Kent Haruf: I hope you're right in what you're suggesting, that that is the subtext. Dad does personify the town and maybe humanity. I think there are things we can feel critical about—his treatment of his son, Frank. We wish he were more open with him and certainly more understanding. But with the people around him outside his family, he's maybe slow on the uptake yet does the right thing, finally. Or tries to. After Clayton commits suicide and Dad realizes what he's done, he tries to make amends to Clayton's wife. And to his son, Frank, in the last scenes of visitation, when the people Dad's harmed, or thinks he has, appear. He's rethought some of what he's done and he tries to redeem himself—in mind and spirit. In the last paragraph of the second visitation he asks for forgiveness, and then asks his son to take his revenge, and finally asks his son to take his hand. To my mind these are attempts at redemption. He doesn't achieve redemption but his effort is genuine. As to the town, who knows whether they'll ever be more accepting, but some are already. My intention was to portray the Lewis family and those around them as capable of generosity and also as being close-minded. In this book I wanted to give a more complicated picture of the town and the people in it than I have before. There are no real antagonists in my novel: the antagonist is the divided self—that and death.

There are no real antagonists in my novel: the antagonist is the divided self...
BB: In more than one scene a child comments on the lack of attention of a parent. And that failure has consequences on more than one life. Can you talk about that inattention in terms of parents and their children in the book and in life?

KH: That's one of the most difficult and painful things in all our lives—separation from parents and lack of attention when we need attention—NOTHING is more painful. I worry about that with my own children. I was a good parent but I know there was neglect, there are those times when we're too busy. In the case of Frank it's gone beyond neglect to cruelty—a great deal of it on the part of his father. Even after Frank has left home, when his parents visit him in Denver, Dad shows a lack of affection. A lack of attention.

With Alice it's the most extreme kind of neglect—her mother has actually died. Losing a parent is the worst lack of attention there can be. In Dad's own life he suffered the same kind of neglect and ran away from it. Knowing that helps to explain how he is who he is. BB: This book is about a lifetime. When Dad talks about the number of times he's gone in and out the back door of the hardware store and asks what it comes to, his wife's answer is precisely that—a lifetime. So while he's haunted by particular mistakes, the main ingredient of life is still its dullness, which he calls nothing but Mary calls everything and Reverend Lyle describes as "that precious ordinary." Can you talk about how you see that mix of drama and the daily and what the balance is between those crucial moments when, in an instant, we make a decision that has unthink- able consequences and the ongoing day-to-day way we live—which also has consequences?

KH: I do think this book is about the dailiness of life, and what we're focusing on in Benediction is the dailiness at the END of Dad's life. In many ways he lived a good daily life, at least outside of his family. It was hard for him to be conscious of how that daily life was—Mary helps him to understand that. Mary does understand it and maybe Willa, too, but the others all expect something major to come along and change them. It's an idea that's important to me. I'm happiest when I'm in the middle of a long project like a novel. Right now, with the new book coming out—it's exciting, but you get caught up in waiting for the next thing to happen. I don't want to live like that—waiting for the next thing to happen. I feel strong that it's not a centered way of living.

BB: Of my favorite scenes in the book occurs when the son, Frank, is riding a horse bareback in the barn with his friend. They're just kids and they've dressed up in his big sister's lingerie and summer dresses. There's something so childlike, innocent, and joy- ous about them and, then, as his father sees them, takes in the gender implications, his reaction is like a slap in the face—to the reader as well as to the boys. I couldn't quite think about it. There's something so elemental in the scene about bigotry being in the eye of the beholder. Please discuss that scene and what it means to you as well as the characters.

KH: It's a pivotal point in the story. It had to be there. One of the difficulties in writing the book was how to get in the scenes from the past that help us to understand the present. I'd thought of using in the reader by using italics, but then I decided that the reader is smart enough—smarter than I am, maybe—and would understand what was happening. Besides, the scenes from the past are set in winter and the present takes place in the summer. That helps make it clear. About that scene, it's innocent and elemental—almost archetypal. Two kids in winter in a barn with the sun slant- in, catching motes, the boys dressed up in a celebratory way. If you looked at it without prejudice it's celebratory, but if you don't, if all you see is boys in the clothes of the sister, then what you see if you do have prejudice is horrific. My intention was to suggest to the reader what the problem was in 1950s America where things were looked at in only one way and where there were no other ways to react than violence. If you react violently to what you see it does so much harm to others and ultimately to yourself and leaves lasting bitterness and anger and hatred with little chance of understanding.

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men can’t. And that women project a way of being that society could model itself on if only we were wise enough.

I think there’s a suggestion in that scene where the women are together pinching and they swim in the stock tank that they’re bringing this little girl, Alice, into their adult circle in an almost ritualistic baptismal way, accepting her and teaching her—to keep your head above water for one thing. Then the cows come up to the tank and they echo the whole scene in a way. There’s no bull, just cows and their calves gathering—they’re a community of females and their young.

