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THE TOP 10 FICTION BOOKS WE LOVED THIS YEAR

THE BOOK THIEF
Sunday, 12 January 2014


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**BRAIN CENTRE SALE**
Readings at the Melbourne Brain Centre opened in May 2011 at one of the largest neuroscience facilities in the world and features books on neuroscience, psychology and psychotherapy, as well as Readings' trademark range of general fiction, non-fiction, gifts and stationery. After over two years of trade, the Brain Centre shop will close on Thursday 19 December. Until then, there will be a sale on psychology and neuroscience titles, with up to 30% off while stocks last.

**THE BOOK THIEF SPECIAL EVENTS**
The Book Thief, the highly anticipated film based on the bestselling novel of the same name by Markus Zusak, will be released in January 2014. Readings, in partnership with Classic Cinema Elsternwick and Cinema Nova Carlton, will present two special film screenings with Markus Zusak on Sunday 12 January. See the film, hear Markus speak about The Book Thief and receive a signed copy of the new paperback edition with each ticket. Tickets are $35 per person and available from Classic Cinema classicscinemas.com.au and Cinema Nova cinemanova.com.au.

**SO FRENCHY SO CHIC IN THE PARK**
So Frenchy So Chic in the Park takes over the grounds of Werribee Park on Sunday 12 January for a day of French music, food and wine. The family-friendly boutique party features folk-pop chanteuse and daughter of Jane Birkin, Lou Doillon, charismatic duo Lilly Wood & The Prick, pop chanteuse and daughter of Jane Birkin, Lou Doillon, and the effervescent Café, and 10-piece ska, reggae and rock band Babylون Circus. Please visit carnetmusic.com.au/stfr or softlyfrenchic.com.au for more information and tickets. Join us from noon for fun in the sun!

**FÉFÉ IN-STORE**
Fresh from So Frenchy So Chic in the Park, soulful troubadour Féfé joins us for a night of wicked French hip-hop, blues, reggae and R'n'B stylin’, playing songs from his new album Le Charme des Premiers Jours. The evening will be held at Readings St Kilda (112 Acland Street, St Kilda) on Tuesday 14 January, 6.30pm. This is a free event, but please book on (03) 9525 3852.

**HUMANITIES 21: PUTTING HUMANITIES BACK ON THE AGENDA**
Established in 2012, Humanities 21 is an independent, not-for-profit advocacy organisation — champions the benefits a humanities education can bring to all aspects of contemporary life, especially business, and aims to help the humanities receive a better hearing from educational funders, granting bodies and philanthropists. Humanities 21 runs public and corporate seminars in the humanities; links humanities students and business via internships and mentoring; promotes humanities events around Melbourne in a free monthly newsletter; and provides an online space to bring interesting people and thoughts together.

Readings and Humanities 21 have recently partnered to celebrate the humanities in various ways. Keep an eye out in 2014 for a range of events, offers and perhaps even some book reviews from Humanities 21 enthusiasts. Please visit humanities21.com.au for more information, to make a donation or to become a member of Humanities 21.

**INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE**
The convening of the 20th International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2014) in Melbourne in July next year is a first for Australia. The biennial International AIDS Conference is the premier gathering for those working in the field of HIV, as well as policy makers, people living with HIV and others committed to ending the epidemic. It will be a tremendous opportunity for researchers from around the world to share the latest scientific advances in the field of HIV. It will be a tremendous opportunity for researchers from around the world to share the latest scientific advances in the field of HIV. It will be a tremendous opportunity for researchers from around the world to share the latest scientific advances in the field of HIV, as well as policy makers, people living with HIV and others committed to ending the epidemic. It will be a tremendous opportunity for researchers from around the world to share the latest scientific advances in the field of HIV. It will be a tremendous opportunity for researchers from around the world to share the latest scientific advances in the field of HIV, as well as policy makers, people living with HIV and others committed to ending the epidemic. It will be a tremendous opportunity for researchers from around the world to share the latest scientific advances in the field of HIV. It will be a tremendous opportunity for researchers from around the world to share the latest scientific advances in the field of HIV, as well as policy makers, people living with HIV and others committed to ending the epidemic.

Please visit aids2014.org for more information and to get involved. Readings is a supporter of AIDS 2014.
New Fiction

ASHES IN MY MOUTH, SAND IN MY SHOES
Per Petterson
Harvill. PB. $19.95

Review: Norwegian novelist Per Petterson is unfailingly – his prose slicing across the page in swift, clean strokes – and now English readers can take pleasure in his literary debut. First published in 1987, Ashes In My Mouth, Sand In My Shoes is a collection of short stories about a young boy who dreams of crocodiles. While Petterson might niggle at the idea as Arvid Jansen, from his novel I Curse the River of Time, you don’t need any prior knowledge of Petterson’s work to enjoy this newly translated title.

Love reading debuts; there is something distinctive in those early publications, an aspect – be it a thematic element, stylistic tic, or a particular motif – that is not quite right, yet somehow still utterly captivating. In later works this aspect might disappear entirely as the author grows into a new phase, or even better, improve with age. But for me this flawed potential is what holds a powerful sway over my imagination. In Petterson’s case this aspect is his exploration of masculinity. In Ashes In My Mouth he attributes a certain kind of nostalgia to the male ideal of the strong, silent and isolated. This nostalgia is also weighted with unease as the young Arvid tries to make sense of his world. There are moments where Petterson falters – I found the comparison between Arvid’s father and the man they call Fatso blunt – but there are also moments of pure delight, such as in the titular story.

In this story Arvid had become paralysed by nightmarish visions and his father wills him back to the world through an exquisitely tender passage. As the father gently washes and dries Arvid, the power he exudes to his son is restrained but not muted – rather, his strength is more palpable here than when he is in the midst of action. Throughout this scene Petterson lulls us into the same dream-like state of passivity that has overcome Arvid and then subtly snaps us awake: “Come on, let’s eat.” Dad says, and all of a sudden there is the wonderful strong aroma of fried bacon. ‘Like state of passivity that has overcome Arvid and then subtly snaps us awake: “Come on, let’s eat.” Dad says, and all of a sudden there is the wonderful strong aroma of fried bacon.‘

BromCo is the online and Readings Monthly assistant

GOD’S DOG
Diego Marani
Text. PB. $27.99

Review: God’s Dog is a rare kind of literary detective novel: thrilling, hard-boiled and action-packed, with beautiful imagery and compelling insights into religion, science and philosophy. It’s also a uniquely Italian take on the dystopian genre, a relief after the flood from the Anglophone. Reading translated novels is always a slightly unnerving experience, but as Italian author Diego Marani’s novel New Finnish Grammar was also translated by Judith Landry and won the Oxford-Weidenfeld Translation Prize in 2012, you can trust that you’re in good hands.

After surviving the 2010 Haiti earthquake as a child, Marani’s protagonist Domingo Salazar grew up in Italy within Catholic institutions. He’s now a policeman who upholds the ‘laws of our Holy Mother Church’: it is a theocracy and Salazar is ‘God’s dog’. His mission, given to him in a confessional by an elderly vicar, is to capture an abortionist doctor who is likely to commit the serious crime of euthanasia while visiting his terminally ill father. Salazar is also instructed to help foil whatever nefarious plans the Free Death Brigade have for the upcoming canonisation of Pope Benedict XVIII.

Although happy to follow these orders, Salazar is a complex man with complex ideas. While living in Holland, he’s been secretly building a movement called Bible-Koranim, ‘the new frontier of globalised faith’. This lands him and his ally Gunter in hot water with his Church superiors, threatening their lives even as Salazar continues to carry out what he sees as God’s work. To further complicate matters, Gunter is a neuro-psychiatrist who has taught a chimpanzee how to speak Swahil, posing a threat to Church doctrine.

Interviewed late last year by Samuel Rutter for Readings, Marani spoke of writing the second adventure of an imaginary actor, Vatican detective, Domingo Salazar … ”His first adventure was published in June and provoked quite a wave of criticism from the Catholic establishment. I’m looking for more!” Anyone who reads God’s Dog will be eagerly anticipating more Salazar.

Kate Goldsworthy is a freelance reviewer

ACTORS ANONYMOUS
James Franco
Faber. PB. $29.99

Review: Mark Twain said, ‘Write what you know’ and James Franco knows acting. But he has also directed two feature films this year (Interior. Leather Bar. and As I Lay Dying) and teaches English at the University of California. He published a collection of linked stories, Palo Alto, in 2010, and is currently undertaking a PhD candidature at Yale. Directors, teacher, writer, student – aren’t these but roles in the performance of life? Such is the premise of Franco’s debut novel, Actors Anonymous.

Though the title suggests a juicy tell-all, in the style of Kenneth Anger’s Babylon, Actors Anonymous is the opposite of an expose. Entering the literary world as a madcap exercise in self-obliteration, it is much closer in spirit to Joaquin Phoenix and Casey Affleck’s hoax film project I’m Still Here (2010): a reality-inspired fiction told by an unreliable narrator. Sometimes that narrator is Franco but mostly it is the result of a book结构性 narrative he developed in Palo Alto, a collection of linked stories featuring a wonderful autobiographical piece in the form of correspondence with the Nigerian author Teju Cole, and includes a glimpse of Murnane’s legendary archive. This volume also offers numerous essays, including contributions from local luminaries Wayne Macauley and Emily Stenson.

On the non-fiction front, notable is a collection of essays by Australia’s leading female voices on Julia Gillard’s prime ministership: Bewitched & Bedeviled: Women Write the Gillard Years. There are also two new music biographies – one on the recently departed rock legend Lou Reed, Lou Reed: The Life, by the well-regarded Mick Wall; the other on the Brazilian pianist, is Franco’s attempt to define and articulate his practice in a mixed-bag confessional. Sometimes that narrator is Franco but mostly it is

THE INVENTION OF WINGS
Sue Monk Kidd
Harper. PB. $29.99

Released 14 January

Review: Having read Sue Monk Kidd’s The Secret Life of Bees earlier in the year, I was curious when I received a copy of her new novel from the publisher. I started reading The Invention of Wings that very night and couldn’t put it down.

The inspiration for The Invention of Wings came when Monk Kidd visited the Brooklyn Museum for an exhibition celebrating the achievements of women. Already having an idea that she would like her next novel to be about sisters, Monk Kidd realised she had found the beginnings of a book when she came across the story of Sarah and Angelina Grimké. The Grimké sisters were born into the class and privilege of the land-owning (and thus slave-owning) aristocracy of Charleston, South Carolina, in the early 1800s. The story is told through the eyes of Sarah, the older sister who, on her eleventh birthday, is given a 10-year-old slave girl as a gift, replete with a bow around her neck. Sarah rejects the idea of a person being gifted to another, and here begins her life-long struggle against slavery. It is while campaigning against slavery that Sarah and Angelina realise that women too are in many ways enslaved. The sisters go on to become radical abolitionists, and also pioneers of the women’s movement in America.

Interwoven with Sarah’s story is that of her own imaginative gift ‘given’ to Sarah. Through Hetty, we are given a glimpse of a slave’s life and of the brutality one human being is capable of inflicting on another (thankfully, Monk Kidd shies from too many gory details).

Hetty, at least, is given some hope of a better life – defying the laws of the time, Sarah teaches Hetty to read and the two form a close bond. Though often tested, it’s a remarkable friendship and one that lasts their whole lives.

