Letter from the Editor / George Kendall

In the January 1 & 15, 2020, issue, which, considering all that has happened since seems like ancient history, I described Booklist’s yearlong initiative, Women in Focus: The 19th in 2020, as recognition of the “progress women have made since 1920” and the “challenges women continue to face today.” In this issue, we bring to a close this timely focus at the end of a year full of breakthroughs and accomplishments at the magazine, while, as a country, we have elected Kamala Harris as the first woman and the first Black and South Asian to become Vice President of the United States.

Over the past 12 months, Booklist featured around 300 Women in Focus titles. The series began with Suffrage: Women’s Long Battle for the Vote, by Ellen Carol DuBois, reviewed by Adult Books Editor Donna Seaman. It closes with a starred review of the audiobook version of This Is Your Time (p. 103), by Ruby Bridges, read by the author and reviewed by Audio Editor Heather Booth. “In clear, simple, inspiring words—and with tones to match,” Heather writes, the author “walks listeners through her perspectives on racism as a learned disease, and on grace as the key to our collective salvation.” This powerful message inspires deep reflection and practice during a turbulent and deadly time.

As exemplified by our Women in Focus collection, there were fantastic books published this year. When adding up the numbers, you’ll find that Booklist published well over 7,000 reviews in 2020. All of the books published and reviewed in 2020 that received a Booklist starred review are presented in this issue, the latest of our annual compilations of Booklist starred titles. We are extraordinarily proud of this issue and recommend sharing it widely with friends and patrons, because, as a gift to all who love to read, and for a limited time, this issue is free online for everyone!

And so from here we move on with hope and best wishes for the new year. Although future reviews may not be tagged with Women in Focus, Booklist will continue to cover great books by and about women in 2021 and the years to come, and, with you, we will celebrate progress.

May you have a healthy, safe, and restful holiday season!

I wish you all the very best for the holidays and look forward to connecting with you in the new year.

On the Cover

Our “star” cover collage for this special issue features art from the covers of ten books published and given starred reviews in Booklist in 2020, listed here in alphabetical order with our congratulations: Bride of the Sea, by Eman Quraish (Tin House); Elsewhere, by Darcie Little Badger (Levine Queridos); In the Valley, by Ron Rash (Doubleday); Matutinaland, by Pam Munoz Ryan (Scholastic); The Night Lake, by Liz Tichenor (Counterpoint); Upeta Salada, by Elisa Macellari (Dark Horse); Punching the Air, by Ibi Zoboi and Yusef Salaam (HarperCollins/Balzer & Bray); The Unpassing, by Chia-Chia Lin (Farrar).
“A deeply affecting and disturbing novel, both suspenseful and tragic, one of Spencer’s best over a long career. Riveting reading from first page to last”
Booklist Starred Review

“A deeply affecting and disturbing novel, both suspenseful and tragic, one of Spencer’s best over a long career. Riveting reading from first page to last”
Booklist Starred Review

“Ripley spins a head-scratching whodunit while effectively recreating Allingham’s tone and characters. This clever continuation of a beloved series keeps getting better”
Publishers Weekly Starred Review

“Remarkable stuff. Fans of Bill James’ Harpur and Iles saga of cops and robbers are in for quite a treat”
Kirkus Reviews Starred Review

“Best Books of the Year from Severn House”

“Alys Clare matches well-drawn characters, in particular the charismatic lead, with a head-scratching puzzle and creepy atmospheres. Imogen Robertson fans will be pleased”
Publishers Weekly Starred Review

“Excellent... The surprising revelations that populate the book, mixed with a mood of regret and wistful longing for dead loves, imbue the story with a seductive power”
Publishers Weekly Starred Review

“Superior... Even minor characters are fully fleshed out in this trip down the mean streets of early 20th-century Leeds. Nickson’s consistent high quality across multiple series continues to impress”
Publishers Weekly Starred Review
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**Journalism & Publishing**


Invaluable for the serious writer who is dedicated to publication, and the rare title that’s both a reference manual and a page-turner.

**Bright Precious Thing.** By Gail Caldwell. Random, $27 (9780525510055).

Caldwell’s newest, vibrant memoir recounts the inspiration derived from a five-year-old neighbor, and views women’s issues through the lenses of the #MeToo movement and the Trump presidency.


In this tremendously engaging and idiosyncratic guidebook, Greene celebrates Icelandic curiosity and creativity, reporting on some of the country’s many unusual museums.

**Nothing Is Wrong and Here Is Why.** By Alexandra Petri. Norton, $25.95 (9781324006459).

This brilliant and wry collection of essays, lists, letters, plays, and more hilariously roasts the last five years in American culture.

**Screening Reality:** How Documentary Filmmakers Reimagined America. By Jon Wilkman. Bloomsbury, $30 (9781635571035).

In this many-faceted, dynamic, and thought-provoking history of nonfiction films in America, Wilkman elucidates the motivations of intrepid documentarians as they “struggled to capture and honestly portray the real world.”

**Philosophy & Psychology**

**Can’t Even:** How Millennials Became the Burnout Generation. By Anne Helen Petersen. HMH, $26 (9780358315070).

Buzzfeed culture reporter Peterson explores how millennials of all backgrounds and income brackets suffer because of the gig economy they inherited.

**Conflagration:** How the Transcendentalists Sparked the American Struggle for Racial, Gender, and Social Justice. By John A. Buehrens. Beacon, $32 (9780807024041).

A sterling, inspirational group portrait of the Transcendentalists, the parents of modern American liberalism.


A thoughtful and fashion-forward approach to figuring out what to wear—and understanding how clothes reflect lives well lived.

**Group:** How One Therapist and a Circle of Strangers Saved My Life. By Christie Tate. Avid Reader, $27 (9781982154615).

Tate’s debut memoir invites readers to sit alongside the author in one of the chairs circled for group therapy, and watch her struggle, fail, and very slowly learn.

**See No Stranger:** A Memoir and Manifesto of Revolutionary Love. By Valerie Kaur. Random/One World, $28 (9780525509097).

Activist and lawyer Kaur’s call for revolutionary love as a resolution to social injustice is expansive, nuanced, and inspiring.

**Sign Here If You Exist and Other Essays.** By Jill Sisson Quinn. Ohio State Univ., paper, $19.95 (9780814255926).

Over nine essays, Quinn finds connections between the natural world and her life, from grappling with her religious upbringing to adopting a child.

**The Socrates Express:** In Search of Life Lessons from Dead Philosophers. By Eric Weiner. Avid Reader, $27 (9781501129018).

Weiner’s writing is fresh and revelatory as he pulls together seemingly disparate notions and asks meaningful (and often unanswered) questions.

**Strange Situation:** A Mother’s Journey into the Science of Attachment. By Bethany Saltman. Ballantine, $27 (9780399181443).

This fascinating mix of memoir and scientific history examines attachment research into the bonds between infants and their caregivers.

**The Bible with and without Jesus:** How Jews and Christians Read the Same Stories Differently. By Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler. HarperOne, $34.99 (9780062560155).

Levine and Brettler offer a fascinating analysis of how Jews and Christians read the same Bible stories but come to profoundly different conclusions about what they mean.

**Broken Faith:** Inside the Word of Faith Fellowship, One of America’s Most Dangerous Cults. By Mitch Weiss and Holbrook Mohr. Hanover Square, $28.99 (9781335145239).

Compelling in its evidence, this shocking narrative examines the bonds of family, the limits of endurance, and how far people will go to save their souls.


An introduction to the facets and historical development of Sharia law, which clearly presents its complexity and fluidity in a way that is accessible to both Muslim and non-Muslim general readers.

**For All Who Hunger:** Searching for Communion in a Shattered World. By Emily M. D. Scott. Convergent, $25 (9780593135570).

Scott recounts the founding and early strug-
gles of St. Lydia’s, a “dinner church” centered around the sharing of a meal.

**The Islam Book.** By DK. DK, $25 (9781465491480).

While the ideas in this overview of Islam are complex, the narrative is easy to follow, and the visual aids will enhance readers’ understanding.

**Kingdom of Nauvoo: The Rise and Fall of a Religious Empire on the American Frontier.** By Benjamin E. Park. Norton/Liveright, $28.95 (9781631494864).

A gripping, at-last-it-can-be-told account of the 1840s crisis of Mormonism.

**Morality: Restoring the Common Good in Divided Times.** By Jonathan Sacks. Basic, $30 (9781541675315).

In this probing analysis of modern individualism, Sacks finds a needlessness that has undermined family, but also sees hope as young people rediscover the value of service to others.


Dorman tells the little-known and fascinating story of the ingenious founder and uplifting impact of Chicago’s Moorish Science Temple, the precursor to the Nation of Islam.

**Strange Rites: New Religions for a Godless World.** By Tara Isabella Burton. PublicAffairs, $28.95 (9781603589604).

Burton blends research and analysis to suggest that faith is actually surging in forms that privilege personal intuition over analysis to suggest that faith is actually surging in forms that privilege personal intuition over analysis to suggest that faith is actually surging in forms that privilege personal intuition over. Theology scholar Burton makes a strong case for labor unions as a corrective to the economic, social, and political structure of the U.S.


A provocative and probing piece of narrative nonfiction that follows the story of The Gospel of Jesus’s Wife, at first hailed as a religious breakthrough, then revealed to be a fake.


Jones holds up a mirror to white religious culture, cautioning those who “read their worldview back into the Bible,” in this powerful, deeply researched book.

**Social Sciences**


Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing Davidson, who ushered the remarkable Well-being of Future Generations Act through the Welsh Parliament, offers advice for passing similar legislation elsewhere.


Urofsky’s extensively researched account explores the full history, controversies, and impact of affirmative action policies and practices.

**African American Culture: An Encyclopedia of People, Traditions, and Customs.** Ed. by Omari L. Dyon and others. ABC-CLIO, $319 (9781440862434).

This timely and necessary three-volume work highlights the ways African Americans have shaped U.S. culture, covering history, religion, art, biographies, and more.

**Agent Sonya: Moscow’s Most Daring Wartime Spy.** By Ben Macintyre. Crown, $28 (9780593136300).

In this suspenseful, multilayered read for fans of spy novels, truth becomes more exciting and astonishing than fiction.

**Ancient Bones: Unearthing the Astonishing New Story of How We Became Human.** By Madeline Böhm and others. GreyStone, $28.95 (9781771647519).

This engaging overview of early humans raises several lingering questions that inquisitive readers will love.


Baker uses a suspenseful diary format to chronicle his long quest to uncover the truth about Project Baseless, an attempt to deploy biological and chemical weapons in 1950s Korea.

**A Better Man: A (Mostly Serious) Letter to My Son.** By Michael Ian Black. Algonquin, $24.95 (9781616209117).

A series of essays that tackle tough topics like toxic masculinity and fatherhood, all featuring Black’s signature sarcastic comedic style.

**Blood and Oil: Mohammed bin Salman’s Ruthless Quest for Global Power.** By Justin Scheck and Bradley Hope. Hachette, $29 (9780306846663).

Wall Street Journal reporters Scheck and Hope investigate the dramatic rise of Mohammed bin Salman, documenting the Saudi crown prince’s disruptive ambitions and utter ruthlessness.


Khakpour presents candid and illuminating essays written over a decade in which she explores nuances of personal and communal identity as an Iranian immigrant.

**Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents.** By Isabel Wilkerson. Random, $32 (9780593230251).

Wilkerson’s brilliant blend of history and journalism reveals the roots and destructive force of the caste system that underlies the economic, social, and political structure of the U.S.


Poet Castillo’s memoir tracks the traumas his family has endured in its struggles with the U.S. immigration system.


Labor activist McAlvey makes a strong case for labor unions as a corrective to the economic and political disparity between the corporate superrich and underpaid workers.

**Conditional Citizens: On Belonging in America.** By Laila Lalami. Pantheon, $25.95 (9781524747169).

Lalami treats the complex, incendiary topic of the intersection of racism and citizenship
with personal candor, nuanced consideration, and blistering insight.

The Dead Are Arising: The Life of Malcolm X. By Les Payne and Tamara Payne. Norton/ Liveright, $33.99 (9781631491665).

Payne's monumental biography places Malcolm X within the continuum of Black struggle as he transformed the Nation of Islam into a powerful movement paving the way for Black Lives Matter.


A local reporter takes on the many Goliaths of the opioid crisis of West Virginia, from drug distributors to incompetent bureaucracies to corrupt politicians.


Tye brings anti-communist firebrand Senator Joseph McCarthy and all the harm he did back to ferocious life in this must-read biography full of resonances to today's fraught politics.


Litt covers every aspect of American governance and politics at perspectives both granular and big picture, writing conversationally yet powerfully and offering solutions to challenging problems.


In this insightful, meticulously detailed book, Cervini tells the story of Dr. Frank Kameny, who was at the forefront of the fight for gay rights a decade before Stonewall.


Baime narrates the fascinating story of the 1948 presidential election, in which Truman fought scrappily against what seemed to be overwhelming support for Dewey's pro-corporation stance.


Brock examines the racial bias of mainstream internet browsers and the creative and empowering uses African Americans make of the web and social media.


Three scholars and one writer explore what it means to develop ideas together, with Elena Ferrante's Neapolitan Quartet as their subject.


Chabon and Waldman have created a stunning collection of original essays by premier writers about landmark cases to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the American Civil Liberties Union.


Pulitzer Prize–winning journalist Weiner traces the history of U.S.-Russian political warfare, from the end of WWII through the Mueller report, just in time for the homestretch of the 2020 presidential campaign.


Farrier travels the world in search of the “future fossils” we’re creating with our environmentally destructive ways, calling on science and the arts for illumination.


This critical and convincing scientific investigation into friendship urges readers to understand quality friendship as a biological necessity, not a luxury.


Jackson, a gay man, wrote these wise and compassionate epistolary essays about his experience of being LGBTQ in America today, to his 18-year-old son, who had just come out.


Readers will be enlightened, stupefied, and provoked as Kaplan harpoons ingrained notions about genius being the exclusive domain of men.


Schwartz centers his sophisticated, well-textured, and masterly written biography of Henry Kissinger on the former secretary of state's relationship with Richard Nixon.


Caparrós's titanic exploration of world hunger masterfully blends interviews, geopolitical history, social observation, and biting commentary to righteous effect.


In this smart, funny, and touching memoir, British-based journalist Heawood tells the story of her life in Hollywood, interviewing celebrities and going to posh parties while barely making ends meet.


Former prosecutor Wiehl crafts a powerful dual narrative of the unfolding investigation of the Unabomber and the life story of Ted Kaczynski.


Tjipombo’s vivid, soulful account of surviving sexual trafficking and her escape and reclamation of her life reveals a hidden hell and the need for justice.

I Don't Want to Die Poor. By Michael Arceneaux. Artria, paper, $17 (9781982129309).

Arceneaux’s writing is meticulously researched, gut-busting funny, and rich with niche cultural references that will delight audiences.


Beloved novelist Berg beautifully and insightfully recounts the emotions raised as she helps her aging parents as health issues lead to their moving into assisted living.


Focused on Henry Kissinger’s major influences, this is diplomatic and intellectual history at its best.


A riveting memoir of injustice, resilience, and hope, and a personal look at a modern humanitarian crisis.


Using data, observations, anecdotes, and helpful exercises, three industry consultants and executives explore unconscious (or implicit) bias and its impact in the workplace.

Dyson presents profound letters to Black martyrs in this consequential scrutiny of “the racial calamity at the heart of our democracy.”

Madison’s Sorrow: Today’s War on the Founders and America’s Liberal Ideal. By Kevin C. O’Leary. Pegasus, $27.95 (9781643134345).

O’Leary defies the liberal–conservative dichotomy by introducing the anti-democratic, caste-driven concept of illiberalism, whose origins he traces to pre-Revolutionary American history.


Saad’s call for readers to take personal responsibility for dismantling systemic racism is informed, insightful, and inspiring.


In seven stupendous essays of reclamation and declaration, poet Hong addresses Asian American history and identity in a mix of memoir, sociopolitical treatise, and revolution-ary call-out.


Goldstein pulls readers in with his entertaining approach to a complicated topic.


Dayen’s clarifying investigation into the far-reaching and malignant impact of monopolies is disturbing, compelling, and invaluable.


Science journalist Shah presents a beguiling fascination with our hominin ancestors. Leakey covers dramatic personal matters briskly while passionately sharing her driving interest in our hominin ancestors.


In her exciting and richly informative scientist’s autobiography, paleoanthropologist Leakey covers dramatic personal matters briskly while passionately sharing her driving fascination with our hominin ancestors.


Voiced from the perspective of her late grandmother, Kalb’s first book is a monumental act of attention, love, and memory.

Notes on a Silencing. By Lacy Crawford. Little, Brown, $28 (9780316491556).

Crawford’s meditation on the effects of silence, shame, and belief will add to evolving discussions of sexual assault and power.

Women in Focus: Memoirs

All year, Booklist marked books about women’s rights and women’s lives with the tagline: Women in Focus: The 19th in 2020. In the Adult section, we called out 194 titles and 44 received starred reviews. We’ve chosen several categories to highlight some of those stellar titles, beginning with memoir. No other genre puts women in focus as intimately as memoir and 2020 was, fittingly enough, a banner year for women’s memoir in sports, science, and the arts.

The Dragons, the Giant, the Women. By Wayétu Moore. Graywolf, $26 (9781644450314).

Moore follows her stunning first novel, She Would Be King (2018), with a powerful, stirring, and imaginatively allegorical memoir anchored in her family’s experiences in the Liberian civil war and immigration to the U.S.


Burton’s stirringly crafted memoir of disordered eating is also an extraordinary depiction of growing up, with breathtakingly related intimacies of family, friendship, and romantic love.


In this must-read memoir for the #MeToo era, Kang recounts how her discovery of the combat sport of Muay Thai enabled her to reclaim her self-worth.


Former lady-in-waiting to Princess Margaret, Glenconner has lived a fascinating life, as detailed in this entertaining peek behind the royal curtain.


Lynn’s countless fans will be delighted to find that she writes the way she talks in this memoir about her all-too-brief friendship with her mentor, Patsy Cline.


Soccer star and gay activist Rapinoe’s memoir combines compelling testimony for equality in sports with a resounding message of hope.

Recollections of My Nonexistence. By Rebecca Solnit. Viking, $26 (9780593083338).

Solnit’s unconventional and galvanizing memoir-essays illuminates key formative moments in her valiant writing life and the perils women face in a complexly, violently sexist world.

The Sediments of Time: My Lifelong Search for the Past. By Meave Leakey and Samira Leakey. HMH, $30 (9780358206675).

In her exciting and richly informative scientist’s autobiography, paleoanthropologist Leakey covers dramatic personal matters briskly while passionately sharing her driving fascination with our hominin ancestors.


Astrophysicist Seager’s engaging memoir of her life, work, and autism diagnosis is technical writing at its best.

This Is What America Looks Like: My Journey from Refugee to Congresswoman. By Ilhan Omar. Morrow/Dey St., $27.99 (9780062964213).

Omar tells the story of her life as a Somalian war refugee, a newly arrived child with no English in America, and a U.S. Congresswoman in this compelling memoir.


Doyle writes candidly about her life, including falling in love with a woman while married to a man and being a mother of three, to help others break free.

What We Carry. By Maya Shanbhag Lang. Dial, $27 (9780525512394).

In this deeply moving memoir, novelist Lang shares the complex realizations she experienced while caring for her mother, an Indian immigrant and a physician, as she struggles with Alzheimer’s.

Constitutional-law historian Goldstone provides a timely examination of the checkered past of voting rights in the U.S., a tale of racism and politics aimed at disenfranchising African Americans.


Yang presents a dramatic history of anti-immigration legislation and rhetoric in twentieth-century America, and all the harm done.


Longtime British war correspondent Lamb considers the impact of war on women in this powerful, wrenching, and global account that gives voice to those who have experienced unimaginable horrors.


This blindingly candid family memoir about the impetus behind young environmental activist Greta Thunberg's galvanizing global campaign traces the symbiosis between human and planetary health.


Abrams recounts her long involvement in voter issues, shares her solutions for overcoming racist voter suppression, and reaffirms the importance of voting to keep democracy alive.


With clarity and a fine ability to make connections, Frank looks at the history of populism in the U.S., turning many common assumptions on their heads.


Reinforcing the social justice belief that the personal is political, Gevisser alternates between contextualizing political events and profiling the lives of LGBTQ+ people.


In this one-stop history of third-party presidential candidates, Stein shows how outliers provided a politics-weary populace with plenty of distraction.

Pretty Bitches: On Being Called Crazy, Angry, Bossy, Frumpy, Feisty, and All the Other Words That Are Used to Undermine Women. Ed. by Lizzie Skurnick. Seal, $28 (9780525509684).

In short, incisive essays, 29 outstanding women writers consider how 29 ordinary words are used to undermine and disparage women and their accomplishments.


In this sweeping intellectual biography, Carter traces Keynes’ career and the impact of his economic and social ideas.


In his brilliant survey of Japan’s modern global cultural influence, Alt focuses on a toy car, anime, karaoke, kawaii culture typified by Sanrio’s Hello Kitty, and the Sony Walkman.

The Purpose of Power: How We Come Together When We Fall Apart. By Alicia Garza. OneWorld, $27 (9780525509684).

Garza, a founder of Black Lives Matter, offers a moving, instructive, and timely account of her in-the-trenches experience as a social justice warrior.


A disturbing origin story of the CIA, seen through the work lives of four American spies.


Mitchell’s riveting reporting makes for both an important Civil Rights document and a timely read.

Rigged: America, Russia, and One Hundred Years of Covert Electoral Interference. By David Shimer. Knopf, $29.95 (9780593137581).

Shimer’s deep history of Soviet and Russian interference in American elections and democracy is thoroughly engaging.


A very smart and very funny look back at the Trump years and forward to 2020, detailing how the Democrats could win—or blow it.


Raines reveals that Alabama has the most diverse ecosystem in the nation and boasts the worst record of environmental protection.

Say I’m Dead: A Family Memoir of Race, Secrets, and Love. By E. Dolores Johnson. Lawrence Hill, $28.99 (9781641602747).

Johnson powerfully describes the love, hate, and anguish catalyzed by the 1943 marriage of her white mother, who “disappeared” to protect her family, and Black father.


Science writer Hvistendahl writes about how the sighting of an Asian man bending over corn in an Iowa farmer’s field led to a multifaceted FBI investigation into industrial espionage by China.


Following several cases from his time as a New Orleans parole officer, Hardy illustrates the whole person behind each story.


Soboroff’s expose of the inner workings of a corrupt and unfeeling government is essential.
Bestsellers of 2020

WEIRD AL SERIOUSLY
Lily E. Hirsch
9781538142448

FEAR IS FUEL
Patrick J. Swkeney II
9781538134412

SUMMONED TO GLORY
Richard Atwater
9781538137161

OUR PEOPLE
Discovered Lithuania's Hidden Holocaust
Noita Tanagaite
9781538133033

A SOCIAL MEDIA SURVIVAL GUIDE
Melody Korle
9781538126790

MANIPULATED
9781538133507

MY BROTHER, MUHAMMAD ALI
The Celebrating Biography
Gail Golden
9781538142448

CURATING YOUR LIFE
Gail Golden
9781538132876

HAPPINEST
Finding Fulfillment When Your Life Leaves Home
Judy Holland
9781538130582

EVERY DAY BIAS
Understanding and Navigating Unconscious Biases
9781442258655

FINDING COMFORT DURING HARD TIMES
Earl Johnson
9781538127094

GETTING SMART ABOUT RACE
Margaret L. Andersen
9781538129494

Available at www.rowman.com
800-462-6420
to understanding America’s current immigration misery.

**Sex Robots and Vegan Meat:** Adventures at the Frontier of Birth, Food, Sex, and Death. By Jenny Kleeman. Pegasus, $27.95 (9781643135724).

Investigative journalist Kleeman explores how technological advances are affecting intimate areas of human life, with possibly destructive outcomes.


This brutally honest account of the author’s ex-husband’s death from drug addiction underscores that addiction knows no demographic barriers.


A compelling, frank, bracing, and caring look at the Frontier of Birth, Food, Sex, and Death. By Jenny Kleeman. Pegasus, $27.95 (9781643135724).

Fifty-Year Battle for a More Unjust America. By Gilda R. Daniels. NYU, $30 (9781479862351).

A vivid and rousing history of suffrage in the U.S. includes entries on the suffrage movement, women’s rights, and the political parties, movements, and processes, as well as primary documents.


With deep research, Puleo recounts how American citizens ferried tons of food and clothing to Ireland in 1847 for relief from the Irish Potato Famine.

**The Presidents Club in the Age of Trump.** By Kate Andersen Brower. Harper, $28.99 (9780062666874).

Insights into presidential life beyond the rancor of everyday politics will appeal to a wide variety of readers.


In chronicling the murder of two young hippies in rural West Virginia, Eisenberg offers a powerful commentary on society’s notions of gender, violence, and rural America.


Guardian contributor Dabiri explores the twists of racism which are tangled up in considerations of Black hair, reaching back to pre-European-invasion Africa and into the present.


A thrilling, emotional, and engaging ride that almost commands the reader to turn the page, this memoir accurately widens the lens of American history.

**Why Did I Get a B? And Other Mysteries We’re Discussing in the Faculty Lounge.** By Wead Seib. Random, $28 (9780593188934).

Concrete career and life advice from the first African American woman CEO in Silicon Valley.

**Concrete career and life advice from the first African American woman CEO in Silicon Valley.** By Wead Seib. Random, $28 (9780593188934).

**Supreme Inequality: The Supreme Court’s Fifty-Year Battle for a More Unjust America.** By Adam Cohen. Penguin Press, $30 (9780735221505).

Cohen argues that the court’s five-decade pattern of “siding with the rich and powerful against the poor and weak” bears some of the blame for our historic levels of socioeconomic inequality.


A Page of a Document, as well as primary documents.

**Tales of Two Planets: Stories of Climate Change and Inequality in a Divided World.** Ed. by John Freeman. Penguin, paper, $18 (9780143133926).

Essays, stories, and poems by 35 writers around the world illuminate yoked environmental and humanitarian crises in this powerful literary anthology created by editor of conscience and poet Freeman.

**Team of Five: The Presidents Club in the Age of Trump.** By Kate Andersen Brower. Harper, $28.99 (9780062666874).

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Guardian contributor Dabiri explores the twists of racism which are tangled up in considerations of Black hair, reaching back to pre-European-invasion Africa and into the present.


West Point graduate and Bronze Star recipient Edstrom recounts his experiences in Afghanistan and questions our national perspective on patriotism, the military, and war.

**Uncounted: The Crisis of Voter Suppression in the United States.** By Gilda R. Daniels. NYU, $30 (9781479862351).

Daniels’ presents a thorough and rousing history of voter suppression, rich in personal stories, to create a valuable resource for everyone in the public square.

**The Undocumented Americans.** By Karla Cornejo Villavicencio. Random/One World, $26 (9780399592683).

Journalist Cornejo Villavicencio reports on the lives of her fellow undocumented Americans from New York to Miami and beyond in this valuable, imaginative, and moving inquiry.

**The Violence inside Us: A Brief History of an Ongoing American Tragedy.** By Chris Murphy. Random, $28 (9781984854575).

Senator Murphy digs deeply into the forces behind America’s epidemic of gun violence in this compelling, frank, bracing, and caring inquiry.

**Voting and Political Representation in America: Issues and Trends.** Ed. by Mark P. Jones. ABC-CLIO, $204 (9781440860843).

Comprehensive coverage of the fragile history of suffrage in the U.S. includes entries on political parties, movements, and processes, as well as primary documents.


A thrilling, emotional, and engaging ride that almost commands the reader to turn the page, this memoir accurately widens the lens of American history.

**Why Did I Get a B? And Other Mysteries We’re Discussing in the Faculty Lounge.** By Wead Seib. Random, $28 (9780593188934).

Concrete career and life advice from the first African American woman CEO in Silicon Valley.


Funny and kind but also angry, incredulous, demanding, smart, harsh, gentle, and compli-
Women in Focus: Politics

Politics has consumed our attention this year, and with the first woman vice president-elect, and a woman of color, it seems only right to honor stellar books about women in politics past and present.

Michaelis clarifies and repositions Eleanor Roosevelt’s unique and exceptional life in ways that emphasize just how relevant her struggles and achievements are in this time of political reckoning.

Hamlin portrays a forgotten force in the freethought, women’s rights, and women’s suffrage movements, an unconventional and successful woman fascinating for her courageous and creative activism.

An entertaining and balanced biography of Nancy Pelosi, veteran politician and current Speaker of the House.


The Queens of Resistance series combines sass and savvy to vividly portray four courageous and powerful women politicians and illuminate their causes, strategies, and accomplishments.

A suitably buoyant and zesty portrait of determined, dauntless, and always dazzling Congresswoman Waters.

The story of women’s fight for equality, from the example set by the Haudenosaunee to the riot grrrl movement and the founders of Black Lives Matter.

DuBois meticulously and vibrantly chronicles the leaders and every phase of the arduous, complicated, 75-year battle for women’s suffrage in America, culminating in the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920.

This is What America Looks Like: My Journey from Refugee to Congresswoman. By Ilhan Omar. Morrow/Dey St., $27.99 (9780062954213).
Omar tells the story of her life as a Somalian war refugee, a newly arrived child with no English in America, and a U.S. Congresswoman in this compelling memoir.

Congresswoman Jayapal recounts her political education in a memoir of remarkable generosity, humor, and spirit.

A unique take on the usual nature guide explores avian behavior from the bird’s point of view, offering new insights in a beautifully illustrated volume.


Miller’s research into the life of scientist David Starr Jordan reads like a podcast episode, blending investigative journalism, biography, and a dash of memoir.


Using mathematical models, Cheng makes a clear and impassioned case for the eradication of gender bias.

Decoding Your Cat: The Ultimate Experts Explain Common Cat Behaviors and Reveal How to Prevent or Change Unwanted Ones. By American College of Veterinary Behaviorists. HMH, $27 (9781328489906).

This helpful guide encompasses almost every mental, physical, and emotional cat symptom and behavior imaginable.


Historian Goodman presents an entertaining and wide-reaching investigation of the extensive ripple effects of the choice by late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century Londoners to use coal to power their homes.


Lepore tells the story of the Simulmatics Corporation’s early use of computerized simulations to predict human behavior in a perceptive work of historically informed dissent.


Gostick and Elton understand their audience of leaders and aspiring leaders and “sell” their concept—leading with gratitude—with examples from well-known business personalities and case histories.

Child Care


In a warm and judgment-free style, Perry helps readers examine their childhoods to decide which parenting patterns to let go of and which to keep.


Single mom Rippon, whose six children include Olympic figure skater Adam Rippon, offers inspiring insights, compelling family stories, and sound advice for everyone who interacts with children.


Best-selling author and renowned clinician Levine takes a close look at how anxiety affects parental decision-making and child development.

Health & Medicine


Zaman’s vividly informative history of antibiotics, the scientists who discovered them, and the Hidden Order of Life. By Lulu Miller. Simon & Schuster, $23 (9781501160271).

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investigates our evolutionary past and explains why exercise is necessary and healthy.


Renowned physician and global health expert Farmer chronicles the 2014 Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia, and explores the deep history of exploitation behind it.


Johnson, a hospital chaplain with the American Red Cross, offers thoughtful guidelines for helping survivors of and first responders to natural and human-made disasters.

**Golem Girl:** By Riva Lehrer. Random/One World, $30 (9781984820303).

In her frank, darkly humorous, illustrated memoir, artist, writer, and disability activist Lehrer recounts her struggles with spina bifida and people’s responses to her socially challenged body.

**Good Morning, Destroyer of Men’s Souls.** By Nina Renata Aron. Crown, $27 (9780525576679).

Aron’s memoir of a codependent and all-enveloping relationship is a beautiful and nuanced portrait of living alongside addiction.

**Hidden Valley Road:** Inside the Mind of an American Family. By Robert Kolker. Doubleday, $29.95 (9781604609905).

Kolker delves into the diagnosis and treatment of schizophrenia by chronicling the staggering tragedies of the Galvin family, in which six of 12 siblings suffered from the disease.

**The Lady’s Handbook for Her Mysterious Illness.** By Sarah Ramey. Doubleday, $27.95 (9780385543767).

Ramey’s chronicle of her ongoing medical nightmare pivots on her realization of how medicine fails to treat women with proper respect and trust.


To read Posner’s encyclopedic, explosive exposé of the pharmaceutical industry and the government’s role in its development is to peer into a Pandora’s box of malfeasance, perfidy, and corruption.


Lyman covers many aspects of human skin, going far beyond the obvious, in this thoughtful, informative treatise.

**The Sensitives:** The Rise of Environmental Illness and the Search for America’s Last Pure Place. By Oliver Broudy. Simon & Schuster, $27 (9781982128500).

Broudy ventures into the realm of those who suffer from the mysterious ailment known as Environmental Illness (EI) to provocative effect.


Zakaria presents the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and offers innovative, logical, and considered options for how to emerge with more resilience and strength.

**Gardening**

**Ikebana Unbound:** A Modern Approach to the Japanese Art of Flower Arranging. By Amanda Luu and Ivanka Matsuba. Artisan, $24.95 (9781579659134).

A modern take on a centuries-old art based in naturalness, movement, simplicity, and balance.


A science-based call to heal the planet in the comfort of our own yards.

**A Year in My Garden.** By Jacqueline van der Kloet. ICP/Helene Lesger, $55 (9789082683691).

It’s hard to argue with Dutch master gardener van der Kloet’s decades of experience—and amazing illustrations.

**Cookery**

**The Baja California Cookbook:** 60 Recipes from Lower California. By David Castro Hussong and Jay Porter. Ten Speed, $30 (9780399582837).

Sidebars on Baja’s food and culture add a compelling narrative to Baja native Castro Hussong’s collection of 60 traditional and novel recipes.

**Beyond the North Wind:** Russia in Recipes and Lore. By Darra Goldstein. Ten Speed, $37.50 (9780399580390).

Informative sidebars envelop and elevate food scholar Goldstein’s 100 recipes.

**Chasing Flavor:** Techniques and Recipes to Cook Fearlessly. By Dan Kluger. Harcourt, $35 (9781328546333).

Kluger leaves readers with a “takeaway” in each of his recipes: pairing unusual flavors, spotlighting a single element, boosting a technique.


This authentic introduction to the cuisine of central Chile shares generally quick-to-make recipes, culminating in once, the last meal of the day in which nearly anything goes.

**Dessert Person:** Recipes and Guidance for Baking with Confidence. By Claire Saffitz. Clarkson Potter, $35 (9781984826961).

High-quality, foundational instructions paired with a splendid array of instructions, from a salty-rosemary nut tart to French pastries to St. Louis (Saffitz’s hometown) gooey butter cake.


Buford’s memoir of his apprenticeship in France’s gastronomic capital is an inside look into haute cuisine.

**East:** 120 Vegan and Vegetarian Recipes from Bangalore to Beijing. By Meera Sodha. Flatiron, $35 (9781250750730).

For readers of all cooking levels, Sodha shares thoughtfully written recipes with a sincerity that home cooks will find encouraging.

**Falastin:** A Cookbook. By Sami Tamimi and Tara Wigley. Ten Speed, $35 (9780399581731).

This celebration of Palestinian cooking addresses the history and politics of the region.
while also highlighting local culinary experts, with 120 unique and familiar recipes.


In scientific yet wholly readable terms, the Mumbai-born molecular biologist maps out the nature of delicious. With 100-plus recipes.

**Foolproof Fish:** Modern Recipes for Everyone, Everywhere. By America’s Test Kitchen. America’s Test Kitchen, $35 (9781948703109).

Novice fish cooks will discover just about everything they need to take advantage of the bounty of the world’s oceans, lakes, and rivers.

**Fresh from Poland:** New Vegetarian Cooking from the Old Country. By Michal Korkosz. The Experiment, paper, $19.95 (9781615196555).

Korkosz’s photographic talent and his inventive ways with Polish cuisine make his first book a real standout.

**Friuli Food and Wine:** Frasca Cooking from Northern Italy’s Mountains, Vineyards, and Seaside. By Bobby Stuckey and others. Ten Speed, $50 (9780309958061).

A love letter to Northeastern Italy, a place bordered by Austria, Slovenia, and the Adriatic Sea.

**Gordon Ramsay Quick and Delicious:** 100 Recipes to Cook in 30 Minutes or Less. By Gordon Ramsay. Grand Central, $32 (9781538719336).

An instructive and inspiring entry, rich in international flavors and careful preparation, that stands out among the vast array of quick-meal cookbooks.


Caldewell shows readers that, with the proper starter, making yogurt at home proves fairly easy, incorporating recipes for cheeses, dips, and drinks along the way.

**Open Kitchen:** Inspired Food for Casual Gatherings. By Susan Spungen. Avery, $35 (9780525536673).

Simplicity shines in this collection of family-style meals that can be prepared with agility at a moment’s notice or planned-for in stages with more ample time.

**Parwana:** Recipes and Stories from an Afghan Kitchen. By Durkhani Ayubi and Farida Ayubi. Interlink, $35 (9781623718756).

Into a skillfully told narrative of her ancestral land, Afghanistan, Ayubi weaves the cross-pollinating of foods, culture, and recipes there.


Readers will find everything they’d ever wanted to know about making pie, and a recipe for almost any filling eaters hanker for.

**Pieometry:** Modern Tart Art and Pie Design for the Eye and the Palate. By Lauren Ko. Morrow, $32.50 (9780062911223).

Ko’s artful tart recipes—both sweet and savory—will unleash home chefs’ creative spirits in the kitchen.

**Resetting the Table:** Straight Talk about the Food We Grow and Eat. By Robert Paarlbarg. Knopf, $28.95 (9780525656449).

A broadly and deeply informed look at the system that supplies massive quantities of food to a still-growing global population, and how to make that system work better.


A celebration of Black culture through food, and a must for all readers of culinary history.

**Rose’s Ice Cream Bliss:** By Rose Levy Beranbaum. HMH, $25 (9781328506627).

Who better than the reigning monarch of baking to share her always thorough and ever-enticing grasp of home ice cream making?

**See You on Sunday:** A Cookbook for Family and Friends. By Sam Sifton. Random, $35 (9781400609927).

Sifton credits his appreciation for Sunday dinners to delightful meals prepared at his Brooklyn parish, encouraging others to cook and serve such joyful repasts.

**The Tahini Table:** Go Beyond Hummus with 100 Recipes for Every Meal. By Amy Zitelman and Andrew Schloss. Agate, $29 (9781572842892).

This unfussy cookbook is fun to read, full of bright photographs, and easy to use.

**This Will Make It Taste Good:** A New Path to Simple Cooking. By Vivian Howard. Little, Brown/Voracious, $35 (9780316381123).

Home chefs will clap with surprise and awe at these 100-plus recipes organized around Howard’s 10 “flavor heroes.”

**The Arts**

**150 Glimpses of the Beatles.** By Craig Brown. Farrar, $30 (9780374109318).

The many twists and turns in this addictive, immersive, funny, bizarre, silly, poignant, weird, and amazing mix of biography and cultural history make this an essential Beatles title.


Undeniably fun reading enhanced by Maerz’s expert chapter introductions and many conversations with everyone from Linklater to the stars to the film crew.

**The Art of Drag.** By Jake Hall. Nobrow, $22.95 (9781910620717).

This beautifully crafted and vibrantly illustrated volume celebrates drag as an art form that’s at once glamorous, amusing, and subversive.


Wasson, a veteran Hollywood writer, looks both at the particulars of how Chinatown came to be as well as the larger societal and cultural forces swirling behind it.

**Black Diamond Queens:** African American Women and Rock and Roll. By Maureen Mahon. Duke, $114.95 (9781478010197).

With depth and breadth, Mahon’s work centers the many African American women who heavily influence rock and roll, from LaVern Baker to Tina Turner.


With expertise and narrative vitality, Perl

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completes his magnificent two-volume biography of sculptor Calder, focusing on his monumental public works and exuberantly radical creativity.

**Counterpoint: A Memoir of Bach and Mourning.** By Philip Kennicott. Norton, $26.95 (9780393653562).

An approachable, keenly thoughtful rumination on the nature of musical study, biography, and Bach’s place in the firmament of classical composers.

**Frida in America: The Creative Awakening of a Great Artist.** By Celia Stahr. St. Martin’s, $29.99 (9781250113382).

Stahr draws on vivid primary sources to chronicle Kahlo’s often wrenching early-1930s sojourn in the U.S. and the profound impact her experiences had on the arc of her creativity.


This wonderful making-of account of the 1984 classic features new commentary from the key players, rarely seen concept art, and plenty of behind-the-scenes stories.


This is Turner’s quasi-biography wrapped around an exploration of Buddhism, with roughly equal emphasis on personal anecdotes and devotional practices.

**It’s Never Too Late: Make the Next Act of Your Life the Best Act of Your Life.** By Kathie Lee Gifford. Thomas Nelson, $26.99 (9780785236641).

Running the gamut from hilarious to heartbreaking, the iconic television personality shows readers that it’s never too late to start over, chase a dream, or accept Jesus into their lives.

**Latinx Photography in the United States: A Visual History.** By Elizabeth Ferrer. Univ. of Washington, paper, $34.95 (9780295747637).

Ferrer’s richly diverse and well-curated history of Latinx photography is a powerful testament to a people’s artistic vibrancy and legacy.


Rinzler, a rock star in the world of making-of movie books, delivers another lavishly illustrated stunner, this time chronicling the genesis of James Cameron’s *Aliens.*

**Modesty: A Fashion Paradox.** By Hafsa Lodi. Neem Tree, $45 (9781911107255).

A thoughtful consideration of modest-clothing trends from numerous social, religious, and commercial aspects.


