

Riverhead Books *Winter 2012*



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# ALL I DID WAS SHOOT MY MAN

*A Leonid McGill Mystery*

Walter Mosley

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Seven years ago, Zella Grisham came home to find her man, Harry Tangelo, in bed with her friend. The weekend before, \$6.8 million had been stolen from Rutgers Assurance Corp., whose offices are across the street from where Zella worked. Zella didn't remember shooting Harry, but she didn't deny it either. The district attorney was inclined to call it temporary insanity—until the police found \$80,000 from the Rutgers heist hidden in her storage space.

For reasons of his own, Leonid McGill is convinced of Zella's innocence. But as he begins his investigation, his life begins to unravel. His wife is drinking more than she should. His oldest son has dropped out of college and moved in with an ex-prostitute. His youngest son is working for him and trying to stay within the law. And his father, whom he thought was long dead, has turned up under an alias.

A gripping story of murder, greed, and retribution, *All I Did Was Shoot My Man* is also the poignant tale of one man's attempt to stay connected to his family.

Praise for Walter Mosley and the  
Leonid McGill mysteries

"Suspenseful, insightful and superbly written in Mosley's unique style." —Associated Press

"As complex and thoughtful as its narrator-hero . . . smartly paced, well plotted and elegantly written." —*Los Angeles Times*

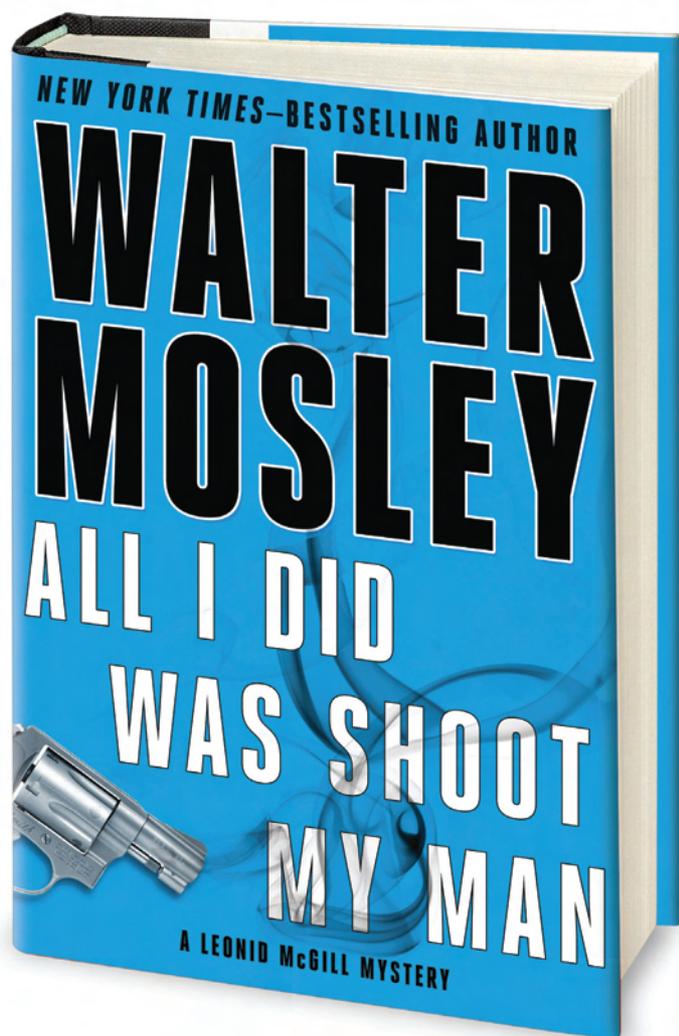
"Mosley's compassionate shamus finds plenty of opportunity to apply his insight . . . and that's where Mosley's genius for characterization comes in." —*The New York Times*



© David Burnett

**WALTER MOSLEY** is one of the most versatile and admired writers in America today. A *New York Times*-bestselling author, his work has been translated into more than twenty-one languages. Mosley, the winner of an O. Henry Award, a Grammy, and PEN America's Lifetime Achievement Award, lives in New York City.

In the latest and most surprising novel in the bestselling Leonid McGill series, Leonid finds himself caught between his sins of the past and an all-too-vivid present.



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*Known to Evil*  
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# THE STREET SWEEPER

A Novel

Elliot Perlman

---

Lamont Williams is a paroled felon, looking to turn his life around, working as a street sweeper at a large city hospital and searching for his estranged daughter. Adam Zignelik is a struggling, non-tenured professor, paralyzed by looming failure, his life falling apart around him. He discovers a cache of recordings of previously unheard voices reaching out from a horrific past, voices that can both save his career and bring him back to the woman he loves. At the same time, Lamont forges an unlikely friendship with a dying man who, having lived through those horrors, has a crucially important story to tell, and to preserve. The worlds surrounding these two men, their families, their pasts, their potential futures, swirl in and out of history as the forces of the American civil rights movement, the Holocaust, Chicago unions, and New York City racial politics combine in a thrilling cross-generational literary symphony.

The acclaimed author of *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, Elliot Perlman weaves the narratives of Lamont and Adam—and their myriad connected friends, lovers, parents, and distant relatives—into an ambitious, masterful depiction of the power that memory has over our lives.

## Praise for Elliot Perlman

“Perlman writes with such convincing simplicity—his sentences read like whiskey-fueled confessions. . . . [W]e dig ravenously through Perlman’s sentences.” —*Esquire*

“Elliot Perlman has many things working in his favor as a novelist: curiosity, erudition, daring, and a gift for seducing readers into going along with him for the ride.” —*The Washington Post*

“Perlman writes fiction with muscle.” —*People*

“There are traces of Dickens’s range in Perlman and of George Eliot’s generous humanist spirit.” —*The New York Times Book Review*

“Perlman has a rare gift for keeping the pages turning. . . . [T]he Aussie equivalent of the Franzens, Roths, and yes, Austens of the world.” —*Elle*

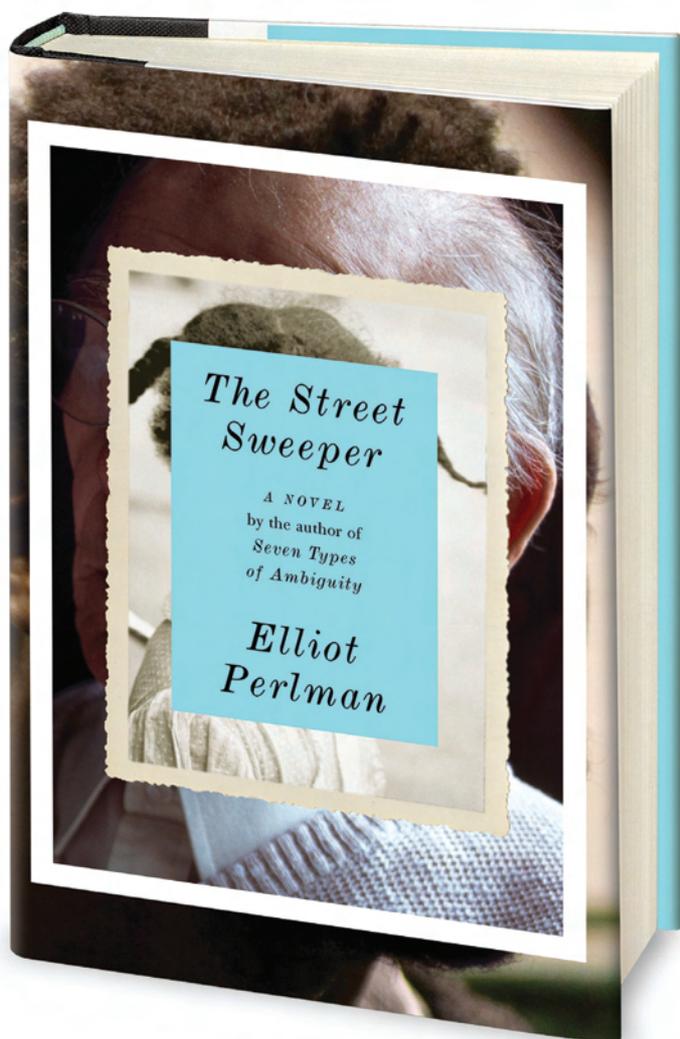


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**ELLIOT PERLMAN** is the author of *The Reasons I Won't Be Coming* and *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. He also cowrote the award-winning screenplay for a film version of

*Three Dollars*, his first novel. He lives in Australia.

The power of history to change our lives reverberates through this virtuosic, engrossing epic novel.



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Previous titles:

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*Seven Types of Ambiguity*  
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# COME IN AND COVER ME

*A Novel*

Gin Phillips

---

When Ren was only twelve years old, she lost her older brother, Scott, to a car accident. Since then, Scott has been a presence in her life, appearing with a snatch of a song or a reflection in the moonlight. Now, twenty-five years later, her talent for connecting with the ghosts around her has made her especially sensitive as an archaeologist. More than just understanding the bare outline of how our ancestors lived, Ren is dedicated to re-creating lives and stories, to breathing life into those who occupied this world long before us. On the cusp of the most important discovery of her career, it is ghosts who are guiding her way. But what do two long-dead Mimbres women have to tell Ren about herself? And what message do they have about her developing relationship with a fellow archaeologist, the first man to really know her since her brother's death? *Come In and Cover Me* is the moving story of a woman learning to let go of the past in order to move forward with her own future.

Written with the same warmth and depth of feeling that drew readers to *The Well and the Mine*, Phillips's debut, *Come In and Cover Me* is a haunting and engrossing new novel.

