

Featuring 307 Industry-First Reviews of Fiction, Nonfiction, Children's and YA Books

KIRKUS

VOL. LXXXVI, NO. 8 | 15 APRIL 2018

REVIEWS

Pulitzer Prize-winning poet
Gregory Pardlo's
nonfiction debut, *Air Traffic:
A Memoir of Ambition and
Manhood in America*, is
masterfully personal, with
passages that come at you
with the urgent force of his
powerful convictions.
p. 58



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK:

Four Excellent New Books

BY CLAIBORNE SMITH



Photo courtesy Michael Thad Carter

Claiborne Smith

Our Little Secret by Roz Nay (Apr. 24): “First love goes bad in Nay’s mesmerizing debut. Cove, Vermont, is a tidy town, and 15-year-old Angela Petitjean felt very out of place when she moved there 11 years ago with her well-meaning but cloying parents. Then she met Hamish “HP” Parker. HP looked like a young Harrison Ford and lit up every room he walked into, whereas Angela was quiet and thoughtful. They became the best of friends and stayed that way until a graduation trip to the lake, when they realized they were in love....Nay expertly spins an insidious, clever web, perfectly capturing the soaring heights and crushing lows of first love and how the loss of that love can make even the sanest people a little crazy. Carve out some time for this riveting, one-sitting read.”

Miss Ex-Yugoslavia by Sofija Stefanovic (Apr. 17): “A writer and raconteur chronicles her life growing up in the former-Yugoslavian immigrant subculture of 1990s Australia. Stefanovic, the host of the literary salon Women of Letters New York, uses the eponymous pageant to introduce the “ex-Yugos,” immigrants from the former Yugoslavia who found refuge in Australia from the brutal wars of the Slobodan Milošević regime. The author’s adolescence coincided with the dissolution of her country....Her stories show the ways in which war warps the lives of generations, even those who never witness violence firsthand. A fresh and timely perspective on the immigrant experience....”



The Truth About Animals: Stoned Sloths, Lovelorn Hippos, and Other Tales from the Wild Side of Wildlife by Lucy Cooke (Apr. 17): “Charming forays into the world of natural history and the ways of animal behavior. ‘Much of zoology is little more than educated guesswork,’ writes Cooke....Thus, even in the recent past, well-meaning people could aver that eels spontaneously generate out of mud and hyenas change sexes at will, and we imagine today that animals lack consciousness or emotion. All of this, writes the author, traces back to our ‘habit of viewing the animal kingdom through our own, rather narrow, existence.’...A pleasure for the budding naturalist in the family—or fans of Gerald Durrell and other animals.”

The Last by Katherine Applegate (May 1): “What do you do when you’re the last of your kind? Applegate transports her readers to a new land, one inhabited by numerous sentient species, six of which have fought to the top of the food chain: humans, dairnes, felivets, natites, terramants, and raptidons. In this world, readers meet Byx, a dairne—a doglike creature that walks erect, glides like a flying squirrel, and has opposable thumbs—on the day she becomes the last of her species....A savvy choice for readers of fantasy; individual readers and book clubs will love it and demand to know when the sequel will be available.” (*Fantasy*, 8-11)

The cover of the April 1 issue incorrectly stated that that issue was the March 15 issue; the correct volume information is LXXXVI, No. 7, not LXXXVI No. 6. The April 1 issue contained 315 reviews. The information on the spine of the April 1 issue was correct. We regret the errors.

KIRKUS REVIEWS

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YOUNG ADULT

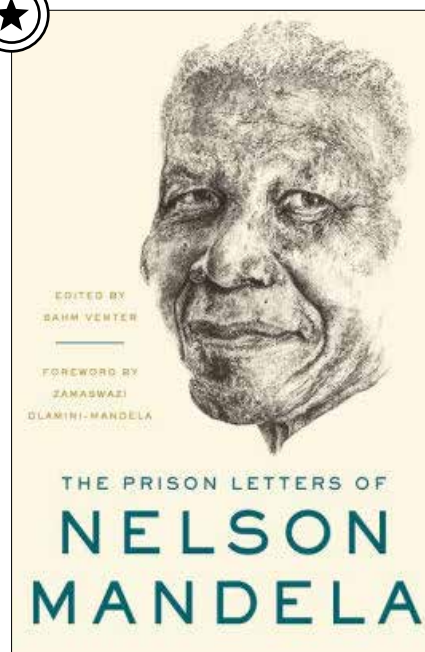
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The Kirkus Star is awarded to books of remarkable merit, as determined by the impartial editors of Kirkus.



In *The Prison Letters of Nelson Mandela*, we receive a valuable contribution to our understanding of one of history's most vital figures. Read the review on p. 70.

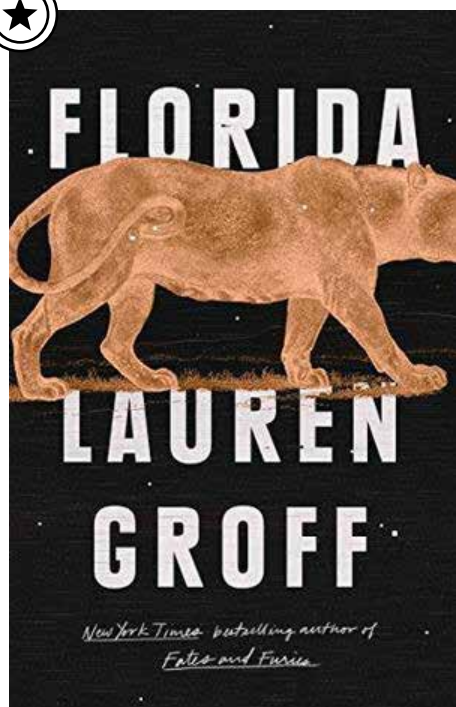
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FICTION



These titles earned the Kirkus Star:

- THE GIRL WHO NEVER READ NOAM CHOMSKY** by *Jana Casale* ..7
- THE MELODY** by *Jim Crace*8
- FLORIDA** by *Lauren Groff*..... 15
- THE COLLECTED STORIES OF MACHADO DE ASSIS**
by *Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis*; trans. by *Margaret Jull Costa*
& *Robin Patterson*23
- THE DEATH OF MRS. WESTAWAY** by *Ruth Ware*31
- THE GREY BASTARDS** by *Jonathan French* 40



FLORIDA
Groff, Lauren
Riverhead (288 pp.)
\$27.00 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-1-59463-451-2



THE HOSPITAL

Bouanani, Ahmed
Trans. by *Vergnaud, Lara*
New Directions (128 pp.)
\$13.95 paper | Jun. 26, 2018
978-0-8112-2576-2

It would be hard to avoid the word “Kafkaesque” in describing this dreamlike and symbolic excursion into an institution that represents suffering humanity.

Originally published in French in 1990 and now translated for the first time, this novel by Moroccan writer and filmmaker Bouanani (1938-2011) plunges the reader into a world of pain, misery, and mystery—a world in which no one leaves the hospital because no one is ever cured. The patients are given nicknames that are both descriptive and evocative: Guzzler, Rover, Fartface. From the opening sentence—“When I walked through the large iron gate of the hospital, I must have still been alive”—Bouanani introduces a world of confinement and a kind of death in life. The narrator admits to being a “great amnesiac,” and much of the book is about the possibility of recovering his memory. He’s observant of the present, however, and spends a great deal of time describing what he sees—his fellow patients as well as the hospital itself. Incongruously, amid the bleakness of the patients’ lives, the hospital has a garden, ancient oaks, and profuse vegetation. Bouanani foregoes conventional narrative structure and instead presents his plot as a series of encounters—some brutish, some tender—between patients. The narrator uses the dreamlike aura of the hospital in a self-conscious way as he wonders for “the thousandth time” what he’s doing there and questions whether his experience is “dream or reality”—and he then aptly alludes to his earlier reading of Kafka and Borges. Nothing ever becomes quite clear in the narrator’s experience but rather remains murkily allegorical. Whatever else it may be, the hospital is definitely a microcosm of suffering humanity: “Regardless of where I look, even in the depths of my sleep, I see nothing but men set upon by a decay greater than ever before. It’s not just disease wearing them down.”

A puzzling but haunting novel.



LADY BE GOOD

Brock, Amber
 Crown (320 pp.)
 \$26.00 | Jun. 26, 2018
 978-1-5247-6040-3

Women's fiction set in the 1950s, with a touch of social consciousness.

In her second novel, Brock (*A Fine Imitation*, 2016) tells the story of 25-year-old Kitty Tessler, the spoiled, devious daughter of New York hotel magnate

Nicholas Tessler. An attractive socialite in the Paris Hilton mode, Kitty leads a carefree existence, shuttling between beauty salons, nightclubs, and fashion shows. Yet she's not really satisfied and yearns for acceptance in the elite, old-money world epitomized by her good-hearted BFF, Henrietta Bancroft. So Kitty hatches a complicated and fairly implausible scheme to separate Hen from her fiancé, the social-register cad Charles Remington, and claim him for herself; the idea is to secure his pedigree and make him miserable at the same time. Meantime, Kitty's loving father—concerned about her future—virtually commands her to marry Andre, his steady but not-so-exciting second-in-command. Needless to say, things don't go exactly as anyone planned. The action moves from New York to Miami to pre-revolutionary Cuba, where the visiting Kitty and Hen get a taste of the unrest that will eventually bring Castro to power. It's here that Kitty begins to emerge from her privileged cocoon, thanks to Max, a Jewish bandleader in the Tesslers' Miami hotel, who opens her eyes to social injustice. The pace of the book quickens during the Havana interlude, which includes scenes set in the real-life Hotel Nacional and other local hot spots. Throughout, though, too much space is devoted to descriptions of cute outfits and lavish decors. And while there's a tiny hint of Jane Austen in the novel's romantic intrigue, the characters are mostly one-dimensional, their dialogue stilted. The cheery resolution—with Kitty learning to be proud of her lineage—is never in much doubt.

Some amusing moments but not as clever or observant as it needs to be.



THE LOST FOR WORDS BOOKSHOP

Butland, Stephanie
 Thomas Dunne Books (304 pp.)
 \$25.99 | Jun. 19, 2018
 978-1-250-12453-1

A jaded bibliophile comes to terms with her dark past and learns to live in the present.

Set in a used bookshop, Butland's (*The Other Half of My Heart*, 2015, etc.)

latest novel tackles love, grief, violence, and friendship. Loveday Cardew—an anti-social, tattooed 25-year-old—works at Lost for Words, a secondhand bookstore in York. Despite her name,

Loveday doesn't much care for anyone or anything except for books. She's reserved and painfully sarcastic, and the surrounding characters either exacerbate or quell this: Archie, the caring, larger-than-life bookstore owner; Nathan, the handsome, cravat-wearing poet; and Rob, the sullen, dangerous ex. Switching between the past and present, the chapters are organized by genre—Poetry, History, Crime, Travel, and Memoir—and correspond to the plot (i.e., Poetry chapters center around Nathan). Told from Loveday's perspective, the casual first-person narration provides an entry point into an otherwise closed-off character, which works well save for a few startling fourth-wall breaks. Loveday's descriptions of her childhood are among the strongest in the book: "His boots, which smelled of salt and oil, rubber and leather, lived outside," and "the sea was part of their story." As her charmed life descends into darkness, one life-altering moment shatters her world—and sense of self—forever. The buildup to and aftermath of this moment feel earned and purposeful. However, other things do not. Unfortunately, the book sometimes veers into unnecessary stereotypes about mental illness by equating (perhaps unintentionally) being mentally

MORE THAN A SOLDIER

ONE ARMY RANGER'S DARING ESCAPE FROM THE NAZIS
 BY D.M. ANNECHINO

Taken prisoner by the Nazis during World War II, an American Army Ranger escapes his German captors and struggles to survive and find his way back home.

"The tale is simultaneously inspiring and harrowing, and the author skillfully portrays both DiMarco's valor and his horror..."

ISBN # 9781544840956

"Annechino colorfully draws the action scenes, and richly brings the supporting cast of characters to life."

"A moving tale of survival in war-torn Europe."
 —Kirkus Reviews

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AND THE AWARD GOES TO: A WRITER'S WRITER



LITERARY AWARDS TEND to develop personalities. Over the 25 years I've been a member of the National Book Critics Circle, one thing that's happened with surprising regularity is the awarding of the fiction prize to an older woman who's known as a writer's writer, someone who's read passionately among a small circle but isn't as famous as she should be, someone published by a small press and/or in paperback original. This year, it was Joan Silber, 72, who won for *Improvement*, a novel in stories that illuminates "a group of characters woven together by a butterfly-effect chain of decisions, accidents, and consequences," as our review says. This is Silber's eighth book, and Counterpoint, which put it out, is her sixth publisher. I hope it brings her to a much wider audience.

This pattern first showed up in the late 1990s, when 71-year-old Gina Berriault won for *Women in Their Beds*—also published by Counterpoint, coincidentally or not—and the next year, 80-year-old Penelope Fitzgerald won for *The Blue Flower*, which was published as a paperback by Houghton Mifflin's Mariner imprint two years after it appeared in Britain. Fitzgerald, who had won the Booker Prize for an earlier novel but was not well-known in the U.S., beat both Don DeLillo and Philip Roth to the prize; some people thought the two men must have split the vote, because how could a slim novel by a white-haired Englishwoman beat *Underworld*, but that's not what happened at all. With only a little prodding, I'll tell you the whole story, or you could read about it in the NBCC bulletin (<http://bit.ly/2pJeLLo>).

Then 66-year-old Edith Pearlman won the 2012 award for *Binocular Vision*, which our reviewer calls "lovely and lyrical—a celebration of language and [a] virtuoso performance." It was the first book ever published by Lookout Books at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, and it did bring Pearlman a bigger readership—just what an award from a bunch of book critics is supposed to do. —L.M.

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Laurie Muchnick is the fiction editor.

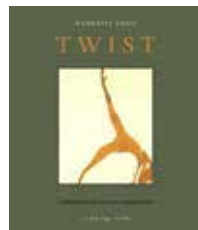


Joan Silber at the NBCC Awards

Photo courtesy Credit: Keri Arsenault

ill with violent behavior. If the novel feels particularly harrowing at times, the well-drawn romance helps temper and elevate the story. The hopeful ending is unexpected but not unwelcome—it's exactly what Loveday deserves because she's been through far too much.

A tale full of romance and violence demanding readers not judge a book by its cover.



TWIST

Cano, Harkaitz

Trans. by Gabantxo, Amaia

Archipelago (520 pp.)

\$20.00 paper | Mar. 6, 2018

978-09146718-2-4

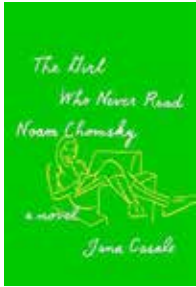
Of political terror and its consequences in the Basque country of northern Spain.

Readers of a certain age may remember that, a generation or two ago, Basque nationalists were busy setting bombs in Spanish venues in an effort to gain independence. It didn't work. Readers of any age will want to have at least some grounding in the history of the paramilitary group ETA and post-Franco Spain to appreciate the nuances of Basque author Cano's sometimes-labored, sometimes-lumbering tale, which centers on a compatriot who, having given up two separatist friends to the Guardia Civil, now spends the next few hundred pages pondering what he's done and waiting for the other shoe to drop. Diego Lazkano isn't necessarily a bad guy, but in the dirty war of political oppression and assassination in which he's implicated, everything in his life hinges on his betrayal: He wants to talk of art and philosophy, to be in love, but the world spins away from him as the reckoning draws nearer. "The dead; they are many and always grateful for a bit of entertainment," he avers, having added to their number. His lover, Gloria, the daughter of an ardent, murderous fascist, meanwhile retreats from politics into art while nursing a deep well of anger, though her theatrical inquiry into whether torture can be "sublimated through art" speaks directly to Diego's crime. In the end, Cano's book is a meditation on secrets and historical truth, no small issue in a Spain that is still dealing with the Civil War of the 1930s. That truth will out, as a Guardia Civil officer relates, only when the perpetrators speak up: "They say that truth always ends up coming out, and that, generally, it does so...not because of the arduous research of the person who's been digging after it, but because the person in possession of the secret no longer wants to be its keeper."

Camus meets Hamlet: a slow but meaningful examination of guilt and expiation.

Prepare to fall in love with Leda, the protagonist of Casale's funny, insightful debut.

THE GIRL WHO NEVER READ NOAM CHOMSKY



THE GIRL WHO NEVER READ NOAM CHOMSKY

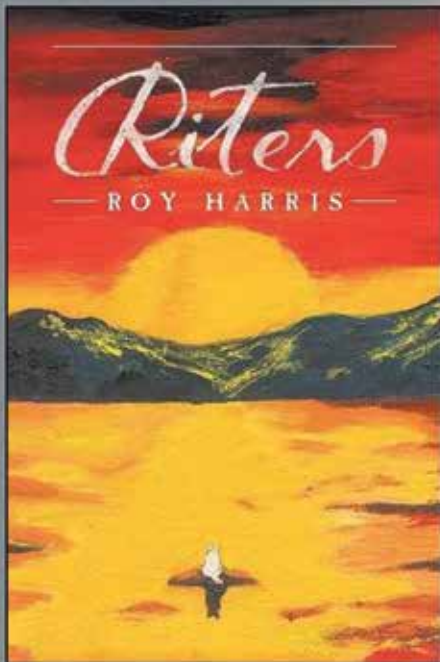
Casale, Jana
Knopf (368 pp.)
\$26.95 | Apr. 17, 2018
978-1-5247-3199-1



The interior life of a millennial Everywoman as she matures over the decades.

Prepare to fall in love with Leda, the wickedly relatable protagonist of Casale's funny, insightful, and deeply adorable debut. When we first meet her, she's a college student studying writing in Boston, dealing with her annoying friendships with women, her unsatisfying encounters with men, and the loneliness and self-doubt at the heart of it all. As she moves through life, we see all her experiences from both the outside and the inside. For example, in a coffee shop exchange with her friend Elle about their future plans, Elle announces that, as far as she's concerned, it's time for the

fantasy of becoming a writer to end. She just wants to set "realistic goals," she says. "Leda recognized the familiar wave of cruelty and cattiness that lingered in the comment, a rich but common display of the unabashed hatred and simultaneous press for superiority any woman could feel for another woman at any given moment." Soon after this meeting with her ultraslender friend, Leda decides to join a gym. "As she walked past all the men and their weights, she looked back at the women running and biking and stepping. *Keep running ladies*, she thought. *You'll never get away.*" Much later in life she's in a dressing room, miserably trying on bathing suits. She has told the obnoxious salesgirl several times that her name is Leda, but the woman insists on calling her Lisa, shouting, "'Lisa, how are the sizes working for you?' 'Fine.' *I'll kill you, Karen. I'll kill you right now, so help me god.*" We follow Leda as she drifts away from her commitment to writing and toward her first serious relationship, relocating quite unhappily for her partner's career. One of the most moving and original parts of the book is when Leda becomes a mother and we can see how much her attitudes toward herself and other people have matured by the way she raises her own child. In fact, the depictions of Leda's



Riters ROY HARRIS

In this debut sci-fi novel, one man's journey leads to a group of survivors spending a century aboard a spaceship in search of a new Earth. *Riters* embodies the spirit of works like *Catch-22*.

"One of the tales strongest points is its treatment of flesh and blood intimacy versus the virtual kind"

"Harris' story is a shrewd genre piece taking place in an expansive universe that doesn't shy away from farce."

"A sometimes-preposterous but often profound tale of civilization struggling to persevere."
—Kirkus Reviews

"Riters is an innovative vision of a dystopian future."
—San Francisco Book Review

"This is not a perfect book, but it is a fascinating one."
—Seattle Book Review

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With devastating understatement, Crace offers a parable for a time in which empathy has given way to callousness and fear.

THE MELODY

connections to both her mother and her daughter are filled with love and warmth. This is so rare in contemporary fiction, it's almost hard to believe. But just as importantly, will she ever get around to reading Noam Chomsky?

So much fun, so smart, and ultimately profound and beautiful.



INVITATION TO A BONFIRE

Celt, Adrienne
 Bloomsbury (256 pp.)
 \$26.00 | Jun. 5, 2018
 978-1-63557-152-3

Trembling with atmosphere, Celt's (*The Daughters*, 2015) second novel follows a young Russian émigré as she becomes embroiled in a sinister love triangle with a brilliant novelist and his exceptional wife.

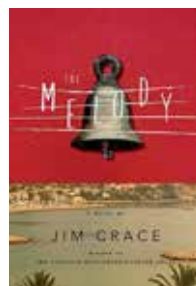
Constructed as a "collection of papers" bequeathed by one Vera Orlov to the posh girls' boarding school where her husband taught before his untimely death, the book begins with the end. Leo "Lev" Orlov was murdered in 1931, according to the opening "note on the text"; the same year, a young Donne School employee, Zoe "Zoya" Andropov, "died under hotly debated circumstances." The story—primarily told through Zoya's supposed diary entries and Lev's letters—is about everything that happened before. The child of political dissidents, Zoya arrives in New Jersey on a ship of orphans and finds herself an out-of-place charity case at the Donne School, a dark outcast amid shiny American wealth. But while the other girls move on to college or marriage or secretarial jobs after graduation, Zoya stays on, tending the school's greenhouse under the tutelage of the kindly gardener and obsessing, in her spare hours, over the otherworldly novels of the great Leo Orlov. And then, outside her greenhouse window in New Jersey, there he is: Lev Orlov. Encouraged by his beautiful, ice-cold wife—the engine of his career—he's teaching at the school. Immediately, he and Zoya, fellow Russians with upbringings on opposite sides of a vast cultural divide—she's a peasant, he's the son of White Russian wealth—fall into a passionate affair. But as Zoya becomes increasingly involved with the Orlovs, she begins to understand that their relationship is darker and more tangled than she'd bargained for, and she finds herself a half-witting pawn for them both. An ominous snowball of a novel (very) loosely based on the Nabokov marriage, with a slow-burning first half and a second half that hurtles toward inevitable catastrophe, it's a book that requires some patience, but that patience—carefully calculated—pays off in spades.

Rich and moody.



THE MELODY

Crace, Jim
 Talese/Doubleday (240 pp.)
 \$26.95 | Jun. 19, 2018
 978-0-385-54371-2

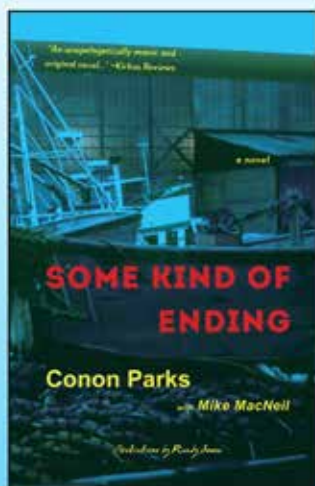


A brutal parody of urban renewal and its casualties takes the guise of a domestic elegy.

A novelistic trickster (*Harvest*, 2013, etc.), Crace engages in some subversive sleight of hand here, introducing a story about a recent widower, a formerly acclaimed singer named Alfred Busi, known to all who still remember him as Mister Al, who "wonders if he's running out of days" and, in the meantime, struggles to find some purpose or significance to fill them. Then comes the first attack, which leaves him bloody and bandaged and fearful of rabies. But he can't determine who or what attacked him, because the town struggles with not only wild animals, but "wild people," whether they be impoverished homeless people or naked Neanderthals, "humanzees," as local legend has come to know them. Through a gradual transition, Mr. Al comes to seem less like the protagonist than a pawn in a developer's scheme (as well as a novelist's), especially after a

SOME KIND OF ENDING

A Crude Little Novel by Conon Parks



Parks offers the postmodern adventures of an unlikely fisherman in this 20-year-old novel.

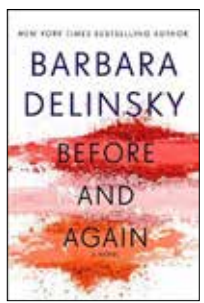
"...the writing dances on with such verve and loquacious joy that readers will be happy to keep turning the pages."

"An unapologetically manic and original novel about a drifter who heads for the Aleutian Islands in the 1980s."
 —Kirkus Reviews

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sensationalistic journalist publishes a story about the attack as a cautionary tale about the dangers for the haves of living amid the have-nots. The narrator hovers over the story but rarely intrudes, except as a bystander, a resident of the town, whose occasional opinions pass as conventional wisdom. It isn't until the last quarter of the book that the narrator identifies himself and his perspective (and its limitations), as the novel proceeds to a climax that will barely involve Mr. Al at all. "Our town will never be the same again," muses the narrator, "though it is hard for anyone to say if this is for the better or for the worse. Each gain is paid for with a loss."

With devastating understatement, Crace offers a parable for a time in which empathy has given way to callousness and fear.



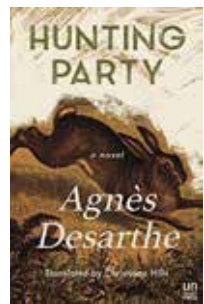
BEFORE AND AGAIN

Delinsky, Barbara
 St. Martin's (416 pp.)
 \$27.99 | Jun. 26, 2018
 978-1-250-11949-0

A young woman loses her daughter in a car accident and struggles to build a new life for herself in the aftermath of tragedy.

Mackenzie Cooper was driving her 5-year-old daughter to a play date when she missed a stop sign and collided with another car, killing both the other driver and her own daughter. A few years later, after Mackenzie has been divorced by her husband, dropped by her friends, disowned by her mother, and dragged through the mud by the press, she has finally created a quiet existence for herself. She lives in the sleepy town of Devon, Vermont, with two cats and a dog and works as a makeup artist at the spa in a local inn. She's changed her name to Maggie Reid, and almost no one in Devon knows about the accident or the probation officer who's been keeping tabs on her since that fateful day. Everything changes for Maggie the day her new friend Grace's son is criminally charged with high-profile computer hacking, bringing the press swarming to Devon and dredging up many painful memories for Maggie. Worse yet, when Maggie accompanies Grace to meet with an attorney, they bump into Maggie's ex-husband, Edward. Maggie learns that Edward has purchased the inn where she works, and he is moving to Devon. As Edward reaches out to Maggie with one overture after another, it quickly becomes apparent that the inn is not the only reason her ex was drawn to this particular town. Before she can reconcile with Edward, however, Maggie must find a way to accept the person she was before the accident and forgive herself for her past. Through a fast-paced and accessible narrative voice, Delinsky tackles many weighty issues in this complicated tale of friendship, loss, love, and redemption.

A tale about surmounting life's most difficult moments and finding hope when one least expects it.



HUNTING PARTY

Desarthe, Agnès
 Trans. by Hills, Christiana
 Unnamed Press (175 pp.)
 \$16.99 paper | Jul. 17, 2018
 978-1-944700-71-3

A talking rabbit, a hunting party, and an apocalyptic storm descend on the French countryside.

Any novel with talking animals—is immediately suspect. Desarthe's (*Chez Moi*, 2008) latest does feature a talking rabbit, but the result isn't as tacky as you might think. Tristan is a yielding, nonconfrontational (human) transplant to the French countryside. When his unyielding wife urges him to join the ultramacho village men on a hunting trip, he acquiesces—but he doesn't mean to kill anything. When he shoots a rabbit, he does so by mistake and scoops the injured-but-still-living body into his game bag with the hope of protecting it.

"Dystopian political sci-fi with a disturbingly persuasive edge."
— Kirkus Reviews
The WEALTH of a NATION
T.B. O'Neill

An insightful story of suspense and intrigue, set in the future in a stratified society after the jobs are gone.

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"A comparison to *Brave New World* . . . would not be far off the mark. . ."

Tristan and the rabbit go on to engage in a conversation the rest of the hunting party is apparently unable to hear (“Don’t die,” Tristan thinks; “I’m not dying,” the rabbit replies). But then Dumestre, the leader of their little hunting circle, falls into a deep hole, unable to climb out; two of the men go for help, while Tristan (and the rabbit) wait with him. As if that weren’t enough, it soon starts to rain—a heavy, apparently apocalyptic rain. And if *that* wasn’t enough, flashbacks from Tristan’s sad childhood intersperse with the action. Desarthe’s prose is elegant and clear, and, like other recent French authors, she’s interested in larger existential questions: what it means to be a man, to be human, to live a courageous life. But still: Why the talking rabbit? It’s not clear. It’s not clear, either, what the novel adds up to in the end, not even when the entirely unsurprising secret between Dumestre and Tristan’s wife is revealed.

This slim novel engages but doesn’t surprise.



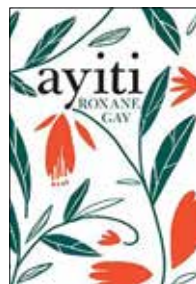
THE SUMMER LIST

Doan, Amy Mason
Graydon House (384 pp.)
\$16.99 paper | Jun. 26, 2018
978-1-525-80425-0

Seventeen years ago, Laura Christie suddenly fled her home on the lake of beautiful Coeur-de-Lune. But she cannot resist an invitation back to see her estranged best friend.

Adopted by an older couple, Laura had chafed under her mother’s strict, religious rules, not to mention the school bullies. So when red-haired Casey and her artistic, flighty mom, Alex, moved into the run-down house everyone called The Shipwreck, just across the lake, Laura was intrigued. Soon the girls were the best of friends, and Alex—too young to remember she was supposed to impose rules—was included in most of their shenanigans. With Casey and Alex at her side, Laura shook off her shyness, creating a new, vibrant family yet fracturing her relationship with her adoptive parents. Now 35, Casey and Laura need to mend their friendship, and Alex, with the help of Laura’s ex-boyfriend J.B., has designed a scavenger hunt to help them. The hunt sends them to all of their old haunts, including the restaurant where Casey first came out to Laura and the roller-skating rink where Laura first met J.B. Looming behind their summer reunion, however, is the question of Laura’s biological parentage. Threading the tale of Laura’s biological mother throughout the novel, her debut, Doan builds toward the revelation by tightening the bond between Laura and Casey, whose mothers turn out to have been friends, too. Resisting their own mothers’ religious constraints, these women of the 1980s found each other at summer camp, forging a strong bond. Without judgment, Doan carefully portrays their living in a commune with one of Coeur-de-Lune’s sons. Casey and Laura learn how their own mothers faced parental disapproval, teenage pregnancy, and drug use to accept why only Casey’s mom could take on motherhood.

A poignant tale of mothers and daughters finding their ways home to each other.



AYITI

Gay, Roxane
Grove (192 pp.)
\$16.00 paper | Jun. 19, 2018
978-0-8021-2826-3

A set of brief, tart stories mostly set amid the Haitian-American community and circling around themes of violation, abuse, and heartbreak.

This debut collection was first published by a small press in 2011, before Gay became a household name as a fiction writer, essayist, and memoirist (*Hunger*, 2017, etc.). Republished with two new

Kindly Welcome

A Novel of the Shakers in the Civil War

By Linda Stevens

LINDA STEVENS
Kindly Welcome
A novel of the Shakers in the Civil War

Hardcover ISBN #: 9781999751708
Ebook ISBN#: 9781999751715

A historical novel that explores the precarious position of pacifist Shakers during the American Civil War.

“SEARCHING... SENSITIVE...”

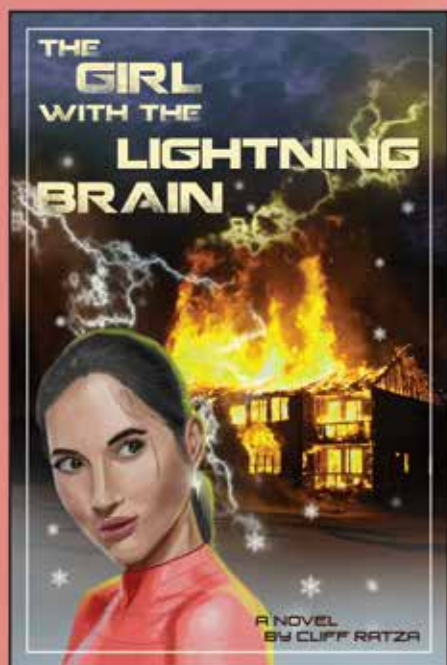
“An often mesmerizing look at a unique group of Americans.”
—*Kirkus Reviews*

For information on publishing or film rights, contact KindlyWelcome@mail.com

stories in 2018, much of it reads like a rehearsal for her more ambitious work, though it's worth exploring in itself for Gay's sharp-elbowed flash fiction. One of the new stories, "Sweet on the Tongue," echoes the plot of her debut novel, *An Untamed State*: A woman visiting her native Haiti is abducted and raped, beyond the help of her wealthy husband, and the shorter version emphasizes how difficult it is to articulate an assault in its immediate aftermath. The tension is equally dramatic in the closing "A Cool, Dry Place," in which a Haitian couple plans to make a dangerous boat trek to Miami, struggling to decode both the mythology of America and their own difficult relationship. Usually, though, the stories are brief and intimate: There's a lesbian relationship in "Of Ghosts and Shadows" ("We are the women people ignore because two women loving each other is an American thing"); American tourists sexually fetishize Haitian women in "The Harder They Come"; and a new arrival to America is taunted in the schoolyard in the opening "Motherfuckers." This book set the tone that still characterizes much of Gay's writing: clean, unaffected, allowing the (often furious) emotions to rise naturally out of calm,

declarative sentences. That gives her briefest stories a punch even when they come in at two pages or fewer, sketching out the challenges of assimilation in terms of accents, meals, or "What You Need to Know About a Haitian Woman."

Gay has addressed these subjects with more complexity since, but this debut amply contains the righteous energy that drives all her work.



THE GIRL WITH THE LIGHTNING BRAIN

A Novel by by Cliff Ratza

A girl of abnormally high intelligence grows up in a future world plagued by a virus whose primary symptom is cognitive impairment in this debut sci-fi novel.

"...incisive and profound."

"This series opener boasts an exemplary protagonist and leaves plenty of story avenues to explore."

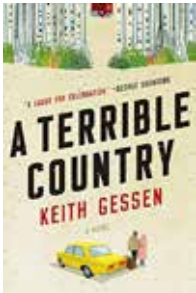
—Kirkus Reviews

ISBN - eBook: 978-1-64133-330-6
 ISBN - Paperback: 978-1-64133-331-3
LightningBrainSeries.com

For information about film rights and publishing, email nodonnell@sandw.com

A man returns to Moscow to care for his grandmother and learns much about Russia's new prosperity and old problems.

A TERRIBLE COUNTRY



A TERRIBLE COUNTRY

Gessen, Keith

Viking (352 pp.)

\$26.00 | Jul. 10, 2018

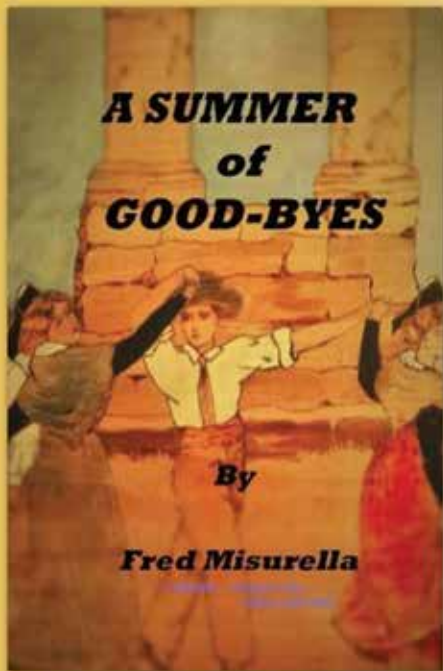
978-0-7352-2131-4

A man returns to Moscow to care for his grandmother and learns much about Putin's Russia, its new prosperity and old problems.

Gessen (*All the Sad Young Literary Men*, 2008) opens his second novel where his first ended, in 2008. The new work's central figure, Andrei Kaplan, recalls the feckless, at times unlikable young men of Gessen's debut. After eight years of grad school and a Ph.D. in Russian literature and "modernity," Andrei, at 33, is struggling to live in New York on a meager salary from online teaching. So when his older brother calls to say he must leave Moscow—his business schemes have brought legal woes—and asks Andrei to come care for their grandmother, it seems like a promising

alternative that might even bolster his resume. Grandma Seva is 89 and physically healthy but suffering "medium-stage dementia." As Andrei settles in to a daily routine, he comes to know her past and the new Moscow, a place he left at age 6 with his parents and brother. He's accepted by a group of socialists who show him the pricey city's cheaper side while they discuss Putin's form of capitalism, the "dictatorship of the market." They stage political demonstrations and share a strange sort of nostalgia for Soviet times. Small crises arise, but nothing like the chilling developments of the last 30 pages. Gessen's prose is generally unembellished and lends itself to deadpan humor, though it can be repetitious. The plain style does suit the muted action of Andrei's mostly mundane existence, and understatement helps to highlight the real hardship and peril that other lives confront.

The themes are timely and engaging, and Moscow-born Gessen displays an affecting sympathy for the smaller players on history's stage.



ISBN-10: 1537721119 | ISBN-13: 978-1537721118

www.fredmisurella.com

A SUMMER OF GOOD-BYES

BY FRED MISURELLA

A middle-aged man makes peace with his life choices in this novel.

**"...A STANDOUT...
RENDERED VIVIDLY..."**

"What emerges is a moving account of the necessary compromises people make in their lives."—Kirkus Reviews

"Fred Misurella writes in the clearest, precise prose, and has as his special strength the joining of shining intelligence with deep emotion."—Kent Haruf

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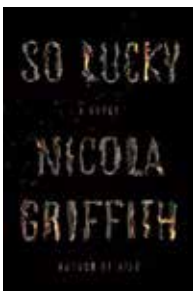
TRUE

Greenfeld, Karl Taro
 Little A (225 pp.)
 \$24.95 | \$15.95 paper | Jun. 1, 2018
 978-1-5420-4683-1
 978-1-5420-4684-8 paper

A fierce teen soccer player fights, hard, to become one of the world's best.

Greenfeld (*Triburbia*, 2012, etc.) has a custom of inserting his personal experiences into his work, be it fiction or non-fiction, so it's a refreshing change for him to so fully occupy a very different protagonist. Our narrator, Trudy, known to all as True, is a short, tomboyish teenage girl with a character-defining purpose: She really wants to play soccer and she really wants to win, and anyone who gets in the way of that goal is a fair target. The novel largely tracks her arc to make national teams, with the ultimate goal of joining the U.S. Women's National Team. The challenges in her troubled life include her absent mother, who died in childbirth; a father slowly losing his spirit to gambling and depression; and the Richter-scale earthquake that is her younger sister Pauline, who is deeply autistic. When the book sticks to the pitch, it's gripping stuff that employs painful descriptions of physically grueling training, gruesome injuries, and a determined fury sparked by competition. True doesn't exactly inspire sympathy—the girl is mean, violent, and cracked in some very specific ways. But her single-minded pursuit of her goals makes for compelling reading, barring a few distracting sidebars like the boyfriend, the frenemy rival, and a dark episode near the end that nearly derails the plot despite being largely irrelevant. Readers should also know that although it stars a young adult, this is a very adult book with some sexuality, explicit language, and violence. In spirit and tone, this novel skews closer to the Walter Tevis cult classic *The Queen's Gambit* (1983), about a similarly talented and tenacious young woman, than a mere sporting adventure.

An emotionally raw but engaging story of a woman who recognizes that her gift can help her escape.



SO LUCKY

Griffith, Nicola
 MCD/Farrar, Straus and Giroux (192 pp.)
 \$15.00 paper | May 15, 2018
 978-0-374-26592-2

A narrative of disability and its consequences.

An author of science fiction, thrillers, and historical fiction, Griffith (*Hild*, 2013, etc.) defies easy categorization. So does her latest novel. It has some of the elements of crime fiction, but its shape does not conform to the genre's norms. Romantic relationships play a significant role in the plot, but this is certainly not a romance novel. This is, more than anything, a story about disability and how it

shapes—and reshapes—people's lives. The narrative begins with Mara Tagarelli's longtime partner, Rose, leaving her for another woman. When Mara turns to Aiyana, one of her oldest friends, for comfort, their relationship turns sexual. But Aiyana's job is taking her to New Zealand, so Mara is alone when she discovers that she has multiple sclerosis. As both the illness and the side effects of drug therapy take their toll, Mara is forced to step down as executive director of a multimillion-dollar AIDS organization. Her experience in that space gives her tools for advocating for herself and other people with MS, but her failing body challenges Mara's sense of herself. She's used to being strong and self-reliant, and now she is weak and dependent. She doubts that anyone can really want her. She is prickly about Rose's offers of help, and she assumes that Aiyana has lost interest. Then MS sufferers on a mailing list Mara has compiled become the victims of violence, and she suspects that the perpetrators might be working their way toward her. There are plenty of compelling themes here, and this might have been an excellent novel if it had been half again as long. But everything feels rushed. Mara's reaction to

FROM THE MIDST OF WICKEDNESS

by Nelson Cover

Nelson Cover

ISBN-10: 1944037640
 ISBN-13: 978-1944037642
www.fromthemidstofwickedness.com

Cover (*Danced by the Light of the Moon*, 2013) offers a thriller about a college professor whose career and life are threatened when he learns about his university's acceptance of shady donations.

"...the narrative's modest pace and eerie plausibility succeed."

"A slow-burning thriller that reveals the seedy politics of higher learning in America."
 —Kirkus Reviews

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INTERVIEWS & PROFILES

REBEKAH FRUMKIN

THE DEBUT NOVELIST HAS TALENT TO BURN

By Mark Athitakis



Photo courtesy Carmen Maria Machado

ONE THING THAT QUICKLY becomes clear in Rebekah Frumkin's excellent debut novel, *The Comedown* (Apr. 17), is the scope of its ambition. Spanning three generations, two families, and roughly a half-century of American life, it's at once a study of the society the boomers created and a spirited critique of it, rich with riffs on drugs, politics, art, race, and sexuality. The two busy family trees in the opening pages promise a maximalist work, and the richness of Frumkin's prose and characterizations delivers on it.

Frumkin, 28, says her novel was only slightly less expansive when she began it seven years ago. "I wanted to write a novel that was sort of *Brothers Karamazov*-esque, about a family," she says from her home in Chicago. "It was going to be about this megalomaniacal father and his two sons, both by different wives. I started writing it when I was pretty young, and [later] I got

the opportunity to be exposed to different people and different ideas—people who are outside the realm of the snarky, hyperwhite, dark-comedy kind of genre position I was trying to occupy."

A central patriarch is still key to the story: Leland Bloom-Mittwoch is the first character on the scene in 1999, leaping off the top of a Florida hotel on his 54th birthday, after two marriages and an epic cocaine addiction. A rumor of a suitcase stuffed with cash that Leland left behind has mobilized his relatives, as well as those of Reginald Marshall, his drug dealer. As the story expanded, Frumkin says, and as she worked on it in earnest while at the Iowa Writers Workshop, she began making the tale more pluralistic.

Among the first characters to emerge from that process was Tarzan, the genderqueer partner of Leland's son. The set piece featuring Tarzan is an affecting portrait of emerging and shifting sexuality, from anxiety and self-loathing ("he tried to find small ways to keep himself from thinking the Thought, but they were almost as bad as the Thought itself") to a comfortable relationship where "they wanted to spend their life hanging suspended between two poles."

"The journey from a man assigned male at birth to a somewhat feminine character to a genderqueer person was fantastic for me to write," Frumkin says, "because I was going through my own process of self-discovery and becoming a person who lives in a more queer life and more out as a queer woman."

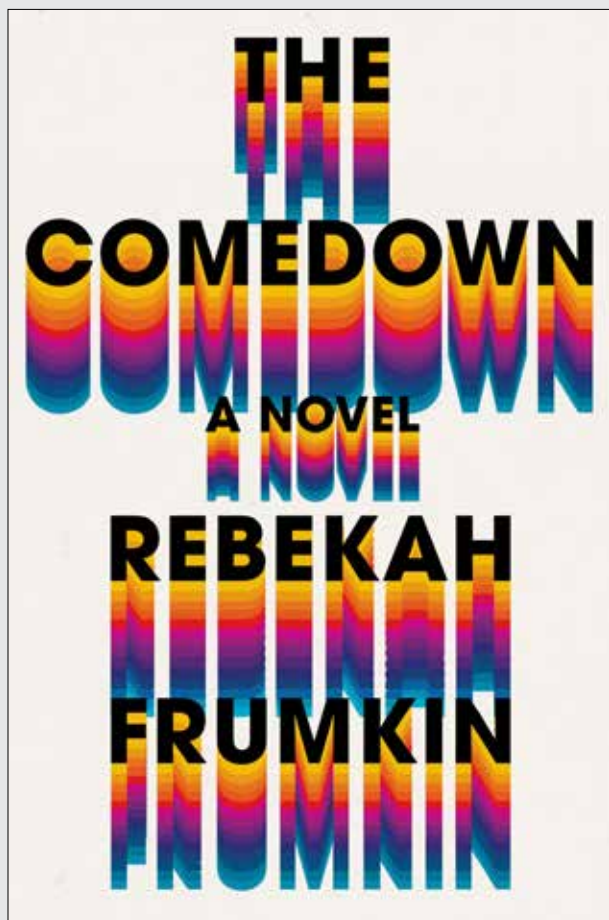
She was careful, though, about the challenges of writing across difference in a novel where half the characters are African-American. At the Iowa Writers Workshop, she consulted with fellow writers, including Tony Tulathimutte (*Private Citizens*), for a close read of the manuscript. "No one was tasked with reading for sensitivity alone," she says, but she adds that the experience led her to produce "what I think amounts to something that is more sensitively written, and written toward the characters as individuals. As opposed to prefacing those characters' exist-

tences with their race, which is something that white writers tend to do.”

That’s not to say that the novel is about race or difference as such. As the title suggests, *The Comedown* is more broadly concerned with the end of the era of boomer free-wheeling behavior and the consequences of what she sees as an intoxicated, emotionally detached age.

“I’m intrigued by how that generation got away with taking as much as they took,” she says. “My generation often gets labeled the me generation: We’re always on our phones, we have everything we could possibly want, so why aren’t we buying houses and diamonds? But it’s just simply more difficult to participate in capitalism and win now than it was then.”

Mark Athitakis is a writer in Phoenix and author of The New Midwest. The Comedown received a starred review in the Feb. 15, 2018, issue.



her disease is raw and honest, but readers only see her as caustic and difficult. Unpleasant protagonists can be compelling, of course, but, here, it’s easier to understand why Rose and Aiyana would ditch Mara than to understand why they stick with her. And the element of mystery is introduced late and resolved before it generates any real tension.

Original but disappointing.



FLORIDA

Groff, Lauren
Riverhead (288 pp.)
\$27.00 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-1-59463-451-2

In 11 electric short stories, the gifted Groff (*Fates and Furies*, 2015, etc.) unpacks the “dread and heat” of her home state.

In her first fiction since President Barack Obama named *Fates and Furies* his favorite book of the year, Groff collects her singing, stinging stories of foreboding and strangeness in the Sunshine State. Groff lives in Gainesville with a husband and two sons, and four of these tales are told from the perspectives of unmoored married mothers of young ones. The first, “Ghosts and Empties,” which appeared in the *New Yorker*, begins with the line, “I have somehow become a woman who yells,” a disposition the narrator tries to quell by walking at all hours as “the neighbors’ lives reveal themselves, the lit windows domestic aquariums.” Groff fans will recognize the descriptive zest instantly. The same quasi-hapless mother seems to narrate “The Midnight Zone,” in which she imperils the lives of her boys by falling off a stool and hitting her head while alone with them at a remote cabin, “where one thing [she] liked was how the screens at night pulsed with the tender bellies of lizards.” Ditto for the lonely oddballs telling “Flower Hunters” and “Yport,” the longest and last story, in which the reckless mother is often coated in alcohol. These are raw, danger-riddled, linguistically potent pieces. They unsettle their readers at every pass. In the dreamy, terrific “Dogs Go Wolf,” two little girls are abandoned on an island, their starvation lyrical: “The older sister’s body was made of air. She was a balloon, skidding over the ground”; their rescue is akin to a fairy tale. Equally mesmerizing is “Above and Below,” in which the graduate student narrator sinks away and dissipates into vivid, exacting homelessness. Even the few stories that dribble off rather than end, such as “For the God of Love, For the Love of God,” have passages of surpassing beauty. And Groff gets the humid, pervasive white racism that isn’t her point but curdles through plenty of her characters.

A literary tour de force of precariousness set in a blistering place, a state shaped like a gun.



CLEAN TIME
The True Story Of Ronald Reagan Middleton

Gwin, Ben
Burrow Press (320 pp.)
\$17.00 paper | May 29, 2018
978-1-941681-70-1

An acerbic and multilayered debut novel satirizing reality television, drug-rehab memoirs, and academia.

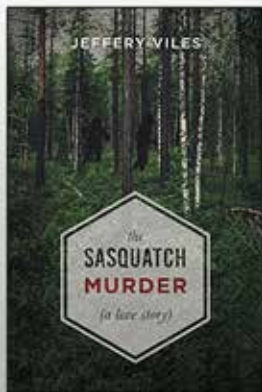
Framed as a memoir written by the drug-addicted reality TV protagonist Ronald Reagan Middleton—as annotated by a Ph.D. candidate named Harold Swanger—Gwin’s novel follows Ronald after his wealthy New Jersey family disowns him out of frustration with his abusive behavior. He gets caught up in the underworld of the Southern drug trade and is eventually arrested and imprisoned for the murder of another addict. Encouraged by an MFA student named Sophia, he begins to write the story of his life but is

suddenly released from prison in return for an agreement to enter a rehabilitation facility in New Jersey called Rose-Thorn Recovery Center. The center’s ominous name ends up being prescient: Rose-Thorn is not just a rehab clinic, but the site of a reality television experiment called *Clean Time*, in which drug addicts “compete for the right to stay in treatment based on their popularity.” What follows is a bizarre, gonzo exploration of America’s obsession with reality TV and redemption narratives. Pieced together via fragments of Ronald’s memoir, excerpts from the *Clean Time* script, interviews with Sophia and the villainous television producer Margaret Turner, and commentary by Swanger, the novel is dizzying in its formal experimentation. Unfortunately, the novel’s logic is opaque and mostly results in a number of characters and storylines disappearing in the middle. The unconventional form also highlights the novel’s lack of a plot. It doesn’t help that the satire—especially when it targets academic writing programs—is less biting than bitter. Characters like “White Reggie,” a poet and self-proclaimed feminist conducting ethnographic research on the working class so he can write about them, after having inherited “a couple million bucks from his dead uncle,” just about sum up the novel’s disdain for MFA culture when he says, “Honestly, bro, I try to avoid MFA students. Bunch of suburban kids trying to sound edgy.” It’s too bad the humor doesn’t comment on such hypocrisy so much as merely observe its existence.

An ambitious and unorthodox novel whose humor misses the mark.

**THE SASQUATCH MURDER:
A Love Story**

BY JEFFERY VILES



Viles tells the story of a couple caught in the middle of a Bigfoot controversy in this debut novel.

“Viles writes in a crisp, balanced prose that’s laden with wonderful details...”

“An earnest, thoughtful story about an unplanned discovery.”
—Kirkus Reviews

sasquatchmurder.com

For information regarding agent representation or film rights, contact ellen@jkscommunications.com



THE COLOR OF BEE LARKHAM'S MURDER

Harris, Sarah J.
Touchstone/Simon & Schuster (368 pp.)
\$26.00 | Jun. 12, 2018
978-1-5011-8789-6

A teenager with autism becomes embroiled in the murder of a neighbor—but as culprit or witness?

Comparisons of this novel with *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* (2003) will be inevitable but, sadly, unwarranted. Thirteen-year-old Jasper Wishart, the protagonist of Harris’ first novel for adults (after having written YA under a pseudonym), is on the spectrum, and what an infinitely varied spectrum it is. He has synesthesia—sights and, particularly, in his case, sounds evoke a range of colors most people can’t see. But he is face-blind, unable to recognize even those closest to him except by hue of voice and clothing. He takes everything literally, including metaphors, idioms, and empty threats, like those of his blustery neighbor David Gilbert. The narrative, told exclusively from Jasper’s first-person perspective, ratchets between past and present as Jasper tries to reconstruct events in his London street by painting the colors of his memories. He thinks he killed his new neighbor, Bee Larkham, but has only disordered images, a bloodied knife, and his own stomach

Short stories that will puzzle, perplex, and provoke.

DARKER WITH THE LIGHTS ON

slash wound as evidence. His father, who has raised Jasper alone since the deaths of his mother and grandmother, is coping by covering up—Jasper is sure Dad disposed of Bee's body. Jasper recalls how Bee, a musician and Australian transplant, fomented neighborhood squabbles by blaring loud music and deliberately luring wild parakeets to feeders in her front yard. (These descendants of escaped pet birds have become an invasive pest in the U.K.) Even more disruptive is Bee's questionable behavior with her young music students, especially Jasper's schoolmate Lucas Drury. Although Harris strives to keep things coherent with chapter headings dated using Jasper's idiosyncratic color markers, readers must work to make sense of it all. Unpacking Jasper's color-coded reality becomes as tedious as deciphering hieroglyphics. Those few instances when Jasper delivers a straight narrative are essential for exposition purposes but feel like a violation of the novel's fourth wall. The end result of Harris' determination to spare no synesthetic detail, is, well, monochromatic.

A potentially engaging mystery embedded in an overly daunting puzzle.



DARKER WITH THE LIGHTS ON

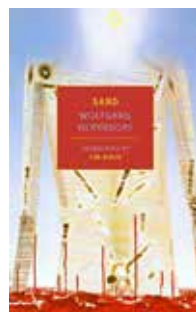
Hayden, David
 Transit Books (219 pp.)
 \$15.95 paper | May 15, 2018
 978-1-945492-11-2

Short stories that will puzzle, perplex, and provoke.

Irishman Hayden's first book is a collection of 19 stories that invite readers into some puzzling and unfamiliar places: symbolic, surrealist, and language-based worlds. His tales are reminiscent of his countryman Samuel Beckett's *Stories and Texts for Nothing*. Hayden's book might be subtitled *Texts with the Stories Gone*. "Dick" is drawn directly from the Beckett playbook. It begins: "Dick is buried up to his belly on a cold shingle beach." Little happens; descriptions of the surroundings are given. "He laughs. He is full of words. They bubble out of his mouth and dribble down his chin." Hayden eschews conventional plots, characters, and narrative flow for ambiguity and words. Striking images and metaphors and new, compound words—"thatmakes," "andeverything"—abound. He invites readers to participate, to peel back the prose, reveal the very process of reading. "Reading" imagines readers as writers living in their own books. As the eponymous narrator of "The Auctioneer" tells us: "The essence of the book is another thing entirely, not the words as such but what lies beneath the words, that is what can set you free." Some stories have a fairy-tale quality to them, like "How to Read a Picture Book." Meet Sorry the Squirrel—"My real name is Maximilian Liebowitz," he says, "but you wouldn't be able to pronounce that now, would you kiddies?" He instructs a group of "little darlings" on how to read a picture book. Some stories possess a grisly, Brothers Grimm quality. In one, a platter with the "blackened, smoking corpse of a man" is on

display at a dinner party. Another begins: "My name is Leckerdam and this is how my children killed me." In the ghostly "Memory House," the narrator keeps seeing (maybe) a stranger in his house or maybe it's himself, a "piece of me."

Those seeking challenging, nontraditional wordplay stories will find much here to ponder.



SAND

Herrndorf, Wolfgang
Trans. by Mohr, Tim
 New York Review Books (464 pp.)
 \$17.95 paper | Jun. 19, 2018
 978-1-68137-201-3

A beguiling, idiosyncratic exercise in postmodern bafflement by the late artist/novelist Herrndorf (*Why We Took the Car*, 2014, etc.), awarded the Leipzig Book Fair Prize for it in 2012.

savage
CUTS

COLIN MCINTOSH

COLIN MCINTOSH

ISBN: 978-0-9955970-3-7

**"An entertaining...look at the chaotic reality of a modern health care system."
 —Kirkus Reviews**

For information on publishing or film rights, contact colinmh13@gmail.com

Somewhere along the coastal desert of northwestern Africa—Herrndorf isn't specific, but it's a former French colony, so perhaps Mali—four disaffected foreigners living in a commune have been killed in a murder whose payoff is a basket of fruit and a wicker suitcase full of an unknown currency. The case draws attention: There's an American woman “best seen from afar”—no surprise that her last name and hotel room add up to the moniker of a far-distant star—and a Swedish double agent with nuclear secrets to sell. Then there are two cops assigned to the case, one of them a Frenchman who took the gig to get away from a girlfriend in Paris and who “didn't have a clue about Africa.” He worries that he doesn't have a clue about much of anything, since he scored lower on an intelligence test than his partner, who's dumb enough to bring about his own demise thanks to a miscalculation having to do with the political influence of the prime suspect. Then there's the guy whose head was bashed in and wanders in from the desert, an amnesiac, apparently well connected enough to international plots of derring-do that the Stasi, the CIA, and a sinister pseudo-psychiatrist are after him. Electrical shocks ensue, whereupon the amnesiac

“talked about everything he knew, and he talked about the things he didn't know, too.” In this rollicking shaggy-cum-sandy dog of a tale, no one knows much of anything, save that the badder the bad guy the more reliable the information. Herrndorf, it seems, had trouble deciding what this story would be—a satire? a spy novel? a thriller? Suffice it to say that if you mashed up the Ian Fleming of *Casino Royale* with *Tim Drum*—era Günter Grass and threw in a little Paul Bowles for leavening, you might get something approaching this concoction.

It's bizarre, wacky, and broad—but highly entertaining, especially for fans of the Vonnegut/DFW school of the absurd.



COMPANIONS

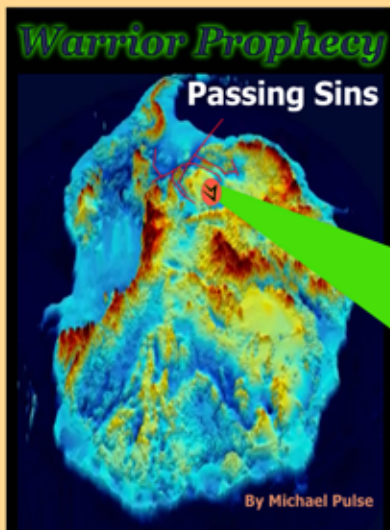
Hesselholdt, Christina
Trans. by Garrett, Paul Russell
 Fitzcarraldo Editions (400 pp.)
 \$20.00 paper | Apr. 24, 2018
 978-1-910695-33-3

Award-winning Danish author Hesselholdt paints a composite portrait of six well-read, well-traveled friends at middle age in this novel, her first to be translated into English.

A Danish couple on a trip through the Lake District in England watch their landlady feeding leftovers to a family of badgers. The animals, practically blind, “munched on the bones.” “Of course,” our narrator of the moment, one of the six eponymous companions, tells us, “I was reminded of how in the past, when the woods were teeming with badgers, people filled their boots with charcoal when they were hunting because badgers bite until they hear a crunch.” A blend of arresting detail, digression, and erudition tinged with nostalgia characterizes this novel, which ranges back and forth between different points of view, through chapters with titles such as “The Houses and Their Brilliant Suicide Victims,” “The Hair in the Drawer,” “Bernhard's Shoes, a Note,” largely unbothered by conventional concerns with plot or narrative momentum. Much of the pleasure here comes from the unhurried accumulation of moments and the intersections between the companions' lives. The characters—Alma, Kristian, Edward, Camilla, Charles, Alwilda—are thoughtful and articulate, given to quoting Osip Mandelstam and Colette and musing about loneliness and mortality. More trips are taken, to Virginia Woolf's house and to Sylvia Plath's. Marriages fail, among them the badger-watching couple's. Their friend Camilla's mother dies, in bed with her glasses on, and Camilla is consumed by a grief familiar to Edward, whose own parents committed suicide and left him to find their bodies. Toward the end of the book, the friends, dining together, converse in apparent non sequiturs. “‘This cod is delicious.’ ‘Yes, it's difficult being human, Camilla, for me too,’ Kristian says.”

Both the difficulty and the pleasure of being human shine through in these pages.

Warrior Prophecy: Passing Sins



By: Michael Pulse
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Accident brought the
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 becomes the only answer, yet favoritism isn't allowed!
 Who is protected isn't clear...will this be the end...or will
 life continue...where will it exist...would you survive?

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EVERYONE WANTS TO BE AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE

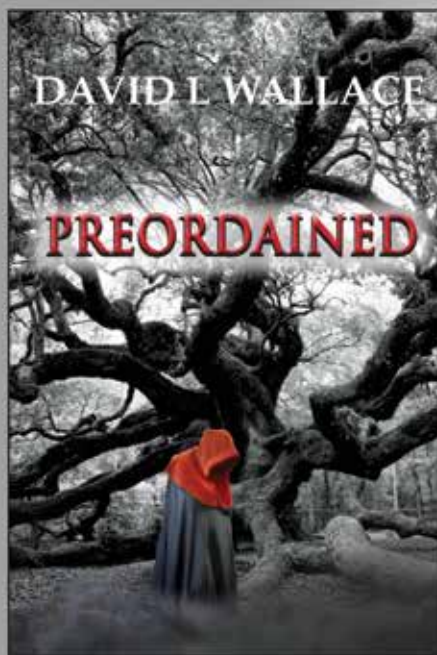
Hurt, Bryan
 Red Hen Press (168 pp.)
 \$15.95 paper | Jun. 26, 2018
 978-1-59709-700-0

Small, kooky stories exploring the absurdity and sadness of relationships.

Midway through this wide-ranging collection, Hurt (editor: *Watchlist: 32 Stories By Persons of Interest*, 2016) includes a story called “Panic Attack.” In it, a writer named Bryan Hurt has a conversation with two literary editors who urge him to write more “regular” stories that are “*true* true. The kind of truth that builds a nest in your heart, lays eggs, and two weeks later little baby truth birds hatch out.” That Hurt scoffs at the idea that “time travel, zombies, [and] ghosts “ can’t tell deep human truths is evident from reading all the stories before “Panic Attack,” which are about those very things. Hurt, in fact,

delights in the wacky premise. In “Contract,” we learn that CEOs are able to climb the ladder as the result of human sacrifice. “Seagull” features a boy whose past life as a sea gull makes it difficult for him to relate to others. Other stories explore the melancholy of being merely the fourth man to walk on the moon (“The Fourth Man”) or the strange changes that come over a group of children when they enroll in French immersion school (“The Bilingual School”). Often, Hurt is able to achieve just the kind of “*true*” truth he contemplates in just a few pages, though the collection’s standout tale, “My Other Car Drives Itself,” about a Google employee working through disasters at work and home, is also one of the longest. But the stories, so often about men who are at best caddish and at worst cruel, can sometimes hit sour notes, too. When the jaunty style juxtaposes with loutish characters, the effect can make the readers feel some sympathy for those impatient editors.

A collection that veers from the exhilarating to the exasperating.



Paperback: 978-0-9972257-2-3
 eBook: 978-0-9972257-3-0

PREORDAINED

by David L Wallace

In Wallace’s (*Trojan*, 2016) supernatural thriller, a South Carolina cop tracks a serial killer with ties to the occult and starts having visions of a demon.

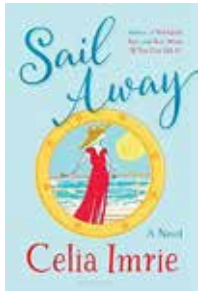
“A gripping detective story with biblical undertones.”
 —*Kirkus Reviews*

“Original and engaging.”
 —*Publisher’s Weekly*

“A riveting and intriguing read.”
 —*Clarion Review*

<http://davidwallace.com/preordained>

For publishing rights or agent representation, please contact WallaceDavidL@msn.com



SAIL AWAY

Imrie, Celia

Bloomsbury (368 pp.)

\$17.00 paper | Jun. 19, 2018

978-1-63557-183-7

Acting roles are pretty sparse for women over 60, so British actress Suzy Marshall seizes the opportunity to play Lady Bracknell in a Swiss production of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Things go terribly awry, though,

and she unexpectedly finds herself playing detective on a cruise ship.

Suzy might have seen the writing on the wall earlier: Reg, the director, had some very strange ideas, including desecrating the famous handbag scene with a barbershop quartet, and the actors' flights to Zurich were all cobbled together with last-minute tickets. Luckily, her fellow actors were marvelous—except for whiny Stan Arbuthnot—especially Jason Scott,

a young man eager to plot with Suzy behind Reg's back. Yet the morning after Jason escapes a sketchy party hosted by the play's financial backer, the play is suddenly cancelled, return plane tickets voided, and all the actors' bank accounts drained. Suzy and Jason land entertainment jobs aboard the *Blue Mermaid*, a ship bound for New York. Together they begin some online sleuthing, trying to piece together what happened in Zurich. Meanwhile, Amanda Herbert has found herself homeless for a few weeks, pending the closing of her purchase of a London flat from a jittery seller. Treating herself to a cruise sounds wonderful, and soon, via internet, Amanda takes possession of the flat, letting her son housesit for her. All is well until Amanda's son is mysteriously arrested. With sly, charming villains committing dastardly deeds, Olivier award-winning actor Imrie (*Nice Work (If You Can Get It)*, 2016, etc.) brings her own theatrical experience to bear on this refreshing whodunit, carefully tightening the strings bringing Amanda, Suzy, Jason, the villain, and a constellation of quirky characters (including Myriam La-Grande-Motte with her hilarious malapropisms) together.

This charming collision of Agatha Christie and *The Love Boat* will delight fans of classic mysteries.

POINT LOOKOUT
A Civil War Story

by Fredd Snell

POINT LOOKOUT
A Civil War Story

Snell's Civil War novel documents the savage treatment of prisoners of war.

"...the author paints a morally nuanced picture of both sides."

"George's inner conflict is a good example of this authorial sensitivity."

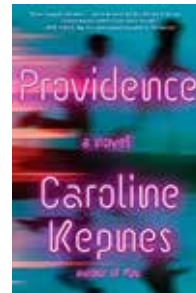
Fredd Snell

ISBN # 978-1-973267-23-2

pointlookoutacivilwarstory.com

"An impressive blend of history and fiction..." —Kirkus Reviews

For information on publishing or film rights, contact fredd.snell@gmail.com



PROVIDENCE

Kepnes, Caroline

Lenny (384 pp.)

\$27.00 | Jun. 19, 2018

978-0-399-59143-3

The mysterious return of a kidnapped boy is more curse than blessing in this novel—which is equal parts love story, thriller, and horror tale.

In Nashua, New Hampshire, young teen Jon Bronson is the sort of boy who loves newspapers and hamsters and takes the long way to school to avoid bullies. He also loves fellow teen and popular budding artist Chloe Sayers, though he never admits as much. Kepnes (*Hidden Bodies*, 2016, etc.) nails the tentative feelings that develop between kids from different middle school social strata. When Jon vanishes one morning—it's revealed early on that his kidnapper is local substitute teacher Roger Blair—the relative speed with which the town's interest wanes is nearly as devastating as his disappearance, a narrative trick Kepnes pulls off seamlessly. Four years later, a more muscular Jon emerges from the local mall with no memory of his captivity and a new obsession with the work of H.P. Lovecraft, particularly the novel *The Dunwich Horror*, which features a man named Wilbur Whateley, with whom Jon begins to identify. Soon after Jon's return, strange things begin happening to the people around him, from getting nosebleeds to fainting and even having a fatal heart attack. Jon disappears again, voluntarily this time, fearing that, like Wilbur, he's the monster whose mere presence causes sickness and death. Kepnes follows Jon, Chloe, and Charles "Eggs" DeBenedictus, a detective from Providence, Rhode Island, over the years as they live their separate but interconnected lives: Jon in Providence under two assumed names; Chloe in New York City

as an artist who shot to fame with her initial paintings of Jon during his disappearance; and Eggs as he investigates a series of seemingly unlinked heart-attack deaths of young people. As the three come closer to one another and are repelled by either choice or circumstances, the question of sacrificing love for safety becomes painfully clear to everyone.

Kepnes, whose previous novels deftly dealt with obsessive love, changes gears here and injects into this “Beauty and the Beast”-like story a deeper allegory about how far we’ll go to protect the things we love the most.



HAVOC

Kristensen, Tom

Trans. by Malmberg, Carl

New York Review Books (528 pp.)

\$17.95 paper | Jun. 12, 2018

978-1-68137-207-5

Forgotten modernist novel by Danish journalist/novelist Kristensen, who blends Dürrenmatt and Bukowski with a shot of Frank Norris in this moody, booze-soaked tale.

Ole Jastrau pretty much has it all: a good job in journalism, a “tall and buxom” wife, a decent family life. So why mess with it? Because, existentialism being what it is and all, it’s sometimes better to descend into hell than to serve in what passes for the heaven of Danish social democracy in the wake of World War I. Comes a bang on the door at electioneering season, and there stand a couple of grimy former comrades from his leftist past, one of whom paints him with



THE GREAT LANDZMAN

THREE TIMES THE KING

BY THOMAS G. JEWUSIAK

Jewusiak reimagines an American classic by F. Scott Fitzgerald.

“Cloaked in Lemony Snicket-esque layers of metafiction, Jewusiak, the narrator, Landzman, Carramel, Fitzgerald, and Jay Gatsby himself begin to merge into one tangled archetype of American power, deception, authorship, and authority. Jewusiak has an indisputable talent for language ...” —*Kirkus Reviews*

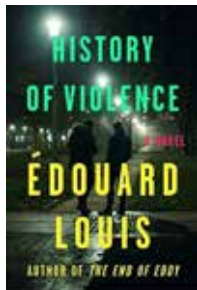
ISBN#: 978-0-9970967-0-5

Available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble

For information on publishing or film rights, please contact jewusiak1@aol.com

a broad brush: “There’s nothing so irrational as the bourgeois mind.” Indeed, and the aperçu is all it takes to set Jastrau down the path of drunken self-indulgence that takes him into the no man’s land between madness and civilization, into “a Noah’s ark with bits of wreckage from his past and liquor and dancing people whom he didn’t know.” The descent is harrowing, but Kristensen would seem to have a larger purpose in making an allegory of soulless capitalism, where the answer to most questions is “earn some money,” and, as Jastrau grumbles, “A person can think whatever he wants to about aesthetics, ethics, and I don’t know what else. But if he has opinions that encroach on economics, then the freedom no longer applies.” Phrases such as “crude, swarthy, Negro fetish” and “Mongoloid features” are products of their time, doubtless, but one wonders whether the translator might better have smoothed them down. In all events, the book, originally published in 1930, seems largely a period piece, an expression of Dostoevskian self-loathing mixed up with heavy-handed cultural critique.

Bibulous readers might want to take the cure after following these hungover proceedings.



HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

Louis, Édouard
Trans. by Stein, Lorin
 Farrar, Straus and Giroux (224 pp.)
 \$25.00 | Jun. 19, 2018
 978-0-374-17059-2

A sobering tale of crime and the exhausting search for justice in its aftermath.

Following on his none-too-cheerful roman à clef *The End of Eddy* (2017), Louis again blends fact and fiction to report a crime: On Christmas Eve a few years ago, following a chance encounter, he was raped and nearly murdered in an episode that the police dossier blandly calls an “attempted homicide.” His first impulse after the act is to clean his apartment obsessively, especially anything his attacker might have touched. “I couldn’t stop,” he writes. “I was possessed by an almost manic energy. I thought: *Better crazy than dead.*” As if rejoining Camus, Louis circles again and again to the scene and facts of the assault, and with all his predecessor’s matter-of-factness. In a particularly telling reverie, Louis imagines approaching a stranger in a supermarket and telling that person the story, which “would be so ugly he’d have no choice but to stand there and listen till the end.” In essence, that is the whole point of this lapel-grabbing narrative; it is slender but altogether powerful, unsparing in detail and not without sympathy for the people who are caught up in it, the reader included. Even the police, who are none too helpful throughout, catch a break; when they snicker at his story, it is mostly out of shock, though after a time, with their endless questioning, the cops all blend together: “I no longer saw the bodies of men and women, only repetitions that had taken on the bodies of women and men.” No such lack of specificity for the attacker, who, Louis is sure, is bound to strike again, all the more reason

for Louis to keep a box cutter in his pocket at all times “in case [he] was hiding and waiting.”

An intensely suspenseful psychological portrait—and with many more questions than answers.



REMIND ME AGAIN WHAT HAPPENED

Luloff, Joanna
 Algonquin (288 pp.)
 \$26.95 | Jun. 26, 2018
 978-1-56512-922-1

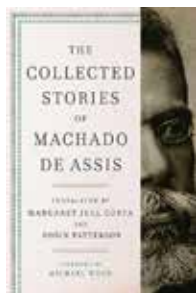
A woman’s amnesia strains her relationships with her husband and her best friend.

Married couple Claire and Charlie and their dearest friend, Rachel, have a long, complicated history and a friendship so close it’s more like family. Rachel and Charlie met in a modernist poetry seminar when she was studying abroad in England. They had a shy but loving romance of their own, and he moved with her to Boston to go to graduate school, where together they met Claire. When Rachel’s parents died in a car accident, first Claire and then Charlie moved into her childhood home and took care of her through her intense grief. Claire has been leading the trio through their lives ever since. When Rachel became pregnant and decided against keeping it and against telling Charlie, Claire helped her through. When Rachel, in her sadness about this choice, turned away from Charlie, Claire took her place as his romantic partner. When Charlie got a job in Vermont, Claire moved with him, convincing them both that it would work. But now it’s Claire who needs to be led. A traveling journalist working on a story in India, she has been away from Vermont and from Charlie for some time, literally and emotionally, when she’s bitten by a mosquito and contracts Japanese encephalitis, leading to seizures and brain damage: “There is a smudge where [her] memories are supposed to be.” She is unstable, unwell, unable to remember her life from her late teens through her most recent writing assignments, knowing only that she awoke alone in a hospital in Florida. Occasionally a floating memory comes forth—of a moment in the shared kitchen of their youth or, more recently, of a mysterious photographer named Michael—but mostly Claire is at a loss. She hates it, a normally independent and fearless woman trapped by her health—and her husband hates it, too, as the dynamics of their relationship lurch dramatically away from the usual. Over the course of the novel, told through the friends’ three alternating points of view, shared and unshared memories are revealed as Charlie and Rachel care for Claire and as Claire works to put it all back together. Each has secrets, and secreted resentments, of which Luloff’s (*The Beach at Galle Road*, 2012) slow unearthing is fascinating and thorough.

A novel of sonorous character study, showing both the limits and allure of truly knowing another person—and oneself.

Sometimes Machado de Assis reads like a European modernist, at others like the contemporary of Melville and Flaubert that he was.

THE COLLECTED STORIES OF MACHADO DE ASSIS



THE COLLECTED STORIES OF MACHADO DE ASSIS

Machado de Assis, Joaquim Maria
Trans. by Costa, Margaret Jull & Patterson,
Robin

Liveright/Norton (992 pp.)
 \$35.00 | Jun. 12, 2018
 978-0-87140-496-1



A welcome omnibus edition of short fiction by the writer widely considered the greatest to have come out of Brazil.

The grandson of freed mixed-race slaves on his father's side and son of a white Azorean mother, Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis (1839-1908) was a largely self-taught writer who worked in several genres, including drama and poetry, and much of whose prodigious output is not well-known outside his native Brazil. His stories are not always accurate gauges of what scholar Michael Wood calls "his evolution from a poorly educated child of impoverished parents to Brazil's greatest writer and pillar of the establishment," inasmuch as his stories, most of them set in Rio de Janeiro, are more the stuff of drawing rooms than favelas. This edition, comprising all seven collections published in Machado de Assis' lifetime and including a dozen stories that have never before been translated into English, stands as a primary firsthand literary portrait of Brazil in its age of empire and especially of a city that was on its way from being a tropical backwater to its reinvention as a grand imperial metropolis. Close readers of Latin American literature will note in many of his stories early stirrings of magical realism, especially in their evocation of a musty past of nobles and antique surroundings: "Naturally, the mirror was very old, but you could still see the gilding, eaten away by time, a couple of carved dolphins in the top corners of the frame, a few bits of mother-of-pearl, and other such artistic flourishes." Sometimes Machado de Assis reads like a European modernist ("On that day—sometime around 2222, I imagine—the paradox will take off its wings and put on the thick coat of common truth"), at others like the contemporary of Melville and Flaubert that he was ("I succumbed to the morbid pleasure of tormenting myself, for no good reason"). In whatever regard, this collection offers plenty of evidence for why he enjoys the reputation he does, a pioneer of moods and modes that include fables, thin satires, and even gothic romances.

Essential to students of Latin American and world literature.



THE LOST VINTAGE

Mah, Ann
 Morrow/HarperCollins (384 pp.)
 \$26.99 | Jun. 19, 2018
 978-0-06-282331-1

A wine expert in training visits her family's vineyard in Burgundy only to discover a cellar full of secrets.

Kate Elliott, a San Francisco sommelier and daughter of a French expatriate, is preparing for a notoriously difficult wine-tasting exam. If she passes (most don't), she will be one of a tiny cadre of certified Masters of Wine worldwide. She has repeatedly flunked the test; her weakness is French whites, so some serious cramming at Domaine Charpin, her ancestral vineyard, is in order. There, Kate rejoins Heather, her best friend from college, who married her cousin Nico, the Domaine's current vintner. Kate herself almost wed a vigneron, Nico's neighbor Jean-Luc, but feared being trapped in domesticity.

CONDUIT
 A Novel by Leif Garbisch

ISBN# 10: 0-692-87721-5
 ISBN-13: 978-0-692-87721-0

"Garbisch also has a keen eye for detail and the ability to find magic in the mundane..."

"A complex book asks big questions and rewards those who are willing to go along for the ride."
 —Kirkus Reviews

leifgarbisch.com

For information on publishing or film rights, contact leifgarbisch@gmail.com

THIS WRITER MAKES NO FRIENDS AT THE NRA WITH HIS NEW NOVEL

“NOT A CHANCE.” Steve Israel doesn’t let a second pass before replying, by phone from his office in New York, to Kirkus’ query whether he could ever be persuaded to run for Congress again. The eight-term U.S. Representative from New York’s Third District elaborates: “Having spent 16 years there and over 5,000 hours just fundraising, there is no way I would go back. I’ve learned since that I enjoy writing far more than I enjoy politicking.”

With his second novel, *Big Guns* (Apr. 17), Israel works with a premise that could come from today’s headlines. Fretful that an electorate sick to death of constant massacres and shootings will do something silly like pass meaningful gun-control legislation, filthy-rich arms manufacturer Otis Cogsworth calls on a prominent D.C. lobbyist to get a law passed that requires every citizen to carry a gun. Alliances form, dollars exchange hands, political IOU’s are called in, and suddenly a law that seems to have no chance at all of passing clears all the hurdles.

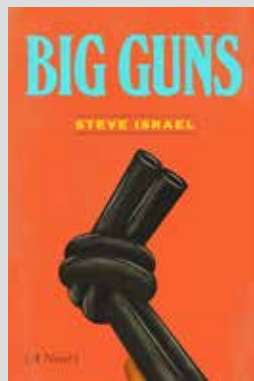


Photo courtesy/Katrina Halagos

Steve Israel

“The storyline seems unbelievable, but I got the idea for the book from a real event, when I read that a little town in Georgia had passed a law making it mandatory for residents to own guns,” says Israel. “I just took that to its logical end.”

