

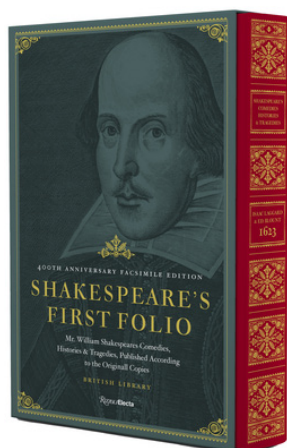
Kitchen Dispatch

Dear Neighbors,

In my dreams the other night I was bested by turmeric: my white outfit was entirely splattered with the yellow dye spice. It was a silly dream, but upon waking, a welcome reminder that cooking season is upon us! The kitchen is one of my favorite rooms in the house at this time of year, filling my home with the smells of curries and stews, roasts and briskets, breads and cookies, and warm spiced drinks. My husband is a process cook—detail oriented to a fault, he wants to master techniques that create melt-in-your-mouth textures and explosive flavors. I am a product cook, interested mostly in the result:

the feasting. I rarely use the kitchen to its fullest, but I was trained to by my mother, and I will if it is for special occasions, especially for guests. Cooking is one of our favorite gifts, deeply personal, and a basis for our sense of both self and community. Is it any wonder then, that we have an entire bookshelf devoted to cookbooks in our home? This is a time of year filled with special occasions, so both of us will be in the kitchen more, and my shelf is in danger of overflowing as I look through all the amazing cookbooks coming out now (see page 3). Let us whet your appetites as well. May your feasts this season be delicious and filled with laughter. May all your bookshelves be overflowing. —Michaela Riding

Happy Anniversary Shakespeare!



Shakespeare's First Folio: 400th Anniversary Facsimile Edition,
William Shakespeare

At any given moment across the world, a Shakespeare play is likely being performed. From a group of children acting out a medley of plays in a park in Stratford-upon-Avon, to countless high school drama departments and English classes, to a sleek, professional re-interpretation of *Richard II* complete with a floating grand piano, to a spooky community performance of *Macbeth* at our own Castle Amphitheater in Provo on the outskirts of the Utah State Hos-

pital. The Bard has worked his way into our social fabric like almost none other, and our language and idioms and culture are the richer for it. Although I firmly believe watching (or acting) is better than reading when it comes to plays, none of this would be happening at all if the plays had never been written down and printed, and for that we must thank the First Folio. First printed in 1623, the First Folio contains thirty-six of Shakespeare's plays in one volume and is the only source for eighteen of his plays. Without it, works such as *The Tempest*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Macbeth* would have been lost. Of the 750 copies originally produced, about 200 remain today. This is the 400th Anniversary of the First Folio, and the British Library has published a full-sized facsimile in celebration. A sure gift for any lover of language and history. —Michaela Riding, Rizzoli, \$135

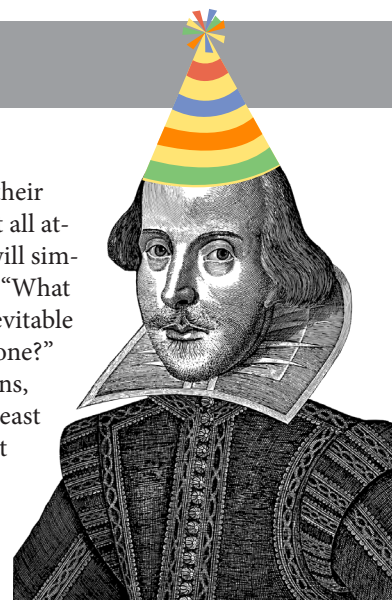
The Play's the Thing

If you ask a bookseller to name their favorite anything, they will resist all attempts to pin them down. You will simply get a question in return, like "What genre?" "Old or new?" or the inevitable "How could I possibly pick just one?" And if you answer those questions, then you will be subjected to at least a half hour of explanations about how, if forced to choose, THIS one, but actually not because of this OTHER one, and how really they go together anyway and should be read as such, etc.

If you make it to the end of that explanation, you will both be hungry and thirsty, and need to take a snack break. And if you take a snack break, you will need something to talk about while you relax. But if you talk about books and ask a question... You see, booksellers are predictably maximalist when it comes to the written word, to *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* proportions. Even knowing that, I foolishly endeavored to ask my fellow booksellers at TKE to name their favorite Shakespeare plays. It was not easy. Shakespeare plays are a treasure trove. Our resident thespian Annie Mark asked, as if on cue: "How can one choose? *Hamlet* is the finest play ever written, *King Lear* the most tragic, *Othello* such a grand comment on human feelings, *Macbeth* the shortest and most fun to act in, *Henry V* the best of the histories, and *Twelfth Night* with its gender switching: sublime!" But I stubbornly carried on, dear neighbors, and here are our results.*

Three-way tie for most votes: *Macbeth*, *As You Like It*, *Much Ado About Nothing*

continued on page 4...



Remembrances

Remembering Ann Berman

Ann Stevenson Berman, co-founder of The King's English Bookshop, died, surrounded by her four lovely daughters Priscilla, Katie, Jane, and Sara, on September 11, 2023. Ann, who was born December 15, 1933, in Richmond, Indiana, grew up in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, graduated from Mount Holyoke College, worked for two years in Washington DC, and then ran into an old high school friend, Dan Berman, at Columbia University where she was receiving a Masters in Special Education. She married Dan (who, according to their daughters, always said she was the smartest person he knew—an opinion with which she agreed) and came with him to Salt Lake City where she raised her children, read, gardened, and spent what little time the children left her with the friends she made so easily. As the girls approached adolescence, Ann, who was by then divorced, started The King's English with one of those friends, Betsy Burton. The two women, who were renting rooms in a small building on 15th and 15th where they worked on the novels and short stories they hoped to publish, decided that what their city needed was a bookstore where people could browse in comfort and community, a place with chairs and benches, books for all kinds of readers who would be made to feel as at home as they did in their living rooms. The two women not only created such a space in those (by now three) rented rooms, they did so with a decidedly idiosyncratic inventory cobbled together from the books on their own shelves and by reading the minuscule print, line by line, of the two gigantic author volumes of "Books in Print," writing down titles of books they knew and loved by authors from E.B. White to Wallace Stegner to John Irving, Edith Wharton to Shirley Hazzard to Margaret Atwood, Frances Steegmuller to Isak Dinesen to Shirley Jackson, Andre Brink to E.L. Doctorow to Robertson Davies, typing them laboriously onto purchase orders they created for the various publishers with which they opened accounts. When the books arrived, they were shelved in bookcases a local carpenter



Back, left to right: Priscilla Kaufman, Jane Bourgeois
Front, left to right: Katie Bailey, Ann Berman, Sara Jensen

had built, and The King's English Bookshop opened on September 10, 1977. The two served tea and coffee (to all but small children) while chatting about this book and that one, querying customers about their own reading preferences and generally creating a space that readers came to love. Ann subsequently left TKE for a (far better paying) job at the Salt Lake City Library where she continued to talk books to readers. Although she considered herself a book snob, Ann firmly believed that, as she told her daughters over and over, all books spoke to someone and NO books should be banned.

The King's English likewise continued to talk books to readers, to protect those books from any who would censure them and to welcome people into their home away from home in a bookstore that grew room by room over the years but maintained at its heart, along with its unique presence, that same idiosyncratic inventory which shines still on its shelves—mingled with the preferences of booksellers who have come after, but maintaining at its core books by those original beloved authors. Ann finally left Salt Lake for Baltimore to be with her children who had migrated East over the years. She died peacefully in their midst, maintaining until the end her passion for books.

Remembering Wade Bentley

A beautiful bookstore friend was taken from us tragically and too soon in a car accident this summer. Wade Bentley was many things including an English professor, poet, father, son, grandpa, photographer, and hiker. You could say he was one with the moose of Big Cottonwood Canyon. And he was a reader who loved spending time in the shop and really loved bringing his kids and then his grandkids for a special day and a special book (or ten). His book of poetry, *What is Mine*, lives on our shelves in his favorite room. We found this poem

Bookstore, 15th and 15th

All the years I've been coming here
alone or with my kids, buying them books
first with pictures and pop-ups
then gradually on to sterner stuff,
watching anxiously what they would do
with all the worlds I once walked.

And now they've read much more than I,
buy their own books in their favorite
little shops. Most times now,
here in mine, I am content simply to sit
surrounded by a growing rind of books
I will never read.

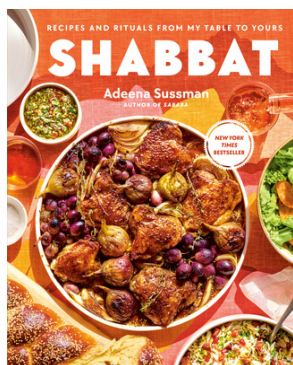
But by squatter's rights it is still my chair,
in this corner warmed by the friction
of word on word, the slow decay
of paper and ink. Imposing ranks
of spines, at attention or at ease—at least
they still know me to speak to.

Thanks

cwb

laying in the chair there one day, many, many years ago. We weren't sure who wrote it at the time but we loved it, framed it, and hung it on the wall leading into the poetry room. It was Wade of course. We'll miss you friend; hope you have enough books to read in heaven!