## *Praise for *The Well and the Mine**

"A dazzling new novelist . . . [a] bold debut, full of heart."  
—*O, The Oprah Magazine*

"Gin Phillips has a remarkable ear for dialogue and a tenderhearted eye for detail; you can hear the pecans and hickory nuts falling from the trees and feel the stillness of a hot summer night."  
—*Los Angeles Times*

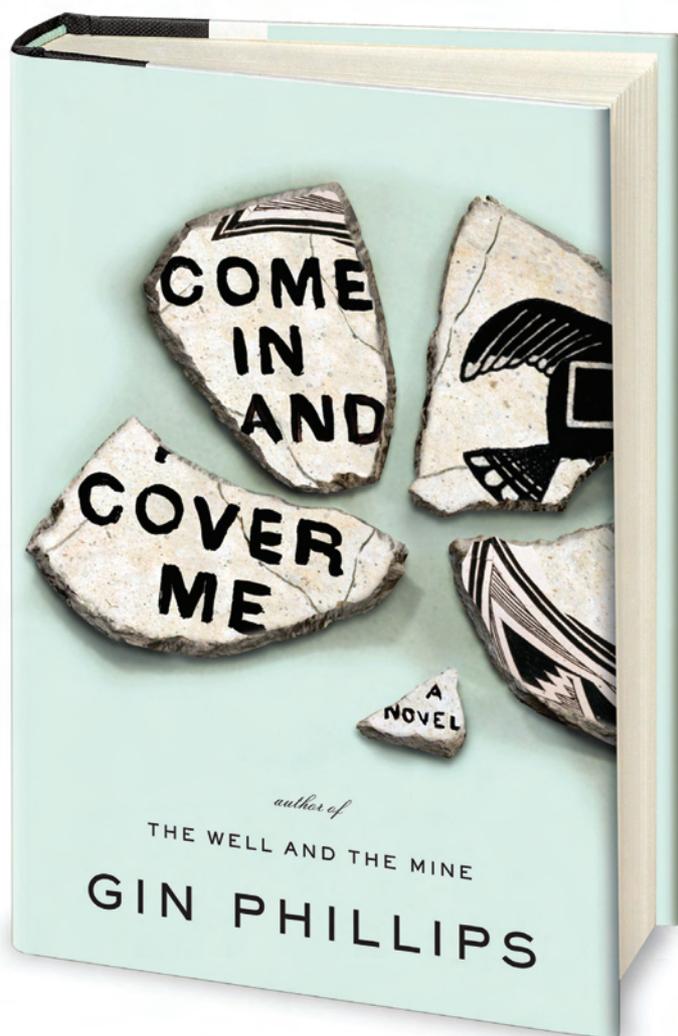
"*The Well and the Mine* doesn't just give you characters who'll stay with you—it gives you a whole world."  
—Fannie Flagg, author of *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe*



© Brad Daly

GIN PHILLIPS is the author of the Barnes & Noble Discover Award-winning novel *The Well and the Mine*. She lives in Birmingham, Alabama.

From the beloved author of *The Well and the Mine*, a love story where one woman's grief has given her a secret connection to the ghosts of the past.



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Previous title:

*The Well and the Mine*  
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# NO ONE IS HERE EXCEPT ALL OF US

*A Novel*

Ramona Ausubel

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In 1939, the families in a remote Jewish village in Romania feel the war close in on them. Their tribe has moved and escaped for thousands of years—across oceans, deserts, and mountains—but now, it seems, there is nowhere else to go. Danger is imminent in every direction, yet the territory of imagination and belief is limitless. At the suggestion of an eleven-year-old girl and a mysterious stranger who has washed up on the riverbank, the villagers decide to reinvent the world: deny any relationship with the known and start over from scratch. Destiny is unwritten. Time and history are forgotten. Jobs, husbands, a child, are reassigned. And for years, there is boundless hope. But the real world continues to unfold alongside the imagined one, eventually overtaking it, and soon our narrator—the girl, grown into a young mother—must flee her village, move from one world to the next, to find her husband and save her children, and propel them toward a real and hopeful future.

A beguiling, imaginative, inspiring story about the bigness of being alive as an individual, as a member of a tribe, and as a participant in history, *No One Is Here Except All Of Us* explores how we use storytelling to survive and shape our own truths. It marks the arrival of a major new literary talent.

*Praise for No One Is Here  
Except All of Us*

“A special work of the imagination, an original gift, dark and light, and Ramona Ausubel colors it all with a glowing wisdom.”

—Ron Carlson, author of *Five Skies*

“A wise, compassionate book that even in its darkest turns uplifts.”

—Christine Schutt,

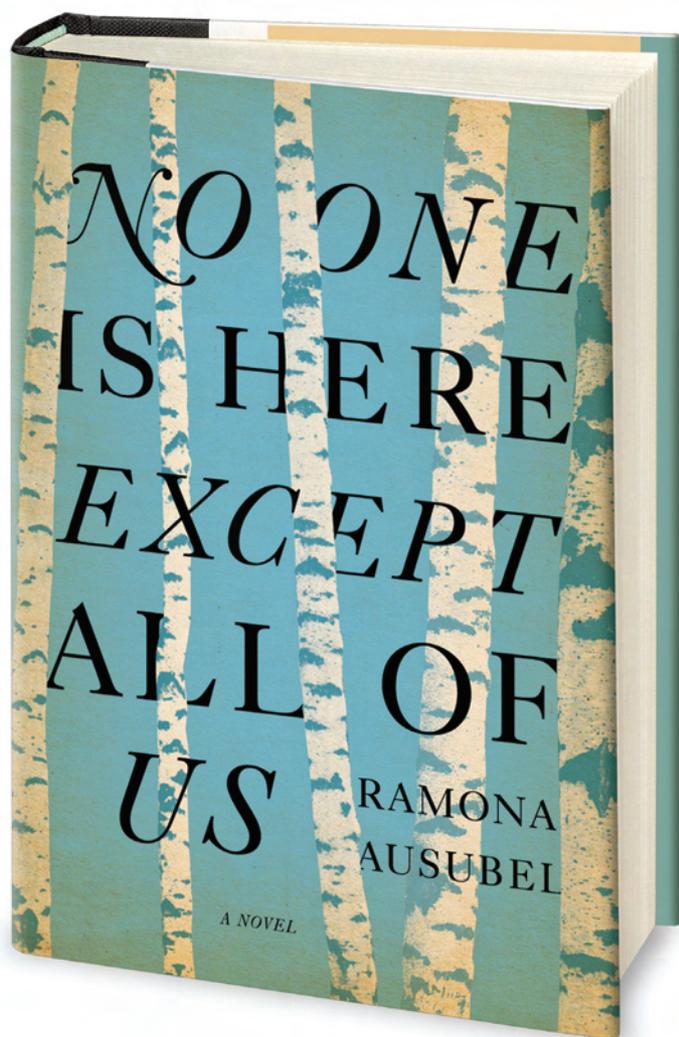
National Book Award finalist for *Florida* and  
Pulitzer Prize finalist for *All Souls*



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**RAMONA AUSUBEL** is a graduate of the MFA program at the University of California, Irvine. She has been published in *The New Yorker*, *One Story*, *The Paris Review Daily*, and *Best American Fantasy*. She is the recipient of the Glenn Schaeffer Award in fiction, and was a finalist for the Puschcart Prize. Ausubel lives in California.

An isolated village tries to save itself from a war through sheer force of imagination—all at the suggestion of a young girl.



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# CHARLOTTE AU CHOCOLAT

*Memories of a Restaurant Girlhood*

Charlotte Silver

---

Like Eloise, growing up in the Plaza Hotel, Charlotte Silver grew up in her mother's restaurant. Located in Harvard Square, Upstairs at the Pudding was a confection of pink linen tablecloths and twinkling chandeliers, a decadent backdrop to a childhood. Over dinners of foie gras and Dover sole, always served with a Shirley Temple, Charlotte kept company with a rotating cast of eccentric staff members. After dinner, in her frilly party dress, she often caught a nap under the bar until closing. Her one constant was her glamorous, indomitable mother, nicknamed "Patton in Pumps," a wasp-waisted woman in stilettos and cocktail dresses who shouldered the burden of raising a family and running a kitchen. Charlotte's unconventional upbringing takes its toll, and as she grows up she wishes her increasingly busy mother were more of a presence in her life. But when the restaurant—forever teetering on the brink of financial collapse—looks as if it may finally be closing, Charlotte comes to a realization of the sacrifices her mother made to keep her family and her restaurant afloat, and a new appreciation of the world her mother built.

Infectious, charming, and at times wistful, *Charlotte au Chocolat* is a celebration of the magic of a beautiful presentation and the virtues of good manners, as well as a loving tribute to the author's mother—a woman who always shows her best face to the world.

## *Praise for Charlotte au Chocolat*

"Reading *Charlotte au Chocolat* is like sitting down to a sumptuous, many-coursed dinner—and then, after taking your last bite of Queen Mother's cake—having the pleasure of lingering in the kitchen, where a cast of vivid characters conjures their culinary magic until closing time. A feast of a book!" —Allison Hoover Bartlett, author of *The Man Who Loved Books Too Much*

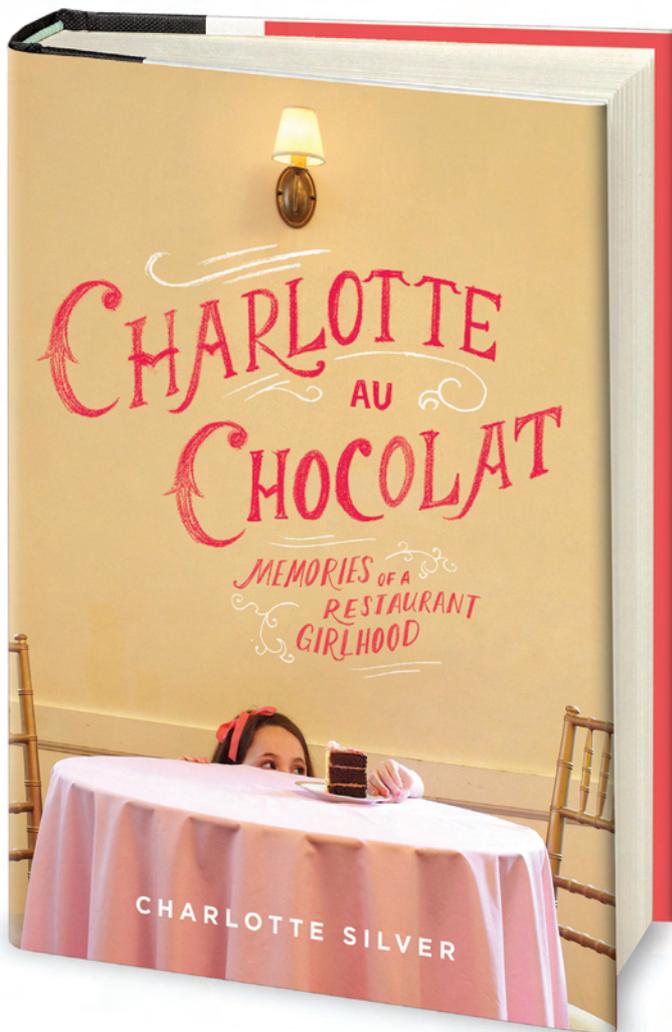


© Carmelle Sardie

## CHARLOTTE SILVER

grew up in Cambridge, Massachusetts, before attending Bennington College. She studied writing at the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, and has been published in *The New York Times*. She lives in New York and Boston.

