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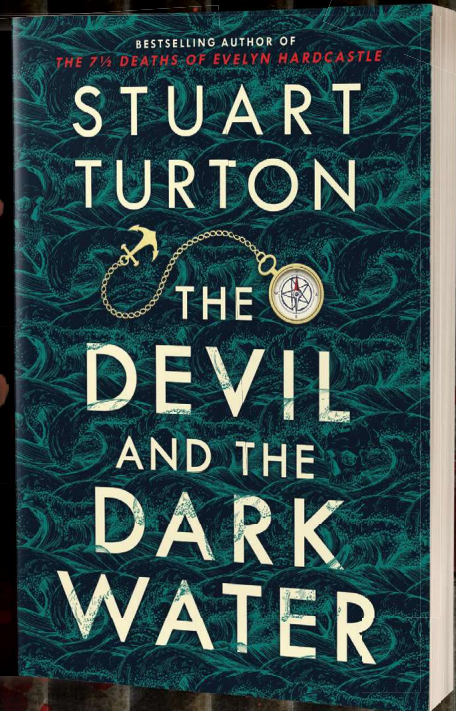
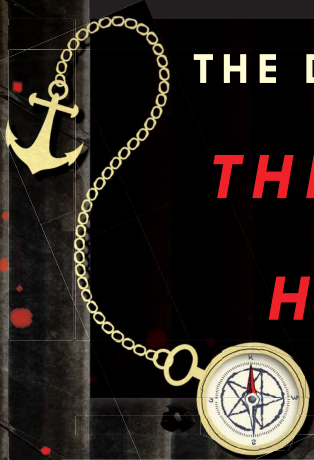
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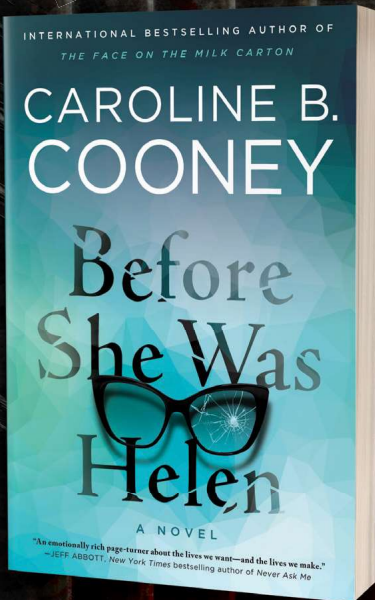
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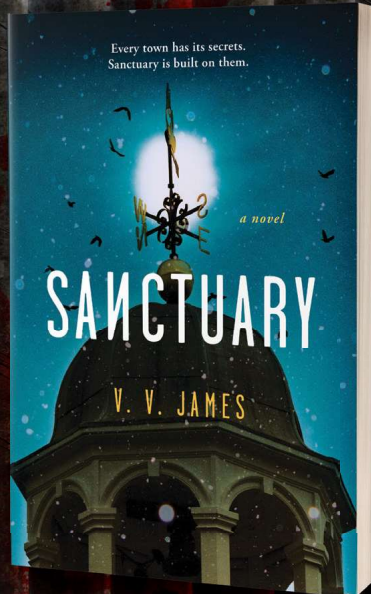
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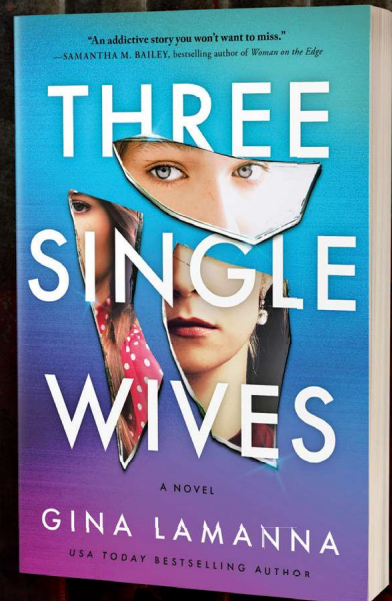
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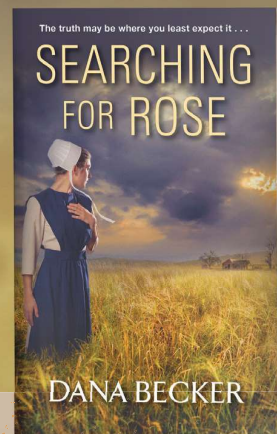
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A **Troubled Young Woman** on the Fringes of Society, a Desperate Search for Her **Missing Sister**, and the **Intriguing Amish Man** Who Comes to Her Aid...

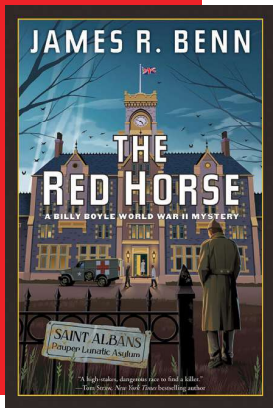


The **romance novel** behind the memoir about writing a romance novel by **Avi Steinberg**, author of *The Happily Ever After: A Memoir of an Unlikely Romance Novelist* in his romance genre debut as **Dana Becker**.



A journalist's **thoughtful memoir** about **falling in love with the romance genre**, restoring his **faith in the Happily Ever After**, and **writing a novel** about the search for love.

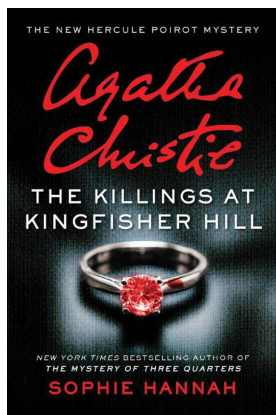




The Red Horse

During World War II, soldiers who experienced “shell shock” (the condition we now call PTSD) were often remanded to mental hospitals for treatment. James R. Benn’s new Billy Boyle novel, **The Red Horse** (Soho Crime, \$27.95, 9781641291002), proves that rehabilitation was not always the featured item on the menu at such institutions. After a particularly harrowing set of adventures (chronicled in 2019’s *When Hell Struck Twelve*), Billy and his friend Kaz have been sidelined in the Saint Albans Convalescent Hospital: Billy with uncontrollable shaking and daytime nightmares, and Kaz with a faulty heart valve. The pair jumps into the fray once again when Billy witnesses what appears to be a murder—two men in the clock tower engaging in some sort of argument or struggle, culminating in the death plunge of one and the disappearance of the other. A couple of additional homicides erase any lingering doubts Billy may have had about whether the first was an accident or deliberate. But there are forces at play in Saint Albans that seek to interfere with his mission, particularly when he happens upon clues that involve an enigmatic logo of a red horse. As is always the case with Benn’s books, the painstaking research is evident, the story crackles with life, and the overlay of fictional characters onto very real historical events is seamless. If you are new to the series, welcome; there are 14 more to keep you busy after you finish this one.

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The Killings at Kingfisher Hill

Author Sophie Hannah made a name for herself with clever, dark and intricately plotted standalone thrillers. Then in 2014, she was authorized to pen a series of novels featuring Hercule Poirot, the Belgian detective made famous by Dame Agatha Christie. It is no small undertaking to follow in the footsteps of Christie, but Hannah nails it in her latest, **The Killings at Kingfisher Hill** (William Morrow, \$27.99, 9780062792372). The tone is pitch-perfect, the mystery aspect is as convoluted as anything ever crafted by Hannah’s predecessor, there are more red herrings than you would find at a Swedish breakfast buffet, and the diminutive mustachioed Belgian detective has never been cannier. This time around, Poirot is summoned to an English estate to look into the murder of Frank Devonport, a country gentleman. The alleged killer (Helen, fiancée of Frank’s brother, Richard) has confessed, but there is considerable doubt in the mind of her betrothed regarding her guilt. She will be hanged soon if no exculpatory evidence is

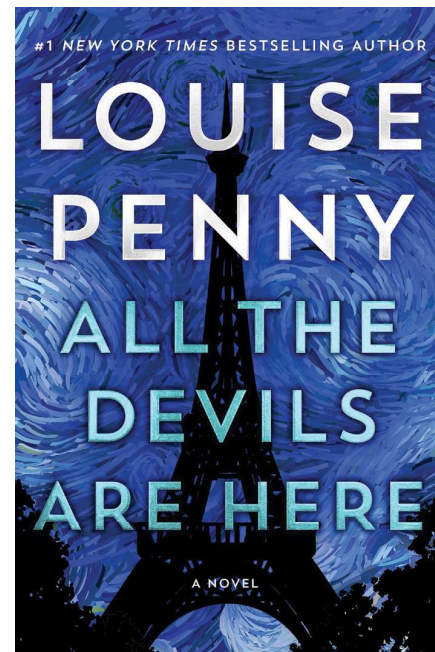
unearthed. Who better to have on the case than Poirot, right? I am rarely a fan of series reboots, but Hannah’s work is first-rate. Poirot lives.



One by One

Speaking of Christie, the legendary writer was known for her “locked-room” mysteries, a subgenre of suspense fiction in which the perpetrator could not have entered or exited the crime scene without detection, and yet somehow a crime was committed. Ruth Ware’s latest work, **One by One** (Scout, \$27.99, 9781501188817), updates this device. There’s no stodgy English manor house here but rather a gorgeous, luxurious and very isolated chalet in the French Alps playing host to a millennial corporate retreat. The merrymakers are the founders and employees of emerging social media platform Snoop, an application that allows you to track the digital music listening preferences of your favorite celebrities and your circle of friends, with the caveat that they can track yours as well. When one of the group’s members goes missing after an afternoon of skiing, a snowstorm and avalanche do double duty in isolating the already remote chalet—and then the guests start dying, one by one.

Read this back to back with Christie’s *And Then There Were None*, and you will witness the evolution of a literary form over the space of eight decades as Ware proves she’s more than deserving of all those comparisons to the Queen of Crime.



★ All the Devils Are Here

Louise Penny’s latest novel featuring Québec homicide inspector Armand Gamache, **All the Devils Are Here** (Minotaur, \$28.99, 9781250145239), takes place in Paris, the City of Light, where he’s awaiting the birth of his granddaughter. On the agenda are reunions with his son, Daniel; daughter, Annie; Annie’s husband, Jean-Guy Beauvoir, once Gamache’s second-in-command; and Stephen Horowitz, Gamache’s nonagenarian godfather, a billionaire activist who has made a lot of enemies over the years. One of those enemies turns up early in the story, deliberately running the elderly man down at a Paris crosswalk as Stephen’s friends watch in horror. Gamache and Beauvoir investigate the attempted murder, which local authorities are writing off as a simple hit-and-run, and there is much more afoot than meets the eye (please pardon my mixed metaphor). Beauvoir’s new corporate job seems to have been offered to him as a result of intervention by Stephen, and Daniel has a potentially shaky investment linked to a man who now lies dead on the floor of Stephen’s Paris pied-à-terre. Being Gamache and Beauvoir, they persist and prevail, in a sense, but not without taking some very serious hits along the way. Penny’s books are always a cause for celebration, and this one is superb in every regard.

Bruce Tierney lives outside Chiang Mai, Thailand, where he bicycles through the rice paddies daily and reviews the best in mystery and suspense every month.



American horror story

In acclaimed romance author Alyssa Cole's debut thriller, racism and gentrification become even more terrifying than they already are.

Alyssa Cole's work has always had two common threads: a social conscience and a central love story. That combination remains in her debut thriller, **When No One Is Watching**, as Sydney, a Black Brooklynite, begins to suspect that the gentrification of her neighborhood may be the result of a sinister conspiracy.

What made you want to write about gentrification?

I've wanted to write about it for years, in part because real estate and home ownership—who gets to own and who gets to keep what they own—is one of the major forces shaping American society. However the results of this force are often overlooked or attributed to other sources. Everywhere I've lived as an adult, I've seen the effects of gentrification. One of my first memories of moving to Brooklyn after college was seeing a Black man on the stoop, holding his child and arguing with his landlord, asking where he was supposed to go if he couldn't afford the rent there. My parents own a home that they've put 20 years into, but they have to sell it due to an absolutely unfathomable increase in property taxes. So, this is specifically personal to me, but it's also something that is unfair and pisses me off in general, which is often a factor for why I decide to write about certain things.

When No One Is Watching blends social realism and a strong social justice critique with elements of fantasy and horror. Why did you want to tell the story in this way?

It was a way of processing the emotions I've experienced while writing historical romances set in America, and researching and seeing all of the horrible, flat-out evil things done to Black, Indigenous, Asian . . . basically all nonwhite people. Things that were evil in the time they were done were known to be evil, despite what people try to tell you, and were done anyway in the names of white supremacy and profit. There's a cyclical nature to these things. Fantasy and horror can be a way of grappling with these kinds of overwhelming topics, just as romance can. But also: The things that have been done in America in the name of profit are literal horror stories.

There's a scene in which a recent white transplant to the neighborhood threatens to call the police on Sydney for making her feel "un-

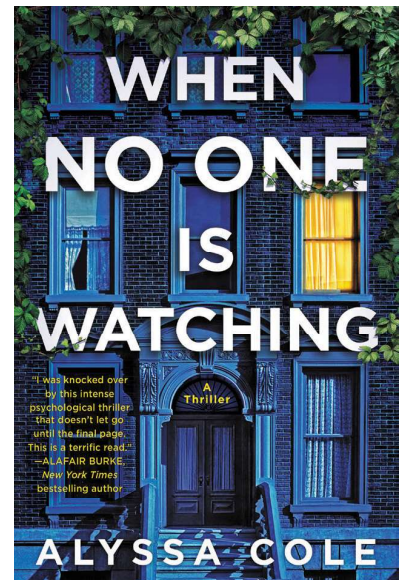
safe," weaponizing her privilege in a way that's eerily familiar. Did you have anything particular in mind when you were writing this scene?

Amy Cooper threatening a Black bird-watcher with police just to flex her own power; learning that Breonna Taylor was possibly killed because of a warrant executed in the name of gentrifying her historically Black neighborhood; EVERYTHING going on in the news right now—all of that has been a lot. A LOT. The things that happen in the book are based on things I've experienced, my family has experienced, my friends have experienced, my community has experienced and things I've seen pop up again and again during my years of research. As to Amy Cooper, several of my works, notably my Civil War romances *An Extraordinary Union* and *A Hope Divided*, explore how white womanhood has been used as a weapon. It's something that we see play out every day on social media, with these videos of the "Karens" (a term I don't like because it cordons these people off into a specific group of evil white woman, when they are just normal people doing what is normal for them in situations where they want to maintain control).

Sydney finds her greatest ally in Theo, who candidly describes himself as a "mediocre white man." Did you ever consider making Theo Black or multi-racial? Or was he always white in your mind?

I'll be honest that when I was working on this, I didn't feel like writing a sympathetic white main character at all. I didn't want anyone who readers might cling to as a white savior. However, though the book is about gentrification, it's also about whiteness, and I thought that Theo needed to be there to interrogate his own whiteness in a way that many people don't seem to do. We're seeing this right now with many white people who, due to an aversion to looking at the reality of things for other people, are just now horrified at what's been going on forever. Living in a world with so much injustice and only just now realizing how bad it is shows that there has been a kind of walking around with blinders on, but on a societal level. So yes, I did consider making Theo Black or a non-Black person of color, but in the end whiteness works best for this specific story. I also wanted him to be an outsider, not only to the neighborhood but also to the idea of critical thinking about race and how it affects communities. I've had so many ideas over the years about how to tell the story of gentrification from the perspectives of Black characters and characters of color. I still want to tell and read those stories, because this kind of injustice is so immense and so central to America that you can come at it from hundreds of angles and have a fresh story every time.

—Carole V. Bell



When No One Is Watching

William Morrow, \$16.99

9780062982650

Thriller



Visit [BookPage.com](https://www.bookpage.com) to read our starred review of *When No One Is Watching*.

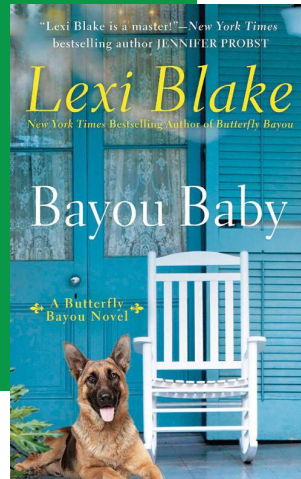
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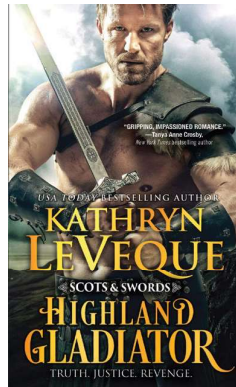


★ Bayou Baby

Southern delight awaits in **Bayou Baby** (Berkley, \$7.99, 9781984806581), Lexi Blake's second Butterfly Bayou romance. Single mom Seraphina Guidry is focusing on her young son when a handsome newcomer arrives in her hometown. Harry Jefferys, nephew to the town's wealthy queen bee, is an Army veteran looking to find his way in the world. One look at Sera and he thinks he's discovered the answer, but there are bad feelings between his aunt and the young woman who's captured his fancy. Will secrets and past grievances break Sera and Harry apart? This charming small-

town drama is as smooth and sweet as a Louisiana drawl, with a good-guy hero who more than deserves his happily ever after.

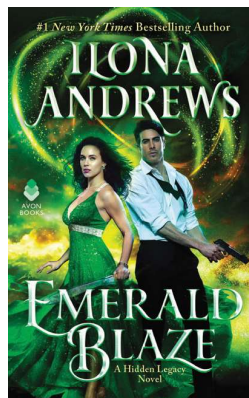
Highland Gladiator



Medieval romance flourishes in Scotland in Kathryn Le Veque's **Highland Gladiator** (Sourcebooks Casablanca, \$7.99, 9781728210100). Young Lor Careston is smitten when he meets Isabail Keith, a brash Highland lass. But his romantic dreams are dashed when his village is burned and he declares vengeance. He joins an infamous fight guild, Ludus Caledonia, where he trains as a warrior, gaining the skills he'll need to enact his revenge. There, Isabail reenters his life and they find love—and a common enemy. Well-drawn characters and heart-thumping fight scenes give readers

a lot to relish in this series starter. Lor is a hero made for swoons and sighs, evolving from callow youth to driven fighter-with-a-cause. And broadsword-wielding Isabail never waits to be saved, which is the hallmark of the very best kind of heroine.

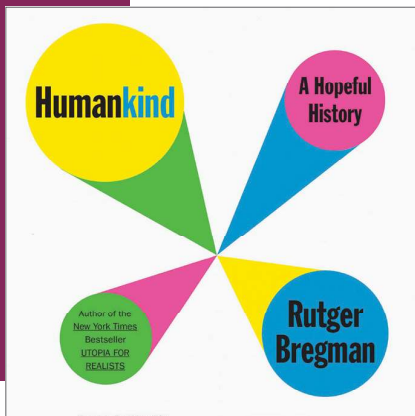
Emerald Blaze



Ilona Andrews' Hidden Legacy series continues to dazzle with **Emerald Blaze** (Avon, \$7.99, 9780062878366). In this alternate universe, magical families known as Houses dominate the world. Catalina Baylor is a Prime, a particularly powerful magic user, and also the Deputy Warden of Texas, whose job it is to protect humanity from those who unscrupulously wield their magic. Tasked with tracking down the murderer of another House's Prime, Catalina must partner with assassin Alessandro Sagredo, who recently broke her heart.

There's conflict galore in this wryly written story, but what appeals most are the relationships between the Baylor family members and the growing trust—and romance—between Catalina and Alessandro. **Emerald Blaze** sizzles with imagination, making this paranormal a true gem of the subgenre.

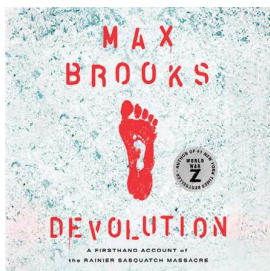
Christie Ridgway is a lifelong romance reader and a published romance novelist of over 60 books.



★ **Humankind**

In **Humankind: A Hopeful History** (Hachette Audio, 11.5 hours), Dutch historian Rutger Bregman posits that people are basically good and that our assumptions about humankind's tendencies toward violence and selfishness are wrong. Bregman supports his theory of humanity's innate kindness with tangible proof. He tracks down the real-life kids from *Lord*

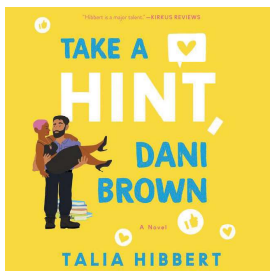
of the Flies, teenagers who were marooned in the 1960s and worked together to form a just society. Bregman also shares studies that disprove Philip Zimbardo's famed Stanford Prison Experiment and the "broken windows" theory of policing, which asserts that visible signs of petty crime encourage more serious criminal activity. He makes some bold claims, but if we listen, his theories just might make the world a better place. Bregman narrates the book's introduction, but as a non-native English speaker, he hands the bulk of the book over to Thomas Judd, who clearly finds joy in Bregman's revelations, making the audiobook a pleasure to listen to.



