

Sacramento Book Review



VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

The Secret Scripture

By Sebastian Barry

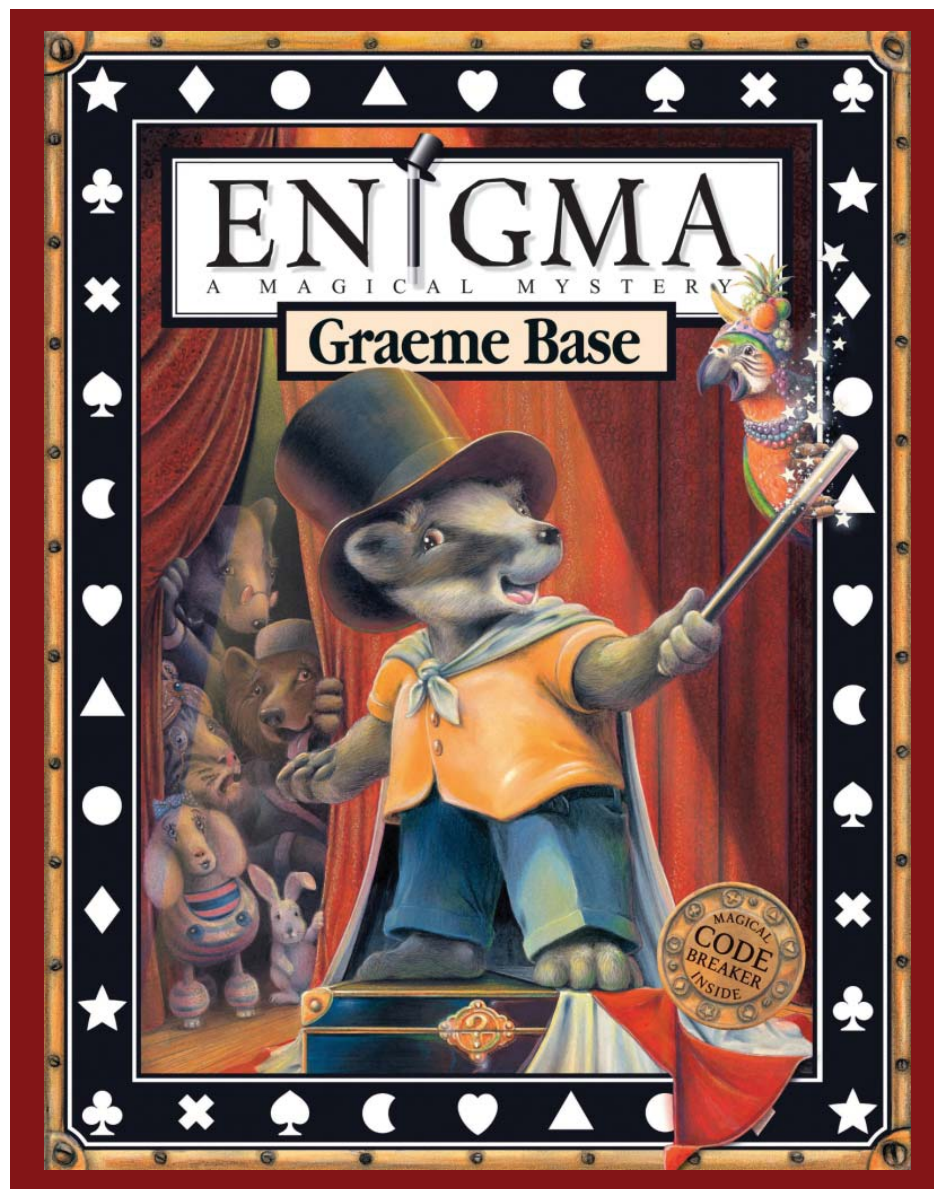
Viking, \$24.95, 304 pages

While nominally the story of an elderly woman trying to write her autobiography, *The Secret Scripture* quickly delves into an involved and poetic mystery story as her story starts conflicting with written records. Roseanne McNulty is a long-term resident of a psychiatric hospital, and her psychiatrist is trying to determine if she can be released. As he looks into her files, the contradictions between her memories and reality draw him into looking further into her stories. *The Secret Scripture* floats between Roseanne's youth in the early 1900s during Ireland's civil uprisings, when she was young, attractive and desirable, and her current life nearing 100. It is both Roseanne's story and the story of Ireland's history, troubles, and the influence of the Catholic Church on Irish society. Barry's earlier novel *A Long Way* was shortlisted for the Man Booker award in 2005.



***The Secret Scripture* is one of the six finalists for the Man Booker Prize.**

More information about the Prize, and reviews of four other finalists, are on page 6.



Local Badger Solves Crime!

By Graeme Base (Abrams, \$19.95)

Graeme Base is known for his detailed, complex, and highly entertaining books and illustrations. *Enigma* is a wonderful addition to his list of books. Bertie Badger loves to visit his grandfather at the Retirement Home for Elderly Magicians and watch his grandfather do his magical act. But on his latest visit, someone has taken not only his grandfather's magical prop, but each of the other magicians living in the home have also lost their magical tools as well. And, its

up to Bertie to solve the crime. The book includes a puzzle to help the readers to solve the crime themselves and a many hidden clues within the pictures. The story itself is written in rhyme, making it fun to read out loud, and the detailed pictures will give parents opportunity to spend time looking at each with their child.

Also see *The Art of Graeme Base*, page 18.

NEW AND OF INTEREST

The Heretic's Daughter

Once again to the Salem Witch Trials.
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Bone

Black and white collection vs. color reprints.
Pages 14 & 15

Robe of Skulls

When fairy tales go weird.
Page 24

The Hemingses of Monticello

Family history of America's most famous mistress.
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The Heirloom Tomato

More tomatoes than you'll know what to do with
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Over 200 Reviews
INSIDE!

Cooking, Food & Wine

The Best Casserole Cookbook Ever

By *Beatrice Ojakangas*

Chronicle Books, \$24.95, 640 pages

The Best Casserole Cookbook Ever is not your typical cookbook of ho-hum casserole recipes that your Mother and Grandmother routinely put on the dinner table. It is, in fact, just what it says it is. The recipes include everything from appetizers and breads to main courses, side dishes, and desserts, and the offerings are imaginative, ethnically diverse, and healthy. Most of the ingredients are commonly found in any good cook's pantry—and very few recipes include cream-of-something soup—a staple of the casseroles of yester-year.

The Swiss Mushrooms Au Gratin is a mouthwatering appetizer, side dish, or main course, and the Clam Chowder Casserole and Greek Beef Casserole with Onions (Stifado) are representative of the unique main courses included in this book. With more than 500 recipes, there is something for everyone and for every season.



Collecting cookbooks is this reviewer's hobby but rarely do I cook any of the recipes. This cookbook has inspired me to get back in the kitchen and start cooking again. So, if you love to cook, this book is a must for your collection.

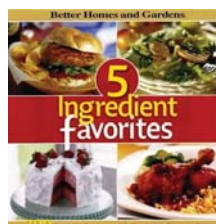
--Sharon LeBrun

5 Ingredient Favorites

By *Alicia Goldstein*

Meredith Books, \$19.95, 416 pages

For busy families, the folks at the Better Homes and Gardens Test Kitchen have delivered more than 700 recipes that require only five ingredients. Now, as usual, there is a bit of fancy foot work on what constitutes an ingredient; in this case, they made it fairly simple. Water, non-stick cooking spray and any listed optional ingredients don't count; salt and pepper count as one. Not too bad. Neither are the recipes. Major categories are major meat groups (chicken and turkey, beef, pork, and lamb), desserts, side dishes, and fun items.



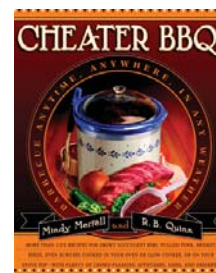
All of the dishes look easy to prepare, and, with a small ingredient list, shopping for them should also be quick and easy. Probably perfect for families with lots of members and lots of scheduled activities.

Cheater BBQ

By *Mindy Merrell, R.B. Quinn*

Broadway Books, \$17.95, 224 pages

The perfect book for those too far away from a BBQ restaurant or living in weather unsuited for outdoor barbecuing. One hundred twenty-five recipes, ranging from smoked almonds to pulled pork, all made in either your oven or slow cooker. Simple tools, easy-to-follow instructions, low heat, and plenty of patience can make your kitchen a BBQ any time of the year. There is a heavy dependence on Liquid Smoke, but as the authors explain, it is actual smoke—FDA-approved since the 1960's and able to make your foods taste as if they have been cooking over wood for many more hours than they actually



did. Chapter two's extensive recipes of sauces, dry rubs, and smoked salts will also help actual outdoor barbecues if you leave out the option of liquid smoke. Perfect gift for the obsessive BBQ'er dreading the rainy season.

Menú del Día

By *Rohan Daft*

Simon & Schuster, \$25.00, 192 pages

Having been a fan of Spanish foods for a number of years, I'm familiar with the concept of menú del día. For those who aren't, it is the Spanish equivalent of the French prix fixe, a three-course meal with a fixed price. Daft has collected a number of recipes from across Spain that reflect the cultural mixing pot that is Spanish cooking. Broken into three major sections, the Primeros Platos (Starters), Segundos Platos (Main Courses) and, of course, Postres (Desserts). Each recipe comes with background on the cultural history of the dish and what part of Spain it came from. It is



See **COOKING**, page 5

Sauces

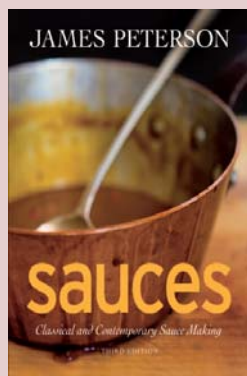
By *James Peterson*

Wiley, \$49.95

640 pages

This is the book on sauces. Well, this is the updated reprint of the book on sauces. Winner of the *James Beard Foundation Cookbook* of the Year Award in 1991, this update contains all the original material (sauce history from the Greek and Roman era, through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and into modern times. The new content takes the emphasis off the French tradition (though it is still completely covered) and adds in Italian, Asian, and Middle Eastern sauces. It also goes into the modifications made by New World cooks, and updates the format of the previous editions. There are 60 new recipes, adding in pasta sauces, curries, salsas, and dipping sauces. This should be on every aspiring chef's reference shelf, and in any serious home cook's reference library.

--Ross Rojek



Mixed Shellfish Fricassée

YIELD 4 MAIN-COURSE SERVINGS

Cockles	1 pound	450 grams
or	or	or
Littleneck clams	12	12
Mussels, preferably green-lipped New Zealand	4 large	4 large
White wine	1/2 cup	125 milliliters
Water	1 cup	250 milliliters
Lobster, 1	1-1/2 pounds	600 grams
Tomatoes, chopped	2 large	2 large
Heavy cream	1/2 cup	125 milliliters
Sea scallops	4 large	4 large
Shrimp, peeled, deveined	4 jumbo	4 jumbo

Steam open the cockles and mussels in the white wine and water. Remove the cockles and mussels and set aside. Put the lobster in the pot with the steaming liquid. Steam it, covered, over medium heat until it turns bright red, about 10 minutes.

Take the meat out of the lobster.

Combine the tomatoes with the steaming liquid and simmer gently for 10 minutes. Work through a strainer and combine with the cream. Simmer slightly to concentrate its flavor but not so much as to thicken it or make it too salty. Poach the scallops and shrimp in the sauce for about 3 minutes.

Arrange the shellfish in heated soup plates and pour the sauce over and around them. See the photograph in the color plates.



Sacramento Book Review

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October print run - 10,000 copies. Distributed by Sacramento Distribution Services

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EDITOR'S NOTES

All the books we get for review here at the *Sacramento Book Review* are sent to us free by the publishers with no quid pro quo understanding that they'll get a positive review. Whomever reviews the book says how they feel about the book—its positives and negatives. There have been some book review publications that have charged for reviewing, again with no guarantee of positive reviews. While there might be some understanding reached between a writer or editor and a publicist for positive reviews, that is not an usual arrangement, and is more equivalent to payola in the music industry.

Which is why its nice to get so many books that we can give positive reviews. Not all of the books do; not every book is good—even to its target audience. But, we have been getting some great submissions, and it's a pleasure to acknowledge them. There are 20,000 books a month being published, and, with this issue of *SBR*, we reviewed just over 200. One percent. And, there were plenty of books we requested copies of that we never received. So, with the overwhelming reviews being positive this month, I think we're helping find some of the cream published each month. And, by trying to get a few books from most major categories, I think we can help direct people, regardless of their reading taste.

I hope you enjoy this issue. We had a good time putting it together. If you read a review that moves you to read the book, let us know, and let the store where you picked up this issue know as well. We'll need advertising support, and if stores know their customers read and use us, it'll help.

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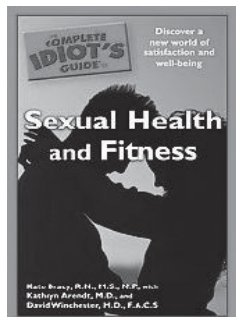
Relationships & Sex

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Sexual Health and Fitness

By Kate Bracy; Katheryn Arendt; David Winchester

Alpha Books, \$16.95, 320 pages

Maybe less a guide for idiots on how to have sex and more a guide for people who want to have healthy, safe and long-term sexual activity, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Sexual Health and Fitness* is much a typical *Idiot's Guide* with clear explanations, guides and tips. Bracy covers diet, exercise, hygiene and safe sex practices without being too clinical, and a detailed, yet-not-too-frightening overview of sexually transmitted diseases. There are also chapters on medical conditions that cause sexual dysfunction and prescription and alternative supplements for sexual enhancement.



A good beginner's guide for someone just starting sexual activity or someone who feels like they should know more about sex.

September Songs

By Maggie Scarf

Riverhead Books, \$24.95, 256 pages

In the last century, almost 30 years have been added to the average American lifespan. That has resulted in married couples living longer, more active lives with their partners. Through interviews with seven couples that have been married for more than 20 years, Maggie Scarf has looked for answers, trends, and solutions to the institution of marriage as it now stands for people between 50 and 75 years of age. Each chapter focuses on a different couple and, while many of the questions Scarf poses bring similar themes (health and financial issues, ability to compromise, maintaining sexual desire), each couple's answers reflect the different ways in which they found ways to overcome those difficulties. In addition, Scarf brings current research on how in-



creased life expectancy alters previous marriage and family dynamics. *September Songs* is a well-written, very readable book for either those in their September years or those approaching them.

The Sexually Confident Wife

Shannon Ethridge

Broadway Books, \$21.95, 288 pages

Quoting statistics that 42% of married women describe their sex life as either routine and boring or non-existent, Shannon Ethridge's (*Every Woman's Battle*) latest book is aimed at helping women create healthy, exciting sex lives. From confronting and dealing with past sexual issues, to developing confidence in your sexual power, *The Sexually Confident Wife* is one of those books that can help change a relationship without passion or intimacy to one of sexual enjoyment. Many of the stories and examples used are based on the many women she's counseled, and the book reflects those concerns about body image, sexual boundaries, and confidence-busters that inhibit a healthy and active sex life. Whether purchased by a wife to increase her confidence or a husband to start a conversation, *The Sexually Confident Wife* may help change those current statistics.

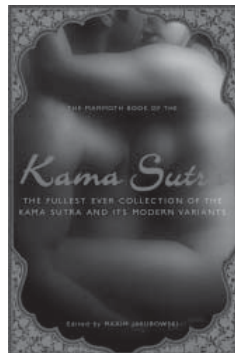


The Mammoth Book of the Kama Sutra

By Maxim Ed. Jakubowski

Running Press, \$13.95, 512 pages

In a combination of a *Kama Sutra* reprint, a modern update, and a collection of erotica, *The Mammoth Book of the Kama Sutra* is just that, mammoth. Some of the stories are historical to the *Kama Sutra*, and 24 of the stories are brand new, designed to expand on how some of the positions may have been developed. There is also a history of the *Kama Sutra*, illustrations of the positions described in the book, and clear instructions for managing the position. While very large (500+ pages), it is still a digest of the many positions in the original, so there may be hope for another mammoth sequel.



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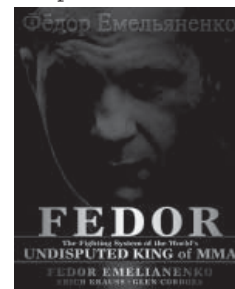
Fedor

Fedor Emelianenko

Victory Belt Publishing, \$34.95

270 pages

A pictorial, step-by-step guide to proper punching, kicking, cinching, and ground work for mixed martial artists. While not giving away any secrets, MMA heavy-weight champion Fedor Emelianenko provides in-depth, detailed instructions for all major areas of fighting systems. The limitations of such a book are obvious; the inability to see the moves in motion. Having to refer to static pictures and guess the position of hands, feet, or other body parts not in direct view, or not see the flow as one move leads to another is simply a limitation, not a flaw. MMA fans of Fedor, or those with some martial arts training will either find the book helpful in understanding Fedor's basis fighting systems, or as a stepping stone to a new style.



Rebound Rules

Rick Pitino

Collins, \$25.95, 240 pages

Rick Pitino had taken two different school teams to the NCAA Final Four. He moved from college basketball to professional, and after three losing seasons with the Boston Celtics, the loss of his infant son and two brothers-in-law (one in the 9/11 World Trade Center disaster), he reached a point in his life where he needed to find new perspective. He did, returned to college basketball with the Louisville Cardinals, taking them to the Final Four, becoming the only coach to do that with three different school teams. *Rebound Rules* is more than his memoir, but also lessons on overcoming adversity, re-framing your your perspectives, and rebounding from failure. The stories and insights take this book from being a "rah-rah" coaching guide for success to a deeply personal memoir, with life lessons wrapped around it.



Cooking, Food & Wine

COOKING - Con't from page 2

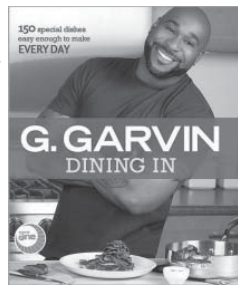
a great deal of knowledge and love for the dishes of Spain, and the selection of meals gives something for cooks of all skill levels.

Dining In

By Gavin G.

Meredith Books, \$24.95, 224 pages

Between his two TV shows, Gavin still has time to occasionally entertain his friends at home. *Dining In*, his third book, is aimed at home entertaining, and is a collection of recipes he enjoys preparing for himself and guests in his home. The book includes not only the recipes, but tips on preparation, serving and hosting. Most of the recipes are mid-range, requiring some familiarity with the kitchen, but still easy for the novice chef. However easy the recipes, they are uniformly colorful and sure to please any dinner party.

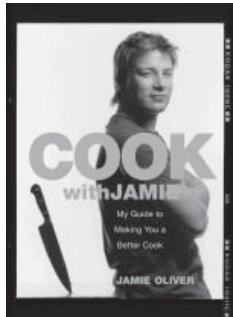


Cook With Jamie

By Jamie Oliver

Hyperion, \$37.50, 448 pages

The Naked Chef, Jamie Oliver, has written the prequel to all his many other cookbooks. Aimed at teaching the basics of proper cooking, *Cook With Jamie* covers preparing meats, including live lobster, crispy duck, and hand-made pasta, tools every kitchen needs, and tips on better shopping. Each recipe comes with plenty of commentary on the dish, the ingredients, and the options on variations. The 160 recipes range from simple, yet tasty, salads to items like Slow Roasted Pork Belly with the Sweetest Braised Fennel. Whether you are an experienced chef or not, *Cook With Jamie* will provide you with some great recipes and the simple step-by-step instructions to prepare it well (just in case you aren't). All proceeds go to Oliver's Fifteen Foundation, an organization that helps disadvantaged young people enter the restaurant business.

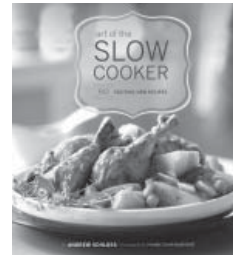


Art of the Slow Cooker

By Andrew Schloss

Chronicle Books, \$24.95, 216 pages

In an age where bestselling cookbooks often have a time frame in the title (30 minute, etc.), it is easy to forget that we used to have more time for meals, and dinner wasn't just a break between other, more important activities. *The Art of the Slow Cooker* is a return to those days, with meals you can start in the morning and let cook all day. With recipes ranging from slow-cooked soups, stews, braising, to one dish mains and cooking vegetables and side dishes. These is a simple overview of finding a good slow cooker, and tips and tricks to using it well. Maybe not a nightly addition to the weekly menu, but a good slow-cooked meal should be on it at least once a week. And you should probably take the time to enjoy it as well.

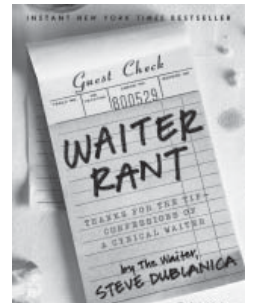


Waiter Rant

By The Waiter

Ecco, \$24.95, 320 pages

There seem to be two major schools of thought when publishers transfer blogs to books. First is just reprint the best bits of the blog, maybe tidy up the entries, add some art or supplemental material, and go to press. *Waiter Rant* is from the second school. An editor finds himself reading a blog for personal enjoyment day after day, and one day, in a V8 moment, says, "Hey, this guy can write." The formerly anonymous waiter (Steve Dublanica) behind the waiterrant.net blog, gives his all in this highly acclaimed book. Often described as the "front-of-the-house *Kitchen Confidential*" (see, I did it myself).



Waiter Rant gives voice to the waitstaff across the nation, having to put up with the 20% of all customers who really do think its all about themselves. Many first person stories about his experiences, tips on how to get better service, interactions with pleasant customers and more. Fun to read, already optioned for TV, likely to see more from Dublanica in the future.

Horror

Poe's Children

By Peter Straub

Doubleday, \$26.95, 544 pages

The label "Horror" is often viewed by readers as the shlock playing at the late-night movie theaters. But in the last several decades, an intelligent, yet scary, sub-category of writers have emerged. Leaning on the writings of Edgar Allan Poe, these authors have found an audience interested in what has been called New Wave horror. *Poe's Children* is a sample of these stories, ranging from early 1980's Ramsey Campbell and Stephen King, to more recent stories from Neil Gaiman and Peter Straub (the book's editor). While there isn't any new



story in the collection, it is a great overview of the subgenre, and collects several short stories that haven't had wide release in other formats.

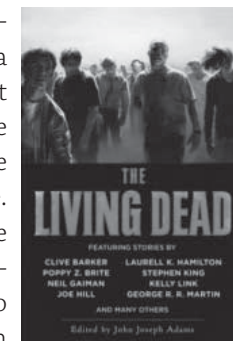
The Living Dead

By John Joseph Adams Ed.

Night Shade Books, \$15.95, 350 pages

The Living Dead is a collection of short zombie stories from some of the greatest horror writers of all time. Upon receiving this book to review, I couldn't help but smile as I saw some of the names on the cover: Clive Barker, Poppy Z. Brite, and Neil Gaiman are only a few. The book features a great introduction on zombie lore and why we are drawn to the stories about people running from packs of brain hungry undead. Most of these stories are not original to this volume, they span back as far as 1976, and have been featured in various anthologies or collections previ-

ously. I am not saying that this is a bad collection, just that some of these are classics that we all know and love. It is good to have on hand to read because you want to send a chill own your spine. Right now though, I want to make special mention to a certain story, *This Year's Class Picture* by Dan Simmons. I never thought I would think of zombies as sweet, mostly undead flesh-eating monsters, and this one brought an almost human nature to them. Thank you mister Simmons for the wonderful look into teaching a class of zombie children, although I can't tell the difference zombie and human children.



--Thomas Rojek



The Man Booker Prize for Fiction awards £50,000 to the author of the best full-length original novel written in the English language by a citizen of the Commonwealth of Nations or Ireland. It was originally known as the Booker-McConnell Prize, named after the sponsor, in 1968, and, in 2002, administration of the Award was transferred to the Booker Prize foundation. The UK-based investment company, the Man Group, became the lead sponsor, and has kept Booker as part of the awards title.

Selection of the books for consideration is a two-step process. First, an advisory committee of an author, two publishers, a literary agent, a bookseller, a librarian, and a chairperson appointed by the Booker Prize Foundation select the members of the judging panel. The members of the panel typically include writers, literary critics, academics, editors and literary minded public figures. Judges are rarely selected more than once. Books selected for consideration will include any by an author that has won the award or been selected for the short list of books under consideration, and publishers can submit up to two books from any imprint. Judges can also submit books for consideration.

The panel takes all the books submitted for judging (averaging 130 a year), and thins it down to what is called the Long List. Being included on the Long List of titles under consideration is a sign of literary excellence. From there, the judges reduce again, creating the Short List. Staying on the Short List is a guarantee of attention, reprint and licensing rights for the author. From the Short List, the winner of the Prize is chosen.

The Long List in full:

- The White Tiger by Aravind Adiga (Atlantic)
- Girl in a Blue Dress by Gaynor Arnold (Tindal Street)
- The Secret Scripture by Sebastian Barry (Faber)
- From A to X by John Berger (Verso)
- The Lost Dog by Michelle de Kretser (Chatto)
- Sea of Poppies by Amitav Ghosh (John Murray)
- The Clothes on Their Backs by Linda Grant (Virago)
- A Case of Exploding Mangoes by Mohammed Hanif (Cape)
- The Northern Clemency by Philip Hensher (Fourth Estate)
- Netherland by Joseph O'Neill (Fourth Estate)
- The Enchantress of Florence by Salman Rushdie (Cape)
- Child 44 by Tom Rob Smith (Simon & Schuster)
- A Fraction of the Whole by Steve Toltz (Hamish Hamilton)

The Short List:

- The White Tiger by Aravind Adiga (Atlantic)
- The Secret Scripture by Sebastian Barry (Faber)
- Sea of Poppies by Amitav Ghosh (John Murray)
- The Clothes on Their Backs by Linda Grant (Virago)
- The Northern Clemency by Philip Hensher (Fourth Estate)
- A Fraction of the Whole by Steve Toltz (Hamish Hamilton)

The big upset was that Salman Rushdie's *The Enchantress of Florence* didn't make the Short List. Of those selected, two are Indian authors, two English, an Australian, and an Irish author. Two are first-time novelists: Adiga and Toltz.

