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“[A] pleasing edition.”—Times Literary Supplement

“This is a wonderful book. Jane Austen’s juvenilia is captivating, Leon Steinmetz’s illustrations are absolutely gorgeous, and Claudia L. Johnson’s afterword is excellent.”
—Jenny Davidson, author of Reading Jane Austen

The Beautifull Cassandra

Most people think Jane Austen wrote only six novels. Fortunately for us, she wrote several others, though very short ones, while still a young girl.

Austen was only twelve or thirteen when she wrote The Beautifull Cassandra, an irreverent and humorous little masterpiece. Weighing in at 465 occasionally misspelled words, it is a complete and perfect novel-in-miniature, made up of a dedication to her older sister Cassandra and twelve chapters, each consisting of a sentence or two.

Narrating the slightly criminal adventures of the sixteen-year-old title character, The Beautifull Cassandra gives us Austen’s most irrepressible heroine, who, after stealing a hat, leaves her mother’s shop to flounce around London, eating ice cream (without paying), taking coach rides (without paying), and encountering handsome young ladies and gentlemen (without speaking)—all to return home hours later with whispered joy: “This is a day well spent.”

This charming edition features elegant and edgy watercolor drawings by Leon Steinmetz and is edited by leading Austen scholar Claudia L. Johnson. In her illuminating afterword, Johnson calls The Beautifull Cassandra “among the most brilliant and polished” of Austen’s youthful writings—a precocious work written for the amusement of her family but already anticipating her mature irony, sense of the absurd, gift for parody, and, above all, stylistic mastery.

The result is a marvelous edition of a literary treasure that is sure to delight.

JANE AUSTEN would go on to write other novels. CLAUDIA L. JOHNSON is the Murray Professor of English Literature at Princeton University. LEON STEINMETZ is an American artist whose work appears in major museums in the United States and Europe.
The Last Utopians
For readers reared on the dystopian visions of Nineteen Eighty-Four and The Handmaid’s Tale, the idea of a perfect society may sound more sinister than enticing. In this lively literary history of a time before “Orwellian” entered the cultural lexicon, Michael Robertson reintroduces us to a vital strain of utopianism that seized the imaginations of late nineteenth-century American and British writers. The Last Utopians delves into the biographies of four key figures—Edward Bellamy, William Morris, Edward Carpenter, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman—who lived during an extraordinary period of literary and social experimentation. These writers, Robertson shows, shared a belief in radical equality, imagining an end to class and gender hierarchies and envisioning new forms of familial and romantic relationships.

MICHAEL ROBERTSON is professor of English at The College of New Jersey.

How the Other Half Looks
New York City’s Lower East Side, long viewed as the space of what Jacob Riis notoriously called the “other half,” was also a crucible for experimentation in photography, film, literature, and visual technologies. This book takes an unprecedented look at the practices of observation that emerged from this critical site of encounter, showing how they have informed literary and everyday narratives of America, its citizens, and its possible futures. How the Other Half Looks reveals how the Lower East Side has inspired new ways of looking—and looking back—that have shaped literary and popular expression as well as American modernity.

SARA BLAIR is the Patricia S. Yaeger Collegiate Professor of English and a faculty associate in the Department of American Culture and the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan.

“[I]nstructive and touching.”
—Adam Gopnik, New Yorker

“Deftly blends visual and aural evidence in this multilayered, multisensory journey through the Lower East Side and across several centuries.”
—Hasia R. Diner, author of Lower East Side Memoires: A Jewish Place in America
“I have not read such a stimulating and original book for a long time. Marcus brings the experience and thrill of nineteenth-century theater to life, but that is only the start of it.”
—Clare Pettitt, King’s College London

The Drama of Celebrity

Why do so many people care so much about celebrities? Who decides who gets to be a star? What are the privileges and pleasures of fandom? Do celebrities ever deserve the outsized attention they receive? In this fascinating and deeply researched book, Sharon Marcus challenges everything you thought you knew about our obsession with fame. Icons are not merely famous for being famous; the media alone cannot make or break stars; fans are not simply passive dupes. Instead, journalists, the public, and celebrities themselves all compete, passionately and expertly, to shape the stories we tell about celebrities and fans. The result: a high-stakes drama as endless as it is unpredictable.

SHARON MARCUS is Orlando Harriman Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University. She is a founding editor of Public Books.