Devolution

Come for the horror and survival story, stay for the incredible voice cast. Max Brooks' latest speculative thriller, **Devolution** (Random House Audio, 10 hours), is narrated by the author as well as by Judy Greer, Jeff Daniels, Nathan Fillion, Mira Furlan, Terry Gross, Kimberly Guerrero, Kate Mulgrew, Kai Ryssdal and Steven Weber. When the idyllic community of Greenloop is cut off from

society after the eruption of Mount Rainier, the residents are on their own as they struggle to defend themselves against a clan of sasquatch. In the aftermath, Kate Holland's journal, voiced by Greer, aids investigators as they put the pieces together. As Kate goes from worrying about her marriage to struggling to survive, Greer's performance becomes more urgent, capturing Kate's devolution from perky California girl to bloodthirsty warrior.



Take a Hint, Dani Brown

In **Take a Hint, Dani Brown** (HarperAudio, 10 hours), written by Talia Hibbert and narrated by Ione Butler, Dani Brown is a witchy Ph.D. student who dreams of the perfect friend with benefits. Her incantation points her toward Zaf, the flirty Pakistani British security guard at her university. After Zaf carries Dani out of the building during a fire drill, a picture of the rescue goes viral, and Zaf asks

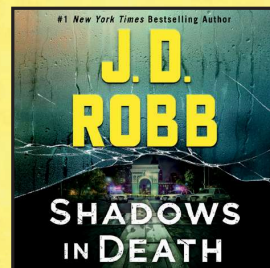
Dani to help him use their fame to raise awareness for his nonprofit. As one of the few Black women in her field, Dani is very work-focused, but her no-strings-attached policy may not be able to withstand her smoking-hot chemistry with Zaf. Butler does a wonderful job narrating Dani's brash quirkiness and Zaf's lovestruck sweetness.

Anna Zeitlin is an art curator and hat maker who fills her hours with a steady stream of audiobooks.

Get lost in these audiobooks

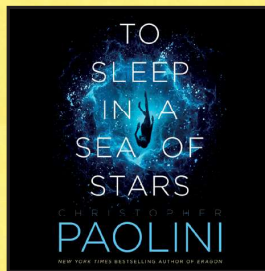
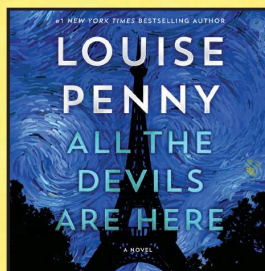
READ BY SUSAN ERICKSEN

In the new audiobook from the #1 *New York Times* bestselling series, Lt. Eve Dallas is about to walk into the shadows of her husband's dangerous past.



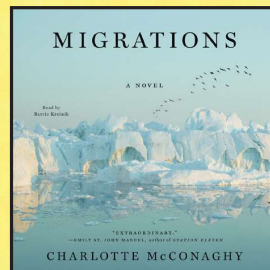
READ BY ROBERT BATHURST

"Robert Bathurst's intelligent narration captures every nuance, every emotion, and each of Louise Penny's subtle revelations." — *AudioFile* (Earphones Award winner) on *A Better Man*



READ BY JENNIFER HALE

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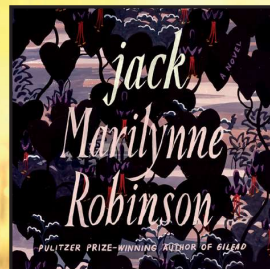


READ BY BARRIE KREINIK

"I recommend *Migrations* with my whole heart." —Geraldine Brooks, author of *March*

READ BY ADAM VERNER

Pulitzer Prize winning author, Marilynne Robinson returns to the world of *Gilead* with *Jack*, the latest novel in one of the great works of contemporary American fiction.



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The Selected Works of Audre Lorde

Has there ever been a more germane time to read Audre Lorde? This trailblazing Black writer, a lesbian and the daughter of immigrants, stood unflinchingly at the vanguard of the many interlocking fights for social justice during her lifetime. More than 25 years after her too-early death, many of the issues Lorde advocated for and articulated in her work are once again capturing national attention and demanding action. The ever-thoughtful, often brilliant

Lorde hasn't always received the notice she deserves. Ideally, **The Selected Works of Audre Lorde** (Norton, \$16.95, 9781324004615), edited by one of her artistic progenies, the author Roxane Gay, will right that wrong.

For Gay, and no doubt for many others, Lorde was “a beacon, a guiding light. And she was far more than that because her prose and poetry astonished me,” Gay writes in her introduction. The works collected here are equally divided between prose and poetry, providing an excellent entry point into Lorde's wide-ranging yet particular concerns and capturing her singular literary voice, aptly described by Gay as “intelligent, fierce, powerful, sensual, provocative, indelible.” The poems explore womanhood, motherhood and race, as well as love in its many manifestations. Her poetic style alternates between frank directness and elliptical inquiry.

Lorde never shied away from unpopular truths, and her essays, often written as public addresses, take on not only the patriarchy but also the feminist movement, which shunted aside (or blatantly ignored) the different realities of women of color. Feminism's failure to recognize nonwhite, non-heterosexual experiences not only harmed marginalized women but also undermined the movement as a whole, as Lorde made clear in her writings.

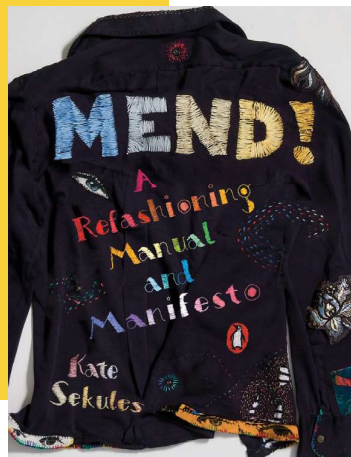
Racism was an inescapable companion for Lorde, and her fierce reactions to it—weariness, rage, sometimes astonishment but never acceptance—remain timely. This passage, from a 1981 piece on women's response to racism, could easily have been written in 2020: “I cannot hide my anger to spare your guilt, nor hurt feelings, nor answering anger; for to do so insults and trivializes all our efforts. Guilt is not a response to anger; it is a response to one's own actions or lack of action. If it leads to change then it can be useful, since it is then no longer guilt but the beginning of knowledge. Yet all too often, guilt is just another name for impotence, for defensiveness destructive of communication; it becomes a device to protect ignorance and the continuation of things the way they are, the ultimate protection for changelessness.”

Perhaps the world is catching up with Audre Lorde at last.

In this well-timed collection, a voice from the past rings with a distinctly modern resonance.

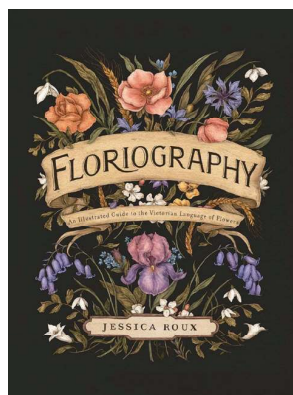
Robert Weibezahl is a publishing industry veteran, playwright and novelist. Each month, he takes an in-depth look at a recent book of literary significance.

★ Mend!



I am not a big sewer (OK, I am not a sewer at all), but I can't stop poring over Kate Sekules' **Mend! A Refashioning Manual and Manifesto** (Penguin, \$22, 9780143135005). A seasoned travel editor and writer, Sekules brings a refreshingly fierce voice to an assemblage of topics: the wastefulness and exploitative practices of the fashion industry, the sustainability of slow fashion, the history of clothing, stars of the mending scene and more. Visible mending, or VM, is

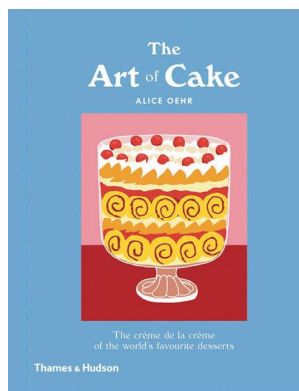
her chief cause. “To stitch or sport a VM is to declare independence from consumer culture with a beautiful scar and badge of honor,” she writes. A prim sewing guide this is not, and I am here for it. If you want sewing basics, Sekules does offer them, but along the way she will school you on where fashion has been and where it's going (to the grave?).



Floriography

For some time now I have been a big admirer of Jessica Roux's illustrations, which feel rooted in a time that's decidedly not the present. So I was thrilled to discover her new book, **Floriography** (Andrews McMeel, \$19.99, 9781524858148), an A to Z of flowers and the meanings they were given by flower-mad Victorians. Back then, people weren't so quick to emote socially; rather, they let petals do the talking for them. Roux provides a brief but fascinating history of this coded discourse and then shows us the flowers, in her distinct

style, from amaryllis (pride) to zinnia (everlasting friendship). A final section illustrates bouquets—for new beginnings, bitter ends, warnings and more—and an index lists the flowers by meaning.



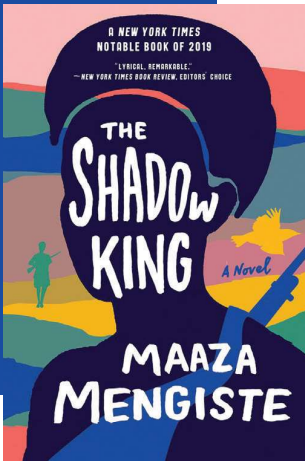
The Art of Cake

Alice Oehr's **The Art of Cake** (Thames & Hudson, \$19.95, 9781760760755) is not a cake cookbook—just a whimsically illustrated book about cake, with precise physical descriptions of and historical and cultural context for 50 cakes, such as Pavlova, linzertorte, charlotte and pound cake. “I am not a professional baker by any stretch of the imagination,” Oehr writes in a note about the final section of the book, in which she provides recipes (the only ones in the book) for six cakes.

I'm intrigued by Oehr's inclusion of banoffee pie, a dessert that she describes as “pie” twice in addition to its name. But particularly in these times, such quibbles are minor, and we could all use a bit more cake.

Susannah Felts is a Nashville-based writer and co-founder of The Porch, a literary arts organization. She enjoys anything paper- or plant-related.

BOOK CLUB READS FOR FALL



The wide world of fiction

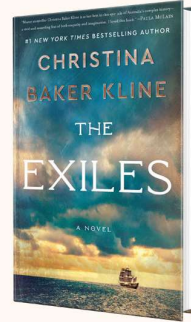
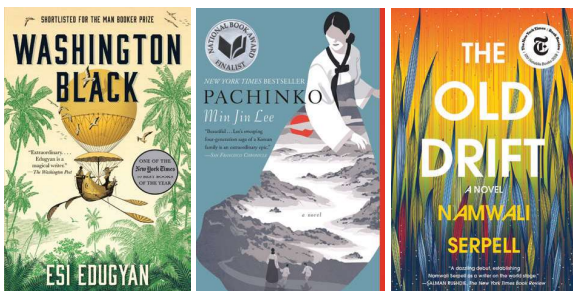
When Benito Mussolini invades Ethiopia at the beginning of Maaza Mengiste's powerful novel, **The Shadow King** (Norton, \$17.95, 9780393358513), a young maid named Hirut wants to fight alongside the men, but she's not allowed. Joining with other women, including the wife of her employer, Hirut eventually comes into her own as a resistance fighter, and her coming of age and developing political consciousness provide a captivating arc for readers to follow. Mengiste's fierce novel is a study of loyalty and identity in the years leading up to World War II.

Four dazzling works of historical fiction, all set outside of Europe and America, are perfect for book clubs.

Set in the 19th century, Esi Edugyan's **Washington Black** (Vintage, \$16.95, 9780525563242) tells the story of Wash, an 11-year-old boy who is enslaved in Barbados and selected to be the manservant of Christopher Wilde, the brother of his enslaver. Christopher takes Wash under his wing, using him as an assistant in his experimental launch of a hot air balloon. When the two are forced to leave Barbados, new possibilities open up for Wash. Complicated examinations of colonization, slavery and power dynamics add richness to Edugyan's tense, gripping tale of adventure. Expect a rousing good read with somber undertones as Wash struggles to find his place in the world.

In Min Jin Lee's **Pachinko** (Grand Central, \$16.99, 9781455563920), a young Korean woman named Sunja has an affair with a rich man who turns out to be married. When Sunja discovers she's pregnant, she marries a good-natured minister and they move to Japan. Lee spins a hypnotic saga that opens in the early 1900s and unfolds over several decades, first following Sunja's and her husband's experiences as immigrants, then the stories of subsequent generations of their family.

Book clubs will find plenty to discuss in Lee's sweeping novel, including gender roles and the pressures of family. **The Old Drift** (Hogarth, \$18, 9781101907153) by Namwali Serpell begins in 1904 Northern Rhodesia (what is now the nation of Zambia) and spans a century. When British photographer Percy Clark makes his home in a colonial settlement known as the Old Drift, his adventures lead to unforeseen involvement with three Zambian families. Serpell draws upon elements of magical realism and Zambian history and mythology to create a singularly innovative and slyly funny narrative that unfurls the history of an evolving nation.



THE EXILES

by Christina Baker Kline

"Master storyteller Christina Baker Kline is at her best in this epic yet intimate tale of nineteenth-century Australia. I loved this book."

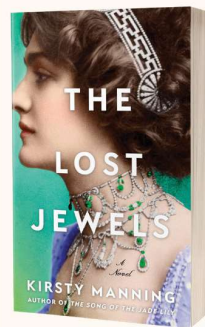
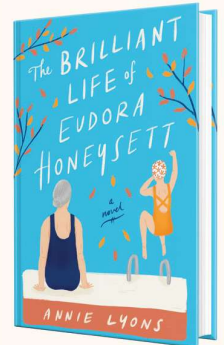
—PAULA MCLAIN, author of *The Paris Wife*

THE BRILLIANT LIFE OF EUDORA HONEYSETT

by Annie Lyons

"An exquisitely poignant tale of life, friendship and facing death. Everyone should read this book."

—RUTH HOGAN, author of *Queenie Malone's Paradise Hotel*



THE LOST JEWELS

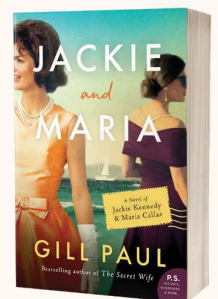
by Kristy Manning

From the author of *The Song of the Jade Lily* comes a thrilling story of a family secret that leads to a legendary treasure.

JACKIE AND MARIA

by Gill Paul

A story of love, passion, and tragedy as the lives of Jackie Kennedy and Maria Callas are intertwined—and they become the ultimate rivals, in love with the same man.



@Morrow_PB

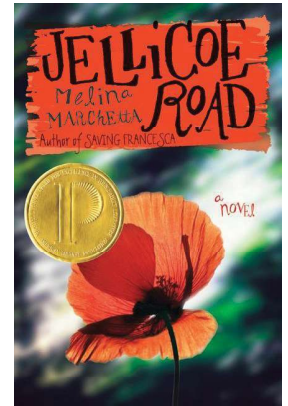
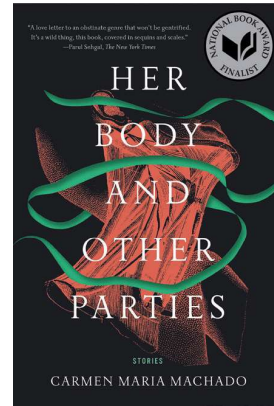
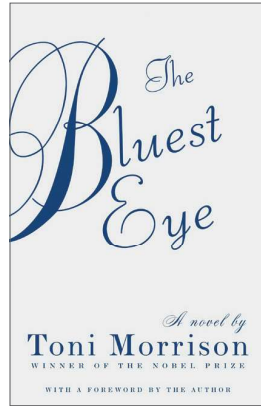
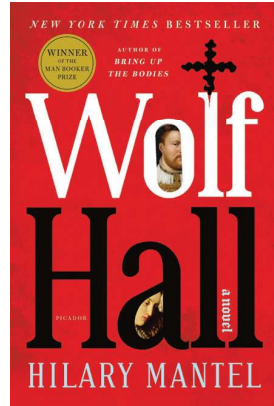
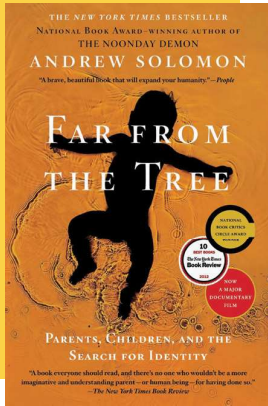
@bookclubgirl

William Morrow

BookClubGirl

A BookPage reviewer since 2003, Julie Hale recommends the best paperback books to spark discussion in your reading group.

the hold list



Books that reward a committed reader

As autumn approaches, we're up for the challenge of books that ask a lot from their readers—mentally and emotionally.

Far From the Tree

Any book that closes in on 1,000 pages poses an obvious challenge, but Andrew Solomon's National Book Award-winning study of parent-child relationships levels up by encouraging readers to examine a well-worn concept in a new light. Solomon spent 10 years interviewing hundreds of families to pull together the case studies featured here, all of which involve children whose identities do not match those of their parents. Inspired by his experience as a gay child of straight parents, Solomon compassionately lays bare the tension between a parent's instinct to encourage children to reach their full potential and a child's need to be accepted for who they are. **Far From the Tree: Parents, Children, and the Search for Identity** is a celebration of difference, even as it acknowledges the difficulties. It is impossible to finish this book without reconsidering your own family dynamics.

—Trisha, Publisher

Wolf Hall

As a young, impossibly nerdy child, one of my very first obsessions was Tudor England. (Why, yes, I had a lot of friends, why do you ask?) So I thought I'd take to **Wolf Hall**, Hilary Mantel's acclaimed novel based on the life of Thomas Cromwell, like a duck to water. Reader, I was wrong. Mantel plunges into the 16th century with a gusto that is as impressive as it is disorienting. Can't keep track of all the men named Thomas? Pay closer attention! Unsure about the novel's timeline, as often your only markers are religious holidays mostly unobserved these days? Look them up! But stick with it, and you'll find yourself adjusting to the simmering chaos of Henry VIII's reign and increasingly in awe of Cromwell's ability to navigate this complicated and mercenary world. And by the novel's end, you'll be utterly astonished by Mantel's ability to transport you there.

—Savanna, Associate Editor

The Bluest Eye

I read **The Bluest Eye** for the first time this spring, as part of an assignment for a class I was taking. What a dissonant reading experience—at once intensely pleasurable and supremely painful. I marveled at Toni Morrison's word-perfect style in every sentence; her ability to find the exact right turn of phrase again and again is nothing short of genius, and the effect is sublime. Without these little bursts of delight at Morrison's writing, it would have been impossible to follow 9-year-old Pecola Breedlove as she navigates self-loathing, rejection, isolation, sexual abuse and delusion in a white supremacist culture. Even with Morrison's voice to guide the way, the temptation to look away was nearly constant. Reading this book will push you to your emotional limit, but, as with all of Morrison's works, the reward for staying the course is transcendence.

—Christy, Associate Editor

Her Body and Other Parties

The opening story of Carmen Maria Machado's debut collection is the key to why this book is such a challenge: A woman with a green ribbon around her neck tells a frightful fairy tale of wifehood and motherhood, and as dread builds, she frequently stops the telling to instruct the reader in ways that supplement the story, from emitting sounds to committing small acts of betrayal and even violence. These demands steadily intensify the relationship between reader and narrator, and the reading experience becomes almost unbearably intimate the more she insists that you know what this fairy tale means. From this opening salvo, we are complicit in all the later stories, each one fantastical and horrifying in its exploration of the cruelties leveraged against women's bodies. There are few books more emotionally demanding. I am undoubtedly changed by it.

—Cat, Deputy Editor

Jellicoe Road

Melina Marchetta's 2009 Michael L. Printz Award winner is not the kind of novel in which you will find explanations of character history, setting and premise carefully integrated into opening scenes, patiently establishing the story's stakes. Instead, the opening third of the book is more like stepping into what you think is the shallow end of a swimming pool, only to find yourself dropping down, down, nothing but cold water above you and no sense of which way to swim to regain the surface. Names, places, the past, the present, some kind of conflict all swirl around you like so many chaotic bubbles. Not to be all *Finding Nemo* about this, but you just have to keep swimming, because if you do, I promise you that **Jellicoe Road's** payoff is among the most cathartic and stunningly plotted you'll ever encounter. I'm in awe every time I read it.

—Stephanie, Associate Editor

Each month, BookPage staff share special reading lists—our personal favorites, old and new.

Parenting like a pro

With an emphasis on communication and cooperation, these books can help parents become the grown-ups their kids deserve.

Whether you're dealing with a cranky kindergartner or a teen with an attitude, parenting isn't easy. We've gathered three parenting titles that provide fresh perspectives on family life.

Abigail Gewirtz's **When the World Feels Like a Scary Place: Essential Conversations for Anxious Parents and Worried Kids** (Workman, \$16.95, 9781523508310) couldn't have come at a better moment. From social media drama and the pressure to succeed in school to global threats like COVID-19, kids today have plenty to be stressed about, and many parents feel inadequate when it comes to helping them make sense of it all. In her book, child psychologist and sought-after parenting consultant Gewirtz shows families how to handle difficult topics through upfront discussion and healthy dialogue.

Gewirtz identifies talking and listening as critical steps that "help kids understand and deal with their intense negative emotions." Her book equips parents with concrete techniques for broaching sensitive subjects with children of all ages, from toddlers to teens. There are hands-on exercises, sample scripts and lists of talking points that can jump-start a family conversation, bring kids' hidden concerns to the surface and defuse fear. She even offers advice on how to shield youngsters from harmful information and decide what—and how much—they should know.