Wagner’s memories of her mother, Natalie Wood, are vivid and heartbreaking as she recalls her childhood and her mother’s fatal accident and candidly shares her lifelong struggles with anxiety.


Swafford, a composer himself, presents Mozart in his full complexity, accompanied by keen musical insights into his subject’s entire canon.

**Niche: A Memoir in Pastiche.** By Momus. Farrar, $28 (9780374144081).

Nick Currie, aka Momus, an avant-garde singer, songwriter, and blogger, offers a marvellously eccentric mock oral history of his life allegedly recounted by 217 deceased authors and artists.

**Nightmares in the Dream Sanctuary: War and the Animated Film.** By Donna Kornhaber. Univ. of Chicago, $35 (9780226472683).

One of those rare “academic” books so well done that anyone interested in its subjects—animated cartoons and war—will benefit from.


Music journalist Robinson writes about the talented women musicians she met over the decades and the difficulties and even violence they faced in the sexist music industry and wider world.


In the first in-depth biography of profoundly influential if underappreciated singer and civil rights icon Odetta, Zack offers a thoughtful portrait of a pioneering, deeply independent African American artist.


Composer Adams, winner of the Pulitzer Prize and a Grammy Award, inspires and enchants in his memoir about the Alaskan wilderness, friendship, and creativity.

**Small Hours: The Long Night of John Martyn.** By Graeme Thomson. IPG/Omnibus, $28.99 (97817787600195).

This sympathetic biography of Anglo-Scots John Martyn, a complicated but important singer-songwriter-guitarist, establishes his key role in the 1960s-70s British folk scene and his ongoing influence.

**Tomoko Fuse’s Origami Art: Works by a Modern Master.** By Tomoko Fuse and David Brill. Tuttle, $29.99 (978405315552).

Familiar or not with the works of origami artist Tomoko Fuse, readers will be astonished and intrigued by the pieces gathered in this anthology of her designs.

**The Way of Bach: Three Years with the Man, the Music, and the Piano.** By Dan Moller. Pegasus, $27.95 (9781643135809).

This story of a man struggling to achieve his own aesthetic meaning will move anyone seeking to grasp the power of music in human existence.

This well-researched book on the making of West Side Story in 1961 offers a guided tour through an important piece of film history.


Gefter's expert and engaging portrait of a master portraitist vividly proves his claim that photographer Avedon is “one of the most consequential artists of the twentieth century.”

Crafts & Hobbies


A spectacular how-to book for drawing, sketching, and painting fruits, flowers, tree parts, and vegetables.


It’s difficult to see how an in-person class could teach more than Ogura’s unique and helpful drawing how-to book.


After viewing these elegant knits, crafters will emerge with a sense of delight and, perhaps, a resolve to try.


This very intimate portrait of a potter, gardener, photographer, and entrepreneur is guaranteed to, as its title insists, inspire.

Mini Amigurumi Animals: 26 Tiny Creatures to Crochet. By Sarah Abbondio. Search, $11.95 (978172219163).

Both crocheters new to and experienced with amigurumi will enjoy the cuteness as they easily whip up these delightful creatures.

Storey’s Curious Compendium of Practical and Obscure Skills: 214 Things You Can Actually Learn How to Do. By How-to Experts at Storey. Storey, $29.95 (9781635861914).

The “makers and doers” at Storey compile their favorite projects, from simple to complex, in this how-to book of how-to books.

Sports & Recreation


Feinstein profiles the players and coaches at smaller schools in the world of NCAA basketball, teams that occasionally achieve the pinnacle of the sport: a trip to the Final Four.


In one of the very best baseball books in years, Kornhauser details the journeys of 11 baseball players who made the majors for a single game.


Period photos, chapter notes, and a timeline attest to this offering’s scholarship, while its insightful and often amusing commentary will keep readers’ attention.


Abramsky tells the inspirational story of England’s Lottie Dod, who was a five-time Wimbledon champion in the late nineteenth century and a star in multiple other sports.


In the most insightful book yet about one of the signature athletes of the last 25 years, Bamberger details Tiger Woods’ phenomenal comeback, culminating with his victory in the 2019 Masters Championship.


This eloquently written running memoir by a young Mexican American describes not only a grueling “spirit run,” but also the challenge of embracing one’s heritage while forging an individual path forward.


In this captivating memoir, Morley describes his winter trek across Canada, from Prince Rupert, British Columbia, to Swan Lake, Manitoba. A fine chronicle of one man’s journey of self-discovery.

Three-Ring Circus: Kobe, Shaq, Phil, and the Crazy Years of the Lakers Dynasty. By Jeff Pearlman. HMH, $30 (9781328530004).

With an eye for revealing detail, Pearlman profiles the Los Angeles Lakers team that won three straight NBA championships in the early aughts behind Shaquille O’Neal and Kobe Bryant.


In this engrossing biography, Madden chronicles the remarkable career that put pitcher Tom Seaver in baseball’s Hall of Fame.


Retired NOAA climate scientist Goodrich brings thoughtful focus to the complicated issues surrounding the controversial Keystone Pipeline.

Why We Swim. By Bonnie Tsui. Algonquin, $26.95 (9781616207861).

In this eloquent exploration of the human relationship to water, Tsui examines the “universal experience of being immersed in water,” whether it’s in an ocean, lake, or swimming pool.

Literature


Cohen recounts how she found herself seeking comfort in the reading and rereading of
Jane Austen's five complete novels in this wondrous mix of memoir and literary biography.


Robert Stone remains one of America's finest novelists, and his friend Madison Smartt Bell pays moving tribute to Stone's genius and to the man behind the books in this insightful biography.

**Grabbed:** Poets & Writers on Sexual Assault, Empowerment and Healing. Ed. by Richard Blanco and others. Beacon, paper, $15 (9780807071847).

In this richly diverse, creative, and gender-inclusive anthology, poets and writers address sexual assaults physical and psychological and the trauma that followed in works staggering, sometimes witty, and always empowering.

**House Lessons:** Renovating a Life. By Erica Bauermeister. Sasquatch, $22.95 (9781632172440).

In her memoir of falling in love with a 100-year-old house, Bauermeister details every cranny, cove, and piece of plaster.


Laymon's artful revised essay collection shares truth without limit and could not feel more timely.

**I Have Something to Tell You.** By Chasten Buttigieg. Atria, $27 (9781982138127).

This smoothly written, insightful memoir recounts Chasten Buttigieg's coming-of-age as a gay man and his experiences on the campaign trail with his husband, presidential candidate Mayor Pete Buttigieg.

**The Inner Coast.** By Donovan Hohn. Norton, paper, $16.95 (9781324005971).

Hohn's sparkingly witty and complex essays, which bring those of John McPhee to mind, address coastal regions and watery subjects with an exciting mixture of science, literature, and history.

**Just Us:** An American Conversation. By Claudia Rankine. Graywolf, $30 (9781644450215).

Rankine presents an arresting blend of essays and images about the overwhelming power of whiteness perfectly attuned to this long- overdue moment of racial reckoning.

**Memorial Drive:** A Daughter's Memoir. By Natasha Trethewey. Ecco, $27.99 (9780062248572).

Distinguished poet Trethewey recounts her childhood and all that led to her mother's murder in this lyrical, courageous, and resounding remembrance.


Blending perceptive analysis of the novels with parallel experiences in Dickens' life, Wilson offers a compelling exploration of what he calls the writer's "divided self."

**Places I've Taken My Body.** By Molly McCully Brown. Persea, $24.95 (9780892551130).

In these searing and ineffable essays, Brown describes in gorgeous prose her lifelong struggle with cerebral palsy.


Heyman tells the lively story of forgotten Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Bromfield, who was also a gardener, conservationist, and sustainability pioneer.

**The Saddest Words:** William Faulkner's Civil War. By Michael Gorra. Norton/Liveright, $29.95 (978131631491702).

Gorra's transcendent study of Faulkner, his many contradictions, and the nearly inescapable artistry of his work provides a compelling and necessary reexamination of a towering literary figure.

**Sigh, Gone:** A Misfit's Memoir of Great Books, Punk Rock, and the Fight to Fit In. By Phuc Tran. Flatiron, $27.99 (9781250194718).

In this deeply felt coming-of-age memoir, Vietnamese immigrant Tran writes of growing up in "very white" Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and attempting to assimilate through academic excellence and punk rock.

**This Is Major:** Notes on Diana Ross, Dark Girls, and Being Dope. By Shayla Lawson. HarperPerennial, paper, $16.99 (9780062890597).

The totality and the essence of Black women are front and center in Lawson's heartfelt essay collection.

**Three Brothers:** Memories of My Family. By Yan Lianke. Grove, $26 (9780802148087).

In this tender and powerful memoir, leading Chinese novelist Yan looks back at his rural childhood, his family's struggles, and his passion for literature and need to escape.

**The Toni Morrison Book Club.** By Juda Bennett and others. Univ. of Wisconsin, paper, $17.95 (97880929324940).

Four scholars commune through this collection of personal essays examining the brilliance and relevance of Toni Morrison's classic works.


In a profoundly personal and historically significant memoir, Lovato digs deep into his family's history to illuminate the troubled relationship between Central America and the U.S.

**Vesper Flights:** By Helen Macdonald. Grove, $27 (9780802128812).

There is abundant wonder in these gorgeous and revelatory essays, but they are shadowed by grief because the north to which Macdonald's compass points is climate change.

**What We Carry.** By Maya Shanbhag Lang. Dial, $27 (9780525512394).

In this deeply moving memoir, novelist Lang shares the complex realizations she experienced while caring for her mother, an Indian immigrant and a physician, as she struggles with Alzheimer's.

**Wintering:** The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times. By Katherine May. Riverhead, $24 (9780593189481).

In this introspective, beautifully written mix of memoir and philosophy, May explores winter, the hardest season, and offers lessons in acceptance and solace.


The 23 literary conversations gathered here are substantial and effervescent—magnetic qualities attributable to the focus on reading and the expertise and passion of the two interlocutors.

**Poetry**

**African American Poetry:** 250 Years of Struggle & Song. Ed. by Kevin Young. Library of America, $45 (9781598536669).

Young's expert anthology of resonant poems by 250 African American poets, reaching back to colonial times and into the present, is a powerful and imperative resource.

**After Rubén.** By Francisco Aragón. Red Hen, paper, $17.95 (9781597098571).

Aragón pays dexterously erudite and sensitive tribute to poet and hero Rubén Darío in this exquisite balance of scholarly appreciation and creative passion.


Solie, a master of the sardonic sublime, presents poems of loneliness set in caves along the Scottish coast, labyrinthine works in which something is learned at every turn.

**Cinderbiter:** Celtic Poems. By Martin Shaw and Tony Hoagland. Graywolf, paper, $16 (9781644450277).

Stories to tell and songs to sing, these retold old Celtic pieces sparkle, dazzle, and beg for reading aloud.

Basbanes draws on previously untapped sources to tell the full story of poet, novelist, and translator Longfellow’s success and subsequent neglect in this thoughtful and resurrecting biography.


Blount’s captivating, unrelenting collection of poetry composed of sharp-edged truths and beautiful complexities explores questions of race and violence from startling perspectives.

Habitat Threshold. By Craig Santos Perez. Omnidawn, paper, $17.95 (9781632430809).

Wickedly intelligent, endlessly talented poet Perez explores environmental themes related to his native home, Guam, and the planet.


Dynamic, breathtaking, and utterly brilliant, the poems in Smith’s third dazzling collection are not only magnificent weapons but also salves to share and songs to shout.

Imperial Liquor. By Amaud Jamal Johnson. Univ. of Pittsburgh, paper, $17 (9780229666067).

Vibrant and deeply felt, Johnson’s imaginative poems pay tribute to earlier poets and other icons as he combines contemporary politics and personal relationships with humor, quirkiness, and emotional precision.


Bass’ bold, passionate, and compassionate collection embraces history and personal desire to marvel over the miracle of being.

Lean Against This Late Hour. By Garous Abdolmalekian. Tr. by Ahmad Nadalizadeh and Idaho Novey. Penguin, paper, $20 (9780143134930).

This dazzling bilingual collection of poems by Iranian author Abdolmalekian explores disparate yet intertwined topics of nature, politics, and personal relationships with humor, candor, and awe.


Hirshfield performs cosmic accounting in meticulous poems charting our ecological debts as we pump carbon into the air, and species vanish.


Erdrich’s fully alive and timely poems face painful truths about oppression personal and societal, making us bear witness as if viewing body-camera video that does not lie.


Diaz’s electrifying poems buzz with erotic energy as she parses attraction, paints vivid landscapes, considers imperialism and reservation life, and creates surprising illuminations.


Hirsch brings new life to the elegy in these consummate, passionate, generous, and resplendent poems of grief and consolation.


In his first collection in ten years, former U.S. poet laureate Hass presents bright, glowing poems shaped by intellectual momentum and emotional precision.


Sullivan’s accessible and rewarding debut collection elevates otherwise mundane daily interactions through artful specificity and repetition of sounds, perfect images, and exquisitely captured sentiments.


Doty’s scintillating work of literary exegesis and gay memoir informed, as Whitman would want it, by heart, soul, and body alike, is a unique illumination of Whitman’s poetic achievement.


U.S. poet laureate Harjo’s decades of writing and activism on the subject of indigenous peoples have generated the most comprehensive and nuanced anthology of Native Nations poetry to date.

Geography & Travel


These aren’t just beautiful images; they’re momentary encapsulations of people, wildlife, environment, and emotion at their essence.

Arctic: Culture and Climate. Ed. by Amber Lincoln and others. Thanes & Hudson, $60 (9780500480663).

This substantial, gorgeously illustrated volume documents the rich and resonant past and vital present of arctic cultures now imperiled by climate change.


Adventurer and endurance athlete O’Brady tells the exciting story of how he became the first person to cross Antarctica alone with no outside help.


Carlsen’s entertaining walk around the block illuminates the stories behind our water and power systems, city trees, and many other aspects of everyday life that we take for granted.

History


Even readers who think they know Lincoln’s life deeply will find new insights here.


Sexton surveys the leaders and policies of American rule from the Founding Fathers to now, laying bare a collective, consistent, centuries-long gaslighting of the American people.


Fehrman records the literary efforts and reading tastes of presidents from the beginnings of U.S. history to the present.

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Meno recounts the long and torturous journeys to reach the U.S. of two Ghanaian asylum-seekers, Seidu Mohammed and Razak Iyal, who arrived only to be treated with brutality.


Hazareesingh presents a deeply researched, energetic, and comprehensively reenvisioned study of the extraordinary life and still-growing influence of Haiti’s liberator and founding father.


In the first of a two-volume biography of Edward M. Kennedy, Gabler discerningly traces the formative moments of one of the twentieth century’s most persuasive and popular statesmen.


Smith’s in-the-moment account of the fire and all the social injustices that led to it and festered in its aftermath vividly sets the historical record straight.

The Deepest South of All: True Stories from Natchez, Mississippi. By Richard Grant. Simon & Schuster, $29 (9780316463591).

British travel writer Grant portrays Natchez, Mississippi, in all its fascinating and appalling contradictions.


Demick provides the missing human dimension in coverage of twenty-first-century Chinese-occupied Tibet by telling the harrowing stories of individual Tibetans from a town with a legacy of resistance.


Doherty resurrects the exhilarating history of the Radcliffe Institute for Independent Study by vividly profiling participating writers and artists Maxine Kumin, Anne Sexton, Tillie Olsen, Barbara Swan, and Marianna Pineda.


Published by the author’s daughter, this searing memoir recounts a Czechoslovakian Jewish woman’s Holocaust imprisonment in three concentration camps and her survival of unimaginable atrocities.


Students of American Revolutionary history and the birth of the Republic will find here an inspired approach for considering the lives and legacies of these two founding fathers.


Sherwin insightfully examines nuclear policy as it evolved in the Cold War, culminating with the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962.


Parkin shines a spotlight on the largely overlooked contributions of the British Wrens, members of the Women’s Royal Naval Service, many of whom were teenagers.


Alter offers a balanced portrait of the Carter presidency, acknowledging shortcomings but seeing him as more successful in his labors as chief executive than is generally acknowledged.


This spectacular and scrupulous survey of early 1940s to mid-1950s cartography includes Theodor Geisel’s alert to malarial zones, a secret map of Germany’s attempted new world order, and more mundane but no less illuminating maps.


In this deeply moving, beautifully told history, Moorehead tells the overlooked story of northern Italian resistance during WWII, paying special attention to women anti-Fascists.

HRH: So Many Thoughts on Royal Style. By Elizabeth Holmes. Macmillan/Celadon, $35 (9781250625083).

A visual feast suitable for fashionistas and royal watchers alike.


O’Donnell tells the true story of her German grandmother Inge, who long repressed memories of immense hardship during WWII.


Expansive in scope yet detailed in implementation, Logevall’s biography of young JFK portrays him as an embodiment of the two world wars, the twentieth century’s defining events.


Harvey’s restless chronicle of nineteenth-century con man James Strang, who anointed himself divine king of a Mormon enclave on a remote Lake Michigan island, captures the ferment of antebellum America.


Ball’s history of his great-great-grandfather as
a microcosm of white supremacist U.S. society is sober, dominated by a deep sense of shame and outrage, and intentionally disquieting.

**Magdalena: River of Dreams.** By Wade Davis. Knopf, $30 (9780375410994).

Davis recounts the natural and human history of Colombia’s Río Magdalena in a deeply inquisitive, dazzlingly fluent scientific, cultural, and spiritual investigation.


Marwell, former investigator for the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Special Investigations, details decades of fruitless hunting for the infamous Nazi, and has deeply researched his life.

**Oak Flat: A Fight for Sacred Land in the American West.** By Lauren Redniss. Random, $30 (9780399589720).

Redniss creates an enthralling convergence of oral history, narrative, and illustrations to tell the dramatic story of the battle over copper mining on public and, for Native Americans, sacred land in Arizona.

**Once I Was You: A Memoir of Love and Hate in a Torn America.** By Maria Hinojosa. Atria, $28 (9781982101404).

Award-winning journalist Hinojosa, known for covering overlooked and marginalized communities, has written a formidable memoir of personal and professional struggles.

**Overstated: A Coast-to-Coast Roast of the 50 States.** By Colin Quinn. St. Martin’s, $27.99 (9781250268440).

Based on his travels as a stand-up comedian, Quinn offers a biting, funny look at what makes each state unique, from Alabama’s foot-obsession to Maine’s inner creepiness.

**Paper Bullets: Two Artists Who Risked Their Lives to Defy the Nazis.** By Jeffrey H. Jackson. Algonquin, $27.95 (9781616209162).

Jackson tells the extraordinary story of how gender-bending artists Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore became a two-woman resistance movement against the Nazi occupation on the English Channel island of Jersey.


Armchair historians in particular will appreciate McAuliffe’s readable yet detailed history supplemented with illustrations and bibliography.

**Pravda Ha Ha: True Travels to the End of Europe.** By Rory Maclean. Bloomsbury, $27 (9781408896525).

MacLean’s morbidly funny, often surreal trek through Eastern Europe reveals a land in retrograde as fragile postwar optimism gives way to predatory capitalism and the reanimation of age-old prejudices.


Nearly 100 photographs of men and women who survived enslavement are paired with excerpts from their 1930s conversations as part of the Federal Writers Project’s Slave Narrative Collection to resounding effect.

**Shadow on the Mountain: A Yazidi Memoir of Terror, Resistance, and Hope.** By Shaker Jeffrey and Katharine Holstein. Da Capo, $28 (9780306922831).

Jeffrey, a Yazidi combat interpreter with the U.S. Army in Iraq, shares his harrowing experiences during the ISIS genocide against his community.


Bingham vividly recounts the extraordinary adventures and heartbreaks of independent and gutsy philanthropist Doris Duke, who, heretofore, has not received the respect she deserves.


Larson’s skill at integrating vast research and talent for capturing compelling human dramas allow him to bring Churchill and his inner circle into fresh perspective.


Cozzens brings new dimension to our understanding of famed Shawnee warrior Tecumseh by illuminating the crucial influence of his younger brother, Tenskatawa.

**Those Who Forget: My Family’s Story in Nazi Europe—A Memoir, a History, a Warning.** By Géraldine Schwarz. Scribner, $28 (9781501199080).

This brutally honest memoir is also a smart historical analysis and a relevant warning for the future.

**Tightrope: Americans Reaching for Hope.** By Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn. Knopf, $27.95 (9780525655084).

Pulitzer Prize–winning authors Kristof and WuDunn’s investigation into why the U.S. lags behind in aspects of health, education, safety, and well-being will be hard for readers to stop thinking about.


Historian MacMillan sets the record straight on just what war is and what it does to a nation.

**We Gather Together: A Nation Divided, a President in Turmoil, and a Historic Campaign to Embrace Gratitude and Grace.** By Denise Kiernan. Dutton, $25 (9780593183250).

Journalist Kiernan offers a history of the American Thanksgiving holiday in three aspects, with humor, pathos, and surprises.


From her father’s mysterious documents, Neumann pieced together the history of her Czech Jewish ancestors’ bravery amid the horrors of the Nazi regime.


In this dual biography, historian Brands explores how two radically different men contributed to the abolition of slavery in the U.S.
142 Ostriches. By April Dávila. Kensington, paper, $15.95 (9781496724700).

Dávila’s beautifully executed debut novel may feature quirky 300-pound birds, but imperfectly likable protagonist Tallulah’s hardest problems come from her human family.


On a hot summer day, John Cole closes his London bookshop and travels to the Norfolk coast. What follows is a dreamlike tale of obsession, guilt, and love.


Alvarez portrays the four Dominican American Vega sisters as one, a professor and writer, is widowed, another disappears, and a pregnant, undocumented teenager appears, needing sanctuary.

All Adults Here. By Emma Straub. Riverhead, $27 (9781594634697).

A multigenerational celebration of the life force we find in ourselves and in our families.


Lydia Perez’s quotidian life is upended when her extended family is killed by a cartel jefe, and she and her young son flee to the U.S. border in an odyssey that is full of heartbreak and possibility, told in beautiful, straightforward language.


Dupont’s multigenerational epic, stemming from Montreal and reaching Europe and paralleling Tose, is immensely entertaining and revels in the marvels of storytelling.

Apeirogon. By Colum McCann. Random, $28 (9781400069606).

McCann fictionalizes with poetic precision and associative expansion the story of Palestinian Bassam Aramin and Israeli Rami Elhanan and the murders of their young daughters in the region’s ongoing violence.


In 17 short stories, master storyteller Mosley portrays a complex range of Black men who defy stereotypes and struggle against racism and other forms of disaster.


In a novel at once raw and dreamy, lauded Korean writer Kim tells the story of two Seoul teen girls suffering abuse and indifference who meet a “strange guy” named Book.


Unferth’s vividly provoking, revelatory, and mordantly funny work of ecofiction entwines family complexities and an expose of the horrors of the egg industry to powerful effect.

A Beginning at the End. By Mike Chen. MIRA, $26.99 (9780778309345).

This dystopian tale is deeply rooted in realistic emotion, portraying a world recovering from a flu epidemic that left the government and citizens paranoid, shy, and traumatized.


From a diverse array of writers, this incredible entry to the popular series explores topics like childhood, love, privilege, and parenthood.

The Big Door Prize. By M. O. Walsh. Putnam, $27 (9780735218482).

Walsh’s soulful tale about an odd little machine that informs people of their true life by casting a spell, one that stands in the way of many lives, in a world where women’s fate as mothers, or not, is decided for them.


In her thought-provoking novel about fate, control, and biology, Mackintosh creates a world in which women’s fate as mothers, or not, is decided for them.

Bluebeard’s First Wife. By Leila Aboulela. Two Lines, paper, $16 (9781931883962).

Aboulela sensitively portrays three very different Muslim immigrant women in the Scottish Highlands, illuminating Celtic and Muslim traditions via the sacred hoopoe bird.


In her thought-provoking novel about fate, control, and biology, Mackintosh creates a world in which women’s fate as mothers, or not, is decided for them.

The Bitter and Sweet of Cherry Season. By Leila Aboulela. Black Cat, paper, $16 (9780062947451).

Apage-turning story about family secrets that begins with a woman and her silent daughter showing up on her aunt’s doorstep, and the three bonding over the course of cherry season.

The Blaze. By Chad Dundas. Putnam, $26 (9780399176098).

Iraq war veteran Matthew Rose returns to Montana suffering from traumatic brain injury and trying to make sense of his dimly remembered past with the help of an old friend, journalist Georgie.

Big Girl, Small Town. By Michelle Gallen. Algonquin, paper, $16.95 (9781643750255).

A darkly comic novel about an isolated young woman struggling to find her place in a town still deeply divided in a post-Troubles world.

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Harms examines both sides of the ever-growing technology debate, especially the pros and cons of life as an influencer.

Levin’s monumentally imaginative, breathtakingly bizarre novel in the form of the protagonist’s memoir is set in an alternative future and teems with humanity, humor, and pathos.

Majumdar’s electrifying debut about Jivan, a shopgirl who is beaten and jailed for a Facebook post, serves as a barometer measuring the fragility of human life and connections.

Butter Honey Pig Bread. By Francesca Ekwuyasi. Arsenal Pulp, paper, $19.95 (9781551528236).
Ekwuyasi’s craftsmanship is stunning as her debut tells a complex story of family, love, trust, wounds, and intimacy.

In this melancholy but curiously hopeful first novel set in the world of Major League Baseball’s spring training, Nemens focuses on a gallimaufry of characters struggling to hang on just a little bit longer.

A Candle for San Simón. By Kelly Daniels. Owl Canyon, paper, $18.95 (9780998507392).
Daniel’s powerful debut novel portrays a long-gone, alcoholic American entangled in the early days of television who left the U.S. to work in England.

Abbs’ moving U.S. debut novel delivers a luminous portrait of James Joyce’s daughter, Lucia, whose dreams of becoming a dancer were thwarted by her role as helpmate and muse to her father.

The Once and Future Witches. By Alix E. Harrow. Orbit, $28 (9780316422048).
Moore vividly fictionalizes real-life Dolly Cameron, who ran a home for young Chinese women, such as Mei Lien, the novel’s other main character, who were lured to 1880s San Francisco and enslaved as prostitutes.

Stratford’s latest historical novel tells the too-little-known story of blacklisted women in the early days of television who left the U.S. to work in England.

Kirkpatrick offers a powerful fictionalized version of the remarkable life of Abigail Scott Duniway, a fierce advocate for women’s rights.

This debut chronicles the extraordinary rise of Catherine I from humble servile to Empress, and the often-uncredited role she played in husband Peter the Great’s strides in modernizing Russia.

Rival fried chicken restaurants and estranged sisters battle it out on a reality TV competition that brings out old secrets and wounds in Dell’Antonia’s hilarious debut.

A smart, ferociously paced novel about a woman who fatally fends off an attacker and tells two stories, one in which she turns herself in and the other in which she runs.

Expanding the story introduced in What Belongs to You (2016), an American expat in Bulgaria prepares to leave the country while reflecting on his evolving understanding of his own desire.

A multigenerational Own Voices novel that reads like interlinked short stories, connecting readers to the heart of a family of Cherokee women.

The powerful story of foster siblings, who grew up cultivating a magical plant on a family farm, searching for a missing baby both in the Vine and in the outside world.

Chang portrays her narrator’s early-adulthood exploration of her Asian American identity with elegance and an offset humor that complements her poignant observations.

This expertly paced, wondrous read follows the 12-year-old sole survivor of a plane crash in his efforts to build a new life.

Coetzee concludes his Jesus trilogy with a novel rich in allegory and philosophical discourse, intensified by strong currents of grief.

The Death of Vivek Oji. By Akwaeke Emezi. Riverhead, $27 (9780525541608).
Emezi’s novel about a young man’s struggles in Nigeria, a society which too often straitjackets one’s identity, is achingly raw and ultimately redeeming as it upends established definitions of family and community.
The Discomfort of Evening. By Marieke Lucas Rijneveld. Tr. by Michele Hutchison. Graywolf, paper, $16 (9781644450345).
Readers who can persist through the agonies of a family falling apart, will find their breath taken away by Rijneveld’s prose.

Echo on the Bay. By Masatsugu Ono. Tr. by Angus Turvill. Two Lines, paper, $16.95 (9781946941035).
Ono’s exquisite and concentrated novel about the sole policeman in a coastal Japanese village and his family begins comically wry and ends with shocking resonance.

Azar portrays a mother who has lost two children in the wake of Iran’s Islamic Revolution and worries about her third in this tragic yet charming novel of unbreakable human bonds.

Trentham explores the complex range of emotions facing members of the military and their loved ones, emphasizing the power of connection.

A new mother returns to her best friend in their rural Ohio hometown in a book that explores complex relationships with the town and between the friends.

A young Irishwoman teaches English in Hong Kong and tries to reconcile two love affairs.

Álvarez unravels this searing story of a Cuban family-in-crisis—an ill mother, an idealistic hotel manager father, a reluctant soldier son, and a worried daughter working a menial hotel job—with symmetrical precision.

In ten unsettling, interconnected climate fiction stories imbued with a weighty, wet sensuality, Vadnais explores a world where survival and contagion battle and characters fight primitive hunger.

Jumping to the year 2051, this is an intricate and brave story of friendship, ambition, and love and the lengths people will go to protect it all.

Man Booker–winner Okri’s modern allegory set in a world without books and art beautifully renders how the elimination of history and truth impacts the human spirit.

A Supreme Court Judge handling a divorce begins to examine his fraught marriage to an often-absent biologist in this rare state-sanctioned and translated North Korean novel.

Frying Plantain. By Zalika Reid-Benta. Anansi/Astoria, paper, $16.95 (9781487005344).
Tracing the life of Jamaican Canadian Kara from ages 10 through 19, these 12 interconnected stories, set in Toronto, recount vividly rendered coming-of-age moments in straightforward prose.

McCormick’s masterfully structured and deeply moving first novel traces the trauma of the Armenian genocide through the stories of two cousins and a former wrestling manager in the U.S.

A beautiful bartender and a shady investor are at the center of this gorgeously spun spider web of a tragedy about a Ponzi scheme.

Maya, a young Ghanaian royal living in Hong Kong and trying to reconcile two love affairs.

Altschul’s culturally aware novel about a well-intentioned American woman sent to prison for terrorist activities in Peru is a captivating depiction of passion, disenchantment, and hope gone violently awry.

Half. By Sharon Harrigan. Univ. of Wisconsin, paper, $17.95 (978029328542).
This haunting and lyrical debut novel explores twin sisters’ shared identity, with a clever narrative structure.

Geddes' first novel invites belly laughs and thoughtful, genuinely moving introspection on how what we collect comes to define us.

Data nerd Anna is catapulted into a world of superheroes, supervillains, and henchmen as Walschots’ refreshing, diverse, subversive, and darkly humorous debut novel.

McCorkle’s novel of two historical tragedies, a long-married couple touched by both, and a struggling mother connected to them by place is a deeply insightful look at longing and hope.

Hurston’s 21 short stories, gathered together for the first time, showcase her wit and insights into African American lives in Harlem and the South.


Akhtar’s bold, memoristic novel-in-stories confronts issues of race, money, family, politics, and sexuality in a tale about a young Pakistani American man and his family before and after 9/11.


A charming journey of a stubborn old lady hoping to counter her many hardships with an altruistic act.

How to Pronounce Knife. By Souvankham Thammavongsa. Little, Brown, $26 (9780316442130).

Thammavongsa writes with an elegance that is both brutal and tender, giving her stories and their characters a powerful voice.

I Hold a Wolf by the Ears. By Laura Van den Berg. Farrar, $26 (9780374102098).

In 11 perceptive and wildly imaginative short stories, Van den Berg portrays vulnerable yet tenacious women in untenable situations.


Kispert’s short fiction is a performative lie that reveals truth to readers in subtle, surprising ways that literary fiction lovers will devour.

If I Had Your Face. By Frances Cha. Ballantine, $27 (9780593129463).

With unblinking focus, Cha confronts some of the darkest consequences of contemporary gender inequity in South Korea in her magnificent first novel.

The Illness Lesson. By Clare Beams. Doubleday, $26.95 (9780385544665).

Beams’ suspenseful and vividly evocative tale of an 1870s Massachusetts girls’ school in which strange afflictions and shocking revelations break out explores sexism and sexuality through the eyes of a complicated narrator.

In Her Shadow. By Kristin Miller. Ballantine, paper, $16 (9781524799496).

In a modern-day Rebecca, a pregnant woman moves in with her boss-turned-boyfriend, only to find that his wife disappeared not long before, and his seaside manor is full of secrets.

In the Valley: Stories and a Novella based on Serena. By Ron Rash. Doubleday, $26.95 (9780385544290).

Rash’s lyrical and atmospheric short stories and a novella, a sequel to his novel, Serena, span more than a century, and all are set in North Carolina.


Cain’s bewitching debut subtly portrays a woman enthralled by art and writing who works as a museum cleaning woman, then uneasily marries a wealthy man.


Resembling a movie script, Yu’s rollicking and scathing tale portrays Willis Wu, an Asian actor struggling to move beyond generic roles within scenes saturated with commentary on racism and other social evils.


First-time novelist Givney has Jane Austen time-travel to 2020 Bath in search of love, allowing for a clever contrast of eras and gender expectations.


Already an international best-seller, television scriptwriter Cho’s debut novel has been credited with helping to “launch Korea’s new feminist movement.”


In Poissant’s stunning, unforgettable first novel, the bonds that hold together a dysfunctional family unravel over the course of a single weekend vacation.


Mitch and Jessica decide to open up their marriage, but no amount of guidelines and conversations could have prepared them.

The Last Interview. By Eshkol Nevo. Tr. by Sondra Silverston. Other, paper, $17.99 (9781635429879).

An interview with a writer grows increasingly intense in Nevo’s clever, delightfully unreliable, occasionally headshaking, sometimes eye-rolling portrait of an artist as a not-at-all-young man.

Last One Out Shut Off the Lights. By Stephanie Soileau. Little, Brown, $26 (9780316423403).

Southwest Louisiana native Soileau portrays the beauty and struggles of the people of Sulphur, a town beaten down by unemployment and hurricanes, with empathy and love.


In Kim's haunting and heartbreaking debut, knotted threads between a mother and daughter blend together in a delicate and rich weave.


Swarup's magical realism debut exalts in the majesty of South Asia as characters fall in love, communicate with spirits, and recognize nature's overwhelming power.


A white family vacating in a rented Long Island cottage is unexpectedly joined by the returning Black owners as strange things occur in the woods.


The family epic of a great American bank, magnetically realized in storyteller’s verse.

The Lending Library. By Aliza Fogelson. Amazon/Lake Union, paper, $14.95 (9781503904019).

A wide-ranging emotional debut about 35-year-old Dodie, a small-town art teacher
who opens a makeshift library in her home, while her secret dreams of romance and motherhood feel out of reach.

**Little Family.** By Ishmael Beah. Riverhead, $27 (9780374110062).

Unflinching and undaunted, Beah's novel portrays a "little family" of two teens and three children living a precarious, hustling, desperate existence in a war-torn land.

**Little Gods.** By Meng Jin. Morrow/CUSTOM, $27.99 (9780062935953).

Jin's adroit debut pieces together the hidden family history of a young woman, brought to the U.S. as a child, who returns to China in search of her father.

**Little Wonders.** By Kate Rorick. Morrow, paper, $15.99 (9780062877215).

Two preschooler moms—one perfect, one not—find surprising common ground when a toddler meltdown video goes viral.

**The Lives of Edie Pritchard.** By Larry Watson. Algonquin, $27.95 (9781616209025).

Watson's taut, understated narrative portrays Edie Pritchard from the mid-1960s to 2007, as she desperately seeks to find a sense of self not defined by men.


Zapata spins an iridescent web of grief, loss, and memory that spans the globe and a century and involves a lost novel of alternative realities and two orphaned boys.

**Love after Love.** By Kate Rorick. Morrow, $27 (9780062935953).

McConaghy's transfixing econovel portrays an American-born artist Chris travels to his mother's island, Jamaica, to mourn for his wife, acquiring a global family as the story moves to Paris and encompasses matters of identity and relationships.

**Missionaries.** By Phil Klay. Penguin, $28 (9781984880659).

Klay's masterful mosaic of modern Colombia and its ongoing turmoil is told through the perspectives of a young revolutionary, an American journalist, and a colonel, all facing complex moral dilemmas.

**Monogamy.** By Sue Miller. Harper, $28.99 (9780062969651).

Miller's novel of a woman's loss of her beloved husband of 30 years compounded by the shock of an affair traverses an emotional minefield with crystalline focus and boundless empathy.

**More Than We Remember.** By Christina Suzann Nelson. Bethany, paper, $15.99 (9780764235382).

The lives of three women struggling with faith and personal issues intersect when a tragic accident occurs in their small Oregon town.

**A Mother's Goodbye.** By Kate Hewitt. Grand Central/Forever, paper, $12.99 (9781538704356).

Single Grace adopts Heather's baby, and the two women embark on a heart-wrenching journey that explores love and motherhood.


A family's peculiar museum in a small English village becomes a surprising source of renewal and hope for a grief-stricken widow and her special-needs son.

**New Waves.** By Kevin Nguyen. Random/One World, $27 (9781984855237).

Nguyen's debut novel about an Asian American tech worker run amok illuminates issues of race, sex, millennial ennui, and the digital onslaught and is superb and surprisingly moving.

**The Lying Life of Adults.** By Elena Ferrante. Europa, $26 (9781609455910).

A confessional, perceptive, gut-wrenching, and often funny story of a girl's "arduous approach to the adult world."

**Man of My Time.** By Dalia Sofer. Farrar, $27 (9780374411062).

In Sofer's gorgeously written character study, Hamid, a former Iranian interrogator, is forced to confront his past when he learns his late father's final wishes.

**Members Only.** By Sameer Pandya. HMH/Mariner, paper, $14.99 (9780358799928).

A realistic, character-driven novel, with well-developed threads of suspense, that engages contemporary identity politics and what it means to belong.

**Memorial.** By Bryan Washington. Riverhead, $27 (9780593087275).

Washington's first novel, about boyfriends, one African American, one Japanese American, separated by family crisis, is a love story writ large that sings in small moments.

**Memories in the Drift.** By Melissa Payne. Amazon/Lake Union, paper, $14.95 (9781542004725).

In an isolated small town in Alaska, Claire suffers from anterograde amnesia and functions through a system of notebooks, alarms, and calendars.

**The Midnight Library.** By Matt Haig. Viking, $26 (9780525559474).

When Nora Seed considers ending her life full of regrets, she finds the midnight library, where she can try on other potential lives, in this emotionally resonant novel.

**Migrations.** By Charlotte McConaghy. Flatiron, $26.99 (9781250204028).

McConaghy's transcending envision portrays mysterious Franny, who flees a traumatic past to try to follow what may be the last flock of Arctic terns on their perilous migration.

**A Million Aunties.** By Alecia McKenzie. Akashic, paper, $15.95 (9781617758928).

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Zapata spins an iridescent web of grief, loss, and memory that spans the globe and a century and involves a lost novel of alternative realities and two orphaned boys.


Missy Carmichael, 79, must choose between comfortable wallowing in loneliness or allowing new friends (and a lovable mutt) in, in this uplifting "coming of old" story.

**Love, Death & Rare Books.** By Charlotte McConaghy. Flatiron, $26.99 (9781250204028).

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**A Million Aunties.** By Alecia McKenzie. Akashic, paper, $15.95 (9781617758928).

American-born artist Chris travels to his mother's island, Jamaica, to mourn for his wife, acquiring a global family as the story moves to Paris and encompasses matters of identity and relationships.

**Missionaries.** By Phil Klay. Penguin, $28 (9781984880659).

Klay's masterful mosaic of modern Colombia and its ongoing turmoil is told through the perspectives of a young revolutionary, an American journalist, and a colonel, all facing complex moral dilemmas.

**Monogamy.** By Sue Miller. Harper, $28.99 (9780062969651).

Miller's novel of a woman's loss of her beloved husband of 30 years compounded by the shock of an affair traverses an emotional minefield with crystalline focus and boundless empathy.

**More Than We Remember.** By Christina Suzann Nelson. Bethany, paper, $15.99 (9780764235382).

The lives of three women struggling with faith and personal issues intersect when a tragic accident occurs in their small Oregon town.

**A Mother's Goodbye.** By Kate Hewitt. Grand Central/Forever, paper, $12.99 (9781538704356).

Single Grace adopts Heather's baby, and the two women embark on a heart-wrenching journey that explores love and motherhood.


A family's peculiar museum in a small English village becomes a surprising source of renewal and hope for a grief-stricken widow and her special-needs son.

**New Waves.** By Kevin Nguyen. Random/One World, $27 (9781984855237).

Nguyen's debut novel about an Asian American tech worker run amok illuminates issues of race, sex, millennial ennui, and the digital onslaught and is superb and surprisingly moving.

In Cook's gripping and incisive debut novel, a mother and daughter struggle to survive in a decimated world as part of a diabolical wilderness experiment.


Oates traces the impact of the death of a former mayor at the hands of police officers on his family, with a particularly impassioned portrayal of his widow.

The Office of Historical Corrections. By Danielle Evans. Riverhead, $27 (9781594487330).

Evans writes with a wealth of knowledge of American history, serving as a catalyst for both the prisons and the freedoms her characters are allowed to explore.


Oona lives her life non-chronologically, waking up in a different year every January, in this heartwarming, freewheeling romp.

The Orchard. By David Hopen. Ecco, $27.99 (9780062974747).

This brilliantly conceived and crafted coming-of-age novel follows 17-year-old Ari and his circle of friends as they grapple with heady philosophical questions at a prestigious yeshiva in Florida.


This atmospheric small-town novel unfolds over a single night as a woman's vision for her future becomes increasingly clear.


