

Pulphead John Jeremiah Sullivan

The books that we choose to keep -- let alone read -- can say a lot about who we are and how we see ourselves. In *My Ideal Bookshelf*, dozens of leading cultural figures share the books that matter to them most; books that define their dreams and ambitions and in many cases helped them find their way in the world.

Contributors include Malcolm Gladwell, Thomas Keller, Michael Chabon, Alice Waters, James Patterson, Maira Kalman, Judd Apatow, Chuck Klosterman, Miranda July, Alex Ross, Nancy Pearl, David Chang, Patti Smith, Jennifer Egan, and Dave Eggers, among many others. With colorful and endearingly hand-rendered images of book spines by Jane Mount, and first-person commentary from all the contributors, this is a perfect gift for avid readers, writers, and all who have known the influence of a great book.

"This book will change you." --Chicago Tribune *White Girls* is about, among other things, blackness, queerness, movies, Brooklyn, love (and the loss of love), AIDS, fashion, Basquiat, Capote, philosophy, porn, Eminem, Louise Brooks, and Michael Jackson. Freewheeling and dazzling, tender and true, it is one of the most daring and provocative books of recent years, an invaluable guide to the culture of our time.

From a writer “whose genre-jumping refusal to be pinned down [makes him] an exemplar of our era” (NPR), a new book that confirms his power to astound readers. As a child Geoff Dyer spent long hours making and blotchily painting model fighter planes. So the adult Dyer jumped at the chance of a residency aboard an aircraft carrier. Another Great Day at Sea chronicles Dyer’s experiences on the USS George H.W. Bush as he navigates the routines and protocols of “carrier-world,” from the elaborate choreography of the flight deck through miles of walkways and hatches to kitchens serving meals for a crew of five thousand to the deafening complexity of catapult and arresting gear. Meeting the Captain, the F-18 pilots and the dentists, experiencing everything from a man-overboard alert to the Steel Beach Party, Dyer guides us through the most AIE (acronym intensive environment) imaginable. A lanky Englishman (could he really be both the tallest and the oldest person on the ship?) in a deeply American world, with its constant exhortations to improve, to do better, Dyer brilliantly records the daily life on board the ship, revealing it to be a prism for understanding a society where discipline and conformity, dedication and optimism, become forms of self-expression. In the process it becomes clear why Geoff Dyer has been widely praised as one of the most original—and funniest—voices in literature. Another Great Day at Sea is the definitive work of

an author whose books defy definition.

Jonathan Franzen's *Freedom* was the runaway most-discussed novel of 2010, an ambitious and searching engagement with life in America in the twenty-first century. In *The New York Times Book Review*, Sam Tanenhaus proclaimed it "a masterpiece of American fiction" and lauded its illumination, "through the steady radiance of its author's profound moral intelligence, [of] the world we thought we knew." In *Farther Away*, which gathers together essays and speeches written mostly in the past five years, Franzen returns with renewed vigor to the themes, both human and literary, that have long preoccupied him. Whether recounting his violent encounter with bird poachers in Cyprus, examining his mixed feelings about the suicide of his friend and rival David Foster Wallace, or offering a moving and witty take on the ways that technology has changed how people express their love, these pieces deliver on Franzen's implicit promise to conceal nothing. On a trip to China to see first-hand the environmental devastation there, he doesn't omit mention of his excitement and awe at the pace of China's economic development; the trip becomes a journey out of his own prejudice and moral condemnation. Taken together, these essays trace the progress of unique and mature mind wrestling with itself, with literature, and with some of the most important issues of our day. *Farther Away* is remarkable, provocative, and

necessary.

A re-discovered masterpiece of reporting by a literary icon and a celebrated photographer In 1941, James Agee and Walker Evans published *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, a 400-page prose symphony about three tenant farming families in Hale County, Alabama, at the height of the Great Depression. The book shattered journalistic and literary conventions. Critic Lionel Trilling called it the “most realistic and most important moral effort of our American generation.” The origins of Agee and Evans’s famous collaboration date back to an assignment for *Fortune* magazine, which sent them to Alabama in the summer of 1936 to report a story that was never published. Some have assumed that *Fortune*’s editors shelved the story because of the unconventional style that marked *Famous Men*, and for years the original report was presumed lost. But fifty years after Agee’s death, a trove of his manuscripts turned out to include a typescript labeled “Cotton Tenants.” Once examined, the pages made it clear that Agee had in fact written a masterly, 30,000-word report for *Fortune*. Published here for the first time, and accompanied by thirty of Walker Evans’s historic photos, *Cotton Tenants* is an eloquent report of three families struggling through desperate times. Indeed, Agee’s dispatch remains relevant as one of the most honest explorations of poverty in America ever attempted and as a foundational

document of long-form reporting. As the novelist Adam Haslett writes in an introduction, it is “a poet’s brief for the prosecution of economic and social injustice.”

Pulphead

Swimming Studies

Better Lucky Than Good

Dispatches

Cotton Tenants

As a student working in the dusty archives of the Sewanee Review, John Jeremiah Sullivan came across an article entitled ‘Lost Utopia of the American Frontier’ and was immediately hooked on the dramatic story of a lost book, an alternative history of the South, a white Indian. It was a story he’d chase for the next two decades. In 1735, a charismatic German lawyer and accused atheist named Christian Gottlieb Priber fled Germany under threat of arrest, bound for colonial South Carolina. In the Cherokee village of Grand Tellico, he created a Utopian society that he named Paradise. For six years, Paradise was governed by a set of revolutionary ideas that included racial equality, sexual freedom, and a lack of private property,

ideas which he chronicled in a mysterious manuscript he called Paradise. Priber's ideas were so subversive that he was hunted for half a decade and eventually captured by the British – making headlines across the world – and imprisoned until his death. The only copy of Paradise was apparently destroyed. Now, in a rare combination of ground-breaking research and stunning narrative skill, award-winning writer John Jeremiah Sullivan brings that lost history vividly to life.