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE



FOOD LOVERS

Shabbat: Recipes and Rituals from My Table to Yours, Adeena Sussman, Avery, \$35

An Invitation to Indian Cooking: 50th Anniversary Edition: A Cookbook, Madhur Jaffrey, Knopf, \$40

The French Chef Cookbook, Julia Child, Knopf, \$35

Juke Joints, Jazz Clubs, and Juice: A Cocktail Recipe Book: Cocktails from Two Centuries of African American Cookbooks, Toni Tipton-Martin, Clarkson Potter, \$30

Start Here: Instructions for Becoming a Better Cook: A Cookbook, Sohla El-Waylly, Knopf, \$45

Winter Cheers: Cozy Cold Weather Cocktail and Drink Recipes, Adams Media, \$16.99

The Wine and Cheese Board Deck: 50 Pairings to Sip and Savor, Meg Quinn, Jennifer Fiedler, Haley Davis, Clarkson Potter, \$20

The Secret of Cooking: Recipes for an Easier Life in the Kitchen, Bee Wilson, W.W. Norton & Company, \$40

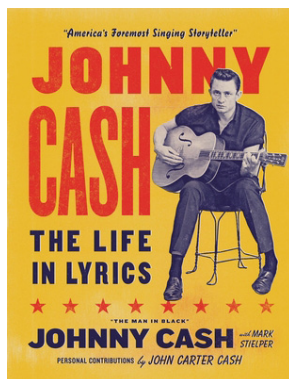
MUSIC FIENDS

Johnny Cash: The Life in Lyrics, Johnny Cash, John Carter Cash, Voracious, \$55

Behind the Seams: My Life in Rhinestones, Dolly Parton, Ten Speed Press, \$50

Bob Dylan: Mixing up the Medicine, Mark Davidson, Callaway, \$100

My Name is Barbara, Barbara Streisand, Viking, \$47

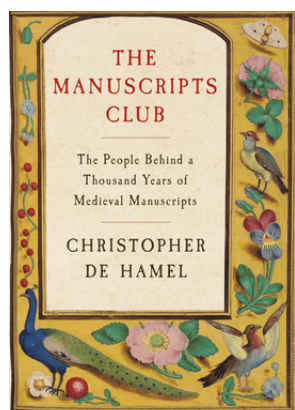


HISTORY BUFFS

The Manuscripts Club: The People Behind a Thousand Years of Medieval Manuscripts, Christopher de Hamel, Penguin Press, \$50

The Colors of Life: Early Color Photography, Stuart Humphryes, gestalten, \$75

Blood Memory: The Tragic Decline and Improbable Resurrection of the American Buffalo, Dayton Duncan,



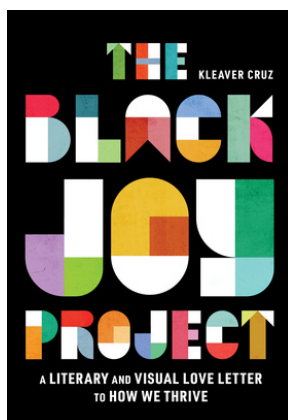
Ken Burns, Knopf, \$40

The Explorers Club: A Visual Journey of the Past, Present, and Future of Exploration, The Explorer's Club, Ten Speed Press, \$35

FILM AFICIONADOS

Hollywood and the Movies of the Fifties: The Collapse of the Studio System, the Thrill of Cinerama, and the Invasion of the Ultimate Body Snatcher—Television, Foster Hirsch, Knopf, \$40

The Princess Bride Ultimate Trivia Challenge: 400 Questions to Test Your Movie Knowledge, RP Studio, \$20



ART FANS

The Black Joy Project, Kleaver Cruz, Mariner Books, \$35

The Memoirs of Miss Chief Eagle Testickle: Vol.1: A True and Exact Accounting of the History of Turtle Island, Kent Monkman, Gisèle Gordon, McClelland & Stewart, \$35

The Memoirs of Miss Chief Eagle Testickle: Vol.2: A True and Exact Accounting of the History of Turtle Island,

Kent Monkman, Gisèle Gordon, McClelland & Stewart, \$33

Smithsonian Asian Pacific American History, Art, and Culture in 101 Objects, Theodore S. Gonzalves, Smithsonian Books, \$40

The Upside-Down World: Meetings with the Dutch Masters, Benjamin Moser, Liveright, \$39.95

NATURE LOVERS

Entangled Life: The Illustrated Edition: How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Merlin Sheldrake, Random House, \$40

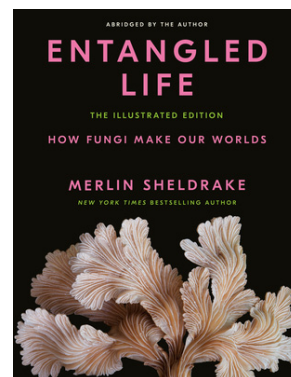
Winter Solstice: An Essay, Nina MacLaughlin, Black Sparrow Press, \$14.95

A Nature Poem for Every Winter Evening, Jane McMorland Hunter, Batsford, \$19.95

Bennu 3-D: Anatomy of an Asteroid, Dante S. Lauretta, University of Arizona Press, \$50

Grizzly 399: The World's Most Famous Mother Bear, Thomas D. Mangelsen, Rizzoli, \$60

Adventuress: Women Exploring the Wild, Carolina Amell, Prestel, \$55



HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

BOOK LOVERS

Purple Rising: Celebrating 40 Years of the Magic, Power, and Artistry of The Color Purple, Lisa Funderburg, Atria Books, \$45

The Iliad, Homer, translated by Emily Wilson, W.W. Norton & Company, \$39.95

50 Years of Ms: The Best of the Path-finding Magazine that Ignited a Revolution, Katherine Spillar, Knopf, \$50

Edith Eger Boxed Set: The Choice, The Gift, Edith Eva Eger, Scribner, \$52

The Hobbit: Illustrated by the Author, J.R.R. Tolkien, William Morrow, \$75

The Silmarillion: Special Edition, J.R.R. Tolkien, William Morrow, \$195

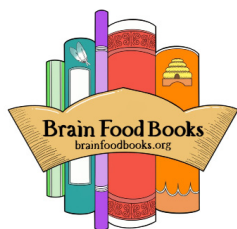
The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien: Revised and Expanded Edition, J.R.R. Tolkien, William Morrow, \$40

FOR THOSE WHO HATE SURPRISES

Libro.fm Audiobook Credit Bundles – Visit our website or speak to one of our booksellers for how to gift audiobook credits! Your friend will be able to choose which audiobooks they want for themselves. libro.fm/kingsenglish

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE SURPRISES

Book-a-Month Club Subscriptions – Visit our website or speak to one of our booksellers to sign up for one of our book club subscription services. Hand chosen books will be sent throughout the year! www.kingsenglish.com/book-month-program



FOR A GOOD CAUSE

BRAIN FOOD BOOKS – Consider donating to our non-profit, Brain Food Books. Because Kids Need to Read! brainfoodbooks.org

BESTSELLERS

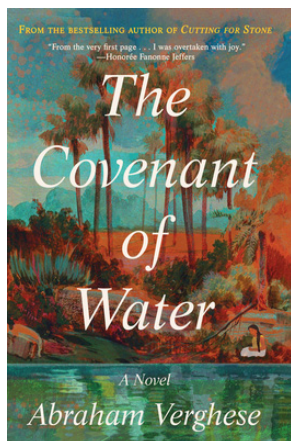
Did you miss them? Don't forget this year's bestseller books make great gifts too!

The Covenant of Water, Abraham Verghese, Grove Press, \$32

Demon Copperhead, Barbara Kingsolver, Harper, \$32.50

Tom Lake, Ann Patchett, Harper, \$30

The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store, James McBride, Riverhead Books, \$28



Happy Anniversary Shakespeare!

Runner-up: **The Tempest**

Honorable Mentions: **A Midsummer Night's Dream, Romeo and Juliet, Twelfth Night, Hamlet, King Lear, Othello, Henry V**

*Nathan Spofford rejected the premise entirely and instead gave us his list of Shakespeare Bests:

Best comedy duo in Messina: Dogberry and Verges (**Much Ado About Nothing**)

Best trio upon the heath: The Weird Sisters (**Macbeth**)

Best moving forest in Scotland: Birnam Wood (**Macbeth**)

Best disguise in France: The young man who played Rosalind disguised as Ganymede and wooed Orlando as either and both (**As You Like It**)

Best minor characters in Denmark: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (**Hamlet**)

Best state capital in an Athenian Wood: Helena (**A Midsummer Night's Dream**)

Best ass in Athens: Nick Bottom (**A Midsummer Night's Dream**)

Best worst day in Rome: March 15 (**Julius Caesar**)

Best cheeky thief in Illyria: Sir Toby Belch (**Twelfth Night**)

Best double for the man from Stratford: Prospero (**The Tempest**)

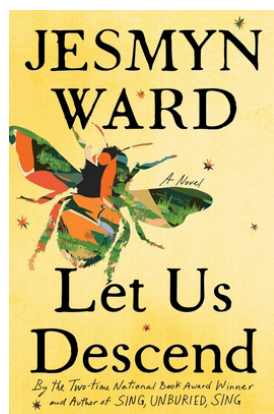
What is YOUR favorite Shakespeare play?

Brain Food Books Spotlight

Brain Food Books was honored to host Jason Reynolds (**Stuntboy, Stamped, Ghost**) at Rose Park Elementary and Bryant Middle School, where 770 books were given to Title One students thanks to our reader's generous donations. Reynolds brought so much energy to the students, and inspired children and educators alike with his passion. Just existing won't build strength, but reading can teach us how to listen to ourselves and hear our own voices. Reading is an essential skill, and one Brain Food Books is committed to helping every person cultivate.



Calvin Crosby, Melissa Engel (Literacy Coach SL District), Jason Reynolds, Mickey George at Rose Park Elementary



Let Us Descend, Jesmyn Ward

Taking us by the hand and walking us along the trail with child/woman Annis through one Dante-esque circle of hell after another, Jesmyn Ward helps us, step by wrenching step, to descend into the world of slavery, a world we may have thought we knew but did not. Fathered through rape, sold into ever darker caverns of despair, Annis carries with her the harshly incandescent love of her mother, the more confusing, controlling, lonely oversight of her magically reappearing

grandmother, collective memories of Amazonian ancestry and of the secret, verdant forests that surround her and suffuse her being with magic as she travels the Carolinas, New Orleans, and the sugar plantations of Louisiana. Only rarely does a book shock the reader into seeing life in whole new ways—the pain of it yes, but its spiritual nature (in this case springing not from religion but from human resilience) and the impermeable boundaries of love. On the one hand the book is deeply personal, exploring in precise and indelible detail the grief and ongoing, shattering disbelief of Annis as she is forced to face many horrors, among them a woman whose unseeing, miserly banality is a portrait of pure evil. On the other hand, *Let Us Descend* takes us on a journey as universal as it is tragic, one that encompasses the darkest places in the hearts of humankind as well as the unquenchable light and love that allows us to endure. And sometimes, not just to survive but to transcend. Even the most brilliantly evocative tellers of the tale of black enslavement do not conjure so compellingly the personal reality that is searing separation from all connection (to family, to friends, even to common bonds of suffering), or the globally terrifying essence of evil that slavery and human trafficking forced whole populations to endure for centuries. Somehow, miraculously, Ward has done both, not just helping us to bear witness but, through an act of extraordinary imagination, making the reality of slavery a part of our own memories, our very souls, and thus giving us the divine ability to really see its present as well as its past incarnation. —Betsy Burton, Scribner, \$28

