

The Bookworm presents Shelf Awareness for Readers for Friday, May 1, 2020

From: The Bookworm Omaha (bookwormomaha@shelf-awareness.com)

To: [REDACTED]

Date: Friday, May 1, 2020, 09:29 AM CDT

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"Shah's earnest and witty memoir serves as an astute look into the world of sports journalism."  
—*Publishers Weekly*

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**RED LIGHTNING BOOKS**



Friday, May 1, 2020

## From the Shelf

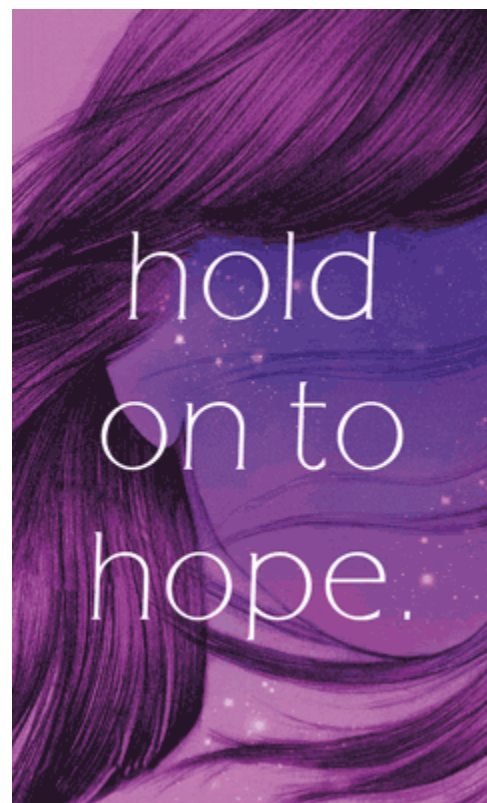
### The Children Are Our Future Present

I have three young cousins living in Kirkland, Wash., an area, at the time of writing, especially hard hit by the

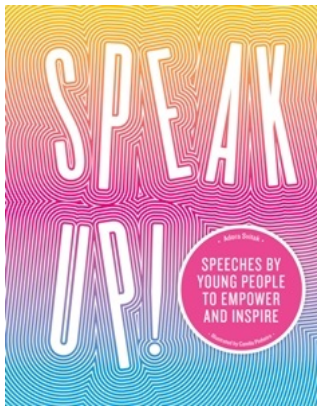


Adora Svitak

Covid-19 pandemic. I've been worrying a lot about how kids like my cousins are coping with all the uncertainty. Many are responding in creative and resilient ways: there's the teen who used his coding skills to start the [Covid-19 data tracking website](#), and the organizers of Student Voice, who called on colleges to change admissions requirements for students now unable to take the SAT. And my cousins



bring a smile to my face with their weekly newsletter filled with facts and drawings.




I began work on *Speak Up! Speeches by Young People to Empower and Inspire* (available now from Quarto) because of my deep belief in the power of young voices to change the world for the

better. Young people bring fresh perspectives; in history, we've seen time and time again the revolutionary power of young adults who have quite literally put their bodies on the line for causes like civil rights, democracy and protesting war.

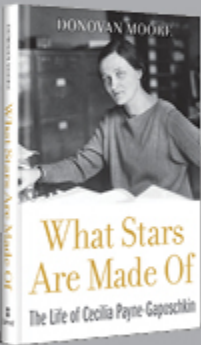
I want to live in a world where we are civically engaged even at young ages, like Madison Kimrey, who gave a speech about voting rights at the age of 12. A world where girls and young women feel empowered to pursue science and engineering, like Tiera Guinn, who spoke about her experience as a NASA rocket engineer at 22. It's a kinder world and a place where everyone, no matter their background, can have a voice. Youth are leading the way to that world. Will you follow? --Adora Svitak

*Svitak is a Bay Area writer and public speaker who advocates for youth empowerment around the world.*



 Harvard

"Skillfully opens up Payne's achievements and adventures by setting them in the global village of astronomy...Moore illuminates Payne's development into a remarkable scientist."  
—Nature



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ON SALE MAY 5

## In this issue...

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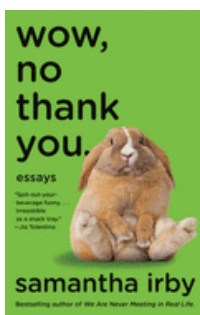
## Reviews



*Sigh, Gone: A Misfit's  
Memoir of Great Books,  
Punk Rock, and the Fight  
to Fit In*  
by Phuc Tran

This wry and unsparing coming-of-age memoir recaps the tumultuous childhood and turbulent adolescence of a bookish Vietnamese immigrant raised in a blue-collar American town.

