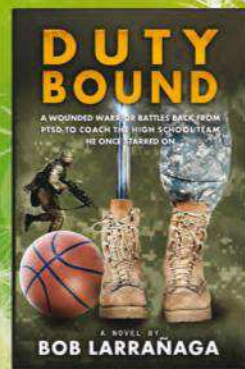
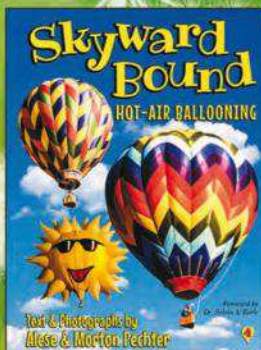
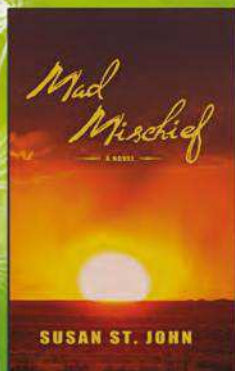
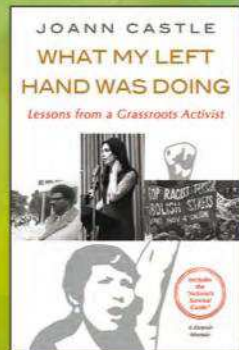
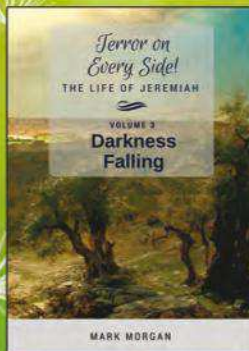
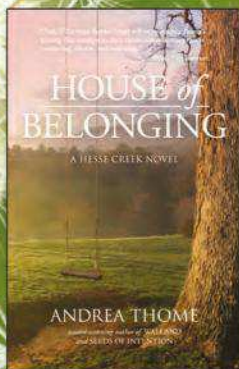
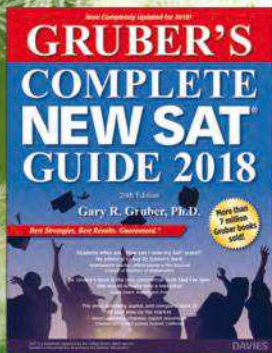
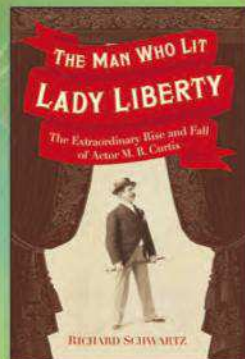
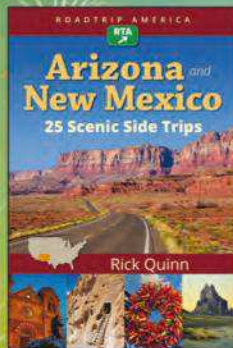
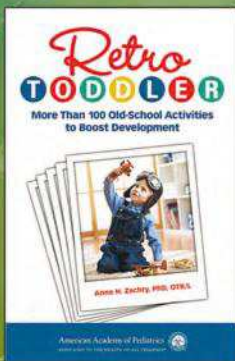
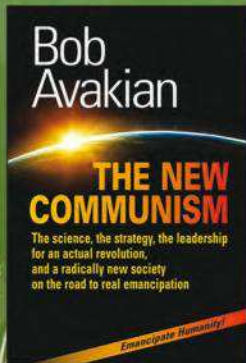
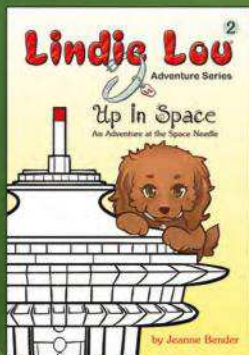
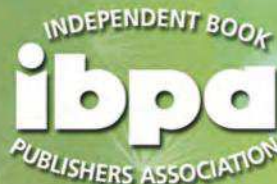




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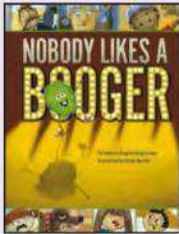
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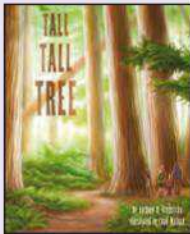
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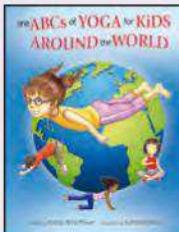
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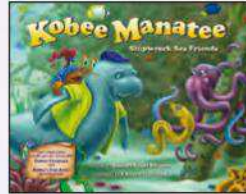
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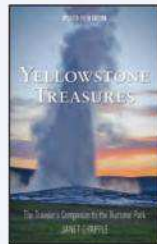
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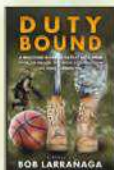
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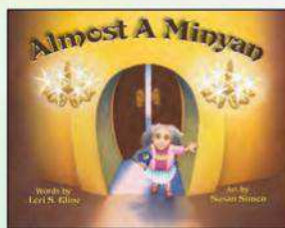
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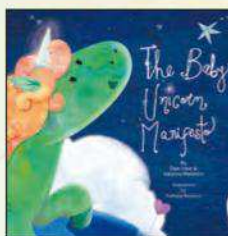
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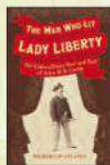
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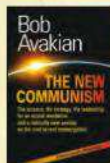
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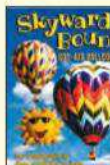
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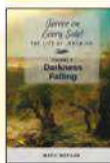
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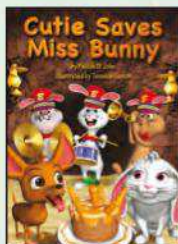
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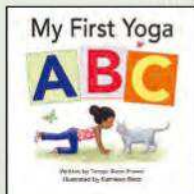


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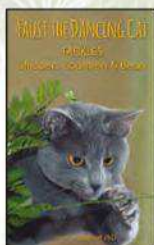
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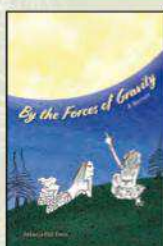
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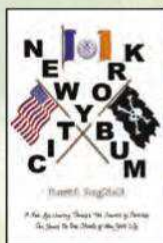
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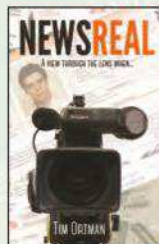
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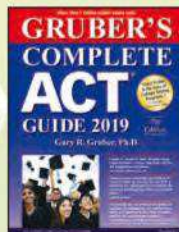
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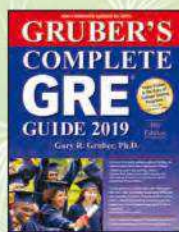
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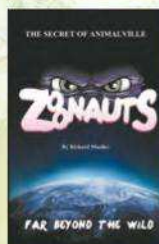
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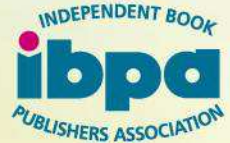
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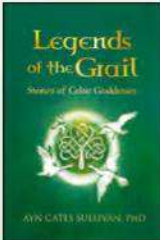
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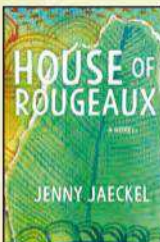
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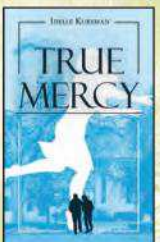
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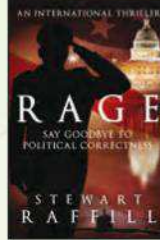
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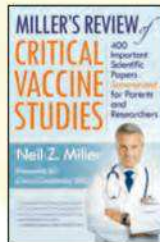
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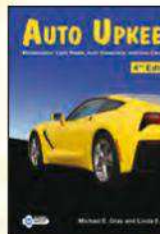
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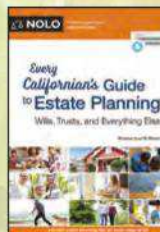
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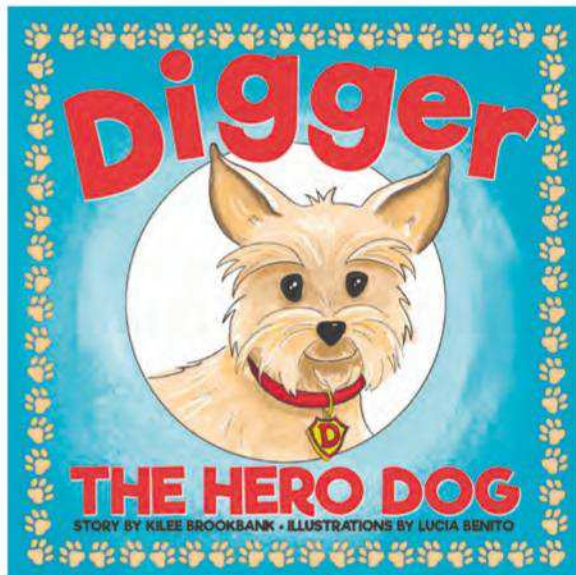
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2018

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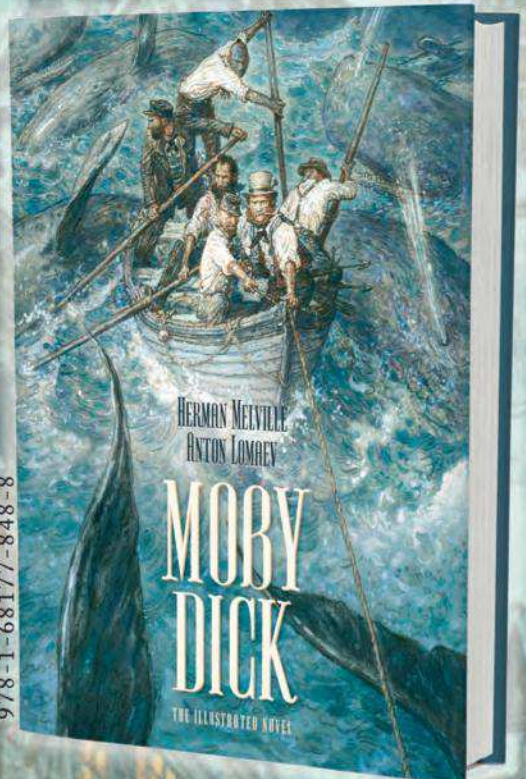
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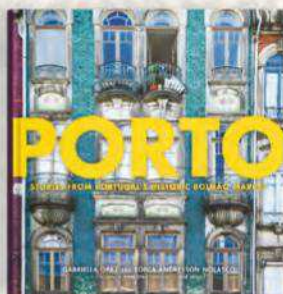


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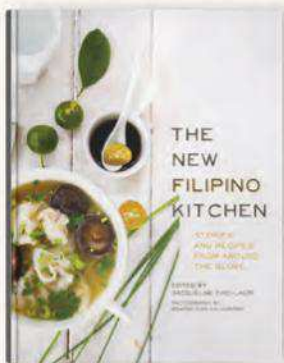
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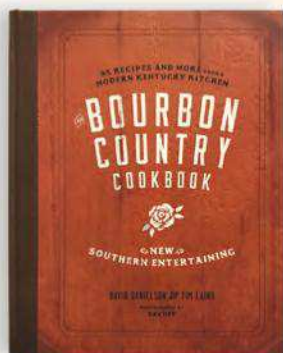
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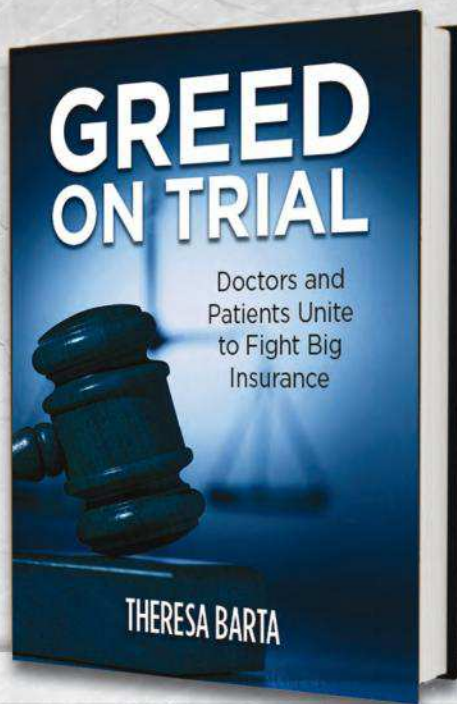


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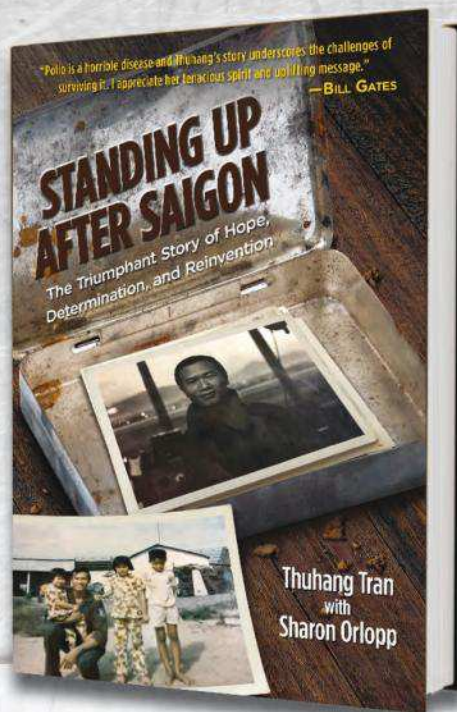
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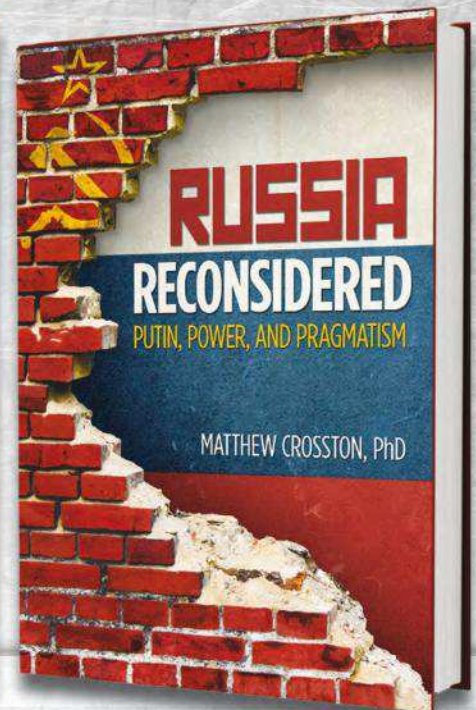
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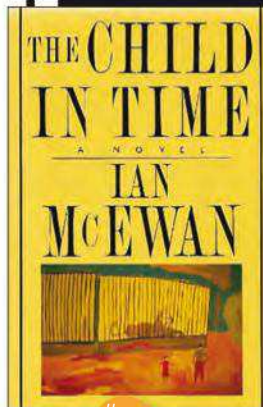
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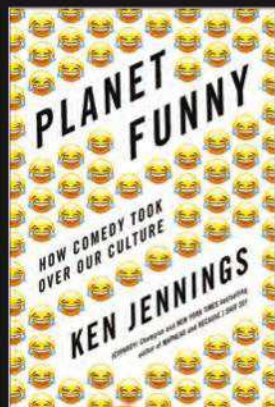
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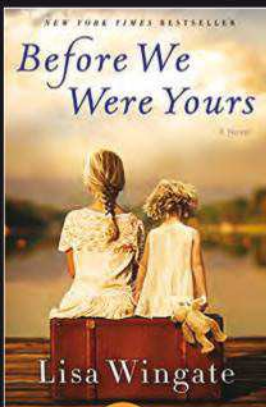
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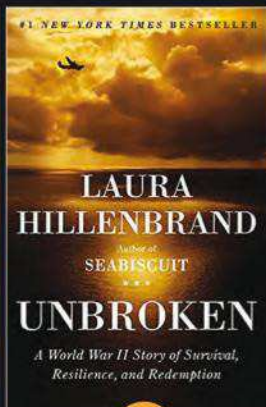
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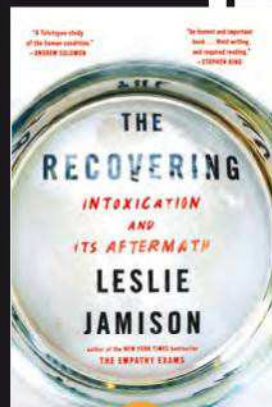
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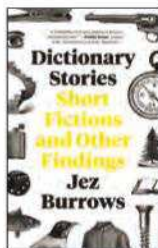
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From the Newsletters



Tip Sheet

Jez Burrows, author of *Dictionary Stories*, delves into the six most versatile words in the English language. publishersweekly.com/jezburrows

Children's Bookshelf

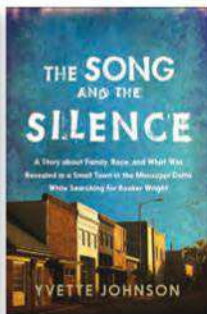
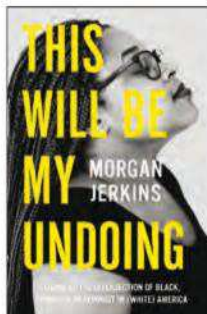
Photos from this year's Bologna Children's Book Fair. publishersweekly.com/bologna2018



Jean-Christopher and Klaus Flugge

BookLife Report

How a U.K. police officer-turned-self-publisher crafts authentic police procedurals. publishersweekly.com/copsandwriters



PW Radio

In a special archive show, Morgan Jerkins discusses *This Will Be My Undoing: Living at the Intersection of Black, Female, and Feminist in (White) America*, and Yvette Johnson talks about *The Song and the Silence: A Story About Family, Race, and What Was Revealed in a Small Town in the Mississippi Delta While Searching for Booker Wright*. publishersweekly.com/pwradio272

Podcasts Week Ahead

PW senior writer Andrew Albanese takes a look at why the digital future, despite an improved balance of print and e-books for publishers, is looking anything but stable. publishersweekly.com/weekahead

More to Come

Calvin Reid and Kate Fitzsimons preview the MoCCA Arts Fest indie comics show and discuss Frank Miller's new multiproject deal with DC and the *New York Times*' announcement of a regular graphic novel column; plus, Heidi MacDonald reports from Chicago's Diamond Retailer Summit.



Frank Miller

publishersweekly.com/moretocome

Blogs ShelfTalker

A children's bookseller reflects on the closing of Toys R Us. publishersweekly.com/toysrus

A New Generation of African-American-Owned Bookstores

After a steep decline, the number of black-owned independent bookstores is growing

When Troy Johnson began tracking the number of black-owned bookstores in the U.S. in 1999, there were more than 325. By 2014, that number had dwindled to 54, a decline of 83%.

“They were closing left and right, and the major ones were struggling,” said Johnson, who runs the African American Literature Book Club, an online book database. Today, Johnson estimates, there are at least 108 black-owned independent stores, a number of which have opened in the past six months, marking a substantial reversal. “Last year was the first year I added more stores to the list than I took away,” he noted.

The surge in black-owned indie bookstores is notable at a time when both bookselling and publishing are wrestling with issues of workforce diversity.

Ramunda and Derrick Young, wife-and-husband owners of the newly opened MahoganyBooks, looked for a physical location for years, but a wave of gentrification in Washington, D.C., left them with few promising options. That changed in early 2017, when they found a location in the Anacostia Arts Center, in the historically African-American neighborhood of Anacostia in Southeast D.C. Ramunda, a former general books manager of the Howard University Bookstore, said opening a store was a logical step toward diversifying the couple’s business after having run a books website serving predominately African-American readers for a decade.

MahoganyBooks opened in February

and is the first bookstore in Anacostia in 20 years. The 500-sq.-ft. store has an adjacent events space for large readings.

With tablets for readers to locate books online while they browse, the store fulfills the couple’s vision of “a bookstore 2.0,” Derrick said.

“Bookstore 2.0” is shorthand for the Youngs’ effort to integrate the physical store and the long-standing digital operation, creating independent sources of revenue that stand alone but point to one another.

In-store technology points to the website, and the website now points to the physical store’s events. “We thought, if there were another big crazy economic downturn, how would we prepare ourselves so that we would have multiple streams of income?” Derrick said.

Opening the bookstore is also a homecoming. Derrick’s grandmother lived in Anacostia when he was a child, and he frequented the neighborhood’s black-owned bookstores. He later worked at the black-owned Karibu booksellers with Ramunda. Speaking about himself and Ramunda, he paid tribute to those earlier stores: “We were both kind of nurtured in that way. We both made an effort to be mentored and to understand the experience that readers want when they come into a bookstore.”

When forensic anthropology professor Christina Benton opened Janco Books in Las Vegas in October 2017, readers asked



Top: At Cafe Con Libros in Brooklyn, readers and authors discuss feminist zines. Above: MahoganyBooks opens in Washington, D.C.

if she would model her store after Native Son, a neighborhood African-American specialty bookstore that closed in 2008. Benton expanded the store’s African-American section, but she said her interest is in catering to as broad a community as possible. “It’s a general bookstore owned by an African-American person,” she said.

With a selection of new and used books, Janco caters most of all to families that homeschool in the area. “They buy the most, because they need to have the resources,” Benton said.

In Brooklyn’s rapidly gentrifying Crown Heights neighborhood, a general bookstore is as far from what Afro-Latina owner Kalima Desuze and her Caribbean husband, Ryan Cameron, wanted to open when they launched the Afro-feminist Cafe Con Libros in late December.

continued on page 16

The Weekly Scorecard

Unit Sales Saw Big Gains in Easter Week

The last week before Easter proved to be a great one for publishers, with print unit sales in the week ended Apr. 1, 2018, jumping 22% over the comparable week in 2017, at outlets that report to NPD BookScan. Similar to the prior week, sales of board books drove the gains, with unit sales of the format soaring 87% over the week ended Apr. 2, 2017. Easter week also was good to mass merchandisers, whose unit sales jumped 84%. The juvenile nonfiction category had the biggest gain in the week, with unit sales up 55%. Board books held all 10 spots on the category bestseller list. *Baby Touch and Feel: Animals* remained in the top spot on the list, selling more than 17,000 copies, followed by *My First Read and Learn Bible*, which sold more than 14,000 copies. The juvenile fiction segment also had an outstanding week, with units rising 51%. *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle stayed on top of the category list, selling more than 34,000 copies. The rest of the top-10 bestseller list had a mix of Easter-related books, including *Llama Llama Easter Egg* by Anna Dewdney, which was #3 on the category list, selling almost 23,000 copies. Unit sales rose 6% in adult nonfiction over 2017. Jordan Peterson's *12 Rules for Life* returned to the #1 slot on the category list, selling about 27,000 copies. The newest book by Lysa TerKeurst, *Embraced: 100 Devotions to Know God Is Holding You Close*, was in the second spot, selling more than 17,000 copies. Adult fiction sales rose 3%, led by *Red Alert* by James Patterson and Marshall Karp, which sold more than 23,000 units in its first week.

UNIT SALES OF PRINT BOOKS BY CHANNEL (IN THOUSANDS)

	APR. 2, 2017	APR. 1, 2018	CHGE WEEK	CHGE YTD
Total	11,994	14,670	22%	6%
Retail & Club	10,264	11,489	12%	5%
Mass Merch./Others	1,730	3,160	84%	11%

UNIT SALES OF PRINT BOOKS BY CATEGORY (IN THOUSANDS)

	APR. 2, 2017	APR. 1, 2018	CHGE WEEK	CHGE YTD
Adult Nonfiction	4,878	5,166	6%	5%
Adult Fiction	2,441	2,528	3%	-3%
Juvenile Nonfiction	1,063	1,649	55%	14%
Juvenile Fiction	3,292	4,960	51%	13%

UNIT SALES OF PRINT BOOKS BY FORMAT (IN THOUSANDS)

	APR. 2, 2017	APR. 1, 2018	CHGE WEEK	CHGE YTD
Hardcover	3,203	4,033	26%	10%
Mass Market Paperback	1,057	1,113	5%	-3%
Trade Paperback	6,674	7,727	16%	3%
Board Books	775	1,454	87%	26%
Audio	62	46	-26%	-25%



SOURCE: NPD BOOKSCAN AND PUBLISHERS WEEKLY. NPD'S U.S. CONSUMER MARKET PANEL COVERS APPROXIMATELY 80% OF THE PRINT BOOK MARKET AND CONTINUES TO GROW.

PRH Names McIntosh CEO, Dobson Head of Penguin Publishing Group

Penguin Random House has named Madeline McIntosh, previously president of the Penguin Publishing Group, CEO of Penguin Random House U.S. The position is a newly created one. Additionally, Allison Dobson has succeeded McIntosh as president of Penguin Publishing Group, where she was formerly senior v-p of strategy and finance.



Madeline McIntosh

The promotions, announced in a press release from Markus Dohle, CEO of Penguin Random House Worldwide, mark a structural revamp of the publishing conglomerate. Dohle said the move will align the U.S. business with other PRH territories around the world.



Allison Dobson

Dohle said the creation of McIntosh's position speaks to "the size and importance of the U.S. business for Penguin Random House worldwide." He added, "Now is the right time for dedicated leadership in our U.S. market."

Under the newly announced PRH structure, McIntosh, who reports to Dohle, is responsible for all PRH U.S. publisher operations and all adult and children's publishing groups (among them Crown, Knopf, Penguin, Penguin Young Readers, Random House, and RH Children's).

Dobson, who reports to McIntosh, is now responsible for overseeing the Penguin Publishing Group, the largest PRH publishing division. At PPG, Dobson oversees all imprints, as well as the departments handling art, business development, finance, marketing strategy, publishing operations, and subsidiary rights.

In a release about the structural changes, McIntosh praised Dobson for her "quick, analytical mind," calling her "an ideal colleague and leader for the very broad range of internal and external stakeholders we house and partner with."

Dohle said July 1 will mark the five-year anniversary of the merger between Penguin and Random House. Over the next year, he added, Penguin staff will begin moving into the Penguin Random House building on Broadway in New York, which will continue to be the global headquarters of Penguin Random House.

Dohle said of McIntosh that there is "no one better prepared and more qualified" for the role. —C.R.



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■ Gappah Shines Her “Light” on Scribner

For Scribner, **Kathy Belden** took North American rights, at auction, to two books—a novel called *Out of Darkness, Shining Light*



Gappah

and a short story collection called *Rotten Row*—by **Petina Gappah**. The author, who was represented by **Eric Simonoff** at William Morris

Endeavor, won the 2009 Guardian First Book Award for her novel *An Elegy for Easterly*. The novel, Scribner said, is about the last days of a Scottish explorer and missionary named David Livingstone, as well as the journey of his body from Zambia back to England. The publisher added that the book is “narrated by his sharp-tongued cook, Halima, and a repressed African missionary, Jacob Wainwright,” and tells the tale of “this harrowing 1,500-mile journey.” *Out of Darkness* is set for summer 2019.

■ Turner’s ‘Girls’ Goes to S&S

In a world rights preempt, **Christine Pride** at Simon & Schuster bought **Dawn Turner’s** first nonfiction project, *Three Girls from*



Turner

Bronzeville. Turner (*Only Twice We’ve Reached for Heaven*), a former columnist for the *Chicago Tribune*, has written extensively about race and class in

America. In *Three Girls*, which Pride compared to *The Other Wes Moore*, Turner follows the lives of three black girls through the 1970s and ’80s in Chicago: herself, her younger sister, and her childhood best friend. Laying out the trajectory of these three lives, the author, Pride explained, “dissects a universal question about resilience: why do some people ‘make it,’ able to withstand oppressive forces like poverty, racism,

violence, etc., and some people don’t?” **Steve Ross** at Abrams represented Turner.

■ ‘Marlon Bundo’ Co-creator Re-ups at Chronicle

Jill Twiss, a writer on the HBO show *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* and coauthor of *A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo*



© GABRIELLE STUBBERT

Twiss

(Chronicle), sold a YA romantic comedy called *Love Delivered* to **Razorbill**. **Ben Schrank** took world rights to the book from **Brenda Bowen** at **Sanford J. Greenburger**.

The publisher said the novel, which is set for a 2019 release, is about a teen entrepreneur who “creates a personalized subscription box service that guarantees true love... for everyone but herself.”

■ Berkley Invests in Lim’s Debut

After winning two books at auction for six figures, **Cindy Hwang** at Berkley will publish **Roselle Lim’s** debut novel, *Natalie Tan’s Book of Luck and Fortune*. **Jenny Bent** at the Bent Agency brokered the deal, which includes a second, currently untitled novel, for U.S., Canadian, and translation rights. Berkley said *Natalie Tan*, slated for summer 2019, is “a heartwarming novel of magical realism in which an aspiring chef returns home to San Francisco following her estranged mother’s death and must master a series of enchanted recipes in order to revive her family’s old Chinatown restaurant.” The second book in the deal is scheduled for summer 2020.

■ ‘Bob’s Burgers’ Writer Sells a Book on Autocomplete

Hollywood writer **Justin Hook** sold a book about the hilarious damage search engines can wreak on our language. **Rebecca Hunt** at Chronicle Books nabbed world rights to

Autocomplete: The Book from **Mark Gottlieb** at Trident Media Group. Gottlieb said the book is “a curated collection of the funniest, saddest, strangest, and most beautiful ways that search engines such as Google offer to autocomplete popular searches.” Hook is a writer on the Fox show *Bob’s Burgers* and creator of the game *Google Feud*, which, Gottlieb said, “has been played over one billion times” and featured on *The Tonight Show*.

■ Porter’s Sophomore Novel to Graywolf

At Graywolf Press, **Ethan Nosowsky** took U.S. rights to **Max Porter’s** second novel, *Lanny*. **Lisa Baker** at Aitken Alexander represented Porter, whose debut, *Grief Is the*



© LUCY DIKRENS

Porter

Thing with Feathers, was published by Graywolf in 2016. The new novel is set in a village outside of London where a mythical figure called *Dead*

Papa Toothwort who once loomed large in the imaginations of the local children, Graywolf explained, “awakens after a glorious slumber and becomes darkly fixated on a mischievous, ethereal boy named *Lanny*.” The book is set for a May 2019 release in the U.S., and rights to it have also sold to publishers in, among other countries, the U.K., France, Germany, and Spain.

■ Thomas & Mercer Nabs Three by Bryndza

Indie bestseller **Robert Bryndza** struck a six-figure, three-book deal with **Thomas & Mercer** for a new series set to launch in 2019.

Liz Pearsons bought North American

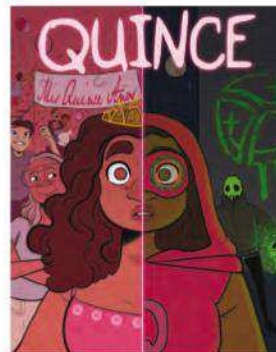


Bryndza

rights, at auction, to the books from **Amy Tannenbaum** at the **Jane Rotrosen Agency**. Bryndza, T&M said, has sold more than two million copies worldwide of

Pop Culture Publishing

A Publisher of the Fans, By the Fans, for the Fans



his self-published Erika Foster series, which launched with *The Girl in the Ice*. The new series is built around a forensic profiler named Kate Marshall, and, following the 2019 release of book one, *Shallow Graves*, books two and three are set, respectively, for 2020 and 2021.

■ Mosse's New Series to Minotaur

In a U.S. rights deal for three books, **Kate Mosse** sold a historical series to **Catherine Richards** at Minotaur Books. Mosse (*The Taxidermist's Daughter*), Minotaur said, has sold more than seven million copies of her books worldwide, and the new series, which will launch with *The Burning Chambers* in spring 2019, is set during the French Wars of Religion, which stretched from the mid- to late 16th century. The Macmillan imprint said the *Romeo and Juliet*-esque epic will "tell the story of a 300-year feud stretching across the generations and across the globe." **George Lucas** at Inkwell Management handled the U.S. sale on behalf of **Mark Lucas** at the London-based LAW Literary Agents. Mosse, who lives in England, is the cofounder of the Women's Prize for Fiction.

■ McElderry Listens to Powell's "Cacophony"

Kelly Powell sold North American rights, in a preempt, to her debut novel, *Cacophony*. **Karen Wojtyla** at Margaret K. McElderry Books acquired the YA title from **Kristy Hunter** at the Knight Agency. Hunter said the novel, a work of magical realism,



Powell

follows a violinist working with a lighthouse keeper to "solve a murder on an island that is also home to deadly sirens who prey on the inhabitants."

Quince, a comic book series about a Latina teen who discovers her superpowers on her 15th birthday, broke out last month at the Long Beach Comic Expo, when it was named a finalist for the Dwayne McDuffie Award for Diversity in Comics. The buzz around the series is a testament to its publisher, Fanbase Press, and its focus on building a pop culture business steeped in the fan community.

For the past eight years, the Los Angeles-based publisher has divided its editorial resources between two interconnected projects: to publish comic books and graphic novels and to create editorial content on the publisher's website that

will nurture the fan community. "We celebrate fan-doms and create new ones," said cofounder and editor-in-chief **Barbra Dillon**, "because everyone is a fan of something."

Besides links to the company's comic book and graphic novel projects, readers can find free pop culture content on the site that includes interviews with comics creators, "Geeky Parent Guides," and features about crowdfunding efforts. "We started building our community by writing reviews of

IN
MEMORIAM

RUSSELL FREEDMAN

(1929–2018)



BELOVED AUTHOR AND FRIEND

HOLIDAY
HOUSE



Clarion Books



other people's material and doing interviews with other creators," Dillon said. "It's a rising tide, and we're all in this together."

Quince creator Sebastian Kadlecik met the Fanbase team at a comic book shop four years ago. Dillon wrote an article for the Fanbase website about Penguins vs. Possums, Kadlecik's comic book chronicling a clandestine war being fought between two seemingly harmless animals. Soon after the interview, Fanbase offered to publish the final four issues of his series, and they joined forces for the rest of the run.

"When Quince started to come together, they were the first people I went to when looking for a publisher," Kadlecik said. "A small publisher should be taking risks and looking for perspectives and stories that aren't always told." Quince is written by Kit Steinkellner,

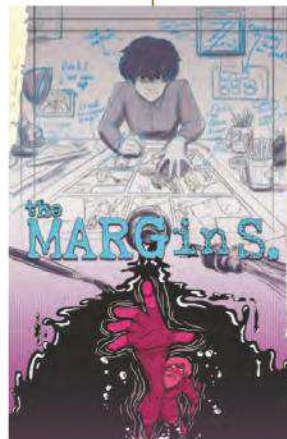
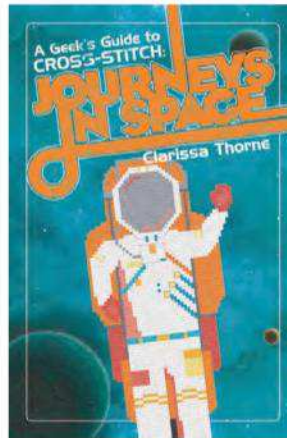
with art by Emma Steinkellner.

Dillon and her husband, comic book writer Bryant Dillon, cofounded the press in 2010 under the name Fanboy Press. Both had busy day jobs in the entertainment industry but sought an independent creative outlet. "We really wanted to provide our very talented friends and colleagues with a platform to share their talents," she said. They built the press with a core group of five contributors who all volunteered their time.

Fanbase receives between 30 and 40 submissions a year, but the list has stayed small—around one project per year. It publishes comics digitally, as well as a 1,000-copy print run of each comic or graphic novel. The publisher accepts ideas at any stage of development, from a raw idea to a fully realized comic book. "As the publisher, we take on the cost of the print run," Dillon said. "Once that cost is recouped, we will split the profits with the creators."

In 2016, the publisher rebranded with a more inclusive name: Fanbase Press. It now counts eight core comic book projects published in digital and print formats. Most recently, the publisher announced *The Margins*, a young adult graphic novel written by David Accampo and Paul Montgomery and set for July.

The publisher has never been confined by genre or medium. Fanbase released *Fearworms* (2014), Robert Payne Cabeen's Bram Stoker Award-nominated book of poetry, and audio has become a key platform as well. In 2011, the core Fanbase team worked together to produce an unlicensed fan adaptation of the Hunger Games series in audio,



The Katniss Chronicles. "We just loved the book so much," Dillon said, noting that the project was not released under the Fanbase banner. "We didn't make any money from it; it was just a fan project."

The audio offerings have expanded into a scrappy podcast network that now includes *The Fanbase Weekly* (in which fans discuss pop culture, currently in its third season), *Quality Time with "Family Ties"* (fans rewatch and review episodes of the '80s sitcom), and *The Arkham Sessions* (fans rewatch *Batman: The Animated Series* through the lens of clinical psychology), and *Tread Perilously* (fans rewatch the worst episodes of TV shows). In addition, the publisher is currently

scripting a 12-episode audio adaptation of Robert J. Peterson's 2015 novel, *The Odds*, described by the publisher (Rare Bird Books) as "a postapocalyptic action comedy."

The website now counts 30 volunteer contributors, and some of them end up publishing books with the press. After four years of writing articles and working on *The Fanbase Weekly* podcast, contributor Clarissa Thorne is now working on her own newly announced craft book with 25 original cross-stitch patterns: *A Geek's Guide to Cross-Stitch: Journeys in Space*.

