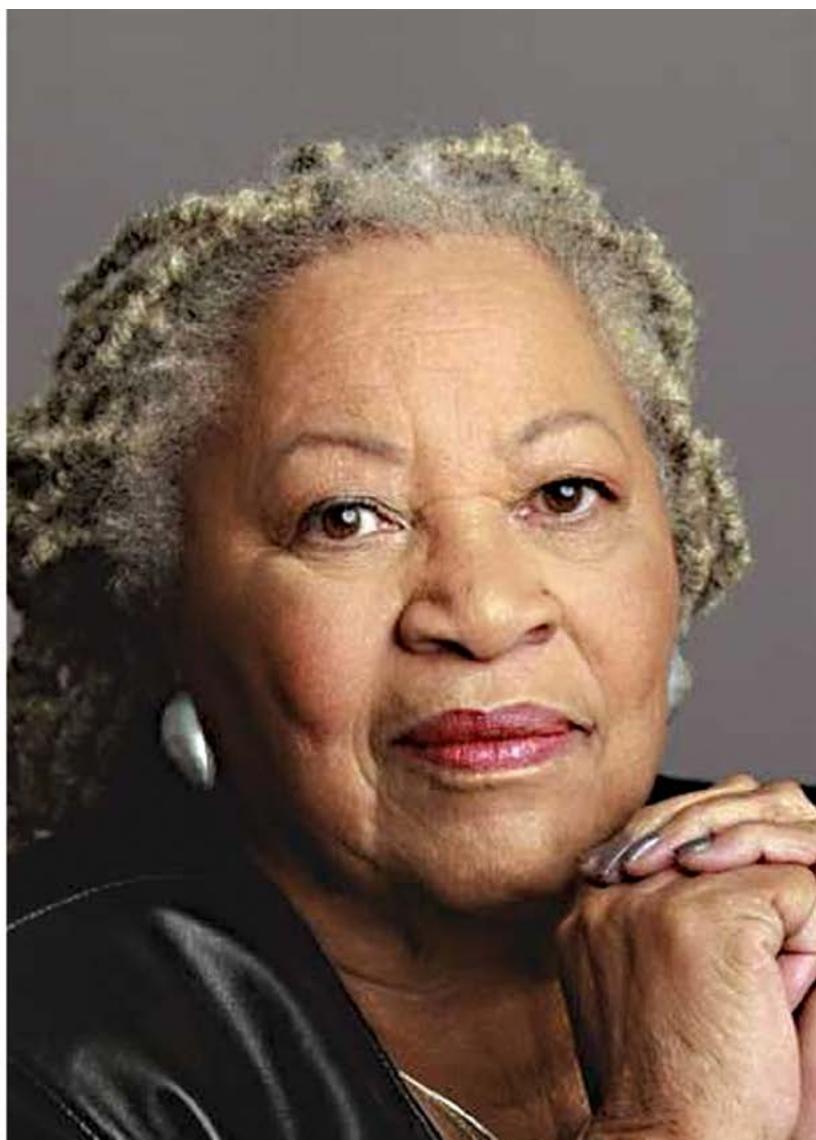


# OHIOana QUARTERLY

WINTER 2020 | VOL. 63 NO. 1



Remembering Toni Morrison

Collecting, Preserving, and Celebrating Ohio Literature

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# QUARTERLY

WINTER 2020

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# From the Director

Dear Friends,



*The year 2020.*

It's almost startling to say it. Not only a new year upon us, but a new decade. Seems like only yesterday everyone was in a panic about Y2K and how technology the world over would go dark. Of course, nothing happened. Was that really twenty years ago?

So many changes have happened in this first one-fifth of the 21st century. But one thing we're glad has not changed – people seem to love to read as much as ever. In part it's because of the wonderful new writers and illustrators who arrive on the scene every year. Many

of them, we're proud to say, are from Ohio. Like the gifted Oge Mora, whose debut picture book, *Thank You, Omu!*, has been named as Floyd's Pick for 2020. You'll meet Oge in this issue – a young talent in the early stages of what promises to be a fabulous career.

And speaking of fabulous careers, Ohio and Ohioana could not be prouder of any author as it is Toni Morrison – a giant not just of American literature, but world literature. After Toni passed away in August, it was my honor to introduce Timothy Greenfield-Sanders' wonderful film, *Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am* at a special screening on the OSU campus. We pay tribute to this remarkable woman as the cover story of our winter *Ohioana Quarterly*. And how apropos that 2020 marks the 50th anniversary of the publication of Toni's first novel, *The Bluest Eye*.

Toni Morrison received many honors during her career, capped by the Nobel Prize for Literature. Ohioana is proud that the first of her literary prizes was the 1975 Ohioana Book Award for *Sula*. She would go on to win more Ohioana Book Awards and, in 1988, our highest honor, the Ohioana Career Medal. It was an award close to her heart, as was her native state. As she said, "Ohio is paramount in so much of my work. My gratitude to you and fellow Ohioans is profound – not only for the award but for the gift to my imagination."

We thank you, Toni Morrison – for sharing your life and your gifts with the world.

And thank all of you for sharing the love of books and reading in this winter *Ohioana Quarterly*.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Weaver".

David Weaver

## ON THE COVER

Celebrating Toni Morrison  
Left: 1974 (Photograph by Jill Krementz)

Right: *Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am*, a Magnolia Pictures release.  
©Timothy Greenfield-Sanders/  
Courtesy of Magnolia Pictures

# Toni Morrison: A Tribute



By Morgan Peters and David Weaver



*Chloe Ardelia Wofford was born on February 18, 1931 in the Lake Erie steel town of Lorain, Ohio. As Toni Morrison, she would become one of the most prolific American writers of our time, and the first black woman of any nationality to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. The Ohioana Library has a long and proud association with Toni Morrison, going back to 1975 when she won the first literary award of her career – an Ohioana Book Award for her second novel, Sula.*

*Morrison's books, many of which are set in and take inspiration from Ohio, have touched millions around the world with their themes of race, gender, and identity. When Morrison passed away on August 5, 2019, tributes poured in from around the world. In this piece we look back at her extraordinary career and the special place Ohio had in her work and her life and feature quotes from those who were touched and shaped by her words, including several from Morrison's fellow Ohio writers.*

The second of four children born to George and Ramah Wofford, "Toni" – as she was known from the age of twelve after she became a Catholic and took Anthony as her baptismal name – harbored a love of reading from a young age. Her first job was as a shelver at the Lorain Public Library, where she further cultivated her passion for literature. Morrison lived in Lorain until moving to Washington D.C. to attend Howard University. It was in D.C. that she encountered racial segregation in restaurants and on buses for the first time, experiences that would shape her life and work.

After graduating from Howard University with a Bachelor of Arts in English, Morrison went on to earn a Master of Arts from Cornell University, and began

teaching English at Texas Southern University in Houston. After teaching for nine years, she moved on to working as an editor for a textbook division of the publisher Random House in Syracuse, New York. Two years later she would become the first black female editor at Random House in New York City, where she would play a vital role in recognizing Black literature and bringing it into the mainstream.

Morrison first began writing during her time at Howard University, but it wasn't until 1970 at the age of thirty-nine that she published her first novel, *The Bluest Eye*. *The Bluest Eye* takes place in Morrison's hometown



Toni Morrison in her office at Random House, 1974. Photo by Jill Krementz.

of Lorain, Ohio, and tells the story of a young African-American woman living in the 1940s who longs to have blue eyes. The main character in the novel is based on a childhood friend of Morrison's, and many locations from around Lorain, including the lakeside Lake Shore Park, are mentioned and described with delicate affection. The setting comes alive with a level of attention that only a native could achieve. The book was published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston and met with moderate success, though due to its topics of racism, incest, and child molestation there would be numerous attempts to ban the book from libraries and schools.

Despite controversy surrounding the subject matter of *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison quickly found her stride as a writer. A few years later, she produced her second novel, *Sula*. Set again in Ohio, and a powerful story about the friendship of two black women, *Sula* won Morrison the first of her many prizes: the Ohioana Book Award in fiction. Morrison, unable to attend the award ceremony in Columbus, was represented by her mother, Ramah, who accepted the award on her daughter's behalf.

It was Morrison's acclaimed third novel, *Song of Solomon*, that firmly established her as one of the great authors of her time, winning her the prestigious National Book Critics Circle Award. It remains one of her most popular works, and would be a book that influenced a number of other aspiring writers.

*"I was in a fever dream about writing that year. It was 1977 and I'd recently finished college. In college I wrote fictional short stories. A Toni Morrison novel came out that very year, Song of Solomon. After finishing it I phoned her publisher, believing they'd connect me with her. I wanted to tell her that her prose made me want to write. Her secretary told me she didn't take unsolicited phone calls. Silly me. I eventually found my calling in nonfiction writing. A few years ago while attending an anniversary event for Knopf authors – of which I am one, as was Morrison – I replayed that scene in my mind as I stood in the New York Public Library listening to Morrison give the keynote address. She was both regal and earthy. She still makes me want to write."*

Wil Haygood, 2019 Ohioana Award Winner for *Tigerland*

*"I was in the Shrine of the Black Madonna Bookstore in Atlanta when the salesclerk suggested I read Song of Solomon by Toni Morrison. Since that time, I've*



Morrison accepts the Ohioana Career Medal at the King Arts Complex, 1988.

*developed a lifelong love for her novels, reading them with a highlighter in hand, notating her exquisite language. I re-read Song of Solomon in 2004 and found it even more riveting than the first time. The novel inspired my monologue, Ms. Morrison Speaks to Pilate from Song of Solomon, which was selected for the History in ACTION Festival of New Plays in Dayton last September. And I enjoyed The Pieces I Am, the documentary that celebrates the extraordinary literary life she lived! Toni Morrison was radiant."*

Chiquita Mullins Lee, Arts Learning Coordinator, Ohio Arts Council; Poet and Playwright, *Pierce to the Soul*

Each new book (she would ultimately go on to publish eleven novels, seven works of non-fiction, two plays, and three children's books) pushed Morrison more into the public eye and earned her recognition as a literary master. In the early 1980s, Morrison decided to leave the publishing industry to focus on writing while teaching at the university level, ultimately becoming the Robert F. Goheen Chair of Humanities at Princeton University, a post she held from 1989 until her retirement in 2006.

In 1981, the same year as her fourth novel, *Tar Baby* was published, Morrison made a trip back to her native Ohio for a special event.

*"Toni Morrison was the guest speaker at the 1981 Ohio Arts Council (OAC) Awards dinner as part of an OAC board meeting and conference in Cincinnati. In an interview Morrison did with Robert Fox, then writer-in-residence at the OAC, Morrison said: "I love everything about books, including the feel of the paper, the pencil." Fox went on to say that Morrison, as an editor, introduced us to authors such as Toni Cade Bambara, Gayle Jones, and Alice Walker. Even in 1981 Morrison was worried about young people and their reading habits, saying, "They know a lot, but they seem to pick up their knowledge from other sources than reading." Toni Morrison was a woman of the times – intuitive and reflective. As we pay tribute to her global impact, we are better people due to her influence, tenacity, and the humanness of her words."*

Donna S. Collins, Executive Director, Ohio Arts Council

Six years later came Morrison's masterpiece, *Beloved*, the story of a freed slave who kills her child. It won Morrison the 1988 Pulitzer Prize in fiction. The announcement of the Pulitzer came one day after the Ohioana Library announced it was giving Morrison its and the state's highest recognition for an author – the Ohioana Career Medal.

Ohioana presented the medal to Morrison at the King Arts Complex in July of that year as part of the Thurber House Literary Picnic Series. The Ohio Arts Council joined with Ohioana in sponsoring the event. Morrison would say afterwards, "It is always a delight when one's home state recognizes the value of one's work. But it is an extraordinary pleasure to be honored for it. Ohio is

paramount in so much of my work. My gratitude to you and fellow Ohioans is profound – not only for the award but for the gift to my imagination."

More accolades would come in the years that followed, capped by the 1993 Nobel Prize in Literature. No black female author before or since has won that honor. And in 2012, Morrison received the Presidential Medal of

Freedom from President Barack Obama, who had proclaimed *Song of Solomon* as his favorite book by any author. Morrison may have slowed down in her later years, but she never stopped. Not long before her death, the acclaimed documentary, *Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am*, produced and directed by her friend and portraitist Timothy Greenfield-Sanders, had its world premiere at Robert Redford's Sundance Film Festival.



Toni Morrison receives the Nobel Prize in Literature from King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden in the Concert Hall in Stockholm, Sweden on December 10, 1993. (Photo credit: Associated Press)

*"Toni Morrison's impacts as a novelist, essayist, and editor are immense and multi-generational. Her catalogue of work brims with imagination, truth, and stunning linguistic prowess. Her sentences are as urgent as they are refined, and they bring readers to unique junctures of thought, feeling, and reckoning with history. Morrison's literary brilliance and commitment will continue to deepen our understanding of the world for centuries to come."*

Marcus Jackson, 2019 Ohioana Award Winner for *Pardon My Heart*

Though Morrison moved from Ohio after her childhood and lived there only briefly during her adulthood, she clearly maintained an identity to her home state, and her ties there remained strong. Ohio's large impact on her is apparent throughout her literary career. *The Bluest Eye* is not her only novel set in Ohio – *Beloved* takes place in Cincinnati and follows a female slave who escapes to Ohio, and *Sula* is set in a mostly black neighborhood

in Ohio called The Bottom. She drew on particular experiences from her childhood in Lorain throughout her work. Morrison once described Ohio as, “a curious juxtaposition of what was ideal in this country and what was base.”

Morrison’s impact on literature and popular culture cannot be overstated. Her books have been read and studied in schools and universities across the country. Above all, her work has the ability to appeal and relate to vast readership with grace, sensitivity, and understanding. Being able to provide this experience is part of what makes her a noteworthy and remarkable author.

Ohioana is proud of its association with Toni Morrison over the years. In addition to the 1988

Career Medal and her 1975 prize for *Sula*, Morrison also won the 1999 and 2004 Ohioana Awards in fiction for *Paradise* and *Love* respectively. In a 1999 poll, Ohioana readers selected Morrison as their favorite Ohio author of the twentieth century, and *Beloved* as their favorite book.

Morrison has been honored across her home state. In 1995, after her Nobel Prize was awarded, the Lorain Public Library officially opened the Toni Morrison Reading Room. Toni Morrison herself attended the ribbon cutting ceremony and donated several of her books to be held in a special archive there. The reading room attracts scholars and fans alike. Another attraction is her childhood home, still standing in Lorain at 2245 Elyria Avenue.

The Toni Morrison Society, founded in 1993, with more than six hundred members worldwide, is dedicated to the study and appreciation of Morrison’s work. Since 2012, the Society’s home has been the Oberlin College Library, located in Mudd Center on the campus, just eight miles from Morrison’s hometown. Oberlin is also the site of one of the benches placed by the Society as part of the Bench by the Road Project, which helps to memorialize the lives of Africans who were enslaved. A project that was deeply personal to Morrison, it was launched by the Society on her 75<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Toni Morrison’s legacy is and will continue to be resounding throughout the world – and it all began right here, in Ohio. She was in part shaped by the unique experiences of growing up in Ohio, and in turn her work has carved and developed the state’s identity. Her accolades and accomplishments are

reflective of what a truly remarkable woman and writer she was, and she surely retains a special place in the heart of Ohio.

*“In Toni Morrison we heard our stories – the beautiful and the hard ones alike. Her command of language helped us to see ourselves a little clearer and inspired us to be better. I don’t know that a greater mind has ever existed among writers. Her willingness to share that mind with us was truly among her greatest gifts. Reading her work, learning from it is how we repay that debt.”*

Dr. Dana Williams, President, the Toni Morrison Society

*Special thanks to Donna S. Collins, Wil Haygood, Marcus Jackson, Chiquita Mullins-Lee, and Dr. Dana Williams for their contributions to this tribute.*

# A Conversation with Oge Mora

by David Weaver



Photo by Abigail Best

Ohioana is pleased to introduce Floyd's Pick for 2020: *Thank You, Omu!*, by author and illustrator Oge Mora. Mora both wrote and illustrated the book, which tells the story of Omu, who cooks a stew and shares it with her neighbors; they show their gratitude by returning her generosity. Published by Little Brown Young Readers, the book received the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Illustrator Award, was a Caldecott Honor Book, and was a finalist for the Ohioana Award in juvenile literature. A native of Columbus, Oge now lives in Rhode Island.

*Thank You, Omu!* was chosen as the 2020 Floyd's Pick award winner by the advisory board of Choose to Read Ohio. The award is given in memory of Floyd Dickman, a librarian and passionate advocate of children's literature who passed away in 2015. Previous winners include Loren Long, Jennifer Maschari, Sally Derby, and last year's recipient, Jacqueline Woodson.

We were delighted to have the chance to speak recently with Oge.

**Q** What inspired you to write *Thank You, Omu?*

**A** *Thank You, Omu!* first started as a class project where I wanted to explore something lost but something also gained. When I thought about this concept, I was immediately reminded of childhood experiences with my late grandmother. The story soon became a celebration of her memory, gratitude, and food's magical ability to bring families and communities together.

**Q** Were you surprised at the wonderful success and acclaim the book has received?

**A** Most definitely! When I was working on this book my number one concern was doing justice to a story near and dear to my heart, but the experience of having it published and out in the world has been beyond anything I could have imagined. I am so grateful that my story has resonated with so many readers.

**Q** This was your first published book. Can you describe what the process of writing and publishing was like for you?

**A** Very nerve-wracking to be quite honest! I am a bit of a perfectionist, but you learn pretty early on that that mindset isn't the best suited for publishing. I rewrote, resketched, recollaged so many things and when it went to print, there were still so many things that I wanted to go back into and change! I've learned that all you can do is your very best with the time available and move forward. I learn so much over the process of every book I make and I'm certain it'll be that way for life.

**Q** Can you tell us about your new book, *Saturday*, which has just been published?

**A** Since Ava's mother works six days a week, Saturday is a very special day for both of them. They have a bunch of exciting plans for their day, but alas, things don't go according to plan. Despite their setbacks, Ava and her mother know what is most important to them - spending time together. If *Thank*

*You, Omu!* is a book about gratitude, *Saturday* at its heart is a book about love.

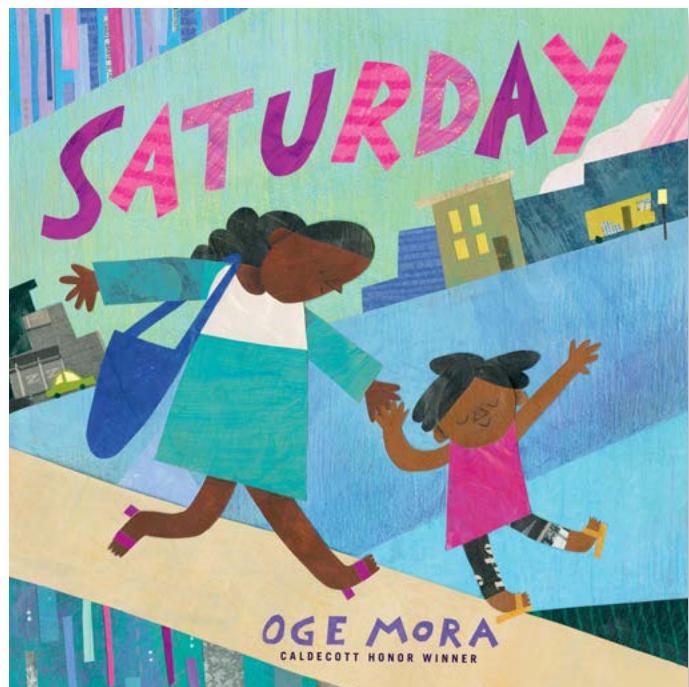
**Q** Floyd Dickman was a passionate advocate for children's literature. How does it make you feel seeing children learn to love reading from your books?

**A** I have so much respect for Floyd's legacy. It's well known that every writer begins as a reader. I fell in love with reading as a child because there were librarians that read and recommended books to me. Books opened my eyes to the possibilities of the world and changed my life. For my own books to offer any of that to children today is an incredibly humbling thought.

**Q** Finally, we are proud to claim you as an Ohio writer and illustrator, which is what Ohioana is all about. Do you get back to Ohio often, and do you think of yourself as a Buckeye?

**A** I'm a Buckeye born and raised. I lived in Columbus until I moved to Providence for college. I currently reside in Rhode Island, but I am often back to Ohio to visit my family and friends. No matter where I go, it will always be home.

Thank you, Oge . . . and congratulations!

