

OHIOana QUARTERLY

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OHIOANA AT THE MOVIES

"THE SEQUEL"

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Collecting, Preserving, and Celebrating Ohio Literature

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OHIOana QUARTERLY

WINTER 2021

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From the Director

Dear Friends,



It's a question I'm sure we've all heard more than once: "Say, have you read any good books lately?" Or its variation, "Hey, seen any good movies lately?"

Books and movies . . . movies and books. The two are so related, they're almost twins. While not every book is made into a movie, and every movie is not based on a book, it's remarkable how many films start out that way. And books by Ohio authors have provided the source material for movies almost since the dawn of cinema. Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1852 novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had no less than nine adaptations in the Silent Era alone.

A few years ago, we took our first-ever look in the *Ohioana Quarterly* at Hollywood and films written by or based on books by Ohio authors. That article covered movies only to the early 2000s. With the past decade seeing a boom in the number of Ohio writers whose best-selling and award-winning books have been adapted for the screen, the time seemed ripe for an update. You'll find it in Morgan Peters' cover story, "Ohioana at the Movies: The Sequel." And test your movie IQ with the quiz on our back cover!

Additionally, we're delighted to present a special feature interview with Ernest Cline, whose debut book *Ready Player One* was a huge best-seller and turned into a blockbuster movie by Steven Spielberg. Cline spoke with us just as *Ready Player Two* hit bookstores worldwide.

It's 2021, and I'm sure all of us are hopeful that this new year will be better than the last, which itself seemed like a dystopian novel adapted into a disaster movie. As I write this, vaccines have just been approved which will help us finally to overcome the scourge of COVID-19. I know we're all looking forward soon to the day when we can gather safely once again with loved ones and friends, and enjoy all the many activities that bring us together as a community.

Until then, take care and thank you for all you do to support Ohio authors and their books—and movies!

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

David Weaver
Executive Director

ON THE COVER

We celebrate films based on books by Ohio authors in "Ohioana at the Movies: The Sequel" by Morgan Peters. Cover design and artwork by Kathryn Powers.

Ohioana at the Movies: The Sequel

by Morgan Peters

In a year marked by social distancing and staying home, many of us have found ourselves with a new wealth of free time and have had to find ways to stay busy and entertained. At Ohioana, one of our favorite activities is, of course, reading. We also love movies and TV shows, and are excited whenever a book by an Ohio author is brought to life on the screen. In 2020 alone, we have seen the release of two feature films and two television miniseries based on books by Ohio writers, with many others having been released in recent years.

In the cover story of the winter 2015 *Ohioana Quarterly*, "Going Hollywood: Ohioana at the Movies," we celebrated many of the great film adaptations that have been made from books by Ohio writers, from Jack Schaefer's *Shane* to Susan Orlean's *The Orchid Thief*. Just five years later, many other movies and TV shows have been added to this ever-growing roster. With winter setting in again, it's the perfect time to discuss these newer releases, including eight feature films (with two sequels) and two television miniseries. If you're feeling unsure of what to do while social distancing this winter, we hope you will check out some of the entries in this special feature. For more suggestions, be sure to revisit the above-mentioned article from winter of 2015, available on www.ohioana.org.

The Butler – 2013

The first entry on our list is based on Columbus native Wil Haygood's *The Butler: A Witness to History*. An expansion of an essay written by Haygood in 2008 called "A Butler Well Served by This Election," the book was

released alongside the movie in the summer of 2013. In advance of the historic 2008 presidential election where Barack Obama became the United State's first Black president, Haygood had the idea to interview Eugene Allen, a Black butler who had served in the White House during the presidencies of Harry Truman through Ronald Reagan. The result is an intimate account of the life of Allen and his wife, Helene Allen (changed in the movie to Cecil and Gloria Gaines). The book explores the history of race in American politics and offers perspectives on presidents as told by a man who had spent his career working for and with them. The movie was directed by Lee Daniels and stars Forest Whitaker and Oprah Winfrey as Cecil and Gloria Gaines. The cast also stars Mariah Carey, Cuba Gooding Jr., Robin Williams, John Cusack, Alan Rickman, and Jane Fonda.

My Boyfriends' Dogs – 2014

The Hallmark Channel is known for creating classic comedy-romance films, and their adaptation of *My Boyfriends' Dogs* by Dandi Daley Mackall is a great example of this. Mackall is a well-established Ohio author who has published over 450 books and counting for adults, teens, and children. *My Boyfriends' Dogs* was published in 2010 as a juvenile title about a teenage girl who stumbles into an after-hours diner in a soaked prom dress with three dogs in tow. The film adaptation is geared toward an older audience, with the main cast of characters reimagined as adults and the prom dress swapped for a wedding dress. The film was released in 2014 starring Erika Christensen, Teryl Rothery, and Emily Holmes.

Goosebumps – 2015

Few Ohio writers are more well-known than R. L. Stine. Author of the wildly popular *Goosebumps* series, Stine has written at least 300 books, has been referred to as the “Stephen King of children’s literature,” and his work has been adapted into video games, comic books, and a TV series that ran from 1995 to 1998. In 2013, it was revealed that a *Goosebumps* movie was in the works starring Jack Black as a fictionalized version of R. L. Stine himself. Stine was born in Columbus, Ohio, and grew up in the Columbus suburb of Bexley. He graduated from The Ohio State University in 1965, and later moved to New York City to further pursue his writing career.

Rather than focus on a single entry in the series, the *Goosebumps* film follows a teenage boy named Zach Cooper (Dylan Minette) who moves in next door to R. L. Stine and his daughter Hannah (Odeya Rush). After unintentionally releasing the monsters in Stine’s manuscripts, the three must join together to return them to their books before they wreak untold havoc. The film is a celebration of all of the themes most prevalent in the *Goosebumps* series—fear, monsters, and everything unusual. A sequel, *Goosebumps 2: Haunted Halloween*, was released in 2018.

Captain Underpants: The First Epic Movie – 2017

The first entry in the *Captain Underpants* series by Dav Pilkey, *The Adventures of Captain Underpants*, was released in 1997. It follows the titular superhero, created as a homemade comic book character by two fourth-grade students living in Piqua, Ohio. The *Captain Underpants* books are hybrid novel/graphic novels, and the series now includes twelve books, two activity books, and eleven spin-offs. Since the release of the first book, *Captain Underpants* has been a smash hit with children everywhere, as well as being one of the most frequently banned book series of all time.

In the mid-2010s, it was announced that *Captain Underpants* would be adapted into a CGI feature film by DreamWorks animation. The movie was released in 2017, followed by a sequel TV series on Netflix, *The Epic Tales of Captain Underpants*, in 2018. The character of Captain Underpants is voiced by Ed Helms, while Kevin Hart and Thomas Middleditch provide the voices for



Jack Black (left) stars in *Goosebumps* as a fictionalized version of author R. L. Stine (right). (Photo: Hopper Stone/Sony Pictures)

George Beard and Harold Hutchins, the two fourth-grade students.

Though Dav Pilkey might be best known for creating *Captain Underpants*, he has also written and illustrated a large number of other picture books and novels for children. One of which, his *Dragon* series, was adapted into a stop-motion television series that ran from 2004-2007 and had seventy-nine episodes. Pilkey was born in Cleveland, attended Kent State University, and now lives in Bainbridge Island, Washington, with his wife.

Ready Player One – 2018

1980s blockbusters. From *Back to the Future*, to *Ghostbusters*, to *Indiana Jones*, film in the 80s was a time of series, sci-fi and fantasy hits, and “high concept” plots. Ernest Cline’s *Ready Player One*, released in 2011, pays homage to this era of filmmaking, as well as other 80s cultural staples such as video games, books, and board games that were popular at the time. The novel is set in the 2040s in Columbus, Ohio, where the city has become the headquarters for the company that manages a worldwide virtual reality game called the OASIS. Despite the futuristic setting, the young protagonists must use their knowledge of “vintage” culture like *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Galaga*, and Stanley Kubrick films to complete a quest that is central to the plot.

The novel's extreme popularity led to a film adaptation, directed by none other than Steven Spielberg. The film retains the same charm and appeal of the book as a coming-of-age story and thrilling adventure, as well as a love letter to popular classic films, games, and literature. Ernest Cline was born in Ashland, Ohio, and lived in Columbus as an adult before ultimately settling in Austin, Texas. The popularity of *Ready Player One* led to a sequel, *Ready Player Two*, released in November of 2020.

You'll find an exclusive interview with Ernest Cline, as well as a review of *Ready Player Two*, later in this issue.

Ophelia – 2019

Of William Shakespeare's works, *Hamlet* is both the longest and one of the most well-known. It has been performed on stage countless times and adapted for both film and TV, including iterations that have remade and reworked the story. The Prince of Denmark is *Hamlet's* star, but the story contains many other iconic and intriguing characters including Ophelia, the potential wife of Hamlet. In Lisa Klein's 2006 young adult novel, *Ophelia*, she explores the classic tragedy from a new perspective, reimagining the story from Ophelia's point of view.

Production of the film version of *Ophelia* took place during the spring and summer of 2017, and it was released in theaters on June 28, 2019. The film stars Daisy Ridley in the title role, alongside Naomi Watts and Clive Owen. The film was praised particularly for Ridley's performance, the visuals, and musical score. *Ophelia* was Lisa Klein's first novel and she has since published several others, including one from the perspective of the daughter of Macbeth, another classic Shakespeare work.

A full interview with Lisa Klein is available online on Ohioana's blog in a post from July 19, 2019.