An endearing and loving memoir of a girl growing up in an opulent restaurant.



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# SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED

*A Journal of My Son's First Son*

Anne Lamott with Sam Lamott

---

In *Some Assembly Required*, Anne Lamott enters a new and unexpected chapter of her own life: grandmotherhood.

Stunned to learn that her son, Sam, is about to become a father at nineteen, Lamott begins a journal about the first year of her grandson Jax's life.

In careful and often hilarious detail, Lamott and Sam—about whom she first wrote so movingly in *Operating Instructions*—struggle to balance their changing roles with the demands of college and work, as they both forge new relationships with Jax's mother, who has her own ideas about how to raise a child. Lamott writes about the complex feelings that Jax fosters within her, recalling her own experiences with Sam when she was a single mother. Over the course of the year, the rhythms of life, death, family, and friends unfold in surprising and joyful ways.

By turns poignant and funny, honest and touching, *Some Assembly Required* is the true story of how the birth of a baby changes a family—as this book will change everyone who reads it.

## Praise for Anne Lamott

“Lots of people love Anne Lamott, because she’s funny and she tells the truth, and truth and laughter are two things we need more of.”

—*The New York Times Book Review*

“Anne Lamott is a cause for celebration. . . . She is nothing short of miraculous.” —*The New Yorker*

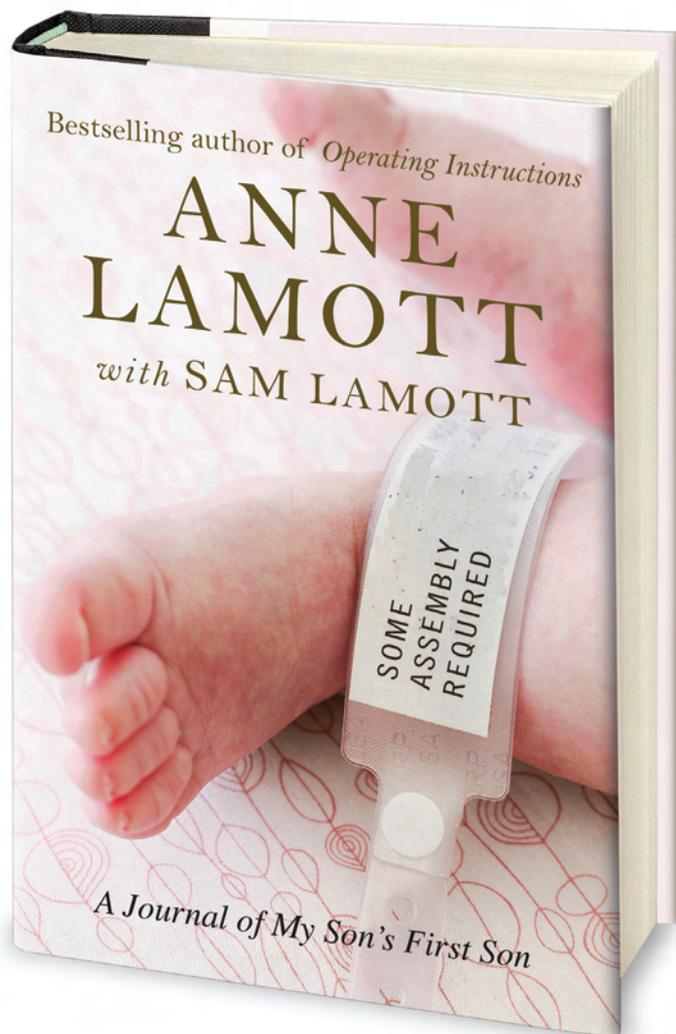
“Anne Lamott is beloved for writing down-to-earth personal essays and fiction that dig into the nitty-gritty of faith, addiction, sex, discipline, trust and other domestic issues.” —NPR.org



**ANNE LAMOTT** is the author of the *New York Times* bestsellers *Grace (Eventually)*, *Plan B*, *Traveling Mercies*, and *Operating Instructions*, as well as several novels, including *Imperfect Birds* and *Rosie*. A past recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and an inductee to the California Hall of Fame, she lives in Northern California.

**SAM LAMOTT** is currently studying industrial design, with a major in product design. He lives with his family in San Francisco.

Bestselling author Anne Lamott, together with her son, Sam, chronicle his first year as a father and her own journey to being both a mother and a grandmother.



## MARCH

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*Grace (Eventually)*  
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# THE MAN WITHOUT A FACE

*The Unlikely Rise of Vladimir Putin*

Masha Gessen

---

*The Man Without a Face* is the chilling account of how a small-minded, low-level KGB operative ascended to the Russian presidency; and, in an astonishingly short time, destroyed years of progress and made his country once more a threat to her own people and to the world.

Handpicked as a successor by the “Family” surrounding an ailing and increasingly unpopular Boris Yeltsin, Vladimir Putin seemed like a perfect choice for the oligarchy to shape according to its own designs. Suddenly the boy who had stood in the shadows, dreaming of ruling the world, was a public figure, and his popularity soared. Russia and an infatuated West were determined to see the progressive leader of their dreams, even as he seized control of media, sent political rivals and critics into exile or to the grave, and smashed the country’s fragile electoral system, concentrating power in the hands of his cronies.

As a journalist living in Moscow, Masha Gessen experienced this history firsthand, and for *The Man Without a Face* she has drawn on information and sources no other writer has tapped. Her account of how a “faceless” man maneuvered his way into absolute—and absolutely corrupt—power has the makings of a classic of narrative nonfiction.

## Praise for *Perfect Rigor*

“A fascinating biography.” —John Allen Paulos,  
*The New York Review of Books*

“A brilliant reconstruction. . . . [Gessen] has written something rare: an accessible book about an unreachable man.”

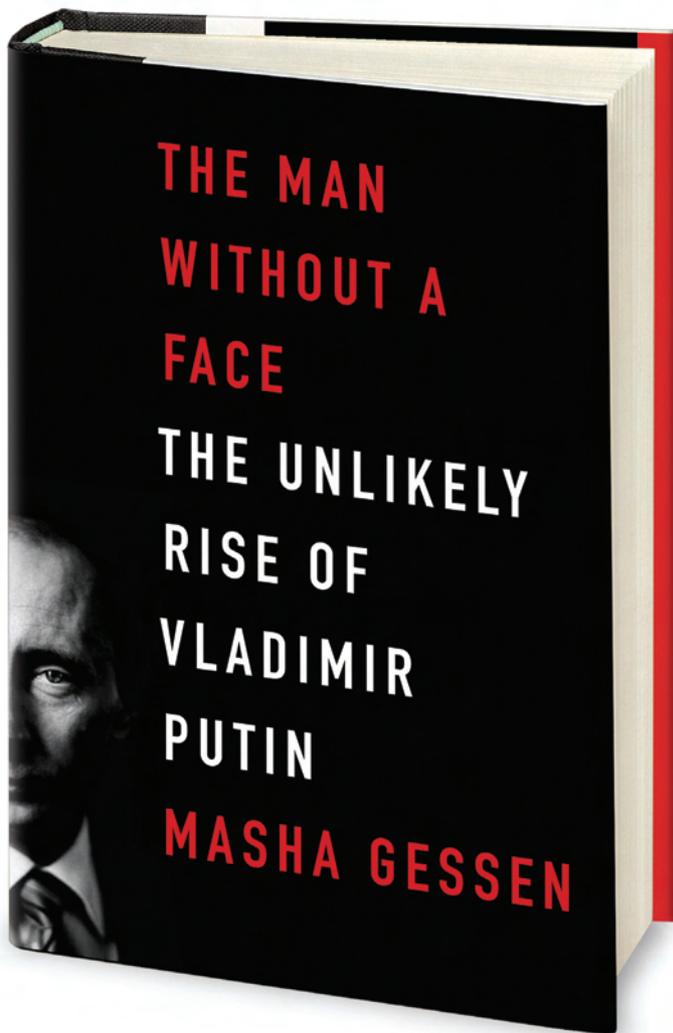
—*The New York Times Book Review*



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**MASHA GESSEN** is a journalist and the author of several previous books, most recently *Perfect Rigor*. Editor of the Russian-language *Snob* magazine, she has contributed to *Vanity Fair*, *The New Republic*, *Granta*, and *Slate*, among other publications. Gessen lives in Moscow.

How Vladimir Putin, a small man of little known talent, became the most powerful—and dangerous—man in Russia.



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# FORGOTTEN COUNTRY

*A Novel*

Catherine Chung

---

On the night Janie waits for her sister Hannah to be born, her grandmother tells her a story: Since the Japanese occupation of Korea, their family has lost a daughter in every generation, so Janie is charged with keeping Hannah safe. As time passes, Janie hears more stories, while facts remain unspoken. Her father tells tales about numbers, and in his stories everything works out. In her mother's, deer explode in fields, frogs bury their loved ones in the ocean, and girls jump from cliffs and fall like flowers into the sea. Within all these stories are warnings.