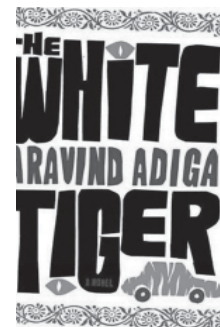
The winner will be announced October 14, 2008. *Sacramento Book Review* has reviewed five of the books on the Short List. U.S. Publisher, Knopf, asked us not to review the only missing title, *The Northern Clemency*, by Philip Hensher, because Hensher is doing a significant re-write for the American market. This book is currently scheduled for publication in February 2009.



The White Tiger

By Aravind Adiga
Free Press, \$24.00, 288 pages

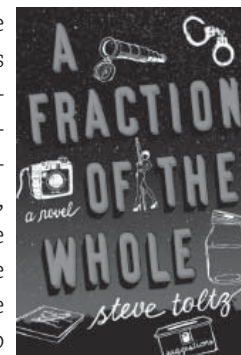
Written as a letter from from the protagonist to a visiting Chinese diplomat, *The White Tiger* takes us not only into the mind of a murderer, but also into the heart of modern India, rich and poor. Belram Halwai began life as a Halwai or "sweet-maker." Forced to leave school early, he finds himself not making sweets, but cleaning floors and breaking coals for the ovens. Through an overheard tip, he decides to change his life, leaving behind his village to become a driver for a wealthy family. Working for them transforms him from his caste limitations to becoming in his terms "a social entrepreneur." Whether wheeling and dealing for whiskey, mechanical service, or other necessities of his job, we see India's poor, all scrambling to make do, working within their limitations. In the official parts of his job, he sees India's rich, giving and accepting bribes, using those weaker and poorer than themselves. This element of the story, metaphored as the Great Rooster Coop, reflects Belram's insight into the Indian culture. Roosters in a small coop raised for food become used to their limited space and opportunities, unable to imagine anything else. Belram sees himself as a white tiger, a predator at the top of the food chain, preying on everything else. Eventually, he realizes that tigers have cages of their own. Far from being an unsympathetic character, Belram is interesting, funny, insightful and unforgettable. Even as he describes the act of murder and the reflects on the reasons behind it.



A Fraction of the Whole

By Steve Toltz
Spiegel & Grau, \$24.95, 544 pages

Using the often overused "start at the end and explain your way along" format, Toltz gives us Jasper, in prison as a result of his father, but no explanation as to why. In a series of flashbacks, and flashbacks within flashbacks, we get the story of Jasper's father Martin, who Jasper fears to become like, and his uncle Terry, Australia's most famous outlaw folk hero. Using diaries, interviews, unfinished, and interviews, we begin to get the entire story of the three, delve deep

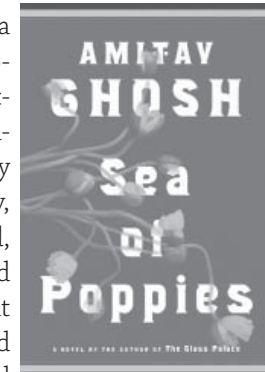


into the craziness that is Martin, see that Jasper is already so far down the road to becoming Martin he cannot recognize it and meet the women in their lives that keep them together and take them apart. The narration changes almost randomly between Jasper and Martin's first person perspective, and second and third person. At times annoying, this constant change does reflect the mental picture you develop about the two, neither of whom are all that sympathetic. And for Jasper's prison sentence? As typical, you don't get that until the end, each step along the way leading you ever on, knowing its coming and just waiting for the final shoe to drop. The story might have needed another edit, losing some of the digressions, but is still a highly amusing book, and the characters, unsympathetic as they may be, will keep you wondering just what they have coming to them next.

Sea of Poppies

By Amitav Ghosh
Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$26.00, 528 pages

In this first of three planned novels, Amitav Ghosh has vividly brought to life a dark section of history. *Sea of Poppies* explores the costs, human and otherwise, of the British Raj's creation of the opium industry, growing and manufacturing it in India and shipping it to China to keep the populous there docile and controllable. So many fields originally, used for food, were converted to opium, that it often caused poverty and hunger among the local communities. Scenes range from the opium fields and manufacturing plants, to the high and lows of the Indian cities in 1838 and some of the best 19th Century sailing writing in many years. Most of the book is set on the sailing ship Ibis, and the characters are as varied as one could possibly imagine. A British captain and first mate, an American second mate, regarded as "black" but passable as white, a French woman raised by a Muslim wet nurse, and bankrupt rajah. The mix of languages creates almost a Babel-ish environment, though Ghosh uses the resulting language as an additional character.



See **BOOKER**, page 7

The Clothes on Their Back

By Linda Grant

Virago, £11.99, 293 pages

The Clothes on Their Back is a story of lost identity and trying to create one. Vivien Kovacs has been raised almost entirely ignorant of her background; her Jewish parents having fled Hungary before WWII, and so traumatized by their experiences, never talk about any of their past and now simply try to avoid any possible attention or trouble. The only other family member she knows of is her Uncle Sándor, the black sheep of the family, who, during his one visit to the Kovacs' house, was driven off by Vivien's father. Later, she sees TV and newspaper articles about his arrest and 14-year prison sentence for being an extreme slumlord. The bulk of the story takes place in 1977 London, when the National Front was particularly active in tormenting and intimidating immigrant neighborhoods. Vivien accidentally meets her Uncle, but both she and he pretend not to recognize the other. She takes on the job of transcribing his life story and, through it, learns of her parent's past, and why they reacted the way they did. She also learns that Sándor stayed behind during the war and the lessons he learned about how the strong survive by preying on the weak. But, she also finds his human side, one that isn't so easily dismissed. The use of clothing to reflect the identities of the characters is a re-occurring motif, used by Vivien throughout her life, as she seeks to create an identity of her own, since she didn't feel connected to one growing up.

The questions of identity and belonging, along with the issues of race, immigration, and assimilation are all timely subjects, and Grant treats them all well.

Reference

Ask Click and Clack

By Tom & Ray Magliozzi

Chronicle Books, \$16.95, 208 pages

While best known for their NPR radio show, Tom and Ray Magliozzi, better known as Click and Clack, also do a twice-weekly newspaper advice column. This book is a collection of what might be tentatively called their greatest hits. I use the word tentatively, because if you've heard their show, you'd realize that the best parts are not always the most helpful, accurate, or even on point. But they are funny. Ranging from questions like "How can I ruin my dad's minivan?" to "Is he what he drives?", Tom and Ray may attempt to actually answer the question, but they do have fun along the way.

The book has some actual advice here and there, lots of car trivia, and too many low-humor jokes to count. If you've never seen the newspaper column, or have a friend that must wake up to Click and Clack on the weekends, this is a book to pick up.

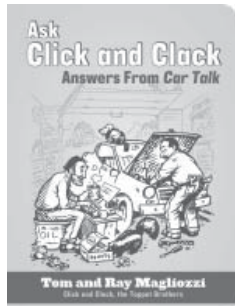
Dirty Words

Ellen Sussman Ed.

Bloomsbury, \$19.95, 304 pages

Remember being in fourth grade, and sneaking the dictionary off to look up all the dirty words? Now, maybe that was just me, but I'm fairly sure I wasn't the

only one. Ellen Sussman has collected, not only all the dirty words, but a good clear description of the act, and, to help get the point across, a collection of stories, essays, memoirs, and one play. Some of the dirty words are truly dirty and not re-printable here, others more clean or family friendly. Covering positions, relationships, and social aspects of sex, Sussman has pretty much covered not only the basics, but also the odd, avant-garde, and the "who first thought that up"? Subtitled "A Literary Encyclopedia of Sex", *Dirty Words'* best attribute is the literary. With almost 100 contributors, there is a wide selection of stories to choose from. Some of them are imaginative, others clinical, and some true. Sure, it probably isn't for current fourth-graders, but it is for those former fourth-graders still interested in knowing the all the dirty words.



age Design Now! covers multiple categories of packaging needs, from Foods and Beverages to Pharmaceutical and Electronics. Taschen shows their international reach by having all of the text printed in English, German and French, which, at times, can be disconcerting when you forget which column you are reading, but overall it doesn't take away any enjoyment of the book. The many pictures are of products and their packaging, only some of which will be familiar to Americans (the iPod and iPhone being two American contributions to the book). Some of the products are intriguing enough to want to track down on your next trip overseas. Recommended for design fans of any language.



Package Design Now!

By Gisla Kozak; Julius Wiedermann

Taschen, \$39.99, 414 pages

In a multi-lingual, highly illustrated book, Kozak and Wiedermann introduce us to some of the newest, most unusual, and most innovative packages in the world. Most everything we buy comes in a package, some we notice as unusual or unique, others we take for granted. *Pack-*

Historical Fiction

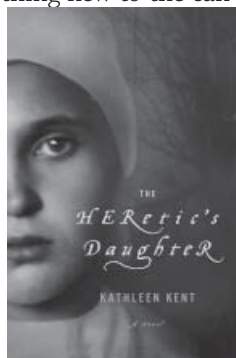
The Heretic's Daughter

By Kathleen Kent

Little, Brown, \$24.95, 352 pages

The Salem witch trials are one of those dark periods in American history that have been written about to the point of overkill. So, when a new book on the subject comes along, you have to wonder if it is going to add anything new to the canon. *The Heretic's Daughter* adds two;

an author with a personal connection to the trials (Kent's great-grandmother to the 9th generation was Martha Carrier, hanged as a



witch during the trials) and a very well-researched and written novelization of the event. The story itself follows Martha Carrier's daughter, Sarah, who has recently returned from being sent away to protect her from the plague. She is thrown into a family conflict between her family and an uncle over the land Martha and Sarah live on. When the hysteria of the witchcraft accusations start, it is the uncle that first points the finger at Martha.

The ongoing story of Martha's incarceration, trial, and execution are told with grace, care, and love. For a debut author, Kent has done a spectacular job in putting a very human face onto tragedy and love, particularly for a subject that can be disquieting or often used for shock value. *The Heretic's Daughter* is wonder-

fully written, excellently researched, and over-all a story of love between mothers and daughters.



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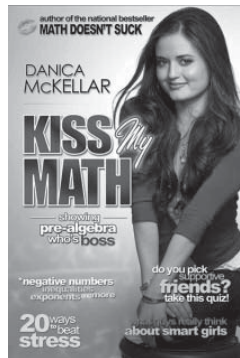
Parenting & Families

Kiss My Math

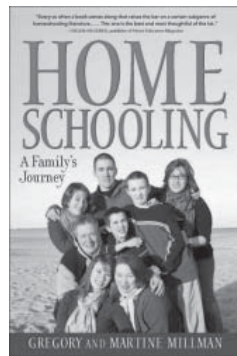
By Danica McKellar

Hudson Street Press, \$24.95

A follow up to last year's bestseller *Math Doesn't Suck*, actress Danica McKellar (The Wonder Years, The West Wing) now moves into middle-school and provides tools, tips and examples of how pre-Algebra is easy, fun and necessary for girls today. Easy to read, friendly, and doesn't talk down or at the pre- and early teen girls it is written for. The many examples of real-world applications and sample problems walked through in conversational English almost make this a functioning textbook for school use. *Kiss My Math* is a good addition to any household with students struggling with math—male or female.



choice and a sort of guide book for other parents considering that choice. The reason I use "sort of" is *Homeschooling* is long on encouragement and short on specifics. They do a good job of explaining how they began homeschooling, finding curriculum and supplies, and creating specific paths of study for each of their six children. However, as they discuss how much emphasis they placed on taking advantage of random events as a basis for schooling, some of their argument begins to fall apart. The ability to use coincidental occurrences is an ability that not every parent may have, and trying to rely on it may be a detriment to a child's education. Furthermore, not every parent can take either time off, or the money out of their budget, to take eight family members to Pompeii and turn it into a learning experience.



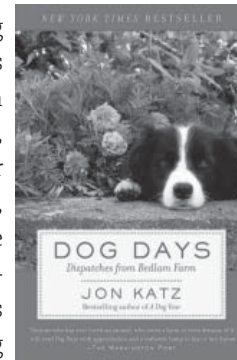
While much of the book comes across as a defensive explanation of their decision to homeschool, they did collect a large number of resources for parents considering, and already, homeschooling, particularly the chapter on college admissions (their three oldest children are all in top-tier colleges.)

Dog Days

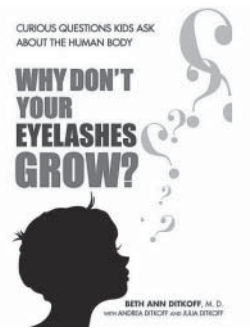
By Jon Katz

Random House, \$14.00, 304 pages

In a newly released paperback memoir, feeling like an updated *All Creatures Great And Small*, Jon Katz lets us wander around his upstate New York farm, aptly named Bedlam Farm. Having written numerous previous books on dogs, dog training, and some murder mysteries, here, Katz lets us see much of his inspiration for his books. Bouncing between providing too much care for the animals and just letting them be animals, we get his reflections on his tendencies to anthropomorphize and the personalities of the animals that make them unique beings. His relationship with his wife plays a fair role as she tolerates his farm, but doesn't find the same enjoyment in it. *Dog Days* gives you the feel of being in the farm, without having to shovel the manure out of the way.



Andrea (12) and Julia (10) have collected more than 150 common, and some uncommon, questions asked by children and provided clear, understandable answers for them. Chapter titles should give clear guides to the subject matter within—Your Body 101; The Weird, The Ugly and the Downright Gross; Body Afflictions and Everyday Strange Things That Can Happen; Urban Myths and What If; and some Bonus Body Trivia. While some of the questions are normal, yet ones not easy to answer by parents (the title question as a good example) and 30 that a highly inquisitive kid just may ask (why is your poop brown?) or dealing with some of the many body myths that float around the school yard (If you eat Pop Rocks and drink soda at the same time, will your stomach explode?). Recommended for either a parent's reference shelf or to just hand to the kid that just keeps asking "why."



Homeschooling

By Gregory and Martine Millman

Tarcher/Penguin, \$24.95, 304 pages

When the economy goes south, one of the things often dropped by parents is private school enrollment. One of the options explored by those parents is homeschooling. Gregory and Martine Millman chose that option, and have written this book as both an explanation for their

Why Don't Your Eyelashes Grow?

By Beth Ann, Andrea and Julia Ditkoff

Avery, \$14.95, 192 pages

Beth Ann Ditkoff is a former surgeon accustomed to answering patients' questions. Here she, and her two daughters,

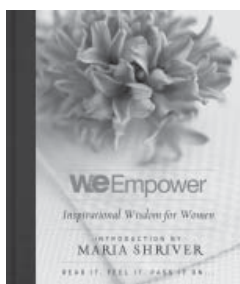
Spirituality & Inspiration

WE Empower

By Maria Shriver, ed.

Hyperion, \$9.95, 224 pages

During the California Governor and First Lady's Conference on Women, California First Lady Maria Shriver has asked the many speakers, male and female, to write down a tip for living productive and happy lives, rising children, maintaining healthy relationships, taking risks, surviving failure and fulfilling dreams. Each year, those tips were printed and distributed to the attendees, and here is a collection of them for general circulation.



Ranging from the political (Condoleeza Rice), to the spiritual (the Dalai Lama), to business (Diane von Furstenberg) and the celebrity (Rachel Ray), the quotes sometimes are specific to women, but often have a wider general appeal. Set up much like an inspirational quotes book, you rely in serendipity to find something specific for your situation, or just browse through, looking for something that catches your eye.

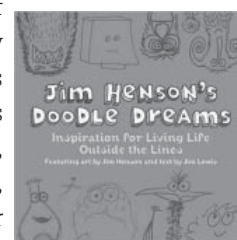
Jim Henson's Doodle Dreams

By Jim Henson; Jim Lewis

Meredith Books, \$12.94, 96 pages

In an eminently strange, yet strangely compelling little book, Jim Lewis has collected sketches and doodles from Jim Henson and added his own inspirational quotes he draws from the years he spent working with Henson. There is no explanation of where these sketches originated

from, or what they may have been used for originally, but, that aside, *Jim Henson's Doodle Dreams* is a wonderful little volume. The sketches themselves range from pencil on lined paper to fully colored pictures (medium sometimes unidentifiable). The inspirational quotes are often well suited to the pictures, and never cross over into sappy or feel like they are reaching too far to find a connection. This is a gift sort of book; one you buy someone who likes Henson's creations - Kermit the Frog, Bert and Ernie, Fraggle Rock, or Labyrinth.



Science & Nature

Cosmic Imagery

By John D. Barrow

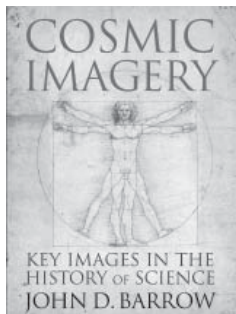
Norton, \$39.95, 608 pages

A picture, as the saying goes, is worth a thousand words. If true, *Cosmic Imagery* has saved itself several hundred thousand words. But as Barrow shows, many of the images selected, meant so much more, and, in some cases, changed the world.

The first photo of the earth from the surface of the moon not only changed people's perspective of the Earth, but also became the symbol of a growing environmental movement.

Divided into four parts, *Cosmic Imagery* is not only a

history of science, but also a visual history of technology. Part One - Stars in Your Eyes - starts with reproductions of Nicholas Copernicus' hand-drawn model of the solar system, with the Sun at the center, and not the Earth, and ends with hand-drawn images from John Archibald Wheeler on the event horizon of black holes. In between are numerous Hubble Telescope images, a microwave temperature map of the sky, and a reproduction of



Van Gogh's *The Starry Night*. The other sections are *Spatial Prejudice* (views of the Earth large and small), *Painting by Numbers* (numbers, number theory and music) and *Mind Over Matter* (atoms, molecules and quantum objects). Each one has some picture that makes you want to call someone to look over your shoulder at the book with you.

The breadth of subjects covered is amazing. *Cosmic Imagery* could easily be a textbook on science (and probably will be used for that at some point). The stories of the images are well-written, concise, and very informative. The quotes at the beginning of each chapter range from St. Mark and Niels Bohr to Douglas Adams and Homer Simpson. Barrow must have not only spent a great deal of time researching the images and history of them, but also put a lot of thought into just what quote would be appropriate for each one.

Your Brain: The Missing Manual

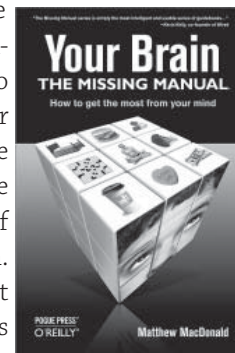
By Matthew MacDonald

O'Reilly Media, \$24.95

The Missing Manual series of tech guides from O'Reilly are for just that, technology: guides to the iPhone, Google, Wikipedia, software and hardware. *Your Brain: The Missing Manual* is a guide to

the one piece of technology we all have, carry around, and use, but most of us have never been taught how to use. This book seeks to use the latest information available, to make you, the user of your brain, more informed on the care and feeding of that same brain. One of the hottest trends recently has been brain-training software--or practicing puzzles to keep your brain alert and young. If you've found yourself doing them, or considering doing them, this book is for you.

Your Brain not only gives you an overview of the different parts of the brain, how they work, and what you can do to improve all the functions of your brain. Sections include *Brain Food* (how your brain controls hunger, and what foods improve brain function), *Mental Fitness* (how to improve it), *Sleep* (why we do it, and how to do it better), *Emotions* (pleasure, fear and the pursuit of happiness) and *Personality* (do you have one and how to tell what kind). Considering just how important our brain is to us, it is a surprise that we aren't given a manual like this at birth, but just expected to figure it out as we go along. Lots of information, suggestions, puzzles and even some party tricks. If you can't figure out how to use your brain after reading this guide, you may want to return your brain for another.

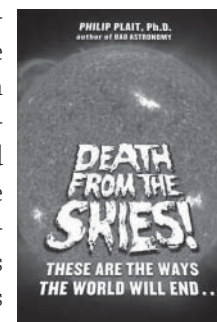


Death from the Skies!

By Philip Plait

Viking, \$25.95, 336 pages

In a collection of Doomsday scenarios, Plait lays out just how the world, or human life, could come to an end. Another asteroid the size of the one that killed the dinosaurs could hit, and pretty much set the world on fire. A gamma ray supernova could bath the Earth in so much radiation that almost nothing could survive. From Ice Age to Alien Invasion, Plait covers them all, explains what it would be like, the science behind the scenario, and then tells you the ever so small odds that it could actually happen during our lifetime. For those who already worry about the end of the



world, this book will not quiet your fears, but instead, give you more to worry about.

For critically thinking people, this will let you be that annoying person that can expand on just why the latest Hollywood blockbuster is using bad science.

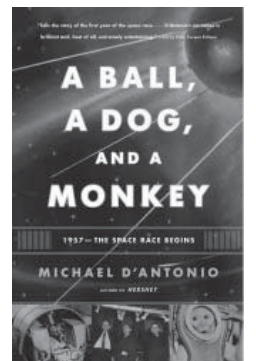
A Ball, a Dog, and a Monkey

By Michael D'Antonio

Simon & Schuster, \$15.00, 320 pages

Originally published last year in hardcover, *A Ball, a Dog, and a Monkey* is the story of 1957 told from the point of view of the space race. Anyone who has read much on Sputnik I and II, will be familiar with the factual history, but D'Antonio brings the excitement and fear Americans had at that time to life. From following the story of Laika, the first cosmo-mutt, in the American papers, to the politics in getting rockets approved for production, *A Ball, a Dog, and a Monkey* really covers all aspects of that most singular year in American history, when our complacency about American superiority over the backward Soviet Union was not only challenged, but shattered.

A well-written, easy-to-read history.



The Hungry Scientist Handbook

By Patrick Buckley; Lily Binns

Collins Living, \$16.95, 224 pages

The Hungry Scientist is an informal group, founded as one may guess, over food. Buckley and Binns have collected 20 of the best projects--from a caramel bikini, to a Thanksgiving gravy fountain, the projects involve new ways to use food (or food related items - i.e., a milk carton megaphone). Or just play with it. Designed somewhat like *Make* magazine, each of these do-it-yourself projects are clearly documented, illustrated with step-by-step pictures and can keep you busy for a couple of weeks in your kitchen (or garage depending on the size of your kitchen).

I'm actually sorry it's too late for me to benefit from the electric birthday cake, with edible wiring and LED lights for candles. Maybe next year. Some projects need adult supervision, but kids interested in science will find many things to do with their parents.



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Poetry & Short Stories

Tyrannosaurus Rex Versus the Corduroy Kid

By Simon Armitage
Knopf, \$25.00, 66 pages

Poetry is probably one of the most under-served genres of literature and, yet, it's one of the most accessible and requires the least time commitment of the reader. Simon Armitage is one of the UK's most popular poets, among other awards, was made the official Millennium Poet in 2000. *Tyrannosaurus Rex Versus the Corduroy Kid* is his first collection to be published in the US, and from its contents, it's long overdue. From classic riffs (*Odyssey*) to highly current commentary (*Republic*) where the government only allows one color car on the road for each day of the week, Armitage shows a range of verse, language and insight that really brings a reason for poetry to continue to find support regardless of its commercial potential.



Best New American Voices 2009

By Mary Gaitskill Ed.
Harvest Original, \$14.00, 368 pages

Gathered with care from the top writers' workshops around the country, *Best New American Voices* has introduced a number of now-acclaimed writers during its 9-year run. This volume continues that tradition. Fourteen stories, all different, all good. They deal with loss, with longing, with family ties. These are stories that one absorbs and they roll around in your head for days after. They aren't to be read in one sitting, but over a period of days.



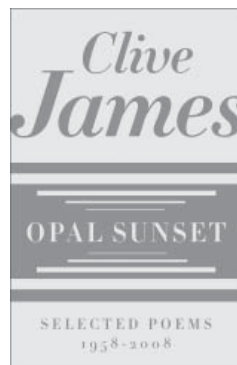
The editor, Mary Gaitskill, has identified some wonderful voices in this year's selection. These authors will, most likely, move on to longer works, but short stories are a skill. It's easier to add more words than to take away, and these writers have worked their stories to the bare necessities. As an added bonus, all of the contributing writers workshops that submitted stories for consideration are listed in the book. People interested in developing their writing skills may find programs to join.

Opal Sunset

By Clive James
Norton, \$25.95, 208 pages

Clive James is well-known in his adoptive home of Britain as a television host, author, critic and musician.

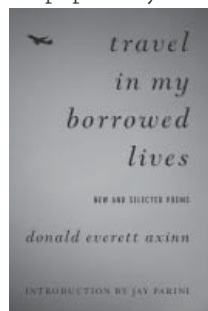
For the first time in America, his poetry receives a collection of its own. The first half of the collection comprises poems from his first book of poetry, *The Book of My Enemy*, the second, all poems having been written since 2003, and never having been collected before. The title refers to the shade of sky in his native Australia, and the verses range from longing for home, "Go Back to the Opal Sunset," schadenfreude, "The Book of My Enemy Has Been Remaindered", sex and Latin, "Hard-Core Orthography," modern technology, "Windows is Shutting Down" and a very different take on suicide bombers with "The Australian Suicide Bomber's Heavenly Reward" (and no, it isn't what you may think. This is a well-suited companion to last year's collection - *Cultural Amnesia*, also from Norton, of biographical essays and commentary.