In Bertino's fantastically untethered-from-reality second novel, the Bride experiences "a very specific nervous breakdown" during the week before her wedding.

Payback. By Mary Gordon. Pantheon, $27.95 (9781524749224).

Gordon's nuanced novel of rage and repentance involving an art teacher and a student over decades explores moral quandaries steeped in sexism with scintillating energy and piercing inquisitiveness.


Smiley's spellbinding fable about a young runaway racehorse in Paris and the animals and boy who befriend her celebrates freedom, generosity, and love.


Nguũgĩ wa Thiong'o's eloquent retelling in verse of an epic Kenyan origin story is essential reading and especially vital at this time for both its uniqueness and its universality.


Clarke's narrator, Piranesi, describes a bizarre world, a vast labyrinth through which tides rise and fall, in an occult puzzle of a novel that pits reverence against the lust for power.


Brown offers a glittering, high-stakes drama, stacking childhood nostalgia against the power to reinvent oneself in the age of social media.

Qualityland. By Marc-Uwe Kling. Tr. by Jamie Searle Romanelli. Grand Central, $27 (9781538732960).

A sharply satirical novel about an Everyman who challenges the infallible algorithms of TheShop in a land where those algorithms control every aspect of a person's life.


O'Neill's slow-burning yet suspenseful tale of the hidden realm of data mining and surveillance, and the bond between a spy and a brand new genius, is a powerful warning and a lament.


Contained in one weekend, Taylor's steadily exciting debut finds biochem grad student Wallace forced to reckon with the walls he's built.


Kunzru portrays a mentally unstable Brooklyn-based writer unhinged by the 2016 U.S. presidential election as he embarks on a writer's residency near Berlin, where history compounds his struggles.


In this uniquely witty and powerful dystopian tale set in AutoAmerica, Jen creates a family of resisters, including courageous attorney Eleanor and young baseball star Gwen.


Mexican immigrant Fulgencio has persistently courted his beloved, only to run afoul of a curse he must dispel in Ruiz's beguiling, magical, and magnetic tale of perseverance and steadfast love.


As the climate cools, a young woman moves her trailer from Appalachian Ohio to California, picking up stragglers along the way in this feminist dystopian novel of survival, desperation, and, ultimately, hope.


Sittenfeld imagines an alternative life for Hillary Rodham Clinton in an exhilaratingly trenchant, funny, and affecting novel, a gloriously cathartic antidote to the actual struggles women politicians face.


These indelible slices of life detail the unorthodox coming-of-age of a Chicago boy named Roy, a sharp observer who finds warm hearts beating within the sadness of those he encounters.

Run Me to Earth. By Paul Yoon. Simon & Schuster, $26 (9781501154041).

Yoon's novel follows three inseparable Lao-Tian orphans across countries and through decades of loss and suffering, kindness and survival to mesmerizing and profound effect.


Loskutoff's debut novel is narrated by Montana Ruthie Fear, who resentfully witnesses the gentrification of the wilderness and very strange goings-on.


Sadness is not situational for the narrator of Britsch's radical debut; rather, it is a way of being in response to the difficulty of living.


With nostalgia as thick as the scent of coconut-scented sunscreen, this explores the consequences of emotional decisions and the strength needed to set things right.


First novelist Porter's gripping, literary speculative tale features an alien invasion that engenders peace and allows humans to radically transform themselves.

She Gets That from Me. By Robin Wells. Berkley, paper, $16 (9781984802002).

A beautifully complicated story about a woman whose best friend unexpectedly dies, leaving her with her child and the unexpected arrival of the child's sperm-donor father.


Teens will enjoy this captivating novel and identify with the protagonist, Wren.


Allott's intense novel about two unhappy couples in Australia, and the disappearance...
of one of the women, includes a murder investigation and an ignoble chapter in the country’s past.

**The Silence.** By Don DeLillo. Scribner, $22 (9781982164553).

In this razor-sharp, deeply unnerving tale, DeLillo brings together five characters to watch the 2022 Super Bowl when suddenly everything stops; all devices go dark, and silence grows.

**Sisters.** By Nancy Wayson Dinan. Riverhead, $26 (97805931388958).

Sisters September and July are so close they often share thoughts, which pass through the skin like an electric current in this feverishly written and haunting novel.

**Sorry for Your Trouble.** By Richard Ford. Ecco, $27.99 (9780062969804).

Unforeseen encounters and surprising power shifts shape Ford’s nine emotionally intricate, stealthily unnerving, and mordantly funny stories of men coping with divorce, widowhood, and fathoms-deep loneliness.

**The Summer Set.** By Aimee Agresti. Graydon, paper, $17.99 (9781525823589).

An ensemble of narrators tells the story of a summer of Shakespearean theater in the Berkshires, complete with hijinks and moments of creative magic.

**Sweet Sorrow.** By David Nicholls. HMH/Mariner, $17.99 (9780358274278).

As a man looks back on an unforgettable summer, Nicholls’ addictive story is as much about time’s passage as it is about first love.

**Tender Is the Flesh.** By Agustina Bazterrica. Tr. by Sarah Moses. Scribner, paper, $16 (9781982150921).

Argentinian novelist Bazterrica’s unflinching dystopian tale of a society in which humans are bred to be a protein source is a scorching exploration of the limits of moral ambiguity.

**Then the Fish Swallowed Him.** By Amir Ahmadi Arian. HarperVia, $25.99 (9780593088029).

In a novel of literary and moral brilliance, Iranian writer Arian portrays an Iranian political prisoner, and through Yunus’s story, the hard truths faced by all in his brutal situation.

**These Ghosts Are Family.** By Maisy Card. Simon & Schuster, $24 (9781982117436).

Across generations, a family reckons with the ghosts of enslavement’s legacy in this stunning, kaleidoscopic debut novel.


This strange brew of a book nods to the picaresque novel, is shot through with magical realism, and undergirded by a naturalist’s concern for Mother Earth.

**The Thirty Names of Night.** By Zeyn Joukhadar. Atria, $27 (9781982121495).

Nadir, a trans Syrian American artist mourning his mother and painting murals of birds at night, is linked to fellow artist Laila Z in Joukhadar’s stunning novel.

**To Be a Man.** By Nicole Krauss. Harper, $26.99 (9780062431028).

Krauss addresses many weighty issues, including familial guilt, in her short stories, which pay homage to strong women.

**Tokyo Ueno Station.** By Miri Yu. Tr. by Morgan Giles. Riverhead, $25 (9780593088029).

Yu considers modern society’s traps driven by nationalism, capitalism, classism, and sexism in this surreal fable of splintered families, disintegrating relationships, and the casual devaluation of humanity.

**Tropic of Violence.** By Nathacha Appanah. Tr. by Geoffrey Strachan. Graywolf, paper, $16 (9781644450246).

Appanah’s harrowing, surreal tale of the undoing of a young boy on an Indian Ocean island riddled with illegal immigration, stifling poverty, and crime is also gorgeous.

**The Truants.** By Kate Weinberg. Putnam, $26 (9780525541967).

With a mystery at its core, this slow burn of a novel explores the years-long reverberations of a fractured friend group.

**True Story.** By Kate Reed Petty. Viking, $26 (9781984877680).

A genre-busting puzzle box of a novel that uses metafictional narratives to tell the story of an alleged assault and its far-reaching repercussions.

**The Two Lives of Lydia Bird.** By Josie Silver. Ballantine, $26 (9780593135235).

When the love of Lydia Bird’s life dies suddenly, she relies on a sleeping pill that causes hyperrealistic dreams in which Freddie is still alive.

**Utopia Avenue.** By David Mitchell. Random, $30 (9780812997439).

This addictive Big Gulp of a narrative may be the best novel about a rock band since Jennifer Egan’s *A Visit from the Goon Squad.*

**The Vanishing Half.** By Brit Bennett. Riverhead, $27 (9780525536291).

Bennett introduces twin sisters, living very separate adult lives, and their teenage daughters in this intergenerational epic of race, reinvention, and the ever-present past.

**Verge.** By Lidia Yuknavitch. Riverhead, $26 (9780525534877).

A collection of strange, provocative stories about captivity, grief, and tortured relationships with the body; but ultimately, also about healing and endurance.

**The Wanting Life.** By Mark Rader. Unnamed, paper, $18 (9781944700997).

In Rader’s ambitious and deeply moving first novel, a beloved pastor and his niece each confront the universal dilemma of having to hurt others in pursuit of true love.

**We Had No Rules.** By Corinne Manning. Arsenal Pulp, paper, $15.95 (9781551527994).

Wistful, funny, angry, bitter, raw—Manning’s first short story collection shocks and enthralls as it explores the myriad ways of falling, making, betraying, and celebrating love.

**Weather.** By Jenny Offill. Knopf, $23.95 (9780385351102).

Offill’s irresistibly incisive and mordantly funny narrator, Lizzie, a university librarian concerned about climate change and toxic politics, tries to keep herself and others from “tipping into the abyss.”

**Well-Behaved Indian Women.** By Saumya Dave. Berkley, paper, $16 (9781984806154).

Three generations of Indian women living in India, New Jersey, and Manhattan try in vain to do what is expected of them—but follow their dreams instead.
**What Are You Going Through.** By Sigrid Nunez. Riverhead, $26 (9780593191415).

With both compassion and joy, Nunez contemplates how we survive life’s certain suffering, and don’t, with words and one another.

**When I Hit You; or, a Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife.** By Meena Kandasamy. Europa, paper, $17 (9781609455996).

Kandasamy’s thoughtful fictionalization of the nature of abuse and its effects is a call-to-action to believe and support all women, and Indian women in particular.

**Where the Wild Ladies Are.** By Aoko Matsuda. Tr. by Polly Barton. Soft Skull, paper, $16.95 (9781593766900).

Matsuda’s 17 stories, loosely linked via recurring women characters who work for the enigmatic Mr. Tei, enthral with both insight and bite.

**Who Rescued Who.** By Victoria Schade. Berkley, paper, $16 (9780593098837).

A delightful romp through the English countryside, Schade’s second novel is resplendent with sheep, dogs, cats, and lovely people.

**Why Visit America.** By Lily King. Grove, $27 (9780593138737).

A closely observed and romantic story of a young writer finding her voice while working through grief.

**Yellow Earth.** By John Sayles. Haymarket, $28 (9781642590210).

Sayles animates a vibrant, complex, and diverse cast of characters in this rambunctious, perceptive, hard-driving novel about a shale oil boom in a North Dakota town near the Three Nations reservation.

**You Were There Too.** By Colleen Oakley. Berkley, paper, $16 (9781984806468).

Mia and Harrison’s struggle with infertility is a toll on their marriage, and when Mia meets a man she recognizes from her dreams, she begins to wonder if fate has other plans for her.

**Crime Fiction**

**The Abstainer.** By Ian McGuire. Random, $27 (9780593138737).

An exceptional period thriller in which James O’Connor, a disgraced cop, attempts to revive his career by rooting out members of the Irish Fenian Brotherhood in 1867 Manchester, England.

**All the Devils Are Here.** By Louise Penny. Minotaur, $28.99 (9781250145239).

In Paris for the birth of a grandchild, Armand Gamache and his wife, Reine-Marie, must work together to expose a conspiracy that threatens their entire family.

**Are Snakes Necessary?** By Brian De Palma and Susan Lehman. Hard Case Crime, paper, $22.95 (9781789091205).

Film director De Palma and journalist Lehman deliver a deliciously deceptive, dark thriller distinguished by beautifully synchronized plotting and a fusillade of surprises that suggest one of De Palma’s twisty movies.

**The Art of Violence.** By S. J. Rozan. Pegasus, $25.95 (9781643135311).

The thirteenth Bill Smith and Lydia Chin novel finds the New York PIs trying to determine if their client, who suffers from memory loss, is a murderer.

**The Better Liar.** By Tanen Jones. Ballantine, $27 (9781984821225).

To claim her inheritance, Leslie must reconcile with her vanished sister, who turns out to be dead. No problem: find a look-alike and pass her off as the sister. A clever debut with a stunning ending.

**Blacktop Wasteland.** By S. A. Cosby. Flatiron, $26.99 (9781250252685).

In this superb debut, a former wheelman trying to go straight must take “one last job,” which leads to another last job, even more star-crossed than the first one.

**Blackwood.** By Michael Farris Smith. Little, Brown, $27 (9780316529815).

Smith’s latest country noir offers an uncompromising, poetic journey into the darkness of a small Mississippi town that is gradually being consumed by the malevolent kudzu vines on its outskirts.

**The Book of Lamps and Banners.** By Elizabeth Hand. Little, Brown, $27 (9780316485937).

Hand’s teeth-grindingly tense thriller finds photographer Cass Neary on the trail of a legendary rare book purported to possess magical qualities.

**Broken.** By Don Winslow. Morrow, $29.99 (9780062988904).

After three epic-scale masterpieces, Winslow returns with a delicious serving of small plates: novellas that reunite fans with characters from the author’s earlier novels.

**The Burden of Truth.** By Neal Griffin. Forge, $27.99 (9780765395627).

Griffin’s tale of murder in a small Southern California town is rich with bubbling vitality, boundless curiosity, and sympathy for people doing their best in a brutal world.

**Cactus Jack.** By Brad Smith. Arcade, $24.99 (9781950691456).

Mixing elements from multiple genres, Smith tells the story of a steely-willed woman who inherits a raccoon and takes on an unscrupulous ranch owner.

**The Case of the Reincarnated Client.** By Tanquin Hall. Severn, $28.99 (9780772888785).

The fifth in the hilarious Vish Puri series finds the Delhi private eye investigating during the anti-Sikh riots of 1984, after the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

**The Chocolate Cobweb.** By Charlotte Armstrong. Penzler/American Mystery Classics, $25.95 (9781613161661).

This outstanding example of early domestic crime fiction, originally published in 1948, builds on a switched-at-birth premise to deliver a suspenseful tale awash in intricate plotting.

Forensic anthropologist Temperance Brennan is recovering from a cerebral aneurysm when she is thrust into a new case that suggests conspiracy, but can Temp trust her own mind to make connections?


Sayer Altair, a Black female FBI neurologist, races against time when the abductor of a bus of high-schoolers starts killing his captives one by one.


Hoping to learn more about her mother's death, 20-year-old Augusta journeys, often dangerously, through a small town's secret past, looking for answers.

The Darkling Halls of Ivy. Ed. by Lawrence Block. Subterranean, $50. (9781596069657).

Mystery master Block collects 18 sterling crime stories set in the ever-competitive world of academia. Contributors include Ian Rankin, John Lescroart, and Peter Lovesey.


Cop turned PI Jennie Redhead traces the murder of a British doctor in Oxford back to New Guinea in the 1930s and London after WWII.


In this series bar-raiser, V. I. Warshawski investigates a musician's disappearance and uncovers a web of greed linking the South Side of Chicago, rural Kansas, and a Chilean mining town.


These three fine novellas—a prequel to the Giordano Bruno series—detail Bruno's early life in sixteenth-century Italy, before he became a master spy for Elizabeth I.


Two much-younger wives are at the center of a tightly wound thriller with tension as stifling as the Georgia heat and an unsettling touch of the supernatural.


A simple case—and a quick trip to LA to escape the Minnesota winter—turns complicated for private investigator Nils Shapiro and his friend/hired muscle Jameson.


In this exquisitely twisty debut thriller, Hausmann starts her story where Emma Donoghue's Room ends—with the escape of a kidnapped and long-imprisoned woman.


This is a fascinating, page-turning historical mystery, with dashes of twelfth-century politics and religion, intriguing period ambience, charismatic characters, and a completely unexpected ending.


In this jaunty country-house mystery, mixing wicked social commentary and a complicated, unnerving plot, a bold murder is committed at a masked ball taking place at Feltham Abbey in England.


Genevieve Stewart, aka reporter Polly Palmer, haunts Gilded Age New York conventions by chasing a killer in the company of one of the city's richest men.


A husband and wife have devastating news to share about their daughter but are reluctant to do so on a special day. An unusual premise, breathtakingly executed.

The Distant Dead. By Heather Young, Morrow, $27.99. (9780062690814).

Young's second stunning novel puts a young boy at the center of a mystery and surrounds him with adults' unresolved guilt for the loved ones they have lost.


With her personal and professional lives in free fall, MI6 officer Kate Henderson attempts to outmaneuver both the Russians and Britain's perfidious and possibly traitorous prime minister.


In the outskirts of Buenos Aires, Eartheater is ostracized by her gift: she sees the fates of the missing when she ingests earth connected to them.


In his fourth Butcher's Boy novel, Perry sends retired Mob hit man Michael Shaeffer on the killing road again, where he hopes to carve a more permanent separate peace.


In this most macabre of Street's three Poe and Dupin mysteries, Edgar Allan Poe shares the stage with his own fictional characters—particularly master sleuth C. Auguste Dupin.


A Boston bookseller lands in the middle of a murder investigation when a blog post he
wrote about eight perfect murders in mystery fiction becomes a serial killer's playbook. A devilish premise combined with jaw-dropping execution.


Pavesi's inventive debut follows a book editor who finds disturbing connections to a real-life murder within a manuscript she's publishing.

The End of October. By Lawrence Wright. Knopf, $27.95 (9780525658658).

This gripping medical thriller, which mirrors the coronavirus outbreak, follows epidemiologist Dr. Henry Parsons, who is marooned abroad by a travel ban while a pandemic ravages the world.


Georgia detective P. T. Marsh, obsessive in his craving for justice, walks a thin line between right and wrong in conducting a murder investigation with ties to his own life.


Connelly brings back reporter Jack McEvoy in this riveting thriller about a misogynistic serial killer who targets victims using DNA identified on the dark web.


Eve Taggert, a waitress in the Missouri Ozarks, attempts to find her daughter's killer in a gritty mystery about women struggling to provide the best lives possible for their children.


The first in the Mace Reid K-9 series, starring a dog trainer and a special golden retriever, is a terrific thriller: fascinating characters, sparky dialogue, wry humor, sweaty-palm tension.

The Finisher. By Peter Lovesey. Soho, $27.95 (9781641291811).

Lovesey's nineteenth Peter Diamond mystery finds the Bath, England, copper working security at a marathon and stumbling into a case involving human trafficking. Served, as always, with gin-dry humor.


After stealing $200,000 from an author suffering from dementia, Sarah escapes to Bangkok, where her life spirals out of control. Karma or bad choices? A gripping psychological thriller.


Missing-person tracker Colter Shaw finds himself not only searching for a missing woman but also going undercover to expose a mysterious cult in Washington State.


Joe Wilderness, incorrigible black marketeer and unconventional MI6 spy, ruffles feathers on both sides of the Iron Curtain, from Finland to Prague to Berlin, leading up to a jaw-dropping finale.


This splendid genre-bender combines super thriller plotting with the emotional resonance and fine writing that comes with literary fiction, all while a Georgia investigator tries to solve a murder.

He Started It. By Samantha Downing. Berkley, $26 (9780451491756).

To collect their inheritance, siblings from a dysfunctional family embark on the mother of all road trips, a cross-country car jaunt in which greed and betrayal rule the road.

Hi Five. By Joe Ide. Little, Brown/Mulholland, $27 (9780316509534).

Isaiah "IQ" Quintabe, the Sherlock Holmes of East Long Beach, must keep a murder suspect with multiple personality disorder out of jail in the fourth in Ide's outstanding series.

Hide Away. By Jason Pinter. Amazon/Thomas & Mercer, paper, $15.95 (9781542005906).

Pinter does a masterful job of ramping up suspense in this fine blend of domestic thriller and police procedural that centers on what happened to Rachel Marin's family seven years ago.


The tenth Inspector Chen mystery again takes up Xiaolong's passionate concern with China's pressing environmental problems, especially that of air pollution. Written with urgency and grace.


In his fourth Nick Heller thriller, Finder sends his hero on a quest to prove that a Big Pharma company knowingly profited from peddling addictive products. Excruciatingly suspenseful.


Political fixer Joe DeMarco comes to the aid of a 15-year-old girl, who is the sole survivor of a plane crash in the Adirondacks.

How Quickly She Disappears. By Raymond Fleischmann. Berkley, $26 (9781984805171).

In isolated Tanacross, Alaska, in 1941, Elizabeth Pfautz encounters a man accused of murder who claims to know where her sister, who disappeared 20 years earlier, is and how to contact her.


When Pike Logan and the Taskforce become targets of Russian assassins, Logan is after revenge. Breathless action from a master of the black-ops thriller.

In the Absence of Miracles. By Michael J. Malone. IPG/Orenda, paper, $15.95 (9781912374793).

Glasmogen teacher John Docherty sets out to learn more about a brother he never knew existed and finds himself embroiled in a depraved conspiracy. Celtic noir at its best.


Estleman adds another sterling entry to the list of crime fiction about film noir with this tale of film archivist Valenti's efforts to solve a mystery involving a long-lost fifties film.
iar genre trope—the agent as fall guy—with a plot that employs cutting-edge computer technology to show how easy it is to distort reality.

**Percentages of Guilt.** By Michael Niemann. Coffeetown, paper, $15.95 (9781603816748).

Summoned to Antwerp by his former employers, UN investigator Valentin Vermeulen must prove that he is not responsible for the death of a police informant.

**Please See Us.** By Caitlin Mullen. Gallery, $26.99 (9781982127480).

Mullen’s debut delivers a wrenchingly detailed, utterly credible “woman in peril” thriller about a psychic reader and a spa employee in Atlantic City who attempt to find out what happened to a girl who went missing.

**The Poison Garden.** By Alex Marwood. Penguin, paper, $16 (9780143110521).

Having survived the mass poisoning of the cult in which she was raised, Romy, pregnant with the cult leader’s child, has her own plan for saving the world.

**Pretty Little Wife.** By Darby Kane. Morrow, paper, $16.99 (9780063016408).

This page-turning debut featuring skillful plotting and an intriguing protagonist, Lily matches wits with a CID detective who senses there’s something fishy about Lila’s husband’s disappearance.

**A Private Cathedral.** By James Lee Burke. Simon & Schuster, $28 (9781982115683).

Burke melds horror and crime in his twenty-third Dave Robicheaux novel, which finds the Cajun detective battling racist evil and the spell of a comely forensics expert.

**The Red Right Hand.** By Joel Townsley Rogers. Penzler/American Mystery Classics, $25.95 (9781613161548).

This outstanding thriller, a stellar reissue in the American Mystery Classics series, details what happens when an eloping couple pick up the hitchhiker from hell.


Thomas brings compassion and insight to this tale of a long-absent father and his deaf 13-year-old son, who reunite to solve a murder in 1934 West Virginia.

**Running from the Dead.** By Mike Knowles. ECW, paper, $15.95 (9781770415195).

Knowles tells the story of a private eye, Sam Jones, in desperate need of personal and professional redemption. A case involving a missing child offers the chance he seeks.

**The Russian Pink.** By Matthew Hart. Pegasus, $25.95 (9781643135502).

After discovering that a presidential candidate is in debt to Russian oligarchs for a rare diamond called the Russian Pink, Alex Turner sets out to expose an international conspiracy.

**Salt River.** By Randy Wayne White. Putnam, $27 (9780735212725).

Doc Ford and his hippie pal Tomlinson have their hands full with Spanish gold and the revelation that Tomlinson fathered numerous children via sperm donations made years ago.

**The Searcher.** By Tana French. Viking, $27 (9780735224650).

Country noir lives in West Ireland in French’s moving tale of a retired Chicago cop who looks for peace in an Irish village and finds something else entirely.

**The Sentinel.** By Lee Child and Andrew Child. Delacorte, $28.99 (9781984818461).

If this terrific Jack Reacher thriller, the first coauthored by Child and his brother, Andrew Grant, proves a harbinger of what is to come, the iconic Reacher is in good hands.

**Seven Years of Darkness.** By You-Jeong Jeong, Tr. by Chi-Young Kim. Penguin, paper, $17 (9780143134244).

This beautifully written redemption story explores the tragic reverberations that echo for years after a young South Korean girl is murdered at a reservoir in South Korea.

**Shadow Ridge.** By M. E. Browning. Crooked Lane, $26.99 (9781643853536).

In this first entry in a series set in small-town Colorado, police detective Jo Wyatt challenges the official view that a computer-game creator killed himself.

**The Shadows.** By Alex North. Macmillan/Celladon, $26.99 (9781250318039).

North follows his best-selling *The Whisper Man* (2019) with another riveting thriller set in the small town of Featherbank in which North again displays his total mastery of misdirection.

**Shakespeare for Squirrels.** By Christopher Moore. Morrow, $28.99 (9780062434029).

Pocket, star of two previous Moore romps based on Shakespeare plays, must turn hard-boiled sleuth if he is to solve the murder of Puck, King Oberon’s fool.

**The Shooting at Château Rock.** By Martin Walker. Knopf, $25.95 (9780525656654).

A real-estate scam drives the mystery in Walker’s latest Bruno mystery, but, as always, the real joy here is Chief Bruno’s lifestyle, the envy of every foodie Francophile.

**The Siamese Twin Mystery.** By Ellory Queen. Penzler/American Mystery Classics, $25.95 (9781613161548).

A forest fire forms the sinister backdrop to this exquisite puzzle, originally published in 1933, the seventh in the classic Ellery Queen series, featuring old-fashioned, quirky, and meticulous deduction.

**The Sicilian Method.** By Andrea Camilleri. Penguin, paper, $16 (9780143134978).

The next-to-last entry in the Salvo Montalbano series finds the Sicilian police inspector investigating two murders while reeling under the spell of a comedy forensics expert.

**A Silent Death.** By Peter May. Quercus, $26.99 (9781784294984).

May delivers a tour de force of psychological suspense in which a fugitive plots an elaborate revenge scheme against the cop he holds responsible for the death of his girlfriend.


The latest in Slaughter’s Will Trent series delivers another slam dunk, pitting Trent and partner Faith Mitchell against a serial killer while exposing strains in the couple’s relationship.

**The Sleeping Nymph.** By Ilaria Tuti. Tr. by Ekin Oklap. Soho, $27.95 (9781641291217).

A recently rediscovered painting from 1945 leads Italian police superintendent Teresa Battaglia, recently diagnosed with dementia, to track a killer whose motives stretch back to WWII.

**A Small Town.** By Thomas Perry. Mysterious, $26 (9780802148063).

The versatile Perry is in no-holds-barred
thriller mode here, in the gripping story of a one-woman hit squad empowered to track the escaped convicts who pillaged her small town, and to kill them all.

**Snow.** By John Banville. Hanover Square, $27.99 (9781335230003).

In 1957 Ireland, DI St. John Strafford investigates the murder of a Catholic priest, stabbed and castrated at the country home of a reclusive Protestant family.

**A Song for the Dark Times.** By Ian Rankin. Little, Brown, $27 (9780316479257).

A call from his daughter, Samantha, sends retired Edinburgh copper John Rebus to the north of Scotland, where he becomes involved in a murder investigation with links to WWII.

**Squeeze Me.** By Carl Hiaasen. Knopf, $28.95 (9781524733452).

Hiaasen’s latest mix of crime fiction and rampaging satire features a hungry python, a “crude-spoken commander-in-chief,” and a plot rich in the author’s signature craziness.

**Still Life.** By Val McDermid. Atlantic Monthly, $26 (9780802157447).

Fife, Scotland, detective Karen Pirie juggles two cases complicated by false identities that emerge after a fisherman pulls a dead body from the Firth of Firth.

**The Sun Down Motel.** By Simone St. James. Berkley, $26 (9780440000174).

Carly Kirk’s aunt disappeared from a small New York town 35 years ago while working as a motel night clerk. Carly takes the same job, and the creepy stuff starts up again.

**Take It Back.** By Kia Abdullah. St. Martin’s, $27.99 (9781250273017).

Zara Kaleel, a Muslim working as a sexual-violence adviser in London, takes the case of a 16-year-old white girl who claims she was raped by four Muslim boys.

**Tell Me My Name.** By Erin Ruddy. Dundurn, paper, $15.99 (9781459746152).

Who is the kidnapper who has abducted Ellie and her husband, Neil? Ellie has three chances to identify him, but with each wrong answer, Neil loses a body part.


Kidd’s eerie historical mystery, set in Victorian England, delivers a richly woven tapestry of fantasy, folklore, and history.

**Three Hours in Paris.** By Cara Black. Soho, $27.95 (9781641290418).

In this historical thriller, Black contemplates one of WWII’s enduring mysteries: Why did Hitler come to Paris in June 1940 but abruptly leave three hours later?

**The Three Mrs. Wrights.** By Linda Keir. Amazon/Lake Union, paper, $14.95 (9781542019705).

In this compulsively readable blend of thriller and women’s fiction, three women gradually realize what they have in common. Is it the men (or man?) in their lives?

**A Time for Mercy.** By John Grisham. Doubleday, $29.95 (9780385545969).

Grisham’s third Jake Brigance novel finds the Mississippi attorney defending a 16-year-old boy charged with the murder of a police deputy.

**To Fetch a Felon.** By Jennifer Hawkins. Berkley, paper, $7.99 (9780593197080).

In a quaint English village, Emma Reed and her corgi, Oliver, must unmask a killer before Emma can proceed with her plans to open a tea shop.

**Trace Elements.** By Donna Leon. Atlantic Monthly, $27 (9780802148674).

Leon melds topical social issues with time-less considerations of human imperfection in a novel that looks at both the water crisis in Venice and the enduring problem of injustice.

**Twisted.** By Steve Cavanagh. Flatiron, $26.99 (9781250207326).

Why is the real identity of mega-best-selling crime-fiction author J. T. LeBeau so closely guarded? Maria Cooper tries to find out and in so doing lets a monster into her life.

**Untamed Shore.** By Silvia Moreno-Garcia. Polis/Agora, $25.99 (9781947993921).

Viridiana has outgrown her dreary hometown in 1970s Baja, California, but her attempts to become someone new come at a price in this insightful portrait of a sardonic yet lonely soul.


Copenhagen’s renowned investigative group Department Q is rocked when one of its members, Hafez al-Assad, learns that his long-lost wife and daughter are being held by a notorious Iraqi interrogator.


With a mix of romance, horror, and suspense, Cole reveals the insidious forces behind the gentrification of a Brooklyn neighborhood.

**When She Was Good.** By Michael Robotham. Scribner, $26 (9781982103637).

Robotham provides backstory here on how psychologist Cyrus Haven and his sort-of ward, “feral child” Evie Cormac, introduced in Good Girl, Bad Girl (2019), encountered one another. A powerhouse of a novel.

**When You See Me.** By Lisa Gardner. Dutton, $27 (9781524745004).

Bones discovered in a remote mountainous area in Georgia link to a notorious serial killer in this nail-biter by suspense master Gardner.

**Without Sanction.** By Don Bentley. Berkley, $27 (9781984805119).

In this stunning debut, intelligence agent Matt Drake gets a chance to right a wrong by capturing an ISIS-connected Pakistani scientist who has developed a chemical weapon. Nonstop immersive action.

**Wrong Alibi.** By Christina Dodd. HQN, paper, $17.99 (9781335080820).

In Dodd’s fiendishly clever tale of suspense, Evie is framed for murder but avoids a lifetime behind bars, changes her identity, and waits for revenge.


Decades after her physician father was murdered, Long Island City homicide detective Nina Karim continues to search for his killer, in this compulsively readable thriller.

**You Let Me In.** By Camilla Bruce. Tor, $25.99 (9781250302045).

Cassandra Tipp lives in two worlds, one with the appearance of everyday reality, the other a faerie world dominated by the evil Pepper-Man—but what is real, and what is fantasy?
Historical Fiction

The Age of Witches. By Louisa Morgan. Redhook, $28 (9780316419512).

Morgan’s third witch-centric historical novel, set in Gilded Age New York, features a scheming stepmother, Frances; her heiress stepdaughter; and Harriet, a wild witch determined to thwart Frances’ dark plot.

The Bell in the Lake. By Lars Mytting. Tr. by Deborah Dawkin. Overlook, $27 (9781419743184).

In this tale of conjoined twin artisans, church bells, and a beautiful stave church in Norway, Mytting perfectly evokes a place and a culture, Norse tradition and rampant modernity.


Randall draws on a real-life entertainment columnist and emcee to reveal and celebrate untold stories of early-twentieth-century Detroit’s remarkable Black art community.

Black Sun Rising / La Corazonado. By Barry Gifford. Seven Stories, paper, $18.95 (9781609809980).

Gifford’s short novel combines an action-filled western with a vivid recounting of the fascinating history of the Seminole Indians, who integrated with fugitive slaves called the Mascogos.

The Book of Kane and Margaret. By Kiik Araki-Kawaguchi. FC2, paper, $18.95 (9781573661843).

Dozens of avatars of Kane Araki and Margaret Morri inhabit the world of a Japanese internment camp in this magical realist exploration of an insular world with boundless mythologies.


Francis-Sharma’s saga of Rose Rendon, who grows up in 1790s Trinidad, and ends up marrying into the Crow Nation of Montana, dramatizes how historical forces shape private lives.


Rooney portrays with bravura, empathy, and preternatural detail two WWI heroes, Cher Ami, a conscripted British homing pigeon who saves the Lost Battalion, and American Charles White Whittlesey, the officer in charge.


With deep research and love for his home city, Walter takes readers to Spokane in 1909 as two hard-luck brothers find their place in the fights for fair labor and free speech.


As an erupting volcano threatens the Hawaiian town of Oahu in 1935, characters grapple with long-buried secrets in Tsukiyama’s lush, dramatic, and charming novel of a Japanese migrant community.

Coming Up for Air. By Sarah Leipciger. Anansi, paper, $18.95 (9781487006501).

A captivating and thought-provoking story centered on the real death mask of L’Inconnue de la Seine (the Unknown Woman of the Seine River).


Buchanan’s detail and dramatic portrayal of a troubled family in a first-century settlement in Roman Britain is a richly atmospheric and beautifully emotive tale of community and love.


McBride’s richly detailed, emotionally sensitive, and socially insightful tragicomedy about the denizens of a 1969 Brooklyn neighborhood, including an unlikely hero, sets a new standard for multicultural fiction.

The Eighth Life. By Nino Haratischvili. Tr. by Agnes, as she mourns.

A richly animated tale of an unusual mother and her two very different daughters, McPhee’s enthralling novel glides through early-twentieth-century Billings, Montana, to Prohibition in the Adirondacks and beyond.


The little-told tale of European Jewish refugees in Bolivia during WWII is a moving, evocative coming-of-age tale of a young woman facing her trauma and accepting her sexuality.


The powerful story of three very unheralded female track-and-field athletes from vastly different backgrounds, spanning three Olympic Games, from 1928 to 1936.

A Girl Is a Body of Water. By Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi. Tin House, $27.95 (9781951142049).

In this modern retelling of the story of Uganda’s mystical first woman, young Kirabo’s quest to learn about her absent mother reveals the ups and downs of womanhood.


A woman and her family, stationed on the Andaman Islands off the east coast of India at the start of WWII, are set to evacuate when their son disappears with their servant in a novel that explores many cultures and the many dimensions of war.


O’Farrell’s striking, painfully lovely novel about grief is a freely imagined tale inspired by the death of Shakespeare’s son, Hamnet, and focused most on Hamnet’s mystical mother, Agnes.

Here We Are. By Graham Swift. Knopf, $22.95 (9780525658054).

In crisp, eloquently understated prose, Swift follows the lives of three show people in post-war Britain, brought together in a variety show on Brighton Pier in 1959.

Residents of the English village of Chawton just after WWII find purpose in preserving Jane Austen’s last-known residence in this delightful country tale and clever tribute.

The Other Bennet Sister. By Janice Hadlow. Holt, $28 (9781250129413).

A moving, immersive Pride and Prejudice fan fiction that allows Mary Bennet to bloom from priggish outsider to an intelligent, emotional woman who understands her own worth.


Lester’s tale of Kat Jourdan’s discovery of her grandmother Margaux’s hidden life as a Dior-clad WWII spy opens out into a beautifully wrought tale of love, courage, and compassion.

Plain Bad Heroines. By emily m. danforth. Morrow, $27.99 (9780062942852).

A sexy, funny, spooky tale that weaves the story of a filmmaker exploring the haunted Brookhants School for Girls together with the spooky story of the girls who came of age there.


In this WWI–era novel about a dedicated nurse in a Dublin hospital, Donoghue offers vivid characters and a gripping portrait of a world beset by a pandemic and political uncertainty.


Marco and his younger sisters are sent from war-torn Spain to Mexico in 1937, where they encounter betrayal and danger but hold on to their humanity.


Imbued with the dust, grit, and grime of the great depression, 1930s A Long Petal of the Sea.

A valiant young woman and a night watchman on a North Dakota Chippewa reservation confront the threats against their 1950s community and discover its profound strengths.


Godwin’s intricately structured, psychologically refined tale of a long, tested friendship between two women who meet in college, become writers, and suffer profound loss is beautifully sorrowful and charming.

The Last Great Road Bum. By Héctor Tobar. MCD, $28 (9780374279301).

A valiant young woman and a night watchman on her mother’s death in this gripping novel that will come to be seen as the quintessential road bum novel of our time.


Two women journey from England to the South Pacific in search of the beautiful golden beetle in this delightful novel of self-discovery and the power of friendship.


A young woman blames her family’s moonshining business on her mother’s death in this 1960s North Carolina-set coming of age story.


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Romance

All Scot and Bothered. By Kerrigan Byrne. St. Martin’s, paper, $7.99 (9781250318862).
Mathematician Cecelia Teague continues to run her gambling establishment after she inherits a girls’ school and acquires the suspicions of the sexy lord chief justice in Byrne’s soul-searing historical.

Davidson is in peak form in this hilarious, sexy, and heartfelt paranormal romance launching a new series and featuring two shifters, an interspecies caseworker, and a hunky investigator.

In an inspirational novel rich in genuine feelings, Deese portrays first-grade teacher Lauren who hopes to adopt a child on her own, but who then falls for substitute teacher Joshua.

Slee’s bewitching debut about an illustrator setting out on a treasure hunt orchestrated by her children’s author grandmother is a beautiful tribute to books and the imagination.

Somewhat famous Luc needs to clean up his image, so he launches “Operation Fake Respectable Boyfriend,” only to find that his pretend relationship with Oliver just might be the real thing.

Wildlife biologist Mari and construction foreman Jack, both abuse survivors, overcome adversity and fear in a romance as hot as the Mojave Desert setting.

When Agatha Griffin seeks help from bee expert Penelope Flood, she is astonished at her feelings in Waite’s latest poetic and marvelously inventive F/F Regency romance.

In Quick’s latest 1930s Burning Cove tale, photographer Vivian documents crime scenes until one shot puts her in danger and in deliciously close proximity to private investigator Nick Sundridge.

A fall and memory loss sends celebrity chef Evie back home, where cowboy Zach rejected her in the charming start to Weatherspoon’s multicultural Cowboys of California series.

Phillips delivers grieving midwife Tess to a small Tennessee town, where she meets celebrated and cranky artist Ian, resulting in an emotionally enriching, breathtakingly brilliant tale of heartbreak and hope.

Berne’s entrancing Regency romance features exquisitely realized characters and a delightfully done friends-to-lovers plot fueled by sweet charm, sharp wit, and heart-melting sexual chemistry.

In a clever plot, Drake delivers an outspoken American frontierswoman to England, where she crosses paths with a duke, and an unlikely and steamy romance ensues.

Ana, a music teacher and a thief, sort of, meets secret penny-dreadful author Hollis, who helps Victorian London’s street children, and, as romance blossoms, they investigate a true criminal enterprise.

A heartwarming, second-chance romance about Anusha Desai, who wants to be more than a perfect Indian wife and mother.

A lost-and-found mutt, depressed Sloan’s dream of keeping him, and the objections of his owner, Jason, make for an exceptionally sensitive, funny, and affirming romance.

Chandler’s restoration of an historic train depot on the former grounds of the Bonaventure Circus resurrects a spooky, serial-killer cold case in Wright’s captivating, unexpectedly sensitive tale.

In Rodale’s latest Gilded Age Girls Club title, Beatrice’s family business is threatened by that of a spurned suitor’s, making for a sexy tale of rivalry and romance.

Stranded without a room at the inn, Lady Delilah “Leela” Chambers spends the night with a stranger, Elliot Townsend, Duke of Huntington, who turns out to be her step-daughter’s beau.

The scintillating and original start to Cole’s Runaway Royals series features newly crowned King Sanyu II and brilliant commoner Shanti, who has every intention of becoming the true queen.

Newspaper columnists Lady Katherine Bascomb ends up working on a serial murder case with Inspector Andrew Evenham in Collins’ superb and witty Victorian tale of romantic suspense.

The Librarian of Boone’s Hollow. By Kim Vogel Sawyer. WaterBrook, paper, $17 (9780525653721).
In this grace-based tale, Addie Cowherd arrives in Boone’s Hollow, Kentucky, to work as a WPA pack-horse librarian, posing complex challenges for library manager Emmett Tharp.

Driven by the magnetism between an intellectual and a carpenter, Bell’s start to her circa-1830s Wallflowers vs. Rogues series is brilliant and intoxicating.

Duffy’s elegantly told tale of late-nineteenth-century entomology postgrads Nora Shipley and Owen Epps, Nora’s academic rival, and a field expedition in India dramatizes with delicate precision complex personal transformations.

Allain offers a cheeky look at the gender biases of the Regency era in this smart and emotionally engaging romance featuring wonderfully evolving characters and entertaining social critiques.

Young widow Kate Tremaine takes charge of an inn within Yellowstone National Park in 1886 and joins forces with Lieutenant Will Prescott to preserve the wild and seek love.

Spencer kicks off a new Regency-set series, Rebels of the Ton, with a smart, sensual, and

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witty spin on the popular bluestocking-and-rake trope.


A mayoral election in Henry Adams, Kansas, pitches the town into a frenzy and reignites romance as Jenkins continues her superb and beloved Blessings series.

