

# Readings Monthly

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Patrick Allington *on* Jane Sullivan • Benjamin Law *on* Cory Taylor

IMAGE FROM THE COVER OF DAVID FOSTER WALLACE'S NEW NOVEL THE PALE KING (HAMISH HAMILTON)



## David Foster Wallace's final novel p8

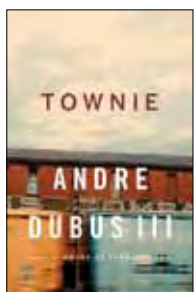
Highlights of April book, CD & DVD new releases. More inside.



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>> p5



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POP CD  
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>> p17



CLASSICAL  
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>> p19

April event highlights: Andrew Fowler on Wikileaks, Betty Churcher on *Notebooks*, Julian Burnside talks to Michael Kirby. More events inside.

All shops open 7 days, except State Library shop, which is open Monday-Saturday. *Carlton* 309 Lygon St 9347 6633 *Hawthorn* 701 Glenferrie Rd 9819 1917 *Malvern* 185 Glenferrie Rd 9509 1952 *Port Melbourne* 253 Bay St 9681 9255 *St Kilda* 112 Acland St 9525 3852 Readings at the *State Library of Victoria* 328 Swanston St 8664 7540 email us at [readings@readings.com.au](mailto:readings@readings.com.au) Browse and buy online at [www.readings.com.au](http://www.readings.com.au) and at [ebooks.readings.com.au](http://ebooks.readings.com.au)

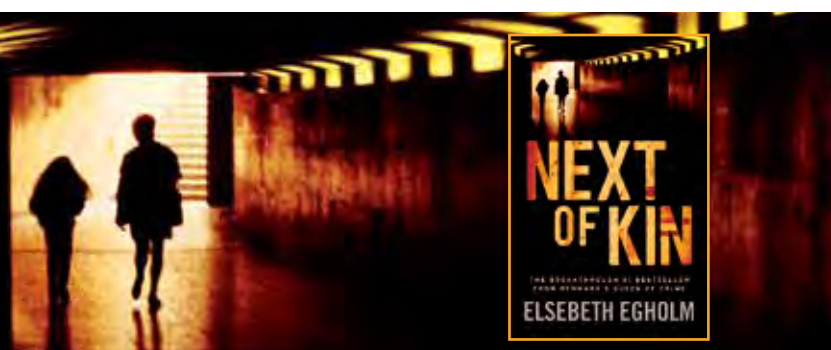
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MURDOCH BOOKS

PIER 9





# This Month's News

## MILES FRANKLIN LONGLIST ANNOUNCED

The longlist for Australia's most prestigious literary prize has been announced – and, as with last year, it's a varied one, though overwhelmingly dark in terms of subject matter. There are two debut novelists (Jon Bauer and Kirsten Tranter) and two former winners (Roger McDonald and Kim Scott). And Melina Marchetta, author of the much-loved *Looking for Alibrandi*, is a newcomer to the Miles, though her books (all classified as 'young adult') have won critical and popular acclaim.



Marchetta's publisher, Laura Harris said, 'It is a thrill to see Melina's work acknowledged in the longlist of the most prestigious Miles Franklin Award. Her work has long crossed over to many different

aged readers and her exploration of multigenerational characters and contemporary Australian life has endured beautifully over many novels.'

Readings spoke to Morag Fraser, chair of the judging panel, about the shortlist, and asked whether the fact Marchetta's *The Piper's Son* is branded 'young adult' was a factor for the judges when discussing eligibility. 'The judges are interested in the quality of the writing, not the marketing category into which the books may or may not be slotted,' she said. 'You will recall some of the publicity about eligibility that attached to Peter Temple's win last year with *Truth*. A genre novel! Crime fiction! *The Guardian* took up the debate and British crime writers cheered, along with a number of eminent Australian and British critics. We made our judgement strictly on the quality of the writing.' She pointed out that many of the books considered for the Miles are about childhood or young adulthood, but have 'very broad' appeal – and if selected, 'it is because the quality of the writing (always our first consideration) transcends genre categories and notions of targeted audiences'. Fraser demonstrated her point aptly: 'I recently gave Miles Franklin's *My Brilliant Career* to my almost teenage granddaughter. I trust she will enjoy it as much at her age as I do at mine. Ditto for *Pride and Prejudice* etc.'



We were also curious about Melbourne author Jon Bauer's *Rocks in the Belly*, which includes only subtle references to Australia (for instance, a 'Robert proof fence' puns on our 'rabbit-proof fence'), and whose setting is open to interpretation. 'It seeks in the main to set the story where the reader is,' Bauer told Readings. 'I worked awfully hard to set it in all Australia, rather than one place.' Fraser said Bauer's novel does meet the requirement of 'Australian life in any of its phases', saying, 'Landscapes can be psychological as well as physical. And recognisable – picking up on a Zeitgeist.' Bauer's longlisting comes at an auspicious time, in the same month that he was finally granted his much-longed-for Australian citizenship. 'It means a great deal to have a book that means the world to me acknowledged in such a prestigious and Australian award. I am and will always be an

Australian writer. Australia gave me writing and I shall always be grateful for that. Whether I go any further in the Miles Franklin process or not, what I love most is that this achievement can never be taken away from me.'

The nine books are: *Rocks in the Belly* by Jon Bauer (Scribe, PB, \$32.95), *The Good Daughter* by Honey Brown (Viking, PB, \$32.95), *The Mary Smokes Boys* by Patrick Holland (Transit Lounge, PB, \$29.95), *The Piper's Son* by Melina Marchetta (Viking, PB, \$24.95), *When Colts Ran* by Roger McDonald (Knopf, PB, \$32.95), *Time's Long Ruin* by Stephen Orr (Wakefield, PB, \$24.95), *That Deadman Dance* by Kim Scott (Picador, PB, \$32.95), *The Legacy* by Kirsten Tranter (Fourth Estate, PB, \$24.99) and *Bereft* by Chris Womersely (Scribe, PB, \$32.95).

The 2011 shortlist will be announced on 19 April, in Sydney. The winner will be announced in June at an award event in Melbourne – the first time the award has been announced at a venue outside Sydney. 'It is a national prize, however it has also been rather Sydney-centric in the past,' John Atkin, CEO of Trust (the company that administers the Miles) told Readings. The move, along with the increase in prize money (from \$42,000 to \$50,000) is part of a concerted move to 'refresh' and 'revive' the award, ensuring it 'remains relevant and also financially beneficial for authors'.

## INDIES WINNERS

The results of the 2011 Indie Awards, chosen by Australia's independent booksellers (like Readings!) have been announced. The overall winner of Book of the Year was Ahn Do, for *The Happiest Refugee* (A&U, PB, \$32.99), also winner of the Non-Fiction Book of the Year. Other winners were Chris Womersley, who took out Best Fiction for *Bereft* (Scribe, PB, \$32.95), Jon Bauer, who won Best Debut Fiction for *Rocks in the Belly* (Scribe, PB, \$32.95) and Jeannie Baker, whose *Mirror* (Walker Books, HB, \$39.95) won Best Picture Book. Both Chris Womersely and Jon Bauer have also been longlisted for the Miles Franklin. Congratulations to all Indies winners!

## ORANGE LONGLIST

Almost half of the writers on this year's longlist for the Orange Prize for Fiction are debut novelists – providing plenty of opportunities for award followers to discover new favourites. At the same time, established authors whose books have attracted much praise (including attention from other book awards) join them on the list – like Emma Donoghue, author of the Man Booker shortlisted *Room* (Picador, PB \$32.95) and Jennifer Egan, whose *A Visit From The Goon Squad* (Anchor, PB, \$20.95) is reviewed by Readings Carlton manager Robbie Egan on p8. Both novels made the list of Readings' ten favourite fiction books of 2010. Our Book of the Month for April, Tea Obreht's much-lauded debut novel, *The Tiger's Wife* (Orion, PB, Normally \$29.99, **Our special price \$24.95**) also made the longlist. And *Swamplandia!* by Karen Russell (Knopf, HB, \$34.95), is also reviewed in this issue, on p9.

Other shortlisted titles include: *Jamrach's Menagerie* (Carol Birch, Text, PB, \$32.95, Ebook \$19.95), *Great House* by Nicole Krauss (Viking, PB, \$32.95), *Whatever You Love* by Louise Doughty (Faber, PB, \$32.99), *Repeat it Today With Tears* by Anne Peile (Serpent's Tail, PB, \$27.95), *Grace Williams Says it Loud* by Emma Henderson (Hodder, PB, \$19.99), *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* by Lola Sheniye (Serpent's Tail, PB, \$22.99), *Annabel* by Kathleen Winter (Jonathan Cape, HB, \$36.95), *The Seas* by Samantha Hunt (Constable & Co, PB, \$19.95), *The Pleasure Seekers* by Tishani Doshi (Bloomsbury, PB, \$29.99), *The Invisible Bridge* by Julie Orringer (Vintage, PB, \$22.95), *Lyrics Alley* by Leila Aboulela (Orion, PB, \$32.99), *The Memory of Love* by Aminatta Forna (Bloomsbury, PB, \$22.99), *London Train* by Tessa Hadley (Jonathan Cape, HB, \$36.95), *The Birth of Love* by Joanna Kavenna (Faber, PB, \$29.99), *The Road to Wanting* by Wendy Law-Yone (Chatto & Windus, PB, \$32.95) and *The Swimmer* by Roma Tearne (Fourth Estate, PB, \$24.99).

## 20% OFF FROMMERS

Throughout April, all Frommer's travel guides are 20% off, in-store and online. Purchase one (or more) this month and you will go into the draw to win a copy of their new title *Melbourne Free and Dirt Cheap* and other Frommer's goodies!

## Meet the bookseller with...

Fiona Hardy, Readings Carlton



Why do you work in books?

I've loved reading and writing ever since I was a little girl making my own little stories out of wallpaper scraps and terrible re-writes of my favourite books. I did work experience in a my local bookshop in Year 11, and even after finding out that it's not all sitting behind the counter and reading, I loved it enough to stay. That was 13 years and four bookshops ago, and it is still an industry I remain entirely dedicated to.

What's the best book you've read lately?

*A Widow's Story* by Joyce Carol Oates was a marvel: an account of loss that turned from raw stream-of-consciousness to clarity as the author moved through her grief. It reminded me why it can be worth persevering through a difficult read.

What have you noticed people buying lately?

I'm really pleased to see a lot of Australian books flying off the shelves, like the late Hazel Rowley's biography of the Roosevelts, the *Quarterly Essay* and *Meanjin*, Meg Mundell's *Black Glass*, and *This Too Shall Pass* by S.J. Finn.

What's the strangest experience you've had in a bookshop?

Having Bret Easton Ellis in for a surprise signing the day after I'd seen him be wholly (and comically) intimidating towards both MC and audience at the Athenaeum Theatre. Turns out that in person he's perfectly friendly, signed a book for me and didn't once send me wailing into a corner with my feelings hurt.

What's the best experience you've had in a bookshop?

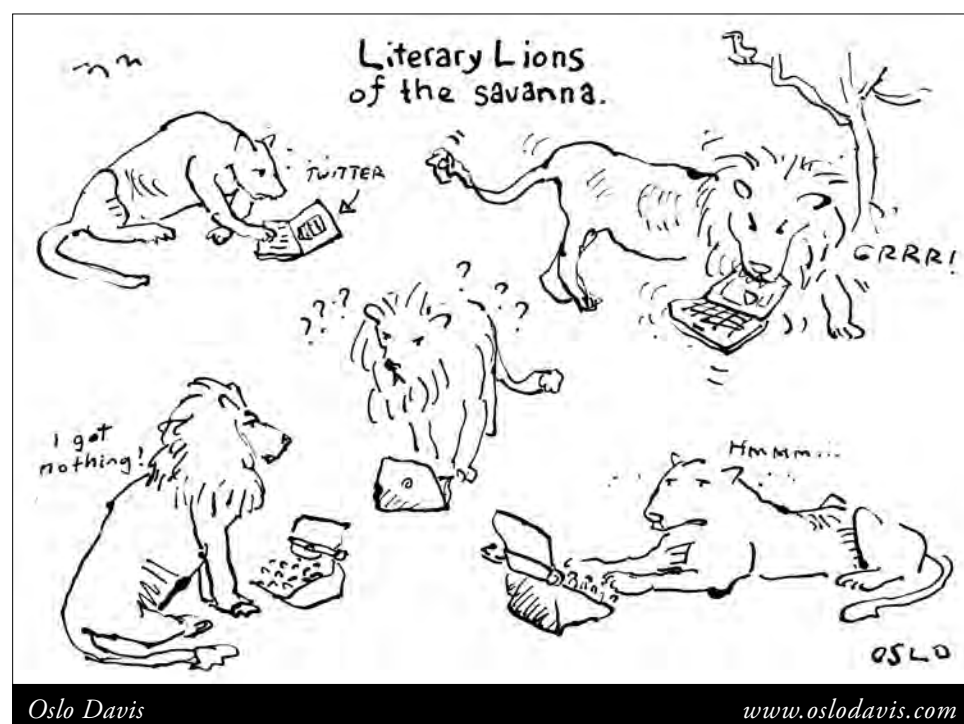
Probably the release of the last Harry Potter book. The morning was freezing cold but so many people turned up for it, dressed up in costume, waiting patiently, and all totally and utterly excited to buy a book.

Name a book that has changed the way you think – in ways small or large.

*The Ethics of What We Eat* by Peter Singer—I read it almost four years ago and it led to an entirely new way of thinking about what I eat and why. I wish he'd added a chapter on why popcorn is bad for you, so maybe I could stop consuming the stuff by the bucketload.

What was your favourite book as a kid?

The Dr Seuss-styled book *Go Dog Go*, by P.D. Eastman. I was endlessly fascinated by the dogs leading these exotic lifestyles like living under houses and having parties in trees, and though the book itself had only about 20 different words in it, I still loved reading it even when I was older.



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## CINEMA NOVA RECOMMENDS

KEIRA KNIGHTLEY CAREY MULLIGAN ANDREW GARFIELD

### NEVER LET ME GO

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Carey Mulligan  
British Independent Film Awards



COMMENCES MARCH 31

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Directed by Mark Romanek (*One Hour Photo*)

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from the creators of *Bad Santa* comes...

### I LOVE YOU PHILLIP MORRIS

★★★★★

"An intriguing, offbeat comedy"

The Times



COMMENCES APRIL 7



# Events in April

All our Readings book and music events are entry by gold coin donation, unless otherwise stated. Please note that bookings do not guarantee a seat, but rather indicate to us the number of people to expect. To see more events or for updates on new events please visit the events page at [www.readings.com.au](http://www.readings.com.au).

## 7 LIBBI GORR



*Mummy Manners* by absolutely funny woman Libbi Gorr (HarperCollins, PB, \$29.99) is designed to help mothers of young children navigate a course through the maze of etiquette, morals and madness that comes from dealing with All The Other Mothers you encounter while rearing your own precious child. Not to mention coping with yourself. That's a shock. Giving birth to yourself as a mum! Think Debre's *A-Z of Modern Manners* crossed with elements of *The Slap*. But it's not the child that needs the slapping: it's the mother. Join us for a belly laugh. **Thursday 7 April, 6.30pm, Readings Carlton.** Bookings: 9347 6633.

## 11 PAGES TO POETRY

We're back! This month we have two fine emerging poets, Aden Rolfe and Sam Langer, with celebrated Melbourne poet Claire Gaslin. Aden Rolfe is a Melbourne-based writer, editor and radio maker whose work has appeared in *Overland* and *Best Australian Poetry*. Sam Langer was born at the Queen Vic in 1983 and is the founding editor of *Steamer*. Claire Gaslin's *a bud* was published by John Leonard Press in 2006, and was shortlisted in the John Bray SA Festival Awards for Literature. **Monday 11 April, 6.30pm, Readings Carlton.** Free, no need to book.

## 12 DAVID HERLIHY

You thought the Great Victorian Bike Ride was hard ... well, let us introduce David Herlihy and *The Lost Cyclist* (Mainstream, HB, \$49.95), set in the late 1880s. Frank Lenz of Pittsburgh, a renowned high-wheel racer and long-distance tourist, dreamed of cycling around the world. In the spring of 1892, he quit his accounting job and gamely set out to cover 20,000 miles over three continents as a correspondent for *Outing* magazine. Two years later, having survived countless near-disasters and hardships, he approached Europe for the final leg. He never made it. **Tuesday 12 April, 6.30pm, Readings Carlton.** Bookings: 9347 6633.

## 14 ANDREW FOWLER IN CONVERSATION WITH NIC MCKENZIE ON JULIAN ASSANGE



Nic McKenzie, from the investigative unit at *The Age*, will talk with Andrew Fowler about *The Most Dangerous Man in the World* (MUP, PB, \$32.99). This new book is based on interviews with Julian Assange, his inner circle and those disaffected by him. Fowler tells the story of how a man with a turbulent childhood and brilliance with computers has become, according to *Pentagon Papers* whistleblower, Daniel Ellsberg, 'the most

dangerous man in the world.' **Thursday 14 April, 6.30pm, Cinema Nova, Lygon Street Court, Carlton.** Bookings: 9347 6633.

## 14 LESLIE CANNOLD



Leslie Cannold is considered one of Australia's leading thought-provokers. Join us as she takes us on the journey of her first novel, *The Book of Rachael* (Text, PB, \$32.95). This is the story of a fiercely intelligent child, consigned by her sex to a life of ignorance and drudgery. But Rachael fights her destiny, secretly learning the forbidden skills of literacy from her father Yosef and her brother. Leslie has a wonderful knack of turning stories that we live by upside-down. This is a treat for those who have not had the pleasure of hearing Leslie speak before. **Thursday 14 April, 6.30pm, Readings St Kilda.** Bookings: 9525 3852.

## 18 FAY ANDERSON & RICHARD TREMBATH

Join us for a heart-breaking conversation about the absolute realities of war. *Witnesses to War* by Fay Anderson and Richard Trembath (MUP, PB, \$36.99) is a landmark history of Australian war journalism that covers the major conflicts of the twentieth century: World War I, World War II, Vietnam and Bosnia, through to recent and ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. *Witnesses to War* looks at how journalists reported the horrors and politics of war, the rise of the celebrity journalist, issues of censorship and the ethics of 'embedding'. Includes interviews with leading war correspondents such as John Pilger, Paul McGeough and Chris Masters. **Monday 18 April, 6.30pm, Readings Carlton.** Bookings: 9347 6633.

## 18 BETTY CHURCHER IN CONVERSATION WITH CHRIS MCAULIFFE



Former director of the National Gallery of Australia and much-loved figure in Australia's art world, Betty Churcher was dubbed 'Betty Blockbuster' by the public during her reign at the NGA. She is credited with bringing some of the world's best art to Australia. She was also the face of ABC TV series *Hidden Treasures* – and became something of a national treasure herself. After the shock degeneration of her eyesight in 2003, Betty set off on a journey to revisit her favourite pieces of art around the world, to sketch them and commit them to memory. Betty's journey and the lovingly drawn sketches are reproduced in this new book. **Monday 18 April, 6pm til 7.30pm, North Fitzroy Star, St Georges Road, North Fitzroy.** \$45 per person: includes a glass of wine and a copy of *Hidden Treasures*. Bookings: 9347 6633.

## 19 HON MICHAEL KIRBY IN CONVERSATION WITH JULIAN BURNSIDE

We are delighted to bring you a wonderful night of stories. In celebration of the Hon Michael Kirby and the impact his life's work has had on Australian culture, a book has been written about him by A.J. Brown, a Professor of Public Law at Griffith Uni-

versity. Tonight, we are fortunate enough to have Michael with us in conversation with Julian Burnside. Expect to laugh, cry and be inspired. **Tuesday 19 April, 6.30pm, Asialink Theatre, Asialink Centre, Swanston Street, University of Melbourne.** Bookings: 9347 6633.

## 27 HAZEL EDWARDS

Family history sleuthing is the world's most popular hobby. Hazel Edwards' revised edition of *Writing a Non-Boring Family History* (Hale & Iremonger, PB, \$22.95) acknowledges the new e-formats that today's family members use, includes helpful tips on how to write a eulogy, and covers the growing interest in touring military battlefields and researching on-site material. Join us as Hazel talks us through writing about our families in ways that people want to read. **Wednesday 27 April, 6.30pm, Readings Hawthorn.** Bookings: 9819 1917.

## 27 REPOWERING AUSTRALIA

Come and hear how Australia can switch to 100 per cent renewable energy in ten years. Beyond Zero Emissions, an independent, not-for-profit research group, presents its award-winning plan. Developed in partnership with University of Melbourne, it is fully costed, provides baseload power and uses technologies commercially available now. For more information, visit [beyondzeroemissions.org](http://beyondzeroemissions.org). **Wednesday 27 April, 6.30pm, Readings Carlton.** Free, no need to book.