From left to right: Kerry Washington, Celeste Ng and Reese Witherspoon on the set of *Little Fires Everywhere*. (Photo: Erin Simikin/Hulu)

Little Fires Everywhere – 2020

On this list, *Little Fires Everywhere* is one of two releases that is not a movie. Rather, this adaptation is an eight-episode miniseries aired by Hulu from March to April of 2020. The miniseries is based on a novel of the same name written by Celeste Ng. The novel was released in 2017 to critical acclaim and was the winner of an Ohioana Award in 2018. Ng spent part of her childhood growing up in Shaker Heights, a suburb of Cleveland in which the story of *Little Fires Everywhere* takes place. Set in the late 1990s, *Little Fires Everywhere* explores topics of inequality, motherhood, sexuality, immigration, friendship, and family relationships. The miniseries stars Reese Witherspoon, Kerry Washington, and Lexi Underwood.

Witherspoon discovered *Little Fires Everywhere* in 2017 before the novel's official publication, and began plans for a limited series adaptation almost immediately. It was only a few short months after picking the book for her book club that it was announced on March 2, 2018, that the miniseries was officially in production, with Witherspoon starring.

You can read more about the television adaptation of *Little Fires Everywhere* on Ohioana's blog in a post from May 1, 2020.

The Devil All the Time – 2020

Just southwest of Chillicothe, Ohio, is a small village known as Knockemstiff. Though the origins of the village's name aren't fully known or agreed upon, it's a fascinating and unique place to call home. Writer Donald Ray Pollock grew up in Knockemstiff and released his first book in 2008, a collection of short stories that shares the town's name. Pollock's second release and first novel, *The Devil All the Time*, returns to the setting of Knockemstiff and also features the fictional town of Meade, Ohio, based on Chillicothe. In *The Devil All the Time*, Pollock explores a fictionalized history of the area in which he grew up and has lived most of his life.

The film adaptation of *The Devil All the Time* was announced in 2018, with Jake Gyllenhaal serving as producer. Bill Skarsgård, Tom Holland, Robert Pattinson, and Harry Melling were announced as stars, and production began in the winter of 2019. Because of the Coronavirus pandemic, the film had a limited theater release on September 11, 2020, and a worldwide digital release on Netflix on September 16. Notably, parts of the film are narrated by Pollock himself, quoting directly from the novel.

Hillbilly Elegy – 2020

In 2016, J. D. Vance's memoir, *Hillbilly Elegy*, became a runaway success, and won an Ohioana Award the following year. In the book, Vance remembers his upbringing in the small city of Middletown, Ohio. He describes a life of poverty and his mother's addictions, and contrasts this with his later journey of attending The Ohio State University and Yale Law School to become a lawyer. His story and anecdotes resonated with a wide variety of readers, especially those living in the many small towns of Ohio and undergoing similar struggles. The book's release coincided with the 2016 election, which spurred its success as well, seen by some as offering a window into the lives and perspectives of the white working class.

The film rights to the adaptation of the book were sold in 2017, and Amy Adams, Glenn Close, and Gabriel Basso were announced to star in the film. Part of the movie was filmed in Middletown itself, though most filming took place in Georgia. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic,

the movie had a limited theater release for two weeks in November before streaming on Netflix on November 24, 2020. Vance now lives in Cincinnati and works as a venture capitalist.

The Queen's Gambit – 2020

The second television miniseries on our list, *The Queen's Gambit*, is based on a 1983 novel of the same name by Walter Tevis. It was Tevis' penultimate work, published just a year before his death, and explores the life of a female chess prodigy. It covers themes of adoption, feminism, drug addiction, and alcoholism. Tevis was born and raised in San Francisco and wrote the novel while living in New York City. However, he spent over a decade in the 1960s and 1970s teaching literature and creative writing at Ohio University in Athens, and portions of *The Queen's Gambit* are set in Cincinnati. The television adaptation stars Anya Taylor-Joy as the main character, Beth Harmon.

Production of the miniseries began in March of 2019, over thirty-five years after the novel's publication. However, the writer and director of the series, Scott Frank, purchased the screenplay rights from Tevis' widow in 1992 and had been attempting to adapt the novel to screen ever since. Many who have watched the seven-part miniseries would agree that it is worth the twenty-eight years in the making—on November 23, 2020, exactly one month after the series' release, *The Queen's Gambit* surpassed sixty-two million viewers and became Netflix's "biggest scripted limited series to date."

To Be Continued...

The past few years have been a lucrative time for movies and television shows based on books by Ohio writers. The work of Ohio authors is diverse, containing themes that connect and resonate with readers and viewers worldwide. And with so many great new Ohio books being published all the time, we predict many more adaptations to come for both the silver screen and home television streaming. We're excited to keep watching, celebrating, and promoting these works and hope you are, too!

Quiz Answers: (1) Jack Black (2) Steven Spielberg (3) Celeste Ng (4) Donald Ray Pollock.

A Conversation with Ernest Cline

by David Weaver



Photo by Dan Winters

Ernest Cline is a #1 *New York Times* bestselling novelist, screenwriter, father, and full-time geek. He is the author of the novels *Ready Player One* and *Armada* and co-screenwriter of the film adaptation of *Ready Player One*, directed by Steven Spielberg. His books have been published in over fifty countries and have spent more than one hundred weeks on the *New York Times* bestsellers list. He lives in Austin, Texas, with his daughter, a time-traveling DeLorean, and a large collection of classic video games. Cline spoke recently with the *Ohioana Quarterly* following the release of his latest book, *Ready Player Two*.

Q When you were working on *Ready Player One*, did you think it would be as popular as it has become?

A I had no idea my first novel would become so popular with so many readers. And I never thought it would be turned into a film. I continue to be pleasantly surprised by its success.

Q What was it like working with Steven Spielberg on the movie? How involved were you with the process?

A It was the best collaborative creative experience I've ever had. I was lucky enough to be one of the screenwriters of the film adaptation, and I spent a lot of time on the set during filming. It was a wonderful experience. Every novelist who has their work adapted into a film should be so lucky.

Q Ohio features heavily in your work—growing up here clearly had a big impact on you! Why did you decide to set much of *Ready Player One* in your home state? Do you think Columbus has the potential to become the mega-metropolis from your story? How did your life in Ohio inspire your work?

A I set *Ready Player One* in Columbus because I lived there for many years, and I also worked in technical support at CompuServe, one of the first online information services. It seemed like a fun idea to transform Columbus into a technological hub of the future. I couldn't say if it will ever actually become one in reality—anything is possible.

Growing up in Ohio has had a profound effect on my writing, since that was where I experienced the pop culture of the 70s and 80s, as well as the rise of video games and home computers—all things I draw upon in my work.



Cline on set. Courtesy of Dan Farah.



Steven Spielberg and Ernest Cline on set. Courtesy of Dan Farah.

Q Readers of *Ready Player One* are really excited to return to that world—what are you most excited for them to see in *Ready Player Two*?

A I'm excited for them to experience the whole story, and to see how the OASIS and each of the characters evolve.

Q Along with Ohio, another theme that features heavily in your work is 1980s culture. Why do you think the messages and references to this time period stay so relevant and popular with modern readers?

A Because the 1980s was when we acquired a lot of the technology that would change our lives and set

us on the path to where we are today. It was the dawn of video games, home computers, home video, and also a golden age for movies and music—all things that still resonant with people today.

Q What inspired you to become a writer? Were there any specific books or authors that sparked your passion and led you to this career?

A I loved escaping to books when I was growing up, and there were a lot of different writers who inspired me to become a writer, too. Stephen King. Tolkien. William Gibson. Neal Stephenson. And especially Kurt Vonnegut.

Q The COVID-19 pandemic has moved modern society online in more ways than ever before: education, commerce, health care, socializing, and more. Do you think a virtual reality universe like the OASIS could be more fact than fiction in the near future?

A VR universes are already becoming a reality. There are already virtual worlds like *World of Warcraft* and *Roblox* that are visited by millions of people every day. And VR headsets are also becoming more affordable and easier to use. I don't think it will be long before we see the rise of a virtual world similar to the OASIS, and it will be interesting to see how many people embrace it. Only time will tell!

Days after winning OASIS founder James Halliday's contest, Wade Watts makes a discovery that changes everything. Hidden within Halliday's vaults, waiting for his heir to find, lies a technological advancement that will once again change the world and make the OASIS a thousand times more wondrous—and addictive—than even Wade dreamed possible. With it comes a new riddle, and a new quest—a last Easter egg from Halliday, hinting at a mysterious prize. And an unexpected, impossibly powerful, and dangerous new rival awaits, one who'll kill millions to get what he wants.

Wade's life and the future of the OASIS are again at stake, but this time the fate of humanity also hangs in the balance.

—from *Ballantine Books*



Book Reviews

NONFICTION

Armstrong, Beth. *Voices from the Ape House*.

Trillium/The Ohio State University Press (Columbus, OH)
2020. PB \$19.95.

Are you an animal lover? Do you enjoy going to the zoo? Have you watched “Jungle Jack” Hanna’s antics on TV? Do you watch the wonderful *Secrets of the Zoo* on the National Geographic Wild channel? If you’ve answered “Yes” to any of those questions, then we have a book for you!

Voices from the Ape House by Beth Armstrong is about the author’s experiences working as a zookeeper in the Ape House at the internationally famous Columbus Zoo, which has long been at the forefront of captive gorilla management and conservation. Armstrong has documented nearly thirty years’ worth of her and colleagues’ insights into the zoo’s progress of caring for gorillas. In short, readable chapters, you will come to know Bongo, Colo, Fossey, Mumbah, and many more as Armstrong carefully recounts her observations of the gorillas.

The chapters usually focus on an incident involving one or more of the gorillas. She came to know each ape well, and describes them and the troops in such detail that the reader wishes they could get to know these great apes as well as the writer. Armstrong obviously cared tremendously about them, and not just those in her charge at the Columbus Zoo, but gorillas in all zoos and those still in the wild. So much so, that she was one of the founders of *The Gorilla Gazette*, which became respected internationally, and frequently wrote articles for it.

Armstrong stresses the zoo’s role in animal conservation organizations around the world.