Sharon Peterson is from Readings Carlton

From the Books Desk

Martin Shaw, Readings Books Division Manager

In mid-November the winner of the 2013 ‘Most Underated Book Award’ was announced at a wonderful prize-giving evening organised by the Small Press Network. It is the only award on our literary calendar which seeks to acknowledge special books that, for whatever reason, did not receive the attention they deserve. The finalists were six novels, with the overall winner being a book in the Children’s Fiction category – ‘Inferno’, by the well-regarded Mick Wall; the other

PETIT MAL
DBC Pierre
Faber. HB. $27.99

Released 13 December

Review: Petit Mal isn’t a conventional memoir, but then again there’s nothing conventional about its author, DBC Pierre. His nickname concealed by initials (‘Dirty But Clean’) only hints at the provocative and unsettling nature of his work.

It began as a personal quest to return to the memories and experiences of his own youth, the ‘time between the ages’, as he puts it. ‘It is a collection of flash fictions, philosophical musings and prose poems interspersed with cartoons, drawings and photographs’. Browsing through these ‘is as disorientating a process as it is entertaining’, according to our reviewer. Clearly one for the fans, or the lover of the surreal!

In terms of Oz Lit, there is a very exciting publication arriving on our shores from the US – the third issue of Music & Literature, partly dedicated to the life and work of our own Gerald Murnane. The issues features a wonderful autobiographical piece in the form of correspondence with the Nigerian author Teju Cole, and includes a glimpse of Murnane’s legendary archive. This volume also offers numerous essays, including contributions from local luminaries Wayne Macauley and Emily Stenson.

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Finally this is the month when Readings announces its ‘Best Of’ lists. I’m delighted to see that some of my personal favourites have made the cut: Baracauda, A History of Silence, Boomor & Me and The Death of Bees. To round out my personal Top 5 I would perhaps join the chorus of acclaim for Karl Ove Knausgård – his A Man in Love is a book I’ve seldom stopped thinking about this year.

Petit Mal is the opposite of an expose. Entering the literary world as a madcap exercise in self-obliteration, it is much closer in spirit to Joaquin Phoenix and Casey Affleck’s hoax film project I’m Still Here (2010): a reality-inspired fiction told by an unreliable narrator. Sometimes that narrator is Franco but mostly it is

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SOMEONE
Alice McDermott

In Someone, scattered recollections—of childhood, adolescence, motherhood, old age—are stitched into a vibrant whole by National Book Award-winning Alice McDermott’s deft, lyrical voice. Marie grows up in an Irish neighborhood in 1900s New York, and McDermott sketches her first heartbreak and her eventual marriage; her brother Gabe’s brief stint as a Catholic priest, his subsequent loss of faith and eventual break with the advent of the World War II; the death of their parents; the births and lives of the next generation, Marie’s children, and the changing world outside Marie’s Brooklyn window. With sympathy and insight, this book speaks truthfully of life as it is daily lived.

TEXT

PIG’S FOOT
Carlos Acosta

From renowned ballet dancer Carlos Acosta comes a big tale of love and identity across three generations. When Oscar Kortico wakes to find himself alone in the world, he sets out in search of the lost boy he had been led to believe was his brother. Pata de Puerco and to uncover the meaning of the magical pig’s-foot amulet he has inherited. Along his journey he becomes entangled with the stories of Cuba’s tumultuous history, from the arrival of slaves through the wars of independence, to dictatorship, Bacardi rum and revolution.

TEXT

SAVING MOZART
Raphaël Jerusalmi

On the eve of the World War II, time is running out for Otto Steiner, an elderly Jewish music critic who is languishing in a sanatorium in Sabbgub. With the sinister sounds of Nazism in his ears, he feels surrounded by darkness, and when he’s asked to write the program notes for the approaching music festival, he decides to act. His diary bears witness to his astonishing act of heroism, revealing how music itself can be a powerful form of resistance.

TEXT

ANTHOLOGY

MUSIC & LITERATURE NO. 3: MURNANE, GODAR, BITTOVÁ
Taylor Davis-Van Atta (ed.)

Music & Literature. Text. $24.95

Music & Literature 3 brings to light the life’s work of three artists who have to date been denied—by geography, by language and by politics—their rightful positions on the world stage. Gerald Murnane has been described as “a genius on the level of Beckett” and his novels and short stories are available, but the complexities of his work create difficulties for those who experience a formal school environment for the first time. In spite of her resistance she makes some new friends, in particular a boy named Finn who, with his own family issues and understanding, may help Hayley through what is both her first and last year of high school. This is a fantastic, well-paced and compassionate novel.

TEXT

BOOK OF THE MONTH

WHY WE TOOK THE CAR
Wolfgang Hermndorff

Scne. PB. $19.99

Released 2 January

Review: Mike Klinkenberg has no friends. He believes this is because he is boring, which is cemented in his mind when he never receives an invite to the party of the year being held by the most popular girl in school (and the love of his life). With his alcoholic mother in rehab and his father on a business trip, Mike has the whole holidays to himself. That is until the slightly odd kid from school, Tschick, turns up at his house and makes himself comfortable. With nothing to do but sit around and play video games, Mike and Tschick decide to take a road trip with no destination, no map and no mobile phones. They will take wrong turns, commit a couple of crimes and meet some eccentric people. But one thing is for sure: if they return, neither of them will be boring anymore.

TEXT

THESE BROKEN STARS
Amie Kaufman & Meagan Spooner

A&U. PB. $18.99

Review: This first book in the Starbound trilogy—aptly described by the publisher as “Fanfic in space—reads like star crossed lovers’ tale but it’s so much more: a compelling, richly imagined adventure, intriguing at every turn and with a thrilling climax.”

TEXT

THE RANSOM OF DOND
Carlos Acosta

HarperCollins. PB. $19.99

Released 2 January

Review: Hayley has moved to a new town after years on the road with her father, a veteran of the Iraq War suffering from PTSD, who was driving long-haul trucks. He relies heavily on alcohol and his condition has left him fragile and prone to self-destructive, odd behaviour. Hayley, a tough and witty character who delivers sass from the first page, takes on a parental role in the family “because the complexities of her own life create difficulties for her as she experiences a formal school environment for the first time. In spite of her resistance she makes some new friends, in particular a boy named Finn who, with his own family issues and understanding, may help Hayley through what is both her first and last
DEATH IN FLORENCE
Maccoi Vichi
Headline. PB. $29.99
Released 10 January
Inspector Bordelli’s emotions mirror Florence’s grey and stormy weather: it’s 1966 and as he edges ever closer to retirement and solitude, Florence moves closer to a catastrophic flood. Bordelli’s inability to let go of his wartime past isn’t helped by his suspicions that fascists are to blame for the disappearance of a 13-year-old boy, the timing of which means that others – who are not headstrong as Bordelli – are preoccupied by the rising waters outdoors. This is a loving re-creation of Florence and a fascinating character piece.

SILENT KILL
Peter Corris
A&U. PB. $29.99
Released 2 January
Cliff Hardy has been around the literary traps for about as long as I’ve been alive, and he’s seen his fair share of political intrigue. In Silent Hill, Hardy becomes a bodyguard for Rory O’Hara, who’s trying to reshape his life after a storm in 1966. Hardy’s research into the death leads him from O’Hara’s own staff to broader plains, from Sydney to Darwin, and into a deadly conflict.

THE GODS OF GUILT
Michael Connelly
A&U. PB. Was $32.99 Special price $27.95
Lincoln lawyer Mickey Haller is alarmingly adept at legal wrangling and pulling off courtroom stunts (to the reader’s general delight) – but when his focus is narrowed to the murder of someone he knew in the past, he can be even better. Giselle Delligere, whom Mickey knows as Gloria Dayton, is dead, and her e-pimp, Andre La Cose, is accused of the crime. Mickey is suspicious of the police force’s case, and whips together his crack team to figure out who has actually killed her. Michael Connelly, a consistently excellent purveyor of thrillers, is in top form.

A SONG FOR THE DYING
Stuart MacBride
HarperCollins. PB. $29.99
After the tragedies of Birthdays for the Dead, Ash Henderson is back – so to speak – and on hand to help solve a murder that bears strong and unpleasant resemblance to a series of deaths eight years before, where women were found with dolls stitched under their skin. The ex-Detective Inspector is no longer part of the police force, what with being in prison, but Dr Alice McDonald has the chops to get him released to assist on the case. This is tense crime and blithely funny, as Stuart MacBride does best.

NORTHERN BOSTON
Elisabeth Elo
Headline. PB. $29.99
Released 14 January
Review: Most of the crime books I love have characters I feel invested in; this, Elisabeth Elo’s first book, I adored for the writing. Pirio Kasparov, head of her mother’s perfume company, isn’t easy to love, but her general bad assery is admirable and she’s unwilling to let the death of a friend be brushed aside like an accident on her own.

THE GOOD NURSE
Charles Graeber
A&U. PB. $29.99
Charlie Cullen was a registered nurse, believed by his family and colleagues he cared for, in 2003, he was arrested for murder, and linked to some 300 patient deaths over 16 years. For a decade, reporter Charles Graeber has been studying the case, and in this remarkable and terrifying book reveals an industry that allows someone to get away with murder with impunity. The ex-Detective Inspector is no longer part of the police force, what with being in prison, but Dr Alice McDonald has the chops to get him released to assist on the case. This is tense crime and blithely funny, as Stuart MacBride does best.
DEAD INTERVIEWS

Dan Crowe (ed.)

Granta. HB. $24.99

Review: The idea of talking with the dead as a form of literary concert has been with us for centuries. Dan Crowe profiles Dialogues of the Dead by Lucian of Samosata (c.125-85) as the first evidence of this kind of writing. We all talk with the dead, Crowe suggests, seeking solace, answers and revelations.

Many of the stories in this collection of fictionalised interviews with deceased writers and other icons have been published previously in Crowe’s literary quarterly, Zembla, while others were commissioned exclusively for this book. The title ‘Zembla’ was lifted from Nabokov’s Pale Fire, described here as a ‘perfect fusion of tradition, reflection, literary playfulness and distortion’, and the stories in Dead Interviews are certainly rife with these last two. Cynthia Ozick asks Henry James intrusive questions he’s not prepared to answer, especially not to a feminist. David Mitchell interviews both Samuel Johnson and Johnson’s biographer James Boswell, while William Blake makes a cheeky cameo appearance. Andy Warhol appears as dithering in death as in life in Douglas Coupland’s entry.

It’s revealing to see how each writer has worked with the concept, and some stories will charm more than others. John Burnside’s interview with Rachel Carson was particularly moving, her ideas still resonate, given our continued environmental destruction and political framework, and I’ve now added Carson’s Silent Spring to my reading list. Z.Z. Packer’s enlightening interview with the ‘black Mozart’ and inspiration for Aragorn, Monsieur de Saint-Georges, had me reaching for the history books and revisiting Alexandre Dumas’ The Three Musketeers.

Joyce Carol Oates refreshingly broke the Q&A format of this genre, with her structured glossary of ideas for a collection, and at times it’s a little patchy, but inspired piece on Robert Frost, whom we meet seemingly dozing with a ‘scribble of saliva on his mouth’. In some respects this is an odd idea, given our continued environmental destruction and political framework, and I’ve now added Carson’s Silent Spring to my reading list. Z.Z. Packer’s enlightening interview with the ‘black Mozart’ and inspiration for Aragorn, Monsieur de Saint-Georges, had me reaching for the history books and revisiting Alexandre Dumas’ The Three Musketeers.

THE WHITLAM LEGACY

Troy Bramston (ed.)

Federalb. HB. $59.95

Shaking off the vestiges of two decades of conservative rule, Gough Whitlam’s rise to power in 1972 marked a turning point for Australian politics, with new ideas, new policies and new people at play. In The Whitlam Legacy, Troy Bramston presents the candid views of insiders such as ministers, advisers, public servants and Whitlam himself, alongside analysis from journalists and academics, as well as previously unpublished archival documents, to provide the definitive account of the government that changed Australia forever.