Parents will appreciate the sample conversations on topics such as climate change, the digital world, social justice and violence. Because what parents say and do has a direct impact on other family members, Gewirtz continually emphasizes the importance of parental accountability in dealing with kids' emotions and advises readers on how to manage their own responses. Her guide is essential reading for parents who want to prepare their families to face today's challenges without fear.

The title says it all: **You Can't F*ck Up Your Kids: A Judgment-Free Guide to Stress-Free Parenting** (Atria, \$16.99, 9781982110130) by journalist Lindsay Powers is a frank, funny look at the challenges of child rearing that will give beleaguered moms and dads a boost. A mother of two, Powers wrote the book as a rebuff to the culture of judgment and one-upmanship that so often characterizes contemporary parenting. "In today's hyper-connected world, parents' worst fears and neuroses are manipulated by a promise of perfection that's unreal and unattainable," she writes. Powers encourages readers to ignore the buzz generated by childcare experts, trendsetters and other parents and simply focus on what feels right for their families.

Three new parenting books offer guidance for having a healthy dialogue with yourself as well as your kids.

Powers, who's been featured on "Good Morning America" and "The Today Show," is the former editor-in-chief of Yahoo! Parenting and the creator of #NoShameParenting, a viral social media movement that consoles anyone losing sleep over being a less-than-ideal caregiver. Her knack for connection shines through in this book, which is filled with unreserved, open advice on a wide range of domestic matters, including breastfeeding, understanding discipline techniques, making decisions about daycare, navigating mealtimes and compromising on screen usage. Throughout the book, Powers stresses that there is no single secret to raising happy, well-adjusted children. Her key piece of advice to

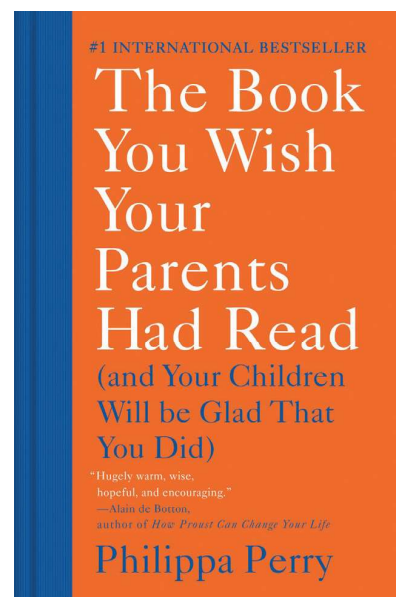
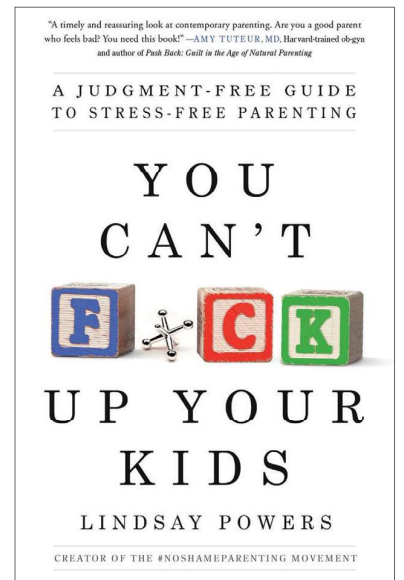
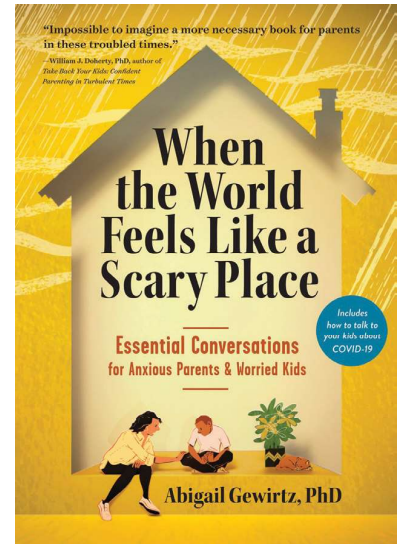
parents is to do what works for you. Readers will be heartened by her unbridled approach to parenting as an imperfect process.

Psychotherapist and best-selling author Philippa Perry shares valuable recommendations for readers who are working to create satisfying connections with their kiddos in **The Book You Wish Your Parents Had Read (and Your Children Will Be Glad That You Did)** (Pamela Dorman, \$24, 9781984879554). From the beginning of this accessible, compassionate book, Perry asks readers to examine their own personal stories. Coming to terms with past experiences and family memories, both painful and pleasurable, enables parents to better understand and nurture the next generation. By identifying inherited models of child rearing that are potentially damaging, parents can free themselves from patterns of dysfunction.

"I am interested in how we can relate to our children rather than how we can manipulate them," Perry writes. Her book consists of six chapters filled with bite-size passages of wise advice. She addresses parent-child communication, behavior, feelings and ways to create a healthy family environment. She also tackles perennial parental challenges such as children's sleeping habits, tantrums, lying and caring for a clingy youngster.

Throughout the book, Perry includes productive exercises related to parenting styles, emotional triggers and more. She also provides relatable anecdotes from clients and her own family's experiences. Readers with tweens and teens will welcome her insights into how to set boundaries and resolve conflicts as kids mature. By taking stock of the past, Perry says, parents can navigate the present and move into the future with confidence. Her holistic style makes this a unique, constructive and inspiring guide.

—Julie Hale



A shifting vision of life, art and marriage

In her 11th novel, Sue Miller tracks our ever-changing perceptions of ourselves and each other.

There's no cell service at the tiny Vermont house where author Sue Miller and her husband spend their summers, so she's crossed the Connecticut River and is sitting on a leafy street in Hanover, New Hampshire, for our phone call to discuss her breathtaking new novel, **Monogamy**. She hopes no one comes along with a loud lawn mower while we're trying to talk.

I remind her that we spoke back in 2003, just before the publication of her memoir, *The Story of My Father*. The experience of writing that book, she tells me, was the wellspring of **Monogamy**. "As I wrote that book about my father, I came slowly to understand him differently and to understand myself differently," Miller says. "I felt I was in communication with him in some sense or another and was changed by him. My ideas about him changed as I discovered things as I worked through the book. I wanted that to happen to someone in the marriage in this book."

In **Monogamy**, after a long, full, mostly happy life together, Annie's husband, Graham, dies unexpectedly one night in bed beside her. Graham, a bookseller in Cambridge, Massachusetts, was a large, charismatic, needy man with a big "appetite for people, for music, for food." And for Annie. At first she is numbed by his death, but soon she is alienated from him and from her grief when she discovers that he'd had a recent affair.

"I wanted her, for some reason, to retreat from the marriage after the death of her spouse," Miller says, "and then find a way, just through life experiences, odd things that happened to her, in sequence somehow, to rediscover him and re-think who she was and who he was. But to come to understand all this not through grieving."

At the time of Graham's death, Annie is preparing a local show of her latest photographs. Miller describes Annie as "quite a good photographer, but not great, not famous. Maybe she could have been better. I don't know," suggesting how independently her characters come to live in her imagination.

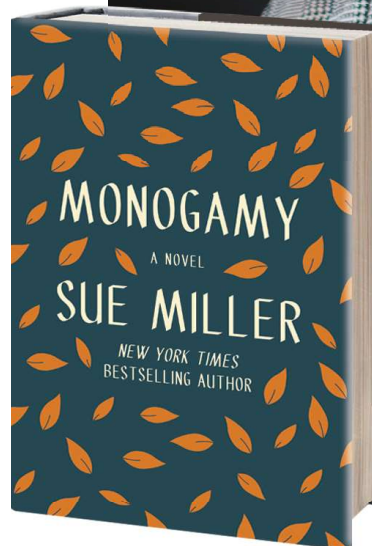
"I was interested in having her be a bit like me," Miller says. "I thought of photography and

the distance you spend from the things, mostly from other people, that you're taking pictures of. That way of looking at life has some parallels to a writer, who is always looking and always using other people's lives and thinking, *oh, that would be good. I could use that*. I think for a lot of writers and photographers, there's something temperamentally that makes you more comfortable at a slight distance."

While doing research for **Monogamy**, Miller spent a lot of time with a friend who is a professional photographer, talking about cameras and picture taking. In the six years it took Miller to write the novel, she read widely about photographers like Diane Arbus, Nan Goldin, William Eggleston, Sally Mann and others, and she saw their exhibitions when they came to her hometowns of Cambridge and Boston.

"I think my interest started with Sally Mann, when she created such a stink with photographs of her children," Miller says. She notes how Mann's focus and interests have changed throughout her life. Like Mann, "Annie doesn't have a singular vision she's working with," Miller says. "She changes. She moves around in terms of what she's interested in taking pictures of, what she sticks with and then

moves off from. I think more women photographers do that than men. It seemed to me when I was looking at men's photographs that they didn't change much over the arc of their photographic life, whereas with women, there's this strange richness in what they are doing. I think that's from their lives being so chopped up in some ways."



Monogamy

Harper, \$28.99
9780062969651

Family Drama

In a certain way, this is true of Miller's own writing career. "The first couple of books I wrote were about children in families, younger children," she says. "Then I moved on from that, doing things dealing with adults."

Maybe this observation helps explain an underlying theory of process Miller seems to have. The emotional beauty of **Monogamy** arises from the impact of her characters' interactions on one another, and how their memories of those interactions and of other events shape, shift and reshape.

"Back when I was doing a psych course, we would do sociograms, where you draw a circle and put people around the edge of the circle," Miller says. "Then you take one person and have something happen to them or have them act in some way, and you draw lines to who is affected by that. Then you would see how their responses affect other people in the circle. You end up with a sort of spiderweb of crisscrossing lines of connection. I think that is, in a way, what this book is like."

Indeed it is. In **Monogamy**, what a wonderful web Sue Miller weaves.

—Alden Mudge

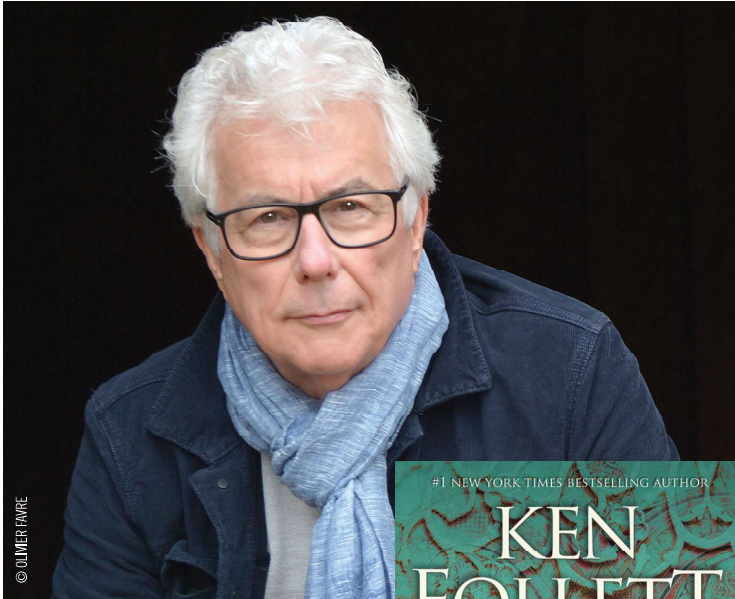
"For a lot of writers and photographers, there's something temperamentally that makes you more comfortable at a slight distance."



Visit BookPage.com to read our starred review of **Monogamy**.

A home full of books

Spending an afternoon in a bookstore or library with Ken Follett sounds like our kind of fun. Here he shares a look into his life as a book lover, bookshelf peruser and storyteller.



It's been 30 years since the publication of *The Pillars of the Earth*, Welsh author Ken Follett's enormously beloved novel about the building of a Gothic cathedral, and the publication of its highly anticipated prequel, **The Evening and the Morning** (Viking, \$36, 9780525954989), is cause for much fanfare. Set at the end of the Dark Ages, the nearly 500 years of incredibly slow progress that came after the fall of the Roman Empire, it follows three figures during this period of immense change. It's a hefty, expansive epic worthy of deep reading by history fans. To celebrate this momentous release, we reached out to Follett to learn more about his literary life.

Tell us about your favorite library from when you were a child.

I'd say that the first big thrill of my life was joining Canton Library in Cardiff at age 7. Canton Library—found on Library Street—is an absolutely stunning building. The philanthropist Andrew Carnegie donated the money for the library, around £5,000 at the time, and it was built on the site of an old market. Carnegie, a Scottish American industrialist, gave away

a huge proportion of his fortune, funding more than 650 libraries in the U.K., plus more than 1,500 in America. Undoubtedly, he transformed lives. Canton Library certainly changed mine.

What is on your “bucket list” of bookstores and libraries you'd love to visit but haven't yet?

The Bibliothèque nationale in Paris. It's architecturally stunning and contains 40 million items.

While researching your books, has there ever been a surprisingly relevant discovery among the stacks?

When I wrote *Eye of the Needle* in 1977, I had never been to Scot-

land, but half the book is set there. However, I could not afford to go on a research trip. The public library in Farnborough, Surrey, had a touring guide to Scotland, which was helpful for a special reason: It was out of date, having been published 30 years earlier—which was perfect for me, because the story is set during the Second World War.

How is your personal library organized?

My own library at home is not big enough for all my books, so the whole house has effectively become a library. I've arranged novels alphabetically by author and history books chronologically by subject. This makes everything easy to find. But I periodically run out of space.

What's the last thing you checked out from your local library or bought at a bookstore?

I haven't been to a bookstore since March, for obvious reasons, but the last thing I bought was *The Book Smugglers of Timbuktu* by Charlie English [published in the U.S. under the title *The Storied City*].

When you enter a bookstore, where do you go first?

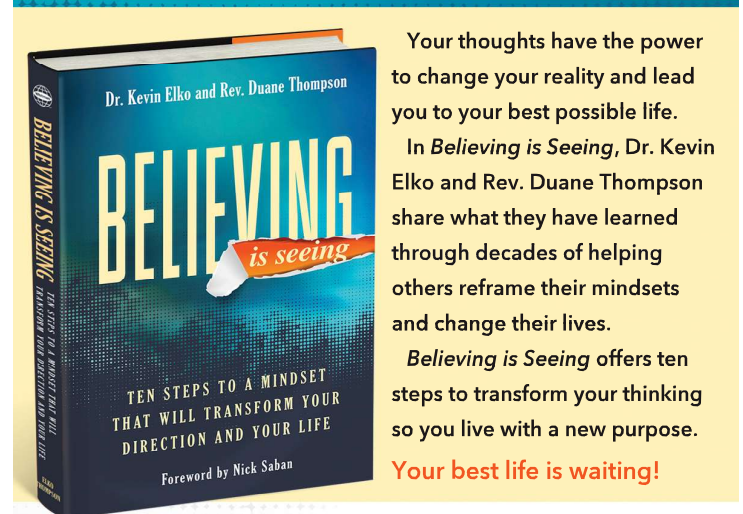
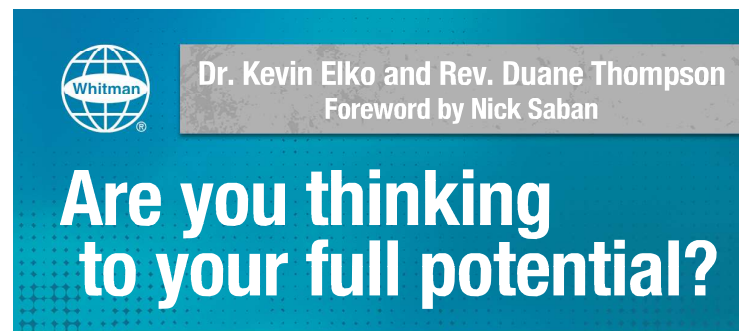
The bestsellers table. I want to see who is doing well.

What is your ideal bookstore-browsing snack?

I'm afraid I think it's bad manners to eat while browsing. Sorry.

Bookstore cats or dogs?

I'm a dogs man.



Your thoughts have the power to change your reality and lead you to your best possible life.

In *Believing is Seeing*, Dr. Kevin Elko and Rev. Duane Thompson share what they have learned through decades of helping others reframe their mindsets and change their lives.

Believing is Seeing offers ten steps to transform your thinking so you live with a new purpose.

Your best life is waiting!

Whitman Publishing, LLC • Pelham, AL

Craft, not catharsis

Vicki Laveau-Harvie waited decades to write the story of her dysfunctional family. Her debut book was worth the wait.

For Vicki Laveau-Harvie, raw emotion has no place in the act of writing a memoir, even one as harrowing as **The Erratics**. “I believe really sincerely that I won’t write anything that will have an impact for other people if I’m not paying attention to craft, if I’m writing it in the heat of emotion,” the author says in a call to her home in Sydney, Australia. “That would be like reading somebody’s diary. That’s not as interesting as memoir.”

The Erratics is anything but uninteresting. Rather than a way to release emotional pain, its careful and artful creation was an opportunity to explore a constellation of life events that had long resisted Laveau-Harvie’s efforts to commit them to the page. Readers who can relate to her story will find comfort in knowing that there are others who understand what they’ve endured. Those who cannot imagine such goings-on will have their eyes opened to what it might be like to have a father who seemed to lack any protective instincts and a mother who relished telling her children, “I’ll get you and you won’t even know I’m doing it.”

After surviving a traumatic childhood, Laveau-Harvie left her home in Canada to attend university in France, where she remained for 27 years until she and her husband and children moved to Australia in 1988. In 2006, Laveau-Harvie’s elderly mother broke her hip and was hospitalized. “My sister and I decided to go without thinking much about it,” she says. “They were our parents. Our father was in need of our help, so we went.”

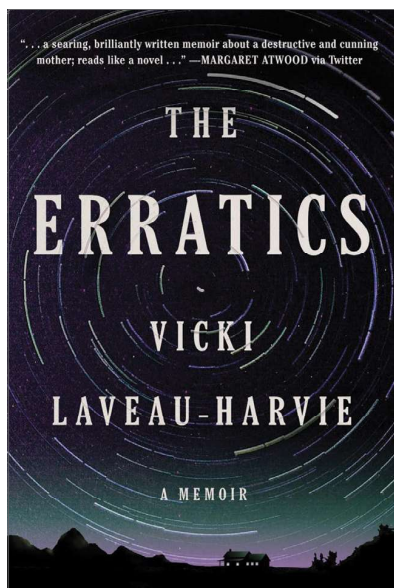
The memoir opens as the author and her sister, both estranged from their parents for nearly 20 years, arrive in Canada and soon realize that their mother has been starving and isolating their father. The sisters attempt to find appropriate care for their mother, whom they know requires mental health care, in order to protect their increasingly frail father. Old pain and fear are dragged back into the light, and it’s often not clear whether the women will be able to save their father from

their mother, or save themselves from having to return to a place where they endured so much anguish.

Laveau-Harvie didn’t begin writing **The Erratics** until six years after this initial act of daughterly duty. The memoir’s form is often poetic, sometimes impressionistic, with hits of dark humor. “I wanted the writing to be spare,” she says. “I wanted the movement between direct speech and thought to be fluid. That’s why there are no quotation marks. I wanted that distance to be there in the way I told the story.” This creative choice echoes the distance she put between herself and her lived experiences. “That’s what I had to do to survive,” she says.

In testament to its broad emotional resonance, **The Erratics** gained critical acclaim upon its initial publication in Australia, which was itself an emotional roller coaster. Laveau-Harvie put the manuscript in a drawer for two years after writing it and only brought it out again after she had applied for a week at a nearby writers’ retreat. An author there urged her to try to publish her story, and she took their advice. “Finch [a small Australian press] had a memoir prize of publication and \$5,000,” she says. “It’s a well-known prize, one of the few for memoir here. So I did submit my manuscript [in 2018], and I won. I was flabbergasted! It was a wonderful opportunity.”

Then things took a turn. Finch closed down after Laveau-Harvie’s book had been in print for just six months. “I was casting about for what to do,” she recalls. “Do I self-publish? Sell it on a street corner? I had no idea, and no experience in the publishing world.” She gained some experience in short order, though, when she won the prestigious Stella Prize in 2019 (and its \$50,000 purse), secured an agent and was signed by a major publisher. **The Erratics** was published



The Erratics
Knopf, \$25.95, 9780525658610

Memoir

in the U.K. and Australia in 2019 and is being published in the U.S. and Canada in 2020. “It’s been a fairy tale!” she says.

As for the enthusiastic response from readers, Laveau-Harvie muses, “After the book came out, people would say, ‘You’ve written my story.’ I’d think, no, I haven’t. I’ve written my story. But themes of aging, estrangement, mental health issues in families and their destructiveness, the different ways people cope—those are universal kinds of things.” She adds, “That has been the best part of all this, connecting with people—once I got over the shock of people who didn’t know me buying my book.”

It’s no wonder those early readers expressed such excitement. From start to finish, **The Erratics** offers moments of wonder and beauty amid struggle and distress. There are lovely and affirming reunions with long-lost family members and many lyrical contemplations of the Canadian landscape that sustained the author first as a child and again when she returned so many years later.

During those intervening years, Laveau-Harvie, who is now 77, endeavored to recover from the family dysfunction that serves as the centerpiece of her moving and memorable debut book. “I’ve done a lot of work on myself,” she says. “I’ve been getting the monkeys off my back for many years.”

—Linda M. Castellitto



Visit [BookPage.com](https://www.bookpage.com) to read our starred review of **The Erratics**.