[Read this review >>](#)



*Wow, No Thank You*  
by Samantha Irby

In her hilarious third collection, an essayist tackles the horrors and joys of growing up (and getting old) in the time of Instagram, reality TV and Trader Joe's.

[Read this review >>](#)



*Incendiary*  
by Zoraida Córdova

In this YA novel, a memory thief fights for redemption in a fantasy realm based on Inquisition-era Spain.

[Read this review >>](#)

*Reviews by subject:*

Fiction · Mystery & Thriller · Science Fiction & Fantasy · Romance · Biography & Memoir · Social Science · Essays & Criticism · Psychology & Self-Help · Gardening · Teen Readers Recommend



The legacy continues as bestselling author Leslie Rule, daughter of true crime legend Ann Rule, exposes the shocking story of an identity thief and sadistic killer at the helm of a real-life fatal attraction...

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# Book Candy

## Library-Themed Video Call Backgrounds

The New York Public Library highlighted several ["library-themed backgrounds for your next video call."](#)

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Multimedia parodist Stefanie Trilling has reimagined ["Children's Books for Pandemics,"](#) including *Goodnight Zoom* and *Oh, the Places You Won't Go!* (via *School Library Journal*)

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The *Guardian* features ["an updating list of online treats from bibliophiles... to entertain locked-down children and adults."](#)

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*Open Culture* showcased ["vintage book & record covers brought to life in a mesmerizing animated video."](#)

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Kelly Fordon, author most recently of *I Have the Answer*, recommended ["10 unmissable books from the 'flyover states' "](#) for *Electric Lit*.

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*Mental Floss* shared ["21 phrases you use without realizing you're quoting William Shakespeare."](#)



**"Walker has written a Black cultural tour de force."**

—JEMIMA PIERRE, author of *The Predicament of Blackness*

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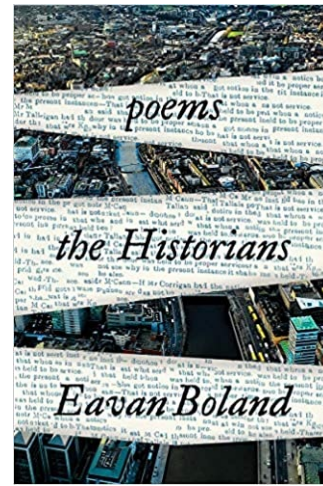
## Great Reads

### Rediscover: Eavan Boland

Eavan Boland, one of Ireland's most distinguished poets, died April 27 at age 75. Boland's first two collections, *23 Poems* and *Autumn Essay*, were published before she was 20 years old. Her collection *In a Time of Violence* (1994) received a Lannan Award and was shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot Prize.

Her books include *A Woman Without a Country*; *Outside History: Selected Poems 1980-1990*; *An Origin Like Water: Collected Poems 1957-1987*; and *In Her Own Image*. Her poem "Eviction," from her upcoming collection *The Historians* (Norton, \$26.95, 9781324006879), appears in the May 4 issue of the *New Yorker*.

*Irish Times* columnist Fintan O'Toole wrote that Boland "has occupied the Irish public poetic tradition that stems from W.B. Yeats, taking on its concerns with myth, history and the Irish landscape while forcing it to make room for female experience.... In part this was a struggle to make room for the body. She made female sexuality and motherhood into poetic subjects. She evoked domestic violence, anorexia, infanticide, mastectomy, bodily functions from menstruation to masturbation."



