered the worst and most reckless journalists on the right. To call the writers at *Breitbart* et al. opinion journalists is wrong; it isn't journalism if it's not based on facts. Much of our current situation can be traced to Newt Gingrich's pernicious influence and the polarization he introduced and proliferated. Centralizing power in the Speaker of the House's office and the drive for a majority sent a message that ideological commitments would always outweigh evidence. Trumpism is best understood as a protest movement reacting to the long-term changes in our social, economic, religious, and political lives. The authors also note a difference between nationalism, always a power situation, and Trump's populism, more a style than a philosophical orientation. They trace the various elements of his rise, but there is no single reason why Trump is president. Ultimately, the authors seek to develop a new concept of patriotism, a new sense of civic-mindedness, a new civil society, and a new democracy. Of course, this is all exceedingly difficult in the current climate, but the authors are seasoned guides and provide good jumping-off points for moving beyond the noxious atmosphere of Trumpism.

A breath of hope but also a serious call to action: everyone needs to take part.



**NOT A CRIME TO BE POOR
The Criminalization of
Poverty in America**

Edelman, Peter

New Press (320 pp.)
\$26.95 | Oct. 31, 2017
978-1-62097-163-5

How poor people are being punished for their poverty.

Supported by compelling evidence of endemic injustice, Edelman (Law and Public Policy/Georgetown Univ. Law Center; *So Rich, So Poor: Why It's So Hard to End Poverty in America*, 2012, etc.), faculty director of Georgetown's Center on Poverty and Inequality, presents a hard-hitting argument for reform. Joining critiques offered by writers such as Chris Hayes (*A Colony in a Nation*), Michelle Alexander (*The New Jim Crow*), and Matthew Desmond (*Evicted*), Edelman underscores the ways in which impoverished individuals are victimized by the criminal justice

**PROGRAMMING THE BRAIN:
EDUCATIONAL NEUROSCIENCE PERSPECTIVE**

Pedagogical Practices and Study Skills for
Enhanced Learning and Metacognition

by Chandana Watagodakumbura

"Watagodakumbura makes a convincing case that everyone is wired differently for learning, and children who are taught in ways that allow for this fact will blossom intellectually."

"The book raises intriguing questions about what it truly means to be different in an educational system that demands conformity."

ISBN-10: 1541040139
ISBN-13: 978-1541040137
www.chandana-watagodakumbura.net/

**"A sometimes-difficult but thoroughly researched work that offers a fresh angle on improving education."
—Kirkus Reviews**

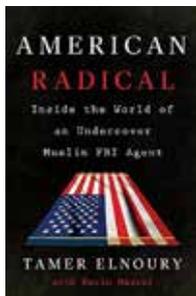
For information on publishing or film rights, please contact cwatagod@gmail.com

An entertaining, richly documented biography that will be appreciated by film and theater scholars as well as fans of these memorable actors.

HANK AND JIM

system. “Low income people are arrested for minor violations that are only annoyances for people with means,” he writes, and they face penalties they cannot afford to pay. Failure to pay results in additional fines, repeated driver’s license suspensions, and incarceration. Shockingly, 43 states charge for having a public defender. In addition, to accrue revenue, states have increased fines for minor infractions. Fines for speeding tickets have soared to \$300 or more. Students who commit low-level offenses often are sent into the criminal system rather than to the principal’s office. To monitor probation, 13 states employ for-profit companies that impose high fees, and 44 states charge offenders for the costs of their own probation or parole, which include fees for electronic bracelets, drug testing, alcohol monitoring, driving classes, and home supervision. Mentally ill inmates receive no treatment or at best minimal attention; Edelman cites Corizon, “the largest for-profit mental health provider in the country for prisons, jails and detention centers,” as particularly egregious. After documenting case after shocking case in the first part of the book, Edelman proposes that the real solution to injustice lies in ending poverty: “prenatal care for all, child development for all children, first-class education for all, decent jobs and effective work supports, affordable housing, health and mental health, lawyers as needed, safe neighborhoods,” healthy communities, and “social, racial and gender justice.” He presents case histories of achievements in several communities, fueling his optimism.

An impassioned call for an “overarching movement” for justice.



AMERICAN RADICAL
Inside the World of an Undercover Muslim FBI Agent

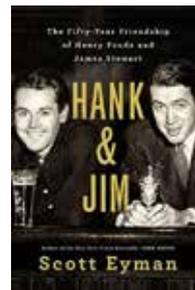
Elnoury, Tamer with Maurer, Kevin
Dutton (368 pp.)
\$28.00 | \$28.00 e-book | Oct. 24, 2017
978-1-101-98615-8
978-1-101-98616-5 e-book

The story of an Egyptian-born Muslim FBI agent’s undercover pursuit of Islamist extremists.

Elnoury—who co-wrote this book with Maurer, co-author of *No Easy Day: The Autobiography of a Navy Seal: The Firsthand Account of the Mission that Killed Osama Bin Laden* (2012)—is clearly aware of the complexities of his life’s mission. Although he was always drawn to law enforcement, spending years in undercover narcotics work in New Jersey, he notes that “Islam was something I practiced privately.” He was understandably outraged on 9/11. “I was angry, embarrassed, and hurt,” he writes. “Some asshole in a cave turned me and my family into the enemy.” The author volunteered his services as a culturally attuned Arabic speaker, realizing that “the FBI was waking up to a new war....They had to adapt to meet a new enemy.” Still, it took years for the FBI to recruit him. “They wanted to see if I could come close to passing the FBI Undercover School,” he writes, and he credits this intensive training with protecting him

during his high-risk infiltrations. He developed a “legend” (or cover identity) as a wealthy real estate speculator who’d drifted toward extremism, first ensnaring an Afghan al-Qaida supporter, whose “confession had led to [a] drone strike.” Elnoury then began an elaborate penetration of a small cell determined to commit mass-casualty attacks in the U.S. and Canada. This complex international operation, which makes up much of the narrative arc, resulted in several successful prosecutions. The author reflects compellingly on the challenges of being a Muslim patriot, and he closes with a plea to resist wholesale bigotry: “Banning Muslims from the United States throws gas on the myth that the United States is at war with Islam.” His tale of infiltration is exciting and clearly written, although since he blurs the specifics of actual undercover tradecraft, his reconstructed, dialogue-heavy encounters with jihadist suspects are occasionally repetitive.

A worthwhile, unique addition to the shelf of post-9/11 memoirs concerning the fight against terrorism.



HANK AND JIM
The Fifty-Year Friendship of Henry Fonda and James Stewart

Eyman, Scott
Simon & Schuster (416 pp.)
\$29.00 | \$14.99 e-book | Oct. 24, 2017
978-1-5011-0217-2
978-1-5011-0219-6 e-book

A dual biography tracing the careers and 50-year friendship of two iconic

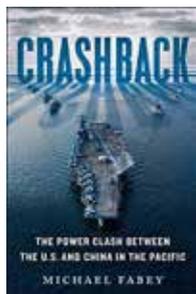
American actors.

In his engrossing new book, biographer and film historian Eyman (*John Wayne: The Life and Legend*, 2014, etc.) vividly portrays the lives and work of two Hollywood legends: Henry Fonda (1905-1982) and James Stewart (1908-1997). As young actors, they worked together in regional theater with the University Players and eventually became roommates in New York. Upon moving to Hollywood, their individual careers took off, and their friendship continued to endure over the next several decades. Aside from political differences—Fonda was a Democrat, Stewart a Republican—they shared interests, core values, and personality traits that would distinguish them from many actors, including a highly disciplined approach to their work and an aversion to the superficial trappings of celebrity. “They were two loners who went off to see the world and remade component parts of it into their own images,” writes the author, “two fiercely private men who were quite capable of confounding their own families....In their friendship they created a safe place for themselves, away from the fears and frustrations of their careers, their domestic problems, the responsibilities of their legendary status.” While their long-standing friendship is notable, in tracing their personal lives and accomplishments, Eyman’s narrative is even more compelling. He provides a fascinating overview of the industry and the ebbs and flows of his subjects’ careers in film, on stage, and eventually TV (Fonda



ultimately felt more at home on stage, while Stewart preferred working on film. Additionally, the author offers in-depth portrayals of key industry players who would remain their close associates, including writer/director Josh Logan, agent/producer Leland Hayward, and Fonda's first wife, Margaret Sullivan, the talented, somewhat troubled actress for whom both actors shared a lasting, deep affection until her death. Of further note were their individual military achievements in World War II, experiences that greatly influenced their lives and values throughout their remaining years.

An entertaining, richly documented biography that will be appreciated by film and theater scholars as well as fans of these memorable actors. (16 pages of photos)



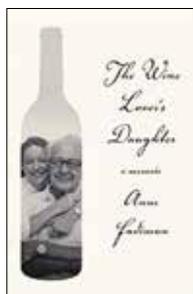
CRASHBACK
The Power Clash Between the U.S. and China in the Pacific

Fabey, Michael
Scribner (304 pp.)
\$26.00 | \$13.99 e-book | Oct. 24, 2017
978-1-5011-1204-1
978-1-5011-1206-5 e-book

An examination of military confrontation in the western Pacific and the dangers it poses for those who now play a calculated game of chicken.

Take your pick: China is either our adversary or our friend. You'll find plenty of books to support either position. Military journalist Fabey takes the former point of view; indeed, the first sentence is, "The United States and China are at war in the Western Pacific." That war, he adds, hasn't come down to widespread shooting—yet—but is nonetheless "warm," waged over small atolls and islands that may not add up to much but stand as outposts of "military hegemony and the diplomatic and economic influence that naturally follows that hegemony." Who the hegemon is depends on your point of view. The author would seem to agree with both the proposition that sovereign states have territorial rights and that U.S. shipping should enjoy freedom of the seas. He worries, naturally, that America is not playing hard enough—though the current administration supports hard power, it has isolationist tendencies, too. Fabey often writes as if possessed by the set piece—and cliché—happy ghost of Tom Clancy: "No other navy in the world would challenge it. But there was one navy that was willing to try"; "*Can't we just talk this over?*" At the highest echelons of the U.S. Navy there certainly are senior officers who are willing to do that...In short, they believe that the U.S. can actually *trust* China." For all its alternately leaden and overwrought passages, however, there's good on-the-ground (or, better, on-the-sea) reporting from both sides of the conflict. Fabey gives his Chinese sources a thorough workout, the little emperors and true believers alike, and he has a sharp eye for what faces the American fleet if push comes to shove, as well as for the countermeasures that U.S. military leaders are already taking by way of "naming and shaming" and otherwise containing China's ambitions at sea.

Of interest to policy wonks, naval strategists, and specialists in the region.



THE WINE LOVER'S DAUGHTER
A Memoir

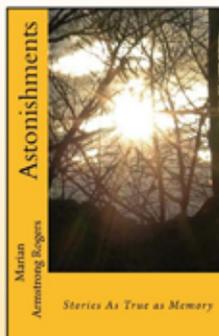
Fadiman, Anne
Farrar, Straus and Giroux (272 pp.)
\$24.00 | \$16.80 e-book | Nov. 7, 2017
978-0-374-22808-8
978-0-374-71176-4 e-book

Fadiman (*At Large and at Small: Confessions of a Literary Hedonist*, 2008, etc.) decants a harmonious blend of biography, wine lore, and memoir in this account of a literary daughter's relationship with her celebrated literary father.

Born into a secular Jewish family in Brooklyn, Clifton Fadiman (1904-1999) spent his adult life submerging that identity

ASTONISHMENTS
Stories as True as Memory

by Marian Armstrong Rogers



A woman looks back on her life and how she found grace amid many trials.

"An account that eloquently shows the author's resilience through heartbreaks."
—Kirkus Reviews

"Beautifully written, with moments that make you laugh, cry, shake your head in bewilderment and narrow your eyes in frustration..."
— San Francisco Book Review, 5 stars

★★★★★

"...a page-turner..."
—Manhattan Book Review, 5 stars (Robert Buccellato)

★★★★★

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beneath WASP sensibilities and pursuits. His belief that Jewishness was a cultural and career impediment and his envy of WASP privilege were powerful motivators to escape his origins, in the 1930s and beyond. As revealed by his daughter, Fadiman's was almost entirely a life of the mind. Physically clumsy, he was unacquainted with much of life beyond its gustatory or literary pleasures. Though thwarted in his desire to become an academic, he emerged as a self-invented, ardent public intellectual of the first rank. Before the age of 30, he had served as editor-in-chief at Simon & Schuster and head of the book review section at the *New Yorker*. His friends and colleagues were a who's who of celebrated litterateurs of the time, and the gleam of a life in letters was not lost on his daughter. Despite considerable renown, the refined yet self-effacing Fadiman always regarded himself as an outsider and, in darker moments, even an imposter. The author's mother, by contrast, was of mixed Presbyterian and Mormon stock, an accomplished journalist and screenwriter who relinquished her career to marriage. Anne Fadiman, writer-in-residence at Yale and winner of a National Book Critics Circle Award, grew up in a prosperous, secular, decidedly rational household. Always there were books and a civilizing force embodied by wine, a taste for which she did not share. In limning her father, Fadiman also lays a gradual accretion of detail about herself, but she is careful never to eclipse his (regrettably) diminished star.

Reading this daughter's graceful, often melodious billet-doux to her father is not unlike imbibing several equally felicitous glasses of wine, their salutary effects leaving one pleasantly sated.



UNQUALIFIED

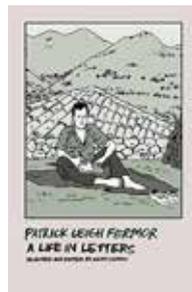
Faris, Anna
Dutton (320 pp.)
\$28.00 | Oct. 24, 2017
978-1-101-98642-4

The comedic actress and podcaster reflects on her career journey and offers advice on relationships.

In the effusive foreword to his wife's book, actor Chris Pratt notes that a similarity they share is their reliance on people's tendency to underestimate them—a possible hint for readers to anticipate something more than the routine narrative that follows. Faris, best known for her roles in the Scary Movie franchise and the TV sitcom *Mom*, does little to raise the bar of what can best be described as equal parts Hollywood coming-of-age story and celebrity-as-relationship-adviser brand-building exercise. The author's background story is fairly uneventful. She grew up in a Seattle suburb in a loving, supportive family. In high school and college, she appeared in a few local stage productions, which sparked a continued interest in acting, leading to auditions and minor film and TV work. After falling in love with a co-star from an early film, Ben Indra, she followed him to Hollywood, where she landed a few breakout film roles. Her eventual marriage to Indra didn't work out, but

shortly thereafter, she met Pratt, and their relationship quickly blossomed and continues to endure. As a writer, Faris has her moments. She has an engaging voice and is capable of expressing a distinct point of view. She is most affecting in her occasionally bittersweet reflections, as she recounts stories about working in the industry, her anxieties and frustrations about auditioning, and the personal challenges of dealing with aging in Hollywood (she recently turned 40). Unfortunately, there are far too many self-conscious references to the fact that she's writing her first book. Her story is also loaded with unnecessary filler—e.g., chapters revolving around relationship themes and advice from her popular podcast *Unqualified* and random lists (“Sex on the Beach and Thirteen Other Things that Sound Better Than They Are”) that are presumably intended to engage her podcast audience.

A mildly compelling celebrity memoir primarily for fans of the author's podcast.



PATRICK LEIGH FERMOR *A Life in Letters*

*Fermor, Patrick Leigh
Sisman, Adam—Ed.*
New York Review Books (496 pp.)
\$19.95 paper | \$19.95 e-book
Nov. 14, 2017
978-1-68137-156-6
978-1-68137-157-3 e-book

A collection of correspondence to friends and family over more than half a century, recounting the noted British traveler and writer's adventures over a long life.

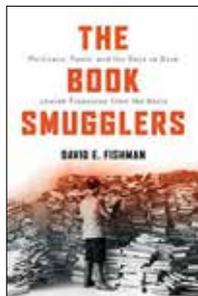
If letters are a lost art, you wouldn't know it from reading this lively collection by Fermor (1915–2011), who, writes editor Sisman (*John le Carré: The Biography*, 2015, etc.), saw them as “a means...of making convivial connection across the void.” Famously, as a young man, Fermor had walked across Europe to what is now Istanbul, witnessing the rise of Nazism as he crossed Germany. In the ensuing war, he served as a special operations officer who, spectacularly, kidnapped a German general in Greece. “The Germans in Crete,” he recalls understatedly of his squad of behind-the-lines mischief-makers, “were just as courageous, probably more efficient, four times more numerous and a hundred times more ruthless than the British... and yet we all managed to survive quite easily.” Fermor seems to have remembered everyone he met and every snippet of conversation that entered his ears, for his letters, to friends and fellow writers such as the poet George Seferis and the medieval historian John Julius Norwich, are full of details of all that he witnessed. Sometimes his memories, as presented in these letters, are quite striking: here he awakens in the middle of the night to the sound of wild ponies driven by the cold from the Devonshire moors, there he recalls decrepit Transylvanian hotels and rugged Spanish goat paths. Even his mundane reminiscences are interesting. He protests in old age that his “memory swings very erratically from the lucid to the nebulous and

First-rate scholarship that pulses with the beat of a most human heart.

THE BOOK SMUGGLERS

back,” but he doesn’t skip a beat. Fans of Fermor’s travelogues will recognize incidents, and readers new to him will find this a good introduction.

Recounting triumph and tragedy, these letters help round out a portrait of a writer who had long ago reconciled himself to a minor role in literary history—but who deserves a wide readership all the same.



THE BOOK SMUGGLERS Partisans, Poets, and the Race to Save Jewish Treasures from the Nazis

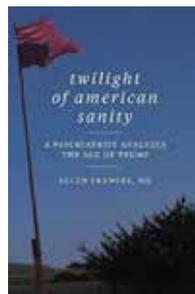
Fishman, David E.
ForeEdge/Univ. Press of New England
(312 pp.)
\$29.95 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-5126-0049-0



The remarkable story of a group of Jewish ghetto inmates who “would not let their culture be trampled upon and incinerated.”

In a work that is scholarly and intimate, descriptive and personal, Fishman (History/Jewish Theological Seminary; *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture*, 2005, etc.) reminds us that the Holocaust was not just “the greatest genocide in history.” It was also “an act of cultural plunder and destruction” in which “the Nazis sought not only to murder the Jews but also to obliterate their culture.” The author proceeds to demonstrate this in wrenching detail. Focusing on the Jewish community in Vilna (aka Vilnius) in Lithuania, Fishman engagingly tells the astonishing story of a group of dedicated bibliophiles and religious and cultural caretakers determined to save a massive number of Jewish manuscripts and books and other artifacts from the Nazis, who intended to destroy most and to use others for their academic “study” of “the race they hoped to exterminate.” To personalize his narrative, Fishman follows some key figures, including Shmerke Kaczerginski, a poet, humorist, and songwriter; Abraham Sutzkever, a prolific poet; and Rachela Krinsky, a teacher who risked everything to save materials. The author also follows some of the Nazis, virtually all of whom escaped punishment for what they did and attempted to do. Fishman teaches us about what these items were, how the so-called “Paper Brigade” sneaked them out of libraries into hiding (and, later, out of the country), how the Nazis responded, and how the postwar celebrations were a little premature—the Soviets eventually became as openly anti-Semitic as the Nazis. The United States does not escape censure, either. Among other things, the American government would not allow Kaczerginski into the country because he had once been a communist.

First-rate scholarship that pulses with the beat of a most human heart. (28 b/w photos; 2 maps)



TWILIGHT OF AMERICAN SANITY A Psychiatrist Analyzes the Age of Trump

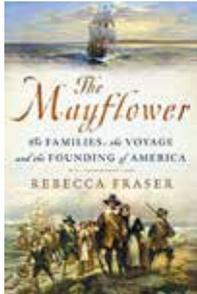
Frances, Allen
Morrow/HarperCollins (336 pp.)
\$27.99 | \$17.99 e-book | Sep. 5, 2017
978-0-06-239450-7
978-0-06-239452-1 e-book



“Trump isn’t crazy, but our society is.”

In this cogent analysis of “societal insanity,” begun before the last presidential election, Frances (Psychiatry and Behavioral Science/Duke Univ.; *Saving Normal: Reclaiming the Natural Power, Resilience, and Self-Healing Properties of the Brain*, 2013, etc.) explores at length the many societal delusions that have given rise to Trump. The delusions include a false belief in fast, easy solutions to complex problems, such as global warming (God will fix it), guns (they don’t kill people; people do), dwindling resources (there will be a high-tech fix), and so on. Exploiting this societal sickness, Trump, a “skilled snake-oil salesman selling quack medicine...won power because he promised quick, phony cures for the...real problems burdening the significant segment of our population left out of the American dream.” Regarding Rust Belt jobs, writes the author, “most of the jobs were lost to automation, not globalization, and sadly they will never return.” In the election campaign, Trump, a lifelong con man, displayed the common touch, while Hillary Clinton proved “remote and inaccessible, assuming she could rest comfortably on her long lead and past laurels.” Frances makes no secret of his deep abhorrence of Trump: “we have placed the future of humanity in the hands of someone indifferent to facts, proud of scientific ignorance, and ready to act deceitfully on whim and spite.” While Trump “doesn’t qualify for a mental disorder...he does present with one of the world’s best documented cases of lifelong failure to mature.” He is “a distillation, mouthpiece, and terrifying living embodiment of all the worst in human nature and societal delusion.” In his final, discursive chapters, Frances envisions the possibility of a rational post-Trump world informed by progressive populism.

This welcome and insightful book joins a small shelf of essential titles—Arlie Hochschild’s *Strangers in Their Own Land* is another—that help explain why and how the Trump presidency happened.



THE MAYFLOWER
The Families, the Voyage,
and the Founding of America

Fraser, Rebecca

St. Martin's (400 pp.)

\$29.99 | \$14.99 e-book | Nov. 7, 2017

978-1-250-10856-2

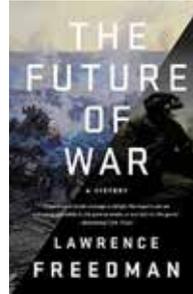
978-1-250-10858-6 e-book

Fraser (*The Story of Britain: From the Romans to the Present*, 2005, etc.) personalizes the legend of the Pilgrims by

focusing on Edward Winslow and family and their voyage from England to Holland to Plymouth.

In the early 1600s, it was no longer peaceful in Holland. Rather than return to England, Charles I sent the Pilgrims to America to get them out of his hair and to create a bulwark against Catholic Spain. Edward was an enthusiastic, impulsive man, a leader who was influenced throughout his life by a series of significant colleagues, William Bradford especially. Arriving on the *Mayflower*, 41 adult men signed a compact creating the Plymouth Colony, "the first experiment in consensual government in Western history between individuals with one another, and not with a monarch." Encountering the Massasoit peoples, the pilgrims were initially afraid but then grateful, as the natives saved them in their first desperate winter. The colonists bought furs and gave strength and backing to the smallpox-depleted Wampanoag tribe. Fraser's smooth storytelling provides a revealing look into the development of the colony, the rise of the Massachusetts Bay Company, and the different outlooks on the community and the lure of land. The Massasoit relied on Edward to act as middleman as other tribes feared trading with whites. As the population grew, the inevitable troublemakers appeared, including Anne Hutchinson and Uncas, the leader of the Mohegan. Edward fought in the Pequot War, a small conflict that eventually cost the Indians' trust and led to King Philip's devastating war. Edward also traveled to England as the colony's representative and eventually served on a number of Cromwell's commissions. He was truly a founding father, dealing with every aspect of life in the colony, always showing his spirit and how he "liked fighting for a cause."

The story of the Winslows is an effective way to experience the emotions and fears of the small band who dauntlessly sailed off to the New World.



THE FUTURE OF WAR
A History

Freedman, Lawrence

PublicAffairs (400 pp.)

\$30.00 | \$19.99 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017

978-1-61039-305-8

978-1-61039-306-5 e-book



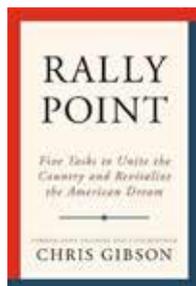
Nations are constantly preparing for war, and a major part of that preparation is predicting what the next war will be like. An expert in military strategy provides a detailed look at how that process has evolved.

Freedman (Emeritus, War Studies/Kings Coll. London; *Strategy: A History*, 2013, etc.) focuses primarily on British and American approaches, beginning in the mid-19th century, when a consensus arose that wars were decided in decisive battle, on the model of Waterloo. This encouraged military planners to aim for a knockout blow, preferably at the beginning of hostilities. Despite ample evidence of its flaws, this doctrine held sway for more than a century. With the arrival of the Cold War and its persistent theme of nuclear stalemate, Great Power wars became unthinkable. New technology that would avoid nuclear involvement became the holy grail of military thinkers. Then, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, local civil wars began to dominate the landscape. Western involvement—e.g., in Kosovo—became common, with results that often disappointed. Especially after 9/11, it became clear that traditional military methods were inadequate to win the new kind of conflict. The importance of cyberwar and the introduction of remote ways of killing—drones, in particular—came to the forefront, while grinding civil wars and terrorist action dominated the landscape. To show how contemporaries viewed future war in various eras, Freedman cites novels such as H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* and Nevil Shute's *On the Beach* along with more official military texts to show how the brass was thinking. More often than not, everybody guessed wrong, especially as they fell under the "decisive battle" illusion. Freedman consistently brings the discussion down to real cases, covering a wide range of history and geography. The final section, which considers the place of gang warfare and civil unrest in many parts of the world and the likely role of China in future conflicts, is especially thought-provoking. The author's lively style adds to the interest for general readers.

A valuable book for anyone interested in international affairs.

A revealing, well-researched—and, unfortunately, contemporarily relevant—investigation of the KKK’s wide support in the 1920s.

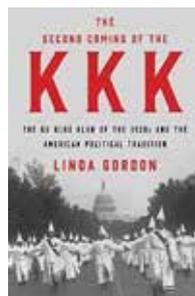
THE SECOND COMING OF THE KKK



RALLY POINT
Five Tasks to Unite the Country and Revitalize the American Dream
 Gibson, Chris
 Twelve (256 pp.)
 \$26.00 | \$14.99 paper | \$13.99 e-book
 Oct. 3, 2017
 978-1-5387-6058-1
 978-1-5387-6059-8 paper
 978-1-5387-6057-4 e-book

A conservative *cri de coeur* by a former U.S. representative. Gibson, a retired Purple Heart-winning Army officer from upstate New York, term-limited himself out of Congress when his term expired in January 2017, just after a bruising presidential race. Of that, he writes mildly, “for the majority of Americans, the 2016 presidential was not a positive experience.” Trump’s victory, he suggests, brings with it a rat’s nest of problems, since it elevated “a guy without a strong set of principles and beliefs....President Trump lacks the core strength of deeply held views.” While his own views would appear to be deeply held, especially on matters of religion, Gibson voted for that guy as “the only candidate who could bring the change we need—jobs, wages, and reform.” That, of course, remains to be seen. The author serves up a set of red-meat-to-true-believer formulas: “restore founding principles,” “unify and grow,” and so forth, each of which seems reasonable enough at first glance but under which are some questionable assertions. For instance, the Establishment Clause notwithstanding, by Gibson’s view, “the United States has never been a secular state.” No? Tell it to the Founders. Of Robespierre, architect of revolution, he writes, “the French experiment with a republic died with him.” Tell that to Emmanuel Macron. Libertarians and even progressives will find common cause in a few of Gibson’s points, such as his repudiation of the Iraq War, a deviation from the author’s “peace through strength” mantra, and of the Patriot Act. “We reject authoritarianism,” he writes resoundingly, “and favor liberty and the messy business of self-governance in which citizens have rights and responsibilities.” Even so, many of Gibson’s stated views tend toward the Tea Party right, especially when he scorns fellow Republicans for being statist, neoliberal, and so forth.

A book that can be reduced to slogans, none especially original—but a requisite step in building a brand for the next political step.



THE SECOND COMING OF THE KKK
The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and the American Political Tradition
 Gordon, Linda
 Liveright/Norton (288 pp.)
 \$27.95 | Oct. 24, 2017
 978-1-63149-369-0

An award-winning historian of social movements examines the unlikely rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the North after World War I, underscoring the organization’s ideas that “echo again today.”

Among those ideas were white supremacy, Christian evangelicalism, suspicion of elites, anti-intellectualism, fear of immigrants, and a conviction that American values were under dire threat. Gordon (Humanities and History/New York Univ. *Dorothea Lange: A Life Beyond Limits*, 2009, etc.), the winner of two Bancroft Prizes, argues persuasively that the Klan was visible and respected, drawing its membership from the middle class. “In many areas,” she writes, “Klan membership brought prestige” and “community status.” Like other contemporary fraternal organizations, such as the Masons and Rotarians, the Klan fostered “male bonding through brotherhood and ritual.” Elaborate and arcane rituals involved “Klan water,” purchased from the organization’s national headquarters, “where it was made sacred, like holy water.” Membership required learning an intricate vocabulary of rank. The Imperial Wizard reigned over three Great Klaliffs, the Great Klabee, the Great Kligrapp, the Great Kludd, and the Great Night-Hawk, and “chapters were known as Klaverns, each headed by an Exalted Cyclops.” New members were “naturalized” at a Klonversation, and the officers of a Klavern were known, tellingly, as Terrors. The Klan was funded through initiation fees, dues, and a pyramid scheme, whereby recruiters worked on commission; the Klan also sold costumes and memorabilia. A member could buy “a zircon-studded Fiery Cross” as a brooch for his wife. Gordon examines in particular Klan popularity in Portland, Oregon, once a bastion of racism, and the attraction of the organization to at least half a million women, many of whom were active in other reform groups, such as the Women’s Christian Temperance Union. In the late 1920s, the Klan was beset by infighting, money troubles, and scandals that exposed leaders’ hypocrisy and misbehavior. Its appeal diminished, and membership dwindled. But as the author amply shows, its fearful, angry spirit lives on.

A revealing, well-researched—and, unfortunately, contemporarily relevant—investigation of the KKK’s wide support in the 1920s. (8 pages of illustrations)



DEMOCRACY AND ITS CRISIS

Grayling, A.C.

Oneworld Publications (224 pp.)

\$21.99 | \$21.95 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017

978-1-78607-289-4

978-1-78607-290-0 e-book

Of democracy and its discontents, with a resonant defense of what Winston Churchill called “the least bad of all systems.”

Two recent developments, writes Grayling (Philosophy/New Coll. of the Humanities, London; *War: An Enquiry*, 2017, etc.),

indicate that “something has gone seriously wrong in the state of democracy”: Britain’s Brexit referendum, in which, by the author’s account, a minority partisan group superseded the interests of the entire polity, and the election of Donald Trump, the product of an outmoded Electoral College system that had the same effect. As the author notes, democracy is not just the notion that the people are the source of consent to govern and the ultimate sovereigns, but the arrangement of constitutional accords and institutions so that everyone’s interest is represented, along with guarantees of civil liberties and a strong commitment to the rule of law and the idea that the law applies equally to everyone. “Each vote should have equal weight,” Grayling ventures, noting that in both the U.S. and Britain, as well as elsewhere, this foundational principle is under attack. Surveying ancient ideas of democracy and their reformulation in the contending philosophies of John Locke and Thomas Hobbes, among others, Grayling examines the benefits and contradictions of popular sovereignty—which, he notes, really means in the U.K. that the Parliament is sovereign, since “there is no power in the land—not the Crown, not the courts—which can overrule it, other than itself.” In this respect, the American system of checks and balances is more than a nicety. Grayling concludes his argument, lucid if at times a touch technical, with specific recommendations for reform, including “complete transparency about the funding involved in an election campaign” and universal suffrage at the age of 16—as well as mandatory voting.

A compelling book worthy of being shelved alongside the *Federalist Papers* and *Two Treatises of Government*.



JUST A JOURNALIST On the Press, Life, and the Spaces Between

Greenhouse, Linda

Harvard Univ. (170 pp.)

\$22.95 | Oct. 30, 2017

978-0-674-98033-4

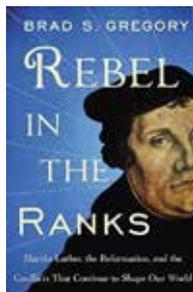
A Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist reflects on the changes and flaws within her profession.

Best known for her decades covering the Supreme Court beat for the *New York*

Times, Greenhouse (*Becoming Justice Blackmun: Harry Blackmun’s Supreme Court Journey*, 2005) writes frankly of her frustrations at

the *Times* and with journalism in general. Too often, she believes, journalists have pulled their punches, sacrificing truth as they perceive it before the false gods of fairness and objectivity. “The opposite of objectivity isn’t partisanship, or needn’t be,” she writes. “Rather, it is judgment, the hard work of sorting out the false claims from the true and discarding or at least labeling the false.” Greenhouse shows what significant strides journalism has made in what she calls “the post-truth age,” when news stories and headlines now employ language once reserved for opinion pieces or for private conversations among journalists. If a candidate, or even a president, tells a lie, her former paper no longer has qualms about labeling it as such. Yet some will continue to find bias in such labeling and will see what is offered as context or analysis as opinion. The author asks, “does ‘objectivity,’ with its mantra of ‘fairness and balance,’ too often inhibit journalists from separating fact from fiction and from fulfilling the duty to help maintain an informed citizenry in a democracy?” From her perspective, the question is rhetorical, and the answer is apparent. Yet this brief book of argument and anecdote presents a minefield of challenges that journalism itself is far from unified over how to face. And the ground keeps shifting as the mainstream press does its best to remain a watchdog while resisting the label of adversary. The third and final section of the book recounts Greenhouse’s newspaper career, showing how much things have changed since the days when women were an anomaly in the profession, deadlines determined the news cycle, and the internet and smartphones were hard to imagine.

While raising plenty of significant issues, Greenhouse’s themes remain open to spirited debate.



REBEL IN THE RANKS Martin Luther, the Reformation, and the Conflicts that Continue to Shape Our World

Gregory, Brad S.

HarperOne (304 pp.)

\$27.99 | \$22.39 e-book | Sep. 12, 2017

978-0-06-247117-8

978-0-06-247120-8 e-book

To understand our modern world, one must understand the Reformation.

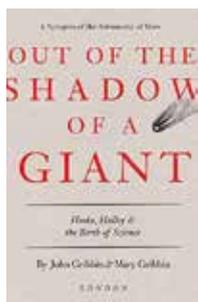
Gregory (European History/Notre Dame Univ. *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society*, 2012, etc.) jumps on the bandwagon of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation with this uneven retelling. He opens by promising that “a major theme of this book” is the fact that “the Reformation’s influence remains indirect and unintended.” However, he waits until the last quarter of the book to expound on this conclusion. This serves to undermine one of the author’s greatest strengths: his ability to explain how the Reformation molded—unintentionally—our current, largely secularized world. Gregory instead focuses on the life of Martin Luther, the movement he sparked, and its immediate aftermath throughout Europe. He begins with Luther’s troubled faith life, leading up to his disputes

A rich and insightful coming-of-age story of not only a woman, but an artist and the country in which she was born.

NINE CONTINENTS

with Rome over points of theology as well as church authority. The author then examines the early Reformation, including such significant figures as Huldrych Zwingli, before moving ahead to John Calvin, the religious upheavals in England, and the Thirty Years' War. Though intermittently interesting, these chapters add few new insights to supplement the many biographies of Luther or histories of the Reformation already in print. Further, Gregory's use of the present tense eventually becomes grating. It is at the end that the author partially redeems himself, coming to the insightful conclusion that "the long-term outcome of the Reformation era—and its ultimate irony—has been the gradual, unintended secularization of modern Western society." Essentially, Gregory explains that as Europe grew weary of religious warfare, it found ways of separating faith from governance as a way of keeping the peace. It is an intriguing conclusion that deserves more than the pages allotted to it.

A worthwhile and understated conclusion closes an unremarkable Reformation history.



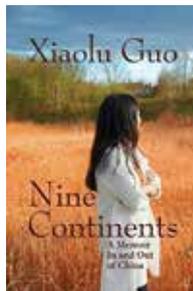
OUT OF THE SHADOW OF A GIANT
Hooke, Halley, and the Birth of Science

Gribbin, John & Gribbin, Mary
Yale Univ. (320 pp.)
\$32.50 | Oct. 24, 2017
978-0-300-22675-1

The story of Robert Hooke (1635-1703) and Edmond Halley (1656-1742) and an exploration of "how science might have developed if Isaac Newton had never lived."

Newton was as revered as anyone during his time and will remain a towering figure even to readers of this provocative dual biography, in which the husband-and-wife team of science writers maintain that the great man had feet of clay. The Gribbins (*A History of Science in 100 Experiments*, 2016, etc.) clearly admire their subjects and dislike Newton—not only for his personality, which most historians agree was execrable, but also his integrity (of lack thereof). They make a good case. A prodigy as a youth, Hooke came to London as a teenager and became the "best experimental scientist of his time, the leading microscopist of the seventeenth century, an astronomer of the first rank, and he developed an understanding of earthquakes, fossils, and the history of the earth that would not be surpassed for a century." Newton claimed credit for many of Hooke's discoveries, including his First Law of Motion, the concept of gravity as a universal attractive force, and the inverse square law of gravity. Hooke's reputation has revived over the past century, and he has been called Britain's Leonardo da Vinci. Halley, known these days only for the eponymous comet, was another spectacularly energetic polymath who produced the first atlas of the southern skies, captained and navigated the first official scientific voyage to the southern seas, and produced a steady stream of scientific observations. Perhaps most important, he got along well with Newton and prodded him to write the *Principia*, paying for its publication.

There is no chance that the authors will knock Newton off his pedestal, but they present a well-documented argument that he owed more to the ideas of others than he admitted.



NINE CONTINENTS
A Memoir In and Out of China

Guo, Xiaolu
Grove (336 pp.)
\$26.00 | Oct. 10, 2017
978-0-8021-2713-6

A gripping memoir about growing up in—and leaving—China, from one of Britain's most acclaimed young novelists.

Guo (*I Am China*, 2014, etc.) spent most of her childhood unwanted: first, by parents who gave her away to a peasant couple, and later, by those adopted parents, who returned her as a sickly 2-year-old child to ailing, illiterate grandparents in a struggling fishing village. Poor,

SONS AT WAR
JANE SWEETLAND

The True Story of Two Young Men Destined, from Birth, to Collide in Death.

Sweetland builds upon a cherished fragment of family history to create a comprehensive story of two opposing World War II pilots.

Overall, she's done military-history readers a service by offering a war story on a very personal level.

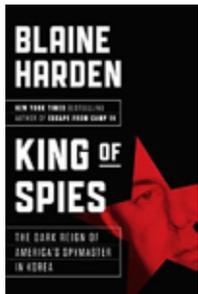
ISBN# 978154267659
www.sonsatwar.com

"A deft, engaging history of two young soldiers' brief lives."
—Kirkus Reviews

For information on publishing or film rights, please contact jane.sweetland@gmail.com

emaciated, and uneducated, Guo experienced a harsh childhood scraping by on rice porridge and the promise a Taoist monk made to her and her grandmother: “The girl is a peasant warrior....She will cross the sea and travel the Nine Continents.” When the author’s parents came to reclaim her following her grandfather’s suicide, her long and often heartbreaking journey to making that prediction come true began. In the communist compound of Wenling, she lived as the “unwanted one,” beaten by her mother, ignored by her older brother, and abused by her community. Her love of art kept her going until she landed a coveted spot at the prestigious Beijing Film Academy. However, even in a city overflowing with culture and rebellion, oppression and censorship reigned supreme, and it wasn’t until a scholarship from England granted Guo the opportunity to leave China that she was able to find artistic and personal freedom. After a decade abroad, the birth of her daughter forced her to return home to confront her family and the tragedies of her past. In evocative, captivating prose that reads like fiction, Guo brings to life her lifelong struggles against the chains of poverty, gender, and censorship. A talented wordsmith, she unabashedly lays bare her personal history with raw emotion and unflinching honesty, and she is unafraid to express her anger, disappointment, or joy at every turn.

A rich and insightful coming-of-age story of not only a woman, but an artist and the country in which she was born.



KING OF SPIES
The Dark Reign and Ruin of an American Spymaster in Korea

Harden, Blaine
Viking (288 pp.)
\$27.00 | \$27.00 e-book | Oct. 3, 2017
978-0-525-42993-7
978-0-698-41015-2 e-book

Fascinating account of an espionage pioneer who thrived during the Korean War and then disappeared into disgraced obscurity.

Harden (*The Great Leader and the Fighter Pilot: The True Story of the Tyrant Who Created North Korea and the Young Lieutenant Who Stole His Way to Freedom*, 2015, etc.) deepens his exploration of Korean history with the bizarre story of Donald Nichols (1923-1992), who spent World War II as a motor pool sergeant, then moved into military intelligence in Korea as the peninsula was descending into civil war, becoming a confidant of anti-communist strongman (and eventual South Korean president) Syngman Rhee. “In Nichols,” writes the author, “Rhee discovered a back door for delivering intelligence that could influence American policy toward Korea.” However, Nichols also witnessed Rhee’s torture and massacre of both insurgents and civilians prior to the 1950 Soviet-backed North Korean invasion. Nichols’ prescient warnings about the invasion to the American military were ignored; once war began, he was able to run operations including code-breaking and pilfering secrets from disabled Russian tanks and planes. “The air force credited

Nichols, more than anyone else, with finding bomb targets in North Korea,” writes Harden. Under the protection of a powerful superior, Nichols built up an unsupervised black-ops unit, often sending South Koreans on suicide missions. His shadowy activities continued after the 1952 armistice (when he was vilified as a spy in a North Korean show trial), but in 1957, Nichols was abruptly sacked by the military and hospitalized, receiving electroshock therapy. Living with relatives in Florida, the ex-spymaster tried to acclimate to civilian life, but he was eventually revealed to be a sexual predator, accused of molesting young boys. Harden’s research shows such behavior had begun with his subordinations during the war, seemingly signifying the amoral inner life of an otherwise audacious, successful spy. The author ably connects his ominous central figure to the larger mysterious, unresolved narrative of the Korean conflict.

An engrossing hidden history of wartime espionage, with elements of derring-do and moral barbarity.



THE COLLECTED ESSAYS OF ELIZABETH HARDWICK

Hardwick, Elizabeth
New York Review Books (640 pp.)
\$19.60 paper | Oct. 17, 2017
978-1-68137-154-2

A career-spanning collection of essays, reviews, criticism, and more from a co-founder of the *New York Review of Books*.

As a novelist and co-founder of the immensely influential (and still-running) *NYRB*, Elizabeth Hardwick (1916-2007) lived at the center of midcentury public intellectual life in America. (She was even married to poet Robert Lowell.) Throughout her six-decade career, Hardwick was devoted to pursuing literature as a way of life and finding life in literature. A quintessential “writer’s writer,” her essays are not academic in style, but neither do they pander to broad public interest or themes. Instead, she writes with a clear, concise voice that is simultaneously accessible and erudite. At the heart of Hardwick’s *oeuvre* is a study of literature and writers that includes essays on her contemporaries Norman Mailer, Joan Didion, and Philip Roth, among others, as well as historical studies of American luminaries Herman Melville, Henry James, and Edith Wharton. Perhaps the most relevant essay among the collection is the opening lamentation “The Decline of Book Reviewing.” Written in 1959 for *Harper’s*, the essay criticizes popular book critics and reviews their soft and moderate tone: “Sweet, bland commendations fall everywhere upon the scene; a universal, if somewhat lobotomized, accommodation reigns. A book is born into a puddle of treacle; the brine of hostile criticism is only a memory.” The sentiment captured by the essay could easily be used as a stand-in for the current climate of book culture, which prizes the market and pleasure of reading to such an infantilizing extent that criticism is nearly obsolete. Contextualized with an introduction by longtime *NYRB* contributor and author Darryl Pinckney (*Black Deutschland*, 2016, etc.), who was a creative writing student of Hardwick’s, the essays

collected in this volume represent a vital entry point to American literature and culture.

An essential compendium of midcentury American intellectual life, one that reaffirms the personal and cultural importance of literature.



EVERY DAY WE LIVE IS THE FUTURE
Surviving in a City of Disasters

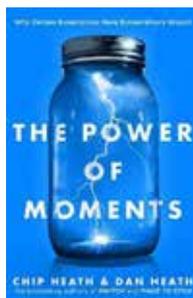
Haynes, Douglas
 Univ. of Texas (262 pp.)
 \$27.00 | Oct. 11, 2017
 978-1-4773-1312-1

A humanized illumination of the challenges facing developing countries as climate change accelerates the race to

the bottom.

There are no easy answers for the two extended families who are the subject of Haynes' (English/Univ. of Wisconsin, Oshkosh) deeply intensive reporting, but, as the title suggests, there is no hopeless defeatism either. They may live from flood to drought, from earthquake to earthquake, and from slum to overcrowded evacuation center, but family relationships, personal responsibility, and hope that education brings their children a better future keep them afloat. The author began his personal journey to this story as a high school student writing a newspaper story criticizing American policy in Central America. His subsequent experience is as an essayist and poet who teaches writing rather than as a scientist or political scientist, though he refers to those disciplines in extending his own theses. Haynes traces the lives of two families who have left the Nicaraguan countryside to fend for themselves in urban, impoverished Managua, a city that is perennially under the threat of destruction from earthquakes and flooding, where the shantytown called The Widows sits on Lake Managua, which one scientist calls "the world's biggest toilet." With basic subsistence such a challenge, the narrative, often in the present tense, depicts marriages that collapse under pressure, children who suffer and die, epidemics of dengue fever and alcoholism alike. But the author also shows an indomitable human spirit and resilience in the face of long odds and no safety net. He tells the story of these people in their singularity but also what it augurs for a developing world that has seen "a meteoric mass migration that made Latin America the most urbanized region in the world, as well as the most unequal," amid U.N. predictions "that, by 2050, three billion people might live in shantytowns and favelas—almost half of the world's projected urban population."

A potent book that gives faces and voices to trends that are too often reduced to cold statistics and academic analyses.



THE POWER OF MOMENTS
Why Certain Moments Have Extraordinary Impact

Heath, Chip & Heath, Dan
 Simon & Schuster (320 pp.)
 \$29.00 | \$14.99 e-book | Oct. 3, 2017
 978-1-5011-4776-0
 978-1-5011-4777-7 e-book

How significant moments have the capacity to redirect our future endeavors.

"Defining moments shape our lives, but we don't have to wait for them to happen" write co-authors Chip and Dan Heath (*Decisive: How to Make Better Choices in Life and Work*, 2013) in their encouraging text, which analyzes the aha instances that have the underestimated ability to change lives. While acknowledging that some moments are naturally more memorable than others, the authors use a wide array of real-life situations as examples to identify the common denominators these meaningful experiences share. Their extensive research brought forth four elements that have the most impact: the elevation of moments using sensory influences, personal insight into our place in the world, pride in the things we do and for the people we love, and the valuable connections made in the business and personal arenas of our lives. An in-depth examination of these four elements makes up the foundation of the narrative, providing a sincere introduction to how readers can shape and improve the peaks in their own experiences. Infused with positivity and enthusiasm, the Heaths believe that whether your keepsakes include love letters, report cards, newspaper articles, or family photos, collectively they all define and represent the strongest and most significant moments in our lives. Using customer experience research, personal stories, professional profiles, and a series of situational "clinics" in which readers can apply the techniques provided, the authors offer simplified input into the process of shaping everyday moments into mightier ones using a wealth of practical strategies. Maximizing the frequency and intensity of these electric instances is the key, the authors insist, to improving life by creating a more satisfying professional and social world, preserving and commemorating one's milestones, and capitalizing on the opportunities to create them. Readers hungry for a bigger slice of life will find this book valuable.

Heuristic advice and life-affirming direction form a gratifying combination in this motivational handbook.

Diverse essays from the iconoclastic art critic.

PERFECT WAVE



PERFECT WAVE *More Essays on Art and Democracy*

Hickey, Dave

Univ. of Chicago (240 pp.)

\$25.00 | \$25.00 e-book | Nov. 3, 2017

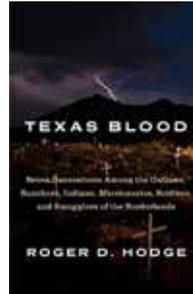
978-0-226-33313-7

978-0-226-51515-1 e-book

Diverse essays from the iconoclastic art critic.

Hickey (*25 Women: Essays on Their Art*, 2016, etc.), former executive editor of *Art in America*, returns with more entertaining, surprising, and delightfully written pieces. Framing the collection are two previously unpublished personal pieces, one on the author's love of surfing Southern California, the other a reflection on his life as a "journeyman artisan in a marginal industry." The remainder is an eclectic mix. Whether it's an insightful appreciation of a "genuinely amazing, some kind of rocket science" pop single by the Carpenters, "Goodbye to Love," that "just blew me away" or journalistic pieces on traveling the campaign trail in post-George W. Bush America with his state senator or a visit to Disney World and the Magic Kingdom, they're all written in Hickey's usual witty, sarcastically friendly, and slangy style. He doesn't just look; he observes. "After the Prom" is an example of his sharp skills at close-reading art—in this case, a Norman Rockwell painting that "opposes the comfortable, suspicious pessimism of the 1950s and proposes, in its place, a tolerance for and faith in the young as the ground-level condition of democracy." In "The Real Michelangelo," Hickey discusses the films of Antonioni, who makes "narrative motion pictures that live in experience and memory the way art does." For Hickey, Robert Mitchum "was the counterculture—a one-man zeitgeist." Compared to fellow actors Jimmy Stewart, Henry Fonda, and Ronald Reagan, "he was like a switchblade on a plate of cupcakes." William Claxton was the "dean of jazz photographers and one of the heroes of my youth," and Morris Lapidus' Fontainebleau in Miami Beach was the "first freestanding building designed not just to house commerce but to facilitate it."

Hickey's description of a "real book," an essay collection by Terry Castle, fits his own distinctive book to a T: "piece by piece, everything falls sweetly into place."



TEXAS BLOOD *Seven Generations Among the Outlaws, Ranchers, Indians, Missionaries, Soldiers, and Smugglers of the Borderlands*

Hodge, Roger D.

Knopf (368 pp.)

\$27.95 | \$27.95 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017

978-0-307-96140-2

978-0-307-96141-9 e-book

A native son takes a loping tour of the Lone Star State and the paths to, through, and from it.

Intercept national editor Hodge (*The Mendacity of Hope: Barack Obama and the Betrayal of American Liberalism*, 2010), a former editor of the *Oxford American* and *Harper's*, grew up down on the Rio Grande and learned how to handle a rope and a six-shooter, the whole package. He got out at 18, and, he writes, "I'm still gone." That kind of talk can get a person branded as a carpetbagger, but the author has long lines of history and blood tying him to the state over a couple of centuries, exploring which is the point of this somewhat shapeless but always interesting ramble across the state and points beyond, from the pioneer trails of Missouri to the gone-west paths across New Mexico and Arizona to California. Some of Hodge's explorations are bookish: he's a huge fan of Cormac McCarthy, wandering around the vicinity of Del Rio contemplating *No Country for Old Men* and other "messages from lost worlds, artifacts of vanished histories." Elsewhere, Hodge calls on the Border Patrol, ponders the lost ways of the Comanche Trail and the ever speculative argonauts, and visits the grave of Sam Houston's Cherokee wife and a much-contested shrine constantly beset by what one defender calls "the Satanics from Juárez." Hodge's suggestion that the "official" history of Texas, whatever that might be, excludes many of its players, from Native Americans to French buccaneers and German freethinkers, isn't quite accurate; no modern writer on Texas dares overlook them, and even the old-timers along the lines of J. Frank Dobie and John Graves recognized how diverse Texas was and is. Still, Hodge does a nice job of relating some of those lesser-known stories.

Of a piece with revisionist Westerns à la Larry McMurtry and Richard White and of much interest to readers along the border. (65 photos; 3 maps. First printing of 50,000)



VACATIONLAND *True Stories from Painful Beaches*

Hodgman, John

Viking (224 pp.)

\$25.00 | \$25.00 e-book | Oct. 24, 2017

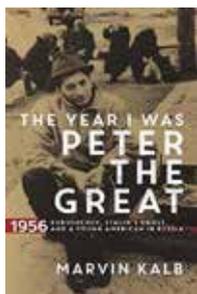
978-0-7352-2480-3

978-0-7352-2481-0 e-book

A memoir from a writer who doubles as a comedian.

Though Hodgman has been a bestselling author with his books of “fake facts” (*That Is All*, 2011, etc.) and has written weekly for the *New York Times Magazine*, his renown is less literary or journalistic than multimedia, in which everything pretty much cross-promotes everything else. Many fans know him mainly as a correspondent for the *Daily Show*, which resulted from his books, or his podcast that also builds on his demographic reach and extends it. He has perhaps been most widely seen through his Apple campaign, in which he portrayed the stodgier PC to the hipper computer devices. Having exhausted his fake facts through his earlier books, Hodgman turns to the feeling of being a white man in his 40s, a Yale graduate with a wife who has long been with him and two children he refuses to name to avoid feeding their egos. He reveals to readers, “the central conflict of my life and this book...is this: *I OWN TWO SUMMER HOMES*.” One is in Massachusetts, bequeathed by his family, and the other is in Maine. Little wonder that a friend once described his work as “white privilege comedy,” though the author actually came to his privilege late. He grew up in a middle-class household and scuffled through a freelancing life and a stint as a literary agent. Hodgman’s comedy is more deadpan than laugh-out-loud funny, aimed at a too-hip-to-chuckle readership for whom this might be metacomedy, in which the very notion of trying to be humorous is the big joke. The author senses an affinity with “Maine Humor,” which elicits “a kind of low inner chuckling, so dry and so deep inside you that you may not realize it is happening.” Though Hodgman explores the landscape of his area of Massachusetts, the title refers to Maine, where he struggles with critters and their waste, ordering propane, and getting along with the locals when you’re “from away.”

Very dry, with a twist.



THE YEAR I WAS PETER THE GREAT
1956—Khrushchev, Stalin’s Ghost, and a Young American in Russia

Kalb, Marvin
 Brookings Institution Press (300 pp.)
 \$24.99 | \$24.99 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017
 978-0-8157-3161-0
 978-0-8157-3162-7 e-book

A veteran TV news correspondent’s memoir of his first assignment in Russia, which corresponded with Nikita Khrushchev’s unprecedented “thaw.”

A graduate student studying Russian history and language in 1956, Kalb (*Imperial Gamble: Putin, Ukraine, and the New Cold War*, 2015, etc.) was plucked by the State Department to do translation work for an international organization in Moscow. In his first memoir, the former anchor of NBC’s *Meet the Press* and senior adviser at the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, the author, now in his 80s, switches from writing history to writing about himself to depict this extraordinarily enlightening year—not an easy task. He relies on a diary he kept during this year working as a translator/interpreter, traveling around

Russia, and even meeting Khrushchev himself, who made a historic address to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union tearing down the cult worship of the once-untouchable Stalin, who had died in 1953. Raised in the Bronx and in Washington Heights, Kalb attended City College in the footsteps of his older brother, Bernard, who became a *New York Times* journalist and whose advice proved prophetic: if the author wanted to become a journalist, he should “cultivate an area of expertise...that would catch the eye of an editor or producer.” Learning Russian proved to be the ticket. In Moscow, Kalb was assigned the work of translating and analyzing the Soviet press, which would give clues to what was really going on in the Kremlin. Khrushchev’s speech did change history, and during a time of enormous political uncertainty, Kalb describes scenes of spontaneous youthful demonstrations at the Lenin Library, which would spread that summer to the East Bloc. The author has an amazing story of an important year in Russian history, but the prose doesn’t always match the gravity of the events he recounts.

An intriguing eyewitness historical account rendered in a surprisingly pedestrian manner.



ENDURANCE
A Year in Space, a Lifetime of Discovery

Kelly, Scott
 Knopf (368 pp.)
 \$29.95 | \$18.00 paper | \$18.00 e-book
 Oct. 17, 2017
 978-1-5247-3159-5
 978-1-5247-1125-2 paper
 978-1-5247-3160-1 e-book

A four-time veteran of off-planet missions, including a year aboard the International Space Station, offers a view of astronautics that is at once compelling and cautionary.

Why go into space in the first place? Kelly ponders that existential question early on, the whys and wherefores of entering into the strangest of strange environments and potentially suffering all manner of consequences. He replies, “I have a few answers I give to this question, but none of them feels fully satisfying to me.” Among those answers, perhaps, are because it’s extremely exciting to go where no one—very few people, anyway—has gone before, and after all, Kelly still holds the American record for consecutive days spent in outer space. Naturally, that comes at a cost; his book opens with an alarming portrait of edema, rashes, and malaise, and hence another answer emerges: we can’t go to, say, Mars without understanding what space flight does to a human body. Some of Kelly’s descriptions seem a little by-the-numbers, the equivalent of a ball player’s thanking the deity for a win—a spacegoing colleague is “sincere and enthusiastic without ever seeming fake or calculating,” while a Russian counterpart is “a quiet and thoughtful person, consistently reliable.” Nonetheless, Kelly’s book shines in its depiction of the day-to-day work of astronautics and more particularly where that

work involves international cooperation. On that score, there's no better account of the cultural differences between *Right Stuff*-inculcated NASA types and Yuri Gagarin-inspired cosmonauts: "One difference between the Russian approach to spacewalking and ours," he writes, "is that the Russians stop working when it's dark." It's fascinating stuff, a tale of aches and pains, of boredom punctuated by terror and worries about what's happening in the dark and back down on Earth.

A worthy read for space buffs, to say nothing of anyone contemplating a voyage to the stars. (24 pages of color photos; 8 b/w photos. First printing of 750,000)



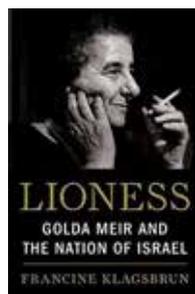
**CHIP KIDD
Book Two**

Kidd, Chip
Illus. by the author
Rizzoli (320 pp.)
\$60.00 | Oct. 1, 2017
978-0-8478-6008-1

More than a decade after the first, the second volume of art and anecdotes from one of the foremost book-jacket designers in contemporary publishing.

Those with an extensive library will already have plenty of these works of art on their shelves: the dust covers on novels by Haruki Murakami, Cormac McCarthy, Jay McInerney, Michael Chabon, and so many others. Yet, collected in their own book, these designs show just how prolific and eclectic Kidd has been. He has also used his publishing experience as a springboard for his own career as a novelist (*The Learners*, 2008, etc.), with his writing often showing the same inventive flair as his design. The authors with whom he works sense a kindred spirit as well. Murakami praises his "boundlessly inventive ideas, the out-of-the-box perspective, the sly sense of humor, the carefully calculated anachronisms, the occasional glimpse of the lyrical." Neil Gaiman writes, "he broke every rule in publishing...including some that the publishers didn't realize were rules until Chip did it differently." Kidd's art often doesn't submit to the rectangular format of the book jacket or serve as a representational depiction of the subject or author. Instead, his playful creativity seems to reflect something deeper. This collection also shows how his design assignments extend beyond his employment at Knopf, with *Rolling Stone* and *Newsweek* commissioning magazine covers and Paul Simon enlisting his services for a CD booklet. Where album covers once drew attention to visual artistry, CDs shrank that art to the point where it became less noticeable, and streaming has all but eliminated any attention to album art at all. Will book design suffer the same fate in the move to e-books? In the self-interview that opens the collection, Kidd addresses changes in publishing and how those might affect his approach to his work. Not at all, he insists, for while publishing is always changing, the hard copy of a book has shown its staying power.

As for his own work, it is also constantly changing, as reflected in this vibrant decadelong retrospective, but it has most certainly endured.



**LIONESS
Golda Meir and the
Nation of Israel**

Klagsbrun, Francine
Schocken (856 pp.)
\$40.00 | \$40.00 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017
978-0-8052-4237-9
978-0-8052-4350-5 e-book



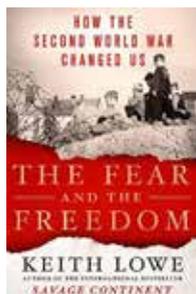
An evenhanded new biography of one the larger-than-life Israeli leader.

During her entire 50-year public career, Golda Meir (1898-1978) was dedicated to the cause of Zionism and creation of the state of Israel, from joining the socialist Workers of Zion movement in high school in Milwaukee in 1915, to becoming the fourth prime minister of Israel in 1969. In this suitably admiring but hardly gushing chronicle, versatile writer and journalist Klagsbrun (*The Fourth Commandment: Remember the Sabbath Day*, 2012, etc.) guides readers through her own journey of understanding this enormously important, often contradictory, crafty, and frequently opaque personage in Israel history. The project is the result of a long-running research between America and Israel, including the use of newly declassified files. Meir—whom Klagsbrun refers to as "Golda" throughout because that is the way the premier wanted to be addressed, only adopting the Hebraized version of her married name, Meyerson, because her mentor David Ben-Gurion strongly suggested it in the late 1950s—was hugely popular, even adored, as an effective rainmaker for Israel in 1940s and '50s America, the land of her youth; yet later in Israel, it was a different story. Meir never regained the popularity she enjoyed when first becoming premier in Israel in 1969. In a time of a series of debilitating terrorist attacks and an alarming (for her) unraveling of the social fabric, including, ironically, the thrust of feminism, she and her defense minister, Moshe Dayan, were blamed for being blindsided by the attacks of Egypt and Syria in the Yom Kippur War of 1973, and she resigned over the painful subsequent protests. As the author shows in her well-rounded portrait, Meir was Ben-Gurion's "only man in the Israeli cabinet," a ferocious chain-smoking socialist leader without a high-level education but whose plainspoken speeches brought audiences to tears—and action.

A terrific chronicle of a unique world leader. (16 pages of b/w illustrations)

Instructive reading for every coach and every player in every sport—and fun, too.

BETABALL



THE FEAR AND THE FREEDOM *How the Second World War Changed Us*

Lowe, Keith

St. Martin's (512 pp.)

\$29.99 | \$14.99 e-book | Oct. 24, 2017

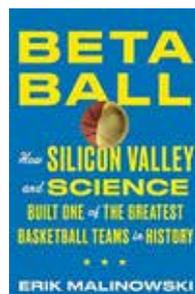
978-1-250-04395-5

978-1-4668-4229-8 e-book

How 70 years of profound political, social, and cultural change resulted directly from World War II.

In an ambitious history, Lowe (*Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II*, 2013, etc.) follows his study of the anarchy and devastation of postwar Europe with an overview of the effects of the war globally. Each of the chapters begins with the story of an individual who “was profoundly affected” by the events of the war. These case studies serve as a springboard for generalizations “about why our cities look the way they do today, why our communities are becoming so diverse, and why our technologies have developed in the way they have.” The author argues, diffusely, that attitudes about human rights, efforts to reform our economic system, frustrated policies to achieve world peace, and unresolved quarrels and civil conflicts all result from the war. Lowe divides the book into sections: the war’s generation of myths and legends, such as the hero, the martyr, and the victim; the striving for a Utopian future, “rational, enlightened and peaceful”; efforts toward international cooperation in economics, government, and law; the emergence of the U.S. and Soviet Union as polarizing superpowers; dreams of self-determination that gave rise to nationalist movements in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Israel, and Europe; and the “destructive legacies” that led to fragmentation and atomization, resulting in economic inequality and divisive identity politics. Lowe crafts interesting case histories of those he chooses as representative of these themes, but he finds himself tangled in contradictions throughout. The myth of communal rebirth, for example, “came into conflict with the myths of individual nations.” Campaigns for equal rights were undermined by “the conservative tendencies of normal human nature.” The author’s claim that the war “united almost everyone in a general understanding of what was right and what was wrong” is contradicted by his revelation of pervasive ideological struggles, including “the conflict between the urge to draw together as one, and the urge to fragment into different and ever smaller groups.”

A sweeping but flawed history of a world defined by contradictions and conflict. (*illustrations throughout*)



BETABALL

How Silicon Valley and Science Built One of the Greatest Basketball Teams in History

Malinowski, Erik

Atria (400 pp.)

\$26.00 | \$13.99 e-book | Oct. 3, 2017

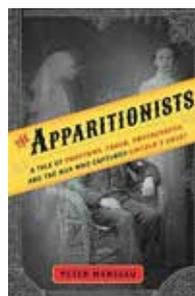
978-1-5011-5819-3

978-1-5011-5821-6 e-book

An exploration of how to rebuild a professional basketball team.