Travel in My Borrowed Lives

By Donald Everett Axinn
Arcade, \$19.99, 200 pages

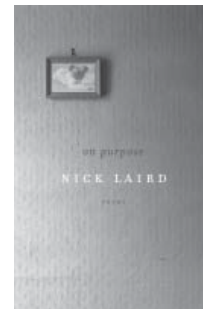
In a small but dense collection, Axinn collects 50 poems from his previous seven collections, and includes 30 more recent poems. Broken into chapters by his previous books, the poems are the "winners" in Axinn's personal popularity contest, choosing those poems he felt the most strongly about. Usually, overview books like these are done by an editor, with some input by the author. Here, he has chosen the poems he most wants to be remembered by and then for those you already own his previous volumes, adds almost as many new poems. If you don't have any of his earlier books, this is a great jumping in point. If you do, view this as a "best of" book, with bonus works.



On Purpose

By Nick Laird
Norton, \$23.95, 64 pages

With a searing view of life, Nick Laird's second collection of poems may be a small volume, but his poems are ones you will not forget anytime soon. Sometimes graphic in images of life, love, and death, *On Purpose* is a wonderful, though disturbing collection. His poem "Lipstick" is partially based on the diary of a British officer who helped liberate the Bergen-Belson concentration camp, and its description of the situation, the passiveness of the former inmates to their situation until the arrival of a shipment of lipstick. His final section uses the classic war text *The Art of War* as the basis for 11 poems on love and relationships, from arguing across the dining table (*Waging War*), to losing control when one's meds stop working (*Offensive Strategy*). This is contemporary poetry at its best.



Flight

By Linda Bierds
Marian Wood Books, \$24.95
224 pages

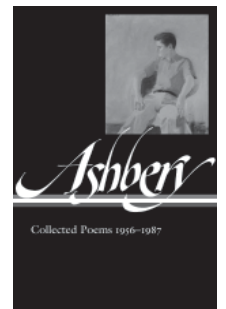
Often, poetry is only followed by a small, specific audience. Other poets read and enjoy each other's works, get published in small journals or chapbooks. Their collections are small print runs, and the higher prices reflect that, and also limit the number of people who read them. Then you have a poet like Linda Bierds. Highly recognized by the arts community with many awards (the PEN/West Poetry Award, four Pushcart Prizes) but also by numerous grants to continue her work, including a MacArthur Genius grant. Her work has been printed often in the *New Yorker*, the *New York Times* and *Atlantic Monthly*. *Flight* is an overview of previous poems, and 15 new ones. Often she uses historical figures or situations as her subjects, in interesting and unusual ways. *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaas Tulp: Amsterdam, 1632* is a poem from the perspective of Dutch painter Rembrandt as he paints Dr. Tulp dissecting an executed criminal. Other subjects include Galileo, Gregor Mendel and Meriwether Lewis (as he discovers the magpie).



John Ashbery: Collected Poems 1956-1987

By John Ashbery; Mark Ford ed.
Library of America, \$40.00
1,050 pages

With the release of this collection, John Ashbery joins Philip Roth as the only living author to have his works collected by the Library of America. Now 80, Ashbery has had a tremendous influence on American poets and poetry over his 50 years of creating poems. Library of America has two volumes planned in their Ashbery series, this first one reprints the entire text of his first 12 books, including *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror*, the winner of the Pulitzer Prize, National Book Award and the National Book Critics Circle Award. Also included are more than 60 previously uncollected poems. The Library of America publishes books of literary significance, and this, and its future companion volume, are great additions to their collection. Ashbery's poems are varied, moving from clear, and concise to sometimes almost so innovative to not be understandable, but moving through the collection shows his style as it developed, as he experimented and as he matured.



flatmanCROOKED: First Winter

By Kaelan Smith ed.
flatmanCROOKED, \$16.00, 173 pages

Local publisher flatmanCROOKED's first anthology, the stories collected show that there is a good local outlet for literary works. Headlined by two stories from Jorge Luis Borges and Ha Jin, *First Winter* is well-presented, the stories well-chosen, and the Borges story (*Gradus Ad Parnassum*) isn't new, nor one of Borges' best, but may help flatmanCROOKED find a larger audience for this collection. The Ha Jin story is new, about Chinese grandparents coming to terms with the Americanization of their grandchildren. The other eight stories range from two couples using swinging to celebrate Flag Day to an abandoned baby discovered by a young girl. It's nice to see someone going to the effort to bring this sort of literature to Sacramento.



Current Events & Politics

How to Rig an Election

By Allen Raymond; Ian Spiegelman
Simon & Schuster, \$12.00, 256 pages

Otto von Bismarck (1815–98) supposedly said “If you like laws and sausages, you should never watch either one being made.” To that, you can add, “if you believe in the righteousness of your political party, you should never see how campaigns are really run.” In part memoir, in part chest-beating bragadocio, Raymond documents with glee the many campaigns he worked on, the Republicans he worked with, and the ways Republicans lied, cheated and tricked their way into power in elections—local and national. Having joined the Republican Party for the money, he went from running the House Campaign for William Martini to being the deputy political directory for Steve Forbes’s presidential campaign.

After the 2000 elections, Raymond started GOP Marketplace to provide telemarketing support to Republican campaigns. During his tenure, he used tactics like making positive calls for Democratic opponents during the Super Bowl. As long as a lawyer said it was ok, no one questioned the morality of the “win at any cost” mentality. Finally, in 2005, there was a cost; Raymond was sentenced to three months in federal prison for his role in jamming the phone lines of the New Hampshire Democratic Party on election day in 2002.

While his story is often funny, it does leave a disquieting feeling, especially as we gear back up for another election in November.

Taking on the System

By Markos Moulitsas Zúniga
Celebra, \$23.95, 288 pages

Readers of the blog, DailyKos, will be familiar with Zúniga and his brand of “storm the gate” politics. *Taking on the System* is a handbook of modern politics. No longer limited to being grassroots activists, people can use the new tools of the digital age to have a direct, influential impact on today’s political issues. This is a highly political book, focused on liberal politics—entertaining and fun to read—using many current examples from the last couple of election cycles of how these tools have been used to good effect.

Zúniga was one of the early pioneers in blogging, and quickly became a major influence, on not only Democratic politics, but also required that Republicans paid close attention to his blog. Both a history of progressive politics and an overview of the changes that have happened, *Taking on the System* will find itself on many liberal activist’s shelves. Many a conservative will probably take a look, trying to learn from the enemy, particularly if the Democratic majority continues to grow.

A More Perfect Constitution

By Larry J. Sabato
Walker, \$16.00, 352 pages

Just in time for the presidential elections, in which the argument of constitutional originalism will raise its head in regard to Supreme Court judicial appointments, comes the paperback release of *A More Perfect Constitution*. Now at a more affordable price, you can read Sabato’s suggestions for changes to the document that unpins our entire governmental system. Starting with his assertion that the Constitution was never intended to be unchanged (backed up with clear and unequivocal quotes from some of the founding fathers), he lays out 23 proposals in seven major categories for public discussion—ranging from changing the presidential term to 6 years, to limiting judicial terms to 15 years with mandatory retirement ages; his suggestions often strike at the core of political belief, both liberal and conservative. Mostly serving as the basis for starting a public debate, the hardcover release did just that. Sabato makes good arguments that even if you don’t believe in his suggestions, change is not only needed, but intended by the original framers.

If you didn’t pick it up then, this new paperback release is worth picking up by anyone interested in the future of our nation’s Constitution.

The Forever War

By Dexter Filkins
Knopf, \$25.00, 384 pages

In a detailed, emotional, and often difficult book, Dexter Filkins has written a memoir of his years stationed as a reporter in the Middle East. However, he has gone well beyond a simple memoir and, instead, used his experiences to illustrate the history of Afghanistan and Iraq. From America’s early involvement with the Mujahideen in the 80’s to the current occupation of Afghanistan, Filkins explains how the current situation developed and is still being viewed by those involved. Filkins does not just concentrate on the larger political issues, he also brings a very human face to the conflicts—and that face is often damaged, disfigured, or sad with loss.

Very well-written and hard to put down. Not a book to read casually, it demands you commit time and emotion to a very hard situation, that as the title suggests, might just be a forever war.

The Wrecking Crew

By Thomas Frank
Metropolitan Books, \$25.00, 384 pages

In a follow up to *What’s the Matter With Kansas?*, Frank has now released a history of the conservative movement from the turn of the twentieth century to its current incarnation in the Bush administration. And, through that history, he explains why the incompetence of FEMA’s response to Katrina is so endemic of how conservatives view government and, therefore, administer it. A large portion of the book looks at the conservative movement’s renewal during the Reagan administration and how the rise of lobbyist accelerated their attempt to dismantle what they saw is “Big Government” by outsourcing, underfunding and defanging agencies, departments and regulatory bodies. His primary argument is that through all those changes, conservatives were setting up the agencies to fail, thus

proving their point that Big Government was incompetent (Bush’s “Heck of a good job Brownie” as a case in point.).

There are many side stories of the people, places, and personalities involved in the conservative movement, many portrayed almost as caricatures, but the sorry aspect of it is that many of those people not only are accurately portrayed, but also enjoyed acting out their role. The chapter on the island of Saipan not only explains the role of lobbyists in protecting big business over human rights (Jack Abramoff), but also is a microcosm example of how the conservative dream of “liberty laboratories” was simply marketing spin to hide the true cost of American business expansion. Not going to be liked by conservatives, lauded by liberals. But it will be talked about as much as *What’s Wrong With Kansas?* was, regardless of who actually wins the elections this year.

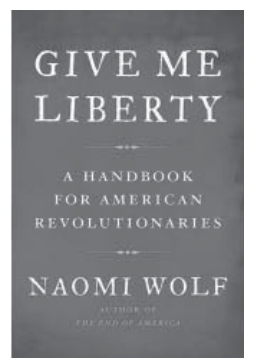
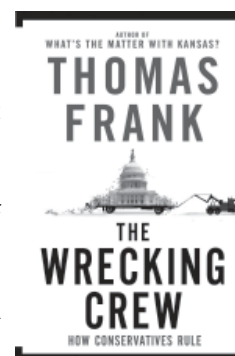
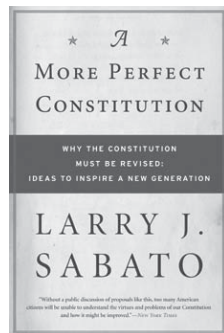
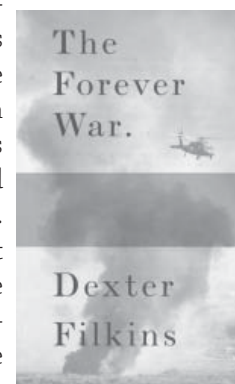
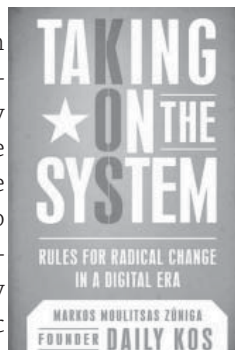
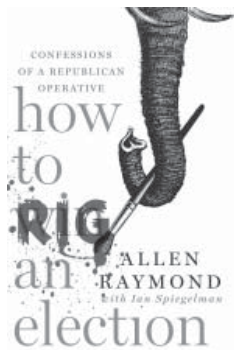
Give Me Liberty

By Naomi Wolf
Simon & Schuster, \$13.95, 400 pages

In her last book, *The End of America*, Naomi Wolf argued that there was an ongoing political shift in America toward fascism and totalitarianism. In *Give Me Liberty*, she now provides the tools to stand up to that shift and ways to bring back the Founder’s intent for citizen participation in government. Part one of the book is a fairly concise overview of Wolf’s views and the propaganda she sees for fake patriotism and democracy, intended to lull us into accepting the status quo. Part two is her core values for new American patriots that were intended by the founding fathers, updated to today, and includes stories of citizens that have tried to run for office, lead protest, and organize. Part three is the meat of the book, giving instructions, resources and guides to being an American revolutionary. Including essays from other people that have done the actions, from leading a Town Hall meeting, to organizing a boycott, and use the media.

Mostly aimed at the liberal and libertarian, Wolf has provided another great book, sure to start debate, and maybe help shift power back from big business and an entrenched bureaucracy to the citizens.

See **CURRENT EVENTS**, page 12



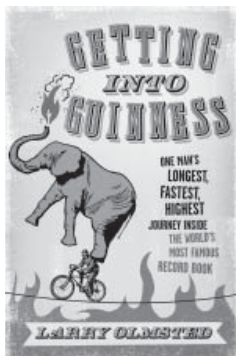
Humor - NonFiction

Getting into Guinness

By Larry Olmsted

Collins, \$24.95, 320 pages

In a mix between memoir and history, Larry Olmsted tells both the story of his quest to get into the *Guinness Book of World Records* and a not so brief history of the book. Olmsted is an entertaining and talented writer, and has a great deal of enthusiasm for the subject. His history of the *Guinness Book* starts with its humble beginnings as an authoritative pub bet guide, to a 100-million-copy best-selling handbook of record oddities. Along the way, Olmsted introduces us to some of the oddest, most compulsive Guinness record holders, and we get to view it through his eyes



as his own compulsion to not only break an existing record, but also to set a new ones. Past being just a book used by school children to waste time during rain days, Guinness is a world-wide standard. And, *Getting into Guinness* helps explain some of that phenomenon.

Caligula for President

By Cintra Wilson

Bloomsbury Press, \$16.00, 256 pages

In this highly biting, highly satirical (one hopes), and occasionally almost incomprehensible book, Cintra Wilson speculates on why only go halfway down the road to tyranny that George Bush as begun, but, instead, bring back the one world leader, truly able to make us a world-wide em-



pire, feared by all, including our own citizens; Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, commonly known as Caligula. Bouncing from Caligula's personal history and rule, and its parallels to Bush and America today, *Caligula for President* presents an amazing number of facts, stories and events overlooked by the mainstream media that show America's turn from democracy to potential totalitarian empire. Wilson is in turn, entertaining, frightening and demanding, bringing her political wit to a highly unique look at America as heir to the Roman Empire.

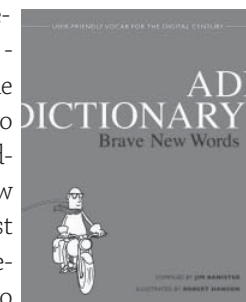
Addictionary

By Jim Banister; Robert Hanson

Abrams Image, \$12.95, 160 pages

Following the trend of websites making the jump to books, *Addictionary* is a collection of newly coined words for the modern age, along with some illustrations of those same words. Many of the

werds (n. made up word) make clear sense - skepticles (n. Eyewear that causes the user toward disbelief of any new ideas or information; the opposite of rose-colored glasses) - others seem made up by visitors to the site to get credit for adding a new word - Rwandalust (n. A burning desire to travel to Rwanda.) Many of the words are in common usage (prostitots comes to mind), and even those that aren't, often hit a specific situation that will make you want to keep them in mind for future use. The werds are sorted into 18 different categories, and the one thing lacking would be an index, so you don't have to keep flipping through the book looking for that one word that you aren't quite sure where it was categorized.



Current Events

The Big Necessity

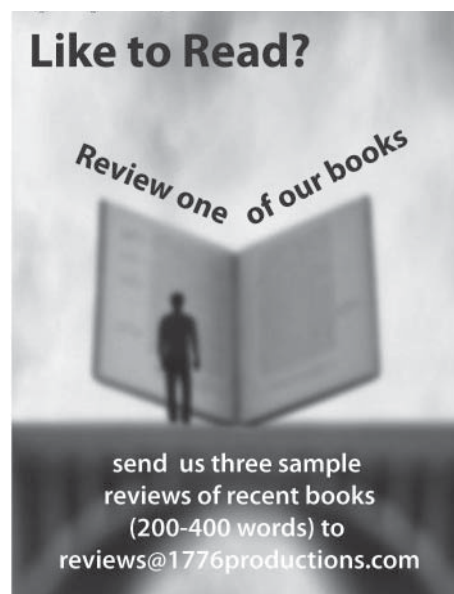
By Rose George

Metropolitan Books, \$26.00, 304 pages

The Big Necessity covers the need for better sanitation when dealing with human excrement. Not the most pleasant subject in almost any forum, but a very necessary one when you confront the facts that Rose George lays out: disease spread by human waste is the number one world wide killer of people; 2.6 billion people do not have access to any sanitation facilities, and 1.95 million people in America do not have an indoor toilet. Getting into great detail, George moves from the overtaxed first world sanitation facilities to the non-existent third world ones. The book is written with style, amusing and extensive, giving plenty of causes for action. Not only does she provide a clear history of sanitation (high heels became popular when chamber pots were emp-



tied in the streets of London), the political issues (Myanmar's refusal to allow help in creating healthy sanitation facilities), the societal (introducing latrines in schools, increased attendance from female students by 15%) and the critical (diseases spread by excrement kill more people than any other source). Sure it isn't a pretty subject, and not one for casual conversation, but George makes a clear, convincing argument that it should be a topic of interest for anyone interested in human rights, well being and the future.



Religion - Other

Resurrecting Hebrew

By Stavans, Ilan

Schocken Books, \$21.00, 240 pages

After Ilan Stavans had a dream of a woman speaking an unknown language, he is diagnosed with "language withdrawal." This leads him into a search for the roots of Hebrew, and its effects on the everyday relationship between Hebrew and God. It started with Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, a 19th -century linguist and editor, who became convinced that Hebrew could become a living language, not just spoken in the synagogue. Ben-Yehuda raised his son in almost total linguistic isolation, making him the first native speaker of Hebrew. *Resurrecting Hebrew* follows not only Ben-Yehuda's story, but that also of the early Zionist movement, the creation of Israel and the the results of resurrecting an almost dead language into a living tongue, that binds together a nation, religion and culture.

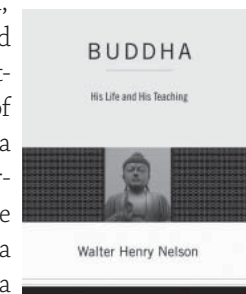


Buddha

By Walter Henry Nelson

Tarcher/Penguin, \$13.95, 208 pages

This concise volume of Buddha's life, teachings and the mythology around his story is an excellent addition to Tarcher's Lives of the Masters series of books. Nelson, an experienced biographer, brings both his skills as an author and his many decades of study of world religions to create an easy to read, well-documented and highly insightful biography of Prince Siddhartha and his transformation into the Buddha. Buddha goes beyond just a biography, but includes some of the myths and stories that arose around the original episode, and also a clear, understandable introduction to Buddhist thoughts, beliefs and traditions. As more people look at reducing the amount of use they put onto the planet, the ancient beliefs of Buddhism's non-materialism is becoming more important and timely.



Imagine.....

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your ad.

Self-Help

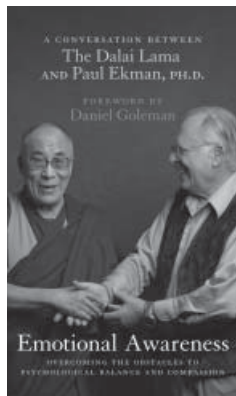
Emotional Awareness

By Dalai Lama; Paul Ekman

Times Books, \$23.00, 288 pages

In a series of of conversations, more than 40 hours in all, the Dalai Lama and Paul Ekman (psychologist and expert on emotions and facial expressions) discuss the nature of emotion as a universal commonality and how to handle, control, and manage emotions in positive ways. The two different approaches in viewing emotions—from the Buddhist and scientific points of views—find more common ground than different, and both men share and learn from each other. The main parts of the book are a written transcript of the conversations themselves, but they are interspersed with commentary from other scientist and Buddhists, sharing further enlightenment into what is a very complex and important subject. Some of the conversations are very theoretical (is it possible for a victim to extend compassion to their torturer) others highly practical (recognizing emotions as they occur and seeking their origin).

A very interesting, educational and, probably, helpful book for anyone interested in emotional balance, happiness, and forgiveness.



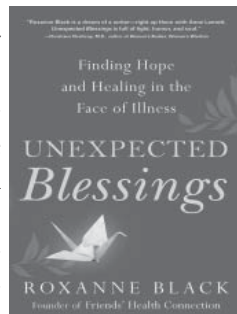
Unexpected Blessings

By Roxanne Black

Avery, 424.95, 240 pages

When she was 15, Roxanne Black was diagnosed with Lupus, a chronic debilitating disease, that ended her rowing and social life. As she continued her life with her new restrictions, she started Friends Health Connection, a network of patients that could help and support each other. Now, 20 years later, she has written a memoir, on how, even through her disease she was able to find inspiration in those around her, and inspire it in others. Her story is touching, as she describes the changes she had to get used to, the procedures and surgeries she needed and physical indignities that had to become commonplace.

Many people take an unexpected illness or disease like this as an excuse to feel sorry for themselves; Black took it as a challenge, rose to it, and is now providing inspiration to that next 15 year old facing a life changing crisis.



Local Calendar

8

Wednesday, Oct 8, 7:30 pm -
The Book Collector (1008 24th St.)
Rattlesnake Press Release party for Moira Magneson (He Drank Because) and Hatch Graham (Circling of the Pack)

10

Friday, October 10, 7:30 pm -
The Avid Reader at the Tower (1600 Broadway)
Book signing for Obscene to the Extreme by Rick Wartzman

11

Saturday, October 11, 1:00 - 3:00pm -
Barnes & Noble Citrus Heights (6111 Sunrise Blvd.)
Signing for local author Chris Enss - Frontier Teachers; Stories of Heroic Women of the Old West (\$14.95).

Saturday, October 11, 6:00 pm - CSU
Sacramento University Union
Lecture by Brian Fagan (The Great Warming: Climate Change and the Rise and Fall of Civilizations), Tickets \$10.00 General, \$5.00 Student

Saturday, October 11th, 7:30 pm -
Newsbeat (20th between J & K) -
“flatmanCROOKED - First Winter” -
Sacramento Release Party

Saturday, October 11, 7:30 pm -
The Avid Reader at the Tower (1600 Broadway)
Book signing for Zen of Helping by Andrew Bein

Thursday October 16th, 7:00 pm -
Time Tested Books (1114 21st St.)
William Burg discussing his book Sacramento.

17

Thursday, October 16,
7:30 pm - **The Avid Reader (617 Second Street, Davis)**
Book signing for House of Mondavi by Julia Flynn Siler

18

Saturday, October 18, 1:00 - 3:00pm -
Barnes & Noble Citrus Heights (6111 Sunrise Blvd.)
Children's author David Domeniconi will provide a special storytime and sign copies of his new book, Golden Numbers: A California Number Book (\$17.95).

Saturday, October 18th, 8:00 pm -
Pangaea Cafe (2743 Franklin Blvd.)
Content Inappropriate: Readings by Joe Wenderoth, “Whitey” and the editors of flatmanCROOKED

23

Thursday, October 23, 6:30 pm
Preview, 7:30 pm Lecture - Crest Theatre (1013 K St.)
CA Lectures Series - Julia Glass (I See You Everywhere). Tickets \$27.00

25

Saturday, October 25, 1:00 - 3:00pm -
Barnes & Noble Citrus Heights (6111 Sunrise Blvd.)
Local author Cindy Tuttle will discuss and sign copies of her new book, Joyful Surrender (\$16.95).

26

Sunday, October 26, 3:00 pm,
Time Tested Books (1114 21st St.)
Lin Jensen - Together Under One Roof

26

Sunday, October 26, 1:00 pm -
The Avid Reader at the Tower (1600 Broadway)
Book signing for Swimming the Mirror by Brad Buchanan

27

Monday, October 27, 7:30 pm -
The Avid Reader - Davis (617 Second Street, Davis)
Davis Bookclub - Under the Banner of Heaven by Jon Krakauer

29

Wednesday, October 29, 7:30 pm -
The Avid Reader (617 Second Street, Davis)
Book signing for Tyranny of Oil by Antonia Juhasz

30

Thursday, Oct. 30, 8 pm, **Luna's Café (1414 16th St.)**
Rattlesnake Press reading for B.L. Kennedy (Luna's House of Words); and an anthology of Luna's poets, artists and photographs (La Luna: Poetry Unplugged at Luna's Café) edited by Frank Andrick.

Sequential Art

The Alcoholic

By Jonathan Ames; Dean Haspiel
Vertigo, \$19.99, 136 pages

In a pseudo-autobiographical story, Ames (*Wake Up Sir!*) introduces us to the alcoholic, sexually debauched, and possibly confused, definitely self-absorbed mystery novelist Jonathan A. *The Alcoholic* follows Jonathan A as he discovers alcohol, sex, and drugs, loses his parents, goes to detox, flirts with homosexuality, and worries about his premature baldness. Haspiel's (*The Quitter*) art fits this type of realistic self-confessional; he's worked with writer Harvey Pekar (*The Quitter*). Disturbing at times, one almost hopes that the lows reached by Jonathan A. are not the lows reached by Ames during his life.



While graphic novels are usually shelved in bookstores all together, *The Alcoholic* deserves to be shelved along side books like *Lost Weekend*.

Justice League of America: The Tornado's Path

By Brad Meltzer; Ed Benes
DC Comics, \$17.99, 212 pages

What could possibly be better than another graphic novel about the JLA fighting Amazo? How about a graphic novel involving the before-mentioned scene, but throw in Solomon Grundy and Vixen as pivotal characters, and make the entire comic revolve around a super hero whose power is shooting T5 tornados from his hand. The Red Tornado is possibly the coolest hero ever, with the powers of flight and tornados. Oh, and he's an android with a sense of humor. The Tornado's Path follows the story of the Red Tornado and his path to become human, and the destruction and danger from said mission. This comic not only shows how truly powerful a hero can be, even if he seems weak compared to someone like, say, Superman, but it also shows how compelling the search for humanity really is.