BB: I want to ask a few questions that involve the art of writing and maybe the structure behind the intention and ideas. First, Dad was so named, at least according to him, when his daughter was born. Used like that, as a name rather than a term of kinship inside one family, that universal word, Dad, made him into a kind of every- man—for me—the Dad in every family who loves and withholds love, feels and clothes and exercises authority and/or ignores in ways that aren’t always fair. I don’t mean to imply that this particu- lar Dad isn’t alive on the page because he is—intensely so. But was the use of the name Dad and the resultant broadening to the uni- verse simply my reading or was it your intention and if so, why?

KH: I had the name from the first time I thought of him—for sev- eral reasons. First as you suggest, Dad is all dads with all their faults and virtues. Also I just like that name, Dad Lewis. In Denver there’s a street, Dad Clark Blvd. It’s kind of an honorary term like calling someone Doc. Then in blues music some men are called Dad and it’s affectionate. My editor wanted me to explain the name to readers, and I finally agreed to do—it’s in that conversation where it’s explained to Alice—how I want to.

BB: Every time you read your work I’m struck anew by the power of understatement, of spare dialogue in which the silences say more than the words, of scenes created in lean language that are intense- ly vivid. Do you have to write and rewrite, pare and pare again, to achieve that—or and I know this will sound simplistic, and I do know you edit and re-edit, but still—is this more how you actually think so that it comes out with such—I don’t know how else to say this—vivid simplicity?

KH: It’s both. The first draft comes out simply, the consequence of trying for 40 or so years to learn how to write fiction. If I were able to write like James Agee, so lyrically that it takes your breath away, I might be able to write like that. The second time I didn’t think the reader needed that cue. Also I tried to create awareness through the quality of the light in that scene. It’s dim and even darker where they’re sitting. You’re finding out the rest of the story in those scenes, too. His memory of his parents helps us and helps him and his son as well—

BB: The specters that gather around Dad’s bedside at two different times near the end—shades of his long-dead parents, his lost son, his employees, a woman he’d wronged—lend a startling context to his life. Given the hallucinatory nature of near-death, their appear- ance is altogether believable, but they add to his knowledge and to ours. Can you talk a bit about that time in a slow death like Dad’s when memory begins to merge with reality and shades really do gather?

KH: I have been involved with hospice, and I am aware that these kinds of moments are common in slow deaths. I’ve seen it and I’ve heard people talk about it and I know it happens frequently. Dad has entered into this realm of connection. His impulse is to try to fix his life in the time he has. He’s not shunning what he’s done, he’s very aware of the past. His memory is more present to him than the actual present.

In terms of the structure, in the first visitation I wanted those who appeared to him to be a little confusing to the reader until Mary asks him who he’s talking to, making it evident that no one really is there. The second time I didn’t think the reader needed that cue. Also I tried to create awareness through the quality of the light in that scene. It’s dim and even darker where they’re sitting. You’re finding out the rest of the story in those scenes, too. His memory of his parents helps us and helps him and his son as well—

BB: Without ever slipping into sentimentality Kent Haruf has laid bare the hearts of a dying man, Dad Lewis, a sort of Every- man’s autobiography. The story then set in motion is that of his present life, along with the memories and ghosts from his past. A more painfully “human” character than Dad Lewis is hard to come by and some of those refusal to bend results in tragedy for more than one person, someone chary of open emo- tion, someone who, paradoxically, is ca- pable of the deepest kind of love. The rest of the cast consists of his wife of many years, the daughter who has come home to help care for him; an estranged son who visits him in memory and in dying dreams; assorted neighbors, children and adult alike; the Pastor and his family—all with troubles of their own. For all its rural grace, the high plains town of Holt, Colorado, is no Eden. Bigotry and violence are as much a reality there as they are everywhere. But there is also a wealth of caring that lets the narrative be more accurately, part of the character of humanity as Haruf sees it, sees us. He seems to see in each of us the capability for hope as well as pain, the capacity for redemption as well as sin. Kent Haruf has crafted a tale that is as riveting, as shot with joy, anger, fear, love, re- gret, as life itself—and one that, in its compassionate and profoundly honest view of humanity, really does feel like a kind of benediction.

—Betty Smith

Frances and Bernard, Carlene Bauer

They meet at a writers’ conference and have the most scintillating conversation either has had, there or anywhere else. Since he lives in Boston and she in Phila- delphia, he asks if they can continue their talk via letters. Both committed Catholics, their letters first reflect their spiritual- ity; but as time goes on, the content of those letters begins to change, focusing on their burgeoning relationship. Neither of them really wants this; their priorities belong elsewhere. She, in her way, denies the sparks of love. Elegant, beautifully written, loosely based on the friendship between poet Robert Lowell and short story writer Flannery O’Connor, this is the perfect book to curl up with on a quiet afternoon...—Washington Post