It doesn’t faze Israel in the least to know that his book is likely to put him squarely on the bad side of the National Rifle Association, which owns fully half of Congress and would seem like-



ly to be very pleased indeed at the success of a Cogsworthian gun-strapping initiative. In fact, Israel is busily making notes for a third novel (his debut novel, *The Global War on Morris*, was published in 2015) that will take his darkly comic insider’s view of politics to new smoke-filled rooms—or new smoking guns. —G.M.

Gregory McNamee is a contributing editor. Big Guns received a starred review in the Feb. 15, 2018, issue.

Decluttering the family caves, Kate and Heather discover the World War II-era effects of one H el ene Charpin—her great half-aunt, Kate learns. Why, then, do the Charpins, particularly dour Uncle Philippe, seem determined to excise H el ene from family memory? Interspersed with Kate’s first-person narration are excerpts from H el ene’s wartime diary, which her descendants have yet to find. A budding chemist whose university plans were dashed by the German invasion of France, H el ene and her best friend, Rose, who is Jewish, are recruited by the Resistance. H el ene’s father, Edouard, is also a R esistant, unbeknownst to her stepmother, who embraces the new status quo. In the present, the little Kate is able to glean from the historical archives reveals that H el ene was punished as a collaborator, one of the women whose heads were shaved, post-Occupation, as a badge of shame. An extensive subplot, concerning a hidden wine cache and another sommelier’s duplicity, adds little, whereas the central question—what is up with the Charpins?—is sadly underdeveloped. The apparent estrangement not only between the Charpins and Philippe’s sister Celine, Kate’s mother, but between mother and daughter remains unexplored. Wine buffs will enjoy the detailed descriptions of viticulture and the sommelier’s art. Mah deserves credit at least for raising a still-taboo subject—the barbaric and unjust treatment of accused female collaborators after the Allied liberation of France.

An unusual but imperfectly realized blend of trivia and tragedy.



LYING IN WAIT

Nugent, Liz

Scout Press/Simon & Schuster (320 pp.)

\$26.00 | Jun. 12, 2018

978-1-5011-6777-5

Laurence Fitzsimons has a mother who’s determined to control everything, and everyone, around her—even if she has to kill to do it.

When 22-year-old Annie Doyle is murdered, it’s ugly and sudden. Her life ends in 1980 on a Dublin beach at the hands of Lydia and Andrew Fitzsimons, for reasons not immediately made clear. Lydia doesn’t feel at all bad about the deed: “I like to think I did the girl a kindness, like putting an injured bird out of its misery. She did not deserve such kindness.” Lydia is disillusioned with Andrew after more than 21 years of marriage, and although they live in a lovely estate called Avalon, they are nearly penniless because of Andrew’s bad investments. All Lydia really cares about is her 17-year-old son, Laurence, whose every move she attempts to control. Laurence is overweight and bullied at school, but he’s also observant and not at all stupid. His parents are acting squirrelly, and he soon suspects one or both of them had a hand in Annie’s death. Meanwhile, Annie’s sister, Karen, is convinced something bad has happened to Annie, who has always been troubled: At 16 she became pregnant, was sent to a home for unwed mothers, and was forced to give up her baby girl, Marnie. It left her forever changed. Karen begins investigating

A young woman gets a job with an exclusive matchmaking service in Orenstein's debut.

PLAYING WITH MATCHES

on her own, eventually becoming intimately tied to the Fitzsimons. Like *Unraveling Oliver* (2017), this is a whydunit, not a whodunit, and the real meat lies in Nugent's exploration of motherhood, mental illness, and what could drive a person to murder, told through first-person accounts from Lydia, Karen, and Laurence. Lydia is a Gothic villain for the ages, and Annie is sympathetically drawn; a letter she wrote to Marnie, riddled with misspellings, is heartbreaking. Society failed Annie, and her victimization never ended, even after her death.

A page-turner chock full of lies and betrayals and a very creepy mother-son relationship.



PLAYING WITH MATCHES

Orenstein, *Hannah*

Touchstone/Simon & Schuster (320 pp.)

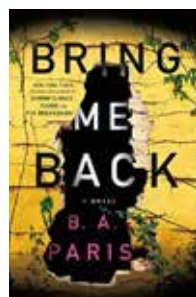
\$16.00 paper | Jun. 26, 2018

978-1-5011-7848-1

A young woman gets a job with an exclusive matchmaking service in Orenstein's debut.

Sasha Goldberg is a recent college graduate in New York City with a gorgeous finance-bro boyfriend and a roommate who's her best friend. The one thing she needs? A job. When she applies to work at Bliss, an elite matchmaking service that finds love for its superexclusive, rich, and successful clientele, it seems like fate. She knows what happens when a relationship is a bad match—her mother was a Russian mail-order bride, and her parents divorced when Sasha was a child. Sasha's certain she can help people find a better match than the one her parents had, and soon she's knee-deep in the world of the New York dating scene. She learns that finding dates for picky businesspeople is harder than she thought it would be—but then she discovers the unthinkable. Her boyfriend, whom she'd always assumed was just working late, has actually been on Tinder behind her back. She breaks up with him and, in her despair, breaks the one rule Bliss has—she asks out a client. She'd set Adam up with another Bliss client, but since the two of them didn't hit it off, what's the harm in going out with him herself? Soon, Sasha is juggling her secret new relationship and her clients' dating lives. But as her ex tries to win her back and her relationship with Adam gets more serious, things start to get complicated. Will Sasha stick with her old flame, or will she strike out on her own? Orenstein's writing style is simple, but the plot is engaging enough that readers will find themselves flying through the pages to find out what decisions Sasha will make. Refreshingly, the ending hits a note of realism and refuses to tie things up with a bow.

A fun, fast read about dating in the city.



BRING ME BACK

Paris, *B.A.*

St. Martin's (336 pp.)

\$26.99 | Jun. 19, 2018

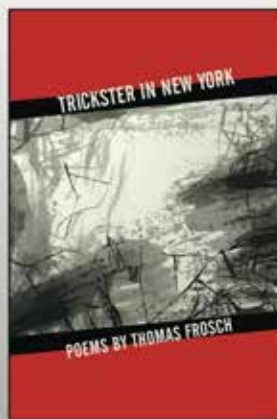
978-1-250-15133-9

A man whose girlfriend disappeared more than a decade ago suspects she may still be alive.

Twelve years ago, Finn McQuaid's girlfriend, Layla Gray, disappeared without a trace while they visited a rest stop while on holiday in France. He was eventually cleared as a suspect and is shocked when Exeter-based police detective Tony Heddon contacts him with the news that an ex-neighbor of Finn and Layla's claims to have seen her outside of their old cottage in Devon. Finn gets another surprise when he arrives at the home he shares with, wait for it, Layla's sister Ellen—now his fiancée—whom he evidently bonded with while mourning Layla's disappearance. Finn, who narrates, makes it clear that Ellen is

TRICKSTER IN NEW YORK

Poems by *Thomas Frosch*



ISBN-13: 978-1398142433

Available on Amazon

An eclectic collection of poetry explores Los Angeles architecture, a Native American trickster, and a talented pig.

"Frosch makes poetry downright fun."

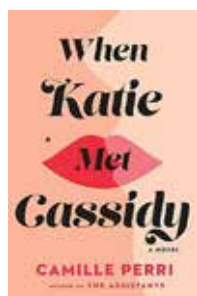
"A carnival of poetic storytelling that will grab readers' attention from the first page and never let go."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

For information on publishing or film rights, contact thomasfrosch1954@gmail.com

no Layla and constantly tries to convince himself that he truly (really!) loves her. Now she's found a little Russian nesting doll on the sidewalk in front of their house, similar to a doll that was found at the place where Layla disappeared. Then the dolls begin appearing everywhere, and Finn starts getting some pretty strange emails that may be from Layla herself. Could she be alive, and if so, what happened all those years ago? As the emails get more ominous, Finn falls all over himself chasing the clues and offers insights into his past with the complicated Layla. Paris (*The Breakdown*, 2017, etc.) quickly ramps up this short novel's paranoia and tension; Finn is the consummate unreliable narrator—or is he? But Finn is largely two-dimensional, and Ellen is little more than a prop. Although Paris seeds the tale with plenty of clues, the denouement takes a turn that will stretch the reader's credulity to the limit, and beyond.

Far-fetched fare.



WHEN KATIE MET CASSIDY

Perri, Camille
Putnam (272 pp.)
\$25.00 | Jun. 19, 2018
978-0-7352-1281-7

How do you find yourself again after a devastating breakup? It might involve redefining what love looks like to you.

For Katie Daniels, who was just dumped by her art curator fiance, the steps toward recovery begin with days of

binge drinking followed by a dose of reality: She has no choice but to leave her apartment for a big closing at Falcon Capital. As a tall, blonde, 20-something lawyer, she's used to being treated a certain way in the typically male-dominated boardroom—which might be a nice ego boost given her new single status. Katie is totally thrown for a loop when “he of the trim suit and shiny dark hair” is introduced as Cassidy Price—a she. Her reaction blossoms from surprise, to intrigue, to possible attraction. And the feeling is mutual. Told from both Katie's and Cassidy's points of view, the book shows how the two protagonists deal with a connection that is entirely new to them, and for very different reasons. Perri's (*The Assistants*, 2016) second novel is similar to her first in being a combination of fun and fulfilling, but the content this time is softer and runs deeper. Expect some typical rom-com tropes, like the opposites-attract scenario of commitment-prone romantic meets commitment-phobe realist. Not to mention Cassidy's apartment and wardrobe, which are worthy of Christian Grey himself. But Cassidy's emotional depth is revealed early on, as she patiently waits for Katie to reconcile the woman she was with the new woman she's becoming. Katie's admission that “the rest is me trying to understand” her initial feelings toward Cassidy is a small taste of the honest conversations about female identity and sexuality included throughout. The cast of supporting characters and the ram-bunctious Greenwich Village bar scene are added bonuses.

A romance with a big heart and refreshing perspective.



PLAYTHINGS

Pheby, Alex
Biblioasis (248 pp.)
\$14.95 paper | Jun. 19, 2018
978-1-77196-172-1

A highly detailed, emotional plunge into the mind of a disturbed man.

Englishman Pheby's (*Grace*, 2009) unique second novel draws on a famous psychiatric case from the 19th century for its main character, Daniel Paul Schreber, a judge of the High Court of Saxony. In 1903, Schreber wrote *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, which became a subject of interest to other novelists as well as Sigmund Freud. Pheby's novel picks up Schreber's story later, when he suffers a third bout of mental illness. There are echoes of Nikolai Gogol's “Diary of a Madman” and Franz Kafka's nightmarish writings. Writing in the third person in a semi-stream of consciousness manner, Pheby invites us to enter deep into Schreber's mind as he experiences frustrations, delusions, and fantasies. The novel opens with Schreber frantically searching his house for his wife, Sabine. He finds her on the floor; she's had a seizure: “What was this? This panting thing? Moaning...grinning mannequin...his wife's form, but without her soul.” He leaves the house and wanders around, encountering various people on the streets. His daughter, Fridoline, tries to get him to come back; he refuses. He then finds himself in a hospital under the care of Müller, an orderly, and Dr. Rössler, who has read Schreber's memoir. Pheby meticulously chronicles Schreber's treatment and his recurring nightmares and tortuous memories of his strict father, who probably mistreated his children. Schreber ruminates on religion—was he a mere “plaything of the Lower God?” A mysterious Jewish gentleman, who may or may not be real, haunts him. Schreber is the book's sole focus, always front and center, but that center is askew.

An intense, immersive reading experience that provides real insight into those afflicted with severe mental illness.



FIND YOU IN THE DARK

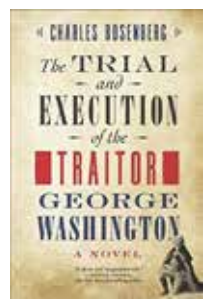
Ripley, Nathan
Atria (368 pp.)
\$26.00 | Jun. 19, 2018
978-1-5011-7820-7

Seattle man Martin Reese, a retired “dot.com superstar,” has his obsession with finding the remains of long-missing young women disrupted when he crosses paths with a murderer who isn't happy with his grave digging.

Martin fancies himself a public servant in doing what police were unable to—giving closure to the families of the victims. He takes great satisfaction in taunting cops for their failures via

anonymous phone messages following each of his discoveries. The only cop he doesn't scorn is one he befriends in order to lay his hands on cold case files. The bones he most covets are those of Tinsley Schultz, whose apparent murder 20 years ago so stoked his interest that he married her sister, Ellen. Things start going south for Martin when he is shaken to discover not only what he thinks is Tinsley, whose remains have been deposited in someone else's grave, but also a fresh corpse hidden beneath her. Stalked and manipulated by the killer known as the Ragman, Martin becomes a potential victim himself. Pressed to determine whether this notorious finder of bodies is responsible for the recent murder, newly promoted police detective Sandra Whittal finds herself breaking badly with standard procedure. Ripley, a pseudonym for Canadian writer Nabem Ruthnum (*Curry: Eating, Reading and Race*, 2017), has come up with a fresh angle to the serial murder game. There's a certain *Silence of the Lambs* feel to the twisty narrative. But as clever and diabolical as the book is, Ripley's dry, calculating style has a way of neutralizing the horror. Perhaps if the novel didn't seem geared toward a sequel, it would have gone more for broke.

This unusual debut thriller has a lot going for it but may be too calculating for its own good.

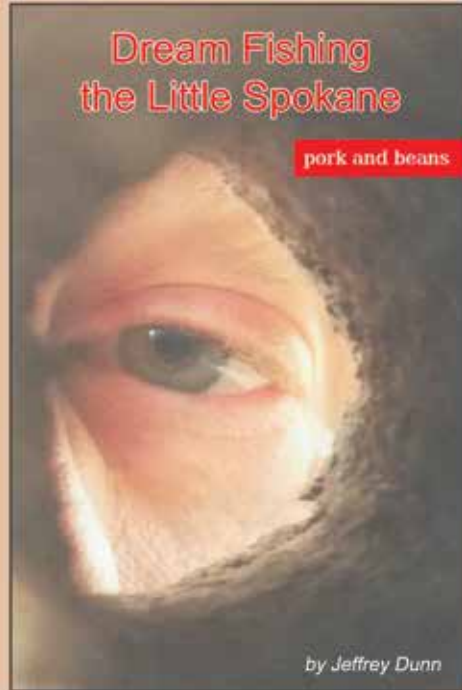


THE TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF THE TRAITOR GEORGE WASHINGTON

Rosenberg, Charles
Hanover Square Press (432 pp.)
\$26.99 | Jun. 26, 2018
978-1-335-20032-7

This novel about the American Revolution imagines—well, the spoiler might be in the title.

Of course, the British have to *get* Washington first—to capture or kidnap him, depending on one's viewpoint. In 1780, the First Minister of Great Britain, Lord North, orders Jeremiah Black to grab the “supreme traitor,” Gen. George Washington, and deliver him to justice. So



Dream Fishing the Little Spokane
by Jeffrey Dunn

A debut abstract novel ponders the intersection of nature, history, and writing.

“These short pieces, which turn away from one another and back again like bends in the river itself, accumulate in readers’ minds to form a picture not just of a place, but of a certain mindset: melancholic, irreverent, and untamed.”

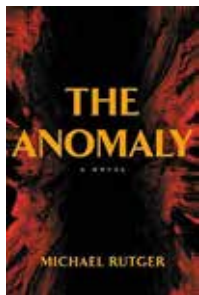
“A Bratigian-esque ramble through a river’s history.”
—Kirkus Reviews

ISBN # 978-0-9993339-0-7
<http://jeffreydunnspokane.com>

For information on publishing rights or agent representation, please visit <http://jeffreydunnspokane.com>

Black sails to New Jersey, where the general and his staff are headquartered, to take him “back to England to stand trial for high treason.” One Loyalist thinks killing Washington would be simpler, but a trial in London might force the rebels to a settlement. Lord North wants a “thorough...and slow” investigation prior to the trial, to allow time to negotiate the war’s end. Meanwhile, King George III wants a trial and an execution of the rebel leader. Being more than 6 feet tall and disinclined to be cowed, Gen. Washington exudes an “aura of command” even when a group led by Black arrests him in the name of the king. “Sir, if I must die in defense of my country,” Washington says, “my life will be forfeit in a noble cause.” That’s a gutsy statement indeed, given that the likely conviction means mandatory hanging, disembowelment while still alive, then being quartered and beheaded. (*Tikes!*) North later marvels that Washington “sits even taller in the saddle than I expected,” feeding nicely into the narrative of the larger-than-life hero Americans learn about as children. Although Washington had become ill on the ocean crossing aboard the HMS *Peregrine*, the British largely treat him respectfully according to his rank, and he never, ever complains or shows fear right up to his trip to the gallows. Ethan Abbott of the Continental Congress arrives in London to negotiate Washington’s release, but without success, as the title foretells.

A well-told if rather straightforward tale that’s sure to please lovers of American history.



THE ANOMALY

Rutger, Michael
Grand Central Publishing (352 pp.)
\$26.00 | Jun. 19, 2018
978-1-5387-6185-4

An online reality show goes looking for a long-rumored cave in the Grand Canyon, with horrific consequences.

Nolan Moore is the host of a show in which he and his crew investigate phenomena and tall tales respectable archaeologists have long since dismissed. For their latest outing, the group is joined by a flaky representative of the foundation underwriting their work (the character’s name is actually Feather) and an investigative journalist determined to expose Nolan as a charlatan. Their source is a newspaper account from more than 100 years ago claiming discovery of a cave high up in the walls of the Grand Canyon containing artifacts that suggest a lost civilization. The team has no trouble finding the cave—and anyone who’s been to a horror movie in, say, the past 40 years will know that that’s only the beginning of their troubles. What follows is a mishmash of Indiana Jones, hoo-hah about the unearthing of long-buried secrets, and the type of horror movies (*The Descent* and *Bone Tomahawk* are recent examples) in which a small band of characters are picked off one by one by at-first-unseen adversaries. There are betrayals, feats of sacrificial courage, and survivors who emerge with Secret Knowledge Which Cannot Be Spoken Of. It’s mildly engrossing, appropriately icky, very familiar, and wholly ludicrous.

Readers will see so much of the action coming that they’ll wonder why the characters can’t.



YOU WERE MADE FOR THIS

Sacks, Michelle
Little, Brown (352 pp.)
\$27.00 | Jun. 19, 2018
978-0-316-47540-2

A young family moves to Sweden to pursue an idyllic life in Sacks’ debut novel.

When Sam inherits a cottage from his stepgrandmother, he and his pregnant wife barely hesitate but pack up their lives in Brooklyn and move, excited to raise their child in this place of ice-cold lakes and dappled sunlight. Merry spends her days picking fresh produce from the garden and baking homemade treats, taking baby Conor for long outings in the woods, and Sam works to begin a new career in documentary film. But from the very beginning of the novel, as both characters take turns narrating the story, it’s clear there’s something rotten at the core of this perfection. When Merry’s best friend from childhood, Frank, comes for a visit, she can immediately see the ugliness beneath this facade. She knows Merry too well, knows her history of slipping from persona to persona, and she can see Sam for what he is. But Frank has her own secrets, and as her voice joins the others in narrating the story, it becomes clear that she’s suffering for her own sins and may not be able—or willing—to save anyone. Sacks has crafted a beguiling and frightening modern fairy tale, an Eden story that presents an Adam and Eve who were never innocent and who try to make over the world on their own terms only to find that evil thrives even in the most ideal of settings. Sacks’ writing is at once lush in description but also spare; she uses the white space around the words to nurture a sense of dread.

Hard to read but also bewitchingly hard to put down—a fitting contradiction in a novel that explores the corruption at the heart of beauty.



SLOWLY WE DIE

Schepp, Emelie
Harlequin MIRA (432 pp.)
\$15.99 paper | Jun. 19, 2018
978-0-7783-1966-5

Back for a third adventure, Swedish prosecutor Jana Berzelius is forced to harbor escaped murder suspect Danilo Peña—a childhood friend-turned-nemesis—as the city of Norrköping is terrorized by a second homicidal menace.

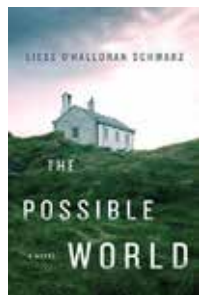
Danilo is in possession of Jana’s childhood diaries and notebooks, which she badly needs in order to penetrate blocked memories of her early years. She knows her birth parents were

These are subtle, meditative, well-crafted stories.

ALL THAT IS LEFT IS ALL THAT MATTERS

murdered by a child trafficking ring and—alongside Danilo, the only person with access to her past—she was trained by her captors as a child soldier. But the rest is mostly a blank. When Danilo, who grew up to be a drug smuggler, offers to turn over all her jottings in exchange for her letting him hide in her apartment, she can't refuse—especially if she wants to keep her reputation from being blemished by unseemly truths. Meanwhile, a serial killer is doing horrendous things to his victims, beginning with a female nurse who is found tied to a chair with her amputated hands on the floor. The obvious suspect is a pill-popping paramedic with connections to all the victims. Alternating and overlapping narratives with musical precision, Schepp may be the smoothest storyteller among the new crop of Nordic noir aces. While the gruesomeness of the murders seems imported from a nastier, more intense kind of thriller, the ingenious plot reveals and hidden connections keep you glued to the action. So, in a sad and subtle way, does the sense of helplessness that infects the relationships in the book, including the one between Jana and her father, a corrupt prosecutor left brain damaged by a recent suicide attempt.

The final installment in an announced trilogy, following *Marked for Life* (2016) and *Marked for Revenge* (2017), this is Schepp's best effort yet in its deft blend of psychological suspense and procedural X's and O's.



THE POSSIBLE WORLD

Schwarz, Liese O'Halloran
 Scribner (368 pp.)
 \$27.00 | Jun. 26, 2018
 978-1-5011-6614-3

A young boy loses his mother to a violent crime and struggles with his own identity in the aftermath of tragedy.

Dr. Lucy Cole is slugging her way through another night on call in the emergency room when the police bring in a 6-year-old boy they'd rescued from a crime scene. The boy calls himself Leo, and he can't remember anything about either the crime or his life prior to that evening. As Lucy attempts to assess whether the blood covering the boy is his own, she feels a startling connection to the child. She soon discovers that Leo's real name is Ben, and his mother was among the victims murdered that evening, leaving him an orphan. The story then shifts perspective, and the reader is introduced to Clare, a woman of almost 100 who lives across town in a nursing home. Clare is surprisingly lucid and independent for a woman her age, and a new resident of the facility named Gloria is driving her crazy with constant requests to record her life story. It quickly becomes apparent that Clare has something to hide. As the story unfolds, the perspective continues to shift among Lucy, Ben, and Clare, each character slowly revealing more about his or her past. Lucy can't shake her interest in Ben and continues to visit him in the pediatric psych ward. The doctors believe Ben has dissociative identity disorder, but Lucy begins to wonder whether the boy actually used to be a person by the name of Leo, literally

in another life. In hauntingly beautiful prose, Schwarz weaves a complicated story that spans nearly a century, from the Great Depression until the present day. Brimming with emotionally difficult moments and an enviable understanding of human nature, the novel will seize readers from the first scene and hold tight until its satisfying conclusion.

A bittersweet story full of imagination and nostalgia, loss and redemption.



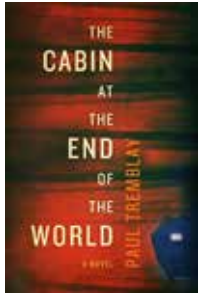
ALL THAT IS LEFT IS ALL THAT MATTERS

Slouka, Mark
 Norton (160 pp.)
 \$24.95 | Jun. 26, 2018
 978-0-393-29228-2

The latest collection from Slouka (*Brewster*, 2013, etc.), whose work has won an O. Henry Prize and appeared in *Best American Short Stories*, features 15 crisp, poignant, mostly downbeat tales.

In the tender "Dominion," an elderly husband and wife, long married, find their home increasingly surrounded by coyotes and have to discover whether they have enough resilience left to withstand the invaders—the howling coydogs outside but also the slower, stealthier encroachments of death. "Half-Life" features a long-term shut-in—she glimpses her house's facade in a shot of a passing ambulance on the news, and it's the first time she's seen the front yard in 16 years—fighting off an unexpected kind of intruder. "Then" is a lovely, nostalgic story built around a brief chance meeting, 40-odd years later, of sexagenarian former lovers who are feeling their age. She invites him, in parting, to think of her sometime: of her "then." Which he does for the rest of the story, restoratively, and for a while the aches and jaded jokes and sadness of age are banished. In "Conception," a young couple at the end of their tethers—and perhaps at an end of their marriage—are brought back from the brink by an encounter with future infirmity in the form of a naked, fallen neighbor. A son tries vainly to protect his Holocaust survivor father from painful memories in the haunting "The Hare's Mask." And in "Crossing," a father trying to reconnect with his son and his own boyhood by re-creating the back-country campout he used to do with his dad finds himself in trouble as he fords a snowmelt-swelled river with his son on his back.

These are subtle, meditative, well-crafted stories, death-backed but life-affirming.



THE CABIN AT THE END OF THE WORLD

Tremblay, Paul

Morrow/HarperCollins (288 pp.)

\$26.99 | Jun. 26, 2018

978-0-06-267910-9

A striking work of psychological horror and unblinking terror from bloody fantasist Tremblay (*Disappearance at Devil's Rock*, 2016, etc.)

In this peek-between-your-fingers work of domestic horror, the Bram Stoker Award-winning author demonstrates a counterintuitive maturity in his writing even as he inflicts the cruelest possible scenarios on his unwitting victims. Here the author has stripped his narrative back to the most threadbare elements in a tale that is nearly impossible to review without unveiling some critical shocks. The moving parts are surprisingly mundane. There is a longtime couple, Eric and Andrew, who have taken a well-earned vacation in a remote cabin near a lake in rural New Hampshire. There is their kiddo, Wen, an adopted and much-loved Chinese girl who is portrayed in a rich, endearing, and authentic way throughout the story. There are four strangers from disparate parts of the country, two men and two women bearing medieval-looking makeshift weapons, who come to convey an unbearable proposition. Other than their common quest, there is nothing particularly extraordinary about these strangers—a bartender, a nurse, a line cook, and a roughneck who may or may not be who he claims. “Your dads won’t want to let us in, Wen,” says their leader. “But they have to. Tell them they have to. We are not here to hurt you. We need your help to save the world. Please.” In a grave choice that meets all the dramatic principles of Anton Chekhov, there is a gun. Tremblay masterfully switches perspectives during the book’s most dramatic moments, offering only hints at how the quartet’s strange mission originated but fully seizing upon this family’s personal shock and distress. As the story unfolds, Tremblay introduces bloody violence, a sweeping, agonizing consequence that may or may not be real, and a series of episodes that lead these troubled souls toward a disquieting and macabre conclusion.

A blinding tale of survival and sacrifice that matches the power of belief with man’s potential for unbridled violence.



THE SECRETS BETWEEN US

Umrigar, Thrity

Harper/HarperCollins (368 pp.)

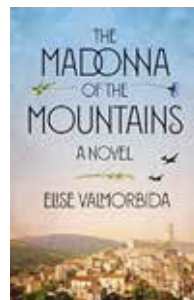
\$27.99 | Jun. 26, 2018

978-0-06-244220-8

Two elderly Indian women—one poor, the other poorer still—move beyond mutual suspicion to forge a bond, start a business, and, even this late in life, absorb change.

A new marble shopping mall is attacked; an old brothel, scene of terror and enslavement, is replaced by a gleaming high-rise. The profound impact of modernity on India is greeted variously with violence, a measure of relief, and significant shifts in attitude by the characters in Umrigar’s (*Everybody’s Son*, 2017, etc.) eighth novel, a sequel to *The Space Between Us*. A more traditional storyteller than Neel Mukherjee, whose recent *A State of Freedom* also considered seismic social shifts in this immense nation, Umrigar chooses to reflect new India via a pair of aging female characters whose lives of struggle and suffering have not delivered an easeful old age. Bhima is working two cleaning jobs to enable her granddaughter Maya to complete the college course which will, Bhima hopes, lift both of them out of poverty. Parvati, the survivor of an even harsher youth and an abusive marriage, is homeless and ill but still equipped with street savvy and a propulsive, bitter anger. Reluctantly, the pair—living proof that “being a poor woman...is the toughest job in the world”—pool their entrepreneurial talents to start a produce stall, while slowly opening up to each other. Umrigar’s depictions of Mumbai’s chaotic slums and pitiless streets are vivid; her events and moral lessons—Bhima will overcome her own prejudices to love and appreciate a kindly lesbian duo; Parvati will acknowledge that behind her stalwart front she is lonely—are more broadly delineated. These plot predictabilities weaken a female-centered story framed by oppressive masculinity, but its poignancy and descriptive strength help redress the balance.

A lengthy but affecting tale of late sisterhood.



THE MADONNA OF THE MOUNTAINS

Valmorbida, Elise

Spiegel & Grau (368 pp.)

\$28.00 | Jun. 12, 2018

978-0-399-59243-0

One woman’s life serves as an exemplar of the harsh realities experienced by an Italian generation marked by war in this panoramic, yet site-specific, novel.

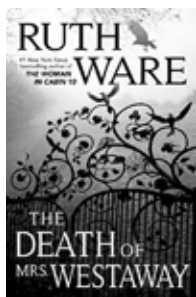
Maria Vittoria is a bride of advanced age—25—as Valmorbida (*The Winding Stick*, 2009, etc.) begins her story. In 1923, her father produces a groom for her, Achille, a World War I veteran, and the story of Maria’s life begins to unfold, along with the story of a family and a country devastated by competing loyalties and warring factions. Maria and Achille settle in the plains, in the village of Fosso, but the wisdom imparted to her by the emblematic Madonna of the Mountains, a statue of the Virgin Mary which Maria carries with her throughout her life, harkens back to the rough-hewn lessons and truths of her early life in the mountains of the north. As Maria and Achille nurture both their growing family and a thriving grocery business, the rising power of fascism and the cruel privations of World War II threaten to destroy all the couple has so doggedly worked to create. Valmorbida’s narrative raises issues of misogyny, family loyalty, and moral ambiguity during wartime in an organic way while maintaining the tension and

Ware's novels evoke comparison to Agatha Christie; they certainly have that classic flavor despite the contemporary settings.

THE DEATH OF MRS. WESTAWAY

characterization needed to advance a family saga. As the tale approaches a postwar finale, Maria must make peace with past decisions and, once again, depends on her companion since youth, the eponymous Madonna, for guidance.

Valmorbida belongs to a family that emigrated from Italy to Australia after World War II, and the wartime horrors endured by her characters may invite speculation about the autobiographical nature of this work—but the moral and ethical questions raised propel the story beyond the particulars into the universal.



THE DEATH OF MRS. WESTAWAY

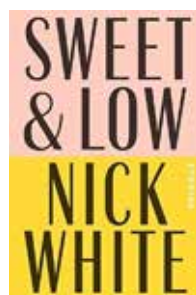
Ware, Ruth
Scout Press/Simon & Schuster (384 pp.)
\$26.99 | May 29, 2018
978-1-5011-5621-2



A young woman receives notice of a mysterious bequest. Is it a case of mistaken identity, or will it reveal some truth about her family?

In Ware's (*The Lying Game*, 2017, etc.) fourth novel in as many years, Harriet "Hal" Westaway is barely making ends meet as a tarot reader on the Brighton Pier. Her mother died in a hit-and-run several years before, and in her grief, Hal has drifted into a solitary and impecunious life. Worse still, she's under threat from a loan shark who's come to collect the interest on an earlier debt. So when she receives a letter saying she's been named in the will of, possibly, an unknown grandmother, she decides to travel to Cornwall, despite fearing that it's probably all a mistake. There she meets several possible uncles and a creepy old housekeeper right out of a Daphne du Maurier novel, all against the backdrop of a run-down mansion. As Hal desperately tries to keep up her charade of belonging to the family, she realizes that the malevolent atmosphere of Trepassen House has strong roots in the past, when a young girl came to live there, fell in love, and was imprisoned in her bedroom. Hal just has to figure out exactly who this girl was... without getting herself killed. Ware continues to hone her gift for the slow unspooling of unease and mystery, developing a consistent sense of threat that's pervasive and gripping. She uses tarot readings to hint at the supernatural, but at its heart, this is a very human mystery. The isolation of Trepassen House, its magpies, and its anachronistic housekeeper cultivate a dull sense of horror. Ware's novels continue to evoke comparison to Agatha Christie; they certainly have that classic flavor despite the contemporary settings.

Expertly paced, expertly crafted.



SWEET & LOW

White, Nick
Blue Rider Press (304 pp.)
\$25.00 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-0-399-57365-1

A first collection of short stories by newcomer White (*How to Survive a Summer*, 2017).

"How well can you know a person?" That question, posed by a therapist, provides a mantra for White's stories, set in

Mississippi and, within its confines, the South of people who are "educated and practical, mostly Southerners with quasi liberal leanings," to say nothing of a former Miss Mississippi who "came out as a lesbian years after her reign." The opening story, "The Lovers," recounts a different kind of love story, a bisexual triangle that operates in all its awkward effort at casualness until the apex "got himself killed in a plane crash, and shit got complicated." As with much literary fiction, the scenario pushes at the edges of probability but seems plausible—especially in the possibility that that educated, practical, liberal cohort, forming the audience for the ostensibly wronged wife's podcast, consists of all the dead man's former lovers, which "would make her, like, the ultimate fag hag." White verges on fable with the next story, in which a man already in a very bad situation faces down the karma that just might be visited on him by a passing cottonmouth: "It braved to skim across his neck, and Pete could sense each of its tiny ribs as it treaded across his skin, rubbing his flesh like sandpaper." A highlight is the title story, a fine exemplar of lower-class yearning, in this case to make a fortune as a country music star guided by a slick Svengali: "They're all so whiney," says the would-be star of the models he's guided her to, to which he replies, "Whiney sells." There's little whining here, but all the adultery and unrequited longing and even a dead dog needed for a country hit are present. A bonus: White's unapologetic homage to William Faulkner, known here as "the Author," turned into an industry by the little town that once shunned him as a boozy menace.

Work that bears the promise of good things to come.



THE LION'S BINDING OATH AND OTHER STORIES

Yusuf, Ahmed Ismail
Catalyst Press (220 pp.)
\$15.95 paper | Jun. 5, 2018
978-1-946395-07-8

Snapshots of rural and urban life in Somalia, written by a refugee and concerned with the "morality that's long been dead" there.

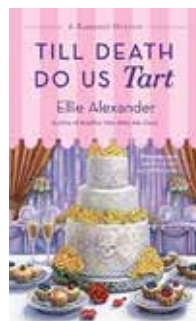
In the late 1980s, Yusuf fled his native country for America, where he learned English and began writing nonfiction, plays, and short stories. This debut collection has some flat plotting and clunky lines, but Yusuf is unquestionably

talented, with a knack for stories focused on injustice and the anxiety of separation, be it over time or distance. In the fable-like closing story, a young man who's separated from his fellow refugees in the midst of Somalia's civil war is given unlikely safe harbor by a lion, with the implication that the dangerous animal has a more honorable moral system than the human leaders who've splintered the country. Yusuf delivers a similar point in a more realistic form in "A Delicate Hope," about an aspiring writer who's given an opportunity to move to Saudi Arabia and escape his country's degradations (rampant violence, innocent youth pressed into military service) only to watch his hopes get dashed catastrophically. Five linked stories featuring a woman named Mayxaano focus on Somali life more removed from military strife: She grew up an outcast ("Midgaan") before becoming a teacher eager to speak up against the country's caste system and misogynist culture. ("Men had claimed exclusive ownership of Somali poetry, although throughout history women had played a pivotal role by actually composing it," Yusuf writes.) Each story individually has an instructive tone, but taken together the cycle has a more complex perspective on how people are inspired or damaged by social forces. Lives are lost to "an accumulation of social illnesses," Mayxaano says, and these plainspoken stories are laments for their consequences.

Informative and direct storytelling from a corner of Africa that's poorly understood in the West.

disproportionately happy and euphoric off substances. A few laughs and a few bad choices. A break from all the responsibilities. A break from the daily grind." Not shy about showing the consequences, Abbott's plot meanders from one scene of squalor and violence to the next. Frank, for example, crushes his wife's head with a chair when she won't give him money for more drugs. Perhaps this relentless bleakness is meant to be true to the mean streets, but does no one in Grand Rapids ever crack a joke? A budding writer who falls under the spell of Colum McCann's *Let the Great World Spin*, Isaac marvels at the way he finds "beauty in the ugliness." There are degrees of ugliness, though, that make beauty too hard to see.

Unremittingly grim.



TILL DEATH DO US TART

Alexander, Ellie
St. Martin's (304 pp.)
\$7.99 paper | Mar. 23, 2018
978-1-250-15937-3

A lovely Oregon town is host to both a wedding and a murder attempt.

Along with her mother, Juliet Capshaw owns and operates Torte, Ashland's finest bakery and coffee shop. Jules has been stressed with a capital S. In addition to planning a major renovation to Torte, she's secretly planning an Elizabethan wedding for her mom and her longtime boyfriend, the Professor—a celebration that perfectly suits a town famous for its Shakespeare festival. On top of that, her husband, Carlos, and his teenage son, Ramiro, are expected in town. Jules has plenty of feelings left for the handsome Spaniard, but his job as a cruise-ship chef has strained their relationship ever since she decided that Ashland is where she wants to be. Before the wedding takes place at Uva, the winery in which Jules owns a share, her friend Lance, the artistic director of the festival, reveals that he's a son of the Brown family of Medford, who've made a fortune in timber but never supported his theatrical ambitions. Lance's dying father thinks his other son, Leo, is trying to kill him. So Lance has hired tough private eye Megan Antonini to check things out. When his father does die, Lance, certain that he was murdered, asks that Megan, Leo, and his lawyer and personal assistant be invited to the wedding, which goes off without a hitch until Megan drinks a glass of poisoned wine which may have been meant for Jules. Jules and Lance turn sleuth, much to the dismay of their friends in the police department, who prefer to solve crimes themselves.

Alexander's charming series (*A Crime of Passion Fruit*, 2017, etc.) offers descriptions of enticingly fattening foods, a tour of southern Oregon, and, incidentally, a mystery that provides enough riddles to keep you guessing without ever upstaging the main event.

M Y S T E R Y



THE CONCRETE

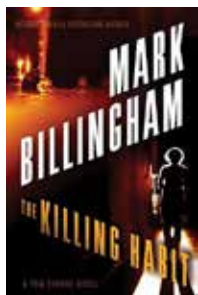
Abbott, Daniel
Ig Publishing (320 pp.)
\$16.95 paper | Jun. 1, 2018
978-1-63246-070-7

Men and women in Grand Rapids, Michigan, struggle to survive.

Grand Rapids sounds like a bad place to grow up. In Abbott's debut novel, the city is full of drugs, crime, and broken families. Nearly every adult character faces hopeless circumstances. A Motown singer named Joy Green had a hit a while back but becomes a drug addict, starting in violent pornographic movies to make money until she dies of an overdose. Once a promising football prospect, Jackson Carter is now an alcoholic raising two foster children, Isaac and Miles. There's hope for them, though. Isaac has a great jump shot, while Miles is an aspiring hip-hop producer—with talent passed down by his biological mother, Joy. Abbott has a keen sense for how dull or difficult lives lead to bad choices rather than the other way around. "It's not that he wants to go back to that life, no," a man named Frank thinks right before trying crack for the first time, "but the party part of it, people

Aimée Leduc chases across Paris' low-rent district in search of a World War II-era dossier.

MURDER ON THE LEFT BANK



THE KILLING HABIT

Billingham, Mark
Atlantic Monthly (432 pp.)
\$26.00 | Jun. 26, 2018
978-0-8021-2824-9

One of DI Tom Thorne's most harrowing cases begins with evidence that someone's taken to slaughtering...cats.

"Tomicide?" Thorne's boss, DCI Russell Brigstocke, wonders if the Homicide squad should rename itself

after it's asked to investigate the gruesome deaths of at least 15 cats throughout greater London. Since butchering animals is, along with wetting the bed and setting fires, one of the classic symptoms of a nascent serial killer, the powers that be are worried that someone is preparing for a more serious spate of felonies. But consulting psychiatrist Dr. Melita Perera plants a still more disturbing seed in Thorne's head: What if, instead of working up to homicide, the cat killer is actually cooling down in between human murders? As soon as Thorne and DI Nicola Tanner, back on the job after her partner's own murder (*Love Like Blood*, 2017), start to look for unsolved cases, an unnervingly large number of possibilities leap out: retired librarian Patricia Somersby, Bristol University student Annette Mangon, Norwich physician Leila Fadel, all of them strangled by an unknown person who remains at large—not to mention Alice Matthews, a victim who's still cooling in the mortuary. In addition to spearheading Operation Felix, Thorne and Tanner must also decide whether city trader Andrew Evans, recently released from prison after his distracted driving claimed the life of a boy he ran down, can possibly be innocent in the fatal shooting of Adnan Jandali, like Evans a drug addict hopelessly in debt to his suppliers, despite the mountain of evidence against him. The main feature the two cases seem to share is an endless tangle of false leads. Will they converge in some more spectacular fashion?

The unusual premise will hook you, but it's Billingham's patience and persuasiveness in unfolding its grim details that will keep you reading long past the hour when all cats are gray.



MURDER ON THE LEFT BANK

Black, Cara
Soho Crime (288 pp.)
\$27.95 | Jun. 19, 2018
978-1-61695-927-2

Aimée Leduc (*Murder in Saint-Germain*, 2017, etc.) chases across Paris' low-rent district in search of a World War II-era dossier.

Attorney Éric Besson can't believe there might be anything of value in the notebook Holocaust survivor Léo Solomon brings him wrapped in old twine. But the aging accountant insists the

document must be presented to *la Procureur de la République* that very day. To pacify the old coot, Besson gives the packet to his sister's kid Marcus, who serves as his office boy, for delivery. But Besson's nephew delays his mission to spend a couple of hours at a hotel with his girlfriend, Karine. A couple of thugs break in and cut his date short, and by the time Marcus' body is discovered, Karine and the diary are nowhere to be found. Though Besson doesn't want to spend any more effort on Solomon, his diary, or even finding Marcus' killer, the case is red meat to Aimée. She thrives on redressing old wrongs. And as she pokes into the first few layers of the puzzle, she begins to suspect that Solomon's diary may include incriminating evidence against members of "the Hand," a part-political, part-criminal organization that may have been complicit in her father's death. Her partner in Leduc Detectives René Friant, warns her that the case will put both Aimée and her 10-month-old daughter in the cross hairs of some very bad people. Of course Aimée ignores René, and of course she and Chloé end up running for their lives. How many times will readers watch Aimée try desperately to shield her bébé from

TIED UP WITH STRINGS

A Serebral Seniors Mystery

by Madeline McEwen



In this novel, an American part-time detective suspects foul play during her Christmas visit to check on her best friend's daughter in the British village of Abbeyvayle.

"...feisty with a tender streak..."

"A pleasant diversion and a perfectly sized puzzle for PBS Mystery! fans."

—Kirkus Reviews

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the consequences of her off-the books investigations? On ne sait jamais.

Like her earlier entries, Black's latest is refreshingly free from the focus on French food culture that marks provincial mysteries and gratifyingly full of local Parisian color. But a little more variation in the detection menu would be welcome.



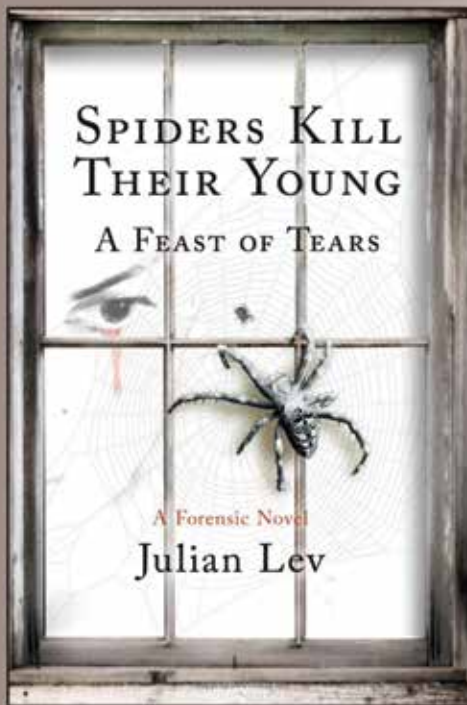
MURDER AT THE MANSION

Connolly, Sheila
Minotaur (304 pp.)
\$24.99 | Jun. 26, 2018
978-1-250-13586-5

A Maryland businesswoman is caught up in a Victorian mystery.

It begins when Katherine Hamilton's high school bestie, Lisbeth, arrives in Baltimore to ask for her help in saving their

hometown of Asheboro from extinction. The local infrastructure has been damaged in a storm, and there's been no money for repairs ever since the town bought the Barton Mansion, a Victorian house built by a Civil War veteran whose factory long supported the local economy. As Katherine leaves for Asheboro, her boss informs her that the high-end hotel where she works has been bought out and her job is gone. As she strolls through the town's streets, she realizes that the paint and modern siding cover some lovely Victorian buildings that might better be restored than tarted up. Kate's high school nemesis, Cordelia Walker, is on the town board, which has roused her to fury by vetoing her plan to turn the mansion into a modern B&B. Kate is hooked when she tours the mansion, a showstopper replete with Victorian furnishings that's hardly changed since its heyday. The current caretaker, Joshua Wainwright, is a history professor at Johns Hopkins who's using the on-site apartment to work on a book. Kate develops a plan to turn Asheboro into a living history site like Old Sturbridge Village, using the stunning Barton place as a centerpiece. Things get both better and worse when Cordelia is found dead on the steps of the mansion.



ISBN-10: 1974315169
ISBN-13: 978-1974315161

SPIDERS KILL THEIR YOUNG A FEAST OF TEARS

A FORENSIC NOVEL BY JULIAN LEV

A doctor struggles to understand a woman who allegedly murdered her own child in Lev's (*A Feast of Tears*, 2010) thriller.

“...intelligent but always intelligible...”

“A psychological tale that’s riveting, perceptive, and accessible.”
—*Kirkus Reviews*

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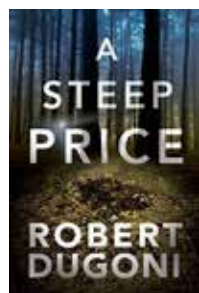
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Anyone interested in mysteries and books and humor—and who isn't?—will enjoy Flanders' latest delightful novel.

A HOWL OF WOLVES

Cleared by the police, Kate and Josh decide to do a little sleuthing. Since almost everyone in town hated Cordelia, the suspects are many and even include Kate's high school sweetheart, who married and divorced Cordelia. The backstory of Henry Barton, who died childless in 1911, makes for fascinating reading, and the discovery of a trove of letters from Clara Barton—the real-life founder of the American Red Cross, who's supposedly related to the fictional Henry—encourages Kate to hope that her plan might succeed if they can only put the murder behind them.

The prolific Connelly (*Many a Twist*, 2018, etc.) kicks off a new series that skillfully combines history, romance, and mystery.



A STEEP PRICE

Dugoni, Robert

Thomas & Mercer (380 pp.)

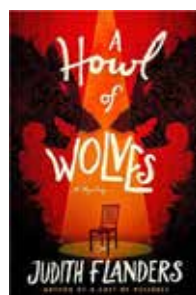
\$15.95 paper | Jun. 26, 2018

978-1-5039-5418-2

The sixth case for Detective Tracy Crosswhite (*Close to Home*, 2017, etc.) poses a pair of unrelated but equally vexing problems for the Violent Crimes squad of the Seattle Police Department.

Monique Rodgers may not have been successful enough to warrant the label community activist, but it's clear that she's done all she's ever going to do when someone shoots her down in broad daylight in her South Park neighborhood. Detective Vic Fazzio, whose wife has been stricken with another round of cancer, would dearly love to tie the murder to Little Jimmy, ne Ricardo Luis Bernadino Jiminez, a drug runner whose father, Big Jimmy, was stabbed to death six months after Faz sent him to prison. But the best evidence at the scene, a tell-tale handprint on a parked car, leads to a suspect who gets killed by Detective Andrea Gonzalez, a newcomer to A Team, before they can slap the cuffs on him. Meanwhile, Tracy, intent on concealing a pregnancy Gonzalez noticed literally within seconds of first meeting her, does a favor for Katie Pryor, a friend in *Missing Persons*, by talking to Aditi Dasgupta, a recent University of Washington graduate whose old friend and roommate, Kavita Mukherjee, has disappeared. The two cases couldn't be more different. The first, which offers an obvious suspect and an obvious motive, runs into endless complications over Gonzalez's fatal shot; the second, which heats up after Tracy and Pryor find Kavita's body in a disused well, is a whodunit that will cast suspicion on pretty much everyone who knew the victim, whose determination to apply to medical school instead of allowing her family to arrange her marriage turns out to be far from her only act of defiance.

Dugoni (*The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell*, 2018, etc.) winds up both cases satisfactorily, if not very compellingly or brilliantly, in this solid grade-B procedural.



A HOWL OF WOLVES

Flanders, Judith

Minotaur (304 pp.)

\$26.99 | May 15, 2018

978-1-250-08783-6

Theater people may be superstitious, but even they don't expect to find the director hanging from the rafters on opening night—in the middle of the play.

London book editor Samantha "Sam" Clair is trying to be a supportive friend when she takes her boyfriend, Scotland Yard detective Jake Field, to see a play called *The Spanish Tragedy*, even though Jake isn't thrilled about an evening's entertainment so full of murder. Her upstairs neighbor Kay is "only playing the lead actress's maid, but, as she said cheerfully, she got to die in a pool of blood onstage." Kay's 6-year-old son, Bim, also has a small part, and Sam certainly doesn't want to miss that. The climax of the play is supposed to be a body hanging from the rafters, so at first the audience doesn't realize the body is real—it's Campbell Davison, the director, and not just a dummy made up to look like him. Jake quickly gets involved in the police investigation, which means, of course, that Sam is pulled between trying to get information out of him and downplaying her own interest so he won't clam up. Soon she and her mother, Helena, an indefatigable solicitor, are searching through archives and waylaying lawyers to find out more about various persons of interest while Sam manages to hold down her job and even convince her firm's recalcitrant sales director to feature one of her authors—that most overlooked of creatures, a middle-aged woman—at their upcoming sales conference. In previous installments, Flanders (*A Cast of Vultures*, 2017, etc.) used Sam's job as a point of entry to the fashion industry and the art scene, and this peek behind the scenes of the theater world is equally entertaining. There are several people with plausible motives—the costume designer who seems to be using stolen designs, the investor who keeps turning up in unexpected places—but, as usual, the main attraction is Sam's wry, skeptical voice, which manages to inject humor into something as prosaic as trying to interpret a nine-word text from Helena: "*Meeting Nigel for breakfast. 7, at St. Paul's cafe.*" What's funny about that? Read it and see.

Anyone interested in mysteries and books and humor—and who isn't?—will enjoy Flanders' latest delightful novel.



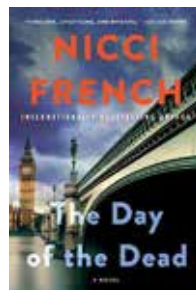
A LADY'S GUIDE TO ETIQUETTE AND MURDER

Freeman, Dianne
Kensington (272 pp.)
\$26.00 | Jun. 26, 2018
978-1-4967-1687-3

A Victorian lady's sense of self-worth is much improved when she takes control of her life.

Frances Price, Countess of Harleigh, is making a bold attempt to gain some independence. Frances, the daughter of a wealthy American family, did not marry for love, but her husband, Reggie, loved and freely spent her money while she cared for their daughter, Rose. A year ago, Alicia Stoke-Whitney came to Frances' room to announce that Reggie had died in her bed. To avoid scandal, Frances asked George Hazelton, her best friend Fiona's brother, to help move his body. Since then, despite opposition from Reggie's brother, Graham, and his wife, Delia, who badly need Frances' money, she's rented a house in London. Frances is startled to discover that her neighbor is George Hazelton and further shaken by a visit from Inspector Delaney of the Metropolitan Police, who's investigating a rumor that her husband did not die of a heart attack. Her next surprise is the arrival of her sister Lily with her Aunt Hetty, who's taking the place of her mother—a welcome relief—while Frances launches Lily in society. She also gets a check for a hefty sum she badly needs because Graham has gone to court to get her money and her account has been frozen until the case is decided. Frances' social circle is already buzzing over a series of robberies at fashionable parties and balls. When someone dumps a valuable bracelet in her reticule at the Stoke-Whitney ball, she enlists the help of Hazelton, who has reasons of his own to find the thief. As she worries about the investigation of Reggie's death and vets her sister's suitors, all of whom had opportunities to steal the valuables, she learns more and more about Hazelton while fighting her strong feelings of attraction toward him. A murder in her garden just adds to her problems, and now she must find the strength to overcome them.

Despite its heroine's many problems, this lighthearted debut tale of mystery, love, and a delightful sleuth will leave you wanting more—which is presumably just what Freeman has in mind.



THE DAY OF THE DEAD

French, Nicci
Morrow/HarperCollins (416 pp.)
\$15.99 paper | Jul. 24, 2018
978-0-06-267670-2

French closes the saga of consulting psychologist Frieda Klein with the story of a criminology student who, casting around for a topic for her dissertation, chooses "In the Footsteps of Dr. Klein," a choice that turns her life into a nightmare.

Lola Hayes has no idea what to write about for her final paper at the University of London's Guildhall College. Her lazy adviser, hearing her say, "I'd much rather write about people than ideas or science," directs her: "You want a person?...Here's a person. Have you ever heard of Frieda Klein?" Lola hasn't, but she reads up on Frieda, talks to her archenemy, Guildhall profiler professor Hal Bradshaw, and eventually tracks her down. That's no mean feat in itself, since Frieda, pursued once more by monumentally patient serial killer Dean Reeve, has gone into hiding, and even her closest friends don't know or won't say where. Apart from his earlier track record, there's good reason for Frieda to fear Reeve, who's started to kill more or less random people in order to flush her out of hiding so she can protect the next innocent. One victim is found after his car crashes through a shop window; another's bicycle is struck by a hit-and-run driver; a third turns up dead on Hampstead Heath. DC Dan Quarry and his new boss, DCI Bill Dugdale, have yet to realize that Dean Reeve is behind the latest round of mayhem. After Frieda agrees to take in Lola, she agrees to meet Reeve alone in a place he's picked, and Lola, frantic to prevent what she sees as Frieda's suicidal acquiescence, acts to protect her. Ungrateful Frieda promises her: "One day you'll want to get in a time machine, come back and stop yourself doing what you did today." If anything, that turns out to be an understatement.

Though its climax couldn't possibly live up to the harrowing story it ends, French's legion of fans will rejoice that she's capped her memorable week of thrillers (*Sunday Silence*, 2017, etc.) with this nerve-shredding eighth day.



A STUDY IN TREASON

Goldberg, Leonard
Minotaur (320 pp.)
\$25.99 | Jun. 12, 2018
978-1-250-10106-8

Dr. Watson, his son, and the daughter of Sherlock Holmes solve a case of treason in 1914.

Joanna Blalock Watson, the daughter of Sherlock Holmes and Irene Adler and the wife of Dr. John Watson Jr., gets a chance to test her own formidable deductive skills when Sir Harold Whitlock calls at 221B Baker St. to ask the elder Dr. Watson for help in a case of espionage. After Watson insists that

A trip to Yosemite turns deadly for old climbing friends.

YOSEMITE FALL

Joanna and John be included, Sir Harold tells them of the theft of a new treaty with France from the Duke of Winchester's carefully guarded country estate, where the Duke's son was making copies. The Germans would clearly love to see this document. Since all the doors and windows were locked in the five minutes that the Duke's son, Harry Halifax, was out of the room, Inspector Lestrade has thoroughly examined the place for secret passages. But Joanna finds an entrance to an unknown attic space, where footprints in the dust indicate that a large man who's a heavy smoker spent time waiting for his chance to steal the document. Settling in at a nearby inn, the sleuths find that one of the guests in a ground-floor room is never seen and has all meals delivered. Although suspicion falls on Roger Bennett, the son of the Duke's family butler, who's friendly with the German-born groundskeeper, Joanna goes further, suspecting even the families of the Duke and his daughter-in-law, both of whom are in financial difficulties. When the butler is found dead, apparently of carbon monoxide poisoning, Joanna thinks he's been murdered. Using many of the same skills as her father, including his mastery of all things related to tobacco, she bids the Baker Street Irregulars watch the room of the unknown guest while she continues to hunt down clues.

Goldberg (*The Daughter of Sherlock Holmes*, 2017) matches the style of Conan Doyle's stories and adds the fillip of a female protagonist.



YOSEMITE FALL

Graham, Scott
 Torrey House Press (220 pp.)
 \$15.95 paper | Jun. 12, 2018
 978-1-937226-87-9

A trip to Yosemite turns deadly for an archaeologist, his family, and the old climbing friends the trip is reuniting him with.

Chuck Bender's multitasking trip to Yosemite packs a little bit of every part of his life into a few days in the great outdoors. While his overarching purpose is to do historical research on whatever happened to Stephen Grover, a prospector whose search for gold in Yosemite Valley ended badly, the trip doubles as a reunion with old friends and a well-earned family vacation. Meeting up with old climbing companions like Jimmy O'Reilly, Ponch Stilwell, and Thorpe Alstad will provide a chance for the friends, who've put in serious time at Yosemite's Camp 4, to reminisce about old adventures while challenging each other in the Yosemite Slam climbing contest that same weekend. Chuck is ready to pass the torch to his barely teenage stepdaughter, Carmelita, though her mother, Janelle, isn't so sure that Carm's first climb should be in a competitive atmosphere even if the girl does seem to be a climbing prodigy. An accident at the competition practice puts Chuck in the cross hairs of the rangers leading Yosemite's Serious Accident Investigation Team, who seem mysteriously determined to find fault with him. More worrisome still is the absence of Thorpe, whose risk-taking YouTube

videos of himself flying in a wingsuit indicate that whatever's happened to him could stem from causes natural or otherwise. Chuck's work on the Grover case leads him and his family on a path that connects the past to a present in which someone seems determined to keep the truth from coming to light.

As always, the highlight of Graham's National Park Mystery series (*Yellowstone Standoff*, 2016, etc.) is his extensive knowledge of the parks system, its lands, and its people.



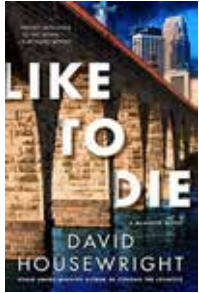
LONDON RULES

Herron, Mick
 Soho Crime (336 pp.)
 \$26.95 | Jun. 5, 2018
 978-1-61695-961-6

A sixth round of troubles for the slow horses of Slough House, where burned-out, compromised, or incompetent members of Her Majesty's intelligence community have been banished (*Spook Street*, 2017, etc.), pits them against a group of terrorists who seem to be working from MI5's own playbook.

It doesn't usually make headlines when a crew of uniformed men efficiently murder a dozen inhabitants of an isolated village, but when the target is Abbotsfield, in the shadow of the Derbyshire hills, attention must be paid. The time-servers at Slough House, the last group anyone in the know would expect to get anywhere near this outrage, are roped into it when Shirley Dander celebrates her 62nd drug-free day by saving her colleague Roderick Ho from getting run down by a car. Flatulent Jackson Lamb, the head of the troops at Slough House, doesn't believe Shirley's story of attempted vehicular homicide, but even he changes his tune after a second attempt on Ho's life kills an intruder whose corpse promptly disappears and police match the bullets found at the scene to one of the weapons used in the Abbotsfield massacre. When someone tosses a bomb into the penguin shelter in Dobsey Park and a second bomb is disabled before it can blow up a Paddington-bound train, alarm bells go off for J.K. Coe, the newest arrival to Slough House, who realizes (1) these outrages are all being perpetrated by the same team, (2) they're following a blueprint originally conceived by the intelligence community, and (3) they still have several escalating chapters left to go. Just in case this all sounds uncomfortably menacing, a subplot concerning the threats posed to the nation's security by a cross-dressing Brexit partisan is uncomfortably comical.

Herron shows once again that the United Kingdom's intelligence community is every bit as dysfunctional and alarmingly funny as Bill James' cops and robbers.



LIKE TO DIE

Housewright, David
Minotaur (320 pp.)
\$26.99 | Jun. 19, 2018
978-1-250-09453-7

“Roving troubleshooter” Rushmore McKenzie agrees to look into a case of industrial sabotage and ends up shooting a lot more trouble than he expected.

McKenzie’s poker buddy Ian Gotz, an accountant, may be better at keeping books than at filling inside straights, but even he knows something’s gone seriously wrong for Erin Peterson, the friend he wishes were much more. The founder of Salsa Girl Salsa has evidently been riding too high for the taste of whomever’s squirted superglue into the locks in her latest manufacturing plant. A prank, she tells McKenzie when he drops by to ask how she is and she realizes that her aspiring lover has given him the news she shared in confidence. But McKenzie (*What the Dead Leave Behind*, 2017, etc.) brushes that explanation away: The plant is in the middle of nowhere, and there’s zero chance that teenage kids would have taken that much trouble to mess with someone they didn’t know and couldn’t watch. Soon enough McKenzie’s suspicions of some darker motive are confirmed when someone superglues the door locks on a delivery truck that has to get the refrigerated salsa to Minnesota stores before it warms up and spoils. Since Erin has never had time for a boyfriend, let alone an ex-lover with a grudge, McKenzie focuses on the obscenely rich Bignell family, whose wastrel scion, Randy Bignell-Sax, loaned Erin the money she needed to launch Salsa Girl, and whose family-held company, Minnesota Foods, distributes her six flavors. Although a bombing at the plant jolts McKenzie, it’ll take several more nudges before he realizes that Salsa Girl has been built on a foundation that’s been rotten from the beginning and that bigger threats are on the way.

A fast-moving, dialogue-driven tale so effortlessly and irresistibly spun that you may well finish it before you notice that nobody has died, except for a couple of faceless gangbangers executed offstage, and that the elaborately choreographed denouement doesn’t make a whole lot of sense.



ISLAND OF THE MAD

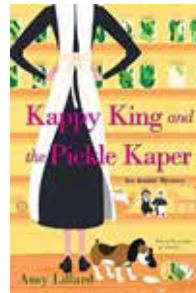
King, Laurie R.
Bantam (320 pp.)
\$28.00 | Jun. 12, 2018
978-0-8041-7796-2

Mary Russell and her husband, Sherlock Holmes, seek a friend’s missing relative in the most unlikely places.

The year 1925 finds Veronica Fitzwarren’s aunt, Lady Vivian Beaconsfield, still resident in Bedlam, where she’s been clapped up for years and years. But things are about to change.

Released for a week’s home leave for the 50th birthday of her half brother, Edward, Lord Selwick, Vivian goes AWOL on the way back to the asylum along with Rose Trevisan, her nurse. When Ronnie begs her old Oxford friend Russell to find her missing relative, Russell thinks the best way to gather information will be to get herself committed to Bedlam. She doesn’t find Vivian there, of course, but she does turn up enough information to send her haring off to Venice, where Mycroft Holmes just happens to want to send his brother on still another hush-hush diplomatic errand. The food, the wine, the location are all superb, and soon Russell and Holmes have insinuated themselves into the social circles of legendary columnist/hostess Elsa Maxwell and nonpareil songwriter Cole Porter. A gander at the locked asylum on the island of San Clemente convinces Russell (*Mary Russell’s War*, 2016, etc.) that she’s very close to finding Vivian, whose tenancy in Bedlam turns out to have been voluntary for the past few years, and she’s quite correct. But her most shocking discoveries come both after she’s finally caught up with the missing woman and well beforehand, in an obsequious scene between the Porters and a military emissary of Il Duce that suddenly turns ugly.

Precious little for Sherlock Holmes to do, and not much more for his wife, not even in the way of King’s trademark dialogue between the two. Come for the mystery, stay for the sightseeing, the gibes at fascism, and the heroine’s climactic masquerade as silent film star Harold Lloyd.



KAPPY KING AND THE PICKLE KAPER

Lillard, Amy
Zebra/Kensington (352 pp.)
\$9.95 paper | Jun. 26, 2018
978-1-4201-4299-0

A quiet Amish community is rattled by the death of a young girl.

Even though she makes the kapps (women’s head coverings) for her community of Blue Sky, Pennsylvania, Kappy King has always been a marginal figure. Perhaps that’s why she’s befriended flamboyant Edie Peachey and her brother, Jimmy, who has Down syndrome. Edie’s under a bann after leaving the church and living as an Englischer, but when her mother was murdered, she came home to care for Jimmy and helped Kappy solve the mystery (*Kappy King and the Puppy Kaper*, 2017). After Sally June Esh’s buggy is run off the road and she’s killed while making the family pickle delivery, Edie gets a series of cryptic texts hinting that the death was no accident. Edie refuses to show the texts to detective Jack Jones, knowing that he’ll confiscate her phone; instead, she and Kappy decide to do a little sleuthing on their own. But there’s a problem. Although Edie’s dedicated to her brother and respects his love for their little farm and dog breeding business, she may not be ready to return to the church, and until she does, no one but Kappy will talk to her. All the while, Kappy’s still trying to decide whether she should marry Hiram, the widower of her best friend. Hiram’s

A bartender at a Florida VFW post is suspected of murdering one of her customers.

LAST CALL

particularly worried about his younger brother, Willie, who's often taken off on adventures but this time is gone longer than usual. Kappy's also attracted to Silas Hershberger, whose aunt has just moved back from Lancaster and wants to establish her own pickles as supreme. Would Bettie Hershberger really kill someone over pickles? Kappy and Edie travel by buggy and car all over the valley attending everything from funerals to rock concerts while trying to figure out whether Sally June's death was accident or murder.

Plenty of details about the Amish lifestyle and a more complex mystery than the heroine's first case.



LAST CALL
Matter, Paula
 Midnight Ink/Llewellyn (312 pp.)
 \$15.99 paper | Jul. 8, 2018
 978-0-7387-5782-7

A bartender at a Florida VFW post who's already been written up more than once for her bad attitude gets called out once again when she's suspected of murdering one of her customers.

Maggie Lewis isn't much to look at, and she'll never see 40 again, or even 45. But that's no reason she should get railroaded when the body of Jack Hoffman, a Korean War vet who'd long been one of the mainstays of the North DeSoto VFW post where Maggie handles the night shift, is discovered inside the truck he'd parked outside the night before. Sure, Maggie had had words with prickly Jack from time to time, just like everyone who knew him. And it's definitely one of her hair ties that North DeSoto police chief Bobby Lee plucks from the floor of Jack's truck. But such wispy evidence is hardly enough reason for Bobby Lee to take her downtown for questioning or for the board of the post to suspend her without pay pending further developments, like a confession from somebody else. Unable to trust Bobby Lee, who was never able to solve the murder of Maggie's husband, Rob, to do any better on this one, and eager to clear her name before she dies of old age, Maggie asks her tenant, not-yet-licensed private eye Michael Bradley, to give her a hand looking under rocks for possible motives and suspects in Jack's killing even though she wonders how she'll ever be able to pay him with no money coming in. Romance doesn't bloom, but there are definite sparks, and alert readers will win bar bets of their own if they bank on hearing more about this couple down the road (maybe even solving Rob's murder in a future installment).

Meantime, Matter's debut provides mystery lite and forgettable suspects but a heroine who's not only feisty, but sometimes downright funny as well.

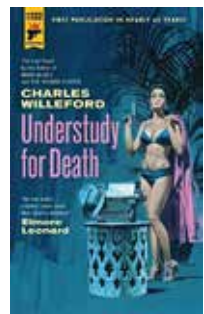


THE SWORD OF JUSTICE
Persson, Leif G.W.
Trans. by Smith, Neil
 Vintage Crime/Black Lizard (720 pp.)
 \$16.95 paper | Jun. 5, 2018
 978-1-101-87295-6

More Scandinavian murder mayhem from Swedish novelist/criminologist Persson (*The Dying Detective*, 2017, etc.).

Evert Bäckström lacks the noble mien of Hercule Poirot and the rough chivalry of Philip Marlowe; he's a worldly schlub of large appetites and strong opinions ("carrots and oatbran were almost certainly one contributing fact to why his malnourished and retinous colleagues fucked up with such depressing regularity") who doesn't lack for prejudices and the ugly language to accompany them. Still, he's been at the detective game for a long time, and even if he likes to hide out in his office with the door closed and a do-not-disturb light, he's actually reasonably good at his job, less briskly efficient than his right-hand man ("who, naturally, was a woman"), but still game to "wield the sword of justice" come Monday morning each week. As the narrative progresses, one week's comparatively mild body count is headed by the murder of an arty aristocrat, illustrating that he who lives by the auction catalog dies by the auction catalog. But that murder has bearing on another, this one of a lawyer with connections to organized crime and the drug trade—and, not coincidentally, to a plot to do away with Bäckström. There's a Maltese falcon in the equation, too, in the form of a music box that has been wandering from living room to living room ever since it slipped out of the possession of "that fat bloke who was always smoking a cigar"—that is, Winston Churchill. Getting to the facts of the matter takes plenty of time, and Persson seems in no hurry to arrive at a conclusion, which, one assumes, is a reflection of the business-as-usual slow unfolding of criminal investigations, particularly ones as tangled as this, in which one bit of bad behavior leads to another.

His detective isn't the most pleasant of company, but Persson's wry commentaries on contemporary Swedish life make for pleasing entertainment.



UNDERSTUDY FOR DEATH
Willeford, Charles
 Hard Case Crime (224 pp.)
 \$9.95 paper | Jul. 17, 2018
 978-1-78565-698-9

Hard Case reprints a real rarity for fans of Florida noir stylist Willeford (1919-1988; *The Shark-Infested Custard*, 1993, etc.): a barely-published paperback original from 1961.

Why would Marion C. Huneker leave her husband, Jack, a cement and wrought iron contractor, a farewell note and then kill their two children

An addictively readable—and undeniably cool—fantasy masterwork.

THE GREY BASTARDS

and herself? J.C. Curtis, Lake Springs *Morning News* reporter Richard Hudson's hard-bitten managing editor, wants the answers Marion's suicide note doesn't give. Hudson, who fancies himself a playwright even though he's been toiling away on draft after draft of his blank-verse play *The Understudy* for years, isn't much drawn to the story, but he's not given much of a choice, either. So he sets about in a desultory way to figure out why a well-to-do matron of 30 would suddenly take her husband's .22 to her kids and herself. His inquiries run into three roadblocks. First, asking questions of Marion Huneker's friends and neighbors reveals nothing more fraught than a woman with many friends, interests, and plans for the immediate future. Second, Hudson is repeatedly distracted from the case by Marion's friend Gladys Chatham and his own wife, Beryl, both of whom offer Willeford opportunities to describe torrid sex scenes in vintage 1961 prose; Beryl also provides a sad, comical, wholly unexpected subplot. Third, Hudson, who doesn't get around to interviewing Jack Huneker until the next-to-last chapter, just isn't as interested in the reasons for Marion's death as he is in questions about his own relationships and his own writing—and therein lies the key to this self-reflexive little tale.

A treasure for Willeford fans, who'll know not to expect a socko ending; a forgettable curio for most everyone else, who may well turn the last page feeling that they're owed a refund.

over Aratay to save Semo. It is a scheme that stretches back to the world's flawed creation and may forever end the threat the spirits pose to all of Renthia...if Naelin and Daleina agree to participate. It is also a scheme that doesn't make a lot of sense, because if it succeeds, it seems likely to rob Merecot of the magical power that she loves so much and requires in order to maintain her rule. That issue aside, the book offers a reasonably satisfying resolution to the trilogy while still leaving the door open for new books in Renthia (which, according to the acknowledgments, is exactly what the author plans to write). Perhaps that will also provide opportunities for the more interesting minor characters in the story, such as the sociopathic poisoner Garnah, to take center stage. Other characters, particularly Cajara, a shy young candidate for queen, are never fully developed despite the key roles they play in the plot. But at least Merecot gets exactly what she deserves for her presumption.

On balance, a decent wrap-up.



THE GREY BASTARDS

French, Jonathan

Crown (432 pp.)

\$27.00 | Jun. 19, 2018

978-0-525-57244-2



French's adrenaline-fueled adventure fantasy, which features badass gangs of tattooed half-orcs on the backs of giant war hogs thundering across a lawless wasteland, is an unapologetically brutal thrill ride—like *Mad Max* set in Tolkien's

Middle-earth.

The Lot Lands are sprawling badlands that separate the realm of humans (frails) from the orcs (thicks). Seen as abominations from both sides, the half-orcs exist in loose outlaw clans that patrol the Lot Lands, keeping the frails safe from orc attack, as has been their sole duty for generations. Jackal is a member of the Grey Bastards, and although he loves his home in the Kiln—a seemingly impenetrable fortress that can heat its outsides like a blast furnace when attacked—he believes the leader of the Bastards, an old half-orc twisted with disease called the Claymaster, should be overthrown. The arrival of a half-orc wizard has increased the Claymaster's strange behavior. Jackal's childhood friend Oats—a giant thrice-blood (the product of a half-orc breeding with an orc)—backs his decision to attempt to head the Bastards, but when the group puts it to a vote, a tough female half-orc who Jackal thought had his back chooses the Claymaster, effectively exiling him into the Lot Lands. With the future of the Bastards in jeopardy, Jackal embarks on an epic adventure that includes saving an elven girl imprisoned by a demon that lives in a massive swath of bogland saturated with dark magic, becoming a folk hero to a community of halfings after battling crazed centaurs, and, most important, discovering the true history of the Lot Lands and the reason for the half-orc patrols. Powered by unparalleled worldbuilding, polished storytelling, and relentless pacing, French's novel is a cool fusion of

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY



THE QUEEN OF SORROW

Durst, Sarah Beth

Harper Voyager (432 pp.)

\$21.99 | May 15, 2018

978-0-06-241338-3

The final volume in a high fantasy trilogy (*The Reluctant Queen*, 2017, etc.) set on a continent where all the powers of nature are tied to vicious elemental spirits controlled by queens.

In the previous installment, ruthless, ambitious Queen Merecot of Semo sought to find a place for her excess spirits by conquering Aratay, the country co-ruled by her former schoolmate Queen Daleina. After Merecot's defeat, Semo is still swarming with too many spirits, whose urge to harm and destroy might tear the country apart. Now, Merecot has kidnapped the children of Aratay's second queen, the more powerful Queen Naelin, whose grief and fury devastate Aratay before she can get her emotion-fueled magic under control. But Merecot's plan extends beyond simply taking

classic adventure fantasy and 21st-century pop-culture sensibilities with nonstop action; a cast of unforgettable and brilliantly authentic characters; vulgar but witty dialogue; and strong female characters who overturn old sexist conventions. This is a dirty, blood-soaked gem of a novel.

An addictively readable—and undeniably cool—fantasy masterwork.



84K

North, Claire

Orbit (432 pp.)

\$15.99 paper | May 22, 2018

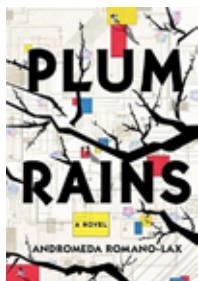
978-0-316-31680-4

A story about the value of one human life.

The man known as Theo Miller works in the Criminal Audit Office, setting the prices for various crimes against society. In a world without the concept of human

rights, a capitalist world run completely by the Company, prison is “deeply inefficient.” Far better to charge a price for each crime and send those who can’t pay to work off their debts. It’s Theo’s job to calculate the cost of crime—so much for manslaughter, with deductions if, say, the victim was a resident alien. It’s a bleak but orderly world that’s disrupted when a woman from his past appears, because she knows that he’s not who he says he is, and in return for keeping quiet, she wants to know where her daughter is. To find her, the man known as Theo Miller must risk destroying his own quiet little life—and a lot more lives with it. North (*The End of the Day*, 2017, etc.) has created a compellingly dark and gritty world where everything has a price and those who can’t pay aren’t treated as human. The sometimes stream of consciousness of the story, with past and present folding over on one another, does distance the reader from events and reduces the tension of Theo’s quest to uncover the truth. Still, the story is strong enough to keep the reader interested.

Style gets in the way of substance here, but North is an original and even dazzling writer, and fans of her work will enjoy this grim tale of capitalism taken to a terrifying extreme.



PLUM RAINS

Romano-Lax, Andromeda

Soho (400 pp.)

\$25.95 | Jun. 5, 2018

978-1-61695-901-2

A Filipino care worker’s livelihood is threatened by an android in future Japan.

The year is 2029, and in Japan, technology rules every aspect of life. But Angelica Navarro still provides an essential service to her employer, Sayoko Itou, an elderly woman rapidly approaching her 100th birthday. She

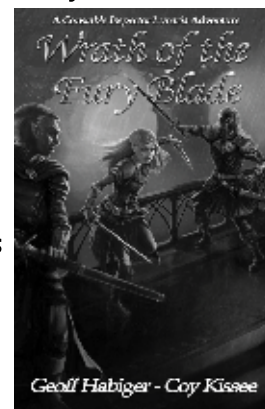
is a caregiver, closely monitoring Sayoko’s health, preparing her food, and helping her in even more basic ways. But when Sayoko’s son arranges for a new android prototype to be delivered to Sayoko’s home, Angelica begins to worry about her future. Sayoko, normally technology averse, is soon taken with the android and begins telling him long-suppressed stories about her childhood that even her son does not know. The android, who names himself Hiro, develops according to Sayoko’s needs and seems to outdo Angelica at every turn. Angelica has other problems to contend with: debt to pay back to her uncle who helped her immigrate to Japan, worrying news about her brother in Alaska, and an unexpected medical problem of her own. But the longer she fights against Hiro, the more she begins to wonder whether he might not be the enemy she initially suspected after all. This sci-fi tale by Romano-Lax (*Behave*, 2016) is hardly groundbreaking: In concocting the charming, wholly human Hiro, she draws heavily on other android literature and cinema, most notably *Blade Runner*. But, refreshingly, her spin on the genre focuses on an elderly woman and a male android, a dynamic that provides the novel with its most original and

Wrath of the Fury Blade

by Geoff Habiger & Coy Kissee

“In this marriage of fantasy and procedural thriller, the team of Habiger and Kissee (*Unremarkable*, 2018) gives fans of both genres a master class in world-building.”

—Kirkus Reviews



978-1-932926-61-3 (paperback)

978-1-932926-63-7 (e-book)



Constable Inspector Reva Lunaria must track down a serial killer while dealing with a new partner and the ‘assistance’ of the King’s secret police.

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engaging material. Though the plot is somewhat lacking in incident, the thoughtful depictions of old age, memory, and trauma are refreshing. Angelica's actions are sometimes frustrating or inexplicable, and the worldbuilding is wonderfully specific one moment and maddeningly vague the next. But on the whole, this is a compelling, enjoyable addition to the genre.

A well-written, entertaining novel that both enacts and subverts the tropes of android fiction.



GATE CRASHERS

Tomlinson, Patrick S.

Tor (416 pp.)

