

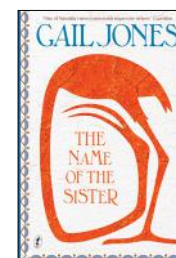
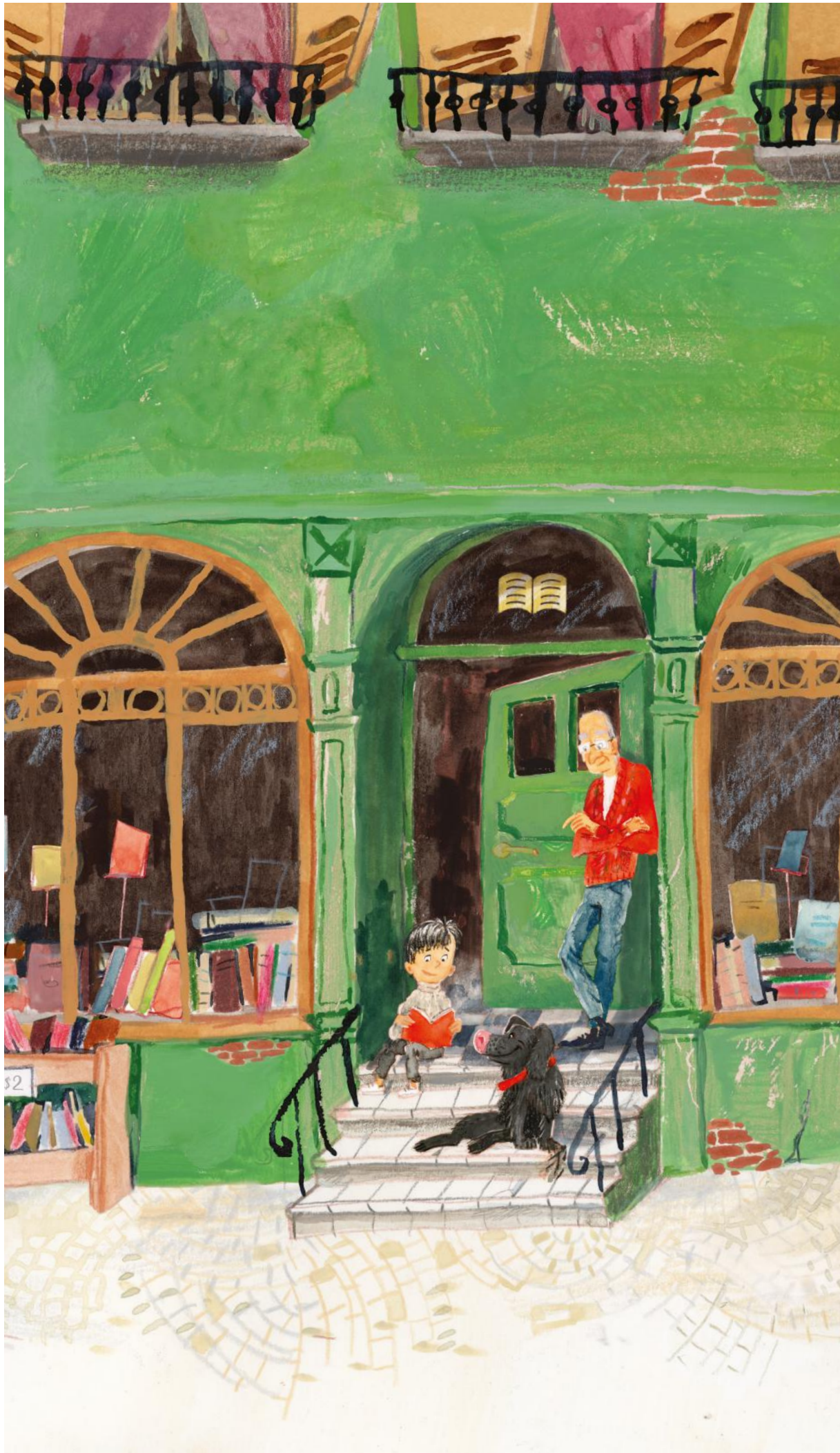
Readings Monthly

FREE | JUNE 2025

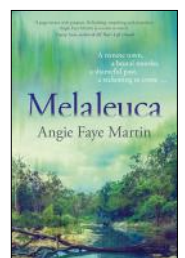
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Keio Yoshida
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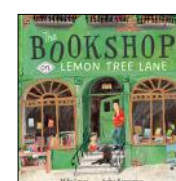
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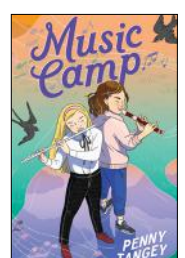
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News

CHIFF at Lido 2025

The Children's International Film Festival (CHIFF) is a celebration of creativity, imagination and adventure, catering for the youngest film buffs! The 2025 program will run from Saturday 7 June until Sunday 20 July, bringing the best new kids' films from around the world to Melbourne. To find out more and to book tickets, head to chiff.com.au

Stella Prize 2025

The Stella Prize for 2025 has been awarded to Michelle de Kretser for *Theory & Practice*, a mesmerising account of desire and jealousy, truth and shame. The Stella Prize celebrates the best books by Australian women and nonbinary writers, and offers prize money of \$60,000. Find out more about the prize and *Theory & Practice* at thestellaprize.com.au

Promos

3 for 2 classics

Throughout June we have a great offer on a select range of classics. Buy two classics and choose a third title in the range (of equal or lesser value) for free! This offer is available in Readings shops (except Readings Kids) until 30 June 2025. Not available online. Offer valid on stickered, in-stock items only, while stocks last. Not valid with any other offer.

3 for 2 children's classics

Throughout June we have a great offer on a select range of hardcover children's classics. Buy two classics and choose a third title in the range (of equal or lesser value) for free! This offer is available in Readings shops (except Readings Carlton) until 30 June 2025. Not available online. Offer valid on stickered, in-stock items only, while stocks last. Not valid with any other offer.

Events

with Chris Gordon



Confession time. Not every day during winter, because obviously my job is brilliant, but some days when it's raining outside, I fantasise about staying in bed all day and reading. And I know I'm not the only one. An excellent reason to

brave the outside world is our program of authors and poets coming in from the cold to a Readings shop near you. Consider this forward planning: you hear the author, you gift yourself the book and then when the rain and hail prevent you from leaving the house, you'll be ready to honour yourself with a day of reading.

Tabkha by Mona Zahed

Sunday 8 June at 2.00pm

Readings St Kilda, 112 Acland St, St Kilda
Free, but bookings are essential

Join Palestinian chef Mona Zahed for a celebration of *Tabkha: Recipes from Under the Rubble*. Prior to October 2023, Zahed ran a successful catering business, putting her skills and passions to practice. *Tabkha* is filled with 20 of her most beloved recipes.

Linda Jaivin and Sheila Fitzpatrick in conversation

Tuesday 10 June at 6.15pm

Cinema Nova, 380 Lygon St, Carlton
Free, but bookings are essential

Join ABC Radio National's *Big Ideas* host Natasha Mitchell as she discusses revolution with two of our most gifted extraordinary women historians, Linda Jaivin and Sheila Fitzpatrick.

Chelsey Goodan in conversation

Thursday 19 June at 6.00pm

Readings Chadstone, 1341 Dandenong Rd, Malvern East
Free, but bookings are essential

Join us to hear international speaker on women's empowerment Chelsey Goodan in conversation with Jo Stanley. Written with warmth and humour, Goodan's *Underestimated* is the first book to invite us into a teenage girl's brain and heart.

Kimberley Allsopp in conversation

Thursday 26 June at 6.00pm

Readings Emporium, 287 Lonsdale St, Melbourne
Free, but bookings are essential

Join us to hear Kimberley Allsopp in conversation about *Rise and Shine*, a story about hope, baking, making music, lemon trees, painting, love, divorce, dogs, the families we create for ourselves, and the heat of the Brisbane sun.



Scan the QR code for our full events calendar, the latest events information and to book tickets; or visit: readings.com.au/events

READINGS MONTHLY

The *Readings Monthly* is a free, independent newspaper published by Readings.

The print edition is available in all our shops and a copy is included with every online order.

Sign up to our e-news to receive a link to a digital copy of each new edition or view them online at readings.com.au/readings-monthly

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FRONT COVER

The June *Readings Monthly* cover features cover artwork from *The Bookshop on Lemon Tree Lane* by Mike Lucas and Sofya Karmazina (illus.), courtesy of the publisher, Little Hare, an imprint of Hardie Grant Children's Publishing. Design and illustration by Sofya Karmazina.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Readings acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we work. We pay respects to all First Nations people of Australia, and recognise their connection to the land. Sovereignty was never ceded.

PRICES AND AVAILABILITY

Please note that all prices and release dates in *Readings Monthly* are correct at time of publication, however prices and release dates may change without notice. Special price offers apply only for the month in which they are featured in *Readings Monthly*.

Readings donates 10% of its profits each year to the Readings Foundation. Learn more about the foundation at readings.com.au/the-readings-foundation

SHOP INFORMATION

See shop opening hours, browse and buy online at readings.com.au

Australian online, mail and phone orders have \$9 flat rate shipping, with free shipping on orders \$100 and over.

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KEY

Your key to getting the most out of the *Readings Monthly*

Review

Events

Special price



"Where do you want us?"

Foreword

with Joe Rubbo



In April, Readings participated in the inaugural Global Book Crawl. The event ran for over a week and encouraged book lovers to visit bookshops in and around the Melbourne CBD to get their book crawl maps stamped at each shop

they visited. Participating shops included Paperback Books, Hill of Content, Mary Martin, Books for Cooks, Dymocks 234 Collins Street, Kay Craddock, Amplify Bookstore and Readings. The prize for book crawlers who visited all the participating shops was a free book!

The scale of the response to the initiative caught us by surprise, with 1,692 people completing the crawl in Melbourne. While the crawl took place in cities around the world, the Melbourne crawl was organised by Mary Martin's indomitable owner Jaye Chin-Dusting and Readings' chairman Mark Rubbo. To get that many people out to bookshops in its first year was an incredible effort. Stay tuned for next year as I'm sure it's going to keep getting better and better.

This venture got me thinking about the collegial nature of our industry, and particularly among independent booksellers. It might surprise you to know that we're not fierce competitors, but on the whole we all get along pretty well. I'm not sure if it's the common ground, the precariousness and peculiarities of running an independent bookshop, or a shared love of books and reading. It must be some sort of combination of all of these factors. At the recent Melbourne Writers Festival, I was running low on Pádraig Ó Tuama's terrific poetry collection *Kitchen Hymns*. Ó Tuama was such a compelling speaker that attendees of his event just *had* to buy his *Kitchen Hymns*. I put the call out to see if I could borrow some copies from a local bookshop and Dymocks 234 came to the rescue. This is just one of many examples of how we all help each other out.

If you want to find out more about the world of bookselling, Jaye and Mark have a podcast called *The Bookseller's Podcast*, which features interviews with different booksellers from around Australia. Jaye and Mark have covered all sorts of topics that will enlighten you on all the intricacies of bookselling.

Dear Reader

with Alison Huber



I would usually describe myself as a 'reformed procrastinator', but occasionally those dusty old undergraduate habits rear their dreadful heads, and the target for my unreconstructed behaviours most recently was: This Month's Column.

Last night, after tidying the kitchen, rearranging a sock drawer, and catching up on all my shows (of which there are far too many), I decided the only way forward was the old trick of taking myself to bed in order to get up early with a refreshed mind (though as any true procrastinator knows, you never sleep that well, such is the level of guilt). But in happy news, that decision led to me listening to the announcement of the International Booker Prize winner as I write this morning, and I can now write about this here (see, there was method there, or at least that's the way I'm spinning it, dear Ed.). By the time you read this, you'll likely have heard that the winner is *Heart Lamp*, written in Kannada by Banu Mushtaq and translated into English by Deepa Bhashti. You may also know that this prize awards both the writer and translator, so Mushtaq and Bhashti share the £50,000 prize money equally, which recognises the collaborative practice required to bring works into a new language, and the important creative work of literary translators. Typically, the International Booker Prize winner turns out to be one of the books on the shortlist that I haven't read (and I was tracking so well this year! It's just about to be released locally in an edition by Scribe Publications), but the chair of judges, Max Porter, describes this book as, 'a radical translation which ruffles language, to create new textures in a plurality of Englishes'. I'm looking forward to reading this!

Our dear Mark Rubbo is a longtime fan of Gail Jones and has written our review for Jones's new book, *The Name of the Sister*, our Fiction Book of the Month. There's nothing quite as satisfying as following an author across the length of their career, and Mark says that he has, 'loved everything of hers that I've read: her books are intelligent, sophisticated, and cosmopolitan' and that this book, 'will delight her admirers but also garner the attention of those yet to discover her'. That pretty much covers all of us I think, so let's get reading! This month we also see new works from Jennifer Mills and Marija Perić and several strong debuts, including a highly recommended short story collection by Lucy Nelson about characters who are not mothers called *Wait Here*, and first novels from Miranda Nation, Sinéad Stubbins, and Thomas Vowles. Speaking of the International Booker Prize, you might recall the novel *The Enlightenment of the Greengrass Tree* by Iranian-Australian author Shokoofeh Azar, which was shortlisted for that prize in 2020: Azar has a new novel out this month called *The Gowkaran Tree in the Middle of Our Kitchen*. The rediscovery of Charmian Clift's work continues this month, with the

republishing of *Honour's Mimic*. Our resident graphic novel expert assesses a new work called *The Brownout Murders* which is set on the mean streets of Melbourne, circa 1942. Our Crime Book of the Month is *Melaleuca*, by First Nations debut author Angie Faye Martin, and our reviewer describes it as 'masterful'. We also point you in the direction of lots of interesting international writers in our reviews section, including books from Susanna Kwan, Taylor Jenkins Reid, Fredrik Backman, Jennifer Trevelyan, V.E. Schwab, and Anthony Passeron, and there's lots more to discover there too, like the new novels from Sarah Moss and Hiro Arikawa, as well as local editions of books that received a lot of acclaim in the 'best of 2024' lists overseas, *Rejection* by Tony Tulathimutte and *Beautyland* by Marie-Helene Bertino.

Our Nonfiction Book of the Month comes to us from Perth-based Upswell, the project of former UWA Publishing director and publisher Terri-ann White. Upswell produces a fascinating list of unusual and creative literary works, and I admire this imprint immensely. Our reviewer describes Anne-Marie Condé's *The prime minister's potato and other essays* as 'storytelling of the highest order: insightful, discerning, and quietly magical'. You'll remember Dr Debra Dank's multi-award-winning memoir, *We Come with This Place*, and the writer and academic's new work *Terraglossia* is published this month. Food critic Beshla Rodell's *Hunger Like a Thirst* appears mid-June, and we have a sneak peek extract on page 4. It will be hard to miss the memoir from former New Zealand Prime Minister and trailblazing woman Jacinda Ardern; early buyers might be lucky enough to receive a copy with a signed bookplate. Also out this month is a new *Quarterly Essay* from Hugh White, Jacinta Parsons's further writing on women and aging, *A Wisdom of Age*, new books from Andreas Malm, Keio Toshida, Linda Jaivin, Jenny Valentish, and Sheila Fitzpatrick, and it won't be a surprise to hear that I'm looking forward to diving into Ottolenghi co-founder and chef Sami Tamimi's first solo cookbook, which is called *Boustany: A Celebration of Vegetables from My Palestine*.

And finally, dear Reader, we do love our classics here at Readings, and we know you do too. We've had an annual promotion of Penguin's extensive range for a number of years running now, with previous years focusing on their Black, Vintage, Modern, and Clothbound Classics, and this year I thought I'd put together a bunch of their lesser known series that you may not have seen en masse, including the splendid Vintage Quarterbound Classics hardbacks. Though I knew how lovely they all were, even I was excited to see them out on display together! Meanwhile, my colleagues in the Children's buying team have organised a similar deal for children's hardback classics – see our News page for details. We have both promotions as 3-for-2 offers in-shop only, so come in soon and see how gorgeous they are. **R**

"Doesn't take much persuasion to enjoy"

WE LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Jane Austen wrecked my life

A ROMANTIC COMEDY BY
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Hunger Like a Thirst



**Hunger Like a Thirst:
A Memoir of Obsession, Anonymity and
Eating the World**

Besha Rodell

Hardie Grant. PB. \$35

Available 17 June

Available for pre-order now

In this edited extract, get a taste of the forthcoming memoir from *The Age's* chief restaurant critic, the internationally acclaimed food writer **Besha Rodell**. And it all began at Stephanie's!

Yes, there was a trip to France. A tower of *profiteroles* at Les Deux Magots. Breakfasts that included flaky, buttery *croissants* and fine porcelain cups of *le chocolat chaud*, so thick and creamy it has taken up residence in my sense memory as a paragon of deliciousness. But my journey into a life in food did not begin there. It began in Melbourne, at a restaurant called Stephanie's.

Stephanie's was Melbourne's grandest restaurant at the time, housed in a majestic old home in Hawthorn and run by Stephanie Alexander, a chef who is credited with changing the way Australians ate. She trained many of the cooks who went on to become the country's most prominent chefs. The name *Stephanie's* was synonymous with the finest dining. In 1984, I was aware of none of this, because I was eight and living with my American mother, my Australian father, and my three-year-old brother, Fred, in a share house in Brunswick.

The hulking old terrace where we lived – white, with black wrought iron framing its verandahs – had previously housed an elderly order of nuns. When my parents rented it, with the idea of filling it full of other like-minded hippie/academic/journalist types, its sweeping staircase and stained-glass windows and high-ceilinged rooms were filthy. They scrubbed it, claimed its grandest bedroom upstairs, and advertised the downstairs rooms for rent.

Some of the first housemates they attracted were a single mother and her daughter, Sarah, who was about my age. Sarah was small, with dark hair and freckles and a gap-toothed grin, the opposite of my pudgy, blonde, self-conscious self. She quickly became the leader of our gang of two, bossing me into compliance, though I did manage to inspire some awe with my firm belief that I was the queen of the fairies. (At night, while she slept, I flew away to fairyland, where I lived in a rosebush with my many fairy princess daughters. This is the subject for a different book entirely.)