“Conservation was risky...and a competitive business...but Columbus was willing to take chances and because of that our reputation grew. Beginning in 1990, under Jack Hanna, not only would Columbus drastically change gorilla husbandry, but that innovative atmosphere would eventually lead to the Columbus Zoo becoming a quiet, but effective conservation leader...before supporting fieldwork was considered hip and the right thing to do...I was proud that we were a zoo that was responsive to the needs of field researchers and conservationists.”

Being a zookeeper meant taking time to watch the gorillas individually and collectively, to ensure that all was well within each troop of the great apes, and to note and react to any health issues or changes, including pregnancies. “There is nothing better in the afternoon than to sit down for some observation time,” Armstrong writes.

It would have helped to have detailed illustrations of the gorilla enclosures and passageways included, especially since the daily process of moving gorillas outside and inside is frequently discussed. But there are many black and white photographs sprinkled throughout the book, putting faces of gorillas together with their names from the text. As you study the pictured gorillas, you will envy Armstrong’s closeness with these great apes, for as she writes, “We are so similar to them that it boggles the mind sometimes...Some studies have shown that we humans may share as much as 98% of our genes with gorillas.”

Several times Armstrong notes the very positive influence of zoo director Jack Hanna, saying that he “created such a rich and creative environment that his staff felt as if they could accomplish anything.”

Among the several helpful appendices, one stands out: “Gorilla Communications.” It describes the meanings of gorilla facial expressions, body language, and vocalizations, meticulously compiled by Armstrong and based on her years of time with the great apes.

After reading this delightful book, I’m going to become a Columbus Zoo member and visit the zoo as soon as

BOOK REVIEWS | NONFICTION

possible. I plan to devote extra time to observe the gorillas which Armstrong has lovingly described.

REVIEWED BY GEORGE COWMEADOW BAUMAN, WHO WAS THE CO-OWNER OF THE LATE ACORN BOOKSHOP, AND HAS WRITTEN FOR THE OHIOANA QUARTERLY FOR MANY YEARS. HE LOVES BOOKS, BASEBALL, READING, CATS, AND LINDA.

Jolie, Raechel Anne. *Rust Belt Femme*.
Belt Publishing (Cleveland, OH) 2020. HC \$26.

A story of love and a testament of forgiveness, *Rust Belt Femme* is a coming-of-age memoir that conveys a love of self and a gentleness that honestly surprised me. So often those of us who grew up in poverty are taught to hate ourselves, to hate where we came from, our families, and the struggle we went through. Raechel Anne Jolie busts that mold in the most stirring, empathetic way imaginable with this story of her struggle with class and identity.



This is a very personal examination of not only class but gender and sexuality, set against the backdrop of the late 1990s and early 2000s, of 9/11 and the Iraq War, of the “alternative” political punk and underground scene in Cleveland. Almost every chapter title is from a song, and Jolie’s joy in the music and the vivid emotions and memories it evokes for her are palpable, even when I had never heard of the artists she mentions. She describes her feelings of alienation, sorrow, and despair after a horrible, random accident left her father physically in her life, but damaged his mind to the point that she guiltily feels like he died. A sexual assault she experienced at a very young age leaves her traumatized and given a full PTSD diagnosis, but it does not destroy her. The book is also practically a love letter to her mother, a strong, loving woman who quit alcohol cold turkey after her husband’s accident and cared fiercely for her daughter, even as she failed her in a number of ways.

Those failures (and many triumphs) helped shape the person Jolie would become, and the sheer love and forgiveness she has for her mother, as well as for the grandparents, uncles, friends, and romantic interests she grew up with, is inspiring. Jolie has so much

empathy for the people around her, and for herself, that she made me examine the way I look at my own life and my own choices and relationships. As she grows up and begins to find her own identity as a queer woman, a feminist, and a femme person, she never loses sight of where she comes from, nor does she judge the city or people who raised her. Additionally, though she fully recognizes the shortcomings of her upbringing, she does so without once losing sight of the privilege she did have as an able-bodied, cis white person.

Jolie states, “I think most of us who are drawn to memoir are burdened with an incurable case of nostalgia,” and she is very kind even to people who do not deserve it. But at the same time, unlike other recent Rust Belt and Appalachian memoirs, her narrative is more heartfelt, with a genuine love and understanding of both the people and community that formed her.

“I breathe easier when I am in Ohio. My lungs grow bigger there. I am surrounded by decay, graffiti that begs the governor for a clean needle exchange...I am sometimes on the same street that took my father. And yet.”

And yet. And yet, she continues to return to Ohio, which she refers to as “back home” even now—even after love and success in other states, after other heartbreaks, and brushes with other viewpoints and ways of living. She refers to herself as a “class-straddler,” with one foot always firmly in Valley View. Others of us who “got out” can see ourselves in this compassionate, beautiful work. It is like listening to a mix tape you love on repeat: I couldn’t get enough.

REVIEWED BY COURTNEY BROWN, OHIOANA’S LIBRARY SPECIALIST

Roth, Michael. *Fire in the Big House: America’s Deadliest Prison Disaster*.
Swallow Press/Ohio University Press (Athens, OH) 2019.
HC \$29.95.

Michael Roth’s *Fire in the Big House: America’s Deadliest Prison Disaster* provides an in-depth account of one of the deadliest fires and least-remembered disasters that took place in Ohio in 1930. Through thorough research and an informative, readable narrative, Roth describes the people, the events, the environment, and the attitudes of the time that were involved in this powerful disaster. The prisoners, both

the ones who died and the ones who survived the fire, were real people. Many primary sources—including letters, newspaper articles, government documents, and period prison handbooks—are referenced and used to gain insights into these people and the circumstances that triggered the catastrophe.



Roth has organized the chapters in this book by categories. Each category sheds light on the situation in a prison that was overcrowded and behind the times in adequately caring for its prisoners. Roth's meticulous research is revealed in each chapter as he provides facts on the prisoners, the conflicts amongst the staff, and the controversies that developed from this deadly fire. His final chapter creates time for the reader to reflect on how disaster can stimulate change and progress. While this fire encouraged some prisons to reevaluate the safety standards of their buildings and procedures, it took Ohio's state penitentiary over forty years to address the safety measures in this antiquated, overcrowded prison.

Being unfamiliar with prisons and their development, and as one who appreciates history, I found *Fire in the Big House: America's Deadliest Prison Disaster* both intriguing and educational. Not only did I learn more about the penal system, but I also discovered a piece of Ohio's history that I knew nothing about. Having grown up in Columbus and remembering this forbidding prison structure near the center of the city with its riots in the 1960s, I never knew what its architecture was like inside and what events had happened within its walls. Not only does Roth provide a history of this Big House, but he also presents a history of the 1930s, the people involved with the prison, and the deadliest prison fire in the history of the U.S.

REVIEWED BY CHARLOTTE L. STIVERSON, EDUCATOR & RETIRED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

FICTION

Cline, Ernest. *Ready Player Two*.

Ballantine Books (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$28.99.



In Ernest Cline's critically acclaimed *Ready Player One*, teenager Wade Watts inherits the vast fortune and power of reclusive super genius James Halliday, the creator of the worldwide virtual reality game known as the OASIS. We rejoin Wade in *Ready Player Two* a few years later, after he has discovered a secret technology created by Halliday called the ONI (short for OASIS Neural Interface). The ONI allows OASIS users to log in via direct brain connection to experience the game in all five senses. Wade releases the ONI for worldwide use, and soon most of the planet's OASIS users are accessing the virtual reality using the ONI—though they can only do so for twelve hours at a time. Spending any more time logged in through the ONI risks irreversible brain damage. Despite that, the ONI otherwise seems incredibly safe and beneficial, giving people a needed escape from the declining economic and environmental state of the world. Not everyone agrees that the ONI is positive, though. Releasing it loses Wade his relationship with his first love, Art3mis, who believes that humankind should be focused on the physical world instead of escaping into the virtual.

From there, things get even more complicated for Wade as he deals with strained friendships and isolation. He becomes obsessed with completing Halliday's latest posthumous Easter Egg hunt, which started just after the ONI was discovered. To complete it, Wade will need to find Seven Shards scattered throughout the OASIS. After finding the first shard, however, he unwittingly unleashes an aggressive Anorak—an AI version of the late Halliday's OASIS avatar—who claims to have become sentient. Anorak subsequently locks all ONI uses into their headsets without the ability to log off, leaving Wade only twelve hours to find the remaining six shards before millions of lives are lost.

Though *Ready Player Two* picks up not long after the first book left off, giving eager readers a welcome return

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to the futuristic (and nostalgic) world of Wade and his friends, not everything is the same. We immediately get the sense from the narration that the past few years have had the effect of creating a more mature, more jaded Wade. This is reflected in the prose and is understandable—he's shifted from his late teenage years into his early twenties, and has gone through falling in love for the first time and the subsequent heartbreak. Wade also has several years of being rich and famous under his belt, living the life of a billionaire and filling his role as a co-owner of Gregarious Simulation Systems, the company that manages the OASIS. The stakes are high for Wade, as he now very literally has control over the technology that much of the world has come to rely on.

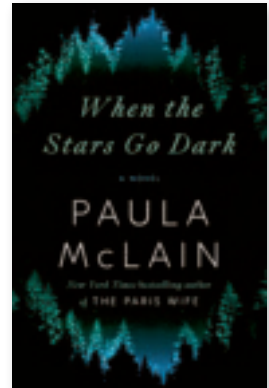
Despite Wade's personal struggles and the dire nature of his newest quest, *Ready Player Two* retains the humor and wit that was so prevalent in the first novel. Wade's best friends—Aech, Shoto, and Art3mis, along with a handful of new characters—make up a colorful and entertaining cast. And of course, the pop-culture trivia-laden prose is still very much a main feature. Wade's quest has him traveling through recreations of John Hughes films, battling NPC versions of Prince, and traversing a digital Middle Earth. Fans of 1980s culture and role playing games who enjoyed the nods and references in the first book will find that the theme is still going strong. Cline has a special gift for including a wealth of nostalgic, pop-culture tidbits that add to the story and make it fun, rather than being dense or dry.