BIography

WE ARE ALIVE: A PORTRAIT OF BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

David Remnick

Scribne. HB. $19.95

Pulitzer Prize-winning writer and editor of The New Yorker, David Remnick paints a portrait of America’s working-class hero Bruce Springsteen, from his recent Wrecking Ball world tour all the way back to childhood rock’n’roll fantasies. Springsteen’s strained relationship with his father, his battle with mental illness and much more are revealed as Remnick traces a career that spans over four decades. The rock legend’s story also provides insight into the heart of America, the drive of self-transformation and renewal. Making We Are Alive a much-needed contribution to our understanding of history.

PHILOSOPHY

THE LAST INTERVIEW AND OTHER CONVERSATIONS

Hannah Arendt

Mekelb. HB. $23.95

Here is a portrait of one of the twentieth century’s boldest and most original thinkers, showing Arendt in vigorous intellectual form, taking up the issues of her day with energy and wit. The features offer Arendt’s last interview with French journalist RogerErrain, an interview from the early 60s with German journalist Günter Gaus, in which the two discuss Arendt’s childhood and her escape from Europe, and a conversation with acclaimed historian of the Nazi period, Joachim Fest, as well as other fascinating exchanges.

PSYCHOLOGY

ONE WAY AND ANOTHER: NEW AND SELECTED ESSAYS

Adam Phillips

Hamish Hamilton. PB. $32.99

Throughout his brilliant career, Adam Phillips has lent a new and incisive dimension to the art of the literary essay, and in so doing revived the form for audiences of the new millennium. Collected here are nineteen pieces that have best defined his thinking - including ‘On Tickling’, ‘On Being Bored’ and ‘Clutter: A Case History’ - along with a selection of new writings and an introduction by Man Booker Prize-winner John Banville.

SPORT

GAME CHANGER: MY TENNIS LIFE

Paul McNamee

Text. PB. $32.95

Paul McNamee is a legendary figure in Australian tennis. From his early days as a talented Melbourne teenager, McNamee became a top international player, conquering Wimbledon and the Australian Open with his doubles partner, Peter McNamara. Along the way he shared a court with such luminaries as Rod Laver, Martina Navratilova, John McEnroe and Bjorn Borg. This is his story of an ever-changing life in tennis.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

IT’S COOL TO BE CONSCIOUS

Harry O’Brien

Hay House. PB. $17.95

In It’s Cool to Be Conscious, star defender for the Collingwood AFL club Harry O’Brien shares how he stays level-headed amidst the hectic world of professional sport, and how the techniques that have worked for him can be applied to benefit anyone, irrespective of their age, background or work situation.

COOKERY

RECIPEs & REFUGE

Chasey Rowland & other voices

Rag & Bone Man. HB. $33

Recipes & Refuge brings together the stories and foods of people who have sought refuge in Australia. These are not ‘asylum seeker’ stories or ‘illegal maritime arrival’ stories but rather, tales about journeys that are at once familiar and completely unlike the ones being presented in the media and told alongside beautiful recipes from across the globe. The book is simple and powerful, providing insight into an aspect of our nation that has become increasingly mangled by political motives in recent times.
**BURYAL RITES**
Hannah Kent
Picador. PB. $29.95

Buryal Rites is inspired by the true story of Agnus Magnúsdóttir, who was condemned to death after being charged with the murder of her employer in 1929. While awaiting her execution, Agnus is housed on a remote farm with a family who discover that there is more to Agnus’s story than first thought. Hannah Kent’s haunting tragedy lends voice to a woman labelled a monster in her time and is worthy of all its hype. This is a stunning and moving debut.

- **JASON AUSTIN**

**BARRACUDA**
Christos Tsiolkas
A&U. PB. Was $33
Special price $27.95

As the reviews for Barracuda have appeared recently, I’ve noticed they’ve almost all shared something in common, a caveat here or there aside: namely that Barracuda is a wonder of storytelling. Here’s Peter Craven: ‘It swins, it soars, it is full of sap and feeling: it will enrage you, it will engage you, it will fill you with pity and wonder.’ Christos Tsiolkas has dug deep with Barracuda, into ourselves as well as himself more than ever before, and it is a transcendent achievement.

- **MARTIN SHAW**

**LIFE AFTER LIFE**
Kate Atkinson
Doubleday. PB. $32.95

Life After Life, shortlisted for the Women’s Prize for Fiction, is a stunning novel: clever, sassy and thought provoking. It follows the various stories of Ursula Todd, set against the backdrop of the last century. Atkinson departs from her detective novel days, creating a quirky and satisfying portrait of last century’s disruptions and celebrations. If you loved Behind the Scenes at the Museum, you will adore this novel.

- **CHRIS GORDON**

**THE LUMINARIES**
Eleanor Catton
Granta. PB. $29.99

Set in the 1860s on the goldfields of New Zealand, The Luminaries is a fantastic read. It’s a literary detective story with hidden treasure and a hint of the supernatural. If historical fiction is not your favourite genre, I think this will surprise. The world Eleanor Catton creates is so remarkably convincing and meticulously researched, and the story so compelling that you will be hooked. A deserving Booker Prize winner and a perfect summer holiday read.

- **KARA NICHOLSON**

**A TALE FOR THE TIME BEING**
Ruth Ozeki
Text. PB. $32.99

I read this book in March and haven’t stopped thinking about it since. A novelist enduring writer’s block finds the diary of a Japanese schoolgirl washed up on a Canadian beach, and this simple discovery sets an expansive narrative in motion. The thematic material this book traverses is truly vast – much of it covering existential territory. It’s a masterful work of literary fiction: inventive, challenging, genre-defying, deeply affecting. A book that might – and I mean this quite seriously – change your life.

- **ALISON HUBER**

**THE DEATH OF BEES**
Lisa O’Donnell
Random House. PB. $19.95

‘Today I buried my parents in the backyard. Neither of them were beloved.’ It is Marnie’s fifteenth birthday, and she and her younger sister must cope alone as best they can under the burden of their terrible secret. Marnie is streetwise but vulnerable – people want drug money from her father; sister Nelly’s violin playing and strange utterances on life are not helping; and the neighbour’s dog keeps appearing with bones from the garden. By turns shocking and extremely funny, this poignant novel, winner of this year’s Commonwealth Book Prize, is far more uplifting than it may sound – I loved it!

- **LESLEY ANDERSON**

**MY BRILLIANT FRIEND**
Elena Ferrante
Text. PB. $29.99

A biting portrayal of a complicated female friendship. My Brilliant Friend is set in a poor and violent Neapolitan neighbourhood during the 1950s and acts as the first in a three-part Bildungsroman from the notoriously mysterious Elena Ferrante. Ann Goldstein’s rendering of the Italian author’s language is beautiful: pared back and beautiful images, almost no other writer working today is as good as capturing the flow of thought. He’s also incredibly hilarious. In these ten stories he shows us how he has become a master of the form.

- **CHRIS SOMERVILLE**

**WE NEED NEW NAMES**
NoViolet Bulawayo
Random House. PB. $29.95

This Booker-shortlisted novel is set in a shanty town in Zimbabwe, ironically called ‘Paradise’. Told from a child’s perspective, the story is raw and heart-breaking. Eleven-year-old Darling and her friends no longer attend school, but wander the streets with growing stomachs and fantasies about life in the West. Darling’s dreams come true when she moves to America as a teenager, however she is surprised by the darker elements of ‘first world’ life. This beautifully written account of cultural identity and confusion is immensely powerful.

- **ANNIE CONDON**

**TENTH OF DECEMBER**
George Saunders
Bloomsbury. HB. $29.99

Although George Saunders has an almost other-worldly mix of slang words, corporate jargon and beautiful images, almost no other writer working today is as good as capturing the flow of thought. He’s also incredibly hilarious. In these ten stories he shows us how he has become a master of the form.

- **BELLE PLACE**

**THE GOLDFINCH**
Donna Tartt
Little, Brown. PB. Was $33
Special price $27.95

Fans of Donna Tartt have been waiting over a decade for this release. At the nexus of her sharply written new novel is Theo Decker, who at age 13 has his life wrecked apart. What follows is a sweeping drama with a Dickensian cast of characters and a thrilling, curving plotline. Set in present-day America, from the desert of Las Vegas to the art underworld of New York, The Goldfinch proves richly deserving of reader’s anticipation.

- **BRONTE COATES**
Art & Design

We are alive

After his sell-out tour of Australia in 2013, this summer’s the perfect time to curl up and read the Bruce Springsteen profile that Rolling Stone called ‘one of the most thorough’ ever published. Written by the Pulitzer Prize-winning editor of The New Yorker, and featuring photos from the last four decades, it’ll get you that little bit closer to The Boss.

SERIOUSLY GOOD BOOKS.
scribpublications.com.au

Non-Fiction

NIGHT GAMES
Anna Krien
Black Inc. PB. $29.99
Sitting effortlessly beside other great works of contemporary first-person narrative journalism, Anna Krien’s Night Games follows the rape trial of a young footballer in Melbourne, unpacking issues of sex, power and consent prevalent in our culture. There’s an underlying sense of urgency here and a growing unease that threatens to swallow you whole, making for a thrillingly addictive read.

- BRONTE COATES

BOOMER & ME
Jo Case
Grant. PB. $24.95
This deeply personal, rich and engaging memoir is about parenting and life in general just as much as it is an insight into having a child diagnosed with Asperger’s. Jo Case’s anxiety-ridden attempts to navigate other mothers in the playground were among the many situations I identified with, and the dialogue with her son is touching and funny. A wonderful book that deserves a wide audience.

- EMILY GALE

MADNESS: A MEMOIR
Kate Richards
Viking. PB. $29.95
Madness, Kate Richards’ razor-sharp account of her own mental illness and depression, is a truly unique read. Offering accessible insight into the erratic highs and alienating lows of psychosis, Richards chronicles the long, yet ultimately hopeful, journey back towards balance and wellness. A must-read for anyone interested in the dark side of life.

- EMILY HARDS

FAR FROM THE TREE
Andrew Solomon
Vintage. PB. $32.95
Ten years in the making, Andrew Solomon’s Far from the Tree elegantly tells the stories of hundreds of families dealing with exceptional children, focusing on deafness, deafblindness, Down syndrome, autism, disability, schizophrenia, child prodigies and more. Meticulously researched, this book is powerful and relevant to anyone whose family came to this country in the nineteenth century. For those who loved the First Footprints TV series, this is a must.

- EMILY HARDS

LOVE & TERROR ON THE HOWLING PLAINS OF NOWHERE
Poe Ballantine
Transit Lounge. PB. $29.95
In his fascinating memoir-mystery, Poe Ballantine, along with his Mexican wife and autistic son, spends a year in Chadron, Nebraska. Town life is interesting enough, but when a local professor disappears, Ballantine is drawn into a mystery that divides the locals and attracts national media attention. Funny, wise and beautifully written.

- ROBBIE EGAN

FORGOTTEN WAR
Henry Reynolds
South. PB. $29.99
Forgotten War completely debunks the notion of peaceful colonisation in Australia, depicting European settlement as an unpromising, hundred-year-long invasion – and there is no dodging the ruthlessness at its heart. However, this book is really readable and relevant to anyone whose family came to this country in the nineteenth century. For those who loved the First Footprints TV series, this is a must.