Years later, when Hannah inexplicably cuts all ties and disappears, Janie embarks on a mission to find her sister and finally uncover the truth beneath her family's silence. To do so, she must confront their history, the reason for her parents' sudden move to America twenty years earlier, and ultimately her conflicted feelings toward her sister and her own role in the betrayal behind their estrangement.

Weaving Korean folklore within a modern narrative of immigration and identity, *Forgotten Country* is a fierce exploration of the inevitability of loss, the conflict between obligation and freedom, and a family struggling to find its way out of silence and back to one another.

## *Praise for Forgotten Country*

"A moving and deeply personal story of a family caught between two very different countries and very different lives."

—Alison Lurie, author of *Foreign Affairs*

"Chillingly beautiful and magnetic, unforgettable."

—Alexander Chee, author of *Edinburgh*

"A riveting, brutal portrait of two sisters in crisis, *Forgotten Country* examines the unspoken complexities of familial love and forgiveness, loyalty and betrayal, and renders an indelible, haunting image of Korea."

—Kate Walbert,  
author of *A Short History of Women*

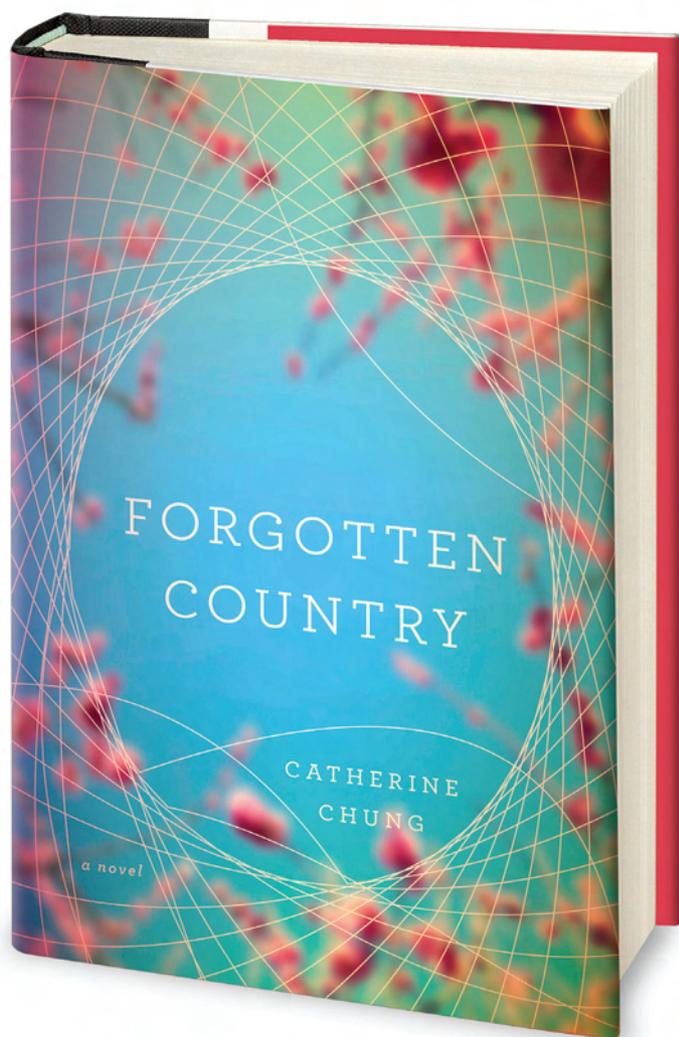


## CATHERINE CHUNG

was born in Evanston, Illinois, and grew up in New York, New Jersey, and Michigan. She was named one of *Granta's* New Voices, and is the recipient of

a Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Prize. She lives in Brooklyn.

A prizewinning young writer debuts with a luminous novel about a family whose bonds are tested by a legacy of silence and sacrifice.



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# INDIA BECOMING

*A Portrait of Life in Modern India*

Akash Kapur

---

Akash Kapur has a unique perspective on India. Raised in India but educated in the United States from the age of sixteen, this son of an Indian father and an American mother returned to his birth country for good in 2003, eager to be part of its exciting growth and modernization. What he found was a nation even more transformed than he had imagined, where the changes were fundamentally altering Indian society—for better and for worse.

As he met a number of Indians—young and old, across classes—he saw how their stories reflected the dilemmas of contemporary India, not just in the urban centers but in rural areas, too, where the process of change was even more layered and complex. Here, he has woven his experience together with the stories of these people, revealing the rich tapestry of India through the eyes and lives of real characters.

Kapur's rare ability to witness India from the vantage point of both insider and outsider allows him to illustrate to a Western audience the moving nuances of India's transformation, in a riveting narrative that puts the personal into a broad, relevant, and revelational context.

## *Praise for India Becoming*

"Akash Kapur lives in and writes out of an India that few writers venture into. Curious, suspicious of received wisdom, and intellectually resourceful, his writing has established him as one of the most reliable observers of the New India."

—Pankaj Mishra, author of  
*Temptations of the West*

"I have never been to India, but after reading Kapur's fascinating and absorbing book, I almost feel as if I have."

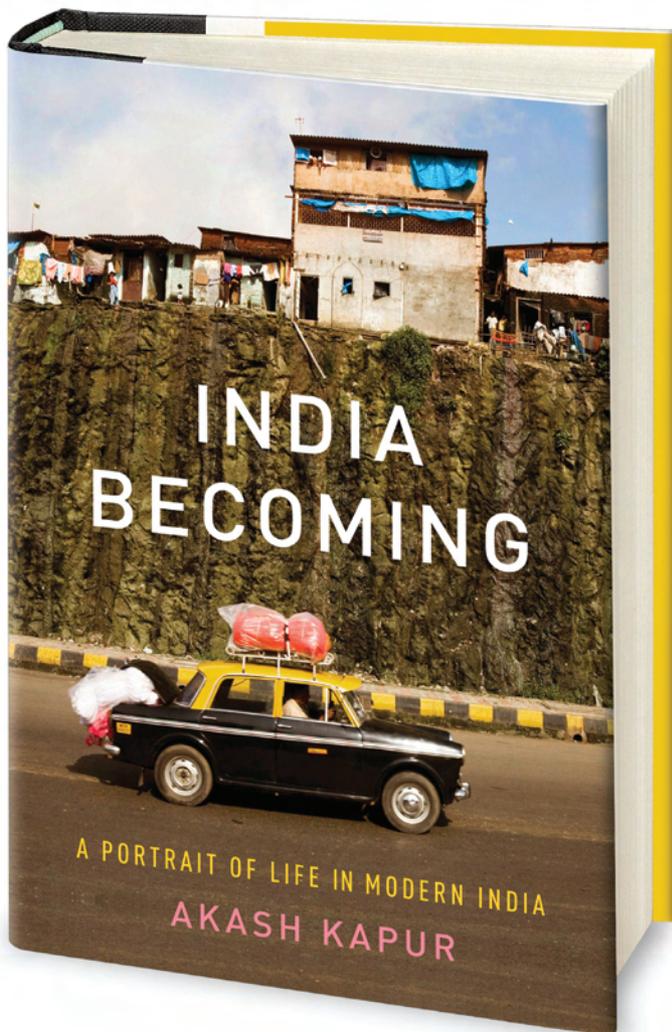
—David Lida, author of  
*First Stop in the New World*



© Jesse Fox-Allen

**AKASH KAPUR** is the former "Letter from India" columnist for the *NYTimes.com* and the *International Herald Tribune*. He has also written for *The Atlantic*, *The Economist*, *Granta*, *The New Yorker*, and *The New York Times Book Review*. He lives outside Pondicherry, in South India.

A portrait of lives transformed by economic growth, and a rare insider's look at the process of development in both rural and urban areas.



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# HOPE: A TRAGEDY

*A Novel*

Shalom Auslander

---

The rural town of Stockton, New York, is famous for nothing: No one was born there, no one died there, nothing of any historical import at all has ever happened there, which is why Solomon Kugel, like other urbanites fleeing their pasts and histories, decided to move his wife and young son there. To begin again. To start anew. But it isn't quite working out that way. His ailing mother stubbornly holds on to life, and won't stop reminiscing about the Nazi concentration camps she never actually suffered through. To complicate matters further, some lunatic is burning down farmhouses just like the one he bought. And when, one night, Kugel discovers history—a living, breathing, thought-to-be-dead specimen of history—hiding upstairs in his attic, bad quickly becomes worse.

The critically acclaimed writer Shalom Auslander's debut novel is a hilarious and disquieting examination of the burdens and abuse of history, propelled with unstoppable rhythm and filled with existential musings and mordant wit. It is a comic and compelling story of the hopeless longing to be free of those pasts that haunt our every present.

## Praise for Shalom Auslander

"Auslander writes like some contemporary comedic Jeremiah, thundering warnings of disaster and retribution. What makes him so terrifyingly funny is that he isn't joking."

—Howard Jacobson, author of *The Finkler Question* and winner of the Man Booker Prize

"A wonderful, twisted, transgressive, heart-breaking, true, and hugely funny book. It will make very many people angry. It will also make very many people very happy."