And “fun” is the key descriptor for *Ready Player Two*. This is a story packed full of adventure and action, spurred along by a cast of interesting characters. It's impossible to put down and a constant page-turner. The story has the high stakes, quick pacing, and feel-good moments of many of the 1980s sci-fi and adventure films that Cline pays loving tribute to. *Ready Player Two* is sure to please returning fans while attracting new ones to the franchise—and increase anticipation for Cline's next project. No one knows yet if that will be another entry in the *Ready Player One* series or an entirely new endeavor, but it will certainly be something to look forward to in the (hopefully) not-too-distant future.

REVIEWED BY MORGAN PETERS, PROGRAM COORDINATOR,
OHIOANA LIBRARY

McLain, Paula. *When the Stars Go Dark.*
Ballantine Books (New York, NY) 2021. HC \$28.

Anna Hart is a seasoned missing persons detective in San Francisco with far too much knowledge of the darkest side of human nature. When tragedy strikes her personal life, Anna, desperate and numb, flees to the Northern California village of Mendocino to grieve. She lived there as a child with her beloved foster parents, and now she believes it might be the only place left for her. Yet the day she arrives, she learns that a local teenage girl has gone missing.



The crime feels frighteningly reminiscent of the most crucial time in Anna's childhood, when the unsolved murder of a young girl touched Mendocino and changed the community forever. As past and present collide, Anna realizes that she has been led to this moment. The most difficult lessons of her life have given her insight into how victims come into contact with violent predators. As Anna becomes obsessed with saving the missing girl, she must accept that true courage means getting out of her own way and learning to let others in.

Set in the 1990s against the backdrop of the real-life kidnappings of Jaycee Dugard and Polly Klaas, this harrowing novel is a departure for Paula McLain—the author of historical novels like the Ohioana Book Award-Winning *The Paris Wife*. However, as McLain lets the reader know in the afterword, it is a deeply personal story for her. McLain, who grew up in Northern California in a series of foster homes and now lives in Ohio, obviously feels a kinship with Dugard, Klaas, and her own characters, Cameron and Shannan. It is this kinship and deep empathy that make this novel utterly captivating. It is very sad and at times an extremely hard read, but it is a necessary one. Anna's dogged determination to solve crimes at the expense of her own health—and possibly her own family—grab the reader from the first page and hold on with an iron grip to the last and even beyond, as this reviewer is still thinking about it days later. To include any “spoilers” or specific details would ruin the book for anyone who is interested in reading it.

In her afterword, McLain includes statistics about foster care, kidnappings, sexual assault, and police procedures that put much of the novel into context. McLain obviously did a lot of research into missing persons cases. The real-life details of the Klaas case cast a pall over the proceedings of the book, though the story ends before Klaas' did in real life. *When the Stars Go Dark* did not go in any predictable direction for me, which made it even more compelling to read. Anna and her partner, Will, alongside the citizens of Mendocino, are all fully-developed characters I would love to read more about. I am not sure if McLain is interested in making this into a series, but I would definitely read more about Anna Hart.

REVIEWED BY COURTNEY BROWN, OHIOANA'S LIBRARY SPECIALIST

POETRY

Gunter-Seymour, Kari. *A Place So Deep Inside America It Can't Be Seen*.

Sheila-Na-Gig Editions (Russell, KY) 2020. PB \$16.

On a recent walk, I took a copy of 2020 Ohio Poet of the Year, Ohio Poet Laureate, and founder and executive director of the "Women of Appalachia Project" Kari Gunter-Seymour's *A Place So Deep Inside America It Can't Be Seen*. I took these poems with me outside because, after reading the first few pages of this collection, I sensed these poems needed room to breathe, or maybe it was me that needed more air to digest the living and the dying, the echoes of grieving, the captive blur of suffering, silence, disbelief, and beauty. But as I kept reading, the surprise was that these compassionate and concise lines offer—alongside woe and wounds—a heavy breath of "wing-fluttering" and "feathers," the shapes of light, and the hard and grace of "each new rain." Walking the streets in my neighborhood, reading line by line, dead brown leaves crunched beneath my feet as if cringing or ringing alongside Gunter-Seymour's alliterative sounds: "mind a buzz / of song, psalm and sonnet." "...sorrow lifted in wisps and moans / to the mouth of the wind." "...pain-



ripened sun, / swayed to the pitch and pluck of sky." At times it felt like I matched my stride with the pace of the form, the short and long syllables, full descriptive middles of stanzas, and last lines resigned and worthy of rereading with pause and more thought. And along the way, every so often I stopped near a light post to notice the outdoors Gunter-Seymour takes great care in describing. However, the smell and the literal taint of crisp air is of course different in the city than what Gunter-Seymour often describes in her writing of rural Ohio. She makes poems that offer the reader something hard and beautiful, ephemeral and concrete. Her writing offers an opening—outlines of a life, a geography, a culture, history, and ancestry—filled in with objects, movement, time, light, shadows, and space. She writes in a voice, in a life shaped by open fields, hills, water, roots, sky, bird song—a throat full of Appalachia.

After visiting her website and reading more about her work, I discovered Gunter-Seymour's poems found their way out of an assemblage of arts and creative training—including a fine arts degree in graphic design and a master's degree in photography, along with writing and craft workshops, mentoring, and guidance from other "distinguished poets." This collective and expansive training, stitching together of disciplines, shows up in the work as a gathering of creative tools, intense notes. She writes a whole of emotion and imagery, a glimpse inside of a rich and vibrant frame: "...trees flexing and knotting their bodies." "A rainbow of zinnias swayed the sidewalk, / moonlit," "Out of the side of her eye / the soft blur of rabbit, / and watchful dusk, / air ripe with herbs and tinctures, the echo / of gasping roots." The lines of these poems often feel like immense grieving, as well as finding their way to sounding something like freedom.

At dusk, the sky darkens, the temperature lowers, and I wonder why I did not bring a pair of gloves. Still, I held the book open in both hands feeling for uneven earth beneath my feet. I cannot get the image of the barn out of my mind, "the hot breath," the "whiskey," the way pain echoes in bodies. How hurt looks for a way out through the wishes of little girls underneath a makeshift fort.

"Trace the ruthless shadows of December's moon," Gunter-Seymour writes. While reading this line, I found myself under a near-December moon, stunning, almost full, in between the branches, as I walked and sunk deeper into the book: "...She reminds me / how a seed

case splits, exposes backbone / but also vulnerability.” The works pull into its “rich Ohio soil”—a deepening commentary on the land, the breeze, identity, captivity, struggle, migration of people and climate, depletion, the precariousness of a fertile environment, substance abuse, the social and the political, and time.

There was a point where I lost most of the daylight. Using the lights from porches and storefronts, walking against the glow of headlights, I was persistent in the reading. Then I headed home to finish the book. The shapes of these poems continued to reveal their waking. Increasing the image and volume of loss, mourning, absence, ache, wisdom, strength, desire, the last line in “Once I Had Wings,” is intimate and resonant: “I have grown to crave even your silence.”

In the final lines of “Because The Need To See Your Daughter Overcame All Sense Of Reason,” Gunter-Seymour writes:

*“I know soon the dark above the clouds
will do everything it can to turn us.
But for now there is this—
a star-carted sky, a trickle of grace,
our uneasy peace unwilling to unknot.”*

These lines, the cold evening air, the wise clear-eyed imagery, float as remnants, bright crumbs, sorrow, will, treasure, and complexity. This collection of poems draws their fragments and dreams on the blank page, as if following the journey of a bird in the sky. Or like salt in the eye, a sting and watering, a rub, a sharp thing, so deep you cannot quite reach, or as the title of this collection testifies in memory and lyric, cannot see.

REVIEWED BY DIONNE CUSTER EDWARDS, DIRECTOR OF LEARNING AND PUBLIC PRACTICE AT WEXNER CENTER FOR THE ARTS, AND MEMBER OF THE OHIOANA BOARD OF TRUSTEES

YOUNG ADULT & MIDDLE GRADE

Bobulski, Chelsea. *Remember Me*.

Feiweil & Friends (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$17.99.

Living in a hotel would seem a strange concept to most teenagers, but to Nell Martin, it’s nothing unusual. Her father has been in the hospitality business her whole life, and since her mother passed away, she’s been used to traveling to wherever he can find work. But even Nell has to admit that her father’s newest gig, working at the Winslow Grand Hotel built in 1878, is a bit different. Built right on the seaside with a private beach and lots of shops and restaurants, the Winslow is expansive and full of history.



At first, Nell spends her time diving deep into this history, cleaning out the hotel’s cluttered storeroom to prepare an exhibit of the hotel’s life. Soon, though, she starts having strange dreams and running into the hotel’s repairman—Alec Petrov—who seems a bit *off*. As she delves further into the Winslow, Nell finds that the hotel’s history hasn’t always been squeaky clean, that it has the tendency to repeat, and that a dark secret may threaten her.

Remember Me has the unique benefit of feeling like several great stories in one. The novel’s genre can be accurately described as historical fiction, ghost story, romance, and a coming-of-age tale, and yet it is all balanced skillfully. The majority of the novel switches between two narrators—Nell and Lea—who are both clear and empathetic voices. The setup and story-building in the beginning of the novel do a great job at creating a world that feels timeless and lush. The dual narratives keep the plot moving quickly, and that—along with the mystery and intrigue—will have readers flying through the story. It’s a great book to devour over the course of a weekend or a few evenings.