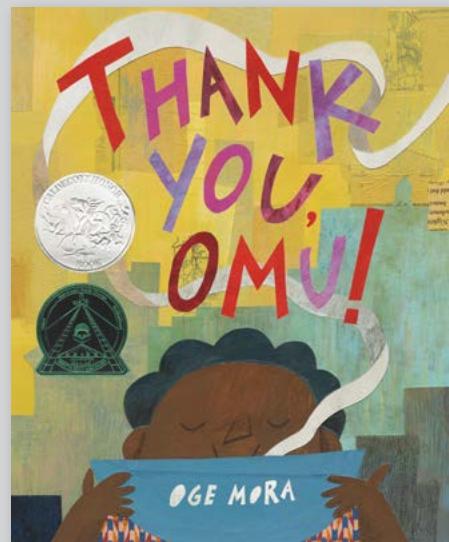


Oge Mora's newest book *Saturday*.

### ***Thank You, Omu! 2020 "Floyd's Pick"***

In 2015, the Choose to Read Ohio (CTRO) Advisory Council created a special honor to be given annually to one outstanding book of children's literature written by an Ohio author or illustrated by an Ohio illustrator. The honor is named for and presented in memory of children's literature expert, advocate, and librarian Floyd Dickman. "Floyd's Pick" is selected by the CTRO Advisory Council in addition to the twenty titles in the biennial Choose to Read Ohio list.

The CTRO Advisory Council has chosen *Thank You, Omu!*, written and illustrated by Ohio native Oge Mora, as the 2020 "Floyd's Pick." The book brings to life a heartwarming story of sharing and community in colorful cut-paper designs as luscious as Omu's stew, with an extra serving of love. *Omú* means "queen" in the native Igbo language of the author's parents; growing up, she used it to mean "grandma."



# Book Reviews

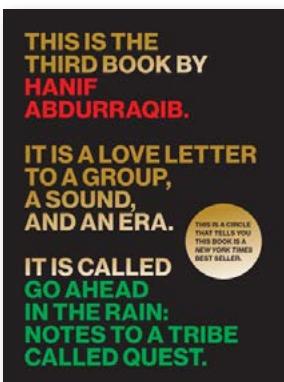
## NONFICTION

Abdurraqib, Hanif. *Go Ahead in the Rain: Notes to a Tribe Called Quest.*

University of Texas Press (Austin, TX) 2019. PB \$16.95.

Familiarity with the music of seminal rap group A Tribe Called Quest is not a prerequisite to enjoying this, the third book by Columbus poet and cultural critic Hanif Abdurraqib. But if you are not a fan before you start reading this excellent book, you probably will be when you finish it. The story of Q-Tip, Phife Dawg, Ali Shaheed Muhammad, and Jarobi White quickly pulled me in. Tribe formed in 1985, so those of us who grew up with the MTV generation in the 1980s and 1990s (back when they used to play actual music videos) clearly remember the Queens group's jazz-influenced, socially conscious beats.

In addition to the detailed critical biography presented in *Go Ahead in the Rain*, we also get more of Abdurraqib's signature personal stories. Some of what he tells us is heartbreakingly sad, such as the story of the racist music teacher who claims Hanif was bad at playing the trumpet simply because his lips were "too big" (a ridiculous statement for which his irate father took the teacher to task by throwing album covers featuring Louis Armstrong, Eric Dolphy, Wynton Marsalis, and other famous black trumpet players onto the man's desk). He describes the halcyon days of the 1990s cassette, listening to groups like De La Soul, Wu-Tang Clan, and rappers like Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg on his Walkman with his friends. Abdurraqib has extremely eclectic music taste; indeed, you will find it a very rewarding experience to Google Abdurraqib's own Spotify playlists as you read the book, particularly songs from A Tribe Called Quest's second album, *The Low End Theory* (1991).



Abdurraqib takes us through what it is like to fall hard for a band, a song, a sound. This book is a true love letter not only to one particular group, but to an entire genre. The author gets us to recognize our own similar loves for bands, movies, or other cultural trends, and how they can be uniquely special at shaping certain times in our lives. This book made me yearn not just for what many consider the Golden Age of Rap, but also for that more innocent time, before jobs, bills, and other chains of adulthood. I am only a couple of years older than Hanif Abdurraqib, and I fell hard into a high-school era music nostalgia hole after I read this book.

*Go Ahead in the Rain* was on the longlist for the National Book Award in 2019, and was a 2019 Kirkus Prize Nonfiction Nominee, as well. Read some of the glowing reviews alongside the book itself, and you will see why. This book has resonated not only with critics, but with countless people who have found their lives shaped by fandom. But it is also much deeper than that. Abdurraqib strikes the heart of human experience by uniting us with feelings that every person can understand. "We are nothing if not for our histories, and so much of mine is tied up in the business of ghosts," he writes, in a letter addressed to the mother of Phife Dawg, who passed away in 2016. He speaks of loss, in the same letter: "I don't want to burden anyone, but I consider anyone who has lost someone my kin, because I think we are all faced with the same question of how we go on. How we live the life that best reflects the people who aren't here and are still counting on us." Yet Abdurraqib himself admits he is not a cynic, and while some of his words and experiences are sad, they are hopeful too. He quotes Toni Morrison and delves into his experiences growing up African American in a very white Midwest suburb, and later progresses to discussions of the 2016 election. Abdurraqib never flinches or minces words. His writing, through that signature hope, is direct and honest, lyrical and thought-provoking. A lot like the music and lyrics of A Tribe Called Quest.

REVIEWED BY COURTNEY BROWN, OHIOANA'S LIBRARY SPECIALIST

## Grunenwald, Jill. *Reading Behind Bars: A True Story of Literature, Law, and Life as a Prison Librarian.*

Skyhorse Publishing (New York, NY) 2019. \$25.99.

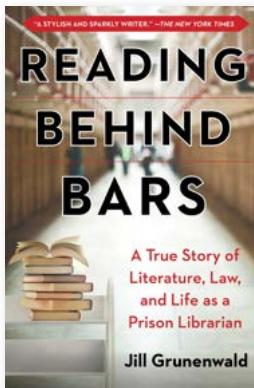
Jill Grunenwald got her job as a prison librarian because an inmate was caught wearing panties belonging to her predecessor.

So, the minimum correction facility for men in Grafton, Ohio, was in need of a new librarian, naturally. Grunenwald described herself as someone who had always had “books in my blood,” and had recently graduated with a master’s degree in library science. Jobs were scarce after the 2008 recession, though she and her new classmates in library school had been told there would be a plethora of jobs available upon graduation. When the only library job available was behind bars, she joined the inmates locked in the slammer. The Joint. The Clink. The Big House.

The author’s book, *Reading Behind Bars*, is her account of what it was like to run the prison’s library for twenty-one months. She spent her days surrounded by inmates, and even had a few of them work a few hours each week in the library. Being a library porter was a choice job for inmates, and there was a long line of applications to work with “Ms. G.” (During one confrontation with an inmate, she told him that the “G” in her name stood for “Gangsta,” which quickly spread around and earned her some respect.)

Imagine becoming a librarian, one of the gentlest of careers, and finding no place to work but inside a prison, where you had to pass a search inspection each day to get to your job, and as you left each evening. As an employee there, you were automatically suspect that you would bring contraband in. “It wasn’t easy and it was surreal knowing that there was a constant Threat Level I had always to be aware of.” If at the end of their shifts, all persons inside were still alive and unharmed, employees considered they’d had a good day.

“I felt like a fish out of water those first few weeks,” she wrote. She knew the fairly standard rules in a normal



library, “but a correctional institution comes with a lot of unique rules.” After three months, she wrote, “I admittedly still had no idea what the hell I was doing. Mostly I was making it up as I went along.”

Most of the prisoners were incarcerated for drug offenses as well as DUI convictions. They weren’t the more dangerous convicts in mid- or maximum-security prisons, but they were jailbirds, locked up because of breaking the law.

“Part of my job was to contribute to their collective education and to prepare them for their eventual reentry into society,” Grunenwald wrote. The library was also to provide a space for the inmates to go, “a unique pocket of freedom within the confines of a prison.” In addition to spending time in the library to read newspapers, consult legal texts, or to check out a book, inmates told her that they came to the library because it kept them out of trouble.

There were seven hundred inmates, many of which came to the library often. The author wrote, “Every single interaction with my service population was a bomb waiting to detonate.”

She had to be a disciplinarian, when necessary. She had authority, they didn’t. She wrote up reports on them occasionally for non-acceptable behavior, such as “establishing,” when inmates tried to establish some relationship with a prison employee other than the employee-inmate way things worked. Grunenwald had to write up two men for masturbating in the library, one while he was staring at her, an event which understandably shook her up.

Despite the challenges of a prison employee, she did enjoy being a librarian there, though the library was not as modern as the ones she was educated in, due to a lack of access to computers. The books – roughly 8,000 of them – still were checked out using those old pockets in the back of the book. There was no budget to buy more books or an updated computer system.

The inmates read most of the same books that the general population read: James Patterson, John Grisham, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, Nora Roberts, and J. D. Robb. They read fantasy and science fiction, historical fiction and romance. They read to remember and forget.

One aspect of the prison job she hated: "I had to practice censorship, which with my whole heart I objected to." But she had been hired to uphold the prison's rules. The freedom we non-inmates have to read anything doesn't hold in a prison. Such as books on bomb-making. Or anything too sexually or violently graphic. The librarian had a list of books that were forbidden inside, and all books coming in – often with inmates' families with specifically requested books not available in the library – were searched for contraband.

I personally can attest to the effectiveness of that search. At my Acorn Bookshop, we occasionally sent books to prisoners on behalf of a family member or friend. One day, shortly after sending a hardback mystery inside, two Columbus city cops came into the store and told us that a book we'd sent to a prison was found to have cocaine sewn into the book's spine. Their first task was to see if we were the offending party, but soon they cleared us, and later told us they never did find the woman who had used us. We were emphatically told not to send any more books to any prison. Yes, sir!

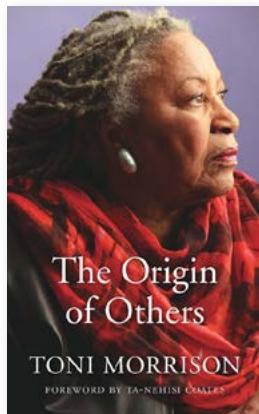
After twenty-one months, Grunenwald left to work in an academic library. She wrapped up her time there by writing, "Overall I liked it far more than I thought I would; I enjoyed working with the men."

REVIEWED BY GEORGE COWMEADOW BAUMAN, THE LONGTIME CO-OWNER OF THE ACORN BOOKSHOP IN THE GRANDVIEW HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD OF COLUMBUS

### Morrison, Toni. *The Origin of Others*.

Harvard University Press (Cambridge, MA) 2017. \$23.95.

Toni Morrison – novelist, historian, Robert F. Goheen Professor in the Humanities, Emerita, Princeton University, winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993, National Book Critics Circle Award, and a Pulitzer Prize – brought together six of her Norton Lectures to challenge her readers. These talks, now essays, focus on the idea of the "Other," concentrating on the political, social, and historical definitions and trends that differentiate one from another.



As a historian, Morrison looks at racism and the place of the African American in American society. She examines how literature describes and defines roles within our society and across the last 250 years. Drawing examples from literature and history, she drills down to the essence of society, class, and position.

As a novelist, Morrison takes up her subject of the "Other" and weaves it into her writings including *Beloved*, *A Mercy*, and *Paradise*. She draws from historical events that include racism and "othering" and builds fictional stories upon the framework of past attitudes and events.

Unerringly, Morrison makes the reader think about society today, the question of immigrants and migrants, and the value of other cultures within American society.

Ta-Nehisi Coates, novelist, National Book Award winner, and thinker, writes a glowing foreword, placing Morrison's essays within a contemporary social and political context.

This slim volume will make you think, will encourage you to look at the world through other people's eyes, and will help you recognize the significance of Morrison's writings, both historical and literary. May her memory live on to challenge all of us to be better.

REVIEWED BY MIRIAM KAHN, LIBRARIAN, COLUMBUS, OHIO

### FICTION

#### Goble, Steve. *A Bottle of Rum*.

Seventh Street Books (Amherst, NY) 2019. PB \$15.95.

Fair warning, ye rascals: Steve Goble's *A Bottle of Rum*, the third novel chronicling reluctant pirate Spider John Rush, catches nary a glimpse of the deep blue sea.

The slap of waves against wooden hulls, the snap of sail canvas in a freshening breeze, the crackling boom of a twelve-pounder—nowhere to be found. You won't miss them, though. It's abundantly clear from the first handful of paragraphs: There be pirates here.

The reader quickly learns that Spider John is a pirate (desperately wanting to be a *former* pirate), a fugitive from justice, and a homesick carpenter yearning for early eighteenth century New England. The author

won't let Spider John go home just yet, and the character's knack for being in the wrong place at the wrong time opens this novel's treasure chest for readers.

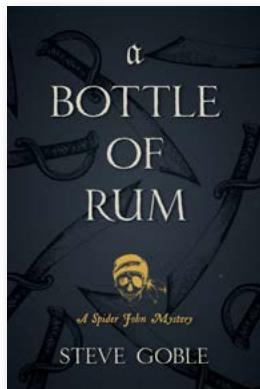
Goble's skillful weaving of backstory prevents new readers from becoming confused. That said, you should own *The Bloody Black Flag* and *The Devil's Wind* and set your sights on the upcoming *Pieces of Eight* (and, I hope, the next dozen after that).

Disclosure: Fellow Buckeye State native Goble and I have been close buddies since our paths converged in an Ohio newsroom decades ago. I was – and am – attracted by Goble's integrity, work ethic, and vivid imagination. I am a Goble fanboy. Consequently, we yell and cuss as we support one another, as we did as he shared early versions of this novel. Luckily, he won all the important arguments – or, as friends do, I let him believe so.

In *A Bottle of Rum*, Spider John and his entertainingly crude sidekick Odin discover perils that might not kill them as dramatically as an English broadside, but are just as deadly. The pirate slang that readers of this series have come to expect is still there, but doesn't detract from the pacing of the story, even if one has to occasionally turn to the internet to interpret. My favorite is "gobermouche." (Nah, I had to look it up; you can, too.)

A tavern owner's murder puts Spider John on the trail of his onetime shipmate and protégé Hob. ("A tavern is a wonderful spot for smugglers and merchants to arrange matters," Spider John observes. "Aye," Odin retorts. "But it is a better place for getting drunk and minding your own [expletive] business.")

Spider John follows clues to an apothecary shop ("... rose oil, poppy seeds ... with just a touch of cow urine...") and subsequently to an English madhouse that becomes the chilling backdrop for the main part of the novel. Although the author largely resists the temptation to romp in the asylum's horrific vibe, he succinctly makes it clear that the place is just as fearsome as the deck of any pirate ship. ("Meat pies are my favorite ... Meat used to be alive.")



Spider John and Odin seek Hob using brains, brawling, and language as blue and salty as the briny deep. The characters they encounter are a nightmare blend of dubious friends and pirates galore, dealing murder and mayhem. Such a large cast could become a hindrance, but like the mystery authors he clearly loves, Goble knifes through the action with razor-sharp efficiency.

Odin's role should not go unnoticed. Not only is he a reminder of the piracy that hangs over Spider John, he's a rowdy, unscrupulous foil to SJ's deductive reasoning. "You always have too much in your thoughts, Spider John," Odin says. "It all gets tossed about, flotsam drifting across your brain."

Readers need not worry about flotsam on their brains from *A Bottle of Rum*.

REVIEWED BY TOM WILLIAMS, OHIO NATIVE, WRITER, AND FORMER EDITOR OF MARION AND DELAWARE NEWSPAPERS

### **Huber, Lee Anna. *Penny for Your Secrets: A Verity Kent Mystery.***

Kensington Books (New York, NY) 2019. PB \$15.95.

*Penny for Your Secrets*, a book of the *Verity Kent* mystery series, begins with a drunken party and a wife, Ada, issuing a death threat. When Lord Rockham really is murdered that night, Ada is shocked, especially when she is accused of the murder. She calls upon Verity Kent, a WWI Secret Service spy, to suss out the culprit. At the same time, her friend Irene asks Verity and her husband Sidney to look into the murder of her half-sister, Esther Shaw.



After much digging, the clues start pointing toward a double murder, a smuggling ring, and other possible deaths. Can it be true? What have they stumbled upon? Verity and Sidney draw on their Intelligence Service and military contacts, asking for context and facts, even a little background history.

Aside from the wonderful and intriguing cozy murder mystery set in 1919 London, you'll learn a lot more about aristocratic society, the struggles soldiers had acclimating to peacetime, Shell Shock or today's PTSD,

and the slow dissolution of rigid upper-crust society. Many of these topics are discussed in PBS' *Downton Abbey* and in other books set in the aftermath of WWI.

Anna Lee Huber tangles the plots, provides a host of aristocrats and members of the Intelligence Services, and much more to delight fans of historical fiction and cozy mysteries alike. Huber provides plenty of back story if this is your first exposure to the series. You'll also want to read Huber's *Lady Darby* mystery series set in 1830.

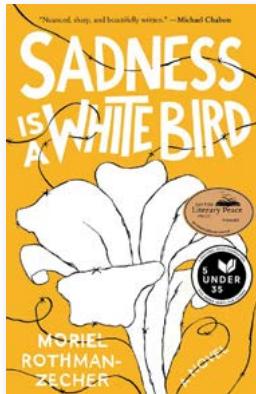
REVIEWED BY MIRIAM KAHN, LIBRARIAN, COLUMBUS, OH

### Rothman-Zecher, Moriel. *Sadness is a White Bird*.

Atria Books (New York, NY) 2018. HC \$26.00.

Despite spending a large part of his youth in Pennsylvania, Jonathan feels a profound, unwavering connection to Israel where he was born. It's where his grandfather still lives – a Salonian Jew who helped establish the Jewish state – and he feels an indescribable connection to the land. When his family moves back to Israel he savors his surroundings with every moment, and feels at home in a way he never did in the States. He views his upcoming eighteenth birthday and conscription as a way to solidify himself as an Israeli, and he looks forward to it as a right of passage. He knows some of his military duties might include monitoring the Palestinian territories, a reality that he becomes increasingly uncomfortable with when he meets siblings Nimreen and Laith – the Arab-Israeli twin daughter and son of his mother's friend. The three of them form a bond that intensifies quickly in the months leading up to Jonathan's military service, and as their friendship grows Jonathan feels his ideals and beliefs begin to waver for the first time.

Moriel Rothman-Zecher's debut novel explores the Israeli-Palestine conflict through the eyes of an impressionable teenage boy who is devoted to and deeply proud of his Jewish heritage and home in Israel. As the story progresses and Jonathan finds that he has a stake in both sides of the conflict, things are suddenly



not as cut-and-dried as he is used to, and he is hearing the other side of a story that has been recited to him all his life. The result is a deeply moving, poetic and impactful coming-of-age story that contemplates the unique pain in questioning beliefs you hold close, and the bravery it takes to do so.

In *Sadness is a White Bird*, it's not hard to step into Jonathan's shoes and understand his conflicted emotions. The novel is told as if Jonathan is addressing Laith directly, and his vulnerability and affection for his friend come through acutely, creating an empathetic bond between him and the reader even in his most flawed moments. Through careful prose, Rothman-Zecher succeeds in creating a character that is familiar in his teenage naivety and idealism, and whose growing pains can be felt deeply as if they're one's own.

The questions Jonathan faces throughout the novel are timely and important. The complexity of the Israeli-Palestine conflict is handled expertly, as are Jonathan's feelings of being pulled one way by his friends and another by his family, unsure if his own opinions and feelings are valid. As his identity and reality become increasingly tangled, he moves toward a decision that can change the course of his life. With writing that is smooth and lyrical and impeccable pacing, Rothman-Zecher writes with an impressive amount of control and seamlessly creates a story about love and longing, and how sometimes there is a gap between what is expected of us and what is right.

REVIEWED BY MORGAN PETERS, PROGRAM COORDINATOR, OHIOANA LIBRARY

### Scibona, Salvatore. *The Volunteer*.

Penguin Press (New York, NY) 2019. PB \$28.00.

If you're looking for your next beach book or waiting-at-the-airport fare, you might want to look elsewhere.

It's not that Salvatore Scibona's *The Volunteer* can't be read in those places. It's that you won't want to leave this full meal of a book behind.

The author, a native of Cleveland, Ohio, is in fine form with this novel. It should come as no surprise, as Scibona's previous novel, *The End*, earned him a spot as a finalist for the National Book Award and won the Young Lions Fiction Award.