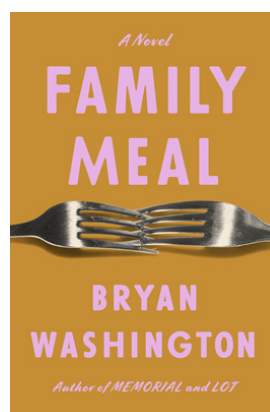
The MANIAC, Benjamin Labatut

If you watched the movie *Oppenheimer* and want more, this is the book for you. This book tells of John von Neumann, one of the minor physicists who worked on the Manhattan Project and eventually invented the first programmable computer leading the way for the AI revolution that we see today in technology. With genius and precision, von Neumann takes his findings and himself into strange and dangerous places which drives him toward madness. Structured in triptych, the plot is fascinating and the narrative unnerving in a way that will keep you on the edge of your seat. Will von Neumann descend into the madness of his own invention, or will he transcend and win over the masses? —Brady Parkin, Penguin Press, \$28



Roman Stories, Jhumpa Lahiri

At its core, this compilation of stories is an anthology of the home: What does it mean to have one? To make one? To intrude upon one? To lose one? These are the questions, amongst others, that Jhumpa Lahiri thoughtfully poses to readers in her newest book *Roman Stories*, which uses Italy's capital city not only as its canvas but its paint. Each of the nine stories is immersed in Italian culture in such a precise and authentic way that the reader can't help but be transported to each mentioned piazza and cobblestone street. It truly is a stunning work of literature that will undoubtedly leave you longing for the road not taken. —Thea Soter, Knopf, \$27

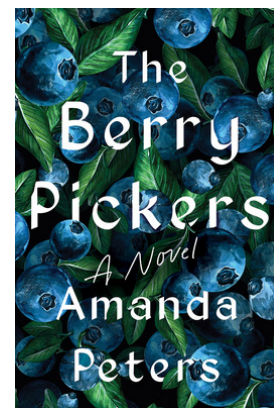


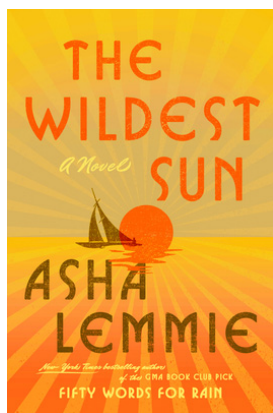
Family Meal, Bryan Washington

After the death of his partner, Cam returns to his hometown of Houston where he is confronted with his past while coping with grief. Through this, Cam is accompanied by Kai's ghost while reuniting with former friend and sometimes lover TJ. This is a story of friendship, connection, and community, the people you invite to your table. It may not always be who you've wanted, but it will often be who you've needed. This book is stunning and emotional and worth every tear that fell out of my eye. —Brady Parkin, Riverhead Books, \$28

The Berry Pickers, Amanda Peters

The tragedy that befell so many Indigenous families whose children were stolen from them and raised as white kids in non-Indigenous homes with no memory of their true lives, is the subject of this daring debut novel. Joe is dying from cancer and is haunted by the day his little sister, Ruthie, disappeared from the edge of the berry fields in Maine where their family worked as migrant workers every summer. Norma grows up in a well-to-do household with a distant father and over-protective mother near Boston wondering why she has visions she cannot understand which her mother refuses to accept as anything other than an overactive imagination. One day as she and her aunt attend a protest, a tall Native man stares at her and cries out "Ruthie!" Norma tries to reconcile what has happened and she is stonewalled once again by her parents. When her father dies and her mother begins to fall to the ravages of dementia, a secret slips from her lips that leads Norma to discover the truth of both her life and Joe's. Readers who enjoyed *The Vanishing Half* and *Woman of Light* will be thrust into this riveting tale from an author we hope will continue telling such heartbreaking and light bringing stories. —Anne Stewart Mark, Catapult, \$27





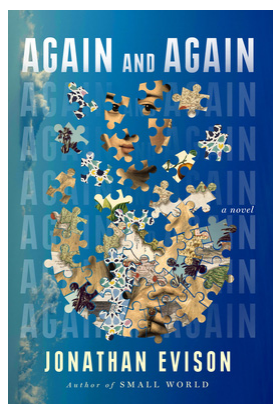
***The Wildest Sun*, Asha Lemmie**

Delphine is a writer and daughter of a woman who was part of the Lost Generation in Paris during the 1920s. All her life, she has been told she is the illegitimate daughter of Ernest Hemingway. As such she leaves an untenable situation in Paris to follow Hemingway to New York and Cuba in the hopes that a reunion will change her troubled life. Her impulsive ways and bad luck create situations which propel the story to its conclusion. Along the way she grows up and discovers who

she truly is. —Christina Richards, Dutton, \$28

***Again and Again*, Jonathan Evison**

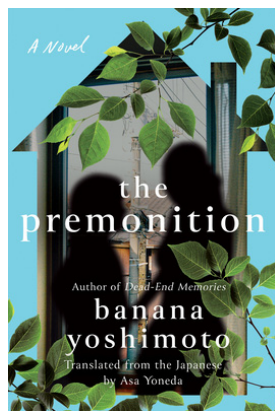
Eugene Miles is one hundred and five years old. The admittance records at Desert Green, the eldercare facility where he's anchored to the one existence he hopes to be his last, list him as ninety-three years old. The discrepancy doesn't end there; the series of past life stories he tells his new nursing assistant, Angel, has him roaming through medieval Spain as a young thief eleven hundred years ago, eventually showing up in Elizabethan England as Oscar Wilde's cat, and finally dropping into the 20th century as a decorated Marine and lonely farm boy. He's more than ready to call it quits with these never-ending lives of his. Mainly because not one of them has reunited him with Gayla, the love of his life that he fell hard for as a young Visigoth. The staff at Desert Green mostly shake their heads and marvel at the old man's historical accuracies, but Angel doesn't care how old "Geno" really is or if his stories are true or false. Angel is about to lose the woman he loves and Geno knows better than anyone how going back again and again, never giving up, is the only hope he has for getting her back. *Again and Again* transports you to other times, other lives, some hard and cruel experiences, each one adding up to one more time, and this time, with love. —Val Kittel, Dutton, \$28



***The Premonition*, Banana Yoshimoto, transl. Asa Yoneda**

A literal and figurative journey of self-discovery unfolds in this quietly beautiful Japanese novel. Yayoi has no memory of her childhood. As her unlikely journey evolves, so does the memory of her earlier life and things begin to fall into place. Although the translation is occasionally clunky, the simplicity of the story transcends this to tell an evocative tale.

—Christina Richards, Counterpoint, \$24



***Blackouts*, Justin Torres**

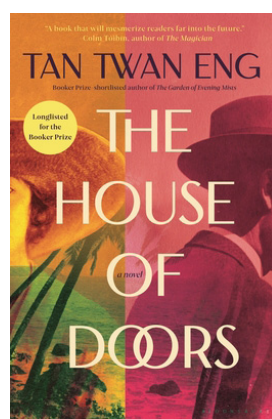
In a mixed-media presentation including photographs and manuscripts as well as standard written word, Torres gives us a story of a young man's friendship with an older man who is nearing his own

expiration. We learn that Juan, our older character, has been working on a project that confronts erasure and gaps in a specific volume of history regarding queer individuals and queer life in the early 20th century. It is this project that Juan wants to pass on so it may continue. This intensely smart and highly innovative presentation adds layers of dimension and intentional obscurity for the reader to sit with as they read. The deeper you want to go, the more you will find. —Brady Parkin, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, \$30



***The House of Doors*, Tan Twan Eng**

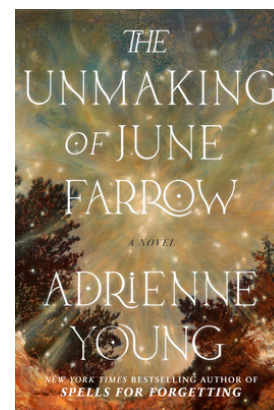
"A story can carry a name beyond the clouds, beyond even time itself." This story, based on true events, interweaves the 1947 world of W. Somerset Maugham (Willie) and his lover and friends, and the 1910 world inhabited by Dr. Sun Yat Sen and threaded by a forgotten murder trial. The action moves forward and back in both time and place. Secrets abound—between lovers, both male/male and male/female, both British and Chinese, both activist and patriot. Willie's 2-week visit



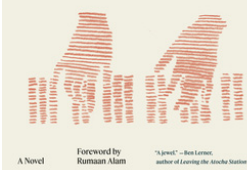
with long-time friends, Robert Hamlyn and wife Lesley at Cassowary House, becomes rich fodder for him as a writer desperate for morsels to feed his next publication. Lesley says, "I want to tell you a story, Willie." She thinks, "Let him write it. Let the whole world know." But for such shocking, intimate material Willie must decide which details and people to reveal and which to protect. His novel *The Casuarina Tree* reflects his decision. Should we trust a writer? That is the crucial question in this finely written, graceful, illuminating story about love, desire, and duty. —Carol Kranes, Bloomsbury, \$28.99

***The Unmaking of June Farrow*, Adrienne Young**

June Farrow has a problem, the same condition that plagued her mother, Susanna and her grandmother, Margaret. She sees a man in black, hears someone calling her name, and smells a burning cigarette, none of which are there. And why does the mysterious red door keep appearing out of nowhere? Are the Farrow women cursed? As June clings to her fragile sanity and buries her blessed grandmother, clues are left for her in a cryptic note and a photograph of her mother which couldn't possibly be real. As with her last novel *Spells for Forgetting*, Young creates a world of mysticism and counterculture placed in a small town where everyone knows each other's business and gossip is rife. Can June end the curse and create a life for herself, or will the madness overcome her? Young's readers will delight in a quick page-turner of romance, mysticism, and a bit of the unreal. —Anne Stewart Mark, Delacorte Press, \$28



Helen Garner
The Children's Bach



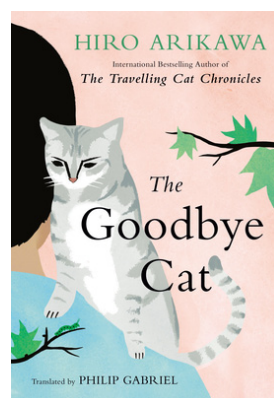
The Children's Bach, Helen Garner

Written in 1984 by Australian author Helen Garner, and now published for an American audience with a lovely new introduction by Rumaan Alam, this small work of fiction is a series of “eventlets” involving nine characters whose lives intersect in the turbulent 1970s. Dexter and Athena’s domestic solitude is interrupted by Dexter’s old flame from college and her much younger sister and their musical friends from the cultural underground. As Athena’s world is turned up-

side down, she begins to question her quaint and uncomplicated life. Told with evocative prose in tiny spurts of brilliance, *The Children's Bach* should be devoured in one sitting for full effect, but don’t let its brevity fool you. This novel will stay with you long after you’ve come to its transcendent conclusion. —Anne Stewart Mark, Pantheon, \$25