For those still marveling at how the once-inconsequential Golden State Warriors won two out of the last three NBA championships, look no further than Bay Area basketball reporter Malinowski’s lively book, which documents the many-moving-parts project of rebuilding the Warriors, very much as Michael Lewis’ *Moneyball* did so for another hapless Oakland squad, the A’s. When new owners Joe Lacob and Peter Guber, bringing venture capital and Hollywood money, came onto the scene at the turn of the decade, they initiated massive changes, firing a hapless front office with a knack for losing talented players while overpaying mediocre ones and bringing in basketball legend Jerry West to work with the players. What no one had appreciated, writes the author, was that they had one key ingredient to success and didn’t really realize it—namely, Wardell Stephen Curry II, who was drafted by the team in 2009 and “was seen as a scrawny college star who performed feats that couldn’t be replicated in the pro game.” Wedding Curry’s skills to solid coaching provided by West, Steve Kerr, and a host of lieutenants, the Warriors began to show their stuff. At the same time, those strategists began to pull together other elements of success, including “an improved and retooled defense” and, yes, lots of number-crunching that gave them uncanny insight into who ought to be on the court at any given moment: “With [Kevin] Durant sitting, Golden State shot 13 percent better from the floor and a whopping 29 percent better from three,” Malinowski writes, good reason for Kerr to be constantly mindful of moving his roster in and out of the game depending on who they were up against. Obviously, it worked.

Instructive reading for every coach and every player in every sport—and fun, too.



THE APPARITIONISTS

A Tale of Phantoms, Fraud, Photography, and the Man Who Captured Lincoln's Ghost

Manseau, Peter

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (352 pp.)

\$27.00 | \$27.00 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017

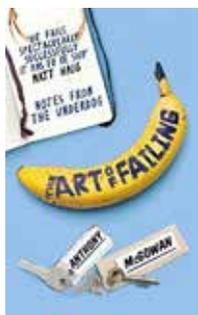
978-0-544-74597-1

978-0-544-74598-8 e-book

The tale of a provocative controversy and court trial from the formative era of photography.

Written like a novel but researched with academic rigor, this account of a photographer whose work seemed to incorporate images from the spirit realm stops short of either endorsing the veracity of the photographer's claim or debunking his work as a scam. What Manseau (*One Nation, Under Gods: A New American History*, 2015), the curator of American Religious History at the Smithsonian, demonstrates is that William Mumler (1832-1884) was perhaps as mystified as his skeptics in his emergence as a "spirit photographer" whose photographs of a living subject might show a deceased relation hovering somewhere in the print. Court transcripts show that Mumler's subjects mostly believed in the legitimacy of the apparitions in his work and that none of the photographers who attempted to expose his trickery were able to do so. Yet the narrative is less an argument in favor of a miracle than an evocation of an era "shaped by war, belief, new technology, and a longing for connections across ever greater distances—a time not unlike our own." It was a time when the telegraph offered instantaneous communication across oceans and "transformed nearly every aspect of American life, and perhaps none more so than the press." It was also a time when electricity demonstrated the very real power of things unseen. If communication could become instantaneous across thousands of miles, why couldn't the emerging field of photography close the distance between the living and the dead? For this was also an era, even before the Civil War, when the country "was suffering a spiritual hangover," in which spiritualism and mediums who claimed to communicate with the dead were perceived as a threat to conventional Christianity. Thus the trial not only focused on the possibilities and limits of the emerging photographic technology, but on whether it was possible to reconcile such apparitions with the Bible.

A well-paced nonfiction work that reads more like a historical novel than an academic study. (29 b/w photos)



THE ART OF FAILING

McGowan, Anthony

OneWorld Publications (288 pp.)

\$16.99 paper | Oct. 10, 2017

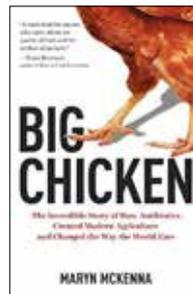
978-1-78607-182-8

A British fiction writer humorously chronicles the quotidian frustrations, discomforts, and outright failures he faced over the course of one year.

In this sometimes-scattershot but often hilarious collection, McGowan (*Rook*, 2017, etc.) recounts the details of his life as a husband, father, and North London writer. Organized as a series of titled journal entries, the narrative explores the strangeness and banality of everyday life and, in particular, its often laughable embarrassments. In "I Love You," the author describes the unusual events that led him to accidentally put a banana on which he'd written "I love you" in front of a man sitting near him at the British Library. His eye ever on the bizarre, McGowan also tells the story of encountering his double in a dwarf who "propelled himself with crutches along the pavement,

at high speed" and seemed to exist to offer the author a "cryptic message" he never actually delivered. In reflecting on his career as a writer, he recalls an interview he did with Anthony Burgess that "went like a dream" but ended in disaster when he later realized he had failed to turn on his tape recorder. McGowan's family life is a rich source of material for his entries. Whether he is recounting his neighborhood adventures with Monty, a "dog blessed more with irascibility than intelligence," musing at how he ever could have ended up with as sensible, successful, and beautiful a wife as his "Mrs. McG," or wondering at the softness of his M&S woolen socks and whether they make him too "content with the state of the world," McGowan always brings a quirky and refreshing perspective. Though the meandering plotlessness becomes irksome, the author's delight in unearthing the overlooked pain points of everyday life and laughing at them makes up for the fractured, willy-nilly nature of the narrative.

Entertaining reading to dip into now and then.



BIG CHICKEN

The Incredible Story of How Antibiotics Created Modern Agriculture and Changed the Way the World Eats

McKenna, Maryn

National Geographic (400 pp.)

\$27.00 | \$27.00 e-book | Sep. 12, 2017

978-1-4262-1766-1

978-1-4262-1767-8 e-book

An investigative journalist specializing in public health and food policy delves into the implications of chicken becoming the most consumed source of protein in the American diet.

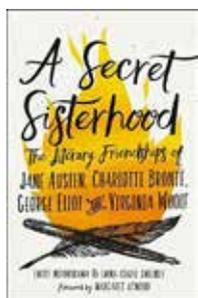
When chickens are raised or processed poorly, serious or fatal food poisoning can result. Indeed, McKenna (*Superbug: The Fatal Menace of MRSA*, 2010, etc.) opens her exposé with the story of a near death from salmonella poisoning (the cause of 1 million instances of illness each year in the United States) linked to mass-produced chicken. However, the focus of the investigation is not specifically food poisoning. The author is most concerned about how the overuse of antibiotics to prevent or treat human diseases, and in animal feed, has led to drug-resistant bacteria. When antibiotics can no longer neutralize certain bacteria, fatalities can occur. A strength of McKenna's reporting is her inclusion of valuable historical context, as she shows how the antibiotic crisis has evolved over the decades. She divides the roughly chronological narrative into three parts: "How Chicken Became Essential," "How Chicken Became Dangerous," and the somewhat-hopeful section, "How Chicken Changed." Each part contains lessons derived from visits to poultry processing operations both small and large (think Perdue and Tyson), farms where chickens grow only to a certain size, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and private science laboratories. McKenna learned not only from sources in the United States—Georgia is now, in many ways, the center

A book likely to stand at the head of further research into the problem of Native and African-American slavery in the north country.

DAWN OF DETROIT

of the chicken industry—but also from speaking with experts in the Netherlands, France, and England. Throughout the narrative, the author also unravels medical mysteries, such as why some urinary tract infections are not responding to treatment with antibiotics. McKenna's ideas for reform seem practical, but she warns in clear, urgent prose that it will take years to fully conquer bacterial resistance to antibiotics.

Solid, eye-opening public health journalism.



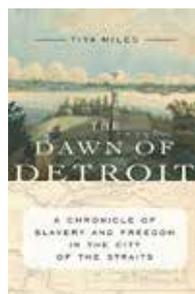
A SECRET SISTERHOOD The Literary Friendships of Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, and Virginia Woolf

Midorikawa, Emily & Sweeney, Emma Claire
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (336 pp.)
\$27.00 | \$27.00 e-book | Oct. 17, 2017
978-0-544-88373-4
978-0-544-88378-9 e-book

Rich and revealing portraits of four literary friendships.

Because female authors are so often “mythologized as solitary eccentrics or isolated geniuses,” Midorikawa and Sweeney (*Owl Song at Dawn*, 2016), both teachers at New York University in London, set out to uncover overlooked friendships. As Margaret Atwood puts it in the foreword, the authors successfully “retrace forgotten footsteps, and tap into emotional undercurrents.” The close relationship between Jane Austen and Anne Sharp would be lost if it wasn't for Jane's niece, Fanny, whose writings included much information about her governess, Anne, who liked to pen theatricals. It turns out Jane had “deep affection” for Anne, her “most treasured confidante.” Over the years, on and off, they “would find all sorts of ways to support each other's endeavors.” Jane “treated Anne as her most trusted literary friend.” Charlotte Brontë and the pioneering feminist writer Mary Taylor were “good friends” despite quite differing personalities. Taylor was energetic and political while Charlotte was quiet and diffident. So when Mary wrote to her that *Jane Eyre* was “so perfect as a work of art,” she also criticized it “for not having a greater political purpose.” Despite disagreements and debates, they found a “space for themselves in the rapidly changing Victorian world.” When George Eliot heaped great praise upon Harriet Beecher Stowe (whose bestselling fame was greater than Eliot's) for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Eliot received an unexpected letter from Stowe, which praised Eliot's works, and a friendship was born. Until, that is, Eliot shockingly learned of Stowe's published criticism of Byron for his incestuous relationship with his sister. It created a “frostiness” in their relationship, but it endured. Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield played a literary cat-and-mouse game with each other thanks to social differences and creative rivalry, but they remained friends.

Despite occasional fictional flourishes, these forgotten friendships, from illicit and scandalous to radical and inspiring, are revelations. (8-page b/w photo insert)



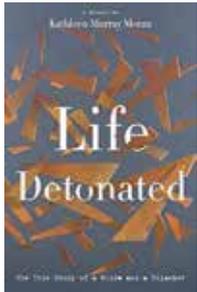
DAWN OF DETROIT A Chronicle of Bondage and Freedom in the City of the Straits

Miles, Tiya
New Press (368 pp.)
\$27.95 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-62097-231-1

A history of the Michigan metropolis as a center of the Northern slave trade.

“We tend to associate slavery with cotton in the commercial crop heyday of the southern ‘cotton kingdom,’” writes MacArthur Fellow Miles (American Culture/Univ. of Michigan; *The Cherokee Rose*, 2015, etc.), “but in the northern interior space, slavery was yoked to the fur industry.” In this connection, slavery enfolded Native Americans, putting individuals in thrall and binding communities in a network of trade obligations. When recently ascendant Americans imposed the Treaty of Detroit in 1807, they cleared several such well-entrenched communities both to create military defenses and to enhance the “processes of surveillance and recapture for American slaveholders” whose property—in this case African-Americans—tended to disappear into Native realms before the advent of the Underground Railroad. African-Americans were also bought and sold in Detroit, Miles writes, though this story is little known and unrecorded by any memorial. Whether those African-Americans were in personal service or worked as trappers or freighters, whether they were claimed by French Canadians, British, or American owners, they were just as unfree as if in New Orleans. Drawing on archival records and a thin scholarly literature, Miles pieces together a story in which African-Americans were used “like railroad cars in a pre-industrial transit system that connected sellers, buyers, and goods.” At times, the narrative takes turns that push it away from general readers into the hands of postmodern-inclined academics: “There is perhaps one space in the American-Canadian borderlands in which a radical alterity to colonial and racialized complexity existed.” But for the most part, the author's account is accessible to anyone with an interest in local history as well as the larger history of world systems in the time of the Seven Years War and beyond.

A book likely to stand at the head of further research into the problem of Native and African-American slavery in the north country.



LIFE DETONATED

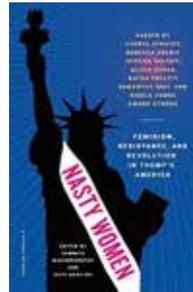
Moran, Kathleen Murray
Amberjack Publishing (258 pp.)
\$23.99 | Oct. 10, 2017
978-1-944995-32-4

Drawing on letters and newspaper articles, former writing instructor and political advocate Moran re-creates her personal history and the events leading up to Sept. 11, 1976, when Croatian freedom fighters launched a terrorist attack

in New York City that killed her husband.

In this moving memoir, the author recalls the panic gripping her as Walter Cronkite delivered the report of a Chicago-bound flight that had been hijacked by Zvonko and Julie Busic, a Croatian man and his American wife. The lockers at Grand Central subway station had also been bombed, and Moran's husband, Brian, a member of the NYPD bomb squad, perished when the explosive suddenly detonated. The author provides details of life growing up in the late-1960s South Bronx with seven brothers and sisters, several of whom were physically abusive or drug-addled, an abusive father, and an elusive mother who raised her children with resentment. The evolution of her seven-year romance with Brian also resonates throughout. Moran recalls meeting the recently discharged Air Force serviceman when she was 21, and she was instantly intrigued and attracted after his bold declaration that they would be married someday. The author delicately yet unreservedly explores a widow's experience: the necessary yet near-impossible task of reconciling a senseless death to a terrorist organization, the unanswered questions and insecurity, and the crushing reality of suddenly becoming a single parent to small children. The estrangement between Moran and her drug-addicted sister Gracie added further sorrow to her life, though she achieved a measure of closure from discovering exactly how her husband died and meticulously researching the hijackers, who were members of the Fighters for Free Croatia terrorist movement. In the closing chapters, the author delivers some engaging revelations. She remarried and, unable to reconcile the details of Brian's death, filed a lawsuit against New York for gross negligence, which was eventually dismissed. She also began correspondence with one of the hijackers, who sought atonement and a chance to "unload emotionally."

A raw, somber emotional journey that concludes with hope and a measure of forgiveness.



NASTY WOMEN Feminism, Resistance, and Revolution in Trump's America

Mukhopadhyay, Sambita &
Harding, Kate—Eds.
Picador (304 pp.)
\$16.00 paper | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-250-15550-4

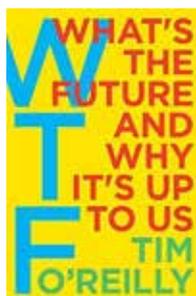
Women essayists reflect on Trump, Clinton, and the prospects for feminism.

Mukhopadhyay (*Outdated: Why Dating is Ruining Your Love Life*, 2011), senior editorial director of Culture and Identities at *Mic*, and Harding (Women's Resource Center/Cornell Univ.; *Asking for It: The Alarming Rise of Rape Culture—and What We Can Do About It*, 2015, etc.) gather a diverse collection of essayists to respond to the challenges faced by women in Trump's America. The writers include Cheryl Strayed, who felt "numb shock" after Trump's election; *Nation* columnist Katha Pollitt, who offers suggestions for activism for reproductive rights; and award-winning essayist Rebecca Solnit, who points to the "highly gendered term 'hysteria'" used to attack Clinton. Many writers agree with Carina Chocano, who sees Clinton's defeat as a result of gender bias: "there's no more despised figure on earth than a woman who thinks she should be in charge." The anthology is broadly representative. Sarah Michael Hollenbeck considers women with disabilities; Jill Filipovic points out the plight of women in Africa after Trump's "gag rule" prohibited U.S. funding to any foreign organization that provides abortions or advocates for abortion rights; Melissa Arjona writes about Mexican women living in South Texas; Collier Meyerson and Zerlina Maxwell consider black feminism. Also represented are gay and trans women, such as Meredith Talusan, who asserts that "Clinton's loss, despite the fact that she was exceedingly better qualified than Trump, mirrors the way trans women and femmes are marginalized in post-Trump feminism, despite our significantly greater experience of fighting oppression" compared to mainstream white women, who, several writers note, dominated the women's march after Trump's inauguration. Kera Bolonik, a gay mother raising an adopted black son, and the granddaughter of Jews persecuted by Nazis, sees parallels to fascism in the atmosphere of hate and fear unleashed by Trump and his supporters.

Strong, thoughtful, and angry voices ring out for resistance, empathy, and solidarity.

A lucid and provocative look at the geopolitics of energy and the shifts and dislocations it is likely to produce.

WINDFALL



WTF?
What's the Future and Why It's Up to Us

O'Reilly, Tim

Harper Business (432 pp.)

\$32.99 | \$17.99 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017

978-0-06-256571-6

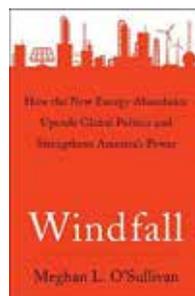
978-0-06-256572-3 e-book

A good-news, bad-news look at a world full of unicorns, robots, and wonder—the future, in other words, as seen

by longtime innovation watcher O'Reilly.

“Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic,” the great British futurist and sci-fi writer Arthur C. Clarke once observed. Thus the rude but now commonplace acronym of media maven and venture capitalist O'Reilly's book: “The world today is full of things that once made us say ‘WTF?’ but are already well on their way to being the stuff of daily life.” One such innovation was the LINUX operating system, a decentralized creation essentially given away for free, just as was the World Wide Web, and never mind all the people trying to monetize both, the source of exasperated cries of WTF on the part of techno-libertarians. There's magic, there's WTFery, and there are unicorns—the latter things like Siri and kindred bits of artificial intelligence that fulfill O'Reilly's requirements that they change the world while seeming at first impossible. (And how did we ever live without our iPhones, anyway?) The rub in all this, of course, is that people are being left behind in this glamorous future, a place of “thick marketplaces” and endless churn. It is on these matters that O'Reilly turns serious, if a trifle dreamy: “The future depends on what we choose,” he intones. As such, it offers us chances to do such things as rethink government and how it delivers services, reconceive money and its place in our lives (“Money is like gas in the car—you need to pay attention or you'll end up on the side of the road—but a successful business or a well-lived life is not a tour of gas stations”), and so forth. The argument gets a little scattershot, but understandably, since the future is a big subject and the choices many.

O'Reilly's vision is more Utopian than dystopian, even downright optimistic in a roundabout, creative-destruction sort of way. The positive outlook is refreshing and engaging.



WINDFALL
How the New Energy Abundance Upends Global Politics and Strengthens America's Power

O'Sullivan, Meghan L.

Simon & Schuster (512 pp.)

\$29.00 | \$14.99 e-book | Sep. 12, 2017

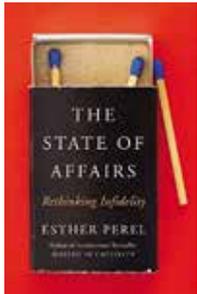
978-1-5011-0793-1

978-1-5011-0795-5 e-book

Remember when the world was running out of oil? The good news is that energy is abundant, at least for the time being. As for the bad news....

The era of peak oil has peaked. In just the last decade, writes O'Sullivan (Practice of International Affairs/Kennedy School of Government, Harvard Univ.; *Shrewd Sanctions: Statecraft and State Sponsors of Terrorism*, 2003, etc.), “developments in the world of energy have unfolded at breakneck speed,” such that fracking, digitally wrought efficiencies, and other advances, combined with reductions in demand, have changed the political stage. For one thing, writes the author, the Arab oil-producing nations have lost some of their hold as the U.S. has emerged as an energy exporter—though, as she adds, that picture is complicated by the fact that the U.S. also imports fossil fuels. Its supremacy as a producer also puts Russia in a leading role, especially in any European scenario. For its part, Europe's conventional oil production is projected to fall, while shale gas extraction is forbidden in many places, so that net imports will almost certainly rise within the next two decades. O'Sullivan's projections largely hinge on the fossil fuel economy, and though she does figure renewables into the mix, there are times when she seems to give too little attention to externalities—the effects, say, of that shale extraction on water, forcing competition for resources in other directions. Even so, her argument offers intriguing possibilities. “The new energy abundance,” she writes, “provides grounds for recasting ties between the United States and China,” increasing energy trading while easing the conflict narrative that has been dominant recently, changing it to “one of potential and actual cooperation around energy.” How all this will play out in the current political setting, given the threat of trade and other wars, remains to be seen, but O'Sullivan's generally optimistic view of “energy realities” merits attention.

A lucid and provocative look at the geopolitics of energy and the shifts and dislocations it is likely to produce.



THE STATE OF AFFAIRS *Rethinking Infidelity*

Perel, Esther

Harper/HarperCollins (336 pp.)

\$26.99 | \$14.99 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017

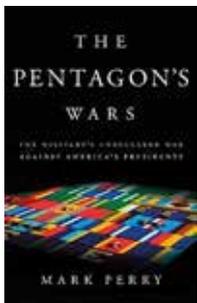
978-0-06-232258-6

978-0-06-232260-9 e-book

A veteran therapist's approach to thinking about extramarital affairs.

"Affairs have a lot to teach us about relationships—what we expect, what we think we want, and what we feel entitled to," writes Perel (*Mating in Captivity: Reconciling the Erotic and the Domestic*, 2006, etc.). "They offer a unique window into our personal and cultural attitudes about love, lust, and commitment." Using research and personal stories from her 30 years as a couples' therapist, the author dives into the world of affairs: why men and women engage in them, what many consider "innocent" behavior versus flat-out wrongdoing, the rage, jealousy, guilt, and host of other emotions that flair up once an affair is discovered, and the full recovery process, which determines whether a couple will remain together or split up. Perel examines each affair with an open attitude, trying to get to the root of why it happened and how each person involved can view the same scenario in a different light. She discusses the stigmas surrounding the words "affair" and "divorce," how the healing process has to steer away from blame and toward understanding, and how access to social media and pornography have made it far easier for people to cheat on their loved ones, sometimes while in the same room. The real-life examples and quotes from people who are working through the aftermath of a discovered affair offer insights into the sadness, betrayal, innocence, resentment, love, and denial that are part of this complex package. Perel's advice to these couples will resonate with anyone going through a similar situation, providing comfort and guidance without the need for an actual therapy session.

Poignant stories of couples facing the aftermath of an affair and the highly knowledgeable analysis and advice they received from a well-trained couples' therapist.



THE PENTAGON'S WARS *The Military's Undeclared War Against America's Presidents*

Perry, Mark

Basic (384 pp.)

\$30.00 | \$20.99 e-book | Oct. 24, 2017

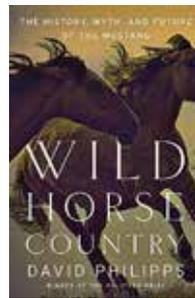
978-0-465-07971-1

978-0-465-09310-6 e-book

Why have we been in Afghanistan twice as long as the Soviets? Why did Saddam Hussein reign for a dozen more years after defeat in the Persian Gulf War? This study of the clash of military and civilian cultures goes a long way toward answering such questions.

By many reckonings, the United States has not been at peace since the atomic bombs fell on Japan in 1945. There is good reason for that: politicians like war, and they have been able to co-opt plenty of military people to press their cases, even as professional soldiers recognize war as a last resort. By freelance military affairs journalist Perry's (*The Most Dangerous Man in America: The Making of Douglas MacArthur*, 2014, etc.) account, in the last three decades especially, "the brilliance of our battlefield leaders has not been matched by those in Washington who are responsible for making certain that our soldiers, sailors, and airmen (and women) not only have what they need to win, but are backed by strong leaders who speak their minds." It is this last matter that occupies much of the book, for the military is made up of two classes of officers: politicians who often migrate into the enemy (read: administrative or legislative) camp and actual combat leaders who have little use for politicians but still follow their orders. The author observes that the politicians among the soldiers, usually at the very apex of leadership, rarely say no to their civilian bosses: only Colin Powell did, and then only over the matter of gays in the military, which was less problematic of itself than as a symptom of Bill Clinton's "rookie mistake" tendency to tell the Pentagon what to do. The overarching result is that field officers often actively conspire to frustrate political ambitions, particularly to resist directives at nation-building, which is not the military's mission.

A book that does much to explain quirks of foreign policy, providing a military context for them—and one that makes one wonder who's really in charge. (8-page b/w gallery)



WILD HORSE COUNTRY *The History, Myth, and Future of the Mustang*

Philipps, David

Norton (336 pp.)

\$27.95 | Oct. 10, 2017

978-0-393-24713-8

A gimlet-eyed look at the place of the wild horse in the landscape of the American West and at the poor legacy of human relations with that spirited animal.

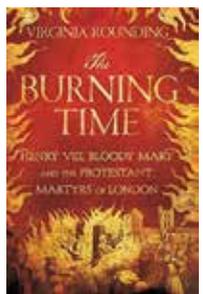
If you do not live in the mountain West, you might not know that a fierce controversy rages over wild horses, or mustangs, on public lands and whether they should be removed and, in some cases, exterminated. Ranchers, as Colorado-based *New York Times* reporter Philipps (*Lethal Warriors: When the New Band of Brothers Came Home*, 2010) writes, are vocal in their hatred of both the federal agencies in charge of those lands and of the wild horses: "Mention mustangs in almost any small-town bar or café and prepare for an earful." Lifting the argument a notch or two above where it usually rests, the author examines the natural history of these wild creatures—feral, their ancestors long-ago domesticated horses that escaped and formed their own herds—writing that while they may look a little scruffy, they are prized for intelligence and stamina: "The desert prunes any deficiencies." Traveling through mustang country, Philipps

Often quirky but thoughtful—solid popular science.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF EVERYONE WHO EVER LIVED

considers a long history of mismanagement on the part of the federal government, based on rather haphazard roundups for most of the last half-century, with halfhearted efforts at adoption. When left to their own devices, ranchers have followed a program of trapping wild horses, selecting the best to incorporate into their herds, and then—well, one Nevada rancher tells the author, “we would chicken feed whatever nobody wanted.” Philipps proposes that we recognize the mustang, as with other wild species, as an animal that has a people problem, not the other way around, adding that some of the old saws about mustangs are inaccurate: it’s not true, for instance, that they lack natural predators, since mountain lions are vigorous in culling the herd.

A fine, readable work of advocacy journalism, of a piece with Marc Reisner’s *Cadillac Desert*, that deserves to inform discussion about the mustang issue as it plays out in courts and in Congress. (20 illustrations; 2 maps)



THE BURNING TIME Henry VIII, Bloody Mary, and the Protestant Martyrs of London

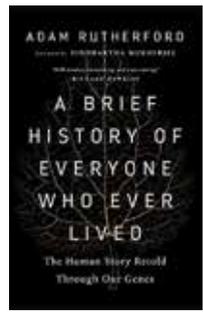
Rounding, Virginia
St. Martin’s (480 pp.)
\$29.99 | \$14.99 e-book | Oct. 31, 2017
978-1-250-04064-0
978-1-4668-3624-2 e-book

Rounding (*Alix and Nicky: The Passion of the Last Tsar and Tsarina*, 2012, etc.) explores the depth of the differences and the dangers of life under Henry VIII and his daughter, Queen Mary.

Henry did not jump wildly into the Protestant camp; he fought to protect traditional beliefs and Catholic doctrine, particularly transubstantiation. His greatest fear was usurpation of his authority, which he felt to be fairly total. The pope, obviously, had to go, and, as head of the church, that left Henry to divorce his wife. Next was the submission of the clergy, the cause of Sir Thomas More’s resignation as Lord Chancellor. As More left power, he was replaced by Thomas Cromwell’s man Sir Thomas Audley. Audley’s closest aide, Richard Rich, was at first chancellor of the Court of Augmentations, dealing with the revenues of dissolved monasteries (certainly, a few properties slipped into his pocket). Rounding does a service by bringing Rich back into the spotlight, since he continued into Mary’s reign and was integral in steering many to the stake. Confusion among Henry’s subjects was rampant, as Edward VI turned toward Protestantism and Mary doubled back to Catholicism. One of the main difficulties was the availability of the Bible in the vernacular, which would allow everyone to direct their own faith. After many hours attempting to return a martyr to the flock, death was assured. Negotiation was impossible, even if the inquisitor was proven to have once believed the same as the condemned. Throughout the book, the author examines the mindsets of the martyrs and the strength of their consciences, which kept them from deserting their belief. The suppression

of religious beliefs and executions proved to be failures of leadership, but Mary’s convictions were stronger than her reason.

An intriguing, astute look at this volatile period, though the author includes too many victim biographies, occasionally slowing the pace.



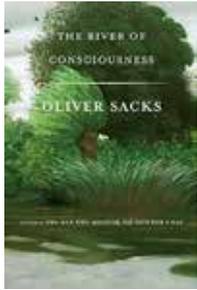
A BRIEF HISTORY OF EVERYONE WHO EVER LIVED The Human Story Retold Through Our Genes

Rutherford, Adam
The Experiment (416 pp.)
\$25.95 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-61519-404-9

An enthusiastic history of mankind in which DNA plays a far greater role than the traditional “bones and stones” approach, followed by a hopeful if cautionary account of what the recent revolution in genomics foretells.

According to British geneticist and science writer Rutherford (*Creation: How Science Is Reinventing Life Itself*, 2013), “we have literally thousands of ancient, hardened bones, found all around the world; many in the nursery of the human story in eastern Africa, many in Europe, and the more we look the more we find.” They reveal clues about how our ancestors looked, hints about their behavior, and vague, contradictory hypotheses about their relation to our species. Deciphering DNA from these relics turns up more specific information about “how our evolution has proceeded.” Neanderthals were close relatives. They separated from a common ancestor around 500,000 years ago and met and interbred with us throughout Eurasia, dying out 30,000 years ago and leaving a small percentage of their DNA in ours. Amazingly, DNA from a single finger bone uncovered another subspecies, the Denisovans, which wandered Asia at the same time, leaving a sprinkling of DNA in Pacific Islanders and Australian Aborigines. Turning to the present, Rutherford recounts this century’s spectacular discoveries in genomics, pausing regularly to grind axes. For readers who wonder if racism has any basis in genetics, he explains at length that it hasn’t. He examines companies that offer to analyze an individual’s DNA and reveals why many of their claims are nonsense. Casting doubt on the steady stream of media announcements that scientists have discovered the gene for...addiction, homosexuality, height, anxiety, obesity, etc...the author emphasizes that dramatic advances in human well-being through genomics are guaranteed, if not quite yet. “Life is the accumulation and refinement of information embedded in DNA,” writes Rutherford. “We are the data.”

Often quirky but thoughtful—solid popular science.



THE RIVER OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Sacks, Oliver

Knopf (252 pp.)

\$27.95 | \$27.95 e-book | Oct. 24, 2017

978-0-385-35256-7

978-0-385-35257-4 e-book

Fans of the late neurologist have another chance to enjoy this erudite, compassionate storyteller, essayist, and memoirist in what may be his final work.

This collection of 10 essays, some of which appeared previously in the *New York Review of Books*, was assembled by three colleagues from an outline provided by Sacks (*Gratitude*, 2015, etc.) two weeks before his death in 2015. Here, the author explores evolution, time, memory and forgetting, experience, creativity, and consciousness. As his colleagues note, Sacks “interrogates the nature not only of human experience but of all life (including botanical life).” Readers will see how Darwin’s botanical work provided the strongest evidence for evolution and natural selection, the different ways in which time is perceived and experienced, and the fallibility of memory (explored in a fascinating piece on cryptomnesia, or unconscious plagiarism). The essay on misheard words, a real problem for the aging Sacks, is the shortest entry and also the funniest. The most speculative is “Scotoma,” a neurological term for a disconnect in perception, which Sacks uses to refer to the neglect or oversight of an idea proposed or a discovery made before its time. This gives the author the chance to explore how the history of science might have been different. The longest, densest, and most technically demanding is the title essay, “The River of Consciousness,” in which Sacks examines what neuroscientists have begun to learn about the neural basis of consciousness, from relatively simple mechanisms such as perception to more complex issues such as memory, imagery, and reflection. Interestingly, the collection can be seen as a subtle reminder of this polymath’s previous works, for references to a number of these appear throughout the text and in footnotes.

A collection of dissimilar pieces that reveal the scope of the author’s interests—sometimes challenging, always rewarding. (first printing of 75,000)



DINNER WITH DARWIN Food, Drink, and Evolution

Silvertown, Jonathan

Univ. of Chicago (272 pp.)

\$27.50 | \$27.50 e-book | Oct. 1, 2017

978-0-226-24539-3

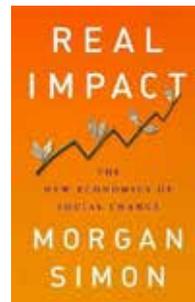
978-0-226-48923-0 e-book

A science-informed tour of the table, showing how our fare comes to us courtesy of natural selection—and, of course, survival of the fittest.

Why does food taste different to different people? Did

Australopithecus cook? Why can’t some people handle booze—or milk? The taphonomic, paleontological, and archaeological records are full of pointers to the answers to questions like these, but it’s only with modern genetic and genomic analysis that full replies emerge. Silvertown (*Evolutionary Ecology/Univ. of Edinburgh*; *The Long and the Short of It: The Science of Life Span and Aging*, 2013, etc.) delves in with gusto, opening by noting that “everything we eat has an evolutionary history,” a history that opens onto other questions of evolutionary biology. He notes that Darwin’s most famous book, *On the Origin of Species*, opens with a discussion of plant and animal domestication precisely because “Darwin realized that the process of artificial selection that breeders use to produce new varieties is analogous to natural selection.” Thus cocktail corn and bespoke pigs. The foods we select in turn select us: the evolutionary record is light on information about vegetarianism, what with the absence of datable bones, but by Silvertown’s account, humans may have been cooking food—and eating meat—by the time *Homo erectus* emerged on the scene nearly 2 million years ago. The author’s accessible discussion ranges from shellfish gathering to bread-making to gardening, from issues of food security (which “depends on being able to continually match the challenge posed by constantly evolving diseases”) to the genetic basis for taste and genetic variability among populations of food plants, with local adaptations governed by sets of genes charged with protecting plants from predators. Along the way, he ponders matters such as why we drink milk, which raises further issues of distinguishing cause and consequence—which, in turn, teaches novice readers how scientists approach problems.

Nothing world-shaking but a tasty nibble for the bookish, science-inclined foodie. (6 maps; 6 line drawings)



REAL IMPACT

The New Economics of Social Change

Simon, Morgan

Nation Books (256 pp.)

\$26.00 | Oct. 3, 2017

978-1-56858-980-0

Investment adviser Simon outlines the concept of impact investment, “the practice of investing not just for profit, but also for social benefit.”

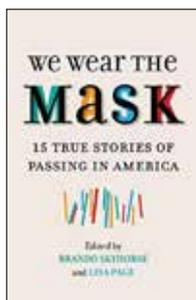
In some ways, impact investment aligns with Bangladeshi financier Muhammad Yunus’ experiments in microfinance and what he is now calling “social business,” giving would-be entrepreneurs in developing countries opportunities to enter the marketplace. Simon holds that some of Yunus’ programs, however, have not scaled well in the marketplace and may have worked backward; the first step, she suggests, is to “identify a good idea that has a mix of qualitative and quantitative, micro and macro approaches to addressing poverty and structural inequality”—and always with an eye to profitability. In her understanding of impact investment, a great deal of due diligence is involved to

A bibliophagist snacks and dines, sharing with us some of the tastiest bits.

TRUE STORIES

assure not only that investors' money is well placed in projects that do good in the world, but also that communities are well served. To this end, Simon offers a series of operating principles—e.g., the call to “add more value than you extract,” again with an eye to such things as providing long-term, well-paying jobs to help break the cycle of poverty. Throughout, Simon insists on some of the basic tenets of capitalism, including the notion that the value added should yield return on investment. Even so, she counsels that investors take steps that, en masse, would shake Wall Street to the ground, such as the thought that the conscious impact investor should “break up with your bank” and look to community banks and other institutions that are better inclined to social justice. Simon also suggests that investors realign their portfolios so that they know, as the adage has it, where their money spends the night, investing in funds that provide small loans to entrepreneurs, funding for sustainable agriculture projects and water systems, and the like.

A cleareyed case for socially conscious investment, of much interest to those who want their dollars to do good.



WE WEAR THE MASK **15 Stories About Passing in America**

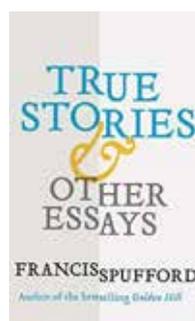
Skyhorse, Brando & Page, Lisa—Eds.
Beacon (224 pp.)
\$18.00 paper | \$18.00 e-book
Oct. 10, 2017
978-0-8070-7898-3
978-0-8070-7899-0 e-book

Writers explore how and why the phenomenon of “passing” both shocks and fascinates.

Skyhorse (English/Indiana Univ.; *Take This Man*, 2014, etc.) and Page (Creative Writing and English/George Washington Univ.) assemble a collection of 15 authentic narratives about how people attempt to “win access to the specific life they want, the ultimate form of assimilation, the pure embodiment of the American Dream,” by assuming to be a class or race they are inherently not. Both of the editors know this particular form of “reinvention” well and contribute their perspectives in highly personal essays. Skyhorse, who received his name from his mother “after my Mexican biological father abandoned us,” opens with reflections on how he, as a Mexican-American with the surname Ulloa, passed himself as an American Indian on his college applications. Page chronicles how her black great-grandmother passed for white in Mississippi in order to get a college education. The editors agree that “each of us sometimes employs misdirection to let someone jump to a different conclusion about who we are.” Racial passing also plays a key role in Achy Obejas’ tender recollection of how her Cuban-born father reinvented his “Third World soul” to create a better future for his family in America and in Marc Fitten’s excavation of his familial roots as an urgent preventative tool against diseases predisposed to Asian culture, which his great-grandfather went to great lengths to blur. Class-crossing comes into play in

poet Patrick Rosal’s address to a woman who mistook him for a waiter at the National Book Awards. Sexuality passing became tantamount when M.G. Lord suppressed her lesbian leanings in favor of “appropriate feelings towards men” while at Yale, until she fell in love with a woman. In presenting these insightful, provocative life experiences, the editors give inquisitive readers (some of whom may be passing themselves) nutritious food for thought. Other contributors include Margo Jefferson, Susan Golomb, and Sergio Troncoso.

Sharply drawn reflections on identity fluidity, stereotypes, marginalization, and cultural assumption.



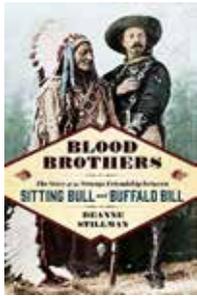
TRUE STORIES **And Other Essays**

Spufford, Francis
Yale Univ. (336 pp.)
\$25.00 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-0-300-23005-5

A longtime writer in a variety of genres presents a potpourri of pieces, arranged thematically, from the past few decades.

Acclaimed essayist Spufford (English and Comparative Literature/Goldsmiths Coll., Univ. of London; *Golden Hill: A Novel of Old New York*, 2017, etc.) offers not just a variety of subjects here, but also a variety of sources. Some were originally blog posts; others, traditional journalism, including book reviews and features; still others, talks and speeches, many of which have been revised. Throughout the collection—in texts dating back to the 1990s (though most are of recent vintage)—run a number of brightly colored threads. Among them is the author’s vast and passionate reading and his fondness for technology. He peppers each essay—though never excessively so—with allusions to numerous other cultural figures, ranging from Shelley (husband and wife) to James Bond, Charlie Chaplin, Shakespeare, Adam Smith, Francis Bacon, Pinocchio, and Oscar Wilde. Spufford’s affection for books, even when tacit, is patent. He writes about the excitement of entering the world of a book—comparing it to breaking the seal on a new container of instant coffee—and about the emotions of finishing a book. As a book reviewer (he includes a few samples here), the author displays a generosity of spirit, a willingness to try to discover what the writer was trying to do, and he provides long appreciations of Kipling and of the *Arabian Nights*. Although his political liberalism continually comes through, he will no doubt disappoint some liberal readers new to his work with his sturdy defense of Christianity. Also included are several sharp pieces that rebuke the “new atheists” (Richard Dawkins et al.) as well as some impressive pieces about the Soviet Union, which, at one time, “had a reputation that is now almost impossible to recapture.”

A bibliophagist snacks and dines, sharing with us some of the tastiest bits.



BLOOD BROTHERS
The Story of the
Strange Friendship
Between Sitting Bull and
Buffalo Bill

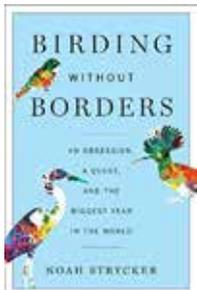


Stillman, Deanne
Simon & Schuster (288 pp.)
\$27.00 | \$12.99 e-book | Oct. 31, 2017
978-1-4767-7352-0
978-1-4767-7354-4 e-book

Blood is thicker than water, but friendship is perhaps thickest of all, particularly when it acts as a poultice for seemingly unhealable wounds.

Relating large events in the guise of paired persons, friends or enemies, is an old storytelling strategy, not much used these days. Stillman (*Desert Reckoning: A Town Sheriff, a Mojave Hermit, and the Biggest Manhunt in Modern California History*, 2012, etc.) neatly revives it in this portrait of the uncomplicated, mutually admiring friendship of the Lakota leader Sitting Bull and William Cody, aka Buffalo Bill. Adding a third to them in the form of the sharpshooter and all-around interesting person Annie Oakley, the author looks at the clash of cultures and how each character resolved or sometimes ignored differences to form bonds of respect. Along the way, as is her special talent, Stillman places these and other characters at the center of major events that they perhaps did not know were major at the time. In one fine moment, she profiles Custer's horse, Comanche, noting that the poor beast, drafted onto the pack train "in spite of retirement," was also an unwitting witness to the massacre of Sioux Indians at Wounded Knee. Acknowledging the terrible coincidence that terrible things have tended to happen to Native people at the time of "important holidays of the white man," Stillman gives an account of the tragic murder of Sitting Bull that's as good as any in the literature. She closes by observing how the lives of her three principals can be seen in the context of the still ongoing "journey of healing our original sin—the betrayal of Native Americans," a journey that requires continued goodwill, to say nothing, perhaps, of a revival of the Ghost Dance to sing peace into the world.

Thoughtful and thoroughly well-told—just the right treatment for a subject about which many books have been written before, few so successfully. (*illustrations*)



BIRDING WITHOUT
BORDERS
An Obsession, a Quest,
and the Biggest Year in the
World

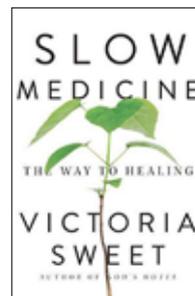


Strycker, Noah
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (320 pp.)
\$27.00 | \$27.00 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017
978-0-544-55814-4
978-0-544-55815-1 e-book

Discovering the universal nature of humanity's kindness while pursuing a birding world record.

In 2015, *Birding* magazine associate editor Strycker (*The Thing with Feathers: The Surprising Lives of Birds and What They Reveal About Being Human*, 2015, etc.) set a goal to see half of the world's bird species in one year. Though his journey took him to all seven continents and over 40 countries—and he eventually clocked in at 6,042 species sighted, surpassing the 5,000 he aimed for when he set out—the author's travelogue focuses less on the counts than on the moments that made up his remarkable journey. He discusses the evolution and historical context of ornithology and birding, noting that it moved from a process of taming the wilderness through discovering, collecting, and categorizing to a way to rediscover nature "at a time when significant chunks of society rarely venture outdoors." Through his knowledgeable viewpoint, Strycker celebrates the creatures he followed, avian and human alike. With impressive attention to detail and a sharp eye, he conveys a sense of optimism even as he notes the ecological challenges faced not only by birds, but also by the other animals that occupy different habitats. If anything, cynics might struggle to believe in the spate of generosity embodied in the global village of birders as seen through the author's eyes. Nonetheless, Strycker's description of a year "expanded to its maximum potential" will inspire readers to explore the world, "from the tiniest detail to the biggest panorama." In the appendix section, the author includes a list of his gear, a "Big Year Snapshot," which lists the total days in each country and number of birds sighted, among other data, and a 50-page list of each of the birds he saw and when and where he saw them.

Colorful but unassuming—and unexpected—lessons for living life fully, presented from a birder's-eye view. (22 photos)



SLOW MEDICINE
The Way to Healing

Sweet, Victoria
Riverhead (304 pp.)
\$27.00 | \$27.00 e-book | Oct. 17, 2017
978-1-59463-359-1
978-0-698-18371-1 e-book

A doctor dissatisfied with the modern delivery of health care details how she developed her ideas about how medicine should be practiced.

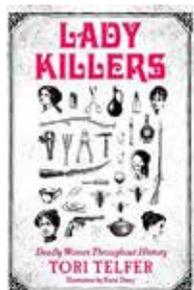
Sweet (*Medicine/Univ. of California, San Francisco; God's Hotel: A Doctor, a Hospital, and a Pilgrimage to the Heart of Medicine*, 2012), a physician, historian, and master storyteller, has provided an autobiographical prequel to *God's Hotel*, recounting her years in training to become a doctor and her early experiences treating patients. The moments she highlights here are those that revealed some aspect of what she calls Slow Medicine. Sometimes, it involves nurses and doctors showing calmness, confidence, expertise, and a personal touch; sometimes, it is patients whose treatments provide revelatory moments. Sweet recalls scenes from years ago in full detail, describing settings, physical appearances, and lengthy conversations. These

A colorful, entertaining journey with a voluble guide.

WHITE MOUNTAIN

personal scenes, which constitute the bulk of the book, make for a highly readable narrative. While the author appreciates the world of modern “Fast Medicine,” with its logic, methods, and technology, she argues that its view of the body as a machine to be fixed would benefit from a consideration of the body as a garden to be tended. Taking time out from clinical work, Sweet studied other medical systems—e.g., ayurvedic, Chinese, folk—and especially the writings of Medieval nun Hildegard of Bingen. The author learned Latin so she could read her work in the original, and it is from her that Sweet takes the concept of *viriditas*, the healing power of nature. The role of the physician, she writes, is to nourish this power, to remove what is in the way, to see the whole patient in her environment, and to think deeply about her life and figure out what is wrong and what can be changed.

Though Sweet’s firm belief that *Slow Medicine* is necessary in today’s high-tech world will strike some as impractical, the sick will take comfort in this physician’s warm, personal, knowledgeable approach.



LADY KILLERS Deadly Women Throughout History

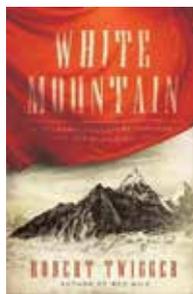
Telfer, Tori
Perennial/HarperCollins (336 pp.)
\$15.99 paper | \$12.79 e-book
Oct. 10, 2017
978-0-06-243373-2
978-0-06-243374-9 e-book

A compendium of women serial killers through the ages.

“When we think about serial killers,” writes freelancer Telfer, “we think about men. Well, ‘man,’ actually—some vicious, twisted sociopath, working alone. He probably has a dreadful nickname...[which] is his brand, a nightmare name for a nightmare man whose victims are, more often than not, innocent women.” In her first book, however, the author compiles comprehensive biographies of more than a dozen women who were as vicious, coldblooded, and brutal as their male counterparts. These women took great pleasure, physically, emotionally, and sexually, in killing—their husbands and other men, their own children, and other women. Most often, they used poison to kill their victims, but some enjoyed, among other methods, brutal and bloody torture and throat cutting as a means to a deadly end. Telfer delves deeply into the role of the media in making these women notorious, and she analyzes how quickly they lost their stardom, fading into relative oblivion. She examines how physical attractiveness and sexuality played into each woman’s personal scenario and how each was branded or given a nickname depending on the violent nature of her crimes. As the author writes, “there’s something so seductive about the word ‘murderess.’” Telfer also explains how humor has been used to describe and counterbalance the atrocious acts these women performed. The book is well-researched and informative, but squeamish readers beware: Telfer doesn’t hide the grisly and

gruesome details about what these women did to the people they murdered. For those interested in historical facts about a special group of sociopaths, the author offers an illuminating read on a subject that has not received much publicity, except during the time when each woman was finally apprehended.

Heavily researched and filled with gory details, a rare look at women who killed for pleasure.



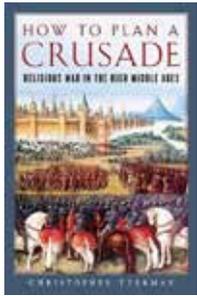
WHITE MOUNTAIN A Cultural Adventure Through the Himalayas

Twigger, Robert
Pegasus (480 pp.)
\$27.95 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-68177-535-7

A trip to discover the “spirit and soma” of the formidable peaks.

Poet and award-winning writer Twigger (*Red Nile: A Biography of the World’s Greatest River*, 2014, etc.) takes on the mighty Himalayas in a sprawling, panoramic chronicle of history and adventure. Drawing on mountaineers’ memoirs, histories, and his own experiences, the author offers quirky facts, idiosyncratic observations, and vivid profiles of some of the most daring climbers. Twigger explains the biology of altitude sickness, caused by the body’s efforts “to re-establish the same levels of oxygen in each cell as would be experienced at sea level.” Besides nausea, headache, and dizziness, breathing at a high altitude causes a mental state similar to intoxication, attracting seekers of spiritual enlightenment. In thin air, he was told, they “have to listen to their breath. This reminds them that they are human after all. And they mistake this insight for something wonderful.” Twigger investigates the many religious groups prevalent in the mountains: “Hindus, Muslims, Bon worshippers, Lepchas, Mishmis and Christians.” But Buddhism is “the central Himalayan religion.” He also steeps himself in prevalent superstitions, including the power of curses and the elusive Yeti. “Imaginary creatures,” he reflects, “transform a banal journey into an exciting one.” From his recounting of mountaineering expeditions, it’s clear that there is nothing banal about climbing in the Himalayas. Twigger is at his liveliest following the treks and travails of climbers such as Col. Francis Younghusband, an intrepid Englishman who crossed the challenging Mustagh Pass in 1887; his compatriot Aleister Crowley (“corpulent heroin addict and alcoholic”), who, in 1904 made a climb using the newly invented crampons; George Curzon, a fascist sympathizer; and author Jon Krakauer, a client (i.e., paying) climber, whose record of an Everest expedition was made into a movie. Twigger peppers the book with digressions and philosophical musings—on the nature of reality, the power of gurus, mapping, and other topics. “To map is to be,” he writes. “The map-maker seeks to control the world through recreating it in an abstract form.”

A colorful, entertaining journey with a voluble guide.



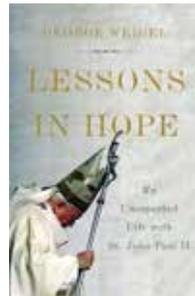
HOW TO PLAN A CRUSADE
Religious War in the High Middle Ages

Tyerman, Christopher
Pegasus (432 pp.)
\$28.95 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-68177-524-1

Overhauling the notion of the Medieval Ages as a time of zealotry and ignorance and examining the nuts and bolts of crusading.

By concentrating on the “prosaic methods” of crusading rather than on the drama of the campaigns, as historians have traditionally done, Crusades expert Tyerman (History/Univ. of Oxford; *The Debate on the Crusades 1099-2010*, 2011, etc.) manages to demythologize the process. The outcomes of the Crusades—usually not good, and the author lays out the other numerous smaller ones in addition to the five big ones, from 1096 to the 1290s—do not concern Tyerman as much as the details of planning: recruitment, finance, logistics, supplies, etc. While the author concedes that the recruitment for these massive undertakings required the creation of a religious justification—e.g., “God wills it,” and warriors were assured of a spiritual as well as material reward—the effective propaganda by religious leaders instilled in volunteers a sense of military urgency, even revenge. The missions served as holy wars to push back the threat to the order of Christendom in the Mediterranean especially. The Crusades also tightly involved the culture of the ruling aristocratic elite, expressed through the concept of chivalry, and required persuasion and propaganda by itinerant preachers at local assemblies and open-air sermons to sign up the necessary volunteers. Tyerman uses the examples of two such 12th-century preachers—Henry of Marcy and Gerald of Wales—to illustrate these methods. Much of Tyerman’s work is a fascinating but dense catalog of logistics, including who actually went on crusade (the aristocrats and their retinue, as well as women), where the money came from, and what kind of massive supplies were needed, as delineated so beautifully in the Bayeux Tapestry. The narrative may leave lay readers not familiar with the specific Crusades bewildered, but overall, Tyerman provides a compelling, vivid sense of a lively, pragmatic, driven, and highly organized society.

A fresh way to envision the Medieval era. (16 pages of color illustrations; 8 pages of maps)



LESSONS IN HOPE
My Unexpected Life with St. John Paul II

Weigel, George
Basic (368 pp.)
\$30.00 | \$20.99 e-book | Sep. 19, 2017
978-0-465-09429-5
978-0-465-09430-1 e-book

The story behind the defining biography of John Paul II (1920-2005).

Vatican expert Weigel (*Evangelical Catholicism: Deep Reform in the 21st-Century Church*, 2013, etc.) tells the tale behind the writing of his most influential book. In 1999, the author published *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II*. Though not technically an authorized biography, Weigel received the written permission of the pontiff to write the book as well as the assistance of the Curia in researching it. The book changed Weigel’s life, but only partly through its publication. The process of researching and writing it was also life-changing, and that is the story the author conveys here. He takes readers back in time to the closing years of the Cold War, chronicling how he rose up the ranks of Catholic scholars and writers as the Catholic Church pivoted, with difficulty, toward a new worldview in terms of communism and its own future. As his story passes into the 1990s, the author describes a pope of immense moral stature who was often at odds with the church bureaucracy that often fought, or ignored, John Paul’s agenda in a changing world, as well as many of the problems besetting the church as the 20th century closed. Weigel interviewed these bureaucrats, among many others, to piece together the story of John Paul’s papacy. In the end, the author completed his acclaimed biography and received his greatest remuneration: the gratitude of the pope himself. Weigel brings out an astounding collection of names, and the work could easily sound like a continued exercise in name-dropping were it not for his skill as a storyteller. Though the language is occasionally overly formal, the author’s standing as a thinker and writer keeps his work from seeming arrogant.

A page-turner for fans of John Paul II, devotees of papal history, or those who simply enjoy a good and literate personal story.



SOONISH
Ten Emerging Technologies That'll Improve and/or Ruin Everything

Weinersmith, Kelly & Weinersmith, Zach
Illus. by Weinersmith, Zach
Penguin Press (368 pp.)
\$30.00 | Oct. 17, 2017
978-0-399-56382-9

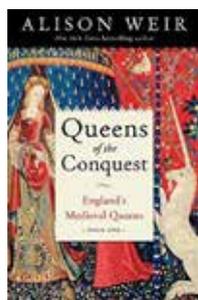
Ten futuristic developments familiar to readers accompanied by equally astute explanations of the crushing difficulties to be overcome in order to bring the ideas to fruition.

A delight for New York aficionados. Every city needs a version of this artist and her book.

TENEMENTS, TOWERS & TRASH

In this husband-and-wife team of authors, cartoonist Zach, creator of the webcomic *Saturday Morning Breakfast Cereal*, provides a steady stream of amusing illustrations throughout the book. Ecologist and blogger Kelly belongs to the science-shouldn't-be-boring school of writing, but readers able to tolerate her joke-filled prose will not regret the experience. Nuclear fusion can provide unlimited clean energy by forcing two hydrogen atoms to combine into one helium atom, a process that requires temperatures and pressures present at the heart of the sun. Achieving this turns out to be extremely difficult and expensive (more than \$20 billion spent so far), but the scientists involved have no doubts that it is possible. We don't have cheap space travel because rockets must carry all their fuel, leaving little room for cargo. An analogy is driving a car around the world pulling a trailer containing all the gasoline. All prophets of future technology must discuss robots, and the authors do their duty ("Build me a Rumpus Room, Metal Servant!"). Everyone knows that genetic engineering may eventually cure diseases and correct our defects; the authors provide the details. Predictions have a terrible record, but they're irresistible. With good, common sense the authors turn the problems on their heads by discussing the barriers to the marvels to come. In the end, they take for granted that these will happen, so the predictions remain. Even so, they deliver excellent descriptions of the science behind each wonder and the state of current research that may or may not bear fruit.

Despite unrelenting whimsy, the authors provide solid, well-thought-out, useful information on cutting-edge technology.



QUEENS OF THE CONQUEST England's Medieval Queens Book One

Weir, Alison

Ballantine (520 pp.)

\$30.00 | \$30.00 e-book | Sep. 26, 2017

978-1-101-96666-2

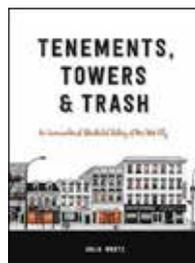
978-1-101-96667-9 e-book

Though Norman queens were largely unknowable, leave it to this prolific historical biographer to bring them to life.

Having previously tackled the lives of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Isabella of France, not to mention the Tudors (*The Lost Tudor Princess: The Life of Margaret Douglas*, 2017, etc.), English author and novelist Weir presents five queens of the post-Norman Invasion era who sometimes wielded power in their own right, and not just as queen consort. While the author asserts that her portraits are based on primary material, there is scant little to go by, or what she calls with charming understatement "tantalizing gaps," because "the deeds of women, unless they were notably pious, politically important, or scandalous, were rarely thought worth recording." However, in England, the Salic code of the Franks, forbidding succession by or through women, did not apply. Consequently, not only did many kings gain their titles through their female ancestors, but some queens got a

shot at ruling, such as Empress Maud (1102-1167), widowed queen of the Holy Roman Emperor Heinrich V and designated successor of her father, Henry I of England. The first queen Weir portrays is William the Conqueror's headstrong wife, Matilda of Flanders (1032?-1083), who initially scorned marrying a "bastard." However, after he roughed her up, she agreed to marry him, saying, "for he must be a man of great courage and high daring who could venture to come and beat me in my own father's palace." After their three-decade marriage and long reigns, their son Henry, acceding to the throne after the suspicious death of his older brother, married the controversial Edith of Scotland (renamed Matilda) in order to unite the Norman-Saxon kingdoms in the slow process of integration. Their daughter, Empress Maud, proved a shrewd, and not always well-loved, elder stateswoman. As usual, Weir is meticulous in her research, though the barrage of royal ancestry may deter some American readers.

Another sound feminist resurrection by a seasoned historian. (16-page color photo insert)



TENEMENTS, TOWERS & TRASH An Unconventional Illustrated History of New York City

Wertz, Julia

Illus. by the author

Black Dog & Leventhal (304 pp.)

\$29.99 | \$22.99 paper | \$14.99 e-book

Oct. 3, 2017

978-0-316-50121-7

978-0-316-50123-1 paper

978-0-316-50122-4 e-book

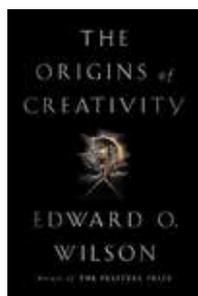


In busy cartoons and archly entertaining prose, *New Yorker* artist Wertz (*Museum of Mistakes*, 2014, etc.) serves up a grandly alternative history of Gotham.

There was a time, not so long ago, when Times Square was a locus of hookers and nude dance shows rather than Disney-fied tourist traps. More pointedly, writes the author, it was "a garbage covered shithole full of strip clubs, porn theaters and seedy characters"—which, naturally, she characterizes as representing "the good old days." As Wertz cautions, the sordidness hasn't entirely disappeared; you just have to know what to look for, and then look. This graphic book, rendered in a style that seems a distant cousin to that of Roz Chast, is all about looking. Wertz is a transplant from the Bay Area who came to New York, found her nirvana, and began exploring the history and actuality of the place. It's a tragic note that, evicted from her studio in an up-and-coming Brooklyn neighborhood, she couldn't find affordable digs anywhere in the city and returned to California, where she discovered that "it was an absolute fucking torture drawing and writing about a city I no longer lived in but desperately loved." It's easy to gauge that affection from her pages, which recount long walks through the city fueled by a steady diet of histories and trivia ("Pinball was banned in NYC until 1978! It was a 'pinball prohibition,' and officials would smash

the machines with sledgehammers, and dump them in the river”) that she recounts in ever salty prose. Wertz, for instance, revisits the history of the many instances of Ray’s Pizza, a synecdoche of a kind: founded by mobsters as a money-laundering site, the operation became legit in the hands of immigrants who worked there, quit, and opened their own versions of the place, name and all, so that there are now somewhere between 20 and 40 unrelated Ray’s outlets in the city.

A delight for New York aficionados. Every city needs a version of this artist and her book.



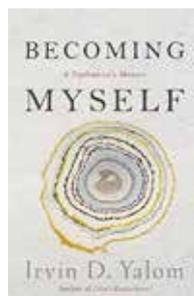
THE ORIGINS OF CREATIVITY

Wilson, Edward O.
Liveright/Norton (256 pp.)
\$24.95 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-63149-318-8

Two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Wilson (Emeritus, Evolutionary Biology/Harvard Univ.; *Half-Earth: Our Planet’s Fight for Life*, 2016, etc.) offers a philosophical examination into “the mystery of why there are universal creative arts.”

The author’s answer exemplifies an alliance between science and the humanities that he champions throughout the book. Such a blending, he maintains, could “reinvigorate philosophy and begin a new, more enduring Enlightenment.” Wilson identifies five fields of research where this blending can be especially fertile: paleontology, anthropology, psychology, evolutionary biology, and neurobiology. These fields may allow “the full meaning of the humanities” to emerge by helping the humanities overcome their shortcomings: “they are rootless in their explanations of causation and they exist within a bubble of sensory experience.” The big five fields are united by a “common thread” of belief in the crucial importance of natural selection. “Nothing in science and the humanities makes sense except in the light of evolution,” Wilson quotes a geneticist, including the existence of creativity. The author sees language as “the greatest evolutionary advance,” setting *Homo sapiens* apart from other species: “Without the invention of language we would have remained animals. Without metaphors we would still be savages.” Early *Homo sapiens* had a larger brain than their ancestors, providing “larger memory, leading to the construction of internal storytelling” and “true language,” which in turn gave rise to “our unprecedented creativity and culture.” That rapid transformation “was driven by a unique mode of evolution, called gene-culture coevolution,” in which cultural innovation and genes favoring intelligence and cooperation occurred “in reciprocity.” Wilson’s writing is at its most luminous when describing the “chitinous armor” and glistening bodies of ants—“one of the most beautiful animals in the world”—to which he has devoted much of his career. His more abstract analysis, though sometimes repetitious, is nevertheless salient.

A concise, thoughtful exploration of how human understanding will be enhanced by “a humanistic science and a scientific humanities.” (6 illustrations)



BECOMING MYSELF A Psychiatrist’s Memoir

Yalom, Irvin D.
Basic (352 pp.)
\$30.00 | \$20.99 e-book | Oct. 3, 2017
978-0-465-09889-7
978-0-465-09890-3 e-book

A distinguished psychotherapist reflects on his life and fulfilling career.

After a prolific string of publications including fiction, nonfiction, and collections of case files from his practice, Yalom (Emeritus, Psychiatry/Stanford Univ.; *Creatures of a Day: And Other Tales of Psychotherapy*, 2015, etc.) turns his perspective inward. Braided throughout client profiles are colorfully drawn anecdotes of his younger days as a self-proclaimed “disturber of the peace” whose disrespect and rebelliousness were always assigned primary blame for any unrest within the family household, including his father’s chest pain. Yet these are characteristics he regrets now, as an adult, as well as not being able to connect more emotionally with his frugal immigrant parents before time ran out. Valiantly leaving home for medical school meant seriousness and discipline, both of which Yalom mastered, even while making room for love. In smoothly conversational prose, the author ruminates on anger, his Jewish identity and the “ruins of my own religious education,” the “encounter groups” of the 1960s, the evolution of his relationship with wife Marilyn, a stint in the Army, international sojourns, and his psychiatry practice, which eventually landed him at Stanford. In the most touching chapters, Yalom chronicles how he has wrestled with the integrative role that death plays in the everyday lives of his patients (as well as with his own mortality). At 86, the author, an avid bicycler and poker enthusiast, still writes daily and sees patients in his San Francisco apartment. The author believes their intimate histories affect how he personally views his present life and memorializes his past, a notion that fortifies much of this fecund memoir. “My clients’ memories more often trigger my own,” he writes, “my work on their future calls upon and disturbs my past, and I find myself reconsidering my own story.”