Scibona's prose accomplishes the all-too-rare feat of being understandable without eschewing vibrant imagery. As wielded by the author, these two elements do not trip over one another, and as a result, the reader can sit back and enjoy the read. He is a master of using the other words—the ones that provide perfect clarity without resorting to a mundane description. ("The

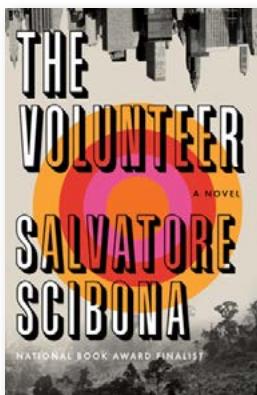
table was set for a meal such as people ate who never had to wash the dishes." "The plum had detonated in Elroy's teeth and spattered his shirt with juice.")

*The Volunteer* shifts back and forth between characters' pasts and presents to explain its premise: A small boy, speaking an unfamiliar language, is abandoned by his father at an airport, with only the clothes he is wearing and a pocketful of cash. ("He looked up at the agents behind the counter, stating his case incomprehensibly, while two hundred travelers watched, mesmerized, waiting for Lufthansa 531 to Amsterdam. It might have been Lithuanian.")

Despite this yo-yo technique—often used, often abused—the author clearly steers the reader through the life of military veteran and undercover operator Vollie Frade. Scibona uses the back-and-forth to provide context and foreshadowing and ratchet up tension. ("Within a week of his arrival in the country, Vollie was picking shards of the head of a lance corporal off his shirt, a boy nearly his same age, and hair attached to the shards that smelled of smoke and Brylcreem.")

The main character struggles throughout for control of his life and understanding of his actions, and the author puts us right in his mind. At one point, he writes that Vollie is "watching his own life without him in it ... All the home water had passed out of him. If a body was mostly composed of its water, he was mostly some foreigner now."

There's scarcely a page that doesn't both titillate the readers' senses and add to the comprehensive picture that the author is creating. Scibona has his protagonist return from Vietnam, but makes it clear that Vietnam is still within him. "The trombonist, with only the slide and nothing to measure it by, hit note after uncanny



perfect note, invisible calculations precise as mortar fire: the powder charge, the tube, the parabolic shot that struck its distant mark."

Ultimately, *The Volunteer* is larger than the sum of its parts – gritty, determined, romantic, and laced with brutality. The story's competing elements come together and give the reader pause about the nature of family, a concept that, in Scibona's capable hands, soars beyond shared DNA and dinner tables.

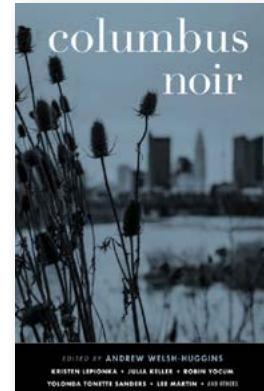
REVIEWED BY TOM WILLIAMS, OHIO NATIVE, WRITER, AND FORMER EDITOR OF MARION AND DELAWARE NEWSPAPERS

### Welsh-Huggins, Andrew, ed. *Columbus Noir*.

Akashic Books (Brooklyn, NY) 2020. PB \$15.95.

There's a town full of dangerous dames running shady deals with the help of their unwitting dupes. In this dark city, there are also good women gone bad, men desperate for one more chance, and cops who look the other way. It's gotta be NYC or the City of Angels, right?

Wrong. Capital city Columbus, Ohio, has a capital-N Noir heart.



Noir began with Dashiell Hammett's novel *The Maltese Falcon* and the subsequent classic film adaptation starring Humphrey Bogart. In Noir, men and women are equally agents of betrayal and have the potential for redemption – although frequently the female of the species etc. etc. etc. Noir is thick with moral ambiguity, and dead-end alleyways that turn out to be traps rather than escape routes.

Andrew Welsh-Huggins, author of the Andy Hayes mysteries published by Ohio University Press, has curated this Akashic Noir volume, a series that began in 2004 with *Brooklyn Noir*. The *Noir* series has since taken over not only the United States, but also the world with collections from Amsterdam to Zagreb and several stops in between.

As you read the stories in *Columbus Noir*, you'll see the city in a different light. Yes, James Thurber said that Columbus was the sort of place where anything was

likely to happen. But Thurber wasn't thinking of human trafficking, drug deals gone bad, marriages gone bad, friendships gone bad; the whole gamut of *just plain bad* and all within the borders of Franklin County.

Ohio's capital city is more than a wide spot at the intersection of I-70 and I-71, propped up by the insurance industry and a fanatical devotion to football. No, this Columbus is a place where a man realizes he lost his faith in his fellow man long ago in Lee Martin's "The Luckiest Man Alive," a story of suffering brought just to the brink. Or where violence engenders more punishment and heartache in Clintonville (no joke: Clintonville is not for sissies) in Tom Barlow's "Honor Guard." Economic anxiety finds its expression in the bitter world of real estate – especially combustible when sex gets tossed into the mix – in Kristen Lepionka's "Gun People" and Craig McDonald's "Curb Appeal."

Unsuspecting men don't stand a chance, by the way. The wife in Mercedes King's "An Agreeable Wife for a Suitable Husband" is not to be trifled with despite her obedient exterior. And woe betide the newcomer, like the protagonist in Nancy Zafris' "Foreign Study."

In this volume are offerings by well-known Ohio writers, multiple award winners, and skilled up-and-comers. The mini-bios in the back will help you find out more about this talented group. Be sure to look for their other works.

After reading the collection, if you find yourself safe in your suburban home on Sunday night with nothing worse ahead than Monday morning, then thank your lucky stars. And whatever you do, don't get cute. Crime might pay, but cute never does.

REVIEWED BY LESLIE BIRDWELL SHORTLIDGE, FORMER OHIOANA QUARTERLY EDITOR

## POETRY

### Borsenik, Dianne. *Raga for What Comes Next*.

Stubborn Mule Press (Devil's Elbow, MO) 2019. \$15.00.

At this year's Sun & Moon Festival in Yellow Springs, Dianne Borsenik was one of several poets reading her

poetry in the woods. Imagine hearing verse recited by water's edge, near the intersection of steep and flat trails, under a canopy of trees, so far off the grid that, apart from poetry, the world is silent. I had the unique experience to hear Borsenik read several poems from *Raga for What Comes Next* in this authentic manner. Borsenik frequently reads her works at events in Northeast Ohio. If you get a chance to hear her live, I highly recommend it.



The author includes important background to the title's key term at the beginning: "Raga: a melodic framework for improvisation" so the reader can understand the overall concept. While every poem may stem from improvisation, each also has a foundation in the auditory sound. It is apparent the author wrote and revised with a focused ear to having these poems be experienced aloud.

Borsenik's poetry book is divided into four sections, with names after four instruments: Sitar, Shehnai, Bansuri, and Tabla. Each section works individually as if it is a chapbook of related work, but the differences of the styles and lengths of poems combine in harmony as if in an extended play record album.

Two key takeaways from this book of poetry are her ease with titles and her fearless line breaks. Both strengths are demonstrated with "Train, Loud, Lonesome, Leaving Without Me." I wonder if Borsenik kept in mind that a train's sounds were the primary inspiration for rock n' roll, as the Rock Hall begins its general tour with this fact, before delving into the music. Either way, a train is also a symbol for a journey, for going beyond one's hometown. "*Me? I'll barefoot the rails / after they've cooled, // a balancing act of foolhardiness / and faith, caution left hanging // in the long morning, distant / whistle moonlighting as map*" (p. 15). The final three stanzas dance an improvised song.

Another skill Borsenik demonstrates is her mastery within short poems. "Sonar Readings" contains only forty-two words, but some skilled succinct lines. The favorites are unexpected images: "*release voices / from tangled nets. / Earth's blood is a hymn...*" (p. 17). "Scapular," another short poem mixes the abstract and

concrete, “*Tension/cloaks the vertebrae,/ worn like a commitment*” (p. 31).

Part III, the Bansuri section, stands out, as the longer poems mimic the way flute music drifts in unexpected ways. The first poem, “Luminaria (Meditations Before Kaddish),” is divided into ten sections and part IV stands out as one of the most vivid, and seems like a mantra for how Borsenik sees life: to live without regret, and to always stay present in the experience of the moment: “*When you hold the flame in your hand, you burn. There's no turning back. There never was*” (p. 39).

REVIEWED BY ANNE RUNDLE, POET AND TESTING CENTER COORDINATOR AT COLUMBUS STATE CC

### **Eisenberg, Susan. *Stanley's Girl.***

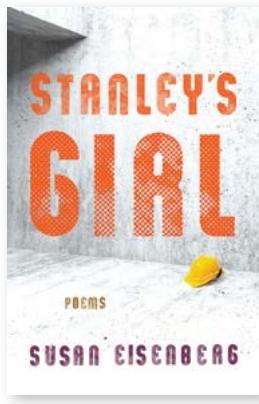
ILR Press (Ithaca, NY) 2018. PB \$14.95.

### **Gunter-Seymour, Kari. *Serving.***

Crisis Chronicles Press (Parma, OH) 2018. PB \$7.00.

Two powerful and unique Ohio writers have published recent poetry books with perfect timing in a culture hungry for thoughtful voices from marginalized communities. Their journeys in verse earn empathy and pave an honorable path for sincere discernment. Susan Eisenberg’s *Stanley's Girl* reflects on a woman’s experience in the male-dominated construction profession, while Kari Gunter-Seymour’s *Serving* reflects on a mother’s fear and anguish over her son’s absence and experience from military deployment. What both these poets are able to accomplish in many of their poems is the ability to sneak up on their readers. They start with nostalgia, sentiment, or benign observation and slowly twist to an uncomfortable American horror. The situations are disturbing. Their poems are chilling.

Eisenberg infected me with the chill right away with *Stanley's Girl's* early poems like “First Week Apprentice,” “Welcome,” “Guideposts,” and “Stanley’s Girl.” In “Welcome,” for example, Eisenberg begins the poem with whimsical first day blunders: “*Everything you thought you knew / must be relearned overnight. / How to walk. / Walk, not trip,*

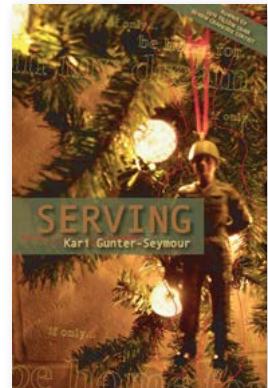


*over cords, 2x4s, / used coffee cups, concrete cores.*” By the end of the poem she is learning how to respond to someone who “*imitates your voice on the loudspeaker, / spraypaints Cunt on your Baker staging, / urinates in your hardhat.*” The journey of a woman’s need to connect was enlightening and heartbreaking.

The female worker’s vulnerability was most apparent in Eisenberg’s poem about the two Joe Millers. A woman observes the blue-collar life of men and recognizes their humanity and their dysfunction. I felt the frustration between the development of a personal relationship with an individual and the complication of that relationship when that same individual associates with the group mentality.

I haven’t read such vivid “work life” poems since Philip Levine. But lingering over Eisenberg’s poems is always a fear of death. That fear grows when Eisenberg writes poems about female Marines and army soldiers and moves closer to the powerful ending of *Stanley's Girl*.

The lens of military life continues to focus in Gunter-Seymour’s *Serving*. Full disclosure, I am a military veteran and a military veteran recalled to active duty after September 11, 2001. I was also once a trash collector. I have a respect and affection for Eisenberg’s poems if I can assume, which I want to do, that these blue-collar experiences are the poet’s personal experiences. Certainly Gunter-Seymour’s poems are also the first-hand experience of a mother. However, Gunter-Seymour boldly pens poems that imagine war and take a peak. I still can be stubborn about “can you write about it if you haven’t lived it?” Gunter-Seymour can. These are some of the best military poems, mother’s perspective or not, that I have ever read. *Serving* should be mandatory reading for military personnel of all the branches and their families. The poems have the ability to delve into deep meaningful conversations of intimate connection.



*Serving* begins with “Photo 1985,” which explores the images of the past that help define the bond between a mother and her son. The small book ends with “No Word from Kandahar,” a poem that invited me to

understand that the picture, the image, the memory isn't good enough anymore. Words are needed. Maybe a picture isn't always worth a thousand words. And in that invitation, Gunter-Seymour reminds me of the power of poetry itself. No poem in both books encapsulated the importance of poetry more than in Gunter-Seymour's "After the Farm, the Apartment on Hope Drive:" *"I flipped on the swag light / hanging over the kitchen table, / sat down to notebook and pen, / waiting for the next words to come. / Turns out the danger in the writing, / Son, is that you will remember / all you've worked so hard to erase."*

For both Eisenberg and Gunter-Seymour, their brave journey to live it and to write it not only sacrifices the erasure of their pain, but also the readers'. Turns out, the writing is so strong in *Stanley's Girl* and *Serving* that the danger in the reading is that you will remember – a danger I was willing to experience if reading these books meant reconciliation and becoming a better person.

REVIEWED BY J.M. GREEN, WRITER AND LIBRARIAN AT XAVIER UNIVERSITY

## YOUNG ADULT & MIDDLE GRADE

### Haddix, Margaret Peterson. *The Strangers (Greystone Secrets #1)*.

Katherine Tegen Books (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$17.99.

In Margaret Peterson Haddix's *The Strangers*, the first book in her new Greystone Secrets series, three siblings must rise above the roles they play in their family to discover that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts in order to save their mother.

An ordinary school day in Ohio ends with the usual race to the porch that happy-go-lucky Finn Greystone always wins, but life changes with the sliver of light allowed into the house with the opening of the door. Their family has a secret. A secret their mother has woven into their world with the finest thread. When three children in Arizona that have exactly the same names and birthdays as Chess, Emma, and Finn are kidnapped, that thread begins to unravel.



Kate Greystone reassures her children that their similarity to the kidnapped kids is a weird anomaly. She says her concern is merely for the family in Arizona. Being the oldest, Chess is the only sibling that can remember their father's death eight years ago. Now those memories of his mother's face on that tragic day flash back to him, lighting a spark of doubt. Enough doubt for him to eavesdrop on his mother's phone call later.

Things don't add up for logical and calculating daughter, Emma, either. She's the middle child and she also has an inkling they're in the middle of something more awful than the kidnapping of three children.

Finn, the youngest, is just hungry. He's not sure why the problem with those kids in Arizona had anything to do with why his afterschool snack wasn't ready in Ohio.

The next morning an emergency business trip drags their mom out of town. Now Chess, Emma, and Finn find themselves forced to trust the hospitality of a strange woman and her daughter, Natalie, the head of the Lip Gloss Girls.

A trip back to the Greystone's house leads to Finn's discovery – Mom left her cellphone behind. Then they find her computers. As clues lead to clues, Natalie gains the Greystone kids' confidence. Together, they follow their suspicions that Mom's business trip wasn't business. The clues lead to a hidden room that spins, a stash of cash, and a series of coded messages from Mom. As ciphers become clearer, the thread of the Greystone secret unwinds. The answer will shatter the siblings' perceptions of reality and reveal the ripple effect of their mother's decisions on all their worlds.

Written from the alternating perspectives of Finn, Emma, and Chess, Haddix creates flawed and relatable characters for a wide readership. This also plants the reader fully inside the family dynamics of the Greystone kids – their frustrations and skepticisms, but ultimately their love for each other. By overlapping key scenes, the multiple points of view masterfully create tension and suspense, allowing the reader to know something the other siblings do not. Unspoken and unanswered thoughts floating in each character's mind begs the reader to ask their own "what if?" questions.

Two criminal issues, the kidnapping and the possibility of domestic abuse, are dealt with in age-appropriate sensitivity. The kidnapping is handled mainly through

the Greystones's and Natalie's concern for the captive children's welfare. Domestic abuse is shown only through the need of women to find the courage to remove themselves from the danger and reach out for assistance. Nothing graphic. A reader with experience will be able to fill in the blanks, but one without will still feel the perils.

Ultimately, *The Strangers* is a sci-fi/fantasy meets *Young Sherlock Holmes* page-turner.

REVIEWED BY ANTHONY HOEHN, FATHER OF A BOOK-DEVOURING 9-YEAR-OLD AND SCBWI MEMBER

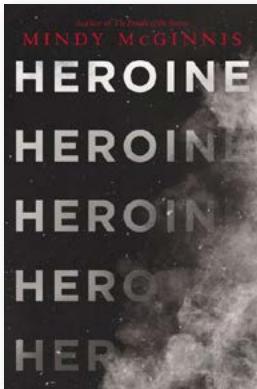
### McGinnis, Mindy. *Heroine*.

HarperCollins (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$17.99.

Mindy McGinnis has never been one to shy away from difficult topics, tackling the dark side of family and mental health in *This Darkness Mine* and sexual assault and vengeance in *The Female of the Species*. So, it should come as no surprise that in her latest YA novel, she turns her attention to the opioid crisis and the slippery slope of addiction with her trademark unflinching honesty and compassion.

With *Heroine*, McGinnis introduces us to Mickey Catalan, a high school softball star who's got one goal for her senior year: to win State and secure a college sports scholarship. That is, until a car accident derails her plans and leaves her with a hip injury that is described as a "Barbie doll having her leg popped out of the socket." Determined to start the season despite the three screws embedded in her hip, she embarks on a brutal rehab schedule that she hopes will get her life back on course. However, as Mickey pushes herself to edge of her limits to speed up her recovery time, her seemingly temporary reliance on Oxy becomes less innocent: She finds herself making riskier and riskier choices to get her next fix, leading to an addiction to heroin that has devastating consequences for her and those around her.

I think where McGinnis succeeds is in giving the opioid epidemic a face that teen readers can relate to, not the strangers they see on TV or in the news. Mickey could be any high schooler – an athlete, a sister, a friend – anyone



who just needs a little help to push through the pain and ends up addicted to the very pain killers that were meant to help. It's the small, seemingly harmless compromises that eventually add up and lead Mickey down a path that she swore she would never take – shooting up.

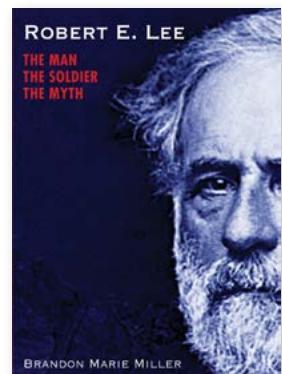
*Heroine* is a sober reminder of just how easily addiction can happen and how quickly that addiction can lead to serious repercussions and even accidental death. There is no neat and tidy bow to end Mickey's story – just the uncertainty that faces addicts on their road to recovery and the hope that readers will be left with a newfound empathy for those struggling with addiction.

REVIEWED BY PAULA GEGLEIN, JUVENILE SELECTOR FOR THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF CINCINNATI AND HAMILTON COUNTY AND READER OF YA BOOKS

### Miller, Brandon Marie. *Robert E. Lee: The Man, The Soldier, The Myth*.

Calkins Creek (Honesdale, PA) 2019. HC \$19.95.

This book is a fascinating biography of the most important Confederate General of the Civil War. It's an informative book for Northerners, for sadly, we're educated about the Civil War from a Northern perspective and learn little about the Southern generals. Miller explores the myths surrounding Lee, his political and personal beliefs – particularly about slavery – his role in the military from his earliest days as a West Point Cadet to his leaderships as the General of the Army of Northern Virginia, and most importantly, his accomplishments during peacetime as an engineer, surveyor, educator, and family man.



The centerpiece of this book, indeed the second half, is all about Lee as General. A secondary theme of the book is Lee's role in the US Army Corps of Engineers, his diligence in enhancing education at West Point and later at Washington (and Lee) College. His drive for military excellence makes him stand out among military men of the nineteenth century.

Opening with a series of chapters about Lee's ancestry which describe his illustrious grandfather Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee III, a Revolutionary War hero with feet

of clay, and equally his maternal grandmother Martha Custis (Washington) and grandfather Daniel Parke Custis, also of great renown. While shedding light on his heritage, Miller is careful to describe how Robert E. Lee grew up with a strict moral code imbued by his mother and from the rigors of West Point.

Miller's writing is fluid and easily understandable, perfect for YA and adult readers curious about military men and their role in the development and expansion of the United States. *Robert E. Lee: The Man, The Soldier, The Myth* was designed to enlighten and inform the curious reader and the nascent military history buff.

REVIEWED BY MIRIAM KAHN, LIBRARIAN, COLUMBUS, OH

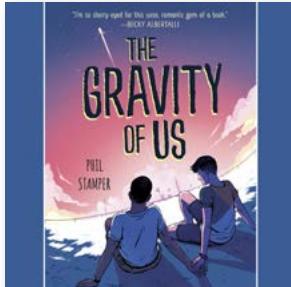
### **Stamper, Phil. *The Gravity of Us*.**

Bloomsbury YA (London, UK) 2020. HC \$17.99.