Harvest, Jim Crace

Jim Crace captures the heaven and the hell of rural reality perfectly in this bewitching and bewildering tale of Walter Thrisk, a sturdy, steady man, a widower who suddenly finds himself on the outside in a medieval village where he has lived and worked for decades. Two young men high on morphine begin the trouble, and three strangers, two men and an enchanting woman, appear just in time to take the blame. The real tremors beneath the surface of village life are caused by relentless currents of change and, although said change is from crops to sheep, the results are every bit as pervasive as when, centuries later, motos replaced scythes. And the author’s unswerving dissection defines much of Crace’s work. He digs beneath the surface not just of society but of character in a tale that is by turns blustery, dangerous, surprising, and timeless.—Betty Burton, Nan Talese, $24.95

A Tale for the Time Being, Ruth Ozeki

After a series of misfortunes and tumultuous bullying at school, 16-year-old Nao de- cides to kill herself; but first, she decides to write the history of her 104-year-old great-grandmother’s life in a journal. A number of years later when the diary washes up on a beach in a Hello Kitty lunchbox, an American writer named Ruth discovers it and sets about reading it. The novel follows the developments in these stories as they suddenly begin to intertwine. I normally dislike using the word “weave” in regards to a novel, but the nonchalant efficiency with which it is handled here leaves the reader spinning. Nao’s tale is heartbreaking yet her somehow-cheer- ful attitude throughout the whole ordeal makes the reader, just like Ruth, want to turn the last page...—Meagan Ganssler, Viking, $27.95

FICTION

Y. Marjorie Celona

A baby girl is left on the steps of the YMCA and a young man asks, “Why?” The story then set in motion is that of a life lost and found on the streets of Victo- ria, British Columbia. Shannon is adopted into one foster family after another until he finds his mother. He is the mother you need when you are searching for the mother you missed. Don’t miss this heart-wrenching novel of looking for love in all the wrong places and then, suddenly, finding—love...—Anne Holman, Free Press, $24.99

The Woman Upstairs, Claire Messud

With deft precision, Messud exposes the very heart of a middle-aged, unmarried, childless woman who has fallen in love with a family—an artistic, worldly, blithe family of three—mother, father, son. She believes this is a returned love, but as the novel progresses, the reader discovers she may be deluding herself. At times brutally honest, this is ultimately a terrifically ac- curate portrait of a person’s deepest fears, uncertainties and mis- tions. It is truly astonishing how true-to-life Nora appears, at turns vulnerable, giving, yet selfish and misguided. The story caught me up in its excitement, and as it ran its course, I felt as deeply betrayed by Nora herself did, which is quite an accomplishment for an author to achieve...—Jenny Lyons, Knopf, $25.95

The Nonchalant Efficiency with Which It Is Handled Here Leaves the Reader Spinning
Finding Camlann, Sean Pidgeon

Oh, no, not another book about King Arthur! This author’s point exactly. His protagonist, archeologist Donald Gladstone, is determined to uncover the real source of Arthurian legends in this compelling if scholarly book. Gladstone is a flawed yet likeable character, as is linguistic Julie Llewellyn, they make an appealing pair as they parse through an Old Welsh epic poem searching for clues to the location of Arthur’s final battle and his final resting place, while at the same time parse their own pasts for what has brought them each to this point in their lives. The poem might or might not have historic precedent, just as their parts might or might not illuminate their present in this riveting literary detective story with such obvious antecedents as Possession. Like that antecedent, it is also an affecting and believable love story. But Pidgeon’s true concern is with history itself: its schools of thought, its methodology, its mistakes, the truth it does—and does not—tell. I loved every page. – Betsy Burton, W. W. Norton, $26.95

Fever, Mary Beth Keane

Someone steers, someone coughs, someone snores—we cringe and try to get away and invariably, someone makes the comment, “Boy, she’s a real Typhoid Mary.” In fact, there really was a Typhoid Mary—a poor Irish immigrant whose cooking ability took her into the kitchen of many wealthy families in late 19th century New York City. That some of these families soon succumbed to typhoid fever seemed a coincidence until these family members soon succumbed to the disease. Keane manages to uncover the indomitable spirit of the woman who has been demonized as a carrier of typhoid and, therefore, should be isolated from society. Her tragic story and the creation of the legend of Typhoid Mary are skillfully told in this story of a time and place where much of disease and its transmission was still a mystery. Keane manages to uncover the indomitable spirit of the woman who has been demonized as a carrier of typhoid fever and portray her life as an immigrant in New York City more than a century ago as a life of promise before she was quarantined and held for three years on an island off the coast. One of the young fiction writers chosen as the National Book Foundation’s “5 Under 35,” Keane is a superb writer. – Betsy Burton, Vintage, $15

Finding Camlann

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The Earth Is Not Flat

Katherine Coles

Katherine Coles recently wrote a grant that took her, as poet, along on a scientific expedition to Antarctica. The resultant poems, like most of Coles’s work, examine the intersecting boundaries of science, history, and literature. But her palette is more extrava- gant here, her interests more far-flung and there’s a rest for life, a joy, and a sense of adventure that strike the reader immediately. It’s as if the icy southern light has struck and changed her imagination. Poetry that is light-struck, awe-struck, joyfully anecdotal in tone, evokes not only the natural world of Antarctica but its human history as well—the people who explored, examined, recorded the land. Coles takes us on voyages, across oceans and ice floes, places where penguins gather and where elephant seals calve. She employs humor as well as science, passion along with precision, and wonder blazes through each poem as she captures her reflec- tion—and our own—on the ice. Ed Hirsch uses the word bedazzled to describe The Earth Is Not Flat. Terry Tempest Williams calls it searing and searing. All words that describe these poems exactly. — Betsy Burton, Red Hen Press, $17.95