"What I do with Fanbase Press is really more about family and being able to exercise the creative side of what I am," said Thorne, a compliance analyst who appreciates the community she found through the publisher. "About 80% of it, for me, is getting to sit and meet and enjoy creative things other people are doing."
—Jason Boog

AAP} MONTHLY STATSHOT, NOVEMBER

CATEGORY	CHANGE November	YTD
Adult Hard	-2.7%	11.0%
Adult Paper	0.8%	0.2%
Mass Market	-36.7%	-11.0%
Physical Audio	-18.4%	-6.5%
Audio Download	45.2%	28.0%
Adult E-book	-5.1%	-5.4%
Children's/YA	-8.2%	-3.0%
Religious Presses	-0.7%	-1.1%
Professional	14.8%	10.5%
K-12 Materials	9.4%	-3.1%
Higher Ed.	-23.9%	3.8%
University Presses	-0.8%	4.8%

(Comparisons of \$ sales against same periods in 2016)

According to AAP's StatShot report, adult book sales fell 2.2% in November compared to a year ago. Sales of mass market paperbacks declined 36.7% and e-book sales dropped 5.1%. Downloadable audio sales, however, jumped 45.2% in the month. In the first 11 months of 2017, sales of adult books were up 2.9% over the comparable period in 2016. The downloadable audio category had the biggest gain, with sales up 28.0%. Among the print segments, hardcover sales were up the most, 11.0%. E-book sales from reporting publishers were down 5.4%. In the children's/young adult category, November sales were down 8.2% compared to November 2016, with hardcover and e-book sales down 17.3% and 20.0%, respectively. For the first 11 months of 2017, sales in the category declined 3.0% compared to 2016, with only board books posting an increase, with sales up 5.1%. For the 1,212 publishers who report to AAP, sales were down 5.4% in November, but up 1.1% in the first 11 months of the year.



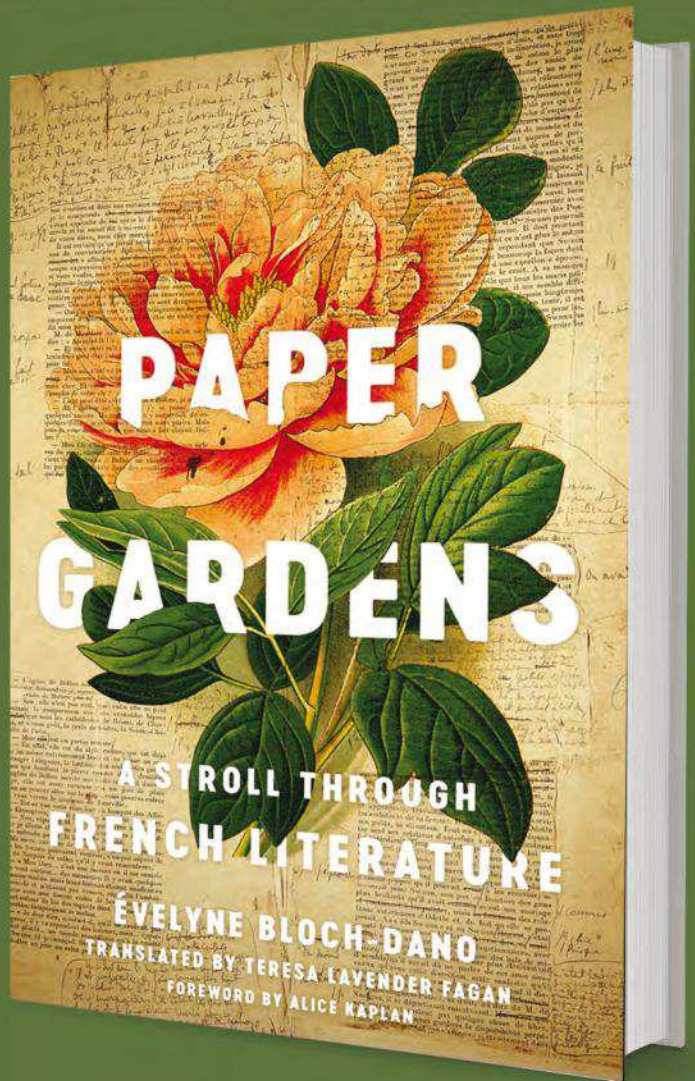
“A charming book that’s erudite, bucolic, and delightful at once.”

—Version Femina



“Évelyne Bloch-Dano tells with much empathy what gardens, whether real or on paper, reveal of writers’ imaginary.”

—Figaro Littéraire



UPRESS.VIRGINIA.EDU

continued from p. 9

Desuze, a retired U.S. Army JAG corps member with master's degrees in social work and public administration, grew up in Prospect Place and credits her trajectory in life to reading feminist African and African-American authors.

"A lot of the reason why I opened up the store is because feminism has not always been the province of women of color," Desuze said. "Part of my challenge as a black woman, calling my bookstore a feminist bookstore, is that some black women do not identify with the word feminism. But if they took the time to explore they would discover that they are already living it."

In an interview in *PW* last November about her efforts to open the Lit. Bar, the only bookstore in the Bronx, Afro-Latina bookseller Nöelle Santos said that she had encountered discrimination from lenders in financing her effort, until her IndieGogo campaign raised more than \$150,000. In contrast, Desuze said her Brooklyn-based backers were supportive. "I think it was a combination of a lot of things," she noted. "I am independently financially stable. I own my own home and have advanced degrees. My portfolio alone was something that was able to catapult me." Desuze added that without those things, and in a different location in Brooklyn, she believes that discrimination would likely have been an issue.

"I don't know if this would be possible in Brownsville," Desuze said of another diverse Brooklyn neighborhood that is not gentrifying, "because there's an underlying idea that black folks don't read and Latino folks don't read." She added that even without the challenges that Santos faced, "it's quite a revolution for black folks to open up a bookstore and to provide these books that are about African-American culture."

Revolutionary books and a community focus are both part of Marc Lamont Hill's approach at his newly opened Uncle Bobbie's Coffee and Books in Philadelphia. Hill, an author, CNN contributor, and professor of media studies and urban education at Temple University, decided to take his scholarly

knowledge of the history of bookstores and put it to practical use selling books in the Germantown neighborhood of the city where he lives. His dream of owning a bookstore turned into reality after he walked past a vacant building in 2017.

"I did some hard number crunching," said Hill, who settled on opening a café as a way to create a welcoming space that also had higher margins than a stand-alone bookstore. The store opened in November and it has exceeded his expectations, he added. "People are buying books at a rate we didn't expect."

Hill does much of the buying for the store himself. And though the store has roots in the historic black-owned bookstores he went to as a young man, Hill said there are differences between those and Uncle Bobbie's, which has an African-American focus but is a general bookstore with leftist political leanings. Older stores "didn't have gender theory, queer theory, environmental studies, and disability studies," he noted. "I'm expanding what black activist literature is."

Community events have been so successful for the store, Hill said, that he has had to bring in additional staffing. In February, he hosted an event called the Radical Martin Luther King Symposium that drew 600 people to a neighboring church.

Johnson sees differences between the older bookstores and the new wave of stores, many of which have fewer books and larger spaces devoted to coffee and tea, but Hill believes there is still a desire among readers to congregate in a physical bookstore. "Amazon has tried to match that [connection to books] with algorithms, but that's not the same as having an elder in the community say, 'Son, I know you want to read this, but first you have to read this and this and this and this,' and then have them talk about the content of these books," Hill said.

Creating a space for those connections to happen over books is "the best thing I've ever done professionally," Hill said. "I've written books, I've had *New York Times* bestsellers, but I've never done anything so gratifying." —Alex Green



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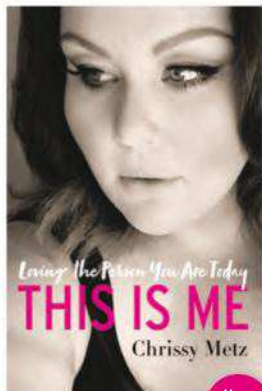
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Behind the Bestsellers MAR. 26–APR. 1, 2018

By CAROLYN JURIS

A LITTLE HELP, PLEASE?

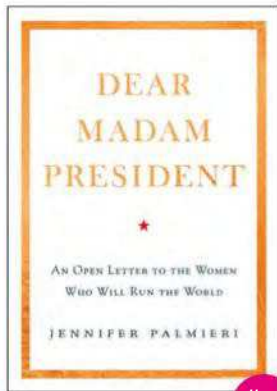
The self-help category is booming: print-unit sales for the year to date are up 19% this year from the same period in 2017. Three new books enter the fray and debut on our hardcover nonfiction list.



#5

THIS IS ME

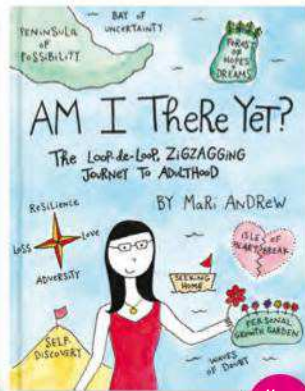
Chrissy Metz, who stars on the NBC hit *This Is Us*, shares her struggles with self-acceptance and encourages readers to love “the person you are today.”



#6

DEAR MADAM PRESIDENT

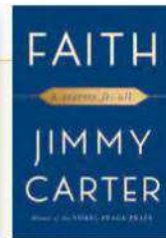
Jennifer Palmieri, Hillary Clinton’s former communications director, aims to motivate the next generation of women leaders with lessons learned from the campaign trail.



#8

AM I THERE YET?

Mari Andrew’s book grew out of the illustrations she posted daily on her Instagram account (currently at 777K followers) after a bad breakup and the death of her father.



Embracing Their Faith

The week leading up to Easter was a good one for new and recently released Christian nonfiction. Lysa TerKeurst debuts at #2 with the devotional *Embraced*, and Jimmy Carter lands at #15 with the inspirational title *Faith*. Maintaining claims to our list are Kathie Lee Gifford’s *The Rock, the Road, and the Rabbi* (#12), Rachel Hollis’s *Girl, Wash Your Face* (#19), and Kate Bowler’s *Everything Happens for a Reason* (#20).

NEW & NOTABLE

RED ALERT

James Patterson and Marshall Karp
#1 Hardcover Fiction, #4 overall
You’re not seeing double: a second edition of the Patterson-Karp thriller, the large print format, is #20 in hardcover fiction.



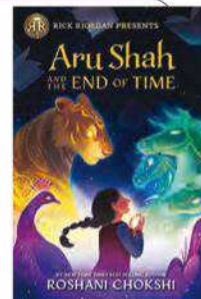
TIGER WOODS

Jeff Benedict and Armen Keteyian
#11 Hardcover Nonfiction
This biography draws on interviews with more than 250 people and had the good fortune to appear as the golfer returned to Augusta National and the Masters for the first time since 2015.



Lighting the Way

Aru Shah and the End of Time by Roshani Chokshi debuts at #10 in children’s frontlist fiction. In this series launch, which draws on stories from the Mahabharata, the title character lights a cursed lamp on a dare, freeing a demon who’s bent on awakening the god of destruction. It’s the first book from Rick Riordan’s new Disney imprint devoted to mythology-based middle grade books, and our starred review said it “expertly channels the humor and action that have made Riordan’s own work so successful.”



TOP 10 OVERALL

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	UNITS
1	A Wrinkle in Time	Madeleine L'Engle	Square Fish	34,683
2	Dog Man and Cat Kid (Dog Man #4)	Dav Pilkey	Graphix	32,026
3	12 Rules for Life	Jordan B. Peterson	Random House Canada	26,861
4	Red Alert	Patterson/Karp	Little, Brown	23,008
5	The Disappeared	C.J. Box	Putnam	22,969
6	Llama Llama Easter Egg	Anna Dewdney	Viking	22,883
7	Little Blue Truck's Springtime	Schertle/McElmurry	HMH	22,467
8	Pete the Cat: Big Easter Adventure	Dean/Dean	HarperCollins	22,252
9	Camino Island	John Grisham	Dell	20,084
10	God Gave Us Easter	Bergren/Bryant	WaterBrook	18,962



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ALL UNIT SALES PER NPD BOOKSCAN EXCEPT WHERE NOTED

Hardcover Frontlist Fiction

RANK	LW	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	UNITS
1	-	Red Alert	Patterson/Karp	Little, Brown	9780316395441	23,008
2	-	The Disappeared	C.J. Box	Putnam	9780399176623	22,969
3	1	Accidental Heroes	Danielle Steel	Delacorte	9781101884096	16,657
4	3	The Great Alone	Kristin Hannah	St. Martin's	9780312577230	11,867
5	-	To Die but Once	Jacqueline Winspear	Harper	9780062436634	9,795
6	6	Little Fires Everywhere	Celeste Ng	Penguin Press	9780735224292	9,390
7	7	The Woman in the Window	A.J. Finn	Morrow	9780062678416	8,822
8	9	Before We Were Yours	Lisa Wingate	Ballantine	9780425284681	7,490
9	4	The Rising Sea	Cussler/Brown	Putnam	9780735215535	7,129
10	2	The Punishment She Deserves	Elizabeth George	Viking	9780525954347	7,040
11	-	Bob Honey Who Just Do Stuff	Sean Penn	Atria	9781501189043	5,282
12	12	An American Marriage	Tayari Jones	Algonquin	9781616208776	5,276
13	13	Fifty Fifty	Patterson/Fox	Little, Brown	9780316513227	5,036
14	5	The Bishop's Pawn	Steve Berry	Minotaur	9781250140227	4,943
15	14	Alternate Side	Anna Quindlen	Random House	9780812996067	4,484
16	17	Origin	Dan Brown	Doubleday	9780385514231	3,965
17	16	The Flight Attendant	Chris Bohjalian	Doubleday	9780385542418	3,829
18	26	The Escape Artist	Brad Meltzer	Grand Central	9781455559527	3,687
19	19	The Wife Between Us	Hendricks/Pekkanen	St. Martin's	9781250130921	3,506
20	-	Red Alert (large print)	Patterson/Karp	Little, Brown	9780316395564	3,150

Hardcover Frontlist Nonfiction

RANK	LW	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	UNITS
1	3	12 Rules for Life	Jordan B. Peterson	Random House Canada	9780345816023	26,861
2	-	Embraced	Lysa TerKeurst	Thomas Nelson	9781400310296	17,244
3	1	Secret Empires	Peter Schweizer	Harper	9780062569363	15,067
4	2	Russian Roulette	Isikoff/Corn	Twelve	9781538728758	14,284
5	-	This Is Me	Chrissy Metz	Dey Street	9780062837875	12,282
6	-	Dear Madam President	Jennifer Palmieri	Grand Central	9781538713457	11,078
7	-	World of Warcraft Chronicle, Vol. 3	-	Dark Horse	9781616558475	10,565
8	-	Am I There Yet?	Mari Andrew	Clarkson Potter	9781524761431	9,575
9	6	I've Been Thinking...	Maria Shriver	Viking/Dorman	9780525522607	8,809
10	-	Giada's Italy	Giada De Laurentiis	Clarkson Potter	9780307987228	8,512
11	-	Tiger Woods	Benedict/Keteyian	Simon & Schuster	9781501126420	8,502
12	8	The Rock, the Road, and the Rabbi	Kathie Lee Gifford	W	9780785215967	8,184
13	4	Food	Mark Hyman	Little, Brown	9780316338868	7,696
14	10	Educated	Tara Westover	Random House	9780399590504	6,881
15	-	Faith	Jimmy Carter	Simon & Schuster	9781501184413	6,532
16	9	Fire and Fury	Michael Wolff	Holt	9781250158062	6,321
17	12	Astrophysics for People in a Hurry	Neil deGrasse Tyson	Norton	9780393609394	6,292
18	11	Genius Foods	Max Lugavere	Harper Wave	9780062562852	5,924
19	19	Girl, Wash Your Face	Rachel Hollis	Nelson	9781400201655	5,681
20	-	Everything Happens for a Reason	Kate Bowler	Random House	9780399592065	5,580

LW: rank last week

Mass Market Frontlist

RANK	LW	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	UNITS
1	1	Camino Island	John Grisham	Dell	9781524797157	20,084
2	–	All by Myself, Alone	Mary Higgins Clark	Pocket	9781501131127	15,461
3	–	White Lace and Promises	Debbie Macomber	Harlequin	9781335145116	12,865
4	–	Twice Bitten	Lynsay Sands	Avon	9780062468970	10,691
5	–	The Stalking Death	William W. Johnstone	Pinnacle	9780786040063	10,656
6	–	16th Seduction	Patterson/Paetro	Vision	9781538744413	9,789
7	2	The Fix	David Baldacci	Vision	9781455586585	9,254
8	–	The Whispering Room	Dean Koontz	Bantam	9780345546821	8,604
9	–	Pitchfork Pass	William W. Johnstone	Pinnacle	9780786040100	8,581
10	–	Hero's Return	B.J. Daniels	HQN	9781335013309	8,168
11	7	Proof of Life	J.A. Jance	Morrow	9780062657558	7,856
12	3	The Duchess	Danielle Steel	Dell	9780425285411	7,096
13	–	No Safe Secret	Fern Michaels	Zebra	9781420135893	6,904
14	4	Ruthless	Lisa Jackson	Zebra	9781420146400	6,084
15	6	Red Sparrow (movie tie-in)	Jason Matthews	Pocket	9781501168918	5,931
16	–	Lone Rider	Lindsay McKenna	Zebra	9781420145359	5,916
17	5	Fast Burn	Lori Foster	HQN	9780373789986	5,611
18	23	Ready Player One (movie tie-in)	Ernest Cline	Broadway	9780804190145	5,050
19	–	How the Cowboy Was Won	Lori Wilde	Avon	9780062468253	5,018
20	12	Against All Odds	Danielle Steel	Dell	9781101883938	4,677

Trade Paperback Frontlist

RANK	LW	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	UNITS
1	2	End Game	David Baldacci	Grand Central	9781455586622	12,384
2	3	The Sun and her Flowers	Rupi Kaur	Andrews McMeel	9781449486792	12,345
3	1	The Lying Game	Ruth Ware	Scout	9781501156205	11,926
4	11	Ready Player One (movie tie-in)	Ernest Cline	Broadway	9780804190138	11,002
5	4	Small Great Things	Jodi Picoult	Ballantine	9780345544971	10,059
6	5	Camino Island	John Grisham	Bantam	9781524797140	9,170
7	–	The Read-Aloud Family	Sarah Mackenzie	Zondervan	9780310350323	7,243
8	8	The Woman in Cabin 10	Ruth Ware	Scout	9781501132957	6,850
9	7	Call Me by Your Name	André Aciman	Picador	9781250169440	6,702
10	10	Norse Mythology	Neil Gaiman	Norton	9780393356182	6,654
11	–	Fantomorphia	Kerby Rosanes	Plume	9780525536727	6,633
12	9	We Were the Lucky Ones	Georgia Hunter	Penguin Books	9780399563096	6,453
13	12	Pachinko	Min Jin Lee	Grand Central	9781455563920	6,273
14	6	Haunted	Patterson/Born	Grand Central	9781538760673	6,249
15	–	Maggie Murders	Anthony Horowitz	Harper Perennial	9780062645234	6,104
16	15	Instant Pot Miracle	–	HMH	9781328851055	5,628
17	19	All the Light We Cannot See	Anthony Doerr	Scribner	9781501173219	5,498
18	16	Lincoln in the Bardo	George Saunders	Random House	9780812985405	5,259
19	13	The Identicals	Elin Hilderbrand	Back Bay	9780316375214	5,242
20	16	The Women in the Castle	Jessica Shattuck	Morrow	9780062563675	5,010

LW: rank last week

Children's Frontlist Fiction

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	UNITS
1	Dog Man and Cat Kid (Dog Man #4)	Dav Pilkey	Graphix	9780545935180	32,026
2	The Getaway (Diary of a Wimpy Kid #12)	Jeff Kinney	Amulet	9781419725456	17,645
3	Alien vs Bad Guys (The Bad Guys #6)	Aaron Blabey	Scholastic	9781338189599	16,124
4	A Wrinkle in Time (movie tie-in)	Madeleine L'Engle	FSG	9781250153272	16,069
5	Dog Man: A Tale of Two Kitties	Dav Pilkey	Graphix	9780545935210	11,273
6	Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda (movie tie-in)	Becky Albertalli	HC/Balzer + Bray	9780062792167	10,008
7	Middle School: From Hero to Zero	Patterson/Tebbetts	LB/Patterson	9780316346900	8,503
8	Children of Blood and Bone	Tomi Adeyemi	Holt	9781250170972	8,001
9	Big Nate: Silent but Deadly	Lincoln Peirce	Andrews McMeel	9781449489915	7,614
10	Aru Shah and the End of Time	Roshani Chokshi	Disney/Riordan	9781368012355	7,105
11	Tales from a Not-So-Secret Crush... (Dork Diaries #12)	Rachel Renée Russell	Aladdin	9781534405608	6,522
12	The Wild Robot Escapes	Peter Brown	Little, Brown	9780316382045	5,701
13	Wonder (movie tie-in)	R.J. Palacio	Knopf	9781524720193	5,599
14	Turtles All the Way Down	John Green	Dutton	9780525555360	4,989
15	Minecraft: The Island	Max Brooks	Del Rey	9780399181771	4,411
16	Word of Mouse	Patterson/Grabenstein	LB/Patterson	9780316414012	4,012
17	Everything, Everything	Nicola Yoon	Ember	9780553496673	3,986
18	Treasure Hunters: Quest for the City of Gold	Patterson/Grabenstein	LB/Patterson	9780316349550	3,914
19	One of Us Is Lying	Karen M. McManus	Delacorte	9781524714680	3,732
20	Captain Underpants and the Wrath of the Wicked...	Dav Pilkey	Scholastic	9781338216233	3,682
21	Every Day (movie tie-in)	David Levithan	Ember	9780525581611	3,618
22	The Hidden Oracle (Trials of Apollo #1)	Rick Riordan	Disney-Hyperion	9781484746417	3,590
23	Dawn and the Impossible Three (Baby-Sitters Club #5)	Martin/Galligan	Graphix	9781338067118	3,528
24	I Survived the Children's Blizzard, 1888	Lauren Tarshis	Scholastic	9780545919777	3,310
25	Restart	Gordon Korman	Scholastic Press	9781338053807	3,136

Children's Picture Books

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	UNITS
1	Llama Llama Easter Egg	Anna Dewdney	Viking	9780451469823	22,883
2	Little Blue Truck's Springtime	Schertle/McElmurry	HMH	9780544938090	22,467
3	Pete the Cat: Big Easter Adventure	Dean/Dean	HarperCollins	9780062198679	22,252
4	God Gave Us Easter	Bergren/Bryant	Waterbrook	9780307730725	18,962
5	Mother Bruce	Ryan T. Higgins	Disney-Hyperion	9781484730881	18,942
6	Happy Easter, Mouse!	Numeroff/Bond	HC/Balzer + Bray	9780694014224	18,924
7	The Berenstain Bears and the Easter Story	Berenstain/Berenstain	Zonderkidz	9780310720874	17,642
8	Animals	-	DK	9780756634681	17,291
9	Green Eggs and Ham	Dr. Seuss	Random House	9780394800165	17,022
10	A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo	Twiss/Keller	Chronicle	9781452173801	16,464
11	One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish	Dr. Seuss	Random House	9780394800134	15,062
12	Happy Easter, Little Critter	Mercer Mayer	Random House	9780307117236	14,385
13	The Easter Story	Pingry/Utt	Guideposts	9780824955311	13,653
14	Guess How Much I Love You	McBratney/Jeram	Candlewick	9780763642648	13,466
15	Dr. Seuss's ABC	Dr. Seuss	Random House	9780679882817	13,387
16	Peppa's Easter Egg Hunt	Neville Astley	Scholastic	9780545881302	12,350
17	There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Chick!	Colandro/Lee	Cartwheel	9780545161817	12,226
18	Biscuit's Pet & Play Easter	Capucilli/Schories	HarperFestival	9780061128394	12,164
19	The Story of Easter	Pingry/Thornburgh	Ideals	9780824918446	12,128
20	The Tale of Peter Rabbit	Beatrix Potter	Warne	9780723244325	11,540
21	The Berenstain Bears and the Real Easter Eggs	Berenstain/Berenstain	Random House	9780375811333	11,317
22	How to Catch the Easter Bunny	Wallace/Elkerton	Sourcebooks	9781492638179	11,202
23	Baby Animals	-	DK	9780756643010	11,142
24	The Cat in the Hat	Dr. Seuss	Random House	9780394800011	11,029
25	Mr. Brown Can Moo! Can You?	Dr. Seuss	Random House	9780679882824	11,027

Mystery

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	FORMAT
1	Instinct	Patterson/Roughan	Grand Central	9781478945185	Trade Paperback
2	The Disappeared	C.J. Box	Putnam	9780399176623	Hardcover
3	The Punishment She Deserves	Elizabeth George	Viking	9780525954347	Hardcover
4	House of Spies	Daniel Silva	Harper Paperbacks	9780062354372	Trade Paperback
5	All by Myself, Alone	Mary Higgins Clark	Pocket	9781501131127	Mass Market
6	Never Never	Patterson/Fox	Vision	9781478944782	Mass Market
7	The Bishop's Pawn	Steve Berry	Minotaur	9781250140227	Hardcover
8	Raspberry Danish Murder	Joanne Fluke	Kensington	9781617732249	Hardcover
9	Agent in Place	Mark Greaney	Berkley	9780451488909	Hardcover
10	The Kept Woman	Karin Slaughter	Morrow	9780062696304	Trade Paperback

Romance

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	FORMAT
1	Ruthless	Lisa Jackson	Zebra	9781420146400	Mass Market
2	Hello Stranger	Lisa Kleypas	Avon	9780062371911	Mass Market
3	Driftwood Cove	Debbie Mason	Forever	9781538744178	Mass Market
4	Looking for a Hero	Debbie Macomber	Mira	9780778331148	Mass Market
5	Once Again	Nora Roberts	Silhouette	9780373282487	Mass Market
6	Getaway	Nora Roberts	Silhouette	9781335005687	Mass Market
7	Surrender	Joan Johnston	Dell	9780399177767	Mass Market
8	The First Kiss of Spring	Emily March	St. Martin's	9781250131706	Mass Market
9	Dark in Death	J.D. Robb	St. Martin's	9781250161536	Hardcover
10	The Girl Who Knew Too Much	Amanda Quick	Berkley	9780515156379	Mass Market

Science Fiction

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	FORMAT
1	Ready Player One	Ernest Cline	Broadway	9780307887443	Trade Paperback
2	Ready Player One (movie tie-in)	Ernest Cline	Broadway	9780804190138	Trade Paperback
3	Star Wars: The Last Jedi	Jason Fry	Del Rey	9781524797119	Hardcover
4	Ready Player One (movie tie-in)	Ernest Cline	Broadway	9780804190145	Mass Market
5	Ready Player One	Ernest Cline	Broadway	9781524763282	Mass Market
6	Annihilation (movie tie-in)	Jeff Vandermeer	MCD	9780374537159	Trade Paperback
7	The Power	Naomi Alderman	Little, Brown	9780316547611	Hardcover
8	Artemis	Andy Weir	Crown	9780553448122	Hardcover
9	Ready Player One	Ernest Cline	Crown	9780307887436	Hardcover
10	Armada	Ernest Cline	Broadway	9780804137270	Trade Paperback

Fantasy

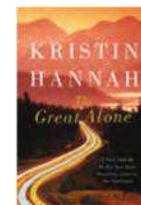
RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	FORMAT
1	Norse Mythology	Neil Gaiman	Norton	9780393356182	Trade Paperback
2	Annihilation	Jeff Vandermeer	FSG	9780374104092	Trade Paperback
3	Burn Bright	Patricia Briggs	Ace	9780425281314	Hardcover
4	How to Stop Time	Matt Haig	Viking	9780525522874	Hardcover
5	Year One	Nora Roberts	St. Martin's	9781250122957	Hardcover
6	The Name of the Wind	Patrick Rothfuss	DAW	9780756404741	Mass Market
7	Borne	Jeff Vandermeer	MCD	9780374537654	Trade Paperback
8	Oathbringer	Brandon Sanderson	Tor	9780765326379	Hardcover
9	Lake Silence	Anne Bishop	Ace	9780399587245	Hardcover
10	The Wise Man's Fear	Patrick Rothfuss	DAW	9780756407919	Trade Paperback



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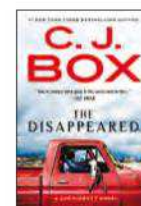
Fiction & Literature

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN
1	The Great Alone	Kristin Hannah	St. Martin's	9781250165619
2	Little Fires Everywhere	Celeste Ng	Penguin Press	9780735224308
3	Accidental Heroes	Danielle Steel	Delacorte	9781101884102
4	The Rising Sea	Cussler/Brown	Putnam	9780735215542
5	An American Marriage	Tayari Jones	Algonquin	9781616207601
6	Before We Were Yours	Lisa Wingate	Ballantine	9780425284698
7	Shock Wave	Clive Cussler	Sphere	9780751570908
8	A Gentleman in Moscow	Amor Towles	Viking	9780399564048
9	The Inheritance	Heidi Hostetter	Heidi Hostetter	9780996133708
10	Still Me	Jojo Moyes	Viking/Dorman	9780399562471
11	The Secret Mother	Shalini Boland	Bookouture	9781786813176
12	Circle of Friends	Maeve Binchy	Dell	9780440337614
13	Alternate Side	Anna Quindlen	Random House	9780812996074
14	Little Big Man	Larry McMurtry	Dial	9780307788993
15	Blueprints	Barbara Delinsky	St. Martin's	9781466878853
16	The Cafe by the Sea	Jenny Colgan	Morrow	9780062662989
17	The Truth According to Us	Annie Barrows	Dial	9780812997842
18	On the Road	Jack Kerouac	Penguin Books	9781101127575
19	Sweet Vengeance	Fern Michaels	Kensington	9781496703217
20	The Handmaid's Tale	Margaret Atwood	HMH	9780547345666



Mysteries & Thrillers

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN
1	The Disappeared	C.J. Box	Putnam	9780698410114
2	Red Alert	Patterson/Karp	Little, Brown	9780316395588
3	The Wife Between Us	Hendricks/Pekkanen	St. Martin's	9781250130938
4	The Escape Artist	Brad Meltzer	Grand Central	9781455559510
5	The Flight Attendant	Chris Bohjalian	Doubleday	9780385542425
6	The Woman in the Window	A.J. Finn	Morrow	9780062678447
7	The Bishop's Pawn	Steve Berry	Minotaur	9781250140234
8	Red Sparrow	Jason Matthews	Scribner	9781476706146
9	Demon Seed	Dean Koontz	Berkley	9781440672996
10	The Girl Who Came Back	Kerry Wilkinson	Bookouture	9781786812650

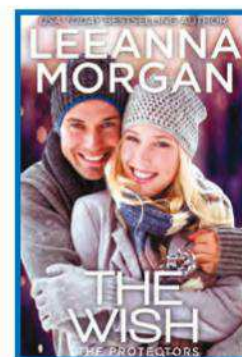
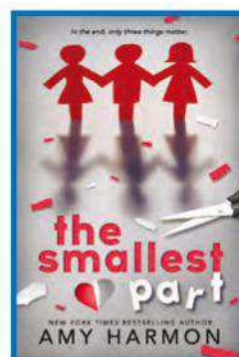
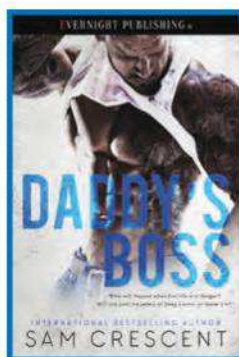
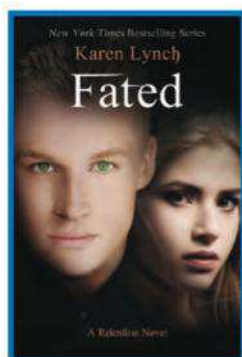
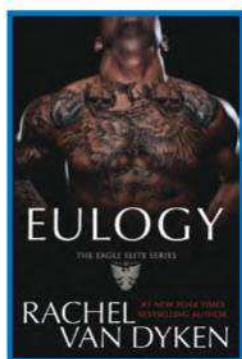


Science Fiction & Fantasy

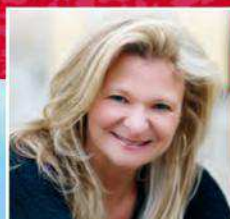
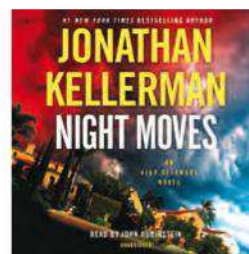
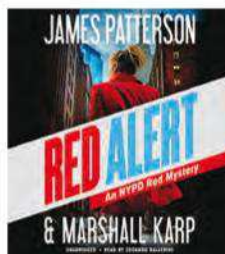
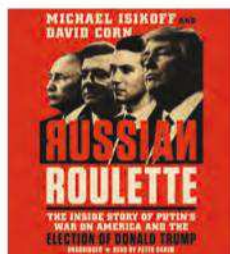
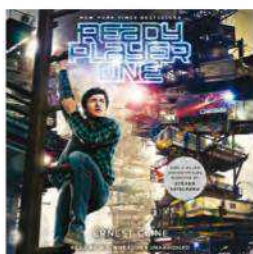
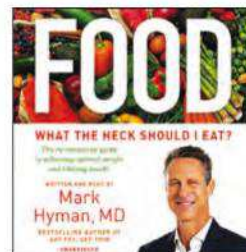
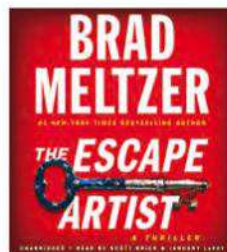
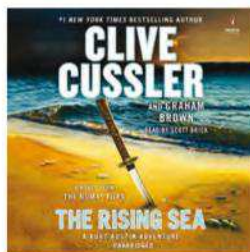
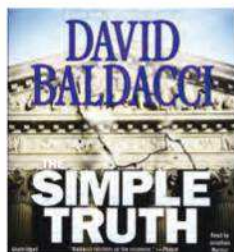
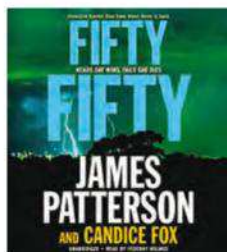
RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN
1	The Ship Who Sang	Anne McCaffrey	Del Rey	9780425287118
2	The Three-Body Problem	Cixin Liu	Tor	9781466853447
3	The Seafort Saga, Books 1–3	David Feintuch	Open Road	9781504048002
4	The Name of the Wind	Patrick Rothfuss	DAW	9781101147160
5	The Power	Naomi Alderman	Little, Brown	9780316547659
6	Burn Bright	Patricia Briggs	Ace	9780698195837
7	Sar Wars: The Last Jedi	Jason Fry	Del Rey	9781524797126
8	The Ladies of Mandrigyn	Barbara Hambly	Open Road	9781453216781
9	The Wise Man's Fear	Patrick Rothfuss	DAW	9781101486405
10	Carcharadons: Outer Dark	Robbie MacNiven	Black Library	9781785728853



RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	CATEGORY	PRICE
1	Broken Silence	Natasha Preston	9781301920686	Romance	2.99
2	Cross the Line	Julie Johnson	9780996510813	Romance	5.99
3	The Upside to Being Single	Emma Hart	9781370591800	Romance	3.99
4	The 5 Second Rule	Mel Robbins	9781682612392	Self-Help	9.99
5	Eulogy	Rachel Van Dyken	9780997145175	Romance	3.99
6	Bound by Vengeance	Brenda K. Davies	9781370050888	Romance	3.99
7	One Good Reason	Julie Johnson	9780996510844	Romance	5.99
8	Daddy's Boss	Sam Crescent	9781773395661	Romance	3.99
9	The Hookup	Kristen Ashley	9781370740475	Romance	3.99
10	Fated	Karen Lynch	9780997990133	YA Fantasy	3.99
11	Brothers South of the Mason Dixon	Abbi Glines	9780988301382	Romance	3.99
12	Sakura	Alexia Praks	9781310161711	Romance	5.99
13	The Wish	Leeanna Morgan	9780994144430	Romance	3.99
14	Take Your Time	Julie Johnson	9780998657424	Romance	5.99
15	Models	Mark Manson	9781476065809	Family/Relationships	12.95
16	Players, Bumps and Cocktail Sausages	Natasha Preston	9781311298089	Romance	2.99
17	The Viking's Chosen	Quinn Loftis	9781634222730	YA Historical Fiction	3.99
18	The Smallest Part	Amy Harmon	9781370592524	Romance	5.99
19	Complicated	Kristen Ashley	9781370643295	Romance	3.99
20	Keeping It	Rachel Robinson	9781370857272	Romance	2.99
21	Falling for the Jerk	Sam Crescent	9781773395555	Romance	3.99
22	Bred by the Bushmen	Sam Crescent	9781773395388	Romance	3.99
23	Sex, Not Love	Vi Keeland	9781370103768	Romance	4.99
24	Last Call	Angela White	9781945927577	Science Fiction	5.99
25	Satyr's Son	Lucinda Brant	9780987073884	Romance	5.99



RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	PUB DATE	UNITS
1	Fifty Fifty	Patterson/Fox	Little, Brown	Feb 2018	2,171
2	Once Again	Nora Roberts	Brilliance Audio	Feb 2018	1,908
3	The Simple Truth	David Baldacci	Grand Central	Jan 2018	1,583
4	The Fix	David Baldacci	Grand Central	Feb 2018	1,562
5	The Great Alone	Kristin Hannah	Macmillan Audio	Feb 2018	1,298
6	The Rising Sea	Cussler/Brown	Penguin Audio	Mar 2018	1,277
7	The Escape Artist	Brad Meltzer	Grand Central	Mar 2018	1,271
8	Getaway	Nora Roberts	Brilliance Audio	Jan 2018	1,253
9	House of Spies	Daniel Silva	Harper Audio	Feb 2018	851
10	Food	Mark Hyman	Little, Brown	Mar 2018	838
11	Ready Player One (movie tie-in)	Ernest Cline	Random House Audio	Jan 2018	812
12	The Whistler	John Grisham	Random House Audio	Oct 2017	777
13	Alexander Hamilton	Ron Chernow	Penguin Audio	May 2016	707
14	Russian Roulette	Isikoff/Corn	Twelve	Mar 2018	695
15	Red Alert	Patterson/Karp	Little, Brown	Mar 2018	667
16	Fire and Fury	Michael Wolff	Macmillan Audio	Jan 2018	657
17	Night Moves	Jonathan Kellerman	Random House Audio	Feb 2018	596
18	The Woman in the Window	A.J. Finn	Harper Audio	Jan 2018	575
19	The Rooster Bar	John Grisham	Random House Audio	Oct 2017	547
20	Hardcore Twenty-Four	Janet Evanovich	Random House Audio	Nov 2017	543



Photograph by April Narby

BLOCKBUSTER NEW FICTION

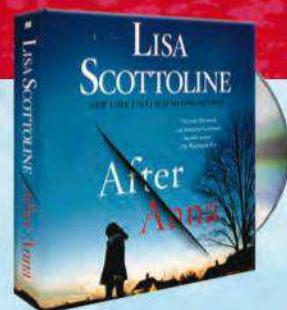
“A nail-biting thriller.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“Scottoline is a master at crafting intense family dramas.” —*Booklist*

READ BY MOZHAN MARNÒ AND JEREMY BOBB

NEW YORK TIMES
BESTSELLING AUTHOR
LISA SCOTTOLINE

macmillan audio



By Shannon Maughan



In the Studio

🎧 F. Murray Abraham Heads 'Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales' for Listening Library

For the newest Listening Library Classics entry, Academy Award-winning actor F. Murray Abraham (*Homeland*, *Amadeus*) leads a full cast narrating *Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales*. The collection contains such beloved stories as "The Ugly Duckling" and "The Little Mermaid," as well as lesser-known works like "Luck Can Be Found in a Stick." *Fairy Tales* was made available as a digital download March 27 in honor of International Children's Book Day, which is celebrated each April 2, Andersen's birthday. The CD edition will be released May 1.