Life can be messy and difficult when you're seventeen-years-old, but luckily Cal seems to have it all figured out. He has a successful social media following, a highly sought-after summer internship at Buzzfeed lined up, and his best friend lives just steps away in their Brooklyn apartment building.

As they spend their days scouring thrift shops to feed Cal's cassette addiction, it seems as if his parent's rocky relationship is Cal's biggest challenge. That is, until his pilot father is selected to train as the last astronaut for a highly publicized mission to Mars. Suddenly, Cal's whole world is changing. He and his family must move to Houston, leaving everything they know behind in New York City. Cal is less than thrilled about the move. But when he meets Leon, another "Astrokid" living in Houston due to his parent's involvement in the mission, he suddenly feels himself falling head over heels faster than a shooting star.

*The Gravity of Us* is a starry-eyed romance and a charming, tender debut from Phil Stamper. Throughout the novel, Cal deals with the kind of challenges that many teens face in high school – such as uncontrollable changes, first love, and complicated friendships. Cal's versions of these common issues are intensified and accelerated, but the content doesn't suffer any loss in relatability because of it. The dialogue is realistic, and



the prose is in turn both funny and poignant. Cal is a very believable teenager in today's world and tells the story with a narrative full of cultural references that make the story come alive and fill it with relevance.

The novel shines the most in its characters. Cal is a well-meaning, ambitious, and highly intelligent protagonist – though that doesn't mean he's without his flaws. His tendency to be self-centered is a trait he must face in himself, particularly where it relates to his parents and his best friend, Deb. Leon and Kat – the "Astrokids" who Cal befriends soon after moving to Houston – are also multi-dimensional, layered characters. The theme that returns time and again is one of self-growth and acceptance – both in the teenaged characters and their relationships, as well as those of the adults. There is a great deal of introspection and maturity displayed as they learn about themselves and others, and this especially goes for the budding romance between Cal and Leon.

*The Gravity of Us* is a refreshing and unique take on the teen romance that manages to pack an impressive amount of story in a well-paced narrative that never seems slow or bogged down despite how many balls are in the air. Besides the romance aspect, the novel also offers an interesting and well-researched take on the future of the space program and an eventual mission to Mars, as well as highlighting the importance of upkeep of all relationships, romantic and otherwise.

REVIEWED BY MORGAN PETERS, PROGRAM COORDINATOR, OHIOANA LIBRARY

### **CHILDREN'S**

#### **Hoeffer, Kate. Illus. by Sarah Jacoby. *Rabbit and the Motorbike*.**

Chronicle Books (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$17.99.

*Rabbit and the Motorbike* travels through the lives of two friends and shows how relationships leave their lasting mark even when their roads diverge.

Rabbit's friend, Dog, has a motorbike and rides off on howling great adventures. Dreams of the rumbling road fill his nights. From the safety of his wheat field, Rabbit's days are filled with the vivid tales Dog shares. Until the day Dog no longer comes. Only his motorbike

does. Rabbit tries to talk to the motorbike, but the only language it knows is the song of its motor and the hum of traffic. Rabbit is scared. He misses his friend. Why would Dog leave him the motorbike?

He's never been out of

the wheat field. When the summer sun shines and the open road calls, will Dog's gift of his motorbike and the memories it carries be enough for Rabbit to answer and brave his own adventures? Time to put a paw on the kickstarter and find out.

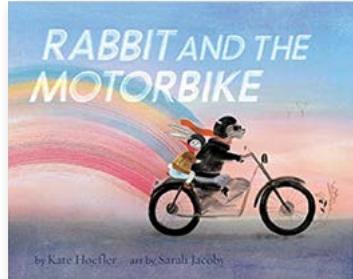
Hoefer's specific descriptions of Rabbit and Dog make the characters real and relatable, while her open-ended portions of the text allow for personal experience to be brought in. The way both are woven together throughout the story pulls the reader/listener closer, allowing them to feel Rabbit's struggle, fears, and most importantly, his hopes after Dog is gone.

The setting is active in showing how Rabbit views his world and how he is drawn into it. The illustrations by Sarah Jacoby work beautifully to express the contrasts.

Although the death of Dog may deter some from wanting to read this book, Hoefer is ever so sensitive with the writing for this scene. Dog is described as old and sick, then one day he stops coming to visit Rabbit. Death is never explicitly stated.

Like in life, we may lose those closest to our hearts, but their memories continue to shape our lives. In the same way *Ida, Always* by Caron Levis handles life after loss, *Rabbit and the Motorbike* is a wonderful journey that urges us to live and to share our love with others so they too may pass it on.

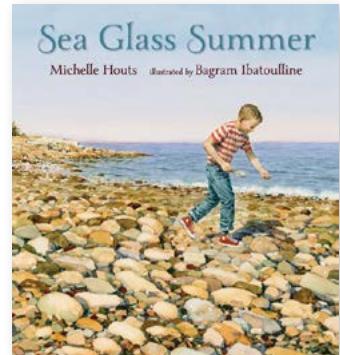
REVIEWED BY ANTHONY HOEHN, AVID MOTORBIKE RIDER AND SCBWI MEMBER



**Houts, Michelle. Illus. by Bagram Ibatoulline. *Sea Glass Summer*.**

Candlewick Press (Somerville, MA) 2019. PB \$16.99.

When Thomas begins the summer at his grandmother's seaside cottage, she gives him a magnifying glass that belonged to his grandfather. Thomas uses it to inspect shells and tiny wonders on the beach, but a peculiar green fragment captures his attention the most. His grandmother explains that the green piece is called "sea glass," made from glass dropped in the sea long ago that turned smooth and cloudy from being tossed in the waves and sand. She tells him, "Your grandfather used to say that each piece of sea glass has a story all its own."



Thomas spends the summer hunting for sea glass and stories from the past. Then the unthinkable happens: his grandfather's magnifying glass breaks and the pieces are swept into the ocean. But is it the end of his sea glass adventure, or the beginning of a new story?

*Sea Glass Summer* is a heartwarming tale of family, history, and possibility. The past and present come together to tell the full story, alternating with each part of the tale. Thomas' days searching along the beach at his grandmother's side are shown with bright and colorful illustrations. When history comes to life in Thomas' dreams, the illustrations take on a monotone palette and the text becomes italicized and framed, giving these sections the feeling as if one is peering into the past through a scrapbook or photo album. Together, the lively present and muted past gives the reader a full picture of Thomas and his family, ending with a peek into the boy's future, too.

*Sea Glass Summer* is a perfect book to explore the concepts of interconnectedness and generational bonds, encouraging the reader to imagine what stories the objects in their own lives might tell.

REVIEWED BY KATHRYN POWERS, OHIOANA LIBRARY OFFICE MANAGER AND SOCIETY OF CHILDREN'S BOOK WRITERS AND ILLUSTRATORS VOLUNTEER

# Book List

The following books were added to Ohioana's collection between August and December, 2019. Look for them at your local library or bookstore!

## NONFICTION

Banyas, Susan Grace. *The Hillsboro Story: A Kaleidoscope History of an Integration Battle in My Hometown*. Spuyten Duyvil (Brooklyn, NY) 2019. PB \$18.00. *The Hillsboro Story* is set in the writer's hometown, near the Mason Dixon Line, during a powerful turning point in America, when the Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954 set the stage for school integration. A single childhood memory - a protest outside her classroom window - opens into a multi-voiced tale that brings to light the courageous people who fought for integration and equal protection in the early days of the Civil Rights Movement, at a time when Cold War tensions were at their peak. Anchored by the wisdom of real people who lived through the experience, *The Hillsboro Story* reveals what hides in the shadows of the culture, then and now, and the deep nature of memory as a tool for empowerment and healing.

Cryer, Dan. *Forgetting My Mother: A Blues from the Heartland*. Parafine Press (Cleveland, OH) 2019. PB \$17.95. When journalist Dan Cryer was just eight, his mother unexpectedly died. In their grief, he and his siblings shut out all memories of their beloved Pauline. In this haunting memoir, Cryer recreates his quest to

discover this gentle mystery woman, her small-town midwestern milieu, and how this haunting absence has shaped his emotional life.

Driver, Cady. *Extraordinary: Stories of Adopting Children with Down Syndrome*. JPV Press (Winesburg, OH) 2019. PB \$19.95. *Extraordinary: Stories of Adopting Children With Down Syndrome* will introduce you to thirteen families who said "YES!" to the most rewarding journey of their lives. Inside these pages, you will catch a glimpse of the struggles, the successes, and the unspeakable joy they experienced as they welcomed a child with Down syndrome into their forever family. It also includes a statement of "We Believe..." listing the many reasons that children with Down syndrome are more alike than different from a typical child. A Resource Guide will help you find general information such as "How to Adopt" and "Financial Assistance Organizations." If you're not able to adopt but would like to help, there are resources in "Orphan Care" to guide you to what best suits your situation.

Fleming, Deborah. *Resurrection of the Wild: Meditations on Ohio's Natural Landscape*. Kent State University Press (Kent, OH) 2019. HC \$24.95. An impassioned call for recognizing and preserving the ecological wonders of the Allegheny Plateau. Yosemite National Park, Louisiana's bayou, the rocky coasts of New England, the desert Southwest - America's more dramatic locations are frequently celebrated for their natural beauty, but far less has

been written about Ohio's unique and beautiful environment. Author Deborah Fleming, who has lived in rural Ohio and cared for its land for decades, shares fourteen interrelated essays, blending her own experiences with both scientific and literary research. *Resurrection of the Wild* discusses both natural and human histories as it focuses on the Allegheny Plateau and hill country in Ohio's eastern counties. These meditations delve into life on Fleming's farm, the impacts of the mining and drilling industries, fox hunting, homesteading families, the lives of agriculturalists Louis Bromfield and John Chapman (better known as Johnny Appleseed), and Ohio's Amish community. Fleming finds that our very concept of freedom must be redefined to include preservation and respect for the natural world. Ultimately, *Resurrection of the Wild* becomes a compelling argument for the importance of ecological preservation in Ohio, and Fleming's perspective will resonate with readers both within and beyond this "forgotten" state's borders.

Dorr, Christina, and Liz Deskins. *LGBTQAI+ Books for Children and Teens*. ALA Editions (Chicago, IL) 2018. PB \$45.00.

There is a rich and varied body of literature for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, asexual/allied and intersexed young people, which can function as a mirror for LGBTQAI+ individuals and as a window for others. This resource for librarians who work with children and teens not only surveys the best in LGBTQAI+ lit but, just as importantly, offers

guidance on how to share it in ways that encourage understanding and acceptance among parents, school administrators, and the wider community. Helping to fill a gap in serving this population, this guide gives school librarians, children's, and YA librarians the guidance and tools they need to confidently share these books with the patrons they support.

Ford, Lyn, and Sherry Norfolk. *Speak Peace: Words of Wisdom, Work, & Wonder*. Parkhurst Brothers (Marion, MI) 2019. PB \$15.00.

Lyn Ford and Sherry Norfolk have studied social distrust, disturbance, and dysfunction throughout their professional lives, which has led them to compile this anthology of peacemaking tools, stories, and interviews.

Hosier, Erin. *Don't Let Me Down: A Memoir*. Atria Books (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$26.00.

Erin Hosier's coming-of-age was full of contradiction. Born into the turbulent 1970s, she was raised in rural Ohio by lapsed hippies who traded 1960s rock 'n' roll for 1950s-era Christian hymns. Her mother's newfound faith was rooted in a desire to manage her husband's mood swings, which could alternately fill the house with music or with violence. All the while, Jack was larger than life to his adoring daughter. Full of conflict, their complex relationship set the tone for three decades of Erin's relationships with men; the Beatles provided the soundtrack. Jack bonded with Erin over their iconic songs, even as they inspired her to question authority—both his and others'. *Don't Let Me Down* is about a brave girl trying to navigate family secrets and tragedies

and escape from small-town small-mindedness. It is a searing and often funny exploration of how women first see themselves through the lens of a parent's love, and of the ties that bind us to our childhood heroes, who ultimately lead us to ask that most profound of questions: Is love really all you need?

Hunter, Bob. *Players, Teams, and Stadium Ghosts: Bob Hunter on Sports*. Ohio University Press (Athens, OH) 2019. PB \$24.95. In *Players, Teams, and Stadium Ghosts*, sportswriter Bob Hunter has assembled a Hall of Fame collection of his best writing from the *Columbus Dispatch*. Fans will encounter some of the biggest names in sports and relive great moments from games played by amateurs and pros. They'll encounter forgotten players and teams that struggled. Hunter shows us LeBron James when he was a fifteen-year-old high school freshman, already capturing the world's attention; twenty-year-old Derek Jeter's meteoric rise through the minors, including the Columbus Clippers; a strange encounter with Pete Rose hustling frozen pizzas; and the excitement of watching future WNBA star Katie Smith dominate a Columbus Quest championship game. Hunter consistently uses a personal touch to take readers beyond the final scores and the dazzle of lights. These are the people behind the athletes. They're remembered for how they played, but Hunter reminds us who they were.

Kachuba, John. *Shapeshifters: A History*. Reaktion Books (London, UK) 2019. HC \$22.50.

There is something about a shapeshifter – a person who can transform into an animal – that

captures our imagination; that causes us to want to howl at the moon, or flit through the night like a bat. Werewolves, vampires, demons, and other weird creatures appeal to our animal nature, our "dark side," our desire to break free of the bonds of society and proper behavior. Real or imaginary, shapeshifters lurk deep in our psyches and remain formidable cultural icons. The myths, magic, and meaning surrounding shapeshifters are brought vividly to life in John B. Kachuba's compelling and original cultural history. Rituals in early cultures worldwide seemingly allowed shamans, sorcerers, witches, and wizards to transform at will into animals and back again. Today, there are millions of people who believe that shapeshifters walk among us and may even be world leaders. Featuring a fantastic and ghoulish array of examples from history, literature, film, TV, and computer games, *Shapeshifters* explores our secret desire to become something other than human.

Kasich, John. *It's Up to Us: Ten Little Ways We Can Bring About Big Change*. Hanover Square Press (Toronto, Ontario, Canada) 2019. HC \$19.99.

John Kasich has walked the corridors of power both in politics, as a former leader of Congress, governor of Ohio, presidential candidate, and in the private sector, as an in-demand public speaker, best-selling author and a strategic advisor to businesses and large nonprofits. Yet he's seen that the most powerful movements have started from the bottom up. Rather than waiting on Washington, the solutions happen once we become leaders in our own lives and communities. The strength and resilience of our

nation lies in each of us. That's what this book is about. In *It's Up to Us*, Kasich shares the ten little ways we each can bring about big change. Taken together, they chart a path for each to follow as we look to live a life bigger than ourselves. Taken one-by-one, they can help to lift us from a place of outrage or complacency or helplessness and move us closer to our shared American dream.

Ketteler, Judi. ***Would I Lie to You?***  
***The Amazing Power of Being Honest in a World That Lies.***

Citadel Press (New York, NY) 2020.  
 HC \$26.00.

We all want the truth, don't we? In fact, we demand it. We divorce spouses who withhold it. We insist our children practice it. We're hurt when our friends don't divulge it. We're incensed by politicians who invent it. But when it comes to our own behavior, how often do we transgress? Out of diplomacy, kindness, sympathy, and privacy we don't always tell the truth. Yet we often barely notice. So, what happens when we do notice? When we truly focus on the decisions we're making around honesty? When we view our entire life through the lens of honesty? Award-winning journalist and New York Times contributor Judi Ketteler looked at her Facebook page and saw a content mother, a generous friend and sister, a good daughter, and a wife with a happy marriage. It wasn't quite the whole story though. In thinking about all the truths she wasn't revealing, Judi realized that the line between truth and deception was beginning to blur. How often had she herself paltered, exaggerated, concealed, side-stepped, or spun the truth? To answer that question, Judi started her "Honesty Journal."

She set out to get to the bottom of her complicated relationship with honesty and confronted her perennial fear of speaking the truth in social situations, among friends, in the workplace, with her kids – and finally, inside her complicated marriage. Blending her personal journey with the latest research into the psychology of deception, *Would I Lie to You?* is a timely consideration of the joys and pains of truth in a world that seems committed to lying.

Kuhlman, Nan. ***Nontraditional: Life Lessons from a Community College.*** Annorlunda Books (San Diego, CA) 2020. PB \$14.99. Nan Kuhlman reworked her plans for her career – and her life – several times to support the needs of her family. Then a chance encounter gives her another chance to pursue her dream of teaching college students. Kuhlman begins teaching writing classes at her local community college where many of the students are "nontraditional" – returning service members, laid off factory workers, and a range of other people who never thought they might be "college material." In this collection of linked essays, Kuhlman introduces us to her students, the lessons she taught, and the lessons she learned along the way.

Louis, Matthew J. ***Mission Transition: Navigating the Opportunities and Obstacles to Your Post-Military Career.*** HarperCollins Leadership (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$27.99. Every year, about a quarter of a million veterans leave the military – most of whom are grossly unprepared for the transition. These servicemembers have developed

incredible leadership, problem-solving, and practical skills that are underutilized once they reach the civilian world, a detriment to both themselves and society. Well-intentioned Transition Assistance Programs and other support structures within the armed forces often leave veterans fending for themselves. And the mission-first culture of the military results in servicemembers focusing on their active duty roles in the year leading up to their separation, leaving them little time to adequately prepare to join the civilian world. *Mission Transition* guides military personnel through the entire process of making a successful move into civilian professional life. Each chapter includes advice from other veterans, illustrations of key concepts, summaries, and suggested resources.

Maciejunes, Nanette V., and M. Melissa Wolfe, eds. ***Reflections: The American Collection of the Columbus Museum of Art.*** The Columbus Museum of Art/Ohio University Press (Columbus/Athens, OH) 2019. PB \$55.00.

*Reflections: The American Collection of the Columbus Museum of Art* adds a novel and provocative element to the library of art museum collection catalogs. In the traditional manner, *Reflections* features selected works – more than 125 – from the museum's collection, accompanied by concise essays by scholars of art who reflect on and respond to the distinctive aspects of each work. To this customary approach, the editors have added what they term intersections essays: an examination of a well-known work of art from the differing perspectives of two authors – most of whom are

not art historians. For instance, acclaimed writer Joyce Carol Oates provides her perspective on George Bellows and is joined by Laurie Bellows Booth, an objects conservator and the painter's granddaughter. The book includes ten of these compelling essays, including contributions by such authors as Adam Gopnik and Alan Trachtenberg.

Millard, Candice. *The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey*. Anchor Books (New York, NY) 2005. PB \$17.00. The first book by multi-award winning author Candice Millard. *The River of Doubt* – it is a black, uncharted tributary of the Amazon that snakes through one of the most treacherous jungles in the world. Indians armed with poison-tipped arrows haunt its shadows; piranhas glide through its waters; boulder-strewn rapids turn the river into a roiling cauldron. After his humiliating election defeat in 1912, Roosevelt set his sights on the most punishing physical challenge he could find, the first descent of an unmapped, rapids-choked tributary of the Amazon. Together with his son Kermit and Brazil's most famous explorer, Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon, Roosevelt accomplished a feat so great that many at the time refused to believe it. In the process, he changed the map of the western hemisphere forever. Along the way, Roosevelt and his men faced an unbelievable series of hardships, losing their canoes and supplies to punishing whitewater rapids, and enduring starvation, Indian attack, disease, drowning, and a murder within their own ranks. Three men died, and Roosevelt was brought to the brink of suicide. *The*

*River of Doubt* brings alive these extraordinary events in a powerful nonfiction narrative thriller that happens to feature one of the most famous Americans who ever lived.

Money, Nicholas P. *The Selfish Ape: Human Nature and Our Path to Extinction*. Reaktion Press (London, UK) 2019. HC \$20.00. Weaving together stories of science and sociology, *The Selfish Ape* offers a refreshing response to common fantasies about the ascent of humanity. Rather than imagining modern humans as a species with godlike powers, or *Homo deus*, Nicholas P. Money recasts us as *Homo narcissus* – paragons of self-absorption. This exhilarating story offers an immense sweep of modern biology, leading readers from earth's unexceptional location in the cosmos to the story of our microbial origins and the innerworkings of the human body. It explores human genetics, reproduction, brain function, and aging, creating an enlightened view of man as a brilliantly inventive, yet self-destructive animal. *The Selfish Ape* is a book about human biology, the intertwined characteristics of our greatness and failure, and the way that we have plundered the biosphere. Written in a highly accessible style, it is a perfect read for those interested in science, human history, sociology, and the environment.