The central mythology in Sarah's young life had to do with her father, who was mostly absent. He was, she told me, handsome and rich and lived in a fancy house with his beautiful new wife. (The narrative was quite different when Sarah's mother told the story.) About once a month, Sarah would disappear for the weekend to her father's house and come back with fifty-cent pieces that he had given her – more proof that he was 'rich', since our parents would never have bestowed such lavish wealth upon us. I distinctly remember after one such weekend, Sarah leading me dramatically to the milk bar near school and pointing to the wall of candies at the counter. I could pick whichever one I wanted, and she would buy it with her paternally acquired riches. (Did I mention my parents were hippies? Candy was not part of my usual diet.) When Sarah turned nine, her father proved the point of Sarah's mythology by taking both of us for a celebratory birthday meal at the fanciest restaurant in town: Stephanie's.

I have almost zero recollection of the food. There was a huge, beautiful chocolate *soufflé* that haunts me to this day, but other than that, I cannot recall a thing I ate. I remember the brocade seating and deep red curtains, which gave everything a feeling of grandeur. I remember the lighting, the tinkle of glasses, the swoosh of the waiters, the mesmerising, intense luxury of it all. I remember feeling *special*, truly special, that I was allowed into this room where people were spending ungodly amounts of money on something as common as dinner.

Quite honestly, I can't remember much about that year or my life at that time, other than the fact that my mother started sleeping with men other than my father and he moved into a different bedroom and cried a lot and then eventually she moved out of the share house and into a tiny, crappy house somewhere else with the guy who would end up becoming my stepfather. But. I remember Stephanie's.

My family did not frequent restaurants like Stephanie's, and in fact I do not remember any specific restaurant meal in my life prior to the one that occurred there, although I'm sure there were a few.

I didn't need an education in food. I grew up with fantastic food, some of it just as good – and in some ways better! – than what was

served at Stephanie's. My father was an academic and an occasional farmer and a gardener and a devotee of Julia Child. I was reared on homegrown fruits and vegetables, rich cream sauces, chocolate mousse made with egg whites and heavy cream and not a lick of gelatin.

My mother had melded her American upbringing with her hippie sense of exploration. She spent her earliest years in Hollywood, where my grandfather was a screenwriter and many of his friends were Syrian. Rice and yoghurt became staples of her childhood meals, a tradition she never gave up. My father did most of the cooking while they were together, but when she cooked, lemon juice was added to everything: chicken livers, broccoli with butter, salads full of olives and feta bought from the Greek stalls at the Queen Victoria Market. No, I did not need an education in food. I needed – or more accurately, I desperately *wanted* – an education in luxury.

After my meal at Stephanie's, I began haranguing my parents on my own birthdays. No longer satisfied with the family tradition of picking a favourite home-cooked dish as a birthday meal, I told them I wanted to eat at restaurants instead. They tried. My mother and my new stepfather took us out – now with a baby sister, Grace, in tow – to a neighbourhood Lebanese restaurant for my 11th birthday, an expense that I'm sure they could not afford. I was disappointed. The food was good, but the luxury was lacking.

This instinct, this need for extravagance where it is wholly unearned, runs in my family. Wealth has come and gone on both sides of my lineage, but it has never settled in and stayed. My paternal grandfather owned Malties, a cereal company that was one of Australia's most popular brands in the early 20th century. Then he had a heart attack and died, leaving my grandmother with five children and no idea how to run a business, and before long, the cereal company and the grand house in Eltham were lost. My maternal grandfather grew up exceedingly wealthy in Philadelphia and spent his life squandering that wealth on fancy cars and trips to Europe and multiple divorces, including two from my grandmother, all the while fancying himself some sort of genius playwright. Both of my parents grew up resenting the lack of luxury that should have been their birthright. I somehow absorbed that, but from a very early age, the thing I thought I ought to have, in a just world, was meals at fancy restaurants.

Money was a constant stress when I was growing up; I'd be lying if I said it hasn't remained a constant stress in my own adult life. And yet my mother has a thing for vintage cars, French soap, French underwear, Chanel perfume, tiny pieces of luxury that she should not be able to justify given that she is the type of woman who carries an extra canister of gas in her car because she runs out of gas so frequently because she never has the money to fill her tank. (I know this makes no sense; you need not explain that to me.)

In fact, the trip to France was a case in point. When I was 13, my mother came into a small amount of money and decided to whisk me off for an around-the-world trip, even though she and my stepfather were struggling with a mortgage and my sister Grace was a toddler and leaving her alone with my stepfather for months in order to take me to France and America was a wholly ridiculous thing to do. But this is my mother we're talking about, who drove a vintage red MGB convertible rather than a normal car, who believed her teenage daughter *must* see Paris in order to understand the brand of sophistication she believed we deserved to inhabit.

I have endeavoured, in my life, to be more pragmatic. I have mostly failed. If I thirst for designer clothes, I know how to find them in thrift stores. I do not long for money, other than the kind that relieves you of the deep, existential dread that accompanies poverty. What I long for – what I've longed for since I was eight years old, sitting wide-eyed in that grand restaurant – is the specific opulence of a very good restaurant. I never connected this longing to the goal of attaining wealth; in fact, it was the pantomiming of wealth that appealed.

I did not belong in that grand room! And yet there I was! It was intoxicating.

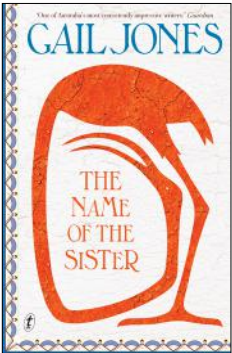
I have been chasing that feeling ever since. **R**

Besha Rodell is the chief restaurant critic for *The Age*, a *New York Times* contributor, a James Beard Award winning writer, editor and restaurant critic with two decades of experience and one of the most respected voices in food writing today.

Read our review of *Hunger Like a Thirst* on page 13.

Fiction

BOOK OF THE MONTH
Australian Fiction



The Name of the Sister
Gail Jones
Text. PB. \$34.99
Available 3 June

R I've read most of Gail Jones' works. She certainly is one of our most prolific writers and *The Name of the Sister* is her 11th novel. I've loved everything of hers that I've read; her books are intelligent, sophisticated, and cosmopolitan. *The Name of the Sister* has all of those qualities, too, but is more rooted in Australia and stylistically is, I feel, quite different from her earlier works. It has all the suspense and tension of a thriller and reminded me of Charlotte Wood's *The Natural Way of Things*.

On a lonely road in the bush outside Broken Hill, an emaciated, terrified woman stumbles into the headlights of a car; she cannot or won't speak, and has no identifying papers or marks. Sydney-based freelance journalist Angie is intrigued, sensing that there might be an opportunity for a big story. Pictures of the unknown woman, 'Jane Doe', are circulated, and the police are inundated with people claiming that Jane is known to them. By coincidence, Angie's childhood friend, Bev, is the lead officer on the case and leaks information to Angie, including details of people who have come forward about Jane. By default, Angie becomes a contact point for people who have lost loved ones and now view Angie as a possible source of hope. 'Can you help?' they ask. 'I'm only a journalist,' she replies.

Her growing obsession with Jane highlights the distance between Angie and her husband. When Bev is sent to Broken Hill and suggests Angie follow her, the journalist becomes much more than an objective observer and

turns into an active participant in the case, which leads to an uneasy and disturbing resolution. Gail Jones is a great writer and this thrilling, intriguing book will delight her admirers but also garner the attention of those yet to discover her.

Mark Rubbo is the chairman of Readings

crash landing; Celeste's memories of what happened on the space station; and a point a few months after the escape pod landed, when Celeste's survival has brought unwelcome attention from the authoritarian government of the neighbouring Alliance – the antithesis of the egalitarian Freelanders. Across these narrative strands, we see Jude grappling with how to help her sister without losing herself in the process.

Throughout *Salvage*, Mills explores the importance of helping others and of accepting help ourselves, and the bonds of community that form when help is given or received. *Salvage* is ultimately a hopeful novel, suggesting that working together and doing our best for each other is the best hope we have of rebuilding a better world – either post- or pre-apocalypse.

Bella Mackey is the digital content lead

New Skin
Miranda Nation
A&U. PB. \$32.99
Available 3 June



R You never forget your first love, the saying goes, and *New Skin*, the debut novel from celebrated screenwriter and producer Miranda Nation, examines this idea over a period of 20 years.

Alex and Leah are second-year medical students in Melbourne in 1997. Both feel thwarted in their choices. Leah's dream is to act, but her middle-class family is pleased she is doing something 'useful'. Alex lives with a tyrannical father who beats him, berates Alex's mother, and favours Alex's sister. Alex avoids home as much as possible and doesn't mention his home life to anyone in his course.

On Leah's 19th birthday, Alex and Leah begin sleeping together, but neither admits the depth of their connection. While the relationship remains sexual, there are key moments suggesting how it could be – open, caring and uncomplicated. In these moments, I wanted to scream at the characters, 'Just do it!', 'Take a leap of faith!' But, of course, that's not how novels work!

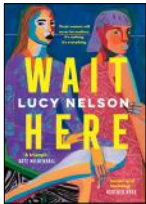
Miranda Nation has created two troubled and vulnerable characters. In alternating chapters, the reader sees how their lives progress – with and without each other. Outwardly, Leah is the more sensitive one. She literally wears her pain: battling an extreme eating disorder and becoming unhealthily thin. Alex, however, keeps his emotions and desires to himself, seemingly afraid of echoing his father's behaviour. Instead, he turns to drug use to calm his mind. The novel has many 'sliding doors' moments. When Alex is available for a relationship, Leah isn't. Regional and international distance also keep them apart at key times.

The novel paints an accurate picture of the inner northern suburbs of Melbourne in the late 1990s. The university, the streets of Brunswick and Carlton, and the bars around Fitzroy will make many local readers smile with recognition.

Ultimately, the question at the heart of this perceptive and highly compelling novel is not about remembering or forgetting your first love, but about knowing the right time to let your first love go.

Annie Condon is from Readings Hawthorn

Wait Here
Lucy Nelson
S&S/Summit Books. PB. \$32.99
Available 4 June



R In her debut short story collection, *Wait Here*, Lucy Nelson demonstrates a depth of feeling for a very diverse group of women whose only link is their status as 'not mothers'.

In several stories, babies and children are not even mentioned. Many of Nelson's characters create lives outside the nuclear family unit. In 'Chances Are, We Were High as Kites', elderly twin sisters set a plan in motion with their 'chosen family': Best Friend Lionel and Downstairs Patricia. In one of my favourite stories: 'Ariel. Marvin. I Don't Want a Boyfriend', Casey, unhappy with the name her mother gave her, meticulously chooses a name for her new car, the closest she may get to an act of mothering.

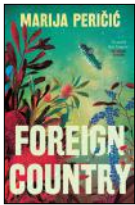
These stories have won awards and appeared in literary publications. Some explore what is said and unsaid. In the title story, 'Wait Here', Ivy sees a psychiatrist weekly, knowing what her husband wants her to talk about, but never mentioning it. She admires the huge painting of a woman in the waiting room and begins to enjoy the waiting time more than the sessions. 'I am always waiting for things, anyway,' she muses, giving the reader a clue to the reason for her visits.

In the final story, 'I am Five, I Am Twelve, I Am Twenty', a woman traces the history of her body; her sex education; the expectation that one day she'll give birth. Throughout her life, the opportunities she has to 'mother' change in ways she would never expect. Definitions of the role of motherhood, even the definition of a 'family unit', shrink and expand during her lifetime.

Nelson's stories are extraordinary. She creates dialogue that is humorous and characters who are insightful about their own limitations. I also enjoyed the bonds between women in the stories – best friends, colleagues, roommates and sisters. This is the best story collection I've read in 2025.

Annie Condon is from Readings Hawthorn

Foreign Country
Marija Peričić
Ultimo. PB. \$34.99
Available 3 June



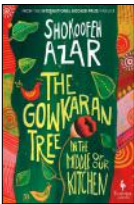
R Sisters, no matter the age gap or where they were born or what decade they grew up in, share a bond. Your sister can't judge you, because she is part of you. She shared your childhood

in a way no one else could. She can make you angrier than anyone else ever could, and yet hers is the only opinion you need when deciding on a new pair of shoes to wear to that very important event you have next week.

Eva and Elizabeta were sisters, inseparable until the unthinkable happened. They relied on each other when they were uprooted from their home and moved to the other side of the world. They were there for one another when their father died, and their mother fell apart. And then, suddenly, Eva can't bear the sight of El, refuses to take her phone calls, moves back to the other side of the

Australian Fiction

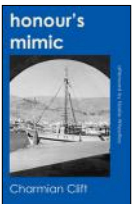
The Gowkaran Tree in the Middle of Our Kitchen
Shokoofeh Azar
Europa Editions. PB. \$34.99
Available 10 June



International Booker Prize finalist Shokoofeh Azar's new novel spans 50 years in the history of modern Iran in a lush, layered story that embraces politics and family, revolution and

reconstruction, loss and love, as it recounts the colourful destinies of 12 children who get lost inside a mysterious palace one long-ago night. Against the backdrop of immense cultural and political transformation, this is also the story of one family's efforts to preserve the richness of Iranian culture in the face of Islamic hegemony following the 1979 revolution.

Honour's Mimic
Charmian Cliff & Nadia Wheatley (afterword)
NewSouth. PB. \$34.99
Available now



Charmian Cliff broke the rules of the romance genre with this representation of a relationship between a middle-class Australian woman and a Greek sponge diver who is an outcast even within his

own society. Both are 'desperate' – trapped in loveless marriages and overcome by a sense of nameless dread. But when these twin souls fall in love in

the ruins of an ancient citadel above the port town of a remote and poverty-stricken Greek island, unhappiness and fear are cast aside.

Salvage
Jennifer Mills
Picador. PB. \$34.99
Available now



R Jennifer Mills is an ambitious and often experimental author; her latest novel, *Salvage*, is her furthest venture into speculative fiction yet, taking readers to a not-so-far-flung

future, to a world after political and environmental collapse. But the factors that lead to this collapse remain oblique – Mills' story is not about the downfall of a civilisation, but about the work of carrying on, and how community bonds can salvage even a seemingly lost world.

The story follows Jude, a laconic woman in the Freelands – a slightly ramshackle socialist society that survives with the motto: If you can help, help. Decades after they last saw each other, Jude is still haunted by the memory of her older sister, Celeste, who became obsessed with fleeing the dangers of Earth by venturing into space. Jude believes Celeste died on the ill-fated space station that was meant to be her sanctuary, but when an escape pod crash-lands in the Freelands, Jude is unexpectedly once again face to face with her sister – and must work out how to look after Celeste, herself, and her community.

There are four timelines woven together in this intricate novel: Jude and Celeste's fraught adolescence; the immediate aftermath of the escape pod's

world, and flees a past too difficult to bear. Eva assumes there will be time someday, if not for reconciliation or even forgiveness, but at least for one more conversation. And then Elizabetha is gone, and Eva is left to pick up the pieces.

In her sister's home, back among the gum trees, Eva literally picks through the debris left behind, gradually finding out who this older version of El was, and slowly realising that in her own grief her memory failed her in a most devastating way. Ten years ago, not only did Eva lose a daughter, she also gave up her sister at the one point in time when she needed her the most.

Written in pieces, reflecting Eva's emotional state as she attempts to deal with the past, this is a poetic story of emptiness and renewal, trauma and catharsis, loss and love.

Kate McIntosh is the manager of Readings Emporium

The War Within Me Tracy Ryan

Transit Lounge. PB. \$34.99
Available 1 June



In the second novel of the *Queens of Navarre* trilogy, 16th-century Princess Jeanne d'Albret is twice royal. As a small and often ill child, she is carried to the altar at the French King's command, but she

and her famous poet mother have a secret plan. Soon, a new king is on the French throne. A second arranged marriage is forced on her, but Jeanne is surprised by bliss. As the Wars of Religion break out and Jeanne commits to the Huguenots, will her adored husband take the same path?

King of Dirt Holden Sheppard

Pantera. PB. \$34.99
Available 3 June



Giacomo Brolo, aka Jack, works piecemeal construction gigs in remote WA and drinks himself to oblivion. When he returns to his hometown of Geraldton for a family wedding his conservative Italian family would prefer he remained in the closet, and he finds out he may have conceived a son with his high-school girlfriend. Now Jack needs to convince her and her new husband that he's fit to be a father. And whatever happened to the schoolmate whose rejection spurred Jack to leave Geraldton at 18?

Stinkbug Sinéad Stubbins

Affirm Press. PB. \$34.99
Available now



R Corporate horror is the hot dish right now, and while office life has long been artistic fodder, there seems to be an increased fascination with it. Is it a post-Covid, hybrid hangover where work-life balance, for those who can indulge in such thoughts, is the conversation de rigueur? At any rate, I am here for it as a form of snarky cathartic escapism, which Sinéad Stubbins delivers in spades in *Stinkbug*.

The setup is simple: Edith is a woman who has moulded herself to fit into her world – both at work and beyond.

She has recently broken up with her boyfriend, a popular co-worker who increased her social currency at work. He made the ambitious Edith seem more approachable, softer. But he has just been unceremoniously fired, a Swedish company has taken over the advertising firm where Edith works, and a number of the staff have been selected to take part in a company retreat, where they are told that if they don't find a work friend by the end of the week there will be consequences.

Despite the uncoupling and firing, Edith is set. She has a work buddy in Mo, and they are solid. But as the days unfold, it is clear this is not going to be a breeze after all. Edith battles with her inner demons (of which there are many), the bro-culture of her advertising world, gaslighting (which she also dishes out), and her place in the company social structure as a single and, let's be real, prickly woman. As Edith and her world slowly unravel, I found myself being pitched back and forth between sympathy and dislike. Edith is a fabulously unreliable narrator, but her whole world is full of unreliable narrators, to the extent that by the end of the novel I wasn't sure, in the best possible way, what had actually happened – or why. But then, perhaps not entirely making sense of this corporate, capitalist, patriarchal madness is the point.