F. Murray Abraham

🎧 'Stranger Things' Actress Cast in 'Simon' Sequel for HarperAudio

Shannon Purser, known for her acting roles on *Stranger Things*, *Riverdale*, and *Rise*, reads YA novel *Leab on the Offbeat* by Becky Albertalli for HarperAudio's audiobook edition, due out April 24. *Leab* is the follow-up to Albertalli's *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda*, which was recently adapted for the big screen as *Love, Simon*. *Simon* is about a high school boy struggling to come to terms with his sexuality and come out as gay.

🎧 FBI's Comey Wraps 'Loyalty' at Macmillan

James Comey, the former FBI director who was fired by President Trump last May, recently stepped into the recording studio to read his memoir, *A Higher Loyalty: Truth, Lies, and Leadership*, for Macmillan Audio. The audio edition goes on sale April 17.

🎧 Imperioli's 'Perfume' Lands at HighBridge

Actor and author Michael Imperioli, best known for his role on HBO's *The Sopranos*, narrates his novel *The Perfume Burned His Eyes* for HighBridge Audio. The tale follows 16-year-old Matthew who, in the span of a few months in 1976, loses both his father and grandfather and then moves with his mother from Queens to Manhattan. On his bumpy journey to manhood he be-



Michael Imperioli



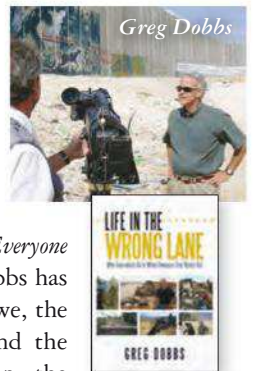
gins attending an elite prep school and befriends one of the neighbors: drug-addicted musician Lou Reed. *The Perfume Burned His Eyes* is set for an April 10 release.

🎧 Audible Studios Locks in Wheaton and Benson for New Scalzi Title

For John Scalzi's new futuristic thriller, *Head On*, a standalone follow-up to his title *Lock In*, actors Wil Wheaton (*Star Trek: The Next Generation*) and Amber Benson (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*) were each behind the mic to record separate versions of the book. The duo also recorded different editions of *Lock In*, a novel in which the author does not identify the gender of the protagonist. As with *Lock In*, listeners will be able to choose either Wheaton's or Benson's narration for the audiobook of *Head On*, which releases April 17 on Audible.

🎧 Journalist Dobbs Reads 'Life in the Wrong Lane' for Brook Forest Voices

Greg Dobbs, a two-time Emmy-winning broadcast journalist and former correspondent for ABC News, shares behind-the-scenes stories from his assignments around the world as he reads his memoir, *Life in the Wrong Lane: Why Journalists Go in When Everyone Else Wants Out* for Brook Forest Voices. Dobbs has covered civil wars in Lebanon and Zimbabwe, the Iran-Iraq War, the Iranian Revolution and the occupation of the U.S. embassy in Tehran, the Watergate scandal, and the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. Dobbs self-published the book about 10 years ago but it wasn't released as an audiobook. The audio edition will be published on April 30.



🎧 Hachette Taps Tapper for 'Hellfire Club'

Jake Tapper (*The Outpost*), CNN's chief Washington correspondent and bestselling nonfiction author, recently took on the role of audiobook narrator for the first time, recording his debut political thriller, *The Hellfire Club*, for Hachette Audio. Tapper relates the story of how a fatal car crash sweeps Congressman Charlie Marder and his wife into a mystery involving a secret society and political machinations in 1950s Washington, D.C. ■

BUZZWORTHY NON-FICTION

What is right instead of what is politically expedient?

How do you maintain loyalty to the values of the institutions you have sworn to protect, the values you have dedicated your entire life to upholding, even if that loyalty comes at your own personal expense?

READ BY THE AUTHOR
JAMES COMEY

Rouse Photography Group, LLC



Louisa Ermelino

Start with a Great City and a Dead Prostitute

Young women are gruesomely murdered in a medical mystery that brings 1847 Edinburgh to life

Canongate is a 40-year-old independent U.K. publisher with offices in a 16th-century building in the Old Town section of Edinburgh. Francis Bickmore, the publishing director of Canongate, shares an architectural detail: “The Fear of the Lord Preserveth the Lyf” is carved into the interior stone wall. Fitting, since Canongate’s “superlead title,” *The Way of All Flesh* by Andrew Parry, which Bickmore edited, is an historical novel set in 1847 Edinburgh.

“I love that the atmosphere of Edinburgh is captured on the page,” Bickmore says. And it certainly is: “The smells of ordure were inescapable around here, so many lives piled one upon the other in the foetid labyrinth that was Old Town.”

The book opens with a promise of intrigue: “No decent story ought to begin with a dead prostitute.”

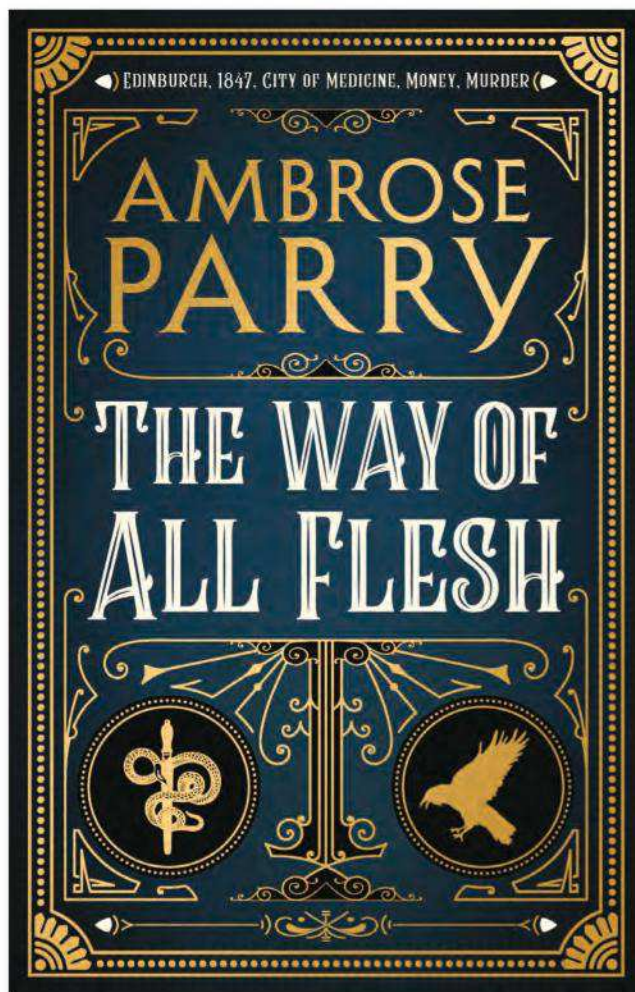
Bickmore calls the novel a celebration of Edinburgh in the 1840s, a time when the city was at the forefront of medical discoveries. James Simpson, a Scottish obstetrician, was pioneering the use of liquid chloroform and revolutionizing surgery. Before chloroform came along, Bickmore tells me, patients were restrained and made to “bite down on wooden sticks.”

Andrew Parry is a pseudonym of Chris Brookmyre and Marisa Haetzman, a husband-and-wife team with an interesting mix of skills. Brookmyre is a bestselling crime writer whose 21 books are all contemporary or set in the future; Haetzman has been an anesthesiologist for 20 years, and Bickmore notes, is “probably the only person I’ve ever worked with who could save my life.”

Haetzman stopped practicing to get a master’s degree in the history of medicine at the University of Edinburgh, and while researching Simpson, uncovered fascinating stories. Combined with the goings on in 1840s Edinburgh, the extremes of high brow and low, and, as the couple has said, “the colorful nature of Simpson’s domestic arrangements,” Haetzman thought there were the perfect elements for a historical mystery.

With his openness, which defied the stuffiness of the Victorian era, Simpson became a central character. “*The Way of All Flesh* is the first in a series that Chris and Marisa want to create around Simpson and his house,” Bickmore says, “which was a revolving door for all sorts, from the aristocracy to the poorest of the poor.”

In the novel, young women are being gruesomely killed across Old Town, and Simpson’s housemaid, Sarah, an intelligent young woman with ambitions, and his apprentice doctor, Will



Raven, an unreliable rogue, team up to solve the murders. Sarah takes an instant dislike to Raven (he has the privileges that she’s denied; an underlying theme of the book is how women were restricted by this society), but there’s chemistry, of course, and I’m not giving anything else away.

Bickmore remembers first hearing about the book outside the Spiegel tent at the Edinburgh International Book Festival while having drinks and talking to Brookmyre. “We hadn’t worked together at this point,” Bickmore says. “He started telling me about a secret project he was working on with his wife, and from what I was hearing, I said I couldn’t think of a piece I’d be more excited to see.”

When the manuscript arrived at Canongate, from Sophie Scard at United Agents in London, in late 2017, Bickmore was

enthralled and says everyone else felt the same way. “A consensus is not at all common in publishing, it’s actually rare, and I swiftly preempted it,” he says. He bought world rights for a “substantial sum” and SunnyMarch quickly preempted TV rights, with plans to adapt the novel into a drama series.

With historical fiction, Bickmore tells me, “there’s the danger that it’s repeating a formula, but *The Way of All Flesh* is genre breaking; it bends the rules.” He adds, “It has the pacing of crime fiction but in an historical setting. We wanted a book that would keep you up all night reading. Chris is a master at plotting, suspense and pacing; Marisa brings three years of research and the historian’s eye for detail.”

Brookmyre is a longtime client of Caroline Dawnay at United Agents; Scard began jointly representing him with Dawnay about five years ago. “But with Ambrose Parry,” Scard says, “I became the sole agent in order to make the distinction.”

Scard tells me that she and Dawnay knew Brookmyre was working on something but saw nothing until the couple sent in a few early chapters in February 2017. “We gave a few suggestions and in early October the manuscript for *The Way of All Flesh* appeared. We were all very excited. I tweaked it a bit and sent it out at the end of November 2017 to about a dozen publishers. Three days later, Francis [Bickmore] called and made an offer.”

Scard says she called Brookmyre and they talked back and forth. Forty minutes later, they had a deal. Scard thought the

book was “brilliantly executed” and the characters so relatable “even though they are from another era.” She also thought that Brookmyre and Haetzman were “very brave” to write a book together. (Scard and I agree that writing a book with a spouse is not something either of us would ever think of doing.)

Like Bickmore, Scard emphasizes that this book is a wild departure for Brookmyre. “You wouldn’t know Chris had anything to do with it,” she says. “It’s a different voice, a different style—such attention to aesthetics, details, interiors.”

When I speak with Brookmyre and Haetzman, I understand how they wrote a book together. Maybe it was the lilting Scottish brogue, but they came across as paragons of calm.

“Every night Marisa had another story about Simpson and the transformations that were taking place in Edinburgh [in the 1840s],” Brookmyre says. Haetzman completed her master’s degree in 2014 and they talked about a story for a couple of years. In January 2017, they began in earnest.

“We weren’t reluctant to collaborate, but didn’t quite know how it would work out,” Brookmyre says. They imagined at first that Haetzman would do the research and Brookmyre would shape the story, but Haetzman developed ideas and characters, Sarah in particular, because, Haetzman says, “I had time while Chris was working and I was waiting for him to be available.”

For the character of Raven, the apprentice doctor, Haetzman was invaluable because she had all the medical details. And when she was researching Simpson, she was able to see his original case notes, in his own handwriting, at the Lothian Health Services Archives at the University of Edinburgh.

Brookmyre says that he had always wanted to write a historical novel, but under his own name he produces a book per year (he’s working on one right now) and couldn’t imagine finding the time. “But with Marisa, I had the perfect partner,” he says. “It’s great having a collaborator. My contribution was making it all darker, and far more complicated.”

Canongate is publishing *The Way of All Flesh* in the U.K. in August and in the U.S. in October. It will be distributed in the States through PGW. Bickmore says there was a temptation to license it to one of the American houses, but after exploring options, Canongate decided to go through PGW. Foreign rights have been sold to Canada (HarperCollins), Denmark (Modtryk), Germany (Piper), Italy (Rizzoli), Poland (Zysk), Russia (Eksmo), and Spain (Salamandra). Bickmore expects more deals to come at the London Book Fair this week. Plans are still underway for the U.S. launch; 2,500 ARCs will be available at BookExpo.

I still can’t quite let go of the idea of a husband and wife from such wildly different professional backgrounds writing such a thrilling and seamless book. How did they do it without killing each other? Both told me that it was “mostly harmonious,” but after I keep prodding, Haetzman finally breaks down.

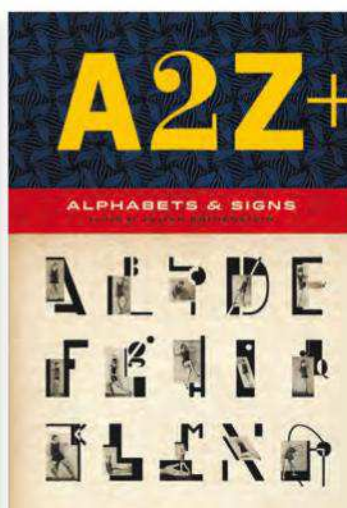
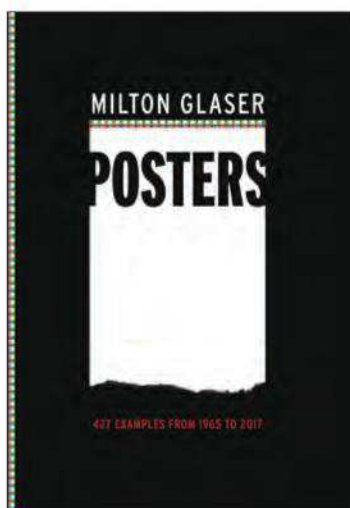
“Well, I’m the historian and all about the facts,” she says. “I’d question something and Chris would say, ‘Oh that’s fine, we can just make it up—it’s a novel!’ But I wanted everything accurate, and was very, very fussy about everything being true.”



Clockwise from top: Chris Brookmyre and Marisa Haetzman; Francis Bickmore; the Canongate offices in Old Town; Sophie Scard.

Graphic Content

NEW BOOKS SHOW THAT STRONG DESIGN CAN BE AN ANTIDOTE TO MEDIA OVERLOAD



BY CATHERINE LASOTA

In an increasingly digital and information-saturated world, good design may be the key to being understood. The months ahead bring new titles in graphic design and typography, from long-standing names in the field and from relative newcomers, all of them demonstrating the importance of a thoughtfully composed message.

GENERATIONS OF CONVERSATION

April sees the release of several new books from active and influential designers, some of whom have been working for decades and others young enough to have studied their work at art school. Milton Glaser cofounded Push Pin Studios in 1954 and in 2004 received a lifetime achievement award from the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum. His new book, *Milton Glaser Posters: 427 Examples from 1965 to 2017* (Abrams) is a compact but thick volume that showcases one image on each 5 1/2" x 7 5/8" page, with its title and a few sentences of explanation from Glaser on the opposite page.

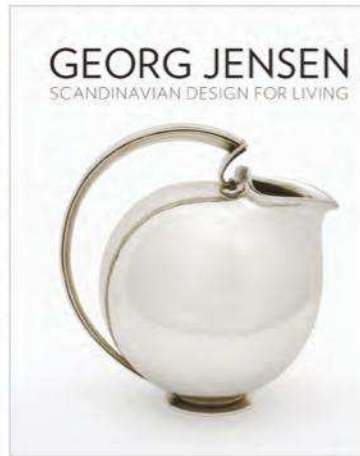
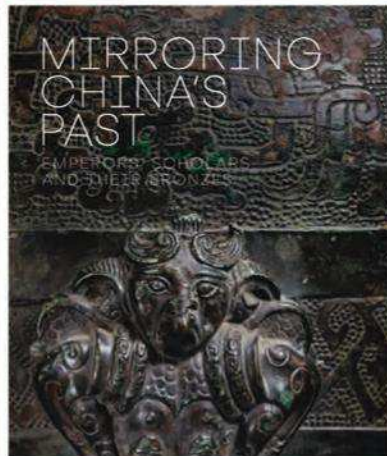
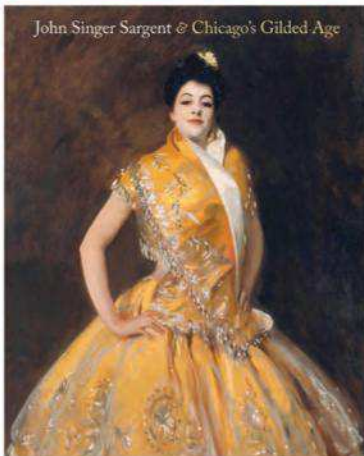
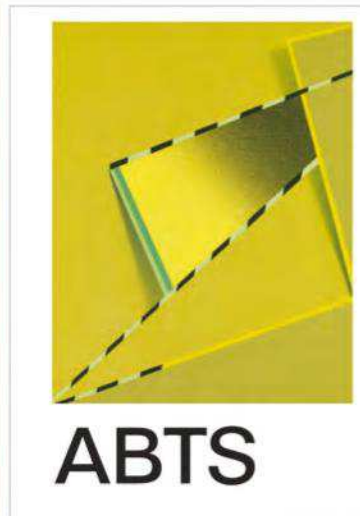
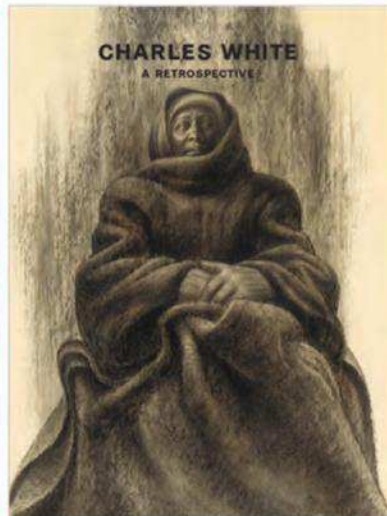
The graphic designer, who is known for such projects as his I Love NY logo and his publicity poster for the 1967 album *Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits*, says that his style has changed over the years. "It used to seem more decorative and now seems more purposeful," he says. "Context always determines design. When there is a lot of noise in the atmosphere, silence is a good response."

British publisher, editor, and designer Julian Rothenstein's passion for typography may rival Glaser's long dedication to artful poster design. Rothenstein's *A2Z+* (Princeton Architectural Press),

New

FROM THE

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Yale

Distributed by Yale
University Press
www.yalebooks.com/art

Max Lamb: Exercises in Seating

Zoë Ryan and Max Lamb, with
Ryan Gander
Paper \$30.00

John Singer Sargent and Chicago's Gilded Age

Annelise K. Madsen, with
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and Deborah Willis and a preface
by Kerry James Marshall
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Mirroring China's Past: Emperors, Scholars, and their Bronzes

Tao Wang, with essays by Sarah Allan,
Jeffrey Moser, Su Rongyu, Edward L.
Shaughnessy, Zhixin Jason Sun, Zhou
Ya, Liu Yu, and Lu Zhang
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Tomma Abts

Edited by James Rondeau and
Lekha Hileman Waitoller, with essays
by James Rondeau, Kate Nesin, and
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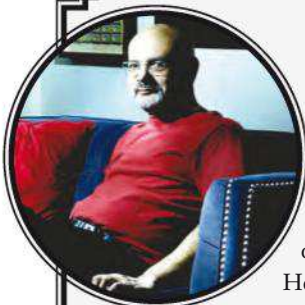
Georg Jensen: Scandinavian Design for Living

Edited by Alison Fisher, with essays
by Alison Fisher, Maggie Taft, and
Thomas C. Thulstrup
Hardcover \$50.00

now in its fourth iteration, began its life almost 30 years ago as the black-and-white *Alphabets and Other Signs* (1991) from Rothenstein's Redstone Press. For the colorful pages of the new book, Rothenstein raided his and other designers' bookshelves for typography he loved and included an introduction by his longtime friend and collaborator, art critic and curator Mel

Gooding; he says the two work together so well because "we hate rules and academic designations and divisions."

The source material is wide-ranging and includes several Russian book covers, diagnostic eye charts, and statistical proto-infographics drawn by W.E.B. DuBois. Rothenstein imagines the book as an inspiration for designers, and is "sure



MORE THAN A *Pretty* FONT

PW TALKS WITH STEVEN HELLER

As an art director at the *New York Times* for 33 years and co-chair of the MFA design department at the School of Visual Arts in New York City, Steven Heller has had a major impact on the trajectory of graphic design—and that's not even

mentioning the more than 180 books he's written, coauthored, or edited on design and popular culture. Heller spoke with *PW* about how he chooses his projects—which include the forthcoming *Head to Toe*, coauthored by Mirko Ilić (Rizzoli, Apr.) and *The Illustration Idea Book*, coauthored by Gail Anderson (Laurence King, Oct.)—and why good design matters to non-designers, too.

A new edition of *Citizen Designer*, which you and Véronique Vienne coedited 15 years ago, is pubbing in May. Has the role of socially responsible design changed in any way since that first edition?

Because the world is shifting back onto that slippery slope of populism and exclusion, I think [the importance of] being a designer who makes messages for the public has increased. You see it with #MeToo, #NeverAgain, etc. I also think, at least for now, designers take their roles as framers of ideas in society a bit more seriously. Design is not just about prettifying, although there's nothing wrong with that.

What new issues or concerns are you addressing in the second edition?

There are more personal responses to sexism, racism, the usual concerns. But there is a piece I love about designing an artificial pancreas that fits outside the body. As Paul Rand once said, probably not really aware of how true his statement was, "design is everywhere."

Which other designers, and design books, have been important to you?

I have thousands of books spread out between office, apartment, and weekend house. Most of these books are on art, design, or a combination of the two, plus other drivers. Many of those have added chunks of knowledge and inspiration to my life. Milton Glaser's first monograph influenced me a lot. It certainly made me realize I wasn't a very good designer.

Given your packed schedule, how do you decide which book projects to take on?

I once thought I had boundless energy. I also had limitless curiosity, and doing books was a way to expend one and satisfy the other. I've always been interested in how design works in the context of culture, politics, and so on. Deciding on projects is fairly easy: what do I want to know, and what do I want other designers—or nondesigners—to know about the art and craft?

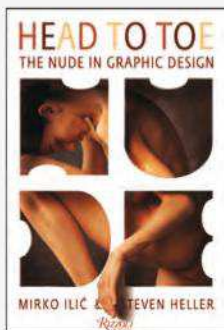
What can nondesigners learn from typography and design, and from books on these subjects?

Design and type are integral parts of our experience: if the book is not overly technical but tells a good story, it can be as enjoyable and inspirational as anything that neophytes or nonwhatevers find interesting in books.

Who do you envision as your readership when you write about design?

Depends. Some work is just for designers. But I'd like to reach whoever sees its relevance. I try to write accessibly; I'm always criticized for not using footnotes. Even when I write about design history, I like the anecdotal approach. But I've been doing this so long, maybe it's time to focus in on something very specific and do the proverbial opus. Then again, maybe not.

—C.L.

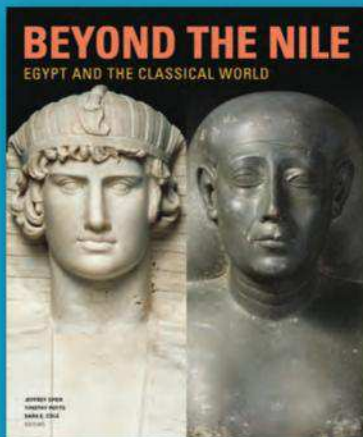


Above: A poster for a German production of *Antony and Cleopatra* from 1996, from *Head to Toe* by Mirko Ilić and Steven Heller (Rizzoli, Apr.)



NEW
FROM THE

Getty



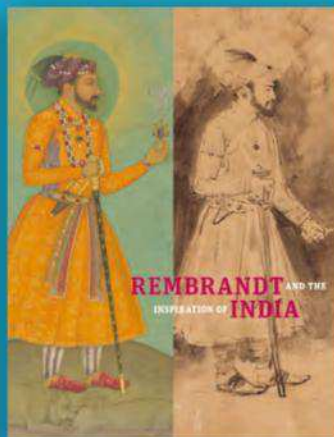
Beyond the Nile

Egypt and the Classical World

Edited by Jeffrey Spier, Timothy Potts, and Sara E. Cole

The history of the ancient world is not simply the stories of Egypt, Greece, and Rome as separate cultures, but an interwoven narrative of aesthetic and technological exchange, hybridization, and collaboration. This milestone publication is the first to offer a comprehensive account of these vicissitudes of cultural exchange, covering over 2500 years with lively prose and gorgeous illustrations.

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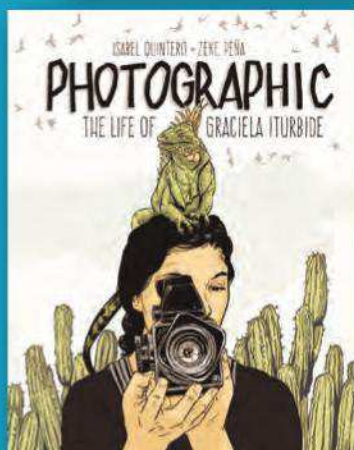


Rembrandt and the Inspiration of India

Edited by Stephanie Schrader

This sumptuously illustrated volume examines the impact of Indian art and culture on Rembrandt in the late 1650s. Pairing twenty-two of Rembrandt's drawings of Mughal courtiers with Mughal paintings of similar composition, this catalogue features essays by scholars of both Dutch and Indian art.

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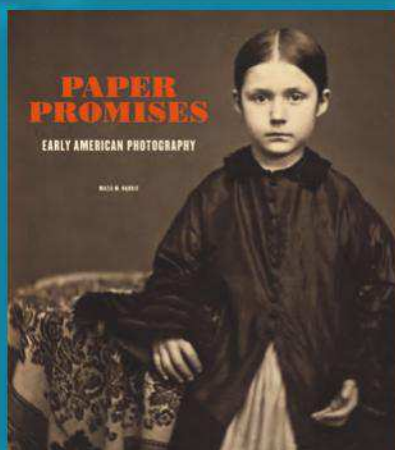
Photographic

The Life of Graciela Iturbide

Isabel Quintero and Zeke Peña

This young adult graphic biography follows the life of one of Mexico's greatest living photographers, Graciela Iturbide, as she makes her way from Mexico City to the Sonoran Desert, Los Angeles, India, and beyond. The kaleidoscopic narrative offers deep insight into the path of a young photographer from an early tragedy to great fame. Ages twelve and up.

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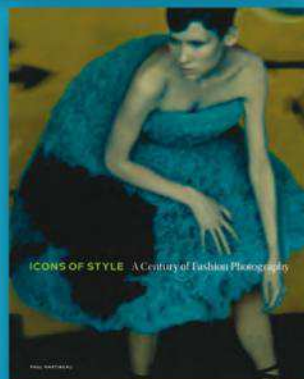
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Early American Photography

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Filling a gap in previous scholarship, Mazie M. Harris looks specifically at early American photographers who used paper negatives to create photographs on a variety of papers. This richly detailed catalogue provides a new window not only into photography practice in the mid-nineteenth century, but life in general.

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Art & Photography Books

some people will cut it up for collage. It's meant to be useful."

Compared with Rothenstein and Glaser, Oliver Munday and Craig Oldham are relative newcomers. In 2010 Munday was named one of *Print* magazine's 20 best graphic artists under 30, for his illustrations for publications including *Time* magazine and the *New York Times*. *Don't Sleep: The Urgent Messages of Oliver Munday* (Rizzoli, Apr.), with an introduction by the *New Yorker*'s Hilton Als, highlights work that often sticks to a simple color palette, including the black, white, and red book covers for Touré's *Who's Afraid of Post-Blackness?* and Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad*.

Munday, who continues to do a great deal of editorial work, says there is less time for levity in politics these days, and this translates into his design work. "The stakes for communicating have been raised," he says. "Any chance to speak should be direct in its appraisal and summary. When sending out signals into the cacophony, you better have something worthwhile to say."

Craig Oldham, in *Oh Sh*t, What Now?: Honest Advice for New Graphic Designers* (Laurence King, Apr.), is writing for a readership to which he belonged relatively recently. He earned a bachelor's degree in graphic design from the U.K.'s Falmouth University in 2006, and has since won multiple awards for his design work, which spans fields including branding, pub-

continued on p. 35

FROM SIDEWALK TO

As the coverage of Fashion Week proves, what happens outside the shows can attract as much attention as what happens on the runway. Even *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and the rest of the old guard weigh in not just on designer trends but on what social media influencers are wearing. So it's no surprise that several forthcoming titles celebrate street style—those who promote it and those who wear it.

Drop

Byron Hawes (*PowerHouse*, July)

Hawes documents the culture of the "hypebeast," which he describes as "a ruthless pursuit of limited-edition street fashion and kicks, by any means necessary." *Drop* features photographs of the fashion fans who treat product launches, or drops, as opportunities to show off their threads as they wait outside stores in lines that stretch down city blocks. The prevalence of Instagram lifestyle posturing, Hawes speculates, has made such launches into events. "The ateliers have fashion week; these drops are becoming the street fashion analogue."

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Art & Photography Books

CATWALK

► Fashion Climbing

Bill Cunningham (Penguin Press, Sept.) Self-taught photographer Cunningham, who died in 2016, was the unofficial king of street-fashion photography. He cruised the streets of New York City by bicycle, capturing its citizens' clothing and accessory choices for the *New York Times*. His memoir, which he wrote, revised, and secreted away to be published after his death, is interspersed with photographs from his life as a designer and professional people-watcher.

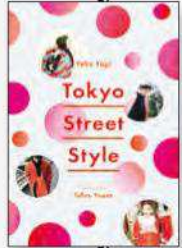


► This Is Not Fashion

King ADZ and Wilma Stone (Thames & Hudson, Apr.) Beginning with what the book calls the first streetwear shop—Trash and Vaudeville, which opened in Jersey City in 1972 and soon after moved to St. Mark's Place in New York's East Village—this look at fashion styles and brands encompassing punk, hip-hop, club wear, and more includes hundreds of photos as well as interviews with big names in the field, such as Shepard Fairey, the street artist and designer of the Barack Obama “Hope” poster whose clothing brand Obey was a pioneer of contemporary street art–based streetwear.

► Tokyo Street Style

Yoko Yagi, photos by Tohru Yuasa (Abrams Image, Apr.) Joining a list that includes books on Paris (2013) and Brooklyn (2015), this title tracks Tokyo fashion by neighborhood and decade, from the 1960s to today, and showcases the influence of its models, photographers, designers, and shops in other arenas, such as food. “Trends that develop in Japan quickly spread to international markets,” says Abrams senior editor Laura Dozier. For instance, “the book explores how Tokyo has been a pioneer in genderless fashion for decades, and continues to be today.”



► Polka Dot Parade

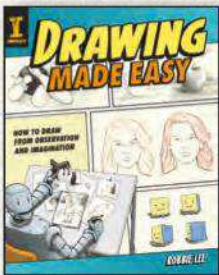
Deborah Blumenthal, illus. by Masha D'yans (Little Bee, Sept.; ages 4–8) The author of 2017's *Fancy Party Gowns*, which introduced the picture-book crowd to fashion designer Ann Cole Lowe, here profiles street-fashion photographer Bill Cunningham, contrasting his reclusiveness with the joy he found in placing the spotlight on others.



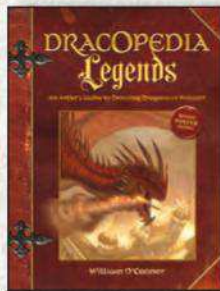
—C.L.

New for Summer

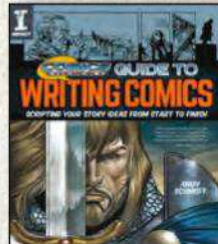
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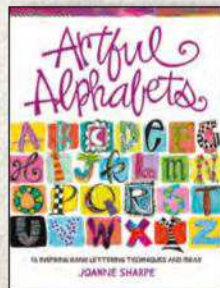
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INSPIRATION AND
INSTRUCTION





Artistic Representation

Cultural gatekeepers are increasingly acknowledging their responsibility to diversify the voices in the spotlight. In November, GLAAD reported that the TV industry had its highest percentage of characters who identify as LGBTQ since tracking began more than 20 years ago. In March, the *New York Times* launched *Overlooked*, a series that highlights notable women whose deaths were not covered by the paper at the time. *National Geographic's* editor-in-chief introduced April's issue with an editorial titled, "For Decades Our Coverage Was Racist. To Rise above Our Past We Must Acknowledge It." Book publishing, too, has been stepping up, and a number of forthcoming titles give a platform to artists from traditionally marginalized groups.

➤ A Big Important Art Book (Now with Women)

Danielle Krysa (*Running Press, Oct.*)

Collage artist Krysa launched the website *The Jealous Curator* in 2009 as a way of turning her envy of other artists into admiration. In 2015, she started a podcast of the same name that averages 10,000 downloads per episode. Her new book picks up where *The Jealous Curator* started—offering images of artwork to inspire creativity—but focuses on only women artists.



➤ Lorna Simpson Collages

Lorna Simpson (*Chronicle, June*)

Simpson's collages combine vintage advertising images with geological formations and colorful ink washes, presented as a celebration of black women and men's hair. Poet and newly anointed Andrew M. Mellon Foundation president Elizabeth Alexander wrote the introduction to the book, which our review called "electrifying."

➤ Madam & Eve

Liz Rideal and Kathleen Soriano (*Laurence King, Apr.*)

Artist Rideal and curator Soriano document the impact of second-wave feminism on the art world over the last 50 years. The book showcases women depicting women in their artwork, 200 artists in all. Included are Louise Bourgeois, Barbara Kruger, and Tracey Moffatt, as well as lesser-known names such as Lalla Essaydi and Amalia Ulman.

➤ My Soul Has Grown Deep

Cheryl Finley, Randall R. Griffey, Amelia Peck, and Darryl Pinckney (*Metropolitan Museum of Art, June*)

Taking its title from the Langston Hughes poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," this book accompanies the forthcoming exhibition *History Refused to Die* (May 22–Sept. 23). Griffey says the artists in the book "are all connected by common legacies of slavery and post-Reconstruction histories of oppression under the Black Codes and Jim Crow laws"

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NEW

and are often described as self-taught, with few expectations that their work would be seen in galleries or museums.

➤ **Pansy Beat**

Michael Economy (*KrimKrams Island, dist. by ArtBook, May*)

From 1989 to 1990, Economy published five issues of the zine *Pansy Beat*, which shined a light on the downtown N.Y.C. gay and drag club scene during the darkest days of the AIDS crisis. His book collects the five issues alongside new material. “Maybe because issues of gender fluidity and drag have become almost mainstream in the last few years,” Economy says, “looking back at the old issues reveals how prescient so much of it feels.”

➤ **Upstate Girls**

Brenda Kenneally (*Regan Arts, Sept.*)

Kenneally, an artist and documentarian, was born in Albany and spent time homeless and incarcerated as a youth. She returned to the region for an assignment in Troy, N.Y., in 2004, which led to the long-term project that became *Upstate Girls*.

Kenneally maintained a room at the Troy YWCA for ten years while documenting the lives of one block of Troy’s residents. She sees poverty as a culture “where the common denominator is not necessarily race or gender, but social class dictated by income and other things that tell you what social class you’re in.”

—C.L.



lishing, and film. The genesis for *What Now?* was a lecture series and accompanying book Oldham produced called *The Democratic Lecture* (2012), which offered advice in a similarly cheeky, informal way.

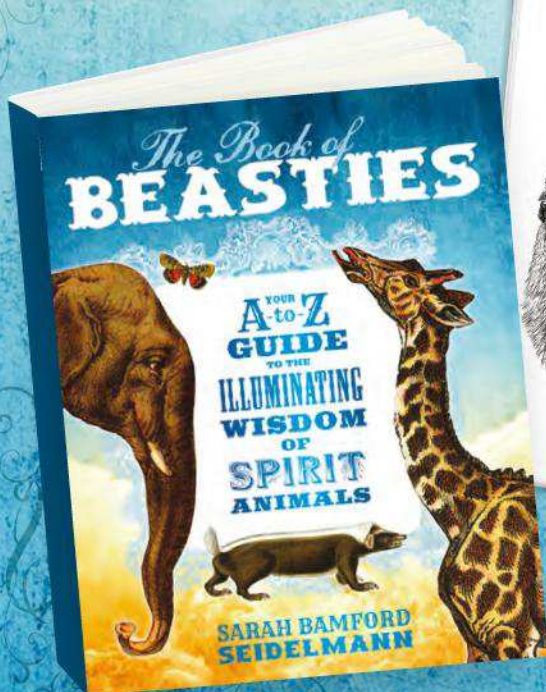
Oldham says his philosophy of form working in tandem with content inspired the format of the new book, which has a black, white, and neon palette and page thicknesses that vary throughout. “I like that the change of pace confronts you in this book,” he says. “The experience of reading it, that fluctuation of really firm board to suddenly flimsier paper, is just trying to play with the idea that these questions in the book aren’t set, and change always happens.”