--James Rojek

The Lost Colony, Book 3: Last Rights

By Grady Klein
First Second, \$18.95, 160 pages

Described as "a mysterious island, unknown to the rest of the world, in nineteenth century America," *The Lost Colony* seems based on the Roanoke Island, set in a somewhat magical environment. Technologically backward, culturally semi-current, the inhabitants are loosely connected to the mainland by a ferry, but somehow undiscovered by anyone there.

The third book has a stranger arriving on the ferry, posting flyers for an upcoming slave auction on the mainland. From here, a cascade of events takes place, from the banker's daughter, Birdy, plotting to get a slave to do her chores for her, to the free black and Indian inhabitants preparing to repel the expected slave-catchers. The Chinese-Mexican pharmacist/chemist, Dr. Pepe Wong tries to drug the stranger to make him forget the town's existence. And there is



the plantation owner that invents a robot to remove his need for slaves. The artwork is often thick lined, focused on the characters, with the backgrounds either indistinct, or simply a colored background with some texture. With the anachronistic elements, it's hard to place *The Lost Colony* as either a fable set "a long time ago, in a land far, far away" or as a modern allegory to discuss racism, technological disruption and social isolation. Either way, Klein seems to have a longer story in mind, and maybe will settle that issue eventually.

Batman Black and White Volume 2

By Various
DC Comics, \$19.95, 172 pages

Batman Black and White Volume 3

By Various
DC Comics, \$19.99,

The *Batman Black and White* Volumes Two and Three are the second and third volumes to the first *Batman Black and White*. These volumes collect the amazing miniseries of *Batman Black & White*, from a truckload



of different artists, possibly the best talent to touch the story of Bruce Wayne, playboy millionaire and caped crusader. Each story has its own twist on *Batman*, each inked in black and white. The black and white keep this series dark and mysterious, which is the general air the *Batman* comics breath. Every iconic *Batman* villain will make an appearance, and the different stories all have different takes and twists on the different aspects of *Batman*. A great buy, whether you are a *Batman* fanatic or only a tiny bit interested.

--James Rojek



Bone: The Complete Volume

By Jeff Smith
Cartoon Books, \$39.95, 1,300 pages

Originally produced over 13 years (1991 - 2004), the *Bone* comic series helped develop the second wave of black and white comics and created the superstar self-publishing comic writer and artist. This massive volume collects all individual issues in a slightly smaller size than originally published, but not enough to be truly noticeable unless you hold the pages next to each other. The story of three Bone cousins - Fone Bone, his scheming cousin Phony Bone, and the happy-go-lucky Smiley Bone, were all chased out of Boneville when one of Phony's get-rich quick plans goes horribly wrong; they find themselves in a strange land caught up in a fantasy tale of good and evil, right and wrong. All the supporting characters are well-developed, entertaining, and create emotional ties with the reader as the story develops. The story moves from an almost slapstick beginning (think Carl Bark's *Uncle Scrooge* stories), to dark fantasy in a Tolienesque fashion. The black and white art is both cartoony in many places, but that does not take away from the seriousness of the story in a way that Walt Kelly may have done had he worked in a longer format than his *Pogo* comic strip.

If you haven't read *Bone*, this one volume version is the cheapest way to get the entire story, and Smith's original colorless art keeps you focused on the simplicity of his lines or the darkness of the story when the blacks dominate the page.



Sequential Art

Into the Volcano

By Don Wood

Blue Sky Press/Scholastic, \$18.99, 175 pages

Famed children's illustrator Don Wood has produced his first graphic novel. Set on Wood's current home of Hawaii, it follows two brothers, Sumo and Duffy, as they are whisked out of their school during the middle of the day by their father and handed off to a family member they've never met or even heard of, to go to Hawaii and stay with another unknown family member, their Aunt Lulu. Sumo is concerned over the irregularity of the entire event, wishing his mother was home from Borneo to save him from having to go. Duffy, on the other hand, is quite happy to miss school and live on an island. Facing spiders, centipedes, a group of suspicious family member who are definitely up to something, and an active volcano, Sumo and Duffy find they have to depend on each other to get through their vacation and discover



that sometimes things are not as they appear.

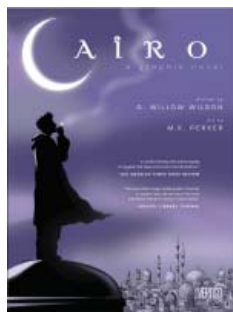
Beautifully drawn by computer, *Into the Volcano* is a spectacular book, showing all the 5 years Wood put into producing it.

Cairo

By G. Willow Wilson; M. K. Perker

Vertigo, \$17.99, 160 pages

Setting their story in the eponymous Egyptian city, Wilson and Perker are both relative newcomers to the sequential art medium. Perker is mostly a commercial illustrator, Wilson, a journalist and essayist. Ostensibly an action story about a stolen hookah containing a genie. Bringing together a diverse cast of character, *Cairo* allows Wilson to discuss current Middle Eastern politics and she weaves it into the story in a fairly natural manner; only sometimes does the social aspects seem forced. Perker's art is clean, detailed and his depictions of *Cairo* seem more natural and not photo referenced.



This almost reads like a decently budgeted Hong Kong movie, told comic style.

Drawing Words & Writing Pictures

By Jessica Abel; Matt Madden

First Second, \$29.95, 282 pages

After reading Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics*, the next book any aspiring comic creator should read is Abel and Maddon's *Drawing Words & Writing Pictures*. It is not a primer on drawing, but is 15 lessons on how to combine story, dialog and art into coherent comics. Chapters include lettering, character motivation, panel layout and one on scanning art into the computer and using Photoshop to finish your work. Drawn from Abel and Maddon's classes at the School of Visual Arts, *DWWP* can be used for independent study, or as a textbook for a class on the subject. Each chapter includes homework, additional activities and a bibliography of related reading material.



Number of the Beast

By Scott Beatty; Chris Sprouse; Karl Story

Wildstorm, \$19.99, 189 pages

Although most of us are not familiar with the super heroes in this comic book series, Beatty and Sprouse draw their reader into the fantastic life of the powers that make up The Paladins. Set in an alternate dimension, all of the heroes have been locked into a virtual world where they run the same apocalyptic training simulation over and over. Together, they must break free and rise against their captors. The bad guys become the good, the good become the bad, and everyone will change when the fate of the Earth's existence is on the line.



A good read, this graphic novel is a must for any avid comic book connoisseur.

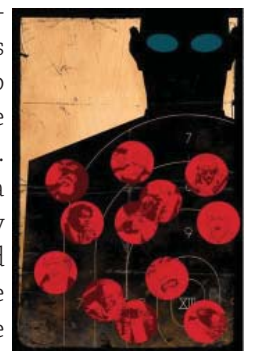
--James Rojek

100 Bullets Volume 12: Dirty

By Brian Azzarello; Eduardo Risso

Vertigo, \$12.99, 126 pages

This interestingly dark Eisner award winner, *100 Bullets*, is a gritty and dark murder mystery. At the center of the story is Graves, a man who is willing to help people extract revenge on those who have wronged them. He can give his clients immunity from any action he does, even murder. Like the earlier parts of this series, more members of "The Trust" are dying off, and a retired hitman is hired to stop Graves and those that work for him. This book has a murder at every page turn, and each one is more sinister than the last.



This graphic novel is a must read, as once you begin, you can't stop until you turn the final, bloody page.

--James Rojek



Bone: Color

By Jeff Smith; Steve Hamaker

Scholastic, \$9.99 each, 130+ pages

Without giving a story overview (see *Bone: The Complete Volume* review on page 14), these issues of *Bone* are reprints of Smith's original self-published collections of his critically acclaimed series.

Scholastic has added color to Smith's black and white art to excellent effect. Having read the books back when they were being published, the color adds another dimension to the story and art that I didn't know was missing. Hamaker's color is well-suited to the story, not dominating it, and, in many subtle ways, enhances the story. It wasn't for many pages that I realized that the white-skinned Bones had a very light pink tinge to their skin. The bright red of the Red Dragon pops out, which originally was only on the comic book covers.

The first eight books of the Scholastic reprints are available now, and the last, book nine, is scheduled for release in February 2009.

These color reprints are well worth the extra expense, especially for a series that will be enjoyed by many members of the family and be loaned out to friends and family.

Children's Books

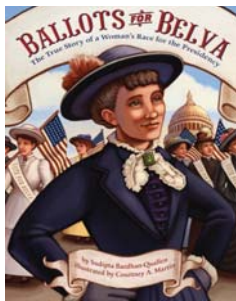
Ballots For Belva, The True Story of a Woman's Race for the Presidency

by Sudipta Bardhan-

Quallean and Courtney A. Martin

Abrams Books, \$16.95, 32 pages

In an era in which women were not allowed the same rights as men, one woman managed to initiate change. *Ballots For Belva* is the true story of a woman from the late 1880's named Belva Lockwood. Belva was determined not to let silly laws get in her way. She managed not only to attend the all-men's National University Law School, but she also received a diploma to become a lawyer. In addition, she was the first woman to run for President of the United States when women weren't even allowed to vote! Although Belva did not win the presidency, she came very close to winning the election and might have if the votes had been counted fairly.



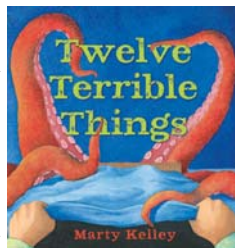
Ballots For Belva is an inspiring story for all women—young and old. It is a reminder to this generation as to just how far women have come in receiving equal rights. This true story sets the tone for anyone not letting anything stand in their way of achieving their goals.

Twelve Terrible Things

By Marty Kelley

Tricycle Press, \$15.99, 32 pages

Twelve Terrible Things is about an array of childhood memories—from the stinky, old aunt who wants to pinch your cheeks every time she sees you, to the cafeteria lady who smothers everything with gravy. The warning at the beginning of the book begs the reader to turn the page and read on, as if taunting us to close the book and walk away. The book is illustrated from the child's point of view, as though the smelly aunt's hands are reaching for the reader's cheeks.



The book relies heavily on its illustrations, since there are not many words; however the illustrations tell the story. As I turned the pages, I found myself thinking "oh, yeah, I remember that as a kid!" But, ice cream still does make everything better, doesn't it?

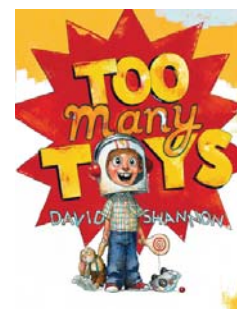
Too Many Toys

By David Shannon

Blue Sky Press, \$16.99, 32 pages

Too Many Toys is about a little boy named Spencer who has way too many toys. He has so many toys that his parents are tripping over them and stepping on jacks and Legos in the middle of the night. One day his mother has had

enough, and demands that Spencer get rid of toys he no longer wants. The trouble is, Spencer wants ALL of his toys. His mother finally gets him to agree to give away a large box of toys, but after she leaves the room Spencer empties out all the toys he agreed to give away. What she doesn't realize is that Spencer has discovered the greatest toy of all: a box!



Too Many Toys is artfully illustrated with bright colors that are similar to those used in the popular *I Spy* books. Children are sure to spend time trying to pick out the toys they recognize in this book – and there are a lot of them!

Beware of the Frog

By William Bee

Candlewick Press, \$15.99, 48 pages

Old Mrs. Collywobbles lives near the dark, scary woods, and the only thing between her and the nasty creatures living there is her pet frog. Each of the visitors coming to her house—the Greedy Goblin, the Smell Troll, and the Giant Hungry Ogre—all disregard the warning on the fence to "Beware of the Frog" to ill results. But, the surprise ending will make younger readers laugh and want to re-read the book. The illustrations are colorful, interesting and detailed.



The Little Bit Scary People

Emily Jenkins; Alexander Boiger

Hyperion Children's, \$16.99, 32 pages

A cute and helpful book for young children who find themselves scared of people who might be a little different, a little louder, or a little mean. The lesson that maybe those people have qualities that make them nice or normal in situations you don't get to see. Step-by-step, from the boy with the loud music, to the mean bus driver, to the girl that kicks the trash can just to hear the noise, each is given a more human aspect to make them just a little less scary. Illustrations are detailed, colorful, and a pleasure to view.



Sing My Song—A Kid's Guide to Songwriting

By Steve Seskin,

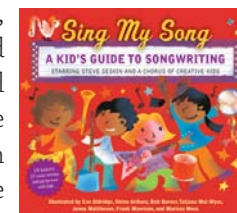
Eve Aldridge, Shino Arihara, Bob Barner,

Tatjana Mai-Wyss, Jenny Mattheson,

Frank Morrison and Marissa Moss

Tricycle Press, \$18.99, 32 pages

Sing My Song was developed by songwriter Steve Seskin who based his book on his background in teaching elementary school songwriting workshops. In the book, Seskin teaches young readers about the process of songwriting from creating lyrics and rhymes to giving the song a title. *Sing My Song* was illustrated by a bevy of artists, each song graced with an original illustration. The book comes with a CD featuring the songs in the book performed by Steve and a chorus of children.



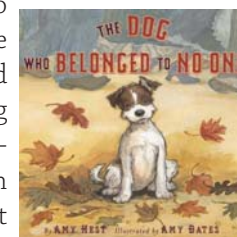
Seskin's compilation of silly lyrics set to fun music is bound to tantalize children of all ages, inspiring them to try their own hand at writing a tune.

The Dog Who Belonged to No One

By Amy Hest; Amy Bates

Abrams, \$15.95, 32 pages

A story of a lonely dog with crooked ears, looking for a warm place and someone to care for him, and a young girl looking for a friend to join her as she works around town delivering bread for her parents. Tracing both as they go about their lives, looking for something to complete their lives; eventually they meet on a stormy night, and after that, they belonged to each other. The watercolor illustrations are gorgeous, muted and fit the early American era the story is set within.



The Pet Dragon

By Christoph Niemann

Greenwillow, \$16.99, 40 pages

In a very interesting twist on teaching children foreign language, illustrator Christoph Niemann has embedded Chinese characters into his illustrations, as both part of the picture, but also in a relevant way. The story of Lin and her pet dragon,



Inside the Slidy Diner

Written by Laurel Snyder and Jaime Zollars

Tricycle Press, \$15.99

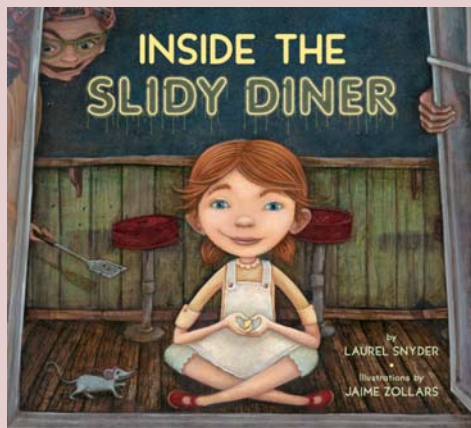
32 pages

Eddie spends her days at The Slidy Diner after stealing a lemon drop. The Slidy Diner hosts quite an array of characters such as Ethelmae, the old lady with curlers and a bird's nest in her hair and the gray man, who has fallen asleep in his oatmeal. My 8-year-old and I read this book and she spent much time looking at the beautiful illustrations which are filled with little things to find hidden amongst the food, under the tables, and in the cupboards.

This is a book that is bound to bring hours of enjoyment to little children. There is no doubt that each read will uncover new tidbits that were not seen the last time the book was picked up.

And in the end...well, I won't give away the ending about Eddie and that lemon drop. This is a book that will bond a parent and child together as they snuggle in for a bedtime story.

--Heidi Komlofske

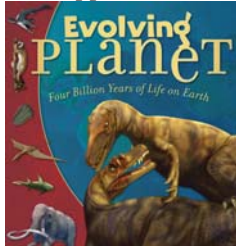


who disappears after they get in trouble and Lin's father wants the dragon in a cage instead of loose. When Lin finds her dragon gone, she heads out to find him. All along the way, the illustrations make the story flow, and the Chinese characters don't distract from the pictures or the story, but, instead, add to it.

Evolving Planet

By Erica Kelly; Richard Kessel
Abrams, \$19.95, 136 pages

Less a handbook on evolution, *Evolving Planet* is more a younger reader guide to all the forms of life that have existed so far and what happened to them. There is an easy-to-follow explanation on how evolution works and how animals can change over time. It also covers the mass extinctions that have happened in the past, different animals that have existed, a pronunciation key to the many Latin names and a bibliography for further reading.

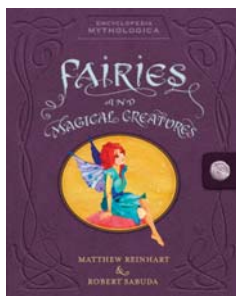


Families that don't believe in evolution will not be interested in this book, but those who want to be able answer questions for younger children on how evolution works, types of life that existed in the many millions of years of the past and create an interest in natural history will find *Evolving Planet* a helpful resource.

Monsterology

By Dr. Ernest Drake; Douglas Carrell; Nicholas Lenn; and Helen Ward
Candlewick Press, \$19.99, 32 pages

A sequel to 2003's *Dragonology*, *Monsterology* treats the world's many mythical creatures as objects of scientific study. From Unicorns and Chimeras to Centaurs and the Loch Ness Monster, each monster is given attention on history, living areas and, sometimes, samples of their skin, fur or hair. There are many extra booklets built into the book—a riddle book, in case you meet a Sphinx, a cabinet of curiosities full of samples. Written like a natural history book from the 1800's, *Monsterology* is fun, entertaining, and will keep younger readers busy.



Encyclopedia Mythologica: Fairies and Magical Creatures

By Matthew Reinhart; Robert Sabuda
Candlewick Press, \$27.99, 12 pages

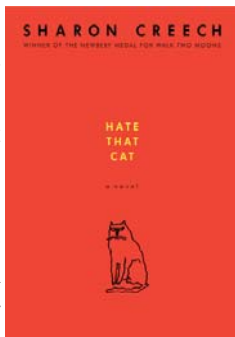
A truly spectacular pop-up book from two masters of the art. The start of a new series focusing on mythological creatures, *Fairies and Magical Creatures* has multiple, detailed pop-ups on each page and can be enjoyed from several angles. The stories are somewhat dark, focusing on the more trickster aspects of fairy mythology, but not too dark for younger readers. In addition, many lesser-known mythical creatures from non-Western mythology have been included. But it is, at its heart, a pop-up book. Reinhart and Sabuda are the creators of the Encyclopedia Prehistorica pop-up books, and with this new series, they can create even more fantastical art and pop-ups. While only 12 pages long, the book is almost 2 inches thick and just an amazingly engineered collection of pop-ups.



Hate That Cat

By Sharon Creech and Joanna Cotler
Harper Childrens, \$15.99
160 pages

In a series of poems, Newbery Award winner Creech tells the story of Jack, his teacher, Miss Stretchberry, and a fat black cat. Told in diary form, the poems in *Hate That Cat* teach ways that poems can look, feel and behave. Some of the poems are "inspired" by other poems assigned to Jack by Miss Stretchberry, and those poems are included in the back of the book. As the school year goes on, Jack comes to terms with the death of his dog, Sky, and develops a relationship with the black cat he hates. Through his poems, we are introduced to Jack's family, and his deaf mother that is able to "hear" Jack's poems at the end of the school year. Wonderfully written, practically useful to learn about poetry and emotionally compelling to see Jack's story throughout his school year.



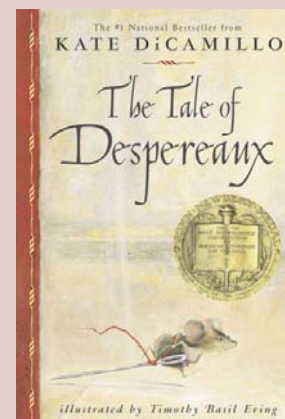
The Tale of Despereaux Movie Storybook

By Kate DiCamillo
Candlewick Press, \$18.99, 14 pages

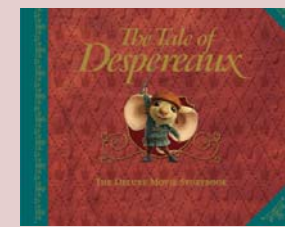
The Tale of Despereaux

Kate DiCamillo
Candlewick Press, \$7.99, 269 pages

The story of a young mouse who doesn't want to behave like a mouse (he'd rather read the books than reading them), *The Tale of Despereaux* is the best-selling Newbery award-winning book (2004) and wonderfully illustrated in black and white by Timothy Basil Ering. Despereaux falls in love with Princess Pea, and banished to the dungeon by his father for "un-mouselike behavior." He is joined by Chiaroscuro, a rat who doesn't like living in the dungeon darkness like the other rats, and Miggery Sow, a young serving girl clouted on the head so often she has cauliflower ears. Together, they have to pool their resources to save themselves and the Princess. Good to read to young readers or for mid-grade readers to read on their own; if you haven't picked it up, it deserves to be on a shelf with *Wind in the Willows*.



In a very well-produced pop-up book, *The Tale of Despereaux Movie Story Book* is aimed at young readers who will be interested in the upcoming December release of the movie. While a very shortened version of the story, the pop-ups and other paper engineering in the are top-notch, and the art from the movie will increase interest from young fans. While a very short book, collectors of good pop-up books, fans of *Despereaux*, and parents of young children who want to introduce them to the story prior to taking them to the movie will all want to purchase this book.



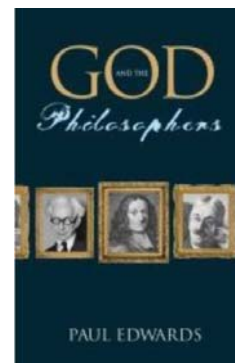
--Ross Rojek

Religion-Christian

God and the Philosophers

By Paul Edwards
Prometheus Books, \$28.95, 250 pages

Edwards is a witty and knowledgeable museum guide touring the reader through a vast collection of the greatest works of philosophers—both obscure and renowned. He relates philosophers, such as Thomas Aquinas, Voltaire, David Hume, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Bertrand Russell, through comparative study of their views on God, morality, creation, life after death, free will, and eternity, as well as other philosophical ideas. Some unexpected members of his cast include Blaise Pascal, Charles Darwin, and Carl Sagan, whose reputation for science are not mutually



exclusive of philosophical and religious thinking.

This book is not for the philosophical neophyte, who may find themselves intimidated by the erudite quality of the text and lack of explanations for the various philosophical concepts. The references provided in each section of *God and the Philosophers* are a great resource for additional study and reading.

Edwards is not content to simply tell the stories of the philosophers, although he provides historical details about their lives and the political/religious climate during their lifetime, Edwards adds his own humorous and sometimes acerbic commentary throughout the tour, either agreeing or disagreeing as his own views dictate, which takes this volume beyond simply a compilation of the works of great philosophers' past.

--Natalie Stone

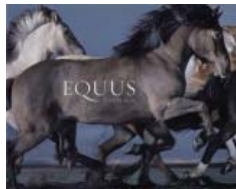
Art, Architecture & Photography

Equus

By Tim Flach

Abrams, \$60.00, 300 pages

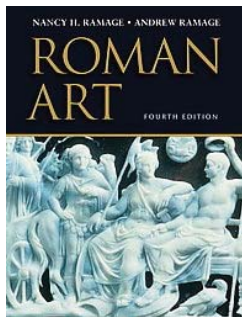
In coffee table book sure to be opened, poured over, and enjoyed for years, Tim Flach's *Equus* celebrates the horse in all its varied glory. Photographing them in their own elements, as well as studio settings and underwater training pools, Flach traveled around the world looking for the perfect shot, and, after 7 years, collected them. More than 200 full-color photos, ranging from Arabians to zebras, close-ups and panoramic views. The highlights are the pictures of the horses interacting with each other in their native environment, be it the snow of Finland or the deserts of the American Southwest. Flach's numerous close-ups range from the texture of horses hair to a couple of very close (and reprinted in very large format) pictures of eyes and one of a swarm of horse flies. *Equus* goes beyond being a survey of horses and raises it to what it is—a fine art book of portraits, who's subjects happen to have hooves.



Art of the Romans

By Nancy H. Ramage; Andrew Ramage
Prentice Hall, \$125.00, 384 pages

Ostensibly a college textbook, the *Art of the Romans* is a wonderful overview of 1,300 years of art in Italy. Anyone who has been to Italy has seen the centuries of art, buildings and culture that exist everywhere. Here, with many color pictures, clear text and organized timelines, is how Roman art, architecture, and culture developed, from the early Etruscans in the 1000s B.C. to the emperor Constantine and the introduction of Christianity. Closeups of mosaics and engravings on tombs contrast with the oversized grandeur of Roman villas, aqueducts and coliseums. If you enjoy learning about history, visiting Italy or are planning a visit sometime in the future, this book is like getting a personal guided tour of Roman art history.



Street Art

By Cedar Lewisohn

Abrams, \$24.95, 160 pages

Graffiti is often considered a blight on society and property. Lewisohn traces graffiti from the earliest origins that can be found (Pompeii and Greek drinking pots) to its current status as introductory work for aspiring modern artists. With lots of photos, *Street Art* show graffiti not as just random spray-painting, but as self-expression, political statements, and as artistic endeavors. There are numerous interviews with street artists, overviews of their work, and illustrations of some of their best art. Artists, like Keith Haring and Banksy, have moved from street art to high-end gallery showings. New art collectives, like Crate-man and Graffiti Research Lab, have changed graffiti from paint on walls to public installations of art without permission. There may be a bit too much emphasis on New York graffiti from the 70's and 80's, but, without that period, and without the subway cars taking street art from one borough to another, challenging other graffiti artist to answer back with something, bigger, better, or more controversial, today's modern art may not be as vibrant as it is.

