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TOWARDS ZERO ENERGY ARCHITECTURE

sharon pomerantz
portland, oregon
slut lullabies
MIGRATION

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Writing Competition For Self-Published Authors

Wattpad, the world's most popular eBook community, and **Shelf Unbound** indie book review magazine announce the launch of the Wattpad + Shelf Unbound Writing Competition for self-published authors.

The competition is open to any self-published writer who has an active Wattpad account (go to www.wattpad.com/contests for further details). The winner, as selected by Shelf Unbound editors, will have their work published and promoted on Wattpad and featured in an upcoming issue of Shelf Unbound.

Entries may be submitted through January 31, 2011.



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GREEN BY DESIGN

It was a bathroom controversy worthy of George Costanza. In June, *Wired* magazine ran a captivating article about the latest design advance: waterless urinals (www.wired.com/magazine/2010/06/ff_waterless_urinal/all/1#). When first introduced in 1991, plumbers protested; the military investigated. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers intervened. Al Gore took to the podium and *An Inconvenient Truth* was released. The plumbing unions capitulated. Waterless urinals were installed in public restrooms and universities; said urinals were subsequently improperly maintained and backed up. The debate was reignited. Polar bears on TV started asking us to buy hybrid cars. An oil well ruptured spewing millions of gallons in the Gulf. A tornado struck downtown Dallas. Summer was unbearably hot. It's hard to keep up and to know what it all means.

Being green means engaging in countless questions and calculations: If I build a mansion from sustainable wood with a solar-heated sauna, is that really any more energy efficient than living in an artificially constructed double wide with no air conditioning? If I choose not to repopulate the planet, does that mean I get to take a shower as hot and long as I want? Is it better to order recycled glass tile from Costa Rica and have it shipped or to repurpose the quarried limestone I already have?

Then there's the book vs. e-reader debate. *The New York Times* weighed in on the issue on its website this past spring (www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/04/04/opinion/04opchart.html). The article compared the environmental cost of producing an iPad or Kindle (33 pounds of minerals and 79 gallons of water) with that of an average paperback (2/3 pound of minerals and 2 gallons of water), concluding that it takes 100 books to level the global warming scale. But that is just the beginning: What about long-term disposal issues, not only of the e-readers themselves but also of the outdated technology they are intended to replace? What if you use a reading light for late-night book browsing? What about shipping? Emissions? Battery disposal? The authors conclude that you're best off walking to the local library.

From toilets that wash your hands before refilling the tank to houses that practically fan themselves, this issue is full of green ideas (page 8). Then there's Portland, Oregon—the Emerald City—which has lost none of its enviro-cachet even as flannel and grunge faded away (page 36). To top it off we have a warning from science fiction master Ray Bradbury about the hazards of moving on to other planets (page 54). The choices may be difficult, but I'll take Ray's sage advice. I like this planet. I'd like to keep it. Waterless urinals, paperback books, e-readers, and all.

Kathy Wise
editor in chief

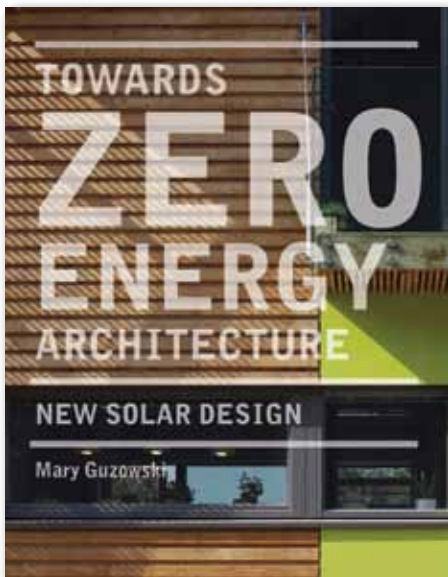


reading



reen

EIGHT BOOKS TO LIVE BETTER BY.



This is solar like you've never seen it before. An associate professor of architecture at the University of Minnesota, Mary Guzowski showcases 10 award-winning buildings that beautifully rise to the challenge of global warming and climate change, passively taking advantage of wind, rain, and the path of the sun. Detailed enough for architecture and design professionals with design plans, wind studies, and sunpath charts, it is also simply stunning.—*Jack Rubenstein*

EXCERPT

“Solar radiation is the primary source of renewable energy. Besides offering a direct source of energy, it drives the Earth’s climate creating opportunities to draw energy from wind, waves, tidal (together with the moon) and a host of biological sources... Since the sun drives every aspect of the climate it is logical to describe the techniques adopted in buildings to take advantage of this fact as ‘solar design.’”

—Peter F. Smith, *Architecture in a Climate of Change*

Humans continue to adapt to the rhythms of light and darkness in the eternal cycle of night and day as the sun rises and sets, season after season, millennium upon millennium. We find ways to harness the forces of the sun and wind to sustain our lives, and these forces have shaped the built environment. Our ancestors used

Laurence King Publishing
www.laurenceking.com





simple and ingenious strategies to create dwellings, neighborhoods, public spaces, villages, and even sophisticated solar cities. The forces of the sun and wind have inspired architectural design at all scales, from building form to plan, section, materials, and detailing. We have always relied on the sun and wind to meet seasonal needs for lighting, heating, and cooling; always celebrating our relationships with the varied places and climates of the world.

Not until the mid-twentieth century, with the widespread construction of roads, distribution of fossil fuels, and manufacture of mechanical systems were we able to turn our backs on the sun and wind as providers of light, heat, and air. As a consequence, in just a few decades we have witnessed an exponential growth in the consumption of resources, production of pollution and waste, and alienation from the natural world. Fortunately, in response to this grim trajectory, architects and designers from around the world are joining a movement to create buildings that mitigate global warming and climate change. Zero-energy and carbon-neutral architecture has emerged as a top priority, although low-energy and low-carbon design is often more readily achieved.

A true architecture of the sun and wind is more

than the sum of passive strategies, technological systems, and ecological engineering. Buildings that are shaped by the sun and wind promote social and ecological values by revealing how our lives can be powered by renewable resources; and just as importantly, they also promote aesthetic values by creating relationships with place and site that are based on the form-giving and poetic attributes of these forces. The new solar architecture has a thin profile that optimizes light and air; it employs an ecological envelope that is responsive to the site and environmental forces; it reduces or eliminates dependence on fossil fuels, is renewable, and strives for little or no carbon-based energy consumption.

Above all, a true architecture of the sun and wind is beautiful and fosters health, well-being, and a connection to the local site and ecosystems. As architect Sim Van der Ryn explains in *Design for Life*: “Architecture is ‘re-membering’—putting back together our collective dreams... The building should tell a story about place and people and be a pathway to understanding ourselves within nature.” This new generation of architecture uses the sun and wind not only to address energy and resource consumption but also to awaken, or “re-member,” our ecological



relationship to the world and to express an ecological aesthetic.

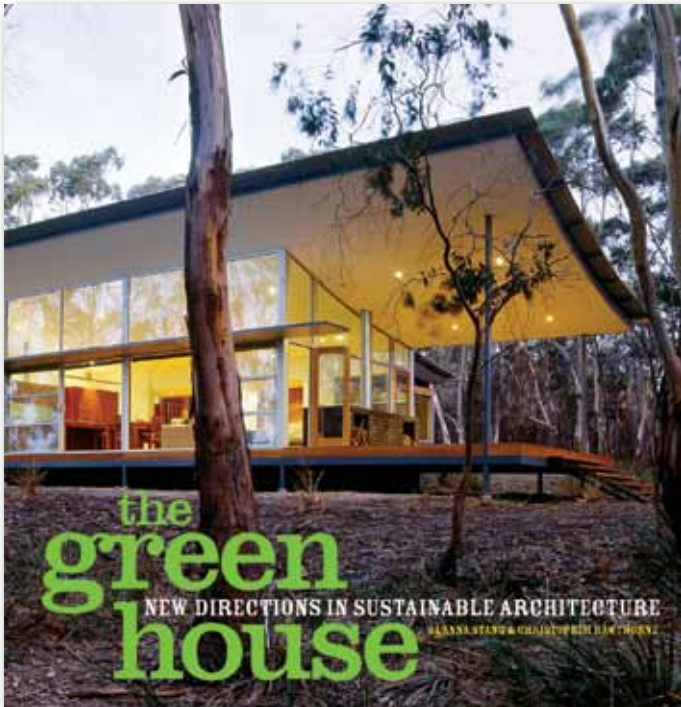
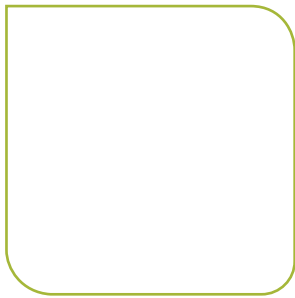
The growing interest in zero-energy and carbon-neutral architecture is generating an evolution in design processes, strategies, and protocols. Evidence of this transition is found in recent legislation, revisions to green standards and guidelines, new evaluative tools, and in design firms that are striving to learn more about the issues. It is a hopeful sign that a great number of projects are in the development stage. In the next few years there will be many more precedents to help designers understand the architectural opportunities and challenges of reducing or eliminating fossil fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

The firms that have designed the ten architectural projects featured in this book are leading the way into a new and more sustainable future. Differing in size, location, and scope, these projects can be viewed as pilot studies, in some cases even experimental endeavors, that explore and expand the role of the sun and wind in reducing or eliminating our depen-

dence on fossil fuels. The ten case studies reveal that there is no single strategic approach to low- and zero-energy architecture. Formal, aesthetic, and expressive responses are as varied as are the individual architects and design firms. Yet, a common thread in all of the projects is a deep commitment by the design teams to harvest the sun, wind, and other sources of on-site renewable energy to heat, light, and cool the buildings. Spanning the range of these architectural expressions we also find approaches to solar design that integrate ancient lessons of passive and climate-responsive design with state-of-the-art technologies and new, innovative approaches to high-performance and responsive building envelopes. Working within essential solar and climate-responsive parameters, we find seemingly unlimited formal, stylistic, and expressive design opportunities. ■

From Towards Zero Energy Architecture: New Solar Design by Mary Guzowski, Laurence King Publishing 2010, www.laurenceking.com. Reprinted with permission.



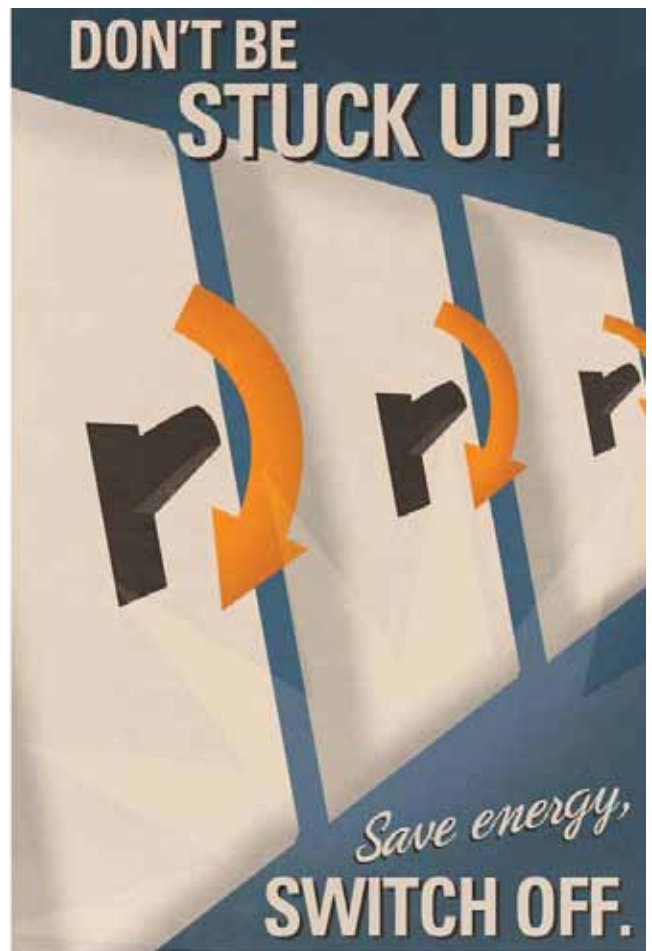
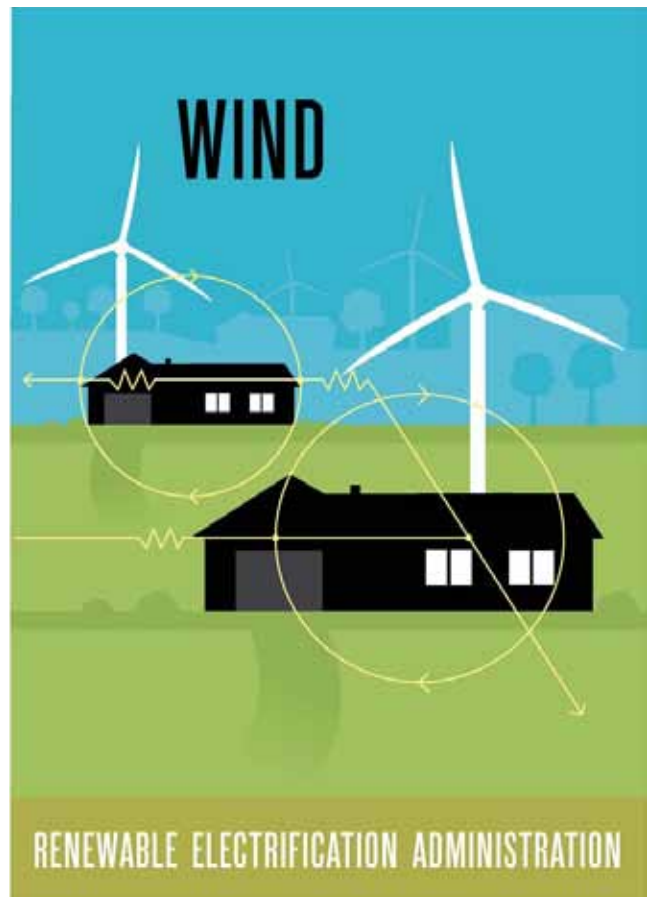


Princeton Architectural Press
www.papress.com

This book is the result of an exhibition of the same name organized by the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C. The goal? To make green architecture utterly unremarkable. By dissolving the environmental mission into sophisticated designs, these architects will make you forget you're saving the planet as you savor the intrinsic artistry. Visit the National Building Museum website at www.nbm.org for information on upcoming lectures and exhibits, and to access the museum's extensive multimedia resources on green design.

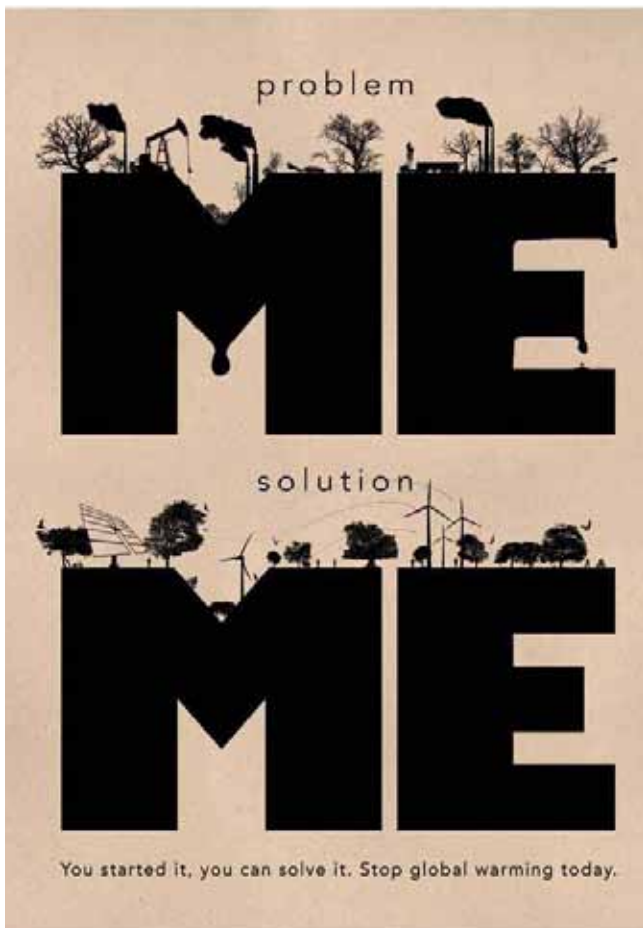
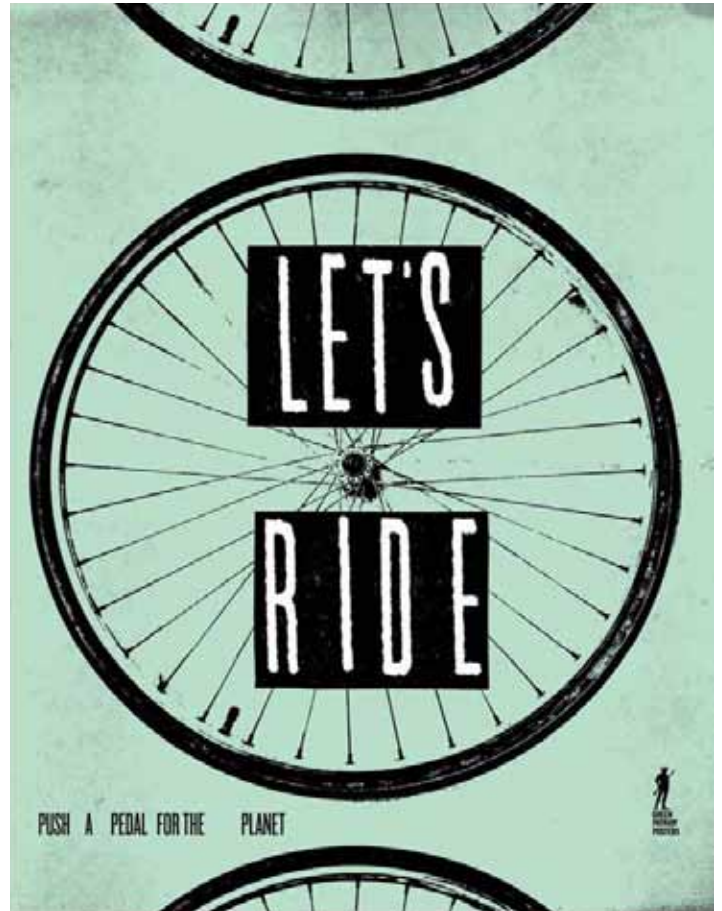


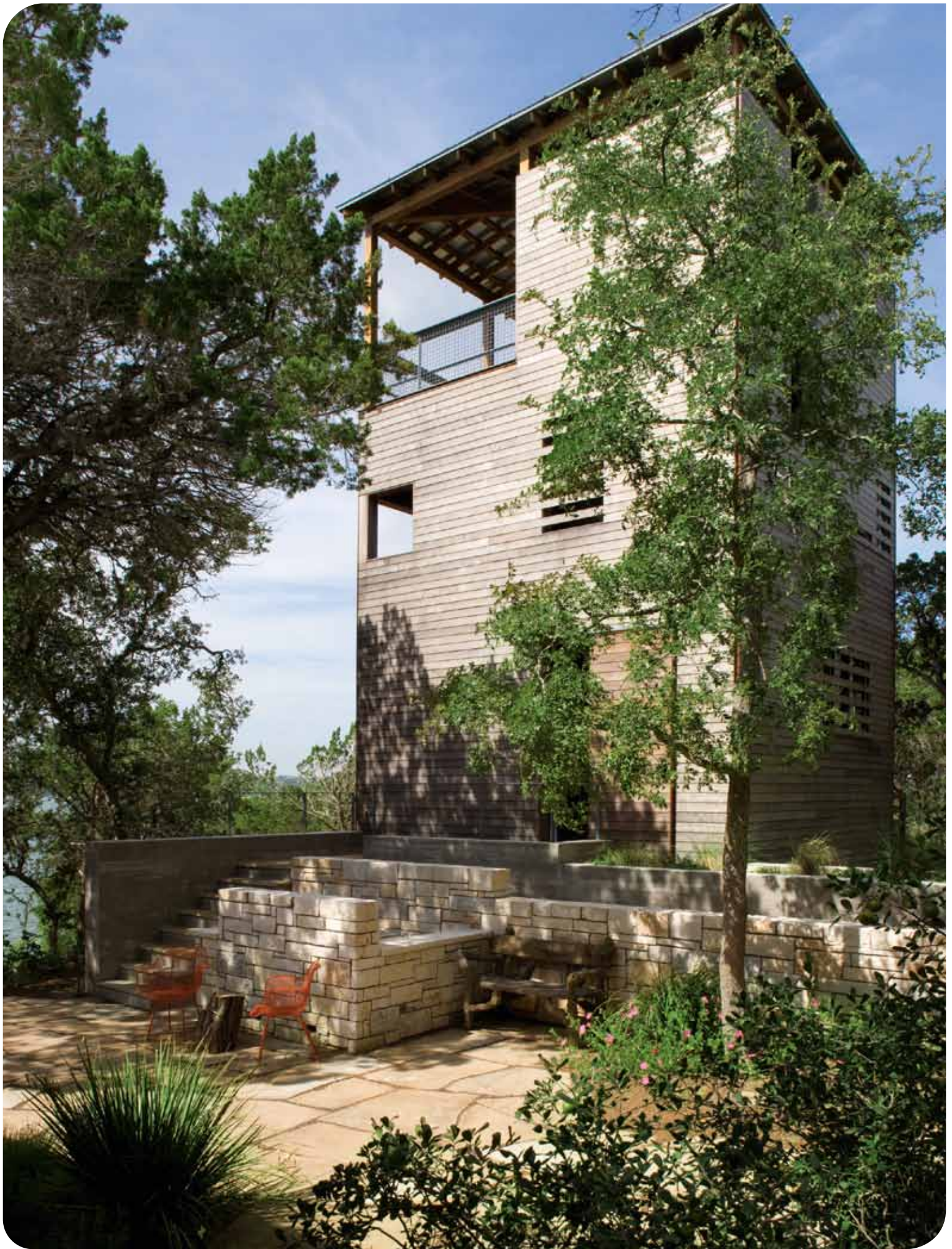
DMITRI SIEGEL & EDWARD MORRIS

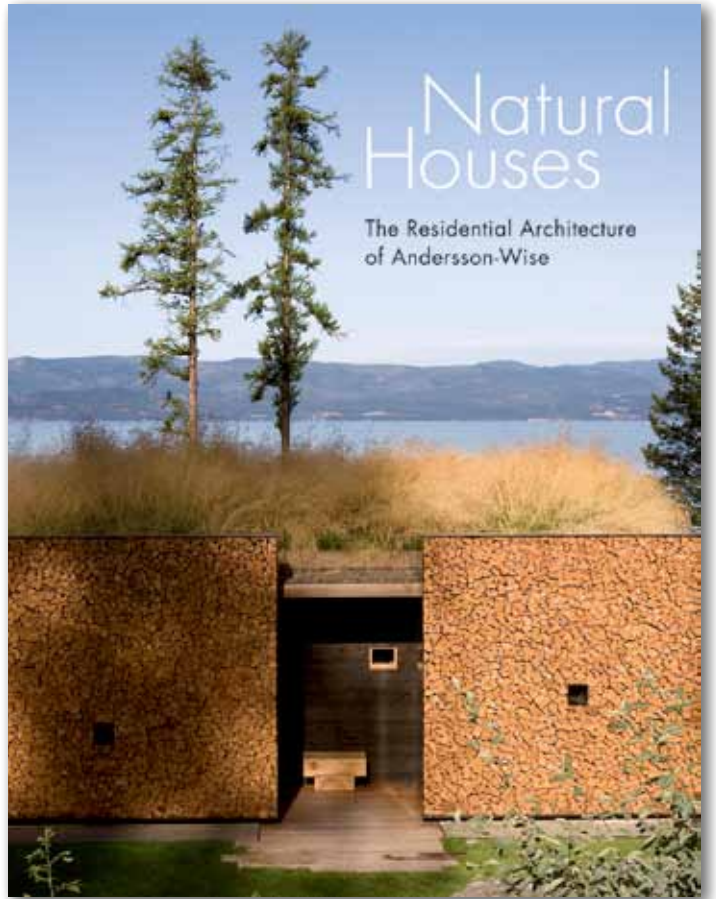
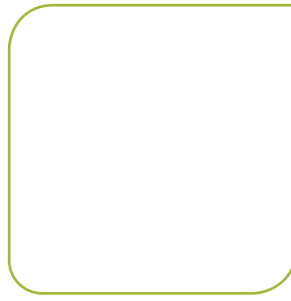


Metropolis Books
www.artbook.com

Recognizing that the environmental problem—or more specifically our failure to help solve it—is in large part a marketing problem, the Green Patriot Posters project turned to the graphic arts to mobilize a new generation. Drawing on inspiration from WWII propagand posters, a wide variety of artists take an equally varied approach—from positive reinforcement to fear to hope—to recruit the next wave of green warriors. In keeping with its mission, the book is printed in the U.S. on 100% recycled paper using vegetable inks and wind power. To submit your own poster design or donate to the cause, go to www.greenpatriotposters.com.