## 28 WILL MACKERRAS

Will Mackerras was born and raised in Canberra, where he stayed to study law. In 2006 he decided to get away from both Canberra and the law, and before long found himself working as an apprentice Anglican Minister in north-western NSW. Up there he developed a deep love of nineteenth-century Australian rhyming verse, and began trying to write poems in the same style. He is now studying theology in Melbourne, hoping to upgrade from 'apprentice' to 'master'! **Thursday 28 April, 6.30pm, Readings Carlton.** Free, no need to book.

## 28 DAVE GRANNEY IN CONVERSATION WITH FIONA SCOTT-NORMAN

Legendary rock showman Dave Graney makes his literary debut with *1001 Australian Nights* (Affirm Press, PB, \$29.95), a memoir of sorts and a rollicking ride through three decades as a working artist. Join him on the publication of his first book and the release of *Rock 'n' Roll is Where I Hide*, an album comprising electric recordings of a dozen Graney classics. He'll bring his guitar, probably even an amp. **Thursday 28 April, 7pm, Readings St Kilda.** Bookings: 9525 3852.

## Book launches

### DR KIRSTY GOVER

Together with the Centre for Comparative Constitutional Studies, and the Centre for Environmental and Energy Law, Professor Jeremy Webber will launch Kirsty Gover's *Tribal Constitutionalism* (OUP, PB, \$95.95). **Tuesday 5 April, 6pm for 6.30pm, Readings Carlton.** Free, no need to book.

### LARISSA HJORTH

Professor Jo Tacchi (Deputy Dean, Research and Innovation, School of Media and Communication RMIT University) will launch *Games and Gaming* (Berg, PB,

\$45), a work that explores the dominant forms of global popular games. Larissa Hjorth is Australian Research Council APD fellow and senior lecturer in Games and Digital Media at RMIT University. **Wednesday 6 April, 6.30pm, Readings Carlton.** Free, no need to book.

## SONIA KRESTSCHMAR & ERROL BROOME

Join illustrator Sonia Krestschmar and author Errol Broome as they celebrate the release of their very beautiful picture book *Song of the Dove* (Walker, HB, \$29.95), the tragic love story behind the young musician, Bellini, and his ascension to fame and glory. **Friday 8 April, 6.30pm, Readings Carlton.** Free, no need to book.

## GUILIA GIUFFRÉ & IAN BRITAIN

Join us for the launch of *Primavera* (\$39.95), an Australian-Italian memoir of childhood and family in the second half of the twentieth century that takes the reader from the rules for cooking pasta, to the love that gives life meaning. **Wednesday 13 April, 6.30pm, Readings Carlton.** Free, no need to book.

## PETER BARRY

Wayne Macauley will launch Peter Barry's *I Hate Martin Amis et al.* (Transit Lounge, PB, \$29.95). A winner of the Victorian Premier's Unpublished Fiction Prize, it is the compelling story of a frustrated writer who becomes a sniper in Sarajevo. **Thursday 14 April, 6pm for 6.30pm start, Readings Carlton.** Free, no need to book.

## ANTHONY LA RICCA

*Destiny* (Sid Harta, \$24.95) is the first in a trilogy about a teenage boy who discovers he is not only from another world, but is also half-elf. He soon travels back home to rate their world but gets caught in the cross-fire, changing both worlds forever. **Saturday 16 April, 3pm, Readings Hawthorn.** Free, no need to book.

## JOE REICH

*I Know Precious Little* (PB, \$24.95) is the story of Pree and Katherine, whose lives are intertwined mysteriously in a bond that will unravel as they face an unexpected death. Set in Melbourne, against a backdrop of the Beatles music, all is not as it appears in this darkly comic tale of misunderstandings and incidental hurt. **Thursday 28 April, 6.30pm, Readings Hawthorn.** Free, no need to book.

## Coming in May

### SUSANNA DE VRIES

Art historian Susanna has written about great Australian women in her new book, *Trailblazers* (Pirgos, PB, \$39.95). **Wednesday 4 May, 6.30pm, Readings Hawthorn.** Bookings: 9819 1917.

### KELLY DOUST

In this beautifully illustrated mix of memoir, thoughts, fantasies and conversations with other women, *A Life in Frocks* (Pier 9, PB, \$29.95) is a book for those who love clothes and find fashion beguiling, fickle and fabulous. **Thursday 5 May, 6.30pm, Readings Hawthorn.** Bookings: 9819 1917.

### WHAT IT IS

Our graphic novel extravaganza returns! **Monday 23 May, 8pm, Readings Carlton.**

### CASSANDRA CLARE

Meet the author of the thrilling Mortal Instruments YA trilogy. The latest instalment is *City of Glass* (Walker, PB, \$19.95). **Wednesday 25 May, 6.30pm, Westgarth Theatre.** Free, book on 9347 6633.



## New Australian Writing Feature

# Larger than life

Patrick Allington interviews Jane Sullivan about *Little People* (Scribe, PB, \$32.95, Ebook \$18.99)



Jane Sullivan is best known to Melbourne literature-lovers as the scribe behind the Saturday Age's weekly column, 'Turning Pages'. Now, on the eve of the publication of her second novel, *Little People* (the first was *White Star*, in

2000), we'll be thinking of her as a novelist first, journalist second. *Little People* was shortlisted for Scribe's inaugural CAL/Scribe Fiction Prize for writers aged 35 and over. Patrick Allington, the Miles Franklin longlisted author of *Figurehead*, spoke to Jane about *Little People*'s long journey from her imagination to the page, for Readings' New Australian Writing feature series.

Don't let the title of Jane Sullivan's new novel fool you. *Little People* is crammed with big ideas and larger-than-life characters, several of whom are famous midgets. 'I'd like people to have the sense that they're watching a wonderful show and the curtain swings open and the characters come on and they perform, and have some of that exhilaration of a live performance,' Sullivan says. 'I hope it's convincing ... but I don't mind if it seems a bit over the top.' In other words, even though real people and events inspired *Little People*, Sullivan doesn't let history cramp her storytelling style.

More than a decade separates *Little People* and Sullivan's debut novel, *The White Star* (2000). That's partly because she wrote another novel in between: 'It's gone into the bottom drawer now,' she says. It's also because *Little People* 'wasn't easy to write. I haven't found any novel easy to write.' Sullivan is also a journalist – she writes a Saturday column, 'Turning Pages', in *The Age* — and she juggles the different demands of writing fiction and non-fiction by imagining she has 'a little toggle switch'

in her head. 'Sometimes when the fiction isn't going well it's a relief to get back to the journalism,' she says, 'because there usually I feel I know what I'm doing and it doesn't take too long and I just need to find out x, y and z and then I write the thing and I get paid and I see it appear. And that's nice, I feel like I've achieved something, whereas the fiction can drag on for years. I never quite know what I'm doing or whether I'm going to end up with a proper novel at the end. It's very hard to tell.'

Although *The White Star* is set in contemporary Sydney, it shares some themes and preoccupations with *Little People*. In particular, both books deal with fame, public and private personas, the allure of seemingly illogical ideas and celebrity adoption. 'To me they seem to be very different books,' Sullivan says. 'Of course, there are things going on when you're writing that you're not even conscious of. There are themes that pop up because you think about them consciously, and there are also themes that pop up without you even realising they are there, but they somehow make their way to the surface.'

In *Little People*, Sullivan takes two distinct stories – two different worlds, really – and merges them into one raucous, chaotic, tense and deliberately melodramatic tale. There's Mary Ann, the principal narrator, who must confront the stark reality of being pregnant and unwed in 1870s Melbourne. And then there's the spectacle of a troupe of P.T. Barnum's little people, in Australia as part of a world tour. From this, Sullivan conjures a novel in which performance and life imitate each other in an energetic mix of dastardly deeds, secret alliances, professional jealousies, dubious science, and true and false love.

Mary Ann is, as Sullivan puts it, 'the spine of the book'. She describes the little people and their entourage with the eye of an inquisitive outsider, except that, having performed an act of extreme bravery, she has become an insider of sorts. The troupe

employs her, but they are mostly interested in her because she is pregnant – Charles and Lavinia Stratton, aka General Tom Thumb and The Queen of Beauty, seem to have a solution to the conundrum of what should become of Mary Ann's unborn child. But Mary Ann (and readers too) cannot be sure of the Strattons' motives. For one thing, when it comes to babies, they have a history. For another, Charles has some rather original ideas about conception.

While Mary Ann anchors the story, the colourful and eccentric troupe shines brightest. 'There's something in me that's strongly attracted to the quirky and the seemingly a bit crazy,' Sullivan says. 'I don't mean in the sense of psychotic or anything like that, just really oddball ... out of the mainstream. I think I'm attracted to those kinds of worlds and the people in them and what makes them tick.'

What's most interesting about the midgets is not their size but their weird public lives. Sullivan humanises the Strattons, Lavinia's sister Minnie and Commodore George

**'In going back 140 years to observe celebrities of another age, [Little People] invites readers to consider contemporary society's fixation with cartoon-like characters such as Michael Jackson, Charlie Sheen or Lady Gaga.'**

Washington Nutt by allowing them to speak for themselves. They interrupt Mary Ann's narration to offer up their own perspectives – as does Rodnia, Commodore Nutt's less vertically challenged brother. These voices, labelled 'sideshowes' in the book, so sparkle that they threaten to become the main event.

Charles Stratton is perhaps *Little People*'s most fascinating character. Sullivan pokes holes in Stratton's puffed-up facade, imagining a rather sad but proud private man with a split personality. In a stand-out scene, a boy arrested in time reveals himself:

My name is Charlie Stratton, and I am what the General used to be. The General is thirty-two years and three months old;

he's pulling himself together, he's going onstage to astound the Antipodeans with his Napoleon. I'm four years old and I'm not going anywhere. I have been four for a long time. You can't see me, can you? I'm hiding. I'm good at hiding. I'm like the boy in the picture puzzle. The boy in the fork of the tree, the boy-shaped space the branches make. It's kind of lonely up here, but it's the best place for me. As long as I keep still, you can't see me.

'I think he's an extraordinary man,' Sullivan says of the real-life Charles Stratton. 'It's hard when you're reading about him to get a sense of what he was really like. What you're reading about most of the time is the performer and he was obviously quite a talented performer, although from all accounts he was not as talented as Commodore Nutt ... At this stage of his life, Charles Stratton was in his thirties, he had put on a lot of weight and he seemed a bit tired and stiff, and not very convincing. He'd been performing since he was four years old, which I just find utterly extraordinary. But growing up in that sort of totally artificial world and becoming this celebrity, I think it would have given him a strange sense of himself.'

*Little People* is greatly preoccupied with fame and celebrity. An example: when Lavinia first meets Mary Ann, she orders her to kneel. While Mary Ann understands that she should pin Lavinia's hem, Lavinia later explains, 'This is what one does before a queen, and I think I have been a queen for most of my life, long before Mr Barnum manufactured me.' The famous P.T. Barnum hovers over the story like a God-like creator. He trained the real-life Charles Stratton when Stratton was a young boy, and as Sullivan says, 'that kind of oddity and fame at a very early age can distort people. The obvious example these days would be Michael Jackson.' Sullivan points out that Australians in 1870 'didn't have television or YouTube ... When somebody like General Tom Thumb came to Australia, people were absolutely thrilled to have a chance to see him. He was this huge celebrity and he'd come amongst us. No wonder they all rushed to the theatre and thronged into the streets to see him and his troupe. It was an amazing event.'

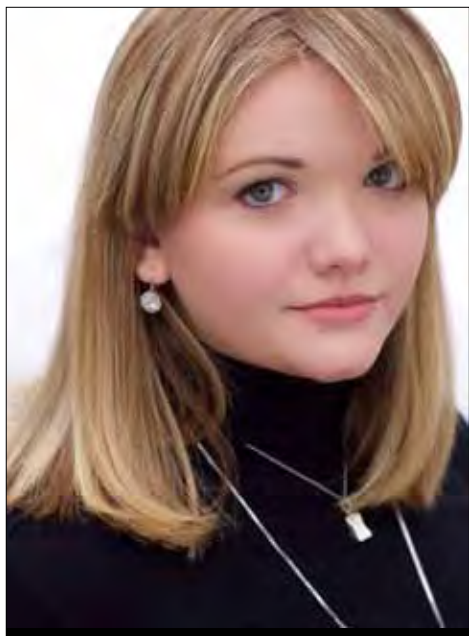
Perhaps this is why *Little People* is such thought-provoking entertainment. In going back 140 years to observe celebrities of another age, it invites readers to consider contemporary society's fixation with cartoon-like characters such as Michael Jackson, Charlie Sheen or Lady Gaga. And while Mary Ann is an outsider, so too are the members of the troupe. They are Americans, sure of their prominent position in the world, some of them world famous, who are startled by Australia's deserts and floods, its over-excited crowds and even its inadequate men: 'All gape and guffaw,' as Minnie puts it. *Little People* offers a fresh perspective on colonial Australia and its peripheral place in the world. In doing so, it also invites us to think afresh about modern Australia.

Patrick Allington is the author of *Figurehead* (Black Inc., PB, \$29.95), which was long-listed for the Miles Franklin in 2010.



# Q&A with Téa Obreht

Jo Case interviews Téa Obreht about *The Tiger's Wife* (Orion, PB, Normally \$29.99, *Our special price \$24.95*)



*Storytelling is central to 'The Tiger's Wife' – its power to transport us to other places, to comfort, to inform, to entertain. And perhaps most of all, the way shared stories create bonds between people. Did you always see the process of storytelling as integral to the book?*

Like so much of the book, 'storytelling' ended up taking over as a central theme very naturally. Of course, I wouldn't realise this until later – one of the things I learned in writing a novel is how much of it formed on its own, almost behind my back – but I did know that the reader would have to reconcile two sides of the story when it came to the tiger and the tiger's wife: 'objective' information and the perceived truth of village gossip. After that, other facets of storytelling, especially storytelling as a bond between Natalia and her grandfather, fell into place.

*I think my favourite thread of the story was that of Gavran Gaile, the 'deathless man' who Natalia's grandfather encounters at intervals throughout his life, always in places where people are dying en masse. I like the way science (embodied by Natalia's grandfather, a doctor) meets superstition (Gaile) and they vie, in increments, for credibility. What inspired this character? And what drew you to that juxtaposition of science and superstition, which is mirrored elsewhere in the book?*

The character is based on an archetype who often appears in Slavic and German myth, and his presence usually forces the people around him to deal with the social necessity of death. In terms of the juxtaposition of science and superstition: my friend is a doctor in Serbia, and for the past several years, I have been treated to anecdotes from her medical life, most notably situations where she has had to struggle to get past a patient's superstition in order to treat them. Knowing that much of the book would focus on death, it seemed that the deathless man's continual reappearance would most naturally frustrate a doctor, so that's how the grandfather became one. That being said, in thinking about death, I believe that we all walk a very fine line between superstition and reality, no matter how steadfastly our beliefs pull us in one direction or another.

*One thing that strikes me about this book is how nuanced your characters are. For example, the reader is uncomfortably forced to re-calibrate their feelings about Luka – the village butcher who beats his wife, serves customers in a blood-soaked apron and compares 'delicious' pigs' feet to children's feet – after we discover his back-story. And even Natalia's grandfather, in some ways the book's hero, is morally complex. Was this something you worked deliberately to achieve?*

In writing several of my short stories, I had struggled with my tendency to oversimplify characters. Luka was very much a villain at the start, but it didn't seem right to throw him out there and allow him to be comfortably reviled. It seemed easy. As a writer, I didn't feel I understood him, and thought it would be useful – and fair – to explore his character further. This led to his youth as an artist and the difficult times he had, and also opened the door for me to explore Darisha the Bear and the apothecary.

*I was intrigued by your insights about the young people – Natalia and her peers – for whom the war had always been 'at the center of everything', and their seemingly paradoxical 'inability to part with it' as it draws to a close. The idea that, terrible as it is, it's both what they are used to and provides the circumstances they have planned their lives around. Are these observations based on your conversations with people you grew up with in early childhood, reading and research, or simply imagining yourself in that place? Or a combination?*

Well, thank you! They're definitely a combination. I was very young when I left, so my understanding of the war was based on the stories of people with whom I later reconnected, and my own observations of its aftermath when I returned to Serbia and Croatia. In spending my childhood in Cyprus and Egypt, I also grew up surrounded by a very restless youth culture. There's a kind of energy when people are on the brink of something, and I think that made its way into the book.

*Natalia's grandfather says, after they see an escaped zoo elephant on the streets of their neighbourhood in the middle of the night, 'The story of this war – dates, names, who started it, why – that belongs to everyone ... But something like this – this is yours. It belongs only to you. And me. Only to us.' It's those small, often surreal, moments, in this novel that brings the lived reality of this conflict and these places to life – and make the reader feel something in a way that reported facts can't. Was that something you were aiming for?*

Yes. I didn't want to tell a 'war story' straight, because I felt that relying on facts and historical accuracy and politics would restrict the essence what I wanted to write about. Personal and family mythology born of conflict, the way you keep people and situations alive long after they are gone, were both something in which I was deeply interested. I found that mostly in the small, surreal moments you describe.

*You spent your early childhood in Belgrade, then lived in Cyprus and Egypt before moving to America aged 12. Do you think your experience of these very different places has influenced the way you read and write? If so, how?*

Absolutely. Growing up, I was steeped in stories. Myths were in minutiae, even the copper platter on which the merchant around the corner sold his spices (he might tell you the platter had once belonged to Napoleon). I think the idea of a story behind everything is very prevalent in *The Tiger's Wife*; and is ultimately something by which we are all riveted. Great-grandmother's silver picture frame is that much more significant an heirloom if we are told that it survived a flood or an arduous ocean crossing – whether or not that story is actually true.

*The extended version of this interview is available online at [www.readings.com.au](http://www.readings.com.au).*

## Book of the Month

### THE TIGER'S WIFE

Téa Obreht

Orion. PB. Normally \$29.99

*Our special price \$24.95*



I returned from my Christmas holidays knowing that with *The Tiger's Wife*, I had just read my book of the year. And my euphoria hasn't subsided since: I'm happily reading the novel

a second time, and, as I write, I note with delight that Obreht has just made the cover of the *New York Times Book Review*, and, over at the *New York Times*, has received the thumbs-up from the inimitable Kakutani (among many other glowing notices). And this a debut novel, by a 25-year-old no less! I think it's an interesting question – do you, dear reader, perhaps wonder whether all of this might just be hype?

I can only share my personal discovery of this author. Hearing about her forthcoming novel late last year, and noting that she was picked by *The New Yorker* as one of the '20 Best American Writers under 40', I decided to read one of her short stories ('The Laugh', which handily appeared in last year's *Best American Stories* collection). It involved an African safari trip from memory, and it wasn't as though it was the greatest story I had ever read in my life, but I do remember being transfixed by its dynamics and its rendering of place, and thinking – as I did when I first read Nam Le – how does Obreht know all this stuff??

So the process of writerly seduction had already begun – but I still had no concept of the masterpiece Obreht had in store for me with this novel. We are in a Balkan country; precisely where is not defined, but it suits a tale where 'reality' is a slippery thing, and legends and superstitions seem to carry more weight than the historical record. A young doctor, Natalia Stefanovic, travels across the border on behalf of a charity to administer inoculations at a poverty-stricken orphanage in a remote village (in one of this narrative's occasional piercing asides, Natalia notes the irony that it was her country that made these children orphans). Not too far away, her beloved grandfather has gone away to die, without even informing his wife that he is sick. Natalia is puzzled – she knew of his illness, but at the moment of his greatest need, why did he go elsewhere? Could the story he used to tell her of his encounter with 'the deathless man' be at all relevant? And why is a woman in his native village called 'the tiger's wife'?

In the re-telling of these fables, which Natalia explores anew in the quest for the truth about her grandfather, her love for him gradually becomes a clear-eyed reckoning with her homeland: his greatest gift to her. The sombre realisation that collective historical memory can actually occlude truth and perpetuate conflict and misunderstanding – and that it is only by being attentive to our stories that we can truly connect with one another – is the book's greatest achievement. And what extraordinary storytelling! The experience of reading it brought back for me the long-ago excitement of first reading Garcia Marquez's *100 Years of Solitude*. *The Tiger's Wife* is a thrilling novel, one that I believe will be read, talked about, and passed on like some kind of talisman for many years to come.