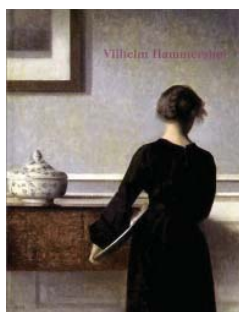


Hammershøi

By Felix Kramer; Naoki Sato; Anne-Birgitte Fonsmark

Abrams, \$75.00, 160 pages

Danish painter Vilhelm Hammershøi (1864–1916) was artist of renown in his lifetime, but faded as the years went by. Published to coincide with major retrospectives of his work, both in the UK and in Japan, *Hammershøi* goes beyond being a catalog of his works and provides perspective on his life, travels, and how his artwork reflected his time. Many of his interior paintings are highly reminiscent of 17th Century Dutch masterworks in their perspectives, colors, and subjects. The paintings of the interior of his apartment show a sparse living environment, with few pieces of artwork on the walls. His land-



scapes are usually empty, almost static in their view. Architectural paintings of London, show his fascination with the city, and lack of human figures provide them a timelessness that could have had them painted at any point in the last 200 years. This may only be for a specialized audience, but anyone who enjoys 17th Century Dutch paintings and is unfamiliar with Hammershøi (and granted, they probably won't be) will find this book a good addition to their art book collection.

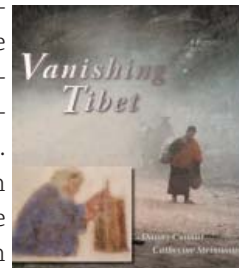
Vanishing Tibet

By Danny Conant;

Catherine Steinmann

Overlook Press, \$39.95, 96 pages

Going beyond a simple, albeit beautiful, photo record of Tibet and its inhabitants, Conant and Steinmann have created a multimedia eulogy to the vanishing indigenous people and culture of the country. Their many pictures, in black and white, and color, are often haunting, particularly when reproduced on the many varied surfaces and substances chosen. Pictures of Tibetan schoolchildren are reproduced on hand-made paper made by those same children. Other images are manipulated into unusual perspectives or overlaid onto religious objects. With the new bullet train going from China to Tibet, there will only be more encroachment onto traditional Tibetan culture. *Vanishing Tibet* will be one record of its final days, and its images will stay with you.



Graphic!

By Johanna Drucker; Emily McVarish

Prentice Hall, \$135.00, 416 pages

In this very comprehensive guide to graphic design, the authors started with the very early forms of creative art that were not just pictures recording early man's needs and activities, but the representational art that expressed ideas. From there, *Graphic!* flows through history covering early writing, Medieval lettering, Renaissance design and into modern typography with the invention of the Gutenberg



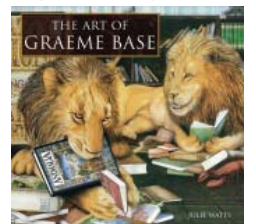
press. *Graphic!* is almost exclusively focused on print, but going beyond typography into design, layout, images and the communication of ideas. Hundreds of illustrations; profiles of artists, magazines, newspapers, advertisements and books. A great reference guide for anyone in the print graphics field, and probably highly helpful for those in the digital field.

The Art of Graeme Base

By Julie Watts

Abrams, \$60.00, 244 pages

Graeme Base is known for his highly detailed, gorgeously painted illustrations in his children's books (*Animalia*, *The Eleventh Hour*, and *Enigma*). *The Art of Graeme Base* is a biography of his life, overview of his work, and almost as much fun to read as his books. Not only are there plenty of illustrations of his work, but there are also rough drawings showing how the illustrations developed from idea to finished work. Watts' biography of Base is supplemented by Base's own commentary about the illustrations and the thoughts he had when developing them or sometimes just personal stories associated with them. Starting with Chapter 4, each chapter is the story of each of his books, how it started, the turns it took along the way, and what was happening in his life at that time. If you, or your children own and enjoy Base's work, this book is almost as fun to read. And with all the extra unpublished illustrations, its almost as much fun as looking for through his books for the hidden parts to his illustrations. (See another Graeme Base book "*Enigma*" on front cover.)

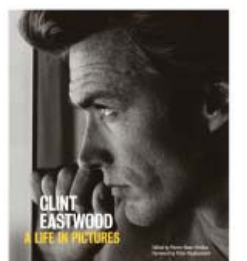


Clint Eastwood: A Life in Pictures

By Pierre-Henri Verlhac

Chronicle, \$40.00, 192 pages

In the most recent addition to Chronicle's *A Life in Pictures* series, and a departure from the previous subjects (Audrey Hepburn and Marilyn Monroe), comes the penultimate male movie star, Clint Eastwood. From his early beef cake photos, through the Spaghetti westerns and Dirty Harry Movies, to his most recent film roles, *Clint Eastwood: A Life in Pictures* is the photo



history of an American movie icon. Eastwood was been nominated for 10 Academy Awards, won five, and one of only two people to be nominated twice for Best Actor and Director for the same film (the other is Warren Beatty). Hundreds of photos from all portions of his life, public and private, many not seen in wide release. The only odd point was the choice of a forward by Peter Bogdanovich; there are a number of actors or directors that could have been chosen and with more relevance to Eastwood.

A must-buy for any Clint fan. I doubt that this volume will be topped at any point in the near future.

Vanity Fair: The Portraits

By Graydon Carter

Abrams, \$65.00, 384 pages

Almost a companion piece to the Edward Steichen book reviewed here, *Vanity Fair: The Portraits*, collects 300 pictures from the pages of Vanity Fair. Covering almost 95 years of fashion, culture, and the arts, the number of subjects portrayed in *Portraits* is a who's who of the 20th century. The photographers are also luminous, from Edward Steichen, who really developed the standard, through to portraitist to the stars, Annie Leibovitz. Doing a pictorial in Vanity Fair was almost a right of passage for many actors and actresses, and the resulting pictures have often become their iconic legacy. The subjects range from Pablo Picasso to Cary Grant, from Amelia Earhart to Leonardo DiCaprio. The commentary from David Friend, Terrance Pepper, and Christopher Hitchens provide a concise overview of the history of Vanity Fair, in two part, and the biographies of the photographers. The vast bulk of the book lies in the images—many in black and white, but they are well matched on the pages, interspersed with the color. Many of Vanity Fair's two page and pull-out images are reproduced, and as the book is an oversized coffee table book, they fit across the book much like originally published. The only complaint: They could have picked a better cover.

Edward Steichen: In High Fashion

By William A. Ewing; Todd Brandow

Norton, \$75.00, 288 pages

From 1923 to 1938, Edward Steichen was the chief photographer for the Condé Nast publications Vogue and Vanity Fair. Already an established photographer, this new influence gave him access to the cream of American and European actors, actresses, models, society, and royalty. Most of this collection have never been

seen before and provides a view of that time period done by a master portraitist with some of the most photogenic faces and personalities in the first half of the last century. Ranging from anonymous models to celebrities like Charlie Chaplin, Greta Garbo, W. C. Fields (in one of the only humorous photos of the collection), *Edward Steichen: In High Fashion* is an excellent book for fans of portraits, early 20th century movies and above all, those who enjoy vintage clothing.

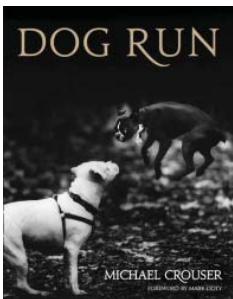


Dog Run

By Michael Crouser

Viking Studio, \$32.00, 112 pages

The oldest relationship humans have with another species is probably the dog. They have been our hunting partners, protectors, and, now, most often, our pets. It's often hard to look at your pet and think that they are still fairly close to the wild animals that used to chase down live prey for food. In *Dog Run*, photographer Michael Crouser helps bring back those images of dog as animal and not pet, by photographing them at dog parks. Flashing teeth, tumbling bodies, lots of motion. The black and white photographs were probably the best choice for this, as color might have put the emphasis on the the breeds and types of dogs, instead of the starkness of motion and those before mentioned bared fangs. Even knowing that these dogs are at play, humans all around, there is a wildness in the pictures, as the dogs focus their play on each other, snapping, snarling, and then making up to do it all over again.



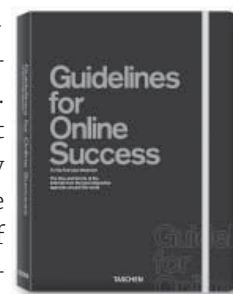
Computers & Internet

Guidelines for Online Success

By Rob Ford; Julius Weidemann, Eds.

Taschen, \$39.99, 366 pages

In a very well-put-together book, editors Ford and Weidemann have collected more than 200 websites, many of them from Ford's Favorite Website Awards, and provided information about who designed them, what makes them work, why they are successful and a couple of screenshots. Each site is not covered in any depth, but the sheer breadth of coverage of different types of sites is very good. Most of the sites use Flash in either a minor or major part of their site, so fans of *Skip Intro* won't be real impressed. There is (as one might expect from a Taschen book) a nice selection of web sites from around the world, and not just American sites. From a designer point of view, there is much to give you ideas for your own or client sites. From a business point of view, it is less helpful. The do's and don'ts might be helpful, but are more general in nature and not as specific as you could get in a more business-oriented and less design-oriented book. Many of the sites used as examples are more than a year old, and in Internet design time, that's almost an entire generation. But that may be more indicative of the problems moving from the Internet to print, than the selection of sites by the authors. In summary, buy this if your livelihood, or your interests, lie in the web design area, not if you are hoping for clear business guidelines for your website.

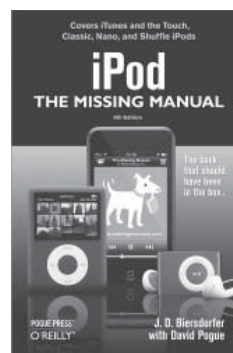


iPod: The Missing Manual

By J.D. Biersdorfer; David Pogue

O'Reilly, \$19.95, 256 pages

Ok, you've bought your iPod, or been given one by a nice friend or relative. The one thing you will notice is the manual you get is pretty limited. Enter O'Reilly's *Missing Manual* series. The new 7th edition of their iPod manual covers all the different forms of iPods, installing iTunes, and finding copy protec-



tion songs to put on it (all legally, of course), how to manipulate iTunes between computers, how the Genius features work and how to use them to your full advantage and how to get TV shows, movies podcasts and more on your iPod. Owners of older iPods don't have to get the newest version to appreciate this book. The sections on iTunes, the Apps store and other tips and tricks will come in handy for all versions. A worthwhile addition to an iPod purchase. Too bad Apple couldn't include something this good when you buy one.

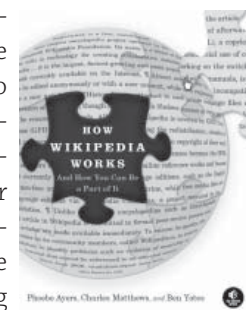
How Wikipedia Works

By Phoebe Ayers; Charles Matthews;

Ben Yates

No Starch Press, \$29.99, 536 pages

Few sites show the potential of the collaborative spirit of the Internet as much as Wikipedia. Cited in hundreds of books, case studies and probably more than a few business plans, Wikipedia has changed not only the way people perceive the accuracy of information on the Internet, but also the way they interact with that information. For many people, deciding to move from just using Wikipedia to settle questions, research a paper or just spend hours moving from page to page, to contributing to the editing and community of Wikipedia is a huge step. *How Wikipedia Works* makes that easier. Mostly aimed at those people more comfortable referring to a book than to a series of web pages for instructions on how to edit a page, fact-check and document, adding new pages and participating in the active community surrounding Wikipedia, *How Wikipedia Works* provides plenty of clear step-by-step lessons. Probably the best and most complete book on Wikipedia to date. For those old schoolers who like a book they can mark-up and flag pages with Post-It notes.

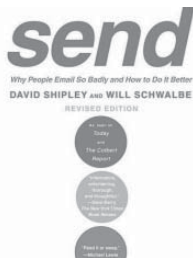


Business & Investing

Send

By David Shipley and Will Schwalbe
Knopf, \$19.95, 288 pages

This revised edition of *Send: Why People Email So Badly and How to Do It Better*, really ought to be one of those books people are required to read prior to being given an email account. Sure, there are lots of funny little anecdotes to keep you interested, but the main message is to consider what you are sending, to whom, and the potential impact of the email if it receives a wider audience than you planned. From the Eight Deadly Sins of Email (#3 The email that lands you in jail) to The Anatomy of an Email, Shipley and Schwalbe provide extremely good suggestions to keep your emails clear, productive and you potentially out of jail. A new chapter in this edition covers tips for keeping hand-held email devices from taking over your life.

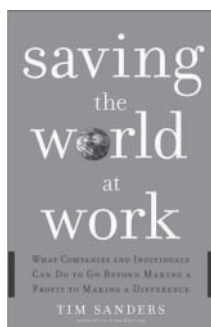


Saving the World at Work

By Tim Sanders

Doubleday, \$23.95, 256 pages

Former Chief Strategy Officer for Yahoo, Sanders has a new book out on how the Green Revolution is affecting business strategy. He calls it the Responsibility Revolution, and shows how many companies are making their responsibility to their customers, employees, partners, communities and the world an essential part of their business practices. Sanders argues that consumers and employees are now beginning to demand those changes through changing the way they purchase goods and what companies they are willing to work for. Drawing from examples for a multitude of companies that have already made socially responsible changes - Timberland, Whole Foods, SAS Institute and Ben & Jerry's - *Saving the World at Work* provides some practical advice for both the company leaders and those working at the front lines on how to effect positive



change in their workplace. With the occasional awkward labeling of roles (Saver Soldiers and SaverCEOs) *Saving the World at Work* does give a good set of instructions and effectively marries the Greening at Work trend with the Social Responsibility trend to create the Responsibility Revolution.

Click

By Bill Tancer

Hyperion, \$25.95, 240 pages

Bill Tancer describes himself as being a "data lover" from an early age, well before the math geek badge became one of pride. So, it would follow that, as the general manager of Global Research at Hitwise (an online competitive intelligence service), he would revel in the data that he gets from tracking 10 million Internet user's web traffic every day. *Click* is a survey of the ways in which that data can be used, from picking winners of reality dance shows to analyzing the two major groups of prom dress buyers, and why one starts in January and the other in March.

It would be easy to dismiss this as just another book, like *Freakonomics*—someone with a weird discipline showing that their information can be cool, too. However, some of the trends Tancer describes have interesting implications, as they show differences between our online and offline behaviors, including things we are unwilling to confess to offline pollsters (our Internet porn habits), our willingness to use the Internet instead of a doctor (what do fears do people research most online) and the reasons why online poker playing is cyclical.

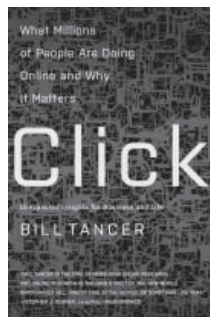
Does any of it actually matter? Yes, but maybe only to other data junkies. But those people will see this as a manual to start, find or ride trends. You may find it a better source to understand just how the Internet is actually used, and not how you think it is used.

Tuned In

By Craig Stull; Phil Myers; David Meerman Scott

Wiley, \$27.95, 224 pages

Tuned In refers to focusing your business on the needs of your customers and fulfilling them, instead of creating new products or services and then trying to convince consumers they need them



through mass advertising. While there have been a number of books on this subject in recent years (Blue Ocean Strategy for one), the authors have done a reasonably good job providing a framework to tune into customer needs. There are many real-world examples of companies that have both succeeded and failed, and, after-action analysis, why those products worked or didn't. As always, it's easy to spot the winners and losers in hindsight.

It's harder to find breakthrough products that only slightly worked. Stull, Myers and Scott try to provide a six-step process to making sure you focus only on opportunities that have the chance to provide a winning result, though there are elements of this process that remind me of a *Far Side* cartoon: two scientists are looking at a chalk board and, in the middle of the long, complicated equation, there is a note "A miracle occurs here." Step four of the six steps is that miracle: Create breakthrough experiences. Plenty of great products have fallen by the wayside, even though they had breakthrough experiences.

If you enjoyed and use the concepts in *Blue Ocean Strategy*, *Tuned In* will be a good addition to your reference shelf.

Do You Matter?

By Robert Brunner; Stewart Emery; Russ Hall

FT Press, \$24.99, 256 pages

In an example of "if you have a hammer, everything looks like a nail," former Apple Design Director, Robert Brunner, has co-written a book advocating that the way to a successful company is through design. In multiple case studies, he explains that good design practice, at all levels of business, drives better customer relationships and, thus, better profits, margins, and customer retention. To do that, designers need to be given a more prominent roll in the business structure and management. And, because enough of the book focused on the role of design at Apple, I almost checked to see if there was an Apple logo on the spine of the book. Now, many of the other examples in the book are also high-profile, highly emotionally compelling companies, through the design of



the products they sell—IKEA, BMW, W Hotel and Whole Foods, to name a few—and there are very good discussions of the way that design works.

The book is entertaining, but doesn't seem as practical for smaller businesses that do not have the budget for a design department or even a design consultant. Interesting case studies. (And, speaking of good design, I still cannot decide of the design of the book was good or bad. It felt awkward to read, but the pictures and sidebars seemed to fit in well.)

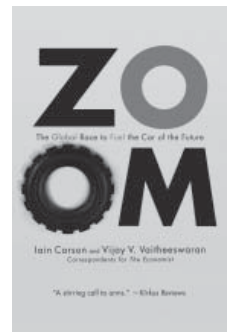
Zoom

By Iain Carson;

Vijay V. Vaitheeswaran

Twelve, \$14.99, 352 pages

Less a history of the internal combustion engine and the vehicles that it powers, *Zoom* does that, introduces you to the innovators trying to find the next major way to power transportation and provides a multitude of reasons why this is one of the most important issues the world faces. Both authors are highly familiar with the workings of the automotive and transportation industries; Carson being the former industry editor for *The Economist*, and Vaitheeswaran having been a writer for energy and environmental stories also for *The Economist*. The chapters on the development of America's reliance on Middle Eastern hold particular relevance today, even though they were originally published last year. This new paperback publication of *Zoom: The Global Race to Fuel the Car of the Future*, is a fun, comprehensive overview of cars, our dependence on them, and the future of how we will get from here to there.

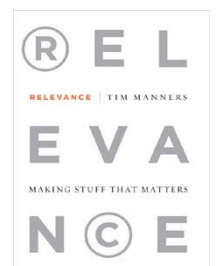


Relevance

By Tim Manners

Portfolio, \$24.95, 224 pages

In the most recent denunciation of mass market advertising as a method to create demand, Tim Manners provides (as expected) not only relevant case studies, but a very readable guide to adding relevance to your own products and services, regardless of the size of business. While a portion of his focus is on making your brand relevant, any-



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one providing a product can make sense of the six key issues he brings to light. From caring about what your customers do and not what they think (Insight) to knowing your brand needs to be worth more than what your customers spend on it (Value), *Relevance* proves its relevance in today's crowded business book market. Plenty of examples, both positive and negative, quotes from many of the executives who's businesses are cited, short summaries of the key points. Perfect for people who've read and enjoyed Seth Godin or Malcolm Gladwell.

The World is Curved

By David M. Smick

Portfolio, \$26.95, 272 pages

As Congress argues the merits, limits, and necessity of a trillion-dollar bailout of the mortgage crisis, David Smick's new book, *The World is Curved*, takes on a new importance. While, at first glance, it looks like a business book trying to ride on the coat tails of Thomas Friedman's *The World is Flat*, *Curved* is a very good tour of the rise of private capital in world markets, the reduced importance of central bankers, and the interdependence of the global economy. Friedman's book concentrated on the ways in which global interdependence was good for everyone. *Curved* explains why that same interdependence makes even small problems in one part of the world cascade into areas no one would expect.

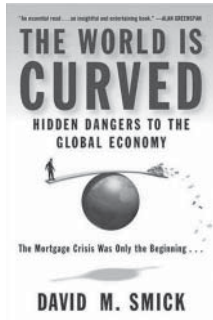
Easy to read, but not as conversational as *Flat*. Highly important, particularly if you are interested (and you should be) on why the securitization of sub-prime mortgages has caused not only localized foreclosures and housing problems, but also a potential world-wide credit crisis.

From Average to Awesome

By Jim Smith Jr.

ASTD Press, \$18.95, 260 pages

In an actually practical guide to improving your life, Jim Smith Jr.'s book *From Average to Awesome* has helpful advice (and lots of it), checklists and methods for overcoming adversity to create an awesome life. At times over the top with enthusiasm



or stories of hardships overcome, it is still one of the better personal motivation books to come out in a while. Not a time management book, it focuses on ways to deal with many areas in your life that could use improvement, and helps you through key questions at the end of each chapter to find your strengths and weaknesses and ways to work on them. He may have gone overboard with inspirational quotes, but he is a self-confessed quote collector, and it's his book, so he can use them if he wants.

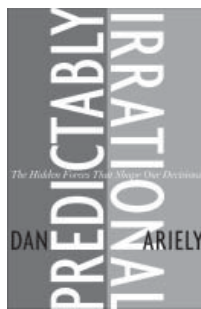
Predictably Irrational

By Dan Ariely

Harper, \$25.95, 304 pages

In *Predictably Irrational*, MIT professor Dan Ariely shows that not only do people make irrational decisions, they make them in a highly predictably fashion.

Through 20 years of research in behavioral economics, Ariely has come up with a surprising series of results, explaining everything from why a 50-cent aspirin will cure a headache faster than a 1-cent aspirin, even if they are both the same, to why we don't lie after recalling the Ten Commandments, even when we can't get caught in the lie. Often compared to *Freakonomics*, *Predictably Irrational* actually gives better information, being that many of the examples used by Ariely can help you begin to make changes in how you decide things and maybe start behaving more rationally. And, with the ongoing financial crisis at hand, housing collapse, and the new concerns over bank stability, being able to make consistent, rational decisions is more important than ever.



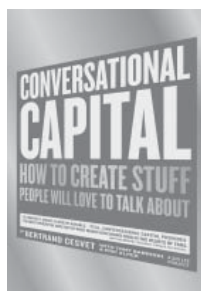
Conversational Capital

By Bertrand Cesvet; Tony Babinski;

Eric Alper

FT Press, \$22.99, 208 pages

Casvet is the chairman and chief strategist of Sid Lee, an experiential and creative design firm that has worked on multiple, high-profile brands, developing strategies for them that consumers love to talk about. In *Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell explained the importance of consumers



talking about products they loved in making them hits or fads. But he didn't get into the specifics on how to create the desire to talk up a product. In *Conversational Capital*, Cesvet, Babinski and Alper take their experiences with brands like Cirque du Soleil, Red Bull, and Addidas to explain just how word-of-mouth campaigns work, how to start them and the different ways they behave. The eight engines of word-of-mouth campaigns identified in the book include Initiation (the difficulty in acquiring an item or experience), Ritual (creating comfort through familiarity), and Exclusive Product Offerings (self explanatory). Most of the examples are of large companies, but useful for many sizes of businesses.

Philanthrocapitalism

By Matthew Bishop; Michael Green

Bloomsbury Press, \$27.00, 304 pages

With the rise of the mega-rich who didn't inherit their money, but made it within the early part of their life, philanthropy has been changing. No longer is the money going to foundations that hand out money without getting any accountability as the the effectiveness of the grant. These new donors are demanding not only accountability, but actual results. *Philanthrocapitalism* is one of the first books to investigate the new world of business model donating. Using the lessons they learned from the business ventures that earned their millions or billions, are willing not just to put money into a charity, but want measurable results showing that their money had a specific, definable success. Interviewing billionaires like Bill Gates, Michael Bloomberg and George Soros, Bishop and Green provide an inside look at how charity is changing, and how that may soon change the way world problems will be approached and solved.



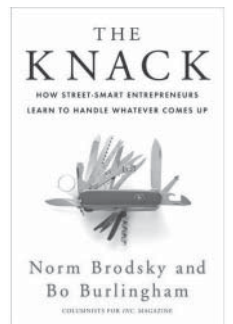
The Knack

By Norm Brodsky; Bo Burlingham

Portfolio, \$25.95, 256 pages

Brodsky and Burlingham will be familiar names to readers of Inc. magazine. Brodsky through his Street Smarts column, Burlingham as an editor-at-large, and author of *Small Giants* (2006). Together, they have collaborated on *The Knack*, a distillation of the skills one needs to survive in business, in all sorts

of situations. Covering the financial numbers you need to know and keep an eye on, how to raise money during the current credit crunch, the differences between sales and cash flow, *The Knack* could be an invaluable guide for your current or future business. Brodsky sold his document storage company last year for \$110 million. It was his eighth business, three of which were Inc. 500 honorees. His insight and knowledge about all phases of business development is spectacular, and you really cannot go wrong with this book.

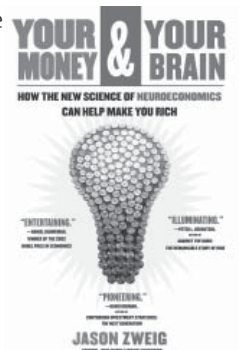


Your Money & Your Brain

By Jason Zweig

Simon & Schuster, \$15.00, 352 pages

Using MRIs and neuroscience, Zweig shows that the way we approach financial decisions is almost intrinsically opposite to the logical way. Our brains evolved over a very long period of time to help us find food, avoid pre We didn't evolve the ability to decipher the rapidly changing, and almost totally random nature of the stock market, but we continue to make decisions without recognizing our irrationalism (see the related book - *Predictably Irrational*). For example, we developed the ability to be confidence, most likely to keep us from becoming paralyzed with indecision. However, that often leads to an overconfidence in our own ability to pick stocks, see trends or make rational investments. Zweig's subtitle is "How the new science of neuroeconomics can help make you rich" and in *Your Money & Your Brain*, he shows the various ways people make highly irrational decisions when dealing with money or investing and how to recognize those errors. The major problem with the book is that the people who probably need these lessons most are probably too overconfident in their own skills and rational-



See **MONEY**, page 22

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MONEY, Cont'd from page 21

how to raise money during the current credit crunch, the differences between sales and cash flow, *The Knack* could be an invaluable guide for your current or future business. Brodsky sold his document storage company last year for \$110 million. It was his eighth business, three of which were Inc. 500 honorees. His insight and knowledge about all phases of business development is spectacular, and you really cannot go wrong with this book.