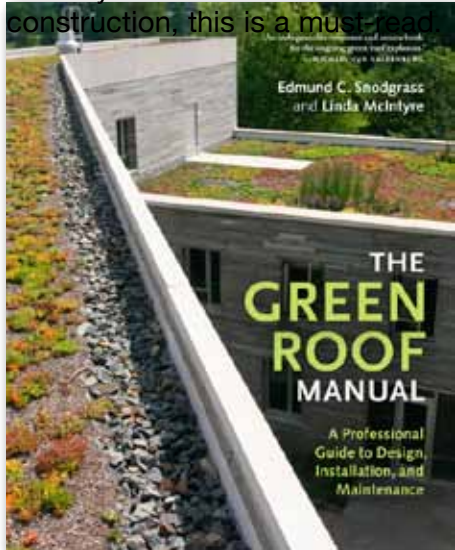


Princeton Architectural Press
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Austin, Texas-based architects Arthur Andersson and Chris Wise base their theory of architecture on place, starting with location and keeping in mind Sir Winston Churchill's comment: "We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us." This book presents seven of their firm's exquisite projects, reminiscent of horse barns, Tuscan cottages, and even a smoke-house woodpile. Tropical and vibrant, forested and remote, you won't believe you're still in Texas.

Metropolis Books
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You've turned the lawn into a garden, now turn the roof into a lawn. For those who want a practical guide to navigating increasingly stringent stormwater regulations while ensuring that plants will grow without creating a damp and moldy interior, this book intends to fill the gap by providing an overview of tried and true techniques that have been effective in North America. If you're building a business in Toronto where green roofs have recently been mandated for new construction, this is a must-read.

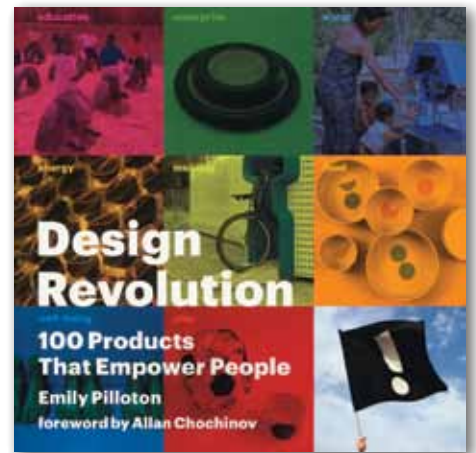


Metropolis Books
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Editors Bryan Bell and Katie Wakeford explore the ways creative design can serve the greater good. More than 30 essays by architects, urban planners, historians, environmental designers, and oth-

Metropolis Books
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Edible landscaping is the epitome of eating local. Author Fritz Haeg documents eight regional prototype gardens that he has planted in California, Kansas, Texas, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and England, while also including day-to-day accounts of the challenges and rewards of front yard farming from homeowners and communities who are reaping what they sow. Not intended as a comprehensive how-to guide, this book will make you look at lawns in a whole new way. Trellis,



You'll recognize the revolutionary red Target pharmacy bottle with its large, flat face and easy-to-read type and the OXO Good Grips can opener, but you may be shocked and amazed by such innovations as SunNight Solar's buy-one-give-one BoGo Lights, solar-powered flashlights which last an average of 100,000 hours. Or the Tack-Tiles Braille-based blocks, which resemble LEGOs but represent letters, numbers, syllables, or punctuation marks and can be used to create words, games, equations, and musical compositions. Or the Whirlwind RoughRider wheelchair which looks as cool as the rugged urban areas it is built to navigate. By documenting mind-blowing and eloquent solutions to worldwide problems small and large, Design Revolution can't help but set your own mental wheels in motion.

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Michael Wiese Productions | www.themigrationproject.org

Sixteen of the nation's finest contemporary photographers train their lenses on America's vast and varied landscape, with an accompanying soundtrack composed by songwriter and photographer Donald McCrea to take along for the ride. Beginning in NYC, heading down to post-Katrina New Orleans, on through heartland, prairies, and the Wild West, and ending in Los Angeles, the journey exposes the social, economic, and political diversity that is America, from sea to shining sea.

—Michelle Jackson



Shelf Unbound: What was your goal when you set out on your monster project that is Migration?

Donald McCrea: When I became a teenager, two things happened that altered the course of my life. The first was discovering music and joining my first band at age 13. The second was discovering the Beat writers, starting with Jack Kerouac and *On the Road*. That mad inventive book revealed that running down a road with no agenda was a liberating and life-enhancing experience. I subsequently thumbed twice across the U.S. and toured with bands for years, and loved every minute of it all.

So when I set out to produce *Migration*, it was that visceral rush of the wind in your hair and heading for the horizon that I was trying to capture. I wanted the reader to discover some hidden facets of this great land and to explore places where they might never dare venture on their own. Our adventure starts in New York

City, winds through the South and across the prairie, heads into the West and Southwest, and ends up in Los Angeles.

Shelf: How did you select the photographers that you wanted to participate?

McCrea: I started by contacting a few friends who have made it their life's work to document America, and when they readily agreed to partake, I then contacted a few of my heroes in photography, and when they jumped in, I knew we had the core elements for a great book. Then, by networking from there, I picked the other photographers that comprise the 15 artists that help me tell this story. I might mention that in this quest I also scoured the Internet culling through thousands of photographer's websites, as well as spending weeks poring over such sites as Flickr, etc. All in all, I put in some 2,000 hours assembling this book.





David Zaitz





Jerry Downs



Edward Burtynsky

Shelf: *Were you surprised by any of the other photographers' perspectives on America?*

McCrea: Not surprised, as I am well versed in this milieu, with the photographic documentation of America being one of my passions, but I was certainly delighted with the work I found. Many of the photographs here are the latest images from photographers who have been working this theme for years. They range from Alex Harris, who has spent the past 18 years lugging a large format camera around the wilds of New Mexico, to Dave Jordano, who is capturing the rural Midwest with a 30mg Hasselblad for his *Prairieland* series.

Migration has been a dream project for me. I have owned some 2,000 photography books over the years, and never thought that I would ever get the opportunity to assemble one myself. Michael Wiese Productions

gave me carte blanche to put this together as I saw fit, which allowed me to be able to showcase some of the work that I felt deserved to reach a broader audience and help define how this great land is perceived.

Shelf: *You are also releasing three CDs in conjunction with the book. Did you feel that road music was a natural fit for the photographic journey?*

McCrea: It was actually the music that inspired the book. For the past seven years, I have been writing and recording songs for this *Migration* project.

The text of the music is the same as the images, which is America. And the subtext for both is America as it has grown and changed, as well as America on the move, hence the title. The music draws thematically from various classic American musical genres,



Susana Raab

such as ragtime, Delta blues, rock and roll, etc. I utilized a five-piece horn section (many tracks have 10 horns) to help to fill out the core group.

The original concept was to have the photographs serve as illustrations for the music, but I quickly realized that to be able to compile the most powerful images, I would have to allow for them to tell their own story. So while the images start in New York and end in L.A., the music starts where American music was born, in New Orleans and the Mississippi Delta. So we have two journeys here that wander and intertwine in places and eventually find their way across the country.

▶ **Telephone Line**

▶ **Ragtime**

[click to listen](#)



Donald McCrea

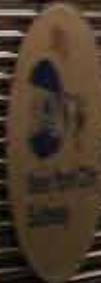
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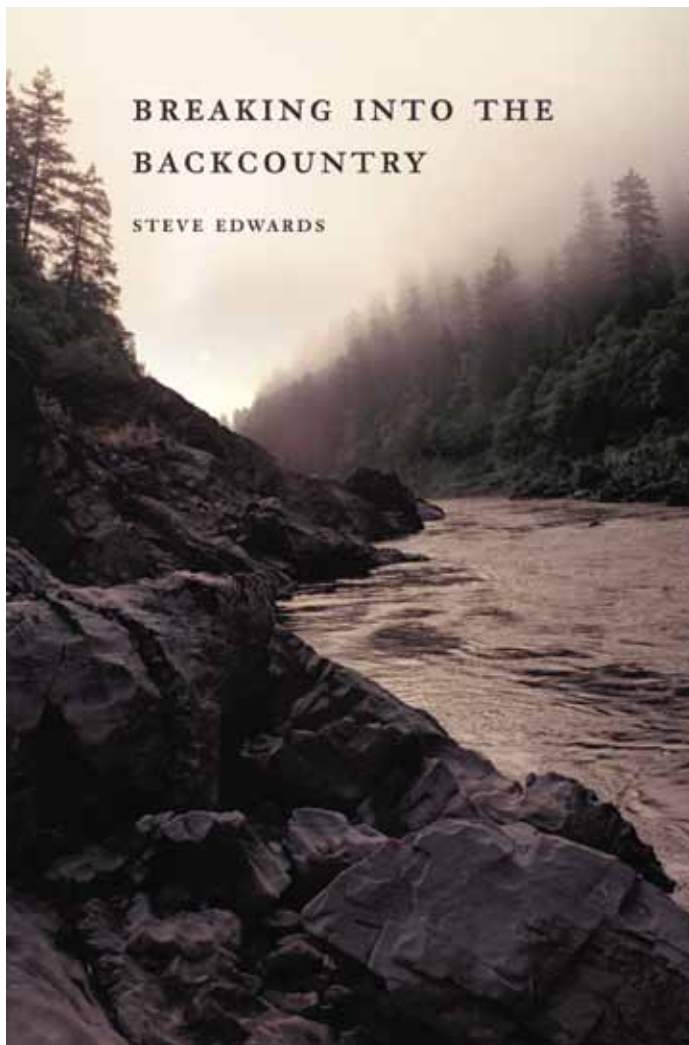
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PORTLAND

Breakfast, books, brews, and bikes—your guide to the best of America’s greenest city.



Recently divorced and teaching college English in Indiana, Steve Edwards entered a writing contest because, more than anyone else, he needed to win it. The prize? Seven months of “unparalleled solitude” as the caretaker of a 92-acre backcountry homestead in southwestern Oregon. In clean prose that is both introspective and self-deprecating, Edwards tells the age-old story of how the wilderness has the power to transform a life.

—Anna Nair

University of Nebraska Press
www.nebraskapress.unl.edu

Getting There

By midafternoon we've crossed Iowa on I-80 and started north to South Dakota on I-29. It's the same route we took on a family vacation to the Badlands when I was fourteen, only on that trip we stopped and spent a night in Mitchell, home of the Corn Palace. Today we hit Mitchell and keep on rolling. All afternoon and into the evening the scenery is the same: the highway's broken white center line, semitrailers streaming west in plumes of exhaust, the flatness of the plains. Checking our mileage, I'm amazed by how far we've come and how far we still have to go. Riddle, Oregon, where my father and I will meet the homestead's owners at a gas station and follow them into the homestead, is 2,316 miles from my little hometown in Indiana. I can no more fathom this distance than I can fathom the distance from Earth to the moon. And though I have poured over the manual Bradley sent me and spent the last few months reading everything I can get my hands on about the Pacific Northwest, I still don't totally know what to expect. The moon might actually be more familiar a place to me than the Rogue River canyon.

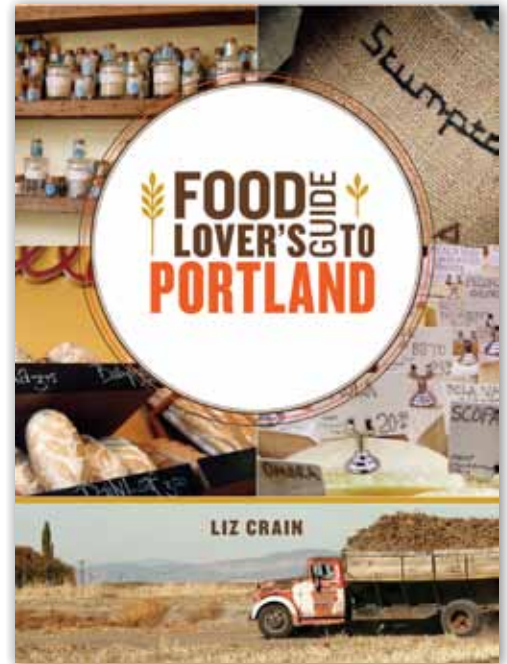
What is my father thinking as we drive along? I haven't the foggiest idea. Perhaps he's nervous about what could happen to me living alone for seven months in the woods. Somehow I doubt it. He stares out the window, taking in the changing scenery. He's thinking about whether a steelhead will take a night crawler. He's thinking this experience will make a man out of me. He's thinking that after the thirty-two years he spent in the pharmaceutical industry, there's no better way to enjoy retirement than by getting out and seeing a piece of the country. Or maybe he's not thinking anything, just resting and staring out the window at the changing scenery.

It's a comfort having him along. From time to time, I just look at him—this man I've always known. His shiny bald head. Sideburns beginning to turn silver. Big Popeye forearms with their gold hairs. This is the man who bathed my brother and me when we were small enough to fit in the tub together.

I've invited him along because I need help with the drive. I also want him to feel proud of me and to see this as an accomplishment. He's along, however, to make sure I'm not getting in over my head.

Fathers and sons.

On the second morning of the trip, we wake road weary and dazed in a Motel 6 in Rapid City, South Dakota. The day dawns bright and clear, a lucky break in April, and scenery that yesterday ran on an endless loop has somehow shifted overnight. We're in the Black Hills region. Along the horizon are pine-studded ridges and steep granite outcroppings. Touristy billboards tout Black Hills gold and jackalopes. Soon we cross into Wyoming, clipping the northeast corner: Gillette, Sheridan, the Bighorn Mountains. The land flattens again, but it's not like the fertile pastures of Iowa or Illinois. It's dry and dusty, wind



I have eaten some of the most memorable breakfasts of my life in Portland. There was the red snapper hash at Bijou Cafe, the fresh-baked scones with homemade preserves at Byways Cafe, and the light-as-air veggie omelet with a side of buckwheat pancakes at the *original* Original Pancake House. Ten years later, I'm jonesing to go back and try all of the not-to-be-missed foodie faves outlined by Portland resident and writer Liz Crain. Breakfast is just the beginning—she covers the essential food groups (baked goods, cheese, chocolate, and wine), as well as food carts, coffee shops, farmers markets, distilleries, and seafood. With, of course, lists of the best breakfast spots, brewpubs, vegetarian restaurants, and sandwich shops so you don't miss a morsel.

Food Lover's Guide to Portland by
Liz Crain, Sasquatch Books 2010,
www.sasquatchbooks.com.

PORTLAND MIX

Portland may often be overshadowed by big sis Seattle, but this little sibling has a vibrant music scene all its own. Here's a sampling inspired by local Portlander Serena Bartlett, author of *GrassRoutes Portland: An Urban Eco Guide*.

our iTunes playlist

(click above to link to playlist)

SPILT NEEDLES, the shins

BOHEMIAN LIKE YOU,
the dandy warhols

SWEET ADELINE, eliott smith

SYMPATHIQUE, pink martini

THE ENGINE DRIVER,
the decemberists

JUMPERS, sleater-kinney

FOR A REASON, at dusk

GETCHA NOW, marchfourth

STANDING IN THE WAY OF CONTROL,
the gossip

WET AND RUSTING, menomena

HANDS IN POCKETS, laura gibson

A FIELD REPORT, loch lomond

LOST GIRL, foghorn stringband

FLOAT ON, modest mouse

I DECIDED, liv warfield

O OREGON, raina rose

I HEARD THAT, cool nutz

RED LETTER DAY, viva voce

SEE A PENNY (PICK IT UP), yacht

beaten, dotted with scrub. I watch the long wire fences roll by and count pronghorn among the black cattle.

Midmorning we cross into eastern Montana, and my father perks up. We have entered the Crow Indian Reservation.

"I mean, we won the war," he says, waving a hand over the steering wheel at the surrounding hills and forest, the scattering of outbuildings far from the road. "I don't see why we don't just take all this back. We ought to be using this land for something."

"Just take it back?"

"Something."

In Billings we stop for lunch at a Pizza Hut, gas up, and switch drivers. Not long after that, we come to a spectacle that makes it clear we're now in the West: the snow-covered Crazy Mountains in full sun.

From the Crazies it's not much farther (a couple hours) to Three Forks, Montana, where my father's friend the Six Million Dollar Man—a moniker earned after some oil deal he made in Wyoming—has offered to put us up for the night. His plush three-story house sits on 340 acres of sprawling marsh between two forks of the Jefferson River. In the distance the snow-covered peaks of three separate mountain ranges appear in faint relief: the Gallatins, the Bridgers, and Big Sky. It's a beautiful day for April, sixty and sunny, and up at the house, the Six Million Dollar Man greets my father and me with firm handshakes. He's wearing a flannel shirt, jeans, work boots. An unlit cigarillo hangs from his lip. We stand around the little trout pond he's had dug in his front yard, watching fish rise to the surface, and when he asks about the origins of our trip I tell him the story: I've somehow won a writing contest, and the prize is seven months as caretaker of a backcountry homestead in Oregon. When he asks what kind of writing I do, I say fiction. He's just finished reading *Close Range* by E. Annie Proulx.

"Those are some tough stories," I say.

"That's Wyoming," he says.

"Who owns all them mountains?" my father wonders aloud, gesturing toward a distant range of snowy peaks.

The Six Million Dollar Man shrugs, says he doesn't know, says the government probably holds the lease. I tell him how impressed I've been by the Crazy Mountains after the flatness of Billings. "The Crazies," the Six Million Dollar Man says, raising his eyebrows, nodding. "The Crazies are beautiful."

That night, after a meal at a rib joint in the little town of Willow Springs, I bed down in a sleeping bag in the Six Million Dollar Man's sunroom and can see huge wintergreen stars twinkling in the sky. Strangely, I don't feel far from home at all tonight. If anything, I feel closer. I think of the miles my father and I have driven, that life and land and sky, those millions of stories colliding like atoms in places I'll never know. By comparison, my own life seems small. My worries and fears, my hopes and dreams and aspirations. One more speck of dust in an infinite universe.

The next morning my father and I wake to snow. The flakes are dime sized and falling furiously. Nothing to do but take off

and hope for the best (and pull over if we have to pull over), we pile into my truck and wave good-bye to the Six Million Dollar Man and his river-island homestead. Despite the snow, we make halfway decent time, flying down I-90 in a convoy of eighteen-wheelers. Signs appear for Butte and Deer Lodge. The road rises, drops, dips, and curves. Throngs of dark, snow-covered pines lean into the wind. Craggy peaks and ridges crowd the sky. The scenery so challenges my midwestern sense of scale and proportion that as morning gives way to afternoon I have no real appreciation of how much time is passing. As we round one bend, the city of Missoula appears, its grid of streets and houses nestled snugly in the valley below. Then we shoot north to the tip of Idaho and Lake Coeur d'Alene. We zip through the heart of Spokane and afterward are surrounded by wheat fields that stretch to the horizon.

All afternoon, I keep a foot on the gas. We cross the Columbia River at Umatilla and head west on I-84, cleaving to a series of high bluffs that look out over the water. Another few hours snowcapped Mount Hood appears, followed by the Portland skyline and a snarl of commuter traffic. Everything here is lush and green—lawns, hillsides, trees. South of the city, we pass acre after acre of blooming tulips, like a postcard from Holland. The sky is blue, the clouds full and gray. Then it's down to the town of Corvallis and out to the coast. We drive by bucolic pastures and hobby farms, where gorgeous black and white horses stand perfectly still in fields of tall grass, where black cattle kneel under the spreading arms of an oak.

Since leaving the Six Million Dollar Man's house, my father and I have been watching the sky, calculating mileage and wondering if we'd arrive at our destination tonight in time to watch the sunset over the Pacific.

"Well, what do you think?" I say.

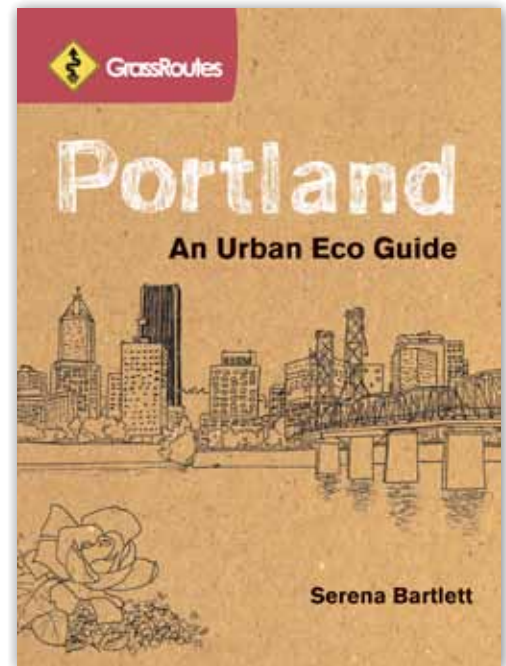
"Maybe," my father says.

Our final stretch of highway winds its way through the fir-shrouded coast range with the light fast fading.

About the time I think there's no way we'll make it before dark, the highway spits us out of the mountains and stuns us with a view of the ocean from a lookout on Highway 101 at Waldport. The water churns like a sloshing cauldron, and the air all around us is gray. But there, far out on the horizon, glows a slender band of pinkish orange where the sun has just now dipped below the edge of the world.

In typical midwestern fashion, my father and I have arrived a day early and now must decide what to do with the extra time. There are any number of options along the coast: hike up Cape Perpetua, near Yachats, to the big lookout over the water; check out the Sea Lion Caves farther south; drive dune buggies down at the Oregon Dunes National Recreational Area. In our hotel lobby we look at pamphlets and decide to drive another three or four hours south on Highway 101 to see redwood trees. We've driven this far, what's another few hours?

Highway 101 winds its way along the coast, offering stunning views of the water and the beach. Towns come and go: Coos Bay, Port Orford, Pistol River. I see old men in rain slickers mending fishing nets out on long, rickety piers. The weather is overcast and cool. The ocean is the color of pencil lead.



GrassRoutes Guides are all about the greater good. They focus on restaurants that serve sustainably grown produce, co-operative bakeries, art-house theaters, and organic spas. They highlight local artists, wildlife preserves, and neighborhood markets. Looking for a bookstore? In addition to the well known Powell's City of Books, there's St. Johns Booksellers for serious subjects, Broadway books for comfort and comedy, In Other Words for a women-centric selection, and Reading Frenzy for funky and indie. Need a cuppa? How 'bout Ladybug Organic Coffee Company for organic pastries, Random Order Coffeehouse for free WiFi and outdoor seating, Sip for a wheatgrass shot in an Airstream trailer, or Pied Cow Coffeehouse for a vegan dessert and hookah hookup to go with your joe. In addition to Portland, other series titles include *San Francisco*, *Seattle*, *Oakland & Berkeley*, and *Northern California Wine Country*.

GrassRoutes Portland: An Urban Eco Guide by Serena Bartlett, Sasquatch Books 2010, www.sasquatchbooks.com.



In 2008 *The New York Times* dubbed Portland “Bike City, USA” in recognition of both the city’s cycling culture and the international reputation of its burgeoning bike builders. So a shelf of Portland guides would not be complete without a guide to the bike itself, in this case a comprehensive guide to—in proper do-it-yourself Portland fashion—building your own. Guy Andrews, editor of *Rouleur* magazine, provides detailed information and beautiful studio photographs of every frame, saddle, gear shift, and crank that you could possibly want for your custom bike, be it road, time trial, track, or cyclo-cross. Interviews with designers like Dario Pegoretti and Chris King, along with guides to builders, websites, and further reading, are all added bonuses.

The Custom Road Bike by Guy Andrews, Laurence King Publishing 2010, www.laurenceking.com.