**Good Books for Tough Times**

NOLO

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Quick & Legal Will Book

No!o's Guide to Social Security Disability Getting & Keeping Your Benefits

## The Writer's Life

### Reading with... Sonya Lalli

*Sonya Lalli is a Canadian writer of Indian heritage. She studied law in her hometown of Saskatoon and at Columbia University in New York, and later completed an MA in Creative Writing and Publishing at City, University of London. She lives in Toronto with her husband. Her debut novel was [The Matchmaker's List](#); her new novel, [Grown-Up Pose](#), is available now from Berkley.*

#### On your nightstand now:

*The Starless Sea* by Erin Morgenstern, author of *The Night Circus*. This book is full of magical realism and is beautifully written and entirely engrossing. The book is like a fairy tale for book lovers. I haven't read her first book, *The Night Circus*, but it's now definitely shooting straight to the top of my TBR list.



photo: Ming Joanis

#### Favorite book when you were a child:

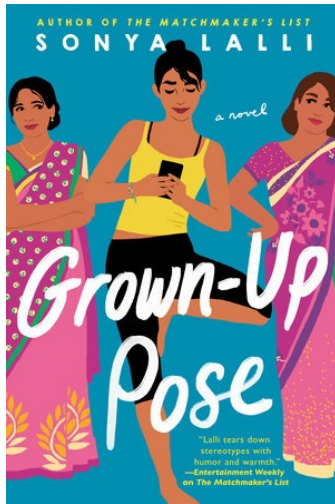
Little House on the Prairie books by Laura Ingalls Wilder. I've re-read the series countless times. I loved her journey, the character and I always felt a little special reading them because I, like the author, grew up on the prairies (I was born and raised in Saskatoon).

### Your top five authors:

Jhumpa Lahiri, Louisa May Alcott, Arundhati Roy, Madeleine Thien and Jean M. Auel. I stand in awe of all of these amazing women!

### Book you've faked reading:

*The Silmarillion* by J.R.R. Tolkien. I'm a diehard Lord of the Rings fan, and I've read all the books and watched all the movies, including the Hobbit ones, but I've never been able to get through *The Silmarillion*. I find it too involving.



### Book you're an evangelist for:

*My Sister, the Serial Killer* by Oyinkan Braithwaite. This book has it all: a complex protagonist, a vibrant setting, an intriguing pace and a problematic love triangle.

### Book you've bought for the cover:

*Where'd You Go, Bernadette* by Maria Semple has an incredibly funky cover. The story turned out to be pretty amazing, too, with an amazing and super complex heroine. I can't wait to see the movie.

### Book you hid from your parents:

As a preteen I hid my Harlequin romances. I was a bit too young to be reading them perhaps, but it definitely piqued my interest in reading and writing romances.

### Book that changed your life:

*The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri. This book resonated with me so much. As a child I had never read a book that featured a child of Indian immigrants growing up in the West....

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Book Reviews

# Fiction

## *The Sweeney Sisters* by Lian Dolan



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Lian Dolan delivers a juicy, witty, warmhearted family saga in her third novel, *The Sweeney Sisters*. Liza, Maggie and Tricia Sweeney shared a (mostly) idyllic childhood in a super-WASPy Connecticut town. But when their father, literary light William Sweeney, dies unexpectedly, they discover they have another (half) sister: their former neighbor, Serena Tucker. Now a journalist, Serena is grappling with the truth about her parentage as her new siblings try to reconcile their grief, shock and shame. During a summer spent sorting out William Sweeney's complicated estate, the sisters must also come to terms with their feelings about him--and each other.

Dolan (*Elizabeth the First Wife*) gives each "full" Sweeney sister a type: dutiful Liza, free-spirited artist Maggie, hyper-focused Tricia. Adding Serena to the mix jumbles things up: she shares Tricia's discipline, Maggie's warmth and Liza's determination, but is also definitely her own woman. As Serena tries to figure out her place in this new family, all four sisters are caught up in the search for a missing William Sweeney memoir, which may hold further surprises. Dolan shares the narration equally among the sisters, giving readers insight into each woman's personal and professional challenges, plus the sibling dynamics (heightened by grief). The novel tackles questions of identity, family roles and hierarchies and keeping up appearances, but Dolan handles these issues with a light touch, sprinkling in humor and a bit of romance. By summer's end, readers will join Serena in hoping for a seat at the Sweeney family table. --[Katie Noah Gibson](#), blogger at [Cakes, Tea and Dreams](#)

**Discover:** This warmhearted family saga begins when three sisters discover the existence of a fourth after their father's death.

Morrow, \$27.99 hardcover, 304p., 9780062909046

ONE DAY IN  
THE CITY OF LIGHT.  
ONE NIGHT IN SEARCH  
OF LOST TIME.