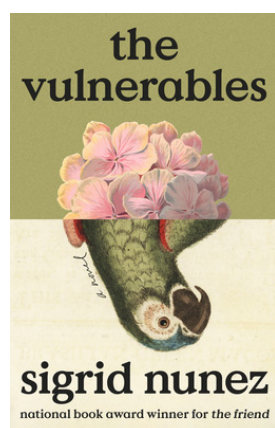
The Goodbye Cat, Hiro Arikawa, transl. Philip Gabriel

The Japanese have a long history of nurturing close bonds with animals, and when they write about their pets and animal companions, they write with respect and reverence. *The Goodbye Cat* by Hiro Arikawa (and translated from Japanese by Philip Gabriel) tells eight stories about eight different cats. Each tale is told in a different voice, sometimes human, sometimes feline, but always centering on our quiet and observant companion, the cat. The stories are told with love and humor and remind us that our feline friends possess a certainty and balance that often manifest in our own lives. —Rob Eckman, Berkley, \$24



The Vulnerables, Sigrid Nunez

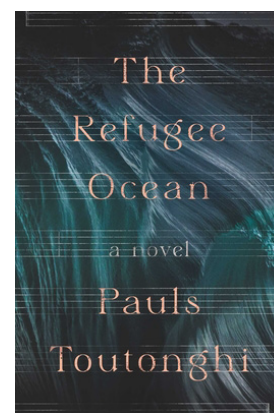
Reading a novel—any novel—by Sigrid Nunez is like having a secret friend who is sometimes just as honestly (and wittily) uncomfortable as you are when it comes to easing another’s distress. In her National Book Award winner, *The Friend*, it was a grieving Great Dane, and in *What Are You Going Through* it was a dying friend. In her latest novel, *The Vulnerables*, it’s a solitary writer, a Gen Z college dropout, and a spirited parrot named Eureka: three strangers waiting out the pandemic in a Manhattan apartment in a world on



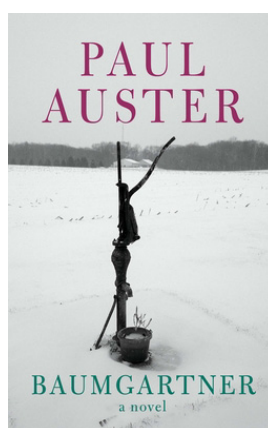
the brink of disappearing into the farthest reaches of isolation. Once again, Nunez teases out exactly what keeps us most alive and squirming—death, loss of control, the playfulness of birds, the purpose of strangers, and our capacity as humans to risk the exquisite pain of connection. —Val Kittel, Riverhead Books, \$28

The Refugee Ocean, Pauls Toutonghi

The stories of three individuals who’ve survived sectarian violence and revolution come together in *The Refugee Ocean*. A boy from present day Syria, a female composer constrained by the norms of 1920’s Lebanon, and a woman in present day Virginia are inextricably linked by a piece of music. This novel travels across time and trauma and poignantly describes some of the confusion and difficulties of the immigrant experience. Ultimately, music provides a healing link in this beautifully wrought narrative. —Christina Richards, Simon & Schuster, \$27.99



Baumgartner, Paul Auster

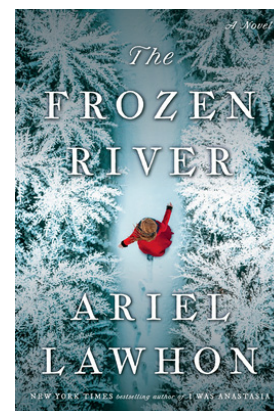


Sy Baumgartner, a widowed philosophy professor at Princeton, tries and fails to move on with his own life after circling round and round and probing endlessly through the life he had forged with the love of his life and the sorrow that has swamped him since Anna’s passing (she died in a freak accident nine years before the book opens). While working feverishly on a monograph on Kierkegaard’s pseudonyms, he finds himself plunging instead into his dead wife’s papers, collating her best poems to publish in a collection.

Getting an idea for a new book on phantom limb syndrome as a metaphor for grief, he revisits Anna’s papers and his own memories over and again, discovering more about the woman he thought he knew—intriguing facts about her work, her past, and her feelings which elicit truths about himself that seem new as well. Freed by a startling dream, he tries dating, knowing he doesn’t want to finish his life alone. Exploring his future prompts even more intensive recycling of Anna’s past and his own: her family, her childhood and his own, her work and his. Somehow the wondrous tone thus created captures the intersection of intellectual respect and consuming desire, the interplay of words and ideas on a page and in lives, the back and forth of passion and peace that made up a memorable, indeed magical, marriage. Sy’s quest is ongoing, its outcome surprising, the reader’s experience luminous and enlightening. —Betsy Burton, Atlantic Monthly Press, \$27

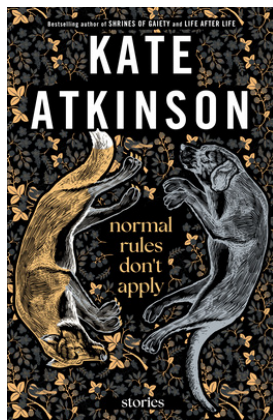
The Frozen River, Ariel Lawhon

This historical fiction is based on the journals of New England midwife Martha Ballard, who lived during revolutionary times. Over 27 years and hundreds of deliveries, a nearly daily entry into her diary provided details of early post-colonial life. The author is careful to point out that this is fiction (the afterword provides important evidence of the license taken), unlike Laurel Thatcher Ulrich’s Pulitzer prize-winning history *A Midwife’s Tale*:



FICTION

The Life of Martha Ballard. Reading partly as a mystery, this novel provides an engrossing glimpse into a horrific crime and the beginnings of the American justice system. —Christina Richards, Doubleday, \$28



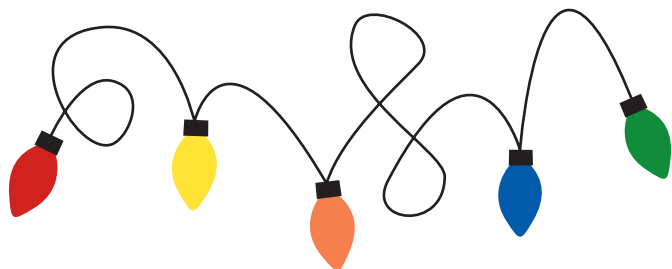
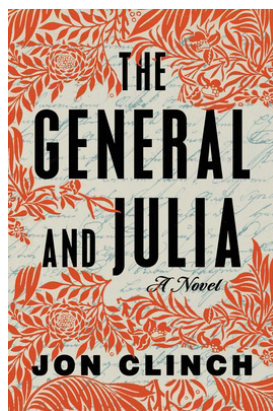
Normal Rules Don't Apply,
Kate Atkinson

Fractured fairy tales and their ghoulish protagonists do not compare with the puckish (some might say macabre) humor or the freakish characters—animal and human alike—who populate the pages of Atkinson's new collection of stories. As the title suggests, normal rules do NOT apply to the universe in which these characters dwell. A writer-turned-bingo-caller's talk with a dog who is really a girl (or so she says); a dead girl whose

husband bet—and lost everything—on a tip from a talking horse; a queen, a princess and a uncanny, circular spell; a strange pregnancy and a stranger cricket match. Characters, animal and human, come and go in one another's stories, marriages and courtships have unpredictable (and ghastly) endings, family members surprise one another in appalling ways, murder (this is Kate Atkinson after all), the ting of texting, the silence of the void all combine to throw the reader into a fever of misunderstanding, mistaken expectations, and false impressions often followed by what some might see as divine interventions. Not for everyone, Atkinson's latest is at once eerie, enigmatic and entertaining. —Betsy Burton, Doubleday, \$28

The General and Julia, Jon Clinch

Ulysses S. Grant reflects on his experiences as a general, president, husband, and father in this insightful portrayal of the man. Defining circumstances in his life are presented in between chapters of the general dying slowly and painfully of esophageal cancer as he tries to finish his memoirs. The ordinary and extraordinary people in his life and his belief in the best of man define him and, in some cases, doom him. I highly recommend this historical novel and appreciate gaining a sense of the man—who this larger-than-life personage was and continues to be. —Sue Fleming, Atria Books, \$26.99



MYSTERY/HORROR

Out There Screaming, Jordan Peele

In *Out There Screaming*, award-winning screenwriter and actor Jordan Peele prefaces the anthology by describing how oubliettes, a medieval torture practice, informed his creation of the Sunken Place in his movie *Get Out*. A victim would be cast down into a dungeon where they would be left to waste away, forgotten, as the world continuous on without them. Peele brought together a stellar group of black authors to create short stories that answer the question: What would your own oubliette look like? The result is everything from car headlights that transform into fleshy eyeballs under a wicked cop's gaze to a suspicious new software used to "reform" prisoners before sending them back out into society. This anthology was everything I wanted and more from these writers and sits perfectly at the intersection of what Jordan Peele does best, combining the macabre with social commentary. I highly recommend for horror fans. —Alexis Powell, Random House, \$30



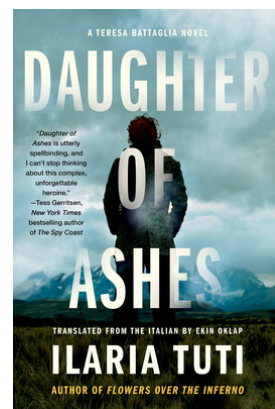
The Night House, Jo Nesbo

If you don't mind not sleeping, this may be for you. Norwegian mystery writer, Jo Nesbo, crafted a horror story with enough twists and turns to keep you thoroughly engaged. An outcast new kid who's just moved to a small town becomes the suspect in the disappearance of some of his friends. Everything seems to revolve around a mysterious house in the woods and an evil man who may or may not be alive. Richard needs to find the truth and save others who are threatened. Just

when you think you know what's happening, you don't. —Christina Richards, Knopf, \$28

Daughter of Ashes, Ilaria Tuti, transl. Ekin Oklap

Book three in the world of Superintendent Teresa Battaglia and her colleagues. The rich language and twisted plot lines make this novel more of a Russian novel and less of a police procedural. The Superintendent is in the later stages of dementia but still a force to be reckoned with. A serial killer, Giacomo Mainardi, has become part of the superintendent's life and the bond between the two of them is deep and secret. Inspector Marini serves as her partner and protégé. He is both jealous and protective of her. Watching this strong woman failing in body and mind is a turning point for him, and a moving moment for the reader of the book. Tuti has written a novel about memory by weaving historical stories with modern murders and their souvenirs of bones and tiles. The novel is not one to be thrown aside. Binge the whole trilogy, and then read it all over again. Kudos to the masterful translator, Ekin Oklap. —Wendy Foster Leigh, Soho Crime, \$27.95





***The Star and the Strange Moon,*
Constance Sayers**

Christopher Kent became obsessed with Gemma Turner the day his troubled mother destroyed a photo of the doomed star.