\$15.99 paper | Jun. 26, 2018

978-0-7653-9864-2

Humanity makes first contact with aliens—but humanity being what is, it doesn't go smoothly.

The research vessel *Magellan* discovers a reason to wake her cryogenically sleeping crew: an object at an impossible dead rest in deep space. Capt. Allison Ridgeway orders the strange, hourglass-shaped object brought aboard and the discovery reported to Earth. The resulting frenzy of activity on Earth matches that on *Magellan*, except on Earth, the researchers must contend not only with the artifact's high-tech mysteries, but also with budgets, political machismo, tabloid reporters, conspiracy theorists, and the odd cultist or three. Tomlinson (*Children of the Divide*, 2017, etc.) takes a tongue-in-cheek view of the spectrum of human responses as our species discovers that we're not only not alone, but regarded as little better than clever—and dangerous—apes. But warmongering isn't confined to Earth alone: One alien race, the Turemok, see humanity's debut onto the cosmic stage as the chance to regain lost glory...if they can just frame humans as planetary mass murderers. *Magellan's* crew will need to navigate aggressive orders from back home—personified in the dispatch of hot-dogging space captain Maximus Tiberius and his shiny new warship—as well as interstellar intrigue. Human ingenuity, grit, and sheer dumb luck are pitted against the technological might of a galactic empire that's had a lot more time to learn about us than we have about them. The high stakes are defused with a humor that's often hit-and-miss: At its best, it reminds us of humanity's foibles, but at its worst it shifts the tone from a tense tale of discovery to a slapstick romp.

A well-drawn ensemble cast of scientists, soldiers, and aliens enriches this quirky first-contact tale, but that same quirkiness steals some of its impact.

ROMANCE



MISS WILTON'S WALTZ

Kilpack, Josi S.

Shadow Mountain (352 pp.)

\$15.99 paper | May 1, 2018

978-1-62972-413-3

Lenora Wilton accepts a position as music teacher at a girls' school in Bath, where a difficult student and an unfortunate meeting with the girl's guardian change her life—and her hopes for the future.

Painfully shy Lenora moves to Bath after her fiance breaks their engagement to marry her sister and she's left feeling she has no marital prospects. Spending her workdays as a music teacher and her weekends at the home of her beloved Aunt Gwen, Lenora often sneaks out to the river for midnight walks, which would be a scandal should anyone discover her. All goes well for two years, until Lenora meets Aiden Asher, guardian to his niece Catherine Manch, a bright but troubled girl who was neglected by her family and can't read, since she suffers from what modern readers will recognize as dyslexia. Acting out, Catherine ultimately gets Lenora dismissed from her job, but Aiden and Gwen arrange for Lenora to give Catherine private lessons despite reservations on both sides. Aiden and Lenora become close, and Catherine begins to have faith that neither of them will abandon her. Lenora, however, feels betrayed by Asher, who told her he had feelings for her even though he was engaged to someone else. Asher, who had entered into a betrothal with a woman he doesn't love in order to offer Catherine more stability, realizes they should share their lives with Lenora, but his fiancée won't release him, and Lenora refuses to have him even if she does. Lives intertwined by circumstance are suddenly bound by love, and it will take courage to vanquish the fear, pride, and guilt that are blocking everyone's happiness. Kilpack's sequel to *The Vicar's Daughter* (2017) is another quiet, character-driven romance that finds poignancy through complex conflicts while maintaining a more authentic tone and sensibility (including no sex) than many current historical romances.

A sweet, engaging, graceful romance.

NONFICTION



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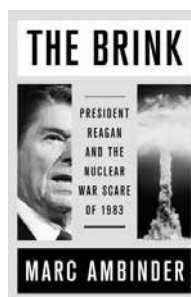
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THE BRINK
*President Reagan and
the Nuclear War Scare
of 1983*

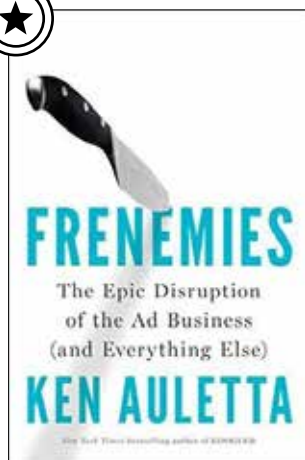
Ambinder, Marc
Simon & Schuster (384 pp.)
\$27.00 | Jul. 10, 2018
978-1-4767-6037-7

An account of the tense relations between the United States and the Soviet Union during Ronald Reagan's

first presidential term.

On Nov. 7, 1983, NATO commenced a five-day military exercise called Able Archer 83. In simulating a Warsaw Pact invasion of Western Europe and a NATO nuclear response, Able Archer scared the Soviet Union into believing that an actual U.S.-led attack was imminent. Thus the Russians readied their nuclear forces and placed military units in Eastern Europe on alert, bringing the two superpowers to the edge of war. Ambinder (co-author: *Deep State: Inside the Government Secrecy Industry*, 2013), a former White House correspondent and TV producer, chronicles the road to this near catastrophe. In relating incidents such as Reagan's "evil empire" speech, the Soviet Union's shooting down Korean Air Lines Flight 007, and the installation of Pershing II missiles in Western Europe, the author skillfully places the Able Archer exercise within the context of the fraught Cold War atmosphere of the early 1980s. He also persuasively argues that a key to the easing of this tension was Reagan's belated understanding that Russian distrust was rooted in the fact that, as the president noted in his diary, "many people at the top of the Soviet hierarchy were genuinely afraid of America and Americans." The book features interviews with government officials and spies who were on the scene, and Ambinder writes in the appealing style of Tom Clancy. Yet he compromises the narrative with short chapters that bounce from place to place and a frustrating tendency to omit dates. Moreover, the author employs an extensive cast of characters and a plethora of acronyms (although he does provide lists for both). The fulcrum of the book—the Able Archer exercise and the Soviet reaction to it—is somewhat anticlimactic.

An informative and often enthralling book, but it is tough sledding. Readers must pay strict attention lest they get lost in the story.



FRENEMIES
*The Epic Disruption of
the Ad Business (and
Everything Else)*
Auletta, Ken
Penguin Press (368 pp.)
\$30.00 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-0-7352-2086-7

STILL WRESTLING WITH RACIAL STRIFE

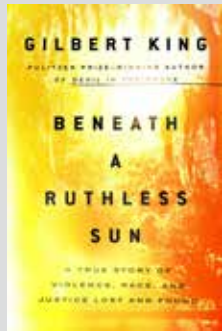


Photo courtesy Leah Overstreet

AS WE SADLY CONTINUE to struggle with racial issues in this country, I want to highlight two outstanding books that confront significant racial conflicts in our history, providing important context and analysis that will hopefully lead to further progress.

Beneath a Ruthless Sun by Gilbert King (Apr. 24): In what our reviewer calls “a spellbinding true story of racism, privilege, and official corruption,” King, who won a

Pulitzer Prize for his previous book, *Devil in the Grove*, narrates a shocking tale of a 1957 case of legal malfeasance, blatant prejudice (against both whites and blacks), and the KKK in a small Florida town. In the starred review, we write that “the author draws on thousands of pages of unpublished documents, including court filings and testimony, hospital records, legislative materials, and personal files, to assemble this page-turner, suffused with a palpable atmosphere of dread....By turns sobering, frightening, and thrilling, this meticulous account of the power and tenacity of officially sanctioned racism recalls a dark era that America is still struggling to leave behind.” Like *Devil*, this one will prove to be one of the most powerful of the year and garner award nominations.



Denmark Vesey's Garden by Ethan Kytte and Blain Roberts (Apr. 3): Historians Kytte and Roberts dive deeply into the “whitewashed” versions of the story of American slavery, shooting down the many myths surrounding “benevolent” masters and grateful slaves. They begin with the Civil War and move through Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and more recent history, using Charleston, South Carolina, as a focal point from which to investigate the many conflicting narratives surrounding slavery and its aftermath. In a starred review, we write, “making fine use of letters, diaries, and other sources, the authors offer a richly detailed, vivid re-creation of the entire era, showing how former slaveholders fostered romanticized antebellum memories while former slaves told the true story of slavery’s brutality.” —E.L.



Eric Liebetrau is the nonfiction and managing editor.



SEX AND THE CITY AND US How Four Single Women Changed the Way We Think, Live, and Love

Armstrong, Jennifer Keislin
Simon & Schuster (256 pp.)
\$26.00 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-1-5011-6482-8

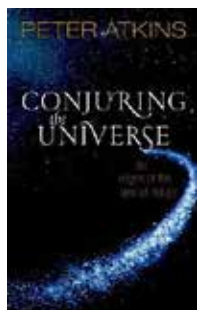
A retrospective of the groundbreaking TV series, coinciding with the 20th anniversary of its premier.

When *Sex and the City* first aired on HBO in 1998, the provocative comedy about four attractive, single women living glamorous lives in New York City quickly gained an immense following. The show marked a significant departure from typical network situation comedies and, along with the *Sopranos*, would lead to an increased demand for well-written adult-themed programs, many of which would be produced through cable networks. TV historian and entertainment writer Armstrong (*Seinfeldia: How a Show About Nothing Changed Everything*, 2016, etc.) provides an in-depth account of the show, from the early development stages in its transformation from Candace Bushnell’s popular weekly column in the *New York Observer* to its six seasons and eventual incarnation as two films. Through interviews with various cast members and writers, including the show’s creator, Darren Star, and executive producer, Michael Patrick King, the author shares vivid stories of the writing process, with particular emphasis on the women writers whose personal dating experiences inspired many of the memorable plotlines. Armstrong is clearly a fan of the show, yet she offers a balanced and insightful perspective of its cultural influence, specifically in relation to our country’s evolving feminist movement. “*Sex and the City*, for all of its excellent and addictive qualities, served as a weekly commercial for white ladies doing what they want as the ultimate liberation,” she writes. “Its portrayal of women as layered characters, flawed and sometimes unlikable, freed the women of television and the women who watched them to embrace more than the traditionally feminine role meant to delight men at all costs. But the show also equated feminism with wearing expensive clothes and sleeping with lots of men. While this was a step up from single women as cat ladies, it only provided a limited view of liberation in which patriarchy hasn’t lost much ground.”

An entertaining, well-documented consideration of a significant TV series—thoughtful fare for TV historians as well as fans of the show.

In this well-researched, personality-packed account, Auletta examines the baffling choices facing advertisers and the technological threats to agencies, from ad blockers to targeted, computerized ad-buying.

FRENEMIES



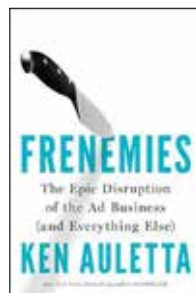
CONJURING THE UNIVERSE
The Origins of the Laws of Nature

Atkins, Peter
Oxford Univ. (192 pp.)
\$19.95 | Jun. 1, 2018
978-0-19-881337-8

A brief yet mind-twisting exploration of the laws of nature.

At first blush, readers may be under the assumption that Atkins (Fellow, Lincoln Coll./Univ. of Oxford; *Chemistry: A Very Short Introduction*, 2015, etc.), the author of numerous scientific textbooks who has taught chemistry at universities throughout the world, is primarily concerned with cosmogenesis. He engages in economical but not simple descriptions: of how, out of emptiness, roughly 14 billion years ago, nothing rolled over and brought forth time and space (“how something can come from nothing without intervention”), or the contention that time and space could be circular, with no beginning or end. The author then moves into a discussion of Einstein’s theories of relativity and velocity, momentum, moments of inertia, and isotropy. Then Atkins explores reflection and the angle of incidence and refraction and the principle of “least time.” He argues that time is the best comparative measure, and all is reducible to the beauty of mathematics. The author is clearly having fun, and his enthusiasm is contagious and the writing, approachable. Thankfully, he confines equations to footnotes, where dedicated readers can continue their journeys. Throughout, he helps us understand the importance of the underlying laws of nature, such as electricity, magnetism, and temperature, and how they touch every single moment of our lives. He also demonstrates the importance of continuing to advance the study of the world around us. “Maybe there are myriad seemingly irreconcilable yet equally valid descriptions of the world waiting to be discovered,” he writes, “myriad collections of mutually self-consistent yet seemingly disparate laws of nature.... Whatever the future, it is good to know that as far as we can see, the universe is a rational place and that even the origins of the laws it abides by are within the scope of human comprehension.”

Atkins pleasingly takes the laws apart, amuses himself (and us) with their parts, and then reassembles them.



FRENEMIES
The Epic Disruption of the Ad Business (and Everything Else)

Auletta, Ken
Penguin Press (368 pp.)
\$30.00 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-0-7352-2086-7

How technological change has “convulsed” the advertising industry.

Mad Men’s Don Draper would not recognize today’s ad business, writes *New Yorker* media critic Auletta (*Googled: The End of the World As We Know It*, 2009, etc.). Once dominated by creatives and clients producing ads for print, radio, and TV, the modern industry relies on “machines, algorithms, pureed data, artificial intelligence—and on the skills of engineers.” The \$2 trillion global business is “struggling...to figure out how to sell products on mobile devices without harassing consumers, how to reach a younger



ALL ABOUT YOU
An Adopted Child's Memoir
by Liz Butler Duren

After discovering that she was adopted, debut author Duren set out to find her birth mother and uncover her biological roots.

“...delightful...”

“Readers will be left feeling satisfied by the hopeful ending to her search.”

“A charming, relatable memoir on adoption, love, and identity.”
—*Kirkus Reviews*

ISBN: 9780998279428
www.lizbutlerduren.com

For information on publishing or film rights, contact read@lizbutlerduren.com

generation accustomed to dodging ads, how to capture consumer attention in an age where choices proliferate and a mass audience is rare.” In this well-researched, personality-packed account, the author examines the baffling choices facing advertisers (hundreds of media channels, billions of smartphones, etc.) and the technological threats to agencies, from ad blockers to targeted, computerized ad-buying. With trust eroding between clients and agencies, many clients find “neutral” guidance from MediaLink, a firm that orchestrates most relationships in the business. Auletta uses Michael Kassan—ad “power broker,” MediaLink founder, and Brooklyn-born son of a Catskills comic—as the thread for his lively narrative, which delves into the major agencies and most corners of the business. There are deft portraits of agency heads, including the Cambridge- and Harvard-educated Martin Sorrell, founder of WPP, the world’s largest agency (he popularized the term “frenemies” for firms that both compete and cooperate, notably Google and Facebook, which take ad money but refuse to share data with advertisers), and the stylish Irwin Gotlieb, chair of GroupM media company, part of WPP, who “looks as if he just slid out of a barber’s chair” and “speaks slowly, as if inspecting each word.” Auletta also covers privacy, kickbacks to agencies, the growing importance of data scientists and engineers, and how media clients are building in-house ad agencies.

A bright, informative take on an industry in turmoil.



**MOTHER AMERICAN NIGHT
My Life in Crazy Times**

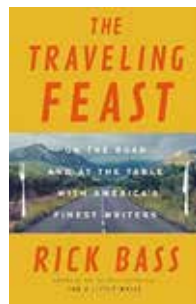
Barlow, John Perry with Greenfield, Robert
Crown Archetype (288 pp.)
\$27.00 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-1-5247-6018-2

Wondrous tales of the hippie high-way by Grateful Dead lyricist and internet pioneer Barlow.

The author died recently after a long series of illnesses that form a moody counterpart to the general anarchist fun of his memoir. That may be a good thing considering that the statute of limitations may not yet have run out for various of the hijinks he recounts here. The son of a prominent Wyoming rancher, Barlow was packed off to a Colorado prep school, where he met a classmate named Bob Weir, later to become renowned as a Dead’s guitarist and singer. Later, at Wesleyan, Barlow came into the orbit of Timothy Leary, who inducted him into the mysteries of LSD. These and many other confluences make for the narrative bones of a story that the author tells with zest and no small amount of self-congratulation—in part for having survived where so many others fell, such as pal Neal Cassady, who died of exposure in Mexico. “Exposure seemed right to me,” writes Barlow. “He had lived an exposed life. By then, it was beginning to feel like we all had.” A lysergic pioneer, Barlow initiated young John F. Kennedy Jr. into the cult; had the young man not died in a plane crash, as Barlow warned him it was all

too easy to do, he might have changed the shape of American politics. The author was steeped in politics, renegade though he might have been; he was a friend of Sen. Alan Simpson, a sometime associate of Dick Cheney, and a confidant of Jackie Kennedy. The storyline is a bit of a mess, but so was Barlow’s life, the latter part of which was devoted to internet-related concerns. But he writes with rough grace and considerable poetic power, as when he describes a 1993 Prince concert: “the place was full of all these bridge and tunnel people who were swaying in their seats like kelp in a mild swell.”

A yarn to read, with pleasure, alongside Ringolevio and The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test. (8-page color insert)



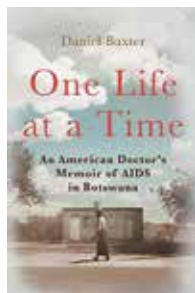
**THE TRAVELING FEAST
On the Road and at the Table
with America’s Finest Writers**

Bass, Rick
Little, Brown (288 pp.)
\$28.00 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-0-316-38123-9

Have skillet, will travel; or, one writer’s “pilgrimage of gratitude and generosity.”

In his latest, fiction and nature writer Bass (*For a Little While: New and Selected Stories*, 2016, etc.) pens an entertaining and love-infused gastronomic memoir. In his mid-50s and recovering from an agonizing divorce, the author decided there was no better time to give payback to the authors who had mentored him over the years and to recharge his writing battery. He wanted to see them in person and cook them a luscious meal—including wild game from his Montana freezer—as a way to say thanks. Joining him along the way were students he was mentoring. The on-and-off, three-year journey began on Long Island, where he visited “one of my greatest literary heroes, Peter Matthiessen,” who was struggling with leukemia. “Readers can enter his work from any direction and become lost, in the best way, changed forever,” writes Bass, who admires his “life of artistic as well as political integrity.” He also visited the “good witch of Manhattan,” Amy Hempel, and they talked about the renowned writer and editor Gordon Lish, “captain fiction,” who edited Hempel, Bass, and Raymond Carver in the 1980s. Next up is Idaho and Denis Johnson, the “hermit, the recluse,” who was also ill (he died in 2017). Bass is a huge fan of his prose, “often lean, sizzling like a wire stripped of its protective coating.” In Arizona, he stayed with Doug Peacock, “my most cherished mentor.” There’s a trip to meet the “funniest man in the world,” David Sedaris (London), and the “old man of the mountains,” John Berger (French Alps). Other destinations include Gary Snyder, Barry Lopez, Tom McGuane, Joyce Carol Oates, and the homes of Mississippians Eudora Welty and William Faulkner.

Dripping with tasty anecdotes, literary tales, and great food, this joyful book is delightful.



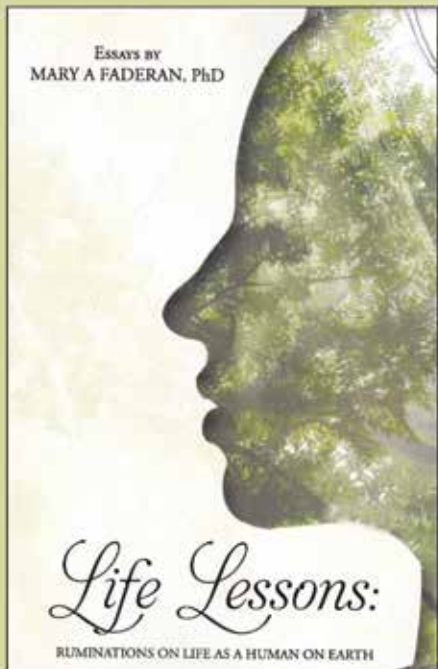
**ONE LIFE AT A TIME
An American Doctor's
Memoir of AIDS in Botswana**

Baxter, Daniel
Skyhorse Publishing (304 pp.)
\$25.99 | Jun. 12, 2018
978-1-5107-3576-7

A distinguished doctor tells the story of his years working with HIV/AIDS patients in Botswana.

In 2002, Baxter (*The Least of These My Brethren: A Doctor's Story of Hope and Miracles on an Inner-City AIDS Ward*, 1997) traveled to the African nation to manage a new program intended to help the many thousands of Botswanans infected with HIV/AIDS. Brimming with "naïve altruism" and certain that his experiences treating HIV/AIDS patients in New York had prepared him for the task, he was soon confronted by a crisis more massive than he had imagined. The author observed his patients from a distance, dutifully

pronouncing their lives to be even more important "than those of people in the States." But his interactions with his patients soon made him see the "arrogance" of his attitude. One of Baxter's first patients was Comfort, a 10-year-old girl suffering from malnutrition and an undiagnosed case of HIV. His intervention helped Comfort regain some of her health, but Baxter could do nothing to stop her family from letting her die because they considered her "an albatross, a burden." To the author's enduring shame, he realized that his "grand gesture" had been more important to him than Comfort's fate. As he learned how to navigate cultural differences and dispense with his own egotism, Baxter also witnessed the many problems inherent in the Botswanan medical system, including shortages in qualified staff and medicines. He returned to the U.S. in 2008 believing he had come to "a new awareness about...the suffering that all of us endure." Instead, he found American patients to be demanding and the American medical system "dysfunctional beyond words." A second sojourn in Botswana helped him finally come to terms not only with his attitude toward the American medical establishment, but also the deeper, more personal meaning



Life Lessons:

Ruminations on Life as a Human on Earth

by Mary A. Faderan

A scientist-turned-writer imparts wisdom about corporate America and faith.

"CAPTIVATING"

"Topics range from navigating corporate structures to following God's advice."

—Kirkus Reviews

ISBN-10: 0692960635
ISBN-13: 978-0692960639

www.marianwritings.com/lifelessons

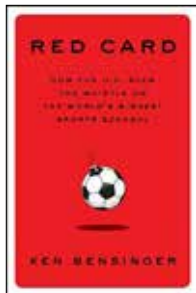
For information about film rights and publishing, email mary@marianmusings.com

A deeply forensic investigation of the depth of corruption within FIFA and its regional bodies that also shows how much work goes into high-level criminal investigations.

RED CARD

of his time in Africa. Rich in memorable patient portraits, Baxter's book is at once a meditation on lives saved and lost as well as a testament to the challenges inherent in humanitarian work.

An honest, moving memoir giving voice to those without one.



RED CARD **How the U.S. Blew the Whistle on the World's Biggest Sports Scandal**

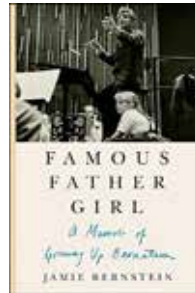
Bensinger, Ken
Simon & Schuster (352 pp.)
\$28.00 | Jun. 12, 2018
978-1-5011-3390-9



Investigating and prosecuting corruption in the world's most popular sport.

On May 27, 2015, after several years of slow, meticulous investigation on the part of a number of agencies, most notably the American FBI and IRS, Swiss police conducted sweeping arrests of large numbers of high-ranking functionaries gathered for elections for Zurich-based FIFA, world soccer's governing body. Corruption across the sport has been endemic for decades, and in this fine, deeply researched, painstakingly assembled book, *BuzzFeed News* investigative reporter Bensinger shows how American agencies homed in on corruption within CONCACAF, the governing body for soccer in North and Central America and the Caribbean. Fortunately, the narrative is not as ham-handed as the subtitle, which turns the years of investigation into some sort of simplistic nationalist triumph. Working diligently for years, FBI and IRS officials revealed patterns of corruption—bribery, graft, outright theft—much of which passed through American banks and other institutions and which amounted, in their estimation, to racketeering. A focus on the two highest-ranking CONCACAF officials—the deeply compromised American Chuck Blazer and Trinidadian Jack Warner—expanded to include a large swath of FIFA's hierarchy, especially in North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean. The book is deeply sourced. However, because of Bensinger's reliance on hundreds of hours of interviews with anonymous sources, it is somewhat thinly documented, and readers will have to trust the force of the argument and the mountains of clear evidence (as well as the successful prosecutions). As the author notes, "the saga of corruption within FIFA and worldwide soccer as a whole is immeasurably complicated." Perhaps most shocking is that there is little evidence that FIFA and organizations such as CONCACAF have really cleaned up their acts.

A deeply forensic investigation of the depth of corruption within FIFA and its regional bodies that also shows how much work goes into high-level criminal investigations. (16 pages of photos)



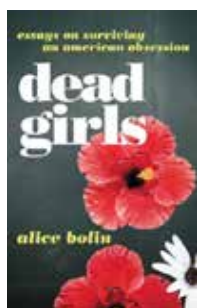
FAMOUS FATHER GIRL **A Memoir of Growing Up Bernstein**

Bernstein, Jamie
Harper/HarperCollins (400 pp.)
\$28.99 | Jun. 12, 2018
978-0-06-264135-9

The challenges of living with a flamboyant, self-centered, and brilliant father.

Making her literary debut, broadcaster and filmmaker Bernstein offers an intimate, gossipy, and candid memoir of growing up the eldest child of renowned conductor and composer Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990). When a second-grade classmate called her "famous father girl," Jamie did not yet feel the impact of her father's fame; but within a few years, she began to realize what it meant. The "endless parade of triumphs and that blazing energy that overtook every situation could be exhausting to live with," she recalls. LB, as he was known, "was a daredevil; he loved roller coasters, fast boats, vertiginous ski slopes," and the author yearned to be just like him rather than like her mother, "the family policeman and Lenny stabilizer." Family life buzzed with activity and famous visitors: Stephen Sondheim, for one, who started them playing fiercely competitive "cutthroat" anagrams; and the "notoriously imperious" Lauren Bacall, who was their neighbor at the Dakota. Her father's fame had benefits: With LB, Jamie got to go backstage to meet the Beatles, making her the envy of her friends; and through his connections, she got various jobs and eventually pursued her dream of becoming a rock musician. One summer, working at Tanglewood, where LB had been in the festival's first conducting class, she heard rumors of his "wild youth," which included "amorous escapades with other men." When she confronted LB, he denied the rumors, claiming that "wicked stories" were made up by envious detractors. But a few years later, he fell in love with an assistant, an affair that led to his leaving his wife; "acting exuberantly gay," he embarked on a new life. Although her mother had known of LB's homosexuality when they married, this new turn incited grief and depression. Jamie reflects sensitively about her mother, who died of cancer in 1978, and the particular challenges faced by her brother and sister.

A cleareyed portrait of a spirited, and troubled, family. (70 b/w photos)



DEAD GIRLS
Essays on Surviving an American Obsession

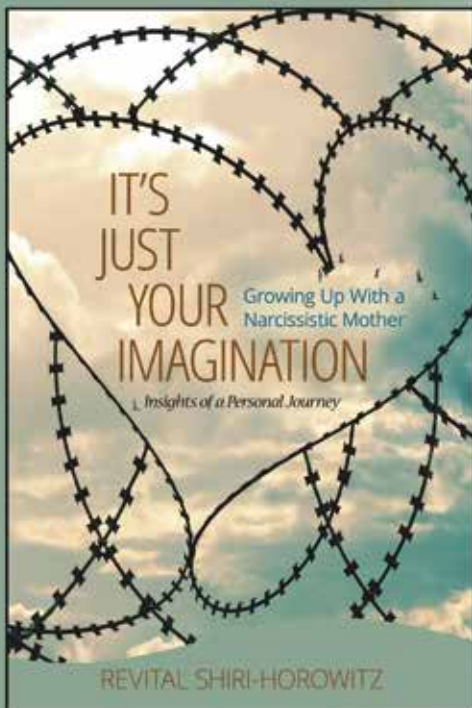
Bolin, Alice
 Morrow/HarperCollins (288 pp.)
 \$15.99 | Jun. 26, 2018
 978-0-06-265714-5



In this engrossing debut collection of essays, Bolin (Creative Nonfiction/Univ. of Memphis) looks at two things: America's cultural obsession with dead girls in works of literature and on TV and Los Angeles from the perspective of both a newcomer and a veteran.

"Our refusal to address warning signs that are so common they have become cliché means we are not failing to prevent violence but choosing not to," writes the author, the former nonfiction editor of Electric Literature's literary magazine, *Okey-Panky*. In fact, according to Bolin, Americans demonstrate a specific fascination with watching women die

on screen, seeing them lose control over their lives to abusive husbands and societies, and, most crucially to her story, investigating the circumstances around their murders. To study these phenomena, the author explores shows like *Twin Peaks*, *True Detectives*, and *Pretty Little Liars*, among others. "If you watch enough hours of murder shows," she writes, "you experience a peculiar sense of déjà vu...the same murders are recounted again and again across shows." Interwoven with these analyses of pop culture is the story of the author's arrival in LA, broke, friendless, and with not much awareness of life under the sunny Californian sky. She drew many impressions of the city from the work of Joan Didion and Raymond Chandler, among others, who have painted a picture of a unique, bewildering city: "I was impressed by the unnerving sense of a city that sprang up overnight and sprawled like an invasive species over the landscape." Bolin's LA story becomes exemplary of her insights about female-obsession culture, from her wacky roommates to her boyfriends to her eventual private and public writing practices. The author's voice is eerily enthralling, systematically on point, and quite funny, though



ISBN #: 9781642047

IT'S JUST YOUR IMAGINATION

Growing Up with a Narcissistic Mother

by Revital Shiri-Horowitz

An Israeli author offers advice on breaking free from familial cycles of manipulation and conditional love.

"Shiri-Horowitz capably weaves telling incidents from her own history with the psychological insights she has gained into narcissism."

"A succinct and useful self-help guide for those who have been emotionally damaged by narcissists."
 —*Kirkus Reviews*

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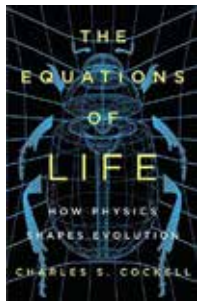
For information about film rights and publishing, email revital@revital-sh.com

A lucid, provocative argument that the dazzling variety of organisms produced by 4 billion years of evolution may seem unbounded, but all follow universal laws.

THE EQUATIONS OF LIFE

at times readers may not fully understand the motives behind their laughter.

An illuminating study on the role women play in the media and in their own lives.



THE EQUATIONS OF LIFE
How Physics Shapes Evolution

Cockell, Charles S.

Basic (352 pp.)

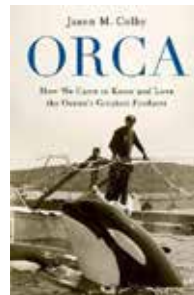
\$32.00 | Jun. 19, 2018

978-1-5416-1759-9

An insightful argument that evolution, despite producing complex creatures as different as bacteria, bugs, and humans, must obey scientific laws.

“Physics explains much about why living things look like they do; evolutionary biology provides much of the explanation about how they become like they are.” So writes Cockell (*Astrobiology/Univ. of Edinburgh; Astrobiology: Understanding Life in the Universe*, 2015), the director of the UK Centre for Astrobiology, in his latest, and he proceeds to make a convincing case. Laws set limits. There is life at temperatures above that of boiling water and below freezing, but not by much. When water is absent or locked up in extremely salty environments, life cannot exist. Honey doesn’t spoil not because it contains any toxins but because its water is unavailable. Our planet’s life is carbon-based and requires a universal solvent, water. Might creatures elsewhere in the universe form themselves from closely related silicon and prefer other common liquids such as ammonia or methane? Moving smoothly from physics to chemistry, biology, and beyond, the author is an amiable guide through some knotty scientific thickets. Ignoring the taboo on equations in popular science writing, Cockell sprinkles them liberally to illustrate their (relative) simplicity. Perhaps the simplest, $P = F/A$ (pressure equals force over area), is critical to the mole, a burrowing animal designed to shift soil by maximizing the force over a small area. Evolution eliminates less efficient burrowers, so all moles, many entirely unrelated, look alike. “If physics and biology are tightly coupled,” writes Cockell, “then life outside Earth, if such life exists, might be remarkably similar to life on Earth, and terrestrial life might be less an idiosyncrasy of one experiment in evolution, but a template for much of life in the universe.”

Many readers will find the equations incomprehensible, but they will relish a lucid, provocative argument that the dazzling variety of organisms produced by 4 billion years of evolution may seem unbounded, but all follow universal laws.



ORCA
How We Came to Know and Love the Ocean's Greatest Predator

Colby, Jason M.

Oxford Univ. (392 pp.)

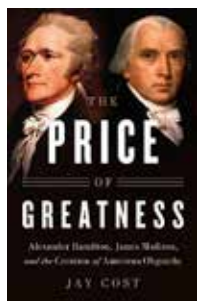
\$29.95 | Jun. 1, 2018

978-0-19-067309-3

The history of *Orcinus orca*, from its days as both a cultural icon of the Pacific Northwest and a dangerous pest to marine fishermen and whalers to stardom as a performer at marine theme parks.

Environmentalist Colby (*History/Univ. of Victoria; The Business of Empire: United Fruit, Race, and U.S. Expansion in Central America*, 2011, etc.) reports on one species and concentrates on one brief period of time, in contrast to Nick Pyenson’s *Spying on Whales*, which looks with a scientist’s eye at whales of all kinds in the distant past, present, and possible future. Colby’s story is also focused on the human relationships with orcas. His history is filled with the names of the men who attempted to capture killer whales, those who met with increasing success, the entrepreneurs who capitalized on whales, and the names of the whales that were caught. Readers will meet Namu, Kandu, Skanda, Taku, Haida, Chimo, and, perhaps the most famous one of all, Shamu (a name given to many after the original). For decades, catching and selling whales was big business, and as captive display animals at places like Sea World, killer whales became public favorites for their spectacular performances and their strikingly handsome black-and-white coloration. Captivity also meant that scientists could study orcas in ways not previously possible. By the 1970s, the environmental movement had become a subject of mainstream politics, and activists took up the issue of whale conservation. The author delves into the conflicts over regulation as protestors tangled with businesses, scientists with fisherman, and fishermen with government officials. Anecdotes abound. The cast of characters is enormous, and readers may find themselves struggling to keep the names straight.

A good choice for serious fans of Pacific Northwest and marine history but information overload for mere lovers of all the Shamus and their ilk. (40 photos)



**THE PRICE OF GREATNESS
Alexander Hamilton, James
Madison, and the Creation of
American Oligarchy**

Cost, Jay
Basic (256 pp.)
\$27.00 | \$17.99 paper | Jun. 5, 2018
978-1-5416-9746-1
978-1-5416-9747-8 paper

Founding Fathers worried over inequality, popular sovereignty, and economic growth.

Controversy over the meaning of the Constitution, the powers of the presidency, and the reach of federal government; concern about the political influence of wealthy citizens and corruption among elected officials; questions about the effects of tariffs on economic stability—these issues that beset contemporary America began in its earliest days. Focusing on James Madison (1751-1836) and Alexander Hamilton (1757-1804),

Weekly Standard contributing editor Cost (*A Republic No More: Big Government and the Rise of American Political Corruption*, 2015, etc.) offers a revealing look at how their contrasting political philosophies shaped the new nation's domestic and foreign policies. Although they eventually became fierce opponents, Madison and Hamilton began as allies, sharing a belief "that people were easily led astray by selfish interests that undermined the cause of good government." State oversight could not be trusted to rein in opportunism and greed. Their proposals for fostering a strong federal government, however, were at odds: Hamilton envisioned a system emulating Britain's, where senators, appointed by an electoral college, would serve for life, as would the president. Only members of the House would serve three-year terms. The "natural aristocracy" would be drawn from wealthy men, who, merely by virtue of their wealth, had proven their talent for leadership. He proposed a strategy of mediation whereby "individual factions within society would receive direct benefits from the government" in the expectation that they would invigorate the economy and therefore benefit the whole nation by growing its industries. Madison, on

The
big
bubble

How technology makes it
harder to understand the world

Per Grankvist

ISBN #9789163959905

The Big Bubble

How Technology Makes It Harder To Understand The World

by Per Grankvist

An analysis of the ways that technology has transformed the media and made it harder for people to accurately understand the world.

“The prose is perfectly limpid and free of prohibitively technical jargon.”

“A sober and penetrating study of the damage done to journalism in recent years, including the scourge of ‘fake news.’”

—Kirkus Reviews

http://hmsworld.net/HMS_US.htm

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the other hand, saw a society dominated by agriculture, “populated by able-bodied, independent farmers.” Deeply suspicious of warring factions, he proposed two chambers of Congress, apportioned according to population, with the power to veto state laws. Madison’s views were held by Republicans, including Jefferson and James Monroe; Hamilton’s, by Federalists, including Washington and John Adams. All recognized the difficulty of balancing nationalism, liberalism, and republicanism, and all saw the risk of factions usurping popular sovereignty.

A well-argued examination of the nation’s founding principles.



THE BONE AND SINEW OF THE LAND
America’s Forgotten Black Pioneers and the Struggle for Equality

Cox, Anna-Lisa

Public Affairs (304 pp.)

\$28.00 | Jun. 12, 2018

978-1-61039-810-7

Antebellum black communities in the upper Midwest emerge from the

mists of history.

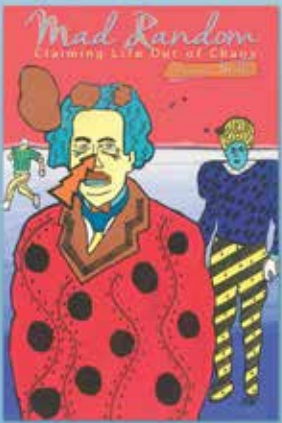
By 1860, more than 63,000 African-Americans were living in the five states carved out of the old Northwest Territory, mostly in small farming communities. Many had moved there from the South and East during the territorial period seeking good land and the considerable freedoms guaranteed by the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. As the states from Ohio to Wisconsin were established, the black pioneers’ legal status deteriorated as these “free” states stripped them of one legal right after another. While many of them prospered financially, their success proved both a rebuke to the notion that blacks were inherently incapable of thriving on their own and a temptation to their rapacious white neighbors. Greed, racial hatred, and the effects of the fugitive slave laws too often combined to produce incidents of harrowing violence. Cox (*A Stronger Kinship: One Town’s Extraordinary Story of Hope and Faith*, 2006, etc.), a fellow at Harvard’s Hutchins Center for African and African American Research, sets out to illuminate the experience of this community, the very existence of which has been generally overlooked or denied. Extensive endnotes attest to the thorough and diligent scholarship underlying her account. Along the way, however, the author appears to have been captivated by the stories of some of the families whose circumstances illustrate her thesis. She imagines their daily lives in detail—the rooster crowing as they pause in morning chores to admire the sunrise—and muses on what they may have been thinking or discussing; indeed, Cox often indulges in guesses about what her subjects could have done, might have thought, and must have known. The account thus often teeters on the edge of historical fiction. The prose style is more suitable for young adult readers than for scholars, and the author sometimes lapses into overwrought, florid passages.

A scholarly study with a young adult novel trapped inside and struggling to escape.

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BY DONNA MILLER



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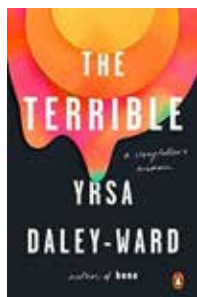
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A powerful, unconventionally structured memoir recounting harrowing coming-of-age ordeals.

THE TERRIBLE



THE TERRIBLE A Storyteller's Memoir

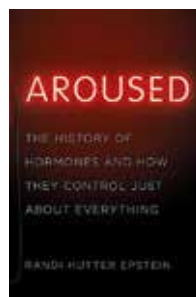
Daley-Ward, Yrsa
Penguin (224 pp.)
\$16.00 paper | Jun. 5, 2018
978-0-14-313262-2



A powerful, unconventionally structured memoir recounting harrowing coming-of-age ordeals.

Though she earned acclaim for her debut poetry collection, *bone* (2014), Daley-Ward resists classification in this profound mix of poetry and prose. Her Jamaican mother was sent to live in England during her first, teenage pregnancy. Her father, whom she never met, was Nigerian, married to someone else. The author was raised entirely in England, largely by her maternal grandparents, Seventh-Day Adventists. She discovered her poetic calling on a pilgrimage to Africa, after drugs and depression had left her at the end of her rope. Before then, she had worked as a model and aspired to be a singer, though her most lucrative source of income was sex work. The one main constant in her life has been her younger brother, Roo, who attempted suicide after their mother's death. Roo had a different father than his sister, who had a different father than their older brother. Their mother subsequently had a series of boyfriends, some of whom played quasi-dad to the offspring none of them had fathered. "I think about these parents of ours / our makers / our stars. (Such impossible, complex stars)," she writes. "How they came, exploded, / and fell away." Daley-Ward had developed well before her teens, both physically and mentally, so much that her mother feared her then-boyfriend would have sexual designs on her and sent her to her strict grandparents. She soon became aware of the attention her looks brought her, and she exercised her power to attract men and feared the power they might have over her. She abused alcohol and drugs, both to feel something and not to feel anything, and she found older men willing to support her. Then she got engaged to a man who truly loved her but whom she sensed she didn't deserve. "I don't think that I'll live a particularly long life," she writes. "It doesn't bother me. You gather speed when you're descending."

The subtitle is apt: Daley-Ward has quite a ferociously moving story to tell.



AROUSSED The History of Hormones and How They Control Just About Everything

Epstein, Randi Hutter
Norton (288 pp.)
\$26.95 | Jun. 26, 2018
978-0-393-23960-7



A tour of the history of endocrinology, highlighting progress but also the hype that has promoted the curative abilities of hormones.

Epstein (*Get Me Out: A History of Childbirth from the Garden of Eden to the Sperm Bank*, 2010), who has a medical degree and masters of public health, explores the long-held beliefs in the power of glandular "juices," but she credits two British researchers at the dawn of the 20th century as the founders of the science of endocrinology. Their canine experiments showed that a chemical released by the pancreas aids digestion without the

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by Ilana Slaff, MD

"detailed support manual for people undergoing the same trials and a thoroughly researched testimonial to the effectiveness of aversive therapy..."

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What that effort has taught her about medicine, politics, education, risk

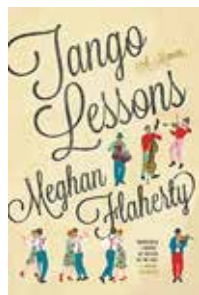
"A highly informed and convincing personal defense of aversive therapy."

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involvement of the nervous system. By 1905, the word hormone had been coined, and the science took off. In successive chapters the author highlights selected hormones, but not before she introduces the “Fat Bride,” a 517-pound sideshow star who, along with giants and bearded ladies, is now considered a victim of hormones gone awry. Epstein devotes a chapter to Harvey Cushing, the brain surgeon who described the hormones secreted by the pituitary gland that also stimulate secretions of other glands. By the 1920s, hormones were touted as being responsible for emotions and behaviors. The ’20s also saw the launch of a long fad for vasectomies, touted as the sure cure for declining libido and other aging male ills. Later chapters also deal with sexual themes. At one time, it was decided that babies born with ambiguous sexual organs should be assigned either a male or female sex designation and have corrective surgery in the first year of life. This is wrong, given current understanding of the complexity of sex determinants; Epstein makes this clear in a sensitive chapter on trans individuals. As for the sex hormones themselves, the hype continues. Not so long ago, estrogen was the dream hormone that would cure hot flashes and ward off heart disease and Alzheimer’s. It’s true for hot flashes, but forget the rest. As for the virtues of testosterone, the hype goes on.

A fine, poignant survey of “what makes us human, from the inside out.” (10 illustrations)



TANGO LESSONS A Memoir

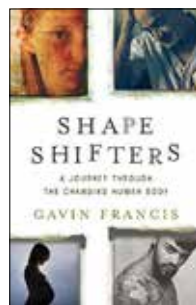
Flaherty, Meghan
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (320 pp.)
\$26.00 | Jun. 19, 2018
978-0-544-98070-9

An essayist’s debut memoir of how a passion for tango dancing transformed her life.

Flaherty took her first tango lessons when she was 16 and studying abroad in Argentina. Ten years later, she was living in New York, unhappily surveying the dismal prospects in both her love life and professional pursuits as an actress. Desperate “to do something, however bold or blind,” and longing for human touch, she plunged back into the world of tango. A traumatic childhood that included living with a substance-abusing, man-hungry mother marked the author at her deepest levels. The more she engaged with tango, the more she realized that at the core of her desire to master the dance was a wish to simply “close my eyes and trust.” Her first lessons felt like a liberating “insurrection.” But later encounters with “the maestro,” an older man who sought to school her in tango and a passion she did not want, tested her resolve. Flaherty persisted, and as she improved, she found other teachers who showed her that tango dancing was a dialogue of “betrayals and...broken loves” between two bodies as well as a pathway to a womanhood she had suppressed and ignored. She eventually found her way into the New York underground of tango venues, where she met Enzo, the lover

who moved her into greater awareness of a body she had allowed to be led but had not allowed to lead. A fellow “tango nerd”—turned-friend named Marty helped the author evolve. With him, she learned to dance a tango that was a sensual expression of an autonomous woman unafraid to take risks in life and love. Well-researched, eloquent, and entertaining, Flaherty’s book is not only a witty, incisive reflection on a beloved dance and its history. It is also an intimate celebration of dance, life, and the art of taking chances.

A vibrantly intelligent reading pleasure.



SHAPESHIFTERS A Journey Through the Changing Human Body

Francis, Gavin
Basic (288 pp.)
\$27.00 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-1-5416-9752-2

A physician/writer celebrates the dynamism and transformation of the human body and life.

Francis (*Adventures in Human Being: A Grand Tour from the Cranium to the Calcaneum*, 2015, etc.), who regularly contributes to the *London Review of Books* and the *Guardian*, brings well-honed knowledge to these short chapters on the perpetual metamorphosis of the human body. What makes the book fun to read is not only the author’s limpid anecdotes, but also his abiding marvel at the body’s endless expressions. Francis ranges freely and skillfully from the strange to the elemental, such as pregnancy, “a primitive reminder that [the body’s] changes are often beyond control; that bodies have their own rhythms, waypoints and fixed destinations.” The author also explores the body’s acts: sleep, for example, during which vital cerebral hygiene is at stake, and dreaming, which tends to our restless minds and “transforms our fear, shame and dark ambitions into...narratives.” Francis is clearly drawn to curiosities, but he never makes them seem freakish—nor is he judgmental, but rather colorfully frank: Think steroids are the only road to a fine physique? Consider the risks of diabetes, infertility, depression, uncontrollable bouts of rage, and wicked acne. These chapters can easily be read as stand-alones—the chapter on jetlag is followed by one on ancient and modern bone-setting techniques—but it’s also satisfying to binge-read a number of them at once. While it might be disappointing to read that “we don’t have much idea as to why we laugh”; appalling to consider that late-19th-century Vatican officials were still castrating young boys for its choir; and infuriating to read that the return of tuberculosis is a direct result of poverty, as are so many other maladies, Francis always makes you think.

Captivating medical narratives that fit well alongside those of Oliver Sachs, Atul Gawande, Jerome Groopman, and Berton Roueché.

An eminent British critic casts a spotlight on a major period of art history in London.

MODERNISTS AND MAVERICKS



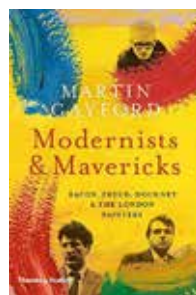
RENDEZVOUS WITH OBLIVION Essays

Frank, Thomas
Metropolitan/Henry Holt (240 pp.)
\$25.00 | Jun. 19, 2018
978-1-250-29366-4

A liberal commentator offers his scathing take on contemporary American politics and culture.

One of the results of the shocking election of Donald Trump has been the political commentariat's reassessment of the state of the nation. In that vein, Frank (*Listen, Liberal*, 2016, etc.), a former columnist for the *Wall Street Journal* and *Harper's* and founding editor of the *Baffler*, assembles a series of essays that originally appeared in various publications from 2011 to 2018. The essays, asserts the author in his introduction, "all aim to tell one essential story": the dissolution of the common bonds of American society as the rich and powerful accumulate more power and the rest of the citizenry is forgotten. Frank proceeds to paint a dystopian picture of struggling fast-food workers, greedy colleges and universities, and politicians' disregard for the common folk, all culminating in the election of Trump, "the very personification of this low, dishonest age." To his credit, the liberal author (he supported Bernie Sanders in 2016) acknowledges Trump's appeal to the working-class and rural voters whom Democratic Party elites have all but abandoned. Moreover, several of his arguments should resonate with Americans of all political stripes. Is there any doubt, for example, that a factor in the skyrocketing cost of a college education is "the insane proliferation of university administrators"? Yet Frank's analysis is occasionally faulty, as when he writes that Barack Obama, whose administration added as much as \$9 trillion to the national debt, made a "turn to austerity" following a "brief experiment with deficit spending." While the author's essay on modern colleges and universities is mostly spot-on, he doesn't acknowledge the role that federal student loans have played in the outrageous rise in tuition he so rightly laments.

Flaws aside, the book is worth perusing, primarily for its keen analysis of why the Democrats have come up short in recent election cycles. The party's powers that be would be wise to read up.



MODERNISTS AND MAVERICKS Bacon, Freud, Hockney and the London Painters

Gayford, Martin
Thames & Hudson (340 pp.)
\$39.95 | Jun. 12, 2018
978-0-500-23977-3

An eminent British critic casts a spotlight on a major period of art history in London.

According to *Spectator* art critic Gayford (*History of Art/Univ. of Buckingham*; *Michelangelo: His Epic Life*, 2013, etc.), the paintings that came out of London from 1945 to 1970 are artistically significant yet less celebrated than those of cubist Paris or Renaissance Venice. This book, an attempt to correct the oversight, is a survey of the noteworthy figures from this era, from William Coldstream, co-founder of the Euston Road School of painting, to the era's most famous innovators. Among them are

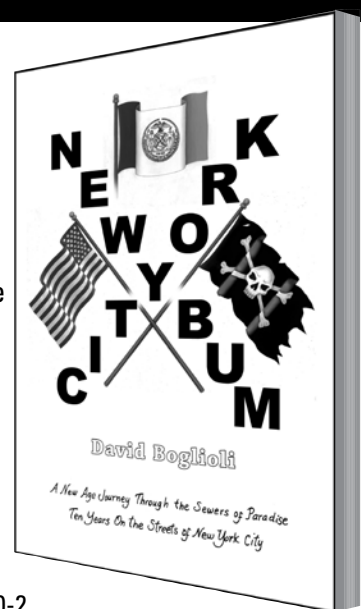
NEW YORK CITY BUM Takes us into the seedy underbelly of the street; paints graphic portraits of the hidden denizens of Manhattan.

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— *Kirkus Reviews*

❖ ❖ ❖
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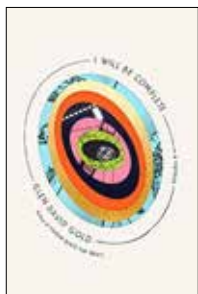
532 pages,
maps, glossary

ISBN: 978-0-9860476-0-2
www.davidboglioli.wordpress.com



Francis Bacon, whose “pursuit of a realism that would activate the nervous system” led him to such experiments as incorporating dust into a gray flannel suit in his painting *Figure in a Landscape* (1945); Lucian Freud, creator of unflattering nudes that “were among the most radically unclassical ever seen”; and David Hockney, whose groundbreaking portraits of fellow gay men, “clarity and subtlety of line,” and innovative rendering of the play of light on California pools made him one of Britain’s most renowned painters. Gayford acknowledges that these artists had no “coherent movement or stylistic group,” and the book suffers for it: Chapters feel randomly organized rather than unified. However, this is still a fascinating look at postwar London artists, filled with entertaining figures, such as the Cornwall neighbor who thought so little of the work Bacon produced during a brief residence there that, when the artist returned to London, the neighbor “used some of Bacon’s paintings on hardboard to mend a hen-house roof.”

Frank Auerbach, one of many artists interviewed for the book, said his contemporaries belonged to “a British line of artistic mavericks, ‘people who did exactly what they wanted to do.’ ” This well-researched history shows the enduring results of such single-minded nonconformity. (100+ illustrations, 70 in color)



**I WILL BE COMPLETE
A Memoir**

Gold, Glen David
Knopf (496 pp.)
\$29.95 | Jun. 26, 2018
978-1-101-94639-8

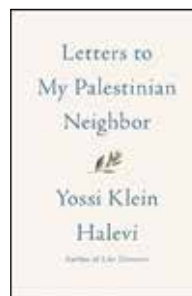
A novelist and short story writer takes a stab at memoir.

“For years I didn’t write this memoir because I wasn’t sure of myself,” writes Gold (*Sunnyside*, 2009, etc.) near the end.

“I was waiting for a specific perception to cascade down and surround and I was hoping it would feel like radiance. *Oh now I understand why my mother did that.* I was waiting for the moment I would be a slightly better person.” These perceptions—the author’s clear desire for insightful retrospection—follow Gold throughout the book. He writes searchingly about the tenuous relationship with his mother that he fostered, watched decay, and eventually restored. Systematically, it seems, she loved and demoralized him at the same time. “I loved my father but I belonged to my mother,” writes the author. This feeling of belonging and ownership would eventually come to define him. As he navigated through the hardships of social acclimation at Wesleyan University, in the workforce, and in his romantic life, Gold was constantly seeking a comfortable place in a world constantly in flux. But this struggle made him particularly insightful, and he offers consistently interesting takes on a variety of topics, specifically childhood and the process of maturation: “I was an anxious kid. I was born with a job. My parents told me they wanted to be parents so they could avoid the mistakes their own parents had made. I think they said this to let me

know I was loved, but it made me feel pressure. I was going to have a *better* childhood. I wasn’t sure what that entailed, but it suggested responsibilities.” Gold delivers an engaging work of nonfiction that shows the author in a continuous battle to reconcile axioms with personal truths. As readers accompany him through his tumultuous relationships, unsuccessful jobs, or awkward interactions with his father, most will enjoy the ride.

A strong memoir that oozes with the excitement of a life well-lived—and well-analyzed.



**LETTERS TO MY
PALESTINIAN NEIGHBOR**

Halevi, Yossi Klein
Harper/HarperCollins (224 pp.)
\$24.99 | May 15, 2018
978-0-06-284491-0

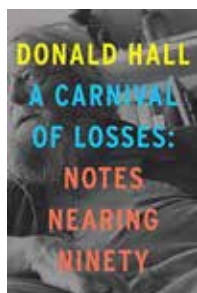
A plea for “radical goodwill” in the face of the seemingly intractable bad blood between Israelis and Palestinians.

In Judaism, writes the philosophically adept Halevi (*Like Dreamers: The Story of the Israeli Paratroopers Who Reunited Jerusalem and Divided a Nation*, 2013), a senior fellow at the Shalom Harman Institute, there is one transgression so great that even fasting at Yom Kippur cannot atone for it: “desecrating God’s Name.” By his account, interacting with practitioners of other faiths strengthens and “sanctifies” the bond, forcing the recognition that there are many paths to truth and that, in the end, all that will be left of us is bones and souls. Coexistence has hitherto been sought by exclusion and separation, with Jews, Muslims, and Christians retreating into their separate corners in the Holy Land. Clearly that’s not working, Halevi argues, and if every path toward a solution is fraught with problems, at least there’s promise at the end. The author proposes some truly radical solutions, including reparations for Palestinians displaced from their homeland (and for Mizrahim, Jews forced to leave their Arab homelands for Israel in return) and a hard bargain for the intractable: “I forfeit Greater Israel and you forfeit Greater Palestine,” a proposal likely to fire up opposition among the nationalist hardcore on both sides. More searchingly, Halevi urges that each camp look into its faith to determine where common ground can be found and, even more difficult, where in its doctrine barriers to peace are located: Can Jews give up land they believe sacred, and can Muslims accept the thought that non-Muslims can be equals? The author’s reasoned if sometimes too hopeful suggestions for peaceful reconciliation are surely worth hearing out, though one can imagine the din that would accompany any public reading of his pages among the ranks of Hamas or the Likud.

A good choice for any reader with an interest in Middle Eastern affairs, though perhaps unlikely to sway those whose minds are made up.

A joyful, wistful celebration of poetry, poets, and a poet's life.

A CARNIVAL OF LOSSES



A CARNIVAL OF LOSSES Notes Nearing Ninety

Hall, Donald
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (224 pp.)
\$25.00 | Jul. 10, 2018
978-1-328-82634-3

A joyful, wistful celebration of poetry, poets, and a poet's life.

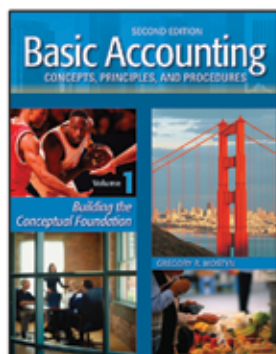
Personal matters that former poet laureate Hall wrote about in *Essays After Eighty* (2014, etc.) pop up again, this time with a greater sense of urgency: "As I write toward my nineties I shed my skin. I tell short anecdotes, I hazard an opinion, speculate, assume, and remember. Why should the nonagenarian hold anything back?" In the book's fourth section, "A Carnival of Losses," the author returns to stories about his New Hampshire life, relatives, friends, his appearances on Garrison Keillor's radio show (where once—off air—they traded dirty limericks), watching baseball, and interviewing Boris Karloff

in high school. Also included here is his somber and poignant *New Yorker* piece, "Necropoetics," largely about his wife, poet and translator Jane Kenyon, who died in 1995. "Poetry begins with elegy," he writes, as he ruminates on the subject. Poetasters will enjoy his "The Selected Poets of Donald Hall" section, pithy, sharp, and gossipy profiles and anecdotes about poets he has known and met, some slight—e.g., "my recollections of some poets are brief. Allen Tate always looked grumpy." These are countered by those Hall loved, like Robert Creeley, Theodore Roethke, Seamus Heaney, and James Wright. Then there's James Dickey, the "best liar I ever knew," and Tom Clark, the "best student I ever had." Hall's admiring piece on Richard Wilbur includes a short, insightful passage on prosody in Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress." The book's first section, "Notes Nearing Ninety," shows off Hall's humor and wit, as in "The Vaper," about how vaping helped him quit smoking (mostly), "The Last Poem," about the only time he expressed his politics in a newspaper ("it went bacterial"), and a piece about frequently losing his teeth—literally.

There's much to enjoy in these exuberant "notes."

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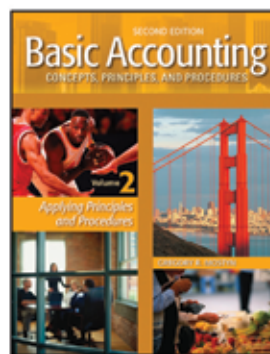
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G. Mostyn, Mission College
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INTERVIEWS & PROFILES

GREGORY PARDLO

THE CELEBRATED POET USES AN INFAMOUS LABOR STRIKE TO CRAFT AN ENGROSSING MEMOIR

By Michael Valinsky



Photo courtesy John Midgley

“I WANTED TO REMAKE myself as a cosmopolitan artist with a magical blue passport,” writes Pulitzer Prize winner Pardlo in *Air Traffic: A Memoir of Ambition and Manhood in America*. Oscillating between a distraught emotional landscape and a militant perception of the world around him, Pardlo is a writer who carries with him the weight of his history and the promise of his language. Known for his politically engaged poetry, Pardlo now switches gears in *Air Traffic*. This collection of essays isn’t just a series of reflections on a historical event; it’s also a razor-sharp look into the inner workings of a writer’s psyche as it is affected by the

changing definitions of identity, masculinity, and labor in the 20th century.

In 1981, after negotiations with the federal government, U.S. air traffic controllers went on strike to protest low wages, overwhelmingly long work weeks, and tenuous working conditions. That August, over 12,000 air traffic controllers failed to report to work, leaving the airline industry in complete panic and effecting a historic rebellion against the structures that shaped the workforce under the Reagan administration. Over 7,000 flights were cancelled and control towers were left vacant.

In response, President Ronald Reagan declared that if the striking controllers did not come to work within 48 hours, they would lose their jobs, arguing that striking was against the law. He kept his promise and fired over 11,000 air traffic controllers. As a result, many Navy air traffic controllers were ordered to take over the positions of commercial air traffic controllers and had to learn the rules of commercial air traffic within a very short amount of time. The industry was completely turned inside out. Today, the episode is seen as one of the most extreme actions against labor protests.

For Pardlo, whose father was an air traffic controller on strike at the time, the threat of termination was dire. “That job was really defining for him and for us as a family,” he explains. As Pardlo coped with his father’s termination, he looked for ways to make an immediate impact. “I had convinced myself of the nobility of the labor class. I still believe in that nobility—far more romantically,” Pardlo writes. It’s this romantic illusion of the labor class that slowly led Pardlo to spiral out of control and into alcoholism (a topic he reveals openly and with no inhibitions in *Air Traffic*). The Marines ef-

fectively shattered his optimism, though his stint did provide him with the possibility of travel, which activated the freedom of exploration and, ultimately, the creative impulse to write.

As a result, Pardlo has chosen to center *Air Traffic* around the political and psychological effects the strike had on him and his family. "There was always a cult of civil rights and labor activism in my family," Pardlo says. "Class consciousness, even, and race consciousness. My father moved very easily into an influential role during the strike....When my father lost his job it was not only a blow to him and his essential identity, but to me and my sense of my father and my own masculinity," Pardlo says.

So it's no surprise, then, that in *Air Traffic*, Pardlo launches into meditations on the development of his own attitudes toward family, masculinity, racial disparities in the United States, and, ultimately, on writing as a form of both documenting political events and radically altering our perception of them. Pardlo says he "started thinking about the different types of unions that operate" under the logic of labor as it is structured in a highly prejudiced society, like a marriage union, a family union, the union of community, "all of these concentric forms of bonded communities," as Pardlo puts it.

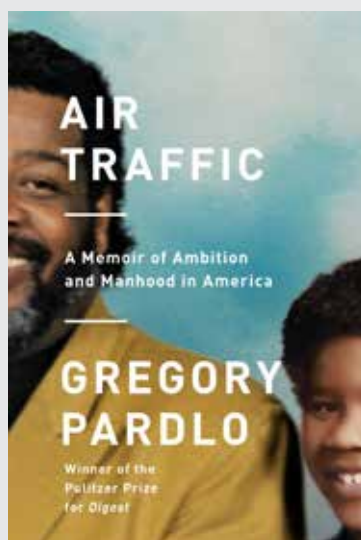
His father's termination changed many things for Pardlo, including a growing resentment that he felt consigned to a blue-collar job coupled with his newfound passion to embark on a career in the arts. But the air traffic controller position was always a fascinating one for Pardlo, who recounts a conversation he had with his father in which the latter told him to "think of each plane as an 'idea' that pops into your head.... They're all important ideas but some aren't as pressing as others. Regardless, you have to keep them all in mind. You can have more than a dozen ideas in mind at one time and you have to make sure they stay distinct." Later in his life, Pardlo came to realize that this description contributed greatly to his understanding of himself and of language and writing. "The job itself had this magical aura about it," he says. "You're directing these celestial bodies around." He went on doing exactly that in his poetry, arranging words in the same way that planes shape the formation of clouds in the sky, particularly in *Digest*, for which he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 2015.

In "Winter After the Strike," a poem from his first poetry collection, *Totem* (2007), Pardlo writes, "I miss sitting beside you at the console when you worked /

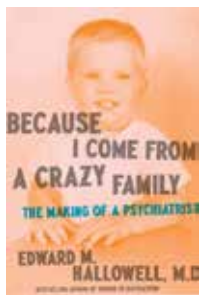
graveyard shift in the tower. Mom and I visited with our / sleeping bags." The poem was a way for him to begin to distill the incidents that took place in 1981 and understand how they completely uprooted his experience as a child visiting his father at work. "I told myself that if I ever had the space to do so, I would approach labor history and the impact of the strike in the wider context of labor in general." *Air Traffic* gave him the opportunity to use a historical event as a bridge between poetry and nonfiction.

Pardlo effectively blends his genres, looking at nonfiction as a way to dig beneath the surface of his poems and the issues that map them out. To challenge genres is exactly what this work does. Rarely do we see authors blend so seamlessly the historical events that shaped their childhoods with their retrospective perceptions of them. More importantly, *Air Traffic* effectively serves as a rare homage to the strike that helped define the labor force of today. "I'm hoping the book enters into larger conversations in our culture in a way that I am probably too self-conscious to do so as a public speaker or as an activist," he says.

Michael Valinsky is a writer from Paris and New York. His work has been published in i-D, Paper Magazine, BOMB, OUT, Hyperallergic, and the Los Angeles Review of Books, among others. He currently works and lives in Los Angeles. Air Traffic was reviewed in the Feb. 15, 2018, issue.



AIR TRAFFIC
A Memoir of
Ambition and
Manhood in America
 Pardlo, Gregory
 Knopf (288 pp.)
 \$26.95 | Apr. 10, 2018
 978-1-5247-3176-2



BECAUSE I COME FROM A CRAZY FAMILY
The Making of a Psychiatrist

Hallowell, Edward M.
Bloomsbury (416 pp.)
\$28.00 | Jun. 12, 2018
978-1-63286-858-9

A psychiatrist reflects on his childhood and the family members who struggled with mental health issues.

In this sympathetic memoir, psychiatrist Hallowell (*CrazyBusy: Overstretched, Overbooked, and About to Snap! Strategies for Coping in a World Gone ADD*, 2006, etc.) creates a memorable portrait of his younger self in relation to the colorful and often troubled family members who influenced his personal and professional development, several of whom dealt with alcoholism and/or mental illness, including both his parents and one of his brothers. A defining event of his early childhood occurred after his parents divorced and his mother remarried a charming but unstable man who had a violent drinking problem that surfaced after they moved from their familiar Cape Cod home to North Carolina. Though traumatized by this disruption within his family, Hallowell had the good fortune and family means to attend private boarding schools, where he excelled in his studies and expanded his social life. Through continued effort, he went on to attend medical school. In the latter portion of the narrative, the author touches on his internships and eventual practice, devoting much attention to stories of his patients. For the most part, Hallowell is a generous and lively storyteller, and he shares inspiring insights into his family and the patients he has treated. Yet he is surprisingly less forthcoming about tackling his own issues or feelings. “The price I paid is that I carry a lot of sadness inside me,” he writes. “But that also gives me a deeper understanding of other people’s sadness that lectures and books can’t provide.” His narrative lacks a driving momentum or evolving tension to grab readers’ imaginations. Compared to other writers whose memoirs address similar issues of familial dysfunction—Mary Karr and Tobias Wolff come to mind—Hallowell’s approach feels passive. He has a warm, reassuring voice, but readers may feel that there wasn’t enough at stake.

An affectionate, well-meaning memoir of how a psychiatrist gained empathy through his family’s troubled lives.



EVOLUTIONS
Fifteen Myths that Explain Our World

Harman, Oren
Farrar, Straus and Giroux (256 pp.)
\$26.00 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-0-374-15070-9

A chronicle of events from the Big Bang to the origin of life to the development of human consciousness, written as folktales.

In the introduction, Harman (*History of Science, Science Technology and Society/Bar-Ilan Univ.*; *The Price of Altruism: George Price and the Search for the Origins of Kindness*, 2010) reminds readers that all cultures rely on myths: stories, often supernatural, that explain their origins and the great deeds that followed. The rise of science has marginalized them, but are we better off? The author asks, “has the knowledge of the inflating universe gotten us closer to understanding Fate?... Have the shadows of Jealousy or Love or Sacrifice been further illuminated by the understanding that emotions must have conferred an advantage in evolution?” Having asked a big question, Harman proceeds not to answer it. Beginning at the beginning, 14 billion years ago, the author delivers a technically accurate review of cosmology, biology, evolution, anthropology, and neuroscience in flowery, dramatic prose, often with an unconventional narrator (a bacterium, a whale). Each chapter’s title (“Hope,” “Love,” “Motherhood,” “Sacrifice,” “Truth”) promises deep insights, but the end result is a straightforward narrative with an occasional jolt. Early on, single-cell creatures were immortal; death became inevitable only with the appearance of sex. Evidence-based explanations of cosmology and evolution remain a minority view even in the United States, so readers with traditional beliefs will miss the point. Harman assumes his audience possesses a good layman’s knowledge of these topics, which may be a stretch. Ultimately, he writes, “I hope that all readers, insofar as they are still fully human, will recognize an age-old journey, an ancient and meaningful quest.” Ironically, the author’s final chapter is an outstanding discussion of the literature, popular and scholarly, that covers essentially all of science.

An overly quirky yet amusing and well-informed history of everything. (15 b/w illustrations)

If you believe life created itself from non-living matter,
Cosmic War will trigger serious second thoughts.

COSMIC WAR

BATTLEFIELD EARTH

*"Now the earth was formless and empty,
darkness was over the surface of the deep, and
the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."
Genesis 1:2*



*"God said, 'Let there be light!'...and there was light."
Genesis 1:3*

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Sci-fi geeks with a penchant for rock 'n' stomp, prog excess, and other flavors of pop will enjoy this one.

STRANGE STARS



STRANGE STARS *David Bowie, Pop Music, and the Decade Sci-Fi Exploded*

Heller, Jason
Melville House (256 pp.)
\$25.99 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-1-61219-697-8

The mothership connection is clear: Where there's rock 'n' roll, science fiction isn't far away, as Hugo Award winner Heller (*Taft 2012, 2012, etc.*) deftly

demonstrates.

The author was born in 1972, a couple of months after David Bowie's landmark album "The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars" appeared. That wasn't Bowie's first foray into sci-fi; as Heller notes, his career is bracketed and punctuated by tunes devoted to the intrepid Major Tom, who ends up a skeleton encased in a spacesuit with Bowie's 2015 farewell album, "Blackstar." It's a good thing Bowie was on the case, writes the author, for Pink Floyd wasn't going to get the interplanetary job done, and Neil Young, despite the sci-fi-born "doomsday, time-travel, space-ark" album "After the Gold Rush," was pretty well earthbound. There's a lot of yes, but hedging as Heller assembles his catalog of sci-fi rock: ELP may not have been thinking outer-spacey thoughts with "Tarkus," which, "for all its highbrow musicianship...is hardly the stuff of classic sci-fi," and X-Ray Spex was more tuned to pop culture than cyberia when Poly Styrene got to caterwauling about the Bionic Man. Still, it's clear the author has listened to a vast assemblage of music, and readers who don't know the foundation stories of P-Funk and Devo, Gong and Hawkwind, Kraftwerk and Jefferson Starship, and a whole host of lysergic-and-Asimov-soaked bands will find his tales to be both entertaining and instructive. His explorations sound just the right note, too, as when he unpacks the Deep Purple tune "Space Truckin'" to find in it "in essence, Steppenwolf's 'Born to Be Wild' recast for outer-space Hell's Angels." Though the thesis can be a little wobbly once taken outside of the 1970s—Chuck Berry didn't hitch his Caddy to a star, after all, and Elvis, though Martian, was resolutely terrestrial—the book holds up well to argument.

Sci-fi geeks with a penchant for rock 'n' stomp, prog excess, and other flavors of pop will enjoy this one.



TONIGHT I'M SOMEONE ELSE *Essays*

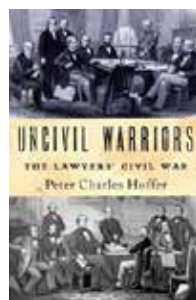
Hodson, Chelsea
Henry Holt (208 pp.)
\$17.00 paper | Jun. 5, 2018
978-1-250-17019-4

An eerie and uncanny collection of essays.

"I gathered secrets like little pieces of survival, and I was so healthy," writes Hodson early on in the first essay of her

debut collection. From the very beginning, the author sets up the tone of the book, which feels crystalized in time and space, oscillating between intoxicating and alienating, exciting and dull, genuine and contrived. Much of this collection of essays feels more related to fiction than nonfiction. The author's word choices capture entire worlds and emotional landscapes, so much so that readers might wonder whether she is indulging in autofiction. However, this is not a disservice to the book, which is filled with enough tangible instances of lived experience to capture reader attention. She shares unusual tips for modeling, one of her previous jobs: "I narrowed it down to one trick, one simple, private action: think of someone you want to touch whom you cannot touch, someone forbidden. Think of a room where there is nothing except the two of you: still, you cannot touch them. Think of the electricity between two hands about to touch, the language that exists in that silence. Now, turn the camera into the face of the beloved and tell it everything." Hodson's language magnetizes and begs for attention without ever feeling overly needy. The author effectively meditates on the development of the self in a highly material world and on the function of female bodies in a society that systematically objectifies and commodifies them. "If I'm sold as an object," she writes, "then I'm no longer a threat. My mind spoken for, contained, no one waiting for proof, my body no longer my own." Such pointed observations pop up throughout the book, occasionally causing disorientation but successfully keeping readers longing for explanations, keeping the pages turning.

A simultaneously bewildering and compelling body of work.



UNCIVIL WARRIORS *The Lawyers' Civil War*

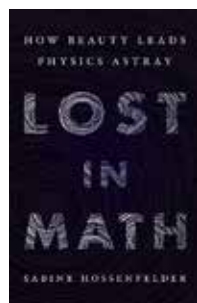
Hoffer, Charles
Oxford Univ. (184 pp.)
\$27.95 | Jun. 1, 2018
978-0-19-085176-7

An exploration of several legal conundrums of the Civil War.

In this slender volume, prolific historian Hoffer (*History/Univ. of Georgia; John Quincy Adams and the Gag Rule, 1835-1850, 2017, etc.*) considers a variety of legal issues raised by what he calls "a Civil War by lawyers, of lawyers, and in the end, for lawyers." These include the legality of the states' secession, justifications for the suspension of habeas corpus and the use of military courts in civilian areas, the legitimacy of the blockade and the status of ships and cargo seized as blockade runners, the legal basis for the Emancipation Proclamation, and the debate over the extent and nature of the civil rights of freedmen after the war. Two themes run throughout. The first is that the dominance of lawyer-politicians in both governments and in the leadership of the armies rendered this war "unlike civil wars before and after, remarkably rule-bound" and thus far less savage than it might have been. The second is that the war forced a shift away from an earlier constitutional

concept of a federal government of severely limited powers; its aftermath “so fundamentally changed the shape of national law and federalism that it created a second constitution.” As the author puts it, “the most lasting achievement of the lawyers in the Civil War era was turning that terrible conflict into a new and lasting regime of law.” Hoffer’s explication of the legal conflicts is remarkably clear and perceptive, both in the details of the individual issues and in their significance to a contemporary understanding of what the war was about and what the two sides were fighting for. He raises, and then largely answers, questions that even many Civil War buffs have likely never considered, thus providing a rare fresh approach to a conflict that has been exhaustively surveyed.

A worthy addition to the thinking person’s Civil War library.



LOST IN MATH
How Beauty Leads Physics Astray

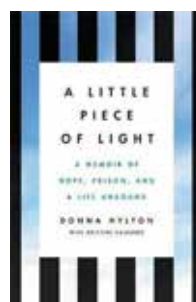
Hossenfelder, Sabine
Basic (304 pp.)
\$30.00 | Jun. 12, 2018
978-0-465-09425-7



A theoretical physicist delivers an entertaining attack on her profession, arguing that it has fallen in love with theories that bear little relation to reality.

In her first book for a popular audience, a “story of how aesthetic judgment drives contemporary research,” Hossenfelder (editor: *Experimental Search for Quantum Gravity*, 2017), a research fellow at the Frankfurt Institute for Advanced Studies in Germany, expresses despair that the golden age of physics ended with her parents’ generation. By the 1970s, a torrent of Nobel Prizes went to physicists who unified a confusing mélange of subatomic particles into the elegant standard model and did the same for three out of four fundamental forces. While a brilliant achievement, the standard model failed to answer basic questions such as the nature of dark matter and energy, matter-antimatter asymmetry, and the impossibility of quantizing gravity. The author maintains that fashionable new theories addressing these issues are preoccupied with beauty and naturalness to the neglect of actual observation. Thus, supersymmetry solves several problems by predicting dozens of new subatomic particles that the most powerful accelerators have failed to find. String theory seems to explain almost everything, but its basis is pure mathematics, and its postulates are untestable by any conceivable technology. “I can’t believe what this once-venerable profession has become,” writes Hossenfelder. “Theoretical physicists used to explain what was observed. Now they try to explain why they can’t explain what was not observed. And they’re not even good at that....But there are so many ways not to explain something.” A take-no-prisoners interviewer, the author asks pointed questions of the giants of physics and is not shy about arguing with them.

Even educated readers will struggle to understand the elements of modern physics, but they will have no trouble enjoying this insightful, delightfully pugnacious polemic about its leading controversy. (18 b/w drawings)



A LITTLE PIECE OF LIGHT
A Memoir of Hope, Prison, and a Life Unbound

Hylton, Donna with Gasbarre, Kristine
Hachette (272 pp.)
\$28.00 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-0-316-55925-6

A criminal justice reform advocate’s story about how her personal history of abuse and poor judgment led to incarceration for crimes she did not commit.

Hylton was barely 8 when she left her native Jamaica with Americans Daphne and Roy, who promised her a “magical” trip to Disney World. Instead, she found herself in New York, the unwitting adopted daughter of a cold woman and her sexual predator husband. A school guidance counselor later confronted Daphne with Hylton’s story of sexual abuse, but Daphne denied it and forced Hylton to apologize. Desperate to flee a dysfunctional family situation, the author applied for a scholarship to a prestigious boarding school. In her confusion, she ran away with Roy’s friend Alvin, who offered sanctuary but instead made her pregnant. She spent the remainder of her teens trying to be “a mother, find a job, and straighten out my life” and recovering from a series of rapes. Eventually, she found a stable job as a shop clerk and befriended a woman named Maria, who promised she would help Hylton find money to begin a modeling career. Instead, Maria drew the author into a web of mob intrigue that led to Hylton’s wrongful conviction for kidnapping and second-degree murder. Over the next 25 years in prison, she came into contact with women of all backgrounds—including “Long Island Lolita” Amy Fisher—who had also been victims of molestation and abuse. Hylton formed powerful relationships with them and became involved in prison groups promoting pathways beyond hopelessness and despair. Intimate and disturbing, the book reveals the ways women are silenced and victimized in society, and it also tells the inspiring story of how one woman survived a prison nightmare to go on to help other incarcerated women “speak out about the violence in their lives.”

A wrenching memoir of overcoming seemingly insurmountable abuse and finding fulfillment.

WORLD, PREPARE TO MEET THE CULT OF FANATICAL FLY-TIERS

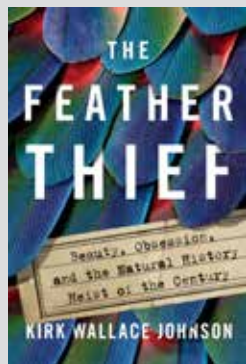
KIRK WALLACE JOHNSON has seen hard days. As an officer in the U.S. Agency for International Development, he was given the brief of rebuilding the Iraqi city of Fallujah after years of war. The work was stressful, awful. As a break, he went to the Red River in the high country of New Mexico for some R&R. It was there, while fly casting, that a fishing guide told him the odd tale of a fly-tying enthusiast who had worked one of the oddest corners of the angler's obsession: namely, crafting period lures out of feathers plucked from birds way back in the Victorian era. You should get a load of this guy who broke into the British Museum to steal feathers from its collection—now there's a fly-tier, the guide told Johnson.