ARTS AND LETTERS

Several new titles explore the history of typography and delve into new innovations in the field. Steven Heller and Lita Talarico, co-chairs of the MFA Design/Designer as Author + Entrepreneur program at the School of Visual Arts, coauthored *Free Hand: New Typography Sketchbooks* (Abrams, Apr.). *Free Hand* reproduces pages from notebooks belonging to designers around the globe, showcasing hand-drawn sketches as well as computer-generated artwork. (For more on Heller, see “More Than a Pretty Font,” p. 30.)

The authors write in their introduction, “As design becomes

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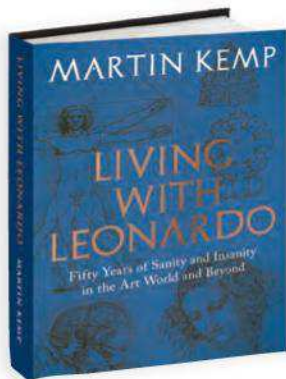
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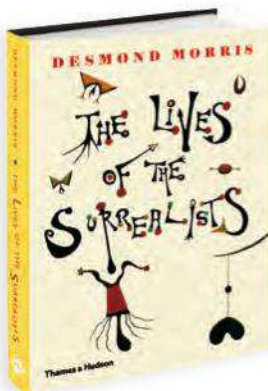
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by Desmond Morris

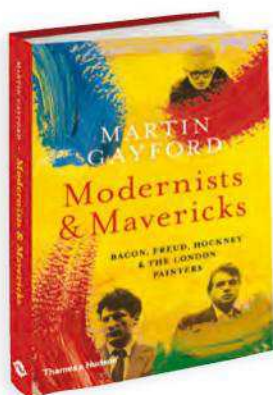
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Art & Photography Books

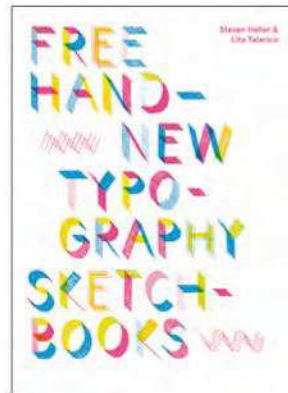
a more globalized discipline, and non-Latin writers take their rightful place on the world stage, linguistic diversity is growing." Their volume is an international selection of typefaces that reveals the beauty of letters to the viewer, even when the literal meaning may not be understood. The more than 70 featured designers include Milton Glaser, Sylvia (Di) Kong, and Mohammad Sharaf.

Another title that showcases letter design from around the world, *Goodtype: The Art of Lettering* (Rizzoli, June), presents the concept sketches and finished designs of more than 120 artists from 30 countries and includes interviews with some of them. Author Brooke Robinson, a graphic designer, has attracted 872,000 followers to her Goodtype Instagram account since launching it in 2013. The account promotes installations, murals, and other work with interesting letter design and builds community with its weekly "Goodtype Tuesday" design challenge.

While *Goodtype* presents of-the-moment work, *Letterforms: Typeface Design from Past to Future*, by designer and educator Timothy Samara (Rockport, July), reaches back through the history of typography, opening with the origins of Western writing circa 3300 BCE. Samara, whose other books include 2004's *Typography Workbook*, then moves into details such as the intricacies of curve formation, proportion, and structure in modern letter design, while emphasizing the importance of finding inspiration in the everyday.

Other titles take a more fanciful approach. *Typographic Specimens: A Natural History of Letterforms* (Ammonite, June) purports to draw on a manuscript by the fictional Reverend Jackson Whitehead, who served aboard the HMS *Pica*, an imagined sister ship of Charles Darwin's *Beagle*. Author-illustrator A.W. Bainbridge has created 112 pages of mystical creatures—"Commacat" and "Fumble Bee," to name two—designed entirely out of letters, numerals, and punctuation.

The Book of Ornamental Alphabets: Ancient & Medieval (Ilex,

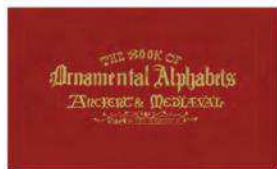


Above: An image from Jovan Shpira Obradovic's *Skeleton Typography* project, as seen in *Free Hand* by Steven Heller and Lita Talarico (Abrams).



Art & Photography Books

Apr.) brings a real book by Victorian artist Freeman Delamotte, who died in 1862, to a modern audience. Delamotte compiled alphabets from sources including manuscripts in the British Museum and inscriptions on medieval royal tombs in Westminster Abbey. Octopus Publishing Group licensing director and former Ilex publisher Roly Allen, who studied Old and Middle English at the University of Manchester, says the book will be of interest to hand letterers and art historians, and perhaps also tattoo artists, because of the “selection of gothic alphabets that seem to be popular in that world.”

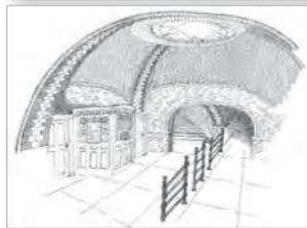
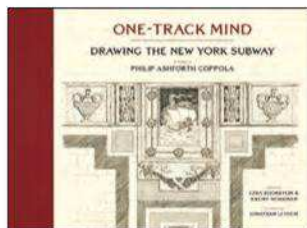


DESIGNING THE EVERYDAY INTO ART

New books with a single focus—statements by President Trump in one case, and the New York City subway in another—use graphic design to reframe subjects that have become, for many people, part of the fabric of daily life.

In *Hate Is What We Need* (Chronicle, Apr.), Ward Schumaker, whose illustrations have appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Atlantic*, *Le Monde*, and *Esquire Japan*, takes quotes such as “The conceit of global warming was created by and for the Chinese” and “How stupid are the people of Iowa?” and recasts them as artful images via stencils and paint. A portion of proceeds will be donated to the ACLU.

One-Track Mind: Drawing the New York Subway (Princeton Architectural Press, May) pays tribute to Philip Ashforth Coppola’s 40-year devotion to documenting the New York City subway system in his sketchbooks. Editors Ezra Bookstein and Jeremy Workman combed through Coppola’s 2,000 pen-and-ink drawings of subway mosaics, patterns, and typography, and recreated many of them in this book alongside information about the history of each station depicted.



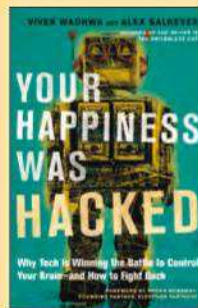
Above: An illustration from *One-Track Mind*, edited by Ezra Bookstein and Jeremy Workman (Princeton Architectural Press).

The book, which is being published in conjunction with an exhibition of Coppola’s work at the New York Transit Museum Gallery Annex at Grand Central Terminal (through June 2018), demonstrates that, even amid the noise and bustle, beauty may be found anywhere. ■

Catherine LaSota is associate director of the Center for the Study of Social Difference at Columbia University and runs the LIC Reading Series in Queens, N.Y.



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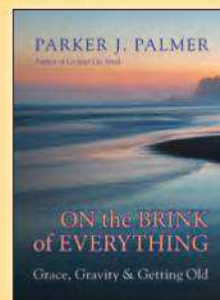


Armed with research and inquisitive questioning, Vivek Wadhwa and Alex Salvever, former tech executives and authors of *The Driver in the Driverless Car*, show readers how to fight back and make technology serve them—not the other way around.

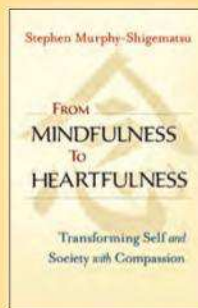
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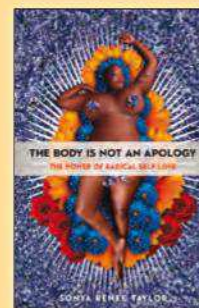
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FAST-GROWING Independent Publishers, 2018

To be successful, presses forge a unique path

BY JIM MILLIOT & CLAIRE KIRCH

Filling underserved niches and meeting the needs of consumers looking to understand changes in the country's political and cultural environments helped several independent publishers make this year's fast-growing indie publishers list. A number of these presses are relatively new, having barely been operating for longer than the three-year minimum required in order to qualify for the *PW* list.

Cottage Door Press has had extraordinary growth ever since it released its first titles in 2015, a year after it was founded by former Publications International president Richard Maddrell. The company's focus continues to be on producing a range of products for babies and toddlers that align with its mission of "promoting reading aloud from birth."

According to marketing manager Melissa Tigges, much of Cottage Door's growth last year, when sales grew 107% over 2016, was driven by increased distribution and an expanded list. In addition to other new initiatives in 2017, Cottage Door published its first licensed books with Baby Einstein and the Smithsonian, expanded its bestselling Early Book Song Book series, and added to its Love You Always series, which is done in a padded board book format. The company also took advantage of the gift market, expanding its seasonal offerings with line extensions in its lift-a-flap, padded board, and peek-a-flap formats for Valentine's Day, Easter, Halloween, and Christmas. The company's top-selling title continues to be the board book *Grandma Wishes*, which has more than 850,000 copies in print.

In addition to expanding its title count, Cottage Door has significantly broadened its distribution reach. Though its initial success was fueled by selling titles in targeted mass merchandisers, its recent growth, Tigges says, "is being driven by a diversity of titles and customers, including e-commerce, independent toy and bookstores, and international markets." The publisher will

continue to expand its reach in 2018 with the launch of a trade line that will feature four titles, including Cottage Door's first picture book, *Nothing Is Scary with Harry*, by first-time author Katie McElligott. To accommodate its growth, Cottage Door plans to move to new offices this summer.

Milli Brown, founder and CEO of **Brown Books**, says the hybrid publisher has been able to grow its sales over the past three years by "staying focused on a select number of authors and frontlist titles each season." That

FAST-GROWING INDEPENDENT PUBLISHERS 2015-2017

PUBLISHER	SALES GROWTH 2017 v. 2015	EMPLOYEES		TITLES	
		2015	2017	2015	2017
Cottage Door Press Barrington, Ill.	1,222%	13	24	18	158
Brown Books Publishing Group Dallas, Tex.	287%	15	15	25	31
Wisdom Publishing Somerville, Mass.	220%	14	14	28	44
Haymarket Books Chicago, Ill.	187%	11	16	67	59
Familius Sanger, Calif.	104%	4	5	40	56
Page Street Publishing Salem, Mass.	94%	8	22	34	67
Seven Stories Press New York, N.Y.	62%	8	9	29	36
Jump Minneapolis, Minn.	59%	4	9	85	125
Compendium Seattle, Wash.	38%	57	64	28	24
Morgan James New York, N.Y.	32%	38	49	141	188
Charlesbridge Watertown, Mass.	28%	21	22	46	50
Agate Publishing Evanston, Ill.	7%	17	17	24	24
Berrett-Koehler Oakland, Calif.	7%	26	28	40	40

SOURCE: PUBLISHERS WEEKLY



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approach, she says, has enabled the company to significantly boost placement at independent and national bricks-and-mortar stores, as well as in school, classroom, and public libraries.

“Our authors create our success and feed their own,” says Brown, who notes that Brown Books authors retain full rights and control over their own books. Among last year’s bestsellers were *Sage Alexander and the Hall of Nightmares*, *10 Pillars of Wealth*, *Wounded Tiger*, and *Magnet Max*. Brown Books authors also have access to an integrated public relations and marketing firm that produces, on average, exposure to more than 5,000 media outlets per book launch, says Tom Reale, Brown’s COO.

The publisher’s distribution agreements reach both the trade and education markets. In 2016 its licensing practice began maturing, with rights sales for multiple titles made across Asia and Europe. Now with a backlist of 150 titles, Brown Books’ list has expanded beyond nonfiction to include YA fantasy, juvenile, mystery, and coffee-table books.

Wisdom Publications in Somerville, Mass., specializes in books about Buddhism, mindfulness, and meditation, and publisher Doug Aitkin says some of the company’s growth last year was due to increasing numbers of people searching for tools to better deal with the change and uncertainty in their worlds. But he points to actions taken by the publisher that contributed to the gains as well. Specifically, he notes that the 30-year-old company implemented a more aggressive strategy regarding its frontlist last year.

“We set a goal of growing frontlist revenues for 2017 by more than 100%,” Aitkin explains. “We achieved this goal by increasing the number and quality of our frontlist titles. We also tested and refined a number of pricing strategies to help maximize revenue.” He adds that the company also streamlined the publishing process and communication among its production, editorial, and marketing teams.

Austin Macauley Takes Root in N.Y.C.

Austin Macauley Publishers, a hybrid press founded in the U.K. in 2006, opened a New York City office last year. The American office has enjoyed rapid growth since it was launched, signing more than 200 authors. One of Macauley’s big releases last year was entertainment attorney Lloyd Zane Remick’s *Two Times Platinum*, a legal mystery that looks “behind the scenes of the sports and entertainment industries,” the company says.

International director Jade Robertson is expecting a huge increase in title output in 2018, and to accommodate the growth, more staff has been added to the New York office; the press is now being distributed by Baker & Taylor Publishing Services. “It’s been truly rewarding to see how the New York office has grown since opening its doors in 2017, and we are committed to continuing to broaden our presence both at home and abroad to support our expanding list of talented authors,” Robertson says.

In addition to the London and New York offices, Austin Macauley has an office in Sharjah and plans to expand into Australia, Canada, and South Africa in the next few years. Overall, Austin Macauley reports that worldwide sales between 2015 and 2017 rose 330%.

—JOHN MAHER

Though he declines to disclose sales, Aitkin says that the press’s top three sellers in 2017—*The Suttanipata: An Ancient Collection of the Buddha’s Discourses Together with Its Commentaries*, *Mindfulness in Plain English*, and *Bearing the Unbearable*—grossed a total of more than \$350,000. Several new marketing initiatives also fueled the company’s growth, including a podcast featuring interviews conducted every other week with leading Buddhist thinkers; the *Wisdom Journal*, a biannual publication with illustrations that highlights new releases and bestsellers; and Wisdom Academy, an online course platform accompanying the books that has provided the press with a separate stream of nonbook revenue.

Last year, marketing manager Jim Plank described **Haymarket Books**’ sales as shooting up “through the stratosphere” since Donald Trump’s election a few months earlier, putting the Chicago-based publisher of left-wing political and social justice titles on our list of fast-growing indie presses. Haymarket’s rapid upward trajectory has continued, with sales jumping 187% in fiscal 2017 from fiscal 2015. The sales increase came

despite cuts to the number of titles released between 2015 and 2017.

According to Plank, Haymarket’s strategy is to “put out books that speak to the current moment.” Shortly after Trump’s inauguration, Haymarket partnered with Random House Canada and Allen Lane in the U.K. to release a paperback edition of Naomi Klein’s *No Is Not Enough: Resisting Trump’s Shock Politics and Winning the World We Need*. Knopf Canada took the lead in editing and production, and Haymarket and Allen Lane tweaked the cover design and tailored title pages to their own specifications to drop the book simultaneously in the three countries. It was Haymarket’s top title this past year, having sold 60,052 copies.

Rebecca Solnit’s three books on politics and feminism also continue to sell well in this era of women pushing back against sexual discrimination and harassment. *Men Explain Things to Me*, published in 2014 and updated in 2015, sold 53,763 copies last year, followed by Solnit’s *Hope in the Dark*, originally published in 2004 when George W. Bush was reelected. Updated in 2016, it sold 40,773 copies in 2017. Solnit’s most recent work, *The Mother of All Questions* (2016), last year sold 24,804 copies. Another strong seller was Angela Davis’s 2016 collection of essays, *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle*,



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which sold 35,036 copies in 2017.

Plank notes that Haymarket has always focused on publishing books about people's histories and their struggles. "Since the election in 2016, the audience for these ideas has grown exponentially, as many more people are interested in connecting with those ideas," he says.

Since **Familius** was first started in 2013 by former Gibbs Smith executive Christopher Robbins, the company has focused on publishing family-friendly books. "We create and sell titles that appeal to diverse families and encourage communication and focus on values that make families happy," says Kate Farrell, the new marketing and public relations director. The publisher sells its list across a wide range of channels and last year saw gains in all markets—including chains, independent bookstores, gift stores, libraries, international, club, and specialty outlets.

Among Familius's bestsellers last year were *Beauty and the Beast Book and Puzzle*

Box Set, 101 Amazing Uses for Apple Cider Vinegar, 101 Amazing Uses for Coconut Oil, 101 Amazing Uses for Essential Oils, and Lit for Little Hands: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. Last year the publisher slightly broadened its offerings with increased investment in children's and regional children's programs.

Since its launch, Familius has built a backlist of more than 250 titles. Using that as a resource, it recently created the Happy Family Box, which combines books with crafts and other family-bonding activities. The package is subscription based and priced at \$29.99 per month, though consumers receive 35% off of their first boxes.

Looking for new talent, Robbins was at the recent Bologna Children's Book Fair, where he was selling translation rights and

scouting for new international illustrators. "The children's illustrator market has exploded globally, and our ability to work with these artists regardless of geographic boundary has been a tremendous benefit for Familius, as these artists have very unique and fresh approaches," Robbins says. "The majority of Familius illustration now comes from international partners."

Page Street Publishing president Will Kiester cites a number of factors for the independent publisher's consistent

growth between 2015 and 2017. The first is the quality of Page Street's content. When Kiester first launched Page Street in 2011, he said that if he ever saw the quality of the books decline, he would cut back title output. But that has not happened. "As we do more books, the books are

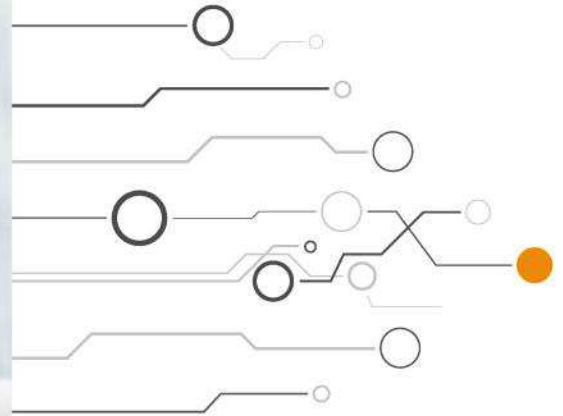


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coming out better,” he says.

A second factor has been Page Street’s ability to better promote and merchandise its books as sales increase. “I think more accounts are finding us and are stocking our books, so when we have a hit, it has more merchandising opportunities,” Kiester says.

Certainly, the quickened sales rate has justified Kiester’s approach. He notes that in the fourth quarter of 2017, Page Street’s bestselling books were selling at three times the rate they were in the fourth quarter of 2016. That growth led Page Street to ship \$2 million worth of books in a single month twice in a row for the first time, this past November and December. Among Page Street’s bestsellers in 2017 were *101 Asian Dishes You Need to Cook Before You Die*, *Hand Lettering for Relaxation*, *The Simple Kitchen*, and a number of Instant Pot titles.

On the kids side, *Epic Lego Adventures*

with *Bricks You Already Have* and *The Superkids Activity Guide to Conquering Every Day* “are paying the bills,” Kiester says, as the company pushes deeper into the children’s market. This fall its first children’s picture books will

land, and they follow the recent release of the publisher’s first young adult titles, *Beneath the Haunting Sea* and *It Should Have Been You*. Sales have been slow, Kiester acknowledges, but he says the books have been getting “rave reviews,” and he will continue to provide marketing support to give them an opportunity to get attention and traction.

Kiester also notes that as Page Street’s title count increases, he is seeing more opportunities—and stronger sales—in different areas and subjects: “It’s nice to see the heavy hitters spread out nicely from our cooking list, with surprising strong sellers like *American Duchess Guide to 18th Century Dressmaking*, and the year



before, *A Touch of Farmhouse Charm*, which in turn is creating new opportunities. The goal is to continue to create quality content in every category into which we venture.”

Seven Stories Press

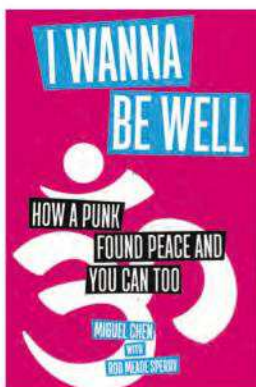
posted double-digit gains in both 2016 and 2017, leading to a 62% increase in 2017 over 2015. Publisher Dan Simon says there were a number of factors that have led to consistent gains over the past three years.

The company started its children’s list in 2012, and sales began to show solid growth in the fall of 2013 with the release of *A Is for Activist*. In a relatively short period of time, Seven Stories has built a strong children’s backlist, and titles including Howard Zinn’s *A Young People’s History of the United States* and Cory Silverberg’s *Sex Is a Funny Word* sold well last year.

On the adult side, last year Seven



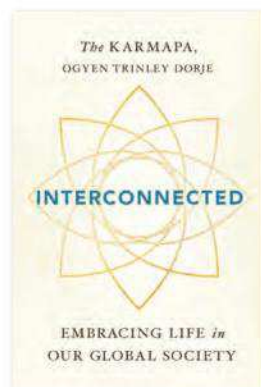
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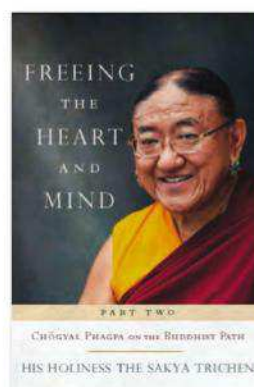
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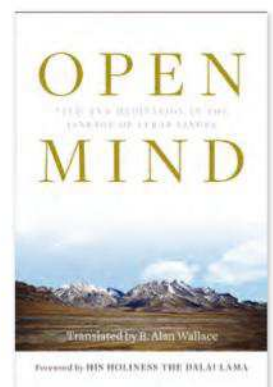
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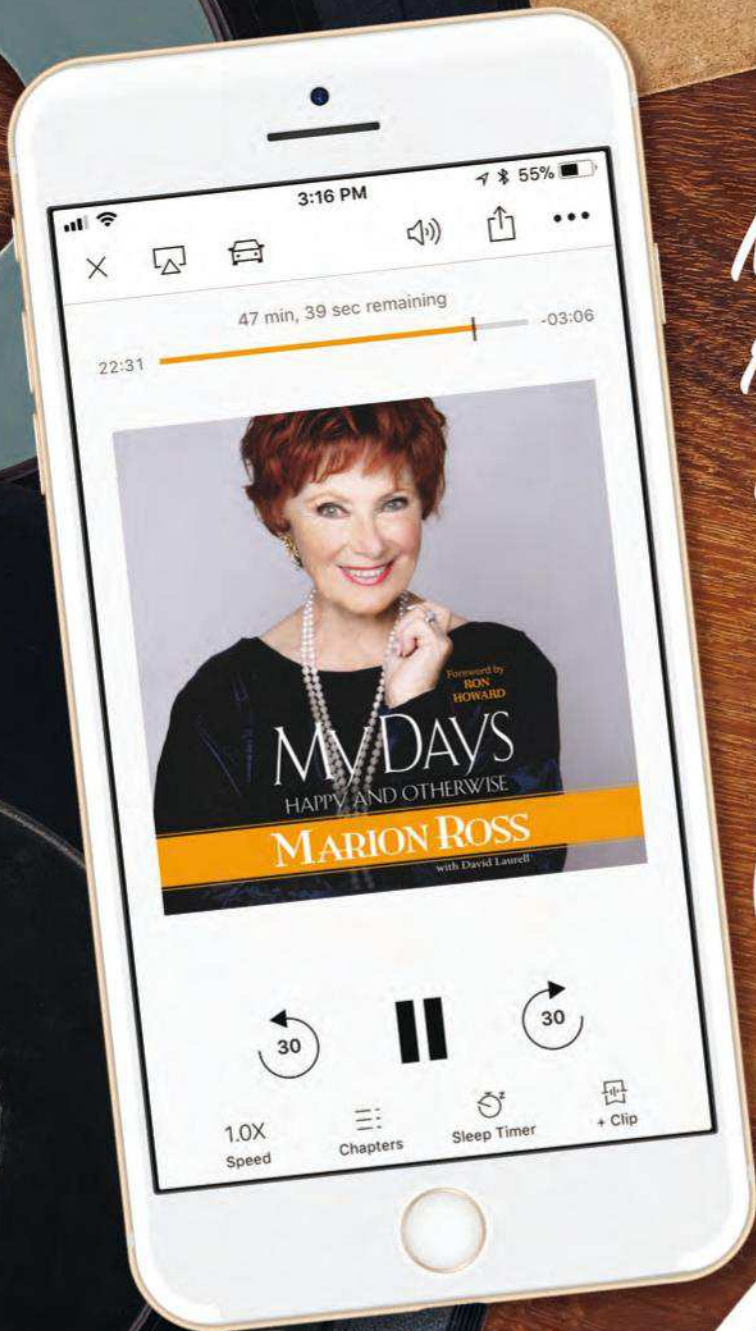
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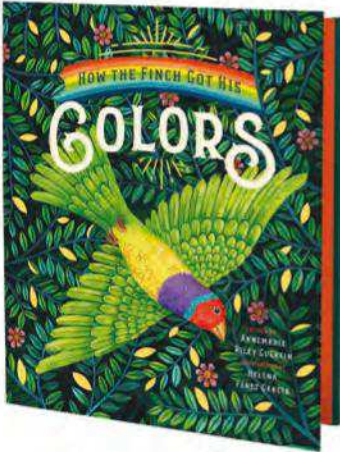
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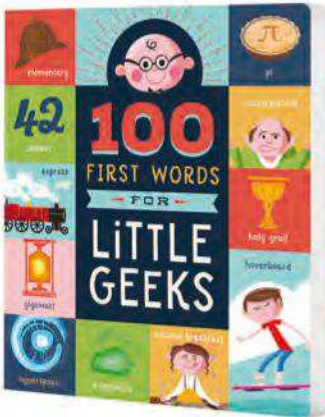
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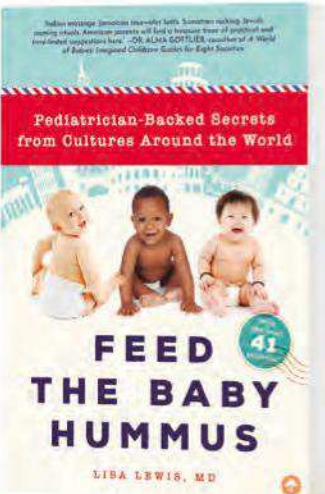
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Fast-Growing Indie Publishers

Stories had two big books: *Requiem for the American Dream*, Noam Chomsky's best-seller on income inequality, sold more than 40,000 copies, and sales of Kurt Vonnegut's *Complete Stories* topped 20,000 copies.

Simon points to two other factors that had a positive impact on sales in 2017. The company relaunched its website, which he says has made it "far more effective than it had been in building our community online." Last year also marked Seven Stories' fifth year as client of Penguin Random House Distribution Services. "The better you get to know your distributor, and the better they get to know you and your books, the more effective the partnership becomes," Simon notes.

Jump is living up to its name: net revenue in 2017 leapt 40% from 2016, with 2016's revenues up 14% from the previous year. "We have achieved fast growth over the past three years by staying laser focused on meeting a major need in the education and library market; there's a shortage of high-quality low-level books for emerging and struggling readers," president Gabe Kaufman says of the company he founded in Minneapolis in 2012 to serve the library market.

In 2016, Jump entered the education market by publishing books in paperback for classroom usage, as well as in a hardcover format with reinforced binding for libraries. The various series, published under three imprints—Tadpole Books for children beginning to read, Bullfrog Books for high-interest low-level readers, and Pogo for readers in grades two to five interested in STEM topics—are made "easily recognizable" to teachers and librarians, as well as young readers themselves, Kaufman says, with "clean white covers and bright, warm interior spreads" that feature vibrant photos and simple text.

Two series that especially pushed up sales in 2017 were STEM Careers, a series (under the Pogo imprint) of eight volumes that has sold 1,200 collections,

and Celebrating Differences, a series (under the Bullfrog imprint) with five volumes that has sold 1,300 collections. "With everything that's going on in this country, it's probably not surprising such a series as Celebrating Differences would do so well," Kaufman says.

Compendium, which is better known in the gift market than in the publishing industry, has landed for the first time on PW's list of fast-growing publishers after 2017 sales jumped 38% from 2015. Its title output went up 21% in the past three years, with 35 frontlist releases in 2017, up from 29 in 2015. The Seattle-based company specializes in publishing children's books, gift books, guest books, notebooks, and journals, as well as greeting cards, boxed note cards, stationery, and pop-up cards, although trade books do account for a portion of its overall sales.

Founded in 1985, Compendium attributes its recent sales increase of books to the fact that librarians and educators have finally discovered the company's products, due in part to the somewhat unexpected



success of company president Kobi Yamada's What Do You Do series of three picture books: *What Do You Do with an Idea?* (2014), *What Do You Do with a Problem?* (2016), and *What Do You Do with a Chance?* (2018). "We're a small company, and we do almost no marketing and advertising," says marketing manager Angeline Candido. "Yamada's first book hit the *New York Times* best-seller lists a year after it published. It was all word of mouth." The three books together now have a million copies in print.

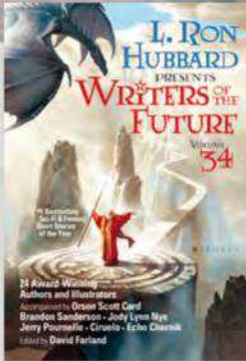
Compendium's sales are also being driven by backlist titles, particularly adult activity books such as *The 5 Book: Where Will You Be Five Years from Today?* by Dan Zadra, which, almost a decade after its release, continues to appeal to the lucrative gift market for graduations, job promotions, and retirements.

After a soft 2016, **Morgan James** came roaring back in 2017, posting a 35% increase from last year, giving the



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Fast-Growing Indie Publishers

company a 32% sales gain in 2017 over 2015. According to president David Hancock, the rebound was led by titles from its core business—entrepreneurial business nonfiction. But he adds that the publisher did have its first fiction best-seller last year: *On the Clock* by Tim Enochs and Bruce Tollner hit #1 on the *Los Angeles Times* and landed spots on the *New York Times* and *USA Today* lists. The novel was one of two frontlist books to be among Morgan James's top five sellers last year; the other was *Expert Secrets* by Russell Brunson, whose *DotCom Secrets*, released in 2015, was the company's top seller in 2017.

Overall, Hancock says, Morgan James is seeing continued solid sales from its growing backlist, mostly in trade paperback. Unlike most larger trade houses, Morgan James has seen an increase in e-book sales, and growth has been strong enough that the company is preparing to launch an e-book subscription service through which subscribers will have unlimited access to all Morgan James titles for a \$10 monthly fee.

The company also expanded its international efforts last year, opening an office in Vancouver, which lifted sales to Canada. It also now has an office in Melbourne and just opened in London. As part of Morgan James's international expansion, Hancock says he expects to soon sign an enhanced distribution deal for global print sales with Ingram Publisher Services that he hopes "will help our international sales significantly."

Finally, Hancock says he is "strategically" releasing more hardcover titles, and the publisher is joining with the rest of the industry in taking advantage of the boom in audiobook sales through the recent hire of an audio publisher "to lead the charge."

Charlesbridge director of marketing Donna Spurlock says the Boston-based publisher's double-digit sale growth in 2017 over 2016 was due to gains across all of its markets, with increases in sales of both its frontlist and backlist titles. Among the publisher's bestselling 2017 frontlist titles were

Malala: Activist for Girls' Education; *Lola Gets a Cat*, the latest in Charlesbridge's popular *Lola Reads!* series; and *Baby Loves Thermodynamics* and *Baby Loves Quantum Physics*, the newest books in Ruth Spiro's *Baby Loves Science* series, which launched in October of 2016. A couple of titles that were released in 2016—the picture book *Whoosh! Lonnie Johnson's Super-Soaking Stream of Inventions* and *Samurai Rising*—enjoyed higher sales in 2017 due to award recognition.

Spurlock also says that Charlesbridge's STEM/STEAM titles had sales gains last year, as did its general backlist, led by *Baby Animals Black & White* (1998) and *I'm New Here* (2015). Sales also remained strong for the perennial back-to-school favorite *First Day Jitters*, originally released in 2000, while its companion book, *Last Day Blues*, remains popular.

Last fall saw the publisher launch a new young adult imprint, Charlesbridge Teen. The inaugural list included titles covering paranormal, contemporary fiction, and political issues, with Spurlock noting Charlesbridge has plans to further diversify the list. To help market its growing list, Charlesbridge has increased its overall advertising and promotional efforts, and it has also adopted a more aggressive direct-to-consumer approach through social media and boosted posts.

Agate Publishing bounced back in 2017, from a down year in 2016, to post a 7% gain over 2015. Besides a boom in sales of books and other educational content in its Agate Development unit (its digital content development service business), Agate founder Doug Seibold says last year's improvement was spearheaded by *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut*, written by Derrick Barnes and illustrated by Gordon C. James. The children's picture book, released as part of Agate's new multicultural children's book line, Denene Millner Books, was published in October 2017 to critical acclaim. The book was a runner-up for some of the most prestigious awards in U.S. children's book publishing: it was named a Newbery Honor book for

content, a Caldecott Honor book for illustrations, and a Coretta Scott King Honor book for both text and illustrations. *Crown* also appeared on several year-end best-of lists for 2017, and it is now in its fifth printing, bringing the number in print to 65,000 copies. It's the fastest-selling book Agate has published since 2012, which was the first year Agate appeared on our fast-growing list.

Seibold also notes that *Crown* was only the third title in the Denene Millner line, as the imprint debuted in spring 2017 with *My Brown Baby* by Millner. One new Denene Millner book will be released this year, *What is Light?*, with three of four books planned for 2019. Seibold also has high hopes for *I, Ruth Bader Ginsberg: In Her Own Words*, set for release later this month.

After only minor growth in 2016 over 2015, **Berrett-Koehler** had a stronger 2017, leading to a 7% sales increase from 2015. Though print book revenues were flat between 2015 and 2017 and e-book sales had a small decline, other B-K initiatives drove up total revenue.

Audio sales doubled in 2017 over 2016, in large part because B-K now releases nearly all of its new books in digital and CD formats, says

Katie Sheehan, senior communications manager. Subsidiary rights income also had a nice increase, rising 15% in 2017 over 2015. B-K has long conducted various types of conferences, and its Servant Leadership Online Training Summit held in October attracted nearly 20,000 participants from 146 countries.