Runzo, Sandra. *"Theatricals of Day": Emily Dickinson and Nineteenth-Century American Popular Culture*. University of Massachusetts Press (Amherst, MA) 2019. PB \$27.95. In her own private ways, Emily Dickinson participated in the

popular entertainments of her time. On her piano, she performed popular musical numbers, many from the tradition of minstrelsy, and at theaters, she listened to famous musicians, including Jenny Lind and, likely, the Hutchinson Family Singers. In reading the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *Springfield Republican*, and *Harper's*, she kept up with the roiling conflicts over slavery and took in current fiction and verse. And, she enjoyed the occasional excursion to the traveling circus and appreciated the attractions of the dime museum. Whatever her aspirations were regarding participation in a public arena, the rich world of popular culture offered Dickinson a view of both the political and social struggles of her time and the amusements of her contemporaries. "Theatricals of Day" explores how popular culture and entertainments are seen, heard, and felt in Dickinson's writing. In accessible prose, Sandra Runzo proposes that the presence of popular entertainment in Dickinson's life and work opens our eyes to new dimensions of the poems, illuminating the ways in which the poet was attentive to strife and conflict, to amusement, and to play.

Stortz, Diane. *Encountering God's Heart for You: 365 Devotions from Genesis Through Revelation*. Bethany House (Minneapolis, MN) 2019. HC \$17.99.

God put the Bible together for humans, and he wants them to understand and know him better. But sometimes one can get lost in the details and miss the big picture. The Bible is more than just a collection of wisdom, instructions, and history. It's one

unified story of the incredible love of God. *Encountering God's Heart for You* takes the reader on a daily journey through the full narrative of Scripture in a year. And in the process, it will draw the reader nearer to God as they discover his love and compassion. It won't cover every verse, or even every chapter, in the Bible, but by the time one is through, one will have a strong grasp of what the Bible is all about. Reading Scripture isn't just a way to collect information or check something off a to-do list. This book will attempt to bring the reader into God's presence to better understand the Bible's story of love, sacrifice, and redemption as he draws them to himself.

Sweeney, Nita. *Depression Hates a Moving Target: How Running with My Dog Brought Me Back from the Brink*. Mango Publishing (Coral Gables, FL) 2019. PB \$18.99. It's never too late to chase your dreams. Before she discovered running, Nita Sweeney was forty-nine years old, chronically depressed, occasionally manic, and unable to jog for more than 60 seconds at a time. Using exercise, Nita discovered an inner strength she didn't know she possessed, and with the help of her canine companion, she found herself on the way to completing her first marathon. In her memoir, Sweeney shares how she overcame emotional and physical challenges to finish the race and come back from the brink. There's hope and help on the track: Anyone who has struggled with depression knows the ways the mind can defeat you. However, it is possible to transform yourself with the power of running. You may learn that you can endure more than

you think, and that there's no other therapy quite like pavement beneath your feet.

Thomson, Cindy. *Celtic Song: From the Traditions of Ireland, Scotland, England, and Wales*. 7th & Cherry (Pensacola, FL) 2019. PB \$8.99.

The Celts have always been a people of songs. Stories, legends, and wise sayings were better remembered when put to music. While the melodies may have faded, the wisdom of these songs still rises from mountain, valley, and bog to lift the spirit and encourage the modern wayfarer. While music has always been an integral part of the lives of the people of the British Isles and the diaspora around the world, an exploration of why this is so has seldom been explored.

Weibel, Betty. *Little Victories: A True Story of the Healing Power of Horses*. Brown Dog Books (Cleveland, OH) 2019. PB \$19.99. Debbie Gadus was fulfilling her childhood dream of working in the horse business and living on her own when the riding arena roof collapsed on her and a young student during an extreme winter snowstorm. Rescue workers dug her out, doctors saved her life, and therapists guided her through rehab and into her new life as a paraplegic living in her parents' home. This is the true inspirational story of how horses led a young woman back to her dream, and how disability enabled her to discover abilities she never knew she possessed. Debbie's story intersects with that of a small therapeutic horseback riding center for disabled persons that would go on to become one of the nation's leading facilities. *Little Victories: A True Story of*

*the Healing Power of Horses* takes readers into the world of therapeutic riding and the little victories Debbie experiences as she learns to ride again, teach others with disabilities from her wheelchair, and develop a new carriage driving program for those who can't ride. In time, a quiet and reserved woman would gain confidence, becoming a leader and advocate for people with disabilities.

## ABOUT OHIO/OHIOAN

*The Columbus Renaissance Lookbook: A Look Back to Look Forward*. Greater Columbus Arts Council (Columbus, OH) 2019. HC \$35.00.

Columbus, Ohio celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Harlem Renaissance with a vivacious citywide celebration that touched thousands of lives through art, inspiration and collaboration. Experience the movement that continues to sweep across this city by purchasing the stunning commemorative lookbook. This 200-page book documents the collective journey of our city through rich photography and compelling stories. The narrative carries the reader from the early 20th century all the way through our vision for the future of African American creative expression in Columbus.

Bachelor, Bob. *The Bourbon King: The Life and Crimes of George Remus, Prohibition's Evil Genius*. Diversion Books (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$27.99.

On the 100th anniversary of The Volstead Act comes the epic, definitive story of the man who cracked the Prohibition system, became one of the world's richest criminal masterminds, and helped

inspire *The Great Gatsby*. Love, murder, political intrigue, mountains of cash, and rivers of bourbon - the tale of George Remus is a grand spectacle and a lens into the dark heart of Prohibition. Yes, Congress gave teeth to Prohibition in October 1919, but the law didn't stop George Remus from amassing a fortune that would be worth billions of dollars today. As one Jazz Age journalist put it, "Remus was to bootlegging what Rockefeller was to oil." Author Bob Batchelor breathes life into the largest bootlegging operation in America – greater than that of Al Capone – and a man considered the best criminal defense lawyer of his era. Remus bought an empire of distilleries on Kentucky's "Bourbon Trail" and used his other profession, as a pharmacist, to profit off legal loopholes. He spent millions bribing officials in the Harding Administration, and he created a roaring lifestyle that epitomized the Jazz Age over which he ruled. That is, before he came crashing down in one of the most sensational murder cases in American history: a cheating wife, the G-man who seduced her and put Remus in jail, and the plunder of a Bourbon Empire. Remus murdered his wife in cold-blood and then shocked a nation winning his freedom based on a condition he invented – temporary maniacal insanity.

Bourdon, Jeffrey Normand. *From Garfield to Harding: The Success of Midwestern Front Porch Campaigns*. Kent State University Press (Kent, OH) 2019. HC \$29.95. In 1880, James Garfield decided to try something new: rather than run the typical passive campaign for president, he would welcome voters to his farm. By the end of

the campaign, thousands of people – including naturalized voters, African Americans, women, men from various occupations, and young voters – traveled to Garfield's home, listened to him speak, shook hands, met his family, and were invited inside. The press reported the interactions across the country. Not only did Garfield win, but he started a new campaign technique that then carried three other Republicans to the presidency. Benjamin Harrison followed suit in 1888, and his crowds dwarfed Garfield's as Indianapolis exploded with hundreds of thousands of visitors. Eight years later, William McKinley ran the most famous front porch campaign from his hometown of Canton, Ohio, with around 750,000 Americans traveling down those streets – including miners' unions, women's suffrage groups, and Confederate soldiers to their Union counterparts. Finally, Warren Harding continued the tradition in 1920 and won by a 60 percent popular majority. Using a technique very evident today, Republican campaign managers quickly realized that merchandising their candidate as a brand generated much support. After Harding, presidential candidates began to travel the country extensively themselves to speak personally to the American people.

Carroll, Tim. *World War II Akron*. The History Press (Charleston, SC) 2019. PB \$21.99. When World War II engulfed the nation, the men and women of Akron dutifully played their part in the epic struggle. Keyes Beech ducked grenades as marines raised the American flag at on Iwo Jima. Newspaper magnate John S. Knight watched the Japanese surrender on

the USS Missouri just five months after his son was killed in Germany. On the homefront, Goodyear manufactured blimps used to hunt down Nazi submarines, and noted *Beacon Journal* cartoonist Web Brown pledged his talent and his pen to boosting morale at home and abroad. Replete with more than one hundred images, including many of Brown's wartime drawings, this thrilling account by local author Tim Carroll recalls all that Akron gave for freedom.

Grabowski, John J. Photographs by Lauren R. Packini. *Cleveland A to Z: An Essential Compendium for Visitors and Residents Alike*. Black Squirrel Books (Kent, OH) 2019. PB \$29.95.

Cities around the globe, whether large or small, have characteristics that create a particular identity. So what about Cleveland? What are its nuances, its images? In addressing that question, *Cleveland A to Z* is not a typical city guide. Rather than concentrating solely on the usual topics – landmarks, restaurants, shopping, and notable facts – this guide touches on deeper themes related to Cleveland's people, places, stories, and events. These seventy-two short articles reveal details about the city's rich history, while also hinting at the issues, attitudes, and even the quirks that define Cleveland's character. *Cleveland A to Z* truly serves as an entry point for a fuller exploration of the city's history. Originally released as part of the Western Reserve Historical Society's 150th anniversary celebration, this book is evidence of the Historical Society's outstanding and nationally significant collections. Almost every historical photo in this volume derives from

the archives of the Society. Those collections represent a trust for the community – an essential service to students, scholars, family historians, and old and new Clevelanders.

Hanna, Eric. *Fight to the End: A True Story of Determination.*

Warren Publishing (Charlotte, NC) 2019. PB \$15.95.

Ever since he was a kid growing up in Youngstown, Ohio, Eric Hanna knew he was born to play basketball. Despite setbacks and criticism from all angles, he never stopped practicing, always worked to improve his game, and learned about true focus and commitment along the way. In *Fight to the End*, Eric shares his journey from an awkward nine-year-old basketball hopeful; to a scrawny but promising high school athlete; to a 6'7", award-winning walk-on player for the Ohio State University. Eric's coming-of-age story is one of perseverance, dedication, and redefining glory through the lens of college basketball.

Hinds, Conrade C. *Lost Circuses of Ohio.* The History Press

(Charleston, SC) 2019. PB \$21.99.

The nineteenth century was the golden age of the circus in Ohio. Before the Ringling brothers became synonymous with the American circus, Cincinnati's John Robinson and the Sells brothers of Columbus wowed audiences with stunning equestrian feats and aerial exploits. For good measure, the Sells brothers threw in a sharpshooting show with a young Ohio woman by the name of Annie Oakley. The Walter L. Main Circus of Geneva and a number of smaller shows presented their own unique spectacles with exotic animals and daring acrobats. But for

all the fun and games, Ohio's circus industry was serious business. As competition intensified, advertising wars erupted and acquisitions began. Eventually, Ringling Brothers swallowed many of these circuses one by one, and they dropped out of memory. Author Conrade C. Hinds brings this fascinating piece of Ohio show business back into the spotlight.

Heffron, Joe, and Jack Heffron. *Classic Reds: The 50 Greatest Games in Cincinnati Reds History.*

Black Squirrel Books (Kent, OH) 2019. PB \$16.99.

Choosing the fifty greatest games is hard to do; ranking them is even harder. Now every Reds fan can relive memories of baseball before and after the Big Red Machine, debate about these choices, or make a list of their own. Highlighting these moments is a unique way of telling the great story of the Cincinnati Reds. While many fans will know about Frank Robinson, Pete Rose, Johnny Bench, and Tony Perez, how many will remember names like Bumpus, Bubbles, and Noodles, who each had their moments of glory in a Reds uniform? It's easy for players and moments to disappear in a history that spans 150 years, but baseball roots run deep in Reds country. *Classic Reds* keeps those roots strong.

Jackson, Zac. *100 Things Browns Fans Should Know & Do Before They Die.* Triumph Books (Chicago, IL) 2019. PB \$16.95.

Most Browns fans have taken in a game at FirstEnergy Stadium, remember the way they felt when it was announced that Cleveland was getting back the Browns, and are psyched to see Odell Beckham

Jr. and Jarvis Landry lighting up scoreboards together. But only real fans know the exact number of Joe Thomas' consecutive snaps streak, remember who the Browns were playing when Jerome Harrison rushed for 286 yards, or have barked with the Dawg Pound. Featuring traditions, records, and lore, this lively, detailed book explores the personalities, events, and facts every Cleveland Browns fan should know. Whether you were there for the rise of Bernie Kosar or are a more recent supporter of Baker Mayfield, these are the 100 things every fan needs to know and do in their lifetime. Beat reporter Zac Jackson has collected every essential piece of Browns knowledge and trivia, as well as must-do activities, and ranks them all from 1 to 100, providing an entertaining and easy-to-follow checklist as you progress on your way to fan superstardom.

Meyers, David, and Elise Meyers Walker. *Historic Black Settlements of Ohio.* The History Press

(Charleston, SC) 2020. PB \$23.99.

In the years leading up to the Civil War, Ohio had more African American settlements than any other state. Owing to a common border with several slave states, it became a destination for people of color seeking to separate themselves from slavery. Despite these communities having populations that sometimes numbered in the hundreds, little is known about most of them, and by the beginning of the twentieth century, nearly all had lost their ethnic identities as the original settlers died off and their descendants moved away. Save for scattered cemeteries and an occasional house or church, they have all but been erased from

Ohio's landscape. Father-daughter coauthors David Meyers and Elise Meyers Walker piece together the stories of more than forty of these black settlements.

Oler, Andy. *Old-Fashioned Modernism: Rural Masculinity and Midwestern Literature*. Louisiana State University Press (Baton Rouge, LA) 2019. HC \$45.00. In *Old-Fashioned Modernism*, Andy Oler explores how midwestern literature produces specific forms of regional modernity through male protagonists who both fulfill and resist traditional American narratives of economic advancement, spatial experience, and gender roles. Focusing on images of men from the rural Midwest who face the tensions between agricultural production and mass industrialization, Oler examines novels by Sherwood Anderson, William Cunningham, Langston Hughes, Wright Morris, and Dawn Powell, as well as the poetry of Lorine Niedecker. By reading literary representations of the Midwest alongside artifacts of material culture from the region, *Old-Fashioned Modernism* demonstrates how midwestern regionalism negotiates the anxieties and dominant narratives of early- and mid-century rural masculinities by planting formal innovations in the countryside and pitting nostalgic pastoralism against the byproducts of industrial modernity.

Pender, Rick. *100 Things to Do in Cincinnati Before You Die: 2nd Edition*. Reedy Press (St. Louis, MO) 2019. PB \$16.00.

Cincinnati has been intriguing adventurers since its founding in 1788 as the Gateway to America's

western frontier. With its beautiful river valley reminiscent of Bavaria and centuries-old entrepreneurial spirit, Cincinnati has always offered a surprising variety of attractions, history, and dining. In the second edition of *100 Things to Do in Cincinnati Before You Die*, you'll find the perfect guide to exploring everything with even more updated choices for visitors to experience. Tap into the city's German heritage by sampling the food, drink, and even language of the old country at an authentic tavern, or learn about the best places to find a real Belgian waffle. Learn about the updates to the city's prized Memorial Hall and the exciting events that are revitalizing the Elm Streets arts corridor. Turn your gaze to the stars with all the tips you'll need to visit the Cincinnati Observatory. Enjoy the city's many green spaces like the Over-the-Rhine Parks, or time your visit to coincide with an outdoor festival. Between all the music, craft brewers, historic renovations, and red bricks, Cincinnati will capture the attention of any visitor who relishes in discovery. And with local author and tour guide, Rick Pender, leading you, even long-time residents will find fresh reminders of why they love it here. Grab a copy of this book, hop on the Cincinnati Bell Connector streetcar, and don't forget to have a three-way chili as you explore the Queen City.

Prufer, Jason. *Small Town, Big Music: The Outsized Influence of Kent, Ohio on the History of Rock and Roll*. Kent State University Press (Kent, OH) 2019. HC \$29.95. Relying on oral histories, hundreds of rare photographs, and original music reviews, this book explores the countercultural fringes of Kent,

Ohio, over four decades. Firsthand reminiscences from musicians, promoters, friends, and fans recount arena shows featuring acts like Pink Floyd, The Clash, and Paul Simon as well as the grungy corners of town where Joe Walsh, Patrick Carney, Chrissie Hynde, and DEVO refined their crafts. From back stages, hotel rooms, and the saloons of Kent, readers will travel back in time to the great rockin' nights hosted in this small town. More than just a retrospective on performances that occurred in one midwestern college town, Prufer's book illuminates a fascinating phenomenon: both up-and-coming and major artists knew Kent was a place to play - fertile ground for creativity, spontaneity, and innovation. From the formation of Joe Walsh's first band, The Measles, and the creation of DEVO in Kent State University's art department to original performances of Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* and serendipitous collaborations like Emmylou Harris and Good Company in the Water Street Saloon, the influence of Kent's music scene has been powerful.

Rich, Marci. *Looking Back at Elyria: A Midwest City at Midcentury*. The History Press (Charleston, SC) 2019. PB \$23.99. Brimming with postwar optimism and prosperity, mid-twentieth-century Elyria seemed like Camelot and was, indeed, a brief passage on a beloved president's campaign trail. You could visit the bears at Cascade Park and play on the slides. See a movie at the Capitol Theatre and enjoy a cherry Coke at the Paradise, but wait until the party line is free before calling your friends on your rotary telephone to make your plans. Run an errand for Mom at Hales

Market and then walk up to the old Reedy mansion to check out a book at the library. Shop for your parents at Merthe's and Harry's Men's Wear, then admire the groovy clothes at New Horizons East. Revisit your Elyria youth with this, your very own time-travel guide. Based on her award-winning articles for the *Chronicle-Telegram*, author Marci Rich combines journalism, historical research, and memoir to look back at her hometown with love.

Rieland, Thomas M. *Sparks Flew: WOSU's Century on the Air*. Trillium (Columbus, OH) 2019. HC \$27.95.

Wireless Morse code began a new age of communications, magically sending invisible waves through the ether received at some distant place. Among the first universities to experiment in this unknown world was The Ohio State University, which became one of the first educational broadcast stations and a think tank for the future of public service radio – pioneering radio audience research and serving as an innovative school of the air. *Sparks Flew* is a rich story of creative, tenacious men and women working in a new medium that commercial enterprises soon dominated. At any moment in time, educational broadcasting could have failed if not for a few land-grant institutions like The Ohio State University and prominent stations like WOSU that supported the medium. *Sparks Flew* is the untold story, a century in the making, of one institution and one educational station that represent the roots of today's public broadcasting system.

Roth, Mitchel P. *Fire in the Big House: America's Deadliest Prison Disaster*. Swallow Press (Athens, OH) 2019. HC \$19.95.

On April 21, 1930 – Easter Monday – some rags caught fire under the Ohio Penitentiary's dry and aging wooden roof, shortly after inmates had returned to their locked cells after supper. In less than an hour, 320 men who came from all corners of Prohibition-era America and from as far away as Russia had succumbed to fire and smoke in what remains the deadliest prison disaster in United States history. Within 24 hours, moviegoers were watching Pathé's newsreel of the fire, and in less than a week, the first iteration of the weepy ballad "Ohio Prison Fire" was released. The deaths brought urgent national and international focus to the horrifying conditions of America's prisons (at the time of the fire, the Ohio Penitentiary was at almost three times its capacity). Yet, amid darkening world politics and the first years of the Great Depression, the fire receded from public concern. In *Fire in the Big House*, Mitchel P. Roth does justice to the lives of convicts and guards and puts the conflagration in the context of the rise of the Big House prison model, local and state political machinations, and American penal history and reform efforts. The result is the first comprehensive account of a tragedy whose circumstances - violent unrest, overcrowding, poorly trained and underpaid guards, unsanitary conditions, inadequate food – will be familiar to prison watchdogs today.

Ruffner, Howard. *Moments of Truth: A Photographer's Experience of Kent State 1970*. Kent State University Press (Kent,

OH) 2019. HC \$34.95. Working as a photographer for the Kent State University student newspaper and yearbook, Howard Ruffner was a college sophomore when the tragic shootings of May 4, 1970, occurred – a tragedy that left four students dead and nine others wounded. Asked to serve as a stringer for *Life* magazine in the days leading up to May 4, as student protests against the Vietnam War intensified and National Guard troops arrived on campus, Ruffner became a witness and documentarian to this important piece of history. Several of his photographs, including one that appeared on the cover of *Life*, are etched into our collective consciousness when we think about civil unrest and the latter half of the 20th century. Here, in *Moments of Truth: A Photographer's Experience of Kent State 1970*, Ruffner not only reproduces a collection of nearly 150 of his photographs - many never before published – but also offers a stirring narrative in which he revisits his work and attempts to further examine these events and his own experience of them. It is, indeed, an intensely personal journey that he invites us to share.