“The level of specific, thorough attention given to a particular period of U.S. lexicography sets The Dictionary Wars apart from other lexicographical histories.”
—Lynne Murphy, author of The Prodigal Tongue: The Love-Hate Relationship between American and British English

The Dictionary Wars

Peter Martin recounts the patriotic fervor in the early American republic to produce a definitive national dictionary that would rival Samuel Johnson’s 1755 Dictionary of the English Language. But what began as a cultural war of independence from Britain devolved into a battle among lexicographers, authors, scholars, and publishers, all vying for dictionary supremacy and shattering forever the dream of a unified American language. Delving into the personal stories and national debates that arose from the conflicts surrounding America’s first dictionaries, The Dictionary Wars examines the linguistic struggles that underpinned the founding and growth of a nation.

PETER MARTIN is the author of numerous books, and has taught English literature in the United States and England.
Insomniac Dreams

On October 14, 1964, Vladimir Nabokov, a lifelong insomniac, began a curious experiment. Over the next eighty days, immediately upon waking, he wrote down his dreams. The purpose was to test the theory that time may go in reverse, so that, paradoxically, a later event may generate an earlier dream. The result—published here for the first time—is a rare glimpse of the artist at his most private.

VLADIMIR NABOKOV wrote innovative fiction, verse, and drama.
GENNADY BARABTARLO is professor of literature at the University of Missouri.

2017. 224 pages. 23 b/w illus.
Hardback 9780691167947 $24.95 | £20.00
E-book 9781400888962

Semi-Detached

When you are half lost in a work of art, what happens to the half left behind? Semi-Detached delves into this state of being: what it means to be within and without our social and physical milieu, at once interacting and drifting away, and how it affects our ideas about aesthetics. John Plotz focuses on Victorian and early modernist writers and artists who understood their work as tapping into, amplifying, or giving shape to a suspended duality of experience.

JOHN PLOTZ is professor of Victorian literature at Brandeis University.

2017. 344 pages. 8 color illus. + 35 b/w illus.
Hardback 9780691159461 $35.00 | £27.00
E-book 9781400887880

Ladies’ Greek

In Ladies’ Greek, Yopie Prins illuminates a culture of female classical literacy that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century, during the formation of women’s colleges. In the words of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, they wrote “some Greek upon the margin—lady’s Greek, without the accents.” Yet in the margins of classical scholarship they discovered other ways of knowing, and not knowing, Greek.

YOPIE PRINS is the Irene Butter Collegiate Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Michigan.

2017. 312 pages. 30 b/w illus.
Paperback 9780691141893 $29.95 | £24.00
E-book 9781400885749
Winner of the 2018 NAVSA Book Prize, North American Victorian Studies Association

“This is a celebratory enterprise, an ideal present for readers who are already fans.” —Eric Naiman, Times Literary Supplement
“Lewis’s brilliant analysis here gives fresh meaning to long-familiar if half-understood phrases.”—James Shapiro, New York Review of Books

Hamlet and the Vision of Darkness

Hamlet and the Vision of Darkness is a radical new interpretation of the most famous play in the English language. By exploring Shakespeare’s engagements with the humanist traditions of early modern England and Europe, Rhodri Lewis reveals a Hamlet unseen for centuries: an innovative, coherent, and exhilaratingly bleak tragedy in which the governing ideologies of Shakespeare’s age are scrupulously upended.

RHODRI LEWIS is professor of English literature and a fellow of St. Hugh’s College at the University of Oxford.

2017. 392 pages. 11 b/w illus. Hardback 9780691166841 $39.95 | £30.00

“[This book] not only highlights the interconnected nature of these various objects in reception history—even as the narratives they build are contradictory—but also legitimizes them as spaces or further literary study.”—Megan Peiser, Victorian Periodicals Review

What the Victorians Made of Romanticism

Shedding new light on how Romantic authors were posthumously recruited to address later cultural concerns, What the Victorians Made of Romanticism reveals new histories of appropriation, remediation, and renewal that resonate in our own moment of media change.

TOM MOLE is Reader in English Literature and Director of the Centre for the History of the Book at the University of Edinburgh.