**Party of Two.** By Jasmine Guillory. Penguin, paper, $16 (9780593100820).

Best-selling Guillory's new addition to her multicultural Wedding Date romance series features lawyer Olivia, freshly returned to L.A., and a very hot young U.S. senator.

**A Reckless Love.** By Beth White. Revell, $29.99 (9780800738587).

U.S. Deputy Marshal Zane Sager and Aurora Daughtry must contend with dangers associated with Klansmen's trials in 1870 Mississippi, as White presents the gripping conclusion to her Daughtry House trilogy.

**Rescue You.** By Elysia Whisler. MIRA, paper, $16.99 (9780778310082).

Two sisters, rescued dogs, an injured war veteran and gym owner, and therapeutic massage are the unusual elements in Whisler's wonderfully complex first romance.


Hedlund brings together a woman determined to marry a gentleman on 1862 Vancouver Island, and a baker with a rebellious past in this gently sensual inspirational romance.


James expertly mixes exuberant wit with elegant sensuality as terribly shy Viola Astley is drawn to a quietly charming vicar, but intrigued by devilishly desirable Devin.

**Second Chance on Cypress Lane.** By Reese Ryan. Forever, $7.99 (9781538734452).

When Dakota Jones returns to Holly Grove Island, she ends up working with her first love in Ryan's dynamic and gratifying second-chance romance starring African American characters.

**Snowball's Christmas.** By Kristen McNanagh. Kensington, paper, $15.95 (9781496729903).

Emily, who works and lives at a Victorian B&B, is skeptical about the owner's visiting kitten Snowball is a sneaky matchmaker in this sweet Christmas romance.

**Something to Talk About.** By Meryl Wilsner. Jove, paper, $16 (9780593102527).

Debut romance author Wilsner delivers a fresh, socially astute, and captivating Hollywood romance about two talented women, actress-turned-showrunner Jo and her assistant, Emma.

**Spoiler Alert.** By Olivia Dade. Avon, paper, $15.99 (9780063005549).

Dade's clever and sexy debut romance about a fan fiction author and the star of her beloved television show addresses body image issues and dyslexia.

**Starbreaker.** By Amanda Bouchet. Sourcebooks/Casablanca, paper, $7.99 (9781492667162).

Bouchet continues her Nightchaser series with spaceship Captain Tess Bailey on a risky rescue mission, while her romance with Shade Ganavan intensifies.

**Sweet Talkin' Lover.** By Tracey Livesay. Avon, $26.99 (9780062979544).

Caila goes to Bradleyton to evaluate an old manufacturing plant and ends up taking measure of “Mayor McHottie” in Livesay’s funny and sexy launching of the Girls Trips series.

**The Switch.** By Beth O'Leary. Flatiron, paper, $16.99 (9781250769862).

Each dealing with their own grief, Leena and her grandmother, Eileen, decide to swap homes, so Eileen moves to London and Leena to rural Yorkshire, and joyful, wittily told high jinks ensue.

**Take a Hint, Dani Brown.** By Talia Hibbert. Avon, paper, $15.99 (9780062942127).

Hibbert's magical friends-to-lovers romance about a PHD student and a security guard who gain unplanned internet fame is smart, authentic, and devilishly funny.

**To Have and to HOAX.** By Martha Waters. Atria, paper, $17 (9781982136116).

In her cheeky and charming debut about a faltering marriage, Waters delivers the Regency-set equivalent of a classic 1930s–40s screwball romantic comedy.

**The Vanishing.** By Jayne Ann Krentz. Berkley, $27 (9781984806437).

Krentz begins the paranormal-spiked, romantic suspense Fogg Lake series with the disappearance of Catalina’s best friend, and the arrival of Slater, whom Catalina doesn't want to tangle with again.

**When a Rogue Meets His Match.** By Elizabeth Hoyt. Forever, paper, $7.99 (9781538763568).

Gideon makes a deal with the vipersus duke so that he can marry Messalina, but what if she finds out? Hoyt combines heartbreak and hope in this witty and passionate tale.


In Sosa's zesty, funny, and sexy tale, Lina worries that Max Hartley, who ruined her wedding, is now going to interfere with her dream job.


A basset hound mix-up brings together hectic Carly and geeky-cute neuroscience professor Max in London's witty, sexy love story, which celebrates dogs and explores life with a neurodiverse family member.

**SF/Fantasy & Horror**


The virtual and real worlds collide when a gamer and his team are hired by a wealthy celebrity in an sf adventure that explores identity, human relationships, and the frightening potential of the next-generation internet.

**The Angel of the Crows.** By Katherine Addison. Tor, $27.99 (9780765387394).

In an alternate historical London, angel Crow and Dr. J. H. Doyle consult on investigations from their offices at 221B Baker Street, including the Jack the Ripper murders.


A fun, action-packed space opera that follows a human archaeologist, his soldier wife, and their cybernetically enhanced pilot as they run from powerful forces interested in the artifact they just found.
Anthropocene Rag. By Alex Irvine. Tor.com, paper, $14.99 (9781250269270).
A hallucinatory post-apocalyptic America is traversed by six travelers who encounter talking animals, smart storms, and living graffiti on the way to confronting the rich megalomaniac responsible for the world’s destruction.

A pool of hungry ink threatens the fragile equilibrium of the fantasy library from The Library of the Unwritten (2019) in a tale that gets at the heart of what it means to tell a story.

Extranged siblings fight on opposite sides of a developing civil war in a post-apocalyptic world that combines magic, alchemy, and technology.

Asperfell. By Jamie Thomas. Uproar, paper, $18.50 (9781949671063).
A fantasy debut follows young Briony Tenebræ, who crosses into an inescapable prison to dethrone a tyrant, only to find the prison both mundane and inaccessible without magic powers.

Attack Surface. By Cory Doctorow. Tor, $26.99 (9781250757531).
Masha Maximow assuages her guilt about her government surveillance work by helping those who need to hide, until she is fired and must reckon with the harm she has done.

A bigger and darker Dresden Files emerges as an apocalyptic confrontation descends on Chicago, and even Harry’s allies can’t be trusted.

The raucous, inventive sequel to An Absolutely Remarkable Thing (2018) follows three of April May’s friends as they deal with the disappearance of the extracurricular Carls.

The latest in the long-running anthology series features struggles on a generation ship, multi-generational lesbian romance, a Lovecraft retelling, and more.

A wide-ranging anthology of fantasy published after 1945, including a surrealist tale of menacing wall-fish and an Oz-like wonderland threatened by a mysterious black glacier.

A sprawling, insightful exploration of the gentrification of Hudson, New York, through the eyes of three current and former residents whose efforts to save the town are met with supernatural resistance.

The Boatman’s Daughter. By Andy Davidson. Farrar/MCD, paper, $16 (9780374538552).
A haunting, lyrical Southern Gothic horror tale about a bayou smuggler and the generations that surround her.

A Bond Undone. By Jin Yong, Tr. by Gigi Chang. St. Martin’s, $27.99 (9781250220684).
Guo Ji and Lotus travel through jianguo as Guo Ji pursues vengeance for his father in the second installment of this newly translated, highly influential classic of the wuxia genre.

Bone Chase. By Weston Ochse. Saga, $26 (9781534450097).
Ochse tells the gripping story of Ethan McCloud, who is plunged into a mystery involving a six-fingered man, giants, and a global conspiracy that reaches back into ancient history.

A wide variety of stories and poems set on Earth, in fantasy worlds, and in space that focus on one of the most enduring creatures in speculative fiction.

In the conclusion to the Poppy War trilogy, Rin must decide between trusting others who share her powers and training new warriors, not considering how she will live when war is over.

The City We Became. By N. K. Jemisin. Orbit, $28 (9780316509848).
Five people experience new powers as they each become an avatar for one of the City’s five boroughs in award-winning Jemisin’s foray into contemporary fantasy.

Cry of Metal & Bone. By L. Penelope. St. Martin’s, paper, $18.99 (9781250148117).
Penelope’s third Earthsinger Chronicles tale is an epic, sprawling, inclusive, and romantic fantasy adventure with exciting characters battling everything from xenophobia and terrorism to airship sabotage and corrupt academia.

A Deadly Education. By Naomi Novik. Del Rey, $27 (9780593128480).
In this fresh and fast-paced series starter, El, a loner student at the magic school Scholomance, must prevent the school champion from causing apocalyptic destruction.

Deal with the Devil. By Kit Rocha. Tor, $27.99 (9781250256294).
Two mercenary teams—biomechanically enhanced supersoldiers and genetically enhanced librarians—road trip to save the legendary Rogue Library of Congress, facing secrets, landmines, and dangerous romance.

This impeccably researched alternate history follows eighteenth-century figures around the world as they fight revolutions, enslavement, and a growing, dark magical presence.

Devolution. By Max Brooks. Del Rey, $28 (9781984826787).
A terrifying first-person account of an invasion of folkloric creatures into an unsuspecting neighborhood cut off from technology and the outside world.

Adroitly mixing elements of SF and horror, Koontz taps into one of literature’s oldest themes, the monster versus the innocents. Scary, sickening (in that good way), and touching.

Driftwood. By Marie Brennan. Tachyon, paper, $15.95 (9781616963460).
In a world made up of scraps of other, dying worlds, a seemingly immortal guide disappears, and in a series of vignettes, residents try to piece together his purpose.

The complex, dreamy follow-up to Silver in December 15, 2020 Booklist 41

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the Wood (2019) uses evocative descriptions of nature to tell a story of quiet courage, magic, and queer love.


In a gutsy blend of SF and family drama, Koontz sends a father and daughter on a journey to reunite with their vanished mother.


Chakraborty continues the stories of Nahri, Ali, and Dara with musical prose, majestic settings, and a compassionate and epic story concluding an entralling fantasy trilogy.

The Empress of Salt and Fortune. By Nghi Vo. Tor.com, paper, $11.99 (9781250750303).

A young novice and their companion seek to recover artifacts from an abandoned abbey, but they find an old woman who weaves the epic tale of the exiled empress.


The sequel to A Rage of Dragons (2019) finds Champion Tau desperately trying to convince the emperor to return the throne of Queen Tsiora.


The occult, Egyptian mythology, and old Hollywood are just a few of the things Sebastien Vickery and Ingrid Castine have to deal with as they flee unknown assailants in the spirit world of modern Los Angeles.

Harrow the Ninth. By Tamsyn Muir. Tor, $26.99 (9781250313225).

The sequel to Gideon the Ninth (2019) finds new Lyctor Harrow learning to manage her new necromantic abilities while dealing with unhelpful mentors, frenemies, and ghosts of her past.


The delicate survival systems of a colony of humans on a distant, ecologically hostile planet is upset when more people arrive, and neuroatypical teen Kyle has the chance to save the day.


Colfer, author of the Artemis Fowl children’s books, offers adults this delightfully funny, quite obscene tale of vodka-swilling Vern, who hides away in the Louisiana swamp because he’s, well, a dragon.

A House at the Bottom of a Lake. By Josh Malerman. Del Rey, paper, $16 (9780593237779).

A young couple on their first date discover a hidden lake with a secret: a submerged house, generating the obsessive curiosity and danger that propel this enchanting dark fantasy.


A moving urban fantasy series starter finds half-fae Bryce Quinlan trying to solve her best friend’s murder with the help of a feared demon hunter, and sparks fly as the plot thickens.

If It Bleeds. By Stephen King. Scribner, $30 (9781982137977).

King presents four welcoming, terrifying, and charming novellas about a boy and a reclusive millionnaire, a struggling writer, a serial killer, and our multitude of selves.


Maberry returns to Pine Deep, Pennsylvania, in this stand-alone horror story about people losing pieces of their identities and how they respond to the loss.


This offshoot of the Iron Druid series introduces A, a simple printer who is actually an agent tasked with keeping the worlds of the human and the Fae separate.

The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue. By V. E. Schwab. Tor, $26.99 (9780765387561).

In 1714, Addie sells her soul to live forever, but for 300 years, everyone who sees her forgets her in this lush, raw, romantic tale.


The story of a planet-bound orphan be- trothed to a space traveler is a thriller that asks big questions about family, anger, and resistance versus acceptance.

Looking Glass. By Christina Henry. Ace, paper, $16 (9781984805638).

Four interconnected stories fill in details and provide a satisfying resolution for the beloved characters of the Chronicles of Alice series.


A fresh anthology by Two-Spirit/queer Indigenous authors explores surviving an apocalypse by rejecting colonial or individualistic methods.

Malorie. By Josh Malerman. Del Rey, $28 (9780593156858).

In the sequel to Bird Box (2014), Malorie and her now teenage companions must flee again into a world terrorized by blindness-inducing horrors, where ramped-up twists and tension await.

The Memory of Souls. By Jenn Lyons. Tor, $27.99 (9781250175571).

In the third book of the Chorus of Dragons series, Kiriin and her allies rely on newly remembered past lives to regain the throne from the King of Demons.


The leader of an international environmental organization and a doctor work to save humanity and the planet from the ravages of climate change in a story that is both epic and intimate.


A collection of Bova’s favorite stories that reveals his versatility and storytelling genius, ranging from a time-traveling alternate history to a sequel to Casablanca.

Network Effect. By Martha Wells. Tor, $26.99 (9781250229861).

In a story as action-packed as ever but with the welcome addition of richer details, everyone’s favorite Murderbot finds himself kidnapped while providing security on a research outing, by what appears to be an old friend.

The New Improved Sorceress. By Sara Hanover. DAW, paper, $16 (9780756414375).

College student Tessa Andrews adjusts to college life, complete with supernatural friends who help her on her quest to locate a treasure, and possibly some powers of her own.
Otaku. By Chris Kluwe. Tor, $26.99 (9781250203939).

A resilient gamer takes on a dangerous, only-sort-of-legal side job to help her mother, discovering that cutting edge gaming equipment might be more than what it seems.


The long-awaited return of Chicago magician Harry Dresden finds his seemingly settled life upended by a vampire queen, his misbegotten brother, and an unprecedented meeting of supernatural leaders.


The latest Ben Walker horror-thriller invokes maximum terror as he and his team track down a woman with a sickness that kills anyone she touches.

Ring Shout. By P. Djèlí Clark. Tor, $19.99 (9781250767028).

In 1920s Georgia, a young Black bootlegger and her friends are summoned to fight extradimensional monsters that possess the willing bodies of Klan members, and then an even greater threat arrives.


Charm caster Sophie uses her skills to protect the Reformist army, led by her brother and her fiancé, during her country’s civil war which becomes even more dangerous as they approach the capital in a trilogy conclusion that will have series fans cheering.

Shorefall. By Robert Jackson Bennett. Del Rey, $28 (9781524760380).

The founders series reaches new depths of world building with fascinating new characters as Sancia and Gregor try to save the city of Tevanne using magically imbued technology.


An irreverent romp about intergalactic civilizations whose cultures are modeled on brands and video serials, which looks at prejudice and slavery from multiple viewpoints.


U.S. coast guard commander Jane Oliver, while dealing with a personal tragedy, must train a crew to prevent a war with China in space.


The third Condor Heroes follows Guo Jing and Lotus Huang as they survive a shipwreck, infiltrate a palace, and fight both their enemies and their burgeoning feelings for each other.


A pitch-perfect mashup of domestic satire and tense horror follows suburban housewives in a true crime book club who must save their children from a daylight-averse neighbor.

Starborn & Godsons. By Larry Niven and Steven Leive. Tor, $29.99 (9781250306081).

A space colony is beginning to collapse under technological and physical strain, until the Godsons arrive and promise to set things right in this gitty, exciting story from three masters of the genre.


The terrifyingly realistic tale of two women—one, a pediatrician, the other, her pregnant best friend—on the run from a virulent strain of rabies, framed as a folk song and written with lyricism and horror.

The Taxidermist’s Lover. By Polly Hall. CamCat, $24.99 (9780744300376).

A modern gothic told in alternating time lines in Scarlet’s life, one in her troubled childhood, the other with her lover, who turns taxidermy into high art to increasingly menacing degrees.

That We May Live: Speculative Chinese Fiction. Two Lines, paper, $16.95 (9781949641004).

A compelling and provocative collection exploring the thin line between reality and absurdity.


In 1500 words or less, 42 authors of both horror and literary fiction surprise, scare, and confound in this outstanding anthology.

To Hold Up the Sky. By Cixin Liu. Tor, $27.99 (9781250306081).

This collection illuminates the strength and variety of Liu’s writing, focusing on high-concept, large-scale sf stories featuring ideas like a digital, crime-free duplicate of the universe or a disruption of space-time.

To Sleep in a Sea of Stars. By Christopher Paolini. Tor, $29.99 (9781250762849).

The wildly popular YA fantasy author transitions to adult sf in this tale of a xenobiologist who stumbles on some alien tech that leads her on a quest across the galaxy with a ragtag crew.


A dark, claustrophobic Egyptian tomb promises archaeological greatness for Imogen Riley and her ex, but the treasure is not a mummy or gold, but something else entirely.


Two hundred years after the events of A Gathering of Ravens (2017), Grimnir must choose between protecting his home against armies driven by prophecy and avenging the death of his mother.

The Tyrant Baru Cormorant. By Seth Dickinson. Tor, $29.99 (97814466875142).

A magnificent antihero is the center of this continuing epic featuring plagues and sorcerers, as Baru tries to destroy an evil empire from the inside.

Unconquerable Sun. By Kate Elliott. Tor, $27.99 (97812505197245).

A stirring, fast-paced series starter features the ambitious daughter of a queen and her team of loyal friends facing off against political rivals, sea monsters, and antagonistic empires.

Unreconciled. By W. Michael Gear. DAW, $27 (9780756415662).

The fourth Donovan novel (after Pariah, 2019) is grittier and more thrilling, with the arrival of a beleaguered starship transport whose passengers were forced to turn to cannibalism, and who now believe themselves possessors of the souls they have eaten.

The Unwilling. By Kelly Braffet. MIRA, $26.99 (9780778309406).

An adoptive brother and sister are on opposite sides of their father’s favor, but their
bond—they can feel each other's pain—may just be magical.

**Upright Women Wanted.** By Sarah Gailey. Tor, $20.99 (9781250213587).

A post-apocalyptic Western in which a young woman stows away with the Librarians delivering Approved Materials across a barren southwest and discovers surprising truths.

**Uranus.** By Ben Bova. Tor, $27.99 (9781250296542).

A fast-paced series starter about a habitat around Uranus and the forces of good and evil that operate there, and the discovery of an ancient civilization destroyed by alien invaders that may be coming back.

**Vagabonds.** By Hao Jingfang. Tr. by Ken Liu. Saga, $27.99 (9781534422087).

In the 22nd century, collectivist Mars and capitalist Earth are on the brink of war, and the granddaughter of a politician, a non-conformist doctor, and a documentarian are caught up in a web of political intrigue.

**The Vanished Birds.** By Simon Jimenez. Del Rey, $26 (9780593128985).

This lyrical and moving debut set in a corporate-controlled, space-bound future follows a ship captain, her adopted boy who fell from the sky, and an ancient corporate scientist looking for answers.


A riveting collection of the forgotten women writers who built the horror genre, featuring spooky stories that explore motherhood, queerness, and societal expectations.

**The Wise Friend.** By Ramsey Campbell. Flame Tree, $24.95 (9781787584044).

A man must save his teenage son from sinister forces found in arcane family paintings in a tale on folk horror with a masterfully rendered sense of dread.


A vivid, intense thriller that follows investigators trying to solve the murder of Maria Kopenon, whose husband's books about the occult mirror some of the clues.

**Wonderland.** By Zoje Stage. Little, Brown/ Mulholland, $28 (9780316458498).

Stage delivers a chilling twist to the haunted-house novel in this astonishing tale about a family of transplanted Manhattanites who find evil lurking in their rural farmhouse.

**The Year of the Witching.** By Alexis Henderson. Ace, $26 (9780593099605).

In a strict theocratic society, a woman relies on the help of the son of its ruler to stop impending darkness and disease.

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**Graphic Novels**

**Adult**

**The Adventure Zone:** Petals to the Metal. By Clint McElroy and others. Illus. by Carey Pietsch. First Second, paper, $19.99 (9781250232632).

The third installment in this comic series inspired by the Adventure Zone podcast features a high-octane battle-wagon chase and quest for treasure.


Som’s debut graphic collection presents a brave new world of diverse women, balancing the expectantly mundane with the utterly fantastical.


This formally experimental portrait of Bix Beiderbecke “visualizes musical rhythms” as it explores the jazz legend’s travels, success, and eventual ruin.


Deeply expressive artwork communicates the emotional current in Terry’s graphic memoir about dealing with alcoholism and connecting with his Native roots.


Harald, trapped in an endless dungeon crawler reminiscent of video game RPGs, fights to free himself and atone for his past.

**Doomsday Clock, Part 2.** By Geoff Johns. Illus. by Gary Frank. DC, $24.99 (9781779501189).

This concluding volume sees classic DC heroes colliding with their counterparts, culminating in an emblematic confrontation between Superman and Dr. Manhattan.


Graphic narratives from a collective of journalists and comic artists confront controversies around the prison known as Guantánamo in this anthology.

**Happiness Will Follow.** By Mike Hawthorne. Illus. by the author. Boom!/Archaia, $24.99 (9781684155453).

This profoundly moving and conflicted memoir of the artist’s life with his abusive mother is rendered in piercing, masterful artwork.

**The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Cartoonist.** By Adrian Tomine. Illus. by the author. Drawn & Quarterly, $29.95 (9781770463950).

Tomite’s wryly funny memoir of a life in comics is expertly drawn, deeply affecting, and full of humble, self-deprecating humor.


After waking up in a theater without their memories, two teenage girls investigate the horrifying occurrences in their small town.

**Menopause: A Comic Treatment.** Ed. by MK Czerwiec. Pennsylvania State Univ., $29.95 (9780271087122).

This valuable addition to the growing field of graphic medicine gathers 26 varied and echoing perspectives.

**Moms.** By Yeong-shin Ma. Illus. by the author. Tr. by Janet Hong. Drawn & Quarterly, paper, $29.95 (9781770464001).

Ma’s mother’s own journal is the inspiration for this graphic novel about raucous, vivid, and dynamically rendered middle-aged moms.

**Nineteen.** By Ancco. Illus. by the author. Tr. by Janet Hong. Drawn & Quarterly, paper, $21.95 (9781770464100).

This collection of rebellious, irreverent, and deeply observational autobiographical comics provides a poignant, raw glimpse into the life of the artist.


An inviting account from Macellari of her Thai great-uncle’s experiences during WWII, traveling the world as a soldier and experiencing danger and deprivation.


This graphic adaptation of Vonnegut’s iconic novel powerfully transforms the source material with poignant, clever visual storytelling and artwork.


With neat pencil cartoons, Crowes draws her gloriously not-neat journey to understand her sexuality, beginning in childhood.

**Umma’s Table.** By Yeon-sik Hong. Illus. by the author. Tr. by Janet Hong. Drawn & Quarterly, paper, $29.95 (9781770463868).

Anthropomorphized cat figures soften the intensity of this graphic novel about Madang,
who’s caring for his dying mother and wrestling with his abusive childhood.

**Venus in the Blind Spot.** By Junji Ito. Illus. by the author. VIZ Media, $22.99 (9781974715473). This horror manga collection of 10 shorts includes adapted works in addition to stories by the popular Ito.


**Year of the Rabbit.** By Tian Vasna. Illus. by the author. Tr. by Helge Dascher. Drawn & Quarterly, paper, $29.95 (9781770463769). Vasna’s graphic debut recounts his and his family’s experience under the murderous Khmer Rouge regime in post–Vietnam War Cambodia.


**A Cat Story.** By Ursula Murray Husted. Illus. by the author. Harper/Quill Tree, paper, $12.99 (9780062932044). Gr. 4–7. As two cats, Cilla and Betto, quest for a mythical garden, they journey through art and story.

**Catherine’s War.** By Julia Billet. Illus. by Claire Faufel. Tr. by Ivanka Hahnenberger. Harper, $21.99 (9780062915603). Based on the life of the author’s mother, this graphic adaptation of a French novel tells the story of one of the hidden children of WWII.

**Class Act.** By Jerry Craft. Illus. by the author. Harper/Quill Tree, $22.99 (9780062885517). Gr. 4–7. This follow-up to *New Kid* turns the focus to Jordan’s friend Drew and his struggles as a Black kid at their predominantly white school.

**Dancing at the Pity Party.** By Tyler Feder. Illus. by the author. Dial, $18.99 (9780525553021). Gr. 9–12. Feder celebrates and mourns her beloved mother in this pitch-perfect graphic memoir of love, grief, and healing.


**Dungeon Critters.** By Natalie Riess and Sara Goetter. Illus. by the authors. First Second, $22.99 (9781250195463). Gr. 3–8. The eponymous adventurers stumble into a grand conspiracy in this cheekily clever graphic novel, which makes thrilling use of the visual format.


**Flamer.** By Mike Curato. Illus. by the author. Holt, $25.99 (9781627796415). Gr. 9–12. Stunning visual storytelling characterizes this graphic novel about Aiden, who struggles to recognize his sexuality over one week at Boy Scout camp.


**Nos llaman enemigo.** By George Takei and others. Illus. by Harmony Becker. Top Shelf, paper, $19.99 (9781603094832). Gr. 7–10. This Spanish-language version of Takei’s memoir of Japanese internment camps is particularly pointed, as largely Spanish-speaking migrants are currently being held in detention camps in the U.S.

**The Phantom Twin.** By Lisa Brown. Illus. by the author. First Second, $17.99 (9781626729247). Gr. 6–9. After undergoing risky surgery, Isabel is haunted by the ghost of her once-conjoined twin and the prospect of life outside of the sideshow.

Cassandra Caine dons the bat mantle in this top-tier, character-driven take on the Batgirl origin story.


Snap and Jacks, a rumored witch, strike up an unlikely friendship in this densely plotted, beautifully illustrated graphic novel.


Inspired by a 74-year-old radio serial, this old-fashioned tale offers contemporary social commentary through Superman’s battle with the Klan.


Somali refugee Mohamed tells of escaping a crowded refugee camp with his disabled young brother in his care.


Smith shines a spotlight on three overlooked Black people pivotal to the history of the American West.


In a series of humorous, episodic adventures, two young beetle besties explore their quirky world of quasi-anthropomorphic critters.


A pair of hungry squirrels devise a plan to steal donuts from a nearby food truck.


After Maureen’s twin sister, Francine, begins pulling away socially, they end up as opposing candidates for student council president.


Ailis and her cousins, along with their magical familiars, stumble upon perilous, decades-old secrets in this charming, just-scary-enough middle-grade graphic novel.

Youth Nonfiction

Older Readers


Gansworth, a tribally enrolled Onandaga, offers an illuminating memoir in verse and lyric prose that confronts racism facing Native peoples.


Freitas straightforwardly gives teens the information and critical questions they need as they consider embarking on sexual relationships.


Through personal stories and interviews, Joseph helps readers understand white privilege and racism, fostering a desire to fight for racial justice.


A vividly written young adult adaptation of Abdi’s memoir about growing up in Somalia and immigrating to America.


In this exceptional memoir, Amra recalls growing up during the Bosnian War, detailing the beauty and the brutality of her life.

Channel Kindness: Stories of Kindness and Community. By Lady Gaga and Born This Way Foundation Reporters. Feiwel and Friends, $24.99 (9781250245588). Gr. 8–12.

This book on Lady Gaga’s Channel Kindness project compiles 51 first-person accounts of homegrown initiatives that make differences in communities.


Rooting her work in Black womanhood, León utilizes poetry to tell personal stories of injustice without losing sight of life’s beauty.


An absorbing introduction to Victorian naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace, whose ideas predated Darwin’s then-unpublished theory of evolution.

Brimner tells the story behind the Loving v. Virginia case and the landmark Supreme Court decision overturning race-based marriage restrictions.


During the Freedom Summer project in 1964, civil rights leaders sent college students into Mississippi to work for voting rights.


Sammy Keyes series author here offers a highly readable (and enjoyable!) book that is part memoir, part writing manual.


Acclaimed author Blumenthal speaks on behalf of Roe v. Wade and tackles the history of reproductive rights in America.

Now That We’re Men: A Play and True Life Accounts of Boys, Sex & Power. Ed. by Katie Cappiello. Dottir, $19.95 (9781626721654). Gr. 8–12.

Part play, part essay collection, this provocative book puts modern masculinity and its toxicity at center stage.


This biography of Ely Samuel Parker doubles as a history book that challenges existing narratives of that era of Native and colonial contact.


Eli, who identifies as queer and Jewish, posits 10 rules rooted in conscience and kindness to uplift the queer community.


This detailed book, the first on the topic specifically for young audiences, fills in Flint’s history and offers poignant personal stories.


A stunning full-color celebration of LGBTQ+ history that humanizes the queer community and explains many of its joys and challenges.


Acclaimed nonfiction author Fleming maps the complicated, contradictory life of American hero and villain Charles Lindbergh.


This absorbing, engagingly written young reader’s adaptation of Stamped from the Beginning should be required reading for everyone.


Seventeen-year-old environmental activist Hannah Testa shares personal experiences and advice with teens looking to join the fight against single-use plastics.


This conversational guide to politics updates...
During a year marking the centennial anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment, it only seems fitting to see so many quality biographies about women.


Gobs of humor, lively artwork, and tidy explanations of the science make this graphic novel about women in the space program a standout.


The 1920s became a decade of change for women as athletes, with greater numbers participating in competitive sports and excelling.


This vivid, biographical picture book introduces Zaha Hadid as a curious, imaginative child who became a visionary, determined architect.


A quirky and upbeat picture-book biography of Helen Martini, the first female zookeeper at the Bronx Zoo.


This picture-book biography offers an arresting look at Anne-France Dautheville, the first woman to travel the world by motorcycle.


Using disarming cartoons, this moving account of Anne Frank’s life highlights the resilience and hope with which she lived.

**In One Ear and Out the Other:** Antonia Brico and Her Amazingly Musical Life. By Diane Worthey. Illus. by Morgana Wallace. Penny Candy, $16.96 (9781734225914). Gr. 3–6.

This inviting, well-researched biography about a pioneering woman conductor emphasizes that being the first is never easy.


Intense collage-work illustrates the story of folk singer Joni Mitchell, highlighting her most recognizable songs and commitment to honest expression.


When a conductor forces a young Black woman off a New York streetcar in 1854, she decides to fight for equality and dignity.


Ella Baker, who spoke up for the poor and for women, became a respected figure within the civil rights movement.


With dramatic art and told in Mother Jones’ insistent voice, this details the children’s march that brought attention to the plight of working children.


The story of Mary Walker, who at age 116—after surviving enslavement and witnessing the civil rights movement—learned to read.


This picture-book biography details the life of Frances Perkins, a boundary-breaking woman who created the U.S. Social Security system.


This masterful work intertwines entertaining and poignant stories about Carson with significant detail on her scientific work.

**RESPECT:** Aretha Franklin, the Queen of Soul. By Carole Boston Weatherford. Illus. by Frank Morrison. Atheneum, $18.99 (9781534452282). K–Gr. 2.

The life story of Queen of Soul Aretha Franklin is told through lyrical rhyming couplets and soulful oil paintings.

**To Fly among the Stars:** The Hidden Story of the Fight for Women Astronauts. By Rebecca Siegel. Scholastic/Focus, $18.99 (9781338290158). Gr. 6–9.

When the seven original American astronauts were flying in space, few people wondered why they were all men. Still, a number of qualified women were eager to go.
its first edition to cover changes in the last few years of our political landscape.


This balanced, well-researched examination of the threats facing bee populations is essential reading.

Middle Readers


In 1959, NBA rookie Elgin Baylor refuses to suit up for a basketball game in a town practicing widespread racial discrimination.


A detailed, thrilling account of the international effort to rescue the ‘Thai boys’ soccer team trapped in a flooding cave.


Bulion pairs jaunty poems with science notes, with each poem personifying a specific amphibian and exploring its special trait.


Fifteen-year-old entrepreneur Mikaila Ulmer looks back on how her relationship with bees led to the development of her foundation.


Fred Korematsu and Jackie Robinson, born in the same year, both faced racial injustice and fought it with intelligence and courage.


A nonfiction picture book about a Japanese girl and her family’s resilience before and after the Nagasaki bombing.


This beautifully illustrated picture-book biography showcases Reverend Charles Tindley, who left a lasting legacy of faith expressed through gospel music.


Poignant poems about trash and our relationship to it pull issues of community, poverty, and environmentalism into focus.


Using spare text and expressive drawings, Shulevitz arrestingly tells of his boyhood experiences fleeing the horrors of the Holocaust.


This handsome book introduces the California condor and tells how scientists brought it back from the brink of extinction.


Readers will come to understand consent and navigate uncomfortable or confusing social situations involving their bodies in this lighthearted, illustrated guidebook.


Burgess’ poignant and joyful biography of Keith Haring features bold artwork emulating the artist’s distinctive style.


Smart and stylish, this guide breaks down the periodic table into bite-size bits that give each element its due.


Tonatiuh recreates the Mesoamerican creation myth in which Quetzalcoatl, god of knowledge, ventures into the underworld to create humanity.


This inviting book takes a refreshingly inclusive approach to the historical struggle for women’s voting rights in the U.S.


This beautiful picture-book biography follows John Glenn’s path from small-town boy dreaming of flight to WWII fighter pilot to astronaut circling the Earth.

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THE ADORING 20s!
PYR’s most starred books of 2020!

SEVEN STARRED REVIEWS
★ “An ESSENTIAL, POWERFUL mirror and window for any reader.”
—Publishers Weekly
★ BCCB ★ Booklist ★ Bookpage ★ The Horn Book ★ Kirkus Reviews ★ School Library Journal

SIX STARRED REVIEWS
★ “A POIGNANT and achingly BEAUTIFUL narrative.”
—Kirkus Reviews
★ Booklist ★ The Horn Book ★ Publishers Weekly ★ Shelf Awareness ★ School Library Journal
★ “The need for a book like this...could not be GREATER.”
—Booklist
★ BCCB ★ The Horn Book ★ Kirkus Reviews ★ Publishers Weekly ★ School Library Journal

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FIVE STARRED REVIEWS

- A Phoenix First Must Burn by Patrick Caldwell
- The Cat Man of Aleppo by Lauren Wolk
- Echo Mountain by Victoria Jamieson
- Watch Over Me by Nina LaCour
- We Are Not From Here by Jennifer Niven

FOUR STARRED REVIEWS

- Blackbird Girls by Angie Smolicki
- Every Body Looking by Carter Green
- In a Jar by Joanh A. Green
- The Ocean Calls by Julianna Baggott

THREE STARRED REVIEWS

- All the Days Put All the Days to Shame by Ashley Lukashevitz
- Dark Was the Night by Kekla Magoon
- Get a Grip by Vivyi Cohen
- Sanctuary by Won Ju "KRW" Shin
- What Happened to Milo and Dave and Eliza by Trudy Matley
- Wink by Katherine Waterbury
**From Acclaimed Author**

KATE MESSNER

**A School Library Journal Best Book**

- “Rich, timely, and beautifully written.”  
  —KIRKUS REVIEWS
- “Comforts and inspires.”  
  —PUBLISHERS WEEKLY
- “Empowering.”  
  —SHELF AWARENESS
- “Riveting.”  
  —BOOKPAGE
- “A must-purchase.”  
  —SCHOOL LIBRARY CONNECTION

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Social actions prompted by climate activists Greta Thunberg's exhortations to save the planet come to the fore in this accessible resource.

Stunningly rendered, this picture book captures a honeybee's brief life down to the smallest of details.

A gorgeously illustrated telling of the history, science, and human contributors that put Apollo 11 on the moon.

A thoroughly sourced and contextualized account of the history surrounding women's suffrage and the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment.

This picture-book memoir illustrates Peter Feigl's flight from the Nazis and is an important addition to children's Holocaust literature.

This picture-book memoir illustrates Peter Feigl's flight from the Nazis and is an important addition to children's Holocaust literature.

This detailed account follows newspaper mogul Joseph Pulitzer through his campaign to raise money for the Statue of Liberty's pedestal.

**The Next President:** The Unexpected Beginnings and Unwritten Future of America's Presidents. By Kate Messner. Illus. by Adam Rex. Chronicle, $18.99 (9781452174884). Gr. 2–5.  
This cleverly overlapping history of U.S. presidents educates while encouraging kids to see becoming president as a realistic dream.

In simple, evocative poetry, Lowry explores her childhood experiences of Pearl Harbor and the atomic bombng of Hiroshima.

A well-rounded, photo-rich overview of the sun's formation, composition, and role in forming the solar system.

In 1859, on the disputed territory of San Juan, an American soldier shoots a British pig and almost starts a war.

An effective review of the history of women's sports and the ongoing pay disparity between male and female athletes.

**The Racers:** How an Outcast Driver, an American Heiress, and a Legendary Car Challenged Hitler's Best. By Neal Bascomb. Scholastic/Focus, $18.99 (9781338277418). Gr. 5–8.  
A high-speed history of European auto racing during Hitler's rise to power.

A luminous history of the dial-painters whose dangerous work with glowing radium paint revamped workplace safety standards.

This detailed account follows newspaper mogul Joseph Pulitzer through his campaign to raise money for the Statue of Liberty's pedestal.

The bizarrely named creatures in this fun romp will delight animal-lovers and liven up STEM collections.


This picture-book biography of Peruvian archaeologist Julio C. Tello tells of his fight to preserve Indigenous history in the Americas.


Through large-scale illustrations and insightful commentary, this handsome anthology places 15 American speeches in the context of their times.


This powerful picture book tells the true story of Reverend F. D. Reese, who organized the 1965 Selma teachers' march.


Bridges writes a moving letter to young readers, describing her pivotal role in civil rights history.


This lively book explores fads and trends—their beginnings, their effects, and how readers can evaluate whether they're worthwhile.


A thoughtful and inspiring look at nonviolent movements that have shaped recent history and the men and women who led the charge.


This beautifully designed collection of fascinating, often-overlooked baseball stories makes a point of including marginalized athletes.


A glimpse of the opportunities seized by some women in the American West that doesn't overlook Indigenous or Black individuals.


Attention-grabbing, attractive entries offer pithy descriptions of 32 women artists' works, inspirations, and lives.


This tightly written book chronicles, in crisp color photographs, glass artist Dale Chihulys and his team's creations from workshop to exhibition.


In a creative approach to nature study, this handsome book shows how to attract moths to an outdoor viewing party.

Young


Sundar Palivilas's radical idea of planting a tree for each newborn girl comes to fruition through collaboration, persistence, and gradual change.


This beautifully illustrated picture book considers what all birds have in common and what sets them apart from one another.


In this illuminating picture-book biography of Ramanujan, a boy's fascination with numbers later leads to significant insights in mathematics.


The remarkable true story of Syrian Mohamad Alaa Aljaleel, who opened an animal shelter in the wake of his country's civil war.

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Combining a poetic text with subtle, beautiful photos, this science book guides readers toward a clearer understanding of fog.

This lovely picture book introduces young readers to the many manifestations of light in our daily lives.

The dramatic, true story of a family’s escape from East Germany via hot-air balloon is compellingly relayed here.

This picture-book biography of the Zhou Brothers, contemporary Chinese artists, explores their collaborative art style, inspiration, and the effect of censorship on their art.

This must-have book about Jadav Payeng’s battle against deforestation on the Indian island of Majuli incorporates varied ideas about ecosystems.

The “only authorized picture-book biography” on the revolutionary creator of children’s TV programming, Mister Fred Rogers.

The “only authorized picture-book biography” on the revolutionary creator of children’s TV programming, Mister Fred Rogers.

This journey through American history introduces the U.S. presidents by the pets—they’ve had in the White House.

Poetry and watercolors combine to gloriously depict life in the woods through the eyes of the creatures that inhabit it.

This appealing overview of world forests is packed with information in a variety of formats, including the inviting illustrations.

This handsome board book shows nine trucks doing their jobs and making their distinctive sounds at a house construction site.

Striking jacket art will draw readers to this fascinating book on building the Boeing 747, the world’s first jumbo jet.

Young readers are encouraged to interact with the text in this visually delightful trip to a strawberry patch.

An impactful but accessible account of the Exxon Valdez oil spill for the very young.

When an old man living in Brazil saves an oil-covered penguin, the two become friends for life.

A series of spreads highlighting various types of flora show how plants can, in fact, use trickery to survive and thrive.

As a child, Carver tended a woodland garden, beginning his life’s path of learning from nature and using his knowledge to help others.

A diverse assortment of star athletes is profiled in this inviting board book.

The dramatic, lightly fictionalized, account of a ruby-throated hummingbird’s 1,500-mile fall migration to Mexico.

Youth Fiction

Nineteen varied stories of love settle around characters both new and familiar, guaranteed to warm readers’ hearts.

Although Mira is fictional, her story is real, evoking those who suffered, fought, and died in the Warsaw Ghetto.

Lockhart’s moving, high-concept novel follows Adelaide Buchwald through variations of her summer to tell the story of a messy, normal life.

When Tabitha survives an accident that kills her all-star boyfriend, the people in her town form their own conclusions.

All the Days Past, All the Days to Come. By Mildred D. Taylor. Viking, $18.99 (9780399257308). Gr. 9–12.
This stunning sequel to Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry candidly depicts Black life in America during the 1940s, ’50s, and ’60s.

A brutal, unflinching story of a girl pushed from grief to violent revenge after she captures an alien.

Ashley, a privileged Black teen, experiences a personal awakening in the tumultuous wake of L.A.’s Rodney King Riots.

The Bridge. By Bill Konigsberg. Scholastic, $18.99 (9781338325034). Gr. 8–12.
Konigsberg’s candid exploration of mental health focuses upon two unacquainted teens preparing to jump from the same bridge.