Churchill Downs is the epicenter of Kentucky's equine heritage and the most storied racetrack in the world. More than a thousand workers come to the backside of Churchill Downs on any given day during a meet. Before sunrise, seven days a week, stable hands, hot walkers, grooms, outriders, jockeys, and more tend to the well-being of the horses and the track. Most will never stand in the Winner's Circle. There could be no Kentucky Derby without their contributions. *Better Lucky Than Good* is the most caring, in-depth look into the lives and stories of equine workers ever published--and it was written by the people who live and work on the backside of Churchill Downs. The book's 32 authors include grooms, hot walkers, exercise riders, a clocker, an outrider, assistant trainers, a jockey, a starting gate crew member, a pony person, a horticulturist, a silks seamstress, shedrow foremen, a tack and saddle man, a security guard, a horse

tattooer, trainers, an alcohol and drug abuse counselor, a farm manager, a chaplaincy associate, and many more. "Every person I know who has ever 'written a horse book,' or worked extensively as a journalist covering the world of the track, has at some point had a version of this thought: If somebody would just do a good oral history, interviewing the people who actually work with the horses--the grooms and riders and ferrriers and assistant trainers, the folks on the "backside"--it would be worth 10,000 pages of even the best literary description of the sport. Now the Louisville Story Program has done this, and done it beautifully. It's no exaggeration to say that this book has needed to exist for 200 years."--John Jeremiah Sullivan, author of Pulphead and Blood Horses

A "painful and poignant" memoir of the author's father, a heroic firefighter--and his grandfather, a serial arsonist (USA Today). When Jay Varner, fresh out of college, returns home to central Pennsylvania to work for the local newspaper, he knows he will have to deal with the memories of a childhood haunted by a grandfather who was both menacing and comical, and of his fire-chief father, a local hero who died too young. While digging into the past, Varner uncovers layers of secrets, lies, and half-truths. It is only when he finally has the truth in hand that he comes to understand the forces that drove his father, and the fires that he, despite all his efforts,

could never extinguish. “Unadorned but vivid, Varner’s coming-of-age story unravels family secrets about firefighting and arson. It’s painful and poignant . . . [Varner] reminds us that few lives, even those we think we know best, are easily understood.” –USA Today “At its core, the book is about the way we spend half our lives trying to understand the people who brought us into this world . . . [Varner’s] writing is reporterly with lovely lyrical flourishes.” –Time Out Chicago

The television host and author of *Fired!* and a television writer for such shows as *Curb Your Enthusiasm* document the whimsical roles of complaining, codependence and wine in keeping their marriage and sanity intact.

Winner of the 2011 Strega Prize, this blend of essay, social criticism, and memoir is a striking portrait of the effects of globalization on Italy’s declining economy. Starting from his family’s textile factory in Prato, Tuscany, Edoardo Nesi examines the recent shifts in Italy’s manufacturing industry. Only one generation ago, Prato was a thriving industrial center that prided itself on craftsmanship and quality. But during the last decade, cheaply made goods—produced overseas or in Italy by poorly paid immigrants—saturated the market, making it impossible for Italian companies to keep up. In 2004 his family was forced to sell the

textile factory. How this could have happened? Nesi asks, and what are the wider repercussions of losing businesses like his family's, especially for Italian culture? *Story of My People* is a denouncement of big business, corrupt politicians, the arrogance of economists, and cheap manufacturing. It's a must-read for anyone seeking insight into the financial crisis that's striking Europe today.

The Prime Minister of Paradise

Also Families, Poetry, Folksy Wisdom and You

The Heart of the Humanities

Notes of a Sportswriter's Son

The Tarball Chronicles

A Memoir

Award-winning essayist Tom Bissell explores the highs and lows of the creative process. He takes us from the set of *The Big Bang Theory* to the first novel of Ernest Hemingway to the final work of David Foster Wallace; from the films of Werner Herzog to the film of Tommy Wiseau to the editorial meeting in which Paula Fox's work was relaunched into the world. Originally published in magazines such as *The Believer*, *The New Yorker*, and *Harper's*, these essays represent ten years of Bissell's best writing on every aspect of creation—be it

Iraq War documentaries or video-game character voices—and will provoke as much thought as they do laughter. What are sitcoms for exactly? Can art be both bad and genius? Why do some books survive and others vanish? Bissell's exploration of these questions make for gripping, unforgettable reading.

From the author of *Infinite Jest* and *Consider the Lobster*: a collection of five brilliant essays on tennis, from the author's own experience as a junior player to his celebrated profile of Roger Federer at the peak of his powers. A "long-time rabid fan of tennis," and a regionally ranked tennis player in his youth, David Foster Wallace wrote about the game like no one else. *On Tennis* presents David Foster Wallace's five essays on the sport, published between 1990 and 2006, and hailed as some of the greatest and most innovative sports writing of our time. This lively and entertaining collection begins with Wallace's own experience as a prodigious tennis player ("Derivative Sport in Tornado Alley"). He also challenges the sports memoir genre ("How Tracy Austen Broke My Heart"), takes us to the US Open ("Democracy and Commerce at the U.S. Open"), and profiles of two of the world's greatest tennis players ("Tennis Player Michael Joyce's Professional Artistry as a Paradigm of

Certain Stuff About Choice, Freedom, Limitation, Joy, Grotesquerie, and Human Completeness" and "Federer Both Flesh and Not"). With infectious enthusiasm and enormous heart, Wallace's writing shows us the beauty, complexity, and brilliance of the game he loved best. A New York Times Notable Book Daring and fiercely original, *The Women* is at once a memoir, a psychological study, a sociopolitical manifesto, and an incisive adventure in literary criticism. It is conceived as a series of portraits analyzing the role that sexual and racial identity played in the lives and work of the writer's subjects: his mother, a self-described "Negress," who would not be defined by the limitations of race and gender; the mother of Malcolm X, whose mixed-race background and eventual descent into madness contributed to her son's misogyny and racism; brilliant, Harvard-educated Dorothy Dean, who rarely identified with other blacks or women, but deeply empathized with white gay men; and the late Owen Dodson, a poet and dramatist who was female-identified and who played an important role in the author's own social and intellectual formation. Hilton Als submits both racial and sexual stereotypes to his inimitable scrutiny with relentless humor and sympathy. The results are exhilarating. The

Women is that rarest of books: a memorable work of self-investigation that creates a form of all its own.