*Martin Shaw is book buyer at Readings Carlton*

## Mark's say

*News and views from Readings' managing director Mark Rubbo*

### How much should an ebook be?

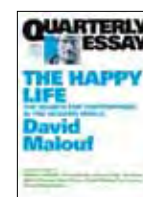


As some of you may know, in February we launched Australia's first ebook site ([www.ebooks.readings.com.au](http://www.ebooks.readings.com.au)) committed to Australian writing and featuring

works by Australian writers – something I'm really excited about. We've been working with publishers to add new titles; this month we will be adding University of Queensland Press, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Murdoch Books and Allen & Unwin titles to our list. Although we have a strong Australian bias, we do want to include writing and books from overseas and should have Penguin and Random House books available by late April/early May.

One of the perplexing issues in the ebook world is: what is the right price for an ebook? Certainly, this has been brought up by some of our customers. Without the cost of the physical book and all the costs associated with its physical distribution, the ebook price should be significantly lower. Some of our correspondents have argued that the price should be negligible, but they fail to take into account that authors deserve a decent royalty, that publishers still have significant and legitimate editorial and marketing costs and that our ebook technology has costs. In our conversations with publishers, we've taken the approach that authors and publishers need to get the same return that they do from the printed book; what can be taken out should be the distribution costs and the amount we get.

What kind of price does that give and what are the implications? Amazon, who own Kindle, price their ebooks often below what publishers charge them, in an attempt to lock in customers to the Kindle; it's very difficult for anyone to compete with that. In addition, they don't have to charge Australian customers GST, which we do. While there may be short-term benefits for readers, an ebookselling world totally dominated by an offshore behemoth can't be in the best interests of readers and writers interested in a vibrant local culture. This is certainly of concern to publishers who have developed the so called agency model, where the bookseller is just an agent of the publisher who controls the price. The trick is to balance the interest of the reader with those of the author and publisher. It will be interesting to see what transpires.



I was particularly pleased that last month our sales of the ebook version of David Malouf's *Quarterly Essay, The Good Life: On Happiness and the*

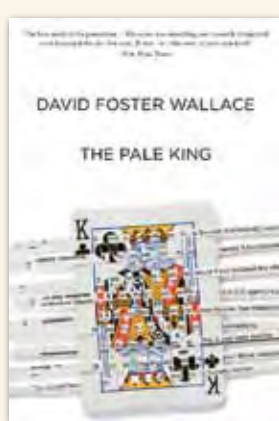
*Modern World* (PB, \$19.95, Ebook \$9.95) comprised 25 per cent of our total sales. At half the price of the print version, Malouf's ruminations on the idea of happiness are ideal for reading on the iPhone or similar device.

*Mark Rubbo is managing director of Readings. His review of David Malouf's Quarterly Essay, The Good Life, can be read on our website.*





Beautifully photographed, *Mangia! Mangia!* is not only a wonderful cooking reference, it is a heartwarming account of the sharing of wisdom, the creation of community and the preservation of rituals that keep us close to those we love.



Unfinished at the time of David Foster Wallace's death, *The Pale King* is a deeply intriguing and satisfying novel. It grapples directly with questions of life's meaning and of the value of work and family – through characters imagined with the interior force and generosity that were Wallace's unique gifts.



When Anthony Macris' son was diagnosed with autism, he and his partner Kathy had two choices: do what they were told – and could afford – or do what they thought best. This is the tragic, joyful, instructive story of how they confronted the condition that changed their lives.



At the end of the war Silvana and her son Aurek board a ship from Poland to England to meet up with her husband Janusz. After fleeing the war as a deserter Janusz is getting ready for their arrival. But the six years apart have changed them all, and they must learn that love can't work unless there are no secrets.

penguin.com.au



# New Fiction

## Australian Fiction

### THE BOOK OF RACHAEL Leslie Cannold

Text. PB. \$32.95. Ebook \$19.95



Dr Leslie Cannold is an impressive and formidable writer. Her latest offering, *The Book of Rachael*, her first novel, takes what we think we know and turns it on its head. No surprises there:

Cannold is considered one of Australia's top 20 leading intellectuals. Her life's work is about making you think and her previous books, *The Abortion Myth* and *What, No Baby?* spoke to generations of women. Both works showed where women have been stopped and why.

*The Book of Rachael* does the same. However, with this novel Dr Cannold returns to the beginnings of the Second Testament. The story is set in Nazareth in 30AD and tells the story of Rachael, the younger sister of a Jesus-like character, Joshua. Rachael is ambitious and passionate and chooses to be unhindered by her culture. This is quite an extraordinary situation, given the time and place of this novel. The brutality of women's lives is not hidden in this book. (There are some deeply disturbing passages.) These women do not have choices. Education, language and politics are not part of their lives. Rachael, however, is not going to accept her rank. She falls in love with Judah of Iscariot, Joshua's best friend – and it is this person who changes the shape of biblical history as we know it.

*The Book of Rachael* is not just a feminist rewriting of the past, though. Essentially, it is a love story about courageous people. It is fast-paced and the narrative is superb. One can only imagine the amount of research needed to achieve such an ode to a time passed. This novel is not going to make everyone happy – it is controversial and brave – but, dear readers, it is a work of fiction. How brilliant that Cannold's move to fiction has not marred her ability to ensure the reader thinks twice, and then speaks out. *Chris Gordon is events coordinator at Readings.*

Feature Review by Benjamin Law

### ME AND MR BOOKER Cory Taylor

Text. PB. \$32.95



In some senses, *Me and Mr Booker* is your conventional coming-of-age story. Sixteen-year-old girl is bored; sixteen-year-old girl falls in love; sixteen-year-old girl learns many important lessons about life. But by the

end of Chapter One, you know this novel's different. For starters, very few opening chapters end with hilariously dry English banter, before the teenage protagonist matter-of-factly takes a guy's balls into her mouth. And in most coming-of-age novels, that guy wouldn't be twice the girl's age and married.

One of the most unsettling things about *Me and Mr Booker* is how wry and funny it is, especially considering the plot is actually pretty grim when you boil it down. Martha is 16 years old and lives in a dull Australian town hours away from a big city. Viktor, her father, is insane – in the clinical sense of the word. Martha's mother can't shake Viktor off, and her brother is largely absent. Bored and lonely, Martha becomes smitten with the charming and hilarious Mr and Mrs Booker, and Mr Booker becomes smitten with Martha in a way that can't end well.

For obvious reasons, some critics have already drawn comparisons between *Me and Mr Booker* and Nabokov's *Lolita*. But Taylor's novel flips the dynamic, examining teenage female sexuality from the girl's perspective without ever dismissing her agency in the relationship. For that reason alone, some will find it an unnerving read. What helps is that it's blisteringly entertaining. I was sent the final manuscript of the book, printed out half of it, greedily inhaled it on a plane, read the rest on a laptop until the batteries ran out, then desperately resorted to reading the last few pages on my phone. I should note here that Taylor is a friend of mine, but it's really rare that I find any book that compulsive. Deftly written, *Me and Mr Booker* is a cracking read. And like the best coming-of-age stories, it reminds us that while teenagers grow up fast, it's only because they're surrounded by adults who behave like children.

*Benjamin Law is the author of The Family Law (Black Inc., PB, \$27.95)*

### BEARINGS

#### Leah Swann

Affirm. PB. \$24.95



The newest addition to the divine Long Story Shorts – and one that will nearly complete the S-H-O-R collection on your bookshelf with the T on its spine – is another example of Australia's knockout talent when it

comes to short stories. Leah Swann's involving tales are perfect little parcels of humanity: there is family, both new and old, there is life and death, pain and love, happiness – and such wrenching heartbreak I had to put the book down for a moment to hook myself back to reality.

Behind another stylish Dean Gorissen cover for the series (and of course you should not judge books by their covers, but I shamelessly do) there are seven short stories and the novella 'Silver Hands', sitting neatly in the middle. In the novella, Rachel is struck by the loss of both her husband and the movement in her arms, which, as a sculptor and a mother, she sees as her entire world. Within her past lies the origin of both problems, and it needs to be confronted to help her; in the meantime you feel Rachel as close to you as a friend.

The collection is sometimes dark, but remains full of hope, and the saddest stories are still touched with quirks: a dash of humour, the addition of an unexpected animal, or something as beautifully simple and evocative as the texture and taste of marmalade. Australia itself is as much a character as anyone else – all trees and dirt, drought and creeks, fairy penguins and the Belgrave/Lilydale train line. Leah Swann makes every tale as realistic as a memory: I would re-read 'The Singles Club' for its thrill of warm weather and new love, or 'Slow to Learn' for a stretch into the past. One little girl is called 'clear as a diamond' and, ultimately, Swann's writing is exactly that.

*Fiona Hardy is from Readings Carlton*

### THOSE WHO COME AFTER Elisabeth Holdsworth

Picador. HB. \$29.99

Our special price \$24.95



*Those Who Come After* is a book that straddles the crumbling, aristocratic world of post-war Europe and the hot, dry landscape of Australia, today and in the 1960s. Juliana Stolburg was 12 when her family of three stepped off a boat that travelled from Europe



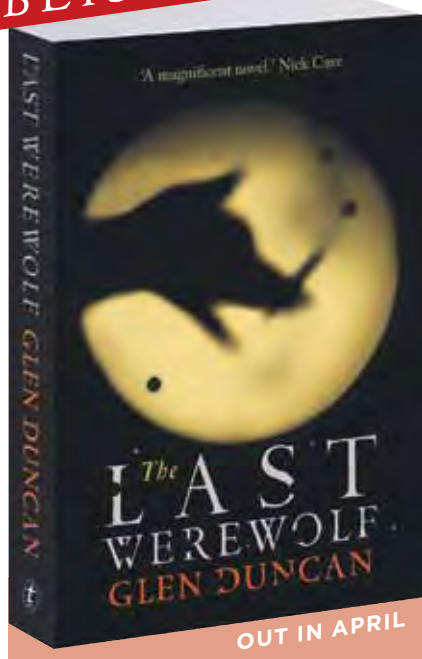
'The church has spent millennia writing women out of history. In the wonderful *Book of Rachael*, Leslie Cannold returns them to their rightful place at the centre of one of our most powerful stories.'

**SOPHIE CUNNINGHAM**

TEXT PUBLISHING

'A sexy, blood-spattered page-turner, beautifully crafted and full of genuine suspense, that tears the thorax out of the horror genre to create something that stands rapturous and majestic and entirely on its own.'

**NICK CAVE**



OUT IN APRIL

TEXTPUBLISHING.COM.AU



to Melbourne in 1959. With her father, the son of a Lord of Zeeland (a province of the Netherlands) and her mother, a Jewish peasant and political prisoner of the death camp Dachau, she moves to the bottom of the earth to restore the fortune that was lost to the Stolburgs as a result of the war. But the family has lost much more than heirlooms and gold.

This atypical migrant tale weaves between Juliana's life at 60, as a just-retired diplomat, and her life as a sickly child, first in Zeeland, playing in the collapsing castles of her ancestors, and then as a strong-willed adolescent in the new world of Melbourne. Married, but childless, Juliana realises she is the last of the illustrious Stolburgs when her aunt, Lady Katrien, a lady-in-waiting to the royal family in the Netherlands, dies. Elisabeth Holdsworth was born in Zeeland and arrived in Australia in the same year as her protagonist. In 2007 she won the Calibre Prize for an essay with the same title as this, her first novel.

*Those Who Come After* explores the legacy of the war that ravaged Europe and the people who survived. It is the story of resilience, emotional fall-out and an era that slowly collapsed. Although parts of this book feel clunky, this wide-ranging story encompasses a life that has borne unimaginable trials. Holdsworth writes without emotional fanfare, allowing the reader to be swept across oceans to the icy climes of Zeeland, and back again, to the sound of cicadas in the Australian air.

Virginia Millen is an editor at *Hardie Grant Magazines* and a freelance reviewer

## THE LAST WEREWOLF

Glen Duncan

Text. PB. \$32.95. Ebook \$19.95



Mod-glam vampire rot has finally lost its reign at Top of the Pops. And in many ways, this is a story that pits these pitiful snobs prone to catatonia against the more comely monsters of hunger, lust and depravity –

werewolves. For a serious literary novelist on his seventh book, this is a brave move. Duncan has made his name writing about sex and violence (see *I, Lucifer*), and to add further supernatural elements to this well-traversed territory risks triteness. But this isn't your regular gothic-horror-thriller.

Jacob Marlowe, an Oxfordshire gentleman, turned werewolf 167 years ago (1842) on a walking tour in Wales. Now, he's fallen into deep despondency and melancholy. He's exhausted the modes: 'hedonism, asceticism, spontaneity, reflection, everything from miserable Socrates to the happy pig'. Thus what ensues is a fatalistic ennui, and preparedness to meet his death on the next moon of the Curse. He is the last of his species, being hunted for years by the World Organisation for the Control of Occult Phenomena (WOCOP). Of course, plans are hampered by Hollywood plot twists and lycanthropic hunger and lust – and, quite possibly, love.

Sure there are vampires, hookers and hired mercenaries here too, and while it might all smack of a work adapted from the screen to page, Duncan can certainly turn a phrase. Sitting in a three-piece-suit drinking Macallan and chain-smoking Camel filters, Marlowe tells us that God is dead, but irony's utterly alive. He's painfully aware that monsters die out when the collective imagination no longer needs them. You'd be hard-pressed not to howl out loud at Marlowe's sharp, depraved mind. Think Warren Zevon meets Grinderman, and it's little wonder that it becomes all the more piquant to have such a mythical beast tilt the lid on twenty-first century humanity.

Luke May is assistant manager of *Readings St Kilda*

## THE SPARROWS OF EDWARD STREET

Elizabeth Stead

UQP. PB. \$32.95



Aria Sparrow is 17 and struggling to help her mother, Hanora, and younger sister, Elizabeth Rose, cope with the grim realities of living in a disused army camp that has become the dreaded housing commission settlement on the

fringe of Sydney in 1948.

Row upon row of corrugated iron huts are set in the dust, with gaps between the walls and ceilings that let in the searing heat and the icy cold. Hanora medicates herself into a haze and Elizabeth Rose, like the royal she's named after, feels the humiliation of homelessness and dependency. It is Aria, as our narrator, who lives up to the family name: Sparrow. These tiny birds thrive by picking through the debris, their sharp eyes finding the next scrap; and always willing to fight for their share.

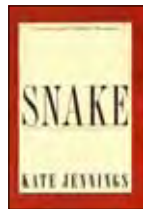
She ekes a living as a photographer's model in the city, paid a pittance to 'love' everything from sandsoap to vegetables. Her big breasts are what she plainly knows as her 'currencies' and also what prevents her from entering the more lucrative world of the flat and curveless professional model. Back in the camp, with 'the theatre of this day lifted a grubby curtain to the drama of faded hopes', she can't help but take an interest in the lives and sufferings of other residents. Aria is torn between doing the right thing for everyone and using her 'currencies' to jump ahead of the queue for a flat: who will help her family if she doesn't? Covering an embarrassing chapter of New South Wales' social history, this is an interesting read for lovers of post-war fiction and the humour found amongst the struggle to survive.

Kath Lockett is a freelance writer and reviewer

## SNAKE

Kate Jennings

Black Inc. PB. \$19.95. Ebook \$11.95.



*Snake* is Kate Jennings' first novel, first published in 1996, now re-issued – because, quite frankly, it is a brilliant novel, written with sparse effective language. Jennings is originally a poet and her move to writing a novel easily

demonstrates the power of lucid imagination. It is the story of a 1950s marriage in outback Australia. Irene realises almost immediately that her marriage to Rex is not what she wants. Together, they attempt to create a life for themselves and their children, bleakly known in the novel only as Girlie and Boy. As the years pass, Irene's contempt for Rex and his quiet ways grows into pure hatred. The title, 'Snake', conjures up this insidious marriage, ending with a strike of venom ...

The novel is divided into four parts, allowing the two main protagonists their own voice, although it is the judicious separation of the chapters that creates a rising tension. Each chapter has its own title and with these headings, Jennings' power as a poet can also be realised. (Each title contributes a separate layer to the story.) With the same approach, the landscape described reflects the growing desolation of the relationship. It is Irene's rage at the dryness of the land and the muted emotions of her terribly loyal but ineffective husband that in the end drive this story to its final tragedy. Reminiscent of Lawson's *The Drover's Wife*, yet also a depiction, perhaps, of why Jennings herself left Australia (she now lives in New York). Like Irene, I'm sure she thought there were adventures to be had away from this 'sunburnt country'. *Snake* is not a sweet tale, but one of aching loss for all those involved. This short novel is, without doubt, one of the most carefully crafted and evocative tales to emerge in the last 20 years of Australian fiction.

Chris Gordon is events coordinator of *Readings Carlton*

# Q&A with Leslie Cannold

Leslie Cannold, author of the critically acclaimed *The Abortion Myth* (2000) and *What, No Baby?* (2005), talks to *Readings Monthly* editorial assistant Phoebe Bond about her third book, and first work of fiction, *The Book of Rachael*. (Text, PB, \$32.95, Ebook \$19.95)



*The Book of Rachael is set in Israel 2000 years ago. In your Author's Note you mention that you don't view the book as historical fiction. Where do you draw the line between fiction and historical accuracy and what historical details were important for you to get right?*

I began the fiction-writing journey in a different place on this question to where I ended it. When I started *The Book of Rachael*, my experience was as an academic researcher and journalist. It was outside of the scope of possibility to write anything I didn't know or believe to be true based on available evidence. It was all I could do not to footnote! However, having written a first draft bristling with far too many, too precisely drawn facts and realising – okay, so perhaps someone told me – that it didn't work as a novel, I was forced to reconsider my position.

Ultimately, a novel has to work as a story and by the third draft of the story I finally understood this, not just in my head but my heart. There had also been enough time between drafts that the masses of knowledge I'd packed into my first go had faded. The knowledge or impressions that stuck with me were ones I decided must be most important to the story I was telling so I wrote the novel with these as the foundation stones and only returned to my tomes for further historical facts on an as-needs basis.

*You have created a style of speech that seems to observe the conventions of the time but simultaneously feels fresh and modern. How did you go about finding the voices for your characters?*

That is so nice of you to say – thanks! This was certainly among the most challenging aspects of making the novel work. I wrote and rewrote that first chapter many times, making very few changes on the nature or order of events I was recounting, but working constantly with the voice. Throughout, I returned to the Gospels and the First Testament to absorb the cadence and phrases of these texts, but combined this with fierce pragmatism. If more than one reader of the manuscript said, 'that's lovely, but what does it mean?' or simply wrote 'huh?' in the margins, I'd usually – not always, but usually – bite the bullet and change it. My editor was also pretty clear about the merits and limits of the vernacular enterprise on which I'd embarked, and when she decided something was too ye-olde or just plain confusing, I was smart enough to give way.

*You say that the impetus for this novel came from watching a BBC documentary about the life of Jesus. Can you talk a bit about this initial inspiration and where it led you?*

I love documentaries, and many years ago I saw a BBC one about Jesus of Nazareth – the man, not the religious figure. It was broadcast over weeks, the narrator microscopically examining every shred of evidence about how Jesus lived and died. At one point, the names and fates, even the burial places, of his four brothers was canvassed before the breezy assertion was made that Jesus may have had sisters, too, but no one knew their names. The program moved on. But I was stuck. What kind of world painstakingly records the names and stories of important people's brothers, but not their sisters? What would it have been like for a girl to have come of age in such a world, especially if she was preternaturally bright, as well as determined? I decided right there that I would tell the stories of these forgotten women, feeling it was both an honour and a challenge to take on the task of reclaiming them for history. Eventually, it came to feel like a responsibility, too, and it was this sense of duty to the sisters that kept me going during the lean years.

*As a feminist, you've written a book set in an era when women were totally subjugated by men. Do you see The Book of Rachael as a feminist novel? What were the intentions and tensions for you in writing of book?*

I see the project of reclaiming women lost to history as a feminist project and of course I'm sympathetic to women born in times where their horizons were so limited. But it's a novel and so once the decision to write it was made, all such considerations were set aside so I could focus on the sole and difficult-to-achieve objective of every work of fiction: to be a bloody good yarn. Indeed the highest praise I have received for the book so far has been from a not-particularly-feminist bloke who told me he couldn't put it down for this reason.

*You build a strong sense of how much the spirited protagonist Rachael struggles to find her place in the world. How do you think Rachael would fare in today's society? And was this your way of writing the journey of womankind in general?*

Rachael would have loved being born today. I get a smile on my face just thinking about her. She'd be the prime minister or head of the UN or something. Perhaps she'd do this by not having kids, but she might manage even with a few. I wouldn't put anything past her.