—A. L. Kennedy, author of *Day*

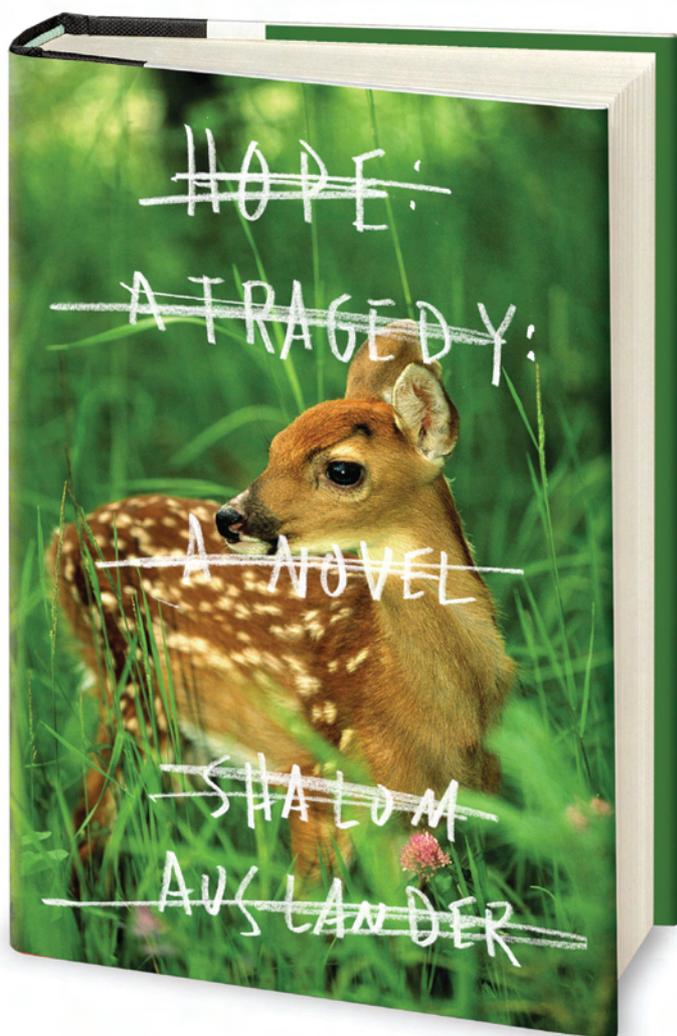


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## SHALOM AUSLANDER

was raised in Monsey, New York. Nominated for the Koret Award for writers under thirty-five, he has published articles in *Esquire*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Tablet*, *The New Yorker*, and has had stories aired on NPR's *This American Life*. He is the author of the short story collection *Beware of God* and the memoir *Foreskin's Lament*. He lives in New York.

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- Author tour
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- [www.ShalomAuslander.com](http://www.ShalomAuslander.com)

Export rights: WOO  
First serial, UK, translation, audio: Riverhead Books  
Other: Sarah Chalfant  
The Wylie Agency, Inc.  
250 West 57th Street, Suite 2114  
New York, NY 10107



Also available from  
Penguin Audio:

Unabridged digital download  
8.5 hours  
ISBN 978-1-10-153874-6  
\$39.95 (\$46.00 CAN)

Previous title:

*Foreskin's Lament*  
ISBN 978-1-59448-955-6 (hc)  
ISBN 978-1-59448-333-2 (pb)

# GOD'S HOTEL

*A Doctor, a Hospital, and a Pilgrimage  
to the Heart of Medicine*

Victoria Sweet

San Francisco's Laguna Honda Hospital is the last almshouse in the country, a descendant of the *Hôtel-Dieu* (God's hotel) that cared for the sick in the Middle Ages. Ballet dancers and rock musicians, professors and thieves—"anyone who had fallen, or, often, leapt, onto hard times" and needed extended medical care—ended up here. So did Victoria Sweet, who came for two months and stayed for twenty years.

Laguna Honda, lower tech but human paced, gave Sweet the opportunity to practice a kind of "attentive medicine" that has almost vanished. Gradually, the place transformed the way she understood and practiced medicine. Alongside the modern view of the body as a machine to be fixed, her extraordinary patients evoked an older idea, of the body as a garden to be tended. *God's Hotel* tells their story, and the story of the hospital itself, which—as efficiency experts, politicians, and architects descended, determined to turn it into a modern "health care facility"—revealed its own surprising truths about the essence, cost, and value of caring for body and soul.

## *Praise for God's Hotel*

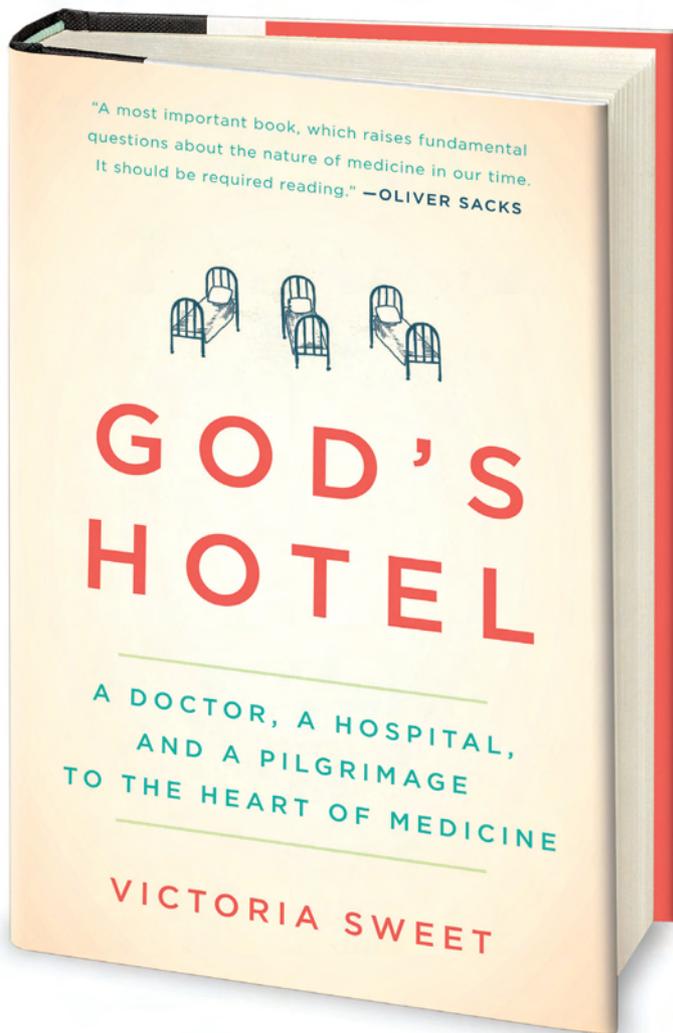
"Victoria Sweet writes beautifully about the enormous richness of life at Laguna Honda, the chronic [care] hospital where she has spent the last twenty years, and the intense sense of place and community that binds patients and staff there. Such community in the medical world is vanishingly rare now, and Laguna Honda may be the last of its kind. . . . *God's Hotel* is a most important book which raises fundamental questions about the nature of medicine in our time. It should be required reading for anyone interested in the "business" of health care—and especially those interested in the humanity of health care." —Oliver Sacks



© Denise Zmekhol

**VICTORIA SWEET** has been a physician at San Francisco's Laguna Honda Hospital for more than twenty years. An associate clinical professor of medicine at University of California, San Francisco, she also holds a Ph.D. in history and social medicine.

A piercingly insightful narrative about a last-of-its-kind hospital and its remarkable patients.



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Hardcover

ISBN 978-1-59448-843-6

\$27.95 (\$32.50 CAN)

Nonfiction

6 x 9

368 pages

- National print coverage
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Export rights: E00

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Mary Evans Inc.

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# WHEN CAPTAIN FLINT WAS STILL A GOOD MAN

*A Novel*

Nick Dybek

---

Every fall, the men of Loyalty Island sail from the Olympic Peninsula up to the Bering Sea, to spend the winter catching king crab. Their dangerous occupation keeps food on the table but constantly threatens to leave empty seats around it.

To Cal, Alaska remains as mythical and mysterious as Treasure Island, and the stories his father returns with are as mesmerizing as those he once invented about Captain Flint before he turned pirate. But while Cal is too young to accompany his father, he is old enough to know that everything depends on the fate of those few boats thousands of miles north. He is also old enough to feel the tension between his parents over whether he will follow in his father's footsteps, and to wonder about his mother's relationship with John Gaunt, owner of the fleet.

Then Gaunt dies suddenly, leaving the business in the hands of his son, who seems intent on selling away the fishermen's livelihood. Soon Cal stumbles on evidence that his father may have taken extreme measures to salvage their way of life. As winter comes on, his suspicions deepening and his moral compass shattered, he is forced to make a terrible choice.

## *Praise for When Captain Flint Was Still a Good Man*

"Robert Louis Stevenson would be proud of Nick Dybek. . . . He delivers a page-turner full of danger, secrets, and betrayals." —Stewart O'Nan

"Complex and suspenseful . . . Dybek manages to create [a] genuine tragedy—powerful, mythic, unforgettable." —Jaimy Gordon

"An engrossing and exacting moral thriller." —Peter Ho Davies

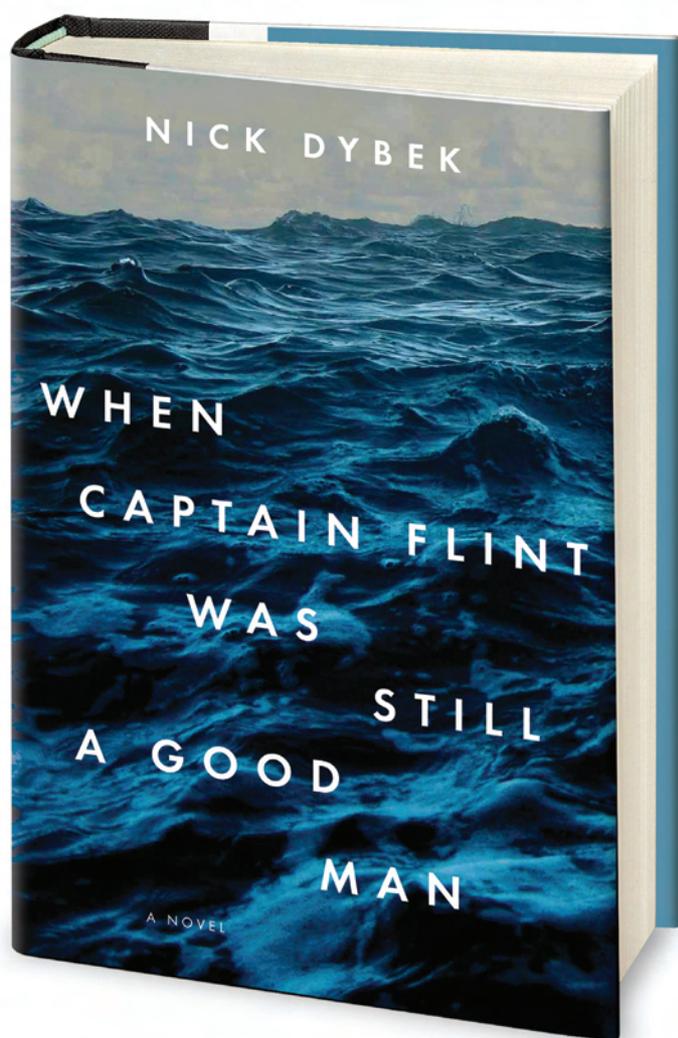
"A fascinating and powerful first novel . . . that will stay with you long after you turn the last page." —Daniel Alarcón



© Madeline McDonnell

**NICK DYBEK** is a graduate of the University of Michigan and the Iowa Writers' Workshop. He is the recipient of a Hopwood Award for Short Fiction, a Maytag Fellowship, and a 2010 Michener-Copernicus Society of America Award. Dybek lives in New York City.