- SUSAN STEVENSON

A HISTORY OF SILENCE
Lloyd Jones
Text. PB. $32.99
Here, Lloyd Jones turns to memoir for the first time. One of the fascinations of the book is just how that turn within came about, from the trigger of the Christchurch earthquakes in 2011 to the rupture of long-suppressed failings in his own family’s history. This搜救 account of the uncovering of family secrets is tender, affecting and utterly transcending.

- MARTIN SHAW

LEAN IN
Sheryl Sandberg
WH Allen. PB. $34.95
Sheryl Sandberg is the COO of Facebook and Lean In is her memoir, business manifesto and career guide rolled into one. Along with intelligent, practical and useful advice, Sandberg’s passion to see women succeed at the highest level is evident throughout and it’s this that makes Lean In such an inspiring, entertaining and energising read.

- GABRIELLE WILLIAMS

BOY, LOST
Kristina Olsson
UQP. PB. $29.95
Kristina Olsson uses perfectly balanced prose and enormous compassion to weave breathtaking beauty into this family memoir. As a young woman, Olsson’s mother had her two-year-old son wrenched from her arms and didn’t see him again for the next 40 years. Mother and son both demonstrate astounding dignity and resilience throughout this beautiful, wistful book. Highly recommended.

- GABRIELLE WILLIAMS

New Suburban: Reinventing the Family Home in Australia and NZ
Stuart Harrison
Thames and Hudson. HB. $70
A walk through most recent suburban housing developments will confirm the trend towards bigger houses on smaller blocks. These houses consume excessive amounts of energy and encourage indoor, sedentary lifestyles. The timely optimism and vision of the projects in this excellent book retain the suburban ideals of outdoor space, informality, occupation and activity.

ROCK THE SHACK
S. Ehmann & S. Borges
Dies Gestalten. HB. $89.50
So we have a lovely home in the suburbs or perhaps a cozy apartment, but with so much going on we long for a weekend escape into nature. This architectural collection of cabins, cocoons and hide-outs has got so many wonderful bothel’s it’s hard not to pack a bag and head for the bush, woods, beach, mountains, lakes, grasslands or wherever that magical shack may be. That is, when we win the lottery...

NATURE MORTE
Michael Petry
T&H. HB. $70
This book explores how twenty-first century artists are reinventing and redefining the still life. Structured according to the classic categories of still-life tradition – flora, food, house and home, fauna, and death – each chapter explores how the timeless symbolic resonance of the moment has been rediscovered for a new millennium.

THE ANATOMY OF FASHION
Colin McDowell
Phaidon. HB. $110
There were lots of great fashion books this year. Art Fashion in the 21st Century, Jean Patou and Paris Haute Couture, to name a few, so it is hard to choose. However, this classy exploration of how and why we dress the way we do is exceptional. Beautifully put together, it covers the history of fashions by looking at the clothing demands of various body parts – creating much more than the sum of its parts.
Crime with Fiona Hardy

THE CUCKOO’S CALLING
Robert Galbraith
Little, Brown. PB. $29.99

J.K. Rowling's foray into crime writing is a complete success: Cormoran Strike PI is a character as large on the page as he is in height. Ex-military and ex-happiness, he is offered a new case along with a tough new secretary, and gets a fame-studded boost out of his emotional mores. This is as comforting and inventive as her fantasy world yet with the grit and instincts of a seasoned crime writer.

BITTER WASH ROAD
Garry Disher
Text. PB. $29.99

Constable Paul Hirschhausen is delivered hastily to a rural, one-officer station in South Australia after helping to expose police corruption in Adelaide. He’s barely been in Tiverton long enough to make friends – or enemies – when he is first called to Bitter Wash Road with a report of shots fired. But with a town ruled by fear and hiding its share of secrets, it won’t be the last call he’ll make down that dusty track.

STRAIGHT JACKET
Adrian Deans
High Horse. PB. $24.95

Morgen Tanjenz is a Life Sculptor – not the kind of guy you’d find represented in an art museum as much as a guy you’d find in your apartment planting incriminating evidence because he doesn’t like you. He’s a dissatisfied lawyer: rich, bored, manipulative and evil in an underhand and slightly delicious way. Morgen is a guy you’ll hate to love and love to read.

IF I TELL YOU... I’LL HAVE TO KILL YOU
Michael Robotham (ed.)
A&U. PB. $24.99

This compendium of essays by Australia’s foremost crime authors is a complete delight. Given the opportunity to discuss how they create their works, they don’t disappoint: for readers, there’s a great insight into your favourite (or soon-to-be-favourite) authors when they aren’t figuring out how to commit crimes; for writers, there are excellent pieces of advice and tips. If I Tell You... I’ll Have To Kill You is funny, moving and filled with inspiration.

GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS
Maggie Groff
Macmillan. PB. $27.99

Byron Bay investigative journalist Scout Davis is on the hunt: a trio of reclusive sisters have discovered that the husband of one – presumed dead years before – has turned up in a newspaper article. Recruiting her friends and family to assist in the quest and some rather entertaining petty crimes, Scout is frequently in danger, but mostly is just having as much fun as Groff’s readers are.

DARK HORSE
Honey Brown
Michael Joseph. PB. $29.99

On a mountain in Tasmania, on Christmas Day, a woman rides her beloved horse up and away from the problems that plague her. Not making life easier is a freak storm, flooding the mountain and stranding them high above. The discovery of shelter leads to another find: Heath, young, handsome, and not entirely honest, but trapped as they are. This an unnerving and taut psychological thriller.

GENTLEMEN FORMERLY DRESSED
Sulari Gentill
Pantera. PB. $29.99

As dignified and wickedly satisfying as an elaborate and high-octane cocktail, Rowland Sinclair upper classes and upper-cuts his way through 1930s London, determined to make those in power aware of the atrocities in Germany. When his first contact is killed, it sends him and his gloriously arty cohorts on an investigation that includes London’s more anatormic corners. Something of a political caper story, this is a complete delight.

THE NEVER LIST
Koethi Zan
Harvill Secker. PB. $29.95

A brutal tale of women trying to free themselves from the horror of their past. The Never List sees the traumatised Sarah coming out of her self-inflicted isolation to prevent the release of the man who held her hostage for three years. She was not alone in Jack Derber’s basement, and the more she and her fellow captives fight for their lives back, the more they realise there could still be others to save.

THE CUCKOO’S CALLING
Robert Galbraith
Little, Brown. PB. $29.99

It’s 1983 in Northern Ireland, and being a Catholic police officer during the Troubles means checking under your car every morning and regarding everyone with suspicion even outside of work hours. Detective Inspector Sean Duffy is an officer who hasn’t let his sense of humour or culture dry up, and following him on a fraught investigation into a grisly death is enlightening, horrifying and essential to read.

I HEAR THE SIRENS IN THE STREET
Adrian McKinty
Serpent’s Tail. PB. $29.99

Adrian Deans
STRAIGHT JACKET
High Horse. PB. $24.95

Sean Duffy is an officer who hasn’t let his sense of ex-happiness, he is offered a new case along with a tough friends – or enemies – when he is first called to Bitter Wash Road with a report of shots fired. But with a town ruled by fear and hiding its share of secrets, it won’t be the last call he’ll make down that dusty track.

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Seral A&U. PB. $24.99

A strange welcome relief from the slurring alcoholics of much mainstream crime is Catherine Berlin, investigator, friend, recovering heroin addict. More at home in London’s seedy underbelly than in the bright lights of the everyday world, she is out to find a woman whose life Berlin unwittingly destroyed years before. This is not the London of Dame Agatha Christie, but it is worth a visit.
**Middle**

**NAVIGATING EARLY**
Clare Vanderpool
Random. HB. $24.95

This is a cracker of an adventure and Early is a terrific character. He shines with a heart-warming strangeness and his quest to find his brother reveals him as a boy with a powerful love. Clare Vanderpool is a firestarter and she evokes a time and place that is rich and palpable. Ages 9 to 12.

- **ALEX DRETTZE**

**SONG FOR A SCARLET RUNNER**
Julie Hunt
A&U. PB. $15.99

Peat is on the run and takes refuge in the eerie marshes. Eccentric Marsh Aunties compete to make her their apprentice storyteller, but Peat cannot tell whom she can trust and who is using her. This book has a brave hero in an original setting with lots to interpret as well as plenty of action. A very absorbing fantasy.

- **EMILY GALE**

**THE BOY ON THE WOODEN BOX**
Leon Leyson
S&S. HB. $19.99

Written by the youngest person on Oskar Schindler's famous list, this story perfectly captures the innocence of a small boy and his terrible circumstances with simple, heartfelt prose. Although written from a child's perspective, this is not just a children's book – it is an important memoir that is both heartbreaking and inspiring in equal measure.

- **ANGELA CROCOMBE**

**THE GIRL WHO BROUGHT MISCHIEF**
Katrina Nannestad
HarperCollins. PB. $14.99

You'll fall in love with Inga Maria, who brings mischief and mayhem to her tiny island community: her exuberance challenges and transforms everything, including her grandmother's life and the local school. An enchanting story of family and friendship, perfect for independent readers and an ideal read-aloud for the whole family.

- **ATHINA CLARKE**

**TIMMY FAILURE: MISTAKES WERE MADE**
Stephan Pastis
Walker. HB. $17.95

This book about a bumbling but clueless detective causes nine-year-old boys to become so engrossed that they forget to get off the tram (true story). It's accessible while still providing some challenges in the form of interesting and unusual words. Our protagonist, Timmy Failure, is completely inept and utterly hilarious. For ages 7 to 12.

- **KATE CAMPBELL**

**JUNIOR**

**A BIG GUY TOOK MY BALL**
Mo Willems
Disney-Hyperion. HB. $13.95

The usually plucky Piggie is upset when a big guy takes her ball. Her sensitive friend Elephant is determined to get it back … until he sees how big the big guy is! But big guys have feelings too and in the end they find a way to play together. More Mo Willems magic.

- **EMILY GALE**

**THE LION WHO STOLE MY ARM**
Nicola Davies & Annabel Wright (illus.)
Walker. PB. $11.95

This gripping story is the first in a series of readers on animal conservation, which feature local children in their foreign locales. When Petru gets his arm bitten off by a hungry lion near his African village he initially seeks revenge, but his feelings change after visiting a lion conservation program where he learns to see the lion in a new light.

- **ATHINA CLARKE**

**SMOOTH & ROSE**
Samantha Wheeler
UQP. PB. $14.95

Rose and Gran rescue an injured koala, call him SMOOTH and raise him. But he is ready to live independently on their farm. But when the property needs to be sold and the bulldozers arrive, Smooth's tree is under threat. A brilliant book for early readers who are interested in animals and their wellbeing. For ages 7 and up.

- **KATHERINE DRETTZE**

**STAR WARS: JEDI ACADEMY**
Jeffrey Brown
Scholastic. PB. $12.99

This clever and very funny book joins Roan, an initially reluctant Jedi-in-training, as he completes his first year at the Jedi Academy. It's an appealing mix of comics, diary entries, letters and drawings that will delight young Star Wars fans and those who loved the Diary of a Wimpy Kid books.

- **KIM GRUSCHOW**

**Picture Books**

**MR TIGER GOES WILD**
Peter Brown
Pan Mac. HB. $24.95

Mr Tiger is living the civilised life but he is yearning to walk on the wild side! He heads back to nature but he misses his friends and they miss him. On his return, Mr Tiger finds they have successfully settled in the wild. Wonderful illustrations make this a great gift for ages 3 and up.