Crónicas de John Jeremiah Sullivan, reunidas por primera vez en este volumen, nos acercan a la cultura popular norteamericana y nos convierten en testigos de excepción de algunos de los episodios de la historia reciente de Estados Unidos. Como si de un tour se tratara, Sullivan nos lleva de viaje por la cara más desconocida de su país. Viajamos a Indiana para investigar los años de formación de Michael Jackson y Axl Rose; pasamos unos días en el festival de rock cristiano más grande del mundo en las Ozarks, en Missouri; visitamos un refugio de la Cruz Roja en Nueva Orleans poco después del paso del Katrina, y nos adentramos en la «cueva sin nombre número uno» (llamada así por los arqueólogos a fin de evitar el pillaje) para admirar las pinturas de los pueblos nativos del Mississippi. Conjugando la energía gonzo de Hunter S. Thompson, la agudeza de David Foster Wallace y el ingenio y la perspicacia de Joan Didion, Sullivan construye una radiografía de la sociedad norteamericana del siglo xxi. Reseñas: «Su honestidad compulsiva y su prosa salvajemente inteligente recuerdan la obra de maestros norteamericanos del Nuevo Periodismo

como Hunter S. Thompson y Tom Wolfe.» Time Magazine «Pulphead es la mejor y más importante colección de artículos desde "Algo supuestamente divertido que nunca volveré a hacer" de David Foster Wallace.» The New York Times Book Review «Un talento en auge que merece ser leído y alentado es el de John Jeremiah Sullivan [...].Pulphead es una de las colecciones de ensayos más apasionante de las publicadas en los últimos años.» Larry McMurtry, Harper's Magazine «Pulphead reafirma a Sullivan como uno de los mejores ensayistas de su generación.» Bookforum «John Jeremiah Sullivan, tal y como yo lo veo, puede ser el mejor ensayista de su generación. [...] Es lo más parecido a Tom Wolfe de lo que tenemos ahora mismo,y eso incluyendo a Tom Wolfe.» Lev Grossman, Time

Barrett Swanson embarks on a personal quest across the United States to uncover what it means to be an American amid the swirl of our post-truth climate in this collection of critically acclaimed essays and reportage. A trip with his brother to a New York psychic community becomes a rollicking tour through the world of American spiritualism. At a wilderness retreat in Ohio, men seek a cure for toxic masculinity, while in the hinterlands of Wisconsin, antiwar veterans turn to

farming when they cannot sustain the heroic myth of service. And when his best friend's body washes up on the shores of the Mississippi River, he falls into the gullet of true crime discussion boards, exploring the stamina of conspiracy theories along the cankered byways of the Midwest. In this exhilarating debut, Barrett Swanson introduces us to a new reality. At a moment when grand unifying narratives have splintered into competing storylines, these critically acclaimed essays document the many routes by which people are struggling to find stability in the aftermath of our country's political and economic collapse, sometimes at dire and disillusioning costs.

Another Great Day at Sea

In The Garden of Beasts

I Am Sorry to Think I Have Raised a Timid Son

Draw Your Weapons

The Correspondence

My Ideal Bookshelf

This enhanced eBook includes video, audio, photographic, and linked content, as well as a bonus short story. Hear TAMMY talk. Learn the origins of Minor Universe 31. See the

*TM-31. Take a trip in it. Photos and illustrations appear as hyperlinked endnotes. Video and audio are embedded directly in text. *Video and audio may not play on all readers. Check your user manual for details. National Book Foundation 5 Under 35 Award winner Charles Yu delivers his debut novel, a razor-sharp, ridiculously funny, and utterly touching story of a son searching for his father . . . through quantum space-time. Minor Universe 31 is a vast story-space on the outskirts of fiction, where paradox fluctuates like the stock market, lonely sexbots beckon failed protagonists, and time travel is serious business. Every day, people get into time machines and try to do the one thing they should never do: change the past. That's where Charles Yu, time travel technician-part counselor, part gadget repair man-steps in. He helps save people from themselves. Literally. When he's not taking client calls or consoling his boss, Phil, who could really use an upgrade, Yu visits his mother (stuck in a one-hour cycle of time, she makes dinner over and over and over) and searches for*

his father, who invented time travel and then vanished. Accompanied by TAMMY, an operating system with low self-esteem, and Ed, a nonexistent but ontologically valid dog, Yu sets out, and back, and beyond, in order to find the one day where he and his father can meet in memory. He learns that the key may be found in a book he got from his future self. It's called How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe, and he's the author. And somewhere inside it is the information that could help him—in fact it may even save his life. Wildly new and adventurous, Yu's debut is certain to send shock waves of wonder through literary space-time.