Schloman, William D., and Barbara F. Schloman. *A Century of Flight at Paton Field: The Story of Kent State University's Airport and Flight Education*. Kent State University Press (Kent, OH) 2019. HC \$39.95.

This detailed study explores the hundred-year history of the longest-surviving public-use airport in Ohio. Intertwining the story of the airport's development with the history of flight-education programs at the University, the

book highlights a vast cast of characters and an examination of aviation's development on the local level throughout the last century. What was once Stow Field, a small airport in a rural community, stands at the center of this story. Kent State's participation in the federal government's Civilian Pilot Training Program in the years leading up to World War II led to state funding for purchase of the airport and prepared the way for the creation of collegiate aviation. This brought in Andrew Paton, who created the first flight-training curriculum and established a vision for the role the airport could play in a university-run program. In the period between the two World Wars, Stow Field was also the site of aviation exhibits that drew as many as 80,000 people, including the christening of Goodyear's first helium blimp. As Kent State's airport is now enjoying both a new vitality and long-awaited investment, William D. Schloman and Barbara F. Schloman place this in context with the at-times-uncertain survival of Kent State's aviation program.

Stanforth, Sherry Cook, and Richard Hague, eds. *Riparian: Poetry, Short Prose, and Photographs Inspired by the Ohio River*. Dos Madres Press (Loveland, OH) 2019. PB \$25.00. This anthology contains work by 60 writers and photographers, supported in part by the Ohio Arts Council.

Swenson, Kyle. *Good Kids, Bad City: A Story of Race and Wrongful Conviction in America*. Picador (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$29. In the early 1970s, three African-American men, Wiley Bridgeman, Kwame Ajamu, and Rickey Jackson, were accused and convicted of

the brutal robbery and murder of a man outside of a convenience store in Cleveland, Ohio. The prosecution's case, which resulted in a combined 106 years in prison for the three men, rested on the more-than-questionable testimony of a pre-teen, Ed Vernon. The actual murderer was never found. Almost four decades later, Vernon recanted his testimony, and Wiley, Kwame, and Rickey were released. But while their exoneration may have ended one of American history's most disgraceful miscarriages of justice, the corruption and decay of the city responsible for their imprisonment remain on trial. Interweaving the dramatic details of the case with Cleveland's history – one that, to this day, is fraught with systemic discrimination and racial tension – Swenson reveals how this outrage occurred and why. *Good Kids, Bad City* is a work of astonishing empathy and insight: an immersive exploration of race in America, the struggling Midwest, and how lost lives can be recovered.

Tucker, Paula Stone. *Surviving: A Kent State Memoir*. Sunbury Press (Mechanicsburg, PA) 2019. PB \$19.95.

In a stunning parallel to our own times, this memoir of the late Sixties and early Seventies, *Surviving: A Kent State Memoir*, explores the turbulent era of the War in Vietnam, domestic violence, and a young woman's triumph in face of great danger and great loss. In an era as divisive as today's, she witnessed one of the events that became a turning point in public sentiment toward the War in Vietnam. On May 4, 1970, Ohio National Guardsmen fired on students protesting the invasion of Cambodia at Kent State

University, killing four students and injuring nine. Standing thirty yards in front of the Guard when they began firing, she escaped with her life. This uplifting journey follows her from her years as a naïve Catholic schoolgirl through her time at Kent State to her development as a journalist and mother. She heals in the weeks following May 4, as she awaits the birth of her baby. Her due date nears but problems arise as her husband becomes increasingly violent. Rejected by her family and without societal protections against marital abuse in place today, she is on her own. In an unexpected turn of events, she is freed from danger, only to have to learn to survive on her own.

## FICTION

Batiuk, Tom. *The Complete Funky Winkerbean Volume 9: 1996-1998*. Black Squirrel Books (Kent, OH) 2020. HC \$45.00.

*Funky Winkerbean*, a newspaper staple since 1972, is one of the few comic strips that allows its characters to grow and age. With this ninth volume, containing strips from 1996 through 1998, time continues to pass and events take place that will forever alter the lives of the core characters, even as new characters take the stage with stories to tell. Tom Batiuk's narrative humor style now grows to encompass such diverse events as retirement, weddings, treatment of immigrants, dating abuse, and post office bombings. Some of the stories can be told over a cup of coffee, while others require a full-on Roman feast. As the stories become more universal, the humor in *Funky* continues to become an integral part of the ongoing narrative.

Boyd, Shawn. *Raksasha: The Evolution of the Vampire, Book II.* Tell-Tale Publishing Group (Swartz Creek, MI) 2019. PB \$20.00. What happens when monsters collide? Sometimes a new abomination is born. Our seven brothers continue to use their gifts to fight the spread of evil. They are scattered, battling on several fronts, trying to stem the tide of bloodsuckers moving across the land and figure out how to deal with new opponents that are being created as the evolution continues.

Boyd, Shawn. *Xiang Shi: The Evolution of the Vampire, Book I.* Tell-Tale Publishing Group (Swartz Creek, MI) 2018. PB \$23.00. In China 4th Century AD, a new evil is emerging in the war torn north. It strikes terror in the heart of all those unfortunate enough to encounter it, even those who survive. Seven brothers, Buddhist monks with special gifts, are determined to stop the rise and dominion of the bloodthirsty demon and his minions. Witness the evolution of the ultimate predator.

Ellis, Mary. *Island of Last Resorts.* Severn House (London, UK) 2019. HC \$28.99. Kate Weller's boss, Nate Price, has some exciting news: Julian Frazier, a friend of one of the agency's wealthy clients, has invited the Nate Price Investigations team and their partners on a trip of a lifetime to his home on Elysian Island, an exclusive retreat off the Georgian coast. But there's a catch. Frazier has written his own murder mystery script, and the PIs must work out whodunnit. As they're about to discover, though, the murder Frazier wants them to solve is a real cold case, and there's

a killer twist that isn't in the script. Unable to reach Elysian Island and her co-workers, Kate is sure that someone wants her to stay away. Can she stop a ruthless killer and uncover the truth behind a deadly game?

Erickson, Alex. *Death by Café Mocha.* Kensington Books (New York, NY) 2019. PB \$7.99. Krissy Hancock and her pals are taking a coffee break – leaving their bookstore-café in Pine Hills, Ohio, and heading to a convention. But this road trip will be more dangerous than they expected. Coffee lovers are gathering from far and wide at the hotel, and Krissy, Rita, and Vicki are excited. But some of the attendees may need to switch to decaf, as a public argument breaks out soon after they check in and then a flavor competition leads to bitter feelings. When the winner of the contest is beamed with a carafe full of café mocha, suspicions swirl – along with accusations of bribery. Was the dead man offering perks to the judges – or was something sinister going on in his personal life? This case is going to keep Krissy up all night long.

Farkas, Andrew. *The Big Red Herring.* Kernpunkt Press (Hamilton, NY) 2019. PB \$16.99. In this latest work by Andrew Farkas, the United States and the Soviet Union were allies, not enemies. The moon landing was a hoax filmed by Stanley Kubrick. The Space Race and the Cold War were diversions enacted to cover up the biggest secret ever kept. But Wallace Heath Orcuson (Wall to his friends) has more immediate problems to deal with. He's just woken up in an apartment he's never seen before. There's a dead body under his couch. It's his girlfriend's husband, a man

named "Senator" Kipper Maris. Meanwhile, at a donut shop, a radio narrator, who's been forced to adopt the name Edward R. Murrow, reads Wall's story. He hates it. He wants to change it. The problem: Murrow is a narrator, not a writer, and the penalty for altering a manuscript is death. Luckily for Murrow, his boss, "Senator" Kipper Maris, was recently murdered. So maybe no one will notice. Or maybe there's a reason for the rule. But you can't find out what's in Pandora's box until it's opened, right? Who wants to see what's inside?

Farkas, Andrew. *Sunsphere.* BlazeVOX[BOOKS] (Buffalo, NY) 2019. PB \$16.00. The Sunsphere is a 266-foot-tall green truss structure topped by a gold glass sphere that was built as the symbol of the 1982 World's Fair (also known as the Knoxville International Energy Exposition). Actually, the Sunsphere stands 6,520 feet tall and is composed of a black, cylindrical base capped by a miniature neutron star. Well, the Sunsphere Shot Tower, made entirely of brick, manufactures shot for shotguns. But then, the Sunsphere is 1,000 feet tall and composed of a green tower and a pulsing orb of blue lightning. Really, the Sunsphere is dilapidated, covered in tarps, and likely to be torn down soon. Or maybe, Sunsphere Ziggurat is a massive conceptual art installation constructed by an underground organization called the KnoxVillains. Certainly, Sunsphere, a collection of nine formally innovative fictions, focuses on characters obsessed with ideas of energy and entropy, focuses on characters who are trying to figure out how to continue on in a world

that is falling apart, who are trying to learn how to act in a world that is constantly changing. In the face of social collapse, some characters find solace in the logic of puzzles, in the conventions of art, in outdated ideas of empire and romance, in the lure of pop culture, in academia and politics. But at the core of this collection is a search for humanity, even when the very atmosphere appears to demand the inhumane.

**Flower, Amanda. *Matchmaking Can Be Murder*.** Kensington Books (New York, NY) 2019. PB \$7.99.  
 When widowed Millie Fisher moves back to her childhood home of Harvest, Ohio, she notices one thing right away: the young Amish are bungling their courtships and marrying the wrong people! A quilter by trade, Millie has nevertheless stitched together a few lives in her time, with truly romantic results. Her first mission? Her own niece, widowed gardener Edith Hochstetler, recently engaged to rude, greedy Zeke Miller. Anyone can see he's not right for such a gentle young woman – except Edith herself. Pleased when she convinces the bride-to-be to leave her betrothed before the wedding, Millie is later panicked to find Zeke in Edith's greenhouse – as dead as a tulip in the middle of winter. To keep her niece out of prison – and to protect her own reputation – Millie will have to piece together a patchwork of clues to find a killer, before she becomes the next name on his list.

**Fried, Seth. *The Municipalists*.** Penguin Books (New York, NY) 2019. PB \$16.00.  
 In Metropolis, the gleaming city of tomorrow, the dream of the great American city has been achieved.

But all that is about to change, unless a neurotic, rule-following bureaucrat and an irreverent, freewheeling artificial intelligence can save the city from a mysterious terrorist plot that threatens its very existence. Henry Thompson has dedicated his life to improving America's infrastructure as a proud employee of the United States Municipal Survey. So when the agency comes under attack, he dutifully accepts his unexpected mission to visit Metropolis looking for answers. But his plans to investigate quietly, quickly, and carefully are interrupted by his new partner: a day-drinking know-it-all named OWEN, who also turns out to be the projected embodiment of the agency's supercomputer. Soon, Henry and OWEN are fighting to save not only their own lives and those of the city's millions of inhabitants, but also the soul of Metropolis.

**Gawell, Donna B. *War and Resistance in the Wilderness: A Novel of WWII Poland*.** Blendon Woods Press (Columbus, OH) 2019. PB \$9.99.  
 When the Germans invade their Polish village in September 1939 to build the largest SS training camp outside of Germany, Anna, Jozef, and Stacia must work as forced laborers serving the Reich. Then, in 1943, Hitler moves his top-secret V-2 missile research project into their wilderness area. With test missiles exploding over their homes, Anna, Jozef, her priest, and other villagers become partisans for the underground Home Army. Just as it appears the Germans are losing, Stacia finds herself inside the cattle car of a train headed to Ravensbrück, a women's concentration camp. The rest of the village bursts into chaos,

and the priest who was working with the Home Army goes into hiding in the church's roof for six months to avoid arrest. The novel begins with the amazing true story of an American pilot who made a forced landing in the village in 1944, told in three later chapters. List and his crew found hidden letters addressed to America in the outhouse, and one of them was Anna's letter. It was undeliverable, and he kept it in his briefcase for forty-five years.

**Hess, Victor. *Jesse Sings: Jesse's World Book 1*.** Victor Hess (Slidell, LA) 2017. PB \$10.95.  
 Eight-year old Jesse Hall and his pregnant mother move to the "Eden of America," a small rural town in Ohio, to escape an abusive father addicted to gambling and alcohol. There, Jesse is bullied by the most popular school kid, denied a church experience by a self-righteous preacher, and threatened with foster care by a well-meaning social worker. Can Jesse fulfill his dream of a normal family with his own parents and brothers and sisters? See a childhood romance grow with Lynn, a fatherless eight-year old girl, and watch what he learns from the lovely Five and Dime clerk. How does this all relate to a mummified corpse?

**Hess, Victor. *The Clock Tower Treasure: Jesse's World Book 2*.** Brother Mockingbird (Diamondhead, MI) 2019. PB \$15.99.  
 The 1950's was a time of new homes, television, astronauts, new cars, and rock and roll. It was also a time of nuclear threats and deadly polio. Out of this challenging decade comes the enchanting story of a ten-year-old boy from the Midwest showing a small town the meaning of toughness

and tenacity. The Shawnee Indian treasure was a myth, they said. Nowhere to be found, except in the legends and tall tales of the region. Despite his polio, despite his poverty, despite his fractured family, Jesse Hall believes the stories and discovers irresistible clues in the courthouse clock tower. With each twist and turn, Jesse learns to overcome all that life can throw at him. He leads his Boy Scout pal, his nineteen-year-old nurse, and the local county historian in a quest for the mythical treasure - a hunt that yields a most unexpected discovery.

Hieber, Leanna Renee. *The Spectral City*. Rebel Base/Kensington Books (New York, NY) 2018. PB \$15.00. Her name is Eve Whitby, gifted medium and spearhead of the Ghost Precinct. When most women are traveling in a gilded society that promises only well-appointed marriage, the confident nineteen-year-old Eve navigates a social circle that carries a different kind of chill. Working with the diligent but skeptical Detective Horowitz, as well as a group of fellow psychics and wayward ghosts, Eve holds her own against detractors and threats to solve New York's most disturbing crimes as only a medium of her ability can. But as accustomed as Eve is to ghastly crimes and all matters of the uncanny, even she is unsettled by her department's latest mystery. Her ghostly conduits are starting to disappear one by one as though snatched away by some evil force determined to upset the balance between two realms, and most important - destroy the Ghost Precinct forever. Now Eve must brave the darkness to find the vanished souls. It's her job to make sure no one is ever left for dead.

Huber, Anna Lee. *Penny for Your Secrets: A Verity Kent Mystery*. Kensington Books (New York, NY) 2019. PB \$15.95. The Great War may be over, but for many, there are still obstacles on the home front. Reconciling with her estranged husband makes Verity sympathetic to her friend Ada's marital difficulties. Bourgeois-bred Ada, recently married to the Marquess of Rockham, is overwhelmed trying to navigate the ways of the aristocracy. And when Lord Rockham is discovered shot through the heart with a bullet from Ada's revolver, Verity fears her friend has made a fatal blunder. While striving to prove Ada's innocence, Verity is called upon for another favor. The sister of a former Secret Service colleague has been killed in what authorities believe was a home invasion gone wrong. The victim's war work - censoring letters sent by soldiers from the front - exposed her to sensitive, disturbing material. Verity begins to suspect these two unlikely cases may be linked. But as the connections deepen, the consequences - not just for Verity, but for Britain - grow more menacing than she could have imagined.

Lepionka, Kristen. *The Stories You Tell: A Roxane Weary Mystery*. Minotaur Books (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$26.99. A late-night phone call is never good news, especially when you're Roxane Weary. This one is from her brother Andrew, whose evening was interrupted by an urgent visit from Addison, a hip young DJ and one-time fling, who turns up at his apartment scared and begging to use his phone. She leaves as quickly as she appeared, but now Andrew is

worried - especially when Addison never makes it home and her friends and family demand to know where she is. As the police begin to suspect that something may have happened to her, and that Andrew is involved, Roxane tracks Addison's digital footprint as she goes deeper and deeper into the events preceding her disappearance. Meanwhile, a cop is found dead on the opposite side of town, leading to a swirl of questions surrounding a dance club whose staff - which includes Addison - has suddenly gone AWOL. As Roxane struggles to distinguish the truth from the stories people tell about themselves online, it's clear that the mystery of Addison's whereabouts is just the beginning.

Lindsey, Julie Anne. *Apple Cider Slaying*. Kensington Books (New York, NY) 2019. PB \$7.99. Blossom Valley, West Virginia, is home to Smythe Orchards, Winnie and her Granny's beloved twenty-five-acre farm and family business. But any way you slice it, it's struggling. That's why they're trying to drum up business with the "First Annual Christmas at the Orchard," a good old-fashioned holiday festival with enough delicious draw to satisfy apple-picking locals and cider-loving tourists alike - until the whole endeavor takes a sour turn when the body of Nadine Cooper, Granny's long-time, grudge-holding nemesis, is found lodged in the apple press. Now, with Granny the number one suspect, Winnie is hard-pressed to prove her innocence before the real killer delivers another murder.

Lutz, Anne Marie. *Taylenor*. Hydra Publications (Goshen, KY) 2019. PB \$14.99. Jaena, a young priest, travels to

isolated villages, blessing births and singing the souls of the departed to her goddess. In one village she finds Wiel, a boy with the rare mage talent known as taylen that is linked to a fatal illness. Jaena takes Wiel to the city to try to save his life. Too late, she discovers she has delivered Wiel into the hands of the Mage Defender, who rules by stealing the magic – and the lives – of children. Desperate to right the wrong she has done, Jaena races for aid to save Wiel and destroy the Mage Defender. At stake are the lives of the last remaining taylenor as well as Jaena's own survival – and the destruction of an ancient scourge that has reawakened to threaten all the people of Cassahn.

Meyers, David. *Hello, I Must Be Going: The Mostly True Story of an Imaginary Band*. Black Opal Books (Dallas, OR) 2019. PB \$13.99.  
The year was 1970 and Zack Black & the Blues Attack was poised to be the hottest band in America. Radio loved them, and everywhere they played seats were sold-out. But when stardom seemed within their grasp, they let it slip away. Will Black thought that chapter of his life was closed forever. He had not been in touch with his former bandmates since he moved to New York some forty years ago. But now a mysterious woman has approached him with an unusual request: will he help her carry out her husband's dying wish? Incredibly, Will finds himself tasked with putting the Blues Attack back together to prove to the world, and themselves, that they still have what it takes. But to do so means that the one-time friends will have to confront the secrets and lies that had contributed to their demise. Given a second chance, will they make the same mistakes?

O'Connor, Varley. *The Welsh Fasting Girl*. Bellevue Literary Press (New York, NY) 2019. PB \$16.99.  
Twelve-year-old Sarah Jacob was the most famous of the Victorian fasting girls, who claimed to miraculously survive without food, serving as flashpoints between struggling religious, scientific, and political factions. In this novel based on Sarah's life and premature death from what may be the first documented case of anorexia, an American journalist, recovering from her husband's death in the Civil War, leaves her home and children behind to travel to Wales, where she investigates Sarah's bizarre case by becoming the young girl's friend and confidante. Unable to prevent the girl's tragic decline while doctors, nurses, and a local priest keep watch, she documents the curious family dynamic, the trial that convicted Sarah's parents, and an era's hysterical need to both believe and destroy Sarah's seemingly miraculous power. *The Welsh Fasting Girl* delves into the complexities of a true story to understand how a culture's anxieties led to the murder of a child.

Patchen, Jacob Paul. *At Daddy's Hands: Courage Knows No Age*. Black Rose Writing (Castroville, TX) 2019. PB \$16.95.  
In public, Jim Handler is a well-respected, small-town hero, and homicide detective who solved the case of the Will's Creek Massacre. But at home, in the shadows, Jim's childhood demons come alive to feast upon his family in the form of sexual, physical, and mental abuse. But his three teenage children have had enough. They have devised a plan for redemption.

Empowered by the legal system's lack of accountability, a judge who offers a quiet and meager plea deal to save face, Jim feels enabled to do whatever he wants to his family. With no one to keep Jim in check, this cycle of sexual and physical abuse is rampant. It is up to Nikki, Tyler, and Ally to end the evil that is devouring the Handler family.

Petrone, Susan. *The Heebie-Jeebie Girl*. The Story Plant (Stamford, CT) 2020. HC \$22.95.  
Youngstown, Ohio, 1977. Between the closing of the city's largest steel mill and the worst blizzard in more than 40 years, the table is set for remarkable change. Unemployed steel worker Bobby Wayland is trying hard to help his family and still pay for his wedding, but the only solution he can think of involves breaking the law. On the other side of town, a little girl named Hope is keeping a big secret, one she won't even share with her Great Uncle Joe - she can make things move without touching them. Watching over both of them is the city herself, and she has something to say and something to do about all of this.