10 unexpected aspects of space travel

How to Astronaut author Terry Virts shares 10 of the wildest, most surprising aspects of going to space—and he ought to know. He's done it twice!

I had two goals for **How to Astronaut**: to make the reader say “Wow!” and to make them laugh. I didn't want to write another typical astronaut book—say, an autobiography or a technical guide. I wanted a book that would be easy reading—something for the beach or the nightstand, a kind of literary comfort food. Here's a taste, with 10 things about space travel you may find interesting, surprising or funny.

1. Learning Russian

Whenever a new astronaut shows up at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, they probably think they're pretty good at a few things. They were either the hotshot jet pilot at their military base, the top doctor at their hospital or the nerdiest computer nerd at their engineering job. But one thing I learned during my time as an astronaut is that whatever you think you're good at, there's always someone better. For example, I thought I was pretty decent at foreign languages until I had to learn Russian, which was probably the hardest thing I've done in my life. It's a required language because the Russians are such important partners in the International Space Station (ISS) program, and it ended up being something I loved; but I must admit, the first 10 years were the hardest.

2. Chez Terry

When I signed up to be an F-16 pilot many years ago, and when I joined the astronaut corps some years later, there were a lot of things I expected to do. Cutting women's hair was not one of them. But when Samantha Cristoforetti was assigned as my Italian crewmate, that was exactly what I had to learn to do. It was the most hair-raising thing I did in my seven-plus months in space. You'll have to ask Samantha if I did OK, but I never heard any complaints.

3. Rodent research

Everyone knows that astronauts do science in space. After all, that is the purpose of the ISS and the reason that our 15-nation partnership has spent tens of billions of dollars over decades on the station program. Honestly, though, this fighter pilot never expected

to dissect mice in space—but that's exactly what I did. Ultimately it was worth it because the rodent research we did is very important for the pharmaceutical industry and will hopefully lead to better medications down here on Earth.

4. The red button

I wish you could have seen the look on the face of the poor guy at the Kennedy Space Center who was giving my astronaut class their first tour of Cape Canaveral. It was an innocent question that I asked: “What's that red button for?” The answer was a little surprising, to say the least. It was the button he would use to blow up my space shuttle, with my butt on board, if we went off course during launch. It reminds me of a song: “Don't ask me no questions, and I won't tell you no lies.”

5. Potty talk

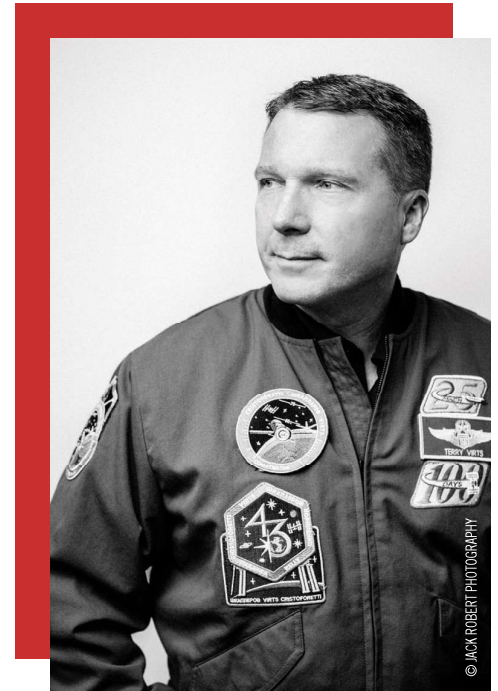
Well, what can I say? There are several chapters in **How to Astronaut** on this topic. Frankly, it's the most popular question we get as astronauts. To put it succinctly, yes, astronauts do wear diapers.

6. Making movies in space

When I learned that we would be filming an IMAX movie during my mission, I was beside myself with joy. Helping to make *A Beautiful Planet* was my favorite thing I did while in space. Plus, I got to learn the craft of filmmaking from my director, Toni Myers. It's a skill I've transitioned into my post-NASA career.

7. Doing the deed

This is the second most popular question we get. Have astronauts done it in space? You'll



have to read the book to find out, but as for me and my time on the ISS, it was a long 200 days . . .

8. What to do if you're stranded in space

It's a bit of a morbid subject and not one that we talk about very often, but if your rocket engine doesn't light up to fly you back to Earth while you're in orbit or on the moon, you have the rest of your life to figure out what to do.

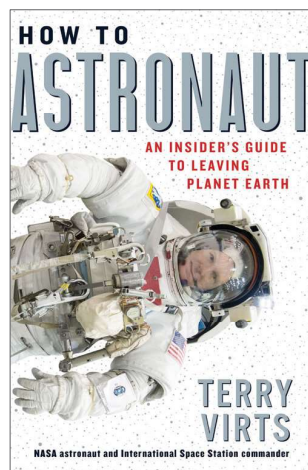
9. What to do with a dead body

I don't remember discussing this subject in any of my NASA training, but the astronauts we fly are not exactly spring chickens, and in any case, humans don't have a good record of being immortal. On top of it all, the space environment isn't the safest place to be. If we continue to travel beyond our planet, future space crews will eventually have to reckon with this question.

10. Juxtaposition between the sublime and the mundane

This is the best way I can describe space flight. During the first minutes of my first shuttle flight, when I was busy helping to fly Endeavour as her pilot, I saw the most amazing sights out the window—things humans weren't meant to see. I experienced this dissonance a thousand times during my seven months in space: 99% of my time was spent on mundane, mechanical tasks, but 1% of the time I felt like I was seeing God's view of the universe.

—Terry Virts



How to Astronaut
Workman, \$27.95
9781523509614

Science

The way things were

New novels from Héctor Tobar, Jennie Fields and Alice Randall follow spectacularly imagined characters into the past.

We turn to historical fiction to be reminded of the truths carried from one generation to the next. Three new novels contain big dreams, incredible journeys and precise, immersive historical detail.

The Last Great Road Bum

Drawing from a discovered cache of journals, letters and unpublished fiction, Héctor Tobar's third novel, **The Last Great Road Bum** (MCD, \$28, 9780374183424), follows the true peregrinations of Joe Sanderson, denizen of Urbana, Illinois. Privileged and corn-fed, Joe goes where his whim takes him, and his family even pays for him to do so, their money wired to embassies all over the world. You might grit your teeth with resentment if Joe weren't so openhearted—and if Tobar weren't such a wizard of a writer.

Joe's journey begins on a teenage lark when he hitchhikes out of Urbana and ends up in Jamaica with a band of welcoming Rastafarians. But the tale darkens as he gets a glimpse of the Vietnam War and then the horrifying famine in Biafra. Throughout his travels, Joe witnesses suffering that radicalizes him, though his letters home remain almost aggressively cheery. After more rousing about, he stumbles into a group of guerrilla fighters in El Salvador. It's among these dedicated compas, some still in their teens, that the last great road bum finds his purpose.

Third-person narration weaves with Joe's stream of consciousness, so we're privy to not only his thoughts and observations, which flit from topic to topic like the butterflies he used to catch as a child, but also the thoughts of his mother, his fellow compas and even people he meets briefly. Quirky endnotes conclude each chapter. This structure lends propulsion and unexpected cohesion to a tale that would have been haphazard without it. A work of fiction and sort of true, **The Last Great Road Bum** is brilliant in its contemplation of a particularly American restlessness, innocence and foolishness.

—Arlene McKanic

Atomic Love

Jennie Fields' **Atomic Love** (Putnam, \$26, 9780593085332) scrupulously captures both the minute (you might say "atomic") and panoramic elements of the early Cold War. At ground zero: a female physicist, an FBI agent and a possible spy. Each has been broken, physically, emotionally or both, by World War II. They form a triangle, which brings to mind the symbol of a fallout shelter.

Rosalind was the lone woman on the University of Chicago team that constructed the first controlled nuclear reaction, but in 1950, she's

unhappily selling jewelry at a department store. During her wartime service, she fell hard for Weaver, a British team member who awakened her sexually and then dumped her. As the novel begins, Weaver, "the cartoon of a good-looking man" with a "dimpled Cary Grant chin," injects himself back into Rosalind's life. FBI agent Charlie suspects Weaver of selling secrets to the Soviets, and he enlists Rosalind's help to unmask her former lover.

Surely among the most patient FBI agents in recent fiction, Charlie is a complex character who has repressed most feelings, though he feels a strong attraction to Rosalind. Tortured as a prisoner of war, Charlie was left with one hand so disabled that someone else must help knot his tie. When Rosalind tends to his tie, it is an intimate gesture.

In Rosalind, Fields has created an anxious yet gutsy heroine who carries her Shakespearian name with aplomb. Growing up, science was her religion, yet she is horror stricken at the destructive power of the atom bomb she helped unleash. Inspired by such female scientists as physicist Leona Woods and the author's own mother, **Atomic Love** is as much about undercover work as it is about women's passions.

—Grace Lichtenstein

Black Bottom Saints

Alice Randall's latest novel is a genre-bending series of profiles of the dazzling residents of Black Bottom, the commercial and residential heart of Detroit's Black community in the era spanning from the Great Depression to the early 1960s. Characters are revealed through

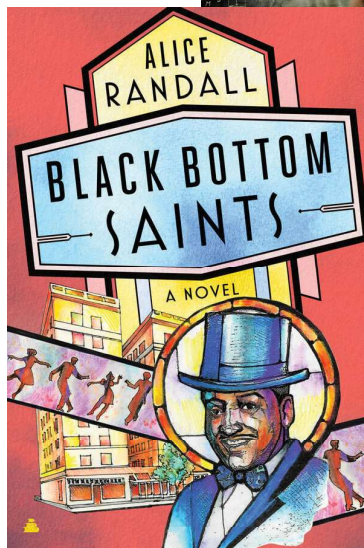
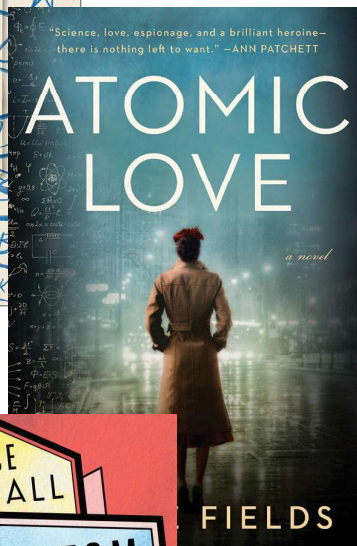
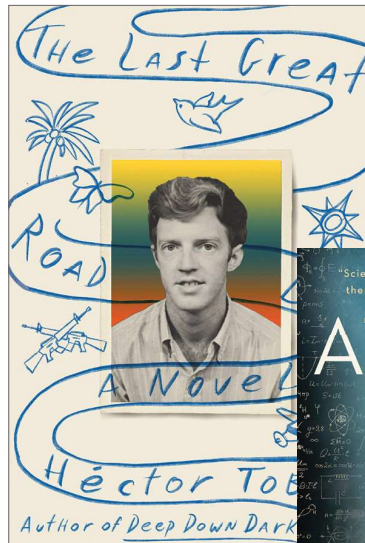
the eyes of real-life emcee, theater director, newspaper columnist and dapper man about town Joseph "Ziggy" Johnson (1913–1968). From his deathbed, Ziggy recalls friendships with some of the city's most notable characters, some well known and some not.

Black Bottom Saints (Amistad, \$26.99, 9780062968623) is an intriguing and beguiling look at the storied city at the height of its pomp. Randall shows us a warm, thriving, tightly woven community of "breadwinners," or auto industry workers who fled the Jim Crow South and became patrons of Detroit's glittery club scene. Also part of the novel's milieu are artists such as poet Robert Hayden, actor Tallulah Bankhead and theater director Lloyd George Richards, as well as United Auto Workers negotiator Marc Strepp, boxer Joe Louis, NFL Hall of Fame defensive back Dick "Night Train" Lane and

entertainment industry figures such as Sammy Davis Jr. and Motown Records' finishing school legend Maxine Powell. The final profile is of "Colored Girl," whose identity is not quite clear. Perhaps she is Randall herself. Each chapter ends with a cocktail recipe in tribute to the profiled person.

This is a book to read at your leisure, as you might a collection of short stories. Each profile offers fascinating insight into the characters that made Black Bottom a hub for glamour, culture and creativity.

—Jeff Vasishta



★ Transcendent Kingdom

By Yaa Gyasi

Literary Fiction

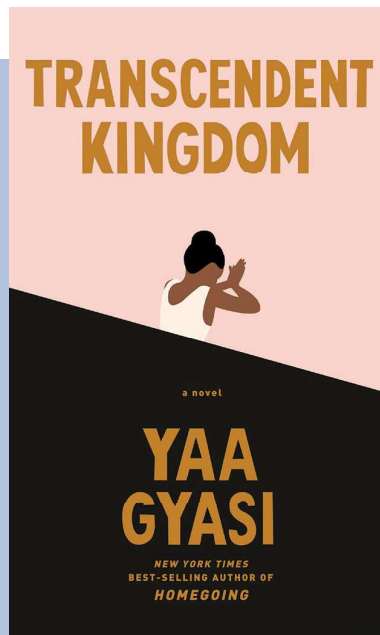
Yaa Gyasi's second novel, **Transcendent Kingdom** (Knopf, \$27.95, 9780525658184), takes us deep into the heart of one woman's struggle to make sense of her life and family.

Gifty was born in Huntsville, Alabama, after her family emigrated from Ghana. Now she's finishing up a Ph.D. at Stanford, studying addiction and reward-seeking behaviors in mice. She has a personal connection with her chosen subject: When she was 10, her adored older brother, Nana, died of a heroin overdose after a basketball injury left him hooked on opioids. Their mother spiraled into depression soon after. Over a decade later, Gifty brings her mother to California after the older woman shows signs of another approaching breakdown. As Gifty keeps a watchful eye on her mother and continues her research, she begins to experience the

pull of the strong evangelical Christian faith of her childhood, which she'd intended to leave behind in Alabama.

Gifty's determination to better understand her family's suffering and the tension between two opposing belief systems (faith and science) forms the heart of this empathetically written novel.

As Gifty begins the final months of her experiments, the narrative shifts in time to include stories of Gifty's father, known as the Chin-Chin



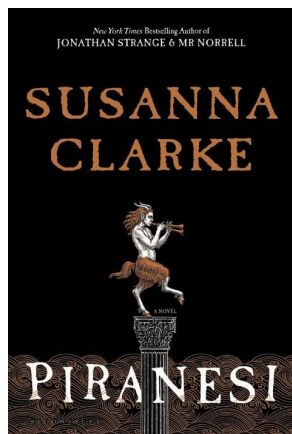
Man, as well as Nana's tragic tumble into addiction and Gifty's single summer spent in Ghana. Gifty's move from the tight embrace of organized faith to the wide-open questions of the sciences is depicted in exquisite detail. The casual but cutting racism of the all-white church of her childhood, the alienation she felt as a Black Christian woman pursuing a science degree and the unease with which she encounters other students in her lab are all unforgettable.

Gyasi's bestselling debut novel, *Homegoing* (2014), was a multigenerational saga that traced the families and fortunes of two Ghanaian half sisters over three centuries. Despite its focus on a single family, **Transcendent Kingdom** has an expansive scope that ranges into fresh, relevant territories—much like the title, which suggests a better world beyond the life we inhabit.

—Lauren Bufferd

★ Piranesi

By Susanna Clarke



Fantasy

“It is my belief,” writes Piranesi, the protagonist of Susanna Clarke's new novel of the same name, “that the World (or, if you will, the House, since the two are for practical purposes identical) wishes an Inhab-

itant for Itself to be a witness to its Beauty and the recipient of its Mercies.” Clarke's first novel since 2004's wildly successful and critically acclaimed *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell*, **Piranesi** (Bloomsbury, \$27, 9781635575637) centers on a strange, haunting world and features a main character whose earnest goodwill is piercingly endearing.

The House, composed of hundreds of huge rooms filled with statues and wild birds and containing an ocean's four tides, is so vast it may as well be infinite. Piranesi spends his days fishing, drying seaweed to burn for warmth, tracking the tides and cataloging the features of each room of the House in his journals. Twice a week, he meets with the Other, the only living person Piranesi has ever

known. The Other is obsessed with finding and “freeing the Great and Secret Knowledge from whatever holds it captive in the World and to transfer it to ourselves,” and the guileless and devoted Piranesi has been his cheerful collaborator.

But just as Piranesi begins to lose faith in the Knowledge, a discovery leads him to question his own past. From this point, the novel is almost impossible to put down. The reader reflexively mirrors Piranesi in his quest to interpret the clues revealed to him by his beloved World. Stripping this mystery back layer by layer is a magical way to spend an afternoon, reading narrative motifs like runes and studying Piranesi's journals as if they are the religious texts they resemble.

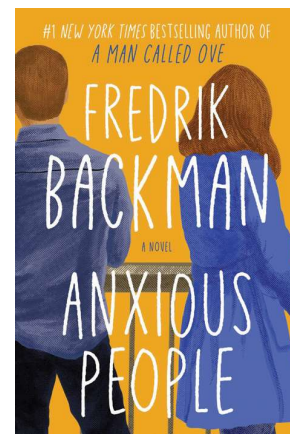
Piranesi hits many of the same pleasure points as *Jonathan Strange*—Clarke's dazzling feats of world building, for one. But at one-third as many pages, **Piranesi** is more allegorical than epic in scope. With their neoclassical verve, certain passages recall ancient philosophy, but readers may also see connections between Piranesi's account and the unique isolation of a confined life—whether as a result of a mandatory lockdown during a global pandemic, or perhaps due to the limitations caused by a chronic illness, such as Clarke's own chronic fatigue syndrome.

Lavishly descriptive, charming, heartbreaking and imbued with a magic that will be familiar to Clarke's devoted readers, **Piranesi** will satisfy lovers of *Jonathan Strange* and win her many new fans.

—Kathryn Justice Leache

Anxious People

By Fredrik Backman



Comic Fiction

Fredrik Backman's gift for portraying the nuances of humanity is well known to his many loyal fans. With **Anxious People** (Atria, \$28, 9781501160837), Backman once again captures

readers' hearts and imaginations.

An armed, masked robber attempts to hold up a bank in a Swedish city. But as the thief approaches, the apathetic young teller is unmoved. It's a cashless bank, the teller says. Doesn't the would-be robber know that? Well, no. The robber doesn't. As police arrive, the robber rushes into the street, through the nearest open door, up a set of stairs and into an apartment's open house. When the potential buyers and real estate agent see the thief, they assume they're being held hostage.

Backman describes these events with a light touch, making clear early on that, though there's a crime at the heart of this story, his novel is much more than this series of events. Father and son police officers Jim and Jack try

to understand how a bank robber slipped, unnoticed, from an apartment full of people. As the officers interrogate the witnesses, Backman reveals glimpses of each character's past.

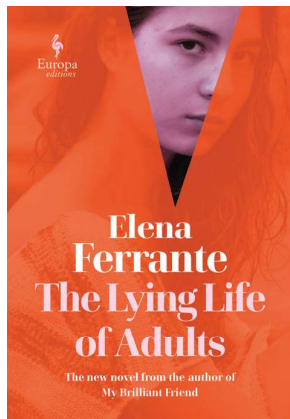
Anxious People could reasonably be called a mystery, but it's also a deeply funny and warm examination of how individual experiences can bring a random group of people together. Backman reveals each character's many imperfections with tremendous empathy, reminding us that people are always more than the sum of their flaws.

—Carla Jean Whitley

★ The Lying Life of Adults

By Elena Ferrante

Translated by Ann Goldstein



Coming of Age

Published in Italy last November (to fans who lined up outside bookstores to purchase their copies at the stroke of midnight), **The Lying Life of Adults** (Europa, \$26, 9781609455910)

is the first novel from Elena Ferrante since 2016, when the final installment of the Neapolitan quartet, the series that made her an international literary star, was published. Set in an upscale neighborhood in 1990s Naples, her new novel is a powerful coming-of-age story like no other.

Dutiful, bookish and sweet, Giovanna is on the cusp of puberty when she overhears her father comparing her to his ugly sister. Used to receiving compliments, Giovanna is alarmed but curious, and despite her parents' concerns, she initiates a relationship with her tempestuous Aunt Vittoria. As Giovanna learns more about her father's background, she begins to see how her parents' lies and treachery have impacted their lives as well as hers.

Giovanna travels between areas of Naples so different, they might as well be opposing planets: from the comfortable, progressive household where she was raised with a secular education, including access to sex education, to her aunt's working-class neighborhood, which is mired in violence, religion and superstitions, all expressed in the dialect that Giovanna's parents forbade her to speak at home.

Ferrante's ability to draw in her reader remains unparalleled, and the emotional story is well served by Ann Goldstein's smooth and

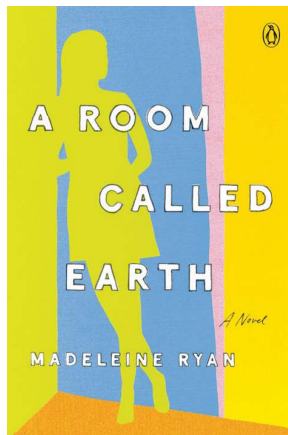
engaging translation. The novel simmers with overt rage toward parental deception, teachers' expectations and society's impossible ideals of beauty and behavior. For readers who are familiar with Ferrante's work, there will be much that is recognizable: the belief that poverty can be transcended through education, the power of a talismanic object (in this case, a bracelet that may or may not have belonged to Giovanna's paternal grandmother) and the absurd linkage of physical beauty with purity and goodness. There is even an unattainable man who holds the promise of escape.