A poignant, funny, and timely memoir that marries the intimacy and the sexual identity themes of Boy Erased with My Life in Middlemarch's interest in the way literature shapes and influences our lives, written in the authentic Southern voice, deeply incisive wit, and with quirky but erudite observations evocative of John Jeremiah Sullivan's Pulphead. Mark Scarbrough has been searching for something

his entire life. Whether it's his birth mother, true love, his purpose, or his sexual identity, Mark has been on a constant quest to find out who he really is, with the great Western texts as his steadfast companions. As a boy with his head constantly in a book, desperate to discover new worlds, he can hardly distinguish between their plots and his own reality. The child of strict Texan Evangelicals, Mark is taught by the Bible to fervently believe in the rapture and second coming and is thus moved to spend his teen years as a youth preacher in cowboy boots. At college, he discovers William Blake, who teaches him to fall in love with poems, lyrics... and his roommate Alex. Raised to believe that to be gay was to be a sinner, Mark is driven to the brink of madness and attempts suicide. Hoping to avoid books once and for all, Mark joins the seminary, where he meets his wife, Miranda. Neither the seminary nor the marriage stick, and Mark once again finds himself turning to his books for the sense of belonging he continues to seek...In the tradition of beloved titles like

The End of Your Life Book Club, Reading Lolita in Tehran, and The Year of Reading Dangerously, Bookmarked tells a deeply personal story through the lens of literature. An examination of one man's complicated, near-obsessive relationship with books, and how they shaped, molded, ruined and saved him, *Bookmarked* is about how we readers stash our secrets between jacket covers and how those secrets ultimately get told in the ways that the books themselves demand.

A single book might not change the world. But this utterly original meditation on art and war might transform the way you see the world—and that makes all the difference. “How to live in the face of so much suffering? What difference can one person make in this beautiful, imperfect, and imperiled world?” Through a dazzling combination of memoir, history, reporting, visual culture, literature, and theology, Sarah Sentilles offers an impassioned defense of life lived by peace and principle. It is a literary collage with an urgent hope at its core: that art might offer tools

for remaking the world. In Draw Your Weapons, Sentilles tells the true stories of Howard, a conscientious objector during World War II, and Miles, a former prison guard at Abu Ghraib, and in the process she challenges conventional thinking about how war is waged, witnessed, and resisted. The pacifist and the soldier both create art in response to war: Howard builds a violin; Miles paints portraits of detainees. With echoes of Susan Sontag and Maggie Nelson, Sentilles investigates images of violence from the era of slavery to the drone age. In doing so, she wrestles with some of our most profound questions: What does it take to inspire compassion? What impact can one person have? How should we respond to violence when it feels like it can't be stopped? Praise for Draw Your Weapons "A collage of death, savagery, torture, and trauma across generations and continents, Sarah Sentilles's Draw Your Weapons is painful to read, hard to put down, and impossible to forget."—O: The Oprah Magazine "In her dynamic, impressionistic (and cleverly titled) book, Sentilles focuses on language and

images—particularly photography—and considers what role they play in peace and war. Eschewing a traditional narrative, Sentilles focuses on two men—one a World War II conscience objector who makes violins, and the other an Abu Ghraib prison guard who paints detainee portraits. In brief, delicately layered pieces rather than a narrative, Sentilles has created a collage that explores art, violence, and what it means to live a principled life.”—The National Book Review “It’s the kind of book that, after reading just half, you have to stop and catch your breath, because reading it changes you, not just in terms of what you know—it changes the way you think and how you feel—so much so that, halfway in, I wanted to go back and start again because I felt I was already a different person to the person I was when I began.”—Turnaround

The first collection from a Whiting Writers’ Award winner whose work has become a fixture of The Paris Review and n+1

Can civilization save us from ourselves? That is the question J. D. Daniels asks in his first book, a series of

six letters written during dark nights of the soul. Working from his own highly varied experience—as a janitor, a night watchman, an adjunct professor, a drunk, an exterminator, a dutiful son—he considers how far books and learning and psychoanalysis can get us, and how much we're stuck in the mud. In prose wound as tight as a copper spring, Daniels takes us from the highways of his native Kentucky to the Balearic Islands and from the Pampas of Brazil to the rarefied precincts of Cambridge, Massachusetts. His traveling companions include psychotic kindergarten teachers, Israeli sailors, and Southern Baptists on fire for Christ. In each dispatch, Daniels takes risks—not just literary (voice, tone, form) but also more immediate, such as spending two years on a Brazilian jiu-jitsu team (he gets beaten to a pulp, repeatedly) or participating in group psychoanalysis (where he goes temporarily insane). Daniels is that rare thing, a writer completely in earnest whose wit never deserts him, even in extremis. Inventive, intimate, restless, streetwise, and erudite, The

Correspondence introduces a brave and original observer of the inner life under pressure.

In this “urgent and enthralling reckoning with family and history” (Andrew Solomon), an American writer returns to Russia to face a past that still haunts him. NAMED ONE OF THE NEW YORK TIMES CRITICS’ TOP BOOKS OF THE YEAR Alex Halberstadt’s quest takes him across the troubled, enigmatic land of his birth, where decades of Soviet totalitarianism shaped and fractured three generations of his family. In Ukraine, he tracks down his paternal grandfather—most likely the last living bodyguard of Joseph Stalin. He revisits Lithuania, his Jewish mother’s home, to examine the legacy of the Holocaust and the pernicious anti-Semitism that remains largely unaccounted for. And he returns to his birthplace, Moscow, where his grandmother designed homespun couture for Soviet ministers’ wives, his mother consoled dissidents at a psychiatric hospital, and his father made a dangerous living by selling black-market American records. Halberstadt also explores his own story:

that of an immigrant growing up in New York, another in a line of sons separated from their fathers by the tides of politics and history. Young Heroes of the Soviet Union is a moving investigation into the fragile boundary between history and biography. As Halberstadt revisits the sites of his family's formative traumas, he uncovers a multigenerational transmission of fear, suffering, and rage. And he comes to realize something more: Nations, like people, possess formative traumas that penetrate into the most private recesses of their citizens' lives.