Rosalind McClintock is the head of marketing

Our New Gods Thomas Vowles

UQP. PB. \$34.99
Available 3 June



R Cresting the sticky swell of a Melbourne summer, newcomer Ash trips into obsession with hook-up-turned-friend James in Thomas Vowles' propulsive debut, *Our New Gods*. Amiable, easy-going James offers Ash something more than help in navigating the heady kaleidoscope of the urban gay scene. In James, there's an escape from Ash's complicated relationship with his late father, and a chance to reinvent himself – that is, if he can compete with Raf, James' charismatic new boyfriend.

The novel hits the ground running from its opening act as Ash witnesses an unsettling altercation between Raf and his ex at a party. Like missing a step on a dark staircase, Vowles' taut narrative voice snatches you from the precipice of certainty and pulls you into the fervour of Ash's compulsive search for answers. It's little wonder as Vowles comes from a screenwriting background and *Our New Gods* flows with cinematic effortlessness, as it presents a wholly original perspective on the literary thriller genre.

Beneath his page-turning prose, what Vowles quietly excels at is evoking the the incessant loneliness at the heart of Ash's character, and how it refracts into other pockets of isolation, bubbling to the surface around him. In both the fictional and real worlds, where connection – for friendship, for sex, and for love – is seemingly more accessible than ever, *Our New Gods* takes a scalpel to the protective skins we've sheathed ourselves in, opening us to the porous lines of intimacy and violence. From cover to cover, the threat of absence is a presence in itself. But

what if, as Ash comes to question, there's something worse than being alone?

Gene Pinter is from Readings Chadstone

International Fiction

The Passengers on the Hankyu Line Hiro Arikawa & Allison Markin Powell (trans.)

Doubleday. HB. \$34.99
Available 3 June



Trundling through the scenic countryside of Kyoto and Osaka is the famously scenic Hankyu line, a burgundy-coloured electric train that has been carrying its commuters to their destinations for decades. Over the course of a single journey in springtime, and the return journey six months later *The Passengers on the Hankyu Line* follows the key emotional dramas of five commuters. As the seasons change, the gentle timeless train carries each traveller forward towards the person they intend to become.

Beautyland

Marie-Helene Bertino

Vintage. PB. \$22.99
Available 10 June



Meet Adina: a woman who has never felt at home on Earth. Born at the moment when Voyager 1 is launched into space, Adina is a baby of unusual perception. As a child, she recognises she is different, not least because of her strange knowledge of a faraway planet. Then a fax machine arrives at home: her mission is clear. As Adina grows up, she dispatches transmissions on the terrors and delights of human existence. But is there a chance there are others like her out there?

My Friends

Fredrik Backman

S&S. PB. \$34.99
Available 4 June



R Twenty-five years ago, four teenage friends spent one last summer together. Each of them had their own problems, but as a group they were unstoppable. Joar, Ted, Ali and the artist knew they probably wouldn't be friends forever, but at 14, forever can seem a long, long way away.

Now, Ted is nearly 40. He's a history teacher who hasn't taught since he was stabbed by a student, and he has just lost the love of his life. Louisa is a foster kid about to turn 18 who has also just lost her best friend, her human, her world. An accidental meeting brings these two very different characters together, and as their stories unfold, so does the laughter, and the tears. As they travel back to the town Ted grew up in, the memory of that last summer goes with them in the form of a painting. The artist painted the sea, with a pier, and on that pier are three tiny figures: his friends. Louisa has loved that painting since the first time she saw it on a postcard and now it is hers, and so she must know the story behind it.

Fredrik Backman wrote *A Man Called Ove* and *Beartown*, among several other heartwarming, and heartbreaking, novels. The characters he imagines into being are incredibly real. They are flawed, they are funny, they are anxious, they are angry, they are loved, and they are us, which is how he makes me cry every single time. This is not his best story, but it does feel as though it might have been written in an attempt to understand his own fears, his depression and his struggle to deal with the world around him. And because it is so personal, it is even more poignant.

Kate McIntosh is the manager of Readings Emporium

Flux

Jinwoo Chong

Melville House. PB. \$34.99
Available 3 June

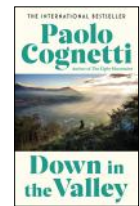


Four days before Christmas, eight-year-old Bo loses his mother in an accident, 28-year-old Brandon loses his job after a hostile takeover of his big-media employer, and 48-year-old Blue, a key witness in a criminal trial against an infamous but now-defunct tech startup, struggles to reconnect with his family. Jinwoo Chong's time-bending debut blends elements of neo-noir and speculative fiction as it explores grief, trauma, abuse, and whiteness within the development of Asian identity in America through a tale woven with experimental technology, a vast network of secrets and an iconic 1980s detective show.

Down in the Valley

Paolo Cognetti &
Stash Luczkiw (trans.)

Harvill Secker. PB. \$34.99
Available 24 June

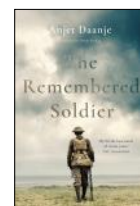


Alfredo and Luigi grew up in the Italian Alps. Their father planted trees for them when they were born: for Luigi, a larch, which looks towards the sun; for Alfredo, a fir, which flourishes only in shade. Since their father's untimely death, all the brothers have in common is heavy drinking and the old family home. Luigi would like to buy Alfredo out and move from the valley to a new life up on the mountain with his pregnant partner. But in this remote landscape, one drink too many can turn dogs into wolves.

The Remembered Soldier

Anjet Daanje & David McKay (trans.)

Scribe. PB. \$37.99
Available 3 June



Flanders, 1922. Noon Merckem has lost his memory in the Great War and lives in a psychiatric asylum. Responding to a newspaper ad, countless women visit him there, hoping to find husbands vanished in battle. When Julianne appears and recognises Noon as her husband, the photographer Amand Coppens, she takes him home against medical advice. But their miraculous reunion doesn't turn out the way that Julianne wants her envious friends to believe. Only gradually do the two grow close, and how can Amand be certain she's telling the truth about his identity?

Cloudless
Rupert Dastur
Fig Tree. HB. \$35
Available now



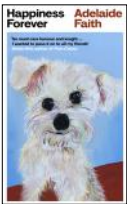
Autumn, 2004. In the hills of North Wales, Catrin and John endure the wait for their elder son to return from Iraq. His decision to join up left them reeling, yet there are other pressing concerns: working the farm that has been theirs for generations; their troubled younger son. Catrin's childhood sweetheart returns to their small town, offering a glimpse into another life. John falls once more into his gambling habit. They drift further apart until, on a cold winter evening, there is a fateful knock at the door.

The Ladie Upstairs
Jessie Elland
Baskerville. PB. \$34.99
Available now



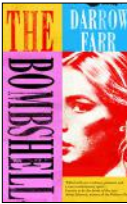
Scullery drudge Ann longs to become a lady's maid. Ann can't quite remember how or when she arrived at the grand Ropner Hall, but she loathes spending her days toiling in the dank kitchen. When a chance meeting with Ropner's Lady Charlotte leads to the opportunity to become her personal maid, Ann is convinced she has finally escaped her own version of hell. As Ann's new life above stairs takes a sinister twist, will it turn out that the terrors lurking up there are worse than the devils she knows below?

Happiness Forever
Adelaide Faith
Fourth Estate. PB. \$32.99
Available 4 June



Sylvie is only happy when she is at therapy. This is because Sylvie is in love with her therapist. Whether this obsession is – as her therapist suggests – a case of extreme 'erotic transference', or a lost person's need to connect, Sylvie isn't sure. Beyond therapy, Sylvie has a small life: a job as a veterinary nurse; her little brain-damaged dog, Curtains; and a new friend, Chloe, who she met on the beach. When the therapist delivers some devastating news, Sylvie must imagine new and lasting ways of coping.

The Bombshell
Darrow Farr
Atlantic. PB. \$34.99
Available 24 June



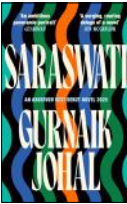
Corsica, 1993. Seventeen-year-old Séverine Guimard knows in her heart that it's only a matter of time before she'll escape to Hollywood's glimmering lights. Until then, she'll spend her days listening to 'What is Love' on her Walkman and riding her bike at dusk along the roads that wind around her parents' villa. That is until three masked men emerge from an idling car and take her somewhere hidden from prying eyes. Séverine's face will be plastered all over newspapers and TV, but not for the reason you think.

Isola
Allegra Goodman
Summit. PB. \$34.99
Available 4 June



In 16th-century France, Marguerite is the heiress to an aristocratic fortune and destined for a life of privilege. Then she is orphaned, her guardian squanders her inheritance and insists she accompany him on an expedition to the new French colonies in North America. Marguerite befriends her guardian's servant and the two develop an intense attraction. But when their relationship is discovered, they are marooned on an island. *Isola* tells a timeless and deeply moving story of love, faith and a woman fighting for survival.

Saraswati
Gurnaik Johal
Serpent's Tail. PB. \$34.99
Available 17 June



Centuries ago, the holy river Saraswati is believed by some to have flowed through what is now Punjab, alongside the Indus River and its five tributaries. When Satnam arrives in Punjab for his grandmother's funeral, he finds water in the dried-up well behind her house and sets in motion a contentious government scheme to unearth the lost river. Tracing each river as threads in a tapestry, Gurnaik Johal follows the lives of seven people whose histories resurface with a river that will change their future forever.

Atmosphere
Taylor Jenkins Reid
Hutchinson Heinemann. PB. \$34.99
Available 3 June



Joan Goodwin has always dreamt of touching the stars. But it has never felt possible. So she is content working as a physics and astronomy professor and being the best aunt to her niece, Frances. But when NASA advertises for women scientists to join their space shuttle program, Joan knows she has to apply. Chosen from thousands of applicants, Joan begins training and her dream suddenly feels achievable. But then there's Vanessa Ford, the mysterious aeronautical engineer whom Joan just can't stop gravitating towards. Suddenly Joan is questioning everything she thought she knew about herself.

In her acknowledgements, Taylor Jenkins Reid jokes she should dedicate *Atmosphere* to 'Artistic License', but her extensive research and focus on historical accuracy comes through on the page. She has a talent for writing stories that read more like a memoir than a work of fiction. It truly feels like I could search Joan Goodwin and find a Wikipedia page dedicated to her life and accomplishments. On the surface, *Atmosphere* is a story about astrophysics, space engineering and the lives of astronauts. As you read further, you'll discover it's actually a broader story of the human experience. Set in Texas in the late 1970s and early 1980s, it's about the struggles women face in male-dominated fields, and their constant fight to be seen as worthy. It also

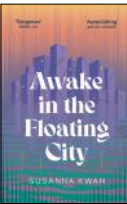
shines a light on the specific barriers the LGBTQIA+ community faced during this time and the aching desire not to have to hide one's true self. Ultimately, at its core, *Atmosphere* is a story about love, in every sense of the word. This book left me sobbing and completely destroyed in the best possible way. It will stay with me for a very long time. It is a must-read for Jenkins Reid fans, space enthusiasts and romance lovers alike. Lucie Dess is the marketing and events coordinator

The Sisters
Jonas Hassen Khemiri
Sceptre. PB. \$34.99
Available 24 June



Meet the cursed Mikkola sisters: Ina, Evelyn, and Anastasia. Their mother is a Tunisian carpet seller, their father a mysterious Swede who left when they were young. Following the sisters from afar is Jonas, the son of a Swedish mother and a Tunisian father. Over three decades, his life intersects with the sisters', from a chance encounter in Tunis to the scene of a fighter jet crash in Stockholm. When Evelyn disappears on a trip to New York, Jonas finds her and a shocking revelation changes everything.

Awake in the Floating City
Susanna Kwan
S&S. PB. \$34.99
Available 4 June



Susanna Kwan's *Awake in the Floating City* is a quietly powerful novel that explores grief, resilience, and human connection in the face of environmental collapse. Set in a hauntingly reimagined San Francisco – now transformed by endless rainfall and rising tides – the book follows Bo, a 40-year-old former artist grappling with loss and dislocation in a city that is literally and emotionally sinking. Bo's life has been marked by profound change: friends and family have either perished or fled, the familiar cityscape has eroded into watery ruins, and the isolation of survival weighs heavily. As she prepares to evacuate aboard a ship bound for safer lands, a mysterious note appears under her door: *I need help. Three days per week, afternoons. Can pay in cash.* It's a quiet plea that halts Bo's escape, leading her to her neighbour Mia, a 130-year-old woman who has been left behind by her own family.

What unfolds is a beautifully written and emotionally layered portrait of caregiving and unexpected companionship. Bo and Mia's bond begins as one of necessity, but deepens into something far richer. Kwan treats their relationship with tenderness and complexity, capturing how two women – generations apart – come to rely on each other not just for survival, but for a sense of purpose and continuity. Kwan deftly explores the emotional weight of caregiving, the endurance it requires, and the quiet dignity it can offer. The novel weaves in themes of cultural heritage, as Mia's stories offer glimpses into histories often forgotten in the urgency of crisis.

At its heart, this is a novel about the power of human connection even in the bleakest of circumstances, which makes *Awake in the Floating City* a tender and timely story that lingers long after the last page. Nicole Vasilev is from Readings Emporium

Aftertaste
Daria Lavelle
Bloomsbury. PB. \$32.99
Available 3 June



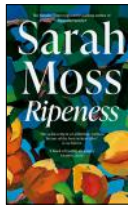
Anthony Bourdain meets Marcel Proust – via *The Kamogawa Food Detectives* – in this high-energy, often anarchic debut from Ukrainian-American Dana Lavelle.

In the heart of Brighton Beach's Russian enclave, 10-year-old Kostya, mourning the recent death of his father, starts experiencing mysterious hallucinations – not visions, or sounds, but tastes. Aftertastes. Naturally, everyone – including Kostya – assumes he's going crazy. But he's not. On the contrary, it turns out that this remarkable ability is being visited on him by the spirits of the dead. What's more, in the right circumstances, recreating the foods he's tasting brings those spirits into the corporeal world. And if that wasn't enough – if Kostya's life wasn't already sufficiently complicated – about a third of the way through this story, there's a neat twist that introduces a truly epic love story, too.

There's a lot going on here, but Lavelle attacks it all with humour and passion and is at her best when she's writing about food. She not only has an impressive ability to vividly evoke flavours – not easy to do – she also brings terrific imagination to the ways in which flavours might mirror or embody emotion. You can tell she's put an exceptional palate to good use (she mentions checking restaurants off her bucket list as a favourite pastime). If this novel-writing business doesn't work out for her, she's a shoo-in as a restaurant critic. As Proust (and Bourdain) knew, food is also a way to address larger metaphysical questions, and that's a big part of what Lavelle is doing here. If you could have one last moment with a dead loved one, would you? What price would you pay? What does "closure" even mean? And if Lavelle occasionally veers into (ahem) cheesy or (cough) overripe territory, her enormous brio sweeps us along regardless. It's a rich mix, and often a delicious one.

Melinda Houston is from Readings Carlton

Ripeness
Sarah Moss
Picador. PB. \$34.99
Available now

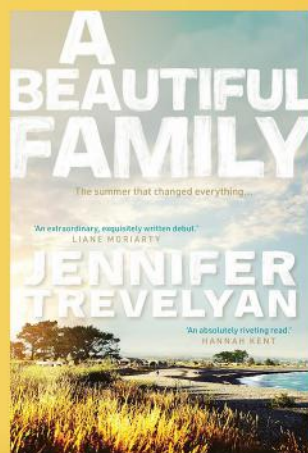


Just out of school in the 1960s, Edith is travelling to rural Italy with strict instructions from her mother: she must see her sister, ballet dancer Lydia, through the final weeks of her pregnancy, help at the birth and then make a phone call which will seal this baby's fate, and his mother's. Decades later, divorced and newly energised, Edith is living a contented life in Ireland. When her best friend Maebh receives a call from an American man claiming to be her brother, she asks Edith for help.

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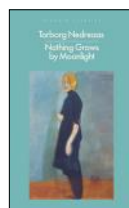
What if you could have one last
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someone you've lost?



A food story to binge. A ghost story to devour.
A love story to savour.

READ IT NOW

Nothing Grows by Moonlight
Torborg Nedreaas & Bibbi Lee (trans.)
Penguin. PB. \$26.99
Available 10 June



First published in 1947, this unforgettable Norwegian classic tells the haunting tale of one woman's soul-shattering love affair. When an obsessive passion for her high school teacher consumes a small-town

17-year-old, her life spirals out of control, giving way to pregnancy, poverty and alienation. Here, darkness and light converge, and unrequited love blooms against the shadows of societal injustices, as she fights for autonomy: over her life, her mind and her body.

Sleeping Children
Anthony Passeron & Frank Wynne (trans.)
Picador. PB. \$29.99
Available 10 June



Anyone who has spent time with three-year-olds knows of their ability to run around like caffeinated bunnies, stop suddenly and fall asleep almost where they are standing. This gorgeous image of innocence also

describes the initial impression that the inhabitants of a small village near Nice in rural France have of the bodies lying under trees and in parks. It soon becomes clear that they are witnessing the bodies of their teenagers overdosed or passed out from the flood of heroin that is ravaging Europe and their own isolated hamlet.

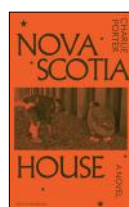
Désiré is the golden child of the village butcher and is succumbing to heroin addiction, while his bourgeois family ignores and denies his obvious sickness. Eventually, their hand is forced by his savagely declining health and they must help him with rehabilitation.

At the same time in 1981, Willy Rozenbaum, a French doctor, is trying to find out why a cluster of young men are presenting with mysterious maladies. Diseases such as cystic pneumonia and Kaposi's sarcoma are almost unknown. The only link is that these new patients are male and homosexual. This frightening disease is dismissed by the authorities as a 'gay disease'. Heroin addicts, haemophiliacs and Haitians were the other main groups affected. Once the fifth H (heterosexuals) began to die, the sleeping children – world governments – finally acted.

The author seamlessly weaves the twin narratives of the lyrical and the journalistic, as the global race to find a cure for AIDS meets the intimate struggle for the life of a single child. Whether you lived through that plague or the most recent one, this novel provides a terrifying reminder of how poorly prepared we are, and how slowly we react to an existential threat.