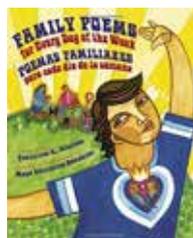
Fans of this eloquent and introspective author will welcome this innermost chronicle of his history, passions, and the keys to unlocking a fruitful life. (26 b/w images)

CHILDREN'S & TEEN



These titles earned the Kirkus Star:

- WISHTREE** by Katherine Applegate; illus. by Charles Santoso 162
- WINTER DANCE** by Marion Dane Bauer;
illus. by Richard Jones..... 165
- FAR FROM THE TREE** by Robin Benway..... 165
- IN THE COUNTRY OF QUEENS** by Cari Best 166
- THE POND** by Nicola Davies; illus. by Cathy Fisher 172
- WINDOWS** by Julia Denos; illus. by E.B. Goodale..... 172
- MIGUEL'S BRAVE KNIGHT** by Margarita Engle;
illus. by Raúl Colón..... 175
- MAMA AFRICA!** by Kathryn Erskine; illus. by Charly Palmer..... 175
- POPPIES OF IRAQ** by Brigitte Findakly & Lewis Trondheim;
trans. by Helge Dascher 176
- MEET CINDY SHERMAN** by Jan Greenberg & Sandra Jordan..... 180
- SINGING IN THE RAIN** illus. by Tim Hopgood 183
- THIBODEAUX AND THE FISH** by Peter Huggins;
illus. by Mary Ann Casey 184
- WHERE'S HALMONI?** by Julie Kim 188
- SATELLITE** by Nick Lake 190
- LINES** by Suzy Lee..... 192
- CHICKEN WANTS A NAP** by Tracy Marchini;
illus. by Monique Felix..... 196
- TRU & NELLE** by G. Neri..... 202
- BEASTS MADE OF NIGHT** by Tochi Onyebuchi 204
- DRAGONFLY SONG** by Wendy Orr..... 204
- READY TO FALL** by Marcella Pixley..... 207
- MILO** by Toby Riddle 209
- VINCENT CAN'T SLEEP** by Barb Rosenstock;
illus. by Mary GrandPré..... 210
- CITY MOUSE, COUNTRY MOUSE** by Maggie Rudy 211
- THE SECRET OF NIGHTINGALE WOOD** by Lucy Strange..... 214
- NEXT YEAR** by Ruth Vander Zee; illus. by Gary Kelley 218



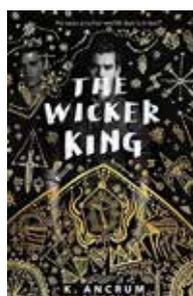
FAMILY POEMS FOR EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK / POEMAS FAMILIARES PARA CADA DÍA DE LA SEMANA

Alarcón, Francisco X.
 Illus. by Gonzalez, Maya Christina
 Children's Book Press (40 pp.)
 \$18.95 | Sep. 18, 2017
 978-0-89239-275-9

Set within a loose mythological framework, each poem is partnered with a day of the week, playing with its etymology in both Spanish and English.

Alarcón juxtaposes this classical imagery with a child's limitless perspective of place. "Thursday / this day is for Jupiter / the largest planet of all / and god of thunder Thor— / like Jupiter and Thor / I feel big and mighty / on Thursday." Daily ritual and mundane activities take on the patina of legend as time molds the character of what a family is and what it becomes. Equating the distinct characteristics of each day with the uniqueness of each family member, the poems embrace the strength of individuality while recognizing the power of the whole. "I begin to see / every day as part / of one big family // where every family / member is unique / so worthy and special." And just as straightforward as Alarcón's uncomplicated language and style are Gonzalez's bold, geometric illustrations rendered in watercolor, gouache, and acrylic markers. From Wednesday's Talavera-inspired rabbit to Saturday's Huichol-like design, the colorful double-page-spread layouts complement the poems' simplicity. Recalling the warmth of family gatherings on the sun's day and the joy of unstructured play on Saturn's day, each tribute resonates with nostalgia for a time when personal interactions were done face to face.

This posthumously published bilingual collection will be welcomed by Alarcón's many admirers. (illustrator's note, introduction) (Picture book/poetry. 5-8)



THE WICKER KING

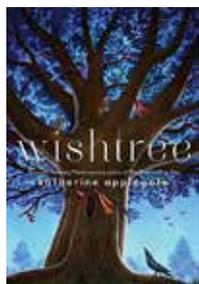
Ancrum, K.
 Imprint (320 pp.)
 \$17.99 | \$12.59 e-book | Oct. 31, 2017
 978-1-250-10154-9
 978-1-250-10156-3 e-book

Love and friendship are severely tested by mental illness tinged with fantasy.

August and Jack are the very definition of opposites attracting. Jack, a popular, golden-haired white varsity rugby player,

seems to have a perfect life, while August is a poor kid of mixed race who runs drugs in their high school to make extra money. The boys are from opposite ends of the social spectrum, but their connection is deeper than friendship and more intense than the relationships either one has with members of the opposite sex. Their bromance, which enables both teens to survive parental neglect and absence, has a decidedly destructive bent that leads to their breaking into a toy factory together and also tattooing their names on each other. When Jack begins hallucinating, convinced that he sees into a parallel world in need of saving, August decides to believe him, charting a course that tests their friendship and their sanity. Ancrum's first novel, set in 2003, is an eerie piece of realistic fiction whose characters revel in intense emotions that will feel very authentic to high school teenagers. Their story is presented in extremely short chapters punctuated by pictorial elements such as arrest reports, snapshots, and maps. As the story proceeds, the pages darken until the final acts play out in white type on black. The fragmented style of the narrative keeps the action moving but undercuts character development, causing details about the main characters to be told to readers rather than shown.

A haunting story that bravely explores friendship and mental illness. (*Historical fiction. 14-18*)



WISHTREE

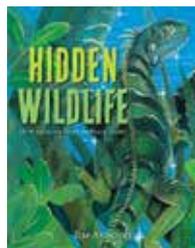
Applegate, Katherine
Illus. by Santos, Charles
 Feiwel & Friends (224 pp.)
 \$16.99 | \$9.99 e-book | Sep. 26, 2017
 978-1-250-04322-1
 978-1-250-14303-7 e-book



Generations of human and animal families grow and change, seen from the point of view of the red oak Wishing Tree that shelters them all.

Most trees are introverts at heart. So says Red, who is over 200 years old and should know. Not to mention that they have complicated relationships with humans. But this tree also has perspective on its animal friends and people who live within its purview—not just witnessing, but ultimately telling the tales of young people coming to this country alone or with family. An Irish woman named Maeve is the first, and a young 10-year-old Muslim girl named Samar is the most recent. Red becomes the repository for generations of wishes; this includes both observing Samar's longing wish and sporting the hurtful word that another young person carves into their bark as a protest to Samar's family's presence. (Red is monoecious, they explain, with both male and female flowers.) Newbery medalist Applegate succeeds at interweaving an immigrant story with an animated natural world and having it all make sense. As Red observes, animals compete for resources just as humans do, and nature is not always pretty or fair or kind. This swiftly moving yet contemplative read is great for early middle grade, reluctant or tentative readers, or precocious younger students.

A deceptively simple, tender tale in which respect, resilience, and hope triumph. (*Fantasy. 8-12*)



HIDDEN WILDLIFE How Animals Hide in Plain Sight

Arnosky, Jim
Illus. by the author
 Sterling (40 pp.)
 \$16.95 | Sep. 5, 2017
 978-1-4549-2097-7

Animals' shapes, coloring, and behaviors allow them to conceal and reveal themselves.

Arnosky uses his considerable artistic talents to demonstrate how animal camouflage works using examples from across the animal kingdom and throughout the year. Acrylic paintings (including foldout spreads) and occasional pencil studies show animals in their natural habitats, where colors, patterns, and the play of light work to allow them to seem to vanish. He suggests looking at these paintings from across the room to see how a Florida panther can vanish in the grass or a moose into a forest. He uses familiar examples such as a spotted fawn on a forest floor or a female blackbird in the reeds as well as surprising ones: a bittern stretched tall like the grasses around it; a scorpion fish blending in color and texture with its perch on a mound of coral. He discusses the role of the countershading—dark above and light below—so often found in birds and marine animals. Pencil drawings show how some insect shapes mimic parts of plants and how a fawn's spots will disappear over time. Loosely organized into chapters with short introductions, his examples are captioned with short explanatory paragraphs. Most come from his own observations and experiences over many years of exploring and researching the natural world.

Read aloud or alone, this will heighten anyone's appreciation for "Nature...the ultimate artist." (author's note, further reading) (*Informational picture book. 4-10*)

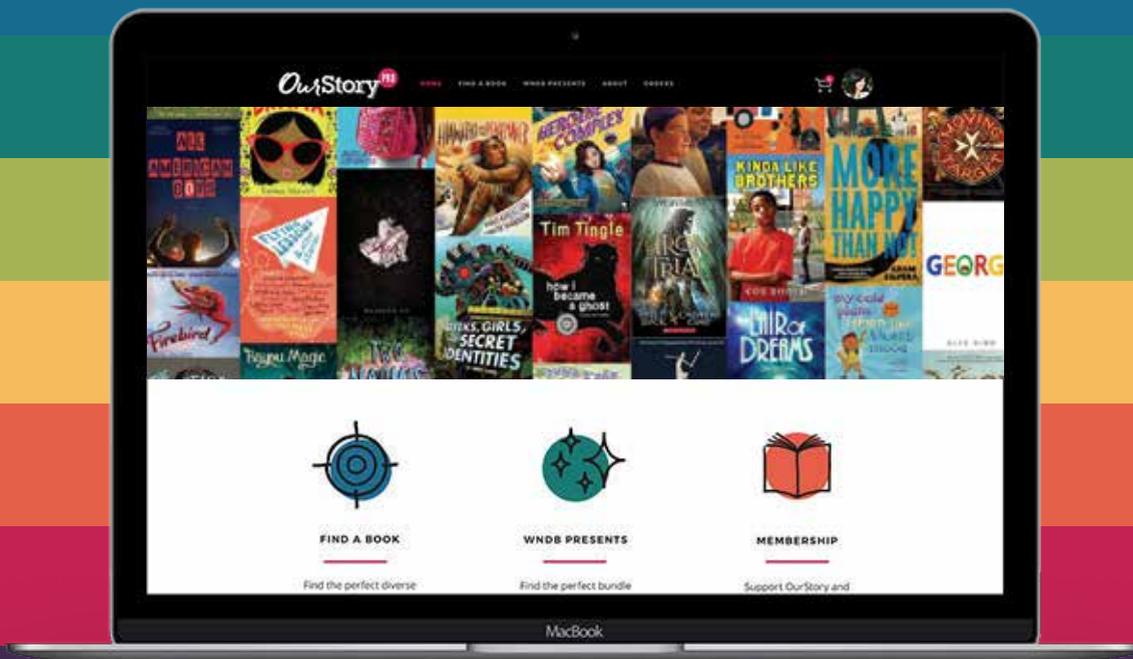


THE DEVILS YOU KNOW

Atwood, M.C.
 Soho Teen (288 pp.)
 \$18.99 | \$18.99 e-book | Oct. 3, 2017
 978-1-61695-788-9
 978-1-61695-789-6 e-book

Five high school seniors are lured into a game in which their souls are at stake.

Maxwell Cartwright Jr., who reads like a demonic cross between the Goblin King and the Jigsaw killer from the Saw film franchise, traps five classmates in his cursed house, forcing them to play his game to win their freedom and escape death. White alpha girl Ashley, white goth boy Dylan, white fashion artist Gretchen, black basketball jock Paul, and shy white Violet eventually work together to make their way through room after room of horrors, until each is forced to confront both their most shameful secrets and their swiftly approaching demise. Atwood debuts with a hefty serving of uncanny gore and alluring malevolence, but missteps and lack of development undercut the fright.



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THREE VERSIONS AVAILABLE

- OurStory Kids:** for ages 12 and under
- OurStory Teen:** for ages 13 and up
- OurStory Pro:** for educators and librarians



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OurStory is accessible via the internet browser on your computer and tablet. The Android app for tablets can be downloaded from Google Play, and an iOS version is forthcoming.

Disorienting leaps from one first-person–perspective chapter to another undermine the narrative urgency, repeatedly stalling the plot so each of the five protagonists can have a turn at soliloquizing underdeveloped terror into overwritten tedium. And while some of the teens’ character-motivating secrets—right-wing Ashley’s closeted queerness and crush on nemesis Gretchen, Gretchen’s bravado-shielded shame about her poverty, and Violet’s power-disparate sexual relationship with a teacher—bring the high stakes and moral complexity horror enthusiasts expect, the rest underwhelm. Dylan’s home life as a wealthy evangelical and Paul’s wonderfully geeky love of Shakespeare feel like lazy afterthoughts in comparison.

Horror fans will find many classic and campy tropes but little substance. (*Horror*. 13-17)



THE PLAYER KING

Avi

Atheneum (208 pp.)

\$16.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Oct. 17, 2017

978-1-4814-3768-4

978-1-4814-3770-7 e-book

From prolific, Newbery winner Avi, a novel set in the Middle Ages that is replete with authentic period details, page-turning brief chapters, and a plot filled with twists, turns, and political

intrigue.

Avi expands on the historical footnote of an unnamed boy who challenged the kingship of Henry VII, was crowned briefly in Ireland, then led an army to England where he was soundly defeated. Lambert Simnel is a young orphan of unknown age who works and lives in a tavern where he is treated cruelly. A friar with his own selfish motives sees Lambert, purchases him, and schools him in the rules of behavior in order to pass him off as the previous king’s nephew, supposedly escaped from imprisonment. The first-person narration adds immediacy to Lambert’s fears and confusion. Having previously watched street actors, Lambert determines his best chance is to be a convincing player king, perpetuating the sham and nearly convincing himself. Although Lambert rises from a “loathed nobody” who spent “his life in a cellar, like a rotten turnip,” his fortune rapidly plummets. Touches of humor, brought about by both Lambert’s need for spiffing up and a colorful vocabulary (“gundy-gut,” “bootlicker,” “want-wit”), are sprinkled throughout. Unsurprisingly, the cast is an all-white one.

An appealing protagonist pursuing a grand adventure and struggling with themes of power, pride, and identity will appeal to fans of historical fiction. (*Historical fiction*. 9-12)



50 CITIES OF THE U.S.A. Explore America’s Cities with 50 Fact-filled Maps

Balkan, Gabrielle

Illus. by Linero, Sol

Wide Eyed Editions (112 pp.)

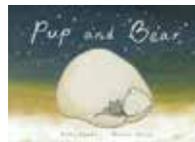
\$30.00 | Sep. 30, 2017

978-1-84780-870-7

The creators of the fact-packed *The 50 States* (2015) give as many of the United States’ bustling burgs similarly upbeat, panoramic overviews.

Printed on simplified street maps that provide loose geographical anchors, each of the alphabetically arranged surveys fills an oversize spread with graphic vignettes and descriptive notes about select neighborhoods, institutions, sports, and sights, plus a carefully diverse cast of prominent natives, local cuisine, historical highlights, and major festivals. Each features a box of “Key Facts” (all nonstatistical except for population) and an infeasible but tantalizing itinerary for a day’s tour. The information is current enough to include mention of *Hamilton* on Broadway and audience-conscious enough to cite hometown superheroes where appropriate, along with site-specific books for young readers. It’s all compiled with a sure instinct for sparking urges to visit or at least to find out more. Who, for instance, would want to pass up the International Cryptozoology Museum in Portland, Maine, Flaming Lips Alley in Oklahoma City, or the chance to drive a bulldozer at Las Vegas’ Dig This? Washington, D.C., caps the main tour, but lest any state go unrepresented Des Moines and seven other cities that didn’t make the cut get their “Key Facts” laid out at the end.

As selective as the companion outing but a trove of data nonetheless for tourists of both the active and armchair sorts. (*Atlas*. 8-12)



PUP AND BEAR

Banks, Kate

Illus. by Stoop, Naoko

Schwartz & Wade/Random (32 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$20.99 PLB | Oct. 3, 2017

978-0-399-55409-4

978-0-399-55410-0 PLB

A lost wolf pup is taken in by a polar bear in Banks and Stoop’s sweet arctic tale.

As winter descends on the Arctic tundra, a young wolf pup becomes separated from his pack, isolated on an ice floe. He swims to shore, tired and cold, and finds himself face to face with a large polar bear. Frightened, the pup is perplexed when the bear nuzzles him rather than attacking: “Aren’t you going to eat me?” After all, “Polar bears eat wolves.” “Not this one” is the polar bear’s reply, and she explains that though she is not his mother, she can keep him safe and warm. The two stay together through the Big Freeze and the Big Melt, the bear teaching the pup how to fish, playing with him, and, when the time comes, gently sending him out into the world on his own. The pup, now

Jones' full-page illustrations, done in rich, muted earth tones, are stunningly designed and executed

WINTER DANCE

a fully grown arctic wolf, acquires a pack of his own, leading it over the tundra until, one day, he comes upon a small polar bear cub alone in the snow and pays forward the care he was shown as a pup. This quiet tale of kindness, adoption, and reciprocity uses sparse text to great effect among the crisp, wind-swept, snow-laden illustrations that practically crunch as the pages turn, cycling through the “wheel of life.”

A chilly tale to warm the heart. (Picture book. 3-7)



WINTER DANCE

Bauer, Marion Dane
 Illus. by Jones, Richard
 HMH Books (40 pp.)
 \$16.99 | Nov. 7, 2017
 978-0-544-31334-7



As winter begins to set in, a curious fox wonders what he ought to do.

Winter is coming—a snowflake has just fallen on the nose of the “fine red fox”—and he wonders what he should do. With each page turn, he encounters a critter that gives him advice. A caterpillar tells him to wrap himself in a chrysalis and become a butterfly in the spring, but the fox replies that he was “not meant to fly.” The bat tells him to find a cave, hang by his toes, and go to sleep, but the fox says his “toes would get tired.” The squirrel tells him to “gather, gather, gather,” but the fox replies, “I don’t even like acorns.” In this cheerful way, readers follow the fox through his rambles while learning what different creatures do during the winter. Bauer’s free-verse narrative is sprightly and accomplished, with a playful touch and earnest humor. Jones’ full-page illustrations, done in rich, muted earth tones, are stunningly designed and executed—the hare is particularly effective—while the book’s illustrated endpapers amplify the story with satisfying detail. What the fox ultimately finds to do may surprise readers, but it is, like the rest of the book, based in fact.

An exemplary addition to the shelves of nature-themed picture books. (Picture book. 3-6)



FAR FROM THE TREE

Benway, Robin
 HarperTeen (384 pp.)
 \$17.99 | \$12.99 e-book | Oct. 3, 2017
 978-0-06-233062-8
 978-0-06-233064-2 e-book



Placing her daughter for adoption left a hole in Grace’s heart; her adoptive parents can’t fill it, and her birth mother’s unreachable—then Grace learns she has siblings.

Maya, 15, a year younger than Grace, was adopted by wealthy parents 13 months before their biological daughter, Lauren, arrived. Joaquin, nearly 18, a survivor of 17 failed foster-care placements and one failed adoption, is troubled when his current

foster parents express a wish to adopt him. Grace reaches out, and the siblings soon bond. All—Maya especially, standing out in a family of redheads—are grateful to meet others with dark hair (only Joaquin identifies not as white but Latino) and weird food preferences (French fries with mayo). Still, each keeps secrets. Maya discusses her girlfriend but not her mother’s secret drinking; Joaquin edits out his failed adoption; Grace, her pregnancy and daughter’s birth. It hurts that her siblings have zero interest in tracking down the mom who gave them away, yet Grace persists. Chapters alternate through their third-person perspectives, straightforward structure and syntax delivering accessibility without sacrificing nuance or complexity. Family issues are neither airbrushed nor oversimplified (as the ambiguous title suggests). These are multifaceted characters, shaped by upbringing as well as their genes, in complicated families. Absent birthparents matter, as do bio siblings: when their parents separate, Lauren fears Maya will abandon her for her “real” siblings.

From the first page to the last, this compassionate, funny, moving, compulsively readable novel about what makes a family gets it right. (Fiction. 13-18)

COMING THIS FALL FROM ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TOON BOOKS

GOOD NIGHT, PLANET

Superstar cartoonist Liniers returns with a gorgeously illustrated comic book about sleep, toys, puppies and New England’s moonlit skies.

Also available in Spanish hardcover & paperback!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ THE STARRED REVIEWS ARE IN! ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

“Masterfully executed.”
 —Booklist (starred review) ★ ★ ★

“Delightful.”
 —Kirkus Reviews (starred review) ★ ★ ★

Also by Liniers

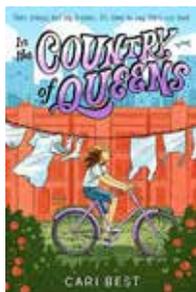
WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY HENRIETTA

THE BIG WET BALLOON

www.TOON-BOOKS.com

As revealed in Best's precise, evocative third-person narrative, Shirley taps into the courage of her hero Pippi Longstocking.

IN THE COUNTRY OF QUEENS



IN THE COUNTRY OF QUEENS

Best, Cari

Margaret Ferguson/Farrar, Straus & Giroux (224 pp.)

\$16.99 | Nov. 28, 2017

978-0-374-37052-7



In Queens during the summer of 1961, a shy 11-year-old white girl finds her voice and learns to use it.

Word-loving aspiring writer Shirley Alice Burns lives with her overprotective single mother and her gentle Russian-immigrant grandmother. Not one to rock the boat, Shirley always goes along with the crowd. But when she finds out the father she thought simply long absent is really deceased, she vows to confront her mother about it. Also on Shirley's list of things to do once her "courage comes in": stand up for herself when her teacher accuses her of plagiarism, tell her mother she's too old for summer camp and that she wants to go to Lake Winnepesaukee (affectionately nicknamed "Lake Winni Pee") with their large extended family instead, as well as telling her that she hates ballet and following her mother's restrictive Safe-at-Home Doctrine. As revealed in Best's precise, evocative third-person narrative, Shirley taps into the courage of her hero Pippi Longstocking and projects memories of her father onto a dead mouse she hides in the freezer. Shirley's gradual change and just the right amount of lost innocence are punctuated by summer adventures with cousin Phillie; her disdain for her mother's gassy boyfriend; her strong, loving bond with her grandmother; and her looming first kiss, courtesy of spin the bottle. This Queens neighborhood, with its menagerie of carefully drawn secondary characters, appears to be an all-white one.

Picture-book author Best's first middle-grade novel sparkles and pops like a Fourth of July firecracker. (Historical fiction. 8-12)



ZIGZAG ZOOBORNS! Zoo Baby Colors and Patterns

Bleiman, Andrew

Beach Lane/Simon & Schuster (40 pp.)

\$13.99 | \$13.99 e-book | Oct. 17, 2017

978-1-4814-3105-7

978-1-4814-3106-4 e-book

Series: ZooBorns!

Newborn animals in zoos and aquariums across the world are welcomed in this photographic exhibit meant to draw attention to the important conservation role these organizations maintain for many endangered species.

A brief greeting introduces each new arrival featured across the gutter in a bold, close-up color photograph; it's followed by a quick review that asks children to specifically note the coloring, pattern, and texture of the animal. "Hello, Orys! Though Orys is tiny compared to his mother, this Indian rhinoceros tyke weighed an impressive 150 pounds a few days after birth.

See his thick bumpy *gray* skin? It helps protect him from sunburn and insect bites." Some animals will be familiar, such as the giraffe calf or the cheetah cub. All are adorable and intriguing, even the diamondback terrapins, while some are especially eye-catching, such as the golden lion tamarins or the baby langur. Seventeen animals are included, giving children a fair survey of species. An addendum succinctly provides more information for each, including the species, the particular zoo or aquarium each baby is housed in, the animal's endangered status, and a few key facts.

A striking, beautiful, and clearly focused bundle of cute. (Informational picture book. 4-8)



RETRIBUTION RAILS

Bowman, Erin

HMH Books (384 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$17.99 e-book | Nov. 7, 2017

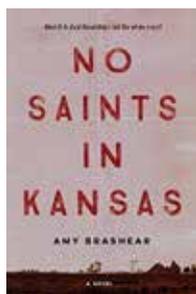
978-0-544-91888-7

978-1-328-82901-6 e-book

In the Arizona Territory in 1887 a mining heiress meets an outlaw during a train robbery; violence, redemption, and romance ensue.

Narration alternates between Charlotte, who's 16 and sheltered but dreams of becoming a reporter, and Reece, a reluctant, 18-year-old outlaw with a deadly reputation. He's more compelling as a character, having been forcefully adopted into the murderous Rose Riders three years earlier because he can identify the man who killed the gang leader's brother in the companion novel, *Vengeance Road* (2015). Reece regrets the horrible things he's done with the gang, remaining with them mainly because Luther Rose, the leader, threatens Reece's mother's life should he run but also because he's strangely attached to Rose, who is violent and threatening but also seems to have some affection for Reece, calling him "son" and imagining he will someday inherit gang leadership. Reece's realization that freeing himself ultimately requires killing all the gang members comes with its own moral price tag. Meanwhile, he's accidentally abducted Charlotte, who has her own melodramatic set of family problems but whose primary purpose seems to be learning to love the promise of a reformed Reece. Very conveniently they're assisted in their quests for freedom by the couple who killed Rose's brother 10 years earlier. Though Reece is biracial, with a Mexican mother and white father, his heritage is not plumbed, and most other characters are, like Charlotte, white.

Occasionally contrived but entertaining. (Western romance. 14-18)



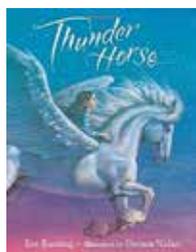
NO SAINTS IN KANSAS

Brashear, Amy
 Soho Teen (320 pp.)
 \$18.99 | \$10.99 paper | \$10.99 e-book
 Nov. 14, 2017
 978-1-61695-683-7
 978-1-61695-934-0 paper
 978-1-61695-684-4 e-book

A transplanted Kansas teen tries to make sense of a brutal murder in Brashear's debut.

Sixteen-year-old Carly narrates the story of a murder that gripped the small Kansas town of Holcomb in 1959, when Herb and Bonnie Clutter, along with their teenage children, Nancy and Kenyon, were killed without obvious motive. Truman Capote would immortalize the subsequent manhunt and trial in his masterpiece *In Cold Blood*. Brashear chooses to tell the story from the perspective of a presumably fictional white girl who wanted to be—but wasn't quite—Nancy's friend. Ex-New Yorker Carly searches for evidence, going so far as to hold a séance at the scene of the crime; she's interrogated by police and, like everyone else in the town, interviewed by Capote. Kansan Brashear writes smoothly, but her novel is problematic on several fronts. Carly never emerges with a clear motive for her snooping, uncovering nothing of value, and her personal narrative arc seems slight. Worse, modern teens aren't likely to understand that this is a retelling of a nearly 60-year-old crime story. Without background, Capote and his female friend, Nelle Lee (later author of *To Kill a Mockingbird*), seem like odd distractions from the main narrative. There's no author's note to separate fact from fiction or to inform readers what happened after the trial, and without context the story doesn't really hold up on its own.

Interesting but befuddled. (map) (*Historical fiction. 13-17*)



THUNDER HORSE

Bunting, Eve
Illus. by Nolan, Dennis
 Neal Porter/Roaring Brook (32 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Nov. 14, 2017
 978-1-62672-443-3

A child raises a magical horse and learns about the enduring power of love in this picture book.

The narrator is given a tiny white horse, "perfect in every way," by Aunt Aldora, who wears a bright shawl and bangles, in contrast to the child's more staidly attired parents. She says that the tiny horse came from a "hidden Greek Island" and cautions the child that, because the horse is magical and "you cannot own magic," one day, the horse will leave. The child cares for the horse, feeding it and walking it on a leash. After the child hears a teacher read the story of Pegasus in class, the youngster decides that Pegasus is the perfect name for the horse, who has been growing and growing and now sports magnificent wings.

Bunting's assured text is quiet, subtle, and accepting, and Nolan's delicate and emotive illustrations (all full-color, double-page spreads) add their own peacefulness. They have the look of pastels on colored paper, giving the images a textured, solid feel that is nevertheless dreamlike. The youngster and Pegasus form a strong and loving bond, made poignant by its impermanence. The final pages of the story switch from past tense to the present, allowing readers to understand that the happy, satisfying conclusion will continue. The narrator has long, brown hair and pale skin, as do both parents and Aunt Aldora.

A quiet tale of magic and love with delicate, realistic illustrations. (*Picture book. 3-8*)

Maya's Story
SLIPPING BETWEEN TIME AND SPACE
 A NOVEL BY DIANA STORY

ISBN - 13: 978-1542660556
 ISBN - 10: 1542660556

This debut YA fantasy sees a teen prepare to battle the ills of the world and the sinister force responsible.

"A lively and optimistic alarm bell regarding the fractured state of the globe today."
 —Kirkus Reviews

"A magical coming of age story...marvelous."
 Eduardo Santiago, Story Editor and author of *Midnight Rumba*.

"a page-turning novel and a half-formed screenplay...uniquely worthy..."
 —Stephanie Edwards, Television Commentator/Host.

For information on publishing or film rights, please contact maya.time.space@gmail.com



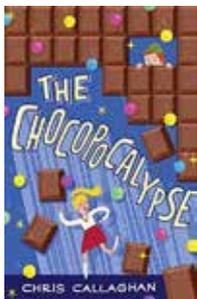
CINDERELLA AND THE FURRY SLIPPERS

Cali, Davide
Illus. by Barbanègre, Raphaëlle
Tundra (32 pp.)
\$17.99 | Oct. 10, 2017
978-1-101-91898-2

A feminist version of “Cinderella” to suit fans of Robert Munsch’s *The Paper-Bag Princess* (1980).

This tale begins like the traditional one, with Cinderella slaving away for her stepmother and two stepsisters. But when the day of the prince’s annual ball arrives, she takes matters into her own hands and phones a fairy-godmother service she sees advertised. (Indeed, all of Cinderella’s expectations and dreams are based on ads and magazine articles, a subtle message that most readers will probably miss.) But the fairy godmother who arrives with her animal helpers isn’t anything like what was pictured in the ad. And the dress and slippers and turnip coach the fairy godmother conjures aren’t standard either. Dashed expectations don’t end there, however, as Cinderella discovers when she wins the dance contest (despite a severe wardrobe malfunction) and a solo dance with the prince, who is definitely better in glossy pages than in person. Cinderella’s flight is in earnest, but it quickly becomes a flight to something rather than away: the Girls Only Job Fair gives Cinderella a new lease on life. Barbanègre’s digital illustrations feature bright pastels and a sort of Addams Family sensibility. While the scene inside the job fair features diverse women of all shapes, sizes, and colors, the rest of the book is largely white save for two brown-skinned dance contestants (and the green-skinned fairy godmother!).

Cinderella joins Elizabeth in advocating for girl power. (Picture book. 4-8)



THE CHOCOPOCALYPSE

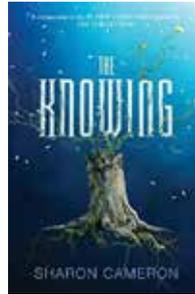
Callaghan, Chris
Illus. by Lalalimola
Delacorte (240 pp.)
\$16.99 | \$16.99 e-book | \$19.99 PLB
Oct. 10, 2017
978-1-5247-1915-9
978-1-5247-1917-3 e-book
978-1-5247-1916-6 PLB

Stock up now! The end of chocolate is nigh.

The ancient Chocolati tribe of Easter Egg Island worshipped chocolate, but they also prophesied that the 66th cycle of Cacao-Cacao will bring about the Chococalypse. Jennifer “Jelly Welly” Wellington lives with her poor but lovingly wacky parents and grandmother in Chompton-on-de-Lyte, the chocolate center of the world. Although chocolate is about to disappear forever, there’s a new chocolate shop in town. Its owner, Garibaldi Chocolati, claims to offer the best chocolate in the world, but Jelly discovers it’s truly awful. Who is this man dressed like a Victorian big-game hunter who sells terrible

chocolate? Jelly and her grandmother are on the trail. Gender roles are slightly subverted: Gran was a scientist; Dad does the sewing; and Mum works long hours to make ends meet. Everyone appears to be white, however, and colonialist and Orientalist themes run deep. Chocolati claims to be descended from a tribe of the same name who celebrated summer solstice by “eating lots of chocolate, drinking lots of tropical concoctions, and generally dancing like there was no tomorrow,” while the sultan of Swang, who embodies the stereotype of the extravagantly rich Arab ruler, pays \$5 billion for a bit of chocolate.

Callaghan’s debut possesses many similarities to *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and will likely find a place among readers who enjoy Dahl’s humor. (chocolate facts) (Fantasy. 7-12)



THE KNOWING

Cameron, Sharon
Scholastic (352 pp.)
\$18.99 | \$18.99 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017
978-0-545-94524-0
978-0-545-94525-7 e-book

Nearly 400 years after the events in *The Forgetting* (2016), Canaan, long abandoned, its whereabouts lost, has devolved into an evil myth, while New Canaan, the rigid, class-stratified community that’s replaced it, faces growing threats, internal and external.

New Canaan’s rulers, the Knowing, live underground and are served by Outsiders, impoverished surface dwellers. The Knowing have perfect memory; to recall is to re-experience events as if for the first time. For those like black-haired, brown-skinned Samara who are unable to “cache,” or repress traumatic memories, suicide is common. Secretly helping Outsiders, Samara may have unintentionally endangered them. Tortured by horrific memories, she escapes to find Canaan’s ruins and to Forget. There, she runs into Beckett and Jill, two Americans from Earth’s spaceship *Centauri III*, its mission to learn the fate of predecessor missions. Beckett, multiracial (Chinese/Latinx) son of two anthropologists, is intrigued by Samara, who talks them into returning to New Canaan with her. His growing chemistry with Samara angers Jill, the bright, blonde, white daughter of an archaeologist. Uneasy with Jill’s ambition and expectations, Beckett’s alarmed by his father’s warning that *Centauri III* has a secret agenda, one that Jill may share. New Canaan, too, has surprises in store, including a burgeoning rebellion. Diverse, well-drawn characters abound, but in the riveting power struggles that ensue, women are dominant players, ruthless ideologues willing to sacrifice all that interferes with the goal.

The intricately woven narrative threads come together in a suspenseful denouement sure to leave readers hoping for another installment. (Science fiction. 13-16)

The illustrations have a rustic, folksy feel and sport chalky textures.

FRANKLIN'S FLYING BOOKSHOP



FRANKLIN'S FLYING BOOKSHOP

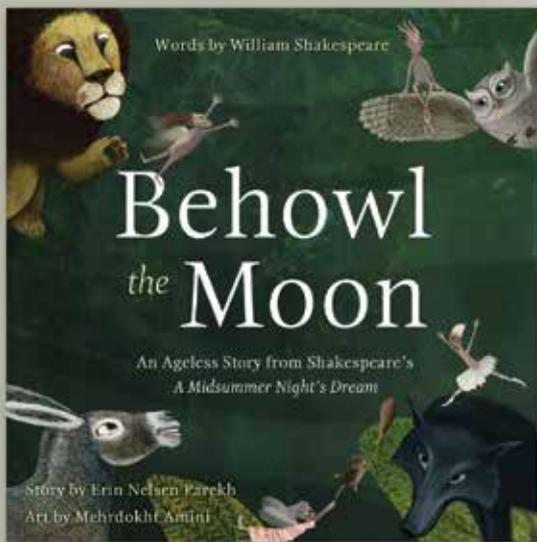
Campbell, Jen
Illus. by Harnett, Katie
 Thames & Hudson (32 pp.)
 \$17.95 | Oct. 17, 2017
 978-0-500-65109-4

Franklin the dragon loves stories and wants to share them by reading out loud.

Franklin reads every day, from King Arthur to baking, spiders to ballet, and everything in between. He even reads at nighttime, by the light of 1,000 fireflies. He is eager to share the stories with the nearby villagers, a diverse population, but they are terrified by his size and run away. That is, all except for one redheaded young white girl who loves both dragons and reading. Franklin has found a kindred spirit. Luna and he come up with a plan to share all the stories they've read. With the help of the mice and bats from Franklin's cave, they build a small, lopsided bookshop atop Franklin's back, and off they fly to the

village. Before long, the curious villagers climb up to look at the books. Luna passes out cake while Franklin tells stories and everyone listens. The illustrations have a rustic, folksy feel and sport chalky textures. Franklin often expands beyond the frame, emphasizing his size. Small details in the art and text plump up the story: apron-wearing mice use a mixer to stir a bowl of batter; gi-clad bats practice kung fu. Unfortunately, it's all a little too quirky to cohere, the notion of a flying, dragon-back bookshop just a little too precious and inorganic to the story.

Overall, there isn't a lot of spark in this dragon bookmobile. (Picture book. 5-8)



BEHOWL THE MOON

An Ageless Story from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
 BY ERIN NELSEN PAREKH, ILLUSTRATED BY MEHRDOKHT AMINI

Shakespeare's words reach a new—very young—audience in this gorgeously illustrated board book offering a new story by debut adapter Parekh and veteran illustrator Amini of fairies and animals to accompany lines from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

“Parents who love Shakespeare will find this a perfect introduction to the works of the Bard—it’s at once sophisticated and approachable, with a whimsy that youngsters will enjoy.”

—Kirkus Reviews

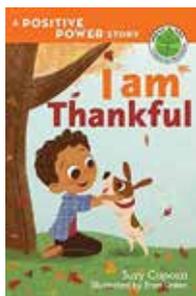
ISBN: 978-0-9984397-1-6



For information on publishing or film rights, please contact: kenneth.canatsey@gmail.com

Chaperon captures the openness and fragility of childhood with a valuable lesson. Iris' childlike illustrations add charm and age-appropriate emotion.

ODD ONE OUT



I AM THANKFUL

Capozzi, Suzy
 Illus. by Unten, Eren
 Rodale Kids (32 pp.)
 \$13.99 | \$4.99 paper | Oct. 10, 2017
 978-1-62336-920-0
 978-1-62336-876-0 paper
 Series: Positive Power, 1

A Thanksgiving-themed text for new readers features illustrations of a grateful child in a multiracial family.

The unnamed narrator, a child of color with brown skin and wavy, dark hair, awakens and is thankful there's no school that day. The narrator's happy to pitch in when Pops, an elder who uses a cane and has gray hair and lighter skin, asks for help in the kitchen. They join the child's mother in making pies, and then they visit the child's father at his job as a firefighter (the former has lighter skin like Pops', the latter shares the narrator's coloring). Throughout, the child gives thanks—expressing gratitude “that Pops lives with us” and “for what my dad and his crew do to keep us safe.” After participating in the town's turkey-trot road race, they return home to greet diverse extended family (cousins, aunts, uncles, and Great-Gran), who join them for a shared meal, watching football on TV, and, once the weather clears up, playing football outside. With its consistent affirmations and digital art that visually echoes the text, the book is rooted in the “positive power” its series title extols. This doesn't lead to action-packed storytelling but could spark conversations about gratitude and Thanksgiving, depicted as a modern family celebration without any reference to its history in Colonial America. Series companion *I Am Kind* publishes simultaneously.

An accessible early reader for the holiday shelf. (*Early reader. 6-8*) (*I Am Kind. 978-1-62336-921-7, 978-1-62336-878-4 paper*)



BLACK GOLD

Cassidy, Sara
 Illus. by Flook, Helen
 Orca (96 pp.)
 \$6.95 paper | \$6.95 e-book | Nov. 7, 2017
 978-1-4598-1422-6
 978-1-4598-1424-0 e-book

White Canadian city-dwellers-turned-farm kids Cyrus and Rudy are back for a third outing.

The pair is trying to raise money by selling blackberries and dahlias as well as some enormously popular worms a neighbor has provided. Later, many of the same worms cause a funny odor problem in Cyrus' school locker. Cyrus wants to buy a new bicycle. Maybe it's that lust for prize money that causes him to make a snap decision to substitute a very robust Mexican grocery-store cucumber for the much-less-impressive one he carefully tended in the garden as his entry in the fair. He is quickly found out and offered “natural consequences” to make up for his cheat and be forgiven. The boys'

next-door neighbor Rachel, who is given to dressing all in one color, is now wearing all black since her beloved grandmother, Cornelia, just died. Rudy has anxiety issues; both the memorial service for Cornelia and starting at a new school are stress-filled. This loving family, however, knows how to work together to help Rudy with his worries. Their calm and wise approach is just one of the winning aspects of this simple, down-to-earth (literally, with all the worms) early chapter book that's jam-packed with likable, well-realized characters and a compassionate but never didactic message.

A worthy addition to collections for budding readers. (*Fiction. 7-9*)



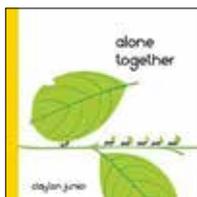
ODD ONE OUT

Chaperon, Danielle
 Illus. by Iris
 Auzou Publishing (40 pp.)
 \$12.95 | Oct. 1, 2017
 978-2-7338-5066-4

Clara finds herself left out when her best friend, Annabelle, gets close to Juliette, the new girl.

Clara herself tells the story. Her life used to be perfect, mostly because of her “wonderful, brilliant, *very* best friend,” Annabelle. They were inseparable. Their parents even said that they were “soul sisters.” But everything changes when *the new girl*, Juliette, walks into their classroom. Clara isn't worried at first, but when Annabelle and Juliette walk to recess hand in hand, Clara's knees go weak. “There can't be *THREE* soul sisters!” (It's clearly “mathematically impossible.”) Clara feels as if she has begun “to shrink...and shrivel...until [she becomes] very, very, very small.” She comes up with three diabolical plans to get rid of Juliette (one consists of dumping her insect collection on Juliette) but just sits on the bench in the hallway and cries. When Annabelle's kite gets stuck in a tree, Clara climbs it without even thinking. A breaking branch leads to a hard fall and then to a visit to the doctor. Later, Annabelle brings Clara a big box of chocolate-covered cherries—her favorite. Juliette arrives shortly after with a gift as well. Clara realizes that there *can* be three soul sisters. Chaperon captures the openness and fragility of childhood with a valuable lesson. Iris' childlike illustrations add charm and age-appropriate emotion. Her cast of cartoon animal characters with human clothes and hairstyles recalls Marc Brown's Arthur without feeling imitative.

Simply sweet. (*Picture book. 3-6*)



ALONE TOGETHER
Clayton Junior
Illus. by the author
 Words & Pictures (32 pp.)
 \$17.95 | Oct. 3, 2017
 978-1-910277-28-7

All kinds of animals are shown in varying settings to illustrate antonyms and contrasting concepts.

Flat illustrations that look digitally composed are shown on mostly white backgrounds, with just the descriptor in easy-to-read sans-serif type. The contrasting concepts are illustrated opposite each other on the spreads. Thus, the lower portion of a giraffe (from the neck up is off the page) is illustrated with the word “high” opposite a snake in the grass, which is “low”; a tangled spider’s web is shown with the word “messy” and the remade web on the opposite page with the word “tidy.” The animals are connected with their own visual logic, so distant African antelopes represent “far,” and a scary close-up of a tiger’s face illustrates “close.” The text is sometimes subtly angled or differently sized to represent a given concept but remains easily legible for a beginning reader. The titular concept, “alone/together,” visually illustrates how ants work independently and together to demolish a leaf. In spite of their extreme simplicity, Clayton Junior’s illustrations successfully convey in scale and color the concepts being illustrated, and each spread tells a story that a skillful adult could expand on when reading with a child. A few images may be hard to interpret, particularly the bats in “sleepy/awake.” The whole impression is somewhat bland and clinical, however.

Perhaps not a first choice in the competitive field of opposites books. (*Picture book.* 3-6)



THE WACKY WINTER WONDERLAND!
Corderoy, Tracey
Illus. by Berger, Joe
 Nosy Crow (128 pp.)
 \$14.99 | \$6.99 paper | Oct. 10, 2017
 978-0-7636-9624-5
 978-0-7636-9625-2 paper
 Series: Hubble Bubble

Pandora and Granny continue their magical partnership in this chapter book that presents three discrete stories.

In the first, Granny creates lots of Christmas fun at a disappointing Winter Wonderland. When they arrive, the promised snow is made of shaving foam; the ice rink is “just dirty sheets of bubble wrap stuck together.” There are no reindeer, just dogs with antlers, and the sleigh is a pig trough. With several flicks of her wand, Granny transforms everything into the “most wacky and wonderful” Winter Wonderland for Pandora and her friends Jake and Nellie. Pandora is white and so is Jake, but Nellie is darker-skinned in the illustrations. In “Best in Show,” Cobweb the cat easily wins first prize with his beautiful grooming, courtesy of

Pandora’s hard work, and his tightrope and trapeze act, thanks to Granny. In “Museum Mayhem!” Granny acts as the chaperon at a class sleepover at the history museum. Using her magic to bring history to life, she introduces the class to Vikings, Egyptians, Tudors, and Stone Age animals. She even turns Mr. Bibble, the teacher, into Henry VIII. Amusing line-and-wash drawings enhanced with red appear on almost every page, making this beginning chapter book very attractive for newly proficient readers.

Funny and light but with enough of a plot to keep readers interested. (*Fantasy.* 6-9)

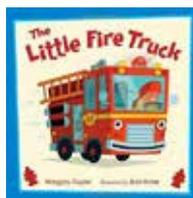


TINY TANTRUM
Crowe, Caroline
Illus. by Okstad, Ella
 Tiger Tales (32 pp.)
 \$16.99 | Oct. 1, 2017
 978-1-68010-072-3

A hairy purple monster and its friends help a little white girl remember to keep her composure.

Her name is Tiny Tantrum, and she has quite a temper. She smiles when she gets her own way, but tell her to wash her hair or go to bed, and she’ll scream so loud that windows rattle and birds fall out of their trees. One day, as Tiny is preparing a huge tantrum, a hairy purple monster arrives with a warning... in rhyme. Tiny is charmed, and the duo become inseparable companions. When Tiny balks at eating her broccoli, another monster appears, a mint-green one wearing a chef’s hat. He says, “When I eat peas or broccoli, I do a little wiggle. / Vegetables taste better if you eat them with a giggle.” The dynamic duo quickly becomes a terrific trio. On the playground, a mustard-yellow monster reminds Tiny of the importance of sharing, and at bedtime a hot-pink monster extols the joys of tooth-brushing. Though Tiny is tired, her four new monster friends want to “bounce all night!” It’s her turn to offer an encouraging verse. Soon, everyone is tucked in and fast asleep. Diverting tantrums with wit makes good sense. Crowe’s monster verses are crisp and upbeat, but the rest of her rhyming text lacks sharpness. Similarly, Okstad’s illustrations often feature cluttered, confusing compositions, and her palette’s pallid.

So-so. (*Picture book.* 3-5)



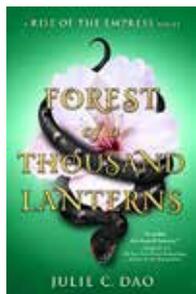
THE LITTLE FIRE TRUCK
Cuyler, Margery
Illus. by Kolar, Bob
 Christy Ottaviano/Henry Holt (32 pp.)
 \$13.99 | Oct. 10, 2017
 978-1-62779-805-1

Clearly *The Little Dump Truck* (2009) and *The Little School Bus* (2014) were just the prelude to Cuyler and Kolar’s most ambitious project yet.

“Perky” would not be a poor way of describing the little fire truck that shuttles its white driver, Jill, and her racially diverse

fire crew all over town. Each rhyming stanza, one per spread, begins with the line “I’m a little fire truck” then proceeds in a standard abcb rhyme scheme. After rescuing a cat, the firefighters must contend with a burning building. Happily it just takes a couple “splish-splish” squirts of the fire hose to put everything right. Aimed at toddlers and younger preschoolers, the art proves to be just as simple as the text. The digital illustrations keep the color bright, the anthropomorphized truck perky, and the situations shy of scary. Cuyler even opts to ensure that the burning building is pet- and baby-free. When it comes to true firefighting enthusiasts, more is always better, hence the endpapers’ impressive (not to mention diverse and gender-inclusive) visual dictionary of terms. (Front and rear are identical.) Alas, no fire-safety tips are included aside from the visual image of Jill and crew crawling along the floor, so continue to turn to Mike Austin’s *Fire Engine No. 9* (2015) as the industry standard.

A deserving if not divine little book, worthy of its pint-sized enthusiasts. (Picture book. 2-5)



FOREST OF A THOUSAND LANTERNS

Dao, Julie C.

Philomel (384 pp.)

\$18.99 | \$12.00 paper | \$12.00 e-book

Oct. 10, 2017

978-1-5247-3829-7

978-1-5247-4168-6 paper

978-1-5247-3830-3 e-book

Series: Rise of the Empress, 1

Xifeng, a poor, beautiful village girl, dares to fulfill her destiny to become the Empress of Feng Lu.

Guma raised her sister’s bastard daughter with aspirations lifted from card readings and smoky, incense-filled visions. Xifeng is taught history and classic verse to prepare for a fate that “lies in the Imperial Palace,” but at 18 she escapes Guma’s abusive love and runs away with Wei, her childhood friend and lover. Together, they embark on a journey through the Great Forest and discover friendship with Kamatsu’s ambassador, a little person, and fierce warnings from the queen of the *tengaru*, “the demon guardians of the forest.” At the end of their journey, Xifeng must enter the palace alone, as lady-in-waiting to Empress Lihua, and learn to navigate the intrigue and treachery endemic among the eunuchs and concubines of Emperor Jun’s court. With every step marked with both violence and poetry, will Xifeng sacrifice love and her own humanity to gain ultimate power? Readers will appreciate the sweeping fantasy saga lifted from East Asian dynasties and endearing characters that are beautifully rendered, but elements of the far-reaching storyline don’t fully intertwine and satisfy. As the story leaves Xifeng poised for Book 2, they will hope it follows through.

A dark and savage fairy-tale epic with all the trappings of imperial Asia. (Fantasy. 14-18)



THE POND

Davies, Nicola

Illus. by Fisher, Cathy

Graffeg/Trafalgar (36 pp.)

\$16.99 | Nov. 1, 2017

978-1-912050-70-3



Dad plans a pond in the backyard and speaks of all the wonderful things that it will hold. But it is a promise left unfulfilled.

When Dad dies, the uncompleted pond becomes a large part of the family’s grieving. The young narrator wants to see the pond completed, but for now they all see only “the muddy, messy hole that filled our hearts.” When the narrator fills the hole with water it makes the mess worse. Mother and older brother let out their anger, and the child retreats, screaming at Dad for dying. The family goes through the motions of their lives, and eventually the rebuilding of the pond brings them together. Then there is vegetation, insects, tadpoles, and dragonflies, just as Dad had envisioned, and they celebrate each sign of life. In time they are able to move on and start anew. Davies avoids sentimentality and pity in expressing the young narrator’s raw and painful emotions, as the survivors experience all the stages of grief, separately and together. Fisher’s dark-toned illustrations place the family deeply in shadow, encased in their pain. Only the pond has a degree of light, growing a bit stronger as time passes. The family emerges from the shadows emotionally, and finally, the image is bathed in misty light as they leave. Dad is white, and Mum appears to be Asian.

Heart-wrenching, powerful, and beautifully realized. (Picture book. 6-10)



WINDOWS

Denos, Julia

Illus. by Goodale, E.B.

Candlewick (32 pp.)

\$15.99 | Oct. 17, 2017

978-0-7636-9035-9



Readers are invited to match their observant eyes with those of a child out for an evening walk.

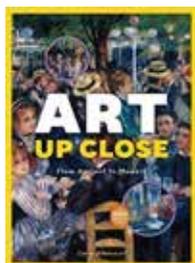
A young child of color puts on a red hoodie and goes for a walk in his neighborhood in the hours between sunset and bedtime. The neighborhood is mostly residential with two-story homes, apartment houses, and some small businesses. The family dog goes along as the child (referred to as “you” throughout in the second-person narrative) notes the animals—a cat and a raccoon—they pass by. The child notes the windows and what the people or animals that can be seen within their frames are doing; they may be playing an instrument or dancing or painting. At the end of the walk they go past a house with no lights on; its windows “leave you to fill them up with stories.” Finally, home beckons, and child and mother curl up in a comfy chair for a bedtime story. Denos’ story is quiet, thoughtful, and paced to the beat of a gentle rhythm. Debut illustrator Goodale’s delicately detailed ink, watercolor, letterpress, and digital collage

In a nearly wordless book, DiCamillo delivers an inspiring, powerful story beautifully realized through Kim's mixed-media illustrations.

LA LA LA

illustrations display palettes of the evening and night skies with beautifully nuanced shades of yellow, gold, and blue. The red-hooded child of color with dog can't help but recall Peter and Willie, and this book is a lovely, affirming follow-up.

A warmhearted tale of a child, a dog, and their peaceful, friendly, and inviting neighborhood. (Picture book. 3-6)



ART UP CLOSE From Ancient to Modern

d'Harcourt, Claire
Princeton Architectural Press (64 pp.)
\$29.95 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-61689-421-4

Art appreciation, taught with a puzzle element.

With an 11-by-15-inch trim size, this impressive volume opens to spreads almost 2 feet across, each featuring one piece of fine art. Outside every artwork's border float 10 to 12 small circles, each circle reproducing a detail from that spread's spotlighted piece. The charge to readers: locate each detail's location in the full piece. Although this structurally recalls Martin Handford's *Where's Waldo*, the chance to pore over high-quality reproductions of complex and varied masterpieces strongly elevates this search in both appeal and sophistication. Short essays at the end discuss the works' genres, contexts, and media. There's also an answer key. Of the 23 pieces, Jackson Pollock's *Convergence* makes the hardest puzzle because of its complete abstraction and close, frenetic squiggles of paint; the others either are representational (the Aztec manuscript *Codex Borbonicus*; Pierre-Auguste Renoir's *Bal du moulin de la Galette*) or feature distinct, identifiable shapes (Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*, black-and-white and stunning in this big, glossy format). Each isolated detail appears slightly larger than in the main piece, enhancing understanding; for example, Jan Van Eyck's *Madonna with Canon van der Paele* magnifies an eye, emphasizing that facial expression's complexity.

Excellent for art lovers and for potential art lovers; both will be hooked by the search. (answer key, locations of art) (Nonfiction. 6-13)



LA LA LA A Story of Hope

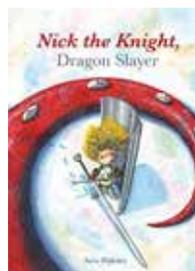
DiCamillo, Kate
Illus. by Kim, Jaime
Candlewick (72 pp.)
\$17.99 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-0-7636-5833-5

A lonely child's perseverance helps her find the unlikely companions.

With a single "La," a small Asian child confidently begins to sing, standing in a shaft of light. Within a few gray-hued pages, the girl (identified as such in the author's and illustrator's notes) realizes that she's singing alone. Her imaginary spotlight gone,

she stomps off to chase the colorful leaves outside. Still alone, she sings and shouts "Laaaaaaaaa!" to no avail. Dejected, she goes home, venturing out again in the purple evening. She tries hard to get the moon's attention, even climbing a ladder to sing to it. (Here, her "La"s are set in black type against the dark purple sky, posing a low-contrast challenge to legibility.) Finally, the moon responds with a firm "LA!" to begin a sparkling duet. In a nearly wordless book, DiCamillo delivers an inspiring, powerful story beautifully realized through Kim's mixed-media illustrations. At more than twice the length of a standard 32-page picture book, that's quite a feat. The square format contains soft colors that contrast with strong geometric design elements, subtly underscoring the push and pull of emotional tension. The limited palette of comforting, complementary purples and yellows along with the character's expressive body language evoke both her loneliness and determination to overcome it.

For a dreamer, it's easy to imagine a singer in the benevolent face in the moon—here it's a symbol of hope. (Picture book. 5-adult)



NICK THE KNIGHT, DRAGON SLAYER

Dijkstra, Aron
Illus. by the author
Clavis (32 pp.)
\$17.95 | Nov. 1, 2017
978-1-60537-274-7

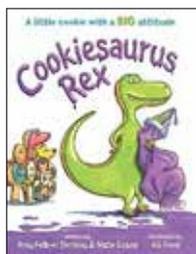
A fierce dragon needs slaying, and young knight Nick's determined to do it.

It seems Nick is "dying to *fight* a real dragon." (The text sporadically breaks into bold and italicized type with little apparent logic.) The dragon he has chosen is Breakhorn, which has been bedeviling the village at the base of the snow-capped mountain where the dragon lives. Young Nick makes his quest and confronts this great red beast armed with such a rinky-dink sword that Breakhorn refuses to engage, so the villagers equip him with a proper one, and back up the mountain he goes with a sword three times his height, but now he has no shield....Down and up, down and up Nick goes, till finally he has sword and shield and is wearing a practically immobilizing suit of armor. Turns out Breakhorn never wanted to fight in the first place: "I prefer talking or playing games." Chess, for instance, at which Nick is quite good. "And that's how our little knight **defeated a dragon** after all." Although the conceit is cute, the text seems to get as tired as Nick with all the to-ing and fro-ing. Dijkstra paints a charming, medieval European village whose residents are all white, as is Nick, and a great, red dragon that looks rather like a benevolent Smaug.

Nick's great quest to "fight" a dragon is more buildup than story. (Picture book. 4-8)

Delightfully imparts the joy and discovery of reading— and many chuckles and guffaws.

READ THE BOOK, LEMMINGS!



COOKIESAURUS REX
Dominy, Amy Fellner & Evans, Nate
Illus. by Ford, A.G.
Disney-Hyperion (40 pp.)
\$16.99 | Sep. 26, 2017
978-1-4847-6744-3

A dinosaur-shaped cookie takes matters—and frosting—into his own doughy hands.

The dino comes out of the oven full of himself, claiming to be “Cookiesaurus Rex, the King of All Cookies.” While he likes the green frosting the hand of his white baker squirts on him, he becomes disgruntled at the sight of the other cookies’ decorations, which include sprinkles, shiny stars, and gumdrops. He demands a “do over.” But the baker isn’t too fond of Rex’s imperiousness, issuing commands with nary a “please.” The hand uses bright pink frosting to turn Rex into a ballerina. The dino scrapes it off with a spatula, but the tantrum prompts the hand to turn him into a diapered baby, complete with a chocolate-chip trail of poop. That’s it! Let the battle begin! Rex is a superhero, a duck (“Ha-ha. I’m quacking up”), a ninja, a clown. But when Rex fashions himself into a king to beat all Mardi Gras kings, readers see a bit more of the creator than just a hand. The other cookies can’t help but smirk: “He took a licking.” Ford’s bright and funny illustrations perfectly complement Dominy and Evans’ tongue-in-cheek text. The cheeky dino is full of personality and spunk, and his facial expressions are priceless, inevitably recalling Daffy’s in the classic cartoon “Duck Amuck.”

Have cookie dough and frosting ready, as kids are sure to want to try their own hands at decorating after a few laugh-filled rereads. (Picture book. 3-7)



THE OYSTER’S SECRET
Dunham, Traci
Illus. by Tuohy, Hannah
Brown Books Kids (27 pp.)
\$18.99 | Nov. 2, 2017
978-1-61254-967-5

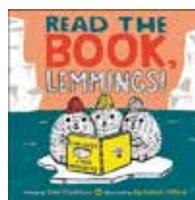
Turns out that many sea creatures are as catty as the popular-student clique in every high school, but the oyster is much

more than meets the eye.

“In the ocean on an oyster bed lived a lonely oyster,” writes Dunham. “His sea creature friends wanted to know / what he was doing all by himself down below,” a fair enough question, as an oyster bed should be fairly teeming with oysters. But these “friends” are not really curious anyway. They are more into being mean, expressing themselves in occasional couplets and sometimes straightforward cruelty. The angelfish: “You’re not as pretty as me.” And the jellyfish: “What can you do against others who prey?” The crab: “I use my claws to help me eat, / but you have neither arms nor feet.” A wise old sea turtle tells the others to back off, but Mr. Oyster is not defenseless. He

has a refrain he pipes back to these bullies: “Don’t worry about me”—as if—“I’m making something BEAUTIFUL, you’ll see.” Well, of course the oyster is doing its nacreous thing to another one of his life’s little irritations, finally popping out a pearl that would have made Elizabeth Taylor swoon. Tuohy’s cartoons add little nuance to Dunham’s story.

An oyster bed with but one oyster—maybe it should be called an oyster cot—and “friends” that make the word enemy sound inviting? Go figure. (Picture book. 4-8)

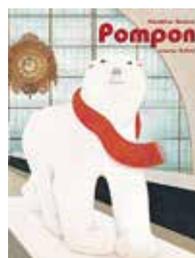


READ THE BOOK, LEMMINGS!
Dyckman, Ame
Illus. by O’Hora, Zachariah
Little, Brown (40 pp.)
\$17.99 | Nov. 7, 2017
978-0-316-34348-0

Lemmings don’t jump off cliffs; someone just needs to tell the lemmings.

Foxy, a crew member aboard the aptly named S.S. *Cliff* (a container ship that happens to be a whale), reads a fascinating book about lemmings. The book says that lemmings do *not* jump off cliffs. But when Foxy relates this tidbit to Capt. PB (presumably short for “Polar Bear”), three stubby little lemmings hear the word “jump” and gleefully throw themselves overboard. “Jump? I’ll jump!” / “Me too!” / “Ditto!” Foxy fishes them out and urges them to read the book so they can see for themselves that lemmings do *not* jump off cliffs. “Jump? I’ll jump!” / “Me too!” / “Ditto!” Off they go, over the side. “I don’t think they read the book,” Capt. PB says ruefully. After a few more foolish leaps, each one more perilous than the next (“Sinking! Sinking fast!” / “Me too!” / “Glub!”), Foxy realizes the lemmings cannot read. He works with them until they can all comprehend the most important words in the book: “Lemmings DON’T jump off cliffs,” (earning a thumbs-up from curmudgeon Capt. PB). O’Hora applies his customary matte paints to his Arctic Ocean scenes, peach skies, teal seas, and white icebergs dominating the backgrounds. Foxy and Capt. PB make convincing if fuzzy tars, the lemmings look like tribbles with faces and stubby little legs, and it’s nice to see a real working vessel in a picture book.

Delightfully imparts the joy and discovery of reading—and many chuckles and guffaws. (Picture book. 4-8)



POMPON
Elschner, Géraldine
Illus. by Boillat, Joanna
Minedition (32 pp.)
\$17.99 | Oct. 1, 2017
978-988-8341-43-6

Can the admiration and touch of a young boy bring a large sculpture to life?

Leo is such a boy. When he visits the museum, he is fascinated with the huge white bear statue named Pompon, which stands proudly

and majestically on a pedestal. “For a long time, he studied the arch of Pompon’s legs which were as tall as a gate. / He imagined sliding down Pompon’s back, as if on a sled.” Leo’s examination extends over several deliberate page turns, amplifying his fascination. Leo can’t resist—he stretches out his hand and strokes Pompon’s white cheek, which is “forbidden.” Even though a museum guard scolds Leo, the transformation has begun. Something magical has happened: Pompon flies away (the illustration suggests he becomes a constellation), and his twin brother stands in his place in the museum. It’s the illustrations here that breathe life into this story, which is based on a real sculpture by François Pompon (1855-1933). The oversized images of the bear run off the pages’ edges and convey its size next to Leo. Effective page composition and perspective create an air of magic. Leo, a white boy, sports short pants, white knee socks, and a red muffler (seen on Pompon on the appealing cover). The backmatter offers a brief bio of Pompon along with an author’s note and a timeline.

Charming and quiet, an invitation to children to stop and really regard art. (Picture book. 5-8)



MIGUEL'S BRAVE KNIGHT
Young Cervantes and His Dream of Don Quixote

Engle, Margarita
Illus. by Colón, Raúl
Peachtree (32 pp.)
\$17.95 | Oct. 1, 2017
978-1-56145-856-1



An introduction to the childhood of the creator of the noblest literary knight of all time.

Miguel de Cervantes y Saavedra is to Spanish literature what William Shakespeare is to English literature and is best known as the creator of Don Quixote, the brave knight whose idealism and perseverance have made him an enduring character for the past 500 years. In this account written in free verse, Engle weaves fact together with fiction to tell the story of young Miguel de Cervantes. Cervantes’ childhood was one of hardship, as his father’s gambling debts constantly put the family on the financial edge, and of instability, as the family kept moving, always one step ahead of its creditors. Could the seeds of the brave knight’s deeds have been sown in Cervantes’ childhood? Engle imagines young Miguel retreating into his imagination: “But when I close my eyes, / the spark of a story flares up. / A tale about a brave knight / who will ride out on / a strong horse / and right / all the wrongs / of this confusing / world.” Colón’s stunning pen-and-ink-and-watercolor illustrations add dimension and life to the story, depicting an olive-skinned cast of Renaissance Spaniards and aging Miguel from round-faced boy to lanky young man.

Beautiful and engaging, this book will inspire readers to find out more. (author’s, illustrator’s, historical, biographical, literary notes) (Picture book/poetry. 7-10)



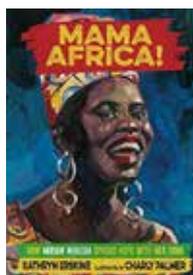
THE LITTLE GIRL WHO DIDN'T WANT TO GO TO BED

Engledow, David
Illus. by the author
Harper/HarperCollins (40 pp.)
\$17.99 | Oct. 17, 2017
978-0-06-242537-9

Engledow, known online as the “World’s Best Father,” presents a bedtime book illustrated with his signature, humorous, digitally manipulated, composite photographs.