Witches of America

Crónicas desde la otra cara de Estados Unidos

Farther Away

Essays

A Journey Beyond the Oiled Pelican and Into the Heart of the Gulf Oil Spill

Blood Horses

From one of America's great professors, a collection of works exploring the importance of reading, writing, and teaching well, for anyone invested in the future of

the humanities. In his series of books *Why Read?*, *Why Teach?*, and *Why Write?* Edmundson, a renowned professor of English at the University of Virginia, explored the vital worldly roles of reading, teaching, and writing, earning a vocal following of writers, teachers, and scholars at the top of their fields, from novelist Tom Perrotta to critics Laura Kipnis and J. Hillis Miller. He has devoted his career to tough-minded yet optimistic advocacy for the humanities, arguing for the importance of reading and writing to an examined and fruitful life and affirming the invaluable role of teachers in opening up fresh paths for their students. Now for the first time *The Heart of the Humanities* collects into one volume this triad of impassioned arguments, including an introduction from the author on the value of education in the present and for the future. The perfect gift for students, recent graduates, writers, teachers, and anyone interested in education and the life of the mind, this omnibus edition will make a powerful and timely case for strengthening the humanities both in schools and in our society.

In this elegant volume, literary critics scrutinize the existing Wallace scholarship and at the same time pioneer new ways of understanding Wallace's fiction and journalism. In critical essays exploring a variety of topics—including Wallace's relationship to American literary history, his place in literary journalism, his complicated relationship to his postmodernist predecessors, the formal difficulties of his 1996 magnum opus *Infinite Jest*, his environmental imagination, and the “social life” of his fiction and nonfiction—contributors plumb sources as diverse as Amazon.com reader recommendations, professional book reviews, the 2009 *Infinite Summer* project, and

the David Foster Wallace archive at the University of Texas's Harry Ransom Center. **NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER** • A beautifully written, witty memoir that is also an immersive exploration of classical music—its power, its meanings, and what it can teach us about ourselves—from the MacArthur “Genius” Grant – winning pianist “Jeremy Denk has written a love letter to the music, and especially to the music teachers, in his life.” —Conrad Tao, pianist and composer *In Every Good Boy Does Fine*, renowned pianist Jeremy Denk traces an implausible journey. His life is already a little tough as a precocious, temperamental six-year-old piano prodigy in New Jersey, and then a family meltdown forces a move to New Mexico. There, Denk must please a new taskmaster, an embittered but devoted professor, while navigating junior high school. At sixteen he escapes to college in Ohio, only to encounter a bewildering new cast of music teachers, both kind and cruel. After many humiliations and a few triumphs, he ultimately finds his way as a world-touring pianist, a MacArthur “Genius,” and a frequent performer at Carnegie Hall. Many classical music memoirs focus on famous musicians and professional accomplishments, but this book focuses on the everyday: neighborhood teacher, high school orchestra, local conductor. There are few writers capable of so deeply illuminating the trials of artistic practice—hours of daily repetition, mystifying advice, pressure from parents and teachers. But under all this struggle is a love letter to the act of teaching. In lively, endlessly imaginative prose, Denk dives deeply into the pieces and composers that have shaped him—Bach, Mozart, and Brahms, among others—and offers lessons on melody, harmony, and rhythm. How do melodies work? Why is harmony such a

mystery to most people? Why are teachers so obsessed with the metronome? In *Every Good Boy Does Fine*, Denk shares the most meaningful lessons of his life, and tries to repay a debt to his teachers. He also reminds us that we must never stop asking questions about music and its purposes: consolation, an armor against disillusionment, pure pleasure, a diversion, a refuge, and a vehicle for empathy.

A New York Times Notable Book for 2011
One of Entertainment Weekly's Top 10 Nonfiction Books of the Year 2011
A Time Magazine Top 10 Nonfiction book of 2011
A Boston Globe Best Nonfiction Book of 2011
One of Library Journal's Best Books of 2011

A sharp-eyed, uniquely humane tour of America's cultural landscape—from high to low to lower than low—by the award-winning young star of the literary nonfiction world. In *Pulphead*, John Jeremiah Sullivan takes us on an exhilarating tour of our popular, unpopular, and at times completely forgotten culture. Simultaneously channeling the gonzo energy of Hunter S. Thompson and the wit and insight of Joan Didion, Sullivan shows us—with a laidback, erudite Southern charm that's all his own—how we really (no, really) live now. In his native Kentucky, Sullivan introduces us to Constantine Rafinesque, a nineteenth-century polymath genius who concocted a dense, fantastical prehistory of the New World. Back in modern times, Sullivan takes us to the Ozarks for a Christian rock festival; to Florida to meet the alumni and stragglers of MTV's *Real World*, who've generated their own self-perpetuating economy of minor celebrity; and all across the South on the trail of the blues. He takes us to Indiana to investigate the formative years of Michael Jackson and Axl Rose and then to the Gulf Coast in the wake of Katrina—and back again as its

residents confront the BP oil spill. Gradually, a unifying narrative emerges, a story about this country that we've never heard told this way. It's like a fun-house hall-of-mirrors tour: Sullivan shows us who we are in ways we've never imagined to be true. Of course we don't know whether to laugh or cry when faced with this reflection—it's our inevitable sob-guffaws that attest to the power of Sullivan's work.