Selcer, David. *The Old Stories*. Biblio Publishing (Columbus, OH) 2019. PB \$12.95.  
The saga of righteous man Hyman Zeltzer. He didn't immigrate through Ellis Island. His journey began on a Russian battleship in the Pacific. His first job wasn't in the New York sweatshops. It was laboring on the Canadian Northern Railway from Edmonton to Quebec. Astride two worlds, assimilation was a problem. But values learned early in his life led him to amazing consequences.

Tassone, Don. *Sampler: Fifty Short Stories*. Adelaide Books (New York, NY) 2019. PB \$19.60.

Conventional wisdom holds that story collections should have a theme. In this way, this book is unconventional. The fifty stories in this collection are wide-ranging. Some are serious, others light. Most are gentle, but a few are disquieting. There are fantasy, spirituality and politics here. Many of these stories are slices of life. Most are short. All are an invitation to think more deeply.

Taylor, Ali. *The Chronicles of WaterWorld After the Hough Riots*. Rosedog Books (Pittsburgh, PA) 2018. PB \$17.00.

In Cleveland, Ohio, drugs, rape, violence, and mayhem became a part of a neighborhood called Hough Heights. After the Hough riots in 1966 and 1968 and the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the children of Hough were growing up experiencing the aftermath from a society whose forefathers knocked down obstacles of those who were abused, neglected, discriminated, and hated due to the color of their skin. Now the next generation is experiencing new obstacles which caused them to neglect the ones our leaders risked their lives to put in place. Crime bosses Frank Burton, King George, and others come up with a plan to get rich from the negative environment of Hough. Consequently, two undercover FBI agents mysteriously disappear. King George realizes the criminal underworld activities will be threatened by the agents' disappearance and his past will catch up with him if he did not stop. King George decides to change his ways and give back to the

community. However, King George's son, Ali, is now caught up in the criminal activities surrounding him. King George and Ali's girlfriend, Monique, attempt to persuade Ali to leave the criminal life behind before it is too late.

Thompson, Chera, and NF Johnson. *A Time to Wander*. Solstice Publishing (Farmington, MI) 2019. PB \$15.95.

Two college kids on two different roads. Save for the one they share. An email exchange between former college lovers takes them back to their college years at Kent State, the 1970s. The Vietnam War is raging. Anti-war rallies hit the breaking point. It was a time of bell bottoms, vinyl, incense, free love, and travel by thumb. For Kris and Lena, two strangers on two very different paths, a thrown beer bottle shatters the lives they have known, bringing them together by chance. Lena is attracted to Kris and his live-in-the-moment personality. When he invites her to join him on a winter break hitchhiking trip, she kicks aside her uptight attitude and accepts the adventure. The trip is harrowing at times, comical during others, and poignant as Lena and Kris learn about themselves and each other. The events that shape and seal the fate of their relationship in unpredictable ways are revealed in the authors' female/male alternating perspectives. Inspired by true events, a *Time to Wander* is a magical tale of freedom before the future takes hold.

Thurber, James. Edited by Michael J. Rosen. *Collected Fables*. HarperPerennial Modern Classics (New York, NY) 2019. PB \$15.99. James Thurber has been called "one

of the world's greatest humorists" by Alistair Cooke (*The Atlantic*), and "one of our great American institutions" (Stanley Walker)—and few works reveal Thurber's genius as powerfully as his fables. Perennially entertaining and astutely satirical, Thurber pinpricks the idiosyncrasies of life with verbal frivolity, hilarious insights, political shrewdness, and, of course, quirky, quotable morals. Now, readers can savor 85 fables by the twentieth century's preeminent humorist collected for the first time in a single anthology. Here, *Fables for Our Time*, *Further Fables for Our Time*, and ten previously uncollected fables – illustrated by ten contemporary artists including Seymour Chwast, Mark Ulriksen, Laurie Rosenwald, and R. O. Blechman – are presented in *Collected Fables*, a must-have for readers of all ages.

Vanek, John A. *Miracles: A Father Jake Austin Mystery*. Coffeetown Press (Kenmore, WA) 2019. PB \$16.95.

Father Jake Austin's life is turned upside down by three intersecting plots that focus on the relationship between miracles and science, the clash of facts and faith, and the inexplicable production of unexpected miracles from disastrous events. As a priest, he counsels a young couple whose baby is in a coma but wonders whether he is dealing with an accident or child abuse. When his sister is hospitalized with leukemia, he assumes the role of caregiver for her child, as well as her bone marrow donor. Newspaper reports of miracles at a nearby parish draw Jake to St. Wenceslaus Church. When he arrives, he witnesses a statue weep blood, and his Bishop

assigns the investigation to him. With each challenge, his faith is tested. One thing is for certain, Jake is not your conventional Catholic priest.

Welsh-Huggins, Andrew, ed. *Columbus Noir*. Akashic Books (New York, NY) 2020. PB \$15.95. Akashic Books continues its award-winning series of original noir anthologies, launched in 2004 with *Brooklyn Noir*. Each book comprises all new stories, each one set in a distinct neighborhood or location within the respective city. Brand-new stories by: Lee Martin, Robin Yocum, Kristen Lepionka, Craig McDonald, Chris Bournea, Andrew Welsh-Huggins, Tom Barlow, Mercedes King, Daniel Best, Laura Bickle, Yolonda Tonette Sanders, Julia Keller, Khalid Moalim, and Nancy Zafris.

Winfrey, Kerry. *Waiting for Tom Hanks*. Jove (New York, NY) 2019. PB \$15.00.

Annie Cassidy dreams of being the next Nora Ephron. She spends her days writing screenplays, rewatching *Sleepless in Seattle*, and waiting for her movie-perfect meet-cute. If she could just find her own Tom Hanks – a man who's sweet, sensitive, and possibly owns a houseboat – her problems would disappear and her life would be perfect. But Tom Hanks is nowhere in sight. When a movie starts filming in her neighborhood and Annie gets a job on set, it seems like a sign. Then Annie meets the lead actor, Drew Danforth, a cocky prankster who couldn't be less like Tom Hanks if he tried. Their meet-cute is more of a meet-fail, but soon Annie finds herself sharing some classic rom-com moments with Drew. Her Tom Hanks can't be an

actor who's leaving town in a matter of days...can he?

Woff, TG. *Widow's Run*. Down & Out Books (Lutz, FL) 2019. PB \$16.95. One night in Rome. One car. One dead scientist. Italian police investigate, but in the end, all they have are kind words for the new widow. Months later, a video emerges challenging the facts. Had he stepped into traffic, or was he pushed? The widow returns to the police, but they have little interest and no answers. Exit the widow.

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Red at the Bone*. Riverhead Books (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$26.00.

An unexpected teenage pregnancy pulls together two families from different social classes, and exposes the private hopes, disappointments, and longings that can bind or divide us from each other, from the *New York Times*-bestselling and National Book Award-winning author of *Another Brooklyn* and *Brown Girl Dreaming*. Moving forward and backward in time, Jacqueline Woodson's new novel uncovers the role that history and community have played in the experiences, decisions, and relationships of these families, and in the life of the new child. As the book opens in 2001, it is the evening of sixteen-year-old Melody's coming of age ceremony in her grandparents' Brooklyn brownstone. Watched lovingly by her relatives and friends, making her entrance to the music of Prince, she wears a special custom-made dress. But the event is not without poignancy. Sixteen years earlier, that very dress was measured and sewn for a different wearer: Melody's mother, for her own ceremony – a celebration that ultimately

never took place. Unfurling the history of Melody's parents and grandparents to show how they all arrived at this moment, Woodson considers not just their ambitions and successes but also the costs, the tolls they've paid for striving to overcome expectations and escape the pull of history. As it explores sexual desire and identity, ambition, gentrification, education, class and status, and the life-altering facts of parenthood, *Red at the Bone* most strikingly looks at the ways in which young people must so often make long-lasting decisions about their lives – even before they have begun to figure out who they are and what they want to be.

Wortman, Jennifer. *This. This. This. Is. Love. Love. Love. Stories*. Split Lip Press (Wyncote, PA) 2019. PB \$16.00.

Thirteen stories, full-length and flash, that explore love – sexual, platonic, filial, and beyond – in its gritty and beguiling forms. A small-town teenager pursues an eccentric pinball wizard after her grandfather's move to her home shakes up her parents' marriage; a chronic depressive turns to a TV animal psychic in hopes of mending her relationship with her dog-loving dad; a middle-aged recovering alcoholic goes back to college and becomes fixated on his stern professor. Throughout the collection, as characters in various stages of life try to navigate love, they court obsession, madness, and transcendence.

Young, John. *When the Coin is in the Air*. Golden Antelope Press (Kirksville, MO) 2019. PB \$19.95. Like most boys, Jason Blake wants to please his father and older

brother. But this erratic father and hyper-competitive brother challenge beyond the norm. To find his way, Jason tries on different roles: schoolyard bully, football player, actor, student. At 20, Jason escapes his Midwest home and seeks independence and adventure: first to Cape Cod, later in Europe. Each adventure takes Jason farther from his father and brother. Each brings him closer to finding himself. When he returns home, the world as he knew it explodes and Jason risks all to protect his mother from his violent father. The dramatic and unforgettable course of events changes this family forever.

## POETRY

Abbot, Steve, ed. ***Common Threads 2019***. Ohio Poetry Association (Mansfield, OH) 2019. HC \$10.00. Published annually and edited by Steve Abbott, *Common Threads* is an OPA members-only journal and is one of the privileges of membership. The journal features poetry of OPA members and contest winners, such as those who win the Ides of March and Ohio High School Poetry contests.

Abbott, Steve. *A Language the Image Speaks: Poems in Response to Visual Art*. 11th Hour Press (Columbus, OH) 2019. PB \$24.95. Using the approach of ekphrasis – poetry responding to visual art – this collection of forty-eight poems explores a range of responses to paintings, photographs, and sculpture. Poems appear opposite the images that inspired them, including high-quality color and black-and-white reproductions of works from museums, galleries, and private collections throughout

the United States, including works by Edward Hopper, Andre Kertesz, Herbert Bayer, Louise Nevelson, Jerome Liebling, and Ben Shahn, as well as paintings and photographs by other artists from throughout the United States. Poem and image inform each other, blending to create a unique literary and visual experience.

Arnold, Philip. *The Natural History of a Blade*. Dos Madres Press (Loveland, OH) 2019. PB \$17.00. *The Natural History of a Blade* portrays a life among the Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina. At a meeting place of landscape, language and memory, the poems of this collection articulate liminal spaces – where animal and human, the wild and cultivated roam and rustle. Broadly, the poems explore the origins of the word *blade*, with meanings of leaf, blossom and sharp edge. From this approach – new growth and old, the forms of nature and the tools by which we mark the natural world around us – are the poems' chief interests. This debut work by Philip Arnold enacts experiences within a wider pattern of ritual and lore, where older rhythms may possibly enrich the circulations of the present.

Biddinger, Mary. *Partial Genius: Prose Poems*. Black Lawrence Press (Mt. Vernon, NY) 2019. PB \$16.95. What happens when you finally realize that you are really good, but only at unremarkable things? What value does memory hold when weighed against heavier commodities such as money and time and conventional beauty? The prose poems of Partial Genius build upon the form in a collective narrative, working in unison to

craft a larger story. Post-youth and mid-epiphany, *Partial Genius* ponders the years spent waiting for reconciliation of past wrongs, the acknowledgment of former selves, and the desire to truly fit into one landscape or another.

Borsenik, Dianne, Juliet Cook, Puma Perl, and Jeanette Powers. ***Heaven We Haven't Yet Dreamed***. Stubborn Mule Press (Devil's Elbow, MO) 2019. PB \$18.00.

Dianne Borsenik, Juliet Cook, Puma Perl and Jeanette Powers all in one space, you know magic is happening. This anthology features twenty-three pages of poetry from each of these four radical femme poets.

Burgess, Kathleen S. ***The Wonder Cupboard***. NightBallet Press (Elyria, OH) 2019. PB \$15.00. In *The Wonder Cupboard*, Kathleen S. Burgess has written poems both filled, and filling, with wonder... "Why We Went to See Madame Luminitsa," "Marilyn's Lips," "I'm a pilgrim light needles into space," "Unearthing Earth Day." Using skillful language to draw crisp, colorful sketches of time and place, Burgess addresses a child's thrilled reaction to a father's wild driving, an F2 twister, Singer sewing machines, bird-watching, going braless, pregnancy, sunflowers, a Chinese lantern festival, missing women, mass shootings, and quiet hikes through Southern Ohio beauty.

Burroughs, John. ***Rattle & Numb: Selected and New Poems, 1992-2019***. Venetian Spider Press (Cleveland, OH) 2019. HC \$29.95. *Rattle & Numb* is the prestige edition of the poetry of John Burroughs, State of Ohio Beat Poet Laureate 2019-2021, and master of the

expressive beat voice for which he has toured the US in his evangelism.

Collins, Martha. *Because What Else Could I Do*. University of Pittsburgh Press (Pittsburgh, PA) 2019. PB \$17.00.

*Because What Else Could I Do* is a sequence of fifty-five untitled short poems, almost all of them addressed to the poet's husband during the six months following his sudden and shocking death. Perhaps best known for her historical explorations of sociopolitical issues, Martha Collins did not originally intend to publish these poems. But while they are intensely personal, they make use of all of her poetic attention and skills. Spare, fragmented, musical even in their most heartbreakng moments, the poems allow the reader to share both an intimate expression of the poet's grief and a moving record of her attempt to comprehend the events surrounding her loss.

Friebert, Stuart. *A Double Life: In Poetry and Translation*. Pinyon Publishing (Montrose, CO) 2019. PB \$18.00.

As recounted in the memoir-essays and poignant late poems in *A Double Life*, the distinguished co-founding editor of *Field* and poet-translator, Stuart Friebert, has led the kind of globe-trotting "double life" that makes for the stuff of legend. There are fabled meetings with the likes of Günter Grass in Berlin and Paul Celan in Paris (not to mention the stray run-in with secret police in Bucharest before the fall of Ceausescu!). But Friebert also includes a sparkling homage to his late colleague, the co-founder of *Umbra* (with Langston Hughes and Alice Walker), Calvin Hernton. The volume richly concludes with

an expert's guide to teaching literary translation.

Hassler, David, Jessica Jewell, and Stephanie Siciarz, eds. *I Hear the World Sing: Italian and American Children Joined in Poetry*. Kent State University Press (Kent, OH) 2019. PB \$19.95.

When schoolchildren from Kent, Ohio, and Florence, Italy, were invited to express their thoughts about "Where I'm From" in poetry, the connections that emerged between these students from different continents were remarkable. Their responses to this prompt – "lo vengo da" in Italian – demonstrate the underlying importance of home, families, the natural world, and the creative identities that children harbor within them. The 40 poems in *I Hear the World Sing*, printed in both English and Italian, are presented in three sections – "The Chirp of Little Birds," "Witness the River," and "I Write to Grow a World" – which explore and celebrate the commonalities between us. Anyone can be a poet, no matter the language one speaks or writes. And by presenting each poem in two languages, this collection emphasizes how successfully poetry transcends both physical and linguistic boundaries, no matter the age of the poet.

Heath, William. *Night Moves in Ohio*. Finishing Line Press (Georgetown, KY) 2019. PB \$14.99. When William Heath began writing poetry in the 1960s, James Wright hailed him as "one of the most brilliantly accomplished and gifted young poets to appear in the United States in quite some time." Now after an award-winning career as

a novelist, historian, and literary critic, he has returned to his first love. *Night Moves in Ohio* vividly captures his memories of growing up in Poland, Ohio, a suburb of mobbed-up Youngstown, the city at the heart of the thriving Steel Valley but notorious as Little Chicago for its numerous gang-land bombings ("Youngstown tune-ups"). Heath's poems, by turns raunchy and poignant, evoke via his unblinking eye, ironic asides, and acute ear for the American idiom, the dangers and delights of a by-gone era.

Kell, Charles. *Cage of Lit Glass*. Autumn House Press (Pittsburgh, PA) 2019. PB \$16.95.

The debut poetry collection of Charles Kell, *Cage of Lit Glass* engages themes of death, incarceration, and family through a range of physical, emotional, and philosophical spaces. In startling images of beauty and violence, Kell creates a haunting world that mirrors our individual and cultural fears. *Cage of Lit Glass* follows multiple individuals and points of view, all haunted by various states of unease and struggle that follow them like specters as they navigate their world. Kell's poems form blurred narratives and playful experiments from our attempts to build lives from despair. A tense and insightful collection, these works will follow the reader long after the book is finished.

Mash, Terri. *A Cultured Girl*. Monday Creek Publishing (Butchtel, OH) 2019. PB \$17.99.

From Ohio, USA, Terri Mash finds joy living in the rural hills of southeastern Ohio. Sitting on her front porch, Terri writes of her family, friends, horses, dogs, and

more. She finds quiet time by the creek and under the pine canopy, nestled in the needles, where she remembers her past as she plans her future. A heartfelt poet and illustrator, Terri invites you into the mind of *A Cultured Girl*.

Mullet, Robin, and Holli Rainwater. *The Curve of Her Arm*. NightBallet Press (Elyria, OH) 2019. PB \$15.00. *The Curve of Her Arm* is a forty-page book containing thirty-three haiku and poems, Rainwater's haiku appearing first, with Mullet's parallel poems on the opposite pages. Each form is introduced within the poem that explores it.

Schubert, Karen. *Dear Youngstown*. NightBallet Press (Elyria, OH) 2019. PB \$15.00.

In *Dear Youngstown*, poet Karen Schubert delves into stories meant to convey emotional truths about living in Youngstown, Ohio. From the opening poem, "Reading at the Old Ward Bakery" to the ending poem "After the New Yorker Festival," Schubert gently leads you through reminiscence and recall, offers observation, appreciation, and tribute to a city she clearly loves.

Townsend, Ann. *Dear Delinquent: Poems*. Sarabande Books (Louisville, KY) 2019. PB \$15.95.

Is it possible for poetry to be simultaneously raw and elegant, direct and oblique, hurtful and consoling? Yes, says *Dear Delinquent*, Ann Townsend's new collection. "My heart presses my ribcage like an octagon fist," she writes, taking on the persona of both betrayed and betrayer. Through poems that masterfully recall the styles of Sylvia Plath or Philip Larkin, Townsend convinces us that,

even if its most destructive forms, love is the driving force behind all behavior.

Weldon, Laura Grace. *Blackbird: Poems*. Grayson Books (West Hartford, CT) 2019. PB \$15.95. This collection casts an uncommonly bright glow. In clear language these poems explore themes of connection and healing through subjects as unusual as cow pastures, dictionaries, to-do lists, and astrophysics. Beauty is revealed in what one reviewer calls "sacraments of the ordinary." Perfect for poetry lovers and those who haven't read a poem in years. A portion of all book royalties will be donated to the Medina Raptor Center, a non-profit center in Ohio which rescues, rehabilitates, and releases injured and orphaned birds.

## CHILDREN'S

Ashman, Linda. Illus. by Jamey Christoph. *Outside My Window*. Eerdmans Books for Young Readers (Grand Rapids, MI) 2018. HC \$17.00. Children living in different parts of the world see very different things when they gaze out of their windows. One child looks out over a boulevard lined with palm trees, another sees a train whistling past snow-capped mountains, and another waves to her father as he tends to their garden. But while their lives may seem different, there's something important that they all share. This book will spark readers' curiosity and imagination with its celebration of global diversity.

Bayer, Vanessa. Illus. by Rosie Butcher. *How Do You Care for a Very Sick Bear?* Feiwel and Friends (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$16.99.

When someone dear is dealing with illness, it's difficult to know what to do or say. The actor Vanessa Bayer experienced this firsthand when she was treated for childhood leukemia. In her first children's book, she offers gentle, reassuring advice that people of all ages will appreciate.

Black, Patricia L.H. Illus. by Deborah Hayhurst. *Twillaby Pond*. Monday Creek Publishing (Buchtel, OH) 2019. HC \$19.99.

A little wee pock and a water-blue pret sail off across Twillaby Pond on a wind-blown leaf to more adventure than they expected – sailing through a rainbow, meeting a whole new world of pond inhabitants they'd never even known about. Exhausted at the end of a long, long day and worried about how to get back home they get assistance from an unexpected source.

Burchwell, Erin M. *Pip's Path Through Lancaster, Ohio*. Orange Frazer Press (Wilmington, OH) 2019. HC \$19.99.

Follow Pip and Pepper as they seek adventure and excitement in Lancaster, Ohio. Beautiful illustrations offer clues that launch the curious reader into an interactive scavenger hunt along with the characters. In the process, Pip steps out of his comfort zone to make new friends, and at the end of the journey he finds a special surprise. Children and grown-ups alike will enjoy seeing the familiar sites of our beautiful town.