A riveting, atmospheric debut novel  
about the bad deeds good people can  
be driven to.



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# EXTRAS

THE FOLLOWING PAGES HAVE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE STORIES BEHIND—OR SOMETIMES FROM WITHIN—OUR WINTER 2012 LIST. *ENJOY.*

# THE STREET SWEEPER

*An essay by Elliot Perlman*

---

In the early 2000s, I was living in New York across the street from the mini-metropolis that is Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. Patients came to the giant hospital from all over the world for treatment there. Visitors, bewildered, sad, or numb, came from all over the world, too.

I used to catch the bus at a stop outside the hospital and see the hive of activity and the interaction of seemingly disparate people of different ages, socioeconomic groups, and educational levels, people of different races, ethnicities, and nationalities, all milling around one another. So stressed were the visitors and many of the staff that they chain-smoked out on the street beside patients in wheelchairs.

To a writer observing this scene—the multitude of smokers outside the cancer hospital, people of all different backgrounds forming an instant but transient community—all of this is the gold that sends one off in search of the mine that is the answer to the question “What if an unlikely friendship was to blossom out of all of this?”

From here came the answer that was the seed for *The Street Sweeper*. We see the beginning of an unlikely relationship between two men who, statistically, should never have met. One of them is an African American janitor—a wrongly convicted, recently released ex-con, the first to be put on six-month probation in a pilot program to help ex-cons reintegrate into society, a man desperate to keep his job, find his young daughter, and get his life back on track. The other is an old white man bat-

ting cancer: a Jew in his eighties with only wisps of hair and thick, European-accented English, a Holocaust survivor. He’s a survivor of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp and—even rarer than that—he was a member of the Sonderkommando, those Auschwitz prisoners forced by the Nazis on pain of death to work in the gas chambers and crematoria.

In a twenty-first-century survival story, these two men will need each other in ways neither of them could ever have imagined. And this is only the beginning.

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THE STREET SWEEPER

January 2012

# THE SOUNDTRACK OF MEMORY

*An essay by Gin Phillips*

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*Come In and Cover Me* revolves around a woman who needs to deal with the ghosts of her past. Her brother, long dead, is still very much a presence in her life, and her memories of him are wrapped up in his music—Dylan, Springsteen, the Sex Pistols.

My childhood soundtracks were not so sophisticated, but I do feel the pull of them. There's something about music that sharpens memory, that makes it easier to grab and hold on to. When my parents divorced, my father took one record with him: The Oak Ridge Boys. On my weekends with him, we listened to it constantly. I liked it just as much when we turned off the record, and Dad sang by himself. My father has a fantastic voice, and he could really blow the roof off the place when he hit the "Oom Poppa Oom Poppa Mow Mow" part of "Elvira." Thirty years later, I hear a few chords of The Oak Ridge Boys, and I can taste the cans of fruit cocktail and Vienna sausage sandwiches we always ate—he wasn't much of a cook. I can feel the rough upholstery under my thighs as I perched on the arm of his red recliner. I can feel the joy of seeing him after being two weeks apart. The sounds of the past seem to make the smells and textures—and hopes—all come rushing back, too.

When I was six, my mother and great-aunt convinced me to let them give me a permanent because they said it would make me look like Dolly Parton, my idol. Just for the record, they were big fat liars. Frizzy-headed and heartbroken, I stumbled around singing "9 to 5" for days. It gave me some relief, and it's still a song that comforts me immensely. Then there were my grandmother's earnest lullabies. She didn't know many songs, so I fell asleep almost exclusively to "Home on the Range" and "You Are My Sunshine." The line "Please don't take my sunshine away" would make me bawl because it made me think that my grandmother might die. Sometimes I would run from the bed and hide under the dining-room table for an hour or so, inconsolable. Eventually, she started leaving out that line, but when I hear it today, it still makes me want to crawl under something.

This book is about memory and family and love and ghosts, and there's a reason a ghost sometimes announces itself with a snatch of song or a wordless hum. A familiar melody or voice can bring back the past—or just our past selves—with all the attached love and longing and regret. I think music can summon ghosts for us all.

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COME IN AND COVER ME

January 2012

# REIMAGINING FAMILY HISTORY

*An essay by Ramona Ausubel*

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My grandmother was born in a village in the Carpathian Mountains, in what was then Romania. She came to New York as a girl, learned English, had her pigtails pulled by a boy whom she would later marry. On the other side of the ocean, a war emptied her family's original villages.

The stories of those long-ago villages were repeated to me many times. In them, a girl—my great-grandmother—was given to her childless aunt and uncle; later, when a war broke out, her husband was captured and taken to Sardinia where, instead of suffering, he spent the best years of his life; my great-grandmother escaped the village and wandered with her children through beech forests, surviving on tree bark and stolen potatoes; her son, jumping on a mattress left in the middle of a field, fell and died; my great-grandmother's adoptive parents drowned in a river at ninety years of age attempting to escape Nazi guards. But she made it to America, and the story changed.

When I was twenty-three, I went to New York with a tape recorder and asked my grandmother to tell me everything. We went through photo albums of people who all looked the same—mothers with black skirts and square ankles, fathers with scrawny arms and bowler hats. I wrote down family trees and birth dates. When I went home and

started to write, I couldn't get anything to move. All those facts, and the story was gone—with all the information, I thought I needed to get it "right." I closed the notes on my computer and did not look at them for two years.

When I began again, it was in the dark. The legends were nothing more than points of light in a night sky. My territory was in the dark matter, in the emptiness of what is unthinkable yet can still be felt. As I wrote through deeply sad stories, I found that hope was in the telling. Hope was not an idea but the act of continuation, of connecting the rope's two ends and making a circle. As long as the story was told, it was alive.

For me, this book is about what we pass on—genes, letters, memories, and the right of the next generation to keep telling the story long after the facts have melted away and what's left is truth, glittering in a sky deep and dark enough to hold everything lost, everything saved.

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NO ONE IS HERE EXCEPT ALL OF US

February 2012

# A CHILDREN'S MENU

*Foods from my mother's restaurant by Charlotte Silver*

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## BEVERAGE

*Shirley Temple . . . . . \$4*

Every meal began with a Shirley Temple made specially for me. Seeing it passing through the dining room like a brightly plumed bird perched on top of the waiter's tray, customers would sometimes order one too, but they never got as many maraschino cherries as I did.

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## FIRST COURSE

*Smoked Pheasant and Roquefort Flan . . . . . \$14*

Carla, the old line cook, used to twist off the dimpled, fatty pheasant legs just for me.

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## ENTRÉE

*Beef Wellington with Foie Gras . . . . . \$28*

I may have eaten foie gras more than any other child. Sometimes when Gus the chef passed my table, he glanced at my plate and muttered, "Foie gras. Foie gras on a fucking school night."

---

## DESSERT

*Charlotte au Chocolat . . . . . \$7*

The signature dessert of the restaurant and the inspiration for my name. A line cook once threatened me: "One of these nights when we run out of Charlottes, we're going to plop you on a plate and top you in whipped cream."

---

CHARLOTTE AU CHOCOLAT

February 2012

# A FEW USEFUL TIPS ON PARENTING KIDS OF ANY AGE

*A list by Anne Lamott*

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1. It is hopeless. You are doomed.
2. All parents realize, upon first seeing their baby, that they will never again draw a complacent breath. This will only get worse as the child grows. And if this small creature somehow produces a child—your grandchild—you will never draw a complacent breath into the next generation. You will be like a double-dipped ice cream cone of anxiety and hypervigilance. And while inwardly you will feel like a dying asthmatic whose rib cage retracts with every attempt at breath as you struggle to let this untested parent care for a new life, outwardly you must appear blasé in the face of all medical symptoms—headaches, chest colds, bone-rattling coughs—even when it is clear the child needs to be rushed to the ER and intubated.
3. Where your children live is their home, their family, their sink. It is beyond rude to recoil at their low housekeeping standards. The mantra is: Their baby, their lives, their sink.
4. Grown children are about as interested in your thoughts on college, affordable health insurance, and the proper time to commence toilet training as they were in your opinions on safe driving and teen fashion.
5. They may very well adore you (mine does), but you are still a major source of embarrassment to them, and they will continue to make the clicking sounds of mortification at your incompetence as long as you both shall live.
6. As they grow, you will love them at least as much as you did when they were babies, and you will love all the ages they ever were. And they will use this against you every step of the way.

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*SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED*

March 2012

# THE PUTIN ERA: SOME CASUALTIES

*A time line by Masha Gessen*

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## **December 1999**

Yeltsin resigns; former secret police chief Putin becomes acting president

## **January 2000**

Journalist Andrei Babitsky kidnapped and released by the military on Putin's say-so

## **February 2000**

"Heart attack" death of Anatoly Sobchak, Putin's former boss

## **March 2000**

Putin elected president by a landslide

## **August 2000**

Crew of Russia's *Kursk* submarine drowns after Norwegian rescue help refused; Putin on vacation. Later, he shrugs and smiles: "It sank."

## **Early 2001**

Corruption investigator Marina Salye goes into internal exile, reportedly after threatening telegram from Putin

## **June 2001**

George W. Bush meets Putin. "I looked the man in the eye . . . I was able to get a sense of his soul."