*You evoke a tremendous sense of place in your novel, I often felt like I was right there with the characters walking through the landscapes of ancient Israel. 'Gethsemane ... where stone walls crumbled from the weight of years, and the branches of olive trees straggled towards God like a hag's withered arms.' How did you go about constructing this world?*

Thanks again, this Q & A is really good for my self esteem! Look, I have been to Israel three times, though it was a number of years ago and way before I decided to write the book. Ideally, I would have travelled there again, but this just wasn't feasible. So I dragged out all the photos I took during those years and pasted them around my desk, surfed the net for more images and put them up, and then let my imagination build the rest of the picture based on the world described in the Bible.

Visit [www.readings.com.au](http://www.readings.com.au) to see the longer version of this interview.

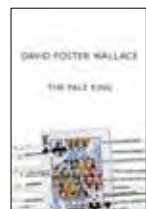


# International Fiction

## Feature Fiction Title:

### THE PALE KING David Foster Wallace

Hamish Hamilton. HB. \$39.95  
Our special price \$31.95  
Released 15 April 2011



David Foster Wallace was, as so many critics and fellow writers have attested, both a literary genius and a major influence on so many of the writers who came after him. Peter Craven calls him, 'The greatest American writer of his generation'; *The New York Times* Michiko Kakutani dubbed him, 'A prose magician'. *The Pale King* (unfinished at his time of death) is the last literary work we'll see from him – and it's no exaggeration to say it's the year's most keenly anticipated literary event. Wallace intended the book as an exploration of 'crushing, crushing' boredom and the possibility of transcending that boredom to find bliss on the other side – and a characteristically fearless and original questioning of life's meaning, and the value of work and family.

The agents at the IRS Regional Examination Center in Peoria, Illinois, appear ordinary enough to newly-arrived trainee David Foster Wallace. But as he immerses himself in a routine so tedious and repetitive that new employees receive boredom-survival training, he learns of the extraordinary variety of personalities drawn to this strange calling. And he has arrived at a moment when forces within the IRS are plotting to eliminate even what little humanity and dignity the work still has.

Visit our website after 15 April to read our Readings review of *The Pale King* by Triple R Breakfasters book reviewer Emmett Stinson.

### A MAN OF PARTS David Lodge

Harvill. PB. Normally \$32.95  
Our special price \$27.95



David Lodge's latest novel opens in 1944 as London is being hit by the Blitz and H.G. Wells – once but no longer the most famous writer in Britain – discovers he has cancer. Approaching death evokes in Wells an internal interviewer, who draws out his life story: a rise from poverty to great popular and financial success as an author, renown for his idealistic political views, scandal for his sexual mores and acclaim as an originator of science fiction that endured even as his popularity faded.

Wells is ripe for fictionalisation and Lodge makes the most of him, skilfully weaving original material (letters between Wells and Henry James are a highlight) and excerpts from Wells' books into invented scenes. Wells' writing and his womanising share the focus, both shown in their complexity. On one level a literary hack, churning out everything from pot-boilers to political polemics and social comedies, Wells' incisive imagination was early to explore the possible impacts of science on humanity and foresaw the rise of tank warfare and atomic power. His deep beliefs in sexual freedom and emancipation for women conveniently allowed him to seduce highly intelligent, beautiful, occasionally very young women, often with the knowledge and sometimes the support of his second wife, Jane. With two of these women – Amber Reeves and Rebecca West – he had children. His behaviour raised eyebrows then, as it may still, for different reasons.

In the unseen questioner, Lodge has found an effective way of disrupting Wells' point of view. Without hammering retrospective judgement home, the device draws attention

to Wells' egotism, selfishness and blindness to the effects of his actions on others, particularly the women in his life and his children. More subtly, these traits are also hinted at through the gently humorous storytelling. It's an involving, enjoyable depiction of the writer's life. The background, a familiar one peopled with the eccentric British literary and socialist elite of the late Victorian and Edwardian years, is also entertaining. But still: I would have liked to have seen more of Jane. *Ann Standish is a freelance reviewer*

### A LOVE LETTER FROM A STRAY MOON Jay Griffiths

Text. PB. \$19.95. Ebook \$19.95



Griffiths has taken the life of Frida Kahlo as inspiration, creating a fictional autobiography that is a passionate ode to love and creation at their most pure and primal. Acts that can inspire delirious joy, or knee-jerk reactionary fear – art that has consequences beyond the success found within the four walls of a museum, the earnest documentary, or the polite review – art that can incite tears and rebellion.

For this purpose, there can hardly be a better subject than Frida. Despite a horrific accident as a young woman, she lived her life to the maximum and her paintings are honest and raw outward expressions of an individual's inner pain, depicting subject matter that continues to resonate: love, fertility and death. Frida's exuberant identification with indigenous Mexican mythology created a powerful sense of connectedness to the earth and nature, which is another window of expression for the author of this book.

I started reading this deceptively slim volume with some hesitation – there have been some notoriously melodramatic/pretentious renditions of the artistic life – but as I found Griffiths' voice harmonising with what I know of Frida's life, I was swept up and seduced. Through the great love that Frida had for Diego Rivera, the pain of Frida's accident and the subsequent loss of fertility and motherhood; love, loss and maternalism are explored in Griffiths' whirling prose. Recently, I received a bewildering advertisement for shoes *à la* Frida Kahlo – not only did they not look remotely Mexican (to me), they had really high heels – perhaps that was meant to represent the metal rods that impaled the young Kahlo. Frida of the monobrow as fashion promotion?! Style and guts: yes, in buckets. Griffiths has taken these qualities and wrought a lyrical piece that soars – and takes you with it.

*Margaret Snowden is Art & Design Buyer*

### THE PARIS WIFE Paula McLain

Little Brown. PB. Normally \$30  
Our special price \$24.95



This is the story of a marriage. Or, perhaps, of how a good marriage ends. It is also the story of a place and of an era. Ernest Hemingway is a struggling but ambitious writer trying to scratch a living from his freelance journalism when he meets Hadley. She is depicted as somewhat of a lost soul, with few prospects for anything other than a comfortable, middle class existence.

It seems an unlikely union, until we realise that Hadley's true passion is for her husband, so that she becomes his first devotee, providing the kind of reliable emotional and financial support that allows him to risk everything for his writing. Hadley helps make it possible for Ernest to live in Paris between the wars, when it attracted people such as Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein and Ezra Pound, among others. It is an old-fashioned view of marriage, one that is not much challenged by McLain, but it

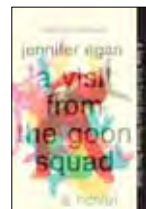
is difficult to resist the pull that Hadley's perspective provides, so that we too become enthralled by Ernest, by where his ambitions take him, and by his complicated, passionate friendships.

This is a thoroughly researched novel that will appeal to readers of biography as much as readers of fiction. Despite a somewhat unadventurous prose style, I loved it and recommend it highly. For Hemingway's take on his time in Paris, try *A Moveable Feast* (Vintage Classics, PB, \$12.95).

*Bruno Moro is manager of Readings Malvern*

### A VISIT FROM THE GOON SQUAD Jennifer Egan

Anchor. PB. \$21.95



Jennifer Egan's latest novel consists of a series of tangentially linked chapters concerning that most pressing of baby boomer preoccupations: time. The lynchpin is Bennie Salazar, an untalented musician who mines his love of music through the record producing business. We leap back and forth through time, meeting Bennie's friends, girlfriends, publicists – the character count is as vast as it is diverse – and each of their stories offers another radial aspect of how nothing we do is an accurate prospectus of our futures, and that we all look around at certain points and wonder: *how the hell did I end up like this?*

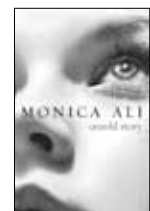
Though the book is deliberately jagged in structure, there is a tenderness in the treatment of all the character's lives that binds the disparate strands together. A beautiful example is the story of a young man, drunk and high and desperately unhappy, who dives into the toxic flotsam of New York's East River in a final and devastating act of self-loathing and futility. The empathy Egan brings to the youth in *Goon Squad* allows for an even more brutal dissection of the old. But their accumulated impatience, anger and bitterness is tempered by her understanding of the primal human urge to keep going, no matter how much our bodies deteriorate, our relationships implode, our businesses rise and fall, and our options rapidly evaporate.

*Goon Squad* ends with a leap into the future, extrapolating from current trends to a world of relentless individual marketing. But it is nostalgic too, checking in on our quest for authenticity. It is a clever novel – one chapter is a PowerPoint presentation – but not an exercise in gimmickry. The PowerPoint is the work of a young girl, and builds a picture of her family so startlingly real and comprehending of family dynamics that I was moved to tears. Not every chapter reaches these heights, but the peaks are upthrusts of originality and greatness. *A Visit From the Goon Squad* is easily the best novel I read last year. It's a must.

*Robbie Egan is manager of Readings Carlton*

### UNTOLD STORY Monica Ali

Doubleday. PB. \$32.95



The third novel from Monica Ali (author of the Booker-shortlisted *Brick Lane*) takes the tortured fairytale life of Princess Diana as 'a point of departure' for her story about a fictional princess. Acknowledging her inspiration, she's said, 'When [Diana] died, she seemed to be at some kind of crossroads in her life. Over the years since her death, I've sometimes found myself wondering how she would have matured into her 40s and beyond.' This book promises to offer an answer of sorts – but, Ali says, it's not intended as a kind of sequel to the media story of Diana's life, but an exploration of identity and what makes a person who they are; the central question common to Ali's fiction.

### PIGEON ENGLISH Stephen Kelman

Bloomsbury. PB. \$29.99



This debut novel – inspired by a high profile real-life murder of a ten-year-old on an London estate – was the subject of a twelve-publisher bidding war, eventually sold for 'a six-figure sum'. It boasts a front-cover rave from *Room*'s Emma Donoghue. And the BBC has commissioned an adaption directed by *Skins*' Adam Smith. So: expectations are high. Harri, an 11-year-old Ghanian immigrant is caught up in gang warfare in his South London estate when he and his best friend decide to 'investigate' the murder of an older boy stabbed outside the fried chicken shop. Told from Harri's perspective, this is a riveting exploration of a world where the hope of new beginnings meets moral compromise and danger.

### THE FINAL TESTAMENT OF THE HOLY BIBLE James Frey

Hachette. PB. Normally \$32.99  
Our special price \$27.95



The ever-controversial James Frey (of *A Million Little Pieces* fame) delivers what just may be his most talked-about work yet – a fictional update of the Bible story. The Messiah is alive and living in New York:

sleeping around with men and women alike, euthanising the dying and healing the sick, defying the government and condemning the holy. Frey asks – what would you do if you met the modern-day Messiah and he changed your life? Would you believe?

'This boy's love letter to the world made me laugh and tremble all the way through. *Pigeon English* is a triumph.'

Emma Donoghue, author of *Room*

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## 22 BRITANNIA ROAD

Amanda Hodgkinson

Fig Tree. PB. \$32.95



World War II is always a painful subject to tackle and in her debut novel, *22 Britannia Road*, Amanda Hodgkinson doesn't shy away. She writes not only about the terrors of war and secrets people hold once it's

over, but also has a frank and open look at what it means to be a family, a husband, a wife and a child of parents who are, at their core, only human.

Silvanna is a Polish refugee fleeing a past that still wakes her in the night screaming. Arriving in England with her six-year-old son Aurek, they are met by her husband (Aurek's father), Janusz. At first, we don't know how Janusz made it from Poland to England, or how he has managed to set up a whole new life for them, but he welcomes his lost wife and child, and they desperately try to settle down and blend into the English way of life.

The story continually jumps between Janusz's point of view and Silvanna's, with an occasional glimpse into Aurek's, never dwelling long in either the past or the present. Their disjointed history – and now this painful togetherness – highlights how secrets can destroy a family. The reader can see how each character is torn apart by memories of home, their early marriage and the war years, where their experiences are so different and yet similar, to the present-day, where they can't let go. The child Aurek just wishes 'the enemy' (Janusz) would disappear and leave him and his mother to return to the wild woods where he feels most at home. The question throughout is: do these people have enough spirit left to hold themselves together, or will their new life shatter and fall once these secrets are revealed?

Kate Rockstrom is from Readings Carlton

## YOU THINK THAT'S BAD

Jim Shepard

Knopf. HB. \$35.95



A new story collection from Jim Shepard is one of the treats of my reading life. His new book, *You Think That's Bad*, is as original and diverse as the previous three, and reminds me most of his brilliant second collection,

*Love and Hydrogen*. What makes Shepard so remarkable is his ability to inhabit wildly different worlds. If a theme runs through *You Think That's Bad*, it is isolation, but that skirts around the edges of Shepard's achievement. His range is limitless – he can and does take you anywhere.

There is a story about two brothers and an emotionally warped love triangle, the main character stuck on the Kokoda track as the Japanese advance invisibly through the suffocating tropical jungle. There is another about the special-effects creator of *Godzilla*, one about the adventurer Freya Stark, and a disturbingly thrilling tale about a serial killer preying on children in fifteenth-century France. Shepard moves through time and location with seamless, effortless grace, and appears able to write about anything he takes to be interesting. His research, whether it be historical, bibliographical, or a speculative leap into the future, never comes across as information. It is as if he absorbs lives and worlds, and mulls them over before giving them back to us in sharper, purer tones.

Shepard is not read widely in Australia, and this is a mystery to me. His novels are masterful too, and *Project X*, a thin slip of genius about two misfit high-school boys, is one of my all-time favourite books. He is a master of the interior and of the landscape, and is a prose stylist of extreme elegance. If you haven't heard of him, look him up; *You Think That's Bad* is as good a place to start as any. Robbie Egan is manager of Readings Carlton

## SWAMPLANDIA!

Karen Russell

Knopf. HB. \$34.95



Karen Russell's debut novel is not effortless, breezy, charming, fresh, or much else that much-hyped debut novels are often reported to be. Instead, Russell's dark tangle of a book demonstrates that she is a writer

with serious intentions and some very unusual material.

It all starts innocently enough at Swamp-landia!, a DIY theme park where a family of not-Indians called the Bigtrees trade in live animals, kitsch, and the potential for grievous bodily harm. Those familiar with Australia's giant banana and World's Largest Prawn will feel right at home amongst Swamplandia's alligator wrestlers and airboat rides. When the star gator-wrestler dies and the park flounders, however, her children and the story seep out of the park and into south Florida's procession of weirdness.

Among its attractions: an alibino girl who elopes with a ghost; a stunningly accurate picture of the ritual unpleasantness of both teenage boys and their poorly paid hospital-ity jobs; a tooth-and-nail fight started by a senile resident of a nautical-themed floating nursing home; and the state of Florida itself, perhaps the closest a real place can come to a parallel universe.

Russell, whose first book was a collection of short stories, winds her novel just as tightly to fit in all her best details and anecdotes. Her collection of staged oddities is fascinating, but the novel slows down and nearly falters as chapters alternate between unconnected episodes from very different paths of two Bigtree siblings. With some effort, however, the novel pulls loose and one-ups its oddities. Russell's novel cinches shut as a coming of age story – the fairy tale ends, the world grows weird and briefly hellish, and closure, when it finally comes, is as welcome, beautiful, and almost inevitable as making it through adolescence in one piece.

Luke Meinzen is an intern at Sleepers Publishing and a freelance writer

## BESTSELLER

Allesandro Gallenzi

Released 15 March. Alma. PB. \$19.95



This wicked satire is being dubbed 'the *Devil Wears Prada* of the publishing world' – and yes, it's written by an insider (a working publisher). Jim Talbot, rejected by every agent and publisher in the land, is

willing to go to extreme lengths to make his dream of literary stardom come true. Charles Randall is the eccentric head of a small independent publisher, about to be sacked by a newly appointed business consultant. Inevitably and calamitously, Charles and Jim's paths are about to collide ...

## Poetry

### ILLUMINATIONS

Arthur Rimbaud, John Ashbery (translator)

WW Norton. HB. \$34.95



John Ashbery's long-awaited, virtuosic translation of Arthur Rimbaud's *Illuminations* is presented with the French text in parallel and a preface by its new translator. This collection of magic lantern slides, each an intense

and rapid dream, is recognised as an unparalleled masterpiece of world literature. 'An exquisite, untainted translation of Rimbaud; a transmission as pure as a winged dove driven by snow.' – Patti Smith

## (Vintage) Classic of the Month

### COLLECTED STORIES

John Cheever

Vintage Classic. PB. \$12.95



John Cheever's *Collected Stories*, first awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1979, is a magnificent, inspiring collection, and one that has resolutely stood the test of time.

Spanning from his earliest writings in the mid 1940s to the late 1970s, *Collected Stories* features Cheever's most iconic works, including 'The Swimmer', 'The Enormous Radio', and 'The Country Husband'. These stories plumb the depths of human experience and have rightfully earned Cheever the title 'Chekhov of the suburbs'. And yet, for all his accolades, John Cheever (1912–82) faded from critical attention after his death. It wasn't until 1991, with the publication of the scandalous *The Journals of John Cheever* (also available in Vintage Classic, PB, \$12.95) that his reputation underwent significant revision. Here, his public persona was so brutally contrasted with his private – hitherto depicted as a wry, conservative and monogamous man; the journals instead portrayed Cheever as plagued by chronic alcoholism. He struggled, too, with acceptance of his bisexuality, for which he consistently blamed his long-suffering wife, Mary.

All this biographical stuff naturally complicates the way you read him. Was he an essentially good yet brooding chap, or an adulterous, misogynous tyrant? You'll need to read *The Journals* to decide on that yourself – and ultimately, it would be a shame if it clouded your opinion. Because the man, as horrible as he sounded, can write, and there remains such a thrilling sense of anticipation when cracking open the Cheever spine – as if delving into something fresh and cool and profound. Never has a writer so poignantly captured the tedium of the American suburbs.

Like his contemporary Richard Yates, Cheever's fiction dwells largely in the domestic, exploring life in mid-twentieth century America, and it is located mostly in the Upper East Side and the suburbs of Westchester. We read about families holidaying in ski lodges, home renovations, servants and parties; characters recur. They are ordinary folk, with ordinary feelings – yet something larger and more damaging festers in them: loneliness and helplessness. There is such aching beauty in these tales, so sad and authentic. And beneath the surface of sparse, neat prose seethes other kinds of compelling desire: for escape, for the more generous times in the past, and for the climax of confined rage and corruption.

For me, the stand-outs are 'The Sorrows of Gin' and 'The Swimmer'. 'The Sorrows of Gin' is a short tale, told from the perspective of a little girl, Amy. Her parents are upper-middle class and like to attend parties – they both enjoy a tippie. The family employs a cook, Rosemary, who it later transpires has a severe drinking problem. Amy's father has a drinking problem of his own – he needs several drinks in the evening before he softens: 'At last,' Amy thinks, relieved, 'he is happy.' And 'The Swimmer', Cheever's most famous and most anthologised story, remains awe-inspiring in its casual, cruel critique of bourgeois America, chronicling the Narcissus-like Neddy Merrill's bizarre quest to swim across all the swimming pools in his neighbourhood.

Rebecca Starford is editor of Kill Your Darlings

## Great new titles from Hachette



TIGER'S WIFE

Tea Obreht

As Natalia and a friend travel across the former Yugoslavia, immunising villagers, the body of her grandfather turns up in a hospital in the middle of nowhere. She and her family have no idea why.



WHEN GOD WAS A RABBIT

Sarah Winman

*When God Was A Rabbit* is a mesmerising portrait of childhood and growing up; the loss of innocence, eccentricity and familial bonds, a story of the unbreakable tie between a brother and sister.



LAND OF PAINTED CAVES

Jean M Auel

Once again, Jean Auel combines her brilliant narrative skills and appealing characters with a remarkable re-creation of the way life was lived thousands of years ago, rendering the terrain, dwelling places, longings, beliefs, creativity and daily lives of Ice Age Europeans as real to the reader as today's news.



PARIS WIFE

Paula McLain

A heart-wrenching novel of ambition and betrayal that captures a remarkable period of time and a love affair between two unforgettable people: Ernest Hemingway and his first wife Hadley.



# New Crime **Dead Write** *with Fiona Hardy*

In a new Dead Write feature, from now on I'll be choosing my own book of the month: the crime tale I loved the most. However, this month saw too many good titles to pick just one, so with the help of previous Dead Write scribe Kate O'Mara, a big Henning Mankell fan, I cheated. Here are our top two.