At the California border there’s a checkpoint, and we think it might be a drunk-driving initiative of some kind, or possibly a manhunt. When we pull up to the officer in charge, he asks if we’ve brought any produce with us across the border. The confusion must show on my face. “Produce,” he says. “Fruits and veggies.” Then he explains that it’s an effort to keep invasive insect species out of the state’s billion-dollar orchards. We have some apples, I tell him.

“From the grocery?”

“Yeah,” I say.

He waves us through.

After the checkpoint, we zip down to the Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park and take a driving tour. It dawns on us, as midwestern tourists, that we don’t really know what a redwood looks like. Sure, we’ve seen the iconic pictures—cars driving through the enormous trunks—but nothing around here looks like that. The trees are extremely large with a red tint to their bark, but are they redwoods? We just don’t know. And it’s sad that we don’t know. We pull into an empty campground parking lot and decide to walk around a while, stretch our legs. Whether the trees all around us are redwoods or not, this is an eerily beautiful place: wisps of fog flutter in the canopy of trees; a damp pine-needle smell rises from our footsteps. We have walked maybe fifty feet when we come to a picnic table whose legs have rotted out from under it. On the table’s surface is the unmistakable evidence of bears: a series of long claw marks in the soft wood. And on a nearby tree trunk at eye level is a sign with a picture of a bear: **YOU ARE IN BEAR COUNTRY. BE AWARE.** I am suddenly unaccountably afraid.

In my heart of hearts, I know it’s ridiculous. I should be able to point to a tree and identify it as a redwood. I should be able to take a stroll in bear country without a bad feeling in the pit of my stomach. But right now—just a day before meeting the owners of the homestead and getting set up to live in bear country for seven months—I just can’t. I’m afraid. There is an actual lump in my throat.

We take a last look at the picnic table with the claw marks and casually decide to cut our stroll short, keep driving.

As we head up Highway 199, back to Grants Pass (where we’ll stay the night before meeting the owners in Riddle the next day and following them to the homestead), my cowardice sickens me. We’ve come all this way. Across the Great Plains, through the Rockies, along the Columbia River Gorge. Come all this way and for what? To be scared out of a campground by claw marks that for all we know could be ten years old? How in the world am I supposed to be a caretaker of a backcountry homestead when I can’t even stand in bear country for five minutes without getting a lump in my throat? It doesn’t bode well, and the whole way north I’m on edge, cranky. We take a room at a Motel 6, and because it’s still early, my father wants to go out, explore the city of Grants Pass. Maybe get some more groceries for the week we’ll spend at the homestead together. Maybe find the post office. A Laundromat. I’m not having any part of it.

“Go out if you want,” I tell him.

“You don’t want to look around?”

“No.”

What I want to do is lay on the flimsy bed with the curtains drawn tight and sulk. Finally, my father shrugs and says he thinks he saw a

donut shop down the street; he's going to check it out. He'll be back.

Then the room is mine, and as has happened to me so often at cheap hotels, in towns far from home, a great loneliness descends. I listen to the traffic on Sixth Street, its steady grind, and every once in a while someone walks past my door. I hear the gentle sound of footsteps, murmuring voices. It reminds of nights as a kid when I'd lie awake in bed listening to the sounds of my mother and father settling in for the evening, feeling as though everything were right in the world and mourning its goodness, never wanting anything to change. And also nights in my early twenties, alone in an efficiency apartment after a divorce, hounded by doubt and regret. From the window of that place, I could see the underside of a bridge that spanned the Wabash River. A homeless man lived there, and one day, walking by on my way to teach class at Purdue, I saw three big square-cut swatches of sod the man had stolen from a yard somewhere. He'd been sleeping on them. There was an indentation where he'd lain his head.

I think about that homeless man, about my divorce, about that era in my life when things had felt so shaky and adrift: that was four years ago. Now I'm starting a new era. When I first decided to enter this contest some part of me knew that I'd win. Not because I'm the world's greatest writer, but because I needed it. That was the story I'd been telling. That more than anyone else, I needed it.

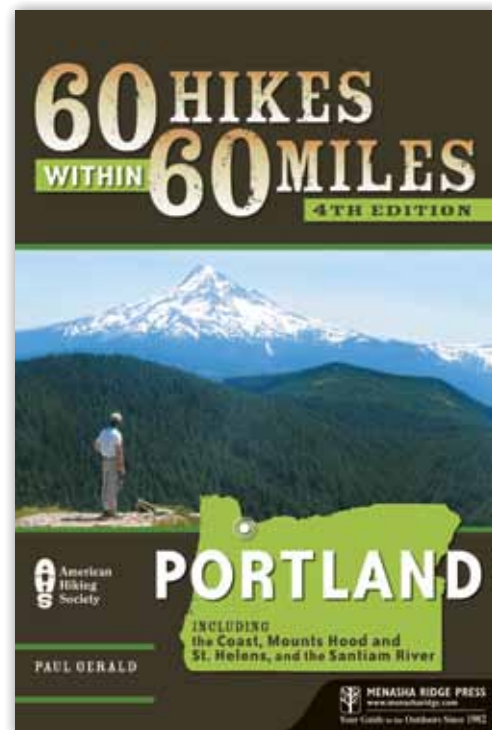
I try to remind myself of that.

It doesn't help.

Lying on the bed, thumbing through Bradley's manual, I go over the rules and regulations, the warnings about wildfires and disease-carrying ticks, what to do in the event of serious injury, the explanation of the water system, the hand-drawn maps into the homestead, the two hundred hours of chores I'm to fulfill in order to complete my hour-a-day caretaking duties. Should anything go wrong—should a pipe burst or a bear break into the cabin—it's up to me to deal with it. What happens if I can't? What happens if I come up short on character? What if I fail everyone?

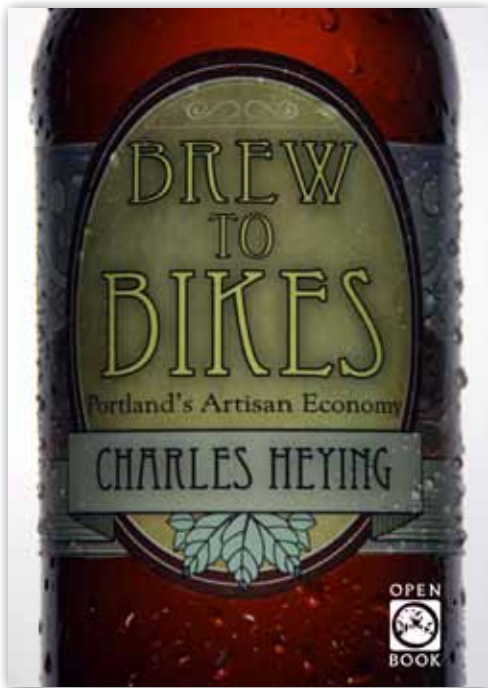
It's maybe an hour before my father returns from his walk to the donut shop. We're both ready for dinner and head across the street to a restaurant. It's dusk. The sun has dropped below the cloud ceiling and is shining wanly on the low, folded mountains surrounding town. There is a freshness in the air, a coolness. Over a dinner of hamburgers and French fries and Cokes, my father informs me that he met a local at the donut shop who said you couldn't find better halfpounder steelhead fishing than on the Rogue River. Who said once upon a time it was a big gold-mining river. "I may have to do a little panning for gold," my father says, between bites of hamburger. And I tell him: he'll get his chance, that tomorrow's the big day. "I'd like to find me a big gold nugget," he says. "Wouldn't that be something? A gold nugget?" I tell him: it would.

It's spitting rain when my father and I pull into the gas station near Riddle, Oregon. Big wisps of steam rise from the surrounding mountains. The Douglas firs are wet and green. This is what Bradley calls "Last Gas" in the manual—from here on in, some forty-five miles of bumpy logging roads, it's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) numbered roads and bridges over little creeks: Middle Creak, Cow Creek, Rifle Creek.



One of my favorite places outside of Portland is Timberline Lodge. The hand-hewn Arts and Crafts furniture alone is worth a visit. Hiker and author Paul Gerald agrees, recommending that if you have just one day in Oregon, spend it at the place he calls "the greatest man-made thing in Oregon." Built in 1937 by the Works Progress Administration, the lodge offers spectacular views of Mount Hood and Mount Jefferson, and one of the best hikes in the region—a 13-mile out-and-back trail to Paradise Park that traverses Zigzag and White River canyons, flower-filled meadows, and overhead glaciers. Too long, too strenuous, or the wrong time of year? Don't worry, Gerald provides plenty of other options (59 to be exact), specifying hike length, difficulty, exposure, traffic, trail surface, and optimal times to visit. Other *60 Hikes within 60 Miles* titles include Birmingham, Chicago, Dallas, Nashville, and New York City.

60 Hikes Within 60 Miles, Portland by Paul Gerald, Menasha Ridge Press 2010, www.menasharidge.com.



For some academic insight into what makes Portland's artisan economy tick, check out this fascinating collection of essays written and edited by Charles Heying, Associate Professor of Urban Studies and Planning at Portland State University, along with a team of graduate researchers. Heying and his students examine why the residents of this Pacific Northwest town have taken such an interest in developing a thriving and sustainable local economy, and why it has been successful on a national scale. He looks at microbreweries and bike manufacturers, instrument-making businesses and tech startups, arguing that, in spite of drawbacks like gentrification, artisan economies are the antidote to a steadily globalized market, one that continues to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. Heying ultimately concludes that the artisans and residents of Portland are consciously and intentionally aware of the moral implications of their making and buying decisions. And they're trying to make the right choices.

Brews to Bikes: Portland's Artisan Economy by Charles Heying, Ooligan Press 2010, www.ooliganpress.pdx.com.

We're early again. We fill up with gas and back into a parking spot in a corner of the lot. We watch logging trucks roll by on the highway. They are loaded down with long, skinny trunks, oversized Lincoln Logs.

With the engine switched off, the truck is chilly. I'm wearing blue jeans with big holes in the knees, a thick flannel shirt, a barn coat, steel-toed boots. There is no backcountry in Indiana, and this is my best guess as to what one might wear if there were. It's my poor imitation of the farmers I grew up around, out combining corn in the late-October chill. I suppose I could have done some research on the Web or bought a copy of *Outdoor Magazine* or *Backpacker*, but somewhere down deep I already knew that nothing betrayed one's inexperience in the woods quite like getting decked out in the latest expensive and unnecessary wilderness accoutrements. Not to mention that I didn't have the money. I'd been house sitting half the year for a retired poetry professor, teaching a few sections of English 101 at Purdue as an adjunct, saving every last penny—I couldn't see spending a hundred bucks on hiking boots.

Likewise with my truck. Bradley had suggested a four-wheel drive, a little Toyota or maybe a Jeep, but in a homemade video he and Frank sent, I thought I heard Frank say that his rig was two-wheel drive and he'd never had a problem getting in and out of the homestead. So when I had to acquire a truck, I bought a fairly new two-wheel drive GMC from a mattress salesman who used it to make his deliveries. A standard midwestern rig, big and square and durable, it was the kind of truck you could imagine parked six deep at any small-town café in rural Indiana on a Friday night. I even liked the color: slate gray. Nothing flashy or glitzy, just a vehicle to take you where you wanted to go. Why pay more for a truck with more miles and more wear simply because it had four-wheel drive? It wasn't like I'd be off-roading. When I'd made my mandatory visit to the homestead last summer, I rented an SUV, and it felt like overkill. The roads were bumpy and I had to watch out for fallen rocks that could puncture a tire, but they were roads like any I'd ever driven before.

From "Last Gas" Bradley's manual says it's another two hours of logging roads into the homestead. My father and I sit in the truck, wait. When the windows steam, I roll them down and breathe in the pulpy, sulfuric smell of a pulp mill. It's not so terribly different from the corn-processing plant back home, the stink of sweet gold kernels being melted down for syrup. It's strangely comforting.

"Is that them?" my father says after a time, pointing to a rusty Toyota pulling in, three middle-aged men up front.

The truck pulls up to a pump, and the three of them hop out. I recognize Bradley and Joe Green, last year's resident caretaker, from my mandatory trip to the homestead. In his wire-frame glasses and John Berryman beard Joe Green had peppered me with questions I didn't understand about soldering copper pipe. Bradley—tan, bald, clean-shaven—laughingly opened a sliding glass door on the deck of the upper house to show me where a bear had tried to paw its way in. "See that scratch?" he said, pointing to a long arcing scar on the glass. "Now what's the only thing sharp enough to scratch glass? That's right. Diamonds! We got us a diamond-clawed bear!"

The other man with Bradley and Joe Green is Bradley's brother, Frank. As I understand it, Frank is a well-known ceramist who runs an artist program up the coast, the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology. He is tall and lanky, wearing blue jeans and boots, a sock cap bunched on the back of his head.

My father asks again if that's them, then looks at me, waiting. Up until now, I could have called it off. Chickened out. And against what feels like my better

judgment, I tell him that's them and get out and wave hello to everyone. Frank introduces himself with a handshake. Bradley pounds me on the back. Joe nods. I introduce them to my father and hear myself saying I'm glad to see them all.

"That your rig?" Bradley says, eyeballing my truck. A look of deep concentration—perhaps irritation—has spread across his face. "You'll ruin my road with that monster."

He pulls off his wool beret and runs a hand over his bald head, pinches his lips with his forefinger and thumb, keeps staring at my truck. Frank, the taller of the two, pulls off his sock cap, folds it in his hands, says the roads get awfully, awfully muddy in the spring and worries that I might get stuck. Joe Green, in a rain slicker, a crumpled fedora, points at the tires. "Street treads," he says.

Bradley's chewing his bottom lip, thinking it over. In his gray work pants and boots, his scuffed jacket, his wool beret, he looks like any other Oregonian I've encountered in the last day and a half. There's something in his countenance, though—his arch seriousness, the scrutiny with which he's considering the details of our trip into the homestead—that makes me think of a general on the eve of battle. As a greenhorn from Indiana who knows next to nothing about the world he's entering, I'm intimidated as hell but at the same time deeply grateful. He tells me I'm going to need mud and snow tires. Then he asks me if I have chains. He says that I'm going to need chains.

"You should've called me," he says. "I could've told you—you need four-wheel drive. It's muddy as hell in the spring."

"I'll get new tires."

"Then again," he says, lifting his eyebrows and shrugging, "as dry as it's been, you may not have a problem. They might even close your road for fire precaution. Then you'll have to get a permit from the BLM. They might even close off the river to rafters. That's how bad it is. Middle of a ten-year drought."

I nod as though I understand.

Bradley sighs.

For now at least, we're just going to have to make due. Last report from John Daniel, who spent the winter in solitude at the homestead, was that the road was dry and clear. We'll have to take him at his word. We'll go slow. If I get stuck or start to slip and slide, Frank's got a big steel chain, and we can connect our rigs. It's something they have apparently had to do before. Bradley and Frank share a glance and a laugh. There's a story I don't quite catch about a writer whose rig wouldn't stop sliding on the downhill slope. They tethered their rigs with the chain—the writer's vehicle out in front and Bradley back behind, with his rig in 4WD low range, and riding the brakes. Or else it was the other way around, and the writer kept braking every time Bradley stepped on the gas. I don't really catch it because the two of them are laughing so hard, remembering, and because I'm glad they're laughing, and because I'm relieved to hear I'm not the first greenhorn writer they've had to deal with. For a while there, the way Bradley scowled at my truck, I thought we might have to delay the trip. I thought: here we are, day one, and you've already screwed up. ■

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www.marthagoesgreen.com.au

We have found ourselves falling for these three New Zealanders and their adorably delicious self-published cookbook. Rosie Percival and Ruth Friedlander, two young food authors, have joined forces with photographer Jessica Symonds (along with illustrator Jessica Honey and writer Hazel Squair) to design a practical cookbook that promotes sustainable and conscious culinary habits. Printed on 100% recycled paper using only vegetable-based inks and packaged in a reusable book bag made from organic fair trade cotton, cooking green has never looked, or tasted, so good.

—Kathy Wise





CUITY PUFFS
makes 20 (vegan)

To make pastry rub margarine, flour and salt together in a medium sized bowl. Rub in a well in the center and add water on the back, turn out onto a clean lightly floured surface and knead until smooth. A water tea bowl and an axle for 30 minutes.

Heat olive cook potatoes in boiling salted water for 20-25 minutes or until tender. Drain and let cool. In a large pan heat oil over a medium heat and add onion, garlic, turmeric seeds and onion to flavor. Stir in garam masala, peas and fry for 5 minutes, then add potatoes, fresh coriander and sugar. Stir remove from heat and set aside for 30.

On a lightly floured surface, divide dough into 20 balls and roll each out to form a circle with a 12cm diameter.

Place 2 tablespoons of filling on one half of a pastry circle and leave a 1.5 cm gap along the edge. Fold over to form a semi-circle and pinch along the edges lightly floured surface. Repeat until all curry puffs are made. In a large pan, cover a medium heat. Lower curvy puffs into oil with a second spoon, do not overcrowd. Deep fry for 8-10 minutes until golden and drain on absorbent paper. Serve with sweet chili or tomato.



- pastry**
- 3 Tbsp margarine
- 3 1/2 cups plain flour, sifted
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 cup lukewarm water

- filling**
- 4 medium sized potatoes, washed, cut into small cubes
- 2 Tbsp oil
- 2 small onions, diced
- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tsp cumin seeds
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp garam masala
- 1 Tbsp curry powder
- 1/2 tsp chili powder
- 1 cup frozen peas, thawed
- 1 cup coarsely chopped fresh coriander
- 1 tsp brown sugar
- vegetable oil for deep frying





Lentil, haloumi and asparagus salad

Serves 4, gluten free

2 x 400g cans brown lentils, rinsed, drained
½ red onion, finely sliced
red capsicum, diced
1 small Lebanese cucumber, halved lengthways, sliced
cup kalamata olives, halved
½ cup roughly chopped fresh mint leaves
1 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 Tbsp lemon juice
salt and pepper, to taste
1 Tbsp oil, for frying
2 bunches asparagus
250g haloumi cheese, drained and sliced

To serve

1 lemon, cut into wedges

In a large bowl combine lentils, onion, capsicum, cucumber, olives and mint leaves. Pour over olive oil and lemon juice, season with salt and pepper and toss to combine.

Heat half a tablespoon of frying oil in a large pan over a medium heat. Snap woody ends off asparagus, discard and add stalks to the pan. Cook for 5 minutes, turning halfway through, or until asparagus is tender and has turned bright green. Remove from pan and heat remaining half tablespoon of oil. Add sliced haloumi and fry for 1–2 minutes, turning halfway through. Haloumi should be golden on both sides.

Divide lentil salad between four plates, top with asparagus and haloumi and serve with lemon wedges.



Chana masala (chickpea curry) with cucumber raita

Serves 4, gluten free

Raita

200g natural yoghurt
½ Lebanese cucumber, seeds removed, finely chopped
2 Tbsp chopped fresh mint leaves
tsp ground cumin

Curry

2 Tbsp oil
2 tsp cumin seed
1 onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 tsp grated ginger
½ tsp dried chilli flakes
1 tsp garam masala
tsp turmeric
1 tsp ground coriander seed
2 x 400g cans chickpeas, rinsed, drained
2 x 400g cans diced tomatoes
tsp salt

To serve

cooked basmati rice
1 bunch coriander leaves, chopped
1 lemon, chopped into wedges

To make raita place yoghurt, cucumber, mint and cumin in a small bowl and stir to combine. Refrigerate until needed.

Heat oil in a large pan over a medium-high heat. Add cumin seeds and let pop. Add onion and cook until translucent. Add garlic, ginger, chilli flakes, garam masala, turmeric and ground coriander and cook, stirring, for 1–2 minutes.

Add chickpeas and stir, covering chickpeas in the spices. Add tomatoes and salt, stir and bring to a gentle boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 20–25 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Serve on rice topped with chopped coriander leaves, lemon wedges and a dollop of cucumber raita.

Note: Adjust chilli to taste, this recipe results in a medium spiced curry.



Chocolate tofu mousse

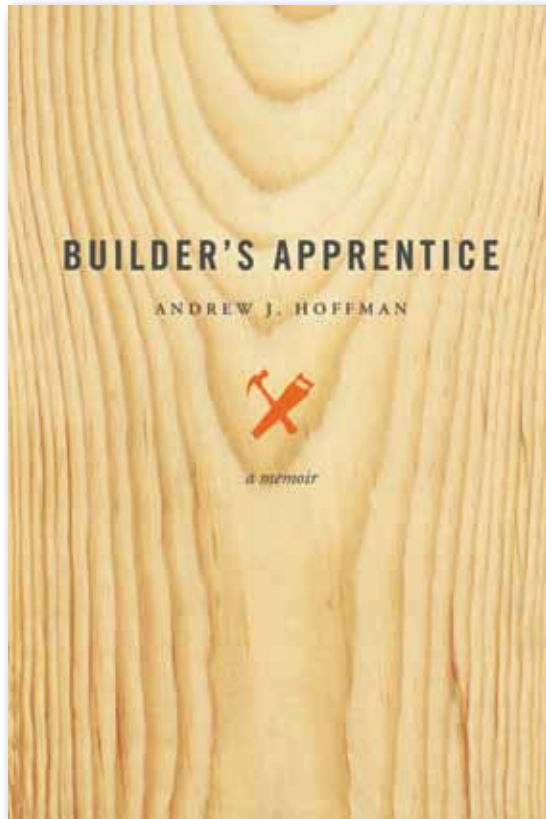
Serves 4, vegan, gluten free

250g silken tofu
250g vegan chocolate, melted
2 tsp pure maple syrup
2 tsp peanut butter

To serve
grated chocolate

Blend all ingredients until just smooth, be careful not to overmix. Pour into jelly moulds, small dishes or glasses and garnish with grated chocolate.

Refrigerate for a few hours until set.



Huron River Press
www.huronriverpress.com

INTERVIEW

Shelf Unbound: Your chapters are based on St. Benedict's stages in becoming a monk. I also found an echo of a monastic philosophy in your acceptance that any day on the job site could be your last, a perspective that helped you take action despite your fear of making a costly error. What parts of that philosophy are still present in your life today?

Andrew Hoffman: I feel very strongly in the idea of pursuing a calling. I believe everyone has a purpose and they need to be still and listen to that inner voice in order to find it. Unfortunately in today's hectic, loud, and commercialized world, many of us do not spend time searching for that true sense of direction that is our own. We tend to go with the crowd or

what the crowd thinks has value. Think how great a world it would be if everyone followed their own inner passion and purpose!

I think one reason I left home building was a feeling that I had more to offer the world than creating such opulent homes for wealthy clients. I love every house I built but felt that my calling had a deeper social purpose to it. Sometimes I question that decision, but one thing I learned only after I left carpentry was the love I derive from writing. I really love it.

Shelf: Your book was really a page-turner for me as an amateur carpenter, but I wonder at what point you realized that your experience could be made into such a compelling book?

WARNING—THIS BOOK MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR CAREER. Andrew Hoffman's memoir recounting his journey from a cubicle-dwelling chemical engineer to a full-fledged custom homebuilder is the opposite of a cautionary tale. Instead it recommends taking the road less traveled—specifically the one that heads toward a dream borne of passion, which, happily for Hoffman, also ends up being the road to success. Hoffman, or “Stuff” as he is inexplicably nicknamed by the master builder under whom he studies, recounts his work on three homes, each progressively larger and involving more responsibility and mastery. To call this memoir a page-turner may seem incongruous, but this was one of those books I was tempted to pull out at long traffic lights, unable to wait any longer to find out who was to blame for the out-of-plumb wall at the Shaw house or whether or not the Colorado carpenter's bad influence would infect the rest of the crew. While *Builder's Apprentice* constructs its story around the building of homes, its themes will resonate with those striving to find meaning in their life's work.

—Jennifer Wichmann

Hoffman: It's hard to say. I knew that mine was an unusual experience and I wanted to write about it soon after I finished my last house. But taking 20 years to reflect before actually writing helped me to be more introspective and thoughtful about what the book is really saying. Had I written it right after the experience it would have been more of a collection of events and less about what they meant. I didn't show it to anyone except my editor until it was done, and only when I started getting positive feedback did I know I had something special that touches people. That response is very gratifying.

Shelf: The love of carpentry drew you into building—the joy you got from creating “your trap door” on the Rogers House was palpable.