The Cambridge Companion to American Poetry Since 1945

Jennifer Ashton, editor

The stunning compendium takes as its starting point the period after WWII when poetry, along with the rest of 20th century life, “pointed the way forward” in the world of the imagination. It documented the profound cultural, political, and social changes that took place over 60-plus years, they helped propel American poetry into the world of international debate and with the world of international debate. It is significant that “the American aesthetic” was being changed by people of the 21st century, and those changes are documented in this 2008 anthology. — Betsy Burton, HarperOne, $17.95 Editor’s note: Catherine Wolcott’s essay “The Male Poet” can be read in this issue.

Carry On, Warrior: Thoughts on Life Unarmed

Glennon Doyle Melton

It’s December 26, 2004. An academic Londoner, her husband, their 5- and 7-year-old boys who are bright, active, curious are enjoying a wonderful vacation in Sri Lanka along with a pair of doting grandparents. And then they’re gone, engulfed by the now-infamous tsunami that killed thousands. Only one of the mother is left, submerged, even as the water recedes, in a tide of grief. Drown- ing in sorrow, engulfed in memory, de- tailed, raw alcohol, despair, she wanders the devastated landscape where she lost everything, the devasted terrain of her own mind. She tries again and again to linger in the sunlit patches of the happiness she remembers. She is in those same brief snippets of joy—before we disappear with her back into the dark shroud of the present. I’ve never read a piece of nonfiction like this. I nearly put it down after the second sentence, realizing where I was about to be taken. But I’m more than grateful that I didn’t. — Betsy Burton, HarperOne, $24.95

Slow Fix, Carl Honore

How many quick fixes have you per- formed today? And how many will actually work? In truth, not many. From the 1224.0x792.0 —9—
The Girls of Atomic City, Denise Kiernan
Ms. Kiernan has created a narrative history of the young women in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, who unwittingly played a role in the Manhattan Project that created the atomic bomb used to end our involvement in World War II. These young women, many fresh out of high school, were recruited to work in this small Appalachian town and were forbidden to talk about their work, even to each other. I highly recommend this book for anyone interested in this little-known chapter of our history.

The Uninvited, Liz Jensen
In the near future, with sea levels rising, the United Nations and scientific community on the verge of tearing up Einstein's theories, a pandemic of sabotage breaks out. Hesketh Lock's company gets involved. Month after month, people who have Asperger's syndrome, is good at finding patterns. He soon realizes that the sabotage is just the tip of a very nasty iceberg. Domestic violence plagues the area. Domestic violence caused by children... – Paula Longhurst, Bloomsbury, $25
Maya’s Notebook, Isabel Allende
Maya, newly ensconced in the home of Manuel, an old friend of her grandmother, finds plenty of opportunity to contemplate— and record in her notebook—the events that have brought her to this small Chilian island. Although barely 19, Maya has experienced a lifetime of heartbreak and is sure that her age might suggest. She’s been raised in a rambling house in Berkeley by her step-grandfather Popo, an astronomer, and is aware of the fandom and love for land and sea—a love that lefts 'The Edge of the Earth' high above the traditional boundaries of historical fiction. — Betsy Burton, Atta, $25

Maya’s Notebook
Isabel Allende

The Shelter Cycle, Peter Rock
The Shelter Cycle begins with two 10-year-olds who belong to a religious cult that hypothesizes the end of the world. Three pages in, we meet these same two characters as adults. Francine, married, pregnant, preoccupied with the search for a missing girl, Colville, who has come to see Francine for the first time since their shared childhood, and who is likewise obsessed by the missing girl. As memory reaches out for them, tugging them back into the world of their childhood, the world of the “Messenger” and the “Elementals” of the underground compound in which they were once housed, the reader is pulled willy-nilly in their wake. Rock’s language is a canny mix of narration and interiority; his dialogue juxtaposes the jargon of the sect with the ordinary chatter of kitchen tables and bedrooms, and the land is evoked subtly yet powerfully until all of this—land, home, past, beliefs, family—forms a present that seems at once inescapable and unexpectedly redemptive. Rock somehow manages to find new ways that make us understand what impels them from the inside, feel empathy as well as repugnance, understanding as well as dread. Never has this been more true than in his latest novel. I can’t quit thinking about it. — Betsy Burton, Houghton Mifflin. Editore's note: Peter Rock will be at the bookstore Thursday, April 25 at 7 p.m.