The Gagnon Family. Illus. by Seth Yoder. *Cowboy Joel and the Wild Wild West*. JPV Press (Winesburg, OH) 2019. HC \$17.95. Cowboy Joel and Blackbeard find themselves face to face with El

Maton, the most feared desperado in the West. When El Maton mocks him for the way he looks, Joel must confront his biggest fear; a tongue-slingin' with the outlaw. Can Blackbeard convince Joel to do it? Will Joel find the courage? Note to Mom and Dad: Cowboy Joel will teach your child that it's not always about punching the bully. It's about being confident in who God made them to be, and using those truths to fight the battle in their mind.

Gilbert, Frances. Illus. by Allison Black. *Go, Girls, Go!* Beach Lane Books (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$17.99.

Come along for a rollicking ride in this picture book celebration of vehicles that puts girls in the driver's seat! Girls can race...and girls can fly. Girls can rocket way up high! Piloting fire trucks, trains, tractors, and more, the girls in this book are on the go! Join them for an exuberant journey that celebrates how girls can do - and drive - anything.

Guidroz, Rukhsanna. Illus. by Dinara Mirtalipova. *Leila in Saffron*. Salaam Reads (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$17.99.

When Leila looks in the mirror, she doesn't know if she likes what she sees. But when her grandmother tells her the saffron beads on her scarf suit her, she feels a tiny bit better. So, Leila spends the rest of their family dinner night on the lookout for other parts of her she does like. Follow Leila's journey as she uses her senses of sight, smell, taste, and touch to seek out the characteristics that make up her unique identity, and finds reasons to feel proud of herself, just as she is.

Houts, Michelle. Illus. by Bagram Ibatoulline. *Sea Glass Summer*. Candlewick Press (Somerville, MA) 2019. HC \$16.99.

One summer, a boy named Thomas visits his grandmother at her seaside cottage. She gives him a magnifying glass that once belonged to his grandfather, and with it Thomas explores the beach, turning grains of sand into rocks and dark clamshells into swirling mazes of black, gray, and white. When his grandmother shows him a piece of sea glass, Thomas is transfixed. That night he dreams of an old shipyard and the breaking of a bottle. Could the very piece of sea glass on his nightstand have come from that bottle? For the rest of the summer, he searches for more sea glass and hopes to have dreams that will reveal more of the sea's secrets. A stunning ode to stories and the seaside, this picture book invites readers to imagine the ocean of possibility that lives in every small or forgotten treasure.

Johnston, Tony. Illus. by Emily Dove. *Spencer and Vincent: The Jellyfish Brothers*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$17.99.

Spencer and Vincent are jellyfish brothers who live together in the sea, their wet and shining home. One day a wave of superior magnitude separates them! The brothers know they have to do whatever it takes to find each other again. And they'll need some help along the way. Sometimes friends can really make a difference. *Spencer and Vincent* is a story of adventures and the bond of family.

Mora, Oge. *Saturday*. Little, Brown and Company (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$18.99.

In this heartfelt and universal story, a mother and daughter look forward to their special Saturday routine together every single week. But this Saturday, one thing after another goes wrong--ruining storytime, salon time, picnic time, and the puppet show they'd been looking forward to going to all week. Mom is nearing a meltdown...until her loving daughter reminds her that being together is the most important thing of all. Author-artist Oge Mora's highly anticipated follow up to Caldecott Honor *Thank You, Omu!* features the same magnificently radiant artwork and celebration of sharing so beloved in her debut picture book.

Mora, Oge. *Thank You, Omu!* Little, Brown and Company (New York, NY) 2018. HC \$18.99.

Debut author-illustrator Oge Mora brings to life a heartwarming story of sharing and community in colorful cut-paper designs as luscious as Omu's stew, with an extra serving of love. An author's note explains that "Omu" (pronounced AH-moo) means "queen" in the Igbo language of her parents, but growing up, she used it to mean "Grandma." This book was inspired by the strong female role models in Mora's life.

Narh, Samuel. Illus. by Jo Loring-Fisher. *Maisie's Scrapbook*. Lantana Publishing (London, UK) 2019. HC \$17.99.

As the seasons turn, Maisie rides her bull in and out of Dada's tall tales. Her Mama wears linen and plays the viola. Her Dada wears kente cloth and plays the marimba. They come from different places, but they hug her in the same way and they love her just the same. A joyful celebration of a mixed-race family and the love that binds us all together.

Parsons, Celeste, ed. Illus. by Hannah Sickles. *Nelsonville from A to Z*. Stuart's Opera House Arts Education Program/Monday Creek Publishing (Nelsonville/Buchtel, OH) 2019. HC \$19.99.

This unique alphabet book explores places in and around Nelsonville, a small town in southeastern Ohio. Watercolors by local artist Hannah Sickles and short poems by area writers provide an ideal introduction to the town's history and attractions. A perfect bookshelf addition for readers of any age.

Tharp, Jason. *Bunny Will Not Smile!* Ready-to-Read/Simon Spotlight (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$17.99.

A bear named Big has a problem. His friend Bunny will not smile, no matter what Big tries, so Big needs your help! With appealing comic-inspired speech bubbles and interactive storytelling that prompts kids to do everything from turning the page, to leaning in so Big can whisper an idea, to making their silliest silly face, beginning readers will giggle their way through this Level 1 Ready-to-Read.

Tharp, Jason. *Kiwi Cannot Reach!* Ready-to-Read/Simon Spotlight (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$17.99. Kiwi sees a rope. He wants to pull it, but he cannot reach! What will happen next? Beginning readers can help Kiwi by turning the pages, shaking the book, and more in this interactive story from the author of *Bunny Will Not Smile!*

Zachariah, Abdul-Razak. Illus. by Keturah Bobo. *The Night is Yours*. Dial Books for Young Readers (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$17.99.

This lyrical text, narrated to a young

girl named Amani by her father, follows her as she plays an evening game of hide-and-seek with friends at her apartment complex. The moon's glow helps Amani find the last hidden child, and seems almost like a partner to her in her game, as well as a spotlight pointing out her beauty and strength. This is a gorgeous bedtime read-aloud about joy and family, love and community, and most of all about feeling great in your own skin.

## MIDDLE GRADE & YOUNG ADULT

Bundy, Tamara. *Pixie Pushes On*. Nancy Paulsen Books (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$16.99.

Pixie's defenses are up, and it's no wonder. She's been uprooted, the chickens seem to have it in for her, and now her beloved sister, Charlotte, has been stricken with polio and whisked away into quarantine. So it's not surprising Pixie lashes out. But her habit of making snap judgements – and giving her classmates nicknames like "Rotten Ricky" and "Big-Mouth Berta" – hasn't won her any friends. At least life on the farm is getting better with the delivery of its newest resident – a runt baby lamb. Raising Buster takes patience and understanding – and this slowing down helps Pixie put things in better perspective. So too does paying attention to her neighbors, and finding that with the war on, she's not the only one missing someone. As Pixie pushes past her own pain to become a bigger person, she's finally able to make friends; and to laugh about the fact that it is in places where she least expected it.

Chima, Cinda Williams.

*Deathcaster: A Shattered Realms Novel*. HarperTeen (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$18.99.

In this indispensable conclusion to the New York Times bestselling *Shattered Realms* series, Warrior Alyssa ana'Raisa would do anything to protect her home, the Fells, and her legacy, the Gray Wolf line. But as a prisoner of Empress Celestine, Lyss is forced to turn her fearsome talents as an army commander against her beloved homeland. Refusal would swiftly lead to her death, and her death would end the Gray Wolf line. In Lyss's absence, Fellsmarch Castle swarms with intrigue, deception, and a primordial threat. Destin Karn, a southern spymaster with a hidden agenda of his own, might be the queendom's only hope of defeating the forces aligned against the Seven Realms...as well as the enemies within the castle.

Daigneau, Jean. *Code Cracking for Kids: Secret Communication Throughout History, with 21 Codes and Ciphers*. Chicago Review Press (Chicago, IL) 2019. PB \$16.99.

People throughout history have written messages in code and ciphers to pass along closely held, secret information. Today, countries around the world enlist cryptanalysts to intercept and crack messages to keep our world safe.

*Code Cracking for Kids* explores many aspects of cryptology, including famous people who used and invented codes and ciphers, such as Julius Caesar and Thomas Jefferson; codes used during wars, including the Enigma machine, whose cracking helped the Allies gather critical information on German intelligence in World War II; and work currently being done

by the government, such as in the National Security Agency. Readers also will learn about unsolved codes and ciphers throughout history, little-known codes used today, and devices used over the years by governments and their spies to conceal information. *Code Cracking for Kids* includes hands-on activities that allow kids to replicate early code devices, learn several different codes and ciphers to encode and decode messages, and hide a secret message inside a hollow egg.

**Farquhar, Polly. *Itch*.** Holiday House (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$17.99. After a tornado tears the roof of the school cafeteria, and Itch's mother goes on a two-month business trip in China, Itch's sixth grade year begins badly – particularly because he can't do fractions. At least he has his job at the pheasant farm, and the guys at school and Sydney to hang out with when he's not working. But when trading school lunches goes wrong and Sydney gets rushed away in an ambulance, Itch thinks it's his fault. When you suddenly don't have any friends, would you do anything – even things that are wrong – to get them back? This novel by a debut author, set in the Ohio heartland, captures the issues and feelings of being in middle school in a warm, humorous, and above all, recognizable, way.

**Gleisser, Sheldon. *Dianasaurus Rex*.** Hydra Publications (Goshen, KY) 2019. PB \$14.99. Nothing is impossible. Disintegration and re-integration of solid matter? Time Travel? Gene splicing? Not Science Fiction, not any more. The freakish terrorist incident should have killed sixteen-year-old Diana Dunphy. Instead,

she has an all-new body and some all-new abilities. Abilities courtesy of the most fearsome predator ever to walk the Earth.

**McGinnis, Mindy. *Be Not Far From Me*.** Katherine Tegen Books (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$18.99. *Hatchet* meets *Wild* in this harrowing YA survival story about a teenage girl's attempt to endure the impossible, from the Edgar Award-winning author of *The Female of the Species*, Mindy McGinnis. The world is not tame. Ashley knows this truth deep in her bones, more at home with trees overhead than a roof. So when she goes hiking in the Smokies with her friends for a night of partying, the falling dark and creaking trees are second nature to her. But people are not tame either. And when Ashley catches her boyfriend with another girl, drunken rage sends her running into the night, stopped only by a nasty fall into a ravine. Morning brings the realization that she's alone - and far off trail. Lost in undisturbed forest and with nothing but the clothes on her back, Ashley must figure out how to survive with the red streak of infection creeping up her leg.

**Rogerson, Margaret. *Sorcery of Thorns*.** Margaret K. McElderry Books (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$17.99.

All sorcerers are evil. Elisabeth has known that as long as she has known anything. Raised as a foundling in one of Austermeer's Great Libraries, Elisabeth has grown up among the tools of sorcery - magical grimoires that whisper on shelves and rattle beneath iron chains. If provoked, they transform into grotesque monsters of ink and leather. Then an act of sabotage releases the

library's most dangerous grimoire, and Elisabeth is implicated in the crime. With no one to turn to but her sworn enemy, the sorcerer Nathaniel Thorn, and his mysterious demonic servant, she finds herself entangled in a centuries-old conspiracy. Not only could the Great Libraries go up in flames, but the world along with them. As her alliance with Nathaniel grows stronger, Elisabeth starts to question everything she's been taught - about sorcerers, about the libraries she loves, even about herself. For Elisabeth has a power she has never guessed, and a future she could never have imagined.

**Rubini, Julie K. *Eye to Eye: Sports Journalist Christine Brennan*.** Ohio University Press (Athens, OH) 2019. PB \$14.95.

Christine Brennan, the *USA Today* sports columnist, author, and commentator, uses her voice to advocate for diversity and equality in the world of sports, and her wisdom to encourage future journalists. Her passion for sports was sparked by her dad, who encouraged her to participate in athletics and, as he said, "smell the game" – go watch baseball and football games together. As a child, Christine wrote daily entries in her diary and listened to play-by-play coverage on her radio. She pursued this love of words through journalism school and applied her passion for sports by reporting on them for various newspapers. Since then, she has portrayed the setbacks and triumphs of athletes, all the while fighting her own battles for success - and respect – as a female journalist. From knocking down barriers in NFL locker rooms to covering every Olympics since 1984 to being the go-to commentator whenever scandal

occurs in the sports world, Christine Brennan has done it all. *Eye to Eye* invites young readers to learn more about this remarkable journalist and perhaps to nurture their own dreams of investigating and telling important stories.

Shumaker, Heather. *The Griffins of Castle Cary*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$17.99.

Siblings Meg, Will, and Ariel Griffin are off on an adventure! They can't wait to spend a week visiting their eccentric aunt and her giant, tongue-drooling Newfoundland dog in England. But when they finally arrive, they're faced with a few local secrets that stir up more than a little trouble. Add in some very peculiar lights, strange new friends, a police chase and some stampeding sheep, and the Griffin kids are in over their heads - literally. Apparently this town has a ghost problem and the three children must race to solve the mystery before the ghosts take something that doesn't belong to them.

Tyler, Tara. *Windy Hollow: Beast World Series Book 3*. Tara Tyler Author Productions (Cincinnati, OH) 2019. PB \$14.99.

This summer, Gabe and his beast buddies fly across the Great Sea for the wedding of the century: a dragon prince and a beautiful harpy. Dragon weddings are adventures in themselves, but behind the scenes, the High Council is delivering the Revelation - to tell the rest of the world: beasts and humans exist. Though Professor Hardaway warns Gabe and his friends to stay out of it, they overhear news of an evil human scientist and a vengeful were-ogre experimenting on beasts. They can't

resist sticking their snouts in and helping, whether the High Council wants it or not.

Vogel, D.W. *Superdungeon: The Forgotten King*. Future House Publishing (Provo, UT) 2019. PB \$16.95.

Treffen Cedarbough has trained his whole life to protect the Fae Woods. He knows what plants to eat and what plants will eat him. But most of all he knows that light magic in the Woods comes from the great and powerful Deeproot Tree. As the newest member of the Rangers, Treffen has vowed to protect the Tree with his life. When a deadly attack comes too close to Treffen's home, he seeks guidance from the elven elders and receives an ominous prophecy directly from the Tree. An old enemy of the kingdom, the Forgotten King, plots to break free of his ancient prison. And according to the prophecy, it's up to Treffen to stop this evil from escaping. With the help of a pedestrian knight and an adventuring princess, Treffen confronts the darkness. But each battle brings them one step closer to the Lordship Downs, the heart of all evil in the Woods, and to the Forgotten King's carefully laid trap. Deep into enemy territory, Treffen must choose between his sacred oath and the lives of his closest friends.

Warga, Jasmine. *Other Words for Home*. Balzer + Bray (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$16.99.

Jude never thought she'd be leaving her beloved older brother and father behind, all the way across the ocean in Syria. But when things in her hometown start becoming volatile, Jude and her mother are sent to live in Cincinnati with relatives. At first, everything in America seems too fast

and too loud. The American movies that Jude has always loved haven't quite prepared her for starting school in the US - and her new label of "Middle Eastern," an identity she's never known before. But this life also brings unexpected surprises - there are new friends, a whole new family, and a school musical that Jude might just try out for. Maybe America, too, is a place where Jude can be seen as she really is.

# Coming Soon

**A Mile and a Half of Lines:  
The Art of James Thurber**  
Through March 15, 2020  
Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus

A special exhibition curated by Ohioana Award-winning author, poet, and Thurber expert Michael J. Rosen that showcases the drawings of the Columbus native and beloved humorist. For more information visit [www.columbusmuseum.org](http://www.columbusmuseum.org).

**Ohioana Walter Rumsey Marvin Grant**  
Application deadline is January 31, 2020

This annual competition awards \$1,000 to an Ohio writer, age 30 or younger, who has not yet published a book. For more information and an application, please visit [www.ohioana.org/programs/ohioana-book-awards](http://www.ohioana.org/programs/ohioana-book-awards).

**Ohioana Book Club**  
February 19, 2020  
10:00 a.m. – noon  
Ohioana Library, Columbus

The book for February is *American Duchess* by New York Times and USA Today best-selling author Karen Harper. If you would like to attend, please e-mail us at [ohioana@ohioana.org](mailto:ohioana@ohioana.org).

**Author Event: Astronaut Kathy Sullivan**  
February 19, 2020  
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.  
Gramercy Books, Bexley

Kathryn Sullivan, the first female astronaut to do a spacewalk, discusses her debut memoir, *Handprints on Hubble: An Astronaut's Story of Invention*, with COSI CEO Dr. Frederic Bertley. For more information, visit [www.gramercybooksbexley.com/event/astronaut-kathy-sullivan-conversation-cosi-ceo-frederic-bertley](http://www.gramercybooksbexley.com/event/astronaut-kathy-sullivan-conversation-cosi-ceo-frederic-bertley).

**Brews + Prose at Market Garden Brewery**  
March 3, 2020  
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.  
Market Garden Brewery, Cleveland

The March edition features 2016 Ohioana Walter Rumsey Marvin Grant recipient Eliese Colette Goldbach in the launch of her debut book, *Rust: A Memoir of Steel and Grit*. For more, visit [www.brewsandprose.com](http://www.brewsandprose.com).

**Columbus Noir**  
March 3, 2020  
7:30 – 9:00 p.m.  
Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus

Author-editor Andrew Welsh-Huggins is joined by other contributors for the launch of the new mystery anthology, *Columbus Noir*, presented by Thurber House as part of the 2020 winter series of Evenings with Authors. For information and tickets, visit [www.thurberhouse.org](http://www.thurberhouse.org).

**The Write Stuff**

March 28, 2020  
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
Upper Arlington Main Library,  
Upper Arlington

The fifth annual day of information and inspiration for writers will feature presentations and workshops by local authors as well as an expo of local publishers and literary organizations. Registration is required, and space fills up quickly. Reserve your spot beginning March 1, 2020 at <https://write-stuff.eventbrite.com>.

**Ohioana Book Festival**

April 25, 2020  
10:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Columbus Metropolitan Library's Main Library, Columbus

Join us for the 14th annual Ohioana Book Festival at the beautiful Main Library of Columbus Metropolitan Library! The event features nearly 150 authors, panel discussions, a book fair, special activities for children and teens, food trucks, and more. Free and open to the public. No ticket and no advance registration required. For more information, visit [www.ohioana.org](http://www.ohioana.org).

To list a literary event in the *Ohioana Quarterly*, contact us at [ohioana@ohioana.org](mailto:ohioana@ohioana.org).

## Thank You!

The Ohioana Library wouldn't be the unique organization it is without our many generous supporters. Listed below are those who have given from September 1, 2019 through November 30, 2019. Special thanks to Governor Mike DeWine and the Ohio General Assembly for the state's ongoing support.

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## Why I Support Ohioana

Literature is a powerful thing.

That's exactly why I see so much potential in Ohioana. I think of the mission as not just collecting, preserving, and celebrating Ohio's literature, but also playing a significant role in moving the literary world forward. This is not to disregard or leave behind Ohioana's ninety-year history of literary impact, programming, and award-winning authors. I just believe from here Ohioana is uniquely positioned to do even more.

I think of all the ways that reading can change the trajectory of a person's life. How writing allows us to capture, process, and express the human experience. How sharing and celebrating stories can shift perspectives, spark discussions, and bring people together. How that first grant or award can give rise to the next literary greats. I think of what happens when literature is accessible and open to all.



Zora Neale Hurston once said, "Literature and other arts are supposed to hold up the mirror to nature. With only a fractional 'exceptional' and the 'quaint' portrayed, a true picture of life in America cannot be....these are the things that publishers and producers, as the accredited representatives of the American people, have not yet taken into consideration sufficiently."

As a queer woman from rural Ohio, as a writer, and as a member of the Ohioana Board of Trustees, I think of this quote often. I imagine what can happen when literature reflects all of Ohio and I recognize that we still have a ways to go. As we connect Ohio readers and writers, my hope is that Ohioana can begin to show that truer picture of life in Ohio and move literature forward as we do.

Ellen McDevitt-Stredney

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**Save the  
Date!**

**April 25, 2020**

Join us for the 14th annual Ohioana Book Festival, taking place Saturday, April 25, from 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Columbus Metropolitan Library's Main Library at 96 S. Grant Avenue, Columbus, OH 43215.

The festival will feature a book fair and book signings, panel discussions with your favorite authors, children's and teen actives, food trucks, and more. We hope to see you there!