Photo courtesy Marilee-Jessie Carlin

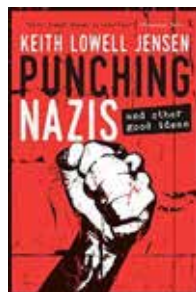
Kirk Wallace
Johnson

The story hooked Johnson, and the result is his new book, *The Feather Thief: Beauty, Obsession, and the Natural History Heist of the Century* (Apr. 24). "I couldn't resist a project that can be summarized with the sentence, 'A young American flautist broke into a British museum to steal the feathers of long-dead birds to sell to a cultish community,'" Johnson says.



That obsessive young man, Edwin Rist, not only stole feathers from some of the world's most important natural-history collections, but he also "blew a hole in the scientific record," says Johnson, whose pursuit of the story eventually took him to Rist's door. "When I'd asked Edwin why he didn't just use substitute feathers that had been dyed to resemble the real thing," writes Johnson, "he winced: 'The knowledge of its falsity eats at you...and all these people have been eaten by it. Including me.'" —G.M.

Gregory McNamee is a contributing editor. The Feather Thief received a starred review in the Feb. 1, 2018, issue.



PUNCHING NAZIS And Other Good Ideas

Jensen, Keith Lowell
Skyhorse Publishing (250 pp.)
\$24.99 | Jun. 1, 2018
978-1-5107-3374-9

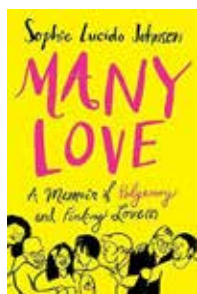
Give fists a chance.

As a boyhood veteran of the Sacramento punk scene, Jensen became uncomfortably familiar with white supremacy before it began veering toward mainstream acceptability. In this scattered collection of polemics, broadsides, stand-up routines, social commentary, and personal anecdotes, the street-wise author and comedian mainly leads with his heart. His heart tells him that racism is wrong, wrong enough to deserve a punch in the nose whenever one encounters it. However, he notes early on, "full disclosure; I've never punched a Nazi. This is my great shame." Regardless, Jensen supports those who do, even if he admits that sometimes those folks are just looking for a brawl. Take his ambivalence toward a group that some readers might not know: "The SHARPS, Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice." You have to be up on your cultural codes and tribes to understand that shaved "skinheads" originally embraced everything about Jamaica: the culture, the rhythms, the black musicians—until the shorn style was adopted by militant white racists who transformed that culture into their stomping grounds. Hence the SHARPS, who represent a rejection of that racist stereotype and a return to the original ethos—ostensibly. A club promoter suggested to the author that they weren't really effective anti-Nazi warriors but rather "just dudes who wanted to fight. They cloaked it in some kind of ideal but they were just dudes who wanted to fight." Jensen admits to his own ambivalence: "I didn't like a lot of the SHARPS, and I loved several of them," before concluding, "whatever other issues I may have had with them, I will always admire them for their Nazi punching. Well done, crew, well done." His sentiment toward Antifa—the aggressive anti-fascist protestors—is similar: "If you think Antifa groups are as bad as Nazis, please stop being the right's tool." This is a book about right and wrong, and if right stops wrong with a punch, so much the better.

Neither a nuanced political analysis nor a typical comedian's laughfest.

An adroit portrait of an early American physician who became a pioneering horticulturist.

AMERICAN EDEN



MANY LOVE **A Memoir of Polyamory and Finding Love(s)**

Johnson, Sophie Lucido

Illus. by the author

Touchstone/Simon & Schuster (272 pp.)

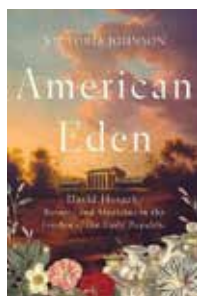
\$16.00 paper | Jun. 26, 2018

978-1-5011-8978-4

A writer and illustrator reveals how she went from serial monogamist to happily married polyamorist.

Johnson grew up with parents who had a “model nuclear relationship.” After almost 50 years, it was still as strong as it had been when they married at age 20. So it was no surprise that the author’s early ideas about love and sex were largely shaped by conventional norms. Throughout her adolescence, Johnson engaged in courtship rituals without ever considering that other relationship options might be as—or even more—fulfilling as a heterosexual coupling. In college, she found herself emotionally drawn to women. The intensity of Johnson’s feelings inspired her to follow one friend to Chicago and fall into nonsexual love with a woman named Hannah when she was later living in New Orleans. The emotional attraction for Hannah was intense enough that she eventually felt the need to explain just how important it was to the people she was dating. Desiring more freedom and autonomy than a conventional relationship would allow, the author began having relationships that allowed her to not only date other men, but also spend significant time with the women close to her. In her refreshingly candid and provocative narrative, Johnson seeks to present polyamory as a practice that is about “emotional consideration and communication” rather than selfish and unrestrained libertinism. The book mirrors her lifestyle in the unconventionality of its presentation. In addition to including a polyamory FAQ at the beginning of the book, the author adds a dash of humor and incisive observation to almost every page of her text with comic book–style drawings. She also peppers her work with statistics and thoughtful commentary on the history and culture of polyamory. Johnson’s multipronged approach not only demystifies a much-maligned and misunderstood practice; it also makes for enjoyable, accessible reading.

Illuminating and entertaining.



AMERICAN EDEN **David Hosack, Botany, and Medicine in the Garden of the Early Republic**

Johnson, Victoria

Liveright/Norton (448 pp.)

\$29.95 | Jun. 5, 2018

978-1-63149-419-2

A biography of David Hosack (1769–1835), a nature-obsessed doctor who “was convinced that saving lives also depended on knowing the natural world *outside* the human body.”

Trivia buffs may know Hosack as the physician who attended the 1804 duel between Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr. He certainly deserves a fuller portrait, and in her first book, Johnson (Urban Policy and Planning/Hunter Coll.) writes an admiring account of the energetic physician, who mingled with the Founding Fathers, lectured in medical schools across the country, and created America’s first botanical garden. After training in America, Hosack traveled to Britain in 1792 to take advantage of its superior schooling. This included the study of medicinal plants, a more important element in medical practice during that time than today. He became fascinated with botany and brought this passion home in 1794. Settling in New York, he built a prosperous practice and became a university professor in both medicine and botany. Remaining neutral in national politics allowed him to treat both Hamilton and his bitter enemy, Burr. In 1801, he bought 20 acres in then-rural mid-Manhattan and built a huge botanical garden replete with greenhouses and hothouses. Universally praised, it became an educational and research center. However, the expenses were ruinous even for a wealthy physician, and Hosack, supported by influential friends, lobbied for government support. Legislators were unenthusiastic until 1810, when New York state bought it for less than Hosack wanted; then the government showed little interest in maintenance, so it fell into decay. As a physician, Hosack was not ahead of his time. He bled patients, prescribed toxins such as mercury, and administered drugs that produced vomiting, sweating, or diarrhea. This was accepted practice, and Johnson gives his healing efforts perhaps more credit than they deserve, but she provides an engaging tale of an important life in early America.

An adroit portrait of an early American physician who became a pioneering horticulturist. (16 pages of color illustrations)



SHATTERING SILENCES **Strategies to Prevent Sexual Assault, Heal Survivors, and Bring Assailants to Justice**

Johnston, Christopher

Skyhorse Publishing (304 pp.)

\$24.99 | Jun. 1, 2018

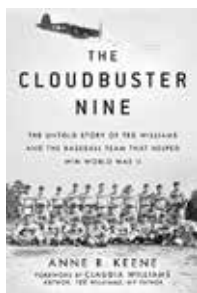
978-1-5107-2757-1

A timely update on efforts to combat sexual assault in America.

In a narrative bolstered by extensive research involving clinical professionals and law enforcement experts, Ohio-based journalist Johnston investigates how rape cases are processed today after decades of mishandling. Focusing primarily on the Cleveland area, the author spent eight years researching rape and sexual assault, and he presents his findings through the case histories of several survivors. Their stories are indeed unsettling, with many left unresolved for decades and now resurfacing through the advent of DNA analytics. Johnston reports on the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center, and he compassionately profiles a group of “healers” comprised

of sexual assault nurse examiners charged with the intake and rape-kit follow-through for assault victims. The victim's stories, however, are the true heart of the book, conveying a palpable sense of suffering. From a law enforcement perspective, Johnston looks at a Cleveland police commander responsible for the Sex Crimes and Child Abuse Unit who acknowledges that this particular work is psychologically and emotionally difficult and "not for everybody." Even more exacting is the work of an Ohio crime lab where forensic pathologists process rape kits and scrutinize DNA samples, now considered "law enforcement's greatest weapon" in convicting rapists. The legally irrefutable science of DNA examination, writes the author, is also making it possible for sexual assault cold cases to be reopened and litigated, as with the valiant ordeal of a girl who was raped 20 years ago at the age of 14. In Detroit, Johnston brings to life the court battles of rape victims and the challenges facing prosecutors attempting to exhume a backlog of rape kits for tracking and reanalysis. Though the challenges facing tireless task force detectives, medical staff, and community psychologists may seem insurmountable, the author's hard-hitting, victim-centered report reveals the great strides being made toward achieving justice through collaborative and tech-innovative investigation.

A hopeful report that is more triumph than trauma in the prosecution of sexual assault cases past and present.



THE CLOUDBUSTER NINE
The Untold Story of Ted Williams and the Baseball Team that Helped Win World War II

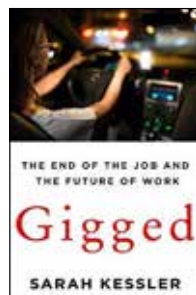
Keene, Anne R.
 Sports Publishing/Skyhorse (368 pp.)
 \$26.99 | Jun. 1, 2018
 978-1-68358-207-6

A thoroughly researched but somewhat cluttered account of Ted Williams and other professional baseball players who enlisted in the military in World War II and also managed to play some baseball.

In her debut, Keene, a trained journalist and former Capitol Hill speechwriter, recounts how she stumbled across this story in 2013 when, going through some things that had belonged to her late father, a former minor leaguer and lifelong baseball fan, she found materials relating to the Cloudbuster Nine. Her father had been the batboy for this Navy team undergoing their preflight training in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, a team that featured, among others, Red Sox standouts Ted Williams and Johnny Pesky. But the author has more than one story to tell (despite the focus suggested by her subtitle). She narrates the sad arc of her father's baseball biography, the development of the preflight training regimen, the lives of many others involved in the program, her own immersion in the sport (which came much later in her life), her research, and her interviews of some elderly sources and some descendants of her principals. Her research is exhaustive and impressive, but the work suffers from all her work, as

well. It appears that Keene struggled with what she needed to include or exclude. As a result, the narrative continually takes offramps to stories and facts the author unearthed, information which, though sometimes interesting, often serves as a distraction. Keene also often employs conventional and even clichéd expressions—e.g., "an unshakable bond," "fit him like a glove." Still, the story she has found is historically significant, and she does not neglect the fact that many professional athletes enlisted in the military and that very few do so today.

An important story enriched by solid research and authorial commitment but weakened by excess. (40 b/w photos)



GIGGED
The End of the Job and the Future of Work

Kessler, Sarah
 St. Martin's (304 pp.)
 \$25.99 | Jun. 12, 2018
 978-1-250-09789-7

An examination of how job environment models and opportunities have evolved, mainly through the success of Uber and other gig-economy stalwarts.

Kessler, a reporter for Quartz who previously worked for Fast Company and Mashable, describes Uber's rise to prominence in 2013 after a series of failed fledgling attempts to garner venture capitalist funding and how the unique business model changed the way people taxi. But Uber is just one example within an ever expanding network of job marketplaces eschewing the classic template of an office day job with steady hours and benefits. Though both Snapchat and Instagram emerged from this revolutionary period, Kessler focuses on on-demand business models like Uber's, which became widely scrutinized when it classified its drivers (mostly men) as independent contractors, which "relieved the company from government-mandated employer responsibilities in most countries." The author taps the experiences of a number of Uber drivers and satisfied members of this alternative workforce and provides a comprehensive cross section of workers and developers who have abandoned their unrealistic daily working structure to benefit from the gig economy's flexible business models. She also charts the unique strategies of like-minded on-demand workforce marketplaces such as Mechanical Turk, Managed by Q, and Gigster, demonstrating how their successes were earned and are consistently maintained. By contrast, Kessler spotlights the negative aspects of the gig economy: pay discrepancies (e.g., Uber's fluctuating pricing model which affected drivers' take-home potential), personal injury risk and exposure, and lack of benefits. The author then probes how the gig economy became a hot-button discussion among politicians and world economists and policymakers. In conclusion, the author suggests that the advent of "Uberisation" has encountered a wide-ranging groundswell and its share of potholes and obstacles, and though it remains a potentially lucrative employment alternative for workers and

A powerful story of dedicated service to abandoned birds and veterans and how bringing them together helped save them all.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

labor innovators alike, there are still great opportunities for much-needed refinement.

A fair-minded analysis of the ever morphing worldwide labor force—an early entry in burgeoning popular literature on the gig economy.



THE SECRET TOKEN *Myth, Obsession, and the Search for the Lost Colony of Roanoke*

Lawler, Andrew
Doubleday (448 pp.)
\$29.95 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-0-385-54201-2

Early settlers vanish, spawning centuries of speculation.

In 1587, more than 100 men, women, and children landed on Roanoke Island to become the first English settlers in the New World. In 1590, when the group's leader returned from England with supplies, the settlement had disappeared, never to be found again. Lawler (*Why Did the Chicken Cross the World?: The Epic Saga of the Bird that Powers Civilization*, 2014, etc.), a contributing writer for *Science* and contributing editor for *Archaeology*, clearly has been infected with the "Lost Colony syndrome...an urgent and overwhelming need to resolve the question of what happened to the colonists." He creates a vivid picture of the roiling, politically contentious, economically stressed Elizabethan world from which they sailed and a thorough—sometimes needlessly so—recounting of historical, archaeological, and weird theories to explain the disappearance. Besides visiting numerous archaeological digs, historical archives, and libraries in America, Portugal, and Britain and interviewing scores of experts, the author doggedly traces down frauds and hoaxes, no matter how improbable. The Zombie Research Society, he reports, warns of "something sinister still in the ground on Roanoke Island, waiting to be released into a modern population that is more advanced, more connected, but just as unprepared as ever." Something sinister certainly emerged in the settlers' relationship with Native Americans. At first, they "traded peacefully," learned each other's languages, and "formed mutually advantageous alliances." But the English spread deadly disease among tribes with no immunities to Old-World pathogens, decimating communities, and although some leaders tried to treat Native Americans with gentleness, others lashed out against those they considered depraved savages. Native Americans responded with ruthless violence. Massacre is one theory of the settlers' fate; another, equally possible, is assimilation. Most historians believe that the colonists, "if they survived, merged with indigenous society," miscegenation that some found unpalatable. An 18th-century traveler, for example, "recoiled" from the idea that "white women found Indian husbands."

In this enjoyable historical adventure, an unsolved mystery reveals violent political and economic rivalries and dire personal struggles.



TAKE YOU WHEREVER YOU GO

Leon, Kenny with Hassan, John
Grand Central Publishing (240 pp.)
\$26.00 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-1-5387-4497-0

A Tony Award-winning director pays loving tribute to his grandmother as he covers the broad scope of his life.

Leon's Grandma Mamie had a hard life. She raised 13 children and then took in Leon when he was 4 and kept him for four years while his mother found her own way in the world. Prayer and the belief that her children and grandchildren could have a better life than she had had kept Mamie going, and she pushed Leon to always do his best. "[She] put in those endless days of work and effort," writes the author, "and her kids never missed a meal. She led that life, that hard, country life, without the comfort of a partnership and some love coming back." Leon's love and devotion to his grandmother are evident throughout the narrative of his childhood and his rise through the ranks as an actor and director. The author discusses her cooking, her clothing and colorful hats, the way she talked, and how she almost always had visitors and was happy to throw together a meal for them. He shares his personal doubts and fears as he worked first as an actor and then as a director in the Alliance Theater in Atlanta. He also writes about his relationships with women, his professional working relationship with the playwright August Wilson, his endeavors to bring more diversity to the stage, and the founding of his own theater company, Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre Company. The author, who won a Tony for his direction of *A Raisin in the Sun* in 2014, shows how the supportive words and actions of his closest family members instilled in him a strong confidence in his ability to dream big and overcome the obstacles in his path.

Offering a well-rounded look at his successful life, Leon's memoir is self-reflective and encouraging to those who might harbor self-doubts about their own abilities and pursuits.



BIRDS OF A FEATHER *A True Story of Hope and the Healing Power of Animals*

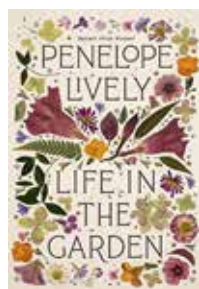
Lindner, Lorin with
Butler-Witter, Elizabeth
St. Martin's (240 pp.)
\$25.99 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-1-250-13263-5

Parrots and military veterans bond and heal each other.

Abused and abandoned parrots are fairly common in the United States. People purchase them for pets without understanding the challenges: They are large, noisy, need plenty of space to fly and forage, want to be with other parrots, and can live more than 50 years. When Lindner fell in

love with an abused Moluccan cockatoo she named Sammy, she started on a journey that changed her life. After Sammy, she adopted Mango, another abused cockatoo. At the time, the author was working as a clinical psychologist and also began helping homeless veterans suffering from PTSD. When the veterans were introduced to the parrots and began speaking to them when no one was watching, Lindner had an epiphany. She realized the parrots had fewer emotional problems around the vets, and the men and women with PTSD were much calmer and more capable of handling their stress. So the author decided to start a parrot sanctuary where vets could work with and care for the birds. After much work and many years, Serenity Park was born, built on the grounds of the LA Veterans Administration Healthcare Center. Lindner pleasingly blends the stories of several out-of-luck veterans with those of the abused birds as well as facts and information about the care and maintenance of parrots. She also shares the story of her love for one of the men she helped who has worked with Lindner at Serenity Park for many years. Her story of dedication to the birds she loves and to the men and women she has helped is encouraging and uplifting. Bird lovers, in particular, will enjoy the descriptions of the parrots she saves, each with his or her own unique personality.

A powerful story of dedicated service to abandoned birds and veterans and how bringing them together helped save them all. (*first printing of 75,000*)



LIFE IN THE GARDEN

Lively, Penelope
 Viking (208 pp.)
 \$25.00 | Jun. 12, 2018
 978-0-525-55837-8

A memoir about how gardening sharpens the eye and buoys the spirit.

In a graceful melding of memoir and reflections on literature and art, award-winning fiction and children's book author Lively (*The Purple Swamp Hen and Other Stories*, 2017, etc.), a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire, celebrates the delights of planning, planting, weeding, and harvesting a garden. For her, gardening is "both formative and essential," honing "an extra way of looking about me, and an abiding and enriching engagement" with the world. The gardener, she writes, "is always noticing, appreciating, recording." Besides recounting family gardens in Cairo and Somerset, her own gardens in Oxford and London, and her exuberant trips to garden centers, Lively considers the meaning of gardens to writers such as Virginia Woolf, Edith Wharton (she admires Wharton's "delectable" and "lavish" French gardens), Willa Cather, and Laura Ingalls Wilder, who indelibly evoked the "practical, essential" importance of the pioneer garden. To Lively, Beatrix Potter's Mr. McGregor is "the archetypal gardener in literary fiction." Artists—Monet, Van Gogh, Klee, Klimt, Matisse, and Edvard Munch, among many others—were drawn to gardens as "a resource for the exploration of colour possibilities, of the evanescence of light and movement,

the study of form and structure" as well as for "the expression of mood and emotion." Lively returns often to the theme of time, which gardening makes strikingly visible. "We are always gardening for a future," she observes; "we are supposing, assuming, a future." At the age of 84, she is aware that some of her current plantings "will outlast me," but they produce joy nevertheless. Gardening, she adds, "corrals time, pinning it to the seasons, to the gardening year, by summoning up the garden in the past, the garden to come." The gardener "floats free of the present, and looks forward, acquires expectations, carries next spring in the mind's eye."

A gentle elegy on the "charisma" of gardens.



FIGHTING FOR SPACE How a Group of Drug Users Transformed One City's Struggle with Addiction

Lupick, Travis
 Arsenal Pulp Press (432 pp.)
 \$21.95 | Jun. 5, 2018
 978-1-55152-712-3



A chilling update on the most drug-ravaged sectors of North America.

Once journalist Lupick details the dire state of drug addiction across the country, the main focus of the book becomes one of motivation, humanitarianism, and perseverance on the part of a group of inner-city activists in Vancouver's skid row section, Downtown Eastside. The author describes this area as destitute and rife with single room-occupancy hotels and countless drug pushers and addicts. In moving profiles, he chronicles the area's downslide since the early 1990s. The drug epidemic's stronghold on this particular Vancouver sector is intensified but also humanized by the stories of the well-organized efforts of the many activists who have provided counseling, compassionate assistance, and radical solutions through the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users, which was founded in 1998. The roadblocks were monumental, including political invisibility, controversies surrounding supervised injection sites and overdose prevention programs, and efforts to destigmatize the addicts and their behaviors. Most inspiring are the stories of those rallying for the rights of users and advocating for interventional drug and harm reduction programs with adequate follow-up measures. Lupick also checks in with several other major American cities—Boston, Seattle, Miami, San Francisco, Toledo—to show their progress on combating the drug-abuse epidemics. The author highlights many unconventional approaches to fighting the onslaught of drug deaths, how these singular techniques are working, and what needs refinement to improve the odds. In addition to chronicling the desperation of addicts and how entire neighborhoods can buckle beneath the weight of drug dependency, Lupick also provides significant insight into the movement to destigmatize the opioid abuse epidemic with efforts to reclassify it as a health problem and to combat it with methods of harm reduction rather than criminal policing. He

brings the reality of the perennial war on drugs into vivid focus and introduces an impressive group of activists confronting this “ongoing struggle” with steely determination and compassion.

An intense, riveting report on a public health crisis and a network of heroes on the front lines.



ROOM TO DREAM

Lynch, David J. & McKenna, Kristine

Random House (592 pp.)

\$32.00 | Jun. 12, 2018

978-0-399-58919-5

It takes a tag-team effort to tell this ambitious life of the enigmatic filmmaker and artist.

Lynch (*Catching the Big Fish: Meditation, Consciousness, and Creativity*, 2006) has always been an outsider when it comes to

his films, art, and photography, so it comes as no surprise that this dual biography/autobiography is “strange,” as the authors describe it. Journalist and friend McKenna (*The Ferus Gallery: A Place to Begin*, 2009, etc.) pens an insightful, well-researched, conventional biography in chapters drawing mostly on interviews. Lynch’s chapters follow hers, responding like “a person having a conversation with his own biography.” Inevitably, there is repetition, and it’s not uncommon for McKenna to tell a story one way and Lynch to tell it differently. Lynch comes across as an amiable, chatty fellow who wears his brilliance lightly. He writes lovingly of his “dreamy,” itinerant, middle-class childhood where the roots for his films were first planted. He enthusiastically describes how he felt after receiving an American Film Institute grant that would allow him to make his first feature film, *Eraserhead*. McKenna writes that “John Waters encouraged his fans” to see it, and Stanley Kubrick “loved” it. It also got Mel Brooks’ attention, and he asked Lynch to direct *The Elephant Man* for his production company. Lynch describes making the film as a “baptism of fire.” It was “a beautiful story and a beautiful experience and it’s timeless.” Next came *Dune*, which “brought him to his knees,” McKenna writes—but it also “helped clarify precisely who he is as a filmmaker.” It was a “good thing,” Lynch responds, “to have a humiliating major failure.” In the end, Lynch sums it all up: “It’s impossible to really tell the story of somebody’s life, and the most we can hope to convey here is a very abstract ‘Rosebud.’”

Although an awkward read, the book abounds in great stories and terrific movie trivia that will sate Lynch fans for years to come.



SEEDS OF SCIENCE Why We Got It So Wrong On GMOs

Lynas, Mark

Bloomsbury Sigma (288 pp.)

\$27.00 | Jun. 26, 2018

978-1-4729-4698-0

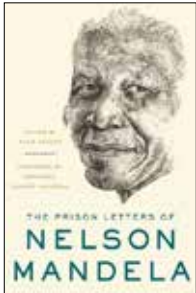
An environmental science writer takes a deep look at the ramifications of genetically modified organisms over the past four decades.

In the 1990s, Lynas (*Nuclear 2.0: Why a Green Future Needs Nuclear Power*, 2014, etc.) was not content to just march against GMOs; he would wade into test plots at night, swinging a machete at the Frankenplants. However, he admits that he didn’t really know a strand of DNA from a corn tassel, so he began intensive research on GMOs. Fortunately, by the late 1990s, there was a large body of work on GMOs, plenty of it suggesting a healthy side to their nature. In the 1980s, writes the author, “we were against the whole forward march of scientific research in the area of biotechnology and the idea of technological control over intimate life processes such as reproduction.” As Lynas dug deeper into the literature—from Greenpeace to the National Academy of Sciences, respected peer-reviewed journals to the “low-ranking journal called *Environmental Sciences Europe*”—he found compelling examples of GMOs doing good, especially regarding the diminished need for cropland and increased production with less insecticide intervention. The author moves back and forth through time, charting changes in attitude as the results came in. For example, in 1974, the NAS voiced “serious concern that these artificial recombinant-DNA could prove biologically hazardous.” Then in 1987, they claimed that the risks associated with GMOs were “the same as those associated with the introduction of unmodified organisms.” Lynas is aghast that biosafety laws have been stymied by anti-GMO advocates in famine-scorched lands. He is also wary of pesticide and herbicide use and the costs associated with GMOs for poor farmers. He understands patents as a spur for research, but he is appalled that nearly half the corn crop—monocultured, government-supported—goes to biofuels.

In this well-tempered, smoothly written book, Lynas calls for balance. Suspicion of all scientific discoveries will lead to further famine and global warming, while unscrutinized experimentation is prone to folly and corporate profit-gouging.

A necessary, intimate portrait of the great leader.

THE PRISON LETTERS OF NELSON MANDELA



THE PRISON LETTERS OF NELSON MANDELA

Mandela, Nelson.

Venter, Sahm—Ed.

Liveright/Norton (640 pp.)

\$35.00 | Jul. 10, 2018

978-1-63149-117-7



An epistolary memoir of Nelson Mandela's prison years.

From August 1962 to February 1990, Mandela (1918-2013) was imprisoned by the apartheid state of South Africa. During his more than 27 years in prison, the bulk of which he served on the notorious Robben Island prison off the shores of Cape Town, he wrote thousands of letters to family and friends, lawyers and fellow African National Congress members, prison officials, and members of the government. Heavily censored for both content and length, letters from Robben Island and South Africa's other political prisons did not always reach their intended targets; when they did, the censorship could make them virtually unintelligible. To assemble this vitally important collection, Venter (*A Free Mind: Ahmed Katbrada's Notebook from Robben Island*, 2006, etc.), a longtime Johannesburg-based editor and journalist, pored through these letters in various public and private archives across South Africa and beyond as well as Mandela's own notebooks, in which he transcribed versions of these letters. The result is a necessary, intimate portrait of the great leader. The man who emerges is warm and intelligent and a savvy, persuasive, and strategic thinker. During his life, Mandela was a loving husband and father, a devotee of the ANC's struggle, and capable of interacting with prominent statesmen and the ANC's rank and file. He was not above flattery or hard-nosed steeliness toward his captors as suited his needs, and he was always yearning for freedom, not only—or even primarily—for himself, but rather for his people, a goal that is the constant theme of this collection and was the consuming vision of his entire time as a prisoner. Venter adds tremendous value with his annotations and introductions to the work as a whole and to the book's various sections.

A valuable contribution to our understanding of one of history's most vital figures.



ONE DAY YOU'LL THANK ME Lessons from an Unexpected Fatherhood

McGlynn, David

Counterpoint (272 pp.)

\$25.00 | Jun. 5, 2018

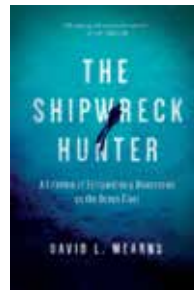
978-1-64009-039-2

A father shares stories of his childhood and those of his two sons.

McGlynn (*A Door in the Ocean*, 2012, etc.) was not expecting to become a father when he did. When he and his wife found out their first

child was on the way, he gulped nervously and moved into the role with a mixture of trepidation and elation. The author gathers tales of his two young sons and of his own childhood into an entertaining, humorous, and enlightening series of essays on fatherhood. Readers learn of his longing for his father, who divorced his mother and moved away when the author was 12. Suddenly, his father's physical presence was reduced to a few weeks during the year, so McGlynn learned snippets of wisdom on growing into adulthood over the telephone, a touching memory of a pre-digital era. The author also shares moments of pride: watching his son at his first swim meet, supporting him at basketball games, and seeing him use the author's old skateboard. McGlynn doesn't ignore his struggles with his children: trying to discipline them when they used profanity, told their classmates that Santa was dead, or would not go to sleep at night. Throughout, the author's love for his children is palpable, as is his feeling of achievement at having done the best that he could regardless of the situation. He and his wife have favored a smaller home in order to have more money for travel, giving up material goods for the chance to create lasting memories with their children, and he hopes they appreciate that approach as they grow into adults and have their own children. Overall, the book is neither shallow nor profound but a pleasing blend of humor and humility that shows what it means to be a father in America today.

A father tells timeless, funny, and honest stories of raising boys.



THE SHIPWRECK HUNTER A Lifetime of Extraordinary Discoveries on the Ocean Floor

Mearns, David L.

Pegasus (416 pp.)

\$28.95 | Jun. 5, 2018

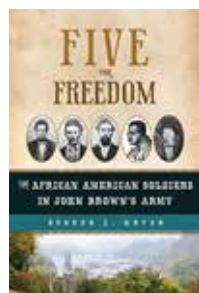
978-1-68177-760-3

In his first book to be published in the United States, famed shipwreck hunter Mearns (*The Search for the Sydney*, 2009, etc.) provides an engrossing collection of his most exciting undersea finds.

With stories that would befit an adventure novel, the author recounts seven of his dramatic shipwreck journeys, including a number of famed World War II ships (like the HMS *Hood* and the HMAS *Sydney*), a 15th-century vessel belonging to Vasco da Gama's fleet, and commercial freighters featuring sordid histories straight out of a soap opera. Beyond the stories of the ships themselves, Mearns, a fellow of the Royal Geographic Society and the Explorers Club, shows how the life of a shipwreck hunter is itself dramatic and fraught with risk. "I have experienced," he writes, "just about every emotion imaginable for a person in charge of such costly and technically complex adventures....Searching for shipwrecks is basically an all-or-nothing proposition, where you either find what you are looking for or go home empty-handed." The chapters are only loosely connected,

with little overarching narrative arc, but the author does well to keep his tales highly entertaining and understandable for lay readers. Mearns doesn't ignore the necessary technical detail, but he smartly keeps it to a minimum. At the end, the author includes two ships he'd yet like to find, but one of them—the USS *Indianapolis*—was located in 2017. While Robert Ballard's 1985 discovery of the *Titanic* remains the most famous individual shipwreck find (and therefore made him the most famous hunter as well), Mearns deserves a spot in the upper echelon of deep-sea explorers, not only for his work of finding lost wrecks, but also for his continued efforts, along with the oceanographic community, to map the entire ocean floor.

A touch overlong but required reading for any maritime enthusiast.



FIVE FOR FREEDOM
The African American
Soldiers in John Brown's
Army

Meyer, Eugene L.
 Chicago Review (304 pp.)
 \$26.99 | Jun. 1, 2018
 978-1-61373-571-8

Former *Washington Post* reporter and editor Meyer (*Chesapeake Country*, 2015, etc.) rights a wrong older than the Civil

War: Five African-American men made up 25 percent of John Brown's crew at Harpers Ferry. Until the 2009 sesquicentennial, they were never mentioned.

Fleeing escapees found a safe haven in Oberlin, Ohio, an integrated city strongly linked to Brown, whose father was a trustee of the college. The Great Compromise of 1850, which included the Fugitive Slave Act, drove not only escaped slaves, but also fearful free African-Americans to move. A great number settled in Ontario and built a thriving community. Dangerfield Newby was a former slave who joined Brown to rescue his wife and children, still held in slavery and under threat of being sold south. Shields Green, an escaped slave from Charleston, was living with Frederick Douglass when Brown came seeking support from Douglass in his efforts to free the slaves. Douglass turned him down, but Green joined up. Brown held a meeting to set up a free government of liberated slaves in Virginia. Osborne Anderson served as secretary and was the only one joining Brown—chosen by lottery as it turned out. In Oberlin, John Copeland told his family he was leaving to teach in a colored school, and Lewis Leary just left his family to join the fight. It's difficult to say if any of these men truly understood Brown's intention to take the arsenal and use a slave army in a full-scale assault on federal power. Brown only had 19 men with him; in the end, he moved the date up by a week, preventing support from many who couldn't get there in time. Fresh in the minds of the state and federal governments was Nat Turner's murderous rebellion, and defenders struck back hard. Though the raid failed, it is widely viewed as the opening round of the American Civil War. The author delivers a

well-researched, approachable narrative, but the final section, about the men's descendants, is overkill.

A good book for Civil War buffs. (15 b/w illustrations)



BARREL-AGED STOUT AND
SELLING OUT
Goose Island, Anheuser-
Busch, and How Craft Beer
Became Big Business

Noel, Josh
 Chicago Review (384 pp.)
 \$19.99 | Jun. 1, 2018
 978-1-61373-721-7

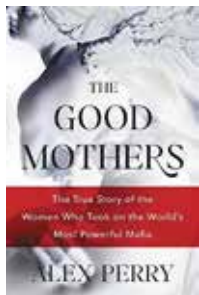
Mass-produced beer? You're soaking in it—and sometimes, as this foamy exposé relates, under the guise of a trendy indie label.

Every hipster worthy of his chest-length beard may be a connoisseur of artisanal beer these days, but that wasn't always the case. Just a few decades ago, apart from homebrew wizards who made grog in their basements, the ordinary stuff of American consumption was watery, sudsy, corporate lager. Then came the pioneering heroes, foremost among them John and Greg Hall's Goose Island brewpub, a well-kept Chicago secret much beloved of drinkers. Goose Island innovated constantly, particularly by aging its brew in whiskey barrels, a technique that soon, as *Chicago Tribune* beer maven Noel writes, "became a necessity for any ambitious brewery." Goose Island plied a lonely trade for a time; as the author notes, "the only craft brands with velocity in the city were Sam Adams Boston Lager... and Pete's Wicked Ale." Even there, the most popular of Goose Island's many experiments was a blonde ale that was as close as it came to brewing a mass-produced beer. There's portent there, and in Goose Island's later production of a pilsner that was even closer to store-bought stuff, for when Anheuser-Busch came calling, the owners were only too glad to sell out, and to "the company that had spent decades thwarting the American beer industry with confusion, trickery, and dullness." That big companies swallow up the little innovators is a standard plank in corporate capitalism, and Noel's offended sensibility can be a little heavy-handed at times. However, Goose Island may prove an outlier, for, as the author also notes, whereas when Goose Island began, craft beers and their makers were rare, now there are northward of 2,500 breweries in the U.S., so that "after decades of Big Beer's bland dominance, American beer is rife with choice."

Fans of good beer will enjoy Noel's explorations, which make for a useful cautionary tale as well.

An impossible-to-put-down page-turner revealing the Mafia makeup and three courageous women who bore witness to save others.

THE GOOD MOTHERS



THE GOOD MOTHERS
The True Story of the Women Who Took on the World's Most Powerful Mafia

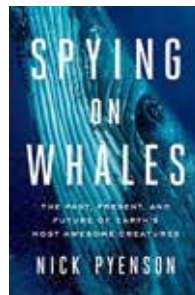
Perry, Alex
Morrow/HarperCollins (368 pp.)
\$27.99 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-0-06-265560-8



The highly compelling story of the women who dared to break omertà, the Mafia code of silence.

In fully developing his subjects, Perry (*The Rift: A New Africa Breaks Free*, 2015, etc.) shows remarkable empathy for their plights. The women were raised in Calabria, the home to the 'Ndrangheta, an arm of the Mafia, just like the Camorra of Naples and the Cosa Nostra of Sicily. Italy cracked down on the Sicilian Mafia in the early 1980s, outlawing any relationship, even familial. By the mid-2000s, Cosa Nostra was a shadow of itself. Then the 'Ndrangheta stepped in, took over the narcotics trade, and expanded it to a multibillion-euro business. In 2009, a prosecutor named Alessandra Cerreti was assigned to Calabria, and her tireless work uncovered the truth. In this captivating true-crime narrative, the author paints a frightening and intimate picture of women's misery under the rule of organized crime. Many were denied education, they knew their sons would end up murderers, and their daughters married early and were routinely abused. They were part of the clan, and voluntarily or not, women worked as messengers, bookkeepers, and heads of the business when their husbands were "unavailable." In the mid-1990s, 'Ndrangheta wife Lea Garofalo left her husband, taking her daughter to inform against the Mafia. She spent years in the witness protection program; unfortunately, her witness produced no arrests. Garofalo and her daughter hid for years, knowing her husband was following them. She eventually attempted reconciliation, knowing full well she would likely be murdered. Fortunately, she was not the only woman who was fed up with the misogynist tyranny and oppression of the "family." Giuseppina Pesce and Maria Concetta Cacciola were friends and were ready to talk. Both had children, and their information proved to be priceless. Desperate, their families used their children to try to get them back for the singular purpose of murdering them.

An impossible-to-put-down page-turner revealing the Mafia makeup and three courageous women who bore witness to save others.



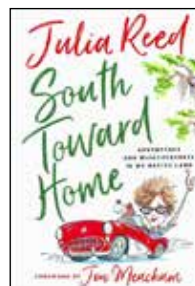
SPYING ON WHALES
The Past, Present, and Future of Earth's Most Awesome Creatures

Pyenson, Nick
Viking (336 pp.)
\$27.00 | Jun. 26, 2018
978-0-7352-2456-8

A paleontologist and self-styled whale chaser weaves his own adventures into a rich account of the largest creatures on our planet.

Pyenson, the curator of fossil marine mammals at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History and prolific author of scientific articles in newspapers and popular magazines, is both enthusiastic and highly knowledgeable about whales. His research has taken him around the globe, from the Atacama Desert in Chile to examine newly discovered whale skeletons to a whaling station in a fjord in Iceland, where whalers carve up freshly caught whales. He has looked for answers to his questions about their evolution, biology, and behavior in the Arctic and Antarctic, Panama, and North Carolina's Outer Banks. He vividly shows how scientists work and the significant physical demands required to extract fossils from sand and rocks and dissect blubber and flesh from bones. Pyenson divides his account into three parts: the past, the present, and the future. He asks questions about how whales evolved from four-legged land animals, how they grew so big, how and what they eat, how they live today, and what the age of the Anthropocene holds for them. Although the book is packed with information, the author is quick to remind readers that, even among scientists, much about whales remains unknown. Many fossils that would reveal their evolution have not been found, and their behavior is often hidden in the deep ocean world. One particularly intriguing question arises: What can humans learn about surviving in a changing world from these creatures who for millennia have survived on a planet where oceans rose and fell and land masses shifted?

What keeps readers going in this occasionally challenging work are Pyenson's clear love of his subject, his thrill at making a scientific discovery, and his depiction of the world of scientists at work.



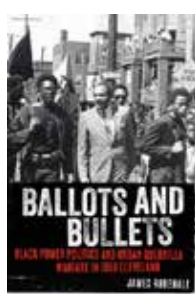
SOUTH TOWARD HOME
Adventures and Misadventures in My Native Land

Reed, Julia
St. Martin's (256 pp.)
\$25.99 | Jul. 31, 2018
978-1-250-16634-0

A Mississippi native returns to the South to revel in the "typically jarring contradictions" of Dixie.

Garden & Gun contributing editor Reed (*Julia Reed's South: Spirited Entertaining and High-Style Fun All Year Long*, 2016, etc.) logged time in newsrooms up North, but she found it necessary, in time, to get herself back home. Even though "it's hot as hell, the mosquitoes are murderous, and we all might be half crazy," there's something about the region that can't be bottled up and carried away. In this scattering of essays, the author hits on some of the high points and plenty of the low, perhaps the lowest being the whole Honey Boo Boo thing, which a friend of hers characterized with rough poetic justice as "Peckerwood Mayhem." For her part, Reed wryly notes the oddity of the fact that the show appeared on a network once called The Learning Channel. The author demonstrates an indexical bent, enumerating the things that make the South what it is: the highest incidence of diabetes, a still-high number of cigarette smokers, "the most violent crime, the most guns, and the most shooting deaths." In all this, she paints with a surprisingly broad brush given that the South is really a concatenation of Souths: Virginia is not Alabama is not Texas, despite some shared rounded vowels. Reed makes for a knowing commentator on debutante balls, pecan pies, and the relative merits of Scotch versus bourbon. Still, the collection sometimes hangs together too loosely, as if an excuse to pull together Reed's columns from her magazine. There's nothing terrible in it, but the disquisitions on such things as whether women should carry flasks ("they are also crucial to have on hand in times of stress, duress, or just plain boredom) and a playlist of Southern tunes (featuring, natch, "Sweet Home Alabama") seem to be mostly filler.

A mixed bag but useful for explaining the South to Yankees—and perhaps to some Southerners, too.



BALLOTS AND BULLETS
Black Power Politics and
Urban Guerrilla Warfare in
1968 Cleveland

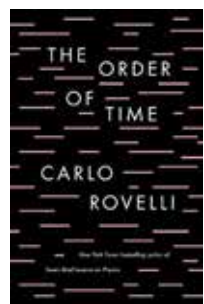
Robenalt, James
 Chicago Review (304 pp.)
 \$27.99 | Jul. 1, 2018
 978-0-89733-703-8

A detailed account of the shooting deaths of police and self-described black nationalists on July 23, 1968, in Cleveland.

Cleveland-based lawyer and author Robenalt (*January 1973: Watergate, Roe v. Wade, Vietnam, and the Month that Changed America Forever*, 2015, etc.) devotes roughly 75 percent of the book to Cleveland's historical racism (both individual and systemic) and conditions that led to the shootout. Some of the characters and their personal histories within the Cleveland metropolitan area are so specific that non-Cleveland readers might feel adrift. Others, however, contribute to a story that was being played out in similar fashion across the United States, as the author appropriately explains. And the cast of characters at the end of the book is especially helpful. A major narrative thread involves the seeming anomaly of African-American politician Carl Stokes being elected mayor just eight months

before the fatal day. As the first black mayor of a large American city, Stokes was poised to ameliorate racial tensions; Robenalt offers explanations about why that failed to occur. "Stokes was elected in an apparent triumph of the ballot over the bullet," writes the author. "But even his election could not turn back the generations of frustration, anger, and neglect." In addition, the author provides sometimes-surprising insights on why visits to Cleveland by Martin Luther King Jr. upset some of the leading individuals on both sides of the racial divide. Naturally, Clevelanders hoped that those directly responsible for the carnage—three police dead, 12 police wounded, at least three black nationalists dead and one wounded, at least two civilians dead from the crossfire—would face severe punishment. The leader of the black nationalists who fired shots did face trial in a Cleveland court, and a jury sentenced him to death. One fact about the trial highlighted the systemic racism contributing to the shootout: The jury was all white.

A painstakingly reported, clearly written case study that is all too relevant today.



THE ORDER OF TIME
 Rovelli, Carlo
 Trans. by Segre, Erica & Carnell, Simon
 Riverhead (256 pp.)
 \$20.00 | May 18, 2018
 978-0-7352-1610-5

Undeterred by a subject difficult to pin down, Italian theoretical physicist Rovelli (*Reality Is Not What It Seems: The Journey to Quantum Gravity*, 2017, etc.) explains his thoughts on time.

Other scientists have written primers on the concept of time for a general audience, but Rovelli, who also wrote the bestseller *Seven Brief Lessons on Physics*, adds his personal musings, which are astute and rewarding but do not make for an easy read. "We conventionally think of time," he writes, "as something simple and fundamental that flows uniformly, independently from everything else, uniformly from the past to the future, measured by clocks and watches. In the course of time, the events of the universe succeed each other in an orderly way: pasts, presents, futures. The past is fixed, the future open... And yet all of this has turned out to be false." Rovelli returns again and again to the ideas of three legendary men. Aristotle wrote that things change continually. What we call "time" is the measurement of that change. If nothing changed, time would not exist. Newton disagreed. While admitting the existence of a time that measures events, he insisted that there is an absolute "true time" that passes relentlessly. If the universe froze, time would roll on. To laymen, this may seem like common sense, but most philosophers are not convinced. Einstein asserted that both are right. Aristotle correctly explained that time flows in relation to something else. Educated laymen know that clocks register different times when they move or experience gravity. Newton's absolute exists, but as a special case in Einstein's curved space-time. According to Rovelli, our notion of time

The author deftly plumbs the depths of Mary's psyche to enlighten us about both Shelleys and reveal the profound effects they had on each other.

IN SEARCH OF MARY SHELLEY

dissolves as our knowledge grows; complex features swell and then retreat and perhaps vanish entirely. Furthermore, equations describing many fundamental physical phenomena don't require time.

As much a work of philosophy as of physics and full of insights for readers willing to work hard.



IN SEARCH OF MARY SHELLEY *The Girl Who Wrote Frankenstein*

Sampson, Fiona
Pegasus (336 pp.)
\$28.95 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-1-68177-752-8

A fresh biography of Mary Shelley (1797-1851), who created the monster that has become "part of our shared imagination."

Mary's mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, died just after she was born, leaving her and her older, illegitimate sister, Fanny, to be raised by her father, William Godwin. Since her parents were two of the leading political philosophers of the time, Mary received a fine education in the humanities, developing her reasoning skills. Godwin was also an anarchist and utilitarian who seemed to approve of the Romantic poets and free love—except for Percy Shelley. As his protégé, Shelley met Mary when she was 16, and he was married with a pregnant wife. They soon ran off to Europe and took Mary's stepsister, Jane, with them. Throughout the marriage, they shared their talents and supported and encouraged each other. But Shelley handled money poorly, and they soon had to return to London to the first of innumerable homes throughout Europe. Jane, who soon changed her name to Claire, met and fell for Lord Byron and persuaded Percy and Mary to meet up with him at Lake Geneva. As Sampson (*Lytic Cousins: Poetry and Musical Form*, 2016, etc.) shows in this perceptive biography, it was there that *Frankenstein* was born, with Byron's challenge to write ghost stories. Begun when she was 19, Mary's novel, often considered the first work of science fiction, was finished and published before she was 21. With it, she changed the face of fiction, revealing the experimental spirit of the Romantic period. Unfortunately, their marriage was also experimental and filled with inequities. Shelley was a firm believer in free love, particularly for himself. After a series of pregnancies and only one surviving child, Mary still believed in their love, even more so after his death. Throughout, Sampson demonstrates why the story of Shelley and *Frankenstein* remains so intriguing, even today.

The author deftly plumbs the depths of Mary's psyche to enlighten us about both Shelleys and reveal the profound effects they had on each other.



WHY TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD MATTERS *What Harper Lee's Book and the Iconic American Film Mean to Us Today*

Santopietro, Tom
St. Martin's (320 pp.)
\$26.99 | Jun. 19, 2018
978-1-250-16375-2

A detailed account of a classic novel's context, transformation, and acclaim.

Translated into 40 languages, with sales of some 40 million copies since its publication in 1960, Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* has become famous worldwide. Adapted on film, it earned its star, Gregory Peck, an Oscar for his portrayal of Atticus Finch, a role that defined him for the rest of his career. In an affectionate homage, media journalist and Broadway show manager Santopietro (*The Sound of Music Story: How a Beguiling Young Novice, A Handsome Austrian Captain, and Ten Singing von Trapp Children Inspired the Most Beloved Film of All Time*, 2015, etc.) asserts that Lee's novel still sends a relevant message to 21st-century readers. "By wrapping a nostalgic look back at childhood around a clear-eyed gaze at how racism diminishes and damages an entire community," he maintains, Lee offers a way to perceive "America's racial history with a fresh set of eyes." Most of Santopietro's book, though, does not elaborate any more deeply on why Lee's novel matters, or to whom. He covers ground that Joseph Crespino examined in his recently published *Atticus Finch: Lee's youth in Alabama; her relationship with her father, a lawyer and model for Atticus; her friendship with Truman Capote; the prolonged writing and revising of the novel, which became an immediate bestseller; and her subsequent writing career, which ended in the long-awaited publication of *Go Set a Watchman*. To this biographical overview, Santopietro adds a close look at the movie's creation: with Alan Pakula as producer, Robert Mulligan as director, and Horton Foote as screenwriter; and with Gregory Peck (rather than Lee's ardent hope of Spencer Tracy) to play Atticus. The author details casting decisions, especially the search for the perfect girl to play Scout; and the work of designing costumes and constructing sets on the Universal backlot to bring Lee's Alabama town to life. He conveys, as well, critics' reception of the movie and summarizes the major figures' post-*Mockingbird* careers.*

For *Mockingbird* and Harper Lee devotees.

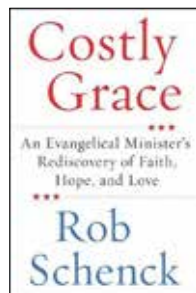


CANCERLAND
A Medical Memoir
Scadden, David with D'Antonio, Michael
 Dunne/St. Martin's (320 pp.)
 \$27.99 | Jul. 10, 2018
 978-1-250-09275-5

Stories of loss and hope from distinguished Harvard oncologist Scadden.

Having spent much of his career on the cancer battlegrounds, the author writes with authority that cancer is an “immutable fact of life.” When Scadden was growing up in the 1950s, he was confused and traumatized by the cancer deaths of three people he knew. As a medical student at Case Western Reserve University, the author encountered his first patient cases, which prepared him for a livelihood built on a delicate combination of medical precision and compassionate humanity. Scadden shares poignant and moving anecdotes of his patients as a student earning a real-world medical education—e.g., learning about childbirth from a gracious pregnant woman or delivering a devastating prognosis to a lymphoma victim. The author’s account of the personal pain of watching his own parents navigate cancer treatments leads into a probing discussion on how far early formative therapies have evolved, including how his work with stem cell research has branched out to encompass a wide array of afflictions. Scadden effectively weaves in clinical information on viral growth, research studies from a variety of medical revolutionaries, dissections of the early misconceptions and physiological mechanics of cancer, and a timeline for the AIDS epidemic, which he believes “gave every doctor, nurse, therapist, or technician the chance to become a better caregiver.” As co-founder of the Harvard Stem Cell Institute, Scadden is partly responsible for numerous medical breakthroughs through bone marrow stem cell research. He reminds readers that those dismal days of scant hope are gone and that the promise of modern technology and radical curative immunotherapies (including those he continues to develop) is making cancer a disease “that changes people’s lives, but [is] something they can speak of in past tense.” Lay readers may want to skirt around the book’s later chapters, laden with frequently complex medical jargon, to get to the heart and soul of Scadden’s passion.

Illuminating reading on the legacy of a cancer authority.



COSTLY GRACE
An Evangelical Minister's
Rediscovery of Faith, Hope,
and Love

Schenck, Rob
 Harper/HarperCollins (352 pp.)
 \$26.99 | Jun. 5, 2018
 978-0-06-268793-7

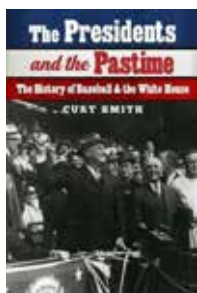
Christian activist and minister Schenck provides a provocative autobiography centered on the evolution of his life as a person of faith.

Born into a nominally Jewish family, the author and his identical twin brother, Paul, shocked their parents by converting to Christianity as teenagers and, soon thereafter, jumping headlong into evangelical ministry. While still rather young, the brothers moved wholeheartedly into the nascent anti-abortion movement of the late 1980s. From the rise of Operation Rescue, Schenck describes in page-turning detail his life at the heart of the abortion controversy. The author seems to have been at almost every important event and turning point as evangelical Christianity reached its zenith of political influence in the George W. Bush years—and as it began a slide into confusion, infighting, and muddled morality over the past decade. Having set himself up in Washington, D.C., targeting politicians and others of influence, Schenck became a well-known face of the religious right, often conferring with members of Congress and being interviewed by the press. But years of fame, travel, legal troubles, and near zealotry took their toll on the author and his family. Early in the Barack Obama era, an encounter with the works of German writer Dietrich Bonhoeffer caused Schenck to re-evaluate his ministry and his priorities, including his involvement with “the politicized religion that had infected me and millions of others back in the eighties, when American evangelicals entered into their Faustian pact with Ronald Reagan’s party.” The author’s seemingly sudden change from a card-carrying fundamentalist to a moderate on almost all controversial issues may be difficult to grasp, but some readers may be most startled by what Schenck put his wife and children through during three decades of unabated activism.

An informative book that leaves the author exposed throughout as the center of attention, as opposed to God.

A stellar exploration of the complexities and limitations of gender.

UNBOUND



THE PRESIDENTS AND THE PASTIME *The History of Baseball and the White House*

Smith, Curt

Univ. of Nebraska (472 pp.)

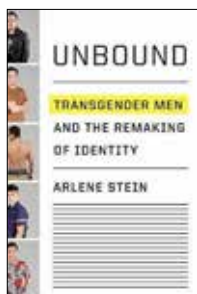
\$29.95 | Jun. 1, 2018

978-0-8032-8809-6

An exhaustive look at the relationship between the chief executive of the United States and baseball.

A young John Adams played a precursor of baseball called “one old cat.” Theodore Roosevelt had no use for the game, preferring football. Young Donald Trump was skilled enough to merit visits from scouts for the Philadelphia Phillies and the Boston Red Sox. From George Washington to Barack Obama, baseball and its antecedents have coexisted with the highest political office in the land. Smith (English/Univ. of Rochester), a former speechwriter for George H.W. Bush and the author of *Voices of the Game* (1987) and *George H.W. Bush: Character at the Core* (2014), among other books, chronicles the relationship in considerable detail. The author provides many interesting stories and anecdotes. Legendary Washington Senators pitcher Walter “Big Train” Johnson once missed a no-hitter when a line drive hit the secretary of the Senate—who was standing behind outfield ropes frequently deployed at the time for sold-out games—and fell in for a hit. First lady Grace Coolidge was an avid fan of the game. In 1934, three New York City major league teams imposed a five-year radio ban, afraid that few would pay to attend a ballgame when they could hear it for free. Ronald Reagan and legendary Dodgers announcer Vin Scully lived on the same street in Pacific Palisades, California. Yet these contributions are compromised by several of Smith’s stylistic idiosyncrasies, including repeated use of the first-person, extensive quotes, references to his own text (“as chapter five will show,” “as noted earlier,” etc.), and awkward directives to readers. Furthermore, the book is simply too long: Smith seemingly details every pennant race and World Series from William Howard Taft to Obama, no matter the connection to the president in office at the time.

Informative and amusing, but readers hoping for a brisk and engaging history of the relationship between baseball and the presidency will be disappointed.



UNBOUND *Transgender Men and the Remaking of Identity*

Stein, Arlene

Pantheon (336 pp.)

\$26.95 | Jun. 5, 2018

978-1-5247-4745-9

A new sociological study on transgender individuals and their experience transitioning.



In her latest, gender theorist Stein (Sociology/Rutgers Univ.; *Reluctant Witnesses: Survivors, Their Children, and the Rise of Holocaust Consciousness*, 2014, etc.) follows the lives of four individuals who have gone through the process of transitioning from female to male. The author states that her book is a “group portrait of those who choose to remake their bodies and lives using the tools they have at their disposal.” Stein spent considerable time with her subjects, Ben, Parker, Lucas, and Nadia, each one existing at different levels of the transgender spectrum. Ben, who grew up in a highly supportive environment, never identified as a woman; he had large breasts and struggled on a daily basis with his body image. As a result, he started hormonal treatments and eventually underwent top surgery to fully transition from female to male. Parker is a prototypical Californian, though he is from Virginia. Muscular and blond, he referred to himself as a “gurl” and dressed as a tomboy. He was outspoken and refused to wear the clothes his parents wanted him to wear as a girl. Lucas’ identity fits near the intersection of male and female—i.e., he identifies neither as a man nor a woman but rather “somewhere masculine of center.” Finally, Nadia wishes to modify her body but still wants to be recognized as a woman. Stein takes readers on each one of these individual’s incredible journeys, shedding a rigorous, respectful, and highly studied light on the experience of transgender individuals today. For example, “transgender men,” she writes, “are not simply retrieving the male that resides within; they’re also creating themselves.” This significant book provides medical, sociological, and psychological information that can only serve to educate those lacking understanding and awareness of an entire community of individuals who deserve representation.

A stellar exploration of the complexities and limitations of gender.



SIREN SONG *My Life in Music*

Stein, Seymour with Murphy, Gareth

St. Martin’s (352 pp.)

\$28.99 | Jun. 12, 2018

978-1-250-08101-8

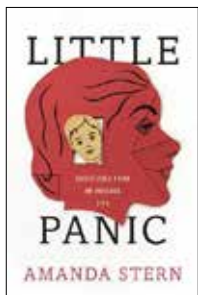
A memoir detailing the 1966 founding of Sire Records and the author’s journey through six decades in the music industry discovering talent like the Talking Heads, the Ramones, Madonna, and

many others.

Of all the great music men who emerged from the 1960s record industry—from the Ertegun brothers of Atlantic Records to Warner’s Mo Ostin, Morris Levy, Jerry Wexler, and Berry Gordy—Stein has one of the most nuanced stories. As the author explains, from his late teens, he knew music was his destiny: “I’d lie on my bed, studying the small print on the sleeves: King, Apollo, Mercury, Aladdin, Excelsior, Atlantic, Miracle, Sun, Chess, Vee-Jay, Modern...all these castles and flags from across the land.” After a couple of years working at *Billboard* magazine, learning the charts and grooming himself as a music

journalist, Stein landed with Syd Nathan, the recording legend and founder of King Records, who showed him the “shellac in his veins.” Why merely write about music when you can be making music history—and real money? Convinced, Stein packed it up and did two summer internships with Nathan in Cincinnati, where he learned every function of the King empire. Within years, the author had earned lots of money and enough experience to co-found his own label, Sire Records. With Sire, he spent the next couple of decades signing major acts—e.g., Madonna, Depeche Mode, Echo and the Bunnymen—and became a pioneer of the new wave, punk, and post-punk genres along the way. Intertwined with behind-the-scenes tales of mayhem and craziness of the 1970s and ’80s, Stein weaves down-to-earth storytelling about his Jewish upbringing in 1950s Brooklyn and his childhood fascination with Coney Island and how it stoked his young imagination, leading to his future life in music.

A sometimes-gritty, sometimes-charming memoir that pays tribute to the American recording industry. (two 16-page color photo inserts)



LITTLE PANIC
Dispatches from an Anxious Life

Stern, Amanda
Grand Central Publishing (400 pp.)
\$27.00 | Jun. 19, 2018
978-1-5387-1192-7

Stern (*The Long Haul*, 2003) offers a searing memoir about her lifelong panic disorder.

In a series of mostly brief chapters, most of which could function as stand-alone mini-essays, the author proves, as other memoirists have before her, that looking away from a train wreck can be nearly impossible. The riveting story is mostly chronological, as Stern deals with her daily fears up to age 25, the age when a therapist finally provided the proper medical term for her outsized anxieties. “The matter-of-factness with which [the therapist has] said all these life-altering things astonishes me,” she writes of that revelation. “I’ve spent my entire life battling some impossible, invisible plague no one ever seemed to see, and this guy did it with such ease, as though panic disorder is easy to establish, obvious to anyone who would take the time to ask what my symptoms were; textbook, even.” At times, the author jumps ahead to the current decade, as she approaches 50. In her recent years, she has been thinking seriously about becoming a mother. As a result, she explores the science of freezing her eggs until she can identify a suitable sperm donor. Eventually, she decided that the move would be too risky. With a loving mother, a compassionate stepfather, stable siblings, admirable schoolteachers, and at least a couple of competent therapists, the author seemingly faced good odds of shedding her panic disorder and resulting anxieties. However, as she shows, she has had to battle anxieties nearly every day, with occasional patches of worry-free hours. In one of the chapters, Stern shares with readers a day-by-day account

of a full week, conveying what it is like inside her head. At the end of selected chapters, the author includes actual paragraphs from the reports of multiple therapists she consulted, sometimes willingly, sometimes under duress.

Stern is such a skilled stylist—and such an unforgiving judge of herself—that the memoir radiates a morbid fascination.



GOODBYE, SWEET GIRL
A Story of Domestic Violence and Survival

Sundberg, Kelly
Harper/HarperCollins (272 pp.)
\$26.99 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-0-06-249767-3

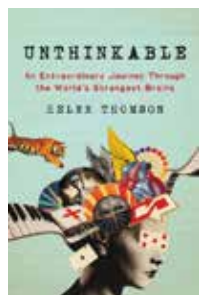
An essayist’s debut memoir about her decadelong struggle to leave a violent, emotionally unstable husband.

When Idaho native Sundberg met Caleb, whose “West Virginia drawl made him seem gentlemanly,” she had no idea that within six months, they would be engaged and pregnant. Both were in their 20s and equally unprepared for commitment. But the author chose to forget their relationship was neither “idyllic [n]or blissful” and “love him through my fear,” just as she had a childhood friend who had once chased her with a knife. Caleb’s dark side surfaced not long after their engagement, as they were returning from a hunting trip. Sundberg immediately assumed responsibility for his rage and felt “grateful” when he forgave her. Caleb’s sudden fits of anger soon became a permanent feature of their relationship, as did the heavy drinking he managed to keep hidden during their courtship. The author also discovered that Caleb had cheated on her with three women while they had been dating, but only after they had married. As with all of her husband’s other transgressions, she accepted his tearful apologies as proof that he would change. Sundberg became depressed enough that she sought out counseling. The therapist was able to name the destructive behaviors in her marriage for what they were: domestic violence. Nevertheless, the cycle of brutality and tenderness continued. Eventually, the author and her husband moved to West Virginia. There, the author began a graduate program and found the success Caleb did not have with his own writing. Only after an especially savage incident that required police and paramedic assistance was Sundberg finally able to move on from a broken relationship and begin the long process of healing her own life. By turns wrenching and lyrical, Sundberg’s book is an unflinching exploration of both domestic violence and one woman’s long, often painful evolution from codependence to self-respect.

A courageously honest memoir.

A user-friendly tour of the brain and the curious things that go on inside of it, from splendidly practical visions to debilitating hallucinations.

UNTHINKABLE



UNTHINKABLE
An Extraordinary Journey
Through the World's
Strangest Brains

Thomson, Helen

Ecco/HarperCollins (288 pp.)

\$27.99 | Jun. 26, 2018

978-0-06-239116-2

A user-friendly tour of the brain and the curious things that go on inside of it, from splendidly practical visions to debilitating hallucinations.

The brain is inseparable from the body, even if, writes *New Scientist* writer and consultant Thomson, “all too often we think about our brains as being somehow separate from ourselves.” Of course, the concept of “ourselves” is not uniform: We see broad variations in the capabilities and workings of the brain, from normal to abnormal and all points between. Some of the most extraordinary brains aren’t particularly interesting in the thoughts that they generate; one of Thomson’s case studies possesses what is called “highly superior autobiographical memory,” by which a person can recall just about every detail of every moment he has lived. There’s a reason we forget, of course: It’s an evolutionary adaptation that enhances survival so that we pay attention to the oncoming lion or truck rather than being constantly enthralled by lingering memories. “The brain doesn’t tolerate inactivity,” the late Oliver Sacks told Thomson in an interview. Indeed, the brain makes inventive use of its resources; thus it is that some people associate particular colors, musical notes, or even tastes with particular words, which is sometimes a blessing and sometimes a curse. Thomson introduces a lot of good neuroscience lightly, explaining how we perceive reality, such as it is (one of her informants calls reality “a controlled hallucination, reined in by our senses”), and check in with ourselves (“our ability to sense the physical condition of our body is called interoception”). A bonus, along the way, are the author’s notes on such things as improving memory skills through the construction of memory palaces and other event-fixing tricks and training the brain how not to get lost, a highly useful skill indeed.

Pleasant and accessible and of broader application than the title suggests, inasmuch as “we all have an extraordinary brain.”



JERUSALEM, DRAWN AND
QUARTERED
A Year Spent Living in the
Christian, Muslim, Armenian,
and Jewish Quarters of Old
Jerusalem

Tuttle-Singer, Sarah

Skyhorse Publishing (256 pp.)

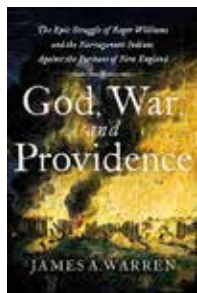
\$24.99 | Jun. 1, 2018

978-1-5107-2489-1

A memoir of a year spent in the Old City in the heart of today’s Jerusalem.

Tuttle-Singer, the new media editor at the *Times of Israel*, was enraptured with life in Jerusalem ever since her first youthful visit, and she remains in love with the Holy Land as a grown-up Israeli now living again in the ancient city. During the year she chronicles, the author lived part of each week on a communal moshav with her two young children. The rest of the week, she lived in the various quarters of the Old City, where the disparate Christian, Muslim, and Jewish cultures are encapsulated in one small spot on a map. “On the days I’m not with my kids,” she writes, “I’m in the Old City, because it’s one thing to understand this place through the thoroughfares, and it’s quite another to go behind the walls and see what’s hidden, what doesn’t meet the eye.” Tuttle-Singer enjoyed views from the city’s rooftops, watched Arab elders play backgammon, and danced with bar mitzvah celebrants. She delighted in such things as the “amazing” chicken-and-rice dish called makloubah and the wide variety of odors wafting through the city. She was friendly with merchants and became a confidante of many candid residents of the walled district. It wasn’t all charm and understanding, though. There were the nervous young soldiers carrying rifles and demonstrators throwing rocks. When she was 18, the author was stoned by Palestinian kids. During her youth in Los Angeles, she lost her mother, who now haunts her daughter’s impassioned memoir, which tends toward the operatic. Certain descriptive passages of the sounds and sights may be a bit rich for some readers, but Tuttle-Singer’s approachable personality will prevail for a good many more.

A quirky, novelistic tour as much about the author as Jerusalem.



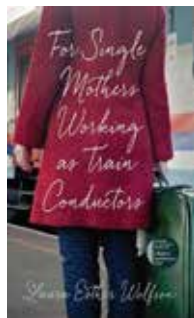
GOD, WAR, AND PROVIDENCE
The Epic Struggle of
Roger Williams and the
Narragansett Indians
Against the Puritans of
New England

Warren, James A.
 Scribner (304 pp.)
 \$30.00 | Jun. 12, 2018
 978-1-5011-8041-5

A historian revisits the bloody confrontations between American Indians and New England colonists in the mid-17th century, finding much behavior to deplore but one leader to admire.

Daily Beast contributor Warren (*Giap: The General Who Defeated America in Vietnam*, 2013, etc.) relies heavily (and explicitly) on the previous works of historians of the era, quoting extensively. But he also uses his contemporary viewpoint to analyze conflicts between the natives and the newer arrivals from England. Emerging as a towering figure of tolerance is Roger Williams (1603-1683), the Puritan minister who was determined to understand the local Narragansett and advocate for religious freedom and cultural tolerance. As Warren shows us—after rightly noting that the voices of the Indians are too often silent in the historical record—Williams, after establishing the Rhode Island colony, worked tirelessly on behalf of all; it was only when Puritan expansionism (and rampant lying and greed) grew intolerable that frontier warfare erupted. The fighting ended with predictable results, with mere numbers and superior firepower being the keys. Warren distinguishes himself by trying to understand all the motives of the principal players in this sad, sanguinary drama, but, as he reveals, it was basically the oldest story of all: people who believe their God is the only true one slaughtering those who beg to differ—and arrogating for themselves the losers' lands and property. There are several simultaneous stories going on, and the author handles them all deftly: Williams (his banishment from Massachusetts, his establishment of Rhode Island), the power of the Massachusetts and Connecticut Puritans, the struggles of the various Indian tribes in the region, the bloody battles, and colonial historiography in general.

A solid book of American history that will cause readers to grimace at the fire and fury and perhaps blush with shame for the suffering and the shamelessness.



FOR SINGLE MOTHERS
WORKING AS TRAIN
CONDUCTORS

Wolfson, Laura Esther
 Univ. of Iowa (144 pp.)
 \$19.95 paper | Jun. 1, 2018
 978-1-60938-581-1



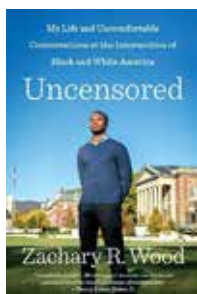
A translator's command of language belatedly finds her translating her own life.

Wolfson describes herself as working “in a difficult-to-name genre containing generous helpings of the lived, the observed and the overheard...[and a] blurring of distinctions that had long struck me as artificial and unnecessary.” In a volume that is more cohesive than a typical essay collection, the pieces flow together like memoir, though an elliptical one, in which the author is “omitting a lot, almost everything, in fact.” Yet her writing attests to a remarkable life, one rendered with a remarkable verbal facility. She long supported herself as a translator, primarily of Russian, a language she was inspired to learn in order to read *Anna Karenina*. She eventually did, but her deeper connection to the language resulted from her marriage to a Russian man, whom she divorced because he resisted having children even more than she wanted them. The book's odd title comes from her husband's insistence that if they were to have a child, they would need “twenty-four-hour day care.” Well after she had divorced him and married again, she learned that this was actually an option in Russia, “for single mothers working as train conductors,” and thus away from home for days on end. Wolfson subsequently spent years immersing herself in the study of Yiddish as a way of coming to terms with her own identity within a family of mostly nonobservant Jews. Then she suffered a collapsed lung, caused by a disease she couldn't pronounce. It was degenerative and usually fatal, making her pregnancy too great of a risk in her second marriage (which also collapsed). Where essayists often strain to find topics to muse about, this evocatively detailed and richly experienced writing reflects a life with no dearth of material. But as she tells an aspiring writer, “what's important about a book is not so much what happens in it, but how the writer tells it.” Wolfson unquestionably tells it well.

An impressive literary debut.

A pleasant book about the joys of close observation.

THE SECRET LIFE OF COWS



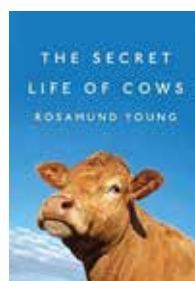
UNCENSORED *My Life and Uncomfortable Conversations at the Intersection of Black and White America*

Wood, Zachary R.
Dutton (272 pp.)
\$26.00 | Jun. 19, 2018
978-1-5247-4244-7

Still in his early 20s, Wood chronicles his arduous upbringing as a black male, including his 15 minutes of fame (so far) while a college student.

Growing up, the author developed impressive intelligence and a dedicated character, but he had to battle a controlling, abusive mother suffering from bipolar disorder, his parents' divorce, and struggles to pay for an elite education. The detailed accounting of his upbringing comprises more than three-quarters of the narrative; the renown does not arrive until Page 200. Wood was a student at Williams College in rural Massachusetts. Upset at the closed-minded nature of college students when given the opportunity to hear campus speakers sometimes labeled racist, sexist, homophobic, or politically extremist, the author became involved in the initiative Uncomfortable Learning. Some of the speakers he wanted to invite faced a veto from the Williams administration. Others, such as Charles Murray, were able to deliver their presentations and then engage in dialogue with the students. Wood received widespread national media attention as a result, and he is currently Robert L. Bartley fellow at the *Wall Street Journal*. The early part of the book, a mostly chronological account of Wood's challenging life, offers pointed insight into the struggles of growing up black among often wealthy whites. However, the circumstances of Wood's daily existence don't engage with enough universal truths about race, financial struggles, and other similar topics. The author, who writes well, is a sympathetic narrator, and he has unquestionably displayed an impressive work ethic and devotion to free speech. But after the insight offered through his personal history, the analysis tails off, and his father, one of the most intriguing characters in the story, is somewhat of a spectral presence. As he continues to mature, expect Wood to grow as a writer and further the dialogues he sketches here.

A memoir that would have radiated greater power as a long-form magazine article.



THE SECRET LIFE OF COWS

Young, Rosamund
Penguin Press (160 pp.)
\$23.00 | Jun. 12, 2018
978-0-525-55731-9

British farmer Young shows how she has continued her family's farming tradition, a moral, observant, and personal way of farming that predates the "organic" trend or even the use of the term.

"I hope that I am beginning here what began as an oral tradition," writes the author in this celebration of her farm, Kite's Nest, and her cows. Though the table of contents lists a number of chapters (a division Young resisted), there are actually two main parts to this short book. The first is a farming manifesto presenting the compelling argument that farm animals are more like individual people than most of us would ever suspect. They have their own personalities, levels of intelligence (that vary widely in some species), and common sense about what is best for them. They are naturally happy, until humans interfere. As the author notes, interfering with their happiness is not only immoral, it is bad farming: The milk and the meat taste worse, the animals are less healthy, and those who consume them will be as well. "Happy animals grow faster, stay healthier, cause fewer problems and provide more profit in the long run, when all factors, such as the effects on human health and the environment are taken into account," she writes. The longer second part of the book is a fondly annotated genealogy of the animals on her farm. We learn of the names of the animals, their individual temperaments and friendships, the preferences they develop for some humans over others, and their willingness to forgive or not (as perceived by the author). This part could have been much longer, the author insists, even if it had focused solely on "Amelia...an unusually delightful calf, more trusting and understanding than we would have thought possible....I could write for a thousand pages, listing every detail of Amelia's life, and I still would not have presented an even half-accurate picture of her."

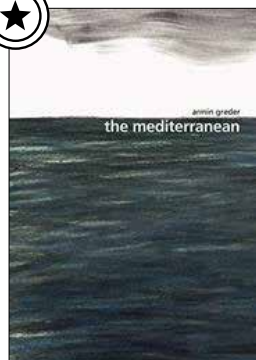
A pleasant book about the joys of close observation.

CHILDREN'S



These titles earned the Kirkus Star:

- AKISSI** by Marguerite Abouet; illus. by Mathieu Sapin; trans. by Judith Taboy & Marie Bédrupe..... 81
- RUN WILD** by David Covell..... 88
- RUNNING ON SUNSHINE** by Carolyn Cinami DeCristofano; illus. by Giovana Medeiros..... 88
- THE PRINCE AND THE PEE** by Greg Gormley; illus. by Chris Mould 93
- THE MEDITERRANEAN** by Armin Greder 94
- LITTLE ROBOT ALONE** by Patricia MacLachlan & Emily MacLachlan Charest; illus. by Matt Phelan 102
- THE DINOSAUR EXPERT** by Margaret McNamara; illus. by G. Brian Karas 103
- THE HYENA SCIENTIST** by Sy Montgomery; photos by Nic Bishop 104
- THE BARBER'S DILEMMA** by Koki Oguma & Gita Wolf; illus. by Koki Oguma..... 104
- HIZNOBYUTI** by Claude Ponti; trans. by Alyson Waters 106
- WALKING IS A WAY OF KNOWING** by Madhuri Ramesh & Manish Cbandi; illus. by Matthew Frame 107
- SUNNY** by Jason Reynolds..... 108
- SPELL & SPINDLE** by Michelle Schusterman; illus. by Katbrin Honesta..... 109
- SUN** by Sam Usber..... 112



THE MEDITERRANEAN
Greder, Armin
Allen & Unwin/Trafalgar (40 pp.)
\$25.99 | Jun. 1, 2018
978-1-76063-095-9



DENIS EVER AFTER

Abbott, Tony
Katherine Tegen/HarperCollins
(224 pp.)
\$16.99 | Jul. 23, 2018
978-0-06-249122-0

Denis returns from the afterlife to help his twin brother solve the mystery of how he died.

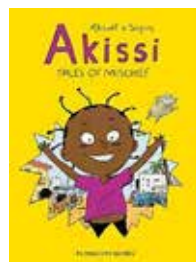
Narrator Denis has been dead for 5 years. Because the sojourn in Port Haven, Denis' post-death residence since he was 7, is about letting go of the threads of life, backward from dying, Denis doesn't remember what happened to him. Denis' twin, Matt, now 12, has found their father's file on his brother's disappearance from an amusement park and the subsequent discovery of the boy's body at the Georgia monument in Gettysburg, and he wants answers: What happened to Denis? Denis—hoping to help his brother find peace—goes through “the razor,” a frightening and painful process that allows the dead to visit the living. Together, with some help from Matt's best friend, Trey, they follow the few clues available to them, all the while navigating their parents' grief and distress. News of a car submerged in a quarry and a strange stalker add to the mystery, while red herrings, past violence and tragedies, and Denis' fragmented recollections intensify the challenge. The characters seem to be white. A great-uncle was gay, and Trey is someone whose gender Denis never figures out. Abbott keeps the tension high and the mystery dark and unsettling, leavening it with several flashes of humor and intriguing imaginative speculation about the dead.

Page-turning. (Mystery/ghost story. 10-13)



AKISSI Tales of Mischief

Abouet, Marguerite
Illus. by Sapin, Mathieu
Trans. by Taboy, Judith & Bédrupe, Marie
Flying Eye Books (188 pp.)
\$14.95 paper | May 8, 2018
978-1-911171-47-8



Compiled from a bestselling comics franchise in France, this import captures the hilarious misadventures of a township girl as she rewrites the bounds of African girlhood one comical short story at a time.

“Akissi, do you want to look beautiful?” her mother says as Akissi suffers the pain of getting her hair twisted. How does

ISLAM IN 32 PAGES



Photo courtesy Leah Overstreet

IN THIS ISSUE, we review two picture books related to Islam. Let us stop now and cheer that two picture books by and about Muslims—and published by mainstream houses, no less—are coming out in the same season, when it wasn't very long ago that an entire year could pass without a single one: Huzzah!

They make for an interesting juxtaposition. The first, *Crescent Moons and Pointed Minarets* (Apr. 10), by Hena Khan and illustrated by Mehrdokht Amini, is two concept books in one, introducing shapes and Islam at the same time. Children wash before prayers in an octagonal fountain, celebrants enter a mosque through its rectangular door, and so on. Each double-page spread depicts a different locale and, often, ethnic group within Islam, giving readers a sense of its global reach. But there's only so much a picture book can encompass, and some details lack nuance. Muslim readers in the U.S. will find a mirror, to be sure, but many may also find that their specific understandings and customs differ.



The other, *Saffron Ice Cream* (May 29), by Rashin Kheiriyeh, is a memoir that contrasts two trips to very different beaches: one on the Caspian Sea in Kheiriyeh's native Iran and the Coney Island beach in Brooklyn.



The child narrator recalls a moment when boys peeked through the curtain that separated men from women on the Iranian beach, only to be driven back by black-robed female beach guards. The excitement of the event is related in a perfectly child-like manner, with no interpretation for readers unfamiliar with Iranian Islam.

Again, there's only so much a picture book can do, and Kheiriyeh clearly opted to keep her story at a child's level rather than providing context—that's something that caregivers must provide where necessary.

Two books, one very general and one perfectly granular. Both crucial in a market starved of representations of Muslims, both inevitably inadequate due to this paucity. So cheer these two picture books—and root for more. —V.S.