## **June 2002**

"Heart attack" of former Putin ally Dmitry Rozhdestvensky

## **October 2002**

Terrorist seizure of Moscow theater; 129 people die during sloppy rescue that later proves to be strategic government fearmongering

## **April 2003**

Murder of opposition party chairman Sergei Yushenkov

## **July 2003**

Poisoning death of journalist and activist Yuri Shchekochikhin

## **March 2004**

Putin reelected

## **September 2004**

Terrorist seizure of Russian school results in 300+ deaths; again, evidence of secret police involvement; apparent poisoning of former Putin ally Roman Tsepov

## **October 7, 2006 (*Putin's birthday*)**

Journalist Anna Politkovskaya gunned down

## **November 2006**

Secret police agent turned Putin foe Alexander Litvinenko poisoned with polonium in London

## **October 2008**

Mercury poisoning of human rights lawyer Karina Moskalenko (she survives)

## **March 2008**

Putin cedes presidency—but no power—to Dmitry Medvedev

## **November 2009**

Lawyer Sergei Magnitsky, who uncovered government corruption scheme, dies after months of torture in a Moscow jail

## **November 2010**

Journalist Oleg Kashin brutally beaten in Moscow

*Who's next?*

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THE MAN WITHOUT A FACE

March 2012

# LETTERS TO HOME

*An essay by Catherine Chung*

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Every family has secrets. Ours was an aunt I'd never met, never even knew existed until one day, forty years after she disappeared, she sent us a letter. She was alive, she told us: she'd gotten married, had children, thought of her brothers and sisters and deceased parents often. How was everyone? she asked. What had happened in our lives? And could we send pictures?

My aunt was a college student in Seoul when she went missing, sometime after the Korean War. The North Koreans had been kidnapping people for several years, and one night they raided her dorm. The next morning, my aunt and a handful of other girls were gone. Even now, more than ten years after finding out about her, this is almost all I know.

As a child, my parents' history had always seemed faraway and long ago. This made it all the more mysterious, and Korea itself had its own pull on my imagination, a place so sorely missed by them, which had the power to transform them into happier, more comfortable people. Even though I hadn't been born there like my brother, I still learned the lesson immigrants must learn: how heavy the lost life weighs on the new one.

The revelation of my aunt's existence made clear how much had been lost that I didn't even know, how much of my own history was hidden from me. The magnitude still takes my breath away. Korea was one

country when my parents were born into it. And then it split in two, and the two halves took drastically different turns. My aunt was taken to the other side in an act of violence and she survived. She lived a whole life.

My family never spoke of my aunt because for a long time it was forbidden. It was dangerous to have relatives in North Korea, even if they'd been kidnapped against their will. It seems to me this must have been the hardest loss: the right to lay claim to those you love. Even though everyone had family on the other side, if you spoke of them openly, there could be terrible consequences. And so, until recently, the whole country bore this in silence. They missed their lost ones quietly. And then my aunt wrote a letter, reaching out to us across the expanse of time and separation. *Forgotten Country* is a book about that expanse, and the voiceless longing to reach across it and meet.

# HOPE: A TRAGEDY

## *A list of rejected titles by Shalom Auslander*

---

*Hope: A Tragedy* was the first title I suggested to my editor. I really thought it was right.

“No,” he said.

My parents didn’t love me, so I have low self-esteem, and I agreed to keep working. These are some of the alternate titles I presented, and the reasoning for or against them:

- **The Diary of Anne Frankenstein:**

My working title; I never really intended to use it—too *Sense and Sensibility* and *Sea Monsters*—but it had grown on me, and I mentioned it to my editor as I was finishing the manuscript. This caused him to proclaim a couple of “title rules” for this novel:

- 1) Nothing funny.
- 2) No mentioning Anne Frank.

Apparently, people don’t buy “funny” novels, and they don’t buy books about Anne Frank.

Which is, ironically enough, pretty fucking funny.

- **It’s a Wonderful Ka-Pow:**

Too funny.

- **Did I Ever Tell You How Unlucky You Are?**

Too funny.

- **To Those About to Be Consumed by Flames:**

Too Sedaris.

- **Nowhere Ho:**

I liked this title quite a bit, a play on the old expression “Westward Ho.” Kugel, the main character, wishes for nothing more than to be nowhere—a place with no past, no history, no wars,

no genocides. This is his dream, his goal of sorts, for both himself and his family. My editor liked it as well, and began mentioning it to people, testing it out. It turns out young people don’t know that expression anymore. The poor dears were very confused. My editor was disappointed. I wanted to run to *Nowhere* even more than I had before.

There was a brief concern that they won’t know who Anne Frank is, either, which, we decided, would be pretty fucking funny.

- **The Sufferers:**

I do my best to stay out of bookstores because they make me want to kill myself, but apparently *The X* is a bit of a trend now. *The Informers*, *The Intuitionist*, *The Imperfectionists*. Et cetera. There was some concern it would be seen as that. I had a difficult time believing that things had gotten so bad that the word “The” was a trend.

“Like *the Bible*?” I asked.

“Keep working,” I was told.

*The Lacerations* and *The Crematorians* died for the same reason. Probably for the best, those.

- **What Have You Done, Mother, What Have You Done?**

My editor phoned one day, and told me that he liked novel titles that were questions.

“Questions?” I asked.

“Questions.”

“Why?” I asked.

---

HOPE: A TRAGEDY

April 2012

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“I like titles that are questions,” he said.  
“That’s why?”  
“Yes.”  
“Because you just like them?”  
“Yes.”  
“Why do you like titles that are questions?”  
“Hey,” he replied, “what’s with all the god-damned questions?”  
“Sorry,” I said.

My parents didn’t love me, so I have low self-esteem, and I agreed to keep working.

• **The Sea:**

That’s the title of a John Banville novel. It makes me laugh for some reason, and so I suggest it as a title for every book I write. This was the response:

?

• **The Driftwood Remains:**

There’s an old Yiddish expression: The storm passes but the driftwood remains. It seemed appropriate, and it sounded like a “literary novel,” plus Yiddish is a dying language, so I’d get points for that.

“What’s the title?” people asked.

“*The Driftwood Remains*,” I said.

“Oh,” they replied, nodding their heads as if to say, Yes—yes, that sounds like a book. My editor, showing it to people he knew, was getting the same unenthusiastic reception.

We kept looking. As the time ticked by, the suggestions received more scrutiny and less con-

sideration. *The Attic* was my shrink’s recommendation. He pushed it pretty hard, too. “Because the attic is his superego, which he is trying to emerge from beneath.” That’s what’s called knowing too much about your character. Just analyze me, Doc, stay away from my characters. *Laceration Nation*: Too George Saunders. *Life’s a Gas*: Too Tadeusz Borowski. *Sufferer’s Delight*: Too Sugarhill Gang. *The Excruciating Agony of Joy*: Sounded to my wife a bit too much like *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. She was pushing for *Hope: A Tragedy* from the beginning, though, so maybe she was just bullshitting me.

At last, time ran out and the winter catalog had to ship, which is the way most literary decisions are finally made.

“How about,” the editor said to me, “*Hope: A Tragedy: A Novel?*” But when the copy editor complains, I’m giving her your landline.”

There’s a lesson in there somewhere, but I’ll be damned if I know what it is.

# COMING HOME TO A COUNTRY TRANSFORMED

*An essay by Akash Kapur*

---

I left India in 1991, and returned twelve years later. I left, as so many had before me, in search of better opportunities. The India of my youth—and especially rural South India, where I grew up—felt cut off, isolated from the world. America, where I spent most of my time abroad, was at the center of it.

By the time I returned, things had in many ways come full circle. America felt weighed down, burdened by a troubled war in Iraq and a sputtering economy. India's economy, on the other hand, was one of the fastest growing in the world. Surveys regularly showed that its population was one of the most optimistic. It was as though India had co-opted the energy and optimism, the sense of possibility, that had once drawn so many to America.

India's transformation was exciting, but it could also be confusing. Einstein once wrote of America that it was a country always becoming, never being. Now I felt that same energy, that sense of forward momentum, in India. But this is an ancient, complex culture; India was changing so fast, and in so many different ways, that it was hard to know what to make of it all. Sometimes I wondered just what the country was becoming.

In the villages near my home, the transformation was apparent. Farmers who had once ridden to their fields in bullock carts now drove shiny tractors; concrete structures were replacing thatch huts. But alongside this evidence of new prosperity, the seam-

ier side of development was evident, too. The villages were wracked by environmental depredation, and torn apart by new forms of inequality. A social and cultural fabric built up over centuries and millennia was suddenly unraveling. The process of change was messy, at times even frightening.

This book represents my effort to make sense of it all. For almost five years, I have traveled the country, meeting people, getting to know their families and lives. These people have taught me a lot. They have shown me just how complex this country is, how layered and nuanced the transition it is currently undergoing. I have learned to see—and to love—India in a new way. In many ways, after more than a decade away, writing this book has brought me home.

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INDIA BECOMING

March 2012

# THE PATIENTS AT GOD'S HOTEL

*An essay by Victoria Sweet*

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I came to God's Hotel to escape.

It was twenty years ago, and the hurried, efficiency-obsessed model of medicine we now take for granted was just beginning to take hold. I didn't like it much, and God's Hotel—Laguna Honda Hospital in San Francisco—seemed just the place to escape it. Although the hospital was on sixty-two acres in the middle of the city, it was literally over the hill to the poorhouse, and no one—regulators, economists, or budgeters—paid it much attention.

But that wasn't why I stayed. I stayed for the place and the patients.

The place was old and ramshackle, spread out high on a hill overlooking the ocean. Outside, it looked like a medieval monastery, with bell tower, turrets, and a red-tiled roof. Inside, it was the 1930s, though the long, open wards went all the way back to when a hospital was still a hospice, where monks took care of the pilgrim, the traveler, and the poor for free.

It was also fascinating. Originally it had been the city's almshouse, what the French call a *Hôtel-Dieu* (God's hotel), and it still was the city's almshouse despite its name. That meant it took in anyone and everyone who fell through the cracks in the medical system. It had murderers from San Quentin and dancers from the Royal Ballet of London; failed stockbrokers and the West Coast fat model for artists; merchant marines and rock musicians; telegraph operators, professors, poets, and

thieves. They had one of just about every kind of disease, too, so I saw almost everything in the 2,630 pages of my *Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine*.