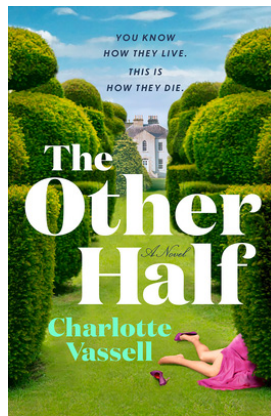
1968: Gemma Turner starred in a low budget horror flick *L'Étrange Lune*, a generic scripted mess that would become her final film.

1998: Kent, now a rising documentary maker, finally gets to witness a secret screening of *Lune* but it appears to be evolving long after its star and director

perished... —Paula Longhurst, Redhook, \$30

***The Other Half,* Charlotte Vassell**

Detective Caius Beauchamp discovers the body of a dead woman named Clemmie, on his morning jog and finding the killer becomes his passion. Clemmie introduces Caius to the world of her boyfriend, and just how “the other half” live. Detective Beauchamp represents the common man while the boyfriend is a member of a young, aristocratic world in which he can take over a local McDonalds for a catered birthday party and use his privileged family title to confuse the investigation of Clemmie’s murder. That world is filled with obnoxious London socialites who have the power to interfere with Caius’s investigation. Nothing moves smoothly in the investigation; therefore, the action is constant and twisted and forces you to turn the page in hopes of a solution. —Wendy Foster Leigh, Anchor, \$27



***Kennedy 35,* Charles Cumming**

1995 Senegal: Kite and Martha are posing as backpackers on a surveillance mission. Lockie is pretty sure Box 88 are looking to recruit his then girlfriend. To say things don’t go according to plan...

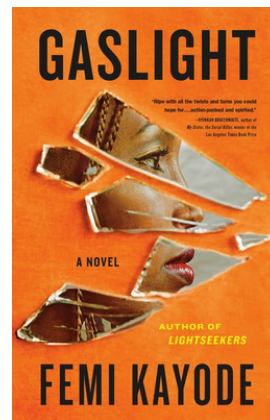
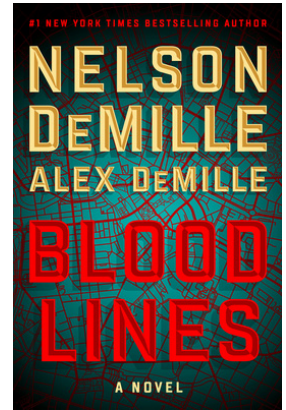
Present day: Kite is contacted by an old school friend with ties to the Senegal operation who informs him that a pod-caster is about to name names in a DGSE coverup, one of them Martha’s. Kite is anxious to protect her but is he already too late? If you haven’t discovered Charles

Cumming, start with the older standalone *Typhoon*, or go bang up to date with *Box 88*, the first in this series. —Paula Longhurst, Mysterious Press, \$27.95

***Blood Lines,* Nelson DeMille and Alex DeMille**

Scott Brodie and Maggie Taylor, two U.S. agents whose recent past in Venezuela was marred by violence and betrayal (*The Deserter*), are now in Berlin, their assignment to investigate the murder of a highly respected Military Police Officer. Because he was experienced in counter terrorism, it is assumed that the victim’s killer was an Islamic

terrorist. But between Stasi history and present-day Neo-Nazism, the possibilities of guilt begin to multiply and, despite the strictures placed on the investigators to listen and report, not pursue, as the pair dig ever deeper, they begin to mine complexities in the present involving everything from immigration to Iraqi chemical weapons to American betrayal. The threat to call them home or get them killed only accelerates Brodie’s hunt for truth and in the end even the rule-bound Taylor is caught up in his quest. DeMille the elder’s usual skill in crafting a good read is enhanced rather than held back here by the skills of DeMille the younger. —Betsy Burton, Scribner, \$29.99



***Gaslight,* Femi Kayode**

Investigative psychologist Dr. Philip Taiwo, who practiced for years in San Francisco before returning to Nigeria with his wife and three teenage children, has already garnered press attention for solving a previous case (*Light Seekers*) when he is hired to find the missing wife of the bishop of an evangelical megachurch called (no doubt with irony intended) Graceland. This is no ordinary missing-person case; the police clearly suspect not only that Mrs. Sade Dawodu has

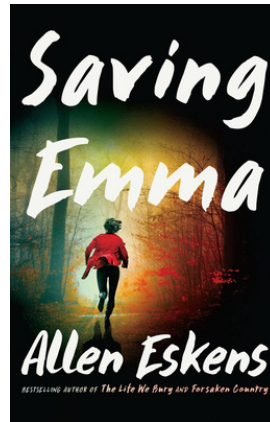
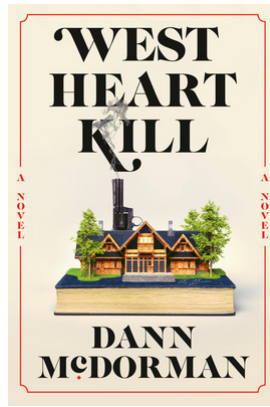
been murdered, but that Bishop Dawodu killed her. But the reader has been privy to letters from Mrs. Dawodu since page one, evidence that she’s alive, that she disappeared for good reason and that in the end all will be revealed. Taiwo, who in his teenage years had sought shelter from the gangs of L.A. in America’s version of Graceland only to be sadly disillusioned by its charismatic leader, is both attracted to and repelled by Bishop Dawodu. Despite the doctor’s doubts, his investigation uncovers manufactured evidence that seems to proclaim the Bishop’s innocence—until Sade turns up dead after all. Subsequent investigations into church finances, structure and rituals are leading Taiwo ever deeper into a psychic and legal morass while on the home front his daughter is becoming increasingly troubled, his wife increasingly determined to go to war on her behalf, bringing Taiwo’s family life to a boil. The racial tension that is at the bottom of the situation at home, the unquestioning faith of the Graceland flock regardless of the uncertain character of its bishop and most of all the questions surrounding what happened to his wife, exactly who Sade really is (or was), and who her husband is are the stuff of an excellent mystery that sheds light on human character, on evangelicalism and on the culture and customs of a fascinating country. —Betsy Burton, Mulholland Books, \$29

***West Heart Kill,* Dann McDorman**

Esoteric, entertaining, enticing, and often funny, this locked-room (or rather impassable forest) puzzle is replete with fascinating characters, a succession of corpses, a swarm of suspects, along with a lonely, enigmatic but determined detective—not to mention endless asides that examine the classic mystery, its rules, eccentricities, foibles, and

MYSTERY/HORROR

form. The reader is thus pulled back and forth between plot and mystery arcana, as the well-to-do suspects are woven together with not only sleuths and murderers from famous mysteries of the past but their authors as well—from Arthur Conan Doyle to G.K. Chesterton, Agatha Christie to Dorothy Sayers to Patricia Highsmith, John Dickinson Carr to Anthony Berkeley to Anthony Boucher, Raymond Chandler to Dashiell Hammett. Even while peeved at the frequent and abrupt departures from the present-day plot, mystery lovers will be intrigued by said arcana in a detective story that is at once true to the form, devilishly subversive and endlessly surprising. —Betsy Burton, Knopf, \$28



trust-fund ward, from Emma's wealthy aunt, Anna. Emma's father, Ben Pruitt (Boady's colleague and best friend) murdered Emma's mother and was shot in Boady and Dee's home. The tangle? Ben was Elijah's attorney. The novel includes some interesting passages of testimony from Elijah's trial, showing Boady much that Ben missed. And Boady is presented with photographic proof that Elijah was at the library when the murder took place. Desperate to free an innocent man and to bring Emma "home," Boady finds he has to fight as a man not a lawyer. With time running out, he faces an uphill battle. This is a good legal thriller complicated by a web of entanglements from the human heart. —Carol Kranes, Mulholland Books, \$28



Kids Run the Show, Delphine de Vigan, transl. Alison Anderson

If you've ever wondered what's going to happen to the generation of kids who have grown up having their whole lives filmed and documented on social media—often without their consent—this is the book for you. When the child of a famous parenting influencer goes missing, two former childhood friends—now the mother of the child and a police-woman, respectively—are thrust back into each other's orbit and forced to face the dystopian nightmare that is modern

social media. Originally published in French, this literary thriller is a chilling, gripping look at the side effects of social media, particularly in the lives of unconsenting children. Absolutely chilling.

—Mackenzie Van Engelenhoven, Europa Editions, \$26

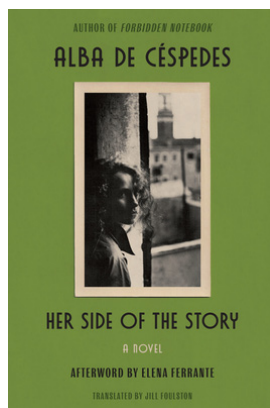
Her Side of the Story, Alba de Cespedes, transl. Jill Foulston

A new translation of a novel initially published in 1949. Set in Italy during the rise of fascism, this very personal story immerses us in what it was to be a woman during this time. Traveling from Rome, to the Italian countryside, and back to Rome, a woman who loves intensely details her deepest feelings and struggles with life. Far from trite, and heartrendingly honest, this portrayal is as personal a book as I have ever read.