- **ALEX DRETTZE**

**BANJO AND RUBY RED**
Libby Gleeson & Freya Blackwood (illus.)
Egmont. HB. $24.95

From an established pairing comes another beautiful story about an unlikely friendship between a farm dog and a chicken. Freya Blackwood creates movement and patios while Libby Gleeson's words are perfectly restrained – art and text in total harmony. I love the quarter cloth binding and the story has been a hit with the pre-schoolers at Readings' Story Time.

- **EMILY GALE**

**RUNNER**
Julie Hunt
Random. HB. $24.95

An ideal read-aloud for the whole family. A gripping story with a message for today's children who are constantly told they can do it … Well, sometimes you can, sometimes you can't, but 'The only true failure can come if you quit.' Rosie's gadgets, built out of dolls' heads, skateboards and hula-hoops, don't always work, but she learns that every attempt is worthwhile.

- **KATHERINE DRETTZE**

**THE DAY THE CRAYONS QUIT**
Drew Daywalt & Oliver Jeffers (illus.)
HarperCollins. HB. $24.99

Duncan's crayons have decided it's time to air their grievances and each of them has written him a letter demanding that he make amends – some are worn out, some want more glory and others are fighting among themselves! A very funny picture book with fantastic illustrations.

- **KIM GRUSCHOW**

**BE DOCTORS?: THE STORY OF ELIZABETH BLACKWELL**
Tanya Lee Stone & Marjorie Priceman (illus.)
Henry Holt. HB. $28.95

Gorgeous illustrations and sparkling text vividly bring to life a story that could have been solely educational. America's first female doctor, Elizabeth Blackwell, is far from boring and her journey will thrill and inspire readers in equal measure. A wonderful story, suitable for ages 4 to 7.

- **ANGELA CROCOMBE**

**WHO SAYS WOMEN CAN'T BE DOCTORS?**
Chris Owen & Moira Court (illus.)
Framantle. HB. $25.95

A rhyming story about medical greatness that celebrates the extraordinary mind of Elizabeth Blackwell. Elizabeth Blackwell, is far from boring and her journey will thrill and inspire readers in equal measure. A wonderful story, suitable for ages 4 to 7.

- **ANGELA CROCOMBE**

**I WISH I HAD...**
Giovanna Zoboli & Simona Mulazzani (illus.)
Eerdmans. HB. $21.95

Have you ever wished for the stealth of a tiger, the dexterity of a lemur, or the speed of a hare? This deceptively simple picture book, with its naïve illustrations and sparse prose, is a celebration of the wonder of every child's imagination. There's a wealth of exploration and delight to be had here for any pre-schooler.

- **ATHINA CLARKE**

**NAVIGATING EARLY**
Clare Vanderpool
Random. HB. $24.95

Quirky illustrations and wonderful prose celebrate the extraordinary mind of Albert Einstein, a dreamer who maintained his childlike curiosity into adulthood and, as a result, revolutionised the way we think about the universe. I can think of no better book to entertain and inspire the genius in every child.

- **ATHINA CLARKE**

**ON A BEAM OF LIGHT**
Jennifer Berne & Vladimir Radunsky (illus.)
Chronicle. HB. $24.95

A wonderful story, suitable for ages 4 to 7 .

- **ATHINA CLARKE**

**THE LION WHO STOLE MY ARM**
Libby Gleeson & Freya Blackwood (illus.)
Egmont. HB. $24.95

A wonderful story, suitable for ages 4 to 7.

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**NAVIGATING EARLY**
Clare Vanderpool
Random. HB. $24.95

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- **ATHINA CLARKE**

**JANUARY 2014 – DECEMBER 2013**

**BEST OF 2013**

- **KATHERINE DRETTZE**

- **ATHINA CLARKE**

- **EMILY GALE**

- **ANGELA CROCOMBE**

- **KEDDY KAZLOWSKI**

- **KATHY KAZLOWSKI**

- **KIM GRUSCHOW**

- **KATE CAMPBELL**

- **ATHINA CLARKE**

- **EMILY GALE**

- **ANGELA CROCOMBE**
Chinese mythology makes for a fascinating read.

This is not your average romance. When Li Lan, a young girl growing up in 1890s Malaya, it is Li Lan's duty to marry, but her family's dwindling fortunes haven't exactly provided her with a lot of matches. So when a wealthy family approaches Li Lan and asks her to marry their recently deceased son, her father is forced to consider the offer. Li Lan, however, has other ideas, and will have to fight off demons and explore the ghostly afterlife in order to regain control over her life. This is not your typical romance; the vibrant exploration of Chinese mythology makes for a fascinating read.

- ALEXA DRETZKE

SHINE

David Picketing, HB. $24.95

Shine is an eerie story set on an island where superstitious villagers call the dark clouds. Rosa is a teenage living with a rare medical condition and as the book progresses she discovers truths about her family and the strange events that have occurred throughout her life. This is a cleverly addictive and mysterious novel filled with warm characters and moments that do ultimately shine over menacing presences.

- KIM GRUSCHOW

WILD AWAKE

Hilary T. Smith

This debut is contemporary YA at its best. The main character is a responsible girl and brilliant pianist who, for the first time in her life, lets herself make mistakes and then picks herself back up in a way that will resonate strongly as well as inspire. The writing is sharp and playful, and the romance is schmaltz-free. I can't wait to see what this author does next. One to watch!

- EMILY GALE

MORE THAN THIS

Patrick Ness

In the first chapter of More Than This, Seth dies dramatically in rough sea but then wakes up in a deserted, crumbling suburban landscape. The reader, along with a teenage Seth, must piece together exactly what is going on. Is he dead? In hell? Or is this just a dream? Carnegie Medal-winning writer Patrick Ness has crafted a disconcerting and brilliant novel that keeps you guessing.

- ANGELA CROCOMBE

ELEANOR & PARK

Rainbow Rowell

Eleanor is a misfit with a dysfunctional family. Park doesn’t quite fit in but has a warm, loving home life. One day the odd girl sits next to the comic book fan on the bus and slowly they fall in love. The sensuality of young love is beautifully explored here and fans of John Green will love this book.

- ALEXA DRETZKE

MAN MADE BOY

Jon Skovron

At first glance, Boy is a typical teenage girl, but he’s creating code or chatting online. But look again: he’s the son of Frankenstein’s Monster. Rebels against his dad’s plans for his future, Boy embarks on an exciting cross-country adventure with Jekyll and Hyde’s grandchildren! Man Made Boy is hilariously funny and incredibly inventive, drawing inspiration from fiction and mythology.

A marvelously original coming-of-age tale.

- ATHINA CLARKE

GIRL DEFECTIVE

Simonne Howell

It’s summer in St Kilda and Sky is expecting it to be the same as usual: working in her dad’s failing record shop while he drinks too many beers and continues to be miserable. Instead, it’s a summer full of mystery, friendship and love. I called it early that this would be my book of the year and that hasn’t changed. Quirky, creative and original ... what more could you ask for? For ages 15 and up.

- KATHERINE DRETZKE

How to Love

Katie Cotugno

It’s summer in St Kilda and Sky is expecting it to be the same as usual: working in her dad’s failing record shop while he drinks too many beers and continues to be miserable. Instead, it’s a summer full of mystery, friendship and love. I called it early that this would be my book of the year and that hasn’t changed. Quirky, creative and original ... what more could you ask for? For ages 15 and up.

- KIM GRUSCHOW

From internationally bestselling author Paulina Simons comes another compelling mix of heartbreak and redemption, and the mesmerizing love story that led to The House of the Dead.

- ANGELA CROCOMBE

SONS OF THE SOUTH CROSS

Timothée de Fombelle

This is a captivating and addictive murder mystery and an orphant’s search for parentage, set during the rise of Hitler in Europe and the awe-inspiring flight of the Zeppelin. Written by a French author in translation, this novel – with a large and eccentric cast – is thrilling reading for lovers of action-packed adventure.

- HOLLY HARPER

WILDLIFE

Fiona Wood

Wildlife, set in a bushland outdoor education camp with shared accommodation, is an absorbing novel of teenage life. I loved the authenticity of setting and voice, the drama of shifting friendships and portrayal of kids under pressure. The alternating and very different narrators, Lou and Sibylla, are likeable and strong. A compelling and enlightening read.

- KATHY KOZLOWSKI

IN LIFE, QUIET ACHIEVEMENT IS WHAT REALLY MATTERS . . .

Blind Optimist

The Life of Lawrie McCredie

Dr Webbsdale-Marris

$39.95

In 1952, 23-year-old Lieutenant Lawrence McCredie lay dying on Puckapunyal’s gunny range ... a chronicle of against-the-odds survival, determination & achievement.

Lost in the Mists

Leslie Russell Blake

Mawson’s Cartographer

Herbert J.G. Darvall

$49.95

Brilliant surveyor, war hero. Based on diaries & letters, enhanced by illustrations and short biographies.

A Funny Course for a Woman

Rosemary Bainnard

$39.95

The personal story of the first female judge on the Supreme Court of Victoria.

Proud to be a Wharfie

Jim Beggs

$29.95

Beggs, the last president of the Waterside Workers Federation, brings alive the hardships & hazards, humour & mateship, of the Melbourne waterfront.
EDIBLE GARDEN DESIGN
Jamie Durie
Penguin. HB. $49.99

Jamie Durie takes us on an international romp through garden design, with a focus on the various bounties. From a fish farm in Thorntonbury to a rooftop veggie patch in New York, Durie has managed to create an accessible, beautiful book which is all about cultivating your own food, even around the bathtub.

COOKED
Michael Pollan
Penguin. PB. $29.99

In Cooked, Michael Pollan explores an essential human activity – cooking – which is at the heart of our culture. It seems insane that fresh food is flown in from all over the world when we can produce most of it in our own patch. Pollan’s manvellous book is a call to arms: reminding us of the magic of preparing food.

THE GARDEN AT STONEFIELDS
Paul Bangay
Penguin. HB. $100

This is the celebrated landscape designer Paul Bangay’s romping story of creating Stonefields, one of Australia’s most beautiful country gardens. Think of it as a manor garden. Aside from photographs documenting the evolution of the garden, the book also features extracts from Paul’s diary, making it an intimate and compelling account of dealing with drought and bushfire in contemporary rural Australia.

SAVE WITH JAMIE
Jamie Oliver
Penguin. HB. Was $49.95 Special price $39.95

Mark LaBrooy and Darren Robertson, owners and chefs at Bronte-based cafe Three Blue Ducks, have collated really easy and scrumptious recipes that share their favourite ethos – and mine – of cooking with only the freshest ingredients, using sustainable, locally grown produce, and (surprise) utilising your own kitchen garden.

SMALL SPACE ORGANICS
Josh Byrne
Hardie Grant. PB. $45

Here, Gardening Australia presenter Josh Byrne has added a connoisseur in sustainable design and urban water management, providing all the detailed information you need to create your own organic panorama. This is the guide book needed for plotting, planting, watering and, eventually, harvesting your own food garden.

GARDENING AUSTRALIA’S FLORA
Various
HarperCollins. HB. $69.95

In every collection there should be the final word, and here it is. Gardening Australia’s Flora is an encyclopedia containing information on more than 20,000 plants from all around the world. Organised by botanical name, the individual entries provide a detailed description of each plant. This is a book for knowledge rather than inspiration. Essential.

THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER
The Perks of Being a Wallflower is a film that actually does justice to the book it was based on. On screen, Stephen Chbosky’s novel of teenage angst and life-changing friendships is honestly and unflinchingly portrayed. Logan Lerman, Emma Watson and Ezra Miller brilliantly play the three outsiders trying to maneuver their way through adolescent life.