The particular white, blonde little girl will be familiar as Engledow’s daughter to those who’ve followed him online. She resists going to bed because she’s certain her parents stay up having fun after she’s asleep. That resistance is exemplified with various scenarios certain to be familiar to readers—she’s hungry, she wants another story, etc.—but the understated text works with illustrations that amplify its humor. When she’s hungry, for example, she’s depicted eating a massive turkey drumstick while clutching a head of broccoli and sitting in bed before a huge slice of watermelon. Then she catches her parents “doing boring grown-up stuff” after her bedtime, and her father tells her to count herself to sleep. This backfires, as she stays up until dawn not only counting, but creating a range of absurd and wonderful things in her room. Her lost sleep makes her miss the next day’s fun at a party, and when she decides to get a good night’s sleep to avoid missing out on the *next* day, the story’s resolution is saved from heavy-handedness by a clever twist on the final page.

While it may not make kids excited for bedtime, this book is one they’ll want to read. (Picture book. 3-7)



MAMA AFRICA!
How Miriam Makeba Spread Hope with Her Song

Erskine, Kathryn
Illus. by Palmer, Charly
Farrar, Straus and Giroux (48 pp.)
\$18.99 | Oct. 10, 2017
978-0-374-30301-3

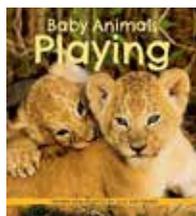


Buoyed by the work of Nelson Mandela and the music of Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald, Miriam sang to make black South Africans free.

Born in 1932 near Johannesburg, Miriam Makeba “sang as soon as she could talk.” Growing up in apartheid-era South Africa, she rebelled against unjust laws restricting where blacks could go and what they could do, and she fought that racism with her songs, even singing subversively in languages the government officials could not understand. Eventually, Miriam illegally left South Africa to sing internationally and tell the world that blacks were dying because of apartheid. Throughout the book, white rectangular text boxes convey the discriminatory actions of the baases (white ruling class), while black-background text boxes present Makeba’s words and efforts to

fight racism—making white negative and black positive. Palmer’s densely illustrated, painterly scenes give readers a strong sense of the culture and beauty of South Africa. His images of people, however, often include just enough detail to reveal their emotions. The backmatter offers a single timeline of Makeba’s life and the U.S. civil rights movement, a glossary, and copious research resources. Erskine, a white woman who, as a child, lived in South Africa during apartheid, includes photos of her young self working for social justice.

An excellent perspective from which American readers can learn about apartheid and one of the pioneers who fought it through her art. (*Picture book/biography. 6-10*)



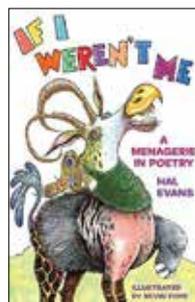
BABY ANIMALS PLAYING

Eszterhas, Suzi
Photos by the author
 Owlkids Books (24 pp.)
 \$14.95 | Oct. 15, 2017
 978-1-77147-297-5
 Series: Baby Animals

A skilled wildlife photographer captures baby animals at play and at rest in the wild.

Eszterhas, who has documented animal behavior with her camera on seven continents, offers young readers and listeners an album of irresistible images of baby animals playing, exercising their bodies, practicing skills they will need to survive in the wild, and even resting on gorilla Dad’s “soft and bouncy” belly or capybara Mom’s back. Cheetahs wrestle, and jackal cubs fight over a ball of elephant poop. A lion cub uses a stick as a toy, a bison practices her head butts. Lemurs and raccoon kits climb trees, dolphins leap, bears dance, a giraffe runs. A baby orangutan dangles from his mother’s fur, and a small chimpanzee rolls on the ground of his rain-forest home. Beautifully reproduced photographs fill each spread, sometimes with another image superimposed. Each is a close-up, crisply focused on the subject with the animal’s wild habitat a soft blur behind. Two-sentence captions introduce the young animals and explain their actions. Two pages of backmatter introduce the California-based photographer and offer additional images, suggesting how difficult her choices must have been. Even toddlers can easily associate these animal activities with their own running, jumping, swinging, and dancing experiences.

For readers and listeners alike, an appealing connection to the natural world. (*Informational picture book. 2-7*)



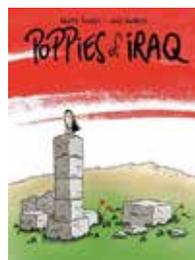
IF I WEREN'T ME A Menagerie in Poetry

Evans, Hal
Illus. by Pope, Kevin
 Plum Street Publishers (112 pp.)
 \$19.99 | \$9.99 paper | Oct. 1, 2017
 978-1-945268-09-0
 978-1-945268-12-0 paper

A light poetic survey of the animal kingdom and then some.

Posing the question, “If I weren’t a human, / what else could I be?” Evans playfully answers with possibilities ranging from the “one-celled amoeba” and exotic narwhal to the fanciful jackalope, unicorn, even a vampire. As he curates his menagerie, Evans takes occasion to employ a variety of poetic forms in portraying both the common and the unusual, with mixed results—going so far at one point as to both use and invoke the ghazal form to describe the gazelle: “I’d live like a poem, headlong and heartstrong, / and wear a ghazal, if I were a gazelle.” Throughout, Pope’s bold, directly expressive pen-and-ink illustrations amplify Evans’ wry message, as in “If I Were a Hippo,” where Pope underscores Evans’ apt depiction with a sketch of a hippo holding a wee umbrella that barely shields its eyes. Evans’ humor, while silly and offbeat, often relies on rather refined wordplay (“If I were a polar bear, / ... / I’d go with the floe”) or, as in the case of the albatross, on sophisticated literary and cultural allusions: “Of course I’d be cross / if I were an albatross! / What did I do? What the heck? / Why hang me around your neck?”

Kids after some highbrow ha-ha’s will find them here. (*Poetry. 8-14*)



POPPIES OF IRAQ

Findakly, Brigitte & Trondheim, Lewis
Illus. by the authors
Translated by Dascher, Helge
 Drawn & Quarterly (120 pp.)
 \$21.95 | Sep. 5, 2017
 978-1-77046-293-9



From the daughter of a French mother and Iraqi father comes a touching memoir of childhood in Iraq.

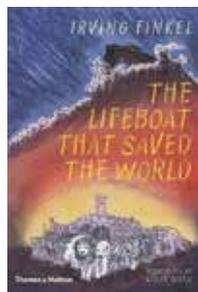
Writing with her husband, Findakly strings together memories and facts from her family’s past and present as well as from Iraqi culture, as if she is sharing herself with readers over tea. She begins with happy childhood moments in Iraq and her school days, her parents’ backgrounds and how they met, and introductions to other family members and neighbors. Especially poignant are the portrayals of her French mother’s successful adjustment to Iraqi society over 23 years and Findakly’s own process of growing apart from Iraqi society after her father decides they should move to France when she is a teenager. Trondheim’s charming cartoon drawings, colored by Findakly,

Inserted in the fable is one chapter from the point of view of the gods, one of whom, highly cantankerous (and the most powerful), is tired of humankind; their group dynamics are almost humorous—and very human, as well.

THE LIFEBOAT THAT SAVES THE WORLD

help readers envision the worlds the family straddles, while occasional pages of family photographs remind readers of the author's historical reality. Readers feel they are getting an inside look into an impenetrable world with cultural and historical notes on pages titled "In Iraq" interspersed throughout the book. This personal portrayal of the impact of war and societal upheaval on one family will help many Western readers to see how the past half-century of conflict has devastated a region rich in ancient culture.

Small in size but large in impact, this intimate memoir is a highly relevant and compassionate story of family, community, prejudice, and the struggle to love when the forces of the world push groups apart. (timeline) (*Graphic memoir. 10-adult*)



THE LIFEBOAT THAT SAVED THE WORLD

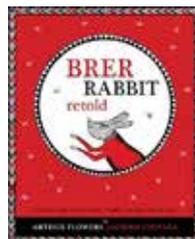
Finkel, Irving
 Illus. by Giles, Dylan
 Thames & Hudson (112 pp.)
 \$16.95 | Nov. 14, 2017
 978-0-500-65122-3

Many are familiar with the biblical story of Noah's Ark. Finkel retells a much earlier ark tale, discovered in the cuneiform writing of the people of

Mesopotamia.

Very-quick, a 9-year-old boy, overhears Enki, one of the gods, tell his father, Atra-hasis, that he must build a giant coracle, a round boat, and "save life." Enki is very specific about its construction, which is a good thing since Atra-hasis doesn't know much of anything about boat building. Fortunately, he's able to convince many neighbors to help out, since the scale of the boat is immense, and he's only got seven days to both complete the work and gather up pairs of all the world's animals. Happily, the animals start arriving on their own as soon as the boat is completed. Inserted in the fable is one chapter from the point of view of the gods, one of whom, highly cantankerous (and the most powerful), is tired of humankind; their group dynamics are almost humorous—and very human, as well. Finkel includes direct quotes from the ancient cuneiform tablets in bold type. Giles' naïve, black-and-white illustrations enhance the presentation. Brief and presented in relatively simple language, this story is both amusing and intriguing.

A fascinating tale, worthy of retelling, that includes plenty of smoothly incorporated details of life in Mesopotamia. (*Historical fiction. 8-12*)



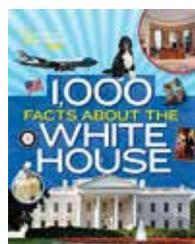
BRER RABBIT RETOLD

Flowers, Arthur
 Illus. by Chitara, Jagdish
 Tara Publishing (72 pp.)
 \$29.95 | Sep. 15, 2017
 978-93-83145-46-1

A successful reclamation project—or one that adds to an already-problematic literary history?

Flowers identifies Joel Chandler Harris' Brer Rabbit stories—tales collected from slaves on a Georgia plantation—as his source material. Harris sought to justify slavery as beneficial to both masters and (contented) slaves, making the stories "narrative minstrelsy." Flowers writes that as Harris took the slaves' stories "for his purposes, I'm taking them back for mine." Throughout this anthology of cultural, visual, and linguistic juxtapositions, readers must wonder what, exactly, is Flowers' purpose and intended audience for this book? In the 21 tales—some familiar, some less so—the language echoes Black English Vernacular, though inconsistently, while the art, which Indian artist Chitara created in red, black, and white, seems to belong in some other story. Given the histories of colonialism in India and slavery in America, merging these two cultures could create some productive synergy. But due to linguistic inconsistencies and because many of the musical elements—sung or chanted by Flowers on the accompanying CD—translate poorly into text, this mashup results in more confusion than cross-cultural understanding. Though beautiful, Chitara's art features animals in static poses, some of which are so stylized that young readers may have difficulty using them to make sense of the stories.

A lavishly illustrated art book with a self-indulgent purpose that may appeal to adults but misses the mark for children's literature. (*Picture book/folk tales. 5-10, adult*)



1,000 FACTS ABOUT THE WHITE HOUSE

Flynn, Sarah Wassner
 National Geographic (96 pp.)
 \$14.99 | Sep. 26, 2017
 978-1-4263-2873-2

A bounteous buffet of historical tidbits about the presidential digs and its residents.

Flynn's heaping helpings of anecdotes, legends, facts, firsts, foods, and statistics are gathered into 40 digestible (if sometimes thematically diffuse) groupings—from "25 Facts About Rooms That Rock" to "15 Cool Facts About Everyday Life at the White House." These infobits are set into numbered circles or boxes that are arranged on each spread in rough chronological order. Along with notes on presidential pets and perks, White House ghosts, furnishings, refurbishings, and events like state dinners and the Easter Egg Roll, the author offers nods to the original builders (some of whom were "African-American workmen, both enslaved and free") as well as the cleaners,

The inspiring, humane adventure joyfully concludes with Gerstein's pinnacle scenes of the whale breaching joyfully.

THE BOY AND THE WHALE

chefs, calligraphers, and other workers who keep the place functioning and safe. Aside, perhaps, from references to President Barack Obama's inauguration crowd and the "80 official White House Twitter accounts," she steers clear of controversial topics and keeps the tone cheerfully upbeat throughout. Aerial views of the White House grounds and interior (in an artfully selective cutaway) highlight a generous array of period images and photos in which people of color aren't exactly prominent but are at least represented.

Tailor-made for browsing but with plenty of nutritious content for young historians and prospective visitors. (timeline, presidential roster) (Nonfiction. 8-13)



THE BOY AND THE WHALE

Gerstein, Mordicai

Illus. by the author

Roaring Brook (40 pp.)

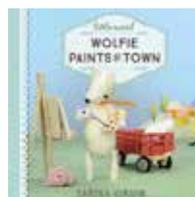
\$17.99 | Nov. 21, 2017

978-1-62672-505-8

A boy defies his father's warning and rescues a whale tangled in their sole fishing net.

The story opens with two clear viewpoints. Papa is distressed their only source of income is in jeopardy; Abelardo is very concerned for the whale's survival. He remembers a time when he had been trapped in a net and almost drowned before his father saved him. Papa leaves to borrow another net, and Abelardo, alone on the beach, takes their outboard-equipped panga out to the ensnared whale, dives in, and bravely works with a small knife to cut the tough plastic netting, finally freeing the animal. The boy's daring determination and his emotional and physical struggles are evident in the succinct, first-person narrative, which builds urgency, fear, and suspense to a one-word crescendo—"...BREATHE!"—when Abelardo and whale must surface to do so. Realistic pen-and-ink-and-acrylic paintings alternate between sunny, glimmering sea and beach scenes and dark underwater scenes done in aquas and grays. The drama is vividly shown, paralleling the boy's passion with the whale's defeated resignation in a double-page image of the boy's grim face next to and as large as the gray whale's sad eye. The inspiring, humane adventure joyfully concludes with Gerstein's pinnacle scenes of the whale breaching joyfully. A Latin American coastal setting is indicated with naming conventions; Abelardo and his father have brown skin and straight, black hair.

Bravo for a courageous boy's achievement. (Picture book. 5-8)



WOLFIE PAINTS THE TOWN

Gibson, Sabina

Illus. by the author

Knopf (32 pp.)

\$16.99 | \$19.99 PLB | Oct. 31, 2017

978-1-101-94073-0

978-1-101-94074-7 PLB

Series: Little Wood

Portrait of a town by a young wolf.

"Welcome to Little Wood! The tiniest town around." Meet Wolfie, a young artist, who walks around her community with her easel, painting different aspects of it and thereby introducing different characters and places that seem likely to be featured in later selections of what is surely a new series. Young listeners will be introduced to Bear, Badger, Rabbit, among others, and see them walking, gardening, and building as they go about their days (they are all revisited later in Wolfie's culminating gallery show). Photographs of Gibson's appealing felt creatures have the feeling of stop-motion animation and are full of details to explore, while the text is very simple, though sometimes stilted, and has a stylized retro tone, emphasized with an abundance of exclamation points. Perhaps better suited to a board-book format, this brief but pleasant tale stands out more for the distinctive style of illustration than anything else; the minimal text seems to exist as an afterthought rather than as a partner to the illustrations. Still, young readers and listeners will embrace this sweet, soft world that's full of warmth and friendliness and look forward to the offerings that follow.

A nice choice to encourage kids to explore their own neighborhoods. (Picture book. 2-5)



NOW IS EVERYTHING

Giles, Amy

HarperTeen (368 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$9.99 e-book | Nov. 7, 2017

978-0-06-249573-0

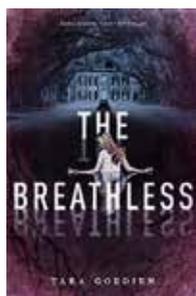
978-0-06-249575-4 e-book

Airplane-crash survivor Hadley's motivations for attempting suicide are explored in chapters that alternate between flashbacks of her life and her current stay in a psychiatric facility.

Hadley's pre-accident life seemed charmed—she's the rich, white, academically successful senior captain of her high school lacrosse team. She's also incredibly lucky to have survived the private plane crash that killed both her parents (her father was pilot). Even luckier, her adored 10-year-old sister, Lila, missed the flight. And yet, within hours of the crash, Hadley attempts suicide. This raises red flags for the crash investigator, who begins interviewing her friends to understand what might have happened during the flight. Through his interviews, Hadley's pre-accident flashbacks, and her counseling sessions, a very different picture of her life emerges. Her father, who initially seems like an overactive helicopter parent, actually uses

violence at home to control his daughters and his wife, who refuses to intervene. Motivated by a desire to protect Lila from their father's attentions, Hadley has largely complied with his demands. That changes when she begins a forbidden romance destined to be discovered by her father. His clever punishment is to shift his controlling, violent attention toward Lila, prompting Hadley to consider extreme measures. Her palpable despair and desperation, conveyed in well-paced first-person chapters, increase the tension as the truth of the accident slowly emerges.

A tragic exploration of why people sometimes protect their abusers. (*Fiction. 14-18*)



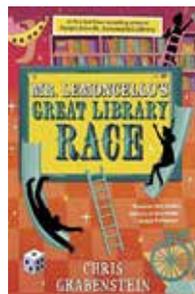
THE BREATHLESS

Goedjen, Tara
 Delacorte (368 pp.)
 \$17.99 | \$17.99 e-book | \$20.99 PLB
 Oct. 10, 2017
 978-1-5247-1476-5
 978-1-5247-1478-9 e-book
 978-1-5247-1477-2 PLB

A Southern gothic about family secrets and a dead sister.

Nearly a year ago Cage Shaw fled after being spotted over the dead body of his girlfriend, Ro Cole. Ro's artistic younger sister, Mae, still doesn't know what really happened—though she suspects it was more than it appeared to be after finding an old family-heirloom journal that was most recently Ro's. In it is such disturbing content as the "Ritual for a Raising," other apparent spells, and cryptic notes, some written by Ro herself. Meanwhile, Cage wakes in a hospital with vague memories of a motorcycle crash and makes his way back to the decaying Cole home, Blue Gate, where he's shocked to learn that a year has passed, Ro is dead, and he is a pariah. He says he's innocent, and Mae finds herself believing him. In between Mae's investigation of Ro's secrets and Cage's attempts to figure out what's happened over the past year, the text jumps back into Cole family history, to 1859, when Grady Cole falls for a magic-using outsider with the ability to raise the dead. The modern-time romance is light, as both of Mae's potential love interests are hung up on Ro, and the setting—the derelict estate on the Alabama coast—suits the creepy, ritualistic, magical elements of a plot that confuses at times but mostly weaves together by the ending twists. All characters are white.

A plot-heavy saga. (*Paranormal romance. 12-18*)



MR. LEMONCELLO'S GREAT LIBRARY RACE

Grabenstein, Chris
 Random House (288 pp.)
 \$16.99 | \$12.00 e-book | \$19.99 PLB
 Oct. 10, 2017
 978-0-553-53606-5
 978-0-553-53608-9 e-book
 978-0-553-53607-2 PLB
 Series: Mr. Lemoncello's Library

Participants in one of Luigi Lemoncello's board-games—without-a-board discover the value of careful research and teamwork.

Middle schooler Kyle Keeley and his mostly white friends and fellow trustees of the splendiferous Lemoncello Library are delighted when its founder, the irrepressible inventor, offers them another challenge: a Fabulous Fact-Finding Frenzy that will take them far from home. Kyle, a boy from Mr. Lemoncello's hometown of Alexandriaville, Ohio, who often jumps to conclusions, is paired with hijabi Abia Sulayman from Boston. Her serious, careful approach (disappointingly, expressed in stiffly formal, mostly contraction-free syntax) turns out to be a good counterbalance—and both are eager to win until their research turns up information that could destroy the Lemoncello reputation, threatening his game-building empire and their beloved library. Luckily, all four of the finalists in this research game team up to dig deeper to find the true facts. This third volume of a popular series will be equally welcomed. As before, Grabenstein blends suspenseful adventure, humor, and wishful thinking, seasoning it with riddles, rebuses, wonderful wordplay, and plentiful allusions to children's literature. He makes some political statements, too. At one point, Lemoncello's lawyer reminds the researchers that "public opinion can often be swayed by emotion with little regard for facts." At another, Muslimah Abia reminds her friends to judge people as individuals rather than members of a group.

Good entertainment with some meaningful messages. (*Fiction. 9-14*)



MONSTER

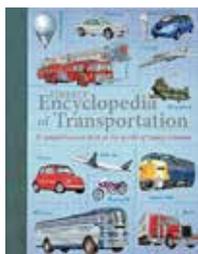
Grant, Michael
 Katherine Tegen/HarperCollins
 (432 pp.)
 \$18.99 | \$11.99 e-book | Oct. 17, 2017
 978-0-06-246784-3
 978-0-06-246786-7 e-book
 Series: Gone, 7

The Gone series continues.

It has been four years since the invisible dome created by an alien virus stunned the world and left hundreds of children to fend for themselves inside. Now, meteors are striking the Earth with even deadlier effects: mutating human beings into monsters. Some of these new mutants use their powers for selfish reasons,

while others team up to use them for good. Meanwhile, shady government agencies are doing their best to contain the fallout. New characters and old favorites abound in this follow-up, which feels heavily influenced by comic books and the author's pseudonymous work on the Animorphs series. Grant's action sequences have improved, crisply composed here with exciting powers and a grounded sense of destruction. There are casualties, and the author doesn't skip over the collateral damage these characters create. The psychological toll helps shade the author's broad characterizations. The most complex and interesting characters are the ones brought over from the earlier books, but the new faces engage easily enough. The cast is fairly diverse, covering a wide variety of skin colors, sexual orientations, and gender identities. The setup for the sequel is blessedly minimal, growing naturally out of the story. Longtime fans will surely be excited by the novel's final moments.

A bombastic, engaging start to a sequel series full of potential. (*Science fiction*. 14-17)



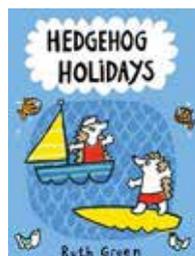
FIREFLY ENCYCLOPEDIA OF TRANSPORTATION
A Comprehensive Look at the World of Transportation

Green, Oliver & Graham, Ian & Wilkinson, Philip & Nabum, Andrew
 Firefly (160 pp.)
 \$14.95 paper | Sep. 1, 2017
 978-1-77085-931-9

A visual history of transportation technology, from early wheels to the rover Curiosity.

Readers aren't going to be carried very far by this ponderous assemblage of staid modern stock images and (here and there) photos paired to perfunctory notes on top speeds, uses, and the like. They are grouped by general type, with occasional changes of pace, such as a quick glance at some varieties of "greener" transport shoehorned in between the trains and aircraft. The pictures—most of them small, depicting vehicles uncumbered by visible drivers or crews, and monotonously pinned to pale, neutral-colored background grids—are laid into their arbitrarily ordered single-topic spreads without regard for relative scale or visual flow. Despite offering looks at a great array of wheeled, airborne, and nautical vehicles of the present as well as the past, the gallery is not only selective and stingy at best with action or cutaway views, but stale to boot. The newest fighter jet (an F-117, 1981 vintage), for example, was superseded in 2008; the latest model of electric auto mentioned outside the closing timeline is a 2010 Nissan Leaf; and the most recent space probe, *Cassini-Huygens*, was launched in 1997. Moreover, so Eurocentric is the viewpoint that only four of the 23 older types of sailing vessels on display are not European or North American.

An underpowered survey. (timeline, list of records, index) (*Reference*. 10-13)



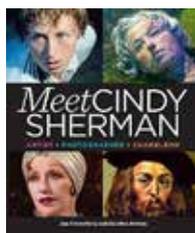
HEDGEHOG HOLIDAYS

Green, Ruth
Illus. by the author
 Tate/Abrams (32 pp.)
 \$14.95 | Sep. 5, 2017
 978-1-84976-484-1

The prickly friends Herbert and Hilda are inspired by reading a book about the sea to make a trip to the seaside.

They check out the bus schedule and collect an assortment of beach toys and a picnic. They hop on the bus and wend their way to the seaside. Their enjoyment of their picnic is marred by the arrival of some ants, who march off with large quantities of their food. They have fun with a beach ball until it is popped by Hilda's spikes. They meet some sea creatures, including a crab wearing socks (six of them). Hilda goes sailing and meets some dolphins, and Herbert has fun on a surfboard. After a final ice cream treat, the hedgehogs board the bus and make their way home, where they relax and admit that "The seaside is lovely, but home is the best!" And that's about it. Strong, humorous illustrations in bold colors with thick black outlines reminiscent of the Maisie series are appealing to look at but do not compensate for an uninspiring plot. Poor-quality rhyming verse ("Herbert is hot, so as quick as a flash, / He jumps in the water and makes a big SPLASH") makes this a faltering effort at best.

Although this book carries the prestigious imprimatur of the Tate Trustees, it won't compete with more creative and original efforts on the same theme.



MEET CINDY SHERMAN
Artist, Photographer, Chameleon

Greenberg, Jan & Jordan, Sandra
 Neal Porter/Roaring Brook (64 pp.)
 \$19.99 | Oct. 17, 2017
 978-1-62672-520-1



An introduction to the work of artist Cindy Sherman, illustrated with dozens of her photographs.

Sherman has been photographing herself in makeup and costumes since the 1960s, often reflecting on the societal roles of women. This beautifully designed account moves from her childhood through art school to her career as an artist, with sections on her various series, titled by year, such as *Fairy Tales* 1985 and *Clowns* 2003-2004. The final chapter, which discusses her 2012 retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, highlights her success and influence in the art world. Greenberg and Jordan, who have honed their skills in many previous art books for young people, engage their audience from beginning to end. Their conversational text prompts readers to think, using questions ("Can we find beauty in ugliness?") and friendly commands ("Imagine Cindy alone in her studio"). Well-chosen quotes from Sherman help explain her art and process, while colored boxes

Quiet pen-and-ink illustrations show the pink pig in his element as he tumbles about, carrying his oversized books with him.

RUFUS BLASTS OFF!

set off quotes from children and teens in which they respond to specific photographs. These quotes and the authors' own interpretations offer ways to understand Sherman's sometimes-controversial art. An introductory note invites readers to enter Sherman's world and "discover your own stories"; the book brilliantly gives them the tools to do so.

An excellent, eye-opening exploration perfectly pitched to its audience. (bibliography, notes, list of artworks) (Biography. 10-14)



RUFUS BLASTS OFF!

Griswold, Kim T.
 Illus. by Gorbachev, Valeri
 Sterling (40 pp.)
 \$16.95 | Sep. 12, 2017
 978-1-4549-2099-1

Persuasive pig Rufus Leroy Williams III shatters the porcine glass ceiling—or in this case atmosphere—yet again in his third outing.

Ever since mastering literacy in *Rufus Goes to School* (2013), the titular pig has used his skills to find adventure. After convincing Capt. Wibblyshins to let him join a pirate crew in *Rufus Goes to Sea* (2015), his pirate mates demand fresh new tales—but Rufus is all out! In search of stories, Rufus is determined to go boldly where no pig has gone before: Mars. There's only one problem: Cmdr. Luna (a black woman) believes that pigs aren't made of "the right stuff" because they are bound to "do loop-the-loops in the crew cabin" and "hog the juice packets." Despite Luna's bias, Rufus isn't deterred: he's been rejected before, but that's never stopped him. After a few tries, he gets lucky: the Mars mission will be cancelled unless they can find someone to read a book on Mars, via livestream, to children around the world. Lucky for them, Rufus is the pig for the job! Quiet pen-and-ink illustrations show the pink pig in his element as he tumbles about, carrying his oversized books with him. While some readers new to Rufus may be puzzled at his jump from golden age piracy to futuristic space travel, fans of Rufus will be glad to see him triumph and will look forward to seeing where his next adventure will take him.

Those who love pigs, pirates, and planets are sure to be pleased. (Picture book. 4-6)



I CAN'T SLEEP!

Hart, Owen
 Illus. by Pedler, Caroline
 Tiger Tales (32 pp.)
 \$16.99 | Oct. 1, 2017
 978-1-68010-066-2

Poor Mole can't sleep in spite of all his patient friend Mouse's attempts to help.

The anthropomorphic animal friends are onboard a boat called the *Leaping Salmon*, and Mole cannot fall asleep. He ventures over to Mouse's cabin and asks to cozy up with him.

Mouse is welcoming, but Mole simply can't settle down even after they read several bedtime books. He complains that it's too dark, then too bright. Then he's too cold, and then too hot. At every turn, Mouse comes up with solutions and ways to comfort his friend. Finally, with a paper lampshade affixed on a lamp to provide just the right amount of light and having moved their bed under an open window with an extra cozy blanket, Mole falls asleep. Alas, however, now Mouse can't sleep. Why? A closing spread shows Mole snoring away, oblivious to his friend's wakefulness. This conclusion ends up underscoring how very patient Mouse has been throughout the book, making one wonder what he gets out of the friendship with Mole. The illustrations are largely redundant of the text and don't offer deeper characterization to answer this question or to otherwise expand upon the story.

Never mind poor, sleepless Mole; take pity on poor, beleaguered Mouse. (Picture book. 3-5)



RUBY & OLIVIA

Hawkins, Rachel
 Putnam (256 pp.)
 \$16.99 | \$16.99 e-book | Oct. 24, 2017
 978-0-399-16961-8
 978-0-698-19177-8 e-book

Working in a scary house helps two preteens both connect and find their own identities.

It's always been *Emma and Olivia*, until Emma shoplifts a tube of lipstick and her identical twin, Olivia, takes the blame so Emma can still attend the summer camp of her dreams. Forced to enroll in another camp, the one for Bad Kids who need "positive redirection," Olivia's summer gets even worse when Ruby appears in her group. Even though Emma and Ruby had a falling-out over a boy, Olivia still blames Ruby's friendship with Emma for straining her own relationship with Emma. The only good thing about this "camp" is cataloging artifacts from Live Oak House rather than picking trash—until creepy dolls talk, the mansion seems hungry to eat them, and other oddities occur. But the haunted house really serves as a vehicle to bring these white 12-year-olds together. Alternating chapters in their respective voices reveal Olivia's suppressed anger and need to form a life apart from her twin and Ruby's misperceptions of Olivia and lingering grief over her deceased grandmother. As they work to solve the mystery of Live Oak House, Ruby and Olivia become fast friends while also encouraging the best in each other. Maybe they still need Emma—but on their own terms.

This lightly spooky story demonstrates the complexities of preteen girl relationships. (Mystery. 8-12)

Ho's simple, humorous story provides a gentle lesson on prejudice and friendship; her illustrations are bright and basic, and Bear's teeth are visible only in Chicken's imagination.

BEAR AND CHICKEN



BEAR AND CHICKEN

Ho, Jannie

Illus. by the author

Running Press Kids (32 pp.)

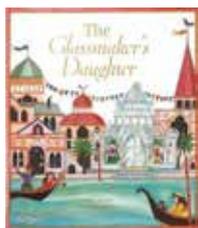
\$16.99 | Nov. 14, 2017

978-0-7624-6266-7

When Bear says he's having chicken for lunch, what *exactly* does he mean?

One very cold day, as Bear is taking his morning walk, he sees a chicken frozen in the snow. As he carries the chicken to the warmth of his home, he wonders about the best way to defrost a chicken, then "burrito-wraps" it in a blanket in front of the roaring fire. This works, though Chicken, whose first sight upon awaking is sharp teeth, is immediately alarmed. But Bear is as friendly as can be. "Hello there," he says. "You're just in time." Chicken wonders, "In time for what?" Bear brings out a big pot, fills it with water, and sets it on the stove to boil. Bear is going to make Chicken into lunch! Chicken makes a clumsy run for it, out into the snow and zigzagging through the trees. Bear pursues, carrying Chicken's bundle and expressing his concern that Chicken is leaving without lunch—which is *vegetable* soup. Ho's simple, humorous story provides a gentle lesson on prejudice and friendship; her illustrations are bright and basic, and Bear's teeth are visible only in Chicken's imagination. Readers in vegetarian households or those unfamiliar with the cooking terminology used in the text may be several steps behind Chicken, but they will still probably find the tale a funny one. There's also a recipe for Bear's vegetable soup and an informational note about "mostly vegetarian" black bears.

A sweet tale of expectations upended. (Picture book. 3-6)



THE GLASSMAKER'S DAUGHTER

Hofmeyr, Dianne

Illus. by Ray, Jane

Frances Lincoln (32 pp.)

\$19.99 | Oct. 5, 2017

978-1-84780-676-5

A Venetian glassmaker's daughter resists attempts to cheer her up.

Daniela, the fair-skinned daughter of a prominent glassmaker in 16th-century Venice, is melancholy. Her concerned father offers the reward of a glass palace to the first person who can make Daniela smile. Many try, and here the narrative amiably bounces along: "Glove makers, tart bakers, trumpet players, dragon slayers" try their best, but Daniela remains glum. Enter Angelo, a fair-skinned young glassmaker who fashions a looking glass—something Daniela has never before encountered. He presents it to her, and as she looks into it, she sees a frowning face. She smiles, and the mirror smiles, then she laughs and the mirror laughs. Soon all of Venice is laughing along with Daniela's laugh. Hofmeyr's narrative conforms to the familiar, rescue-the-princess fairy-tale theme, but the addition of the looking glass lends it originality, and its ultimate message, that happiness lies

within, is empowering if overt. An introductory note conveys information about historic Venetian glassmaking and the popularity of wearing decorative masks in Venice—facts that add considerable interest. Ray's luxuriant-looking, well-designed illustrations in gouache, watercolor, and ink evoke a lush, multiracial Venice.

Rich illustrations, a familiar fairy-tale structure, and an upbeat message make this story a visually attractive, comfortable read. (Picture book. 4-8)



LOVELY

Hong, Jess

Illus. by the author

Creston (32 pp.)

\$16.99 | Oct. 1, 2017

978-1-939547-37-8

Beauty is said to be in the eye of the beholder, and this book encourages readers to regard everyone as "lovely."

In today's world, with increasingly evident diversity in race, ethnicity, gender expression, sexuality, fashion, body shape, abilities, and choices about everything, the author/illustrator presents people of every description in the bold, brightly colored digital illustrations. Opposites are introduced: "black" for a white young woman clad in black and "white" for a young-looking, brown-skinned woman with flowing white hair. "Simple" appears on a tattooed white arm, along with a few designs, while "complex" is written on a brown arm, with what appear to be elaborate *mehndi* designs (henna designs applied before a South Asian wedding). A white baby is "soft," and an older white woman with purple hair, a spiked denim jacket and choker, a nose ornament, and many ear decorations is "sharp." A "tall" person with Asian features walks a small dog. A "short" smaller, light-brown-skinned male with green hair has a large dog. A gay interracial male couple face an adoring dark-brown-skinned child and mom. These pages read: "Lovely is you. / Lovely is me." The last double-page spread includes young and old: a white woman in a wheelchair (there is one amputee with a modern prosthetic leg earlier in the book), a goateed man in a bustier, and others of various colors and sizes.

"Lovely is different, weird, and wonderful." So reads the caption for a white girl with blonde hair and one blue and one brown eye! A simple book with lots of truth. (Picture book. 3-6)



SINGING IN THE RAIN

Hopgood, Tim—Illus.

Godwin Books/Henry Holt

(32 pp.)

\$17.99 | Oct. 7, 2017

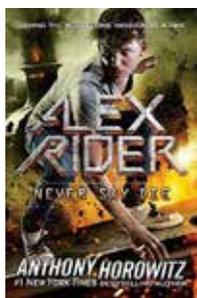
978-1-250-12770-9



Movie happiness is now picture-book joy.

The title song from the classic 1952 movie musical is a song-and-dance salute to *joie de vivre*—as is this book version. It opens with a cheerful double-page spread of a brown-skinned child in perfectly matched yellow rain gear perched on a lamppost as musical notes in the same cheerful yellow stand out against a blue rain-splattered background. Homage to Gene Kelly? Of course! On the following pages, children in equally colorful rainy-day outfits join in the fun as they dance and march along. They watch from the observation deck of the Empire State Building as clouds fill the sky and the same bright yellow notes appear. Close-ups of the smiling, multiracial cast follow as they watch flowers grow or a reflection in a puddle and then happily splash away to other landscapes filled with tropical birds and lush green foliage. Sing the lyrics or recite the words “based on the song” and have a really good time. Hopgood’s digitally rendered collages of watercolor, pencil, and ink add depth, texture, and buoyant spirit to the package.

Raindrops are delightful and danceable musical melodies. (illustrator’s note) (Picture book. 4-7)



NEVER SAY DIE

Horowitz, Anthony

Philomel (368 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$17.99 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017

978-1-5247-3930-0

978-1-5247-3931-7 e-book

Series: Alex Rider, 11

After ending his Alex Rider series with flashback volume *Russian Roulette* (2013), Horowitz revives his bestselling adventure series, sending his hero on a pursuit that is very, very personal.

Held captive by sadistic enemies in *Scorpio Rising* (2011), Alex was forced to watch the murder of his best friend and caregiver, Jack Starbright. Now safe, recovered from his wounds, and with his enemies dead, the white, English teen has moved to San Francisco with his foster family, the Pleasures, also white. He’s trying to live a normal life; he’s going to school, trying to fit in, not standing out even though he’d like nothing better than to trounce the local bullies. Then, out of the blue, he receives a truncated email: “ALEXX / I’M AL.” Immediately, against all odds, he knows that Jack’s alive and trying to reach out to him. His guardians don’t believe it, having seen the footage of Jack’s death. But Alex won’t give up—and it doesn’t take him long to slip away and start a globe-trekking search for the only person who has always been there for him. The time has come to be

there for her, regardless of the consequences, with or without the help of his friends from MI6. This time, he’s on his own. In his usual breakneck fashion, Horowitz whisks Alex from one improbable situation to another, all of which Alex survives by using his wits and whatever else happens to be at hand.

It’s as if there’d been no interruption; this installment is sure to please Alex’s legions of fans. (Thriller. 10-14)



SILAS’ SEVEN GRANDPARENTS

Horrocks, Anita

Illus. by Flook, Helen

Orca (32 pp.)

\$10.95 paper | \$10.95 e-book

Oct. 10, 2017

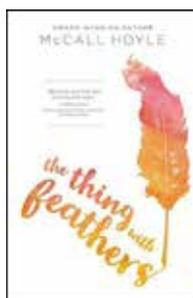
978-1-4598-1640-4

978-1-4598-0639-9 e-book

Is there such a thing as too much grandparental love?

While the text never explains how Silas, a boy with light skin and brown hair, came to have seven adoring grandparents, have them he does. Nor does the text specify race, but somewhat problematic illustrations indicate that they are a multiracial group of elders. Nana and Oma appear to be white, while Gramma appears black, Opa has light-brown skin (or maybe a tan), Papa’s eyes are not dots like the others’ but lines, perhaps a stereotypical indication that he is Asian, and Granny and Grandad are visually depicted as Native through what some may regard as stereotypical Western dress embellished with feathers and turquoise and positioning near totem poles. They also gift him a dream catcher and take him “to a pow wow and go fishing and canoeing” while the other grandparents offer gifts and activities absent of such broad cultural significance or stereotype. Although Silas loves them dearly, the seven grandparents’ attention can be overwhelming, and when his parents go away he knows he can’t take them all up on their offers to stay with them in their respective homes. The solution? They come stay with him at his house and after busy days, he tucks them in to sleep (though why the closing illustration has them sleeping on the porch is a mystery).

An intergenerational story with a lot of heart and a few missteps. (Picture book. 3-6)



THE THING WITH FEATHERS

Hoyle, McCall

Blink (304 pp.)

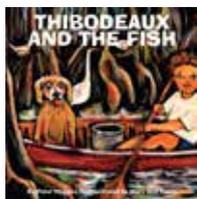
\$17.99 | Sep. 5, 2017

978-0-310-75851-8

A teenager with epilepsy who has recently lost her father to cancer overcomes the depression induced by grief and illness as she acclimates to attending public school for the first time in several years and finds a boyfriend.

Home-schooled and reluctant to engage with strangers, Emilie spends her spare time reading, cuddling with her therapy dog, Hitch, and playing board games with Cindy, her 8-year-old neighbor. Forced to begin classes at the local high school, Emilie is determined to remain aloof. A smart, creative girl named Ayla and a hot (and very nice) boy named Chatham befriend her, making it hard to stay distant and self-contained. Conflicts with her mother, who is just beginning to date, and concern about the potential embarrassment of having a seizure at school further complicate Emilie's life. Miserable and self-absorbed, Emilie is exceedingly articulate. Indeed, her first-person narration sometimes sounds older than her years, particularly when describing her crush. Extended metaphors abound, most involving water. That's logical given the Outer Banks setting and Emilie's fears, but they slow the flow of the plot and contribute to the not entirely believable tone. Emilie seems to be white, and so does her world, aside from the occasional student of color.

Smoothly written and packed with (perhaps too many) challenging issues, Hoyle's debut may feel a bit glib and predictable to some readers; others will swoon over the dreamy Chatham and root for Emilie to come out of her shell. (*Romance*. 14-16)



THIBODEAUX AND THE FISH

Huggins, Peter
Illus. by Casey, Mary Ann
 Solomon & George Publishers (34 pp.)
 \$12.00 | Sep. 1, 2017
 978-0-9986362-0-7



A determined little boy finds truth in his father's words about the larger-than-life catfish on the end of his fishing line.

Tired of gumbo, Thibodeaux boards his pirogue and heads for Bayou Fryou to catch Pantagruel, "that big old catfish" with three hooks in his mouth. Thibodeaux nabs the wily fish with bacon and bread, giving him the fourth hook, but Pantagruel demands that the boy cut the line. If he doesn't, Pantagruel promises to drag him "all the way to Longue Chaise Bay, where the giant crabs will eat you." Despite disadvantages of size and strength, Thibodeaux refuses. When no one comes to his rescue, he must solve this conundrum himself. Peppered with French Creole words and references to New Orleans cuisine, this story offers a glimpse into Louisiana bayou folklore. While young readers will enjoy hearing of Thibodeaux's solo adventure, Casey's illustrations give the story a distinctive mood. The painterly, acrylic-on-canvas paintings have a black background, and Casey makes some scenes intentionally out of focus to increase the mystery of events. She also uses perspective to good effect, often putting readers right up to Pantagruel's mouth—hooks and all. As Thibodeaux moves back toward safety, blues and reds replace blacks, lightening the mood as the conflict resolves.

A delightful story of an antagonist who becomes a little less antagonistic because of one smart and kind boy. (*Picture book*. 4-7)



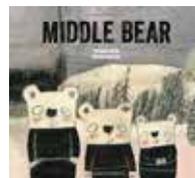
LAST CHANCE

Hurwitz, Gregg
 Tor Teen (384 pp.)
 \$17.99 | \$9.99 e-book | Oct. 17, 2017
 978-0-7653-8269-6
 978-1-4668-8852-4 e-book
 Series: Rains Brothers, 2

After an alien invasion, the survival of humanity depends on teenage brothers.

At the close of series opener *The Rains* (2016), Chance and his older brother, Patrick, were separated, and Chance encountered an alien rebel who told him that humanity's fate depends on his staying out of the aliens' clutches. As this book opens, he's been caught, and an alien scan identifies him. Although readers are tossed quickly into the action, a brief synopsis reminds them of the spores that turned those over 18 into mindless workers who prepared Earth for the arrival of the alien Drones and Queens who, with assistance from the already-turned Hosts, round up kids and teens and make them into Husks that incubate the alien Hatchlings. Patrick and his girlfriend—whom Chance also loves—arrive and rescue him, and the three flee to their high school, where survivors have established a base of operations and where a thinly developed bully character represents the man-is-the-true-danger figure that all post-apocalyptic books seem to need these days (this storyline is exceptionally forced). Alien rebels reveal how to stop the invasion and its required cost—which has been telegraphed in the novel's epigraph, leaving no surprises. The novel's conceit—that it's been written by Chance as journal entries—distracts, but the endless action is solid. The narrative defaults to white, with exceptions identified by ethnicity (a Tongan ranch hand) or name (Dr. Chatterjee).

Predictable and plot-driven. (*Post-apocalyptic adventure*. 12-18)



MIDDLE BEAR

Isern, Susanna
Illus. by Gauthier, Manon
 Kids Can (34 pp.)
 \$16.99 | Oct. 3, 2017
 978-1-77138-842-9

A little bear discovers the benefits of being the middle one when his medium size works to his advantage.

The "second of three brothers," middle bear's neither largest nor smallest, tallest nor shortest, strongest nor weakest. Even his clothes and toys are "middle-sized." He eats and drinks middle-sized portions and goes to bed "before his older brother and after his younger." Often sad, the middle bear does not "want to be the middle one" until the day his sick parents send their three sons on a quest to a high mountain for willow bark. Reaching a partially frozen river, the oldest brother's too heavy and the youngest brother's too little to cross the ice. Just the right size, the middle bear successfully traverses the river, scales

The sparseness of the storyline is matched by the clean aesthetic of the simple illustrations, created with black pencil crayons and oils in a limited color palette.

NO ROOM FOR BABY!

the mountain, and returns with the willow bark. Repeated use of “middle-sized” emphasizes the disadvantages as well as the advantages of being a middle child. Cut-paper collage, pencil, and mixed-media illustrations rely on a subdued palette of black, gray, and tan to convey the blandness of the middle bear’s life. Drawn with childlike simplicity, the brother bears seem visually identical (except for size) and usually appear together until the middle bear happily takes center page alone, suddenly aware “he could do all sorts of things.”

A neatly pitched lesson for the middle child. (*Picture book.* 4-7)



NO ROOM FOR BABY!

Jadoul, Émile
Illus. by the author
 Kids Can (28 pp.)
 \$16.99 | Oct. 3, 2017
 978-1-77138-841-2

Leon is sure there’s no room for his new baby brother, Marcel, outside of his crib until he finds just the right spot.

This new-baby story features a family of anthropomorphic penguins who, despite their presumed Antarctic origins, live in a remarkably spacious cartoon-style igloo outfitted with chairs, beds, curtained windows, and a crib for Marcel. New big brother Leon asks his mother hopefully if Marcel will always stay in his crib. When she smilingly replies in the negative, he tries to make the case that there’s simply no room for the baby in his own bedroom, on her lap, or up high on his father’s shoulders. But when Marcel begins to cry, Leon suddenly announces that there is room enough for the baby in his own arms, and he snuggles him close in a sudden surge of brotherly affection. This happy resolution seems rather abrupt, but the sparseness of the storyline is matched by the clean aesthetic of the simple illustrations, created with black pencil crayons and oils in a limited color palette. The penguins look like black potatoes with pipestem feet, wings, and white, rosy-cheeked faces with tiny yellow beaks.

A simple, positive new-baby book. (*Picture book.* 2-5)



ANIMALS AT NIGHT A Glow-in-the-Dark Book

Jankélowitch, Anne
Illus. by Chedru, Delphine
Translated by Bodeux, Eve
 Sourcebooks Jabberwocky (40 pp.)
 \$19.99 | Oct. 1, 2017
 978-1-4926-5319-6

All around the world, while humans sleep, there are animals active at night.

After an opening spread introducing the idea of nocturnal animals and a few of their adaptations, this unusual album offers a simulation of looking through a night-vision scope into

different environments: woodland, country road, urban neighborhood, beach, desert, and so forth. Each illustration (rounded, as if viewed through a scope, with top and bottom edges bleeding off the page) fills three-quarters of the spread; the text, white on black, sits alongside. Five animals from the scene are identified in short paragraphs, and there’s a question (answers in the back). Some creatures or parts of creatures have been highlighted with phosphorescent paint, visible in darkness for a short while if the page has been held under a lamp for a few minutes. These illustrations invite repeated exploration; the glow-in-the-dark effect advertised on the cover is intriguing, but each page must be exposed separately, and the glow is not long-lasting. Children may need instruction beyond the book’s “turn off the lights to see what glows in the dark.” For the U.S. version of this French import, some European species have been replaced by more-familiar North American ones (the barred owl for the tawny owl, for example), and the text has been recast to include North American details. This makes these scenes a curious conglomeration but no less interesting for it.

Attention-grabbing if not truly glowing. (*Informational picture book.* 6-10)



STARS OF ALL TIME

Jökulsson, Illugi
Illus. by Torfason, Árni
 Abbeville Kids (64 pp.)
 \$13.95 | Sep. 5, 2017
 978-0-7892-1295-5

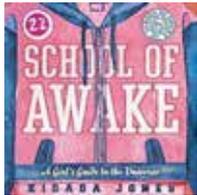
Jökulsson and Torfason present 20 men with thighs like oak and feet like mambas.

Like Madonna, these men need only one name, like Maradona. Represented in short, zinging profiles are 20 of soccer’s (or football’s, if you prefer) greatest players. Told with as much flash as the players exhibit, the book is also energetic in its design, with crisp biographies that capture major moments, boxed items that illuminate some particular achievement or disaster, photos, and outline maps of the players’ native countries. Soccer is a game that rivets half the world, from Finland to Cameroon to Argentina, and its global reach is an important aspect of the book’s humanism. It doesn’t shy away from the weaknesses that can attend even the most gifted among us: George Best’s alcoholism, Zinedine Zidane’s temper, Diego Maradona’s drug problems. While all these players had extraordinary physical attributes of strength and endurance, what makes them shine is their elegance and brains. Such words as “cunning,” “dexterity,” and “vision” speak of what is admired in the game: “Beckenbauer was such an ingenious defense player and team leader that he is repeatedly noted as the greatest defender in history—without ever being rough or vicious.” The worldwide scope of the players represented is impressive, and it also gives a sense of world history, as in the entry on Mozambique’s Eusébio, who played for then-imperial overlord Portugal.

Joyful, enthusiastic, well-versed, and uplifting. (*Nonfiction.* 10-14)

The dreamy, highly textured oil pictures by Cecil in his signature palette of gentle grays, greens, and blues make the transition from land to sea seamlessly.

SAIL AWAY DRAGON



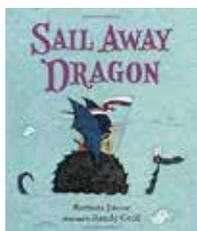
SCHOOL OF AWAKE
A Girl's Guide to the Universe

Jones, Kidada
Illus. by Jones, Koa & Jones, Kidada
New World Library (168 pp.)
\$18.95 paper | Oct. 2, 2017
978-1-60868-458-8

In the opening of this self-esteem builder, Kidada Jones tells readers that the education system failed her; she matriculated through 11 schools and was kicked out of eight.

This is the book she didn't have growing up. It starts with the premise that a girl is a mini-universe, referencing astrophysics that teaches how atoms and molecules in our bodies contain the same materials that exist in the visible universe. Each chapter ends with a "So you're telling me this because...?" section, offering an alternative teaching model that explains the benefit of each lesson. Throughout the book, readers are advised to create a "soul-soothing tool kit," a shoe box to be filled with affordable, creative supplies that are used for ongoing activities related to the theme of each chapter. Lessons include mindfulness exercises, reflective writing activities, yoga poses, and affirmations, along with several activities that help inspire mental and emotional well-being. Jones offers healthy-eating tips that include simple and nutritious recipes. This book has a strong New Age feel, with its allusions to the power of energy, vibes, and dreamcatchers, but it also gets practical, addressing bullying, crushes, and learning how to be a good friend. The coolest thing about this book is that none of the activities involve using social media, leaving readers to truly tap into the creative, undistracted self.

Despite the subtitle, this book's affirming messages can serve diverse genders. (Nonfiction. 13-17)



SAIL AWAY DRAGON

Joosse, Barbara
Illus. by Cecil, Randy
Candlewick (32 pp.)
\$15.99 | Oct. 24, 2017
978-0-7636-7313-0

A young girl and a dragon take their sweet friendship on an adventure.

After sharing the beginning and deepening of their friendship in *Lovabye Dragon* (2012) and *Evermore Dragon* (2015), Joosse puts this twosome on a journey to the high seas. Girl, forever sleeping in her same bed, dreams of sailing away. Dragon, snug in his lair, dreams of sailing with Girl. "Sometimes when friends share a heart / they dream the same thing, apart." So they pack a wicker basket, a spyglass, and a banner and wave goodbye. The ocean provides plenty of interest with dolphins, whales, and Bad Hats with ratty beards (depicted as Vikings who differ only in the amount of their facial hair). There's also a cat. The dreamy, highly textured oil pictures by Cecil in his signature palette of gentle grays, greens, and blues make the transition from land to sea seamlessly. With

a tender nod to "The Owl and the Pussycat," the scenery is full of diversions while the clever rhyming verse full of word-play drifts the story farther from Home. The hazy images allow young minds to see this tiny princess with dark hair as racially ambiguous. As in many famous stories, one must leave home to find home, which is the same for these two loving friends. "With Dragon as boat / and Girl as crew / there was nothing—nothing—they couldn't do!"

Fans of the series will delight in seeing these favorites again, and *Girl and Dragon* should win some new ones. (Picture book. 3-6)



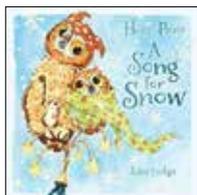
GETTING THE BRUSH OFF

Joyce, Mere
Orca (120 pp.)
\$9.95 paper | \$9.95 e-book
Nov. 14, 2017
978-1-4598-1358-8
978-1-4598-1360-1 e-book

In Halifax Harbour a 16-year-old girl with snow-cone-blue hair and a lip ring performs ballet to punk rock while she paints for the passing public.

After several noise complaints, performance artist Sydney Hart must pack up and say goodbye to her tips, her only source of income. Then an invitation to a speed-painting competition hosted by the prestigious art academy she attended before her mom lost her job offers Sydney a glimmer of hope. The Brush Off's grand prize is full tuition and room and board, which would allow Sydney to return to the school. She's willing to do whatever it takes to win, and that includes suppressing who she's become—a creative performance artist who doesn't look like the preppy academy student she was two years ago. Should she risk competing as the artist she is instead of the one the academy wants her to be? Sydney does her best work when she dances to loud music and makes a mess while she paints, a modus operandi that doesn't jibe with the academy's uptight, rigid constraints. In this brief novel, Sydney is frustratingly wishy-washy, going back and forth—during the course of the competition's two days—between being who she is now and who she was when she fit in at the school. Her dark-skinned, pink-haired best friend, Lish, and competition rival Jorge comprise the white teen's support system.

A feel-good story with a tidy, happy ending. (Fiction. 12-16)



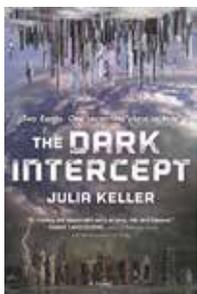
A SONG FOR SNOW

Judge, Lita
 Illus. by the author
 Dial (40 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Nov. 14, 2017
 978-1-101-99451-1
 Series: Hoot and Peep

Hoot and Peep, the adorable owl siblings, are back, this time in a story that introduces little sister Peep to a new phenomenon: snow.

The season has changed, but the two birds' natures remain the same. Hoot likes to seem wise, and Peep interprets the world around her through song. When Hoot predicts that snow is coming soon but won't tell her what it will sound like (he doesn't admit that he's forgotten), Peep attempts to guess. Once again, Judge uses delightfully creative language. Peep asks, "Does snow drop, ploppety splop, like the rain's song" or "swish swoooooo like the wind's song," or "scrrinkle scattle like falling leaves?" As the birds converse, they swoop through the romantic Parisian night, where glowing lights, bright store windows, and decorated shrubbery suggest that the holiday season is near. When the snow finally arrives, typical winter shenanigans come along with the white stuff. As in *Hoot and Peep* (2016), the two birds are accompanied by a mouse who brandishes a carved staff. Big-eyed and smiling, all of the animals pictured have a cartoon-style charm. Judge's text consists primarily of the siblings' dialogue and is pleasingly playful. The luminous watercolors, enhanced with "a few digital finishing touches," should have wide appeal.

Festive and sprightly, this entry will likely leave listeners wondering what the pair will get up to when spring rolls around. (Picture book. 3-6)



THE DARK INTERCEPT

Keller, Julia
 Tor Teen (320 pp.)
 \$17.99 | \$12.59 e-book | Nov. 7, 2017
 978-0-7653-8762-2
 978-0-7653-8764-6 e-book

At the end of the 23rd century, government surveillance uses weaponized emotions to control the population.

Violet Crowley, the daughter of New Earth's founder, president, and chief executive, works with the police and the Intercept program, surveilling for crime and unleashing the Intercept to halt criminals. The Intercept uses a chip implant to store and categorize memories and emotions, and it incapacitates people by feeding them back, forcing them to relive their worst moments. Violet's got a huge crush on mysterious cop Danny Mayhew, who frequently sneaks to Old Earth despite the danger and refuses to say why. New Earth, which is an artificial society above Old Earth, promises safety for the richest and brightest. (The book claims the division ignores nationality, race, creed, and

so forth and gives no thought toward intersectionality in this post-racial future in which most though not all named characters are described as pale; Violet appears to be white, while Danny is described as dark.) But the Rebels of Light are spreading rumors that they've found a way to overcome the Intercept. Balancing contrived worldbuilding (Earth has had resource wars, yet New Earth has strategically placed dilapidated buildings designed to stay vacant—where else would rebel groups meet?) and characters who frequently feel older than 16 are otherwise nuanced characterizations and strong if sometimes heavy-handed themes involving privacy and immigration.

Middling and undercooked, redeemed by characters and ideas. (Dystopian adventure. 12-adult)



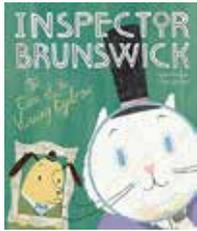
WHO GIVES A HOOT?

Kelly, Jacqueline
 Illus. by Meyer, Jennifer L.
 Godwin Books/Henry Holt (112 pp.)
 \$15.99 | \$5.99 paper | Oct. 3, 2017
 978-1-62779-873-0
 978-1-250-14339-6 paper
 Series: Calpurnia Tate, Girl Vet, 3

Hoo hoo *who* knows what to do when an owl needs some aid? Calling Callie Tate, stat!

October 1901 sees budding veterinarian/naturalist Calpurnia Tate and her grandfather floating in a leaky rowboat (christened the *Beagle*) down the San Marcos River. Along the way they run across a most unusual creature: a drowning owl. Baffled by the bird's condition, they decide to keep it on hand until they can ascertain its problem. Skillful observations on Callie's part help to determine the owl's ailment (illness by way of a poisoned mouse) and lead to an effective cure. In this latest in an early chapter-book series (*Counting Sheep*, 2017, etc.) that continues the story begun in series for older readers (*The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate*, 2009, etc.), Callie is a welcome guide to not only animal facts and lore, but also the mores and restrictions of early-20th-century life for women. Callie's description of "the bloodthirsty Comanche" who left arrowheads behind is tonally out of sync with her noting that they "had hunted here for centuries before being driven onto the reservation in the Oklahoma Territory"; that "bloodthirsty" feels unnecessary at best.

An addition to a series that verges on the charming for readers who can ignore a bump or two along the way. (Historical fiction. 7-10)



INSPECTOR BRUNSWICK
The Case of the Missing Eyebrow

Keoghan, Angela & Lam, Chris Sam
Illus. by Keoghan, Angela
Tate/Abrams (32 pp.)
\$16.95 | Sep. 12, 2017
978-1-84976-444-5

Inspector Brunswick and sidekick Nelson solve a dastardly mystery at the art museum.

They could easily be Holmes and Watson in their natty suits and fashionable hats, but Inspector Brunswick is a white cat, and Nelson's a tan dog. After a busy week of case-cracking, the duo takes a break at the museum. Brunswick feels his whiskers tingle, a sure sign that something is amiss. Indeed, the portrait *The Admiral* looks quite different; Brunswick notices that his left eyebrow is missing! Everyone reacts with shock and begins frantically searching for the missing brow (depicted in a panoramic double gatefold). The eyebrow is nowhere to be found; Brunswick concludes that it has been stolen. Nelson, however, has a different idea. When they use their magnifying glasses, they find a tiny trail of footprints snaking all over the museum and ending at a painting of a cherub, now adorned with a brushy mustache. Only it's not a mustache, it's an eyebrow—correction, it's a very hairy caterpillar! Case closed. The caterpillar returns to *The Admiral*, allowing the painting to change expression at will. Keoghan and Lam's twisty mystery delivers droll surprises; it should encourage young readers to visit their local museums. Keoghan's posterlike illustrations featuring clothed, anthropomorphic animals (including oxygen-breathing fish) are full of child-pleasing details, including the portraits, who react amusingly to the goings-on.

Solidly silly. (Picture book. 5-8)



THE THINGS OWEN WROTE

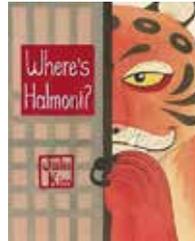
Kerrin, Jessica Scott
Groundwood (168 pp.)
\$14.95 | \$14.95 e-book | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-77306-029-3
978-1-77306-030-9 e-book

Owen's loving relationship with his grandfather Neville is moving in an unexpected and unwelcome direction.

Neville has decided that he should send back to Iceland the medal that his now-deceased friend received for his sensitive translation of the works of Icelandic-Canadian farmer/poet Stephan G. Stephansson. He makes a spur-of-the-moment decision to travel—immediately—to Iceland, and Owen willingly comes along. The trouble is that Neville is becoming increasingly confused (to the extent that readers may find it surprising that Owen's parents left the eighth-grader in his care). Owen has a good reason to accompany Neville on the trip: his grandfather accidentally sent Owen's notebook there, and its contents are something

the white boy doesn't ever want anyone to see. The reason for his need for secrecy isn't finally revealed until the conclusion of this gentle novel of love, loss, and self-fulfillment, all intertwining in Owen's life. Owen initially rationalizes both Neville's frequent missteps and his own character flaw, but it all finally becomes impossible to ignore. The present-tense, third-person narrative primarily focuses on Owen's point of view, permitting a believable and nuanced exploration of his emerging self-awareness. Owen, Neville, and Owen's dead but much-missed grandmother Aileen are fully realized characters. Even the (real) poet Stephansson emerges from the pages of this quiet tale.

A tender and affecting coming-of age story. (Fiction. 10-14)



WHERE'S HALMONI?

Kim, Julie
Illus. by the author
Sasquatch (96 pp.)
\$19.99 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-63217-077-4



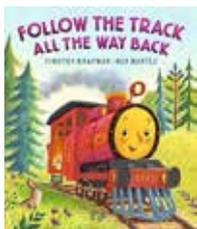
Korean siblings have a rip-roaring adventure, tumbling into a magical land in search of their missing grandmother in this folklore-inspired graphic novel.

A girl and her little brother arrive at their *halmoni's* home only to find her mysteriously absent and large paw prints covering the floor. Falling through the doors of a bedding closet into a fantastical wilderness inhabited by classic Korean folk-tale characters, the siblings work together—armed only with a backpack full of snacks, an enchanted back scratcher, a golden door handle, and their plucky wits—to find Halmoni. The children's dialogue is written in English, while the utterances of the rabbit, goblins, tiger, and nine-tailed fox are given in the Korean alphabet, *hangul*. Romanized Korean also appears throughout, with an endnote providing translations as well as background about Korean folklore. Kim's bright, expressive illustrations are a delight, effectively conveying triumph, indignation, surprise, consternation, and more. Hidden clues lurk, adding another layer of intrigue to the plot for observant readers to ponder. Cultural details are seamlessly integrated into the story, such as removing outside shoes to change into slippers indoors and gesturing "come here" in the East Asian manner. Those familiar with the culture will appreciate elements that are not explicitly explained, such as the little boy's calling his sister "Noona," the appropriate kinship term for an older female, making this an accessible, diverse title for a broad readership.

An exceptionally charming and well-executed romp that brings to life loving family relationships and an enticing fairy-tale world. (Graphic fantasy. 7-10)

There's a vintage feeling to the digitally manipulated pastel illustrations that would make Little Train and his family seem right at home alongside Hardie Gramatky's Little Toot and Watty Piper's Little Engine That Could.

FOLLOW THE TRACK ALL THE WAY BACK



FOLLOW THE TRACK ALL THE WAY BACK

Knapman, Timothy
Illus. by Mantle, Ben
 Candlewick (32 pp.)
 \$16.99 | Oct. 17, 2017
 978-0-7636-9573-6

Little Train follows Mommy and Daddy Train's advice to return safely after his first solo journey.

There's a vintage feeling to the digitally manipulated pastel illustrations that would make Little Train and his family seem right at home alongside Hardie Gramatky's Little Toot and Watty Piper's Little Engine That Could. The story, too, has a classic feel to it, as Little Train's journey follows a home-away-home plotline. When he sets off from the train shed alone for the first time, Mommy and Daddy Train offer encouragement and the titular advice that he "follow the track all the way back" in order to return home after his journey. He's a bit too excited to let their words sink in at first, and he's soon caught up in enjoying a field he passes through, crossing a bridge, climbing a mountain, and rolling by a river. The palette darkens considerably when Little Train reaches the end of the track and stares out to sea. Rain begins to fall, and Little Train must think back to his parents' advice. He quickly recalls their words, and then retraces his journey home (with a little help from a mouse who operates the railroad switch), proceeding backward through scenes now bathed in moon- and starlight. As promised, Mommy and Daddy Train are awaiting his return, and his success makes Little Train determined to seek out "even BIGGER adventures" the next day.