The Small Business Bible

By Steven D. Strauss
Wiley, \$19.95, 544 pages

Strauss is a small business expert, columnist for USA Today.com, and frequent talking head on financial TV. In this almost intimidatingly sized book, he goes into comprehensive coverage on all parts of running a business, managing people, buying a franchise and more. Much more detailed than most other basic business guides, *The Small Business Bible* is helpful to those who are not experienced business people. Experienced business owners will probably



find sections that will teach them something new, or help them do things better, but a great deal of the book is aimed at the beginner. If you've been thinking about opening a business, or have a business you've been managing by the seat of your pants, this would be a valuable guide.

Retail Business Kit for Dummies

By Rick Segel
Wiley, \$34.99, 408 pages

The *Dummies* guides have taken on a certain iconic part of the self-help sections of book stores. You can recognize the black and yellow cover easily on the shelf and know that there it is. What is sometimes overlooked is that they are actually often very good and written by some very competent people. Rick Segel is a highly experienced retailer, speaker, and author. His *Retail Business Kit for Dummies* is packed with very useful and valuable information, from setting up your store, hiring and training employees, getting a lease, buying and selling merchandise, and that all-important part of retail...finding a good location. Even experienced retailers will find something useful in here. The included bonus CD has all the forms dis-

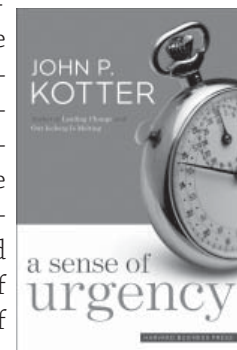


cussed in the book, samples, and templates of letters, ads, signage, income, and expense forms and more. A highly practical guide for any small retailer or someone wanting to become one.

A Sense of Urgency

By John P. Kotter
Harvard Business Press, \$22.00
128 pages

Kotter, a Harvard professor emeritus for Harvard Business School, has written previous books on change. This newest one is aimed at underscoring the importance of what he feels drives change and what isn't always well implemented. *A Sense of Urgency* is what drives employees to deliver a better customer experience, better quality control, and to make sure that necessary change elements in a business plan are actually understood and followed through. One of the key aspects of Kotter's system is to bring outside information and "decorating the walls" with it. Make sure everyone in the company can see market share and trends, financial results, and customer responses. And then you use that information to tell the story of where the organization is and where it needs to be.



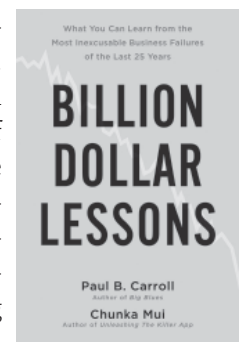
For a short book, it is well-focused, easy to read, and filled with practical instruction on creating that sense of urgency to drive change in an organization of any size.

Billion Dollar Lessons

By Paul B. Carroll; Chunka Mui
Portfolio, \$25.95, 310 pages

In a book dripping with schadenfreude, Carroll and Mui do a post-failure review of some of the most spectacular business failures in the last several decades.

But this is less a slow drive past a car accident and more a series of cautionary tales with the two placing most of the failures into one of eight common patterns of failure. Those patterns can help businesses of any size recognize problems, hopefully before they develop into catastrophes that can bring down the company.



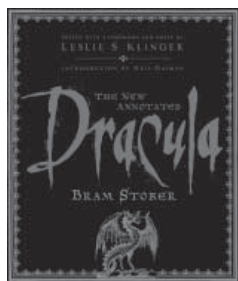
With a wide field of examples to choose from (Tyco, Sears, Kodak, U.S. Airways), *Billion Dollar Lessons* surveys disastrous mergers, product launches, and mismanagement in both instructive and entertaining ways. The "Devil's Advocate" questions they include may help new companies from being added to this billion dollar book of shame.

Classics

The New Annotated Dracula

By Bram Stoker; Leslie S. Klinger
WW Norton, \$39.95, 624 pages

Just in time for Halloween, comes this extensively researched version of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Presenting not only the originally published text, Klinger also includes a different ending from the original manuscript. Each page of the novel is presented with footnotes on either side of the text, tracing new and old references to so many parts of the story that there are at least as many footnotes as there are paragraphs. Going



from the original *Vald the Impaler* to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, this should satisfy the most demanding of *Dracula* or vampire fans.

Hundreds of black and white photos, 35 color photos, enhance the text. Introduction by Neil Gaiman.



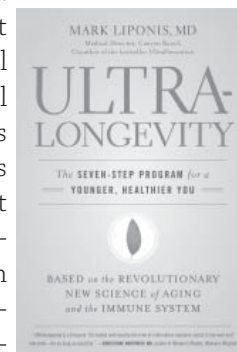
Health & Fitness

Ultralongevity

By Mark Liponis, MD
Little, Brown, \$14.99, 304 pages

Arguing that aging isn't dependent on your age, but the quality of your immune system, Mark Liponis, MD, introduces his theory in *Ultralongevity*. Many people are victims of a hyperactive immune system, according to Liponis, and he provides tests for finding just how fast you are aging, tools and tips for calming it down, and a meal plan for practical daily eating. His basic argument is unusual and not peer-reviewed research. His health plan is fairly normal for many get-

healthy plans (stop smoking, eat better, exercise, floss etc.), and can't hurt you. His seven-step plan for a healthy immune system is also fairly basic, and again, can't hurt anyone (breathe, eat, sleep, dance, love, soothe, enhance). Nothing unusual, nothing harmful, and, if an odd theory, Liponis doesn't try and sell anything that your own family doctor wouldn't: take care of your body, and your body will take care of you.



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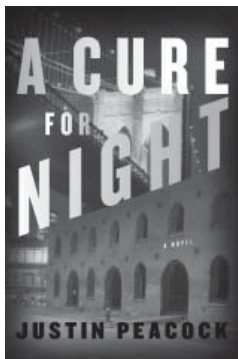
www.1776productions.com

Mystery, Crime & Thrillers

A Cure for Night

By Justin Peacock
Doubleday, \$24.95

An new addition to the ever-popular courtroom drama genre, *A Cure for Night* is Peacock's debut novel and a good first showing. The book revolves around Joel Deveraux, a former corporate lawyer who resigned his high-flying job after one of his paralegals died from a heroin overdose. Now serving as a public defender in Brooklyn, Deveraux gets involved in the shooting death of a white college student by a black pot dealer--a case that has attracted a great deal of media attention and pressure. Peacock not only provides an entertaining story, but also a very interesting and accurate look at contemporary drug culture, court process, and the racism intrinsic to the criminal justice system.

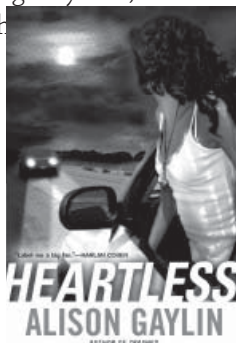


Heartless

By Alison Gaylin
Obsidian, \$21.95, 336 pages

Heartless is an amusing romp, mixing chick-lit with mystery/thriller, Gaylin introduces Zoe Greene, a former investigative-reporter-turned-soap-opera-digest-writer, who has fallen in love with one of her subjects: star, Warren Clark. Zoe leaves Manhattan behind to join Warren in San Esteban in Central Mexico where, as things become weird around her, she begins to dust off her investigative skills. Following up on a NYU student that had had his heart ripped out the week before she arrived, Warren's mysterious disappearances and a longevity cult, lead Zoe into danger. Add her crush on Warren (hiding a crush on Zoe), who follows her to San Esteban, and *Heartless* has enough story to keep you entertained till the end.

Whether chick-lit mixed with



thriller, or thriller with a romantic story, it's a book to please fans of both.

Cat in a Sapphire Slipper

By Carole Nelson Douglas
Forge, \$24.95, 400 pages

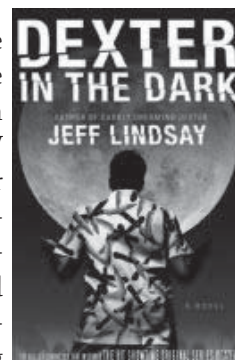
The latest entry in Douglas' Midnight Louie Mystery series, *Cat in a Sapphire Slipper* has Temple Barr and Louie helping Temple's romance novelist aunt, Kit Carlson, get married to a mob-connected Fontana brother. When the bachelor party ends up at a the brothel, *Sapphire Slipper*, Temple's secret fiancé, Matt, discovers a dead prostitute, and Temple and Louie need to solve the murder. With the complication of Max Kinsella's (Temple's former love) disappearance, plenty of mobster Fontana brothers and prostitutes, fans of the previous Midnight Louie books will not find a reason to be disappointed--just enough camp to keep things lighthearted.



Dexter in the Dark

By Jeff Lindsay
Vintage Crime/Black Lizard, \$13.95, 320 pages

Already released in hard cover, *Dexter in the Dark* was a departure from the previous two Dexter books. His Dark Passenger (the voice that motivates his killing) has fled when Dexter begins to investigate a double murder at the University of Miami. The crime was particularly nasty, even giving Dexter the creeps. For those only familiar with the Showtime TV series, the Dexter books are well-written, fast-paced, witty, and highly entertaining. After watching a couple of episodes, you begin to hear Michael C. Hall's voice as you read the book. This story brings Dexter to a more introspective mode, as he deals with the potential loss of the Dark Passenger. Many of the fans of the first two novels were disappointed when the explanation of the Dark Passenger was more supernatural in nature and not just the result of Dexter's early childhood trauma. It will be interesting to see what direction Lindsay takes the fourth book, currently being written. Still a good book.



Three Bags Full

By Leonie Swann
Flying Dolphin Press, \$12.95, 352 pages

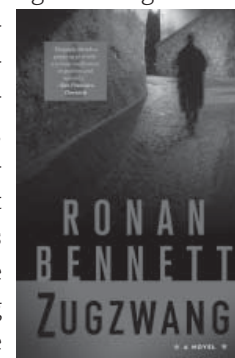
Reading like a 300-page Far Side cartoon, *Three Bags Full* is a murder mystery written by a German, about a flock of Iris sheep trying to solve the murder of their shepherd. Before his death, George Glenn had read them detective novels, which they absorbed and now are using the skills they learned. Having to sneak around the village of Glennkill without making the humans suspicious, the flock, lead by Miss Maple (Miss Marple anyone?) and Othello, track the killer and in a Larsonesque moment, denounce the culprit during the Smartest Sheep contest at the local pub. Funny, unique, worth reading.



Zugzwang

By Ronan Bennett
Bloomsbury, \$15.00, 288 pages

In a thriller using chess as a metaphor for all the moves and counter-moves going on, *Zugzwang* is set in 1914 St. Petersburg on the edge of the Revolution. The rich carry on, ignoring the rising tension, while the secret police, Bolsheviks, Polish terrorists, czarists, workers and students all fight among themselves looking for an edge in the coming storm. Amidst the chaos, is Dr. Otto Spethmann, a psychoanalyst, implicated in a murder. In all the confusion, hatreds and mystery, Otto finds himself falling for a female patient, participating in a chess game with another, and trying to protect his daughter, also under suspicion from the police. Looming over the entire story is an upcoming chess tournament, a part of international attention, to a city about to explode. The title, refers to a chess term meaning "a state in which one player is reduced to helplessness, forced to move, and each move making his situation worse." Unfortunately for Dr. Otto, he is the player, reduced to helplessness.

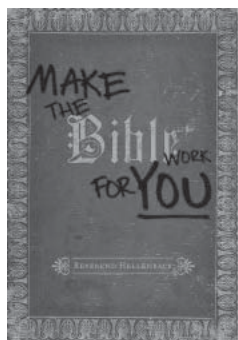


Humor - Fiction

Make the Bible Work for You

By Dave Johnston
Abrams Image, \$12.95, 260 pages

In a fairly irreverent guide to the bible, Dave Johnston has found key passages to use for justification of your wrong-doings--large and small. Want to take your Fifth Amendment rights in front of a congressional hearing? Use Job 20:12. Want breast augmentation? Song of Solomon 4:5. Sure, it's irreverent, but, still, every time a bible-shaking televangelist gets caught with a gay escort, they find a verse to excuse their behavior, or one to encourage their followers to forgive them and reopen their wallets.

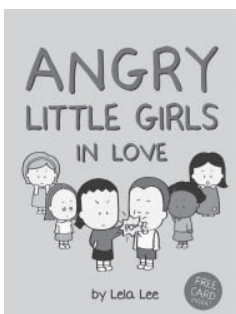


Funny, yes. Only major irritation was the use of King James English throughout the book. The thees and thous get old after a while.

Angry Little Girls in Love

By Lela Lee
Abrams Image, \$14.95, 64 pages

In her third *Angry Little Girl* book, Lela Lee channels half my previous relationships. From one panel comics to two or three panels, the angry little girls navigate love, from first date to bitter break-ups. With comics like "What happened to Chivalry?", "You killed it.", this book calls for a line of greeting and Valentine cards, and wonder of wonders, one is included. Funny in a "Oh my god, I want to rip this page out and send it to -----" way, you may feel much like me--that either Lee has been following you around or maybe your relationships weren't all that unusual after all.

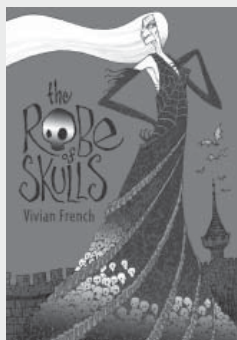


Young Adult

The Robe of Skulls

By Vivian French; Russ Collins
Candlewick Press, \$14.99, 208 pages

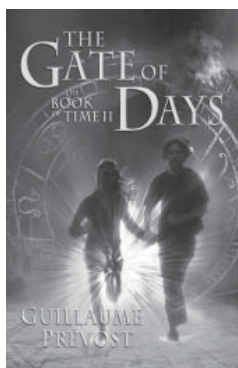
In a fresh look at classic fairy tale motifs, *The Robe of Skulls* is the story of sorceress, Lady Lamorna, and her plan to get a new dress of black velvet with skulls along the hem. With no money in her treasure chest, she plans to turn the prince and princesses of neighboring kingdoms into frogs and then offer to restore them for a reward. Against her plan is Gracie Gillypot (complete with evil stepfather and wicked stepsister), Prince Marcus (twin to one of the threatened princesses), two talkative bats, a troll, and some very ancient crones. Lamorna wanders through the countryside on her quest for cash, causing chaos and confusion. Gracie's wicked stepsister follows Gracie to bring her home. French is an experienced young adult writer, and this is one of her best books so far. Collins' cartoony illustrations fit the mood.



The Gate of Days: the Book of Time II

By Guillaume Prévost
Arthur A. Levine Books, \$16.99
249 pages

The sequel to Prévost's, *The Book of Time*, delivers many adventures and much excitement to Sam and his cousin Lily in their quest to find Sam's father. You will find yourself holding your breath in anticipation from the first time traveling experience to the last. Sam and Lily will win your heart with their dedication and resourcefulness in their search for the coins during their time travels. Even if you have not read *The Book of Time* you will not have any problems following this adventurous story.

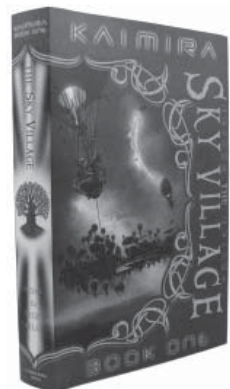


--Terri Boggs

Kaimira: The Sky Village

By Monk and Nigel Ashland
Candlewick Press, \$17.99, 416 pages

In a future Earth, animals, people, and intelligent machines all compete for control. The two young protagonists; Mei, living in the Sky Village, floating above China, and Rom, living in the ruins of Las Vegas, both share a copy of the *Tree Book*. The *Tree Book* allows both



to communicate with each other, and explains some of the ties they share in their genes. In an effort to rescue his kidnapped sister, Rom has been drafted into learning the art of demonsmithing, a special talent he inherited from his father. Mei's father sent her to live at the Sky Village after her mother was also kidnapped and he wanted to stay on the ground to seek her.

Much of the story's past is up to the reader to figure out as the story progresses, with some issues never really explained. With another four volumes of the story to go, one would hope that some of that will be resolved.

An intricate story, fun and involving.

The Hunger Games

By Suzanne Collins
Scholastic Press, \$17.99, 384 pages

In a young adult version of *The Running Man* (Richard Bachman), Collins introduces us to a future America, now called Panem, a cruel dictatorship keeping the surrounding districts in line through an annual program called the Hunger Game. Each district sends two children, a boy and girl, to compete in an arena on TV. Competing against each other and horrible situations (killer wasps, werewolves, and more), the only two rules are survive and don't eat the losers. In *The Hunger Games*, 16-year-old Katniss, from the former Appalachia, takes the place of her younger sister, assuming she is going to die in the Game. Instead, Katniss ends up becoming a



competitor, making alliances with two other players to survive.

The Hunger Games is a well-written, interesting story, not derivative of previous books using this subject. This is the first book in a planned series; Collins has a previous series, *The Underland Chronicles*, which also was on the subject of violence and young adults.

Graceling

By Kristin Cashore
Harcourt, \$17.00, 480 pages

In a new fantasy debut, Cashore brings us to the land of the Middluns and the power of the Graces, individuals born with almost superhuman powers. Discovered early in life through heterochromia, having eyes of different colors, their power develops in puberty, ranging in power from the ability to swim like a fish, to read minds or tell the future. In Middluns, like some of the other kingdoms, Gracelings are considered the property of the Crown, gathered up as they are detected, and horded until their power manifests. Katsa, the protagonist, has the Grace of killing, and is used by her king as executioner and torturer. Sent to another kingdom on a mission, she meets Po, another Graceling with her same powers. Behind the story of kingdoms and lies the subject of power, its uses, abuses, and the temptation to use another person for personal gain.



Written at the upper end of the Young Adult market, *Graceling* may have themes or scenes too mature for the under 14, but could also be a pleasant read for an adult.

The Night Children

By Kit Reed
Starscape, \$17.95, 240 pages

The Castertown MegaMall is New York's Fifth Avenue, Mall of America, and Disneyland all rolled into one. The night children are all the abandoned, lost, and runaway children that live, and battle, in the Castertown MegaMall. Only coming out at night--thus their name and the title of the book--the night children have separated into gangs,



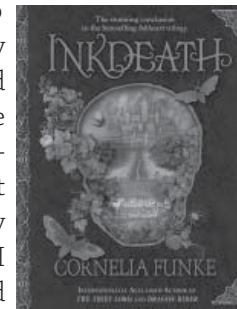
and it is between two of them, that Julie Devereaux steps, her parents lost years ago, her aunt just a couple of days before. And watching it all, is Amos Zozz, billionaire owner of the MegaMall, planning on getting rid of all the night children.

Reed is a well-established author of adult novels and here, has very successfully created a YA world.

Inkdeath

By Cornelia Funke
The Chicken House, \$24.99, 656 pages

In this utterly massive ending to the *Inkheart* trilogy, Funke delivers a mostly satisfying finale for her fans. Sure, you need to wade through almost 100 pages of expository material just to get to the story, but, once that's done, *Inkdeath* steams along with its multitude of characters. Almost impossible to summarize without having to get into the story from *Inkheart* and *Inkspell*, and, due to the story-within-the-story that controls the story without (and I hope you followed that), you cannot pick up *Inkdeath* as a stand-alone book. With books of this size and complexity, the reader must make a commitment to follow it to the end, and, unlike other series (Robert Jordan's *Wheel of Time*, which really started to bog down under the weight of too many characters in too many places around book seven), Funke doesn't really let you down.



The Leanin' Dog

By K.A. Nuzum
The Bowen Press, \$15.95, 256 pages

Dessa Dean has plenty to worry about. It is the dead of winter in Colorado. Her mother died of exposure just a month and a half ago, in Dessa's arms, while they waited for someone to find them. Christmas is in four days, and her father can't find anything in their traps. Dessa has developed agoraphobia, unable to go outside beyond the porch of their cabin. Worse, her "daymares," flashbacks of her mother's death, are increasing, and she doesn't want her father to know about them. Along comes the leanin' dog, also men-



Young Adult

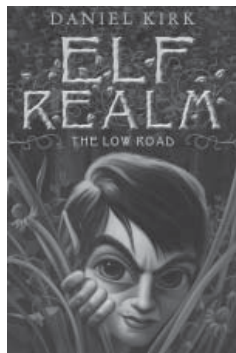
tally scarred, but with claustrophobia, unable to stay in the cabin without the door open. Between themselves, they find the ability to heal each other. A well-written book that doesn't so much play on your emotions, but draws you into the emotions of the characters.

Elf Realm

By Daniel Kirk

Amulet, \$18.95, 528 pages

Daniel Kirk has written and illustrated children's books, most notably Library Mouse. In *Elf Realm*, he makes a very successful jump to chapter books for young adults. The wall between the elf realm and the human one is getting thinner, and as more trees are cut down to clear land for new houses, more of the elf-land secrets are coming to light. Matt and Becky, children of a housing developer, find a long-lost elfin wedding shoe, and find themselves having to side with the elves against their father to keep the elfen city of Alfheim from discovery.



Definitely has an environmental tone, but without banging you over the head with a monkey wrench. Kirk's many black and white illustrations have a Gothic feel, sometimes eerie, but add to the story by giving a face to the characters as you go along.

Deltora Quest: The Complete Series

By Emily Rodda

Scholastic Books, \$19.95, 731 pages

Much less intimidating when you realize it is the collection of eight novels, Deltora Quest is the story of the country of Deltora and the evil Shadow Lord, who wants to invade. The only thing that protects the land is the magic Belt of Deltora with its seven stones of power. As the importance of the Belt has been forgotten, the Shadow Lord had the stones removed from the Belt and scattered to some of the most dangerous places in Deltora. Enter Lief and a hand-drawn map to the stone. As Lief



and the companions he meets along the way face evil beings and danger, they race to gather the stones, restore the Belt of Deltora, and rid the Deltora of the Shadow Lord. This is a handy, nicely packaged collection.

Blood Tide

By Dave Barry; Ridley Pearson

Disney Editions, \$9.99, 160 pages

In *Blood Tide*, Barry and Pearson continue their excellent continuations of the Peter Pan stories. After an earthquake, things in Neverland Island quickly go bad. The Lost Boys' hideaway gets flooded, Captain Hook finds a barrel with mysterious contents that give him a plan to destroy the Mollusk Indian tribe's village and the once peaceful mermaids start attacking anyone entering their lagoon. When they injure some of the Mollusks, their chief, Fighting Prawn, prepares to attack back.

The Lost Boys, along with Fighting Prawn's daughters, set out to make peace with the mermaids before the battle is joined. During that mission, they are captured, discover the cause of the mermaid's new aggressiveness and set



out on a new quest; they need to find out how to stop the incoming Blood Tide and also foil Captain Hook's new plan along the way.

The Stowaway

By R.A. and Geno Salvatore

Mirrorstone, \$17.95, 304 pages

In an excellent YA fantasy novel, R.A. Salvatore, bestselling author of many *Dungeons & Dragons* novels, and his son Geno, introduce Mainum, a 12-year-old orphan on the run from a demon, who is seeking the good luck stone, Mainum, received from his foster father. Set in the Forgotten Realms *Dungeons & Dragons* setting, *The Stowaway* will give new readers an introduction to the world and R.A.'s most famous character, the Drow Drizzt Do'Urden.

Stowing away on the pirate hunting ship Sea Sprite, Mainum needs to prove his worth as a new member of the crew, and overcome the trouble he's brought to them.

Published in conjunction with R.A.'s other new *Forgotten Realms* novel, *The Pirate King*, *The Stowaway* is an easy book to recommend to younger readers interested in fantasy novels.



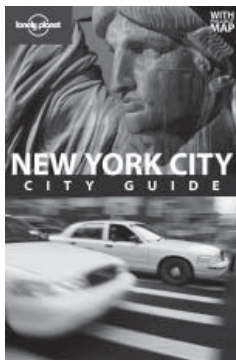
Travel

New York City 6th Ed

By Ginger Adams Otis

Lonely Planet, 19.99, 432 pages

Lonely Planet's new guide to *New York City* is a well organized, helpful, and interesting book, great for the first-time visitor to NYC interested in maximizing their time enjoying the city. Otis and three other local authors provide a great deal of information for people interested in eating, shopping, or visiting cultural sites throughout the five boroughs. Expanded mini-guides to Brooklyn and many of the city's fashion boutiques help round out an already impressive guide book. Walking guides, a pull-out map, and helpful suggestions for short neighborhood visits make this a easy-to-use, easy-to-carry, and all-around useful guide for your next visit to New York City.



Rome Encounter

By Bonetto Cristian

Lonely Planet, \$11.99, 224 pages

A handy pocket-sized guide to Rome, *Rome Encounter* is book that both the experienced and novice travelers will find helpful. A pull-out map will keep you on track as you wander the city, either on foot, by cab or however you find most efficient to get around. Broken into sections of the city, with suggestions for the best sights, restaurants, and entertainment, *Rome Encounter* has hundreds of places to visit, and all the information you need to get tickets, reservations, or just find it. There are little interviews with locals about their favorite places or suggestions on sights to see are interspersed throughout the book. The Snapshots in the back of the book provide small overviews to parts of the city for quick reference.



Pop-Fiction

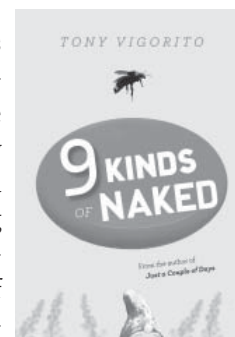
Nine Kinds of Naked

By Tony Vigorito

Harvest Books, \$14.00, 416 pages

Part quirky love story, part philosophical manifesto, and part metaphysical mystery, *Nine Kinds of Naked* is almost more musical dance than written word. Tony Vigorito's book on life, and those things outside the boundaries of the traditional plane, is right at home with the works of Tom Robbins and Christopher Moore.