A move that B-K hopes will set it up for future growth came last July, when it acquired Management Concepts Press. The purchase added 127 titles on project management, federal acquisition and contracting, federal financial management, leadership, and public administration. Sheehan says B-K is using those titles as a beachhead to establish a professional publishing program, which will expand into other professional subject areas over time. ■



Reviews

Fiction

The Dead

Christian Kracht, trans. from the German by Daniel Bowles. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, \$25 (208p) ISBN 978-0-374-13967-4

The latest from Kracht (*Imperium*) is an uneven novel about film in the years leading up to World War II. Japanese film minister Masahiko Amakasu, tired of Japan's lagging behind America on the film front, seeks to "establish a celluloid axis between Tokyo and Berlin." In Germany in the early '30s, when Nazism is on the rise, the production company Universum Film AG receives Amakasu's letter and sees an opportunity to promote German superiority. It sends Swiss director Emil Nägeli to Japan with a huge sum of money to make the film. Once there, Nägeli meets up with his fiancée, Ida, a German actress, but plans for the film quickly spin out of control. Nearly three-quarters of the novel is dedicated to asides and backstories, such as Nägeli's reveries about his recently deceased father. Some of these asides, like the one about Amakasu's disturbing childhood, are excellent, while others, like the description of an encounter with Fritz Lang on a train, frustratingly derail the more intriguing main plot, which is rushed through in the last 50 pages. Meanwhile, important elements of the story, including the motivations of the characters, are handled obliquely or in passing, which frequently keeps it at arm's length. Kracht's strangely filmic prose ("A cherry blossom falls in death, dies in falling; it is perfect like this") leads to some inspired moments and images, but readers may be disappointed by the novel's evasive attitude toward the story. (July)

Florida

Lauren Groff. Riverhead, \$27 (288p) ISBN 978-1-59463-451-2

Ferocious weather and self-destructive impulses plague the characters in this assured collection, the first from Groff (*Fates and Furies*) since 2009's *Delicate Edible Birds*. In "Above and Below," a grad



© KRISTIN KOZELSKY

Lauren Groff's consistently rewarding new collection, Florida, features ferocious weather and self-destructive impulses (reviewed on this page).

student loses her university funding and spirals into homelessness. The solo vacationer in "Salvador"—one of three stories set outside Florida—waits out a raging storm with a menacing shopkeeper who, after the harrowing night, "smelled of wet denim and sweated-out alcohol and sour private skin." Groff's descriptions shimmer with precision: in "Eyewall," at the onset of a hurricane that a hallucinating woman endures alone, "the lake goosebumped" and "the house sucked in a shuddery breath." On a family getaway to a cheerless cabin in the claustrophobic "The Midnight Zone," a woman notes "how the screens at night pulsed with the tender bellies of lizards." That story is one of five to feature an unnamed fretful mother and novelist who, in "Yport," has dragged her two young sons to France while she researches Guy de Maupassant. "Their world is so full of beauty," she says, fearing for the boys' future, "the last terrible flash of beauty before the darkness." A number of the stories hit similar tonal notes (pessimism threatens to sink a few of them), but Groff's skillful prose, self-awareness, and dark humor leaven the bleakness, making this a consistently rewarding collection. (June)

★ Rough Animals

Rae DelBianco. Arcade (Two Rivers, dist.), \$24.99 (296p) ISBN 978-1-62872-973-3

In DelBianco's furious and electric debut, a contemporary western, Wyatt and Lucy Smith are twins living a hardscrabble existence on a cattle ranch in Box Elder County, Utah. Early one morning, Wyatt

discovers that one of his steers has been fatally shot. The killer is a barely-teenaged girl, who, during a brief shoot-out, wounds Wyatt and kills three more of his cattle before escaping. Knowing the entire ranch enterprise has been economically doomed by the shooting, Wyatt decides to go after the girl, who is wounded herself, and demand restitution. With Lucy holding down the fort, Wyatt follows the girl south towards Salt Lake City, tracking her through an inhospitable desert of armed outlaw bikers, camouflaged meth labs, drug deals gone wrong, and hungry coyote packs. Interspersed with Wyatt's narrative are flashbacks to the twins being raised by their father, who schools them in the cruel lessons of nature. Although clearly influenced by the prose styles of Cormac McCarthy and the late Jim Harrison, DelBianco nevertheless develops her own distinct voice, alternately laconic and roughly poetic. And though the girl is more device than actual character, the novel succeeds as a viscerally evoked and sparsely plotted fever dream, a bleakly realized odyssey through an American west populated by survivors and failed dreamers. (June)

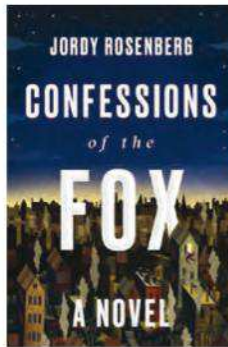
The Melody

Jim Crace. Doubleday/Talese, \$26.95 (240p) ISBN 978-0-385-54371-2

This haunting and transfixing novel by the British author of *Being Dead* and *Quarantine* is set in a world just parallel to our own, somewhere on the edge of a nameless sea. Widowed Alfred Busi, semiretired from a career as a world-famous musician, lives a quiet life in a villa until one night, after going outside to straighten up some tipped-over garbage cans, he is bitten on the throat and face by something "fierce and dangerous" that smells like potato peel. Busi's wounds, as well as those he sustains in a mugging the following day, raise questions and fears in the minds of the townspeople. Was he attacked by one of the fierce animals who live in the forest just outside the town's boundaries? Or by one of the homeless people who took up residence in a park? Or possibly, as an inventive journalist suggests, by a Neanderthal? In any case, the town, led by Busi's mendacious housing developer nephew Joseph, begins to take steps towards ridding itself of any

★ Confessions of the Fox

Jordy Rosenberg. One World, \$27 (352p) ISBN 978-0-399-59227-0



Academic intrigue meets the 18th-century underworld in Rosenberg’s astonishing and mesmerizing debut, which juxtaposes queer and trans theory, slave narrative, heroic romance, postcolonial analysis, and speculative fiction. The story appears in the form of an ostensibly historical document and lengthy discursive footnotes. In a 2018 not entirely recognizable as our own, transgender university professor R. Voth happens upon an apparently unread 1724 manuscript entitled “Confessions of the Fox.” It purports to be the memoirs of real-life 18th-century British folk hero Jack Sheppard, whose crimes and jailbreaks transfixed his contemporaries and inspired works including Brecht’s *The Threepenny Opera*. But this Jack was born female, falls in love with a mixed-race sex worker, and clashes with a ring of conspirators attempting to monetize a potentially priceless masculinizing elixir. Some of the footnotes Voth appends as he edits the manuscript cite scholarly references. Others are glosses on the 18th-century slang with which the swashbuckling and often sexually charged action is narrated. Still others recount Voth’s own travails: broke and lonely, he must also contend with a shadowy publisher-cum-pharmaceutical company hoping to cash in on the manuscript’s value. Rosenberg is an ebullient and witty storyteller as well as a painstaking scholar. Like the Sheppard of most earlier tellings, his Jack is an entertaining “artist of transgression” who sheds shackles with ease. Yet the novel is most memorable when evoking the pain behind such liberations: the constraints of individual and collective bodies, and the infinite guises of the yearning to break free. *Agent: Susan Golomb, Writers House. (June)*

While the conceit of the scavenger hunt and the accompanying tidiness of the mystery about what caused the rupture in Casey and Laura’s friendship stretch the limits of plausibility, Doan’s layered storytelling moves readers slowly toward uncovering what happened to each of the three women. As Laura and Casey move through the items on the list, they reenact previous moments from their early friendship, like swimming in Jade Cove and ice skating at a local skating rink, which slowly works to rekindle their friendship. Doan’s characters leap off the page, believably struggling with the conflict between resentment and tenderness. With lovable characters and a scenic small town, Doan’s pleasant mix of mystery and high school nostalgia will please readers who grew up with the novels of Judy Blume. *(June)*

The Hospital

Ahmed Bouanani, trans. from the French by Lara Vergnaud. New Directions, \$13.95 trade paper (128p) ISBN 978-0-8112-2576-2

Moroccan filmmaker and writer Bouanani’s newly translated mind-bending 1990 work about secluded, chronically ill patients blurs lines between history, Islamic folklore, and nightmares. The unnamed narrator is admitted to a labyrinthine hospital for treatment of an unspecified disease. To survive the tedium of endless days and unexplained but gentle treatments, the narrator chronicles his slightly detached interactions with fellow patients. A timid young man known as Rover drifts through the hospital and into the narrator’s nightmares. Another young patient, Guzzler, embellishes his tuggish exploits to cover up his vulnerabilities. The narrator increasingly loses his sense of reality, seeing himself in the afterlife and his own past and overhearing possibly imagined conversations. Moments of irreverent humor, such as old men debating whether medicine is permitted during their Ramadan fast, cut through the genuine terror of patients’ sudden

unsettling influences, evicting the homeless from the park where they normally sleep and where Busi was mugged. The novel, which is narrated by one of the town’s nosy residents, takes place almost entirely during a few days, with a coda that indicates the repercussions several years later. Like the simple but subtle song from which the novel takes its title, the novel’s effects linger, coloring the reader’s feelings about the thin border between the natural world and human society. *(June)*

The Summer List

Amy Mason Doan. Graydon House, \$16.99 trade paper (384p) ISBN 978-1-5258-0425-0

This accomplished debut novel from

Doan cleverly blends a coming-of-age tale, the story of a long-simmering mystery, and a thoughtful study of relationships between childhood friends. Laura Christie and Casey Shepherd were best friends as teenagers growing up in quaint Coeur-de-Lune, Calif., but they have become estranged as adults. Seventeen years after they graduated high school, Casey’s eccentric mother reunites them with an elaborate scavenger hunt intended to prompt their reconciliation. The book toggles between Laura’s narration of her prickly 2016 reunion with Casey and their teenage years in the 1990s, when Laura feels out of place in her strict adopted mother’s home and intoxicated by the exuberant tenuous life Casey and her mother, Alex, share.

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deaths and uncertain futures. An ample introduction by Anna Della Subin provides context on Bouanani's life and Moroccan history to help readers understand some of the allusions. The layers of metaphor and surreal imagery create a atmospheric, unresolved tension for fans of compressed, unsettling narratives. (June)

Mad Boy

Nick Arvin. Europa (PGW, dist.), \$17 trade paper (240p) ISBN 978-1-60945-458-6

Arvin (*Articles of War*) uses one family's bad luck as the linchpin of this irreverent journey around Maryland during the War of 1812. Ten-year-old Henry Phipps can still hear his very recently dead mother talking to him, urging him to bury her at sea with family around. Her dissolute, feckless husband, however, is in debtor's prison, and her older son Franklin is to face a firing squad for deserting. Henry crams his mother's corpse into a pickling barrel and sets out to make enough money looting battlefields to free his father, connecting with a varied crew of dislocated people as his scheme rapidly crumbles. Franklin, meanwhile, is alive and soon to be a father, having escaped the firing squad and a plot by the local magnate Suthers to get him killed for impregnating Suthers's daughter, Mary. Though convinced he still needs to free his father, Henry agrees to help Mary and her newborn son escape her forced seclusion. Henry rushes toward a final ill-conceived plan involving duping Suthers, a kidnapping, and a buried treasure. The colorful characters make this account of the War of 1812 a rollicking page-turner. (June)

The Life Lucy Knew

Karma Brown. Park Row, \$16.99 trade paper (304p) ISBN 978-0-7783-1934-4

In this enjoyable take on the amnesia story, Brown (*In This Moment*) explores the complexities of memory in the aftermath of an accident that alters the life of Lucy Sparks. After slipping on a patch of ice and striking her head against the pavement, Lucy suffers amnesia and confusing false memories: she has no recollection of her relationship with her live-in boyfriend, Matt, and believes she is married to her ex-fiancé, Daniel (though she has nagging feelings that he isn't the one for her). Her

[Q&A]

PW TALKS WITH NORMAN LOCK

Rethinking Past Wars

Lock continues his American Novels series with *The Wreckage of Eden* (Bellevue Library, June), about the relationship between an Army chaplain and Emily Dickinson during the Mexican-American War and John Brown's 1859 slave rebellion.

How would you describe your American Novels series?

As an ongoing examination of certain qualities in the American character which persist from the 19th century, when the nation was acquiring its mandates of Manifest Destiny and violent acquisition. I use the device of imagining the primary documentarians of the time to present my ideas about these qualities that make Americans what they are—for better or for worse.

This novel deals with issues of racism and social injustice. Was that always your intention?

Yes, certainly. It's not my intent solely to recreate the past, but to comment on it. When I set out to write, I have no preconceived notions other than the figures, the characters I'll be invoking, but each time I find myself returning to themes of race, social inequality, and injustice. I suppose that's simply a reflection of the present.

How did you imagine the relationship between fictional chaplain Robert Winter and Emily Dickinson?

I thought of their voices as contrary. Emily Dickinson really didn't engage in the world beyond the larger, metaphysical sense of the world. Robert was at the heart of the most desperate adventures this nation had during that century. He was the one who questioned himself; she never questioned

herself. So it was a debate between the absolute certainty of art, which Emily embodies, and the character buffeted constantly by happenstance, contingency, and moral questioning, which is Robert.

Why did you choose to set the novel partially during the Mexican-American War?

These wars, such as the Mexican-American war, the Mormon Rebellion, the Border Wars—outside of history majors, these are forgotten and unknown major conflicts, every bit as important to the time and to the nation that we became as the wars of the last century. It's certainly

not anything novel for me to observe that we can't understand the present unless we understand the past.

Is there anything specific you hope readers will take away from this series?

One of the things that motivated my interest was my daughter's attitude. She's a marine biologist and knows nothing of American history. Her attitude is that "I'm not interested in dead people," and I think that's a mistake. I have a feeling that if this holds true for the millennial generation, it probably holds true for many of my own generation. It is very important to understand how the national ethos, the collective unconsciousness which every nation possesses, was formed.

—CHELSEA ENNEN

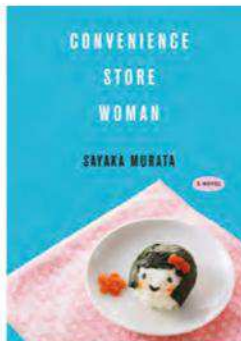


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★ Convenience Store Woman

Sayaka Murata, trans. from the Japanese by Ginny Tapley Takemori. Grove, \$22 (176p)
ISBN 978-0-8021-2825-6

Murata's slim and stunning Akutagawa Prize-winning novel follows 36-year-old Keiko Furukura, who has been working at the same convenience store for the last 18 years, outlasting eight managers and countless customers and coworkers. Keiko, who has a history of strange impulses—wanting to grill and eat a dead bird, pulling down a hysterical teacher's pants to get her to be quiet—applied to work at the Hiromachi Station Smile Mart on a whim. Where someone else might find the expected behavior for convenience store workers arbitrary and strict, Keiko thrives under such clear direction, finally finding a way to be normal. In fact, she thinks of herself as two Keikos: her real self, who has existed since she was born, and “convenience-store-worker-me.” But normalcy is not static, as Keiko discovers. The older she gets, and the further she drifts from milestones like having a “real” job, marrying, and having children, the more her friends and family push her towards change. She strikes a sham marriage deal with a lazy and shifty ex-coworker, which, though it finally makes her “normal” in the eyes of others, throws her entire life and psyche into turmoil. Murata's smart and sly novel, her English-language debut, is a critique of the expectations and restrictions placed on single women in their 30s. This is a moving, funny, and unsettling story about how to be a “functioning adult” in today's world. *Agent: Kobei Hattori, the English Agency. (June)*



family and friends want to protect her and hold back parts of the truth, leaving Lucy feeling frustrated and uncertain of who she can trust. Matt is doing all he can to help revive her memory about the past three years of their relationship, but nothing seems to click, and Lucy only begins to move forward when she gives up on understanding the past. This simple, thoughtful story will remind readers that nothing in life is certain. *(June)*

Who Is Vera Kelly?

Rosalie Knecht. Tin House (Norton, dist.), \$15.95 trade paper (274p) ISBN 978-1-947793-01-9

Knecht's solid second novel (following *The Relief Map*) opens in 1966, when 25-year-old Vera Kelly is sent to Buenos Aires by the CIA to infiltrate a rumored KGB cell, gladly leaving behind her life in New York. Ever since a falling-out with her abusive mother as a teenager, Vera's life consists of her work at a radio station and her occasional discreet trips to underground lesbian bars in Greenwich Village.

But in Buenos Aires, Vera learns to lead a spy's double life. Vera's observations of the politically charged city are straightforward and sharp: “Bars where students liked to go were nearly empty. Plainclothes police lounged conspicuously in the windows.” As Vera consorts undercover with the radical students assumed to be in touch with the Soviets, a military coup and a personal betrayal threaten her work, leaving her with the new task of trying to make it out of Argentina alive. While Vera is a charming narrator, especially among the ranks of spy thriller leads, her work among the radicals is never as gripping as it should be, nor are the flashbacks following her trajectory from reckless teenager to CIA operative. Still, with some suspension of disbelief, this is a promising subversion of the classic espionage novel, one which would lend itself well to a sequel or series to come. *(June)*

The Ever After

Sarah Pekkanen. Washington Square, \$16 trade paper (272p) ISBN 978-1-5011-0698-9

The latest from Pekkanen (*The Wife*)

Between Us is a by-the-numbers domestic drama in which a woman's world shatters when an incriminating email alerts her to her husband's affair. Chicago suburbanites Josie and Frank Moore have been married for 12 years and have two young girls, three-year-old Isabella and seven-year-old Zoe. After discovering the email on Frank's phone, Josie finds out that he's been seeing a married coworker. Josie confronts Frank, and he insists it was only a few times and never went beyond kissing. Josie isn't so sure, and the pace subsequently alternates between frantic and introspective as she dissects her marriage, past and present, while obsessively working out the timeline of the affair. Frank vows to make things right and, after Josie asks him to move out, undertakes painfully earnest attempts at self-improvement, like attending church and volunteering at a soup kitchen. While working through her pain, Josie eventually glimpses the possibility of forgiveness, but the pat conclusion is disappointing. Although Pekkanen excels at capturing the intimate details of family life and the insidiousness of domestic ennui, this study of a marriage in crisis, while diverting, doesn't distinguish itself in a crowded field. *(June)*

Mystery/Thriller

The Chairman's Toys

Graham Reed. Poisoned Pen, \$15.95 trade paper (264p) ISBN 978-1-4642-1006-8

Set in Vancouver, B.C., Canadian author Reed's quirky first novel introduces Jake Constable, whom his ex-wife, Nina, describes as “a semi-employed, semi-reformed drug dealer coming up fast on his forties.” A party that Jake is hosting at the \$20-million mansion belonging to Chinese entrepreneur Mickey Wu, for whom he's housesitting, comes to an abrupt end when he receives a text from his pal Richard telling him “there's a dead guy in the bathroom.” Soon Jake is chasing and being chased by his former marijuana distributor (known as the Norwegian), Mickey and his minions, agents from the Chinese Ministry of Public Security, and the deputy director of the Department of Infrastructure Development in the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce, who happens

to be Nina's uncle and business partner in her real estate firm. Jake, whose philosophy is "life is often less about making good decisions than figuring out how to live with bad ones," takes the reader on a fast, furious, and often hilarious tour.

Watching him zigzag through the twisting plot is pure pleasure. (*July*)

★ **Splinter in the Blood**

Ashley Dyer. Morrow, \$26.99 (400p) ISBN 978-0-06-279767-4

At the start of the enthralling debut from Dyer (the pen name for two British authorities on crime), Det. Sgt. Ruth Lake holds the gun that just shot her partner, Det. Chief Insp. Greg Carver, who's been pursuing the Thorn Killer. Greg is slumped on the sitting room floor of his Liverpool house and, amazingly, alive. Before calling in the shooting, Ruth wipes all surfaces she touched and stashes in her car the box of evidence on the Thorn Killer, who has been terrorizing the city using poison-drenched thorns to kill his victims. When Greg wakes up in the hospital, he can't remember anything that happened on the day he was shot, but he's sure that his shooting is a warning not to get too close to the killer. While Greg recuperates in the hospital, Ruth, a former crime scene investigator, clandestinely pursues the Thorn Killer. But Ruth is harboring a dark secret that she'll do almost anything to keep hidden. The skillfully constructed plot complements the intriguing characters, including a deliciously creepy killer who lurks in the background. Dyer is definitely a crime writer to watch. *Agent: Jennifer Joel, ICM. (June)*

Broken Ice

Matt Goldman. Forge, \$25.99 (336p) ISBN 978-0-7653-9131-5

The disappearance of 17-year-old high school student Linnea Engstrom after a hockey game in Warroad, Minn. (aka Hockeytown USA), kicks off Goldman's witty, well-plotted second mystery featuring PI Nils Shapiro (after 2017's *Gone to Dust*). Linnea's parents hire Nils, who soon learns that another student, 18-year-old Haley Housh, went missing after the same game, though the girls weren't together. Haley's body turns up in a cave outside St. Paul, and Nils is shot in the shoulder with an arrow outside it.

Nils knows he ought to be resting from his serious injury, but he also realizes he has little time to find Linnea before it's too late. Divorced and involved in a failing relationship as well as a struggling business, Nils is a deeply flawed but good-hearted everyman. He's supported by a cast of wonderfully quirky characters, including the former Canadian Football League player turned nurse practitioner hired by his ex-wife to care for his wounded shoulder. Readers will look forward to seeing a lot more of Nils and crew. *Agent: Jennifer Weltz, Jean V. Naggar Literary Agency. (June)*

Night-Gaunts and Other Tales of Suspense

Joyce Carol Oates. Mysterious, \$26 (352p) ISBN 978-0-8021-2810-2

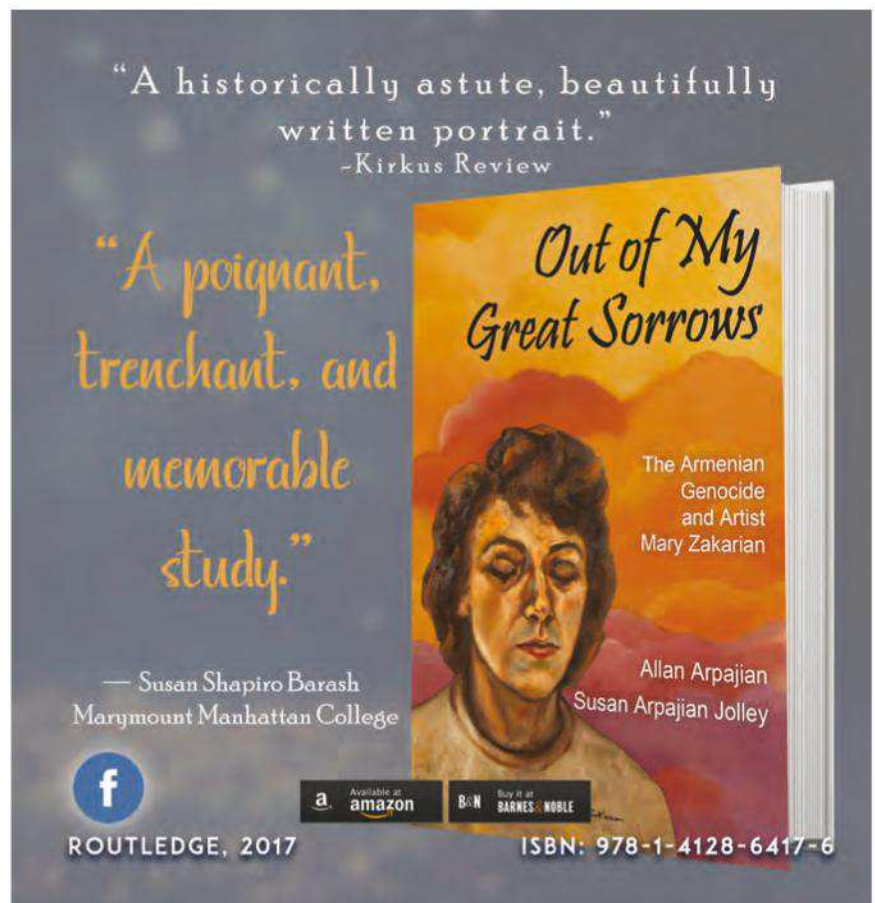
The eponymous creatures haunting the Providence, R.I., mansion where the gothic title story is set seem about as terrifying as toddlers draped in bedsheets compared to some of the humans in this unsettling collection from Oates (*Beautiful Days*). "Sign of the Beast" centers on Mrs. S____,

a sadistic Sunday school teacher who both angers and sexually arouses her lumbering, self-conscious student, Howard. In "Walking Wounded," L____, a 41-year-old cancer patient "eviscerated" by his surgeries, starts stalking a wraithlike young woman—when he's not fantasizing about chloroform and dumping a body in the local lake. Ghastliest of all, however, are the scientific researchers of "The Experimental Subject," in which senior technician N____, acting with the enthusiastic backing of his government-funded primate laboratory team, performs an experiment on ungainly undergrad Mary Frances that may raise the hackles of #MeToo supporters. The upsetting journey is in no way redeemed by the slapdash resolution. Oates pushes the boundary between the disturbing and the offensive with mixed results. *Agent: Warren Frazier, John Hawkins & Assoc. (June)*

Like to Die

David Housewright. Minotaur, \$26.99 (320p) ISBN 978-1-250-09453-7

In this intriguing 15th novel featuring



[Q&A]

PW TALKS WITH YOU-JEONG JEONG

The Unlucky Pulled Along by Fate

In *The Good Son* (Penguin, June), South Korean author Jeong presents a twisted story of murder.

Was the plot inspired by real life?

Yes. A while ago, a young man committed a crime that shocked Koreans. He had grown up wealthy, studied abroad, and returned home to lead a life of leisure. He came back from a trip to Las Vegas with huge debts and got into an argument with his parents, becoming so enraged that he stabbed them to death. He snickered with his girlfriend at his parents' funeral. When he was arrested, he rationalized his actions and lied about everything. This kind of criminal is very rare in Korea. I thought about him constantly: how could he have done something like this? What was behind his ordinary façade? Was he crazy? Was he evil? What had triggered such violence—was it circumstance, or personality, or something from his childhood? Was this tragedy a result, in part, of our hypercompetitive society, or was it rooted in something deeper, more fundamental in humans? I spent a lot of time thinking about these questions, and I wanted to explore this topic as a writer.

Your other novels also have dark, downbeat themes. What appeals to you about writing about the dark side of human nature?

I am not that interested in ordinary, happy lives. I'm more interested in the unlucky pulled along by fate, the

foolish who plummet to their demise, and those who reveal ugly, shameful selves. I like to explore the dark side of humanity. My work deals with the terrible things that create problems in our lives, like jealousy, rage, hate, greed, terror, violence; my characters are human beings pulled to the extreme. As to why I am drawn to



© YOU-JEONG JEONG

this, Richard Dawkins says it best: "Let us understand what our own selfish genes are up to, because we may then at least have the chance to upset their designs, something that no other species has ever aspired to."

An essay you wrote is entitled "I Dream of Fire, Always." What

do you mean by that?

That essay was about the kind of writer I want to be. I want readers to be sucked into the world of my creation and be inflamed by their emotions and experience. I want readers to stay awake all night, their hearts on fire.

How did your work as a nurse influence your writing of fiction?

I spent most of my time in the ER and the ICU, both spaces for people on the verge of death. Doing that work, I learned how to dissect a situation impartially, and I think that experience formed my view of humans as part of something larger; as merely one of the many organisms on Earth.

—LENNY PICKER

former St. Paul, Minn., cop Rushmore McKenzie by Edgar-winner Housewright (after 2017's *What the Dead Leave Behind*), McKenzie, who's now a millionaire with a penchant for off-the-books investigations, tries to figure out who's sabotaging Salsa Girl, a small food business run by the enigmatic Erin Peterson. When the disruptions move from minor vandalism to the planting of a bomb in the truck she uses for deliveries, McKenzie digs in, even as Erin becomes evasive and reluctant to share any details that might uncover the villains. While the business mystery's solution is telegraphed pretty clearly, another puzzle about a violent antagonist from Erin's murky past, who's on a single-minded quest for revenge, leads to some good action sequences. McKenzie proves an able protector of life, limb, "and the deep dark secrets that... people want hidden" in an entry sure to please old and new fans alike. *Agent: Alison Picard, Alison J. Picard Agency. (June)*

Death Notice

Zhou Haohui, trans. from the Chinese by Zac Haluza. Doubleday, \$26.95 (320p) ISBN 978-0-385-54332-3

Set in Chengdu in 2002, this uneven opening volume in a bestselling trilogy in China—the first of Zhou's books to be translated into English—offers little that American suspense fans haven't seen before. Shortly after Sgt. Zheng Haoming begins looking into new evidence concerning a case he investigated in 1984, he is found stabbed to death in his apartment. Meanwhile, someone using the pseudonym Eumenides, for the Greek goddesses of retribution, posts a call for justice on a message board, asking the public for the names of wrongdoers who deserve punishment. Since this person seems to be the killer in the 18-year-old case, the police re-form the original task force. Eumenides begins to post a series of execution notices, but, despite the forewarning, the police are unable to prevent the killings. Zhou does a credible job keeping the clues and the complicated plot straight, but clichéd prose ("You cut right to the center, like a hot knife through butter. A woman after my own heart!") may be a problem for some readers. Few will eagerly await the second volume. *(June)*

Hangman

Jack Heath. Hanover Square, \$26.99 (320p)
ISBN 978-1-335-06291-8

Australian YA author Heath (*500 Minutes of Danger*) makes his adult debut with a thriller marred by preposterous plot twists and excessive violence. Timothy Blake, who developed a perverse taste for human flesh during a period when he was homeless, reaches an unlikely agreement with Peter Luzhin, a cop who discovers his secret. When Luzhin becomes the director of the Houston Field Office for the FBI, he volunteers the extremely observant Blake to aid the bureau in its cases. When the cases lead to the death penalty, the FBI unrealistically rewards Blake with the bodies of the executed criminals. The story line goes in even more improbable directions after Blake partners with an attractive agent, Reese Thistle, who falls in love with the repellent Blake, on the missing-person case of 14-year-old Cameron Hall. Readers will find it difficult to stomach Blake's behavior—such as convincing his roommate that the human meat in their freezer is bear meat—and will be disappointed in the book's groanworthy conclusion. Heath's fans will hope for better next time. *Agent: Daniel Kirschen, ICM. (June)*

★ London Rules

Mick Herron. Soho Crime, \$26.95 (336p)
ISBN 978-1-61695-961-6

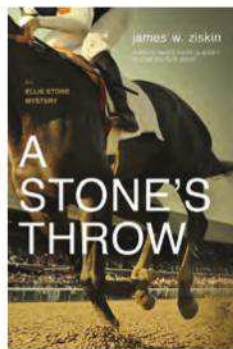
British author Herron's superlative fifth Slough House novel (after 2017's *Spook Street*) opens with a terrorist attack in Derbyshire that kills 12. All MI5 resources are looking for the culprits—with the notable exception of the “slow horses,” the spies demoted to London's Slough House, who suffer from self-doubt and the crushing weight of the abuse of their leader, Jackson Lamb, “a fat bastard you dismissed at your peril.” They are actually pretty competent, and one of them, J.K. Coe, has a powerful insight into the Derbyshire terrorists after a second attack. Meanwhile, someone's trying to kill hacker Roddy Ho, and Ho's colleagues want to know who and why. Eventually, the investigation into Ho's attempted murder converges with the search for the terrorists. The ironic title, an echo of the “Moscow rules” trope of cold war fiction, conjures up the absurdities and intrigues

of bureaucracy, espionage, and politics. Herron combines a strong plot with a fine, often comic style as he celebrates the power of community in response to terrorism. *Agent: Juliet Burton, Juliet Burton Literary Agency (U.K.) (June)*

A Stone's Throw: An Ellie Stone Mystery

James W. Ziskin. Seventh Street, \$15.95 trade paper (288p) ISBN 978-1-63388-419-9

In Edgar-finalist Ziskin's suspenseful sixth mystery featuring newspaper reporter Ellie Stone (after 2017's *Cast the First Stone*), set in 1962, Ellie stumbles across two bodies, burned beyond recognition, while investigating a fire at an abandoned stud farm in upstate New York. Ellie's best friend, the bearish Ron



“Fadge” Fiorello, becomes her expert guide to the sometimes seamy world of horse racing, and, armed with her newfound knowledge, Ellie digs up information

that convinces her the victims are jockey Johnny Dornan and his “date of the evening,” Micheline Charbonneau. She subsequently learns that Johnny, who threw a horse race nine years earlier, ended up on the wrong side of the mob. The carefully constructed plot unfolds in unexpected ways as tough, ambitious, and dogged Ellie follows clues in the horse-racing mecca of nearby Saratoga Springs. Ziskin keeps readers guessing every step of the way. *Agent: William Reiss, John Hawkins & Assoc. (June)*

Darkness Lane: A Geneva Chase Mystery

Thomas Kies. Poisoned Pen, \$26.95 (282p)
ISBN 978-1-4642-1001-3; \$15.95 trade paper
ISBN 978-1-4642-1003-7

Journalist Geneva Chase, the flawed narrator of Kies's entertaining sequel to 2017's *Random Road*, once did stints at the nation's top news organizations, but has worked her way down the career ladder to the point where she's now an editor and crime reporter at the local paper in

Sheffield, Conn., her hometown. The crime beat pulls her into two stories that at first seem straightforward but turn out to be quite complex. One of them involves the murder of a low-level thug by his abused wife; the other focuses on the disappearance of beautiful 15-year-old aspiring actress Bobbi Jarvis. The connection between the two stories keeps the plot humming. Chase's life is further complicated by being the legal guardian of 15-year-old Caroline Bell (Bobbi's best friend), by the potential loss of her job if her newspaper is sold, and by the struggle to control her drinking. Kies neatly balances breathless action with Chase's introspection and sleuthing savvy. *Agent: Kimberley Cameron, Kimberley Cameron & Assoc. (June)*

The Angel Makers

Tessa Harris. Kensington, \$26 (320p)
ISBN 978-1-4967-0657-7

Constance Piper, a flower girl in London's East End, shares narrative duties with Emily Tindall, her old Sunday school teacher, who was brutally murdered and now guides Constance from beyond the grave, in Harris's solid sequel to 2017's *The Sixth Victim*. Shortly before Christmas 1889, Constance's friend Catherine Mylett is found dead in what may be a homicide. Cath, a prostitute, recently gave up her newborn baby for adoption, but the infant died shortly thereafter. Constance discovers that Cath visited the adoptive family the night of her own death. Miss Tindall then draws Constance's attention to other vulnerable infants, including one found strangled on a London street. She suspects that an illegal “baby farmer” known as Mother Delaney may be involved in all the cases, even Cath's. Harris successfully dramatizes the desperation of Victorian women faced with untenable pregnancies, and her portrait of the unconventional partnership between Piper and Tindall feels fitting for its séance-loving era. Fans of paranormal Victorian mysteries will be rewarded. *Agent: Melissa Jeglinski, Knight Agency. (June)*

Bimini Twist

Linda Greenlaw. Minotaur, \$25.99 (304p)
ISBN 978-1-250-10758-9

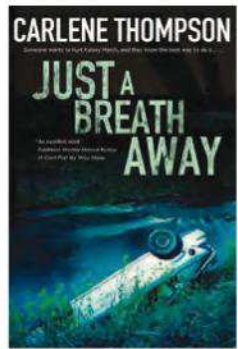
The disappearance of Bianca Chiriac, a 19-year-old Romanian exchange student

working at the Bar Harbor Resort, drives Greenlaw's satisfying fourth outing for part-time Hancock County (Maine) deputy sheriff Jane Bunker (after 2017's *Shiver Hitch*). Jane's search for Bianca takes her to the waters off Bar Harbor, where she helps rescue Ron, a local fisherman whose boat was deliberately run down by another boat. When Ron later dies, Jane thinks his death should be investigated as a crime. Meanwhile, another student goes missing, and a fisherman's boat is found circling with no one aboard. On hand for much of the action is a mysterious, handsome boat captain named Pete, who piques Jane's interest and becomes her date for the region's annual swanky soiree. But is it a coincidence that Pete keeps turning up at crime scenes? Greenlaw, a bestselling nonfiction author and a fisherwoman, smoothly blends murder, mayhem, nautical lore, and the slimmest sliver of hope that Jane has found true love. (June)

Just a Breath Away

Carlene Thompson. Severn, \$28.99 (240p) ISBN 978-0-7278-8517-3

This workmanlike thriller set in Louisville, Ky., from Thompson (*Can't Find My Way Home*) opens a few days before the running of the Kentucky



Derby. Manhattan fashion model Lorelei March is in town visiting her older sister, Kelsey March, an interior designer. After spending the evening at Conway's

Tavern chatting about their parents, men, and horses, the sisters decide to walk back to Kelsey's nearby loft. Vernon Nott, a bar patron, follows them. On the street, Nott fatally shoots Lorelei, but the tavern's owner arrives just in time to shoot Nott dead before he can kill Kelsey. At first, the police focus on Lorelei as the intended victim, but could it have been Kelsey who was marked for death? Soon others close to Kelsey start dying under mysterious circumstances. Thompson provides plenty of viable suspects with plausible motives as she skillfully braids together the var-

ious possible answers to the questions who and why. Lines like "Kelsey sobbed as Lori's lids slowly lowered over her beautiful indigo eyes" will resonate with fans of romantic suspense. (June)

Don't Believe It

Charlie Donlea. Kensington, \$26 (304p) ISBN 978-1-4967-1380-3

New York producer Sidney Ryan, the heroine of this riveting if flawed novel from Donlea (*The Girl Who Was Taken*), is producing a documentary TV series about Grace Sebold, an American medical student who has spent 10 years in prison in St. Lucia for the murder of her boyfriend, Julian Crist. As Sidney becomes convinced of Grace's innocence, fans of her show, *The Girl of Sugar Beach*, pressure authorities to exonerate Grace. One viewer, however, has a different opinion: a retired police detective who investigated a similar death in Grace's past. Racing to meet weekly deadlines, Sidney grapples with whether Grace is guilty—a conclusion that will infuriate network executives, devastate fans, and hurt her career—or whether she can identify the killer among Grace's circle. Donlea splices Sidney's investigation with excerpted scenes from the documentary and jury room, creating a fast-paced narration that mimics TV shows' frequent scene shifts but doesn't encourage in-depth character development. A risky late plot twist will frustrate some readers while thrilling others, and a few loose ends hint at a potential sequel. Agent: *Marlene Stringer, Stringer Literary Agency.* (June)

★ **The Lavender Ladies Detective Agency: Death in Sunset Grove**

Minna Lindgren, trans. from the Finnish by Lola Rogers. Pan (IPG dist.), \$13.95 trade paper (384p) ISBN 978-1-4472-8932-6

Finnish journalist Lindgren treats growing old with mordant humor in her memorable first novel and series launch, which centers on the residents of the Sunset Grove retirement community. Nonagenarians Siiri Kettunen and her best friend, Irma Länneleimu, inspired by the coincidental color of their wardrobes, decide as a joke to form the Lavender Ladies Detective Agency to snoop into the goings-on at Sunset Grove. They soon have a chance to take the idea seriously after the apparent suicide of their facility's cook Tero

Lehtinen, a tragedy that presages other strange developments, including disappearing medical records and the suspicious dispensation of additional medications. Lindgren perfectly captures the universal confusions (Siiri and Irma attend the funeral of the wrong person) and uncertainties of old age (how many of their friends will still be alive in a week to attend a reunion luncheon?) in the service of a captivating plot. Readers will eagerly await the sequel. Agent: *Elina Ahlback, Elina Ahlback Literary Agency.* (June)

Santa Cruz Noir

Edited by Susie Bright. Akashic, \$15.95 trade paper (320p) ISBN 978-1-61775-622-1

The 20 tales in this average entry in Akashic's noir series cover the area in and around Santa Cruz, Northern California's surfing capital. A few spotlight surfing, a few more feature psycho killers on the loose, and others offer magical overtones, such as Peggy Townsend's "First Peak," which in a surprise move somehow brings the Hawaii volcano deity Pele to town. Longtime local reporter Lee Quarnstrom's brief "The Shooter" realistically depicts a burst of gunplay in a Watsonville roadhouse decades ago. In Jessica Breheny's "54028 Love Creek Road," an aging teacher makes rent by doing classes at multiple institutions—a tough enough situation even if you didn't have a problem with a gang member who needs a passing grade. A 15-year-old girl detective stars in Elizabeth McKenzie's "The Big Creep," while Jill Wolfson in "Death and Taxes" works a quick Tarantino-esque scenario with a 17-year-old boy spinning a sign for tax work on the street corner. Most of the stories feel unfinished, but some are redeemed by a vibrant edge. (June)

A Steep Price

Robert Dugoni. Thomas & Mercer, \$15.95 trade paper (380p) ISBN 978-1-5039-5418-2

Thriller Award–finalist Dugoni's engrossing sixth Tracy Crosswhite mystery (after 2017's *Close to Home*) finds Tracy and the other members of the Seattle PD violent crimes division investigating the murder of Monique Rodgers, a mother and an activist against gangs and drugs gunned down in a neighborhood playground. Meanwhile, Tracy looks into the disappearance of Indian American Kavita

Mukherjee, who was applying for medical school. Kavita is somewhat estranged from her parents because they want her to agree to an arranged marriage she wants no part of. The case dredges up painful memories for Tracy of her sister's abduction more than 20 years earlier. The stakes rise when another team member, Vic Fazzio, is framed for a key witness's murder in the Rodgers case. Complicating things further, Tracy is pregnant and fearful that a new hire, Andrea Gonzalez, is being groomed to take her place. Fully developed characters and a fast-moving plot that builds to a shocker of an ending distinguish this crime novel. *Agent: Meg Ruley, Jane Rotrosen Agency. (June)*

What Happened That Night

Sandra Block. Sourcebooks Landmark, \$15.99 trade paper (352p) ISBN 978-1-4926-6029-3

Dahlia, the heroine of this propulsive tale of revenge from Thriller Award–finalist Block (*The Secret Room*), was a Harvard student and aspiring lawyer until she attended a finals party and was sexually assaulted. Five years later, Dahlia, now a Beretta-carrying, tattooed paralegal living in Boston, still doesn't remember what happened that night. Suffering from PTSD and stress-related-seizures, she seeks solace with her cat and her best friend, Eli, who like her attempted to commit suicide. When a video of the fateful party surfaces online, Dahlia sees her attackers for the first time and decides to take matters into her own hands. She teams up with James, a quirky IT geek she meets through a suicide survivors support group, and together they hatch a plan to uncover the truth and execute their own version of justice. Dahlia thinks she has everything figured out, but there's another secret—a shocking betrayal that turns her world upside down again. Only the draggy ending, in which Block ties up loose ends, disappoints. Until then, this is a satisfying page-turner. *Agent: Rachel Ekstrom, Irene Goodman Literary Agency. (June)*

The Spook in the Stacks:

A Lighthouse Library Mystery

Eva Gates. Crooked Lane, \$26.99 (320p) ISBN 978-1-68331-580-3

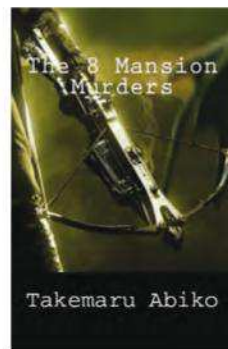
Gates (a pen name for Vicki Delaney) graduates from mass market to hardcover

★ The 8 Mansion Murders

Takemaru Abiko, trans. from the Japanese by Ho-Ling Wong. Locked Room International, \$19.99 trade paper (180p) ISBN 978-1-986036-06-1

First published in Japan in 1989, Abiko's outstanding impossible crime novel combines laugh-out-loud humor with an ingenious murder plot.