2017. 336 pages. 30 b/w illus. 4 tables. 2 maps. Hardback 9780691175362 $45.00 | £35.00 E-book 9781400887897

Winner of the 2018 Dorothy Lee Award for Outstanding Scholarship in the Ecology of Culture, Media Ecology Association

“Learned, beautifully written, and crafted with evident care.”—Los Angeles Review of Books

Tact

In this book, David Russell traces how the essay genre came to exemplify this sensuous new ethic and aesthetic. Offering fresh approaches to thinking about criticism, sociability, politics, and art, Tact concludes by following a legacy of essayistic tact to the practice of British psychoanalysts like D. W. Winnicott and Marion Milner.

DAVID RUSSELL is associate professor of English at the University of Oxford and a tutorial fellow of Corpus Christi College.

2017. 216 pages. 4 b/w illus. Hardback 9780691161198 $35.00 | £27.00 E-book 9781400887903
“[A] deft, knowledgable and consistently interesting study.”
—Seamus Perry, London Review of Books

The Plural of Us

The Plural of Us is the first book to focus on the poet’s use of the first-person plural voice—poetry’s “we.” Closely exploring the work of W. H. Auden, Bonnie Costello uncovers the trove of thought and feeling carried in this small word.

BONNIE COSTELLO is William Fairfield Warren Distinguished Professor and professor of English at Boston University.

2017. 272 pages. 1 b/w illus.  
Hardback 9780691174464 $45.00 | £35.00  
E-book 9781400885176

Winner of the 2017 Warren-Brooks Award for Outstanding Literary Criticism, Robert Penn Warren Center and Western Kentucky University

“[A] fascinating look at the role strangeness and otherness played in the development of a national language and identity.”
—James Holloway, Fortean Times

Strange Vernaculars

While eighteenth-century efforts to standardize the English language have long been studied, less well-known are the era’s collections of odd slang and nautical jargon. Strange Vernaculars delves into how these published works presented the supposed lexicons of the “common people.”

JANET SORENSEN is associate professor of English at the University of California, Berkeley.

2017. 352 pages. 8 b/w illus.  
Hardback 9780691169026 $39.95 | £30.00  
E-book 9781400885169

Victorian Pain

If pain serves no obvious purpose, how do we reconcile its existence with a well-ordered universe? Examining how writers of the day engaged with such questions, Victorian Pain offers a compelling new literary and philosophical history of modern pain.

RACHEL ABLOW is associate professor of English at the University at Buffalo, State University of New York.

2017. 208 pages.  
Hardback 9780691174464 $39.95 | £30.00  
E-book 9781400885176
“A masterpiece of comparative reading and a gripping story of Cold War culture, *City of Beginnings* is a fascinating journey into the intellectual life of postwar Beirut and the best account we have of the modernist poetry movement in Arabic.”
—Elias Khoury, author of *Gate of the Sun*

**City of Beginnings**

*City of Beginnings* is an exploration of modernism in Arabic poetry, a movement that became the most influential and controversial Arabic literary development of the twentieth century. Robyn Creswell introduces English-language readers to a poetic movement that will be uncannily familiar—and unsettlingly strange. He also provides an intellectual history of Lebanon during the early Cold War, when Beirut became both a battleground for rival ideologies and the most vital artistic site in the Middle East. The book also reveals how the modernists translated concepts of liberal individualism, autonomy, and political freedom into a radical poetics that has shaped Arabic literary and intellectual debate to this day.

**ROBYN CRESWELL** is assistant professor of comparative literature at Yale University.

“Leaks, Hacks, and Scandals is a truly significant book, combining cutting-edge research on digital media in the Arab world with insights into classical Arabic literature. El-Ariss’s topic could not be more important.”
—Ellen Anne McLarney, author of *Soft Force: Women in Egypt’s Islamic Awakening*

**Leaks, Hacks, and Scandals**

In recent years, Arab activists have confronted authoritarian regimes both on the street and online, leaking videos and exposing atrocities, and demanding political rights. Tarek El-Ariss situates these critiques of power within a pervasive culture of scandal and leaks and shows how cultural production and political change in the contemporary Arab world are enabled by digital technology yet emerge from traditional cultural models. *Leaks, Hacks, and Scandals* maps the changing landscape of Arab modernity, or *Nahda*, in the digital age and traces how concepts such as the nation, community, power, the intellectual, the author, and the novel are hacked and recoded through new modes of confrontation, circulation, and dissent.