THE NEWSROOM: SEASON 1
Was $39.95 Special price $24.95

What better arrangement than a newsmagazine for Aaron Sorkin to weave his writing magic? The creator and writer of The West Wing centres his new series on a volatile cable news anchor, Will McAvoy (Jeff Daniels), who returns to the network from an enforced vacation to find his staff have jumped ship. Obliged to work with an ideological new team hired in his absence, McAvoy and his newsroom set out to deliver quality TV news while dodging corporate and personal obstacles.

THE KILLING: SEASON 3
Was $39.95

Detective Inspector Sarah Lund (Sofie Grabol) returns in the long-awaited third and final series of The Killing (Forbrydelsen) trilogy. This Scandinavian piece of crime noir set the tone for many other great shows: The Bridge and Borgen both owe it much. With its mix of kidnappings, murders and a government on the verge of collapse, The Killing is absolutely essential viewing.

INSPECTOR MONTALBANO: VOLUME 6
Luca Zingaretti plays the gruff yet likeable sceptical police inspector from Sicily made famous in the novels of Andrea Camilleri. For close to a decade Inspector Montalbano has been giving viewers a slice of Sicilian life that incorporates exotic locations, a great murder mystery and, of course, fantastic dining. Aided by a motley crew of detectives and incorporating some fascinating locals, no case has ever been more important as to get in the way of a good lunch!

MOONRISE KINGDOM
To declare that this film is one of Wes Anderson’s quirkiest productions is saying something. From the man who brought us Rushmore, The Royal Tenenbaums and my personal favourite, The Darjeeling Limited, quirky is status quo in Anderson movie. Moonrise Kingdom is a story about two 12 year olds who, after falling in love, make a pact and run away together into the woods. With a cast including Bruce Willis, Edward Norton, Bill Murray and Frances McDormand, and warm, impeccable cinematography, you can’t help but feel good watching this film.
**Music**

**TROUBLE WILL FIND ME**

David Bowie

$19.95

You pretty much have to admire someone like Bowie who has had such a long and varied career. The man knows how to reinvent himself, pushing the boundaries of what people expect him to do next. The Next Day is no exception – much like some kind of complex aural jigsaw puzzle it reveals more with every listen.

-MELODY WHEELER

**THE NEXT DAY**

David Bowie

$19.95

**THE LOWWAY**

Steve Earle and The Dukes (and Duchesses)

$24.95

I do believe that Steve Earle has got this album just about perfect. From the opening title track, which gives us a gentle ramble about travelling through small-town America, to the bar-room rocker of ‘Cilco Country’, Earle has managed to capture the stories and snapshots of his home and its people. Backed by wife Allison Moorer and The Dukes, each song will move you, or get you moving.

-LOU FULCO

**ONCE I WAS AN EAGLE**

Laura Marling

$24.95

This English rose has bloomed since moving to Los Angeles. Musing on relationships, this album sees Laura Marling’s songwriting elevated to another level. While her style hasn’t changed dramatically, you can hear new influences like Gillian Welch and the grandeur of Pink Floyd or early Genesis. Comparisons to Joni Mitchell resound from reviews but this wise lass is making her own way – these beautiful songs stand as a testament to her original talent.

**WARP & WEFT**

Laura Veirs

$21.95

Warp & Weft is layered with textures and sounds that make every song sound fresh. There are highs and lows, rockers and ballads, and an impressive cast of backing vocalists – when K.D. Lang and Neko Case are two of them, you raise your game and Veirs delivers on all fronts. This album is a joy to listen to.

**WAKIN’ ON A PRETTY DAZE**

Kurt Vile

$21.95

**AMERICAN KID**

Patty Griffin

$19.95

It’s always a good year when Patty Griffin releases an album. And when America’s finest folk-country-gospel female singer-songwriter releases an album as good as American Kid, then it’s a great year. Griffin is also rumoured to be touring again in 2014, so make sure you see her live – what a voice.

-Michael Awosoga-Samuel

**DREAM RIVER**

Bill Callahan

$21.95

Dream River is, at times, both intimate and universally awakening. Callahan’s baritone voice carries your attention, reminiscent of a 70s Terri Callier and, of course, Kurt Wagner of Lambchop. I am particularly taken with the second track, ‘Javelin Unlanding’, which transports me to Marvin Gaye circa ‘What’s Going On’. Recorded earlier this year at Caecophonix, Texas, Dream River is a quiet gem.

-Michael Awosoga-Samuel

**Classical Music**

with Phil Richards

**PHILIP GLASS: METAMORPHOSIS & THE HOURS**

Lavinia Meijer

Channel Classics, CCCSA23912. $29.95

**PIAZZOLLA: 4 BUENOS AIRES**

Denis Plante & David Jacques

ATMA Classique. AC0297. $24.95

Bandoneonist Denis Plante, together with guitarist David Jacques, has produced a stunning recording of contemporary tango music. Plante’s arrangements are striking as well as faithful to the very essence of the tango spirit and as a result you cannot help but be immersed in this glorious music from beginning to end.

**BRUCKNER: SYMPHONY NO. 7**

Donald Runnicles & BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra

Hyperion. CDA67916. $24.95

When released earlier this year this was certainly one of my favourites. Everything about this recording works, from the beautiful cover art to the classic Hyperion sound and, of course, the magnificent playing from the BBC SSO under the excellent direction of Donald Runnicles, whose attention to detail is second to none.

**RACHMANINOV: SYMPHONIC DANCES, THE ISLE OF THE DEAD, THE ROCK**

Andrew Litton & Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra

BIS. BIS1751. $29.95

This recording from Andrew Litton and the Bergen Philharmonic is the perfect introduction to the music of Sergei Rachmaninov. The three pieces recorded on this disc are great examples of Rachmaninov’s compositional style. Litton’s passion for the music is obvious and all pieces are beautifully played.

**NOVECENTO GUITAR PRELUDES**

Cristiano Porqueddu

Brilliant Classics. 9292. $19.95. 3CDs

For me, there is nothing like the sound of a solo guitar, especially when played well. Cristiano Porqueddu has put together an engaging collection of twentieth-century preludes for guitar. Though they are stylistically different, the common link between the five composers featured here is that they weren’t guitarists. Sometimes that can be a problem for the performer but in this case it all works beautifully.

-PIA SPREADBROUGHT

**SOLO**

Leonard Grigoryan

Which Way Music. WW1M17. $24.95

Leonard Grigoryan, younger brother of Slava, takes centre stage with his first solo recording. Featuring four original compositions – one being homage to American guitarist Ralph Towner, one of Grigoryan’s musical heroes – as well as pieces by Villa-Lobos, Barrios and Towner, this is an excellent first up recording. The playing is exciting, precise and full of emotion and beauty.

-J.S. BACH: SONATAS & PARTITAS

Chris Thile

Nonesuch. 7559795864. $21.95

This is probably my favourite classical release of the year. Thile, who made his name in the world of country and bluegrass music, is a master musician and what we get here is an astonishing performance of some of the greatest pieces for solo violin played on the mandolin. The combination of great music played by a great musician is never dull.

**VIVALDI: THE FOUR SEASONS**

Richard Galliano

DG. 4810350. $24.95

Love it or hate it, The Four Seasons is here to stay and this version is definitely worth the effort. Richard Galliano has produced a very worthwhile performance, arranging the work for accordion and string quintet. This arrangement is simple but it also brings out the purity in Vivaldi’s writing. Galliano’s playing is delicate and, of course, technically superb.

**THEN: RENAISSANCE AIRS AND DANCES**

Stockholm Chamber Brass

BIS. BIS2017. $29.95

Renaissance music and brass instruments are a match made in musical heaven and on this fine recording, from the Stockholm Chamber Brass, this is exactly what we get. There are pieces that will be familiar and some that will not, but the common thread is the brilliant playing and the arrangements, which always enhance these compositions.

**SHOSTAKOVICH: SYMPHONY NO. 10**

Maris Jansons & Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra

RCO Live. RCO13001. $29.95

Shostakovich has always been one of my favourite composers and this is one of my favourite symphonic performances of the year. It seems to me that Maris Jansons and the RCO were put on this earth to play Shostakovich and as they work their way through this magnificent work you would be hard pressed to disagree.

**Random Access Memories**

Daft Punk

$21.95

Here is an unexpectedly rewarding left turn into late-night soul-pop after the gradually diminishing returns of their prior rock-funk offerings. Calling on the Gog and Magog of disco, Nile Rodgers and Giorgio Moroder, among other collaborators, Daft Punk have fashioned the ultimate twenty-second-century pop album. Smoking-jacket ballads and glitter-sweating workouts alike are rich with textural detail and laden with hooks.

- Richard Mohr

**Fanfare**

Jonathan Wilson

$21.95

His 2011 debut Gentle Spirit was a minor, mellow classic among other collaborators, Daft Punk have fashioned the ultimate twenty-second-century pop album. Smoking-jacket ballads and glitter-sweating workouts alike are rich with textural detail and laden with hooks.

-Pia Spreadborough

**Phil Richards**

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-then: Renaissance airs and dances

stockholm chamber brass

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-shostakovich: Symphony no. 10

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Rco live. RCO13001. $29.95

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**Best of 2013**
Gift Ideas from Readings

1. NANOBLOCK Large $22.95 each, Small $11.95 each Each Nanoblock, including the Eiffel Tower, Sydney Opera House and animals like the Great White Shark, includes between 200-550 blocks and takes 20-60 minutes to complete.

2. QUESTION TIME! $90 An exciting new board game that brings the highs and lows of Australian politics into your own living room – without dividing the house.

3. AXEL & ASH TRAVEL JOURNAL $34.99 Bound in cloth, this charming journal is suitable for every traveller to capture their travel memories in style – from the classy jetsetter to the novice explorer.

4. SCRATCH MAP 58.4cm x 82.1cm $34.95, 42cm x 29.7cm $21.95 Scratch off the places you've been with a coin. Happy travelling.

5. GIFT IN A TIN $19.95 Pictured here is the Train Set in a Tin. Other Gift in a Tin products include a Farm Set, Mini Mechanic, and Flower Pressing Kit.

6. AREAWARE MICRO CUBOT $12.95 Robot toys are usually made of plastic and require batteries – but not this one! When it’s time for Cubot to rest, he folds into a perfect cube.

7. PEPIN PRESS WRAPPING PAPER BOOKS $22.95 each These books, including Kimono, Art Deco and Japanese Pattern themes, contain 12 large sheets of very high-quality wrapping paper, each sheet in a different design.

8. OSLO DAVIS 2014 CALENDAR $20 Spanning 13 months, here are Oslo’s beloved trademark line-drawings combined with the usual calendar-esque attributes.

9. MICHAEL LEUNIG FINE ART 2014 CALENDAR $29.95 Frameable Leunig images printed on Italian archival paper plus curious quotes for each month.

10. PENGUIN BAGS $19.95 each Cloth bags from Penguin India based on Arundhati Roy’s The God of Small Things and Vivram Seth’s A Suitable Byst.
ART & DESIGN
with Margaret Snowden from Readings Carlton

ART & PLACE: SITE-SPECIFIC ART OF THE AMERICANS
Phaidon Editors
Phaidon, HB. $89.95

This book is an extraordinary collection. Featuring over 500 artworks from all periods across 15 countries, an enormous variety of schools and styles can be compared. From deserts to cities, mountains to islands, each work is mapped and documented with stunning photographs and, in some instances, specially commissioned plans for complex layouts. Many are familiar, such as Robert Smithson’s Spiral Jetty, or the murals of Diego Rivera, while others are less so, such as Instituto de Arte Contemporáneo e Jardim Botânico Inhotim.