Pierre Sutcliffe is from Readings St Kilda

Nova Scotia House: A Novel
Charlie Porter
Particular. HB. \$42.99
Available 24 June

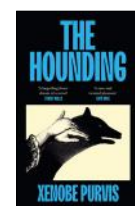


Johnny Grant faces stark life decisions. Seeking answers, he looks back to his relationship with Jerry Field. Nearly 30 years ago, Johnny was 19, Jerry was 45. They fell in love and made a life on their own

terms in Jerry's flat. Johnny is still there today – but Jerry is gone, and so is the world they knew. As Johnny remembers stories of Jerry's youth, he realises what he must do next. *Nova Scotia House* takes us to the heart of a relationship, a community and an era.

The Hounding
Xenobe Purvis

Hutchinson Heinemann. PB. \$34.99
Available 24 June



In 18th century Oxfordshire, many stories are told about the five Mansfield sisters. They have taken the death of their grandmother hard. The villagers of Little

Nettlebed all agree that the girls are odd. One long summer, a heatwave descends. Bloating sea creatures wash up along the parched riverbed, and as the stifling heat grips the village, so does a strange rumour: the Mansfield sisters have been seen transforming into a pack of dogs. With the witch trials only a recent memory, hysteria sets in.

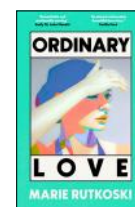
Liquid
Mariam Rahmani
Doubleday. PB. \$34.99
Available now



Liquid's protagonist, a young Muslim scholar living in LA, always believed herself to be the smartest person in the room. But a couple of years on from earning a fancy PhD, she's still broke, single

and stuck in a job going nowhere. Deciding instead to marry rich, her summer becomes a whirlwind of dating. Yet when some unexpected and tragic news takes her – and her project – to Tehran, she is forced to ask and answer overdue questions about family, connection and, terrifyingly, her own purpose in life and in love.

Ordinary Love
Marie Rutkoski
Virago. PB. \$34.99
Available 10 June



Emily has a life many would envy: a Manhattan townhouse, two sweet children and an adoring husband, Jack. But Jack isn't what he appears, and Emily's marriage is secretly troubled. During their rocky separation, Emily encounters Gen Hall. As a teenager she was Emily's best friend, first love, and first heartbreak. Separated by over a decade of mistakes and miscommunications, can they find their way back to each other? A sweeping queer love story about the possibility of second chances.

A Room Above a Shop
Anthony Shapland
Granta. HB. \$29.99
Available 10 June



M has inherited his family's ironmongery business and B is younger by 11 years and can see no future in the place where he has grown up, but when M offers him a job and lodgings, he accepts. As the two men work side by side in the shop,

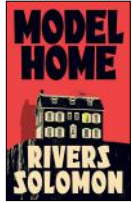
they also begin a life together, one they never thought possible, in their shared room above. Unfolding in South Wales against the backdrop of Section 28, the age of consent debate and the HIV and AIDS crisis, this powerful debut is a tender and resonant love story.

Model Home

Rivers Solomon

Merky. HB. \$34.99

Available 3 June



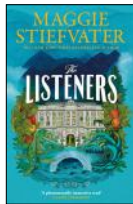
Two bodies lie in the garden of a sprawling property in Oak Creek Estate, a wealthy gated community in Dallas, Texas. The bodies belong to the parents of Ezri, Eve and Emmanuel, who grew up as the only Black family in the area and have long since abandoned the childhood home. In the wake of their parents' death, Ezri and their siblings are forced to confront the reasons they left, the nightmares that have held them captive and the possibility that realities exist beyond those that have forged them.

The Listeners

Maggie Stiefvater

Headline Review. PB. \$32.99

Available 10 June



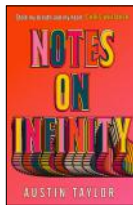
The Avallon Hotel offers unrivalled luxury in the Appalachian Mountains, its curative sweetwater washing away the troubles of high society. General manager June Hudson has known its power since she first stepped through the doors. But in 1942, the real world intrudes. War comes to the Avallon and under the State Department's watchful eye, the hotel welcomes three hundred enemy diplomats and Nazi sympathisers. As dark alliances and desires crack the Avallon's polished veneer, not every guest is who they seem.

Notes on Infinity

Austin Taylor

Michael Joseph. PB. \$34.99

Available 10 June



When Zoe and Jack meet in a chemistry classroom in Harvard, they couldn't be more different: she's the daughter of a renowned MIT professor, he's escaping an upbringing steeped in poverty. Neither knows it yet, but in two years' time, they will have dropped out of college and become business partners in a billion-dollar company that promises longer life. But as they become wrapped up in a maelstrom of insatiable ambition, greed and ultimately deceit, their love for each other will be tested to its very limit.

A Beautiful Family

Jennifer Trevelyan

A&U. PB. \$32.99

Available 3 June



R Written from the perspective of a 10-year-old New Zealand girl in the early 1980s, this is the story of one family holiday where the seams of their ordinary lives are slowly and relentlessly unravelled around them. Our young

narrator, whose name you only learn right near the heart-pounding finale, and her family travel from Wellington to a sleepy coastal town for the summer holidays. Usually, her mother wants to escape to an isolated location, but this year she wants to be where there are people.

The narrator's older sister, Vanessa, is bored and when she discovers a friend from school in the holiday town, she begins experimenting with shoplifting, drinking and boys. The creepy older man from next door spends an inordinate amount of time on his deck watching their backyard, and her mum is secretly writing and wandering off on walks all the time. The narrator and her new friend Kahu decide to investigate the disappearance of a girl who went missing a few years earlier, presumed drowned. This is a time before mobile phones, when people can disappear for hours, and the narrator's most cherished possession is her cherry-red Walkman, which plays her only tape on repeat – *True Colours* by Split Enz. Some characters also display racist attitudes towards diverse characters within the narrative, which appear jarring from our current perspective.

Beautifully, languorously written, this is a novel to savour like a long summer's day at the beach. As the author slowly heightens the levels of menace, the reader fills in the gaps left by our innocent narrator to discover that not only is this family deeply unhappy, but it is also at significant risk. This debut novel by New Zealand author Jennifer Trevelyan will captivate literary fiction readers, while also providing plenty of enjoyment for lovers of thriller and mystery writing.

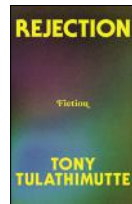
Angela Crocombe is a senior book buyer

Rejection

Tony Tulathimutte

Fourth Estate. HB. \$36.99

Available 4 June



Sharply observant and outrageously funny, *Rejection* is an original novel-in-stories which follows a cast of intricately linked characters as they plunge into the thorniest problems of modern life: relationships, sex, identity and the internet. As these characters pop up in each other's dating apps and social media feeds, or meet in dimly lit bars and bedrooms, they reveal the ways that our delusions can warp our desire for connection and throw our lives and relationships into chaos.

Make Me Famous

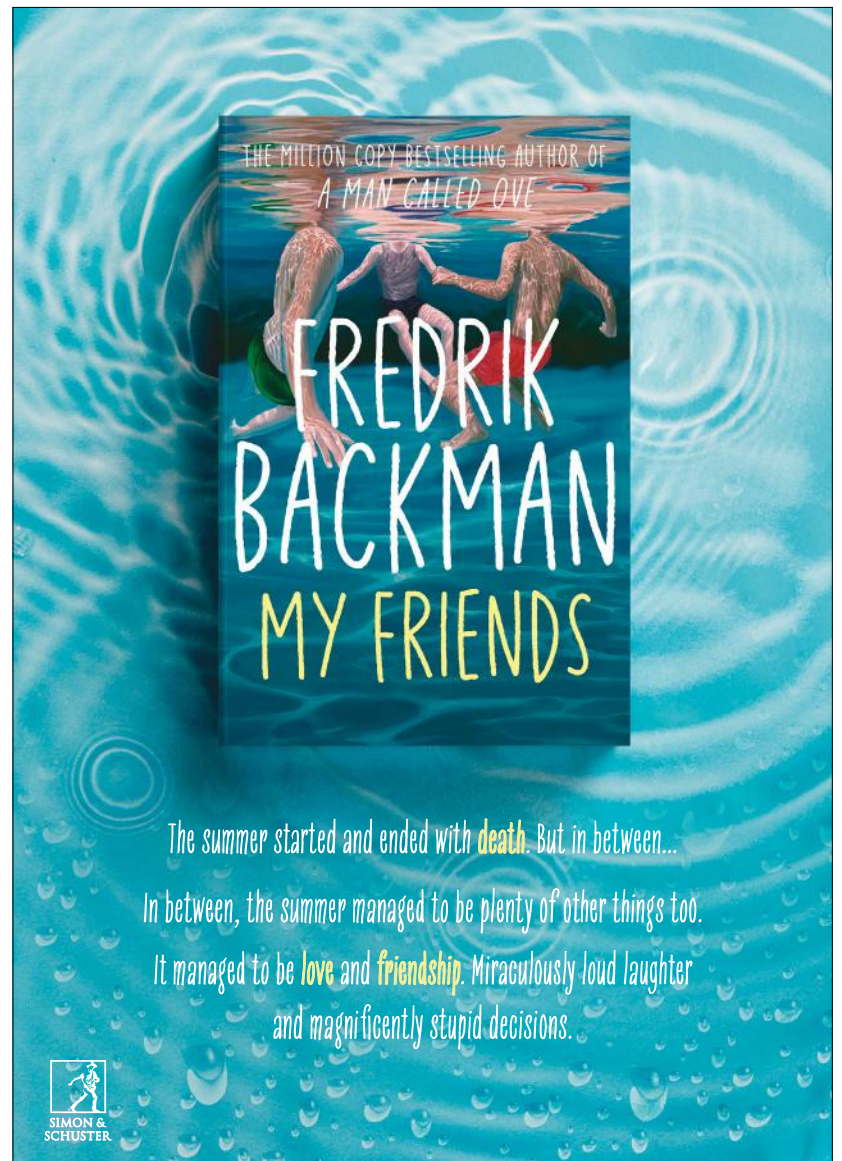
Maud Ventura & Gretchen Schmid (trans.)

HarperVia. PB. \$34.99

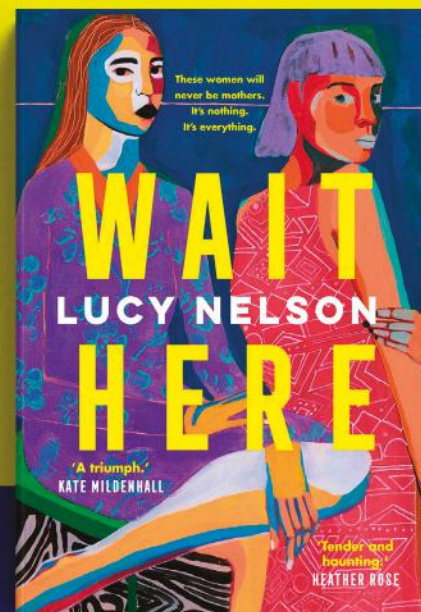
Available 4 June



Cléo has had only one obsession: becoming a famous singer. Throughout the years she overcomes every obstacle and becomes a global superstar with millions of dollars, countless awards, and several Los Angeles villas to her name. Now aged 33, Cléo is taking her first real vacation in years, on a remote island. With her life finally on pause and no paparazzi she can work on her fourth album in peace. Except that with so much time to think, she can't help but ruminate on her past.




The summer started and ended with *death*. But in between...
In between, the summer managed to be plenty of other things too.
It managed to be *love* and *friendship*. Miraculously loud laughter
and magnificently stupid decisions.



'I loved everything about this funny, touching, big-hearted, moving collection ... Highly recommend.'

LUCY TRELOAR



CHENG LEI
A MEMOIR OF FREEDOM

Harrowing, fierce and often darkly humorous, Cheng Lei's memoir is about the power of the human spirit and bravery in the face of cruelty.

JUNE in the GARDEN
Eleanor Wilde

An uplifting, inspiring book about the wisdom of older women – and what we can learn from them to rewrite the story of the second half of our lives.


Melaleuca
Angie Faye Martin

The crime debut of 2025. A country town, a brutal murder, a reckoning to come... The injustices of the past and dangers of the present envelop Aboriginal policewoman Renee Taylor.

Learning Country
Ryhia Dank

From Gudanji/Wakaja artist Ryhia Dank comes *Learning Country*, a vibrant and contemporary picture book that celebrates the traditional names of well-known Australian places.

OUT NOW



June in the Garden

Eleanor Wilde

Text. PB. \$34.99

Available 17 June



June can name every flower species. She finds it much harder to cultivate an understanding of people. After her mother's unexpected death, June sets out to find her father, whom she knows only from an old photograph. When she arrives at his door, he panics and turns her away. With nowhere to go, she secretly moves into his yellow garden shed. But when her father's 12-year-old son discovers her, June must decide whether to stay or run. A joyful and humorous debut novel celebrating difference.

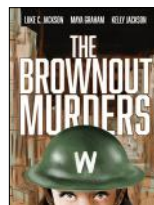
Graphic Narrative

The Brownout Murders

Luke C. Jackson, Kelly Jackson & Maya Graham (illus.)

Scribe. PB. \$35

Available 3 June



This suburban noir graphic novel takes us to the uneasy streets of 1942 Melbourne to remind us of a real-life wartime nightmare. Beatrice and her two sisters (one a communist, one a good-time girl) live with their mum, who's been struggling to keep control over the household, which has been unruly since her husband died. Beatrice is the responsible sister and becomes an air-raid warden, with all the power invested in her uniform and helmet and rattle, trying to make Melburnians adhere to the brownout regulations, keeping lights low in the evenings. But the tension already shaking their household is cranked up by fears about the war, then cranked up again by the arrival of shiploads of American soldiers: 'over-sexed, over-paid and over here', as the saying of the time went. Many were housed at Camp Pell, in Royal Park near the Melbourne Zoo. One of them, 24-year-old Eddie Leonski, sexually assaulted and murdered three women, for which he was hanged at Pentridge prison.

Writers Kelly and Luke Jackson deliver a deliberately restricted point of view on this historical horror. The terrors are a backdrop to Beatrice's *Keep Calm and Carry On* routine: coping with rationing; assuaging her mother's worries; visiting the aunts; and Sunday lunch with a dull, ham-fisted, tin-eared suitor. Crashing through the walls of her suburban life, however, are incidents of surreal power triggered by the murders: a desperate informant on a phone line of which Beatrice is the operator; a mannequin dressed in second victim Pauline Thompson's actual clothes (complete with a photograph of her face tied around the head); and a terrified night search through rainswept Camp Pell.

Visual artist Maya Graham presents stark, black-and-white images of a brownout Melbourne, all offices, suits, dresses and family spats, in the shadows of which a young, charming, laughing

serial killer stalked our ill-lit streets in his well-fitting uniform.

Bernard Caleo is from Readings Carlton

Fantasy

Bury Our Bones in the Midnight Soil

V.E. Schwab

Tor. PB. \$34.99

Available 10 June



I'm a long-time V.E. Schwab fan. From *A Darker Shade of Magic* to *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, *Vicious*, and even her older books such as *This Savage Song* and *The Archived*, V.E. Schwab has consistently left an impactful mark on me through her stories. She has a way of weaving dark and intricate plots with characters who feel like they could jump out of the page at any minute. When I saw she was writing a new book, I just knew that I was in for something special.

Bury Our Bones in the Midnight Soil is a raw and bloody story that follows three hungry women over multiple timelines whose lives end up interconnected. It's a story about vampires, but it's also a story about love, grief, revenge and anger. With enthralling and captivating characters, and a plot that has a climactic ending after a slow build, this is one of V.E. Schwab's best works.

I truly believe that her writing is the best it's ever been with this one. You can tell she really threw her soul into the book. The story was atmospheric and at times messy (in the best vampire way), and it felt like I was right there alongside her characters. After I finished this book, I stared at a wall for 10 minutes, utterly amazed by what I had experienced and read.

If you love slow-paced plots, with deep character buildup and growth, then this is definitely a story you should check out. I will be thinking about this one for a long time to come and I'm so intrigued to see what V.E. Schwab does next. Wow, wow, wow.

Yasmin Baker is the manager of Readings Doncaster

Poetry

Joss: A History

Grace Yee

Giramondo. PB. \$27

Available now



In Bendigo, the remains of more than a thousand 'chinamen' lie interred, many in unmarked graves. Most were sojourners from the Canton region in south China who found themselves unable to return. *Joss* is inspired by the experiences of these early settlers, and their compatriots and descendants. The poems pay tribute to the author's ancestors, illuminating how they survived – and thrived – amid longstanding colonialist stories that have exoticised and diminished Chinese communities in white settler nations around the Pacific Rim since the gold rushes of the 19th century. **R**



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Crime

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Crime



Melaleuca
Angie Faye Martin
HQ Fiction. PB. \$34.99
Available now

R Set in the fictional small country town of Goorungah, Queensland, police officer Renee Taylor has only returned to her hometown to look after her mother before leaving for her new home in Brisbane. But when the body of an Indigenous woman is found brutally murdered by the creek, Renee takes on the task of leading the investigation into the mystery woman’s death. In her search, she finds a web of secrecy that the sleepy town has hidden for decades, including the bizarre connection between the victim and two Aboriginal women who went missing more than 30 years ago.

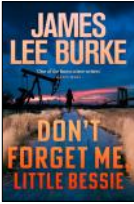
Crime fiction, I believe – as someone who reads a lot of it regularly – can ironically be an underrated genre. It’s extremely popular for its cosy whodunits or its dark and twisted thrillers full of gory details. However, crime fiction is often the most overlooked genre when it comes to bringing important real-world issues to attention, conveying a crucial message that people don’t expect to see beyond a juicy murder. Angie Faye Martin’s debut explores systemic racism, violence against First Nations women, and the vast difference in rates of domestic violence, abduction, and homicide between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and non-Indigenous women.