But **The Lying Life of Adults** is very much its own story. Giovanna's self-reliance and her efforts to become the kind of adult she has yet to meet will resonate with thoughtful readers.

—Lauren Bufferd

A Room Called Earth

By Madeleine Ryan



Literary Fiction

In Madeleine Ryan's debut novel, **A Room Called Earth** (Penguin, \$17, 9780143135456), the young autistic narrator relishes getting ready for a house party in Melbourne, Australia. She at-

tends to a series of preparation rituals: picking out her outfit, dabbing the backs of her ears with her grandmother's perfume, making a vegan sandwich, dancing in front of the living room mirror, collecting martini ingredients and having the taxi drop her a block from the party so she can enjoy the approach. Her high heels hurt soon after she arrives. She endures hearing about an acquaintance's latest crush. She is about to leave when she meets a man in line for the bathroom, and they enjoy a refreshing conversation.

In the vein of Virginia Woolf, the narrator's incisive commentary pierces through descriptions of quotidian affairs. "We can't go without experiencing ourselves for a millisecond," she says, and she never fights her subjective perspective. She inquires into what people really mean by what they say, pokes through the rooms of the party house and analyzes every encounter she witnesses.

The freedom to experience the narrator's inner world makes room for objective reality. Melbourne's neighborhoods come alive. Mud and stars, butterflies and books inhabit the

narrator's consciousness like companions. There's a sacredness surrounding the individuals she meets and with whom she speaks, shown by the treatment of dialogue on the page. Short exchanges are set apart from the rest of the text with double spaces, while long speeches are crammed into single-space blocks, a visual expression of how people can crowd and overwhelm the narrator. But with the man she meets in the bathroom line, the anxiousness and intensity of the party give way to the pleasure of shared company.

A Room Called Earth, written by a neurologically diverse author, culminates in unexpected intimacy, not only between the narrator and her new friend but also between the reader and an extraordinary mind.

—Mari Carlson

★ Impersonation

By Heidi Pitlor



Satirical Fiction

Your favorite celebrity memoir was most likely written by a ghostwriter, an author who anonymously pens books for others (often famous folks) to publish under their own names. Taking a

bunch of garbled notes from a celeb and writing up something legible is interesting work, to say the least.

Ghostwriters have to be adaptable and discreet about their clients. This hasn't been a problem for ghostwriter Allie Lang, a single mom in suburban New England who is the main character in Heidi Pitlor's **Impersonation** (Algonquin, \$26.95, 9781616207915). Or rather, adaptability and discretion haven't been a problem for Allie before—until she is hired to ghostwrite a book for famous activist Lana Breban about raising a feminist son.

Allie admires her ballsy new client, and adopting the voice of a trailblazing feminist comes naturally to her. Allie wants to raise a feminist son, too. Yet it becomes clear over time that the two women are not fighting the same battles. In fact, they might not even be fighting on the same battlefield. Lana has a financially generous book deal, an assistant and Hollywood pals on speed dial. Furthermore, she's spent little to no time actually raising her son. She has a nanny for that.

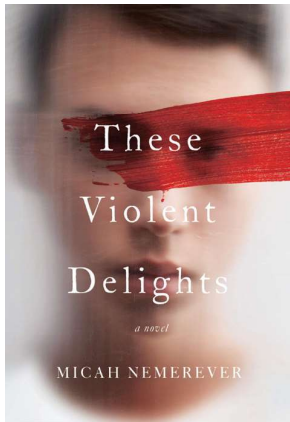
Pitlor's genius is that **Impersonation** doesn't

resort to pitting two women against each other. One woman's career is circumscribed by care work, and the other's career is not. But when Allie laments that "integrity—and real feminism—were clearly for people more financially secure than I," it's apparent that the issues between this ghostwriter and her client are emblematic of so much more. **Impersonation** isn't just a critique of the "white feminism" of privileged women who prioritize money and success in existing power structures. It's also more than a critique of the publishing industry, which only cares that Lana seems "maternal" enough to sell parenting books. **Impersonation** is a critique of our society's fragile social safety net for so many vulnerable women, full of satirical humor and a lot of harsh truths.

—Jessica Wakeman

These Violent Delights

By Micah Nemerever



Thriller

Few novelists make an impression as quickly and effectively as Micah Nemerever does in his stirring debut, an explosively erotic and erudite thriller. Kicking off with an electrifying prologue, **These Violent Delights**

(Harper, \$27.99, 9780062963635) is infused with a thick sense of dread and urgency that does not let up until the final page.

The novel centers on two social outcasts, Paul and Julian, who first connect in their freshman ethics class in 1970s Pittsburgh. Painfully shy and awkward, Paul gravitates toward Julian's effortless charisma and good looks like a moth to a flame. Much to the consternation of their families, the boys' friendship soon morphs into something far more intimate and dangerously co-dependent, as each amplifies the other's worst ideologies, insecurities and impulses. As their relationship becomes increasingly destructive, Paul begins to search for an act of fealty that will irrevocably bond him to Julian, but neither is prepared for the devastation their act of devotion will yield.

Channeling masters of suspense like Patricia Highsmith and Alfred Hitchcock, Nemerever ratchets up the narrative tension at a deliberately agonizing pace as he unspools the story of Paul and Julian's ill-fated relationship, all leading up to the night teased in the novel's

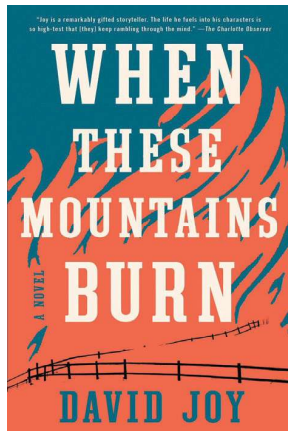
opening pages. The two young men frequently engage in deeply cerebral conversations ranging from philosophy and psychology to entomology, and the narrative lends itself well to close reading, as often the most critical developments between the two men stem from the subtext of these weighty talks.

Though the escalating relationship between Paul and Julian is mesmerizing in its own right, Nemerever's novel so effectively evokes a state of unease that many readers will keep turning pages in desperate pursuit of the tension-breaking relief that can only come from seeing the story to its conclusion. Aptly titled, **These Violent Delights** is exhilarating, but not without pain and peril.

—Stephenie Harrison

When These Mountains Burn

By David Joy



Crime Fiction

Stories about drug addiction and the emotional toll it exacts on both the addict and their family members are inherently tragic. But in the hands of a master storyteller, they can be unforgettably

powerful as well. Such is the case with David Joy's **When These Mountains Burn** (Putnam, \$27, 9780525536888).

Joy follows up his Southern Book Prize-winning novel, *The Line That Held Us*, with a tale fraught with brutal consequences and heart-wrenching loss. All the stages of grief are given ample space here: shock, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.

Set against the backdrop of the 2016 forest fire in the North Carolina foothills, the novel swiftly introduces widower Raymond Mathis, whose 40-something son, Ricky, owes \$10,000 to his drug dealer. If Raymond doesn't cover his son's debts, he'll have to bury Ricky instead. Raymond ultimately gives in, makes the trade and brings Ricky home, only for Ricky to steal all the painkillers in the house to support his habit. At his wit's end, Raymond boots Ricky out, and this is the last time he sees his son alive.

At the same time, junkie Denny Rattler, a Cherokee man who is with Ricky when he dies, is roped into doing the bidding of Ricky's drug dealer. Raymond and Denny are on a collision course with far-reaching ramifications, but with a brutal drug kingpin and the Drug

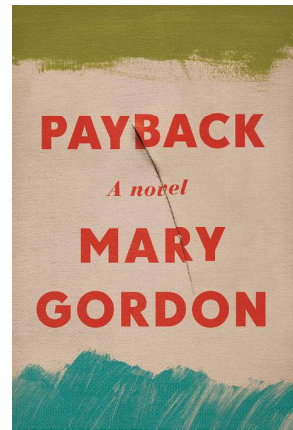
Enforcement Agency ramping up the pressure, finding a way out is more difficult than either Raymond or Denny could have thought.

The novel moves at a brisk pace as it alternates points of view between Raymond and Denny. But what stands out here isn't the story—harrowing though it is, this tale has been told before—but rather Joy's unflinching and gritty depiction of his fully realized characters, from their raw loss to their helplessness and rage to their final acceptance. Joy has thoroughly captured their experiences in vivid, memorable prose that burns to be read.

—G. Robert Frazier

Payback

By Mary Gordon



Literary Fiction

In her long writing career, Mary Gordon has frequently embraced themes surrounding women's lives, feminism and family love. Her new novel, **Payback** (Pantheon, \$27.95,

9781524749224), returns to those themes as it follows the lives of two women.

In 1972, Agnes Vaughan, an idealistic young art history teacher at a Rhode Island girls' school, wonders whether she's making any difference in her students' lives. She decides to take Heidi Stolz, an overprivileged, antagonistic girl and the school's "least obviously lovable" student, under her wing. Agnes sets up a project that will send Heidi to the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. But the project backfires when Heidi finds herself out of her depth and is raped by a man. When she returns home and asks Agnes for help, Agnes instead blames Heidi. Heidi runs off, and Agnes is so appalled by her error that she quits her job to look for the girl, who has disappeared.

The story moves forward to 2015, as Agnes prepares to leave Rome, where she's lived since 1972. She has slowly constructed a new life but still secretly despairs at having betrayed Heidi's trust. The novel then moves into Heidi's perspective, and we learn how she reinvented herself as reality TV star Quin Archer, host of "Payback," a show that lets victims confront their victimizers. Heidi's current goal is to make Agnes pay for what she did.

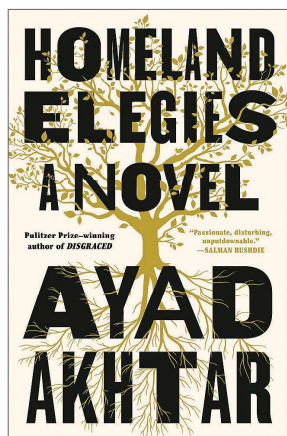
Payback resists categorization; it's part satire

and part meditative character study with a lot of interiority. Agnes' sin is of its time, and readers may wonder how it merited decades of obsession. Still, **Payback** offers many pleasures, not only the range in voices but also the evocation of two eras, the early 1970s and the current decade, with the right amount of period detail. Agnes' sections offer some of the novel's most beautiful writing, with wonderful observations on families, life in Italy, aging and the passage of time. This is an intriguing addition to Gordon's body of work.

—Sarah McCraw Crow

Homeland Elegies

By Ayad Akhtar



Literary Fiction

Awakenings can be brutal. Consider Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright and author Ayad Akhtar, growing up in Wisconsin as the child of Muslim doctors who came to the U.S. from Pakistan in 1968,

riding his bike around the neighborhood and listening to a father who thought America was the greatest place in the world. Along the way to becoming a celebrated American playwright, Akhtar would learn harsh realities about the only country he has ever called home, a country where the treatment of people of color is very different from that of white people.

In **Homeland Elegies** (Little, Brown, \$28, 9780316496421), Akhtar mixes fact and fiction about the awakening that marked his journey to Broadway. He has divided the book into eight chapters, bookended by an overture and coda about a professor who has conflicting feelings about her role as a teacher and who taught Akhtar that America is still “a place defined by its plunder.”

Racism dominates each story. Among the characters is one of Akhtar's father's best friends from medical school, a devout Muslim who grows disenchanted with America and who was secretly the love of Akhtar's mother's life. There are also white police officers and mechanics in Scranton, Pennsylvania, whose prejudices become alarmingly manifest when Akhtar's car overheats on the highway, as well as an unscrupulous Muslim businessman who gives white America a taste of its own capitalism by exacting revenge on U.S. towns

that wouldn't build mosques.

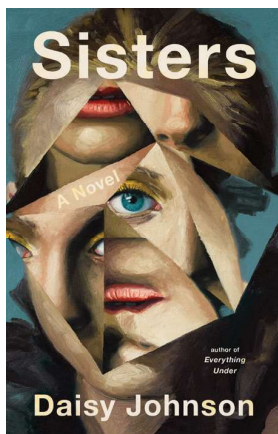
The book's most nuanced sections involve Akhtar's father, a complicated man who grows to like Donald Trump after treating the future president for a mysterious ailment in the 1990s. In a powerful closing chapter, Akhtar documents his father's disillusion with Trump as part of a larger story of a malpractice suit in which the elder Akhtar's religion is a complicating factor.

Despite long tangents, **Homeland Elegies** shows what American life is like for people with dark skin, as when Akhtar and his father park their car poorly outside a convenience store, a miscue that gives a gun-toting white man an excuse to hurl racist imprecations. For readers unaware of such assaults, Akhtar's latest will be a rude awakening, and an important one.

—Michael Magras

★ Sisters

By Daisy Johnson



Family Drama

Daisy Johnson's control of language keeps the reader utterly engaged in her new novel, **Sisters** (Riverhead, \$26, 9780593188958), from the story's opening words—a list in which each item begins with “My sister is”

and ranges from “a black hole” to “a forest on fire”—all the way to the final searing sentences.

July and her older sister, September, have moved with their mother to the coast of England and into the old, deteriorating home where both September and her father were born. In this house, we see the ways that setting shapes everything that can, or might, unfold. We see where boundaries are and where they all but disappear.

The concept of boundaries is at the center of July and September's relationship. So much of their interaction is predicated on September's control. Interesting, too, is the mother's voice and perspective in this story: when we hear from her and when we don't; what she knows and what is hidden from her view.

As the novel unfolds, Johnson brings readers more fully into the complexities and contradictions of the sisters' relationship. Where does one girl stop and the other begin? How does biology bind us? How do our actions impact someone else's life? And how does a person

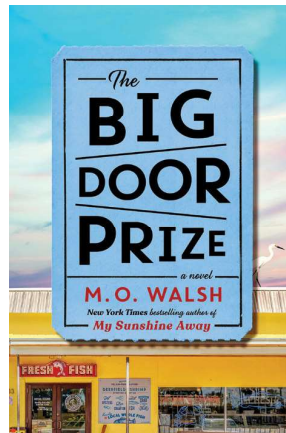
find their own voice? The novel raises many questions, and even as it poses some answers through July and September's story, many other curiosities—delightfully—remain.

Sisters casts a spell, and Johnson's ability to make her language twist and turn, to hint and suggest at something much larger, is truly remarkable.

—Freyja Sachs

The Big Door Prize

By M.O. Walsh



Popular Fiction

In **The Big Door Prize** (Putnam, \$27, 9780735218482), a new machine at a small-town Louisiana grocery store adds excitement to bicentennial preparations. After customers submit a mouth

swab sample, DNAMIX provides each person with a printout of his or her true potential, or “Life Station.” What's the worst that could possibly happen? Better yet, what's the best?

Using John Prine song lyrics as chapter titles, the novel explores idioms, preconceptions and other cultural deposits through the stories of a homemaker, a teacher, a student, a musician and scores of other citizens who try on who they “really” are. Doug and Cheryl appear to be the ideal couple, but Cheryl struggles with odd symptoms behind Doug's back, and Doug's trombone-playing aspirations get in the way of his history teaching. Jacob's twin brother, Toby, has recently died, and when Toby's girlfriend starts giving Jacob undue attention, he begins to question how similar or different he is from his twin. Father Pete, a chaplain at Jacob's Catholic school, is expected to be a font of wisdom, but he's mostly interested in listening—really listening. This cast of characters has a chance to be anyone, but can they be themselves?

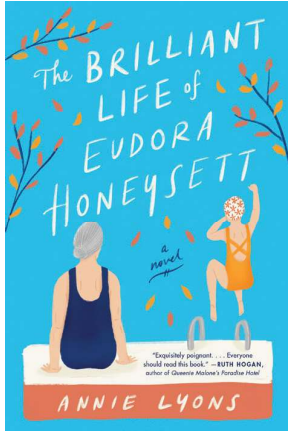
The promises supplied by DNAMIX parallel the marketing-manufactured allure of online life, but ultimately, **The Big Door Prize** celebrates unlikely heroes, like Tipsy, the drunkard who takes up driving as a way to abstain, and Doug's trombone teacher, who brings to mind the famous bassist Victor Wooten in his almost magical pedagogy and thrilling sounds. Over the course of the novel, these characters become genuine role models who contrast with the personalities celebrated by social media.

More than solving societal ills, **The Big Door Prize** calls attention to the ordinary, hard-won joys of real people. M.O. Walsh's second novel is a feel-good read in a down-home setting, with serious undertones.

—Mari Carlson

The Brilliant Life of Eudora Honeysett

By Annie Lyons



Comic Fiction

British humor is so darn good at bringing to light the absurdities of everyday life without being oppressive or depressing. Annie Lyons' new novel, **The Brilliant Life of Eudora Honeysett** (William Morrow, \$26.99,

9780063026063), is no exception.

In southeast London, 85-year-old Eudora Honeysett has quite literally had enough of life. Living alone in the same house where she grew up, Eudora is increasingly baffled and annoyed by how the world around her has become louder and lazier. Though her brain is sharp, her body is a daily reminder of what's to come: an undignified death surrounded by strangers. Without any friends or family to account for, Eudora signs up with a Swiss clinic to end her life on her own terms. She is completely ecstatic at the thought of being gone before Christmas.

Just when things are looking up, so to speak, a new family moves in next door, including Rose Trewidney, a sweet and hyper 10-year-old girl who is instantly intrigued by the grumpy old woman. Eudora finds Rose's curiosity extremely nosy and obnoxious, but trying to resist Rose is even harder than summoning death.

Intertwined with these events are Eudora's memories of her childhood, including heartbreaks, wartime survival and missed opportunities. These flashbacks give the reader something deeper to mull over concerning their own wins and losses, and how our perceptions change during different stages of life.

Even with death and loneliness at its core, **The Brilliant Life of Eudora Honeysett** is filled with personable characters, witty dialogue and relatable moments. It's a vibrant and humorous celebration of being alive and learning to say goodbye.

—Chika Gujarathi

No challenge too great

Two novels reflect on women's strength, cultivated through their faith in God and in themselves.

For centuries, women's roles have been defined for them, their voices and capacities restricted by discriminatory societal standards. In two new inspirational novels, women from different historical eras strive to overcome personal limitations in order to define their own identities.

Inspired by a true story, Jane Kirkpatrick's uplifting **Something Worth Doing** (Revell, \$15.99, 9780800736118) introduces Abigail Jane "Jenny" Scott Duniway, an incredibly determined pioneer woman who defies opposition to fight for women's rights.

From a young age, Jenny experiences the societal barriers placed before girls and women. Despite protests from Jenny's mother, Jenny's father decides that the family will move from Illinois to the Oregon Territory. The journey jeopardizes his wife's health, and she dies before the family arrives at their new home. In 1853, Jenny's confidence and intelligence lead her to a position as a teacher, one of the few professions accessible to women at the time. After marrying Ben Duniway and joining him on his farm, Jenny begins to write about women's issues for the local newspaper. This is a big step away from her upbringing, as her father opposed any form of public expression by women.

Even in the face of devastating financial loss, Jenny never gives up, and her tenacity pulls her family through difficult times, including Ben's injury and incapacitation. In 1871, Jenny founds *The New Northwest*, a newspaper that gives women's issues a platform, including the controversial topic of women's suffrage.

Jenny is bold in her attempts to challenge and bring down sexist social norms, and her efforts receive immense opposition, including hostility from her influential brother. She remains unfazed, continuing to navigate the limitations of being a woman while fighting for reform. Though discouraged many times, she uses every opportunity to empower women, and her efforts become pivotal in the arduous

struggle to attain the right to vote for women.

Jaime Jo Wright's thrilling and mysterious **The Haunting at Bonaventure Circus** (Bethany House, \$15.99, 9780764233890) is set in the fictional town of Bluff River, Wisconsin, and intertwines the stories of two women who live a century apart.

On the surface, Pippa Ripley's life appears privileged. Adopted into the family of a wealthy circus owner, Pippa is surrounded by the finer things that life in 1928 has to offer. Although she remains submissive and obedient to her tyrannical father, Pippa also feels a bond with the "misfit" circus people. Still, Pippa is burdened by, even obsessed with, finding out about her origins, but her adoptive parents are unwilling to reveal the truth.

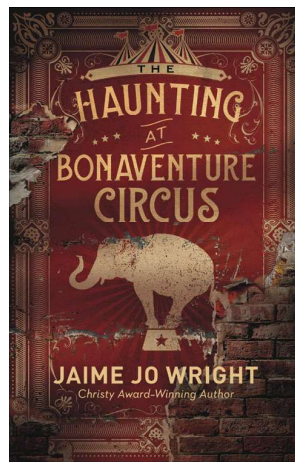
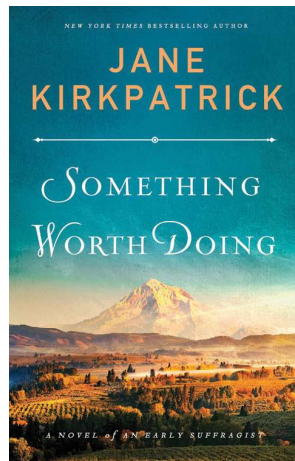
Pippa becomes entangled in a dangerous chase as she tries to get close to the man she believes has the answers to her questions. Meanwhile, the circus faces fierce opposition from an animal rights group, and a serial killer lurks aboard the circus train. Pippa's engagement to a dictatorial man, chosen for her by her father, further complicates matters. Through it all, Pippa remains resolute about discovering her roots, and she soon learns to stand up to her oppressors.