For Adam’s Sake: A Family Saga in Colonial New England, Allegra di Bonaventura
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Leaving Everything Most Loved, Jacqueline Winspear
When an intelligent and caring Indian woman is murdered in London and a young boy runs away from home, Maisie and her team are called upon to solve both cases. Maisie, who had intended to leave her life in London, continued a diary for a diary for decades. Through his eyes, the world of colonial America is revealed, including the often-overlooked fact that slavery existed and was ever-present in the land. That the master/slave relationship in colonial New England was vastly different than it was in the South is illuminated through the author’s scholarship and study of these diaries. Her work is on a par with that of Laurel Thatcher Ulrich ‘A Midwife’s Tale’ and is sure to become a staple in the history of colonial America. — Barbara Harris, Litteworth, Kansas

Who Was Dracula? Jon Steynemeyer
Who Was Dracula? Jon Steynemeyer (April 2013)

The Revisited Fundamentals of Caregiving, Jonathan Evison
Jonathan Evison

Benjamin Benjamin has lost his entire family and is losing the will to live as well; Tvev has lost his mobility and is suffering from a degenerative disease that will eventually cost him his life. Hard to believe such a pair could be funny but they are—frequently and hysterically. In a novel involving, among other things, split and splitting marriages, grief-stricken survivors, helping and helpfulness, a road trip across the West, parents trying to cope with their teenage children, adults trying to grow out of their teenage selves, Evison’s latest is both madcap and deeply moving. And his story-telling ability is nothing short of miraculous. — Betsy Burton, Algonquin, $24.95

The Revised Fundamentals of Caregiving
Jonathan Evison

Fractured Lives, William C. Gordon
San Francisco reporter Samuel Hamilton has grown into his job, pursuing stories against the grain and following the research wherever it takes him—which in this case is the Middle East. The time is the 1960s, and the story that Samuel’s ostensibly-silent partner, Elmer, is a dealer in the basement of city hall. Turns out there’s a world-wide web of motives for the murder involving countries from Switzerland to Israel to Palestine, where the PLO is a nascent but growing force. The FBI shows interest and so does the CIA, not to mention Mosad. To complicate matters further, there’s an unknown woman who, when the case, someone Samuel is determined to identify. He may have to borrow money from his favorite bartender to follow the trail in this lively noir period piece, but follow it he does, across oceans and into danger, giving the reader a fascinating look at the ever-fomenting cauldron of the Middle East circa 1963 in the process. I enjoyed every minute of Fractured Lives. — Betsy Burton, Bay Tree Publishing, $14.95

All That Is, James Salter
From the time he returns home from WWII through his distinguished career in publishing—a job that fits him like a well-tailored suit—he navigated through a succession of highly sexual but always failed affairs, Philip longs for love. As we watch him own the deepest waters of passion, wholly unable to distinguish sex from love or in debt self-love from love of another, see his occasional lapses into outright cruelty as he navigates the men and women he sometimes laugh at, sometimes write with him in anguish, occasionally draw back, shocked by his cruelty. This is a spellbinding journey through the last half of the last century; through the worlds publishing in its heyday; through a fast-changing cultural movement that seems at once inescapable and unexpectedly redemptive. The Shelter Cycle
Peter Rock

Three pages in, we meet these same two characters as adults: Francine, married, pregnant, preoccupied with the search for a missing girl, Colville, who has come to see Francine for the first time since their shared childhood, and who is likewise obsessed by the missing girl. As memory reaches out for them, tugging them back into the world of their childhood, the world of the “Messenger” and the “Elementals” of the underground compound in which they were once housed, the reader is pulled willy-nilly in their wake. Rock’s language is a canny mix of narration and interiority; his dialogue juxtaposes the jargon of the sect with the ordinary chatter of kitchen tables and bedrooms, and the land is evoked subtly yet powerfully until all of this—land, home, past, beliefs, family—forms a present that seems at once inescapable and unexpectedly redemptive. Rock somehow manages to find new ways that make us understand what impels them from the inside, feel empathy as well as repugnance, understanding as well as dread. Never has this been more true than in his latest novel. I can’t quit thinking about it. — Betsy Burton, Houghton Mifflin. Editore’s note: Peter Rock will be at the bookstore Thursday, April 25 at 7 p.m.

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The Shelter Cycle
Peter Rock

The Shelter Cycle begins with two 10-year-olds who belong to a religious cult that hypothesizes the end of the world. Three pages in, we meet these same two characters as adults: Francine, married, pregnant, preoccupied with the search for a missing girl, Colville, who has come to see Francine for the first time since their shared childhood, and who is likewise obsessed by the missing girl. As memory reaches out for them, tugging them back into the world of their childhood, the world of the “Messenger” and the “Elementals” of the underground compound in which they were once housed, the reader is pulled willy-nilly in their wake. Rock’s language is a canny mix of narration and interiority; his dialogue juxtaposes the jargon of the sect with the ordinary chatter of kitchen tables and bedrooms, and the land is evoked subtly yet powerfully until all of this—land, home, past, beliefs, family—forms a present that seems at once inescapable and unexpectedly redemptive. Rock somehow manages to find new ways that make us understand what impels them from the inside, feel empathy as well as repugnance, understanding as well as dread. Never has this been more true than in his latest novel. I can’t quit thinking about it. — Betsy Burton, Houghton Mifflin. Editore’s note: Peter Rock will be at the bookstore Thursday, April 25 at 7 p.m.