How did that love change or transform as you moved away from pure carpentry and into the site management aspect of building a house?

Hoffman: Oh, I still loved it. I loved being in the center of all the action of dozens of subcontractors and directing the construction of those individual elements. Building with my hands is a unique pleasure, and I never gave that up. But thinking how, for such a large crew, to make the house a reality was a pleasure that I relished as well.

Shelf: I noticed that your publisher is a part of the Green Press Initiative, a movement to preserve ancient rainforests and natural resources through the use of recycled, chlorine-free paper. Does the appreciation of wood that you developed as a carpenter influence your perspective on the environment and consumer consumption?

Hoffman: Actually, this is a tough question. I teach about sustainability now, but in this book I write about building a 29,000-square-foot home. No one really needs that much space, but it was truly a work of art, one that I and the crew took great pride in building. There was a lot of large dimension redwood in the house, and I did feel some guilt at first seeing the Muir Woods. But, in the end, this book is about the love of craft and the guilt I feel is short-lived. The choice to print with the Green Press Initiative was something that both the publisher and I believe in.

Shelf: There was a shadowy undercurrent that ran through some of Jack's dealings with difficult subcontractors. The implication I drew was that custom home building in New England was tangentially connected to organized crime and required the ability to either literally or figuratively hurt others. Did this "darkness" lead you away from continuing as a homebuilder?

Hoffman: I wouldn't extrapolate from Jack to the entire construction industry in New England. There is no doubt that it is a tough business (as I am sure it is everywhere), but not all were connected to organized crime. And honestly, to this day, I don't know what to make of Jack and his statements intimating such. He was an enigma in many ways. But I can also say that I could not have resolved many of my more difficult problems without his force and strength, either directly (through dealing with the pool contractor) or indirectly in the way he supported me and gave me strength to take action myself. This didn't lead me away from custom building though.

Shelf: A great deal of the book is devoted to your growth as a supervisor/manager of the workers and subcontractors on the building site. Your struggles and milestones are very similar to those most supervisors and managers face in the workplace—being a friend vs. being the boss, a younger worker supervising an older employee, realizing when it is time for an employee to move on, ensuring promises and contracts are delivered on. Are these lessons you are able to put into practice in your current role as a professor?

Hoffman: Absolutely. In fact, I wrote a series of blogs for the *Harvard Business Review* based on management lessons from the book (i.e., how to fire someone). You can see them on the book's web page [webuser.bus.umich.edu/ajhoff/memoir.html]. I use the stories as ways to illustrate many of the points I want to make in the classroom. They make my lectures vivid and give me a great deal of credibility as one who actually ran a company. Oddly, there are not many business school professors who can say that.

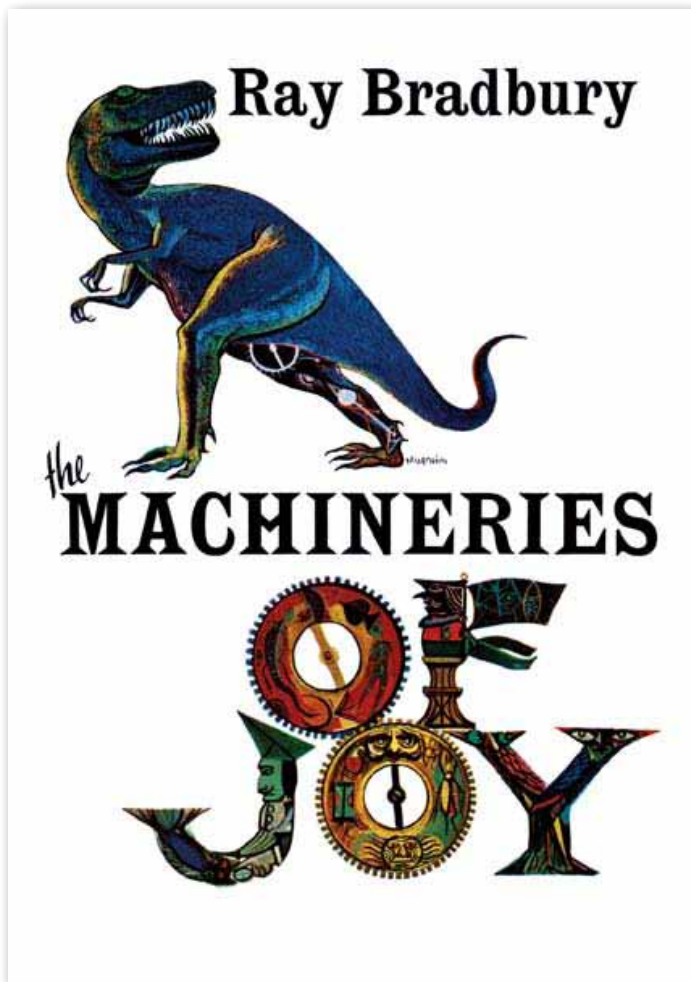
Shelf: You built a series of homes with Jack, your mentor and employer/partner over several years, but then left that work for

the life of a professor. Did you experience a similar calling as you did with building when you made that change?

Hoffman: Yes, but it is harder to define. There is less of a tangibility to being a professor than a contractor. If someone walked into one of my homes and said it was a piece of junk, I'd look him dead in the eye and say he didn't know what he was talking about. If someone grabbed one of my books or articles and said it was a piece of junk, I'd have to ask why he thought that. In many ways I associated more with the identity of builder than I do with the identity of professor. I'm not sure why that's so. It could be because of the tangibility and clarity of building. It could also be because of the strength I drew from Jack. I really wanted that to come out in the book—the power of a mentor in your life.

Shelf: At the end of the book, you mention that you make an annual pilgrimage to the world of home building. However, you also tell readers that your tools were in storage at your sister's home for 20 years. There seems to be a chasm between building at such an intense and exclusive level and not building at all. Yet at the end of the book you tell readers you are a homeowner, ready to renovate your own home. What kept you away and what brought you back?

Hoffman: I still did lots of carpentry in the interim—I renovated my sister's second floor, my brother's kitchen, built a deck for another brother, did Habitat for Humanity projects, etc. I never left it; I just had no place to put my tools while I lived the meager existence of a student in Cambridge. And no matter the scale, it is still immensely pleasurable to look at something I created with my hand and my imagination. My home now has a wood floor, window seat, and many other changes that I feel great satisfaction looking at. ■



PS Publishing Ltd. | www.pspublishing.co.uk

THIS IS THE SHORT STORY “THE ONE Who Waits.” Remember? “I live in a well. I live like smoke in a well. Like vapor in a stone throat.” And “The Vacation,” with the last family left on earth traveling in silence. It is the foreseeable tragedy of “The Drummer Boy of Shiloh” and the shattered sugar skulls of “El Dia de Muerte.” It is the O. Henry ending revealed by the bountiful Emma Fleet of “The Illustrated Woman” and the rollicking Irishmen of “The Anthem Sprinters.” It is vintage Bradbury from 1964, reissued by British press PS Publishing, and it’s as mind-bendingly brilliant as it was when you read it the first time.

—Jack Rubenstein

Introduction

by Neil Gaiman

EXCERPT

I can imagine all sorts of worlds and places, but I cannot imagine one without Bradbury. Not Ray Bradbury the man (I have met him. Each time I have spent any time with him I have been left the happier for it) but Bradbury the builder of dreams. That Bradbury. The one who took the American Midwest and made it magical and tangible, took a childhood and all the people and things in it and shaped the world forever after. The man who gave us a future to fear, one without stories, without books. The one who invented Hallowe’en.

There are authors I remember for their stories, other authors I remember for their people. Bradbury is the only one I remember who sticks in my heart for his times of year and his places. *The October Country* is a perfect Bradbury title. It gives us a time (and not just any time, but the month of Hallowe’en, when leaves change colour from green to flame and gold and brown, the twigs tapping on windows and thing in the cellar time) and it makes it a country. You can go there. It’s waiting.

Places: the green meadows of Green Town, Illinois, in *Dandelion Wine*; the red sandy expanses broken by crumbling canals that could only be Bradbury’s Mars; the misty Venice Beach of *Death is a Lonely Business*. All of them, and so many more, locations that linger.

The Machineries of Joy is a book of places as much as it is a book of tales.

Bradbury's best short story collections have themes and they have patterns. They are arguments and they are conversations. I think of this book as a reminder of the Bradbury who, while too many fine writers were still writing for the pulps, had liberated himself, and was writing for the slicks. He had been one of the first writers to have made the transition from the world of people who read that sort of thing to the world at large. The tales in *The Machineries of Joy* are, with few exceptions, stories in which genre elements are muted or absent. (Sometimes, as in "The Illustrated Woman" or "A Miracle of Rare Device", it is their absence that *is* the story.)

It is hard for me to talk about the stories without thinking of Ray Bradbury the person: I remember his 70th birthday and the joy of being there. I had the honour to present him with a Grand Master Award and I have never seen a room of people cheer and clap more joyously than they did that night. More important than either of those things, though, for me, was that I got to say thank you, in person. Never at the length I should have, because that would have tried Ray's patience. But we have time here, and if you get bored you can flip the page and begin. So...

The first Ray Bradbury story that I read was "Homecoming", and it changed me. I was seven years old. The story was in a collection of SF I had borrowed from a friend's father. I identified more with Timothy, the boy being brought up by a loving family of vampires and monsters, than I had ever identified with any fictional character before. Like him, I wanted to be brave, to not be scared of the things in the darkness. Like him, I wanted to belong.

I read *The Silver Locusts* next, a collection of stories now more often known around the world by its alternative title, *The Martian Chronicles*. The book was sitting on a book case at home. I do not know to whom it had originally belonged. I thought the book was like nothing else I had encountered (although I was young enough and literal enough that I kept waiting for the locusts to turn up). I fell in love with "Usher II", the story that sent me to Poe, as Martian settlers, representing the repressive anti-fiction movement on Earth, arriving at a scary house on Mars, are murdered by robots controlled by an aficionado of horror and the fantastic. The murders were in the style of Poe stories, "The Pit and the Pendulum", "The Murders in the Rue Morgue", culminating in "The Cask of Amontillado". It was after reading this, I suspect, that I resolved to read Poe, become a writer, to own a Scary House of my own, and to own a robotic Orang-Utan that would do my bidding. I have been fortunate in achieving at least three of these goals.

The first Bradbury books I bought with my own money were from a travelling bookshop, which would set up once a term in a room in my school. I was about eleven. The books were *Dandelion Wine* and *The Golden Apples of the Sun*.

So much about Ray's writing was important to me, so much of it helped form me. I read all I could. Finding a Bradbury book was an occasion of excitement, never of disappointment. But I never thought of emulating him. I never consciously wanted to copy him. Although I discovered, re-reading Bradbury as an adult, that I had, almost beat for beat, copied one of Ray's stories as a young man, that it had crept deeply enough into my mind in childhood that, writing what I thought was my own story, I wrote it again. (Which story of mine this was, and which story of Ray's had burned its way so efficiently into my back-brain, I will leave as an exercise for bibliographers.)

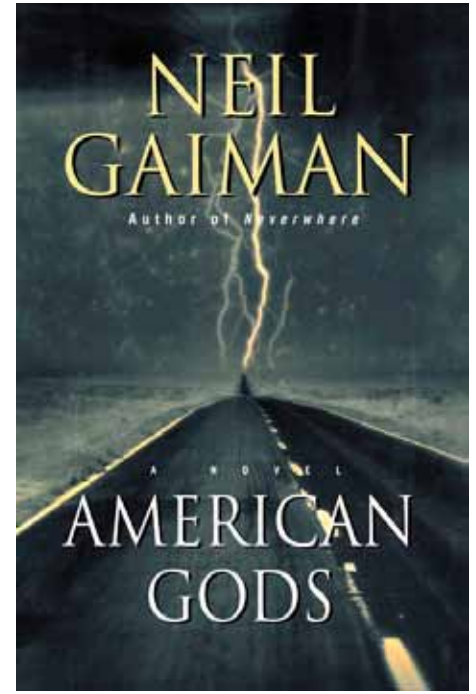
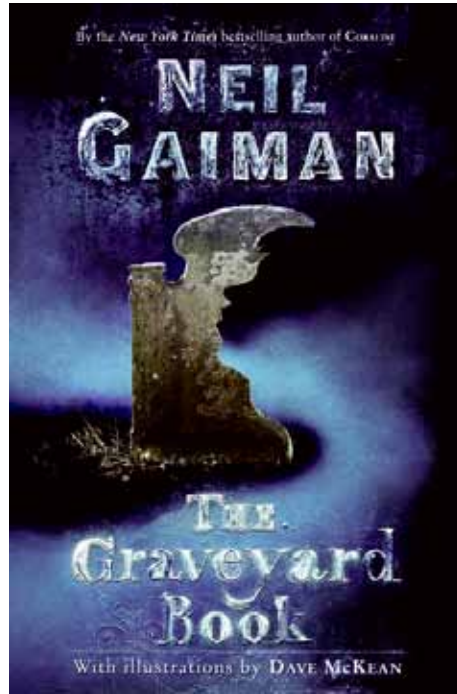
Ray Bradbury was not ahead of his time. He was perfectly of his time, and more than that: he created his time and left his mark on the time that followed. He was one of two men to come from Waukegan, Illinois, who made art that allowed America to define itself from the 1940s until the 1960s. (The other son of Waukegan, of course, being Jack Benny.) And for over sixty years Bradbury has made art, and he still makes art, and sets cats among pigeons, and he gets people talking.

So here, assembled for your amusement and wonder, are the *Machineries of Joy*. A collection of stories, some fantasies, some not. (Many of the ones that are not, still feel like fantasies, while several of the more fantastic tales feel extraordinarily real.) Priests debate and argue about space travel, and an old woman seals her house from Death, and we ask (as Bradbury made us ask and ask and ask again), Who are the Martians? And we wonder, was the man on the bridge in Dublin really a beggar...?

Ray made it. He colonized Hallowe'en, just as the Silver Locusts colonized Mars. He built it, as he built so much, and made it his. So when the wind blows the fallen autumn leaves across the road in a riot of flame and gold, or when I see a green field in summer carpeted by yellow dandelions, or when, in winter, I close myself off from the cold and write in a room with a TV screen as big as a wall, I think of Bradbury...

With joy. Always with joy.

From The Machineries of Joy by Ray Bradbury, PS Publishing Ltd. 2010, www.pspublishing.co.uk. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.



Tweeting with Neil Gaiman

NEIL GAIMAN's writing has earned him numerous awards, most recently both the Newbery Medal and the Carnegie Medal in Literature for his young adult novel *The Graveyard Book*. It's also earned him the largest Twitter audience of any author, so we thought that would be the best way to interview him. Gaiman gamely tweeted thus:

Shelf Unbound (@shelfmagazine): *EW* named "There was a hand in the darkness, and it held a knife" one of 20 best first lines. Did it take long to craft it?

Neil Gaiman (@neilhimself): It's only 12 words, so they didn't take long to write. But I wrote them, & the next 200 words, & then waited 2 years.

Shelf: Other than the *The Graveyard Book's* main character Bod, which character did you most enjoy writing, and why?

Gaiman: I had the most fun writing Nehemiah Trot, the poet. He made me laugh, partly with recognition.

Shelf: I loved the Mikado reference in *TGB*. Do you plant such literary allusions more for your own amusement or the reader's?

Gaiman: Mostly those allusions are there for me. I don't expect everyone to get them, but they will make a few people very happy.

Shelf: Do you plan a sequel to *The Graveyard Book*?

Gaiman: There's a big story I'd like to tell that may have familiar characters in it. Like a *Lord of the Rings* to *TGB's* *Hobbit*.

Shelf: You write in the re-issue of *Ray Bradbury's* *Machineries of Joy* about reading Bradbury at 7. Your favorite Bradbury story?

Gaiman: "Homecoming"—it's been my favourite Bradbury story since before I knew who Bradbury was.

Shelf: What characteristic do you most appreciate about Bradbury's writing?

Gaiman: The beauty.

Shelf: Your love Amanda Palmer has a gorgeous new album of Radiohead songs on ukulele. Do you play an instrument, or aspire to?

Gaiman: I play guitar and piano very badly, ukulele worse, & the tambourine not at all, something @amandapalmer finds hilarious.

Gaiman: As a very small boy I played the double bass, mostly for the comedy value inherent in the size difference.

Shelf: What are you working on now?

Gaiman: About to write an article for *Dr Who Monthly* on what it was like to wander the set & how I failed to steal the TARDIS.

Shelf: The #fridayreads group wants to know what you're reading and invites all tweeps to post what they're reading each Friday.

Gaiman: Tell #fridayreads I'm reading Calvino's *Italian Fairy Tales*, & have *The Count of Monte Cristo* on the go on my Kindle. —



THE ONE OPRAH MISSED

Melba, the relatable protagonist of Barbara K. Richardson's **Guest House**, finds her life turned upside down after she witnesses a fatal car accident that claims the life of a bicyclist. Abandoning her life as a successful real estate agent, Melba retreats to her country farmhouse where her previously unmet boarder, JoLee Garry—the ill-equipped mother of an 11-year-old boy—serves as a winning example of why parenting should require a licensing exam and an extensive waiting period. With wry humor, Richardson tells a touching story of salvation that would do any book club proud.

—Anna Nair

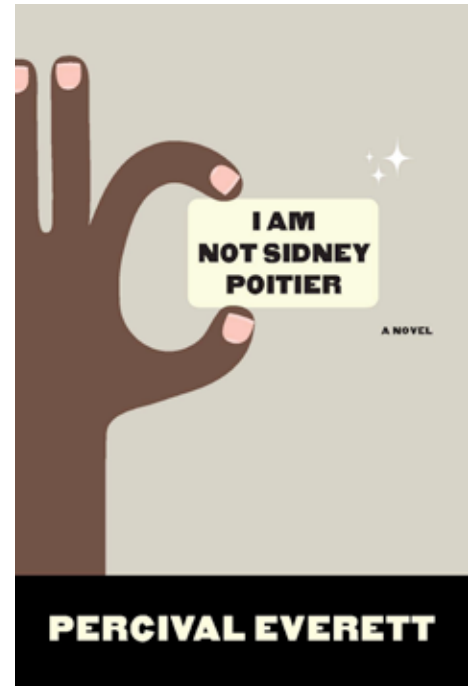
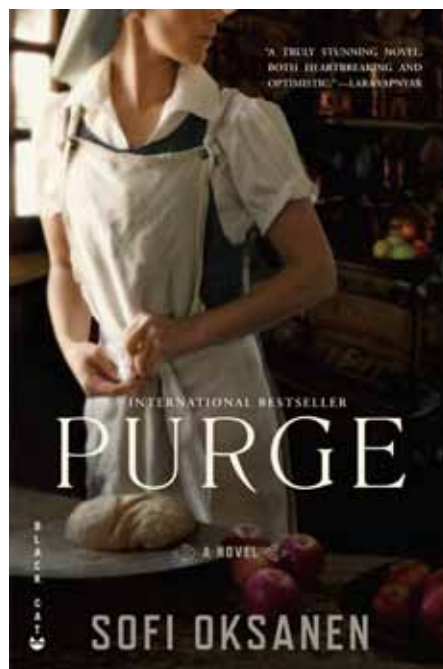
Guest House by Barbara K. Richardson, Bay Tree Publishing, www.baytreepublish.com.

FINNISH FIND

At 33, Sofi Oksanen is Finland's breakout young writer. Her third novel, **Purge**, was a best-seller in Finland and earned her the prestigious Finlandia Award and Nordic Council Literature Prize 2010 (she's the youngest winner of both). While structured as a mystery, the novel is really a commentary on sex trafficking, the plight of Soviet-occupied post-WWII Estonia, and the brutality that humans are capable of inflicting on one another. Oksanen's voice is precise and poetic, repeatedly revealing the nuance of expression, place, and moment. *Purge* is a painful story, beautifully rendered.

—Margaret Brown

Purge by Sofi Oksanen, translated from the Finnish by Lola Roberts, Grove/Atlantic, www.groveatlantic.com.

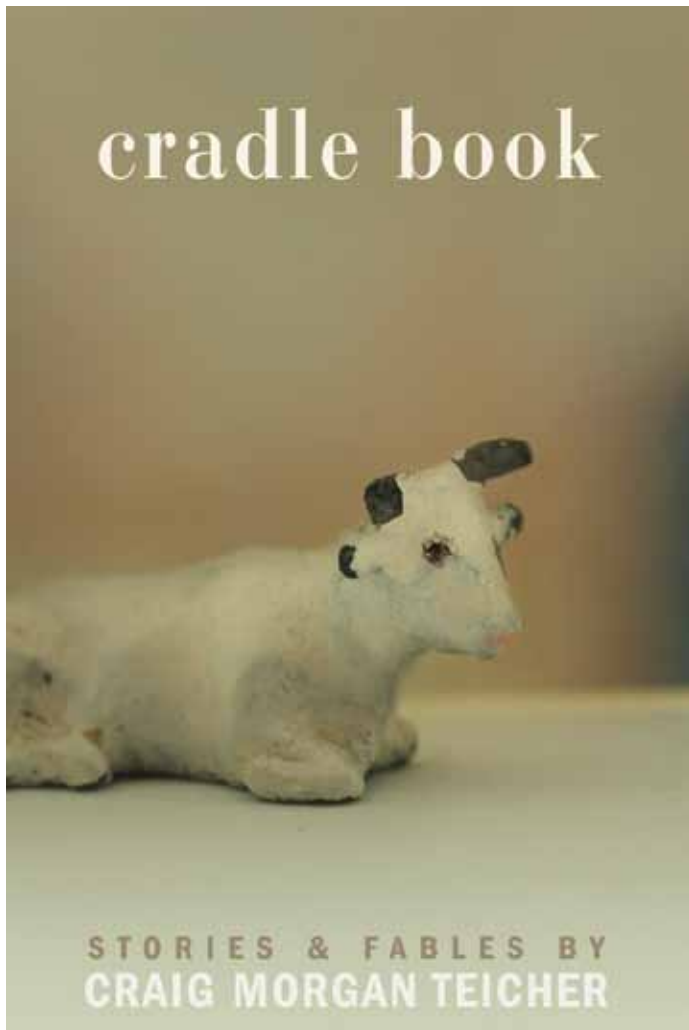


NOT SIDNEY

Don't worry—the title makes sense by page 5. **I Am Not Sidney Poitier** captures the whirlwind life of a young African-American man whose name confusion is, for most of the book, the least of his worries. Orphaned and obscenely wealthy at age 11, Not Sidney is taken in by a fictionalized version of Ted Turner who provides many of the novel's laugh-out-loud moments. Author Percival Everett also paints himself, or at least his name, into the story as an eccentric professor whose classroom provides an apt backdrop for Not Sidney's various adventures, which are woven seamlessly into the thoughtful book.

—Dean Hill

I Am Not Sidney Poitier by Percival Everett, Graywolf Press, www.graywolfpress.org.



Boa Editions, Ltd. | www.boaeditions.org

IF THE IDEA OF FABLES BRINGS TO MIND Aesop and his moral menagerie (think Tortoise and Hare, Ant and Grasshopper), prepare to be surprised—and enchanted—by Craig Morgan Teicher’s *Cradle Book*. *Shelf Unbound* talked to Teicher about storytelling, nervous-looking birds, and anthropomorphic dust.

—Ben Minton

Shelf Unbound: *What made you decide to write fables?*

Craig Morgan Teicher: I’m a poet by trade but I’ve always idolized fiction—there’s nothing better than getting lost in a book. I started writing poetry as a teenager because I didn’t have the patience or attention span to write something lengthy. When I was at McDowell [the oldest artists’ colony in the United States], I came across a book of fables called *Houses and Travellers* by W.S. Merwin that was published in the late ’70s. I thought, What if I wrote fiction that lasted only a page? I could probably handle that. So I wrote a bunch of short fables at McDowell. When I came home I started buying up fables and folk tales. For a year I was writing mostly fables, and that became the book.

Shelf: *Other than brevity, what attracts you to fables and folk tales?*

Teicher: A teacher of mine, Richard Howard, used to say that verse reverses and prose proceeds, which I have taken to mean that you get to the end of a poem and it makes you read it again, whereas with a piece of prose you are meant to take in whatever the prose is about. I got interested in the idea of prose that reverses, meaning it was prose that you had to read again and again in order for it to have its effect. Also, fables are just a really old form of literature that has worked to convey morality and cautionary tales and to concisely tell the stories of cultures all over the world. Plus, it’s a lot of fun to write about things falling on animals and people behaving badly.