Renee is a complex protagonist who struggles at times with her identity as an Indigenous woman and as a police officer. Her investigations reveal the lack of news coverage

or general knowledge about the two missing Aboriginal girls, which we can certainly relate to today. In her author’s note, Martin writes that although the location and characters are entirely fictional, the novel nevertheless ‘provides a window into the lived reality of many Aboriginal people.’ *Melaleuca* is a masterful debut that calls for justice and change within Australian politics, the judicial system and cultural mindset.

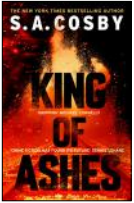
Aurelia Orr is from Readings Kids

Don’t Forget Me, Little Bessie
(Holland Family, Book 5)
James Lee Burke
Orion. PB. \$34.99
Available 10 June



At the beginning of the 20th century, as America faces new and powerful forces of violence, Bessie Holland yearns for love. Her suffragette English teacher inspires her to fight the evil permeating her world, but when she accidentally kills an unarmed man to defend her father, she must flee Texas to New York. There, her spirit and fortitude are admired by other children. Her older brother introduces her to boys who will grow into gangsters, and she is cast into a gangland that yearns for justice and mercy.

King of Ashes
S.A. Cosby
Headline. PB. \$34.99
Available 10 June



R Sometimes when reading a crime novel, all the initial plot setting, character analysis, exposition, etc. can feel a bit laboured, and you ask yourself if you want to continue. Then you hit the sweet spot and something clicks and the next thing you know you’re on page 150. The sweet spot in *King of Ashes* is about page 5.

Roman Carruthers is the oldest son of a family that runs a crematorium in Jefferson’s Run, Virginia. He is summoned home from his high-flying life in Los Angeles to help his siblings look after their father, who has been run off the

road in a suspicious accident. Once home, Roman discovers that his baby brother Dante is in debt to local gangsters. He meets with them to pay off the debt and offer his financial services, but quickly becomes aware that he is way out of his depth, as his capacity to organise tax structures is no match for their brutality and violence.

Neveah has been helping their father run the crematorium, but is overwhelmed by the task now that she must manage alone while their father is in a coma. Dante is a mess and a hindrance to any solution, and Roman discovers the beautiful young woman he is interested in is the sister of the gangsters that he is trying to extricate his family from.

S.A. Cosby is one of the leading young crime writers in the USA and has worked as a mortician’s assistant, so all the background details in this story feel authentic. But the main thing that sets this book apart from less ambitious novels is the Old Testament feeling to the prose. Violent and poetic, this is a standout book about the lengths to which a person may go to protect their loved ones.

Pierre Sutcliffe is from Readings St Kilda

Victorian Psycho
Virginia Feito
Fourth Estate. PB. \$29.99
Available 4 June



Winifred Notty arrives at Ensor House prepared to play the perfect Victorian governess. She’ll dutifully tutor her charges, Drusilla and Andrew, tell them bedtime stories, and only joke about eating children. But the longer Winifred spends within the

estate’s dreary confines and the more she learns of the perversions and pathetic preoccupations of the Pounds family, the more trouble she has sticking to her plan. Virginia Feito returns with her signature sardonic wit and penchant for the gorgeously macabre.

Never Flinch
Stephen King
H&S. PB. \$34.99
Available now



From master storyteller Stephen King comes a thrilling new novel with intertwining storylines – one about a killer on a diabolical revenge mission to murder 14 citizens in ‘an act of atonement for the needless death of an innocent man’, and another about a vigilante targeting controversial and outspoken women’s rights activist Kate McKay. Featuring King’s beloved Holly Gibney and a dynamic cast of new characters these twinned narratives converge in a chilling and spectacular conclusion.

Murder at Mount Fuji
Shizuko Natsuki & Robert B. Rohmer (trans.)
Hutchinson Heinemann. PB. \$34.99
Available now



American student Jane Prescott jumps at the chance to see in the new year with her classmate Chiyo Wada, heiress to one of Japan’s wealthiest families, at a luxurious mansion at the foot of

Mount Fuji. With the Wada family festivities in full swing Chiyo suddenly bursts into the room, covered in blood and holding a knife, screaming she has stabbed her grandfather to death. Stunned, the family closes rank to protect one of its own. Could Jane’s sweet, timid friend really be capable of such violence?

With a Vengeance
Riley Sager
H&S. PB. \$32.99
Available 10 June



R Riley Sager returns with his highly anticipated new murder mystery, *With a Vengeance*, simmering with secrecy, betrayal and retribution. Anna Matheson wants

revenge on the people who killed her family. Her father, head of the Union Atlantic Railroad, was framed for murder. Her brother was tragically killed and her mother committed suicide shortly afterwards. Six people are to blame for ruining her life – Judd Dodge, who designed her father’s trains; Herb Pulaski, who built the engines from Judd’s designs; Sal Lawrence, Anna’s father’s secretary; Edith Gerhardt, Anna’s German nurse; Kenneth Wentworth, the new owner of the Union Atlantic following Anna’s father’s death; and Lt. Col. Jack Lapsford, a military man with the bloodiest hands of them all.

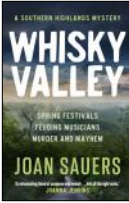
The plan? Invite all six of the people who were once so closely entwined with and trusted by Anna’s family on her father’s train, the *Philadelphia Phoenix*, running express from Philadelphia to Chicago, and get their confessions, ready for the waiting FBI agents to arrest them

at the end of the journey. But someone wants the truth to stay dead and body after body is found murdered on the train. Soon Anna’s quest for justice becomes a story of survival.

Different from Sager’s past eerie and twisting thrillers, *With a Vengeance* is a classic whodunit that calls upon the spirit of Agatha Christie’s *Murder on the Orient Express* like a Ouija board. The sense of claustrophobia Sager builds is overwhelming, as the characters are trapped together on the train for 13 hours and drop like flies. Set in 1950s America, *With a Vengeance* is a stylish and riveting historical mystery that will appeal to readers who prefer an enticing story that still leaves them able to sleep comfortably at night.

Aurelia Orr is from Readings Kids

Whisky Valley
Joan Sauers
A&U. PB. \$32.99
Available 3 June



After nearly being murdered last year, Rose McHugh battles anxiety as she uses her investigative skills to find her son’s best friend, a famous violinist who is missing along with his priceless violin. As

floodwaters rise, Rose uncovers secrets and lies among the missing man’s fellow musicians, as well as their patron and her enigmatic psychologist husband. But when a body is found, can Rose shield her son from suspicion? Historian-turned-detective Rose McHugh returns to solve her next Southern Highlands mystery.

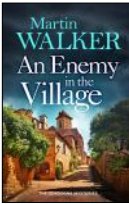
The Ones We Love
Anna Snoekstra
Ultimo. PB. \$34.99
Available 3 June



Since the weekend of the party – the one 22-year-old Liv can’t remember – she’s been locked out of her bedroom by a padlock. Her parents are behaving oddly, and her best friend won’t respond to her texts.

The guilt is getting to her father, and her mother will do whatever she has to do to take care of her kids. Youngest son Casper was away that weekend, but he knows something isn’t right so decides to find out what no one will tell him. Every family has its secrets, but what do the Jansen family have to hide?

An Enemy in the Village
(The Dordogne Mysteries, Book 18)
Martin Walker
Quercus. PB. \$34.99
Available 10 June

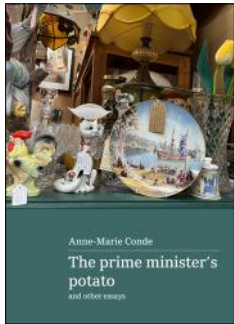


One autumn morning Bruno Courrèges comes across an abandoned car parked near a local beauty spot. Inside is a dead woman, Monique, an apparent suicide resulting from depression. But there are circumstances surrounding the death that raise Bruno’s suspicions. At the same time, Bruno makes the mistake of interfering in a local marital dispute involving the deputy mayor. Suddenly Bruno’s shiny reputation is looking a little tarnished as he battles to save his name and answer the questions surrounding Monique’s suicide. **R**

Nonfiction

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Australian Studies



The prime minister's potato and other essays
Anne-Marie Condé
Upswell. PB. \$29.99
Available 3 June

R In this tender collection of essays, historian and curator Anne-Marie Condé expands her sights towards the less-curated corners of history to explore how the smallest fragments of the past – postcards, commemorative plates, pavements, potatoes – can echo with the weight of history. With a gaze that is both respectful and exacting, Condé searches for meaning not in the grand arcs of battles and statesmen, but in the overlooked and the seemingly ordinary. What results is a quietly stunning meditation on memory, materiality, and the stories we secretly carry.

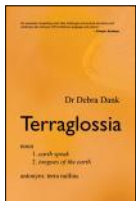
Condé writes with a skilled combination of intellectual precision and emotional attunement. Though clearly grounded in deep archival knowledge, her prose is animated by an insatiable curiosity and sometimes childlike awe of the unseen. Condé does more than interpret objects – she meets them, and through them, the people whom they once touched. The titular potato becomes not just a novelty but also a portal to deeper questions about what we choose to remember and how we might honour lives that official history often forgets. Condé coaxes human complexity from the faintest traces and invites us to consider our immediate world more carefully, to find connection in allegedly idle things, and to approach the past not only with reverence but also with great affection. Hers is a voice that sees the mystical in the mundane, and the enduring presence of those who came before.

This is not just history. It is storytelling of the highest order: insightful, discerning, and quietly magical.

Clem Larkins is from Readings St Kilda

Australian Studies

Terraglossia
Dr Debra Dank
Echo. HB. \$22.99
Available 3 June



R Dr Debra Dank's *Terraglossia*, the follow-up to her acclaimed *We Come With This Place*, represents both an exciting development in the field of Indigenous semiotics and an accessible foray into the worlds of culture, language and meaning-making that her academic work emerges from. Faced with the impact of colonial violence and the systemic silencing of Indigenous voices, Dank turns her attention to language itself, arguing that Australian English as it currently exists is incapable of capturing the intricate knowledges and communication systems of the first Australians, whose living cultures predate English by thousands of years. If we want a fairer, kinder Australia, she suggests we might have to reshape the very language we speak.

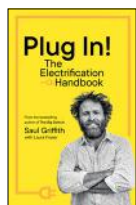
Far from just a snappy title, *terraklossia* is a concept central to this argument: Dank introduces it as a neologism meaning 'tongues of the earth' – standing in opposition to '*terra nullius*' – but a fuller understanding of its importance only reaches you with the book's final chapters, once you've grasped what it might mean for the earth to speak. Before you get there, Dank will lead you on a meandering reflection on communication and Country that encompasses her own lived experience both as a Gudanji/Wakaja and Kalkadoon woman and as a student and schoolteacher in various iterations of the Australian education system. For those unfamiliar with Indigenous concepts of relationality and responsibility, Dank is an admirable guide,

although this book can demand patience and concentration in thornier sections.

Despite it being a book about speaking, I think the key to approaching *Terraglossia* lies in listening: listening to those voices of the earth; listening to forms of communication that don't find expression in English; listening to the first custodians of this land about how to care for it; and, most of all, listening to Dr Debra Dank and her hopes for the future.

Joe Murray is from Readings Kids

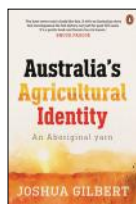
Plug In!: The Electrification Handbook
Saul Griffith with Laura Fraser
Black Inc. PB. \$27.99
Available 17 June



We all know that renewable energy is the future, but how can we ditch coal and gas in our own lives and homes? *Plug In!* is full of pro tips and essential information for your electrification

journey. Energy expert Saul Griffith, with help from some of his electrifying friends, covers the five big decisions: where you get your electricity, hot water, house heat, cooking and transport. But wait, there's more: the new abundance agenda, all hail the tradie army, what to know about EVs – plus great graphics!

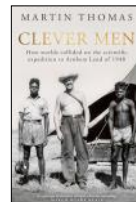
Australia's Agricultural Identity: An Aboriginal Yarn
Joshua Gilbert
Penguin. PB. \$36.99
Available now



Joshua Gilbert explores a new approach to Indigenous culture and farming, combining ancient knowledge and practices with new technology and insights. Starting from his own

Worimi Country, he listens to yarns about the farming that has always been and continues to take place on that Country. As he contemplates these stories and histories, Gilbert discusses Australia's farming heritage, our approaches to land and climate, and more, so that we can create a truly Australian agricultural yarn – one that we all build together.

Clever Men: How Worlds Collided on the Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land of 1948
Martin Thomas
A&U. PB. \$36.99
Available 3 June



Backed by National Geographic, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Australian government, Charles Mountford led an expedition of Australian and American scientists to explore traditional Aboriginal life in Arnhem Land in 1948. Martin Thomas tells how they set out with fanfare in 1948 and how quickly the expedition turned toxic. A poignant portrayal of colliding worlds, Thomas uncovers secrets, scandals and unlikely achievements, finding a story of global significance and profound long-term impacts.

Quarterly Essay 98: Hard New World – Our Post-American Future
Hugh White
Black Inc. PB. \$29.99
Available 2 June



R In an era of rising danger for all, and dramatic choices for Australia, Hugh White explores how the world is changing and Australia should respond. Under Donald Trump, America's retreat from global leadership has been swift and erratic. China, Russia and India are on the move. White explains the strategic trends driving the war in Ukraine, and why America has 'lost' Asia. He also discusses Albanese Labor's record and its post-election choices, and why complacency about the American alliance is no longer an option.

Biography

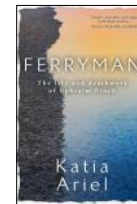
A Different Kind of Power: A Memoir
Jacinda Ardern
Penguin. HB. Was \$55
\$44.99

Available 3 June



Jacinda Ardern grew up the daughter of a police officer, a Mormon girl plagued by self-doubt. But as prime minister she commanded worldwide respect for her empathetic leadership, made political history, and changed our assumptions about what a global leader can be. From the former prime minister of New Zealand, then the world's youngest female head of government comes a deeply personal memoir chronicling her extraordinary rise and offering inspiration to a new generation of leaders.

Ferryman: The Life and Deathwork of Ephraim Finch
Katia Ariel
Wild Dingo. PB. \$34.99
Available 1 June



Blending biography, memoir, and cultural history *Ferryman* portrays the life of Ephraim Finch OAM – a deathworker, community builder, and living repository of Jewish cultural memory. Drawing on his journals and interviews, Katia Ariel explores themes of grief, memory, celebrating life, ritual, and faith. Finch's journey from working-class Sydney, conversion to Orthodox Judaism and later, becoming the director of Melbourne's Jewish Burial Society (Chevra Kadisha), offers profound reflections on belonging, service, and the power of stories.

Cult Bride: How I Was Brainwashed – and How I Broke Free
Liz Cameron
Pantera. PB. \$36.99
Available 3 June



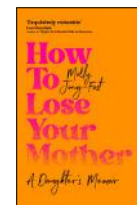
In her gap year after high school, Liz Cameron is approached at a shopping centre by a woman who asks her survey questions about her Christian faith. Liz is slowly brought into her small, friendly church community – but little does she know that her new 'friends' are members of the South Korean cult Providence. This powerful memoir tells one woman's extraordinary story of how she was broken down by a secretive, predatory cult – and how she broke free and remade her life.

Katrina Gorry: A Matilda's Story of Football, Motherhood and Breaking Down Barriers
Katrina Gorry with Robert Wainwright
A&U. PB. \$34.99
Available 3 June



Katrina Gorry was a key part of the Matildas' line-up that captured Australia's imagination during the 2023 women's Football World Cup. But the road to glory hasn't been an easy one. Just a few years before, she was struggling with an eating disorder and considering walking away from the game. All that changed with her solo journey through IVF treatments and the birth of daughter Harper in 2021. This is a story of resilience, of inspiration, of a girl setting goals and not only reaching them but exceeding them.

How to Lose Your Mother
Molly Jong-Fast
Picador. PB. \$36.99
Available 10 June



Molly Jong-Fast is the only child of Erica Jong, author of the feminist autobiographical novel *Fear of Flying*. A sensational exploration of female sexual desire, it catapulted Erica into the heady world of fame in the early 1970s. Molly grew up with her mother everywhere, on television, in the newspaper, but rarely at home. This is Molly's delicious and despairing memoir

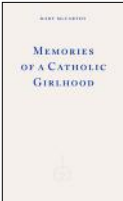
about an intense mother–daughter relationship, a sometimes-chaotic upbringing with a fame-hungry parent, and how that can really mess you up.

Cheng Lei: A Memoir of Freedom
Cheng Lei
HarperCollins. PB. \$35.99
Available 4 June



J Journalist Cheng Lei was at the pinnacle of her career when eight words texted to a friend led to devastating consequences. She spent more than three gruelling years in a Beijing prison after being wrongly accused of espionage. Harrowing, fierce and darkly humorous, Lei’s memoir is about the power of the human spirit; bravery in the face of cruelty and pettiness; the consolations of letters, music and books; and how unexpected friendships and the love of family can unlock the courage we all have within to prevail.

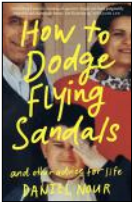
Memories of a Catholic Girlhood
Mary McCarthy & Colm Tóibín (intro.)
Fitzcarraldo. PB. \$32.99
Available 10 June



Blending memories and family myths, Mary McCarthy takes us back to the 1920s, when she was orphaned into a world of relations as colourful, potent and mysterious as the Catholic religion.

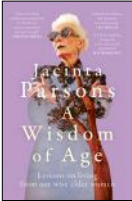
Including a Catholic grandmother who combined piousness with pugnacity, and an aunt who taped her lips at night to prevent unhealthy ‘mouth-breathing’, this is a major work by one of the leading American intellectuals of the 20th century – witty, scathing, piercingly insightful and stylishly written.

How to Dodge Flying Sandals and Other Advice for Life: An Unreliable Ethnic Memoir
Daniel Nour
Affirm Press. PB. \$29.99
Available now



Meet Daniel Nour: Egyptian and Australian; loud and painfully awkward; conservative and very confused (especially about other boys). He’s never quite pulled off normal, but ‘not-normal’ is where the best stories are. Now he’s made his peace with that and is ready to share his wisdom in this highly unreliable ethnic memoir. Told as a series of snapshots from Daniel’s life, this is a sharply funny tale of culture, family and trying, but not always managing, to come of age.