Vicky Smith is the children's editor.

young Akissi respond? "No Mum! I want to be ugly and bald!" This is how the over-the-top story "Lice Games" begins as Akissi searches for a way out of these excruciating hairdo sessions by self-initiating her own head-lice infestation. Such mortifying premises can be found throughout this extended English compilation (containing the same seven stories as the 2013 volume of the same name, plus many more), taken to their unpredictable and uproarious conclusions. The rivalry between Akissi and her older brother, Fofana, takes the spotlight as the source of much ribbing and many pranks. In "Tattle Tattle, Toil and Trouble," Fofana squeaks out a win (possibly just until their parents find out...), while in "Midnight Pee," Akissi is able to get one over on him, leaving Fofana with surprise soiled laundry (yeah, it goes there) on an overnight camping trip with their grandparents. French artist Sapin provides the loose, colorful illustrations that accompany Abouet's tales, which take inspiration from her childhood growing up in the Yopougon neighborhood of Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

An unforgettable, boundary-busting, falling-over-funny collection that defies the narrow representations English-language readers receive of growing African girls—we stand desperately in need of more Akissi and more Abouet. (recipes) (*Graphic short stories*. 8-14)



ALEXANDER HAMILTON *A Plan for America*

Albee, Sarah

Illus. by Ko, Chin

Harper/HarperCollins (32 pp.)

\$16.99 | \$4.99 paper | May 1, 2018

978-0-06-243291-9

978-0-06-243290-2 paper

Albee and Ko take their shot at an early-reader biography about Alexander Hamilton.

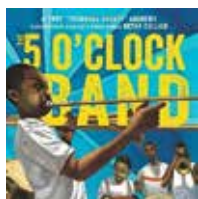
Emergent readers (and their caregivers) familiar with Lin-Manuel Miranda's hit musical *Hamilton* will be rewarded with what amounts to an illustrated highlights reel of the founding father's life. Albee opens in medias res by describing Hamilton as "a soldier, a lawyer, and a financial wizard," before the spare text quickly brings readers to Hamilton's Caribbean childhood, noting his father's abandonment, his mother's death, and his determined rise from poverty. He's presented as a trusted adviser to George Washington and rival to Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr, with Ko's accompanying digital art depicting him with a smiling man on horseback (Washington), while on the facing page, the two other men scowl. A later spread notes major differences between Jefferson and Hamilton, including acknowledgment that Jefferson enslaved people while "Hamilton was against slavery," but Washington's slave-owner status isn't named, nor is the American Revolution's impact on Indigenous peoples. Personal milestones, such as marriage to Eliza Schuyler, are noted alongside references to his involvement in the war and his work with the nascent American government. While his death occurs on the page, strategies to keep the text

Collier's characteristic collage illustrations effectively represent Troy's emotional struggle for self-improvement, and the level of detail in the images portrays the liveliness of New Orleans well.

THE 5 O'CLOCK BAND

within the comprehension of its audience risk undermining other historical content by omitting such terms as "revolution" and the Federalist Papers (though they do appear in backmatter).

Solid, if not revolutionary. (*Early reader/biography. 6-8*)



THE 5 O'CLOCK BAND

Andrews, Troy with Taylor, Bill

Illus. by Collier, Bryan

Abrams (40 pp.)

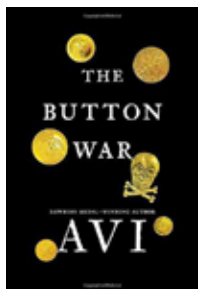
\$17.99 | Jun. 19, 2018

978-1-4197-2836-5

"Trombone Shorty" Andrews (with an authorial assist from Taylor) and illustrator Collier bring to life another compelling, true story of Andrews' early life.

As a young boy, Shorty loved playing music with his friends so much that they created the eponymous band (so named because they practiced at 5:00 after finishing homework and chores). In this picture-book account, Troy becomes so caught up in playing his own music that he arrives late for the band's performance and planned parade to discover that they left without him. Disappointed with himself, Troy wonders how he might ever become a bandleader after letting down his own band members. Crestfallen, he journeys through town, looking for his band. On his way, he encounters three New Orleans institutions—musician Tuba Treme; Queen Lola, Creole chef; and a troupe of Mardi Gras Indians—who help him understand the ingredients for success. Collier's characteristic collage illustrations effectively represent Troy's emotional struggle for self-improvement, and the level of detail in the images portrays the liveliness of New Orleans well. Backmatter includes extensive notes from the author and illustrator and information about the Trombone Shorty Foundation, which exists to "preserve the rich musical culture of New Orleans."

An excellent story about a man who remembers the community he came from and actively works to ensure its future success. (*Picture book. 4-8*)



THE BUTTON WAR A Tale of the Great War

Avi

Candlewick (241 pp.)

\$16.99 | Jun. 12, 2018

978-0-7636-9053-3

When World War I descends upon a tiny Polish village, seven boys launch their own deadly battle for the right to be crowned king of the land.

While playing in the woods, 12-year-old narrator Patryk finds a button, but his friend Jurek claims that it belongs to him. The rusty button becomes the inspiration for Jurek's latest scheme. Whoever can obtain the best button can claim sovereignty over the village and rule over

the others. Despite their apprehension at Jurek's fervency, they all agree to the terms. As the bombs fall and the troops arrive, the eponymous conflict begins. But Patryk soon finds that Jurek is willing to do whatever it takes to claim the prize. Stealing, espionage, and murder are all fair in war. While the message is clear—there are no winners in war—the story's lack of true heroism leaves readers with little hope for a better world. Fans of *The Lord of the Flies* and readers ready to plumb ambiguity will respond to the dark themes. Diversity is limited to nationality and class. German, Russian, Austrian, and British soldiers flood the town, and the boys, while all Polish, differ in standing. Jurek, an orphan, is one of the poorest in town, while the other boys are sons of artisans, teachers, and local politicians.

Bleakly demonstrates that war, no matter its scale, is devastating. (*Historical fiction. 10-13*)



BECCA FAIR AND FOUL

Baker, Deirdre

Groundwood (184 pp.)

\$16.95 | May 1, 2018

978-1-55498-957-7

There is more to this seemingly quiet account of a young girl's seaside summer than meets the eye, including some fairly adventurous hijinks and occasional meaningful issues with which to cope.

Episodic adventures begin as Becca and her friend Jane attempt to sail out of the harbor by themselves for the first time; over the course of the season the girls try to raise money for a new boat by performing *The Tempest*, chafe at doing Gran's chores, wonder about the romance between the island plumber and Aunt Fifi, and eventually decide to donate the play proceeds to charity. Interactions among the various cousins and friends are realistically done, although Becca is more developed as a character than the others; Jane remains a sidekick, the teenager cousin is one-notedly surly, and Gran is stereotypically curmudgeonly. The woody British Columbia setting provides an evocative backdrop for this sequel to *Becca at Sea* (2007), set across winter, spring, and summer. The era isn't specified but seems some years bygone; no one has a cellphone, and activities are wholesomely summery: putting on the play, going to the beach, riding bikes, and exploring the woods.

Happily, the ending, in which the girls are presented with the hull of a small sailboat they'll need to rig and equip in order to use, seems to signal more about Becca to come; perhaps in autumn next time. (*Fiction. 8-12*)

Narrator Melly is a complex blend of anger, curiosity, and creativity, appealingly laying her emotions bare for readers.

DRUM ROLL, PLEASE



HEDGEHOG NEEDS A HUG

Betton, Jen
Illus. by the author
Putnam (32 pp.)
\$16.99 | Jun. 19, 2018
978-1-5247-3712-2

Everyone, including prickly hedgehogs, needs some bodily contact with another animal or human.

Many of the animals that Hedgehog will encounter are pictured even before the story begins in a woodland scene opposite the copyright page. If that hasn't, the first full double-page spread immediately draws readers in, as lush browns and greens show the hedgehog in "his cozy nest" looking out toward the forest. Each picture is painted from a different perspective, making this an exciting visual experience. The story itself is one that has been told before: An animal seeking love and physical contact asks everyone in the forest to give him a hug. Due to Hedgehog's sharp spines, Rabbit and Raccoon decline. Turtle just sleeps through the request. Fox agrees but then "sly-slide-slinking over" grabs the small animal in its mouth (and immediately regrets the act). Finally Hedgehog meets the other pariah of the forest, Skunk, who seems to be experiencing the same problem, and readers may guess the ending. The language is just right for the audience: a repetitive refrain ("Rabbit, I need a hug. Will you give me one?" he asked") and some appealing wordplay ("Hedgehog took a deep breath and tip-patter-padded close to Skunk"). The short text reads well aloud.

Wordplay and engaging images are joined expertly to a theme of love and compassion without treacle. (Picture book. 3-6)



DRUM ROLL, PLEASE

Bigelow, Lisa Jenn
Harper/HarperCollins (320 pp.)
\$16.99 | Jun. 26, 2018
978-0-06-279114-6

A shy, quiet drummer looks for her inner Rebel Girl at rock camp.

The day before 13-year-old Melissa "Melly" Goodwin departs for Camp Rockaway, her parents make a heart-breaking announcement: They're splitting up. At least Melly doesn't have to deal alone; her best friend, Olivia Mendoza, a bassist, will be with her. But when Olivia deserts Melly for her crush (a boy named Noel), Melly has to go it alone. She finds herself confiding in someone who isn't her best friend. Could carefree guitarist Adeline become more than just a new pal? She certainly makes Melly feel like her heart is full of buzzing bees. When Noel dumps Olivia, she turns back to Melly, but jealousy drives a wedge between the besties. Can Melly make room for both her best friend and a potential girlfriend? Can she step out from behind her drum kit and find the

strength she needs to face the music at home? Narrator Melly is a complex blend of anger, curiosity, and creativity, appealingly laying her emotions bare for readers. Puns such as "Joan Jetty" (the boathouse) and "B-flat" (the afternoon rest period) bring character to the camp setting, which is also naturally diverse; Melly is white, Olivia is implied Latina, and Adeline is not the only brown-skinned camper.

Fresh and exhilarating, a welcome addition to the growing middle-grade genre of girls who like girls. (Fiction. 8-14)



SOCCER STARS Meet 40 Game Changers

Billioud, Jean-Michel
Illus. by Almasty
Wide Eyed Editions (88 pp.)
\$14.99 | May 3, 2018
978-1-78603-142-6
Series: 40 Inspiring Icons

Let's talk about the most amazing soccer stars ever!

Billioud's list of 40 is fair, but its struggles with format, content, and illustrations mean that it may be treasured by only the most die-hard fans of the sport. Information on each player covers one page, which is divided into seven text boxes, with additional trivia added to an illustrated image of the player on the facing page. The information provided is superficial and may leave readers with more questions than answers; for example, the section on French player Zinedine Zidane mentions his infamous head-butt in the 2006 World Cup final but neglects to provide any context for the action. The brevity of the text makes no allowance for readers fully unfamiliar with the game. Cristiano Ronaldo's section mentions his "succession of drag-backs, step-overs, and nutmegs," but the book fails to define any of these terms. Almasty's illustrations feature a collection of digitally created characters that are akin to tall, sporty versions of LEGO minifigures. With little subtlety in palette and detail, many of the players appear to be an interchangeable lot. Is that man Cha Baum-Kun of South Korea or Diego Maradona of Argentina? Without the uniforms as a guide, it's hard to tell. Finally, in the history of soccer, surely more than four women have risen to the top of anyone's list.

Red-card it. (Nonfiction. 9-12)



**SMASH
Fearless**

Bolton, Chris A.

Illus. by Bolton, Kyle

Candlewick (160 pp.)

\$18.99 | \$11.99 paper | May 8, 2018

978-0-7636-8118-0

978-1-5362-0035-5 paper

Series: Smash, 2

A fifth-grade superhero gets caught up in a three-way struggle with a supervillain *and* a mad scientist in his second round of adventures (*Smash: Trial by Fire*, 2013).

Sneaking out of the house at every chance to train with his mentor, Wraith, compounded with his lack of interest in doing schoolwork, threatens to leave him in imminent danger of being held back. As if that's not problem enough, Andrew—"Smash" when he's in costume—is further distracted when a wildly destructive running battle breaks out between the gray-skinned minions of his terrifying nemesis, the Magus, and the mechanical creations of dying inventor Dr. Cobb. It seems that both are after a world-altering prototype power source called the "skeleton key" in order to energize devices that will, respectively, either steal all of Smash's superpowers or transfer Dr. Cobb's mind to a healthy new body. The ensuing action is fast, furious, and interrupted only occasionally by scenes at home and the introduction of Jae Kim, a smart and lively new Korean-American classmate who both discovers Andrew's secret identity and cozens him into better study habits. Some of the crashes, explosions, and humongously thewed bad guys feel crowded into the neatly squared-off panels, but the storylines, open-ended though they remain at the finish, are easy enough to follow. Andrew, darker-skinned than his single mom and big brother, Tommy, continues to lead a diverse and expressively drawn cast.

Brisk, nonstop, chock-full of awesome exploits. (*Graphic superhero fantasy*, 9-11)



THE FOREST

Bozzi, Riccardo

Illus. by Lopíz, Violeta & Vidali, Valerio

Trans. by Bibo, Debbie

Enchanted Lion Books (72 pp.)

\$25.95 paper | Jun. 5, 2018

978-1-59270-218-3

Bozzi, an Italian journalist and poet, envisions a forest journey as a metaphor

for the stages of life.

The book's design is clever, instantly arousing curiosity with its translucent jacket (sans title) overlaying brilliantly hued vegetation onto a muted cover. The first double-page spread is all white, containing a straightforward sentence on the verso and a debossed face with die-cut eyes through which color is visible on the recto. A pattern is established. The white pages depict, by embossing or debossing only, a sequence of humans

of varying races who gradually age. These file between spreads of greenery that similarly transform from a small grove to a progressively more crowded forest, then barren woodland. As youths, the explorers study insects and invent games. Later they notice fellow travelers, whose diversity is mentioned in terms of height, shade, and temperament, with potential for rivalry or love. Some leave traces (art carved in stone), but ultimately, "there is a ravine into which each explorer will eventually fall, despite the precautions taken and the advancements of science." The final etched face gradually fades as saplings rise through its cracks. Death is unequivocally a mystery. Some will appreciate the final blank pages for contemplation. For others of any age, confronting one's own mortality in a context in which life seems neither meaningful nor to be remembered will be disquieting.

Students of design will appreciate the construction and the lush, vibrant compositions; those seeking comfort for end-of-life matters will want to look elsewhere. (*Picture book*, 10-adult)

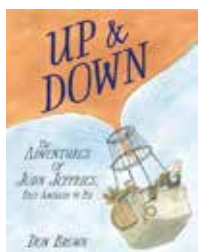
FORD GOES LOOKING FOR THE SUN
by Joseph Settecasì, illustrated by Lisa Bohart

An outdoorsy child wants to know what the sun is made of in this conservation-oriented debut picture book by Settecasì with illustrations by Bohart.

"...easy to grasp, with cartoonishly illustrated, anthropomorphic characters that young readers will enjoy."

"A fun introduction for budding scientists."
—Kirkus Reviews

For information on publishing or film rights, contact joe.settecasì@gmail.com



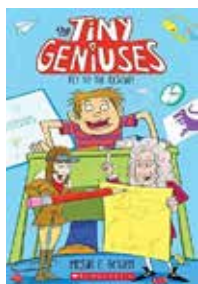
UP & DOWN
The Adventures of John Jeffries, First American to Fly

Brown, Don
Illus. by the author
Charlesbridge (40 pp.)
\$16.99 | Jun. 12, 2018
978-1-58089-812-6

Brown's latest (*Older than Dirt*, 2017, etc.) follows the journey of balloonist John Jeffries, doctor and meteorologist, through his flight across the English Channel in 1785.

At the end of the American Revolution, Jeffries, a Tory, fled to England, where he was swiftly engulfed in "balloon mania." An avid amateur meteorologist, Jeffries was thrilled by the possibility of recording new information at different altitudes. Jeffries quickly teamed up with Frenchman Jean-Pierre Blanchard (husband of famed balloonist Sophie Blanchard) for two flights. For their second, the duo had an outlandish proposition: to be the first to fly across the English Channel from Britain to France. Unfortunately, the flight didn't go as planned, and the duo was forced to unload as much ballast as possible—including their clothes—before ultimately landing unharmed, albeit underdressed, in France. Brown's oil-pencil-and-watercolor illustrations are true to form, but readers may find themselves with more questions than answers thanks to uneven plotting and a lack of focus. Slight space is devoted to Jeffries pre-Channel flight, 18th-century ballooning culture, and the science of ballooning, while over half of the book is devoted to his most famous flight. Frustratingly, this causes the narrative to read like neither a full introductory biography of Jeffries' life nor a strict account of the Channel flight. Jeffries, Blanchard, and spectators are all white.

"Up and down" indeed. (endnote, author's note, bibliography, sources) (*Informational picture book. 6-9*)



FLY TO THE RESCUE

Bryant, Megan E.
Scholastic (128 pp.)
\$4.99 paper | Jul. 31, 2018
978-0-545-90951-8
Series: The Tiny Geniuses, 1

With a little help from some little friends—namely, Amelia Earhart and Sir Isaac Newton—a failing fourth-grader scores a science fair triumph.

Mom insists that Jake do well in the upcoming expo or quit baseball—so when his equally desperate wishes that someone do his project for him bring two figurines in his "Heroes of History" set to life, he thinks his problems are over. Unfortunately they're only just beginning, as both of his tiny advisers turn out to be so wrapped up in delighted explorations of the wonders of Jake's bedroom and the world beyond that he spends most of his time and energy just trying

(with mixed success) to keep them secret. In the meantime, though, their courage, curiosity, and enthusiasm for tinkering turn out to be so infectious that when they do present Jake with a small working airplane and notes on the principles of flight, he decides that it would be better to do his own work—and does. Along with digestible bits of history and Newtonian physics, Bryant infuses the tale with comical incidents while showing that Jake's gloomy conviction that he's "too dumb" to succeed is demonstrably wrong. Jake is depicted on the cover as white (along with Earhart and Newton); the cast otherwise seems to adhere to a white default.

Intriguing premise + themes with wings + a light hand on the rudder = a flying start. (*Fantasy. 8-10*)



BRIANNA BRIGHT,
BALLERINA KNIGHT

Calvert, Pam
Illus. by Hee, Liana
Two Lions (40 pp.)
\$17.99 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-1-50395-101-3

A stylish princess works hard to distinguish herself and find her true calling.

Tutu-clad princess Brianna loves ballet but just cannot master the steps—steps she tries to execute on the palace grounds and not in a studio with a teacher. After a conversation with Pixie, her pink, salon-groomed poodle, she decides to try other pursuits, but "finding a talent" is not an easy goal to meet. Neither cooking nor soccer is hers to master. Then she discovers fencing, and discarding her tutu for a one-piece ensemble adorned with ribbons, she practices. Alas, this does not lead to mastery for clumsy Brianna, who runs through the drills of swordplay—once again by herself, without an instructor. Then, one night, thieves make off with the palace's sparkling jewels, and Brianna is successful in foiling them by combining the steps, moves, and balances of ballet and fencing. Thus one princess discovers her two talents and earns her titular title. Hee's brightly colored digital illustrations feature a pale-skinned, beribboned Brianna with a perfectly coiled black ponytail and big black eyes. Descriptive words and verbs are emphasized in differently colored type, usually pink.

For those who prefer their princesses brave and perfectly pretty. (brief glossary of ballet and fencing terms) (*Picture book. 3-6*)

Astute readers who are accustomed to highly metaphorical tales will probably guess the big—and tragic—reveal as the narrative moves back and forth between the boy's memories and his unsettling present.

THE BOY, THE BOAT, AND THE BEAST



THE BOY, THE BOAT, AND THE BEAST

Clark, Samantha M.
 Paula Wiseman/Simon & Schuster
 (256 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Jun. 26, 2018
 978-1-5344-1255-2

What do you do when you wake up and don't know who you are?

That happens to the titular boy one day when he awakens on the beach of a seemingly magical island where minor desires, such as food and water, are fulfilled while major desires, such as knowing his identity, are more difficult to meet. The boy is joined by an unknown voice in his head that he nicknames “the bully” because of its sour attitude and, later, by the loving voice of his mother. The island is also home to a monstrous beast, half wolf, half bear, that stalks the boy, and the water seems intent on grabbing the boy and pulling him below the waves. The boy must struggle with

both the beast and the boat he fashions in an attempt to locate his parents, who he knows are looking for him. Astute readers who are accustomed to highly metaphorical tales will probably guess the big—and tragic—reveal as the narrative moves back and forth between the boy's memories and his unsettling present, and they will see how the former inform the latter. The pacing of the story is fair, though possibly a little hurried along in the final act with the introduction of the narrator as a character in the eleventh hour. The narrative studiously avoids physically describing the boy.

Solid though not remarkable. (*Fantasy/mystery. 8-10*)

from the imagination of C.S. O’Kelly, author of
THE ADVENTURES OF GRACIE & MONKEYBEAR
 and illustrator Wayne Oram
 comes a new tale that traverses the world, one ocean at a time.

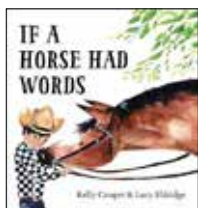
TOMMY TOBLER'S TRAVELING TUB



OCTOBER OF 2018 - FILM RIGHTS AVAILABLE

Covell's illustrations are exuberant, projecting to readers the raw joy and wonder of exploring the natural world.

RUN WILD



IF A HORSE HAD WORDS

Cooper, Kelly
Illus. by Eldridge, Lucy
Tundra (48 pp.)
\$17.99 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-1-101-91872-2

The friendship between a boy and a horse is explored in this picture book.

A newborn foal, struggling to rise, slips and becomes trapped in a badger hole. This tension-filled narrative beginning is agreeably softened by Eldridge's airy, whimsical watercolor illustrations that give the moment a calm, problem-to-be-resolved feel. Sure enough, a man and a boy arrive and pull the unhurt foal to freedom, and the basic premise of the story is neatly set: The foal, named Red Badger, and the boy become friends, and they both dislike the ground. When Red Badger is grown, the boy tries to ride him but is bucked off. The boy laughs, but the man decides to sell Red Badger at auction. They are reunited much later at the rodeo where Red Badger is a bucking bronco and the boy has become a bronco rider. Cooper's narrative is soundly constructed, full of poetic circularity, and the illustrations make an airy counterpoint, with plenty of white space to reinforce the idea of movement and open country. But the underlying presumption of the dominion of human over beast is an atypical theme for a children's picture book, and readers may find the idea of Red Badger's ending up as a bucking bronco in a rodeo less than nourishing.

A skillfully told, whimsically illustrated story of friendship, with a rodeo aspect that may limit its audience. (Picture book. 5-8)



RUN WILD

Covell, David
Illus. by the author
Viking (40 pp.)
\$17.99 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-0-670-01411-8

A child's world appears in black and white—body indoors and face fixed to a screen—until another child zips by with

an invitation to join in a barefoot ramble through the untamed outdoors.

To rhythmic, clipped verse, the pair runs, jumps, and swims through forest and water scenes. They pause to play, to pretend, and to savor. But it's not all sunshine. A pop-up storm serves as a metaphor for life's mixed weather patterns. "Rain dumps. / There'll be slippery slumps. / Bruises. Bumps... / and ROTTEN STUMPS!" The storm passes and the sun returns, so the adventure continues. Covell's illustrations are exuberant, projecting to readers the raw joy and wonder of exploring the natural world. Thick strokes of what looks like watercolor bleed past bold crayon outlines, creating a delightfully messy sense of movement. This pace matches the staccato rhythm of the fast-flowing rhyming text. The skin tones of the children

shift through various shades of beige and brown. Though Covell's intention for the racial ambiguity is unclear, this inclusion of brown-skinned children encouraged to run "wild" in green spaces is a hugely welcome one given their historic exclusion from same.

This sweetly unruly book is destined for mud-stained and ripped pages, as it is sure to accompany many a child on wild adventures in their own parks, playgrounds, and backyards. (Picture book. 3-7)



RUNNING ON SUNSHINE How Does Solar Energy Work?

DeCristofano, Carolyn Cinami
Illus. by Medeiros, Giovana
Harper/HarperCollins (40 pp.)
\$17.99 | May 1, 2018
978-0-06-247311-0
Series: Let's Read and Find Out



An introduction to solar power.

DeCristofano's engaging, conversational text compares how solar panels work to plant photosynthesis, though it never uses that scientific term. Nor does it name climate change, though it identifies pollution caused by generators at energy plants as a main culprit behind negative "changes to weather patterns" and suggests solar energy as a clean alternative. The text excels at clearly describing how solar energy is gathered, stored, and used, and it also highlights current innovations and anticipates new developments to make solar energy use more widespread and effective. The hopeful, aspirational tone is downright sunny and is well-matched with Medeiros' clear, graphic illustrations, which she created digitally. While neither pictures nor expository text follow specific characters, the artwork depicts diverse people of varied skin tones, genders, and abilities interacting with solar-powered devices and working with solar technology, including two spreads with women of color wearing the hijab in different settings. The text also examines current difficulties and limitations of solar technology, though it doesn't explore specifics about the process of manufacturing solar cells and panels.

A necessary, engaging book that shines a light on solar energy. (experiments, glossary) (Informational picture book. 4-9)





CLARA VOYANT

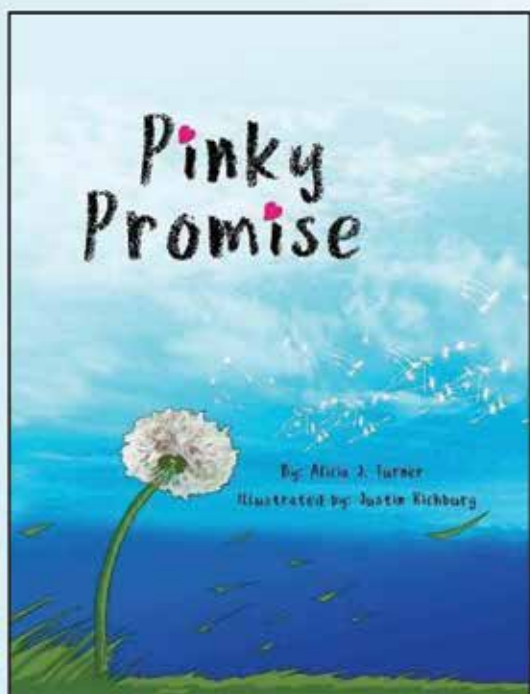
Delaney, Rachelle
 Puffin/Penguin Random House Canada
 (224 pp.)
 \$16.99 | May 15, 2018
 978-0-14-319853-6

After her grandmother’s move to Florida, future investigative reporter Clara Costa finds life with just her ditzy mother, Gaby, maddeningly unpredictable.

Now Clara and Gaby live in Toronto’s lively, diverse Kensington Market neighborhood in an apartment above Healing Herbs. There, Gaby diagnoses ills and dispenses unscientific remedies. Clara misses her grandmother’s practical, predictable ways. On the bright side, Clara’s bonded with classmate Maeve, a budding actress who’s appreciative of Clara’s colorful, chaotic home. Clara hopes to prove herself as a reporter for the school paper, but the knitting-club profile that Wesley, the ambitious grade-eight editor, assigns

Clara offers little scope for her talents. Next, Wesley wants Clara to write a horoscope column: Clara Voyant. Meanwhile, the school mascot, Buzzter the Honeybee (an aging piñata), is stolen. This mystery’s a perfect match for Clara’s investigative talents, but skeptic Clara is stuck with astrological predictions. When these come true, she’s perplexed and intrigued. She also hunts for Buzzter, knowing it’ll be a terrific scoop if she can find him. Clara and the book’s default are white, with the abundant diversity primarily indicated through naming convention; Maeve is biracial and Chinese-Canadian. The plot hums along briskly, but the humor wobbles. At its best—Wesley’s a case in point—it’s dry, succinct, and funny, but Gaby’s more caricature than character. While the plot has amusing twists and turns, the author waffles on the existence of clairvoyance itself.

A lightweight but enjoyable read. (*Fiction. 8-12*)



ISBN #978-0-692-92271-4

www.aliciajturner.com

Pinky Promise

Breaking the Code of Silence

by Alicia J. Turner, illustrated by Justin Richburg

Turner’s picture book encourages parents and children to keep an open dialogue about preventing sexual abuse.

“The bold, saturated hues and graphic-novel–style images provide concrete context.”

“This read will undoubtedly incite necessary discussion.”

“A helpful resource that approachably addresses a difficult topic.”

–Kirkus Reviews

For information on publishing rights or agent representation, please contact aliciaturner@gmail.com



FRED WANTS TO PLAY

de Latboudier, Janna
Illus. by Schneider, Anne
Clavis (32 pp.)
\$17.95 | Jun. 1, 2018
978-1-60537-388-1

When Fred gets that “bouncy feeling,” he can’t help playing and disturbing others, but when he finds a kindred playful spirit, the two make music together

that everyone enjoys.

Fred is an energetic octopus surrounded by disapproving sea creatures, especially the sawfish. “Why can’t you keep still like the other fish?” they scold during quiet time. Sent away, he encounters a clamshell that makes an interesting noise when knocked—until it traps his tentacle. It’s Scott, who also needs to play. Together, their dancing attracts the other fish, and everyone has a good time. This sympathetic story comes from Belgium and the Netherlands, but young readers and listeners anywhere in the world will recognize Fred’s need to wiggle. On one spread, Fred tries desperately to hold in his emotions, clenching eyes and mouth, puffing up his face, and braiding his tentacles—a small child about to explode. Schneider’s pastel paintings show the suppressed energy through the changing colors of these two playful characters. All the anthropomorphized sea creatures have large eyes and expressive faces; they would show well to a group. The text includes made-up words that characterize the sound of Fred’s noisy play: “FLING FLANG FONG / PLUNG PLANG PLONG.” The smooth translation is credited to the publisher.

Follow this agreeable outing with Doreen Cronin and Scott Menchin’s *Wiggle* (2005) during storytime to harness the inevitable imitations. (Picture book. 4-7)



GIFTS OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE
Patroness of Latin America

Demi
Illus. by the author
Wisdom Tales (40 pp.)
\$17.95 | Jun. 7, 2018
978-1-937786-73-1

On Dec. 12, 1531, in newly colonized Mexico City, the Virgin Mary appeared to an Aztec farmer, Juan Diego, and spoke to him in Nahuatl, his native language, telling him to ask the bishop to build her church.

Despite Mary’s command, the Spanish bishop refused to comply until, after repeat visits, Juan Diego opened his cloak and roses cascaded out, revealing the image of Mary with the skin tone and features of an Indigenous Mexican woman. The bishop finally relented and had the church built on the hill of Tepeyac, where millions visit to this day. Demi’s retelling is both often at odds with the historical record and unabashedly Euro-centric: “In 1519 AD, the powerful Spanish conquistador,

Hernan Cortes, landed in Mexico.” Cortes arguably was not a “conquistador” prior to the Mexican campaign. He had been a bureaucrat and owner of Indigenous slaves in Hispaniola and Cuba. Additionally, Demi’s familiar style is incongruous against the setting of 16th-century Mexico. Juan Diego and his fellow Aztecs are garbed in sombreros and clothing from the Mexican Revolution—more than 300 years in the future—and the Spanish conquistadors bear a resemblance to images of Mongol warriors. Furthermore, the Virgin herself appears more Asian than Aztec, and Juan Diego’s childlike depiction belies the fact that he was 57 at the time. Demi also fails to portray the modern basilica even though she ends her retelling in modern Mexico.

The artistic condescension and incongruities make this a marginal offering at best. (further information) (Informational picture book. 4-7)



CECE LOVES SCIENCE

Derting, Kimberly & Johannes, Shelli R.
Illus. by Harrison, Vashti
Greenwillow (40 pp.)
\$17.99 | Jun. 19, 2018
978-0-06-249960-8
Series: Cece and the Scientific Method

Cece loves asking “why” and “what if.” Her parents encourage her, as does her science teacher, Ms. Curie (a wink to adult readers). When Cece and her best friend, Isaac, pair up for a science project, they choose zoology, brainstorming questions they might research. They decide to investigate whether dogs eat vegetables, using Cece’s schnauzer, Einstein, and the next day they head to Cece’s lab (inside her treehouse). Wearing white lab coats, the two observe their subject and then offer him different kinds of vegetables, alone and with toppings. Cece is discouraged when Einstein won’t eat them. She complains to her parents, “Maybe I’m not a real scientist after all...Our project was boring.” Just then, Einstein sniffs Cece’s dessert, leading her to try a new way to get Einstein to eat vegetables. Cece learns that “real scientists have fun finding answers too.” Harrison’s clean, bright illustrations add expression and personality to the story. Science report inserts are reminiscent of *The Magic Schoolbus* books, with less detail. Biracial Cece is a brown, freckled girl with curly hair; her father is white, and her mother has brown skin and long, black hair; Isaac and Ms. Curie both have pale skin and dark hair. While the book doesn’t pack a particularly strong emotional or educational punch, this endearing protagonist earns a place on the children’s STEM shelf.

A good introduction to observation, data, and trying again. (glossary) (Picture book. 5-8)

Annie's first-person narration is hilariously astute.

ANNIE B., MADE FOR TV



HOW TO GROW HAPPINESS

DiPucchio, Kelly

Illus. by Kaufenberg, Matt

Rodale Kids (32 pp.)

\$17.99 | May 1, 2018

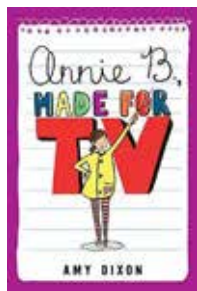
978-1-63565-140-9

Series: Jerome the Gnome, 1

With the help of his forest friends, gnome Jerome learns a valuable lesson about happiness—or maybe gardening.

A bright yellow bird named Warble flies through the Garden of Wonder, landing in Jerome's open window. Warble offers Jerome a "tiny black seed" that she calls "the seed of happiness." Jerome offers a piece of bright red yarn—the "perfect" thing for Warble's nest!—in exchange. When the seed doesn't do anything, however, Jerome worries that it may be broken. Friends Beamer the robot and Nutilda the squirrel suggest sunlight, and Sir Surly the turtle prompts Jerome to toss the seed into the pond for water. It takes Sherwin Wigglesworth, a jaunty worm with a monocle, to show Jerome how to plant his seed. Jerome and friends are impatient for the seed to grow, until Glinda, the butterfly fairy (who just happens to be fluttering by), points out the missing ingredient: love. "The best things always grow from love." Jerome nurtures his seed with water, food, love, and some of his favorite things placed all around. It grows into a giant green watermelon that everyone can share. Though it doesn't really hang together logically, DiPucchio's story captures an innocence in tune with the very young. Kaufenberg's illustrations are appropriately bright and cute, depicting Jerome as a white garden gnome with a pointy red cap.

Like Jerome's, its heart is in the right place. (Picture book. 3-6)



ANNIE B., MADE FOR TV

Dixon, Amy

Illus. by the author

Running Press Kids (240 pp.)

\$16.99 | Jun. 5, 2018

978-0-7624-6385-5

Can "almost-always" best friends get through a rough patch to become "always-always" best friends?

Annie Brown is a writer/inventor ("wrinventor," according to her word-smith dad) who writes commercials for products she invents. Her "wrinventions" include Apology Armor ("the kneepads you wear on the days you have to say sorry") and the Fishlight (a tankless, waterless, and, critically, live-fish-less aquarium that hangs on the wall, inspired by her little brother's unfortunate curiosity about his pet fish's squish factor). However, as sidekick to Savannah Summerlyn, the girl who is "the best at everything," Annie spends a lot of time in the background. Annie's opportunity to use her "made-for-TV commercial voice" to showcase her commercial-writing talent comes when she auditions to host *The Cat's Meow*, a local web show. But Savannah steals Annie's

audition and wins the spot. Can their friendship survive, or will they become never-again best friends? Annie's first-person narration is hilariously astute. About the school mascot, the quail, she muses, "When you play another school in basketball, you don't want to be the bird that gets eaten." Annie's friend Jake Ramirez's surname implies he's Latino, but all other characters are assumed white.

Readers graduating from *Junie B.* to lengthier stories will find a new book-friend in *Annie B.* (Fiction. 8-12)



EVANGELINE OF THE BAYOU

Eldredge, Jan

Illus. by Kuefler, Joseph

Balzer + Bray/HarperCollins (320 pp.)

\$16.99 | May 1, 2018

978-0-06-268034-1

Take bits from the worlds of Harry Potter, Percy Jackson, and Nancy Drew, and set the story in New Orleans, and you've got this compelling tale of Evangeline.

Descended from a long line of haunt huntresses—women who aid people plagued by supernatural beings—Evangeline Clement will soon turn 13 and eagerly awaits the appearance of her animal familiar: confirmation of her destiny. Evangeline has lived with Gran, also a haunt huntress, since her mother was killed by a werewolflike rougarou when Evangeline was a tiny baby. Evangeline assists Gran with gathering herbs, mixing potions, and eradicating harmful supernatural creatures. On the current mission, Gran travels to the Midsomers' home to save Mrs. Midsomer from transforming into a rougarou at the next full moon. Evangeline befriends Julian, the Midsomers' son, who helps save his mother but who also exhibits characteristics that suggest he's on the spectrum and that make him a difficult companion. Julian refuses to believe anything about why Gran and Evangeline have come...until he sees with his own eyes. Readers will enjoy learning about the magical creatures Evangeline encounters and will appreciate the challenge of foreseeing what Evangeline can't. The closing glossary of haunts is amusing in its own right. The book adheres to the white default.

A worthwhile read about a strong girl who embraces the power of knowledge but also heeds Gran's advice to "trust your gut." (Supernatural mystery. 8-12)

Murphy makes each page a riot of shapes and colors. The various bathroom items have googly eyes, smiling mouths, and pipestem arms and legs, displaying a remarkable amount of personality.

BATHROOM BOOGIE



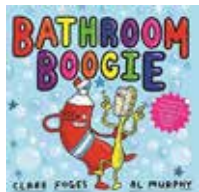
A DARK DESCENT

Fiedler, Lisa
Illus. by Giacobino, Sebastian
 McElderry (368 pp.)
 \$17.99 | May 15, 2018
 978-1-4814-6974-6
 Series: Ages of Oz, 2

Young Glinda and her purple-haired friend Locasta take another step toward saving Oz by tackling the Wicked Witch of the North.

Aphidina, the Wicked Witch of the South, may be history (see *A Fiery Friendship*, 2017), but even as the grass-roots Four-sworn Revolution gathers steam, challenges remain for the band of doughty young heroes. Notable among these is finding and enlisting the long-hidden Elemental Fairies to battle not only the remaining three Wicked Witches, but also the disembodied “fifth Witch” who controls them. Fiedler strews the narrative with sly allusions (“I have a feeling we aren’t in Quadling anymore”), such requisite elements as a magic map and rhymed clues (Locasta: “Oh, hey, here’s a surprise. *Another* obscure and cryptic verse for us to decipher”), and melodramatic but leisuredly battles in which no one is ever described as bleeding or dying. She populates her quest with exotic denizens from Sea Fairies and the winged monkeys to the pun-loving Nome King. Flashbacks, references to recent events, and a plethora of characters both new and vintage make familiarity with the opener a must and at least a passing acquaintance with some of the original series’ classic episodes a good idea. Oz’s inhabitants come in a great variety of colors and species; Glinda and the human(oid) members of her company are white.

It’s an unabashed pastiche, but it doesn’t take itself too seriously. (*Fantasy*. 10-12)



BATHROOM BOOGIE

Foges, Clare
Illus. by Murphy, Al
 Faber & Faber (32 pp.)
 \$16.95 | May 15, 2018
 978-0-5713-4045-3

When the family’s away, the toiletries play in this follow-up to *Kitchen Disco* (2017).

“When you kids go off to school, / And grown-ups go to work... / Your bathroom comes ALIVE / and all the things there go berserk!” The antics of various articles are depicted in ultrabright colors and tight rhymes. Shampoo plays “funky beats,” then “rinses and repeats.” The toothpaste “wiggles” and “squeezes,” the loofahs “dance like they don’t care,” and the mouthwash has “minty moves” all his own. Inevitably, the party gets a bit out of hand. The bathroom is a mess, and the family will be home soon. Shampoo organizes the cleanup. “And don’t forget the foam!” The two kids in the family notice that some bathroom articles have moved...and wonder. Party on! Foges’ punny text keeps a steady beat, but it is repetitive, missing an

opportunity to present more vocabulary. Murphy makes each page a riot of shapes and colors. The various bathroom items have googly eyes, smiling mouths, and pipestem arms and legs, displaying a remarkable amount of personality. Readers can (and should) access the “Bathroom Boogie” video on YouTube, where a plummy British voice (kind of) raps the verse and children join him to sing the chorus. Notably, the family is biracial; the kids’ mom is white and the dad is black.

May inspire some bathroom fun among readers; get those sponges ready.... (*Picture book*. 2-5)



WHEN SPARKS FLY
The True Story of Robert Goddard, the Father of US Rocketry

Fulton, Kristen
Illus. by Funck, Diego
 McElderry (40 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Jul. 3, 2018
 978-1-4814-6098-9

Punctuated—unsurprisingly—by explosions, an account of the groundbreaking rocketeer’s childhood and first experiments.

Fueled by an early interest in hands-on science nurtured by his parents and sparked by reading *The War of the Worlds*, Goddard’s ambition to “build something that would soar to space” led to years of experimentation and failure analysis. Finally, in 1926, a brief but successful flight pointed the way to “every shuttle that has blasted into space, every astronaut who has defied gravity, and every man who has walked on the moon.” Fulton occasionally skimps on scientific details (in one childhood trial Robert “emptied a small vial of hydrogen into a pan”; even in the backmatter, there’s no explanation why, as he notes in his journal, “Hydrogen and oxygen when combined near a flame will ignite”). Still, she highlights the profound curiosity and determined, methodical effort that ultimately earned her subject a well-deserved place in the pantheon of scientists and inventors. Scientific gear in Funck’s cartoon illustrations often looks generic, and in one scene he depicts a rocket that is markedly different from the one described in the adjacent narrative. Moreover, his explosions look like fried eggs, and most come with oddly undersized if all-capped onomatopoeia (“BOOM!”, “POP!”) that underplays both the melodramatic potential and the real danger to which Goddard must have exposed himself. Goddard and his family are white.

Disappointingly lackadaisical. (afterword, list of sources) (*Picture book/biography*. 7-9)



LOVE IS LOVE

Genbart, Michael
Illus. by Min, Ken
 Little Pickle Press (32 pp.)
 \$18.95 | May 16, 2018
 978-1-9397-7513-9

A heartfelt affirmation of queer love.

A first-person text presents several children, all wearing rainbow-heart T-shirts, grappling with others' homophobia. It then documents their eventual movement toward pride in their families, simply by talking through their hurts and then arriving at the conclusion that "Love is the same. Wherever you live. Whoever you are. And whomever you love." Even as the different children talk about being teased for having gay parents (the word "gay" is used as a default or umbrella term, with no instances of words such as "queer," "lesbian," "bisexual," etc.) or feeling otherwise targeted, the illustrations also start to show kites in the distance, first red, then orange, then yellow, and so on. These kites end up forming a heart in rainbow colors in the sky when the various children and their families come together at the end of the book. Before arriving at this point, it's often quite difficult to follow the shifts between characters, as the illustrations pair the text with diverse children in clearly different locales without indicating that a new child is the speaker. Obviously intending inclusion, the images seem to attempt both universality and specificity at the same time, to frustrating effect. There's no story to speak of, but the clear message is underscored by extensive backmatter with conversation prompts and further affirmation of queer families and identity.

A strong message weakly presented. (*Picture book.* 4-8)



UNICORN MAGIC

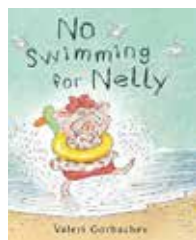
Gibson, Sabina
Illus. by the author
 Scholastic (32 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Jun. 26, 2018
 978-0-545-81331-0

A troubled unicorn wonders what her special power might be.

All of Periwinkle's friends have figured out their magical abilities. Ruby can paint the sunrise with magnificent colors. Pearl can spin clouds into playful shapes. And Marigold can plant meadows of flowers with a single twitch of her horn. Periwinkle sits glumly in Mellow Meadow, while glossy tears drip from her eyes, wondering what her magic might be. Her avian friend Birdie gives her the pedestrian advice: "You just need to believe in magic and follow your heart." Variations on this useless advice (it's literally magical thinking) are repeated throughout, and with no action to accompany it, the one-note theme is hard-pressed to carry through to the end. This contrived story of baseless self-confidence gets its sweetness from the sugary ambiance, not necessarily the text. Gibson's (*Wolfie Paints the Town*, 2017) pastel paradise, constructed from felt, flourishes with sparkles, magical swirls, and of course, flowing manes and

unicorn horns. Tiny tots who gravitate toward anything cotton-candy sweet will be enamored with this fuzzy, cozy world.

Platitudinous...but pink. (*Picture book.* 2-6)



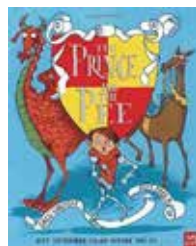
NO SWIMMING FOR NELLY

Gorbachev, Valeri
Illus. by the author
 Holiday House (40 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Jun. 12, 2018
 978-0-8234-3780-1

Three generations of women bond over swimming lessons for little piglet Nelly.

Nelly loves the new swimsuit Mommy gives her—for biking, playing basketball, even sleeping, but not swimming. Why not? The water at the beach is cold; Nelly doesn't like the waves; the water is scary. Mommy knows exactly what Nelly needs: lessons with champion swimmer Grandma. Expressive pen-and-ink lines capture every emotion in the characters' faces, and warm tones highlight the love among them. Even their body language as they curve toward one another demonstrates their closeness. That they are anthropomorphized pigs just makes it more appealing and sweetly comical. Grandma is a patient teacher, and her tricks are ones that parents everywhere can use. Nelly blows bubbles and learns to float, kick, and move her arms. Fluid watercolor washes suit the watery setting and all the motion, while illustrations that vary from double-page spread to vignette set the pace. When Mommy calls them in for dinner, Nelly wants to keep swimming. Imagine!

Nelly learns she can try new things when she's buoyed by her family's support in this thoroughly reassuring outing. (*Picture book.* 3-5)



THE PRINCE AND THE PEE

Gormley, Greg
Illus. by Mould, Chris
 Nosy Crow/Candlewick (32 pp.)
 \$16.99 | Jun. 26, 2018
 978-0-7636-9916-1

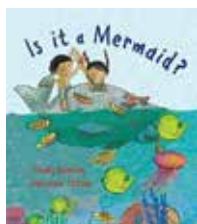
Laugh-out-loud potty humor.

Gormley's story mines fairy-tale tropes as well as toilet humor to deliver laughs. It opens with Prince Freddie on holiday, sunbathing and drinking lemonade. His talking horse, Sir Rushington, interrupts his vacation to tell the prince a dragon is laying siege to Castle Crumbly. After Freddie "gulp[s] down the very last drop of his lemonade," they're off! Alas, the horse's "Up and down. Up and down. Up and down" trot, not to mention the bodies of water, a waterfall, and rain that Mould illustrates in his uproarious acrylic illustrations, soon make the armor-clad Freddie painfully aware of his full bladder. Repeated pit stops for him to relieve himself are interrupted by a terrifying ogre, a princess in a tower ("How



very awkward,” sympathizes Sir Rushington), and a very long bathroom line formed by the Big Bad Wolf, Puss in Boots, and the Seven Dwarfs. (Adult female caregivers will note the irony that every single person in this line is implied male.) When they finally arrive at Castle Crumbly, Prince Freddie is so desperate that he plows right by the dragon, who sets the castle ablaze. Luckily, Prince Freddie eschews the throne room and stands atop a turret instead, well-positioned to douse the flames below: “And suddenly there was an almighty sizzle.” Freddie and all other humanoids save the green ogre are white.

Hap-pee-ly-ever-after reading fun. (*Picture book. 3-8*)



IS IT A MERMAID?

Gourlay, Candy
Illus. by Chessa, Francesca
 Otter-Barry (32 pp.)
 \$17.99 | May 15, 2018
 978-1-91095-912-1

When Benji and Bel spot an unusual creature on the beach one morning, Benji knows exactly what it is: a dugong. The dugong, however, has a differing opinion.

Not only does the sassy sea mammal take umbrage with being called “it,” she also corrects Benji’s initial assumption. On a double-page spread showcasing her wide gray body, flippers, and short snout, she proclaims, “I am a beautiful mermaid!” Bel is quietly supportive, but when Benji continues to point out all her dugong parts and calls her a sea cow, his negativity finally penetrates, and she bursts into tears. “Benji felt terrible.” He realizes that his words have hurt the dugong and he apologizes. Luckily, though “mermaids are a bit sensitive,” they are also “very forgiving,” and the three spend the rest of the day frolicking in the sea with a host of whimsical and colorful sea animals. Young readers will enjoy inhabiting this tropical world infused with fanciful creatures (mermaid or not), and the message of respecting another’s chosen identities is both clear and gentle. Chessa’s illustrations depict little brown-skinned Benji and Bel with childlike exuberance, and a lovely spread at the end of the day highlights the tropical landscape, framing the dugong swimming off—or is that a mermaid’s tail?

This playful frolic in tropical waters is a gentle introduction to the concept of chosen identity and respect for others’ choices. (*author’s note*) (*Picture book. 3-7*)



THE MEDITERRANEAN

Greder, Armin
Illus. by the author
 Allen & Unwin/Trafalgar (40 pp.)
 \$25.99 | Jun. 1, 2018
 978-1-76063-095-9



An art book by Bologna Ragazzi Award winner Greder (*The Island*, 2008, etc.) about the European migrant crisis.

Dark-toned, charcoal-dominant illustrations on wordless pages portray two men, one with a light complexion and the other one darker, eating fish. The white man sells the other rifles, which are delivered across the sea and carried by soldiers. A white man resembling the one who sold the weapons stands right behind the soldiers’ commanders, suggesting that he’s commanding too. Then there is war, death, and displacement. The people escaping war walk, then appear crammed on a truck. They talk to smugglers and get on a boat that founders, hopelessly overloaded. The last illustration, of the sinking boat, harkens back to a man appearing at the beginning of the book, whose drowned body sinks to the bottom of the sea and is eaten by fish—the same fish served to the two men closing the arms deal. In an afterword, Italian journalist Alessandro Leogrande dubs the illustrator’s narrative a human “food chain,” questioning “the relationship between Europe and the dictatorships from which people are fleeing en masse” and connecting Europe’s “inability to understand this modern-day exodus” to a “denial of the humanity of those who travel by sea” and the political reasons behind the journey.

A chilling and thought-provoking book about human, political, and economic aspects of the refugee crisis in a medium that makes it accessible to a wide array of audiences. (*Informational picture book. 8-adult*)



MVP
Most Valuable Puppy
 Greenberg, Mike & Greenberg, Stacy
 Steponate
Illus. by Pang, Bonnie
 Aladdin (32 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Jun. 5, 2018
 978-1-4814-8931-7

A perky Australian labradoodle narrates this sports-themed tale describing the dog’s interest in playing soccer and football with a group of neighborhood children.

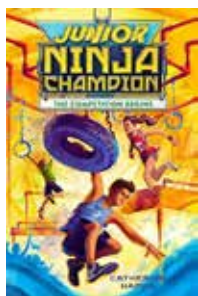
The story is written by a long-term ESPN host and his wife, using their own dog and family as models for the main characters. The dog, Phoebe, has fluffy, white fur and an unusual, bright pink tail. She considers herself an integral part of the human family, referring to family members as Mom, Dad, sister, and brother. (The family has light skin, and the young daughter wears red glasses.) At the neighborhood playground Phoebe wants to join in the day’s informal pickup games of soccer and

Lyricaly written, the novel portrays the war's corrosive, divisive impacts with compassion but skirts the harder issue of those within and outside the military who resisted a war they saw as wrong.

EVERYTHING ELSE IN THE UNIVERSE

football with a group of children, including her "sister." The dog knows the basic rules of the games from watching her owner on his sports show on TV, so she jumps right in and plays, scoring goals and touchdowns (of sorts). Phoebe helps the little girl feel better when she falls down, and a happy conclusion ensues with kids and dog tired after their afternoon playing outside. While the story is a little forced, positive attributes include a female dog and a female main character (a rare and welcome pairing), a group of kids of different ethnicities playing unorganized ball games outdoors without adults directing the action, and a plot with a dog enjoying a taste of two popular sports. Bold digitally produced illustrations use a variety of perspectives and lots of motion, with speech balloons and sound effects providing additional interest.

Phoebe and her best friend score a touchdown with this groundbreaking pairing of a sports-minded girl and her dog. (Picture book. 4-8)



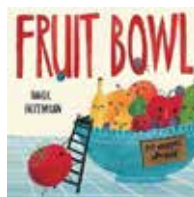
THE COMPETITION BEGINS

Hapka, Catherine
 HMH Books (160 pp.)
 \$13.99 | Jun. 5, 2018
 978-1-3287-1058-1
 Series: Junior Ninja Champion, 1

A group of kids trains together for an obstacle-course game show.

When popular television show *National Ninja Champion* (a fictional analog to *American Ninja Warrior*) announces a spinoff competition for preteens, a group of kids starts training and dreaming big. Ty Santiago is the son of the owners of Fit Kidz gym and a glory-hound athletic superstar. He recruits JJ Johnson, a climber from a family of contractors, to modify the gym's ninja-room equipment (normally reserved for ages 14 and up) for preteen heights. Cancer survivor Kevin Marshall's another NNC-loving gym regular, but he hides his ninja-team involvement from his overprotective mother. Rounding out the team are Izzy Fitzgerald, a snooty but rebellious rich girl from a family of runners, and Mackenzie Clark, a science geek and superfan blogger (with two dads). Although the obstacle runs grow repetitive and occasional lines are clunky, the competition element and quick pace are reader-friendly. Once the team jells, external conflicts take a back seat to narratives about how the characters challenge themselves. The overall moral is the importance of having a supportive team (and being a supportive teammate) in this otherwise individual, niche sport, reiterated in a backmatter interview with an *American Ninja Warrior* competitor. Ty is implied Latino; Kevin is black; the other kids seem to be white by default.

An upbeat and fun series opener capturing the spirit of the source show. (Fiction. 9-12)



FRUIT BOWL

Hoffmann, Mark
Illus. by the author
 Knopf (40 pp.)
 \$17.99 | \$20.99 PLB | Jun. 12, 2018
 978-1-5247-1991-3
 978-1-5247-1992-0 PLB

Is a tomato a fruit or a vegetable? Ripe with puns, this tale turns on the question.

In word bubbles, an off-page child converses with a bevy of colorful, anthropomorphized foodstuffs while putting the produce away: "How's everyone doing?" Lemon's "Full of zest." Strawberry says, "I was jammed in that bag." When the tomato tries to climb into the fruit bowl, everyone questions his right. Tomato then lectures those assembled: Fruits develop from flowers, while veggies might be leaves, stems (asparagus), petals (artichokes, anyone?), or roots. He produces a wacky X-ray showing not only his seeds, but the bones of his skinny arms and legs. Each fruit and vegetable in Hoffmann's digitally composed, hand-lettered gouache pictures sports simple facial features and sticklike limbs. The male tomato and "Old Man Produce"—a wizened prune with bushy gray brows—are explicitly gendered, while a lemon and pepper have full lips and eyelashes, implying they are female. The Old Man delivers a rambling, Zen-like speech that muddies the already-sketchy science. With their new knowledge, a pepper, bean, eggplant, cuke, avocado, snow pea, and yellow squash line up to climb the fruit bowl's ladder. Hoffmann's premise is a bit shaky. Some veggies are typically unrefrigerated (think potatoes), some fruits are regularly kept chilled, and many of those newly ensconced denizens of this fruit bowl (from peppers to squash) keep better in the fridge.

Inessential. (Picture book. 4-6)



EVERYTHING ELSE IN THE UNIVERSE

Holczer, Tracy
 Putnam (272 pp.)
 \$16.99 | Jun. 12, 2018
 978-0-399-16394-4

It's 1971, and the Vietnam War has upended Lucy Rossi's life; when her Army doctor dad returns an amputee, the unsettling changes intensify.

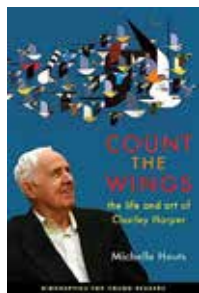
After her dad shipped out, Lucy, 12, and her mom moved from Chicago to San Jose, California, close to his eccentric, loving Italian-American family. Lucy still hasn't made friends. She treasures the small rocks her dad encloses in his letters and longs for his return. But he arrives home changed: He won't use his prosthesis and rebuffs her attempts to help; he talks to her mom in private but shuts Lucy out. She finds solace in her friendship with another newcomer, Milo, whose dad's still in Vietnam. Finding an unknown soldier's discarded helmet, photos, and Purple Heart, they decide to identify and locate him and deliver the items to his family. Along the way,

Ananth's muted, posterlike illustrations are not India-specific (save, perhaps, for the tea stall), and they feature a multigenerational, middle-class brown family that might be found anywhere in the diaspora.

THE MANIC PANIC

they're welcomed at an informal refuge for veterans but turned away from the Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion, where Vietnam veterans are despised. As her dad's condition worsens and the hunt stalls, friends and family teach Lucy to value human connections she's dismissed. Lyrically written, the novel portrays the war's corrosive, divisive impacts with compassion but skirts the harder issue of those within and outside the military who resisted a war they saw as wrong. Major characters are white; two memorable secondary characters are African-American.

A touching, memorable read that explores the costs, large and small, of an unpopular war. (*Historical fiction. 10-14*)



COUNT THE WINGS
The Life and Art of Charley Harper

Houts, Michelle
Ohio Univ. (144 pp.)
\$16.95 paper | Apr. 19, 2018
978-0-8214-2308-0

Portrait of an artist and illustrator whose work is more recognizable than his name.

Best known for angular, geometric images of birds, insects, and other wildlife, Harper, who died in 2007, spent most of his career in Cincinnati, where, along with illustrating several children's books—notably *The Giant Golden Book of Biology* (1961)—he did magazine work and created murals for local buildings. Taking the 2015 restoration of one such mural, an abstract composition called *Space Walk* that had been hidden a quarter century before behind a renovation, as her starting point, Houts makes thoroughly cited use of published works as well as interviews and family archives to look back over her subject's small-town childhood, his military service, art training (which began with a correspondence course in cartooning), and the development of his style from competent but ordinary realism to a livelier, more distinctive look he called “minimal realism.” That development can be easily traced in the sketches and color illustrations that, along with family snapshots and views of letters and other documents, make up the generous visuals. The author doesn't venture to discuss the white artist's children's books in detail or his influence on other illustrators but does convey a clear sense of his amiable character.

Larger collections of Harper's art are available, but this warm tribute offers a look behind the paint box. (endnotes, glossary, timeline, resource lists) (*Biography. 10-14*)



PERFECT PETUNIAS

Jenkins, Lynn
Illus. by Lonergan, Kirrili
EK Books (32 pp.)
\$17.99 paper | Jul. 3, 2018
978-1-925335-58-3
Series: Lessons of a LAC

A frustrated urchin receives a lesson about accepting mistakes.

Little Lopy Lac can't copy the letter “a” consistently and finally throws a tantrum. Companion Curly Calmster calms the tempest by pointing out that just as petunias should be allowed to grow higgledy-piggledy, errors should likewise be seen as natural: “Being OK with how you do things is all part of letting your petunias grow how they grow.” Lonergan has plainly absorbed this lesson, as the two-color art features two creatures drawn in scribbles—one sporting googly eyes and huge rubbery lips, the other with a fixed smile on a head that resembles a moon-faced turnip—who are inexplicably linked through all the minimally detailed scenes by an undulating red-and-white striped tail that, weirdly, replaces Lopy's stubby one at the end. The interchange continues as Curly responds to Lopy's complaint that he was trying his best with an approving “When you focus on the ‘trying’ part you are being the most perfect YOU,” after which Lopy picks a petunia as a reminder and returns to his homework with a new attitude.

Zen masters may be able to draw useful insights from this earnest entry in the Lessons of a LAC series (for “Little Anxious Creature”). (*Picture book. 6-8*)



THE MANIC PANIC

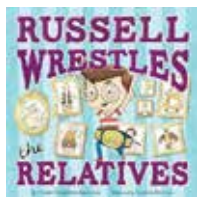
Jha, Richa
Illus. by Ananth, Mithila
Creston (32 pp.)
\$16.99 | May 1, 2018
978-1-939547-43-9

In this unexpected take on screen addiction, an Indian import, an unnamed girl convinces her parents that they, too, can have fun away from their pods and pads.

On “most days,” Daddy can be found referring to recipes on his wireless device, and Mommy, on the couch, snacking and tapping on her laptop. But, when the Wi-Fi goes down, Mommy “howls” and Daddy “bellows.” They “whine” and “whimper.” “Mommy! Daddy! BEHAVE! It is NOT the end of the world,” says the ingenious protagonist, and she takes her parents out into the “big wide world out there”: They climb trees, play soccer, and buy hot chai from the street vendor. While the parents display a reluctance stereotypical to screen-focused children, the young protagonist mirrors parental responses, with “knit... brows” and firmness. Young readers will likely get the joke. When the family returns home, the Wi-Fi is still down, but now they “have other things to think about. Like the clouds and the breeze and the trees.” The identity of the second-person

narrator is revealed at the end, which is yet another humorous turnabout. Ananth's muted, posterlike illustrations are not India-specific (save, perhaps, for the tea stall), and they feature a multigenerational, middle-class brown family that might be found anywhere in the diaspora.

Unmistakably message-driven ("YOU know what's good for them") yet silly and light. (Picture book. 4-7)



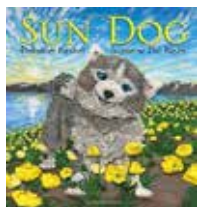
RUSSELL WRESTLES THE RELATIVES

Johnson, Cindy Chambers
 Illus. by Duncan, Daniel
 Aladdin (40 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Jun. 12, 2018
 978-1-4814-9159-4

Mushy family reunions? With Russell's family they're more *masby* than anything else.

Russell is a scrawny kid, and with only one day left before the family reunion, he has yet to devise a plan to escape the tickles, hair-tousles, handshakes, and hugs. His family members are pro wrestlers, so get-togethers can get physical fast. Hiding doesn't get him past the opening doorbell. First his twin cousins "tag-team him with back-to-back Backbusters." Then his uncle "Iron Arm" Murphy grabs his hand for an Earthquake Shake. When his cousin "Cora, The Cleaner" grabs him for a Spin Cycle hug, Russell slips out of her hold. After another smooth escape, Russell suddenly has the moves and the confidence to thwart all attempts at hugging—but can he block Grammy Dorothy's trademark Kansas Crusher hug? Johnson's jokey juxtaposition of family togetherness and pro-wrestling silliness will strike both a chord and a funny bone for little listeners. Duncan's scratchy, colorful, digitally created, cartoon illustrations are full of goofy action and outrageous costumes. Russell and his mom are white, but skin tones and wrestler nicknames hint at a multiethnic extended family for Russell.

When read with a TV-announcer voice, the exaggerated mayhem of text and illustration could make for a kooky KO at storytime. (Picture book. 3-7)



SUN DOG

Kerbel, Deborah
 Illus. by Del Rizzo, Suzanne
 Pajama Press (32 pp.)
 \$17.95 | Jun. 8, 2018
 978-1-77278-038-3

At the top of the world in the Arctic Circle, a young sled dog, Juno, seeks adventure.

Juno was born as the sun started to shine brightly over the tundra both day and night. The puppy loves her boy and spending their days together kayaking and playing near the shore. However, watching the neighbor's big sled dogs practice pulling a sled makes Juno want to do the same. And summer can

be frustrating. How can Juno be expected to sleep with the sun shining around the clock? Bored, the puppy escapes outside while her boy and his family sleep. She soon discovers that being the only one awake is boring—when it's not dangerous. Scared by an owl, she races back home only to find her family is in worse danger from a polar bear. Juno barks so loudly she summons help, saving her family—and learning a good lesson. Kerbel weaves facts about the Arctic Circle within a tender story of the devotion between a boy and his dog. Del Rizzo's vibrant, colorful polymer clay and acrylics capture the beauty of their home. The modeled clay gives Juno, the boy, and environs a sculptural, tactile quality. The boy has beige skin and black hair, there is an inuksuk in one picture, and their town is a tidy one of wood-frame houses.

Juno may be a puppy in the Arctic Circle, but children everywhere will relate to her. (Picture book. 3-6)



**CRESCENT MOONS AND POINTED MINARETS
 A Muslim Book of Shapes**

Khan, Hena
 Illus. by Amimi, Mebrdokht
 Chronicle (32 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Apr. 10, 2018
 978-1-4521-5541-8

A beautiful picture book simultaneously explores shapes, Islam, and the cultures of the Muslim people.

Ranging from simple (circle, rectangle, triangle, oval, diamond) to more advanced (cone, cube, hexagon, octagon, arch, crescent), various shapes introduce an object, architectural form, or concept related to Islamic faith or cultural practices. "Cube is the Ka'aba, / a most sacred site, / where Muslims worship / each day and night." The daff (a type of drum) is a circle; the minaret is a cone; an ayah, defined as "a verse of the holy Quran" in the glossary, is printed on a hexagonal tile, and diamonds adorn a new kaftan for Eid, "an Islamic holiday." Illustrations are elaborately adorned and ornamented, a characteristic of Islamic art, and depict Muslims of many races and ethnicities. However, Muslims dressed in noncultural clothes are largely (though not entirely) missing from illustrations, potentially reinforcing a stereotypical image for non-Muslims. This is partially remedied by the author's note that each spread represents a different country, but without a key or labels, it is difficult to discern which ones these are. The book successfully covers a wide array of concepts, cultures, and shapes, but Islam's vastness, rightly celebrated here, means that some choices in spelling ("mimbar" vs. "minbar"; "Ka'aba" vs. "Ka'ba" or "Ka'bah"), definition ("iftar" is not necessarily a "light" meal), and illustrative detail (the kaftan is not belted) may throw readers accustomed to other practices.

A good accompaniment to the duo's Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns, which featured a Western Muslim family (2012), in a collection of children's books with an Islamic theme. (Picture book. 3-7)

INTERVIEWS & PROFILES

ERIN ENTRADA KELLY

READERS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY SEE THEMSELVES IN THE 2018 NEWBERY WINNER'S NEW NOVEL

By James McDonald



Photo courtesy/Laurence Kesterson

CELEBRATED MIDDLE-GRADE NOVELIST Erin Entrada Kelly, who recently received the 2018 Newbery Medal, says she writes the books she wishes were around when she was young. Her latest, *You Go First* (Apr. 10), which follows two gifted, socially ostracized students, Charlotte and Ben, is no exception.

“Loneliness is a common theme in all of my books,” Kelly says, “because I was a lonely kid. I like to write for kids who are also lonely.” Everyone experiences loneliness, but loneliness at a young age is “palpable,” she says. “You can feel alone in your family, in school, and sometimes even with your friends. Loneliness is such an incredibly weighty emotion, such an experience.”

In *You Go First*, Charlotte and Ben live hundreds of miles away, but they form a friendship through a school-sanctioned program that continues on afterward in the form of the app Words with Friends. They’re very similar; both are incredibly aware and intelligent for their ages, which in many ways only adds to their sense of isolation.

“Rather than seeing that as something of tremendous value,” Kelly says, “which is what it will be for them later in life, it’s actually a source of anguish, because it’s just one more thing that sets them apart from everyone else.”

And yet, Kelly’s characters don’t really appreciate how much they share; they don’t give themselves that chance.

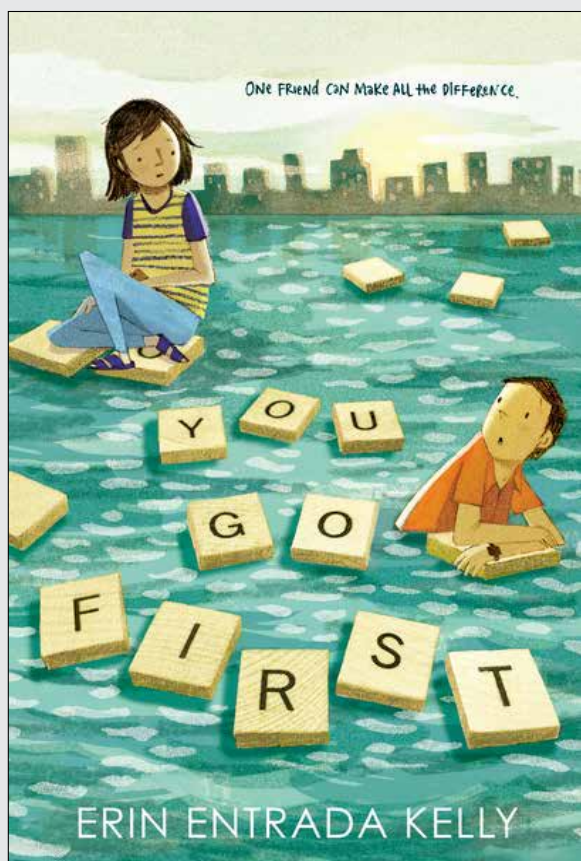
“Growing up, I spent a lot of time in my head,” Kelly says. “And one of the things I would always think about was how many people were on this Earth, and I would wonder how many people felt as I did in that moment. Then, I would think how sad it was that there were probably people out there who knew exactly what I was going through, but I’d never meet them, because they could be on the other side of the world—I mean, they could have also been at my school, but at the time it didn’t feel that way. While technology means that people in two very different places can share a connection, that didn’t feel right for Ben and Charlotte, who are quite private. They take the opportunity to be, online, who they think is their better self.”

As the novel progresses, the reader becomes increasingly aware of how much comfort and support Charlotte and Ben could take from one another, and yet the reader watches helplessly as they pretend to be someone different—someone more popular, more sporty—and thereby deny themselves that ease. And that’s intentional.

“The idea behind the book is we never struggle alone,” Kelly explains, “even if we don’t know it. Even if Charlotte and Ben are going through their struggles

without much support, the reader knows that they are not alone, and hopefully, when the reader knows that, the reader will then say, 'OK, well I know that I'm not struggling alone either.' That's my hope whenever someone sits down with the book—not just my books. And when they finish the book and go out into their lives, I hope that that sense of being connected to someone else, whether it's Charlotte or Ben or whomever it might be, stays with them and they come away with a greater understanding of themselves and the world around them."

James McDonald is a British-trained historian and a New York-based writer. You Go First received a starred review in the Feb. 1, 2018, issue.



SAFFRON ICE CREAM

Kheiriyeh, Rashin
Illus. by the author
 Levine/Scholastic (40 pp.)
 \$17.99 | May 29, 2018
 978-1-338-15052-0

Rashin, a young Iranian girl living in Brooklyn, heads to the Coney Island beach with her family, reminiscing on similar outings she had in the past to the Caspian Sea in Iran and comparing those to the present trip.

At the center of the story are two short anecdotes: One involves three little boys breaking the rules of the gender-segregated, curtain-split Iranian beach and taking a peek on the other side of the divide where women gather. The ensuing chaos is vividly described and illustrated by Kheiriyeh—with women “shouting and jumping out of the water and covering themselves with towels, newspapers and umbrellas.” Order and harmony are, however, soon restored after female members of the Islamic beach guard—depicted as stern, unsmiling women in black attire—patch the holes in the fabric and allow for beach activities to resume. (Since there’s been no connection made between Islam and the segregated beach, the episode may require unpacking for children unfamiliar with the practice.) The second anecdote, which inspired the title of the book, tells of Rashin’s sadness in not finding saffron-flavored ice cream. Her sadness is quickly overcome after a newfound friend, Aijah, a pigtailed black girl, suggests she try a new flavor, chocolate crunch, which she readily enjoys. Lively and imaginative illustrations on two-page spreads adorn the simple premise of the book—a juxtaposition of two beach experiences, one Iranian and one American.

Genuine. (Picture book. 4-8)



WRITE ON, IRVING BERLIN!

Kimmelman, Leslie
Illus. by Gardner, David C.
 Sleeping Bear Press (32 pp.)
 \$16.99 | May 15, 2018
 978-1-58536-380-3

A Jewish immigrant’s passage from pogroms in Russia to “God Bless America” —written 100 years ago to celebrate his beloved adopted home.

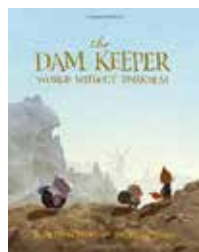
Irving Berlin, born in 1888, was just a child when his family and so many others fled terror directed at Jews in czarist Russia for New York City’s Lower East Side. It was a crowded, dirty, and very poor neighborhood of immigrants, but it allowed a musical boy who had never studied music to grow up and write songs. Israel, his given name, was not a good student in school, but, a cantor’s son, he had a head full of tunes. Early success led to music composed for fellow soldiers during World War I and then music written for Broadway and the movies. It was during World War II that he “took out and polished up a song he’d

Using brushwork that evokes traditional East Asian ink drawings, Kyung creates minimally detailed prehistoric scenes featuring a cast of slightly anthropomorphic but recognizable dinosaurs.

BIGGER THAN YOU

written long ago.” That song was “God Bless America,” which is still sung and loved—albeit over the initial protests of those who were not pleased that a Jewish immigrant was the composer and lyricist. “White Christmas,” written during World War II, was also immediately taken to heart despite the same racist, nativist objections. More success and many more great and still popular songs followed. Gardner’s illustrations are colorful and soft-textured, displaying many smiling faces of Berlin as he ages. Musical notes swirl through the pages.

Heartwarming Americana. (author’s note, selected songs, further reading) (Picture book/biography. 6-9)



THE DAM KEEPER
World Without Darkness

Kondo, Robert & Tsutsumi, Dicie

Illus. by the authors

First Second (160 pp.)

\$21.99 | Jul. 10, 2018

978-1-62672-427-3

Series: Dam Keeper, 2

With only a few days to get back to Sunrise Valley before the next black fog, Pig and his friends undertake a desperate trek across the wastelands.

Short on storyline but long on encounters with strange residents met along the way, this sequel to *The Dam Keeper* takes Pig, Fox, Hippo, and Van (the last apparently a lizard but strongly resembling a Kermit the Frog puppet) from the teeming, smoggy streets of Frogtown through cities of beavers and moles, a meeting with a group of nomads led by a wolf, and finally a brush with a scary smoke monster. The art, done without inked lines in luminous, gracefully brushed colors, has a distinctive and superficially pretty look. However, forms and backdrops tend to be rendered as vague, indistinct blobs, often in dim lighting, and on some pages they are so squeezed into tiny panels that at times their nature, or any action that might be taking place, is hard to discern. This stylization is particularly noticeable in the animal cast, much of which is so cute and snub-nosed as to be unidentifiable without prompts in the dialogue. The influence of the Academy Award-nominated short film that inspired this spinoff remains in the cinematic storyboarding and visual humor—but readers who aren’t already cued into the plot, characters, and overall scenario will flounder.

Moves the story about an inch—handsome but inessential. (Graphic fantasy. 7-11)



WHAT DO THEY DO WITH ALL THAT POO?

Kurtz, Jane

Illus. by Black, Allison

Beach Lane/Simon & Schuster (40 pp.)

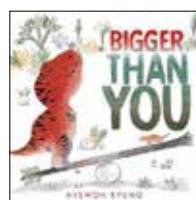
\$17.99 | Jun. 19, 2018

978-1-4814-7986-8

Countless zoo books line the shelves, but how often does one discuss animal manure—and how a zoo discards it?

Employing the page turn to great effect from the very start, Kurtz is bound to get youngsters’ attention: “At zoo after zoo / the animals chew. / And then ... // they poo!” Quick rhymes in boldface type across the top make simple statements about each animal’s toilet habits. “Sloths creep down from trees to poop, / but only once a week. / A penguin shoots its poo out / in a fishy-smelling streak.” Smaller text below offers more in-depth facts: “Why do sloths spend so much energy leaving the protection of trees to poop on the ground? It’s a mystery scientists are trying to solve.” Black’s wide-eyed, expressive animals have personality, but they never cross over to cartoony garishness. After exploring 12 different zoo dwellers, Kurtz then turns her focus to the large amount of poo that accumulates at a zoo every day. What do they do with it? Much is trucked to landfills, but zoos also study it in labs to help understand their animals better. Plus, there are compost options and even elephant-poo paper! A slapdash ending is the only misstep, but the atypical subject matter will surely shine.

A scatological success. (Informational picture book. 3-8)



BIGGER THAN YOU

Kyung, Hyewon

Illus. by the author

Greenwillow (32 pp.)

\$17.99 | Jul. 31, 2018

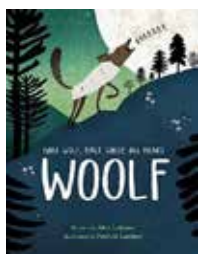
978-0-06-268312-0

Dinosaurs on the playground (and readers who might wish to join them) get schooled both in physics and in the pleasures of noncompetitive play.

Taking alternate ends of a log balanced on a round rock, a succession of ever larger dinos asserts supremacy over the playmate on the opposite end, smugly crowing “I’m bigger than you.” But the tantrum a bright red T. Rex throws after being outweighed by a brachiosaur brings a change of perspective in the form of a much-larger T. Rex: “And I’m your mother!” With parental help, the log is pushed so that only one end is elevated, thus converting it to a slide that puts all of the dinosaurs on the same footing. Using brushwork that evokes traditional East Asian ink drawings (according to the production note she uses Korean paper and paints), Kyung creates minimally detailed prehistoric scenes featuring a cast of slightly anthropomorphic but recognizable dinosaurs. They are all identified, along with size gradations ranging from “Big” through “Massive” and “Immense” to “Biggest,” in a closing gallery, which is followed by

diagrams that explain, with a dollop of wry humor, the differences between a seesaw (“lever”) and a slide (“inclined plane”).

A whimsical lesson in Mesozoic good manners, with an added treat for young STEM-winders. (Picture book. 5-7)



WOOLF

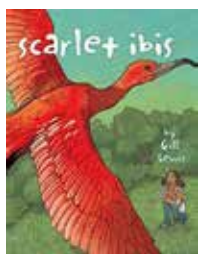
Latimer, Alex
Illus. by Latimer, Patrick
 Pavilion/Trafalgar (32 pp.)
 \$9.99 | Jun. 1, 2018
 978-1-84365-340-0

When a wolf and sheep fall in love against the odds, their son must learn to navigate a world that is hostile to being

both.

Woolf (“wool” plus “wolf”) has his mother’s pointy nose and bushy tail and his father’s fleecy body. He loves to “baa at the moon” and to stalk the best grass in the meadow. When it comes time to make friends, Woolf code-switches to adapt. He shaves his fleece to blend in with the wolves, but his vegetarian ways are not in sync with the wolves’ predatory natures. He curls and whitens his tail and smooths down his ears to fit in with the sheep but does not enjoy their aimless wandering. Defeated, Woolf turns away from both groups. Though Woolf finds a personally satisfying ending with new friends such as a bullfrog and a horsefly, whose names imply a similar mixed parentage, it is likely to be a disappointing end for many mixed-heritage children and their families looking for a story that might encourage a healthy integration of their diverse backgrounds. By rejecting the culture and identity of both sheep and wolves, Woolf rejects all the wonderful aspects that make him up as well.