—Christina Richards, Astra House, \$29

Saving Emma, Allen Eskens

Two threads don't usually make a sufficiently tangled web, except in the crime novel ***Saving Emma***. Thread one: law professor Boady Sanden—publicly working for the Innocence Project—takes on the case of Elijah Matthews (a self-proclaimed prophet) found guilty four years earlier of brutally murdering the pastor of a megachurch. Thread two: Boady and wife Dee privately work to win back the guardianship and love of Emma, their 14-year-old multimillion-

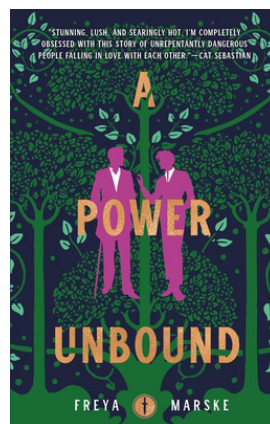


SPECULATIVE FICTION

Starling House, Alix E. Harrow

A grim and gothic new tale from Alix E. Harrow about a small town haunted by secrets that can't stay buried and the sinister house that sits at the crossroads of it all. Opal, our narrator, knows better than to mess with haunted houses or brooding men, but an unexpected job offer might be a chance to get her brother out of the small town he's trapped in. Too quickly though, *Starling House* starts to feel dangerously like something she's never had: a home. Perfect for spooky season reading, this has all the vibes of a creaky old house (nearly sentient, a character in and of itself), and a *Jane Eyre*-esque gothic romance.

—Mickey George, Tor Books, \$28.99



A Power Unbound, Freya Marske

This is the final entry in Freya Marske's Last Binding trilogy, a queer historical fantasy series that began with ***A Marvelous Light***. The last entry finally solves the magical save-the-world plot that we've been building to since the first book. Jack Alston, Lord Hawthorn, is drawn reluctantly back into the magicians' world to help save it. And he needs the help of writer and thief Alan Ross. Cagey and argumentative, Alan is only in this for the money. The aristocratic Lord Hawthorn, with all his unearned power, is everything

that Alan hates. Unfortunately, Alan happens to be everything that Jack wants in one gorgeous, infuriating package. This book is a romantic, magical romp (and the power dynamics in the steamy scenes were fiiiire). —Mickey George, Tordotcom, \$28.99

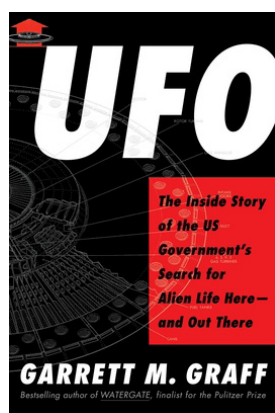
ROMANCE

10 Things That Never Happened, Alexis Hall

This is not a sequel to *Boyfriend Material* and *Husband Material*, but it takes place in the same world! Sam Becker loves or, okay, likes his job. Sure, managing a bed and bath retailer isn't exactly glamorous, but it's good work and he gets on well with the band of misfits who keep the store running. Too bad, then, that the owner is an infuriating git. Jonathan Forest should never have hired Sam. He orders Sam down to London for a difficult talk...only for a panicking Sam to trip, bump his head, and maybe accidentally imply he doesn't remember anything? This basically turns the age-old "amnesia plot" on its head with Hall's typically British humor. An adorable grumpy and sunshine pairing, I loved it. —Mickey George, Sourcebooks Casablanca, \$16.99



NONFICTION



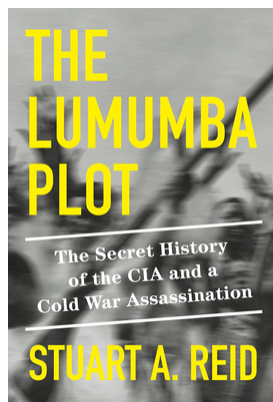
UFO: The Inside Story of the U.S. Government Search for Alien Life Here and Out There, Garrett M. Graff

This is not your father's book about chasing Unidentified Flying Objects. It is a detailed and thoroughly engrossing story chronicling the past eighty years of searching for intelligent life in the universe. If you're looking for tales of chasing flying saucers and little green men you will find that; however, you will also go on a journey of exploration of the cosmos by other means. Visual observation, un-

explained meteorological phenomena, radio astronomy, and philosophy, to name just a few, are brought together in a riveting way that cannot help but make the reader wonder, does life exist elsewhere or are we alone? Graff explores and analyzes government and private theories, both serious and some would say wacky, and takes us on a journey so vast that at times it all seems otherworldly. Because it is. Serious students as well as those with just passing interest in the subject will be well rewarded, and I can guarantee the reader will never look at the sky again in the same way as you may have in the past. —John Mark, Avid Reader Press/Simon & Schuster, \$32.50

The Lumumba Plot, Stuart A. Reid

In this somewhat mystifying yet very easily readable work, Stuart Reid gives us an up close and incisive look at the jumbled world of African politics at the beginning of the 1960s. It is also, at its heart, the secret history of the first authorized CIA assassination plot of a cold war political leader. In the late 1950s and early 60s independence was the cry from most countries in Africa. The Congo was no exception. It was a colony of Belgium, and



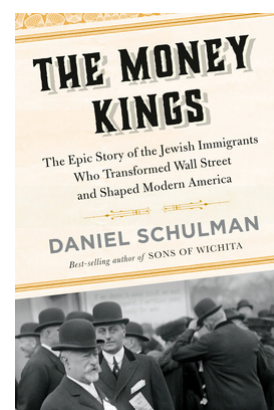
NONFICTION

they didn't want to see it go; its riches were too important. A young man, Patrice Lumumba, a motivated man from the backwater village of Katakombombe rose to the forefront of the independence movement. After much conniving and broken promises, independence was granted. But there was a problem, no native Congolese knew how to run a country. Lumumba was elected the first Prime Minister and thus began a series of machinations between Moscow and the U.S. Who was Lumumba? No one on either side seemed to know. Each thought he was a tool of the other. To his detriment he did play both sides against the other. Eventually the U.S. had had enough. Lumumba could not be trusted and had to go. An assassination was authorized by President Eisenhower. The CIA undertook this job, very clumsily. Eventually Congolese politics caught up with itself. Lumumba was Prime Minister for four months before being overthrown and executed by domestic forces. This is a dynamic look at the world of international political chicanery, chicanery that continues today. —John Mark, Knopf, \$35

The Money Kings: The Epic Story of the Jewish Immigrants Who Transformed Wall Street and Shaped Modern America, Daniel Schulman

The year 1848 saw massive disruptions in Europe which in turn sowed anti-Jewish pogroms across the continent. Because of this turbulence thousands of Jews left their homelands for a new life in America. In the Old World, Jews were only allowed certain means of making a living, most often as peddlers or money lenders. Some of the biggest names in Wall Street began their careers as shopkeepers which evolved into the creation of the largest investment banks in the world. Schulman's intensive research reveals a group of individuals united by strong family ties and dedication as they struggled not only for monetary gains but were forced to confront virulent anti-Semitism throughout the country. Theirs is a story that needs to be told and Schulman does an excellent job through a fascinating history of these renowned families.

—Barbara Hoagland, Knopf, \$35



Eve: How the Female Body Drove 200 Million Years of Human Evolution, Cat Bohannon

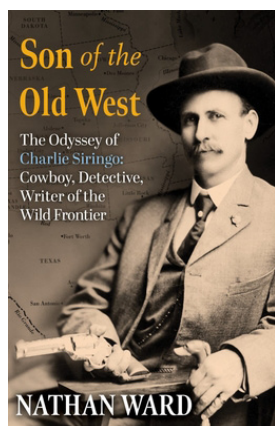
The title says it all – this exhaustive examination of the evolution of humans and how the females of the species evolved encompasses questions and answers we rarely encounter. Why are male sex organs outside the body while females are inside? What evolutionary need do female breasts serve (other than the obvious)? Why do women live longer but are more likely to get Alzheimer disease, and

what is menopause all about? Bohannon covers all aspects of female evolution in a scientific, but engaging probe into things that have been traditionally overlooked by the male dominated scientific community. —Barbara Hoagland, Knopf, \$35



Son of the Old West: The Odyssey of Charlie Siringo – Cowboy, Detective, Writer of the Wild Frontier
Nathan Ward

From what I remember of the movie Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, as Butch peered down at the relentless posse that was after them, he said to Sundance, “Who are those guys?” Sundance: “Dunno, maybe Lefors out of Fort Worth or Siringo.” Butch says, “Where is Siringo out of?” Sundance: “Denver”. They look at each other, mount up and ride deeper into Utah’s San Rafael Swell to try and shake the determined posse. Just like the famous movie, Charlie Siringo is an iconic figure of the old west. Born in Texas and raised during the Civil War era, Siringo’s life mirrors the old west during the second half of the 19th Century. Raised by his Irish immigrant mother after his Italian immigrant father’s early death, Charlie is obsessed with becoming a cowboy, but his mother insists he get at least a fourth-grade education before she will consent to his joining a cattle drive north to the Kansas railroad/cow towns. What happens to Siringo over the next six decades is amazing. He drives cattle on the new Chisholm Trail, becomes a law officer, gunman, detective, rancher, prospector, miner, writer/author (thanks, Mom), Old Hollywood actor, and general historian of the old west. Great book for those who like history, especially western U.S. history because Charlie lived it. Good map and great pictures of some of the most famous people in Western American lore. —Patrick Fleming, Atlantic Monthly Press, \$28



refugee is rendered in blistering and heartbreaking prose that is poetry, poetry as stark as prose. Racism in AMERICA™, Trump deleted, politics in general make this as timely as it is historical, since there is much in America that never seems to change. Beyond creative, wildly entertaining one minute, profound, thought-provoking, heartbreaking the next, *A Man of Two Faces* will force you to see our country in new ways and gain new insights into its inhabitants. Unconventional doesn’t begin to describe it. But the word brilliant does. —Betsy Burton, Grove Press, \$28



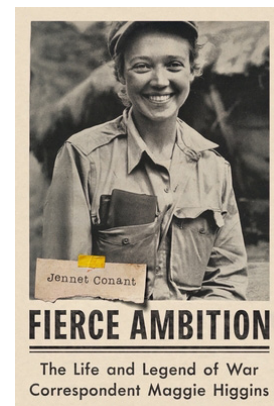
The Comfort of Crows: A Backyard Year, Margaret Renkl

The Comfort of Crows consists of fifty-two chapters that correspond to the weeks in Renkl’s year. Part memoir and part devotional, she employs her keen insight and powers of observation to move us through the seasons. Renkl has a great reverence for nature and a gift for description, interweaving what is happening in her life with what is happening around her and in her memories. This is a beautiful book that celebrates the passage of

time and the passage of life; that which is lost and that which brings us joy and hope. As one reviewer commented, “... it will change how you see the world.” I loved it. An added bonus are the beautiful illustrations that accompany each chapter. —Sally Larkin, Spiegel & Grau, \$32