**TAREK EL-ARISS** is associate professor of Middle Eastern studies at Dartmouth College.
This extraordinary book provides a masterful survey of a notoriously baffling subject, yet does so in wonderfully accessible and engaging prose. *What Is the Present?* is superb scholarship but also exciting news—a captivating report from the front lines of cultural and intellectual engagement. I love this book.

—Jesse Matz, author of *Lasting Impressions: The Legacies of Impressionism in Contemporary Culture*

**Eva Palmer Sikelianos**

This is the first biography to tell the fascinating story of Eva Palmer Sikelianos (1874–1952), an American actor, director, composer, and weaver best known for reviving the Delphic Festivals. Yet, as Artemis Leontis reveals, Palmer’s most spectacular performance was her daily revival of ancient Greek life. For almost half a century, dressed in handmade Greek tunics and sandals, she sought to make modern life freer and more beautiful through a creative engagement with the ancients. This biography vividly re-creates the unforgettable story of a remarkable nonconformist whom one contemporary described as “the only ancient Greek I ever knew.”

**Artemis Leontis** is professor of modern Greek and chair of the Department of Classical Studies at the University of Michigan.

“This extraordinary book provides a masterful survey of a notoriously baffling subject, yet does so in wonderfully accessible and engaging prose. *What Is the Present?* is superb scholarship but also exciting news—a captivating report from the front lines of cultural and intellectual engagement. I love this book.”

—Jesse Matz, author of *Lasting Impressions: The Legacies of Impressionism in Contemporary Culture*

**What Is the Present?**

The problem of the present—what it is and what it means—is one that has vexed generations of thinkers and artists. Many critics argue that people today spend far too much time in the here and now—but how can we tell without first knowing what the here and now actually is? Presenting an entirely new conception of the temporal mystery Georg Lukács called the “unexplained instant,” *What Is the Present?* explores how the arts have traditionally represented the present—and also how artists have offered radical alternatives to that tradition.

**Michael North** is professor of English at the University of California, Los Angeles.
“Magnificent.”
—Neal W. Sobania, African Studies Review

The Life of Walatta-Petros

Translated into English for the first time, The Life of Walatta-Petros (1672) tells the story of an Ethiopian saint who lived from 1592 to 1642 and led a successful nonviolent movement to preserve African Christian beliefs in the face of European protocolonialism. This is the oldest-known book-length biography of an African woman written by Africans before the nineteenth century, and one of the earliest stories of African resistance to European influence. Written by her disciples after her death, The Life of Walatta-Petros praises her as a friend of women, a devoted reader, a skilled preacher, and a radical leader, providing a rare picture of the experiences and thoughts of Africans—especially women—before the modern era.

WENDY LAURA BELCHER is associate professor in the Department of Comparative Literature and the Department for African American Studies at Princeton University. MICHAEL KLEINER has taught at the universities of Göttingen, Marburg, and Hamburg, as well as at Addis Ababa University.

“[A] masterful demonstration of the inseparability of form and meaning.”
—Philip Hardie, Trinity College, University of Cambridge

Virgil’s Double Cross

In this timely book, David Quint depicts a Virgil who consciously builds contradiction into the Aeneid. The literary trope of chiasmus, reversing and collapsing distinctions, returns as an organizing signature in Virgil’s writing: a double cross for the reader inside the Aeneid’s story of nation, empire, and Caesarism. Uncovering verbal designs and allusions, layers of artfulness and connections to Roman history, Quint’s accessible readings of the poem’s famous episodes—the fall of Troy, the story of Dido, the trip to the Underworld, and the troubling killing of Turnus—disclose unsustainable distinctions between foreign war/civil war, Greek/Roman, enemy/lover, nature/culture, and victor/victim. This new account of Virgil’s masterpiece reveals how the Aeneid conveys an ambivalence and complexity that speak to past and present.

DAVID QUINT is Sterling Professor of Comparative Literature at Yale University.
“[A]n important, groundbreaking book…. This book should appeal to a broad audience of scholars interested in oral-literate cultures, medieval and early modern education, the classical tradition, rhetoric, early humanism and Renaissance literature, and the history of the book.”