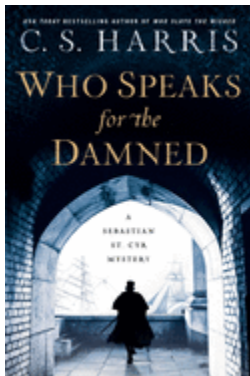
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## Mystery & Thriller

### *Who Speaks for the Damned* by C.S. Harris



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*Who Speaks for the Damned*, the 15th entry in the Sebastian St. Cyr mystery series by C.S. Harris (*Who Slays the Wicked*), is an excellent Regency mystery that can easily be read as a standalone. Glossing over events that happened in earlier books, *Who Speaks for the Damned* focuses on Sebastian's inexhaustible urge to right wrongs and to find justice for those who need it most. Sebastian, the younger son of the Earl of Hendon, nearly went awry in his youth, but has found contentment in marriage and in helping the local London magistrates. He finds himself strongly identifying with Nicholas Hayes, the third son of the Earl of Seaforth.

Hayes was convicted of murdering a countess and was transported to Botany Bay nearly 20 years earlier. Returning to England would have meant death if he'd been caught by authorities. But before the law found out that Hayes had escaped his imprisonment, someone else caught up with him, and stuck a scythe in his back in a public garden. Determined to find justice for Hayes, since he realizes Hayes's fate could have so easily been his own, Sebastian searches for the killer everywhere from the elegant drawing rooms of Mayfair to the squalid back alleys of Smithfield.

A gripping mystery that showcases the inequalities between the wealthy members of upper society and the desperate people who eke out a living on the streets, *Who Speaks for the Damned* is an atmospheric look at the grimmer aspects of Regency life, so often glossed over in fiction. Fans of Anne Perry or Julie McElwain are sure to enjoy C.S. Harris's writing. --[Jessica Howard](#), bookseller at Bookmans, Tucson, Ariz.

**Discover:** In this riveting historical mystery, the heir to an earldom investigates the brutal death of another earl's son.

Berkley, \$26 hardcover, 336p., 9780399585685



## *Strike Me Down* by Mindy Mejia



[MORE INFO](#)

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Twenty million dollars in prize money disappears from a kickboxing tournament, and a forensic accountant has 72 hours to find it before all hell breaks loose in Mindy Mejia's vicious thriller *Strike Me Down*.

At the fitness empire Strike, champion kickboxer Logan Russo wrings blood, sweat and tears out of clients and her husband, Gregg, turns it into mega profits. The couple organizes an expensive three-day fighting competition in which the winner will receive \$20 million in prize money--and inherit Strike so Logan can retire. Two days before the tournament starts, all the money goes missing. Canceling the event would ruin Strike, wreck Logan and Gregg's reputation and anger a lot of people who have been primed to fight. Gregg hires Nora Trier, a forensic accountant with an impeccable record for finding the truth behind the numbers, no matter who it hurts.

Nora's task is complicated enough because she worships Logan and recently slept with Gregg; then her job becomes even harder when she discovers Logan wanted her recently killed protégé to take over Strike and Gregg adamantly opposed the idea. The couple suspect each other of embezzlement, but neither wants Strike to fail. Meanwhile Nora zeroes in on the money, and whoever killed Logan's protégé zeroes in on Nora.

Mejia (*Everything You Want Me to Be*) tells each chapter from a different point of view, which propels the plot at a breakneck speed while doling out brief flashbacks of much-needed exposition. Forensic accounting isn't commonly known for excitement, but Mejia adds kickboxing and homicide to ratchet up the tension in this hard-to-put-down thriller. --[Paul Dinh-McCrillis](#), freelance reviewer

**Discover:** An accountant gets caught up in murder, martial arts and the embezzlement of \$20 million.

Emily Bestler/Atria, \$27 hardcover, 352p., 9781982133238



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## Science Fiction & Fantasy

### *Creatures of Charm and Hunger* by Molly Tanzer



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*Creatures of Charm and Hunger* by Molly Tanzer (*Creatures of Want and Ruin*) combines a dark, gothic adventure with a moving and often humorous story of relationships. In northern England, near the end of World War II, two young women face a test to become diabolists, studying in order to make a pact with a demon in exchange for power. The test itself is only the beginning of their trials. One, Miriam Cantor, a Jewish German refugee, learns that her parents, still in Germany, are suspected of betraying the Société des Éclairées to the Nazis. Meanwhile, Jane Blackwood, the daughter of Miriam's guardian in England, faces the possibility that she may not succeed as a diabolist. The Société has too many secrets to let failed students go their own way, and Jane takes increasingly drastic measures to ensure her future.