All That Is, James Salter

From the time he returns home from WWII through his distinguished career in publishing—a job that fits him like a well-tailored suit—he navigated through a succession of highly sexual but always failed affairs, Philip longs for love. As we watch him own the deepest waters of passion, wholly unable to distinguish sex from love or in debt self-love from love of another, see his occasional lapses into outright cruelty as he navigates the men and women he sometimes laugh at, sometimes write with him in anguish, occasionally draw back, shocked by his cruelty. This is a spellbinding journey through the last half of the last century; through the worlds publishing in its heyday; through a fast-changing cultural movement that seems at once inescapable and unexpectedly redemptive. The Shelter Cycle
Peter Rock

The Shelter Cycle begins with two 10-year-olds who belong to a religious cult that hypothesizes the end of the world. Three pages in, we meet these same two characters as adults: Francine, married, pregnant, preoccupied with the search for a missing girl, Colville, who has come to see Francine for the first time since their shared childhood, and who is likewise obsessed by the missing girl. As memory reaches out for them, tugging them back into the world of their childhood, the world of the “Messenger” and the “Elementals” of the underground compound in which they were once housed, the reader is pulled willy-nilly in their wake. Rock’s language is a canny mix of narration and interiority; his dialogue juxtaposes the jargon of the sect with the ordinary chatter of kitchen tables and bedrooms, and the land is evoked subtly yet powerfully until all of this—land, home, past, beliefs, family—forms a present that seems at once inescapable and unexpectedly redemptive. Rock somehow manages to find new ways that make us understand what impels them from the inside, feel empathy as well as repugnance, understanding as well as dread. Never has this been more true than in his latest novel. I can’t quit thinking about it. — Betsy Burton, Houghton Mifflin. Editore's note: Peter Rock will be at the bookstore Thursday, April 25 at 7 p.m.
Spring-Cleaning? Spring Reading!

Why worry about housekeeping when you could be reading *Housekeeping*? Book clubs of all shapes and sizes meet at the store or other locations and we order books in at a modest discount for all of them. Now you can read your book club's selection on your KOBO and still support your local bookstore. Come in and we'll give you a demonstration.

Readers may be a solitary lot but quite often, a story will pull you in and either make you crazy, or angry, or you just fall in love. That's when you want to talk about it with other people who've read it. Anyway, who wants to clean when there are so many great books out there that need your time and attention?

So, start your own book club OR join one of these...

**Armchair Travel Mystery**
Meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month, 7 p.m. at TKE
March: Love Songs from a Shallow Grave, Colin Cotterill
April: The Last Detective, Peter Lovesey
May: The Fourth Assassin, Matt Beynon Rees
June: City of Veils, Zoe Ferraris

**Teen-Parent Book Club**
Meets the 2nd Saturday of the month, 4-5 p.m. at TKE
March: Code Name Verity, Elizabeth Wein
April: The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, Sherman Alexie
May: Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children, Ransom Riggs

**Roz Reads!**
$10 per evening paid to Roz, meets last Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday of the month, 7 p.m. at Roz’s house
March 25, 26, 27: Angle of Repose, Wallace Stegner (Part I-IV)
April 22, 23, 24: Angle of Repose, Wallace Stegner (Part V-end)
May 28, 29: The Round House, Louise Erdrich

**Margaret’s Book Club**
Meets 2nd Monday of the month, 7 p.m. at TKE
March: The Sense of an Ending, Julian Barnes
April: The Orphan Master’s Son, Adam Johnson

**SLC Lesbian Book Club**
Meets 1st Wednesday of the month, 7 p.m. at TKE
April: Annie on My Mind, Nancy Garden
May: Far From the Tree, Andrew Solomon

More details at [www.kingsenglish.com](http://www.kingsenglish.com)

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**Events for Children & Teens**

**Kathy Reichs and Brendan Reichs**
Monday, March 18, 7 p.m. The New York Times best-selling mother-son writing team will read from and sign *Code: A Virals Novel*. Presented with The Salt Lake City Public Library at the Main Branch, 210 East 400 South.

**Miss Moore**
Thought Otherwise
Saturday, March 23, 11 a.m. Jan Pinborough will read from and sign her new children's biography of Anne Carroll Moore, who created the Children's Room in the New York Public Library.

**Loren Long**
Monday, March 25, 4 p.m. New York Times bestselling author & illustrator Long will read and sign *Otis and the Puppy*, his third Otis picture book. Signing line tickets will be distributed to customers who purchase *Otis and the Puppy* from The King's English Bookshop. Those customers are also allowed to bring up to two books from home through the signing line. General admission to the event is free. Long also illustrated a best-selling edition of Watty Piper's classic, *The Little Engine That Could*, and President Barack Obama's book, *Of Thee I Sing: A Letter to My Daughters*.