## LIVE WIRE Harlan Coben

Orion. PB. Normally \$33  
Our special price \$27.95



*Live Wire* is almost unfairly entertaining; when you put the book down and go back to your normal life, you are crushed by the lack of fights, rock stars, private jets and endless drama. (Unless, of course, you are a football

player.) Talent agent Myron Bolitar never has a dull moment, even in his New York office – his co-workers are two female ex-wrestlers and the feared (and filthy rich) Windsor Horne Lockwood III. After a seemingly inconsequential request from one of his clients, ex-tennis star Suzze T, to track down someone slandering her on Facebook, Myron realises that this problem will eventually lead right back to himself and the brother he has been estranged from for years. The tangled relationship between tennis players, rock stars, the mafia, Our Hero and his family is utterly enthralling – and all bets are off regarding who will survive the confusion and what the hell is actually going on. Coben's writing is ridiculously enjoyable, leading me to laugh, grip the page in tension, and tear through the book in high speed excitement. It's gritty and bloody enough to not be purely light entertainment, but still fun enough to not

leave the reader tiptoeing about their house nervously locking all the windows afterwards. I heartily recommend *Live Wire* – and with Suzze's rock-star husband Lex Power hailing from sunny Melbourne (and playing his breakout gig at St Kilda's Esplanade Hotel), it has a nice dash of familiarity too. FH

## TROUBLED MAN Henning Mankell

Harvill. PB. Normally \$32.95  
Our special price \$27.95



Not long after Linda Wallander announces to her father she is pregnant, her future father-in-law – a respected former high-ranking naval officer – vanishes. To Kurt Wallander, who officially has nothing to do with the

investigation, his disappearance seems linked to one of the biggest controversies in Swedish history – the incursions into neutral Swedish waters by Soviet submarines in the early eighties, and the ensuing allegations of espionage and other Cold War treachery. In the course of asking inappropriate questions, treading on people's toes and sticking his nose in where it doesn't belong, he slowly uncovers what could be a shocking spy scandal. Mankell has declared this to definitely be the last Wallander story, and there is certainly an air of finality to the whole affair. The Wallander in this book is an old man, looking back on a long and not always illustrious career, slowly losing his memory, disappearing into the passage of time. It's a sometimes puzzling goodbye. But if we must say farewell, then let us salute the troubled inspector and his creator, who almost singlehandedly brought modern Scandinavian crime writing

to the world's attention.

Kate O'Mara is from Readings Carlton

Thinker, family man, incorruptible: everyone who loves Commissario Guido Brunetti will be thrilled to know that Donna Leon's creation is back for her newest book, *Drawing Conclusions* (Heinemann, PB, Normally \$32.95, Our special price \$27.95). When an elderly woman dies in her apartment, the medical examiner on the case is happy to write it off as a heart attack, but Brunetti seeks the truth for the dead woman, who helped sufferers of domestic violence. A challenging view of how women and the elderly are viewed, even in the beautiful-if-brittle Venice, and how justice can be found in different ways.

*Gallows Bird* (HarperCollins, PB, Normally \$32.99, Our special price \$29.95), by Sweden's number-one female author Camilla Lackberg, is the fourth book starring Detective Patrik Hedstrom and his very-very-soon wife-to-be Erica, who first shackled up in the thrilling *The Ice Princess* (HarperCollins, PB, Now \$9.95). With plenty on his plate, a car accident seems like little to be concerned about, but along with a new police officer in town and the arrival of the cast and crew of a new reality television show – a drama-filled group at the best of times – the beautiful, tiny, freezing town of Tanumshede is about to find out that the accident is anything but.

Elsebeth Egholm's fame is stratospheric in Denmark, and we are finally getting to try her for ourselves, with the release of her first book in English, *Next of Kin* (PB, Pier 9, Normally \$29.99, Our special price \$24.95, Ebook \$19.99). Journalist and part-time sleuth Dicte

Svendsen is anonymously given a recording of a horrible beheading, and along with Inspector John Wagner and the reluctant help of the Danish secret service, she does what she can to identify the murderer. Religious hysteria is running rampant through Denmark, aided (of course) by the media, and when Dicte's daughter is attacked, the horror of the investigation rushes home.



The ever-popular and fantastically facial-haired Michael Connelly is back with *Fifth Witness* (Allen & Unwin, PB, Normally \$32.95, Our special price \$27.95), the fourth Mickey Haller thriller. With the global financial

crisis leading to the foreclosure of many people's homes, Haller is now in the business of foreclosure defense, and took as his first client a woman desperate to keep her home. After a mortgage banker is murdered in a parking lot, however, Mickey's client – who the bank had taken a restraining order against – is accused of the crime. With Haller's first adventure, *The Lincoln Lawyer*, coming soon to a theatre near you, it's worth finding out why Connelly remains such an enduring bestseller.

Colin Cotterill takes us to a more tropical climate in *Killed at the Whim of a Hat* (PB, Quercus, \$32.99), where hopeful crime reporter Jimm Juree is in despair when she is forced by her eccentric family to move to a coastal village away from the much more journalistically fascinating Chiang Mai. Luckily for her (but unluckily for those involved), this little village is about to literally unearth a crime and Jimm is going to find herself with more than enough to report on.

**POZIÈRES\***  
Scott Bennett  
'Pozières has languished in Gallipoli's shadow for almost a century. Scott Bennett shines a probing light into that darkness.'  
Patrick Lindsay

**LITTLE PEOPLE\***  
Jane Sullivan  
'A pure delight – I fell in love with this glorious novel from the very first page.'  
Toni Jordan

**WHO AM I? AND IF SO, HOW MANY?\***  
Richard Precht  
An international bestseller that uses a light touch to answer all the big philosophical questions.

**WIKILEAKS AND THE AGE OF TRANSPARENCY\***  
Micah Sifry  
A fascinating exploration of the WikiLeaks phenomenon as part of a larger movement for greater transparency and citizen empowerment.

**DISCONNECT\***  
Devra Davis  
This riveting exposé outlines the dangers posed by mobile-phone radiation. Essential reading for all mobile-phone users and abusers.

**MARATHON\***  
Richard Billows  
A fresh, gripping look at one of Western history's defining moments: the battle of Marathon.

**SCRIBE** [www.scribepublications.com.au](http://www.scribepublications.com.au) \*Also available as eBooks

**HarperCollins Publishers**  
[harpercollins.com.au](http://harpercollins.com.au)

**Mezza Italiana:**  
An Enchanting Story About Love, Family, La Dolce Vita and Finding Your Place in the World  
ZOË BOCCABELLA  
9780733329548 \$29.99

**My Dear I Wanted to Tell You**  
BY LOUISA YOUNG  
9780007415755  
RRP \$29.99

Beautiful writing, gorgeous settings, mouthwatering food and heart-warming themes of acceptance and endurance make *Mezza Italiana* a very special journey into the soul of Italy, and into a family you'll never forget!

A moving novel of love and war set against the brutal backdrop of World War I, *My Dear I Wanted to Tell You* reveals the plight of the soldiers who serve, and the women they love.

**'Highly engaging and impossible to put down.'**  
MIA FREEDMAN

**UNDER THE INFLUENCE**  
JACQUELINE LUNN  
PERFECT MOTHER'S DAY GIFT

**A love story of extraordinary power.**

**HALF OF THE HUMAN RACE**  
ANTHONY QUINN  
AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR

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# New Non-Fiction

## Accessories

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\$24.95 each



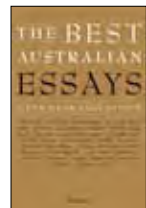
These classy stainless steel water bottles, in classic Penguin orange and white, are perfect for the booklover on the go. They're available in Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* or D.H. Lawrence's *The Lost Girl* – and come with a handy clip on the lid so you can attach it to your bike or backpack.

## Anthologies

### BEST AUSTRALIAN ESSAYS: A TEN-YEAR COLLECTION

### BEST AUSTRALIAN STORIES: A TEN-YEAR COLLECTION

Black Inc. PB. \$34.95 ea. Ebook \$19.95 ea.



To celebrate the tenth birthday of their 'Best Australian' series, Black Inc. has compiled two satisfyingly thick editions of the best of the best – one volume each for stories and essays. As you'd expect, they're both packed with rolled gold writing from some of Australia's finest names, established and new. Well worth picking up.

## Memoir

### NOTEBOOKS Betty Churcher

Miegumyah Press.

Normally \$45 Our special price \$39.95



The former director of the Australian National Gallery gives us a personal tour of some of her favourite paintings in some of the world's greatest galleries (The National Gallery, London, The Prado Museum, The Metropolitan, New York, Kenwood House and the Courtauld Galleries, London, Le Petit Palais, Paris and the Doria Pamphilj, Rome) through the drawings in her personal notebooks. A charming and informative book, it is a window into the pleasures of viewing great art – and as a bonus, some anecdotal insights into the experience of running a world-class National Art Gallery.

For Churcher, it is a revisiting of the art that has inspired her, as she prepares for a future that includes failing eyesight. A talented artist, Churcher has always found contemplation and drawing the key to connecting with works of genius. Composition, technique, colour, meaning, expression – these are unpacked for the reader through her drawings, reproduced in facsimile from the notebooks. The accompanying text reads as part tour guide, part travelogue, part history, and is always engaging.

The next-best thing to visiting great galleries and viewing a masterpiece or two is reading about it in a book as engaging as this. Being drawn into the experience, and perhaps remembering what it was like – the excitement of your first foray into one of the great museums included in the book, for which Churcher also gives us background and historical notes. For me, it was particularly nice to find paintings I've been taken with, including: Titian's *The Death of Actaeon*, and Bellini's portrait of *The Doge Leonardo Loredan*, as well as works by Rembrandt,

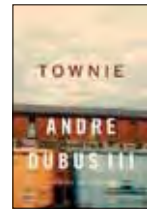
Velazquez, Cezanne, Goya, Sydney Nolan and Jeffrey Smart, Botticelli, Tintoretto and Francis Bacon.

Margaret Snowden is Art & Design Buyer at Readings Carlton

### TOWNIE

Andre Dubus III

WW Norton. PB. \$32.95



A brilliantly rendered memoir of a childhood overshadowed by violence and poverty, from the author of *House and Sand and Fog* – and son of acclaimed American writer Andre Dubus. Amidst many

plaudits, *The San Francisco Chronicle* called it 'haunting ... as explosive as a Muhammad Ali prize fight, as vivid as a Basquiat canvas'. The early childhood of Andre Dubus III was much as you might imagine that of someone whose father is a renowned writer: the house was full of books, his parents' parties were characterised by talk of Hemingway and Chekhov, and Kurt Vonnegut, a neighbour and family friend, dropped by in the afternoons to watch *Batman* with the Dubus kids. But after his parents' divorce, aged ten, his life grew to resemble a Dennis Lehane novel, as he and his siblings moved from rented house to house with his exhausted mother, living in neighbourhoods beset by drugs and violence. Sick of being bullied, and inspired by screen heroes such as *Dirty Harry*, Dubus trained as a boxer and learned to hold his own – until he began to fear that, consumed by anger, he'd become one of the bad guys himself, and found other ways 'to get this pus out, to express a wound' – such as writing. Watch our website for our exclusive online review by Tony Birch, author of *Shadowboxing* and *Father's Day*.

### 1001 AUSTRALIAN NIGHTS Dave Graney

Affirm. PB. \$29.99. Ebook \$14.95.



Dave Graney, best known from his time with The Coral Snakes, hails from Mt Gambier. In his early twenties, he got involved in the local punk scene and met drummer Clare Moore, who was to become his wife and

creative partner. Graney was a collector in a sense; he found much of his musical and creative inspiration foraging through second-hand shops buying old LPs, books and clothes. Musically, he was drawn to rockabilly and blues; in writing, he was attracted to the American noir writers like James Cain and Cornell Woolrich and French surrealists like Blaise Cendrars. He also picked up modish clothes which – together with his pencil moustache – became a signature look. Above all, Graney was interested in the creative process and the essence of performance.

His memoir charts his development as an artist and the influences that shaped his career. It's an affectionate, sometimes cynical, look at life on the road and the music industry he found himself in. He laments the fact that Australia has no real musical or performing traditions and that the Australian audience can be unforgiving of musicians such as himself who tried to transcend a more simplistic rock style. He writes evocatively about the pleasure of performance when it all comes right: 'creating moments of suspension and yawning gaps that billow into the high hell of the dark room'. Graney's memoir is a wonderful rendition of the ups and downs of a musician's peripatetic life. His new CD, *Rock 'N' Roll is Where I Hide*, is also out this month. Mark Rubbo is managing director of Readings

### WIKILEAKS VERSUS THE WORLD: MY STORY Julian Assange

Text. PB. \$34.95. Ebook \$19.95.

If you had to choose one story (aside from natural disasters) that's dominated world press this year, it would have to be Wikileaks and its controversial creator, Julian Assange. There has already been a slew of books on the subject; finally, here's one direct from the source. In this revelatory account, Assange expands on the philosophies that underpin his stateless, ground-breaking media company. He draws on his own fascinating life story and offers compelling insights into the mercurial and highly driven man who has forced us to radically rethink such basic ideas as transparency, democracy and power.

### MY KOREAN DELI Ben Ryder Howe

Henry Holt. PB. \$24.95



Ben Ryder Howe is former editor of *The Paris Review*. Yet it seems he had a higher calling in life. After spending a good part of a year living in his parents-in-law's basement in order to save for a house, his wife Gab one day

announced that she wanted to open a New York deli (ie. convenience store) to give to her mother as a 'thank you' for all the hard work she put into raising her. With a healthy dose of trepidation, Howe went along for the ride. This is a story about opening a working small business in the sometimes hostile, sometimes welcoming community of Brooklyn – and, just as enticingly, an inside account of working in a legendary New York literary institution in the last days of its equally legendary founder, George Plimpton.

Ryder Howe describes his mother-in-law as the 'Mike Tyson of Korean grandmothers' on the very first page: I was instantly hooked! It's easy to fall in love with this dysfunctional, non-Korean speaking, fish-out-water writer who would do anything to keep his loved ones happy. There are so many laugh-out-loud moments and crazy (but totally believable) characters. There's the group of regulars who visit the shop every evening to watch TV, the father-in-law who never says anything (except to sing karaoke if no one is watching), and of course the ever-present, formidable mother-in-law, Kay.

Though told from a humorous point of view, it's also poignant and insightful: you never lose the fact that this family is simply struggling to make ends meet. This is a book that should not be missed by anyone who's ever worked in retail, or quite simply anyone who's shopped at a convenience store. It will make you look twice at the person standing behind the counter, to give them a smile and a 'thank you'.

Kate Rockstrom is from Readings Carlton

### WHEN HORSE BECAME SAW Anthony Macris

Viking. PB. \$32.95



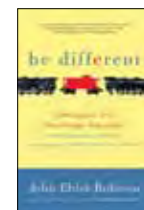
I first became aware of Anthony Macris when I read his heart-wrenching, beautifully wrought *Meanjin* essay, *When Horse Became Saw*, about his young son's descent into autism. This memoir, commissioned on

the strength of that essay, tells the wider story – about how his son's condition was recognised, the diagnosis process, the devastating effects on him and his wife, and the tough decision they took to undergo a time-intensive, crippling expensive experimental therapy as the only way they that offered hope for helping their son find a way of communicating with and being in the wider world. It's not a miracle story, but it does offer some small hope. It's also a damning indictment of the Australian government's meagre provisions for families

with autism. Readers with autistic loved ones will be grateful for this book; it's also an engrossing general read and a poignant story of a couple's fierce love for their son. Jo Case is Editor of Readings Monthly

### BE DIFFERENT: ADVENTURES OF A FREE-RANGE ASPERGIAN John Elder Robison

Random. PB. \$34.95



John Elder Robison (brother of Augusten Burroughs) hit the bestseller lists with *Look Me in the Eye*, his wonderfully titled memoir about his unconventional life, with a (humorous, wise) focus on how his undiagnosed

Asperger's Syndrome affected him. This book, he says, is for the many readers who asked him for more information. He offers stories from his own life to show how his Asperger's traits have helped or hindered him, with advice for 'Aspergians', parents and educators. It's refreshing to read writing about Asperger's that is entertaining and informative, and views it as difference rather than disability (incidentally, the same views held by Asperger's world expert Tony Attwood). Highly recommended for anyone wanting to know more about Asperger's, without being made to feel bad about the Aspergian in their life.

## Australian Studies

### THE BUSINESS OF NATURE: JOHN GOULD AND AUSTRALIA Roslyn Russell

New South. HB. \$49.95



The lithographs of John Gould's artists, depicting Australian wildlife and accompanied by his commentary, are well known and much loved today. This book tells the story of Gould and wife Elizabeth (foremost

among his artists). After moving to Van Diemen's Land in 1838, he cannily established his thriving business, taking him into the world of British aristocracy and the scientific elite.

### ESSAYS ON MUSLIMS AND MULTICULTURALISM Raimond Gaita (ed.)

Text. PB. \$26.95. Ebook \$19.95



Philosopher and writer Raimond Gaita presides over some of Australia's leading writers and thinkers in this wide-ranging discussion. These writers (including Waleed Aly, Graeme Davison, Ghassan Hage and

Gaita himself) weigh the successes and failures of multiculturalism in providing a secure and just Australia, in the context of our post-9/11 cultural landscape.

## Current Affairs

### AGAINST REMEMBRANCE David Rieff

MUP. PB. \$19.95



David Rieff, a contributing writer for *New York Times* magazine (and son of Susan Sontag) poses some hard questions about the importance of collective memory in this controversial and important book. Are events

like ANZAC Day an essential part of decent public culture? Rieff draws on his experience as a war correspondent and his impressive grasp of history to explore the role of memory in the defining events of recent times.



New from **palgrave  
macmillan**

It starts with a gift, when Ben Ryder Howe's wife, the daughter of Korean immigrants, decides to repay her parents' self-sacrifice by buying them a store. Howe, an editor at the rarefied *Paris Review*, agrees to go along. After the business struggles, Howe finds himself living in the basement of his in-laws' home, commuting to the *Paris Review* offices in the Upper East Side by day, and heading to Brooklyn at night to slice cold cuts.

\$24.95 Hb, ISBN 9780805093438  
Henry Holt



Journalist and amateur boxer Mischa Merz fulfils a long-held ambition to travel across the United States and compete in a series of amateur boxing tournaments. On this wild and fascinating journey she meets her idols and some other truly extraordinary characters.

\$29.95 Pb, ISBN 9781583229286  
Seven Stories Press

## THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD SINCE 9/11

Dominic Streatfield

Atlantic. PB. \$32.99



Don't be put off by the slightly glib/dull-sounding title – this is an absolutely terrific book, exploring the far-reaching consequences of the attacks on New York's World Trade Centre ten years ago. Streatfield looks at how

the lives of ordinary people around the world have been affected, though the lens of eight very different incidents around the world, ranging from the murder (with racist overtones) of a Texas gas station attendant to Australia's response to asylum seekers, as experienced by one Iraqi refugee and his family. Blends investigative journalism, reportage and political analysis in one engrossing volume.

## Environment

### THE GREAT DISRUPTION: HOW THE CLIMATE CRISIS WILL BRING ON THE SUSTAINABLE REVOLUTION

Paul Gilding

Bloomsbury. PB. Normally \$32.99

Our special price \$27.95

This book is not just essential reading – its message is urgent. Global crisis is no longer avoidable, says Australian-based environmental business expert Paul Gilding (a former global head of Greenpeace), recently lauded by Thomas Friedman in *The New York Times*. We have come to the end of economic growth. Yet Gilding also has a deeply optimistic message: while the coming decades will see loss, suffering and conflict, they'll also bring out our compassion, innovation, resilience

and adaptability, as we find new ways to live. Gilding tells us how to fight, and win, what he calls 'the One Degree War' to prevent catastrophic warming of the earth, and how to start today.

## CLIMATE CAPITALISM

L. Hunter Lovins  
& Boyd Cohen

Farrar Strauss & Giroux. PB. \$34.95

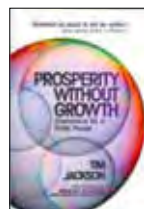


It doesn't matter if you believe in climate change, says this book – the surest route to profitability and security in a recession-riddled, carbon-constrained world is doing exactly what you would if climate change scares you to death. Embracing efficiency, innovation, renewables, carbon markets and new technologies is the smartest decision you can make. This book delivers hundreds of in-depth case studies of international corporations, small businesses, NGOs, and municipalities to prove that energy efficiency and renewable resources are already driving prosperity.

## PROSPERITY WITHOUT GROWTH

Tim Jackson

Earthscan. PB. \$24.95



In this explosive book, Tim Jackson – a top sustainability adviser to the UK government – makes a compelling case against continued economic growth in developed nations. Economic heresy? Or an opportunity to improve the sources of well-being, creativity and lasting prosperity that lie outside the realm of the market? Jackson provides a credible vision of how human society can flourish – within the ecological limits of a finite planet.

