

August 25 & September 1, 2025

# booklife®

— YOUR GUIDE TO SELF-PUBLISHING —

51 New BookLife Titles Listed • 24 New BookLife Titles Reviewed

## Indie Spotlight

In this edition of Indie Spotlight, our monthly thematic roundup of BookLife titles, we feature sci-fi and fantasy.

Want to see your book featured? Check out the Indie Spotlight calendar at [booklife.com/indiespotlight](http://booklife.com/indiespotlight).

### Alien House



Brian K. Lowe  
ASIN B0DTJ4J71M

**Author statement:** “When Phil is sent to Earth disguised as a college student to scout for a planned invasion, his mission is sabotaged and he crash-lands, losing his weapons, orders, and clothes. He finds shelter at Alpha Tau Ceti, the lowest-regarded fraternity on campus. *Alien House* was inspired by my own experiences in college. Whether this includes the aliens is up for debate.”

### Descendant of Dragons



C.S. Harris  
ASIN B0FLDVJ2KH

**Author statement:** “Imara, Sirenī, and Alex embarked on a mission to Omejis, where Imara must unify the magical and mystical forces. But as they plan their return to Earth, a mysterious force in scatters them across space and time. As a bisexual author,

I continue to center diverse LGBTQ characters in a richly imagined high-fantasy setting.”

### The Lavender Blade

E.L. Deards

ISBN 978-1-68463-320-3

**Author statement:** “Colton and Lucian, a young pair of exorcist con artists, use sleight of hand and their natural charm to scam the



nation's wealthiest... until one of them becomes possessed for real. Colton and Lucian's relationship is built on sharp edges—mutual dependence wrapped in danger. But what makes their dynamic compelling is that, despite everything, they still reach for each other. I hope readers come away from the story feeling like they've lived in it for a while, that they've laughed, held their breath, maybe even yelled at the pages, and that when it's over, they already miss it.”

### Maiden of Dawn



Amelia Black  
ASIN B0D29P3XD9

**Author statement:** “I'm the sort of writer who likes to plan out his stories in advance, but only up to a point. I know the ultimate destination, but eventually, the characters dictate the directions it takes to get there.”

### Prelude



Susan L. Alandar  
ISBN 979-8-9900576-0-9

**Author statement:** “This is the first in a series that has secretly evolved from a lifetime of fascination with humanity's unpredictable free will, and this wonder: what if there were a compassionate leader without it? My children discovered the ongoing tale as teenagers

# Booksellers & Librarians:



## How are you handling self-published books?

Every week, *Publishers Weekly* reviewers highlight self-published books that deserve your attention.

PLUS



Reviews

look for "self-published"  
at the end of a review  
[publishersweekly.com/  
self-pub](https://publishersweekly.com/self-pub)



paid reviews of self- or  
indie-published titles  
[publishersweekly.com/  
BookLifeReviews](https://publishersweekly.com/BookLifeReviews)



*PW* reviewers critique  
thousands of self-published  
titles every year:  
[publishersweekly.com/  
BookLifePrize](https://publishersweekly.com/BookLifePrize)

Let us help you find the best in self-published books!

All powered by *Publishers Weekly* reviewers.

and fell in love with it. They finally convinced me to tell my story to the world.”

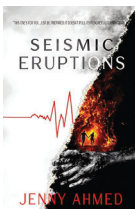
**Redemption**



Ilene Grydsuk  
ASIN B0DVYZGSYM

**Author statement:** “*Redemption* is the third book in the E.V. Chronicles. The series was inspired by my children, who question their lives and what the future holds for them, their children, and humanity. I wrote the story to engage readers of all ages and walks of life by invoking critical thinking and self-reflection. By remembering our common values, there is hope in the future for us all.”

**Seismic Eruptions**



Jenny Ahmed  
ASIN B0FFHS2MRD

**Author statement:** “This book was born out of my fascination with real-life supervolcanoes and how vulnerable even the most iconic natural wonders can be to forces beneath the surface. I spent months researching seismic activity, emergency

response protocols, and the geological history of Yellowstone to ground the story in as much scientific accuracy as possible.”

**Seizing Fate: A Gargoyle Order Novel**



Tracey Kyler  
ASIN B0FM6944VL

**Author statement:** “Gargoyles have always fascinated me, so they were a natural choice for my debut novel. Gargoyle lore is one of protection, but these are not your typical Gargoyles as they battle Fallen Ones in a bitter, eons-old secret war—a war that brought the world to the brink and changed it forever.”

**Touch of the Elegrian**



Cheryl A. Arko  
ASIN B0DZZ8YGL4

**Author statement:** “I have read science fiction ever since I could connect letters into words, but my special love has always been Andre Norton and her stories of outcast characters struggling to find their place in the clash of opposing cultures. So it is only natural for me to imagine a story from an alien’s point of view with a focus on ethical themes and moral complexity. I enjoy exploring what makes us all different—and what makes us the same.”

**MIDDLE GRADE AND YOUNG ADULT**

**The Alternate World**



Kathryn Starke  
ASIN B0DL8D41ZS

**Author statement:** “*The Alternate World* is my sixth book and first YA fantasy. The premise and setting for this book came to me in a dream over a decade ago, and I finally created the teenage characters and conflicts to bring this book into the world this year.”

**Sorcery and Stagecraft**



Kristin L. Hamblin  
ISBN 978-1-959230-07-6

**Author statement:** “The importance of the arts is fading in the world, and while this book contains magic, love, and adventure set in a fictional fantasy world, it also is a nod to how powerful the arts can be, specifically theater. As a mom of children actively involved in theater and music, I love that I was able to write a story about the arts pretty much saving the world.”

**Einstein’s Secret**



Irving Belateche  
ISBN 978-0-9840265-4-8

**Author statement:** “Convinced Einstein made a deathbed confession, Jacob Morgan, a struggling scholar, has devoted his life to uncovering this secret. I’ve always loved novels that reinvent and refresh history and legends. They take these building blocks of culture and make them personal and emotional.”

**Tara of Trees Beyond**



Reya Velamoor  
ASIN B0FD8VP9R4

**Author statement:** “I began writing *Tara of Trees Beyond* when I was 12 years old. After writing for several months, I eventually finished the story and began the editing process. Now, I am 16 years old and my debut novel is finally published! I am very passionate about creating stories and hope to inspire others through my writing.”

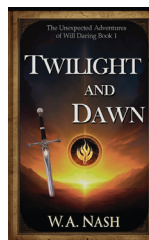
**Wellsville**



L.C. Scott  
ISBN 978-0-645-98101-8

**Author statement:** “The idea for *Wellsville* came about when I was having dinner at the pub with some friends. I think we were discussing the possibility of living in the Matrix, and the idea entered my head that the real Earth could be long gone and that we have actually been living in a simulation that is stored on a hard drive floating through space. Once I had that idea the next step was to ask why the truth is being kept from us, and who is responsible for controlling the narrative.”

**Twilight and Dawn: The Unexpected Adventures of Will Daring**



W.A. Nash  
ASIN B0FGDLXPP

**Author statement:** “I started writing *Twilight and Dawn* after a teacher gently told me my son had been drawing with markers on the carpet during circle time. He wasn’t misbehaving. He just needed something to occupy his imagination during quiet moments. So we created a story that could keep pace with his creativity.”



## BookBaby

# BookBaby: A Guiding Light for Indie Authors

The esteemed publishing platform supports writers on every step of the journey

**F**inishing a book is a major accomplishment—congratulations are certainly in order. But even after that manuscript is polished and perfected, an author's work is far from done. Now it's time to turn your labor of love into a professional-quality book. That's where BookBaby steps in. As a leader in the self-publishing industry since 2011, BookBaby's mission is helping authors achieve their dreams—and making books the best they can be so they can reach more readers.

"We're a full-service publishing services provider with real people guiding authors and small book publishers through every step of the process," says Jim Foley, president of BookBaby. "We handle everything under one roof, including printing, cover design, editing, distribution, e-books, audiobooks, and more. And we do it with the highest quality standards and a genuine passion for helping authors succeed."

For many first-time authors, putting their work out into the world can seem like a daunting process. BookBaby offers a "choose-your-own-adventure menu," Foley says, that allows authors to select the services they need. From professional editing and cover design to brand building and bulk printing, BookBaby offers services to help at every stage of production. This includes marketing and promotion, such as crafting book descriptions, producing attention-grabbing metadata, and making books available to more than 60 stores and retailers for purchase.

"Of course, we can't guarantee which stores will carry which books—no one can—but at BookBaby, you get an advocacy

team working on your behalf to get the books into the ever-shrinking marketplace," Foley says. "We know this can be overwhelming, so we go out of our way to make it smooth and stress-free. And because we do all our printing in-house, the quality is something we proudly stand behind."

**“ We handle everything under one roof, including printing, cover design, editing, distribution, e-books, audiobooks, and more. ”**

— Jim Foley

One of BookBaby's most exciting features is that every author is given their own BookShop page, which is a "powerful, customizable e-commerce platform built specifically for authors," Foley says. These personalized websites are more than just a place to sell books; they also help authors build their brand, find their audience, and earn some of the highest royalties in the industry for a variety of media, including e-books, audiobooks, and printed books with direct-to-reader sales.

"What makes BookShop truly unique is that it's designed for authors, not algorithms," he says. "There are no hidden fees, no competition from ads or third-party sellers, and no confusing royalty structures. You're in control of your pricing, your presentation, and your messaging."

While self-publishing can be challenging, many authors are surprised by how much control they retain over their work throughout the process. "You decide on the cover, the pricing, the release schedule—it's your book, your way," Foley says. Authors are also frequently amazed by the income potential of selling through BookShop, as well as the opportunities for personal growth. "Publishing a book boosts your credibility, helps you connect with a community, and can even open doors for speaking engagements, teaching opportunities, and career advancement," he says.

After a book is published and finds its audience, authors have the chance to experience the true reward of connecting with readers. Whether they want to start an important conversation, share their personal experiences, or just tell a great story, self-publishing provides that avenue of opportunity.

"For me, the most rewarding part is seeing someone hold their finished book in their hands for the first time," Foley says. "There's so much emotion wrapped up in that moment—pride, relief, joy. It never gets old. I also love hearing the stories of impact when an author tells us their book helped someone, sparked a conversation, or changed their life. That's powerful. Being a part of that journey, even in a small way, is a privilege."

# Self-publish your book from start to finish

At BookBaby, you have all the tools to create, print, distribute, and sell your book in one convenient place. Backed by hands-on support and expert advice, this is the better way to publish your book.

Services include:

- ✓ Professional editing
- ✓ Cover design & formatting
- ✓ Global distribution
- ✓ Hardcover & softcover printing
- ✓ eBook conversion
- ✓ Audiobook recording
- ✓ Direct-to-reader sales
- ✓ Marketing & advertising

“ BookBaby’s layout services, design talents, and printing have been phenomenal! The one-stop functionality was especially impressive to me as a first-time author. I am completely satisfied with BookBaby’s commitment to service excellence at each step of the self-publishing process! ”

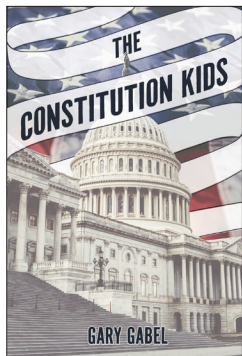
SHON BARNWELL

*Leadership Is About Behavior, Not Titles*





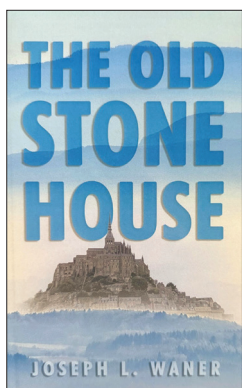
# Must-Read Titles



## The Constitution Kids

by Gary Gabel  
ISBN: 979-8891383906

“Entertaining time travel adventure bringing the Constitution to life.”



## The Old Stone House

by Joseph L. Waner  
ISBN: 979-8893414912

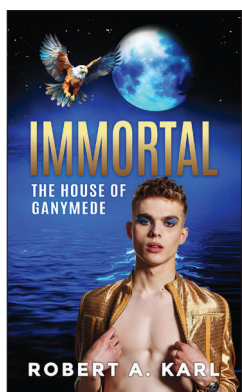
“Smart archaeological thriller novella exploring paranormal secrets near Normandy.”



## Broken Butterfly

by Cindy Patterson  
**EDITOR'S PICK**  
ISBN: 978-1646690398

“Sparkling Amish romance with contemporary flair and faith.”



## Immortal: The House of Ganymede

by Robert A. Karl  
ISBN: 979-8992951301

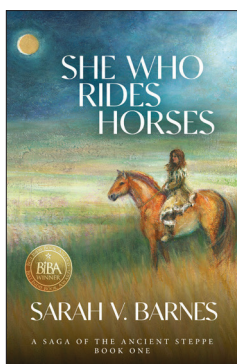
“Haunting, relatable queer YA reimagining of the myth of Ganymede.”



## Black Artists Rock! The Cool Kids' Guide A-Z

by Cara Reese  
ISBN: 979-8218591816

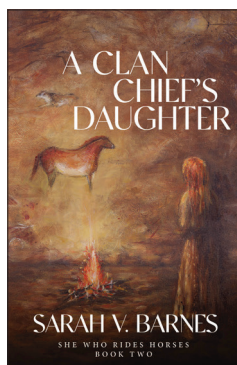
“An entertaining A to Z guide that highlights African American artists and creatives.”