**Liezl Shurtliff**
Saturday, April 27, 2 p.m. Debut author Liezl Shurtliff will present and sign her new book *Rump: The True Story of Rumpelstiltskin*. In a land of magic, curses, gold and familiar fairytale characters, Rump is on a quest to learn his full name. With friendship, courage, and a bit of humor, he may just live to tell the tale.

In order for as many kids as possible to meet Jack and Annie, they will stamp only one book from home per child. Jack and Annie will also stamp all new books purchased at The King's English Bookshop.

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Spring into March with...

Mark the upcoming March/April holidays with books: Start by celebrating the Irish, learn the meaning of Passover and end with an Easter basket full of books and bunnies!

Here are some of our favorites for each holiday:

For St. Patrick’s Day, a pair of green socks and…

Too Many Leprechauns, Stephen Krensky
St. Patrick’s Day, Anne Rockwell
Patrick, Tomie dePaola
Green Shamrocks, Eve Bunting
St. Patrick’s Day in the Morning, Eve Bunting

Learn more about Passover with two lovely books,
The Passover Lamb, Linda Eve Bunting Marshall
The Longest Night, Laurel Snyder

And fill a grassy Easter basket with an egg or two and...

Easter Bunny on the Loose, Wendy Max
Marley and the Great Easter Egg Hunt, John Grogan
Easter Bugs, David A. Carter
Seven Little Rabbits, John Becker
The Easter Egg, Jan Brett
Ollie’s Easter Eggs, Olivier Dunrea

Congratulations to the 2013 ALA winners!

Newbery
One is Not a · Ivan
Klassen
Caldecott
This is Not My Hat
Printz
H.O.R.S.E.
Christopher Meyers

The Black Rabbit,
Philippa Leathers
Rabbit can’t get away from the dark mysterious stranger. Rabbit wonders, as he hides and dodges, why he is being so persistently followed. Then, when the big bad wolf wants to make Rabbit into a snack, the stranger surprises Rabbit and the reader! – Candlewick, $14 (3 and up)

Frog Song, Brenda Z. Guiberson and Gennady Spirin
This beautiful book, combining poetic writing, amazing illustrations and an environmental plea, is a reminder of how important this small species is to the well-being of our planet. The nonfiction pages in the back identify all the frogs in a book that will fit well into school and classroom libraries. – Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, $17.99 (4 and up)

Rose Red & Snow White, Ruth Sanderson
Readers will know the story, and fans of Sanderson’s other fairy tales, Cinderella and Twelve Dancing Princesses, will immediately recognize her lush, rich illustrations. This is an illustrated edition for any fairy tale section. – Interlink, $16.95 (all ages)

H.O.R.S.E., Christopher Meyers
This version of H.O.R.S.E. is an exercise in imagination in which the two players start off in a routine way, but talk themselves into a much larger game. This is the kind of book that can pull readers happily into subjects they didn’t know they liked! – Egmont, $18.99 (8 and up)

Otis and the Puppy, Loren Long
Otis and all his friends love playing hide and seek, but when the new puppy gets lost, Otis will have to be brave enough to go find him. Readers will love meeting Otis’s new friend and cheering for him in this third book in the series in which Long continues the artistic traditions started in the first book. Striking art in tonal shades of black and gray with eye-catching flashes of red make the Otis books stand out on the shelf. – Penguin $17.99 (all ages)

That Is Not a Good Idea!, Mo Willems
Oh so funny! Laugh out loud as Mo Willems shows readers “why that is not a good idea.” The hungry fox is going to make the most of his afternoon stroll with the plump goose but the baby geese have something to say about every move. Willems’ artwork makes this a picture book that will stay on your shelves for a long time. – Harper, $17.99 (all ages)

A Splash of Red: The Life and Art of Horace Pippin,
Jeff Bryant and Melissa Sweet
Even as a child Horace Pippin loved drawing and painting, but after he was severely injured in WWI, he thought he would never draw again. However his overwhelming desire to create pushed him back into the world of art. He began to use his left hand to move his right hand and after three painstaking years he finished that first painting. Horace Pippin is an American master and his art can be seen all over the country. Sweet’s illustrations bring this story to life. – Random House, $17.99 (3 and up)
You Never Heard of Willie Mays?!, Jonathan Winter & Terry Widener
Willie Mays’ dad knew that his son could play ball, and after five years in the Negro leagues (Willie started at age 15) when he joined the mediocre NY Giants, at his first at bat, Willie hit the ball out of the stadium! Mays could do it all, catch, throw and hit—all of sudden the Giants were in contention and Willie Mays was a star. He was tremendous athlete who worked hard at everything he did. This is the perfect biography for anyone interested in baseball or Mays. The artwork and material at the end of the book bring Mays to life for young readers. – Random House, $17.99 (4 and up)

A Little Book of Sloth, Lucy Cooke
Who knew that the sloth could be so cute, so endearing? Cooke, that’s who, and readers will quickly feel the same way. In her book, which is filled with photos and information about a baby sloth orphanage in Costa Rica, kids are introduced to some of the “superstar” sloths, like Buttercup, Mateo, and Ubu whose days are slow, filled with hugs, baths and, occasionally, medical treatments. This is what nonfiction for young readers should look like. I loved it and now I love sloths. – Simon & Schuster, $16.99 (all ages)