A Wisdom of Age
Jacinta Parsons
ABC Books. PB. \$35.99
Available 4 June



A *Wisdom of Age* was sparked by the many conversations Jacinta Parsons has had with older women from around the country about the experience of being a woman and ageing. Over the course of these encounters, it became clear to Parsons that the conversation about ageing for women is alive and

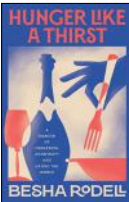
bubbling with a kind of excitement – that is, women are ready to do ageing differently. Uplifting and inspiring, this book captures the wisdom of older women and reclaims the fierce girls inside them.

Behind the Mask
Josh Piterman
Echo. PB. \$29.99
Available now



In *Behind the Mask*, Josh Piterman, Australian star of *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Les Misérables*, shares lessons, learnings and wisdom he discovered while trying to figure out who he really is. Not only does he offer a backstage insight into his musical theatre world, but Piterman provides useful tools to help navigate life, find deeper meaning and explore a growth mindset. Ultimately, this book is about having the strategies and confidence to step out from behind the masks we wear to understand and be ourselves.

Hunger Like a Thirst: A Memoir of Obsession, Anonymity and Eating the World
Besha Rodell
Hardie Grant. PB. \$35
Available 17 June



R This is a memoir and a manual of sorts. Besha Rodell is a restaurant critic, columnist and freelance reporter based in Melbourne. She is a James Beard Award winner and served as restaurant critic for *LA Weekly* for years. Her work now appears frequently in *The New York Times* and *The Age*, and if I knew her, we would be particularly good friends. We would meet at a swanky, dimly lit bar that serves delicious dishes with matched wines and talk about motherhood, misogyny and food – my top three favourite topics after literature – for hours. Given that I do not know her, reading her excellent and funny stories is the next best thing.

Like Rodell, I have always loved knowing the origins of restaurants. Unlike me, she started her love affair with all things fancy and fine at Melbourne’s own Stephanie’s when she was eight years old. It was there that she fell utterly in love with the luxury of perfect service and tastes. As her family situation was not typical, her story moves from Melbourne and through various American states and finally back to Australia. Along the way, she had a dream job, lost it, found another, and held on to her voice, which is clear and full of intelligent, iconic appraisals – most importantly, of herself. Rodell is one of the very few female (and until recently, anonymous) restaurant critics working in the world today.

This book is a history lesson on how, over the last 25 years, food became a source of entertainment. Readers of Anthony Bourdain, or Jay Rayner, will delight in it. Women juggling families with careers will relate. Anyone chasing a dream job will be inspired by Rodell’s story of commitment and gumption. And for those who dream of food, this writing will make you laugh and hungry for more.

Chris Gordon is the community engagement and programming manager
Read an extract from the book on page 4.

A DEEPLY PERSONAL MEMOIR

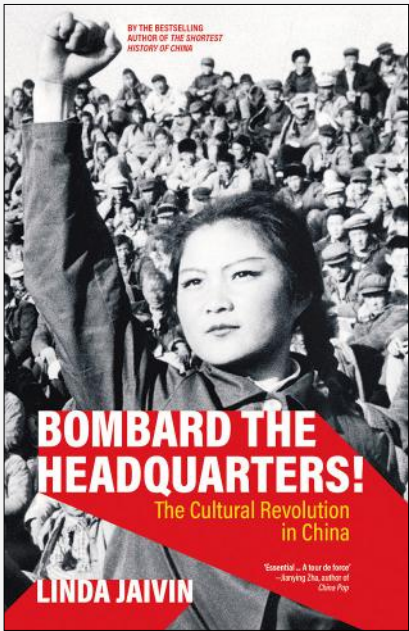
A DIFFERENT KIND OF POWER

WHAT IF KINDNESS CAME FIRST?

Why It's OK
The Ethics and Aesthetics of How We Live

Philosophy is just as important for understanding what we already believe as it is for criticising the status quo.

A collection of 20 short volumes offering new and creative arguments on ethical topics. These accessible, easy to understand books challenge us to think more deeply about the values that give our lives meaning.

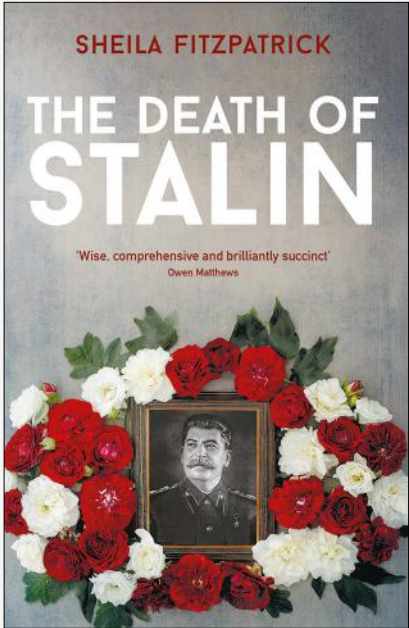


“Essential ... A tour de force”

—JIANYING ZHA

“A powerful account of a truly extraordinary period in recent Chinese history”

—PHILIP SHORT

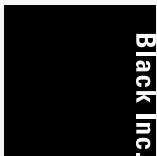


“Wise, comprehensive and brilliantly succinct”

—OWEN MATTHEWS

“Sheila Fitzpatrick knows more than almost anyone about the Soviet system”

—ORLANDO FIGES



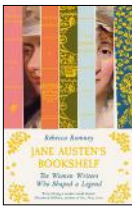
BLACKINCBOOKS.COM

Jane Austen’s Bookshelf: The Women Writers Who Shaped a Legend

Rebecca Romney

Ithaca. PB. \$36.99

Available now



Who were the women writers that inspired Jane Austen? Why have they all but disappeared from our bookshelves? When rare books dealer Rebecca Romney found a clothbound edition of

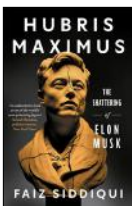
Evelina by Frances Burney, she was happy to discover that she’d stumbled across a novel by one of Jane Austen’s favourite authors. Inspired by this connection, and published to coincide with the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen’s birth, this page-turning literary adventure sheds a light on Austen’s inspirations and contemporaries.

Hubris Maximus: The Shattering of Elon Musk

Faiz Siddiqui

Blink. PB. \$36.99

Available 3 June



Once heralded as a modern-day Edison, Elon Musk has taken up a new role in public consciousness, with his growing desire to both transform global politics and engage in online

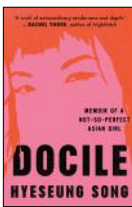
arguments. In six years, Musk turned Tesla into the world’s most valuable automaker and cast himself as a saviour of humanity. Now he is the most polarising and perpetually distracted CEO on the planet. *Hubris Maximus* provides a gripping, detailed portrait of the billionaire’s rapid ascent and his spectacular public implosion.

Docile: Memoir of a Not-So-Perfect Asian Girl

Hyeseung Song

HQ Nonfiction. PB. \$34.99

Available 4 June



Born to Korean immigrant parents Hyeseung Song grows up internalising the Western expectations of the ‘model’ Asian-American, constantly striving for approval and acceptance. Whilst taking a trip to South Korea to reconcile her identity she faces an even greater crisis of self. From Texas sugar cane fields, Ivy League halls to her homeland and back again *Docile* is one woman’s story of subverting the model minority myth, contending with mental illness, and finding her self-worth by looking within.

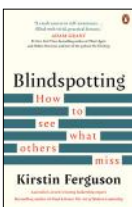
Business

Blindspotting: How to See What Others Miss

Kirstin Ferguson

Penguin. PB. \$36.99

Available 3 June



Intellectual humility, intellectual curiosity and cognitive flexibility can transform the way you lead, think and grow. In today’s fast-paced, polarised world, adaptability is the key to

success. In *Blindspotting*, leadership expert Dr Kirstin Ferguson reveals how the best leaders aren’t those with all the answers. By embracing the mindsets of honesty, curiosity and flexibility you can see what others overlook, empowering you to make smarter decisions and inspire those around you to do the same.

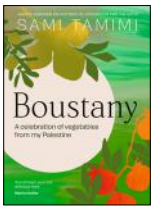
Cooking

Boustany: A Celebration of Vegetables from My Palestine

Sami Tamimi

Ebury. HB. \$59.99

Available 24 June



A homage to Palestinian food and culture, *Boustany*, is the first solo cookbook from Sami Tamimi, Ottolenghi co-founder and champion of Palestinian food and culture.

Boustany translates from Arabic as ‘my garden’, and the 100+ down-to-earth, relaxed and plentiful recipes are reflective of Tamimi’s signature style and approach to food. Bold, inspiring and ever-evolving, *Boustany* picks up where *Falastin* left off, with flavour-packed, colourful and simple vegetable – and grain-led dishes; this is how Tamimi grew up eating.

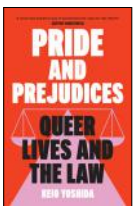
Cultural Studies

Pride and Prejudices: Queer Lives and the Law

Keio Yoshida

Scribe. PB. \$32.99

Available 17 June



The right to life and the right to live life free from discrimination are rights that are codified and legally protected, but there is no dedicated and binding treaty or convention in

international human rights law with respect to LGBTQ+ rights. Keio Yoshida analyses case law from around the world, addressing the legal problems that still persist and contribute to the violence and discrimination that the international LGBTQ+ population experiences, uncovering how far we’ve come, and how much further we must go.

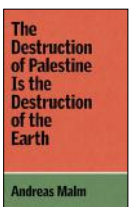
Environmental Studies

The Destruction of Palestine Is the Destruction of the Earth

Andreas Malm

Verso. PB. \$22.99

Available 3 June

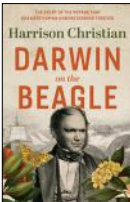


Israel’s pulverization of Gaza since October 2023 is not only a humanitarian crisis, but an environmental catastrophe. Far from the first event of its kind, the devastation has merely ushered in a

new phase in a long history of colonisation and extraction that reaches back to the 19th century. In this book, Andreas Malm argues that a true understanding of the present crisis requires a longue durée analysis of Palestine’s subjugation to fossil empire reaching back to the British empire’s first use of steam-power in war.

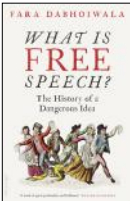
History

Darwin on the Beagle: The Story of The Voyage that Changed Human Understanding Forever
Harrison Christian
Ultimo. PB. \$36.99
Available 3 June



In 1831, Charles Darwin set out on an expedition to South America, brought along as a gentleman companion for Captain Robert FitzRoy. Initially conceived as a Christian mission, the voyage would change drastically with Darwin’s observations becoming the building blocks of his revolutionary theory of evolution. Christian’s narrative focuses on this seminal journey and the differences between Darwin and FitzRoy, which captures the tension of the Victorian period – an age torn between religious certainty and scientific doubt.

What Is Free Speech?: The History of a Dangerous Idea
Fara Dabhoiwala
Allen Lane. HB. \$69.99
Available 24 June



‘Free Speech!’ is a clarion call all over the world, yet what it means today is more contested than ever. Many cultures regard it as dangerous, even in the western world, where it is held up as a core value,

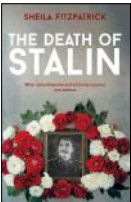
there is widespread discord and disagreement about what freedom of expression means. Through the lens of history, *What Is Free Speech?* shows us that freedom of speech is not an absolute from which societies and regimes have drifted or dissented at different times, but something more complicated and interesting.

The Einstein Vendetta: Hitler, Mussolini and a True Story of Murder
Thomas Harding
Michael Joseph. PB. \$36.99
Available now



Italy, August 1944. A unit of German soldiers arrives at a villa near Florence. Villa Il Focardo is home to Robert Einstein, cousin to Albert Einstein – a prominent enemy of the Nazi regime. Twelve hours after arriving, the soldiers have fled and a family is dead. In *The Einstein Vendetta*, Thomas Harding recounts the story of an until-now untold true crime, one that unspools to reveal Italy’s brutal wartime history – its fall to fascism, antisemitism and bitter partisanship – and a family’s search for justice.

The Death of Stalin
Sheila Fitzpatrick
Black Inc. PB. \$27.99
Available 3 June



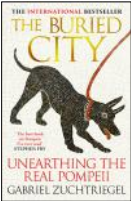
When Joseph Stalin died in 1953, he had been the unchallenged leader of the Soviet Union for over 20 years. He was surrounded by a cult that made him seem godlike; no successors were in sight. Sheila Fitzpatrick draws on her knowledge of Stalin’s circle and Soviet society to tell a tale that blends black comedy with forensic analysis, exploring the problems and opportunities created by the death of the dictator. The final chapter deals with Stalin’s eventful afterlife, including his recent resurrection in Putin’s Russia.

Bombard the Headquarters! The Cultural Revolution in China
Linda Jaivin
Black Inc. PB. \$26.99
Available 3 June



In 1966, with the words ‘Bombard the Headquarters!’ Mao Zedong unleashed the full, violent force of a movement he called the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. By the time he died ten years later, millions had perished, China’s cultural heritage was in ruins, its economic state was perilous, its government institutions were damaged, and its society was divided. This is not just Mao’s story. It’s the unforgettable stories of countless individuals, mass manias, sacred mangos and spectacular falls from grace.

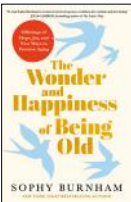
The Buried City: Unearthing the Real Pompeii
Gabriel Zuchtriegel & Jamie Bulloch (trans.)
Hodder. PB. \$34.99
Available now



Pompeii is a world frozen in time. There are unmade beds, dishes left drying, tools abandoned by workmen, bodies embracing with love and fear. And alongside the remnants of everyday life, there are captivating works of art. In this revelatory history, Gabriel Zuchtriegel shares the new secrets of Pompeii. Over the last few years, a vast stretch of the city has been excavated for the first time. Now, drawing on these astonishing discoveries, *The Buried City* reveals the untold human stories that are at last emerging.

Personal Development

The Wonder and Happiness of Being Old
Sophy Burnham
Pan Mac. PB. \$36.99
Available now



What began as a singular response to Sophy Burnham’s cousin asking about aging, soon blossomed into a full year of unmailed reflections, wonderment, and curiosities on a full life

truly lived. *The Wonder and Happiness of Being Old* is Burnham’s timeless introspection on age, love, passion, memories, regret and reconciliation, death, forgiveness, and underneath it all, the silent wisdom that derives from how differently we perceive our lives and struggles from the broader, higher perspective of years.

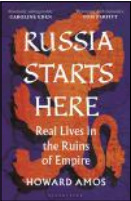
The Introvert’s Guide to Leaving the House
Jenny Valentish
Affirm Press. PB. \$34.99
Available now



At last: a practical and relatable book for introverts, stand-offishs, sociophobes and awkward. Journalist and reformed sociophobe Jenny Valentish will help you extend your social battery life, tackle fear of judgement, form more meaningful connections, create an online presence that feels comfortable, navigate the overlap between social anxiety and neurodiversity, and more. Do we Wary Marys need curing? Of course not. But sometimes we can do with a few aces up our sleeves to navigate social interactions.

Politics

Russia Starts Here: Real Lives in the Ruins of Empire
Howard Amos
Bloomsbury Continuum. PB. \$32.99
Available 3 June



On Russia’s European borderlands, people live their lives among the ruins of successive empires. Pskov, an old Slavic land, has weathered the tides of history. Once a thriving nexus of trade and cultural exchange, today it is one of the poorest and most rapidly depopulating places of this vast nation. Returning to an overlooked region on the edge of Russia, Howard Amos uncovers compelling stories that are shaped by violence, tragedy and loss on a quest to understand the country he once called home.

Daughters of the Bamboo Grove: From China to America, a True Story of Abduction, Adoption, and Separated Twins
Barbara Demick
Text. PB. \$36.99
Available 3 June



In 2000, a Chinese woman gave birth to twins in a bamboo grove, trying to avoid detection by the government because she already had two daughters. Two years later, an American couple travelled to Shaoyang to adopt a Chinese toddler they thought had been abandoned. What they didn’t know was that their daughter had been snatched from her family and her identical twin. This is the story the twin’s separation, their respective fates in China and the USA, and Barbara Demick’s role in reuniting them against huge odds.

Psychology

When Nothing Feels Real: A Journey into the Mystery Illness of Depersonalisation
Nathan Dunne
Murdoch. PB. \$34.99
Available 3 June



Journalist Nathan Dunne was living the life of his dreams in London until, one evening, he jumped into a lake for a swim. When he emerged, his identity was simply gone. He knew who he was supposed to be but had no connection to the person named Nathan. Everything was unfamiliar. All he felt was terror. *When Nothing Feels Real* is Dunne’s long search for an answer and cure to the mystery of his illness, depersonalisation, one of the least understood but increasingly diagnosed mental illnesses.

True Crime

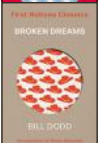
Murderland
Caroline Fraser
Fleet. PB. \$34.99
Available 10 June



Caroline Fraser grew up in the shadow of Ted Bundy, the most notorious serial murderer of women in American history. But in the 1970s and ’80s, Bundy was just one perpetrator amid an uncanny explosion of serial rape and murder across the region. As *Murderland* maps the lives and careers of Bundy and his peers in mayhem Fraser’s Northwestern death trip uncovers a deeper mystery and an overlapping pattern of environmental destruction involving lead, copper, and arsenic smelters which blighted millions of lives.

Four new First Nations Classics from UQP

UQP First Nations Classics
Various
UQP. PB. \$19.99 each
Fiction | Australian Studies | Biography
Available 3 June



UQP’s First Nations Classics series celebrates the richness and cultural importance of First Nations writing. It aims to bring new readers and renewed attention to some brilliant, timeless books that are as important, engaging and relevant today as they ever were upon first publication. This month, UQP release four more exceptional titles. They are: *Dancing Home* by Paul Collis, with an introduction by Samuel Wagan Watson; *Swallow the Air* by Tara June Winch, introduced by Yasmin Smith; *Aboriginal Women by Degrees* by Mary Ann Bin-Sallik, introduced by Amy Thunig-McGregor; and *Broken Dreams* by Bill Dodd, introduced by Gayle Kennedy. **R**

Bargains

Shakespeare: The Man Who Pays the Rent

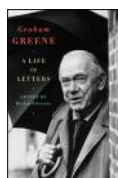
Judi Dench
PB. Was \$36.99 **Now \$16.99**



Taking a curtain call with a live snake in her wig and cavorting naked through the countryside painted green are just a couple of the things Dame Judi Dench has done in the name of Shakespeare. In a series of conversations with actor and director Brendan O'Hea, she guides us through Shakespeare's plays, revealing the secrets behind her rehearsal process and vignettes of her creative partnerships.