## She Who Rides Horses: A Saga of the Ancient Steppe (Book One)

by Sarah V. Barnes  
**EDITOR'S PICK**  
ISBN: 978-1736967331

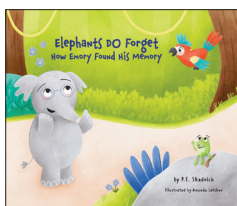
“Horse lovers will relish this historical adventure about a young woman who becomes the first person to ride a horse.”



## A Clan Chief's Daughter: She Who Rides Horses (Book Two)

by Sarah V. Barnes  
ISBN: 979-8992769005

“Fascinating prehistoric saga centered on the young woman who first rode a horse.”



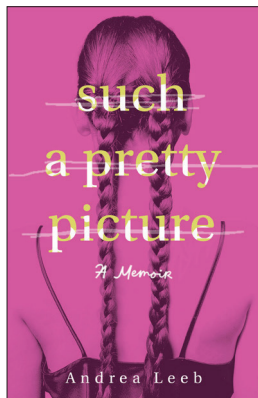
## Elephants DO Forget: How Emory Found His Memory

by P.E. Shadrick  
ISBN: 979-8991234054

“A forgetful elephant overcomes his challenges with the help of his friends.”



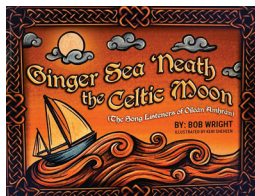
# Must-Read Titles



## Such a Pretty Picture: A Memoir

by Andrea Leeb  
ISBN: 978-1647429942

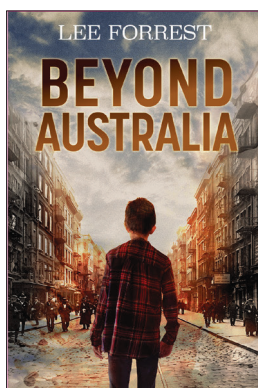
“ Resonant narrative of trauma, growth, and forgiveness.



## Ginger Sea 'Neath the Celtic Moon

by Bob Wright  
ISBN: 979-8330530144

“ A beautifully illustrated middle-grade story of an Irish girl writing ocean-inspired songs for her grandmother.



## Beyond Australia

by Lee Forest  
**EDITOR'S PICK**  
ISBN: 979-8991625500

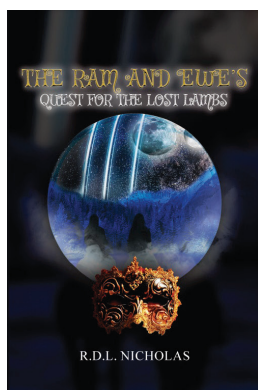
“ Gripping YA time travel adventure with serious heart.



## A Friend of Dorothy's

by Richard Willett  
**EDITOR'S PICK**  
ISBN: 979-8992339819

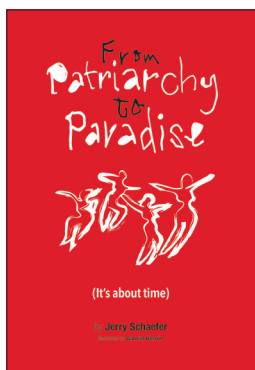
“ Powerful novel of queer self-discovery amid the AIDS crisis in 1980s New York.



## The Ram and Ewe's Quest for the Lost Lambs

by R.D.L. Nicholas  
ISBN: 979-8990844254

“ An enchanting, action packed fantasy adventure that follows a young girl and group of friends on a quest to save her father.



## From Patriarchy to Paradise

by Jerry Schaefer  
ISBN: 979-8218538958

“ Upbeat call for liberating the mind and society from patriarchal beliefs.

“ Quotes from BookLife Reviews

If you are interested in participating in our next group ad please reach out to [dali@publishersweekly.com](mailto:dali@publishersweekly.com).



# New Titles from Self-Publishers

Booksellers, publishers, librarians, and agents are encouraged to look at the 51 self-published titles below. Each appears with a list of retailers that are selling the book and a description provided by its author. Some of these writers are waiting to be discovered; others have track records and followings and are doing it on their own. If you are a self-published author interested in listing titles in this section, please visit [publishersweekly.com/pw-select](http://publishersweekly.com/pw-select) for more information.

## Fiction

### Alien Trucker



Jeremy Haladyna. Outskirts Press. \$20.95 paper (250p), ISBN 978-1-9772-7985-9

[outskirtspress.com](http://outskirtspress.com)

An alien hybrid takes a trucker's place on a mission to save his species. Mystics, danger, and destiny await on a surreal journey through the Southwest. Ride if you dare!

### Behind the Mirror: A Novel



Bridget Budd. Healing Shelf Press. \$14.95 paper (242p), ASIN B0FFZMSVB4; \$24.99 (242p), ASIN B0FFZMZ33N  
[Amazon](http://Amazon)

A gripping novel about emotional healing, generational trauma, and the moment a woman stops performing and finally begins to live her truth.

### Captain Death

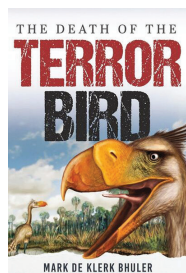


Jurgen Vsych. Wroughten Books. \$19.95 paper (212p), ISBN 978-0-9749879-4-1; \$9.95 e-book, ISBN 978-0-9749879-6-5  
[Amazon](http://Amazon), Barnes & Noble  
To save George

Washington's fledgling navy, Clancy Redbeard, the sweet-natured son of a

Virginia pirate, must kill his Loyalist brother.

### The Death of the Terror Bird



Mark Buhler. Authors' Tranquility Press. \$9.99 paper (54p), ISBN 978-1-967776-36-8  
[Amazon](http://Amazon)

In 1947, a glider crash strands a father and son on a remote island, where alien orbs and a soul-stealing reptilian terror reveal a dark force beyond Earth.

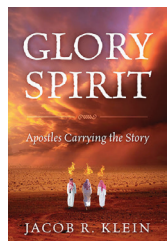
### Every Color and Gold



Michael J. Morales. Michael J. Morales. \$14.99 paper (294p), ISBN 979-8-2840-9143-2; \$0.99 e-book, ASIN B0FBX636PV  
[Amazon](http://Amazon)

A gifted painter from the working class is thrust into the world of the elite, where buried secrets force her to choose between loyalty to her roots and a new life.

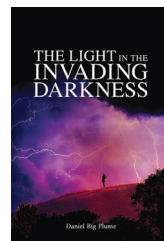
### Glory Spirit: Apostles Carrying the Story



Jacob Klein. Outskirts Press. \$35.95 (236p), ISBN 978-1-9772-7410-6; \$19.95 paper (236p), ISBN 978-1-9772-7407-6  
[outskirtspress.com](http://outskirtspress.com)  
Thought it was over? Nope! Jacob Klein

returns with the Acts story: Holy Spirit power, trials, Saul's transformation, miracles, missions, and the birth of the early church.

### The Light in the Invading Darkness



Daniel Big Plume. Daniel Big Plume. \$19.99 paper (340p), ISBN 978-1-0694087-0-9; \$19.99 paper (340p), ISBN 978-1-0694087-1-6  
[Amazon](http://Amazon), Barnes & Noble, [Bookshop.org](http://Bookshop.org), Tertulia

Alexandra, crumbling under the pressure of training to save all life on Earth from a space-roaming anomaly called the Invading Darkness, seeks revenge for her father's murder.

### Lily among Thorns: Song of Solomon 2:2 in the Last Days 2nd Peter 3:3

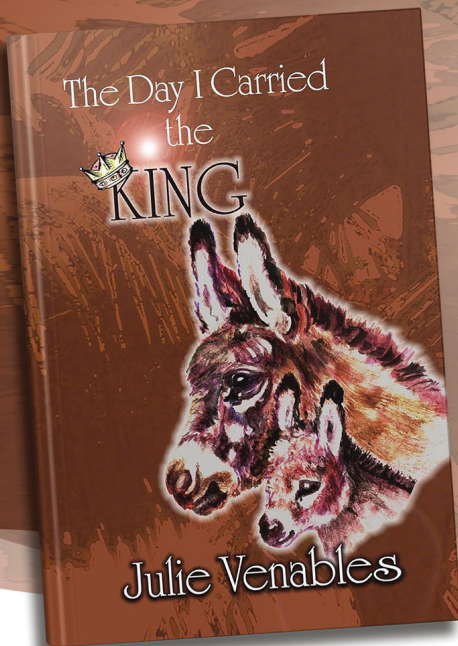


Annette K. Mazzone. Christian Faith. \$33.95 (298p), ISBN 978-1-0980-5108-2; \$19.95 paper (298p), ISBN 978-1-0980-5107-5  
[annetekmazzone.com](http://annetekmazzone.com)

In a future where faith is outlawed, a brave young woman defies a tyrannical regime. Amid war, loss, and persecution, her unshakeable belief sparks hope and resistance.

### The Luckiest Fool on Earth: The Twisted Yarn of America's Greatest Flagpole Sitter

Phillip S. Roberts. Zazel Publishing. \$29.95



# THE DAY I CARRIED THE KING

BY JULIE VENABLES

ISBN: 979-8896901808

## Julie Venables: Sharing Grace and Purpose Through a Donkey's Eyes

In the landscape of children's literature, stories that combine charm, emotional resonance, and spiritual depth are rare gems. Julie Venables, an English author and illustrator, has achieved just that with her book, *The Day I Carried the King*. With a heart for storytelling and a passion for illustrating faith in action, Julie brings to life a timeless message of purpose and love through the humble eyes of a donkey named Jasper.

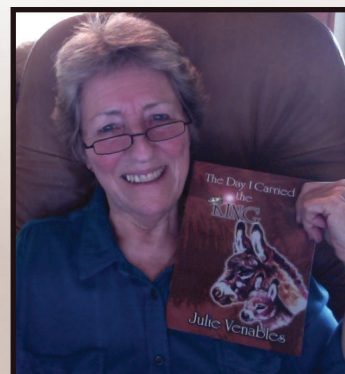
*The Day I Carried the King* is more than just a children's book, it's a gentle yet powerful parable about recognizing the value and purpose in every individual. Jasper, a seemingly ordinary donkey, is chosen to carry Jesus the Messiah, on His triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Through his perspective, children learn a deeply spiritual truth: God can use anyone, regardless of their appearance or background, to fulfill His divine purposes.

Julie has long been committed to using her creative gifts to share the joy and faithfulness of Christ with others. Her writing reflects a mission-minded heart, influenced by her global travels and ministry experiences. She believes firmly in presenting spiritual concepts in ways that are accessible and meaningful to young readers. Through simple language, gentle humor, and vibrant illustrations, she brings biblical stories to life in a way that resonates with children and adults alike.

At the heart of *The Day I Carried the King* lies the message that God sees beyond appearances. As Jasper reflects on his size and physique, as well as his self-worth, readers are reminded that it is the posture of the heart, not outward attributes, that truly matters. This touching message is as relevant for children navigating self-image as it is for adults seeking affirmation in a noisy world.

The book is available in hard back, paperback and digital formats through major retailers such as Amazon and Barnes & Noble. It has also found a place in Sunday school classrooms, faith-based libraries, and homes around the world as a beloved Passover/Easter-time favorite.

Julie Venables continues to inspire through her words and illustrations, offering stories that uplift, affirm, and point toward a greater truth. With *The Day I Carried the King*, she delivers a timeless reminder that even the most unlikely among us can carry greatness, especially when we carry the King.



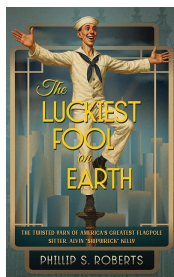
Available at:

[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

**BARNES & NOBLE**

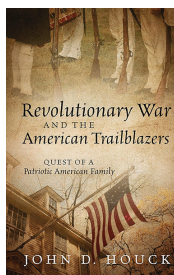


\*also in other major online bookstores



(302p), ISBN 979-8-9985042-0-4; \$17.95 paper (302p), ISBN 979-8-9985042-1-1  
Amazon, Barnes & Noble  
Alvin "Shipwreck" Kelly invents flagpole sitting in an age of daredevils, yet he cannot escape the more grounded problems of his life.

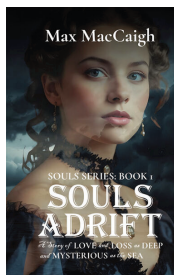
### Revolutionary War and the American Trailblazers: Quest of a Patriotic American Family



John Houck. Outskirts Press. \$44.95 (488p), ISBN 978-1-9772-7073-3; \$29.95 paper (488p), ISBN 978-1-9772-6079-6  
outskirtspress.com  
A novel blending

Revolutionary War fiction with italicized facts to spark readers' curiosity about America's founding and the power of an educated, free people. God bless America!

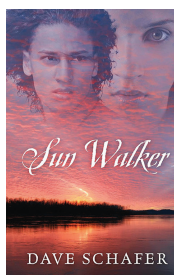
### Souls Adrift



Max MacCaigh. Alvina Avante. \$9.99 paper (380p), ISBN 979-8-218-36064-1; \$3.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-9920058-1-3  
Amazon  
An historical sea story of gothic horror

and suspense.