—Mary Carruthers, New York University

Weeping for Dido

Weeping for Dido takes readers into the medieval classroom, where boys identified with Dido, where teachers turned an unfinished classical poem into a bildungsroman about young Achilles and where students not only studied but performed classical works. The result is a groundbreaking study that provides a surprising new picture of medieval education and writes a new chapter in the reception history of classical literature.

MARJORIE CURRY WOODS is the Jane and Roland Blumberg Centennial Professor of English, Professor of Comparative Literature, and University Distinguished Teaching Professor at the University of Texas at Austin.

“A formidable achievement that will stand as a definitive landmark.”

—Froma Zeitlin, Princeton University

Sophocles

Here, for the first time in English, is celebrated French classicist Jacques Jouanna’s magisterial account of the life and work of Sophocles. Exhaustive and authoritative, this acclaimed book combines biography and detailed studies of Sophocles’ plays, all set in the rich context of classical Greek tragedy and the political, social, religious, and cultural world of Athens’s greatest age, the fifth century.

Written for scholars, students, and general readers, this book will interest anyone who wants to know more about Greek drama in general and Sophocles in particular. With an extensive bibliography and useful summaries not only of Sophocles’ extant plays but also, uniquely, of the fragments of plays that have been partially lost, it will be a standard reference in classical studies for years to come.

JACQUES JOUANNA is a member of the Institut de France and professor emeritus of Greek at the Université de Paris-Sorbonne.
“[C]onvincingly redefines the progressive potential of utopian thinking.”
—Branka Arsić, Columbia University

**Utopias of One**

*Utopias of One* examines how eight writers—Henry David Thoreau, W. E. B. Du Bois, Osip and Nadezhda Mandel’shtam, Anna Akhmatova, Wallace Stevens, Ezra Pound, and J. H. Prynne—construct utopias of one within and against modernity’s two large-scale attempts to harmonize individual and collective interests: liberalism and communism.

**Joshua Kotin** is associate professor of English at Princeton University and an affiliated faculty member in the university’s Program in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies.

2017. 216 pages. 3 b/w illus.  
Hardback 9780691176710 $45.00 | £35.00  
E-book 9781400887866

“This is an ambitious and meticulously researched study.”
—Emily Zobel Marshall, *Times Literary Supplement*

**The Tar Baby**

*The Tar Baby* offers a fresh analysis of this deceptively simple story about a fox, a rabbit, and a doll made of tar and turpentine, tracing its history and its connections to slavery, colonialism, and global trade.

Compellingly argued and ambitious in scope, the book concludes with twelve versions of the story transcribed from various cultures in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

**Bryan Wagner** is associate professor in the English Department at the University of California, Berkeley.

2017. 280 pages. 12 b/w illus.  
Hardback 9780691172637 $29.95 | £24.00  
E-book 9781400885619

“[T]his splendid essay anthology … gathers a stellar cast of scholars to provide a wide-ranging and thoughtful introduction to French literature.”—*Publishers Weekly*

**A History of Modern French Literature**

This book provides a new history of French literature from the Renaissance through the twentieth century. Christopher Prendergast has gathered a group of more than thirty leading scholars who provide original essays on carefully selected writers, works, and topics that open a window onto key chapters of French literary history.

**Christopher Prendergast** is professor emeritus of French literature at the University of Cambridge and a fellow of King’s College and the British Academy.

2017. 736 pages. 4 b/w illus.  
Hardback 9780691157726 $49.95 | £40.00  
E-book 9781400885046
“This is a remarkable presentation of the whole sweep of *Genji* in both text and image, one that will open up Murasaki’s tale to a wider audience than ever before, and still deeply satisfy specialists. McCormick’s exquisite book is beautifully written—a real pleasure to read.”
—Andrew M. Watsky, Princeton University

**The Tale of Genji**

*The Tale of Genji* is a masterpiece of prose and poetry that is widely considered the world’s first novel. Melissa McCormick provides a unique companion to Murasaki’s tale that combines discussions of all fifty-four of its chapters with paintings and calligraphy from the *Genji Album* (1510) in the Harvard Art Museums, the oldest dated set of *Genji* illustrations known to exist.