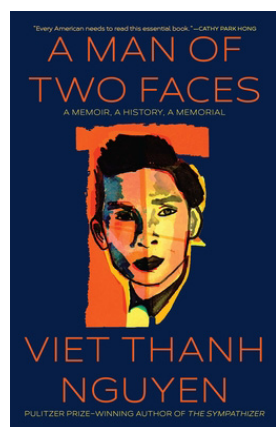
Fierce Ambition, Jennet Conant

Jennet Conant (*A Covert Affair*, *The Irregulars*) has meticulously recorded the complex life of Maggie Higgins, a driven, some may say ruthless, woman intent on becoming a known figure in the journalistic world. In 1945, at age 24, she was a cub reporter for the New York Herald Tribune, stationed in Europe imbedded with American troops about to free prisoners from the Dachau concentration camp. Afterwards she found she was disappointed the Big Show was over and was probably the only person on VE Day to find that peace was the last thing she wanted. Thereafter she followed major wars and battles through Korea and Vietnam as a war correspondent known to do whatever necessary to get her byline. She eventually had a starring role at the Herald and went on to win a Pulitzer, become a celebrity, war hero, patriot, and polemicist. For those following the female impact on foreign affairs through war years, the reader will appreciate learning the details of this fascinating woman. —Sue Fleming, W.W. Norton & Co, \$32.50



A Man of Two Faces: A Memoir, A History, A Memorial, Viet Thanh Nguyen

A memorial as well as a memoir (Má, Nguyen’s mother, is woven as inextricably into the book’s fabric as she was in Nguyen’s life) this is also, as the subtitle indicates, a history—of two Vietnams, two Americas, and two men, internally speaking. If its split-faced cover is tantalizing, its contents are even more so—each page as startling, unsettling, evocative on paper as any book I’ve encountered in my years of reading (Tristram Shandy eat your heart out). Headlines in various



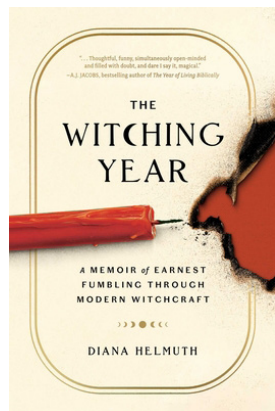
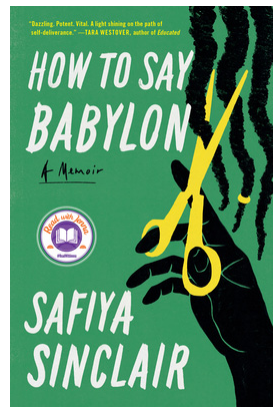
sizes, some in caps, some with capped first letters, various typefaces, descriptions in stanza form tripping over each other on almost every page, left, right and centered; America trademarked as in AMERICA with a TM encircled to indicate its public “persona”; Trump, never named but rather indicated by a bold, black deletion (we wish); haunting black and white photographs, mostly of family; truth-telling turns on familiar adages (Make America White Again); all forge mere words on a page into an often harrowing, sometimes funny, always thought-provoking emotional journey through the life of a man, his mother, his family, and his countries of origin and adoption. His early life is couched as a war story—which it emphatically was—and described in the context of films (Apocalypse Now is but one) we thought we understood until we read Nguyen’s words. The life of a

How to Say Babylon, Safiya Sinclair

Before reading *How to Say Babylon* by Safiya Sinclair, I must confess I did not understand what it was to be Rastafari. Safiya grew up in a household where her father’s strict adherence to the principles of Rastafari shaped every aspect of their lives. I didn’t understand the patriarchal control of women. As a young girl, Safiya often questioned her father’s beliefs. She yearned for freedom, for the ability to

NONFICTION

express herself without fear or judgment. But her father's iron-fisted rule left little room for individuality or dissent. He believed that by shielding his family from the corrupting influences of Babylon—the embodiment of the evil, immorality, and corruption that is the Western world always just outside of the gate—he was preserving their purity and ensuring their salvation. The women were not allowed friends or to cut their hair. He expected obedience from his wife and children without exception. While compliant and a faithful practitioner, her mother Jamaica gave Safiya and her sibling books, a drive for education, and an eye to what lay beyond their home in Montego Bay, encouraging their love of literature and the world. Safiya excelled at learning and developed a passion for poetry (you will see her love for the art in her storytelling, tone, and overall cadence that is uniquely hers as she tells her story.) This is a story filled with conflict with the culture and faith that initially nourished their family but also stifled and silenced them. She pushes against her father and rebels to survive and break the abusive cycle perpetrated on her. ***How to Say Babylon*** is the story of a woman finding her power, following her truth, and giving us a unique glimpse into a world that corrects our assumptions about Rastafari. —Calvin Crosby, Simon & Schuster \$28.99



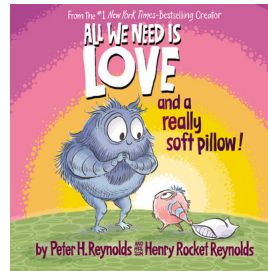
The Witching Year: A Memoir of Earnest Fumbling Through Modern Witchcraft, Diana Helmuth

In a world where everyone from your barista to your tennis partner seems to be charging crystals and talking about their astrology charts, we are conversing about magic in a much more mainstream and casual way lately, whether tongue in cheek or sincerely. Diana personally explores this modern preoccupation—what it means to believe in magic, whether belief is even a necessity, and how to ethically

engage with a tradition that is simultaneously newly made-up and older than folklore. Conscientious and thoughtful, this memoir follows a year in her life while attempting to practice witchcraft and find a spiritual home. Balancing deep skepticism with earnest hope, the result is a thoroughly honest, humorous, and humble account, and a very fun read. —Michaela Riding, S&S/Simon Element, \$27.99

KIDS

PICTURE BOOKS



All We Need is Love and a Really Soft Pillow, Peter H. Reynolds and his son Henry Rocket Reynolds

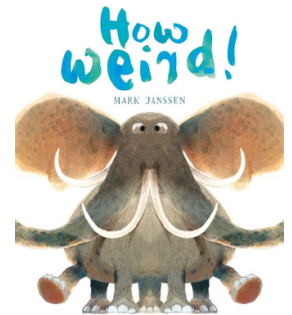
A stunningly illustrated picture book about all we really need. It's love, isn't it? As well as a really soft pillow, and maybe some food, and a pot to cook it in, and a roof, and maybe some walls and a few other things that might actually be

necessary in life. So is Love all we really need? Or perhaps having Love is the part that makes it easier to get everything else we really need. A fabulously funny take on the hierarchy of human needs with childhood logic winning the day. —Antonia Squire, Orchard Books, \$18.99 (Ages 4-8)

How Weird!, Mark Janssen

Once upon a time a group of animals found a strange object and when they stood it on end it did the strangest thing. The animals saw strange and wonderful creatures in the object, until the little elephant realized that what he saw was himself? As the animals play with the mirror the weirdest creatures come to be. Now in board book for the first time, ***How Weird!*** is truly delightful!

—Antonia Squire, Tra Publishing, \$11.99 (Ages 1-4)



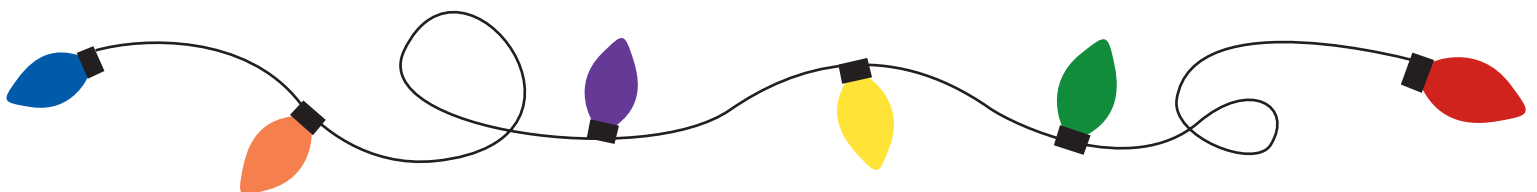
MIDDLE READER

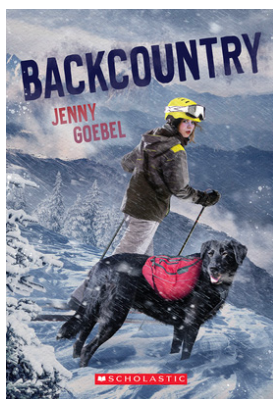


Juniper's Christmas, Eoin Colfer

On the lookout for a great middle grade holiday book? Look no further. Juniper and her Mum live in a park where there are many homeless people, one of whom is Duchess and another is Nico who lives with some reindeer deep in the forest. When Juniper's mother disappears, Duchess moves in to take care of the girl and suggests that her friend Nico might help find Mum. All kinds of mysterious and magical things happen. Grab this one as soon as it's on the shelf. —Becky Hall,

Roaring Brook Press, \$22.99 (Ages 8-12)





Backcountry, Jenny Goebel

Recently diagnosed with Type I diabetes, Emily thinks her high-powered athletics are over because she must carefully watch her food intake, test her sugar levels and get insulin injections. Her lovable support dog Molly makes life bearable, but Emily doesn't feel like herself. When her dad suggests they still go on their X-country ski adventure, she jumps at the opportunity to prove herself to her father. But she hadn't planned on the surprises that turn the trip into a survival test. —Becky Hall, Scholastic, \$8.99 (Ages 8-12)

The Apartment House on Poppy Hill,

Nina LaCour

Nine-year-old Ella welcomes two new tenants into her apartment in San Francisco by explaining all the quirks of the building and the personalities of the other tenants, except for the mysterious people who live on the top floor. No one ever sees them, but they leave evidence of their presence. Ella wants to meet them so she leaves a note on their beautiful rose bushes in the garden. And then the people respond. You will fall in love with Ella's good heartedness and look forward to the next book in this new series. —Becky Hall, Chronicle Books, \$14.99 (Ages 7-10)



Sparkle, Lakita Wilson

In this heart-warming story Sparkle is becoming a famous influencer which she expects will help the family's financial difficulties. She works hard at the performing arts school and is trying out for a starring role in the upcoming school play. But when her magnificent full hair begins to fall out, her future looks grim. Sparkle faces stinging medications, itchy wigs and the loss of commercial gigs. When she is mortified by a bullying boy, she must come to terms with who she really is. —Becky Hall, Viking Books, \$17.99 (Ages 8-12)