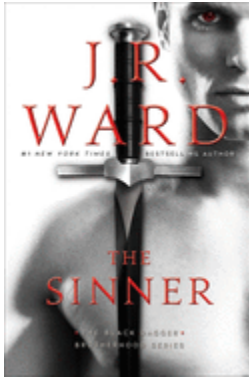
Miriam and Jane were dear friends when they were young, but as they grew, their relationship became more strained and, of the two, Miriam followed more closely in Jane's mother's footsteps. As Miriam's search for her parents leads her to a Nazi diabolist plot, she takes greater and greater risks to defeat it, and as Jane's dangerous methods jeopardize her own mother, the two together will need to face what they were taught in order to defeat evils both human and supernatural. For a diabolist there are no shortcuts, only sacrifices. Tanzer's third in the Diabolist's Library series will delight and captivate new readers and series fans alike. --[Kristen Allen-Vogel](#), information services librarian at Dayton Metro Library

**Discover:** In a gripping gothic tale, two young women wrestle with literal and figurative demons to protect their families and their futures during the last days of World War II.

John Joseph Adams/Houghton Mifflin, \$16.99 paperback, 320p.,  
9780358065210

## Romance

### *The Sinner* by J.R. Ward



MORE INFO

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J.R. Ward (*The Angels' Share*) returns to the fascinating, dangerous vampire world with the riveting story of Syn, a mercenary and assassin for hire. This 18th novel in the series can be read as a standalone, although readers will surely want to read earlier books as well.

Reporter Jo Early is unaware her biological father was a vampire. Syn is fully aware Jo is about to transition to non-human, however, and despite believing he's the last thing she should want, he's compelled to save her.

Unfortunately, pulling Jo into Syn's world has the potential to destroy her, for the ongoing war with the Lessening Society, an undead enemy determined to destroy both vampire and human society, has reached a pivotal moment. Threading the fine line between good and evil, keeping Jo safe, and retaining what little is left of his own scarred soul is complicated for Syn. What his actions mean to the Black Dagger Brotherhood warriors and their families could change their lives forever. With Brotherhood vampire ally Butch O'Neal, Syn may save the world or destroy it and the odds against them winning are high. In the final battle, neither Butch, Syn or Jo can be certain they will endure despite an unexpected intercession.

This novel's gritty plot, with multiple actors, moves at lightning speed to reach an excellent and surprising ending. Several long-running mysteries are resolved while new possibilities arise, and the steamy romance doesn't disappoint. --Lois Faye Dyer, writer and reviewer

**Discover:** A damaged, menacing warrior and intrepid female reporter join forces to save each other and their world.

Gallery Books, \$28 hardcover, 512p., 9781501195099

## Biography & Memoir



### *Sigh, Gone: A Misfit's Memoir of Great Books, Punk Rock, and the Fight to Fit In* by Phuc Tran

In the funny heartbreaker *Sigh, Gone: A Misfit's Memoir of*



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*Great Books, Punk Rock, and the Fight to Fit In*, two seemingly incompatible art forms get Phuc Tran through adolescence--a grueling period for many but especially so if you're a young Vietnamese immigrant whose first name has "an uncanny and unfortunate consonance to the f-word."

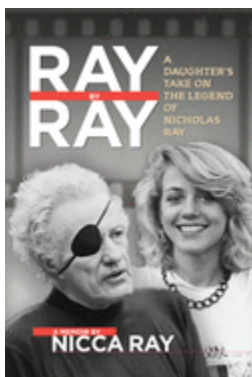
In 1975, when Tran isn't yet two, a rescue effort brings him and his family from war-torn Saigon to Carlisle, Pa., a blue-collar Susquehanna Valley town. Tran's father drives a cement mixer and then takes a job at a tire factory; he was a lawyer in Vietnam. The sacrifice is worth it to get his family out of harm's way. Growing up in Carlisle, Tran is still vulnerable, but to a different menace: as the only Asian kid in his class through eighth grade, he's the object of racist taunts. Tran seeks refuge in books, and *Sigh, Gone's* 11 chapters are named for the literary works in which he comes to recognize his own experiences. In the chapter "The Scarlet Letter," a classmate calls Tran a "gook" at recess ("G was my scarlet letter"). In the eighth grade, Tran discovers punk rock, which grants him social entrée with some of his school's other square pegs.