Despite having so much going on in terms of plot, *Remember Me* is also full of characters that are sympathetic, enjoyable, and even enjoyably villainous. The setting of the Winslow hotel seems to be a character

of its own, with its long history and secrets trapped between its walls. This well-crafted characterization adds an excellent depth to the novel, and creates a charming (if somewhat eerie) picture of a grand old hotel brimming with life and tragedy. At the end of the novel, readers will wish that they could really vacation at the Winslow and experience all it has to offer—even the ghosts.

REVIEWED BY MORGAN PETERS, PROGRAM COORDINATOR, OHIOANA LIBRARY

Davis, Ronni. *When the Stars Lead to You*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$17.99.

Falling in love for the first time is a difficult journey. It can be confusing, exhilarating, and painful. When you add in mental illness, all of this becomes even more intense and the stakes feel even higher. This is something that high school senior Devon learns when her summer fling, Ashton, shows up at her school and their short-lived, whirlwind romance becomes something much more real.



Suddenly, Devon's priorities go from applying for colleges and studying for finals to learning how to navigate Ashton's illness and the challenges it presents for the both of them. Her goals before meeting Ashton were clear—she wanted to study astronomy, enjoy her senior year, and have a great last few months in high school with her friends. Falling in love with Ashton was unplanned, but wonderful. They click in every way, and his struggles don't seem like a big deal in comparison to the intensity of their connection. After all, Devon is confident in herself and knows that her love for Ashton is worth it. The question is, is it possible for her to handle everything at once? Should she even be expected to?

When the Stars Lead to You is a tender, passionate debut from author Ronni Davis. Tackling the subjects of young love, mental illness, and racial and class tension (Devon is mixed-race and middle class while Ashton is white and from a rich family) is not easy. However, Davis

handles it beautifully, creating two young characters that readers will be quick to connect to and empathize with. In this story, no one is the villain, even though sometimes they are in the wrong. The characters are presented in a very real light, with all their charms and flaws and tragedies. It's a great lesson for living with or loving someone with mental illness.

The subjects covered in the novel are clearly close to Davis' heart, but the writing is also often lighthearted and hopeful. Devon is a fun narrator—reading her first-person account feels very life-like and makes the reader wish they could have her as a best friend. At its core, *When the Stars Lead to You* is a story about taking care of yourself and realizing your limits, something that young people often struggle to figure out. With such a stunning debut, Ronni Davis is a very promising new voice in the world of YA literature.

REVIEWED BY MORGAN PETERS, PROGRAM COORDINATOR, OHIOANA LIBRARY

Pearsall, Shelley. Illus. by Xingye Jin. *Things Seen from Above*.

Alfred A. Knopf (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$16.99.

We've all felt like outsiders at some point in our lives, most often when we were in school. Sometimes we were outsiders because we spoke with an accent, other times because we were smart or had different life experiences, and most often when we were "different." It's the last that is the focus of *Things Seen from Above*.



Shelley Pearsall puts forth compelling main characters April, Joey Byrd, and Veena. At the beginning of sixth grade, April has been jilted by her best friend, so she's hiding by volunteering as a Bench Buddy for fourth graders during lunch time. Joey Byrd is an introverted boy, probably autistic, and definitely artistic. He's not very communicative. He makes designs in the playground that are really cool when seen from above. Veena's family immigrated from India a year ago and has just moved into the school district. She also volunteers to be a Bench Buddy. Together April and Veena bring Joey out of his shell, realize he's drawing art that's best

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seen from above, and by accepting Joey's differentness, teach others about compassion and understanding.

The story is told from alternating perspectives. April is articulate and insightful. She writes her school newsletter's advice column, and is curious about everything. The other perspective is Joey's. Readers learn how he sees the world, as pictures and ideas percolating in his brain and expressed through his playground designs.

This heartfelt story is about acceptance of others and learning to understand people who don't act or think like you. There's a little about bullying, too, and many moments that celebrate inclusiveness. The imaginative illustrations by Xingye Jin add to the story.

While perfect for readers eight and up, this middle grade book will enchant book lovers of all ages.

REVIEWED BY MIRIAM KAHN, MLS, COLUMBUS, OH

drivers behind each wheel—any young girl will be able to find herself within this inclusive story.

With its messages of inclusivity and girls-can-do-anything positivity, *Go, Girls, Go!* will rumble, race, and rocket straight to your heart.

REVIEWED BY KATHRYN POWERS, OHIOANA LIBRARY OFFICE
MANAGER AND SCBWI REGIONAL ADVISOR

JUVENILE

Gilbert, Frances. Illus. by Allison Black. *Go, Girls, Go!*

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

*Girls can race...and girls can fly.
Girls can rocket way up high!*

There's nothing girls can't do—or drive!—in *Go, Girls, Go!* From tow trucks to tugboats, ambulances to airplanes, girls are hitting the road, the sea, and even the sky in this delightful book that celebrates vehicles, careers, and girl power.



This picture book is perfect to read aloud, with zippy rhyming text and joyful language. Bright, bold illustrations by Ohioan Allison Black fill the pages with movement and excitement. Each vehicle that is introduced even has its own unique sound effect, which Black hand-lettered to accompany the illustrations. Kids will have tons of fun shouting “Crunch!” and “Wooh!” along with the dump trucks and trains. In addition to the wide variety of vehicles and careers, it's especially wonderful to see the diversity of

Book List

The following books were added to Ohioana's collection between September and November, 2020. Look for them at your local library or bookstore!

NONFICTION

Dickey, Timothy J. *Library Dementia Services: How to Meet the Needs of the Alzheimer's Community*. Emerald Publishing Ltd. (Bingley, UK) 2020. PB \$56. There are 50 million people globally living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, and tens of millions further who are their caregivers. As a public service, it is important that library and information professionals learn to serve and assist those with dementia. Designed for seasoned professionals and library science students alike, this book first presents a complete overview of the spectrum disease known as Alzheimer's dementia, as well as a basic understanding of the information needs of dementia caregivers. It then explores best practices, guidelines, and concrete ideas for serving those with dementia and their caregivers.

Diggs, Nancy Brown. *In Search of Appalachia*. Hamilton Books (Lanham, MD) 2020. PB \$24.99. After writing extensively about different cultures, Nancy Brown Diggs chose to focus on one closer to her own, the Appalachian, and was surprised to learn that it is her own—and quite different from the image conveyed by the media. Rich in anecdotes and interviews that bring her research to life, this book offers

a study of Appalachians today and explores what they are truly like and why, concluding that it is a culture to be celebrated, not denigrated.

Downs, Maggie. *Braver Than You Think: Around the World on the Trip of My (Mother's) Lifetime*. Counterpoint (Berkeley, CA) 2020. HC \$26.

As a child, Maggie Downs often doubted that she would ever possess the courage to visit the destinations her mother dreamed of one day seeing. "You are braver than you think," her mother always insisted. That statement would guide her as, over the course of one year, Downs backpacked through seventeen countries—visiting all the places her mother, struck with early-onset Alzheimer's disease, could not visit herself—encountering some of the world's most striking locales while confronting the slow loss of her mother. Interweaving travelogue with family memories, *Braver Than You Think* takes the reader hiking the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu, white-water rafting on the Nile, volunteering at a monkey sanctuary in Bolivia, praying at an ashram in India, and fleeing the Arab Spring in Egypt. By embarking on an international journey, Downs learned to make every moment count—traveling around the globe and home again, losing a parent while discovering the world. Perfect for fans of adventure memoirs like *Wild* and *Welcome to the Goddamn Ice Cube*, *Braver Than You Think* explores grief and loss with tenderness, clarity, and humor, and offers a truly incredible roadmap to coping with the unimaginable.

Giffels, David. *Barnstorming Ohio to Understand America*. Hachette Books (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$28.

The question of America's identity has rarely been more urgent than now, and no American place has ever been more reflective of that identity than Ohio. David Giffels, a lifelong resident of the "bellwether" state, has spent a quarter century writing and thinking about what it means to live in what he calls "an all-American buffet, an uncannily complete everyplace." With Cleveland as the end of the North, Cincinnati as the beginning of the South, Youngstown as the end of the East, and Hicksville (yes, Hicksville) as the beginning of the Midwest, Ohio offers important insight into the state of the nation. As a historic 2020 presidential election approaches, *Barnstorming Ohio* is Giffels' account of a year on Ohio's roads, visiting people and places that offer valuable reflections of the national questions and concerns, as well as astounding electoral clairvoyance—since 1896, Ohio has accurately chosen the winner in twenty-nine of thirty-one presidential elections, more than any other state. In a year when Americans are seeking answers, *Barnstorming Ohio* offers rare and carefully nuanced access to the people who have always held them.

Greene, Ray. *Coach of a Different Color: One Man's Story of Breaking Barriers in Football*. The University of Akron Press (Akron, OH) 2020. PB \$24.95.

As a freshman at South High School in Akron, Ohio, Ray Greene overslept one August 1952 morning

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and was a few minutes late to football practice. Coach Gordon Larson saw this and cut him from the team, but this did not diminish Greene's desire to play football. He returned to play his sophomore year and went on to have a distinguished career in high school, college, and professional football. Greene entered coaching in the 1960s, determined to make the most of every opportunity. He became an expert in coaching and football philosophy at a young age. *Coach of a Different Color* tells the story of Greene's rise through the coaching ranks and will appeal to anyone interested in the history of Akron, in the history of football, and in the important life lessons we can take from the story of his achievement. The book also contains testimonials by football legends Johnny Majors, Jimmy Johnson, Dwight Wright, and Ray Sherman.

Knight, Brenda, and Nita Sweeney. *You Should Be Writing: A Journal of Inspiration & Instruction to Keep Your Pen Moving (Journaling & Writing Skills Tips, for Readers of Dialogue or Character Reactions from Head to Toe)*. Mango (Coral Gables, FL) 2020. PB \$15.95.