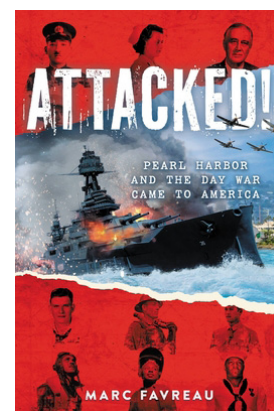
Treasure Island, Runaway Gold, Jewell Parker Rhodes

When the elderly boarder Captain Maddie dies leaving her treasure map for Zane, he and his dog Hip-Hop are joined by his friends Kiko and Jack. They ride the ferry into Manhattan to uncover Captain Maddie's treasure while a gang of marauding skateboarders chases them around the city, and a mysterious man claims to be their friend. But is he? —Becky Hall, Quill Tree Books, \$18.99 (Ages 10 and up)



ATTACKED! Pearl Harbor and the Day War Came to America, Marc Favreau

This nonfiction middle grade book is an intense narrative of the lead up to December 7, 1941 and continues with some of the aftermath of that day that went "down in infamy" as one of the worst attacks on our democracy. A very readable account, this book follows several American and Japanese people who were involved in the day which thrust the United States into World War II. —Becky Hall, Little, Brown and Company, \$17.99 (Ages 10 and up)



How Not to be a Vampire Slayer, Katy Birchall

Maggie Helsby has always been ostracized at school as a weird horror nerd. While it's true that she might take an unnatural delight in the macabre, when she moves to a new school she is determined to fit in. Unfortunately, the fact that she's moved into a creepy old house on the edge of Skeleton Woods does set her apart from her schoolmates and the fact that she's unafraid to explore the woods sets her apart even more. Fortunately though,

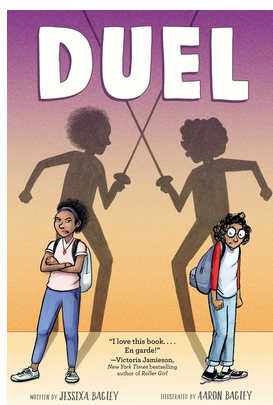
some of her new friends are quite brave and relatively unperturbed when Maggie introduces them to her new friend from the woods—Sharptooth Shadow, a vegan vampire from a secret coven in the woods. When Maggie discovers that she is the heir to the vampire slayers she has to decide what is most important to her, and can she still be loyal to all her friends? —Antonia Squire, Scholastic, \$8.99 (Ages 8-12)

The Winterton Deception 1: Final Word, Janet Sumner Johnson

I don't say this lightly, but this is the best middle grade mystery I've read in a very long time - a Westing Game for a new generation. Twins Hope and Gordon Smith have always lived alone with their mom, never knowing their dad, or his side of the family. Money's always been a bit tight, but when it looks as though they may be evicted from their home at the motel where their mom works, Gordon concocts a plan to enter into the annual Winterton Spelling Bee. The Winterton Family are dictionary magnates with more money than sense and when the family matriarch dies, she sets in motion a competition to see who inherits the family fortune. But there are other forces at work, and in such a wealthy family, secrets abound. Hope and Gordon find themselves in the middle of the intrigue, hoping that the Wintertons never discover that their dad was a Winterton too. An absolute tour de force from local Utah author Janet Sumner Johnson. —Antonia Squire, Holiday House, \$18.99 (Ages 8-12)



GRAPHIC NOVELS



Duel, Jessixa Bagley and Aaron Bagley

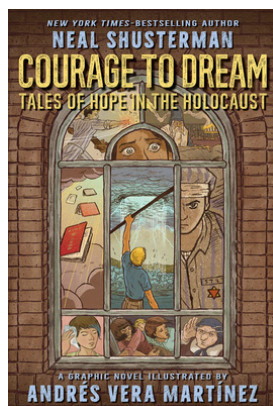
A heartrending graphic novel about two sisters who are grieving over the death of their father. The older, Gigi, is an 8th grader trying out for captain of the fencing team. The younger one Lucy is tired of being bullied by her sister, and after Gigi trips her in the cafeteria on the first day of 7th grade, Lucy challenges Gigi to a duel. Their mother is overworked and exhausted from single parenting, but no one talks about the root cause of their family troubles: their sadness.

—Becky Hall, Simon & Schuster, \$14.99 (Ages 8-12)

Courage to Dream: Tales of Hope in the Holocaust, Neal Shusterman, illustrated by Andres Vera Martinez

People have always used stories to cope. This stunning graphic novel explores one of the greatest atrocities in modern memory—the Holocaust—delving into the core of what it means to face the extinction of everything and everyone you hold dear, through the stories and mythologies of Jewish culture. The result is an interesting combination of fantasy and folklore that offers a way to translate the horrors of the Holocaust, rather than confronting them directly. At the end of each of the tales, Shusterman includes a few pages to clearly delineate and expound on the historical facts as well as give background on the story's origins. Endnotes from both author and illustrator speak to an exhaustive amount of research done by both. Moving and powerful.

—Mickey George, Graphix, \$14.99 (Ages 12 and up)



By Any Other Name, Erin Cotter

In this young adult historical mystery set in Elizabethan England, Will Hughes, a down on his luck young stage actor must team up with an English lord to solve the murder of their friend, the famous playwright Christopher Marlowe. Along the way, they get wrapped up in a plot to kill the Queen of England, and Will finds his loyalty split between protecting the queen and getting revenge on the woman whose royal decrees doomed his family. High-stakes, high-drama, a few knife

fight, and a little romance come to life in a vividly rendered Shakespearean London. Readers will be taken on a journey from the slums to the theaters to the palaces of Elizabethan England, led by a plucky, determined hero fighting to restore his family's honor.

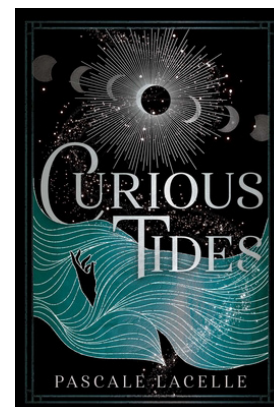
—Mackenzie Van Engelenhoven, Simon & Schuster, \$21.99 (Ages 14 and up)

EDGY

Curious Tides, Pascale Lacelle

For fans of *Babel* or *A Deadly Education*, this YA entry into the dark academia fantasy genre hits all the right notes, following a teen mage who must unravel the truth behind the secret society that may have been involved in her classmates' deaths. The magic was fun, but the story shone in highlighting the relatable feelings of inadequacy and hopelessness that come with school. There was academic competition, but more poignant was the social pressure. The need to fit in, the desire to be seen, the wish for identity, belonging, and community. Read it if you're in the mood for more gritty magic schools.

—Mickey George, Margaret K McElderry Books, \$21.99 (Ages 14 and up)



Ryan and Avery, David Levithan

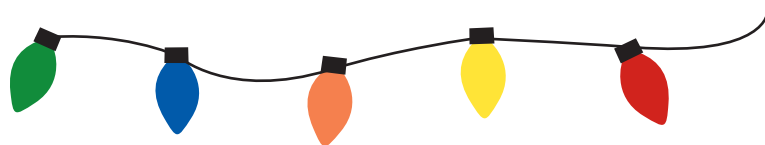
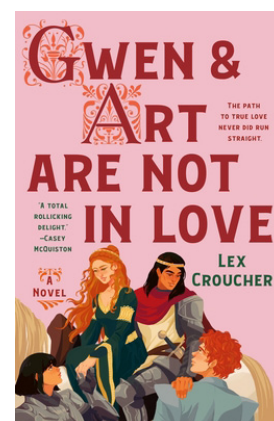
When a blue-haired boy (Ryan) meets a pink-haired boy (Avery) at a dance—a queer prom—both feel an inexplicable but powerful connection. Follow them through their first ten dates as they bridge their initial shyness and fall in love—through snowstorms, groundings, meeting parents (Avery's) or not (Ryan's), cast parties, heartbreak, and every day and date in between. I know I'm not the only person who fell in love with Ryan & Avery when they made their debut ten

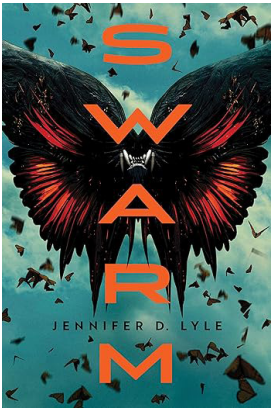
years ago in Levithan's *Two Boys Kissing*. This novel is told over their dates, not necessarily in order and not merely a gay teen romance, but one of serious first love that will resonate with any age.

—Mickey George, Knopf Books for Young Readers, 18.99 (Ages 14 and up)

Gwen & Art Are Not in Love, Lex Croucher

Heartstopper meets *A Knight's Tale* in this queer medieval rom-com YA debut about love, friendship, and being brave enough to change the course of history. The cast of characters are a bunch of lovable idiots who sometimes find themselves in the most ridiculous situations. I didn't know that a teen medieval romantic comedy was something I needed, but here we are. —Mickey George, Wednesday Books, \$19.99 (Ages 14 and up)





Swarm, Jennifer D. Lyle

When giant killer butterflies appear above their school (yeah, you read that right!) Shar and her brother know they need to get home as soon as possible. They load into the car with their friends and stop by to collect their little brother from pre-school, hoping against hope that their mom will have made it home safely too. On the drive home they see people being attacked by the butterflies and Shar, already beset by incapacitating anxiety since their dad died, sets about

doing what she does best in a crisis - looking at what she can control. They board up the windows, hunker down in the basement, conserve food and water and try to wait it out. But things never go as planned, and soon it's not just the butterflies that are trying to get into their house; the insects are venomous, turning their prey into zombie-like creatures. Soon their safe haven is under attack from all sides and all it takes is one mistake before they are breached. Absolutely loved this! —Antonia Squire, Sourcebooks Fire, \$11.99 (Ages 14 and up)

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Editor:

Michaela Riding

Designer:

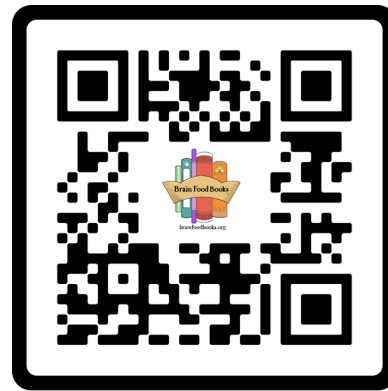
Hilary Dudley

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Anne Holman Alexis Powell

Inkslingers:

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