"[An] absorbing and revealing book. . . nestling in the fruitful terrain between memoir and criticism." —Geoff Dyer, author of *Out of Sheer Rage* Blending memoir and cultural criticism, Matthew Specktor explores family legacy, the lives of artists, and a city that embodies both dreams and disillusionment. In 2006, Matthew Specktor moved into a crumbling Los Angeles apartment opposite the one in which F. Scott Fitzgerald spent the last moments of his life. Fitz had been Specktor ' s first literary idol, someone whose own passage through Hollywood had, allegedly, broken him. Freshly divorced, professionally flailing, and reeling from his mother ' s cancer diagnosis, Specktor was feeling unmoored. But rather than giving in or “ cracking up, ” he embarked on an obsessive journey to make sense of the mythologies of “ success ” and “ failure ” that haunt the artist ' s life and the American imagination. Part memoir, part cultural history, part portrait of place, *Always Crashing in the Same Car* explores Hollywood through a certain kind of collapse. It ' s a vibrant and intimate inspection of failure told through the lives of iconic, if under-sung, artists—Carole Eastman, Eleanor Perry, Warren Zevon, Tuesday Weld, and Hal Ashby, among others—and the author ' s own family history. Through this constellation of Hollywood figures, he unearths a fascinating alternate history of the city that raised him and

explores the ways in which curtailed ambition, insufficiency, and loss shape all our lives. At once deeply personal and broadly erudite, it is a story of an art form (the movies), a city (Los Angeles), and one person 's attempt to create meaning out of both. Above all, Specktor creates a moving search for optimism alongside the inevitability of failure and reveals the still-resonant power of art to help us navigate the beautiful ruins that await us all.

White Girls

The Book of My Lives

A Love Story

You Say Tomato, I Say Shut Up

Tall Tales and Straight Talk from the Backside of the Track

The Legacy of David Foster Wallace

It's a dark day for Itching Down. Four million wasps have just descended on the town, and the pests are relentless! What can be done? Bap the Baker has a crazy idea that just might work . . . Young readers will love this lyrical, rhyming text as they watch the industrious citizens of Itching Down knead, bake, and slather the biggest wasp trap there ever was! John Vernon Lord's bright ink and crayon illustrations fill the pages with humorous detail.

'A compelling tale... a narrative that makes such a brave effort to see history as it evolves and not as it becomes.' SPECTATOR Suffused with the tense atmosphere of the times, and with brilliant portraits of Hitler, Goebbels, Goering

and Himmler amongst others, Erik Larson's new book sheds unique light on events as they unfold, resulting in an unforgettable, addictively readable work of narrative history. Berlin, 1933. William E. Dodd, a mild-mannered academic from Chicago, has to his own and everyone else's surprise, become America's first ambassador to Hitler's Germany, in a year that proves to be a turning point in history. Dodd and his family, notably his vivacious daughter, Martha, observe at first-hand the many changes - some subtle, some disturbing, and some horrifically violent - that signal Hitler's consolidation of power. Dodd has little choice but to associate with key figures in the Nazi party, his increasingly concerned cables make little impact on an indifferent U.S. State Department, while Martha is drawn to the Nazis and their vision of a 'New Germany' and has a succession of affairs with senior party players, including first chief of the Gestapo, Rudolf Diels. But as the year darkens, Dodd and his daughter find their lives transformed and any last illusion they might have about Hitler are shattered by the violence of the 'Night of the Long Knives' in the summer of 1934 that established him as supreme dictator . . .

Aleksandar Hemon's lives begin in Sarajevo, a small, blissful city where a young boy's life is consumed with street soccer with the neighborhood kids, resentment of his younger sister, and trips abroad with his engineer-cum-beekeeper father. Here, a young man's life is about poking at the pretensions of the city's elders

with American music, bad poetry, and slightly better journalism. And then, his life in Chicago: watching from afar as war breaks out in Sarajevo and the city comes under siege, no way to return home; his parents and sister fleeing Sarajevo with the family dog, leaving behind all else they had ever known; and Hemon himself starting a new life, his own family, in this new city. And yet this is not really a memoir. The Book of My Lives, Hemon's first book of nonfiction, defies convention and expectation. It is a love song to two different cities; it is a heartbreaking paean to the bonds of family; it is a stirring exhortation to go out and play soccer—and not for the exercise. It is a book driven by passions but built on fierce intelligence, devastating experience, and sharp insight. And like the best narratives, it is a book that will leave you a different reader—a different person, with a new way of looking at the world—when you've finished. For fans of Hemon's fiction, The Book of My Lives is simply indispensable; for the uninitiated, it is the perfect introduction to one of the great writers of our time.

A Kirkus Reviews Best Nonfiction Book of 2013

Looks at the Gulf Coast region's birds, sea life, and ecosystems after the events of the BP Deepwater Horizon Explosion and Oil Spill in 2010.

PulpheadEssaysFSG Originals

Nothing Left to Burn

A Novel

A Love Story, in Music Lessons

Always Crashing in the Same Car: On Art, Crisis, and Los Angeles, California

Life Aboard the USS George H.W. Bush

Three Families

*A collection of satirical, crass, comedic essays from famed Internet personality and New York Times bestselling author Maddox, of the infamous website The Best Page in the Universe. In this third book from Maddox, the reigning king of Internet satire delivers a collection of humorous, unapologetic essays in the same voice that propelled him into comedic stardom. With all-new material, F*ck Whales delivers on his personal brand of satire, complete with self-promotion, petty rants, and brilliant essays on anything and everything Maddox deems worthy of his ire.*

INSTANT NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER AND A NEW YORK TIMES CRITICS' PICK

“Thrilling . . . [told] with gonzo élan . . . When the sommelier and blogger Madeline Puckette writes that this book is the Kitchen Confidential of the wine world, she’s not wrong, though Bill Buford’s Heat is probably a shade closer.” —Jennifer Senior, The New York Times Professional journalist and amateur drinker Bianca Bosker didn’t know much about wine—until she discovered an alternate universe where taste reigns supreme, a world of elite sommeliers who dedicate their lives to the pursuit of flavor. Astounded by their fervor and seemingly superhuman sensory powers, she set out to uncover what drove their obsession, and whether she, too, could become a “cork dork.” With boundless curiosity, humor, and a healthy dose of skepticism, Bosker takes the

reader inside underground tasting groups, exclusive New York City restaurants, California mass-market wine factories, and even a neuroscientist's fMRI machine as she attempts to answer the most nagging question of all: what's the big deal about wine? What she learns will change the way you drink wine—and, perhaps, the way you live—forever. "Think: Eat, Pray, Love meets Somm." —theSkimm "As informative as it is, well, intoxicating." —Fortune

"The best book to have been written about the Vietnam War" (The New York Times Book Review); an instant classic straight from the front lines. From its terrifying opening pages to its final eloquent words, Dispatches makes us see, in unforgettable and unflinching detail, the chaos and fervor of the war and the surreal insanity of life in that singular combat zone. Michael Herr's unsparing, unorthodox retellings of the day-to-day events in Vietnam take on the force of poetry, rendering clarity from one of the most incomprehensible and nightmarish events of our time. Dispatches is among the most blistering and compassionate accounts of war in our literature.