In an alternate Cold War–era America where dragons live alongside humans, teenage Sarah Dewhurst uncovers an earth-shattering prophecy.

Margot travels to her mother’s hometown
for the first time and uncovers the strange, dark truth about her family history.

**By the Book:** A Novel of Prose and Cons. By Amanda Seltzer. HMH, $17.99 (9780358156611). Gr. 7-10.

Mary tries to apply the knowledge she’s gained from reading nineteenth-century novels to the local dating scene with disastrous results. A witty, engaging romance.

**Camp.** By L. C. Rosen. Little, Brown, $17.99 (9780316537759). Gr. 10–12.

Randy changes himself to land his dream guy; an essential story for teens figuring out who and how to love.

**Cemetery Boys.** By Aiden Thomas. Feiwel and Friends/Wyrene Reads, $17.99 (9781250250469). Gr. 9–12.

Navigating terrifyingly real obstacles, trans brujo Yadriel, his friend Maritza, and the alluring spirit Julian chase leads to learn how Julian died.

**Cinderella Is Dead.** By Kalynn Bayron. Bloomsbury, $18.99 (9781547603879). Gr. 8–12.

This thrilling take on Cinderella centers a smart, brave Black girl determined to dismantle a powerful misogynistic system.


At 16, Edith is a laborer at a priory, where she has a dream that may, in fact, be prophetic.


Quinn moves to a small town and finds himself in the middle of a murder spree led by a clown.

**Come On In:** 15 Stories about Immigration and Finding Home. Ed. by Adi Alsaid. Harlequin/Inkyard, $18.99 (9781335146496). Gr. 8–12.

This anthology showcases fresh perspectives of young writers from various international backgrounds, collecting poignant stories about immigration in the U.S.

**Coming Up for Air.** By Nicole B. Tyndall. Delacorte, $17.99 (9780593127087). Gr. 9–12.

A powerful debut novel that explores young love as it collides with addiction.

**Darius the Great Deserves Better.** By Adib Khorram. Dial, $17.99 (9780593108239). Gr. 9–12.

Khorram beautifully continues Darius’ story in Portland, where he juggles romance, a strenuous homelife, depression, and high-school drama.

**Dark and Deepest Red.** By Anna-Marie McLemore. Feiwel and Friends, $17.99 (9781250162748). Gr. 9–12.

McLemore uses the fairy tale “The Red Shoes” to give voice to marginalized groups, poetically illustrating their rights to love and life.


This *Dear Martin* sequel follows Quan in a youth detention center as he tries to escape an oppressive cycle driven by systemic racism.


Jane and Katherine head west to find Jane’s mother and safety in this riveting, sometimes scathing sequel to *Dread Nation*.


In a postapocalyptic world, a boy raised by dogs is caught in a war between the two remaining human settlements.


When Q dies after a fight with his best friend, he’s brought back to life—but only for a short time.


Little Badger’s fast-paced, spine-tingling mystery follows Ellie, the aspiring paranormal

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investigator, as she battles vampires, spirits, curses, and grief to overcome evil.


In a winding series of personal vignettes and Persian history, Nayeri relates his life as a youth in Iran and refugee in Oklahoma.


Seventeen-year-old Felix is Black, queer, and trans, and his exploration of his gender identity is nuanced and unforgettable.

**The Fell of Dark.** By Caleb Roehrig. Feiwel and Friends, $17.99 (9781250155849). Gr. 9–12.

Teenager August finds out he's at the center of a supernatural plot involving vampires, a great evil, and the apocalypse.


Jemima sets out to change the gender double standards at her private school, unaware of how she may participate in them.


Eager to keep his cancer history a secret, popular Jase denies knowing new transfer student Mari—his friend from Camp Chemo.


After she's raped by a group of boys, Jade plans to murder her attackers in this fierce retelling of *Macbeth*.

**Garden of Thorns and Light.** By Shylah Addante. Month9, $17.99 (9781951710361). Gr. 9–12.

Amethyst learns powerful secrets about her mother, her aunt, and the fairy realm in this gripping, introspective fantasy.

**Girl, Serpent, Thorn.** By Melissa Bashardoust. Flatiron, $18.99 (9781250196149). Gr. 9–12.

Soraya, poisonous to the touch, faces her own dark impulses when a demon offers her a choice.


In this thoughtfully feminist mystery, Sydney tells of her sixteenth summer in a San Francisco mansion with her struggling movie-star mother.

**Given.** By Nandi Taylor. Wattpad, $17.99 (9781989365045). Gr. 7–11.

In this fresh take on princess and dragon tropes, Taylor eloquently marries Caribbean folklore, magical boarding-school tales, and whimsical interspecies romance.

**The Glare.** By Margot Harrison. Little, Brown, $17.99 (9781368005654). Gr. 9–12.

A dark-web game and long-buried secrets are at the core of this propulsive horror novel, featuring spine-tingling descriptions and a twisty plot.

**Golden Arm.** By Carl Deuker. HMH, $17.99 (9780358012429). Gr. 7–12.

Laz lands a dream spot on an affluent high-school baseball team, but accepting it means leaving the family who needs him.


Cal causes a stir with his social media coverage of NASA’s new project, as Leon triggers massive flutters of his heart.


R&B star Korey Fields lures in Enchanted with the promise of fame and fortune, but she finds nothing but abuse instead.


A group of friends at a posh high school form a club that becomes the target of someone’s cruel pranks.

**I Kissed Alice.** By Anna Birch. Illus. by Victoria Ying. Macmillan/Imprint, $18.99 (9781250219855). Gr. 8–12.

Rhodes and Iliana can’t stand each other, but little does either girl know, they’ve been falling in love anonymously online.

**Illegal.** By Francisco X. Stork. Scholastic, $18.99 (9781338310559). Gr. 10–12.

This thrilling sequel to *Disappeared* spotlights Emilian’s struggles as an illegal immigrant in the U.S. following his sister’s detainment.

**It Only Happens in the Movies.** By Holly Bourne. HMH, $17.99 (9780358172062). Gr. 10–12.

Audrey’s so done with love that not even Harry, her roguish coworker at the movie theater, can melt her heart—right?


Depressed Jamie and popular David meet by chance at the hospital, and emotions fly in this dynamic, voice-driven novel.

**Kent State.** By Deborah Wiles. Scholastic, $17.99 (9781338356281). Gr. 7–10.

Wiles evocatively tells the story of the Kent State shooting through the unattributed voices of those involved in the tragedy.
After a deadly virus wipes out most of the human race, Elodie and Aiden must survive a corporate-controlled dystopia.

This playful examination of purgatory has plenty of laughs, mixed deftly with meditations on what it means to be alive.

To learn the truth about her mother’s death, Black teen Bree infiltrates a racist secret society at war with demons.

After her brother’s suicide, Na feels compelled to give up her dreams and support her family—until she unearths a damning secret.

Two sisters lean on each other after the tragic loss of their parents upends their lives.

In an adventure rooted in Argentine folklore, Manu discovers her identity as the first lobizona, or female werewolf.

Calamity Jane, Frank Butler, and Annie Oakley perform in a traveling show and hunt werewolves in this farcical historical fantasy.

After escaping the Hinterland, Alice’s attempt at a normal life is interrupted when she’s framed for a string of ex-Story murders.

Del and Qwan find themselves tackling their own participation in toxic masculinity in this well-wrought novel with a fully fleshed-out cast.

Alif and her friends are stranded in the desert at a mysterious oasis in this haunting supernatural thriller.

Wealthy Chinese teen Claire is sent to the U.S. for school; her host sister Dani and sexual abuse on campus bring new perspective.

Teenager Jonathan Lambshede inherits a strange old house and a stranger legacy of magic in this wild, wonderfully absurd fantasy.

This excellent collection of 16 sf and speculative fiction short stories centers Black women and their resistance, hope, and liberation.

Calamity Jane, Frank Butler, and Annie Oakley perform in a traveling show and hunt werewolves in this farcical historical fantasy.

A stunning, dark fairy tale revolving around Pirouette, a marionette turned real girl who makes a dangerous pact to save her father.

Raised to slay a prince in an elaborate revenge plot, Tarisai yearns to choose her own destiny.

A teen girl tracks and kills men preying on women in this riveting rendition of “Little Red Riding Hood.”

Sylvester expertly puts readers inside the pressured lives of a family in politics and reaffirms the adage that knowledge is power.

The thrilling conclusion to the Shadowshaper Cypher trilogy brings the inevitability of war and possible loss of magic.

Stone’s take on fan-favorite Shuri is full of witty writing, science genius, superhero action, and Black girl magic.
**“A POIGNANT FANTASTICAL ALLEGORY.”**

—PW

**Kirkus**


Séverin leads his criminal crew on a dangerous hunt for an ancient but powerful relic.

**A Song below Water.** By Bethany C. Morrow. Tor Teen, $17.99 (9781250315328). Gr. 8–12.

Readers get a double dose of Black girl magic in this story of two teens struggling against societal injustices.


A princess’ and a refugee’s fates become entwined as each goes to extreme measures to save a loved one.


Dre and Dean, the queer and questioning sons of two opposing presidential candidates, fall in love on the campaign trail.

**Strange Exit.** By Parker Peevyhouse. Tor Teen, $17.99 (9780765399427).

A mind-bending sf thriller with an ontological puzzle at its heart, this postapocalyptic tale of space-dwelling humans is compulsively readable.


Unrequited love, a new crush, and a bookstore that needs saving are all on Wes’ plate in this delightful rom-com.

**Surrender Your Sons.** By Adam Sass. Flux, $17.99 (9781635830613). Gr. 8–12.

After Connor comes out to his family, his mother forcibly sends him to a conversion camp, where nefarious deeds are underway.


In 1920s Shanghai, a reimagining of Romeo and Juliet sees rival factions battling for financial and political control of their city.

**They Went Left.** By Monica Hesse. Little, Brown, $17.99 (9780316490573). Gr. 9–12.

Hesse brings concentration camp survivor Zofia’s post-WWII existence to visceral life, as she finds healing in familial and romantic love.

**Tigers, Not Daughters.** By Samantha Mabry. Algonquin, $17.95 (9781616208967). Gr. 9–12.

After Ana Torres dies, her three sisters react differently; contains elements of magical realism, Latinx folklore, and a ghostly visitor.

**Tornado Brain.** By Cat Patrick. Putnam, $17.99 (9781984815316). Gr. 6–9.

When 13-year-old Frankie’s former best friend disappears, she’s determined to follow what she perceives as clues to find her.

**The Voting Booth.** By Brandy Colbert. Disney/Hyperion, $18.99 (9781368053297). Gr. 10–12.

Over the course of a single day, Marva and Duke connect in the attempt to cast their first votes.

**Watch Over Me.** By Nina LaCour. Dutton, $17.99 (9780593108970). Gr. 9–12.

In a quixotic tale rooted in Jewish folklore, two teens embark on a quest to defeat Death.

**We Are Not Free.** By Traci Chee. HMH, $17.99 (9780358131434). Gr. 8–12.

A remarkable portrayal of the disintegration of family life in the WWII Japanese American internment camps, told through the interconnected stories of 14 teens.

**We Are Not from Here.** By Jenny Torres Sanchez. Philomel, $17.99 (9781984812261). Gr. 9–12.

A trio of young Guatemalans escape the violence in their country, undertaking an arduous journey in pursuit of the American dream.

**We Unleash the Merciless Storm.** By Tehlor Kay Mejia. HarperCollins/Katherine Tegen, $17.99 (9780062691347). Gr. 9–12.

Revealed as a spy for a resistance group against an oppressive regime, Carmen considers following her heart in another direction.


Attending art school on scholarship, Sabine struggles in a cutthroat world and is inadvertently involved in an art theft.

**What Unbreakable Looks Like.** By Kate McLaughlin. St. Martin’s/Wednesday, $18.99 (9781250173805). Gr. 9–12.

At 17, Poppy—a former victim of sex trafficking—gets the chance to rebuild her life and take steps toward healing.

**Where We Go from Here.** By Lucas Rocha. Illus. by Marina Esmeraldo. Tr. by Larissa Helena. Scholastic/Push, $18.99 (9781338556247). Gr. 9–12.

After testing positive for HIV, Ian finds comfort in new friends, one of whom also has HIV.

Sparks don’t exactly fly between Maya and Jamie while they’re canvassing for the summer—at least, not at first.


Meg, picture-perfect from the outside, and Colby, falling apart after a family tragedy, connect through a voter-registration phone bank.

Middle Readers


Rabbit Alice rustles up a crew of predator and prey animals alike to protect a clueless new family’s vegetable patch.


In this pitch-perfect story from Sweden, three children perform a series of animal funerals over the course of a single day.


In this amusing chapter book, Iggy’s antics frequently land him in trouble, though he rarely sees it coming and he occasionally has regrets.


In the wake of mistreatment by his school administration, Donte finds an outlet in fencing in this sharply written novel.


After Matt’s best friend reveals that he’s moving away, they plan one final, epic adventure together—sneaking out to DefenderCon.


After an incident at school, Colin is sent to live with his mother on her Ojibwe reservation.


After her entire wombat community is abducted, Lola sets out on a quest to find the queen and save her family.


An important book that explores how 12-year-old Sora and her brother, Youngsoo, escape from North to South Korea in 1950.


Candy is outlawed, and an underground trade is thriving; preteen private detective Nelle has a missing sugar smuggler to find.


When Zac’s tiny kitten grows to a gigantic size, she and her best friend journey to find it a safe home.


After her little brother’s disappearance, Andrea enters Reverie, a magical—and secretly sinister—fairground that promises to help you forget your troubles.

Cloud Hopper. By Beth Kephart. Penny Candy/Penelope, $17.99 (9781734225907). Gr. 5–8.

Three young teens try to unravel the mystery surrounding a girl who literally falls into their midst—from the sky.


As his family’s business goes under, a friend’s art project inspires Rick to take matters into his own hands.


Ordinary middle-schooler Danny is startled when his old friend Natalie—now a Hollywood star—turns up as his date for a dance.


When a staged kidnapping goes wrong, silent-film star Darleen has to rely on her wits to get out of trouble.


When a disease jumps from dogs to humans and becomes a pandemic, Georgie searches for a cure—in the future.


The disappearance of a celebrity St. Bernard’s diamond-studded collar sets a kid not yet ready for middle school on the case.
Sports in Fiction

Competition and athleticism characterize these novels (and one graphic novel!) about love, friendship, family, perseverance—and dragons.

**All the Things We Never Knew.** By Liara Tamani. Greenwillow, $18.99 (9780062656919). Gr. 9–12.

Rex and Carli fall instantly in love on the basketball court, but can their relationship withstand their turbulent home lives?


As figure skater Ana competes in a princess-themed program and befriends transgender boy Hayden, she begins to question her gender identity.

**Blazewrath Games.** By Amparo Ortiz. Page Street, $18.99 (9781645670797). Gr. 7–10.

In an alternate America, Lana Torres dreams of becoming the Puerto Rican representative in the Blazewrath Games, a bloody dragon sport.

**Check, Please! Book 2:** Sticks and Scones. By Ngozi Ukazu. Illus. by the author. First Second, $23.99 (9781250179494). Gr. 9–12.

Through junior and senior years at college, Bitty bakes more pies, plays more hockey, and embarks on a new relationship.


Through a series of letters to her baseball hero, Vivy relates her struggle being an autistic girl on a boys’ baseball team.


Efrén struggles to manage life in the wake of his mother’s deportation in this powerful, timely debut novel.


With many comic missteps, 12-year-old Henry Khoo asserts his independence by taking a secret trip from Australia to Singapore.


Three young students at Krakenstop Academy for Heroes set out to have adventures and level up in this game-inflected kickoff.


The trauma of sexual abuse looms over this challenging but fierce account of two sisters reclaiming their future.


Zoe secretly corresponds with her incarcerated father—and digs into whether he’s innocent—in this deftly written middle-grade novel.


After witnessing a friend’s humiliation over the school dress code, Molly leads the eighth grade in a peaceful protest movement.


From this deftly written middle-grade novel.

**Echo Mountain.** By Lauren Wolk. Dutton, $17.99 (9780525555568). Gr. 4–8.

In this moving Depression-era tale, a 12-year-old girl discovers her gift for healing after her father suffers a serious accident.


Efrén struggles to manage life in the wake of his mother’s deportation in this powerful, timely debut novel.


Three young students at Krakenstop Academy for Heroes set out to have adventures and level up in this game-inflected kickoff.


The trauma of sexual abuse looms over this challenging but fierce account of two sisters reclaiming their future.


With many comic missteps, 12-year-old Henry Khoo asserts his independence by taking a secret trip from Australia to Singapore.


Zoe secretly corresponds with her incarcerated father—and digs into whether he’s innocent—in this deftly written middle-grade novel.

**Girl Giant and the Monkey King.** By Van Hoang. Roaring Brook, $17.99 (9781250240415). Gr. 4–7.

Thom agrees to help the legendary trickster god the Monkey King recover his staff if he helps take away her superstrength.


As Sara and Hawk journey to New York from
their farm to defend an author, readers will find this book as refreshing as rain on a dry field.

**How to Build an Orchestra.** By Mary Auld. Illus. by Elisa Paganelli. Interlink/Crocodile, $18.95 (9781623718718). Gr. 1–4.

This thorough, detailed introduction to orchestras is bolstered by links to audio tracks of the pieces mentioned in the text.


As Emma struggles to deal with her beloved grandmother’s death and a troubling skin disease, she finds strength in unexpected places.


Atmospheric steampunk art sets the scene for a tale of an introverted girl who escapes her hostile surroundings through books.


With some creativity and community support, 10-year-old Isaiah endeavors to keep his family afloat after the loss of his father.

**King and the Dragonflies.** By Kacen Callender. Scholastic, $17.99 (9781338129335). Gr. 4–7.

King struggles with grief and coming to terms with an identity he’s afraid his family won’t accept in this deftly written novel.


As 10-year-old Bea prepares for her father’s wedding to another man, she comes to terms with a troubling secret.

**Mañanaland.** By Pam Muñoz Ryan. Scholastic, $18.99 (9781338157864). Gr. 4–7.

As Max searches for his long-lost mother, he helps a refugee escape a dictatorship in this lyrical, fablelike tale.


Mostly average Meade encounters versions of himself from parallel dimensions, plus an evil genius out to destroy the world.


When a hurricane and a famous author...
descend upon Jane’s town on the same day, her life is thrown into turmoil.


Wondrous things are in store for Lampie when she’s sent to work at a mansion rumored to house a monster.


Fifteen #OwnVoices Muslim authors highlight the diversity within Islam and explore the meaning of and otherworldly feelings associated with Eid.


An illuminating window into the hearts and minds of two of the few Black students in a small-town school.


In frigid Hodeldorf, Otto finds refuge with the Tattercoats—a group of homeless children—who help him search for his missing mother.


When Hedgehog’s best friend gets lost in a storm, she bravely journeys to find him, making friends along the way.


After ignoring warnings about La Llorona, the wailing ghost woman, Pao sets off in search of her missing friend.


Omar takes on a school bully and fasting for Ramadan in this doodle-tastic series starter.


Half-Chinese, half-white Hanna and her white father contend with racism as they open a business in nineteenth-century Dakota Territory.

**Premeditated Myrtle.** By Elizabeth C. Bunce. Algonquin, $17.95 (97816162009186). Gr. 5–8.

Irrepressible Myrtle Hardcastle is sure her neighbor’s death is really a murder, and she intends to prove it.

**The Prettiest.** By Brigit Young, Roaring Brook, $16.99 (9781626729230). Gr. 5–8.

Three eighth-grade girls band together to figure out who’s behind a list ranking the prettiest girls in their class.

**The Queen Bee and Me.** By Gillian McDunn. Bloomsbury, $16.99 (9781681197517). Gr. 4–7.

Torn between her longtime best friend and a newcomer who shares her interest in science, Meg makes mistakes before realizing where her greatest loyalty lies.


After the Forces of Darkness infiltrate the Board and fire any resisting librarians, it’s up to Lenora to bring back the light.

**Rick.** By Alex Gino. Scholastic, $17.99 (9781338048100). Gr. 3–6.

Sixth-grader Rick explores his identity and must confront a toxic friendship in this heart-felt companion to *George*.

**Rosie:** Stronger than Steel. By Lindsay Ward. Illus. by the author. Amazon/Two Lions, $17.99 (9781542017947). Gr. 2–4.

Rosie, a little green tractor, works hard alongside crews of American and British women during WWII.

**Sal and Gabi Fix the Universe.** By Carlos Hernandez. Disney/Rick Riordan Presents, $16.99 (9781368022835). Gr. 4–7.

As Papi plugs the holes that Sal made between universes, an “Evil Gabi” tries to stop him.


After being kicked out of his abusive aunt’s home, Santiago decides to risk the harrowing journey from Mexico into the U.S.

**First Dad Summer.** By Benjamin Klas. Illus. by Fian Arroyo. Red Chair/One Elm, $16.99 (9781947159242). Gr. 4–7.

Jeremiah is excited to spend the summer with his dad, but he’s not thrilled about his dad’s over-the-top boyfriend.


Through a folk tale about a boy who enters a raja’s contest, this picture book offers a sneaky introduction to binary reasoning.

**The Ship We Built.** By Lexie Bean. Dial, $16.99 (9780525554837). Gr. 5–8.

This emotionally raw narrative delicately and respectfully covers incredibly complex issues, compounded by Rowan’s status as a trans boy.


Aboard the magical train *The Silver Arrow*,
Kate transports various animals from endangered habitats to new homes around the world.


Jake accidentally eats a bowlful of intellect-enhancing pills and must save his school from an evil principal.


After Clo’s father fails to make their rendezvous, she sets out on a mind-bending journey of mystery and magic.


Eleven-year-old Yumi wants to lead her life with laughs as a stand-up comic, but her old-school Korean parents have other ideas.


Marzana, Nialla, and a cadre of new friends team up and use their considerable smarts to investigate a tricky kidnapping case.


Twen thieves find themselves contending with a monster outbreak in this high-energy adventure from a Newbery Honor Book author.


This sequel to *Front Desk* (2019) sees sixth-grader Mia standing up for justice against a tide of anti-immigrant politics.


When a recently blended family moves to a new house, the kids experience magic that puzzles, delights, terrifies, and unites them.

**The Truth according to Blue.** By Eve Yohalem. Little, Brown, $16.99 (9780316424370). Gr. 4–7.

Thirty-three-year-old Blue manages her type 1 diabetes as she spends the summer searching for a long-lost family treasure.


While completing the community service required for his bar mitzvah, Will meets RJ, a dying boy with a bucket list.

**The Unready Queen.** By William Ritter. Algonquin, $16.95 (9781616208400). Gr. 4–7.

A threat to the Wild Wood leads its magical creatures to war with humans, unless Cole, Tinn, and Fable can stop it.


A small paper boat embarks on a phantasmagorical voyage in this awe-inducing wordless adventure, illustrated in pen and ink.


Page-turning suspense builds on Trevor’s trip with great-grandfather G. G. to honor G. G.’s WWII tour of duty.


Three sisters set out to rescue their brother, braving a frozen landscape and a mythical bear in the process.


A magic book helps Danny find the fairy-tale land of Rio Luna, where he hopes his lost sister is waiting.


A beautifully rendered series of vignettes featuring a Black girl developing into her own personhood.


Three siblings deal with a troubling home life while anticipating the *Challenger* launch in this poignant, well-wrought novel boasting lots of emotional depth.


When a powerful earthquake separates two young orcas from their pod, they undertake a dangerous journey to find their family.

**What We Found in the Corn Maze and How It Saved a Dragon.** By Henry Clark. Little, Brown, $16.99 (9780316492317). Gr. 4–6.

When Modesty and her friends find spells that really work, they end up in a magical world that needs saving.


After moving in with her sick grandmother,
Lily strikes a deal with a magical tiger straight out of Korean folktales.


After her father’s disappearance, Rae moves to Whispering Pines, where the creepy and bizarre lead to a dark mystery.


Wink navigates the seventh grade after the diagnosis of a rare cancer in a heartfelt story packed with comic art.


In this Thai-inspired twist on *Les Misérables*, Pong helps his oppressed city execute a peaceful revolt against their fascist Governor.

**Young**

**All along the River.** By Magnus Weightman. Illus. by the author. Clavis, $18.95 (9781605375182). PreS–Gr. 2.

With 12 sets of animals traveling downriver, this engaging picture book challenges children to find various characters in each scene.


A small elephant-mouse leads his fellow “failed projects” in an escape from a lab that engineers perfect pets.


A home is transformed into an animal-filled wilderness to reflect a mother’s efforts to put her wild child to bed.


A boy is taken by his dead sister’s ghost on a bike ride, exploring death in terms both concrete and emotional.


This beautifully told and illustrated celebration of African American people and ethnicity thoughtfully explores what the Black experience means to a child.


When the landlord sells their house, Leo and his dad are angry, but together they make a new home elsewhere.


Exquisite details and clever mirroring show the close relationship between father and son as they—literally!—build their dreams.


Inspired by her own experiences, Copeland tells the story of a young ballerina hoping to dance in the ballet *Coppélia*.


After immigrating from Mexico to America, a girl finds a way to help monarch butterflies complete their amazing migration.


A sweet and entertaining story of a young girl’s first time camping, as she learns to be open to nature and new experiences.


Wolf snatches Turkey and carries her home, intending to eat her for Christmas dinner, but the wily bird has other plans.

**Cityscape.** By April Pulley Sayre. Illus. by the author. Greenwillow, $17.99 (9780062893314). PreS–Gr. 3.

Brief verses and exceptional photos encourage children to discover the beauty, ingenuity, and energy that define a city.

**Comet the Unstoppable Reindeer.** By Jim Benton. Illus. by the author. Amazon/Two Lions, $17.99 (9781542043472). K–Gr. 3.

Santa’s gone AWOL on Christmas Eve, so it’s up to beleaguered reindeer Comet to deliver presents.


Initially excited to travel the ocean with Very Big Crab, Little Crab is overwhelmed by life beyond the tide pool.


A mother bird mistakenly raises a baby human as her lost chick in this sweet and silly wordless tale.


A message in a bottle leads to a friendship that brings young Alice happiness and helps her in sad times.


After Emi’s stuffed fox is lost and damaged in a storm, he is found and repaired by Kiko.


As May grows up, her enthusiasm for aeronautics directs her love for Grama, until she becomes the world’s youngest astronaut.


As the seasons pass, hypnotic tercets describe how colors blend and layer in the scenic landscape inhabited by a boy and his parents.


An accessible and thoroughly engaging introduction to monarch butterflies, told through a parable of friendship.


In this handsome, near-wordless picture book, a father and his child spend a day hiking in the mountains.


Dismayed to learn that their library must close after the librarian retires, Houndsley and Catina’s friend Bert finds a solution.


A poetic, powerful celebration of Black boy
joy, showing kids being adventurous, inquisitive, playful, creative, loving, brave, vulnerable, and worthy.


Scott draws upon his own experience in this emotionally attuned, reassuring story of a boy struggling with stuttering.

**If You Come to Earth.** By Sophie Blackall. Illus. by the author. Chronicle, $18.99 (9781452137797). PreS–Gr. 2.

A boy describes the vast diversity of Earth’s geography, people, and cultures in a written invitation to visitors from outer space.


An important book that can serve as a conversation starter for gender-expansive children and also help cis children build empathy.


A pair of young rabbits become friends and collect wondrous mementos of their time together in glass jars.


This is the best kind of picture book, offering a satisfying reading experience while leaving plenty of space for wondering.

**Jacob’s Fantastic Flight.** By Philip Waechter. Illus. by the author. Tr. by Elisabeth Lauffer. Blue Dot, $17.95 (9781733121262). PreS–Gr. 2.

Jacob, who can fly, joins a flock of birds as he travels to meet his parents and finds an adventure.


The antics of a delightful, energetic kitten will charm readers of any age.


As Bear traverses a wondrous, whimsical landscape, she describes the journey in heartfelt letters to her dear friend, Bird.


This poignant family drama steeped in cinematic imagination is an immersive experience that children will reach for like their own magic button.
**HOLIDAY HOUSE**

★★★ Our Stars Are Shining! ★★★

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### Picture Books

- **6 STORIES ABOUT KRIS**
  - By Amy Shurkin
  - Illustrated by Phoebe Wahl
  - Neal Porter Books
  - 9780823442478 / Neal Porter Books
  - 9780823443093 / Margaret Ferguson Books

- **BEAR GOES SUGARING**
  - By Laura Numeroff
  - Illustrated by Florentine Courbois
  - Margaret Ferguson Books
  - 9780823445257 / 9780823445592 / Neal Porter Books

- **Girl Versus Squirrel**
  - By Sandy Proby
  - Illustrated by David Shannon
  - Penguin
  - 9780823443260 / Neal Porter Books
  - 9780823440993 / Margaret Ferguson Books

- **Home Base**
  - By S.R. Albert
  - Illustrated by Matt Myers
  - Margaret Ferguson Books
  - 9780823446445

- **I TALK LIKE A RIVER**
  - By Sarah Blackman
  - Illustrated by D.J. Hunt
  - Margaret Ferguson Books
  - 9780823443208 / Margaret Ferguson Books

- **Our Stars Are Shining!**
  - By Charlotte Zolotow
  - Illustrated by Philip Stead
  - Neal Porter Books
  - 9780823442492 / Neal Porter Books

- **The Horn Book**
  - Booklist
  - Kirkus Reviews
  - School Library Journal

- **The Bulletin**
  - Kirkus Reviews
  - Publishers Weekly

- **Kirkus Reviews**
  - School Library Journal

- **Publishers Weekly**

- **Quill & Quire**
  - School Library Journal

- **School Library Journal**

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### Chapter Books

- **Littlest**
  - By Margi Preus
  - Illustrated by Cheryl Pilgrim
  - Margaret Ferguson Books
  - 9780823436637 / Margaret Ferguson Books

- **Lucky me,**
  - By Mary Amato
  - Illustrated by Jess Mesarovic
  - Margaret Ferguson Books
  - 9780823444489 / Margaret Ferguson Books

- **The Horn Book**
  - Booklist
  - Kirkus Reviews
  - Publishers Weekly

- **School Library Journal**

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- **Book Page**
- **Booklist**
- **Kirkus Reviews**
- **Publishers Weekly**
- **Quill & Quire**
- **School Library Journal**
- **Shelf Awareness**

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**Chapter Books**

- **Out of the Door**
  - By Charley Hall
  - Margaret Ferguson Books
  - 9780823445154

- **Overground Railroad**
  - By Jason Reynolds
  - Margaret Ferguson Books
  - 9780823444608 / Margaret Ferguson Books

- **We Will Live in This Forest Again**
  - By Mary Amato
  - Illustrated by Jessica Widdis
  - Margaret Ferguson Books
  - 9781645950240 / 9781645950257 / Pixel+ Ink

- **You Poop Here!**
  - By Pam Meisel
  - Margaret Ferguson Books
  - 9780823446452 / Margaret Ferguson Books

- **Dear Beast**
  - By John Wight
  - Illustrated by Zach Price
  - Margaret Ferguson Books
  - 9780823443809 / Margaret Ferguson Books

- **Littlest Voyageur**
  - By Emily Jenkins
  - Illustrated by Greg McGoon
  - Margaret Ferguson Books
  - 9780823443823 / Margaret Ferguson Books

- **Lucky Me, Lucy McGee**
  - By Mary Amato
  - Illustrated by Jessica Widdis
  - Margaret Ferguson Books
  - 9781645950240 / 9781645950257 / Pixel+ Ink

- **Twit and Turtle**
  - By Joanna Wing
  - Illustrated by Felix Scheinberger
  - Margaret Ferguson Books
  - 9780823443823 / Margaret Ferguson Books

- **The Bulletin**
- **Kirkus Reviews**
- **Publishers Weekly**
- **School Library Journal**

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**Booklist**

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**Quill & Quire**

- **School Library Journal**

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**School Library Journal**

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- **Publishers Weekly**
- **School Library Journal**

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**Book Page**

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- **Kirkus Reviews**
- **Publishers Weekly**
- **Quill & Quire**
- **School Library Journal**
- **Shelf Awareness**
Novels in Verse

Novels in verse are difficult to do right, but these exceptionally well-written examples from the past year demonstrate how powerful the format can be.


In this fictionalized biography, powerhouse authors Patterson and Alexander chronicle Clay’s rise to fame in 10 chapter “rounds.”


Woodson’s poignant verse novel looks beyond sports stardom to explore the devastating impact of head trauma in football.


An 11-year-old girl in Japan, unnerved by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami, gradually finds equilibrium and conquers her anxiety by helping others.

**The Bird in Me Flies.** By Sara Lundberg. Tr. by B. J. Epstein. Groundwood, $18.95 (9781773062600). Gr. 3–6.

This illustrated novel in verse tells the remarkable story of Berta Hansson’s road to becoming a beloved Swedish artist.

**Blood Moon.** By Lucy Cuthew. Candlewick, $18.99 (9781536215038). Gr. 9–12.

Frankie must learn to regain control of her life after becoming a victim of slut-shaming via humiliating memes.


Nora channels her inner strength to survive being lost in a canyon and the lingering grief of losing her mother.


This artful novel in verse weaves together details of Ada’s childhood and young adult experiences and how they shaped the woman she becomes.


A searing, prescient story of an unjustly sentenced Black teen’s time in prison and the abuses he suffers there.


Wolf resurrects the settlers traveling in the Donner Party to narrate their grueling experiences during that fateful journey.


Engle’s novel in verse tells the life story of Rubén Darío, the famed Niño Poeta (Boy Poet) of Nicaragua.


From watching black-and-white movies to wearing flannel nightgowns to opening the treasure chest, Maud loves sleepover weekends with her grandmother.


When the monster under his bed accidentally swallows him, a boy has the nighttime adventure of his life.


Two girls meet on a playground and play riotous games, and in a particular little-kid way, that means they’re best friends.


This innovative approach to color primers guides readers through ranges of colors, depicted in color-shifting grids of abstract square art.


Before her family leaves for a new country, a girl wonders how to fit all her favorite things in a small suitcase.


A charming and sensitive picture book about a parent who is neither male nor female, neither father nor mother.


This beautiful picture book offers a helpful perspective on Ghanian tradition and cultural differences within a heartening family story.


A simple but realistic story of a pair of robins as they build a nest and raise their babies.


On South Korea’s Jeju Island, Grandma teaches Dayeon to become one of the haenyeo, women divers who hunt for deep-sea delicacies.
Poetic text gradually reveals the meaning and significance of poi, kalo, and ‘ohana to Hawaiian culture.

A quiet, winsomely illustrated book about intergenerational farm life, centered around a cheery red truck.

After waking with gum in her hair, a child suffers mounting indignities as her family tries to get it out.

In two neighboring houses, one family puts their beloved dog to sleep while the other family prepares to give birth.

This busy ode to a community kitchen emphasizes the warmth and fellowship found in cooking and sharing food with a crowd.

In this historical picture book, a Black family boards a northbound train, leaving North Carolina to find better jobs, more education, and a brighter future.

Inspired by her father, who travels the world and brings home treasures from faraway places, Lulu decides to follow in his footsteps.

A must-have for children’s picture-book collections, this is a delightful celebration of what makes a family.

Recalling her mother’s escape from the Vietcong, author-illustrator Lam utilizes sequential panels of exquisite cut-paper collage to tell parallel tales of survival.

Celebrating our Booklist Stars of 2020

When Daniel joins his parents on their janitorial night shift, he discovers the magical “paper kingdom” (office building) they care for.

Crafted with simplicity and subtle humor comes the story of a polar bear awakening and embarking on a playful mission.

A small light bulb shines brightly on a big adventure when placed in a camping lantern.

An accident triggers a fight between best friends Rita and Ralph, who learn the value of meeting in the middle.

A robot family receives a special delivery, a new baby brother for Cathy, but he’s not so easy to assemble.

Made possible with the support of Ontario Creates

www.booklistonline.com December 15, 2020 Booklist 73
Salma cooks her Mama’s favorite dish to help her smile again after separating from Papa at a Syrian refugee camp.

Meticulously detailed and whimsical artwork carries the wordless tale of a girl who builds an extraordinary sandcastle.

This engaging, funny, and offbeat romp will be a great way to initiate conversations about diversity, tolerance, and acceptance.

From the misleading title to the often perturbed, occasionally exasperated main character, this book delivers laugh-out-loud moments for beginning readers.

Little Sloth embarks on a mission of utmost seriousness: venturing to the ground so he can poop.

A succinct, inviting look at protest movements, past and present, ideal for starting conversations about collective action.

When a UFO brings a robo-dog to a real dog’s backyard, he’s disappointed that it’s there for the kitchen appliances.

This mystical tale of celestial friendship sees a girl trading places with her best friend, a boy who lives among the stars.

A mother explains the many reasons for crying different way.

The sounds of summer permeate this picture book from a popular retired duo, the concluding volume in a quartet that celebrates the seasons.

This story for the youngest readers employs the same design for a sun, flower, and lion that interact in six brief chapters.

This humorously satisfying picture book tells the tale of a cantankerous sea captain, his new neighbors, and the mischievous sea.

Lina visits her grandmother, who is losing her eyesight. Still, she’s quite capable of hearing the sound of snow.

In celebration of toddler–dog love, a scraggy old dog feels left out when a baby comes into the household.

This fictionalized biography of Italian glassmaker Barovier captures the beauty of “thousand flower” glass beads.

When a tiny bee baker’s café meets with a small disaster, her insect friends work together to save the day.

Here is a gentle tale of inclusion and fairness, set among animals in a barn, that children will clearly understand.

In a series of exponential escalations, animals literally band together to form one unstoppable unit, teaching a lesson on cooperation.

Bob is a simple dog who just wants to

even his nap. Unfortunately, Someone—a mischievous cat—has her own plans.

A humorous introduction to an Inuit creation story about a woman who breathes life into animals—and fixes their mixed-up parts.

An Indigenous girl explains why water is sacred and calls readers to action in protecting the planet from polluting pipelines.

In the town of Bobville, every resident is the same—until a renegade Bruce sees a different way.

An arresting illustrated, simply written reflection on what kind of person a mother’s young son will grow up to be.

Gorgeous illustrations and words combine as a mother explains the many reasons for crying to her young son.

New parents introduce their child to the world and celebrate his first sensory experiences.
A STAR-STUDDED COLLECTION FOR EVERY LIBRARY!

5 STARS!

- Feathered Serpent and the Five Suns
- Once Upon an Eid

4 STARS!

- Village of Scoundrels
- Raybearer

3 STARS!

- Above the Rim
- Our Little Kitchen
- We Are Power
- Deeplight

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Fiction


Lingerings descriptions of Paris, a heightened emotional tenor, and a broad cast of internationally accented characters makes this series entry one not to miss!

Apeirogon. By Colum McCann. Read by the author. 15hr. Books on Tape, CD, $45 (9780307878805).

In his soft Irish lilt and without ever eliding the magnitude of loss and mourning, McCann creates a can’t-turn-away, elegiac homage to resilience and hope.

A Beautifully Foolish Endeavor. By Hank Green. Read by a full cast. 16hr. Books on Tape, DD, $76 (9780593146330).

A full cast enriches this can’t-miss sequel that is appended with a fun interview between the author and buddy Cory Doctorow.


Marnò navigates Ana’s tumultuous life as “a woman with her own quest” in this imagining of the story of Jesus’ wife.


Gilbert gives Vera Garland the authentic, appealing voice of an ambitious woman determined voice of an ambitious woman and narrator in this lively and wryly humorous mystery.

The Case of the Reincarnated Client. By Ariel Lawhon. Read by Barrie Kreinin and Peter Ganim. 17.5hr. Books on Tape, DD, $95 (9780593166924).

A star-studded full cast headlines this exquisitely produced full cast headlines this exquisitely produced full cast that is also a love letter to the New York of 1924.


As a consummate professional, Lee gives listeners an enjoyable and satisfying experience with this lengthy historical epic.

The Girl with the Louding Voice. By Abi Daré. Read by Adjoa Andoh. 12hr. Books on Tape, DD, $95 (9780593168738).

Andoh’s genius is in empathizing with each character and bringing their truth to the fore. “Honest, honest, her voice is doing music inside my ears.”

The Glass Hotel. By Emily St. John Mandel. Read by Dylan Moore. 10.5hr. Books on Tape, CD, $40 (9780525596677).

Interspersed with main-character Vincent’s incarnations, the wide cast switches genders, ages, and backgrounds for the wide cast.

The Gringa. By Andrew Altschul. Read by C. Pam Zhang. 15.5hr. Books on Tape, CD, $44.99 (9781696600521).

Shifting accents among an international cast of characters, Bonnem’s voice gives insight into each character’s perspective.

Hamnet. By Maggie O’Farrell. Read by Ell Potter. 12.5hr. Books on Tape, DD, $95 (9780593212158).

O’Farrell and Potter alchemize aural magic in this imagining of Shakespeare’s family life.


Multiple personalities challenge both detective and narrator in this lively and wryly humorous mystery.


Navigating Hurston’s varied language and wide-ranging use of dialects, Ellis is an effortlessly fluent cipher, comfortable and confident throughout.

How Much of These Hills Is Gold. By C. Pam Zhang. Read by Catherine Ho and Joel de la Fuente. 9.5hr. Books on Tape, DD, $76 (9780593166924).

Emphasizing Zhang’s sensuous language, Ho plays with words and tone, and leans into the menace of discrimination in this multifaceted western.

The Girl with the Louding Voice. By Abi Daré. Read by Adjoa Andoh. 12hr. Books on Tape, DD, $95 (9780593168738).

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Emphasizing Zhang’s sensuous language, Ho plays with words and tone, and leans into the menace of discrimination in this multifaceted western.
The Janes. By Louisa Luna. Read by Tavia Gilbert. 15.5hr. Books on Tape, DD, $95 (9780593152720).