From famous poets like T.S. Eliot to modern creatives like Roxane Gay, the selected writing quotes in this journal aim to instruct and inspire you to become a better writer. With wisdom and quotes to use as creative prompts on every page, you'll be able to bring your writing inspiration with you wherever you go. Gathered by Brenda Knight and writing coach Nita Sweeney, author of *Depression Hates a Moving Target*.

Miller, Patricia. *Mysterious Tales of the Unexplained: Volume I*. Booklocker.com (St. Petersburg, FL) 2020. PB \$18.95.

Singing specters, secret passageways, unsolved clues, abandoned mansions, old photo albums, and hidden motives are all found in the four stories making up this unique collection, *Mysterious Tales of the Unexplained*. A young sleuth solves a mystery surrounding a creepy, community theatre in "Break a Leg & Knock 'Em Dead." She then goes on to investigate the apparent suicide of a wealthy factory owner in "House up on the Hill." In "Picture on the Wall," a mother/daughter restoration team experience ghostly encounters in an old, abandoned mansion. And six young friends go on a mystery weekend at a spooky inn, deciphering clues and exploring the mysterious property, only to find much more going on than they thought.

Minor, Sarah. *Bright Archive*. Rescue Press (Chicago, IL) 2020. PB \$18.

In Sarah Minor's adventurous and investigatory debut collection of essays, *Bright Archive*, place and space are inextricably linked through an imaginative exploration of the patterns, shapes, and systems that alternately organize and disrupt our ordinary intimacies. From a recollection of a summer spent working in an Italian commune to the business of mollusks in Minor's grandparents' hometown in Iowa; from the history of the mapping of the Mississippi River to the mythologies of the image of "the lean;" from studies of soffits and hidden spaces to the freedom found at the top of an island birch tree—these essays reach beyond the classically confined trajectories of literary nonfiction. Using elements of memoir, concrete poetry, archival research, interview, performance,

and design in a radiant kaleidoscope of storytelling, the essays in *Bright Archive* delight in challenging the reader's habits of interaction with the page and its possibilities.

Niehoff, Buck. *Walking the Thames*. Orange Frazer Press (Wilmington, OH) 2020. PB \$16.

Many of the best areas in England are along the Thames River. Beginning at its source in the Cotswolds, the river drifts tranquilly through beautiful countryside featuring quaint villages like Clifton Hampton, renowned for its thatched roof houses. It passes historic cities like Oxford, acclaimed for its distinguished university; Windsor, the home of an ancient royal palace; and Hampton Court, the residence of King Henry IV. In London it flows next to Kew Gardens, the Houses of Parliament, Big Ben, the London Eye, Globe Theatre, the Tower of London, Tower Bridge, Greenwich, and the Thames Barrier. Pursuing his passion for rivers, the author walks the 184-mile length of the river along the Thames Path with four companions. Despite some hardships along the trail, he discovers that his joy for flowing water is one of his most meaningful pleasures.

Pagel, Caryl. *Out of Nowhere Into Nothing*. FC2 (Tuscaloosa, AL) 2020. PB \$17.95.

The ghosts—literal and figurative—that drive our deepest impulses, disturb our most precious memories, and haunt the passages of our daily lives are present in this collection of sublime meditations on the unbelievable, the coincidental, and the apparitional. Often containing reflections on the art of storytelling, Caryl Pagel's essays blend memoir, research, and reflection, and are

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driven by a desire to observe connections between the visual and the invisible. The narrator of Pagel's essays explores each enigma or encounter (a football coach's faked death, the faces of women walking, historical accounts of hallucinations, a city's public celebration gone wrong) as an intellectual detective ascending a labyrinthine tower of clues in pursuit of a solution to an unreachable problem: always curious, and with a sense of profound wonder. *Out of Nowhere Into Nothing* is a sprawling, highly associative consideration of the ways in which the observed material world recalls us to larger narrative and aesthetic truths. Interspersed with documentary-style photographs, Pagel's first collection of prose is a radiant, obsessive investigation into the mysteries at the center of our seemingly mundane lives.

Rensch, Adam Theron-Lee. *No Home for You Here: A Memoir of Class and Culture*. Reaktion Books/The University of Chicago Press (Chicago, IL) 2020. HC \$20.

No Home for You Here is a memoir of a life lived in the shadow of Ronald Reagan. Raised in rural Ohio, Adam Theron-Lee Rensch tells the story of a millennial trying—and failing—to leave behind the shame of growing up poor in the middle of nowhere. Interweaving personal narrative and political criticism with recent social and political history, *No Home for You Here* shows how the interrelationship of class, culture, and identity stifles working-class solidarity by constructing an imagined cultural divide that those in power use to maintain the status quo. With one foot on each side of

this division, Rensch moves between the flat horizon of the Midwest and the densely populated streets of the city, bearing witness to the tragic effects of a precarious free-market economy on family and friends. Rather than wallowing in despair, however, *No Home for You Here* is a timely, passionate call for class consciousness in an era of economic crisis and staggering inequality.

Rudinger, Joel. *Lost and Found in Alaska*. Bird Dog Press (Huron, OH) 2020. PB \$18.

Joel Rudinger takes us to Alaska when statehood was brand new, its frontier breathtaking—and dangerous. His is a physical and cultural journey where life, without exaggeration, is lived on the edge. Growing up middle class in Ohio, Rudinger wills himself towards the extraordinary. First, with going to Alaska—of all places—for graduate school. Then taking on jobs for which he had no training or visible aptitude. Later, he's hitchhiking the Alcan Highway with a lover, pushing himself repeatedly to physical and spiritual limits. Rudinger tells his story in striking first-person detail. Events six-decades-old are told as though they happened just last summer, raw, not romanticized. Having left Ohio in 1960 a man-child, he returns four years later deeply experienced in all the ways of the world.

Saunt, Claudio. *Unworthy Republic: The Dispossession of Native Americans and the Road to Indian Territory*. W. W. Norton and Company (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$26.95.

In May 1830, the United States formally launched a policy to expel Native Americans from the East to

territories west of the Mississippi River. Justified as a humanitarian enterprise, the undertaking was to be systematic and rational, overseen by Washington's small but growing bureaucracy. But as the policy unfolded over the next decade, thousands of Native Americans died under the government's auspices, and thousands of others lost their possessions and homelands in an orgy of fraud, intimidation, and violence. *Unworthy Republic* reveals how expulsion became national policy and describes the deadly results of the operation to deport 80,000 men, women, and children. Drawing on firsthand accounts and the voluminous records produced by the federal government, Saunt's deeply researched book argues that Indian Removal, as advocates of the policy called it, was not an inevitable chapter in U.S. expansion across the continent. Rather, it was a fiercely contested political act designed to secure new lands for the expansion of slavery and to consolidate the power of the southern states. Indigenous peoples fought relentlessly against the policy, while many U.S. citizens insisted that it was a betrayal of the nation's values. When Congress passed the act by a razor-thin margin, it authorized one of the first state-sponsored mass deportations in the modern era, marking a turning point for native peoples and for the U.S. In telling this story, Saunt shows how the politics and economics of white supremacy lay at the heart of the expulsion of Native Americans; how corruption, greed, and administrative indifference and incompetence contributed to the debacle of its implementation; and how the consequences still resonate today.

Washuta, Elissa. ***White Magic***. Tin House (Portland, OR) 2021. HC \$26.95.

Throughout her life, Elissa Washuta has been surrounded by cheap facsimiles of Native spiritual tools and occult trends, “starter witch kits” of sage, rose quartz, and tarot cards packaged together in paper and plastic. Following a decade of abuse, addiction, PTSD, and heavy-duty drug treatment for a misdiagnosis of bipolar disorder, she felt drawn to the real spirits and powers her dispossessed and discarded ancestors knew, while she undertook necessary work to find love and meaning. In this collection of intertwined essays, she writes about land, heartbreak, and colonization, about life without the escape hatch of intoxication, and about how she became a powerful witch. She interlaces stories from her forebears with cultural artifacts from her own life—*Twin Peaks*, the *Oregon Trail II* video game, a Claymation Satan, a YouTube video of Stevie Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham—to explore questions of cultural inheritance and the particular danger, as a Native woman, of relaxing into romantic love under colonial rule.

FICTION

Beatty, Pete. ***Cuyahoga***. Scribner (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$27. Big Son is a spirit of the times—the times being 1837. Behind his broad shoulders, shiny hair, and church-organ laugh, Big Son practically made Ohio City all by himself. The feats of this proto-superhero have earned him wonder and whiskey toasts but very little in the way of fortune. And without money, Big

cannot become an honest husband to his beloved Cloe (who may or may not want to be his wife, honestly). In pursuit of a steady wage, our hero hits the (dirt) streets of Ohio City and Cleveland, the twin towns racing to become the first great metropolis of the West. Their rivalry reaches a boil over the building of a bridge across the Cuyahoga River—and Big stumbles right into the kettle. The resulting misadventures involve elderly terrorists, infrastructure collapse, steamboat races, wild pigs, and multiple ruined weddings. In *Cuyahoga*, tragedy and farce jumble together in a riotously original voice. Evoking the Greek classics and the Bible alongside nods to Looney Tunes, Charles Portis, and Flannery O’Connor, Pete Beatty has written a rollicking revisionist (mid)Western with universal themes of family and fate—an old, weird America that feels brand new.

Black, Lisa. ***Every Kind of Wicked (Gardiner and Renner #6)***.