LYND WARD: SIX NOVELS IN WOODCUTS
Art Spiegelman (ed.)
LOA, HB. $80

This two-volume box-set collects the six woodcut novels, each composed of a single image per page, created by Lynd Ward in the 1920s and 30s. In his entertaining and perceptive introduction, Art Spiegelman attests that Ward “is one of only a handful of artists anywhere who ever made a ‘graphic novel’ until the day before yesterday.” Ward’s work is dense with the stark symbolism of an expressionist, and is predominantly concerned with the nature of art on one hand, and the prevailing social and labour issues of the day on the other. Elegant, harsh, ambitious, flawless and compelling.

GO: A KID’S GUIDE TO GRAPHIC DESIGN
Chip Kidd
Workman Publishing, HB. $29.95

Award-winning graphic designer Chip Kidd gives a stunning introduction to the ways in which a designer communicates his or her ideas to the world. Kidd explains not just the elements of design, including form, line, colour, scale, typography, but also, most importantly, how to use those elements in creative ways. Go is about shaking things up with a playful spirit and belief that the world looks better when you look at it differently. The book ends with 10 projects; you can share your designs at GoTheBook.com.

FOOD & GARDENING
with Christine Gordon from Readings Carlton

ON THE NOODLE ROAD
Jen Lin-Liu
A&U. PB. $29.99

My hand is already up for writing the next instalment of this book. Jen Lin-Lui feasts her way through Italy on her honeymoon and is struck by culinary echoes of the delicacies she ate and cooked back in China, where she’d lived for more than a decade. She sets out along the ancient trading route of the Silk Road – through Central Asia, Turkey, Iran and then across the Mediterranean – looking for the origins of noodles and dumplings. While this is not essentially a cookbook – rather, more a thoughtful exploration of food origins – there are recipes sourced from all over the world. This is a great summer read and one that will inspire: to travel, to eat and to cook. And because the recipes yield large quantities, On the Noodle Road is all about sharing.

THE NEW CLASSICS
Donna Hay
HarperCollins, HB $59.99

We have seen this type of all-un-compromising cookbooks before – the Chef’s collection, I like to call it. Here is Donna Hay’s landmark book, The New Classics, a definitive collection of classic recipes for every modern cook from the Donna Hay magazines. As any fan will know, the recipes and even the presentation are simple, clear and successful. And if that doesn’t win you over, remember any cookbook with a macaroni cheese recipe in it is a big win for me. This book is perfect for keeping it effortless, elegant and traditional.

DISH IT UP
Hayden Quinn
Murdoch Books, PB. $35

For those who don’t know, Hayden Quinn became a bit of a household name in 2011 as a contestant in the third series of MasterChef Australia. Dish It Up is his cookbook, packed full of recipes that would please anyone, but in particular those in share-houses and those gathering to have a big night (then those recovering from a big night). Think cheery, fun and no fuss: barbequed corn, big cooked brekkies, and sweet munchies. Binge cooking! It’s no wonder Quinn’s style has hit a nerve out there!
WHAT'S YOUR STORY?
Tom McLaughlin

The STORY MACHINE

Picture Books

MR TIGER GOES WILD
Peter Brown
Macmillan Australia. HB. $24.95

Review: The idea of a tiger going wild isn’t necessarily our idea of a good thing; however, when an animal isn’t living true to their nature, sometimes they have to break free. Mr Tiger lives a life of civilised hi-tech machines. He doesn’t let the great big cricket ball on the front foot you - this is a story to be enjoyed by cricket fans, for sure, but it’s also a tight and easy read about identity, security and second chances.

THE STORY MACHINE
Tom McLaughlin
Bloomsbury. HB. $22.99

Elliot is a boy who likes to find things and, one day, he stumbles across a machine. But it doesn’t beep or buzz like all his other machines; it makes letters, so it must be a story machine! An inspiring picture book about the simple joys of a typewriter in a world of hi-tech machines.

WHAT’S YOUR STORY?
Rose Giannone & Bern Emmerichs (illus.)
Berbay. HB. $27.95

New Kids’ Books

Junior Fiction

MOUSE HOUSE TALES
Susan Pearson & Amanda Shepherd (illus.)
Random House. HB. $24.95

Two stories about Mouse! With help from her friends, Mouse puts together the furnishings of a nice little house. Her snug home has everything she needs, or so she thinks. One night she hears scary noises and sets out to trap the intriguing ‘ghost’, only to discover that a hungry, homeless mouse has been hiding out.

MIDDLE FICTION

BEHIND THE BOOKCASE
Mark Steensland & Kelly Murphy (illus.)
Random House. HB. $12.95

Spending the summer at her late grandmother’s house is the last thing Sarah wants to do, but she has no choice. Her parents have to fix the place up before they can sell it, and Sarah and her brother, Billy, have to help. But the tedious work turns into a thrilling mystery when Sarah discovers an unfinished letter her grandmother wrote. Strange things are happening behind the bookcase...

Non-fiction

GREAT EXPLORERS
Stewart Ross & Stephen Biesty (illus.)
Walker Books. PB. $19.95

Join the world’s bravest explorers on some of the greatest journeys ever made in this paperback edition of Great Explorers: a highly acclaimed book. From Pytheas the Greek, who sailed to the Arctic Circle without a compass, to Neil Armstrong landing on the moon, here are 14 extraordinary journeys by land, sea and air – each one remarkable.

HOW TO BUILD A HUMAN BODY
Tom Jackson
Scholastic. HB. $29.99

From the team who created the award-winning titles How to Make a Universe from 92 Ingredients and How to Change the World with a Ball of String. Covering all the major body organs and systems, and featuring experiments to help children to understand how their bodies work, this is a fascinating and entertaining approach to the science of our bodies.

Classic

MR ROUSE BUILDS HIS HOUSE
Stefan Thomerson & Franciszka Themerson (illus.)
Tate Gallery. HB. $14.95

Originally published in Poland in 1938, it follows a very polite Mr Rouse as he plans his new home. He learns a lot in the process and so do we, as the story skips along with a curious mix of prose and verse. In this age of technological gadgetry, this book seems absurdly antiquated and yet pretty much everything inside is as relevant today as it was over 70 years ago. This is a little book for small hands but don’t be fooled, there’s a lot going on here. Ages 4 and up will enjoy Mr Rouse.

Class of the Month

HARRIET THE SPY
Louise Fitzhugh
Yearling. PB. $11.95

Review: First published in 1964, Harriet the Spy is the story of eleven year old Harriet M. Welsch, who wants to be a spy and a writer. Harriet lives in Manhattan with her preoccupied socialite parents, so her main companion is her nanny, Miss Golly. For a character written in the 60s, Harriet is an atypical heroine: she sneaks around her neighbourhood spying on school friends, their families and other locals. As a child, I was intrigued by Harriet; she was fearless and determined, and honest to the point of rudeness. She roamed the streets freely, looking for answers and situations. Her intense interest in the nuances of people’s lives and her compulsion to write in her notebook, always close at hand, inspired me to write too.

I also enjoyed the emotional depth of the book as Harriet faced some of the inevitable conflicts of growing up – learning how and when to compromise, and ultimately how to be true to herself.

Annie Condon is from Readings Hawthorn

READINGS MONTHLY DECEMBER 2013 – JANUARY 2014
New DVDs with Lou Tufo

BEFORE MIDNIGHT
$39.95
The third instalment in Richard Linklater’s much-acclaimed romantic trilogy, which began with Before Sunrise and Before Sunset, is here. Nearly 20 years have passed since Celine (Julie Delpy) and Jesse (Ethan Hawke) first met on a train bound for Vienna, and we now find them in their early 40s in Greece, living as a couple and parents to twin girls.

JOSS WHEDON’S MUCH ADD ABOUT NOTHING
$29.95
Released 18 December
Joss Whedon’s retelling of Shakespeare’s classic comedy is dark, sexy, funny – and occasionally absurd. With a cast that includes Joss’s regulars, the story of sparring lovers Beatrice and Benedick is given fresh life in this modern interpretation.

FAREWELL, MY QUEEN
$39.95
From French director Benoît Jacquot and based on the novel of the same name by Chantal Thomas, Farewell, My Queen transports us back to July 1789, where the gathering of a royal audience is being deftly orchestrated in the shadow of the French Revolution is causing panic among King Louis XVI, Queen Marie Antoinette and their courtiers. These last days unfold through the eyes of the eternally devoted servant Sidney Laborde.

BREAKING BAD: FINAL SEASON
$39.95
Vince Gilligan’s unforgettable saga comes to a shattering, bloody conclusion. As meth kingpin Walter White and his partner Jesse Pinkman attempt to get clear of the wreckage each has left in their wake over the past year, DEA agent Schrader’s obsessive pursuit of Heisenberg gains pace, setting in motion an unstoppable chain of destruction that will leave no one unscathed.

JAMIE: PRIVATE SCHOOL GIRL
$29.95
A horrific, hilarious satire of Australian culture, the latest mockumentary from the infamous Chris Lilley chronicles the final months of school for the monotonously narcissistic Ja’ime King. With one term of Summer Heights High under her belt, Ja’ime returns to Hillford as their school captain.

NOTHING ON EARTH
$24.95
Murray Fredericks is renowned for his photographs of the vast empty space of Lake Eyre, South Australia. In this stunning documentary, he’s relocated to the Greenland Icecap and it is here, atop a melting glacier and beneath the solar storms of the Aurora Borealis, where what began as an artistic Odyssey quickly transforms into an adventure of extremes.

A behind-the-scenes look at Australian Encounters

AUSTRALIAN ENCOUNTERS
$19.95
Australian Encounters is a short form animated series that celebrates ten historic encounters, each between a renowned Australian and an international mover and shaker. What happened when Bob Hawke locked horns with Frank Sinatra? Or when Enrico Caruso slipped a hot sausage into his mouth when Enrico Caruso slipped a hot sausage into Libera’s excessive wealth and attention suffocating: the jealous Libera prefers to keep his distance. Douglas gets the performance spot on: the whining, nasally voice, the speed and dramatic hand gestures of his piano playing, the hair and outrageous outfits, and then those teeth! It’s a master class in disappearing into a role. Damon also impresses, as do Debbie Reynolds and Rob Lowe. Make no mistake, though: this movie belongs to Michael Douglas and his chameleon-like interpretation of the king of the ivories.

BEHIND THE CANDELABRA
$39.95
Review: This made-for TV movie (which later received a cinematic release) recounts the stormy six-year relationship between flamboyant entertainer Liberace (Michael Douglas) and his younger lover Scott Thorson (Matt Damon). Raised in foster homes, a 17-year-old, bisexual Thorson is introduced to Liberace by a Hollywood producer whom Thorson has met in a gay bar. He begins a romantic relationship with the pianist, but Thorson ultimately finds Liberace’s excessive wealth and attention suffocating: the jealous Liberace prefers to keep the palm of Dame Nellie Melba? Narrated by Geoffrey Rush.

LOW WINTER SUN: SEASON 1
$49.95
A smart cop show with two great leads in Mark Strong and Lennie James. Low Winter Sun takes place in Detroit, in a world where the line between cops and criminals is blurred. In the pilot episode, two detectives kill a third in a fit of revenge and attempt to stage the murder as a suicide, sending their lives into a spiral.

Promotional material for “The Art of Conversation”

The Art of Conversation is a pocket-sized, award-winning card game designed to help people think, reminisce and enjoy quality time. The third instalment in Richard Linklater’s much-acclaimed romantic trilogy, which began with Before Sunrise and Before Sunset, is here. Nearly 20 years have passed since Celine (Julie Delpy) and Jesse (Ethan Hawke) first met on a train bound for Vienna, and we now find them in their early 40s in Greece, living as a couple and parents to twin girls.