Perfectly matching every nuance of tone and pace, Gilbert leads listeners through this intense and harrowing ripped-from-the-headlines thriller.

The Jetsetters. By Amanda Eyre Ward. Read by Thérèse Plummer. 8hr. Recorded Books, CD, $77.75 (9781980057598).

By varying tone, pitch, and even singing ability, Plummer distinguishes the four narrators and their journey in this fun and moving work.

Laetitia Rodd and the Case of the Wandering Scholar. By Kate Saunders. Read by Anna Bentinck. 1hr. Dreamscape, CD, $59.99 (9781979498896).

Saunders’ clever text matched with Bentinck’s stellar reading makes this a treat for fans of historical mysteries.


The veteran superstar narrator portrays four generations over a century and a half, embodying dozens of characters in just-under 14 magical hours.


Ryan distinguishes characters sharply by their varying regional accents, ages, and backgrounds. Even minor speakers are believable in this tense tale.

A Long Petal of the Sea. By Isabel Allende. Read by Edoardo Ballerini. 9.75hr. Books on Tape, DD, $76 (9780593167984).

Author and reader remain ideally paired, with Ballerini displaying his signature rhythm and animation of minor characters.


First-time narrator Blake readily embodies an odd couple with an odder family, voicing each as a character with a vibrant emotional core.

The Lying Life of Adults. By Elena Ferrante. Read by Marisa Tomei. 10.5hr. Books on Tape, DD, $40 (9780593340882).

Oscar-winner Tomei pulls out all the stops in a narration that matches the accolades for Ferrante’s lauded and incisive coming-of-age novel.


Krennik narrates with deft agility while showcasing an impressive, empathetic skill for accents and vocal quirks.


The veteran narrator of Austen’s novels uses variations in tone to indicate the societal perception of women of the era, in contrast to the “important” men in their lives.


A contemplative, resonating reading by the author is an aural gift to listeners and long-time fans.

My Mother’s House. By Francesca Molnipraisir. Read by a full cast. 10.5hr. Books on Tape, DD, $85.50 (9780593169605).

Debut novelist Molnipraisir’s already unnerving nightmare-on-the-page morphs into aural terror in three voices.


As always, Gaiman is an excellent narrator of his own work. Adding narration from George Guidall and Lenny Henry makes the collection one not to miss.


Narrating her own work, Erdrich shines with a cast that is delightfully vast, displaying her inviting fluency and consistently magnificent storytelling.


Church, the narrator for all of Ware’s other novels, is once again the quintessential voice of Ware’s brand of female protagonist in this Christie-esque mystery.

Pew. By Catherine Lacey. Read by Bahni Turpin. 6.5hr. Brilliance, DD, $24.99 (9781799767640).

A provocative meditation on the duplicity of appearances, with wide-ranging characterizations strongly voiced by Turpin.

Postscript. By Cecelia Ahern. Read by Amy Huberman. 10hr. Hachette, CD, $30 (9781549102080).

Irish-accented Huberman brings meaning to the more emotional parts of this long-awaited sequel to 2004’s PS, I Love You.


From a high-end thief to her Irish partner, ailing mother, and all manner of other characters, a trio of narrators creates and sustains believable voices for all.


Matching Jen’s rhythmic sentence structure, DeMeritt narrates to convey both human and AI personas in this thought-provoking audio.

Saving Ruby King. By Catherine Adel West. Read by a full cast. 10.5hr. Harper, DD, $26.99 (9781488208751).

A full cast made up of veteran- and newcomer-narrators packs a punch in this powerhouse debut imbued with deeply emotional resonance.


Well-drawn characters suffer believable teen angst in this mystery narrated by talented actors who enrich the suspense.


Clark switches deftly between a gruff, Midwestern accent and lively Irish brogues. A haunting tale read exquisitely by a fine performer.

She Gets That from Me. By Robin Wells. Read by a full cast. 14hr. Books on Tape, DD, $95 (9780593290835).

Four narrators alternate perspectives in this romantic story that hits on difficult issues, making each character’s viewpoint relatable.

Sisters. By Daisy Johnson. Read by Daisy Edgar-Jones and Anna Koval. 4.5hr. Books on Tape, DD, $38 (9780593211601).

A dual-narrated aural enhancement, these Sisters will continue to taunt and haunt long after the shocking, satisfying ending.


Delightful and romantic, O’Leary’s sophomore effort boasts stellar dual narration and thoughtful production to distinguish it as an audio.

Tokyo Ueno Station. By Miri Yu. Read by Johnny Heller. 4hr. Books on Tape, DD, $47.50 (9780593211267).

Heller is in top form for this new recording of Yu’s 2015 beautifully bleak title, making it one to remember.

The Vanishing Birds. By Simon Jimenez. Read by Shayna Small. 13.5hr. Books on Tape, DD, $95 (9780593167854).

For Jimenez’s diverse cast, Small adroitly bestows accents, personalities, even unique tics to create an adventure out of this world.


As characters transform, Small never falters, carrying the many generations toward revelation and reunion with resonance and depth.

www.booklistonline.com
The Vineyards of Champagne. By Juliet Blackwell. Read by Xe Sands. 11hr. Tantor, CD, $44.99 (9781977310729).

With a voice that begins hesitant and whispered and grows to become firmer and infused with humor, Sands’ performance mirrors the main character’s growth.


From lecherous cads to an inexperienced 17-year-old starlet, Nordlinger ably depicts a range of characters, subtly aging them over time.

Nonfiction


The longtime host of NPR’s On the Media lays out the factors that are tearing American society apart, and their correctives.


This audiobook about a powerful cult engages like a compelling podcast, narrated in a way that strikes fear in the listener.

Ex Libris: 100+ Books to Read and Reread. By Michiko Kakutani. Read by Tavia Gilbert. 8hr. Books on Tape, DD, $66.50 (9780859339497).

This is a perfectly understated narration, magically melding words and voice for a seamless experience.


With the audio clocking in at just 80 minutes, Pollan makes these Rules easy to savor again and again.

Homie. By Danez Smith. Read by the author. 1.5hr. HighBridge, DD, $8.99 (9781684577392).

As a poet and a performer, Smith is a force to be reckoned with. For those yet to delve into poetry on audio, this collection is a reason to start.

Memorial Drive: A Daughter’s Memoir. By Natasha Trethewey. Read by the author. 5.5hr. Harper, DD, $20.99 (9780063005860).

With aching precision, Trethewey reads as if relentlessly bearing witness, reliving the legacy of being left behind after her mother’s murder.


A lovingly rendered but heartbreaking portrait of a paper-mill community laid low by the corporate and global forces afflicting so many other small towns nationwide.

Once I Was You: A Memoir of Love and Hate in a Torn America. By Maria Hinojosa. Read by the author. 12.5hr. Simon & Schuster Audio, DD, $23.99 (97817977115689).

Hinojosa’s brand of reporting is elevated by her perfect intonations and a languid cadence, making this a highly recommended listen.

Pressure. By David Haig. Performed by a full cast. 2hr. LA Theatre Works, CD, $29.95 (9781682661048).

An edge-of-your-seat production about the weather, yes, but so much more as well. A must-listen for D-Day history buffs and theater aficionados.


In his familiar voice and cadence, Obama reads with emotion, engaging even when the story of his early presidency veers into the sausage-making of politics.


Debuting as both an author and narrator, Tran strikes a connective and humanizing resonance in this coming-of-age memoir.

Spirit Run: A 6,000-Mile Marathon through North America’s Stolen Land. By Noé Álvarez. Read by Ramón de Ocampo. 5.5hr. HighBridge, CD, $29.99 (9781696600460).

This intimate memoir of running, spiritual connection, and coming-of-age gets a compassionate narration in de Ocampo’s youthful voice.


This splendid combination of Larson’s expert storytelling and Lee’s expressive reading makes for an unforgettable listening experience.


Zakaria’s analysis of the COVID-19 pandemic focuses on resilience and hope in this far-ranging look at the global impact of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

This Is Major: Notes on Diana Ross, Dark Girls, and Being Dope. By Shayla Lawson. Read by the author. 9hr. Harper, DD, $26.99 (9780062988492).

Lawson’s narration is perfectly paced and draws listeners in like an old friend, rewarding them with her candor and humor.

To Be Honest. By Michael Leviton. Read by the author. 7.5hr. Dreamscape, CD, $49.99 (9781609595755).

The author voicing his quirky memoir raises questions, yet his authenticity and provides just enough emotion in all the right places.

The Toni Morrison Book Club. By Winnifred Brown-Glade and others. Read by a full cast. 7hr. Dreamscape, DD, $64.99 (9781690598312).

Raw, resonating revelations get enhanced by a roster of empathetic aural ciphers, connecting and sharing lessons from Morrison’s work.


Clearly enjoying Wiener’s razor-sharp observations, El-Attar is an ideal conspirator to this insider-on-the-periphery expose of techbro culture.

The Undocumented Americans. By Karla Cornejo Villavicencio. Read by the author. 5hr. Books on Tape, CD, $38 (9781984885821).

Augmenting her personal, political, and universal story with empathic resonance—Cornejo Villavicencio shares her own experiences as an undocumented American.
Youth Audio

Fiction

Aurora Burning. By Amie Kaufman and Jay Kristoff. Read by a full cast. 5hr. Listening Library, DD, $69 (9781524780838). Gr. 9–12.

The full cast of narrators intensify their emotions and pacing throughout to masterfully capture both non-stop action and increasing interpersonal drama.


With relatable authenticity, Lockard amplifies the emotion and sensory experience of a family navigating the traumatic effects of brain injury.

The Best of Iggy. By Annie Barrows. Read by Kate Reinders. 1hr. Listening Library, DD, $22 (9780593162804). Gr. 3–6.

Multi-voiced casts rarely achieve the authentic accuracy listeners are gifted here. Barrows and Reinders create a remarkable, affecting connection.

Clap When You Land. By Elizabeth Acevedo. Read by the author and Melania-Luisa Marte. 5.5hr. Harper, DD, $29.99 (9780063011816). Gr. 6–12.

With gle, Reinders’ voice exudes purity and trustworthiness as she regales listeners with great detail of Iggy’s adventures.

Echo Mountain. By Lauren Wolk. Read by Holly Linneman. 9hr. Listening Library, CD, $50 (9780593155813). Gr. 4–8.

In a perfect balance between graceful descriptions of the natural world and an urgent tension underlying the plot, Linneman’s narration is emotionally rich.

Fighting Words. By Kimberly Brubaker Bradley. Read by Bahni Turpin. 6.5hr. Listening Library, DD, $50 (9780593214992). Gr. 5–8.

This audio emphasizes the power of finding one’s fighting words to tell one’s own truth. Turpin lifts young Della as she shares her story.

Get a Grip, Vivy Cohen! By Sarah Kapit. Read by Cassandra Campbell and JD Jackson. 5.6hr. Listening Library, DD, $50 (9780593341858). Gr. 4–6.

Campbell’s voice is pitch perfect as she voices a preteen girl with autism, and Jackson’s deep sonorous tones match Vivy’s pen pal, a big-hearted, big-league pitcher.


Shifting between then and now, Abbott-Pratt shifts her voice from the freedom of youthful naivete to tense and pained in depicting Enchanted’s fraught situation.


A dual narration anchors this psychological crime drama punctuated by fully produced episodes of a fictional podcast about the case.

The King of Crows. By Libba Bray. Read by January LaVoy. 22.5hr. Listening Library, DD, $77 (9780385361033).

More than just the satisfying fourth in an epic quartet, LaVoy’s emotional narration and vivid character voices are virtuosic.


DeVito’s voice is Bob’s, with his wry tenor and sarcastic lilt a perfect match for the scrappy, streetwise dog.

The Overground Railroad. By Lesa Cline-Ransome. Read by Shayna Small and Dion Graham. 5.5hr. Live Oak, CD, $31.95 (9781430144250). PreS–Gr. 3.

The audio ably stands on its own, but when paired with the book, it makes an exceptional package, bringing to life the story of the Great Migration.


Perez is more than up to the challenges of this sequel, building on the characterizations of the first and adding even more voices to the array.


Kids will love this fast-paced tale performed flawlessly by the talented Heyborne, who incorporates accents from Swahili to pirate-speak with ease.


With a subtle Irish brogue and a wee bit of magic, Dunne voices the most entertaining introduction to the importance of Seneca Falls in 1848 that has ever been.


Abdullah brings together a wild cast with vividly different vocal presentations to recreate another entertaining adventure in this sequel.

Turtle Boy. By M. Evan Wolkenstein. Read by the author. 8hr. Listening Library, DD, $56 (9780593208038). Gr. 5–8.

An author-narrated debut enlivened by humor, Hebrew, drumbeats, and friendship captures an amazing range of sounds along the way.


With a deeply dark and lyrical cadence, Corduner deftly whisks listeners into the rich characters, unknown places, and Jewish folklore in Savit’s tale.

Where We Go from Here. By Lucas Rocha. Read by a full cast. 9hr. Scholastic, DD, $74.99 (9781338637762). Gr. 9–12.

Three narrators bring emotional resonance and authentic accents to their portrayals of three young gay men navigating life in a climate of HIV.

Nonfiction

Bunheads. By Misty Copeland. Read by the author. .5hr. Listening Library, DD, $22 (9780593294604). K–Gr. 3.

Narrating her own memoir, Copeland is mesmerizing, shifting from suspenseful anticipation to breathtaking excitement and finally joy and confidence.

Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You. By Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi. Read by the authors. 4hr. Hachette, DD, $24.98 (9781549184253). Gr. 7–12.

Transforming his illuminating words into something akin to a riveting open-mic, poetry-slam performance, Reynolds commands attention.

This Is Your Time. By Ruby Bridges. Read by the author. .5hr. Listening Library, DD, $22 (9780593401941). Gr. 4–7.

Hearing Bridges speak her truth brings a contemporary realism to a life that, to many young people, might otherwise seem something of another time.


The audio adaptation of Omar Mohamed’s graphic autobiography offers perfection in storytelling, format shifting, and performance, and a truly #OwnVoices production.

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Philosophy & Psychology

**The Listening Path: The Creative Art of Attention.**


Longtime creativity expert Cameron (It’s Never Too Late to Begin Again, 2016) turns to the essential art of listening. She reminds readers of the importance of “Morning Pages” (emptining the mind by writing three stream-of-consciousness pages each morning), daily walks (preferably solo), and a weekly “Artist Date” (a journey to somewhere that is mentally refreshing). She then sets out a six-week course that begins with listening to our environment (particularly the sounds of nature), listening to others (without interruptions), and listening to our higher selves (with compassion). She shares her conversations with artists, writers, actors, and other creative professionals about the importance of careful listening to their work and adds her own testimonies. In the remaining three weeks, Cameron challenges readers to stretch their perceptions. She encourages listening “beyond the veil” (by contacting spirit guides), listening to heroes (two of her favorites are Carl Jung and Bill Wilson, cofounder of AA), and listening to silence (particularly with meditation). Sprinkled throughout are thoughtful quotes and “Try This” prompts. Cameron writes beautifully and sincerely. Although some readers may need to expand their belief systems, this is nevertheless a thoughtful and helpful book. —Bryce Christensen

**Social Sciences**

**Believing in South Central: Everyday Islam in the City of Angels.**


Sociology professor Prickett spent many years attending services and events at the Masjid al-Quran (MAQ) temple in South Central Los Angeles, embedding herself deeply in the lives of the predominantly African American Muslim community that worshipped there. The result is this compassionate and generous ethnography, which explores the religious, economic, and gendered lives of the small Black community of Muslim worshippers at MAQ. Located in an area of Los Angeles with a long history of governmental neglect, this former Nation of Islam temple is a key source of support and meaning for its members. Prickett draws on in-depth interviews with MAQ members to explore the ways their Muslim faith situates them within their complex social contexts, whether drawing on their meager resources to offer charity to their neighbors during Ramadan, distinguishing their practice of Islam from the tradition’s perceived gender rigidity, or participating in the mosque market to make ends meet. Believing in South Central marries affectionate respect for the author’s subjects with a deep cultural and historical understanding of the African American Muslim community. —Jenny Hamilton

**Religion**

**Founding God’s Nation: Reading Exodus.**


As a young man absorbed in biological science, Kass saw only primitive superstition ready learned from his earlier commentary on Genesis (The Beginning of Wisdom, 2003), later life engendered in him a deep appreciation for Judaism’s sacred texts. In this sequel, readers see how much Exodus, the second book of the Torah, has taught him both about large-scale questions of political philosophy and about the intensely personal cravings of the individual spirit. Approaching the text in the spirit of pensive philosophy, Kass explicates scripture verse by verse, illuminating the way the factual tribal family of Jacob (Israel) acquires a new collective identity as a people, a nation forged by a shared narrative of miraculous deliverance from slavery, a shared moral code revealed at Sinai, and, finally, a shared holy place for worship. Parsing the instructions for constructing that holy place—the Tabernacle, or Tent of the Congregation—Kass teases out of what he once dismissed as tedium priestly minutiæ stirring intimations of what the human spirit experiences in approaching the divine. In his epilogue, Kass draws from Exodus’ record of the founding of Judaism timely—even urgent—universal lessons about twenty-first-century preconditions for human flourishing in any community. Compelling modern reflections on ancient wisdom.

—Enobong Tommelleo

**Women in Focus: The 19th in 2020**

Booklist will mark the centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote by calling out books about all aspects of women’s lives past and present. Watch for the Women in Focus treatment throughout the magazine.

**YA Recommendations**

- Adult titles recommended for teens are marked with the following symbols: YA, for books of general YA interest; YA/C, for books with particular curriculum value; YA/S, for books that will appeal most to teens with a specific interest in a specific subject; and YA/M, for books best suited to mature teens.

**Every Body: An Honest and Open Look at Sex from Every Angle.**


With a boisterous and beautiful combination of oral history, essays, comics, and art, career illustrator Rothman and indie filmmaker Feinberg share this inclusive and empowering guide to sexual identity. It reads equal parts like a scientific documentary and a sit-down with old friends. The authors interviewed strangers on the street and questioned scholars, scientists, and artists, pursuing a wide variety of experiences as well as perspectives on sex and what it means to have it. There

**Black Magic: What Black Leaders Learned from Trauma and Triumph.**


Once Sanders stopped downplaying his true self and his Blackness and started embracing the skills he’d learned navigating the U.S. as a Black man, his tech career in Silicon Valley grew wings. Drawing on his own experiences at Google and those of the Black leaders, scientists, artists, businesspeople, parents, innovators, and champions he interviewed, he investigates how being a Black person in predominantly white spaces creates what he calls Black Magic: resilience, creativity, and perseverance. This mix of memoir, interviews, and motivation is for readers who have faced trauma and kept going and for individuals who have been underestimated because of their race, family, socioeconomic status, gender, sexuality, or any other target for mindless prejudice. Sanders argues that facing adversity can generate a type of magic that has the power to lift those who have been cast low to the highest of positions. Readers will be moved most by how Sanders and his interviewees don’t shy away from the pain of the discrimination they’ve endured, instead transforming suffering into a source of assurance and hope. The overarching vision here is one of making room for Blackness in every sphere and ensuring that being Black is not a distraction but rather a strength. —Enobong Tommelleo
Murder in Canaryville: The True Story Behind a Cold Case and a Chicago Cover-Up.
By Jeff Coen.
In 1976, teenager John Hughes’ murder on the streets of Canaryville, a working-class Chicago neighborhood, sparked little concern outside the community’s narrow confines. Positively identifying the shooter proved problematic, and the case languished for years until FBI investigator Jim Sherlock took it up just prior to his own retirement. The more he dug, the more Sherlock realized that the pursuit of Hughes’ murderer was inextricably connected with the violent intersection of Chicago crime, corruption, and politics. Police detectives had been pulled off the case by the district commander, who apparently had a direct pipeline to the mayor. Sherlock went back and interviewed the principals in the case, unearthin ever-deeper layers of corruption. Chicago journalist Coen (Golden, 2012) links this particular murder to the larger issue of police accountability, and he brings the story up to present-day Chicago police abuse and corruption cases. Fans of true crime and of police proceedings will find much to relish here, but familiarity with Chicago history and geography is vital to appreciating this whole complex story.
—Kathleen McBroom

By Nadav Eyal.
A prominent Israeli journalist traverses the globe, documenting the failures of twenty-first-century globalization. Having reported on refugees in Europe, environmental destruction in Sri Lanka, Islamic fundamentalism, Greek anarchism, the Great Recession, and the election of Donald Trump, Eyal declares that these disruptions (and more) are caused by global capitalism. As the postwar “age of responsibility” has melted away, he suggests, people everywhere are increasingly rejecting Enlightenment notions of progress. The author’s interest in listening to the displaced and the discontented is laudable, and his anecdotes, including one about elephant herds being pushed out of their habitat by indigent farmers who are themselves being squeezed by economic pressures, are often poignant. He is particularly troubled by recent changes in the U.S. and its seeming inability to live up to its foreign and domestic promises. But Eyal puts little effort into demonstrating that the similarities of the “revolts” he describes outweigh their differences and prefers impressionistic assertions over nuanced analysis. The result, although timely, is less a coherent argument than a slide show of extremism and catastrophe.
—Brendan Driscoll

How to Prepare for Climate Change: A Practical Guide to Surviving the Chaos.
By David Pogue.
After a depressing introduction on just how bad current conditions are, CBS Sunday Morning correspondent Pogue (Pogue’s Basics: Money, 2016) devotes almost 600 pages to reasonable actions that individuals and businesses can take to mitigate the effects of climate change. Beginning with exhortations about becoming politically and socially active, topics include where to live, what to insure, and how to prepare for a variety of calamities ranging from droughts and forest fires to societal breakdown. Pogue cites an array of resources: national and international demographic analyses, topical studies, economic statistics, case studies, agricultural reports and medical data. He includes all sorts of maps, charts, and graphs, but he’s not trying to prove anything: it’s sort of assumed that anyone who picks up this book accepts that things are not going well. Pogue’s tone is reasoned and nonsensationalized, and at times he’s even reassuring as he offers best-practice survival tips. His final chapter is all about hope: successful interventions, large-scale cooperative movements, and promising innovations in everything from fuel sources to future foods. His final message? Prepare. That’s one thing readers can control, and this extensive guide offers lots to think about and plenty of practical advice.
—Genevieve Innes

Saving America’s Amazon.
By Ben Raines and E. O. Wilson.
It is perhaps the ultimate irony that the state with the most diverse ecosystem in the nation also boasts the worst record of environmental protection. Alabama lies at the crossroads of this existential conundrum. It claims the greatest number of aquatic species but also the largest number of aquatic extinctions, just as it hosts the most biologically complex river system in the world—and also one of the most overdeveloped. In the Mobile-Tensaw Delta, a tract of land spanning more than a quarter-million acres, breathtaking old-growth forests tenaciously endure as nearby petrochemical plants spew life-threatening pollutants. Streambeds teem with prehistoric fossils, wetlands nourish such apex predators as bull sharks and alligators, and meadows flourish with poetically named native plants like the bashful wakerobin. From coastal dunes to sawgrass fens to jungle wilds, this unexplored and underappreciated gem is under threat from years of gratuitous destruction and wanton neglect. Through his motivational activism and abiding reverence for the area, journalist, photographer, and environmental advocate Raines reveals the overwhelming significance of this severely threatened essential habitat. Alabama is running out of time to reverse course and preserve its resources. Raines’ eloquent, impassioned, and meticulous study of this
threatened ecosystem will inspire much-needed activism. —Carol Haggas

**A Shot in the Moonlight: How a Freed Slave and a Confederate Soldier Fought for Justice in the Jim Crow South.**
By Ben Montgomery.

The author of *The Man Who Walked Backward* (2018) brings to light another historical story: a harrowing crime and the subsequent trials that resulted from it in the Jim Crow South at the end of the nineteenth century. One January night in 1897 in Kentucky, George Dinning and his family are awakened by a mob of over two dozen white men, who accuse Dinning of theft and demand that he and his family leave their home. When the men start shooting, hitting Dinning twice, he fires a single shot, striking and killing one of them. Dinning immediately surrenders himself to the authorities, but the threat of his being lynched looms large as his trial approaches. After an unsatisfactory outcome for Dinning, former Confederate soldier and bank robber Bennett Young steps in to file civil charges against the men who attacked Dinning's home and burned it down the next day, forcing his family to flee. A nuanced exploration of the horrors Southern racism inflicted on Black citizens, as well as the role complicated figures like Young, who fought for the Confederacy, then became a champion for the rights of Black people, played. Blending primary source material with compelling prose, Montgomery brings to light an important turning point in a grim chapter in American history. —Kristine Huntley

**This Is the Voice.**
By John Colapinto.

“The voice is the primary instrument of language,” writes the author of *Music of the Mind: The Science of the Voice* (2005) as he begins his fascinating exploration of the vocal apparatus. Amidst a planet on which all speech originates from the lungs, the author delves into the complex interplay between sound and the physical world in which it exists. From ancient times to now, outbreaks of contagious diseases promoted xenophobia and dissuade (think FDR and Hitler). Es-pecially interesting is his theory of how Abraham Lincoln’s high voice helped win a presidential debate. Insights on why babies vocalize before they speak words further fascinate. Lots of data, evidence, thoughtful, and heart here. —Joan Carborne

**Child Care**

**Parenting while Working from Home: A Monthly Guide to Help Parents Balance Their Careers, Connect with Their Kids, and Establish Their Inner Strength.**
By Shari Medini and Karissa Tunis.

Medini and Tunis, cocreators of Adore-ThemParenting.com, have been working from home while raising families for the past decade. With six kids between them, the authors have discovered that, with a positive mindset, it’s possible to enjoy this hectic phase of life—to not only survive but also thrive. With many caregivers working from home while parenting and supervising their children’s schooling, the authors’ advice is timely and valuable. Serving as a journal as well as a guide, the book is organized by the month, making it easy for readers to find their starting place and work their way through the year. Each chapter provides authentic ways for caregivers to focus on themselves, connect with their kids, and improve working from home. Each month begins and ends with space to write goals and reflections, making this transformative process both thoughtful and intentional. Whether working from home while parenting as a temporary solution or a more long-term plan, readers will get advice for finding a rhythm, maintaining positivity, and balancing everything, while still having fun. —Melissa Norstadt

**Health & Medicine**

**Between Two Kingdoms: A Memoir of a Life Interrupted.**
By Suleika Jaouad.

In her searing memoir, Emmy Award–winning speaker, writer, and activist Jaouad describes how, diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia at age 22, she found herself, as Susan Sontag described coping with cancer, as “incanceration,” which captures her feelings about her lengthy and difficult hospital stay. Readers will feel her anxiety, fear, and despair, but also moments of hope as she pursues life through chemotherapy and a bone-marrow transplant. Jaouad addresses the psychological toll of the illness, from depression to grief to PTSD, and, in the end, confides that she is haunted and humbled by the thought that “it can all be lost in a moment.” Boldly candid and truly memorable. —June Sawyer

**Breath Taking: The Power, Fragility, and Future of Our Extraordinary Lungs.**
By Michael J. Stephen.

“Life and breath are synonymous,” writes pulmonary physician Stephen, who contends that breathing is too often taken for granted. His educational and passionate book successfully unites the true importance of our lungs and advances in medical science. The numbers are impressive: an average adult takes 20,000 breaths per day. We inhale/exhale approximately 10,000 liters of air daily. Five hundred million alveoli (air sacs in the lungs) handle that gas exchange. Stephen highlights the healing ability of focused breathing to enhance mental health and reduce chronic pain, the threat of climate change and air pollution to our lungs, and how the “connectivity of our air” allows infections like COVID-19 and tuberculosis to spread. Types of lung diseases, voice and speech, and tobacco addiction are well-cov-ered, with Stephen explaining that cigarette smoke contains not just nicotine but roughly 7,000 additional ingredients including arsenic, DDT, and cadmium. The physics of soap bubbles, Buddhism, and fish gills also receive attention. Best of all are Stephen’s stories of courageous patients, including a girl with cystic fibrosis who receives a successful lung transplant, which just might take your breath away. —Tony Miksanek

**The Plague Cycle: The Unending War between Humanity and Infectious Disease.**
By Charles Kenny.

Our earliest historical reaction to a surge of a new, severe infection was to try fleeing from it. From ancient times to now, outbreaks of contagious diseases promoted xenophobia and infrequently a rise in authoritarianism. In his fact-filled and alarming overview

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of major infectious diseases past and present, economist Kenny discusses sources and vectors of epidemics, the toll of suffering and death, progress in controlling communicable diseases, and persistent problems. The rise of infections accompanied the expansion of agriculture and increased population density. Famine, war, travel, and trade have nurtured epidemics. Improved sanitation, better living conditions and nutrition, antibiotics, rehydration therapy, and vaccines have played major roles in combating infectious diseases. Yet a lack of preparation and an often-sluggish response by governments across the globe to novel viruses, an overuse of antibiotics resulting in resistance, anti-vaccination movements, and poverty remain major impediments to conquering or at least limiting contagious diseases. Smallpox, malaria, bubonic plague, polio, measles, AIDS, yellow fever, Ebola, and COVID-19 are featured.

Centuries ago, the poet Petrarch described the landscape of the Black Death as “empty solitude encompassing the whole world.” Much hard work lies ahead to avoid such a nightmarish scenario from ever returning. — Tony Michaels

Cookery


Vegetarian cooking has deep roots in Chinese cuisine, not only because of Buddhist influences. Generally much more affordable than meats and seafood for consumers both here and in China, vegetables of every sort overflow in Chinese marketplaces. Chou (Chinese Soul Food, 2018) follows on her earlier cookbook, re-creating many of those same popular recipes without their animal-based components and without sacrificing satisfying flavors and textures. For snackers, she offers vegetarian riffs on dumplings and dim-sum favorites, even currently faddish soup dumplings. For cooks who must satisfy both vegetarians and carnivores, Chou explains how to successfully add meats to stir-fries. She resurrects the Chinese American invention of egg foo yong, giving it a fresh look and taste. For a truly fusion preparation, Chou invents ma la succotash with fragrant Sichuan peppercorns for that unique tongue-numbing sensation. Most ingredients may be readily sourced for American home cooks. Color photographs make every dish look artfully attractive. A glossary helps the uninitiated become familiar with Chinese products. —Mark Knoblauch

The Arts


Music is a universal language and this work speaks volumes—three volumes to be exact. The editors take a holistic approach, arranging articles alphabetically rather than geographically in order to “demonstrate the interconnectedness of many musical cultures from disparate locations.” An introductory essay explores the concept of “world music” and discusses several methods of musical analysis. Following that are signed articles ranging in length from several paragraphs to several pages, each accompanied by suggestions for further reading. The range of topics covered is wide and varied and includes musical genres like Fado, Raga, Soca, and J-pop, K-pop, and Cantopop; vocal styles like shape-note singing, Tuvan throat singing, and yodeling; and musical instruments like the banjo, didgeridoo, gimbri, oud, and pipa. Notable individuals like Celia Cruz, Thomas A. Dorsey, Bob Marley, and Esma Redzepova are also included. East and West are equitably represented, although there is a dearth of information about Balkan music other than one article on polyphonic ganga singing. Libraries serving students and anyone interested in expanding their musical horizons will be well-served by this rich and thoughtful reference work. —Carolyn Mulac


Actor and producer Chopra Jonas’ memoir captures the excitement of an Indian teenager launched into fame and moving rapidly from a national to an international stage. She writes of growing up in a fairly typical Indian middle-class home with professional aspirations common in her milieu. Her winning a beauty pageant, which her mom and brother signed her up for, changed the course of her life, leading to unusual opportunities and challenges. In tracing her career milestones as a Bollywood actor and then as an artist and activist. This book was originally scheduled for publication in 2019 and reads as such, addressing the Trump presidency and the author’s involvement with Black Lives Matter but not covering any events of 2020 (including Kweil’s recent public suspension from Twitter). As a time capsule of autobiography and hip-hop history, this will more than speak to Kweil’s many fans. —Annie Bostrom


Before becoming a comedy writer for Late Night with Seth Meyers, before starring in her own sketch series, Amber Ruffin was Lacey Lamar’s little sister growing up in Omaha, Nebraska. In this book, the charming and hilarious sister duo outlines some of the strangest instances of racism they’ve experienced as Black women in America. Ruffin acknowledges that she lives and works in a relative bubble, in progressive New York City, and on the set of a television show that aims to call out racist behavior whenever possible. Meanwhile, in her office jobs and in various public settings around Omaha, Lamar has seen it all: she’s been mistaken for countless Black celebrities and for her few Black coworkers. She’s had to explain the problematic nature of too many Halloween costumes. She’s been targeted by JC Penney security, even had someone get their whole hand stuck in her hair when
they touched it without her permission. Turkle and Lamar offer a dual commentary on each story, their perspectives an endeavoring portrait of sibling psychology and friendship. They present the content of the stories as is: pervasive and horrifying. Featuring the authors’ razor-sharp wit and limitless brilliance, these true tales of injustice are a gift to readers. —Courtney Eathorne

**YA: There are many teen readers for this book:** Rufin’s fans, late-night comedy fans, those who endure racism daily, and those who live unaware of racism’s reach. CE.

**Women in Focus:** The 19th in 2020

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**Literature**

**American Daughter.**
By Stephanie Plymale and Elissa Wald.

Plymale’s memoir is a gut-wrenching and absorbing portrait of one family’s legacy of mental illness and childhood trauma. Growing up, Plymale and her siblings mostly lived in their car, often had to forage for food, and spent time in and out of abusive foster homes. Their mother suffered from mental illness and was, at best, indifferent to their suffering and often accusatory. With the help of her husband, whom she met at 15, Plymale overcame her circumstances, starting a successful design school and raising three children in a loving household. After her mother is diagnosed with terminal cancer, Plymale becomes determined to find out more about her past including who her father is. Scenes of her childhood are interspersed with the present day as she tries to get information, which is near impossible because of her mother’s alternate personalities and confession. While the time line can get confusing because of this structure, it won’t matter much to folks who enjoy stories of overcoming the odds, especially in the vein of *Educated* and *The Glass Castle. —Kathy Sexton*

**Women in Focus: The 19th in 2020**

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**The Empathy Diaries.**
By Sherry Turkle.

Turkle has devoted her sustained and distinguished career to studying how technology impacts self-development. Her groundbreaking research conducted as an MIT professor laid the foundation for analyzing the inroads AI, digital devices, and reliance upon computers have made into contemporary communications and social mores, topics she has brought to popular consciousness through such best-selling books such as *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age* (2015). In this revelatory and forthright memoir, Turkle traces her fascination with identity to her earliest experiences as a child of divorce forced to relinquish her biological father and reluctantly accept her adoptive one. Academically ambitious yet constrained by economics and thwarted by the sexism directed toward women scholars in the 1960s, Turkle nonetheless charted her own course, but always with an eye toward how her objectives would be interpreted by her family, received by colleagues, and supported by mentors. Turkle’s candor and transparency are totally in keeping with her personal and professional commitment to understanding human emotional motivation and our capacity for empathy, not only towards others but also toward ourselves. —Carol Haggas

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**Just as I Am.**
By Cicely Tyson.

Cicely Tyson is a living treasure; at 96, she remains passionately outspoken about national affairs, politics, and the entertainment world. Her enthusiasm, intelligence, and wit spark across the pages of this engaging and lively memoir. Born in 1924 to Caribbean immigrants, Tyson rose above an imprudent early marriage to become a hardworking single mother. Spotted in a crowd and encouraged to try modeling, she poured her trademark energy and work ethic into this new career, eventually becoming an actor. Along the way, she befriended a who’s who of Black talent: Sidney Poitier, Diahan Carroll, Ruby Dee, Ossie Davis, Maya Angelou, and, most notably, Miles Davis, with whom she had a tempestuous and ultimately tragic on-again, off-again marriage. With steely determination and confidence, she pioneered in notable television roles, defied beauty standards by wearing her natural hair, and fought for meaty parts she was deemed “too sexy” to play. Undaunted by racism and sexism, Tyson triumphed in such iconic roles as Rebecca in *Sounder*, and the lead in *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, confounding Hollywood stereotypes about the abilities and appeal of Black women. Whether discussing the politics of natural hair or the racial violence that led to the Black Lives Matter movement, Tyson speaks with incisive clarity, humor, and moral authority. —Lesley Williams

**Women in Focus: The 19th in 2020**

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**A Swim in a Pond in the Rain: In Which Four Russians Give a Master Class on Writing, Reading, and Life.**
By George Saunders.

How did Saunders, who first trained as an engineer and labored in oil fields, become a writer recognized with a Man Booker Prize and MacArthur and Guggenheim fellow-
Poetry

Three Simple Lines: A Writer’s Pilgrimage into the Heart and Homeland of Haiku.
By Natalie Goldberg.

Venerable writing teacher, writer, and artist Goldberg dispenses personal stories and literary and Zen Buddhist wisdom in books notable for their warmth, candor, and lucidity. Here she shares her immersion in haiku, a form Allen Ginsberg introduced her to when she was a student. Goldberg states, “Haiku is a refuge when the world seems chaotic,” as it does now, and, indeed, the way she showcases haiku, both classic and new, while recounting her adventures in Japan as she followed the footsteps of the haiku masters—Basho, Buson, Issa, Shiki—proves to be stress-reducing, stimulating, and replenishing. The essence of haiku, Goldberg notes, is “pure awareness,” while its three lines should “make the mind leap.” Goldberg deepens appreciation for the evolution of the form by telling tales of the master’s lives and reclaiming the key contributions of an overlooked woman practitioner, Chi-yo-ni. Goldberg’s participation in a haiku writing group at her Santa Fe library, her fish-out-of-water moments in Japan, and her sense of humor and humility converge in a uniquely intimate celebration of haiku and its distillation of life’s beauty and transience. —Donna Seaman

History

The Eagles of Heart Mountain: A True Story of Football, Incarceration, and Resistance in World War II America.
By Bradford Pearson.

Located in north-central Wyoming, Heart Mountain was one of 10 inland “relocation camps” where West Coast–based Japanese Americans were interned following the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. And, yes, while the football teams of high-school-age incarcerated from Heart Mountain would dominate their local public-school rivals—and the author profiles the games and the stars of those teams—their story pales beside that of how they and their fellow Japanese Americans would end up there, which Pearson meticulously details, from their pre–Pearl Harbor lives to the evolution of U.S. policy that created the camps, uprooted those wholly Americanized families, and shamelessly drafted young men from the camps to fight the war—and to the resistance to the draft that many of them mounted (arguing that they should be granted their civil rights first), for which they were jailed. It might not have the sports appeal of most “local team makes good” stories, but Pearson’s account will fill gaps in readers’ understanding of this unsavory chapter in American history. —Alan Moores

Geography & Travel

Incredible Archaeology: Inspiring Places from Our Human Past.
By Paul Bahn.

Armchair globetrotters and archaeology buffs alike will discover new destinations in this photographic tour of 100 of the world’s most famous archaeological sites, selected based on archaeological importance but also accessibility to travelers, interest to a general audience, and visual appeal. Each site’s two- or four-page spread begins with basic information (type of site, location, dates, architectural style) followed by an explanation of the site’s history and archaeological significance, details about its discovery and excavation, and travel information such as transportation access, visitors centers, and other nearby destinations. Because of its longer history of archaeological exploration, roughly a third of the sites are in Europe and Northern Asia. While places such as Machu Picchu, Pompeii, and Little Big Horn will be familiar to many readers, the full-color photos and descriptions of destinations like Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump in Alberta, Canada, or the ruins of Kilwa Kisiwani on an archipelago off the coast of Tanzania may inspire future itineraries. —Lindsay Harmon

YA: Concise, accessible text and enticing images will inspire teen travel buffs and history enthusiasts to add new destinations to their bucket lists. L.H.

Queens of the Crusades: England’s Medieval Queens.
By Alison Weir.

The queens of England fascinate historian Weir; she has written numerous historical novels about them and now brews her special blend of scholarship and storytelling in the second volume in a biographical series on the country’s medieval queens. It covers the early Plantagenet period (1154–1291) with its quintet of women monarchs: Eleanor of Aquitaine, queen of Henry II; Berengaria of Navarre, queen of Richard I; Isabella of Angouleme, queen of King John; Eleanor of Provence, queen of Henry III; and Eleanor of Castile, queen of Edward I. Their stories are told in a single continuous narrative, and the result is like a magnificent tapestry, skillfully woven, ingeniously embroidered down to the smallest detail, and gloriously shot through with the glittering intrigues of the royal court. As Weir describes it, she tells “the story of the history of England through the perspective of its queens.” Aimed at the general reader, this rich and robust account will appeal to readers interested in medieval England and some of its most fascinating royal women, whose stories are often left out of the history books. —Carolyn Mulac

Women in Focus: The 19th in 2020

The Spymaster of Baghdad: A True Story of Bravery, Family, and Patriotism in the Battle against ISIS.
By Margaret Coker.