Insp. Kyozo Hayami, of the Metropolitan PD, Division I, lands a head-scratcher after Kikuichiro Hachisuka, the vice-president of his father's construction company, is killed by a crossbow bolt in the unusual figure eight–shaped house that he shared with his parents and two siblings. Kikuichiro's mute sister Yukie and her sign language teacher witness the murder. Their testimony implicates Yusako Yano, the son of the household's servants, from whose room the arrow was fired, but he claims that he was sleeping at the time, alone, and his door was locked. A second murder seems to have been committed by a crossbow that seemed to hover in the air. Kyozo's accident-prone sidekick provides comic relief, and John Dickson Carr fans will appreciate the summation made by Kyozo's younger brother, a devoted mystery fan, of the various possible ways a murder can be committed in a locked room. This is one of the funniest and cleverest novels of its type to hit the English-language market in years. *(June)*



with her lively fourth Lighthouse Library mystery (after 2016's *Reading Up a Storm*). A few days before Halloween, recently retired multimillionaire Jay Ruddle and his grown granddaughter, Julia, visit the Bodie Island Lighthouse Library in Nags Head, N.C. Jay, an Outer Banks native, is considering giving the library his extensive collection of 16th- to 18th-century documents regarding North Carolina's nautical history. When he is found strangled in the rare book room a few days later, the police suspect Julia, who wanted to keep the collection in the family and recently quarreled with her grandfather about its disposition. Theodore Kowalski, a rare-book collector who has taken a shine to Julia, begs assistant librarian Lucy Richardson to investigate. Book lovers will envy Lucy's dream of a life, working in a wonderful library, surrounded by amusing friends, not to mention a fine feline companion and a handsome suitor. Cozy fans will look forward to her further adventures. *Agent: Kim Lionetti, BookEnds Literary Agency. (June)*

★ In Wolves' Clothing

Greg Levin. White Rock, \$13.95 trade paper (272p) ISBN 978-0-9904029-4-7

Levin movingly conveys the stomach-churning horrors of child sex trafficking

in this effective thriller. Zero Slade works for Operation Emancipation, a globe-trotting group of operatives with intelligence backgrounds, who pose as prospective clients as a way to bust the traffickers and liberate their young captives. After one such mission, while waiting for a flight from Guadalajara, Mexico, to L.A., Zero muses: "Before I joined Operation Emancipation, I was just like the dozens of people fuming at Gate A-11 right now. Flight delays would ruin my day.... Now I can smile and whistle while walking through a pediatric cancer ward." Zero feels deep empathy for the helpless victims he labors to save at great personal risk. The conflict between a facade of professionalism and heartfelt involvement with the suffering he witnesses reaches a head after he bonds with Sung, a five-year-old girl he rescues in Cambodia. Zero does his best to keep Sung safe, but more perils for the girl lie ahead. Levin provides a window into one of the world's darkest underbellies, while somehow managing to insert appropriate lighter moments, as when Zero meets a new recruit to OE, a Buddhist former FBI agent. This author deserves a wide audience. *(BookLife)*

life, and Art's book offers a pathway to a place of unbelievable bliss and little responsibility, the realm of the Hidden Things. But when the companions learn the price of entry, they struggle to confront their own demons and decide whether the promised joys are worth the cost. Dimitri's beautifully written tale, steeped in nostalgia, folklore, and religion, will enthrall and terrify readers. (July)

Rough Justice

Kelley Armstrong. Subterranean, \$28 (192p) ISBN 978-1-59606-856-8

Armstrong's charming novella features Olivia Taylor-Jones (familiar from the Cainsville series), an heiress who works as an investigator for her boyfriend—defense lawyer Gabriel Walsh—and is the newly minted Mallt-Y-Nos, or Matilda of the Hunt. She must lead the Welsh Wild Hunt, bringing accused killers to their final justice with her pack of giant black dogs. During Olivia's first hunt, outside Chicago, she begins to suspect that the target, Keith Johnson, is innocent, and asks to do a little research before bringing him down. She puts her investigative skills to good use digging into Johnson's past. When Gabriel takes on a client accused of shooting her husband, Olivia's research leads her to believe that Johnson's case and Gabriel's new client may be connected. This swift, smoothly written supernatural mystery, told from Gabriel and Olivia's alternating perspectives, employs a clever twist, expands on Olivia and Gabriel's relationship and Olivia's new powers, and poses intelligent questions about the nature of justice. Cainsville fans will enjoy this bite-size treat, which is enhanced by illustrations by Xavière Daumaric. (July)

A Study in Honor

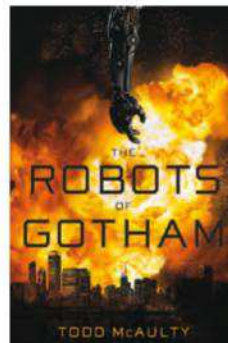
Claire O'Dell. Harper Voyager, \$15.99 trade paper (304p) ISBN 978-0-06-269930-5

This riveting mystery (fantasist Beth Bernobich's first work under the O'Dell pseudonym), set in near-future Washington D.C., spotlights delightfully fresh adaptations of Arthur Conan Doyle's most famous characters. After Dr. Janet Watson loses her arm in an attack by the New Confederacy, she is discharged from the Army and returns home. She

★ The Robots of Gotham

Todd McAulty. HMH/Adams, \$26 (688p) ISBN 978-1-328-71101-4

Debut author McAulty, an expert in machine language learning, extrapolates a scary AI-overrun 2083 that's only a few steps removed from today's reality. This massive and impressive novel is set in an America that outlawed the development of artificial intelligence and quickly lost a short and bitter war against robot-led fascist countries. Most of America is now occupied by Venezuelan "peacekeeping" forces. The story is narrated tastefully and with self-deprecating humor by Barry Simcoe, a 30-something Canadian CEO recently arrived in Chicago to close some international technology deals. Shocked by what he sees, he immediately plunges into 10 days of complicated rescue sorties against a backdrop of urban devastation and corruption. He saves a wounded diplomat robot, allies himself with a Russian biowarfare specialist who's developing an antidote for a virus intended to wipe out the human race, and risks his life to adopt a starving Rottweiler. For romantic appeal, he variously saves and is saved by Mackenzie Stronnick, a gorgeous machine-hating Chicago realtor; tough Venezuelan sergeant Noa Van de Velde; and enigmatic masked robot Jacaranda. Though the technology-rich plot loses a bit of its savage verisimilitude as it progresses, McAulty maintains breathless momentum throughout. Readers will hope for more tales of this sinister future and eagerly pick up on hints that Barry and his companions may continue their exploits. (June)



meets the fascinating, if infuriating, Sara Holmes, and they become roommates in Georgetown, Va., where, as two black women, they are not entirely welcome. Watson observes troubling patterns in her new job at the VA, and these, along with prompts from Holmes's top secret connections, send the women on a high-stakes search for answers. As the mystery unfolds, it departs from direct Doyle parallels and takes on an entertaining life of its own. Attention to detail about futuristic elements, such as Watson's mixed feelings about her temperamental mechanical arm, helps construct a believable setting. Readers who pick this up for the novelty of Watson and Holmes as black women will be impressed by how well O'Dell realizes them as full, rich characters. This is a real treat for fans of Conan Doyle and SF mysteries. (July)

The Book of the Unwinding

J.D. Horn. 47North, \$24.95 (351p) ISBN 978-1-5039-0110-0

In Horn's exciting follow-up to 2018's *The King of Bones and Ashes*, it's been a few

months since Celestin Marin slaughtered many of New Orleans's witches to increase his power and imprisoned his daughter, Alice, on the Dreaming Road, which is built of illusion and is slowly draining her life force. Alice's resurrected niece Lucy draws powerful psychic Nathalie Boudreau into the attempt to free Alice, but Nathalie fears the price will be high. Meanwhile, several witch sisters are still trying to use witch and former exotic dancer Evangeline Caissy to find the Book of the Unwinding, which will reveal how to harvest the last bit of power in a world where magic is fading, and Alice's sister, Fleur, is desperate to find the spell that will save Lucy from dying again. Though the scope of the book is daunting, Horn's characters are terrific, and the superb worldbuilding is buttressed by scenes both wondrous and terrifying; the opening sequence, in which Nathalie must deal with her gruesomely transformed employer, is bone-chilling. The remaining witches must unite to face a dire threat when the Book of the Unwinding falls into the wrong hands.

Horn leaves readers hungry for the next installment. (July)

★ Ring of Swords

Eleanor Arnason. Aqueduct, \$20 (350p)
ISBN 978-1-61976-140-7

Tiptree Award–winner Arnason (*A Woman of the Iron People*) skillfully blends anthropology and gender questions with intrigue and adventure in this provocative tale of alien contact, a long-out-of-print 1993 feminist science fiction classic that's still strong and relevant 25 years on. Exobiologist Anna Perez just wants to study her jellyfishlike creatures in peace, without the crowded distraction of a bunch of diplomats preparing for the first nonviolent meeting between humanity and the alien *hwarbath*. Then the *hwarbath* arrive with a human: Nicholas Sanders, a civilian captured 20 years ago, who's now a translator between the two races. A casual encounter with Nick puts Anna in the crosshairs of human military intelligence, who want Nick back. A failed kidnapping attempt ignites a tense showdown. To prevent a bloodbath, the *hwarbath* demand the human military turn over Nick—and Anna. With fascination overcoming trepidation, Anna agrees, setting off on the exploratory mission of a lifetime. The tense plot, alive with skillful worldbuilding and fascinating characters, is as entertaining as it is fascinating. An introduction by Ursula K. Le Guin reminds readers exactly why Arnason's novel remains important today. (May)

Only Human

Sylvain Neuvel. Del Rey, \$28 (352p) ISBN 978-0-399-18011-8

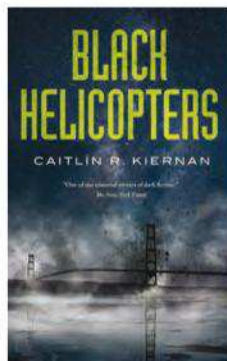
In the exciting conclusion to Neuvel's Themis Files (after 2017's *Waking Gods*), scientist Rose Franklin is back home on Earth after she was marooned for nine years on the planet Esat Ekt. Her giant robot, Themis, was summoned home, with Rose, linguist Vincent Couture, his 10-year-old daughter, and Gen. Eugene Govender stuck inside. Rose loved studying alongside the humanoid Ekt and would have been happy to stay, but Vincent was desperate for home. When they return, it's to an entirely too plausible war-torn Earth that's in the grip of racial hatred (especially of Muslims) and

violence, and Russia and the U.S. are butting heads. Russian agent Katherine Lebedev wants to use Themis to combat the U.S., but she needs pilots to do it, and she'll stop at nothing to get Rose to do her bidding. The story, entwining past and present, is told in the same style as the first two novels, using interviews, diary entries, mission logs, and covert recordings. Lebedev is cartoonish at times, but that makes it even easier to root for Rose and co. This action-packed tale with apocalyptic stakes is a fitting finale to this wonderfully cinematic series. *Agent: Seth Fishman, Gernert Co.* (May)

Black Helicopters

Caitlín R. Kiernan. Tor.com, \$4.99 e-book
(112p) ISBN 978-1-250-19112-0

Nominated for a World Fantasy Award when originally published in shorter form in 2013, this short novel is set in a world convulsed by skillfully evoked cosmic horrors and populated by the semisupernatural agents fighting them. It spans the period 1966–2152 but takes place predominantly in 2012, in the



wake of an invasion of Lovecraftian entities off the coast of Maine. Among those fighting to contain the invasion are Sixty-Six, the descendant of a victim of a CIA behavioral engineering experiment, and the psionically gifted albino Ivoire. She and her identical twin, Bête, have been tracked by Ptolema, an ageless espionage agent with inscrutable motives, to Dublin. As the narrative ping-pongs among different decades and various locales, sinister associations emerge that link the tale's events and their players, heightening the mood of paranoia and conjuring a sense of mysteries whose solutions may ultimately be unknowable. Kiernan's novella is well-wrought dark fantasy struck from the template of the black-ops thriller. (May)

Romance/Erotica

Beyond Control

Kat Martin. Zebra, \$7.99 mass market (364p)
ISBN 978-1-4201-4319-5

Bestseller Martin brings her Texas Trilogy contemporary romantic suspense series (*Beyond Danger*, *Beyond Reason*) to a hair-raising finish with the gripping tale of a single mother on the run and the Marine veteran who offers her a second chance at happily-ever-after. With her four-year-old daughter, Ivy, in tow, Victoria “Tory” Bradford is trying to stay one step ahead of her abusive ex-fiancé, Damon Bridger. She bounces around the Southwest before landing at Iron River Ranch in Iron Springs, Tex. After returning stateside from tours in Afghanistan and Iraq, retired sniper Joshua Cain bought Iron River and planned for a more placid lifestyle. But when Tory shows up on his doorstep, desperate for a job that will allow her to support her daughter and stay off her rich ex's radar, he's plunged right back into danger. The dynamics of abusive relationships and obsession ring true throughout, as does the redemptive power of love. Martin has a consummate skill for developing the most lovable and the most despicable characters; readers will cheer when sadistic Damon meets his well-deserved end. Martin's finely described Texas is a delight. *Agent: Alexandra Machinist, ICM.* (June)

More Than Words

Mia Sheridan. Forever, \$14.99 trade paper
(336p) ISBN 978-1-5387-2739-3

Sheridan explores the power of first love in a tale of childhood friends parted and reunited. After meeting in an abandoned boxcar in California, 11-year-old Jessie Creswell and 12-year-old Callen Hayes become friends. She reads him books from her French school and introduces him to music, and they share a first kiss. Then Callen fails to show at their next planned meeting, and Jessie is crushed. Ten years later, in the present day, Jessie is working part-time in Paris as a waitress while looking for a translating job. Callen, a famous composer with a hard-partying bad-boy reputation, comes to the bar where Jessie works. Though he hits on her and they enjoy a far more sizzling second kiss, Jessie is disappointed that he doesn't rec-

ognize her. At a chance meeting in the Loire Valley, where Jessie is translating some recently discovered cave writings that tell a love story connected to Joan of Arc, Callen recognizes her from the bar and realizes that she is the Jessie from his childhood. Jessie and Callen's touching whirlwind romance is balm for Callen's wounded soul, though Jessie remains wary of being just another conquest. Cleverly juxtaposing Callen and Jessie's relationship against the cave writings' 15th-century story of longing lovers, Sheridan keeps readers enthralled. *Agent: Kimberly Brower, Brewery Literary and Management. (June)*

Hot Asset

Lauren Layne. Montlake Romance, \$12.95 trade paper (301p) ISBN 978-1-5039-0106-3

In this playful romance, first in the 21 Wall Street series, a financial whiz meets his match in the form of the driven Securities and Exchange Commission agent who's investigating him for alleged insider trading. If Lara McKenzie can prove investment broker Ian Bradley guilty, it's her ticket to her dream posting in the FBI's white-collar crime division. Even Ian's smoldering good looks and repeated professions of innocence can't sway her from doing her job, though a lack of evidence makes everyone wonder whether she's wasting her time. Meanwhile, Ian would rather Lara's attention move from his spreadsheets to his bedsheets. As the potential conflict of interest turns into mutual interest and finally compounded interest, the two would-be lovers must figure out who was responsible for siccing the SEC on Ian in the first place. Layne (*Runaway Groom*) populates her world of high-stakes finance with charismatic characters, and the fast-paced story works well with the simmering sexual tension between the leads and the conflict between personal desire and professional ambition. It's easy to root for this couple. *Agent: Nicole Resciniti, Seymour Agency. (May)*

Contraband Hearts

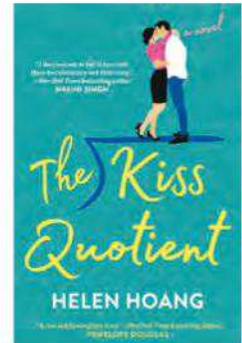
Alex Beecroft. Riptide, \$17.99 trade paper (270p) ISBN 978-1-62649-805-1

Beecroft (*Under the Hill*) has fun retrofitting an old trope with a queer sensibility as she links her Age of Sail series to Riptide's shared world of Porthkennack.

★ The Kiss Quotient

Helen Hoang. Berkley, \$15 trade paper (336p) ISBN 978-0-451-49080-3

Hoang knocks it out of the park with this stellar debut about an autistic woman who takes a methodical approach to learning about sex and accidentally gets a lesson in love. Stella is great at her job creating predictive algorithms, but she's not so great at relationships, which is why she decides to hire escort Michael. Stella's autism is presented as both a genuine challenge and a part of her that she knows how to use to her advantage, and Hoang gives her tremendous depth as a character, never reducing her to a walking diagnosis. While Stella's intentions toward Michael start out as purely sexual, his gentleness and compassion begin to nudge her in more romantic directions, and his sense of honor, along with her tendency toward obsession, soon complicate their tidy professional arrangement. The two of them do a beautiful job of navigating their insecurities and fears, transforming their commercial relationship into something emotionally meaningful to them both. Hoang carefully avoids stereotypes and clichés: Stella never judges Michael for his profession, and he never judges her for her neuroatypicality. The diverse cast and exceptional writing take this romance to the next level, and readers who see themselves in Stella will be ecstatic. *Agent: Kim Lionetti, BookEnds Literary. (June)*



In this late-18th-century Robin Hood–esque adventure, the relationship between the stuffy lawkeeper and the charismatic outlaw is complicated by sexual tension. Ambitious customs officer Peregrine “Perry” Dean is sent from cosmopolitan London to Porthkennack, Cornwall, to rout out corruption. He receives a dubious reception both for his profession and because he's black. He's astonished to find that the notorious freckled smuggler Tomas Quick is more beloved and respected in the seaside town than the rich Sir Lazarus Quick, who has commandeered Perry to execute his personal vendetta against Tomas. Perry soon learns that Tomas is glad to be his ally in the rescue of black men who have been captured from shipwrecks to be sold as slaves, and he embraces a compassionate new balance between inflexible law and human needs—while also, incidentally, embracing Tomas. It's easy to love Beecroft's headstrong, imperfect heroes and their social dynamic, but their romance feels like an add-on; nevertheless, readers who appreciate LGBTQ twists on classic stories will find this one cleverly and appealingly told. *(May)*

Inspirational

A Rebel Heart

Beth White. Revell, \$15.99 trade paper (384p) ISBN 978-0-8007-2689-8

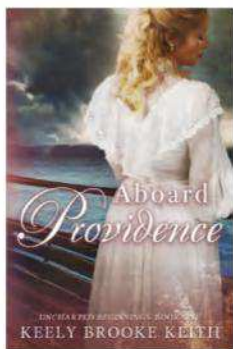
White (*The Pelican Bride*) bridges Union and Confederate in this charming post-Civil War inspirational romance. In 1870, Selah Daughtry is single and struggling to support herself and her two younger sisters on their family plantation outside of Oxford, Miss. Everything changes when Selah is rescued during a train accident by Yankee Levi Riggins, who claims to be traveling to Mississippi as a hotel management agent for the railroad. In fact, Levi is a Pinkerton detective investigating several train robberies whose perpetrators have slipped away near her plantation. Despite instructions to investigate the plantation and his initial suspicions of Selah, Levi is attracted to her. Desperate to keep the family plantation, she agrees to his plan to develop the run-down estate into a glamorous hotel, completely unaware that Levi only proposed the idea as a way to keep his cover as he continues to search for the

robbers. In an effort to mend the prejudice that haunts the town, Levi hires ex-slaves to revamp the plantation and run the hotel. When Levi realizes that he has a true connection to Selah and the town, he cannot bring himself to reveal his secret. But when Selah finds out on her own, her powers of forgiveness are put to the test and she must turn to her faith for answers. White weaves together romance, mystery, and a large amount of reconstruction-era detail in this valuable tale of love and forgiveness. (*June*)

Aboard Providence

Keely Brooke Keith. Edenbrooke, \$12.99 e-book (274p) ISBN 978-1-5425-8956-7

Brooke Keith (*The Land Uncharted*) returns to the frontier settlement featured in her previous Uncharted series in this inviting prequel about an expedition from Virginia to Brazil in 1860. Eight Christian families make a plan to pioneer



a new, peaceful settlement in Brazil, far from the civil unrest brewing in America after Abraham Lincoln's election. Jonah Ashton, a medical student studying in

Pennsylvania, has been called home to Virginia to join the expedition. But a desire to graduate and clear his name after false allegations are lodged against him creates a conundrum for him. Unwilling to disappoint his father, he devises a plan he believes will allow him to appease his family by going on the trip while also finishing school. Marian Foster, a self-taught botanist who is also part of the expedition, sees the trip as a new adventure full of promise. Despite an immediate attraction, their relationship is hindered by Jonah's desire to eventually return to Pennsylvania. Brooke Keith's abundantly detailed and romantic adventure tale features a faithful, colorful cast that face the unknown with grit and determination, making for a fresh and satisfying story. (*BookLife*)

Comics

Little Stranger

Edie Fake. Secret Acres, \$21.95 trade paper (172p) ISBN 978-0-9991935-0-1

Fake (*Gaylord Phoenix*) presents a striking, occasionally scatological collection of his short comics and drawings from recent years, culled from various zines and underground publications. Employing concise imagery and minimal text, and through symbology and analogy, Fake examines sex and gender with generous amounts of sly, irreverent humor. In the three-part "Foie Gras," Fake substitutes images of food and food preparation for sexual acts and genitalia, while in "LA Silence," a trip to a wellness center brings up post-gender-confirmation surgery issues in an unsettling fashion. In the one-page "Anal Sex for Perverts," a drawing of a shell with a pink opening carries the caption: "Before I ask say yes." Other more cryptic pieces require some work from readers to puzzle out, but that's just part of the fun of Fake's oeuvre: his comics maintain a playfully naughty mystery. (Appropriately, the book is dedicated in part to "the Queerdos out there.") Fake deconstructs gender and human anatomy, sex and desire, then puts them back together again, on his own messy, artful terms. This provocative graphic collection pushes boundaries, and then breaks them open. (*July*)

Permanent Press

Luke Healy. Avery Hill, \$14.99 trade paper (136p) ISBN 978-1-910395-33-2

This graphic novel proves a pleasant surprise, as the well-worn narrative of the self-referential comic artist riddled with professional anxiety gets an entertainingly knotty and acidly funny working over by the creator of *How to Survive in the North*. Inside the framing device of depicting himself as a woeful young artist who volleys from catatonic depression to pretentious rambling, Healy slots in stories-within-stories that he has created to stave off his terminal boredom and anxiety—and to win another award. "I'm washed up, I've become irrelevant," declares the artist at age 26, and hearkens back to a moment of glory when his work was recognized. The comedic first piece follows a once-feted film director given a

remarkable comeback opportunity, only to be saddled with adapting an impenetrably obscure novel that by coincidence her daughter is currently reading and hating in high school. In other stories, the artist is literally stalked by his own shadow and interrupted as he tries to create a comic featuring an artist and musician, which quickly spirals into a pit of self-doubt ("Is it about proving your dad wrong?"). Healy's tight panels are frequently broken up by larger and more simplistic spreads that still retain a certain claustrophobia. While there's not much plot momentum, the tongue-in-cheek humor accumulates into a clever and curiously haunting book. (*July*)

★ Luisa: Now and Then

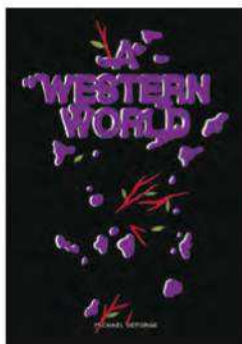
Carole Maurel and Mariko Tamaki, trans. from the French by Nanette McGuinness. Humanoids, \$29.95 trade paper (272p) ISBN 978-1-59465-643-9

In Maurel's sumptuously drawn time-travel fantasy, teenage Luisa is transported from the 1990s to the present to meet her 30-something self. Tamaki (*This One Summer*) adapts the translated French with freshly worded dialogue in this elegant English-language edition. Young Luisa is disgusted to learn that adult Luisa is single and boring, living in a tiny apartment in Paris and working at a compromised version of her dream job. For adult Luisa, the meeting stirs up old regrets and forces her to face truths about her sexuality that she's tried to ignore. But the more time they spend together, the more their identities blend. The idea of meeting one's past or future self isn't terrifically original, but Maurel tells the story with insightfulness and depth and an eye for period detail; note young Luisa's oversized scrunchie and the pacifier necklace that was a '90s fad for mere moments. In stand-out art, Maurel renders attractive characters with open, emotive faces and detailed Paris streets drenched in sunset-toned watercolors. There couldn't be a lovelier setting for this winning story of romantic self-discovery. (*Jun.*)

A Western World

Michael DeForge. Koyama, \$22.95 trade paper (152p) ISBN 978-1-927668-48-1

In the story that opens the latest collection of boundary-pushing comics



by DeForge (*Big Kids*), “Living Hell,” a group of friends imagine living in the same house, perhaps even sharing a single room where they abandon all

privacy and defend themselves from the outside world. This surreal scene sets the tone for this volume in which the ordinary rubs shoulders with the bizarre and bodies, minds, and identities are infinitely permeable. Humans are reborn into incomprehensible alien lives in “Mostly Saturn” in “A Softness,” which feels like a folk tale from another species, a colony of soft creatures is threatened by spiky things that can’t help poking holes into them; and “About Kissing” weaves a creation myth that describes life as the interaction of orifices. Some stories flirt with social commentary, like “Placeholders,” the tale of a tech startup that fills a city with massive “soft storage” devices, ominous data-storage growths that loom up in neighborhoods. DeForge switches up the art, scribbling stringy characters in loose settings, constructing geometric compositions suggestive of Chris Ware and Ivan Brunetti, or transforming figures into abstract patterns. But no matter what style he adopts, there’s a distancing effect to his art, an affinity for the cool language of symbols, logos, and graphs. The lengthy final piece, “Rhode Island Me,” dares to get a little more human with a horror-tinged tale about friends trying to reconnect on a cabin trip. Taken together, the arc of the collection follows an inventive cartoonist breaking the form down to its basics and building it back up again. DeForge has been a darling of the comics community, and, while esoteric, this volume is a showcase of his sui generis talent. (May)

XTC69

Jessica Campbell. *Koyama*, \$12 trade paper (120p) ISBN 978-1-927668-57-3

By the creator of *Hot or Not: 20th Century Male Artists*, this sarcastic sci-fi send-up opens as Commander Jessica

Campbell and her all-woman team of space explorers land on Earth, left vacant after a long-ago apocalypse, to locate “males for our own planet to breed with.” They find a cryonic chamber and free... another Jessica Campbell, a chip-munching slacker from the 21st century who can’t tell them anything about her planet’s understanding of quantum physics but can expound at length on the Harry Potter series. Together they set back off into space in search of men, but are none too pleased with what they discover. Campbell’s simple, thickly inked black-and-white artwork, complete with details like a cutaway diagram of the spaceship, gives her graphic novel the feel of a children’s book. But the content, with its cast of radical female separatists exploring planets and fighting space bros, is closer to the material found in feminist underground comics of the 1960s. Despite the nudge-nudge title and suggestively-shaped spaceships, there isn’t much raunch; the subversion is found in cheerful machismo-bashing and the book’s refusal to take itself seriously. This oddball escapade delights from opening salvo to closing quip. (May)

Forward

Lisa Maas. *Arsenal Pulp*, \$18.95 trade paper (198p) ISBN 978-1-55152-722-2

This gentle and heartwarming debut explores finding love after loss in the lesbian scene of Victoria, Canada. Rayanne hasn’t dated since a bad breakup four years earlier. She claims to a friend that it’s because she’s too busy with work, only to slip into a sexy fantasy inspired by a soft butch she spots on the street. Ali is still grieving the death of her wife, Liv, 10 months prior. A supportive friend sets her up with a phone call to a psychic medium and Ali receives a message from the beyond: Liv wants her to find someone new. Rayanne and Ali’s paths inevitably cross at a local coffee shop. An immediate spark is struck between the two women, but can either of them let go of their ghosts for long enough to open up to new love? The large-size, traditionally inked pages are colored with soft watercolor washes. The character’s faces are often warmed by the glow of sunrises or sunsets. From the hand lettering to the lingering glances, the carefully crafted art reflects

the intimacy of the script. This authentic, poignant love story offers a welcome depth of emotion to what might have otherwise been a simple romantic comedy. (Apr.)

The American Way: Those Above and Those Below

John Ridley and Georges Jeanty. *Vertigo*, \$16.99 trade paper (144p) ISBN 978-1-4012-7835-9

Academy Award-winning screenwriter Ridley has created a thrilling sequel to his 2007 graphic novel, *The American Way*, a superhero saga based on the racial conflicts of 1960s America. That work, while not requisite reading to dive into this volume, is helpful background, as it sets up the scenario: that a secret program in the U.S. government created an all-white group of superbeings who fight staged battles designed to deceive the public about the administration’s ability to respond to supervillain threats. This “wag the dog” spectacle helps keep the government in power. When the President decides to add a black superbeing, Jason Fisher, to placate civil rights leaders, the scheme collapses into a horrific superbeing race war. The sequel picks up in the 1970s, as Fisher remains a supervigilante, though now perceived as a governmental Uncle Tom by other black Americans. Some of the superbeings, such as Amber Waves, a Green Lantern-like heroine, are now disillusioned and refuse to continue acting as government dupes. She turns to violent protest, leading a guerilla war for racial justice. Other recurring characters—like the Secret Agent, a sharpshooter, are still with team government, and Ole Miss, who can manipulate time, is now a Mississippi politician reluctantly campaigning on a racist platform—are joined by new faces like Nikki Lau (daughter of slain Asian-American villain Red Terror), a young revolutionary seeking answers about her father’s death. Jeanty’s drawings are skillful and dramatic. Ridley has pulled off an action-packed, yet thoughtful, continuation of this powerful series, centered around a cast of superheroes trapped and demoralized by the deadly consequences of their acts. (Apr.)

Nonfiction

The Incurable Romantic: And Other Tales of Madness and Desire

Frank Tallis. Basic, \$27 (304p) ISBN 978-1-5416-1755-1

This thoughtful study from British psychologist and mystery novelist Tallis (*Mephisto Waltz*) comprises 11 tales from his own practice touching on a single theme: people who “have experienced significant distress attributable to falling in love or being in love.” He posits this as a neglected field in modern psychology. Tallis recalls that during the eight years he spent studying to become a clinical psychologist, only one hour was devoted to the subject, though love, which often involves delusions and obsessions, can sometimes seem a form of psychopathology. Perhaps the tales that best illustrate this are those of a married woman infatuated with her oral surgeon and convinced, against all evidence, that he reciprocates; of a successful businessman who approaches bankruptcy because of his hypersexuality (he estimates that he has been involved with 3,000 prostitutes); and of a guilt-ridden pedophile who struggles mightily to resist his attraction to the young daughter of a friend. Tallis has a graceful narrative style, easily incorporating brief digressions on deeper philosophical issues such as free will versus determinism. Most importantly, his book is suffused with compassion, avoiding facile categorization and struggling to understand and empathize with his patients as people in pain, often anguish, because of the love they feel. (Sept.)

Fewer, Better Things: The Hidden Wisdom of Objects

Glenn Adamson. Bloomsbury, \$27 (272p) ISBN 978-1-63286-964-7

Adamson, the former director of the Museum of Arts and Design in New York and author of *The Craft Reader*, challenges readers to reconsider the nature of physical objects in this dry treatise on material culture. He asserts that mass production eroded the understanding of craftsmanship and that reconnecting with processes and materials increases one’s overall quality of life. The book is most successful when drawing on everyday



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Before Marlon Bundo, there was Charlie, one of nine dogs that lived with the Kennedys during JFK’s presidency, as seen in *The Dogs of Camelot* (reviewed on p. 71).

items, like a chair. Instead of just something to sit on, he asks readers to consider the wood, the techniques binding it together, and the cultural significance of its design. Adamson writes enthusiastically of how the aesthetics of Japanese tea ceremonies reveal other elements of society (the texture of the clay tea bowl, for example, denotes its provenance). Although almost all readers will find value in some of these anecdotes, Adamson too often veers into academic territory, such as his extended discussion of museum theory. While some examples are more illuminating than others, the book will awaken those who have tuned out from their surroundings. (Aug.)

Lands of Lost Borders: A Journey on the Silk Road

Kate Harris. Dey Street, \$24.99 (320p) ISBN 978-0-06-283934-3

Nature writer and adventurer Harris details her bike journey along the Silk Road, in this beautifully rendered if sometimes slow-moving debut. Growing up, Harris wanted to be an explorer; when she got older, however, she went to Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship and later to MIT where she found the drudgery of the laboratory unbearable. As an escape, she and her best friend, Mel, planned their bike adventure and were soon pedaling

along the Silk Road, starting on the pungent banks of the Black Sea (“The bottom waters are poor in oxygen but rich in hydrogen sulphide, a colourless, poisonous gas that reeks of rotten eggs”). They biked across often treacherous landscapes (and took planes or trains along routes inaccessible by bike) through Turkey, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, India, Nepal, and China; they ascended mountains and traversed river valleys. The trip concluded at the Siachen Glacier in the Himalayas at the edge of the Tibetan plateau, where “the wind was more alive than the branches it moved, and so big it could only be the mountains breathing.” Harris’s talent is in her prose, as she offers breathtaking descriptions of the Silk Road, shrouded in mystery and wonder. (Aug.)

★ Maeve in America: Essays by a Girl from Somewhere Else

Maeve Higgins. Penguin Books, \$16 trade paper (256p) ISBN 978-0-14-313016-1

“Aside from getting champagne in your eye, or being snapped at by your pet toucan, bemoaning a lack of purpose is the most privileged problem in the known universe, so I won’t drone on about it,” writes comedian Higgins in the first essay of her wickedly funny collection. In the 14 pieces that follow, Higgins delivers on her promise to reach beyond the self while addressing such topics as Rent the Runway, a designer-clothes rental service, and the Muslim travel ban with incisive humor and deep humility. In her exceptional essay, “Pen as Gun,” about teaching a comedy workshop in Iraq, questions that begin with the self give rise to political and global considerations: “What if comedy, and creativity, these nebulous things I’ve devoted all these years to, are, in the grand scheme of things, unhelpful? Or even pointless?” While Higgins wisely steers clear of reducing insight to adage—“Comics taking themselves seriously have always made me laugh”—her commitment to wrestling openly and ethically with personhood and privilege suggests “that we are not alone, that we have this common language.” Higgins has the rare gift of being able to meaningfully engage with politics and social ills while remaining legitimately funny. (Aug.)

**Meg, Jo, Beth, Amy:
The Story of Little Women
and Why It Still Matters**

Anne Boyd Rioux. Norton, \$27.95 (352p)
ISBN 978-0-393-25473-0

To coincide with the 150th anniversary of the publication of *Little Women*, Rioux (*Constance Fenimore Woolson: Portrait of a Lady Novelist*) offers a solid and well-illustrated history of the novel's publication, reception, and adaptations. Rioux lays out biographical background on author Louisa May Alcott and traces her unlikely move from gothic potboiler author to girls' literature phenom as a result of the book's wild popularity. Rioux also examines the novel's many stage and screen adaptations, argues it is as appropriate for boys as girls (a section that could be condensed), and discusses contemporary YA fiction directly influenced by this seminal work. In one section, Rioux explores the many women writers, from Susan Sontag to J.K. Rowling, inspired by the example of Jo March, one of the only early literary models of female authorship. She also successfully highlights important points in *Little Women's* history, such as the publisher's altered 1880 edition (still commonly read) that cleans up Alcott's lively slang. Throughout, Rioux offers enough detail to entertain and inform without overwhelming the reader. While she notes the novel's readership has fallen off in recent years, one hopes her well-crafted work will help revive interest in a work she rightfully argues should be placed beside *Tom Sawyer* as an enduring American classic. (Aug.)