Shelf: *You include birds in several of your stories.*

Teicher: Birds are really good symbols for things. They fly, obviously, which is symbolic of any kind of human wishing to transcend anything. They are also small and weak and sort of nervous looking, so they are good stand-ins for a bunch of feelings: hope and fear and anxiousness. Things can fall on them easily.

Shelf: *And you have one story about dust.*

Teicher: This probably came from having lived for way too long in a dusty house when I was in grad school. There is this way that little animals of dust collect. How do they get there, and why don’t they pay rent?

Shelf: *Now that you’ve mastered the short form, do you want to tackle something longer?*

Teicher: I keep running up against the same issue: Poems work for me because I get to move on to the next one when I get tired of the one I’m working on. It is definitely a great ambition of mine to someday write a 15-page short story.

The Burning House

He was outside chopping wood when the blaze took hold of the house. He was standing some hundred feet away—a safe distance, far enough to escape the flames—when the fire rose from within and began consuming the wooden walls and then the roof. He had his back to the house, busy with his work, and so he did not see or hear the first flames growing. No, by the time he turned around, it was already too late to save the home.

Of course, his wife was still inside. She had just closed her eyes for a late morning nap—she was tired and a little bit sick—and a fire had been set in the fireplace to warm her. When the fire seized on some straw nearby, then hungrily spread from rug to curtain to chair to wall, she was thick with sleep.

You may be wondering what he did next. Did he run into the burning house to save his wife, whom he loved as much as most husbands love their most wives? Was he already too late? Perhaps, if he ran back inside, he would find his wife dead and he would die in the fire too. Did he run away? Did he drop to his knees and wail unto heaven? Is it true, as is said, that a bird in the hand is better than two in the bush? Or, is it even possible that, beneath the inward cries of his dreams and fears, he was happy to be rid of his wife, finally free to choose a new life, a new name, a new fate?

These are all very pressing questions, and there are many more that could be asked. Perhaps, someday, we will find answers amongst the rubble.

But you must be wondering, too, whether now, while the fire rages, we should waste our time with questions. But if we fail to ask now, when will we? Isn't one of our houses always aflame?

The Unexceptional Bird

The day the little bird was born, no bells rang to mark its birth. When, many weeks later, the bird leapt from a branch and flew through the air for the very first time, no festival was held in its honor, though, to the bird, this certainly seemed a momentous occasion.

“I guess I'm not very special,” thought the bird, “for otherwise someone would watch and mark my achievements. I must be—though I did not until now believe I was—one of god's unexceptional creations, like the grains of sand and the blades of grass, which, taken together mean a very great deal (for what would the world be if there were no birds? How could children dream of flight without our example to guide their dreams), but as individuals they do not come to much.

Somewhat saddened, though reasonably satisfied, by this explanation, the bird went on about its life, eating unexceptional worms and gathering unexceptional sticks to fortify its unexceptional nest.

Then, one day perhaps a year later, the bird died when a squirrel accidentally dropped a heavy nut on the bird's head from high atop a tree. The squirrel did not notice, and most of the creatures in the woods were used to seeing dead birds, so no one said or thought much about it.

That afternoon, which was a warm spring afternoon, two children—a brother and sister who were known for having nasty manners—came walking through the woods on the path where it happened that the bird's body had fallen.

“Ho! Look!” said the brother when he came upon the dead bird on the path. “A dead bird, and freshly dead! What shall we do with it, sister dear?”

“Oh!” said this sister, who was very excited. “We must do something, for to leave the bird here would surely be a waste. Let us put it in this box I've brought,” she said.

“Yes,” replied the brother, “and then let us set the box on fire!”

“Wonderful!” cried his mischievous sister, “and then we can watch the bird pop and turn black like a loaf overcooked in the oven!”

And that is just what they did. If only the poor bird could have seen himself now. How truly exceptional he had become, at least to these two wicked children, who had never burned a bird before, and who had never seen one burned, on a lovely spring afternoon.



Emergency Press

www.emergencypress.org

IF YOU THINK YOU DON'T LIKE short stories, pick up *Slut Lullabies* by Gina Frangello and prove yourself wrong. Frangello is a gifted writer who doesn't waste pages, fast developing characters you want to know better and sometimes wish you could save. Like the teenaged Jenna in "Saving Crystal," whose Lolita-esque character dares you to judge her while making you realize that personal motivations are always circumspect, and, at the end of the day, we should count ourselves lucky if we are able to simply save ourselves.

—Dean Hill

Shelf Unbound: The characters in *Slut Lullabies* are captivating and, taken together, form a diverse representation of today's Americans. Reading them in one volume really made me think about the variety of experiences of the people that surround me every day. Was that your intent?

Gina Frangello: First of all, thank you. It's been really gratifying to hear people say this. No, I had no specific intent to represent "diversity" per se, in terms of that as a political agenda. I wrote these stories over a period of 10 years, each separately, sometimes with months or years in between in which I was working on other projects, like a novel. There was no sense of them, while I was working, as being part of a whole. They were all published individually in journals, years before *Slut Lullabies* the book came out.

I think the fact that they represent a range of the contemporary American experience has much more to do with the fact that—like many of Americans, of course—I've lived in a lot of different places, and the stories in the book reflect the realities of those environments. The stories also—despite not having overlapping characters or plots—all reflect certain longtime interests, or obsessions, of mine, like gender and class power dynamics. I grew up urban poor, and a number of the pieces in *Slut Lullabies*, including the title story, are set in or feature characters raised in my old neighborhood or some fictional version of it. But I've also lived in Amsterdam, and in rural New Hampshire, for example, where two of the stories take place, and when I returned to Chicago in the 1990s, I no longer inhabited the same Chicago I knew from my youth.

So if anything, I realized after compiling the book that it really represents a wide range of what it means to live in Chicago, which plays at least some role in seven of the 10 stories. The collection depicts the blue collar Chicago of my childhood, in Latino or Italian enclaves with the insularity of a small town; also the bohemian-artsy Chicago; then there's the old money Chicago of the Gold Coast.... The result, to me, seems to encompass much of the nation all within one city. I don't think someone has to be from Chicago to recognize these places, or what it is to live within the perimeters of a certain lifestyle, but it's definitely a collective nod to the diversity of the city I grew up in.

Shelf: As a writing instructor, you must give advice and direction to your students on how to write and how not to write. Do you practice what you preach?

Frangello: Well, one of the things I remind my students

of is that, if you look at the art world, every great innovator—say, Picasso—first learned how to paint a realistic human face. I talk to my students a lot about the fact that in order to “break” a rule, you have to master it first. There is a big difference between breaking a rule volitionally and simply not knowing what you are doing and therefore not adhering to rules because you have no control over your work. I’ve worked as an editor for more than 15 years and I can guarantee them that the reader can tell the difference between experimentation and floundering or incoherence or posturing. And I think most things, really, can be looked at from this lens.

We tell our students to write what they know, but it’s a given that many acclaimed writers do write from the perspectives of characters vastly different from themselves. I tell my students to be patient. To realize that the story of what happened to them last week isn’t really going to be clear to them for five years—that they may understand something is significant but what it will mean in the larger context only emerges over time. It’s a paradox and a difficult balance: You have to write a hell of a lot, to practice, to get better, and if you’re a certain type of writer you also have to do this to stay sane. But you cannot expect the work you produce at 19 to be published, at least not quickly.

My first novel, *My Sister’s Continent*, originated as an entire novel by a different name that I wrote in my early 20s, then evolved into a series of stories I published in magazines in my late 20s, and finally morphed into a whole new novel—same characters and basic plot but rewritten from scratch with a new concept—and was not published until I was in my mid-30s. I

didn’t care about that project any less when I was 23, and I needed to write all of that to get the novel to what it would later become, but that didn’t mean it needed to be published in that early form. In other words, I needed to master a whole lot of rules before I could break them, and I needed to be patient.

But that doesn’t mean the writing is not exciting in the moment. Young writers don’t need to obsess about publication too soon. They need to do the work. A lot of students will stop doing the work by their mid-20s and never publish anything. If you can keep working, you will already be halfway there, and you have the rest of your life to worry about coming out with a book.

Shelf: You’ve said that “What You See” is stylistically different from the other stories in *Slut Lullabies*. Did you intentionally set out to write from a different perspective and in a different style? I loved that you did not give the characters names, but instead referred to them by their defining characteristics, like *Intelligent Woman* and *Beautiful Woman*.

Frangello: Most of the stories in *Slut Lullabies* don’t have a strong authorial narrator. Usually the point of view—whether first person or close third person—is synonymous with the perspective of a protagonist. I’ve been told that my work is extremely intimate in this way, and I consider myself a very character-driven writer. But “What You See” is really a story told by the author, not the characters. The author observes and discusses the characters—usually sympathetically, but sometimes mockingly—in a way that doesn’t happen in any of the other pieces in this book. It’s much more a panoramic, or a pastiche, in terms of the cast of characters and what constitutes plot.

It’s a study in types, whereas generally speaking I try to stringently avoid making anyone “typical.”

And yet, when I discuss it that way, it sounds like “What You See” would be a really cerebral or distanced story, and I don’t think it is. I think it’s quite intimate in its own way. I tried to divulge a lot of dark truths of what different types of women really think about each other, and how you become the type of woman you are, and how the women you’re jealous of or fear are really just another side of yourself. This is one of my favorite stories in the book, even though it... well, I guess breaks all the rules I usually set for myself, to go back to your last question.

Shelf: You have been gracious enough to allow us to include “Saving Crystal” in this issue. The main character, Jenna, takes a drastic course of action to “save” her stepmother, Crystal. Have you ever tried to save someone who really has no desire to be saved?

Frangello: I’m afraid that’s probably the story of my early life. I once wrote a nonfiction piece entitled “Women I Have Tried to Save.” When I went to college, I majored in psychology and later I was a therapist for four years. I have fairly intense desires to save people. I seem to have been born that way, though no doubt growing up in a rough neighborhood where I saw a lot of girls victimized in one way or another also impacted that natural tendency. My rescue efforts were rarely successful, which probably goes without saying. I’ve also gone through some periods of my life when I was in need of a bit of saving, which of course is the case with Jenna. Sometimes it’s easier to try to save somebody else than it is to think about—or make better

choices for—yourself.

Shelf: *Slut* has always been a loaded term for women. What does the word mean to you?

Frangello: It's not just a loaded word but a complex word. A slut can be a party girl, someone very much holding the cards, a woman who refuses to play by the rules or let men have all the fun. Lately, popular culture seems to have very much embraced that version of Slutdom, like Samantha from *Sex and the City*... and I think a lot of young women have fantasies of being that kind of woman, of beating men at their own game and living by a pleasure principle, not caring what people think. Unfortunately, for many people—not just girls but guys too—that's more media hype than reality. Not everyone is cut out to be Samantha—or Madonna or Lady Gaga or whoever. Most people have a hard time separating sexual connection from emotion, and a lot of promiscuity—in both men and women—has to do with desperation, with seeking love in ways that aren't likely to result in it, or with repeating destructive patterns from one's youth.

I try to incorporate a variety of experiences...from tongue-in-cheek to powerful to very sad and frightening...in terms of what it means to "be a slut." I certainly don't believe that how good a person is has anything to do with how many people she sleeps with, and I try to explore sexuality in a way that is not about moral dos and don'ts. I'm not remotely interested in that, or in what men may or may not think about how women "should" conduct their sexual lives. But I'm very interested in women conducting their sexual lives in ways that are more about fear, or loneliness, or compulsion, or self-destruction, than

about actual desire. I would say that a slut is either her own best friend or her own worst enemy, and the word has extremely different meanings, connotations, and consequences depending on where she's coming from in terms of her perception of self.

Shelf: What made you decide to switch from the novel format of your first book, *My Sister's Continent*, to the short story?

Frangello: I didn't really switch. Like I said, the stories in *Slut Lullabies* were written over a decade, and in between that I also worked on novels—and I have a new novel written after all of the stories in *Slut Lullabies*. I consider myself primarily a novelist, and as you can see from the book even my stories tend towards the long side and often have multiple timelines and overlapping plots in ways that are similar to a more novelistic structure. But short stories are wonderful in that I can get them out faster, before they disappear. I think I'll always write them, or too much would be lost and put on a back-burner while I was working on longer projects. Short stories are much harder to write, actually. The form is more rigorous. You can't make as many mistakes and survive.

Shelf: You are the mother of three children. What five books do you hope your children read before they leave the nest?

Frangello: This is a mind-exploding question, because my knee-jerk response is to say that my primary agenda is to make sure my children read far more than five books before they leave the house for school in the morning! I mean, I've delighted in sharing books that were formative to me in my childhood with my twin daughters, who are now 10, from the *Ramona*

books by Beverly Cleary to Judy Blume to the *Little House* series, and especially *The Changeling* by Zilpha Keatley Snyder and, recently, *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros, which my daughter Kenza read in fourth grade but I hope will revisit a number of times over the coming years. I was just talking to them about some of my favorite young adult books when I was a girl, a few of which were about the Holocaust, like *A Pocket Full of Seeds* by Marilyn Sachs. I think they're going to read *The Outsiders* soon—I just gave them my old copy.

So I guess what I mean is that I think a lot about the books that form you when you're young, and who you grow up to be very much influences what books you will love as an adult. I don't know yet that my daughters will have the same literary tastes I do. Because they were adopted from China, I'd love to share some of my favorite Chinese-American authors with them like Maxine Hong Kingston, and I think anyone with any connection to China should read the memoir *Wild Swans* by Jung Chang about three generations of Chinese women.

And then there's my son, who is four, and who loves books and letters and writing already with the kind of intensity I remember from my childhood, and seeing him—the way words are like a form of worship or rapture to him—it reminds me so much of myself and the way books formed and saved me from so many things. Okay, that was a very long answer. The short answer is that if my kids read Milan Kundera someday and we can sit around and have a conversation about his work, I might just have to die of happiness. That would be kind of a dream come true. ■

SAVING CRYSTAL

The last time I saw my dad beating Crystal she was two months pregnant. She had just found out, after having spent the past few weeks puking every morning at 5:00 AM. She wasn't showing yet. Still, when I saw my dad kicking her while she slumped there on the floor, I kept imagining I saw a baby in her stomach, like one of the seals through a glass window at Sea World or something, swimming in water and staring out at the random observers who came by to watch it. Crystal was lying there crying, her arms around her head. I wanted to yell from the stairs and tell her to cover her stomach, but I didn't dare. I stayed quiet, waiting until he'd left her gasping and choking next to the couch. She rolled onto her back. She looked like she was trying to breathe. The baby stared at me from inside the glass cell of her stomach, its eyes as blank and inscrutable as a fish. It was saying, Help me. Get me out of here.

The next morning no one wanted to get out of bed. My dad had been drinking again, down in the kitchen until two or three in the morning, popping the tops off beer cans at a rate of about one every twenty minutes. Crystal also slept late, or pretended to. I didn't want to be the first one up, but I was starving. I went downstairs in my robe and two pairs of socks. Our furnace had been broken since January, and despite reports on the local news of New Hampshire residents freezing to death, Dad hadn't yet put aside money to have it fixed. Crystal came down an hour later. I was in the living room with the TV turned down low, eating cold toast.

"Hi." She ducked her head, letting her hair fall over her face as if I wasn't going to notice the bruise on her cheek. "You been up long?"

"No." Sometimes I lie to people for no good reason at all. "Just a couple of minutes."

"Oh." She went into the kitchen. From there I could hear her slamming plates around. At first I just turned the TV up louder, but finally I got up and went after her. She was sitting at the table, which was cluttered with crushed cans of Miller.

"How's your baby?" I said. She looked at me, forgetting to cover her face. "Is your baby OK today?"

"Yeah, of course, why do you ask that?"

"I just didn't hear you getting sick this morning, that's all."

"Oh, I slept right through the usual puke time, I guess. I was really tired. Me and your dad were up fighting last night. I wanted to go down to Florida to see my mom, but we don't have the money. I shouldn't have even asked, but with the baby and all..."

"Can't your mother come up here to see you?"

"Like she can afford it. The bus ticket costs over a hundred dollars one way."

"Yeah, but sometimes round-trip is cheaper than one way," I said. "When I went to North Carolina to visit my mom, Dad got a cheaper fare buying me a round-trip ticket even though you guys picked me up and drove me back on your way home from Florida."

"A hundred dollars is still too much. Besides, I'd need money once I got there."

I didn't say anything. She got up and started clearing away the cans. She hadn't even cleared half of them when she sat back down again.

"He knew if he gave me the money to go, I wouldn't come back," she said. "That's why he did this, Jenna. He's scared I'll take the baby and leave if he just gives me half a chance. I'm only telling you 'cause... well, I know you worry. I want you to know that what happened last night won't happen again. I've got no money, and I'm not gonna get any."

"That doesn't matter," I said. "He'll just get mad about something else."

Tears filled her bloodshot eyes. "No, he won't. There's nothing left to be mad at. I got pregnant like he wanted. I've stopped working. I haven't seen my family in over a year. There's nothing left. Nothing."

I looked around the room. Dishes spilled over the sink, good for at least a few slaps, I figured. I stared at her stomach. Through the Formica table, the baby peered back at me.

"If you really want to leave, couldn't you just do it here? Do you have to go to Florida?"

She laughed. "What am I gonna do here, work all night at a diner while I'm nine months pregnant? Besides, there are no jobs here. My only hope was to get home to my mom."

"Well then couldn't you get the money from someplace besides Dad? You wouldn't have to tell him or anything, you could just save until—"

"Jenna, stop it." She turned her back to me so that I could no longer see the baby, waving and smiling at me, last night's antics forgotten. "The only way a girl like me makes that kind of money fast is on her back. And don't think I haven't thought of that either." She turned to face me. "But I don't know a soul in this world interested in paying a married, pregnant, twenty-year-old with bruises on her face a hundred bucks a roll. And I must be even more screwed up than I thought if I'm sitting here crying about my problems to you."

She turned and left the kitchen. My toast had moved from cold to stiff. I threw it away.



For the following week, I was captivated by the image of Crystal as a high-class call girl. I'd seen a movie on TV a few months before about a prostitute who made more money than anybody could as a waitress. She wore glamorous clothes and got taken out for drinks by all kinds of rich men. Some of them even fell in love with her. When Crystal and I walked into town together, I tried to imagine the men standing around the gas station all going mad with desire for her, or the guys in Village Pizza offering to take her to New York for a weekend of passionate lovemaking. In the end, though, the fantasy was too ridiculous, and I abandoned it. Whenever anyone stopped Crystal on the street, it was to ask about the baby or my dad. Some guys yelled "Gimme some of that milk, honey" at her, but when she didn't

talk back, they called her a cunt.

On closer consideration, when I imagined Crystal in the outfits a movie heroine might wear—slick, black miniskirts and high leather boots, like Julia Roberts in the ad for *Pretty Woman*—I practically burst out laughing. No one in Lebanon ever wore anything besides blue jeans, except old ladies who wore house dresses. There was no place to go for expensive drinks, no hotel rooms that overlooked city lights. And Crystal was just a shy, pregnant girl who wore pink most days, not black, and did her eye shadow all wrong compared to women in the movies.



Mr. Logan had been flirting with me all year. My friends teased me about it in class, passing back and forth games of hangman that bore messages to decipher like, *Jenn gives Mr. Logan hand jobs in the darkroom*. Of course, all I ever really did in the darkroom was develop pictures for the school paper, and although I'd learned how to give a hand job the previous summer, as of yet, I'd had no occasion to put this new skill to use at school.

I was Mr. Logan's aide fourth period. I also had him sixth period for English and eighth period for Journalism. He was different from most of the small-town teachers at our school. He'd gone to prep school in Connecticut and was a Dartmouth alumni, which was how he came to teach in Lebanon. Even though he'd been here a decade, he still didn't pronounce Lebanon right, enunciating every syllable instead of say "Leb'nin" the way any normal resident would. He didn't live in Lebanon either, he lived way out near Mascoma, right on the lake.

I first got the idea to seduce him when he asked me to be his aide in September, but since I had never actually seduced anyone, the idea soon fell by the wayside. By winter, we'd fallen into a titillating, uncomfortable routine of compliments (him to me) and sidelong glances (me to him). It was rumored that he'd had a disastrous affair with his previous aide, a senior named Deirdre who left town suddenly a week before her graduation and never returned. Some of my friends thought being his aide might not be the best move, considering. To me, though, this faint glimmer of scandal and passion in our dull little town made the idea all the more tantalizing.

It was late February. Crystal's pregnancy was starting to show. The baby was growing a large crop of orange hair, which no one could see but me. Although I wanted a girl, the baby appeared to be a boy, and sometimes now he sided with Dad when the fights broke out. Crystal, of course, didn't know what her baby was up to, but late at night I stayed awake thinking of our predicament enough for the both of us.

Now that Crystal had stopped working, Dad strode around the house with an air of confidence that incensed me, all his possessions in their places. One evening, after I got off the phone with my mother, he laughed at my suggestion that I could go visit her over spring break. From my room, I heard him tell Crystal that my mother was a stupid whore and that he'd be damned if I was ever going to stay with her and her

filthy boyfriend again. Crystal said, "But all girls need to see their mothers," and my dad popped the top off a beer can and said, "You don't know shit about the situation and what I went through to win that kid away from her and her drug addict friends. Just shut up and keep out of it." After that, no one brought up my mother again.

There was no way out for me, I knew. If I tried to run to North Carolina, the court would only send me back again, or make me live in foster care like they'd threatened. I stirred in bed in the darkness, my fantasies of Mr. Logan merging with my fading images of Crystal as a call girl, with my dreams of going to live with my mom. I imagined my baby brother's possible salvation in Florida, where he could grow up like a boy on a TV sitcom instead of like my dad. I imagined my father's anger, red-faced and helpless, if he came home one day to find his son gone.

It was then that I began to plan Crystal's escape.



Mr. Logan, do you think I'm fat?" I got down off the stool I was sitting on and turned around, pausing with my back to him to give sufficient time to scrutinize my body from behind.

"You girls and your obsession with weight," he said. "If anything, you could stand to put on a few pounds."

I pouted, the way the models do in *Seventeen*. "Then why don't I have a boyfriend?"

He looked surprised. Though he often joked around that he saw all the boys milling around me in the hallways, I usually only blushed and pretended not to hear him.

"I'm sure you could have all the boyfriends you want," he said, then cleared his throat. "You're very pretty."

I leaned against the table where I'd been cutting out articles to line up for print. "Yeah, sure, I could have boys at this school, but I don't like any of them. They're all so immature."

He seemed to find this funny, so I said, "I guess you think I'm immature, too, huh?"

"No," he said quickly. "I think you're very mature for your age."

"But I'm not only talking about age," I said. "I just don't fit in here. I want to do different things, not spend my whole life with some lame job like working in the hospital cafeteria. My dad's been working security at the prison in Windsor so long he might as well be in jail himself. At least the kids at Hanover High have parents who are Dartmouth professors and take them to Europe in the summer." I glanced up at him. "I mean, you've been to boarding school and traveled, so you probably know what I'm talking about."

"Yes," he said. "Small towns can be very limiting, especially for a girl like yourself."

"No one here wants anything from life. That's why I want someone more sophisticated. Someone who can teach me things."

He turned his eyes away. I wondered if I had scared him, if the rumors about Deirdre had been only that, and he'd never dreamed a young girl could talk this

way. My heart pounded with fear that he might call up my father and tell him I was turning into a harlot and to send me to Bible study or something. Finally, when he hadn't spoken in what seemed like forever, I knocked some papers off the table and squealed with surprise, the way women in TV movies do when they're about to have an unexpected office romance with their boss. He rushed over to help me pick them up. I could feel his nervousness hanging in the space between us. It encouraged me.

"So when you were in college, would you have dated a high school girl?" I said, handing him a stack of papers and touching his hand with determined purpose.

"No," he said. "I guess not. I'd have figured my friends would laugh at me."

"See, it's hopeless then," I said. "Because I'd like to date a Dartmouth guy, or someone even older, but obviously I should just give up."

He backed away a little, glancing at me out of the corner of his eye. "Sometimes," he said, "tastes change in the most surprising ways when a boy becomes a man."

The bell rang. I stared at the floor, then up at him, holding my eyes on his face despite his refusal to look at me.