The Slither Sisters #2 Tales from Lovecraft Middle School, Charles Gilman
Robert and his friends defeated Professor Gargoyle and now must take on Sarah and Sylvia Price and their evil plan to kidnap the entire 7th grade class at Lovecraft Middle School. Glenn (the school bully), Pp and Squeak (rats) are all convinced that getting involved in the fight will be the end of everyone. They discover that the school is full of gates to other places, some even worse than middle school. Adventure, a little bit of scary and an awesome “morphing” all add up to a fun read. – Quirk $13.99 (8 and up)

The Runaway King, Jennifer Nielsen
Jaron’s story is an on-again-off-again tale. When he is finally on the throne, the first thing that happens is an assassination attempt, and it looks as if the kingdom of Cathya will have to go to war. He realizes that his presence makes it more dangerous for the realm and that he must flee to save it. The False Prince book one and as Nielsen continues to reveal Jaron’s character in this fast-paced sequel, she will surprise readers with each of his choices. This is adventure at its best. – Scholastic, $17.99 (10 and up)

The Price of Freedom, Judith Bloom Fradin and Dennis Brindell Fradin
John Price had fled from slavery and sought safety in Oberlin, Ohio. When slaves found him two years later, it was the townspeople who rose up to save him. This story is another great example of how a small group of people can make a difference. Powerful text and strong illustrations add up to a must-have piece of history. – St. Martin, $16.99 (7 and up)

Out of the Easy, Ruta Sepetys
Sepetys (Between Shades of Gray) was a staff favorite last year offers dramatically different history in her new book, which is set in 1970s New Orleans. Josie Morano is trying desperately to get away from her mother, who is a prostitute working for Willie, a local Madame in the French Quarter. While Josie is working and dreaming of leaving Smith, her mom is involved in a murder that threatens everything Josie is striving for. There is so much more than a murder mystery here. Madame Willie is a source of strength and love for Josie, the well-to-do father wants to help Josie, but for a very steep price. The reader learns what a powerful thing a dream can be as Sepetys draws a compelling picture of New Orleans and a main character possessed of an emotional and believable voice. I couldn’t put it down! – Penguin, $17.99 (14 and up)

The Madness Underneath, Maureen Johnson
After her brutal encounter with ghosts from the past (The Name of the Star), Rory is trying to recover and get on with her life. She isn’t sure where she fits in, but she is pretty certain she can’t go back to her old life. While she continues to explore her newfound abilities, others may want to take advantage of them. Ghosts still populate this world, adding to the creepy factor, but the humans are far scarier. Add a little romance, a surprise ending, and, you too will be looking forward to the next book. – Penguin, $17.99 (13 and up)

Duelled, Elise Chapman
West Grayer has one month to track down her genetic alternate, her twin, and kill her, in order to prove that she is the “worthy” one. This premise takes dystopia to another level of creepy. Chapman has written a fast-paced adventure with a very resourceful young girl at its heart. West knows she is ready for the challenge but is scared by her past and her future. Like readers, she is questioning the value of this system in a book that will inspire some interesting conversations! – Random House, $16.99 (12 and up)

Out of Nowhere, Maria Padian
America is a country of immigrants; most of us started out that way. Padian shows readers a very clear picture of Somali wartime refugees who are trying to make it work in America. Tom is the captain of his soccer team in an old mill town in Vermont. When a group of refugees shows up and changes the soccer team, Tom and the rest of his community are challenged not only to tolerate these kids, but to reexamine what acceptance means. Add all of the “normal” high school challenges, and you have a book that counts readers will love. – Random House, $16.99 (12 and up)

Youth Adult for Forthcoming

Come to a reception for
Jennifer Adams
author of the BabyLit books!

Thursday, April 6 – 8 p.m.
More Upcoming Events for Adults

Kent Haruf, *Benediction*  
**Wednesday, March 20, 7 p.m.**

Lev Grossman, *The Magician King*  
**Thursday, March 28, 7 p.m.**

J. Kevin Morris, *Daddy’s Diary*  
**Thursday, April 11, 7 p.m.**

Alexander McCall Smith  
**SLC Downtown Library**  
**Monday, April 15, 7 p.m.**

Brian Switek, *My Beloved Brontosaurus*  
**Tuesday, April 16, 7 p.m.**

Julia Corbett, *Seven Summers*  
**Thursday, April 18, 7 p.m.**

Lucinda Scala Quinn, *Mad Hungry Cravings*  
**Tuesday, April 23, 7 p.m.**

Jonathan Evison, *The Revised Fundamentals of Caregiving*  
**Wednesday, April 24, 7 p.m.**

Peter Rock, *The Shelter Cycle*  
**Thursday, April 25, 7 p.m.**

**dawn april lonsinger, Whelm**  
**Friday, April 26, 7 p.m.**

Kevin T. Jones, *Shrinking Jungle*  
**Tuesday, April 30, 7 p.m.**

See also calendars on pages 1 and 15