All aboard for a great storytime pick. (Picture book. 2-5)



MOKOMAKI! Let's Count

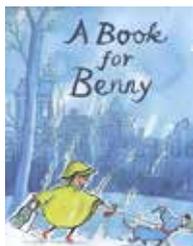
Kontinen, Satu
Illus. by the author
 POW! (24 pp.)
 \$14.95 | Nov. 7, 2017
 978-1-57687-805-7

Finnish graphic designer Kontinen brings her internationally popular world of digital animals to the U.S.

The Mokomaki are small birds with large black eyes that live in the forest of Mokomaka. These birds also like to travel, and as readers turn the introductory page, a giraffe parent implores the Mokomaki to help find its baby. With the clue "He's the tiniest of all," readers join the Mokomaki in sorting through three different baby giraffes to determine the correct one. In each double-page spread, another animal parent with an oversized head and equally big, expressive eyes asks for help in finding its lost baby. The task becomes increasingly challenging as the number of baby animals grows and the clues become more difficult. For instance, a monkey parent asks the Mokomaki

to find its twins: "They've tied their tails in knots!" With 24 monkeys looping tails, joining hands, and pulling on tails, it's a challenge even for adults to find a pair with knotted tails. Comments throughout by the little birds keep the book lively. Adult readers may find the static, geometrically composed animals uninspiring, but youngsters used to digital games and videos will have no qualms as they practice their visual literacy skills, sorting, counting, naming colors, and looking for clues.

While it's not as creative as the works of Hervé Tullet, his fans may enjoy this different kind of interactive book. (Picture book. 2-6)



A BOOK FOR BENNY

Koppens, Judith
Illus. by Meijer, Marja
 Clavis (32 pp.)
 \$16.95 | Oct. 1, 2017
 978-1-60537-352-2

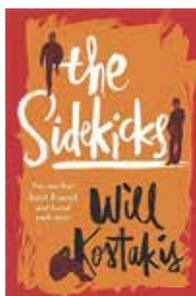
Stories about going to the library on a rainy day are not new, but this one has a cunning twist.

It's raining outside, and Sam, a white girl, is cozily reading when her dog, Benny, tries to get her to play with him. Instead, she takes him to the library to check out a book for him. But the stern librarian (a white woman wearing red glasses) boots them out. Dogs are not welcome. Undeterred, Sam ties Benny to a fence outside the library and chooses several books that she holds up to the window. A book about knights? Benny pees against a tree. A book about the circus? Benny turns his back. On her third try, Sam finds the perfect book for Benny. Here's the twist: the book is not a storybook but a cookbook of sausages. Both dog and girl are happy. Some sentences are printed in boldface type, underscoring the characters' interactions. The sprightly illustrations utilize a strong line and add intriguing background details. The appealing cover depicts Sam in a yellow slicker and Benny holding a book in his mouth, foretelling the storyline. While most of the illustrations are fairly realistic, Benny, perhaps some kind of terrier, is blue rather than a natural dog color and sports a rather distracting, drooping mustachio.

Though this is something of a one-joke, tail-wagging-the-dog tale, kids will enjoy the playfulness and, no doubt, try reading to their own dogs. (Picture book. 4-6)

Considering the number of disasters and near misses in the book, it moves at a languid pace, allowing the tension to slowly crescendo and crash again and again.

SATELLITE



THE SIDEKICKS

Kostakis, Will
Harlequin Teen (304 pp.)
\$18.99 | \$18.99 e-book | Oct. 17, 2017
978-0-373-21262-0
978-1-4880-2783-3 e-book

Three Australian teens deal with the fallout of their friend's death.

Ryan, Harley, and Miles don't have much in common. Ryan is the golden-boy jock, Harley is the school rebel, and Miles is the class nerd. The only common ground these three teens have is their mutual best friend, Isaac. After Isaac dies in a freak accident the trio separately come to terms with what Isaac meant to them and come together to honor his memory. The novel is broken into three sections, each narrated by a different grieving friend. A common thread unites their perspectives: repressed sorrow. After a while this oppressive sadness threatens to sink the book. There are few laughs here but heaps of ennui. The characters are understandably distraught, but the one-note emotional tone gets tiresome. The character arcs are well-structured, and the interconnective tissue is smartly conceived, but it all comes back to these three dull protagonists. Ryan is the most compelling of the three; Miles is a typical nerd and Harley the usual ne'er-do-well. Ryan's living a double life that crackles with a little conflict to pair with his angst, but his section is up first, leaving readers to slog through Harley's and Miles' portions before reaching the novel's perfunctory end. Aside from the toss-off bit of Inuit heritage in Harley's background, the cast is a largely white one.

A curious premise dashed by thin characters and a one-note tone. (*Fiction. 14-17*)



TOMO TAKES FLIGHT

Lai, Trevor
Illus. by the author
Imprint (40 pp.)
\$17.99 | Oct. 24, 2017
978-1-250-08546-7
Series: Tomo's Adventure Journal

Tomo and his best friend, Maya, use his great-grandfather's Adventure Journal to solve more problems (*Tomo Explores the World, 2016*).

As Tomo plots how to fly like a bird, Maya has discovered some unusual bird tracks to investigate. Off they go to their treehouse to see if the Adventure Journal can help them with these mysteries. Though the book has a diagram of a "flying machine" (actually a suit with wings, which may stretch many young readers' notion of "machine"), it does not have all the information Tomo needs, so he decides to experiment. After Maya suggests he model his wings after a bird's, they find a map in the Adventure Journal that leads them to a bird sanctuary on their island home. At the sanctuary, they spot the rare boka bird—the source of the mysterious tracks. Observing how the

boka flies inspires Tomo to try again. Lai sets his tale in a lushly green fishing community. Background details of Cape Cod-style frame houses combine with such stereotypical elements as clothing style, animal-head medallions, and Tomo's father's animal-tooth necklace to give readers a sense of a modern, generic indigenous community. Tomo and Maya have pink skin, black hair, and black, button eyes. But the main event is Tomo's Leonardo-like excitement in invention.

Homing in on the delight of discovery, Lai's second Tomo book encourages readers to get creative when solving problems. (*Picture book. 5-7*)



SATELLITE

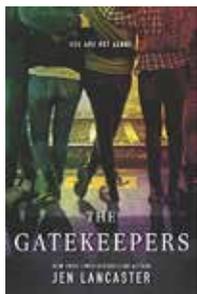
Lake, Nick
Knopf (464 pp.)
\$17.99 | \$17.99 e-book | \$20.99 PLB
Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-5247-1353-9
978-1-5247-1355-3 e-book
978-1-5247-1354-6 PLB



In this free-wheeling sci-fi adventure firmly grounded by its layered characters, Lake (*Whisper to Me, 2016, etc.*) explores home, family, and the idea of belonging.

Raised on a space station since birth, Leo, Libra, and Orion eagerly await their journey to Earth. Each brown-skinned teenager has family ties and personal desires that pull and tether them to the ground (growing plants, hearing music, throwing a ball). But the home they longed for is less than welcoming. The novel's syntax is the first true bit of worldbuilding. The lack of sentence case (only names are capitalized) is enough to mark Leo as "alien" without being obstructive. The subtlety of the exposition overall works well for the near-future setting. Narrator Leo is, rightfully, more captivated by the taste of ice cream and the feel of the breeze against his face than by the cosmetics everyone seems to be wearing and the private Amazon-like corporation that runs the space program. Considering the number of disasters and near misses in the book, it moves at a languid pace, allowing the tension to slowly crescendo and crash again and again. These moments are a pleasant surprise each time, as the book is driven not by the plot but rather by an overwhelming sense of majesty. Every scene is awesome in the most reverent sense of the word.

Bursts with wonder and love. (*Science fiction. 13-adult*)



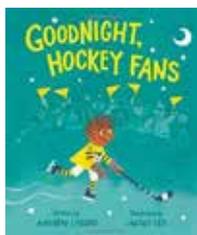
THE GATEKEEPERS

Lancaster, Jen
 Harlequin Teen (448 pp.)
 \$18.99 | \$18.99 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017
 978-0-373-21261-3
 978-1-4880-2782-6 e-book

When the pressure to excel becomes too much, a group of teens bands together to save each other.

At elite North Shore High School, students are expected to be the best of the best; the school has a 98-percent college-attendance rate and wants it to be 100 percent. Driven overachiever Mallory is borderline bulimic from the pressure, while newcomer Simone lets herself be taken in by the drive for success above anything else. Owen refuses to participate, focusing on his nonacademic interests and pot. Best friends Stephen and Kent work hard on their MIT applications, but they handle the stress very differently. What do these different students have in common? They are all affected by the suicides of their fellow students. And when two students in their year kill themselves, everyone decides it's time to change, announced in a few soapbox moments. Will that be enough to save lives when even some of their parents are unwilling to reduce the school pressure on their children for fear of lowering property values? While the students cover a range of attitudes and backgrounds (Mallory is white, Stephen is Korean, Owen is Jewish, and Simone is mixed-race—white and Indian), the answers seem to come too easily, boiling down to supportive parents.

An oversimplified take on the profoundly complex problem of teen suicide. (*Fiction. 14-18*)



GOODNIGHT, HOCKEY FANS

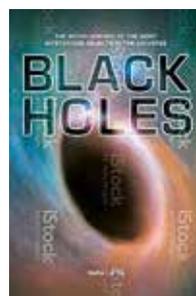
Larsen, Andrew
 Illus. by Lee, Jacqui
 Kids Can (32 pp.)
 \$16.99 | Oct. 3, 2017
 978-1-77138-105-5

A hockey superfan can't get to sleep until he tunes his radio to the big game.

Early one night, a crescent moon and a sprinkling of stars shine over a dozen houses in a small village. Inside one, a multiracial family (brown-skinned dad, white mom, brown-skinned child) watches the hockey game together, but the son's bedtime comes before the game ends. "What if I can't fall asleep?" he asks as they put him to bed. Indeed, he stays restless and awake, using his flashlight to illuminate items in his room. "Goodnight, hockey puck," he whispers. He suddenly remembers that he has his dad's radio and turns it on, tuning into the game. With this in his ears, he's soon asleep, dreaming of an exciting hockey game, one in which he bursts onto the ice and seizes control of the puck. After a moment of shock, the other players give chase, too late to catch him. He shoots, he scores! "What a play! What a goal! What a game!"

When his parents open the door to check on him, they see that he's sleeping comfortably but they also hear, faintly, the sound of the radio broadcasting the game. "Goodnight, hockey fans from coast to coast." Larsen evocatively captures a lovely childhood moment. Lee's illustrations are nicely composed, with minimal elements and clever use of light.

While hockey fans are the most obvious audience for this book, it depicts a familiar childhood scene. (*Picture book. 3-6*)



BLACK HOLES
The Weird Science of the Most Mysterious Objects in the Universe

Latta, Sara
 Twenty-First Century/Lerner (120 pp.)
 \$37.32 PLB | Nov. 1, 2017
 978-1-5124-1568-1

A fresh look at some of the universe's weirdest astronomical phenomena and the people who study them.

Observations in 2015 proved that black holes create gravitational waves when they collide—but, as Latta points out, that's hardly the only string in their bows, because they also sing, dance, belch, and blow bubbles! Along with lucidly explaining the significance of said waves in our relativistic universe, the author describes how black holes are formed and how they behave, at least to our current understanding. She does this in such lively language that attentive readers will come away with firm grasps of a host of cosmically slippery notions, from the Chandrasekhar limit and the Schwarzschild radius to Fermi Bubbles and "spaghettification." She also gives "major props" to the scientists who imagined and then actually found black holes, and she profiles five researchers (all white, but three are women) who are currently engaged in probing their secrets. The photos, graphics, and diagrams are small but sharp, clear, and helpful. The black hole at the center of our Milky Way galaxy, Sagittarius A* (pronounced "A-star"), headlines a closing gallery of "All-Star Black Holes," and annotated lists of recommended reading and viewing provide deeper dives into the topic.

An up-to-date excursion past the boundaries of Newtonian physics: "Crazy!" as the author aptly puts it. (*source notes, index*) (*Nonfiction. 11-14*)



LINES

Lee, Suzy

Illus. by the author

Chronicle (40 pp.)

\$17.99 | Sep. 5, 2017

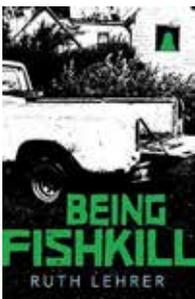
978-1-4521-5665-1



A lone skater, pale-skinned and dark-haired in a red knit cap and mittens, swoops across the white expanse of each double-page spread in this wordless picture book that celebrates companionship and play.

At first reveling in solitary freedom, the figure flies across the ice, skates carving a symphony of lines in the surface with graceful spins, leaps, and turns. Eventually tumbling and crashing to the ground, the skater comes to a skidding halt. Next readers see a crumpled piece of paper, the little skater apparently no more than the figment of an artist's imagination. But wait! The wad of paper is flattened out, and there's the skater, alone and forlorn, on a smudged and wrinkled background, until another child comes along, then another and another. Soon the page is filled with joyful children of varying skin tones and hair colors—and even a bounding dog—skating and throwing snowballs on a pond surrounded by snow and trees. The deft pencil illustrations convey movement and emotion so effectively that words are superfluous.

Readers are transported into a wintry wonderland of exuberant bliss in this picture book that speaks to those who like to explore the boundaries of creative expression. (Picture book. 4-8)



BEING FISHKILL

Lehrer, Ruth

Candlewick (320 pp.)

\$17.99 | Nov. 14, 2017

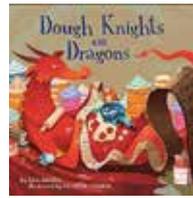
978-0-7636-8442-6

Born in the back seat of a car and named for a road sign, Carmel Fishkill's first 12 years of life are filled with neglect and abuse.

After her grandfather's death and her mother's disappearance, she decides to refashion her image by switching her name and becoming Fishkill. She begins using violence to intimidate other students into giving her food. But when she tries her tactics on a new girl who calls herself Duck-Duck, she finds she has met her match and made a new friend. When Duck-Duck's mother, Molly, presses her for details about her home life, Fishkill reluctantly admits that she has been living alone for months. Molly tries to help, but the reappearance of Fishkill's mother, Keely, complicates everything. Keely is erratic, dangerous, and immature, but when Duck-Duck begins shunning Fishkill in favor of the popular girls, she might be her only option. A desperately sad story of profound abuse is softened somewhat by the highly intelligent Duck-Duck and her loving mother. But neither love nor grief

is linear. Fishkill's guilt, anger, and abandonment only intensify as the story unfolds, leaving her desperate and unsure where to turn. The characters seem to be default white, with diversity limited to the sexual orientation of some key characters.

Abuse is eclipsed by love in this moving novel. (Fiction. 14-18)



DOUGH KNIGHTS AND DRAGONS

Leone, Dee

Illus. by Ermos, George

Sterling (40 pp.)

\$16.95 | Oct. 3, 2017

978-1-4549-2141-7

It's *The Great British Baking Show: Medieval Edition!*

Had Kenneth Grahame's Reluctant Dragon learned the fine art of patisserie, perhaps his tale would have echoed the one readers find here. A redheaded white knight on the hunt for fresh herbs finds himself at the mouth of a cave filled with mysterious ingredients. His desire to try them in a stew awakens a curious resident dragon that finds the soup delish. An instant, forbidden friendship is formed, for in this land every knight must slay a dragon and every dragon must eat a knight. The friends puzzle over the law, concocting delicious dainties in the meantime. In the end, they cook up a tasty solution involving oddly shaped doughnuts and legal semantics. The peppy digital art keeps the action hopping and the tasty treats tempting. Extra points for a map of the land that was clearly a labor of love. The rhyming text is ultimately unnecessary, but no bumps can be found in the scansion. The ending in which all xenophobic differences are overcome with the wonders of food is certainly weighted on the cockeyed-optimist side of the equation, but it's hard to fault a book with a dragon-and-knight food fight at its close.

Cookery and chivalry mix together well in this cream puff of a tale. (Picture book. 4-7)



THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

Leroux, Gaston & Jackson, Erik Forrest

Illus. by Richardson, Owen

Penguin Workshop (304 pp.)

\$12.99 paper | \$12.99 e-book

Oct. 17, 2017

978-0-451-53437-8

978-1-5247-8660-1 e-book

Series: Muppets Meet the Classics

The Muppets put a humorous spin on the classic tragedy *The Phantom of the Opera*.

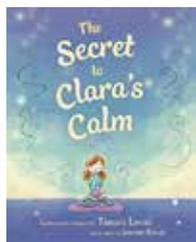
The plot is much the same as the original, with Muppets filling in for the original characters. Vicomte Kermit de Chagny and Mademoiselle Piggy Daaé are the main characters and love interests in this tragic tale. As in the classic, Piggy Daaé rises as a star of the Paris Opera House due to training from an Angel

The muted pastel illustrations are certainly calm but unlikely to draw in children who are not already calm themselves.

THE SECRET TO CLARA'S CALM

of Music, who in this tale is a Koozebanian of Music from the planet Koozebane (or is he?). The main difference between this book and the classic (other than the cast) is the conglomeration of time periods, with a mix of details drawn from both the 21st and the 19th centuries. This may cause older readers mild confusion at first, but children will likely read without inhibition, as the experience of coming across names and objects they recognize and some things they may not is a familiar one. This puntastic tale is full of beloved faces, such as the grouchy pranksters Statler and Waldorf. As in many children's stories, there is entertainment for older readers with abundant modern references, often found in footnotes, as in a tidbit about Beaker's burial alongside Oscar Wilde, Molière, and Jim Morrison.

There's no bones about it: young readers will get a taste of the classic in a fun and *humerus* way (wocka wocka). (Fiction. 8-12)



THE SECRET TO CLARA'S CALM

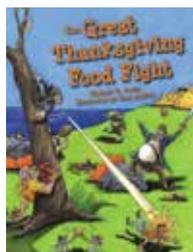
Levitt, Tamara
Illus. by the author
 Wisdom Publications (36 pp.)
 \$15.95 | Nov. 21, 2017
 978-1-61429-390-3

Mindfulness is the new hot topic in education, so this effort could be a timely addition to the "picture books for

parenting" shelf.

Clara wants to be nice, but her temper flares when things don't go her way. Eventually, her unpredictable behavior alienates her friends. Fortunately (and rather improbably) a wise-cracking bird named Brodhi shows up poolside to teach her to "chill out"—slow down and breathe deep. The well-meaning message is clear, but that is part of the problem. The lesson overpowers the slight story. There is no doubt where the story is heading or how it will be resolved. The muted pastel illustrations are certainly calm but unlikely to draw in children who are not already calm themselves. Similarly, the picture-book format will be most attractive to young children, not the 8- to 12-year-olds Levitt seems to be targeting. Clara is white and decidedly middle-class. While she has two friends of color, the friend who features most prominently is also white. "Butter tarts," a uniquely Canadian treat, also feature heavily in the story, which may puzzle U.S. readers.

Even for New Age parents and kids, Clara may be just too calm. (Picture book. 8-12)



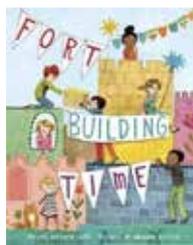
THE GREAT THANKSGIVING FOOD FIGHT

Lewis, Michael G.
Illus. by Jaskiel, Stan
 Pelican (32 pp.)
 \$16.99 | Sep. 1, 2017
 978-1-4556-2285-6

Pirates descend on the first Thanksgiving, and it's not a pretty sight.

When Cap'n McNasty and the crew of the *Knotty List* find themselves with an empty galley, they follow their noses to Plymouth Rock. Invited to the table, they seat themselves and promptly start stuffing a giant sack with the bounty. When their hosts notice, the titular food fight erupts, with pies and pumpkins flying. The pirates beat a retreat with their loot only to discover when they get back to their ship that but one pea remains to be split among them. Young readers will wonder how that happened, as there is no evident hole in the sack; close examination of the pirates' flight reveals that the mouth of the sack may not be held quite closed, though it's not at all clear that this is the case in Jaskiel's rather frantic painting. Impossible physics aside, this title is an eminently skippable one, as there's hardly any stereotyping opportunity lost. The pirate captain himself has but one eye, one hand, and one leg; the Pilgrims are beneficent, and the Wampanoag guests (barely mentioned in the text) are hawk-nosed and bare-chested. There's lots of disruption going on, but none of it is to the foundational myth of the first Thanksgiving. Add to this confusing compositions and limping verse, and there's lots of reasons to leave this one on the shelf.

Skip this feast. (Picture book. 4-7)



FORT-BUILDING TIME

Lloyd, Megan Wagner
Illus. by Halpin, Abigail
 Knopf (32 pp.)
 \$16.99 | \$16.99 e-book | \$19.99 PLB
 Oct. 10, 2017
 978-0-399-55655-5
 978-0-399-55657-9 e-book
 978-0-399-55656-2 PLB

A celebration of fort-building play throughout the year.

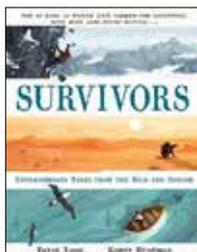
A diverse cast of children with different skin colors and hair textures builds forts with a wide variety of materials in winter, spring, summer, and fall. "WINTER is a...dog-snuggling, cocoa-drinking, snowman-making, fort-building time!" the book opens, and illustrations flesh out the action with said diverse characters and specific materials—in this case, an Asian boy skis past a white girl and a black girl playing near a snow fort festooned with evergreen garlands and pine cones hanging from red string. New fort-building materials are introduced with the changing seasons, and additional characters join in the play, but neither text nor illustrations ever develops a narrative. Instead, text and art simply depict the children's fort-building activities (some quite spectacular) until the final pages depart from the seasonal structure

The well-crafted page design keeps readers guessing at what will happen next.

MOUSE

and depict children grappling with a fort that falls apart and then needs rebuilding. “Every season has its own secret-dreaming, cozy-keeping, hush-listening, fort-building time,” reads the text that introduces those pages, perhaps inviting readers to dream up their own fort-building activities, no matter the season.

Playful reading fun. (Picture book. 3-5)



SURVIVORS

Long, David

Illus. by Hyndman, Kerry

Faber & Faber (192 pp.)

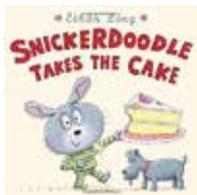
\$19.95 | Oct. 5, 2017

978-0-571-31601-4

A large-format hardcover gathers together true stories of adventure and survival.

Two that are well-known, at least to adults, are Ernest Shackleton's ill-fated Antarctic expedition and the ordeal of Aron Ralston, who cut off his own arm with a dull pocketknife in order to extricate himself from a dislodged boulder that trapped him in a narrow canyon, the subject of the film *127 Hours*. Lesser known is the story of Poon Lim, who survived 133 days alone in the South Atlantic when the merchant ship he was serving on was sunk by a U-boat. At one point, he caught a shark several feet long, pulled it aboard his raft, beat it to death, and proceeded to suck its blood and eat it raw for nourishment. Seventeen-year-old Juliane Koepcke, the sole survivor of a plane crash in the Peruvian rain forest, relied on survival lessons taught by her parents. During her nine-day ordeal, she poured gasoline on her wounds, which succeeded in removing 35 maggots from one arm. In a skiing accident, Anna Bågenholm was trapped under freezing water for so long her heart stopped. Four hours later, medics managed to warm her blood enough to revive her. The attractive design features a full-page or double-page-spread color illustration depicting a pivotal moment in each well-told story. Entirely absent are such standard features as table of contents, source notes, bibliography, or index, pegging this as an entertainment resource only.

A great collection of harrowing, true survivor stories. (Nonfiction. 9-12)



SNICKERDOODLE TAKES THE CAKE

Long, Ethan

Illus. by Long, Ethan

Holiday House (32 pp.)

\$16.95 | \$16.95 e-book | Oct. 17, 2017

978-0-8234-3784-9

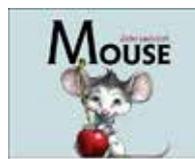
978-0-8234-3926-3 e-book

A young chinchilla who just can't resist temptation comes up with a way to make amends.

Children (and adults!) will totally understand how Snickerdoodle feels when faced with the irresistible lure of his mother's

“Famous Lemon Poppy Seed Cake with Buttercream Icing.” And if they don't have personal experience, Long's digital illustrations make the small creature's feelings perfectly clear. Yes, the cake is marked with a “Do Not Touch” note. But even Snickerdoodle's imagined picture of his mother as a forked-tongue, horned monster surrounded by fire and screaming “STAY AWAY FROM the CAKE” can't stop him from rationalizing that the note didn't say not to “try one tiny crumb.” Resistance is utterly futile after that, and though Snickerdoodle tries (hysterically) to control his wayward hand, he can't control the tripping hazard that is his cat. Cliffhangers on many of the spreads lead readers to frantically turn the pages as each “But...” leads to yet more disaster for Snickerdoodle. The three siblings' solution is perfectly in tune with what readers might do, and their results are believably childlike and completely satisfactory to their Na Na, whose birthday they are celebrating. While the male chinchillas in the anthropomorphic family are grayish, all the females have eyelashes and a slightly pink cast to their fur.

Though Snickerdoodle fails to resist gluttony with either cake, this remains a realistic look at problem-solving and making things right. (Picture book. 3-7)



MOUSE

Ludvick, Zeb

Illus. by the author

Putnam (40 pp.)

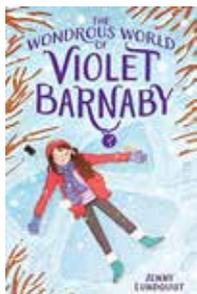
\$16.99 | Nov. 21, 2017

978-1-101-99636-2

Is it possible for a mouse and the letter M to become friends?

The cover of the adorable mouse holding a cherry and sporting a plaid bow tie will be irresistible to youngsters. Mouse is enjoying his cherry when a large letter M with eyes and a mouth asks for a bite. Mouse reluctantly allows one bite. But, pronouncing it “Marvelous,” M wants more and eats it all. In return, M offers Mouse a nibble of itself. Mouse “Munches” and “Nibbles” M's legs off until nothing is left of M but a Z. Feeling full, Mouse “Nods” off until a bolt of “Lightning” wakes the rodent up and transforms the Z into a L. But the former M is now “Lopsided” from all the chewing, so Mouse takes M's broken pieces and puts it back together, making it “Magnificent” and “Magical” once again (though not without a few false starts that has it cycling through a few other letters). The truism of the story is that there is no Mouse without an M. The digital illustrations have the flair and charm of animation cels, and they rescue the oddball story. The well-crafted page design keeps readers guessing at what will happen next. Kids won't care or notice that in this vignette Mouse interacts with only some alphabet letters: M, N, Z, L, R, C, U, H. Instead, they will be enamored by the appealing artwork.

This is less of an abecedary and more of an art lesson exploring the changing of shapes piece by piece. Give it an M for Mercurial. (Picture book. 5-8)



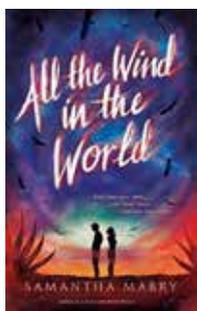
THE WONDROUS WORLD OF VIOLET BARNABY

Lundquist, Jenny
Aladdin (272 pp.)
\$17.99 | \$7.99 paper | \$7.99 e-book
Sep. 19, 2017
978-1-4814-6035-4
978-1-4814-6034-7 paper
978-1-4814-6036-1 e-book

Barely a year after losing her mother to cancer, sixth-grader Violet Barnaby is facing her second Christmas without her—but with her newly remarried father’s wife and her children.

The first Christmas was dubbed Black Christmas, but this one is looking decidedly gray. Now, in addition to dealing with her grief, Violet must find her place in her new stepfamily. Her stepmother, a teacher the kids call the Hammer, proves as difficult at home as she is at school. She lacks empathy and kindness, focusing on her own comfort and desires at the cost of familial harmony. Add in two new stepsiblings, too few chairs at the dining table, and meat on the menu (Violet is a vegetarian), and it is easy to see why Violet feels isolated. When she finds a letter left by her mother that encourages her to make new Christmas memories and move into her new life, Violet wonders if she is ready. Violet’s father and stepmother are painfully clueless and immature, leaving Violet to work out her confusion and grief largely alone. While the treatments of grief, changing friendships, and first crushes are realistic, the constant admonitions from her father to play nice and get along will strike readers as insensitive. The cast is a largely white one.

A mostly emotionally perceptive novel of grief and recovery. (Fiction. 8-12)



ALL THE WIND IN THE WORLD

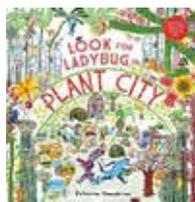
Mabry, Samantha
Algonquin (288 pp.)
\$17.95 | Oct. 10, 2017
978-1-61620-666-6

In a dangerous, post-apocalyptic America, Sarah Jac and her boyfriend, James, keep their relationship a secret as they work at a mysterious farm.

After environmental collapse, the western half of North America is desert. Seventeen-year-old Sarah Jacqueline Crow, aka “Sarah Jac” (who’s mixed-race), and fellow orphan James Holt (who’s white) specialize in picking the maguey plant for violent overseers and profit-hungry ranch owners whose harvests turn into pulque, mescal, and tequila. After a fatal accident during a dust storm, Sarah Jac is accused of murder, and the two stow away on a train that leads them to the Real Marvelous, a ranch in Texas that’s rumored to be cursed. To protect themselves, Sarah Jac and James pretend to be cousins, fearing that if they’re open about their love, they’ll expose themselves to blackmail or

worse. Soon, Sarah Jac is commanded to provide equestrian lessons to the owner’s younger daughter, Bell, while James is commissioned to work in the big house as a groundskeeper—and ends up catching the eye of Bell’s sickly but beautiful older sister, Farrah. A complicated series of plagues, prophecies, and love triangles ensues. The author’s prose is rich and lyrical, but the worldbuilding is lacking, leaving readers wondering about details rather than immersed in the story. In a reverse of most romantic story arcs, the love story goes from initially swoon-worthy to deeply unsatisfying.

Mabry’s mix of magical realism and dystopia doesn’t live up to its promising start. (Science fiction. 14-17)



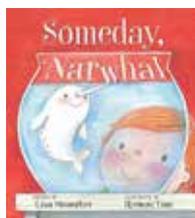
LOOK FOR LADYBUG IN PLANT CITY

Manolessou, Katherina
Illus. by the author
Frances Lincoln (32 pp.)
\$19.99 | Oct. 7, 2017
978-1-78603-029-0

“Welcome to Plant City, where plants grow and ladybugs hide.”

Her mischievous pet ladybug having taken a powder, Daisy, a brown bunny, enlists Basil, a blue lizard and the best detective in town, to track him down—amid teeming hordes of smiling creatures and mazes of vegetation in a museum, a fair, a rock concert (in a cave, naturally), and seven other leafy locales. Filling each oversized spread with bright color and busy activity, Manolessou invites viewers to spot not only the errant insect, but seven other members of the diverse all-animal cast sleeping, crying, carrying various items, or, at Hedge Hospital, suffering specified maladies. At last, Basil comes away from a visit to the silly hat store with Ladybug on his head, so it’s time for some celebratory ice cream. The printed narrative adds dialogue and minor flourishes to the rudimentary storyline, but the pictures, full as they are of lively action and byplay, should prove the main draw.

A moderately challenging addition to the “seek and find” genre, large of format and cheery of tone. (visual key) (Picture book. 5-7)



SOMEDAY, NARWHAL

Mantchev, Lisa
Illus. by Yum, Hyewon
Paula Wiseman/Simon & Schuster
(40 pp.)
\$17.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Oct. 17, 2017
978-1-4814-7970-7
978-1-4814-7971-4 e-book

A tiny narwhal dreams of seeing the world beyond her fishbowl.

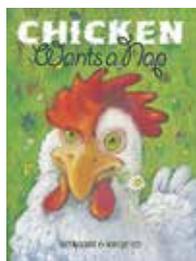
The little white narwhal’s entire universe seems to be an endless circle: the red front door, potted plant, umbrella stand, piano, and back to the red front door. She wants to travel, but

Marchini's story and economy of telling display the chicken as total id, and Felix's pencil-and-watercolor illustrations are genuine works of art.

CHICKEN WANTS A NAP

she is worried about obstacles. She can't walk, is afraid of getting lost, and doesn't want to get cold. The little white boy who lives outside the bowl sympathizes. His diverse group of friends and their accompanying animals—a penguin, a giraffe, and a bat—are eager to help. They come up with a plan to wheel her through the neighborhood in a little red wagon, and off they go. She is thrilled with everything she sees, especially travel posters that hint of an even wider world. Mantchev keeps the tone simple and innocent, filled with wonder. The friends, both human and animal, are kind and encouraging in words and deeds. Yum's childlike, softly hued, colored-pencil-and-gouache drawings complement the sweetness of the tale, and her animals more closely resemble cuddly toys than their real-life counterparts. However it is the central premise of the narwhal in a fishbowl that is problematic. That very tiny, cute creature is so far from the reality (5 feet long and 200 pounds at birth, with grayish-brown coloring) as to severely compromise the suspension of disbelief.

The tender, kind friendship outweighs the flaws. (Picture book. 3-5)



CHICKEN WANTS A NAP

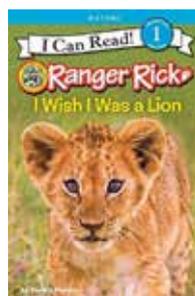
Marchini, Tracy
 Illus. by Felix, Monique
 Creative Editions/Creative Company
 (24 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Sep. 1, 2017
 978-1-56846-308-7



A day on the farm, seen through the eyes of a lively chicken.

"It's a good day to be a chicken. The sun is up. The grass is warm. And chicken wants a nap." Marchini's minimal text runs in short sentences across the bottom of the book's pages, the better to highlight Felix's distinctive, painterly illustrations. Her chicken, with white feathers, yellow feet and bill, green eyes, and bright-red wattle and comb, has personality, nobility, and a kind of beauty. As the day progresses, the chicken's plan to nap is consistently foiled, first by a sudden rain. She finds refuge in the quiet barn, but it's disrupted by the loud, malodorous cows. The chicken next tries to find some peace on the porch, which is covered because "the farmer is kind." This time it's the loud barking of the friendly farm dog that disrupts. Again, the chicken cannot nap. It becomes a good day again when the rain stops and the worms come out of the ground. Belly full, the chicken is finally able to nap. But: "It's a bad day to be a worm," is the cheeky close. Marchini and Felix successfully portray their chicken as a real animal, not a cartoon or a human stand-in, and present life on a small farm. Marchini's story and economy of telling display the chicken as total id, and Felix's pencil-and-watercolor illustrations are genuine works of art.

A surprising gem. (Picture book. 3-7)



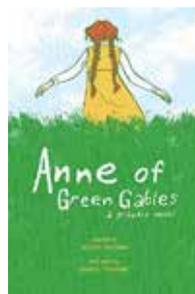
I WISH I WAS A LION

Markle, Sandra
 Harper/HarperCollins (32 pp.)
 \$16.99 | \$3.99 paper | \$5.99 e-book
 Oct. 17, 2017
 978-0-06-243205-6
 978-0-06-243206-3 paper
 978-0-06-243244-5 e-book
 Series: Ranger Rick

Can the venerable I Can Read line attract beginning readers with facts?

For decades these popular, often humorous leveled readers featuring well-known characters (Pinkalicious, Fancy Nancy, Amelia Bedelia, Danny and the Dinosaur, and more) have provided practice in reading skills. For its 60th anniversary publisher Harper has partnered with the National Wildlife Federation's *Ranger Rick* magazine and website and tapped veteran science writer Markle to broaden their reach. Questions about lions, including life in a pride, how lions communicate, how lions learn, what lions eat, where lions sleep, and lions' grooming habits, introduce topics and are highlighted in green. Simple repetitive answers are printed in a clear, black type. Each behavior is illustrated by attractive stock photos from the NWF archives. Ranger Rick, NWF's iconic cartoon raccoon mascot, interrupts the flow of facts with additional speculative questions, such as "How could teamwork help you?" Intriguing facts that do not fit the format are included in a "Did you know?" section. A "Fun Zone" page explains that lions are very fast and challenges readers to test their own reaction times. "Wild Words" offers a seven-word glossary. "Dig Deeper" refers parents or teachers to the *Ranger Rick* website. None of this, however, is quite enough to grab the attention of new readers raised on live-action wildlife television.

Serviceable but nothing to roar about. (Informational early reader. 5-9)



ANNE OF GREEN GABLES A Graphic Novel

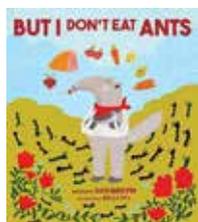
Marsden, Mariab
 Illus. by Thummler, Brenna
 Andrews McMeel (232 pp.)
 \$10.99 paper | Oct. 24, 2017
 978-1-4494-7960-2

A beloved and feisty heroine gets a graphic-novel makeover.

In this adaptation that follows L.M. Montgomery's novel fairly faithfully, orphan Anne Shirley, with fiery tresses and an even more red-hot temper, arrives in Avonlea to help aging brother and sister Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert at their lovely home, Green Gables. Brimming over with imagination and having a propensity for florid ramblings, Anne stands out in the plainspoken town but manages to weave her way into the hearts of those who meet her, including her new "bosom friend," the mild and

well-behaved Diana Barry, and her academic rival and possible love interest, Gilbert Blythe. Anne manages to find herself in many a predicament, but time after time her inherent goodness always rights her wrongdoings. Marsden's reprise of Montgomery's time-honored tale stays true and manages to hit all the notes of the original. Thummler's envisioned Avonlea is lush and verdurous, capturing the earthy beauty of the bucolic hills. However, some of her all-white characters—including Anne—are depicted with eyes as pupilless colored discs with no whites; this makes them appear blank and their bearers almost sightless, sounding a discordant note. But this small quibble is not enough to tarnish an otherwise vivacious imagining.

A sweet and cheerful adaptation of the beloved classic.
(*Graphic adaptation.* 7-13)



BUT I DON'T EAT ANTS

Marvin, Dan
Illus. by Fry, Kelly
POW! (32 pp.)
\$16.99 | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-57687-837-8

An anthropomorphic anteater enjoys many foods but is vehemently opposed to eating ants.

Capital letters are used throughout, beginning with the initial page: "I AM AN ANTEATER AND I LOVE TO EAT." Bright graphics that have the appearance of digital animation show a friendly-looking, gray critter in a waistcoat, its long, red ribbon of a tongue snaking out over a table full of colorful, human foods: a burger on a bun; a pink, triple-layer cake; a bowl of fruit; some sort of pie. On the next double-page spread, readers learn that, like people, this anteater eats three meals a day—and does not eat ants. After a double-page spread full of foodstuffs, there is a droll illustration of anteaters sitting at a place-matted table, with all but one sucking ants out of individual jars labeled, "ANTS." The protagonist is munching—or tonguing—hot dogs and fries. There follow pages of clever, anti-ant-eating wordplay, with matching, funny artwork. For example: "TORTELLINI? TOTALLINI!" shouts the anteater as it whizzes by on a skateboard, one paw on board, the other with a tortellini noodle on a fork. Other cheerful-looking creatures add to the fun. A wry commentary on other animals' diets yields the observation that "JAGUARS EAT ANTEATERS, BUT THEY AREN'T CALLED ANTEATER-EATERS." An apron-clad mother anteater plays an important part in a punch line that will garner knowing nods and grins.

Funny, light, and whimsical. (*Picture book.* 3-6)



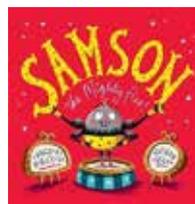
GIRLCOTT

Maxwell, Florenz Webbe
Blouse & Skirt Books (190 pp.)
\$12.99 paper | \$12.99 e-book
Sep. 15, 2017
978-976-8267-08-5
978-976-8267-09-2 e-book

A historical novel examines racial tensions in mid-20th-century Bermuda.

Desma Johnson is a black Bermudian girl who is a week away from her 16th birthday. Growing up in a segregated Bermuda in 1959, she's a brilliant scholar, having earned the Empire Scholarship, beating out many other "coloured" and white students in the Commonwealth. Her father's gift to her was to be his treating her entire class to the movies. But this is where Desma's troubles begin. Rumors of a boycott on the island begin circulating. The Progressive Group, said to be initiators of the boycott, seeks to end racial segregation in Bermuda, and they plan to do so by boycotting the movie theaters. Desma is upset by this development, but as the anxieties around the boycott build, she becomes aware of the racial tensions that she had previously been sheltered from in her paradise home of Bermuda. She comes to see a new, less favorable side of neighbors who were once friendly and supportive and realizes the harshness of the shadow that racial divisions cast over the island. In frequently expository prose, Maxwell tells a simple tale of a moment in a country's history that is often erased. One-dimensional characters, jerky dialogue, and an awkward and excessive use of metaphors often take away from the significance of the revolution that should be at the center of this story.

The pivotal moment this Jamaican import describes deserves a more artful vehicle for the telling. (*Historical fiction.* 12-16)



SAMSON, THE MIGHTY FLEA!

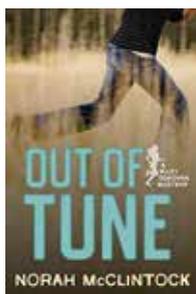
McAllister, Angela
Illus. by Reed, Nathan
Andersen Press USA (40 pp.)
\$17.99 | Oct. 1, 2017
978-1-5124-8123-5

A flea strongman leaves the small circus where he has been performing in search of greater fame and fortune.

The eponymous Samson is a big draw at Fleabag's Circus. Although he's clearly adored by his colleague, Amelie, and appreciated by audiences, readers are told that he feels "empty," so he sets off in search of broader horizons and bigger audiences. Shadowed by a bee wearing a pirate hat and polka-dot pants, Samson pursues his dreams only to find that reaching them doesn't make him happier. A wild ride on a shaggy red dog (with a little help from the bee) leads him home again. Sly humor abounds, much of it in the brightly colored, retro-styled illustrations. There are clever costumes: Samson's leopard-spotted

pants (echoed on the endpapers) and high-top sneakers, for example, and the balloon bug's French-mime striped shirt and beret. The funniest detail—one that's pivotal to the plot—is the larger stage upon which Samson eventually performs: a human strongman's head. Unfortunately, the text is not as successful. It bumps along, sometimes rhyming, sometimes not, with little internal logic. Neither Samson's initial hollowness nor his change of heart is particularly convincing and likely won't have much meaning for young listeners.

Ultimately, Samson is appealingly offbeat but not quite the big star that he aspires to be. (*Picture book. 4-7*)



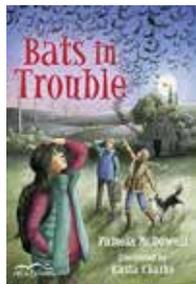
OUT OF TUNE
A Riley Donovan Mystery

McClintock, Norah
Orca (240 pp.)
\$10.95 paper | Oct. 24, 2017
978-1-4598-1465-3

A musical prodigy, Alicia, goes missing and turns up murdered in this latest Riley Donovan mystery from prolific McClintock.

Red herrings are distributed carefully, as are possible suspects, as Riley uses her guardian aunt's position in the local police force as well as gossip, mostly from annoyingly whiny friend Ashleigh, to investigate. After previous outings, Riley is an experienced solver of mysteries and is approached to clear an acquaintance who is suspected of having committed the crime. Moorebridge is a small Canadian town with a largely white population where most everybody has heard of one another even if they don't know them personally. The threads of the mystery eventually lead Riley to discover the perpetrator and to find a solution that, of course, puts her in danger. The key to the plot (both the novel's and the crime) is the tremendous pressure and competition endemic to the world of gifted musicians. And this small community has three! The swift pace and Riley's straightforward narration make this accessible, and low but not absent levels of gore and violence keep pages turning.

A solid whodunit. (*Mystery. 11-15*)



BATS IN TROUBLE

McDowell, Pamela
Illus. by Charko, Kasia
Orca (96 pp.)
\$6.95 paper | \$6.95 e-book | Oct. 17, 2017
978-1-4598-1403-5
978-1-4598-1405-9 e-book

Visiting her grandfather's Alberta farm, Cricket and her best friend, Shilo, discover dead bats near wind turbines operated by the local utility, work out the problem, and find a way to help the bats migrate more safely.

This is a third episode in a Canadian series about animal-lover Cricket McKay, who previously saved ospreys and salamanders (*Salamander Rescue*, 2016, etc.). The 11 short chapters include grayscale illustrations (often occupying a full page) showing the white characters in action. Emerging readers in the primary grades will appreciate the simple, straightforward writing and larger-than-usual type but may be confused by the opening story fragment featuring a character who doesn't figure in the actual story. That ghost story, told around a campfire, is a way of introducing Shilo's fears about bats. Happily, as she learns what bats actually do and don't do, these fears disappear. The two girls identify the dead bats—migrating hoary bats—encounter another local species while sheltering from a hail storm in Mr. McKay's old hay shed, and make origami bats themselves. (A missed illustration opportunity shows several stages of their paper-folding but not the complete instructions.) Finally, they come up with a clever and successful way of sharing their concerns with townspeople and the electric company. An epilogue tells readers more about bats and about the scientific study on which the story is based.

Purposeful but effective in delivering an environmental message and encouraging action. (*Fiction. 7-9*)



WATCHDOG

McIntosh, Will
Delacorte (192 pp.)
\$16.99 | \$16.99 e-book | \$19.99 PLB
Oct. 10, 2017
978-1-5247-1384-3
978-1-5247-1385-0 e-book
978-1-5247-1386-7 PLB

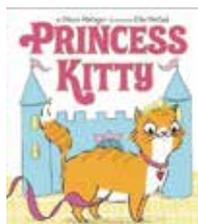
In a nasty, hyperstratified future, white twins Vick and Tara are on their own in the scary streets of Chicago, where economic disaster has laid waste to the poorer sections of the city.

Although Tara is autistic—communicative but faced with worsening symptoms—she has a remarkable talent for designing the robot watchdogs that everyone uses for a variety of purposes. The pair scrounge for saleable electronics all day long in the blocks-long dump that's developed in their part of the city, and at night Tara tinkers. But after she finds an amazing chip among the debris, she crafts a seemingly sentient little critter, Daisy. Daisy's astonishing capabilities immediately attract the attention of the cruel overlord of the Chicago robotics world, Ms. Alba, an Asian woman who uses a group of imprisoned, mostly child workers to turn out watchdog robots. Her minions kidnap the siblings, but with Daisy's help they break out. It's only after they begin to accept help from other street kids that the believably portrayed Vick and Tara start to make a bit of progress. The grim setting is vividly depicted, and the clever-kid-against-mean-adult trope is both plausible and very satisfying. The fast-paced narrative readily conveys the looming sense of ever present danger.

A playful spin on the new-baby theme.

THE LITTLE BOY WHO LIVED DOWN THE DRAIN

Engaging, suspenseful, and with nearly all the vivid fighting confined to robots, this gritty tale is perfect for a younger audience than most post-apocalyptic stories. (*Post-apocalyptic adventure. 10-14*)



PRINCESS KITTY

Metzger, Steve
 Illus. by Okstad, Ella
 Harper/HarperCollins (32 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Oct. 17, 2017
 978-0-06-230662-3

Princess Kitty's attendants throw a party in her honor. Ooh la la!

"My name is Princess Kitty. My attendants have only one job...taking care of ME! They know just what I need." The orange puss's attendants are Anna, her baby sibling, and their parents, a white family. Princess Kitty's overblown narration expresses her perspective, but the illustrations tell another story. She lives in a palace (revealed to be a middle-class home), but she knows her ancestors used to be worshipped. Princess Kitty feels worshipped now. She discovers her attendants are throwing a party for her in a week's time (readers see it's actually a sixth birthday party for Anna). Each day Princess Kitty does something to prepare. Monday's activity is ballet class (jumping from shelf to bed); Thursday's is a massage (slightly too vigorous attention from baby brother); and Friday brings delicacies from afar (Chinese takeout). Princess Kitty's guests (aka Anna's friends) arrive on Saturday, and Princess Kitty manages, at least in her mind, to make it all about her. Metzger's pampered Princess Kitty joins a long line of pets who see their lives slightly differently than their humans do. While Okstad's bright, cartoon, digitally colored illustrations appropriately and humorously clash with Princess Kitty's understanding, the contrast is not as broad nor the activities described as consistent as is necessary for real guffaws.

A far meow from purr-fectly original. (*Picture book. 3-7*)



CHARLIE NUMBERS AND THE MAN IN THE MOON

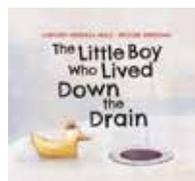
Mezrich, Ben & Mezrich, Tonya
 Simon & Schuster (208 pp.)
 \$16.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Nov. 28, 2017
 978-1-4814-4847-5
 978-1-4814-4849-9 e-book
 Series: Charlie Numbers, 2

Charlie "Numbers" Lewis and his Whiz Kids explore aviation history (and dabble in corporate espionage).

Sixth-grader Charlie, a white boy, and his four somewhat diverse friends are very smart in their fields of expertise. They had quite the adventure at Incredoland (*Bringing down the Mouse*, 2014); now they've been asked by Anastasia Federov, a former student of Charlie's MIT-professor dad's, to enter a

paper-airplane competition. They are to befriend Richard Caldwell, the reigning champ and son of former astronaut (and corporate sponsor of the contest) Buzz Caldwell, and to find out if said former astronaut stole moon rocks from the U.S. government. Of course, nothing turns out the way they expect. Richard's a smart, gracious kid. Anastasia might have faked credentials to get the Whiz Kids into the contest...and faked a lot more than that. Can they figure out what's going on and not come out looking like the bad guys? The Mezrichs follow Charlie's debut with an entertaining-enough thriller dotted with history and science lessons. Though readers will likely give a pass to improbabilities in the story (underground, secret labs and daring escapes riding museum-piece aircraft), improbabilities in the lives of the characters (their parents let their 12-year-olds travel from Boston to D.C. unaccompanied, and another kid sets off fire alarms for fun in a crowded hotel ballroom without repercussions) will leave them scratching their heads and closing the book.

More facile than fun. (*Adventure. 8-11*)



THE LITTLE BOY WHO LIVED DOWN THE DRAIN

Mills, Carolyn Huizinga
 Illus. by Kerrigan, Brooke
 Fitzhenry & Whiteside (32 pp.)
 \$18.95 | Sep. 1, 2017
 978-1-55455-395-2

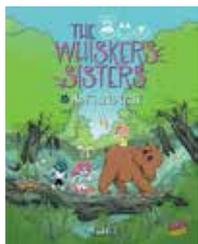
A misheard nursery rhyme gives rise to an imaginary friend who helps a little girl overcome loneliness.

Sally, whom watercolor-and-pencil illustrations depict as a white girl with light skin and sandy-brown hair, thinks her mother ends the "Baa Baa Black Sheep" rhyme she sings to her baby brother with a line about "the little boy... / Who lives down the DRAIN." This inspires her to try to talk with the unseen, pipe-dwelling boy when taking a bath. She voices feelings of sadness and isolation about being too little to join her big sisters in their play, as well as jealousy for her busy parents' attention. Although she's comforted by this imagined audience, she wishes she could hear the little boy respond. "I know you're probably trying, but you need to try something different!" she cries, and the resulting echo inspires her to try something different to change the dynamic with her family. Her efforts ultimately meet with success, not only because her family members respond positively, but because her perspective changes as she realizes, for example, "that much like her favourite toys, she had to share her parents, too." A twist ending returns readers to the nursery rhyme that opened the story, and this time Sally hears about "the little boy who lives down the LANE," whom she imagines anew.

A playful spin on the new-baby theme. (*Picture book. 3-6*)

Solid sports fare for soccer aficionados with a look at how race and class affect kids' friendships.

CAUGHT OFFSIDE



MAY'S WILD WALK

MissPATY

Illus. by the author

Translated by Sacks, Nathan

Graphic Universe (40 pp.)

\$26.65 | \$7.99 paper | Oct. 1, 2017

978-1-5124-2527-7

978-1-5124-5416-1 paper

Series: Whiskers Sisters, 1

A sweet woodland fete may fizzle if the hosts cannot find their younger sister.

The three Whiskers sisters—Maya, who has paper-white skin, pink hair, and antlers; Mia, a blue-gray cat with a cheery yellow gaze; and May, the youngest, also paper-white but with orange tresses and wide pink eyes—live in a pastoral wood, where they await the return of their grandfather, the Guardian of the Forest. Only a toddler, May's kept in the dark when an exciting letter arrives. When her frustrations mount, the precocious toddler stows away with a mail-delivering owl. As Maya and Mia merrily plan their surprise party, they soon discover May's absence; will they be able to find her in time for their big event? Originally published in France, this bubble-gum graphic import is heavy on cute but unfortunately light on narrative substance. The plotting is little more than pabulum, building up to an extremely predictable and saccharine denouement. The worldbuilding is somewhat intriguing, and as this is the first in a series, perhaps subsequent volumes will offer a bit more than fuzzy forest creatures and pink pulchritude. However, the preciously envisioned characters depicted with perky, manga-inspired stylizations may garner favor with some.

As substantive as cotton candy. (*Graphic fantasy. 6-10*)



THE HOLLOW GIRL

Monahan, Hillary

Delacorte (272 pp.)

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

Oct. 10, 2017

978-1-5247-0186-4

978-1-5247-0187-1 e-book

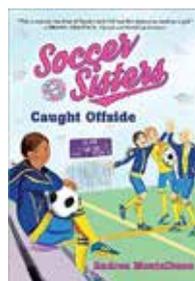
978-1-5247-0188-8 PLB

A Welsh Romani girl faces appalling violence and responds with magic.

Seventeen-year-old Bethan has been raised by her clan's *drabarni*, their witch. Her trips into town to sell her grandmother's magical remedies are plagued by harassment from Silas, the clan chieftain's son. She's protected only by Martyn, a young townsman. Like Bethan, Martyn is diddico, mixed Romani and white. Unlike her, he's been raised in a gadjo town and knows nothing about his Welsh Kale heritage. Still, he befriends her and tries to protect her from Silas—which puts him right in the line of fire of Silas' violence. Silas and his friends beat Martyn nearly to death, then Silas rapes Bethan. The attack brings about Bethan's nascent magical power, and she enacts revenge with horrific, blood-soaked magic. Though

Bethan stresses that Silas and his cronies are exceptions to Romani morality, the only Romani young men depicted participate in rape and attempted murder. And while Gran explains that her magic doesn't come from Romani blood, the clan's caravan life is dominated by the *drabarni*'s dark spells. The result leaves an earnest narrator attempting to depict Romani life as neither criminal nor magical, while the tale itself is about Romani who are at least one or the other.

A cathartic revenge fantasy of rape recovery, Quentin Tarantino-style, weakened by the stereotype-laden depiction of Romani people. (*Fantasy/horror. 14-17*)



CAUGHT OFFSIDE

Montalbano, Andrea

Sourcebooks Jabberwocky (176 pp.)

\$7.99 paper | Oct. 1, 2017

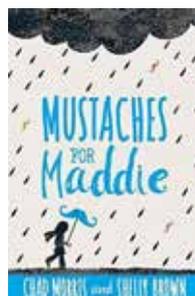
978-1-4926-4484-2

Series: Soccer Sisters, 2

This sports story explores bullying on the Brookville Breakers, a girls soccer team in the New York suburbs.

Protagonist Val Flores' Mexican heritage and lower economic status make her vulnerable in this second in the Soccer Sisters trilogy by Montalbano (*Out of Bounds*, 2017). The team's first outing focused on white, freckled Makena, who is Val's best friend and whose father owns the restaurant where Val's father, Miguel, is the manager. The two girls have been kicking the ball around since they were small, and though Val doesn't live in the same tony suburb as the other team members, she is definitely one of the team's big assets. Nevertheless, Jessie, a tall white girl and a good defender, begins to first hint and then outright tell Val she is not fitting in with the team. How Val handles the insecurities that result from these attacks is the main thrust of the narrative, and a blooming relationship with a teammate's brother forms a subplot. Val seems less interested than many of the others in boys but enjoys having a boy for a friend. Included in the backmatter is an endorsement by Brandi Chastain as well as a glossary and book-discussion questions.

Solid sports fare for soccer aficionados with a look at how race and class affect kids' friendships. (*Fiction. 9-13*)



MUSTACHES FOR MADDIE

Morris, Chad & Brown, Shelly

Shadow Mountain (256 pp.)

\$16.99 | Oct. 3, 2017

978-1-62972-330-3

A 12-year-old copes with a brain tumor.

Maddie likes potatoes and fake mustaches. Kids at school are nice (except one whom readers will see instantly is a bully); soon they'll get to perform Shakespeare scenes in a unit they've all been looking forward to. But

recent dysfunctions in Maddie's arm and leg mean, stunningly, that she has a brain tumor. She has two surgeries, the first successful, the second taking place after the book's end, leaving readers hanging. The tumor's not malignant, but it—or the surgeries—could cause sight loss, personality change, or death. The descriptions of surgery aren't for the faint of heart. The authors—parents of a real-life Maddie who really had a brain tumor—imbue fictional Maddie's first-person narration with quirky turns of phrase (“For the love of potatoes!”) and whimsy (she imagines her medical battles as epic fantasy fights and pretends MRI stands for Mustard Rat from Indiana or Mustaches Rock Importantly), but they also portray her as a model sick kid. She's frightened but never acts out, snaps, or resists. Her most frequent commentary about the tumor, having her skull opened, and the possibility of death is “Boo” or “Super boo.” She even shoulders the bully's redemption. Maddie and most characters are white; one cringe-inducing hallucinatory surgery dream involves “chanting island natives” and a “witch doctor lady.”

Medically, both squicky and hopeful; emotionally, unbelievably squeaky-clean. (authors' note, discussion questions) (*Fiction. 9-11*)



I DREAMED I WAS A DOG

Nakamura, Joel
Illus. by the author
 Leaf Storm Press (32 pp.)
 \$17.95 | Oct. 21, 2017
 978-1-945652-90-5

Dream stories might not be straightforward, but they can be disappointing.

A child of indeterminate ethnicity dreams of being a dog and thus embarks on an unusual journey in which the dog (which bears a striking resemblance to Clifford the Big Red Dog) becomes a dinosaur, which then turns into a futuristic, Picasso-esque train, and on from there. Strangely, the dog persists as a character in the book despite its initial transformation. These illogical meanderings might be explained by the very nature of dreams, and yet the story remains difficult for young readers to follow. Equally puzzling is the visual style itself—full of miniature icons, such as a winged eyeball, musical notes, and stylized bones, and textured, patterned details but ultimately shallow and repetitive in perspective. It seems reminiscent of Native or Aboriginal stylings, but there is no apparent organic reason for its use. The story closes with the child back in bed, surrounded by toys resembling the characters from the dream (though some are left out, leaving the ending disappointingly unfinished)—a tired and overused trope in children's literature that Nakamura employs at the expense of a rich story.

A messy assemblage of convenient pieces that doesn't add up to a satisfying whole. (*Picture book. 3-6*)



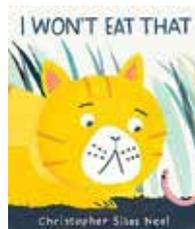
ZACK AND THE TURKEY ATTACK!

Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds
Illus. by To, Vivienne
 Caitlyn Dlouhy/Atheneum (176 pp.)
 \$16.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Oct. 3, 2017
 978-1-4814-3779-0
 978-1-4814-3781-3 e-book

Working on his grandparents' farm every weekend is mostly fun for Zack.

But as soon as that old turkey Tailpipe spots Zack, the bird flies at him and pecks him without mercy. Zack tries all sorts of schemes and tricks to evade him, to no avail. Then he is inspired by the things he sees in grandfather's machine shed and comes up with a genius idea. He will build a contraption, a “turkey-blaster trouble-shooter” that will scare that bird so he will stay away from Zack. Meanwhile, neighbor Josie informs him that things have been disappearing and she is convinced that a robber is on the prowl. Now Zack has two things to worry about. When his friend Matthew joins in with outrageous suggestions, hilarity ensues. The three white friends work together on the ever more elaborate machine, and their interpretations of the burglary clues become more complicated. The children meet the challenges with great ingenuity and good humor. Naylor keeps the tone light and the plot twists simple and believable. Readers will sympathize with Zack's dilemma while laughing in sheer joy at the convoluted attempts at besting that turkey, and they will probably guess the thief's identity, too. Several full-page, detailed, black-and-white illustrations highlight the quirky events and add to the fun.

Charming and lighthearted. (*Fiction. 8-11*)



I WON'T EAT THAT

Neal, Christopher Silas
Illus. by the author
 Candlewick (40 pp.)
 \$15.99 | Nov. 14, 2017
 978-0-7636-7909-5

A finicky cat searches for a meal to satisfy its hunger in this darkly humorous tale.

A marmalade cat turns its nose up to cat food and asks other animals what they eat in order to find its next meal. Each animal's food of choice, however, seems unappetizing to the cat. Turtle's wiggly worms, Fox's bouncy rabbits, Chimp's biting ants, and Elephant's dry grass, among other choices, meet with Cat's disdain. The text follows a cumulative pattern that has Cat listing all of the reasons it rejects others' foods as it approaches each successive animal. When naïve Mouse arrives on the scene, however, Cat perks up when it asks, “What does a cat eat?” The conclusion of the book doesn't definitively show Mouse's probable, sad fate, but a final spread depicts Cat ready to pounce on a wide-eyed Mouse, and closing endpapers show Mouse scurrying away through what seems to be scattered, rejected cat food.

Throughout, mixed-media illustrations are eye-catching and expressive with bold, large forms set against spare backgrounds, making the book a sure bet for storytime success with large groups.

You will read this (and reread it, too). (*Picture book. 3-6*)



TRU & NELLE A Christmas Tale

Neri, G.

HMH Books (336 pp.)

\$16.99 | \$16.99 e-book | Nov. 7, 2017

978-1-328-68598-8

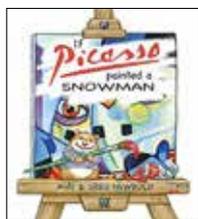
978-1-328-82900-9 e-book



In the sequel to *Tru & Nelle* (2016), Christmas in tiny Monroeville, Alabama, is hardly jolly.

Drawing on real-life characters, places, and events to create a fictional world for Nelle Harper Lee and Truman Capote (Scout and Dill in *To Kill a Mockingbird*), Neri covers three different Christmases, a narrative arc allowing him to follow the two white children to adulthood. In the first scene, 10 days before Christmas in 1935, 11-year-old Truman returns home for a custody hearing that sends him right back to New York City with his parents. Two years later, he shows up again—having escaped from a military academy—and renews his friendship with Nelle, kisses her for the first time (though he reveals his first kiss was with a boy), antagonizes the son of the ex-Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan, and witnesses racism firsthand when Nelle’s father, Amasa Coleman Lee, loses an unfair trial of black defendants unjustly accused. In the brief final section 19 years later, Truman is now a famous writer, and Nelle receives a financial gift that allows her time to write and, in time, also becomes a famous writer. Readers don’t need to know *To Kill a Mockingbird* to find themselves immersed in the goings-on in Monroeville.

An absorbing story of true friends in troubled times. (author’s note, acknowledgments, recipe) (*Historical fiction. 10-12*)



IF PICASSO PAINTED A SNOWMAN

Newbold, Amy

Illus. by Newbold, Greg

Tilbury House (36 pp.)

\$17.95 | Oct. 17, 2017

978-0-88448-593-3

A range of art styles is explored in this picture book that invites readers to imagine how various artists would paint a snowman.

An anthropomorphic hamster wields a paintbrush in opening double-page spreads alongside narration that never mentions it. “If someone asked you to paint a snowman, you would probably start with three white circles stacked upon one

another.” The hamster is doing exactly that. It then describes how 17 different artists would paint a snowman, describing diverse styles, techniques, and movements. Diversity ends on that note, however, with only three women among the 17 artists (Georgia O’Keefe, Pablita Velarde, and Sonia Delaunay), one person of color (Jacob Lawrence) and one Native person (Pablita Velarde). The examples of the art mimic some of the artists’ famous paintings but incorporate imagined snowmen into them. For example, Dali’s “snowmen drip like melted cheese” in a double-page spread that emulates *The Persistence of Memory* with flattened, drooping snowmen rather than time-pieces depicted on the surreal landscape. The off-and-on reappearance of the artist hamster seems a bit intrusive, but a closing spread with a blank easel nicely invites readers to copy it and make their own snowman painting. Endnotes provide further context about the artists, but they do not consistently name the referenced paintings or provide sources for quotations.