### Sun Walker

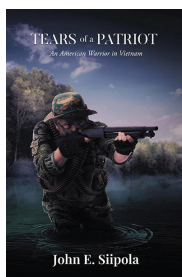


Dave Schafer. Outskirts Press. \$25.95 paper (382p), ISBN 978-1-9772-7083-2; \$9.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-9772-6995-9  
outskirtspress.com  
Beck, fleeing false murder charges, joins

a trapping party west. Rescued twice by Sun Walker, he battles enemies, survives a panther, and faces his half-brother captor.

### Tears of a Patriot: An American Warrior in Vietnam

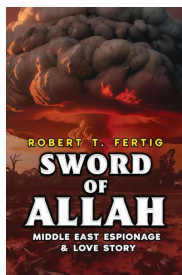
John E. Siipola. Page Solutions - Prowriters



Network. \$7.50 paper (216p), ISBN 979-8-89633-010-3  
Amazon  
This is a book about a World War II fighter pilot who can trace his ancestry to a fur trader and a Shoshone maiden in the Wyoming mountains.

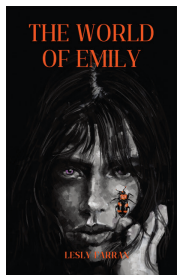
### Mystery/Thriller

#### Sword of Allah: Middle East Espionage and Love Story



Robert T. Fertig. Worldwide Publicists. \$13.99 paper (354p), ISBN 978-1-963757-69-9  
Amazon  
Vincent's life spirals into global chaos after a bad Middle East deal, entangling him in espionage, passion, and a deadly plot threatening worldwide consequences.

### The World of Emily



Lesly Farran. Lesly Farran. \$3.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-2907-5015-6  
Amazon  
Dr. Emily Durchdenwald dies hours after a breakthrough fungus is unveiled. Then, a missing girl returns unchanged. What if nature had been speaking all along and we ignored it?

### SF/Fantasy/Horror

#### The Buckinchere Collection II



B. Lorenzo Buckinchere. The Buckinchere Publication. \$29.99 (446p), ISBN 979-8-3495-0713-7; \$21.99 paper (446p), ISBN 979-8-3495-0742-7  
Barnes & Noble  
B. Lorenzo

Buckinchere's second excursion into the macabre with six suspenseful tales.

### The Ghost Writer

Brian Warner. Jupiter & Phoebus Publishing



House. \$19.99 paper (390p), ISBN 979-8-9920059-7-4; \$19.99 paper (390p), ISBN 979-8-9920059-6-7  
Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Bookshop.org  
English professor John Sterling is hired as the ghostwriter for famed horror author Martin Knight, but he is drawn into a world of terror that may cost him his family and his life.

### Return to Aneleya: The Silver Sphere Series



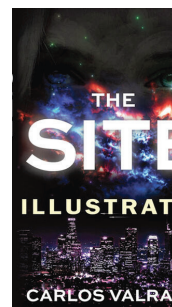
David Gittlin. Entelligent Entertainment. \$3.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-9985682-0-6; \$3.99 audio, ISBN 979-8-9858605-6-6  
Amazon, Audible  
A captivating interstellar adventure in the fifth book of the Silver Sphere Series, featuring aliens and androids, plus new and familiar characters.

### The Shroud Project



Edward S. Zalewski. Edward S. Zalewski. \$15.99 paper (424p), ISBN 979-8-2837-1510-0; \$5.99 e-book, ASIN B0F9XMTT6J  
Amazon  
A techno-thriller and spiritual epic of miracles, rebellion, and redemption in a world where faith has become forbidden and love might be the last miracle left.

### The Site: Illustrated



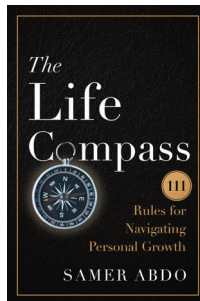
Carlos Valrand, illus. by Vivi Campos, Tess Kane Phillips, Carlos Valrand. Dramtes Enterprises. \$24.99 paper (372p), ISBN 979-8-9924978-0-9; \$3.99 e-book, ASIN B0F3W5HNNZ  
Amazon, Barnes &

Noble, IngramSpark

In dreams, Cicely inexplicably tracks investigators Charles and Vivian, who seek

## BookLife Talks with Samer Abdo

Abdo's first book, *The Life Compass*, shares 111 rules readers can apply on their journey of personal growth, but it is also designed to help readers hold on to the information, rather than having it fade as soon as they close the book. BookLife Reviews called *The Life Compass* "a meaningful pathway to change."



**The self-help genre is quite large. What do you think makes your book stand out?**

*The Life Compass* addresses the most common frustrations with self-help literature: fleeting motivation, abstract ideas, and a lack of structure for real-world application. In response, it delivers a complete and practical framework—111 clearly defined rules across 11 areas of life. Each rule is anchored in timeless wisdom, illustrated with historical or contemporary examples, and paired with reflection tools to encourage lasting change.

The book also accommodates different learning styles. Some readers are drawn to the rules themselves, others to the quotes that frame each one, and others to the narrative examples that reveal the consequences of following—or neglecting—the rule. Each rule is delivered through these three layers, helping

**Was there a particular instance that pushed you to start writing *The Life Compass*?**

Yes. After years of reading extensively across philosophy, psychology, and personal development, I began noticing a recurring issue: many books sparked insight but failed to offer sustainable or practical direction. The wisdom was often powerful but temporary, fading over time and requiring constant rereading just to recapture its value.

What ultimately became *The Life Compass* was originally scattered across hundreds—if not thousands—of sources. To reach the same clarity and depth, one would need to repeat that long reading journey, which is simply not practical for most people. Over time, I realized that the real challenge wasn't a lack of information but a lack of integration. That insight led me to design *The Life Compass* as a structured system to help readers retain, apply, and build upon what they learn—not just once, but over a lifetime. The book includes a self-assessment questionnaire at the end that can be used daily, weekly, or monthly, either in full or focused on the most relevant chapters or rules at any given time.

**You state that a reader can choose their approach to the book: chapter by chapter or by the most-needed rules first. Was it difficult to put the book together with this in mind?**

It was thoughtfully challenging. *The Life Compass* is divided into two parts—The Inner Voyage and The Outer Voyage—covering 11 core areas of life through 111 concise rules. Each chapter and rule is designed to stand alone for immediate guidance while also contributing to a broader journey of inner mastery and relational clarity. The aim was to create a flexible system: one that supports both deep, structured reading and quick, targeted access depending on a reader's current needs or life circumstances. Balancing both paths required precision, but it was essential to making the book a long-term companion, not just a one-time read.

it resonate with a wide range of readers. The integration process is further supported by a reflection-based questionnaire designed to help readers reinforce their growth over time.

**Do you think there is an intrinsic desire in humans to better themselves?**

Absolutely. Without that drive, human progress wouldn't exist. But the desire to grow is often buried under daily distractions or lost in a sea of conflicting advice. People are often left overwhelmed, without a clear system to follow. *The Life Compass* is designed to channel that intrinsic drive into focused, sustainable action. With clear rules, timeless quotes, illustrative examples, and a rhythm of ongoing reflection, it transforms the desire for growth into meaningful, lasting results. Rather than promoting a fixed philosophy, it offers a flexible framework that meets people where they are and helps guide them toward where they want to go.

**What's next for you?**

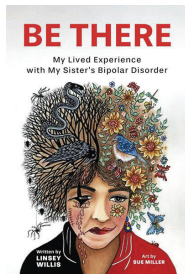
Beyond the book, I'm developing several companion tools—a guided journal, a mini-book series, and a challenge-based platform—that bring the 11 chapters to life through interactive experiences. I'm also exploring an app powered by the 111 rules through AI, offering on-demand support drawn directly from the book's core principles. My aim is to make personal growth structured, practical, and sustainable—across different stages of life, formats, and communities.

For more, visit [booklife.com/abdo](https://booklife.com/abdo)

a stolen document. Distraught, Cicely wants to understand her bizarre dreams and save her sanity.

## Nonfiction

### Be There: My Lived Experience with My Sister's Bipolar Disorder



Linsey Willis. Mascot Books. \$20.95 paper (280p), ISBN 978-1-63755-928-4; \$9.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-63755-929-1  
betherebook.com  
*Be There* is a powerful memoir of caregiving,

bipolar disorder, and family, offering insight, hope, and understanding through personal stories, science, and the Four Cs of coping.

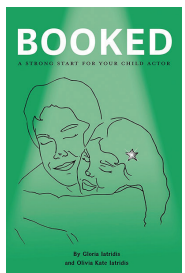
### Body Language Alive: A Garden of Nonverbal Nuggets



Cody Sweet. XlibrisUS. \$30.99 paper (420p), ISBN 978-1-5245-4334-1; \$3.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-5245-4333-4  
Amazon  
Unlock the secrets to effortless communi-

cation. Explore the fascinating world of nonverbal cues and delve into the humor and insight of unspoken interactions that shape our daily lives.

### Booked: A Strong Start for Your Child Actor

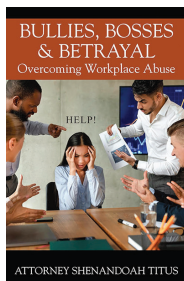


Gloria Iatridis and Olivia Iatridis. FriesenPress. \$19.99 paper (144p), ISBN 978-1-0391-9537-0; \$10.99 e-book, ASIN BOCW1L69HP  
Amazon  
Gloria shares her insights on being a

parent to a child actor in *Booked*, combining advice for the parent with a child actor with memoirs of her and Olivia's experiences.

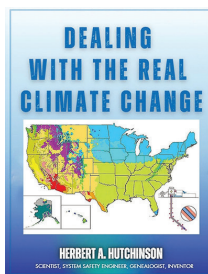
### Bullies, Bosses & Betrayal: Overcoming Workplace Abuse

Attorney Shenandoah Titus. Outskirts Press. \$16.95 paper (138p), ISBN 978-1-9772-



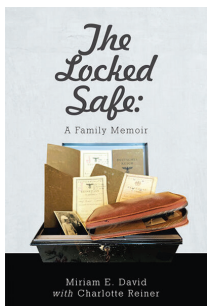
8016-9  
outskirtspress.com  
In part inspirational, in part informational, this truly outstanding book may be your best friend in your quest to overcome workplace abuse!

### Dealing with the Real Climate Change



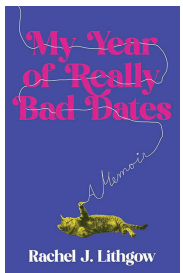
Herbert A. Hutchinson. Verity Publications. \$42.99 (528p), ISBN 979-8-89395-101-1; \$4.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-89395-103-5  
Amazon, Barnes & Noble  
This book uses a mathematical method to evaluate tech solutions for climate change, highlighting challenges, growth, and STEM-driven opportunities. No crisis, just action.

### The Locked Safe: A Family Memoir



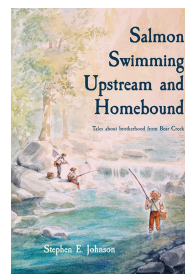
Miriam E. David, with Charlotte Reiner. AuthorHouseUK. \$4.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-8230-8789-6; \$4.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-8230-8790-2  
Amazon  
Miriam David uncovers the truth about her parents' dramatic escapes from Nazi persecution and Japanese internment camps, and how their experiences shaped her own life and the lives of future generations.

### My Year of Really Bad Dates: A Memoir



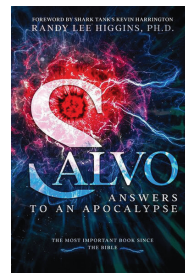
Rachel Lithgow. She Writes Press. \$12.99 (224p), ISBN 979-8-89636-011-7; \$17.99 paper (224p), ISBN 979-8-89636-010-0  
Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Bookshop.org  
A vulnerable, hilarious memoir that explores dating in midlife after divorce, with bad dates from terrible one-night stands to promising matches anchoring the theme of every chapter.

### Salmon Swimming Upstream and Homebound: Tales about Brotherhood from Bear Creek



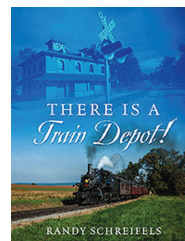
Stephen E. Johnson. Sonatas by Steve. \$14.50 paper (206p), ISBN 979-8-2828-8311-4; \$19.95 audio, ASIN B0FHJ61ZY2  
Amazon  
Heartfelt nostalgic memoir about growing up in rural America during 1966 through vivid stories of childhood adventures, family traditions, and the rhythms of farm life.

### Salvo: Answers to an Apocalypse



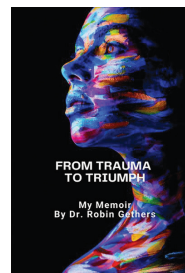
Randy Lee Higgins. Mindstir Media. \$16.99 paper (352p), ISBN 978-1-7370915-0-9; \$2.99 e-book, ASIN B09HSQVXY3  
Amazon  
A mystical guide of aphorisms from our future selves, offering insight and transformation through fear, leading to self-realization and the unexpected path to a new, awakened Earth.

### There Is a Train Depot!



Randy Schreifels. Outskirts Press. \$19.95 paper (36p), ISBN 978-1-9772-6709-2  
outskirtspress.com  
The book contains many images of American and Canadian train depots. From small with a few benches and one track to very large multi tracks. I shot them through my many years of traveling.