The lives of these characters are forever changed by the sight of a woman singing while floating naked in a river. It is that sign that travels through space and time, finally culminating in a world-changing hurricane that settles off the coast of New Orleans. Seventeenth Century missionaries, gnomes and fairies, secret agents, and average everyday Joe's from Normal, Illinois, all are inexplicably



drawn to "Laughing Jim," which not only fails to break land, but rips the clothes right out of dressers and floats delicate tea cups through the air and rest them gently on the ground in time for a dainty drink from a cat.

Nine Kinds of Naked is a quizzical and psychedelic look at the nature of the Butterfly Effect. Just when you think you've gotten it all figured out, a strange man, who only speaks in the present-tense, shows up to upset the proverbial apple cart and the iconic "stripper with a heart of gold" comes across as something fresh and new in Vigorito's capable hands. Confused? Don't worry. That's part of the point.

--Sunshine Strong

Science Fiction & Fantasy

Heaven's Net is Wide

By Lian Hearn

Riverhead Hardcover, 496 pgs, \$26.95

Heaven's Net is Wide is the prequel to the sequence known as *The Tales of the Otori*. It is the coming-of-age story of Shigeru. Shigeru is first-born son of the weak-willed ruler of the Otori. Recognizing that his own son may suffer some of his own weaknesses, Shigeru's father sends him to train as a warrior, the embodiment of self-control. Upon his return to his father's castle, Shigeru finds himself leader of his father's clan, a clan embroiled in political intrigue and war.

This feudal Japan-based historical fantasy is the genre equivalent to *Memoirs of a Geisha*. It is both sensual and mythical in its prose. Hearn's story is so full of the alien, the other; the reader is transported away. Hearn uses her tale to think deeply on peace and war, and what people do to avoid one and gain the other. Shigeru becomes a character study of true honor in a very honor bound but honor-less society. Readers who like lyrical—almost poetic—prose similar to the styles of Patricia McKillip or Susanna Clarke will enjoy this tale.



--John Ottinger, III

The Soldier King

By Violette Malan

DAW, \$15.00, 384 pages

In the sequel to Malan's *The Sleeping God*, mercenaries Dhulyn and Parno unexpectedly find themselves on the winning side of a conflict, which leads to complications when the War Commander they were following refuses to honor the agreement that allows their prisoners to go free. Feeling honor bound to see their captive, Prince Edmir, free, they break their contract and escape with him. This leads to Dhulyn finding clues about her past, and puts the duo into trouble as they pursue them. While not as good as Lieber's *Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser*, Malan has created an entertaining pair of mercenar-



ies and a world for them to adventure within.

Paul of Dune

By Brian Herbert; Kevin J. Anderson

Tor, \$27.95, 512 pages

Paul of Dune is another book written by the Brian Herbert, Kevin J. Anderson, duo in Brian's father's Dune universe. This one is the first in a new series subtitled "*The Heroes of Dune*," and covers the time after Paul conquered Arrakis in *Dune* and before the next book in Frank Herbert's *Dune Messiah*. It tidies up several story threads or characters that disappeared in the intervening years, never to be mentioned again, the major one being Count Hasimir Fenring. The major issue with these books, is that while Herbert and Anderson keep to the heart of the Dune universe, their writing style is so far from Frank Herbert's, that it is often unenjoyable. Dialog often is flat or stilted, descriptions are hackneyed, chapters often so abbreviated as to feel that they have been inserted after a first draft for page count.

All that said, they do have a firm grasp of the Dune characters and world settings. If you enjoy the Dune settings, don't mind almost fan-fictionish writing that has access to the Dune universe bible, *Paul of Dune* will be enjoyable.



Ex-Kop

By Warren Hammond

Tor, \$24.95, 320 pages

This sequel to the 2007 *Kop*, continues the story of Juno Mozambe, now kicked of the police force of the 28th century colonial town of Koba on planet the planet Lagarto. Lagarto is technologically backward, due to extreme trade imbalances between itself and other more established planets. This allows for a very futuristic background, with a almost pulp-noir story. Juno, now working as a bagman and photographer of last resort, is hired by his ex-partner to investigate the possible innocence of a young girl on death row, convicted by her own testimony of killing her parents. Hammond does a



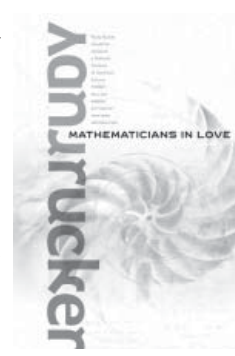
great job with detail, atmosphere and story.

Mathematicians in Love

By Rudy Rucker

Tor, \$15.95, 336 pages

Rucker reviews often end up containing words like "zany," "satire," or "quirky." His stories are often unusual, innovative, and, occasionally, incomprehensible to a new reader. This one is no different. The story of Ph.D. students and roommates, Bela and Paul, both of whom are in love with Bela's girlfriend. Their method of choice to compete for her affections is reality altering math and a future reading computer called "Gobubble." Along the way, Rucker makes fun of academia, math, love and reality. No math is used that could either ruin the story for a non-mathematician or cause any reality dysfunctions.



Slow Train to Arcturus

By Eric Flint and Dave Freer

Baen Books, \$24.00, 320 pages

When the aliens on the planet Miran detect a huge spaceship traveling through their solar system, they send out a research team to investigate. Finding a ship made up of several large spherical units, they randomly pick one to enter and are attacked by the inhabitants. One of the aliens, xenobiologist Kertz escapes, and it is through him, that we explore the human subcultures that chose to leave earth (or were strongly encouraged). From bubble to bubble, Kertz learns new things about humans, himself, and the universe. Flint and Freer have fun skewering political and religious extremists, in the fairly standard "generational ship forgets they are on a ship" Sci Fi story.



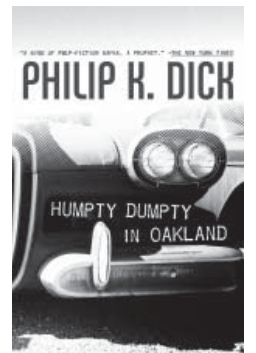
Humpty Dumpty in Oakland

By Philip K. Dick

Tor, \$14.95, 256 pages

While not a science fiction novel, *Humpty Dumpty in Oakland* is reviewed here because its author, Philip K. Dick, is one of the noted writers in the genre.

Originally written in 1960, it was published in England, and this is the first American printing. It is the story of Al Miller, a used car salesman about to lose his car lot as his landlord is selling it to invest the proceeds into a new business, recommended by a shady record producer. Miller is deeply flawed character, and knowing it, sees this as an opportunity to try and win some Karmic balance. It is early in his writing career, but you can see many of the themes he will explore later in his science fiction settings.

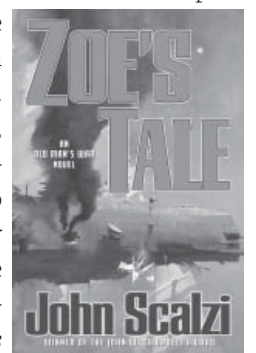


Zoe's Tale

By John Scalzi

Tor, \$24.95, 336 pages

The fourth book (or kinda fourth book) in Scalzi's *Old Man's War* series, Zoe's may either be welcomed by readers or disappoint them based on the subject. *Zoe's Tale* is a retelling of the story in *The Last Colony* (the third in the series) told from the point of view of Zoe, the adopted daughter of the protagonists from *The Lost Colony*. Zoe is a teenager, and Scalzi accurately brings her to life. His use of her as the focus of the story is reminiscent of *Heinlein's Podkayne of Mars*; in fact, if anyone licensed new material set in Heinlein's universe, Scalzi would be an excellent choice. *Zoe's Tale* is a very good book. It is, however, not really progressing the *Old Man's War* series.

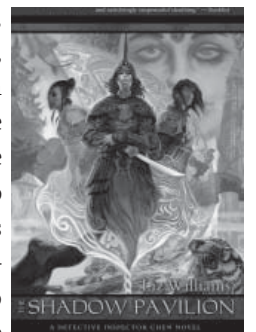


The Shadow Pavilion

By Liz Williams

Night Shade Books, \$24.95, 248 pages

Book four in Williams' ongoing *Detective Inspector Chen* series won't disappoint any of the readers of her previous books. Chen, liaison officer between Earth, Heaven and Hell, has to deal with the disappearance of his partner, the demon vice cop Zhu Irzh, and his wife's badger familiar. Told in two parts, Chen's as he



looks for them, and Irzh's as he and the badger try and escape from a jungle hell. Highly colorful, interesting occult mythology, well placed subtext on modern social issues.

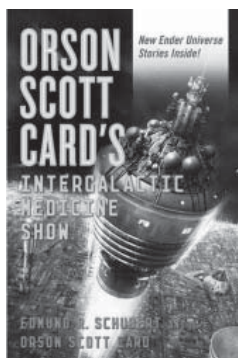
Orson Scott Card's Intergalactic Medicine Show Edited

By Edmund R. Schubert; Orson Scott Card Tor, \$15.95, 432 pages

Keeper of Dreams

By Orson Scott Card Tor, \$27.95, 656 pages

Orson Scott Card is a highly prolific writer of both short and long fiction. Many of his novels were originally developed as short stories or novelettes, and then expanded into the longer editions, most notably, his most famous work, *Ender's Game*. In these two collections, he shows both some of his range in and out of the science fiction field and also his encouragement of the short story medium.



OSC's *Intergalactic Medicine Show* is a collection of stories, drawn from the online magazine *Intergalactic Medicine Show*. Launched in 2006, it has published some very noteworthy stories, from established writers, and many new voices. This is a collection of both, and for Card's *Ender* fans, has four new stories set in the Ender Universe. All of the stories are

worthwhile, and a few reach exceptional status, including "Call Me Mr. Positive" by Tom Barlow, and Tim Pratt's "Dream Engine."

Keeper of Dreams, published earlier this year, is a not quite hit-and-miss collection of Card's short stories, but there are a couple of things that made this collection notable. First, he organizes the book by genres, including a section called Mormon Stories. Card is a practicing Mormon, and the stories reflect his preoccupation with child protagonists, though now set in a highly normal Mormon environment. While you may not get all the details of those stories, they were not written for his usual audience, but for Mormons, by a Mormon. Each of the stories comes with commentary at the end, explaining his thoughts and feelings on the story. Some of the stories feel unfinished, either due to the age of the story, or potentially they were ideas being developed for a potentially longer environment.



Dark Vengeance

By Ed Greenwood Tor, \$24.95, 320 pages

Greenwood is an old hand at the Dungeons & Dragons universe. He's written numerous stories and gaming books set in the Forgotten Realms world, and with *Dark Vengeance*, he mostly recreates that world, by renaming the Drow to Niflgar

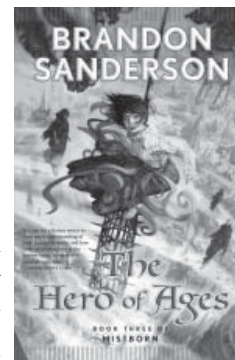
and setting a story around them. It would be a fairly typical D&D story, and this transparent masking of its origins doesn't make it any better. The story is also a highly typical fantasy story for a beginning author--boy gets stolen and enslaved by evil beings, grows to escape (aided by a sympathetic member of their race) and returns to lead a revolution/rescue others/claim his vengeance--and not someone with the writing history of Greenwood.



The Hero of the Ages

By Brandon Sanderson Tor, \$27.95, 576 pages

The conclusion to Sanderson's critically acclaimed *Mistborn* series, *The Hero of the Ages* finds Emperor Elend Venture and his assassin wife Vin trying to correct the mistake Vin made in releasing the malevolent entity Ruin from the Well of Ascension at the end of the last book. Now the world is plagued by the Darkness (a more deadly form of the Mists), Inquisitors, earthquakes and a heavier ash-fall that could end the limited ability people had to grow food. To battle all

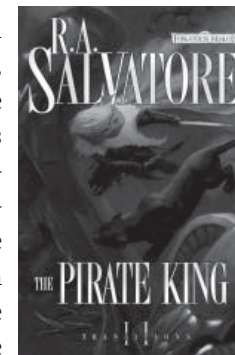


of this, Elend and Vin must find the hidden cache of atium, the metal that fuels their Mistborn powers. Yes, it is a good story and a good ending to the series. And for those fans of Robert Jordan's *Wheel of Time* series, Sanderson was selected to write the last book in the series, based on the story notes and outline left by the late Jordan. If *The Hero of the Ages* is any indication, *Wheel of Time* will have an excellent conclusion as well.

The Pirate King

By R.A. Salvatore Wizards of the Coast, \$27.95, 352 pages

Salvatore may be the most popular writer in the *Dungeons & Dragons* universe, and his most famous creation, the Drow Drizzt Do'Urden, one of the most popular characters in the Forgotten Realms books. In *The Pirate King*, both return and fans of both shouldn't have anything to complain about. Set in the city of Luskan, where the Arcane Brotherhood is losing their control, Drizzt is being drawn into the conflict between the city, and the pirates who have been using it as a safe haven. Published concurrently with *The Stowaway*, written by Salvatore and his son, both will give *Forgotten Realms* readers something to enjoy. (See the review of *The Stowaway* on page 25.)

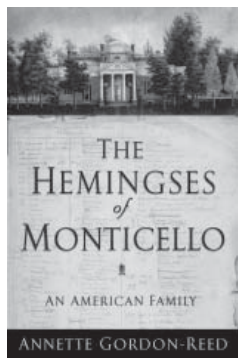


History

The Hemingses of Monticello

By Annette Gordon-Reed Norton, \$35.00, 800 pages

Annette Gordon-Reed wrote a previous book on Sally Hemings (*Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: An American Controversy*), most commonly known in history classes as Thomas Jefferson's slave mistress. In this brilliantly researched and written book, she brings to light and life, the entire Hemingses family; from the "full-blooded African woman" of unknown origins that gave birth to Sally's mother to the children of Sally and Jefferson. Told in three major parts, tracing the origin of the Hemings family, the years in Paris



where Sally and her brother were introduced to a free black society, and then the years at Monticello, ending just a few months after Jefferson's death, with many of the family, including his direct children, being sold off the slave block. It is highly unlikely that this engrossing, sometimes disquieting book can be topped. Going past just the issues with Jefferson's relationship with his mistress and their children, it also goes deep into how enslaved families held themselves together, cared for each other and were sometimes able to better themselves.

Finding Merlin

By Adam Ardrey Overlook Press, 24.95

Claims that Merlin was one of the last Druids have often been a part of the Arthur legends. Ardrey draws on his personal research to further those claims and also claims to have discovered the

real Merlin, the son of a Scottish king, brother to a queen, a scholar, military commander and the target of centuries of English conspiracy to hide his origins and successes. While much of the book deals with the times and events in the late 500s and early 600s CE, Finding Merlin spends a great deal of time pursuing the supposed systematic suppression of Merlin's story by the 12th-century biographer Jocelyn of Furness, who wrote on Mungo, the patron saint of Glasgow and enemy of Merlin.



His disagreements with conflicting source material is often childish and lacking any scholarly basis (describing something as

"obvious nonsense" without providing any actual rebuttal sources.) Interesting? Yes, if you like the Arthur/Merlin mythology and want a different view. While there was a lot of apparent the book falls apart in Ardrey's obvious bias to his conclusions.

The Activist

By Lawrence Goldstone Walker, \$26.00, 304 pages

In a well-researched and currently applicable book, Goldstone goes into the history of the probably most important Supreme Court decision, that of *Marbury v. Madison* and its architect, Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall. Prior to this decision, the Supreme Court was the weakest of the three branches

See **ACTIVIST**, page 30

Modern Literature & Fiction

The Wasted Vigil

By Nadeem Aslam
Knopf, \$25.00, 336 pages

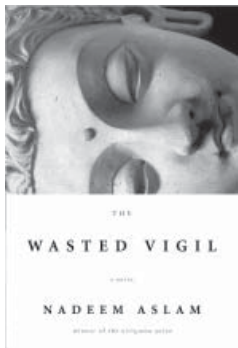
Pakistan-born Aslam weaves a talented and moving story of the many sides to the Afghani situation, and by extension, the issues facing the Middle East. Revolving around a British doctor and his house guests in his home outside Jalalabad, *The Wasted Vigil* introduces by proxy many of the foreign interests in Afghanistan today. Marcus, the doctor, has lost his left hand and wife to the Taliban, and his daughter has disappeared with her illegitimate son. Into his house, Marcus invites Lara, a Russian seeking to find her brother, Benedikt, who disappeared during the Russian occupation of Afghanistan; David, a CIA operative, now disillusioned with the role the United States has played with the local warlords; Casa, a young Afghani jihadist; and James a Special Forces soldier. As their stories intertwine - Benedikt is the father of Marcus's missing grandchild, David, in love with Marcus's daughter - the pressure builds between them and the situation growing in the countryside around them.

A finely written novel that should follow in the footsteps of Aslam's previous books, both nominated for the Booker Prize.

Twenty Fragments of a Ravenous Youth

By Xiaolu Guo
Nan A. Talese, \$21.95, 176 pages

Twenty Fragments of a Ravenous Youth is the very well-told coming-of-age story told in modern Beijing. The story follows Fenfang Wang as she leaves the peasant life behind and begins working as an un-named film extra in the city's growing movie industry. Learning to get along in the new city, Fenfang provides eyes into the changes Beijing is going through and the effect those changes are having on both the older Communist workers and the new, younger, and progressive gener-



ation. Gou's experience as a film writer and director show through as we watch Fenfang struggle to make a living off the bit parts offered to her and the personalities that surround her.

Fenfang is a well-written, well-developed character, and provides an intriguing story that is entertaining. The photographs throughout the novel also provide an interesting look at contemporary Beijing. Originally published in Chinese, this version was extensively rewritten in English.

Child of All Nations

By Irmgard Keun
Overlook Press, \$23.95, 208 pages

Originally published in 1938, this pre-WWII novel both provides an interesting look at the situation in Europe as the nations grew more paranoid over the German and Italian militarization, and a bleak foreshadowing of the horrors to come. Told through the voice of 10-year-old Kully, she and her parents have fled Germany and are now moving from hotel to hotel and country to country as her father, Peter, can find credit, publisher advances or loans from friends, family and the occasional stranger.

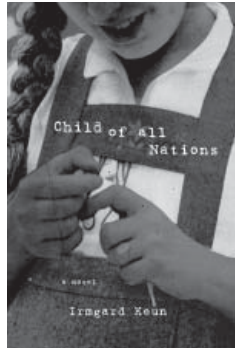
Kully provides a mix of precociousness and neavity in her outlook and observations of the situation as she and her mother often find themselves serving as collateral at one hotel or another, while her father goes off in search of new sources of money. As they travel from country to country, modern readers can feel the coming war and its aftermath, where Kully simply feels the tensions rising as the difficulties in crossing borders grow.

Not quite a war story, not quite a holocaust novel, *Child of All Nations* fits an interesting middle ground in WWII European literature. Translating this book from German to English took a surprising 70 years.

Human Love

By Andrei Makine
Arcade, \$25.00, 264 pages

Makine makes a change from earlier novels, placing much of the location for the story not in his native Russia, but primarily in Southern Africa between Angola and Zaire. Following Elias Almeida, a professional revolutionary, who fights to make Africa independent and to make

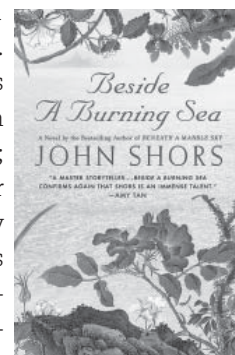
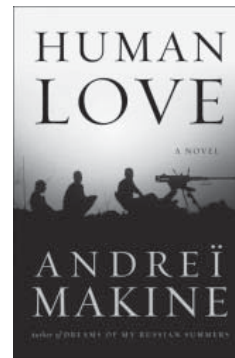


Africans better people. Elias starts his tutoring in revenge, warfare and political awareness when as a child he watches his parents killed by soldiers. His lessons take him from Angola to Cuba and then to the Soviet Union. There, he meets Anna, a love that will continue with him over his life back to Africa and from conflict to prison and out. Covering 40 years, *Human Love* shows several phases of Africa, from colonial rule, to independence and then to the Western capitalism invasion. Narrated by an anonymous former Russian spy turned author, the story moves between the notes collected about Elias for a book, and actual scenes of his life. While different for Makine's *Dreams of my Russian Summers*, *Human Love* still reflects his Russian heritage and love.

Beside A Burning Sea

By John Shors
NAL, \$14.00, 448 pages

After the sinking of the WWII hospital ship *Benevolence*, *Beside A Burning Sea* follows the few survivors as they try to stay alive on a small island near the attack. The survivors include the captain of the *Benevolence*; his wife, and another ship's nurse, both rescued by a Japanese prisoner; and the ship's engineer, and a stowaway rescued by the engineer. All the characters are well-written and developed; each looking for safety and security on an island that is beautiful and dangerous. The interplay between them is what really makes *Beside A Burning Sea* an excellent novel. Akira, the Japanese prisoner, was a professor of English and Western History before the war, and pressed into service is still horrified over the events he witnessed at Nanking. Jake, the engineer, and Ratu, the stowaway, provide a welcome side story of father-son bonding. The traitor among the nine survivors keeps an element of tension as the story develops.



A Partisan's Daughter

By Louis de Bernieres
Knopf, \$29.95, 208 pages

Unhappily married to a "Great White Loaf," Christian went out one night looking for the kind of entertainment all the other men talked about. With his tongue in his throat and his hand in his lap, he pulled up next to a woman standing under a light post in the rain. Roza, the woman under the light post, caught his attention with her long legs and charismatic vibe. She was waiting for a cab when Christian pulls up along side her, shooting the question, "Are you working," out his window.

With a *Pretty Woman* feeling, Louis de Bernieres takes you into the streets and shows you the dirty and sexy side of an introverted man, a twisted young woman and an unlikely love. This is a book you can read at night in your bed or on a blanket in the park. *The Partisan's Daughter* had the tragic romance feel to it with an ending that could not have been more perfect for this novel. If you want to finish a book with a tear in your eye, this is the one to keep at your bedside.

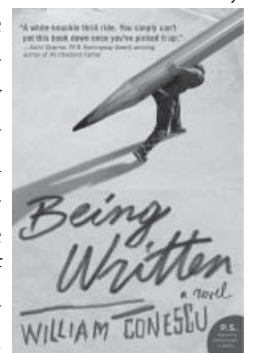
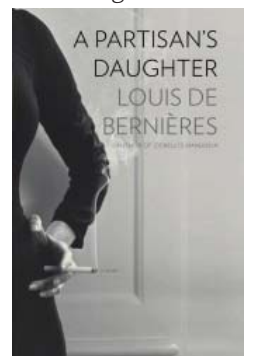
--Michelle Gallegos

Being Written

By William Conescu
Harper Perennial, \$13.95, 224 pages

Being Written is a smarter book than the Will Ferrell movie *Stranger Than Fiction*. Rolling from second-person to third-person and back again, it follows Daniel Fischer, a simple background character in most novels, as he realizes that, not only is he a part of a book, but that he can try to increase the amount of coverage he gets. By managing a one-night stand with singer Delia, Daniel begins to move into the orbit of the primary characters of the novel, and, after studying a writer's guide, tries to make himself essential to the central plot of the story.

Daniel's parts of the story are told in second-person, giving you insight to his thoughts and motivations, while the rest of the novel is told in excerpts in third-person. Bouncing between the two per-



spectives keeps the actual novel flowing and keeps the reader considering the options of being a character and having to please (or outwit) your own author.

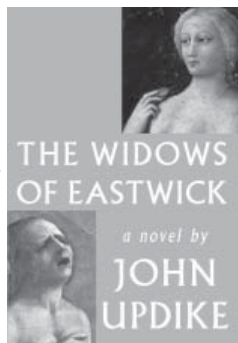
The Widows of Eastwick

By John Updike

Knopf, \$24.95, 303 pages

Where do you go next if you are one of the most critically acclaimed American novelists of the past five decades? If you're John Updike, you pay a return visit to Eastwick, home to the trio of witches popularized in his 1984 novel, *The Witches of Eastwick*. Why not mine familiar territory, if the original work is so highly regarded? Even Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom never made it to the big screen, after all.

The Widows of Eastwick, Updike's 28th novel, is a sequel, yet also functions as a stand-alone meditation



on aging. Alexandra, Jane, and Sukie are all back, certainly older and presumably wiser, following a plethora of life experiences, including widowhood and foreign travel. But, while before, they exuded confidence, now they are victims to the ravages of time, their bodies gradually failing, unable to muster even the basics of witchcraft. When they attempt to do so, things go horribly awry.

Without question, Updike remains a phenomenal writer, just as capable of dishing out a clever metaphor here, a dash of wit and spunk there. Yet, *Widows* is slow to take off, lumbering along half-heartedly; at 303 pages, it's hardly a daunting read, yet feels longer. Once the trio returns to Eastwick, their old Rhode Island haunting grounds, the action picks up, and the novel finally finds its voice. It's an older, weathered voice, but still commanding, as the coven comes to grips with an evil past and an uncertain future. Time, it turns out, is even more cruel than those who desire revenge – and ultimately inescapable.

--Mark Petruska

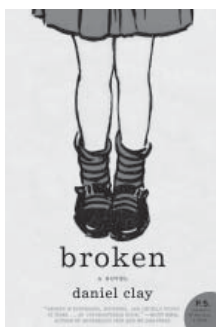
Broken

By Daniel Clay

Harper Perennial, 13.95, 306 pages

Broken, is just that—broken. A potentially intriguing premise gets lost in its pursuit of violence, psychotic behavior, and one-dimensional character studies. Supposedly inspired by Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *Broken* tells the story of Rick Buckley, a neighborhood teenager violently beaten by Bob Oswald, the father of five daughters, one of whom accused Rick of raping her. Even after the accusation is proven wrong, Rick hides in his home, eventually becoming a highly violent young man.