A playful introduction to various art movements, albeit a narrow one with weak backmatter. (*Picture book. 5-9*)



ZOO SCIENTISTS TO THE RESCUE

Newman, Patricia

Photos by Crawley, Annie

Millbrook/Lerner (64 pp.)

\$33.32 | Oct. 1, 2017

978-1-5124-1571-1

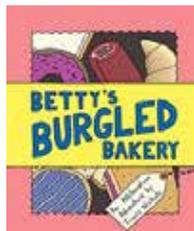
Readers see the human side of animal science.

Newman brings scientific research to life with her lively introduction to three scientists active today, two women and one man, all white and from the United States. The National Zoo’s Meredith Bastian’s “wild perspective” was an important factor in her hiring, first by the Philadelphia Zoo and then by her current employer. Her experiences in Borneo led to conservation efforts that include educating zoo visitors about using palm oil products from companies that do not harm orangutan environments. She has also advocated for the installation of “overhead trails,” resembling ziplines, that allow “orangutans to travel much like wild ones do.” In writing about the Lincoln Park Zoo’s Rachel Santymire’s work in South Africa, Newman describes how “male black rhinos scrape their feces into long trenches” to mark their territory, while “females scrape to look for a mate—kind of like posting a profile on a dating website.” The Cheyenne Mountain Zoo’s Jeff Baughman doesn’t just breed black-footed ferrets; he reintroduces these small mammals back into the wild, helping to build up a population that numbered only 18 in 1984. With engaging photos, useful charts and maps, and practical conservation tips, this volume provides lots of encouragement for budding young scientists.

Three experts, three species, three zoos: these elements add up to a fascinating story of how specialists make a real difference in conservation today. (source notes, glossary, selected bibliography, more conservation stories, index) (*Nonfiction. 9-14*)

Natalia O'Hara's playful, dreamlike story is written in a lyrical cadence and relies on the poetry of the words themselves more than the reality they outline for meaning.

HORTENSE AND THE SHADOW

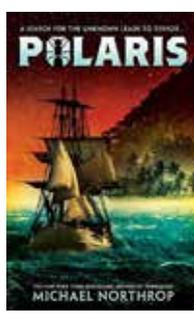


BETTY'S BURGLED BAKERY
Alliteration and Animal Antics Solve a Silly Situation
 Nichols, Travis
 Illus. by the author
 Chronicle (40 pp.)
 \$14.99 | Nov. 7, 2017
 978-1-4521-3183-2

A bandit wipes out Betty's Bakery! Can the Gumshoe Zoo crack the case?

Detective Antoine is interrupted in midsentence—"Always anticipate an alarm. At...any..."—by a frantic call from a panda named Betty. "A bread bandit burgled my bakery before breakfast." Antoine assembles his multispecies squad, and they all head to the crime scene in their big purple van. Nichols' tale progresses through the alphabet in chunks of alliterative narrative. When the squad gets to the bakery, goat Quentin declares, "We'll find the fully fed, fiendish foe." As the investigation continues, Quentin buys some snacks, offering "maybe a meager morsel from the mini-market?" Betty is too distraught to eat: "I'm in need of nary a nibble." Detective Steve, a monkey, finds a solid lead in a half-eaten tart: "If we trace the teeth tracks in this torn tart.../ We can ultimately uncover an unusual underbite." They do, straight to Betty! She's not only a sleepwalker, she's a sleep-eater. Detective Morgan, a white bird, sums it up: "We zipped this zany zigzagging zinger with zeal!" The appendix gives a nice description of alliteration as well as descriptions of five notable leaders of the animal world. The story is a crisp and clever caper, laid out like a comic book in panels. The simple cartoons are rendered in pencil on paper and colored digitally.

This tasty treat's bound to have young readers alliterating along. (Picture book. 3-6)



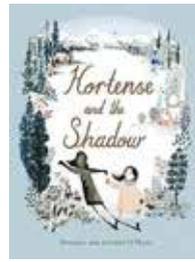
POLARIS
 Northrop, Michael
 Scholastic (288 pp.)
 \$16.99 | \$16.99 e-book | Oct. 31, 2017
 978-0-545-29716-5
 978-1-338-16399-5 e-book

An 1830s American scientific voyage to the Amazon goes terribly wrong.

Only half of the men who went ashore for provisions before the book's outset return to the ship, the *Polaris*, anchored off the coast of Brazil. Afterward some remaining sailors seek to eliminate a sick crew member, and the resulting argument leads to violent mutiny. The successful mutineers, strangely, abandon ship while also attempting to blow it up—leaving behind a handful of the youngest, lowest-ranked, mostly white kids, who save it, overcoming class and racial distinctions to work together. Cabin boy Owen, captain's nephew, takes charge. Botanist's assistant Henry's highly intelligent but knows nothing about sailing. Thacher's rumored to be from a fine Boston family whose reversal of fortune has led to his being sold

into servitude; powder monkey Aaron's said to be half Pequot (the other half unspoken but presumably white). Manny and Mario, the olive-skinned "Spanish brothers," are good sailors with a secret. The kids must keep the ship from sinking before they can reach land and safety. There's also something lurking belowdecks—strange noises and a disturbing, sweet smell lead them to speculate about a haunting. What's actually there is much worse than a ghost. The salty sailing details and the drama of keeping afloat in the face of damaging storms and winds is just as heart-pounding as the struggle for survival against the threat already onboard.

An exciting blend of nautical adventure and monstrous horror. (Historical horror. 9-15)



HORTENSE AND THE SHADOW
 O'Hara, Natalia
 Illus. by O'Hara, Lauren
 Little, Brown (32 pp.)
 \$17.99 | \$9.99 e-book | Nov. 7, 2017
 978-0-316-44079-0
 978-0-316-44081-3 e-book

A young white girl in a snowy, onion-domed fairyland setting escapes from her shadow only to find she is not whole

without it.

Hortense hates her shadow. It follows her everywhere, it does everything she does, and it grows "tall and dark / and crooked" when night falls. One day, Hortense escapes from her shadow, slamming the window on it, and her shadow is left behind. Hortense feels happy and free without the hated shadow—until the bandits show up. (These bandits are hidden within the illustrations throughout the book for sharp-eyed readers to discover.) When her shadow saves her, Hortense realizes that instead of being a hated nuisance, her shadow is an indispensable part of her, and so, in good fairy-tale fashion, all ends happily ever after. Natalia O'Hara's playful, dreamlike story is written in a lyrical cadence and relies on the poetry of the words themselves more than the reality they outline for meaning: ("she was as sad as an owl"). Lauren O'Hara (the O'Haras are sisters) contributes her own layer to the story's fanciful mood with her soft illustrations of muted colors, filled with snowy landscapes, looming trees (for the scary bits), and storybook, folkloric buildings whose interiors show whimsical decorative details.

A delicate original fairy tale that will likely appeal to young readers of imagination. (Picture book. 3-5)

Orr tells her tale in both narrative poetry and prose for an effect that is both fanciful and urgent, drawing a rich fantasy landscape filled with people and creatures worthy of knowing.

DRAGONFLY SONG



WILLA AND THE BEAR

O'Neill, Philomena
Illus. by the author
 Sterling (40 pp.)
 \$16.95 | Oct. 3, 2017
 978-1-4549-2573-6

On a ride to Grandma Bibbie's birthday celebration, young Willa's beloved rag doll, Rosie, is lost in the dark woods then comes back in an unexpected way.

After the horse-drawn sleigh hits a bump and Rosie flies out into the snow, Willa and her parents stop to search—but the sun is going down, and they must get on. After they leave, a bear finds the doll, puts it on his back and pads along behind. When Willa arrives at her grandparents' cabin she is presented with a small sewn bear that matches Grandpa's new trousers. Catching sight of the real bear through the window she cries a warning, but when Papa cracks the door to peer out he finds only Rosie on the doorstep. Later, on the way home, Willa leaves the toy bear in the snow in exchange. "My friend will love you," she whispers...and indeed, the last scene is a view of the live bear, curled in his den, clutching the cloth one. Unlikely as the episode may be, it has a cozy feel that O'Neill's paintings, which strongly resemble Garth Williams' Little House illustrations in settings and homespun style, amplify. The human figures are all white, ruddy of cheek, and dressed in country clothing; the snuffing bear is depicted with comfortably shaggy and rotund naturalism.

A sweet tale of giving and giving back. (Picture book. 5-7)



BEASTS MADE OF NIGHT

Onyebuchi, Tochi
 Razorbill/Penguin (304 pp.)
 \$17.99 | \$17.99 e-book | Oct. 31, 2017
 978-0-448-49390-9
 978-0-448-49392-3 e-book

Taj, the black teenage narrator of Onyebuchi's debut, is an aki, or sin-eater—meaning that he literally consumes the exorcised transgressions of

others, usually in the forms of inky-colored animal-shaped phantasms called inisitas that reappear as black tattoos on the akis' "red skin, brown skin."

This really isn't his most remarkable trait, however, even as he ingests greater and greater sins of the Kaya, the brown-skinned royal family ruling the land of Kos. What makes Taj extraordinary is the tensions he holds: his blasé awareness of his exalted status as the best aki, even as the townspeople both shun yet exploit him and his chosen family of sin-eaters; his adolescent swagger coupled with the big-brotherly protectiveness he has for the crew of akis and, as the story proceeds, his increasing responsibility to train them; his natural skepticism of the theology that guides Kos even as he performs the very act that allows the theology—and Kos itself—to exist. He must

navigate these in the midst of a political plot, a burgeoning star-crossed love, and forgiveness for the sins he does not commit. "Epic" is an overused term to describe how magnificent someone or something is. Author Onyebuchi's novel creates his in the good old-fashioned way: the slow, loving construction of the mundane and the miraculous, building a world that is both completely new and instantly recognizable.

This tale moves beyond the boom-bang, boring theology of so many fantasies—and, in the process, creates, almost griotlike, a paean to an emerging black legend. (Fantasy. 14-adult)



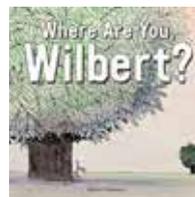
DRAGONFLY SONG

Orr, Wendy
 Pajama Press (408 pp.)
 \$17.95 | Oct. 27, 2017
 978-1-77278-037-6

Orr (*Nim's Island*, 2001, etc.) delivers a fantasy that follows an ill-fated girl's journey from abandoned to accepted.

When Aissa is born with tiny, pink thumbs wiggling from her wrists, the Lady, her mother, is furious. Why have the gods forsaken her, the Lady wonders. Unable to bear the imperfection of her child, she demands that the wise-woman Kelya take the child and toss it off a cliff. Kelya cannot do it, however, and instead places the babe with a family that has just lost a newborn. Thus begins the arduous journey of a child forced to survive by her wits, who seems doomed to suffer loss after loss. Orphaned a second time and now a nameless servant in the palace, now-12-year-old Aissa sees opportunity in being chosen a bull dancer, one of the yearly sacrifices to the Bull King—but without a name, she cannot be chosen. Orr tells her tale in both narrative poetry and prose for an effect that is both fanciful and urgent, drawing a rich fantasy landscape filled with people and creatures worthy of knowing. An introductory note describes Orr's inspiration in the legend of the Minotaur, but her story is no retelling but a meditation on rejection and acceptance, on determination and self-determination. The shifts between poetry and prose build tension just as surely as the bull dances do.

As mesmerizing as a mermaid's kiss, the story dances with emotion, fire, and promise. (Fantasy. 10-14)



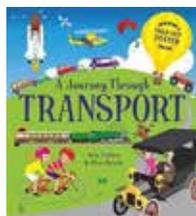
WHERE ARE YOU, WILBERT?

Oskarsson, Bárður
Illus. by the author
 Translated by Thomsen, Marita
 Owlkids Books (36 pp.)
 \$16.95 | Oct. 15, 2017
 978-1-77147-301-9

Oskarsson explores perspective and the slippery boundary between the real and the imagined in this existential play date.

A skinny, comically big-nosed rat counts, her eyes covered. It's hide-and-seek, and the game is on! But no Wilbert can be found. Instead, the rat encounters a wisecracking crocodile (with triangular teeth protruding all along its jawline) who offers to help. Together they search until two gray ears can be seen peeking above a tree. With each spread more of Wilbert appears, until a gigantic hippo, taller than the trees, is revealed. Yet the crocodile still can't see Wilbert. Despite this, the three continue their game, and the crocodile never finds Wilbert. Readers may question each character's existence, whose mind they spring from, and how the world is seen through each character's eyes. A simple cartoon style highlights distinctive animal and plant designs. Single-pane illustrations, done in a pale palette, appear on recto showing the scale of the rodent to other objects, while small vignettes on verso seem to depict the characters with a fly swatter, chasing an erratically buzzing fly. This device is perhaps an attempt to stimulate conversation, but it may result in confusion. Still, there's no question that children and caregivers will find themselves talking about it.

First published in the Faroe Islands in 2016, this is a distinctly different approach to storytelling. (*Picture book. 4-8*)



A JOURNEY THROUGH TRANSPORTATION

Oxlade, Chris
 Illus. by Haslam, John
 QEB Publishing (48 pp.)
 \$16.95 | Oct. 1, 2017
 978-1-68297-152-9

A quick ramble through the history of transport, from camels and chariots to driverless cars.

Beginning with shank's mare ("People simply walked"), Oxlade navigates his topic by transportation type: from a horse-drawn travois to big trucks and small sports cars, from steam trains to maglevs, log rafts to cruise ships, the Wright brothers' *Flyer* to the International Space Station—with pauses along the way to take ganders at motorcycles, submersibles, helicopters, and hot air balloons. Though he sails past "caravels" and "car-racks" without explaining their differences he does wheel out definitions for "penny-farthing" and "quad bike" (which American readers will recognize as an ATV), and he also gives passing nods to the Montgolfiers and other inventors. The figures in Haslam's bright, cartoon illustrations tend toward caricatures, which fly a bit low with a stereotypically dressed Mexican man chasing a mule but generally add a pleasantly breezy air. Some of the bike riders, pilots, astronauts, and subway passengers have darker skin. The vehicles themselves are stylized but recognizable, which is a good thing because closing quizzes challenge viewers to identify 13 of them and to answer a set of questions too. The jacket folds out into a poster that depicts many of the modes of transit covered, with a submersible at the bottom and a futuristic rocket ship at the top.

A spirited road trip over land and sea, through the air, into space, and a bit beyond the present day. (*Informational picture book. 6-8*)



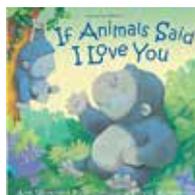
HOCKEY Then to WOW!

Page, Sam
 Sports Illustrated Books (80 pp.)
 \$19.99 | Sep. 26, 2017
 978-1-68330-011-3

A gallimaufry of goodies about hockey.

It is possible that hockey has the greatest range of enthusiasts. It has crossed gender and race lines (though neither is given sufficient page space here), and it is way up there in the cosmopolitan makeup of its rosters. The result is that when you throw together a grab bag of hockey angles, you are going to draw from a wide pool of buffs to fanatics. The then-and-now aspect to this collection is a nifty approach, depicting changes in equipment, uniforms, styles of play, etc., in themed double-page spreads. Eye-catching photographs appear throughout, though the writing could use some pizzazz: "An avid animal lover, the Sharks' defenseman frequently visits zoos on road trips." Readers will sit agog that players wore wool jerseys and didn't wear helmets (and had the scars and the empty gums to prove it) and that goals went without masks. Changes in tactics and game play help readers follow the action on the ice. As the book approaches the end, it loses its focus. Card collecting has its place, but difference in player size now and then seems arbitrary, if not pointless—a 7-foot defenseman is hardly a typical player—and playoff beards... well, if that's what blows your hair back, so be it.

Even if the book becomes a bit of a salmagundi, one page or another will find a follower. (*Nonfiction. 10-14*)



IF ANIMALS SAID I LOVE YOU

Paul, Ann Whitford
 Illus. by Walker, David
 Farrar, Straus and Giroux (32 pp.)
 \$16.99 | Oct. 17, 2017
 978-0-374-30602-1

Paul and Walker team up again to present the youngest listeners with an "I love you" book.

Their previous book *If Animals Kissed Good Night* (2008) looked at the various ways parents might smooch their little ones and both emphasized the animals' physical traits and provided names for their young. This latest does the former (partially) with regard to animals' actions but, sadly, not the latter. The verses remain bouncy and fun to read aloud, however; in answering the titular prompt, "Secretary bird would type with claw feet / warm, tender words with a **click-clack** beat," and "Impala would speak with a leapity-leap. / 'I love you, my grandchild, a **heapity-heap.**'" Love isn't reserved for just parent and child: siblings, cousins, and friends also get in on the act. Walker's adorable animals freely share their love, a gorilla and infant appearing multiple times throughout; the book ends with them snuggled together asleep. Other animals include whale, boa, lion, cheetah, spider, ostrich, and alligator. Only one shows a grouping that could be construed as a nuclear family of two parents and children.

Surely adult and child pairs reading this together will find ways to mimic the animals' ways of expressing their love: blowing bubbles and splashing in the tub, a boa-like "squish-hugging squeeze," and playful wrestling. (*Picture book. 2-6*)



THE RELIC WAR

Pavlou, Stel

Harper/HarperCollins (304 pp.)

\$16.99 | \$8.99 e-book | Nov. 7, 2017

978-0-06-212605-4

978-0-06-212607-8 e-book

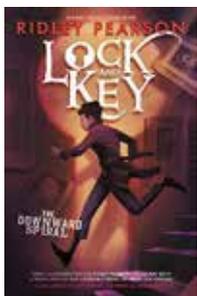
Series: Daniel Coldstar, 1

The abducted children from hundreds of worlds are being held prisoner on a destroyed planet and forced to hunt for technological relics for an evil

overlord.

Whether it is the alien Overseers or the insect cyborg Nightwatchers, violence is a constant for the "grubs." But one boy, Daniel Coldstar, refuses to be cowed. During an expedition into the mines, he discovers an ancient relic capable of defeating their captors. But without a map and with only spotty memories, finding a way out proves difficult. When Daniel meets the ultimate enemy, who uses lies to control his minions, Daniel must figure out how to make both his mind and his heart believe the truth. The fates of his friends and the known universe depend upon it. Confusing worldbuilding and a too-large cast hamstringing this fast-paced and explosive series debut. Short chapters with cliffhanger endings will keep the pages turning, but stilted dialogue, spotty descriptive details, and clichéd villains keep this innovative adventure from hitting its stride. Grotesqueries, such as characters with fingernails instead of hair and no pupils, make up the human diversity in this future setting. A glossary of unfamiliar terms is included; it reveals some of the politics that underlie Pavlou's world.

Outrageously creative but often confusing. (*Science fiction. 9-13*)



THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL

Pearson, Ridley

Harper/HarperCollins (432 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$11.99 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017

978-0-06-239904-5

978-0-06-239906-9 e-book

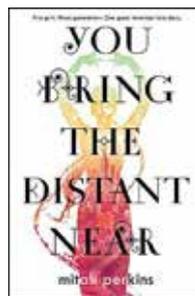
Series: Lock and Key, 2

Twelve-year-old Moria Moriarty chronicles the continuing teenage adventures of the famous archenemies Sherlock Holmes and James Moriarty.

Still reeling from the mysterious death of their father, Moria and James scour their Boston home for clues. But it is a bit of cleverly worked geometry on the part of Sherlock that

reveals a hidden room that offers more puzzles than it solves. Back at boarding school, James finds himself increasingly involved in a secret criminal organization and agrees to prey upon the romantic aspirations of a fellow classmate for leverage. Sherlock, ever the bloodhound, seeks to solve the various cases swirling around the secretive Moriarty family. But his discoveries make it increasingly difficult to know whom and what to trust. As James becomes more withdrawn, Moria partners with the intelligent and conceited Sherlock. This is an origin story that is rich in teen angst, romance, and intrigue. Unfortunately, mysteries range from the far too simple (references to Poe's writing) to the intriguing (using a pencil to escape from a locked room). The meandering story will keep the attention of stalwart Sherlock fans, but it is the budding relationship between Moria and Sherlock that steals the story. The central characters are all white.

Mystery, romance, and teen angst—the game is definitely afoot. (*Mystery. 9-12*)



YOU BRING THE DISTANT NEAR

Perkins, Mitali

Farrar, Straus and Giroux (320 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$12.59 e-book | Sep. 12, 2017

978-0-374-30490-4

978-0-374-30491-1 e-book

Perkins' latest, inspired by the author's own experience as the youngest of three sisters who arrived in the United States in the 1970s, is told in alternating

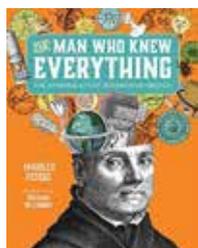
voices across three generations.

This saga tells the intertwined stories of Raneé Das, the matriarch, who uproots her family from Ghana (and then the United Kingdom) to find fortune in the United States; Sonia and Tara, her daughters, who struggle with identity and acceptance; and Anna and Chantal, Raneé's granddaughters, who fight injustices at home and in their communities. As in the author's other books, this novel features inspiring South Asian girl and women protagonists grappling with love, faith, and culture, as well as the intersections among their personal, communal, and national histories. The chapters from Raneé's point of view, highlighting her redemptive transformation from racist mother-in-law to doting grandmother to a half-black grandchild, and those told in Sonia's and Tara's voices, including their turns from awkward and aspiring immigrant teenagers to *New York Times* reporter and Bollywood star respectively, are lushly drawn and emotionally resonant. The final third of the book, however, from the points of view of Anna and Chantal, is less so; its plotlines—Anna's quest to redecorate her elite private school's locker rooms and Chantal's wrecking of her rich, white boyfriend's Porsche—seem contrived and hastily written. While "issues" permeate the book (war, migration, racism, colorism, body positivity, environmentalism), they are more deftly woven into the narrative in the earlier, historical chapters than the later, contemporary ones.

Lyrical prose, fresh and compelling images, and unforgettable characters create an experience that will stay with readers far past the last page.

READY TO FALL

Although the book loses steam and heart toward the end, the earlier chapters, moving and rich in character and setting, make up for it. (*Historical fiction/fiction. 12-18*)



THE MAN WHO KNEW EVERYTHING
The Strange Life of Athanasius Kircher

Peters, Marilee

Illus. by Bikadoroff, Roxanna

Annick Press (60 pp.)

\$19.95 | \$12.95 paper | Oct. 10, 2017

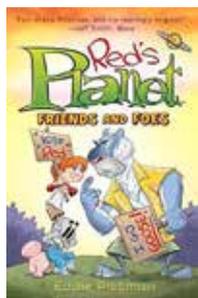
978-1-55451-974-3

978-1-55451-973-6 paper

An introduction to an undeservedly obscure polymath of the scientific revolution.

Justly (if anachronistically, as the term wasn't coined until the 19th century) dubbing Kircher (1602-1680) in his time "the most famous scientist in all of Europe," Peters devotes most of this profile just to laying out the immense range of his interests and exploits. Along with writings on music, geology, mathematics, travel, and more, he built microscopes and other devices, demonstrated a megaphone with a 5-mile range, and had himself winched down into a live volcano. Being also a showman ("closer to P.T. Barnum than to Einstein"), he also created in Rome a popular museum of "bizarre and fantastical objects" including magnetic clocks and mermaid bones, ancient obelisks, statues that could talk or vomit, and many other marvels. Reading this book is like a walk through that museum, and if certain passages of the hair-fine text, being printed on low-contrast color blocks, require some squinting, Bikadoroff's portraits of Kircher and other historical figures (all white) over antique landscapes and images add proper notes of wonder as well as period flavor. Many of Kircher's works and notions were fanciful or, like that talking statue, outright hoaxes, but others have turned out to be valuable contributions; both get equal play, both throughout and in a final section dubbed "Hits and Misses."

A colorful figure in the history of science whose "misses" are as entertaining and instructive as his "hits." (timeline, map, lists of sources and further reading) (*Biography. 10-13*)



FRIENDS AND FOES

Pittman, Eddie

Amulet/Abrams (192 pp.)

\$19.99 | Oct. 10, 2017

978-1-4197-2314-8

Series: Red's Planet, 2

In this second volume, a plucky Earth girl tries to make her way on her new home planet.

Picking up right where predecessor *Red's Planet* (2016) left off (but with a handy recap worked in to help jog memories), a young, unnamed

white orphan everyone calls Red is attempting to fit in with the motley group of aliens on the strange planet on which they all have been marooned. Grouchy Goose—an anthropomorphic cat with a Hawaiian shirt and a bad attitude—refuses to share his supplies with the other refugees. When they decide to hold an election to determine who controls the stock, Red is pitted against Goose. After the election goes awry, the inhabitants and their newly elected leader must then band together to fend off a subsequent attack of alien pirates. Pittman's illustrations are enormously appealing, with an animated feel and imaginative worldbuilding. Although the tale maintains the lively spirit established in the previous book, this volume is somewhat uneven with its plotting. The election arc feels a bit heavy with subtext and invokes current politics, which may be beyond the reach of its intended audience. The plot eventually rights itself, and with an exciting battle and an undeniably optimistic cliffhanger, most young readers will keep reading and may pick up a little civics along the way.

This sophomore effort takes a slight narrative stumble, but overall, it's a nifty addition to the series. (*Graphic fantasy. 7-12*)



READY TO FALL

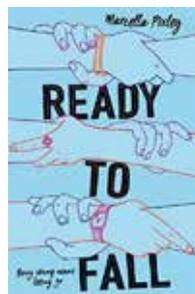
Pixley, Marcella

Margaret Ferguson/Farrar, Straus & Giroux (368 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$9.99 e-book | Nov. 28, 2017

978-0-374-30358-7

978-0-374-30359-4 e-book



Desperate to cling to something of his mother's after her death, 16-year-old Max believes he has invited her tumor into his brain and that it is slowly killing

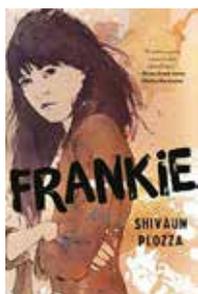
him.

Max is increasingly withdrawn, lost, and strange. His father, desperate to help him with his grief, enrolls him in an exclusive school filled with eccentric artists. There, Max meets Fish, a bubbly girl with pink hair, and her band of misfit friends. Max also meets the curmudgeonly creative-writing teacher, who uses unorthodox methods to force Max to talk about his pain. He has a breakthrough during a staging of *Hamlet*, in which each cast member is forced to confront his or her own ghosts. Max's tightrope walk between sanity and insanity will resonate with anyone suffering from a loss. While he must find a way to live again, it takes the combined efforts of his wild friends, his devoted family, and a few dedicated and eccentric teachers. Lyrical prose, fresh and compelling images, and unforgettable characters create an experience that will stay with readers far past the last page. The principals are white and Jewish, but the school boasts students of many races, religions, and sexual orientations.

Grief becomes something oddly beautiful—and beautifully odd. (*Fiction. 14-18*)

While Reyl hasn't broken the mold of autistic teen protagonists, Martin is a credit to the growing corpus, with multimodal idiosyncrasies that he builds on rather than buries and a validating first-person narrative and first romance.

KIDS LIKE US



FRANKIE

Plozza, Shivaun
Flatiron Books (352 pp.)
\$17.99 | Nov. 7, 2017
978-1-250-14299-3

The members of the Italian-Australian Vega family aren't known for their contributions to society.

"Dark-olive" Frankie, with her "aggressive tendencies," has been suspended from school for breaking a classmate's nose with the complete works of Shakespeare; Juliet, Frankie's drug-addicted mother, abandoned Frankie when she was 4; and Frankie's uncle Terry is currently serving a 15-year sentence for multiple armed robberies. When Xavier, Frankie's half brother, pops out of nowhere, Aunt Vinnie, Frankie's guardian and the only Vega on the right side of the law, warns Frankie not to get too close to the boy with whom she shares a mother. At first Frankie doesn't know what to think of the 14-year-old. Is he a junkie? A liar? A thief? How far from the Vega tree has this newly discovered apple fallen? Is he involved in the recent spate of burglaries in the neighborhood? When Xavier goes missing, the only people Frankie can rely on are her best friend, the caustically funny Cara Lam (whose implied Chinese heritage goes unexplored), and Nate, a white, blue-eyed law-breaking indie poseur. Frankie's first-person narration gives readers a well-rounded picture of a formerly bullied teen from the wrong side of the tracks struggling to make sense of her past and how it affects her present relationships.

A gritty and darkly witty debut. (*Fiction. 14-18*)



SPACE BOY AND THE SNOW MONSTER

Regan, Dian Curtis
Illus. by Neubecker, Robert
Boyd's Mills (32 pp.)
\$17.95 | Oct. 10, 2017
978-1-59078-957-5

Sneering punk snowmen—check. Crazy killer snow bunny—check. Rampaging fanged snow monster—check. Space boy Niko's third rip-roaring adventure is ready for takeoff.

But trusty co-pilot Radar the robot is missing! All clues lead to the Snow Monster's lair on Planet Ice. Upon landing, Niko spots the monster—who sounds suspiciously like his big sister, Posh. The Posh Monster is wily and has an army of menacing, mohawked snowpunks awaiting the indomitable space boy and his space dog, Tag. They're attacked. Frozen projectiles fly! Ducking and weaving, Niko follows Snow Bunny's tracks to Radar—the rescue mission is a success. But wait! The frosty cottontail's eyes are glowing red, and are those fangs? "Killer Bunnies are not to be trusted!" Can they possibly escape? Niko's impassioned play-by-play narrative flawlessly mimics that of kids boisterously immersed in dramatic worldbuilding. Regan's minichapters and short, exclamatory sentences sustain

the escalating tension, while Neubecker's wacky illustrations augment the humor by orchestrating action shots counter to Niko's script. For instance, as Niko blasts into space to find "lost" Radar, the poor robot is shown desperately hanging onto the ship's horizontal stabilizer, and the "cautiously" advancing dog is pictured cavorting above the drifts with joyous abandon. Each detail-packed frame energetically propels the story forward with chuckle-inducing results.

Cardboard boxes and duct tape are sure to turn up missing in many a household as spaceships roar into screen-free adventures. (*Picture book. 3-8*)



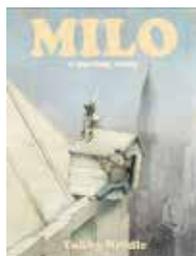
KIDS LIKE US

Reyl, Hilary
Farrar, Straus and Giroux (288 pp.)
\$17.99 | \$12.59 e-book | Nov. 14, 2017
978-0-374-30628-1
978-0-374-30630-4 e-book

Sixteen-year-old Martin Dubois navigates family, friendships, and neurotypical attitudes in Reyl's teen romance.

Spending the first half of the summer in France on location with his filmmaker mother and Stanford-bound sister is as thrilling as it is terrifying for Martin. The white, autistic teen's near fluency in French, his penchant for classic French cookery, and his complex affinity for Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* (or *Search*, as he calls it) ought to make the trip an exciting immersion. But they are not enough to drown out Martin's anxiety about attending a general education French high school (*lycée*), where his ways of interpreting and interacting with the physical and social worlds are sure to clash with others'. To his surprise, however, he makes friends with a few students rather quickly and finds referential roles for all of them in *Search*, including the potential for romance. But when it becomes clear that the other teens have only befriended him for his proximity to Hollywood stars, Martin begins to consider all the relationships in his life and what they mean to and for him. While Reyl hasn't broken the mold of autistic teen protagonists, Martin is a credit to the growing corpus, with multimodal idiosyncrasies that he builds on rather than buries and a validating first-person narrative and first romance.

A charming debut. (*Fiction. 13-17*)



**MILO
A Moving Story**

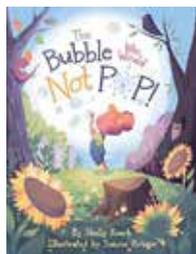
Riddle, Toby
Allen & Unwin (48 pp.)
\$19.99 | Oct. 1, 2017
978-1-76011-163-2



A dog and his house take a fantastical trip.

Milo lives “in a solid kennel in an okay part of town.” He and canine pals Cluffy and Snombo have all kinds of fun. One night, Milo dreams that he’s in a small boat being tossed on a stormy sea. The next morning he is quite cranky, barking at his friends when they offer him poetry. The day is weirder than the dream, with a large rabble of moths fluttering by his house—then a balloon, a scarecrow, an anvil, and a dozen other items. A gust snatches Milo’s house; he huddles inside. The next morning, Milo discovers that his house is perched near the top of a skyscraper, overlooking the city. For a while, he just contemplates his condition, occasionally howling. Carlos, a migrating bird in “comfy sneakers,” stops by and lands on the roof, acting as a counterweight and allowing Milo to scramble to safer ground. Carlos has traveled the world and shares his adventures with Milo. Eventually Milo finds his way home and reconnects with his friends; the illustrations now have touches of color. Riddle’s text is wry and understated, with vocabulary that both challenges and trusts its readers; his illustrations are likewise intelligent, digitally weaving together his soft cartoon figures with photographs and employing color sparingly.

This subtle and meaningful fable makes for thought-provoking literature for young readers. (Picture book. 4-8)



THE BUBBLE WHO WOULD NOT POP!

Roark, Shelly
Illus. by the author
Little Lamb Books (32 pp.)
\$17.99 | Sep. 12, 2017
978-0-9986243-0-3

Roark explains prayer in a basic way to the youngest children.

For soap bubbles, there is nothing more fun than popping. But Billy Bubble can’t pop until he’s delivered a little white, green-eyed girl’s prayer to God in heaven. Though he grows increasingly tired and scared, he is very careful to avoid all the obstacles on his way skyward: leaves, a crow, an airplane, and everyone’s subtle peer pressure in the form of the book’s refrain, “SPLURT! SPLAT! PLOP! / Hey little bubble, / it’s time to POP!” Finally, Billy hears the voice of God telling him that he’s been brave. “I’m here with you...and with the green-eyed little girl. I knew her prayer before she whispered it....I always hear my children.” God thanks Billy and gives him a message for the girl. Billy floats back down and pops on God’s command. The girl hears “a whisper on the wind— / I heard you. / I love you. /

It will be okay.” The tale ends with a prayer journal for readers to record prayer requests and answered prayers. Billy’s face is expressive, and the earnest bubble takes his missions very seriously. Little readers may find themselves wondering what the girl’s prayer was, a question that’s never answered.

Still, this is sure to help parents explain to children that God knows their prayers, needs, and hopes before they even have the words for them. (Picture book. 3-6)



REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

Roberts, Ceri
Illus. by Kai, Hanane
Barron’s (32 pp.)
\$9.99 | Sep. 1, 2017
978-1-4380-5020-1
Series: Children in Our World

With this series entry, Roberts attempts to help readers understand that their peers in many parts of the world are suffering and becoming refugees because of “wars, natural disasters, and acts of terrorism.”

The book also speaks about migrants as people who “leave for a happier, healthier life, to join family members overseas, or because they don’t have enough money and need a job.” This effort aims to educate child readers, reassuring them that “most people have a safe and comfortable home to live in” and while “it can be upsetting to think about what life is like for refugees and migrants,” kids can do something to help. Some practical suggestions are provided and websites included for several aid organizations. Companion title *Poverty and Hunger*, by Louise Spilsbury and also illustrated by Kai, follows the same format, presenting a double-page spread with usually one to three short paragraphs on a topic. A yellow catlike animal with a black-and-white striped tail is found in every picture in both books and seems an odd unifying feature. Mixed-media illustrations in muted colors feature stylized children and adults against hand-somely textured areas; they exude an empty sense of unreality in spite of racial diversity and varied landscapes. By trying too hard to make comparisons accessible, Roberts ends up trivializing some concepts. Speaking about camping and refugee camps in the same sentence is very misleading.

While this book and its companion appear to be meant for the lower elementary grades, these British imports will require too much adult intervention to be very useful. (bibliography, websites, glossary, index) (Informational picture book. 7-9) (*Poverty and Hunger*: 978-1-4380-5019-5)



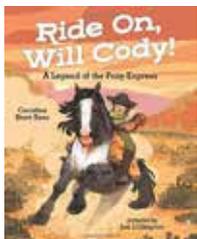
A GOOD STORY

Rock, Zack
Illus. by the author
Creative Editions/Creative Company
(32 pp.)
\$17.99 | Sep. 1, 2017
978-1-56846-280-6

An anthropomorphic pig in a conservative men’s business suit and sensible shoes philosophizes about conforming to the stories that others create for us.

A verso that looks like a piece of graph paper has one typed sentence: “I never really felt like I fit IN.” Could this be because, in the portrait on the recto, the narrator is the only short, obviously porcine-faced businessman of the five who solemnly face viewers (the other four are white human men)? No: at the turn of the page, readers learn that the pig, now dangling upside down in a room full of men and numbers, feels resignation at being Assistant Bean Counter No. 1138 in a place where “something only matters if it can be counted.” Wordplay continues around the double meaning of “count,” as well as other expressions, always enhanced by the illustrations. It is the art that elevates the book’s sparse sentences, with its use of texture, humorous details, and surrealism, all expressed in an autumnal palette. Rushing into a bookstore to escape a thunderstorm, the pig finds both an encouraging, blue-eyed sow-clerk and—yes—books. Their stories may be familiar to readers, but, of course, the artwork portrays all the heroes as pigs. A wolf’s shadow—and eventually, an enormous flesh-and-blood wolf (in business garb, of course)—represent the pig’s self-defeating thoughts as he strives to release his inner acrobat.

Quirky and amusing, though pitched to a sophisticated audience that may feel it’s beyond picture books. (*Picture book. 9-12*)



**RIDE ON, WILL CODY!
A Legend of the Pony Express**

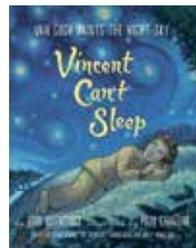
Rose, Caroline Starr
Illus. by Lillington, Joe
Whitman (37 pp.)
\$16.99 | Oct. 1, 2017
978-0-8075-7068-5

Horses and rider tackle time, distance, and the elements in this tribute to a legendary Pony Express gallop.

As Rose freely admits, “legendary” may be just the word for Cody’s claim to have been a Pony Express rider. Nonetheless, in galloping rhyme she sends him on his way across Wyoming and back in a dawn-to-dawn dash that Lillington illustrates with scenes of the teenager pounding along past buttes and buffalo, through heavy rain, beneath orange and star-speckled skies in turn. It’s a horsey sort of episode, as both words and pictures specify breeds or types with each change of mount along the trail: “Trade a Mustang for a Morgan, / ’Loosa for a Thoroughbred. / Racing, flying, / ever riding, / hurry, hurry on ahead.” A

double-page spread that presents eight separate vignettes of Cody on eight different horses as the sky darkens provides effective visual counterpoint to the verse. A final view of the horse and rider wearily finishing their long route as the sun begins to rise once again gives way to a painted portrait of the grown Buffalo Bill resplendent in his buckskins. The author fills in the historical details in an afterword with period illustrations. Human figures in all the pictures are white.

A robust lead-in to Cheryl Harness’ *They’re Off!* (2002) and other more detailed histories. (afterword) (*Picture book. 6-8*)



**VINCENT CAN’T SLEEP
Van Gogh Paints the
Night Sky**

Rosenstock, Barb
Illus. by GrandPré, Mary
Knopf (32 pp.)
\$17.99 | \$17.99 e-book | \$20.99 PLB
Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-101-93710-5
978-1-101-93712-9 e-book
978-1-101-93711-2 PLB



Vincent van Gogh’s lifelong insomnia leads to his masterpiece *The Starry Night*.

Starting as a toddler, wide awake in a cradle, “Vincent can’t sleep.” He sees “pink and yellow starlit shapes that twinkle on the ceiling”; the illustration uses those starlit reflections and the real stars outside to begin the visual theme of *The Starry Night*. A bit older, he runs outdoors at night, lies down in a field, and “snuggles under a blanket of sapphire sky.” He’s at peace right then, but the text is poetically clear that peace wasn’t plentiful: he “runs into the soothing darkness and is brought back to the harsh light over and over again.” He “draws, writes, and sighs alone”; he drifts, lost, creating “canvas after canvas like radiant chapters in a book only Vincent can read.” He’s hospitalized for an unnamed illness. He works hard to know: “Does darkness have a texture? / **Thick?** / **Thin?**...Is the night sky at rest? Or do eleven stars pulse like a beating heart?” Together, text and pictures balance his unsettled melancholy against beauty and harmony. Facially, van Gogh looks much like any GrandPré face; however, GrandPré’s acrylic, pen, and watercolor spreads make marvelous use of dark blues with yellows, putty hues and pinks with swirls, and curving lines, all building to a tender, magnificent final spread.

A soft, sad, lovely introduction to a masterpiece. (images of original art, author’s note, sources) (*Picture book/biography. 6-10*)

Rudy's intricately constructed miniature tableaux of found materials and felted characters, photographed by her, offer much to pore over.

CITY MOUSE, COUNTRY MOUSE



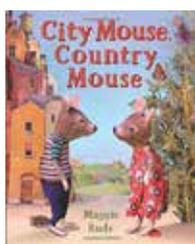
OUR KID

Ross, Tony
 Illus. by the author
 Andersen Press USA (32 pp.)
 \$17.99 PLB | Oct. 1, 2017

A far-fetched excuse for tardiness at school with a twist ending—and dinopirates.

The eponymous Our Kid is a young, anthropomorphic goat who can't seem to get his act together. Despite his parents' guidance, he's late to school and has neither his homework nor his uniform. Sent to the corner by his teacher as punishment, Our Kid weaves a fantastic tall tale to explain his tardiness and unpreparedness for school, which involves a shortcut, a submarine, "dinopirates" (who steal his homework and pants), and a helpful elephant with a howdah on its back who finally brings him across crocodile-infested waters to school. Throughout, onomatopoeic neologisms pepper the text and provide a silly sensibility that enhances its telling. ("Why so *glumbuntious*, little goat?" the elephant asks.) His exasperated teacher doesn't believe a word Our Kid says until green ET's appear and tell Our Kid that they've found his pants and homework while on an expedition to capture a dinosaur for their museum. Chagrined, the teacher gives Our Kid a gold star on his homework and says "You can be as late as you like tomorrow." Ross' cartoon-style illustrations with their characteristic shaky ink line and painterly watercolors evoke humor that reinforces the absurdity of the tale.

A tall tale with lots of fun kidding around. (Picture book. 4-8)



CITY MOUSE, COUNTRY MOUSE

Rudy, Maggie
 Illus. by the author
 Godwin Books/Henry Holt (40 pp.)
 \$16.99 | Oct. 24, 2017
 978-1-62779-616-3

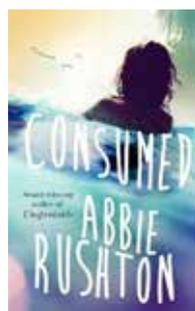
A new twist on the classic Aesop fable.

When Tansy Mouse meets William Gray, she leads him into her country world of strawberry patches, singing birds, buzzing bees, and fresh air, "soft and sweet." But when Will describes his city—the shops and restaurants and crowded sidewalks—and invites Tansy, "Come with me!...It'll be an adventure," Tansy sets off with him. But Tansy finds city life too crowded and noisy, and Will thinks the city too exciting to leave, so they part ways. However, they discover they were lonely without each other. So, as friends do, Tansy and Will find a compromise, set up house-keeping next to each other in a town between the country and the city, and live "mously ever after." Rudy's intricately constructed miniature tableaux of found materials and felted characters, photographed by her, offer much to pore over, and the double-page spreads depicting pastoral scenes, city streets, and their newfound in-between town are beautifully realized. Even



the gestures of the two mice are carefully orchestrated to show emotion. Light and lilting prose complements the illustrations, which are clearly a labor of love.

There's always room for another take on a classic, especially when done so well. (Picture book. 4-8)



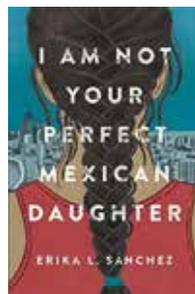
CONSUMED

Rushton, Abbie
 Atom (352 pp.)
 \$11.99 paper | Nov. 21, 2017
 978-0-349-00203-3

Two wounded teens find companionship in an English seaside town.

Myla, a mixed-race teenage girl of Mauritian and Irish heritage, has agoraphobia. Two years ago her sister was abducted and murdered while they were both at the beach, and since then, the only form of socialization that doesn't cause severe panic attacks is online. That is, until Jamie comes along. Jamie, a freckle-faced, white teenage boy, is visiting his aunt, a friend of Myla's mum. His troubles back home with his mother have led to this "vacation." He also has his own personal demon: his relationship with food and eating is strained to nonexistent. He doesn't like to acknowledge it, even when those around him notice. The two are brought together against their will, but eventually they begin to develop a connection on their own and come to trust each other. That trust becomes tested as frightening events bring Myla's past right into the present. Will they help each other through their personal wars? Or will they continue to fight their battles separately? Though the story is occasionally awkwardly paced, Rushton does a grand job describing the heaviness and pain of loss, grief, and mental illness with a truthfulness and humanity that pulls readers in. The conflicts of Myla's story intertwine with those of Jamie's in an organic way. The relationship between the two narrators may feel trope-y at times, but Rushton makes it believable.

Absorbing. (Fiction. 14-18)



I AM NOT YOUR PERFECT MEXICAN DAUGHTER

Sánchez, Erika L.
 Knopf (352 pp.)
 \$17.99 | \$17.99 e-book | \$20.99 PLB
 Oct. 17, 2017
 978-1-5247-0048-5
 978-1-5247-0050-8 e-book
 978-1-5247-0049-2 PLB

After the death of her dutiful older sister, Olga, Julia must deal with grieving parents and the discovery that her sister was keeping secrets.

Fifteen-year-old Julia Reyes is nothing like her sister, "Saint Olga," who was struck by a semi at age 22 and was always the family's "perfect Mexican daughter": contributing at home,

Brimming with rich detail in an Asian-inflected alternative world that's lightly touched with Maoist terminology and concepts and helmed by aching real characters, *Sevvy's* story is thrilling to get lost in.

LAST STAR BURNING

attending community college, working at a doctor's office, and helping their mother clean houses. Julia, on the other hand, hates living in her roach-infested apartment building in their predominantly Latinx Chicago neighborhood, and she doesn't even try to live up to her Amá and Apá's expectations that she behave like a proper Mexican young lady. After secretly snooping through Olga's room, Julia begins to suspect that Olga may have led a double life. In one of many overlong subplots, Julia starts a romance with a rich Evanston white boy, Connor, whom she meets at a used bookstore. Sánchez's prose is authentic, but it's difficult to root for Julia, because she's so contemptuous, judgmental, and unpleasant: "I do dislike most people and most things"—from "nosy" aunts, "idiot" cousins, and tacky *quinceañera* parties to even her "wild and slutty" best friend, Lorena, at least sometimes. An abrupt plot development involving self-harm and mental illness feels forced, as does a magically life-changing trip to Mexico in the third act.

This gritty contemporary novel about an unlikable first-generation Mexican-American teen fails to deliver as a coming-of-age journey. (*Fiction. 14-17*)



LAST STAR BURNING

Sangster, Caitlin
Simon Pulse/Simon & Schuster
(400 pp.)
\$18.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017
978-1-4814-8613-2
978-1-4814-8615-6 e-book
Series: Last Star Burning, 1

Made an outcast by her mother's crimes, a girl fights to uncover the secrets of those that control her sequestered City.

Sixteen-year-old Jiang Sev, called Sevvy, was once a member of the most revered group in the City: Firsts—those of superior wisdom. But eight years ago, her mother betrayed the City, ushering in encephalitis lethargica, or sleeping sickness, and informing the enemy of their location. Sevvy was rebranded a Fourth, the lowest caste, and sent to a military family for re-education. But when an enemy bomb falls near Sevvy and her friend, everything accelerates. The City paints Sevvy as a suspect in the bombing due to her mother's past. While sneaking through her own manhunt, Sevvy meets a boy who seeks to help her—shockingly, he's the Chairman's son. He goes by Howl, and he wants her to venture outside with him, where both fantastical beasts and those ravaged by sleeping sickness roam. As a loyal citizen, Sevvy feels conflicted—but she has nowhere else to go. As Sevvy embarks on a wild journey, she must navigate the duplicity of war, decide whom she can truly trust, and unravel the truth of her past. Brimming with rich detail in an Asian-inflected alternative world that's lightly touched with Maoist terminology and concepts and helmed by aching real characters, Sevvy's story is thrilling to get lost in. By the end, readers will be clamoring for more.

Incredibly immersive and tightly plotted. (*Fantasy. 14-adult*)



BIZZY MIZZ LIZZIE

Shannon, David
Illus. by the author
Scholastic (40 pp.)
\$16.99 | Oct. 10, 2017
978-0-545-61943-1

An overextended bee learns to stop and smell the flowers, literally.

Lizzie is a good student at school, takes dance, acting, art, and music lessons (this last shows her playing the piano with one set of hands and violin with another), plays Bee League baseball, and is part of the Junior Honey Scouts. While she looks happy doing all her activities, when asked why she does so many, her answer may trouble: when she someday meets the Queen, she wants to be able to say that she's the best bee she can be. Meanwhile, her best friend, Lazy Mizz Daisy, enjoys nothing so much as to loll in a flower in the Garden, but Lizzie's always too busy to accompany her. She's even busier when she gets the chance to compete in the Spelling Contest: the prize is to meet the Queen! But will all her studying help her or push her over the edge? In the end, Lizzie's new appreciation of downtime is validated by a new friend who says that "doing *nothing*...helps me be the best bee I can be." Shannon's artwork is heavy on black, white, and yellow, with pops of red and pink, Lizzie's pigtails making her stand out among the anthropomorphized bees.

A powerful message in this time of overscheduling and de-emphasis of play. (*Picture book. 4-8*)



R.I.P. ELIZA HART

Sheinmel, Alyssa
Scholastic (336 pp.)
\$18.99 | \$18.99 e-book | Nov. 28, 2017
978-1-338-08762-8
978-1-338-08763-5 e-book

Sometimes mean girls have a reason.

White girl Ellie Sokoloff was diagnosed with claustrophobia when she was 7, shortly after her family moved from California to New York nearly a decade before. Countless therapists over the years haven't been able to cure her of this debilitating illness, leaving Ellie to try her own cure. She leaves the confines of congested Manhattan and returns to the open spaces of California. When she arrives at the prestigious Ventana Ranch boarding school in Big Sur, she discovers that her childhood best friend, Eliza Hart, is a student. Popular, Barbie doll-perfect white girl Eliza spreads vicious lies about Ellie; soon, the entire student body hates her. When Eliza is found dead, having fallen from a cliff, almost everyone assumes Ellie killed her. Jewish Ellie's biracial (African-American and white) suitemate, Sam, helps her work to clear her name. As she uncovers devastating secrets about Eliza's life, she discovers the childhood roots of her own illness and of Eliza's hatred of her and that her seemingly perfect former

friend's inner life was far from ideal. The narrative alternates between Ellie and Eliza; the latter girl tells her story from her place after death. While the characters reinforce the stigmas of mental illness, the text dispels those problematic myths about depression, bipolar disorder, and phobias.

A public-service announcement about mental illness wrapped up as a compelling mystery that will keep readers going until the hopeful conclusion. (*Fiction. 12-16*)



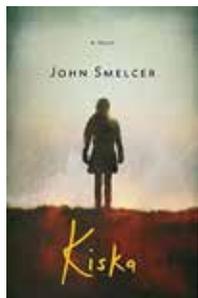
MUTANT BUNNY ISLAND

Skye, Obert
Illus. by Vieira, Eduardo
 Harper/HarperCollins (224 pp.)
 \$12.99 | Nov. 7, 2017
 978-0-06-239912-0

There's a long, proud history of nonsense books, which includes Lewis Carroll and Dr. Seuss. But this novel makes less sense than most.

When Perry goes on vacation to Bunny Island, he packs nothing but junk food. He leaves on the spur of the moment because his uncle has mailed him a two-word distress call. The first word is "HELP." The second word is "MEL," and Perry interprets it to mean that his uncle has been kidnapped by intelligent newts. This actually makes sense. Perry and his uncle are fans of a comic book about Adm. Uli, a talking squid, and in the squid language, "mel" means newt. But even people who don't read comics seem to think Perry's behavior is normal. His father has no problem sending him across the world by himself, with no notice whatsoever. Juliet Jordan, a girl he meets on the island, does think his story is odd, but it doesn't bother her much. "Sometimes," she says, "life is better when you stop trying to make sense." (Most of the characters are white, though one supporting character is described as "dark-skinned and cool looking.") The book would have benefited from a few more skeptics. After all, Alice questioned everything she saw in Wonderland.

The story is always fast-paced and imaginative, but maybe it's a little too imaginative. Skeptics may prefer something a bit more grounded. (*Humorous fantasy. 8-12*)



KISKA

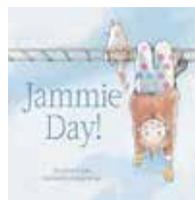
Smelcer, John
 Leapfrog (192 pp.)
 \$12.95 paper | Oct. 23, 2017
 978-1-935248-93-4

In 1942, 14-year-old protagonist Kiska Baranoff's island world turns upside down after Japan attacks Alaska.

For centuries Kiska's people, the Aleuts, have lived according to their traditional ways on their island homes off the coast of Alaska. The men hunt seals, venturing into

the ocean in *baidarkas*, or traditional kayaks. Kiska dreams of becoming a hunter herself, but tradition forbids the use of kayaks by women. Kiska knows women have other, important jobs to do: they gather sea gull eggs and clams, cut and dry salmon and other fish, and render seal oil. Not long after the Japanese attack, men in American Army uniforms land on Kiska's island. They immediately round up all the villagers and force them into the belly of a ship to be taken to an undisclosed destination. Three hundred other Aleutians from many other islands in the archipelago are also forced onto the ship. It then travels 2,000 miles away and leaves them on Admiralty Island, an unfamiliar and stark environment. There they are housed in a decrepit building, an abandoned cannery that the Aleuts eventually improve. Soon after meeting an elder shaman, Agafon Krukoff, Kiska becomes his apprentice. Through his teachings, Kiska discover a way to help her people survive. Kiska narrates, describing the inhumane conditions, the soldiers' racism, and terrible losses. The quiet tone of Smelcer's text softens the cruelty the Aleutians suffer, and in the character of Kiska, he gives readers a strong, resourceful heroine.

A look at an obscure but important part of United States history. (*Historical fiction. 10-14*)



JAMMIE DAY!

Snyder, Carrie
Illus. by Kerrigan, Brooke
 Owlkids Books (32 pp.)
 \$16.95 | Oct. 15, 2017
 978-1-77147-200-5

A middle child takes advantage of adults' distractedness.

Cliffy has a big brother and a big sister who think they know everything and a little brother and a little sister who know almost nothing. He's in between, and he knows his own mind. So one morning, when the before-school chaos is in full swing and Cliffy's harried mother tells him to get dressed, he does "something a little bit funny. A little bit *fuzzy*." He announces, "It's Jammie Day." Her response is the same as all the other adults' responses: "Oh?" accompanied by, "She might not have been paying attention." But his classmates take note, and in future days they too enjoy the perks of wearing jammies to school. And for Cliffy, Jammie Day turns into Jammie Month and Jammie Year, his white-with-rainbow-polka-dot pajamas showing increasing signs of wear. The final, wordless page shows the whole pajama-clad family, but Cliffy's fib remains unaddressed, so readers may come away with the idea that it's OK to use adults' distraction for personal advantage. And really, no matter how many kids in the family or in the class, what adult is truly not going to notice a kid who wears the same thing every day? Cliffy and his family are white; his class is a diverse one.

Maybe one to share on an actual school Jammie Day, but caregivers may want to be on the alert afterward. (*Picture book. 3-7*)



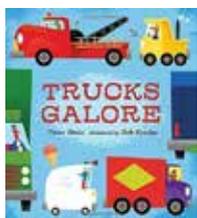
HOW DO YOU SAY I LOVE YOU, DEWEY DEW?

Staub, Leslie
Illus. by Mack, Jeff
Boyd's Mills (32 pp.)
\$17.95 | Oct. 10, 2017
978-1-62979-497-6
Series: Dewey Dew

While Dewey Dew is adjusting well to life on Earth, he still has trouble with a few things, mostly the pronunciation of the word “love” and the bully at school.

The first one can be a problem, especially in the month of February, when “wuhbuh” is on everyone’s mind. His mother tries to help him, but Dewey’s frustration rises to tantrum levels. Her soothing reassurance, “Shee shoo-shoo tanna-wattoo,” sounds “like honey and birds’ wings and safety and singing,” and it’s easy for Dewey Dew to say. But that doesn’t help when faced with Brutus Auralias’ taunting “Wubbah Boy.” “Dewey’s urdle tightened. His eyeball squeezed. Blue-black smoke rose dangerously from his hork.” Just in time his loyal friends save the day, twice in fact. But the teasing leaves Dewey Dew fantasizing about leaving Earth behind...until he devises a solution that encapsulates the sentiment behind Valentine’s Day: he teaches his class to say “I love you” in his language. And they have just as much trouble with it as he has with the word “love.” His effort brings the whole class together, even Brutus. Mack’s pencil, watercolor, and digital illustrations work in tandem with Staub’s marvelously inventive language to ensure readers understand Dewey’s Eighty-N words. And the characters’ facial expressions and posture speak volumes all on their own.

A powerful message about the support of friends and defusing a bully wrapped in a sweet Valentine tale. (Picture book. 4-8)



TRUCKS GALORE

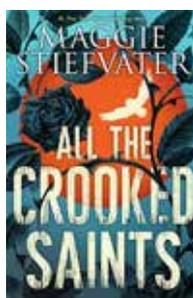
Stein, Peter
Illus. by Staake, Bob
Candlewick (32 pp.)
\$15.99 | Oct. 17, 2017
978-0-7636-8978-0

Staake and Stein keep on truckin’ when madcap tomfoolery and heavy machinery go hand in hand.

Having rendered bereft of all dignity the worlds of automobiles (*Cars Galore*, 2011) and playthings (*Toys Galore*, 2013), the author and illustrator have clearly decided trucks at last must have their due. In bouncy, rhyming text, these kings of the road are described in a wide variety of ways. They are thin and wide, hot and cold, weak and strong, chock full of cows or pigs. What starts as a straightforward list becomes rapidly more imaginative, particularly when “outer-space” trucks descend unannounced and pirates fill their trucks with flounder. As in their previous collaborations, Staake meets Stein’s seemingly impossible descriptions (how do you draw a “bushy-beard truck”?)

with aplomb, putting his highly original stamp on the proceedings. The brightly colored computer art endows each scene with a sometimes-frenzied energy. Though not quite as delightfully bonkers as their previous books, this is sure to lure in both hardcore preschool truck enthusiasts and their truck-curious compatriots as they pore over the details on every page.

Put the pedal to the metal and track down these trucks for your favorite back-seat drivers. (Picture book. 3-6)



ALL THE CROOKED SAINTS

Stiefvater, Maggie
Scholastic (288 pp.)
\$19.99 | Oct. 10, 2017
978-0-545-93080-2

The line between truth and legend is obscured in the high desert of the San Luis Valley, a world of tall tales and miracles that draws literary pilgrims.

In 1962 the teenage Soria cousins of Bicho Raro, descended from Los Santos de Abejones of Oaxaca, Mexico, continue the family legacy of miracle working. However, pilgrims seeking a miracle here find their inner darkneses brought to life, tangible metaphors for their psychic pain. When the eldest cousin and acting Saint, Daniel, interferes with a miracle in progress, the darkness falls upon him as well, and he flees into the night. Barred by their fearful parents from seeking him directly, the remaining cousins decide to reach out in the only way they know how—through their pirate radio station. Coolly intellectual Beatriz and passionate Joaquin join forces with white-bread Pete Wyatt, a salt-of-the-earth transplant from Oklahoma, using the technical marvel of AM radio to perform a practical miracle and hopefully bring Daniel home. In the process, the family rediscovers that the best way to fight the darkness is with someone you love by your side. Stiefvater weaves a rich history for this mythical homestead. Though not an own-voices narrator, she well-captures the rural, mountain West and the Latinx culture that provides the foundation for the Sorias’ twilight world.

True history blends with traditional and fanciful folklore as fallen saints find salvation in the lyrical power of family, community, and rock-’n’-roll. (Fiction. 14-adult)



THE SECRET OF NIGHTINGALE WOOD

Strange, Lucy
Chicken House/Scholastic (304 pp.)
\$16.99 | \$16.99 e-book | Oct. 31, 2017
978-1-338-15747-5
978-1-338-15749-9 e-book

Moving from London to the countryside, Henrietta, a 12-year-old white English girl, encounters mysterious secrets threatening to destroy her family.

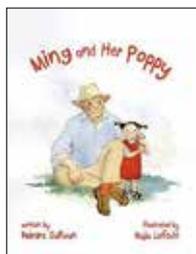


Featuring a strong, tech-savvy protagonist who will stop at nothing to get the job done, the novel explores exciting yet terrifying possibilities.

THIS MORTAL COIL

In the summer of 1919, Henry and her family arrive at Hope House, with its gardens and “wilderness of woodland,” seeking a “fresh start.” Unwell since her son’s recent death, Henry’s mother immediately collapses; local Dr. Hardy sedates and confines her in a locked room. Simultaneously, Henry’s father exits abroad for his job, leaving Henry and her baby sister with their nanny. Alone, Henry spends days rereading familiar books and fairy tales and nights reliving the terrifying fire that killed the brother who haunts her. Magnetically drawn to Nightingale Wood, Henry discovers a woman called Moth living in a caravan harboring her own secrets like a “forgotten, fairy-tale princess.” When Dr. Hardy commits her mother to an asylum, removes her sister, and suggests she suffers the same mental illness as her mother, a resolute Henry attempts a daring rescue, aided by Moth. In an imaginative, compelling first-person narration, Henry wraps her story in fairy tales, exposing her guilt, grief, isolation, and fear as she unravels the stunning secrets of Nightingale Wood.

An evocative, beautifully written, mesmerizing debut tale with lush fairy-tale themes and a poignant exploration of mental illness—enthraling. (*Historical fiction. 9-12*)



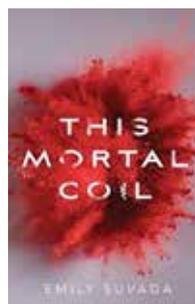
MING AND HER POPPY

Sullivan, Deirdre
 Illus. by Löfdabl, Maja
 Sky Pony Press (32 pp.)
 \$16.99 | Oct. 17, 2017
 978-1-5107-2943-8

Following *Ming Goes to School* (2016), the little girl is back for another subtle journey through the year’s seasons.

“Ming and Poppy know their way” and travel back and forth on foot, by bus, from school, through the park, to restaurants, on noisy streets, and in quiet places. Ming’s name is Chinese; Poppy could be Asian or white, allowing readers to imagine various family structures. In any case, their loving relationship is evident in the sketchy line-and-watercolor illustrations showing a little pale-skinned girl with black pigtailed that stick straight out and a tall pleasant-looking gentleman, often holding hands or sitting close together, enjoying ice cream or doughnuts. The seasons are never mentioned in the spare, poetic text but are noted in the clothing, as Ming’s red school jumper is covered up by her coat and hat; boots replace shoes, which return; and finally she’s in blue shorts and sandals. Red leaves drop, and new spring flowers bloom to give further proof of the time of year. The little girl is mostly carefree, enjoying her friends and her grandpa, but there is a hint of childhood strife in the line “by sticks, by stones, / by names that sting,” when three children are shown whispering to one another and Ming plays alone on the sidewalk as Poppy looks sadly on.

Lovely and quiet, this is a book to savor again and again. (*Picture book. 4-6*)



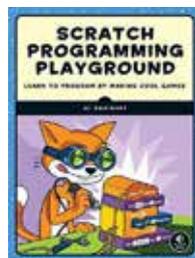
THIS MORTAL COIL

Suvada, Emily
 Simon Pulse/Simon & Schuster (432 pp.)
 \$18.99 | Nov. 7, 2017
 978-1-4814-9633-9

In Suvada’s high-tech debut, a virus has ravaged the world and one teen holds the key to the cure.