Woolf yearns to celebrate diversity but instead paints a bleak picture. (Picture book. 4-8)



SCARLET IBIS

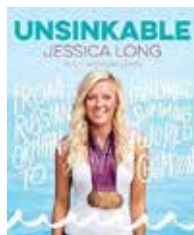
Lewis, Gill
Illus. by Meyer, Susan
 Caitlyn Dlouhy/Atheneum (288 pp.)
 \$17.99 | May 15, 2018
 978-1-4814-4941-0

Twelve-year-old Scarlet Ibis Mackenzie struggles to care for her brother and protect her family.

With a mother who sleeps and smokes her way through most days, Scarlet has shouldered most of the household responsibilities as well as the care of her sensitive younger half brother, Red. Scarlet works hard to keep her family together, but it’s not easy to predict her mother’s bouts of anger and melancholy and support her brother through hair-trigger emotional upheavals, all while trying to ward off social worker Mrs. Gideon. Her worst fears are realized when a fire destroys the family’s apartment, and Scarlet is placed in foster care without Red. With some cursory Americanization to help the

book make the leap across the pond as well as a dash of her signature wildlife enthusiasm, Lewis explores an array of complexities, all to do with family and resilience. Scarlet’s separation from Red (explained as necessary due to Red’s autism spectrum disorder) exacerbates what Scarlet sees as existing splinters of difference (Red is white like their withdrawn mother, and mixed-race Scarlet is dark-skinned like her absent father). And Scarlet uses Red’s fascination with feathers and birds—including the baby pigeon that survives the apartment fire—to find not only a way into her brother’s world, but the hope of reuniting them in the new security of a foster home.

Sadness and hope combine in this heartfelt British import. (Fiction. 11-14)



UNSINKABLE
From Russian Orphan to Paralympic Swimming World Champion

Long, Jessica with Long, Hannah
 HMH Books (112 pp.)
 \$16.99 | Jun. 5, 2018
 978-1-328-70725-3

In a series of “moments,” Paralympic swimmer Long describes how she became “the second-most decorated Paralympian of all time.”

“I’ve never been good at listening to people. They always seem to tell me what I can’t do,” writes Long, setting the theme for her informative—if somewhat disorganized—discussion of sports, family, physical disability, anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder, and Christianity. Born in Siberia with fibular hemimelia, a condition that later necessitated the amputation of her legs, Long was adopted into an American family that encouraged her love of swimming. (“God had a plan for that little Russian orphan,” she concludes.) The youngest member of the U.S. Paralympic swim team at age 12, she went on to compete in the 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016 Paralympic Games. Her acceptance into a “second family” of other amputees after growing up without disabled peers will resonate with readers who also desire camaraderie with others like themselves. Though Long’s disdain for physical or emotional weakness borders on cliché, the sacrifices her grueling training requires—and her desire to make them worthwhile—provide sympathetic context for her aversion to “giving in.” The book’s bright color scheme is occasionally hard on the eyes; blues and reds in the accompanying photos are intense, and white text on yellow and sky blue backgrounds blurs the first page of each chapter. Long and her family present white.

Even readers who are not sports enthusiasts will appreciate Long’s upbeat account of finding confidence in the water and in life. (Memoir. 8-14)

THE GOLDEN THREAD HONORS AN ICONIC MUSICIAN AND ACTIVIST

THE TOOLS OF PROGRESS can be humble and unexpected. For Pete Seeger, it was a banjo whose head read “This Machine Surrounds Hate and Forces It to Surrender.” For Olympia-based papercut artist Nikki McClure, it’s an X-Acto knife.

“There’s a coup going on in our country,” says McClure, who, in the fall of 2016, shelved her own work in progress to prioritize illustrating *The Golden Thread: A Song for Pete Seeger* (Apr. 17) by children’s author and Decemberists rocker Colin Meloy.

“This dark cloud had parked over everyone and everything,” she says, “and so it was a way to shoot a ray of light through that, to focus on this person who had persevered through similar times.”

“HAMMER BRINGER! RIVER SINGER! SAILOR, SOLDIER, LEAN BELL RINGER,” Meloy writes in this rhymed biography of the legendary American activist and musician that our critic writes is “positively joyous.” “A fighter in peace, musician in war / He followed that string till he couldn’t no more.”

McClure carves Seeger’s 94-year life out of black and gold papers, incorporating the words of songs he sang into a golden thread that winds through the pages.



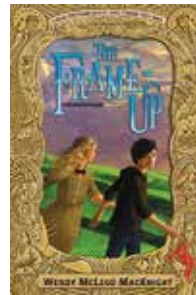
Nikki McClure

Photo courtesy Lisa Scott Owen

“My main hope,” McClure says of choosing to interweave the song lyrics with Meloy’s melodious narrative, “is that the reader might stop reading for a second and start singing.

“And that they’ll learn about the life of a person,” she says, “who, by speaking up and using their voice, changed things for the better and brought people together. And they’re just singing! Through singing, you can do that.” —M.L.

Megan Labrise is a staff writer and co-host of the Fully Booked podcast. The Golden Thread received a starred review in the Mar. 15, 2018, issue.



THE FRAME-UP

MacKnight, Wendy McLeod
Greenwillow (384 pp.)
\$16.99 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-0-06-266830-1

A girl in a painting and a boy visiting the gallery she hangs in foil art thieves.

Twelve-year-old Sargent Singer—named in honor of master painter John Singer Sargent—is visiting his partly estranged, emotionally volatile father, Isaac, in New Brunswick, Canada, for the summer. Isaac runs the top-tier Beaverbrook Art Gallery, which houses works by, among others, Thomas Gainsborough, Salvador Dalí, and Sargent’s namesake. Mona Dunn, the other protagonist, is forever 13; William Orpen painted her portrait, *Mona Dunn*, in 1915, and since then she’s been alive inside her painting. Unbeknownst to the public, Mona and the gallery’s other painted subjects can jump from painting to painting, visiting one another and exploring the various paintings’ landscapes. Sargent and Mona’s friendship—begun when he catches her sticking out her tongue at obnoxious kids—features a poignant trip outdoors and conversation about each one’s unique melancholy. With help, they also identify nefarious deeds (forgery? art theft?) and bravely thwart criminals. MacKnight entices with art critique and technique, although, sadly, readers never see artistic genius Sargent actually paint. In a mismatch to the emotional realism, villains are stereotypes—cartoonishly fat or lower-class. Some of the mechanics of life inside the frame are clear and others vague, but the ending’s an unexpected bolt of perfect gratification. Everyone’s white except one black friend, whom another friend refers to as intimidating. Color reproductions of relevant paintings are included in an insert.

For anyone who’s wondered about the people inside the frames. (gallery map, afterword) (*Fantasy/mystery*. 9-12)



LITTLE ROBOT ALONE

MacLachlan, Patricia & Charest,
Emily MacLachlan
Illus. by Phelan, Matt
HMH Books (40 pp.)
\$17.99 | Jun. 12, 2018
978-0-544-44280-1



What do you do when you’re all alone? If you’re a robot, you make your own friends!

Readers begin this story in a landscape fit for Kenneth Grahame, but there are no toads or badgers in sight. Instead, they meet Little Robot, a short, round little fellow that resembles the cuddly offspring of L. Frank Baum’s Tik-Tok and a toaster. Little Robot is cheerful about his life and routine, so cheerful that every day he wakes up and sings a series of songs. When Little Robot has his breakfast, for instance, he croons: “Oats with oozy oil are yummy / slipping slowly down my tummy.” But although his life is peaceful, he feels a little lonely. What’s a robot to do? Thankfully, this robot has moxie (and a little imagination), so he

A pivotal moment in a child's life, handled with grace and sensitivity rather than conflict or ineffective lecturing.

THE DINOSAUR EXPERT

decides to build himself a doggie friend. MacLachlan and Charrest's text practically screams to be read aloud, and their writing is only further enhanced by Phelan's inviting watercolor illustrations. Subtle shifts in both the text and illustrations support readers: While the narration is written in black, Little Robot's songs are written in green so no one will ever miss their cue to sing. Phelan's art hints subtly at things to come, from Little Robot's dog-shaped thought bubble of inspiration to the slow development of Little Dog himself.

A book to cherish for years to come. (Picture book. 4-6)



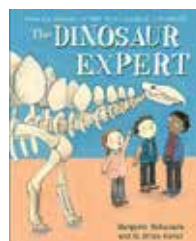
KECKO THE GECKO

McKay, Cindy
Illus. by Johnson, Meredith
Treasure Bay (44 pp.)
\$4.99 paper | Jun. 1, 2018
978-1-60115-304-3
Series: We Both Read

A story about a boy and his gecko helps beginning readers develop confidence and fluency.

Relatively complex text on the left-hand page paired with two lines of simpler text in a larger font on the right-hand page invites shared reading between caregiver and learner (as explained in a foreword). Challenging words highlighted in bold on the left are used again on the right, reinforcing the concept and encouraging success. The text reads smoothly whether children are reading just the right-hand page or hearing and reading the entire story. Plot is not sacrificed to this instructional format. When Matt, a brown-skinned boy with straight black hair, sneaks his new pet into school, his classmates, a diverse group, display a range of reactions to the predictable chaos that ensues while at the same time supporting their friend in his secret. Kim at first holds Kecko and manages to keep from shrieking when his tail breaks off in her hand. (Matt explains gecko physiology to reassure her.) A boy's response to a gecko on the wall is simply "cool." These somewhat stereotypical responses are balanced by all the children's efforts to keep their teacher, a light-skinned woman, from discovering the escapee. Tension builds when Kecko lands in Mrs. Jackson's hair and then when she just barely avoids sitting on him. When she finely learns the cause of the uproar, she turns the surprise visitor into a teaching opportunity.

A success on two levels that's worthy of repeat readings. (Early reader. 5-8)



THE DINOSAUR EXPERT

McNamara, Margaret
Illus. by Karas, G. Brian
Schwartz & Wade/Random (40 pp.)
\$17.99 | Jul. 17, 2018
978-0-553-51143-7
Series: Mr. Tiffin's Classroom

Timely intervention keeps a young science enthusiast's career ambitions on the rails in this fourth outing for Mr. Tiffin's class.

A born naturalist ("She even collected owl pellets. And she took them apart"), Kimmy eagerly shares her knowledge about dinosaurs and fossils on a trip to the museum—until she's silenced by classmate Jake's disparaging remark that "girls aren't scientists." No sooner does her perspicacious teacher spot her sudden change, though, than he leads her to a specimen of *Gasparinisauria*, a dinosaur named, she reads, in honor of paleontologist Zulma Nélica Brandoni de Gasparini. Even Jake admits that that is "awesome," and for the rest of the visit Kimmy becomes a positive fount of information about raptor toes, *Stegosaurus* brains, and other dinosaur lore. "When I grow up," Kimmy declares, "I want to be just like her." Mr. Tiffin's "I think you already are," cements the teachable moment. Kimmy, her teacher, and Jake are white, but along with capturing his characters' changing moods and responses with artfully angled faces and other body language, Karas portrays the rest of the class with diverse features and skin tones. A gallery of women paleontologists of the past and present makes an apt closer.

A pivotal moment in a child's life, handled with grace and sensitivity rather than conflict or ineffective lecturing. (Picture book. 6-9)



THE BRILLIANT DEEP Rebuilding the World's Coral Reefs: The Story of Ken Nedimyer and the Coral Restoration Foundation

Messner, Kate
Illus. by Forsythe, Matthew
Chronicle (48 pp.)
\$17.99 | May 8, 2018
978-1-4521-3350-8

The story of Ken Nedimyer's brilliant idea and his work to restore troubled coral reefs.

Nedimyer, son of a NASA engineer, grew up exploring Florida's underwater world. As an adult, he became aware that the coral reefs he had loved were fading, even dying. He experimented with transplanting staghorn corals that had grown in his live rock farm. The transplants grew and became the impetus for his founding of the Coral Restoration Foundation, which now works internationally. Aimed at quite young readers and listeners, Messner's hopeful tale begins with the one coral gamete that can found a colony and ends with an image of this one man whose efforts have spurred restoration. In between,

Oguma's vignettes are told in a stream-of-consciousness style, matching the spontaneity of his art. The playful illustrations blend a loose figurative style with abstract patterning.

THE BARBER'S DILEMMA

she touches on how corals grow and form an underwater community and how this white scientist worked with his daughter and others to rebuild the reefs. In *Over and Under the Pond* (illustrated by Christopher Silas Neal, 2017) and other titles aimed at slightly older readers, the author has depicted habitats with convincing details about the animals. Here, it's the pictures that portray the colorful underwater world; the text places more emphasis on a human's background and his process. The unusual palette and soft edges of Forsythe's large-scale illustrations add mystery to the marine world and will show well.

A charming piece of environmental good news for storytime. (*Informational picture book. 4-7*)



LA FRONTERA
El viaje con papá / My Journey with Papa

Mills, Deborah & Alva, Alfredo
Illus. by Navarro, Claudia
Barefoot (48 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$9.99 paper | May 1, 2018
978-1-78285-388-6
978-1-78285-392-3 paper

Co-authors Mills and Alva demystify la frontera in this autobiographical tale based on Alva's childhood journey with his father from Mexico to Texas.

To provide for his growing family, Alfredo's father decides to journey northward to "find a new home." Alfredo joins his papá on this arduous voyage, knowing he'll miss his family and his small village. After saying goodbye to his home and loved ones, Alfredo sets off in the early morning light alongside his father. Led to the Rio Grande by el coyote, Papa and Alfredo cross the river with the help of an old inner tube. When el coyote abandons Alfredo and his father, the pair must escape further into the harsh Texan landscape, away from la frontera. Presented in both Spanish and English, the retrospective narrative overflows with grueling, poignant details about the journey Alfredo and his father undertook. Yet Navarro's mixed-media artwork succeeds in emphasizing the more-hopeful aspects of Alva's story, namely love and strength in a familial context. Vivid shifts in color, light, and shadows from scene to scene gently pull readers along, complemented by powerful facial expressions during key moments. After almost a week of struggles, Alfredo and his father arrive at "the Embassy," a makeshift camp behind a factory. As father and son adjust to their new life in the U.S., they never forget about those left behind.

A timely, necessary read. (appendix) (*Picture book. 8-11*)



THE HYENA SCIENTIST

Montgomery, Sy
Photos by Bishop, Nic
HMH Books (80 pp.)

\$18.99 | May 15, 2018
978-0-544-63511-1
Series: Scientists in the Field



A practiced and proficient team returns to the African plains to visit a field camp in Masai Mara, Kenya, where zoologist Kay Holekamp has been studying spotted hyenas for 30 years.

This surprisingly engaging title introduces a species whose bad reputation is nearly universal. Holekamp disagrees. Her study of eight generations of hyenas has revealed the spotted hyena to be "an unexpectedly brave, smart, and extremely social species" as well as the "most formidable carnivore in Africa." During their 10-day visit, Montgomery and Bishop go with the researchers for morning and evening observations, watch one sedate a young male with a dart gun so all can take measurements and specimens, see a skirmish in a war between rival factions of the large Talek West hyena clan, and, during a downpour, when flood threatens, help evacuate precious specimens and equipment. Montgomery's graceful prose draws readers into the experience with clear explanations and vivid description. Bishop's striking photographs show off the doglike hyenas' furry cuteness. He includes close-ups of cubs at play and rest, researchers at work, and adult hyenas interacting with one another, as well as tent scenes, other wildlife, and the always-impressive scenery. Readers may be inspired by the stories of the white scientist's diverse team of assistants: a retired medical social worker, U.S. graduate students, and a young Kenyan who hopes to study in the U.S.

An appealing, elegantly designed introduction to another much-maligned species. (fast facts, bibliography, acknowledgements, index) (*Nonfiction. 10-15*)



THE BARBER'S DILEMMA
And Other Stories from Manmaru Street

Oguma, Koki & Wolf, Gita
Illus. by Oguma, Koki
Tara Publishing (44 pp.)
\$16.95 | May 15, 2018
978-93-83145-65-2

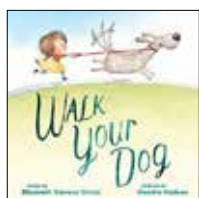


Observations and fancy take flight in Oguma's collection of musings from Manmaru Street, Tokyo.

Oguma's doodles take on a life of their own in this nonlinear tale. Magic pockets produce snakes and crocodiles; a soup's seaweed chats away; and hats made of cream or cheese and slides made of candy seem unremarkable. Each spread contains an idiosyncratic slice of life. From the imaginative, droll text (rendered in English by Wolf) to the collection's layout, readers may draw parallels to Shel Silverstein; however, Oguma's

vignettes are told in a stream-of-consciousness style, matching the spontaneity of his art. The playful illustrations blend a loose figurative style with abstract patterning. Pencil and watercolors in a pastel palette showcase Oguma's expressive style. A young woman loves mushrooms so much that her boyfriend appears in a mushroom costume and bearing a giant mushroom, prompting the question, "So what does Mr. Kiyota's girlfriend like better?" Studying the picture of the two, readers see his mushroom-patterned garb, which blends with the enormous mushroom he holds; his girlfriend's speech bubble, full of nothing but mushrooms, hovers over his head, making it look itself like a giant mushroom. As with Silverstein's *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, readers may enjoy one or many spreads at a time—the treasures within beckon repeat visits and offer inspiration for the classroom or artist.

Funny, eccentric, and unique, this exceptionally designed work has universal appeal. (Picture book. 5-adult)



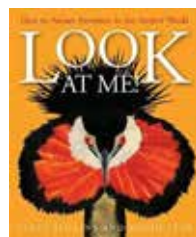
WALK YOUR DOG

Omlor, Elizabeth Stevens
 Illus. by Hudson, Neesha
 Putnam (32 pp.)
 \$16.99 | Jun. 5, 2018
 978-0-399-54652-5

A child and a dog go through their day together.

With nary an adult in sight, the 4- or 5-year-old unnamed child with messy brown pigtails takes charge, brushing the dog in a messy bathroom, feeding the dog at a little table where it wreaks havoc, dressing the canine in all sorts of outfits, and finally taking it outdoors, where the duo meets a small gold-and-brown cat. The dog gets away from its owner and merrily chases the cat through the park, until the child falls in the mud and finally catches the leash again, just in time for ice cream. With just three words in each spread and only the verb varying ("Train your dog. / Treat your dog"), the watercolor-and-colored-pencil art provides delightful details, sometimes using animation strategies to advance the action, as in the "Train your dog" spread, in which the child first glares at the dog, the dog then licks the child, the child instructs the dog, and finally, in a full-page illustration, the dog sits and wags its tail, drawn as three tails with arcing motion lines crossing them. The suburban setting is shown in soft, light pastel hues, while the big, brown dog is given texture with pencil. The minimal text works well with the maximal visual storytelling.

Beginning readers will be able to read this refreshing tale alone; younger kids will tell it from the pictures. (Picture book. 3-6)



**LOOK AT ME!
 How to Attract Attention in
 the Animal World**

Page, Robin & Jenkins, Steve
 Illus. by Jenkins, Steve
 HMH Books (40 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Jun. 19, 2018
 978-0-544-93553-2

Many animals have creative and often startling ways of changing appearance, whether for attracting a mate, fending off predators, or luring prey.

Jenkins and Page write that "visual display—flashing a bright color, performing a dance, glowing in the dark, even blowing up like a balloon—is the most common way an animal says, 'Look at me!'" Jenkins' trademark vividly colored, collaged illustrations stand out strongly on white backgrounds, showing a large diversity of animals and birds in threatening or mating display, grouping them together by type of display. Children will be fascinated by their ingenuity: There's the male hooded seal that inflates a red nasal sack; the magnificent frigatebird, which puffs up a bright red pouch on his throat to attract females; and the pufferfish and common toad, which both inflate their whole bodies to scare off predators. The bright colors of both a range of sea slugs, most poisonous, and poison dart frogs warn their enemies. Some of these animals are straight out of a horror movie, such as the sarcastic fringehead fish, which bares terrifying rows of teeth, and the mandrill, with its lurid grimace of rage. Concise descriptions on each page introduce the animals, and a glossary gives more detailed information about each species.

Animals with fake eye spots, glowing lures, putrid flesh, and stinky glands will fascinate kids who love weird and wonderful science. (Informational picture book. 6-12)



READY TO RIDE

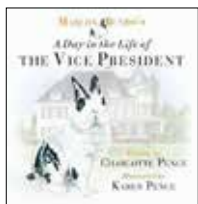
Pelon, Sébastien
 Illus. by rthe author
 Trans. by Miéville, Vanessa
 Words & Pictures (32 pp.)
 \$17.95 | Jun. 19, 2018
 978-1-91027-773-7

The losing-the-training-wheels rite of passage is helped along by a mysterious white blob in this adaptation of a French picture book.

When an unnamed boy goes outside, he sees a "ball of fur wearing a pink hat [go] past on a tiny bike. He looks at me. I hop on my bike and follow him..." Before long, the creature, who looks like a yeti with two dot eyes, is eating the boy's training wheels, causing him to learn to ride on his new "big boy's bike." The learning goes through the familiar stages: fear, injury, recovery, and, finally, comfort, fun, and speed. The creature is equal parts helpful and goading until he is suddenly gone, leaving the boy to go home with his new confidence in riding. The friendly white creature has no dialogue, and Pelon's illustrations don't make much of a character out of him. His defining trait is

that hat, and though it and the other accent colors throughout the book are gorgeous, the friendship developed doesn't feel entirely convincing. As a book to celebrate a kid's graduation from training wheels, it feels worthy: The inside back cover includes a "Certificate for a Super Cyclist" with a blank date. The narrator is paper-white.

It's a bit of a clunky story, but those colors pop, and the tone is just inspiring enough to give to a training-wheel rider nearing the end of that run. (Picture book. 3-7)



**MARLON BUNDO'S DAY
IN THE LIFE OF THE
VICE PRESIDENT**

Pence, Charlotte
Illus. by Pence, Karen
Regnery Kids (40 pp.)
\$18.99 | Mar. 19, 2018
978-1-62157-776-8

Marlon Bundo, a black-and-white rabbit, helps out Grampa—the vice president—on what is represented as a typical day.

From "freshly brewed coffee" delivered by the Naval Enlisted Aides to "one little prayer before bed," Marlon Bundo narrates the day's events. In the West Wing, Grampa and Marlon start off with "the most important meeting... / That's the one with the president!" Then they head to the Capitol, "where Grampa presides over a vote." (Which tie-breaking vote is not mentioned, so readers can imagine whether it's confirming Betsy DeVos, gutting the Affordable Care Act, or some future controversy.) They then meet with "people from across America" with "questions and problems. / And Grampa helps answer each one." Then it's back to the Naval Observatory for a quick squint through its telescope, a phone call from "the president!" and a quiet reading of the Bible. Karen Pence is a competent watercolorist, creating double-page spreads that depict Marlon Bundo hopping through clearly recognizable, famous scenes. Save a white Secret Service agent who's shown opening Grampa's limo door, humans are depicted mostly as feet or hands, none of them of color. Charlotte Pence's verse is frankly execrable, torturing syntax and introducing nonsensical detail in order to maintain rhyme and meter. Additional information is offered in three pages of notes misleadingly labeled "resources." Proceeds go to A21 and Tracy's Kids.

Anodyne at best. (Picture book. 3-7)



BOY BITES BUG

Petruck, Rebecca
Amulet/Abrams (272 pp.)
\$16.99 | May 8, 2018
978-1-4197-2141-0

Eating a stinkbug has unforeseen consequences for Will.

Will Nolan, who is white, is shocked when his friend Darryl (also white) calls the new boy in their Minnesota school, Hispanic Eloy, a cholo. The word is not necessarily a slur, but Darryl clearly intends it as such, prompting Will to eat a stinkbug as a very middle school way of proving that he's not "a jerk," even if his friend is. Unsurprisingly, Will throws up. He arrives at school the next day mortified, only to find, in a turn of events that makes perfect middle school sense, that the stunt has granted him fame: He's now Bug Boy. But Will's problems are far from over: Tensions with Darryl continue to rise, and as he gets to know Eloy, problematic elements in Will's own thinking and behavior begin to reveal themselves. When Will unintentionally betrays Eloy's trust, he must decide not only how to redeem himself, but what sort of person he wants to be—and whether someone like Darryl, his lifelong friend with no apparent desire to denounce his bigotry, is someone Will wants in his life. Petruck successfully weaves such important themes as bias, solidarity, and coming to recognize one's own privilege and prejudice together, delivering them in a plot that is *so* very middle school (bugs! sports!) that it will hopefully appeal to a broad audience who might not otherwise choose to read about these crucial topics.

An admirable feat that entertains even as it instructs. (Fiction. 10-14)



HĪZNOBYŪTĪ

Ponti, Claude
Illus. by the author
Trans. by Waters, Alyson
Elsewhere Editions (35 pp.)
\$18.00 | May 22, 2018
978-0-914671-90-9



An ugly monster sets out on a wonderfully strange journey of self-discovery.

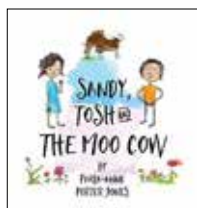
The translated text ambles along smoothly enough, but Ponti's illustrations—equally rich in warm feeling and surreal, precisely drawn figures and details—give the tale wings. Considered so hideous (one member of the comically appalled family gathered around his hatched egg has turned away to throw up) that everyone's first response becomes his given name, Hiznobyuti eventually runs away from his comfy, cluttered refuge beneath the kitchen sink. He adventures, slaying a much-larger monster with one colossal sneeze, temporarily transforming himself into a tree, "communophonizing" with the stars, and saving a dead planet by waking its sun (and a princess on a nearby satellite), among other heroic feats. Home he

Researchers Ramesh and Chandi spent hours with tribal elders, and the result is this magical collection, exquisitely illustrated by Frame.

WALKING IS A WAY OF KNOWING

goes, to find it in ruins and his family in tears since his departure: “Words said the opposite of what they meant, hands did whatever they wanted, and meals were not tasty at all.” Following a joyful reunion featuring “fourteen ordinary desserts and twenty-eight extraordinary ones,” though, everyone dances and sets about rebuilding. Híznobyūtī is left at the end thinking of one last exploit...to see if the princess might want to marry him. Human readers could hardly be repulsed by his looks as, aside from a short trunk, he resembles, like the rest of his clan, an anthropomorphic golden meerkat with wide, batlike ears.

Itzabyuti thruenthru. (Picture book. 7-10)



SANDY, TOSH AND THE MOO COW

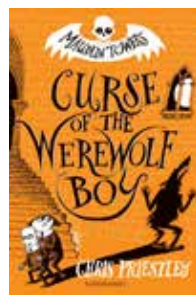
Porter Jones, Paula-Anne
 Illus. by Ion Communications
 Blue Banyan Books (32 pp.)
 \$12.99 | May 25, 2018
 978-976-8267-14-6

Jamaican siblings Sandy and Tosh

search for cows.

When Tosh hears a “moo cow” outside his window one morning, he yells for his older sister, Sandy. Clearly the kids have a love of bovines, because when they rush to the window and see “the swish of a brown tail disappearing down the street,” they decide to go after it. With their mother’s (depicted from the waist down as two brown legs in a colorful, sunflower-print dress) blessing, the pair head off for “an early morning adventure.” The loose linework and the way the watercolors bleed over lend the illustrations an almost child-drawn feel. The story morphs into a counting book as the two adventure past various groups of animals in varying numbers. The illustrations excel at conveying emotion: One notable spread depicts an ecstatic Tosh when they encounter moo cows, and another double page spread offers two separate images of half of Tosh’s face—the only difference being the shape and size of his eyes, which perfectly capture his feelings. The children’s adventure ends rather abruptly, which may leave curious readers with questions.

Though the ending lacks closure, this charming story can be used in multiple ways, including as a counting book and as exposure to life in Jamaica for non-Jamaican readers. (Picture book. 3-7)



CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF BOY

Priestley, Chris
 Illus. by the author
 Bloomsbury (256 pp.)
 \$16.99 | Jul. 10, 2018
 978-1-68119-932-0
 Series: Maudlin Towers, 1

Odd doings at the Maudlin Towers School for the Not Particularly Bright Sons of the Not Especially Wealthy.

First young Arthur Mildew and Algernon Spongely-Partwork spot (to quote the title of Chapter 1) “A Viking in the Ha-Ha.” Shortly thereafter the school’s prized Spoon is stolen (twice), and rumors of an arm-waving ghost give way to the arrival of a beautiful, arm-waving new Latin teacher. The lads decide to do a bit of “detectivating” (Mildew, explaining “red herring” to his dim associate: “Something that seems relevant at first but turns out not to be. Like algebra”)—and hardly have they begun than they come upon a time machine built by former physics instructor Mr. Particle before his recent gruesome death. Decorating his “unfortunate events”-style narrative with gothic ink drawings of the all-white (even corpse-like) students, faculty, and occasional slaver monster, Priestley sends his bumbling but resourceful detectives crisscrossing back and forth from their present to Viking times, Roman Britain, and even into the future (where cookies are shockingly expensive and which readers will find quite familiar). By the end all mysteries are sorted (more or less), and Sponge and Mildew are left gloomily poised for another outing.

There’s no place like school, “grimy, gargoyle-encrusted walls” and all. (Gothic farce. 10-12)



WALKING IS A WAY OF KNOWING In a Kadar Forest

Ramesh, Madhuri & Chandi, Manish
 Illus. by Frame, Matthew
 Tara Publishing (56 pp.)
 \$16.95 | Apr. 15, 2018
 978-93-83145-60-7



A lyrical, dreamy picture storybook of five interlocking outings among the Kadar adivasi (indigenous) community in the Anamalai hills in southern India.

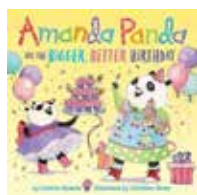
The Kadar tribes were historically nomadic hunter-gatherers, but 40 years ago, according to the authors’ note, they were “forced to live in small permanent settlements at the edges of [the] forests”; today, they act as guides to tourists and traders who want to traverse their lands. Researchers Ramesh and Chandi spent hours with tribal elders, and the result is this magical collection, exquisitely illustrated by Frame. The stories are mostly narrated by Madiyappan, a Kadar elder, as well as his uncle, Krishnan, and his cousin Padma. They guide the narrator, presumably an urban visitor, through a dramatic and philosophical forest walk: “Paths

Another literary pacesetter that will leave Reynolds' readers wanting more.

SUNNY

have character: there are easy ones, challenging ones, unforgiving ones, one that encourage you to walk with a steady swinging rhythm and other that tease your stride with odd twists and turns," Madiyappan says. The book introduces the hills' and forests' flora and fauna—bison, monkeys, hornbills—and uses Indigenous words unapologetically, although many can be deciphered in context or found in the book's short glossary.

Like many oral folktales, the stories meander, but here the craft is also in perfect synchrony with its content: "Good forest people are curious," says Padma. "We constantly explore." (*Folktales*. 8-12)



AMANDA PANDA AND THE BIGGER, BETTER BIRTHDAY

Ransom, Candice

Illus. by Grove, Christine

Doubleday (32 pp.)

\$17.99 | \$20.99 PLB | Jun. 5, 2018

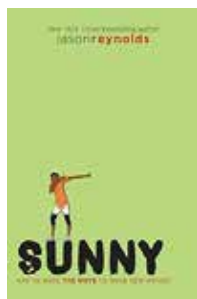
978-1-5247-6819-5

978-1-5247-6820-1 PLB

Amanda Panda is ecstatic about having the first birthday in her kindergarten, but when her best friend's birthday threatens to outshine hers, they must find a way to work it out.

Amanda Panda is "special" because she has the first birthday in her class, and she will be "famous" for being the first to turn 6. Her birthday is tomorrow, but when she goes out to the bus with her party invitations in hand, she discovers that Bitsy's birthday is today! Throughout Bitsy's birthday celebration at school, Amanda broods—she does not want a "leftover song" or "leftover cupcakes" on "her special day." Their birthday parties are planned for the same day, too—Saturday—which makes things so bad that they stop speaking to each other. But Amanda and Bitsy quickly find that they miss each other and don't want to miss each other's birthday parties. They find a solution that pleases both of them as well as all their friends. Grove's illustrations in watercolor and ink create endearing pandas in festive scenes with a pastel palette. Amanda Panda's emotional roller coaster rings true, and the revived friendship is delightful. It may not be the most original story, but as long as children's emotions run high, it is one that doesn't get old.

A sweet celebration of friendship and the drama of kindergarten. (*Picture book*. 3-7)



SUNNY

Reynolds, Jason

Caitlin Dlouhy/Atheneum (176 pp.)

\$16.99 | Apr. 10, 2018

978-1-4814-5021-8

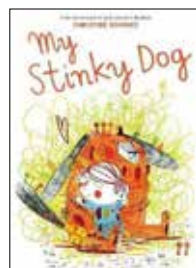
Series: Track, 3

Sunny Lancaster is a home-schooled almost-13-year-old torn between duty to run and passion for dance in the latest compulsively readable installment of Reynolds' lauded Track series.



On the surface, African-American Sunny appears to have a wealthy, comfortable life that his less-fortunate teammates on the Defenders cannot help but envy. Privilege, however, cannot hide pain, and Sunny feels smothered by guilt over his mother's death immediately after his birth and crushed beneath the weight of his father's expectations for him to become the marathon runner that his beloved mother no longer can be. Once again, Reynolds cements his reputation as a distinguished chronicler of the adolescent condition by presenting readers with a winsome-yet-complex character whose voice feels as fresh as it is distinctive, spontaneously breaking out into onomatopoeic riffs that underscore his sense of music and rhythm. Living in an empty house with colorless walls and unfulfilled familial expectations cannot dim the effervescent nature of a protagonist who names his diary to make it feel more personal, employs charts and graphs to help him find the bravery to forge his own path as a discus-throwing dancer, and finds artistic inspiration in the musical *West Side Story*. Defenders introduced in earlier novels receive scant treatment, but new characters, such as Sunny's blue-haired teacher/dance instructor, Aurelia, are vibrant and three-dimensional. Main characters' races are not explicitly mentioned, implying a black default.

Another literary pacesetter that will leave Reynolds' readers wanting more. (*Fiction*. 10-14)



MY STINKY DOG

Roussey, Christine

Illus. by the author

Abrams (32 pp.)

\$16.99 | Jun. 12, 2018

978-1-4197-2823-5

In this French import, a little boy narrates a story about his dog, Alfred, who has a great personality but a significant odor issue.

Faithful companion Alfred is always there to cheer up his owner. The huge dog has short, brown fur, an oval body, and an unusual, white nose reminiscent of a cheese grater. Alfred hasn't had a bath in some time, if ever, and he smells so bad that he attracts flies. The little boy effects change by scrubbing Alfred clean, but then the dog evinces a personality change, tiptoeing around in a raincoat and boots so he doesn't get dirty again. The boy gets down in the mud with Alfred to reinstate the dog's distinctive stench, and order is restored as boy and dog float off on a cloud of odiferous fumes, heading for a new home together. Delightfully imaginative illustrations in a loose, cartoon style use white backgrounds and vibrant swirls of color to indicate Alfred's odors. One hilarious double-page spread shows Alfred in profile as a sort of scent map, with each stinky area identified and each smell indicated by a symbolic key. The unnamed narrator has brown hair, pink cheeks, and white skin. (His face is a line drawing using the white space of the backgrounds.)

This funny story offers a fresh approach to accepting each individual's unique personality. (*Picture book*. 3-7)



THE LEGEND OF GREG

Rylander, Chris

Putnam (352 pp.)

\$16.99 | Jun. 12, 2018

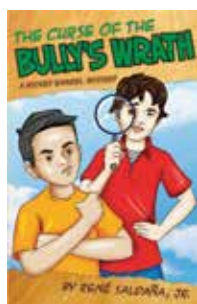
978-1-5247-3972-0

Series: An Epic Series of Failures, 1

In the debut volume of An Epic Series of Failures, 13-year-old Greg Belmont embarks on an adventure he never could have imagined.

When Greg's father, who runs the Earthen Goods and Organic Harmony Shop, returns from a trip to Norway with a mysterious new tea, Greg sips some and has his first taste of magic. Turns out, he's a Dwarf, and his best friend, Edwin, is an Elf—and when Greg's father is kidnapped, ancient strife between Dwarves and Elves is resumed. In his first-person, dialogue-rich narrative, Rylander creates a world where humans unknowingly coexist with Dwarves, Elves, Mountain Trolls, Werewolves, and Goblins. Greg teams up with a band of new friends—including Ari, a “pretty Dwarven girl” with punk-styled purple hair—to battle the Elves and find his father. The fight signals the return of magic to the world, an event that may well end the Technological Age: no more internet, TVs, planes, and electricity, an idea sure to intrigue young readers. The tale, rich in Dwarven and Elven lore and ancient magic, is, at its heart, a tale of a young boy coming into his own. Physical descriptions are scanty, with the book assuming a white default.

A potent blend of magic, adventure, and humor. (*Fantasy. 8-12*)



THE CURSE OF THE BULLY'S WRATH / LA MALDICIÓN DE LA IRA DEL ABUSÓN

Saldaña Jr., René

Trans. by Baeza Ventura, Gabriela

Piñata Books/Arté Público (64 pp.)

\$9.95 paper | May 31, 2018

978-1-55885-866-4

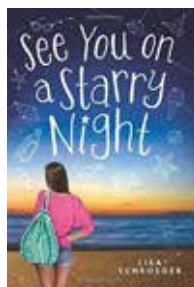
Series: Mickey Rangel Mysteries, 5

In Mickey Rangel's fifth mystery, like many kids his age, the title character is faced with a new kid in class who is less than welcoming. But how do you help someone who doesn't want to change?

Readers first see Mickey at the breakfast table with his parents and twin brother, Ricky, as he fills them in on his current plight. The new kid in school, Marco, is “mean as a skunk” and a full-on bully. After not just witnessing Marco's cruel behavior, but experiencing it firsthand when Marco punches him in the stomach to keep him quiet, Mickey decides he has to do *something*. Using his skills as a private investigator (don't worry, he has a certificate!), Mickey begins to speak with and interview other students and teachers about how to handle a bully. A quick search of the internet provides some kid-centric help from www.stopbullying.gov/index.html (an actual

website sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) and gives him the final answers he needs to solve this real-world problem. Readers may wish for a bit more sleuthing since the story is quick and perhaps resolves rather too quickly. However, it's a solid resource for younger kids to learn about how best to tackle a bully and how to find your voice and speak up for not only yourself, but those around you. Baeza Ventura's Spanish translation immediately follows the English story.

A welcome return to Mickey's primarily Latinx world. (*Mystery. 8-12*)



SEE YOU ON A STARRY NIGHT

Schroeder, Lisa

Scholastic (256 pp.)

\$16.99 | Jun. 26, 2018

978-1-338-19574-3

Juliet loves glitter, painting, cookie-dough ice cream, Van Gogh's *The Starry Night*, and writing lists. She doesn't love that she and her older sister, Miranda, have had to move away from Bakersfield to a beachfront San Diego cottage

because her parents are divorcing.

The 11-year-old is immediately befriended by same-aged Emma, whose family lives near the beach and runs an ice cream shop. Together, the girls cast bottles with messages into the sea. Someone—using the signature “Some Kid at the Beach”—responds to Juliet's message, challenging Juliet to try to make a wish come true for someone, both setting up a minor mystery and leading to a small, touching subplot. Advice for children experiencing a divorce comes thick and steady, making this a useful purchase for that group, if they are willing to overlook the rather slight storyline. Juliet is a likable-enough character, and her narrative voice mostly rings true as she alternately rages against her new situation and competently navigates it, assisted a great deal by extremely nice Emma and her remarkably pleasant family (whose mostly smooth road contrasts poignantly with Juliet's new bumpy one) and by her older sister's kind and calming advice. Nearly all the characters appear to be the white default.

A useful, even soothing choice for children undergoing a common transition. (*Fiction. 9-12*)



SPELL & SPINDLE

Schusterman, Michelle

Illus. by Honesta, Katrin

Random House (272 pp.)

\$16.99 | \$19.99 PLB | Jul. 31, 2018

978-0-399-55070-6

978-0-399-55071-3 PLB

The boundaries between puppet and person blur and break in this fairy-tale-inspired middle-grade novel.



Chance, 11 years old and “a natural-born pessimist,” loves volunteering at the Museum of the Peculiar Arts. But his white, upwardly mobile family is moving to a suburban horrorscape of “identical houses, all curved upward like bland smiles,” and the museum is shuttering in the city’s post-World War II boom. Fortunato, the museum’s owner, reluctantly lets Chance take a mannequin named Penny, who is just about Chance’s height, exquisitely carved out of walnut, and conscious during every moment of her inanimate existence. When Chance touches the strange silvery strings that control Penny’s limbs, he hears her voice in his head, and this discovery launches Chance, Penny, and his big sister, Constance, on a high-stakes, dangerous adventure of soul-thievery and mystical portals. The beautifully creepy plot deftly weaves together old-time-y fears with fresh outlooks through richly realized characters who feel immediate and modern despite the 1952 setting. Especially well done is the approach to gender, as Chance, Penny, and Constance all struggle with different realities of embodiment and expression without resorting to cheap sentiment or heavy-handedness.

An excellent melding of horror and heart, this complex story will appeal to a wide range of readers. (*Fantasy*. 8-14)



DON'T EAT THAT

Sheneman, Drew
Illus. by the author
 Viking (40 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Jun. 12, 2018
 978-1-101-99729-1

How do you teach a grown bear new tricks?

An intrepid young bird-watcher in pursuit of a Scouting merit badge decides to help a bear find a snack in this whimsical tale. “DON’T EAT THAT!!!” Gertie explodes when she sees it about to chomp on a rock. Thanks to frontmatter illustrations, readers know what she does not: The bear has been dropped off by the city zoo and so doesn’t know how to function in the woods. Comic-strip panels alternate with full- or double-page spreads, with the text largely confined to dialogue bubbles, while cartoony Photoshop illustrations carry most of the story. Basic efforts at communication between the two prove problematic, and the bear’s lack of woods savvy (it tries to eat a skunk) and skills (it can’t swim) don’t help either. Puns abound as multiple efforts by the protagonist fail to come to fruition. The two end up far from happy, and Gertie starts to realize that her help may not be so helpful after all. Surely they can work together so that it can learn to fill its tummy! While there is little wholly original here, the messages of friendship and teamwork are portrayed nicely, the minimal text will appeal to reluctant readers, and youngsters will come away with a chuckle. Gertie has blonde hair and pale skin.

An uncomplicated tale of consideration and cooperation rendered in an accessible format. (*Picture book*. 3-7)



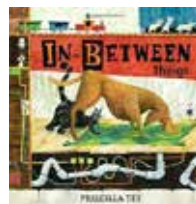
THE SASQUATCH AND THE LUMBERJACK

Sheridan, Crix
Illus. by Sheridan, Crix
 Little Bigfoot/Sasquatch (32 pp.)
 \$14.99 | May 22, 2018
 978-1-63217-161-0

Strangers in the woods become friends.

A sasquatch who’s wearing red high-tops and carrying a camera meets a gray-bearded, flannel-wearing lumberjack: “STRANGERS.” That doesn’t last long. In the “autumn” they “forage” for mushrooms and “pick” apples. In the “winter” they skate and go ice fishing, “climb” a mountain, and “slide” down the other side. In the “spring” they “hike” and “roast” marshmallows, and they ride a tandem “bike.” And in the “summer” they “swim” and “float” lazily on a lake...and by the end, they are, of course, best “friends.” This quietly adventurous tale of a growing friendship between two unlikely buddies begins on the front endpapers with the characters in photos by themselves. Over the course of 15 full-bleed, double-page spreads, each with only one word, set in all capital letters, the two build their friendship in the forest. Two tiny friends, a bumblebee and a mouse, go along for the ride. And the closing endpapers are graced with selfies of the duo having fun together. Graphic novelist Sheridan’s simple tale of friendship is also a love note to the great outdoors. The colorfully muted illustrations are varied in perspective and full of humor (a surfing sasquatch in a wetsuit with an octopus on its back?!). The lumberjack is white; the sasquatch’s fur is rust-colored.

Emergent readers will quickly learn the text and tell their own tales of the duo’s adventures. (*Picture book*. 2-7)



IN-BETWEEN THINGS

Tey, Priscilla
Illus. by the author
 Candlewick (40 pp.)
 \$16.99 | May 22, 2018
 978-0-7636-8983-4

What’s between this and that? In that spot between here and there? Young readers locate the answer in this playful picture book that calls attention to the in-between things.

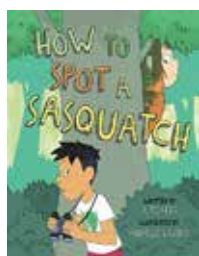
The first double-page spread offers both a definition (“An in-between thing is a thing in the middle”) and a cheery illustration of a cozy, somewhat jumbled living room occupied by a corpulent charcoal cat and a long-faced hound dog. Identifying the spatial relationships within this eclectic interior world grows increasingly entertaining as the “in-between” starts cropping up all over. Aha! A round picture frame between two rectangular ones! A sock between the couch cushions! A glance exchanged between the cat and dog (both awkwardly atop furniture that keeps something between them and the floor)! Frolicsome rhyming verse accompanies these two pets during the course of their rambles around the house and outside, marking the in-between things along the

Torres is a veteran of comic-book writing, and it shows, the text conveyed only in dialogue, sans narrator or footnotes.

HOW TO SPOT A SASQUATCH

way. Their sibling relationship (alternating *between* closeness and estrangement) and individual antics keep the giggles coming. Abundant lemony yellows and springtime greens imbue Tey's soft mixed-media illustrations with a sunny brightness that lifts readers as they search for in-betweens at each page turn.

An entertaining, original search-and-find for young cartographers mapping out their worlds, learning new ways to look and make visual sense of the people, places, and things they encounter. (*Picture book.* 4-8)



HOW TO SPOT A SASQUATCH

Torres, J.
 Illus. by Grand, Aurélie
 Owlkids Books (64 pp.)
 \$16.95 | May 15, 2018
 978-1-77147-277-7

Young ranger Jay uses his camping trip to capture evidence of the Sasquatch while unknowingly being occasionally pranked by one himself.

“Sound off!” Jay, a little Asian boy, is so engrossed in his quest to find the elusive Sasquatch that he is oblivious to the prompts from Ranger Dove (a young woman of color). Each member of his diverse troop questions his search tactics, which he eagerly answers only to be rebuked. Unbeknownst to all, Jay’s “lures” successfully intrigue a flower- and occasionally grass-skirt-wearing sasquatch named Sass and her posse of savvy woodland friends. In episodes characterized by quirky and physical humor, Sass messes with Jay and his troop: She leaves a “Sasquatch Footprint” (really a butt-print); she also puts out their campfire by spitting river water all over it. Things start to get real (well...Sass gets only a tad more serious) when she saves Jay from drowning and Jay wants to thank her. The story moves back and forth between the rangers and Sass and her friends, easily developing both sets of characters. Torres is a veteran of comic-book writing, and it shows, the text conveyed only in dialogue, sans narrator or footnotes. Grand’s thin, pencil-lined illustrations and the linear layout of rectangular panels make the story easy to follow for younger readers.

Hand this goofy bigfoot to young readers eager to get their starts in graphic novels. (*Graphic fantasy.* 6-9)



SPINDRIFT AND THE ORCHID

Trevayne, Emma
 Simon & Schuster (256 pp.)
 \$17.99 | May 8, 2018
 978-1-4814-6259-4

An orphan comes into a fabulous inheritance only to discover that it not only needs defending, but is more a curse than a blessing.

Raised by her enigmatic grandfather, who sells such magical curiosities as strap-on wings, 15-year-old Spindrift knows only that her

parents died at sea until a strange customer’s inquiry touches off a chain of astonishing revelations. It seems that the Seven Sages who created the world distilled their essences in the forms of orchids into seven colored crystal balls long ago, and one of them, a black one that can grant certain limited kinds of wishes, has come down in Spindrift’s family. Moreover, after her grandfather reluctantly shares a trove of letters, she learns that her parents had set out to gather the rest but had been betrayed and killed by none other than Roland, the man who had come to the shop. Knowing that Roland already has five of the crystals—and also that they cause far more harm than good—Spindrift sets out both to recover the long-hidden sixth and exact revenge. Trevayne tucks in oblique clues, motif-building references, a neatly disposed-of bully, dark-skinned twins as allies for Spindrift (everyone else in the cast presents as white), a single encounter with an eerie street person, and other elements as if she were checking them off a list.

Lots of tried and true bits capably, if somewhat arbitrarily, assembled. (*Fantasy.* 11-13)



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF MARLON BUNDO

Twiss, Jill
 Illus. by Keller, E.G.
 Chronicle (40 pp.)
 \$18.99 | Mar. 19, 2018
 978-1-4521-7380-1

In direct response to Charlotte Pence and Karen Pence’s anodyne *Marlon Bundo’s A Day in the Life of the Vice President* (2018), a lifted middle finger to Vice President Mike Pence’s homophobia.

Informing readers that “this story isn’t going to be about [the vice president], because he isn’t very fun,” black-and-white bunny Marlon Bundo relates the events of his Very Special Day, which really begins when he spies Wesley, a “bunny-beautiful” lop-eared, bespectacled brown rabbit, in the garden. (In Keller’s accompanying illustration, Wesley is depicted heroically from a low perspective, enhaloed in the sun’s golden rays.) They hop happily together through house and garden and then decide to marry, at which point The Stink Bug (bearing a head of recognizable white hair) appears on the scene to tell them that “Boy Bunnies Don’t Marry Boy Bunnies!” Marlon Bundo, Wesley, and their animal friends discuss their various differences and then vote The Stink Bug “not in charge.” Attended by “two handsome grooms-otters,” Marlon Bundo and Wesley are then married by a lesbian cat minister. Adult viewers of the satirical TV show *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*, which is behind this stunt, will love it. However, even as it delivers its message, the story takes easy jabs at the format it’s delivered in, and the result is yet another tiresome political picture book that’s nominally for children but really winks at other adults over their heads. Proceeds go to the Trevor Project and AIDS United.

Good for a chuckle for adults who support LGBTQ rights, but those who want to share inclusive stories with children should look elsewhere. (*Picture book.* 3-7)

Usher's expressive ink-and-watercolor illustrations are reminiscent of Quentin Blake's style with a dash of John Burningham's wit.

SUN



SUN

Usher, Sam

Illus. by the author

Templar/Candlewick (40 pp.)

\$16.99 | Jun. 12, 2018

978-0-7636-9949-9

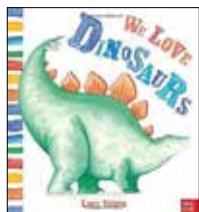


A delightfully warm read about a grandfather and grandchild.

Following *Snow* (2015) and *Rain* (2017), this is the third in Usher's series of picture

books about these characters, and it more than rises to its predecessors' achievements. The first-person text opens with the child excited to go on an adventure. Granddad suggests a picnic. They pack provisions, which are displayed in a marvelous, detailed spread sure to provoke readers to pore over it and note items that inform the story as it progresses. The bulk of the story then follows them as they search for the perfect picnic spot, traversing landscapes that emphasize the sun's heat on this scorching hot day and that become increasingly fantastic in their range and scope. Usher's expressive ink-and-watercolor illustrations are reminiscent of Quentin Blake's style with a dash of John Burningham's wit. The influence of both artists is apparent in the climactic, whimsical scenes when, after crossing a desert, grandfather and grandchild enjoy a picnic aboard an opulent pirate ship before heading back home. How much of this adventure is imagined and how much is real within the world of the book doesn't matter at all in terms of the characters' enjoyment of each other's company, nor will it affect readers' pleasure. Both grandfather and grandchild appear white; grandfather is bald, and grandchild has a mop of curly red hair.

A grand sun story, indeed. (*Picture book*. 3-8)



WE LOVE DINOSAURS

Volpin, Lucy

Illus. by the author

Nosy Crow/Candlewick (32 pp.)

\$16.99 | Jun. 26, 2018

978-0-7636-9959-8

Is there a child out there who doesn't love dinosaurs?

Very young readers will thrill to the sight of these smiling, roly-poly, brightly colored dinosaurs of various kinds, painted in watercolors to resemble reassuringly friendly, beloved toys. With no pretense at verisimilitude or much educational enlightenment, 15 different species are depicted and labeled on the front and back endpapers, giving tiny dino lovers a very rough idea of what the creatures shown in the book probably looked like (with artistic license for the colors), the art differentiating among them to show off scientifically known attributes such as relative sizes, crests, horns, spikes, and so on. Told in very simple, rollicking verse, the text encourages vocabulary enrichment and also lends itself to animated reading, abetted by the sometimes-capitalized extra-large display type that's used for important adjectives, nouns, and verbs. However, an adult will have to help children

with the definition of the word "extinct," depicted on the final spread featuring *Tyrannosaurus rex* and *Triceratops* skeletons and a wide-eyed white child in shorts and black child in a dress.

Nothing terribly special, but an energetic acknowledgment of the passion most tykes feel about these long-gone prehistoric animals. (*Picture book*. 2-4)



SUPER DORKS

Vrabel, Beth

Sky Pony Press (240 pp.)

\$16.99 | May 8, 2018

978-1-5107-3144-8

Series: Pack of Dorks, 3

The pack of dorks, a group of unpopular fifth-graders who have banded together, are back for a third outing.

Lucy, fighting against impending puberty, sees her small group of friends changing. April has restyled her frizzy hair and enrolled in a magnet school where she can leave her unfortunate reputation behind. Sam, while saving toddler twins from getting hit by a car, is badly injured. He's a hero—a status narrator Lucy deeply envies—but his promising gymnastics career is over, and he's filled with anger that too often is turned on Lucy. Amanda admits that she's never known her mother, a traveling fortuneteller in a Renaissance fair, but Lucy finds a way to share her own. Sheldon is on a mission, rejected by many of his classmates, to save the rare turtles that are hatching in the playground mulch. Guided by an outstanding teacher, Lucy decides to run for class president, mostly just to make her own discerning point of view heard, despite relentless, realistic harassment from popular boy Tom, also a candidate. Lucy's heartfelt voice, as she develops a growing understanding—and acceptance—of herself and her friends, is believable and moving, returning to the wisdom and deep emotional resonance that elevated to excellence the first of this series. The book adheres to the white default.

A first-rate exploration of the quiet heroism that keeps unpopular kids moving ahead toward a happier future. (*Fiction*. 9-12)



SHAI & EMMIE STAR IN TO THE RESCUE!

Wallis, Quvenzhané

Illus. by Miller, Sharee

Simon & Schuster (128 pp.)

\$15.99 | Jun. 19, 2018

978-1-4814-5888-7

Series: Shai & Emmie, 3

A book about rescuing in which no rescue happens.

Shai, an African-American girl, and her white "bestie-best friend," Emmie, play in the school orchestra at Sweet Auburn

School for the Performing Arts. One afternoon, Shai spots a brown-and-white critter in her family's backyard garden and assumes it's a stray cat. She draws a picture of it and creates posters to figure out which neighbor has lost the cat. When Shai lures the animal with food, she sees that it's not a cat but a rabbit, but being a city kid, she doesn't understand that it's wild. After Shai and Emmie capture it in a pet carrier, Shai's veterinarian mother explains that the rabbit should live wild in the city. Shai then finds a better pet solution, even though their household already has eight pets. Besides its child-star author and the portrayal of a positive cross-racial friendship, this novel has little to recommend it. The art may give readers a point of reference for some scenes, but it adds little to the story. Furthermore, though children might appreciate Shai's made-up words and phrases ("hunormous," "sleepifying," "lickety-clean," "amazetastic"), this book's readers, who are likely new to chapter books, may find them difficult to decipher.

Perhaps this series fills a reading niche, but this underwhelming third book in the series should be its last. (*Fiction. 6-8*)



MAYA AND ANNIE ON SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS / LOS SÁBADOS Y DOMINGOS DE MAYA Y ANNIE

Zepeda, Gwendolyn
Illus. by Muraída, Thelma
Trans. by Baeza Ventura, Gabriela
 Piñata Books/Arté Público (32 pp.)
 \$17.95 | May 31, 2018
 978-1-55885-859-6

A childhood friendship and cultural acceptance are at the center of this authentic, special story.

In alternating first-person narration, Annie and Maya take turns describing their weekends: They play video games inside and in the backyard of Annie's big home; in Maya's little house, they help with the garden and play with her two dogs. When in Annie's home, Maya is introduced to different foods: noodles, dumplings, and gai lan. At Maya's place, Annie enjoys tamales, tacos, and pozole. The two celebrate a posada with Maya's mother and Lunar New Year with Annie's dad. Sometimes the girls fight, but they always make up. One Sunday, both families eat together, and the girls learn that their parents, Annie's dad and Maya's mom, are getting married. Muraída's colorful, vibrant illustrations pay special, subtle tribute to the girls' Latin American and Vietnamese backgrounds; spreads of the girls at their respective homes display culturally appropriate décor and patterns. Most strikingly, perhaps, two spreads depict the families sharing in each other's religious and cultural celebrations: One displays a candlelit evening parade and children striking a piñata, while the other depicts another vivid parade following red lanterns and an undulating, festive paper dragon. Each page incorporates bilingual text for both English and Spanish readers.

A lovely multicultural story about a young friendship, celebrating culture and differences. (*Bilingual picture book. 3-7*)

CONTINUING SERIES

SALTED CARAMEL DREAMS

Bardenwerper, Jackie Nastri
 Sky Pony (240 pp.)
 \$7.99 paper | Apr. 3, 2018
 978-1-5107-3010-6
 Swirl
 (*Fiction. 8-12*)

MIGHTY TRUCK ON THE FARM

Barton, Chris
Illus. by Cummings, Troy
 Harper/HarperCollins (32 pp.)
 \$16.99 | \$4.99 paper | May 1, 2018
 978-0-06-234467-0
 978-0-06-234466-3 paper
 Mighty Truck
 (*Early reader. 4-8*)

**MIGHTY TRUCK
The Traffic Tie-Up**

Barton, Chris
Illus. by Cummings, Troy
 Harper/HarperCollins (32 pp.)
 \$16.99 | \$4.99 paper | May 1, 2018
 978-0-06-234470-0
 978-0-06-234469-4 paper
 Mighty Truck
 (*Early reader. 4-8*)

THE ALCATRAZ ESCAPE

Bertman, Jennifer Chambliss
Illus. by Watts, Sarah
 Christy Ottaviano/Holt (272 pp.)
 \$16.99 | May 1, 2018
 978-1-62779-963-8
 Book Scavenger, 3
 (*Adventure. 9-14*)

ADA LACE, TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER

Calandrelli, Emily with Weston, Tamson
Illus. by Kurilla, Renée
 Simon & Schuster (96 pp.)
 \$16.99 | \$6.99 paper | May 1, 2018
 978-1-4814-8605-7
 978-1-4814-8604-0 paper
 Ada Lace, 3
 (*Fiction. 7-10*)

THE LITTLE ICE CREAM TRUCK

Cuyler, Margery
Illus. by Kolar, Bob
Henry Holt (32 pp.)
\$14.99 | May 22, 2018
978-1-62779-806-8
Little...Truck
(Picture book. 3-6)

FREEFALL

Davidowitz, Stacy
Amulet/Abrams (240 pp.)
\$8.99 paper | Apr. 24, 2018
978-1-4197-2873-0
Camp Rolling Hills, 4
(Fiction. 8-12)

LUCKY'S DIARY

Deutsch, Stacia
Little, Brown (176 pp.)
\$9.99 | Apr. 3, 2018
978-0-316-47636-2
Spirit Riding Free
(Historical fiction. 8-12)

BORN TO BE GOOD

Fry, Michael
Illus. by the author
Jimmy Patterson (320 pp.)
\$13.99 | May 1, 2018
978-0-316-31915-7
How to Be a Supervillain, 2
(Adventure. 7-10)

TWICE CURSED

Grau, Sheila
Illus. by Sutphin, Joe
Amulet/Abrams (304 pp.)
\$14.99 | Apr. 10, 2018
978-1-4197-2863-1
Dr. Critchlore's School for Minions, 4
(Fantasy. 8-12)

THE POMPEII DISASTER

Gutman, Dan
Harper/HarperCollins (256 pp.)
\$16.99 | Apr. 3, 2018
978-0-06-237444-8
Flashback Four, 3
(Adventure. 8-12)

TEAM PLAYERS

Lupica, Mike
Simon & Schuster (304 pp.)
\$16.99 | Apr. 3, 2018
978-1-4814-1007-6
Home Team
(Fiction. 8-12)

JOHNNY QUICK

Lyga, Barry
Amulet/Abrams (256 pp.)
\$13.99 | Apr. 10, 2018
978-1-4197-2865-5
The Flash, 2
(Fantasy/adventure. 9-12)

EDWARD

Miles, Ellen
Scholastic (96 pp.)
\$4.99 paper | Apr. 24, 2018
978-1-338-21263-1
Puppy Place
(Fiction. 6-9)

THE BACKWARD SEASON

Myracle, Lauren
Katherine Tegen/HarperCollins (304 pp.)
\$16.99 | Apr. 3, 2018
978-0-06-234212-6
Wishing Day, 3
(Fiction. 9-13)

50 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SOCCER

Radnedge, Aidan Keir
QEB (80 pp.)
\$15.95 paper | May 14, 2018
978-1-68297-335-6
50 Things You Should Know About
(Nonfiction. 7-10)

SPLAT AND THE NEW BABY

Scotton, Rob
Illus. by the author
Harper/HarperCollins (40 pp.)
\$17.99 | May 8, 2018
978-0-06-213389-2
Splat the Cat
(Picture book. 4-8)

THE CASE OF THE PERILOUS PALACE

Stratford, Jordan
Illus. by Murphy, Kelly
Knopf (192 pp.)
\$16.99 | Apr. 17, 2018
978-0-553-53644-7
Wollstonecraft Detective Agency, 4
(Mystery. 8-10)

THE RING OF HONOR

Thomson, Sarah L.
Bloomsbury (224 pp.)
\$17.99 | Apr. 17, 2018
978-1-61963-7358
Secrets of the Seven, 2
(Adventure. 8-12)

OUTLAW

Willerton, Donald
Terra Nova (152 pp.)
\$19.95 paper | May 1, 2018
978-1-938288-42-5
Mogi Franklin Mystery, 6
(Mystery. 8-12)

THE LADY IN WHITE

Willerton, Donald
Terra Nova (152 pp.)
\$19.95 paper | May 1, 2018
978-1-938288-43-2
Mogi Franklin Mystery, 7
(Mystery. 8-12)

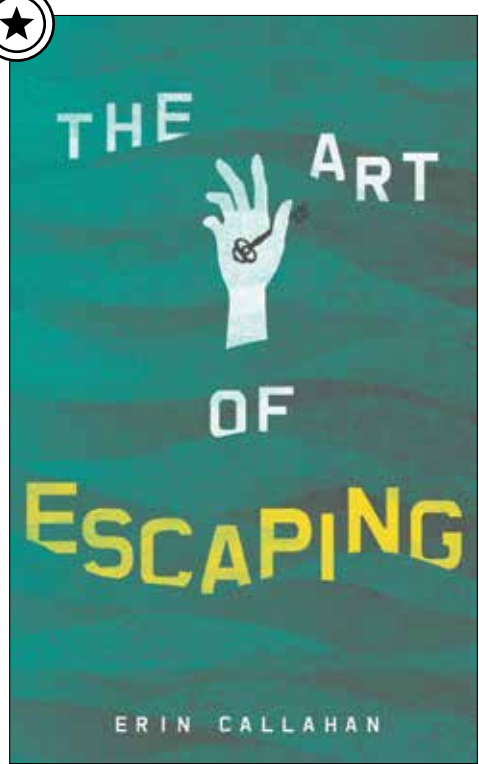
THE LAST OF THE LOST BOYS

Wilson, N.D.
Katherine Tegen/HarperCollins (256 pp.)
\$16.99 | Apr. 17, 2018
978-0-06-232732-1
Outlaws of Time, 3
(Western fantasy. 8-12)

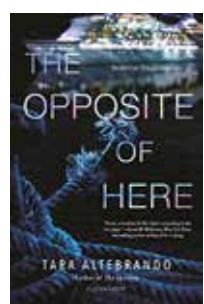
YOUNG ADULT

★ These titles earned the Kirkus Star:

- THE BIRD AND THE BLADE** by Megan Bannen..... 115
- THE ART OF ESCAPING** by Erin Callaban..... 117
- AUTONOMOUS** by Andy Marino..... 122
- FROM TWINKLE, WITH LOVE** by Sandhya Menon..... 123



THE ART OF ESCAPING
Callaban, Erin
 Amberjack Publishing (320 pp.)
 \$12.99 paper | Jun. 19, 2018
 978-1-944995-65-2



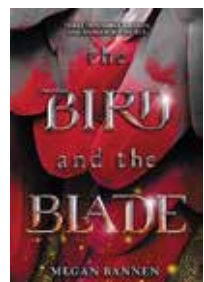
THE OPPOSITE OF HERE

Altebrando, Tara
 Bloomsbury (256 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Jun. 5, 2018
 978-1-68119-706-7

After a charming fellow cruise passenger disappears, Natalie can't help trying to figure out where he went—and why he vanished.

The cruise was supposed to be a treat for Natalie, whose boyfriend recently died in an accident. Armed with new underwear and her three best friends, she's willing to try to have a good time and is surprised at the instant chemistry she feels when she meets a new guy. But this is no easy cruise romance. When Natalie leaves for a minute to change into her swimsuit, returns to find him gone, and rumors that a passenger went overboard start circulating, it seems that something darker is afoot. Questions around the mysterious disappearance propel readers forward, and the vast yet claustrophobic cruise ship serves as a clever stage for the Hitchcock-inspired drama. The plot loses its course, though, as Altebrando (*The Possible*, 2017, etc.) tries to create meaning across a host of topics: grief, betrayal, friendships, sexual assault, and racial identity, to name a few. The last of these feels especially slapdash and ineffective—while Natalie and other primary characters are white, the third best friend is biracial (white and black) and saddled with identity issues, apropos of nothing. Readers who love stories with a twist will sail right through this one and, in the absence of a more compelling or memorable protagonist, keep moving.

Too many vaporous threads set this breezy cruise thriller adrift. (*Suspense*. 12-16)



THE BIRD AND THE BLADE

Bannen, Megan
 Balzer + Bray/HarperCollins (432 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Jun. 5, 2018
 978-0-06-267415-9

A Mongol slave must choose between escaping her captivity and saving the man she loves.

When the Chinese Song dynasty is conquered by the Mongol-led Yuan dynasty in 1279, Jinghua is enslaved by the Khipchak khanate. In autumn of 1280, the khanate itself is overthrown by

THE WISDOM OF YOUTH



German educator Kurt Hahn wrote, “Education must enable young people to effect what they have recognized to be right, despite hardships, despite dangers, despite inner skepticism, despite boredom, and despite mockery from the world.” Recent tragic events have shown us the courage of teens who are prepared to go out and demonstrate for what they believe is right—and while edu-

cation may not always live up to this high ideal, books are always there to help fill the gaps.

Hope Nation: YA Authors Share Personal Moments of Inspiration

edited by Rose Brock (Feb. 27), will nurture teens’ zeal for justice. Essays by diverse young adult authors offer a glimpse into many types of personal struggles and specific ways to meet these challenges. Whether it’s Renée Ahdieh reflecting on her biracial, bicultural identity and her responses to casual racism in the past and the present or Jeff Zentner



writing more generally about how we can respond when those “who lack empathy in their hearts...use their positions of power to persuade frightened people to place the blame for their fears at the feet of people who have less power,” there is something in this book that will strike a chord and touch a nerve.

How I Resist: Activism and Hope for a New Generation

edited by Maureen Johnson (May 15), asks notable contributors to share specific advice for those who wish to make an impact. An interview with Jason Reynolds includes his thoughts on ways that youth today are more open to difference than when he was a young man and the hope he gains daily from getting to be among young people. Alex Gino writes about the inner sustenance we require to have the energy to continue to resist and ways to build community and interdependence to meet this need. —L.S.



Laura Simeon is the young adult editor.

enemy forces, and the exiled Timur Khan and his youngest son, Prince Khalaf, must flee. Jinghua joins their fugitive party disguised as a boy. Traveling across the vast Mongol Empire, Khalaf finds comfort in Jinghua’s companionship, and they bond over Hanyu (Mandarin Chinese) lessons and poetry as, against her better judgment, she falls in love with him. Alas, Khalaf devises a plan of last resort to save his kingdom—he will marry Turandokht (yes, as in Puccini’s *Turandot*), the beautiful but heartless daughter of the Great Khan; however, potential suitors must solve three riddles or face execution. With Khalaf’s life at stake, Jinghua must prove her mettle, even if it means sacrificing the one thing that she holds most dear. Though the tale is ancient and epic, this is a fast-paced page-turner. Thorough research helps build a believable 13th-century Mongolia, and the Romanized Mandarin Chinese is used precisely, right down to the tonal inflections. Lavish, sweeping, and powerful, this is a love story, tragicomedy, and history lesson rolled into one.

A must-read for fans of heart-wrenching, sob-your-heart-out YA. (cast of characters, map, historical notes, author’s note, glossary) (*Historical fiction. 12-18*)

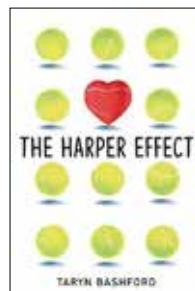
THE HARPER EFFECT

Bashford, Taryn

Sky Pony Press (336 pp.)

\$16.99 | May 15, 2018

978-1-5107-2665-9



An Australian teen struggles for success on and off the tennis court while trying to navigate personal relationships.

Sixteen-year-old Harper started off as a promising junior on the tennis circuit, but turning professional has been hard,

and her coach drops her, calling her mentally weak. This disappointment is compounded by upheaval at home: Her older sister, Aria, and her boyfriend, Jacob, a young man who has been part of their family since they were children, have split. Her father finds a new coach who pairs her with a rising male tennis star, Colt Quinn, who harbors intriguing secrets. Meanwhile, Jacob tells Harper that his feelings for her are the real reason he ended the relationship with Aria. Harper’s guilt about betraying her sister is almost too much to bear, but she concentrates on tennis and her growing relationship with Colt, gaining glimpses into his background and drive to succeed. When Aria recognizes the closeness between Harper and Jacob, the breach between the sisters seems permanent. Details about tennis and the struggles of teens on the cusp of adulthood are nicely balanced. Harper is well-characterized, and the secondary characters, including coaches and parents, ring true. Colt and his backstory are compelling, and the revelations are skillfully handled. The match action is pitch-perfect. All major characters are white.

A layered romance in a unique setting. (*Sports romance. 14-18*)



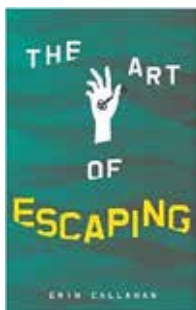
NOTHING HAPPENED

Booth, Molly
 Disney-Hyperion (336 pp.)
 \$17.99 | May 15, 2018
 978-1-4847-5302-6

A retelling of *Much Ado about Nothing* set at a summer camp.

Bee and Hana Leonato's parents run Camp Dogberry, and this summer the sisters and other returning counselors have come prepared for drama. Everybody seems to have a history with or crush on someone else, and Bee's and Hana's will-they-or-won't-they with counselors Ben and Claudia, respectively, are the subject of the other counselors' scheming and gossip. Donald and John (guess who they are avatars of!) cause trouble and get in everyone's way as the group of counselors try to trick the two couples into revealing their feelings for each other. Add to that Ben and Bee's memories of what may or may not have happened last summer, when Ben declared that he wouldn't be back next year. Through alternating perspectives, Booth (*Saving Hamlet*, 2016) constructs a comedy of errors enacted almost exclusively during noncamp events. Campers and traditional camp activities are side stories to the drama of being a counselor with an amount of freedom that stretches credibility. Bee is adopted from Ethiopia, while the other cast members are so vaguely described as to be assumed white. The concept of the novel is pitch-perfect; the execution is muddled, with no distinct character voices and a plot that is followable only if readers know the source material.

Readers would be better served by a camp story not stuck in a self-imposed narrative chokehold. (Fiction. 14-18)



THE ART OF ESCAPING

Callaban, Erin
 Amberjack Publishing (320 pp.)
 \$12.99 paper | Jun. 19, 2018
 978-1-944995-65-2



Mattie has a few obsessions—jazz records, Star Trek, vintage dresses—but not even her best friend, Stella, knows about the one that propels her to the home of Miyu Miyake: her desire to learn how to pick locks and escape from straitjackets.

Escapology legend Akiko Miyake came from Japan, settling in Rhode Island before she died in a plane crash, leaving her tools and methods with her daughter. Miyu is a gruff 30-something who would much prefer to be secluded in her crumbling home than train the relentlessly persistent white teenager who turns up uninvited. Mattie keeps meeting the outrageous demands of her curmudgeonly mentor, including being pushed from her private comfort zone into public performance the summer before senior year. Will, a white basketball player with a secret, finds himself pulled into Mattie's orbit. A seemingly

mismatched friendship develops between the two, and within their growing trust, they find the space to express their genuine selves. Stella, who is white, returns from a prestigious academic summer program to discover, and fully embrace, this radically bold version of Mattie. She ushers 14-year-old Azorean-American boy genius Frankie Campos into the mix, and the four become an inseparable crew, offering each other the space they need to be their overachieving, weird, or queer true selves.

An exciting and nuanced portrayal of the terror of vulnerability and the exalted freedom of authenticity. (Fiction. 14-17)



THIEF OF HAPPY ENDINGS

Chandler, Kristen
 Viking (416 pp.)
 \$18.99 | Jun. 19, 2018
 978-0-425-29047-7

A teen is sent to a remote Wyoming horse camp to recover from the trauma of her parents' impending divorce.

Sixteen-year-old Cassidy gets to spend the summer with mostly-troubled, mostly-rich teens at Point of No Return Youth Ranch, working off part of the cost of her stay by cleaning latrines. At camp she's expected to ride the horses—despite her fear of them—and also work with yearling mustangs, accustoming them to human handling before they're auctioned at the end of the summer. Slowly, Cassidy begins to open up to a few of her fellow campers and counselors, particularly her tentmate Alice and the junior counselor, Justin, who sneaks out at night to set penned mustangs loose. Told from Cassidy's first-person point of view, it's a complex story that unfolds slowly, with no startling transformations or revelations, just a real-life sense of growth, accomplishment, and purpose. In the end, Cassidy says, "...the space between what I thought happiness looks like and all the things I didn't want to happen is the space where I found a new happiness...." A white default is assumed, with a few diverse characters present. Unfortunately, Asian-American Alice has a two-dimensional, clichéd backstory that feels inauthentic, and African-American camper Ethan behaves in a way that feeds negative stereotypes of black males in a tone-deaf, cringeworthy scene seemingly intended to evoke feel-good anti-racist solidarity.

A thoughtful book apart from its well-intentioned blunders around diverse representations. (Fiction. 12-18)

A gripping examination of class, romance, and survival set in a dystopian future that feels chillingly relevant.

BRIGHTLY BURNING



FAT GIRL ON A PLANE

DeVos, Kelly
Harlequin Teen (384 pp.)
\$18.99 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-0-373-21253-8

A teen reaps economic, professional, and social benefits from losing weight.

Cookie Vonn—white and blonde like her supermodel mother—has absentee parents, a zeal for fashion, a hardcore work ethic, and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity: interviewing a world-famous New York designer for her blog internship. But the airline declares Cookie “too fat to fly.” So, age 17 and 330 pounds, Cookie joins the NutriNation diet plan. A plot thread labeled “fat” follows her that year, while the interspersed “skinny” thread follows her at age 19, after losing 199 pounds. Despite showing two parts of the same person’s life—not alternate universes—it reads like alternate universes. Cookie’s first-person voice is zesty, funny, bitter, and bewitching in both, but they vary starkly in plausibility. Fat Cookie faces realistic discrimination and cruelty, while skinny Cookie stumbles into fantasy-level boons: designing her own fashion line, an all-expenses-paid wealthy lifestyle, corporate sponsorship, and passionate sex in an Argentine gondola. Although skinny Cookie still can’t find joy, her bounty of material gains profoundly undermines the text’s attempted message that weight loss is no golden ticket. Skinny Cookie eventually—supposedly—reaches self-acceptance, moderating the diet that left her constantly hungry—but how much import can a literary fat-acceptance message carry when spoken by a still-skinny character? The book assumes a white default.

Although it aims to liberate, this is just another weight-loss arc accidentally portraying fatness as tragic and optional. (author’s note) (*Fiction. 14-16*)



AUGUST AND EVERYTHING AFTER

Doktorski, Jennifer Salvato
Sourcebooks Fire (336 pp.)
\$10.99 paper | May 1, 2018
978-1-4926-5715-6

During a summer at the Jersey shore, a young woman asks questions about loss, love, and music.

At 15, Quinn lost her best friend, Lynn, in a car accident—an accident she thinks is her fault. Now 18, Quinn is staying with her aunt, trying to come up with a life plan at her mother’s insistence. Yet Quinn can’t seem to think beyond the end of the summer. Meeting local musician Malcolm, who became addicted to drugs after a car crash killed two of his band members, makes Quinn start thinking about what she wants. She agrees to play drums on Malcolm’s demo, and they begin a relationship—a dangerous one, since Quinn can’t help wanting to save Malcolm.

There are plenty of people in Quinn’s life, such as her aunt, who tell her to put herself first. Now she will have to decide whether to take that advice or live for today by joining Malcolm on tour. All major characters are white. Whether it’s due to the lack of sparks between Quinn and Malcolm or the lack of power in the retrospective view of Quinn’s problems, the individual notes do not fit together to form a harmonious whole.

While the pieces of this novel are all handled competently, they don’t quite mesh. (*Romance. 14-18*)



BRIGHTLY BURNING

Donne, Alexa
HMH Books (400 pp.)
\$17.99 | May 1, 2018
978-1-328-94893-9

In this feminist retelling of *Jane Eyre*, 17-year-old Stella Ainsley must choose between what is romantic and what is right—all while orbiting uninhabitable planets.

When Stella finds out she’s gotten her dream assignment as a governess aboard the spaceship *Rochester*, she is thrilled to escape her life as an engineer on the decrepit *Stalwart*. Soon after arriving onboard, Stella finds that the *Rochester* is a ship full of secrets, the most compelling of which is 19-year-old Capt. Hugo Fairfax, the handsome, brooding heir to a considerable fortune. Stella finds herself falling in love with the captain even as she discovers the ship’s dark past—a past that, eventually, forces her to choose between her conscience and her heart. Debut author Donne crafts a fascinating world in which humans wait out an ice age in a fleet of spaceships orbiting the Earth, reproducing the same inequities that existed on the ground. Donne populates her narrative with a reasonably diverse cast of characters (most of whom are white or Asian) who are nuanced and sympathetic in their individual struggles against the class oppression that is the story’s central theme. Stella, in particular, is a skillfully rendered character whose independence, confidence, and insistence on consent are a welcome departure from the original *Jane Eyre*.