Building a top-notch intelligence service of capable, patriotic agents is a strong marker of statesmanship and sovereignty in a new nation, especially when the previous regime’s spies and secret police were focused on protecting the ruling party over the good of the nation. The titular player, Abu Ali al-Basri, spent much of his life avoiding the latter, then, after Saddam Hussein’s fall, realizing the former by establishing a government espionage unit called the Falcons. To confront Iraq’s enemies, Abu Ali relied on traditional methods, using networks of spies and informants who could do the intricate and dangerous work that high-tech surveillance could not. Coker delves deeply into the spymaster’s life, along with that of two of his heroic agents, brothers Harith and Munaf al-Sudani, and tracks their daring, secret fight against Al Qaeda and ISIS. She also paints a detailed picture of life in Iraq, from family traditions and culture to politics and intrigue, providing an informative and invaluable perspective for Western readers within an intensely suspenseful, superbly well-reported, and significant tale of brave and essential covert counterintelligence operations. —James Pekoll
**General Fiction**

**A Bright Ray of Darkness.**
*By Ethan Hawke.*

Hollywood actor Hawke follows his fable-like novel, *Rules for a Knight* (2015), with this intriguing character study of faith, masculinity, and celebrity. With similarities to Hawke’s own life story, film actor William Harding seemingly self-destructs by cheating on his beautiful wife, a rock icon. Kicked out of the family home, he now lives in the Mercury Hotel in New York. He drinks and smokes to distract himself from both his personal troubles and his anxiety about playing Hotspur in an ambitious Broadway production of Shakespeare’s *Henry IV.* He is also consumed by worry about his two young children, his voice, and whether he can succeed on the stage as he has on the screen. William has a tragicomic lack of self-awareness. He is a 32-year-old with the mentality of Holden Caulfield and is not helped by the contradictory advice he receives from other self-obsessed actors in the production. While hampered by some clunky analogies, Hawke’s novel is nonetheless an enthralling portrayal of a beleaguered actor’s struggles to balance his life and the physical and mental toll of a Broadway production.

—Alexander Moran

**Cowboy Graves.**
*By Roberto Bolaño. Tr. by Natasha Wimmer.*

Bolaño’s brilliant oeuvre expands with another bright starburst, this one comprising three separate yet thematically connected novels. “Cowboy Graves” follows Arturo Belano, a protagonist familiar to Bolaño fans, as he migrates from Chile to Mexico City and back again to Chile after the military coup in 1973, all of which tracks with the author’s own life. “French Comedy of Horrors” features an unsuspicious teenager who gets drawn into a shady literary group calling themselves the Clandestine Surrealist Group, an entity reminiscent of the “visceral realists” themselves the Clandestine Surrealist Group, founded by Bolaño in 1970. “Fatherland,” gets drawn into a shady literary group calling themselves the “visceral realists,” founded by Bolaño in 1970. “Fatherland,” emerges as a fiction powerhouse, each of her 10 stories an immersive literary event.

**Girls of a Certain Age.**
*By Maria Adelmann.*

In this dark and tender debut, Adelmann explores various struggles that twenty-first-century women face in their daily realities. The unnamed narrator of “Only the Good” has a complicated relationship with men who take advantage of her seemingly easy-going approach to life. When a one-night stand threatens to turn into a permanent responsibility, she reflects on human existence and the powerful effects people can have on one another. In “Elegy,” short snippets from each age of a woman’s life reflect her journey, showcasing the cycle of the inevitable changes she faces to form an understanding and acceptance of her body. In “Middlemen,” the narrator and her wealthier roommates seem to be attracted to each other, but she is quickly disappoind when she realizes her roommate just wants her body for the purpose of pleasing men. Pregnancy, the female body, abuse, sexuality—these deep and often terrifying aspects of women’s lives are beautifully portrayed in this collection of stories as Adelmann’s characters grapple with making sense of their world. —Emily Park

**The Hare.**
*By Melanie Finn.*

Rosie Monroe is an art student in New York in the 1980s, pursuing her dreams away from her small Massachusetts hometown. Bennett, an older man, sweeps her off her feet with his charm and cultured mannerisms. His affluent lifestyle dazzles Rosie, who feels awed that such a wealthy man is showing interest in her, and she quickly learns to adjust to his dominant old-world manners. However, as she falls in love and has a child with him, she soon sees past the facades that hide his nefarious cons. In the middle of the night, he takes her and their child from their glamorous estate to a rundown cabin in northern Vermont, abandoning her for long periods of time and forcing Rosie to fend for herself in the forest while raising their daughter on her own. When she finally takes matters into her own hands to break free from him, the consequences she faces become long-lasting. This thought-provoking literary thriller from Finn (*The Underneath*, 2018) brilliantly depicts the effects of patriarchy on women and their sense of duty to please men. This resilient heroine embodies the evolution of feminism in a male-dominant society, making this a poignant story for our time. —Emily Park

**How the One-Armed Sister Sweeps Her House.**
*By Cherie Jones.*

After a robbery gone wrong in Baxter Beach, Barbados, local Lala and her husband Adam are caught in a dangerous web of deceit and danger. The victims of the thieves are Peter and Mira, who reside in the Baxter Beach Mansions. Shortly following the incident, Lala and Adam’s newborn daughter’s lifeless body is found in the sand nearby. For both couples, the turn of events unravels a complicated weave of trauma, steeped in lust and legacy. Jones’s debut is a microscopio look into the lives of local Barbadians and the rich people who colonize their spaces. The pages are filled with the juxtapositions of wealth versus poverty, choice versus survival, and love versus abuse. Told from multiple perspectives, Jones debut novel provides readers with an arsenal of stories, which ultimately validates the reasoning behind the characters’ senseless choices. There is a rhythm to the writing and the words are often a poetic stream of movement. Jones is meticulous, giving a strong pulse to each perspective. The cinematic ending is sure to leave readers wanting more. —LaParis Hawkins
everyday lives that entertain, educate, and universally resonate. —JERRY HONG

The Narrowboat Summer.
By Anne Youngson.

If high-powered executive Eve, housewife Sally, and elderly canal dweller Anastasia had met in any other way, they likely wouldn’t have given each other a passing thought. But when Eve and Sally decide to rescue a dog making a terrible racket inside Anastasia’s canal boat, their lives are forever changed. Eve has just quit her job. Sally has just asked her husband for a divorce, and Anastasia desperately needs two people to pilot her boat up to Chester while she stays in Uxbridge for medical treatment. Eve and Sally get a crash course in driving a narrowboat, and all three women have a chance to step outside their normal lives for a few months. English novelist Youngson (Meet Me at the Museum, 2018) offers a window onto UK canal boaters, a tight-knit community with a shared understanding of the challenges and triumphs of life on the water. Fans of Jane Smiley and Hannah Mary McKinnon will enjoy Youngson’s immersive, lyrical account of the women’s narrowboat summer, especially the colorful characters they meet along their journey. —STÉPHANIE TURZA

We Run the Tides.
By Vendela Vida.

“I am a daring enigma,” states precocious, 13-year-old Eulabee as she gives us a tour of mid-1980s Sea Cliff, a tony San Francisco neighborhood with views of the Golden Gate Bridge, celebrities, houses with dark histories, fog, and a steep, rocky promontory separating two beaches that Eulabee and her best friend, Maria Fabiola, know how to scurry across between high tides. Eulabee’s family is not wealthy. Her city native father owns a gallery, her Swedish mother is a nurse, but Eulabee’s family is not wealthy. Her city native father owns a gallery, her Swedish mother is a nurse, but Eulabee, possessed of audacious integrity, refuses to go along with Maria’s increasingly dangerous fabrications. Eulabee is ostracized; Maria disappears. In a blink, Frankie has become “a blazing magnum opus.” —Publishers Weekly

Crime Fiction

Before She Disappeared.
By Lisa Gardner.

Vagabond investigator Frankie Elkin (think Reacher with the gift of gab over guns) lands in Boston’s rough-edged Mattapan neighborhood on a mission to find Angelique Badeau, a teenager who disappeared 11 months earlier. In a blink, Frankie has secured a bartending job at the neighborhood drinking hole, found an AA meeting, and pissed off the cops investigating Angelique’s disappearance. (They’re not buying her investigation as public service, and she’s not enlightening them about her need for redemption.) Frankie is sure that Angelique isn’t a runaway: she’s too close...
to her Aunt Guerline and her brother, Emmanuel. So Frankie pokes the soft spots in Angelique’s inner circle and finds that Angelique grew secretive after participating in a rec-center program where she befriended Livia Samedi, another missing Mattapan teen, whose gangland connections up the stakes. When Emmanuel reports that Angelique has left him a coded plea for help online, Frankie’s baggage-laden obsession pushes her straight into Mattapan’s underworld. It’s hard to tag just one stand-out element here, between the multidimensional portrayal of Mattapan’s Haitian expat community, Frankie’s humanizing demons and straightforward investigative technique, and a page-turning plot with all its ends tucked in unpredictably tight. Tense and immersive, Gardner’s latest (hopefully a series starter) is a sure bet both for readers drawn to gritty gumshoe fiction and for the growing legion of true-crime podcast fans. —Christine Tran


This short novel continues the origin story of Todd’s series hero, Bess Crawford, begun in The Maharani’s Pearls (2014). This time the focus is on the period before Bess became a battlefield nurse in WWII. The tale begins in 1899. An underage young man has enlisted in the British Army, in the regiment formerly commanded by Melinda Crawford’s late husband. Asked to evaluate the young man, Melinda winds up sending him to India, where her cousin Richard commands a regiment. The young man, Simon Brandon, becomes a close friend to Richard’s daughter, Bess. Readers of the Crawford series know that Simon is a recurring character and that he and Bess have a close bond that goes beyond friendship. Here we learn how they came together and how each of them began the journey to adulthood. Unlike many origin stories, which exist because the authors have run out of fresh ideas, this one adds new and important history to the Crawford saga, fleshing out the existing novels and adding new depth to our reading of them. For series fans, it’s a must-read. —David Pitt


This is the fourth Golden Age-style mystery (after The Mitford Scandal, 2020) to feature the six singular Mitford sisters and their ever-resourceful lady’s maid, Louisa. The year is now 1933, and newlywed Louisa, studying stenography and settling into life as Mrs. Guy Sullivan, is recruited by MI-5 to keep an eye on the two fascist-leaning Mitford sisters who have fallen under the spell of Adolf Hitler. Louisa escorts Diana and Unity, along with their mother, Lady Redesdale, on an elegant Mediterranean cruise. Louisa’s police-detective husband shows up to surprise her, but instead of enjoying a romantic tryst, they find themselves investigating a murder onboard a luxury cruise liner and a voyage that may very well be a round-trip. While Louisa struggles to keep a sulk ing Unity, unhappy to be thwarted in a budding romance with a Nazi SS officer, in line. Inspired by the larger-than-life Mitford family and a real-life murder, Fellowes delivers a ripping good read. Rich in detail, it moves steadily to its sad ending, leaving Louisa in possession of dark secrets that she will carry for the rest of her life. —Jane Murphy


Throughout the previous four novels in his Isaiah “IQ” Quintarelli series, Ide has displayed a rare ability to mix dark comedy and gut-churning drama (think Thomas Perry), sometimes leaning toward the former (IQ, 2016), other times the latter (Hi Five, 2020). Here he strikes the balance straight down the middle, juggling between Isaiah’s fraught attempt to break away from his peril-plagued career as a quixotic investigator and his best friend Dodson’s parallel effort to save his marriage by transforming himself from a hustler on the streets of East Long Beach to, of all things, a marketing trainee in the straight world. Ide sets us up to expect Dodson’s foray into button-down business culture to deliver the comedy, leaving all the gut-churning for Isaiah’s journey, which takes him to a small town in the woods near Lake Tahoe, where he finds not peace but more hapless souls in need of help (serial killers lurk). On the surface, our expectations are met in both cases, but mixmaster Ide’s compulsion to blend light and dark (Isaiah’s confrontation with the serial killers, while gruesome, takes the form of “a slapstick movie shot in a burning insane asylum”) affects the two plots in surprising ways, again producing an emotion-rich form of character-driven tragicomedy, but one in which peril forever loiters in the shallows. —Bill Ott


A shooting at a Florida school counts 20 wounded or dead. Among the students, but thankfully not among the victims, is Jack Swyteck’s daughter. When a fellow student (the son of a Muslim man) confesses to the shootings, Jack, a defense attorney, initially refuses to take his case. But then he’s persuaded to change his mind by an unlikely person: the parent of a child who died in the shootings. The Swyteck novels have always incorporated complex, sometimes controversial subjects, and this one tackles a tragically hot topic. School shootings have been in and out of the news for the past few years, and, to his credit, Grippando doesn’t sensationalize the issue. He presents an even-handed, intelligent discussion structured of course,
around a smartly plotted mystery. It should be noted, too, that the novel’s characters are fully realized and abundantly human, not the stick figures spouting talking points one finds in much hot-topic fiction. Even with nearly 30 books under his belt, Grippando shows no signs of falling into a rut. —David Pitt

The Woman outside My Door.
By Rachel Ryan.

Georgina tells herself that the fact that her seven-year-old son, Cody, has an imaginary friend is no big deal. Having just lost his grandmother, New Granny, starts leaving signs behind—candy wrappers, mysterious phone calls—does Georgina suspect that there could be something more sinister going on? Trying desperately to convince her husband, Georgina searches for tangible proof beyond her maternal instinct. What if New Granny isn’t imaginary at all? Or worse, what if Georgina is losing her mind (she has had mental problems before)? Heralded by Georgina’s delve into Cody’s imaginary world, first-time-author Ryan draws the reader into not only Georgina’s terrifying journey to save her son, but also her marriage and her sanity. Georgina is a fierce, loyal narrator, and the reader won’t be able to resist rooting for her success. Seasoned mystery lovers will recognize similarities to B. A. Paris’ The Breakdown (2017), Mary Kubica’s The Other Mrs. (2020), and A. J. Finn’s The Woman in the Window (2018).

—Carmen Clark

Historical Fiction

Eternal.
By Lisa Scottoline.

Scottoline conjures atmosphere and culture in lush landscapes and city scenes and delectable culinary descriptions. This nuanced take on WWII Italy offers a variety of perspectives, but at its heart, this is a love story, with heroes lost being warmly remembered and love conquering all. —Bethany Latham

HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: The hook is how best-selling crime writer Scottoline successfully changes course in a coming-of-age WWII love story that will entrance fans and newcomers alike.

YA: YAs will be struck by the struggles of teenage friends as their lives are overwhelmed by world events. BL.

The Gates of Athens.
By Conn Iggulden.

This rousing series opener brings 10 pivotal years in ancient Greek history to energetic life. Spanning from the Battle of Marathon in 490 BCE to the Spartans’ valiant stand at the Battle of Thermopylae, the story moves nimbly among the perspectives of Athenian leaders, primarily the politician and general Xanthippus, plus allies and Persian foes. A celebrated historical adventure writer, Iggulden (The Falcon of Sparta, 2019) illustrates both large-scale military maneuvers and minute details, from close-up views of bronze-armored Greek soldiers in formation to fearsome scenes of the immense Persian fleet, bent on destroying Athens. The intervening decade between major battles in the ongoing Greco-Persian Wars holds equal fascination as Athens is shaken by infighting that divides its statesmen. These inner political workings are vividly personified via courageous, intelligent, well-rounded characters. Iggulden has impressive command of period terminology and largely follows the historical record, filling in gaps with well-thought-out reasoning. This is also an inspiring read about the value of democracy, whose birthplace was classical Athens, and how people fought hard and long to preserve it for posterity. —Sarah Johnson

The Girl from the Channel Islands.
By Jenny Lecoat.

Hedy Bercu is scraping by, like the other residents of the Channel Island of Jersey in 1940. Her life has extra strain because she is Austrian and Jewish. Despite her attempts to lie low, she catches the eye of Lieutenant Kurt Neumann, part of the Nazi occupying forces. When Hedy is nearly caught stealing gas rations, Kurt takes the fall and the attraction becomes reluctantly mutual. As supplies are cut off from Jersey and the occupation intensifies, Kurt learns the truth about the deportation of Jews across Europe, and persuades Dorothea, the wife of Hedy’s friend Anton, who has been drafted into the German army, to keep Hedy safe. Lecoat’s debut is based on true events, which will make readers even more curious about the back-story and motivations of Hedy, Kurt, and the somewhat enigmatic Dorothea. The unique Channel Island setting may intrigue readers of WWII-set women’s fiction, especially those who prefer a relatively gentle take on a harsh, salacious story line, as in Susan Meissner’s The Last Year of the War (2019). —Susan Maguire

HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: With a 250K print run and the attendant marketing plan, count on curiosity about this debut.

A Splendid Ruin.
By Megan Chance.

In 1904, May Kimble’s mother dies suddenly, leaving her penniless until she is invited to San Francisco to live with her mother’s estranged sister. May knows nothing of the family, but she finds a warm welcome from her uncle and her cousin Goldie, though she is told that her Aunt Florence is too ill to see people. The size of the Nob Hill mansion overwhelms May, but it also puzzles her because half of the house is empty. Then she finds Florence, drugged with laudanum and begging May to flee the house. Meanwhile, Goldie introduces May to San Francisco society, and though she is enthralled with this new life, she suspects she is being manipulated. She becomes further apprehensive when Shin, the Chinese maid, warns her to be wary of her newfound family. May must use her wits to survive the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, and to avenge herself and find her true identity. With a fascinating look at 1900s San Francisco, this historical gothic features a feisty woman-in-peril and a fast-paced story that will keep the reader turning pages. —Merle Jacob

Yellow Wife.
By Sadeqa Johnson.

Johnson (And Then There Was Me, 2017) follows the life of an enslaved woman, Pheby Delores Brown, born on a plantation in Charles City, Virginia. She is afforded the privileges of learning to read and write and playing the piano, and the promise of freedom on her eighteenth birthday. After a sequence of unfortunate events, however Pheby is sold up north to Richmond. Her master, who owns a jail known as Devil’s Half-Acre, where the enslaved are kept in inhume living conditions and severely beaten, takes her in as his wife. Pheby has given up hope of freedom and decides to barter her companionship for a better life for her children. She also battles her conscience as she aids in the preparation of the enslaved to be sold. Johnson writes with imagery so vivid that it’s impossible to look away, even during gut-wrenching moments. Readers will be engulfed in captivating suspense, rooting for the protagonist and her mishief, in hopes that it will deliver her from the evils of slavery. —LaPatris Hawkins

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**Romance**

**A Dance in Donegal.**
By Jennifer Deibel.

Moira Doherty may have made the biggest mistake of her life. Moira thought she was doing the right thing by honoring her late mother’s wish that she travel to Ireland to become the new teacher in Ballylann, the place where her mother was born and grew up. Unfortunately, from the moment Moira arrives, she finds life in the small seaside village a challenge, especially given the less than friendly welcome she receives from many of the locals. However, with the help of some new friends, including handsome Thatcher Sean McFadden, she gradually finds herself adapting. But will an old family secret destroy the new life Moira is carefully building for herself in Ballylann? Deibel’s exhilaratingly executed debut is a touching tale of love and forgiveness that will an old family secret destroy the new life Moira thought was hers.

**Right Swipe.**
By Alisha Rai.

Rai’s delightful romance introduces another rising romance star. —
a family’s approval, but is not afraid to follow her heart. She finds herself swarmed by a mischievous cast of minor characters. Dev is raising his orphaned niece, while sorting his mixed feelings about his deceased brother. Jia wants her family’s approval, but is not afraid to follow her instincts and heart. Another win from this rising romance star. —John Charles

**First Comes Like.**
By Arlem Hawks.

Natchez Trace Park Ranger Emma is stunned when shots are fired at her as she returns to her office one night to grab a file. She is further upset when her ex-fiancé Sam, the law enforcement district ranger, will be working with her on the ensuing investigation. Emma was preparing to inventory a historical slave burial site when one of the graves was robbed. To make things worse, the DNA on a remaining bone fragment links to Emma. Her twin brother has been missing for years, and Emma was one of the last people to talk to him. The records for her brother’s case have disappeared, and Emma, Sam, and her parents are determined to finally find out what happened, an effort complicated by the fact that Emma is in danger from a threatening stalker. Emma and Sam must work through both these cases and their lingering feelings. Deepened by Bradley’s fascinating illumination of the park system, this smart, well-written tale of romantic suspense follows Standoff (2020) in a unique series that will appeal to fans of Nevada Barr. —Amy Alessio

**Obsession.**
By Patricia Bradley.

Emma and Sam must work through both these cases and their lingering feelings. Deepened by Bradley’s fascinating illumination of the park system, this smart, well-written tale of romantic suspense follows Standoff (2020) in a unique series that will appeal to fans of Nevada Barr. —Amy Alessio

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**Georgana’s Secret.**

By Arlem Hawks.

Lientenant Dominic Peyton doesn’t need a wife because he is already married to the sea. At least that is what Dominic tells his mother every time she tries to find him a suitable spouse. One thing Dominic can do for his mother is to discreetly inquire about Georgana Woodall, the currently absent-from-society daughter of a dear, recently deceased friend of his mother’s, since Dominic’s new captain is none other than Georgana’s father, Alfred Woodall. Once on board the HMS Deborah, however, Dominic finds the taciturn captain reluctant to engage in conversation about anything, including his cabin boy, George Taylor. As Dominic attempts to help the harassed, seemingly fish-out-of-water George adapt to life at sea, he slowly realizes that the answer to his question about Georgana’s whereabouts is right before his eyes. Now Dominic must figure out how to help keep “George” and her secret safe in an environment inhospitable to women. Fans of sweet love stories as well as readers who fondly remember those marvelous old traditional Signet Regencies will quickly succumb to the siren song of Hawks’ expertly crafted novel, which delivers the perfect blend of Jane Austen–smart romance and Patricia O’Brien–flavored seafaring adventure. —John Charles

**S/Fantasy & Horror**

**Burn, Beautiful Soul.**
By William J. Donahue.

Even Hell, with its collections of tortures and assortments of flame, can get dull after a while. So demon Basil leaves his realm and heads to fresher climes, the Cornhusker State of Nebraska. There, this gigantic hellion with horns and hooves lands a job in advertising and starts to build relationships with the locals. But not all want to give their new neighbor a friendly welcome: a band of bikers and the town’s resident religious fundamentalist stand ready to make Basil’s new life on Earth a living hell. The novel is strongest when playing on the absurdity of its central premise: a demon ginning up slogans for ag-state clients yields some funny moments (although there are repeated examples of rape and bathroom humor that might put off some readers). The transitions to serious scenes of violence are a little strained by comparison, but the creative plotting and plentiful humor make for an enjoyable work of satire.

—Craig Lefteroff

**The Dead Hours of Night.**
By Lisa Tuttle.

After the success of their collection of biographies of female horror writers (Monster, She Wrote, 2019), Lisa Kröger and Melanie R. Anderson began releasing a series of new books by these forgotten creators. This collection of twelve stories that were originally published in magazines and anthologies between 1980 and 2017 includes an introduction by Kröger, and each story is prefaced by new notes from Tuttle herself. The tales are intense and character-driven, exploring women’s lives and realities, and the inherent terror therein. Filled with complicated, fully realized women—not just “final girls”—Tuttle’s captivating protagonists narrate dark, unsettling stories with a direct tone, immediately drawing readers into their weird worlds, immersing them in the dread until the inevitable, emphatic last line that leaves readers gasping, yet eager to dive back into the next story and experience it all over again. These dark emotions gloriously build throughout the collection, never disappointing. Tuttle was obviously impacted by the groundbreaking work of Shirley Jackson, but it is her influence, ringing loud and clear, on the award-winning work of authors like Carmen Maria Machado, Elizabeth McCracken, and Karen Russell that will finally lead grateful readers back to her.

—Deby Spratford

**Dealbreaker.**

By L. X. Beckett.

Set in the twenty-second century, the second book of Beckett’s post-cyberpunk space opera (after Gamechanger, 2019) finds pilot Frankie Barnes and her pack family neck-deep in conspiracy, sabotage, and political intrigue as they work to open interstellar space travel based on advanced alien technology. The Exemplar races originally wanted to take
over Earth, but a deal was struck called the Bootstrap Project, which allowed humanity to reverse engineer their technology in order to participate in interstellar trade. Beckett crafts an intricate world in which there is no privacy, social media is capital, and human or AI consciousness can be transferred into new “printed” bodies. The narrative is quite unique: the story is strewn with hashtags and trademarks that emphasize a world driven by greed, power, and the importance of trending. Amid the harrowing adventure is a good bit of humor, as well as speculation on the future of gender identity, family, and the evolution of AI. This story will appeal to readers who want to explore the next iteration of cyberpunk or crave an intricate and modern space opera.
—Craig Clark

Doors of Sleep.
By Tim Pratt.

When he was nine, Marshall Barton was kidnapped and set upon a barrel in front of his father’s castle with a noose around his neck. When his father refused to spare him, King Gervaise took back Ransom—a nickname given by Claire, also a royal hostage. When Gervaise dies, Ransom is sent off to Lord Kinghorn to learn to be a knight. As he trains, Ransom hears the sound of the water of Kingfountain’s falls; it gives him the strength and endurance to win every battle. His success leads him to become a knight to the eldest son of Devon Argentine, who deposed Gervaise, and his mysterious power is as much a curse as it is a boon. Each chapter begins with excerpts of Claire’s diary, which tracks the romance-from-a-distance that grows between them. Wheeler (The Buried World, 2020) adds elements of Arthurian legend to the start of the First Argentine Series and, much like David Drake did with The Spark (2017), serves up an irresistible, great-hearted hero and a woman with the patience he deserves, along with splendid palace intrigues and battles. —Don Vicha

Red Gear 9.
By Matt Betts.

The V-2 rocket. Operation Paperclip. The Space Race. Global Warming. One of these is not like the others, except in Neuvel’s latest (after The Test, 2019), the first in his Take Them to the Stars series. Real historical figures and events combine over millennia as a hundred generations of mother-daughter research teams work to master manned space flight in order to escape an ancient prophesied doom. The women use espionage, coercion, and even violence to achieve their goal, and are constantly on the run from rival groups of homicidal male siblings. The brothers, always just behind but creeping ever closer, will do anything to keep each generation of ladies from success. The short sentences and chapters and frantic action sequences complement the mothers’ growing concern over carbon dioxide accumulation. The research of the 99th mother and her daughter, Mia, indicates life on the planet could end before the human race reaches outer space. This commentary on survival instincts, violence, reprehensible deals, and the toll that progress can take on people’s lives and souls will appeal to fans of provocative science fiction thrillers with well-developed characters. —Lucy Lockley

The Witch’s Heart.
By Genevieve Gornichec.

“Long ago, when the gods were young and Asgard was new, there came a witch from the edge of the worlds.” Thus begins Gornichec’s debut, a feminist reimagining of the Norse myths surrounding Ragnarök. Angrboda, a sorceress with the gift of foresight, is incredibly old and hard to kill, but barely survives Odin’s wrath at her refusal to share any knowledge of the future. She is befriended by Loki who returns her speared heart, left behind on a smoking pyre during the Civil War. The reality of the chewer threat has been made clear to everyone in the countryside. Reeves is a captive and imprisoned spy, only knew the forthcoming nuptials, Delly becomes attracted to one of the guardsians and is delighted to find her equally interested in return. Things are looking up for the charming swindler until she begins to suspect someone in their party is out to commit murder. Clever romantic banter, an intricate, Cockney dialect, monstrous mechanical spiders, and an undead wizardly rat named Buttons will have readers clamoring for more of this enchanting world. —Lucy Lockley

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Older Readers

Can’t Stop Won’t Stop (Young Adult Edition): A Hip-Hop History. By Jeff Chang and Dave Cook.

This engrossing, engaging account bills itself as a history of hip-hop, but it’s so much more. Divided into four roughly equal, chronological sections beginning in 1969 and spanning into 2020, the book reviews social and political history in light of the myriad individuals and influences that created this vibrant culture. East Coast, West Coast, Black lives, gang wars, civil unrest—all are framed within the context of how they influenced, and were influenced by, the evolving hip-hop scene. Companies blacklisted artists and cancelled contracts, album releases were delayed, and songs were censored, all in testimony to the growing power of this gloriously defiant art form that gave voice to marginalized populations. This young adult version is an update to the 2005 adult edition, and terms that are generally considered to be offensive have been removed. There are also exhortations for young people to work together for positive change, beginning with DJ Kool Herc’s introduction and carrying through to the final chapter, “Black Lives Matter.” There’s new material about the current generation of women rappers and their body-positivity messaging, the #MeToo movement, and the impact of COVID-19 on the hip-hop community. The book ends with age-appropriate discussion questions that will help young readers grasp the tremendous influence hip-hop has had on current society. —Kathleen McBroom


Female-health podcaster Stynes and adolescent-health specialist Kang team up in this comprehensive guide to menstruation. For tweens or teens still waiting to get their period, they begin with basics, from what it means to expect. A chapter entitled “Period Challenges,” such as how to handle swimming or living with just a dad, offers even more tips. Although the book targets cisgender girls, the authors also address menstruation in transgender boys. A helpful list of period resources rounds out the text. Empowering young people with knowledge, this guide is welcome indeed. —Angela Leeper

Middle Readers

50 Space Missions That Changed the World. By John A. Read.

This Canadian publication takes an international approach to presenting 50 endeavors that have advanced space exploration. The front matter briefly introduces basic principles of rocket science and career paths before seven roughly chronological chapters describe various missions, each getting its own two-page spread. Arresting, often full-page photos are set off by detailed caption bubbles, and brief paragraphs provide additional details. While the U.S. is certainly well represented, it’s refreshing to see other programs given due recognition (including Mir cosmonauts representing Syria, Bulgaria, Afghanistan, France, Japan, Costa Rica, Australia, and Peru, among other countries). The missions are presented in logical order, often building on each other, and show how early competition has evolved into international cooperation. The first SpaceX reusable-booster landing in 2015 is the last event, and the book ends with a consideration of future possibilities, a glossary, and a list of websites. This will be a solid pick for STEM collections, and there’s a good chance that even authoritative young astronauts will learn something new. —Kathleen McBroom


Patterned collage illustrations with an emphasis on geometric shapes create the backdrop for this picture-book biography of pop and street artist Keith Haring. Beginning with a young Haring, who knew he wanted to be an artist when he grew up, the descriptive text traces his early influences and the emergence of his own style through

New York City’s subway graffiti, professional paintings and sculptures around the world, and his Pop Shop store. Negley depicts Haring’s distinctive iconography in images of the artist’s imagination flowing across the page, as well as through representations of his actual artwork. Brown complements the energetic artwork with active verbs in bold text and the refrain, “Art is life. Life is art,” which sums up Haring’s personal philosophy for making art accessible. She does not mention the artist’s sexual orientation and simply states that he died in 1990, when he was just 31 years old. An author’s note, however, provides further details, including more of Haring’s influences and friendships, his work with children, and his AIDS diagnosis. A joyful tribute to an enduring artist. —Angela Leeper

Claudette Colvin. By Lesa Cline-Ransome. Illus. by Gillian Flint.

Meet Claudette Colvin, whose refusal to give up her seat on a segregated city bus was an early sign that Black residents of Montgomery, Alabama, would use civil disobedience in the face of injustice. Born in 1939, Colvin was raised by her aunt and uncle in a loving, religious household. In her segregated high school, she learned about African countries, Black history, and civil rights. And in 1955, police dragged 15-year-old Claudette from her bus seat and threw her in jail. She was charged and found guilty. Her testimony in the appeals court helped bring about the Montgomery bus boycott, sparked by Rosa Parks’ similar act of nonviolent resistance later that year. An appended section suggests five ways that readers can learn more about their rights. Cline-Ransome offers a well-balanced and very readable account of Colvin’s family life, her values, and her reasons for resisting unjust laws. Illustrations, not seen in final form, appear on about half the pages. From the She Persisted biography series, here’s an engaging introduction to a young civil rights hero. —Carolyn Phelan

Women in Focus: The 19th in 2020

Exploring the White House: Inside America’s Most Famous Home. By Kate Anderson Brower.

In preparing this very readable introduction to the White House, Brower drew on her experiences as a former White House correspondent and her interviews and research for The Residence (2015) and First Women (2016), both written for adults. Arranged thematically rather than chronologically, the book includes chapters on topics such as the house itself, the permanent staff members, the presidents’ children, and the Secret Service. The book offers some surprising information and many anecdotes
about the house and its residents, particularly during the last 60 years. Even the lists of the presidents’ favorite foods and the presidents’ and First Ladies’ Secret Service code names are enjoyable. But while Brower acknowledges some difficult events, such as Kennedy’s assassination and Nixon’s resignation, she avoids controversy, preferring to create a bland, pleasant portrayal of White House residents and staff. The occasional black-and-white illustrations include photos of residents and staff, maps of the building and grounds, and a small vignette in each chapter heading. A limited but informative behind-the-scenes view of what happens at the White House. —Carolyn Phelan

Nicky and Vera: A Quiet Hero of the Holocaust and the Children He Rescued.
By Peter Sís. Illus. by the author.

In 1938, British banker Nicky Winton cancelled a ski trip to meet a friend in Prague. Aware that WWII was looming and that England was accepting child refugees, he set to work arranging for the transport of as many threatened children as possible. Between March and September 1939, when Hitler invaded Poland, eight trains rescued 669 children, including 10-year-old Vera Diamantova. Afterward, Winton told no one of his work until 1988, when his wife discovered records of the transports. Once again Sís highlights a story from his native Czechoslovakia, profiling a man who saw a need and quietly did what he could to right a wrong. The inclusion of Vera’s story, based on her memoir and interviews, helps to personalize this account for younger readers, and details from her diaries are incorporated into the narrative. As always, Sís’ intricate artwork delights. Unique perspectives (including aerial), fanciful figures (Vera’s parents flying), country outlines that become personified, and characters whose silhouettes depict their essences are all used to great effect, as are the sequential panels that depict important events in a character’s life. Text is carefully sized and placed, in effect producing primary and secondary narratives. Appended with extensive author notes and sources, Sís’ latest reminds readers that real heroes are often quiet and unassuming. —Kay Weisman

Send a Girl! The True Story of How Women Joined the FDNY.
By Jessica M. Rinker. Illus. by Meg Hunt.

In the 1970s, firefighting was firmly closed to women, and in this expressively illustrated picture book, Rinker (Gloria Takes a Stand, 2019) tells the story of Brenda Berkman, a former law student who fought to change that. When Berkman found that the New York Fire Department’s (FDNY) physical test was unrelated to the job, and when women were given men’s equipment that was too big and got in the way, she had the test changed and powered through the equipment issue. Once in the job, she formed United Women Firefighters and became an FDNY chief. This gratifying story is told in cheerful, accessible, inclusive language—firefighting is not described as “men’s work,” for example, but as a job “men usually did.” Engaging, realistic illustrations of Berkman and her colleagues, created in India ink and black-and-gray acrylics with digital coloring, complement the positive tone of the text. Back matter includes details about Berkman and her perseverance and lists several sources for readers who want to investigate further. Recommended for both school and public library shelves.—Housetta Verna

Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre.
By Carole Boston Weatherford. Illus. by Floyd Cooper.

“Once upon a time in Tulsa, there was a community called Greenwood.” This Black
community was rich in money, love, and culture. So much so that white people searched for any reason possible to tear that community down. This tragic, painful event in American history calls into question notions of freedom, equality, and opportunity ostensibly promised to Black Americans following the Emancipation Proclamation, and it’s particularly pertinent in the current sociopolitical landscape, which is throwing a spotlight on the persistence of systemic racism in America. Weatherford draws on the folktales to encourage a “once upon a time” to set a scene that feels far away and removed from our present reality, while Cooper’s soft strokes of muted greens and sepia browns capture the event in a haze of both joy and mourning for the beauty of what Black Tulsa was. Unlike many historical picture books, Weatherford’s doesn’t shy away from naming white people as the perpetrators. This will cause obvious discomfort for some but will be the catalyst for conversation and change if read with eyes toward justice. Included are author’s and illustrator’s notes that explore their personal connections to the Tulsa Race Massacre in addition to photographs of Greenwood at the time of the massacre and today. Ideal for classroom libraries and a deeper study of American history, this title is a must-have for those seeking the painful and complete truth.

—Melanie Marshall

Wild Vet Adventures: Saving Animals around the World with Dr. Gabby Wild

By Gabby Wild


Dr. Gabby Wild is a wild animal veterinarian who travels all over the world to treat a multitude of different animals, from dolphins, turtles, snakes, and bears to wolves, monkeys, spiders, and elephants. In fact, she says getting to know one particular baby elephant was what got her interested in becoming a vet in the first place. The book tracks her travels on six of the seven continents, beginning with South America and ending with North America. For each continent, she showcases over 80 of its wildlife species, most of which are endangered. Besides basic facts about habitat, diet, and dangers, she describes why she has been asked to treat the animal. Each two-page spread is similarly laid out, with a large heading, color photographs, and brightly colored text or photo insets on a solid background. Pages are busy, and font sizes and colors vary, though the instances where white text is printed on bright yellow or orange backgrounds can prove challenging to read. Charts, graphs, and maps further enhance this offering.

—J. B. Petty

Young Animals! Here We Grow.

By Shelley Rotner


Large, colorful photographs and simple text show the various changes that animals go through from birth to adulthood. Readers will be able to compare similarities and differences between animals at various stages of growth, especially those that share similar stages, such as egg and hatching, but develop into completely different beings in their adult stages. The vast majority of spreads are dedicated to the vibrant photography, often laying out multiple images in parallel, showing each step within a stage of physical development. Included here are mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and insects, with the final spread depicting a human’s growth from infant to child. Information on life cycles and breeds accompanies the text, along with a glossary of terms. A strong choice for beginners reading independently or aloud with a parent, for storytimes, and for introducing the youngest readers to life cycles and animal growth.

—Selenia Paz


By Kekla Magoon. Illus. by Laura Freeman.


This informative picture-book biography of Thurgood Marshall begins with his youth in Baltimore, where his family discussed issues such as segregation at the dinner table. Enjoying the challenge and camaraderie of the high-school debate team, he became a persuasive speaker, and he later began a successful career as an attorney working with others to break down barriers affecting minority citizens of all ages. After winning many notable civil rights cases, including Brown v. Board of Education, he became the first Black American to be appointed U.S. Solicitor General and Supreme Court Justice. While concisely telling the story of Marshall’s life and his professional milestones, Magoon emphasizes one of his greatest strengths: his ability to collaborate with others working toward a common goal. Freeman’s well-structured digital artwork uses color effectively and sometimes approaches subjects unconventionally. In one scene, she uses seven images of Marshall (at different ages, wearing different suits) standing to argue significant Supreme Court cases. A handsome, well-organized account of Marshall’s life and work.

—Carolyn Phelan

The Three Water Drop Brothers.

By Lee Unn-Hee. Illus. by Yoon Mi-sook. Tr. by Asuka Minamoto.


This creative reinterpretation of the water cycle takes the perspective of three droplets of water. The personified droplets have various adventures. Their ocean adventures begin long ago in the prehistoric period, when “trilobites crept across the sea floor, clad in fancy armor.” . . . Then, a fish called the coelacanth appeared.” At this time, the three droplets go their separate ways. The first droplet, or oldest brother, heads for the ocean’s surface, where he evaporates, encounters dinosaurs and volcanoes, and eventually becomes part of a glacier. The second droplet, or middle brother, burrows deep into the earth, eventually helping to form a cave. The third and final droplet, or youngest brother, waters the grass that is eaten by a cow. He becomes part of the cow’s milk, is drunk by a young child, and exits the child’s body as urine. Stylized illustrations help give the brothers personality and bring their adventures to life. By the end, the three brothers are reunited in the ocean and ready to continue their water-cycle adventures.

—Miriam Aronin

Walking toward Peace: The True Story of a Brave Woman Called Peace Pilgrim.

By Kathleen Krull. Illus. by Annie Bowler.


Imagine walking for 28 years. Crisscrossing the U.S. on foot, carrying only the bare essentials, talking to people about peace. This is how a remarkable woman who went by the name of Peace Pilgrim—convinced that if we all believed in peace as a way of life, there would be no more war—devoted her life to changing the world in the only way she knew how. Krull (The Only Woman in the Photo, 2020), the acclaimed and prolific biographer, does not disappoint with her latest. The narrative is sufficiently detailed to capture the motivation and spirit of Peace Pilgrim and the people she met along her walks, leaving the reader wanting to know more. The even, steady pacing is perfectly complemented by Bowler’s crisp illustrations, which capture the serenity, gravity, and joy of Peace Pilgrim’s mission. Astute readers will notice that Peace Pilgrim is always surrounded by ethereal, feathery shapes and will wonder at their symbolism. There is much to admire about Peace Pilgrim’s life, particularly her quiet determination and resilience—and her faith in humankind, which bears out. Strangers give her shelter, food, supplies, and company, and they are as much a part of this book as she is—which is precisely the point. Pair with Jennifer Thermes’ Grandma Gatewood Hikes the Appalachian Trail (2018).

—Amina Chaudhri

Inspired by the college admissions bribery scandal that hit headlines early in 2019, Buxbaum (Hope and Other Punchlines, 2019) crafts the story of Chloe Berringer, eldest daughter of a beloved sitcom actress. A senior in high school, Chloe struggled through her college applications, never Harvard-bound like her best friend and boyfriend. Still, an acceptance letter to Southern California College, one of her reach schools, means that the only worry Chloe has now is what to wear to prom. But that’s before the FBI knocks on her door with an arrest warrant for her mom and a scandal that will change Chloe’s life forever. Buxbaum walks a fine line as she borrows details from true events in order to develop Chloe’s fictional experiences. And while Chloe is not an unsympathetic figure, Buxbaum takes care to depict how, consciously or not, she was complicit in her parents’ crimes, telling the story in alternating then-and-now chapters that show Chloe acknowledging the privileges she has in a rigged system. An absorbing and topical novel, tailor-made for discussion groups. —Maggie Reagan


Fifteen-year-old RJ’s summer is going to be fully evil, predicts his best friend Manny’s older brother. They demand that RJ have been using the place as a den. They demand that RJ deface the house to drive the new resident away, that he’s a gifted storyteller; indeed, the book and when that doesn’t work, RJ is instructed to walk a fine line as she borrows details from that will change Chloe’s life forever. Buxbaum —Reinhardts Suarez HIGH DEMAND BACKSTORY: He’s won the National Book Award, and he’s at home on the New York Times best-seller list. The publisher’s robust marketing campaign should catch the attention of any reader not already itching to get their hands on this.