## Science

### DISCOVERERS OF THE UNIVERSE

Michael Hoskin

Princeton UP. HB. \$48.95



The gripping story of William Herschel, the brilliant, fiercely ambitious, emotionally complex musician and composer who became court astronomer to Britain's King George III, and of his sister, Caroline, who assisted him in his observations of the night sky and became an accomplished astronomer in her own right. Together, they transformed our view of the universe from the unchanging, mechanical creation of Newton's clockmaker god to the ever-evolving, incredibly dynamic cosmos that it truly is.

## Cultural Studies

### DISCONNECT: THE TRUTH ABOUT MOBILE PHONE RADIATION

Devra Davis

Scribe. PB. \$32.95. Ebook \$18.99



Concerns about the effects of mobile phone radiation currently have the status of urban myth here in Australia – despite the fact that several countries outlaw the use of mobile phones by children, for health reasons. This compelling, solidly researched and accessibly written exposé is essential reading for anyone who has or knows someone with a mobile phone (ie. everyone). Davis draws on interviews with key players within the mobile phone industry and presents long-suppressed research.

## Travel

### PARIS REDISCOVERED

Caroline Delabroy

Lonely Planet. PB. \$19.99

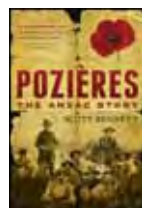
Originally released last year for the French market, this was such a success, Lonely Planet is having a crack at an English version. A different type of guide to the usual fare, it's designed for the return traveller and bypasses the obvious for quirky galleries, off-beat shopping and secret suburbia. Even the well-trodden *Champs-Élysées* is seen with new eyes, honing in on its dazzling array of modern buildings. There is a strong focus on the Parisian music scene, theatre and contemporary art and architecture. It's a lovely little book, and I hope they do a similar guide to other popular cities if this one proves a winner. Kate O'Mara is from Readings Carlton

## History

### POZIÈRES: THE ANZAC STORY

Scott Bennett

Scribe. PB. \$36.95. Ebook \$21.99



This superb account tells the other ANZAC story – one long overshadowed by Gallipoli. In 1916, after five attempts to seize the small village of Pozières, the British called in the ANZACs to complete this seemingly impossible task. Pozières was captured – and heralded as a stunning tactical victory – but only after 45 days and 23,000 casualties. Scott Bennett draws on the letters and diaries of the survivors to tell their story.

### INDIA: A PORTRAIT

Patrick French

Allen Lane. HB. \$49.95



One of this century's greatest surprises has been the economic and social revolution in India. But what is the real nature of this rapid change, and what are its roots? Here is an encompassing social, political and economic history, from partition to present, from a writer who's spent much of his life engaged with India.

## Philosophy

### WHO AM I AND IF SO HOW MANY

Richard Precht

Scribe. PB. \$26.95. Ebook \$15.99



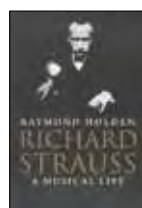
Elegant and light-hearted, this international bestseller deftly introduces readers to the big philosophical questions. Richard David Precht draws on neuroscience, psychology, history and pop culture to examine enduring questions like: *What is truth? Does life have meaning? Why should I be good?*

## Music

### RICHARD STRAUSS: A MUSICAL LIFE

Raymond Holden

Yale UP. HB. \$45



Richard Strauss is best remembered as the composer of a string of masterworks. Yet he also held important conducting posts and influenced generations of conductors. This book is the first to consider Strauss's career as a conductor and place it in relation to his life as a composer: an intertwined process.

The Escape Your Mum's Been Looking For.

### The China Garden

by Kristina Olsson

Winner – 2010 Barbara Jefferis Award

When a newborn baby is found abandoned, the dramatic event pierces the lives of three very different women.

A captivating story about betrayal and its echoes across generations.



### Just a Girl

by Jane Caro

*I am alive. I am awake and I am alive.  
I am awake and tomorrow I shall be crowned.*

Banished, imprisoned and forgotten; determined, passionate and headstrong.

Elizabeth the First shaped the destiny of a kingdom, all before she was 25.



### The Sparrows of Edward Street

by Elizabeth Stead

'Five-stars' – Bookseller+Publisher

Sydney, 1948: Middle-class Hanora, Aria and Rosy Sparrow are facing a grim future in a housing commission camp.

But Sparrows are resourceful, and they soon discover that resilience and good humour might just be their salvation.



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## Food & Wine

by Justine Douglas, manager,  
Readings Port Melbourne

### A MONTH IN MARRAKESH

Andy Harris

Hardie Grant. HB. \$45



In our travels there are some cities that speak to us – where the people are kind and the food is good. Marrakesh is that city for Andy Harris. He returns there every year to wander its ancient markets. *A Month*

*in Marrakesh* is filled with recipes for the street food that can be found around the markets, from a simple egg and potato roll, perfect after a hard day's night, to a beef, barley and couscous salad, a version of which I have been preparing for many years now as a late summer supper. This is a beautiful homage to Moroccan cookery, with exquisite photography and an inspiring collection of delicious recipes. There is an extensive chapter on salads that includes a swiss chard and black olive salad and a mechouia grilled vegetable salad with tomatoes, onions and peppers. Autumn is the perfect time to experiment with some of the tagine and roast recipes. Last weekend, we made the roasted lamb shoulder with orange and honey syrup for our Sunday roast. I am intrigued by the chicken mefenned, a pot roasted chicken, which you tear apart with your hands and wrap in a parsley omelette – maybe this Sunday.

### MANGIA MANGIA

Teresa Oates & Angela Vilella

Penguin. HB.

Normally \$39.95. Our special price \$34.95



On a drizzly Friday morning, I made the trip out to Thornbury to bottle *passata* with Teresa and Angela, who established Mangia Mangia to introduce and reconnect people with traditional family methods of preparing

and preserving food. The morning began with the most delectable almond biscuits (Maria's *Pasta di Mandorla*) and a stove-top espresso. With an enormous pot filled with dozens of bottles of *passata* on the boil, we could relax and enjoy lunch, which included home-made sun-dried tomatoes, marinated olives and salami. I couldn't possibly hope to recreate this banquet (in my shoe-box kitchen), but I will be making some chilli oil to spoon over pasta. In their cookbook, Teresa and Angela have collected their own family recipes and have illustrated them with family photographs, which capture the warmth and generosity these women exude.

### URBAN COOK

Mark Jensen

Murdoch Books. HB. \$49.95



I already have too many cookbooks, but when I am looking through a new one and find myself marking every second page, I know that I need to find space for it on my shelves. *Urban*

*Cook* – a stellar collection of

recipes, but also a treatise on cooking and eating for a sustainable future – is such a book. Rather than structuring his recipes by course, Red Lantern chef Mark Jensen has chosen to divide them into simple chapters. The first chapter on vegetables contains over 40 recipes, with inventive combinations like carrot, orange and blackcurrant salad and sweet and sour capsicum with pineapple and basil. The variety of cultural influences reflects a truly contemporary approach to cooking.

## Art & Design

by Margaret Snowden, Art buyer,  
Readings Carlton

### LIVE FOREVER: ELIZABETH PEYTON

Laura Hoptman

Phaidon. PB. \$59.95



Highly stylised oil paintings, drawings, and watercolours are driven by the emotional, adoring eye of an unrequited lover, or starry-eyed consumer of celebrity culture. Peyton's melding of influences and obsessions ranges widely:

from fandom and fashion illustration to academic anatomical studies; from Hockney and Warhol, to Mannerist and Old Master classics; from innocence to bohemia, equally crediting photography and life drawing as driving forces for her portraiture.

### TALK ABOUT CONTEMPORARY DANCE

Phillipe Noisette

Flammarion. PB. \$49.95

A densely illustrated and comprehensive introduction to an art form that is enjoying a boom in popularity, due to its links with pop culture, fashion, and music. Engaging and unpretentious, this book explores the discipline in all its facets, from opera to hip-hop; from circus skills to fashion. Includes profiles of contemporary dance's 30 most influential exponents and choreographers, including Merce Cunningham, William Forsythe, Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker and Akram Khan.

### ANISH KAPOOR: TURNING THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN

Julia Peyton-Jones et al.

Walther Konig. HB. \$75

Over the autumn of 2010, visitors to the stately grounds of Kensington Gardens in London encountered four monumental stainless-steel sculptures by Anish Kapoor, carefully situated to reflect and distort in their mirrored surfaces the weather, the wildlife and the changing colours of the surrounding foliage. Kapoor's sculptures interact with the locale with a tremendous sensitivity, while opening up new vistas and 'turning the world upside down'. Illustrated with full-colour plates of these works in situ, the book also offers a comprehensive overview of all of the artist's sculptures.

### NEW KIMONO: FROM VINTAGE STYLE TO EVERYDAY CHIC

Kodansha. PB. \$39.99



*Nanao* magazine is a Japanese quarterly devoted to a new generation who are re-inventing the art of wearing kimono. This book is a selection of the best articles from *Nanao*, including interviews with young

Japanese women who consider kimono their day-to-day garb, advice on fabrics and designs, obi, footwear and underwear, how to customise vintage kimono, and fabulous vintage kimono fashion spreads. Step-by-step guidelines for putting it all on and a glossary of kimono terms are also included.

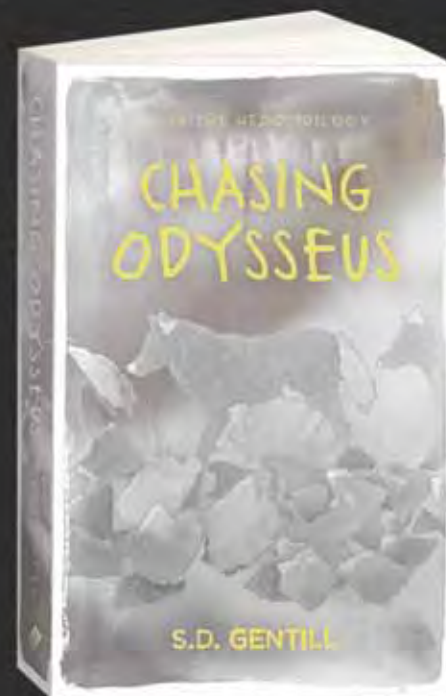
### BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY FIELD GUIDE

Ilex. PB. \$24.95

As digital photography equipment becomes increasingly affordable, more and more bird-watchers are turning their hands to capturing images of their favourite subject. A good knowledge of your equipment, an understanding of both photography and field craft, and a firm basis in post-production techniques are also essential if you want to capture and create high-quality bird photographs. All these topics are covered in this portable guide to bird photography.

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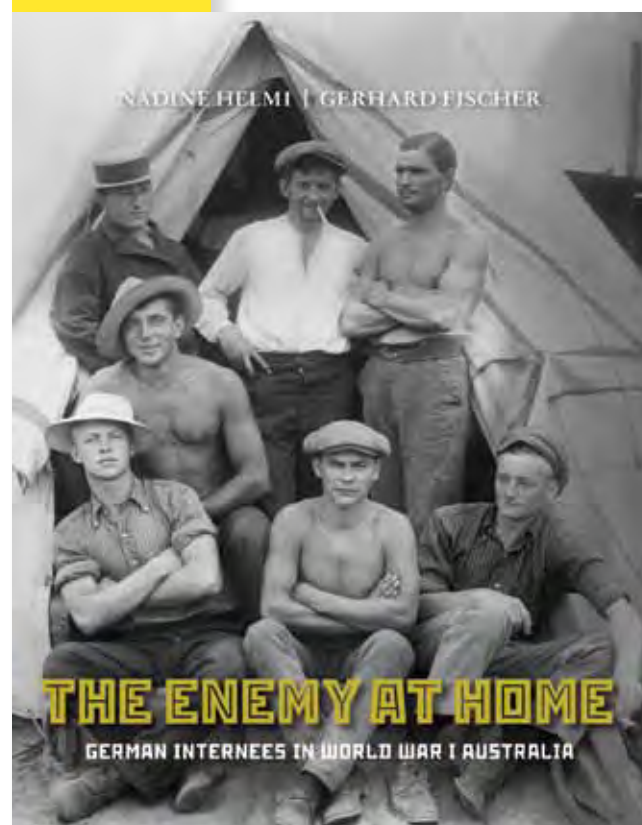
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www.unswpress.com.au



# Kids' Books

## BOOK OF THE MONTH ART FOR BABY

Templar. Board. \$24.95



Child research suggests that babies see images in black-and-white more clearly than coloured ones – and of course it's easy to see why, even as an adult.

The simplicity and clarity of black-and-white is visually more striking; colour can confuse the eye and the mind. In *Art for Baby*, 12 black-and-white artworks from pre-eminent, contemporary artists appear boldly on the sturdy board pages to tantalise the viewer.

It introduces babies to basic shapes in a creative and unique way; not just one circle on a page but, as in Julian Opie's 'Natasha', two piercing eyes in a mesmerising face. Sharing this book with your child will not only be a lovely bonding experience, but will nurture their visual skills and stimulate their minds. What cultured babies you will have when they can recognise iconic artists from such a young age! Forget the cutesy farm animals and bring on Keith Haring; let them chew on Damien Hirst or be hypnotised by Bridget Riley's zig-zags.

However, for me – and, I suspect, parents – the highlights of this book are the three friezes that accompany it, each with a brief monograph on the artist and their work. *Art for Babies* is a collaboration between a maternity nurse, the artists and their foundations (who freely donated the images), and the publisher. Fittingly, a percentage of the sales go to societies in the UK that support vulnerable children. *Alexa Dretzke is from Readings Hawthorn*

## PICTURE BOOKS

### PAUL THURLBY'S ALPHABET

Paul Thurlby

Templar. Board. \$14.95



This colourful, zany picture book makes the letters of the alphabet memorable and fun. From 'A for Awesome', to 'Z for Zip', this is a stunning book from acclaimed graphic artist Paul Thurlby, with each new page revealing a unique,

and highly collectable artwork.

### DREAM OF THE THYLACINE

Margaret Wild & Ron Brooks (illus.)

A&U. HB. \$29.99

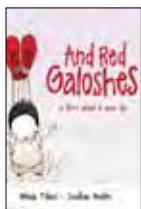


This arresting and beautiful picture book is a shimmering encounter with the Tasmanian tiger, a lament for a lost species, and a celebration of the Australian landscape. It interposes arresting text and images of the last known thylacine in a concrete cage with sweeping colour paintings of the animal in its natural environment. Intense, poetic and beautiful, this book will haunt you.

## AND RED GALOSHES

Glenda Millard & Jonathan Bentley (illus.)

Little Hare. HB. \$24.95



Playing in the rain and kicking leaves in cool windy weather is joyful, wintery fun. But what do you do when your red galoshes are too big? This beautiful text by multi-award-winner

Glenda Millard is brought to whimsical life by Jonathan Bentley's dreamy and enchanting illustrations.

## YOU ARE MY SPECIAL BABY

Carol Chataway & Danny Snell (illus.)

Working Title Press. HB. \$24.95

A gorgeous picture book that explores the bonds between a parent and child and the love, hopes and dreams one generation has for the next, featuring Australian native animals.

## WOLF WON'T BITE

Emily Gravett

Macmillan. HB. \$26.99



Take your seat in the front row and watch in wonder as three cheeky circus pigs make a wild wolf jump through hoops, endure feats of astounding daring-do, and withstand perilous games of dress-up. Safe in the thought

that Wolf Won't Bite! they put their heads between his jaws ... but can you push a wolf too far? Sure to strike a chord with anyone who has a pet and a young child, this is a playful story with a snappy ending!

## I'LL BE THERE

Ann Stott & Matt Phelan (illus.)

Candlewick. HB. \$24.95

Children love the idea of growing up and doing things on their own. It's fun to dress, read and have showers like a big kid. But it's scary too. Scampering along a wall just out of reach, a young boy asks his mother, 'Will you still take care of me when I'm big?' This is an honest, warm-hearted portrait of a child's first steps toward independence.

## A PLACE TO CALL HOME

Alexis Deacon & Viviane Schwartz (illus.)

Walker. HB. \$29.95

Seven furry brothers live in a nice, safe, warm home – a very small hole. But they grow too big for the space and are forced out into the world to find a new place to call their own. This determined little unit tackle the elements until, finally, they reach the edge of the world. Will they ever find a place they can call home?

## JUNIOR & MIDDLE FICTION

### FIRST LIGHT

Rebecca Stead

Text. PB. \$16.95. Ebook \$14.95

Finally released locally, *First Light* is Rebecca Stead's first novel, followed by the award-winning *When You Reach Me*. *First Light* is the story of Peter and Thea. Peter's home is New York, but he heads to Greenland with his family, where his dad is studying the effects of climate change on the ice caps. Thea lives in a secret world hidden in an Arctic glacier after her people retreated there years earlier, having been suspected of witchcraft and almost driven to extinction. As Peter's visions continue to get stronger, and Thea's hopes to see above the surface escalate, this story of determination, exploration and family see's Peter and Thea's worlds collide. *Katherine Dretzke is from Readings Hawthorn*

## THEODOSIA AND THE SERPENTS OF CHAOS

R.L. LaFevers

Sandpiper. PB. \$22.95

As we are about to become enamoured with all things Egyptian ('Tutankhamen and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs' comes to the Melbourne Museum in April), now is the perfect time to introduce Theodosia to the child in your life. She is gutsy, sleeps in a sarcophagus, can sense evil spirits and even better, knows how to banish them – a rare ability.

Her parents work for The Museum of Legends and Antiquities. Her father is a curator and has also been attempting to determine the location of a famous Egyptian's tomb. Her archaeologist mother has just returned with some of the bounty after finally discovering the tomb. To everyone's excitement, she unveils the most sought after 'Heart of Egypt' scarab; but Theodosia is almost overwhelmed by the evil curse that emanates from it. The adventure begins – and what a great read it makes. It is wonderfully atmospheric, has a rollicking mystery and a smart, funny heroine, as well as a host of eccentric, sinister and spirited characters. This delightfully presented hardback is the perfect gift for eight and up. AD

## BUNGAWITTA

Emily Rodda

Omnibus. PB. \$12.99

It hasn't rained in Bungawitta in a very long time. So long, in fact, that the youngest person in town has only ever seen rain on TV. But Bungawitta's second youngest resident, Jay, decides he's not just going to sit around staring at the dust – he comes up with a plan to save the town by hosting an Earth Sculpture Festival. This stand alone-novel from the author of the Deltora Quest series is a real treat. You'll laugh out loud at the antics of the Bungawitta locals, and fret along with them when things don't go exactly as planned. Bungawitta is a charming, heart-warming glimpse into what it's like to live in a drought-affected area, and exactly how much change one good idea can bring about. *Holly Harper is from Readings Malvern*

## YOUNG ADULT

### GOLDEN DAY

Ursula Dubosarsky

A&U. PB. \$19.99

'Today, girls,' said Miss Renshaw, 'we shall go out into the beautiful Gardens and think about death.' In the Gardens they meet a poet. What follows is inexplicable, shocking, a scandal. What really happened that day? Is 'the truth' as elusive as it seems? And do the girls know more than they are letting on?

## WILFUL EYE: TALES FROM THE TOWER BOOK ONE

Isabelle Carmody & Nan McNab

A&U. PB. \$27.99

Six of the world's best-loved writers have chosen fairytales as inspiration for this spell-binding and subversive short-story collection. The collection carries universal themes of envy and desire, deception and abandonment, courage and sacrifice. They offer no prescription for living or moral advice, and none belong in a nursery.

## THYLA

Kate Gordon

Random. PB. \$17.95

Shapeshifters, werewolves, strange creatures of the night roaming not Europe's, but Tasmania's, forests and coming out when the moon is full? Somehow it does seem possible! At Cascade Falls School for girls, the narrator Tessa, a girl with almost no memory, is trying to fit in and come to terms with contemporary language and technology. But as half-memories return, they are of a convict women's workhouse, the Female Factory, and an evil overseer. With the black striped scars on her back and her heightened senses she feels a freak, but then not all the normal school girls are quite what they seem. Darkly involving for lovers of the paranormal.

*Kathy Kozlowski is from Readings Carlton*

## EMERALD ATLAS

John Stephens

Doubleday. PB. \$27.95

Kate, Michael, and Emma have been in one orphanage after another for the last ten years, passed along like lost baggage. Yet these children are more remarkable than

they could possibly imagine. Ripped from their parents as babies, they are being protected from a horrible evil, an evil they know nothing about. Until now. *The Emerald Atlas* brims with humour and action as it charts the children's extraordinary adventures through an enchanted world.