Kensington (New York, NY) 2020. PB \$26. Life and death have brought Maggie Gardiner full circle, back to the Erie Street Cemetery where she first entered Jack Renner’s orbit. Eight months ago, she learned what Jack would do in the name of justice. More unsettling still, she discovered how far she would go to cover his tracks. Now a young man sprawls atop a snowy grave, his heart shredded by a single wound. A key card in the victim’s wallet leads to the local university’s student housing—and to a grieving girlfriend with an unsettling agenda. Maggie’s struggle to appease her conscience is complicated by her ex-husband, Rick, who’s convinced that Jack is connected to a series of

vigilante killings. Also a homicide detective, Rick investigates what seems like a routine overdose on Cleveland’s West Side; but here, too, the appearance belies a deeper truth. Rick’s case and Jack’s merge onto the trail of a shadowy, pill-pushing physician who is everywhere and nowhere at once, while Maggie and Jack uncover a massive financial shakedown hiding in plain sight. And when Rick’s bloody fingerprint is found at another murder scene, Maggie’s world comes undone in a violent, irreversible torrent of events.

Bullock, John. ***Mark Small: This is Your Life***. Sheila-Na-Gig Editions (Russell, KY) 2020. PB \$16.95.

Fourteen-year-old Mark Small has no idea who he is. Anxious for connection and friendship, he embarks on a series of illegal break-ins to punish his father’s nonpaying customers. But mostly he likes to poke around in other people’s lives, a habit borne of his lonely childhood in an English seaside bed and breakfast. This debut novel is a poignant and funny coming-of-age story about identity—in all its guises—tracing Mark Small’s adventures as he learns hard truths about family, friendship, and forgiveness.

Flower, Amanda. ***Courting Can Be Killer (Amish Matchmaker #2)***.

Kensington (New York, NY) 2020. PB \$8.99. Some Amish men don’t know what’s good for them. That’s what Millie Fisher told herself when young Ben Baughman set his heart on marrying Tess Lieb. With Tess’ father refusing to give his blessing and Tess’ ex-boyfriend being a wet blanket, the hapless couple was bound to butt

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heads more than Millie's Boer goats. But when Ben tragically dies in a mysterious fire, Millie wonders if someone in her hometown of Harvest, Ohio, wanted Ben out of the wedding picture altogether. With the help of her quilting buddies, and her outspoken *Englischer* friend Lois, Millie is determined to patch together all the clues without even dropping a stitch. She only hopes it won't be the death of her.

Huber, Anna Lee. *A Pretty Deceit (Verity Kent #4)*. Kensington (New York, NY) 2020. PB \$15.95. Peacetime has brought little respite for Verity Kent. Intrigue still abounds, even within her own family. As a favor to her father, Verity agrees to visit his sister in Wiltshire. Her once prosperous aunt has fallen on difficult times and is considering selling their estate. But there are strange goings-on at the manor, including missing servants, possible heirloom forgeries, and suspicious rumors—all leading to the discovery of a dead body on the grounds. While Verity and her husband, Sidney, investigate this new mystery, they are also on the trail of an old adversary—the shadowy and lethal Lord Ardmore. At every turn, the suspected traitor seems to be one step ahead of them. And even when their dear friend Max, the Earl of Ryde, stumbles upon a code hidden among his late father's effects that may reveal the truth about Ardmore, Verity wonders if they are really the hunters—or the hunted.

Kalagayan, Jay B., and Dylan Speeg. *MeSseD Volume 1: Follow the Flush*. Creative Mussel (Cincinnati, OH) 2018. PB \$28. The Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) processes over one billion

gallons of wastewater each day from more than ten thousand miles of pipeline a day. Nicknamed "MeSseD" by its workers, the MSD also happens to employ our hero, Lilliput. This sewer worker is our tour guide to a weird, wet, and wild world: the thick roots beneath our feet.

Martin, Lee. *Yours, Jean*. Dzanc Books (Ann Arbor, MI) 2020. HC \$26.95.

"When she refused me," Charlie says at his trial. "Well, I had that gun. What else was I to do?" Lawrenceville, Illinois, 1952: Jean De Belle, the new high school librarian, is eager to begin the next phase of her young life after breaking off her engagement to Charlie Camplain. She has no way of knowing that in a few short hours, Charlie will arrive at the school, intent on convincing her to take back his ring. What happens next will reverberate through the lives of everyone who crossed paths with Charlie and Jean—the hotel clerk who called him a cab, the high school boy who became his getaway driver, and the English teacher who became Jean's landlady, her confidant, and perhaps more. In the vein of *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* by Carson McCullers and Elizabeth Strout's beloved *Anything Is Possible*, *Yours, Jean* is a novel about small town manners and the loneliness that drives people to do things they never imagined.

Mitchell, Tonya. *A Feigned Madness*. Cennan Books (Malvern, PA) 2020. PB \$21.

Elizabeth Cochrane has a secret. She isn't the madwoman with amnesia the doctors and inmates at Blackwell's Asylum think she is. In truth, she's working undercover

for the *New York World*. When the managing editor refuses to hire her because she's a woman, Elizabeth strikes a deal: in exchange for a job, she'll impersonate a lunatic to expose a local asylum's abuses. When she arrives at the asylum, Elizabeth realizes she must make a decision—is she there merely to bear witness, or to intervene on behalf of the abused inmates? Can she interfere without blowing her cover? As the superintendent of the asylum grows increasingly suspicious, Elizabeth knows her scheme—and her dream of becoming a journalist in New York—is in jeopardy. *A Feigned Madness* is a meticulously researched, fictionalized account of the woman who would come to be known as daredevil reporter Nellie Bly. At a time of cutthroat journalism, when newspapers battled for readers at any cost, Bly emerged as one of the first to break through the gender barrier—a woman who would, through her daring exploits, forge a trail for women fighting for their place in the world.

Milbrodt, Theresa. *Instances of Head-Switching*. Shade Mountain Press (Albany, NY) 2020. PB \$22.95. A middle school teacher relies on eight interchangeable heads to cope with her job. A woman tries to negotiate life with her arthritis witch and her boyfriend's seizure elf. The Germanic goddess Berchta, tired of being a fearsome hag, shows up in a woman's apartment wanting to be flatmates. In the fictional worlds depicted in *Instances of Head-Switching*, sphinxes are kept as pets, unicorns are raised on ranches, and Sisyphus has escaped from Hades and is happily working as a bagger at a grocery store. But characters still

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struggle to pay bills, deal with cranky customers and bosses, and navigate life with partial vision, limited mobility, and chronic diseases. Focusing on themes of embodiment, disability, and economic insecurity, Teresa Milbrodt offers witty and inventive tales full of compassion for her cash-strapped, hard-luck characters. The collection includes stories originally published in *Guernica*, *Strange Horizons*, *PANK*, and other journals.

O'Leary, Eileen. ***Ancestry***. University of Iowa Press (Iowa City, IA) 2020. PB \$17.
How does one live a good life? If you're Pat Graves, you change your name to Cecile Collette, move to Cleveland, and join three churches and the Rotary Club. For Cecile, who will reinvent herself again before the story ends, it may be possible to make Michigan and everything else she touches beautiful, but she'll come to grief when she tries to redesign another human being. In the title story, Mackenzie, a girl without looks or potential, builds a full life in Paris, based on the sketchy belief that she had an ancestor renowned for being dauntless. College freshman Adam, holding a fantasy of his newly discovered father, finds the man broke and foolish; still he does all he can to rescue his dad from a disastrous contract. Kate, convinced she's doing the right thing, helps her cousin gain full custody of his daughter, only realizing years later the truth of what happened. Watching CNN, a grandmother recalls a date she once had with a man now giving advice on foreign policy. Whether set in Scandinavia, America, France, England, Australia, or Nepal, these stories champion those who

are tenacious in the face of life's surprises.

Sickels, Carter. ***The Prettiest Star***. Hub City Press (Spartanburg, SC) 2020. HC \$26.
Small-town Appalachia doesn't have a lot going for it, but it's where Brian is from, where his family is, and where he's chosen to return to die. Set in 1986, a year after Rock Hudson's death brought the news of AIDS into living rooms and kitchens across America, Lambda Literary award-winning author Carter Sickels' second novel shines light on an overlooked part of the epidemic—those men who returned to the rural communities and families who'd rejected them. Six short years after Brian Jackson moved to New York City in search of freedom and acceptance, AIDS has claimed his lover, his friends, and his future. With nothing left in New York but memories of death, Brian decides to write his mother a letter asking to come back to the place, and family, he was once so desperate to escape.

Strawser, Jessica. ***A Million Reasons Why***. St. Martin's Press (New York, NY) 2021. HC \$26.99.
When two strangers are linked by a mail-in DNA test, it's an answered prayer—that is, for one half sister. For the other, it will dismantle everything she knows to be true. But as they step into the unfamiliar realm of sisterhood, the roles will reverse in ways no one could have foreseen. Caroline lives a full, happy life—thriving career, three feisty children, enviable marriage, and a close-knit extended family. She couldn't have scripted it better. Except for one thing: she's about to discover her fundamental beliefs about them all are wrong. Sela lives

a life in shades of gray, suffering from irreversible kidney failure. Her marriage crumbled in the wake of her illness. Her beloved mother, always her closest friend, unexpectedly passed away. She refuses to be defined by her grief, but still, she worries what will happen to her two-year-old son if she doesn't find a donor match in time. She's the only one who knows Caroline is her half sister and may also be her best hope for a future. But Sela's world isn't as clear-cut as it appears—and one misstep could destroy it all.

Tassone, Don. ***New Twists: Short Stories***. Adelaide Books (New York, NY) 2020. PB \$20.
The twenty stories featured in this collection are based on abiding themes but with new twists, stories that explore old ideas in today's world. What does tolerance look like, for example, at a time of such great divisiveness? Fifteen of these stories are longer. Five are very short. All are an invitation to think anew.

Wyland, Donna. ***Autumn's Harmony***. freetobe publishing (Columbus, OH) 2020. PB \$14.99.
Anna Bentley needs a new life. Struggling in a long-term marriage with two children and a secret that stole her joy many years ago, she begins to search for the key to happiness in marriage and in life. When peach martinis, lacy lingerie, and Nicholas Sparks novels fail to quell her discontent, she finds what she was looking for in the most unlikely place. *Autumn's Harmony* is a poignant and witty tale about the healing power of forgiveness, reconciliation, and new beginnings.