Told mostly from the viewpoint of Skunk Cunningham, another young girl living on the street, *Broken* never rises to the level of *Mockingbird's* insightful look into human motivations and response to crisis.



Man in the Dark

By Paul Auster

Henry Holt, \$23.00, 192 pages

In a great example of meta-fiction, Paul Auster's *Man in the Dark* is his latest recursive novel. Starting as the story of a 72-year-old retired book critic lying in the dark suffering from insomnia. Recovering from a car accident that killed his wife, August Brill is staying with his daughter, and granddaughter, who is also suffering from a death, that of her murdered boyfriend. To help the time go by and distract himself from the thoughts he'd rather not have, he begins to tell himself stories. And, as his story of an alternate America, broken into civil war over the divisive 2000 election, goes on, he finds himself a part of the story, a soldier on a mission to kill August Brill to end the his dream devastating the imagined America.



Auster is no stranger to this sort of meta-fiction, and this book doesn't disappoint. The obvious denouncement of the current administrations Iraq policies, mix with another favorite theme of Auster, that of an aging man reflecting on his life (*The Brooklyn Follies*). Many other writers would have had a hard time telling the same story in double the amount of space Auster takes. Fans of his work will most likely pick this up anyway, but anyone who enjoys innovative writing ought to pick this book up.

This Must Be the Place

By Anna Winger

Riverhead Books, \$24.95, 320 pages

Anna Winger lives in Berlin and has only recently started writing. In her debut novel, she takes on the task of comparing the experiences of Berliners and New Yorkers in the aftermath of 9/11. This would be a difficult job for many experienced writers; Winger does a wonderful job of it. While some of the set up is a bit contrived, the story follows the American Hope, and her neighbor, Walter, a once-famous German actor, now doing voice-over work for American movies.

Exploring the themes of loss, hope, love, and joy, *This Must Be the Place* shows Winger's love of her adopted city of Berlin, her understanding of being an American, and the similarities between the two. Add in the lingering issues of German guilt to Jews, and how that still effects them today, and you have a novel that you not only will enjoy, but will probably find yourself loaning out to friends.

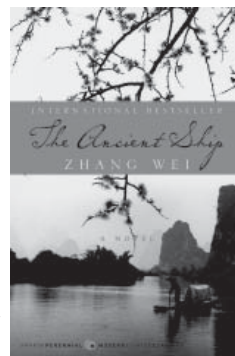


The Ancient Ship

By Wei Zhang

Harper Perennial, \$14.95, 464 pages

Translated into English for the first time, *The Ancient Ship* is an award-winning novel following three generations of Chinese families in a small northern town following the post-WW II years. Through these families, Zhang shows the impact of the major reform programs implemented by the Communist government over the years, both in social and human costs. Of the three families, the Zhao benefited from the changes and the Sui lost most of their wealth and power. The Li clan was the one that saw industrialization as the future and sought after it. Often in disturbing detail, *The Ancient Ship* provides a unique view for Westerners in how China's pre-industrial culture was molded into today's world power. It is also more than a novel of China, it speaks to how people respond to power and its loss, change forced from without, and that decided from within. Originally published in 1987, it's a surprise it hasn't been translated into English until now.

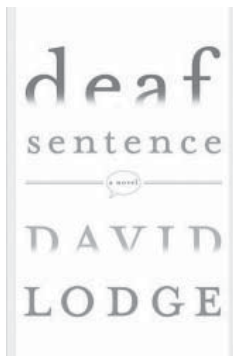


Deaf Sentence

By David Lodge

Viking, \$25.95, 304 pages

Deaf Sentence is a well-written novel on the limits and problems of deafness. Often taken to comic effect, it is still an often accurate look at not only the problems of the elderly going deaf, but also on those around them. Having had a good friend who's father was deaf enough to both need two hearing aids, but also unable to tell when they weren't working, I've seen some of the unintentional humor first-hand. *Deaf Sentence* is the story of retired British linguistics professor, Desmond Bates, going deaf and stir crazy at home as his wife's new interior decoration business takes off. Following an accidental "yes" to a question he just couldn't quite make out, but seemed like the polite reply, Desmond finds himself caught up with Alex Loom, an American graduate student needing him to supervise her doctorate on suicide notes. Alex is a compulsive liar, plagiarist, and sexually adventurous. Between trying to limit his relationship with Alex, dealing with his deteriorating father, reconnecting with his wife and trip to Poland, Desmond's life will keep you reading to the end.



Written in a diary format, with first-person narrative throughout, it is pleasant story on the subject of deafness, aging, relationships, and death.



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History

ACTIVIST, con't from page 27

of government. Afterwards, it became the supreme law of the land, with the power of judicial review, a power never mentioned in the Constitution, and one the founders probably would not have granted to the one body with lifetime appointments. The case, itself, was not one of much importance, but allowed the Federalist Marshall limit the power of then President Thomas Jefferson, a Democrat-Republican. Goldstone not only makes sense of the 1787 Constitutional Convention and the actual Marbury v. Madison case, but makes it readable and living. And, for those that don't quite understand the current relevance of this decision, without it, the Supreme Court most likely wouldn't have been able to intervene into the 2000 election. Truly a decision with long-lasting effects.

The Wordy Shipmates

By Sarah Vowell

Riverhead, \$25.95, 272 pages

Sarah Vowell is a highly prolific and insightful writer, and, in this, her latest book, she turns that insight to the root of American culture and attitudes--the Puritans. Vowell rediscovered them in the weeks after 9/11, through a sermon written by John Winthrop, the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. That sermon on Christian Charity gave her great comfort, and she found that quite unlike the dour black and white wearing caricatures we are taught about in history class, they were highly engaging, argumentative, and through their written legacy, very wordy. With an eye for humor and a respect for history, Vowell introduces us to the key players in the early colonies, their fears, their beliefs and most important, their legacy to us, 350 years later. It is these Puritans that first articulated the separation of Church and State (Roger Williams, kicked out of Massachusetts for it), individualism (Anne Hutchinson, also banished and killed by Indians) and missionary zeal (which we are still exporting today). Plenty of first-person source material, great commentary, personal insights and a

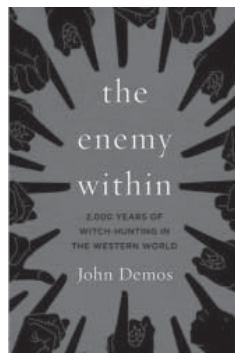
running analysis of how so many sitcoms have set episodes around the Puritans and shaped our popular image of them. Recommended.

The Enemy Within

By John Demos

Viking, \$25.95, 336 pages

Witch hunts have been a part of American history and culture from the very beginning. From the Salem witch trials to McCarthyism, the tendency to want to root out the different, the evil, the "not like us" shows up in our history time and time again. John Demos, a descendant of John Putnam--lead prosecutor in the Salem witch trials--discusses not only our tendency to turn on our neighbors, but gives us its history from the Roman communities that aimed their anger at the Christians to the sex-abuse trials in the 1980s. Both a history, and a commentary, Demos tries to explain how the different crazes started and the mindset that creates or continues them. Mob mentality has a start, a spark that begins the hunt for the different. *The Enemy Within* won't tell you how to avoid it, but it may help you recognize it.

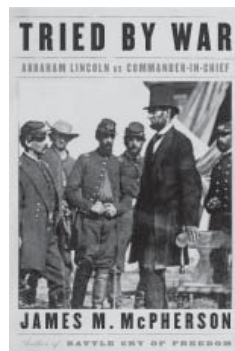


Tried by War

By James M. McPherson

Penguin Press, \$35.00, 384 pages

James McPherson is one of the most recognized authorities on the Civil War. His bestselling *Battle Cry of Freedom* won the Pulitzer Prize. In his new book, he places the focus on Abraham Lincoln and his role as Commander-In-Chief. Lincoln entered office and directly had to wage war, and, while there had been previous conflicts, the Civil War was the largest conflict America had had up to that point. Much of the role of Commander-In-Chief had to be defined by Lincoln, or assumed by him, and much of the authority taken was outside the powers granted to the President by the Constitution. In addition, Lincoln took charge of much of the grand strategy of the war, learning as he went, responsible for keeping his generals



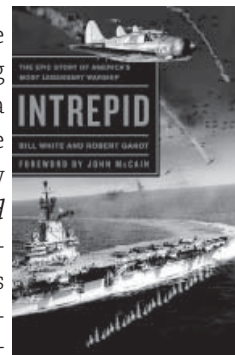
motivated and keeping the civilian populous supportive. Usually a part of Lincoln's presidency relegated to a single chapter or two in a biography, *Tried By War* elevates it to center stage. McPherson doesn't justify the actions Lincoln took, but provides all the framework to understand why he did make the decisions he did, and what the consequences were.

Intrepid

By Bill White; Robert Gandt

Broadway Books, \$26.95, 368 pages

There have been biographies of inanimate objects before. Especially objects that many people have worked on, with or in. Or in the case of an aircraft, all three. The *Intrepid* is one of the most storied aircraft carriers in World War II, launched in 1943, and surviving Kamikaze attacks, torpedo attacks and supporting the assault on Okinawa, was retired from service. Re-commissioned for the Cold War, the *Intrepid* was used as a recovery vessel for American astronauts splash landing at sea, and her frequent appearances doing so, fixed her in American minds as "the" aircraft carrier. She also served during Vietnam, Now a sea, air and space museum in New York City, *Intrepid* still serves as background for movies and TV shows today. *Intrepid* is not the best written military history book. It reads somewhat like fan fiction, written by fans for other fans. The authors do cover the history of the *Intrepid* very well, including interviews with many of the service people that served on her.



The Complete Idiot's Guide to World Mythology

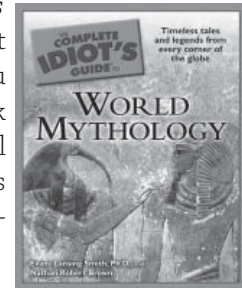
By Evans Lansing Smith;

Nathan Robert Brown

Alpha Books, \$18.95, 368 pages

The Complete Idiot books provide handy guides to many subjects, usually easily readable, giving you a good grounding for further reading. This *Complete Idiot's Guide to World Mythology* (CIG2WM hereafter), does just that. However the things it introduces you to is a very welcome subject of study, and can keep you learning for years to come. CIG2WM is less a listing of world cultures and the myths they have, or had, but ties them together, through an exploration of the similarities

between them, explaining the Hero's Journey cycle of myth and their modern equivalents in pop culture. Far from making us different, the myths our many ancestors believed, have deep parallels, reflecting a common, human method of interpreting the world, nature and questions about our creation and humanity. Sure its an *Idiot's Guide*, but that shouldn't stop you from taking a look at this very well written, beginner's guide to mythology.



England: 1000

Things You Need to Know

By Nicholas Hobbes

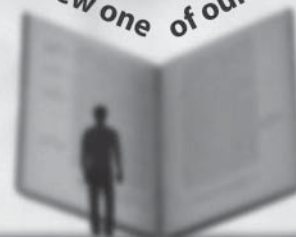
Overlook Press, \$22.95, 256 pages

In a handy reference guide for Anglophiles, Nicholas Hobbes provides 1,000 essential facts, ranging from Literature and Music, to the history of the pub. Not only does he give the basic information, but he gets into the detail of what makes the English, well, English. Usable as a reference guide or as a casual survey to pick up, read an entry and set it down, *England: 1000 Things You Need to Know* will keep fans of Shakespeare (page 159), pubs (oldest pub dated back to 795 AD), Parliament (page 130) or King Arthur (page 385) will find plenty to keep them amused. Or annoying their friends with completely random, yet entirely true facts.



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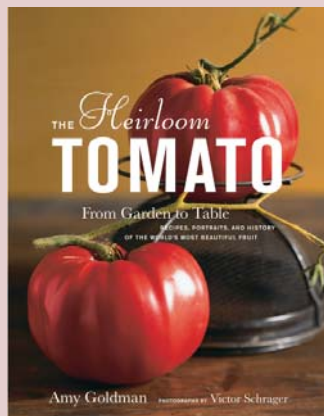
Home & Garden

The Heirloom Tomato

Written by Amy Goldman
Bloomsbury, \$35.00,
272 pages

In a book that can only be described as “tomato porn,” Amy Goldman shows off a vast selection of the many heirloom tomatoes she grows on her Hudson Valley farm. No easy-to-ship-across-country variants for her. With more than 500 varieties to choose from, Goldman moves from giant beefsteaks (the huge ones that a single slice can fit a sandwich) to currants (tiny versions about the size of a pea), and not only describes the specifics, but also gives growing tips and more than 50 recipes using them.

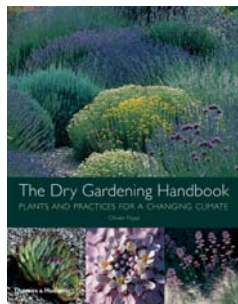
With so many unusually named varieties—Cartwright’s Mortgage Lifter—much of the text is either Goldman’s history of the tomato or a story about how she was introduced to it, and sometimes both. Perfect for the tomato lover (but that should go without saying).



The Dry Gardening Handbook

By Oliver Filippi
Thames & Hudson, \$60.00, 208 pages

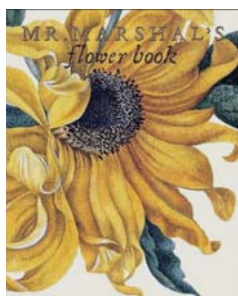
With water conservation and a growing trend to green living, *The Dry Gardening Handbook* could be an indispensable book for the do-it-yourself'er. Tips and instructions on soil preparation, planting, and maintaining your garden and yard year-round. There is an fairly exhaustive list (more than 500) of drought-resistant or low-water usage plants, with plenty of growing and soil information, complementary plants, growing zones and more. Lots of color pictures, clear organization and enough help to make you the low-water leader of your block.



Mr. Marshal's Flower Book

By Alexander Marshal
Viking Studio, \$26.95, 192 pages

Alexander Marshal was a horticulturist and entomologist in the 1600's. Very little is known of him other than the *Florelegium*, a season-by-season collection of flower watercolors known at that time. Presented to King George IV in the 19th century, the original is still owned by the British royal family (as indicated by the copyright.) In this full-color hardcover are many of his illustrations, still



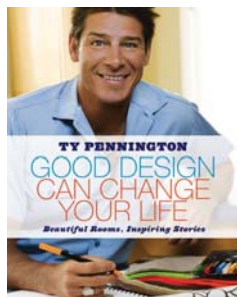
organized by season. There is a brief overview of what is known of Marshal, mostly gleaned from his contemporaries, and supplemental text explaining the historical import of the plants at the time of Marshal's work. Not an entire reprint, but still a fine overview. Most of the pictures are close-ups, but there are some reproductions of the original pages, showing his layout and perspective.

Good Design for a Good Life

By Ty Pennington
Simon & Schuster, \$25.00, 240 pages

Fans of the *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* will instantly recognize Ty Pennington's face on the cover of *Good Design for a Good Life*, and many of the stories used in the book to illustrate Pennington's idea that a well-designed home leads to a well-designed life. As on the show, most of the stories are emotional, and the design of the homes wrapped around personal situations Pennington was helping alleviate. *Good Design* focuses on three areas: the living room, bedroom and work areas.

Many of his ideas are inexpensive, high-impact, and easy for the average non-designer to follow and adapt for their own needs. While the book spends too much time on the stories from the show, there is a wealth of practical information on color, space usage, traffic flow, lighting, and art.



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Biographies & Memoirs

Through the Storm

By Lynne Spears
Thomas Nelson, \$24.95, 272 pages

In a very emotional book, Lynne Spears gives her version of what she calls the “tornado of fame.” *Through the Storm* is her way of trying to make sense of how they went from being a small southern family, to tabloid fodder day in and day out. There are many stories of how fame changed everything for the Spears family and stories that never made any news at all. It is those parts of the book that make Lynn Spears a more sympathetic figure than seen previously, particularly in light of the Jamie Lynn pregnancy and Britney’s ongoing series of public breakdowns.

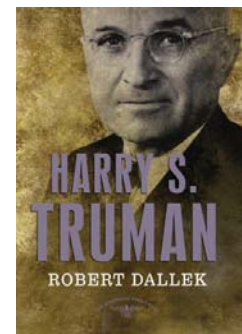
Spears does take some responsibility for how the family handled the early parts of Britney’s rocketing fame, but puts a lot of the blame on media attention, and ducks addressing her part in promoting Britney at the potential costs we have now seen. However, *Through the Storm* doesn’t fail because of that, it simply reminds us that even when blaming the media for causing their problems, celebrities still use the media to get their version of the story across.

Harry S. Truman

By Robert Dallek
Times Books, \$22.00, 208 pages

A part of Times Books *The American Presidents Series*, *Harry S. Truman* brings one of the most defining American Presi-

dents of the 20th Century to the forefront. Chosen as Roosevelt’s vice presidential running mate in 1944, because he would cause no issues with voters or party powers, Truman served only 82 days in that office. Elevated to President with Roosevelt’s death, Truman not only continued Roosevelt’s policies, but took to Presidential power in ways that created much of the modern world we live in. From negotiating the post WWII world with Stalin and Churchill and approving the dropping of the first atomic weapon, approving the Marshall Plan to rebuild defeated Europe, creating the Truman doctrine that resulted in Cold War Europe, pursuing equal rights for blacks and recognizing the new nation of Israel, Truman’s legacy was far reaching and still a part of the modern era. The ongoing stalemate in Korea left his initial legacy being one of low approval poll ratings and a taste of dislike in American memory. As time passed, and the policies he initiated or supported showed long lasting success, his standing among historians has placed him among the most important presidents, not only in the twentieth century, but maybe in our entire history. *Harry S. Truman* is an important book for those interested in why America, and the modern world, is the way it is.



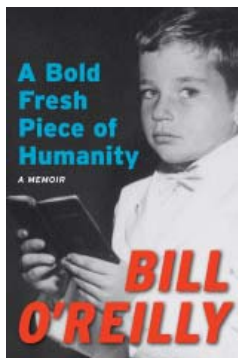
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A Bold Fresh Piece of Humanity

By Bill O'Reilly

Broadway Books, \$26.00, 272 pages

A *Bold Fresh Piece of Humanity* is Bill O'Reilly's memoir and soapbox for why he believes what he believes. Each story from his history is followed by an explanation on how that relates to his current views on culture, politics, government, liberals and conservatives. He really pushes his ability to be self-reliant and his expectation that anyone else can do the same. From his reflection on Katrina, "I'd have gotten in my car and driven away"



to "This last year I donated more money to charity than my father ever made in his life. I wonder how he'd feel about that?" the book clearly is a testament to just how cool Bill O'Reilly sees himself.

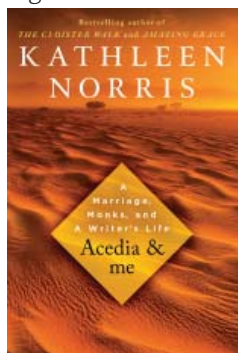
There are some insightful stories, and some that truly do show a human side to O'Reilly. But through the vast majority of the book, I kept seeing Stephen Colbert's face, reading the passages with one eyebrow cocked. If you like O'Reilly and agree with him politically, you'll enjoy the book. If you don't, you'll regret spending the time reading it. There are no revelations, just justifications for his political beliefs. Maybe he would have just gotten into his car and driven away. And he probably believed those people who didn't have a car and couldn't drive away should have worked harder, saved more money, and bought that car to take them to safety. Because if Bill can, you can.

Acedia & me

By Kathleen Norris

Riverhead Books, \$25.95, 352 pages

Part memoir, and part history of religious thought, *Acedia & me* is a thought-provoking book, bringing you deep into Norris' life and thoughts. Norris is the bestselling author of the *The Cloister Walk* and *Amazing Grace*. She starts *Acedia & me* with the simple definition of acedia; a slothful, soul-weary indifference. It is different from depression in that depression often has a medical base, whereas acedia is a failure of will and can



be overcome through an effort of will. Both Norris and her husband suffered from acedia, and much of the book is how they dealt with it throughout their marriage. The book also follows her husband's illness and eventual death, and Norris is often painfully honest about how she felt and managed through those times. *Acedia & me* is also a history of the term and concept, starting with fourth-century monks, who were aware of the feeling and used faith and devotion to overcome it.

Throughout the book, she brings examples of early Christian thinkers on the subject of acedia, faith, devotion, and monastic life. She repeatedly compares her life to that of being in a monastery and how using monastic traditions was able to overcome acedia, depression, and the death of her husband. An excellent book, both on a memoir level and that as a philosophical discourse.

Antoine's Alphabet

By Jed Perl

Knopf, \$25.00, 224 pages

In an A is for Actors, B is for Beardsley (Aubrey) book, art critic Jed Perl waxes philosophically and free-associates using his favorite artist, 18th-century French painter Jean-Antoine Watteau as his muse. Perl links many other artists and writers to Watteau, directly and indirectly, and often through his own experiences with them. There are elements of memoir among Perl's reflections that give insight to his own feelings about not only Watteau, but the writers, film directors and other artists he brings on board his very imaginative book.



There are a number of black and white reprints of sketches and paintings that would have been nice in color, but work well with the over all feel of the book. Art collectors interested in not only Watteau's works, but also the artists of the 18th and 19th centuries will not only enjoy this book, but probably find themselves picking up again and again to enjoy one letter of the alphabet or another.

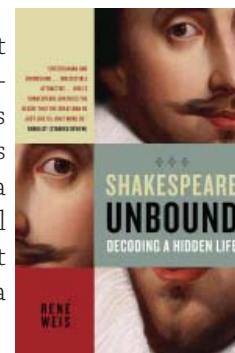
Shakespeare Unbound

By René Weis

Holt, \$20.00, 496 pages

Using Shakespeare's many plays and sonnets as her basis for his speculations on Shakespeare's life, historian René Weis comes to some surprising and occasionally controversial conclusions. The Bard was bisexual and may have slept with rival playwright Christopher Marlowe, may have fathered a illegitimate son, and (less controversial) may have

walked with a limp. Some of his conclusions feel stretched, but Weis, using the theory that one writes what one knows about, digs deep into the Shakespeare's works mining new meaning out of old favorites. Sure, its all speculation, but for those Shakespeare fans, this reprint of last years hardcover is a a fun read, and will make you look at his writings in a new light.

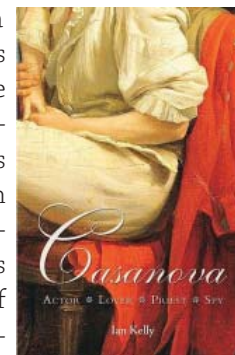


Casanova

By Ian Kelly

Tarcher/Penguin, \$28.95, 416 pages

The name Casanova is has become synonymous with male promiscuity and philandering. Ian Kelly, in his new biography, brings new dimension to Giacomo Casanova, beyond just his sexual exploits. Starting from very humble beginnings, Casanova made himself into the prototypical Renaissance man, being an author, actor, spy and, of course, infamous lover. Originally trained for the priesthood, he went off to enjoy and experience as much of Renaissance Venice as he could. Kelly, in a nod to Casanova's librettos, wrote *Casanova* in an opera style, with acts and intermezzi in the place of chapters. He also puts end to the myth of Casanova's misogyny, showing how he helped his ex-lovers, and kept them anonymous in his 4000 page memoir "The History of My Life." Far from being a one-dimensional historical figure, after reading *Casanova*, not only will you appreciate his life, but also Kelly's excellent historical research that brings the 1700's to life.

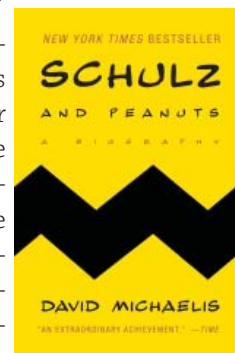


Schulz and Peanuts

By David Michaelis

Harper Perennial, \$19.95, 704 pages

The characters in Peanuts are recognizable by almost anyone, anywhere. What is less well-known is just how much his series reflected his life, the people he was close to, and the events occurring in it. David Michaelis' definitive biography of Schulz was released last year to great fanfare and to some controversy, as the Schulz family complained about Michaelis' mis-char-



acterization of Schulz and his focus on Schulz's personality flaws and not on the overall sweep of his life. That said, Michaelis took exhaustive steps to track events in Schulz's life, with the comic strips appearing at the same time, showing how Schulz used the strip as a therapeutic method for dealing with his depression, family problems, affair and more.

The areas lacking were more of how the strip changed over time and how Schulz adapted to events in the world with his strip--his introduction of Franklin during the civil rights movement, Peppermint Patty during the feminist movement. This new trade reprint of of last year's best-selling hardcover is still the most comprehensive overview of Schulz's life and the way Peanuts wove its way around it.

Romance

The Lucky One

By Nicholas Sparks

Grand Central Publishing, \$24.99, 336 pages

In Sparks' latest most-likely-to-be-a bestseller novel, US Marine Logan Thibault credits a run of good luck during his third tour in Iraq on a photo of an attractive young woman he found half buried in the dirt. After he returns home, he's still obsessed over the picture and the woman in it. So, in typical Spark's fashion, not only does he set off to find her, he does and the heart of the book is the relationship they develop. In many hands, a story line like this would be a quick paperback story, and forgotten as quickly as it took to read. With Sparks, *The Luck One* is going to be enjoyed, loaned out, and probably re-read by many of his readers, regardless of how its reviewed. At least he hasn't taken to turning books that read like they are a first draft or phoned in to pay for a second (or third) home. His still takes the time to provide his readers a good book.