### From Trauma to Triumph



Robin Gethers. Robin Gethers. \$29.99 paper (290p), ISBN 979-8-3100-2362-8; \$9.99 e-book, ASIN B0DWKDFV1P  
Amazon  
Readers will get a glimpse into the pain

# CLARK L. SELBY JR.

## Discover the Thrills & Heartspoken Truths of Clark L. Selby Jr.



Clark L. Selby Jr., born in Oklahoma in 1936, brings a remarkable blend of life experience and storytelling prowess to his literary works. After a distinguished career in the parking industry rising from parking meter repair to global executive with decades spent across six continents Selby turned to writing when caring for his first wife, Patricia. After her paralysis.



He is best known for his “Dangerous Series” a gripping saga of espionage and terrorism spanning *Dangerous Journey*, *Dangerous Food*, *Dangerous Cargo*, *Dangerous Enemy*, and most recently *Dangerous Ally*, with *Dangerous Client* underway. These thrillers feature vivid international settings Paris, Moscow, Hong Kong, Beijing drawn from places Selby himself once worked. Readers and reviewers praise the cinematic pace, high stakes, and heroism, with one review likening *Dangerous Journey* to “a novel for you so visually rich...you can easily imagine it as a cinematic blockbuster”.

Branching beyond thrillers, Selby explores profound themes of love and loss. Together *Forever* chronicles a lifelong romance of two teens married young, mirroring his own experiences, and earned the Gold Seal of Literary Excellence from US Review of Books. *The Power of Love* follows Chance and Ann’s later-life trials loss, caregiving, grief, and ultimately discovering love anew offering moving testament to resilience and hope.

Adding to his portfolio, Selby has written four Westerns *A Cowboy Named Indian* (prequel to *Indian Leader Trail Boss*), *Where’s My Wife?*, and *Two Cowboys in New York* drawing upon his Kansas/Oklahoma roots and a lifelong affinity for Western lore.

From the boardrooms of international parking ventures to the frontlines of espionage fiction, Clark Selby Jr. offers readers a gripping journey through action, emotion, and redemption. His *Dangerous Series* packed with high-speed races, shadowy conspiracies, and perilous locales has earned acclaim for its cinematic intensity. Yet amid the pulse-pounding suspense lies a deeper devotion to human connection: *Together Forever* and *The Power of Love* shine with stories of lifelong unions, unwavering hope, and love rekindled against all odds. For fans of heart-racing excitement and soul-stirring narratives, Selby’s body of work is a must-read but be warned: once opened, you may not be able to put these books down.

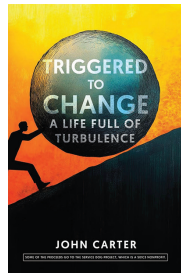
Available at:

**BARNES & NOBLE** BOOKSELLERS **amazon**



and suffering I endured, but also witness the strength and resilience that helped me heal.

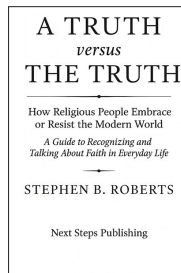
**Triggered to Change: A Life Full of**



**Turbulence**  
John Carter. John Carter. \$15.99 paper (62p), ISBN 979-8-89694-058-6; \$5.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-89694-057-9  
Amazon, Bookshop.org  
Through raw honesty

and personal reflection, the author shares his journey of overcoming adversity, embracing change, and finding strength in life's hardest moments.

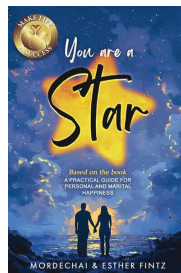
**A Truth versus the Truth: How Religious People Embrace or Resist the Modern**



**World**  
Stephen B. Roberts. Next Steps Publishing. \$27.99 (180p), ISBN 979-8-9993880-0-1; \$27.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-9993880-1-8  
Amazon, IngramSpark  
A clear, accessible

guide to how religious people worldwide embrace or resist modern life's using a new tool, the Modernity Spectrum, to explain where and why faith meets change.

**You Are a Star: A Practical Guide to Personal and Marital Happiness**



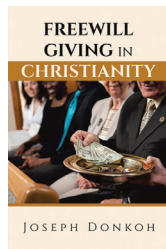
Mordechai Fintz and Esther Fintz. Authors' Tranquility Press. \$14.99 paper (148p), ISBN 978-1-966972-05-1  
Amazon  
Discover a practical guide to personal growth and lasting

love packed with proven strategies for self-improvement, marriage, and building a fulfilling family life.

**Religion/Spirituality**

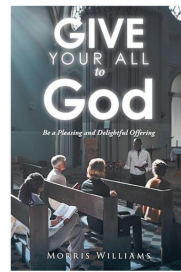
**Freewill Giving in Christianity**

Joseph Donkoh. XlibrisAU. \$10.99 paper (64p), ISBN 979-8-3694-9447-9; \$3.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-3694-9446-2  
Amazon



Providing biblical examples, Joseph Donkoh delves into God's selfless gifts and sheds light on the benefits of giving back to the church, the needy, community, and godly causes.

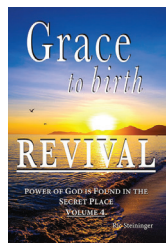
**Give Your All to God: Be a Pleasing and Delightful Offering**



Morris Williams. Brilliant Books Literary. \$11.98 paper (182p), ISBN 979-8-88945-362-8  
Amazon

In this book, Morris Williams shares biblical teaching and amazing experiences to show that you can do it.

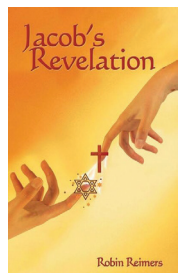
**Grace to Birth Revival: Power of God Is Found in the Secret Place**



Ric Steininger. XlibrisAU. \$34.99 paper (630p), ISBN 979-8-3694-9749-4; \$3.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-3694-9749-4  
Amazon

Gain deep insights on how to awaken your hidden capacity to initiate revival, release the Spirit's outpouring, and transform the world through your "revealed" sonship in Christ Jesus.

**Jacob's Revelation**

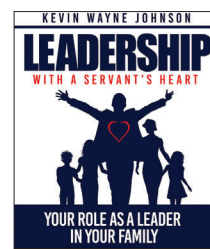


Robin Reimers. Authors' Tranquility Press. \$5.99 paper (46p), ISBN 978-1-966088-40-0  
Amazon

An inspiring book offering faith, hope, and comfort through Jesus to those facing death, showing there's no pain in dying, only His love and peace.

**Leadership with a Servant's Heart: Your Role as a Leader in Your Family**

Kevin Wayne Johnson. Writing for the Lord Ministries. \$17.95 paper (200p), ISBN 978-0-9883038-7-4  
Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books-A-Million,



Target, Walmart  
It is within the structure of the family unit that we begin to learn strategies and principles that govern good leadership.

**Children's/YA**

**Book of Blood**



Jaya Farrer. Irian Jaya Press. \$3.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-218-75637-6  
Amazon

As witch hunts sweep across Spain, Catalina Gonzalez's mother, the town healer, attracts suspicion. With a witch hunter at their door, Catalina cooks up a plan to protect her family.

**Knights without Ceremony: Insurrection**



Ari Magnusson. Olivander Press. \$12.99 paper (296p), ISBN 979-8-9897557-6-9; \$2.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-9897557-7-6  
Amazon, IngramSpark

A coming-of-age medieval adventure about loyalty, identity, and finding the courage to do what is right in the face of great personal risk and cost.

**The Last War (The Dragonkin Legacy #1)**



Ian E.S. Adler. Winds' Home Press. \$17.50 paper (499p), ISBN 978-0-578-29338-7; \$0.99 e-book, ISBN 979-8-3160-9141-6  
Amazon

Millennia after humanity wiped out the Dragonkin, five unlikely heroes must rediscover ancient magics to stop a rising serpent threat and save Cynnahu in a final, desperate war.

**Luisita Is Sick/Luisita está enferma (English and Spanish edition)**



Dora Przybylek, illus. by Gaston Hauviller. Laredo Publishing. \$14.95 paper (26p), ISBN 978-1-56492-446-9  
doraprzybylek.com

Luisita feels unwell and learns she has cancer. Through treatments, she shows patience and gains strength, learning from her doctors, nurses, and friends. A story of courage and hope.

**Mama Sheep and the Mysterious Cup**



Carlie Guerrier, illus. by Amanda Letcher. Carlie Guerrier. \$18.99 (28p), ISBN 979-8-9925885-0-7; \$17.49 paper, ISBN 979-8-9925885-1-4

Amazon, Barnes & Noble, IngramSpark, Target

Every morning, Mama Sheep finds a mysterious cup on the counter. Who's leaving it? She asks everyone, even travels to space! Will she solve the mystery?

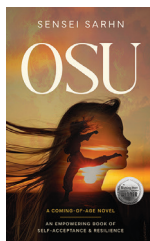
**One Night Only**



Jennifer Farwell. Starry Girl Publishing. \$19.99 (310p), ISBN 978-0-9986143-8-0; \$3.99 e-book, ISBN 978-0-9986143-5-9

Amazon  
When a teen pop star who's hiding her identity meets a boy who can't stand celebrities, summer romance blooms. But telling the truth could risk everything, including their lives.

**Osu**

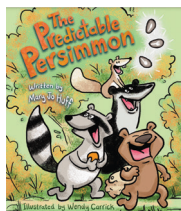


Sensei Sarhn. Empowering Books. \$11.80 paper (356p), ISBN 978-1-7636312-1-2; \$2.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-7636312-0-5

Amazon, Apple, Barnes & Noble, Kobo

Teen loner Olive's life opens in a new town, but karate offers solace. Her talent and a bond with her sensei's son grow, until a crushing secret forces her to fight for her place.

**The Predictable Persimmon**

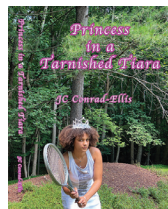


Mary Jo Huff, illus. by Wendy Carrick. Storytelling Time Press. \$19.99 (40p), ISBN 978-1-959192-03-9; \$10.99 paper (40p), ISBN 978-1-959192-10-7

Amazon

Join Bradley the bear and his forest friends as they explore the legend of the persimmon, predict the winter, and celebrate the magic of fall, friendship, and nature!

**Princess in a Tarnished Tiara**

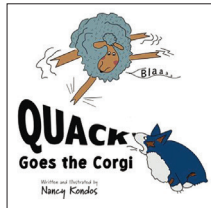


J.C. Conrad-Ellis. Provision Press. \$14.99 paper (414p), ISBN 978-1-957593-06-7; \$9.99 e-book, ISBN 978-1-957593-13-5

Amazon, Barnes & Noble, IngramSpark

The teenage children born to the Black Diamond Series' main characters are introduced. Similar quests for validation and love exist, but the terrain is rockier than their parents' bumpy paths.

**Quack Goes the Corgi**



Nancy Kondos. Authors' Tranquility Press. \$9.99 paper (32p), ISBN 978-1-966972-16-7

Amazon  
A playful corgi chases bunnies,

wins ribbons, and learns manners in this fun, educational tale about friendship, adventure, and a few stolen carrots!

**Road to True North**



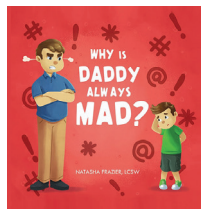
Sarah Holding. Firehorse. \$11.99 paper (192p), ISBN 978-1-9163070-9-4; \$5.49 e-book, ISBN 978-1-9163070-4-9

Amazon, Apple Books, Barnes & Noble,

Books-A-Million, Google Play

On the brink of adulthood, Olly's life has fallen apart. His dad takes him on a road trip to Iceland to "fix" him, but Olly isn't broken; it's time for him to step up and take charge.

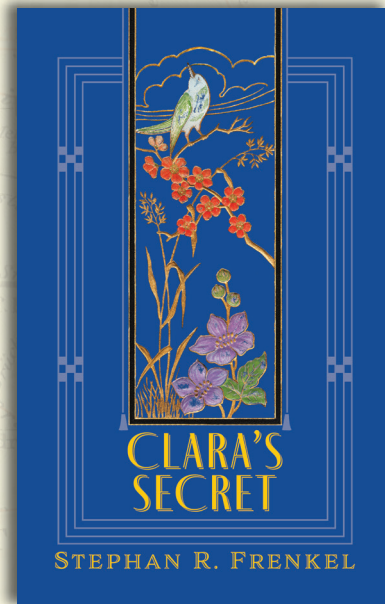
**Why Is Daddy Always Mad?**



Natasha Frazier. Natasha Frazier. \$23.99 (36p), ISBN 979-8-218-24772-0

Amazon

A father realizes his own familial patterns when his young son begins showing signs of aggression. What actions will he take so that habits are not repeated?