The patients taught me a lot. They were always themselves, for better and for worse. Which is not to say they were all good. Mr. Dennis, for instance, was a convicted rapist who hid out at the hospital faking paraplegia. But he was the purest, the most evil Mr. Dennis there could be.

They were utterly attuned to cant, hypocrisy, and falsehood, and if they sensed it, they would turn their backs and walk or wheel away; shout or even throw things; close their eyes and refuse to answer. They responded to the truth and withdrew at the false, and the only way I could take care of them was to meet their true selves with mine.

# ON WRITING A FIRST NOVEL

*An essay by Nick Dybek*

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When I was twenty-two, I moved from Michigan to rural Mississippi. I lived alone, in a tiny room above an eccentric couple's garage. Every morning, the mechanical lock on the double security doors of Bolivar County Correctional Facility buzzed me through to teach literature to inmates.

My students hated *To Kill a Mockingbird* ("We don't have to read about this," one of them pointed out), but they loved *Lord of the Flies*. Naively, I attributed their enthusiasm to the novel's resonance with their circumstances. But what really appealed to them was the island, the ocean, the sand, the jungle; they liked occupying an entirely imagined place.

I have to admit I took the job in part to give myself something other than my stable Midwestern upbringing to write about. But I failed miserably at fiction that year. It became clear that I wouldn't be able to write anything a reader would want to escape into if I restricted myself to the things I saw and heard each day, to material that was still—only—my own.

When I did discover a story I wanted to tell, I didn't find it in my life, or in any real life. I read Shakespeare's *Richard II* for the first time in my apartment above the garage, and the image of a deposed king sitting in prison, listening to mysterious music, stuck in my mind. That image, invented hundreds of years before by someone else,

led easily to other images, images I invented without intending to. As I began to trust the power of invention—to let myself imagine a family, a community, an economy unlike any I had known—I had the outline of a narrative.

I spent part of the next summer traveling through the Olympic Peninsula and found myself wondering: What would my characters make of this place? I decided to set the book there, and moved out to Washington State. But now, as I imagined those characters in an unfamiliar setting, details from my own life found their way into the narrative, unforced. What had so recently seemed the trappings of an uninspiring existence—my parents' huge record collection, my childhood obsession with *Treasure Island*, family stories about suitcases packed with broken jars and pickled animal parts—came newly alive.

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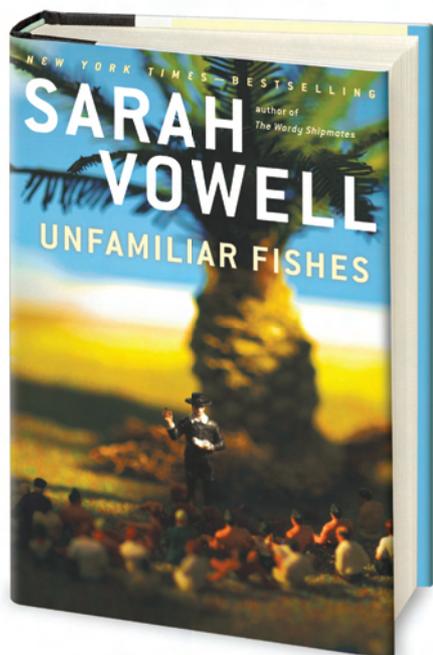


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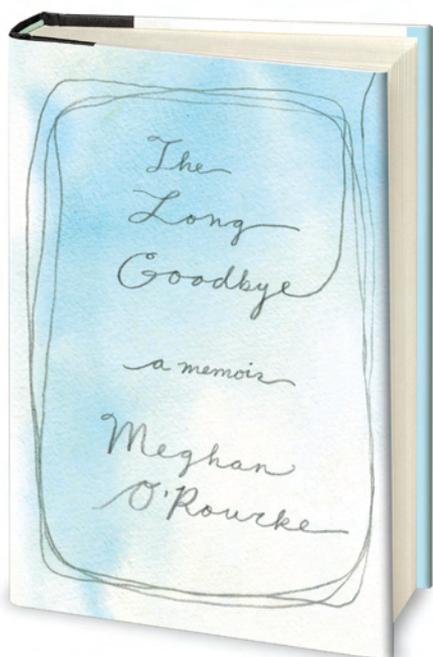
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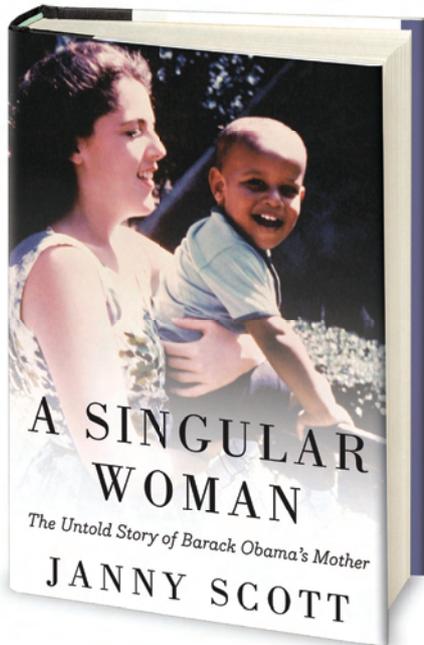
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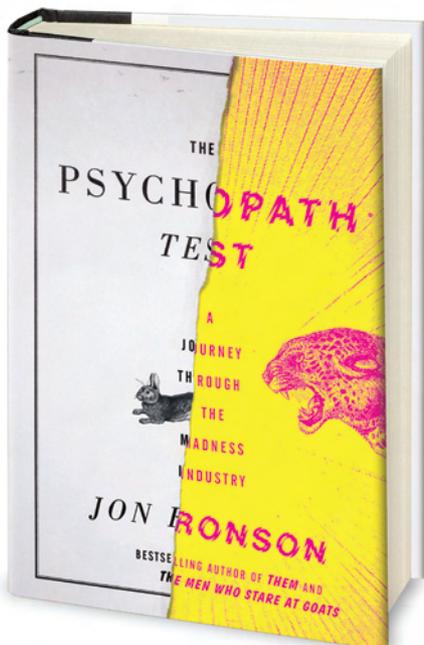
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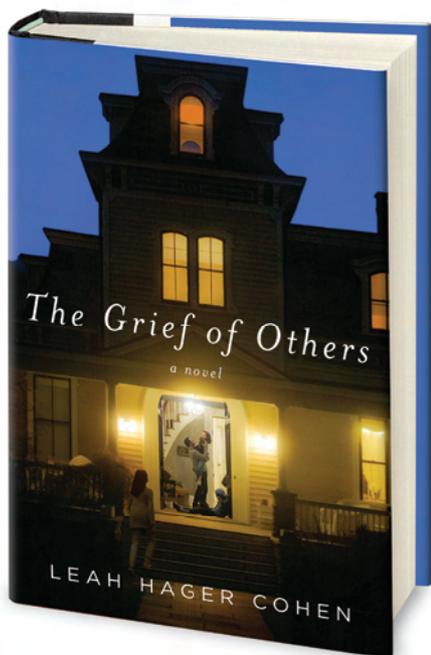
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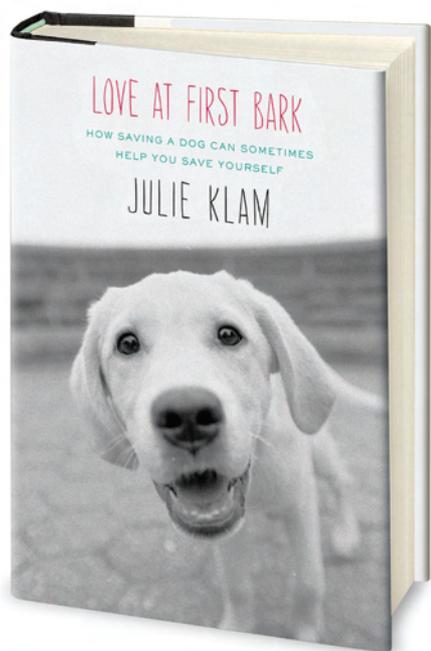
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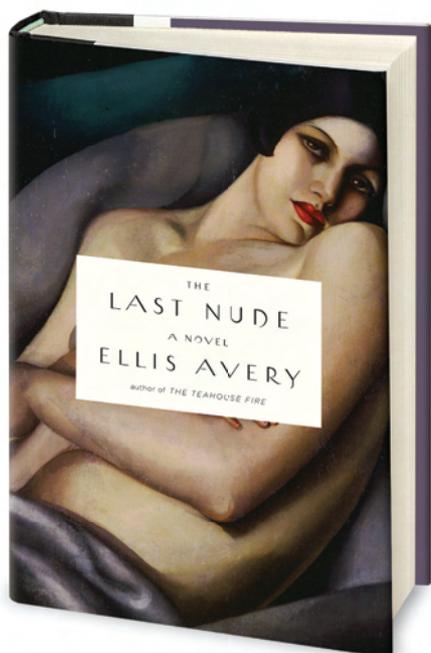
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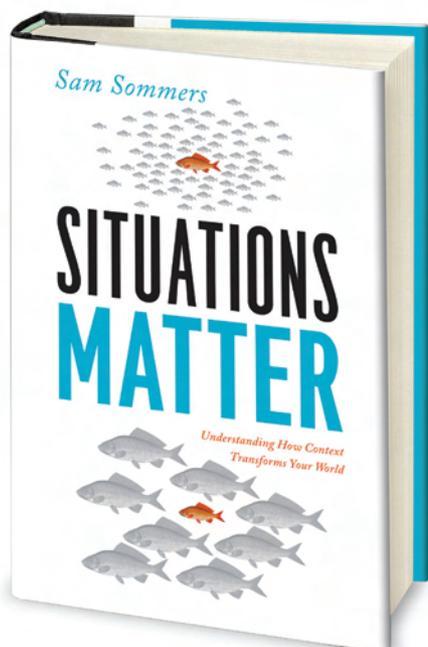
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