Graham Greene: A Life in Letters

Richard Greene (ed.)
HB. Was \$69.99 **Now \$16.99**



One of the undisputed masters of English prose in the 20th century, Graham Greene wrote tens of thousands of personal letters. This substantial volume presents an account of his life constructed out of his own words. In this annotated selection, an entirely new perspective is given on an incomparable life that combined literary achievement, political action, espionage, travel and romantic entanglement.

JFK: Volume One

Fredrik Logevall
PB. Was \$32.99 **Now \$12.99**



This first volume in a two-part biography spans the first 39 years of John F. Kennedy's life, revealing his early relationships, his formative and heroic experiences during the Second World War, and his deeply fascinating romance with Jackie Kennedy. Fredrik Logevall chronicles Kennedy's extraordinary life and times with authority and novelistic sensibility, putting the reader in every room where it happened.

A Memoir of My Former Self

Hilary Mantel
PB. Was \$34.99 **Now \$14.99**



As well as her celebrated career as a novelist, Hilary Mantel long contributed to newspapers and journals, unspooling stories from her own life and illuminating the world as she found it. This strand of her writing was an integral part of how she thought of herself. Compelling, often funny, luminous, and wide-ranging, *A Memoir of My Former Self* collects the finest of this writing over four decades.

From Here to the Great Unknown

Lisa Marie Presley & Riley Keough
HB. Was \$51.99 **Now \$16.99**



Born into an American myth, Lisa Marie Presley tells her story for the first time in this memoir completed by her daughter, Riley Keough. In 2022, Presley asked her daughter to help finish her long-gestating memoir. A month later Presley was dead, leaving

the tapes she had recorded for the book. Composed of both their voices, this book delivers the last words of the only child of a true legend.

Places of Mind: A Life of Edward Said

Timothy Brennan
HB. Was \$69.99 **Now \$19.99**



Places of Mind synthesises Edward Said's intellectual breadth and influence into an unprecedented, intimate, and compelling portrait of one of the great minds of the 20th century. This pioneer of postcolonial studies, a tireless champion for his native Palestine, and an erudite literary critic, emerges as a self-doubting, tender, eloquent advocate of literature's dramatic effects on politics and civic life.

7 Ways

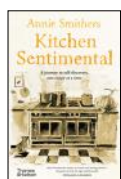
Jamie Oliver
HB. Was \$49.99 **Now \$13.99**



Rather than trying to change what we buy, Jamie Oliver wants to give everyone new inspiration for their favourite ingredients, the kind of things you can pick up in any supermarket. *7 Ways* shares seven achievable, tasty ways to cook 19 hero ingredients. With everything from fake-aways and tray-bakes to family and freezer favourites, you'll find bags of inspiration to help you mix things up in the kitchen.

Kitchen Sentimental

Annie Smithers
PB. Was \$34.99 **Now \$19.99**



In her latest memoir, Annie Smithers answers the question she is asked most often: why cook? Smithers takes us on a journey through every significant kitchen in her life, both domestic and professional, sharing her personal development, her surprisingly complex relationship with food, and the lessons she has learned along the way to find her culinary niche at du Fermier restaurant in country Victoria.

Sarah Tiong's Modern Asian

Sarah Tiong
PB. Was \$44.99 **Now \$16.99**



Step into the heart and soul of Sarah Tiong's kitchen with 60 recipes inspired by the Chinese-Malaysian-Australian homemade gourmet meals of her childhood.

Modern and inventive, with a focus on ease, approachability and using Asian pantry staples that won't break the bank, the book's recipes – and stories – will have you cooking up food that isn't just about flavour, but heart and emotion, too.

Fran Lebowitz Reader

Fran Lebowitz
PB. Was \$24.99 **Now \$10.99**

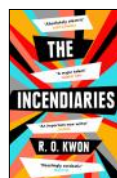


This is a brilliant collection of acerbic, wisecracking and hilarious essays from New York legend and satirist Fran Lebowitz. In this *Reader* she turns her caustic wit to the vicissitudes of life – from children to landlords. Her advice for would-be Absolute Political Dictators is

invaluable, and her attitude to work is the perfect antidote to our exhausting culture of self-betterment.

The Incendiaries

R.O. Kwon
PB. Was \$22.99 **Now \$10.99**



Phoebe is a glamorous girl who doesn't tell anyone she blames herself for her mother's recent death. Will is a misfit scholarship boy who transfers from Bible college. But a charismatic former student draws Phoebe into his cult. When the group bombs several buildings in the name of faith, killing five people, Phoebe disappears. Will devotes himself to finding her, tilting into obsession himself.

I Have Some Questions for You

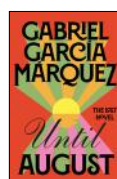
Rebecca Makkai
PB. Was \$32.99 **Now \$13.99**



Film professor and podcaster Bodie Kane is content to forget her past, including the 1995 murder of a classmate, Thalia Keith, and the conviction of the school's athletics coach, Omar Evans. But when the school invites her back to teach a two-week course, Bodie finds herself wondering if, in their rush to convict Omar, the school and the police overlooked other suspects. Is the real killer still out there?

Until August

Gabriel García Márquez
HB. Was \$35 **Now \$12.99**



Sitting alone, Ana Magdalena Bach surveys the men of the hotel bar. She is happily married with no reason to escape the life she has with her husband and children. And yet, every August, she travels here to the island where her mother is buried, and for one night takes a new lover. Each year, amid sultry days, Ana journeys further into the hinterland of her desire, and the fear that sits quietly at her heart.

The Fraud

Zadie Smith
PB. Was \$34.99 **Now \$12.99**



The Fraud transports the reader to a Victorian England transfixed by the real-life trial of the Tichborne Claimant, in which a cockney butcher lays claim to the Tichborne baronetcy, with his former slave Andrew Bogle as star witness. Watching the proceedings, and with her own story to tell, is Eliza Touchet, cousin, housekeeper and perhaps more, to failing novelist William Harrison Ainsworth.

At Home with Plants

Ian Drummond, Kara O'Reilly & Nick Pope (photog.)
HB. Was \$45 **Now \$16.99**

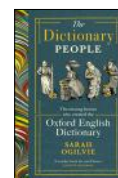


Houseplants are hot, and creative interior planting is becoming increasingly easy to achieve. This book shows how to transform your home with plants and tells you which plants will work best where and how to care for them. From strikingly geometric terrariums to pretty hanging

baskets, practical herb pots and colourful window displays, this book is packed full of exciting and gorgeous ideas.

The Dictionary People

Sarah Ogilvie
PB. Was \$36.99 **Now \$16.99**



The *Oxford English Dictionary* has long been associated with elite institutions and Victorian men. But the dictionary didn't just belong to the experts; it relied on contributions from members of the public. By 1928, its 414,825 entries had been crowdsourced from a surprising and diverse group of people. Lexicographer Sarah Ogilvie dives deep into untapped archives to tell a people's history of the *OED*.

How to French Country

Sara Silm
HB. Was \$59.99 **Now \$16.99**



From deep in the countryside of southwest France comes a comprehensive guide to surrounding yourself with French country style wherever you are. Capturing the beauty and quietude of the region, interior designer and journalist Sara Silm distils the unique colours, textures and flavours of this distinctive corner of the world.

Skellig

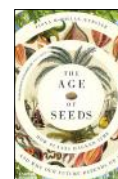
David Almond & Tom de Freston (illus.)
HB. Was \$26.99 **Now \$13.99**



When a move to a new house coincides with his baby sister's illness, Michael's world seems suddenly lonely and uncertain. One Sunday afternoon, he stumbles into the ramshackle garage of his new home and finds something magical. This 25th anniversary edition of David Almond's unforgettable, award-winning story about love, loss and hope includes captivating illustrations by Tom de Freston.

The Age of Seeds

Fiona McMillan-Webster
PB. Was \$34.99 **Now \$14.99**



Plants evolved seeds to hack time. Thanks to seeds, they can cast their genes forward into the future, enabling species to endure across seasons, years, and occasionally millennia, yet many crucial seeds don't live long at all. In *The Age of Seeds* Fiona McMillan-Webster tells the astonishing story of seed longevity, the crucial role seeds play in our everyday lives, and what that might mean for our future.

Art Is Life

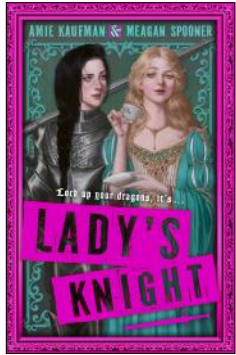
Jerry Saltz
HB. Was \$55 **Now \$16.99**



Jerry Saltz is one of the most-watched writers about art and artists, and a passionate champion of the importance of art in cultural life. Since the 1990s he has been an indispensable cultural voice. In *Art Is Life*, Saltz draws on two decades of work to offer a real-time survey of contemporary art as a barometer of our times. The result is an openhearted and irresistibly readable appraisal. **R**

Young Adult

BOOK OF THE MONTH Young Adult



Lady's Knight
Amie Kaufman & Meagan Spooner
A&U. PB. \$26.99
Available 3 June

R Amie Kaufman and Meagan Spooner – the dynamic duo behind YA series including *The Starbound Trilogy* and *The Unearthed Duology* – are back again with a new collaboration, *Lady's Knight*. This standalone tale departs from Kaufman and Spooner's traditional realm of sci-fi and instead ventures into the past, to a medieval land of knights, lords, ladies and blacksmiths. But this is first and foremost a rom-com adventure – forget any notion of historical accuracy and get ready for cheesecake on a stick, cheerleaders and a tavern serving themed cocktails.

... forget any notion of historical accuracy and get ready for cheesecake on a stick, cheerleaders and a tavern serving themed cocktails.

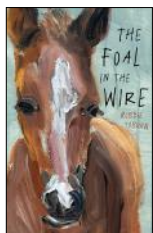
Isabelle is a noble lady with social status and an enormous dowry, but whose indifferent guardian has offered her as the prize for the winning knight in The Tournament of Dragonslayers. Gwen is the daughter of a village blacksmith, whose talents for forging and fighting are pointedly ignored by everyone around her. When the two cross paths, they realise that an unexpected partnership might be the key to solving both their problems – Gwen will

disguise herself as a knight, win the tournament, prove herself beyond a doubt and save Isabelle from being married off to an unknown brute! With Gwen's skill and Isabelle's determination, they can't possibly lose, right?

As someone who had an adolescent obsession with Tamora Pierce's *Song of the Lioness* quartet, any story that involves someone disguising themselves as a knight has me on the hook straight away; but Kaufman and Spooner elevate the already delightful premise with charming characters, endless wit, and a swoonworthy queer romance. While this is a fun-filled adventure, it also manages to maintain a lot of nuance in the relationships between characters, and the depiction of the prejudices and injustices that Isabelle and Gwen are trying to fight. I heartily recommend this to any fantasy or rom-com lover – you'll giggle, sigh, gasp and cheer! For ages 13+.

Bella Mackey is the digital content lead

The Foal in the Wire
Robbie Coburn
Lothian. PB. \$19.99
Available now



R This slim verse novel, with the most exquisite painting by Christa Moffitt of a foal on its cover, certainly packs a punch. It's the story of Sam and Julia, who have lived next to one another

on neighbouring farms for many years, both surviving in unhappy families. They have never really connected before, but when Julia finds a foal caught in barbed wire, she calls out to Sam, and thus begins their connection over caring for the foal and, soon enough, one another.

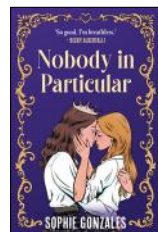
In sparse, unflinching poems, secrets are carefully revealed: the bullying Sam is experiencing at school; his parents' unhappy relationship; and Julia's drunk, abusive father, who takes out his frustrations on Julia now that her mother has left. As the foal slowly improves with their focused love and attention, Sam and Julia must confront their own bullies if they are to survive.

The author is a young Australian poet who writes about horses and the Australian landscape with intimate knowledge. He also describes terribly wounded people with the utmost empathy. *The Foal in the Wire* doesn't take long to read, but its characters will remain with you for a long time. This powerful story

will appeal to reluctant readers and those who like realistic stories aged 13+.

Angela Crocombe is a senior children's book buyer

Nobody in Particular
Sophie Gonzales
Hodder. PB. \$19.99
Available 10 June



After a royal scandal lost her the trust of both her country and her best friend, Princess Rose can't afford any distractions – even her beautiful new classmate, Danni. But resisting temptation is harder than it looks. As Rose and Danni fall for each other, they're forced to hide their romance. Because if the palace finds out, they'll separate Rose and Danni forever.

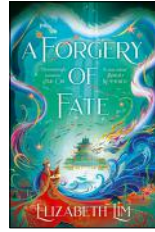
Legend of the White Snake
Sher Lee
First Ink. PB. \$22.99
Available 10 June



When Prince Xian was a boy, a rare white snake bit his mother, condemning her to a slow, painful death. The only cure is an antidote created from the snake itself. Xian is determined to capture one and cure his mother. Then he meets a

beautiful stable boy named Zhen, and they're immediately drawn to each other. But Zhen might just be the human embodiment of the white snake. Will the truth tear them apart?

A Forgery of Fate
Elizabeth Lim
Hodderscape. PB. \$24.99
Available 10 June



As a gifted art forger, Truyan Saigas can paint the future. When her father disappears, Tru must accept an offer from the mysterious dragon lord, Elang. In exchange for her family's safety, Tru must enter a marriage contract with Elang and join him in his desolate undersea palace. There Tru will embark on her most dangerous forgery yet, painting a future so treasonous, it could upend both the mortal and immortal realms.

Heir of Storms
Lauryn Hamilton Murray
Penguin. PB. \$19.99
Available 10 June



When Blaze was born, she summoned a devastating storm that killed thousands. She has spent her life being reviled and feared. Blaze and her twin brother, Flint, are selected to compete in the Choosing Rite, the trials that decide the future rulers of the empire. As her powers strengthen and her fellow competitors fall, the throne is suddenly within her grasp. But Blaze will have to find the courage to rewrite her own story.

Best of All Worlds
Kenneth Oppel
Hardie Grant. PB. \$19.99
Available 3 June



On a weekend away with his dad and his heavily pregnant stepmother, Xavier Oak wakes up to discover his family's cottage has seemingly been moved ... overnight. They've been cut off from the world they knew, Xavier has nearly given up on ever getting home when a second family arrive ... bringing a dangerous new threat. Are they trapped? Or are they saved? And can Xavier keep his family alive?

The Dark Within Us
Jess Popplewell
Chicken House. PB. \$22.99
Available 1 June



When homeless schoolgirl, Jenny, meets demon, Luc, they make a dangerous pact. Both have been scarred by the same childhood event – the day Jenny's soul was stolen by Luc's father. Now Luc has promised to return it, but can a demon be trusted? Jenny must find the courage to follow Luc into Hell and save him from the darkness that waits. An inventive, funny and quirky reimagining of a modern version of hell.

The Pull of the Moon
Pip Smith
UWAP. PB. \$26.99
Available now



R *The Pull of the Moon* is a powerful new book that doesn't shy away from tough discussions. This book centres on the 2010 Christmas Island boat disaster, when a boat carrying asylum seekers ran aground against the rocks surrounding the island. Pip Smith handles this topic expertly, not shying away from tragedy, but presenting the story in a way that is digestible for younger readers.

The story primarily follows Coralie, a 13-year-old girl living on Christmas Island when the disaster occurred. Woven through her story is the tale of two siblings, Ali and Zahra, who were on board the boat when it sank. *The Pull of the Moon* not only tackles issues surrounding asylum seekers, it also heavily centres on environmentalism. It's impossible to read this book and not feel for the characters. *The Pull of the Moon* is a great text to introduce young adults to these issues. Smith expertly balances cold, hard facts with deep emotional insight, weaving together a tapestry from which you cannot look away.

At its core, this is a book about coping with grief: the grief of an absent parent, the grief of losing your family and everything you've ever known, and the grief of a whole species dying. It is also a book about resilience and learning to live after tragedy. The lessons this book teaches about compassion, empathy and determination will resonate with kids and parents. Smith's writing style and method of storytelling will make this book enjoyable for kids aged 12+.

Alicia Guiney is from Readings Kids

Golden
Jade Timms
Text. PB. \$22.99
Available 3 June



When you're drawn to colours and pencils and paint, but you're not an artist. When something happened a year ago that you can't talk about. When it might have been all your fault. When the new guy in town, seems to want to hang out with you. When it comes time to let your friends back in. A warm-hearted optimistic story about friends and friendship and art and beauty.

Honeysuckle and Bone
Trisha Tobias
S&S. PB. \$22.99
Available now



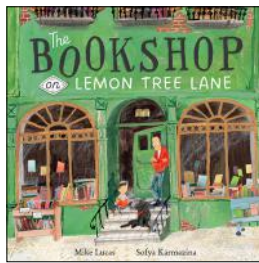
After a tragedy rips her life apart, Carina Marshall runs away to Jamaica, her mother's homeland, and lands a gig as an au pair for the powerful Hall family at Blackbead House. The job is easy, Carina's boss is welcoming and her new friends, especially handsome Aaron, help to ease her loneliness. But new beginnings don't come easy. Because Carina isn't who she says she is, and Blackbead House already knows ... **R**

Kids

PICTURE BOOK OF THE MONTH

Picture Book

The Bookshop on Lemon Tree Lane
Mike Lucas & Sofya Karmazina (illus.)
Little Hare. HB. \$24.99
Available 3 June



R I think Mike Lucas and Sofya Karmazina's *The Bookshop on Lemon Tree Lane* might just be my new favourite picture book. With beautiful illustrations and wonderful, rhyming text, I can't wait to read it at Story Time at Readings Kids! The story follows a young child whose favourite bookshop is about to change – something that they're not exactly looking forward to. However, after the bookshop's reopening, they learn that though it won't ever be quite the same, sometimes, changes aren't all that bad and the new bookshop can be just as magical and adventure-filled as it was before.