## NON-FICTION & NOVELTY

### MY LITTLE WORLD

Julia Cooke & Marjorie Crosby-Fairall

Omnibus. HB. \$26.99

*Sssh, be very still.* It helps if you are small (if tall, bend down quietly) – look closely and carefully and you will see a world of insects and plants that most people miss. For budding young naturalists, this book is a delightful introduction to Australian creatures and plants not normally featured in children's nature books. The enchanting rhyme and exquisite illustrations invite children to explore the beauty and variety of their environment. The author's notes offer more fascinating information and direct the reader back to find things they may have overlooked. For ages four and up. AD

## WHAT BODY PART IS THAT

Andy Griffiths & Terry Denton

Pan. PB \$14.99



Following the success of *What Bumosaur is That?*, hugely popular author-illustrator team Andy Griffiths and Terry Denton turn their zany talents from teaching kids the intricacies of bumosaurs, to teaching them useless made-up facts about the human body (like how to use your head as a bowling ball). Contains 68 fully illustrated, 100 per cent fact-free chapters guaranteed to entertain.

## ROYAL WEDDING: WILLIAM AND KATE DRESS-UP DOLLY BOOK

Ladybird. \$9.95



This delightfully kitsch paper doll dress-up book allows budding princes and princesses to dress Wills and Kate in a dazzling variety of outfits for quintessentially English outings like a weekend in the country or a tea party at Buckingham Palace, as well as the Royal Engagement (dress the former 'Waitie Katie' in THAT navy dress) and the Royal Wedding. Fetching and dead funny ... especially Wills's Union Jack boxers.

## FROM MUMMIES TO BUNNIES



Heavens, it is all happening in April. The fabulous Tutankhamen Exhibition opens at the Melbourne Museum and we have been stocking up on some great background reading.

Among the new ones are Marcia Williams' illustrated cartoon style *Ancient Egypt Tales of Gods and Pharaohs* (Walker, HB, \$29.95) and *Egyptian Diary* from Richard Platt's award winning Diary series, illustrated by David Parker (Walker, PB, \$19.95). Then Anzac Day and Easter are just one day apart, with relevant new publications including Carole Wilkinson's *Frommelles* (Black Dog Books, PB, \$18.99), and the rather more cheery *If I Were the Easter Bunny* by Louise Gardner (Harper, HB, \$14.99), a good one to introduce young children to the joys of Easter bonnet making and Easter egg hunts. Look out too for *Plague* (Egmont, PB, \$19.95), the fourth in Michael Grant's Gone series and the delectable new jackets on Janet and Alan Ahlberg's *Peepo!* (Puffin, Board, \$16.95, PB, \$14.95, HB, \$19.95) for the thirtieth anniversary of this great nursery favourite. KK



# Readings Bargain Table

*Bargains on the web:* New books are regularly added to our website. Click on the Bargains tab at [www.readings.com.au](http://www.readings.com.au).

## CULTURAL AMNESIA

Clive James

Norton. HB. Was \$49. Now \$16.95



Renowned critic Clive James presents over 100 essays, which illuminate, rescue, or occasionally destroy the careers of many of the greatest thinkers and artists of the twentieth century.

## NINA SIMONE

David Brun-Lambert

Aurum. HB. Was \$39.95. Now \$9.95

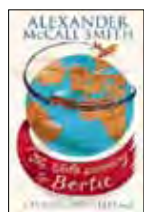


This biography follows Simone's sparkling career. Featuring rare photographs and a review of all Simone's albums and hits, this is an extensive look at the complex and extremely talented diva.

## THE WORLD ACCORDING TO BERTIE

Alexander McCall Smith

Polygon. HB. Was \$29.95. Now \$13.95

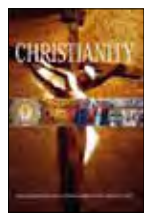


Bertie Pollock is a precocious six-year-old whose mummy forces him to play a saxophone, converse in Italian, do yoga and see a psychotherapist who looks a lot like Bertie's baby brother, Ulysses.

## CHRISTIANITY

Ann Marie Bahr

Millennium House. HB. Was \$85. Now \$24.95

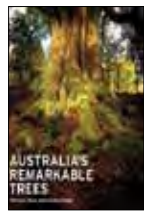


This compelling account of 2,000 years of Christianity includes superb illustrations, features on the Bible, prayer and liturgy, plus maps and a timeline. An exceptionally fine large reference book.

## AUSTRALIA'S REMARKABLE TREES

Richard Allen & Kimbal Baker

Miegumyah. HB. Was \$65. Now \$19.95



With 164 million hectares of forest and a geography that includes snowy mountains, lush rainforests, harsh deserts and rich tablelands, Australia's variety of trees is matched by few countries.

## MINIMAL ART

Daniel Marzona

Taschen. HB. Was \$35. Now \$9.95

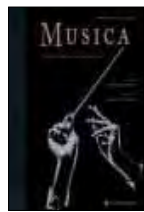


A backlash against abstract expressionism, minimalism was characterised by simplified, stripped-down forms used to express ideas in a direct manner. Featured artists include Carl Andre, Stephen Antonakos, Eva Hesse, Donald Judd and Anne Truitt.

## MUSICA

Vladimir Ashkenazy

Millennium House. HB. Was \$80. Now \$24.95



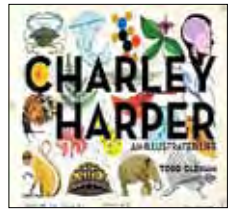
A lavishly illustrated, comprehensive reference to 1000 years of western classical music. Features hundreds of colour photographs, artworks, manuscripts and maps, along with authoritative and engaging text.

## CHARLEY HARPER

Todd Oldham(ed.)

HB. Was \$85. Now \$39.95

Deluxe large edition. Was \$400. Now \$199.95



For more than six decades, Charley Harper painted colourful, graphic illustrations of nature, animals, insects, and people. This coffee table

tome is a tribute to his singular style.

## GREAT EQUATIONS

Robert Crease

HB. Was \$39.95. Now \$14.95

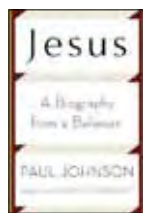


Although most people can recite Einstein's famous little equation, who has heard of eighteenth-century mathematician Leonhard Euler's famous equation? Crease reveals ten of the greatest equations in Western history.

## JESUS

Paul Johnson

Viking. HB. Was \$35. Now \$15.95

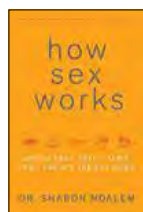


Is Jesus relevant today? Few figures have had such an influence on history as Jesus of Nazareth. Paul Johnson offers a lively biography of the man who inspired one of the world's great religions.

## HOW SEX WORKS

Valerie Laken

Harper. HB \$49.95. Now \$15.95



Why do we need sex? Looking into our evolutionary past, Dr. Sharon Moalem explores how the struggle to survive and create healthy offspring determines our sexuality.

## THE KINDLY ONES

Jonathon Littell

Vintage. PB. Was \$27.95. Now \$8.95



Former Nazi Dr. Maximilien Aue has reinvented himself, many years after the war. Through the eyes of this cultivated yet monstrous man, we experience the horrors of World War II.

## RESISTANCE MEMOIRS OF OCCUPIED FRANCE

Agnes Humbert

Bloomsbury. HB. Was \$39.95. Now \$15.95

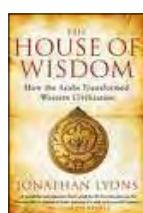


Humbert's account of her work for the resistance in occupied Paris and her arrest and deportation to a labor camp in Germany is an invaluable addition to works highlighting the role of women during war-time.

## THE HOUSE OF WISDOM

Jonathon Lyons

Bloomsbury. HB. Was \$60. Now \$16.95



This lively history book shows how, for centuries following the fall of Rome, Western Europe was a world of subsistence farming and violent conflict, and meanwhile, Arab civilisation was thriving.

## CULINARIA GREECE

Marianthi Milona

Konemann. HB. Was \$49.95. Now \$29.95



This volume leads us from the banquet tables of ancient symposia to the sophisticated arrangements of haute cuisine in the metropolises – as well as the simpler fare enjoyed by fishermen and farming families. More than 1300 coloured illustrations on 460 pages as well as numerous recipes make just reading this book an experience for the palate.

## JONATHAN SWIFT'S GULLIVER

Martin Jenkins & Chris Riddell (illus.)

Walker. PB. Was \$27.95. Now \$9.95



This magnificent edition of Jonathan Swift's adventure story contains all four of Gulliver's extraordinary voyages. Martin Jenkins has skilfully

adapted the original novel, remaining true to its tone and humour, while making it accessible to younger readers. Chris Riddell brings life to Swift's searing imagination in wonderful panoramic detail.

## DOCTOR ZHIVAGO

Boris Pasternak

Vintage. PB. Was \$12.95. Now \$7.95



Yuri Zhivago, physician and poet, wrestles with the new order and the anguish of being torn between the love of two women. This novel talks about Russia in the throes of revolution, offering a love story.

## FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS

Hunter S. Thompson

Harper. PB. Was \$25. Now \$8.95

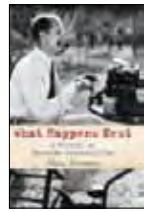


You might have read *On the Road*; you must read *Fear and Loathing*, a hilarious take on America through the drugged eyes of one of America's most original and anarchic journalists.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Marc Norman

Aurum. HB. Was \$49.95. Now \$16.95



In this fresh take on the movies, veteran Oscar-winning screenwriter Marc Norman gives us the first comprehensive history of the men and women who penned some of the greatest movies of all time. Impeccably researched,

erudite, and filled with unforgettable stories, *What Happens Next* is a unique and engrossing narrative of the quintessential art form of our time.

## THE BLACKEST STREETS

Sarah Wise

Bodley Head. HB. Was \$69.95. Now \$16.95



'*The Blackest Streets* is an excellent and intelligent investigation of the realities of urban living that respond to no design or directive ... This is a book about the nature of London itself.' – Peter Ackroyd, *The Times*.

# MOST WANTED



## A ringside seat on the biggest leak in history

*The Most Dangerous Man in the World* is the definitive account of WikiLeaks and the man who is as secretive as the organisations he targets. Through interviews with Julian Assange, his inner circle and those who fell out with him, Fowler tells the story of how a man with a turbulent childhood and brilliance for computers created a phenomenon that has become a game-changer in journalism and global politics.

In this international thriller, Andrew Fowler gives a ringside seat on the biggest leak in history. He charts the pursuit of Assange by the US and Sweden and how in the eyes of many Assange had become, according to the *Pentagon Papers* whistleblower, Daniel Ellsberg, 'the most dangerous man in the world'.

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# New DVDs

## DVD OF THE MONTH GAINSBOURG

**\$39.95**

Based on the remarkable life of iconic French singer, poet, writer and actor Serge Gainsbourg, this film is a surreal and evocative record of Gainsbourg's youth. It charts his growing up in 1940s Nazi-occupied Paris (when he was known as Lucien Ginsberg), through to his transformation into the hard-living showman, enfant terrible and successful song-writer of the 50s and 60s (famous for his glamorous lovers, including Brigitte Bardot and Jane Birkin), to his notoriety in the 70s and 80s. A visually and narratively innovative project, featuring special effects from the makers of *Pan's Labyrinth*, *Gainsbourg* is groundbreaking cinema.

## CITY ISLAND

**\$19.95. Blu-ray \$24.95**

Set in a quaint fishing community on the outskirts of New York City, *City Island* is a hilarious and touching tale about a family whose comfortable co-existence is upended by surprising revelations of past secrets and present-day lies. Stars Andy Garcia, Alan Arkin and Julianna Margulies.

## THE CLOUDED YELLOW

**Released 13 April. \$14.95**

When ex-spy David Somers takes a low-profile job in the country cataloguing a butterfly collection, he finds that dangerous work continues to pursue him. He becomes embroiled in a murder mystery and goes 'underground' with a beautiful suspect. The fugitives stay one step ahead of the police, until the breathless climax. Classic British cinema, starring Trevor Howard and Jean Simmons.

## TIME WITHOUT PITY

**Released 13 April. \$14.95**

Tension rises to fever pitch in Joseph Losey's ingenious psychological thriller about an alcoholic who has one day to save his son from the gallows. The long-absent father races against time to prove his son is not a killer. Stars Michael Redgrave and Leo McKern.

## PREDICAMENT

**Released 14 April. \$34.95**

Naive teenager Cedric Williamson conspires with two misfits to photograph and blackmail adulterous couples. When the scam goes wrong, they end up with blood on their hands and Cedric finds himself in a predicament. Stars Jermaine Clement from *Flight of the Conchords*.

## POWELL & PRESSBURGER DIRECTOR SUITE SERIES: A CANTERBURY TALE I KNOW WHERE I'M GOING

**Released 6 April. \$34.95 ea**

The films of Michael Powell and Eric Pressburger are among the best British films of the twentieth century. Renowned for their representation of ancient mysticism and Celtic mythology; both these titles show a rare beauty, combining romance, comedy, suspense and a sense of the supernatural.

## LORD OF THE RINGS BLU-RAY

**Released 7 April. Blu-ray \$89.95**

Enjoy this fantastical trilogy on Blu-ray and experience the sound and picture quality that this format was made for. Your television will never be the same again! Readings have many Blu-ray DVDs in-stock, at great prices.

## LEBANON

**Released 6 April. \$34.95**

June, 1982. The first Lebanon War has begun. A lone tank holding four novices is dispatched to search a hostile town, which has been bombard- ed by the Israeli Air Force. What should have been a simple mission gradually spirals out of control with the soldiers pushed to their limits in a struggle to survive.

## THE FLOWERS OF ST. FRANCIS

**Released 13 April. \$29.95**

A grand journey of hope and a timeless search for spiritual enlightenment. Roberto Rossellini and Federico Fellini convey the teachings of the people's saint through a captivating series of personal vignettes, illustrating the power of humility, compassion and sacrifice.

## THE HAIRDRESSER'S HUSBAND

**Released 13 April. \$29.95**

As a boy, his two greatest delights were dancing to Arabic music and having his hair cut by the local hairdresser. But as a grown man, is he willing to put childish things aside? Fearing his maturity has gotten the better of him, yet driven by youthful desires, Antoine romances Mathilde, a sultry hairdresser who takes him on a sensual voyage of rediscovery and celebration, in one of the most original love stories ever told.

## MAD MEN: SEASON 4

**Released 6 April. \$49.95 Blu-ray \$69.95**

In *Mad Men*, the glass ceiling is dangerously low, and sexism reigns in a way that may shock viewers. But this isn't the prim 60s: these characters seduce, smoke, and swig with abandon. A drama about one of New York's most prestigious ad agencies at the beginning of the 1960s.

## TREME: SEASON 1

**Released \$39.95. Blu-ray \$49.95**

From the creators of *The Wire* comes a new series about adversity and the human spirit. Residents in New Orleans struggle to preserve their culture in the aftermath of the greatest man-made disaster in American history.

## WHEN YOU'RE STRANGE: A FILM ABOUT THE DOORS

**Released 6 April. \$34.95**

Narrated by Johnny Depp, this film is an intimate exploration of one of the world's most influential rock bands. Uncovering previously unseen footage of the rock quartet, this documentary provides new insight into the revolutionary impact of the music of The Doors. Other titles in the Arthouse series available for \$19.95, for a limited time only.

## GASLAND

**Released 13 April. \$34.95**

The billion dollar energy industry has a dirty little secret. Hydraulic fracturing has contaminated the water supply, the corporate giants are in cover-up mode, and the PR-heavy government has not only turned a blind eye, but has regulated itself out of the picture. Rough-hewn yet poetic, this film is a plea for scrutiny of a powerful industry that has turned its eyes on a new and (for now) largely unexplored territory: Australia.

## GARDENS OF THE WORLD WITH AUDREY HEPBURN

**Released 14 April. \$29.95**

Imagine the world's most elegant tour guide, illuminating some of the world's most breathtaking vistas. The Emmy-winning PBS series features the graceful film icon, in her last screen appearance before her death in 1993, hosting a tour of the world's most spectacular gardens. Hepburn was a garden- ing enthusiast (at least one rose and one tulip have been named for her), and she will entrance even those who struggle to keep a pot of herbs on the windowsill.

"Utterly enthralling. The film is poetry." THE ATLANTIC



# Arthouse Films

A continuing series of documentaries on important artists from a variety of fields, both contemporary and classic.



ANNIE  
LEIBOVITZ  
LIFE THROUGH  
A LENS



PATTI SMITH  
DREAM OF LIFE



REM  
KOOLHAAS  
A KIND OF  
ARCHITECT



JOAN  
RIVERS  
A PIECE OF  
WORK

Get these and other Arthouse Films at discounted prices now\*.  
See in store for details.

\*Excluding When You're Strange, Exit Through the Gift Shop and Art & Soul. Sales ends April 30th

presented by MADMAN



## MASTERPIECES OF THE HERMITAGE

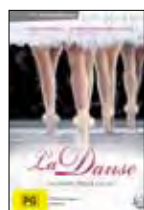
Released 14 April. \$49.95



A breathtaking journey through time, culture and art. This 18-part series includes stunning images of treasures that represent the development of world culture and art, from the Stone Age to the twentieth century. Originally built in 1754, the State Hermitage museum in St Petersburg occupies six buildings and is home to more than three million masterpieces, collected over two and a half centuries, from every school of Western art.

## LA DANSE

Released 6 April. \$34.95



The Paris Opera Ballet is one of the world's great ballet companies. *La Danse* follows the rehearsals and performances of seven ballets: *Genius*, *Le Songe de Medée*, *La Maison de Bernarda*, *Paquita*, *Casse Noisette*, *Orphée* and *Eurydice*, and *Romeo and Juliette*.

## GRAND DESIGNS ABROAD

Released 7 April. \$39.95



*Grand Designs* is now travelling abroad, following self-builders creating their dream homes in amazing landscapes. Each episode follows the in-depth process of an ambitious design project, from the initial blueprints to the often arduous tasks of turning designs into practical living space. Language barriers and foreign planning laws make for interesting times.

## VALHALLA RISING

Released 13 April. \$29.95



*Valhalla Rising* is the brutal, epic story of a mute Scandinavian slave known only as One Eye, whose fate takes a different course when he manages to escape and, after meeting a group of Crusaders, is convinced to join them in their fight for the Holy Land. An intriguing amalgam of Norse mythology, religious historiography and ultra-violence, *Valhalla Rising* is epic, brutal and utterly captivating. Stars Mads Mikkelsen.

## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF FAMOUS COMPOSERS

Released 13 April. \$49.95



This ten-part series crisscrosses the continent in the footsteps of ten of the world's greatest classical music composers. At each stop, a musician or historian serves as our guide to the great composers' public and private lives. Interviews blend with narration, archive materials and musical sequences to paint ten intimate portraits. Follow in the footsteps of Chopin, Tchaikovsky, Verdi, Beethoven, Vivaldi, Bizet, Puccini, Berlioz, Mahler and Offenbach. For lovers of the Classical Destinations series.

## BAMBI

Released \$39.95. Blu-ray \$49.95



Reflecting an age of innocence and a time of wonder, no film better captures the pure magic of Disney than *Bambi* – the world's most endearing animated tale about the beauty of nature and the miracle of life. This immortal blend of classic storytelling and unforgettable characters comes to breathtaking life through the artistry of some of Disney's all-time greatest animators.

## Dancing with the Devil: Cult Classics

with Gerard Elson, Readings St Kilda



As *Devil* (2010) creeps onto DVD this month, it seems opportune to spotlight a couple of The Unholy One's vintage starring roles. Worthy of particular note are two films which have recently clawed themselves up from the yowling pit of import-only obscurity and onto local shelves at long last: William Diertele's oft-lampooned moral parable, *The Devil and Daniel Webster* (1941), and Jacques Tourneur's compromised occult chiller, *Night of the Demon* (1957).

Each presents a different if still 'canonical' incarnation of ol' Nick, who, when the entire cosmic sweep of human myth and literature is surveyed, really is about the most pliable character in the history of storytelling. Diertele's film takes Stephen Vincent Benét's same-titled short fiction as its source, which Benét appropriated from Washington Irving's *The Devil and Tom Walker*, which itself was a then-contemporary spin on the German legend of Faust. It's a tale you know well: mired in a moment of avaricious daydream, a hapless everyman utters the line 'Why, I'd give my soul for a ...' CUE: the miraculous appearance of a glib, charmed stranger who can divest our hero's earthly woes with a snap of his mystic fingers. The price? Why, only that very soul he but moments ago disavowed as if it were pocket lint ... Here, farmer Jabez Stone (James Craig) might just be Mr. Scratch's cheapest client ever. For all he covets as barter is two measly cents! Proving wickedness needn't preclude equitability, Scratch (puckish Walter Hudson) instead tempts Stone with a pecuniary jackpot and seven years of kingly prosperity. Naturally, Stone accepts. Anyone familiar with the Simpsons ep in which Homer and family out-litigate Devil Flanders to a jury of history's most notorious nogoodniks will find fun in discovering just how on-the-nail that send-up is. As the film's eponymous real-life orator, Edward Arnold (in the performance that cast the mold for 'down home Southern attorney'), stays the forces evil with nothin' but a little lawyerly ingenuity and some powerful rousin' speechifyin'. Nice to learn that even Beelzebub is governed by the caprices of the American court of law.