Finalist for the Thurber Prize for American Humor "One of the funniest writers in America." That's what The New Yorker's Andy Borowitz calls Jenny Allen—and with good reason. In her debut essay collection, the longtime humorist and performer declares no subject too sacred, no boundary impassable. With her eagle eye for the absurd and hilarious, Allen reports from the potholes midway through life's journey. One moment she's flirting shamelessly—and unsuccessfully—with a younger man at a wedding; the next she's stumbling upon X-rated images on her daughter's computer. She ponders the connection between her ex-husband's questions about the location of

*their silverware, and the divorce that came a year later. While undergoing chemotherapy, she experiments with being a “wig person.” And she considers those perplexing questions that we never pause to ask: Why do people say “It is what it is”? What’s the point of fat-free half-and-half ? And haven’t we heard enough about memes? Jenny Allen’s musings range fluidly from the personal to the philosophical. She writes with the familiarity of someone telling a dinner party anecdote, forgoing decorum for candor and comedy. To read *Would Everybody Please Stop?* is to experience life with imaginative and incisive humor.*

*“Witches are gathering.” When most people hear the word “witches,” they think of horror films and Halloween, but to the nearly one million Americans who practice Paganism today, it’s a nature-worshipping, polytheistic, and very real religion. So Alex Mar discovers when she sets out to film a documentary and finds herself drawn deep into the world of present-day witchcraft. *Witches of America* follows Mar on her immersive five-year trip into the occult, charting modern Paganism from its roots in 1950s England to its current American mecca in the San Francisco Bay Area; from a gathering of more than a thousand witches in the Illinois woods to the New Orleans branch of one of the world’s most influential magical societies. Along the way she takes part in dozens of rituals and becomes involved with a wild array of characters: a government employee who founds a California priesthood dedicated to a Celtic goddess of war; American disciples of Aleister Crowley, whose elaborate ceremonies turn the Catholic mass on its head; second-wave feminist Wiccans who practice a radical separatist witchcraft; a growing “mystery cult” whose initiates trace their rites*

back to a blind shaman in rural Oregon. This sprawling magical community compels Mar to confront what she believes is possible-or hopes might be. With keen intelligence and wit, Mar illuminates the world of witchcraft while grappling in fresh and unexpected ways with the question underlying all faiths: Why do we choose to believe in anything at all? Whether evangelical, Pagan priestess, or atheist, each of us craves a system of meaning to give structure to our lives. Sometimes we just find it in unexpected places.

A Wine-Fueled Adventure Among the Obsessive Sommeliers, Big Bottle Hunters, and Rogue Scientists Who Taught Me to Live for Taste

Reflections on Life and Other Bad Ideas

Would Everybody Please Stop?

Reading, Writing, Teaching

Bookmarked: How the Great Works of Western Literature F*cked Up My Life

Story of My People

This is a series of essays following a journey by Kent Russell who went over the country gathering experiences and comes back with a portrait of America and manhood.

One evening late in his life, veteran sportswriter Mike Sullivan was asked by his son what he remembered best from his three decades in the press box. The answer came as a surprise. "I was at Secretariat's Derby, in '73. That was . . . just beauty, you know?" Sullivan didn't know, not really: the track had always

been a place his father disappeared to once a year on business, a source of souvenir glasses and inscrutable passions in his Kentucky relatives. But in 2000, Sullivan, an editor and essayist for Harper's, decided to educate himself. He spent two years following the horse—both across the country, as he watched one season's juvenile crop prepare for the Triple Crown, and through time, as he tracked the animal's constant evolution in literature and art, from the ponies that appeared on the walls of European caves 30,000 years ago, to the mounts that carried the Indo-European language to the edges of the Old World, to the finely tuned but fragile yearlings that are auctioned off for millions of dollars apiece every spring and fall. The result is a witty, encyclopedic, and in the end profound meditation on what Edwin Muir called our "long-lost archaic companionship" with the horse. Incorporating elements of memoir and reportage, the Wunderkammer and the picture gallery, Blood Horses lets us see—as we have never seen before—the animal that, more than any other, made us who we are.

Winner of the 2012 National Book Critics Circle Award, Autobiography Swimming Studies is a brilliantly original,

meditative memoir that explores the worlds of competitive and recreational swimming. From her training for the Olympic trials as a teenager to enjoying pools and beaches around the world as an adult, Leanne Shapton offers a fascinating glimpse into the private, often solitary, realm of swimming. Her spare and elegant writing reveals an intimate narrative of suburban adolescence, spent underwater in a discipline that continues to inspire Shapton's work as an artist and author. Her illustrations throughout the book offer an intuitive perspective on the landscapes and imagery of the sport. Shapton's emphasis is on the smaller moments of athletic pursuit rather than its triumphs. For the accomplished athlete, aspiring amateur, or habitual practicer, this remarkable work of written and visual sketches propels the reader through a beautifully personal and universally appealing exercise in reflection.

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER. SEMI-FINALIST FOR THE PEN/DIAMONSTEIN-SPIELVOGEL AWARD FOR ART OF THE ESSAY. One of Amazon, Buzzfeed, ELLE, Electric Literature and Pop Sugar's Best Books of 2018. Named one of the Best Books of October and Fall by Amazon, Buzzfeed, TIME, Vulture, The Millions and Vol. 1 Brooklyn.