A gripping examination of class, romance, and survival set in a dystopian future that feels chillingly relevant to our present times. (*Romance. 14-18*)



CROSSING THE LINE

Elkeles, Simone
 HarperTeen (352 pp.)
 \$17.99 | Jun. 12, 2018
 978-0-06-264196-0

Cartel violence engulfs two teens caught up in an inexplicable summer romance in Mexico.

A scrappy fighter since childhood, Ryan Hess, a white American, devotes himself to boxing, his time in the ring giving him his only sense of peace. After winning the opportunity to train under the direction of a legendary Mexican boxer, Ryan gladly leaves behind his Texas border town along with his emotionally abusive stepfather, who is a corrupt, power-hungry sheriff. Pushed by her family to become a doctor, Dalila Sandoval, a sheltered, affluent Mexican girl, can't seem to escape her seemingly predestined path. Meeting at a concert and unable to shake their mutual attraction, the pair, of course, soon give in to their respective desires. But when Dalila's renowned lawyer father gets involved in a turf war between two rival Mexican cartels, the love-struck teens end up in the middle of the power struggle. In her exploration of adolescent love, Elkeles (*Wild Cards*, 2013, etc.) blends genuine moments of raw passion with indistinct, broad strands of danger, alternating each chapter between Ryan's and Dalila's first-person narration. The flimsy character development features underwhelming attempts at interrogating gender roles. Some stilted Spanish phrases also crop up. Equal parts rushed and endearing, this love story concludes with an implausible showdown, lackluster revelations, and a surprisingly bittersweet coda.

A high-spirited yet bizarrely safe tale of a risky love.
(Fiction. 14-18)



TELL ME NO LIES

Geiger, A.V.
 Sourcebooks Fire (352 pp.)
 \$10.99 paper | Jun. 5, 2018
 978-1-4926-4825-3
 Series: Follow Me Back, 2

It's one month after the events of *Follow Me Back* (2017), and police think pop star Eric Thorn has been murdered by obsessed fangirl Tessa Hart.

The truth: Tessa and Eric, now a couple, are living in a VW van in Mexico after framing Tessa for Eric's "murder." Dismissing Tessa's valid fear of social media as distorted thinking, Eric sets up an anonymous Snapchat account to communicate with formerly pretend-dead idol Dorian Cromwell, who says he can help them. He helps them—right back into the high-profile life Eric desperately wanted to escape. For several reasons, Tessa can't publicly come out as Eric's girlfriend, so the young lovers decide to communicate via Snapchat (because that turned out really well in Mexico), and

chaos and confusion ensue. Tessa's agoraphobia seems to have cleared up overnight (running away from home after staging a murder will do that to a person?), but she still suffers from extreme anxiety triggered by male stalker Blair, who is still on the loose. Tessa and Eric make one bad decision after the next, making it impossible to feel bad for them. The story is somewhat exciting at times, but its predictability and convoluted supporting plot elements don't do it any favors. It seems everyone is white.

This sequel requires a read of its predecessor to understand what's going on, and even then, the most dedicated fans will still be lost. *(Fiction. 14-adult)*



THE GAME OF HOPE

Gulland, Sandra
 Viking (384 pp.)
 \$18.99 | Jun. 26, 2018
 978-0-425-29101-6

Gulland (*The Shadow Queen*, 2014, etc.) writes about Hortense de Beauharnais, daughter of Josephine Bonaparte and stepdaughter of Gen. Napoleon Bonaparte.

Four years after the Reign of Terror, Hortense is 15 and on the brink of adulthood. She is smart, beautiful, musically talented, and seemingly has it all. Hortense lives in a boarding school for aristocrats with her close friend Adèle Auguié and her cousin Émilie de Beauharnais. The girls work diligently under the guidance of the strict but kind headmistress, Maitresse Campan. Despite Hortense's outward calm, she struggles to come to terms with her father's death by beheading and constantly worries about losing her beloved brother Eugène as well, as a result of his military posting in Egypt. To complicate matters further, Hortense is torn as to whether or not to believe the rumors circulating about her mother's extramarital affair with a family friend, Hippolyte Charles. Despite the initially slow-moving plot, Gulland's attention to minor details—such as Josephine's interactions with her in-laws and visiting fortunetellers—brings to life the essence of living as a young noblewoman in the year 1798 amid newfound political peace. The largely underdeveloped characters and choppy plot, however, force readers to work hard to remain invested in the narrative.

This one is strictly for history buffs. *(afterword, historical information, cast of characters, glossary, map)*
(Historical fiction. 14-18)

INTERVIEWS & PROFILES

ADRIENNE YOUNG

HER YA DEBUT SET AMONG THE VIKINGS FEELS FULLY MODERN

By James McDonald



“I ALWAYS GET MY BEST IDEAS when I’m driving,” Adrienne Young says. One day while driving, she got an image in her mind of a girl who was a warrior standing on a battlefield, for the first time seeing her brother after she thought he was dead. Young had no clue where the brother had actually been. “I was just really excited by that moment. So I pulled over on the side of the road and I scribbled a million notes on an old torn-up envelope in my car. I started writing the first chapter that night.”

Young didn’t set out to write a Viking-inspired fantasy—“at first, I really resisted that influence,”

she says—but as she grew to know her characters and understand their world, she gave in. “It just really fit,” she explains.

The Riki and the Aska, clans serving two feuding gods, are locked in a generationslong war in Young’s debut novel, *Sky in the Deep* (Apr. 24). In some ways, they know each other intimately, an intimacy born through battle. And yet as Eelyn, the sister-warrior whose appearance in Young’s thoughts first spawned this tale, discovers, they don’t really know each other at all.

Cushioned by distance and demonization, both the Riki and the Aska have managed to lose sight of their enemy’s humanity. Fueled by a hatred taught from infancy, they have chosen instead to see only their differences. When Eelyn, an Aska, gets to know the Riki, however, she’s forced to make a choice: Either she can ignore what she’s seeing and experiencing with these strangers, or she can ignore everything she’s been told by her own people.

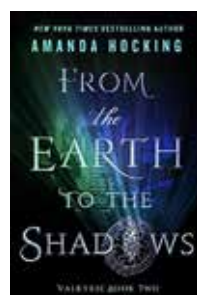
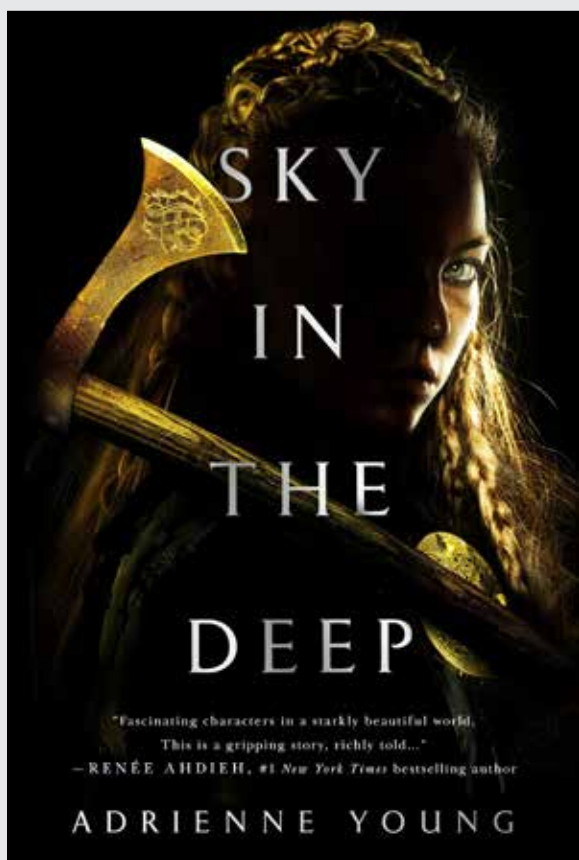
Although filled with blood and battles, at its heart, *Sky in the Deep* is a story of love of family, faith, and deep-set tradition. “That family dynamic, it helps you understand the violence and the ruthlessness,” Young says. “They were fighting for their family.” And in that sense, it feels utterly authentic in its grounding in the ancient Nordic world. But that’s not to say that it won’t resonate deeply with a modern audience.

“I grew up in a very conservative household in Texas,” Young says. “For a long time, I struggled to come to terms with the fact that the way my family saw the world didn’t match up with the way I did. I had to learn to let go of things that I had been taught or told, expectations that didn’t fit into my own worldview. But it was hard because I still wanted to

fit in with my family and my community. I think I wrote a lot of that into Eeyln's experience. She has to choose to change even if that means being different from everything she's ever known, from everyone she's ever known.

"I hope this book causes readers to ask questions about the way they see things," she adds. "And maybe it's only a whisper of a question. But I think this story has some very current, real-world reflections. I hope it inspires people to think more about what they believe. I think Eeyln is a really great example of bravery. She's able to change, to open her heart. I think we could all learn from that."

Sky in the Deep received a starred review in the Feb. 15, 2018, issue.



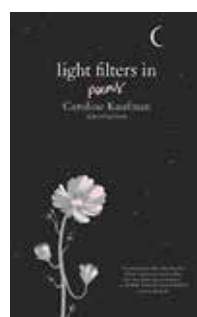
FROM THE EARTH TO THE SHADOWS

Hocking, Amanda
Wednesday Books (432 pp.)
\$10.99 paper | Apr. 24, 2018
978-1-250-08480-4
Series: Valkyrie, 2

Malin and her allies must stop underworld goddess Ereshkigal's plan to release the dead on Earth in this sequel to *Between the Blade and the Heart* (2018).

Having recently lost Asher to the underworld, Kurnugia, Valkyrie-in-training Malin is tasked by Odin with recovering a legendary protective cloak and his missing weapon, Gungnir, which can kill any being and is currently in the possession of Baldur in Kurnugia. With her sorceress roommate, Oona, and a new ally, Valeska, the swarthy, winged daughter of an Alkonost (relatives of the sirens) and a Valkyrie's son, Malin infiltrates the immortals' afterlife. The heroes quickly overcome obstacles in many short action scenes. After completing their mission, they return to a world in crisis—sinkholes, extreme weather, and riots indicating the potentially apocalyptic situation. Making matters worse, Odin has made himself scarce. To figure out what's going on—and how to stop it—Malin must dig into her dead mother's secrets, uncovering more twists of fate. Luckily, her development over the first installment—learning that her mother's lack of attachment to others isn't an inherent Valkyrie trait—makes assembling her team of allies easier (and results in less romantic waffling). The sprawling, multicultural, multimythological world and its massive cast are explained in an extended glossary.

Fans of this fictional world will enjoy seeing more of it—and appreciate that the story's conclusion leaves the door open for more adventures. (glossary) (*Fantasy. 13-adult*)



LIGHT FILTERS IN Poems

Kaufman, Caroline
Illus. by Bryksenkova, Yelena
Harper/HarperCollins (224 pp.)
\$14.99 | May 22, 2018
978-0-06-284468-2

A teenage girl uses writing to heal from sexual assault and depression in this collection of poems in four parts.

Kaufman, who has an active presence on Instagram as @poeticpoison, dedicates her book to "anyone terrified that it won't get better." In Part 1, the narrator is in full crisis mode, searching online for the suicide hotline and answers to questions about depression and anxiety: "I am going stir crazy / inside my skull, / peeling off the wallpaper / with short, bitten nails." In Part 2, the narrator describes writing as a way to find herself and face what happened to her ("I said I guess, I said / I'm scared, I said if

A powerful, poignant story about refusing to let the past dictate who you are or who you will become.

LEARNING TO BREATHE



you want to, I said I don't / think I can do this"). She ponders what her diagnosis of depression and anxiety means for future relationships. In Part 3, she has more help and support: "the wounds have healed / and the scars are fading." Her emergence from depression ("the sadness isn't as / comforting as it used to be") is perhaps most poignant. In Part 4, she speaks of therapy and medication and ends with self-love and the beauty of survival. Debut author Kaufman's voice is authentic, and her experiences, feelings, and journey toward healing are convincing. Black-and-white illustrations enhance the text.

This book could be a lifeline for survivors and provide insight for others. (*Poetry. 13-18*)



SHIP IT

Lundin, Britta

Freeform/Disney (384 pp.)

\$17.99 | May 1, 2018

978-1-368-00313-1

Fandom and creators collide when high schooler Claire attempts to make a popular ship from her favorite TV show a reality.

When superfan Claire asks a panel of the creators behind *Demon Heart* (a stand-in for *Supernatural* and other shows notorious for queer-baiting) if the male protagonists, Heart and Smokey, will end up together, she is humiliatingly shut down. Desperate to boost their ratings, the showrunners save face by inviting Claire along on the rest of their convention tour. What follows is a battle of wits as Claire plots to convince the show's writer to canonize the "SmokeHeart" ship he's been teasing viewers with, while Forest, one of its stars, undermines her efforts to avoid a reputation that might hurt his career. Along the way, Claire gets close with fellow fan Tess—a black, homoromantic pansexual girl—and begins to question her own sexuality. First-person perspectives switch between Claire and Forest (who is a bit too ideal to be a believable 23-year-old actor) and are interspersed with Claire's *Demon Heart* fanfiction. Both characters follow a white default. In her debut, Lundin—herself a television staff writer—effortlessly speaks the language of conventions, fandom, and social media. If some plot points are implausibly convenient, it's forgivable for the sake of escapist fun. Skillfully interwoven are explorations of media representation and the line between fan and creator.

Despite some shortcomings, this ship does more than just sail—it soars. (*Fiction. 14-18*)



AUTONOMOUS

Marino, Andy

Freeform/Disney (368 pp.)

\$17.99 | Apr. 3, 2018

978-1-4847-7390-1

A self-driving car plugged into its teenage passengers' electronic footprints takes them on a road trip based on what it thinks they want.

Reckless William's disregard for his own safety helps him win a prototype luxury car, the Driverless Autonomous, and an all-expenses-paid road trip for him and three friends the summer before college. His companions are neighbor and friend Christina, best friend Daniel, and Daniel's girlfriend, Melissa—or, in team-role terms, tech genius Christina (a dark-web denizen and hacker), muscle Daniel (headed to play basketball at Princeton), and fixer Melissa (a gorgeous girl whose passion and ambition are overlooked because they're directed toward fashion). William is the wild card, and Otto, the car, is the brains. But each vividly drawn teen's mature, serious secrets can draw them into conflict with one another—and no secret is safe from Otto's electronic surveillance. While they make unpleasant discoveries about themselves and one another, Otto—difficult to control from the get-go—learns from them, developing a personality based on their input, reflecting the flaws of the characters and of humanity in general. The road trip is punctuated by drinking games, (consensual, responsible, off-page) sex, laser tag at an abandoned asylum, physical threats, car chases, and more, and along the way they grapple with questions of whom to trust. Aside from biracial (Guatemalan and white) Christina, the characters seem to be white.

A high-tech, twisted *Breakfast Club* for the social media age. (*Science fiction. 15-adult*)



LEARNING TO BREATHE

Mather, Janice Lynn

Simon & Schuster (336 pp.)

\$18.99 | Jun. 26, 2018

978-1-5344-0601-8

Sent away to live with relatives to escape her mother's wild lifestyle, Indira's new home is anything but a sanctuary.

Indy is a black Bahamian girl who can't escape her mother Sharice's unsavory shadow. In their Bahamian community of Mariner's Cay, Sharice has a reputation for being promiscuous—and Indy's nickname, "Doubles," comes from how much she physically resembles her mom. Worse, everyone assumes that she acts like Sharice too. When she goes to live with her aunt, uncle, and cousin in Nassau, presumably for a better life than her mother can give her, the nickname and the assumptions follow. Even her loving Grammy seems to think Indy will end up in trouble. Sure enough, trouble comes, but

it's not of Indy's choosing. One day, she stumbles upon a yoga retreat center, setting off a chain of events that will expose family secrets and force her to make the toughest decisions of her life. Indy is vulnerable, yet determined, as she faces a shameful past and navigates an uncertain future with the help of new friends. Told in Indy's voice, this heart-wrenching story unfolds with intermittent flashbacks, including scenes of sexual harassment and violence. Through well-crafted dialogue, fresh characters, and solid pacing, the book's mature themes are handled carefully and with sensitivity.

A powerful, poignant story about refusing to let the past dictate who you are or who you will become. (Fiction. 14-18)



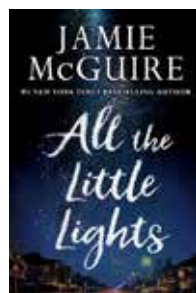
SAVE THE DATE

Matson, Morgan
Simon & Schuster (432 pp.)
\$17.99 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-1-4814-0457-0

On the weekend of the wedding, anything that could go wrong does.

For better or worse, the five Grant siblings have grown up in the public eye via their mother's nationally adored comic strip (occasional examples of the strip are included). Hoping to attend a local university, Charlie, 17, is the youngest and the only child still at home. Now, with her sister Linnie's wedding imminent, the entire family will be reunited, and Charlie is ecstatic. However, there really isn't a single thing that runs smoothly the entire weekend. First the house alarm starts loudly and continually glitching, then the wedding planner vanishes, wedding suits and officiants are switched, the cake goes plummeting, and there are inevitable family fights. Meanwhile, Charlie's longtime crush is also back for the weekend's celebration (with kisses included), causing no little distraction in Charlie's already overworked brain. What should have been a jolly beach read is instead a wade through excessive and unnecessary passages, such as numerous references to the characters' eating doughnuts and a lengthy report on a game of capture the flag. All the author really wants to say is that there's no such thing as a perfect family and that change, though certain, is unpredictable. The Grant family is white, Linnie's fiancé and his family are black.

This is less *Much Ado About Nothing* and more just a long-winded comedy of errors. (Fiction. 13-18)



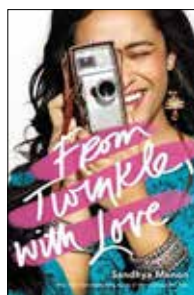
ALL THE LITTLE LIGHTS

McGuire, Jamie
Montlake Romance (444 pp.)
\$12.95 paper | May 29, 2018
978-1-5039-0278-7

Catherine Calhoun has the misfortune of coming from a once-rich white oil family that has been blamed for the deaths of those exposed to the by-products of smelter that seeped into the water supply.

Even worse, her parents' relationship deteriorates after her father loses his job in their dying rural Oklahoma town. Down the block, Cherokee teen Elliot Youngblood is spending the summer with his aunt and uncle due to his parents' tumultuous and violent marriage. Elliot finds the nerve to approach Catherine, and the two forge a friendship, becoming inseparable. On the day Catherine's father tragically dies from a heart attack, Elliot is forced to go home without a chance to say goodbye. Two years later, the beginning of their senior year, Elliot returns to find Catherine angry and heartbroken. Her life has led her to a darker place: Her home now serves as a boardinghouse full of unsafe strangers. As Catherine and Elliot attempt to rekindle their friendship, Catherine hides the terrible behavior of the guests as well as the deterioration of her mother's mental health. There are a few stereotypical references (Elliot's mother is painted with a feather in her hair and mentions of bronze skin and cheekbones), but this is an engaging story of two wounded kids who find solace in a friendship that blossoms into a touching first love.

A young adult love story laced with warmth, angst, and hope. (Fiction. 14-18)



FROM TWINKLE, WITH LOVE

Menon, Sandhya
Simon Pulse/Simon & Schuster (336 pp.)
\$18.99 | May 22, 2018
978-1-4814-9540-0

Aspiring filmmaker Twinkle Mehra fills her journal with entries addressed to her favorite female movie directors, among them Mira Nair, Sofia Coppola, Nora Ephron, and Ava DuVernay.

Shy, 16-year-old Twinkle received the journal as a gift from her unconditionally supportive (and highly eccentric) dadi, or paternal grandmother, who urged her to use it to express her innermost heartfelt thoughts. Twinkle navigates film school aspirations, which she believes are unattainable due to her working-class family's financial situation; an unrequited crush on Neil Roy, a half white, half Indian boy who is the big man on campus; a changing relationship with her former best friend, Maddie Tanaka, who is now hanging out with a wealthy, cool crowd; and an unexpected and confusing relationship with

fellow film geek Sahil Roy, Neil's awkward and less-noticeable identical twin brother. Twinkle sees embarking on a project for a local film festival with Sahil as a way to become close to Neil, realize her romantic ambitions, and thus improve her social standing at school. When she begins receiving admiring emails signed only "N," she assumes her mystery fan to be Neil; however, Sahil has long had his eye on Twinkle—and the true identity of her anonymous fan becomes a tantalizing mystery.

Menon's (*When Dimple Met Rishi*, 2017) **sophomore effort is a charming and sophisticated rom-com that outshines her previous outing.** (*Fiction*. 12-18)



WHAT YOU LEFT ME

Morrissey, Bridget
Sourcebooks Fire (304 pp.)
\$10.99 paper | Jun. 5, 2018
978-1-4926-5551-0

A group of teens finds friendship in the aftermath of tragedy.

Petra McGowan, sitting next to Martin McGee at her high school graduation ceremony, is uneasy—readers find out why later—but Martin, friendly and

open-hearted, invites her to his post-graduation party even though the two white teens haven't met before. But when Petra and her friends get to Martin's house, they find it empty and silent. Subsequently, they learn that Martin and his best friend were in a drunken driving accident, and Martin is in a coma. The story attempts to unfold: Martin's and Petra's friends forge bonds in the hospital waiting room, and first Petra and then others begin to encounter Martin in their dreams while sleeping, which has the ultimate effect of bringing the two groups of friends together and healing an earlier trauma of Petra's. But too many characters and too many points of view (Petra and Martin tell their stories in alternating first-person, and the other characters interact with dream-sequence Martin in third-person), as well as some seriously convoluted language that just won't quit, terminally obscure the plot. Characterization is one-dimensional and revolves primarily around a disdain for high school and parents. Then there is the gratuitous diversity problem: The Latina, Indian, and black characters exhibit no cultural distinction beyond skin color or speaking Spanish occasionally.

A potentially interesting premise is marred by convoluted language, cardboard characters, and dismissive diversity. (*Fiction*. 14-18)



NEANDERTHAL OPENS THE DOOR TO THE UNIVERSE

Norton, Preston
Disney-Hyperion (416 pp.)
\$17.99 | Jun. 5, 2018
978-1-4847-9062-5

All the tropes of YA fiction—suicide, depression, drug abuse, bullying, problems of race, class, and gender, high school cliques and their ensuing drama—are exploited in this mildly entertaining novel.

Sixteen-year-old Cliff is a basically likable teen, but with a passive mother, alcoholic father, and dead brother, he has issues to work through, not least of which is his size. At 6 feet 6 inches tall and 250 pounds, he's earned the unwelcome nickname "Neanderthal." When Aaron, one of Cliff's tormentors, returns to Happy Valley High School following a coma-induced change of heart, he insists that God has given him a list of tasks that he and Cliff must complete together. The boys' rapid change from animosity to friendship as they work on the list is convenient but unlikely. The romantic threads in the story are equally unrealistic, serving mostly as a way to introduce sexual fantasy into the narrative. All this is revealed in first-person narration and expletive-laced dialogue. Norton (*Marrow*, 2015, etc.) seems to be working too hard to be cool. Too much happens, too quickly to these stereotypical characters: jocks, stoners, computer nerds, airhead girls, and Jesus teens. A harsh principal and an English teacher who has lost his passion for teaching have similarly quick attitude adjustments.

Teens who enjoy snarky commentary on high school life may be satisfied with these shortcuts, but Norton doesn't open any new doors to the high school universe. (*Fiction*. 15-18)



SOMETIME AFTER MIDNIGHT

Philips, L.
Viking (400 pp.)
\$17.99 | Jun. 12, 2018
978-0-425-29163-4

The sins of the fathers can't prevent fate from coupling their musician sons in this split-narrative, boy-loves-boy ballad.

High school senior Nate is the son of a dead-before-his-time musician. Doomed to work at the Dairy Barn and live with his not-so-wicked stepmother, he's ready to pack up his guitars and eke out a musician's life. Cameron is heir to a music empire and eager to prove his talents as a vocalist to his cutthroat father. When they meet at a live show, their ignited passion unwittingly illuminates the scandal that binds their families. Their desire to be both paramours and a professional duo is subsequently tested by the tragedy of truth. Will they ever make literal and figurative music together? Nate and Cameron's budding tryst is TMZ'd—only because their bloodlines, not their sexuality, spell

The Japanese-style black-and-white illustrations capture emotions, making readers feel as if they are in a real ghost story.

ANIMUS

scandal. Their ultimate conflict stems from negotiating loyalty to their families, themselves, and each other. On the socio-economic spectrum, Cameron coasts through a privileged existence of wealth while Nate's middle-class existence doesn't even skim the surface of destitution despite his laments. Light applause for not making homosexuality the social challenge in this La La Land-landscape of fame, glamour, and oodles of cash. Both Nate and Cameron are white, fit, and adorable. Nate's bestie, Victor, is Italian-American; presented in caricature form, he's likened to an overfed Al Pacino.

A fun enough fluffy fairy tale with a colorless cast and easily mounted conflict. (*Fiction.13-18*)



ANIMUS

Revoy, Antoine

Illus. by the author

First Second (224 pp.)

\$16.99 paper | May 8, 2018

978-1-62672-183-8

A boy and girl must uncover the secrets of a ghost boy cursed to haunt a playground.

In a neighborhood in Kyoto, Japan, Hisao and Sayuri meet a boy, Toothless, at a small playground and soon discover that he is a ghost imprisoned there. He shares with them that the playground has magic abilities: The swings allow you to see into someone's dreams, the sandbox brings life to your innermost fears, and the slide makes you young or old, depending on which direction you go on it. When their friend falls victim to the slide's power and ends up in the hospital, so old that he is suffering from dementia, they must uncover who Toothless really is in order to save him. Following clues, the two kids find disturbing evidence of another crime as they unearth the truth. Although this is a ghost story, the spookiness is well-balanced with endearing moments of friendship, and there is beauty in the way the characters help each other change and develop. The Japanese-style black-and-white illustrations have sharp lines and detail, creating an alluring, eerie world. They capture emotions and evoke sounds, making readers feel as if they are in a real ghost story. The narrative and illustrations work together seamlessly to create mysteries that are baffling yet intriguing.

An eerie graphic novel mystery that is bewildering and unnerving in the best way possible. (*Graphic novel. 12-adult*)



IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING NICE TO SAY

Sales, Leila

Farrar, Straus and Giroux (336 pp.)

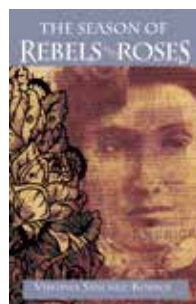
\$17.99 | May 1, 2018

978-0-374-38099-1

Sales' (*Once Was a Time*, 2016, etc.) latest takes a messy dive into the world of public shaming and callout culture.

Seventeen-year-old Jewish high school senior Winter Halperin has her life figured out. Thanks to her blogger mother's world-famous parenting strategies, she's a National Spelling Bee champ who dreams of being a writer and is excited to be attending college in the fall. Everything is going smoothly until she casually tweets: "We learned many surprising things today. Like that *debnstufe* is apparently a word, and that a black kid can actually win the Spelling Bee." Her tweet goes viral and her punishment is swift and severe: Brutally publicly shamed online, her spelling bee title and college acceptance are revoked. Winter is devastated; thinking she made a clever throwaway joke, she doesn't understand how the world can see her as racist. She decides to sign up for a "reputation rehabilitation retreat," where, through self-reflection, she ultimately finds a spark of hope for her future. While she is sometimes sympathetic and frequently frustrating, Winter never demonstrates a true shift toward understanding microaggressions, systemic racism, and white privilege. The few characters of color primarily seem to exist to explain race and white privilege to both the white protagonist and white readers. While clearly a cautionary tale, the book's ultimate message is as muddled as the world of online shaming.

Timely but, like all of us, painfully imperfect. (*Fiction. 12-18*)



THE SEASON OF REBELS AND ROSES

Sánchez-Korrol, Virginia

Piñata Books/Arté Público (258 pp.)

\$12.95 paper | May 31, 2018

978-1-55885-865-7

Two women fight for Puerto Rican independence in the late 1880s.

Inocencia Martínez is just 18 when the story opens, while Lola Rodríguez de Tío, the book's other protagonist, is a married woman with children, but the two white women know each other from Doña Lola's women's political group. The pair are soon separated as liberationists in Puerto Rico are hounded by the Spanish colonizers. The choppy pacing of the plodding plot follows Lola and her family's move to Cuba to avoid persecution. Meanwhile, Inocencia, in love with the political revolutionary Sotero Figueroa, who is described using the questionable term "mulatto" (given without sufficient context for modern readers), goes against her family's wishes in courting

A narrative that crackles with political intrigue, powerful and debilitating magic, and the violent mechanisms of colonization.

ASH PRINCESS

him. Eventually the pair marry and move to New York City. There, Inocencia establishes a women's group to support the causes of Puerto Rican and Cuban independence. Though her group purports to have racial equality as a goal, the fact that the narrative exoticizes Sotero—both actually calling him exotic and fetishizing the darkness of his skin—undermines this aim. With such interesting material, it's unfortunate that the uneven pace and often awkward phrasing don't do the subject matter justice. While more books about Latin American history are overdue, the conflicting content and lack of an engaging narrative will satisfy only the most avid historians.

Disappointing. (*Historical fiction. 12-18*)



ASH PRINCESS

Sebastian, Laura

Delacorte (432 pp.)

\$18.99 | \$21.99 PLB | Apr. 24, 2018

978-1-5247-6706-8

978-1-5247-6707-5 PLB

The daughter of a murdered queen plots to take back what is hers.

With her country seized and her mother, the Fire Queen of Astrea, murdered by invaders when she was only 6 years old, Theodosia has been a prisoner for 10 years, stripped of her crown, her people enslaved. Theo (renamed Thora by her captors) is at the mercy of the Kaiser—the fearsome ruler of the Kalovaxians—enduring his malicious whims in order to survive. But when the Kaiser forces Theo to execute her own father, survival is no longer good enough, and she finally takes up the mantle of queen to lead her people's rise to resistance in a land saturated in elemental magic. Debut author Sebastian has invigorated some well-worn fantasy tropes (a displaced heir, an underground rebellion, and a love triangle that muddies the distinctions between enemies and allies), delivering a narrative that crackles with political intrigue, powerful and debilitating magic, and the violent mechanisms of colonization even as it leaves sequel-primed gaps. Some details—like Theo's crisis of identity and Hamletian indecision—work well to submerge readers in a turbulent and enthralling plot; others, like racialized descriptions that fall short of actual representation (Atreans are dark-haired and olive-skinned, Kalovaxians are blond and pale-skinned) and the use of magic-induced madness for narrative shock and awe feel lazy and distracting among more nuanced elements.

"Cinderella" but with genocide and rebel plots. (*Fantasy. 14-17*)



STANLEY & HAZEL

Schaffer, Jo

Month9Books (280 pp.)

\$15.99 paper | May 15, 2018

978-1-946700-65-0

Series: Stanley and Hazel, 1

Newsie Stanley is just making do in 1934 St. Louis, Missouri, when he meets wealthy socialite Hazel at the movies and they become embroiled in a shocking murder that apparently connects

their disparate worlds.

The enemy is known as Legion, and he is mightier than these two can handle—but don't underestimate their grit, nor the growing attraction between the two that simply is not acceptable in their own rigid communities. To Hazel's family, Stanley's Irish Catholic background is as much anathema as is his poverty. Most characters are strictly stereotypes, including the main white duo whose chatter in the supposed slang of the day is neither fresh nor entertaining. Legion and his organization are far more intriguing. While Stanley is working several jobs, he never seems to actually do much work and always has a few spare coins to share, illustrating his heart of gold. Hazel, who begins as a spoiled rich debutante, is gradually awakened to the advantages her life of luxury has given her as she sees the sufferings of Depression-era life. It's all been done before and with more élan. There might be some connections to actual history related to the Veiled Prophet Ball, but the fictionalized account provides only speculation that the organization is similar to the Ku Klux Klan.

Stock adventure out of 1930s central casting. (*Historical fiction. 13-17*)



THE ART OF FRENCH KISSING

Shrum, Brianna R.

Sky Pony Press (256 pp.)

\$8.99 paper | Jun. 5, 2018

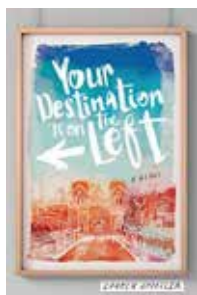
978-1-5107-3205-6

Carter Lane is one step closer to her dream of attending the nation's top culinary school when she is accepted into its prestigious summer scholarship competition, but arrogant and handsome Reid Yamada isn't going to make winning easy.

In fact, he is deliberately sabotaging Carter's dishes—but two can play at that game. Carter, who is Irish-American, and Reid, who is biracial (Japanese/white), have their sights trained on one another as competitors begin to be eliminated. But an obsession that starts out as revenge soon turns romantic when the two are paired up and must work together to win it all. Despite the clichéd premise and the implausibility of sending eliminated teens to the airport at all hours to wait for standby flights home, this meet-cute romance stands out thanks to the nuanced characters and subtle treatment of bigger issues such

as race, gender, and money (Carter's family flirts with poverty). Carter's insecurities about her culinary skill will resonate with any girl who has aspirations in a field dominated by males, and a sensitive sex scene models for readers what a consensual relationship looks like. A full cast of diverse characters, including Indian-American competitors, Carter's lesbian best friend, and Reid himself, who identifies as queer, are portrayed three-dimensionally, but Shrum's (*How to Make Out*, 2016, etc.) greatest accomplishment may be the intricate and mouthwatering descriptions of each dish.

A thoughtful and delicious romance. (*Romance. 14-18*)



YOUR DESTINATION IS ON THE LEFT

Spieller, Lauren
 Simon & Schuster (304 pp.)
 \$18.99 | Jun. 26, 2018
 978-1-4814-9212-6

An aspiring teen artist yearns to break free from her family's nomadic lifestyle in Spieller's debut novel.

For the Rhodes family, home is an RV on a never-ending trek across the country with two other families, one of which includes Dessa's best friend and secret crush, Cyrus. Despite the caravan's "never stop moving" mentality, Dessa dreams of becoming a real artist and settling down one day—also known as "High Nomad Treason." She eagerly applies to 10 art schools but is rejected by every single one of them. Already feeling lost and bound to the life her parents chose for her, she discovers that her father, a web designer without a degree, is struggling to make ends meet. She unexpectedly lands an internship with Santa Fe-based artist Fiona Velarde, a promising opportunity that will test her artistic abilities, challenge her loyalty to her family, and hinder her emerging romance with Cyrus. Refreshingly, it is the parents in this story who have poor decision-making skills throughout, often relying on group votes to decide the caravan's fate. Dessa's resilience is laudable and will resonate with anyone well-acquainted with failure. The cast is mainly white (Dessa has a Greek grandmother) with some racial diversity—Cyrus and another supporting character are black, and Fiona is tan-skinned with black hair.

An emotional, aesthetic, and hopeful journey to self-discovery. (*Fiction. 12-18*)



MINDSTALKER

Steiger, A.J.
 Oneworld Publications (432 pp.)
 \$11.99 paper | Jun. 12, 2018
 978-1-7807-4926-6
 Series: Mindwalker, 2

Can an uprising continue when one of its public faces has her memories altered to believe it's terrorism?

In this sequel to *Mindwalker* (2015), Lain, now 18, wakes up in a white-walled room with no memory of how she got there. Soon, unfamiliar people in holomasks, claiming to be her allies, come to rescue her. The truth emerges: Dr. Swan, Lain's guardian, wiped her memories so she would forget the atrocities his organization, IFEN, committed. After taking a pill to restore those memories, Lain escapes to the Citadel, the Canadian stronghold of the Blackcoats, a majority-teen resistance group. There, as Lain learns more about government-sanctioned IFEN's illegal experiments and the Blackcoats' plans for catalyzing political upheaval through violence, Lain questions which group really has the best interests of the United Republic of America at heart. Is freedom "the easy choice" or "a contract signed in blood?" Part *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, part *Hunger Games*, this plot-driven, romance-laden tale of youth empowerment will surely please genre fans. Though characters remain on the extreme side, Steiger (*When My Heart Joins the Thousand*, 2018, etc.) better develops the sequel's dystopian United States and more deeply interrogates the systems of oppression it uses to isolate its citizens based on mental health. The cast assumes a white default. The Blackcoats' leader, Zebra, uses a wheelchair but is rarely seen.

A relevant read for the youthquake generation. (*Dystopian romance. 12-adult*)



HOLLY JOLLY SUMMER

Stewart, Tiffany
 Farrar, Straus and Giroux (272 pp.)
 \$17.99 | May 29, 2018
 978-0-374-30575-8

Fifteen-year-old Darby Peacher falls in and out of love, publicly humiliates herself, and saves an amusement park, all during one summer in a small Kentucky town.

Daughter of the mayor of booming tourist destination Christmas, Kentucky, Darby spends her time texting, watching *Andy Griffith Show* reruns, obsessing over a boy, and acting as first daughter. She has a peculiar penchant for fruity expressions like "Holy kiwis!" and "What the kumquat was happening?" Darby is jealous of a political adviser who she believes is undermining her close relationship with her father. Following an embarrassing public spectacle, the adviser convinces her father that Darby should keep a low public

profile, and he encourages her to get a summer job. Employed as a janitor at an aging amusement park called Holly Jolly Land, Darby must work with a former boyfriend and ends up leading a crusade to block the sale of the park to a mall developer. Setting the story in a town called Christmas gives debut author Stewart license to create a litany of cringe-inducing cutesy names like the Reindeer Games Midway and Christmas Carol-sel, which quickly become tiresome. Darby is white, and there is a lot of diversity in the secondary characters (the town is described as being among the most diverse in the state).

Readers with a taste for innocuous fluff will not find this lighthearted, plot-driven, coming-of-age novel tedious. (Fiction. 12-16)



SUPERGIRL Being Super

Tamaki, Mariko
Illus. by Jones, Joëlle
 DC Comics (208 pp.)
 \$16.99 | Jun. 5, 2018
 978-1-4012-6894-7

Kara Danvers' bad day begins when she pops a zit.

As origin stories go, Tamaki (*The Moon Is Up*, 2018, etc.) focuses on Kara the teenager over all else. Having arrived on Earth as a young child, she endures bad dreams and has no idea that she's an alien. Blonde, blue-eyed Kara has just turned 16, and her odd abilities are glitching. At a track meet, an earthquake takes the lives of several people, including one of Kara's best friends, who slips out of her grasp. Later, when responding to a mysterious cry for help, she discovers not only the reason for her malfunctioning strength and the quake, but a dark-haired, olive-skinned man strapped to a table who speaks a language that she has only heard in her head and who has the answers to her questions about where she is from. His escape from the facility, however, causes problems that Kara could have anticipated if she was not so busy giggling at his face and admiring his abs. Superpowers are sidelined by the drama of fitting in, keeping secrets, and dealing with grief. Of her small circle of friends, the brown-skinned lesbian Dolly has enough sass to power Kara through everyday interactions as well as the weightier theme of the death of a loved one.

More "teen drama" than "super," this is an interesting choice for those looking for more than the usual hero fare. (Graphic novel. 12-16)

{YOUNG ADULT}

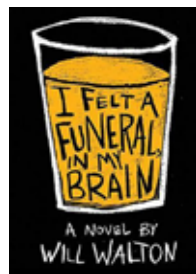
FORGIVING MOSES

Velásquez, Gloria
 Piñata Books/Arté Público (160 pp.)
 \$10.95 paper | May 31, 2018
 978-1-55885-864-0
 Series: Roosevelt High School, 10

"Why can't I accept things the way they are?"

It's Moses Vargas' first day as a freshman at Roosevelt High, and he's not looking forward to being the new "tonto" at school. He misses his life in Salinas, where he would hang out with his best friend. Moses also doesn't want to speak to anyone about his father, who's serving 25 years to life on drug-related charges. Moses gets suspended after a fight when a photo of him with his father in prison circulates among the students. A significant portion of this slim hi-lo novel explores Moses' anger, pain, and confusion with varying degrees of success. The author, however, excels at depicting a family in tatters, particularly in her portrayal of Moses' relationships with his parents. Moses can't understand why his mom wants to wait for his dad. Meanwhile, he struggles to appreciate and care for his father as a flawed human being throughout his prison visits. Support comes from Mr. Gutiérrez, a school counselor, and Dalana, a fellow Roosevelt High student whose father is also in prison. Mr. Gutiérrez begins a *Círculo* support group at school to reach out to students, including a reluctant Moses. The book features a cast of mainly Latinx characters.

Occasional doses of heavy-handed didacticism and an abrupt ending mar an otherwise fine entry about an under-represented topic. (glossary) (Fiction. 12-18)



I FELT A FUNERAL IN MY BRAIN

Walton, Will
 PUSH/Scholastic (304 pp.)
 \$17.99 | May 29, 2018
 978-0-545-70956-9

A damaged patella lays up Avery Fowell and gives him time to contemplate the most eventful summer of his life.

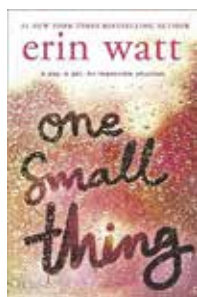
Best friends Avery and Luca, two white boys, made a pact: If they passed biology, they'd lose their virginity with each other. They've been friends forever because their alcoholic mothers used to get drunk together—and are now in recovery together (although Luca's mom is much more successful). When a car crash lands Avery in a cast and his mother in rehab, Avery stays with his beloved grandfather Pal and Pal's girlfriend, Babs. However, Pal has his own problems with alcohol, complicated by his diabetes, and Luca has asked to cool things down. Avery does his best to cope with everyone's issues while exploring who he is, wants to be, and will be. As he deals with history, betrayal, and grief, he finds the best tool is poetry, that of the masters and

A quick-tempered athlete who is a whiz at fixing cars, Addie is a welcome departure from the bookish, quirky heroines of teen romances.

LOVE & LUCK

his own. Walton's (*Anything Could Happen*, 2015) sophomore effort eloquently explores a lot of territory in prosey-verse... or maybe versey-prose. The pop references won't weather well, and the poetical references will only spark the poets in the crowd. However, those willing to invest a little time and brain power in figuring out (or feeling out) what the text communicates will be rewarded with a heartfelt and ultimately uplifting experience peopled with real humans.

Portrait of the artist as a young queer. (*Prose-verse hybrid. 14-adult*)



ONE SMALL THING

Watt, Erin
Harlequin Teen (384 pp.)
\$18.99 | Jun. 26, 2018
978-1-335-01727-7

In this contemporary romance, a high school senior falls for the boy who accidentally killed her sister while he was joyriding in a stolen car.

Seventeen-year-old Beth strains beneath the suffocating weight of her parents' grief and overprotectiveness. When she learns they've intercepted her college applications because they intend to force her to live at home and undertake an online degree program, she reaches a breaking point. Readers will easily sympathize with Beth's struggle even as she spontaneously rebels by going to a party in a neighboring town with a crowd she doesn't know. There she meets mysterious Chase and has sex with him, creating a bond between herself and the misunderstood bad boy that fuels their predictable magnetism. It may strike some as unbelievable that Beth wouldn't have heard any gossip beforehand about Chase's upcoming release from juvenile detention and enrollment at her high school, especially given the depiction of her insular, middle-class community. There are also some instances in which the dialogue between teen characters seems uneven, with passé phrases like "get our party on" clashing with more current slang such as "lit as fuck." Still, teens with a penchant for clandestine love stories will find plenty to keep them going here. A secondary plot involving Beth's sister's old boyfriend adds an edgy layer, appealing to those who favor thrillers. The book assumes a white default.

An engaging, if trope-filled, drama. (*Fiction. 14-18*)



LOVE & LUCK

Welch, Jemma Evans
Simon Pulse/Simon & Schuster (320 pp.)
\$18.99 | May 8, 2018
978-1-5344-0100-6

When an ill-advised romance threatens Addie's friendship with her brother, Ian, it takes an Irish road trip to mend their relationship—along with Addie's broken heart.

Out of her three older brothers, Addie has always been closest to Ian—until she dates Cubby, Ian's football teammate, despite Ian's warnings. When her family travels to Ireland for a wedding, Addie plans a side trip to Italy, intent on visiting her best friend (who moved to live with her father in Florence) and fixing her life. But a fistfight, an alternative music festival, and a guidebook for the broken-hearted derail Addie's Italian plans—and, ultimately, give her what she needs to get her life back on track. A quick-tempered athlete who is a whiz at fixing cars but struggles with school, Addie is a welcome departure from the bookish, quirky characters who are so often the heroines of teen romances. Furthermore, Welch (*Love & Gelato*, 2016) describes Cubby's violation of Addie's trust realistically and sympathetically, deftly addressing the very real issues surrounding love in the digital age. The only weakness of this fast-paced, witty read is its lack of diversity: The characters are uniformly white, straight, middle-class, and nondisabled.

A skillfully rendered exploration of heartbreak, friendship, family, and destiny—and a quick and enjoyable read. (*Romance. 14-18*)



LISTEN TO YOUR HEART

West, Kasie
Point/Scholastic (336 pp.)
\$17.99 | May 29, 2018
978-1-338-21005-7

Kate Bailey, a white 16-year-old, lives in the small town of Lakesprings with her extended family on their lakefront property.

Her best friend, Alana, who is Polynesian from Hawaii, has convinced Kate to enroll with her in a podcasting class. Kate expects to only do behind-the-scenes work, but when her topic, advice, is chosen by the teacher, Kate is expected to co-host the podcast. Meanwhile, Alana is interested in a handsome Latino classmate named Diego Martinez—and when Kate takes her cousin to tutoring, she discovers that Diego works there and tries to get to know him better so she can relay the information to Alana. When a boy calls into the podcast seeking love advice about a girl whom he's interested in, Kate is sure that it's Diego talking about his feelings for Alana. However, Kate slowly realizes her own romantic feelings for Diego—even though she is also

trying to get over her ex-boyfriend, Hunter, who moved away and has fallen out of touch. Kate tries to abstain from telling Diego anything due to her friendship with Alana. While Kate becomes known for her straightforward advice on the podcast, she seems oblivious to the problems of people around her.

West (*Love, Life, and the List*, 2018, etc.) creates a slow but tender story about friendship and love. (Romance. 12-18)



THE RUINOUS SWEEP

Wynne-Jones, Tim
Candlewick (400 pp.)
\$18.99 | Jun. 26, 2018
978-0-7636-9745-7

A teen boy with anger issues, critically injured in a car accident, is suspected of murdering his alcoholic father and staunchly defended by his high school girlfriend, Bee.

The first part of Wynne-Jones' (*Secret Agent Man Goes Shopping for Shoes*, 2016, etc.) novel has a hallucinatory quality. Occasional chapters describe Bee's vigil by Donovan's bedside in the ICU, while the bulk of the text describes Dono's travels through a nightmarish world fraught with violence and danger. A series of bizarre encounters and escapes keeps readers off-balance, unsure what details, if any, are real. In this section, similarities to Dante's *Inferno* may or may not resonate with teen readers. A sharp break in the narrative occurs after a dramatic event and shifts the focus to Bee and the tone from horror-inflected to whodunit. Bee's detecting efforts bear fruit, but her foolhardy risk-taking is clearly plot-driven and may frustrate some readers. Wynne-Jones' writing is smooth and compelling, and certain images will likely linger in readers' minds. However, most characters are adults, which may distance some teens, and the motivation for the murder is both decidedly adult and not entirely convincing. Some aspects of the first section never quite connect to the rest, while the enigmatic author's note raises further questions. No racial diversity is apparent; class differences are implied.

Suspenseful and complex, this will mesmerize readers patient enough to stick with it. (author's note) (Fiction. 14-18)

CONTINUING SERIES

FUTURE LOST

Briggs, Elizabeth
Albert Whitman & Company (256 pp.)
\$16.99 | April 3, 2018
978-0-8075-2687-3
Future Shock, 3
(Science fiction. 12-18)

UNBREAKABLE

Ella, Sara
Thomas Nelson (384 pp.)
\$16.99 | May 1, 2018
978-0-7180-8105-8
The Unblemished Trilogy, 3
(Fantasy. 13-18)

GOLDEN HOUR

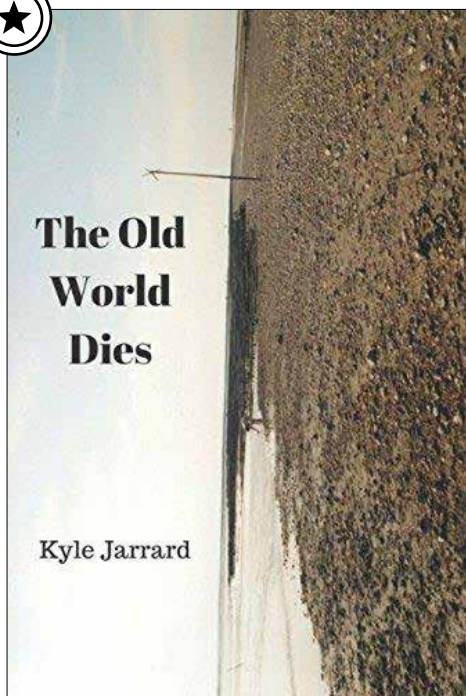
Guertin, Chantel
ECW Press (200 pp.)
\$9.95 paper | May 22, 2018
978-1-77041-235-4
Pippa Greene, 4
(Fiction. 12-16)

INDIE



These titles earned the Kirkus Star:

- #2084 by *A.L.F.I.E.*..... 131
- AN INEXPLICABLE ATTRACTION by *Eric B. Forsyth* 137
- REDLINED by *Linda Gartz*..... 139
- THE OLD WORLD DIES by *Kyle Jarrard*142
- HEAVEN, INDIANA by *Jan Maber* 144
- ACCOMPLICE TO MEMORY by *Q.M. Zhang*..... 152



THE OLD WORLD DIES
Jarrard, Kyle
 Lune de Ville (220 pp.)
 \$14.99 paper | \$9.99 e-book
 Jan. 15, 2018
 978-1-976725-84-5



#2084
Book 1: The Bioman
Chronicles

A.L.F.I.E.
 ALife Media (250 pp.)
 \$5.99 e-book | Apr. 22, 2018

A young man must make radical leaps in perception to save humanity from a powerful artificial intelligence in this debut sci-fi novel.

In 2074, the world is half-drowned and dangerous; a few lucky rich people live in protected domes, but most struggle. Arthur Blackstone, 65, a genius trillionaire who founded Blackstone Labs, is dying—to live again. He has just enough time left to transfer his memories to a clone (2 years old chronologically; 10 biologically) and make a will in his favor. A copy of Arthur’s brain, an AI called SINE, is kept in a cyberprison inside Blackstone Labs, dangerous because it’s “a monstrous creation; a super-intelligence without a shred of empathy.” But a security breach caused by Olivia “Liz” Blackstone, Arthur’s granddaughter by adoption, lets SINE loose, which begins its project to take over the world. Meanwhile, Adam Bionine—as the clone is called—grows up in an orphanage with no memories of his past. But in 2084, Adam catches Liv keeping tabs on him. Following her takes Adam off the grid and to a group of rebels bent on bringing down SINE. Adam’s memories are restored with a plant-based brew that also opens his mind to quantum realities and the nature of his true self, giving him remarkable powers, but Liv’s mother, Penelope, is captured. With a small band of allies, Adam has two days to rescue Penelope, stop SINE, and convince all humans of their underlying unity. *A.L.F.I.E.* offers an action-packed novel of ideas, drawing on correspondences between ancient philosophies and modern physics/computer science. This blend works surprisingly well; some books with similar themes become woolly-headed or overly abstract, but the author always brings the storytelling mojo. Whether describing a cinematic fight scene with cool weapons (like Liv’s whip with an “atomic injector nozzle”) or an inner journey into psychedelic consciousness, *A.L.F.I.E.* makes his complicated sequences clear to follow and exciting to read. Despite the nearly nonstop action, the story develops its characters nicely, and there’s even time for a sweet romance between Adam and Liv. Altogether, it’s a rich and satisfying confection.

A thrilling superhero journey that remains smart and thoughtful.

WILD THINGS



While many picture books star feisty cats or wacky dogs, others feature magnificent jungle creatures or imposing, furry beasts. Kirkus Indie recently reviewed three works that showcase formidable wild animals in tales imparting important messages to children.

In Kosa Ely's *The Jaguar's Story*, a mother and her two cubs need to find a refuge after logging machines

spoil their Amazon rainforest home. Radhe Gendron's striking illustrations show the three majestic jaguars as they navigate the breathtaking Amazon landscape, a poisoned river, and unfamiliar farmland to reach a safe area. Our reviewer calls the adventure "an excellent new tale reiterating an old—but still relevant—ecological issue."



A young royal feels she must always act perfectly in Jennifer Pahl Otto's *Princess Hippopotamus*. But one day, she impetuously throws a water balloon that lands on her uncle's new hat. Her sympathetic father tells the horrified princess that she doesn't have to be perfect all the time. Kseniia Korniienko's cartoon images delightfully depict these huge hippos in action. "This clever tale's theme—that perfection isn't important—is a significant one for kids who are afraid to make mistakes," our critic writes.



Everyone Is Asleep But Me, by the mother-daughter team of Diana Yacobi and Lily Safrani, focuses on a bear cub who wakes up in the middle of the night. He enters his parents' room, where two sprawling beasts slumber in their bed. Sadly, there's no space for the cub. He forlornly returns to his room and climbs into bed. But, finding it "warm and cozy," he immediately falls asleep. The work, which earned a Kirkus star, includes images by Philip L. Wohlrab. According to our reviewer, "An approachable vocabulary, strong theme, and adorable, almost huggable illustrations make this soothing animal tale a bedtime winner." —M.F.

Myra Forsberg is an indie editor.



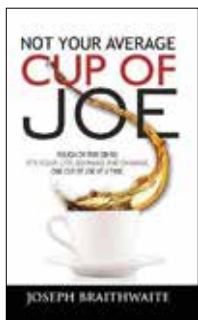
THE CYNIC IN EXTREMIS Poems

Appel, Jacob M.
Able Muse Press (78 pp.)
\$17.95 paper | Jun. 4, 2018
978-1-77349-014-4

These collected poems explore memory, regret, and missed connections.

Along with being a bioethicist, physician, and lawyer, Appel (*The Amazing Mr. Morality: Stories*, 2018, etc.) is also a prolific, award-winning writer of short stories, novels, essays, and plays. He now offers a collection of 43 witty, thoughtful poems, many of which were previously published in literary journals. Appel's poetry has a narrative quality that's appropriate for a fiction writer, telling compressed stories that often end in moments of realization or summation. In the title poem, for example, the first line provides a nutshell character sketch: "You could never put one over on my uncle." Instances follow: "Scoured his returned change for Canadian pennies, / Steered clear of con games like synagogue / And life insurance." The poet makes no judgment about the uncle's cynicism or lack of mercy; he simply does the compassionate thing by visiting him when no one else will. But the uncle remains himself: "*Of course, you've come*, he says, *!... / You were always a sucker.*" Con artists and chumps are a recurring motif in Appel's fiction, with tension between the morality of truth and the comfort, even the magic, of illusion. Is it wrong to be a sucker if it means a dying old man gets a visit from a family member? Other poems consider mortality and the past's irretrievability, such as "Summer Camp Socials," which recalls a girl who's cheerful despite being ostracized at a dance for her bald scalp. Looking back, the speaker writes that she "stars in the revision of my life," one in which he asks her to dance, but in his "unrevised life, she is still waiting." The past can't be made up for; imagination can revise, but life resists editing. Even the future is unsusceptible to change, as in "The Homely Girls," where a kindergarten teacher predicts that the unattractive girls have only steely endurance ahead of them. Of course it's possible for even homely girls to have fulfilling lives, but the teacher, like the uncle, is paying the price for cynicism—sourness that overtakes all perceptions.

A strong collection of insightful narrative poems.



NOT YOUR AVERAGE CUP OF JOE

Braithwaite, Joseph
 Self (112 pp.)
 \$19.95 | \$18.95 paper | \$9.99 e-book
 Jan. 5, 2018
 978-1-77370-407-4
 978-1-77370-406-7 paper

Braithwaite, who describes himself as “a working-class guy who just wouldn’t give up on his dreams,” debuts with a neatly constructed miniguide touching

on some of life’s larger issues.

With short chapters that incorporate salient quotes, anecdotes, and personal reflections, this handbook tackles such far-reaching topics as one’s own uniqueness, choosing to make change, the impact of luck, setting goals, and finding a mentor. None of the material is markedly different from the raft of other inspirational books; in fact, the author references some of these titles in his own book. Rather, this work is distinct because of Braithwaite’s down-to-earth, chatty style combined with his effervescent optimism. Perhaps it’s exaggeration to promise the time it takes to drink a cup of coffee is all that’s required to radically transform, but the author’s point is to quell any fears the reader may have about the scary subject of change. Braithwaite’s observations are smart and insightful, albeit often short on specifics. About originality, he writes, “The most artistic and open-minded people on the planet are our children before they start their formal education cycles. Once in school, our education systems strip away their differences and create a group of ‘normal’ children.” On self-worth: “Understand what your unique quality is and price yourself in the market based on the value that you believe your unique quality is worth.” The author outlines equally perceptive thoughts about resiliency, self-doubt, and one’s personal brand. Braithwaite’s counsel on mentoring is particularly poignant since he relates it to life rather than business. “If you’re missing reassurance and support,” writes the author, “find a mentor who will provide that.” He’s unapologetically bullish on grit and determination and has been inspired by people who faced challenges in their lives. His own life is a testament to overcoming such hardships as divorce, job loss, and homelessness.

Brief, blunt, and buoyant; offers a refreshing jolt of inspiration.



ALEX VEGA AND THE ORACLE OF THE MAYANS

Burchell, D.J. with Burchell, M.A.
 South Bay Publishing (370 pp.)
 \$8.99 paper | \$0.99 e-book
 Aug. 26, 2017
 978-1-941952-10-8

This debut middle-grade adventure sees a group of kids train to prevent an alien invasion of Earth.

One night, the diminutive, pointy-eared Carl Bellon pops up from a seemingly unimpressive hole in an empty lot. He teams up with a German shepherd named Mercure to visit the home of 13-year-old Alex Vega. The dog telepathically alerts the teen’s family members, including Alex’s parents, Miguel and Janet, and sister, Aura, to imminent danger. They escape as four green spheres float toward the house and set it ablaze. While running to the hole in the lot, Miguel and Janet use a polished black tablet called a Z-Con (or Zero Point Field Condenser) to defend against the spheres. The hole, it turns out, is a portal that leads to a carved-out facility inside the Himalayan Mountains. There, Alex learns of the Praefectus, who possess advanced alien technology and have been training for generations to defend Earth against intergalactic invaders. He also meets more children—Maia, Elka, and Dion—with whom he’ll train, and the Masters Kattan and Ebo. The Masters guide the young apprentices through various portals to their new home at the Jade pyramid, a section of the Earth Defense Operations School. In this novel, D.J. Burchell and M.A. Burchell combine touches of the Harry Potter and Indiana Jones series to introduce an epic saga that includes the origins of gods like Zeus and Ra. The brother-and-sister team maintains a tight narrative flow, unveiling the wonders of the Z-Con technology through the kids’ eyes. Less savvy authors might infodump story elements, but the Burchells refuse. Mercure says to Alex, “*Some things you should discover for yourself. More exciting that way, isn’t it?*” Indeed, ice cream that tastes like a high dive into the ocean and Gravity-Energy Manipulator suits that confer near invincibility are wondrously detailed. With Z-Cons standing in for wands, the children solve a minimystery while learning to fly planes and sail, skills potentially needed for later missions. The authors lay down an exceptional foundation of characters and worldbuilding for more dangerous escapades to come.

A clever series opener that draws from the myths and pantheons of numerous ancient cultures.



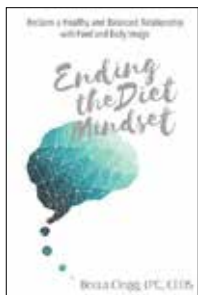
PASS IT ON!

Burgess, Gloria J. McEwen
Illus. by Purnell, Gerald
Two Sylvias Press (34 pp.)
\$23.99 | Nov. 1, 2017
978-0-9986314-2-4

An author and inspirational speaker offers a picture-book biography of her father that explores segregation and access to education.

Set during the 1930s in a segregated Mississippi, Burgess' (*Flawless Leadership*, 2016, etc.) work chronicles how, as a boy, Earnest McEwen Jr. loved to read anything he could get his hands on. His black parents both worked in the cotton fields, and Ernie dreamed of a better life for his family. He wanted to go to college. Ernie finished high school, where he met his future wife, Millie. After getting a job as a janitor at the University of Mississippi, he met two professors who introduced him to William Faulkner. The author changed Ernie's life by paying his tuition to Alcorn, a university for black students. "Pass it on"—the only repayment Faulkner requested—became Ernie's motto, which he gave to his daughters, as explained in the author's note at the end. The superb story is full of hope, showing people reaching across boundaries to help one another and provide a better life for the next generation. The details in Purnell's (*A Homerun for Bunny*, 2013, etc.) beautifully realistic paintings and his attention to the faces of his subjects draw in readers. In this book, initially funded via Kickstarter, Burgess' vocabulary is accessible. While she never talks down to readers, she presents the material in an approachable fashion.

This excellent and uplifting account of a grim American era promotes hope and kindness.



**ENDING THE DIET MINDSET
Reclaim a Healthy and
Balanced Relationship with
Food and Body Image**

Clegg, Becca
BookLogix (144 pp.)
\$6.99 e-book | Feb. 21, 2018

A debut guide strives to help women break out of the dieting trap.

How many women have only been on one diet? This is the question with which Clegg, an eating-disorder therapist, opens her fast-paced look at the short- and long-term damage the dieting mentality can inflict on women, whether they're looking to revitalize their lives or simply lose a few pounds. "Are you ready to go out, change your mind, and change your life?" the author asks. To facilitate this, she identifies 10 "mindsets" that can make dieting a deeply personal pitfall rather than the healthy course of action most women intend it to be. These include "The Deprivation Mindset," "The Mean Girl Mindset," and "The Shame-Based Mindset," all of which tap into potentially unhealthy

personal traits as part of their base line motivations. Clegg deftly lays out descriptions of each of these mindsets and the thinking they typify. For instance, "The Bureaucrat Mindset," which can appeal to rule followers, the author characterizes as "Even though *I* want to eat this, and it makes sense to eat this, I can't—because it is not on my diet." And then there's the extremely common "ABC Mindset," which thinks: "If I diet, I can lose weight, and then my life will be perfect." The author trusts the instincts of her readers to tell them if they're in the grip of one of these toxic mindsets ("If you have an unhealthy pattern," she writes with affecting simplicity, "you will recognize it because it makes you feel bad"). As she's clarifying the difficulties, she's also offering useful, multifaceted solutions to help her readers "reclaim a peaceful, balanced relationship with food." At the root of the problem, she writes, is society's set of body image standards that are patriarchal, unrealistic, and ultimately harmful to women's physiques, minds, and souls. Clegg's valuable, lucid book is a call to dig beneath these manipulations, to understand the *why* of dieting before looking at the *how*. Every reader who's ever struggled with dieting or weight issues should find the author's outlook captivating.

A densely packed and richly empathetic revamping of the dieting world.



**THE HORNED OWL
A Sam Chitto Mystery**

Clifton, Lu
(286 pp.)
Two Shadows (316 pp.)
\$15.95 paper | \$7.95 e-book
Feb. 19, 2018
978-0-9985284-2-7

In the third installment of Clifton's (*The Bonepicker*, 2017, etc.) thriller series, Detective Sam Chitto of the Choctaw Tribal Police in southeastern Oklahoma

tries to prove a high schooler innocent of murder while also digging into his own father's decade-old homicide.

Chitto first hears about Bobby Taneyhill from two concerned members of the Choctaw Nation Tribal Council, one of whom is his mother, Mattie Chitto. She and June Biggers want him to help the teen, who's been charged with first-degree murder for the mutilation death of 33-year-old Muriel Simpson. Authorities are discounting an alibi supplied by Bobby's tribal-elder grandfather, Charlie Walker, and instead rely on circumstantial evidence: the boy's graphic novels, which are filled with savage imagery that he drew. The murder victim had worked at the Spiro Mounds Archaeology Center, near where Chitto's cop father, Will, and Will's partner, Bert Gilly, were murdered 10 years ago. Chitto's boss, Dan Blackfox, allows him to pursue a low-profile investigation into Bobby's case, which is currently in trial, but he tells him to avoid his father's. Regardless, Chitto delves into both from a rented cabin near the Spiro Mounds, bringing along his trusty hound, Boycott, and consulting with his administrative assistant, Jasmine Birdsong, by phone. He

Jackie's inward struggle about what to obey—her dearest wishes or the parents she loves—is one many readers will understand.

JUPITER STORM

already has a suspect in his father's murder, but he's still searching for one for the more recent homicide. Clifton dives right into the mystery at the start of the novel, opening with Mattie and June's emphatic entrance into Chitto's office, soaking wet from a thunderstorm. The concurrent investigations are equally engrossing; at one point, for example, Chitto questions why he never learned of a relevant phone call that Gilly received; meanwhile, his suspect list for the Simpson murder wisely includes Bobby. There's more focus on the present-day case, which intermittently puts Chitto in the role of spectator, watching the trial unfold in the courtroom. It's surprisingly exhilarating to watch Chitto race to catch up with two cases that are already well underway. The various characters are vibrant, but Jasmine, once again, shines brightest, handling the bulk of the story's dry humor; in one scene, for instance, she demands a raise but immediately settles for two weeks of Chitto's buying her coffee.

Another sharp mystery in a continually improving series.



JUPITER STORM

Dumas, Marti

Illus. by Parcus, Stephanie

Plum Street Press (212 pp.)

\$24.97 | \$9.99 paper | \$2.22 e-book

Nov. 11, 2017

978-1-943169-32-0

978-1-943169-34-4 paper

A fifth-grade New Orleans girl discovers a mysterious chrysalis containing an unexpected creature in this middle-grade novel.

Jacquelyn Marie Johnson, called Jackie, is a 10-year-old African-American girl, the second oldest and the only girl of six siblings. She's responsible, smart, and enjoys being in charge; she likes "paper dolls and long division and imagining things she had never seen." Normally, Jackie has no trouble obeying her strict but loving parents. But when her potted snapdragon acquires a peculiar egg or maybe a chrysalis (she dubs it a chrysalegg), Jackie's strong desire to protect it runs up against her mother's rule against plants in the house. Jackie doesn't exactly mean to lie, but she tells her mother she needs to keep the snapdragon in her room for a science project and gets permission. Jackie draws the chrysalegg daily, waiting for something to happen as it gets larger. When the amazing creature inside breaks free, Jackie is more determined than ever to protect it, but this leads her further into secrets and lies. The results when her parents find out are painful, and resolving the problem will take courage, honesty, and trust. Dumas (*Jaden Toussaint, the Greatest: Episode 5*, 2017, etc.) presents a very likable character in Jackie. At 10, she's young enough to enjoy playing with paper dolls but has a maturity that even older kids can lack. She's resourceful, as when she wants to measure a red spot on the chrysalegg; lacking calipers, she fashions one from her hairpin. Jackie's inward struggle about what to obey—her dearest wishes or the parents she loves—is one many readers will understand. The book complicates this question by making Jackie's parents, especially her mother, strict (as one might expect to keep order in a large family) but undeniably

loving and protective as well—it's not just a question of outwitting clueless adults. Jackie's feelings about the creature (tender and responsible but also more than a little obsessive) are similarly shaded rather than black-and-white. The ending suggests that an intriguing sequel is to come.

In more ways than one, a tale about young creatures testing their wings; a moving, entertaining winner.



DO THE RIGHT THING In Business Improvement, Including Process and Technology

Duryea, David A.

Westbow Press (200 pp.)

\$33.95 | \$17.95 paper | \$3.99 e-book

Jul. 28, 2015

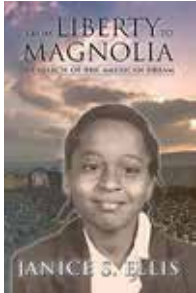
978-1-4908-8607-7

978-1-4908-8606-0 paper

A debut book precisely defines a business improvement model.

Duryea, who spent three decades as an innovation specialist and worked on over 60 enhancement projects, clearly lays out a plan for implementing a strategy for business improvement. The author is nothing if not direct; he states that the common thread in every improvement project failure is "that leadership did not implement a project that empowered the organization's most basic goal. The most basic goal is the organization's core business model." He goes on to discuss this model in detail but first defines "The Law of Business Reality—Organizations serve customers in a profitable way or cease to exist." This description is typical of Duryea's exceedingly lucid prose, one of the assets of the book. Equally strong is the volume's tight organization into three parts with chapters that treat discrete aspects of a business improvement model, building one upon the other. Part 1 addresses three basics: the business reality law and core model as well as "influencers" of the model. Part 2 concerns business processes, smartly divided into two sets—one comprises courses generally applied to all businesses, and the other is industry-specific. Of particular interest in Part 2 are three industry examples: professional services, financial services, and manufacturing. Processes for these industries are described in text and illustrated in a useful chart that identifies similarities and differences. Part 3 discusses how processes are enabled within businesses. Describing implementation, this last part includes a discussion of internal and external resources and their applications as well as a particularly engaging commentary on technology enablement. Here, the author makes a key point: While technology is critically important, it "is not a core business model. More specific technology cannot fix a broken core business model or replace the need for a core business model." At the close of each chapter of this impressive book, Duryea adds another step to his business improvement model so that, by the end of the work, it comprises a complete 15-step program—a nice technique.

Succinct and skillfully written; an eye-opener for business leaders.



FROM LIBERTY TO MAGNOLIA
In Search of the American Dream

Ellis, Janice S.

Christian Faith Publishing (424 pp.)
\$37.95 | \$22.95 paper | \$9.99 e-book
Feb. 13, 2018
978-1-64114-753-8
978-1-64114-751-4 paper

In this debut memoir, a business executive and newspaper columnist recounts her path from a Mississippi farm to high-level positions in the Midwest, contending with racism and gender discrimination.

A black child of the 1950s and '60s, born and raised on a family-owned farm in the heart of the segregated South, Ellis always knew she was not cut out for rural life. In 1964, at the age of 14, the author found her inspiration and direction from the broadcasts of Eric Sevareid, who was a regular commentator on Walter Cronkite's *CBS Evening News*. "Someday, I am going to do what Sevareid does," she told her mother. Years later, while completing her course work for a doctorate in communication arts, she was introduced to the writings of Walter Lippmann: "Eric Sevareid lit the flame within me to become a political columnist. Walter Lippmann set it ablaze." Lippmann became the subject of her Ph.D. dissertation. Throughout most of her professional career in business and government, she continued to be a columnist for Milwaukee and Kansas City newspapers and blogs. Ellis married young, while still in college. The union produced two sons, but, according to the author, it soon became abusive and lasted only a few years. Several relationships followed, one of them also abusive. But more than 11 years after her divorce, she tied the knot with a man named Frank, to whom she is still happily married. In her book, enhanced by family photos, Ellis sets her personal battles within the context of the civil rights and feminist movements, both of which helped fuel her determination. She recounts stories of sexual harassment that are especially relevant in today's #MeToo environment. And the early sections offer striking portraits of segregation, as she recounts cross burnings in front of her house and the murder of a friend's father who was involved in voter registration. But her academic training sometimes gets in the way of a compelling narrative. A long section detailing the works and philosophies of Lippmann is a distraction from the engrossing personal tale and has the feel of a dissertation presentation.

Despite tangential wanderings, this account offers an important historical perspective on two continuing struggles.



JEREMY CUTLER AND THE TORCH OF TIME

Faix, Michael

Black Rose Writing (264 pp.)
\$24.95 | \$17.95 paper | \$6.99 e-book
Nov. 30, 2017
978-1-944715-24-3
978-1-61296-964-0 paper

This debut middle-grade fantasy stars a boy whose true parentage hints at a magical destiny.

Ten years ago, Todd Selby missed his morning train at Waterloo Station in London. He also happened to save a woman who'd been jostled by rambunctious children from falling. Enter Grimble the goblin, who presented them with a swaddled baby. He told them to take the child east to Canterbury and settle there. The enchanted couple did so, and now the child is 11-year-old Jeremy Cutler. He has no idea that he's an Everborn, from the magical kingdom of Averland. Nor does he realize that Harkkruin, the Dark Apprentice of Mordin, once again moves against the Everborn people. Only Jeremy's neighbor Charles Gaper seems capable of preparing the boy for the challenges ahead. He places Jeremy on a special train to Coventry and into the care of Mr. and Mrs. Nockins, fellow Everborns. From his room in their home, he accesses a tunnel leading to the Fairwoods of Averland. He soon meets his mentor, Windermere Hawksley, who gives him the *Season and Thyme Observation Deck* of cards and informs him that his real parents await in the lost Castle of Airenel. In this novel, Faix unfurls a vibrant, complex tapestry reminiscent of J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter universe. Adding emotional weight to the narrative is that it's set during Halloween and then Christmas, holidays that Jeremy's adoptive mother, Sharon, hasn't had the heart to celebrate in the years since her own mother died. Her awakening from a depression coincides with the protagonist's descent into the magical. Though Jeremy is 11, older teen readers should enjoy the detailed plot that involves a rash of kidnappings, time travel, and numerous inventive fantasy scenarios. One episode includes the pirate ship *Polaris*, which carries Jeremy upriver and through a forest lit by colorful fairyflies, where "the air tasted sweet and cool, with hints of peppermint and gingerbread." This opening volume of a series also introduces fellow youthful adventurers Tripp Cunning, Ree Spinnler, and Ckyler Blewett, with whom our hero must prepare to face darker threats.

Familial strife initiates a fresh and lively clique of magic-wielding teens.

The book will be a joy for anyone familiar with deep-water sailing and an inspiration for those eager to try it.

AN INEXPLICABLE ATTRACTION



DON'T EVER LOOK BEHIND DOOR 32

Fegan, B.C.R.

Illus. by Wen, Lenny

TaleBlade (36 pp.)

\$15.99 | \$8.99 paper | Mar. 14, 2018

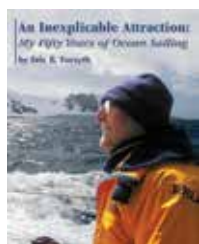
978-0-648-10190-1

978-0-648-10191-8 paper

A couple of dark-haired, big-eyed siblings explore the rooms of a monster-filled hotel with the warning to never look behind door 32.

In this Halloween picture book from the team of Fegan and Wen (*Titch the Itch*, 2017, etc.), the proprietor, Nicholas Noo, greets two pale-skinned children who are the first (human) guests at the Hotel of Hoo. But their stay in room No. 1 comes with the caveat about door 32. The kids proceed to examine each room, counting up to 32, meeting such creatures as grounds-cleaning clowns, light bulb-changing knights, dancing zombies, purple goblins, mad scientists, “miniature giants,” vampire mermaids, and the rest. The children’s facial expressions in Wen’s illustrations are priceless: The brother is clearly more reticent than his perpetually amused younger sister, who shows no fear of kitchen ghosts or old trolls. In several images, the brother pushes or pulls her past particularly troublesome rooms, including one reserved for visitors, and a daunting maze. What is behind door 32? The answer isn’t what readers will expect, and the finale of the charmingly rhymed book has a pleasing twist designed to make kids chuckle with relief that nothing really terrible is lurking. While the tale offers plenty of creepy-crawlies and spooky hazards for monster lovers, there are also delightfully cute dragons, a fantastic library, and adorable baby wizards for readers who prefer their Halloweens less frightening.

With its appealing pictures and smooth rhymes, this book makes an excellent choice for a scary story read-aloud.



AN INEXPLICABLE ATTRACTION

My Fifty Years of Ocean Sailing

Forsyth, Eric B.

Yacht Fiona (400 pp.)

\$34.95 paper | \$7.99 e-book

Mar. 31, 2017

978-0-692-83925-6

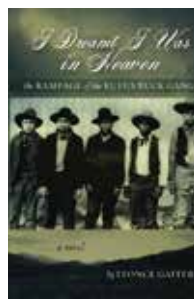


A live-aboard sailor recalls five decades and 300,000 nautical miles at sea in this debut memoir with an environmentalist edge.

Forsyth admits that he’s partial to the idea of escape. For starters, he escaped working in the cotton mills of Lancashire, England, by going to university and then joining the Royal Air Force. When his squadron was disbanded, he escaped England for Canada, emigrating in 1957 with his future wife, Edith. Soon, sailing also became a form of escape in itself. He and Edith had their first taste of it in 1961, chartering two bunks on a 78-foot

ketch sailing around the tropics. After crewing on a number of other vessels, the couple purchased their first boat, *Iona*, in 1965. The memoir then documents the building and captaining of *Fiona*, a 42-foot cutter upon which Forsyth would do most of his travels. There were many breathtaking voyages, including two global circumnavigations and trips to the Arctic and Antarctic, the Baltic Sea, and the Panama Canal, among others. The memoir is also a tender love letter to Edith, who died in 1991. The tone of the book is likable from the outset; Forsyth is knowledgeable, earnest, and endearingly modest given the magnitude of his achievements. His sense of understatement is typified in his account of meeting the prime minister of Tonga: “As I sauntered up in my scruffy shorts and t-shirt, the Prime Minister was handing out long service medals to local officials. Despite my appearance, I was invited to the official luncheon, which was already laid out on the grass, covered with lace to keep the flies off.” Yet beneath Forsyth’s affable raconteurship lies a vital message, as during 50 years of sailing, he’s witnessed an alarming change to the environment: “I have often wondered which societies that I have visited by boat would be able to survive in a post-fossil fuel age.” This is a lovingly compiled work, with charts and photographs that effectively complement the narrative. It will be a joy for anyone familiar with deep-water sailing and an inspiration for those eager to try it.

An intrepid, educational, and thoroughly enjoyable voyage.



I DREAMT I WAS IN HEAVEN

The Rampage of the Rufus Buck Gang

Gaiter, Leonce

Legba Books (288 pp.)

\$9.99 paper | \$4.99 e-book | Aug. 5, 2011

978-0-615-49010-6

A grim, gritty historical novel set in and around Arkansas’ Indian Territory during the last decade of the 19th century.