**MELISSA MCCORMICK** is Professor of Japanese Art and Culture and Harvard College Professor at Harvard University.

“A dizzying, dreamy compendium of ancient stories… Enchanting… The collection aspires to be both a bedside tome that appeals to millennial attention spans and a hunger for cultural canapés elevated to an art form by Schott’s *Miscellanies*, and at the same time a serious contribution to scholarship on ancient narrative.”
—Victoria Rimell, *Times Literary Supplement*

**The Book of Greek and Roman Folktales, Legends, and Myths**

This unique anthology presents the largest collection of these tales ever assembled. Featuring nearly four hundred stories in authoritative and highly readable translations, this is the first book to offer a representative selection of the entire range of traditional classical storytelling. Complete with beautiful illustrations by Glynnis Fawkes, a comprehensive introduction, notes, and more, this one-of-a-kind anthology will delight general readers as well as students of classics, fairy tales, and folklore.

**WILLIAM HANSEN** is professor emeritus of classical studies and folklore at Indiana University, Bloomington.
“Zipes’s translations of the tales are extremely well done.”
—Donna C. Stanton, coeditor of Enchanted Eloquence

Smack-Bam, or The Art of Governing Men

Édouard Laboulaye (1811–1883), one of nineteenth-century France’s most prominent politicians, was also a prolific writer of fairy tales. Smack-Bam, or The Art of Governing Men brings together sixteen of Laboulaye’s most artful stories in new translations. Filled with biting social commentary and strong notions of social justice, these rediscovered tales continue to impart lessons today.

JACK ZYPES is professor emeritus of German and comparative literature at the University of Minnesota.

2018. 288 pages. 15 b/w illus.
Paperback 9780691181868 $22.95 | £17.99
E-book 9780691184487

Oddly Modern Fairy Tales

“A wonderful and wonder-filled collection.”—Philip Pullman

Workers’ Tales

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, unique tales inspired by traditional literary forms appeared frequently in socialist-leaning British periodicals. In Workers’ Tales, acclaimed critic and author Michael Rosen brings together more than forty of the best and most enduring examples of these stories in one beautiful volume.

MICHAEL ROSEN is professor of children’s literature at Goldsmiths, University of London. The author of more than 140 children’s books, he is also known for his work as a broadcaster, political columnist, and scriptwriter, and was Children’s Laureate from 2007 to 2009.

October 2018. 328 pages. 14 b/w illus.
Paperback 9780691175348 $19.95 | £14.99
E-book 9780691185392
Audiobook 9780691193007

Oddly Modern Fairy Tales

“[A]n eclectic collection … spanning millennia and continents.”
—Cameron Woodhead, Sydney Morning Herald

The Sorcerer’s Apprentice

This unique and beautifully illustrated book brings together more than fifty sorcerer’s apprentice stories by a plethora of writers, including Ovid, Sir Walter Scott, and the Brothers Grimm. From Goethe’s “The Pupil in Magic” to A. K. Ramanujan’s “The Guru and His Disciple,” this expansive collection presents variations of a classic passed down through countries and eras.

JACK ZYPES is the editor and translator of The Original Folk and Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm (Princeton). NATALIE FRANK is an American artist whose work is held in multiple museum collections.

July 2019. 296 pages.
Paperback 9780691191423 $19.95 | £14.99
E-book 9781400885633
“[A] considered, moving account of how this flawed but much mis-read writer thought, and of what he still offers, philosophically and politically.”
—Guy Stevenson, Literary Review

On Henry Miller

The American writer Henry Miller’s critical reputation—if not his popular readership—has been in eclipse at least since Kate Millett’s blistering critique in Sexual Politics, her landmark 1970 study of misogyny in literature and art. Even a Miller fan like the acclaimed Scottish writer John Burnside finds Miller’s “sex books”—including The Rosy Crucifixion, Tropic of Cancer, and Tropic of Capricorn—“boring and embarrassing.” But Burnside says that Miller’s notorious image as a “pornographer and woman hater” has hidden his vital, true importance—his anarchist sensibility and the way it shows us how, by fleeing from conformity of all kinds, we may be able to save ourselves from the “air-conditioned nightmare” of the modern world.

JOHN BURNSIDE is a poet, novelist, and memoirist.