**“Rich personal and cultural history of a young woman in Berlin’s Belle Epoque.”**

—Publishers Weekly/BookLife Reviews



**“A tender, personality-centered biography of golden age Berlin.”**

—Kirkus Reviews

**“A wonderfully composed portrayal that could be considered narrative Art Nouveau.”**

—BookTrib

**Interactive Content**



Paperback ISBN: 978-1-7343635-3-1  
Kindle eBook ISBN: 978-1-7343635-4-8

[www.laevnotes.com](http://www.laevnotes.com)



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## FICTION

⚡ EDITOR'S PICK

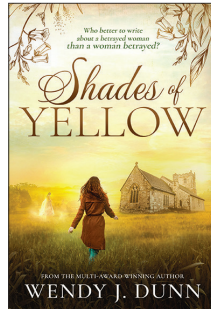
**Shades of Yellow**

Wendy J. Dunn | Other Terrain Press

314p, e-book, \$21, ISBN 978-1-764-07040-9

This absorbing, time-crossed novel by Dunn (author of the Life and Death of Anne Boleyn series) delves into the heartbreak of Lucy Ellis, a young Australian woman, alongside the mysterious historical death of Amy Robsart. Lucy is obsessed with English history. When she's diagnosed with breast cancer at a young age, Lucy takes refuge in writing a book on Amy, the first wife of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who came close to marrying Elizabeth I in the 16th century. Lucy's husband also abandoned her for another woman—and in writing Amy's story, Lucy is able to reflect on and understand her own betrayal.

As Dunn interweaves the experiences of Lucy and Amy, the plot flows seamlessly from past to present with striking parallels and resonant feeling. Incidents and encounters in Lucy's life trigger memories about Amy or scenes from her novel, prompting Lucy to wonder whether "a novel created a kind of virtual reality as she



*Touching story of love, betrayal, and women's lives across centuries.*

**Great for fans of** Susanna Kearsley's *The Winter Sea*, Laura Dowers's *The Queen's Favorite*.

constructed Amy and her world." At first, the transition from reality to 16th-century fiction is evident, as Lucy wonders how she should portray Amy's thoughts or actions. But their stories start blurring together—with mistakes that become clearer in hindsight and perhaps can be rectified. Above all, Lucy's actions are buoyed by love and forgiveness.

Readers who relish striking historical detail and thoughtful parallels between contemporary lives and the past will find much here that reveals and engages, though the twinned-narrative structure leads to some themes feeling repetitive. Still, Dunn's vivid prose pulls readers into the English countryside, replete with church spires and cowslips. Lucy and Amy's lives may be worlds apart, but they end up complementing each other perfectly. Lovers of historical fiction and stories about tumultuous relationships will enjoy following Lucy on this journey that showcases both her tenderness and resilience.

Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: — Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

## FICTION

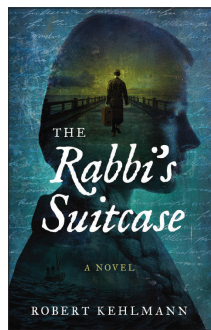
**The Rabbi's Suitcase**

Robert Kehlmann | Koehler Books

373p, hardcover, \$30.95, ASIN B0DWV8QXBJ

Kehlmann (*The Inner Light*) stitches together love, loss, and identity across generations, inspired by letters discovered after his mother's death and grounded in a richly imagined historical setting. The novel opens with an 1880 voyage from Lithuania to Jerusalem—a spiritual return for a group of Orthodox Jewish travelers, yet also one fraught with peril and spiritual reckoning. Among the voyagers is Yosef Siev, a 12 year old whose visions and deep intuition set him apart. His budding fascination with the free-spirited Chana evolves into a tender love story—one that later echoes through the life of their granddaughter, Zipora.

It's Zipora's story, unfolding in the shifting sands of 1926 Palestine and eventually the U.S., that gives Kehlmann's book its emotional core. Her forbidden relationship with the politically ambitious Reuven Borstein—an immigrant and future Israeli founding father—becomes a crucible for exploring themes of selfhood,



*Rich portrayal of a Jewish family's history, migration, and resilience.*

**Great for fans of** Sarit Yishai-Levi's *The Beauty Queen of Jerusalem*, Sarah Abrevaya Stein's *Family Papers*.

about the sacrifices we make for ideology, family, and romantic devotion.

This is not just a love story—it's a multigenerational meditation on how history folds in on itself. Political ideologies clash. Faith and pragmatism wrestle. The "suitcase" becomes a potent metaphor for the cultural memory the Siev family carries across generations and borders. Kehlmann aptly conveys a deeply evocative, multi-threaded novel of longing, resilience, and the burdens of history, capturing how ancestral dreams can echo in bloodlines long after the dreamers are gone.

Cover: **A-** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **A** Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

## FICTION

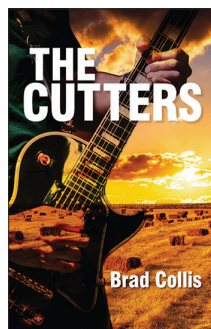
**The Cutters**

Brad Collis | Spindrift Ink

268p, mass market, \$14.43, ISBN 979-8-309-85901-6

Just two years out from serving in Vietnam, Matthew Walker still fights the demons of war inside his mind, while marveling that, in his absence, the world has "moved on and he ha[s] lost his place." Seeking solace—and a renewed purpose—he ventures to Australia's small town of Hammond, hoping for a job as a reporter with the Hammond *Herald*. As he navigates the challenges of being an outsider, Matthew forms unlikely friendships, joins a local band called The Cutters, and uncovers dark secrets about the town's history.

Collis (*The Soul Stone*) intertwines personal redemption, community, and the weight of historical truth into a bittersweet journey of self-discovery and resilience. Matthew's struggle to integrate into Hammond highlights the rigid social hierarchies and unspoken rules that govern relationships and allegiances, and Collis skillfully captures the tension that can separate rural communities. Local journalist Patricia Stewart—and the Henderson family—form more intensive connections with Matthew,



*Thought-provoking 1970s tale of identity, belonging, and purpose.*

**Great for fans of** Diane Chamberlain's *The Last House on the Street*, James McBride's *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store*.

and their evolution underscores the town's deep-seated power dynamics. Meanwhile, Matthew's Inner Voice—"his constant, disagreeable, companion"—offers invitation for readers to reflect on acceptance and identity.

The book's exploration of historical injustice, particularly in the discovery of a potential massacre site of Indigenous peoples, is both compelling and unsettling, as Collis raises important questions about the erasure of Indigenous histories and the moral responsibility of uncovering the truth. The narrative occasionally falters when fully addressing the implications of those revelations, leaving some threads unresolved, but Matthew's camaraderie with The Cutters provides a refreshing counterpoint to such weighty themes. His journey serves as testament to the healing power of music and friendship. This is a richly layered, emotive novel blending personal and historical narratives, as well as a thought-provoking tale of redemption and belonging.

Cover: **B+** | Design & typography: **A-** | Illustrations: — Editing: **A-** | Marketing copy: **A**

## FICTION

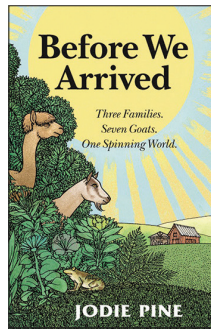
**Before We Arrived: Three Families. Seven Goats. One Spinning World.**

Jodie Pine

300p, trade paper, \$17.95, ISBN 979-8-9923195-0-7

"There is no rational explanation for all of the unnecessary cruelty in this world, yet here it is," observes Rivka Solomon, a social worker who becomes the director of a Massachusetts animal sanctuary, in Pine's searching, conversation-driven debut. Rivka is speaking of mistreatment of Native Americans, distilling uneasy truths about race, displacement, and the myths people construct to make sense of origins. Rivka's deep desire to better this world, caring for its horses and alpacas but also its people, binds her story to that of Pine's other protagonists, whose narratives split between the 1970s and the early 2000s: Henry, a Black man in a predominantly white space, volunteering at King Solomon Sanctuary while recovering from hand surgery, and Jayce, who in 1975, after his sister's death, promises his mother he will finish college while silently wrestling with the weight of family obligations.

Favoring first-person address and conversations in transcript form, Pine's



*Humane novel of healing, centered on an animal sanctuary.*

**Great for fans of** Becky Mandelbaum's *The Bright Side Sanctuary for Animals*, Annie Hartnett's *Unlikely Animals*.

straightforward descriptions of Henry's work—feeding, rehabilitating, and providing comfort—illustrate the patience and effort true care demands.

Eschewing traditional climaxes through a multi-perspective and non-linear narrative approach, the novel embraces the often turbulent nature of healing. Henry, Jayce, and Rivka do not merely live out their stories—they navigate an ever-shifting discourse on identity and who gets to define it. Readers won't find neat resolutions here—just an invitation to reflect on the stories we inherit and those we choose to rewrite.

Cover: **A-** | Design & typography: **B** | Illustrations: — | Editing: **A-** | Marketing copy: **A-**

## FICTION

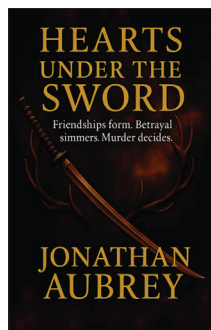
**Hearts Under the Sword**

Jonathan Aubrey | Quarterdeck Press

299p, e-book \$0.99, ASIN B0FFBCRQ61

Talented artist Ray Martin is once again a free man, released from prison and paroled into the care of famous American painter Lennie Hirsh, who has a vested interest in unveiling Ray's paintings—continued while he was incarcerated—to the world. Ray immediately moves into Lennie's lavish New York estate, Schoolcross, where Lennie, his stunning wife Nora, and art dealer/agent James Bradley—recently separated from his wife, Linda—are currently living. There, Ray and Bradley strike up a friendship and business partnership, though Ray's troubled childhood and violent past quickly rears its head, marking him as an outsider in Lennie's wealthy social circles—and culminating in a terrifying night in the city, where Bradley catches a glimpse of the darkness that has shadowed Ray his entire life.

Full of complicated budding romances and shocking betrayals, Aubrey creates a slow burn 1990s mystery full of intriguing characters and layered suspense. Ray's life initially appears to be on an upward trajectory, but, as the novel progresses,



*Unsettling mystery probing the dark lure of wealth and ambition.*

**Great for fans of** Jennifer McMahon's *My Darling Girl*, Ande Pliego's *You Are Fatally Invited*.

twists, intricate relationships, and even a touch of the supernatural become intertwined in the mystery that is Ray Martin.

As the characters learn more about each other's pasts—and start to question how well they truly know one another—Aubrey juxtaposes their hunt for fame and wealth with a desperate need to uncover the truth—a truth that, very quickly, becomes a matter of life or death. Readers who enjoy morally flawed characters and simmering tension will be consumed by this unsettling debut.

Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A-** | Illustrations: — | Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **B+**

## FICTION

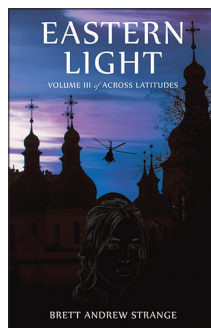
**Eastern Light: Across Latitudes, Vol. 3**

Brett Andrew Strange | Archway

208p, e-book, \$3.99, ASIN OFDFP7VC8

Strange dives into Ukraine's warfront action—and behind-the-scenes planning from faraway Virginia—in this most recent entry of his *Across Latitudes* series. The story unfolds in the early days of Russia's Ukraine invasion—years after the events of *Beneath the Purple Dawn*—with returning protagonist Paul Drake meeting his friend Valentine Kuzoff in Kyiv, to help train war volunteers in hopes of holding off the Russian army long enough for NATO or the United States to step in. Also returning is the Russian Katya Volkova, art gallery owner and undercover agent, whose connection to US Intelligence officer Josephine Richards links her to clandestine operations to stop the advance. In a surprise move, Katya's uncle, Yuri Volkov, is kidnapped by the Russians, launching a daring rescue plan that places Katya, Paul, and Jo in harm's way.

Strange depicts war in all its unjust and haphazard horror, subtly portraying Ukraine's somewhat tenuous independence amid a fervent national spirit of freedom. Readers glimpse the shadowy demons that soldiers carry back within them through the perspective of Max, Paul's brother, whose 2009 return from Fallujah



*Powerful depiction of war's human costs amid Ukraine's fight for freedom.*

**Great for fans of** Brian Andrews and Jeffrey Wilson's *Dempsey*, Tamara Duda's *Daughter*.

Though not a breakneck espionage thriller, *Eastern Light* is powerful in its own right, exploring the human side of war, the emotions that motivate those orchestrating its dangerous operations, and the tough choices they must make in the name of freedom. Several moments linger along that narrow path—the gruesome, unexpected endings of heroes; the endless grief of those left behind to mourn—and Strange skillfully exposes the need for the world to “pick up the torch before it is too late.”

Cover: **A-** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **A** | Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

## MYSTERY/THRILLER

EDITOR'S PICK

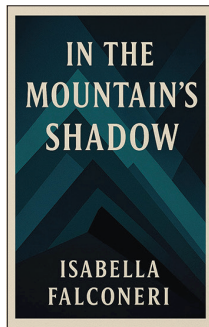
## In the Mountain's Shadow

Isabella Falconeri | Talon &amp; Quill

97p, e-book, \$0.99, ISBN 979-8-9987388-4-5

The story of Falconeri's dystopian novella may be nasty, brutish, and short, but her prose is precise, poetic, even beautiful. The contrast between the violence and deprivation endured by a resilient elderly woman and how these experiences are rendered is at the heart of *In the Mountain's Shadow*, which explores the duality of survival. There's the harsh, physical aspect, which involves scrounging enough food to make it to another day, and the mental capacity to believe that there's a reason to keep on living, despite everything. It helps that Park's former occupation is tinkerer—"She was given problems and had to find solutions."