The march of time rather than a head-of-steam-developing narrative gives Tran's coming-of-age story its forward momentum; *Sigh, Gone* concludes with his high school graduation. By this point, readers will have come to suspect that Tran had a third lifesaver, and it emerged from within: his sense of humor. --[Nell Beram](#), author and freelance writer

**Discover:** This wry and unsparing coming-of-age memoir recaps the tumultuous childhood and turbulent adolescence of a bookish Vietnamese immigrant raised in a blue-collar American town.

Flatiron Books, \$27.99 hardcover, 320p., 9781250194718

### *Ray by Ray: A Daughter's Take on the Legend of Nicholas Ray* by Nicca Ray



Iconoclastic auteur film director Nicholas Ray (*Rebel Without a Cause*; *In a Lonely Place*; *Johnny Guitar*) led a troubled life, plagued with schizophrenia and decades-long addictions to alcohol and drugs. By the early 1960s, his addictions and public breakdowns made him uninsurable within the film industry. His daughter Nicca writes he was "a man riddled with torment who lashed out at those he loved with crushing results." Nicca's blisteringly candid memoir, *Ray by Ray*, chronicles her search for the father who abandoned her at the age of three when he divorced her mother (third of his four wives) and who died when she was 17. Her memoir also details

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her sexual molestation by a stepbrother that led to numbing herself with alcohol and drugs, selling herself sexually to strangers and her eventual recovery.

"I come from a long line of alcoholics and drug addicts," writes Nicca. She also notes that her family life "should have been something out of Greek mythology, not everyday life." Ray's second marriage to actress Gloria Grahame broke up after he discovered she was having sex with his then-13-year-old son, Tony (from his first marriage). A decade later, Grahame married Tony--making him Nicca's half-brother and stepfather. Muddying the waters even further, Nicca's mother later had an affair with Tony that led to a pregnancy and abortion. "That child would have been my brother and my nephew," writes Nicca.

Nicca Ray's original search to understand her troubled father expands into a shocking, intimate and gripping tale of family secrets and addictions. --[Kevin Howell](#), independent reviewer and marketing consultant

**Discover:** Nicca Ray's shockingly candid memoir of her filmmaker father and deeply dysfunctional family is harrowing, beautifully written and near-impossible to put down.

Three Rooms Press, \$20 paperback, 336p., 9781941110874

## Social Science

*Foxfire Story: Oral Tradition in Southern Appalachia*  
by T.J. Smith, editor



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Since 1966, Foxfire has been educating and working to preserve local heritage in Georgia's Rabun County. The organization has published the *Foxfire* magazine for over 50 years, and more than 20 books. But Foxfire's archives are still rich and deep enough to furnish mostly never-before-published material in *Foxfire Story: Oral Tradition in Southern Appalachia*, a collection of folktales, stories, mountain speech, pranks, jests and much more gathered over the decades.

Editor T.J. Smith--Georgia mountain native, Ph.D, folklorist and Foxfire's executive director--groups these materials into categories: anecdotes come from personal experience and often contain a punch line; folk beliefs connect us to cultural or religious communities and are sometimes known by the pejorative "superstition." Proverbs and sayin's include colloquial comparisons: sharp as a tack, a needle, a briar, a pegging awl. Legends include ghost

stories and tales of treasure hunts. In a second, shorter section, Smith organizes additional storytelling by the teller. Here, Ronda Reno recounts the tradition in her family of the "granny witch," or herbalist/midwife/community healer. Cherokee storyteller Lloyd Arneach describes his art form and how it grew, almost by accident, into a career.