In the present day, real estate project manager and single parent Chandler Faulk hopes to catch a break in Bluff River, where she's been given a rare opportunity to work for her uncle. She

wants to provide the best care she can for her young son, Peter, but an autoimmune disease slows her down. She soon learns that the circus train depot, which she has been hired to renovate, was the site of a string of murders that left their mark on the town's history. Bluff River may be fraught with ghost stories, but Chandler is willing to do whatever it takes to prove her competence and take care of Peter.

With the support of amazing friends, Pippa and Chandler both display courage as they face frightening ordeals. Wright entertains with fast pacing, great writing, deep spiritual truths and just the right amount of spookiness.

—Edith Kanyagia

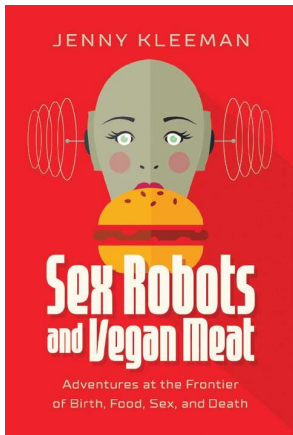


The foreseeable future

Two books depict a future that's strange enough to be science fiction and yet is utterly real.

As technology disrupts and defines how we live our lives, two nonfiction books explore how it has shaped society up to this point and how it will affect what it means to be human in the future.

In a nondescript building in an office park in Southern California lies the future of human relationships. Or that's what Abyss Creations founder Matthew McMullen would have us believe. In **Sex Robots and Vegan Meat: Adventures at the Frontier of Birth, Food, Sex, and Death** (Pegasus, \$27.95, 9781643135724), journalist Jenny Kleeman speaks to CEOs like McMullen, as well as scientists, professors and ethicists, to investigate new technologies that are poised to change essential industries and human interactions.

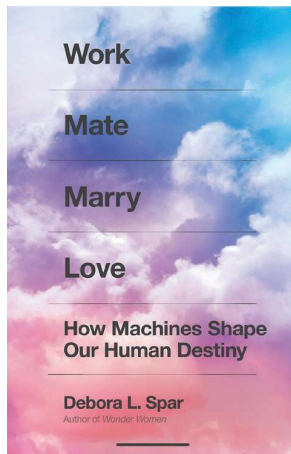


As McMullen competes with other robotics companies to bring the first fully functional, lifelike sex robot to market, the world must contend with the ethical implications of subservient sex robots that are designed to look and act human but that consist of artificial intelligence, silicone and complex circuitry instead of warm flesh and blood. In other chapters, Kleeman investigates the new industry of

plant-based, vegan “meat,” which tastes like a burger or steak without the abattoir, animal suffering or impact on global climate change. She then moves on to the future of childbirth (which involves artificial wombs called “biobags”) and a 3D-printed device that could make euthanasia more accessible. Thoroughly entertaining and written with humor and sly intuition, **Sex Robots and Vegan Meat** is an account of the future that will have you questioning whether technology is helping or hindering human progress.

As current technologies, especially artificial intelligence and robotics, continue to develop, they will force changes in how we structure our work and family lives. One example from history is the plow. It changed humans from egalitarian, freewheeling hunters and gatherers into a society of small families with strict gender roles and private land to cultivate. In **Work Mate Marry Love: How Machines Shape Our Human Destiny** (FSG, \$28, 9780374200039), Harvard Business School professor Debora L. Spar examines historical links between technology, gender, work and family to imagine what the future might look like.

Starting in 8,000 B.C. and writing all the way into the present, Spar argues that nearly all the decisions we make in our intimate lives, including sex and marriage, are driven by technology. This detailed and deeply researched book lands at the intersection of history, feminist theory and futurism and will enrich your understanding of humanity's pliant adaptability. Most of all, **Work Mate Marry Love** lends insight into whether technology can help us live more equal, fulfilling lives in the future.



—Sarojini Seupersad

Space for every body

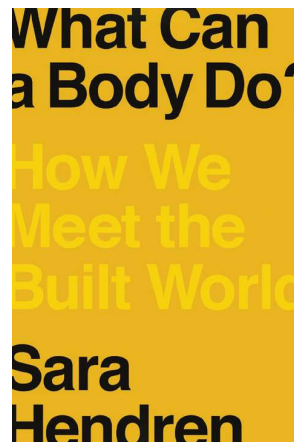
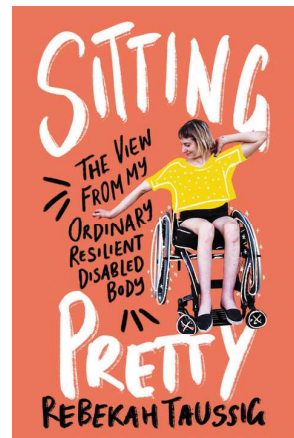
How do our built spaces limit who is able to use them?

One in four adults, or 61 million people, are disabled in the United States, yet the myth of the able body persists. The fact is, all bodies have different needs and abilities over their lifetimes. As these books show, creating an imaginative and accessible world helps everyone.

In **Sitting Pretty: The View From My Ordinary Resilient Disabled Body** (HarperOne, \$25.99, 9780062936790), Rebekah Taussig shares her experiences of disability in eight provoking and lyrical essays. As a child, Taussig moved her body with joy and confidence. But as she grew older, her environment told her a different story about her body. She noticed how many spaces weren't made for her needs, saw the pitying looks strangers gave her and heard ableist narratives from the media, in which disabled bodies like hers were either weak or objects for other people's inspiration. Gradually, she stopped feeling comfortable in her body. In her book, Taussig discusses everything from how the disabled body is left out of feminist conversations, to uncomfortable experiences with kindness, to love, sex and marriage as a disabled person. This collection is essential reading, and its intimate writing style will help readers see disabled folks as the human beings they have always been.

In **More Than a Defect**, Taussig describes teaching her high school students two models of disability: the medical model and the social model. The medical model is the most common way of viewing dis-

ability; it views the disabled body as an object to be fixed. In the social model, the environment that surrounds a disabled body is the object that needs to be fixed. When we use the social model, we begin to see how our culture stereotypes disabled bodies and creates inaccessible environments.



What Can a Body Do? How We Meet the Built World (Riverhead, \$27, 9780735220003) by Sara Hendren focuses on these created environments through seven essays that look at specific objects of design. In the chapter titled “Chair,” she tells the story of a cardboard chair created by the Adaptive Design Association and how it benefits Niko, a toddler with a rare genetic condition called STXPB1. The chair is sustainable, affordable and adaptable to individual needs.

Through stories like Niko's, Hendren shows that the purpose of accessible design should not be to fix a body, but rather to meet

the body where it is. Reshaping and expanding the built world can accommodate many ways of being human. For example, sidewalk curb cuts were created for wheelchair access, but parents with strollers and travelers with rolling suitcases also benefit from their implementation. By applying “what if” questions to practical design, we can build spaces that accommodate every body. **What Can a Body Do?** is a fascinating look at the ingenuity behind these accessible designs.

—Margaret Kingsbury

★ Caste

By Isabel Wilkerson

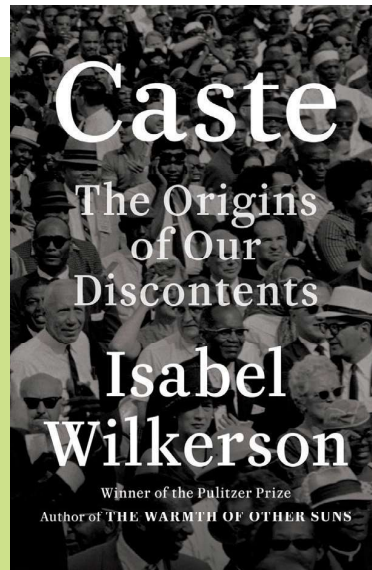
Social Science

In *The Warmth of Other Suns*, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Isabel Wilkerson eloquently traced the lives of the 6 million Black Americans who fled the Jim Crow South during the Great Migration. Never once in that 640-page book did she mention the word *racism*. “I realized that the term was insufficient,” she explains. “Caste was the more accurate term.”

Her latest book, **Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents** (Random House, \$32, 9780593230251), is a much anticipated follow-up and couldn't be timelier. In it, she examines the “race-based caste pyramid in the United States,” comparing this sociological construction to two other notable caste systems: those of India and Nazi Germany. “As we go about our daily lives,” Wilkerson writes, “caste is the wordless usher in a darkened theater, flashlight cast down in the aisles, guiding us to our assigned seats for a performance. The hierarchy of caste is

not about feelings or morality. It is about power—which groups have it and which do not.”

Wilkerson's comparisons are profound and revelatory. Chapters describe what she has identified as “the eight pillars of caste,” the methods used to maintain this hierarchy, such as heritability, dehumanization and stigma, and control of marriage and mating. In addition to such insights, including how immigrants fit into the caste system, what makes this book so memorable is Wilkerson's extraordinary narrative gift. Highly readable, **Caste** is filled with a multitude of stories, many of which are tragically familiar, such as those of Trayvon Martin and Freddie Gray.



The story of Sergeant Isaac Woodard Jr. is particularly shattering. Returning home on a Greyhound bus after serving in World War II, Woodard asked the driver to allow him to step off the bus to relieve himself, but the driver refused. When Woodard protested, the driver called the police and had him arrested. The police chief, in turn, blinded the returning soldier with his billy club.

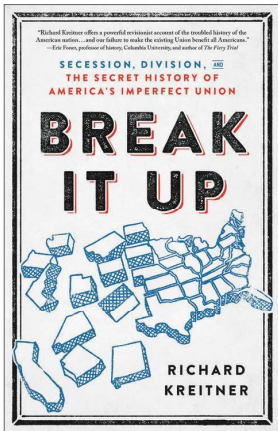
Stories like these are painfully informative, making the past come alive in ways that do not beg but scream for justice. That said, Wilkerson is never didactic. She lets history speak for itself, turning the events of the past into necessary fuel for our current national dialogue.

Dismantling the caste system is possible. Wilkerson points out that Germany did it after World War II. But in the meantime, “caste is a disease, and none of us is immune.” If you read only one book this year, make it **Caste**, Wilkerson's outstanding analysis of the grievances that plague our society.

—Alice Cary

Break It Up

By Richard Kreitner



American History

The dream of independence, not union, inspired the early European settlers of what is now the United States to leave their old world for a new one. The colonies were founded for different reasons, had different

economies and pursued distinctively different interests. Race, religion, class, regional resentment and culture have always divided us. Our most powerful myth, that the many melded into one, has never been true. In his engaging and enlightening **Break It Up: Secession, Division, and the Secret History of America's Imperfect Union** (Little, Brown, \$30, 9780316510608), journalist and historian Richard Kreitner explores this hidden thread of disunion in a fresh, well-documented and persuasive way, focusing on four distinct eras during which some sought to break away from the larger Union.

Consider the following narrative: The Amer-

ican Revolution was a spontaneous response to colonists' realization that they could not separately fight the British Empire and win. The creation of the U.S. was a means to an end, not an end in itself. The drafting and ratification of the Constitution were done in secret in the midst of secessionist movements in the West and insurrection in the East. The Founding Fathers were careful to protect their own interests, including their interest in owning enslaved people.

The first popular disunion movement in our history developed in the North when the Federalists, out of power during the Jefferson presidency, discussed leaving. The War of 1812 led to the Hartford Convention and more secession talk. There was also Aaron Burr's scheme to form a new Western empire.

For years, Southerners cared more about continuing slavery than Northerners did about stopping it, until the abolitionist movement changed politics. Northern resentment boiled over after years of Southern intimidation. In this way, the Civil War could be seen as a Northern resistance movement after years of compromises with the South to try and hold the Union together.

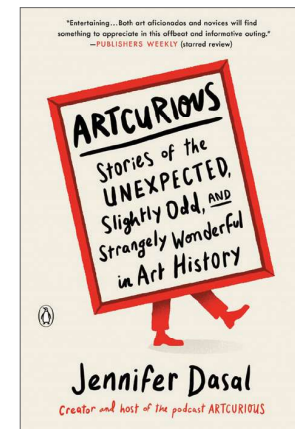
There is so much more in this provocative and often surprising book, including the ways that secessionist movements have continued into the present. Kreitner challenges readers to rethink what the Union means to us and how we can help it live up to its highest ideals.

Reading **Break It Up** is an excellent place to start.

—Roger Bishop

ArtCurious

By Jennifer Dasal



Art

Art isn't everyone's thing, as art historian Jennifer Dasal is quick to admit in her new book, **ArtCurious: Stories of the Unexpected, Slightly Odd, and Strangely Wonderful in Art History** (Penguin, \$17,

9780143134596). But what she also points out, and what resonates throughout the text, is that art “is one of the few things that connects us profoundly to one another and reveals our common humanity.”

Dasal says that one of the best parts of her job is meeting fellow art lovers, but she likes “meeting committed non-art types just as much.” She used to be an “art doubter” herself and can relate to how they feel. On the path

that led her to study art history, she became captivated by stories about what drives artists, what certain subjects and themes reveal about art collectors, how art was received in the past and how it's perceived over time.

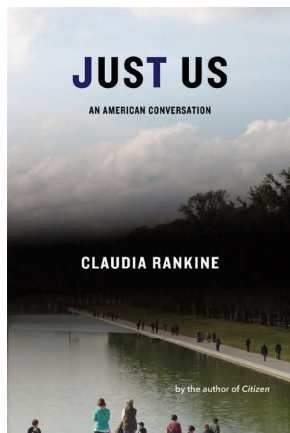
Art history is chock-full of quirks and mysteries, from murders and stolen masterpieces to rebels and hoarders. As a result, **ArtCurious** unspools like a juicy novel, detailing the backstories of several art history notables, their families, mentors, fellow artists, lovers and more. Organized into three categories—the unexpected, the slightly odd and the strangely wonderful—many of the characters are more than just artists. They are collectors, scientists and inventors, too. These eccentric geniuses hail from all over the globe, from countries with prominent places in art history, such as France and Italy, to relative newcomers to the art world like the United States. And they lived during a range of time periods, from Renaissance man Leonardo da Vinci to the ultra-modern Andy Warhol.

Dasal writes with humor and honesty, offering truth mixed with speculation. (There are some things we still don't know, such as whether Vincent van Gogh killed himself or was killed by another person.) All this adds up to a fascinating, lively take on a topic that is too often reduced to dry facts. Art history buffs or anyone who likes a good thriller will find **ArtCurious** a welcome escape.

—Becky Libourel Diamond

Just Us

By Claudia Rankine



Essays

Mixing essays, poetry and images, Claudia Rankine's new book, **Just Us: An American Conversation** (Graywolf, \$30, 9781644450215), asks how our notions of whiteness play out in these United States. In

the book's meditative opening poem, she asks *what if*: "What if what I want from you is new, newly made / a new sentence in response to all my questions. . . . I am here, without the shrug, / attempting to understand how what I want / and what I want from you run parallel— / justice and the openings for just us."

The compelling essay "liminal spaces" comes early in the book. "The running comment in our current political climate is that

we all need to converse with people we don't normally speak to," she writes. Rankine is a Black woman, and though her husband is white, she says, "I found myself falling into easy banter with all kinds of strangers except white men. They rarely sought me out to shoot the breeze, and I did not seek them out. Maybe it was time to engage, even if my fantasies of these encounters seemed outlandish. I wanted to try." A frequent flyer, Rankine finds these men in line for flights or sits next to them on airplanes. In **Just Us**, she details their exchanges alongside her private thoughts.

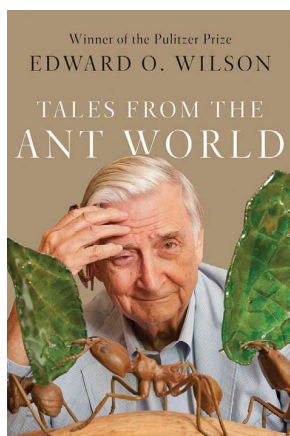
If Rankine's essays are wide-ranging (blondness, police violence, Latinx stereotypes) and well researched, they're also conversational and personal. Images run throughout the text, including photo essays, screenshots of tweets from Roxane Gay and Donald Trump and frequent side notes, in which Rankine fact-checks her own assumptions. These images and asides expand on the essays while offering a glimpse into Rankine's process as a writer.

Rankine is best known as a poet. She's the author of five poetry collections, including the book-length poem *Citizen* (2014), which won the National Book Critics Circle Award. She's also written three plays and many essays and reviews, and she used her MacArthur "genius" grant to found the Racial Imaginary Institute, which sponsors artists responding to concepts of whiteness and Blackness. She is one of our foremost thinkers, and **Just Us** is essential reading in 2020 and beyond.

—Sarah McCraw Crow

Tales From the Ant World

By Edward O. Wilson



Nature

Whether he's writing about island biogeography, sociobiology, human nature or biodiversity, naturalist Edward O. Wilson tells a cracking good story. He's a raconteur who compels us to stop for

a moment and listen in rapt wonder to his captivating tales of forays into forests, where he uncovers rotted logs or overturns mounds in search of the great variety of species in the ant world. With characteristic passion and humor, Wilson regales us with **Tales From the Ant World** (Liveright, \$26.95, 9781631495564), combining memoir and scientific discovery

into a spellbinding narrative of his lifelong devotion to myrmecology, the study of ants.

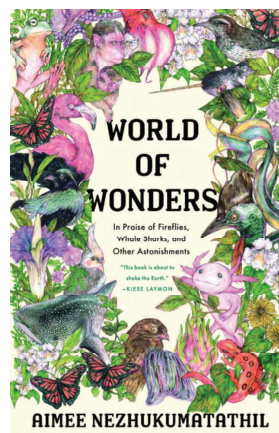
Most of us are familiar with the ants that track across our kitchen counters on warm spring days, but few of us take the time to consider those creatures' lives. Wilson unveils the ant fauna, revealing the astonishing number of ants in the world (more than 15,000 species, and some have estimated that the number is closer to 25,000 or 30,000), their social quirks (pouring out of their "hidden bivouac," uncoiling like a rope and moving "hard and fast" from "one stronghold to the next") and their ways of communicating (of all the social insects that communicate by pheromones, ants are the virtuosos of chemical communication).

Wilson's absorbing and delightful book shows how extraordinary (and populous!) this common creature really is. As he puts it, "If *Homo sapiens* had not arisen as an accidental primate species on the grasslands of Africa, and spread worldwide, visitors from other star systems, when they come (and mark my word, they will eventually come), should be inclined to call Earth 'planet of the ants.'" In his enchanting **Tales From the Ant World**, Wilson encourages readers to feed those ants in your kitchen and observe them. In doing so, you'll discover a great deal about the social world of insects and, perhaps, about yourselves.

—Henry L. Carrigan Jr.

★ World of Wonders

By Aimee Nezhukumatathil



Nature

Poet Aimee Nezhukumatathil's writing often praises the earth and its bounty. In her first nonfiction work, **World of Wonders: In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments** (Milkweed, \$25,

9781571313652), Nezhukumatathil expands her reflections into essays accompanied by illustrations by Fumi Nakamura.

Nezhukumatathil's delight in the world isn't dulled by the world's racism, but she doesn't shy away from sharing her experiences of being on the receiving end of discrimination. In third grade, for example, Nezhukumatathil drew a peacock, her favorite animal, for the class animal-drawing contest. She had just returned from southern India, her father's native country, and she was elated by its colorful an-

imals. Her teacher was less enamored. “Some of us will have to start over and draw American animals. We live in Ah-mer-i-kah!” the teacher declared after spotting Nezhukumatathil’s drawing.

Both of Nezhukumatathil’s parents are immigrants (her mother is from the Philippines), and throughout **World of Wonders**, she describes the foundation they laid for her and her sister. As their family moved across the country, her parents encouraged their daughters to experience the outdoors. No matter their ZIP code, Nezhukumatathil followed her curiosity and found a home in the natural world.

That childhood connection to nature echoes through her adulthood, where plants and animals connect Nezhukumatathil’s present to her past. The catalpa tree offered shade for Nezhukumatathil and her sister as they walked from their home in Kansas to the hospital where their mother worked. When Nezhukumatathil moves to Oxford, Mississippi, to teach at the university, she expects to need the catalpa tree to provide shelter from people’s curiosity about her brown skin. But no one stares at her in Mississippi. Instead, the trees provide shade as she rushes to class, just as they did years ago.

By examining the world around her, Nezhukumatathil finds an ongoing sense of connection to that world, signaling to her like a firefly: “They blink on and off, a lime glow to the summer night air, as if to say: I am still here, you are still here, I am still here, you are still here, I am, you are, over and over again.” **World of Wonders** is as sparkling as an armful of glass bangles and as colorful as the peacocks that first captured Nezhukumatathil’s imagination.

—Carla Jean Whitley

the kind of mentality needed to find stability in our modern world? What do we give up as we pursue economic gain? How can we find agency—write our own rules for living—while also making our way within enormous capitalist systems that are entrenched and seemingly immovable? These are the big questions Biss approaches in her compulsively readable memoir, **Having and Being Had** (Riverhead, \$26, 9780525537458), which blends research (the notes section is nearly 50 pages long), reflection and richly rendered personal experience.