*Night of the Demon*, on the other hand, strips the fiend of its humanness to summon a more Blakean Satan. It's a vision Tourneur never wanted in his film, which was intended as a psychological slow-burner of commensurate tenor to M.R. James' *Casting the Runes*, the short story upon which Charles Bennett's script was based. But, famously, when producer/co-writer Hal E. Chester saw the broody, conspicuously creature-free thinker Tourneur and Bennett had cooked up, he flipped: where was the devil in *Night of the Demon*? Reshoots were ordered and the film wrested from Tourneur's control. Scenes with a goofy Muppet monster—all horns, fangs and bat wings—were inserted, thus literalising (and hence, castrating) the stygian dread Tourneur had elsewhere conjured so well. And yet the film remains undoubtedlly unnerving; its enduring status as a classic is easy to understand. I guess when the imposition of an endearingly hokey rubber hellion is your biggest gripe with a supernatural horror flick, you're probably not faring too poorly.

The Devil and Daniel Webster (\$16.95) and Night of the Demon (\$24.95) are available now through Shock. Devil (\$39.95) is out now through Universal.

# New Release CDs

## CD of the Month

### KING OF LIMBS

#### Radiohead

Normally \$29.95.

Our Special Price \$19.95 for a limited time.

Vinyl also available: Normally \$29.95.

Our Special Price \$24.95 for a limited time.



A new Radiohead album is an event – and hot on the heels of the digital release, their latest sonic adventure *King of Limbs* hits stores on March 25. Anyone expecting another *Bends* or *OK Computer* should really have given up by now, at the risk of massive disappointment and point-missing, as *King of Limbs* certainly ain't it. What it is is the sound of a band on the move and a thing of textured beauty. As in much of their recent work, it's a record that creeps up on you and the sound is loop-heavy, but when it's Radiohead controlling the loopiness, well ... loop away, I say. As only Radiohead can do, they've once again produced a record uniquely theirs – and now yours. Declan Murphy is from Readings St Kilda

## Pop/Rock

### ALELA DIANE & WILD DIVINE

#### Alela Diane

\$25.95



Alela Diane has been a lesser-known member of this century's American folk music revival. Others, such as Joanna Newsom or Iron & Wine, have attracted far more attention and sales. But that may well change with the release of her third (proper) album, *Wild Divine*. She has been a favourite of the music team at Readings Carlton since her first album, *Pirates Gospel*, in 2006. Fans of Neko Case or Laura Veirs should certainly check this out.

Dave Clarke is from Readings Carlton

### SEASONS OF MY SOUL

#### Rumer

\$21.95



Having read fantastic things about this record in the UK press as far back as November – and with no sign of a local release – I was forced to import a few copies from the US, just to see if the accolades were justified. They were, and after a couple of spins in the shop, the imported copies were promptly snapped up, so it's great to see it finally hit our shores. Rumer is an English songstress of Pakistani descent and is possessed of quite a remarkable voice. The Karen Carpenter comparisons seem ubiquitous; and though the similarity and clarity of tone is striking, Rumer's debut leaves the listener in no doubt as to its authenticity. There are shades of Laura Nyro, Dusty Springfield and most noticeably Burt Bacharach. (Indeed, the great man personally invited Rumer to sing for him at his home, so impressed was he by her talent.) This is a wonderful, deeply personal and breakthrough record that plays like a lost 70s classic and proves that Rumer is one to watch. DM

### JAMES BLAKE

#### James Blake

\$26.95

Having gained much critical acclaim for his previous EPs, precocious British talent James Blake releases his debut long player – and what could be an early contender for various 'best of 2011' awards. Blake combines his

classical piano background with sparse electronics, austere drum loops and *that* voice to create something intensely moody and at times quite breathtaking. This is a record that benefits from close attention, preferably alone in a locked room or on headphones. It's a slow burner and requires some work, but reveals new shimmering layers of beauty upon every listen. Absorbing. DM

### ANGLES

#### The Strokes

Normally \$26.95. Our special price \$21.95



It's been five years between albums for New York outfit The Strokes. Their long-awaited fourth LP – and the first to be written collaboratively as a band, rather than just Casablancas – *Angles* is the most eclectic of the band's albums to date. As the album title implies, new directions are approached and explored here, though tracks such as *Under Cover of Darkness* and *Taken for a Fool* still retain elements of what we love so much about the band's sound. Miranda La Fleur is from Readings St Kilda

### BAD MACHINES

#### Shane Nicholson

\$24.95



Take a couple of weeks away in the Hunter Valley (in the middle of winter no less!), take along a stack of Bob Dylan albums to listen to and a trusty guitar, and the result is pure joy. I have been listening to Shane Nicholson since his debut 2003 album *It's A Movie* and was instantly struck by just how much of a wonderful songwriter and storyteller he is. I liken him to Neil Finn, which is saying something. He just has a knack of feeding your heart and soul with wonderful stories. *Bad Machines* is no different. You just get caught up in the wonder of *Blueberry Pie* and *Hammer and Nail* while shedding a tear with the joyful sorrow of *The Broken Things* and *Whistling Cannonballs*, a duet with Paul Kelly. You need to listen to this album – you need to listen to all of Nicholson's albums! Lou Fulco is from Readings Carlton

### HOW TO BECOME CLAIRVOYANT

#### Robbie Robertson

\$21.95. Deluxe 2 CD version \$25.95

Released April 8



Robbie Robertson was named one of *Rolling Stone's* 100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time. *How To Become Clairvoyant* is his fifth solo album and his first record in more than ten years. Guitar virtuosos Eric Clapton (who co-wrote three tracks with Robertson), Tom Morello and Robert Randolph guest on the album; it also features Steve Winwood and Trent Reznor. Robertson was a founding member of The Band, penning such classic songs as *The Weight*, *The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down* and *Up on Cripple Creek*. DC

### SUMMERS IN MARIANA

#### Stina

\$19.95



Stina Thomas is a well-respected composer and performer in Perth, where she currently resides. *Summers in Mariana* is her second album, and it consists of ten beautifully crafted instrumental pieces. These predominantly feature a combination of keyboard instruments (piano, harmonium, korg) around which are



woven various beats, loops, and samples, with tremendous understated melody and attention to tonal subtlety. This is a warm, intimate album: playful, joyous, deeply emotional, and highly recommended. *Lisa MacKinney is from Readings Carlton*

## SO BEAUTIFUL OR SO WHAT

**Paul Simon**

Released 8 April. Normally \$26.95.

Our special price \$21.95



It's been five years since Paul Simon released an all-new album, and – thank goodness – it's been worth the wait. It features wonderful infectious orchestration and mischievous lyrics: all the elements that were so enjoyable back in the time of the *Graceland* album. It's been ages since I've heard songs with such intricate layering of instruments, with words that touch on the everyday, expressed with sarcasm and wit. Top it off with great rollicking choruses, and this is a must-have. *Alice Bisits is from Readings Malvern*

## SING IT LOUD

**k.d. lang and The Siss Boom Bang**

Deluxe edition with extra tracks. Normally \$29.95. Our special price \$22.95



It's off to Nashville with k.d. and the band she has personally selected for this very laid-back, twangy bunch of songs. Many of the tracks were recorded live in Middletree Studios in Nashville, owned by producer Joe Pisapia. Featuring beautiful dobro guitar by Joshua Grange and keyboards by Daniel Clarke, k.d. is in amazing voice, as you would expect. Her version of the Talking Heads song *Heaven* is truly striking, so yes – it's another winner for your collection. AB

## THE LAST The Unthanks

\$24.95



We hear the word 'buzz' a lot these days, but these folks surely deserve it, with their fourth album showing a marked growth. These folk-ternative mournsters draw on folk iconoclasts like Fairport, Steeleye and the Incredible String Band, while retaining a modern indie sensibility à la Sufjan/Devendra/Antony/Joanna. All of which sounds like rather a neither here-nor-there approach, but believe me, it works. Songs of raw and (let's be honest) immensely depressing naked emotion, delivered by the sublime Rachel Unthank. Songs of considerable originality (which this frankly cliché-riddled scribe seems unable to do justice). This is music beyond adjectives: just buy it. *Richard Mohr is a guest reviewer*

## Country

### HERE WE GO AGAIN

**Willie Nelson, Wynton Marsalis with Norah Jones**

Normally \$26.95. Our special price \$21.95

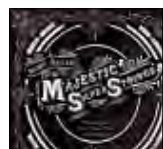


Given the rousing artistic and commercial success of the first recorded collaboration of legendary country troubadour Willie Nelson and jazz statesman Wynton Marsalis on 2008's Blue Note album *Two Men With the Blues*, it's not surprising that the pair would rendezvous again. This album was recorded live at New York's Jazz at Lincoln Center, with special guest Norah Jones. The album pays homage to the music of the late Ray Charles, the iconic star of soul, R&B, country, jazz and pop. DC

## THE MAJESTIC SILVER STRINGS

**Buddy Miller**

\$24.95



Buddy is joined by fellow 'pickers' Marc Ribot, Bill Frisell and Greg Leisz for an album of great musicianship; not only in the playing, but in the singing as well. Featured here is a swag of guest vocalists, including Emmylou Harris, Patty Griffin, Shawn Colvin and Miller's wife, Julie. They play reinterpretations of country and folk standards, along with several original tunes. While after the first few tracks you feel you have stumbled onto a western swing hayride, the album has a fine overall balance of the then and now. LF

## Soundtrack

### NORWEGIAN WOOD SOUNDTRACK

**Jonny Greenwood**

\$24.95



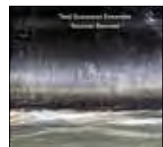
Accompanying director Tran Anh Hung's film adaptation of Haruki Murakami's bestselling novel *Norwegian Wood* is the soundtrack, which features an instrumental score by Jonny Greenwood (guitarist of Radiohead) performed by the BBC Concert Orchestra and the Emperor Quartet, as well as three tracks written and performed by Can. This is Greenwood's third film project; it's has been described by the Irish *Independent* as an 'evocative and frequently plaintive score' and sees Greenwood's reputation as an expert orchestral craftsman gathering strength. Greenwood also wrote the score for *Body Song* in 2003 and composed the music for *There Will Be Blood*, for which he was awarded Best Film Score at the *Evening Standard* British Film Awards for 2007, as well as the Ivor Novello Award for Best Original Film Score. MLF

## Jazz Special of the Month

### RESTORED RETURNED

**Tord Gustaven**

Normally \$32.95. Our special price \$19.95. For a limited time



Tord Gustavsen's piano trilogy of recent years comprises one of the most beautiful – and popular – artistic statements seen for many years. We have limited quantities of this, his latest album from 2010, at a very special price. On this album he took a leap into uncharted territory, adding tenor/soprano sax and the mesmerising, ethereal voice of Kristin Asbjornsen.

## Jazz

### FAITHFUL

**Marcin Wasilewski Trio**

\$29.95



One of the quiet pleasures of recent years has been watching the amazing talent of this unit evolve, first as the young group that grounded trumpeter Tomasz Stanko's leap to superstar sales figures and every award in the book, then as their own unit, releasing two superb discs and playing a revelatory Melbourne concert last year. Wasilewski has a truly gossamer-like touch, even by ECM's lyrical, reflective standard, but now the years on the road as a

leader seem to have drawn him into a more direct, overtly melodic area. Album number three sees the piano sing like it very rarely does, mixing originals with clever choices by Ornette Coleman, Hermeto Pascoal and Paul Bley. Just magical. RM

## Out Now

*All Eternals Deck* (Mountain Goats), *Take The High Road* (Blind Boys of Alabama).

## Look Out For

### RELEASED 8 APRIL

*I Want That You Are Always Happy* (Middle East), *Moment Bends* (Architecture in Helsinki), *Wasting Light* (Foo Fighters), *Gathering Mercury* (Colin Hay), *Rrakala* (Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu).

### RELEASED 15 APRIL

*Apocalypse* (Bill Callahan), *Paper Airplane* (Alison Krauss), *Rock n Roll is Where I Hide* (Dave Graney), *Nine Types of Light* (TV on the Radio).

### COMING 2 MAY

*Helplessness Blues* (Fleet Foxes)

### COMING 23 MAY

*Born This Way* (Lady Gaga)

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# Classical CDs

## Classical CD of the Month

### RAVEL: THE COMPLETE SOLO PIANO MUSIC

Steven Osborne

Hyperion. CDA 677312

Normally \$59.95

Our special price \$33.95

Limited stock at this price



Ravel is traditionally known for his stunning use of orchestral colour – but in this new 2 CD set from Steven Osborne, he shows that he is also a master of colour on a piano. Featuring his complete solo piano works, there are the eternal favourites, *Pavane pour une infante défunte* and *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, interspersed with shorter single movement works. Osborne describes making this recording as ‘a labour of love’ and it is highly apparent in the delicacy of his touch. It has that frisson of feeling that only Ravel can produce, in the hands of a master. With detailed liner notes about each piece and a personal note from Stephen Osborne, this is a great way to explore the repertoire of one of the world’s favourite composers. *Kate Rockstrom is from Readings Carlton*

## Classical Special of the Month

### SIR THOMAS BEECHAM: THE LATER TRADITION (8 CDS)

Sir Thomas Beecham & RPO

EMI. 9186112. \$29.95

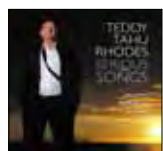


This collection deals primarily with the classic performances Beecham conducted with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, which he established aged 67. Beecham’s recordings of the Beethoven and Schubert symphonies in particular are, for this reviewer, particularly memorable. Also included here are some pieces by Richard Strauss; Beecham was early champion of these works, as well as music from Brahms, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Wagner and Suppe. There can be few (if any) musicians who have single-handedly done so much in the establishment of resources for musical performance as Sir Thomas Beecham. PR

### SERIOUS SONGS

Teddy Tahu Rhodes

ABC Classics. 4764363. \$26.95



The new release from opera superstar Teddy Tahu Rhodes is called *Serious Songs* and lives up to its name, right from the opening chords. But far from being simply serious, it is profound and emotional, highlighting his dramatic voice and style. Tahu Rhodes gets magnificent support from the TSO, MSO, the Australian String Quartet and pianist Kristian Chong: these artists lend a lush and evocative accompaniment and have moments of their own to shine. Featuring works from Brahms and favourite Lieder, such as Schubert’s *Erlkönig* and Samuel Barber’s *Dover Beach*, this recording comes highly recommended. KR

### GERSHWIN: RHAPSODY IN BLUE/PIANO CONCERTO

Stefano Bollani & Riccardo Chailly

Decca. 4782739. Normally \$26.95

Our special price \$21.95

Limited stock at this price



You either love him or hate him, and before we go further, I will admit to adoring Gershwin’s music. With the new recording from Decca, it will give those who dislike his music even more to talk about. Stefano Bollani has been called a ‘jazz star’, while Riccardo Chailly is considered one of the premier conductors still alive. What do you get when you mix them? Why, just about perfect Gershwin of course! Full of joy, and the cheekiness inherent in Gershwin’s music, this blend of jazz and classical has never been so beautiful. We often forget that Gershwin was a ground-breaker in his time, and this recording makes it sound fresh and new all over again. KR

### SOUND THE BELLS!: AMERICAN PREMIERES FOR BRASS

The Bay Brass

Harmonia Mundi. HMU 807556. \$33.95

Most people shudder when they see a brass CD in front of them – but in the case of this recording, it would be worthwhile taking the time to listen to this disc. The Bay Brass has put together an excellent program of brass music, with contributions from John Williams, Kevin Puts and Scott Hiltzik. Stand-out tracks are the *O Magnum Mysterium* by Lauridsen and Bruce Broughton’s *Fanfares, Marches Hymns & Finale*. The playing is of the highest order and the recording quality is excellent. Highly recommended. *Phil Richards is from Readings Carlton*

### RACHMANINOV: RHAPSODY ON A THEME OF PAGANINI/ PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2

Yuja Wang, Claudio Abbado & Mahler Chamber Orchestra

DG. 4779308. Normally \$26.95

Our special price \$21.95.

Limited stock at this price



With this new recording, Yuja Wang continues to climb the heights of the classical world. These performances again show what a wonderful pianist she is developing into – and Rachmaninov, for any pianist, is always a great test of their musical abilities. Wang and Abbado move gracefully through each movement of the *Rhapsody* and the pleasure she derives from performing this work is at once recognisable to the listener. One never gets tired of hearing the *Second Piano Concerto* and Wang’s charismatic performance, combined with beautiful support from Abbado and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, will surely delight. PR

### J.S. BACH: ST. MATTHEW PASSION (3 CDS)

Jos Van Veldhoven & Netherlands Bach Society

Channel Classics. CCSSA32511. \$54.95

The Netherlands Bach Society have redefined the possibilities of Bach performance and recording with their string of acclaimed Channel Classics releases in recent times. They conclude with the big ‘un’, *St Matthew Passion*, and it is an absolute beauty! The recording was made in collaboration with the Catharijne Convent Museum of Utrecht, and the truly lavish packaging contains a glorious written and visual accompaniment to this immortal music, drawing on the unmatched archives of the Museum, which possesses the largest collection of liturgical art in the Netherlands. The young soloists all shine brightly, and this stunningly designed 3 CD set is presented at less than the price of two CDs.

*Richard Mohr is a guest reviewer*

### ROSS EDWARDS: HEART OF NIGHT

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

ABC Classics 4763768. \$26.95



Ross Edwards is among Australia’s most loved contemporary composers. His belief that music should not be so esoteric, but should seduce its audience, is evident in his music, which often has a dreamy, meditative quality. On this disc, Diana Doherty’s wonderful recording of Edwards’ oboe concerto, released a few years ago, is presented alongside two new recordings by the MSO – the *Clarinet Concerto*, with David Thomas, and *Heart of Night* – a work for Shakuhachi and orchestra, featuring Riley Lee. *Heart of Night* is Edwards at his

most serene; the work has an almost drone-like quality. The *Clarinet Concerto* too is dreamy and meandering but is lifted, here and there, to moments of jazz-like animation. *Evan Meagher is from Readings Hawthorn*

### VIRTUOSO

Ray Chen

Sony Classical. 88697808122. \$22.95



The young Australian violinist has now won two of the world’s biggest performance prizes, making him hot property. His debut for Sony, featuring music by Bach, Tartini, Franck and Wieniawski, struck me at first as being very much about showing off Chen’s versatility, so I was surprised by how coherent the program felt on listening – each work defined by a certain kind of passionate energy, the production of which seems to be one of Chen’s particular strengths. The Tartini is appropriately furious. The Franck sonata is a truly great version and calls for the kind of drama Chen delivers – as does the Wieniawski, a personal favourite of Chen’s, and evidently so. EM

### MAHLER: SYMPHONY NO. 2

Sir Simon Rattle & BPO

EMI. 6473632. \$19.95

Simon Rattle is well known for his Mahler interpretations. Here at Readings, it’s mostly for his complete box-set of all the symphonies, done with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Now, with the high-profile Berliner Philharmoniker, he has re-recorded the *Symphony No. 2, Resurrection*. Featuring the vocals of Kate Royal and Magdalena Kozena, this is one of Mahler’s most popular symphonies, and though it’s long, it’s also very accessible. With Rattle’s usual deft touch and the Berliner Philharmoniker’s amazing ensemble and musicality, I will be surprised if this doesn’t become a standard to hold all other recordings to. KR

### BRITTEN: CELLO SYMPHONY, ORCHESTRAL WORKS

Paul Watkins & BBC Philharmonic

Chandos CHAN10658. Normally \$34.95

Our special price \$19.95. While stocks last

As an overview of Britten’s orchestral writing, this disc makes for an interesting compilation, contrasting the edginess of his famous symphony for cello and orchestra – written originally for Rostropovich – with symphonic suites drawn from two operatic works, *Peter Grimes* and *Gloriana*. The latter, rarely performed, was a critical failure as an opera, but the symphonic suite Britten extracted from it is great. Edward Gardner and the BBC Philharmonic are very much at home with this music, while Paul Watkins adds plenty of bite to the cello symphony. EM.

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