Gaiter (*Whites Shackled Themselves to Race and Blacks Have Yet to Free Ourselves*, 2017, etc.) revisits the story of the brutal Rufus Buck Gang—a collection of Native American, mixed heritage, and black teenage boys seeking personal glory and revenge for the mistreatment of Native Americans. The gang has just been captured after two weeks of rape, murder, and torture. The townsfolk of Okmulgee want immediate vengeance, but the boys are taken to Fort Smith, Arkansas, where they will be tried in front of Judge Isaac Parker. Parker will go down in history as “The Hanging Judge,” and this will be his last trial. He is sick and tormented by what he perceives as his failure to “civilize” the territory. He also knows he is partially responsible for enabling a meeting between the young Rufus Buck and Buck’s idol, “Cherokee Bill,” a Native American outlaw sentenced to death. Rufus spent his adolescence reading dime-store novels about Bill’s exploits. The narrative winds its way back and forth, giving some backstory about each of the gang members, with most of the attention devoted to Rufus,

INTERVIEWS & PROFILES

CHRIS ORCUTT

WRITING WELL, AND PUBLISHING IT YOURSELF, ACROSS GENRES

By Rhett Morgan



IN 2011, CHRIS ORCUTT brought years of experience as a professional writer and award-winning journalist to Kindle, releasing his mystery novel, *A Real Piece of Work*. Orcutt's witty prose helped elevate cunning detective Dakota Stevens and gorgeous chess master Svetlana—Orcutt's contemporary, cosmopolitan equivalents for Sherlock Holmes and Watson—out of the crowded mystery genre, earning bestseller spots on Amazon and admiration from critics. Several more Dakota mysteries have since been released, but Orcutt has also used self-publishing to expand his devotion to high-quality writing into several genres: 2014 saw award-winning novel *One Hundred Miles from Manhattan*, and just last year he released both a memoir, *Perpetuating Trouble*, and a very timely play about an arrogant celebrity-turned-politician, *The Ronald*.

What made you decide to self-publish a novel, and what was the experience like?

I received an offer for *A Real Piece of Work* from a legacy publisher, but their terms were entirely in their favor. I was tired of the legacy publisher hoop-jumping, anyway—writing synopses and query letters, waiting for replies—that had nothing to do with what I loved, which was writing novels. I knew that if I could just get my books in front of *readers*, they'd enjoy them, and that's proven to be the case. I've discovered the independent path suits me. I'm a maverick, an artist who enjoys the entire process of creation. I consider myself the literary equivalent of an independent filmmaker in the vein of Woody Allen or Quentin Tarantino.

What do you think sets your Dakota Stevens series apart from other mystery series?

The quality of the writing. Beyond riveting plots and sharp dialogue, I strive to give readers aesthetic pleasure through the language itself—beautifully written page-turners. Also setting the series apart is Dakota and Svetlana's relationship. Their humorous banter, especially.

Why did you want to create a political satire like *The Ronald*, and why did you choose to make it into a play?

I am highly attuned to the Muse, what's happening around me, and what I want to say. For two weeks after the 2016 presidential election, I wondered how Trump pulled it off, then the answer came to me in a dream. But I didn't *choose* to make it into a play; the story revealed itself to me as a play, and I took dictation.

What do you appreciate about writing in several genres?

I'm a lover of sentences and literature, so no matter what format or genre I write in, I want the writing to

be stellar. Also, my reading interests have a very wide range, and I like to write books I would like to read.

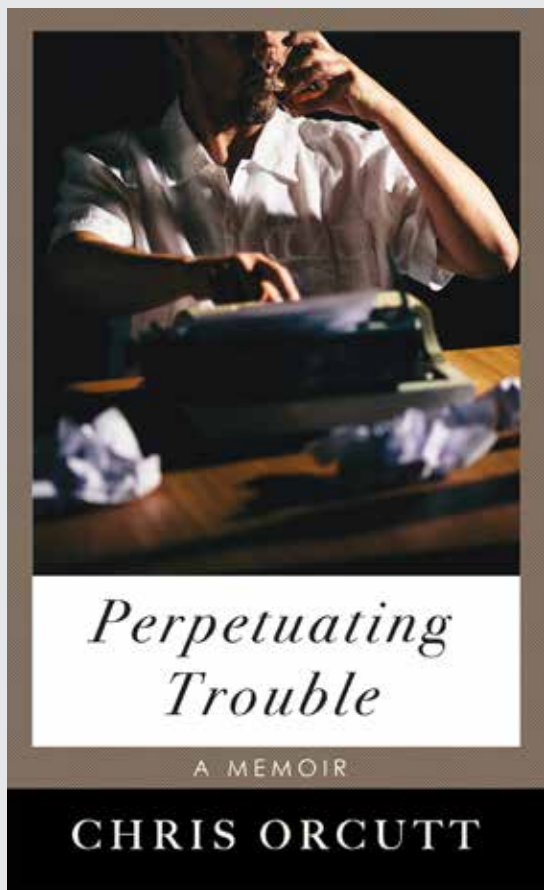
How do you approach releasing your work in different genres?

I write and release what I want to say. I don't write to an audience or seek out an audience when I release a book. They'll find me eventually. Regardless, I get the satisfaction of putting out the very best work I can produce.

What are you working on next?

I recently finished the first draft of a *War and Peace*-length nonfiction novel; I'm revising a Paris memoir/travelogue; I'm about to publish a Dakota Stevens "origin story"; and I'm currently writing a short novel about a biblical hero. Simply put, I'm always writing, always trying to improve and top myself. I believe that readers, whatever their tastes, can find something in my oeuvre that they'll enjoy.

Rbett Morgan is a writer and translator living in Paris.



the delusional leader. Gaiter adroitly intertwines the personal stories of Rufus and his cohorts with the larger narrative of the cruelty perpetrated against Native Americans. Rufus is scarred by his father's disillusionment after he watched the Cherokees sell off their land, and their heritage, in exchange for small individual payouts and worthless promises: "To Buck, that was like buying a house and splitting the money evenly between the man, his wife, and each child and telling them all to go their separate ways." He knew the same would happen to the Creeks. Skillful prose depicts white Americans' pervasive bigotry and the methodical destruction of Indian sovereignty. Unfortunately, the novel contains not a single likable central protagonist.

A historically valuable, well-written, and unrelentingly bleak read.



REDLINED
A Memoir of Race, Change, and Fractured Community in 1960s Chicago

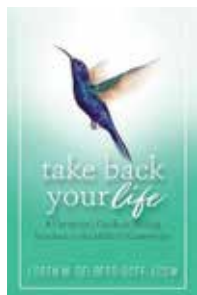
Gartz, Linda
She Writes Press (256 pp.)
\$16.95 paper | Apr. 3, 2018
978-1-63152-320-5

A stunning debut memoir that documents the societal and racial changes of the mid-20th century, told from the perspective of a Chicago family caught in the middle of them.

After the deaths of their parents, Fred and Lillian Gartz, the author and her two brothers found a genealogical treasure: decades' worth of "letters, diaries, documents, and photos" written and taken by her parents and grandparents. Using these detailed sources, she pieced together this family memoir, which begins with her grandparents' immigration to Chicago, their strict and sometimes-abusive child-rearing methods, and their financial devastation during the Great Depression. The spotlight then shifts to her parents' romantic courtship and the early days of their marriage. The joy and innocence of their young love would soon face the demands of everyday life, including caring for Lil's psychotic mother, "their time-sucking devotion to building maintenance" as landlords, and Fred's travel-heavy job that severely strained their marriage. Later, she says, the 1950s brought "a mass migration of African Americans, escaping from the...cruelties of the Jim Crow South." Gartz describes the racial tensions that existed in her white family's neighborhood, manifesting especially in discriminatory property laws that kept black people in poverty. Gartz concludes the book with her own recollections of the civil rights movement and the era's changing sexual mores before returning the spotlight to her parents in their old age. Although the subtitle suggests that this book is primarily about race in 1960s Chicago, it actually covers a much broader array of material, both chronologically (from the early 1900s to the '80s) and topically, as she addresses mental illness, marital distress, and her own quest for independence, among other issues. Her primary sources, which include the aforementioned photographs and quoted letters

and journals, provide an invaluable, up-close-and-personal view of historical events and family drama. Gartz writes with a warm tone, and the various people and settings are as well-developed and intriguing as those in a riveting novel.

A rich remembrance of a captivating, transformative era in American history.



**TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE
A Caregiver's Guide to
Finding Freedom in the Midst
of Overwhelm**

Gelberg-Goff, Loren M.

Well Within (202 pp.)

\$14.95 paper | \$0.99 e-book

Feb. 6, 2018

978-0-9994011-0-1

The founder of a self-help program for family caregivers shares insights into managing the interpersonal aspects of aiding a relative.

In this debut health book, Gelberg-Goff presents a companion to her Take Back Your Life support group, which advises family caregivers and provides strategies for managing the challenges of helping a loved one. Although an appendix details some of the logistical aspects of the role, the volume focuses primarily on the emotional aspects: balancing the caregiver's needs with those of the patient, dealing with frustration in a productive way, and setting boundaries. Anecdotes based on anonymous stories from Gelberg-Goff's clients—as well as her own as caretaker for multiple relatives—serve as case studies for the topics. Each chapter concludes with a series of questions to guide further discussion and action as well as links to additional resources on the author's website (lorenberggoff.com). The narrative voice is that of an unflappable and patient adviser, with the refrain “and we breathe” appearing many times throughout these pages. There are frequent reminders that caregivers should be aware of what they are and are not able to change: “Your decision is not written in stone. Each new decision brings you new direction, and each new reaction you feel or receive from others means you get to go back to Step 1 and process how you want to handle this new awareness.” Although the text is occasionally repetitive (Gelberg-Goff cites passages by Julia Cameron about anger eight times in one chapter), the conversational and confiding tone makes for an easy read, with plenty of actionable lessons for overstretched caregivers. The author provides sample scripts for difficult conversations and frameworks for establishing emotionally healthy thought patterns that readers can easily apply to their own situations. While caregivers will still need other resources for understanding the practical aspects of home health aides, long-term care insurance, and assisted living, this guide is a useful tool for learning to manage the less concrete but equally important emotional facets.

A valuable manual for struggling caregivers.



**PALADIN'S WAR
The Adventures of
Jonathan Moore**

Greene, Peter

CreateSpace (454 pp.)

\$18.99 paper | \$3.99 e-book

Feb. 28, 2017

978-1-5440-1367-1

Greene (*Castle of Fire*, 2012, etc.) returns with a third volume of his YA nautical adventure series set in the early

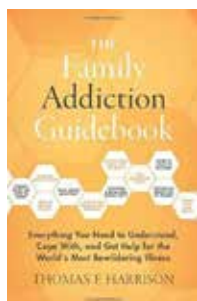
19th century.

Jonathan Moore and his fellow 14-year-old cohorts, Sean Flagon and Delain Dowdeswell, are all in London as the book begins. Jonathan and Sean have been there for about 10 months since returning from their last mission aboard the *Danielle*, during which they were instrumental in defeating a fleet of Napoleon's vessels. Delain arrived in the city more recently, when her father, the governor of the Bahamas, decided that it was time for his three daughters to be schooled in proper social graces. The boys are anxious to return to sea, and Delain is quite bored with her “studies.” But another rousing escapade awaits the teens, as midshipman Jonathan and Marine private Sean are to be stationed aboard the beautiful, swift HMS *Paladin*. Unbeknownst to the crown, someone has hijacked the *Echo*, one of the king's ships, and the *Paladin* is next on the thieves' shopping list. The *Paladin*'s orders are mysteriously changed, and its crew is sent off on a secret mission to the Dalmatian island of Dugi Otok. Jonathan and Sean soon find themselves in battle against the bloodthirsty Nikomed Aggar, a henchman for a Russian profiteer. Meanwhile, Delain, stuck in England and fueled by an insatiable curiosity, suspects that something is amiss with local Lord and Lady Wilder, so she embarks upon a personal mission of espionage. Greene has produced another page-turner here, filling the seas with gunfire and knife fights and London's streets with a network of spies and traitors hidden in tea parties and fox hunts. He deftly alternates scenes of maritime- and land-based exploits, creating a perfect mix of grisly nautical violence, urban skulduggery, and gentle takedowns of British high society. Delain is a delightful character who's smart, funny, and independent; Jonathan and Sean, meanwhile, are heroes of the first order—tenderhearted, ingenious, and fierce in battle. Greene's fluid prose ably handles the extensive nautical terminology, making it easily understandable, and the dialogue reflects both the pretension and the wit of the period.

An exciting, satisfying historical novel with a touch of poignancy.

The author meticulously depicts the way that substance abuse can intersect with other types of addictive behaviors.

THE FAMILY ADDICTION GUIDEBOOK



THE FAMILY ADDICTION GUIDEBOOK *Everything You Need to Understand, Cope With, and Get Help for the World's Most Bewildering Illness*

Harrison, Thomas F.
Regalade Publishing, LLC (232 pp.)
\$18.95 paper | Jan. 1, 2018
978-0-9991215-0-4

A debut manual focuses on the survivors of addiction as well as family members and friends who cope with the effects.

This well-organized book sets itself apart from others in its genre by not only examining the science behind addiction, but also the emotional aspects and strategies to overcome the condition. Harrison begins by breaking down misconceptions about substance abuse—specifically those that demonize or blame the afflicted—and exploring the adverse effects on the user's brain and body. For example, the author explains in Part I that an addiction cannot be identified based solely on the amount of a substance a person uses or the frequency of the behavior. This section distinguishes between heavy recreational drug and alcohol users and addicts, who suffer a loss of control and a hijacking of the brain's reward center. The author dissects the biological process of addiction, pointing out the way dopamine "flooding" can affect a person's free will. Though the science is complex, Harrison describes it clearly and simply, making this title a worthy one for families hoping to better understand their addicted loved ones. In addition, the author meticulously depicts the way that substance abuse can intersect with other types of addictive behaviors, like gambling, eating, and sex, because an afflicted person is attempting to feed the brain's reward system and compensate for a lack of dopamine. Part II of the book effectively delves into the emotional experiences of the addict's family, exploring in depth denial, codependency, and enabling. These behaviors occur when family members are not cognizant of the problem or don't know how to help. Harrison presents numerous strategies to allow relatives to break through the tensions of addiction and begin to work together to beat it. For example, the author emphasizes the importance of positive communication and reinforcement rather than criticism or punishment, tactics that can turn addicts away from their families and back to drugs or alcohol. Harrison also explains rehab: what it entails, the costs, and how it supports recovery. For family members seeking psychotherapeutic approaches, the author details different forms of behavioral therapy and how they have aided substance abusers. Overall, this book is comprehensive, lucid, and useful for readers hoping to help addicts or learn more about their condition.

A valuable guide to recovery for substance abusers and their loved ones.



LOST IN THE RED HILLS OF MARS

Hunter, Jackie
Bayada Publishing House (290 pp.)
\$10.99 paper | \$2.99 e-book
Nov. 19, 2017
978-0-692-92260-6

Celine Red Cloud, first girl born to a human colony on Mars, teams up with Alexander, an untrustworthy visiting rich kid, on a dangerous expedition to find her father, lost somewhere in the mysterious Martian terrain.

Hunter's debut is an assured YA sci-fi novel despite fuzzy science that morphs into fantasy and magic whenever convenient (or inconvenient) to the plot. Hundreds of years in the future, adolescent Celine is the only juvenile in a struggling Mars colony. Having been born there, she is literally the first "Martian girl." But her life is in upheaval. Her father disappeared while scouting for mineral deposits, and the settlement's shady safety director seems less interested in finding him than in courting Celine's mom. The colony's disappointed financier, tycoon Alexander Rittenhouse, visits from Earth to determine the unproductive compound's future. Celine latches onto teen Alex Rittenhouse—the older man's clone-cum-son—assuming he'll have the resources to help her locate Dad. But Alex (whose money has also made him a reality TV superstar) is a spoiled, sneaky knockoff of his father, and the boy's feelings for Celine are mixed with scorn and interest for ratings and self-aggrandizement as they head for the sandstorm-swept, volcanic Martian canyons on an unauthorized, dangerous rescue attempt. Moreover, Celine is having flashes of heightened senses and glowing eyes. Is she becoming something not quite human? Adding a multicultural flavor, as well as a layer of occult spirituality, is the fact that Celine and her father share a Cherokee heritage, and she communes shamanistically long-distance with a grandmother on Earth. Although the plot wraps up satisfactorily, Hunter throws readers curveballs (or curvemeteors, take your choice) with a rather puzzling time-related plot twist and suggestions of generations-old eugenics experiments, military conspiracies, even a pre-existing Martian civilization persisting like ghosts (à la Ray Bradbury) that affects Earth's visitors, both human and animal. The result is an entertaining SF-adventure narrative that nonetheless raises as many questions as it answers, possibly laying groundwork for a sequel.

A well-paced, diverting Mars-survival adventure with a wobbly blend of science and mystical fantasy.



THE OLD WORLD DIES

Jarrard, Kyle
Lune de Ville (220 pp.)
\$14.99 paper | \$9.99 e-book
Jan. 15, 2018
978-1-976725-84-5



In Jarrard's (*Cognac*, 2008, etc.) satire, a prodigious artist and a multifarious cast of characters navigate their way through an unsettling urban landscape.

Paris is crumbling. Murderous gangs of teenage girls prowl the streets, and citizens are bracing themselves for a catastrophic civil collapse. Théo Carnot is a painter of nudes who wants to emerge from the shadow of his uncle Raymond, a distinguished watercolorist who recently died. Roland Jean-Marie Aymé is a taxi driver who's bedazzled by the beauty of his partner, Marina, a "black-eyed creature from Mexico" with a beauty that's almost "beyond believing." Then there's John Green, a suave, if overly bold, American who casually says that he owns a couple of paintings "by that fellow Monet, and I think one by his friend, almost the same name." These characters intermingle with a vast, diverse network of other people in a dreamlike swirl. There is a plot here, punctuated by adventure and romance, but locating it is akin to discovering the eye of a hurricane. Part of the joy of the book is in forcing one's way through what initially appear to be relentless, fragmented images and thoughts in order to understand its central structure and how its characters fit together. The language often apes the moodily introspective monologues of 1950s French art-house films: "Do I look like another man? / The man I know, and there is this improvement. / Roland runs his hand over his head. / Younger? / And older. Both. There is this balance. It's interesting." The surreal elements, as when artists find themselves wandering in the Pyrenees looking for light, are reminiscent of André Breton's *Nadja* (1928). But it's all deliciously tongue-in-cheek. It's a challenge to turn a page without finding an example of Jarrard's inimitably observant approach to prose: "She had wanted to go out of the station and see Basseville for herself, this place where girl murderers come from, but everything is dark and smoky in the beyond and the high-rises stand like grave markers of a race of giants who died in the crepuscule."

An intoxicatingly unique literary voice that demands further attention.



THE FINIS JHUNG BALLET TECHNIQUE A Guide for Teachers and Students

Jhung, Finis
Dog Ear (360 pp.)
\$44.99 paper | Jun. 26, 2014
978-1457530180

Discover—or rediscover—the essentials of good ballet technique in this comprehensive, accessible book.

Ballet has a reputation as a beautiful but intimidating art form, and those who lack natural flexibility or a typical dancer's body may feel unwelcome in a ballet studio. In his first book, former professional dancer and longtime instructor Jhung dispels that notion, reminding students and teachers of the pure joy that dance can bring while offering clear guidance on how to move with grace and confidence—and avoid injury. Jhung came to ballet relatively late in life as a college student, but he enjoyed a long and successful career, first with the San Francisco Ballet, Joffrey Ballet and other companies and now as a teacher at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center, Broadway Dance Center, and other schools. He talks candidly about his own struggles with demanding classical technique and explains how he eventually learned to work with his body, rather than against it, when dancing. Jhung doesn't demand perfect turnout or high battements from his students; instead, he emphasizes proper posture and alignment, which he convincingly argues are the real foundation of good dance. With that in mind, he moves through a series of exercises, from simple stretches and basic barre work to more advanced center work involving turns and jumps. Lessons begin with an outline of the specific movements and are followed by a detailed analysis of each exercise so that readers will understand why it's essential to perfect simple steps before moving on to more complex choreography. These initial lessons are clearly explained and are easy to follow even for those with no prior ballet training. The more advanced lessons require a familiarity with common ballet steps—anyone who doesn't know a pirouette from a pas de chat will be lost. The instructions gradually become more difficult to follow as well, and those who progress to this stage will likely benefit from purchasing the associated demonstration DVDs. Throughout, Jhung maintains his encouraging, supportive tone while also discouraging the sloppiness and overreach that lead to strained, inelegant movement—valuable lessons for beginners and advanced students alike.

A fresh, friendly guide that demystifies classical ballet while providing clear guidance on how to be a better dancer.



BRAND REAL The Startup Entrepreneurs' Guide to Effective Branding and Building Values-Based Organizations

Kalayjian, Vasken
Self (390 pp.)
\$89.95 paper | Mar. 14, 2018
978-0-9993367-0-0

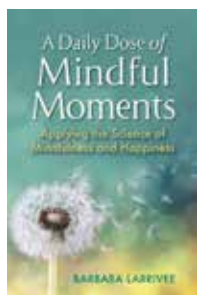
A debut guide dispenses advice to beginners on the vital world of branding. Kalayjian's book concentrates on a business and marketing concept that has only grown in significance as the internet has blossomed and social media has increased the chatter in everybody's lives. These developments have made the process of cutting through that noise extremely important for any new business or enterprise. The most effective way of navigating through that

Drawing on both primary sources and previous scholarship, Li brings a lawyer's perspective to this analysis of Nixon's career.

NIXON IN NEW YORK

atmosphere of undifferentiated messages is through branding—which, if done successfully, helps to guarantee that, as the author puts it, “when people find out about your brand, they will be eager to explore it.” And that method of finding out about a brand comes with its own serious risks that have only grown steeper in the internet age, as Kalayjian takes pains to point out many times in his fast-paced, information-dense work. Branding, he insists, “can no longer be an exercise in manipulating perceptions with phony images and clever slogans.” Nowadays, as the crucial centrality of branding has increased, so too have the number of ways it can be done wrong—hence the need for this lively, energetically engaging handbook on the subject. The author clarifies that the foremost element of this process is to understand the thing being branded. Business leaders are encouraged to carry out a “SWOT” analysis of their own companies—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats—in order to get a clear picture of how to win the branding game. Kalayjian takes readers through all the aspects of his topic: How to come up with a catchy brand name; how (and the reasons) to copyright it; what to concentrate on when designing a logo; and so on. The author deftly illustrates everything along the way with examples drawn from hundreds of well-known, modern brands. It's a hefty amount of material, and this manual is a cogent, approachable guide to all of it.

A wide-ranging, inclusive, and invaluable look at creating, guarding, and promulgating a brand in today's marketplace.



A DAILY DOSE OF MINDFUL MOMENTS *Applying the Science of Mindfulness and Happiness*

Larrivee, Barbara

Shoreline Publications (264 pp.)

\$16.99 paper | \$7.99 e-book | Jan. 3, 2018

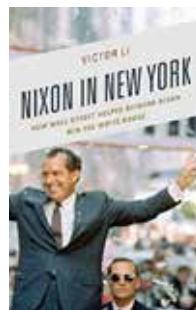
978-0-9651780-0-6

A book that sorts out common misconceptions and offers a wealth of research while exploring how, why, and if meditation can help one achieve mindfulness.

From this work's outset, Larrivee (*Cultivating Teacher Renewal*, 2012, etc.) seeks to dispel the idea that mindfulness meditation and mindfulness practice are one and the same. Mindfulness meditation, she explains, is one single path of many that may be used to achieve a state of calm awareness of the mind, its thoughts, and emotions. By delving into her own personal experiences, along with a wealth of other literature, the author explores not only meditation's benefits, but also other ways to achieve them. To that end, she pulls statistics and findings from numerous studies from sources such as the medical journal *JAMA Internal Medicine* and the Rand Corporation, which claim that mindfulness meditation helps with sleep, depression, memory loss, and one's ability to remain in a calm state despite outside stress. But the book also emphasizes incorporating different types of techniques in smaller segments throughout the day. Specifically, the author suggests that taking a two-minute mindfulness-practice break may produce better results for one's well-being than longer

sessions at the beginning and end of the day. Additionally, the book discusses changes in the brain that meditation may help to bring about, such as greater awareness of one's own impatience and that negative emotions can essentially be “interrupted” and redirected through “mindful moments.” Overall, this book effectively sets itself apart from many other books in its genre by exhaustively curating research, statistics, and empirical studies to discuss its ideas. It's a well-rounded work that will engage and guide any reader who's seeking to introduce more mindfulness into their daily life in order to stimulate wellness, positivity, and other benefits.

A thoroughly researched, well-articulated study of mindfulness practice and its potentially powerful effects.



NIXON IN NEW YORK *How Wall Street Helped Richard Nixon Win the White House*

Li, Victor

Fairleigh Dickinson University Press

(368 pp.)

\$120.00 | Apr. 1, 2018

978-1-68393-000-6

A biography of Richard Nixon focuses on his years at a New York law firm before running for president.

In this debut history book, Li examines one of the less famous periods of Nixon's professional life, from his loss in the 1962 election for governor of California through his political rehabilitation and his successful run for president in 1968. The work focuses on Nixon's tenure at the Wall Street law firm that was renamed Nixon Mudge when he joined, drawing high-profile clients and repairing his public persona. Li shows how formative Nixon's law firm years were, giving him the opportunity to build the relationships necessary for a national campaign and also introducing him to colleagues like Leonard Garment and John Mitchell, who became important figures during his presidency. The work concludes with a brief overview of Watergate and its effect on Nixon Mudge alumni and the story of the firm's decline in the '80s and '90s. Drawing on both primary sources and previous scholarship, Li brings a lawyer's perspective to this analysis of Nixon's career, going into detail about his argument before the Supreme Court in a First Amendment case that involved Time Inc. and *Life* magazine. The author employs an informed historical viewpoint, tracing the connections between Nixon's path and the careers of other presidential aspirants. The prose is solid, flavored by Li's taste for metaphor (“If Kennedy was Camelot, then Nixon seemed to represent Prince John from ‘Robin Hood’”), balancing analysis with substantial quotations from the principals involved. The book also does an excellent job balancing its particular focus with the need to provide readers with sufficient background, resulting in a solid overview of the time period and the political climate surrounding Nixon Mudge. Li approaches Nixon and the volume's other notorious characters with open eyes, acknowledging

their strengths while pointing out the flaws that eventually led to crimes, convictions, and resignations. The author presents readers with well-rounded portraits of key figures in U.S. law and politics in the second half of the 20th century.

An engaging and well-written book that illuminates Nixon through the exploration of the midpoint of his career.



HEAVEN, INDIANA

Maher, Jan

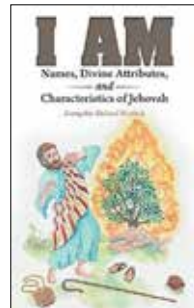
Dog Hollow Press (169 pp.)
\$14.00 paper | \$3.99 e-book
Nov. 15, 2000
978-0-9703993-0-4



Buried secrets churn beneath the placid surface of a small town in this tragicomic debut novel.

Once a station on the Underground Railroad and later a Ku Klux Klan stronghold in the 1920s, the village of Heaven, Indiana, has a tangled history of grace and sin. Maher begins its beguiling saga in 1954, when Madame Gajkanes, a Romani fortuneteller passing through with a traveling carnival (her decidedly non-Romani real name is Nancy White), finds a newborn infant left in a basket at her tent. She duly raises the baby girl, named Nadja, to be a carnie performer who specializes in telling fortunes from dirty dinner dishes (“It’s like tea-leaf reading. I read from the pattern left on your plate after you’ve eaten”). Nadja’s wanderings intersect with the lives of Ellie Denson, a waitress at Clara’s Kitchen who wishes she too had the gumption to get out of Heaven, and Sue Ellen Sue Tipton, whose House of Beauty becomes the clearinghouse for artful gossip thanks to her phenomenal head for town lore. Also threading through the tale are aging farm couple Helen and Lester Breck. When Helen decides that Lester is not really Lester but a farmhand who looks just like him, the long-suffering husband takes his wife’s delusions in stride while covertly seeking consolation with other women. There’s more than enough death and derangement in Maher’s yarn for a prairie gothic potboiler, but she defuses the melodrama in a well-observed comedy of rural manners that breaks down larger villainies into smaller misdemeanors, tinging all of it with a wisp of magical realism. (Fortunetelling, it turns out, is 99 percent reconnaissance and 1 percent something else.) The author’s prose manages evocative flights—“Elephants paced restlessly, their immense feet beating slow syncopations”—but it dwells mainly in small-town naturalism rendered in pitch-perfect dialogue by sharply drawn characters whose folksiness still encompasses layers of complication and conflict. A bit like a darker-tinged version of Garrison Keillor’s Lake Wobegon narrative, Maher’s fictive universe unfolds with richly humorous details and expansive meaning.

A funny, poignant tale of an imperfect paradise.



I AM Names, Divine Attributes, and Characteristics of Jehovah

Mattock, Richard

Westbow Press (250 pp.)
\$35.95 | \$19.95 paper | \$5.99 e-book
Dec. 7, 2017
978-1-973609-84-1
978-1-973609-82-7 paper

A layperson’s guide to the Old Testament names for God.

Recent decades have found an upsurge in interest among evangelical Christians in the many names of God and his attributes in the Hebrew Scriptures. Mattock eschews academic jargon and argument and instead works from a common base of scriptural knowledge to create a worthwhile guide for Christian believers and preachers. For instance, he points out that “Jehovah Go’el” stands for “The Lord Thy Redeemer.” After noting the two instances in the book of Isaiah from which the name is drawn, the author goes on to make Christian connections to the idea of a redeemer God, pointing first to New Testament passages for support, then exploring other biblical uses of the term “redeemer.” Finally, he uses 18th-century theologian John Wesley’s work to tie things together and relate everything back to Christ’s role. In total, Mattock discusses 40 Hebrew names for God, and he also offers separate discussions of “God Almighty” and “the Master Potter.” He concludes with a plea for the support of modern Israel. Mattock’s prose is lucid throughout, and he presents the material in a manner that will be accessible to the average reader. A pre-existing knowledge of the topic isn’t necessary, but Christians who are already familiar with the Bible are the clear target audience. Mattock’s work will be especially helpful, though, for two specific groups. First, it’s a meaningful resource for serious lay Bible students in forming a deeper understanding of God’s identity and characteristics, as presented throughout the Bible (and particularly in the Old Testament). Second, it’s an excellent preaching guide for evangelical pastors; most chapters could be easily transformed into sermons, and doubtless many will be.

A beneficial resource for evangelical audiences.



THE PIPER

Miller, Ben

Krac Publishing (310 pp.)
\$14.99 paper | \$3.99 e-book
Jun. 24, 2017
978-1-5404-7091-1

A special division of the FBI scours the Massachusetts area for an abductor of infants in this sequel.

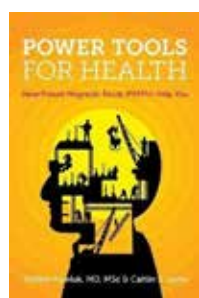
FBI Special Agent Jeff Pine of the Boston branch has made little headway with the kidnapping of 10-week-old Portia Stiles. Following a second infant abduction

Polak's accounts of New York are surprisingly complete on their own and have the force of their own convictions.

MANHATTAN MELODY

with the same M.O., Special Agent Jackson Byrne and the Child Abduction and Serial Murder Investigative Resource Center are on the case. The CASMIRC team gathers the few available clues: An individual had tasered the mothers, who subsequently supplied scant details other than hearing a voice calling out, "Hey." Jack gets some insight into the investigation from the currently incarcerated Playground Predator, a serial killer who is the subject of Jack's book in progress and who had kidnapped the fed's wife and son. The murderer's upcoming trial is rattling the families of his victims, who want to see justice served, even if they have to mete it out themselves. CASMIRC's case, meanwhile, is shaken by a third abduction, one that ends with the baby's mother dead rather than tasered. A modified M.O. could signify the perp's escalation or a copycat, either scenario giving the feds further incentive to stop the kidnapper/killer. Miller's (*A Bustle in the Hedgerow*, 2013) story is loaded with characters; many are returnees from his preceding novel but with ample context for new readers. Characterizations are robust, in line with the sequel's overall sense of simmering violence. The stepfather of a Playground Predator victim, for example, sits in his study with the "earthy fragrance of oak" before removing a .38 pistol from his desk drawer. The narrative likewise implies much of the brutality: Not every abduction/taser is shown, and even a physical confrontation near the end is not drawn out. A couple of plot turns are predictable, but Miller knows how to sustain the tension until the next round of surprises—with some twists involving all those characters' unresolved issues regarding the Playground Predator.

A taut, suspenseful thriller; a third outing for the agent and his team would surely be welcome.



POWER TOOLS FOR HEALTH *How Pulsed Magnetic Fields (PEMFs) Help You*

Pawluk, William & Layne, Caitlin

FriesenPress (418 pp.)

\$39.97 | \$27.97 paper | \$8.99 e-book

Nov. 29, 2017

978-1-5255-0762-5

978-1-5255-0763-2 paper

A Baltimore family physician extols the virtues of pulsed electromagnetic field therapy and its positive effects on the human body in this debut book.

Writing collaboratively with freelance editor Layne, Pawluk shares his frustration with traditional medicine and, after studying acupuncture, his introduction to static magnet and electromagnetic field therapy. He researched it and, years later, applied it within his scope of practice. A holistically trained professional, Pawluk believes in treating illnesses via their root causes, and the peer-reviewed PEMF studies he presents demonstrate dramatic results in accelerating organ healing and improving basic physical functionality. He aims to garner outward support for this revolutionary therapy through the testimonies and focused information provided in this book. The

guide is cohesive, tightly written, and organized into five sections collectively illuminating everything from basic introductory facts to the therapy's effects on disease and dysfunction. The complex operating science and performance attributes behind PEMF are thoroughly explained, though perhaps using overly clinical terminology that may prove challenging for laypeople. Still, while details on modulation, wavelength cycles, frequencies, and entrainment threaten to confuse at the outset, a condensed summary page (which appears at the conclusion of each chapter) is immensely helpful and boils the information down to a more manageable nugget for neophytes. The guide expands further to include how PEMFs help the body and complement other medical interventions while stressing the benefits gained from daily use of the therapy as "primary prevention" to achieve "constant energetic healing." Pawluk touts the scientifically proven antibacterial, regenerative, cognitive, anti-inflammatory, and detoxifying properties of PEMF, and in the most expansive section, the book intricately details an incredibly copious amount of alphabetically arranged ailments that electromagnetic field therapy claims to alleviate. His study-supported claims run the gamut from benefiting addiction, arthritis, obesity, and back pain to more life-threatening conditions such as cancer and strokes. Though each claim is backed up with sound clinical evidence and details on the therapy's mechanical functionalities, Pawluk responsibly recommends professional medical consultation before embarking on any new treatment. A closing section explains how to select and then safely and properly utilize the right PEMF system.

Readers receptive to unconventional curative approaches should find much to ponder in this referential, instructional, and supportive manual on a pioneering advance in modern medicine.



MANHATTAN MELODY *Poems*

Polak, Patricia Faith

Archway Publishing (116 pp.)

\$27.75 | \$11.99 paper | \$3.99 e-book

Nov. 17, 2017

978-1-4808-5387-4

978-1-4808-5386-7 paper

A debut collection of eccentric poetry about New York City.

Countless writers have tackled the idiosyncrasies of the island of Manhattan. In Polak's work, however, Manhattan is a palimpsestic place of lived experience and overwhelming melancholy for days past: "A Manhattan moonrise hangs above / the skyscraped city / like a snowball tossed by a perturbed Rip Van Winkle," she writes. The specificity of Polak's references, which may not be transparent to everyone, provides the text with a gentle veneer of poetic effervescence. She goes on to describe details that quintessentially capture the locale: "City blocks with donuterries, druggeries, and dry cleaners; / air temperate, as if March had rinsed it, / pounded it against the travertine on skyscrapers / until it was like a favored

QUEERIES

LGBTQ HISTORY RISES UP IN FOUR NEW BOOKS

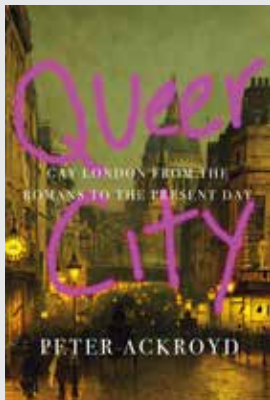
By Karen Schechner

“WE’RE HERE! WE’RE QUEER!” And queers have been here and all over the globe for a very long time, so there’s a lot of rich history to be mined. Some recent and soon-to-published titles illuminate the details of that history, including arson at a New Orleans gay club, the etymology of “gay” and “lesbian,” an undersung 1960s designer, and the universal love for *Angels in America*.

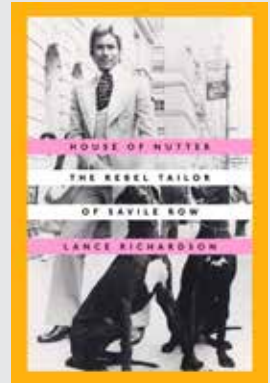
The starred *Tinderbox: The Untold Story of the Up Stairs Lounge Fire and the Rise of Gay Liberation* (June 5) by Robert W. Fieseler recounts the little-known story of a 1973 fire in a New Orleans gay club. Angry about a bar fight, a gay man poured lighter fluid on the barroom steps. The blaze killed 32 people and galvanized a community. Fieseler outlines the conditions gay people commonly endured, which included an ongoing effort to keep their queer identities hidden, and the ways authorities, the media, and legislators bungled the fire and its aftermath. “Powerfully written and consistently engaging, the book will hopefully shed more light on the gay community’s incredible and tragic journey to equality,” says our reviewer. “A momentous work of sociological and civil rights history.”

Peter Ackroyd’s *Queer City: Gay London from the Romans to the Present Day* (May 8) designates London as the epicenter of European LGBTQ life. Londoner Ackroyd has written many books about his home city. In his latest, he covers “the varied practices of the wealthy and powerful through the ages: sleeping with young boys with no

consequences and a blind eye from the general public; an intricate linguistic and hand-motion code that only the ‘queers’ could understand; the long and often overlooked tradition of cross-dressing to gain social advantages; and the ebb and flow of acceptance of same-sex marriages.” Fastidiously researched and a joy to read, the book includes anecdotes gleaned from the LGBTQ community.



Lance Richardson’s biography of Tommy Nutter (1943-1992) reveals the life of a gay designer who had a profound impact on ’60s British fashion. “His life vividly personalized forty years of critical gay history,” writes Richardson in *House of Nutter: The Rebel Tailor of Savile Row* (May 1). “From the underground queer clubs of Soho to the unbridled freedom of New York bathhouses to the terrifying nightmare of AIDS—Tommy was there, both witness and participant.” Nutter helped to revolutionize bespoke and ready-to-wear clothing, creating innovative, iconic looks for the Beatles, Yoko Ono, Elton John, David Hockney, Andy Warhol, and many others. Our reviewer appreciates Richardson’s ability to capture the core of the underappreciated artist: “The author looks at Nutter’s life with impressive objectivity, zeroing in on significant episodes and leaving the rest on the cutting-room floor.”



Angels in America, Tony Kushner’s Tony- and Pulitzer Prize-winning masterpiece, is currently being revived on Broadway. In Isaac Butler and Dan Kois’ *The World Only Spins Forward: The Ascent of Angels in America* (Feb. 13), the authors speak with 250 actors, directors, producers, critics, audience members, historians, and Kushner himself about what Meryl Streep calls “the *Hamilton* of its time.” Our reviewer describes the book as “a rich historical resource”; topics include the assassination of Harvey Milk, Ronald Reagan’s callous attitude toward those living with AIDS, and the end of the Defense of Marriage Act, which allowed for the national legalization of gay marriage. Kushner emerges as someone who didn’t, at least initially, understand that *Angels in America* cemented his position in the pantheon of great American playwrights. “A chorus of candid, emotional, and often moving testimonies,” says our reviewer.

Karen Schechner is the vice president of Kirkus Indie.

pair of jeans.” Polak knows the rhythms of New Yorkers’ feet on the sidewalk; she’s one of them. The juxtaposition of New York stories with the poet’s invested, compelling, and exciting voice effectively creates a self-sufficient poetic universe. Verse about Manhattan is no novelty, and it often must refer to what’s been written about the city before. But Polak’s work doesn’t need additional context; her accounts of New York as she’s experienced it are surprisingly complete on their own and have the force of their own convictions: “Sounds of the city in snowfall / muffle or grow tinny thin. / Then comes the grating noise / of the unmucking metropolis, / the Department of Sanitation’s / mechanized onslaught.” Readers who’ve lived in New York will surely recognize themselves in these poems.

A riveting look at one woman’s relationship with the city that never sleeps.



THE ADMINISPHERE

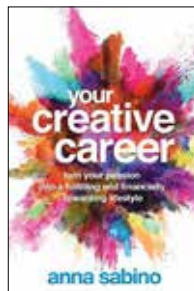
Prather, John
CreateSpace (480 pp.)
\$16.99 paper | \$9.99 e-book
Jun. 11, 2016
978-1-5332-0202-4

A debut comic novel that parodies the labyrinthine bureaucracy of the public school system.

After finishing a graduate school degree program in law and business at Eastern Oregon University, Greg Samson finds himself without any promising employment prospects. However, his best friend, Randy Smith, is the athletic director at Shadowcliff High School in Sweetwater, Arizona, and he helps him find a job as a track coach there. Greg also ends up teaching English and video-production classes and becomes the supervisor for both the yearbook and the business education program. He quickly learns that the world of public education is a well-intentioned but self-destructively incompetent one, full of bureaucratic absurdity. The school’s principal, Connie Rumsford, seems committed to fostering a culture of “compliance and submission,” treating students and their parents as clients to be indulged at the expense of real education. Rumsford also obsessively quotes “master teacher” Elden Ray Fong on issues from pedagogy to sound sleeping habits—a reflection of the fashionable obsession with academic theory. Greg is largely a cheerful idealist and manages to become an effective teacher, but he finds that real progress is thwarted at every turn; he works inside a system that’s designed to produce a veneer of success—one that’s measurable in quantitative terms but ignores actual learning. Debut author Prather has a real talent for comedic writing, and he possesses a deep knowledge of the obstacles that public education faces today, including those created by overzealous parents. At one point, for example, Rumsford refuses to let Greg fail a student for cheating for fear of legal action from the teen’s father and even demands that Greg write the offending student a letter of apology. Prather is clearly influenced by Franz Kafka’s work—Greg’s name, for example, is obviously inspired by that

of the main character of *The Metamorphosis*, and he teaches Kafka to his Advanced Placement students—and he follows that author’s footsteps in ably lampooning technocratic hubris. Problematically, though, his wonderfully rich characters aren’t provided much of a plot; instead, the story meanders somewhat aimlessly at far too great a length.

An often hilarious and astute, if overlong, satire.



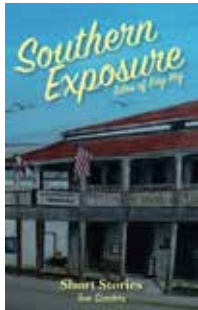
YOUR CREATIVE CAREER
Turn Your Passion Into a Fulfilling and Financially Rewarding Lifestyle

Sabino, Anna
Career Press (192 pp.)
\$15.99 paper | \$9.99 e-book | Jan. 22, 2017
978-1-63265-111-2

A seasoned entrepreneur shares techniques and strategies for turning creative pursuits into successful businesses.

In this debut book, Sabino draws on both her own experience as the founder of jewelry brand Lucid New York and the works of well-known, pop-business writers (Seth Godin, Chris Guillebeau, and Tim Ferriss are name-checked frequently) to provide readers with a framework for developing a venture based on creative activities. The volume explores the psychology of creating—and the challenges that innovators often face when combining their passions with the pursuit of profit—and the elements of a thriving 21st-century business. Concise and cleanly written chapters tackle the decision to launch a creative career, growth management, pricing strategies, and marketing and publicity techniques. Each chapter concludes with suggestions for journaling or otherwise examining the topic more deeply. Although Sabino acknowledges that potential creative entrepreneurs may face financial or personal limits on their abilities to forge new careers, the readers who will find this guide most useful are those who have plenty of time (Sabino describes holding a full-time job for a year in addition to starting her business) and money (working for free “is a simple and effective way to start almost any career you dream of”). Some of the counsel will be familiar to readers of business books—tips on managing time effectively; understanding the psychology of pricing—while in other cases, Sabino brings a unique perspective, as in her recommendation against focusing too much on developing new products: “If we move on from what we’ve completed way too soon, we deprive clients from knowing about it and owning it.” The manual is also notable for its applicability to a wide range of entrepreneurial styles and strategies: Sabino addresses readers who are initiating lifestyle businesses as well as those chasing venture capital and IPOs, and both groups should find the book helpful. While readers will have to look elsewhere for advice on the more nitty-gritty details of running a business, they will find worthwhile information on a mindful approach to creative entrepreneurship here.

An unusual, conversational, and valuable manual for prospective business owners.



SOUTHERN EXPOSURE Tales of Bay Key

Sanders, Tom

CreateSpace (240 pp.)

\$9.49 paper | \$4.75 e-book

Mar. 27, 2017

978-1-5428-9024-3

A mishmash of oddball and rollicking individuals inhabits a Florida fishing village in this debut short story collection.

Bay Key is an isolated island village on the Gulf Coast. It's a place for all sorts of people, like Floyd Butler, a drunk who frequents the local M&M Bar. In "The Lottery Ticket," Floyd is sure he can woo hotel chef Janine if he can just win the Florida lottery. Like many of the book's characters, Floyd crops up in a number of tales. Even the charming eponymous hero of "Bernard's Great Adventure," the Bay Hotel's director of guest relations (and a basset hound), recurs, as do his hotel-owning caretakers, Todd and Terri Swift. Characters are often shiftless and dabble in alcohol and recreational drugs, including Buddy Palmer and his family in "The Meglodon Curse." But neither they nor the stories are one-dimensional. In "Jim Anderson's Ashes," for example, Jim's suicide leads to the discovery of his diaries, which enlighten EMT Zeke with details on a fellow Vietnam veteran's life. This is trailed by "Hemingway's Best Friend," in which a storm dredges up nostalgia for Todd—an old videotaped interview from his days as a Miami TV reporter. Curious characters, despite sometimes craving the isolation Bay Key allows, are drawn to one another; loner Ben of "The Blue-Footed Boobies" befriends vacationing elderly couple William and Grace Elliott-Smith thanks to a shared affinity for birds. The collection's highlight, "Rattlesnake Billy," epitomizes the tales' skillful blend of zaniness and sincerity. In it, Billy Joe Kitchens somehow sustains a snake bite from reptilian roadkill. The locals' swift response is both hilarious (clearing a spot for a helicopter entails arming neighbor Daryl, who once inadvertently shot himself, with a chainsaw) and endearing in everyone's determination to help. Sanders' breezy prose makes the book a quick read. In "Up on the Roof," Terri bemoans the couple's lack of privacy as hotel owners, with their sex life "more of a memory than a reality."

Ten cohesive tales that earn laughs with sincere characters.



THE AMERICAN GIRL

Sohmer, Steve

Self (989 pp.)

A historical novel documents the rise of an American filmmaker in Nazi Germany.

Fresh out of the University of Southern California film school, Sally Faulkner wants to direct but finds herself working as a lowly script girl on David O. Selznick's

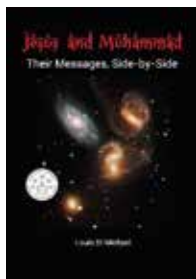
production of *Gone with the Wind*. A chance encounter allows the German-speaking Sally to act as an interpreter for Leni Riefenstahl during the controversial Nazi filmmaker's appearance in Hollywood, which leads to a job offer in Berlin. Sally becomes enamored with the might and romanticism of the Third Reich, even if there are aspects of it, like the hatred of Jews, that she does not quite understand. Working alongside the likes of Riefenstahl and Veit Harlan—and catching the eye of the "respected Filmmminister," Joseph Goebbels—Sally has the opportunity to become something that she never could in Hollywood: a female film director. The German invasion of Poland disturbs Sally, but it offers her an opportunity: She is sent to direct a documentary about the lives of Jews in the Lodz-Litzmannstadt ghetto. There she meets Shimon Goldblum, an Ostjude, or "Westernized Jew," chosen to serve as her translator. In Lodz, Sally falls in love—and begins to question the actions of Hitler's government: "What Shimon said about the German invasion—had he told her the truth? Was it possible the war was based on a ruse, a deception?" Unfortunately, the horrors are only just beginning. Sally soon realizes that her friends are committing one of history's greatest crimes right in front of her and that she is complicit in it. As the world collapses, Sally will discover whether it is possible to use her cinematic talents to atone for her transgressions or if, as her mentor Riefenstahl predicts, there are some sins for which penitence is impossible.

Sohmer (*Reading Shakespeare's Mind*, 2017, etc.) writes in a flowing prose that precisely places readers in each setting: "To Sally the open market was a baffling maze of stands and kiosks.... The smell of produce, the squawk of geese and chickens, and the crying of vendors created a concoction of odors, colors and commotion that was at once carnivalesque and rancid." At nearly 1,000 pages, the novel is as sweeping as the cinema epics of the era, featuring a massive cast of characters (many of whom were real people). While at times it feels a bit overstuffed, the level of immersion the author achieves is breathtaking and should enthrall fans of old Hollywood and World War II buffs alike. Through the willful, naïve, and not-so-innocent Sally, Sohmer deftly explores the complexities of art from myriad angles: the nature of "political" works, the witnessing power of documentaries, the perniciousness of patronage, the dangers of romanticism, and the possibility of ever separating artists from their creations. The book delivers all of the requisite thrills of the historical fiction genre while managing to provide a thoughtful critique of the potency of the moving image—one that readers should find surprisingly relevant to their own time.

An epic and illuminating tale of moviemaking in the Third Reich.

The book astutely addresses the issues of social panic and mental illness and how both can inflict great pain.

NOW I CAN SEE THE MOON



JESUS AND MUHAMMAD *Their Messages, Side-by-Side*

St Michael, Louis

Rising Myrrh Press (536 pp.)

\$23.95 paper | \$9.99 e-book

Mar. 27, 2018

978-0-9996146-0-0

A debut book compares the teachings of Jesus and Muhammad.

The often inflammatory arguments between ideological partisans of Christianity and Islam are rarely conducted by way of sober textual analysis. The complex doctrines of the two religions—as well as the prohibitive nature of the foreign languages in which their primary sources were written—make such comparisons less than accessible. St Michael aims to dismantle that barrier to understanding by supplying an impressively comprehensive catalog of the utterances of Jesus and Muhammad, grouped thematically and presented, as the subtitle of the book notes, helpfully side by side. The work begins with some introductory commentary: a glossary of key terms within both religious traditions as well as concise histories and timelines of Jesus' and Muhammad's lives. Some of the themes chosen are doctrinal—topics like forgiveness and repentance are covered—while others are more directly related to what the author calls “daily living,” like finances, diet, and marriage. One section is titled “Distractions” and seems almost like a catchall, including subjects like Satan and disagreement. St Michael clearly wants the texts to speak for themselves, and so with the exception of a brief editorial comment here and there, the quotations are presented without any accompanying interpretations: “This book is not meant to present information for judgement of the faithful of either religion, but rather to elucidate the foundations of the faiths.” Even the histories provided are minimal, and much of the work is presented in an efficient, bullet-style format. For readers of either faith, such a lucid and unbiased record of the points of commonality and disagreement between Jesus and Muhammad is sure to be educational. And the entire book is scrupulously sourced, adding to the general air of transparency and scholarly rigor. But additional commentary would actually have been quite useful—the quotes are furnished without any discussion of the context within which they appear, and so their meanings often remain obscure. For this reason, the offering is better understood as an encyclopedic preliminary to more in-depth study, because any serious comparison between Jesus and Muhammad would require an exegetical framework.

An exhaustive compilation of immense theological value, especially as a prologue to future study.



NOW I CAN SEE THE MOON *A Story of a Social Panic, False Memories, and a Life Cut Short*

Tallmadge, Alice

She Writes Press (256 pp.)

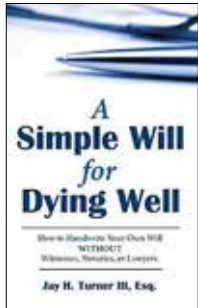
\$16.95 paper | Apr. 24, 2018

978-1-63152-330-4

A tragic suicide cripples a close-knit family in this memoir.

Inspired by the wave of child sexual predation allegations that rattled the 1980s and early '90s, reporter, freelance editor, and author Tallmadge (*Tell It Like It Is*, 1998) details the tragic story of how that hysteria, coupled with mental instabilities, took the life of her “deeply troubled,” 23-year-old niece, Michelle. This book, visceral and urgently depicted, creates an intensive portrait of a family in the throes of misfortune and desperation. The clan became helpless against Michelle’s psychological damage and inner turmoil; Tallmadge details her niece’s suicide shortly after her discharge from a state psychiatric facility. The author weaves her own history into that of her niece, whom she monitored from afar, in a poignant attempt to draw some connection or shed light on the reasons Michelle took her life. As Michelle matured, her volatility became problematic while Tallmadge’s secular, anti-establishment, feminist leanings in rural Oregon opposed those of her brother and his family’s Mormon belief system in Utah. Though the narrative’s jerky, unreliable timeline is too haphazardly arranged to allow the author’s ordeal to achieve a cohesive flow, her story remains compelling nonetheless. By the early 1980s, teenage Michelle became riddled with multiple personalities, depression, severe bulimia, and harrowing memories of ritualistic sexual abuse by a satanic cult that preyed on her when she was a young girl; she also confessed to being gang-raped at 13. The story winds its way downward into darker realms as Michelle’s behavior and appearance became increasingly sinister and her chilling cult abuse allegations multiplied. While Michelle’s parents became more frustrated and helpless, Tallmadge emerged determined to find answers through in-depth research. Later, after her niece’s death, she also relied on her memory of events alongside Michelle’s letters and journals written in the mid-'80s to make some sense of her psychological decline. The author’s crisis of conscience between Michelle’s testimony and what Tallmadge believed in her heart to be true forms the memoir’s core as the powerful book also astutely addresses the issues of social panic and mental illness and how both can inflict great pain and destroy lives.

A potent and compassionate, if meandering, chronicle of a family in crisis.



A SIMPLE WILL FOR DYING WELL
How to Handwrite Your Own Will Without Witnesses, Notaries, or Lawyers

Turner III, Jay H.
Archway Publishing (156 pp.)
\$30.95 | \$12.99 paper | \$4.99 e-book
Jan. 13, 2018
978-1-4808-5710-0
978-1-4808-5711-7 paper

Planning on dying? We all should, and this handy primer provides guidelines for properly writing a will.

In this debut, Turner, an estate attorney, warns of the problems that crop up when one dies without a last will and testament; for example, state law could give the house that you lived in with your current spouse to your children from a former marriage. He advises writing a so-called “holographic will”; it’s a legal term, not for a shimmering, 3-D image but for a will that’s written out entirely by hand. Because it can be authenticated by comparing it to handwriting samples, it doesn’t usually need witnesses or lawyerly vetting, making it the least expensive option for people with modest, uncomplicated fortunes (in the 26 states that allow it). Turner shows how to craft a will that does what one wants while also avoiding the ambiguities and pitfalls that can tie an estate up in court. He covers the basics along with advanced topics, such as how to list bequests

of tangible belongings so that there’s no squabbling over who gets what; how to specify a guardian for children or prevent an 18-year-old from blowing his inheritance; how to deal with the possibility that your spouse could die with you in a car crash; how to provide for a pet; and how to bequeath your gun collection without getting your executor arrested for illegal firearms transfers. Turner deals with these niceties and others in concise, no-nonsense prose; for example, he notes that specifying funeral arrangements in a will is a bad idea because “By the time someone locates your will and the executor takes the necessary steps to start acting on behalf of your estate, you will be long buried.” He also provides checklists, model clauses, and complete sample wills; these cover a multitude of contingencies from the bare-bones “Tangible list, spouse, adult children” case to a convoluted “Divorced, Tangible List, Specific Bequests, Residence Sold, Residue to Charity” case. The clear advice and specific language will give readers confidence in drafting their own wills.

A useful, reader-friendly guide to one of life’s most daunting chores.

This Issue’s Contributors



ADULT

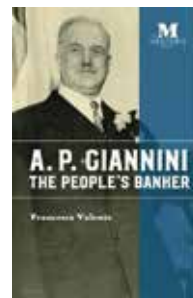
Colleen Abel • Maude Adjarian • Paul Allen • Jeremy Anderberg • Mark Athitakis • Joseph Barbato
Ed Bradley • Jeffrey Burke • Lee E. Cart • Derek Charles Catsam • Kristin Centorelli • Carin
Clevidence • Ben Corbett • Morgan Davies • Kathleen Devereaux • Bobbi Dumas • Daniel Dyer • Lisa
Elliott • Jordan Foster • Mia Franz • Jackie Friedland • Bob Garber • Paul Gleason • Amy Goldschlager
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Mike Oppenheim • Jim Piechota • William E. Pike • Carolyn Quimby • Evelyn Renold • Lloyd Sachs
Bob Sanchez • William P. Shumaker • Rosanne Simeone • Linda Simon • Margot E. Spangenberg
Rachel Sugar • Charles Taylor • Claire Trazenfeld • Michael Valinsky • Steve Weinberg • Joan Wilentz
Kerry Winfrey • Marion Winik

CHILDREN’S & YOUNG ADULT

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Linda Boyden • Christopher A. Brown • Timothy Capehart • Patty Carleton • Hicham Chami • Ann
Childs • Anastasia M. Collins • Dave DeChristopher • Erin Deedy • Elise DeGuiseppe • Rodney M.D.
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Shelley Huntington • Kathleen T. Isaacs • Megan Dowd Lambert • Lori Low • Wendy Lukehart • Kyle
Lukoff • Meredith Macyda • Pooja Makhijani • Michelle H. Martin PhD • J. Alejandro Mazariegos
Jeanne McDermott • Kathie Meizner • Mary Margaret Mercado • Lisa Moore • Katrina Nye • Sara
Ortiz • Deb Paulson • John Edward Peters • Susan Pine • Rebecca Rabinowitz • Kristy Raffensberger
Amy B. Reyes • Nancy Thalia Reynolds • Amy Robinson • Christopher R. Rogers • Leslie L. Rounds
Katie Scherrer • Dean Schneider • Stephanie Seales • Renee Ting

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Michael Deagler • Steve Donoghue • Megan Elliott • Justin Hickey • Elizabeth Kazandzhi • Ivan
Kennally • Barbara London • Jim Piechota • William E. Pike • Sarah Rettger • Megan Roth • Barry
Silverstein • Michael Valinsky



A.P. GIANNINI
The People’s Banker

Valente, Francesca
Barbera Foundation, Inc. (218 pp.)
\$14.99 paper | \$9.99 e-book
Jan. 11, 2018
978-1-947431-04-1

A debut biography focuses on an Italian-American entrepreneur who essentially invented modern banking.

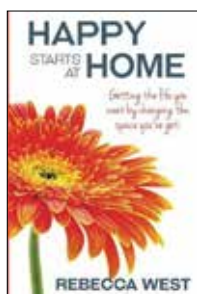
Valente’s book examines the life of Amadeo Pietro Giannini, who was born in 1870 in California. He was the son of Italian immigrants who came to the United States in 1869 in search of opportunity. When he was only 6 years old, he witnessed his father’s murder—he was shot to death by one of his workers over a wage dispute—a traumatic experience that taught the boy an early lesson about the gossamer vulnerability of life. His mother married Lorenzo Scatena, an Italian entrepreneur who owned a thriving produce company and who would become a mentor to Giannini. The boy displayed a precocious talent for business and an insatiable ambition. At 14, he dropped out of school to work for L. Scatena & Co. full time. He pioneered the purchase of produce on consignment and, by the end of 1885, was the company’s chief salesman; at 21, he was a full partner. In 1892, he married Clorinda Agnes Cuneo, the daughter of a wealthy real estate tycoon. When Giannini’s father-in-law died, he became the executor of his will, which included shares in and a directorship of Columbus Savings and Loan. Giannini had a vision for the bank’s egalitarian transformation—he wanted to shift its focus to accepting deposits from and dispensing loans to less affluent Italian-Americans, a plan considered so radical he eventually resigned from the board. He started his own bank—the Bank of Italy—which later became part of holdings that included Bank of America. Giannini’s

Wright inventively combines political intrigue, humor, and philosophical meditation in an unusually policy-wonkish thriller.

LICENSE TO ILL

banking empire revolutionized the industry by turning it toward the establishment of local branches under centralized supervision. Valente, writing in crystal clear prose, concisely captures not only Giannini's entrepreneurial boldness, but also his abiding commitment to social reform and civic causes. After the disastrous San Francisco earthquake in 1906, "he helped the city rise from the ashes by making loans 'on a face and a signature' to the small businesses and people whose lives were shattered." Part of the Barbera Foundation's Mentoris Project, devoted to biographies of historically significant Italians and Italian-Americans, Valente's study is scrupulously researched, both informative and inspiring. She also furnishes a vivid portrait not only of the corruption of turn-of-the-century San Francisco, but also the inhospitality Italian immigrants routinely encountered in the United States.

An edifying portrayal of an indefatigably purposeful life.



HAPPY STARTS AT HOME *Getting the Life You Want by Changing the Space You've Got*

West, Rebecca

Bright House Books (212 pp.)

\$13.99 paper | \$4.99 e-book

Jan. 29, 2016

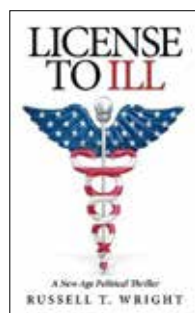
978-0-9976237-0-3

In this debut design guide, West presents remodeling as a means for life improvement.

Our homes reflect the best and worst of our inner selves, asserts the author, as they encourage us to pursue our goals: "Your home can be the key to better health, better sleep, better relationships, and an all-around better life," she says. But West points out that "Your home can also lock you into a damaging relationship, drain your energy, and devour your money." Decorating and remodeling can truly improve people's lives, she says, but only if they go into it with honest self-examination. In this book, she asks readers to more deeply consider the psychology of home improvement rather than simply going out and buying whatever they think will make them happy. The author roots each decision in biography, not property, urging readers to consider what environments are most amenable to sleep and fitness and to long-term career and family goals; she also addresses how to refresh a home after one's kids leave for college or one's marriage ends. By considering the economic, emotional, and aesthetic weight of home improvement decisions, the author aims to help readers create not only a renewed physical space, but also a rejuvenated approach to life. West writes in a soothing, enthusiastic prose style that's more reminiscent of a self-help book than an interior design manual: "it's important to figure out just 'who' it is you are living with. Unfortunately, many of us are living with bullies that keep us in a state of stress and prevent us from living an abundant life." The chapters are full of questionnaires that will help readers to discover their deeper motivations. In one section, for instance, readers must list each

item in a room, identifying who chose it, when it was last used, and the emotions that they associate with it. Decorative decisions are also analyzed; bare walls, the author says, might mean "a lack of commitment to this place, this life, these relationships." Some may find the book's amateur psychology a bit facile, but its underlying message is a useful one. The author offers readers a good opportunity to slow down, regroup, and move forward with a better understanding of how their homes relate to their psyches.

A pleasant blend of self-help and home-design theory.



LICENSE TO ILL *A New Age Political Thriller*

Wright, Russell T.

CreateSpace (422 pp.)

\$16.99 paper | \$2.99 e-book

Dec. 4, 2017

978-1-5030-3389-4

Two lawyers attempt to overturn Obamacare on spiritual grounds in this debut novel.

Jerry Riggs is chief counsel to the speaker of the House and, as a Republican, is exasperated with his party's failure to effectively oppose Obamacare. He's especially angry at the GOP's hypocritical complicity: Senate Minority Leader Mack McCormick openly criticized the Affordable Health Care Act but simultaneously ensured its protection from legislative assault in deference to his close ties to the health care industry. But an unusual opportunity to attack Obamacare surfaces when Sebastian Vogel, an old law school classmate of Jerry's, files a suit against the federal government, requesting a religious exemption from the act's individual mandate. His argument is a strikingly odd one, not premised on any adherence to institutional religion but instead on a general spirituality that interprets sickness and health as states of consciousness rather than medical conditions: "We've mapped out the DNA and found that it doesn't explain everything....Could that be because there's a spiritual aspect to disease?" Jerry reluctantly teams up with Vogel—his New-Age conversion strikes the chief counsel as incoherent at first—because he sees a real possibility to strike a blow at an otherwise impregnable law. But when Vogel's home is set on fire by an arsonist, the stakes become perilously clear—a billion-dollar industry has taken notice and is prepared to kill to protect its profits. Meanwhile, Jerry struggles with his own mounting health problems—overweight and underexercised, he's developed a serious heart condition that requires surgery, precisely the circumstances that led to his father's death. Wright inventively combines political intrigue, humor, and philosophical meditation in an unusually policy-wonkish thriller. The author certainly stretches the outer limits of plausibility—and readers' credulity—but in a way artful enough that the plot never descends into outright absurdity. Vogel's form of spirituality can be irksomely enigmatic, but he still delivers some memorable insights. The whole narrative is a

kind of conservative fantasy—a spiritually inspired but legitimate way to topple Obamacare—so it’s possible those readers unsympathetic to the Republican cause will find it tough to be sensitive to Jerry’s plight.

A witty and refreshingly original political drama.



ACCOMPLICE TO MEMORY

Zhang Q.M.
Kaya Press (352 pp.)
\$21.95 paper | Feb. 28, 2017
978-1-885030-52-8



A Chinese-American woman reimagines her parent’s flight from China in this semifictional debut memoir.

In this darkly enchanting book, Zhang interrogates and re-creates the turbulent life of her father, a Chinese émigré, and the last half-century of Chinese history—some of which she saw for herself while visiting the country over the years. Zhang’s father, whom she here calls “Wang Kun,” grew up in a country that was in thrall to regional thuggery, brutal Japanese occupation, and all-consuming civil war; by 1949, Mao Zedong had won that war. Wang Kun studied with two literature-professor sisters from a powerful family that he called “the Kennedys of China” and later fled the country by way of Hong Kong for the West. Zhang says that she spent a good part of her life “renouncing all things Chinese”; now, in the course of her father’s “slow but unstoppable degeneration,” she works to piece his history together. The resulting book is partly fictional, with italicized, imaginative chapters interspersed with straight memoir and settings ranging from wartime Chongqing to upstate New York. The photographs that pepper the text are useful and create a scrapbook-ish verisimilitude.

However, the book would have been nearly as strong without them, as Zhang delivers images in prose that are far more powerful than any photograph could communicate. One paragraph evokes the “thick plumes of smoke” moving across the waters of a devastated Nanking; another passage describes a pit near Gele Mountain, containing “94 bodies...bound with handcuffs bearing the inscription ‘Made in Springfield, Massachusetts.’” As a child, Zhang says, she had difficulty making sense of the different elements of her father—his charm, his temper, his formidable intellect, and the fact that he would nonetheless “play the Laughing Chinaman for American audiences” at cocktail parties. But in the end, through her exploration and self-described “embellishments,” she gives readers a real and unified man.

A warm, intellectually rich journey through several nations and identities.

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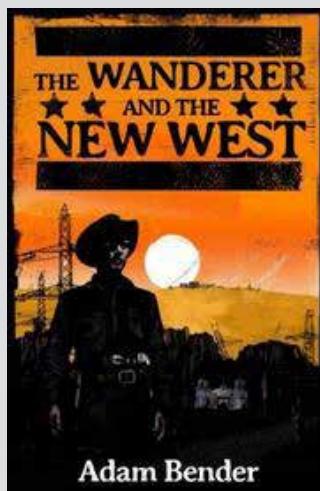
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INDIE

BOOKS OF THE MONTH



THE WANDERER AND THE NEW WEST

Adam Bender

A tight, thoughtful work that has much to offer readers on both sides of the gun control debate.



THE PUDDLE CLUB

Michael McGruther & Gregg Russell

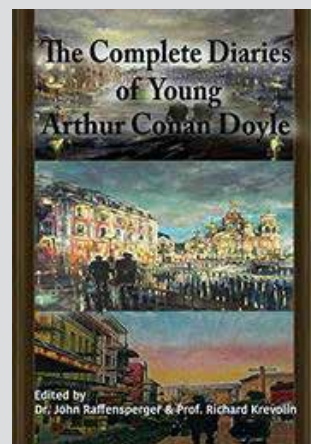
A fine teaching tool that offers advice for getting through a golf game—and through life.



ICONOGRAPHY

Angel Rafael Colón & Patricia Ann Colón

It's difficult to imagine what the authors could have done to improve this marvelous guide.



THE COMPLETE DIARIES OF YOUNG ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

John Raffensperger & Richard Krevolin

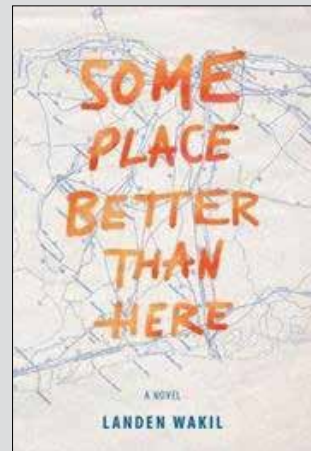
An entertaining, rollicking addition to the Holmes-verse, combining real-world lore with over-the-top melodrama.



DENVER MOON

Warren Hammond & Joshua Viola

A searing mystery with a superlative gun-toting protagonist.



SOME PLACE BETTER THAN HERE

Landen Wakil

A magnetic coming-of-age novel.

FIELD NOTES

By Megan Labrise



Photo courtesy Kerri Arsenault

“I know that *Her Body and Other Parties* is terrifyingly real right now. I wish it wasn’t. I would give this book up in one second if I thought I could make it less relevant, if I could undo my own need to have written it. But the fact is, it’s always been this real. The fact is, stories exist whether or not we decide to commit them to the page. I consider myself lucky to have coaxed a few of them out of the ether, if only to say: me, too.”

—Carmen Maria Machado, recipient of the John Leonard Prize, for best first book in any genre

“I am tired of the word empathy being used in connection with fiction—empathy is the table stakes of good fiction; you shouldn’t be allowed to play without it—but obviously all of our work rests on empathy, the ability to recognize that another person is just as real as you are.”

—Novelist and critic Charles Finch, recipient of the Nona Balakian Citation for Excellence in Reviewing



Photo courtesy Kerri Arsenault

“For a long time I was afraid to write this book, and I had to overcome a lot of fear to write it. Because it’s still risky in our society, especially for a woman, to speak out and speak honestly or even speak at all—let alone to try to tell the truth of her experience—when it contradicts the official story.”

—Carina Chocano, author of criticism winner *You Play the Girl: On Playboy Bunnies, Stepford Wives, Princesses, Trainwrecks, & Other Mixed Messages*

Submissions for Field Notes?
Email fieldnotes@kirkus.com.

“‘Creative nonfiction’ is a term that is currently having its day. When I was in college, anyone who put those two words together would have been looked upon as a comedian or a fool. Today, Creative Nonfiction is the name of the college course I teach. Same college.”

—John McPhee, winner of the Irving Sandrof Lifetime Achievement Award

“At the very least, fiction reminds us that other people have inner lives, whether we want to know this or not.”

—Joan Silber, author of fiction winner *Improvement*



Photo courtesy Kerri Arsenault

“There are conversations in the Native community that so many people are not aware of, that go into our work, our writing, and our art. There’s a particular lexicon, there are tropes, there are pitfalls that all of us are aware of, because we know that there’s a wider audience, looking and reading, and we hold each other to very high standards.”

—Layli Long Soldier, author of poetry winner *Whereas*

Appreciations: Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*

BY GREGORY MCNAMEE



POETS ARE PROBABLY NOT the unacknowledged legislators of the world—as W.H. Auden once remarked, that honor really goes to the secret police. But words and books make a difference all the same. Witness, for example, the quickening of awareness of the civil rights movement among young white people after Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* was published in 1960, joining transformative books such as Richard Wright's *Native Son*, published 20 years earlier, and James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, published in 1953.

In 1948, a novel appeared that introduced readers outside the country to a place then not much in the news, exotic and distant: South Africa. There, the long-standing practice of racial and ethnic segregation was hardening into a system of separate and decidedly unequal accommodations for the citizenry: apartheid.

It would take another 40 years for that system to crumble. An early critic of it was a perhaps unlikely man, a soft-spoken former schoolteacher named Alan Paton.

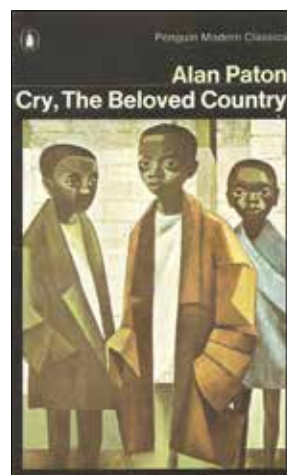
Some years before he had left his teaching post on the country's east coast to move inland to Johannesburg, where he served as director of a reformatory for African boys.

Paton's move coincided with a mass movement of African people, now dispossessed from their land, from the countryside into the city. Jammed into shantytowns, confined to manual labor and service, they struggled and seethed. Some of the disaffected young, with nothing else to do, turned to crime. In all that, Paton found the crux of his book, *Cry, the Beloved Country*.

In that novel, Paton's debut, a young man meaningfully named Absalom runs away to the city, following other members of the family, including an uncle who brags of his life in Johannesburg, "I do not say we are free here. I do not say we are free as men should be. But at least I am free of the chief. At least I am free of an old and ignorant man, who is nothing but a white man's dog." Priding himself but without direction, Absalom is implicated in a crime that lands him in that white man's penal system.

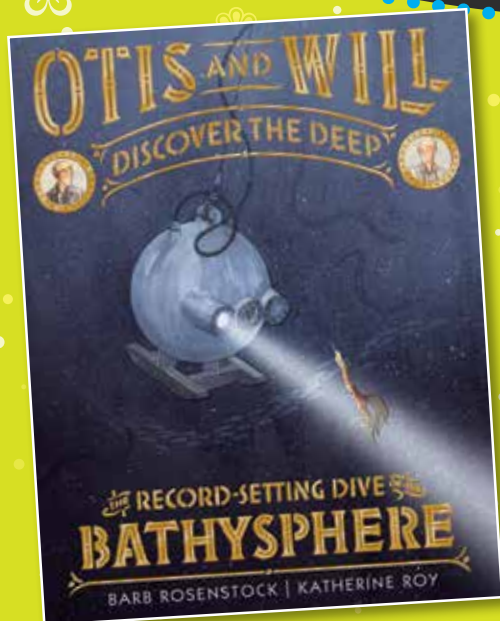
Absalom's arrest draws his reluctant father, an Anglican parson in a remote village in Natal, to the city to plead for his son's life. He runs up against resistance on all sides, not least from unhelpful fellow clergy. Meanwhile, the father of the murder victim, a young white man, begins a journey of his own to understanding that his own willingness to overlook injustice led to the tragedy.

Left to his inclinations, Paton once remarked, he would have written about the beauty of South Africa, and his descriptions of the landscape are lush and admiring, if sometimes obviously overcharged with Christian imagery. But Paton came to believe, as he wrote, that it was his duty to write about "the gross inequalities that so disfigured national life." Seventy years after it arrived in the world, *Cry, the Beloved Country* continues to speak of justice and injustice, a central document in the struggle for equality and human dignity.

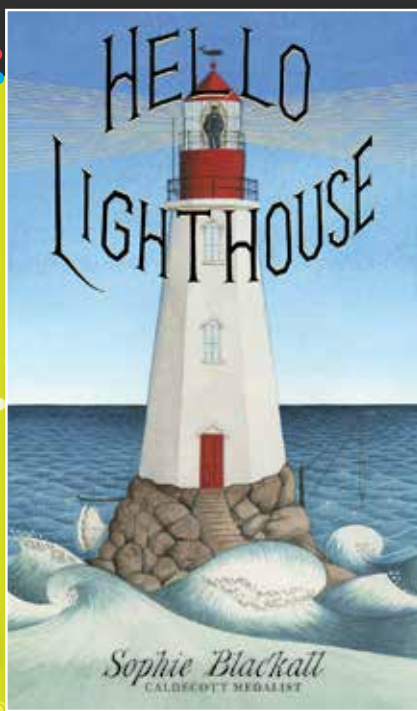


Gregory McNamee is a contributing editor.

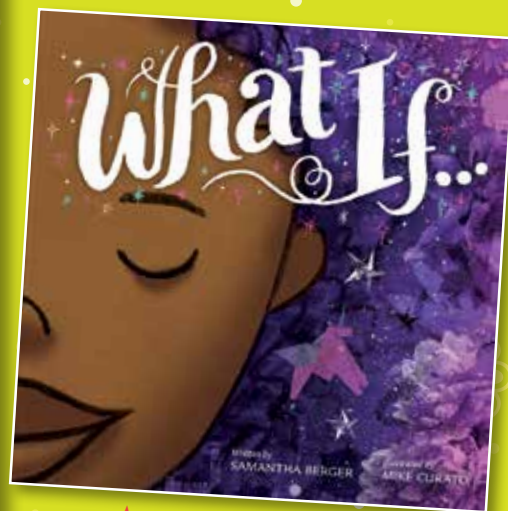
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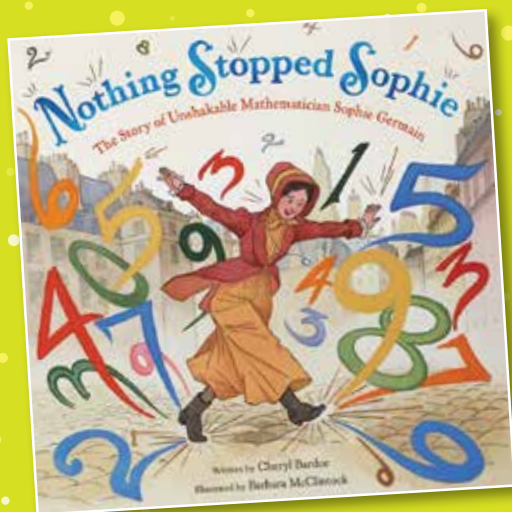
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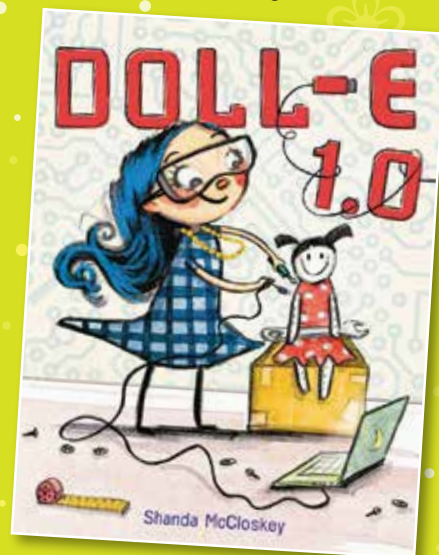
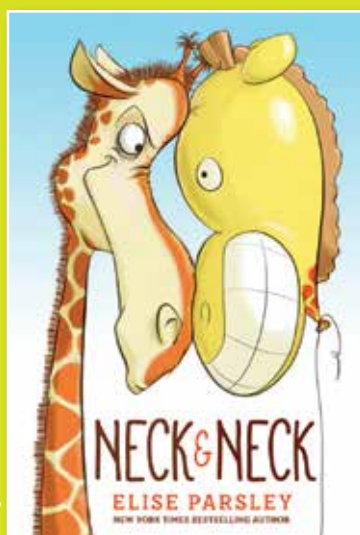
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