Noting how a person’s economic norms are largely determined by their social group, Biss brings people from her life into this story—acquaintances she sits by at dinner parties, friends with whom she swaps books, academics at Northwestern and fellow parents. She thinks about her mother and brother, her husband and son, her house and belongings, her old neighbors and new neighbors, and the big abstract things that inevitably shape how she sees and moves through the world: gentrification, whiteness, privilege and consumption. Through all of this, she keeps a careful eye on how engaging in capitalist economic systems—even as someone experiencing success—brings an unavoidable sense of alienation.

For Biss, art can address this feeling of alienation. And the artfulness of Biss’ prose is fully on display in this memoir, which is made of tiny short-form pieces strung together like beads on a necklace, each one leading to the next yet also standing alone like a perfectly formed droplet. This is a book that asks to be read, absorbed and read again.

—Kelly Blewett

moment into tight focus before whooshing out to take a view so wide it engulfs the entire present.

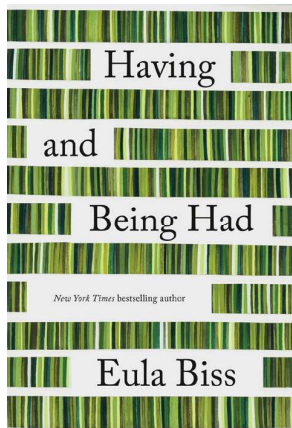
In bite-size essays, Macdonald offers meditations on home, placelessness, the refugee crisis and climate change, all projected through animals who appear in dual form: as their biological selves, examined, explained and marveled at; and their ancient, archetypal manifestations. For every paragraph detailing the flight instincts of swifts, there is another ruminating on the lessons humans derive from these creatures. The essay “Deer in Headlights” vibrates with dark, forested strangeness. Touching on the mystical meaning of deer in a distant time, the unfortunate but ordinary event of a car crash with a deer is transmuted into something terrible and Dionysian. The entire essay becomes shot through with a violent divinity, nodding to the darker feelings that feather around the edges of our emotions surrounding these accidents.

These animal depictions, two-sided and meditative, act as a relational vehicle to carry us through the shock of the Anthropocene, where we’ve come to think of animals as mere creatures. Macdonald espouses a more holistic approach to connecting with animals—one that marries natural science to the heartfelt stirrings that humans have long felt in a furred or feathered presence. “Animals don’t exist in order to teach us things, but that is what they have always done,” she writes, “and most of what they teach us is what we think we know about ourselves.”

—Anna Spydell

Having and Being Had

By Eula Biss



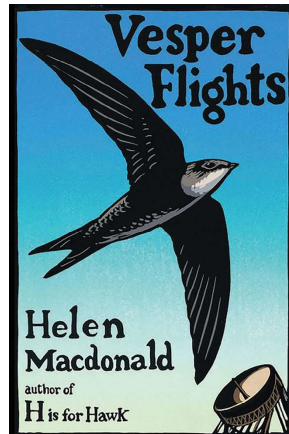
Memoir

Writer Eula Biss worked a variety of temporary jobs before achieving economic security as an English professor at Northwestern University. The moment her contract shifted from visiting artist to a more

permanent title, Biss and her family bought a house. As she came to terms with her new success, she also found herself reflecting on precarity—as well as money, art and capitalism. Why is being an artist so at odds with

★ Vesper Flights

By Helen Macdonald



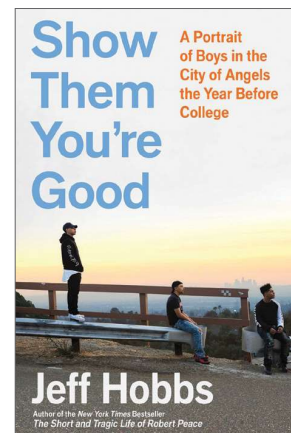
Nature

In her follow-up to 2015’s *H Is for Hawk*, Helen Macdonald examines intersections—of the natural world and the global one, of the scientific and the spiritual, of human and animal, of the modern world and

the ancient, enduring one. In **Vesper Flights** (Grove, \$27, 9780802128812), Macdonald’s literary pupil contracts and dilates over and over. An avid observer of minute detail, she makes an exact science of drawing a personal

★ Show Them You’re Good

By Jeff Hobbs



Biography

Drilling down into the second-largest school district in the country to shine an intimate light on a few senior boys in two very different high schools would have been a daunting task in less capable

hands. In **Show Them You’re Good: A Portrait of Boys in the City of Angels the Year Before College** (Scribner, \$28, 9781982116330), Jeff Hobbs does it so well that these soon-to-be men may be forever cast in the amber of their adolescence: slightly familiar from the start and, finally, utterly unforgettable.

Ánimo Pat Brown (APB), one of six Green Dot charter schools created to remedy “poor and falling graduation statistics” in the Los Angeles Unified School District, is known for its high graduation and college matriculation rates. For its students, many from immigrant families struggling to gain footholds in this country, APB is the rare path to opportunity.

Beverly Hills High School (BHHS) is rated in the top 10% of California schools, holding forth in a city that was founded as a whites-only covenant. Famous alumni include Betty White and Guns N’ Roses’ Slash. Its swim gym, where the floor opens to reveal a swimming pool, made a memorable appearance in the classic movie *It’s a Wonderful Life*.

From these two schools, “separated by much more than the twenty-two miles of city pavement between them,” come the stories of Carlos, Tio, Luis and Byron at APB, and Owen, Sam, Harrison, Bennett and Jonah at BHHS. These young men have different backgrounds and aspirations, but they’re all enveloped in the fog of the American higher education application process.

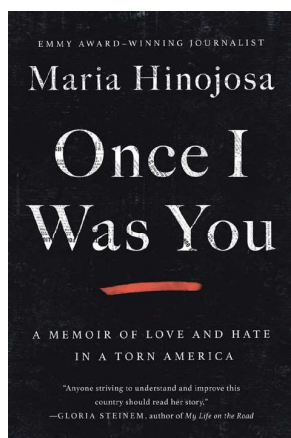
Following them through their senior year, Hobbs is allowed an unflinching look at the supporting players in their lives, from Sam’s strict mom and Tio’s troubled father to Carlos’ brother at Yale and Owen’s bedridden mother. Harrison is obsessed with finding a Division I school where he can play football, despite the BHHS team’s perennial losing streak. Byron tells his Cornell interviewer that his goal is to be Iron Man.

How they each arrived at this pivotal point in their lives may not predict what happens next, but it is our privilege, thanks to Hobbs, to follow them. Readers will come to care deeply about these students’ journeys.

—Priscilla Kipp

★ *Once I Was You*

By Maria Hinojosa



Memoir

In *Once I Was You: A Memoir of Love and Hate in a Torn America* (Atria, \$28, 9781982128654), Latina journalist Maria Hinojosa offers a searing, clear-eyed account of growing up in America after she

emigrated from Mexico as an infant. Weaving her own life story with key milestones in U.S.

immigration history, she produces a brave examination of the United States’ shortcomings.

Hinojosa’s family traveled to the U.S. so her father could work as a researcher at the University of Chicago. When she was a child, they would drive from their home in Hyde Park into Chicago to see the big city, where Hinojosa would gaze at public housing developments, “massive brown cement towers, twenty floors of fencing around balconies and doors. No windows. I wondered why they had no windows even though they were built overlooking this beautiful lake. It seemed like a purposeful punishment.” It was an early glimpse into the inequities of racism to which Hinojosa would devote her journalistic career.

Written in Latina journalist Maria Hinojosa’s honest, passionate voice, *Once I Was You* is, quite simply, beautiful.

Hinojosa moved to New York City to study at Barnard College, where she found her voice as a radio host at the college station, cementing her career path. She took jobs at NPR, CNN, CBS and PBS, where she produced pieces that celebrated diversity and shone a light on immigration issues, including a groundbreaking report on “Frontline” about the immigration industrial complex and physical and sexual abuse at detention centers. She developed PTSD from the countless interviews she conducted with detainees, who told her stories of their horrific treatment.

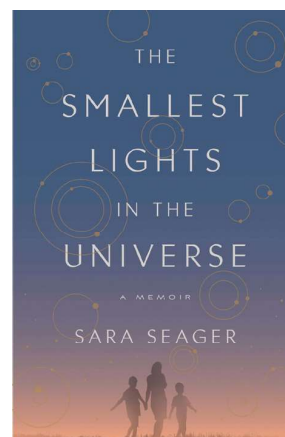
As Hinojosa reported these stories, she maintained the objectivity that’s so crucial to journalists’ credibility, but she also kept close her own immigrant experience and her belief that America is long overdue for a reckoning. “My husband [the artist German Pérez] says that the reason this is so hard for me is because I believed in the promise of this country,” Hinojosa writes. “I bought into the exceptionalism. It’s hard to accept how ornery and normal and mediocre this country really is. I thought we were better than this. But we aren’t.”

Once I Was You is, quite simply, beautiful. Written in Hinojosa’s honest, passionate voice, this memoir takes readers on a journey through one immigrant’s experience. Hinojosa was able to realize the American dream, but she urges us not to look away from all the others for whom America is a nightmare.

—Amy Scribner

The Smallest Lights in the Universe

By Sara Seager



Memoir

Sara Seager has a hard time connecting with people. Despite a meaningful relationship with her father, she often feels a bit removed from others, a bit challenged by social norms. Instead, Seager feels at home when she’s gaz-

ing upward. The night sky has held her attention since she was a child and a babysitter took her and her siblings camping several hours away from their Toronto home. When she saw the stars, Seager was certain she’d discovered a new world.

As an adult, this continuing desire to discover new worlds propelled Seager’s professional life, but she remained less gifted in social relationships. So she was surprised when she found a connection with Mike, a fellow member of the Wilderness Canoe Association in Toronto. As the pair paddled the Humber River, Seager realized they were in sync. Off the water, their interests seemed divergent—he was an editor, she was an astrophysicist—but they complemented each other. He understood the day-to-day concerns of living, while she dreamed of grand possibilities.

When Seager and Mike moved to Massachusetts for her academic career, she found herself torn between two loves: the stars and her growing family. Seager’s work as an astrophysicist was demanding, and Mike supported her stargazing. But when he was diagnosed with terminal cancer, Seager recognized the personal cost of searching the universe for planets that could sustain life. After Mike died, she was left to reconcile her thirst for discovery with her grief and the concerns that occupy everyday life.

In *The Smallest Lights in the Universe* (Crown, \$28, 9780525576259), Seager shares a passion for the universe so deep that even this reviewer, a physics dunce, could grasp why she would spend her life gazing toward other planets. Analytical yet lyrical, Seager’s memoir is an examination of the parallels between searching for new life in the multiverse and starting over with a new life on Earth—the sort of connection only an astrophysicist might make.

—Carla Jean Whitley

★ Never Look Back

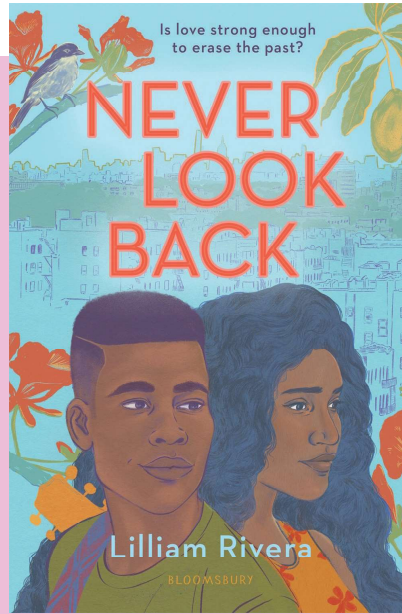
By Lilliam Rivera

Fiction

Lilliam Rivera's third young adult novel, **Never Look Back** (Bloomsbury, \$18.99, 9781547603732), breathes new life into the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, an ancient tale of a girl gone before her time and the boy who would do anything to save her. Rivera transforms this classic tale into a symphony that intertwines the melodies of her characters, their neighborhood in the Bronx and even readers themselves. It builds to a crescendo that reverberates into your very bones, the way only the most exquisite music can.

Pheus is ready to spend the summer at his dad's, hanging at the beach with his friends and

taking full advantage of his musical talents and charm. Then Eury and her struggles arrive. Displaced after losing her home in Puerto Rico to Hurricane Maria, Eury is staying with her cousin in the Bronx to get some rest and to give her mother a break after what the family calls



Eury's "episode." But Eury hasn't come to New York alone. Everywhere she goes, Ato, an evil spirit, follows. When Eury and Pheus meet and sparks fly, Ato makes a move to ensure he and Eury will stay together—forever.

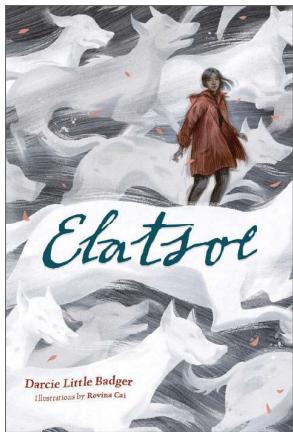
Never Look Back honors the Afro Latinx music, language, heritage and history of its characters. It reads like a concert, each chapter a different song, some languid and slow, keeping readers hanging on every word, others fast and staccato, whipping readers around at a dizzying pace, running to keep up and lost in a cacophonous flood of words. Defying expectation and categorization, **Never Look Back** is a book not to be read with the mind but to be experienced with the soul. It is a revelation.

—Kevin Delecki

★ Elatsoe

By Darcie Little Badger

Illustrated by Rovina Cai



Mystery

In an alternate Texas where major cities have Fairy Ring Transport Centers and the university offers an invasive monster program, Ellie, a Lipan Apache teenager, just wants to reincarnate prehistoric fossils

and teach her ghost dog new tricks. Then her cousin visits her in a dream, says that a man named Abe Allerton murdered him and asks her to protect his family from further harm.

Together with her parents and her friend Jay, Ellie travels to Willowbee to uncover the truth about Abe Allerton, who by all external appearances has led a virtuous life. As Ellie gathers evidence, pieces together clues and retells the myth-tinged adventures of her six-generations-back great-grandmother, whom she calls Six-Great, it becomes clear that the cousin's murder is part of a larger secret. With Willowbee's bicentennial just days away, the time is right to vanquish a horror that's preyed on Native people for far too long.

Darcie Little Badger's **Elatsoe** (Levine Queri-

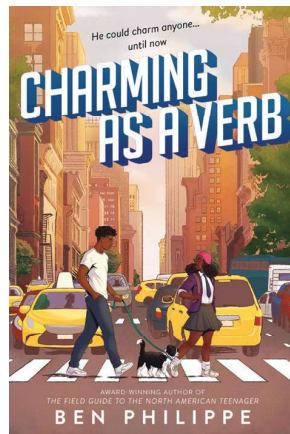
do, \$18.99, 9781646140053) is a clever mystery narrated by a teen whose voice radiates with wonderful self-confidence. Six-Great's stories highlight the importance of storytelling in Ellie's world, and observant readers will delight in the setting's sociopolitical details: Same-sex marriage is unremarkable, as is Ellie's asexuality, and the villain is marked in part by his environmentally unfriendly overuse of disposable eating utensils.

Like the self-published comics Ellie regularly devours, **Elatsoe** presents readers with a strong heroine, a supernatural mystery and a unique and powerful Native American voice.

—Jill Ratzan

Charming as a Verb

By Ben Philippe



Fiction

Henri Hattiwanger is the founder of his own dog-walking business, a valued member of the debate team and a popular kid at New York's prestigious FATE Academy. He attributes his success to

his capital-S Smiles and his carefully cultivated ability to charm just about anyone. That ability is especially important now, as Henri,

a first-generation Haitian American, counts down the days until he receives his Columbia University acceptance letter, which will fulfill his parents' "American dream" for him. But when a classmate named Corinne begins blackmailing him into helping her improve her social status, Henri discovers that his trademark charm may not be his ticket to the American dream after all, and that his dream may not be exactly what he thought it was.

As he did in his debut novel, the William C. Morris Award-winning *The Field Guide to the North American Teenager*, Ben Philippe once again places readers directly inside the mind of a lovable but flawed protagonist. Henri's conspiratorial and, yes, charming narration feels like he's letting us in on secret after secret as he navigates the challenges of senior year, college applications, family pressure and friendships. Henri makes some serious mistakes, and it's satisfying to watch him evolve into a more honest, open and vulnerable person.

Philippe has a true knack for developing rich casts of supporting characters who bring his protagonists' worlds to life. Here, this includes Henri's devoted parents, his sneaker-obsessed best friend, Ming, as well as the students and faculty who populate his high school experience. And of course, there's Corinne, an academic dynamo who marches to the beat of her own drum, reminiscent of other ambitious yet socially awkward teens such as Paris Geller of "Gilmore Girls" or *Rushmore's* Max Fischer. Philippe renders every character as a human being with their own aspirations and imperfections.

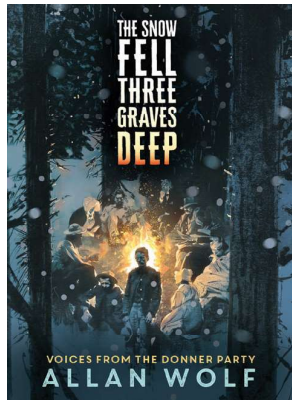
Give **Charming as a Verb** (Balzer + Bray, \$18.99, 9780062824141) to readers looking for a

dynamic YA romp, a touch of romance and the permission to question whether what they've always dreamed of is truly what they want.

—Sarah Welch

★ The Snow Fell Three Graves Deep

By Allan Wolf



Historical Fiction

In April of 1846, the Donner party—a group of 89 men, women and children with plenty of wagons, animals and food—headed west from Illinois. One year later, more than half the group

had died, mostly from starvation and fatigue. Infamously, the survivors resorted to eating their dead after heavy snowstorms trapped them in the Sierra Nevada.

The Donner party is sometimes treated as a curious footnote to history, perhaps rightfully so. Allan Wolf's *The Snow Fell Three Graves Deep* (Candlewick, \$21.99, 9780763663247) revisits this grisly chapter of westward expansion to take a fresh and thought-provoking look at the doomed travelers.

Wolf constructs his story in a multivoice verse format he calls “narrative pointillism.” Readers experience the perspectives of adults, children and even a pair of hardworking oxen. The format also gives voice to lesser known figures in Donner party lore, such as Luis and Salvador, two Native Americans who were conscripted to help the party and were fatally betrayed.

Over the book's nearly 400 pages, the Donner party members abandon animals, people, loyalties and hope itself. There are many deaths, including murders, and characters must grapple with the moral choice between cannibalism and survival. Readers in the mood for a light-hearted romp should look elsewhere.

In a stroke of brilliance, *Hunger* serves as a Greek chorus throughout the book. The hunger for food becomes the characters' primary focus once the expedition goes figuratively south. But this narrative device also cleverly speaks to the many motivations of various Donner party members, including hunger for land, prestige, love, warmth and closeness to God.

Although the surviving members of the group are eventually rescued, nothing is tied up with a neat and tidy bow. To his credit, Wolf does not sensationalize this story's numerous tragedies, nor spare the reader illuminating

details. *The Snow Fell Three Graves Deep* is historical fiction at its very best.

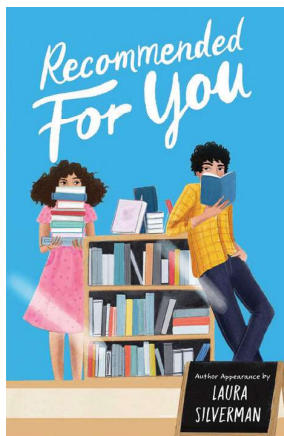
—Jessica Wakeman



Visit BookPage.com to read a Q&A with author Allan Wolf.

Recommended for You

By Laura Silverman



Romance

Working retail during the holiday season can be brutal, but Shoshanna is more than happy to spend her time at work as a bookseller. The independent bookstore *Once Upon* is her happy place—at least, it

used to be. A holiday hire named Jake, who is both standoffish and good-looking, is making Shoshanna's happy place a little more complicated than usual. Laura Silverman's *Recommended for You* (Margaret K. McElderry, \$17.99, 9781534474192) is a whipped cream dollop of a rom-com with an irresistible bookish setup.

Silverman places several obstacles in Shoshanna's path. Her moms are going through a rough patch in their marriage, Shoshanna is desperately trying to keep her dying car on the road, and then a competition to bring customers into *Once Upon* reveals the store's poor financial state. Shoshanna charges at each problem in full attack mode, but her solo efforts are largely ineffective. Only when she leans on her friends does their collective power make waves. The bookstore staff forms a fantastic supporting cast and features in several scenes that play out hilariously. Silverman also smartly uses the bookstore's shopping mall locale to her advantage, as her characters duke it out for table space in the overcrowded food court and draft the on-site Santa into their schemes.

And then there's Jake. *Sigh*. No sooner does Shoshanna meet a fellow Jewish person in her “midsized” Georgia town than she manages to offend him, then finds herself competing against him at work for a cash prize she desperately wants. The novel plays out over just one week, as the heightened circumstances of the holiday rush force Shoshanna and Jake to work together, at first begrudgingly, then as tentative friends and then . . . well, let's not spoil it.