In a world where everyone is embedded with technology at birth that allows them to manipulate their DNA, Catarina Agatta’s dad, Lachlan, is the best gentech coder in the world. Naturally, she has inherited his skills to become a master hacker. At the outbreak of a horrifying virus that causes its victims to combust and those nearby to cannibalize them before they do, Cartaxus, a corrupt organization, forcibly whisks Lachlan away to develop a cure. For two years, Catarina survives on her own, carefully avoiding Cartaxus’ grasp. One day, a Cartaxus soldier, Cole, shows up on her doorstep with the news that her father has died but that he managed to develop a vaccine. The only catch? Cole and Catarina must work together to find, decrypt, and release it to the masses. On their dangerous adventure to save the world, Cat is forced to question everything she thought she knew about her father, Cartaxus, the virus, and even herself. Featuring a strong, tech-savvy protagonist who will stop at nothing to get the job done, the novel explores exciting yet terrifying possibilities. (Race identity in this DNA-fluid future goes mostly undefined, but her surname implies Greek heritage.) While the twists and turns keep readers on their toes, one particular curveball comes so far out of left field it threatens to derail the story.

An original concept but with an ending that requires a suspension of disbelief. (*Science fiction. 14-18*)



SCRATCH PROGRAMMING PLAYGROUND

Learn to Program by Making Cool Games

Sweigart, Al
 No Starch Press (292 pp.)
 \$19.95 | Sep. 1, 2017
 978-1-59327-762-8

A Scratch guide that goes beyond basic games and into some instructional depth.

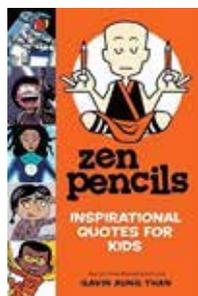
After an introduction explaining the book’s structure and a first chapter that gets users up and running in Scratch, each following chapter is dedicated to a single game. From an early maze game to more-complicated games that resemble popular ones, such as a brick-breaker game and a “Fruit Ninja” clone called “Fruit Slicer,” readers are guided through screenshot illustrations of what the visual Scratch code should look like, as well as clear explanations about what the code is doing. Additionally, this manual’s heavy on customization, encouraging readers to make their own art for the games in the Scratch Paint Editor

It's hard to imagine Calvin Coolidge and the practice of Zen joining forces, but Than gives it the old-school try.

ZEN PENCILS

(although it also provides links to project files with sprites and other images to help those short on time or artistic abilities), and it even includes instructions on how to make “cheats” for the games. Each game is followed by skill summaries and review questions. The chapters’ complexity builds, climaxing in an ambitious, complicated-but-achievable final “Super Mario”-style game. Aside from the easy-to-follow instructions, puns give the book personality, and recommended resources pair with a thorough index to maximize usability. The structure’s ideal for classrooms, and the writing is accessible to independent readers—younger, with parental assistance.

An impressive manual for achieving Scratch programming mastery and creating genuinely entertaining games. (Nonfiction. 8-adult)



ZEN PENCILS Inspirational Quotes for Kids

Than, Gavin Aung—Ed.

Illus. by the editor

Andrews McMeel (128 pp.)

\$9.99 paper | Oct. 17, 2017

978-1-4494-8721-8

It's hard to imagine Calvin Coolidge and the practice of Zen joining forces, but Than gives it the old-school try.

Not just Coolidge (in an unusually prolix turn), but the Stoics Seneca and Epictetus; Margaret E. Knight, Amelia Earhart, and Marie Curie; Jack London, Theodore Roosevelt, and Jacob A. Riis—all are grist for Than's mill, which turns their inspirational words into short, graphic meditations. “Happiness is like a butterfly,” starts one of Than's paneled episodes, a lovely bit from Henry David Thoreau that the cartoonist follows through eight pictures until the old, white man who has been trying mightily to catch a butterfly gives up and then dozes off while fishing—at which point the elusive butterfly appears on his shoulder. The aphorisms can be straight-out sharp, like that of the Dalai Lama's “But basically, we are the same human beings.” Others feel ambiguous—Seneca: “All cruelty springs from weakness”—or dry as tinder—Sir Ken Robinson: “We have to rethink the fundamental principles on which we're educating our children.” Than's characters are easy on the eye, but perhaps there are a few too many transformations into superheroes, and many strips are radically decontextualized from their speakers' work, as in Riis' stonecutter. Thumbnail biographies of at most four sentences follow.

It's well-intended, and these are mostly words of wisdom, but the artwork inspires more than the words, which, if timeless, can still feel musty. (Graphic nonfiction. 10-18)



E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL The Classic Illustrated Storybook

Thomas, Jim—Adapt.

Illus. by Smith, Kim

Quirk Books (40 pp.)

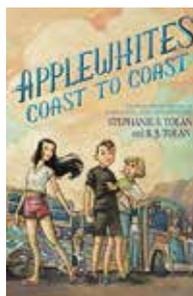
\$18.99 | Oct. 31, 2017

978-1-68369-010-8

A picture-book adaptation of the iconic *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*. Simplified. Very.

For readers who fell through the time-space fabric of earthly life after 1982, this near goo-goo rendering for the young will provide the basics, if not the poignancy and power of “alien” affection, of the famous movie. The narrative adaptation is pared down to the bone but operates fairly smoothly, while the artwork offers some fine comic scenes, such as E.T. hiding among a pile of stuffed animals and E.T.'s various disguises. All the child characters have E.T.-size eyes, and although their heads are round, they are also as exaggeratedly large in proportion to their bodies as their alien friends. The basic plot is here, but the emphasis is on getting E.T. away from the bad guys, who don't look nearly bad enough—though when they finally catch E.T. and put him in the coffinlike box, it's pretty creepy. The flat, affect-free narration underplays the movie's take on the magic of friendship, no matter how peculiar the “other,” and Elliott's gesture of love in helping his friend return home is reduced to plot points. As in the film, principal characters are white, though Smith places some people of color in background roles.

OK, you've read the SparkNotes, now it is time to see the movie. (Picture book. 3-6)



APPLEWHITES COAST TO COAST

Tolan, Stephanie S. & Tolan, R.J.

Harper/HarperCollins (320 pp.)

\$16.99 | \$8.99 e-book | \$17.89 PLB

Oct. 17, 2017

978-0-06-213320-5

978-0-06-213324-3 e-book

978-0-06-213321-2 PLB

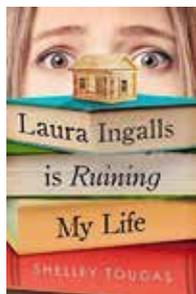
Series: Applewhites, 3

The Applewhites take their untraditional, ramshackle educational show on the road.

In this third in the Applewhites saga, Jake Semple, cured of his rebel ways at their home-school ranch called Wit's End, remains with the Applewhites. The entire brood embarks on a cross-country competition to prove their brand of experiential, self-driven learning is the best. If they win, there's both money and reality TV fame to be had. E.D. and Jake's first kiss hasn't quite gone as expected, so when trouble arrives in the form of a gorgeous bad-girl named Melody Aiko Bernstein, Jake is struck dumb and E.D. is simmeringly jealous. Jake's and E.D.'s thoughts are revealed in alternating, third-person-limited chapters, while the rest of the quirky cast play out their roles in the

background. The Art Bus goes from assigned stop to assigned stop per the competition's directive, amid myriad mishaps such as wayward crushes, stolen cars, embarrassing theater performances, minimakeovers, and cockroach infestations. Through sarcastic wit and sweet charm by turns, Melody manipulates the Applewhites, begging the question of everyone's integrity. This road trip is long and, despite its jumble of events, often tedious. Jake and the Applewhites are white; diversity is mostly conveyed by naming convention, as with Melody's Japanese middle name and yoga teacher/family cook Govindaswami's Indian one.

A humdrum adventure that muddily tries to convey the notion that all of life's students are also teachers. (*Fiction. 8-13*)



Laura Ingalls IS RUINING MY LIFE

Tougas, Shelley
 Roaring Brook (304 pp.)
 \$16.99 | \$9.99 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017
 978-1-62672-418-1
 978-1-62672-419-8 e-book

A girl's irresponsible mother plans to channel the spirit of Laura Ingalls Wilder into a bestselling novel.

Charlotte, age 12, has heard this sort of thing before. Along with Freddy, her hearing-impaired twin, and Rose, her perennially sunny 11-year-old half sister, she's gotten used to Mom's perpetual search for greener pastures. Only they've always lived in warmer places, and Mom's always had a job—now they're in Walnut Grove, Minnesota, the prairie icon's former hometown, and Mom's counting on their meager savings lasting until she can finish her book. (Charlotte and family are white; their landlords, who are important characters, are Latinx, and many of Charlotte's classmates are Hmong.) Charlotte knows how to survive: be average. But here, for the first time, her twin becomes popular in his own right. Her teacher refuses to accept mediocrity, and she's even drawn into volunteering at the Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum. Unaccountably, it's her mother who seems to be struggling—ready to give up and move them again just when Charlotte has finally found a sense of home. Then the museum is vandalized, Charlotte is blamed—and the resulting fallout teaches her to recognize the truth about herself, her family, and her friends. Tougas maintains Charlotte's first-person point of view in a way that allows readers, like Charlotte herself, to gradually realize where Charlotte's perceptions have been inaccurate or unfair. Strong characters and fast plotting propel readers to a sweet, realistic end that provides hope and a sense of stability—at least for the present time.

Lovely. (*Fiction. 8-12*)



ACCIDENT!

Tsurumi, Andrea
Illus. by the author
 HMH Books (48 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Oct. 3, 2017
 978-0-544-94480-0

Oopses occur when animals of varied sizes, colors, and species wreak havoc around town and pay a riotous price—but learn a valuable life lesson.

Trouble begins on the title-page spread when Lola, a smooth, yellow armadillo, haplessly spills juice on a white armchair. Her solution? To hide in the library until adulthood. On the way, Lola encounters three neighbors, each of whom has experienced a misfortune, and they join her. So intent are they on reaching safe haven that no one notices that everyone else around is embroiled in disasters, and troubles escalate from there. Tsurumi portrays accumulating sequences of missteps in breathless, hilarious detail; children will have great fun poring over and savoring the escapades, some of which are depicted small. Besides honing visual-literacy skills, this is a neat vehicle for developing vocabulary, as pertinent themed words (“FIASCO!”, “MAYHEM!”) are wittily incorporated into the comical illustrations as sound effects or speech-balloon dialogue. Aside from that, text is sparse. At the end, the point is made that some unlucky occurrences are, well, accidents. Sweet scenes showing concerned neighbors apologizing, making restitution, and dutifully cleaning up clarify that such incidents are forgivable and fixable. The final pages, depicting Lola's parent also experiencing an oops-able moment, convey this message more pointedly. Note a final, delightful “accident” on the back endpapers.

Accidents are OK. This entertaining romp acknowledges that those who have them are OK, too. (*Picture book. 4-7*)



**MISTRESS OF ALL EVIL
 A Tale of the Dark Fairy**

Valentino, Serena
 Disney Press (304 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Oct. 3, 2017
 978-1-368-00901-0
 Series: Villains, 4

Disney's Villains series' fourth installment highlights *Sleeping Beauty's* Maleficent. Maleficent turns to the villainous witch trio the Odd Sisters for aid finding Aurora. Although they were lost in the land of dreams after *Poor Unfortunate Soul* (2016), they give enough advice that Maleficent succeeds in the spindle plot. But Maleficent needs Aurora gone for good, so she abducts Prince Phillip and seeks the assistance of two other powerful witches, Circe and Nanny, to ensure Aurora never wakes. The connections with the previous books of the series (including periodic recaps and reminders as well as appearances by Princess Tulip, Snow White, Queen Grimhilde, and more) as well as

the back story shared among Maleficent and the other characters are told in lengthy, sometimes-clunky expository passages and flashbacks. The nonlinear plotting allows for forward plot progression on the storyline with Circe and her sisters, as well as a metafictional one about a storybook. In flashbacks, Maleficent goes from an isolated outcast adopted by Nanny to a victim of extreme bullying to the villain. Feminist Maleficent sneers at the princesses-needing-rescue trope, thereby insidiously reinforcing it, and the book primarily concerns itself with all manner of relationships between females. The story builds to a revelation that answers the question of why Maleficent seeks to destroy Aurora. Aside from colorful Maleficent (she modulates between green and lavender), if other characters' skin tones are described, they're pale.

Despite frequently inelegant prose, the story will probably please series fans. (*Fantasy*. 10-18)



FRATERNIZE

Van Dyken, Rachel
Skyscape (318 pp.)
\$9.99 paper | Sep. 12, 2017
978-1-4778-0920-4

A professional cheerleader finds herself caught between two football players.

At 22, Emerson Rodner is determined to continue her career even though at 190 pounds, she isn't the typical cheerleader. Getting her chance with the Bel-

levue Bucks' cheerleading squad—and despite the strict policy against fraternization—Emerson immediately attracts the attention of cocky player Grant Sanchez. Emerson is intrigued by Grant, but she's also distracted by the arrival of a newly arrived player, Miller Quinton: her high school best friend and lover before misunderstandings and a separation ended their relationship. When Grant makes a mistake, will Emerson give Miller a chance? While the love triangle is compelling, the plotting is misleading: a dual-narrative structure sets up expectations that are then overturned in a twist that necessitates the awkward addition of a third voice. Additionally, while Emerson is white and Miller is mixed-race (black/white), Grant's ethnicity is left undefined beyond his last name. The characters' post-college ages and the narrative's lack of inherent teen appeal combine with the explicit sex to move this from a young-adult to a new-adult classification.

Although it's admirable how Emerson succeeds with her big, curvy figure, teen girls who could use this message will probably have to look for this title outside of a library's or bookstore's teen section. (*Romance*. 16-adult)



NEXT YEAR

Vander Zee, Ruth
Illus. by Kelley, Gary
Creative Editions/Creative Company
(32 pp.)
\$18.99 | Sep. 1, 2017
978-1-56846-282-0



An early adolescent boy who lives with his parents on their farm during the Dust Bowl tells his story in this picture book.

In 1935, Calvin, the white narrator, is 12. He lives with Ma and Dad (both also white) on a farm on a prairie that has become, because of the four-year drought, a land of starving cattle, withered crops, and dust storms. Calvin's father, discouraged but clinging to hope, tells him, "It's gonna be better next year." But it doesn't get better for four more years—until 1939—when the rains finally come. By then Calvin's parents have had enough, and to Calvin's dismay, they pack up and leave. Now 16 and realizing, "I love what I've hated for so long," Calvin stays behind to farm the land in the more sustainable ways he has learned about during the drought. Vander Zee's poetic narrative, with its precise distillation and keen perception, brings the poverty and heartbreak of this time powerfully forward, while the story's undercurrent of perseverance, strength of character, and, ultimately, respect and stewardship of the land gives it hope. Kelley's magnificent, colorful, black-outlined illustrations flawlessly convey the grandeur of the land as well as the awfulness of that time. The book's overall design is stellar, each page a visual tour de force, balancing white space, words, and illustration.

Stunning. (author's note) (*Picture book*. 8-14)



FALL IN LINE, HOLDEN

Vandever, Daniel W.
Illus. by the author
Salina Bookshelf (32 pp.)
\$21.95 | Oct. 1, 2017
978-1-893354-50-0

In a modern-day school within the Navajo Nation, the children are expected to conform, but young protagonist Holden's imagination cannot be reined in.

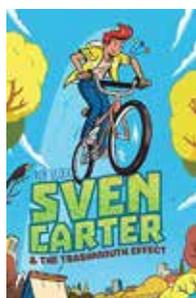
As he and his classmates walk single file to recess through the school corridors, Holden stops to imagine that the pictures on the wall have come to life. Unattributed dialogue in large, bold letters—readers will assume it's spoken by an unseen teacher—orders him to stay with the group by calling out the book's refrain: "Fall in line, Holden!" Holden continues to lag as they walk: past the gymnasium, where students playing ball are dressed as Roman centurions; past the cafeteria, where the lunch ladies don witches' hats and ride brooms; past the computer lab, where astronauts float in space; past the music room, where the notes morph into birds. However, when they reach their destination, Holden discovers a pleasant surprise. Debut author/illustrator Vandever grew up on Navajo land, listening to elders speak of the lasting trauma of boarding schools, as he discloses in concluding notes. His illustrations' limited palette is

The hopeful ending is refreshingly realistic and hits the right notes.

SHAI & EMMIE STAR IN BREAK AN EGG!

effective in showing how the students toe the line. The figures are rendered as negative space with just black hair and eyes and minimal clothing details—a striking effect. Occasionally the text's rhyme and meter seem forced, but the overall message that creativity and imagination will occur even within strict boundaries will resonate with many readers.

A subtle, provocative, and surprisingly joyous read. (Picture book. 4-8)



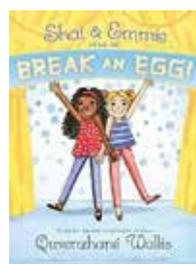
SVEN CARTER & THE TRASHMOUTH EFFECT

Vlock, Rob
Aladdin (384 pp.)
\$17.99 | \$7.99 paper | \$7.99 e-book
Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-4814-9014-6
978-1-4814-9013-9 paper
978-1-4814-9015-3 e-book

Sven Carter has always known he was weirdly different...he just didn't know he was extremely different (in a possibly apocalyptic way).

Seventh-grader Sven is called Trashmouth by his classmates because in times of stress (or any time really) he eats or licks gross things, such as pre-chewed gum stuck to the bottoms of seats and tables or the handrails on buses. He and his best friend, Will, who has OCD, decide that making a daredevil YouTube video will get them some popular attention. When the stunt goes horribly wrong, Sven's severed arm moves on its own to reattach itself to his shoulder. A visit to the creepy family physician is no help. However, Alicia, the new girl at school, knows just what Sven is—and she's sworn to destroy his kind. Sven is a Tick, a human-seeming robot and apparently a doomsday weapon. Can he and his new frenemy save humankind from giant clown snakes and killer roasted chickens? Vlock's debut is a totally out-there adventure that switches things up at every turn. First-person narration by Sven ends each short chapter with a cliffhanger or a joke. Fourth-wall-breaking acknowledgements at the close are not as funny as probably intended, and Will's OCD feels more like a bunch of tics than a genuine disability, there for laughs rather than exploration. Characters are default white.

Lovers of gross-out humor and slightly science-y mysteries might enjoy spending time with Sven. (Science fiction/adventure. 9-12)



SHAI & EMMIE STAR IN BREAK AN EGG!

Wallis, Quvenzhané & Ohlin, Nancy
Illus. by Müller, Sharee
Simon & Schuster (128 pp.)
\$15.99 | \$10.99 e-book | Oct. 3, 2017
978-1-4814-5882-5
978-1-4814-5884-9 e-book
Series: Shai & Emmie, 1

Debut author Wallis' series opener, with co-author Ohlin, is a short and sweet early chapter book tackling themes of jealousy and empathy among classmates at Sweet Auburn School for the Performing Arts.

African-American Shai Williams aspires to being an actress just like Grandma Rosa and Aunt MacKenzie, aka Aunt Mac-N-Cheese. She has the mutual support of her best friend and fellow Sweet Auburn student, white Emmie. When it is announced that the third-grade musical will be *Once on This Island*, Shai wants nothing more than to follow in Aunt Mac-N-Cheese's footsteps in the lead role, Ti Moune—but newly relocated SoCal transplant Gabby, also African-American, is cast in the role. When Gabby struggles, teachers ask Shai to help her out. Shai is less than eager to assist but heeds her parents' sage advice to take "the high road." All does not go perfectly, and Gabby does not become Shai's new best friend by the time the play opens, but the hopeful ending is refreshingly realistic and hits the right notes. As Grandma Rosa reminds us "It takes courage to be nice to people who aren't always nice to you."

Audiences seeking contemporary beginning chapter-book series are sure to find much appeal in Shai and Emmie's world. (Fiction. 6-9)



SATURDAYS WITH HITCHCOCK

Wittlinger, Ellen
Charlesbridge (272 pp.)
\$16.99 | \$16.99 e-book | Oct. 10, 2017
978-1-58089-775-4
978-1-60734-997-6 e-book

A preteen deals with numerous changes in Wittlinger's sleepy middle-grade novel.

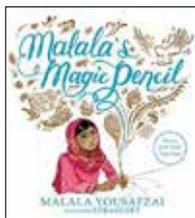
Twelve-year-old Maisie loves classic Hollywood cinema with a passion. The only other people who love movies as much as she does are her best friend and neighbor, Cyrus, her actor uncle, Walt, and elderly Mr. Schmitz, the crotchety owner of the local movie theater. When Uncle Walt injures himself on set and moves in with Maisie's family for the duration of his recovery, tensions at home run high. But that's not all. Her grandmother is becoming dangerously forgetful while simultaneously rekindling an old romance with Mr. Schmitz. Her mother is laid off, and money becomes tight for their white, lower-middle-class family. Her friendship with Cyrus grows confusing as their classmate Gary worms his way into their circle. It seems closeted Cyrus has a

Watercolor-and-ink illustrations give a strong sense of setting, while gold ink designs overlay Malala's hopes onto her often dreary reality.

MALALA'S MAGIC PENCIL

crush on Gary, while Gary has a crush on Maisie, and Maisie isn't sure she's ready for any of them to be having crushes at all. Wittlinger's narrative feels painfully out of touch: these kids have landline phone conversations; Maisie's film references are overwhelmingly white. A handful of contemporary references (*Inside Out*, Kate McKinnon, among others) feel forced and land the book somewhere between the intentional nostalgia of *The Penderwicks* and a real embrace of present-day preteendom, never fully settling on a rhythm that feels right. Maisie's small Illinois town is a largely white one.

A bland jumble. (*Fiction. 8-12*)



MALALA'S MAGIC PENCIL

Yousafzai, Malala

Illus. by Kerascoët

Little, Brown (48 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$9.99 e-book | Oct. 17, 2017

978-0-316-31957-7

978-0-316-31983-6 e-book

The latest of many picture books about the young heroine from Pakistan, this one is narrated by Malala herself, with a frame that is accessible to young readers.

Malala introduces her story using a television show she used to watch about a boy with a magic pencil that he used to get himself and his friends out of trouble. Readers can easily follow Malala through her own discovery of troubles in her beloved home village, such as other children not attending school and soldiers taking over the village. Watercolor-and-ink illustrations give a strong sense of setting, while gold ink designs overlay Malala's hopes onto her often dreary reality. The story makes clear Malala's motivations for taking up the pen to tell the world about the hardships in her village and only alludes to the attempt on her life, with a black page ("the dangerous men tried to silence me. / But they failed") and a hospital bracelet on her wrist the only hints of the harm that came to her. Crowds with signs join her call before she is shown giving her famous speech before the United Nations. Toward the end of the book, adult readers may need to help children understand Malala's "work," but the message of holding fast to courage and working together is powerful and clear.

An inspiring introduction to the young Nobel Peace Prize winner and a useful conversation starter. (*Picture book/memoir. 5-8*)

CONTINUING SERIES

SPARKLE FAIRIES AND THE IMAGINARIES

Anna, Holly

Illus. by Santos, Genevieve

Little Simon (128 pp.)

\$16.99 | \$5.99 paper | Aug. 1, 2017

978-1-4814-9186-0

978-1-4814-9185-3 paper

Daisy Dreamer, 3

(*Fantasy. 5-9*)

THE BAD GUYS IN ATTACK OF THE ZITTENS

Blabey, Aaron

Illus. by the author

Scholastic Paperbacks (144 pp.)

\$5.99 paper | Aug. 29, 2017

978-1-338-08753-6

Bad Guys, 4

(*Fantasy. 7-10*)

THE LAST KIDS ON EARTH AND THE NIGHTMARE KING

Brallier, Max

Illus. by Holgate, Douglas

Viking (272 pp.)

\$13.99 | Sep. 26, 2017

978-0-425-28871-9

Last Kids on Earth, 3

(*Science fiction. 8-12*)

K IS FOR KINDERGARTEN

Dealey, Erin

Illus. by Cowman, Joseph

Sleeping Bear (32 pp.)

\$16.99 | Aug. 1, 2017

978-1-58536-995-9

Sleeping Bear Alphabets

(*Picture book. 4-6*)

ROBOTS CAN'T DANCE!

And Other Fun Facts

Eliot, Hannah

Illus. by Spurgeon, Aaron

Little Simon (32 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$7.99 paper | Aug. 15, 2017

978-1-4814-9195-2

978-1-4814-9194-5 paper

Did You Know?

(*Informational picture book. 4-8*)

CHARLIE BUMPERS VS. HIS BIG BLABBY MOUTH

Harley, Bill
Illus. by Gustavson, Adam
 Peachtree (160 pp.)
 \$14.95 | Sep. 1, 2017
 978-1-56145-940-7
 Charlie Bumpers, 6
(Fiction. 7-10)

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE NERD KIND

Harrington, Kim
Sterling (208 pp.)
 \$6.95 paper | Aug. 1, 2017
 978-1-4549-2613-9
 Gamer Squad, 2
(Science fiction. 8-12)

APEX

Lackey, Mercedes
 Disney Hyperion (304 pp.)
 \$18.99 | Sep. 5, 2017
 978-1-4847-0786-9
 Hunter Trilogy, 3
(Fantasy. 12-18)

ELMER AND THE TUNE

McKee, David
Illus. by the author
 Andersen USA (32 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Sep. 1, 2017
 978-1-5124-8124-2
 Elmer the Patchwork Elephant
(Picture book. 4-9)

IN THE DEEP BLUE SEA

Nye, Bill & Mone, Gregory
Illus. by Illuzuda, Nick
 Amulet/Abrams (320 pp.)
 \$13.99 | Sep. 12, 2017
 978-1-4197-2552-4
 Jack and the Geniuses, 2
(Adventure. 8-12)

JOJO AND DADDY BAKE A CAKE

O'Connor, Jane
Illus. by Glasser, Robin Preiss
 Harper/HarperCollins (32 pp.)
 \$16.99 | \$3.99 paper | Sep. 19, 2017
 978-0-06-237802-6
 978-0-06-237801-9 paper
 Fancy Nancy
(Early reader. 4-8)

THE DRAGON OF FORTUNE

Stilton, Geronimo
 Scholastic Paperbacks (592 pp.)
 \$19.99 | Sep. 12, 2017
 978-1-338-15939-4
 Geronimo Stilton and the Kingdom of Fantasy: Special Edition, 2
(Adventure. 7-10)

WE'LL BITE YOUR TAIL, GERONIMO!

Stilton, Geronimo
 Scholastic Paperbacks (128 pp.)
 \$7.99 paper | Aug. 29, 2017
 978-1-338-15919-6
 Geronimo Stilton Spacemice, 11
(Adventure. 7-10)

I AM SLAPPY'S EVIL TWIN

Stine, R.L.
 Scholastic Paperbacks (160 pp.)
 \$6.99 paper | Sep. 26, 2017
 978-1-338-06839-9
 Goosebumps SlappyWorld, 3
(Horror. 8-12)

I SURVIVED THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, 1776

Tarshis, Lauren
 Scholastic Paperbacks (112 pp.)
 \$16.99 | \$4.99 paper | Aug. 29, 2017
 978-0-545-91974-6
 978-0-545-91973-9 paper
 I Survived, 15
(Historical fiction. 7-10)

ROAR OF THE THUNDER DRAGON

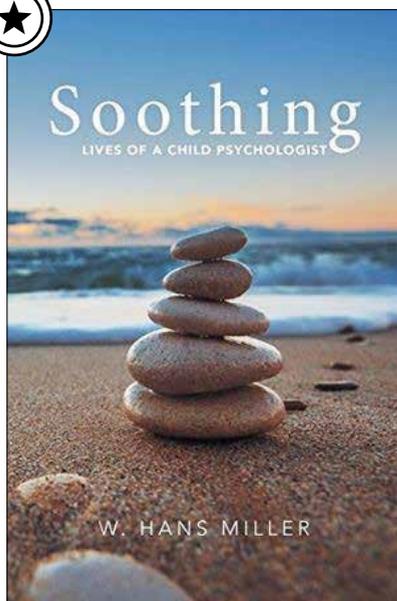
West, Tracy
Illus. by Jones, Damien
 Scholastic Branches (96 pp.)
 \$15.99 | \$4.99 paper | Sep. 12, 2017
 978-1-338-04293-1
 978-1-338-04292-4 paper
 Dragon Masters, 8
(Fantasy. 6-8)

INDIE

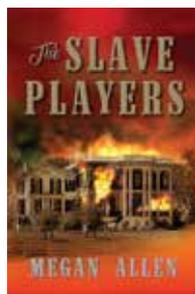


These titles earned the Kirkus Star:

- SEEKING ADAM SMITH** by *Eli P. Cox III* 226
- FISH WIELDER** by *J.R.R.R. (Jim) Hardison* 227
- SANCTION** by *William Hunter* 229
- SOOTHING** by *W. Hans Miller* 234
- SHE'S MY DAD** by *Iolanthe Woulff* 239



SOOTHING
*Lives of a
Child Psychologist*
Miller, W. Hans
Xlibris (263 pp.)
\$3.99 e-book | Feb. 6, 2017
978-1-5245-4631-1



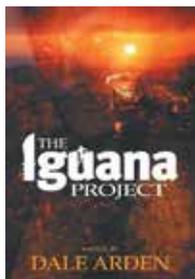
THE SLAVE PLAYERS

Allen, Megan
Burn House Publishing

In this debut thriller, a series of murders leads a rogue general to take the U.S.'s racial strife into his own hands.

A bus from Blue Ash, Ohio, carries 12 black girls toward the Freedom Church camp in Alabama. It's a steamy July evening, and as night falls, the vehicle gets lost. Before Tommy, the driver, can fix the situation, two armed white men assault the bus. One of them breaks the front windshield, boards the vehicle, and drags Elizabeth Courtier away screaming. The next day, the bus is found "crashed" by the roadside, with 11 girls, as well as Tommy and the chaperone, Miss Marcy, dead. Enter coroner Shawn Briggs of Harbor Springs, Alabama, who finds that the two black adults died from gunshot wounds and the girls from brutal cuts inconsistent with the crash. Yet Colby County Sheriff John Parrish insists that the deaths remain "accidental" to keep racial tensions from boiling over. This doesn't sit well with Briggs or his precocious daughter, 15-year-old Olivia. As the coverup proceeds—and fails—various parties observe the situation. One is President Errol Clarkson and another is the self-styled Gen. Anthony Sedgewick, a charismatic—though egomaniacal—military leader who plans to shock America into remembering the nightmare of slavery. In this unsettling tale, Allen displays the plotting chops of someone with five thrillers under her belt. Tension jolts upward with each heinous act perpetrated by Parrish and, later, Sedgewick, who revels in torturing his crop of white slaves in a besieged Colby County. The heroic coroner and his daughter are joined by Willie Scarlett, an elderly black farmer who's spent a lifetime absorbing the slurs and bullying of his miserable, insecure white neighbors. Allen's confident narrative rides higher by including the careerist CBN reporter Samantha King and Mexican killer Manuel Ortiz, whom Sedgewick tests to see "just how black" he is. Though the sadism of Allen's villains delivers pulpy thrills, the message that all must fight racism "as children, not of color, not of God, but of right" rings loud and true.

A masterly indictment of America's failed racial politics that remembers to entertain.



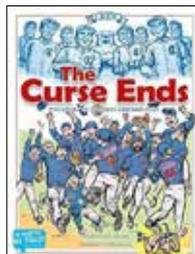
THE IGUANA PROJECT

Arden, Dale
 Lulu (242 pp.)
 \$32.99 | \$17.99 paper | \$8.99 e-book
 Feb. 28, 2017
 978-1-4834-3270-0
 978-1-4834-3268-7 paper

In this debut novel, a lawyer hopes that cutting-edge techniques in suspended animation can solve his problems with the Mafia.

Attorney Patrick Brádaigh lives in Westchester County, New York, and runs the Law Offices of Brady and Sons. For years, while enjoying a seemingly idyllic life with his wife, Colleen, and twin sons, Nick and Andy, Patrick unwittingly works for the Leggiano crime family. When he realizes his mistake, he begins keeping records on the Sicilian Mafia and its murderous operations. To remove the lawyer's leverage, the mobsters burgle his estate. Trying to steal the records from a vault, a thief murders Colleen. Ten years later, her killer might go free, but Patrick still smolders at the chance for vengeance. The Brádaigh family goes on vacation to the Galápagos Islands, and it's there that Patrick meets Dr. Kryten Vandermere, who is researching how iguanas remain underwater for extended periods—which will help NASA place humans in hibernation during deep space travel. He explains to her his idea for storing violent criminals in underground sleep chambers, where they won't burden taxpayers but can be awakened if necessary. Little does the doctor know that Patrick has the Leggiano family marked for a more permanent kind of storage. Arden crafts a sci-fi thriller that heavily embraces family dynamics and red herrings. He teases readers, for example, when Andy says that he and Nick “did a lot of switching around” as children but “never got caught in the act.” Arden also schools audiences in the finances of maintaining a prison: “The approximately hundred and fifty thousand prisoners serving life sentences alone are costing law abiding citizens over four billion a year in hard-earned tax dollars.” That many of the female characters are sexpots—especially Andy's friend Ronni Marcus, president and CEO of Marcus Manufacturing—gives the narrative a pulpy feel. Intense violence typical of the genre plays a minimal role except in the opening homicide sequence and the surprising finale, which act as brutal bookends to a story that succeeds on the strength of its ideas.

Sci-fi and criminology deftly merge in this well-paced tale.



THE CURSE ENDS
The Story of the 2016 Chicago Cubs

Attinella, Jeff
 Illus. by Pascale, Mike
 It Had To Be Told Publishing
 978-0-9989440-0-5

This illustrated children's book explains how the Chicago Cubs finally broke the 108-year drought that kept them from winning the World Series.

A billy goat, a disgruntled fan, and a curse: these are the intriguing ingredients of a baseball legend. Told in rhyming verse and depicted in comic book-style graphics, this story tells how fans in 1945, remembering their team's 1908 win, hoped the Cubs would capture another World Series trophy. But during Game 4, a man who'd brought his smelly goat to watch the game got himself kicked out: “‘You will never win again!’ the man proclaimed aloud, / and thus ‘The Curse of the Billy Goat’ fell over the crowd”—or more important, the Cubs. Moving ahead to 2016, the tale details the road to the pennant and the Cubs' Series win, noting individual contributions by players, the coach, and management. Attinella (*Greatest Ever*, 2017, etc.) employs lively verse to add emotion to the story. Though his scansion isn't perfect, he conveys the building excitement as the Cubs inch closer to breaking the curse. The author writes knowledgeably about the team and the game; a gracious touch that fans should appreciate is the volume's dedication to Cubs fan Steve Bartman. Pascale (*Bru-Hed's Guide to Gettin' Girls NOW! Vol. 1*, 2009, etc.) draws well, with his style mixing realism and cartoon elements. The artwork adds detail, humor, and drama, as in the bottom-up perspective of a player, giving him giantlike dimensions.

Entertaining and informative—a rousing choice for young baseball fans.



HE MADE US BETTER

Boone, Darrell
 Westbow Press (256 pp.)
 \$35.95 | \$19.95 paper | \$3.99 e-book
 Mar. 28, 2017
 978-1-5127-7878-6
 978-1-5127-7876-2 paper

A father pays tribute to his son, who inspired many with his optimism during 39 years of living with a severe disability.

Debut author and freelance agricultural writer Boone's middle son, Peter (1975-2014), had spina bifida. He was born with a high, large, open wound on his back and was given a poor prognosis. Luckily, medical advances made Peter part of the first generation of spina bifida patients to reach adulthood. But his was no easy ride: he was soon wheelchair-bound and over the years endured 80-plus surgeries and multiple hospitalizations. A particularly disastrous

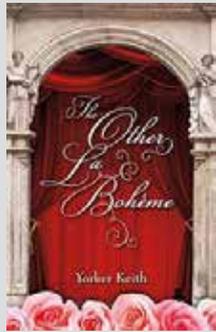
CHASING MUSICAL DREAMS



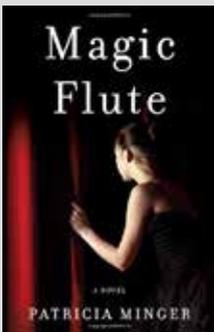
THE CLASSICAL MUSIC and opera giants have always delivered magnificent drama on and off the stage: a majestic elephant marching with the triumphant warriors in Verdi's *Aida*; flames engulfing Valhalla in Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*; Beethoven mobilizing a mighty chorus for his towering Ninth Symphony; the cancer-stricken Puccini failing to finish his stirring *Turandot*.

Kirkus Indie recently reviewed three novels that focus on that world of mercurial maestros, transcendent tenors, lavish sets, and ethereal music that can shatter an opera fan's heart.

In Yorker Keith's *The Other La Bobème*, a quartet of young singers stars in Leoncavallo's version of the tale that Puccini transformed into an opera-house juggernaut. The four friends hope that this production will lift their careers. But as they prepare for opening night, their lives in New York begin to mirror the work's plot. Keith delivers, according to Kirkus' reviewer, "an engaging twist on a classic opera, lush with drama and romance in a contemporary setting."



The gifted American flutist Elizabeth Morgan suffers a devastating hand injury in a car crash in Patricia Minger's *Magic Flute*. This forces the young artist, the daughter of a famous diva, to switch careers: Liz moves to Wales and auditions for soprano roles at a Cardiff opera company. She soon encounters the troupe's attractive and demanding music director. "A smart and uplifting tale of personal and musical renewal," our critic writes.



L.A. Hider Jones' *My Interview with Beethoven* follows George Thompson, who believes the brilliant German composer is his father and devises a plot to meet him. In 1826, George leaves Virginia and travels to Vienna, pretending to be an English nobleman writing for the *Williamsburg Post*. Eventually, he lands an appointment with the troubled genius. Our reviewer calls the book—which earned a Kirkus Star—a "deeply researched, accomplished work of historical fiction." —*M.F.*

Myra Forsberg is an Indie editor.

1987 operation left Peter reliant on oxygen and a ventilator and unable to eat or speak normally; for nearly nine years, he communicated chiefly by mouthing words. It's impressive how conventional a life Peter led despite intense physical trials: from elementary school onward, he attended regular classes; he learned to drive a customized van and attended his prom; and after getting an associate's degree, he worked as a tutor at his old high school. Boone skillfully cuts between Peter's major achievements and the challenges of daily life with a disabled family member; in particular, he is careful not to neglect struggles his wife and other sons faced. While telling Peter's story as a straightforward yet absorbing chronological narrative, the author occasionally pauses to thank those who supported his family: Peter's doctors, their Quaker congregation, and Joni and Friends (a charity founded by quadriplegic Joni Eareckson Tada), whose camps Peter attended and then volunteered in. Peter's obsessive love of sports, especially football and the Purdue teams, is a strong theme running throughout the moving book—"although he couldn't be an athlete in body, he was a great one in spirit," Boone writes. Crucially, Peter and his family never stopped seeing the lighter side of things, as in a vivid scene in which flooding forced them to deliver Peter home by tractor. It's no wonder that his high school instituted the "Peter Boone Mental Attitude Award" in his honor or that 400 attended his memorial service when he succumbed to a coronary thrombosis.

A heartening and well-told family story.



20 WOMEN CHANGEMAKERS Taking Action Around the World

Burke, Pamela & Caso, Patricia—Eds.

The Women's Eye (282 pp.)

\$16.00 paper | Jul. 10, 2017

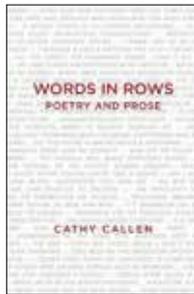
978-0-9977054-5-4

This compilation of interviews by debut editors Burke and Caso comes from *The Women's Eye*, a radio show and website celebrating the accomplishments of women working for change.

"Our subjects' goals are sometimes daunting and certainly wide-ranging," say the editors. "They build schools where there were none, promote global women's issues in treacherous places and uncover ingenious new ways to feed the hungry, rescue children and more." Each entry is an excerpt from a website or radio interview and furthers the editors' efforts "to spread stories of optimism, triumph, mission and purpose." We learn about Maggie Doyne, who, on a gap year after high school, was moved by the desperate poverty she saw in Nepal. She wired home for her \$5,000 in savings, used it to buy land in Surkhet, and built the Kopila Valley Children's Home School, which she still runs today. Retired teacher and guidance counselor Estella Pyfrom also invested personal savings—roughly \$1 million, though not all at once—buying a bus to bring computers and the internet to underprivileged Florida kids. Tina Hovsepian

invented an inexpensive portable cardboard shelter for the homeless; it provides more than just a refuge from some of the elements. "In addition to providing a safe space, there is a psychological aspect," she says. "Cardborigami provides...privacy, which you and I take for granted." Other women have similarly inspiring accounts and are given space to tell those stories in their own words. Question prompts follow the journalistic "who, what, when, where, how" convention, but sometimes the interviews feel like press releases, and more in-depth discussions about how these experiences have changed the subjects would be welcome. The editors boast an enviable international network linking them to ordinary, often unheralded women who are "searching for solutions and new arenas of opportunity, and who [are] reaching out to improve the world in spite of the challenging circumstances." The optimistic tone and diversity of the projects demonstrate that there are countless ways for those with vision to generate positive change.

Activists of all descriptions will find encouragement in these uplifting, albeit brief, success stories filled with recommendations and ideas.



WORDS IN ROWS
Poetry and Prose
Callen, Cathy
 Self (142 pp.)
 \$15.00 paper | \$3.99 e-book
 Aug. 29, 2016
 978-0-9884716-1-0

Callen (*Running Out of Footprints*, 2013) offers a quaint, playful collection of poetry and prose that spans nearly 50 years of her life.

The creation of "I Love You, Sun," the first poem in this book, dates back to 1967; the closing poem, "Galaxy Girls," was written last year. In between are 39 other pieces about nature, love, and the absurdities of Callen's long life. Her descriptions of nature are filled with wonder and delight: "On a clear night...the stars hung rich and heavy over us, and it felt like we could reach out and touch heaven," she writes about the Alaskan sky; in "Come Into Life With Me," she urges readers to "Stand wild in the pulsing rain / and know the strength of its wetness." Love is also a major theme, both romantic and platonic. In "Puzzle," she's intrigued by an unnamed someone, "And, fan that I am of wholeness / I grab you up in little gifted pieces / and turn you around and around / against the straight edges of my brain." Callen is a talented storyteller who recounts many different scenes with wit and humor. In "Blue Moon Baby," for example, an acquaintance details his daughter's birth and the burying of the placenta: "He finally ran out of words, like a tightly spun top that finally came to rest," Callen writes. In "A Wonderful Fantasy," the author works herself into a tizzy anticipating an old boyfriend's overnight stay, which ends in disappointment. "Never Enough" tells of Callen's family as they struggle to calculate how big a batch of mashed potatoes will be required to satiate holiday guests.

Only two pieces seem out of place in this collection: the grim "Time Twister," which details the 1966 Tower killings at the University of Texas at Austin, and "Mom Visits," an imagined reunion between the author and her late mother.

A tender and clever look at a writer's life.



VERONICA AND THE VOLCANO
Cook, Geoffrey
Illus. by Shamsay, Gabrielle
 Violet Moon (320 pp.)
 \$26.99 | \$7.19 paper | \$1.99 e-book
 Jun. 7, 2017
 978-0-692-89200-8
 978-0-692-89448-4 paper

In Cook's debut novel for middle-grade readers, a girl on a camping trip braves volcanic eruptions, pirates, and

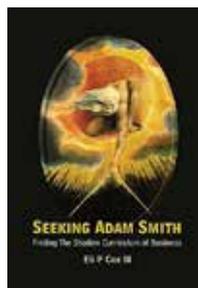
her own townspeople.

In an alternate version of our contemporary world, a 10-year-old girl named Veronica lives on a volcano with her family. They do weekly eruption drills and need special protection for their house and car, but they also get a lava-heated pool and free lava-pump electricity. Veronica wants to get some volcano pearls for her mother's birthday, which means a risky expedition to the far side of Mount Mystery—one that could involve "Violent eruptions, poisonous geysers, pyroclastic flows, [and] lava bombs as big as houses," her father worries. An old man in town also disturbingly warns Veronica about an evil man in white. Nevertheless, she, her best friend Maddy, and their fathers set out on their perilous camping trip. Along the way, Veronica learns more about the area's history from Maddy's dad, Capt. John, the 17th member of the family bearing that name. As the foursome traverses abandoned Babeltown, steep Magma Pass, stinking Yellow Lake, and other landmarks, they encounter all the hazards that Veronica's father predicted and more, making a series of hairsbreadth escapes before reaching Mount Mystery, with the greatest dangers still to come. An exploding volcano, the aforementioned man wearing white, and superstitious townspeople challenge Veronica, who gets help from a very unexpected source to solve a baffling mystery. In his debut, Cook offers an exciting, well-paced adventure tale with an appealingly game young heroine. The scenes of danger and escape are taut and well-handled, with Cook providing lots of cool tech (ice tires!). What makes this YA novel really stand out, though, is its multilayered, insightful poignancy. Behind the fun adventure, for example, is a sense of real loss, as shown in short notes left by wanderers in a box by a bridge: "Please make my mom well. Make her sing and dance again. Are you listening?" Cook also deals thoughtfully with such concepts as so-called "savages" and how victors write history. Shamsay's beautiful, dynamic full-color illustrations do a great job helping to tell the story.

An exciting, complex tale with a terrific heroine.

While the premise of the plot is fantastical, the author has a peculiar talent for rendering the implausible in credible terms.

IMHOTEP



SEEKING ADAM SMITH
Finding the Shadow Curriculum of Business

Cox III, Eli P.

World Scientific Publishing Co (280 pp.)

\$78.96 | \$29.98 paper | \$24.00 e-book

May 20, 2017

978-981-3206-72-4

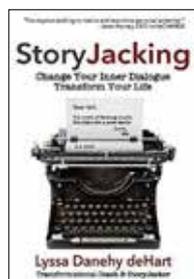
978-981-3206-73-1 paper



A business professor challenges the conventional belief that the father of economics endorsed key assumptions used to justify greed and oppose regulation.

As corporate scandals and financial crises have harmed millions and eroded public trust, debut author Cox (Marketing, Univ. of Texas, Austin) wants business schools to emphasize ethics and social responsibility to offset curriculums that foster a culture of avarice and radical individualism. Mainstream economics, he argues, embraces a political philosophy that promotes the “twin pillars of market capitalism: greedy and rational economic man and the self-regulating power of perfect competition.” Both concepts supposedly find authority in Adam Smith, whose “invisible hand” transforms the personal vice of avarice into the public virtue of economic growth. But Cox effectively describes how these theoretical economic models break down in practice, often harming free enterprise. He persuasively argues that Smith would not recognize or accept them. Cox confesses that for decades as a student and professor he had not read Smith’s 950-page *Wealth of Nations*, accepting what others attributed to it. Intensive study of works by and about the economist and philosopher convinced Cox that Smith distinguished between healthy self-interest and that which was “vulgarily understood”—greed. Cox cites numerous government interventions that Smith endorsed, from a minimum wage to progressive taxation, to show that his philosophy was not *laissez faire*. While Cox aims his work at academia, he writes clearly in mostly jargon-free language that anyone should be able to understand, striking a good balance between scholarly theory and everyday business practice. His case is thorough, well-organized, well-researched, and documented with footnotes, an extensive bibliography, and a basic index. The prose conveys a passion born of regret that the author might have served his own students better; he laments that he presented them “with a hash” of “two conflicting business philosophies.” Particularly effective is his juxtaposition of two former students at the school where he is now professor emeritus: Rick Causey became Enron’s chief accounting officer and went to federal prison; Sherron Watkins, who pens the volume’s afterword, became an Enron whistleblower and *Time* magazine “Person of the Year” in 2002.

A needed and overdue corrective, this book should be essential reading for business and economics scholars and for anyone interested in these subjects.



STORYJACKING
Change Your Inner Dialogue, Transform Your Life

deHart, Lyssa Danehy

Girl+Dog Press (350 pp.)

\$24.95 | \$19.95 paper | \$7.99 e-book

May 5, 2017

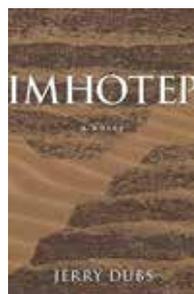
978-1-944335-31-1

978-1-944335-32-8 paper

A refreshingly creative debut that focuses on taking control of one’s life.

Life coach deHart lays out a contemporary method for achieving “self-awareness and self-mastery”; she calls it “StoryJacking,” a clever term that might suggest elevating one’s own life story or, potentially, “hijacking” one’s thinking to shift “internal dialogue.” Each of the four sections—“You are Whole,” “You are Capable,” “You are Resourceful,” and “You are Creative”—contains brief chapters with lots of positive, empowering messages interlaced with exercises, analogies, and numerous examples from the author’s experience coaching clients. The first section explores broad concepts, such as the psyche and how the mind works, and enumerates the StoryJacking steps. Section 2 explores self-actualization through visualization, making choices, expanding awareness, and “archetypes” that are “characters in our internal story.” In the third section, deHart encourages readers to create a personal story using tools that are clearly introduced and described, like the “Locus of Control” and the “Emotional Distress Road Map.” The final section, the shortest, reinforces the flexibility of the tools and discusses creative approaches to StoryJacking. Throughout, deHart gently prods and at times exhorts readers to take control of their stories, noting that “the hardest thing that you will ever do is get out of your own way.” This is typical of her candid, perceptive counsel; the best advice is neatly enclosed in her self-proclaimed “super-secrets of the universe”; for example, “The longest and most intimate relationship you will have in your entire life is the one you will have with yourself.” DeHart’s breezy style and natural storytelling skills keep things moving along.

Heady, insightful content packaged in a nonthreatening, engaging manner; includes ample opportunity for the dedicated reader to consider life-altering directions.



IMHOTEP

Dubs, Jerry

Self (444 pp.)

\$14.99 paper | \$2.99 e-book

Dec. 20, 2016

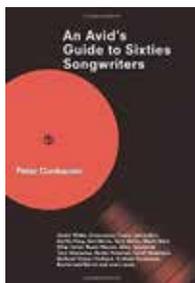
978-1-5190-7028-9

In this historical thriller, three Americans find themselves transported to ancient Egypt and thrust into the political intrigue of the day.

Tim Hope is an American tourist trekking through Egypt forlornly, anguished over the death

of his fiancée. Two Americans he's befriended wander off to explore the Tomb of Kanakht and mysteriously disappear. Concerned for their safety, Tim searches for the couple, Brian Aldwin and Diane Maclaine, but instead unwittingly steps through some sort of portal and travels back in time 5,000 years to an Egypt before the pyramids and the age of Moses. Tim discovers that Brian and Diane stumbled into the portal as well, and all three are suspected by some to be gods, a perception reinforced by heroic deeds performed by Brian and Tim. Problematically, the world they now inhabit, Kemet or The Two Lands, is rife with intramural conflict. After suffering seven years of a devastating famine, King Djoser's reign is threatened by secret rivals, including those close to him who claim loyalty. Further, Tim's and Brian's lives are menaced by political forces that fear their popularity with the people, the consequence of feats of bravery and compassion. Tim, adopting the name and role of a famous architect and adviser to the king, Imhotep, risks his life to properly direct the course of history. Meanwhile, all three Americans are drawn to this unfamiliar way of life and have to decide if they wish to remain indefinitely or—if they can figure out how—return to the future. This is the first installment of a four-part series by Dubs (*Vagabond Retirement*, 2017, etc.). While the undergirding premise of the plot is wildly fantastical, the author has a peculiar talent for rendering the implausible in credible terms. In addition, the depiction of ancient Egypt is masterfully executed, both authentic and accessible, with the narrative including Tim's descriptions of the landscape ("He saw in the distance the green of the Nile's valley, richer and darker and fuller than he remembered it. And along the river, rising from its banks he saw a city of mud brick homes surrounded by a thick white wall: The long-dead city that Tim knew as Memphis"). But the real draw of the book is its characters, especially Tim, drawn in lushly substantive terms.

An intelligently constructed and exciting peek into the distant past.



AN AVID'S GUIDE TO SIXTIES SONGWRITERS

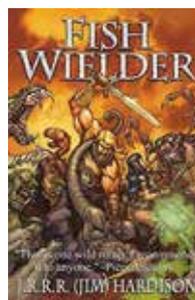
Dunbavan, Peter
 AuthorHouseUK (692 pp.)
 \$51.87 | \$35.02 paper | \$4.99 e-book
 Feb. 28, 2017
 978-1-5246-3346-2
 978-1-5246-3347-9 paper

A debut encyclopedia celebrates famous and obscure pop songwriters of the 1960s.

Dunbavan, a British musician and songwriter, wants to applaud the writer's craft rather than the singer's. He therefore includes only songwriters who mainly did not perform their own work but did pen tunes that made it into the Top 40 charts in America or Britain. Applying these criteria to the '60s, when the singer/songwriter came to dominate music, leads to a somewhat haphazard selection that leaves out Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones, and many other luminaries of the era to focus

on a dwindling number of professional pop composers. (The Beatles do get in thanks to a handful of forgotten tunes they wrote for other bands.) But there's a good roster of legendary songwriting teams, including Burt Bacharach and Hal David, scribes of jaunty classics like "I'll Never Fall in Love Again"; Carole King and Gerry Goffin, authors of "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?" and other anthems of teen-girl yearning; Motown mainstays Eddie and Brian Holland and Lamont Dozier; and Phil Spector, who had his thumb as co-writer or producer in countless '60s hits. The tireless Dunbavan also unearths unsung figures like Phillip Goodhand-Tait, who managed to get three songs onto the British charts, topping out at No. 6 with 1968's "A Day Without Love." Each entry includes lists of the songwriter's charting hits, covers, and rereleases and biographies of several pages, with detailed accounts of how successes were composed and recorded. These thoroughly researched, gracefully written essays contain a wealth of information for scholars and aficionados, including anecdotes from the hit factory in Manhattan's Brill Building, where songwriters plonking away in their cubicles could barely hear their own tunes above the din of others', and well-judged critical appreciations. (The author toasts Bacharach's "unconventional and shifting time signatures, polyrhythms, asymmetrical phrasing, and complex harmonies which stretched even the most accomplished vocalist.") Fans of hits from the sublime ("You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'") to the ridiculous ("Tsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini") should have their memories jogged and their interests piqued.

An intriguing and informative compendium of lore about a great pop-music canon.



FISH WIELDER
Hardison, J.R.R.R. (Jim)
 Fiery Seas (288 pp.)
 \$16.99 paper | \$7.99 e-book
 Aug. 23, 2016
 978-0-9968943-1-9

This debut novel finds a swordsman and his talking fish battling a heartless mage, minions, and a doomsday dessert.

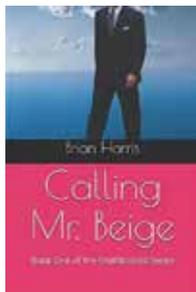
In the magical realm of Grome, Thorral Mighty Fist wars against evil with his enchanted broadsword, Blurmflard. He also has incredibly white teeth, a best friend named Brad—who's a koi—and a heart "too heavy for adventure." As Thorral finishes drowning his sorrows at a tavern, he pops the air-breathing Brad into his belt pouch and heads outside for his steed, Warlordhorse. He's attacked by three black-cloaked figures, members of the Bad Religion. Thorral dispatches them speedily and then travels to the Godforsaken Swamp in search of a mood-enhancing escapade. He eventually finds a ruined castle and runs afoul of Necrogrond, the sorcerer, who wonders whether Thorral is the "Chosen One" from the Goomy Prophecy of Doom. After matching wits and magic with his new nemesis, Thorral frees an imprisoned elf princess, Nalweegie, daughter of King Elfrod. He then learns of Necrogrond's plan to wipe the elves from

Readers will come away from this short book with a firm, uncluttered idea of an important and potentially alluring faith.

SHIN BUDDHISM

Grome. Teamed with Elfred's army, the hero begins tracking a grasthling (flying squirrel) who will hopefully lead them to the Heartless One before the Pudding of Power and the Bracelet of Evil render the sinister forces unstoppable. In this deliciously deadpan fantasy, Hardison (*Demon Freaks*, 2017) parodies a genre that's too often humorless and convoluted. He names people and places with childlike silliness ("The Gap of Goosh," for example) and rivals the wryness of Neil Gaiman with explanations like "She is called Nalweegie, the Evening Snack...because to look on her in twilight quells the hunger of one's heart without making one feel overfull, as can happen with a more substantial meal." Thankfully, the author loves gore, too, and serves fans plenty of it ("He tore both of the elephant trunks off the gorilla body and threw them" so that they "splatted against the black altar and writhed around like huge worms"). Even if readers believe fantasy should always be dark and epic, Hardison's comedic inventiveness and stamina are miraculous to behold.

An irreverent fantasy crammed full of sunlight and surprises.



CALLING MR. BEIGE

Harris, Brian

Self (148 pp.)

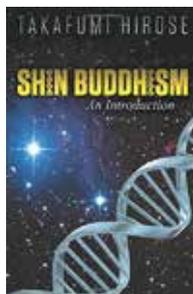
\$4.99 paper | \$1.99 e-book | Jun. 19, 2017
978-1-5214-5178-6

In this comedic novel, a man vainly tries to get people's attention.

Hollywood actor Tad Mortriciano receives too much devotion: from his fans, from his dog, and from his overbearing mother. But that all starts to change once the odd, shuttlecock-shaped birthmark on his shoulder begins to darken. Suddenly he can't get anyone to give him the time of day. He gets rejected for movie roles; fans start to snub him; and his relationships fall apart. People seem unable to grasp what he's saying or to focus on him at all. His new anonymity is so strong he's able to resolve a police standoff by simply walking in and freeing the hostages. It gets to the point that when he is greeted by a woman in the library sporting pigtailed, dental headgear, and a boom box, Tad just assumes that she's speaking to someone else. It turns out Angela is in the exact same position as Tad: they are both "Low-Impactors." Folks who others have a hard time paying attention to." She even has the same shuttlecock-shaped birthmark that appears to be the key to their peculiar situation. One theory is that they're demons. Another, that they're aliens. All Angela knows is that they're being pursued by the Monitors: the only people who can see Low-Impactors and, for some reason, mean to harm them. Angela is helping to organize Low-Impactors who seek to protect themselves in an existential struggle that they are only just beginning to understand. In this first installment of a series, Harris (*Tall Grass*, 2008, etc.) writes in a sharp, playful prose that fills out this absurd world with color and humor. "It's obvious," goes one ally's alien theory. "You both have red hair, you're of similar ages, both put up for adoption about the same time, you

both have the lunar orbiter birthmark." The author leans into the strangeness of the premise, delving into an adventure that is simultaneously cartoonish and compelling. The characters are big and fun; the stakes are high but tongue-in-cheek; and the reading experience is escapism of the best variety.

A delightful, amusing fantasy about folks whom everyone ignores.



SHIN BUDDHISM An Introduction

Hirose, Takafumi

Dog Ear (154 pp.)

\$14.95 paper | Jun. 9, 2017

978-1-4575-5004-1

A retired Japanese university professor and Buddhist priest introduces a major religion of his home country.

Widely practiced in Japan but less well-known in the United States, Shin

Buddhism offers its practitioners salvation from the myriad cares of the world. "Salvation," debut author Hirose explains, is "strictly a mental process such that one becomes able to cope with difficult situations." In this, Shin Buddhism differs from other branches of the Buddhist faith; unlike Tibetan Buddhists, for example, Shin's adherents "have no magical instruments, no sacred places believed to have supernatural powers, no magic words." Instead, devotees concentrate on trying to "see things as they are without any bias or self-interest." In pursuit of this, questions of morality and religion become uncoupled, selflessness is prized over selfishness, and various scriptures become simplified. Hirose describes how Shinran, the faith's 13th-century founder, turned to the original Sanskrit teachings of Gautama Buddha to figure out which lines were intended literally and which symbolically. The tool he used to do this was a search for "universality," as "a universal idea makes sense in any place at any time," Hirose explains. Accordingly, teachings of the Buddha that would be acceptable in all cultures were thereby incorporated as canon in Shin Buddhism. Hirose compares this process to the formation of English common law in one of his brief and always useful personal asides. Readers will come away from this short book with a firm, uncluttered idea of an important and potentially alluring faith. Hirose is cleareyed about his own subject and aware of the ways that its teachings can seem abstruse, as when he admits that the essential part of one teaching is "very simple—perhaps too simple." The dialogues that he includes at the end of each chapter serve as a sort of catechism, answering questions and reinforcing previous lessons. The author shows the patience of the practiced teacher that he is, and, with luck, he'll be rewarded with worthy students.

A cogent, concise, and personable guide to a transformative faith.



SHIMMER
Songs of Night

Howell, Raven
Illus. by Povarchik, Carina
Spork (58 pp.)
\$21.99 | Oct. 17, 2017
978-1-946101-31-0

A prolific children's poet offers an eclectic collection of nighttime pieces.

Opossums, space creatures, the Sandman, dream catchers, and Halloween trick-or-treaters—this inviting book of poems for ages 6 to 12 celebrates dusk to dawn as a world of possibility where nature and flights of fancy coexist. Using different forms (haiku, free verse, couplets, quatrains, and more), Howell (*Gibber*, 2016, etc.) shapes her rhythms and rhymes with a keen appreciation for the subjects and wordplay most likely to engage her target audience. They are matched on every page by debut illustrator Povarchik's fluid watercolor-and-ink images (of wildlife, imaginary beasts, and white siblings), employing a bright, varied palette. The poet's lyrical universe is a place where back-to-back haiku ("5 P.M." and "5 A.M.") contrast whispered secrets as "the wind scrambles by" with the view of "tall and patient" sunflowers anticipating the coming day; where fireflies "skitter" and "flitter" and the Sandman "slippers into the night"; where "Beehives of buildings /...Glow honey-yellow"; where dusk can be "as thick / As chocolate cake"; and where, when bats fly, "The silver of moon / Glistens a bit / On the black on black, / On the flitter and flit." From a child's thoughts about the cosmos and fairy rings to campfire ponderings, shooting stars, and pillow fights, Howell's witty and wise visions of night flow along until "The skillet sky / Warms up / To a pale buttery yellow."

This verbal and visual treat portrays the evening as a lively and thought-provoking place of wonder.



SANCTION

Hunter, William
Manuscript

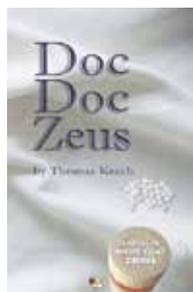


In Hunter's debut espionage tale, the assassination of a Cambridge University professor reveals conspiracies involving terrorist bombings.

Sean Garrett's instructions are to retrieve intelligence from distinguished academic Mohammad Ahmad regarding a King's Cross Station bombing 14 months earlier. But he's also contemplating revenge against Ahmad, as he believes that he's linked to the attack, which killed Sean's grandfather and put his sister in a coma. Quite unexpectedly, an assassin gets to the professor first. Sean witnesses the murder, which soon makes him a target of the elusive hit man. Both MI6 and the CIA want to find the assassin, as Ahmad was a shared asset, and they begin by analyzing closed-captioned TV footage, which seems to implicate

Sean as the killer. MI6's Banastre Montjoy, Ahmad's original handler, is on the case, and soon others enter the investigation, officially or unofficially, including police from Scotland Yard. Meanwhile, the terrorists responsible for the King's Cross Station attack and additional bombings are looking to tie off any loose ends, and they have a mole in British Intelligence that could help them do so. Hunter's tale is deliciously complex, but it's surprisingly easy to follow. Despite the influx of characters, for example, it's generally easy to keep them all straight along with all of their respective agencies. The twists come in the form of shocking alliances, and the final-act explanation is an impressive one that manages to connect multiple events, botched parts and all. The prose throughout is clear and concise despite the characters' use of coded messages and cockney slang (the latter of which is defined as soon as characters utter it). There are some moments of violence, although it's never excessive, and the ending scene, all the way to the closing sentence, is extraordinary.

An explosive thriller full of engaging dialogue and action.



DOC DOC ZEUS
A Novel of White Coat Crime

Keech, Thomas
Real Nice Books (289 pp.)
\$2.99 e-book | Aug. 1, 2017

As a narcissistic gynecologist targets his next vulnerable patient, he comes under suspicion by the state medical board's inexperienced investigator in this novel.