The legends, folktales, songs and stories in this collection are often unsophisticated, portraying ways of life that are dying out or already gone. They shed light on endangered occupations, economies and ecological niches. With Smith's commentary, these unaffected narratives and usages (git-fiddle: "term for guitar in the context of old-time string music") offer a glimpse of a world otherwise unavailable to many readers. --[Julia Kastner](#), librarian and blogger at [pagesofjulia](#)

**Discover:** Decades of carefully collected oral storytelling and local lore from Southern Appalachian culture offer a singular perspective.

Anchor, \$19.95 paperback, 336p., 9780525436317

## Essays & Criticism

★ *Wow, No Thank You*  
by Samantha Irby



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Readers of Samantha Irby's rollicking third collection of essays will be hard-pressed to explain what, exactly, their new favorite book is about. Learning to love your "portable handheld tele-communication device"? Periods, ablations and living with Crohn's disease? Home repair and '90s mixtapes? Realizing self-care "is a full-time job with shi\*\*y benefits"?

Somehow, all of the above. In fact, *Wow, No Thank You's* lack of central thesis--rather, its embrace of the oddity, inconsistency and frustration of adult life in the Internet age--is what makes it so hysterically compelling. Irby straddles the line between hip, gregarious cultural critic and grumpy, exhausted elder who thinks the term "cultural critic" sounds insane. She claims to have no ulterior motives--she's not trying to launch movements; she just likes complaining on the Internet--yet each of her essays makes a statement for which "relatable" is too trite a descriptor. Her humor feeds off of all-capitals, curse words and excessive repetition. In one entry, she starts every sentence with "Sure, sex is fun, but..." before suggesting more than 150 replacements, including "Sure, sex is fun,

but have you ever designed a new IKEA kitchen in your mind?" and "Sure, sex is fun, but have you ever deleted your voice mail without listening to any of it first?"

Sure, Irby, the blogger behind [bitchesgottaeat.com](http://bitchesgottaeat.com) and author of [We Are Never Meeting in Real Life](#), might not be the unifying cultural voice the U.S. needs. She would never deem to try. But she *is* a whole lot of fun. Sometimes, that's more than enough. --[Lauren Puckett](#), freelance writer

**Discover:** In her hilarious third collection, an essayist tackles the horrors and joys of growing up (and getting old) in the time of Instagram, reality TV and Trader Joe's.

Vintage, \$15.95 paperback, 336p., 9780525563488

## Psychology & Self-Help

*A Good Death: A Compassionate and Practical Guide to Prepare for the End of Life*  
by Margaret Rice



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"Euthanasia" means dying well ("eu" means "well," "thanatos" means "death"). Although assisted death is controversial, Margaret Rice believes we can still strive for a "good death" with proper planning and care. Rice, an Australian journalist who has written for Australian Associated Press and been a medical writer for the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Australian*, realized how many questions she had while sitting at her mother's deathbed. Preparing for death as we are trying to live seems difficult and somewhat counterintuitive, but information and a little groundwork can make the transition easier for the dying and for those left behind.

To assist in the endeavor, Rice has written a "gentle, practical guide for dying." In straightforward but sensitive prose, *A Good Death* suggests an 11-step guide to death, based on an ancient Latin text and associated woodcut pictures (the *ars moriendi*) kept at the British Museum. Rice guides readers through each step, whether attending to someone who is dying or preparing for one's own death. The steps are both practical (i.e., the "housework" of planning ahead, dealing with medical staff, pain relief) and spiritual (learning how to say goodbye and talking about how we will die).

Rice presses for change in perceptions about death--which for many is a taboo topic--in order to ease the literal and emotional pain that surrounds it. *A Good Death* offers a compassionate and valuable set of tools that can help us

face and embrace the inevitable. --Lauren O'Brien of [Malcolm Avenue Review](#)

**Discover:** A thoughtful, pragmatic guide to facilitate conversation and planning for death and what follows.

Murdoch Books, \$14.99 paperback, 312p., 9781911632146

## Gardening

### *Cultivated: The Elements of Floral Style*

by Christin Geall



[MORE INFO](#)

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It's tempting to leaf through *Cultivated* from one color portrait of a floral design to the next, but Christin Geall entices readers into the text, where she earnestly describes how they, too, might savor the art of creation and the pride of display.