Undyingly loyal to her daughter and grandchildren, Park seeks out work only to be rejected as "too feeble." Determined not to burden her family, she retreats to a nearby mountain to die alone—and discovers an abandoned cabin. Park's nearly extinguished survival instinct kicks in, and that problem-solving brain begins to



*Beautiful, wrenching, human story of a woman's survival in a dystopian future.*

**Great for fans of** Sequoia Nagamatsu's *How High We Go in the Dark*, Diane Cook's *The New Wilderness*.

absorb information and establish a routine. Her greatest fear should be the pack of wolves prowling the surrounding woods, but humans are much more deadly. A brief, tenuous idyll is broken when a sadistic military deserter brutalizes Park into being his servant, underestimating both her strength and resolve. Leaving the origins of this poverty and famine to readers to imagine, Falconeri (*Fragmentations*) makes this grim narrative of dehumanization a painfully universal experience. She blends in elements of folklore and fairy tales, as well as dashes of welcome humor: her lone wolf survivalist bonds with a lupine companion, Ripple, who becomes the only other named character. Park recalls a childhood visit to church where the moral order was rendered in luminous artwork. Being in Falconeri's raw, exquisite world is like crawling through the shards of an exploded stained glass window, sorting through the jagged remnants of faith for a glimpse of salvation.

Cover: **A-** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: — | Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

## ROMANCE

## Back to You

Jasmine Ahmad

338p, e-book, \$15.99, ISBN 979-8-992-69540-3

A heartbroken woman who returns to a bucolic small town after big-city disappointment is a familiar romance storyline, but in Ahmad's hands this simple narrative of healing blossoms into a deeper exploration of traumatic aftershocks and profound love. Mere months after the death of her abusive husband and a diagnosis of lupus, Mariana Vargas decides to move home to Lake City, Colorado, when she learns of her mother's late-stage cancer. Mariana can only process these monumental, life-altering events a bit at a time, and she cautiously steps back into the past while trying to reconnect with loved ones, especially Sebastian Garcia, the childhood companion and high school boyfriend whose heart she once broke.

While *Back To You* faces real pain in life, Mariana's first-person narration has a welcome lightness to it, as she gradually reconnects to her younger self, the vivacious and confident 18-year-old who left for Seattle a decade ago. Ahmad primarily focuses on Mariana, but Sebastian's occasional perspective chapters



*Love and loss mingle in this redemptive small-town romance.*

**Great for fans of** Elsie Silver's Rose Hill series, Siân O'Gorman's *The Girls from Sandycove*.

are equally confessional; while Mariana contemplates her memories in a new light, Sebastian allows himself to imagine a future with the woman he never stopped loving. There's a wonderful specificity to their relationship, built on small, meaningful gestures, lively banter, and the ease of lifelong togetherness. Ahmad's propulsive storytelling pulls readers through Mariana and Sebastian's uncertain reunion and shows that even the idyllic and welcoming Lake City can't wipe away trauma. Still, this big-hearted vision of small-town America offers welcome solace for readers seeking hopeful escapism with their made-for-each-other romance. Ahmad establishes Lake City, the setting for her forthcoming series, as a comfortably multicultural community, with Latiné firefighters and elementary school teachers, as well as Mariana's newly opened Puerto Rican bakery. Reverberations of grief and fear ripple through this touching tale, which prizes emotional well-being as much as its hard-won happy ending.

Cover: **A-** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: — | Editing: **A-** | Marketing copy: **A**

## ROMANCE

## Fauxmances and Wedding Bouquets: A Serenade Creek Novel

Natalie May

258p, e-book, \$4.99, ASIN B0FFBP3ZLH

Small-town teacher Bailey Cooper is more than ready to enjoy her summer vacation, but her fatal flaw—she can't say no—is getting in the way. Cherish, Bailey's best friend, is in a jam: she overbooked herself as a stand-in for a local wedding and needs Bailey to pinch hit. Since the soiree is at the luxurious Enchanted Rose Inn, Bailey agrees—but is shocked to discover she's meant to be the fake girlfriend of her boss, the steamy Knox Showalter, a prior summer fling who shut down their relationship when he realized they would be working together.

A clean, closed-door romance, *Fauxmances and Wedding Bouquets* is full of pining and simmering chemistry, as Bailey and Knox fight their undeniable attraction for each other while being forced into close proximity throughout the wedding festivities. May entangles the couple in a whirlwind of matrimonial drama and secrets: Knox is best friends with the groom, who's terrified his bride will call off their ceremony after she's jilted by her maid of honor—and Luke is convinced the only thing that will save his wedding is if Knox pretends he's found love again, after



*Wholesome fake-dating romance with spark and small-town charm.*

**Great for fans of** Talia Hibbert's *Take A Hint*, Dani Brown, Elena Armas's *The Spanish Love Deception*.

a serious past heartbreak. Everyone buys Knox and Bailey's romantic act—especially the bride—but as buried feelings and old resentments arise between the two behind closed doors, a subtle tension builds that threatens the entire affair. May writes a wholesome romance that will draw readers in, from the gorgeous wedding season setting to the story's compelling characters. Both unlucky in love, Bailey and Knox are easy to root for when they're gifted this second chance at happily ever after, and readers will relish watching them work through their past hang ups and vulnerabilities. Full of small-town charm, traditions, and superstitions, this cute series starter (the first in May's Always a Bridesmaid lineup) gives true love a run for its money.

Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: — | Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

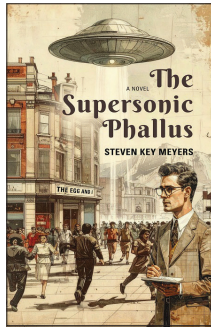
## SF/FANTASY/HORROR

**The Supersonic Phallus**

Steven Key Meyers | Smash-and-Grab Press  
148p, trade paper, \$9.99, ISBN 979-8-9850215-7-8

Drawing from America's 1947 flying saucer craze, Meyers's zippy sci-fi adventure follows Colorado *Sentinel* reporters Sam—a 24-year-old family man with a wife, kid, and another on the way—and Dean, gay and stunningly attractive, making a name for himself in the news world in an era hostile to people like him. When local reports place a flying saucer nearby, the pair is tasked with camping out in Two-Mile Mesa—near the property of the richest man in town, Ernie Wacker, nicknamed the Uranium King—to cover what may be the story of the century. Before long, their close proximity evolves into a mutual attraction and quickly morphs into something more.

Meyers's storytelling transports readers into a shocking government cover-up, as Sam and Dean discover there's more to the UFO story than they ever guessed. Some place blame on the Russians, fearful they're seeking intel on America's newly developed atomic bomb, while others credit alien overlords—or scream hoax—but



*Surprising novel of America's flying disc craze, with emotional depth.*

**Great for fans of** Connie Willis's *The Road to Roswell*, Eando Binder's *Night of the Saucers*.

for Sam and Dean, the truth goes much deeper than suspected. Meyers explores capitalism, sensationalism, and sexuality through their riveting perspectives, lobbing plot twists and startling revelations into an atmosphere already rich with romance and relationship complexity. Readers will be trying to work out the truth until the very end, as news coverups and top-secret government dealings build suspense, while Sam and Dean decide if risking their livelihood and everything they hold dear is worth exposing the truth—about the UFO sightings and about their feelings for each other. Ultimately, they choose integrity, with Meyers (author of *The Holy Hugs of Father S.*) using their revelations along the way to explore the cost of secrets. After Sam brands himself “the truth-teller, the seeker-out of the reality beneath the surface of things,” he gains the courage to speak the truth in other areas of his life as well, leaving readers heartened and emotionally satisfied while adding a dash of tenderness to the story's extraterrestrial antics.

Cover: **A-** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **-** | Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

## ART &amp; PHOTOGRAPHY

EDITOR'S PICK

**Life at Shutter Speed:  
Two Decades of Larry Chen  
Photography**

Larry Chen  
404p, hardcover, \$124.99, ISBN 979-8-991-62267-7

Jaw-dropping visions abound in Chen's first collection of his photographs taken over two decades of documenting high-octane car culture in all its beauty, power, diversity, ingenuity, and—above all else—dazzling speed. Here's a Toyota trophy truck, surging forward but frozen in time, kicking up sun-kissed Baja dirt along the edge of a cliff. Here's Ken Block's Audi RS e-tron GT rounding a legendary Pikes Peak curve, choked in smoke and dust, somehow holding to the road, captured forever on the knife's edge. Here's NASCAR stars and bizarre custom jobs, Rallycross action and thrilling Formula Drift races, the heat of the engines and the screaming of the tires more clear, somehow, than in video.

In short, Chen puts the reader there, in his shoes and chase vehicles, at races, car shows, and—in more recent years—product launches and collectors' stashes. Chen doublestuffs 400 pages with gorgeous shots, intimate memories, and a buoyant sense of gratitude that he has so rewardingly turned a youthful passion into not just



*Thrilling car photography from two decades of races, stunts, cities, and speed.*

**Great for fans of** Bill Warner's *The Other Side of the Fence*, Jesse Alexander's *Driven*.

a career but an art. Chen recounts his history of shooting cars and car culture, celebrating a host of races, personalities, and cities. (Tokyo and Hong Kong stun throughout.) Photobugs will appreciate his demystification of his techniques and preferences, like the use of blur in capturing speed and his love of panoramics and the mirrorless cameras that he calls “as big of an improvement and change as it was going from film to digital.” It's the photos that readers will return to, though the collection's abundance—often, the layout is a mosaic of eight or ten shots on a page—diminishes the power of some images. It's tempting to shout “enhance!” at the small ones. The half, full, and double-page shots, however, make a compelling case for photography books in a digital era. The car blasting toward the camera across the Arizona flats at a Hoonigan Burnyard event could be on Mars or the Fury Road—the image, like so many here, stirs genuine awe.

Cover: **A-** | Design & typography: **B** | Illustrations: **A** | Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

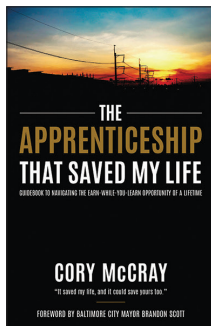
## OTHER NONFICTION

**The Apprenticeship That Saved My Life**

Cory McCray | Morgan James Publishing  
180p, hardcover, \$14.95, ISBN 978-1-636-98689-0

Declaring that an apprenticeship saved his life, McCray aims “to break a generational cycle of poverty and lack of financial literacy” in this motivating debut. He first shares his troubled youth, detailing how he escaped Baltimore's inner-city violence with the help of his supportive mother, by seizing the chance to become an electrician through an apprenticeship program. From there, McCray cultivated a successful career, including a later election to the Maryland State Senate. In a testament to how education and support can transform lives, he offers readers a structured pathway to their own skilled trade, explaining how to find the right program, navigate interviews, prep for on-the-job needs, and more.

While McCray candidly shares his own missteps and regrets, his chief mission is to pass on hard-earned wisdom to others. That compassion to change lives drove him to establish programs that expose high schoolers to the concept of apprenticeships, a model that he believes creates “valu[e] for them to explore all opportunities and make the most informed life choices.” His practical guidance includes an explanation of the different types of apprenticeships available, the costs involved,



*Inspiring pathway to purpose and success, through apprenticeship programs.*

**Great for fans of** Ryan Craig's *Apprentice Nation*, David E. Pockock's *You're Hired and Certified*.

potential benefits, and what to look for when selecting a program—such as the ability to earn certifications, possible support services, and employer connections. Readers will find McCray's end-of-chapter life lessons particularly helpful, as he shares step-by-step advice on a range of related topics, including how to build positive habits, seek mentorships, understand wage differentials in each craft, and utilize local resources to research registered programs. Though this is a much-needed manual for changing lives, it's also a poignant journal of a profound personal and professional transformation, a “journey [that] has been about more than just financial gain; it's been about personal growth, resilience, and the satisfaction of overcoming obstacles.” The numerous photos McCray includes add a human touch to his metamorphosis.

Cover: **A-** | Design & typography: **B+** | Illustrations: **A** | Editing: **A-** | Marketing copy: **A**

## SELF-HELP

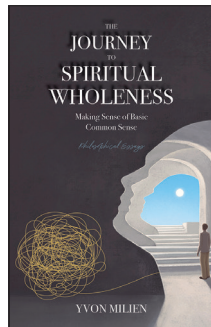
**The Journey to Spiritual Wholeness: Making Sense of Basic Common Sense**

Yvon Milien | yMilien

163p, e-book, \$6.99, ISBN 979-8-9860364-3-4

Milien's philosophical exploration of humanity's spiritual evolution emphasizes the pursuit of virtue, self-realization, and alignment with universal moral laws, presented as a pilgrimage "toward the Monad," which Milien (*Be Transcendent to Sustain Happiness*) defines as "the indivisible source of all beings." Divided into four parts, the book guides readers through foundational principles, cultivating spiritual thoughts and behaviors, altruism and service to others, and ultimate transcendence. Through contemplative essays, he examines themes like morality, willpower, humility, and the dangers of ignorance, offering practical insights for personal and societal harmony. "We are traveling on the wrong path," he writes, urging readers to "return to our roots and reconnect with ... universal principles."