A behind-the-scenes look at Australian Encounters

This month’s Readings Monthly cover art by Brad Howe has been proudly

Discover the story behind Australia’s first public library

State Library of Victoria
FREE, SECULAR AND DEMOCRATIC
BUILDING THE PUBLIC LIBRARY 1853–1913
Until 2 February 2014
dome100.com.au/exhibition

Free exhibition
State Library of Victoria,
338 Swanston St,
Melbourne
10am–6pm daily (to 6pm Thursday)
Exhibition co-ordinated by Trailblazers (School), The Melbourne School of Fine Arts and Victoria University
DOME 100
Sponsor of the exhibition

MAKE SURE YOUR AUSSIE CHRISTMAS DOESN’T GET FROSTY
Banish awkward silences with the in-laws and give your teenagers a reason to switch off their screens.

The Art of Conversation is a pocket-sized, award-winning card game designed to help people think, reminisce and enjoy quality time. All six titles in The Art of Conversation range are available now at Readings priced at $19.95.

www.taoc.com.au

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Until 2 February 2014
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Free exhibition
State Library of Victoria,
338 Swanston St,
Melbourne
10am–6pm daily (to 6pm Thursday)
Exhibition co-ordinated by Trailblazers (School), The Melbourne School of Fine Arts and Victoria University
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CDs

POP & ROCK

NEIL YOUNG: LIVE AT THE CELLAR DOOR
Melody Wheeler
$19.95 Released 6 December

Review: It’s been a good year for Neil Young fans. First there was his string of excellent shows earlier this year, which knocked our collective socks off, and now we see the release of Live at the Cellar Door, Volume 2.5 of Young’s archival performance series.

Way back in 1970, Neil performed for six nights at the Cellar Door, a tiny club in Washington DC. His third solo album, After the Gold Rush, had only been out for a few months and croc-honk, Stills, Nash & Young had only recently disbanded and Young was emerging as a solo performer in his own right.

The Cellar Door shows were recorded to 8-track by Henry Lewy and feature Young on acoustic guitar and piano, which means songs we know and love – ‘Old Man’, ‘See the Sky About to Rain’, ‘Down by the River’, ‘Only Love Can Break Your Heart’, ‘Birds’ – performed in an intimate acoustic setting. Young also treats us to a few Buffalo Springfield numbers: ‘Flying On the Ground Is Wrong’, ‘I Am a Child’, and ‘Expecting To Fly’. But the thing that has Young’s archival performance series.

Remembering my friend’s recording complete albums in their native tongue. For his much-anticipated second album, Post Tropical, McGovern released of work than its predecessor, and is a stand-out free your mind

FREE YOUR MIND
Cut Copy
$21.95

Cut Copy’s Free Your Mind creates a fantasy of the next youth revolution, binding the two epochs without the negative baggage. An event told in three dimensions. Turn on, tune in, fly.

The embryonic stage of Free Your Mind saw frontman Dan Whittington take a new approach to songwriting, roughly sketching a song per day for a four-month period before presenting the fruits to the band and realising their full potential together. While the album’s themes are at the forefront of the completed work, it was never intended as a concept record; rather ideas buried deep beneath the mind’s eye, unlooked by the collective consciousness of Whittington, Tim Hoey, Ben Browning and Mitchell Scott. Recorded in various locations in close proximity to Melbourne’s finest coffee houses.

SHANGRI LA
Jake Bugg
$21.95

Jake Bugg’s new album Shangri La follows his debut, Jake Bugg, and comes just over a year since that record went straight to number one in the UK, sending him into the record books as the youngest solo male debut at the top of the UK charts. It’s fast-approaching sales of one million worldwide and has cemented Bugg as one of the most exciting new talents to emerge border and once again prodigiously choose to write, produce and play virtually every instrument himself. Drawing inspiration from the hundreds of sound files he brought back from international touring and a youthful love of hip-hop, Mckmorrow has vastly broadened his horizons and introduced some generous new textures to his musical palette.

The opening track, the aptly named ‘Cavalier’, sets the tone – in which McGovern proves that perhaps the only thing better than listening to his glorious swoon of a voice is the sound of him harmonising with himself.

Reminiscent of that other fantastic release – anticipated – from a US label, with Dirty Three, Bonnie ‘Prince’ Billy and a staggering line-up of hip-hop, McMorrow has vastly broadened his horizons and introduced some generous new textures to his musical palette.

In recent years. Now hooked up with legendary producer Rick Rubin, he is set to scale new heights. Shangri La is a more fully-formed piece of work than its predecessor, and is a stand-yet-to-release of this, or any year.

DARKSIDE
Tom Stoppard & Pink Floyd
$31.95

Darkside is a radio play by Tom Stoppard for BBC Radio 2, incorporating music from Pink Floyd’s iconic The Dark Side of the Moon. The play was an original commission by Radio 2 to mark the fortieth anniversary of Pink Floyd’s album. The package resembles a hard-back book, including a CD carrying the 54-minute play, plus a 56-page bound insert of the play’s script.

DON’T TELL THE DRIVER
Mick Turner
$21.95

Mick Turner is no stranger to a musical revolution, binding the hundreds of sound files he brought back from international touring and a youthful love of hip-hop, McMorrow has vastly broadened his horizons and introduced some generous new textures to his musical palette.

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ROMANTIC PIANO TRIOS
Trio Anima Mundi
Divine Art. DDA25102. $24.95

Review: This is Trio Anima Mundi’s debut recording and it is a wonderful experience to contemplate from the strong performances of each work – is there is no Beethoven or Brahms in sight on this CD. But there is a strong sense of the music of the Romantic era. It begins with William Burnstine’s Piano Trio composed in 1905. Plagued with ill health and the constant need to support himself financially, he was nonetheless considered by the composers of the time. He’s sadly overlooked today, but his music remains a wonderful discovery. It begins on the album with ‘Piano Trio No.1’ by Dag Wirén. Comparatively unusual in his use of rhythm, he lets the more contemporary ideas influence his music more than the other composers. If you are a fan of the Beethoven and Brahms string quartets, I would highly recommend you immerse yourself in these works for they are a lot to those masters, as well as the composers’ own geniuses. They’re interesting, accessible and, best of all, performed by our very local musicians.

Kate Rockstrom is a friend of Readings and was delighted to host the premiere performance of this CD. She said, “This exciting and extremely talented duo’s Performers and Accompanist, Paul Rhodes, a partnership that allows the wide diversity of musical expression to be wholeheartedly admired. The process of discovery has been exciting and exhilarating, and the results are extraordinary. How else would it be possible for one to know the music so well? It is a joy to listen to this music and to hear this performance.”

This fourth instalment of the complete orchestral works of Ottorino Respighi contains some of his most popular works, starting with the ‘Ancient Airs and Dances’, three suites based on Renaissance and Baroque dances by Italian composers. The rich, brilliant and colourful orchestration by Respighi adds a new dimension, enriching the joyful or melancholy character of these relatively uncomplicated pieces. The second work, ‘Rossina’, is a charming suite derived from Rossini’s piano piece ‘Les riens’. Next follows the Concerto in modo misolidio, a work for piano and orchestra with a main theme based on Gregorian chant. Completing the compilation is the effective ‘Metamorphoseon modi XII’, also pervaded with freely plainsong-like themes. All works are skilfully interpreted by Francesco La Vecchia and the Orchestra Sinfonica di Roma.

This new Chando recording features works of three composers – Vincent d’Oiny, Ernst Krenek and Erwin Schulhoff – all who in the mid- to late-1920s adopted neoclassicism and chose to write works in the neo-Baroque concerto grosso style. D’Oiny wrote the Concerto for his last orchestral piece, at the time of Monteverdi. It combines a lean and strong, lucid instrumental lines with romantic harmonic colouring. The disc also features the world premiere recording of the Concertino that Krenek wrote before he was forced, as a degenerate artist, to leave Austria in 1938. In the Concerto doppio, Schulhoff turns to the Concerto grosso because of its affinity with jazz, a musical genre that greatly influenced him, allowing him to break free from more conventional musical forms. Performed by the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, led by Sir Neville Marriner.

EXPRESSIVE VOICE OF THE FLUTE
Kenneth Smith & Paul Rhodes
Divine Art. DDA2122. $28.95. 2CDs

This collection of some of the world’s most popular concert flute favourites is presented by Kenneth Smith, principal flautist of London’s Philharmonic Orchestra for 27 years, with pianist and accompanist Paul Rhodes, a partnership that has been performing and recording music for flute and piano since 1986. Most of these 46 tracks have been skilfully transcribed by the performers themselves, sharing the musical content between both instruments in a way that allows the wide diversity of musical expression that lies within these works to be realised.

J.S. BACH: GOLDEN VARIATIONS
Jeremy Denk
Nonesuch. NNS354522. $29.95. CD & DVD

This beloved Bach work has long been a staple of Denk’s repertoire and his performances have received critical praise. The New York Times has remarked on his ‘profound affinity with Bach’, and the Philadelphia Inquirer called Denk’s performance of this piece ‘mesmerising’, noting that his ‘Bach is expressive, but not fuzzy or overthought. Technically unburdened by the work’s more explosive spots and remarkably fluid in its streaming passage work, he was able to make connections between and among bits of material that sometimes occur many seconds apart’. A companion DVD accompanies the album and contains video ‘liner notes’, with Denk demonstrating passages on the piano as he explains certain details of the iconic piece.

THE ANDRÉS SEGOVIA ARCHIVE
Ermanno Bignold
Brilliant. 9429. 2CDs

Andrés Segovia, born in 1893 in Linares, Spain, was one of the most important musicians of the twentieth century; a virtuoso guitarist whose contribution to modern Romance repertoire included both commissions and transcriptions of Baroque and classical works. This collection, The Andrés Segovia Archive, was thus created with the aim of making available all the works written for Segovia which remained unpublished (and in some cases never performed) during his lifetime, and here it is played by esteemed Italian guitarist Ermanno Bignold. Bignold presents an engaging tribute to a precious heritage, one whose range of styles has only served to further enrich twentieth-century guitar music.

GERSHWIN TAKE TWO
Simon Tedeschi
ABC Classics. 4810629. $24.95

Simon Tedeschi captures the Gershwin repertoire perfectly; with passionate, vivacious performances that are bursting with life and romance, Gershwin Take Two will surely see Tedeschi’s rise to become one of the world’s foremost exponents of the Gershwin oeuvre. Playing classic Gershwin-compositions such as ‘Embraceable You’, ‘Nice Work If You Can Get It’ and ‘Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off’, Simon Tedeschi brings these works to life in a way never heard before. Also featuring guest appearances from Australian jazz legend James Morrison and a rising star of the world music stage, Sarah McKenzie.
Grattan Institute in partnership with Readings presents
A summer reading list for the Prime Minister

Every December Grattan Institute releases a Summer Reading List for the Prime Minister. Once again we are proud to publish our list in partnership with Readings.

We think the Prime Minister – or any Australian interested in public debate – will find these books stimulating over the break. They’re all good reads that we think say something interesting about Australia, the world, and the future. And they make terrific gifts.

Public events will be held at the State Library of NSW on 3 December and at the State Library of Victoria on 4 December to discuss the Reading List. Lucy Turnbull, former Lord Mayor of Sydney, will join Grattan Institute CEO, John Daley to talk about how these titles illuminate some of Australia’s biggest debates.

To register for an event please go to www.grattan.edu.au/events.

Grattan Institute is an independent think-tank focused on Australian public policy.