WWSD becomes queer high-school freshman Huck’s guiding acronym when his favorite teacher, Ms. Greigore, gives him a copy of The Complete Adventures of Sherlock Holmes. Wouldn’t you know it, soon thereafter Huck is presented with a puzzling mystery of his own and wonders, What Would Sherlock Do? The mystery involves his crush, Win, who has applied for admission to Hero High, Huck’s exclusive private school. The plot thickens when it appears that Win has sent a letter withdrawing his application, and then Win’s iLive page starts containing cruel, snarky remarks about friends. Win denies any involvement, maintaining that the letter and posts are forgeries. Only stalwart Huck believes him and vows to solve the puzzle of this whodunit. The latest in Schmidt’s popular Bookish Boyfriends series is a generally lighthearted romance with appealing characters and a rather mild mystery that takes a backseat to the boys’ burgeoning relationship. Do they ultimately get together? WWSS (What Would Sherlock Say)? Elementary, my dear Watson. —Michael Cart


When Greek American Leo is sent by his aaloof father to self-defense class, his anxiety and gentle demeanor divert him instead into the neighboring hot-yoga class. There, he chronicles his junior year in a journal, through which he shares his struggles with anxiety and isolation—due in part to his mother’s and grandmother’s deaths. As Leo improves through yoga, he connects with also-Greek Evey, whose great-great-grandfather cursed his great-great-grandfather. Initially cold and calculating, she blackmails artistic Leo into helping her exact revenge on the ex-boyfriend who humiliated her, but as the stakes rise, the two teens are drawn into a love of their own. Despite the trappings of a teen romance and high-school drama, Walton’s (Words on Bathroom Walls, 2017) personal story focuses on the internal life of Leo, whose voice and character prove to be completely endearing. The epistolary form demands some suspension of disbelief, but readers won’t mind, as it offers a quick pace and easy access into this character-driven exploration of mental health through friendship, family, and art. —Ronny Khuri
her face, a fear of driving, and a thirst for uncovering—and writing—the truth. When The Unity Project intrudes upon her life in a shockingly violent way, Lo seizes the chance to look into the darkest of her suspicions and discover what’s happened to her sister during the years when she was missing. But to get close to the Project, she’ll have to get close to Lev Warren, and once she enters his orbit, she won’t leave unchanged. Summers follows up her smash hit Sadie (2018) with a deeply disconcerting investigative thriller that seems assuming but worms under the skin and into the mind. Bit by bit, she unsnaps the threads of her story—Lo narrating in the present, flashes of Be’s history revealed in the past—until, eventually, the brutally tense beginning gives way to the frenzied end. Winding questions of faith and sacrifice into an already fibrous plot, Summers presents a rich offering that lingers even as it shocks. —Maggie Reagan

HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: If All the Rage (2015) put Summers on the map, Sadie shot her into the stratosphere. This latest, her tightest yet, delivers on every promise.

A Sky beyond the Storm.
By Sabaa Tahir.

At last, the fourth and final volume (alas!) of Tahir’s epic An Ember in the Ashes cycle has arrived. Happily, it finds the gang all here: Laia, Alia and Karis flee Eratia to find Matthias and uncover Alix’s purpose. Victoria’s dual point-of-view fantasy debut is rich with empathy and self-discovery, leading readers from Karis’ quiet thoughts to Alix’s actions, which, despite being an automaton, are irrefutably human. It’s rare to find a YA novel without some kind of romance component, but asexual Karis’ journey is engrossing enough to drive the story forward. Though with automatons, rune magic, and even pirates at its helm, this standalone suffers from a lack of concentration, its redemption lies in the observations about the human condition and independence underscoring the plot. —Mahjabeen Syed

We Free the Stars.
By Hafsah Faizal.

Following their treacherous journey in 2019’s We Hunt the Flame, Zafira and Nasir must finally return the hearts of the ancient Sisters to the kingdom’s minarets in order to restore magic to Arawiya—but their time is cut short by the return of the Lion of the Night, striking fear across the land. In this phenomenal conclusion to the Sands of Arawiya duology, the once-tentative allies of the zumra—led by Zafira and Nasir after being thrown together in pursuit of a common goal—have their new bond put to the test by shocking betrayals and difficult sacrifices. Faizal explores the relationships within the group by pushing each member to the brink with guilt and grief, and before finally facing the Lion, Zafira and Nasir must face the inner turmoil within themselves. In the end, each achingly raw character arc is fully realized, delivering a satisfying close to the zumra’s story. Faizal’s craft continues to evolve as she demonstrates a facility with language and literary technique, drawing readers into a fantasy world and into the lives of characters that feel impressively real. Moments of humor and edge-of-your-seat action easily balance the book’s dark, tragic depths, creating a memorable story at the height of the fantasy genre. —Anna Hage

What She Found in the Woods.
By Josephine Angelini.

Diagnosed with schizophrenia and surrounded by shallow and disloyal friends, Magdalena ends up the center of controversy at her New York private school after she is linked to the death of a young girl. After spending time in a mental health facility, she is sent to Washington to spend time with her grandparents among new surroundings. Unable to escape her traumatic past, Magdalena tries to find comfort and solace in new friends and in Bo, the boy she met in the woods. When a body is found mutilated near the river, Magdalena begins to question the people around her—Bo, her new friends, volunteers at the rehab facility where she now works—and even herself. The unreliable narration will keep readers wondering if Magdalena knows more than she’s letting on. Angelini (Trial by Fire, 2014) weaves an entertaining narrative that explores mental health, trust, betrayal, friendship, and the ways in which whiteness and privilege shape the narrative of substance abuse. A fascinating, mind-bending thrill ride. —Rob Bittner

Wider than the Sky.
By Katherine Rothschild.

Change comes suddenly to the lives of 16-year-old Sabine and her identical twin sister, Blythe, when their father dies unexpectedly, prompting their mother and a strange man named Charlie to move the girls to the small town of Thornewood. There they will live in a dilapidated mansion, half of which had been owned by their dad and half by Charlie, who, it is revealed (spoiler alert), was the lover of their father, who was bisexual and polyamorous. Meanwhile, Sabine has met and quickly fallen in love with Kai, a Hawaiian boy in her class. But there’s a complication: Sabine’s new friend, Emma, is in love with Kai, too, and feels she has a previous claim on his heart. Rothschild’s first novel is accomplished and nicely plot-rich with some interesting quirks, chief among them being Sabine’s deep-rooted love for Emily Dickinson’s poetry and her compelling need to recite it. Hopefully readers will be inspired to investigate Dickinson’s timeless work on their own. —Michael Cart

Middle Readers

365 Days to Alaska.
By Cathy Carr.

Rigel’s world is turned upside down when her parents decide to split up and she learns that she, her mother, and sisters will be trading their life in the Alaska Bush for a sober existence in Connecticut. Before leaving, her father promises she’ll be able to return to him after a year, but as time passes by, that
promise seems less and less likely. But she gradually makes friends and starts to learn to enjoy herself in a place she was determined to hate—for better or for worse, life goes on. Carr’s heartfelt debut features classic middle-school problems, like dodging mean kids, as well as Rigel’s vivid feelings of displacement and deep love for nature. Though the tween spends a lot of time comparing her new home with her beloved Alaska, she eventually gets enough perspective to find true appreciation for her new surroundings. The ending is hopeful at all angles, satisfyingly wrapping up each little plot point. Hand this thoughtful novel to nature-loving readers who like character-driven stories about family. —Kristina Pino

Amina’s Song.
By Hena Khan.

After Amina’s monthlong trip to Pakistan with her family, she finds it difficult to leave her ancestral country behind, feeling that she is somehow losing an important part of herself and suddenly less certain about who she is. Back home, Amina tries to make sense of these feelings, and when she attempts to share them with her friends, she begins to wonder if they, too, are growing away from her. As Amina comes to better understand her friends, she finds a way to share the beauty of Pakistan with her classmates and to work together with those around her to help others in the community. Along with a new friend, Amina uses her beautiful voice to share her love of both Pakistan and America with others, helping those just like her who may feel part of two beautiful worlds. Revisiting Amina’s world (Amina’s Voice, 2017) is, in a way, similar to Amina’s own experience visiting Pakistan—readers will experience the joy of family, along with the sadness of knowing the visit will end soon. Khan excellently weaves together complex issues of feeling torn between two parts of one’s identity, illness in the family, helping others, and finding out that growing up does not have to mean growing apart. Highly recommended for all collections. —Selenia Paz

The Hatmakers.
By Tamzin Merchant. Illus. by Paola Escobar.

Cordelia whiles away her days in the handsome Hatmaker house, a building that hosts her close-knit family and their magical millinery creations. Hers is a London that, while mostly familiar, contains a bit of magic here and there, woven into the handiwork of guild craftsmen: gloves, hats, boots. Their mostly peaceful and pleasant coexistence is upended when Cordelia’s father mysteriously goes missing, and a series of sinister events tips the magical world into chaos while bringing England to the brink of war. Only Cordelia and some unexpected friends can restore peace, and the determined trio find themselves in a race to save their families—and the kingdom. Merchant’s inventive world is beautifully built through vivid imagery and detailed descriptions, whether of a cozily curated workshop or a derelict guild hall, and though much of the story feels pleasingly predictable, occasional twists will keep readers on their toes. An engaging ode to the bonds of family and friendship, the power of teamwork, and the magic that we all have inside ourselves. —Emily Graham

Mr. Tiger, Betsy, and the Sea Dragon.
By Sally Gardner. Illus. by Nick Maland.

Purple-haired Betsy K. Glory, daughter of a sea-dwelling mermaid and a land-bound ice cream maker, adores her life on “an island that’s been left off of the map of the world,” but she also misses the adventures she had with a now-absent Mr. Tiger, circus ringleader extraordinaire. Be careful what you wish for: Mr. Tiger returns in time for the famous Festival of the Sea Dragon, but so does a band of treasure-seeking pirates, and when a precious sea-dragon egg is poached—er, stolen—by the waggish...
crew, Betsy must help her beloved island and its quirky inhabitants. This sequel is a more straightforward adventure than the preceding Mr. Tiger, Betsy, and the Blue Moon (2020), but it’s still chock-full of delicious descriptions and fantastical wonders. The text, once again, is rendered in a dyslexia-friendly font, and the utterly charming blue-toned illustrations are a perfect complement. Frequent perspective shifts and the sheer number of characters may be slightly daunting for younger readers, but it’s nonetheless a pleasure to slip back into Betsy’s whimsical world. —Emily Graham


It’s the summer before seventh grade, and 12-year-old Beatrice Miller lives with her mom and mamaw in Bardstown, Kentucky. She’s conflicted about entering her teen years— anxious for them to begin yet fearful of leaving childhood behind. She’s also often caught in the middle between her mother (a responsible nurse who is ambitious for her daughter) and Mamaw (her free-spirited, eccentric grandmother who wants Bea to enjoy the present). With the narrative told in free verse, Hagan’s strength is developing characters and their motivations. Bea is particularly well fleshed out, with many poems dedicated to her inner musings about her feelings and place in the world. While the episodic plot meanders a bit (Mom considers a serious boyfriend; Mamaw thinks about getting her own place; Bea contemplates her relationship with her deceased father, learns that slumber party dates can be dangerous, and discovers that joining the in-crowd comes with drawbacks), Hagan’s keen understanding of adolescent preoccupations will be enough to hook many. —Kay Weisman


Hanging out at his father’s workplace, the National Portrait Gallery, 12-year-old Art notices a suspicious anomaly: every afternoon at exactly the same time, a woman takes exactly the same number of steps along the same path through the Great Hall. After Camille, his friend and sleuthing partner, joins him and observes the woman, he convinces her that the thieves who masterminded the notorious art heist at Boston’s Gardner Museum 30 years earlier are about to strike again, probably during the upcoming gala. When Art and Camille’s initial investigation leads to embarrassment and reprimands, they back off, but a revelation at the gala sends them into action once more. Readers intrigued by the famous paintings mentioned can access them online by scanning QR codes within the book. Set in Washington, D.C., this fast-paced narrative features two likable, capable protagonists, a twisting plotline, and plenty of suspense. Kids who enjoyed The Van Gogh Deception (2017) will want to follow Art and Camille’s latest adventure, and this sequel works equally well as a stand-alone. An appealing choice for mystery fans. —Carolyn Phelan


Maisie has devoted herself to ballet since she was four, but a torn ACL puts the seventh-grader’s dream of dancing professionally on hold, perhaps permanently. Maisie is months into her physical therapy as the story opens, keeping the focus of the narrative on the process of healing, physically and emotionally, as well as learning to move forward, even if that means letting go of certain plans. Such a loss hurts, and Maisie finds herself lashing out at her parents and pushing away her dance friends in response. It takes a setback during a family outing to connect with the Makah and Klallam sides of her heritage for Maisie to truly face the facts of her situation and find hope in this unexpected detour. Day’s contemplative OwnVoices novel adeptly explores Maisie’s grief and identity, both as a dancer and as a Native American, with the latter organically highlighting variations within Native cultures. The inaugural title of the Native-centered imprint Heartdrum, this finds strength and beauty in life’s quiet moments and opportunity in the unexpected. —Julia Smith


This inventive, whimsical tale brings to life many metropolitan readers’ worst nightmare—being separated from their family on the subway or, in particular, the London Tube—when Cecilia is stranded on her twelfth birthday in the strange world of the tunnels. She finds a subterranean universe filled with vivid and pleasantly creepy anthropomorphic animals, of which Cecilia must determine who is friend and who is foe. As she draws unwanted and even dangerous attention from the Corvus Community that rules the roost, Cecilia must work to find a way home. Wild-Palmer’s brilliant story—undoubtedly for fans of quirky portal fantasies like Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, The Phantom Tollbooth, or the works of Roald Dahl—melds clever wordplay with fantastically drawn creatures of the deep and dark (quaintly illustrated by Shi) in a wholly new world that readers will be eager to explore. As Cecilia uneartaches unexpected secrets and attempts to thwart the twisted plans of the nefarious Corvus, her journey reminds her of the strength of friendship and family, as well as everyday magic. —Stephanie Cohen

Young


Unable to tell time, Bear is always running late. He misses breakfast and classes at school, then is late for the bus and has to walk home. Finally, Bear’s human family decides to help him with time management, and his father makes the lesson accessible by drawing a clock face as 12 slices of pizza. Set on mostly white backgrounds and using detailed spot art, thickly colored illustrations with the look of pastels humorously depict Bear’s exploits as well as his eventual mastery of the concept. Eventually, Bear goes to the other extreme by filling his calendar with a diverse collection of activities, from tap dancing to playing the harp to swimming, along with many more. Overcommitting can be a problem for many children, and the story addresses this with a somewhat adult turn, as a burned-out Bear collapses and must go to a convalescent facility to recover. Originally published in France, this book’s humorous images keep the tone from becoming too serious, and the happy ending is reassuring. —Lucinda Whitehurst


Louise and her parents, who live beside a lake, are grieving the loss of their dog, Charlie. Mom and Dad go about their chores inside, but Louise takes their boat to a nearby island, a place Charlie loved. There she senses changes: a flock of butterflies, tame deer, and a very large (and seemingly sad) bear. Bear and girl exchange roars but support each other over the coming weeks as life gradually improves for everyone. When Bear hibernates for the winter, Louise is

Children are invited to join a family on a trip to and from Manhattan on the Staten Island Ferry. The boarding process is traced step-by-step: first, they enter the gate, then go up the escalator, watch the walkway come down, and go aboard. The text is minimal, and the vibrant illustrations, done in digital woodcut, are meticulously accurate in their portrayals of the sights en route and the size of the ferry and its seemingly endless windows, capable of accommodating a multitude of passengers. The understated artwork depicts people from all sorts of different backgrounds, highlighting the diversity of the New Yorkers and tourists aboard the ferry. Small illustrations in the back matter identify the key sights. Readers will enjoy the photograph of the author aboard the ferry at age five. This entry in the I Like to Read series will give children a helpful introduction to a vibrant city—and, for New York–based kids, a fun idea for an iconic outing. —Lolly Gepson


“Close your eyes and imagine a wolf,” begins the story, narrated by a wolf who feels hurt because she’s regarded with terror. She’s certainly not the “big, bad” sort that impersonates grandmies and preys on little pigs. She bursts into tears when townsfolk see her and yell “Wolf!” because she’s different. Yes, she has sharp claws (for holding wool while spinning). Yes, she has big eyes (for enjoying colors). But when her big ears hear the cries of cold sheep in the distance, this wolf hops into her car, drives to their field, and delivers hand-knit sweaters for them all. She suggests again that viewers imagine a wolf and then asks, “Am I what you imagined?” Created with pen-and-ink, oil paint, and colored pencil, the illustrations are distinctive and expressive. While delivering a timely lesson about regarding everyone as an individual rather than making judgments based on preconceptions, this picture book also entertains with familiar nursery tale references, the wolf’s aggrieved point of view, and questions that call for imaginative responses. A thought-provoking choice for reading aloud. —Carolyn Phelan


In spare, somewhat philosophical text comes a story of a girl who feels invisible to her parents, who are absorbed in their phone and computer. They don’t even notice their daughter—pale, white skin, angrily angled eyebrows—bundled up with a backpack and bedroll. So off she goes into the wooded hills behind her house. It’s unclear whether she’s running away to a favorite spot or simply venturing there on her own, but the fact that she camps there overnight implies the former. The girl is befriended by a fox, which keeps her company the following day as she path opens to the seaside. She is just about to share a family photo with her furry companion when, happily, the girl’s parents appear over a nearby hill. Levi’s muted watercolors have a folk-art quality that suits this simple, down-to-earth story. While it’s hard to swallow that the girl’s parents arrive without worry or reprimand, the story offers a nice reminder to appreciate the people and the world around you. —Julia Smith


In the Donovan family, everyone has a dance nickname for their special moves except Kai, who can’t do the Electric Slide without knocking someone over. No matter how much his parents try to comfort him by saying that he has his own special rhythm, Kai is worried he’ll mess things up on the dance floor at an upcoming family wedding. But, determined, he takes lessons from his siblings and dad, practices for weeks, and watches video after video. Will he finally impress his grandpa and get the dance nickname he so desperately wants? This is a simple, sweet story about a small boy’s journey to feeling accepted and special in a large family with even larger personalities. In this Lee & Low New Voices Award Honor book, both the story and the digitally rendered illustrations celebrate the Black experience and feature a family of color as they blissfully tear up the dance floor, and the ending—while satisfyingly predictable—has an unexpected moment where Kai is encouraged by his kind new uncle to achieve his goal. —Becca Worthington
when she claps her hands, they don’t hear—not, in fact, until she does her other trick. Everyone says it then, oh yes, which makes her laugh and cheer. Fine-lined cartoon illustrations featuring an expressive redhead sporting a stylish elastic headband and, often, not much else reflect the joyful tone of this nifty, high-spirited bit of toddler turnabout. —John Peters


A father awakens his child at night. They dress in warm clothing, quietly leave the house, and trudge through the frozen countryside together. “What’s an aurora?” asks the child, who follows up with more questions along the way. “Is it scary?” Dad shakes his head. “Are stars in the aurora?” “No.” The enigmatic father leads the way to the top of a steep hill. They sit down, surrounded by the starry sky, which suddenly amazes them with “dancing light, glowing and . . . / glimmering, shimmering, and shining.”/ Colored ribbons swirling and twirling / Lighting up the sky on the still, dark night.” Awestruck, the two stand and watch in silence. On the walk home, Dad tells everything he knows about the aurora. An appended note shares that information with readers. First published in Australia and New Zealand, this picture book captures the beauty of the aurora phenomenon as well as the wonder it inspires in viewers. Written in free verse, the narrative raises questions that are resolved when the aurora appears. The hand-drawn, soft-pastel artwork uses rich colors, varied textures, and subtle lighting effects throughout the book, while the climactic scenes are vibrant and luminous. A memorable picture book that captures an unforgettable experience. —Carolyn Phelan


Willow is a timid white rabbit who prefers staying home—an abandoned mailbox—where it’s cozy and quiet. There she sketches and dreams, but her comfortable routine is interrupted when a letter flutters through the mail slot one day. It turns out to be a letter from a boy to the moon, asking it to shine brightly for his mother’s birthday. Touched, Willow decides to deliver the letter to the moon, despite the scary prospect of being so far from home. A charming sequence of illustrations shows Willow’s varied attempts to reach the moon, with success finally found in a balloon constructed of pages from the rabbit’s sketchbook. Min layers colored pencil and watercolor to create whimsical, rainbow-slicked scenes where the story’s more fantastical elements feel right at home. Young readers will be fully absorbed in Willow’s dreamlike adventure and appreciate her bravery as she ventures outside of her comfort zone. Not only does Willow succeed in her birthday mission, she becomes braver in her daily life, too, signified by a friendship with the boy she helped and by her sketches changing from graphite to color drawings by story’s end. A warm and wondrous adventure for armchair, or high chair, travelers. —Julia Smith


A clever visual conceit helps demonstrate the simple power of paying kindness forward in this gentle, encouraging picture book. It’s the first day of school, and one class is full of nervous kindergarteners. Leach’s sepia-toned scenes reveal an inclusive group of kids lined up to go inside, all of whom have apprehensive faces, except for Alice, who appears in full color. Alice smiles at Lucas, Lucas greets Jasmine, Jasmine passes the class guinea pig to Xavier, and so on. With each friendly gesture, a soft ribbon of color passes between the characters, who then appear in bold, vibrant hues for the rest of the story. By the end of the day, everyone, including the teacher and school janitor, moves from a muted, monochromatic palette to bright, cheerful color, a tidy visual signal of how small gestures of kindness can turn a day around. Though there are plenty of books on similar themes, McAnulty and Leach’s benefits from the strong imagery, which could be particularly useful for pre-readers nervous about starting school for the first time. —Sarah Hunter


For useful things beginning with their letters. Vines but can’t find rabbits. He stomps through shadowy trees, splashes through the murky creek, climbs trees, slogs through soggy bogs, and leaps over steep vines but can’t find rabbits anywhere. By the time he marches into Moonberry Meadow, he is not only hungry, he’s huffy, drooly, growly, fuzzy, and howly as well. When the rabbits finally arrive with their delicate ears and fluffy tails, Wolfty crouches down and opens his mouth—to eat the special moonberry pie that they made for him. Harkness’ impressive career in animation (25 years of experience at Disney) is evident on every page in the remarkable attention to detail, the cinematic and thoughtful framing of each individual image within the context of the story, the use of dramatic close-ups to heighten tension, and the satisfying message of friendship in the story’s unexpectedly funny resolution. The text is delightful and simple, using repetitive variations that naturally encourage participation in read-aloud settings, but it’s the exceptional artwork that truly makes this a masterpiece. Each spread—from expansive landscapes to deliberately cropped features—is painstakingly created with hand-formed clay and then photographed to yield textural and three-dimensional images with striking use of shadow and light that make for an imaginative and completely immersive reading adventure. —Becca Worthington


This charmer of a picture book takes an Alice in Wonderland approach to a young girl’s discovery of a hole. Zia, a spunky Black girl brimming with imagination, finds a hole in her pocket, which grows bigger and bigger until, one day, she falls through it. Confident that this is “an imaginary hole,” Zia knows she doesn’t need to be afraid, as she can transform the hole into anything her imagination can muster. She begins by conjuring a fishing hole, where she quickly catches (and returns) an enormous fish. In the next spread, she is outfitted in a bathing suit and prepares to do a cannonball into what is now a swimming hole. From there, Zia imagines a lion that joins other African animals at the newly created watering hole. Several more clever scenarios play out until, in a slightly meta twist, Zia returns home to put the hole back in her pocket. Saturated artwork includes realistic and whimsical images that match Zia’s rapidly changing imaginations. A vivacious tribute to creative thinking and play. —Tiffany Flowers
Adult Audio

Cher Ami and Major Whittlesey.
By Kathleen Rooney. Read by Juliana Canfield and Noah Michael Levine.
2020. 11.5hr. Books on Tape, DD, $56.50 (9780593291504).
Against the bleak backdrop of WWI, Cher Ami, a messenger pigeon, and Major Charles Whittlesey, her commanding officer lost in the dark Argonne Forest of France, share an unlikely and elegiac story. The pair is based on a true story, but the inner life and anthropomorphic musings of Cher Ami tell the narrative in a completely refreshed fashion. One could easily find a story half told by a racing pigeon to clash with the harshness of war, but Rooney’s elegantly crafted sentences carefully honor the perspectives of both animal and human. Solemnly narrated, this is a listening experience to cherish. Canfield’s calmly contemplative narration outshines Levine’s, but both are performances with aplomb and earnest reflection. A beautiful listen for those who enjoy Emma Donoghue’s and Amor Towles’ historical fiction. —Joy Matteson

Conditional Citizens: On Belonging in America.
By Laila Lalami. Read by the author.
2020. 8hr. Books on Tape, DD, $47.50 (9780593170342).
Lalami dovetails her own journey as a Moroccan-born, UK- and US-educated, naturalized Muslim American, expanding into a socio-historical examination of what it means to be a “conditional citizen” in the United States. Conditional citizens, she explains, “are Americans who cannot enjoy the full rights, liberties, and protections of citizenship because of arbitrary markers of identity [including] their race, ethnicity, gender, and natal origin . . . features over which they have no control.” Her own “conditional citizen” stories are many: border agents asked her husband about trading cows for her; her terrified US-born daughter fearing deportation; facing as many (more?) questions about terrorism as about her actual writing. Beyond the individual, her examples seem never-ending—reminders include California-born Wong Kim Ark, who sought the Supreme Court to recognize his birthright citizenship; the irony that indigenous people as members of sovereign nations remained ineligible for US citizenship until 1924; that even Obama—as the most powerful man in the world—couldn’t escape the birther conspiracy theory. That Lalami herself narrates her nuanced, intimate nonfiction debut adds illuminating, indelible resonance. Remarkably composed and extraordinarily controlled, Lalami reveals, challenges, asserts, and ultimately claims her well-earned place: “Yet I am still here.” —Terry Hong

Dune: The Duke of Caladan.
By Brian Herbert and Kevin J. Anderson. Read by Scott Brick.
In the hotly anticipated first in a new Caladan Trilogy, The Duke of Caladan begins the story of Leto Atreides, Lady Jessica, and their son, the young Paul. The story is set before Duke on Arrakis, when he is the benevolent ruler of a small planet—and life is good. But a terror attack leads to an upheaval in the power structure of the Imperium and the happy Atreides family is thrown into chaos. A fascinating look into Paul’s training and an even closer look at the complicated relationship between Leto and Lady Jessica. The audio version is an easy listen. The quick, action-packed chapters are well performed, and as the disparate story lines begin to come together it’s hard to press pause. Narrator Scott Brick’s deep and interesting voice adds more pull to the quieter parts of the story. His care in performing Lady Jessica’s often clipped—but heavy with meaning—dialogue is well done, as are his readings of the characters’ inner thoughts. All in all, a fun book and a great performance. —Jennifer Kninnery

The Eighth Detective.
By Alex Pavesi. Read by Emilia Fox.
2020. 11hr. Brilliance, DD, $22.04 (9781713558705).
Pavesi’s debut novel is a story within a story—a collection of mystery shorts tied together by an overarching narrative. Editor Julia Hart has tracked down retired author Grant McAllister in hopes of publishing a collection of mysteries he wrote years ago. Each of the seven stories illustrates one critical facet of a murder mystery, as Grant outlined in a paper mathematically defining the genre. As Julia reads each aloud to Grant, she notices that they are connected by a running discussion of Grant’s theory. These culminate in the revelation of a larger mystery involving the book itself. Fox’s warm, calm British accent is reminiscent of an Agatha Christie production, which fits perfectly with the mid-century setting, especially in one story that recalls And Then There Were None. It’s a cozy recording of an entertaining, if mild, mystery that leans heavily on nostalgia for the genre’s golden age. —Jane Philbrick

Elsewhere.
By Dean Koontz. Read by Edoardo Ballerini and Imani Parks.
2020. 11hr. Brilliance, DD, $22.04 (9781713558705).
This tightly plotted sf thriller with a dash of fantasy and solid family drama mixed in—

Podcast Connection

By Roman Mars and Kurt Kohlstedt. Read by Roman Mars.
Thoughfully envisioned, proficiently executed design is all around us, not just in showpieces like couture clothing or architectural wonders. Most forms of design inform our lives in ways we don’t even realize. Think of the utilitarian efficiency of a check-cashing store, or the safety built into breakaway-bolts steadying streetlights. These “invisible” but highly designed elements comprise the fascinating fodder for Mars’ collection of vignettes that will thrill the “beautiful nerds” who listen to his podcast, 99% Invisible. Though the print boasts charming hand-drawn illustrations, Mars’ cool, NPR-ready voice and an impeccable pacing rooted in his deep understanding of the topic at hand is reason enough to listen. Musical interludes separate chapters, and a conversation between Mars and coauthor/ podcast producer Kohlstedt in a sample podcast episode append the book. This is an audio that lends itself well to being listened to piecemeal, which recommends it for short commutes, walks around the block, and brief but engaging breaks throughout the day. For more microtourism listening, pair with Carlsen’s A Walk around the Block, also reviewed in this issue. —Heather Booth
Hench.
By Natalie Zina Walschots. Read by Alex McKenna.
A temp agency for heroines, of course! Anna Tromedlov, a remote data-entry hench, takes an on-site job and gets more action than she ever bargained for as she dives head-first into the action-packed world of villains and superheroes. McKenna is the perfect fit to narrate this darkly humorized, sarcastic, and witty henchwoman. Intense action music begins the audio to set the tone for a work that could easily make the transition to comic book or Marvel movie. Characters run the gamut from supervillains to a terribly "normal" guy from Tinder, and McKenna voices them all uniquely and memorably. Humor is contagious in scenes featuring Anna and her best friend, Julie, as McKenna deftly conveys the mood—and then just as easily transitions to high-energy action as the story flows. Fans of comic books and stories told from the anarchist’s perspective will flock to this fiction debut.

—Lesley Crier

The Lying Life of Adults.
By Elena Ferrante. Read by Marisa Tomei.
2020. 10.5hr. Books on Tape, DD, $40 (9780593340882).
Academy Award-winner Tomei pulls out all the stops in her clever and impassioned narration that matches the accolades for Ferrante’s lauded and incisive coming-of-age novel. The book is set in late-1970s and early-1980s Naples, Italy, as Giovanna, on the precipice of adolescence, forges a relationship with her difficult, estranged aunt; watches her parents’ marriage crumble; and takes her own steps into adulthood. Tomei’s intensity matches Giovana’s punch for punch in a way that recognizes and respects teen-age anger, disdain, bitterness, and, yes, love. Ferrante’s books have been championed for their English translations, and Tomei brings the listener closer to the Italian original as she slides into Italian pronunciations of proper nouns and frequently uses Italian accents and cadences to differentiate characters who speak in dialect over those who speak a more refined Italian. Though her energy does fade a bit in the last quarter, this minor flaw is understandable given the force of this fully-bodied narration. This celebrity performance is superbly cast and will remind listeners of Graham and Annie’s marriage, although, surprisingly, not their deeply supportive friendship, which expanded through the decades to include Annie. On the evening of Graham’s celebration, Frieda confirms Annie’s shocking realization that Graham has also been unfaithful to Annie, irreparably damaging so much of what Annie had always believed to be true. Negotiating betrayal and anger amidst overwhelming mourning, Annie—and the rest of Graham’s survivors—must learn to live on. Miller’s contemplative, resonating reading enhances her already affecting, haunting meditation on betrayal, familial bonds, and—most of all—enduring love.

—Terry Hong

Migrations.
By Charlotte McConaghy. Read by Barrie Kreinik.
2020. 9hr. Macmillan/AudioGO, DD, $19.99 (9781250751508).
Seasoned narrator Kreinik showcases her prowess as a dialect coach as she embodies McConaghy’s vast cast the world from Australia to Ireland to Greenland, traversing quickly emptying terrains and oceans. Making her adult fiction debut, McConaghy introduces Franny Stone, an unmothered wanderer who arrives in Greenland hoping to track the last flock of migratory Arctic terns. She talks herself onto the well-traveled Saghati, joining a less-than-welcoming misfit crew led by a captain in whom Franny recognizes another desperate lost soul. While tracking both fish and fowl, Franny writes desperate letters to her estranged husband, a renowned Irish professor of ornithology and her peripatetic backstory is slowly revealed. While Kreinik empathically, consistently ciphers rootless Franny, she’s even more impressive in maintaining distinctively recognizable personalities, quirks, and accents for the Saghati inhabitants, deftly differentiating even in the midst of all-crew impassioned discussions and bewildering arguments the just-controlled captain Ennis, frustrated Léa, contemplative Basil, struggling Anik, and the many others. Back on land, Kreinik is achingly affecting as bewildered Niall and his fragmenting mother, Penny. With deft agility, Kreinik guides McConaghy’s spectacular Moby-Dick-esque journey toward an all-too-imminent dystopia in which humanity faces a future alone.

—Heather Booth

Monogamy.
By Sue Miller. Read by the author.
Narrating the fourth of her own books, Miller doesn’t so much perform as empathically embody her 13th title—the result is an aural gift to her avid readers. Three decades into Graham and Annie’s marriage, Graham unexpectedly dies in his sleep. He is a generous Cambridge bookseller with scores of devoted friends, and his sudden death leaves Annie—a published photographer—turning further inward. Her intimate circle of supporters quickly shrinks to her San Francisco-based daughter, Sarah; her NYC-based stepson, Lucas; by Graham’s first wife, Frieda; and Frieda herself, who is one of Annie’s closest confidantes. Despite an initially mutually-agreed-upon open relationship, repeated infidelity eventually destroyed Frieda and Graham’s marriage, although, remarkably, not their deep friendship, which expanded through the decades to include Annie. On the evening of Graham’s celebration, Frieda confirms Annie’s shocking realization that Graham has also been unfaithful to Annie, irreparably damaging so much of what Annie had always believed to be true. Negotiating betrayal and anger amidst overwhelming mourning, Annie—and the rest of Graham’s survivors—must learn to live on. Miller’s contemplative, resonating reading enhances her already affecting, haunting meditation on betrayal, familial bonds, and—most of all—enduring love.

—Terry Hong

The Switch.
By Beth O’Leary. Read by Alison Steadman and Daisy Edgar-Jones.
Twenty-something Leena and her seventysomething grandmother Eileen both find themselves stuck in settings that prevent them from living their best lives. The demands of Leena’s corporate job in London are too much to handle as she (barely) manages her unprocessed grief over the death of her sister. In a quaint countryside village, lonely Eileen weighs the neighborhood’s dismal love prospects now that her husband has run off with the rec-center’s dance instructor. Both decide to temporarily switch homes for better opportunities: R&R for Leena, and online dating for Eileen. This intergenerational country mouse-city mouse swap has all of the satisfying trappings that make such a story delightful, but the performances by veteran narrator Steadman and newcomer Edgar-Jones elevate it to tug at the heartstrings, boil the blood, and fully engage the listener. Steadman’s years of experience are on full display as she creates distinct vocalizations for Eileen’s companions; Edgar-Jones
shines in her emotional, self-aware depiction of Leena. Audio filters are used to great effect for phone calls in which the two narrators appear. A delightful, romantic respite that is full of heart, with stellar narration and thoughtful production to distinguish it as an audio.
—Heather Booth

**Classics Corner**

**Go, Dog. Go!**
By P. D. Eastman. Read by Sean Patrick Hopkins.
2020. 9 hr. Listening Library, DD, $22 (97805933986247).

Eastman's 1961 Beginner Books classic has been a staple in early reader collections for decades. A cadre of dogs—big and small, black and white, in and out of trees, zipping around in cars, modeling questionable hats—finally comes together in a great big treetop dog party: the stuff childhood giggles are made of. This new and theatrically energetic performance by Hopkins will undoubtedly engage young listeners and hum our their grownups, too. Though the text is brief and has precious few words to work with, Hopkins manages to give various dogs personality: create tension, suspense, and disdain (“And now do you like my hat? . . . Goodbye!”); and ultimately create a joyful celebration of words and dogs. The production is free of page-turn tones, and because of the full-on performance, works best as a companion to the book, not as a read-along for beginning readers. A dog party doesn't get much more fun than this. —Heather Booth

**Youth Audio**

**The Alien Adventures of Finn Caspian #1: The Fuzzy Apocalypse.**
By Jonathan Messinger. Read by the author.

Finn Caspian is the first child born in space and he, along with a robot named Foggy and three other children of astronauts, are in search of a new planet that humans can inhabit. They find themselves on a planet that’s about to explode and the planet’s inhabitants tell competing stories about what is happening. The young crew must work together to figure out the real story and how they will save the planet! The book is based on Messinger’s serialized sf podcast of the same name, making this an audio adaptation of a print book based on an original audio medium. Though Messinger’s pacing is somewhat slow, his voice reflects the action and excitement of the story. Music backs the opening and closing credits, but the performance is otherwise free of music or sound effects. This silly, fun sci-fi tale is perfect for listeners who are not quite ready for Stuart Gibbs’ Moon Base Alpha books.
—Ashley Young

**At the Mountain’s Base.**
By Traci Sorell. Read by Kimberly Guerrero.

A soft heartbeat-like drum, soon accompanied by a contemplative Native American wood flute, introduces this brief poem by Sorell, the author of much-awarded We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga (2018). The music bed continues through the brief entirety of this cumulative tale that describes a family waiting and praying for the safe return of a female family member piloting a plane in wartime. Guerrero, a Coville-enrolled actress with Cherokee roots like author Sorell, narrates just plainly enough that when the tranquil landscape shifts and the listener learns of the faraway battle, small infections of fear, worry, and hope come across as plaintive and impassioned. An illuminating author’s note—without musical accompaniment—follows the poem and fills in the details of real-life female Native soldiers across time. A respectful and engaging performance, best enjoyed as a read-along with the print.
—Heather Booth

**This Is Your Time.**
By Ruby Bridges. Read by the author.

The most important thing about the audio-book of this letter to young listeners—and it is very important—is that it is read by the author, Ruby Bridges. Bridges, who became a cultural icon at age six when she was selected to integrate New Orleans’ public schools, reads her own words in a way that feels incredibly personal, as if she truly is speaking to each listener. She tells of her first-grade year, walking to school escorted by the National Guard, sitting in an empty school room because all of the white children had been pulled from school, and learning from a Boston teacher brought to town just for Ruby. In clear, simple, inspiring words—and with tones to match—she walks listeners through her perspectives on racism as a learned disease, and on grace as the key to our collective salvation. Without the print, readers will miss archival photos. But hearing Bridges speak her truth will have a deep and lasting impact, bringing a contemporary realism to a life that, to many young people, might otherwise seem unimaginably distant. “This is your time in history,” she tells us, but it is hers as well.
—Heather Booth

♦ **Women in Focus: The 19th in 2020**
As we stare down the looming shorter, darker, colder days ahead, I find myself, probably much like many of you, on the hunt for books to sink into. What could be better than a well-wrought fantasy world to while away the winter hours? How about a fantasy world so immersive and wide-ranging that a single book or series can’t contain it? If you’re looking for something a little fresher than the old standbys, these contemporary fantasy novels could satisfy that itch, with well-wrought stories featuring characters and places that intersect among series titles, stand-alones, and spin-offs.

   It's difficult to pin down an order to the novels set in the expansive, richly described world of Nagspeake, but this is a good starting point. From here, Milford travels backward and forward in time, exploring the history of Nagspeake, a protected way station for smugglers and thieves, as well as its many secrets, including connections to the world of her earlier novels *The Boneshaker* (2010) and *The Broken Lands* (2012).

   Pearson's Remnant Chronicles start with this volume, which follows princess Lia, who's on the run from an arranged marriage, and the assassin sent to return her to her obligations. An intricate plot involving the chase, magic, and romance fills out the rest of the trilogy. While a second series, beginning with *Dance of Thieves* (2018), features some familiar characters from the Remnant Chronicles, this new story's protagonists are captivating enough on their own.

   This series opener is just the beginning of an ever-expanding universe of interconnected adventures and world mythologies. Spin-off series include *The Heroes of Olympus* (beginning with *The Lost Hero*, 2010) and *The Trials of Apollo* (beginning with *The Hidden Oracle*, 2016). The Kane Chronicles series exists in the world of Egyptian mythology, and a series of short, digital-only stories links this series to Percy Jackson's world, and Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard series, about the Norse pantheon, eventually loops into the world of the original series as well.

   Bardugo's Grishaverse starts with this trilogy opener, which follows a new magician in the land of Ravka and her growing (dangerously so) powers. Two subsequent series, starting with *Six of Crows* (2015) and *King of Scars* (2019), respectively, further explore the world, its politics, and the mechanisms of its magic. *The Language of Thorns* (2017), a collection of fairy tales and fables from the fictional Ravka, adds a compelling layer to the world building.

**Shadowshaper**, by Daniel José Older. 2015. Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine.
   The first book in Older's critically acclaimed Shadowshaper Cypher series introduces Sierra, who discovers she can communicate with the spirits through art, particularly the street art in her Bed-Stuy neighborhood. Sierra's adventures occasionally cross paths with characters from Older's Bone Street Rumba series, an adult urban fantasy featuring Carlos Delacruz, who also bridges the gap between the living and the dead in Brooklyn. Several interstitial novellas expand the universe even more.

   The world of Faerie is a frequent setting for Black's novels, from this urban fantasy series opener to her more recent trilogy, beginning with *The Cruel Prince* (2018), which explores the twists and turns of the high court of Faerie. A graphic novel series (*The Good Neighbors*, illustrated by Ted Naifeh) and a stand-alone horror-tinged fairytale, *The Darkest Part of the Forest* (2015), explore the permeable borders of the magical world.
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