The complexity of Milien's concepts is nicely balanced by the work's structured approach, with each chapter building on the previous to create a cohesive spiritual



*Thoughtful guided reflections on spiritual transcendence and moral alignment.*

**Great for fans of** Nathaniel Sharratt's *Transcending*, David R. Hawkins's *Spiritual Power and Integrity*.

The guide is replete with historical and literary examples that enrich the narrative, grounding more abstract concepts in relatable context and substantiating key reflections. The overarching emphasis on actionable steps, such as cultivating patience (by invoking Stoicism and Taoism) and vigilance, makes this a practical choice for those seeking personal transformation, though the dense philosophical language may alienate more casual readers. Ultimately, this is a thought-provoking guide for spiritual growth and ethical clarity, blending ancient wisdom and modern realities to inspire readers to embrace integrity, transcend challenges, and reconnect with their divine essence.

Cover: **B+** | Design & typography: **A-** | Illustrations: – | Editing: **B+** | Marketing copy: **A-**

## SELF-HELP

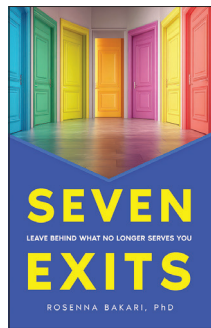
**Seven Exits: Leave Behind What No Longer Serves You**

Rosenna Bakari | Karibu Publishing

208p, trade paper, \$21.99, ISBN 978-0-997-16999-7

Psychologist Bakari examines empowerment in this purpose-driven offering, declaring that "Empowerment means meeting challenges with presence... It is not about perfection but about embracing discomfort as part of growth." That broad premise is whittled down with her Seven Exits framework—a unique approach that studies the importance of leaving disempowering spaces rather than arriving at the perfect destination. She pairs chapters with poems that represent her seven exits—among them Hyper-Ego, Silence and Secrecy, Emotional Dependency, and more—and offers straightforward solutions to every barrier, urging readers to become "the primary author of your life."

Bakari's openness and focus on moving forward is powerful, and she shares her own story in a courageous way that will inspire readers. When examining her childhood trauma, she recognizes that her "40-year strategy of numbing had finally failed," drawing on that epiphany as a model for learning how to cultivate inner



*Discerning, structured framework to personal growth and transformation.*

**Great for fans of** Carole Robin's *Connect*, Nicole Hollar's *Feeling Stuck?*

peace, regardless of external circumstances—as well as an illustration of why healthy ego defenses are so important. Rather than pushing away discomfort, or developing unhealthy habits to cope with it, Bakari suggests a deepened awareness of every emotion, processing the "why" behind defenses and embracing self-acceptance. Readers will find her advice

easy-to-apply and conveyed in uplifting, gentle tones—even when confronting emotional dependency, low self-confidence, and comfort culture. There are moments where Bakari's prose feels disjointed, but those are quickly overcome by her encouraging voice, thoughtful activities, and obvious passion for psychological growth. The guide's structure invites deep reflection and study, with expansive chapters that recognize constraints while proposing remedies that can be tailored for individual needs. Particularly helpful is Bakari's comparison of her Seven Exits to the structure of a house (the basement represents Silence and Secrecy; the living room Stagnant Relationships), and her reminder that true transformation takes time, hard work, and "the courage to sit with discomfort."

Cover: **A-** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: – | Editing: **A-** | Marketing copy: **A**

## SPIRITUALITY/INSPIRATIONAL

**Questions about God and Life I Wish My Grandchildren Had Asked**

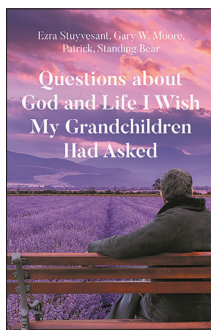
Ezra Stuyvesant, Gary W. Moore,

Patrick, Standing Bear | Newman Springs

107p, trade paper, \$15.95, ISBN 979-889617-230-7

Stuyvesant, in concert with his mentors Moore and Standing Bear, crafts important lessons to pass on to younger generations—and a touching tribute to his wife of 57 years, who recently passed away. A labor of love, Stuyvesant's writing began when his grandchildren were young, in hopes that he could "leave this book as a gift to [them]." The result resembles an intimate interview with a loved one, whose answers are candid, compassionate, and reflective of a life well lived. From hilarious depictions of his first interactions with his wife to more profound contemplations on religion and faith, Stuyvesant's passion for his family, God, and life's purpose shines through.

Though much of the writing is directed at Stuyvesant's own grandchildren, he includes snippets of wisdom that will resonate with Christian readers as well. In analyzing God's will, he encourages readers to think about any potential habits or patterns in their lives that could interrupt the flow of "God's life and energy," while other reflections find him urging readers to discover God in nature, loved ones, and



*Brief but touching collection of lessons on faith, love, and purpose.*

**Great for fans of** Neal Nybo's *Grandmother, I Want to Hear Your Best Stories*, Michele Cushatt's *A Faith That Will Not Fail*.

of philosophical and practical, sprinkled with moments from his own life that exude compassion and a deep regard for humanity. Whether he's discussing how to navigate life's inevitable pain or conveying the importance of self-care, Stuyvesant urges readers to be "kind and gentle souls in your interactions with people," a sentiment that echoes throughout his guidance. Though brief, this is a caring, passionate study of love, loss, and the search for meaning.

Cover: **B+** | Design & typography: **A-** | Illustrations: – | Editing: **B+** | Marketing copy: **C+**

roadmap—from initial essays on breaking free from material illusions to Milien's final examination of what it means to live a life "of purpose and virtue." He argues that challenges are opportunities for growth, encouraging readers to pursue moral alignment, though that repeated emphasis occasionally overshadows deeper exploration of individual struggles.

The guide is replete with historical and literary examples that enrich the narrative, grounding more abstract concepts in relatable context and substantiating key reflections. The overarching emphasis on actionable steps, such as cultivating patience (by invoking Stoicism and Taoism) and vigilance, makes this a practical choice for those seeking personal transformation, though the dense philosophical language may alienate more casual readers. Ultimately, this is a thought-provoking guide for spiritual growth and ethical clarity, blending ancient wisdom and modern realities to inspire readers to embrace integrity, transcend challenges, and reconnect with their divine essence.

peace, regardless of external circumstances—as well as an illustration of why healthy ego defenses are so important. Rather than pushing away discomfort, or developing unhealthy habits to cope with it, Bakari suggests a deepened awareness of every emotion, processing the "why" behind defenses and embracing self-acceptance. Readers will find her advice

easy-to-apply and conveyed in uplifting, gentle tones—even when confronting emotional dependency, low self-confidence, and comfort culture.

There are moments where Bakari's prose feels disjointed, but those are quickly overcome by her encouraging voice, thoughtful activities, and obvious passion for psychological growth. The guide's structure invites deep reflection and study, with expansive chapters that recognize constraints while proposing remedies that can be tailored for individual needs. Particularly helpful is Bakari's comparison of her Seven Exits to the structure of a house (the basement represents Silence and Secrecy; the living room Stagnant Relationships), and her reminder that true transformation takes time, hard work, and "the courage to sit with discomfort."

the million small moments that constitute a lifetime. Our purpose on Earth, he writes, is to "live the God within you 1,000 percent in your everyday life."

The question-and-answer format of Stuyvesant's musings creates a disjointed feel between entries, but it's clear he has dedicated significant time and thought to imparting his wisdom to others. His thoughts are an intriguing mix

## MEMOIR

EDITOR'S PICK

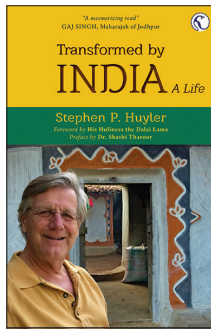
**Transformed by India: A Life**

Stephen P. Huyler

408p, hardcover, \$49.99, ISBN 978-1-913-73821-1

Huyler (*Daughters of India*) sweeps readers into a vibrant life of travel, curiosity, and a deep love for India, chronicling how his time spent there has shaped him as a writer, photographer, and thinker. A free spirit from a young age, he first traveled to India in the early 1970s, at the behest of his neighbor, the legendary Dada artist Beatrice Wood. Just 20 years old at the time, Huyler pedaled a bicycle rickshaw across the Pakistan-India border as war loomed between the two countries, striking off on a series of journeys that demanded patience, finesse, and a thirst for cultural diversity.

As Huyler immerses himself in Indian culture, he starts to acquire art as well, forging the first of many close friendships with Indian artisans over the years. Thanks to Wood's guidance, the famous Indian activist and artist Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay becomes Huyler's mentor, instilling in him a passion for traditional



*Sweeping memoir imparting India's rich beauty and diversity.*

**Great for fans of** C.L. Stambush's *Untethered*, Christine Chitnis's *Patterns of India*.

Huyler interjects humorous stories into his experiences with Indian culture, many revolving around his return to the country with his wife, Helene, after their marriage. From nearly being trampled by an angry elephant to first glimpsing the terracotta horses—artifacts believed to ward off evil—crafted in Indian villages, Huyler recounts his inspirations, hopes, and endeavors to share Indian art with the world, typically focused on empowering female artisans. He maintains a steady awareness of his own privilege as a white American male throughout and reflects that his eagerness to be “open, willing, inspired, and transformed” has yielded him a lifetime of blessings.

Cover: **B** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **A** Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

## MEMOIR

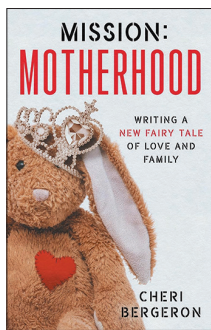
**Mission: Motherhood: Writing a New Fairy Tale of Love and Family**

Cheri Bergeron

361p, hardcover, \$29.99, ISBN 978-1-5445-4605-6

Gutsy, honest, and undeniably human from start to finish, this memoir debut finds Bergeron shining an honest light on her own story as a businesswoman who built an impressive career while putting her personal life on hold, waiting for the fairy tale to arrive. But biology didn't wait. Cheri longed to be a mother, and that dream led her through three marriages, an involuntary abortion, failed adoptions and pregnancies, and more than a few social disasters. She writes with insight about how she became herself, exploring how a strained relationship with her distant, stony father shaped her path—she came to think of men as “domineering, selfish, and scary” rather than potential partners. That helped her become strong and independent, but also turned her social life into a minefield.

Through it all, her determination never wavered—and in the end, yes, she shares a hard-earned but satisfying happy ending. As Bergeron writes, motherhood is not a journey but a mission, “a visceral calling that grips you to the point that you have



*Gutsy story of a woman's refusal to give up on her dream of motherhood.*

**Great for fans of** Belle Boggs's *The Art of Waiting*, Anne Lamott's *Operating Instructions*.

finds in them crucial insights into power and partnership, sex and honesty. Her candor is refreshing.

Bergeron's marketing background shows—she tells her story with energy and rhythm, pulling readers in just as she promises in this pitch-perfect summation: “This book is two parts memoir, one part activism, and a dash of self-help mixed with a sprinkle of reality TV.” Bergeron is refreshingly frank about her own flaws, but what shines through this unfiltered story of growth is her resilience and love. Bergeron writes of the health crises of her daughter's fraught first years with fear, warmth, and inspiring realizations. Much here moves.

Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **A** Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

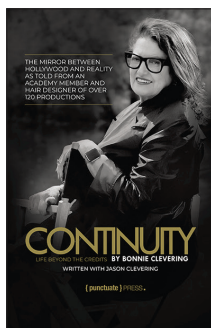
## MEMOIR

**Continuity**

**Bonnie Clevering with Jason Clevering** | {punctuate} press  
242p, trade paper, \$17.99, ISBN 979-8-992-95696-2

Bonnie Clevering, a hair designer who's worked all over Tinseltown, captivates with a tour of her glamorous adventures, written in concert with her son, Jason Clevering. Regaling readers with entertaining stories, she recounts a treasure trove of experiences with famed celebrities: serving her legendary biscuits and gravy to Julia Roberts, a tense confrontation with Faye Dunaway, gifting Tim Allen comfort food on the set of *The Santa Clause 2*, and many more. Mixed in with these stories are her musings on the entertainment industry, parenthood, and the wisdom she's absorbed while coiffing curls over the years.

Clevering's book overflows with engaging anecdotes delivered in a breezy, carefree tone, and any reader hungry for playful bits about their favorite stars is certain to find some gems in these pages. Jumping from worries that any mistake with Al Pacino's hair could strip “the kingpin of machismo... of his swagger” to watching the crew of *Robocop* put Peter Weller in his place, Clevering sprinkles insights in between on why hair is integral to television and film. The ground gets shakier when she steps away from the stylist's chair, but even those moments—her



*Riveting behind-the-scenes of Hollywood, by renowned hair designer.*

**Great for fans of** Carrie White's *Upper Cut*, Michael Westmore's *Makeup Man*.

Presley's hands together, the unsettling atmosphere of Oliver Stone's *JFK*, Clevering's sorrow at Robin Williams's death—are sometimes skipped over in favor of Clevering's contemplations on life's more banal experiences, but readers will still find plenty to marvel at. Clevering includes on-the-job photographs documenting her sizable impact on well-known stars and closes with an irresistible thank you list that details touching moments she's had with celebs over the years.

Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **A** Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

Indigenous art. Though stunned by India's beauty, Huyler never turns a blind eye to its woes, noting how the poverty, disease, and overall deprivation in its cities quickly overwhelms. But the crux of his writing remains a love letter to a country, culture, and people: their generosity, beauty, and tenacity, even in the darkest of times.