POETRY

Ampleman, Lisa. *Romances: Poems*. LSU Press (Baton Rouge, LA) 2020. PB \$19.95.

In this subtle and candid collection, Lisa Ampleman mixes contemporary elements and historical materials as she speaks back to the literary tradition of courtly love. Instead of bachelor knights bemoaning their allegedly cruel beloveds, *Romances* emphasizes the voices of female troubadours, along with those of historical figures such as Dante's wife, Petrarch's Laura, and Anne Boleyn. Ampleman also incorporates the work of the Italian Renaissance poet Gaspara Stampa, mentioned in Rilke's *Duino Elegies*, through a series of adaptations of her verse. Elsewhere, a contemporary sonnet sequence dedicated to Courtney Love shows the 1990s grunge rocker as subject, object, performer, and mother. As her poems reflect on popular romantic ideas about the past, the means by which elegies romanticize the dead, or the conventional romance of a happy marriage, Ampleman addresses a range of romantic entanglements: courtly and commonplace, sentimental and prosaic, toxic and mutual.

DeMott, Robert. *Up Late Reading: Birds of America*. Sheila-Na-Gig Editions (Russell, KY) 2020. HC \$25. Each of these hybrid "proems," inspired in part by Audubon's great book, attempts to combine the amplitude and spaciousness of prose with the compression and focus of poetry. In traveling into darkly intertwined spaces of personal geography, memory, emotion, and loss, as well as into wild nature, each piece surrounds its lyrical moment

in a context of details, imaginings, and resonances with which to express its dramatic occasion.

Essinger, Cathryn. *The Apricot and the Moon*. Dos Madres Press (Loveland, OH) 2020. PB \$18. *The Apricot and the Moon* is a collection of mostly narrative poems that discuss the relationships between language, art, nature, and time. The manuscript moves from existential questions, to personal reflections, and on to a bit of whimsy, because obviously poets do not have all the answers. Using the moon as a talisman and a touchstone, Essinger writes about the known world—the intimacy of nature, the wisdom of the skies—and then moves on to the wonder of the unknown and how it is illuminated in our lives.

Gunter-Seymour, Kari. *A Place So Deep Inside America It Can't Be Seen*. Sheila-Na-Gig Editions (Russell, KY) 2020. PB \$16. In a time of inflated posturing and relentless self-promotion, Kari Gunter-Seymour's poems offer quiet intensity. Her work provides a refuge where one's curiosity, intelligence, and awareness of the complexities of contemporary Appalachian female culture and the struggle to hold on to "old ways" while embracing the new, take shape. The work is firmly and unapologetically attached to the poet's home soil. More than merely commenting, Gunter-Seymour's work searches for meaning. It takes readers outside and indoors, into the world and into bodies and minds, a foray into the tangled bonds of family, weighted with memories. Her work speaks to a knowing that as the threads of our lives unravel, so too, gifts materialize. Here, relationship issues, trauma, and disappointment

are transformed into a journey of revelation, a testament to the complexity and power of love even as it contends with circumstances beyond its control. Each poem is earthy and rich, filled with imagery, exploring beyond the boundaries of feminism, science, and spirituality. There is specific cultural musicality of language and line, a strong sense of observation—giving readers a renewed sense of understanding and discovery of today's Appalachian woman.

Lambert, Paula. *How to See the World (Harmony)*. Bottom Dog Press (Huron, OH) 2020. PB \$17. In *How to See the World*, Lambert takes us deftly along as she examines the new reality in which we've all awakened in 2020. She peels back its complicated layers with adept use of metaphor, as well as a revelatory tone that will have readers doubling back to unfold new meanings in a line, a verse, or a poem. Real moments of brilliance sparkle, calling us to look beyond surface and pattern to recognize something beyond ourselves, even while we languish in a groundswell of change.

JUVENILE

Elasky, Kathy S. *Pudgy Possum and the Porcupine*. Monday Creek (Buchtel, OH) 2020. HC \$19.99. Pudgy Possum meets a strange creature that he has never seen before. His new friend, Peter Porcupine, inspires a big idea for staying safe from Felix Fox. Will Pudgy's idea work? Only time will tell.

MIDDLE GRADE & YOUNG ADULT

Longert, Scott H. *Cy Young: An American Baseball Hero*. Ohio University Press (Athens, OH) 2020. PB \$15.95.

Cy Young was one of the hardest-throwing pitchers of all time. He recorded three no-hitters—including a perfect game—and accumulated more than 2,800 strikeouts on his way to the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Scott H. Longert uses Young's life story to introduce middle grade readers to the game, explaining balls, strikes, and outs in an easy-to-understand way. Longert narrates each season and each milestone game with an enthusiastic play-by-play that is sure to draw readers into the excitement on the field and in the crowd, fostering a better understanding of and a passion for baseball. Baseball fans today know Cy Young's name chiefly through the award given in his honor each year to the best pitcher in the National and the American Leagues. Denton True "Cyclone" Young won more than five hundred games over a career that spanned four decades, a record that no other major league pitcher has come close to matching. In addition to being the winningest pitcher in baseball history, he was also a kind, self-effacing, and generous man. Born into a farm family in rural Ohio, he never lost touch with the small-town values he grew up with.

Meyer, Karen. *Choosing Sides*. Sable Creek Press (Glendale, AZ) 2020. PB \$12.95.

A runaway boy. A virtuous, "dry" town. A determined saloon owner. In 1875, the Temperance Movement reveals the deep divide in the

nation over alcohol. When Gilbert Freeman runs away from his Ohio farm, he plans to leave his troubles behind. Instead, he stumbles into the middle of the fierce fight to close the newly opened saloon in the town of Westerville. His family stands against alcohol, but Gilbert finds a job with a saloon owner. Now he must choose one side or the other before his indecision breaks relations with Rose and other new-found friends. Worse, it may destroy the fragile tie he has with his father. The opposition to the new saloon erupts into real violence, and Gilbert decides to find the culprit. Will he add up the clues before someone gets hurt?

Miller, Patricia. *Joshua: Breaking Free (Joshua Trilogy Book 2)*. Booklocker.com (St. Petersburg, FL) 2020. PB \$17.95.

After fleeing the Theosian authorities and acclimating to their new home, teenage aliens Joshua and Mani have at long last carved out lives for themselves on Earth. With a circle of human friends more supportive than they ever imagined, Joshua and Mani discover true friendship is universal. And, for Joshua, so is true love, in the form of an Earthling named Emma. But the Theosian authorities are not so easily thwarted. The decree of no first contact with Earth must be upheld. A spy sent to Earth aims to find, capture, and return Joshua and Mani to Theos for prosecution. To protect Mani, safeguard his human friends, and preserve his idyllic existence with the love of his life, Joshua risks going back in order to finally BREAK FREE.

Speno, Andrew. *The Many Lives of Eddie Rickenbacker*. Ohio University Press (Athens, OH) 2020. PB \$15.95.

At age thirteen, following the death of his father, young Eddie dropped out of school and joined the workforce. Through a combination of smarts, hard work, and perseverance, Rickenbacker would grow up to become an automobile mechanic, a race car driver, a fighter pilot, an entrepreneur, a war hero, a business executive, and a staunch advocate for hard work and personal responsibility. Along the way he lived on the line between recklessness and courage. He survived dozens of accidents, coming close to death more than once. During the earliest years of American automobile racing, Rickenbacker was "the most daring and withal the most cautious driver" on the circuit. How could he have been both daring and cautious? This book invites young readers to decide for themselves as they follow Rickenbacker on his many hair-raising adventures.

Thank You!

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Why I Support Ohioana

I support Ohioana because it does more than collect and promote the works of Ohio authors and works that are about Ohio. Those aspects of what it does are important, of course, but the vitality of great literature is in its ability to connect people across barriers of time, space, class, ethnicity, and gender. It creates and sustains communities, unites hearts, and enriches the human experience immeasurably.

More than any other organization I know of, Ohioana recognizes this essential function of great literature by doing the work of bringing together authors and readers. When this happens, so does a kind of magic: the generation of a community, united by a love of the written word and a desire to know one another more fully. At the Ohioana Book Festival, via the Ohio Literary Trail, and in all its many programs, Ohioana brings readers and writers together, putting readers face-to-face with Ohio's powerful literary heritage, both in the form of its living creators and in reminders of its past. This is something that I have witnessed in my own family, as my daughter, Chloe, has gotten to meet and interact with some of her favorite authors, in a way that has made their works live and breathe for her beyond the written page. This is the kind of connection that builds lifelong readers and learners.



John Sullivan and daughter Chloe at the Ohioana Awards
(Photo: Mary Rathke)

It is not an understatement to say that Ohioana has changed my outlook on literature, and on the way that good literature forms, molds, and shapes one's outlook and directs one's loves. In doing so, Ohioana has changed my life for the better. I hope you'll join me in supporting this organization and its important work in the Ohio literary community and beyond.

JOHN SULLIVAN is Deputy General Counsel for the American Honda Motor Company, Inc. A member of the Ohioana Board of Trustees since 2014, he was elected President in October 2020.

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TEST YOUR OHIO MOVIE IQ!

A number of books by Ohio authors have been made into films in recent years. Test your movie IQ with the questions below!

1. Which actor and comedian played author R. L. Stine in a movie based on Stine's popular *Goosebumps* series?
2. Which director turned Ernest Cline's novel, *Ready Player One*, into a blockbuster 2018 film?
3. Which author's Ohioana Award-winning novel, *Little Fires Everywhere*, was adapted into a hit 2020 Hulu series starring Reese Witherspoon?
4. Whose off-screen voice narrates the 2020 Netflix series *The Devil All the Time*?

See page 7 for the answers!