Can You Tolerate This? Essays

Ashleigh Young. Riverhead, \$26 (256p)
ISBN 978-0-525-53403-7

Poet Young (*Magnificent Moon*) makes her nonfiction debut with this collection of probing, if sometimes pretentious, essays about growing up and becoming an adult. Refreshingly, she acknowledges that her own coming-of-age was far from unique, and the best selections are those in which Young takes some critical distance from herself. Her voice is more confident and her sentences more pointed in these pieces, such as an investigation of Japanese hikikomoris' hermit lifestyles in "Sea of Trees." "Witches," about discovering the taboo of nudity as a child and

becoming trapped within the accompanying body self-consciousness, takes on more resonance placed next to "Bones," about a young boy becoming trapped in his own body by a rare bone disorder. However, Young's autobiographical essays can still fall into the trap of faux-profound navel-gazing: "I was ashamed of myself, now, for asking so insistently what I could do with stories I only half understood. I stopped writing about Big Red and all I wanted it to symbolize," she writes about her brother's favorite jacket. It's clear Young believes that, as she writes about the hikikomori, "immersion is the desired state" for self-discovery, but Young seems to learn the most about herself, and find the most to teach her readers, when she can immerse herself in a state that isn't her own. (July)

**Valley of Genius: The Uncensored
History of Silicon Valley, as Told
by the Hackers, Founders, and
Freaks Who Made It Boom**

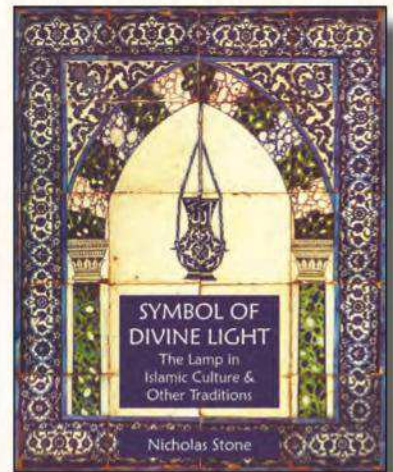
Adam Fisher. Twelve, \$30 (512p) ISBN 978-1-4555-5902-2

Former *Wired* contributor Fisher's lively oral history of Silicon Valley focuses on behind-the-scenes tales of major innovations that emerged from the tech hub, including the interactive video game, the personal computer, and the first computer-animated film. Through these stories emerges "the quintessential Silicon Valley script": "Young kid with radical idea hacks together something cool, [and] builds a wild free-wheeling company around it." The conversational tone allows the reader to connect with the Valley's eccentric and diverse cast of characters, including Napster founder Sean Parker, who helped launch Facebook; film director Ridley Scott, who created the television commercial for the first Macintosh computer; and programmer Jaron Lanier, who coined the term "virtual reality." Touching on the personal habits of the industry's titans—such as Steve Jobs's quirky diets and Twitter cofounder Noah Glass's propensity for giving colleagues "often painful" bear hugs—as well as the grueling process of turning ideas into viable products, Fisher captures the cultural lore of Silicon Valley in the voices of its more prominent players. (July)

**SYMBOL OF
DIVINE LIGHT**

The Lamp in Islamic
Culture & Other Traditions

by Nicholas Stone



978-1-936597-56-7

January 2018, \$22.95, 192pp

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**The Widower's Notebook:
A Memoir**

Jonathan Santlofer. Penguin, \$17 trade paper (304p) ISBN 978-0-14-313249-3

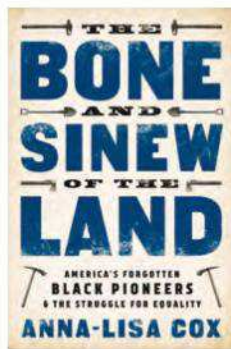
Writer and artist Santlofer (*The Death Artist*), has produced a quiet stunner of a memoir about the rocky shoals of the widower's life. The book's opening scene, in which his wife, Joy, dies suddenly following an operation, is strobed with cinematic verve: "I catch a last glimpse of my wife on the stretcher... all of this in split seconds, like frames of a silent movie before the emergency room doors slam shut." From there, Santlofer writes of being "sick with a grief that has only just begun" before recounting life as an unexpected widower—numbly going through funeral routines, reaffirming his relationship with his adult daughter, nervously re-entering the dating world, finishing his wife's book on the history of New York food (*Food City*)—with asides on the inner turmoil he carefully hides from the world: "I'd lost my sounding board, my reality check, my echo."

Although the author is frequently lost in a fog of detachment, the book never loses momentum, thanks in large part to his vivid writing and lack of self-indulgence. Santlofer includes a cringeworthy though hilarious chapter called "Stupid Things Said by Smart People," which lists thoughtless things people said to him while he was in mourning ("At least your wife avoided a late-in-life divorce," a neighbor bafflingly told him). This is a tender, moving, and resonant account of how life continues whether one wants it to or not. (July)

**The Bone and Sinew of the Land:
America's Forgotten Black Pioneers
and the Struggle for Equality**

Anna-Lisa Cox. PublicAffairs, \$28 (304p) ISBN 978-1-61039-810-7

In this engrossing narrative, historian Cox (*A Stronger Kinship: One Town's Extraordinary Story of Hope and Faith*) restores attention to the role of African-Americans in shaping both the frontier and early- to mid-19th-century American political life. Tracing the paths of black settlers to the Northwest Territory—what became the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin—Cox demonstrates how the growth of African-



the territory was ostensibly slavery-free and granted voting rights to black male property holders, loopholes allowed proslavery Americans to ignore the law in pursuit of wealth and political power. Yet despite facing enormous prejudice, black pioneers fought for their rights and grew businesses, founded schools, built churches, and reorganized politics. Cox anchors her historical claims with portraits of black families living in settings ranging from rural Indiana to Detroit. Although her efforts to imagine settlers' emotions and everyday lives, based more on speculation than archival evidence, may not be up to snuff for historians, they'll enchant general readers. Cox's book tells a story worth recovering, and it will interest anyone wanting to learn more about the lives of free black Americans before the Civil War. (June)

**The Comeback: Greg LeMond, the
True King of American Cycling,
and a Legendary Tour de France**

Daniel De Visé. Atlantic Monthly, \$27 (384p) ISBN 978-0-8021-2794-5

In this thorough biography, De Visé (*Andy and Don*) uses Greg Lemond's razor-thin victory over Frenchman Laurent Fignon in the 1989 Tour de France as a framing device to tell the life story of the first great American road cyclist of the modern era. De Visé describes LeMond's childhood in California with a supportive family, which was clouded by years of sexual abuse by a neighbor. He picked up cycling at age 14 in 1974, and by the time he was 17, the international cycling world began taking notice. In 1986, he became the first American to win the Tour de France, defeating Frenchman Bernard Hinault. His opportunity to repeat that feat was cut short when he was accidentally shot by his brother-in-law while hunting in

American populations in western cities and farmlands forced national questions about equality, citizenship, and the future of slavery. The frontier was a contested zone: although

1987. Two years after his injury, LeMond made his comeback, and De Visé brings that race vividly to life as LeMond and Fignon go neck and neck to the finish line. In LeMond's later career and retirement, he became the "conscience of professional cycling" as the most vocal critic of the sport's doping scandals and Lance Armstrong, whose malice toward LeMond extended for years until his comeuppance. De Visé offers a thrilling read and exciting history for cycling and noncycling fans alike. (June)

**Driven: The White-Knuckled Ride
to Heartbreak and Back**

Melissa Stephenson. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, \$23 (256p) ISBN 978-1-328-76829-2

Rather than render her road story with the usual perils and pleasures of travel, Stephenson builds her memoir around the automobiles that transported her through a life of wanderlust. The book opens with Stephenson embarking on a road trip in 2000 in her brother Matthew's 1970s Ford truck after he committed suicide days earlier. From there she recalls her blue-collar childhood in the 1970s Midwest and her life as a single mother living in Montana; the different makes and models of her automobiles provide a solid touchstone for recounting time, place, and the economic and emotional circumstances of her life. Stephenson combs her memories of the various autos: the VW Squarebacks ("Volkswagens, like tattoos, build character"), a 1984 Saab ("The two years I owned her I... [was] so busy exercising my freedom that Matthew and I rarely saw each other"), and a 1988 Honda Civic ("In one short decade, we'd bootstrapped our way over the poverty line and into a facsimile of a middle-class lifestyle"). Stephenson insightfully maps her family history with tales of strife and love; her beloved brother's mental illness and suicide; her marriage, motherhood, and divorce; and finally finding her voice as a writer. Stephenson's memoir offers a rewarding twist on an American story, and is filled with love, grief, grit, and healing. (June)

**Fare Thee Well: The Final
Chapter of the Grateful
Dead's Long, Strange Trip**

Joel Selvin, with Pamela Turley. Da Capo, \$27 (304p) ISBN 978-0-306-90305-2

The *San Francisco Chronicle's* pop music

writer Selvin offers an exhaustive, warts-and-all story of how the Grateful Dead battled through the rough two decades following Jerry Garcia's death. The narrative begins in 1995 with Garcia's death and the surviving four Dead members trying to right their ungainly hippie enterprise. The messy relationships that had developed between the members of the quartet over the course of the previous three decades collapsed after losing the band's "father figure." Without Garcia's nonconfrontational Zen attitude, bassist Phil Lesh, guitarist Bob Weir, and drummers Mickey Hart and Bill Kreutzmann descended into a thicket of business disagreements and personal irritations. Each took to the road independently, playing to dedicated crowds of Deadheads, with constantly revolving lineups. The soap opera battles achieve epic heights in this telling, such as one night when Lesh's "mean, deliberate power play" forces fans to choose between his band and Weir's. The narrative pays microscopic attention to each concert and every argument, but Selvin livens it up in sunnily composed passages, such as the triumphant 50-year celebration at Chicago's Soldier Field: "it was not the Grateful Dead, only an earnest facsimile. To the audience, however, it was enough." This is an enthusiastic but clear-eyed and enjoyably gossipy piece of modern rock history. (June)

Gigged: The End of the Job and the Future of Work

Sarah Kessler. St. Martin's, \$25.99 (304p)
ISBN 978-1-250-09789-7

Reporter Kessler delivers a stark, skimpy look at the future of work. She begins by describing how, when she graduated from college, in the middle of the 2008 recession, there were few full-time jobs to be had, and increasingly more part-time, "contingent" jobs. She goes on to examine both sides of the gig economy: the one creating opportunity, and the one increasing insecurity and risk. Business leaders quoted here, including Stan Chia of Grubhub and Carole Woodhead of Hermès UK, identify flexibility as a primary benefit of this kind of work, whether it's driving a car for Uber or prowling for short-term tasks on Mechanical Turk, Amazon's crowdsourced task marketplace. Contrary to Silicon

[Q&A]

PW TALKS WITH DAVE ITZKOFF

A Comedian's Life

In *Robin* (Holt, May), journalist Itzkoff chronicles the life and times of the late Robin Williams.

Why did you want to write about Robin Williams?

At the *New York Times* I had written about him on a few occasions and found him not only a fascinating person but a very gentle man, very sincere and genuine. The longest piece was in 2009. He had just experienced a very challenging series of events in his life—recovering from a significant relapse into alcoholism, going through a divorce, then trying to start up this comedy tour and having heart problems that required surgery. So, after all that, he let me come on the road with him for a few days. He was incredibly open and candid, in a way I didn't expect. And that just made him intriguing, and somebody that you don't forget about.

I have to ask you about Pam Dawber's story about how Williams would grab her on the *Mork and Mindy* set, which she seems to give him a pass on.

I think there are a number of layers that did not come across in a tabloid summary. Obviously, that's an inappropriate way to behave in any professional setting. But then there's a level that I think Pam Dawber experienced it on, as a facet of her relationship with Robin—almost a kind of strange sibling relationship. They were around the same age, and they had both grown up in Michigan. Even though he was the star of the show, he needed a lot of guidance and reassur-

ance, and she was somebody who could provide that to him. The way she describes his behavior, she saw it as his way of being playful, and not a sexual advance. But the layer beneath that is still inherently a display of power in their relationship.



© CHAD BATEK

Having now written your first biography, what's your take on the biographer's responsibilities?

In this case you have a person whose life story has not been told in its entirety before, which requires tremendous care by the author. That included looking at Robin's interviews over the years. In the first blush of fame he was more inclined to talk about his early life. Then, as he got older, he reduced his answers to more compact sound bites. For instance, that he left Juilliard because John Houseman said, "You're just too good for the school and there's nothing that we can teach you anymore"—it's pretty clear those weren't exactly the circumstances. So it's important to be as careful and as precise as possible to separate the mythology from the reality. —ROGER REYNOLDS

her life and the personal growth that resulted from it. (June)

The Light of the Stars: Alien Worlds and the Fate of the Earth

Adam Frank. Norton, \$26.95 (288p) ISBN 978-0-393-60901-1

Astrophysicist and NPR commentator Frank (*The End of the Beginning*) explores “the astrobiology of the Anthropocene” in this skillfully written volume. With an evenhanded approach to issues like the possibility of extraterrestrial life and the threat posed by climate change, Frank’s simple, effective narrative interlaces biology, astrophysics, population science, and more to lend a cosmic perspective on the fate of life and earth. “Earth has worn the masks of many worlds” throughout its history of sweeping transformations, he observes, and studying other planets can cast new light on this one’s challenges, such as how Venus reveals the dangers of a runaway greenhouse effect. Big-picture summaries of Fermi’s paradox and philosophical inquiries into “exo-civilizations” lay out how humans have historically grappled with the question of alien life. The Easter Island civilization’s collapse demonstrates “what is true for an isolated island, its ecosystems, and its inhabitants should also be true for planets in the isolation of space.” Coupling a bevy of exoplanet data with his own research, Frank approximates the odds of humanity being the only civilization to ever exist as “one in ten billion trillion.” Engrossing readers start to finish with persuasive, smooth prose, Frank offers a new take on humanity’s place in this “vast and ancient metropolis of stars.” (June)

A Marriage in Dog Years

Nancy Balbirer. Little A, \$24.95 (220p) ISBN 978-1-5039-4002-4

Reluctant to accept the fate of her ailing dog and failing marriage, playwright Balbirer (*Take Your Shirt Off and Cry*) recounts a year trying to save both in this funny but often irritating memoir. Balbirer’s devotion to Ira the beagle leads her to “daydream about what he’d be like if he were human... good-natured, affectionate, romantic,” while lamenting the state of her marriage in its 11th year: “Sam and I hadn’t had sex in several years.” Balbirer resolves Ira’s woes with

an expensive medical treatment, then pawns a Tiffany necklace—a gift from Sam—to cover the exorbitant vet bills, but she’s less successful when it comes to her marriage. She tries couples therapy, Wiccan remedies, candied aphrodisiacs, and even restyles her living room into a “loving room” only to see Sam move out. Complicating matters, the couple closes the restaurant they own together, and Sam admits to cheating with “some chick from Miami.” Meanwhile, Balbirer and Sam try to keep their young daughter in the dark about their trial separation. Balbirer’s confession “that I still hold out hope [Ira’s death] will bring us back together” is an authentic moment in a narrative marred by awkward chronological shifts and self-indulgent rumination. Her indecisiveness regarding her dog of a husband and her terminally-ill pet makes for an overlong, overanxious memoir, no matter how one counts the years. (June)

Room to Dream

David Lynch and Kristine McKenna. Random House, \$32 (592p) ISBN 978-0-3995-8919-5

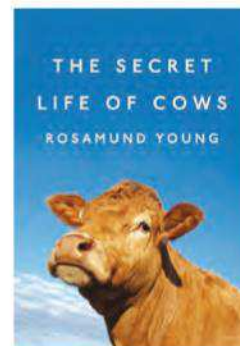
The avant-garde director of *The Elephant Man* and *Blue Velvet* and cocreator of *Twin Peaks* remembers a life as surreal as his movies in this exuberant biography/memoir. In chapters that alternate between Lynch’s first-person narrative and biographical accounts written by McKenna (*Talk to Her*), the book presents an illuminating look into Lynch’s life, drawing heavily on McKenna’s interviews with actors, ex-wives, and friends that paint an admiring portrait of a charismatic man given to intuitive improvisations, like sticking the script supervisor into a blue-wigged speaking role in *Mulholland Drive*. Interspersed chapters contain Lynch’s own memories that explore his creative process from its roots in strange visual imagery to his long-shot quests for financing (“It’s about a man who’s three and a half feet tall, with a red pompadour, who runs on sixty-cycle alternating-current electricity”) went one unsuccessful pitch). Lynch is a great raconteur, and at the book’s heart are his anecdotes, featuring colorful grotesques like the hunch-backed con-man who borrowed his phone to make fraudulent fund-raising calls, and dark intrusions of sexuality into wholesome landscapes (as a boy in idyllic Boise,

Idaho, he recalls, he once saw a naked, bleeding woman silently wandering the night-time streets). The result is an entertainingly offbeat show-biz saga and a fine evocation of Lynch’s unique voice and sensibility. Photos. (June)

The Secret Life of Cows

Rosamund Young. Penguin, \$23 (160p) ISBN 978-0-525-55731-9

Reflecting on over 30 years as a cattle farmer in Worcestershire, England, Young muses on her herd members’ inner lives and shares best practices for keeping them happy and healthy in her appealing, if somewhat disorganized, book. Her contention that “every animal has a limitless ability to experience a whole range of emotions” is demonstrated through anecdotes of her cows engaging in familial



love and bonding, play, and even grief. These include a touching story about a young cow seeking out her mother for comfort after giving birth to a still-born calf; a

mother who held a grudge against Young for three years for taking away her sick calf; and a mischievous cow that amused herself by removing the same workman’s cap every time she saw him. Young also makes a case for the species’ intelligence, as evinced in their ability to make healthy eating choices. Her prose is contemplative and idyllic, featuring charming phrases like “Every old hedge has a story to tell” and folksy section titles like “A little bit about horses” and “A digression on sheep, and pigs and hens.” Although the book’s loose-knit structure can cause it to read more like a series of journal entries than a polished text, Young’s assertion that “all animals are individuals” is certainly supported by these entertaining and tender stories. (June)

Tango Lessons: A Memoir

Meghan Flaherty. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, \$26 (320p) ISBN 978-0-544-98070-9

At the beginning of this thoughtful and entertaining memoir of the transformative

power of dance, Flaherty is a directionless 25-year-old with a humdrum job at a nonprofit and a platonic live-in boyfriend in Queens. She grew up with a cocaine-addicted single mother until, at age six, her father brought her to live with him and his new wife in their loving home. Flaherty was first introduced to tango on a high school term abroad in Argentina; a decade later she decided to sign up for tango lessons in New York City. The first classes were disappointing, but she soon found meaning and fulfillment in the dance movements and in the arms of her partners. Flaherty wonderfully sketches the tension and play within the dance (“every time a leader lunges forward and the follower steps back... the leader opens up an empty space, inviting occupancy”); throughout, she captures the emotions and the mournful, elegiac beauty and history of tango (“for Argentines, it is a living history, written in them root and blood and earth”). In tango’s embrace, Flaherty learned to let go of her troubled past and find her own power and balance on and off the dance floor. This moving story of dancing into womanhood is unforgettable; readers will warm to Flaherty’s unassuming voice and marvelously rendered love of tango, “a sad thought danced.” (June)

The Trigger: Narratives of the American Shooter

Daniel J. Patinkin. Arcade, \$24.99 (336p) ISBN 978-1-62872-919-1

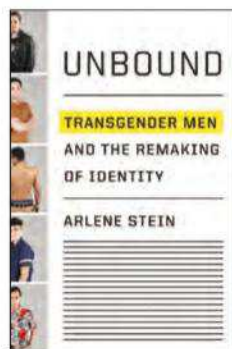
In a timely book, screenwriter and businessman Patinkin (*The Crippler: Cage Fighting and My Life on the Edge*) tells stories of six very different Americans who have shot and in some cases killed people. They include a Chicago cop who killed a gun-wielding civilian who had shot a fellow patrolman, a teenage girl who shot her abusive father as he slept, and a military veteran who gravely wounded a family member while having delusions. Chapters on each include their histories, how they got access to guns, and the role of class and race in their stories. Patinkin offers no solutions and no generalizations, and includes no mass shooters—he selected his subjects for their “compelling” stories and for maximum variation in circumstances and regions. His decision to focus on shooters and not

victims may strike some as morally questionable; the author writes: “we must endeavor to understand [the] actions and motivations” of the “sentient, emotional human being who... pulled the trigger... if we are to improve the situation in America.” (He also plans to donate a portion of the book’s proceeds to victim-centered charities.) His narratives, each complex in its own thorny way, humanize shooters for those who, like Patinkin before he embarked on this project, have had no previous exposure to them as people. (June)

Unbound: Transgender Men and the Remaking of Identity

Arlene Stein. Pantheon, \$26.95 (336p) ISBN 978-1-5247-4745-9

Stein (*Reluctant Witnesses*) tracks the rapid evolution of gender identity in this provocative group portrait of trans men. The book opens in the waiting room of a



South Florida plastic surgery clinic, where four patients are scheduled to undergo “top surgery” (chest masculinization) on the same day. For the next year Stein follows the four subjects as they recover from surgery and grow accustomed to their new bodies, interviewing their friends, families, and acquaintances. While in the past passing as cisgender was the goal, Stein finds these days people are just as likely to reject the gender binary outright and claim trans as their own identity. Of Stein’s four subjects, Lucas makes a point of coming out as trans, Parker is interested in passing in the traditional sense, Nadia chooses to change her body but not her gender, and Ben is still figuring out where he is most comfortable (meanwhile he uses social media to keep people updated, posting a photo of the bandages and tubes on his chest). The book also notes the prominence of reality television and social media in creating space for more gender identities to flourish by making “the personal eminently more public.” Stein posits that trans identity as it exists right now in

younger people is less an act of survival and more an act of self-reinvention. Though Stein finds no tidy conclusions, her book succeeds in documenting what it means to be trans today. (June)

The Weather Detective: Rediscovering Nature’s Secret Signs

Peter Wohlleben, trans. from the German by Ruth Amezai Kemp. Dutton, \$20 (165p) ISBN 978-1-84604-578-3

Anyone caught in a rain shower realizes afterward that there had been warnings: dark clouds looming overhead, for example. In this slim volume, German forester and naturalist Wohlleben (*The Secret Life of Trees*) calls attention to such signs as these to encourage readers to notice and connect with nature. Despite the title, weather is the topic only in the first quarter of the book, which begins at the level of the Earth’s atmosphere and descends through the clouds to arrive at the vantage point Wohlleben advocates for interacting with and observing nature: one’s garden. Along the way he scatters interesting tidbits (he describes how small creatures maintain their body temperatures in cold weather and why some flowers bloom at night). “Whether it’s forecasting what’s ahead or assessing current weather events, whether it’s insect infestations or when it’s safe to say a season has started or ended,” he writes, “you can read all of this data from your garden much more accurately than any newsreader from an autocue.” Despite some focus on Wohlleben’s home country of Germany, green-thumbers all over should appreciate his insight on water requirements in gardens throughout the year and on soil composition, which can significantly affect what can be grown and how to do it. With clarity and enthusiasm, Wohlleben’s soothing guide to understanding nature via one’s backyard offers accessible encouragement “to take pleasure in time spent outdoors and relaxing outside.” (June)

Whitewalling: Art, Race & Protest in 3 Acts

Aruna D’Souza. Badlands Unlimited, \$19.99 trade paper (144p) ISBN 978-1-943263-14-1

Art critic D’Souza (*Cézanne’s Bathers*) provides an impressively nuanced exploration of the relationship between art and

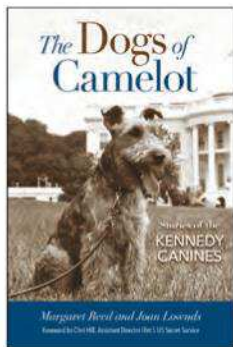
race in America in this account of three controversies from the New York City art world. In 2017, the curators of the Whitney Biennial exhibited white artist Dana Schutz's *Open Casket*, a painting of Emmett Till's disfigured body, precipitating a debate about censorship and the responsibilities of artists and institutions. In 1979, Artists Space, an independent art space in SoHo, displayed white artist Donald Newman's Nigger Drawings series, sparking an emotional back-and-forth between black artists, the gallery, and the wider art world about the meaning of open dialogue. And in 1969, the Metropolitan Museum of Art's *Harlem on My Mind* exhibit provoked protests and dialogue about inclusion and museums' power to police their boundaries. In examining these three events side by side, D'Souza lays bare the "contradiction at the heart of our idea of open dialogue: while it seems to depend on the idea of leaving open space for ambiguity, uncertainty, and the contingent, it is grounded in... de facto limits of who can speak and what can be said." Though navigating this work is demanding, this book could become an essential primer in discussions about exclusion, free speech, and the power of institutions in the art world and outside it. (June)

The Dogs of Camelot: Stories of the Kennedy Canines

Margaret Reed and Joan Lownds. Lyons, \$19.95 (208p) ISBN 978-1-4930-3161-0

Animal trainer Reed and coauthor Lownds (*Man Overboard*) explore a lighter side of Camelot in this charming, photo-filled account of the pets that occupied the Kennedy White House. During that brief time, the first family hosted an assortment of pets that included "nine dogs at one time, a cat, parakeets, hamsters,

rabbits, deer, and seven horses." The family's fondness for dogs even played a role in foreign diplomacy: in 1961, the Kennedys received a puppy named



Pushinka (which in Russian means "little bit of fluff") as a gift from Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev. Pushinka, whose mother was one of the dogs sent into space as part of the Russian space program, proved wildly popular in the United States, and her celebrity provided a brief respite from Cold War tensions in the months leading up to the Cuban Missile Crisis. Later, Pushinka had a litter sired by Charlie, the Kennedys' Welsh terrier. The book offers a glimpse into the family's quieter moments with snapshots of a young Caroline playing with Pushinka's offspring; Jackie Kennedy running with Clipper, the German Shepherd, on the White House lawn; and John Jr. with Shannon, the cocker spaniel, in the Oval Office. This lighthearted book finds an irresistible mix of two popular subjects—the Kennedys and dogs. Photos. (May)

Rise and Fall of the 80s Toon Empire

Jason Waguespack. CreateSpace, \$18.99 trade paper (402p) ISBN 978-1-974098-60-6

Waguespack presents an in-depth look at the cartoon industry in the 1980s in this over-long but fascinating work. The late 1970s was a turning point in television, Waguespack argues, when the FCC implemented new regulations that made it easier for independent stations to start up due to concerns that the big three networks were monopolizing content. Soon, the Reagan administration rolled back advertising restrictions on commercial time during children's programming, which meant more advertising opportunities for toy companies. This confluence of events was the catalyst for the biggest boon in children's entertainment, with shows like *Strawberry Shortcake*, *Transformers*, and *Thundercats* becoming mega hits. But by the end of the 1980s, the glut of properties (and toys) caused the balloon to pop. When the toys stopped selling, companies stopped advertising and studios lost their production partners, causing studios to close. Waguespack offers clear, detailed assessments of the decade's cartoons as a watershed moment in entertainment history: "The creation of so many hits made it possible for children of the '80s to immerse themselves in their favorite fantastic universes as never before in American culture." Waguespack has provided a valuable—if at times overly detailed—

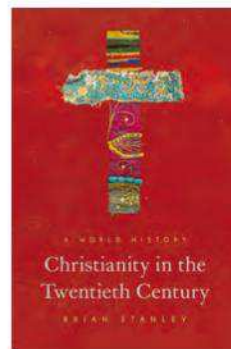
history, which will be of most interest to diehard fans of TV cartoons. (BookLife)

Religion/Spirituality

Christianity in the Twentieth Century: A World History

Brian Stanley. Princeton Univ. \$35 (512p) ISBN 978-0-691-15710-8

This ambitious work by historian Stanley (*The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism*), professor of world Christianity at the University of Edinburgh, surveys narratives of 20th-century Christian activity around the globe. At the dawn of the 20th century, evangelical Christians in the West



were confident that the "global diffusion of Christianity from its Western heartlands" would be a "universal triumph of the Western civilizing creed," Stanley writes. But then

global Christianities flourished in ways Western Christians had not envisioned. Stanley surveys these changes in thematic sections. The chapter on human rights examines how Christians in South Africa supported and opposed Apartheid, as well as the role of Protestant and Catholic churches in Canada's system of residential schools for indigenous children (now regarded as violating the human rights of a generation of First Nations people). The chapter on Pentecostal Christianities considers the development of missionary communities in Ghana and Brazil; the chapter on ecumenism looks at ways Christian practices of worship changed throughout China and the Indian subcontinent. At times the array of Christian organizations (there is a three-page list of abbreviations provided) and the rapid jumps between locations can feel bewildering—yet the author provides reader-friendly transitions into and out of each theme. This comprehensive work is ideally suited for an undergraduate course or study group. (June)

★ **Costly Grace**

Rob Schenck. HarperCollins, \$26.99 (352p) ISBN 978-0-06-268793-7

Schenck, an evangelical minister widely known for his outspoken pro-life views, tells the personal story of his three religious conversion experiences in this revealing memoir. Born into a Jewish family, he came to believe in Christ as a teenager; pursued a right-wing, politically-driven faith as an adult; and finally experienced a spiritual reorientation that brought him back to what he views as the true meaning of the gospel. Schenck's marijuana-hazed adolescence took a life-altering turn when he attended church with a friend, an experience that inspired him to join the ministry. He initially worked with heroin addicts at a residential center before his strong political views took him to Washington. There, what began as a sense of moral urgency to protect life became self-righteous, hate-fueled anger toward anyone with opposing views. Schenck's superb self-critical writing draws readers in with tales of, for instance, rebuking President Clinton during Holy Communion (an act for which Schenck was nearly arrested) and stealing funds raised to help women with unexpected pregnancies. Gradually he comes to realize his flawed thinking ("In private times of reflection, I was ashamed. My unguarded midnight thoughts became more uncomfortable all the time"). As he fell deeper into the power games of Washington, an encounter with the work of theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer inspired Schenck to reconsider his faith and the lessons of the gospel. Addressing libertarian evangelical ideologies, this powerful book is a universal call for a change of heart in both the political and sacred realms. (June)

★ **An Explorer's Guide to Julian of Norwich**

Veronica Mary Rolf. IVP Academic, \$18 trade paper (170p) ISBN 978-0-8308-5088-4

In this exquisite book, scholar of

medieval studies Rolf (*Julian's Gospel*) introduces medieval mystic and Christian theologian Julian of Norwich in all her astonishing brightness. The quote "all shall be well" is popular on bracelets and inspirational cards, but rarely given the context intended by its original author, Julian. Mary argues that Julian's 16 mystical revelations (or "shewings") from Christ should be studied alongside Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*—not least because she was the first woman to write a book (let alone a spiritual autobiography) in the English language. Rolf guides readers through the English Peasant Revolts, the Hundred Years' War, the Great Papal Schism, and the Great Plague's destruction of one-third of human life on Earth to establish the political and ecological collapse in which Julian prays and writes. She makes her case for why Julian was probably the daughter of a cloth merchant, educated in the public system of the time, and likely a mother and wife whose husband and child had died. Julian's remarkable visions with Christ as mother, birthing his children, and the intricate cosmos revealed to her as a "common hazelnut" carry explosive spiritual power. Rolf plumbs Julian's spiritual audacity in this must-read for those interested in medieval Christianity and literature. (June)

★ **The Hundred Story Home: A Memoir about Finding Faith in Ourselves and Something Bigger**

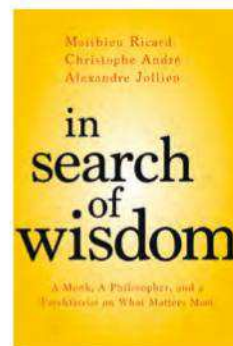
Kathy Izard. W, \$16.99 trade paper (240p) ISBN 978-0-7852-1988-0

This touching debut from Izard shares the story of the creation of the Homeless to Homes program at the Urban Ministry Center in Charlotte, N.C. "Where are the beds?" formerly homeless writer Denver Moore asked Izard in 2007 while they were working in a soup kitchen, a question that stirred a calling in the author. Izard tells of how she quit her job as a graphic designer to start the Homeless to Homes program to help serve Charlotte's homeless, introducing readers to members of the "invisible" community who become friends and family to her, among them Ruth, who finally can get some medical attention; Raymond, who rejoices in having his own

Christmas tree; and Chilly Willy, whose erratic behavior prevents his participation in the program. Alongside the story of the program, Izard explores how her experiences shifted her faith. Although she believes she hears voices encouraging her, Izard is reluctant to admit she has received a calling. But when she finds herself struggling to secure funding and to convince neighbors to back the project, some lucky coincidences (which she later defines as "God-instances") begin to sway her faith and make her reconsider the voices in her head. Izard's inspiring story is a seamless blending of personal memories and information about her project to help the homeless. (June)

★ **In Search of Wisdom: A Monk, a Philosopher, and a Psychiatrist on What Matters Most**
Matthieu Ricard, Christophe André, and Alexandre Jollien. Sounds True, \$18.95 trade paper (336p) ISBN 978-1-68364-024-0

In this wide-ranging series of enlightening conversations, three prominent thinkers share what they have learned about facing suffering, achieving happiness, helping others, and following their "deepest aspirations." French-born Ricard (*Altruism*) gave up a career in molecular genetics to become a Tibetan Buddhist monk and is commonly referred to as the happiest man in the world; French psychiatrist André (*Happiness*) brings mindfulness approaches to his work; and Jollien (*In Praise of Weakness*), a Christian and student of Zen, is a Swiss philosopher whose thought has been shaped by his cerebral palsy. Despite varied life experiences and interests, the three have far more commonalities than differences. ("Every moment of life can become the occasion for liberation—because we are not born free, we become free.") Much of



their discussion is grounded in key ideas from positive psychology ("Positive emotions revive our openness and renew our ability to relate with others") mindfulness,

and Buddhism (“Ignorance is a kind of addiction of which we endlessly create the causes”). Using examples from their daily lives, the participants bring clarity and subtlety to bear on familiar topics such as compassion, gratitude, and nonviolence; roaming freely, they also investigate timely subjects such as listening without judgment, living according to one’s ideals, and responsibly exercising freedom of thought, speech, and action. Each chapter concludes with brief advice from the three on the topic at hand. The conversations in this sprawling feast of ideas offer a model of engaged dialogue based on mutual regard. (June)

Secularism and Cosmopolitanism: Critical Hypotheses on Religion and Politics

Étienne Balibar, trans. from the French by G. M. Goshgarian. Columbia Univ., \$28 (288p) ISBN 978-0-231-16860-1

Philosopher Balibar (*Violence and Civility*) undercuts the liberal faith in secularism as a solution to political problems in this dense, precise work. He opens with a complex and subtle essay about the inherent paradox of secularism and cosmopolitanism. Although robust democracy and intellectual debate require exposure to differences, Balibar argues, proponents of secularism attempt

to flatten out human variety. Religion, in his mind, will continue to survive and morph into new forms, and requires a new secularism that can turn its own critique of subjugating ideologies on itself. In the pieces that follow, Balibar further develops his argument that Western thought obscures the “hegemonic overtones of terms” to perpetuate the power of the ruling classes. “Monotheism” is a surprisingly recent creation deployed to defend political structures, he writes, and “secularism” purports to be universal despite arising from a very specific time and place. Balibar’s less

detailed (though no less demanding) essays critique responses to the Charlie Hebdo and Nice terrorist attacks, including an incisive breakdown of the issue of free speech and blasphemy. Not for general readers, Balibar’s writing on religion and politics contains remarkable insights for scholars working on secular ethics and contemporary religious quarrels. (June)

Supernatural: Death, Meaning, and the Power of the Invisible

Clay Routledge. Oxford Univ., \$27.95 (232p) ISBN 978-0-19-062942-7

Routledge (*Nostalgia*), professor of psychology at North Dakota State University, shares his thinking on “death, meaning, and the power of the invisible” in this informative but cursory book. Routledge explores the reasons humans of all ages aim to find meaning in life, fall back into patterns of teleological thinking, and return to beliefs in the supernatural despite evidence (and even stated beliefs) to the contrary. Essentially, the question Routledge considers is the age-old question of why humans believe things that don’t really make sense or are not supported by evidence—be that a tripartite God or Area 51. There is little original research presented here; instead, Routledge repurposes his own past work and the work of other social psychologists. He ends with a lengthy and not very original discussion of the divides and debates among religion, science, and atheism, and an uninspired call to “engage with those of different views than yours.” Routledge’s brand of pop psychology is an amusing one, though this work feels more like a collection of op-ed pieces or blog posts than a cohesive piece of reasoning. (June)

Zen in the Age of Anxiety: Wisdom for Navigating Our Modern Lives

Tim Burkett. Shambhala, \$16.95 trade paper (160p) ISBN 978-1-61180-486-7

Burkett (*Nothing Holy About It*), a psychologist and teacher at the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center, explores how Zen Buddhist principles can help readers lead more fulfilling lives. Focusing on the ways the “movie-making mind” creates suffering, Burkett explains why human beings struggle with anger, anxiety, and

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FICTION

Future Fiction: New Dimensions in International Science Fiction, edited by Bill Campbell and Francesco Verso. Rosarium, ISBN 978-0-9987059-1-0, Apr.

Shattered Roads Alice Henderson. Rebel Base, ISBN 978-1-63573-046-3, Apr.

★ **Protected** Elisabeth Naughton. Montlake Romance, ISBN 978-1-5039-0078-3, Mar.

NONFICTION

Andy Warhol’s The Chelsea Girls, edited by GERALYN HUXLEY and GREG PIERCE. DAP, ISBN 978-1-942884-18-7, Apr.

★ **Darwin Comes to Town: How the Urban Jungle Drives Evolution** Menno Schilthuizen. Picador, ISBN 978-1-250-12783-9, Apr.