“[T]he most fluent guidance imaginable to the genius and the ingenuity of the man.”
—David Bromwich, New York Review of Books

On Empson

Are literary critics writers? As Michael Wood says, “Not all critics are writers—perhaps most of them are not—and some of them are better when they don’t try to be.” The British critic and poet William Empson (1906–84), one of the most important and influential critics of the twentieth century, was an exception—a critic who was not only a writer but also a great one. In this brief book, Wood, himself one of the most gifted writers among contemporary critics, explores Empson as a writer, a distinguished poet whose criticism is a brilliant literary performance—and proof that the act of reading can be an unforgettable adventure.

Final Matters

An award-winning translator presents selections from the haunting final volumes of a leading voice in contemporary Hungarian poetry

Szilárd Borbély, one of the most celebrated writers to emerge from post-Communist Hungary, received numerous literary awards in his native country. In this volume, acclaimed translator Ottilie Mulzet reveals the full range and force of Borbély’s verse by bringing together generous selections from his last two books, Final Matters and To the Body. The original Hungarian text is set on pages facing the English translations, and the book also features an afterword by Mulzet that places the poems in literary, historical, and biographical context.

Restless, curious, learned, and alert, Borbély weaves into his work an unlikely mix of Hungarian folk songs, Christian and Jewish hymns, classical myths, police reports, and unsettling accounts of abortions. In her afterword, Mulzet calls this collection “a blasphemous and fragmentary prayer book . . . that challenges us to rethink the boundaries of victimhood, culpability, and our own religious and cultural definitions.”

SZILÁRD BORBÉLY (1963–2014) wrote in a wide variety of genres. His books include the novel The Dispossessed and the poetry collection Berlin-Hamlet.

OTTILIE MULZET is a literary critic and the translator of The Dispossessed and Berlin-Hamlet, among other books. Her translation of the novel Seiobo There Below by László Krasznahorkai won the 2014 Best Translated Book Award.

December 2018. 200 pages.
Paperback 9780691182438 $19.95 | £14.99

Lockert Library of Poetry in Translation
“Inspired by his childhood on a dairy farm in Illinois, tales of rural life lead the way in this Austin Smith collection focused on family, violence, and memories.”
—Matt Sutherland, Foreword Reviews

**Flyover Country**

*Flyover Country* is a powerful collection of poems about violence: the violence we do to the land, to animals, to refugees, to the people of distant countries, and to one another. Drawing on memories of his childhood on a dairy farm in Illinois, Austin Smith explores the beauty and cruelty of rural life, challenging the idea that the American Midwest is mere “flyover country,” a place that deserves passing over. At the same time, the collection suggests that America itself has become a flyover country, carrying out drone strikes and surveillance abroad, locked in a state of perpetual war that Americans seem helpless to stop.

**AUSTIN SMITH** is the author of a previous poetry collection, *Almanac* (Princeton), and his work has appeared in the *New Yorker, Poetry, Ploughshares*, and many other publications. He teaches at Stanford University.

“Reader beware: you are handling a book as dangerous as it is delicious. Dora Malech’s passionate constraint—her fervor, her discipline, and her devotion—is exemplary and can be contagious. This collection is one of a kind.”
—Stephen Yenser, author of *Stone Fruit*

**Stet**

In *Stet*, poet Dora Malech takes constraint as her catalyst and subject, exploring what it means to make or break a vow, to create art out of a life in flux, to reckon with the body’s bounds, and to arrive at a place where one might bear and care for another life. Tapping the inventive possibilities of constrained forms, particularly the revealing limitations of the anagram, *Stet* is a work of serious play that brings home the connections and intimacies of language.

**DORA MALECH** is the author of two previous books of poetry, *Say So* and *Shore Ordered Ocean*. Her poems have appeared in the *New Yorker, Poetry, The Best American Poetry*, and many other publications. She is assistant professor in The Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University and lives in Baltimore.
Kafka: The Early Years

How did Kafka become Kafka? Reiner Stach’s definitive biography of the writer answers that question with more facts and insight than ever before, describing the complex personal, political, and cultural circumstances that shaped the young Franz Kafka (1883–1924). Brimming with vivid and often startling details, Stach’s narrative invites readers deep inside this neglected period of Kafka’s life. The book’s richly atmospheric portrait of his German Jewish merchant family and his education, psychological development, and sexual maturation draws on numerous sources, some still unpublished, including family letters, schoolmates’ memoirs, and early diaries of his close friend.

The crowning volume to a masterly biography, this is an unmatched account of how a boy who grew up in an old Central European monarchy became a writer who helped create modern literature.

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