"Does that mean you think some man would actually find me attractive?" I said.

"Jenna." He laughed a little. "I don't think you should ask me that. I am your teacher after all."

I swayed a little, and this time my pout was real. "I know. I mean, I'd never expect anything from a man like you. I just want to know what you think of me."

"I think you are by far the brightest and most attractive girl in this school," he said.

"Now go to lunch. And don't ask me things like that anymore. It isn't right."

"Thank you." I squeezed his hand, and to my relief he didn't pull it away. "You always make me feel so good." I turned and left the room, careful to sway with just the right amount of flair so that I would appear provocative, yet not at all tacky. Then I ran to the lunchroom to eat.



It was not until evening that I fully realized it was possible Mr. Logan *might* actually be interested in me. That night I lay awake imagining scenarios in which I told my friends that I had lost my virginity, that it had been to a handsome older man, and that it had transformed me into a woman. I imagined going to the Lebanon-Hanover football games and listening to the Hanover kids chanting, "We'll be your bosses," waving their fists in the direction of the Lebanon stands, and how their words would no longer touch me, because I had a lover who was one of them—better than them because he was older, already an Ivy League alumni. As I drifted to sleep, my fantasies turned to actually being in bed with Mr. Logan, him holding me and telling me I was pretty and sweet and smart. When I imagined him naked, however, I woke with a start, my heart beating too fast. It took some time before I could fall asleep again.

Over the next few days, I lost my appetite, lost all interest in fighting with my father

and in talking to Crystal. Instead, I stared only at her body, watching the swelling of her stomach with an excitement that was almost all-consuming. My nighttime fantasies, when they were not of Mr. Logan, were of my then-grown-up little brother, who would come to thank me for saving his life. If in reality the almost-robust and freckled child within Crystal's stomach had any idea of the trouble I was going to on his account, he certainly was not letting on.

When I was at home, I was careful to cover my tracks. Naturally my father, despite his obvious personality flaws, might have deemed it necessary to protect me from the slowly growing advances of a nearly-thirty year old English teacher, had he been aware of what was going on. Lest anything get back to him, I didn't tell my family when Mr. Logan started allowing me to stay on during fifth period as well and eat my lunch there in the office. My friends pretended to be disapproving, but the way they hung upon my every word when I told them about the way he complimented my legs or asked me if I'd found myself a "sophisticated boyfriend" yet revealed to me that they were more envious than anything else. In truth, however, I was not closer to having the money in hand. At times I considered abandoning my plan altogether and attempting to save money for Crystal on my own, but I would have to babysit once a week for a year to make enough money for her trip—and that was if I never spent a cent!

It was a Thursday in mid-March; a cold, snowy, typically New Hampshire kind of day. I was daydreaming on my stool during fourth period, thinking about Deirdre. How had she, a worldly senior with large breasts, managed to get this man to make a pass at her? I had been moving forward on my plan of attack for nearly a month, and though our conversations were growing increasingly familiar (I knew he had lived with a woman for five years after college but it hadn't worked out; he knew I was a virgin, though of course I added that I didn't really want to be), he had still never laid a finger on me. I was wondering if I should dye my hair blond like hers when Mr. Logan said, "So what are you thinking about? You look very pensive."

By this point I was desperate. I was beginning to wonder whether his compliments were only efforts to be nice, whether he really did need "extra help" fifth period, whether the whole Deirdre incident was only a small-town myth. I looked up at him. He obviously did not need to resort to dating fifteen-year-olds. Suddenly, without even planning it, I began to cry.

"Jenna." He rushed to my side like a television hero. "What is it? Why are you crying?"

I covered my face with my hands and would not look at him. He continued to press me for an answer, patting my arm. His touch made me grow suddenly tingly, drew me out of my fog enough so my brain began to work again. I leaned against him and sniveled into his chest.

"Do you really not know?" I said.

"Know?" For a teacher, an allegedly savvy one at that, he could be very dense.

“Know what?”

“Why I’m crying. Do you really not know it’s because of you?”

He pulled away. “Because of me? What have I done to upset you?”

There was a wet mark on his denim shirt from where I’d been weeping. My tears were drying up with my excitement, but I continued to sniff. “I think about you all the time. About what it would be like to kiss a man who knows about things, who reads books the way you do. All I do is fantasize about you. It’s driving me insane!”

He opened his mouth to speak, and I leaned forward and kissed him. At the touch of his lips against mine, panic lights went off in my head: that he would push me right off my stool and scold me, that he would have me expelled, that he would tell my father who would beat me black and blue. He kissed me back, and my heart began to race so intensely that I nearly fell down and had to hold on to his shoulders to steady myself. And I didn’t care then if I was kicked out of school, if my father took his belt to me until I never walked again. It had worked!

He said, “Christ, I’m not built to withstand temptation like this. Look, I’ve validated your ego, Jenna. Now you should just leave.”

I looked at him curiously. “How are you, um, validating me by telling me to go away?”

His arms, which had been on my shoulders, wrapped all the way around me. I buried my face in his neck. Unlike guys I’d kissed before who smelled of cigarettes and food, he smelled of shaving cream and mint. I licked his skin to see if it would taste as wonderful as it smelled.

“My God,” he said. “Stop. Please stop.” Then he kissed me again.

In the car, he said, “I think it would be best if you called me Rob, at least outside of school.”

Rob. Bob. Bobby. Robby. I giggled for a moment. “I like Robert better.”

“Nobody calls me Robert. It’s so formal. But you can call me whatever you want to.”

We were driving through Enfield, on the way to his house. It was three thirty. I’d called Crystal to say that gymnastics practice was going to run late, then met him at the back of the school in the parking lot. He drove a Volvo, which was quite different from the men I knew who mostly drove trucks. I had never been in a Volvo before.

His house was bigger than any I’d ever been inside. The interior was made of a brilliant, pale wood. Wood walls, wood floors. I sat down on his couch and drank the Diet Coke he offered me. His nervousness was making my own terror all the more pronounced, and I had a sudden, aching desire to be past the event we were both waiting for. I stood up.

“So where is your bedroom?”

“You want to go in my bedroom?” he said, as though he thought perhaps I had come all the way to his house for an entirely different reason that had not yet occurred to him.

“I just said I did.”

He shook his head. “And Nabokov said nymphets could not be found in polar regions.”

I stared at him. “What are you talking about?”

“Absolutely nothing,” he said. “Come with me.”

His bedroom was messy. The bed was unmade, and there were clothes all over the floor. My father would have had a fit if he could have seen Mr. Logan’s room! I laughed and flopped down on his bed. He came over to sit down next to me. He kissed me again. I felt my body tense up, though I tried to stop it. He slipped a hand under my shirt.

“Did you really have an affair with your aide from last year?”

“I don’t want to talk about that,” he said, sitting up straight. “I would have thought you were above buying into those kinds of rumors. Isn’t that part of what you think is wrong with small-town life? The fact that I’m still teaching should be enough to show that it was nothing more than idle gossip.”

“Wouldn’t you ask if you were me?”

“She has nothing to do with this. If you don’t want to be here, just say so. But don’t bring her up again.”

A sudden chill ran down my back. “I want to be here,” I said. Sometimes I am not sure if I am telling the truth or not. “Very much.”

He put his hands on my waist and kissed me deeply. I moved closer to him, trying to feel some of the warmth and excitement I’d felt in the office. I closed my eyes.

“I’ve never been with a virgin before,” he said. “Even when I was one myself. I’m kind of nervous. I don’t want to hurt you.”

I felt him hard as a rock against my stomach. He was lying on top of me now. He was not a very large man, but he was much bigger than the boys I’d made out with in the past.

“It’s OK,” I said. “I’ve been hurt before. I won’t mind that much.”

“You say the saddest things sometimes.” His fingers were unbuttoning, unzipping, and his words seemed to mean nothing. I began to shake.

“You are the most beautiful thing I’ve ever seen,” he said, but I knew he was lying. I knew he didn’t see me now. I knew he didn’t see at all.



I bled only a little. He got a towel from his bathroom, and I slid it under myself to catch the sticky, bright liquid, trying to act as though all of this was normal—that I should be here at my teacher’s house with a towel between my legs, naked and dripping blood, with a patch of sticky semen on my stomach. He lay on his back, his penis tiny now, still breathing somewhat heavily.

“Are you OK?” he said. It was not the sort of thing men said after making love in movies or books. He was supposed to say, *That was wonderful*, or, *It’s never been like that with anyone else*, or (if this were a Silhouette Romance novel), *My little falcon, I will protect you until the end of the earth*. It made what I had to say next somehow easier.

“I’m fine. There’s something I have to tell you, though. I hope you won’t be mad.”

He looked concerned. “What is it?”

“I need three hundred dollars.” I sat up. “I need it today if at all possible, tomorrow at the latest, and I need you to give it to me.”

There was a silence long enough for me to grow warm and itchy under my arms. Then he said, almost yelling, “What the hell for?”

“For my stepmother. For something she needs to do.”

“Jenna, don’t be crazy. I don’t have three hundred dollars lying around the house to dole out to every girl I bring home. Where would you get it in your head to ask me for money?”

I looked away. “I’m afraid you don’t really have a choice. If you don’t give it to me, I’ll go to the principal and file a report about what happened here today.”

His expression moved from shock to horror. He sat up and glared at me. “And what makes you think anyone would believe you?”

“I can describe this room, this house, in detail.” I paused. “And I’m sure I could describe everything else...about *you*...if I had to. I really think you should give me the money. It isn’t that much. You can afford it.”

“You little bitch,” he said.

I thought about crying but couldn’t. “I was hoping you wouldn’t take it this way. If you think about it, it really isn’t such a bad deal. I’ll keep seeing you if you want, if you aren’t too upset. Please don’t be mad. There’s no other way for me to get the money.”

He stormed into the bathroom, then out again. He was running his fingers through his hair with a kind of agitated dementia. Finally, he sat back down on the bed and took my chin in his hand. “I hope you know that if I give you money, I’d better get something in return.”

A numb kind of relief washed over me that he was not going to fight me; that he would not make me go tell this terribly embarrassing tale to the school officials. I tried to smile.

“You can have whatever you want.”

He pulled me to him, his grip on my arms so tight I flinched. “Fine,” he said. “If you want to be a whore then lie down and let me fuck you like a whore.”

I stood up. “Give me the money first. The minute I have it in my hand, I’ll do whatever you say. I’m not lying about that. I... I really don’t have anything better to do.”

“You’re out of your mind,” he said. “Do you know that?”

I was shaking so badly I was afraid my teeth would begin to chatter. *What would Julia Roberts say?* “This isn’t your classroom, Robert. No one asked your opinion.”

He closed his eyes. “You know, whatever is going on in your family is very unfortunate. If you weren’t trying to use it against me, I would probably feel very badly for you, and for your stepmother. It’s sad that whatever her problem is, she has to resort to depending on a kid for money. How the hell do people get themselves into those kinds of situations?”

I began to dress while he watched me from the bed. “Maybe you should be asking that question about yourself,” I said.



It was hard to sleep that night. He gave me the money the following day during fourth period, then took me in the darkroom and began extracting the service he was paying for. This lasted well through fifth period, after which I had to go to the washroom to straighten myself up before going to his sixth period class. I drifted through English, then Journalism, in a strange, surreal state. My lips felt raw and numb, and my jaw ached terribly. Meeting his eyes seemed impossible, so I doodled in my notebook. He ignored me in English, but in Journalism he scolded me for not paying attention. After class, I went to the bathroom and threw up.

Mr. Logan told me that tomorrow I would be going to his house after school. He instructed that I was to come up with a more credible excuse than lying about gymnastics practice. On my way home, I debated whether or not I should refuse to go with him anymore, whether I should threaten to tell if he tried to force me. I knew that I had enough ammunition to frighten him sufficiently so that he would allow me to leave. The thought of him hating me so much, though, made stopping now seem inconceivable. I spent the rest of my walk home trying to come up with plausible excuses for my future late arrivals home.

Crystal was at the house alone when I arrived. She was watching *General Hospital*. I went and sat down next to her and took out the envelope Mr. Logan had given me.

“I have something for you.”

She took it and opened it. When she saw the money, she looked like she’d seen a ghost.

“What is all this? Where’d you get this?”

“I saved it,” I said. “I want you to have it. For Florida.”

“Florida? You mean to visit my mom? Honey, you should use it to visit your mom.”

“No,” I said. “To go there for good. To leave Dad and take the baby like you said.”

She actually half laughed. “Oh, Jenna. That was just talk. I would never leave your dad. I love him. We’re having a baby. I was just upset.”

Something in my chest sank, so powerful I thought my insides had all collapsed at one. I couldn’t speak. I looked at her hard, at the bruise on her right eye that had been made just a few days before the fight about the furnace. I made some kind of noise.

Crystal stood up. She began to walk around the room, speaking in crisp tones, her hands slicing the air to emphasize her words. “Look, Jenna, I *know* you and your dad don’t get along so good. But he loves us both *very* much. He just has a bad temper. But he’s been a *lot* better since I quit my job, and if you didn’t sass back at him all the time, he’d be a lot nicer to *you*, too. It was sweet of you to try and give me your money. But you *don’t* have to worry about me.”

“But you said you wanted to leave him!” I said, louder than I’d meant to. “I want you to go, Crystal. He’s mean to you, just like he was mean to my mom. You shouldn’t stay here. My dad is too old for you, what do you want with him anyway?”

She put her fluttering hands firmly on her hips as if to keep them still. “Your dad is only thirty-four, for heaven’s sake! I’m grateful for all he’s done for me. I was going nowhere when I met him—I got stoned all the time and did it with any guy. Now I’m married with a family and an income and a house. I have everything I ever wanted.”

“But he calls you names! He hits you! He hits both of us!”

She looked embarrassed. “Jenna, just stop that. He’s not so bad. And our problems are between us. Now why don’t you just get out of the house until dinner and cool down?”

I snatched the envelope away from her, afraid I would burst into tears. She watched me, defensive, angry, and amused all at the same time. The baby inside her pushed his hair out of his clear blue eyes, shrugged, and turned away. I stumbled backward and grabbed my coat.

“Yeah,” I said, “I think I’ll do that. See you later.”

“Six thirty,” she said. “Remember, don’t be late.”

The bus from White River Junction cost one hundred and eight dollars to Florida, one way. I wasn’t sure how much less it would cost to get to North Carolina, but with three hundred and forty dollars in my pocket (forty I’d saved from babysitting), I figured I could get there fine and even take a taxi to my mother’s apartment since I didn’t know the buses. They would know where I’d gone, of course. They might even be waiting for me when I arrived. But I would tuck the rest of my money into my underwear and claim I’d spent it, and when they dragged me home, I’d leave again, and keep leaving until my dad got fed up and let Social Services take me. Anywhere but home.

I didn’t think about much as I boarded the bus. Some man in his forties or fifties stared at me and winked from the seat across the way. My stomach turned, and I looked away quickly.

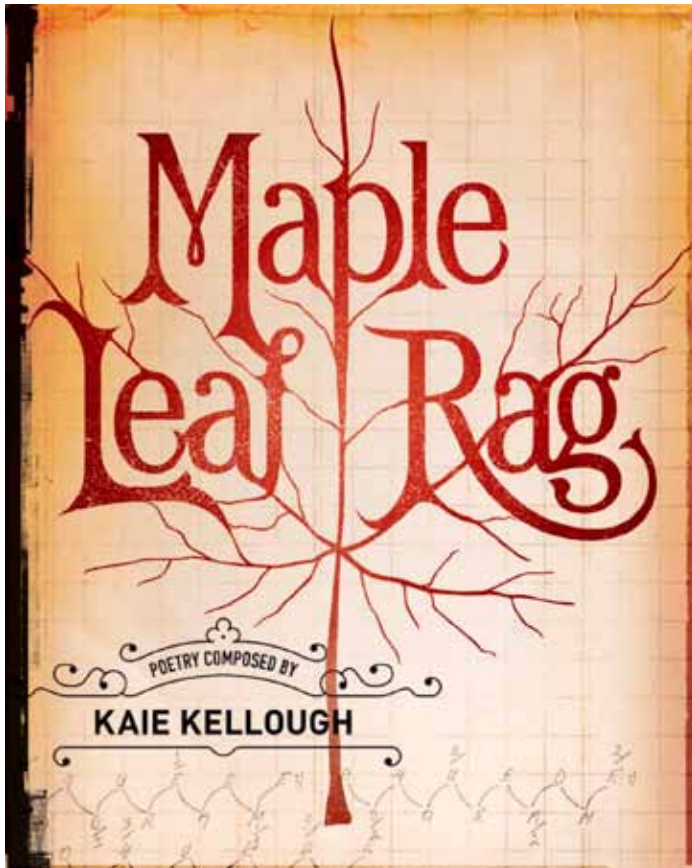
“Hey sweetie,” the man said. “Where you goin’ all by yourself?”

“To see my boyfriend.” Sometimes I say things that could clearly get me into trouble. “He’s much better looking than an old fart like you, so just give it up.”

“Well nice to meet you, too, you uptight little bitch,” the man said, but he laughed, and I was relieved; at least he was not likely to shoot me if he was laughing. He looked like the kind to own a gun, like my father. Maybe more than one gun. I wondered if he polished them the way my father did, if he had ever held one up to his first wife’s pregnant stomach and threatened to blow the baby inside away, the baby she would later lose after he pushed her down a flight of stairs. I stared out the window as the bus started up.

One thing my dad always said was that it doesn’t pay to put yourself on the line for somebody else. They don’t appreciate it, and half the time you can’t guess what another person really wants to begin with. But then I’ve never done anything for anyone else’s sake anyway, so that has nothing to do with me.

*From Slut Lullabies by Gina Frangello, Emergency Press 2010, www.emergencypress.org.
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From *Maple Leaf Rag* by Kaie Kellough, Arbeiter Ring Publishing 2010, www.arbeiterring.com. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.

boy hood dub II

self portrait. st gerard's elementary school, calgary.

i remember the school soccer field
sun scorched grass
trampled to tufts, rocks, dust

member a legged blur
corduroy, patched jean
boys' shrill speed

shrieking after the black
n' bruised ball. i render a pink freckle
flecked face flexed

reendure
a screamed *nigger*. baited
i member re

flex. flinging four
knuckles at braced
teeth. i merember

blood, a silver ember
drip from wire snarled
torn lips

membrrip
roaring
as big boys' blows blitzed

my afro coco-

k.o.

k.o.

k.o. k.o.

k.o.

k.o.

k.o.

k.o. k.o.

o. no day

k.o.

-ay

k.o.

-ay

k.o.

o. no. day-

k.o k.o.

k.o.

dreamed bob marley's wail
could ail centuries. still time. split skulls. cleave
cultures. freeze earth's slo mo rotation.
i alone, intent, mobile, could rhyme

k.o.

k.o.

a soccer ball around my frozen

k.o. k.o.

schoolyard foes'
foiled heils. could ram
that bichromatic pneumatic sphere

k.o.

k.o.

a comet streaking thru the atmosphere
burning thru their unfair fear, & i

k.o.

k.o. k.o.

dribbling, fancy-footing, could veer
blood thru life

k.o.

could weave
wavelengths from strife

k.o.

nut

could trump
& triumph from beneath

my uncracked cranium.
welcome. hail.

ugly

later, bruises risen to mock my crown, i waited
(vexation unabated)

cloud stucco ed
prairie sky

in the pink-jowled principal's office
for his vice voice to shlurr my sentence

watched the light spit
& polish his bald-spot. glared into its gleam

& dreamed no day-

Microscripts by Robert Walser

New Directions
www.ndpublishing.com

Here's a theory: The reason small presses are so vital is because they put out books like this, books which could not be demographically tested or vetted by bigger publishers, books which don't have an easily identifiable *point*, books which are simply *good* and *fascinating*. This, of course, is why we need places like Graywolf, and Milkweed, and Coffee House, and Two Dollar Radio, and Dzanc.



And, of course, the granddaddy: New Directions (still published *for* J. Laughlin, every last one of their books). Robert Walser's *Microscripts*, the latest New Directions book to knock me sideways from my chair, is printed proof that wonder is vital, that the unknown is critical, that life is better when, at least once in awhile, we come into contact with works of art which don't fit any preconceptions.

Microscripts is a book which is as interesting as object/gestational idea as actual narrative-through-text. Meaning what? Meaning Walser, an early modernist, spent his last decades locked up in a sanitarium writing in what he called his "pencil method," which sounds (and looks, vaguely) cuneiform-ish (actually, that's not true: It looks less cuneiform and more like the invented language in the *Codex Seraphinianus*). His pencil method allowed him to cram massive textual information into/onto exceptionally small places (the shortest story reproduced in *Microscripts* is maybe 1 by 2 inches, maybe); there are several reproductions in *Microscripts* of the original scraps Walser attacked, and good *lord*—the stories themselves are satisfying, but the effect of seeing such writing is to get a megadose of inspiration.

It's a fantastically strange book, *Microscripts*: It's valuable and great because Walser's stories are generous and strange, featuring the ho-hum weirdness that makes some early 20th century stuff akin to David Lynch. Here's how "Somewhere and Somewhen" begins: "Somewhere and somewhen, in a region quite possibly furnished with all manner of agreeable sights and significant figures, there lived a peculiar girl—being at once beautiful and clever—who was capable both of making merry and of handling her income or assets in a thrifty, economical manner." The line, while generally establishing the narrative world of the story, raises at least as many questions as it may eventually answer (Who's the narrator? Why is the region maybe/maybe-not furnished with sights/figures? Why is there an implied divide between merriness and fiscal responsibility?), and Walser does this, over and over and over. The actual fiction in *Microscripts* is fascinatingly wild in just this way, page after page, and it'd be a good book if what the reader got were, simply, the stories, translated and transmitted finally, all these years later.

But it's better than that, of course, than just the story of Walser's pencil method, and the story of the micro-scripts sitting for decades untouched, untranslated (having been thought scrap, of little importance), and the fact that he wrote this stuff after he was locked up in a sanitarium, *Microscripts* offers (especially awesomely for the contemporary anything-goes reader/writer) a lesson or idea or template in borders, in restriction. Writers, presently, can run any direction. We're invited to knock all walls down; we can approach limitlessness if we choose. Walser, however, is a faint and necessary reminder of the beauty of rules, the shocking possibilities that arise *because of*, not despite, rigidity.

—Weston Cutter, www.corduroybooks.wordpress.com

Flatmancrooked is gaining quite the reputation for innovative book marketing. Last year they launched Emma Straub's novella, *Fly-Over State*, by asking people to buy a "share" in the project, which includes a signed first-edition copy of the book. This year they tried the same approach with Alyssa Knickerbocker's *Your Rightful Home*, with equal levels of success.

As well as being part of the Launch Project, James Kaelan's short story collection, *We're Getting On*, is also part of the new Zero Emission Book Project, which aims to offset the environmental cost of book production. Each first edition is made of 100 percent recycled post-consumer paper, with covers made of seed paper. This means that if you plant the book, it will grow into a tree. Such beautiful circularity.

We're Getting On consists of four connected stories focusing on hipsters after the apocalypse. It is exactly the sort of book that would be sold in Urban Outfitters, though like most books sold in Urban Outfitters it mocks the people who shop there. The collection's first story, "A Deliberate Life," takes place in a hellish land where people ride bicycles just because one guy does, they wear glasses they can't see through, and everyone spends a lot of time picking out quirky T-shirts. As Bret Easton Ellis' *American Psycho* contrasted lists of music and clothing labels with graphic violence, "A Deliberate Life" connects Palestine and Saddam Hussein's trial with a meaningless cycle of bands, bars, and booze.

The characters in *We're Getting On* are not nice people: When told that the woman he's just gone home with might have a contagious disease, one narrator admits: "Whatever I might contract from her, I thought at the time, would be a small price for the boost in status." Other characters start fights, have hate-sex, and generally think stupid and unpleasant thoughts.

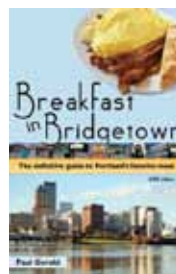
The high point of the book is the second story, "You Must've Heard Something." Here we are treated to a handful of uncomfortably intimate snapshots of two people trying to connect in a mysterious world they don't understand. It's hard to sympathize with them: After describing having sex with an unconscious woman who then presses charges against him, Charles says: "I suppose she was just ashamed for having not paid attention." The focus of the story is kept tight, and the claustrophobic tone allows the dynamic between the two characters to heighten to a beautifully chilling conclusion. The individuals in these stories are "getting on" with each other and with their lives, but just barely.