Alexander Hamilton on Finance, Credit and Debt Richard Sylla and David J. Cowen. Columbia Univ., ISBN 978-0-231-18456-4, Mar.

Endure: Mind, Body, and the Curiously Elastic Limits of Human Performance Alex Hutchinson. Morrow, ISBN 978-0-06-249986-8, Feb.

Unspoken Legacy: Addressing the Impact of Trauma and Addiction within the Family Claudia Black. Central Recovery, ISBN 978-1-942094-56-2, Jan.

fear, and shows how a more accurate understanding of the mind and the practice of meditation can promote well-being. Using an informal, friendly tone, Burkett offers clear explanations and examples to illustrate core Zen ideas. In addition to examining what he calls the “most troublesome areas” of “feelings of unworthiness” (sex, money, and failure), Burkett provides a Zen perspective on such topics as humility, experiences of nature, non-attachment, and non-dualism. He also includes many affectionate memories of his studies in the 1960s with Zen monk Shunryu Suzuki, a seminal figure in the beginnings of Zen practice in North America. While Burkett serves as a wise witness to Suzuki’s legacy, his focus on specific generational experiences (including songs by the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, and Pete Townshend) will seem dated to some readers. Compiled from Burkett’s former talks, this light book will appeal to readers who are new to Buddhism. (June)

Children's/YA

Picture Books

Bear's Scare

Jacob Grant. Bloomsbury, \$16.99 (32p)
ISBN 978-1-68119-720-3

Bear, a plodding, conscientious creature, takes pleasure in the certainty that his house is tidy, and lavishes attention on his stuffed toy Ursa: "They were always together." But then (horrors!) he discovers spiderwebs in his house, and he sets to work trying to find the spider and get rid of it. "I am certainly sure the spider is nothing like us," he sniffs. Grant (*Through with the Zoo*) quickly delivers the message that Bear's the one with the problem as he depicts the friendly-looking arachnid knitting an afghan and painting on a small easel; it's clear that, despite the webs, she's a fine housemate. However, Bear's search is so hurried and careless that he rips Ursa's arm loose. He can't mend it, but someone else—someone with eight legs and lots of creativity—can. Working in a serene palette of pink and lavender, Grant gets comic mileage from Bear's wide-eyed, stricken-looking expression; a view of the bear's big rump as he searches under the bed will make readers smile. Insisting that everyone look and act just as we do, this story suggests, blinds us to some pretty wonderful possibilities. Ages 3–6. *Agent: Steven Chudney, Chudney Agency. (June)*

Too Much! Not Enough!

Gina Perry. Tundra, \$17.99 (40p) ISBN 978-1-101-91950-7

Peanut and Moe share a house and bunk beds, and not much else. It's a personality thing: the goober-shaped Peanut is boisterous, inconsiderate, and judges every situation to be "not enough." The disciplined, cautious Moe, who looks like a slab of blue clay with bear cub ears and a big pink nose, prefers a life that isn't "too much." During the course of their day together, it becomes evident that trouble is brewing. Moe cleans up Peanut's cooking mess while Peanut clowns around with the soap bubbles. When Moe complains, "Too much noise,"



Author-illustrator Turk crafts an ode to the majestic beauty of whales (reviewed on this page).

during a music session, the heedless Peanut, who is playing three kazoos and banging on a drum, sings, "Not enough kazoos!" Peanut ultimately offers the exasperated Moe heartfelt acts of contrition, and Perry's (*Small*) quirky cartooning and all-dialogue, opposites-driven text should hold the attention of younger readers. There's a bit of a power differential in this relationship—Peanut even gets the vast majority of the text's exclamation points—but, despite their differences, a final spread shows that Peanut and Moe's affection for one another is unconditional. Ages 3–7. (*June*)

A Dog Named Doug

Karma Wilson, illus. by Matt Myers. S&S/McElderry, \$17.99 (40p) ISBN 978-1-442-44931-2

Doug is a dog who really likes to dig. He digs his way to Hollywood, the White House (where he tears through the floor of the Oval Office), a mummy's tomb, a mountain summit, Easter Island (where he accidentally knocks over a stone moai), and eventually finds himself—where else?—upside-down in China. A dog who loves to dig isn't the most original concept, but Myers's (*Battle Bunny*) creative, acrylic-and-oil-paint illustrations draw out the humor in Doug's adventures. The artwork frequently doubles as typography: mounds of dirt form the *m*'s in "many miles of dirt" and "mounds of mud," and Doug's tunnels take the shape of various letters in the repeating refrain, "Oh boy, did Doug dig!" Wilson (*Bear Snores On*) maintains a light, playful tone with loose rhymes and lots of alliteration, making this a fun read-aloud. And what

does Doug do when he's been tucked into bed in his doghouse? He digs his way into his owners' bedroom, where he has colorful, surrealistic dreams of digging. Ages 4–8. *Agent for both: Steven Malk, Writers House. (June)*

★ Heartbeat

Evan Turk. Atheneum, \$17.99 (56p) ISBN 978-1-4814-3520-8

Turk (*The Storyteller*) creates an achingly poignant tribute to the beauty and dignity of whales. In powerful pastel spreads of intense red, brilliant blue, and deep, oceanic black, Turk shows a mother whale with a yet-to-be-born baby visible inside her: "One heart beats. Two hearts beat." Once born, the baby and the mother sing together, their song rendered as clouds flowing from their mouths. Then a harpoon's barb slashes across the page to find the mother, and the baby's heart beats on without hers in panels of mournful gray. The young whale spends decades alone as its brethren are slaughtered for their oil, which is burned for illumination around the world. Fast forward to the present: a small girl with two pigtails leans from the bow of a boat, hears the lonely whale's song, and sings with it. Turk's impactful artwork reinforces the powerful, easily graspable metaphor of the heartbeat, representing the unity of human and animal life. The more complex message about the commodification of ocean life, detailed in an appended note, will require careful context setting and explanation. Ages 4–8. (*June*)

★ Otis and Will Discover the Deep: The Record-Setting Dive of the Bathysphere

Barb Rosenstock, illus. by Katherine Roy. Little, Brown, \$18.99 (48p) ISBN 978-0-316-39382-9

Rosenstock (*Dorothea's Eyes*) provides a vivid account of a history-making dive of the submersible Bathysphere. In 1930, eminent scientist William Beebe and Bathysphere designer Otis Barton descend more than 800 feet in a herky-jerky plunge that Roy (*How to Be an Elephant*) depicts with stylized, action-packed watercolors. Text placed vertically alongside pictures of the swinging sphere (the repeated phrase "down, down into the deep" steps down the page) pulls the

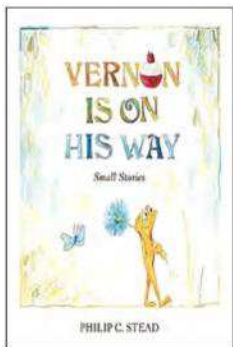
reader further into inky blue-black darkness: "400 feet. Stop. Colder. Breathe in. 500 feet. Stop. Darker. Breathe out." Spreads alternate between scenes of the two explorers working inside the cramped Bathysphere and exterior views of the descent. The tale of this perilous expedition climaxes in a spectacular gatefold showing the small searchlight-lit vehicle hanging amid myriad whitish-gray sea creatures, in an expanse of dark water. Archival photographs, a source list, and lengthy author and illustrator notes conclude this tribute to the power of curiosity, imagination, and ambition. Ages 4–8. *Author's agent: Rosemary Stimola, Stimola Literary Studio. Illustrator's agent: Stephen Barr, Writers House. (June)*

★ **Vernon Is on His Way: Small Stories**

Philip C. Stead. Roaring Brook/Porter, \$19.99 (64p) ISBN 978-1-62672-655-0

Vernon, the thoughtful toad who charmed readers in *A Home for Bird*, returns with his good friends Skunk and Porcupine. In the first of three stories, Vernon waits for one of the world's slowest forms of transportation (a snail). In the second, the three friends go fishing, but in their own way: "If we see a fish," Porcupine suggests, "maybe we should say hello." In the third, Vernon pines for Bird, and Skunk and Porcupine set out to cheer him up. Stead's expressive, openhearted drawings reveal what Vernon works on when he's not fishing or remembering Bird. Scribbly lines show green leaves hung from old fishing hooks overhead; they're part of Vernon's garden. He creates beauty by foraging for things others have lost or thrown away—red and white fishing bobbers, an old kite. The slow pace, the moments of silence, and the quiet white space in

Stead's spreads are an antidote to frenetic busyness. For Vernon, what matters most is kindness, cherishing one's friends, and noticing what other people miss. Ages 4–8.



Agent: Emily van Beek, Folio Literary Management. (June)

Mabel and Sam at Home: One Brave Journey in Three Adventures

Linda Urban, illus. by Hadley Hooper. Chronicle, \$17.99 (60p) ISBN 978-1-4521-3996-8

Mabel and Sam have just moved into a new home. They think that with all the unloading and bustling about, it's likely they'll get "tripped over or smooched or trod upon." But over the course of one day (and three chapters), the two siblings use pretend play and empty moving boxes to help them weather the big transition. By the close of the final chapter, featuring an imaginary trip through space, the children have realized that the move was for the best ("Our old planet was getting crowded," Mabel says) and that their new home has plenty of potential to be "Planet Perfecto." Urban's plentiful text could have benefited from some tightening, but Hooper's images, created with print-making techniques, are beautifully realized; clearly, her imagination is equal to those of her characters. Each chapter is built around a color (navy, yellow, and gray-green, respectively) and mixes fully rendered characters with impressionistic settings and dappled textures, resulting in pages that brim with reassuring humor and lovely graphic nuances. Ages 5–8. *(June)*

Fiction

Kid Normal

Greg James and Chris Smith, illus. by Erica Salcedo. Bloomsbury, \$13.99 (384p) ISBN 978-1-68119-709-8

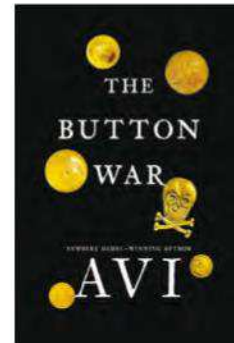
In this tongue-in-cheek middle grade adventure, a kid without superpowers nevertheless discovers his true calling when he's accidentally enrolled in a secret school for superhumans. Eleven-year-old Murph Cooper doesn't have high hopes for the school, his fifth one in as many years thanks to his mother's many work-related moves. It doesn't help when he's the only normal human in a place where people can fly, control weather, move at super-speed, and summon tiny horses (not every power, or Capability—"Cape" for short—is a winner). Murph unexpectedly makes

friends with some of the school's other misfits, which comes in handy when a bizarre villain attacks the school and captures everyone else. Now only Murph and his friends can save the day. This lighthearted caper from BBC radio stars James and Smith is packed with dry wit, snarky narrative asides, and an unabashed eschewing of subtlety (the school's headmaster, a former superhero, is Mr. Souperman). Salcedo's playfully frenetic illustrations complement James and Smith's silly adventure and its good-natured sense of wonder. Ages 8–12. *(June)*

★ **The Button War: A Tale of the Great War**

Avi. Candlewick, \$16.99 (240p) ISBN 978-0-7636-9053-3

Darker than the Newbery Medalist's usual fare, this powerfully evocative WWI novel set in Poland parallels a child's game with the war raging in the not-so-distant background. After the Germans bomb the schoolhouse and the long-residing Russian soldiers prepare to



leave the area, Patryk's small, isolated village is suddenly a whirlwind of activity. Inspired by the frequent comings and goings of military men, Jurek, the cruel, con-ning leader of

Patryk's group of classmates, declares a daring challenge: whoever procures the best button from a soldier's uniform gets to be king. Patryk is determined to beat Jurek at his own game, but he is no match for Jurek's determination to win at all costs, even as the game turns deadly. Told from Patryk's point of view, the novel captures the ways that war can forever alter a child's sense of order, morality, and security in the world. Strongly visual scenes, including the smoky forest after battle, the soldiers marching in perfect formation, and a chilling final image of Jurek, will long resonate in readers' minds. Ages 10–14. *Agent: Gail Hochman, Brandt & Hochman. (June)*

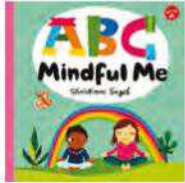
STAYING CALM

New books prime readers for mindful living.

ABC for Me: ABC Mindful Me

Christiane Engel. Walter Foster Jr., \$16.95 (36p) ISBN 978-1-63322-510-7

This board book addition to the ABC for Me series, featuring lively and kinetic art spreads, offers an alphabetic presentation of words relating to mindfulness. Light, rhyming verses accompany each word. Engel includes terms that expressly reference mindfulness practices, like “Meditation” and “Namaste,” along with more general ones relating to positive emotions and experiences, such as “Kindness,” “Love,” and “Outdoors.” Engel’s collagelike art features rich colors and uplifting scenes of children engaging with nature, creating art, and being joyfully present. The ending contains a description of what it means to be mindful (“paying attention to the present moment”), as well as four ideas for mindfulness-focused projects, including creating “Emotion Rocks” with painted faces (“Whenever it’s hard to talk about your feelings, try using an Emotion Rock to say it instead!”), and decorating a “Thankfulness Tree,” with ornaments that name things readers are grateful for. A sweet and multifaceted introduction to a nuanced concept. Ages 3–6. (Apr.)



Yoga Frog

Nora Carpenter, illus. by Mark Chambers. Running Press Kids, \$14.99 (40p) ISBN 978-0-7624-6467-8

Yoga Frog is a green fellow with long, thin legs and arms and a rather anxious expression in his eyes. But he has a morning yoga routine for when “he’s not feeling his happy, froggy self, or if he wants to feel better.” Yoga Frog demonstrates 19 different yoga poses, including “Giraffe,” “Crescent Moon,” “Hawk in Nest,” “Caterpillar,” and “Bridge.” Carpenter briefly yet vividly describes how to perform each pose, along with its symbolism: “Raise your arms skyward like branches, breathing as you wobble. Switch feet. Tree pose reminds us to embrace flexibility and not be too stiff.” Carpenter includes the names of each pose in Sanskrit—

“Cat” is “Marjaryasana,” and “Volcano” is “Malasana”—providing an extra layer of knowledge for interested yogis. Serene and bright background colors offer appealing contrast to Yoga Frog’s green tone, and end pages feature a foldout and perforated poster that shows all of his poses. Ages 4–8. (May)

Yoga Friends:

A Pose-by-Pose Partner Adventure for Kids

Mariam and Rolf Gates, illus. by Sarah Jane Hinder. Sounds True, \$17.95 (32p) ISBN 978-1-62203-816-9

In a companion title to *Good Night Yoga* and *Good Morning Yoga*, pairs of peaceful, bright-eyed children from different ethnic backgrounds collaborate on yoga poses, in a variety of indoor and outdoor settings. In one scene, two sets of kids are “face to face/ and toes to toes” on a sandy beach. At a zoo, children sit back-to-back, mimicking a lizard “basking in the sun,” as two other children perform a yoga imitation of a pink, sushi-eating octopus in a tank: “One small turn and we’re an octopus/ swimming silently so as not to cause alarm./ We move slowly underneath the water./ arm after arm after arm.” Hinder’s cozy, cartoony pictures clearly demonstrate each yoga pose, while offering a celebration of teamwork and cooperation. Ages 4–8. (Apr.)

My Magic Breath:

Finding Calm Through Mindful Breathing

Nick Ortner and Alison Taylor, illus. by Michelle Polizzi.

HarperCollins, \$17.99 (32p) ISBN 978-0-06-268776-0



“Do you have the magic breath?” begins this picture book focused on mindful breathing. “Let’s see... Take a deep breath in... and blow it out!” A bespectacled child blows out bright, swirling patterns of color, a bit like a dragon’s fiery breath. “The magic breath is special,” Ortner and Taylor explain. “It helps when you have too many thoughts running through your mind.” A second child breathes out through her nose while thinking about something that makes her happy: her magic breath carries

Fatal Throne:

The Wives of Henry VIII Tell All

M.T. Anderson et al. Random/Schwartz & Wade, \$18.99 (416p) ISBN 978-1-5247-1620-2

Seven young adult authors provide consistent, captivating accounts of the six marriages of Henry VIII of England, told from the perspectives of his wives and the king himself. Henry’s entries

(written by Anderson) reflect a lust for life and power, as well as his growing disillusionment and isolation. Already in his 40s when courting his second queen, the king is in physical decline and is becoming desperate for a male heir, resulting in a series of ill-fated marriages. Through a mix of dialogue, narrative, and flashback, the authors create a distinctive voice and

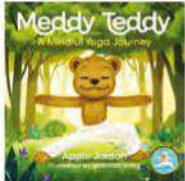
personality for each queen while recounting the events leading up to her demise. By concentrating religious as well as political authority in his own hands, Henry rendered each of his queens a pawn. Only Jane Seymour (depicted here by Lisa Ann Sandell), his third wife who died soon after giving birth, escaped manipulation. A final page presents an alternative:

over two spreads, blowing the seeds off a dandelion. Thinking happy thoughts isn't always easy, especially after a hard day. A somber child rests his hands under his chin, milky pastel clouds dripping raindrops around him. Readers are invited to visualize their own happy thoughts to help push the sad ones away. Polizzi's airy watercolors nicely harmonize with the interactive aspect of the text ("Can you blow that sad thought right off the page?"), giving the book potential as either a resource for anxious readers or as a choice for group readalouds. Ages 4–8. *(May)*

Meddy Teddy: A Mindful Yoga Journey

Apple Jordan, illus. by Nicholas Hong. Rodale Kids, \$17.99 (32p)
ISBN 978-1-63565-046-4

Meddy Teddy is a brand of plush, posable teddy bears created by three brothers, with the goal of inspiring kids to practice yoga. In his first picture book, Meddy—who has a peaceful smile and wears a pair of white yoga pants—wakes on the first day of spring before Mama and Papa Teddy. On a walk through meadowlands, Meddy Teddy strikes the mountain pose, downward dog, butterfly, and happy baby, among other formations. Along the bottom of the page are photos of the Meddy Teddy toy in each pose. Meddy Teddy uses his awareness to help others, including Hedgehog, who is lost ("Take a deep breath and focus on what you're trying to remember"). He is the picture of tranquility, until he's back home and loudly exclaims to his still-slumbering parents, "Mama! Papa! Wake up! It's spring!" It's a refreshing reminder that he's still just a kid. A final spread directs readers to Meddy Teddy's social media pages. Ages 4–8. *(Mar.)*



Yoga Kids

Fearne Cotton, illus. by Sheena Dempsey. Barron's, \$11.99 (32p)
ISBN 978-1-4380-5030-0

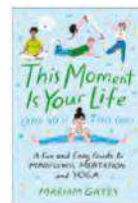
In this introduction to yoga, preschoolers demonstrate common poses with ease and delight. "We're the Yoga Kids,/ look what we can do!/ Rex can make the downward dog./ Can

you do it too?" In a sunlit park, a girl sits on a picnic blanket as her father barbecues: "Winnie is a butterfly,/ can you be one too?" Dempsey's illustrations feature multi-ethnic families and playfully cluttered scenes that speak to the frenzy of everyday life. After a rough day, a mother and daughter cool off by doing yoga in their living room—a cat and baby brother resting on their respective backs as they stretch. In another family's backyard, "Dad and Kit on mats,/ curling downward just like this—/ 'til they look like cats." End pages identify each of the featured yoga poses so readers can practice them on their own. A light, upbeat outing that advocates for yoga as a means to find tranquility amid the chaos. Ages 5–6. *(Apr.)*

This Moment Is Your Life (and So Is This One): A Fun and Easy Guide to Mindfulness, Meditation, and Yoga

Mariam Gates, illus. by Libby Vanderploeg. Dial, \$18.99 (248p)
ISBN 978-0-399-18662-2

Learning to exist in the present moment is a difficult yet rewarding task, Gates suggests in this clear and instructive handbook. Chapters focus on mindfulness, yoga, breathing, and meditation, with detailed descriptions of techniques and best practices. The mindfulness section explores living with intentionality through refocusing the mind. Journal prompts, self-assessments, and other activities urge readers to apply the ideas to their own lives. Meditation activities include a "Meditative Body Scan," or paying attention to different parts of the body, and "Naming Thoughts," which involves quietly observing, labeling, and releasing detrimental thoughts. In Vanderploeg's warm illustrations, brightly clothed figures demonstrate the yoga poses and breathing exercises. Gates emphasizes that mindfulness is a way of seeing one's self and the world, which can be achieved through taking basic steps. An end section offers "5-Day Mindfulness Challenges" for readers seeking additional structure as they embark on their own mindfulness journeys. Ages 10–14. *(May)*



Elizabeth I, Henry's daughter by Anne Boleyn, as an Amazon. Some authors capture the period more successfully than others, but most readers will find the subject matter—including bedroom scenes—too engrossing to mind. Back matter includes a helpful chronology and a section on "Who's Who in the Court." Ages 12–up. *(May)*

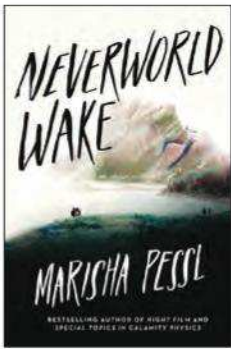


Neverworld Wake

Marisha Pessl. Delacorte, \$18.99 (336p)
ISBN 978-0-399-55392-9

Beatrice Hartley, 19, has spent the past year distancing herself from her four best friends after the mysterious death of her boyfriend, Jim, in their senior year. With summer ending and the former friends gathering to celebrate

a birthday, Bee decides to find out what they know. The reunion doesn't go as expected, and a near-fatal drunk-driving accident brings the teens into the Neverworld, a place between life and death, where they live the same day over and over again until they can agree on who gets to survive. Caught between trying to save her life and solving the mys-



tery surrounding Jim's death, Bee discovers that everyone has a devastating secret. Bestselling adult writer Pessl (*Special Topics in Calamity*

Physics) adeptly creates a compelling nightmare world while maintaining a foothold in realism and providing many wholly unexpected developments. She doesn't shy away from painting her characters as deeply flawed, allowing their choices in the Neverworld to show who they truly are. Thought-provoking and suspenseful, Pessl's YA debut delves into questions of whether even close friends are truly knowable. Ages 12–up. *Agent: Amanda Urban, ICM.* (June)

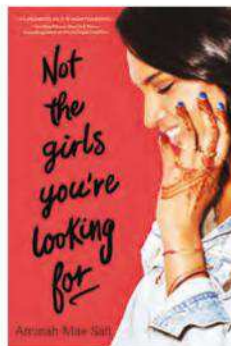
Save the Date

Morgan Matson. Simon & Schuster, \$17.99 (432p) ISBN 978-1-4814-0457-0

Set during a single weekend, Matson's (*Since You've Been Gone*) latest novel is full of appealing elements: the promise of a sister's wedding; a big, close-knit family; a mother who draws a famous comic strip; an estranged brother, who's returned for the big event; and plenty of unexpected guests, all packed under the Grant family roof. In a madcap series of events and in lightning-quick dialogue among family members, Matson explores absolutely everything that could go wrong under the circumstances. Protagonist Charlie narrates the weekend's ups and downs, handling two potential suitors along the way, but neither romance quite comes together amid the constant chaos. As the wedding fails stack up (the wedding planner disappears, as does a tuxedo, and the house alarm keeps going off), Matson introduces more emotionally resonant events impacting the family. There are no perfect weddings, or perfect families, Matson suggests in this romantic comedy of errors. Ages 12–up. *Agent: Emily van Beek, Folio Literary Management.* (June)

★ **Not the Girls You're Looking For** Aminah Mae Safi. Feiwel and Friends, \$17.99 (336p) ISBN 978-1-250-15181-0

In this YA debut, Safi explores the internal struggle of having to “talk to more than one world, simultaneously.” Lulu considers herself both American and Arab (her father is a Muslim immigrant, her mother from Louisiana), but to many of her classmates, she's only Arab (and therefore a terrorist). Meanwhile, she fails to meet her Muslim family's cultural standards. Lulu is a girl who defies stereotypes: a Muslim who celebrates Ramadan, drinks, smokes, and loves to hook up with boys. Safi's prose style



has a lively staccato rhythm that captures Lulu's spirited nature, which can easily slip into impetuosity. In addition to Safi's focus on multicultural identity, her

story provides a candid perspective on female friendships that are full of conflict, love, and angst. Through her character of contradictions, Safi offers a refreshing perspective on conformity and the path to self-actualization. Ages 13–18. *Agent: Lauren MacLeod, Strothman Agency.* (June)

★ **Mariam Sharma Hits the Road** Sheba Karim. HarperTeen, \$18.99 (320p) ISBN 978-0-06-244573-5

Mariam, Ghazala, and Umar drive from New Jersey to New Orleans, looking for escape, fun, and togetherness. They find those things, as well as road trip staples, such as junk food and soul-searching, and—because they're Pakistani-American—prejudice and Islamophobia. Karim (*That Thing We Call a Heart*) effectively gets at the double difficulty of the characters being seen as outsiders even as their families consider them too assimilated. Beautiful Ghaz's family disowns her because she appeared in an ad they consider indecent; Umar, who's gay and a practicing Muslim, can't imagine a life that allows him to be both. Mariam has a good rela-

tionship with her mother, though she wonders whether her commitment issues come from the father she barely knew. But since Mariam and Ghaz are back from their first year at college and Umar is about to start, they at least have each other. With warmth and intimacy, Karim explores the bond among the three protagonists, as well as their individual identity conflicts. The story is focused on the immediate circumstances and concerns; as a result, the characters' psychological development is modest, yet meaningful. Ages 13–up. (June)

★ **My Plain Jane**

Cynthia Hand, Brodi Ashton, and Jodi Meadows. HarperTeen, \$17.99 (464p) ISBN 978-0-06-265277-5

Hand, Ashton, and Meadows follow up *My Lady Jane* (about Lady Jane Gray) with another tongue-in-cheek novel about a famous Jane—this time, Jane Eyre. In this take on the classic, Jane and Charlotte Brontë are good friends from school, and as Jane's story unfolds, Charlotte records every moment of it—at first writing it as a murder mystery, then a romance. Jane can also see ghosts, and the Society for the Relocation of Wayward Spirits determines that she is a rare Beacon (someone who can control ghosts), offering her a high-paying job. The chapters switch among the handsome young Alexander, a member of the Society; Charlotte, who convinces Alexander to give her a temp job (and who falls for Alexander); and Jane, who spurns her job offer, heads off to Thornfield, and falls for Rochester. The authors' prose holds all the flavor of a juicy period novel yet with the addition of numerous, witty asides. The narrative is full of wry humor—at one point, Jane thinks to herself about Rochester, “He



was everything she'd ever dreamed about. Tall. Dark. Brooding”—and laugh-out-loud commentary. The authors' affection for their source material is abundantly

clear in this clever, romantic farce. Ages 13–up. (June)

The Fragile Ordinary

Samantha Young. Harlequin Teen, \$18.99 (400p) ISBN 978-1-335-01674-4

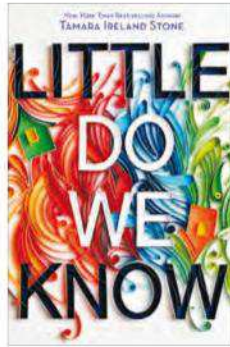
Comet Caldwell, 16, is sure she will never live up to her cool name. She has friends, but she doesn't do social media, and she's certainly not hooking up; the boys she knows are nothing like the "brave and loyal and swoonworthy" heroes of the romances she reads. Then Tobias King moves to Edinburgh from America; he's smart and handsome, but he hides his brains and pals around with a bad crowd, which includes his cousin Stevie. Comet is surprised when

Tobias is interested, but their getting together leads to her being bullied and Tobias becoming estranged from his cousin, who really needs a friend. Young (*The Impossible Vastness of Us*) creates a genuine and relatable heroine in Comet, but the narrative relies heavily on exposition, with Comet dictating her thoughts and emotions in a manner that can come across as forced. And when Stevie gets into real trouble, it feels less like a plot development and more like an arbitrary event needed to create an obstacle to Comet and Tobias's otherwise perfect love. Ages 14–18. *Agent: Lauren E. Abramo, Dystel & Goderich Literary Management.* (June)

★ Little Do We Know

Tamara Ireland Stone. Hyperion, \$17.99 (400p) ISBN 978-1-4847-6821-1

Despite their different personalities, Emory and Hannah have been best friends and next-door neighbors since childhood. But after a bitter argument, which ends with Emory calling Hannah a "sheep" for always following her minister father's beliefs, the two don't speak as they continue their senior years at separate high schools. Emory focuses on her lead role in a school play and her forthcoming acting audition at UCLA.

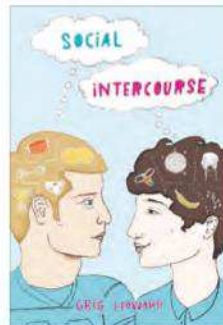


Hannah continues to play the role of devoted daughter at the Christian school where her father is principal, but she is haunted by Emory's words and begins to question everything she's been taught. Then Hannah finds Emory's boyfriend Luke unconscious in front of her house, changing the lives of all three teens. Touching on weighty issues, including sexual harassment, religious crises, friendship, and taboo love, Stone (*Time Between Us*) writes a thought-provoking novel that challenges conventional ideas. With well-developed detail, the characters have realistic vulnerabilities and experience profound transformations that lead them to look at the world differently. Ages 14–18. *Agent: Caryn Wiseman, Andrea Brown Literary Agency.* (June)

Social Intercourse

Greg Howard. Simon & Schuster, \$18.99 (320p) ISBN 978-1-4814-9781-7

Florence, Ala., is not an easy place to be gay, but 17-year-old Beckett Gaines is doing his best to be out and proud, and he's trying to lose his virginity (and hopefully find love) via his newly installed Bangr app. His father is supportive, so much so that he and his new girlfriend, Tracee, are



planning a Rainbow Prom, but Beck worries that Tracee is on the rebound from her longtime female partner. It turns out that Beck has an unexpected ally in Tracee's son, Jax Parker, a quarterback, class president, and golden boy who just wants his moms back together. It's a small town, so Jax and Beck have a history, but they turn out to have things to learn about and from each other. Debut author Howard may lean a little heavily on gay tropes (Beck seems to have grown up on a diet of *The Golden Girls*

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PICTURE BOOKS

The Adventures of Wrong Man and Power Girl! C. Alexander London, illus. by Frank Morrison. Philomel, ISBN 978-0399-54893-2, Mar.

El Chupacabras Adam Rubin, illus. by Crash McCreery. Dial, ISBN 978-0-399-53929-9, Mar.

★ **Forever or a Day** Sarah Jacoby. Chronicle, ISBN 978-1-4521-6463-2, Apr.

Pip and Pup Eugene Yelchin. Holt, ISBN 978-1-62779-394-0, Apr.

Rhyme Crime Jon Burgerman. Dial, ISBN 978-0-7352-2884-9, Apr.

FICTION

All Out: The No-Longer-Secret Stories of Queer Teens Throughout the Ages, edited by Sandra Mitchell. Harlequin Teen, ISBN 978-1-335-47045-4, Feb.

★ **Be Prepared** Vera Brosgol. First Second, ISBN 978-1-62672-445-7, Apr.

★ **Blood Water Paint** Joy McCullough. Dutton, ISBN 978-0-7352-3211-2, Mar.

Burro Hills Julia Lynn Rubin. Diversion, ISBN 978-1-63576-194-8, Mar.

Jinxed Tommy Hutson. Vesuvian Books, ISBN 978-1-944109-12-7, Mar.

The Midnights Sarah Nicole Smetana. HarperTeen, ISBN 978-0-06-264462-6, Mar.

Nothing but Sky Amy Trueblood. Flux, ISBN 978-1-63583-016-3, Mar.

Rebound Kwame Alexander. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, ISBN 978-0-544-86813-7, Apr.

Venators: Magic Unleashed Devri Walls. Brown, ISBN 978-1-61254-987-3, Apr.

and RuPaul), but he tells a funny and satisfying love story while challenging simplistic preconceptions that people are either gay or straight or that the Bible Belt plus football equals a homophobic community. Ages 14–up. *Agent: Brianna Johnson, Writers House.* (June)



Editor's note: Reviews noted as "BookLife" are for self-published books received via BookLife, PW's program for indie authors.

“To anyone grappling with the question of whether it’s a terrible or a wonderful idea to write from such raw personal experience, I think my account shows that it can be both.”

On Writing What You Know

An editor and writer talks about the pitfalls of creating fiction from fact

BY JESSICA STRAWSER

“Write what you know” is either the best or the worst advice ever given to a fledgling writer. This dichotomy is amplified when the advice is given to someone writing a work of fiction inspired by deep, raw personal experience—not from-the-sidelines observation but in-the-huddle emotion. It’s the stuff of amateur novels doomed forever to desk drawers, some say; it’s what compelling, authentic fiction is made of, others argue. In my case, it’s been both.

I was newly installed at the editor’s desk at *Writer’s Digest* when a close friend was murdered in a domestic violence incident over the 2008 Christmas holiday. I reeled, I anguished, and, when the new year arrived in spite of everything, I threw myself into work. It was the only way in those early weeks that I could stand being alone with my thoughts.

I’d always wanted to try my hand at a novel but never had a story I felt wholly invested in telling, and the common gap between the desire to write and the lack of passion for a subject is not necessarily about shame or lack of discipline. In some ways, it simply separates the naive from the weathered, the young from the not so young, and, eventually, those who are thinking about being writers from those who write. Now I had something to say, I was certain. I just wasn’t sure

what it was yet.

Months later, I began to labor over a story that stemmed from what had happened. The basic framework was familiar: the friendship, the murder, the grief, but the protagonist was not based on me—as I was quick to assure myself and everyone else. After all, she made decisions, in her quest to cope, that were completely opposite from those I’d made. I was self-aware enough to know I was working through something personal on the page, but still thought it was a worthy draft of a story.

Indeed, after years of rewrites, I did secure an agent. I’d done it, I thought. It was on submission for roughly forever, the upside of which was that I had time to reconsider how I felt about the story, and to think about the fact that a tsunami of dread hit me whenever anyone dared ask me what the book was about. I was not (red flag!) capable of saying that I’d written it without saying why I’d written it. And I didn’t like to talk about why.

It never sold, which was disappointing, of course. But a voice in the back of my mind whispered, “I’m glad.”

I wrote another novel, a different novel, purposely and triumphantly inspired by no significant personal experience whatsoever, and the process was joyous. Gone was the agony of “working through” anything other than



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a character arc. Writing was fun again, and it seemed that in those years of rejection and rewrites, I’d learned to do it better.

I got a new agent and the book sold in a two-book deal. It was time to think about what I’d write next.

I was starting to figure out what it was I really

wanted to say about the questions surrounding domestic violence. And fortunately, as I now knew how little I wanted to assure anyone that a character was not me, I’d also had time to broaden my grasp of the issue well beyond my own mystifying, heartbreaking experience of losing my friend. I’d volunteered at the YWCA; I’d met other victims; I’d talked with too many acquaintances who also knew people who’d been in bad situations. I thought a lot about that viewpoint we share—from arm’s length.

From that distance—years passed, perspectives shifted—I began an entirely new book. The result, *Not That I Could Tell*, has no framework resembling that unsold story but channels the heart it failed to convey.

I don’t regret the first, failed novel; how could I? To anyone grappling with the question of whether it’s a terrible or a wonderful idea to write from such raw personal experience, I think my account shows that it can be both—sometimes even at the same time. If you’re asking the question at all, it’s worth the effort to try to find out the answer for yourself. ■

Jessica Strawser is editor-at-large for Writer’s Digest and the author of the novels Almost Missed You and Not That I Could Tell, both from St. Martin’s.

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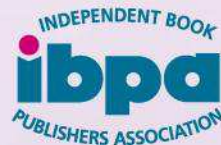


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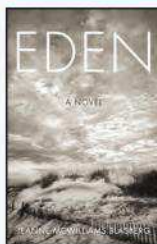
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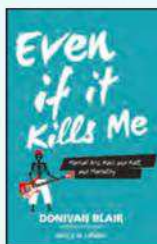
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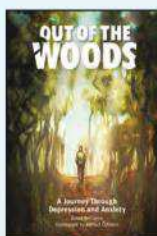
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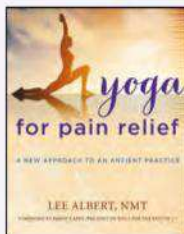
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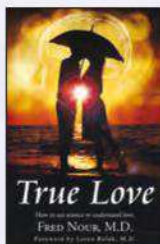
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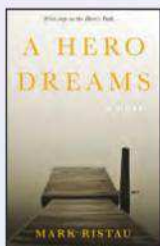
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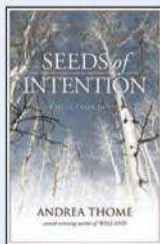
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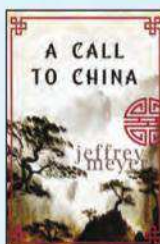
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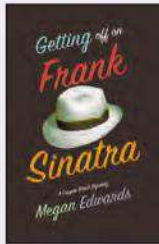
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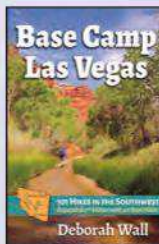
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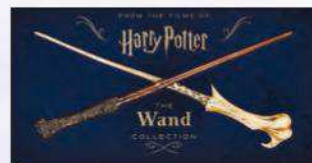
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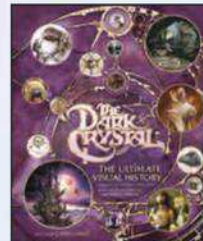
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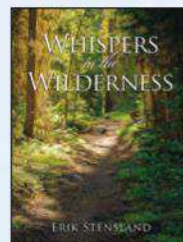
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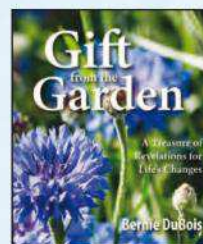
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