At age 14, Diane Morrell became pregnant and gave the baby up for adoption. Now 16, she continues to see Dr. Hartwicke Zeus, 43, a gynecologist, for vague follow-up appointments at the Christian counseling center where he volunteers. Supposedly, he's helping Diane deal with the changes to her body and offer advice. Actually, Zeus takes the opportunity to touch the girl sexually and groom her for a relationship. Handsome and married ("Legally, yes. But not really"), the doctor pursues Diane with attention, drugs, presents, and visits to his yacht and condo. For her, the sex is fun, but the way he talks to her is better. For Zeus, it's all a game: "He wasn't going to be able to dupe" Diane "like the stupid cunts he'd got off on before. But if he could slowly break her and train her to do what he wanted, it would be ten times the fun." Meanwhile, Dave Green, 25, new in his job as investigator for the Board of Medicine, learns of Zeus' past abuses. But when Dave keeps digging, he is forced to confront a rigged system that makes prosecution seem unlikely. These matters of affluence, class, and status also affect Dave's relationship with his girlfriend; she comes from wealth while Dave struggles beneath six figures in student loan debt. As Dave works to close a legal trap on Zeus, the doctor makes increasingly grandiose, malicious, and reckless decisions that could endanger Diane.

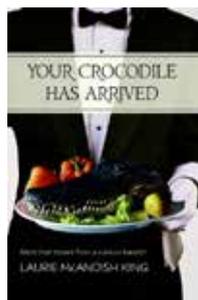
With Zeus, Keech (*Hot Box in the Pizza District*, 2015, etc.) draws a remarkably accurate picture of an especially dangerous

This work is a compelling argument for the cultural vitality of an unjustly neglected sector of the American republic.

FROM WARM CENTER TO RAGGED EDGE

sociopath—not the serial killer of the public imagination but a white-coated, well-educated, and highly respected doctor. Zeus uses his good looks, prosperity, and prestige to molest, drug, and rape his patients, counting on the system and his network of lies to protect him. Keech ably shows the step-by-step process through which Zeus manipulates those around him. For example, with money troubles and divorce looming, Zeus even tells his 12-year-old daughter, Kyra, that the split is because her mother thinks the girl is trying to tempt her father sexually. Keech also is perceptive about what drives Diane to accept Zeus' suggestions; she's lonely, feels blame for the pregnancy, and wants to feel good about herself. The story's minor characters are also well-drawn and contribute importantly to the plot, particularly Robert, a young would-be pastor who keeps pestering Diane because Jesus wants them to be together, and Woody, a high school friend with surprising inner fortitude despite a sketchy past. The book's strengths include how Dave's conflict with his girlfriend touches on real-world economic and ethical concerns that aren't easily solved. The plot moves with energy, building toward a dramatic but believable conclusion. It's hugely satisfying watching the efforts of Dave and his team as they try to expose Zeus' lies.

A complex, multilayered, and psychologically acute tale about a predatory physician: well done.



YOUR CROCODILE HAS ARRIVED More True Stories from a Curious Traveler

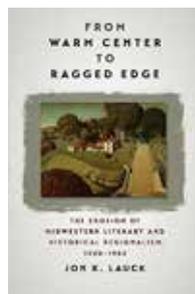
King, Laurie McAndish
Destination Insights (294 pp.)
\$14.27 paper | Jun. 30, 2017
978-0-9986615-1-3

A writer continues her search for the offbeat in food and nature.

King (*Wandering in Bali*, 2017, etc.) is an author with an eye for the quirky. After applying that talent to positive effect in her first collection of travel essays, *Lost, Kidnapped, Eaten Alive!* (2014), she follows up with this volume, in which her experiences range from a chocolate massage in Spain to an establishment specializing in aboriginal cuisine in Australia. The pan-fried saltwater crocodile tail she selects from the menu at the Gugidjela restaurant in the Grampians in Victoria, she reports, has a “unique texture...surprisingly similar to a bicycle tire.” The formula is similar to her first book—closely observed gastronomic and natural history vignettes laced with a sense of a disappearing world as civilization encroaches on the wilds. Her trips, she laments, “provide a stark reminder of the pace at which we’re losing national—and international—treasures.” Those riches include the Giant Gippsland Earthworm, which King encounters at a museum in Australia. The creature is “threatened by drought, use of pesticides and fertilizers, and even the collection of individual worms.” Particularly affecting is the plight of the elephant Sama, who lost her right front foot and part of her lower leg when she stepped on a land mine during

the Sri Lankan civil war. Now a resident of an elephant orphanage, Sama gazes at the author with “the saddest expression I have ever seen...a mixture of resignation and anguish.” There are some intriguing human characters, too, including a Brazilian shaman and the founder of a bear refuge in Alaska. King resorts to some padding with unexceptional essays on sampling the hallucinogen ayahuasca in California and attending a conference of UFO enthusiasts. She is on more solid ground describing confrontations with haggis, the Scottish national delicacy consisting mostly of sheep entrails. “Redolent with nutmeg, warmed by black pepper, and with a slight minerality...it reminded me of a mild-flavored, perfectly textured pâté,” she writes. And from Taiwan, she provides a mouthwatering account of her mission to discover the secrets of making soup dumplings, each one an intricate fusion of dough and filling that turns into a “perfect little gem.”

This enjoyable book comes alive with descriptions of everything from a giant earthworm to tantalizing soup dumplings.



FROM WARM CENTER TO RAGGED EDGE The Erosion of Midwestern Literary and Historical Regionalism, 1920-1965

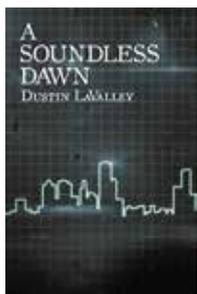
Lauck, Jon K.
University of Iowa Press (266 pp.)
\$27.50 paper | \$27.50 e-book
Jun. 1, 2017
978-1-60938-496-8

A scholarly history examines the academic and cultural derision suffered by the Midwest, calling for a return to a healthy regionalism.

At the start of the 20th century, the Midwest was a tableau of robust health economically, culturally, and intellectually. But an unfortunate alliance of forces conspired to reduce it to a shallow caricature, a backwater of blinkered provincialism. Lauck (*Daschle vs. Thune*, 2016, etc.) links the decline of the Midwest's reputation to several intersecting factors: the rise of mass culture and globalization, the unpopularity of isolationism, the ascendancy of Marxism and the fashionableness of a certain kind of cosmopolitan skepticism, and even misgivings about Christianity, all contributing to a pervasive cynicism about regional values. The author assesses the so-called “village revolt,” the critique forwarded by disaffected Midwestern writers and intellectuals, and exposes that narrative as simplistic and one-sided. Lauck investigates the reasons for the lack of attention devoted to the Midwest by historians, a deficit that contributes to an impoverished view of the country's trajectory. The author also sketches a vision of what a rehabilitated emphasis on Midwestern history would look like, one that includes minority perspectives too often disenfranchised and searching reflections on the effects of 20th-century currents like agricultural mechanization and urbanization. Finally, Lauck argues for the reinvigoration of regionalism itself, which he believes will

politically and culturally strengthen the nation: “If a regionalist consciousness is to dampen our cynicism and bolster community participation and the rudiments of democracy in places such as the Midwest, however, the elements of regionalism must be revived and brought to a broader audience.” Lauck’s study is both concise and meticulous, carefully considering a dizzying wealth of scholarly and literary resources (he offers extensive notes). His writing is always lucid, if dryly academic, but beneath the rhetorical patina of scholarly prose one can’t help but detect a genuine passion for the subject (the author is Midwestern). Lauck hopes that the stories of regions like the Midwest will be heard again, “not as distant echoes from the ragged edge, but in the form of rooted voices from the solid center of the nation.” At its core, this work is a timely appeal for a reconsideration of unrestrained cosmopolitanism and a compelling argument for the cultural vitality of an unjustly neglected—and maligned—sector of the American republic.

A philosophically astute defense of regionalism’s virtues.



A SOUNDLESS DAWN

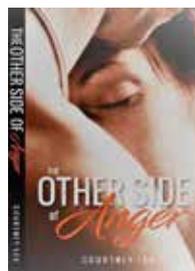
LaValley, Dustin
Sinister Grin Press (154 pp.)
\$9.99 paper | \$2.99 e-book | Mar. 1, 2017
978-1-944044-39-8

Characters experience loss and death and suffer isolation and insomnia in this bleak collection of flash fiction and short stories.

Readers should get a sense of the author’s subversion of genre with the opening story, “The City That Bleeds”: it’s a mere three sentences. Most of the tales are of the literary variety and tend to focus on emotion over plot. In “North Vermont and Lexington,” for example, a man’s post-college life begins on a plane bound for LA, where he meets fellow history major Andrea. Their mutual dreams of California may be diminished by the realization that, upon reaching their destination, anxiousness and hopelessness will remain. Other stories are equally fatalistic: a man’s serious (unspecified) illness may be too much for the woman he loves (“It Rained”), while an unfamiliar passer-by upsets the delicate balance of the idyllic neighborhood of “In Strides.” Hefty doses of somberness, however, aren’t off-putting. There’s a rhythm to LaValley’s (*Despumation*, 2016, etc.) book, starting with its structure: two microshorts, a short story, repeat. Likewise, recurring settings or predicaments link the tales literally and metaphorically. Cold winters chill characters in the same way as a disinterested lover (“Winter in Season”); others take long, sometimes-aimless drives alone, perfectly suited to an insomniac loner (“Sleeper’s Compass”). LaValley’s prose is uncompromising but lyrical: a character sees honesty in dilapidated homes, the outside “not hidden in a fake smile behind whitened teeth.” But it’s not all gloom. The author, for one, toys with expectations: the preachy, titular “Travelin Man” predicts an unusual doomsday event; and it’s difficult not to ruminate on the mysterious but miraculous tonic in “The Secrets of Dr.

Sortelli.” There are also instances of buoyancy. At first glance, “Sand Bucket” is dire, a father’s apparent eulogy for his son Chris. But the story of a boy incessantly carrying and conversing with a bucketful of sand, like an imaginary friend, has a positive message of being oneself despite what others think.

Persistently engrossing tales even at their grimmest.



THE OTHER SIDE OF ANGER

Lea, Courtney
Self (393 pp.)
\$2.99 e-book | Apr. 11, 2017

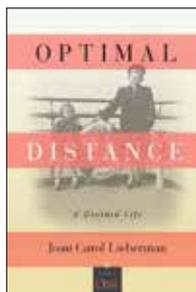
In Lea’s debut romance novel, an emotionally damaged chef and a reclusive carpenter fall for each other while dealing with fallout from their pasts.

Twenty-five-year-old Bryant “Ant” Pembroke, the adopted daughter of the late Tom and Carly Pembroke, is part of Munford, Kentucky’s wealthiest and most-hated family. As the story opens, she’s just tracked down her biological father, Ty Monroe, who’s on his deathbed with stage 4 liver cancer. Ant never got to know him, but he was a friend and surrogate father to 26-year-old Orion “Ore” Black. Standing at 6 feet 6 inches and perpetually clad in flannel, Ore is, for Ant, “the image of a Brawny Paper Towel commercial.” When the pair meet at Mumford Memorial hospital, their mutual attraction is immediate, but each feels that they don’t deserve the other. Ant’s insecurity stems from a childhood of verbal abuse from her father as well as from her relationship with Rodney Picoult, a stalker ex-boyfriend who texts her five times a day; Orion considers himself a monster after a life-changing night in county jail eight years before. As their relationship progresses, there’s no dearth of action; in the span of a single night, Ty dies, Ant finds out the identities of her biological grandparents, Ant and Ore have sex for the first time, and the Pembroke estate gets trashed. And just when Ant and Ore begin to trust each other, there’s a close call involving Rodney. Overall, this is a compelling, well-conceived romance. Ant is an admirable heroine, fiery and capable of taking care of herself, while Ore comes off as a Southern gentleman with rugged sex appeal. There’s a cute makeup scene that’s reminiscent of *The Notebook*—rain pours down as the couple argues outside Orion’s beloved 1968 Chevy truck before they make amends (and love) in a house that he built. Lea’s prose can be repetitive; Ore always smells of “sawdust” and “spice,” and Ant is said to smell of lemon and rose multiple times. However, the novel is redeemed by the author’s ability to capture the intensity of physical attraction—how mundane actions, such as chopping vegetables or carrying furniture, suddenly become irresistible. She also shows a firm command of her book’s erotic scenes.

A solid romance with thrills, sex, and plenty of Southern charm.

The Lynns' photography is crisp and vibrant with color and captures animals with an absorbing immediacy.

ANIMALS OF THE WORLD



OPTIMAL DISTANCE *A Divided Life, Part One*

Lieberman, Joan Carol

Camperdown Elm Publishing (384 pp.)

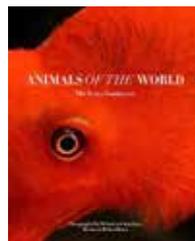
\$20.00 paper | Jul. 28, 2017

978-0-9987690-1-1

A debut coming-of-age autobiography chronicles personal ancestry and familial struggle.

In the first of author and speech-writer Lieberman's two-part history—a massively researched endeavor 18 years in the making—she unveils the genesis of her family life through heartfelt prose and generous photographs. The book's title is derived from the autonomy the author strived to achieve in order to feel wholly at peace with what she calls a shameful family secret: her mother Margaret's lifelong struggle with paranoid schizophrenia. Life became challenging early on as the daughter of an atheist father and a mother who heard the "voices of a god and a devil." Lieberman diligently retraces her parents' individual histories, reaching back to her mother's birth to a Mormon family in Utah and the blind date that would seal her romantic fate with the author's father, Frank. Though the marriage of a Mormon-raised daughter to a gentile raised eyebrows in Salt Lake City, their union produced the author, the surviving female twin from a complicated pregnancy (her brother died in childbirth). Years later, her mother began hearing demonic voices that incapacitated her, while Lieberman found supreme solace in the safe havens of next-door neighbor Marlene Evans, the Mormon Church, and her Aunt Mary's home. In sharing cherished anecdotes and resonant memories, the author effectively exorcises the demons of a youth spent searching for answers and knowing "my mother was both dangerous and deeply disturbed." As the author learned lessons about death, money, driving, and jealousy, a stint abroad helped her mature into a woman capable of love and motherhood even as the Vietnam War raged on and the irrational fear that she would develop schizophrenia loomed. Lieberman rightfully labels schizophrenia as an incurable "human disaster." As a child, her mother's paranoid hallucinations of "invisible demons" were random and frightening, and Lieberman's portrayal of Margaret's further descent is palpably disturbing and sorrowful. Yet it also presents the author as an increasingly formidable and resilient woman able to withstand the sadness of her mother's illness with the fortitude of a well-adjusted adult. Her poignant, painstakingly detailed journey is both exhaustive and intimately personal.

A searingly honest chronicle of motherhood and mental illness drawn from the bittersweet memories of a daughter.



ANIMALS OF THE WORLD *(The Seven Continents)*

Lynn, Richard

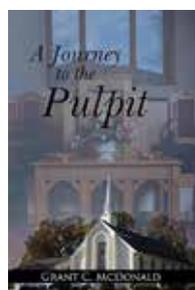
Photos by the author and Lynn, Amy

Blurb (204 pp.)

Not all of the animals but a large sampling of the world's species remains on colorful display in this photo book.

The Lynns (*The Sarcastic Lens*, 2014), a husband-and-wife photographic and writing team, present the haul from some three decades of trotting the globe and taking pictures of animals. The results run the gamut, from minute leafcutter ants to a gigantic blue whale; from an eye-popping peacock to a warthog that seems almost as exhibitionistic in its ugliness; from the brilliant red of the Andean cock-of-the-rock to the dull matted brown of the hyena; from polar bears to Antarctic penguins; from coyotes savagely devouring an elk carcass to tender leopard-on-leopard licking. Certain commonalities emerge from the profusion of fascinating particularities, one being the profound ennui that pervades the life of an animal. Cheetahs, lions, pumas, jaguars, great white sharks, Tasmanian devils, alligators, and hippopotamuses are forever lounging about, gazing listlessly at the camera or yawning wide in a sign of either persistent boredom or a (justified) pride in their fangs. Richard avers that he had to spend two hours watching a three-toed sloth before it finally moved enough to reveal its face. Other beasts are more industrious, particularly the birds, which are forever flitting about flowers, biting fish, or regurgitating food to their chicks. Mainly the dazzling book offers a series of beguiling character studies: flamingos, pacing like ballet dancers in pink-and-white tutus above long legs; a giraffe splayed awkwardly to lower its head to the water; a fiddler crab defying the world with its swollen claw; bison standing immovably beneath a coat of snow; blue-footed boobies kissing with their awkward long bills; a gray langur monkey, its velvety black face framed by a white ruff, peering out with a look of searching reflection. The Lynns' photography is crisp and vibrant with color and captures animals with an absorbing immediacy.

A fine coffee-table volume of natural portraiture.



A JOURNEY TO THE PULPIT

McDonald, Grant C.

Westbow Press (192 pp.)

\$30.95 | \$13.95 paper | \$7.99 e-book

Jan. 30, 2017

978-1-5127-7090-2

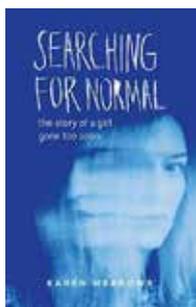
978-1-5127-7088-9 paper

McDonald delivers advice on how to produce better sermons in this debut Christian guidebook.

A majority of pastors in Christian congregations across America are now multivocational, meaning that they have a job in addition to their religious duties. As such, they may lack the time and Bible school education of the

full-time pastors of yesteryear. McDonald seeks to help these part-timers: "The intent of this book is to address both the limited time and financial issues. The multi-vocational pastor must have timesaving options for sermon preparation that still yield a quality sermon." Even the divinely inspired pastor requires research to successfully preach to his flock, and the author provides numerous tips and strategies for those in need of a little aid. From determining the purpose of a sermon to seeking out inspiration and choosing topics that will speak to the needs of the congregation and the pastor himself, McDonald walks the reader through the creation process. In addition to nuts-and-bolts advice on how to structure the sermon, he offers holistic counsel on the ways a pastor should live to make himself a better vessel for God's teachings. These range from the theological ("only a fool would embark upon building a sermon or other spiritual project without prayer") to the practical ("Preachers are not immune to the onset, either temporary or long term, of physiological diseases or psychological disorders"). The book concludes with a number of prompts to get the aspiring sermon writer's imagination flowing. A multivocational pastor and missionary, McDonald writes in a conversational prose and has the gentle, explanatory manner one would expect from a member of the clergy. He approaches the sermon-writing process from every angle while keeping the guide a tight read at under 200 pages. While the audience for the work may be narrow, the book is well-tailored to its task. McDonald makes it clear to new pastors that they are not obligated to be expert sermon writers right out of the gate. Like everything else, there's a learning curve, and this author is happy to light the way.

A well-written and informative sermon primer for pastors.



SEARCHING FOR NORMAL
The Story of a Girl Gone Too Soon

Meadows, Karen
 She Writes Press (280 pp.)
 \$16.91 paper | Nov. 8, 2016
 978-1-63152-137-9

In her debut memoir, Meadows memorializes her daughter while deploring the state of adolescent mental health care.

Karen and Dennis were ecstatic to adopt infant Sadie. She grew into an outgoing, adventurous child who embraced life, whether that meant fishing with her grandfather or starting a neighborhood dog-washing business. But bouts of crying, anxiety, and overeating became regular occurrences in Sadie's life when she started middle school, and a psychiatrist eventually diagnosed her with dysthymia, a chronic depressive disorder. Medication failed to help Sadie, and she made her first suicide attempt in seventh grade. A short stay in a psychiatric ward was followed by more attempts and a longer stay in a residential facility. The family moved to Portland, Oregon, where Sadie's new psychiatrist prescribed an ever changing drug cocktail as Sadie joined the city's street culture and began skipping school, avoiding home, and admitting herself to the

ER. The Meadows eventually found what they hoped was a true solution: several months of treatment in a wilderness program followed by over a year in a rural emotional-growth high school. Sadie's stability issues continued in Portland, however, and at age 18, she died after a suicide attempt. Meadows emphasizes that the tragedy of Sadie's situation was not just her illness, but how her illness obscured a vivacious and complete human being. She writes compellingly about the constant obstacles facing Sadie, herself, and Dennis: a dearth of child and adolescent psychiatrists, lack of "wrap-around" services, and, perhaps most significantly, the stigma that prevents families from seeking help or comfort. The book's power comes from the way Meadows lucidly analyzes her own story to identify larger systematic issues in mental health care for young people. The memoir also includes basic advice and resources for struggling teens and their families.

An intense, moving account of raising and mourning a child with mental illness.



ONLY IN KEY WEST

Michaels, Kenneth D.
 La Mancha Press (242 pp.)
 \$12.99 paper | \$4.99 e-book
 May 8, 2017
 978-0-9983242-0-3

Two police detectives return in a drag-inspired whodunit set in Florida.

Charmingly mismatched sleuths Nick Scott and Norm Malone embark on a new adventure in this sequel, this time in sultry Key West, home to "chickens everywhere you walk, people greeting strangers as if they were good friends, and no one seeming to have a care in the world." Nick, host of the eponymous TV chat show *The Gay Detective*, met the slouchy, heterosexual Norm in the previous installment of the series, in which they teamed up to catch the notorious killer The Reaper while becoming good friends and roommates. Now, as a thank-you gift from the Chicago Police Department, they're vacationing together in Key West. Of particular interest to Nick is an annual New Year's Eve performance by the local drag diva Sho Yu, set to descend upon her adoring fans in a giant red shoe to formally announce her engagement to strapping fiance Matt. To the shock of onlookers, the shoe catches fire on the way down, injuring Matt, and within moments Sho Yu turns up missing. Officer Raphael Perez recruits Nick and Norm to lend their talents to the investigation, one that becomes even darker when Police Commissioner Tom Moss is found dead in his office. The two detectives begin to piece together what increasingly looks like a series of connected killings by a sinister and enigmatic network. Stripper Merlot and a bevy of sassy drag queens (Mimi Peters, Sin Onhym, and Polly Saturates) turn up to crack some jokes and complicate the plot. Along the way, Nick and Norm each finds romance, discovering once again that "sex is the best drug out there and doesn't require a script" and encountering a number of unforeseen hurdles. In this enjoyable caper, Michaels (*The Gay Detective*, 2015) displays a

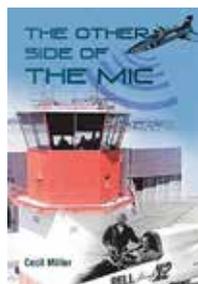
A revealing look at the art of clinical psychology that should give many readers insights into their own problems.

SOOTHING



superb sense of humor, and he deploys it more successfully here than in his last book, using it to balance Nick's complex emotions and the story's suspense. Nick's fraught hookups are effectively woven into the texture of the plot ("Raphael certainly knew how to push my buttons and that scared me. We hardly knew each other"). But his reaction to Norm's own liaison—particularly the intensity of his anger—may strike some readers as more convenient to the narrative than psychologically realistic. But this is a quibble: Michaels' beguiling new tale is an amusing and gripping way to spend a few hours.

A topical, tropical mystery replete with scenes of entertaining buddy comedy.



THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MIC

Miller, Cecil

Xlibris (292 pp.)

\$16.04 | \$17.27 paper | \$3.99 e-book

Aug. 18, 2016

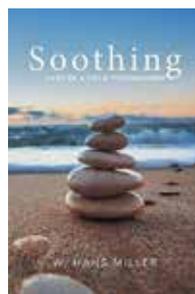
978-1-5245-2969-7

978-1-5245-2968-0 paper

An air traffic controller's memoir blends autobiography with a history of aviation.

Debut author Miller enlisted in the Air Force in 1955 shortly after graduating high school; he was sent for basic training to San Antonio, Texas. He was assigned to Edwards Air Force Base, then a testing base for experimental aircraft, and worked as an air traffic controller within the military for four years before joining the Federal Aviation Administration, where he remained for 30 years, followed by a long stint as a contract worker there until his full retirement in 2013. The author provides a concise dual history of aviation and air traffic control, which partially developed in tandem, detailing the rapid technological development of the two from rudimentary beginnings. When Miller first began his career, air traffic controlling was still in an embryonic stage—before there was either radar or regular radio control with aircraft: "The year 1955 was only twelve years after the United States flew its first jet airplane, ten years after World War II, eight years after man first broke the sound barrier, seven years after the air force became a separate branch of the military service." Air traffic controlling, like aviation, grew out of a whirlwind of causal factors like technological innovation, the demands of war and commerce, responses to catastrophic accidents, and sweeping acts of legislation. Miller also limns the psyche of the air traffic controller, who, not entirely unlike a pilot, is confident and self-assured under pulverizing pressure. Miller's enthusiasm for the subject is only matched by his command of the history, which is worthy of an academic monograph. Also, his experience as an air traffic controller furnishes a uniquely intimate account of that professional cosmos, sometimes anecdotally delivered. The work sometimes buries the reader under heaps of historical minutiae—the novice will likely find the litany of aircraft types and initialisms a touch dizzying. Regardless, it's hard to imagine a better, more thorough introduction that is equally concise.

A scrupulously researched guide to an important but neglected aspect of aviation history.



SOOTHING Lives of a Child Psychologist

Miller, W. Hans

Xlibris (263 pp.)

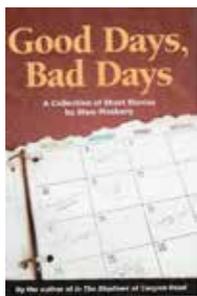
\$3.99 e-book | Feb. 6, 2017

978-1-5245-4631-1

A psychologist looks back on his struggles to quiet the seething minds of his patients—and his own—in this debut memoir.

Miller, a child and family therapist and founder of UCLA's Parent Training Clinic, takes as his central task the "soothing" of psyches agitated by anxiety, shame, compulsions, and the unfulfillable expectations of parents and society and brings to bear two sources of insight into that process. The first is his own dysfunctional family history with an unstable father plagued by nervous breakdowns and a resilient but sometimes-cold mother. Out of that stew came the author's own compulsive talkativeness and crippling stage fright when speaking to large audiences, a blend of neuroses he spent much of his life battling. The second is his trove of reminiscences of his patients. Miller's case studies run the gamut: a young girl who hatches a new phobia whenever he cures the last one; a man in his 70s who obsessively buys CDs he never listens to; a bright, socially awkward teen with Asperger's who fantasizes about mayhem and skulks on the roof with his dad's rifle; and a female psychologist who comes to him for treatment, then leaves a note on his wife's car ordering her to "stay the hell away from my therapist!" They also include a baseball player trying to get his batting average back to .300 and a young man slipping into paranoid schizophrenia who gets yanked from therapy by his parents, with tragic results. Miller writes with a nice balance of subtle, searching analysis and warm empathy that vividly evokes psychic pain and embarrassment—especially his own—while teasing out the convoluted mechanisms behind them. (Of one patient who threw a fit when a leaf fell off the author's office ficus plant, he writes, "All she needed to recover from hellish abandonment was for her words to be accepted *just as spoken* with no judgment...to have her very existence acknowledged.") It's fascinating to watch as he improvises strategies to resolve his patients' problems through everything from traditional talk therapy to breathing exercises and a technique called EMDR that involves slowly tapping the patient's hands to unearth buried childhood traumas. The result is a revealing, humane, down-to-earth look at the day-to-day art of clinical psychology that should give many readers insights into their own problems.

A fine, engrossing portrait of mental illness and healing.



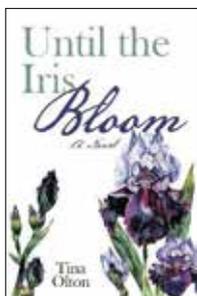
**GOOD DAYS, BAD DAYS
A Collection of Short Stories**

Mosberg, Stew
Full Court Press (373 pp.)
\$7.99 e-book | Aug. 2, 2017

Mosberg's (*In the Shadows of Canyon Road*, 2015) collection offers a series of mostly tragic stories set at different points in history.

David, the journalist protagonist of the opening tale, "A Bad Idea," wants to write a story on the sex trade in Thailand. But a sudden trip to another country could wreck his already strained relationship with his girlfriend, Bridget. The people in Mosberg's tales often confront weighty, impending changes, such as a professional boxer facing the possible end of his career ("Carmine's Fight"). Other times, they must learn to cope with distress: a man's beloved wife battles cancer in "Douglas and Louise," while Geoff Coleman in "Traveling Companion" decides on his next course of action after a doctor diagnoses him with an inoperable brain tumor. Mosberg's concise prose fosters lucid imagery, such as a young man sitting at the bedside of his dying father, who's "smoothing his son's hair, which had been dutifully cut a few inches shorter only minutes before" ("Siblings"). But the author truly excels at creating distinctive characters and settings: in one tale, a cop's simple excursion to the supermarket in "The Organist" takes a devastating turn, and real-world historical events, including the Vietnam War, play crucial roles in others. Even occasional sci-fi or supernatural elements are made relatable and familiar; for instance, in "Copies," set in the mid-22nd century, a man endures a monotonous conversation with a sales rep just so he can order new technology. Also among the 31 yarns is a police procedural ("Hidden") and a tale of an archaeological dig ("Transparent") with uncanny, if predictable, results. In a collection filled with strong emotion, the stand-out tale is the rather lighthearted "The Plan," in which hapless Harlan, who can't hold a job, concocts a scheme involving a rich widow that isn't likely to go the way that he hopes.

Often engrossing tales of ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances.



UNTIL THE IRIS BLOOM

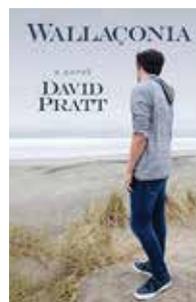
Olton, Tina
iUniverse (380 pp.)
\$20.99 paper | \$3.99 e-book
May 9, 2017
978-1-5320-1237-2

In this novel about love, loss, and the pitfalls of aging, a spirited elderly woman, forced to rely on others for her survival, unexpectedly influences those who come to her aid.

Tidy Bourbon is an irascible 92-year-old woman stubbornly clinging to independence in her home in Oakdale, California.

Physically fragile and beginning to lose her memory at the end of her long life, Tidy forges a relationship of mutual reliance with her boarder, Ivan, a middle-aged Russian down on his luck. When Ivan's drinking lands him in jail for an extended period, Tidy must look elsewhere for the help she so unwillingly needs. She manages to build a small cadre of equally reluctant protectors. One by one, Tidy wins them over—Claire, the social worker, still fragile and defensive after losing her young husband to cancer; Emily, the bank teller, always cheerful and patient with Tidy's quirks; and Julian, Emily's husband and a no-nonsense accountant who cannot believe he keeps coming back to abet such a disorganized and unpredictable client. Less helpful are the down-and-out neighborhood street people Tidy finds herself forced to turn to: Bernie, Blackie, Rap, and Miki, all of whom offer some support while stealing Tidy's money, prescription drugs, and even her car. Olton (*Always Another Horizon*, 2007) constructs a persuasive and caring narrative that addresses the issues of old age without separating them from the trials that confront all humans who must try to remain open to love in the face of the reality of death and loss. Her characters are believably complex and depicted with empathy, even Miki, the Russian Ivan asks to look in on Tidy, who cannot resist the temptation to steal from her. If it seems a bit unrealistic that so many people are compelled to go above and beyond the call of duty to assist the protagonist, readers will likely forgive this flaw because Tidy and her friends have won them over too.

An intricate and moving examination of the challenges of aging anchored by a memorable heroine of indomitable pride and courage.



WALLAÇONIA

Pratt, David
Beautiful Dreamer Press (527 pp.)
\$13.95 paper | \$6.29 e-book
Mar. 25, 2017
978-0-9981262-0-3

A Cape Cod, Massachusetts, teenager deals with his tortured uncertainty about his sexual orientation in this YA novel.

In 2013, James Howard Wallace has just turned 18, and he's agonizing over the fact that he still hasn't lost his virginity. He has a seemingly willing partner in Liz, a sweet 18-year-old girl whom he's known and admired since childhood. The problem, though, is that James has long had a secret desire for men, and he fears, in his own argot, that he isn't "sterling"—that is, straight. (The book's title is also James' invention: his notion of a place in the world where everything is all right and he feels normal.) James finds a compassionate mentor in neighbor Pat Baxter, an antique bookshop owner, while working a seasonal job. Pat gently tells James of his own history of marriage and divorce—a cautionary tale of what can happen when one tries to live a lie. The store owner is also the catalyst for reuniting James with Nathaniel Flederbaum, whom the younger, less thoughtful James bullied in middle school. James' long-standing guilt over this, and his

Random is able to craft a plot that sounds far-fetched on the surface but becomes poignantly believable.

CONNECTED

wish to make things right, is complicated by his current attraction to the strapping Nate. Pratt (*Looking After Joey*, 2017, etc.) organically weaves in other life choices and changes, such as selecting a university, losing a beloved great-aunt, and making a decision about Liz, into the story of James' maturation. The author delivers a LGBT coming-of-age novel that, for the most part, preserves the messiness and uncertainty of youth in the clever, funny voice of its protagonist. Readers may be particularly drawn to the conflicted, questioning James of the earlier chapters. Expected moments of coming-out drama are mitigated by family members' tolerance and understanding. Overall, the quirky complexity of the various characters is appealing, as is the unusual New England setting.

An intelligent, sensitive take on a coming-out story, with locales and characters that rise above the familiar.



THE FALL OF LILITH

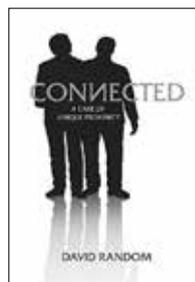
Quiroz-Vega, Vashti
Self (527 pp.)
Aug. 1, 2017

Fallen angels battle for survival in Quiroz-Vega's (*The Basement*, 2013) fantasy novel.

In the beginning, God created angels. His companions reside in Floraison, a beautiful and joyful location in the lowest level of heaven. Though given free will, they must be obedient and remain chaste. For the angel Lilith, this is a difficult proposition. Though she longs to be first in God's eyes, Lilith questions the rules. Her slyness and disobedience cause turmoil and division among the angels. When God sorts the angels in a hierarchy, Lilith is unhappy. When God creates humans, Lilith is enraged and jealous. She sows the seeds of an uprising, eventually seducing Lucifer and encouraging him to revolt against God. A vicious battle ends in defeat for Lilith, Lucifer, and their allies. They are cast out of Floraison and banished to Earth, changed in form and ability. Some are given monsterlike characteristics, including Lilith, who is now half serpent. Lucifer becomes Satan, complete with red visage and spiky horns. The fallen angels struggle to find each other and battle to survive on the alien planet. They are vulnerable and able to be wounded by elements in their ecosystem. Though the angels can now enjoy pleasures of the flesh, it's often violent and painful, especially for Lilith. Rather than experience heaven on Earth, the fallen angels lie, deceive, and suffer. Lilith craves revenge upon God, the angels, humans, and ultimately Satan himself. Quiroz-Vega offers a dark creation tale, a prologue of sorts to Adam and Eve. It's a compelling narrative that provides background on several well-known, supernatural figures. Though obviously religious in nature, Quiroz-Vega's book strays far from traditional biblical text. Sea monsters, mermaids, and vampires share the stage with angels and demons. And illicit (and explicit) affairs, violent battles, and graphic injuries abound. Quiroz-Vega's prose is incredibly descriptive. The fallen angels, including a transformed Beelzebub, whose "arms

and legs appeared gelatinous, punctuated by lumps of broken and calcified bone," are painted with horrifying clarity.

A well-written, descriptive, and dark creation story.



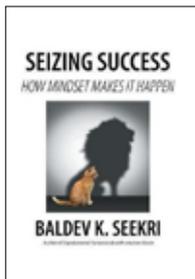
CONNECTED A Case of Unique Proximity

Random, David
LitFire Publishing
\$31.14 | \$19.00 paper | Mar. 9, 2017
978-1-63524-846-3
978-1-63524-834-0 paper

Two brothers are connected to a murder—in divergent ways—in this novel.

At the beginning of Random's (*Defying Gravity*, 2016) tale, there's a body, a weapon, an eyewitness, and a confession. Harvard psychology professor Olek Janko died in his apartment from knife wounds inflicted by Gary Vaughn. Gary confesses to the homicide, which his brother, Maynard, witnessed and reported to the authorities. What veteran Police Lt. Joe "The Bull" Antonelli thinks will be a clear-cut case turns bizarre when "attractive and ambiguously ethnic" Detective Cassandra "Cassie" Navarro reveals that the Vaughn boys share a connection more profound than brotherhood: they are conjoined twins. Maynard is a soft-spoken, articulate, and presumed innocent witness to a murder, and Gary is the coldblooded killer. The Vaughns, joined at the abdomen, had been part of a twin study Janko was conducting; now Antonelli summarizes: "We have a confessed murderer, but we have an apparently innocent man attached to him." Courtroom scenes present a riveting debate as to the degree that conjoined twins can be independent—is it just a physical condition, or if one twin has a mind to kill, how involved psychologically is the other in that decision? And if he can't be punished without penalizing Maynard, did Gary commit the perfect crime? During their investigation, Antonelli and Cassie interview Janko's estranged wife and former research assistant, Christina Cole, who seems more concerned with the twins than with her dead husband. The story moves quickly, and Random is able to craft a plot that sounds far-fetched on the surface but becomes poignantly believable. Descriptions are rich: "A black sky salted with stars" and "The brothers were looking in two different directions at once—like a lizard whose eyes work independently of each other." Smart dialogue fills quick-paced scenes, and accounts of Boston's North End are vivid (cannoli, anyone?). Strong women and players of various ethnicities fill the pages. Lead character Antonelli is a bit of a sexagenarian dandy, with his hand-tailored suits and gold-embossed cuff links.

A winning twin spin that combines an ethical conundrum with a police procedural.



SEIZING SUCCESS
How Mindset Makes It Happen

Seekri, Baldev K.
 iUniverse (286 pp.)
 \$30.95 | \$18.95 paper | \$7.99 e-book
 Jan. 5, 2017
 978-1-5320-1409-3
 978-1-5320-1408-6 paper

A retired corporate executive takes a fresh look at the meaning of success.

Seekri (*Organizational Turnarounds with a Human Touch*, 2010) distinguishes his work by suggesting that many books about success “are hooked on the methodology and the management of success, not on the most fundamental piece of the puzzle: our mindset of success.” The first section of the work does an admirable job of exploring that mindset, demonstrating that true success is, in fact, “dictated by our mind and guided by our heart.” In discussing mindset, the author calls upon some of his own experiences and offers pertinent observations by experts. Of particular interest is his intriguing chart contrasting the “classic mindset” with the “success mindset” as well as the graphical comparisons of “shock and aftershocks of failure” and “shock and aftershocks of success.” These insightful elements lend welcome illustrative support to the text. Section 2 is the most compelling portion of the volume; it presents detailed sketches of “seven role models.” These individuals exemplify “authentic success,” writes Seekri, who searched for five years to identify them. The group is made up of four men and three women of various ages and diverse backgrounds. Each person is accorded a substantial chapter that includes biographical information, extensive quotes from the individual, and the author’s astute comments about the triumphs each attained. Enrique Brower is one relevant example; a Cuban refugee who came to the United States as a child, he ultimately became a professor and executive consultant. “Success for me,” says Brower, “is equilibrium of mind, body, and spirit.” Seekri’s perceptive assessment of Brower’s achievement is summarized in “three priceless lessons” at the end of the chapter. The other six stories are equally mesmerizing. The author closes this section with an excellent encapsulation of the lessons learned from the seven subjects. The third part of the book lists the “ten commandments” for developing a “success mindset.” Here Seekri reprises some of the highlights of the seven tales and reinforces his own thoughtful views on the topic.

Masterfully written and genuinely appealing; an intelligent, meaningful study of success factors.



TALES FROM WEBSTER'S
The Verminous Resuscitator
and the Monsignor in the Zoot Suit

Shea, John
 Livingston Press (222 pp.)
 \$23.95 | August 2017
 978-1-60489-188-1

Shea offers a collection of inventive flash fiction in this literary debut.

Using Webster’s Dictionary as a trove of writing prompts, Shea has constructed 79 microfictions built around the alphabetical order of words in the dictionary. He explains the form in his author’s note: “The bolded key words on the left of the page are consecutive entries in Webster’s New World Dictionary...The text on the right is my connective tissue linking those words into a narrative, scene, or evocation of personality.” For example, the piece “Chablis—chador” links the words Chablis, cha-cha, chacma, Chaco, chaconne, chacun à son goût, Chad, and chador into a conversation between a couple of high-society types swapping anecdotes. “Wine can make me do the strangest things, my dear,” it begins, “like the time all that Chablis went straight to my head, and I did a stunning little cha-cha.” The tone of the pieces tends to be light since the nature of the form leads to absurd places. They often occur as dialogues or monologues, heavy on voice and personality, though occasionally fuller fables emerge. For example, “infinite—inflation” tells the story of a man who wakes up on the wrong side of the bed and must see a doctor to correct the resulting havoc wreaked on his perception of the world. Most shorts are between one and four pages, though the author occasionally gets on a roll (“Nebraska—negotiation” is 12 pages long).

While the premise is admittedly gimmicky, Shea does a masterful job fattening these strings of unconnected words into clever shorts. Even when they begin in relatively normal places—the investigation of a murder, say, or an antiquarian’s attempt to summon a demon via a séance—they quickly spiral into transforming litanies of trivia, word association, and literary allusions. The pieces succeed in drawing out unexpected pockets of poetry in the English language, like “aghast—agleam” with its repetitive “ag”s and “agit”s. He also manages to highlight the incredible diversity of loan words, compound words, hybrid words, and embedded idioms found in English, like in “Brazzaville—breathy,” with its catalog of bread words. Shea does not shy away from challenging sections of the dictionary either, proven by “quoit—q.y.,” “xanthus—xebex,” and “zoot suit—zowie.” The only slight bobble is the way the stories are formatted on the page with the dictionary words segregated to the left column and everything else to the right. This presentation is functional but not pleasing to the eye, and one wishes Shea had found a way to display the words that was more aesthetically agreeable. Fans of linguistics, puzzles, poetry, and humor will each find something to excite them in this work, and writers of all stripes will find themselves reaching for their dictionaries to locate some good stretches of words that Shea hasn’t yet used.

An inspired and inspiring collection of dictionary-prompted flash fiction.

Readers are treated to bits of Izzy's genuinely amusing stand-up comedy.

DEATH ON THE NOT-SO-BLUE DANUBE



SPEAKING WITH STRANGERS

Simson, Jo Anne Valentine
Gatekeeper Press (148 pp.)
\$10.99 paper | \$3.99 e-book
May 20, 2017
978-1-61984-691-3

Simson's (*Russia Revisited*, 2016) collection of 15 stories and a novella features characters who earn insights through self-reflection and interactions with strangers.

Martha, a widow in the short story "Body Donation," contacts a medical school regarding her husband's corpse, which she wants to be cremated. Although the grieving woman doesn't know the person who answers her call, she initiates an earnest, in-depth discussion with him about her husband's death. In Simson's book, chance encounters like these often spark epiphanies. In "Who Will Care for the Children?" for example, a working mother, Lynn, is worried that her attention to her job is at least partly to blame for her not catching her son's illness sooner; she meets a stay-at-home mom whose life is no less demanding. An American visitor in Korea ("Parking in Taegu") seems to be irate at the entire country when her parked car vanishes—but

a fateful, one-on-one encounter changes her point of view. The titular "stranger" in many stories is an unnamed narrator who's often in the process of examining his or her own life. Several tales here tackle themes of feminism and loneliness. One woman's gloom reflects a city's gray streets and sky in "Philadelphia Gray," and the wife and mother of "Holiday Refrain" comes to a sad realization that holiday breaks aren't so relaxing. Simson writes with a keen sense of the overall environment, even in "A Lifetime at the Laundromat," which is formatted like a script. It opens with picturesque stage directions in which a woman is "sitting on a bench by the night-blackened, steam-glazed window, bent over a notebook, writing." There are a few repetitive components in these tales, including numerous characters who are teachers. Married women contemplate affairs in both "Heart's Desire" and the concluding novella, *Gypsy*, but the similar setups lead to somewhat different outcomes; in the former, a conservative political speaker instinctively denies her lustful feelings, which go against her principles, and in the latter, the protagonist is compared with her beloved dog, who's miserable in a fenced backyard.

No-nonsense but undeniably profound tales.

This Issue's Contributors



ADULT

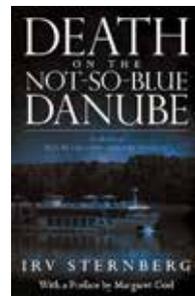
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DEATH ON THE NOT-SO-BLUE DANUBE A Collection of Izzy Brand Comic Mystery Novellas

Sternberg, Irv
Self (171 pp.)
\$0.99 e-book | Mar. 27, 2016

Murder seems to follow a Denver stand-up comedian who ends up playing the part of an amateur sleuth in Sternberg's (*Cobalt Blues*, 2016, etc.) collection of three mystery novellas.

Izzy Brand is an aging comic who still does stand-up gigs on a regular basis. In the title story, the book's longest, he's on a relaxing 12-day cruise on the Danube with his companion, Anita Bender. Unfortunately, a dead body turns up in the ship's library, and Izzy thinks that he'll be the primary suspect, as he was with the victim less than an hour before the murder. With his detective pal Carlos Collins sick from food poisoning, Izzy takes it upon himself to investigate before the police arrive. The comedian, who solved a friend's murder years ago, narrows down a list of suspects, most of whom hated the victim—but then a second corpse turns up. In *The Mayfly Murder*, Izzy once again becomes a gumshoe while fly-fishing on the Arkansas River. A small group's excursion is interrupted when one of them apparently dies from a fall, but later evidence points to murder. In the concluding *Cobalt Blues*, the instructor of Izzy's oil painting class dies mysteriously, and the comedian is once again on the case. Sternberg's protagonist is much like a modern-day Hercule Poirot, which makes the occasional references to Agatha Christie's work appropriate (such as the satirical title). Izzy is highly observant, and his first-person narration clearly notes relevant details, such as a missing bookend in the library. The best

scenes, however, involve Izzy questioning others. His dialogue always feels organic to the situation at hand, and in *Cobalt Blues*, he believably disguises a series of inquiries as a mere lunchtime conversation. Readers are also treated to bits of Izzy's genuinely amusing stand-up comedy. His profession, however, isn't often incorporated into his investigations, during which his jokes have a cynical edge.

Short but diverting whodunits featuring a laudable part-time detective.



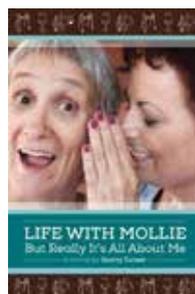
COUNTING WOLVES

Stewart, Michael F.
The Publishing House
\$8.95 paper | \$2.99 e-book
Aug. 14, 2017
978-0-9937579-4-5

In this latest novel by a prolific author of YA fiction, a teenager's life spirals out of control as she desperately attempts to evade the savage manifestation of her fear.

Not even high school is safe for Milly Malone, a 15-year-old who must engage in a never-ending battle to keep an evil wolf at bay using her only magic spell. Before she passes by or through a door, takes a bite of food, or speaks, she must count to 100 to stay "on safety's slender path," or the wolf of the Dark Wood will wreak havoc. But Milly's spell is weakening, and when she trips before finishing a count, the Dark Wood engulfs her. This deeply observant and empathic tale isn't spinning readers into a realm of the supernatural. Stewart (*Keep in a Cold, Dark Place*, 2017, etc), author of fiction and nonfiction for children, teens, and adults, instead weaves threads of unsettling fairy tales into something achingly real: the first-person narrative of a young girl's crippling descent into obsessive thinking. After her collapse, Milly is followed by her wolf to a pediatric psychiatry ward. It prowls through her therapy sessions, daily routines, and interactions with the other memorably drawn, authentic, and ethnically and racially diverse teen patients. Milly views her life and those around her through a prism of fairy tales (a tie to her dead mother), and Stewart punctuates the gritty, funny, heart-wrenching narrative with a reshaping of more obscure and unsettling stories by the Brothers Grimm. The wolf's hot breath and claws feel as real to readers as they do to Milly, but who, or what, is the wolf? The barrier to Milly's recovery finally crumbles with her realization of the beast's real-world identity, a disturbing insight bringing hope in its wake. The author doesn't sugarcoat Milly's hospital environment. Unpleasant encounters, challenges, and setbacks for both the young patients and staff ring true, as do the breakthroughs, humor, and evolving relationships. At its core, Stewart's memorably inventive novel destigmatizes mental illness and sends a message that seeking help can make life better.

A deeply affecting, hard-to-put-down work that depicts a girl's dark odyssey through obsession toward healing insight.



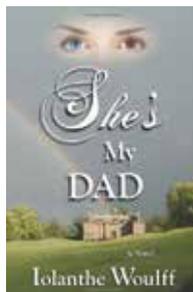
**LIFE WITH MOLLIE
But Really It's All About Me**

Turner, Sherry
CreateSpace (234 pp.)
\$9.99 paper | \$5.99 e-book | Jan. 14, 2017
978-1-5355-8124-0

A debut memoir that presents a realistic view of the challenges faced by baby boomers responsible for elderly parents.

When it came time for Turner and her husband, Bob, to move his mother, 88-year-old Mollie, into their "dream house" near Orlando, Florida, the author approached the task enthusiastically. Turner, in her early 60s at the time, had always had a close, loving relationship with her in-law. Mollie was suffering from Alzheimer's disease, but the author had taken a seminar and collected information ahead of time, so she was confident that she could provide the sort of nurturing environment for Mollie that Bob's three sisters no longer could. She had no idea that the experience would knock her totally off her game, setting up an internal battle between "good Sherry" and "bad Sherry" as she tried to overcome frustration and anger. This is the story of the last three years of Mollie's life and of Turner's personal struggle to reconcile her own expectations with difficult, day-to-day frustrations. For the author, it became a lesson in humility and acceptance. Her smooth, present-tense, often self-deprecating prose brings readers directly into her moments of triumph and defeat. Even when "bad Sherry" rears her snarky head, readers know that Turner loved her mother-in-law, who was sweet and loved singalongs; she even had total recall of the words and music of her favorite songs. She also skillfully recounted stories from her youth and young adulthood. But Turner also makes her short-term memory issues clear. In one vividly described incident, the author took her in-law to a big-band concert, where she joyfully sang along. But while talking about the concert just minutes later, Mollie said wistfully: "Oh, I would love to have seen that....Can I go with you next time?" The author also tells how she learned to cherish positive moments; as her husband told her, "You can't make her better....We want her time with us...her last years, to be pleasant; and you are doing all that you can to achieve that."

Engaging, honest, and poignant and a worthy addition to the burgeoning Alzheimer's literature.



SHE'S MY DAD

Woulff, Lolantbe
Outskirts Press (469 pp.)
\$30.95 | \$19.95 paper | \$2.99 e-book
Nov. 13, 2009
978-1-4327-4405-2
978-1-4327-4377-2 paper

A debut literary novel addresses issues of identity, family, and personal history.

Returning to her alma mater as a professor is a mixed bag for Nickie Farrell. Windfield College is a liberal enclave in a conservative section



of northern Virginia and holds warm memories for her. But as a transgender woman, she must grapple with the fact that she presented herself as male when she attended the college. Her history becomes a more pressing issue when Cinda Vanderhart, an overzealous student reporter, violates her privacy. Nickie grants her an interview, and Cinda reveals that the professor is trans in the school paper. At the same time, Collie Skinner, a waiter in town, struggles with his grief over his mother's serious illness and her recent revelation—that his biological father was a Windfield student who seemed to disappear shortly after their affair. Matters only escalate from there, as violent bigots follow and menace Nickie; Collie and his co-worker and confidante Robin Thompson start digging into his past; Cinda investigates the abnormal heterochromatic eyes Nickie and Collie share; and they all become embroiled in a deadly threat to the entire campus and all it represents. The prose in Woulff's novel is solid, but its true strength is in giving multiple perspectives their own unique voices. Nickie communicates her uncertainty, anxiety, and pride as she deals with her trajectory and shifting relationships. Early on, she's optimistic about teaching at Windfield ("Maybe she had finally discovered her niche, her purpose in life. After everything she'd been through, wouldn't it be wonderful to be at peace with herself and the world?"). Collie's story has a resonance through his sense of loss and the difficulties of self-knowledge without fully understanding his roots. And Cinda too has sympathetic turns even as her thread demonstrates how a passion for truth can be harmful and how attitudes within LGBT communities can threaten trans people. That said, the book contains much more than a character study, and readers who enjoy a good thrill should be happy to be along for the ride even as the more emotional segments tug at the heartstrings. Ultimately, this novel is a deft and nuanced study in contradictions, clashes, and mismatches and a stirring reminder that so often that's exactly what life is.

A rich web of complex questions, rendered beautifully in this tale of a transgender professor.

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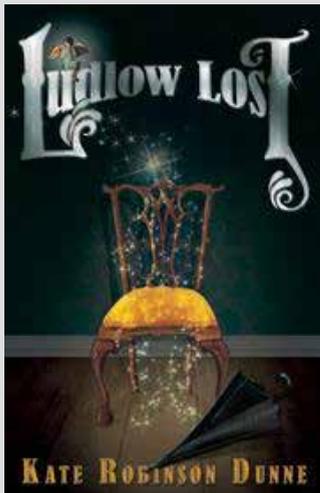
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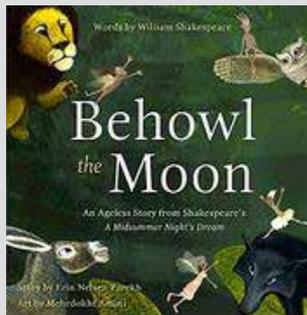
BOOKS OF THE MONTH

FICTION | NONFICTION | CHILDREN'S & TEEN | INDIE



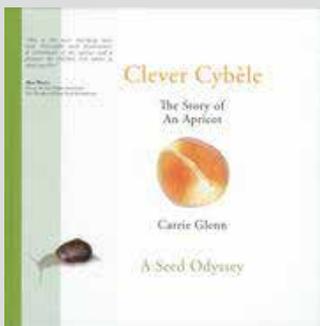
LUDLOW LOST
Kate Robinson Dunne

A delightful novel that could comfortably sit on a shelf beside beloved works of children's literature.



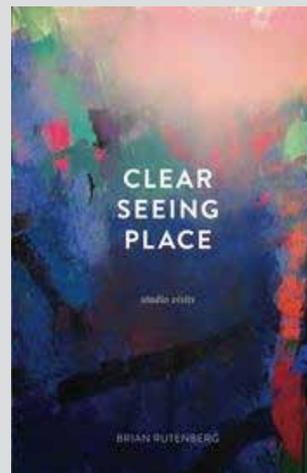
BEHOWL THE MOON
Erin Nelsen Parekh
Illus. by Mehrdokht Amini

Originally funded by a Kickstarter, this reinvention of Shakespeare's verse into a new format is sure to be a hit with parents and their littlest listeners, too.



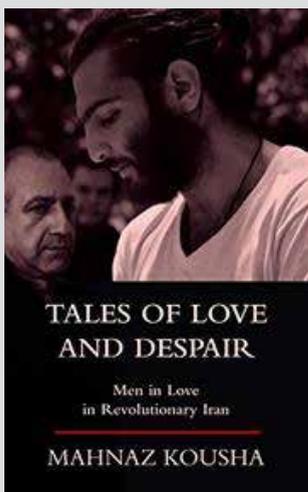
CLEVER CYBÈLE
Carrie Glenn
Illus. by the author

A gorgeous, mysterious, and enchanting introduction to the circle of life.



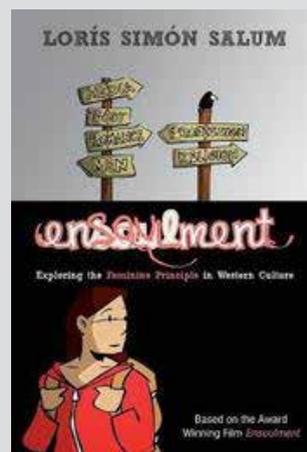
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FIELD NOTES

By Megan Labrise

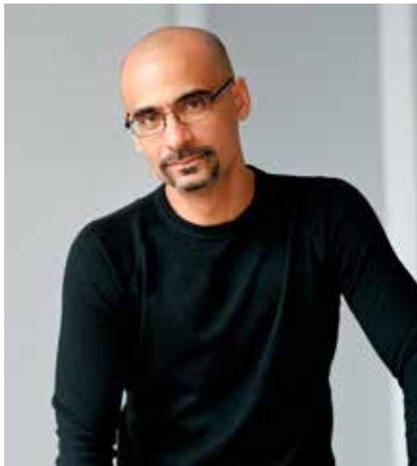
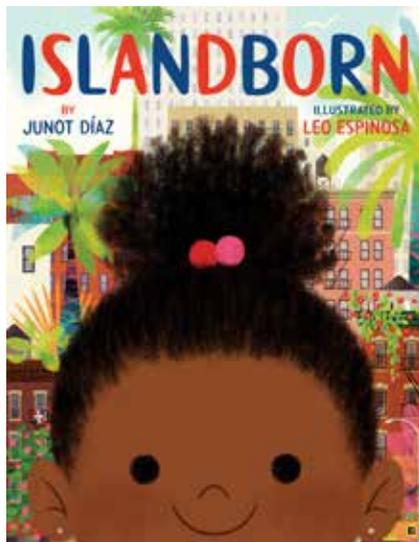


Photo courtesy Nina Subin

“A picture book is like a primer on how to be a human. For a novelist, it’s perfect, because isn’t that what a lot of novelists are exploring in their work, anyway?”

—Namrata Tripathi, editorial director of Dial Books for Young Readers, who will publish novelist Junot Díaz’s first picture book, *Islandborn*, in spring 2018. Díaz, who calls writing for young readers “a lot harder than it looks” in the *New York Times*, promised his goddaughters a story about girls like them—Dominican, living in the Bronx—approximately 20 years ago.



“I keep saying, it’s familial. It’s that little house. Twelve people a year. Small....I hope we set a tone of kindness and generosity with one another. We *are* a community....”

—James Magnuson, founding director of the Michener Center for Writers at the University of Texas at Austin, in an exit interview with the *Austin Chronicle*. Magnuson, who retired after 23 years of service, will be succeeded by novelist and native Texan Bret Anthony Johnston, former director of Harvard’s creative writing program.

“What I found most interesting about Knusgaard was how he feels so confident in being so boring. He would spend 50 pages on making pasta with tomato sauce—it’s so uninteresting, so banal, but somehow in the hands of a male writer it’s received as revolutionary, while in the hands of a female writer it would be seen as a quiet novel about domestic life. In fact, that is what he has written—and that’s why I devoured it.”

—Jenny Zhang, author *Sour Heart*, an autobiographical short story collection, compliments autobiographical novelist Karl Ove Knusgaard, in the *Guardian*



Photo courtesy Sigrid Estrada

“The lives of ordinary women are not written about nearly enough. And there’s nothing ordinary about those lives. I detest when people say women are multitaskers as if what women have done through all of time is something new, created out of a business-efficiency model.”

—Victoria Redel, author of *Before Everything*, a novel about a gathering of lifelong female friends, at *Guernica*

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Appreciations: Stephen Fry, the Modern Oscar Wilde

BY GREGORY MCNAMEE



RACONTEUR, HUMORIST, ACTOR, WRITER, WORLD TRAVELER, all-around smart guy: Stephen Fry, who turns 60 on Aug. 24, has been busy over all his years, getting into trouble here, breaking a limb there, always accumulating adventures and knowledge that he happily shares by means of a range of media: podcasts, Twitter blasts, blog posts, books, newspaper articles, television appearances—the list goes on, and Fry shows no signs of exhausting the possibilities as he moves into a new decade.

Fry has been an adept and enthusiastic early adopter of technology; he has written of his friendly rivalry with Douglas Adams, of *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* fame, over who could assemble the coolest toys. (Adams bought the first Macintosh computer sold in England, Fry the second.) But, as was Adams, Fry is also a noted devotee of the printed book, and he has added several to the store of English literature. In 1991, he published the first of them, a novel called *The Liar*.

Six years later, when he hit 40, he added a memoir, *Moab Is My Washpot*, to the list, showing the many ways in which that first, aptly titled novel was autobiographical while recounting the terrors of growing up bipolar and brilliant in an English boarding school, packed off at the tender age of 7 to an imposing school in a town that produces, he writes in *Moab*, “almost all the baize that Britain and her dominions ever thought to use.”

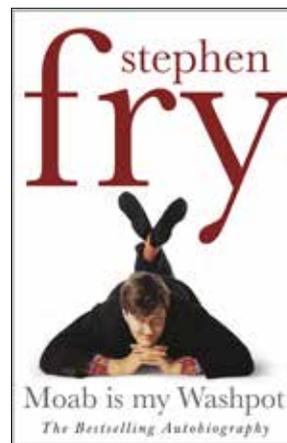
Fry was smarter than the system, even if a common rebuke by the masters was “Don’t be stupid,” and he learned the fine arts of dissimulation—and literature, history, geography, and theater, all the things for which he would become famous as a grown-up. He has since added several other volumes to his ongoing autobiography, most recently *More Fool Me* (2014), which prompted our reviewer to call the author “a gifted writer with a perfect sense of comic timing and anecdote-spinning.”

The description is true. I have long thought of Fry as the closest thing we have to Oscar Wilde, whom he portrayed in a 1997 biopic. The parallels are many, not least in their layers of outsiderdom. Fortunately, though, Fry’s time in jail—for a misadventure involving bad faith and a credit card not his own, as he recounts in *Moab*—came early in life, while, not long ago, thanks to a social evolution that was far too long in arriving, he was able to marry his longtime companion, Elliott Spencer, rather than be castigated for his love.

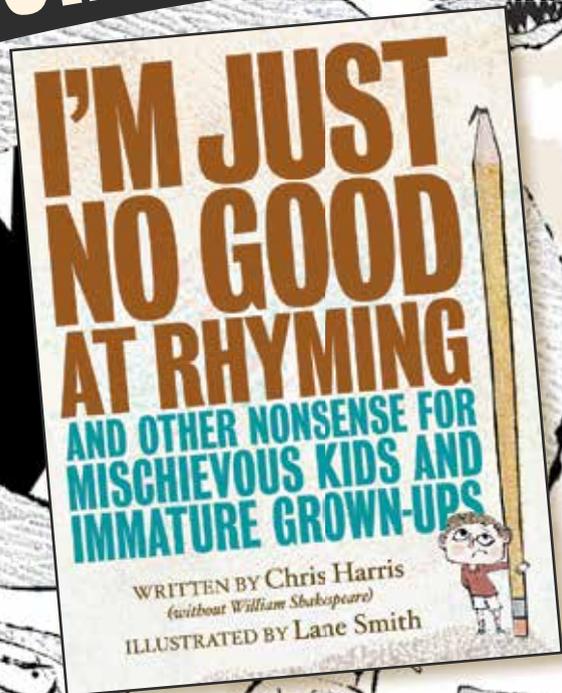
Like Wilde, Fry has also been an insistent champion of freedom of expression, twitting prudes, censors, and trigger-warners on all sides of the aisle: “It’s now very common to hear people say, ‘I’m rather offended by that,’” he has remarked. “As if that gives them certain rights. It’s actually nothing more than a whine: ‘I find that offensive.’ It has no meaning; it has no purpose; it has no reason to be respected as a phrase. ‘I am offended by that.’ Well, so fucking what.”

Indeed, and we wish Stephen Fry the happiest of birthdays and look forward to many books to come.

Gregory McNamee is a contributing editor.



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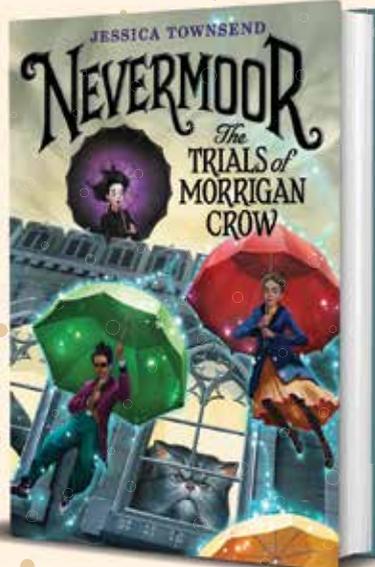
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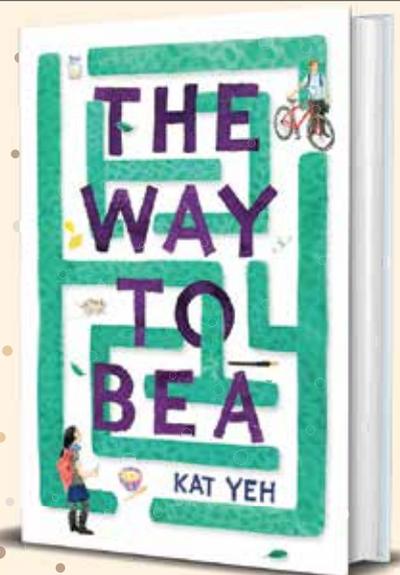
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