Geall, "like a magpie drawn to one shiny object after another," earned degrees in anthropology and environmental studies, and trained in herbalism and horticulture. Writing, painting and art history studies followed. Floral design and photography, plus her lifelong passion for plants, led to a position as florist-in-residence at a Scottish estate, where she created and photographed an arrangement every day. Geall's years of study and experience allow readers to move directly to the fun: arranging flowers and every "weed, seedpod or leaf that speaks to you."

While insisting this is not a "how to" book, Geall offers detailed tips. She simplifies choosing flowers and containers, optimum handling, designing color schemes (red is tricky!), considers shape (height is important for dinner arrangements) and more. Geall shares her love of history in "Learning from the Past," one of seven sections, and the photographs here require close inspection: Is that a Baroque painting? A Dutch masterpiece? Styles changed with culture and political movements (Marie Antoinette's hair "pouf" was imitated in arrangements), and floral design often spoke to current philosophies.

*Cultivated*, an excellent resource for the backyard gardener or the professional florist, is also an exquisite photography book for anyone who appreciates the art of floral design. --Cheryl McKeon, bookseller, Market Block Books, Troy, N.Y.

**Discover:** This beautiful photography book of floral arrangements is also a thorough guide to designing



one's own.

Princeton Architectural Press, \$27.50 hardcover, 224p., 9781616898205

## Teen Readers Recommend

★ *Incendiary*  
by Zoraida Córdova



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Zoraida Córdova (*Labyrinth Lost*) weaves a high-stakes tale of palace intrigue and deception in *Incendiary*, a YA fantasy set in a world inspired by Inquisition-era Spain.

The Moria are a magical race forced to "hide our magics, our bodies, our everything" from the Fajardos, the genocidal royal family of Puerto Leones. Renata Convida is the rarest and most feared of the Moria: a memory thief capable of draining others' recollections until they are lifeless shells known as "Hollows." As a child, Renata was taken to the palace of Andalucía "as a guest of the king and the justice," where she was used to massacre thousands of her own people. Seven years later, Renata searches for redemption as one of the Whispers, a group of Moria rebels who oppose the crown. But many of the Whispers do not trust Renata, who they see as "the reason that their father is gone, their sister is dead, their child was taken." When Dez, leader of the Whispers and Renata's secret love, is captured by Castian--the infamous Bloodied Prince--Renata returns to the palace to complete his mission: the theft of a weapon capable of stripping all the Moria of their powers. As she infiltrates the royal court, risking her life, Renata discovers that the Moria may be in even graver danger than she realized.

A strong cast of supporting characters, including Renata's allies in the Whispers and at court and the enigmatic Castian, add color to the rich world of Puerto Leones, while Renata's quest to "right the wrongs I committed" leaves her facing one impossible choice after another. Although the pacing sometimes lags, Renata's lively voice and search for her own identity while "every memory I've ever stolen" lives in her head make *Incendiary* a compelling read. --Alanna Felton, 19

**Discover:** In this YA novel, a memory thief fights for redemption in a fantasy realm based on Inquisition-era Spain.

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, \$18.99 hardcover, 464p., ages 14-up, 9781368023801

*The Truth About Keeping Secrets*  
by Savannah Brown



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In Savannah Brown's riveting *The Truth About Keeping Secrets*, high school junior Sydney Whitaker struggles to deal with her father's sudden death in a car crash. The loss causes Sydney to experience a near-constant combination of crushing numbness and disturbing, invasive thoughts about death and dying. Visceral fear is added to the mix when Sydney begins receiving unsettling anonymous text messages shortly after her father's funeral. When she discovers that her father was homecoming queen June Copeland's therapist, and that June is struggling with her own hidden problems, Sydney reaches out to her classmate. The two young women form a bond and Sydney soon finds herself falling in love with June. But are the secrets June is keeping dangerous?

Brown (*Graffiti [and other poems]*) effectively depicts genuine, raw feelings in her main character as she experiences despairing grief, a fear of dying and the unknown, and the relief and happiness that come from spending time with a crush and making a new friend. Savannah's fluctuating emotions feel authentic, her responses to trauma leading to a range of intense highs and lows. Brown's plotting is steady as she ratchets up the suspense, making *The Truth About Keeping Secrets* an enthralling novel sure to keep readers hooked. --Rachel Firman, 18

**Discover:** Two young women, both experiencing grief and other personal problems, form a bond after a fatal accident.

Sourcebooks Fire, \$10.99 paperback, 320p., 9781728209678

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