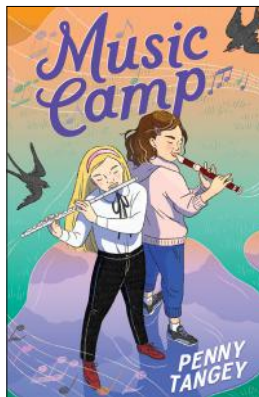
Together, Lucas and Karmazina have struck the perfect balance of text and illustrations, telling a story that is great for anyone needing a reminder that changes can be tough, but also very rewarding – or for anyone in need of an excellent picture book. Suitable for all ages but perfect for kids aged 2–6.

Lili Reus-Smit is from Readings Kids

KIDS BOOK OF THE MONTH

Middle Grade

Music Camp
Penny Tangey
UQP. PB. \$16.99
Available 3 June



R Penny Tangey, winner of The Readings Children's Prize 2021 for *As Fast As I Can*, returns with a new novel perfect for all music lovers. *Music Camp* follows Miley, who lost her home in a flood the year before the book begins. She is super excited that she has won a scholarship to attend a selective five-day music camp, where she can prove that the recorder should be considered a professional instrument – especially to Juliet. Juliet has music running in her veins: her late father was an esteemed clarinet player and he continues to inspire her every day to become just as great as he was. The inclusion of the recorder in the music camp offends everything Juliet believes in. But with new weather reports threatening the camp with flooding and a cancelled concert, can they find harmony even amid their differences?

Tangey asks us to dismantle the hierarchy of musical instruments and celebrate each wonderful tune musicians can make.

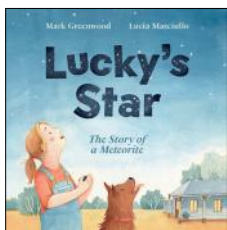
Like many who had an Australian education, my only experience with the recorder was in primary school, with different instruments in high school, and ultimately never again thinking about it, despite its rich history in medieval times and classical music. Tangey asks us to dismantle the hierarchy of musical instruments and celebrate each wonderful tune musicians can make.

Music Camp is a fun, uplifting story about music, climate change, and pursuing your dreams. For ages 8+.

Aurelia Orr is from Readings Kids

Picture Books

Lucky's Star: The Story of a Meteorite
Mark Greenwood & Lucia Masciullo (illus.)
CSIRO. HB. \$26.99
Available 2 June

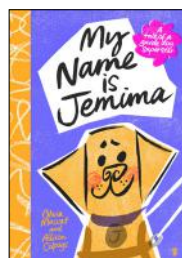


On a quiet spring morning, something strange falls from the sky and lands on a small country town. Lucky watches as 'stars' rain down on the fields and farms, but just what are these unusual objects? And what will Lucky do with her own special find? *Lucky's Star*

explores the fascinating true story of the Murchison meteorite. The pieces of space rock that were discovered in Murchison, Victoria.

My Name is Jemima: A Tale of a Guide Dog Superstar
Olivia Muscat & Allison Colpoys (illus.)

Scribble. HB. \$24.99
Available 3 June



very own guide dog, tells us all about her very important job and what it means to be a guide dog.

Whether it be at the beach, the office or on public transport, we see how Jemima's job is instrumental in Muscat's everyday life and we come to appreciate their special bond. Throughout the story, Jemima teaches

R *My Name is Jemima*, written by disability activist Olivia Muscat, is a much-needed picture book all about the life of a guide dog. Brought to us with bright and beautiful illustrations by Allison Colpoys (award-winning illustrator of *All the Ways to Be Smart*, and *Under the Love Umbrella*), Jemima, Muscat's

us when it is appropriate to pat guide dogs and when we should let them focus on their job, an idea that's not always easy to understand.

This book acts as a wonderful educational tool for children, helping them gain insight into service animals and their handlers. For ages 4+.

Lili Reus-Smit is from Readings Kids

Gozzle

Julia Donaldson & Sara Ogilvie (illus.)
Pan Mac. HB. \$26.99
Available now



honey just like him.

It's springtime. Bear has woken up hungry and finds a lost egg outside his cave. Breakfast? No! Out hatches Gozle, a very sweet little gosling who is convinced that Bear must be her daddy – and that she should be able to climb, dig and eat

We Are Definitely Human

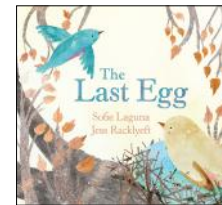
X. Fang
Pushkin Press. HB. \$24.99
Available 3 June



When three mysterious visitors show up in Mr. Li's field in the middle of the night, he does what any kind human would do – he invites them back to his farmhouse and offers to help fix their ... car. No, there's nothing strange about these guests at all. They're just like other humans. Yes, they are *definitely* human – or are they?

The Last Egg

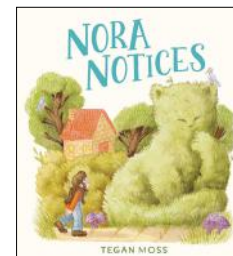
Sofie Laguna & Jess Racklyeft (illus.)
A&U. HB. \$24.99
Available 3 June



When an extra egg appears in their nest and takes too long to hatch, Mother Bird and Father Bird must risk their lives to keep it warm. And as the freezing winter takes hold and it seems all hope is lost, only something miraculous will save them. A gorgeous and heartwarming picture book about love, commitment and discovery.

Nora Notices

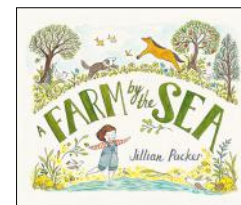
Tegan Moss
Little Book Press. HB. \$24.99
Available now



Nora is a curious girl whose unique perspective accentuates the magic hidden in everyday moments. From a hedge that is shaped like a cat to the way ants talk to each other with their antennae, Nora proves that all we really need to be amused is our imagination.

A Farm by the Sea

Jillian Packer
Berbay. HB. \$26.99
Available 3 June



R This lovely picture book shares a day in the life of a child who is lucky enough to live on a farm by the sea. Animals are greeted and chores are completed before some imaginative time is spent at the beach dancing

and enjoying the many small delights of the natural world. Dinner and a bath are followed by some quiet time on the porch – dolphin spotting – before being tucked up in a cosy bed, listening to the waves, ready for sleep after a busy, magical day.

Filled with lovely details to notice, the illustrations are teeming with stylised flowers, birds, shells and seaweed, giving them a decorative, folky feel reminiscent of textiles. This is a warm and peaceful book that can be shared at bedtime, like a lullaby. What a dream it would be to live on a farm by the sea! For ages 2+.

Kim Gruschow is the manager of Readings St Kilda

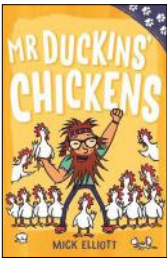
A Lemon for Safiya
Jemima Shafei-Ongu & Nisaluk Chantanakom (illus.)
Lothian. HB. \$24.99
Available now



When a little girl, Safiya, and her family help Maryam, a lost and confused stranger by the side of the road, to find her way home, they begin to understand who she is and the rich and remarkable life she has lived. Through kind-natured Safiya, we come to see Maryam, a woman who had been made invisible by society because of her ethnicity, race, religion, language, age and now dementia.

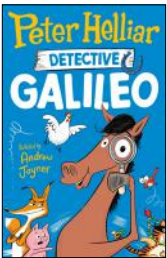
Junior Grade

Mr Duckins' Chickens (Paw Prints)
Mick Elliott
Walker. PB. \$12.99
Available 4 June



Meet Mr Duckins, the most *epic* Grade 4 teacher in the universe. That's because Mr Duckins doesn't believe in tests. Or homework. Or opening doors before he runs through them. But when he hatches a plan to break the world record for eating the most eggs in a day, Mr Duckins and his loyal class of misfits embark on a chicken-filled adventure that could turn rotten. This is the first book in a fun new series.

Detective Galileo
Peter Helliard & Andrew Joyner (illus.)
HarperCollins. PB. \$15.99
Available 4 June



Galileo has always dreamed of becoming a police horse. But when his dream comes true, he soon realises he's just a vehicle to carry around the 'real' human detectives. When Galileo witnesses a crime, he decides to take matters into his own hands. He has a lot to learn, but each crime he solves is sure to take him one step closer to becoming a real detective.

Middle Grade

Rise of the Witch (Everglade, Book 1)
Kitty Black & Rebecca Crane (illus.)
Affirm Kids. PB. \$17.99
Available now



Ever since her mother was killed for being a witch, Wren has lived with her cantankerous aunt in the town of Everglade. Witches are banned in Everglade, so Wren can't let anyone know that she might have magical powers, which she most definitely does, if she only knew how to use them.

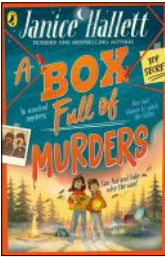
When Wren finds a magical necklace and others discover her magic, she is forced to outwit a terrifying creature called the Eater, who wants the necklace, and then climb over the wall that encircles their city to escape Everglade forever. With Wren's best friend Blue following her and a goat-boy she accidentally summoned inside a fairy circle, they travel to a magical

place called Meadow Court, where there just might be other witches, or at least relief from a world of witch-haters.

This funny, character-driven magical adventure had me utterly captivated. It's perfect for middle grade readers who enjoy fantasy stories. For ages 9+.

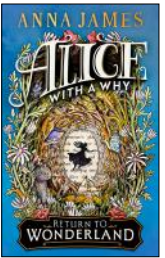
Angela Crocombe is a senior children's book buyer

A Box Full of Murders
Janice Hallett
Puffin. PB. \$16.99
Available 10 June



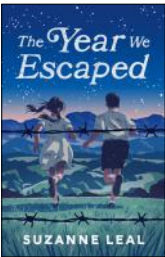
When Ava and Luke discover a mysterious box of papers in their attic, they are instantly curious about secrets it might hold. As they read through letters, diary entries, newspaper cuttings and listen to secret recordings, they realise that a decades-old, still unsolved, murder mystery is unfolding right in front of them. You know the facts. You have all the clues. Can *you* solve the mystery before they do?

Alice with a Why: Return to Wonderland
Anna James & Matthew Land (illus.)
HarperCollins. PB. \$17.99
Available 18 June



England, 1919. Alyce – with a Y – lives with her grandmother, the original Alice. When an invitation to a tea party hits her square in the face, Alyce realises her grandmother's strange stories of a place called Wonderland might actually be true. But Wonderland isn't the same as in her grandmother's stories, it's trapped in a war. Alyce must solve Wonderland's problems and find her way back home.

The Year We Escaped
Suzanne Leal
HarperCollins. PB. \$17.99
Available 4 June



Europe, 1940. With war on their doorstep, German classmates Klara and Rachel, and French brothers Lucien and Paul, are forced to leave their homes. They are taken to Gurs, a French detention camp in the south-west of France. When Klara and Rachel are promised safe refuge in a remote French village, Lucien and Paul are anxious to join them – and will risk their own lives to get there.

Felix and the Future Agency
Rachel Morrisroe & Paddy Donnelly (illus.)
S&S. PB. \$17.99
Available 18 June



Felix Green has a talent, he can foresee the future. And he's not the only one! When his latest prediction comes true, he's whisked off to join the secret underground Future Agency. There he learns tools to protect the country from the natural disasters set to befall it. When a dark spectre infiltrates the agency, only Felix can save it from destruction and unmask the culprit.

Nonfiction

Titanic: Ship of Dreams
Scholastic. HB. \$24.99
Available 1 June



Titanic: Ship of Dreams is the essential guide to the world's most famous disaster at sea. See hundreds of photos of the ship, its interiors and other fascinating objects. This book encourages children to think for

themselves about what caused this great disaster, and how it could have been averted. It presents evidence that allows readers to determine who the heroes and who the villains of the tragedy were.

Filling in the Map: Exploring Inland Australia
Carole Wilkinson
Wild Dog. HB. \$24.99
Available 4 June



When the First Fleet arrived in Australia in 1788, Governor Arthur Phillip selected a sheltered cove as the site of Australia's first colony. Australia is a big place. It covers 7.7 million square kilometres.

Filling in the Map is a history of the explorers who charted the coastlines, scaled the mountains and crossed the deserts in search of farmland and freshwater – and filled the map of Australia.

Graphic Narrative

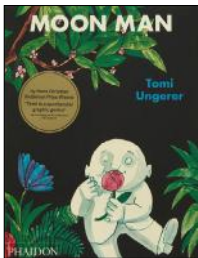
Detective Beans: Adventures in Cat Town (Detective Beans, Book 2)
Li Chen
Penguin. PB. \$17.99
Available now



Detective Beans is back! In between playing Scrabble, having sleepovers and trips to the beach, there's always time for crime solving. Whether it's who ate Mum's donuts, who has lost their handbag in the park, which pigeon stole King Chip, or even a burgled diamond ring, Beans is ready for anything. He's so ready that he's even starting a detective school – if he can find any students ...

Kids Classic of the Month

Moon Man
Tomi Ungerer
Phaidon. HB. \$29.95
Available now



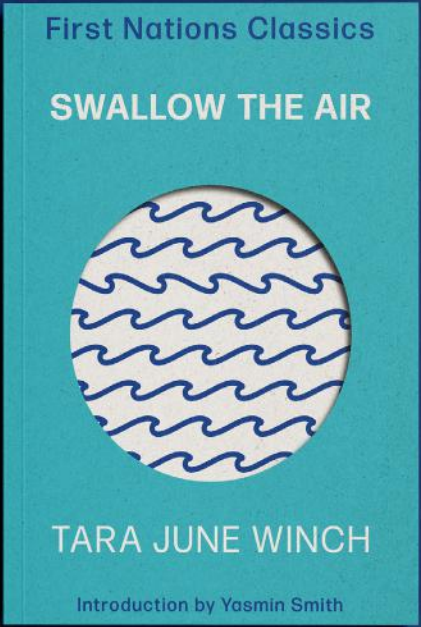
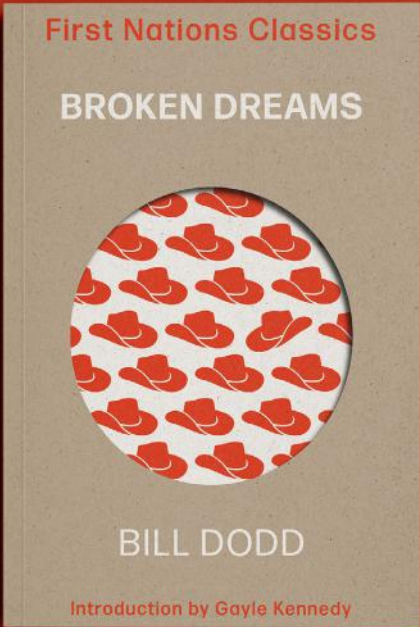
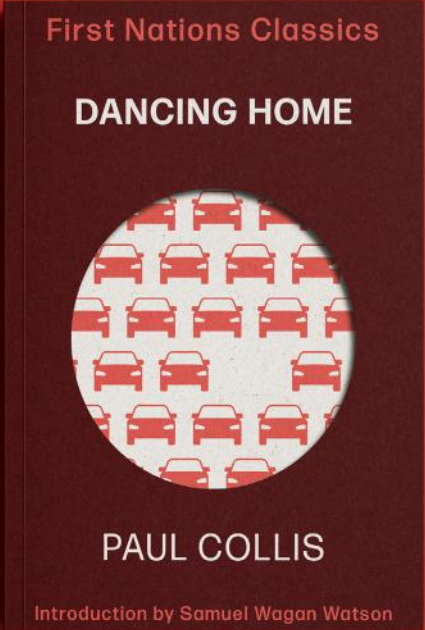
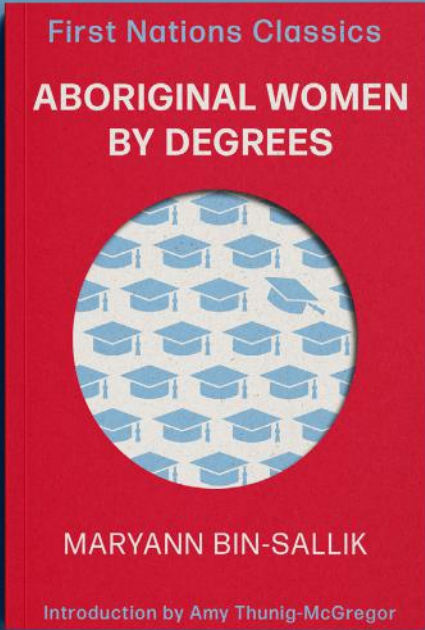
Curious Moon Man catches a shooting star as it is heading to earth one day. On Earth, Moon Man is met with suspicion and hostility from the government and thrown in jail. Luckily, Moon Man's size changes with the phases of the moon, so he can escape through the cell bars during a thin phase. Moon Man finally enjoys some time on Earth, appreciating nature, then dancing at a wonderful costume party. Sadly, a killjoy calls the cops and Moon Man is back on the run, eventually finding a way to return to his moon home. Despite offering moments of beauty and solidarity, Earth did not prove to be an especially welcoming place.

Moon Man was published in 1966, yet remains a strikingly relevant reflection on our treatment of outsiders.

Moon Man was published in 1966, yet remains a strikingly relevant reflection on our treatment of outsiders. French artist Tomi Ungerer is widely regarded as one of the greatest picture book creators of all time. In addition to books, Ungerer was known for comics, posters and design work, all evident in the thick lines and bold colours of his illustrations. He never thought of his picture books as specifically for children, and the funny, subversive, gently anti-authoritarian *Moon Man* remains a glorious reading experience for all ages.

Kim Gruschow is the manager of Readings St Kilda

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