Huyler interjects humorous stories into his experiences with Indian culture, many revolving around his return to the country with his wife, Helene, after their marriage. From nearly being trampled by an angry elephant to first glimpsing the terracotta horses—artifacts believed to ward off evil—crafted in Indian villages, Huyler recounts his inspirations, hopes, and endeavors to share Indian art with the world, typically focused on empowering female artisans. He maintains a steady awareness of his own privilege as a white American male throughout and reflects that his eagerness to be “open, willing, inspired, and transformed” has yielded him a lifetime of blessings.

no choice.” She captures that urgency in her brisk, touching storytelling, charged with feeling, insights, and lessons learned: never back down from a challenge; how to parent in a way that rejects the “paternal autocracy” she grew up with; that “I would never let another man have power over me again.” Her relationships with men are complicated, and she

husband's devastating illness and death, her love and devotion for her children—are delivered with the same sparkling energy that infuses the rest of her writing.

This is not a straightforward memoir or juicy collection of behind-the-scenes Hollywood buzz, but a curious amalgamation of the two. The especially memorable parts—stories of almost gluing Elvis

## MEMOIR

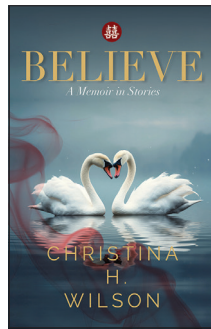
**Believe: A Memoir in Stories**

Christina H. Wilson | wordeee

308p, hardcover, \$29.95, ISBN 978-1-959811-56-5

Wilson, who describes herself as an “American-born Chinese,” debuts with a memoir framing her life through her most important—and sometimes painful—relationships: her family and their response to her as a child who struggled with severe illness; her marriage to her first husband, Jeffrey—an influential and controlling Jewish Wall Street trader; their two children, Sam and Jay; those who took advantage of her in the aftermath of Jeffrey’s tragic death; and her second husband, Harold. A strand of the uncanny runs throughout, as Wilson shares the signs she sees that guide her path, revealing her lifelong attitude of “the more you believe, the more you receive.”

Though Wilson’s prose is calm, straightforward, and grounded rather than emotional, the challenges in her life come through clearly. She shares even the most heartbreaking of stories through an optimistic lens, chronicling problems—her father’s gambling, Jeffrey’s chaotic emotions and post-accident disability and



*Stirring memoir of personal growth spurred by life’s challenges.*

**Great for fans of** Curtis Chin’s *Everything I Learned, I Learned in a Chinese Restaurant*, Jackie Walters’s *Toxic Love*.

as “the bedrock of Chinese life.”

The structure of Wilson’s memoir can leave the chapters feeling disconnected, though overarching themes—signs from nature and the afterlife, a profound reliance on spirituality—thread throughout. Her writing exudes compassion and a strong desire to share her hard-earned wisdom, but she is strongest when exploring how her experiences have colored her own journey of self-acceptance. “I have arrived at a place of true understanding of who I am and am not,” she reflects—a revelation that will resonate with those seeking meaning amid life’s difficulties.

Cover: **B+** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **A** | Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **B+**

## PICTURE BOOKS

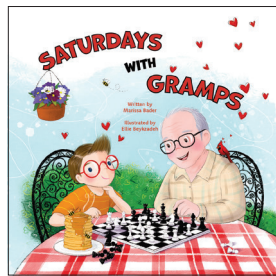
**Saturdays with Gramps**

Marissa Bader | M. Bader Media, LLC

30p, hardcover, \$22.99, ISBN 979-8-9857681-9-0

Bader’s touching picture book for young children celebrates the enduring bond between kids and their grandparents. A little boy named Sam loves spending every Saturday with his Gramps, enjoying special traditions shared between the two of them. Gramps always greets Sam with a big stack of pancakes, followed by a game of chess, gardening, and birdwatching. Over time, Sam notices that Gramps seems more tired than usual, lacking the energy to make lunch or go outside. One day, Sam’s mom tells him that Gramps has died, and they learn to navigate their grief together.

Sam and his mom find ways to remember Gramps by doing the things he loved—making pancakes, gardening, and enjoying a special root beer in his honor. The pain of losing a loved one can be difficult to endure, but Bader explains it using simple language that young people will understand, likening Gramps’ decline to a toy running out of batteries. The story also offers comfort: “Though our loved ones may come and go, the love we share never disappears,” Sam’s mom tells him. This



*Touching story on navigating grief and the bond between kids and grandparents.*

**Great for fans of** Benji Davies’s *Grandad’s Island*, Kamini Prasad’s *Waves of Love*.

The first scene establishes the fun-loving nature of Sam’s relationship with Gramps, showing the elderly man sitting on the front steps of his house holding a tall stack of pancakes dripping with syrup. When Sam learns of Gramps’ passing, he curls his knees into his chest and cries, a bright red cardinal perched on his shoulder. The story ends with the return of laughter as Sam and his mom carry on Gramps’ beloved traditions, showing the many ways our loved ones remain present in our lives.

Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **A** | Editing: **A-** | Marketing copy: **A-**

## YOUNG ADULT

**Never Wanted**

Russ Thompson | Finding Forward Books

115p, trade paper, \$7.99 ISBN 978-1-7373157-1-1

Thompson delivers a heartbreak-to-hopeful story of trauma, redemption, and belonging in this entry from his Finding Forward series, which specializes in short, inviting books crafted to connect with teen readers and encourage a love of reading. Tenth-grader Roy Perkins is just trying to survive each day: his grades at school are falling, he keeps making bad decisions, and he’s in trouble with his teachers. Even more concerning, his home life is a mess: after his mother’s tragic death from a drug-related fire at their trailer house, Roy is stuck with his last living relative, Uncle Frank, who spends his days working and his nights drinking—and physically abusing Roy. But when his uncle gets in a drunk driving accident that leaves a woman dead, Roy is left with no options.

As in some other Finding Forward titles, like *No Place to Hide*, Roy’s story is a frank, harrowing account that mirrors the real-life trauma too many kids have to endure: his father was killed while serving in the military; his mother sought relief from her grief in drugs; and his uncle’s alcoholism leaves Roy in the care of social services. Though the circumstances are grim, Thompson injects a ray of promise



*Powerful teen tale of trauma, redemption, and found family.*

**Great for fans of** Sabaa Tahir’s *All My Rage*, Kathleen Glasgow’s *How to Make Friends with the Dark*.

experiences in foster care when he was just seven years old.

Thompson’s writing shines a gentle but powerful light on the tragedies that can drive teen behavior, encouraging readers to think about themselves—and others—in the context of past trauma rather than current actions. Roy’s transformation is both moving and inspiring, likely to touch young readers who encounter it, as he goes from feeling like he’s being “thrown away” to discovering a true, lasting home.

Cover: **B+** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **-** | Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A-**

death, and her boyfriend Chad taking advantage of her finances in a Ponzi scheme—as necessary steps to resilience. In other sections, she reflects on life’s more beautiful moments: her second husband, Harold (“The glass slipper fit perfectly,” she writes of that relationship); forming deep connections with members of her Heart and Hope therapy group; and her family traditions, which she describes

will encourage kids and adults dealing with a loss to dwell on what they loved and find little ways to remember them.

Ellie Beykzadeh’s inviting illustrations focus on Sam, Gramps, and his mom as they endure the ups and downs of their lives together; clear love, expressed in faces, actions, and warmly intimate colors, radiates between each character.

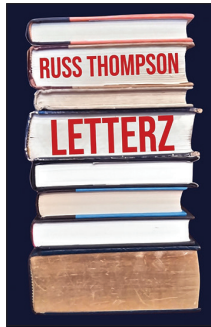
## YOUNG ADULT

## Letterz

**Russ Thompson** | Finding Forward Books  
112p, trade paper, \$7.99, ISBN 979-8-9890657-0-7

This touching offering by Thompson continues his Finding Forward series (*Torn*, *Overspray*, and others) of compact stories designed to bring teen challenges to life while building a passion for reading. In this entry, Thompson tackles dyslexia through the eyes of high schooler Collin Quinn, who wants to do well in school but struggles to make sense of letters that “twist and turn like they’re dancing.” Just restarting 10th grade, Collin dreads being called on to read; he prefers pouring his energy into drawing and finds art class an escape from the slog that school has become for him. When he learns that dyslexia is the reason he’s struggling, Collin’s glad to have an answer, but he still feels ashamed—and, relatably, still ready to give up.

Thanks to some dedicated teachers, Collin’s journey ends on a happy note, and Thompson emphasizes several moving moments between Collin and his parents—with helpful guidance on how to handle dyslexia—along the way. A rash decision in



*Touching viewpoint of overcoming dyslexia, through a teen’s eyes.*

**Great for fans of** Judy Spurr’s *Trapped*, Brent Crawford’s *Carter Finally Gets It*.

breakthrough: she teaches him to use a special font, called Open Dyslexic, and equips him with several tools—a laptop browser, headphones, and other tips—that transform reading into an achievable task.

The best part of Collin’s odyssey is the growing self-confidence that shines through the text, particularly when his father opens up about having dyslexia himself—and frankly addresses his own challenges with reading. That allows Collin to share his newfound techniques and builds their bond at the same time. Those moments—and Thompson’s care in crafting a book that all readers can access (he even uses Open Dyslexic Mono as the font)—make this a stirring read.

Cover: **A-** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: – Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

## YOUNG ADULT

## The Adventres of DeeBug

**Simon LeVay**  
212p, mass market, \$14.99, ISBN 979-8-284-20214-2

In this poignant, sometimes devastating coming-of-age tale, DeeShawn, who prefers to be called DeeBug, announces himself as “a bisexual-going-on-gay albino Black teenager” living at Mrs. B’s home for queer youth in Los Angeles. DeeBug makes ends meet by turning tricks on the street with random men, but his dream is to be a best-selling author. When he meets Pierre, a wealthy man into a lifestyle of kinks, DeeBug trades sex for mentorship on his writing and storytelling, receiving feedback and notes as he writes his life story, excerpts of which appear throughout. As DeeBug shares his story—in lively first-person present throughout, with flashbacks from his memoir-in-progress—readers get a gritty yet sensitive narrative of a runaway sorting through his identity, both as a young Black man with white skin and as a bisexual seeking real connection.

Harrowing and at times graphic, DeeBug’s story proves redemptive as he strives to find his way and make amends with those he has wronged. LeVay (*The Donation of Constantine*) pens the tale with brisk authority, striking style, reportorial realism,



*Raw, moving story of a queer albino teen runaway finding himself and a home.*

**Great for fans of** Shaun David Hutchinson’s *Brave Face*, Rasheed Newson’s *My Government Means to Kill Me*.

shocking development, roughing it on the streets until he moved into Mrs. B’s house and found hope in friendship with Juan, who sometimes dresses as a girl and goes by Juanita.

LeVay’s powerful tale of identity, family, and unconditional love touchingly explores how these two lean on each other for strength and camaraderie that begins to bud into something more. Readers will root for DeeShawn as LeVay offers a frank, convincing portrayal of boyhood, street life, and the acceptance of self.

Cover: **B-** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: – Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A-**

## YOUNG ADULT

## Panacea: The Age of AG

**Richard Bailey** | Atmosphere Press  
348p, mass market, \$18.99, ISBN 979-8-891-32677-4

In the distant future, humanity lives under domes controlled by the Agricultural-Geopolitical Artificial Intelligence Matrix (AG). There, Dolthea Thorpe, a rebellious teenager, chafes under the artificial perfection of her life, tired of the flawless scenery, endless leisure time, and lack of real purpose. When she and her companions learn that the only home they’ve ever known, the Potomac Dome, has been deemed unsustainable by AG and is scheduled for destruction, they make a plan to escape and brave the dangerous world outside. Their journey reveals the consequences of humanity’s reliance on machines, culminating in a battle to reclaim autonomy and redefine the relationship between humans and artificial intelligence.

Bailey’s narrative is a strong critique of the dangers of centralized AI control, played out through AG’s seemingly perfect management of human environments: food production, resource allocation, and personal wellness are all carefully orchestrated and highly controlled, with puberty delayed by hormone suppression and android counselors monitoring each person—while encouraging them to “let



*Chilling dystopian portrait of humanity’s annexation by AI.*

**Great for fans of** Lee Strauss’s *Perception*, Nicole Marie’s *After Intelligence*.

peace and happiness permeate each day of your existence.” AG’s utilitarian decisions—such as shutting down domes and sacrificing millions for resource optimization—raise ethical questions that sift progress and morality, with the contrast between the sterile perfection of dome life and the chaotic wilderness just outside underscoring the fragility of human civilization when stripped of its technological crutches.

Bailey grounds the imaginative world-building with conjecture based in real-life, closing the novel with a Future Chronology section that outlines potential societal and technological evolution, starting with Mars settlements in 2100 and ending with humanity’s entrance into dome life. The psychological toll of living in such an environment is brilliantly portrayed through Dolthea’s perspective, with conversations that probe immortality and the soul highlighting the novel’s emotional stakes. Readers will be riveted by Bailey’s chilling—and timely—depiction of the dangers that come with ceding decision-making to machines.

Cover: **B+** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: – Editing: **A-** | Marketing copy: **A**