We're Getting On is the sort of book that will be sold in achingly cool shops next to cult novels and Beat poetry and photography books of urban graffiti. If you like that sort of thing, this is the sort of thing you will like. And if you don't like it, you can always plant it.

—Kirsty Logan, www.pankmagazine.com



what's on their shelf



Breakfast in Bridgetown: The Definitive Guide to Portland's Meal by Paul Gerald, Bacon and Eggs Press, www.stumptownscribes.com. The updated and expanded second edition, released in October, includes food carts, ethnic breakfasts, and 30 more in-town spots, documenting everything from location to wi-fi availability to brand of coffee served.



Portland Noir edited by Kevin Sampsell, Akashic Books, www.akashicbooks.com. Launched in 2004 with **Brooklyn Noir**, this city-centric series of anthologies explores the dark and rainy underbelly of Portland with stories by Ariel Gore, Monica Drake, Karen Karbo, Floyd Skloot, Jess Walter, and others.



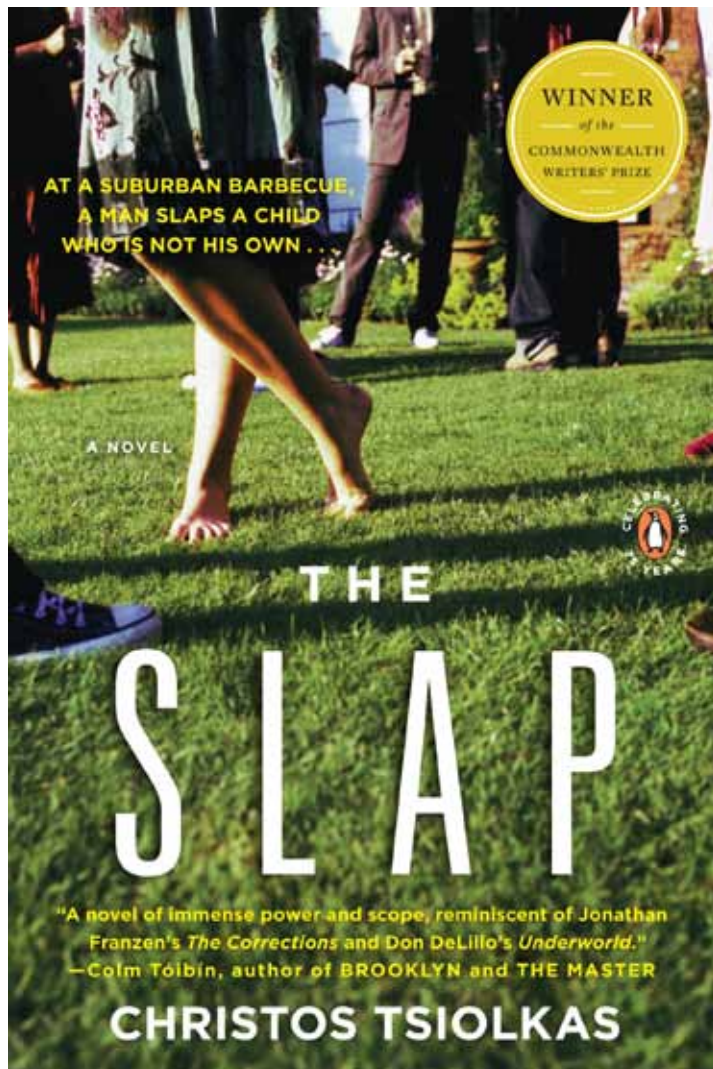
Portland Queer: Tales of the Rose City edited by Ariel Gore, Lit Star Press. At once a love letter to the Rose City and a desperate attempt at escape, the first-person narratives of this Lambda Literary Award-winning anthology reveal the contradictions and commonalities of life in one of the world's great queer Meccas.

BROADWAY BOOKS

There's a legendary story about Broadway Books and burritos that goes like this: Back in 2008 when the bookstore owned by Roberta Dyer and Sally McPherson was facing financial difficulties due to the nationwide recession, Roberta's son Aaron—who lived 600 miles away in San Francisco—decided to take matters into his own hands. He posted a pledge on his blog that he would buy a burrito for every customer who purchased \$50 worth of books when he

was next back in town. The offer went viral, customers streamed in despite a snowstorm, and the store was saved. But when Aaron showed up for the big burrito payout, there were surprisingly few takers—because, ultimately, it had simply been about the books at this Northeast Portland neighborhood bookstore all along. **1714 NE Broadway, Portland, Oregon, 503.284.1726, www.broadwaybooks.net.**

—Jack Rubenstein



The Slap

by Christos Tsiolkas

Penguin, us.penguin.com
 Allen & Unwin,
www.allenandunwin.com

Australian author Christos Tsiolkas made headlines when he recently criticized contemporary European fiction as being “dry” and “academic in a cheap, sh--ty way.” Read the six novels on this year’s Booker short list and you be the judge. Not on the list is Tsiolkas’ *The Slap*, which made the long list but, as characterized by the *Daily Telegraph*, was “the most divisive book chosen for Britain’s most highly regarded literary award in recent memory.”

Dry and academic *The Slap* is not. Critics have called it vulgar, racist, homophobic, and misogynistic. Fans have called it brilliant, gripping, and one of the best books of the decade. Released in 2008 by Australian indie publisher Allen & Unwin, *The Slap* begins with a man slapping an unruly child that is not his own at a suburban backyard barbecue. The slap di-

vides the friends and family who witness it, and Tsiolkas uses the ensuing drama to examine all manner of brutality and division and betrayal, of others and of self, in the realm of the 21st century middle class.

Tsiolkas gives us a large cast of characters, and the story is told from the perspective of eight of them. You may not like them, but by the end of the novel you know them, and know them well enough to be engaged with them even if all you can muster is disgust. Yet among the book’s harsh misanthropy is a profound tenderness, particularly evident in the final chapter, which, without giving anything away, finds a young man acknowledging his homosexuality to himself and those closest to him.

The Slap has received numerous prestigious awards and sold more copies than any other book on the Booker short list. Should it have won the Booker? In my book, absolutely.

—Margaret Brown

AS SOON AS I BEGAN TO READ THIS BOOK, I realized the main character, Aura, has all sorts of problems. Her father leaves her, and her mother is a schizophrenic. Big word. It is a psychotic disorder characterized by withdrawal from reality, illogical patterns of thinking, delusions, and hallucinations. Basically, the schizophrenic sees stuff.

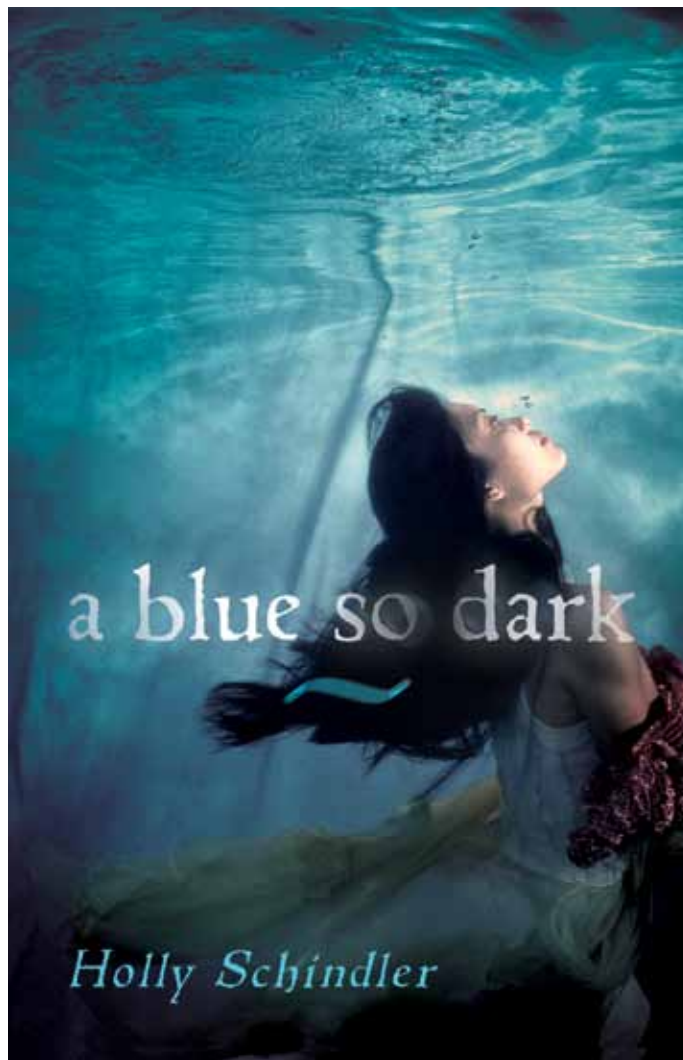
Before Aura's father moves out, he tries to get her mother on special pills to help her with her illness. But she refuses, and so he leaves. Now Aura has to take care of her mother by herself.

Aura and her schizophrenic mother are artists. Aura's mother teaches students and Aura often attends the art classes. Aura believes that the art has something to do with her mother's schizophrenia. Her mother paints on the walls at their house and shouts, "I'll fix it!" Other people think that she is being creative, but she is actually being crazy. Aura soon gives up her passion for art because of her mother.

My mom knew this dude who was really strange—he had seventy 5-foot paintings stuffed in his guest room. Creepy. He painted this HUGE crazy picture that she decided to buy and still thrives in our house today. He said, "When I painted this picture, I was imagining the jazz music from New Orleans in color." This reminds me of when Aura's mother painted the mural on the wall of her bedroom. She didn't care about anything or anyone else, just that mural.

My favorite part of the book was when Aura's mother was trying to light the wooden mermaids on fire because she claimed that they were "drowning her." She was throwing lit matches all over the place—it was great. Overall, I really enjoyed this book. It was interesting and complicated, and very, very good.

—Julia Basile, age 12, www.theipadkids.com



Flux
www.fluxnow.com

IT TOOK ME ABOUT A WEEK TO READ *GIGGED*. I picked it because the cover had a fallen toy soldier on it, and I like war stuff. I play the Xbox war games and my Papa was in the Army and our family writes letters to soldiers in the real war in Iraq.

In the book the main character is Jason Tillman. He was called J.T. when he was older, but when he was young he was Jason and he was wimpy and scared. When he was older he was called J.T. because he was not scared anymore and was very strong.

Instead of the chapters being numbered 1, 2, 3, they have military names like Alpha, Bravo, and Charlie. I really liked that. In every chapter J.T. has flashbacks (these are when you think back to the past like when you were a little kid), and he remembers being in lots of foster homes and people being mean to him when he was called Jason.

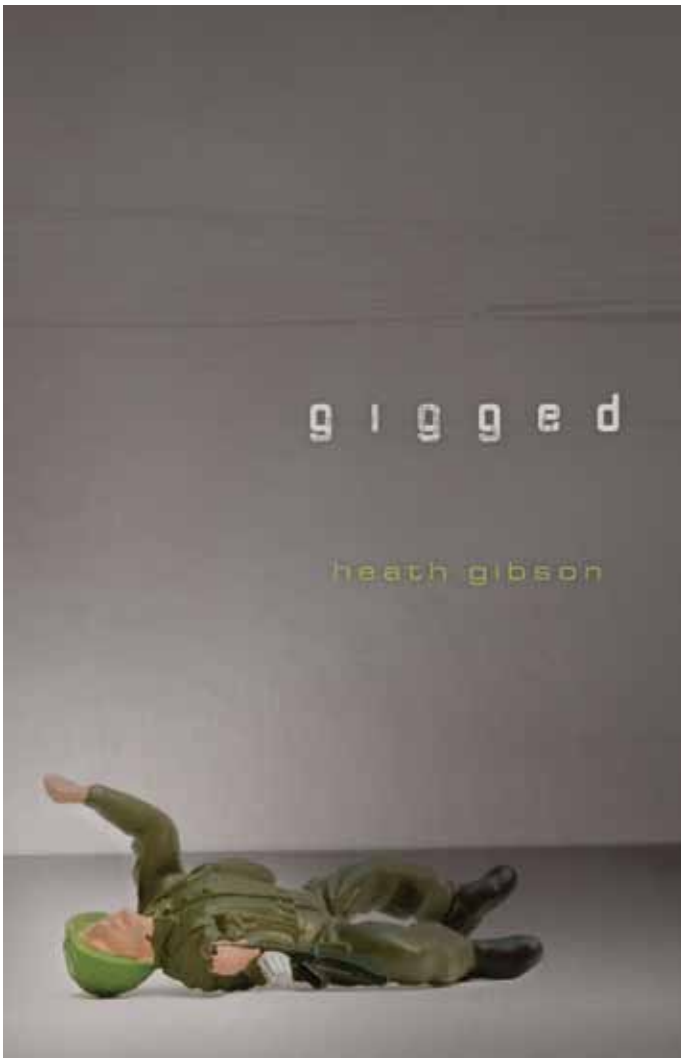
J.T. gets a new foster dad and he is a good one. His name is Mr. Coffeen and he cares about J.T. and is not mean to him, but J.T. keeps having these flashbacks. They are at the end of every chapter and they are in slanted words called italics so you know they are the flashback part of the chapter.

J.T. is a junior cadet trainer for ROTC, which is a high school class he teaches to help other kids learn to become soldiers. The book is about J.T. training kids to be soldiers to go to war, but there is a surprise ending. I can't tell you what happens, but it is a big surprise. I did not know it was going to happen, and usually I can tell.

J.T. has a very best friend called Pickins who is taking the soldier class. Pickins is very good at everything and J.T. likes him. Pickins has a big part in the story. J.T. finally has a friend and someone who is always there for him.

This book is probably for kids ages 10+ because the surprise ending is complicated and you need an adult to help explain it to you. But once you understand it, it is a really big surprise.

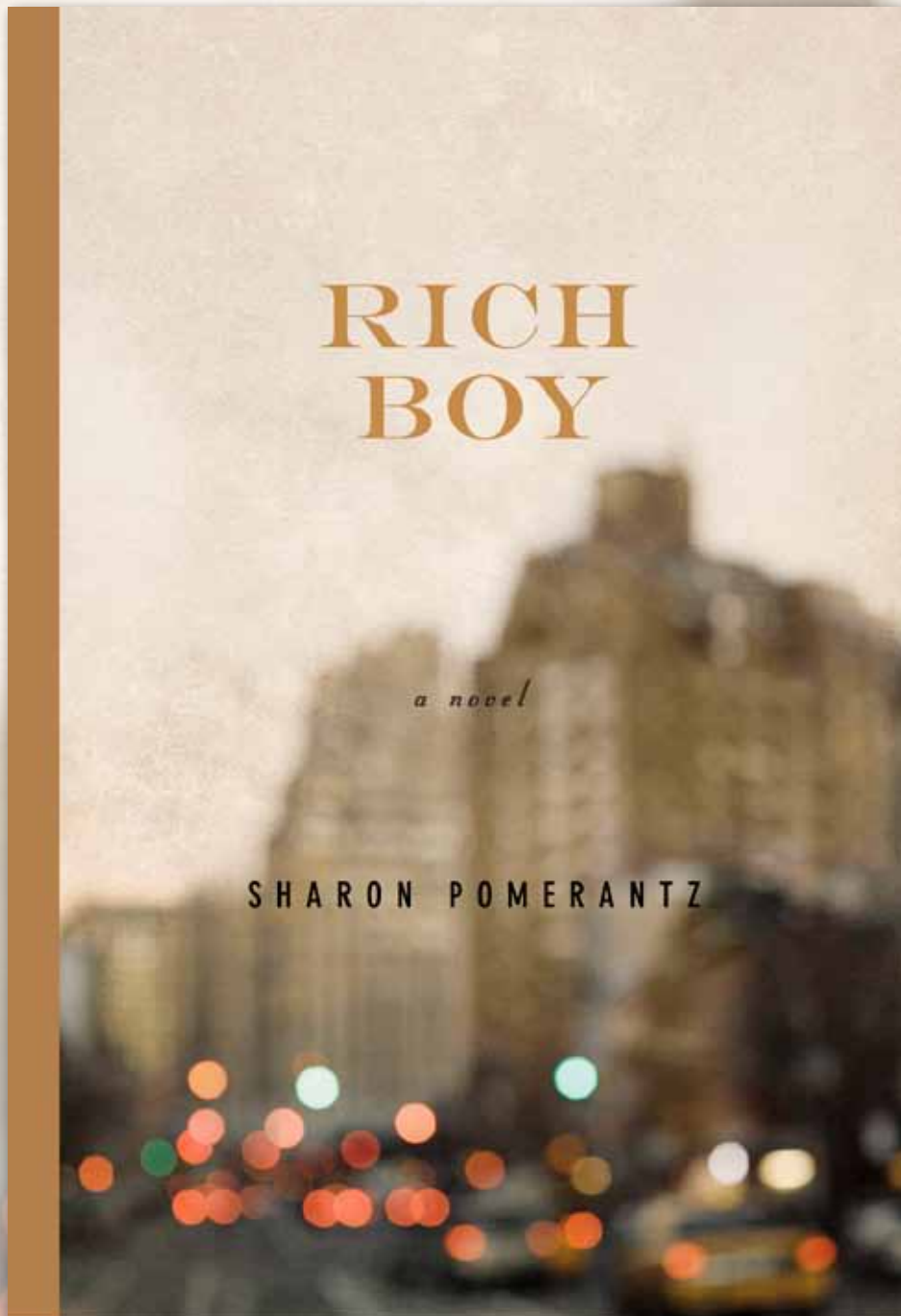
— Nico Basile, age 9, www.theipadkids.com



Flux
www.fluxnow.com

with

Sharon Pomerantz



Rich Boy

by Sharon Pomerantz
Twelve
www.twelvebooks.com

R

obert Vishniak, the protagonist of Sharon Pomerantz's carefully constructed debut novel, is a young man desperate to escape his lower-middle class Philadelphia roots. Invoking comparisons to everyone from Jay Gatsby to Bernie Madoff, Robert takes us along through four decades of his journey, from the '50s to the '80s, as he first pretends then succeeds beyond measure at wealth and social class. We talked with Pomerantz about her contribution to the Jewish American canon, the male obsession with first love, and her rep as a tough-but-hot-enough-to-start-the-Trojan-War professor at the University of Michigan.

—Dean Hill

Shelf Unbound: *What do you think of the comparisons out there of Robert's ascension up the socio-economic ladder to that of Jay Gatsby?*

Sharon Pomerantz: *The Great Gatsby* is so iconic that almost any American novel touching on the subject of social class is compared to it, which is daunting for a first novelist! But I knew that I wanted to write about class, and specifically about class in the Jewish community (Jay Gatsby is not Jewish, that's for sure). Of course, when you write about class in the Jewish community, there are other daunting comparisons people will make, as well, to Philip Roth's Newark, etc. We all stand on the shoulders of the writers who came before us.

Shelf: *You seem to really understand Robert's drive for wealth and status. Where does that understanding come from?*

Pomerantz: I grew up working-class, like Robert, though not in Oxford Circle. My parents struggled financially; they didn't get to go to college (though both certainly had the intelligence, they did not have the opportunity) but were life-long learners and cared tremendously about education, which is why they made great sacrifices to move to the suburbs, for the schools. I spent most of my growing up in Lower Merion on the Maine Line, and then at Smith College, around people who had more money than I did. Then I moved to New York City, where rich and poor constantly brush up against each other. So I've spent my life observing the kinds of details that Robert observes.

Shelf: *Robert's relationship with his mother, Stacia, is a major focus of the book. Who was your inspiration for her character?*

Pomerantz: She is a combination of a lot of women (and men) I've known in my life, particularly in my own family, who came of age during the Depression, knew great deprivation, and had to go to work right out of high school to help support a family despite having both the intelligence and desire to go to college. Life didn't allow them to dream much; they had to be practical and frugal.



Shelf: *Appearance and clothing are very important to Rich Boy's characters, especially Robert. It's almost as if he is donning a costume as he tries to fit in with the students of the Ivy League and the culture of New York City's ultra-rich. Were you conscious of this while you were writing the novel?*

Pomerantz: How we dress tells the world a lot about us, and I've always been aware of this as a writer, as a woman, and as a former longtime resident of Manhattan who did a lot of yearning and window shopping. It's true that anyone can look good for very little these days, but there's a certain kind of quality that only the wealthy can afford. When Robert puts on Tracey's shirts, feels how soft they are, it's a turning point for him.

Shelf: *The novel is heavily influenced by the events of the 1960s and '70s. Do you think the Jewish American experience during the civil rights movement and counter-culture of the Vietnam era was different from the experience of Christian Americans?*

Pomerantz: Jews certainly were involved in the civil rights and anti-war movements (in unusually high

percentages for a minority that was, at the time, about 2 percent of the population). But all that aside, I was writing about working class Jews. And for working class and poor boys of all races and religions, boys that didn't have the connections, or weren't going to college, the draft was a very different experience. Especially before 1969 (under Nixon, deferments got harder). In general, college kids protested, and college kids got out of Vietnam more easily.

Shelf: *You recently spoke at a conference about the evolution of the Jewish American novel. Can you talk a little bit about where the genre started and where you see it going?*

Pomerantz: I'm not sure I'm qualified to answer—I wish I could call in a scholar of this topic, which I'm not. And where the category started depends on your definition of what a Jewish American novel is. Some say Jewish American fiction started with novels about the Jewish immigrant experience of the early 20th century by writers like Henry Roth (*Call it Sleep*) and Anzia Yezierska (*Bread Givers*). But Jews have been in America longer than that. The journalist and statesman Mordecai Manuel Noah was writing plays in the early 19th century. Philip Roth, with *Goodbye Columbus* and *Portnoy's Complaint*, was one of the first Jewish writers to be popular with gentile readers. Delmore Schwartz is a fiction writer of that same era who examined, brilliantly, the generation gap between Jewish immigrant parents and their first generation American children. Same with Grace Paley. They are both favorites of mine.

Shelf: *For three of the novel's main characters, Robert, Claudia, and Tracey, their first love is an experience that colors their entire lives. Did your own first love have a similar impact in your life?*

Pomerantz: Not so much, but I have known a lot of men, more than women, who simply could not move on from that first love. Into their 30s they're still talking about the person who destroyed them in twelfth grade, or freshman year of college. *The New York Times* just did an article on how new studies show that it's actually harder for men to move on from relationships—they simply manifest their despair differently than women, with drinking or violence, and tend not to share with friends and get support to help them cope. So they hold on to their pain longer. I read this and thought—Really? Someone needed a study to figure that out?

Shelf: *Your publisher, Twelve, takes its name from the fact that it only publishes 12 books per year. Were you surprised that Rich Boy is one of only two novels (the other being The Sherlockian) to be published by Twelve in 2010? Is this evidence of a shift in the American public's appetite from fiction to nonfiction?*

Pomerantz: No, I don't see it that way. Novel readers are such passionate readers, if you can touch them. I've gotten wonderful letters from readers, especially former residents of Oxford Circle, where Robert grew up, who connected so intensely with *Rich Boy*. I feel very lucky to be published by Twelve, and I wish more publishers would use a model that gives their books (and authors) the kind of focused attention Twelve provides.