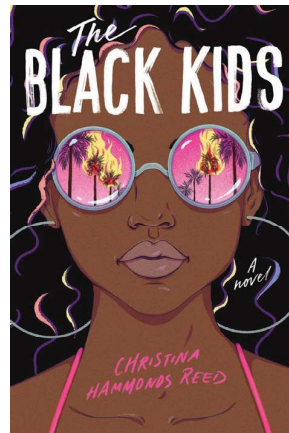
Recommended for You is equally recommended for lovers of love stories and lovers of

books and bookstores, as both are represented here delightfully.

—Heather Seggel

★ The Black Kids

By Christina Hammonds Reed



Historical Fiction

Christina Hammonds Reed's debut novel, *The Black Kids* (Simon & Schuster, \$18.99, 9781534462724), is set in 1992 but has a timeliness that often feels uncanny.

Ashley is a privileged Black

teenager living the good life in Los Angeles. Her parents have tried to shield her from the reality of life as a Black person in America by enrolling her in the best schools, living in the best neighborhood and giving her the kinds of opportunities that are typically out of reach to the Black scholarship students at her private school. However, her all-white friend group constantly reminds her of her Blackness.

When four police officers are acquitted in a trial for the beating of a Black man named Rodney King, prompting riots in Ashley's home city, she begins to realize that in order to find her place in the world, she may need to confront her Blackness and her family's history—even if it means leaving her old life and friends behind.

Reed addresses experiences common to Black teens in both 1992 and 2020 with grace and nuance. Her sentences are searingly beautiful, and her depiction of the breakdown in Ashley's belief that her privileged lifestyle affords her a certain degree of protection is raw and relatable. Ashley must face what it means to be considered a so-called “good Black person” and grapple with her own culpability in having made another Black student at her school the target of judgment.

The Black Kids also explores what it means to be a good friend and how we must take responsibility when we treat others poorly, even when we haven't intended to cause harm. The question of whether anyone can truly be deemed a “bad” person, as opposed to a good person who has done bad things, is threaded expertly through the narrative and is sure to prompt hard but necessary self-reflection from readers. This is a striking debut that fearlessly contributes to ongoing discussions of race, justice and power.

—Lane Clarke

During uncertain times, one certainty

In four picture books about life's changes, the constant is love.

As reviewers, we pick books apart. We dissect mood and discern connotation, weigh words and evaluate images. Our work can be analytical, almost scientific, and we *love* to do it. But what really brings us to our knees are books whose hearts beat louder than our pencils scratch. These picture books check all the boxes for excellence, but most importantly, their honesty resonates strong and clear.

In **Bess the Barn Stands Strong** (Page Street, \$17.99, 9781624149801, ages 4 to 7), Bess the barn is an integral part of life on the farm. She participates in its celebrations and shelters its residents. Her wooden beams and well-made doors are kind and welcoming. But when Bess is replaced by a gleaming new barn, she is no longer the center of farm life—until she proves that a loving, unwavering heart always shines bright.

A true storyteller, Elizabeth Gilbert Bedia gives Bess life with literary gilding; there's repetition, imagery, personification and more. The prose flows, poetic and brusque by turns, as the finely wrought story oh-so-delicately addresses the concept of passing on.

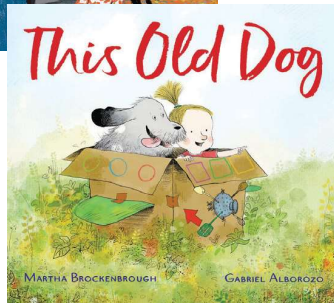
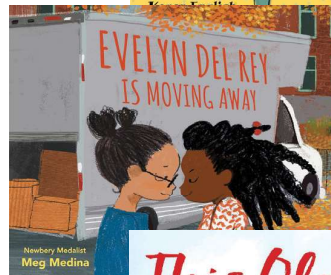
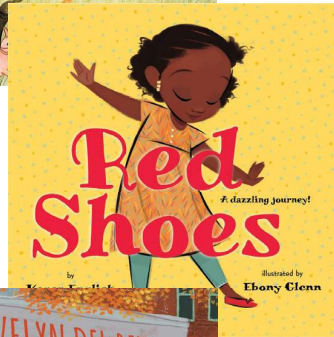
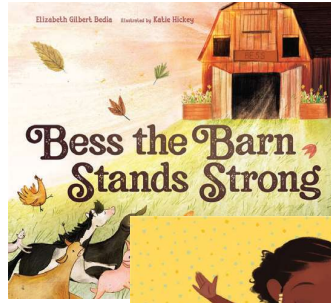
Katie Hickey's art fills these pages with warmth. Her tones shift from light to dark but stay within an appealingly agrarian palette. Varied brushstrokes create movement and mood; soft fields are wind-swept under a swift-moving storm, and when Bess' neglected beams begin to wilt, her distress is visible and wrenching.

This is a book to share while tucked in somewhere cozy. **Bess the Barn Stands Strong** reminds us that love shelters us through all storms.

Sometimes love protects us tangibly, while other times it surrounds us with friendships that change us forever. **Evelyn Del Rey Is Moving Away** (Candlewick, \$17.99, 9781536207040, ages 4 to 7) gently addresses a difficult moment in many childhoods. Autumn has arrived, and so has the moving van. Daniela and her best friend, Evelyn Del Rey, spend one last day together, sharing all the things that make them "almost twins." Daniela knows life is changing, but will her friendship with Evelyn continue?

Sonia Sánchez's illustrations resound with the clatter and chatter of kids at play. Vibrant colors and energetic patterns collide with myriad textures. Some images are framed slightly off-kilter, as though the product of a lively jumble of imagination. Each page feels like a long-ago moment, as pinpoints of detail stand out against a hazy recollection of boxes and bookshelves. Amid the chaos of moving day, Sánchez finds moments of connection and comfort: cookies baked by a neighbor, parents conversing nearby, the two girls placing the last special stickers on each other's faces.

Newbery Medalist Meg Medina writes in the earnest and playful voice of a child, using uncomplicated words and a tone that's equal parts solemn and hopeful. **Evelyn Del Rey Is Moving Away** affirms feelings of sadness but provides assurance that true friendship—the kind built on sharing glittery stickers—endures.



Sometimes love blossoms in spite of the miles, while other times it grows with every step we take. **Red Shoes** (Scholastic, \$17.99, 9781338114607, ages 3 to 5) is a tribute to objects that bring us joy and people whose thoughtfulness follows us everywhere. The story opens as Malika's grandmother surprises her with a pair of red shoes. Malika wears them on school days and play days, rainy days and fancy days. Even on a hard day when she has a disagreement with a friend, the red shoes are there. When the beloved shoes no longer fit, Malika and Nana decide to donate them. And so the shoes arrive in Africa as a gift from a generous aunt to a devout little girl who's been fasting for Ramadan.

Ebony Glenn's art is bright and cheerful, and her characters pop against muted backgrounds. She imbues **Red Shoes** with a spunky personality and a visual style reminiscent of film animation. Bold shapes, warm shades and expressive faces create an inviting tone. It's one of those rare books that feels both brand-new and well aged. Karen English's narrative is kid-friendly, and her writing style—repetitive and full of onomatopoeia—makes for a sweet, delightful read-aloud. **Red Shoes** focuses on the joy Malika finds in her treasured shoes, but its heart sings of family, relationships and tradition.

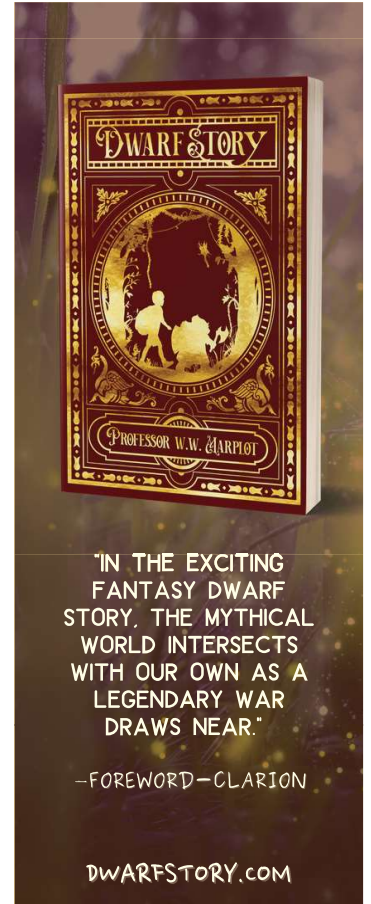
Finally, there is love that expects nothing in return, love that delights in a sunny day shared, an easy walk and a whiff of fresh grass. After an old dog's humans bring home their new baby, he wonders if he will ever again have a friend who moves

at his speed. **This Old Dog** (Levine Querido, \$17.99, 9781646140107, ages 4 to 7) gives us a dog's-eye view of love as an old dog falls fast for his little girl. From his big grin to his floppy, wagging tail, it's clear that what the old dog lacks in elegance, he makes up for in loyalty.

Gabriel Alborozo's art is petal-soft, with a sketchy feel and a subdued tone. Colors tumble together to create a delightful chaos of fields and flowers, while quick lines emphasize action: wagging tails, fast-walking people, a happy somersault down a hill. Martha Brockenbrough writes in an unassuming voice, and her unpretentious, casually poetic lines will catch you off guard with their tenderness and honesty.

This Old Dog is a book that walks calmly into the room and warms your heart with its easy camaraderie before settling into a much-loved napping spot. After all, love doesn't need to be fancy or extravagant. Sometimes, it's as simple as having someone by your side.

—Jill Lorenzini



★ Everything Sad Is Untrue

By Daniel Nayeri

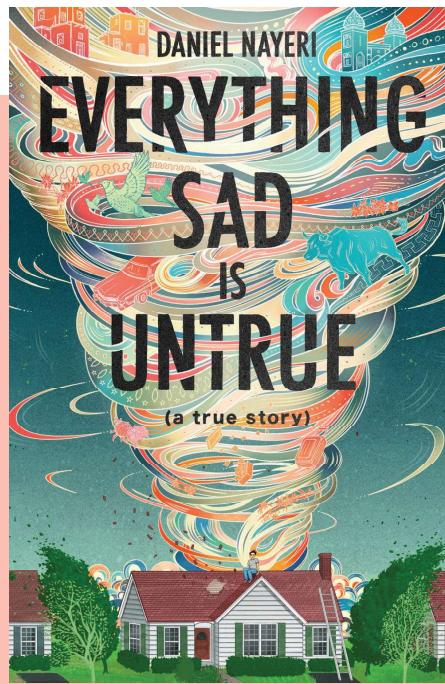
Middle Grade

"A patchwork story is the shame of a refugee," Daniel Nayeri writes in **Everything Sad Is Untrue** (Levine Querido, \$17.99, 9781646140008, ages 10 to 14). Nayeri's patchwork story forms a stunning quilt, each piece lovingly stitched together to create a saga that deserves to be savored.

Everything Sad Is Untrue is the mostly true story of Khosrou, who becomes Daniel, and the two lives he has lived in just 11 years. First, there's his life back in Iran, where his family was wealthy, where he went hunting for leopards and where his parents' veins were filled with the blood of divinity. Then there's his life now, in Oklahoma, where he has to learn to survive the bus ride home, where his mother has to learn to survive her new husband and where he realizes his memories of his first life

are slipping away.

In the voice of his younger self, Nayeri casts himself as Scheherazade, with readers as his king; we hold his life in our hands. Should we believe his tales? His classmates in Oklahoma don't. No one believes that the smelly kid who is too poor to pay for lunch in the cafeteria once lived in a beautiful house and dined with the prince of Abu Dhabi. Even Nayeri admits his memory is shaky. Was that really the prince of Abu Dhabi? It's hard to know when you're a kid who's just escaped a religious death squad



by fleeing to a foreign country.

The stakes here are life and death, not only for young Daniel and his family during their journey but also for Nayeri the storyteller, who stands before us in "the parlors of our minds," spinning tale after tale. To stop reading is to condemn him to a death of indifference. But Nayeri is a gifted writer whose tales of family, injustice, tragedy, faith, history and poop (yes, poop) combine to create such an all-consuming experience that reacting with indifference is simply not possible.

A deeply personal book that makes a compelling case for empathy and hope, **Everything Sad Is Untrue** is one of the most

extraordinary books of the year.

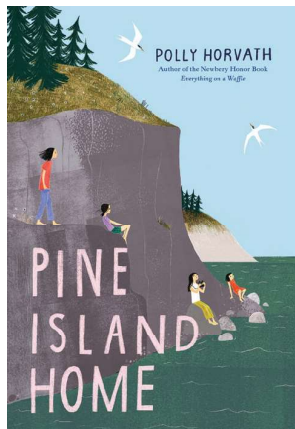
—Luis G. Rendon



Visit BookPage.com to read a Q&A with author Daniel Nayeri and his editor and publisher, Arthur A. Levine.

Pine Island Home

By Polly Horvath



Middle Grade

Stories of orphans making it on their own and finding family are a staple of children's literature, and Newbery Honor author Polly Horvath's **Pine Island Home** (Margaret Ferguson,

\$16.99, 9780823447855, ages 9 to 12) has an old-fashioned feel. It's a comforting coming-of-age tale about four sisters whose missionary parents are killed in a tsunami. Their great-aunt Martha agrees to take them in, but when Fiona and her younger sisters, Marlin, Natasha and Charlie, arrive on Pine Island, they discover Martha has just died.

The sisters move into her house anyway. Determined to keep her family together, Fiona negotiates with Al, the eccentric and often inebriated writer who lives on the property adjacent to Martha's. He agrees to pretend to be their guardian in exchange for beer money and

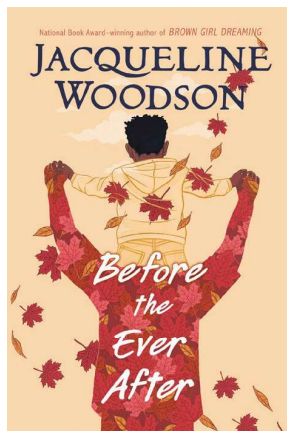
dinners cooked by budding chef Marlin.

Horvath is a master at creating winning characters, and each sister emerges as a distinct individual. In particular, Fiona is a study in resilience, shouldering the burden of financial responsibility and the insistent emails from their great-aunt's attorney. The girls' efforts at self-sufficiency are appealing, as are the cast of townsfolk and the bucolic setting, as the sisters discover that families can be created in surprising ways.

—Deborah Hopkinson

Before the Ever After

By Jacqueline Woodson



Middle Grade

Jacqueline Woodson's **Before the Ever After** (Nancy Paulsen, \$17.99, 9780399545436, ages 10 and up) places professional football's concussion epidemic front and center.

ZJ had it all: musical talent, a solid group of friends,

a strong, supportive mom and a famous football-player dad he adored. But that was before. Before his dad's hands began to tremble. Before his dad's memory began to fade. When his father is diagnosed with a degenerative brain disease caused by the multiple concussions he experienced on the playing field, ZJ must face the prospect of losing his father and the relationship he holds most dear.

Before the Ever After doesn't sugarcoat harsh realities but addresses them with considered care and optimism.

Award-winning author Woodson tells ZJ's story in intimate, compelling poems that slip through time. We see ZJ as a small child riding on his father's shoulders, far above the fray of reporters and fans. We hear their heart-to-heart conversations, listen to ZJ's dad muse on his love for football and watch as the cracks and fissures of memory loss, anger and confusion creep into their idyllic life.

A stirring, character-driven novel in verse, **Before the Ever After** doesn't sugarcoat harsh realities but addresses them with considered care and optimism. Woodson is far too adept a storyteller to directly answer many of the ques-

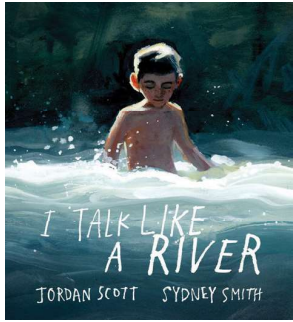
tions she raises, but ZJ's quiet resilience and the network of nurturing figures who surround him suggest a path lit by glimmers of hope.

—Jon Little

★ I Talk Like a River

By Jordan Scott

Illustrated by Sydney Smith



Picture Book

Written with precision, lyricism and compassion, *I Talk Like a River* (Neal Porter, \$18.99, 9780823445592, ages 4 to 8) is a story about stuttering drawn

from author Jordan Scott's personal experience.

A boy is ashamed of his efforts to produce words and the resultant facial contortions: "All

they see," he says, referring to his classmates, "is how strange my face looks and that I can't

I Talk Like a River is as much about observant, loving parenting as it is about a young boy's struggle to speak fluently.

hide how scared I am." The boy's father recognizes that his son has had a "bad speech day" and takes him to a place where they can be quiet. At the river, the pair watches the water as it churns yet is "calm . . . beyond the rapids." Pulling his son close, the father points to the water. "That's how you speak," he says.

Illustrator Sydney Smith (*Town Is by the Sea*) uses thick, impressionistic brushstrokes that dazzle as he represents the boy's roiling interior world. In one gripping spread about the boy's fear of public speaking, we see the classroom from his point of view. Students

stare, their faces indistinct smudges of paint, the entire room distorted by the boy's panic. But at the river—where Smith showcases the mesmerizing play of light on water in a dramatic double gatefold—the world becomes clearer.

Smith also plays visually with some of the book's figurative language. The boy cites elements from nature as examples of the letters he finds most challenging to pronounce (P, C and M). Smith incorporates them into a striking spread in which pine tree branches, a shrieking crow and the outline of a crescent moon cover the boy's face.

Without providing pat answers or resorting to sentimentality, *I Talk Like a River* reverently acknowledges the boy's hardship. Scott's story is as much about observant, loving parenting as it is about the struggle to speak fluently, as the boy's father generously equips his son with a metaphorical framework to understand and even take pride in his stutter: "My dad says I talk like a river." This is unquestionably one of the best picture books of 2020.

—Julie Danielson

meet COZBI A. CABRERA

Master languages. Just 6 more to go!

an ode TO TENDERNESS in me. everyday

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR BOOK

WHO HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON YOUR WORK

WHO WAS YOUR CHILDHOOD HERO

WHAT BOOKS DID YOU ENJOY AS A CHILD

WHAT ONE THING WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN

WHAT MESSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEND TO YOUNG READERS

all things Judy Blume, NANCY DREW, MAYA ANGELOU, EMILY R. DOW

MY MOTHER WOULD HAND ME THE CARDBOARD SHEET WITH THE ROUNDED CORNERS FROM HER NEW STOCKINGS!

HOW TO MAKE DOLL CLOTHES I took 20 questions before I decided to write this

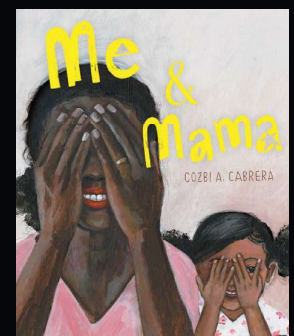
LOVE the questions, dare to ask them! Be yourself, even if you have to mine for it. You are infinite possibility.

DAD THEY COULD Dream & PAY THE TOLL

CARLOS LEONARDO SANCHEZ MLK

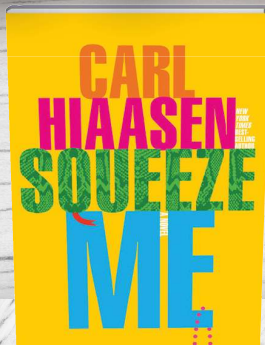


A little girl spends a rainy day with her mom in Cozbi A. Cabrera's *Me & Mama* (Denene Millner, \$17.99, 9781534454217, ages 4 to 8), a lyrical and lushly illustrated tribute to the transformative power of a mother's love. Cabrera has illustrated books written by Patricia C. McKissack, Suzanne Slade and Nikki Grimes. In addition to her work as a visual artist, Cabrera makes cloth dolls and designs clothes. She lives in Evanston, Illinois.



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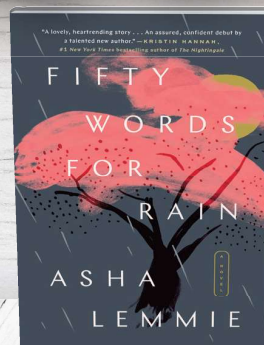


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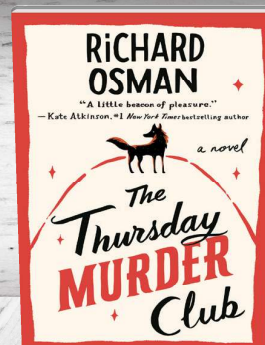


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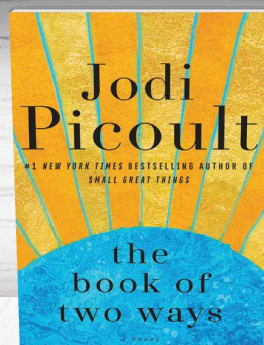


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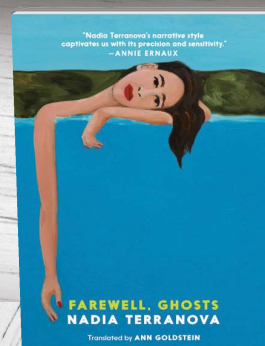


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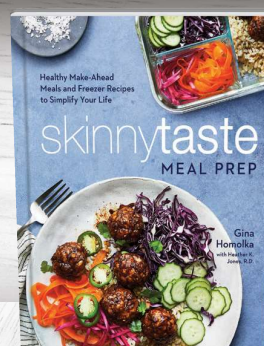


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