“Hilarious, nimble, and thoroughly illuminating.” –Colson Whitehead, author of The Underground Railroad A globe-spanning, ambitious book of essays from one of the most enthralling storytellers in narrative nonfiction In his highly anticipated debut essay collection, Impossible Owls, Brian Phillips demonstrates why he’s one of the most iconoclastic journalists of the digital age, beloved for his ambitious, off-kilter, meticulously reported essays that read like novels. The eight essays assembled here—five from Phillips’s Grantland and MTV days, and three new pieces—go beyond simply chronicling some of the modern world’s most uncanny, unbelievable, and spectacular oddities (though they do that, too). Researched for months and even years on end, they explore the interconnectedness of the globalized world, the consequences of history, the power of myth, and the ways people attempt to find meaning. He searches for tigers in India, and uncovers a multigenerational mystery involving an oil tycoon and his niece turned stepdaughter turned wife in the Oklahoma town where he grew up. Through each adventure, Phillips’s remarkable voice becomes a character itself—full of verve, rich with offhanded humor, and revealing

unexpected vulnerability. Dogged, self-aware, and radiating a contagious enthusiasm for his subjects, Phillips is an exhilarating guide to the confusion and wonder of the world today. If John Jeremiah Sullivan's Pulphead was the last great collection of New Journalism from the print era, Impossible Owls is the first of the digital age.

'A work of genius' Ben Fountain 'A bittersweet book, but also a sharp and profoundly wise one' Herald 'Searcy writes with an urgency that makes his essays matter. Where the shame comes in is not certain, but the wonder is that you begin a year having never heard of an author then, two weeks in, his words are lodged in your consciousness and you are telling everybody you know to read his book' Independent Like dispatches from another world, the twenty-one essays in David Searcy's debut collection Shame and Wonder are unfamiliar, profound and haunting. In his late sixties, the Texan author David Searcy became drawn to non-fiction, writing 'straight-up', on note pad and manual typewriter, a series of disparate thoughts and interests. These unframed apprehensions, as he called them - of forgotten baseball fields, childhood dreams of space travel, the bedtime

stories he'd invent for his young children - evolved into a sequence of extraordinary essays probing the pivots and pathways of his life, and puzzling out what they might mean. Expansive in scope, but deeply personal in their perspective, the pieces in Shame and Wonder forge beautiful connections that make the everyday seem almost extraterrestrial, creating intricate and glittering constellations of words and ideas. Radiant and strange and suffused with longing, this collection is a work of true grace, wisdom and joy.

Love and terror in Hitler's Berlin

The Women

Young Heroes of the Soviet Union

Sunshine State

How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe (Enhanced Edition)

On Tennis

Longlisted for the PEN/Diamonstein-Spielvogel Award for the Art of the Essay • Finalist for the Southern Book Prize A New York Times Critics' Best Books of the Year • An NPR Best Book of the Year • A NYLON Best Nonfiction Book of the Year • A BuzzFeed Best Nonfiction Book of the Year • An Entrophy Magazine Best Non-Fiction Book of the Year • A Brooklyn Rail Best Non-

Fiction Book of the Year • A Baltimore Beat Best Book of the Year A Paris Review Staff Pick • A Chicago Tribune Exciting Book for 2017 • A Rolling Stone Culture Index Recommendation • A BuzzFeed Most Exciting Book for 2017 • A The Millions Great 2017 Book Preview Pick • A Huffington Post 2017 Preview Pick • A NYLON Best 10 Books of the Month • A Lit Hub 15 Books to Read This Month A Poets & Writers New and Noteworthy Selection • A PW Top 10 Spring Pick in Essays & Literary Criticism • An Emma Straub Recommendation on PBS “One of the themes of ‘Sunshine State,’ Sarah Gerard’s striking book of essays, is how Florida can unmoor you and make you reach for shoddy, off-the-shelf solutions to your psychic unease.... The first essay is a knockout, a lurid red heart wrapped in barbed wire.... This essay draws blood.” — Dwight Garner, New York Times "Unflinchingly candid memoir bolstered by thoughtfully researched history.... A nuanced and subtly intimate mosaic... her writing, lucid yet atmospheric, takes on a timeless ebb and flow.” — Jason Heller, NPR.org "Stunning." — Rolling Stone “These large-hearted, meticulous essays offer an uncanny x-ray of our national psyche... showing us both the grand beauty of our American dreams and the heartbreaking devastation they wreak.” — Garth Greenwell, author of What Belongs to You Sarah Gerard follows her breakout novel, Binary Star, with the dynamic essay collection Sunshine State, which explores Florida as a microcosm of the most pressing economic and environmental perils haunting our society. In the collection’s title essay, Gerard volunteers at the Suncoast Seabird Sanctuary, a world renowned bird refuge. There she meets its founder, who once modeled with a pelican on his arm for a Dewar’s Scotch campaign but has since declined into a pit of fraud and madness. He becomes our embezzling protagonist whose tales about the birds he “rescues” never quite add up. Gerard’s personal stories are no less eerie or poignant: An essay that begins as a look at Gerard’s first relationship becomes a heart-wrenching

exploration of acquaintance rape and consent. An account of intimate female friendship pivots midway through, morphing into a meditation on jealousy and class. With the personal insight of The Empathy Exams, the societal exposal of Nickel and Dimed, and the stylistic innovation and intensity of her own break-out debut novel Binary Star, Sarah Gerard's Sunshine State uses the intimately personal to unearth the deep reservoirs of humanity buried in the corners of our world often hardest to face.

A Memoir and a Reckoning

Magic Hours

Lost In Summerland

Five Essays

Cork Dork

F*ck Whales