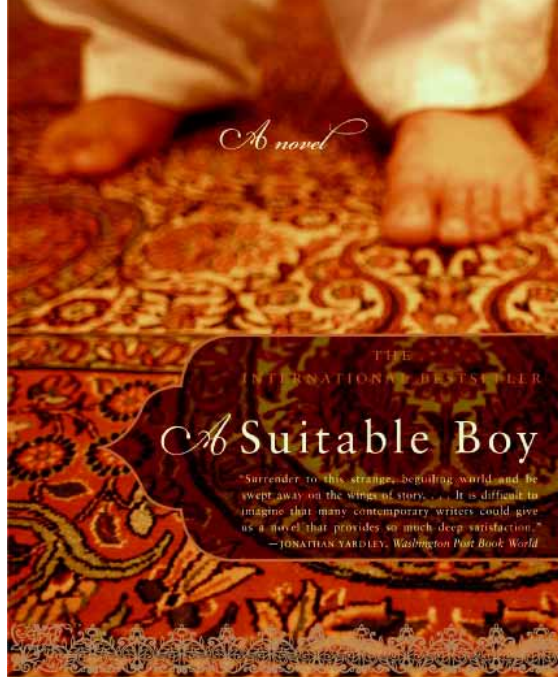
Shelf: *What effect did NPR's 1998 broadcast of your story "Shoes" on Selected Shorts have on your career? For those aspiring writers out there, how did you get NPR interested in the story?*

Pomerantz: I knew no one at *Selected Shorts*. I'd only published two short stories at that point and one had yet to come out. So I basically had one story, "Shoes," published in the *Black Warrior Review*. But I lived on 90th and Broadway, and one day I just walked over and left the story for Isaiah Sheffer, never thinking that he'd take it. I guess the lesson here is that it never hurts to try, and you don't need connections. In the history of *Selected Shorts*, as I understand it, "Shoes" was one of just a handful of stories that came in over the transom and was picked for the show. Being included changed my life in that agents and editors swarmed me (the story was read on Valentine's Day, with a full house), and I

ENORMOUS CHANGES
AT THE LAST MINUTE



GRACE PALEY



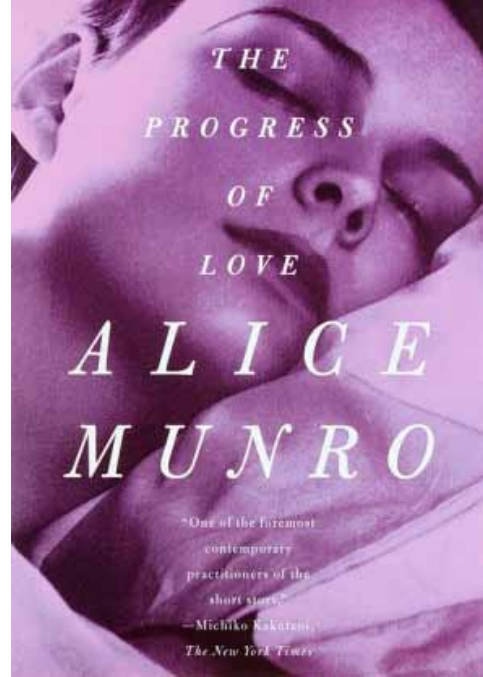
A novel

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VIKRAM SETH
AUTHOR OF *Two Lives*

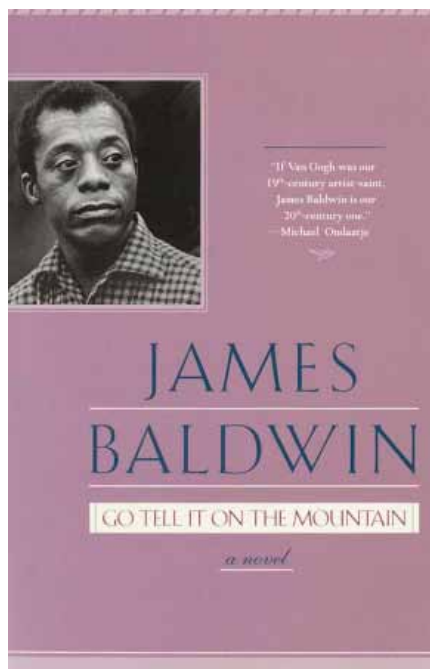
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"One of the foremost contemporary practitioners of the short story."
— Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times*



"If San Gogh was our 19th-century artist-saint, James Baldwin is our 20th-century one."
— Michael Ondaatje

JAMES
BALDWIN

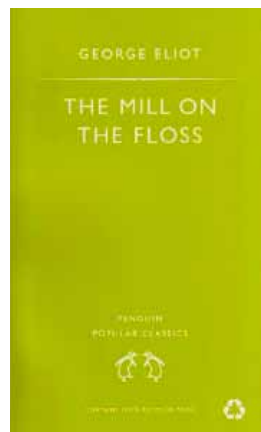
GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

a novel



Fyodor Dostoevsky
Crime and Punishment

GRAND MASTERWORKS COLLECTION

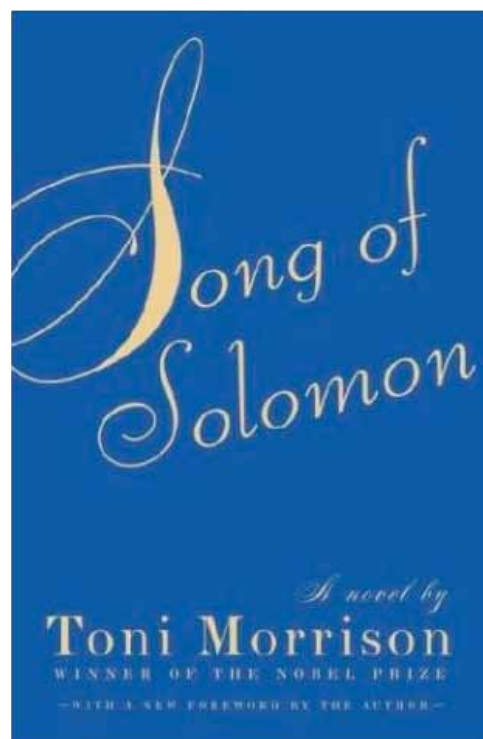


GEORGE ELIOT
THE MILL ON
THE FLOSS

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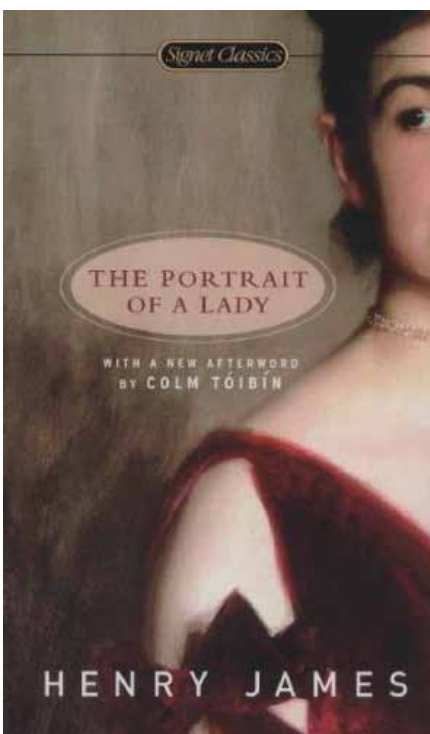
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Song of
Solomon

A novel by
Toni Morrison
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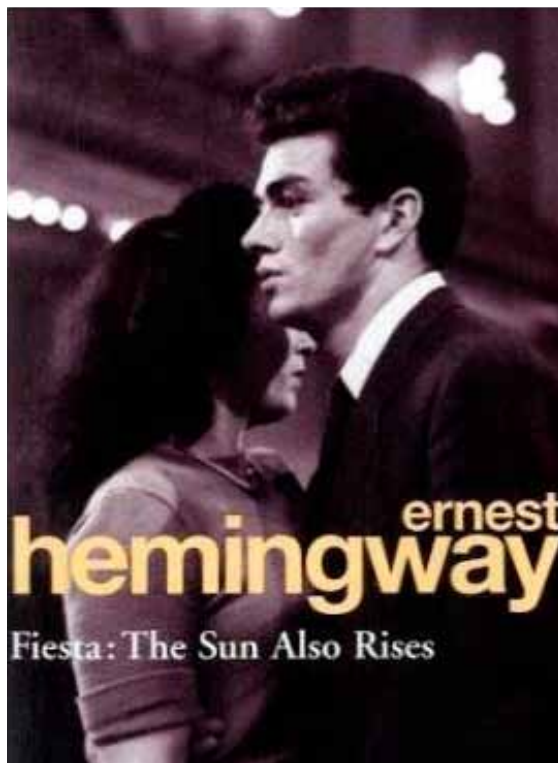


Signet Classics

THE PORTRAIT
OF A LADY

WITH A NEW AFTERWORD
BY COLM TOIBIN

HENRY JAMES



ernest
hemingway

Fiesta: The Sun Also Rises



THE WAY WE LIVE NOW

had nothing to show them but a few stories. All they wanted was a novel—where was my novel? Well, I'd always had a full-time job, and I had to support myself in a very expensive city. It began to dawn on me that New York City might be the publishing center of the country, but it was not necessarily the best place to write a novel if you don't have independent means. A few years later I moved out to Ann Arbor to do the MFA program at the University of Michigan, and it was the best move I ever made. Among other things, they gave me funding and time.

Shelf: *What advice do you offer your students about pursuing a career in writing?*

Pomerantz: Only do it if you feel you can't be happy doing anything else. Don't write to get famous, or because you think it's a career (most writers do other things to support themselves). And don't come into my office and tell me you want to write but you don't read! This happens more and more lately and it drives me crazy. Reading is the most important thing any aspiring young writer can do. Read everything, read indiscriminately. If you don't love reading, you won't ever be a writer.

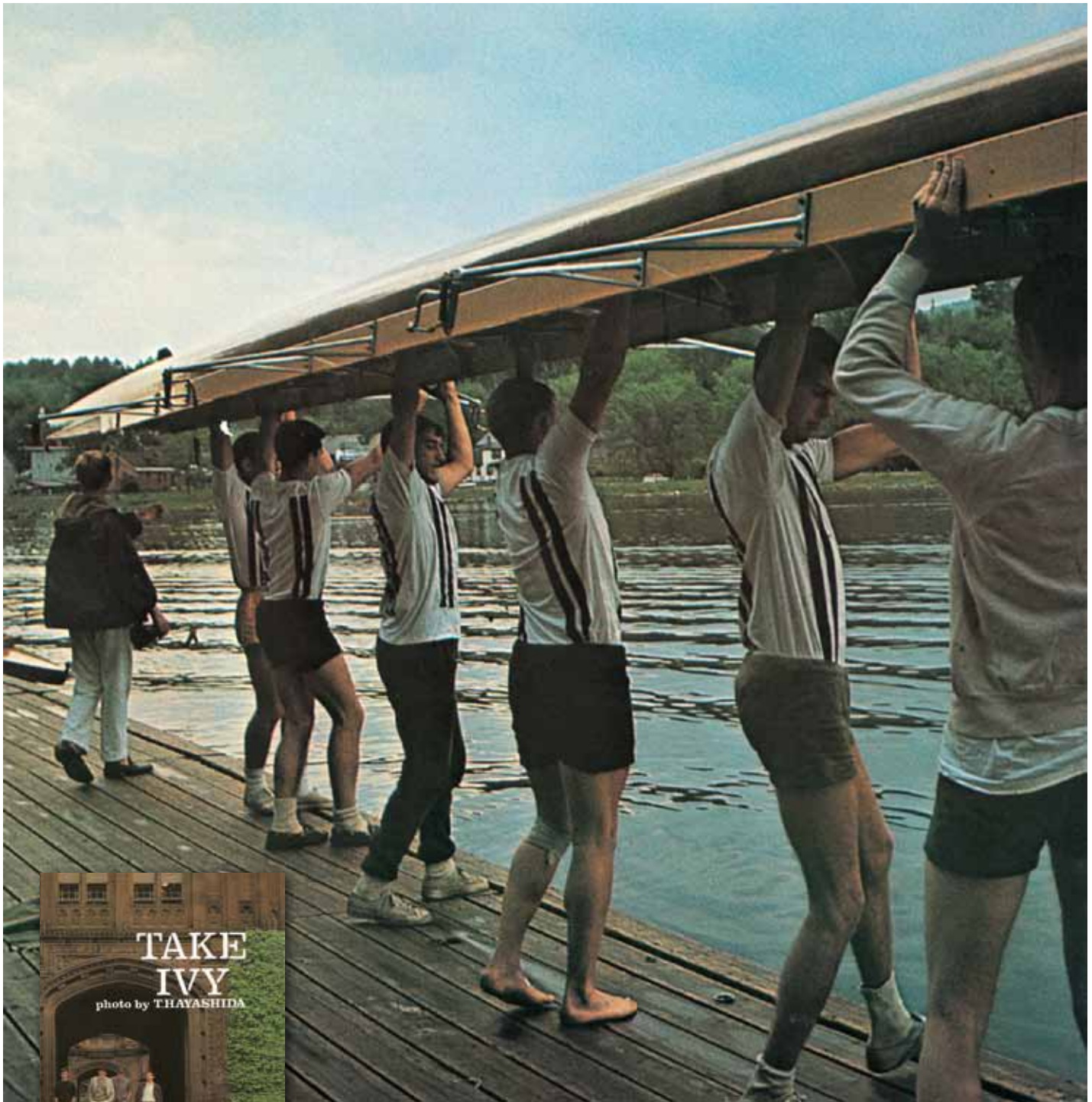
Shelf: *As a writing professor at the University of Michigan, what 10 books do you think every college student should read before graduation?*

Pomerantz: Only 10? That is tough. Since I'm a fiction writer, I'm going to talk about fiction. College is a place where, hopefully, students will be introduced to authors whose work they will want to continue reading, not a "last chance" to read literature. I try to remember that when I create a syllabus.

- 1) *The Portrait of a Lady* by Henry James
- 2) *Enormous Changes at the Last Minute* by Grace Paley
- 3) *The Mill on the Floss* by George Elliot
- 4) *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky
- 5) *The Way We Live Now* by Anthony Trollope
- 6) *Song of Solomon* by Tony Morrison
- 7) *The Progress of Love* by Alice Munro
- 8) *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway
- 9) *A Suitable Boy* by Vikram Seth
- 10) *Go Tell It on the Mountain* by James Baldwin

Shelf: *I must confess, I looked you up on Ratemyprofessors.com and the general consensus seems to be that you are tough and do not give A's. My favorite rating came from a 2008 student who said of you: "Brilliant. Amazing writer, stunningly good teacher. And hot enough to start the Trojan War all over again." Any comment, Professor?*

Pomerantz: First, I do give A's. I don't know where this comes from! Every year I give one or two solid A's, and more than a few A-minuses. I don't give many solid A's because my professors at Smith College didn't give many solid A's. They held us to high standards, and wanted us to have more to reach for. But I think students use that website when they've either had a great experience or a terrible one—you don't get to hear from the ones in the middle, which is why I put more stock in my student evaluations from the University of Michigan. You never know if someone on Ratemyprofessors.com is serious, either (the tone thing). But I am pleased that one of my former students can reference the Trojan War in a contemporary context. ■

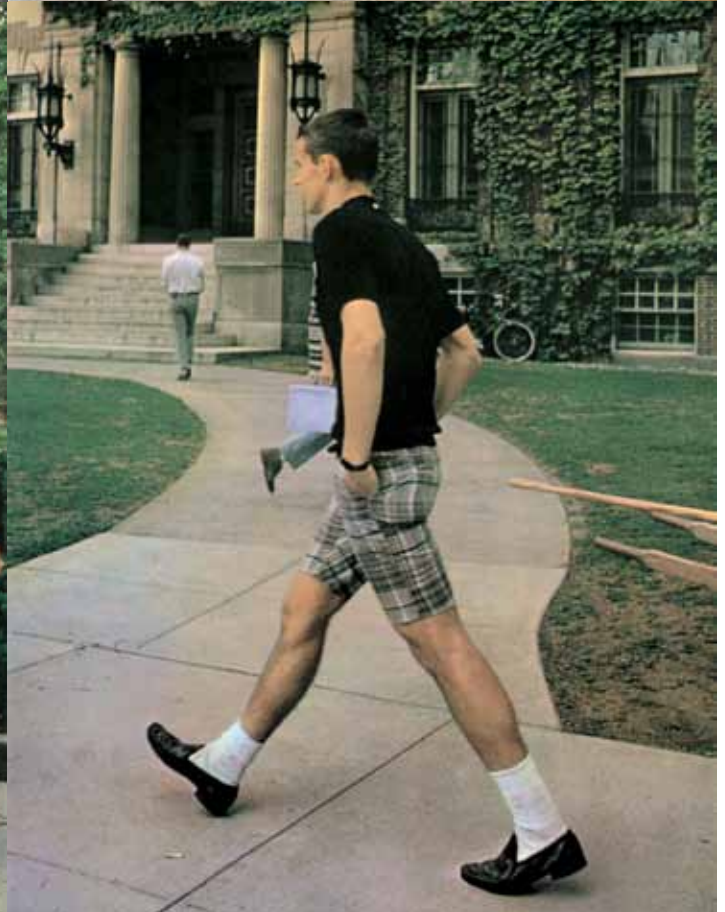
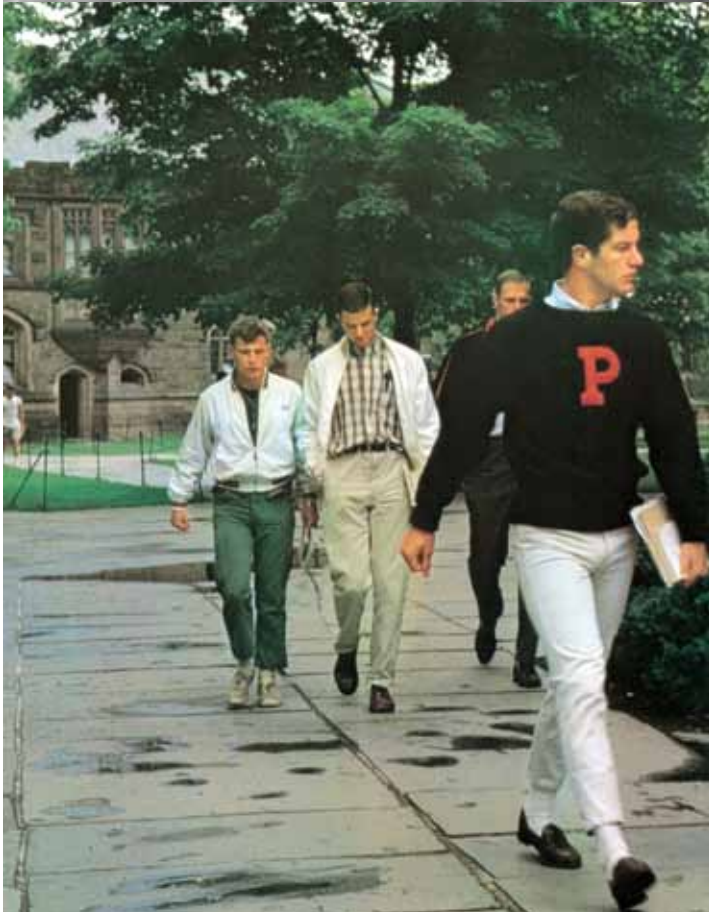


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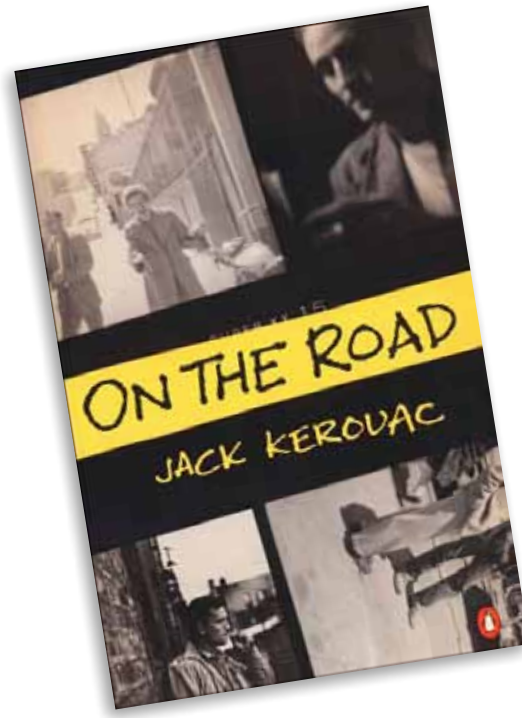
text by Shosuke Ishizu, Toshiyuki Kurosu, and Hajime (Paul) Hasegawa

White socks and boat shoes, letter sweaters, polo button-downs, plaid shorts, and khaki jackets—it took a Japanese photographer to capture New England in all its preppy glory. Originally published in Japan in 1965, *Take Ivy* set off an American-influenced fashion craze among students in the trendy Ginza shopping district in Tokyo. Now it has been reprinted by powerHouse Books with an all-new English translation, making it an essential item for every fashion bookshelf, and a perfect illustration of everything *Rich Boy's* Robert Vishniak aspired to be.

—Dean Hill



LAST WORDS



On the Road
by Jack Kerouac
Penguin
www.penguin.com

So in America when the sun goes down and I sit on the old broken-down river pier watching the long, long skies over New Jersey and sense all that raw land that rolls in one unbelievable huge bulge over to the West Coast, and all that road going, all the people dreaming in the immensity of it, and in Iowa I know by now the children must be crying in the land where they let the children cry, and tonight the stars'll be out, and don't you know that God is Pooh Bear? the evening star must be drooping and shedding her sparkler dims on the prairie, which is just before the coming of complete night that blesses the earth, darkens all rivers, cups the peaks and folds the final shore in, and nobody, nobody knows what's going to happen to anybody besides the forlorn rags of growing old, I think of Dean Moriarty.

STEVE EDWARDS reflects on nature, home, and the writing life on his blog *The Big Quiet*. He lives in Lincoln, Nebraska, with his wife and son.

GINA FRANGELLO is the author of the critically acclaimed novel *My Sister's Continent*. She is the executive editor and co-founder of Other Voices Books and a fiction editor for the online magazine *The Nervous Breakdown*.

RUTH FRIEDLANDER's food obsession began while working in cafes and restaurants in New Zealand during her time studying Digital Media Design. She now works as a graphic designer in Melbourne and spends most of her free time in the kitchen with a glass of wine in one hand and wooden spoon in the other.

NEIL GAIMAN is the bestselling author of *American Gods*. He is the winner of three Hugos, two Nebulas, one World Fantasy Award, four Bram Stoker Awards, six Locus Awards, two British Science Fiction Awards, one British Fantasy Award, three Geffens, one International Horror Guild Award, one Mythopoeic, one Newbery Medal, and the 2010 Carnegie Medal in Literature.

MARY GUZOWSKI is an associate professor in the School of Architecture at the University of Minnesota. She teaches and conducts research related to daylighting, environmental technology, and ecological design.

ANDREW HOFFMAN is a professor of sustainable enterprise at the University of Michigan and the associate director of the Erb Institute for Global Sustainable Enterprise. The focus of his work is on the intersection of business and environmental issues, and he has published seven books and more than 80 articles on the topic. He lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and keeps his carpentry skills honed by working on his house.

KAI KELLOUGH has lived in Montreal, Canada, since 1998. He is the author of *Lettricity* and the editor of the *Talking Book* anthology, both from Cumulus Press. He was writer in residence for the 2005 Toronto International Dub Poetry Festival and the subject of a short documentary titled *Ebon Flow* in 2009. He is set to record a suite of the poems in *Maple Leaf Rag* with instrumental accompaniment, which will be available on his website.

DONALD MCCREA has been a working musician and songwriter for the past 50 years. He is currently recording a trilogy of CDs—*Mississippi*, *Mojave*, and *Malibu*—known as the *Migration* project.

ROSIE PERCIVAL's ardor for cooking began in her teen years, while attending vegan potluck dinners in Hamilton, New Zealand. She has a film degree and has worked as a video editor, vegetarian chef, and bookseller. She has a micro-obsession with vintage aprons and baby animals.

SHARON POMERANTZ is a graduate of the University of Michigan's M.F.A. program. Her short fiction has appeared in *The Missouri Review* and *Ploughshares*, and her story "Ghost Knife" was included in *The Best American Short Stories 2003*. A four-time recipient of the Hopwood Award, she currently teaches writing at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

JESSICA SYMONDS has been behind the camera lens most of her life and has a Bachelor of Media Arts majoring in photography. Her expertise lies in commercial, beauty, and food photography, and she is currently working freelance in Melbourne, Australia. When not taking photos she can be found pottering around in her newly planted vegetable patch.

CRAIG MORGAN TEICHER's first book of poems, *Brenda Is in the Room and Other Poems*, was chosen by Paul Hoover as winner of the 2007 Colorado Prize for Poetry. His poetry has appeared in *The Best American Poetry 2009*, *The Paris Review*, *The Yale Review*, *Verse*, and *Colorado Review*. He is Senior Web Editor and Poetry Reviews Editor of *Publishers Weekly*, a contributing editor of *Pleiades*, and a Vice President of the National Book Critics Circle. He also teaches at The New School and Columbia University, and lives in Brooklyn, New York, with his wife and son.

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